ARCTOS

Acta Philologica Fennica

VOL. LIII

VERTAISARVIOITU
KOLLEGIALT GRANSKAD
PEER-REVIEWED
www.tsv.fi/tunnus

HELSINKI 2019

ARCTOS – ACTA PHILOLOGICA FENNICA

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Publisher:
Klassillis-filologinen yhdistys – Klassisk-filologiska föreningen (The Classical Association of Finland), c/o Tieteiden talo, Kirkkokatu 6, FI – 00170 Helsinki, Finland.

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ISSN 0570–734–X

Layout by Maija Holappa

Printed by KTMP Group Oy, Mustasaari

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Arctos 53 (2019) 129–155

"JUST RAGE" CAUSES OF THE RISE IN VIOLENCE IN THE EASTERN CAMPAIGNS OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Jenna Rice*

In 325 BCE, Alexander the Great was shot in the lung with an Indian arrow while mounting the wall of a Malli citadel.[1] The Macedonians' retaliatory massacre of the city's inhabitants was especially gruesome.[2] Curtius notes that "anyone the Macedonians encountered they believed responsible for their king's wounds. Mass slaughter of the enemy finally appeased their just rage".[3] Arrian specifies that the men killed all, "leaving neither woman nor child" (6,11,1). The sources' emphasis on reciprocal violence is naturally intended to show the Macedonians' anger and fear because they believed their king to be dead.

Alexander's near fatal wound explains the violence of only a single siege here, but the siege of this Malli citadel is far from the only act of outstanding brutality committed in India, nor is it the only occurrence of slaughtering non-combatants, including women and children.[4] Injury to the king cannot be the

* This article stems from my early academic interest in violence and combat experience in the ancient world, and it is a prelude to my current dissertation research on how animals shaped the military landscape in antiquity. I would like to thank my dissertation director Ian Worthington for reading several early drafts of this article and for his many thoughtful suggestions. My thanks as well to the two anonymous referees of this article for their helpful bibliographic additions and edits, and especially to Lassi Jakola for all of his assistance. Any errors are of course my own.

[1] Diod. Sic. 17,98,3; Plut. *Alex.* 63,3–4; Curt. 9,6,9–10; Arr. *Anab.* 6,10,1; Just. *Epit.* 12,9.

[2] Diod. Sic. 17,98–99; Plut. *Alex.* 63; Curt. 9,5,9–20; Arr. *Anab.* 6,10,3–6,11,1; Just. *Epit.* 12,9.

[3] Curt. 9,5,20. All translations of Curtius are Yardley's (2009), and all other translations come from the Loeb Classical Library.

[4] The brutality of the Indian campaign is well attested by modern scholars either in their enumeration of enemy casualties in the Indian invasion or their summarizing statements. For example, Worthington (2014, 255) notes that en route home from India, the "Macedonians marched, massacring all in

only cause for the augmented violence during the India campaign. A better explanation for the massacre of the Malli may be drawn from investigating the broader pattern of increasing violence following the fall of the Persian Empire. The Bactrian and Sogdian campaigns, for example, show a considerable uptick in violence against civilians, a pattern of behavior that escalated as the Macedonian conquest proceeded. Such violence has been emphasized by the ancient sources and used by some modern historians as a basis for forming a "new… orthodoxy"[5] in order to combat the romanticized Alexander of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, Briant cautions that the view that characterizes Alexander as proponent of mindless massacre who has "ravaged the earth" is as dangerous as the romanticized version that it wishes to counterbalance.[6] While Bosworth rightly notes that violence escalated sharply in the North East and India, the reasons for that escalation require careful analysis. The claim that "the killing was certainly a dreadful constant….and with it went a distinct lack of respect for life"[7] is true, but the explanation that "the act of killing meant little"[8] is not sufficient. If that were true, routine massacres on par with those in India would characterize the Macedonian's entire career, making it impossible for modern scholars to point to India as noticeably more extreme.

This article will reassess *why* Alexander's invasion of India was characterized by such viciousness. The article does not intend to exonerate, exculpate, or explain away a brutal campaign that, by modern standards, would rank high in the annals of war crimes. Rather, it examines why Alexander's Indian campaign stands out in the ancient sources as such a noticeable example of extreme, sustained violence. By paying careful attention not only to royal policy, but to the conditions and perspective of rank and file soldiers, this article will focus on untangling some of some of the potentially myriad reasons for such violence on

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their wake as had become their custom". Briant (2012, 60) claims that the campaign against Malli was "unusually violent". English describes the "bloody and brutal repression" (2009, 114) in even the initial phases of the Indian campaign; Cartledge (2004, 235) calls the Indian invasion a "campaign of blood"; and Bosworth (1998, 144) famously named Alexander's Indian conquest a "reign of terror".

[5] Briant 2012, 140.

[6] *Ibid*., 86.

[7] Bosworth 1998, 28–29.

[8] *Ibid*., 28.

the part of the invaders. As we shall see, the Greek combat norms that limited those whom it was permissible to kill changed considerably.[9]

In keeping with Dwyer and Ryan's approach, this article investigates the behavior, social and cultural context, and mentality of the perpetrators in order to understand what combination of conditions made the escalation of violence possible.[10] Such an investigation is difficult. Because the scale of slaughter in the Indian campaign is repugnant to us, attempts to explain its causes in ways other than an abrupt moral condemnation of the soldiers perpetrating it have fallen by the wayside. However, recent scholarly interest in violence and massacre in antiquity (both military and non-military) makes this inquiry an important one.[11] It is necessary to go beyond concluding that Alexander "behaved as though he felt no binding moral constraints",[12] and to investigate what sort of combat conditions eroded the cultural restraints of the Greeks and Macedonians, and why such violence peaked in India.

In doing so, I follow a two-pronged method: an investigation of (1) how the acts and policies of Alexander and his generals contributed to an increase in slaughter, and (2) how the political, military, and ecological experiences the soldiers endured in India wore them down and made slaughter appear as the most efficient (or only) means of rapid conquest and a return home. The former can be gleaned rather easily from the ancient sources, as they often center reports on Alexander and his generals. However, in turn that makes the perspectives of rank and file soldiers, the majority of fighters, difficult to visualize. Such has been the general state of accounts of war throughout history. In his 1976 work *The Face of Battle*, Keegan showed that it is possible to reconstruct some degree of the

[9] Certainly this is not the first time in Greek or Macedonian history that such a barrier had been breached; Konijnendijk (2018, esp. 6–38) convincingly shows that the Greek "rules of combat" developed by Prussian scholars of the 19th century and carried into modern scholarship, do not rest on firm or numerous ancient evidence. Nonetheless, the general limits to extreme acts of violence, such as *andrapodismos*, can be gleaned from ancient military narratives that indicate women and children might be enslaved, but were not slaughtered the way adult men were. See n.33 below.

[10] Dwyer – Ryan 2012, xxi.

[11] Some well-known recent examples include: Riess – Fagan (2016) Meineck – Konstan (2014), Dwyer – Ryan (2012), and van Wees (2009).

[12] Bosworth 1998, 29.

common soldier's experience and to offer a fresh understanding of war.[13] Following Keegan's approach, I argue that the rise in incidence of massacre in Alexander's Indian campaign stems from a variety of factors that began in Bactria and Sogdiana and escalated thereafter.

The Bactrian and Sogdian campaigns pitted the Macedonians against a strong and effective guerrilla resistance movement for which earlier mountain campaigning had not entirely prepared them. Naturally, the Macedonians had no familiarity with the land or local allies in Bactria and Sogdiana; they suffered numerous setbacks and considerable losses and spent two years subduing the territory because they were unable to force the enemy into pitched battle, a more efficient method of decimating an enemy.[14] By the time the army reached India, it had been conditioned to use massacre pre-emptively to avoid prosecuting an endless succession of sieges. The conditions of the prior campaign combined with evasive Indian battle tactics, toxic weapons, environmental conditions that facilitated the spread of disease, and decreased opportunity for material profit, all contributed to a perfect storm of conditions for increased violence and ultimately mutiny at the Hyphasis. Thereafter, the desire to return home at any cost made slaughter tolerable for many soldiers, catalyzing the bloodiest leg of the march through India in 325. To understand the origin of such massacre, it is necessary to look back to 329.

