



Who was Alexander the Great?; Who was Tutankhamun?

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Reviewer:

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Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

This is a new series of children's biographies of figures in ancient history, and its presentation is familiar. There are double page spreads and the information is served up in paragraph chunks, headed with black boxed questions like, 'What happened when a king died?' and 'How did Macedonia come to be so powerful?' The illustrations come from the Hollywood school of dramatic historical reconstruction and, although the two titles have different illustrators, it is difficult to see any distinctiveness of style. The concept and design of the books is conservative and inflexible. Both titles have maps on the endpapers but none in the body of the text, where they would have been a great help, particularly in following Alexander's conquests.

Nasmyth's texts, which do an excellent job of integrating chronology, historical background and personality, offering knowledgeable introductions to their subjects for 8-12 year olds are the best thing about these titles. The way in which Nasmyth draws inferences about Tutankhamun and his time from the objects found in the tomb is a simple, but effective, illustration of the way in which archaeological evidence is used. His writing is clear and logical; take out the black boxes, and his prose might even flow. There are good glossaries and indexes. Space ought to have been found for 'further reading' lists.

Running Order:

95

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