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91396



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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Level 3 Classical Studies 2025

91396 Analyse the impact of a significant historical figure on the classical world

Credits: Six

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Analyse the impact of a significant historical figure on the classical world.	Analyse, in-depth, the impact of a significant historical figure on the classical world.	Analyse, with perception, the impact of a significant historical figure on the classical world.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

You should attempt ONE of the questions in this booklet.

If you need more room for any answer, use the extra space provided at the back of this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–11 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in the margins (//////). This area will be cut off when the booklet is marked.

YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.

Excellence

TOTAL 08

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INSTRUCTIONS

Answer ONE of the questions below with reference to a **historical figure of the classical world**.
You must answer using paragraphs.

QUESTIONS (Choose ONE)

- Discuss the extent to which a significant classical figure's leadership could be described as strategic.
- Discuss the extent to which a significant classical figure's status was challenged by others.
- Discuss whether a change(s) introduced by a significant classical figure was for the better or for the worse.
- Discuss how a significant classical figure's reputation was impacted by their involvement in a conflict(s).

HISTORICAL CLASSICAL FIGURE

Alexander the Great

PLANNING

ANSWER

Type your answer in the space below. You should aim to write a concise answer of no more than 800–900 words. (The counter will change colour when you reach the recommended word count.) The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your answer.

Support your answer with primary-source evidence.

B *I* U

Discuss whether a change(s) introduced by a significant classical figure was for the better or for the worse.

Alexander the Great remains to this day, an outstanding example of leadership and success from a military leader. From 334 BC to his early death in 323 BC Alexander led one of the most successful military campaigns to date, as he conquered the majority of the known world from Greece into India. Despite his military success a change that Alexander implemented and and strongly perused in the end damaged the once strong relationship between himself and his countrymen the Macedonians. Alexander's introduction of his Policy of Fusion which was an ideology of his that ideologically opposed the beliefs and actions of his country men. For this reason it

is without a doubt that the introduction of this ideological change by Alexander was for the worst. This essay aims to firstly explain Alexander's policy of fusion then analyse how this change was able to so negatively effect the great empire he sought to construct.

The Policy of Fusion is an ideology Alexander sought to introduce which would attempt to unite Persian and Macedonian cultures together. Idealist scholar William Tarn suggests this change as an attempt to form the 'Brotherhood of mankind' while Pragmatic scholar A.B Bosworth puts forth the suggestion that this change was merely a means to uphold the maintenance of an expansive empire. Regardless of Alexander's motives for introducing this change its idealistic nature and reform was met by strong opposition that in the end made Alexander's insistent pursuit of it for the worst. Alexander's changes by way of the policy of fusion involved the adoption of clothing and culture of the conquered Persian Empire, the gifting of high ranks and important positions to Persian noble men and the adoption of conquered peoples religion. Alexander was to become the Great King a role once held by Persian Kings. He began to claim divine parentage to the Persian deity Ammon as well as the Greek god Zeus. As Diodorus wrote "*Alexander had begun to adopt the Persian luxury and extravagance of the Kings of Asia.*" moving away from some more traditional Macedonian ways of living and ruling. Perhaps one of the clearest examples of Alexander's change came in 324 BC in the form of the Mass marriages in Susa. The Susa wedding was a large scale ceremony which initiated the marriages of 90 Macedonian men including Alexander to their Persian wives. Modern Scholar J.R Hamilton writes that The Susa weddings "*were the culmination of Alexander's Policy of Fusion.*" Earlier in 327 BC Alexander had sought to introduce the Persian act of Proskynesis into his Macedonian courts. from both these incidents and many more we are able to understand that while Alexander's intentions in his changes way have been virtuous and well meaning, exemplified by Arrian's quoting of Alexander. "*I do not distinguish among men as the narrow minded do... For every virtue foreigner is a Greek and every evil Greek worse than a Barbarian*" The reception of these changes was received poorly and through Alexander's constant adherence to these changes he ended up making them for the worst in terms of relationships and the over all success of his empire.

