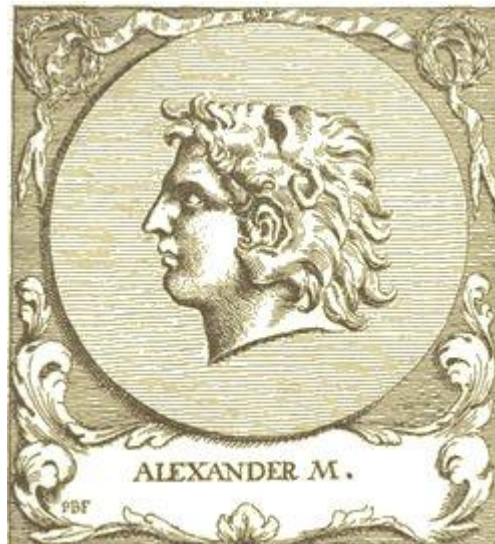


# The Life Of Alexander The Great



BIOGRAPHY WORKBOOK  
SERIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

(356-323 B.C.E.)

Alexander the Great, son of Philip of Macedon and Olympias, daughter of Neoptolemus of Epirus, was born at Pella in 356 B.C.E. His mind was formed chiefly by Aristotle, who instructed him in every branch of human learning, especially in the art of government.

Alexander was sixteen years of age when his father marched against Byzantium, and left the government in his hands during his absence. Two years afterward, he displayed singular courage at the battle of Chæronea (338 B.C.E.), where he overthrew the Sacred Band of the Thebans. "My son," said Philip, as he embraced him after the

conflict, "seek for thyself another kingdom, for that which I leave is too small for thee."

The father and son quarreled, however, when the former divorced Olympias. Alexander took part with his mother, and fled to Epirus, to escape his father's vengeance. But receiving his pardon soon afterward, Alexander returned, and accompanied Philip in an expedition against the Triballi, when he saved his life on the field. Philip, being appointed generalissimo of the Greeks, was preparing for a war with Persia, when he was assassinated (336 B.C.E.). Alexander, not yet twenty years of age, ascended the throne.

1. Can you imagine becoming king at such a young age? How might you react to suddenly having so much power?

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After punishing his father's murderers, Alexander marched on Corinth, and in a general assembly of the Greeks he caused himself to be appointed to the command of the forces against Persia. On his return to Macedon, he found the Illyrians and Triballi up in arms, whereupon he

forced his way through Thrace, and was everywhere victorious.

But now the Thebans had been induced, by a report of his death, to take up arms, and the Athenians, stimulated by the eloquence of Demosthenes, were preparing to join them. To prevent this coalition, Alexander rapidly marched against Thebes,

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which, refusing to surrender, was conquered and razed to the ground. Six thousand of the inhabitants were slain, and 30,000 sold into slavery; the house and descendants of the poet Pindar alone being spared. This severity struck terror into all Greece. The Athenians were treated with more leniency.

Alexander, having appointed Antipater his deputy in Europe, now prepared to prosecute the war with Persia. He crossed the Hellespont in the spring of 334 B.C.E. with 30,000 foot and 5,000 horse, attacked the Persian satraps at the River Granicus, and gained a complete victory, overthrowing the son-in-law of their king Darius with his own lance. As a result of the battle, most of the cities of Asia

Minor at once opened their gates to the conqueror.

Alexander restored democracy in all the Greek cities; and as he passed through Gordium, cut the Gordian Knot, which none should loose but the ruler of Asia.

During a dangerous illness at Tarsus, brought on by bathing in the Cydnus, he received a letter insinuating that Philip, his physician, had been bribed by Darius to poison him. Alexander handed the letter to Philip, and at the same time swallowed the draught which the latter had prepared. As soon as he recovered, he advanced toward the defiles of Cilicia, in which Darius had stationed himself with an army of 600,000 men.

