



OLD MARKET WOMAN, third or second century B.C.E.

In the great cosmopolitan cities of the Hellenistic world, many people lived in poverty and struggled all their lives just to survive. Artists began to portray these people in realistic images that were much less heroic than those favored by earlier Greek artists. Change was afoot in the Greek world.

The Poleis Become Cosmopolitan

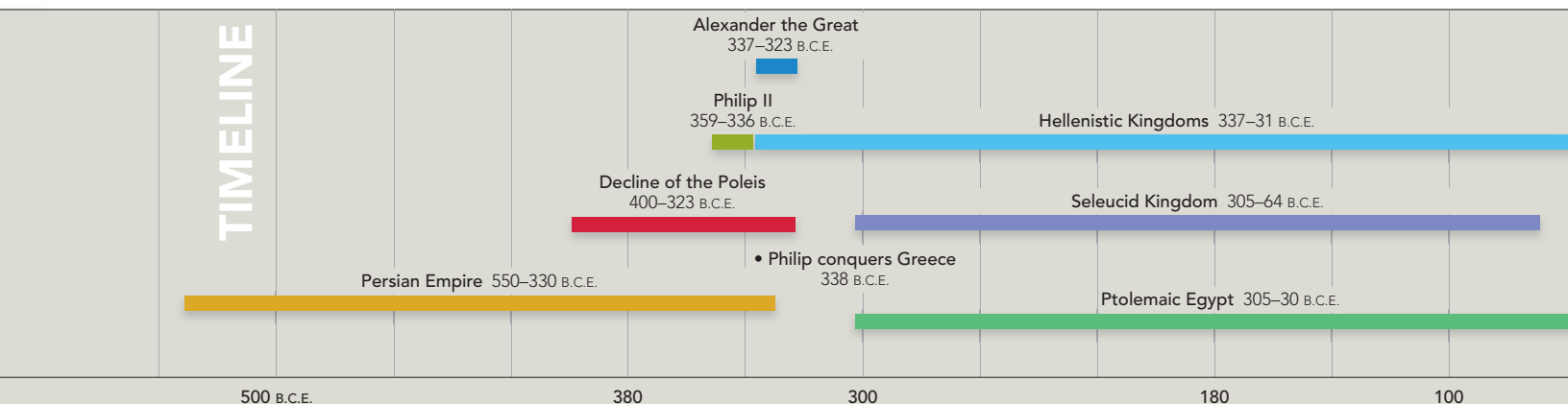
3

The Hellenistic World, 336–150 B.C.E.

Alexander “conducted himself as he did out of a desire to subject all the races in the world to one rule and one form of government making all mankind a single people.” The Greek biographer Plutarch (46–119 C.E.) wrote these words four hundred years after the death of the Macedonian king Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.E.). In his description of Alexander, Plutarch attributed high ideals to the young conqueror that Alexander himself may not have held. However, the biographer’s glowing portrayal captured the reality of Alexander’s conquests, whereby he joined the great civilizations of the ancient Middle East and classical Greece in a way that transformed them both.

This new world that began in 336 B.C.E. with Alexander’s conquest of Persia was described as “Hellenistic” (meaning “Greek-like”) by nineteenth-century historians. During this time, the ideal Greek poleis changed from scattered, independent city-states into large, multiethnic urban centers—what the Greeks called “world cities,” or cosmopolitan sites—firmly anchored within substantial kingdoms. Greek colonists achieved high status in the new cities springing up far from the Greek mainland, making the Greek language and culture the ruling ideal from Egypt to India. In this Hellenistic age, classical Greek culture was in turn altered through the influences of the subject peoples, and the new world left the old world of the Greek mainland behind. Society, economy, and politics all played out on a larger scale, and kings, rather than citizens, now ruled. Royal patronage stimulated intellectual and cultural achievement among the privileged classes, while ordinary people struggled to find their place in a new world.

The Hellenistic culture continued even as these kingdoms were conquered by Rome, the next power to rise in the West. In this chapter, we will see the origins and characteristics of this cosmopolitan culture that endured for so long.



PREVIEW

THE CONQUEST OF THE POLEIS

Learn how Macedonia conquered Greece and how Alexander conquered the Persian Empire.

THE SUCCESSOR KINGDOMS,

323–ca. 100 B.C.E.

Study the Hellenistic kingdoms that emerged after the death of Alexander.

EAST MEETS WEST IN THE SUCCESSOR KINGDOMS

Explore the economy, culture, and military of the Hellenistic kingdoms.

THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH: HELLENISTIC THOUGHT, RELIGION, AND SCIENCE

Understand Hellenistic theater, philosophy, religion, and science.

it had retained a tribal structure in which aristocrats selected a king and served in his army bound by ties of loyalty and kinship. The southern Greek poleis—populated by self-described “civilized” Greeks—had disdain for the Macedonians, whom they saw as backward because they did not embrace the political life of the city-states.

The Macedonian territory consisted of two distinct parts: the coastal plain to the south and east, and the mountainous interior. The plain offered fertile land for farming and lush pastures in which fine warhorses grazed along with sheep and oxen. The level land of the coastline bordered two bays that afforded access to the Aegean Sea. The Macedonian interior, by contrast, was mountainous and remote and posed the same problems for rulers that the Greek landscape presented. Kings struggled to exert even a little authority over the fierce tribes in the hills. Yet, concealed within the mountains were precious reserves of timber and metals, including abundant veins of gold and silver in the more remote locations.

For centuries, the weak Macedonian kings failed to take full advantage of such treasures, in large part because they could not control the remote tribes. Repeated invasions of Macedonia by its neighbors to the north only added to the problem. Throughout this turbulent period, the southern Greeks thought of Macedonia only as an area to exploit for its natural resources. The Greeks neither helped nor feared their beleaguered relatives to the north and instead focused on keeping their old enemy, Persia, at bay. Nevertheless, eventually a Macedonian king arose who not only succeeded in marshaling the resources of his land but also rerouted the direction of Greek history.

This great king, Philip II (r. 359–336 B.C.E.), had participated in some of the many wars that disrupted Greece during the fourth century B.C.E. (see Chapter 2) and, as a result, had been held hostage as a young man in the Greek city-state of Thebes for three years. During his captivity, he learned much about the strengths and weaknesses of Greek politics and warfare. When he returned to Macedonia, he used his new knowledge to educate his people. As his son Alexander later reminded the Macedonians: “Philip took you over when you were helpless vagabonds mostly clothed in skins, feeding a few animals on the mountains. . . . He gave you cloaks to wear instead of skins, he brought you down from the mountains to the plains. . . . He made you city dwellers and established the order that comes from good laws and customs.”

THE CONQUEST OF THE POLEIS

In 220 B.C.E., an Egyptian father appealed to the Greek king to help him resolve a domestic dispute. He claimed that his daughter, Nice, had abandoned him in his old age. According to the father, Nice had promised to get a job and pay him a pension out of her wages every month. To his dismay, she instead became involved with a comic actor and neglected her filial duties. The father implored the king, Ptolemy IV, to force Nice to care for him, pleading, “I beg you O king, not to suffer me to be wronged by my daughter and Dionysus the comedian who has corrupted her.”

This request—one of many sent to the king during this period—reveals several interesting points about Mediterranean life in the Hellenistic era. For example, it suggests that women worked and earned money instead of staying carefully guarded within the home. It also shows a loosening of the tight family ties that had marked the Greek poleis and the ancient Middle East civilizations—a father could no longer exert authority over his rebellious daughter and could no longer count on his children to care for him in his old age. Finally, it indicates people’s view of their king as the highest authority in redressing personal problems. These were dramatic changes, and to trace their origins, we must look to Macedonia, a province on the northeast border of Greece. There, in a land traditionally ruled by strong monarchs, a king arose who would redefine life in the ancient world.

