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Contents

753 BC

The Myth Of Romulus And Remus
The Founding Of Rome

490 BC

The Battle Of Marathon
Pheidippides, The Legendary Runner Of Marathon

356 BC

Alexander The Great
The Temple Of Artemis Burns Down

280 BC

The Theory Of Aristarchus Of Samos
The Colossus Of Rhodes Is Built
The Lighthouse Of Alexandria Is Built

14 AD

The Death Of The First Roman Emperor
Tiberius Becomes Emperor Of Rome
Germanicus Begins Roman Campaign In Germany

68 AD

Emperor Nero Commits Suicide
Year Of The Four Emperors Begins

105 AD

Paper Is Invented In China
Trajan's Bridge Is Constructed

597 AD

The First Archbishop Of Canterbury
Æthelbert's Code Of Laws

1040

Macbeth Kills King Duncan I Of Scotland
The World's Oldest Existing Brewery Opens
First Record Of China Inventing Fireworks

1066

The Battle Of Stamford Bridge
The Battle Of Hastings
King William I Is Crowned

1099

1 The First Crusade And The Siege Of Jerusalem 28
2 El Cid, Hero Of Spain 29

1215

3 The Magna Carta Is Sealed By King John 31
4 Genghis Khan's Mongol Army Captures Beijing 32

1312

6 King Edward III 33
7 The Knights Templar Are Disbanded 34

1368

8 The Construction Of The Great Wall Of China 36
9 The Ming Dynasty Is Established In China 37
10

1415

11 Pope Gregory XII Resigns 39
12 Jan Hus Is Burned At The Stake 40
13 The Battle Of Agincourt 41

1431

15 Vlad The Impaler (Dracula) 43
16 Joan Of Arc Is Executed 44
Henry VI Is Crowned King Of France 44

1453

18 The Hundred Years' War Ends 46
19 The Fall Of Constantinople 47

1455

20 The Gutenberg Bible Is Printed 49
21 The Wars Of The Roses Begins 50

1483

22 The Sistine Chapel Opens 51
23 The First Execution At The Tower Of London 51
The Mystery Of The Princes In The Tower 52

1485

25 Thomas Cromwell, Chief Minister To Henry VIII 54
27 The Battle Of Bosworth 55

Contents

1494			
Christopher Columbus's First Sighting Of Jamaica	57	King Charles I Is Born	83
The Treaty Of Tordesillas			
1497			
Amerigo Vespucci Departs For The Americas	58	The Eruption Of Huaynaputina	84
Vasco Da Gama Sets Sail For India		The East India Company Is Established	85
The Cornish Rebellion Takes Place			
1514			
Nicolaus Copernicus Claims The Sun Is At The Centre Of The Solar System	59	1603	
Henry Grace À Dieu	60	Sir Walter Raleigh Is Tried For Treason	86
1517	61	The Reign Of King James I Begins	86
Martin Luther Posts His Ninety-Five Theses			
The Sweating Sickness Returns To England		1605	
1519		Miguel De Cervantes' <i>Don Quixote</i> Is Published	88
Ferdinand Magellan Begins The First Circumnavigation Of The Earth	62	The Gunpowder Plot	89
The Death Of Leonardo Da Vinci	63	1606	
1520		Australia Is First Sighted By Willem Janszoon	90
Suleiman The Magnificent Becomes Sultan Of The Ottoman Empire	64	The Gunpowder Plot Trial Begins	91
The Field Of The Cloth Of Gold	65	Guy Fawkes Is Executed	91
1533		1613	
Atahualpa, The Last Inca Emperor, Is Executed		London's Globe Theatre Is Destroyed	92
King Henry VIII Is Excommunicated		The Romanov Dynasty Begins In Russia	93
Queen Elizabeth I Is Born	66	Pocahontas Changes Her Name To Rebecca	94
1536	67	1620	
Anne Boleyn Is Executed		Cornelis Drebbel Builds The First Submarine	96
Buenos Aires Is Founded By Pedro De Mendoza	69	The <i>Mayflower</i> Arrives At Cape Cod	97
1547	70	1629	
Edward VI Becomes King Of England And Ireland		The Shipwreck And Mutiny Of The <i>Batavia</i>	99
Execution By Boiling Is Outlawed In England		Christiaan Huygens And The Pendulum Clock	100
Ivan The Terrible Becomes The First Tsar Of Russia	71	1630	
1572	72	King Charles II	101
The St Bartholomew's Day Massacre		Dutch Brazil Is Established	102
The Execution Of Túpac Amaru	74	1642	
	75	Galileo Galilei, The 'Father Of Science'	103
		The First English Civil War Begins	104
	77	1666	
	78	Isaac Newton Sees An Apple Fall From A Tree	106
	79	The Great Fire Of London	107
		1675	
	80	The Construction Of The Royal Observatory,	
	81	Greenwich	109