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[13] Keegan's aim to view a battle, inasmuch as is possible, through the eyes of its rank and file combatants, has been adopted in some form or fashion by scholars of antiquity as well. E.g. it is well known that Hanson (2009) considers restrictive elements of battle and their impact on fighting men, from the physical burden of armor and weapons to the psychological burdens of terror and instinctive flight. The individual experience of battle seems to have influenced Krentz's (2013, 134–156) article "Hoplite Hell" which reassesses the way hoplites experienced the charge, the collision, and the much-debated "push". Crowley (2012, esp. 40–69) investigates the psychological impact of hoplite combat with emphasis on the "primary group".

[14] The nature of Greek pitched battle, its function, and the degree to which it constitutes an agonal event, will always be much-debated, and it is not necessary to discuss it here. However, a cursory glance at Alexander's career shows that the one-day battles of Granicus, Issus and Gaugamela especially yielded immediate and significant financial, political, and military gains. For an up to date and detailed historiography of Greek hoplite combat and its debated agonal features, see e.g. Konijnendijk (2018, 39–71) and Kagan – Viggiano (2013, 1–56).

Bactria and Sogdiana

During the two years of Alexander's Bactrian and Sogdian campaign, Spitamenes' resistance movement successfully and repeatedly foiled Macedonian attempts at establishing military control over the two satrapies. As Holt notes, the Bactrian and Sogdian resistance was largely due to heavy-handed Macedonian interference, which Alexander's Persian predecessors had generally avoided.[15] The Macedonians' efforts to capture Bactria and Sogdiana's strongholds took multiple attempts, as garrisons were often besieged or overrun by Spitamenes' allies. Previous campaigns of conquest had been managed through conclusive sieges (long or short) and decisive pitched battle. Even the mountain wars of the Balkans, those against the Pisidians, and those against the Uxians, were managed with local assistance[16] in less time,[17] with fewer losses, and more decisively[18] than the regions of Bactria and Sogdiana.[19] Indeed, many of the Macedonians tactics, when repeated against Spitamenes and his allies, did little to undercut resistance. The fact that the Macedonian army was suddenly being outpaced and seemingly outwitted by its enemy contributed to the burst of retaliatory violence enacted on

[15] Holt 1988, 53–54.

[16] The Macedonians were fighting ancestral enemies in familiar territory in the Balkans, and they had the aid of Langarus in their campaign against the Taulantians. (Arr. *Anab.* 1,5,2–4); in Pisidia they had the aid of Selge (Arr. *Anab.* 1,28,1), among the Uxians they had the aid of Tauron (Curt. 5,3,9–10).

[17] Alexander's campaigns against peoples who made use of guerrilla fighting techniques were not especially lengthy compared to his campaigns in Bactria and Sogdiana. Neither the Pisidians nor the Uxians gave the Macedonians undue trouble. Pisidian cities either capitulated after short sieges or surrendered (Arr. *Anab.* 1,27,5–1,28,2; 1,28,8), and even the most warlike of the Pisidians (Arr. *Anab.* 1,28,2), those at Sagalassus, were beaten back and captured in decisive battle (Arr. *Anab.* 1,28,6–8) and the Macedonians pursued those who escaped with success and not excessive loss of time (Arr. *Anab.* 1,28,5–8). The Uxians (Diod. Sic. 17,67; Curt. 5,3,4–15; Arr. *Anab.* 3,17,1–6) dominated the terrain but were cut down by Alexander and Tauron (Curt. 5,3,11) or by the Macedonians alone (Diod. Sic. 17,67,5); the campaign could not have been too lengthy or devastating, as Alexander was persuaded by a Persian royal to spare the community (Curt. 5,3,13–15; Arr. *Anab.* 3,17,6).

[18] The campaigns against the Pisidians and Uxians, as well as the battle at the Persian Gates, were decisive. Pisidians: Arr. *Anab.* 1,28,8; Uxians: Diod. Sic. 17,67,5; Curt. 5,3,15; Arr. *Anab.* 3,17,5; Persian Gates: Curt. 5,4,34–5,5,1; Polyaenus 4,3,27; Arr. *Anab.* 3,18,9.

[19] Cf. Howe (2015, 159–166) argues that the tactics used in the campaigns above are essentially the same, and thus so are the campaigns themselves. See also Olbrycht 2007, 312–314. See below n. 24.

both enemy soldiers and civilians. Although Vacante has shown that ultimately the region would be pacified "definitively"[20] through diplomatic alliance, two years of brutal repression came first.

Spitamenes and his allies remained highly mobile, able to launch unexpected and often successful attacks against the Macedonian invasion. A clear back-and-forth emerges between the invading Macedonians and the resistance movement, culminating in a targeted attack on the civilian population of the Zeravshan Valley, as we shall see.[21] After Alexander occupied the Sogdian capital Maracanda (Curt. 7,6,10; Arr. *Anab.* 3,30,6), it was besieged by Spitamenes (Arr. *Anab.* 4,3,6–7) who was narrowly warded off by the Macedonians (Arr. *Anab.* 4,5,2). The relief force that Alexander sent was massacred en route to Maracanda by Spitamenes' Scythian allies,[22] leaving him to besiege Maracanda once again (Arr. *Anab.* 4,6,3–5; Curt. 7,9,20). The attempted pacification of the Zeravshan Valley (Arr. *Anab.* 4,6,5–6; Curt. 7,9,21–22) failed to stop Spitamenes and his allies. Spitamenes appeared in the army's rear at Bactra, where he slaughtered a garrison near the satrapal capital despite the nearby presence of Craterus' defense force (Arr. *Anab.* 4,16,1, 4,16,4–5). The Macedonian sortie in defense of Bactra itself was initially cut down before Craterus', and then Coenus', eventual success.[23] The ubiquity of Spitamenes and his Scythian allies was aided in large part by their manipulation of the topography, putting the Macedonians at a fur-

[20] Vacante's (2012, 118) assessment of the latter half of the Sogdian campaign theorizes convincingly that Arrian's account masks the severe setbacks that the Macedonian army endured and illustrates how the use of brute force against the resistance was ultimately insufficient. Alexander's diplomatic alliance with Oxyartes and his marriage to Roxane gave him the local support necessary to maintain control over the region.

[21] As Bosworth has shown, the date of events preserved in Arrian after the summer of 329 differs significantly from the Vulgate tradition. Notably, Arrian digresses from 4,8–4,15 and he "loses track of Alexander" (Bosworth 1981, 29) for much of the spring of 328, applying much of what likely occurred in 328 to 327. For the purposes of this article, the cause and effect relationship of the events is more significant than the year in which they occurred. For a close examination of Arrian versus the Vulgate tradition and the difficulty of the chronology, see Bosworth (1981, 29–37).

[22] Relief force: Curt. 7,6,24, Arr. *Anab.* 4,3,7; massacre of relief force: Curt. 7,7,31–39; Arr. *Anab.* 4,5,3–4,6,2.

