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Alexander the Wanderer  
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When we look back on the history of Greek wanderers the greatest warrior that glows in history would be that of Alexander of Macedonia. During his campaigns he was envious of Achilles because he had Homer to write of his tales and had been portrayed so well.<sup>1</sup> Alexander fared well without such a poet however, even managing to be remembered as 'the Great'. The Great's conquests were hugely impactful in the spread of Greek philosophy. His death would be the beginning of the Hellenistic period which spanned until Rome conquered Egypt.<sup>2</sup> It would be hard to say Alexander wouldn't have been influenced heavily by Plato. It wasn't long after Plato wrote of the Philosopher's King in his *The Republic*, that Alexander had achieved this for him. I say for Plato of course, because he was their second try after Plato had tried to mold Dionysius of Syracuse into one.<sup>3</sup> He was being taught by Aristotle from youth which had equipped him strongly to carry his father's mantle. With him at the head it's for sure a philosopher was ruling the government. This was only because of his situation of birth, proving Alexander was a man guided by a mission. He once said "If I had not been Alexander, I would like to have been Diogenes."<sup>4</sup> This man Diogenes, was a simple philosopher who was known for not participating in the world, he even just lived in what was only a large tub.<sup>5</sup> When looking at his birth circumstances we would have to remember that not only was he to be a future king, but through his mother he had divine blood. Most directly this would be tracing to that of Achilles and Helen of Troy.<sup>6</sup> Born to wander.

Alexander in hindsight would only be glad he wasn't remembered in the ways Achilles had been. With history telling his story instead, this creates a turning point that brings Greek mythology straight into reality. I think it's hard to deny this, his story of conquering reads like many heroes had in Classical Mythology. As well that he had divine inspirations like our influences before in Socrates and Plato, his were just in more heroic fashions. Most importantly would be when he visited the oracle before his

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<sup>1</sup> Robin, L. F. *Alexander the Great*, 115, In memory Alexander would dance naked around Achilles earth mound tomb

<sup>2</sup> Antoine S. "Hellenistic Period," *Ancient History Encyclopedia*

<sup>3</sup> Tierney M. *Aristotle and Alexander the Great* 223, Their as in Plato and Aristotle's collective School of Thought

<sup>4</sup> Robin, L. F. *Alexander the Great*, 71

<sup>5</sup> Russell B. *History of Western Philosophy* 254, goes on to talk about how he rejected any kind of social convention

<sup>6</sup> Robin, L. F. *Alexander the Great*, 44

fight with Persia for advice and was told he was invincible.<sup>7</sup> Although it wasn't just these trips to the oracle for his encounters with divinity. For him it came in encounters with Hercules that he stated were often of assistance to him. Having Hercules be in his mind is just natural to his mind because the Macedonian kings were descendants of Hercules.<sup>8</sup> Of course, being in this bloodline would make Zeus one of his ancestors too. Coincidentally the first time he met with a Pharaoh, he misspoke and called Alexander "son of Zeus", which of course was much to Alexander's delight.<sup>9</sup> Now despite clearly not one of Zeus' sons, he would still have a share of his blood. This is making quite the case for the reasoning for him to have these divine interventions throughout his impactful life.

Not only was Alexander born to be a king, he was raised to be a Hero. He knew greatly of his own self importance, it wouldn't be something capable of hiding. From a very young age he was granted the best known student of Plato, Aristotle to groom him. His father commanded that Aristotle teach him the ways of Homer and have him studying the Iliad. It was said that Aristotle even wrote Alexander his own version of the Iliad for his benefit.<sup>10</sup> What these poems were to depict were the cultures of the heroic code.<sup>11</sup> We can see for sure that learning these shaped his behaviors. In the story of the Trojan war, Achilles speaks on how he is given a choice between living an old, quiet and forgotten life or one that is short and honourable, it seems clear what his choice was considering he died shortly after.<sup>12</sup> We can see in a multitude of ways that Alexander had made the same decision, but I think it was gracefully done in his interaction with Diogenes. Alexander is only doing what is he because he was born to be capable, otherwise he wouldn't even have interest, because being a failed king is worse than nothing. Being the most successful hero has put the Alexander name in nearly all history books.

