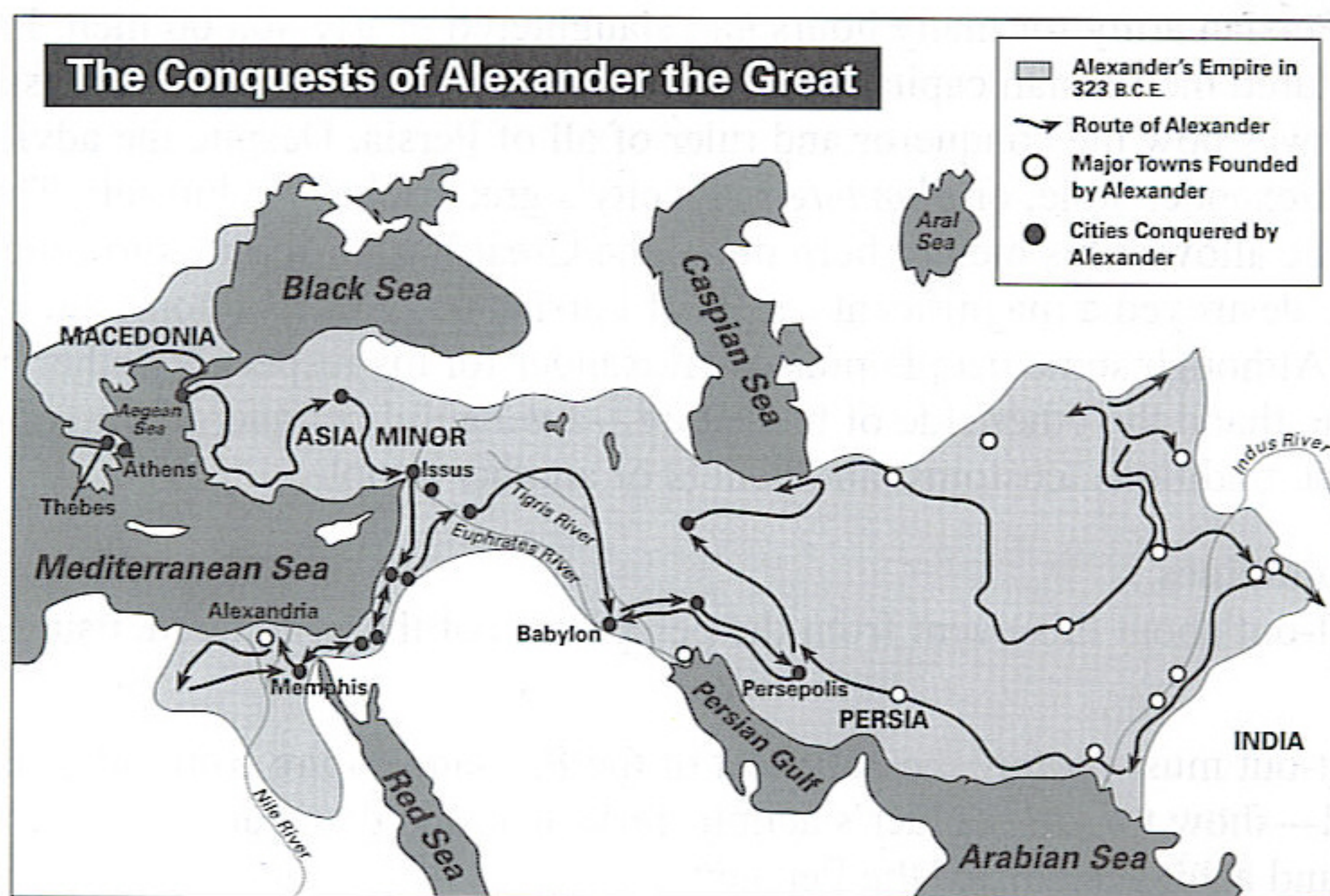


Information About Event C: Alexander in Persia from the Perspective of Conquered



When Alexander the Great set out for Asia Minor in 334 B.C.E. with 35,000 troops, the Persian Empire was the largest in the world. Its territory stretched thousands of miles, across deserts and mountains, from Egypt to India.