[23] Arr. *Anab.* 4,16,6–7, 4,17,1–6; S. Vacante (2012, 111–113) provides a thorough and succinct summary of fortification and defense problems around Bactra.

ther disadvantage despite their familiarity with mountain campaigning.[24] Spitamenes' troops often fled to the desert steppes and so made pursuit impossible, and the Macedonians were unable to force a pitched battle, the surest way to a decisive victory.[25]

Additionally, the Macedonians suffered regular setbacks in Bactria and Sogdiana thanks to ambushes with significant losses, all of which resulted in equally vicious retaliation.[26] For example, en route to the Jaxartes River, foraging Macedonians were caught unawares and surrounded by native soldiers who commanded the high lands.[27] Although Curtius notes that "more [Macedonians] were taken prisoner than were killed" (7,6,1), the sheer number of attackers, which the sources put between 20,000–30,000, indicates noteworthy losses.[28] The Macedonians' response, to attack their captors' citadel, ended in the deaths of thousands but failed to halt local resistance (Arr. *Anab.* 3,30,11). Hence the next example, that of the Scythian-led ambush and massacre of the Macedonians along the Polytimetus River,[29] which resulted in heavy casualties. Importantly, both extant accounts of the attack also emphasize an unusual degree of chaos and panic among veteran soldiers,[30] a testament to the effectiveness of the Scyth-

[24] On the debate regarding how foreign or familiar guerrilla tactics were to the Macedonians, see especially Holt (1988) and Howe (2015). I agree with Howe that the Macedonians were familiar with guerrilla tactics, but because success against guerrilla attacks depends largely on familiarity with a particular opponent's fighting style and knowledge of the topography an army is occupying, the Macedonians were at a severe disadvantage in Bactria and Sogdiana as opposed to, e.g. Illyria, where they had fought for generations. In the context of this paper, my concern is primarily with the Macedonian response to repeated losses and the gradual escalation of violence that culminated in a massacre of the Zeravshan Valley's inhabitants. See further n.39.

[25] Fuller 1958, 117. Such a victory would not stem from mutual recognition between two armies of one victor of the field, but rather one army's capture and decimation of a substantial number of the enemy. For the on-going debate regarding the nature and significance of winning the field in domestic Greek warfare, Konijnendijk (2018, 1–38, 178–215) provides ample historiographical discussion.

[26] Vacante 2012, 87–130.

[27] Curt. 7,6,1–10; Arr. *Anab.* 3,30,10–11. Curtius places the ambush near Maracanda 7,6,10; see Bosworth 1980, 379.

[28] Curt. 7,6,2; Arr. *Anab.* 3,30,10.

[29] For the massacre, see Curt. 7,7,30–39; Arr. *Anab.* 4,5,2–4,6,2; brief narratives in: Worthington 2014, 224; Bosworth 1993, 111–112; Hammond 1996, 195.

[30] Curt. 7,7,34–39; Arrian mentions a "panic –stricken and disorderly descent into the river" (4,5,7) and describes the isolated men on the river isle as "helpless and pressed on every side" (4,5,9). E.g.

ian circling tactic and the Macedonians' inability to counter it without the cover of artillery Indeed this loss was so potentially devastating to morale that Alexander concealed the information from his men while marching his army swiftly to the site (Curt. 7,7,39). However horrifying a loss it was, Vacante rightly notes that the ancient sources may have exaggerated its impact to some extent in order to justify the tremendous acts of violence which followed.[31]

Thereafter, the Macedonians began to increase the frequency and scope of violence in order to subdue the region, a policy which would be carried over into India in its most extreme form, but not successfully. Previously, Alexander had operated by the nowhere codified but generally observable Greek custom of war, which permitted razing cities and, in extreme cases, the use of *andrapodismos*, or the execution of adult men and the enslavement of women and children.[32] Generally, only particularly difficult sieges prompted this degree of retaliation,[33] but in Bactria and Sogdiana, the cities that suffered *andrapodismos* were far more numerous, and even short sieges that cost the Macedonians little

Arr. *Anab.* 4,4,4–8.

[31] Vacante 2012, 103 esp. n.94.

[32] The obvious exception is Persepolis, whose sacking celebrated the finale of Alexander's war of reprisal. The theme of revenge shaped both Philip and Alexander's campaigns. (Diod. Sic. 17,72; Plut. *Alex.*38,3–4; Curt. 5,7,4–7; Arr. *Anab.* 3,18,10–12). The massacre of the Branchidae (Curt. 7,5,28–35) also fits within this category, if indeed it occurred. See Worthington 2014, 204–206; Squillace 2010, 69–80; and esp. Parke 1985, 62–65.

[33] On the treatment of cities after a siege, see Chaniotis 2013, 645–646; Kern 1999, 147–149. For a good overview of the general definition and pattern of *andrapodismos*, see Gaca 2010, 117–121, 127–128. From Alexander's own career, we may take as examples Miletus and Halicarnassus, where the civilian population was left unharmed, as it was distinguished from the Persian sympathizers and defenders of the citadels (Diod. Sic. 17,22,4–5; Arr. *Anab.* 1,19,6). At Halicarnassus, only those covering Memnon's flight by burning the city were killed; any civilians found in their homes were spared (Arr. *Anab.*1,23,3–4). At Tyre and Gaza, where the locals resisted violently along with their garrison commanders and cost the army time and casualties, the most severe punishment was meted out, *andrapodismos*. In the severe case of Tyre, 2,000 were crucified as well. See Diod. Sic. 17,46,3–4; Curt. 4,4,13–14, 17; Arr. *Anab.* 2,24,5; Just. *Epit.* 11,10. On Gaza there is less detail, but Arr. *Anab.* 2,27,7 specifies *andrapodismos* was used against civilians and Curt. 4,6,25–29 adds the story of Batis' fate. Kern (1999, 230) notes that the duration and difficulty of the siege, and potentially Alexander's injury (Arr. *Anab.* 2,27,2), played a significant role in the treatment of the city.

in time or casualties were followed by the most extreme measures. Nonetheless, this type of destruction did not quell resistance.[34]

The clearest examples of an enhanced policy of aggression emerging in Bactria and Sogdiana are the punitive rather than pre-emptive sieges of the seven Sogdian cities and the destruction of the Zeravshan Valley. Alexander besieged the cities in response to the massacre of Macedonians placed in garrisons along the Jaxartes River (Arr. *Anab.* 3,30,10–11; 4,1,4–5). Despite the fact that all seven citadels did not cost Alexander more than three to four days in sum, the sieges were ended in brutal fashion, and the civilian inhabitants were blamed for the resistance. The Macedonians used *andrapodismos* on several if not all the citadels' populations,[35] and they slaughtered any locals that took to flight to prevent them from regrouping elsewhere (Arr. *Anab.* 4,2,6), part of a broader "search and destroy"[36] mission. In similar fashion, Ptolemy reports that captives seized from Cyropolis were bound and put under guard to prevent further revolt, but likely these were sold into slavery upon Alexander's departure.[37] Because the Zeravshan Valley served as the breadbasket of Sogdiana,[38] its destruction led to both immediate slaughter and also long-term starvation. The index of Diodorus 17 *ky* suggests a death toll of 120,000 people. Such a number cannot possibly represent only men of fighting age, who were the traditional casualties of a massacre. In the Zeravshan Valley, non-combatants were also targeted.[39]

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[34] Holt 1988, 59; Holt (1988, 55–60) sees the foundation of Alexandria-Eschate as the root cause of revolt, as it epitomizes Alexander's heavy-handed approach to managing the Bactrian and Sogdian satrapies.

[35] For the seven cities of Sogdiana: Curt. 7,6,13–23; Arr. *Anab.* 4,2,1–4,3,5. Good narrative accounts in: Worthington 2014, 223–224; Bosworth 1993, 110; Holt 1988, 55–56; Hammond 1983, 193–194. On the duration of sieges, Arrian notes that the first five cities were captured in two days (4,3,1), Cyropolis was captured in two (4,3,1–4), and the seventh unnamed city was taken either on the same day as Cyropolis or the following, but on the first attempt (4,3,5). *Andrapodismos* was likely used against all seven, see: Curt. 7,6,16; Arr. *Anab.* 4,3,1; 4,3,5.

[36] Holt 1988, 61.

[37] Arr. *Anab.* 4,3,5; cf. Bosworth 1995, 21.

[38] On the ancient and modern fertility of the Zeravshan Valley, see Bosworth 1995, 35.

[39] Bosworth (1995, 35) confirms that Diodorus' index hints that 1.2 million Sogdians were killed in this revenge; this must be a typographical error for 120,000, which is what Hammond suggests. See Hammond 1983, 61–62.

