

Siege of Tyre by Alexander – His Driving Force of Alexander, Armaments and Weapons and His Innovative Strategy Combining Attack by Both Navy and Land

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Abstract: The most difficult challenge Alexander the Great faced was during the siege of Tyre on his journey toward Egypt. Conquering Tyre was essential to protect the rear of Alexander's army from potential Persian attacks. Tyre was a fortified island city of the Phoenicians, situated about 1 km from the mainland, with a fort wall 150 feet tall. The Phoenicians were skilled shipbuilders. Tyre was protected by fortifications towering approximately 150 feet high. With a history of repelling numerous aggressions, the Tyrians believed their defenses to be impenetrable. Alexander inherited his father's throne, commanded the full strength of the Macedonian army, and was educated by Aristotle, which made him one of the greatest warriors of all time. He employed siege warfare tactics, utilizing siege engines like the catapult, siege tower, and battering ram. He also utilized his army on both land and sea, which led to the seven-month siege of Tyre from January 332 BC to July 332 BC, which became one of his greatest victories. The siege was marked by relentless attacks and counterattacks from both sides. The new city of Tyre was about 3/4 km away from the mainland, and Alexander built a unique causeway. He constructed a 1-kilometer-long and 200-foot-wide causeway, as described by Diodorus, over a natural land bridge less than two meters deep, enabling his army to approach the city's formidable walls.

Keywords: Fortification, Aristotle, Siege warfare, Siege Engine, Catapult, Siege Tower, Battering Ram.

Introduction:

Background of Tyre, the most important city-State of Phoenicia.

It was a fortified island city located approximately 1 km from the mainland, with a fort wall measuring 150 ft in height. Phoenicians were excellent shipbuilders. The mainland city of Tyre was in a dilapidated condition in contrast to its fortified island counterpart.

Location of Tyre: The maximum depth of water is 18.5 feet, and it is surrounded by both land and the Mediterranean Sea, with a distance of approximately one kilometer from land.

-Solid fortification Tyre was approximately 150 feet tall and had previously faced much outside aggression and withstood it all, so they were very confident against any attack.

-Had strong connection with Carthage and could expect help from Carthage in terms of getting help in the form of a warship.

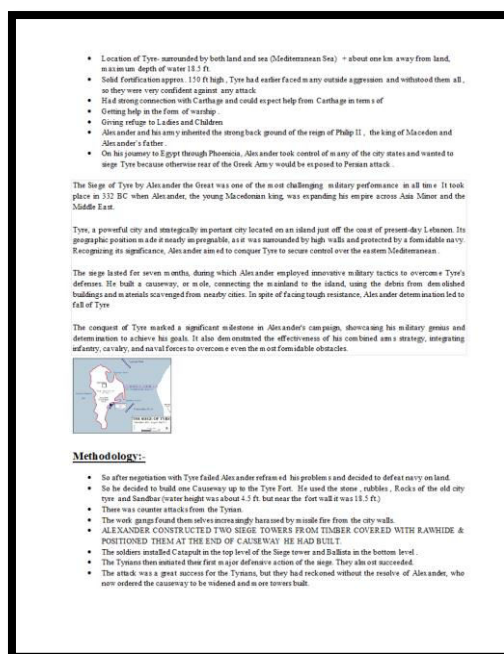
-Offering refuge to women and children

-Alexander's army benefited from the strong foundation laid during the reign of his father, Philip II of Macedon. On his journey to Egypt through Phoenicia, Alexander seized control of several city-states on his path to Egypt and targeted Tyre to eliminate the threat of Persian interference at his rear

The Siege of Tyre by Alexander the Great stands as one of history's most remarkable demonstrations of military strategy and perseverance. It took place in 332 BC when Alexander, the young Macedonian king, was expanding his empire across Asia Minor and the Middle East. Tyre, a powerful and strategically significant city, was located on an island off the coast of present-day Lebanon. Its geographic position made it nearly impregnable, as it was surrounded by high walls and protected by a formidable navy. Recognizing its significance, Alexander aimed to conquer Tyre to secure control over the eastern Mediterranean.

