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This image depicts an illustration, by Andre Castaigne (1898-1899), of the Macedonian phalanx attacking during the Battle at the Hydaspes. Creating this work centuries after the actual fighting occurred, Castaigne provides us with his interpretation of how events may have appeared during that famous event. Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons. Click on it for a better view. PD

Ever the brilliant strategist, Alexander realized he would need a different type of army to fight in India.

No Macedonian had ever been this far east. Alexander and his men had no pre-tested battle plans to adapt. Instinctively, Alexander knew he had to cut personnel, burn excess baggage and eliminate spoils of war. Wisely, he included Persian cavalymen in his ranks and made a plan to fight against the Indian elephants his troops would surely face.

In July of 326, when he and his men reached the Hydaspes (a river located in today's Pakistan and now called Jhelum), they more than met their match with Porus, a renowned Indian leader. (Historians believe they may have located the possible spot of the Indian camp.) Porus and his men fought with elephants which the Macedonians had first encountered at Gaugamela but had never seen in a charge.

Even with their 200 elephants, the Indians were not able to withstand the Macedonian phalanx as it approached with shields locked and sarissas extended. Robin Lane Fox describes the scene of carnage:

*While archers and Agrianian javelin-men aimed at the mahouts themselves, the 3,000 veterans of the Shield Bearers swung axes at the elephants' legs and daringly slashed at their trunks with curved scimitars. Alexander knew the weak points of an elephant and had equipped his men accordingly.* (Alexander the Great, by Robin Lane Fox, at pages 359-360.)

Although the Indians were defeated, Alexander allowed Porus to continue to govern his own land. That approach to conquered territories and leaders was one of Alexander's trademark strengths and was a key ingredient of his astonishing success.

He suffered a major loss in the battle, however. Bucephalus, whom Alexander had ridden into every major battle throughout his career, was injured and died. Grief-stricken, Alexander memorialized his horse by naming a town - Buckephalia - after him. (Scholars today are not sure where that town was located.)

Despite the loss of his horse, Alexander wanted to march to the Ganges River. His troops, wanting to return home, refused to go further. Favorably considering their position, Alexander agreed to turn back.

As he and his men traveled south, Alexander debated philosophy with the Brahmins (Indian philosophers) while his forces subdued Indian villages. His Aristotelean education must have astonished the Indians. Hundreds of years later, they remembered him as both a fearless conqueror and as a wise philosopher.

Alexander was wounded by the Malli, in January of 325, as he continued toward the mouth of the Indus River. An arrow had pierced both his breastplate and his rib cage. Rescued by his officers, Alexander did not recover overnight.

Despite their leader's injuries, the army reached the mouth of the Indus by July of 325 and, taking a westward turn, headed for home.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/VICTORY-IN-INDIA-Alexander-the-Great>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/VICTORY-IN-INDIA-Alexander-the-Great>

## Media Stream



### Hydaspes River

Image online, courtesy the [livius.org](http://livius.org) website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Hydaspes-River>



### Hydaspes River - Panoramic View

Image online, courtesy the [livius.org](http://livius.org) website.

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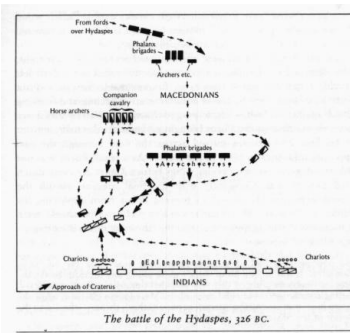


### Alexander the Great - Elephants of War

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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### Detail of the Battle of Hydaspes

Image, described above, online via Wikimedia Commons.

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### Bucephalus

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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### Ganges River - Map

Image online, courtesy the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution website.

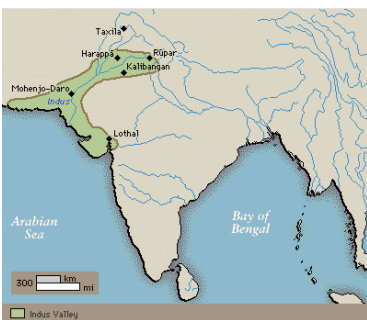
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Ganges-River-Map>



### Indus River - Map Locator

Image online, courtesy [peakwater.org](http://www.peakwater.org) website.

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### Map Depicting the Location of the Indus Valley

Image online, courtesy the North Central College website.

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