At this stage Alexander and his Macedonians had begun responding to resistance with heightened violence both more rapidly and also with less provocation than in the past. While ultimately the Sogdian campaign was ended through diplomacy and marriage between Alexander and Roxane, such diplomatic measures were often not feasible or simply failed during the Indian campaign, often due to the Macedonians' own behavior.[40] The Macedonians were learning that the capture of a capital or citadel by no means translated into conquest of the entire territory, and enemies that had not been thoroughly oppressed would readily resist. Weighted with experiences from the north, the Macedonians entered the Punjab with the goal of preventing flare-ups of resistance in the rear and the later regrouping of a very mobile enemy.[41] Such a goal helped condition the soldiers to preemptive and heightened violence in the face of resistance when they entered India, where the desire to complete its conquest and go home would further spur the army to challenge traditional Greco-Macedonian boundaries of violence.

India

Almost as soon as Alexander's army entered India, the pattern of the local evasion and waiting out sieges began. After a skirmish at the Choes (Kunar) River in the Assaceni territory of West India in 327, the Indian combatants fled to their stronghold. The Macedonians besieged it, but the inhabitants fled once again into the mountains.[42] Curtius' account of the same conflict suggests that Alexander intended to make an example of the first Indian resistance to his conquest, utilizing severe policies of no resistance from the beginning of the campaign.

[40] On the marriage of Roxane and the reduction of the Sogdian and Scythian threat see Vacante 2012, 113 and bibliography of his n. 149; Holt 1988, 67–68 n.11.

[41] It is no coincidence that it was between the Bactrian-Sogdian and Indian campaigns that Alexander reformed his companion cavalry, which had sustained serious losses fighting against Spitamenes. See especially Olbrycht 2007, 312–314. Bosworth (1998, 41) summarizes the Aspasian campaign thus: "The military situation is simple. As the Macedonian army moved from valley to valley, the inhabitants vacated their settlements, and took refuge in the mountains…and [Alexander] sent out scouting parties to detect the main groups of refugees". This pattern of flight and avoidance of pitched battle occurred further east in India as well.

[42] Arr. *Anab.* 4,23,1–5. See also the siege of Bazira, whose citizens fled before capitulating only to take up defense at Aornus (Arr. *Anab.* 4,27,5–4,28,1). Cf. English 2009, 120–122; Bosworth 1998, 49–50.

He ordered Craterus to spare no one (8,10,5) in the city to which the inhabitants had fled, and after besieging it, he "butchered its inhabitants to a man, and even unleashed his fury on the buildings".[43] This is an acceleration of aggression that supersedes *andrapodismos*; *no* inhabitant was spared, and one can presume a city included women and children as well as fighting men. Indeed, there is little mention of enslavement in the Indian campaign at all, suggesting that many noncombatants were simply killed. In Curtius' account of the Hyphasis mutiny, Coenus complains that few Macedonians even had slaves to attend them anymore (9,3,11). This brutal policy upon invasion did not have the desired effect; rather, many Indians favored razing their own cities to the ground, rather than allowing the Macedonians a local base of operation, as occurred among the Aspasians and at Arigaeon and Dyrta.[44]

Diplomatic measures remained an option and were occasionally used, if a city agreed not to resist.[45] Arrian specifies that Alexander sent Hephaestion and Perdiccas en route to Peucelaotis "with orders to subdue, by force or diplomacy, the tribes they encountered on their march" and then meet Alexander by the Indus (4,22,7). After the destruction of the unnamed western Indian city

[43] Curt. 8,10,6; cf. English 2009, 114–115.

[44] Arr. *Anab.* 4,24,2; 4,24,6; 4,30,5. Curtius records only that the people of Arigaion (Acadira) deserted their city (8,10,19).

[45] A discussion of every region with which Alexander came to terms rather than besieged would require more space than this article permits. Because the goal of this article is the understanding of the Macedonian violence which did occur, it would not serve to speculate about occasions on which it could have been avoided. However, here I include a brief list of occasions on which Alexander used diplomacy to subdue a region.: with Taxiles the father (Arr. *Anab.* 4,22,6, and acting on behalf of Sangaius, Arr. *Anab.* 4,22,8); with Taxiles the son (Diod. Sic.17,86,6; Curt. 8,12,4–6; Arr. *Anab.* 5,3,5–6, 5,8,2, etc.); at Andaca (Arr. *Anab.* 4,23,5); famously, with Porus (Arr. *Anab.* 5,18,6–5,19,3); with the Glaucanicae (Arr. *Anab.*5,20,2–3); with an unnamed city whose people ultimately made terms with Alexander before the end of a siege (Curt. 9,9,20–23); Alexander accepted Musicanus' submission (Arr. *Anab.* 6,15,6–7) and only turned back to attack him when he revolted (Arr. *Anab.* 6,17,1; Curt. 9,8,16 says only the instigator was killed; cf. Diod. Sic. 17,102,5); Alexander led an army against Sambus, but found the gates of his city flung open, giving way to diplomacy with the royal family (Arr. *Anab.* 6,16,3–4; cf. Diod. Sic. 17,102,6, Plut. 64,1 is unlikely; Curt. 9,8,13–15 mentions that only some cities surrendered). Olbrycht (2017, 199) implies that resolving conquest by diplomacy would not have been desirable, asserting that the campaign served as "an acidtest proof" of the reconciliation between Iranian and Greco-Macedonian troops, making success in India the ideal propaganda for unity.

mentioned above, Alexander made terms with a neighboring city, Andaca, and garrisoned it without violence, using it as an outpost to secure the area (Arr. *Anab.* 4,23,5).

Subsequently in western India, Alexander met with immediate resistance and defeated the Indian contingent in pitched battle (Arr. *Anab.* 4,24,8–4,25,4). Whether or not to make diplomatic overtures appears to have depended largely on Alexander's perception of Indian behavior—fleeing or meeting the Macedonians for battle was a sure formula for attack, while remaining in place and admitting Macedonian soldiers into the city could bring about a peaceful transaction. One can see why diplomatic means were used less frequently; it is logical that one would flee an invading army, especially one with such a gruesome track record. Thus, the combination of Alexander's policy of no resistance and the logical but tragic Indian desire to protect their autonomy often yielded high death tolls.

The tactic of evasion and strategic retreat meant the Macedonians devoted more time to pursuing their enemies than fighting them, a pattern which seems to have resulted in greater violence upon the capture of a city regardless of the effort involved in taking it. For example, when the Macedonians attempted pitched battle against the Assaceni in the winter of 327/6,[46] they stumbled in their crossing of the Gouraius River. Despite this advantageous moment, the Assaceni disbanded and went to their own cities to prepare for a siege.[47] At Massaga, the largest city of the region,[48] Alexander attempted to hasten a long siege by drawing the defenders away from the walls and out into battle with a feigned retreat. However, as soon as the defenders of Massaga had a taste of fighting in close quarters with the invading army, they retreated into the city (Arr. *Anab.* 4,26,4). Perhaps this unexpected sortie "helped mitigate the subsequent grim

[46] Arr. *Anab.* 4,25,1–7. See Worthington 2014, 238; Bosworth 1998, 49–53.

[47] Arr. *Anab.* 4,25,7; Curt. 8,10,22 explains that the Assaceni's king had recently died, and this is why they did not remain in battle array. See Bosworth 1995, 169. Nevertheless, it seems odd that the Assaceni army would prefer waiting out a siege and give up its advantage on the field while the Macedonians floundered temporarily in the river crossing. A similar event occurs along the Hydraotes in 325, where a Malli army of 50,000 awaited Alexander's approach but fled to their city by the time his infantry arrived after an indecisive skirmish (Arr. *Anab.* 6,8,4–7).

[48] Plut. *Alex.* 59; Curt. 8,10,22–36; Arr. *Anab.* 4,26,1–4,27,4, For narratives: Worthington 2014, 238; English 2009, 115–120; Heckel 2007, 114; Bosworth 1998, 122; Fuller 1958, 245–6.

siege work with its frequent set-backs and not inconsiderable losses".[49] Nonetheless, the vicious post-siege treatment of combatants persisted.