CHRONOLOGICA: THE INCREDIBLE YEARS THAT DEFINED HISTORY

1703			
The Man In The Iron Mask			
The Great Storm Of 1703			
1715			
The Sun King Dies			
The First Jacobite Rebellion			
1727			
George II Becomes King Of England			
Handel Composes 'Zadok The Priest'			
Sir Isaac Newton Dies			
1743			
A British Monarch Leads Their Troops Into Battle For The Last Time			
Thomas Jefferson			
1746			
Bonnie Prince Charlie And The Jacobite Rising			
Francisco Goya			
Wearing Of The Kilt Is Banned			
1755			
Marie Antoinette Is Born			
<i>A Dictionary Of The English Language</i> Is Completed By Samuel Johnson			
The Lisbon Earthquake			
1759			
The Guinness Brewery Is Founded			
The British Museum Opens			
William Wilberforce, Leader Of The Movement To Abolish Slavery			
1770			
Captain Cook Reaches Australia			
The Composer Ludwig Van Beethoven Is Born			
Lexell's Comet Becomes The Closest To Pass Earth			
1773			
The Boston Tea Party			
Captain Cook Becomes The First European To Cross The Antarctic Circle			
	1775		
111	The American War Of Independence Begins		137
112	James Watt Reveals His Steam Engine		138
	J. M. W. Turner, The Painter Of Light		140
114	1783		
115	The First Hot Air Balloon Ascent		141
	The First Parachute Descent Is Attempted		141
117	John Michell Proposes The Theory Of Black Holes		142
118	1787		
119	The First Fleet Departs From England		143
	Delaware Becomes The First State Of America		144
	Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) Is Founded		145
120	1789		
121	George Washington Is Elected As The First President Of America		146
	The Mutiny On The <i>Bounty</i>		147
123	The Storming Of The Bastille		148
124			
125	1791		
	The Brandenburg Gate Is Completed		150
	The Haitian Revolution		151
126	The Death Of Wolfgang Mozart		151
127	1794		
127	Maximilien Robespierre Goes To The Guillotine		153
	Vice Admiral Horatio Nelson Is Blinded In Corsica		154
129	1796		
129	Edward Jenner Administers The First Vaccination		155
	Mungo Park Reaches The Centre Of The Niger River		156
130	Robert Burns, The Bard Of Ayrshire		157
	1804		
132	The Poetry Of William Blake		158
133	<i>William Tell</i> Is Performed For The First Time		159
134	Napoleon Bonaparte Is Crowned As Emperor		160
	1805		
135	Trooping The Colour Becomes An Annual Event		161
	Hans Christian Anderson		161
136	The Battle Of Austerlitz		162