Tribal Macedonia

Although Macedonia was inhabited by Greek-speaking people, it had not developed the poleis that marked Greek civilization on the peninsula. Instead,

Geography

Uniting the tribes

Philip II: Military Genius

The pride of the Macedonian army was the cavalry, led by the king himself and made up of his nobles,

known as “companions.” Yet Philip showed his military genius in the way he reorganized the supporting forces. The shrewd monarch changed the traditional Greek phalanx, already threatened by a new fighting style that favored lightly armed—and therefore more mobile—foot soldiers. Philip strengthened the phalanx by arming his soldiers with pikes 13 feet long or longer instead of the standard 9-foot weapons. Then he instructed the infantry to arrange themselves in a more open formation, which let them take full advantage of the longer pikes. Philip also hired lightly armed, mobile mercenaries who could augment the Macedonian phalanx with arrows, javelins, and slings.

In battle, the long Macedonian pikes kept opponents at a distance, while the cavalry made the decisive difference in almost every battle. The mounted warriors surrounded the enemy and struck at

Military innovations

their flank, leaving the lightly armed mercenaries to move in to deliver the final blow. This strategy, which combined traditional heavily armed foot soldiers with the mobility of cavalry and light troops, would prove virtually invincible.

Philip also developed weapons for besieging walled cities. During the Peloponnesian War, even mighty Sparta’s only strategy against the sturdy walls of Athens had been to starve the inhabitants to death—a slow and uncertain method. Philip is credited with using a torsion catapult that twisted launching ropes to gain more force than the older models that used counterweights could exert. With this new device, his forces could fire rocks at city walls with deadly force. Although Philip is credited with developing these siege weapons, his son would be the one to successfully use them against many fortified cities.

With his forces reorganized and equipped with the latest weapons, Philip readied himself to expand his kingdom. First, he consolidated his own highlands and the lands to the north and east. These conquests allowed him to exploit the gold and silver mines in the hills, which yielded the riches he needed to finance his campaigns. With his northern flank secure and his treasury full, the conqueror then turned his attention to the warring Greek cities to the south.

Philip dreamed of uniting the Greek city-states under his leadership. Some southern Greeks shared this dream, looking to the Macedonian king to save

Greek responses

them from their own intercity violence. Isocrates (436–338 B.C.E.), an Athenian orator and educator, made eloquent speeches in which he supported Philip’s expansionist aims. Expressing a prevalent disillusionment with democracy, Isocrates argued that the Greeks were incapable of forming a cohesive union without a leader like Philip. In his view, this form of participatory governance had become so corrupt that “violence is regarded as democracy, lawlessness as

liberty, impudence of speech as equality.” Isocrates believed that only Philip could unify the Greeks and empower them to face Asia as one people finally to vanquish their ancient enemy, Persia.

Isocrates’ words were compelling. But Athens had another great orator who opposed Philip and who proved more convincing than Isocrates. Demosthenes (384–322 B.C.E.) argued brilliantly for a position that rejected union under a tyrant like Philip in order to preserve Athens’s traditional freedom and the self-government of the polis. As we saw in Chapter 2, the classic polis had eroded in the aftermath of the Peloponnesian War, but the orator was looking backward to a more golden age of democracy. Historians have characterized Demosthenes as everything from a stubborn, old-fashioned orator to the last champion of the lost cause of Athenian freedom. Ultimately, however, the spirited debate about Philip became moot. The question of freedom was answered not in the marketplace of Athens but on the battlefield.

In 338 B.C.E., Philip and his armies marched south toward the peninsula, where they confronted a Greek coalition led by Athens and Thebes, longtime rivals who at last joined in cooperation. The belated cooperation among the Greeks came too late. At the Battle of Chaeronea near Thebes, the powerful left wing of Philip’s phalanx enveloped the approaching Greeks. The Macedonian cavalry, led by Philip’s talented son, Alexander, slaughtered the surrounded Greeks. The victory paved the way for Philip to take control of the Greek city-states (except Sparta).

Greece conquered

Philip proved a lenient conqueror; he charged the Greeks no tribute, but instead united them in a league under his command, so they were technically allies with Macedonia. No longer allowed to wage war against one another, the poleis joined the combined army of Greeks and Macedonians. Isocrates’ hope was fulfilled, and the Greeks reluctantly renounced internal warfare. Now they prepared to follow Philip to attack the Persian Empire, which extended far beyond the borders of the Persian homeland into Asia.

Death of the King

Philip’s brilliance on the battlefield exceeded his judgment in domestic matters. In the tradition of Macedonian kings, Philip had taken at least six wives. The most important was Olympias, daughter of the king of Epirus (which was southwest of Macedonia and bordered the Greek city-states) and mother of Alexander. According to Plutarch, who drew from earlier sources, Olympias and Alexander were highly insulted when Philip, in his forties, took a young bride, Cleopatra. At the wedding, Cleopatra’s uncle made a toast implying that he hoped Philip would disinherit Alexander.

Political and personal resentments came to a head in 336 B.C.E. at the wedding of Alexander's sister, also named Cleopatra. On the morning of the festivities, members of the court attended the theater. Philip was escorted by his son, the bridegroom, and his bodyguards. As the little group separated to enter the theater, Pausanias, one of Philip's jilted companions, saw his opportunity. He stepped in and mortally stabbed the king. Pursued by the guards, Pausanias ran outside but tripped and fell. A guard drew his sword and killed him on the spot.

Philip murdered

Alexander, suspecting a conspiracy behind the assassination, vigorously investigated the murder. He tried and executed the diviner who had predicted good omens for the day, and he put to death anyone who he thought had even a remote claim to the Macedonian throne. Later, even Philip's wife Cleopatra and their infant child were killed, an act that finally eliminated Alexander's rivals. Because of insufficient evidence, historians have never ascertained the full reasons for Philip's assassination. Some ancient sources accused Olympias of organizing the murder; others blame a conspiracy of nobles; still others consider the killing the solitary act of a jealous courtier. Whatever the cause, Alexander was now king.

Alexander's Conquests

The brilliant king was dead, but Philip's son, Alexander, would make an even greater mark on the world than his father had. Alexander (r. 337–323 B.C.E.) was born in 356 B.C.E. and raised by his parents expressly to rule. Philip diligently taught the young boy the arts of Macedonian warfare, including horsemanship, an essential skill for service in the cavalry. Philip and Olympias also encouraged Alexander's intellectual development. They appreciated the accomplishments of the classical Greeks and hired the revered philosopher Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.) to tutor their

promising heir. We cannot know the exact influence of the philosopher on his young student, but Aristotle certainly imparted a love of Greek culture and literature to Alexander. Moreover, he may well have cultivated Alexander's curiosity about the world, which would fuel the young man's later urge to explore. However, Alexander seems to have rejected Aristotle's prejudice against non-Greek "barbarians." Philip's son imagined a world much wider than that of Aristotle's ideal, small city-state.

As soon as Alexander ascended the Macedonian throne, he needed to be recognized as the legitimate king, so he consolidated his rule in the region with a decisive ruthlessness that marked all his subsequent campaigns. For example, when the Greeks revolted after hearing false rumors of Alexander's death, the king promptly marched south, sacked the city of Thebes, and slaughtered or enslaved the inhabitants. With the Greeks subdued, he then turned to implementing Philip's planned war against the Persian Empire. In 334 B.C.E., Alexander advanced into Asia Minor with a large army of hoplites and cavalry. He was joined by Callisthenes, Aristotle's nephew, who later wrote the history of Alexander's campaigns. Although this text has been lost, it served as a pro-Macedonian, but carefully detailed source for Alexander's early campaigns, and subsequent chroniclers who had access to the work have passed elements of it on to us.