### Matching Questions

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Alexander's tutor
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Alexander's deputy in Europe
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Birthplace of Alexander the Great
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Father of Alexander the Great
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Greek city that was conquered and razed after refusing to surrender to Alexander
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Legendary item that symbolized the right to rule in Asia
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Mother of Alexander the Great
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Site of Alexander's defeat of a Persian force in 334 B.C.E.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Where Alexander overthrew the Sacred Band of Thebans

### Matching Questions Answer Bank

- |                       |                  |                         |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| (A) Antipater         | (B) Aristotle    | (C) Battle of Chaeronea |
| (D) Darius            | (E) Gordian Knot | (F) Granicus            |
| (G) Hellespont        | (H) Olympias     | (I) Pella               |
| (J) Philip of Macedon | (K) Pindar       | (L) Thebes              |

Alexander arrived in November, 333 B.C.E., in the neighborhood of Issus. There, on the narrow plain between the mountains and the sea, the unwieldy masses of the Persians were thrown into confusion by the charge of the Macedonians, and fled in terror. On the left wing, 30,000 Greek mercenaries held out longer, but they, too, were at length compelled to yield. All the treasures as well as the family of Darius fell into the hands of the conqueror, who treated them with the greatest magnanimity. Overtures for peace, made by Darius on the basis of surrendering to Alexander all Asia west of the Euphrates, were rejected.

Alexander now turned toward Syria and Phoenicia. He occupied Damascus, where he found princely treasures, and secured to himself all the cities along the

shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Tyre, confident in its strong position, resisted him, but was conquered and destroyed, after seven months of incredible exertion (332 B.C.E.). Thence Alexander marched victoriously through Palestine, where all the cities submitted to him except Gaza; it shared the same fate as Tyre.

Egypt, weary of the Persian yoke, welcomed him as a deliverer. And, in order to strengthen his dominion here, he restored all the old customs and religious institutions of the country, and founded Alexandria in the beginning of 331 B.C.E. Thence he marched through the Libyan Desert, in order to consult the oracle of Ammon, whose priest saluted him as a son of Zeus. Alexander returned with the conviction that he was indeed a god.

11. The Egyptians bitterly fought against Alexander's forces.

- a. True                      b. False

12. At Ammon, Alexander was told he was a son of Zeus.

- a. True                      b. False

### Word Search Puzzle

M	E	D	I	T	E	R	R	A	N	E	A	N	O	Y
A	E	H	E	L	T	T	A	B	I	Y	E	N	E	T
C	U	R	P	F	D	E	L	C	A	R	O	R	E	I
E	A	J	C	O	N	Q	U	E	R	Z	Y	A	G	M
D	V	Q	G	E	U	P	H	R	A	T	E	S	Y	I
O	P	H	O	E	N	I	C	I	A	Z	A	G	P	N
N	B	R	I	T	D	A	M	A	S	C	U	S	T	A
I	S	N	O	M	M	A	R	G	R	E	E	K	S	N
A	L	E	X	A	N	D	R	I	A	K	X	B	D	G
N	P	A	L	E	S	T	I	N	E	W	C	L	C	A
S	N	A	I	S	R	E	P	M	I	S	S	U	S	M

Alexandria  
Ammon  
battle  
conquer  
Damascus  
Egypt  
Euphrates  
Gaza  
Greeks  
Issus

Macedonians  
magnanimity  
Mediterranean  
mercenaries  
oracle  
Palestine  
Persians  
Phoenicia  
Syria  
Tyre

Alexander then again set out to meet Darius. In October, 331 B.C.E., a great battle was fought on the plain stretching eastward to Arbela. Notwithstanding the immense superiority of his adversary, who had collected a new army of more than a million men, Alexander was not for a moment doubtful of victory. Heading the cavalry himself, he rushed on the Persians, and put them to flight; then hastened to the assistance of his left wing, which, in the meanwhile, had been surely pressed. Alexander was anxious to make Darius a prisoner, but Darius escaped on horseback, leaving his baggage and all his treasures a prey to the conqueror. Babylon and Susa, the treasure-houses of the East, opened their gates to Alexander, who next marched toward Persepolis, the capital of Persia, which he entered in triumph.

The marvelous successes of Alexander now began to dazzle his judgment and to inflame his passions. He became a slave to debauchery, and his caprices were as cruel as they were ungrateful. In a fit of drunkenness, and at the instigation of Thaïs, an Athenian courtesan, he set fire to Persepolis, the wonder of the world, and reduced it to a heap of ashes. Then, ashamed of the deed, he set out with his cavalry in pursuit of Darius. Learning that Bessus, the Bactrian satrap, held him a prisoner, he hastened his march, in the hope of saving him, but he found him mortally wounded (330 B.C.E.). Alexander mourned over his fallen enemy, and caused him to be buried with all the customary honors, while he hunted down Bessus, who himself aspired to the throne, chasing him over the Oxus to Sogdiana (Bokhara).