After he promised to absorb the Indian mercenaries stationed within the city into his army, Alexander ordered them killed that night because they allegedly planned to slip away (Arr. *Anab.* 4,26,3–4), an act which destroyed any future opportunity for a diplomatic approach with other Indian cities. Although the account and rationale for this slaughter appears variously in the sources,[50] there is a significant common thread: the mercenaries were attacked in their camp, and thus with their women and children. Diodorus notes it explicitly, claiming that the mercenaries' wives took up arms and were cut down as well. (Diod. Sic. 17,84,5–6).

The details of the siege of Aornus are not entirely discernible because of conflict within the sources, however Arrian's account of a slaughter makes the event relevant here.[51] Arrian tells us that the defenders of the Rock agreed to terms of peace and to surrender the fortress to Alexander, but when they attempted to flee in the night Alexander and his men slew them (4,30,2–4). Diodorus gives a different account, claiming that after Macedonian siege engines had been drawn level with the defenders, the Macedonians abandoned their guard of the Rock's major exits and allowed the occupants to flee "without further fighting".[52] This does not match the negotiations mentioned in Arrian's account, nor does it match Alexander's post-siege decisions up to this point. If Arrian is to be believed, then the siege of Aornus further highlighted Alexander's policy of

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[49] Bosworth 1995, 170. Bosworth may be referring to the Macedonian casualties following a collapsed bridge between a siege engine and a breach in the city wall (Arr. *Anab.* 4,26,7).

[50] E.g. Diod. Sic. 17,84; Plut. *Alex.* 59,6; Arr. *Anab.* 4,26–4,27,4; ME 44–45; Baynham (2012, 33–35) addresses the varying accounts and proposes the compelling argument that Alexander was acting in concert with the Assacenian Queen Cleophis, to whose regency the mercenaries proved a threat. Cf. Bosworth 1995, 173, 175–176.

[51] For narrative accounts of the Rock of Aornus see: Worthington 2014, 241–3; English 2009, 122–129; Bosworth 1998, 49–53; Fuller 1958, 248–54.

[52] Diod. Sic. 17,85,7. Curtius' account is not included here because it seems the least likely, or to use Bosworth's (1998, 50) phrase, "hopelessly confused". Curtius suggests that Alexander "made a show" of continuing the siege after having withdrawn his men (Curt. 8,11,19). The king only won the territory at all because for some reason the occupants of the rock gave up their celebration and decided to flee, and Alexander's men caught them midflight and terrified them, causing many to fall from the steep crags of the pass (Curt 8,11,20–22).

no resistance and treating fleeing individuals as rebellious. Such a reaction likely stemmed from haste in the face of slow progress through India and the assumption that those in flight would take up arms elsewhere and force another siege.

The siege of Sangala in the summer of 326 again exemplifies Alexander's policy of no resistance in the face of evasive Indian maneuvers.[53] After the fortress fell to the invaders, the king sent word to the people of the resisting adjacent territories that they themselves would suffer no harsh treatment so long as they remained where they were (Arr. *Anab.* 5,24,6). Alexander's goal was to ensure surrounding regions would remain passive and not take up arms against him or unify elsewhere, forcing another siege. When neighboring locals fled before his approach, they were treated as resisters in the same way the defenders at Sangala had been, and those whom the Macedonians caught were killed. Even those left behind due to injury were seized and executed by the army (Arr. *Anab.* 5,24,7).

Not yet an all-pervasive policy, the behavior at Sangala clearly shows an expansion of the scope of violence on the part of the Macedonians. They had begun cutting down fleeing locals who had the potential to regroup elsewhere, and those in flight must have included women and children as well as adult men. This behavior constitutes an accelerated rate of violence compared to Alexander's earlier campaigns, where men were cut down only in post-battle routs, rather than in flight from an army's approach.[54] The fear of rebellious flare-ups appeared in Alexander's speech at the Hyphasis River in 326 when he reminded his men that "If we turn back, the tribes we do not now hold securely may be stirred up to rebel by those not yet under our control. And then many of our toils will be profitless, or else we shall have to again undertake fresh toils and dangers".[55] To

[53] On the siege of Sangala, see: Curt. 9,1,14–25, Arr. *Anab.* 5,22–5,24,8; for narrative see: English 2009, 129–135; Bosworth 1988, 132.

[54] Konijnendijk (2018, 188–205) has convincingly shown that the post-battle slaughter was integral to victory and far from uncommon in Greek armies, or Philip's. However, cutting down men in a post-battle chase is quite distinct from hunting out civilians who offered no resistance. From Alexander's career, we may consider the campaign against the free Thracians in the spring of 335. When the Thracians fled at the Macedonian battle charge, 1,500 were cut down in the immediate rout, but Arrian distinguishes that women and children traveling with them were captured separately, not killed (Arr. *Anab.* 1,1,12–13). Even though Arrian notes that of those fleeing "few were captured alive, by reason of their speed and their knowledge of the country" (Arr. *Anab.* 1,1,13), the decisive defeat of the free Thracians had *remained* a defeat.

[55] Arr. *Anab.* 5,26,3–4. One of the best sources for the perspectives of the Macedonian soldiers is the

Alexander, rebellion after conquest meant lost territory; to the Macedonians on the brink of mutiny, it meant another laborious siege.

On the return march from the Hyphasis, the Macedonians' haste to return home combined with Alexander's desire to secure India's submission before retreating westward maintained and in some cases augmented the already staggering rate of violence. This is most clearly seen in the campaign against the Malli in the winter of 326/5.[56] Because the Macedonians received word that the Malli were prepared to resist,[57] Alexander took the Malli entirely by surprise in an attack from the desert (Arr. *Anab.* 6,6,3), giving the tribesmen no opportunity to submit or prepare against him and rendering his offer of clemency relatively meaningless.[58]

The preparations Arrian claims the Malli tribes were making are not apparent in all of his accounts (Arr. *Anab.* 6,4,3), suggestive of an apologetic addition to prop up a pitiable narrative. The Malli of the first (unnamed) city were ambushed from the desert and cut down "without resistance, unarmed as they were" (Arr. *Anab.* 6,5,3). The Macedonians besieged the city thereafter, killing its

exchange of speeches at the Hyphasis River, especially Coenus' speech "on behalf of the majority of the army" (Arr. *Anab.* 5,27,2) as recorded in Curtius (9,3,1–15) and Arrian (5,27,1–9). With respect to the reliability of speeches in Arrian or Curtius, I lean closer to Hammond's (1999, 248) perspective than Bosworth's, that "the substance of the speech [at Hyphasis] is…historical in principal". While neither ancient author's recorded speeches are verbatim, the broader meaning and substance behind them can be accepted as genuine. I rely on Curtius' and Arrian's reports of the speeches to illustrate the condition and complaints of the Macedonian soldiers, not to evaluate the speakers' rhetoric, Greek understanding of the territory beyond the Hyphasis, or Alexander's plans for global conquest, all of which appear to be the most controversial aspects of the speeches. It is reasonable to believe that the details of the soldiers' conditions are accurate, and even Bosworth (1988, esp. 128, 123–124), who rejects the speeches as fabrications, implicitly accepts the descriptions of monsoon- and march-wearied men.

[56] For the Malli campaign see: Diod. Sic. 17,98–99; Curt. 9,4,15–9,5,30 (Curtius places the Malli invasion story among the Sudracae); Arr. *Anab.* 6,8,1–6,12,3. Plutarch (*Alex.*63) and Justin (12,9) give highly condensed versions of the campaign. Worthington 2014, 255–6; English 2009, 135–142; Bosworth 1998, 135–7; Fuller 1958, 261–2.

[57] Arrian tells us that the tribesmen had "sent away their wives and children to the strongest of their cities and intended to meet [Alexander] in battle" (6,4,3).