Military exploits

After several decisive victories in Asia Minor, Alexander engaged the full power of Persia at the Battle of Issus (Map 3.1), where he matched with Persian forces and Greek mercenaries led by the Persian Great King Darius III. Through skillful deployment and swift action, Alexander's armies defeated a force more than twice as large as their own. Darius fled the battle, leaving his mother, wife, and children. The young king captured Darius's family but treated them with respect and courtesy. In this way, he showed his belief that savagery should be reserved for the battlefield.

Before driving deeper into Asia, Alexander turned south along the Phoenician coast, shrewdly recognizing the problem of the superior Persian fleet, which was reinforced by Phoenician vessels. He captured the great coastal cities of Sidon, Tyre, and finally Gaza, thus rendering the fleet useless without ever engaging it. The brilliant young strategist also perfected the art of siege warfare, improving on Philip's catapults and adding siege towers erected next to the defensive walls that allowed attackers to penetrate the fortresses. As the proud cities fell one by one, Alexander gained a reputation for brutal warfare but generosity to subject peoples. Subsequent cities surrendered quickly and joined the rapidly growing Macedonian Empire.

POLITICAL EVENTS

359–336 B.C.E.	Philip II rules Macedonia
338 B.C.E.	Philip conquers Greece
337–323 B.C.E.	Alexander rules
333 B.C.E.	Battle of Issus
332 B.C.E.	Alexander conquers Egypt
331 B.C.E.	Battle of Gaugamela
330 B.C.E.	Alexander destroys Persepolis
323 B.C.E.	Successor kingdoms established
ca. 166–164 B.C.E.	Maccabean Revolt



MAP 3.1
Alexander's Empire

This map shows the vast territory Alexander conquered, the route he took, and the major battle sites. Using the scale on the map, calculate the distance Alexander traveled. Consider the difficulties of supplying an army over this distance.

Explore the Map

1. Compare this map with **Map 1.5**, of the Persian Empire. What additional lands did Alexander conquer?
2. Based on the map and what you have learned from the text, what effects might Alexander's expansion have on the old Persian Empire?
3. What effects might his conquests have on Egypt?

After conquering Gaza, Alexander swept into Egypt virtually unopposed in 332 B.C.E. The Egyptian priests declared Alexander the incarnation of their god Amon, treating him as pharaoh. Now the god-king of Egypt, the young Macedonian founded a new city, Alexandria, on the Delta. This development brought Egypt more fully into Mediterranean economy and culture than it had ever been before, as the new northern, coastal capital encouraged trade and attracted colonists from elsewhere—a cosmopolitan center was founded in Egypt. With his western flank thus secured, Alexander once again headed for Asia to revive his pursuit of the Persian Great King, Darius.

After crossing the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, Alexander encountered Darius at Gaugamela in 331 B.C.E. The Persian ruler had fitted chariots with sharp scythes to cut down the Macedonian infantry, and his forces far outnumbered Alexander's army—by about 250,000 to 47,000 (although these figures are certainly exaggerated). Despite the Persian strength, Alexander's superior strategy vanquished the Persian warriors yet again. He forced the Persians to turn to confront his wheeling formation and thus opened fatal gaps in the long Persian line. His cavalry set upon the trapped Persian infantry. In the ensuing slaughter, a reputed 50,000 Persians died. Alexander entered Babylon and was welcomed as a liberator. He

then turned southeast to Persepolis, the Persian capital. Despite fierce resistance, in 330 B.C.E. Alexander captured the city and plundered it ruthlessly, acquiring enough wealth to fund his future military ambitions. Then he burned it to the ground. Alexander never met Darius on the battlefield again, for the Persian king was assassinated by one of his own guards. After this, no one could doubt that the mighty Persian Empire had a new master—Alexander, who was crowned Great King.

Alexander thought of himself as a powerful, semi-divine Greek hero; he claimed descent from Achilles through his mother and from Heracles (whom we remember by the Roman name Hercules) through his father. The shrewd conqueror was also a skilled propagandist, and his identification with ancient heroes helped consolidate his authority in the minds of Greeks raised on the stories of Homer. **Figure 3.1**

shows a portion of a beautifully carved sarcophagus from the city of Sidon, on the Phoenician coast of the Mediterranean. The local royalty buried here had commissioned a scene of Alexander's victory over Darius to grace the side of the coffin, recognizing the moment that the Sidonian king changed his allegiance from Persia to Macedonia. Alexander sits

The Greek hero

shows a portion of a beautifully carved sarcophagus from the city of Sidon, on the Phoenician coast of the Mediterranean.

astride a rearing horse at the left, while the defeated Persians fall before him. The conqueror wears a lion skin on his head, in a typical portrayal of Heracles. It is highly unlikely that Alexander fought in anything other than the traditional Macedonian armor, but the artistic license reveals the popular view of Alexander as a true Greek hero.

Alexander himself identified most strongly with the hero Achilles. According to Plutarch, Alexander slept with a copy of Homer's *Iliad*, edited by Aristotle, under his pillow and "esteemed it a perfect portable treasure of all military virtue and knowledge." Through Alexander, then, the heroic values of the Greek world endured and spread, and as Plutarch maintained, "thanks to Alexander, Homer was read in Asia. . . ."

The war against Persia had finally ended, but the young conqueror was still not satisfied. Having studied world geography as documented by the ancient Greeks, Alexander yearned to push his conquests to the edge of the known world. He mistakenly believed that this enticing frontier lay just beyond the Indus River in India.

India

A last major battle against an Indian king eliminated opposition in northern India, and Alexander made plans to press farther into the subcontinent. However, his Macedonian troops had had enough and refused to go on. Alexander wept in his tent for days at the mutiny of his beloved troops, but he finally conceded and turned back. However, instead of returning along the northern route, he led his troops south to explore the barren lands at the edge of the Arabian Sea (see **Map 3.1**). His exhausted, parched army finally reached the prosperous lands of Mesopotamia. Yet their relief was marred by an ironic tragedy: Alexander, seriously weakened by ever-growing alcohol abuse, caught a fever and died in Babylon in 323 B.C.E. He was just 32 years old. Others would have to rule the lands conquered by Alexander the Great.

A Young Ruler's Legacy

Was Plutarch right in thinking that Alexander wanted to make "all mankind a single people"? This ideal, which marked a radical departure from traditional Greek attitudes, has provoked intense historical debate virtually from the time of Alexander's life to the present. The Macedonian conqueror implemented several policies that some have interpreted as his desire to rule over a unified rather than a conquered people. One such policy, and certainly the most influential, was his founding of cities. In all his conquered territories, Alexander established an array of new cities. He intended these urban centers in part to recreate the Greek city life that he and his father had so admired. To this end, the conqueror helped settle numerous Greek and Macedonian



FIGURE 3.1 Alexander in Battle, fourth century B.C.E

This magnificent marble sarcophagus (burial casket) found in Sidon (present-day Lebanon) shows a victorious Alexander defeating the Persians at the Battle of Issus. Originally painted in brilliant colors, the coffin reveals the tremendous influence of classic Greek art.