The siege lasted for seven months, during which Alexander employed innovative military tactics to overcome Tyre's defenses. He built a causeway, or mole, connecting the mainland to the island, using the debris from demolished buildings and materials scavenged from nearby cities. In spite of facing tough resistance, Alexander's determination led to fall of Tyre

The conquest of Tyre marked a significant milestone in Alexander's campaign, showcasing his military genius and determination to achieve his goals. It also demonstrated the effectiveness of his combined arms strategy, integrating infantry, cavalry, and naval forces to overcome even the most formidable obstacles.



Methodology:

After negotiations with Tyre failed, Alexander adapted his strategy, resolving to neutralize the Tyrian navy by constructing a single causeway to reach the island fortress. So he decided to build one causeway up to the Tyre Fort. He used the stones, rubble, and rocks from the old city of Tyre, along with the sandbar (water height was about 4.5 feet, but near the fort wall, it was 18.5 feet deep). There were counterattacks from the Tyrian. The work gangs found themselves increasingly harassed by missile fire from the city walls.

Alexander constructed two timber siege towers covered in rawhide for protection, strategically placing them at the end of the causeway. The soldiers installed Catapult on the top level of the Siege Tower and Ballista on the bottom level. The Tyrians launched their first major defensive maneuver, which momentarily disrupted Alexander's plans but ultimately failed. They posed a significant challenge but ultimately failed. The attack was a great success for the Tyrians, but they had reckoned without the resolve of Alexander, who now ordered the causeway to be widened and more towers built.

In addition, he also received vessels from Byblus, Aradus, Rhodes, Lycia, Cilicia and Macedon. The Kings of Cyprus sent another 120 ships to Sidon. In all, Alexander at that moment had roughly 220 ships. The Mediterranean Sea was the governing factor. There was no wave and battle in Mediterranean Sea was equivalent to battle on land. Alexander took full advantage of the situation. The Tyrian could then blockade the entrances to their two harbors.

Alexander commissioned another two siege towers on the ship, and with the help of Battering Ram, he broke the open southern side of the wall. Then it was only a matter

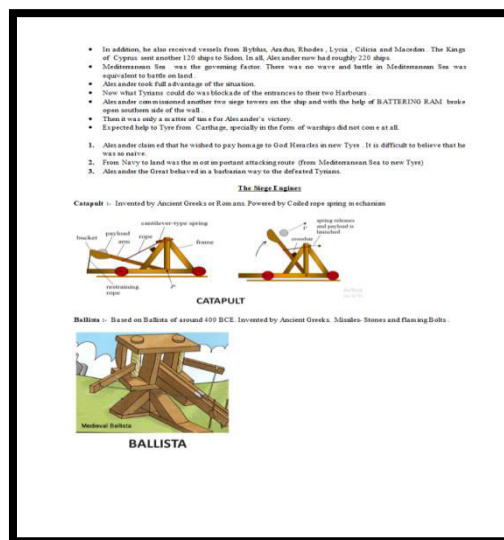
of time for Alexander’s victory. Unfortunately, Tyre did not receive the expected help from Carthage, particularly in the form of warships.

Turning Points in the Siege

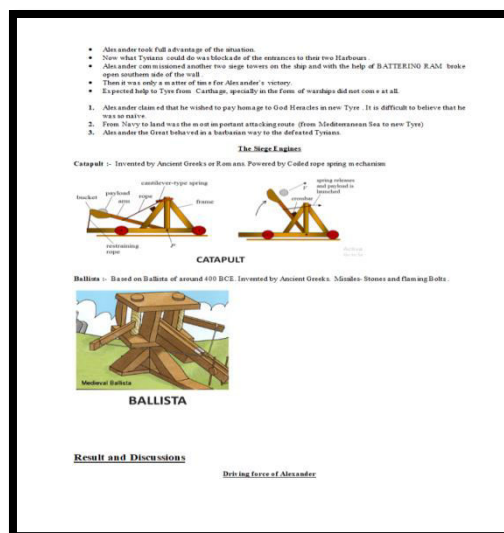
1. Alexander stated that his intent was to pay homage to the god Heracles in the new Tyre, though his true motivations were likely strategic.
2. The navy-to-land attacking route was crucial to Alexander's victory. (from Mediterranean Sea to new Tyre)
3. Alexander the Great behaved in a barbarian way to the defeated Tyrians.

The Siege Engines

Catapult: Invented by Ancient Greeks or Romans. Powered by Coiled rope spring mechanism



Ballista: Based on Ballista of around 400 BCE. Invented by Ancient Greeks. Missiles-Stones and flaming Bolts.



