



0. CHASING DARIUS III - Story Preface
1. LEARNING FROM ARISTOTLE
2. THE YOUNG ALEXANDER
3. ALEXANDER'S HOMETOWN
4. ASSASSINATION OF PHILIP II
5. DISCOVERY OF PHILIP'S TOMB
6. ROYAL TREASURES
7. ALEXANDER'S BEQUEST
8. ALEXANDER'S EARLY CONQUESTS
- 9. CHASING DARIUS III**
10. GAUGAMELA AND THE END OF DARIUS
11. ELEPHANTS IN WAR
12. VICTORY IN INDIA
13. GOING HOME
14. ALEXANDER'S DEATH
15. ALEXANDER'S JOURNEY IN PICTURES
16. THE REST OF THE STORY

In this close-up of a mosaic, discovered at the House of the Faun in the ruins of Pompeii, we see Darius III in a battle against Alexander the Great. Today the mosaic is maintained at the Naples National Archaeological Museum (in Naples, Italy).

Of all the foes Alexander wanted to best, his primary objective was Darius III (not to be confused with [Darius I](#), who was also known as Darius the Great).

Head of the Persian Empire, Darius was used to winning his battles. But he was not accustomed to opposing adversaries whose military genius and strategy were equal to, or better than, his own.

While Alexander used the strategies and battle formations developed by his father, his ability to improvise on short notice was just one mark of his outstanding leadership.

One of his early plans was to liberate the Greek cities along the eastern Aegean Sea, on the mainland of Asia Minor. Crossing the sea with his men, Alexander's first stop was at Troy where he visited the grave of Achilles and paid homage to the gods. (That moment was [artistically depicted](#), nearly 2000 years later, by the German painter Johann Schoenfeld.)

He then turned south with his men, personally leading the Companion Cavalry.

Darius, meanwhile, was at his remote capital in Susa. Alexander's reputation was still in-the-making, and the Persian leader thought his troops could be capably managed by the governors of his western provinces. (They were aided by a Greek mercenary, Memnon the Rhodian, who had already proved his mettle in prior Macedonian battles).

The [battle](#) at the [Granicus](#), a river in Asia Minor, sent Darius the message that Alexander was no ordinary foe.

In 333, Alexander [met Darius](#) at the mountain pass at [Issus](#). Although greatly [outnumbered](#), the Macedonian leader took advantage of the narrow field of [battle](#) and worked it to his advantage.

Not used to such brilliant strategy from his opponents, Darius was shocked by Alexander's ability. A famous mosaic, discovered in the excavations of [Pompeii](#), graphically depicts Darius' surprise. Believed to be based on a contemporary drawing, the Pompeii mosaic is the source of the most commonly used pictures of both [Alexander](#) and [Darius](#).

The work is now called the "Alexander Mosaic" and was originally found at the House of the Faun in Pompeii. It is maintained today at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale Napoli (the National Archeology Museum in Naples). It is believed the [entire work](#) portrays the battle of Issus.

Despite his surprise at Alexander's tactics, Darius escaped.

Thereafter, marching down the Mediterranean Coast, into Damascus, Alexander [captured](#) the [family](#) and [war](#)

chest of the Persian ruler. As he victoriously continued down the Phoenician coast, he easily captured every city except Tyre. It took a seven-month siege before that city gave up as well.

Having secured the eastern Aegean, Alexander and his men headed to Egypt where he founded the city of Alexandria. Ultimately one of the cultural centers of the known world, it was home of the famous Pharos lighthouse (one of the wonders of the ancient world) and of the Great Library (a center of learning until it was destroyed).

Chasing Darius was still on Alexander's mind as he left Egypt in 331. Having captured territory between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers (in today's Iraq), Alexander's men found the Persians at the Plain of Gaugamela. This battle, and its aftermath, would mark a turning point for the Persian leader.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/CHASING-DARIUS-III-Alexander-the-Great>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/CHASING-DARIUS-III-Alexander-the-Great>

Media Stream



Alexander Paying Homage to the Gods - Schönfeld Painting

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Alexander-Paying-Homage-to-the-Gods-Sch-nfeld-Painting>



Alexander - Crossing of the Granicus

Image online via Digischool (a Dutch-language website).