[58] Diodorus' account asserts that the Malli met Alexander fully mobilized (17,98,1), however his account is only of the siege in which Alexander was injured and does not reflect the many sieges of the Malli territory. I rely more heavily upon the more detailed account of Arrian, as it discusses more than one siege (6,6,1–6,11,2).

2,000 occupants after breaching the walls (Arr. *Anab.* 6,6,3–6), while Perdiccas and a contingent of troops marched to a neighboring city to prevent the escape of civilians. Finding the city deserted, Perdiccas gave pursuit, massacring "all the fugitives who had not first found refuge in the marshes" (Arr. *Anab.* 6,6,6). Once again, we see that the scope of violence has expanded from *andrapodismos* to outright slaughter of all.

When Alexander found several Malli cities abandoned, he sent Pithon and Demetrius out to track the paths of the refugees along the river. Any who had gathered together in the forests by the banks were to be killed if they did not voluntarily surrender (Arr. *Anab.* 6,7,2–3), orders similar to those Perdiccas followed after an earlier siege (Arr. *Anab.* 6,6,6). Such a policy raises two important issues. First, if entire Malli cities were found abandoned, the refugees fleeing these cities must have consisted at least in part of individuals not traditionally killed in war: men not of fighting age or ability, women, and children.[59] Secondly, it is unlikely that troops under Macedonian generals could have ensured that the Malli "voluntarily surrender" (Arr. *Anab.* 7,8,3) when few if any could have spoken the local language and no mention of prisoner or slave taking follows the Macedonian generals' pursuit. Arrian very succinctly summarizes the result: "Pithon's and Demetrius' troops did, in fact, find and kill many in the woods" (Arr. *Anab.* 7,8,3).

Curtius casts additional light on the severe carnage of the Malli campaign by noting that as the Macedonians entered the territory, having "believed themselves quit of any danger, were suddenly terror-stricken when they realized that a fresh war with India's most belligerent tribes still lay before them, and once more they began to criticize their king with seditious talk" (Curt. 9,4,16–17). As Arrian has Coenus say at the Hyphasis, these are "unwilling troops" (Arr. *Anab.* 5,27,7). Alexander's army did not want to continue campaigning. Its hesitation is highlighted several times in Arrian's account of the Malli campaign with the inclusion of the reflexive pronoun, usually followed by an explanation of why Alexander was obligated to initiate an attack himself.[60] At the siege of

[59] Note that the Malli tribes that supposedly sent away all their women and children (Arr. *Anab.*6,4,3) were those that were also preparing for battle, of which we see little evidence here.

[60] There is perhaps an earlier sense of this. Plutarch reports that Alexander's men were hesitating to advance into Nysa because of the deep river that surrounded it, using the word ὀκνούντων, which has the sense of "to shrink from" (Plut. *Alex.* 58,4).

the "City of Brahmans" (Arr. *Anab.* 6,7,4–6), Arrian emphasizes that **αὐτός** δέ Ἀλέξανδρος…ἦγεν the advance against the city, and the king was "the first to mount the wall and was seen holding it", a sight which put the Macedonians to shame and obliged them to follow (Arr. *Anab.* 6,7,5–6). At the Malli siege, Arrian claims that Alexander thought that the Macedonians bringing the ladders were shirking (βλακεύειν), and so Ἀλέξανδρος δέ… ἁρπάσας κλίμακα ἑνὸς τῶν φερόντων προσέθηκε τῷ τείχει **αὐτὸς** καὶ εἰληθεὶς ὑπὸ τῇ ἀσπίδι ἀνέβαινεν (6,9,3). Thus, as the Macedonians grew increasingly exhausted, Alexander willingly put himself in greater danger.

Alexander's seemingly impulsive behavior was serious enough that his generals rebuked him for it.[61] After the near-fatal siege of Malli, Craterus visited a recuperating Alexander and urged him not to risk his life so easily when so many men depended upon it, emphasizing the troops' anxiety over Alexander's wellbeing, allegedly asking, "Who wants to survive you? Who is able to?" (Curt. 9,6,9). Indeed, had Alexander died, then his troops would have been far from the center of the empire, farther still from Macedonia, and without a king, heir, or viable leader, "since a great many officers were held in equal esteem by both Alexander himself and the Macedonians" (Arr. *Anab.* 6,12,2). There was considerable rivalry among Alexander's most powerful and capable generals. Strife emerged between Craterus and Hephaestion, who brawled publicly in India (Plut. *Alex.* 47,9–12) and were frequently so at odds that Alexander separated them, even having them march along opposite banks of the Hydaspes (Arr. *Anab.* 6,2,2). After Alexander was wounded at Multan, the rivalries of the generals and the lack of an individual capable of taking charge of the army uncontested inspired great anxiety. Craterus appeared to have been aware of this, reminding Alexander "we have reached a place from which returning home without your leadership is impossible for any of us" (Curt. 9,6,9).

Why Did Violence Increase?

Alexander responded to the evasive tactics of the Indians and the endless series of sieges by establishing a brutal policy of no resistance that was enhanced by the

[61] I use the plural because Curtius does report that Craterus was "charged with the task of conveying to [Alexander] the entreaties of his friends" (Curt. 9,6,6).

soldiers' eagerness to subdue India as quickly as possible. Among the Macedonians, fear for Alexander's life and the stability of the army's leadership also led to vicious massacre and contributed to the Macedonian haste to march and hesitancy to besiege. In addition to this is the nature of Indian resistance, Alexander's destruction of the "city of Brahmans" contributed directly to local resistance, making his policy of violence less effective. Since Alexander would not have wanted to make his conquest intentionally more difficult and had in fact shown considerable religious toleration in the past, the killing of Brahmans was not an attempt to overturn the entire Indian caste system.[62] Indeed, it seems unlikely that the Macedonians grasped what a caste system *was*. In Taxila, Alexander appears to have accepted the venerated status of Brahmans because he understood them to be philosophers, but in Malli territory he slaughtered them.[63] Brahman deaths are mentioned in the Kingdom of Sambus, and that of Musicanus; they were killed to to crush political resistance, a tactic which had the opposite effect. In the spring of 325, Musicanus[64] surrendered to Alexander, likely influenced by the surrender of the Malli and Oxydracae.[65] It was a short-lived victory. As soon as the Macedonian army marched further South, Musicanus, urged by Brahmans, rebelled, and Alexander had them and Musicanus executed.[66] The king's orders that Musicanus "be hanged in his own country *along with* the Brahmans who were responsible for the revolt" (Arr. *Anab.* 6,17,2) suggest that the Brahmans

[62] Bosworth 1998, 97.

[63] *Ibid*., 95. Among the Greeks, Brahmans were equated with philosophers, and their position in society was seen as a profession rather than a status or caste. There was a constant filtering of Indian culture through a Greek lens and often a Greek mouth, pasting Greek terms onto a foreign system. Aristobulus calls Brahmans philosophers who differ in belief and practice, and Nearchus refers to them as political advisors. Indeed, they were both, and the fact that Brahmans consist of an entire caste is not mentioned by those accompanying Alexander's court in India, indicating there was not a full understanding of the system. See especially Worthington 2014, 239–41; Bosworth 1998, 90–3.

[64] These were a people, the Musicani, according to Curt. 9,8,16. For the campaign see: Diod. Sic. 17,102,5;
Curt. 9,8,16; Arr. *Anab.* 6,17,1–2. Bosworth 1998, 95–6 and 1993, 137–8.

[65] Surrender of Malli and Oxydracae: Curt. 9,7,12–15; Arr. *Anab.* 6,14,1–3. Surrender of Musicanus: Arr. *Anab.* 6,15,6. Curtius does not specify that Musicanus surrendered, but that the Musicani were conquered and then revolted: Curt. 9,8,10 and 9,8,16.

