

Public Abstract

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This thesis investigates the sharp increase of violence in Alexander the Great's campaigns in Bactria, Sogdiana, and India in the third century B.C.E. Using the methodologies of scholars like John Keegan and Victor Hanson, whose studies reconstruct the perspectives of common soldiers, the author defines and explains the manifold sources of the steepened aggression of the Macedonian army and contends that the massacres at the apex of the campaign stemmed neither from the behavior of Alexander nor a single skirmish or siege, but from a combination of particular circumstances. One of the most prominent such circumstances is the clash of eastern and western warfare, which is highlighted through an outline of traditional Greek warfare and the modifications it underwent during the rise of Macedonia as a western power. The thesis emphasizes the disintegration of these traditional constraints of war during the army's eastern campaigns in conjunction with other significant factors such as local resistance, enforced settlements of populations, Alexander's policies of conquest and surrender, war-weariness among the troops, as well as a foreign landscape and climate. The author argues that this combination of obstacles provides a more exact explanation for the augmented carnage of the Macedonian army's campaigns in the East than singling out a particular catalyst, as has been suggested in the past.