DOCUMENT 3.1

Alexander Restores Greek Exiles

In 324 B.C.E., Alexander issued a proclamation that all Greek exiles should be allowed to return to their homes, even though many had been gone for generations. This policy pleased the exiles, but it also offended many residents who resented Alexander's high-handed interference in their affairs—in stark contrast to Philip's promise to give the Greeks a measure of autonomy. The Sicilian historian Diodorus describes the decree and its reception. Alexander died less than a year after this decree, and his successors rescinded it.

A short time before his death, Alexander decided to restore all the exiles in the Greek cities, partly for the sake of gaining fame and partly wishing to secure many devoted personal followers in each city to counter the revolutionary movements and seditions of the Greeks. Therefore, the Olympic games being at hand, he sent Nicanor of Strageira to Greece, giving him a decree about

the restoration, which he ordered him to have proclaimed by the victorious herald to the crowds at the festival. Nicanor carried out his instructions, and the herald received and read the following message: "King Alexander to the exiles from the Greek cities. We have not been the cause of your exile, but, save for those of you who are under a curse, we shall be the cause of your return to your own native cities. We have written to Antipater about this to the end that if any cities are not willing to restore you, he may constrain them." When the herald had announced this, the crowd showed its approval with loud applause; for those at the festival welcomed the favour of the king with cries of joy, and repaid his good deed with praises. All the exiles had come together at the festival, being more than twenty thousand in number.

Now people in general welcomed the restoration of the exiles as a good thing, but the Aetolians and the Athenians took offence at the action and were angry. The reason for this was that the Aetolians had exiled the Oeniadae from their native

city and expected the punishment appropriate to their wrongdoing; for the king himself had threatened that no sons of the Oeniadae, but he himself would punish them. Likewise, the Athenians who had distributed [the island of] Samos in allotments to their citizens, were by no means willing to abandon that island.

SOURCE: R.M. Greer, trans., *Diodorus of Sicily* 18.8, vol. 8 of Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969).

Analyze the Document

1. Why was the problem of displaced Greeks so significant during this period? (Consider this in the light of Document 2.3.)
2. Why do you think Alexander made the announcement at the Olympic Games?
3. What were Alexander's motives according to Diodorus?
4. Who supported and opposed the decree?
5. Why do you think the decree was rescinded?

colonists in the new cities. Hundreds of thousands of Greeks emigrated to the newly claimed lands in Asia, taking privileged positions. We will see that as they introduced their culture into Asia, these colonists inevitably influenced and were changed by the subject peoples. These culturally rich cities rank among Alexander's most enduring legacies.

The movement of Greeks to cities far into Asia raised questions about exiles' continued ties with their cities of origin, and Alexander's royal power raised questions about the traditional autonomy of the Greek poleis. Document 3.1 reproduces an edict issued by Alexander near the end of his life that intended to address these lingering issues.

Meanwhile, in Asia, Alexander strongly supported the intermarriage of Greeks and Macedonians with Asians. He himself married the daughter of Darius and Roxane, the daughter of an Asian tribal king who ruled near modern-day Afghanistan. Alexander also presided over the weddings of hundreds of his generals to highborn Persian women. As Plutarch said, he "joined together the greatest and most powerful

peoples into one community by wedlock." Ten thousand more of Alexander's soldiers also married Asian women. Alexander might well have imagined that the offspring of these marriages would help seal the union of the two populations.

Finally, Alexander had a constant need for additional soldiers to support his campaigns, and he obtained these men from the conquered peoples. He accepted both Persian soldiers and commanders into his companies. Preparing for the future, he also chose about 30,000 Asian boys whom he slated to learn the Greek language and the Macedonian fighting style. These boys would become the next generation of soldiers to fight for the king in a combined army.

Alexander's cultural blending disturbed those upper-crust Greeks and Macedonians who saw themselves as conquerors rather than as equals among the subject peoples. Indeed, while in Persia, Alexander adopted Persian robes and courtly ceremonies, including having his subjects prostrate themselves on the ground in his presence. Without a doubt, this ritual helped Persians accept their new king—but it also

Intercultural marriages

Resentments

offended the proud Macedonians. Alexander's inclusion of Asians in the military elite only intensified Macedonian resentment. At one point, an outcry arose among Alexander's soldiers when the king apparently sought to replace some of them with Asians. Alexander squelched these objections decisively, executing 13 leaders and suggesting that the rest of them go home so that he could lead the Asian troops to victory. The Macedonians backed down, pleading for their king's forgiveness. Alexander resolved the incident with a lavish banquet of reconciliation, at which Asians and Macedonians drank together and Alexander prayed for harmony (sometimes mistranslated as "brotherhood") between them.

Alexander died too soon for historians to be certain of his exact plans for ruling his vast, multiethnic empire. For all we know, he might well have intended that Greeks and Macedonians would remain a ruling elite. The cities and colonies guaranteed a continued Greek presence, as did the invaders' weddings to local women. The conqueror's inclusive army might have been simply a practical means of ensuring a large enough force to fulfill his ambitions. Whatever his intentions, Alexander created a fertile combination by joining the cultures of the ancient Middle East and classical Greece.

Alexander's legacy included more than his political conquests—which in some regions hardly outlasted the young king himself. The memory of his accomplishments has endured in an embellished way far beyond even his most impressive victories. For example, Plutarch's interpretation of Alexander's desire for a blending of peoples made this notion a foundational characteristic of Western culture, regardless of whether the king truly held this ideal. Moreover, a highly imaginative version of Alexander's accomplishments, titled *The Alexander Romance*, was translated into twenty-four languages and found its way from Iran to China to Malaysia. The idea of a great empire ruled by one king may have exerted an influence as far as the Han dynasty in China. It certainly shaped Mediterranean thinking, where would-be conquerors reverently visited Alexander's tomb in the spectacular Egyptian city of Alexandria that he founded.

Alexander's memory

THE SUCCESSOR KINGDOMS,

323–ca. 100 B.C.E.

Admirers across the world may have romanticized Alexander's supposed dream of a unified kingdom. In reality, however, brutal politics sullied the picture soon after the Great King's death. Legends preserve the probably false tale that as Alexander lay dying, he told his comrades that the kingdom should go "to the

strongest." Even if Alexander never said this, the story reflects the reality of the violent fighting that broke out among the Macedonian generals shortly after the king died. Alexander's wife, Roxane, was pregnant when he succumbed, and presumably the empire should have gone to his infant son, Alexander IV. But within thirteen years of Alexander's death, both Roxane and her young son had been murdered. Moreover, the Macedonian generals had carved up the great empire into new, smaller kingdoms that became the successors to Alexander's conquests. **Map 3.2** shows the successor kingdoms.

Egypt Under the Ptolemies

Upon Alexander's death, one of his cavalry "companions," Ptolemy, moved toward Egypt with his own loyal troops to take control of that wealthy region. Ptolemy diverted the king's corpse, which was being returned to Macedonia for burial, and took it to Alexandria, where he erected an imposing tomb for Alexander. It seems that Ptolemy believed the presence of the conqueror's remains would help legitimize his own rule. Fending off attempts by Alexander's other generals to snatch the rich land of the Nile, Ptolemy and his successors ruled as the god-kings of Egypt for the next three hundred years.

The **Ptolemies** inherited a land with a long tradition of obedience to authority. Accordingly, the new kings wisely struck a bargain with the Egyptian priests, promising to fulfill the traditional duty of the pharaohs to care for the temples (and the priests) in exchange for protection of their legitimacy. Through most of their history, the Ptolemies lived in luxury in Alexandria, conducting official business in Greek while Egyptian peasants continued to obey the age-old dictates of the Nile, the priests, and the tax collectors. Life away from the court under the new order changed very little, which made it easier for the new dynasty to rule. The parallel practicing of both Egyptian and Greek ways continued throughout most of the Ptolemaic rule. In fact, the majority of these Greek kings rarely carried out traditional ritual functions, and some were probably not even formally crowned. For their part, the priests honored the Ptolemies while still governing in the traditional way.