Contents

1812		
Charles Dickens	164	
Johann Ludwig Burckhardt Rediscovered Petra	165	
The Assassination Of The Prime Minister	166	
1815		
The Biggest Volcanic Eruption In History	168	
The Battle Of Waterloo	169	
1817		
The Elgin Marbles Are Displayed In The British Museum	171	
Karl Drais Invents The First Form Of Bicycle	172	
Jane Austen Dies	173	
1820		
The Lady With The Lamp	175	
The HMS <i>Beagle</i> Is Launched	176	
The British Regency Period Is Ended	177	
1821		
Simón Bolívar Wins Venezuela's Independence	178	
Napoleon Dies In Exile On Saint Helena	179	
1829		
Robert Peel Creates The Modern Police Force	180	
The First University Boat Race	181	
Robert Stephenson's <i>Rocket</i> Is Built	182	
1846		
Neptune Is Discovered By Johann Gottfried Galle	184	
The Saxophone Is Patented By Adolphe Sax	185	
The Liberty Bell Is Cracked	185	
1847		
Bram Stoker, Author Of <i>Dracula</i>	187	
The Brontë Sisters Publish English Classics	188	
Thomas Edison, Inventor Who Held 1,093 Patents	188	
1851		
Herman Melville's <i>Moby-Dick</i> Is Published	190	
The Great Exhibition At Crystal Palace	190	
The Death Of <i>Frankenstein</i> Author, Mary Shelley	191	
1856		
The Great Train Wreck	193	
Nikola Tesla, Inventor Of The Alternating Current System	194	
1859		
Big Ben Rings For The First Time	195	
Charles Dickens' <i>A Tale Of Two Cities</i> – The Bestselling Novel In History – Is Published	196	
<i>On The Origin Of Species</i>	196	
1863		
The First Underground Railway	198	
Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation	199	
The Football Association Is Founded	199	
1864		
<i>Wisden Cricketers' Almanack</i> Is Published	201	
The Clifton Suspension Bridge Is Opened	202	
1873		
American Outlaw Jesse James And The First Train Robbery In The Old West	203	
Levi Strauss Patents Jeans	204	
Heinrich Schliemann Finds Priam's Treasure	205	
1876		
Alexander Graham Bell Makes The World's First Telephone Call	206	
The Battle Of The Little Bighorn	207	
Tomato Ketchup	208	
1889		
The Eiffel Tower Is Completed	209	
Preston North End Win The First 'Double'	209	
The Margherita Pizza Is Invented	210	
1892		
Tchaikovsky's <i>The Nutcracker</i> Premieres	212	
Grover Cleveland Becomes The Only Us President To Serve Non-Consecutive Terms	213	
Civil Rights Activist Homer Plessy Is Arrested	214	

CHRONOLOGICA: THE INCREDIBLE YEARS THAT DEFINED HISTORY

1895

George Herman 'Babe' Ruth
Sortie De L'usine Lumière De Lyon Is Considered
 To Be The First Motion Picture
 Alfred Nobel, Swedish Dynamite Inventor,
 Establishes The Nobel Prizes

1896

The First Olympic Games Of The Modern Era
 The Ford Quadricycle Becomes The First Vehicle
 Developed By Henry Ford
 Giacomo Puccini's Opera *La Bohème* Is Premiered

1898

Ramsay And Travers Discover Neon
 Marie And Pierre Curie Discover Radium
 The First Official Game Reserve, Sabi, Is Established

1899

Camille Jenatzy Becomes The First Person To
 Drive Over 60 Miles Per Hour
 Guglielmo Marconi Transmits The First Wireless
 Communication Across The English Channel
 Sobhuza II – The Longest Reigning Monarch In
 History

1903

Author Of *1984* And *Animal Farm*, George
 Orwell, Is Born
 Henry Ford Sells His First Car To A Dentist
 Le Tour De France Begins
 The Wright Brothers Take Flight

1910

The Death Of Leo Tolstoy
 The Mexican Revolution Begins

1911

Machu Picchu Is Rediscovered By Hiram Bingham
 RMS *Olympic* Reaches New York On Her Maiden
 Voyage

1912

215 Alan Turing, Hero Of The Second World War 239
 Captain Scott And The Terra Nova Expedition 240
 216 The *Titanic* Sinks On Her Maiden Voyage 241

1914

217 Archduke Franz Ferdinand Is Assassinated 242
 The First World War Begins 243
 219 The First Electric Traffic Lights 244