The first instances in which we very clearly understand how Alexander's introduction of the Policy of Fusion were for the worst is in the way it negatively effected Alexander's deep and personal relationships with close friends and men he looked up to. Two particular incidents were the murder of Cleitus the Black in 328 BC at Maracanda and the argument with Callisthenes over Proskynesis in 327 BC. During a drinking party in which copious amounts of alcohol were consumed by all participants. A song was sung that criticised and mocked the Macedonians defeat in a recent battle with natives. Members of the Old guard who were loyal to Alexander's father Philip were angered and extremely offended, Alexander on the contrary was enjoying it. An argument begun as Cleitus believed Alexander was "*Extolling his own deeds at the detriment of his father Phillip's.*" (**Justin**) Arrian wrote how Cleitus was "*Defending the memory of the Old king and scorning the Kings deeds.*" Which further enraged Alexander. As Plutarch quotes Cleitus, "*It is by the blood of the Macedonians and by these wounds that thou art become so great as to disown Phillip and call thyself son to Zeus.*" This exemplifies the reasoning behind Cleitus's rightful anger. He and the other older Macedonians felt that through the adoption of Persian customs through the Policy of Fusion, Alexander was betraying his own father who had done so much for the old guard. Through the escalation of this conflict Alexander murdered Cleitus and man who had once been a close personal friend and mentor, and who had saved his life at Granicus. Soon after in 327 BC Alexander sought to introduce the Persian act of Proskynesis into the Macedonian court which was a custom which involved prostrating ones self at the feet of the King. Proskynesis was a customary act that showed respect for a superior for the Persians but to the Greeks and Macedonians it was an act that was reserved solely for the worshipping of Gods and by making the Macedonians perform this for him, Alexander was putting on a huge display of Hubris which was a disrespect against the gods he claimed to worship. Because of this Callisthenes disobeyed Alexander's express request and refused to take part. He declared that "*there is no honour which Alexander is unworthy to receive provided it is consistent with his being human.*" (**Arrian**) It is quite clearly illustrated that this introduced change which Alexander though would unify his Persian and Macedonian courts instead created conflict between himself and more than just Callisthenes as Plutarch notes, "*Callisthenes voiced the opinions which the oldest and wisest Macedonians cherished in secret.*" Though not directly related to Callisthenes the introduction of Proskynesis led to the assassination attempt on Alexander by the royal pages who were tutored by Callisthenes. Through both these conflicts brought about by the opposition to Alexander's Change of introducing the Policy of Fusion we see the fracturing of close relationships and the rising distrust from Alexander's allies. Clearly this is a worse outcome for all parties involved as fracturing relationships meant that Alexander's army would be less successful without the full support he had once been privy to. This is essential as the Macedonian army relied on Alexander existing as 'first among equals', which meant he did not put himself above others and led by example and trust. Whether because he genuinely sort to unify Persian culture into his own or was just enacting the actions of a megalomaniac leader Alexander was insistent on introducing changes which ideologically and diametrically opposed those of his country men. Through both the anger of Cleitus and Callisthenes we come to understand how Alexander's actions in introducing changes directly led to conflicts and challenges that meant his changes were for the worse rather than better.

Later on in his campaign his changes in introducing the Policy of Fusion created problems not just between high ranking officials and friends but extended to his troops as a whole. In 226 BC Alexander's troops mutinied at the River Beas as the refused to campaign any further into India. Again in 324 BC after the Susa Weddings his troops mutinied at Opis. This came after the final straw for Alexander's army in their acceptance of his Policy of Fusion as he sought to introduce 30,000 Persians into his army. In 324 BC the Epigoni (Persian Successors) arrived in Susa and showed off their prestige and skill in a dazzling display. "*Alexander*