However, in one significant way the Hellenistic rulers departed from their Egyptian predecessors—their queens took a more prominent role. Many of the Ptolemaic rulers engaged in brother-sister marriages as the ancient Egyptians had done, but many women were able to exert considerable power. Hellenistic queens derived much of their authority from controlling substantial wealth and spending it on public works (and on hiring large armies). The height of the

Continuity of life

Hellenistic queens



MAP 3.2

The Successor States After the Death of Alexander, ca. 240 B.C.E.

This map shows the breakup of Alexander’s empire into three states and illustrates the relative sizes of the successor kingdoms.

Explore the Map

1. Based on your analysis of previous maps, as well as the information in the text, what were the historical and geographic reasons for the differing sizes of the successor kingdoms?
2. How might the movement of the Egyptian capital from Thebes to Alexandria have affected Egypt?

Hellenistic queens of Egypt came with the last one—Cleopatra VII—who challenged the growing power of Rome (discussed in Chapter 4).

Under the Ptolemies, the port city of Alexandria became the premier city of the Hellenistic world. It was a dynamic cosmopolitan city that by the end of the first century B.C.E. boasted almost one million inhabitants. Alexandria was a bustling port city where the main enterprise was the pursuit of wealth. The harbors were busy and the markets thronging, and international banks grew up to serve the people. To make sure ships could enter the port safely, Hellenistic scientists built a huge lighthouse on an island (Pharos) outside the harbor. The structure was 440 feet high, and the light from the lantern at the top was intensified by a system of reflectors. Ships

Alexandria

approaching the harbor were guided by the beam of the lantern. This lighthouse came to be regarded as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

For all its commercial value, Alexandria under the Ptolemies also became an intellectual and cultural center. The rulers established a world-famous museum (the word *museum* means “temple to the muses,” the Greek goddesses who served as inspiration to creativity). At the museum, scholars from around the Mediterranean and Asia gathered to study texts and discuss ideas. The Greek rulers founded a great library as part of this museum and ambitiously designed it to stand as the West’s first complete collection of published works. Well established by 280 B.C.E., the library boasted more than 700,000 volumes just one century later, making it the largest collection the ancient world had seen.

BIOGRAPHY

Arsinoë II (315–ca. 270 B.C.E.)

The Hellenistic dynasties created by the successor states to Alexander's empire (see **Map 3.2**) set new precedents for the ancient world by bringing strong women to power. These queens of all three dynasties (Seleucid, Antigonid, and Ptolemaic) derived their power from two main things: their descent from the original founders of the dynasties and their great wealth.

Brilliant and Ruthless Queen of Egypt

Many of these women strongly influenced the great events of the day. The story of Arsinoë II, queen of Egypt, reveals the violent world of Hellenistic politics and shows the fierce will for power that both men and women leaders often needed to rule effectively.

Arsinoë was the daughter of the first Ptolemy, Alexander's successor who took over Egypt. Like most Hellenistic princesses, she was well educated and raised to rule. She was married at age 15 to the king of Thrace, Lysimachus, an old companion-in-arms of Ptolemy. Lysimachus renounced his first wife in favor of the young, and very beautiful,

Arsinoë. By the time Arsinoë was 30, she had borne three sons and had begun to plan for their (and her) future. To position her sons to inherit the throne, she accused Lysimachus's son by his first wife of treason and perhaps had him poisoned.

Yet despite Arsinoë's plans, her family became ensnared in one of the seemingly endless Hellenistic wars of power. First, Seleucus marched from Asia to Thrace to conquer Lysimachus. Amid the combat, Arsinoë's husband (now almost 80 years old) died. Then as Arsinoë fled with her children to Greece, her half-brother Ceraunus seized control of her old realm. Ceraunus well understood the benefits of legitimacy that Arsinoë's bloodline could provide, and the advantages of her great wealth. He offered to marry her and make her children his heirs. She agreed, but he betrayed her, killing her two youngest children in order to secure the kingdom for his own progeny. She and her eldest son managed to escape to Egypt to seek the protection of her brother, Ptolemy II.

Safe in Egypt, Arsinoë moved to rebuild her power. Not content to

be simply sister to the king, she had Ptolemy's wife exiled and married him herself to assure herself the title of queen. From then on, she and her brother were known as "sibling-lovers" (*philadelphus*). If we are to believe the poets of the period, the couple genuinely loved each other. One poet wrote, "No more splendid wife than she ever clasped in bridal chamber her bridegroom, loving him from her heart, her brother and her lord." Satisfied with her newly secured position as the head of Egypt's ruling family, Arsinoë ignored her husband's many mistresses, although purportedly she quickly killed any political rivals who tried to reduce her authority.

The sibling marriage not only gave Arsinoë the power she craved but also helped consolidate the power of the dynasty by bringing the Ptolemies closer to traditional Egyptian practices; sometimes Egyptian pharaohs had married their sisters. However, the Greek Macedonians decried the practice as incest and forbade it. In marrying each other, Arsinoë and Ptolemy reclaimed an older form of legitimacy that had shaped the Egyptian ruling families. Artistic portrayals of Queen Arsinoë depict this movement toward traditional Egyptian practices. **Figure 3.2a** shows her in the traditional Macedonian fashion, crowned only by the slim band that

Eventually, however, the Ptolemies encountered both internal and external pressure to change. Under the reign of Ptolemy V (r. ca. 205–ca. 183 B.C.E.), a boy not yet in his teens, priests began demanding that the young king be more involved in religious rituals. The boy-king's problems only worsened when sub-Saharan Nubians (see Global Connections, Chapter 1), detecting his weakness, clamored for their own pharaoh. In addition, the armies of Alexander's successor in Asia were threatening Egypt's borders. Pressured on all sides, Ptolemy offered concessions to the powerful priests in return for their support in rallying the Egyptians to his cause. The young ruler reduced taxes on the peasants and increased payments to the priests. In return for his cooperation, the priests brought Ptolemy to Memphis, the traditional capital of the pharaohs, where they placed the great double

crown of Egypt—the sign of royalty—on his head. Finally, they ordered that Ptolemy V be worshiped in every Egyptian shrine. To make good on this policy, they demanded that scribes write all the accomplishments of Ptolemy V "on a slab of hard stone, in the writing of the words of god, the writing of documents and the letters of the Northerners, and set it up in all the temples. . . ."

Figure 3.3 shows the **Rosetta Stone**, the tablet that resulted from this decree, which was unearthed in 1799. Demonstrating the presence of both Greeks and Egyptians in the kingdom of the Ptolemies, the stone records Ptolemy's deeds in three written versions: the sacred hieroglyphics at the top, Egyptian cursive administrative script at the center, and Greek ("the letters of the Northerners") at the bottom.

Rosetta Stone



FIGURE 3.2a Arsinoë

marked their rulers. **Figure 3.2b**, on the other hand, shows Arsinoë wearing the traditional headdress of the Egyptian rulers. The Macedonian queen had become an Egyptian one. During the next centuries, the Ptolemies in Egypt followed the precedent set by Arsinoë and Ptolemy. They preserved much of their Macedonian ways while adopting enough Egyptian traditions to let them rule the ancient country effectively. Historians have argued over how much political influence Arsinoë wielded. However, we should perhaps believe the ancient historian Memnon, when he wrote, “Arsinoë was one to get her own way.”



