

record. His maritime general, Nearehus, an islander from Crete, had already pleased the young hero by making a voyage from the Indus round to the mouth of the Euphrates, at the head of the Persian Gulf. More ambitious plans would no doubt have been put in action, but the touch of fever that laid low Alexander stayed alike the tide of Greek conquest in Asia and the work of his fleets upon the seas.

Alexander's generals, Seleueus, Antioehus, and Ptolemy, on their attaining to royal positions of their own, each patronised nautical research.

The Ptolemies, who ruled Egypt, specially deserve credit. They sent out "navies" every year from their Red Sea ports to Arabia, and to places on the coasts of Africa and India. They were the patrons of Eratosthenes (276-196 B.C.), who is famous as being the first to make geography a science, and to construct out of a medley of loose facts an orderly system. It was already recognised that the earth must be a globe, and not, as was formerly believed, a flat surface; and Eratosthenes set himself to mark out the relative position of the various countries, and the proportion of space they really occupied. Nothing is more amusing, in looking at ancient maps of the world, than to see the wrong sizes attributed to certain countries—much after the style of the first outline map drawn by boys at school.