13. Imagine that you are Alexander. At nineteen, you became king. Within a few short years, you have conquered most of the known world. To top it all off, you have been told that you are the son of Zeus. How might you behave? How might your personality be different from what it is now?

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Having discovered a conspiracy in which the son of Parmenio was implicated, Alexander put both father and son to death, though Parmenio himself was innocent of any knowledge of the affair. This cruel injustice excited universal displeasure.

In 329 B.C.E. Alexander penetrated to the farthest known limits of Northern Asia, and overthrew the Scythians on the banks of the Jaxartes. In the following year he subdued the whole of Sogdiana, and married Roxana, whom he had taken prisoner. She was the daughter of Oxyartes,

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one of the enemy's captains, and was said to be the fairest of all the virgins of Asia.

The murder of his foster-brother, Clitus, in a drunken brawl, was followed, in 327 B.C.E., by the discovery of a fresh conspiracy, in which Callisthenes, a nephew of Aristotle, was falsely implicated. For challenging Alexander's divinity, he was cruelly tortured and hanged.

In 327 B.C.E., proceeding to the conquest of India, hitherto known only by name, Alexander crossed the Indus near to the modern Attock, and pursued his way under the guidance of a native prince to the Hydaspes (Jhelum). He there was opposed by Porus, another native prince, whom he overthrew after a bloody contest. It was there that he lost his charger (horse) Bucephalus.

Thence Alexander marched as lord of the country, through the Punjab, establishing

Greek colonies. He then wished to advance to the Ganges, but the general murmuring of his troops obliged him, at the Hyphasis (modern Sutlej), to commence his retreat. On regaining the Hydaspes, he built a fleet, and sent one division of his army in it down the river, while the other followed along the banks, fighting its way through successive Indian armies. At length, having reached the ocean, he ordered Nearchus, the commander of the fleet, to sail thence to the Persian Gulf, while he himself struck inland with one division of his army, in order to return home through Gedrosia (Beluchistan). During this march his forces suffered fearfully from want of food and water. Of all the troops which had set out with Alexander, little more than a fourth part arrived with him in Persia (325 B.C.E.).



*Alexander discovering the body of Darius.*



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14. Who was said to be “the fairest of all the virgins of Asia”?

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15. What was the name of Alexander the Great’s beloved horse?

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16. Alexander and his troops reached the Arabian Sea.

- a. True                      b. False

At Susa Alexander married Stateira, the daughter of Darius, and he bestowed presents on those Macedonians (some ten thousand in number) who had married Persian women, his design being to unite the two nations. He also distributed liberal rewards among his soldiers. Soon afterward he was deprived, by death, of his favorite Hephestion. Alexander’s grief was unbounded, and he interred the dead man with kingly honors. As he was returning from Ecbatana to Babylon, it is said that the Magi foretold that the latter city would prove fatal to him; but he despised their warnings. On the way, he was met by ambassadors from all parts of the world—Libya, Italy, Carthage, Greece, the Scythians, Celts, and Iberians.

At Babylon, Alexander was busy with gigantic plans for the future, both of conquest and civilization, when he was suddenly taken ill after a banquet. He died eleven days later, 323 B.C.E., in the thirty-second year of his age, and the thirteenth of his reign. His body was deposited in a golden coffin at Alexandria, by Ptolemæus (Ptolemy), and divine honors were paid to him, not only in Egypt, but in other countries.

17. Alexander discouraged his Greek troops from marrying women in the lands they conquered.

- a. True                      b. False

18. Where did Alexander the Great die?

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19. Where was Alexander the Great buried?

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The wonderful element in the campaigns of Alexander, and his tragic death at the height of his power, threw a rare romantic interest around his figure. It is ever the fate of a great name to be enshrined in fable, and Alexander soon became the hero of romantic story, scarcely more wonderful than the actual, but growing from age to age with the mythopœic spirit which can work as freely in fact as fiction.

The earliest form of the story which we know is the great romance connected with the name of Callisthenes, which, under the influence of the living popular tradition, arose in Egypt about 200 C.E., and was carried through Latin translations to the West, and through Armenian and Syriac versions to the East. It became widely popular during the Middle Ages, and was worked into poetic form by many writers in French and German. Alberich of Besançon (in modern France) wrote in Middle High German an epic on the subject in the first half of the twelfth century, which was the basis of the German “Pfaffe” and Lamprecht's “Alexanderbuch,” also of the twelfth century.