FIGURE 3.2b Arsinoë

In addition, in a decree after her death, Ptolemy wrote that he followed the “policy of his ancestors and of his sister in his zeal for the freedom of the Greeks.” Arsinoë’s zeal for freedom stemmed more from her hostility to the Seleucid rulers (who had driven her from her lands in Thrace) than from any abstract ideals of independence. The queen wanted to be sure her Egyptian dynasty would be free from intrusion from the successors of Alexander coming from the north, so she even traveled to the front to survey the defenses. Furthermore, she and Ptolemy knew that their safety in Egypt would hinge on sea power,

so they expanded the Egyptian fleet significantly.

Even while securing the independence of Egypt, the Ptolemies did not forget the Greek love of learning that marked all the successor kingdoms. As their greatest accomplishment, they constructed an immense library in Alexandria, which served as the center of learning in the Mediterranean world for almost the next thousand years.

Egyptian priests followed Ptolemy’s lead in worshipping Arsinoë as a goddess, and following her death in about 270 B.C.E., Ptolemy issued edicts and built shrines to stimulate her cult. Poets described Arsinoë as a special patron of sailors, claiming, “She will give fair voyages and will smooth the sea even in midwinter in answer to prayer.” The veneration of Queen Arsinoë by Egyptians and Greeks alike ensured that the cultural blending that emerged during her lifetime continued long after her death.

Connecting People & Society

1. How did the reign of Arsinoë II contribute to the blending of Greek and Egyptian culture that marked the Ptolemaic dynasty?
2. How do the portrayals of the queen in art reflect the transformation of the Macedonian kingship?

In the hieroglyphic section the king’s name is enclosed in circles, which supposedly protected his name and, because the names of pharaohs had always been so encircled, also signaled to all who saw it that Ptolemy was indeed the rightful god-king. Equally significant, the Rosetta Stone provided the key that finally let nineteenth-century scholars decipher hieroglyphic writing. Without the stone, the meaning embedded in the great carvings of the ancient Egyptians might still remain a mystery.

The Seleucids Rule Asia

In the violent political jockeying that broke out after the death of Alexander, one of Ptolemy’s lieutenants, Seleucus, entered Babylon in 311 B.C.E. and captured the imperial treasure there. With this money,

Seleucus laid claim to the old heartland of the Persian Empire. Yet the extensive eastern lands that Alexander had conquered eluded his grasp. As early as 310 B.C.E. Seleucus gave northwest India back to its native rulers in return for five hundred war elephants, and by the third century B.C.E., eastern Asia Minor had fallen away. Nevertheless, Seleucus founded a long-standing kingdom that continued the Hellenizing process begun by Alexander.

Like Alexander, the **Seleucids** founded cities and populated them with imported Greek and Macedonian bureaucrats and colonists. Seleucia, about fifty miles north of Babylon, was established as the new capital of the kingdom, and Dura Europus, near the midpoint of the Euphrates River, was another important center. Their locations reveal that the Seleucid

Commercial cities

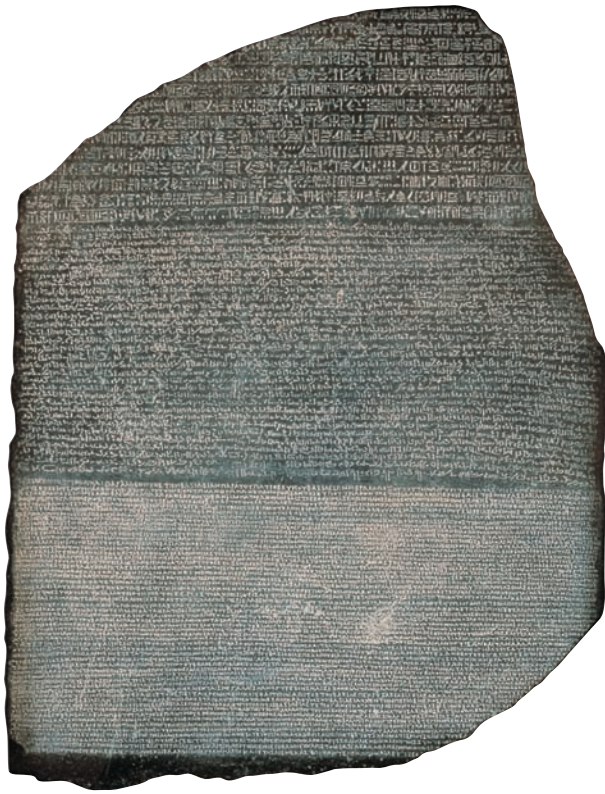


FIGURE 3.3 Rosetta Stone, 197 B.C.E. Greek-speaking Macedonian rulers had to communicate with Egyptians. Fortunately, the Macedonians wrote an edict in Greek and translated it into two Egyptian scripts on this famous stone. This translation provided the key to scholars' ability to read Egyptian hieroglyphs.

kings recognized the crucial role of eastern trade in the prosperity of their kingdom. These cities controlled the trade routes through the Tigris-Euphrates valley and the caravan trails that crossed the desert from Damascus and, along with Antioch, became vital political and economic centers within the former Persian lands (see **Map 3.2**).

While the Ptolemies could depend on an established Egyptian priesthood to facilitate their control of their kingdom, the Seleucids had no such ready-made institution. Instead, they relied in part on Macedonian and Greek colonists to secure their hold on their Asian lands. After Alexander's death, the Seleucids settled at least 20,000 Macedonian colonists in Syria and Asia Minor. This number was supplemented by others from Macedonia who came looking for riches and privileges.

The Macedonian settlers viewed themselves as world conquerors and expected to maintain their high-status positions in the new lands. The Seleucid kings, who saw the colonists as the backbone of their armies, granted them considerable farmlands. Some charters from this time show that certain colonists

were exempt from paying taxes and even received free food until their first crops could be harvested. These colonists did not expect to work the land themselves; instead, resident dependent laborers farmed the land for their foreign conquerors. Again, as in Egypt, the resident peasantry served their Greek-speaking masters. Not surprisingly, the Seleucid kings gained a loyal following among the elite with these allocations of land.

Although Greek sovereignty faded quickly in the easternmost edges of the Seleucid lands, evidence remains of the impact of the Greek presence there. To illustrate, consider the great king of northern India Aśoka (r. ca. 268–ca. 233 B.C.E.). Aśoka is perhaps most remembered for spreading the ideals of Buddhism through inscriptions on stones. Like the Rosetta Stone, these Rock Edicts testify to the Hellenic presence in India, because Aśoka's sayings were preserved both in the Indian language of Prakrit and in Greek. In wise phrases such as "Let them neither praise themselves nor disparage their neighbors, for that is vain," the ideas of Buddhism met the language of Hellenism in the farthest lands of Alexander.

Antigonids in Greece

The Seleucid kings concentrated on ruling the western portions of their Asian provinces, ever watchful for opportunities to gain advantage over the Ptolemies or the Macedonian leaders who now ruled in Macedonia and Greece. These kings, known as the **Antigonids**, were descended from Antigonus the One-Eyed (382–ca. 301 B.C.E.), a general who had joined in the struggle for succession after Alexander's death. Antigonus failed to score a decisive military victory, however, and died on the battlefield at the venerable age of 80, still trying to win control of the entire Macedonian Empire. Nevertheless, his descendants eventually took power in Macedonia and Greece and introduced the Antigonid dynasty.

