

(356–323 bce) was the son of Philip of Macedon and Olympias, daughter of the king of Epirus. Educated by Aristotle and trained in military matters, he unified the Greeks against their ancient foes, the Persians, and went on to establish an empire extending from northern Africa and Macedonia through Asia to Afghanistan and India. He is reviled by the Zoroastrians for the damage that was done, according to tradition, to their sacred texts and to their priesthood.

alizarin

The spelling of the word 'alizarin' is inconsistent in the 1950 edition. It is one of the five main colour-producing substances found in the Rubiaceae, a family of plants used worldwide as a source of the red dye, madder. First synthesized in 1868 as a madder substitute, the single-component dye alizarin soon came into widespread use, and cultivation of madder declined sharply. On wool, alizarin produces a red much brighter and harsher than the colour obtained from whole madder root. see also aniline

Amskomoutator ams-commutator

A commutator is a device for regulating the direction of an electric current.

Amu Darya

The Amu Darya, or Oxus (formerly Oks in Russian), is a river 1,600 miles (2,580 km) long, which originates in the Pamir Knot, flows to the north-west along much of the Afghan-Tajikistan border, passes between the Kara Kum and Kyzyl Kum deserts of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and empties into the Aral Sea. Recent archaeological evidence confirms the tradition that it once emptied into the Caspian Sea at Turkmenbashi (formerly Krasnovodsk). Its pattern of flow was episodic, and during the last three millennia it has changed direction several

times. There appears to have been no single event that diverted it once and for all into the Aral Sea.

anasha

Anasha is a Turkic word commonly used in Russia to refer to hashish.

Anglo-Tibetan war

The Younghusband Expedition, as it is commonly called, was an armed British mission into Tibet in 1903 and 1904 with the purpose of obliging the Tibetans to come to agreement on matters concerning trade and the frontier with India, partly as a consequence of a perceived threat from Russia. The expedition succeeded in its immediate objectives, but accomplished little in the long term. Six or seven hundred Tibetans died in front of the Maxim guns at Guru, and there were further casualties elsewhere.

aniline

Aniline, obtained commercially from coal tar, was the chemical source material for a family of synthetic dyes first produced in 1854. By the 1870s, these dyes were widely used to dye wool and silk. Of the early aniline-derived dyes, mauve (mauvine) and magenta (fuchsin) were not light-fast and faded rapidly—unlike the plant-derived dyes they were replacing. Others would 'bleed' or 'run' if the dyed fabric was washed.

see also alizarin

anthracite

Anthracite is a hard, blue-black clean-burning coal, with a brilliant glassy fracture and a high carbon content.

anthroposophism

Anthroposophy is a spiritual movement which was founded in the early twentieth century by the Austrian visionary Rudolph Steiner. Among his many initiatives are the Waldorf schools, which

developed out of Steiner's philosophy of education.

arak

see arrack

Aral Sea

Once the fourth-largest inland body of water in the world, the Aral Sea is fast disappearing, owing to the diversion of water from its two sources, the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, for agriculture—mainly the cultivation of cotton.

Aras

The River Aras, or Arax, flows past Mount Ararat (known as Massis in Armenian and as Egri Dagh in Turkish and referred to in Turkish in Meetings with Remarkable Men, 93), along the border between Armenia and Turkey, and empties into the Kura, or Mtkvari, River. In 1897, a flood caused it to change its course and it began to empty directly into the Caspian Sea. Today it again joins the Kura. It is called Araxes in Greek, although Xenophon called it Phasis, a name commonly given to another river that flows into the Black Sea. The Kars River, which flows through the town of Kars, is a tributary of the Aras.

Aravians Аравяне

The word 'Aravians' is a misreading of an old Russian word meaning 'Arabians'.

Armagnac

Armagnac is a brandy made in the region of Gers, formerly Armagnac, in southern France.

Arrack arak

Arrack (arak, rack) is derived from the Arabic word 'araq'. The spelling 'arrack' generally signifies various liquors distilled in the Far East from the juice of the date-palm, or from rice, cane-juice or molasses. The form 'arak' usually refers to a Mediter-

ranean drink made of grape spirit and flavoured with anise; the drink of that name is made chiefly in Lebanon. Other drinks belonging to the Mediterranean arak family are raki, ouzo, douziko, anisette, and pastis.

ashhana ashkhana

This word, better read as ashkhana, is used in Persian or Turkish for an establishment where hot food is served, that is, a restaurant.

Assooparatsata

The Armenian sentence Ասոօք արատ տա տալ (Asoq arrat sa ta.) means 'This will give many stars.'

atropine

Atropine belongs to the chemical family of alkaloids and is much used in modern medicine to block the action of the parasympathetic nervous system. Its former use was primarily to dilate the pupils of the eyes; it was extracted from the deadly nightshade plant (atropa belladonna), named belladonna because large pupils were considered attractive in women.

Azerbaijan

In Beelzebub's Tales, Azerbaijan probably refers to the traditional Azerbaijan of north-western Persia or Iran, south of the Aras River, consisting today of the three Iranian provinces: East Azerbaijan (capital Tabriz), West Azerbaijan (capital Urmia) and Ardebil (capital Ardebil). The modern autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan, north of the Aras River (formerly a Soviet Socialist Republic), has been officially known by the name Azerbaijan only since 1918. Its capital is Baku, and its inhabitants, formerly known as Caucasian Tartars, are now called Azeris.

Babylon

Babylon was a city on the river Euphrates