1918

220 The Russian Royal Family Are Executed 245
 221 Soldier And Poet Wilfred Owen Dies One Week
 Before The Armistice 245
 222 The First World War Ends 246
 223 Women Get The Vote 247

1922

Joseph Stalin Is Appointed General Secretary Of
 The Soviet Communist Party 249
 226 The BBC Is Formed 250
 Howard Carter Discovers The Tomb Of
 Tutankhamun 251

1927

228 The Carving Of Mount Rushmore Begins 253
 Charles Lindbergh's Historic Flight 254
 Columbian Author Gabriel García Márquez 255

1928

229 Pharmacologist Alexander Fleming Accidentally
 Discovers Penicillin 256
 230 The First Colour Television Transmission 256
 231 Joseph Stalin Launches The First Soviet Union
 Five-Year Plan 257

1930

The Chrysler Building In New York Becomes The
 First Structure Over 1,000 Feet 259
 236 Amy Johnson Becomes The First Woman To Fly
 Solo From England To Australia 260
 237

Contents

Don Bradman Scores 309 Runs In One Day	261	1954	
The First Football World Cup	262	Roger Bannister Becomes The First Person To Run A Sub-4 Minute Mile	279
1931		The First Hydrogen Bomb Test Is Carried Out	279
American Gangster Al Capone Is Arrested For Tax Evasion	264	The Japanese Monster Godzilla First Appears	280
The Empire State Building Is Completed	265	1963	
The First Non-Stop Flight Across The Pacific	265	Martin Luther King Jr Delivers His 'I Have A Dream' Speech	282
1936		The Great Train Robbery	283
Edward VIII Becomes King	267	Alcatraz Shuts Down	284
Jesse Owens Stars At The Berlin Olympic Games	267	President John F. Kennedy Is Assassinated	285
Sergei Prokofiev's <i>Peter And The Wolf</i> Debuts	268	1969	
The Hoover Dam	269	Man Walks On The Moon	286
1940		The Beatles' Last Public Performance	287
The Battle Of Britain	270	The Boeing 747 Airplane Makes Its First Flight	288
The First McDonald's Restaurant Opens	270	1973	
Food Rationing Begins In Britain	271	The Spanish Painter Pablo Picasso Dies	289
1948		The Watergate Scandal And The Resignation Of The President	289
Albert I Becomes The First Monkey In Space	273	The Sydney Opera House Opens	291
The Berlin Airlift Begins	274	1989	
Mahatma Gandhi Is Assassinated	275	The Tiananmen Square Protests	292
1953		The Fall Of The Berlin Wall	293
The Summit Of Mount Everest Is Reached	276	Tim Berners-Lee And The Internet	294
The Coronation Of Queen Elizabeth II, The United Kingdom's Longest Reigning Monarch	277		
Ian Fleming's First James Bond Novel Is Published	278		

ABOUT WHITAKER'S – THE TEAM BEHIND CHRONOLOGICA

CHRONOLOGICA is written and compiled by the team behind *Whitaker's Almanack* – one of the oldest annual reference books in the UK. Jam-packed full of facts and figures on topics including: Politics, Kings and Queens, World Geography, Art, Music, Science and Sport. The first edition was published on 10 December 1868 and was such a success that it had to be reprinted immediately!

In 1878 a copy of *Whitaker's* was included in a time capsule buried beneath the monument Cleopatra's Needle on the Embankment in London, together with a set of contemporary coins and a copy of *The Times* newspaper.

On 29 December 1940, a wartime bombing raid struck the *Whitaker's* editorial offices in Warwick Lane, obliterating almost all the archive and reference library used to compile the book. This prompted Prime Minister Winston Churchill to write to Sir Cuthbert Whitaker seeking assurances that the publication of *Whitaker's* would not be interrupted: a measure of the book's importance.