In the short run, Alexander's conquests profoundly affected Macedonian society and economy. At first, wealth poured from the east into the young king's homeland. Indeed, near the end of his life, Alexander sent home one shipment of booty that proved so large that 110 warships were needed to escort the merchant vessels on their return journey. Numismatic evidence also confirms the volume of wealth that initially flowed into Macedonia, for its mint churned out about 13 million silver coins immediately after Alexander's reign. Much of this coinage came into wide circulation, for officials used it to pay troops and provide stipends for veterans' widows and orphans. Yet the money did not profoundly alter Macedonian society. By the reign of Antigonus's

Seleucid colonists

Life in Macedonia

great-grandson, Demetrius II (r. 239–229 B.C.E.), life in Macedonia had changed little from even as far back as Philip II's time. The army still consisted mainly of Macedonian nobles, who fought as companions to their king. Invaders from the north still threatened; indeed, in the 280s B.C.E. the Gauls, a tribe on the Macedonians' northern border, launched an attack that cost Macedonia dearly. To make matters worse, the Greeks to the south, who had never really accepted Macedonian rule, kept revolting.

The Greek city-states experienced more change than Macedonia did, for the traditional democracy of

Changes in Greece

Athens and the other poleis had evaporated. The poleis relaxed their notions of citizenship, so many immigrants and freed slaves became citizens, but at the same time people had less attachment to their cities. Many jobs—from soldier to athlete—became the province of specialists, not citizens, and thus international professionals replaced the native competitors who brought glory and wealth to their cities. Furthermore, the new economy of the Hellenistic world widened the gulf between rich and poor, and the disparity undermined participatory government: Rich Greeks took over governance and frequently forgot that they had any responsibility to the poor.

Despite these tensions, outright revolution never materialized. The relentless warfare plaguing the poleis simply proved too distracting. In addition, Greeks from all walks of life continued emigrating to the other Hellenistic kingdoms in search of a better life, and this exodus helped ease population pressures at home. Bureaucrats and scientists headed for the Greek colonies to take advantage of the tempting opportunities there—for example, a talented mathematician, Apollonius, first worked in Alexandria, Egypt, and then was lured to the Seleucid kingdom in the east. The poleis, which in the old days had claimed people's loyalty, had given way to cosmopolitan cities. Now individuals sought to enhance their own fortunes in a wider world.

EAST MEETS WEST IN THE SUCCESSOR KINGDOMS

The vast breadth of the Hellenistic kingdoms stimulated the West's economy to new heights. Trade rhythms quickened, and merchants raked in unprecedented wealth. Under Alexander and his successors in the various kingdoms, Greek became the universal language of business. Now traders could exchange goods across large distances without confronting confusing language barriers. The Greeks also advanced credit, a business practice that let merchants ply their trade without having to transport unwieldy quantities of hard currency.



FIGURE 3.4 Hellenistic Coins Standardized currency facilitated trade among all the Hellenistic kingdoms and serves as fine historical evidence. Coin (a) is an eight-drachma coin of Ptolemy II of Egypt (r. ca. 284–ca. 247 B.C.E.). Coin (b) is a silver coin of King Orophernes (2nd century B.C.E.) from Cappadocia in the Seleucid kingdom.

Money in the New Cosmopolitan Economies

The Hellenistic kings standardized currency as well, another boon for trade. There were two weights of coins in the Hellenistic world: One was based on Alexander's standard, in which one drachma contained

Coinage and trade

4.3 grams of silver. The Ptolemies in Egypt abided by a different standard, using only 3.5 grams of silver in the drachma. Despite the dual standards, the consistency of both helped merchants buy and sell with ease throughout the extensive region. **Figure 3.4** shows two coins from this era. The gold coin from Egypt in **Figure 3.4a** is worth eight drachmas. It shows Ptolemy II with his wife Arsinoë II (featured in the Biography) on the front and Ptolemy's parents, Ptolemy I and Berenice, on the reverse. By showing two generations of royalty, the coin is proclaiming a dynastic succession that was traditionally important in Egypt. The silver coin in **Figure 3.4b** is a "tetradrachma," from Cappadocia in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). It shows King Orophernes, with the Greek goddess Athena on the reverse. These coins show that the Hellenistic kingdoms had much in common. Both coins show the monarchs in the style of Macedonian rulers, wearing the simple diadem that since Philip II's time had marked Macedonian kingship, and both are based on the drachma. They also graphically represent both the wealth that the Macedonian conquests generated and

the spread of Greek cultural influence throughout the region as trade intensified.

Goods moved briskly through the Hellenistic kingdoms, reshaping old patterns of trade and consumption. Athens initially benefited from the widespread demand for Greek goods like pottery and weapons, but a century after the death of Alexander, Alexandria had replaced Athens as the commercial capital of the eastern Mediterranean. The small islands of Rhodes and Delos also rose to prominence because of their advantageous locations along the routes that connected the north and southeast areas of the Mediterranean with Greece and Italy.

Heightened trade led to new approaches to agriculture as people rushed to develop and sell novel delicacies. As one example, Greek farmers began planting their precious olive trees and grapevines in the eastern kingdoms, permanently altering the ecosystems in those regions. In turn, eastern spices transformed cooking on the Greek mainland and in Egypt. Agricultural crossbreeding also became common, though it failed in some cases—even seeds imported from Rhodes to cross with Egypt's bitter cabbage could not sweeten that pungent vegetable of the Nile valley.

While commerce made countless merchants rich, the individual kingdoms also benefited—mainly by taking control of economic activity.

Command economies

In Egypt, where pharaohs traditionally controlled much trade and industry—a system called a command economy—the Ptolemies increased their controls to funnel the riches of the Nile valley into the royal treasury. They converted the most successful industries into royal monopolies, controlling such essentials as sesame oil, salt, perfumes, and incense. Their most successful venture, however, was the beer industry, which had been a royal monopoly since the Old Kingdom. The Ptolemies insisted that the millions of gallons of beer consumed each year in Egypt be manufactured in the royal breweries, though many women doubtless continued to brew the beverage for household consumption as they had always done.

Kings also levied taxes on imports and exports, such as grain, papyrus, cosmetics, timber, metals, and horses. These policies required a complex administrative system, which in turn led to the proliferation of Greek-speaking bureaucrats. Equally important, the kings used their new riches not only to live lavishly, but also to fund the expensive wars that ravaged the Hellenistic world.

Armies of the Hellenistic World

One of the most famous statues of the Hellenistic world, shown in **Figure 3.5**, is the Nike of Samothrace—called Winged Victory because Nike was the Greek goddess of victory—and it is a perfect

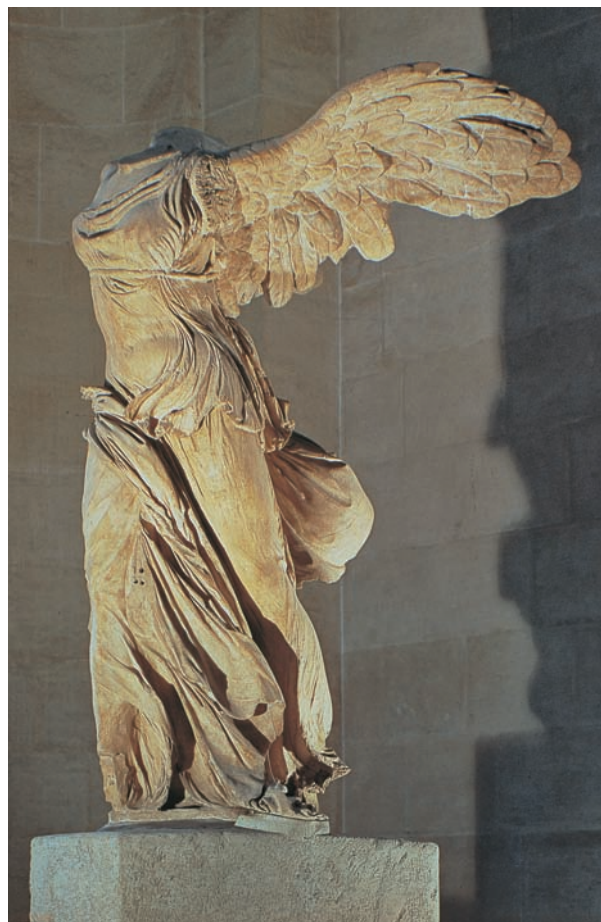


FIGURE 3.5 Statue of Nike (Winged Victory), ca. 190 B.C.E. This 8-foot-tall marble sculpture shows the goddess Nike descending through the wind to celebrate a victory at sea. The blowing draperies mark the Hellenistic style of flowing movement.