was extremely pleased with them (*The Epigoni*) which grieved the Macedonians." (Plutarch) and confirmed their beliefs that Alexander was replacing them. Because of this resentment when Alexander declared that the oldest and disabled Macedonians were to be relieved from service they mutinied. The conflict was eventually resolved as Alexander forced the Macedonians hand after three days through an ultimatum but the resentment and distrust was still very much there. This was because the Macedonian troops were so diametrically opposed to Alexander's changes. Alexander had begun to accept Oriental luxury which "had made Alexander arrogant towards the Macedonians." (Arrian) On top of this he was welcoming Persians into his army and treating them as equals, they were being given the same benefits if not more than the Macedonian soldiers who had supported him throughout his conquest and who he should have remained loyal to. As the conquered People the Macedonians expected to rule over the Persians, they were to be their subordinates not equals, and through his changes Alexander was uprooting the Macedonians entire systems and ideologies and replacing them with idealistically opposed changes that they would not accept. These mutinies were more than acts of subordination as some who view through a modern lens may claim, as Elizabeth Carney writes " *The application of anachronistic military ideology has obscured the nature of the incidents at Beas and Opis... They were quarrels which poisoned the relationship between king/commander and his troops.*" They were a breakdown of trust and respect which was essential to an army led by the 'first among equals'. Alexander's army was not able to function without this key ideology holding it together and therefore his empire suffered for it. After Alexander's death in 323 BC the empire in which he spent so much effort constructing came tumbling down without him to hold it up. We are clearly able to understand that the changes Alexander implemented were only able to remain structurally sound with Alexander to force the acceptance of them. Without Alexander the Macedonians stopped supporting the policy of Fusion as seen in examples like the mass divorces of wives married at Susa after Alexander's death. Alexander failed to see the impact that introducing changes that were so ideologically opposed to those held by the Macedonians would have such a terrible and irreversible effect on the stability of his empire as no one after his death continued it and therefore his empire came crashing down.

Despite the possible good intent behind Alexander's policy of fusion as Idealist Tarn may claim, this change he introduced was for the worst as it completely changed the nature of his relationship with his troops and therefore limited his success in the conquering and lasting success of his empire. As modern scholar Peter Green says, "*The role of the Great king and Macedonian leader were impossible to combine.*" And in Alexander's desperate and determined attempts to do so created an environment that was for the worst for both the figure involved and for the endurance of the empire. Bosworth sums Alexander's attempts of introducing the Policy of Fusion perfectly, "*Alexander's actions when viewed in their historical context seem rather to indicate a policy of division.*" It was not the changes themselves which were for the worse but Alexander's strong adherence to them and desire to see them come into fusion through any means necessary. Alexander's relationships were for him price worth paying in his pursuit. Through this lens Alexander became ignorant to the Macedonians' worries and it was in this way he lost support and made for himself and his empire the worst situation.

1884 WORDS / 900 RECOMMENDED

Excellence

Subject: Classical Studies

Standard: 91396

Total score: 08

Grade score	Marker commentary
E8	<p>The response establishes a clear argument from the outset: Alexander's Policy of Fusion was ultimately "for the worst." This is sustained throughout the response, with each section logically linked to the central claim. The conclusion effectively synthesises the discussion and reinforces the argument.</p> <p>The response goes beyond description to provide insightful analysis of causes and consequences. For example, the discussion of Cleitus and Callisthenes illustrates how Alexander's cultural changes fractured personal relationships, while the mutinies at Beas and Opis show the broader impact on military cohesion and imperial stability. There is an evaluation of Alexander's motives (idealistic vs pragmatic) and consideration of the long-term significance of these changes, demonstrated with a sophisticated understanding of historical complexity.</p> <p>A wide range of relevant evidence is integrated effectively. Primary sources (Arrian, Plutarch, Diodorus, Justin) and modern historians (Tarn, Bosworth, Hamilton, Carney, Green) are used to support points rather than simply quoted. The candidate engages critically with these perspectives, contrasting Tarn's idealist interpretation with Bosworth's pragmatic view and incorporating modern historiographical debate.</p> <p>The response is well-organised, moving logically from explanation of the policy to its impact on relationships, then to the army, and finally to the collapse of the empire. Paragraphs are cohesive, and transitions reinforce the argument.</p>