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# X.13 ALEXANDER

- The Spirit of Law - Book X. On the laws in their relation to offensive strength -

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Alexander made a great conquest. Let us examine how he behaved. Enough has been said of his valor ; let us talk about his prudence.

The measures he took were just. He did not leave until he had utterly crushed the Greeks ; he used that crushing only for the execution of his enterprise ; he left nothing behind against him. He attacked the maritime provinces, had his land army follow the coastline to avoid being separated from his fleet ; he made admirable use of discipline against numbers ; he had no shortages of supplies ; and if it is true that victory gave him everything, he also did everything to obtain the victory.

[1] That is how he made his conquests ; let us see how he preserved them.

He resisted those who wanted him to treat the Greeks as masters [2] and the Persians as slaves. His only thought was to unite the two nations, and make them forget distinctions of conquering and conquered peoples. After the conquest he abandoned all the prejudices that had helped to achieve it. He adopted the customs of the Persians so as not to distress the Persians by making them adopt those of the Greeks. That is why he showed such respect for the wife and mother of Darius, and showed such restraint, which is what made the Persians miss him so. Who is this conqueror who is mourned by all the peoples he subjugated ? Who is this usurper upon whose death the family he had dethroned sheds tears ? That is a feature of his life of which the historians do not tell us that any other conqueror can boast.

Nothing better consolidates a conquest than the union made by the two peoples through marriages. Alexander took wives from the nation he had defeated ; he wanted members of his court to do the same ; the rest of the Macedonians followed this example. The Franks and Burgundians allowed such marriages [3] ; the Visigoths forbade them in Spain, and later allowed them. [4] The Lombards not only allowed but even favored them. [5] When the Romans wanted to weaken Macedonia, they decreed that there could be no marriage unions between the peoples of the provinces.

Alexander, who was seeking to unite the two peoples, thought of creating a large number of Greek colonies in Persia. He built countless cities, and cemented all the parts of this new Europe so well that after his death, in the unrest and commotion of the most terrible civil wars, after the Greeks had, in a manner of speaking, destroyed themselves, not a single province in Persia revolted.

To avoid utterly exhausting Greece and Macedonia, he sent a colony of Jews to Alexandria ; he was indifferent to these peoples' customs, provided they were loyal to him. [6]

The kings of Syria, abandoning the plan of the empire's founder, tried to oblige the Jews to adopt the Greeks' customs, which caused terrible clashes in their state.

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[1] [The edition of 1758 here inserts the text of [Annex 2](#).]

[2] That was Aristotle's advice (Plutarch, *Moralia*, "On the fortune or the virtue of Alexander the Great").

[3] See *Leges Burgundionum*, tit. XII, art. V.

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[4] See *Lex Visigothorum* (book III, tit. I, § i.), which abrogates the former law, which paid more attention to the difference of nations than of station.

[5] See *Leges Langobardorum*, book II, tit. 7, § 1-2.

[6] [The 1758 edition here adds the text of [Annex 3](#).]