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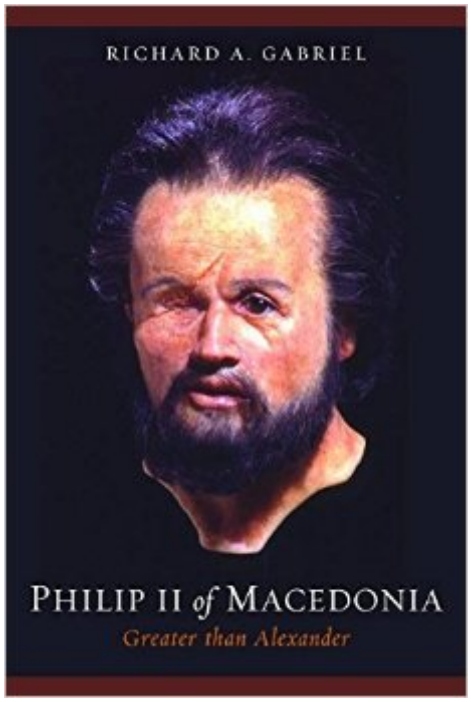
# Philip II Of Macedonia: Greater Than Alexander

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## Synopsis

Philip II of Macedonia (382â “336 BCE), unifier of Greece, author of Greeceâ ™s first federal constitution, founder of the first territorial state with a centralized administrative structure in Europe, forger of the first Western national army, first great general of the Greek imperial age, strategic and tactical genius, and military reformer who revolutionized warfare in Greece and the West, was one of the greatest captains in the military history of the West. Philip prepared the ground, assembled the resources, conceived the strategic vision, and launched the first modern, tactically sophisticated and strategically capable army in Western military history, making the later victories of his son Alexander possible.Philipâ ™s death marked the passing of the classical age of Greek history and warfare and the beginning of its imperial age. To Philip belongs the title of the first great general of a new age of warfare in the West, an age that he initiated with his introduction of a new instrument of war, the Macedonian phalanx, and the tactical doctrines to ensure its success. As a practitioner of the political art, Philip also had no equal. In all these things, Philip exceeded Alexanderâ ™s triumphs.This book establishes Philipâ ™s legitimate and deserved place in military history, which, until now, has been largely minimized in favor of his son by the classicist writers who have dominated the field of ancient biography. Richard Gabriel, renowned military historian, has given us the first military biography of Philip II of Macedonia.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The author has written a detailed book on the generalship of Phillip II of Macedonia whose genius is forgotten because of the accomplishments of his son Alexander.Phillip inherited a kingdom that

although had a lot of potential was surrounded by dangerous neighbours and was on the verge of collapse.Using his diplomatic skills he managed to but time to rebuild his army and in the process revolutionize warfare by creating the legendary combined arms force known as the Macedonian Phalanx.Using this army,his diplomatic skills,his intelligence services and soft power ,Phillip was able to first consolidate Macedonia,expand a security buffer around his kingdom and then expand his control over the greek city states.In doing so he successfully united the warring city states for the first time in their history.What is incredible about phillip's feats is that he never annhilated his enemies like some other generals but rather used his army to disarm them.He was also responsible for the plan to invade the persian empire and as the author convincingly demonstrates many of the strategies ,means and tactics that alexander used would not have been possible without Phillip.However,I disagree with the author that Phillip was the better of the two.Alexander was surely a great innovator as demonstrated by the siege of tyre ,the mountain warfare campaigns he fought in india , the fact that he was able to improvise against an army of elephants in india and the political strategy that he used to bring about the subjugation of the vast persian empire.It would be more accurate to say that Phillip was the equal of Alexander and that Alexander just picked up where his father left off.

This is a good solid biography of Philip II of Macedonia. Perhaps he is more famous for being the father of Alexander the Great than for his own accomplishments.However, this book makes a very strong case that he is a worthy important historical figure in his own right. After all, he is the one who created the military and political platform from which Alexander launched his conquests.The book describes his youth, where he spent much time outside Macedonia as, in essence, a hostage. Then, the tale of his rise to power. The Macedonian forces had been wrecked in combat, and Philip came to power having to repair Macedonia's military. The book shows how he did that, how he developed a new approach to battle, how he coupled diplomacy with conflict to advance the goals of Macedonia.From this beginning, he began to expand Macedonia's sphere of influence and its power. For the most part, his military adventures were successful, and he slowly increased the sway of his country. He began planning for a march on Persia--before his assassination.The book does a good job at taking sometimes sketchy information about events and creating a credible scenario for battles and other occurrences. One problem is the uncritical take on Philip. The book features something of a "rah rah" view of Philip. There is no doubt that he was an important figure, but a more nuanced view of him would have been useful.Still and all, a good book if you want to get a better sense of Philip II of Macedonia.

Gabriel has produced an excellent popular history of a subject that I think is all too often ignored in ancient history: the career of Philip II of Macedonia. Even since the time of his contemporaries, Philip's thunder had been stolen to a large extent by the vainglorious exploits of his son, Alexander. Yet in doing so, what gets ignored is the gross contrast between father and son. Philip created the Macedonian kingdom out of next to nothing; established and perfected the best army the ancient world had yet seen; and used that kingdom and its army to effectively unify the Greek world.Without those accomplishments, literally everything Alexander did would have been impossible. Furthermore, as Alexander's own career shows, he lacked the talents necessary to build states or innovate solutions to anything but battlefield problems. Alexander was probably a somewhat better general than his father, but Philip was in all other respects a vastly superior monarch. If Philip hadn't done the hard work, Alexander would have amounted to nothing.That is Gabriel's argument. He makes it persuasively and proves it in a well-written popular history. If you like swords and sandals non-fiction, buy this book. You'll love it.

I found this book to be both entertaining and informative. As the subtitle states â œGreater Than Alexanderâ • the book has a definite point of view, namely that Philip was greater that Alexander in that Alexander could never have done what he did without the army the Philip created. Not only did Philip create a new type of infantry unit, the Macedonian Phalanx, he also created a new type of cavalry and devised the tactics by which the two worked in harmony, creating a winning battle force. Philip is also credited with engineering innovations that allowed him to destroy city walls instead of having to engage in very long lasting sieges. He altered the supply system and the way in which his army operated in the field. I found the book well written and engaging, with an emphasis on military history and battle history. I recommend it to anyone interested in history, military history and the history of ancient Greece.

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