

# Macedonia, Alexander the Great, and the Hellenistic World

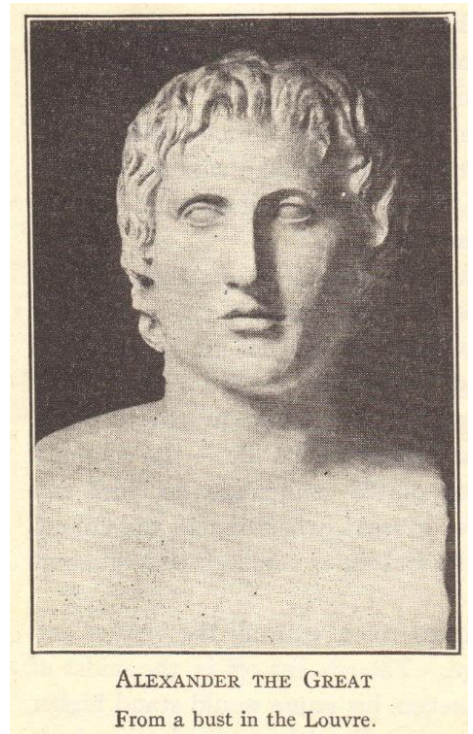
# Macedonia

- Macedonians were culturally and ethnically related to the Greeks
  - Actually looked upon as sort of “barbarian cousins” by the Greeks of Athens, Sparta, etc.
- King Philip II of Macedonia
  - Expanded his territory north to the Danube River and south into the Greek peninsula
  - Conquered all city-states except Sparta by 338 B.C.E.
  - Killed while planning to attack Persia (336 B.C.E.)



# Alexander the Great

- Tutored by the philosopher Aristotle
- Precarious position because his mother was not Macedonian (making Alexander half Macedonian), and his father took a Macedonian as a new wife
- Wanted to conquer Persia like his father
- Wanted to spread Greek culture throughout the world



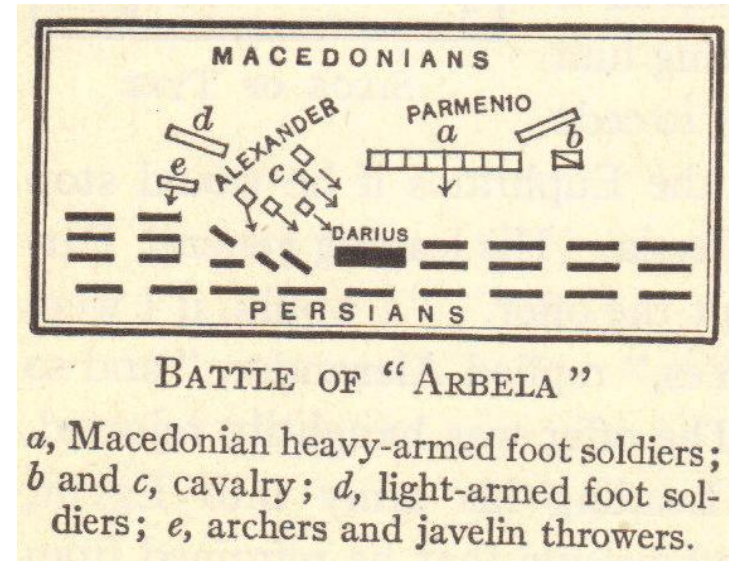
# Alexander the Great

- Philip was killed by companions of Alexander
- Alexander came to the throne at age 20 (336 B.C.E.)



# Alexander the Great

- First put down local revolts, including destroying **Thebes**
- Invasion of **Persia** and beyond
  - 35,000 troops
  - **Granicus** (334 B.C.E.)
  - **Issus** (333 B.C.E.)
  - **Arbela** (331 B.C.E.)
  - City-states along the **Mediterranean**
    - Phoenician **Tyre**
  - **Egypt**
    - Founded **Alexandria**
  - **India**
    - Reached **Indus River**
  - Set up capital in **Babylon** (located in modern-day **Iraq**) in 324 B.C.E.
- Died of a fever in 323 B.C.E. at age 33







### DEATH OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

From a modern painting. Around his bed were gathered his generals. They asked whom he wished to succeed him. Drawing his signet ring from his finger, he said, "To the strongest."