Whitaker's Almanack is mentioned in many famous works of literature, including Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Ian Fleming's James Bond novel *Moonraker*. A copy of *Whitaker's* is even used by Sherlock Holmes to decode a message in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's fourth and final Holmes mystery *The Valley of Fear*.

We hope you enjoy the fascinating journey through time which is **CHRONOLOGICA: The Incredible Years That Defined History**.

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753 BC

THE MYTH OF ROMULUS AND REMUS

Romulus and Remus were twin boys and the pivotal characters of Rome's foundation myth. According to the myth their mother was princess Rhea Silvia, daughter of Numitor, King of Alba Longa and their father was Mars, the Roman god of war. Before the twins were born, Numitor's brother Amulius seized power, killed Numitor's male heirs and forced Rhea Silvia to become a priestess to the goddess Vesta.

Following the birth of the boys Amulius had Rhea Silvia thrown into the river Tiber where she was caught beneath the waves by the river god who married her. The twin boys were set adrift on the river in a reed basket which floated downstream until the basket was caught in the branches of a fig tree where they were found by a she-wolf who suckled them until they were found by a shepherd and his wife who raised the boys as their own.

The twins proved to be natural leaders and each acquired many followers. When they discovered their true origins, the twins raised an army and marched on Alba Longa slaying Amulius and restoring Numitor to the throne.

Rather than wait to inherit Alba Longa, Romulus and Remus chose to found a new city. The twins disputed which hill their city should be built on, Romulus favouring the Palatine, Remus choosing the Aventine. On the hill favoured by Remus there were six vultures, but on the hill preferred by Romulus there were 12. Romulus took this as a sign from the gods and founded the new city, named it Rome, after himself, and started to build a wall around the Palatine Hill. However, Remus was jealous and began to make fun of Romulus' wall. At one point Remus jumped over the wall to show how easy it was to cross. Romulus became angry, the twins fought and Remus was killed.

With Remus dead, Romulus continued to build his city and created its first army and senate. The image of the she-wolf suckling the divinely fathered twins has become an iconic representation of the city and its founding legend.



753 BC

THE FOUNDING OF ROME

Disregarding the myth of Romulus and Remus, Greek writers of the fifth century BC credited the foundation of Rome to the Trojan legend Aeneas. The Greeks believed that Aeneas had travelled to Italy and settled near Rome, following the fall of Troy in 1184 BC from which he was the only hero to have survived the Greek invasion, according to Homer's epic poem, the *Iliad*. Aeneas married Lavinia, the daughter of a local king named Latinus upon his arrival in central Italy and from their marriage a kingdom of Alba Longa was established, which eventually resulted in the monarchy of King Numitor, whereby the story evolved over time so that by the first century BC the stories of Aeneas and Romulus and Remus combined into the account of Rome's foundation.

Upon Rome's foundation in 753 BC, Romulus was believed to have offered refuge to exiles and refugees who were not welcome in other settlements. However, as Rome lacked female citizens, Romulus devised a plan in which he invited Rome's neighbouring community, the Sabines, to a festival but his invitation was a trick and on his order the men of Rome abducted the Sabine women. After a war broke out between the two communities, the Sabine women now resident in Rome, persuaded the Sabines not to seize the new city and instead a pact was agreed whereby Romulus and the Sabine king, Titus Tatius, jointly ruled.

A Roman scholar by the name of Marcus Terrentius Varro had proposed that the exact foundation date of Rome was 21 April 753 BC, after he estimated the length of the reign of the seven Roman kings starting with Romulus up to the expulsion of the last tyrant king, Tarquin the Proud and the establishment in 509 BC of the Roman Republic.

Archaeological discoveries on the Palatine Hill, chosen by Romulus as the founding location of Rome, included fortification walls which dated to the mid-8th century BC, which corresponds to Varro's belief that the foundation of Rome was 753 BC.

