

Destruction of Thebes | Notes

Arrian makes excuses

Alexander gives 4 chances to the Thebans to call off the rebellion. He delays his attack in hopes the Thebans will repent. He provides reinforcements to Perdiccas inside the city walls. He blames the allies for what happened to Timocleia. Alexander visits injured Macedonians. Arrian blames the allies and says that Alexander only attacked the city as a last resort.

Reasons for invasion

- Alexander's ambition- He wanted to beat his father and get all the fame and glory.
- Revenge for the Persians attacking Greece.
- To make an example and stop others in the empire from invading or revolting, Plutarch states Alexander was "redressing the wrongs done to the allies."

The capture of Thebes

Arrian and Plutarch agree that Alexander delayed his attack. Perdiccas initiated the attack. Alexander took up position close to the city in order to support the garrison inside the city.

Perdiccas forced a breach inside the palisade. Arrian says Alexander sent Agrianes and his own archers to help.

Perdiccas was wounded and had to be carried back to base. The Thebans began to retreat to the temple but then launched a counter attack forcing the Macedonians to retreat to Alexander, his guard and the remaining guards.

The Thebans pursued Alexander when he retreated but he then led an infantry attack which caused the enemy to retreat inside the gate.

They were in such a panic that they left the gates open and allowed Alexander's army to get inside.

One group joined the garrison and they passed into the town. The Macedonians attacked the Thebans forcing them to break and the cavalry fled to the country. What followed was the slaughter of the city's inhabitants and destruction of the city. Plutarch says the Thebans fought with "a superhuman courage and spirit." But they were defeated when Macedonian garrison attacked from the rear.

What we learn about Alexander's character

Determined- Alexander wanted to make sure that the rest of Greece did not rebel. According to Arrian it only took 13 days to reach Thebes which is very swift action. Alexander never gave up even when the Thebans killed 70 archers, Perdiccas attacking without permission and despite fierce resistance, Alexander at no stage during the siege gave up. This shows his determination.

Ruthless- 6,000 Thebans were killed. Plutarch says 20,000 were sold into slavery. Plutarch also put forward the excuse that he was redressing the wrongs done to the allies. Arrian says "they burst into houses and killed the occupants. Sparing neither women nor children." Alexander was leader of the army and did not stop the allies.