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Alexander-Crossing-of-the-Granicus>



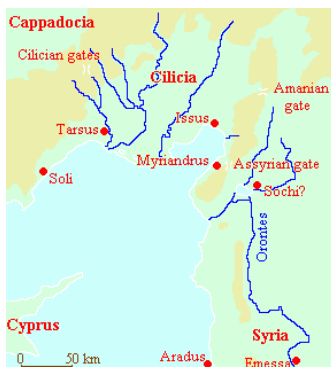
Alexander Meets Darius - Artist Conception

Image, described above, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons. PD

The linked image, of Iskenderun, depicts a 2012 photo of Iskenderun by Locus1891. License: [CC BY-SA 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)

View this asset at:

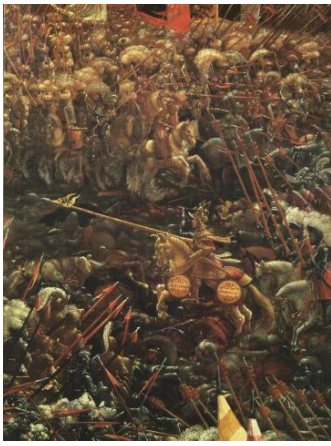
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Alexander-Meets-Darius-Artist-Conception>



Issus - Map Locator

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

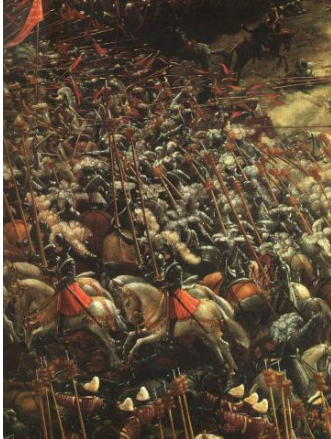
View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Issus-Map-Locator>



Battle of Alexander at Issus

Image from the WebMuseum. Online, courtesy ibiblio.org website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Battle-of-Alexander-at-Issus>



Fighting Troops at the Battle of Issus

Image from the WebMuseum. Online, courtesy ibiblio.org website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Fighting-Troops-at-the-Battle-of-Issus>



Mosaic of Alexander Discovered in Pompeii

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Mosaic-of-Alexander-Discovered-in-Pompeii>



Pompeii - Alexander and Darius in Battle

Image uploaded by Magrippa and online via Wikimedia Commons.

LICENSE: [GNU Free Documentation License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Pompeii-Alexander-and-Darius-in-Battle>



Conquests of Alexander Along the Mediterranean Coast

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Conquests-of-Alexander-Along-the-Mediterranean-Coast->



Alexander the Great as Ruler

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Alexander-the-Great-as-Ruler>

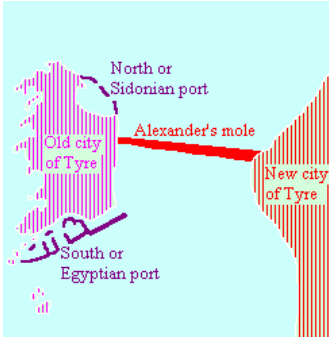


Alexander Collecting the Spoils of War

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Alexander-Collecting-the-Spoils-of-War>



Tyre - Map of Alexander's Causeway

Image online, courtesy the truthnet.org website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Tyre-Map-of-Alexander-s-Causeway>



Mosaic of Darius Discovered in Pompeii

Image online, courtesy the livius.org website.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Mosaic-of-Darius-Discovered-in-Pompeii>



Plain of Gaugamela - Satellite View

Image online, courtesy NASA.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Plain-of-Gaugamela-Satellite-View>



CHASING DARIUS III

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/>