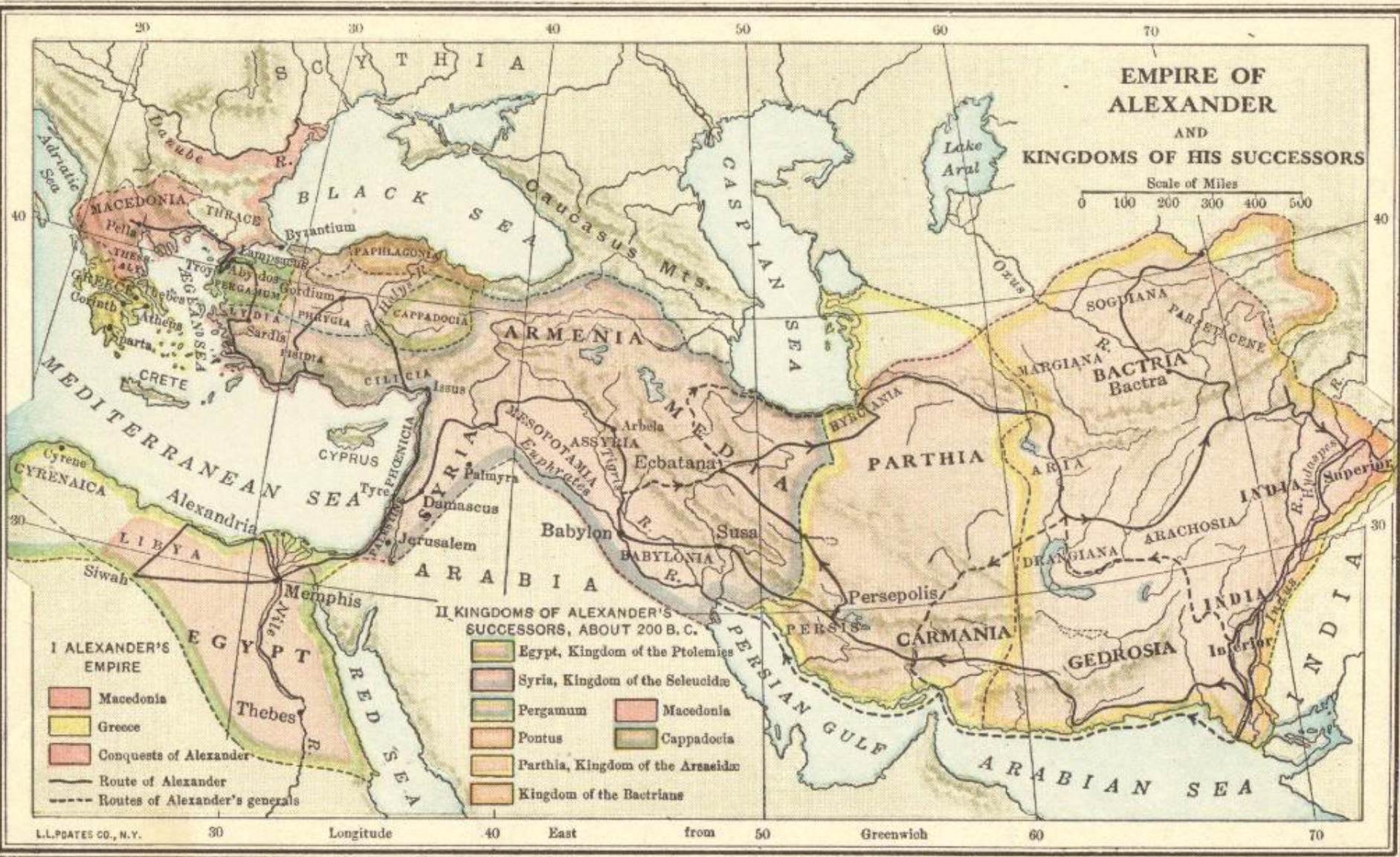
# Alexander's Empire

- Fell apart after Alexander's death
- Generals fought for control of empire
- Empire divided
  - **Egypt** – Ptolemy
  - **Most of Asian empire** – Seleucus
  - **Macedonia and Greece** – Antigonus
- New dynasties ruled for hundreds of years until conquered by Rome

# Alexander's Impact on World History

- Spread Greek culture beyond the Greeks
  - “**Pan-Hellenism**”
  - Founded numerous cities
  - Married a daughter of Darius
    - Encouraged his soldiers to take Persian wives
  - Worshiped foreign gods and goddesses
    - Recognized as foreign incarnations of Greek gods
  - Encouraged trade throughout his empire
  - Settled Greeks throughout his empire
    - Greek culture became “**Hellenistic**” as it spread and mingled with other cultures





**EMPIRE OF  
ALEXANDER  
AND  
KINGDOMS OF HIS SUCCESSORS**

Scale of Miles  
0 100 200 300 400 500

**I ALEXANDER'S  
EMPIRE**

- Macedonia
- Greece
- Conquests of Alexander
- Route of Alexander
- Routes of Alexander's generals