[66] Arr. *Anab.* 6,17,2. Diodorus at 17,102,5 says Alexander killed Musicanus the first time he entered the territory, but both Arrian (6,17,2) and Curtius (9,8,16) talk about the region revolting after the Macedonians pass through it.

were perceived as political advisors rather than priests or philosophers. They played a similar role in the resistance of Harmatelia in the Kingdom of Sambus despite the royal family's own surrender, and the Macedonians took the city by force,[67] executing the "wise men among the Indians" for instigating the revolt.[68] Immediate capitulation in Porticanus' kingdom in the Indus Valley prevented large scale slaughter, and there is no record of targeted Brahman execution,[69] indicating that the ongoing brutality was not the result of any religious persecution but rather the same fierce policy against any opposition.

As we have seen, diplomatic agreements were only offered in cases of preemptive or immediate surrender by the Indians, an unlikely and often impossible task given language barriers, the natural distrust in which the Indian people would have held Alexander, and especially the Indian tradition of political autonomy. Defending one's government, homestead, and life made turning over a city to foreigners or even awaiting their arrival a terrifying option. In addition to limited diplomacy, we have thus far considered the impact of the Bactrian and Sogdian campaigns on the conquest of India, Indian tactics of evasion, Alexander's increasingly intolerant policy of no resistance and his heightened risk-taking, and the religious undertones of Indian resistance in 325. However, the decisions of the king and his generals were not the sole contributors to violence. They provided only part of the framework—we must also consider the primary agents of violence, the Macedonian soldiers themselves.

The duration of the campaign alone would not have worn out hardy veterans, but the risk to reward ratio was no longer in Alexander's favor. The campaign in India diminished the chance of returning home, as it was fought primarily by siege rather than by decisive pitched battle, increasing the odds of debilitating injury. The result was that maimed soldiers could not go home, so they were left on permanent garrison duty in cultural isolation, surrounded by hostile tribes. The difficulty of acquiring loot also eliminated an important

[67] Diodorus reports most cities were razed, their populations enslaved or killed (17,102,6). On the name Harmatelia: Diod. Sic. 17,103,5. Arrian does not name the city (6,16,5).

[68] Diod. Sic.17,102,6–7, Arr. *Anab.* 6,16,5, and Curt. 9,8,13–16 report a death toll of 80,000 Indians, which suggests more than one city revolted; Arr. *Anab.* 6,16,3 appears to have glossed over all but the most prominent.

[69] Arrian calls Porticanus 'Oxycanus', and although his, Diodorus', and Curtius' accounts of the king's death vary slightly, none of them record an extensive slaughter. Diod. Sic. 17,102,5; Curt. 9,8,11–13; Arr. *Anab.* 6,16,1–2.

incentive for marching on. Perhaps most significantly, the inhospitable climate slowed their march, rotted the soldiers' armor, and facilitated the spread of debilitating disease.

The only time in India that Alexander held games and gave his men a break for celebration followed the army's victory at the decisive pitched Battle of Hydaspes (Arr. *Anab.* 5,20,1). It is unsurprising that it was on this occasion that the so-called elephant medallions were minted as well, commemorating the conquest of India.[70] Even though (or perhaps because) the Macedonians engaged in far fewer pitched battles than sieges in their career under Alexander, the pitched battle is most celebrated, suggesting that the steady siege work of India was not only onerous, but lacked the martial glory of hand to hand combat.[71] Craterus for example hints at this; he did not think sieges, even the massive city of the Malli, were worthy of a glorious death; in India, the Macedonians had endured *ignobiles pugnas* (Curt. 9,6,14). As this is not the proper place to engage in the lengthy and complex debate over the agonal nature of Greek pitched battle, I wish only to point out that the Macedonians' pitched battles in Asia were fewer and more decisive than their sieges, yielding quantifiable gains. As we have seen, sieges must have appeared an interminable status quo for many soldiers who undermined one local citadel only to learn another had revolted behind them.

Complicating the problem, sieges provided prime opportunities for debilitating injuries, as they did not afford soldiers the protection of the phalanx. Arrian marvels at the messy siege of Sangala: "the number of wounded…was out of proportion to the number of dead" (Arr. *Anab.* 5,24,5). This is a ratio of 1200 :> 100, due in part to the fact that a siege rendered troops vulnerable to

[70] See in general Holt 2003; Worthington 2014, 249; Heckel 2007, 124–125; Stewart 1993, 201–206 and figs. 68–69.

[71] On the argument that hoplites (and lighter-armed Macedonians) took more pride in a pitched battle, see Hanson 2009, 9–18; Ober 1993, 173–179. I do not intend to address the hoplite debate in the context of this article, only to note that decisive pitched battles were more efficient and decisive means of conquest in the experience of Alexander's men. I do not argue that a battle's decisive nature stemmed purely from winning the field, but rather as Konijnendijk (2018, 226) has noted, pitched battles followed by a rout and massacre enabled one side "to devastate the enemy's land and manpower to such an extent that they would submit to any demands". Although his conclusions are drawn from hoplite warfare, they may be applied here as well; Alexander had great difficulty managing a decisive defeat of his opponents in India, and much of the killing was done in the context of post-siege massacres and attacks on fleeing civilians.

traditional and makeshift projectiles. All of Alexander's serious injuries came from sieges as well.[72] Ober notes of classical hoplites the startling sense of vulnerability climbing up the scaling ladders, and the same must have been true of Alexander's lighter armed men.[73] At Massaga, a detachment of Macedonians suffered a serious setback when a bridge extending from a siege tower collapsed beneath them (Arr. *Anab.* 4,26,6–7). One can hardly imagine that there were not severe casualties, considering the weight of the soldiers' armour and the weapons they would have been brandishing.[74] Given this violent episode, the reported twenty-five Macedonian deaths suggest that there was a high toll of wounded survivors at Massaga (Arr. *Anab.* 4,27,5), similar to Sangala.

Certainly, professional soldiers like those in Alexander's employ were aware of the risks battle posed to their lives and well-being; however, the risk of injury was significantly greater when combined with the penalty of isolation. Because the wounded and disabled were unable to keep up with the army's march, they were stationed indefinitely in outposts or newly founded cities in India. The tactic of settling invalids in garrison began as early Bactria and Sogdiana,[75] but it became so problematic in India that Coenus complained about it at the Hyphasis mutiny: "those [Greeks] who have been settled in the cities you founded do not remain there entirely of their own will".[76] Such discontent was serious enough to change Alexander's patterns. While marching home through India, Arrian's re-

[72] For a few notable examples of siege-related injuries, see: Diod. Sic. 17,24–25 (difficulty with Halicarnassus); Arr. *Anab.* 27,2 (Gaza); Arr. *Anab.* 4,3,3 (Cyropolis and catapult blow); Arr. *Anab.* 4,26,4 and Curt. 8,10,30–31 (Massaga); Arr. *Anab.* 5,24,5 (Sangala and Lysimachus wounded); Diod. Sic. 17,99 (Malli).

[73] Ober 1993, 182–3.

[74] English (2009, 119) asserts that the majority of injuries would have been due to missile attacks on the fallen soldiers from those defending the walls. Bosworth (1995, 173) suggests that the collapse of makeshift bridges was not an uncommon phenomenon in ancient siege warfare and compares the bridge collapse at Massaga to another at the siege of Metulus during the Illyrian Wars. Appian reports fatalities and broken bones (Appian, *Ill.* 4,20), and despite some differences in armor and weaponry, we might assume a similar result for the Macedonians at Massaga three centuries earlier.

[75] See for example settlements at Alexandria Eschate (Arr. *Anab.* 4,4,1), Bactra (Curt. 9,7,1, Arr. *Anab.* 4,16,6), and Arigaeum (Arr. *Anab.* 4,24,6–7). Holt (1988, 82–83) discusses how the men were unable to defend the garrisons efficiently.