Result and Discussions

Driving force of Alexander

1. Quality inherited from his father .
2. To drive away Persians from his rear (Persians had good relation with the Tyrians)
3. Refusal by Tyrian to Alexander's visiting the temple of Heracles.
4. Alexander relied heavily on his chief engineer, Diades of Pella, for the innovative design and construction of siege equipment.
5. His ingenious strategies.

What made Tyrians fail?

- a. Their past records of withstanding aggression from enemies .
- b. The Tyrians' reliance on support from Carthage, which never materialized.
- c. Overconfidence about impregnability.
- d. They underestimated Alexander's ability to transform a one-kilometer-long stretch of water into a functional land bridge.
- E. Alexander's naval forces operated with such precision and coordination that the Mediterranean Sea essentially became an extension of the battle field .

Summary and Conclusion:

Although the events of the siege occurred in 332 BC, many of the technologies and tactics employed, such as the use of catapults, continue to influence modern military strategies.

For instance, modern military aircraft launch systems still utilize catapult technology, an invention pioneered by the Greeks during Alexander's time.

Siege of Tyre by Alexander the Great

There was one time when Assyria resigned Supreme in the Mediterranean World.

Near eastern people, who flourished at the time of Assyrian and Persian Empire, were very active and energetic as Engineers and Technicians. They were the Phoenicians who lived in a chain of City- States, Small Kingdoms at the Eastern coast of the Mediterranean. It was along the Lebanese coast.

Carthage did start as a Phoenician colony , founded possibly on B.C 814.

The most important city in Phoenicia . Although they were not warlike, they defended their city with extreme courage.

Tyre Island lay about a kilometre from the coast and its high wall was 150 ft above the sea on the eastern side .

He built a kilometre long causeway (mole). Stretching out to the Island on a natural land bridge no more than 2 metres deep. The causeway, made of stones, allowed the artillery to get in range of the walls but when the work came near to the city walls the water became much deeper and the combined attack from the walls and the Tyrian Navy had made construction almost impossible .

How did Alexander succeed in the Siege of Tyre?

Alexander's success in the Siege of Tyre can be attributed to a combination of strategic innovation, determination, and military prowess. Tyre was a heavily fortified island city with formidable defenses, making it a challenging target for conquest. However, Alexander employed several key tactics to achieve victory:

1. Construction of the Causeway: Recognizing that Tyre's strength lay in its island location, Alexander devised a bold plan to connect the mainland to the island. He ordered the construction of a causeway, or mole, using rubble, stones, and timber from demolished buildings in the vicinity. This causeway allowed his army to approach the city's walls and launch a direct assault.

2. Naval Blockade: Alexander's navy played a crucial role in the siege by blockading Tyre's harbor, preventing reinforcements and supplies from reaching the city by sea. This naval blockade weakened Tyre's defenses and isolated the city, increasing its vulnerability to Alexander's land forces.

3. Innovative Siege Engines: Alexander employed innovative siege engines, including catapults, ballistae, and battering rams, to breach Tyre's walls and overcome its defenses. These siege engines enabled his army to systematically dismantle Tyre's fortifications and gain entry into the city.

4. Adaptation of Tactics: Alexander adapted his tactics to the changing circumstances of the siege, utilizing both conventional and unconventional strategies as needed. He employed feints and diversions to confuse the defenders, while also leveraging his army's mobility and flexibility to exploit weaknesses in Tyre's defenses.

Overall, Alexander's success in the Siege of Tyre can be attributed to his strategic vision, tactical ingenuity, and relentless determination. By employing a combination of innovative tactics, naval blockade, and siege warfare, Alexander was able to overcome the formidable defenses of Tyre and secure a decisive victory, further solidifying his reputation as one of history's greatest military leaders.

Tyre's Fortifications and Role in the Siege

Tyre was the leading city-state of Phoenicia, known for its strategic location, characteristics, and why it became the foremost city-state of Phoenicia. It was located about 0.8 miles from the mainland, surrounded by both land and sea, with a maximum water depth of 18.5 feet. The city was protected by solid fortifications approximately 150 feet high. Having faced many invasions and withstood them, the Tyrians were confident in their ability to resist any attack. Tyre had a strong connection with Carthage and expected help from them, particularly in the form of warships. It also provided refuge to women and children during times of conflict, showcasing its strength and preparedness.

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