Our mythological hero would take his kingship from his father at the age of 20.<sup>13</sup> He took no delay in taking action at the throne. In only 10 years he transformed the entirety of the Greek world.<sup>14</sup> What most separated Alexander from every other Greek king in history was that he became the master of the Persians.<sup>15</sup> If you are one to study

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 71

<sup>8</sup> Robin, L. F. *Alexander the Great*, 71-72 - He noted that this was a new concept for divine kingship and was just one of the links to his legacy linked with religion

<sup>9</sup> G. T. Griffith Plutarch: *the Age Of Alexander* 310, this misspeak was on the second half of a word

<sup>10</sup> Tierney M. *Aristotle and Alexander the Great* 226

<sup>11</sup> Bryan Natali, *Classical Mythology* "Wrath of Achilles"

<sup>12</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, book 9, 374-417,

<sup>13</sup> G. T. Griffith Plutarch: *the Age Of Alexander* 290

<sup>14</sup> Russell B. *History of Western Philosophy* 241

<sup>15</sup> G. T. Griffith Plutarch: *the Age Of Alexander* 274 "a feat that other Greeks had only dreamt of."

Classical Mythology you would know that the Persians are often the barbarians that are against Greece. From the late Archaic period until Alexander's victory they had always been a powerful adversary to the Greeks.<sup>16</sup> The victory that was had over Persia would be the beginning of the West's triumph over the East in ancient history. Of course this is because he kept advancing and took over Egypt and Babylon as well which would impact the oldest known religions. Having his name in memory was of great importance to Alexander. We should remember that a hero's way to be immortal is to never have his name forgotten.<sup>17</sup> This way was given to him by Homer in a dream. As he slept he dreamt with the thoughts of the creation of his Greek city he heard Homer reciting lines from the Iliad. These directed him to where he was to create his city and Alexander immediately rose and visited the isle of Pharos, and what he came to find was a place structured for a great city, with many natural resources nearby, and so the grand city of Alexandria was built here.<sup>18</sup>

Now if we want to discuss why there is importance of this city compared to his others it's not a hard find. Starting would be how the destined location was being fixated around the omen of a dream. Our creator Alexander would have grown up in a very anti-Persian era. With Alexander and Aristotle wanting to be able to merge the two great empires it would be best for there to be a Greek settlement nearby. His tutor Aristotle loved the ideals of the eastern Persian religion. Both Plato and Aristotle thought of creating what would be an astonishing fusional mix of the two peoples. Even so, Aristotle's father in law was questioned on his knowledge of the late Philip's secret plans which must be in regards to creating some mix of their cultures.<sup>19</sup> Of course Aristotle would come to set up another School of Thought here in Alexandria. They would very much be in the hopes of setting up some new framework for a new advanced society. The reasoning for this would be in how the people of Athens have already rejected the words of God before in crucifying Socrates. "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot." (Matthew 5:12).

The culmination of the two religions was one that was longingly planned. Considering the history of how Plato tried to make his own Great king like Aristotle had, it seems too true to deny. Plato had connected with the Zoroastrians for the

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<sup>16</sup> Barry Powell, *Classical Mythology* 27

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. "Introduction to Heroic Myth", Powell talks about how a universal struggle for heroes, beginning with Gilgamesh was trying to achieve immortality, but they cannot.

<sup>18</sup> G. T. Griffith Plutarch: *the Age Of Alexander* 308-9

<sup>19</sup> Tierney M. *Aristotle and Alexander the Great* 225-226

beginning of these ideas. He thought that the Greeks had been last to the realization of the divinity in the stars because of their place on Earth, however with confidence thought they were capable to “surpass their barbarian teachers in the new religion”.<sup>20</sup> We might see however in the academic works of Plato that he was also prophetic in his own way. His own way is the way in which scholars work, rationally. Things are only true if they are based on absolutes. In working within these guidelines he was able to predict what would happen to his new religion that would come out of the School of Thought. We are taken aback to the allegory of the cave; the conclusion of the story is one last question from Socrates, “And if they can get hold of this person who takes it in hand to free them from their chains and to lead them up, and if they could kill him, will they not actually kill him?” “They certainly will”.<sup>21</sup>

You may consider this a reflection on what had happened to Socrates during his trial. As it could even be confirmation that Socrates was really an atheist, because he brought people to the full meaning of truth and was still put to death. Perhaps this was done with the intention of calling out the corrupted court. I would assume so in fact, because this would be the creation of a rational prophecy. He did so by turning the real events he himself physically witnessed into a parable for what true ideology of religion is. We can imagine Alexander as the mythological Hercules, for he was the only hero to even be called invincible in Homer’s poems.<sup>22</sup> Alexander was capable of manipulating every single high priest for the reasons of claiming divinity. What’s to note about this, is that the priests were attempting to manipulate as well. What had been remarked to Alexander was the shame of abandoning his father and now claiming to be son of Ammon, the Egyptian Pharaoh who called him Zeus by mistake.<sup>23</sup> This was in drunken anger because Cleitus did not understand why Alexander did such actions, and telling him would be revealing the secret. Certainly confusing, the idea that a man who has visions of Greek legends would so quickly turn to another faith. However if we are to take in account the Greek philosopher Plutarch, we must keep in mind that Alexander likely “used belief in his divinity to enslave others”.<sup>24</sup>