[76] Arr. *Anab.* 5,27,5; Alexander's settlers rioted in Bactria and Sogdiana when they received false reports of his death (Diod. Sic. 17,99,5; Curt. 9,7), and in India Philip of Machatas in Taxila was overthrown by mercenaries as soon as Alexander was gone (Arr. *Anab.* 6,27,2).

cords reveal that Alexander established garrisons made up of injured tribesmen and mercenaries, but specifically *not* Macedonians.[77]

Exploration of the Punjab showed that India was not the mythic world that Herodotus described, but its climate proved problematic and fatal to many Macedonians. A high incidence of poisoning from snake bites led to a reorganization of the Macedonian camp: soldiers slept in hammocks slung between trees to avoid being bitten by the multitude of venomous snakes native to the region.[78] Arrian reports from Nearchus that Alexander hired local physicians to travel with the army and "had it announced in camp that anyone bitten by a snake should go straight to the royal tent" (*Ind.* 15,11). Snake venom was also used in battle by Indians with the result that "the Macedonian wounded died in rapid succession", and "even superficial wounds defied treatment".[79] Less immediately obvious but ultimately more debilitating were India's sub-tropical climate and the steady monsoon rains.[80] These produced ideal conditions for the spread of waterborne diseases like malaria and dysentery as well as trench foot, and Coenus bemoans the loss of many soldiers to sickness (Arr. *Anab.* 5,27,5–6). The rains caused rapid deterioration of weapons, armor, and horses. At the Hyphasis, Coenus declared, "Our weapons are already blunt, our armour is wearing out… How many of us have a cuirass? Who owns a horse?"[81] The decay of personal armor referenced here must have provided a daily visual reminder of the duration and difficulties of the Indian campaign,[82] and its impact is well measured

[77] Arr. *Anab.* 5,29,3; As Bosworth has noted (1995, 358), the failure to mention Macedonian troops is not a slip on Arrian's part. Alexander would not have wanted to anger his men further by leaving disabled Macedonians behind. It is not too difficult to reconcile this hesitancy with Curt. 9,4,8, who states that Alexander stationed his sick in a Malli citadel after the town had been taken. Perhaps they were mercenaries and volunteers only, or men who were wounded in the many sieges of the region and could not physically return home.

[78] Diod. Sic. 17,90,6–7; Curt. 9,1,12 reports on the toxicity of snake bites.

[79] Curt. 9,8,20; see also Diod. Sic. 17,103,5; Mayor 2003, 86–97.

[80] For a discussion of monsoon season see Worthington 2014, 252 and 2004 215; Bosworth 1998, 176–177.

[81] Curt. 9,3,10–11; on the horses' hooves worn down in India see Diod. Sic. 17,94. See Worthington 2014, 251–253; Hammond 1983, 63.

[82] Diod. Sic. 17,94,3. For a summary of the difficulties of the Indian campaign see Worthington 2014, 251–3. As Bosworth notes (1995, 343), Arrian curiously leaves out climate as a factor in his synopsis of Macedonian complaints (Arr. *Anab.* 5,25,2) perhaps assuming it was understood under the gen-

by Alexander's own response, to send for 25,000 sets of armor and burn the old (Curt. 9,3,21–22).

Because it is difficult to believe any reward could counterbalance the high risks of the Indian campaign, it is especially startling to find that prizes were in short supply in India. Booty was a significant incentive to war, even for paid soldiers, and yet before entering India, Alexander had his men burn their wagons of loot and prizes taken in previous sieges, likely to speed up travel.[83] In Curtius' account of the Hyphasis mutiny, Coenus complains of lost booty,[84] and Alexander uses future opportunities for booty as a lure.[85] The matter is not purely one of calculable risk and reward, but the state and status of the men: "conquerors of all, we lack everything!" (Curt. 9,3,11).

Conclusion

We have seen how resistance in Bactria and Sogdiana conditioned the Macedonians to initiate conflict with what had once been the most extreme, *final* resort measure, *andrapodismos*; eventually this too was surpassed by the outright slaughter of populations. Bactrian and Sogdian topography facilitated enemy use of ambushes and encirclement from which the Macedonians, for the first time, had difficulty extricating themselves. The campaign may have been tactically similar to what the army faced in the Balkans and other mountain expeditions, but the sluggish rate of Macedonian success and subsequent violence enacted upon civilians marks the Bactrian and Sogdian campaigns out as decidedly different experiences. This was carried on into India, where the Macedonians faced chariots, toxic weapons, months of steady rain, and fast-spreading disease. Once again, a decisive victory seemed impossible and promised a lengthy campaign.

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eral heading of "toils and dangers" (Arr. *Anab.* 5,25,5).

[83] Plut. *Alex.*57; Curt. 6,6,15–17; Polyaenus 4,3,10. claims this occurred directly before entry into Bactria.

[84] Curt. 9,3,11; see the same theme in Alexander's speech in Arr. *Anab.* 5,26,7–8.

[85] Curt. 9,2,26–27. On the tendency of Macedonian kings to manage their soldiers with the promise of booty, see Carney (1991, 25), who gives the examples of: Plut. *Alex.* 24,1, 1; Diod. Sic. 17,35,1, 70,1–6, 94,3, 104,1; Curt. 5,6,4.

In light of this, we must reconsider prior explanations of Macedonian violence. Crediting the increasing violence to something as nebulous as a love of killing misses the significance of the campaign entirely. India presented a unique combination of factors that appears to have made wholesale slaughter tolerable to Alexander and his men, if it ensured a safe return home. Alexander's policy of no resistance, characterized by orders to his generals to slaughter entire populations, played a key role in the increase of campaign violence, especially against civilians. The goals, far-flung location, and forms of combat the army endured in this campaign, coupled with declining morale and incentive to continue on, contributed to willingness among the rank and file soldiers to perpetrate such sweeping acts of violence. The shift the army experienced from skirmishing and pitched battles to sieges and cutting down rebels in flight did not occur at once, but in gradual stages, but it is telling that the bloodiest leg of the march occurred *after* Alexander had yielded to his soldiers, agreeing to return west. The threat of being injured on the cusp of a victorious homecoming and resigned to a far-off garrison post must have played a role in incentivizing the soldiers who enforced the brutal policy of no resistance.

The account of the Malli siege with which we began our discussion should be considered again, not as a stand-alone example of terror-driven violence, but rather the pinnacle, a product of a wider pattern. The graphic details of Curtius' and Arrian's accounts focus on Alexander's injury, presenting the massacre of the city as a gory backdrop. However, to read this account as a stand-alone incident would be deceptive. Ancient authors naturally gave more attention to the retribution sought by Alexander's devoted soldiers; references to sieges during which similar types of slaughter occurred are referenced, as we have seen, only in passing. Alexander was injured at the city on the Choaspes River only *after* giving orders to butcher the entire city (Curt. 8,10,5–6); Perdiccas pursued fleeing civilians on horseback and cut down all who had failed to escape to the marshes (Arr. *Anab.* 6,6,6). The king's injuries were not the sole or even primary cause of the violence in India.

Taken in isolation, not one of the explanations offered above would serve to explain the heightened violence of the Indian campaign; human violence is a complex behavior. Indeed, it is likely that there are many more causes than the ancient sources record even in passing. However, it is still necessary to reconstruct, in as much detail as possible, the conditions in, and under which,

the Macedonians marched. The scholarly tendency to deconstruct ancient war, focusing on the nuts and bolts of armor, formation, and agonal combat, plays a key role in making sense of ancient battle narratives. However, the human elements of ancient war have only recently come under scrutiny, and without them, our picture of Greek and Macedonian battle remains largely schematic, lines and numbers on a page. Visceral and difficult-to-quantify elements of war, such as violence, bring us closer to completing that picture. The illustration presented above is centered on the violence of a particular case study, not intended to condemn or absolve the campaign in any way. Rather, by investigating the myriad behaviors and experiences that contributed to making India a perfect storm of variables that resulted in increased slaughter, we have successfully problematized overly reductive explanations for Macedonian violence and revealed the complexities of an often-overlooked campaign. Now we may say, at the very least, the violence of the Macedonian campaign in India stems from more than the soldiers' "just rage" (Curt. 9,5,20).

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