**II KINGDOMS OF ALEXANDER'S  
SUCCESSORS, ABOUT 200 B. C.**

- Egypt, Kingdom of the Ptolemies
- Syria, Kingdom of the Seleucides
- Pergamum
- Pontus
- Parthia, Kingdom of the Arsacides
- Kingdom of the Bactrians
- Macedonia
- Cappadocia

L.L. POATES CO., N. Y.      30      Longitude      40      East      from      50      Greenwich      60      70

# Alexandria, Egypt

- City in Egypt founded by, and named after, Alexander the Great
- Ptolemy came to rule Egypt after Alexander's death
- Ptolemies built a university in Alexandria –  
“Library of Alexandria”
  - Included 700,000 volumes written on papyrus
  - Center of research and scholarship



# Hellenistic Science

- Many practical, useful inventions
- **Euclid** (lived circa 300 B.C.E.)
  - Greek who lived and worked in Alexandria, Egypt
  - “Father of Geometry”
    - Theorems in plane geometry (“Euclidean geometry”)
- **Archimedes** (circa 287 B.C.E.-circa 212 B.C.E.)
  - Greek who lived and worked in Sicily
  - Principle of specific gravity
  - Law of floating bodies
  - Used levers, pulleys, and screws to build things such as catapults

# Hellenistic Science

- **Eratosthenes** (circa 276 B.C.E.-circa 195 B.C.E.)
  - Greek born in modern-day Libya
  - Geographer and librarian of Alexandria, Egypt
  - Closely determined the earth's diameter
  - Measured earth's distance from the sun with 99% accuracy
  - Used lines of longitude and latitude on a map
  - Believed earth is round
    - One could sail India by sailing west
- **Aristarchus of Samos** (310 B.C.E.-circa 230 B.C.E.)
  - Heliocentric model – first to advocate that the earth revolves around the sun
- **Hipparchus** (circa 190 B.C.E.-120 B.C.E.)
  - Invented plane and spherical trigonometry
  - Predicted eclipses of the moon and sun



# Hellenistic Art and Architecture

- **Architecture**
  - Built many impressive public buildings
  - Baths, libraries, palaces, theaters
  - Pharos – lighthouse of Alexandria – 400 feet high
- **Art**
  - More lifelike – showed more expression
  - Action, grief, motion, pain
  - *The Death of Laocoon, Winged Victory of Samothrace, Venus de Milo*



THE NIKE OR WINGED VICTORY OF SAMOTHRACE

# Hellenistic Philosophy

- **Cynics (Cynicism)**
  - Diogenes (412-323 B.C.E.)
  - Hatred of power and worldly possessions
- **Stoics (Stoicism)**
  - Zeno of Citium (334-262 B.C.E.)
  - Acceptance, courage, patience
  - Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180 C.E.) was a Stoic philosopher (wrote *Confessions*)
  - Stoic belief in human brotherhood influenced Christianity
- **Epicureans (Epicureanism)**
  - Epicurus (341-270 B.C.E.)
  - No life after death
  - Pleasure and pain measure what is good and bad
  - Life is to be enjoyed, particularly by searching for knowledge



# Hellenistic Literature

- Few Hellenistic works had enduring value
- Preserved classical Greek heritage
  - Spread throughout Alexander's former empire
  - Particularly at Alexandria, Egypt
  - Middle East kept and preserved Greek heritage during the fall of Rome and Europe's Dark Ages
    - Europeans rediscovered this Greek heritage during the Crusades

# Hellenistic Culture in the Roman World

- Greek cities of southern Italy piqued Roman interest in Greek culture
  - Many southern Italian, Sicilian, and other Mediterranean cities which came under Roman control had been founded by Greeks
- Romans spread Greek culture throughout their own empire
  - Much Roman art generally copied Greek art

# Hellenistic Civilization Declines

- Endured for approximately 300 years
- Wealth and power in the hands of a few
- Reliance on slavery
  - Free persons could not find work
  - Slave labor cheaper (in the short-term) than investments in new inventions and technologies
  - Slave revolts
- Continuous warfare among city-states
- Easy target for Roman conquest



# Review Questions

1. Under what circumstances did Alexander the Great come to the Macedonian throne?
2. Name at least three modern-day countries which were conquered by Alexander the Great.
3. What does the term *Hellenistic* mean?
4. Describe the work of a Hellenistic scientist or mathematician.
5. Describe a Hellenistic philosophy.
6. What caused the fall of Hellenistic society?
7. Imagine that you are a Babylonian living during the time of Alexander. How might you view Alexander's conquests? Would you consider him "great"?