The French poets Lambert li Court and Alexandre de Bernay composed, between 1180 and 1190, a romance of Alexander, the twelve-syllable meter of which gave rise to the name Alexandrines. The German poem of “Rudolf of Ems” was based on the Latin epic of Walter of Châtillon, about 1200, which became henceforward the prevailing form of the story. In contrast with it is the thirteenth-century Old English epic of Alexander, based on the Callisthenes version.

The story appears also in the East, worked up in conjunction with myths of other nationalities, especially the Persian. It appears in Firdusi, and among later writers, in Nizami. From the Persians both the substance of the story and its form in poetical treatment have extended to Turks and other Muslims, who have interpreted Alexander as the Dsulkarnein (“two horned”) of the Koran, and to the Hindus, which last had preserved no independent traditions of Alexander.

21. What is it about the life of Alexander the Great that continues to make him a fascinating historical figure?

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22. Name three works of literature that mention or include Alexander the Great.

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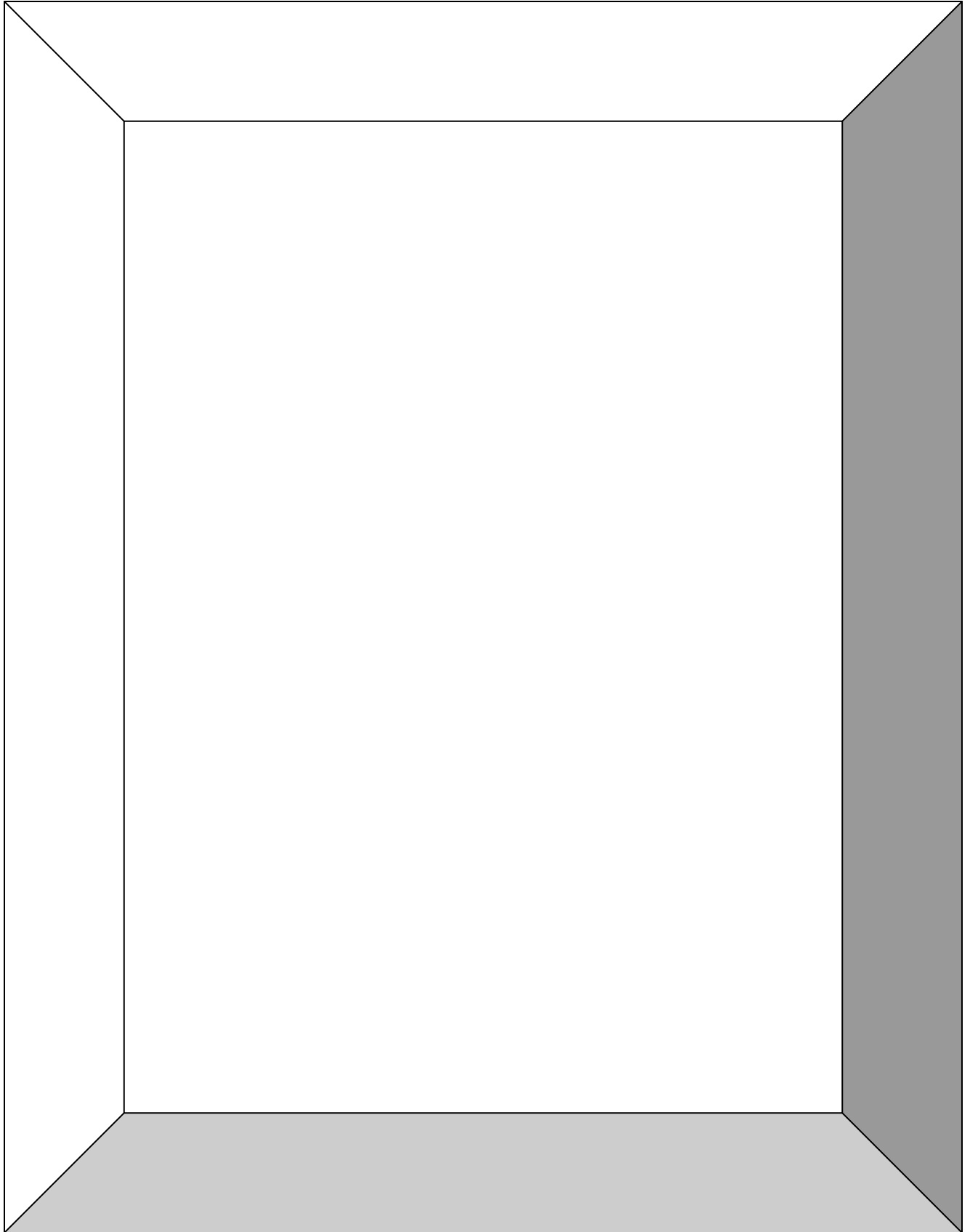
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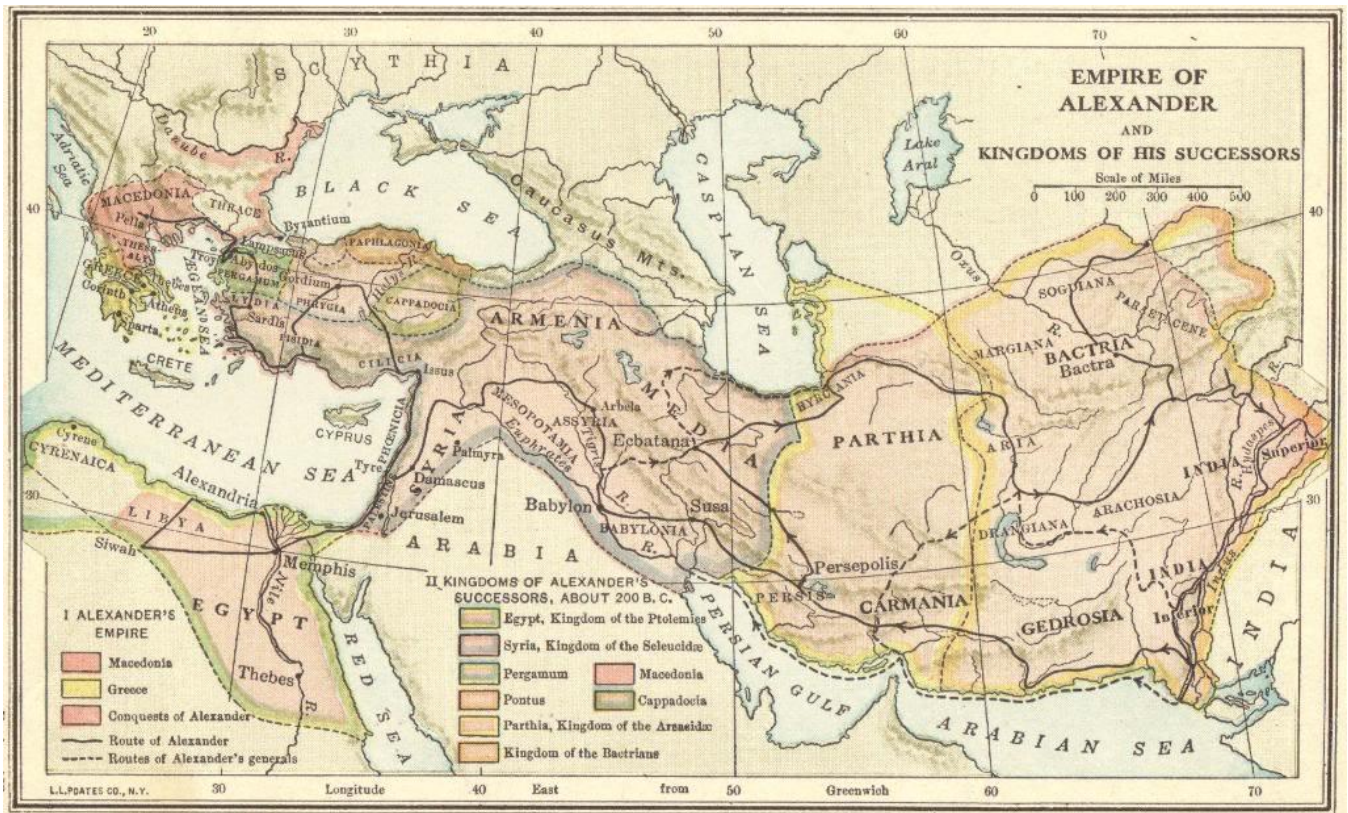
## Artistic Expression

Select and illustrate a scene from the life of Alexander the Great.



# The Life of Alexander the Great

## Map Work



23. Which of the following modern countries was **not** conquered by Alexander the Great?

- a. Egypt
- b. Iran
- c. Lebanon
- d. Ukraine

24. Place a yellow star over the city where Alexander the Great was born.

25. Place a black star over the city where Alexander the Great died.

26. Place a blue star over the city where Alexander the Great was buried.