The Persians knew that since the Persian Wars in the fifth century B.C.E., during which Persians destroyed many Greek cities, the Greeks had dreamed of revenge. However, by the time of Alexander the Great, Persia no longer posed a military threat to the Greeks. The only threat Persia posed to Greece was economic competition—the two were rivals for control of the trade routes in the eastern Mediterranean. Nevertheless, driven by revenge and his own burning desire to rule vast lands, Alexander set out to conquer Persia.

Alexander's military campaign against the Persian Empire was brutal and relentless. While some of his strategies were well planned, more often he relied on simple brute force against the Persians, without regard for the casualties they or his own troops might suffer. Alexander's chief strategy was often to create a line of troops heavily armed with javelins and spears, or a *phalanx* (pronounced FAL-anks), and charge directly at the enemy.

In one of the most famous battles—the Battle of Issus (pronounced ISS-uss) in 333 B.C.E.—Persian forces killed a great number of Alexander's troops, despite his strategies and tactics. Many historians believe that the Persians could have won this battle if their leader, King Darius III (pronounced DAHR-ee-yuss), had not panicked and fled the battlefield. Without him, the remainder of the Persian army scattered in retreat, leaving Alexander to claim victory.

In some cases, Alexander showed respect for the conquered Persians, appointing Persian governors to rule territories and allowing the Persian people to continue practicing their religious beliefs. However, Alexander also treated the people and territories he conquered in a

cruel and disrespectful manner. For example, when he attacked Tyre (pronounced TY-ur), a Phoenician island city belonging to the Persian Empire, the citizens fought back strongly for eight months. When Alexander finally captured the city, he was so furious that he sold most of the city's 30,000 people into slavery. During another battle, Alexander and his troops pursued the retreating Persian army for many hours and slaughtered nearly 40,000 men. Finally, Alexander captured the Persian capital of Persepolis (pronounced pur-SEP-oh-liss) without opposition. He was now the conqueror and ruler of all of Persia. Despite the advice of even his closest aides, Alexander stole, or *plundered*, the city's great riches for himself. Then, in a drunken state, he allowed his men to burn down the Great Palace and its surrounding temples. Alexander thus destroyed a magnificent center of Persian culture, traditions, and artistic achievements. Although some people praised Alexander for his respect for other cultures, the Persians saw firsthand the other side of his nature—a vengeful conqueror who often had a total disregard for the traditions, customs, and beliefs of another people.

Act-It-Out Guidelines

Create an act-it-out about this event from the perspective of the conquered, using these guidelines:

1. Your act-it-out must portray the conquest of the Persian Empire from the perspective of the conquered—show that Alexander's actions reflected total disregard for the traditions, customs, and achievements of the Persians.
2. Study the role cards below to help group members understand what information should be included in your act-it-out.
3. Brainstorm simple actions and lines of dialogue that will help you dramatically convey the information on the role cards.
4. Practice performing your act-it-out so that it incorporates all group members and can be presented in less than 2 minutes.

Role Cards

Alexander: Explain who you are. Explain why you wanted to conquer the Persian Empire, even though it was no longer a military threat to Greece. Brag to the class that you were in a drunken state when you ordered your forces to burn and loot Persepolis.

Macedonian general: Introduce yourself to the class as Perdikkas (pronounced purr-DEE-kahs), one of Alexander's generals. Explain how Alexander's strategy of charging directly at an enemy resulted in his forces suffering numerous casualties. Tell the class that had Darius not fled from Issus, the Persians would have won the battle.

Resident of Tyre: Introduce yourself to the class as Bardiya (pronounced BAR-dee-ah), a Persian resident of Tyre. Explain how Alexander lost his temper and sold most of Tyre's people into slavery. Tell the class that following the conquest of Tyre, Alexander's army slaughtered 40,000 Persian soldiers.

Resident of Persepolis: Introduce yourself to the class as Arsames (pronounced AR-sah-muss), a resident of Persepolis. Explain how Alexander allowed Persepolis to be burned and looted. Tell the class that Alexander's destruction of Persepolis reveals that he is nothing more than a vengeful conqueror.