490 BC

THE BATTLE OF MARATHON

During the Greco-Persian Wars, which began in 499 BC and lasted until 449 BC, the Persian King Darius the Great, made an attempt to conquer Greece and take revenge against Athens, which had supported a regional revolt against Persian rule. The first Persian invasion of Greece began in 492 BC and the Persian army quickly subjugated Thrace and Macedon and when Darius sent ambassadors across Greek regions to call for their surrender, only Athens and Sparta refused to accept and instead executed Darius' messengers. In 490 BC, under the command of Datis and Artaphernes, a Persian invasion force reached Greece and captured Eritrea, which was destroyed and its citizens enslaved. Subsequently, the Persians landed in the region of Attica, preparing for an assault on Athens.

The Persians landed at the bay of Marathon, approximately 25 miles from Athens itself. The Athenians, led by the general Miltiades, an Olympic chariot-racer, were supported by the city of Plataea and numbered 10,000 men while the Persians far outnumbered the Greek defending army, numbering 20,000 soldiers. With the Spartans refusing to assist Athens due to their peaceful festival of Carneia, the Athenians elected to stand firm at Marathon and blocked the exits from the mountainous land. Miltiades devised a plan to attack the Persians on the wings before closing in towards the Persian centre. The tactics worked and the Persian army collapsed, with the surviving soldiers retreating to their ships. The Greek historian Herodotus estimated that 6,400 Persians had been killed and incredibly just 192 Athenians died, with much of the credit due to the fighting skills of the hoplites – citizen-soldiers of Athens, armed with spears and round shields.

Upon hearing that the fleeing ships were instead destined for Athens, the Athenians quickly marched back to the city to prevent the ships landing and on seeing the city refortified, the Persians lost hope and returned home. Although it is recorded that the Persian commander Artaphernes survived the war, conflicting reports about Datis state that he may or may not have been killed at Marathon. Darius the Great began to plan another war against the Greeks, personally in command of his armies but when a revolt broke out in Egypt, which was part of the Persian Empire, the expedition was delayed and his health began to deteriorate. He died in October 486 BC and was succeeded by his son Xerxes I who, like his father, would seek to conquer Greece.

490 BC

PHEIDIPPIDES, THE LEGENDARY RUNNER OF MARATHON



carrying
to Athens to
The triumphant
away. The city had been saved.

Legend has it that a Greek long-distance runner called Pheidippides (also referred to as Philippides) was sent from the city of Athens to Sparta to call for reinforcements before the Battle of Marathon. Renowned warriors, the Spartans had been a crucial component of Greek armies in previous battles and were desperately needed, given how outnumbered the Greeks were by the Persian force. The distance between the two cities was a staggering 140 miles, which Pheidippides is said to have completed in about two days. After winning a historic victory at the Battle of Marathon, the Greek army, exhausted from the battle and their heavy equipment, marched as quickly as possible back to intercept the Persian fleet, which was sailing towards Athens. The triumphant Greeks reached Athens to witness the Persian ships sailing away. The city had been saved.

Over time, this account has become confused with another story about another remarkable feat of running. According to Plutarch, an Ancient Greek historian, a Greek messenger was sent from Marathon to Athens, a distance of around 25 miles (40 km), to bring news of the Greek victory. The runner is said to have run the distance without stopping and heroically delivered the message, believed to be either 'we have won' or 'hail, we are the winners', to the Athenian assembly before tragically collapsing and dying of exhaustion. This moment was captured in a famous painting by French painter Luc-Olivier Merson in 1869.

In preparation for the first modern Olympic Games, which were to be held in 1896 in Athens, Frenchman Michel Bréal, made a suggestion to include a 'Marathon' race. He suggested that this special race should follow the route from Marathon to Athens taken by the legendary runner in 490 BC. Bréal's friend Pierre de Coubertin, who founded the International Olympic Committee and was instrumental in organising the 1896 Olympics, liked his friend's idea, and so the Marathon became an Olympic event. Fittingly, the winner of the first Olympic Marathon event was Greek – a water carrier called Spyridon Louis.