Whether he truly believed he was invincible or divine isn’t of true importance for us. There are truly unique coincidences of his death that give reason for conspiracy. What happened to Alexander remains in a pamphlet of sorts that acted as a journal. In

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<sup>20</sup> Tierney M. *Aristotle and Alexander the Great* 225

<sup>21</sup> Plato, *The Allegory of the Cave, Prisoners Return*, The outcome of the dialogue of free men who return to the cave

<sup>22</sup> Robin, L. F. *Alexander the Great* 71, Robin Fox notes as well that only Homer called Hercules invisible before, so Alexander would be the first by an oracle

<sup>23</sup> G. T. Griffith Plutarch: *the Age Of Alexander* 336

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* 311 Control with this method was used especially for the barbarians

this, it named only six of twenty men innocent of conspiring his death.<sup>25</sup> The reasons would lie in a group from 'Aristotle's' circle and the memory lived on for hundreds of years, eventually being called out by a Roman Emperor.<sup>26</sup> The exact reasoning to conspire would of course never be allowed to be written down. In fact, the possible reasonings have been discredited in history. Aristotle and Alexander are known to have written letters to one another but historians don't agree on the validity. Although we have what was a fake letter written by Alexander to Aristotle, saying that he wishes to go to India. What Aristotle had given as a response was a severe warning for Alexander not to do so. This letter was thought to have given Alexander purpose to start questioning the advice from him.<sup>27</sup>

Looking at the interactions of the people involved it's not hard to see reasoning in conspiracy. It was firstly claimed that Alexander was to die because he angered the god Dionysus, a very peculiar explanation that wasn't taken well.<sup>28</sup> This wouldn't stay well with the people because it was the diviners who told Alexander to put the man Dionysus to death based on the story he had given them.<sup>29</sup> Although Alexander would often defer to diviners when it came to interpreting the meanings of omens he was quite confident in his own mind for morality and piety. One of his contemporaries Cassander had several small arguments with the King. Cassander was another one of Aristotle's pupils who had recently arrived in Babylon. This was one of the friends he was weary of. Cassander once attempted to argue on the side of his father for people were making accusations against Antipater. He confronted Alexander with a potential contradiction just for him to reply with a laugh "This reminds me of some of Aristotle's sophisms, which can be used equally well on either side of a question;"; then finishing the statement by instilling fear deep inside of Cassander's mind. This was then ingrained in him so deeply that even when Cassander was a king of Macedon, he would shudder and tremble at the sight of the statue of Alexander at Delphi.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Robin, L. F. *Alexander the Great* 462, This evidence was found after Alexander's death, making the validity be sort of up in the air

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 469, This idea of inner circles is sort of important. Members who all learnt and worked with Aristotle having the same claims and protecting their teacher from blame doesn't seem like convincing evidence to a lot of people.

<sup>27</sup> Robin, L. F. *Alexander the Great* 336

<sup>28</sup> Robin, L. F. *Alexander the Great* 462 This was also used to excuse the murder of Cleitus and people didn't like that

<sup>29</sup> G. T. Griffith Plutarch: *the Age Of Alexander* 358, a random man said his name was Dionysus and told story of breaking free from chains, and a god told him to wear Alexander's clothes and sit on his throne

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 359

Cassander was eventually accused of the murder of Alexander by his mother Olympia seven years later. It does seem too that he had a couple of reasons himself to conspire. He didn't like the memory of Alexander and as someone in line for throne had to rebuke the charge of murder on him. Cassander also didn't mind the opportunity to slander Alexander's name by making him out to be a drunk for that entire month.<sup>31</sup> I don't think we should shrug off Aristotle's influence here. Aristotle himself believed that the world had two spirits on Earth. One would be good, the other bad. Now of course he related these spirits to the beliefs he was raised with and said that one belonged to Zeus (Ahura Mazda) and one to Hades (Ahriman). The thought was that these spirits would engage in conflict endlessly until one would overcome, and when Ahriman passes away. The Persian king Darius thought that he was chosen by the Good spirit Ahura Mazda. He was convinced that he had to stop Hades, which he envisioned as Alexander because of the lion skin he wore after his ancestor Hercules.<sup>32</sup> We should know from Catholic teaching that Lucifer, satan is the deceiver of the world. Had the great men working with Alexander been convinced that to be safe they must kill him?

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<sup>31</sup> Robin, L. F. *Alexander the Great* 469

<sup>32</sup> Robin, L. F. *Alexander the Great* 152

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