Early versions of the Olympic Marathon were run over distances of 25–26 miles. It wasn't until the London Olympics of 1908 that the fixed distance of 26 miles 285 yards was instituted. This distance was decided upon by the British Olympic Committee so that the race could start from Windsor Castle and finish outside the royal box at White City Stadium in London. The dramatic finish of the 1908 Olympic marathon is credited as the reason marathon races became so popular. Over 500 marathons are now organised worldwide each year.

356 BC

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Alexander the Great, the king of Macedonia, was a legendary leader and conqueror who united the Greek city-states and defeated the Persian Empire.

Born in Pella, Macedonia in 356 BC, he was the son of King Philip II and was taught by the great philosopher Aristotle. The young Alexander was famed for taming a magnificent horse called Bucephalus when he was just ten years old, and he took part in his first military expedition, against invading Thracian tribes, at the age of 16. After his father was assassinated in 336 BC, Alexander became king with the support of the army, and executed many possible rivals, including some half-siblings. He quickly took control of the Greek states, known as the Corinthian League, asserting his power in Thessaly, defeating an Illyrian invasion of Macedonia, and crushing a revolt in Thebes with a brutal massacre.

Philip II had long planned an invasion of Asia, and the Corinthian League now granted Alexander full military power in a campaign against the Persian Empire, with an army of about 30,000 foot soldiers and 5,000 cavalry. In spring 334 BC, he marched through Troy, before defeating Persian King Darius III's army near the Granicus River. He declared himself 'great king' of Persia and the whole of Asia, at the age of 25, and went on to marry a Persian princess called Roxana.

Over the next eight years, he founded over 70 cities, leading his army a further 11,000 miles and creating an empire that spanned three continents and covered around two million square miles. He conquered Syria and most of the Levant, captured Tyre after a long siege in 332 BC, and founded the great city of Alexandria in Egypt, where he was welcomed as a liberator and hailed as the son of the god Amun. He was determined to continue expanding, and marched on to northern India, where his army finally refused to go any further. On their return south, Alexander was wounded several times, and died of a fever in Babylon in 323 BC.

At the time of his death, his territory stretched from Greece to Egypt, from the Danube to the Ganges, a vast area united by a common Greek language and culture. Although his empire was later torn apart, this 'Hellenistic' influence remained powerful for centuries. Alexander is remembered as a military genius who never lost a battle, a man of legendary ambition, recklessness and power.

THE TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS BURNS DOWN

In 356 BC, the great Temple of Artemis was deliberately burned down by a madman called Herostratus.

For centuries before the first temple was built, there had been a sacred site at Ephesus, an ancient Greek port city now on the west coast of modern-day Turkey. The original Temple of Artemis had been destroyed by a flood in the 7th century BC, and the new temple, also known as the Artemesium, was rebuilt from around 550 BC by the Cretan architect Chersiphron and his son Metagenes. It was partly funded by the hugely wealthy Croesus, who was the king of Lydia and the city's ruler, and it was decorated by some of the most famous artists in the ancient world.

The temple, which was known for its large size, was 115m long and 55m wide. According to the Roman historian Pliny the Elder, it had 127 towering columns, many of which were decorated with elaborate carvings. It was reportedly the first Greek temple built of marble, and the magnificent double row of columns formed a passage around the *cella* (central chamber) which housed the sculpted image of the goddess Artemis.

The temple was visited by merchants, kings and worshippers, who came to pay homage to Artemis, the Greek goddess of purity, childbirth and the hunt. Many left offerings in the form of jewellery and other precious objects, and archaeologists have discovered over a thousand items from this era on the site, including silver and gold coins.

Herostratus destroyed the temple by setting fire to its wooden roof beams, hoping that the act would make his name famous throughout the ancient world. Instead, he was sentenced to death, and the people of Ephesus were forbidden from mentioning his name. According to Greek and Roman legend, the structure burned down on the same night as Alexander the Great was born, and the goddess was too preoccupied attending to his birth to save her temple. It was eventually rebuilt on an even larger scale from 323 BC, and stood for almost 600 years until it was destroyed by the Goths in 268 AD.