symbol of the war-dominated Hellenistic age. Originally part of a sculptural group that included a war galley, Nike strides confidently into the wind, certain of victory. However, the battles of the Hellenistic world seemed to bring endless suffering more often than clear victory.

The Macedonian kings thought of themselves as conquerors and derived their legitimacy in large part from their military successes. Like Alexander, whom they strove to emulate, these monarchs fully expected to participate in the hardships of battle and the dangers of combat. Consequently, they regularly made war on one another in hopes of gaining land or power. The ideal of conquest thus persisted after Alexander's death. However, the scale of warfare had broadened.

This broadening occurred partly because of the larger territories in dispute. Some boundaries now far surpassed the dimensions of the earlier Greek poleis. To cover these daunting distances, monarchs accumulated vast armies. Philip had conquered Greece with a force of about 30,000 men, and Alexander had increased the

Mercenary armies

numbers significantly as he moved east. Alexander's force in India may have exceeded 100,000—exceptional for ancient armies. The Hellenistic kings, however, regularly fielded armies of between 60,000 and 80,000 troops. These large armies consisted no longer primarily of citizen-soldiers but of mercenaries—who were loyal only to their paymaster and who switched sides with impunity. Tellingly, Hellenistic theater often featured mercenary soldiers who returned home with lots of money to spend and a newly cynical outlook.

The Macedonian armies were also influenced by their contact with the far eastern provinces. For example, in these distant lands they encountered war elephants for the first time. Just as horses had offered

War elephants

mounted warriors advantages of mobility and reach over foot soldiers, soldiers mounted on elephants had an even greater military advantage. Furthermore, elephants participated in the fray, trampling men and using their trunks as weapons. As mentioned previously, the earliest Seleucids had exchanged territory in India for the prized elephants, and these formidable animals eventually became part of the Hellenistic armory. The Seleucids tried to breed elephants in Syria but had to keep trading with India for more elephants when their efforts failed. To retain their advantage, the Seleucid kings cut off the Ptolemies' trade in Asian elephants, forcing the Egyptians to rely on the smaller, less effective African breed. The Greek historian Polybius (ca. 200–ca. 118 B.C.E.) described a confrontation between the two classes of pachyderms: The African elephants, “unable to stand the smell and trumpeting of the Indian elephants and terrified, I suppose, also by their great size and strength, . . . at once turn tail and take to flight.” As impressive as the Asian elephants were, foot soldiers learned to dodge the beasts and stab or hamstring them. However, the massive animals remained a valuable tool for moving heavy siege engines to walled cities and attacking fortified positions.

Large, wealthy, and well-equipped armies now routinely toppled defensive walls, and kings followed Alexander's ruthless model of wiping out any city that showed even a hint of defiance. Mercenaries, too, cared little for civilians, and historical sources describe soldiers drunkenly looting private homes after a conquest. The countryside also suffered from the warfare, and peasants repeatedly petitioned kings to ease their burdens. Peasants faced increased taxes levied to fund expensive wars and then frequently confronted violence from marauding mercenaries. To an unprecedented level, civilians became casualties in wars waged between kings.

The incessant warfare also changed the nature of slavery in the Greek world. As we have seen, during the classical Greek period—as throughout the

ancient world—slavery was taken for granted. Every household had one or two domestic slaves, and most manufacturing and other labor was done by slaves.

Slavery

Alexander's immediate successors generally avoided mass enslavement of prisoners, but traditionally it was customary to enslave losers in battle. Therefore, by the late third century B.C.E., prisoners began to be enslaved in huge numbers. This changed the scale of the institution of slavery and, ultimately, the treatment of the slaves themselves. By 167 B.C.E., the island of Delos in the Aegean Sea housed a huge slave market. Claiming that 10,000 slaves could arrive and be sold in a day on Delos, the Greek historian Strabo quoted a contemporary saying about the slave markets that suggested how quickly the slave-traders sold their human cargo: “Merchant, put in, unload—all's sold.” Although these large numbers are surely an exaggeration, they testify to the huge increase in numbers of slaves that began to be moved around the eastern Mediterranean. Wealthy households now could have hundreds of slaves, and others worked in gangs in agriculture and mining. This new scale of slavery further dehumanized those who had been taken, and slaves joined civilians as a population suffering under the new kingdoms.

A True Cultural Blending?

Whether or not Alexander had envisioned a complete uniting of east and west, in reality a full blending of peoples never occurred in the lands he conquered. The Hellenistic kingdoms in Egypt and Asia consisted of local native populations ruled by a Greek/Macedonian elite who made up less than 10 percent of the population. However, this elite was not limited to people of direct Macedonian descent; it also included those who acquired Greek language and culture through formal or informal education. Alexander's conquests opened opportunities for people from many ethnic backgrounds to join the elite—a development that inevitably transfigured Greek culture itself.

The intermingling of East and West intensified with the movement of travelers, which the common use of the Greek language and the size of the kingdoms facilitated. Travelers included merchants and mercenaries and diplomats seeking political and economic advantages or opportunities to spy. Perhaps most instrumental in blending cultures were the artists and artisans who journeyed widely in search of patrons and prizes.

Travelers

In this new, cosmopolitan world, even women traveled with a freedom unheard of in the classical Greek poleis. Female musicians, writers, and artists embarked on quests for honors and literary awards. One inscription on a commemorative stone recalls

“Aristodama, daughter of Amyntas of Smyrna, an epic poetess, who came to the city and gave several readings of her own poems.” The citizens were so pleased with this poet’s work that they granted her citizenship. During such readings, authors shared experiences from one part of the world with the people of another, enhancing the diversity that marked this vibrant time.

Such diversity showed up vividly in the art of the period. For example, classical Greek artists had sometimes depicted black Africans in their works. In the Hellenistic age such portrayals grew more frequent. **Figure 3.6** exemplifies the cultural blending that occurred in the visual arts of this period. This bronze

Diverse art

figure was cast in the Greek style, yet it shows a youth from sub-Saharan Africa, possibly Nubia, which partook in continued close interaction with Egypt (discussed in Global Connections in Chapter 1). The subject’s pose suggests that he may have once held a lyre, a traditional Greek (not African) musical instrument. The young man might well have been a slave, given that the Hellenistic kingdoms traded heavily in slaves of all ethnic backgrounds. Or he might have been one of the many traveling performers who earned a living by entertaining newly wealthy, cosmopolitan audiences.

All travelers left some evidence of their visits in the farthest reaches of the Hellenistic world. In the third century B.C.E., for example, the Greek philosopher Clearchus discovered a Greek-style city, complete with a gymnasium at the center, on the northern frontier of modern Afghanistan. In the gymnasium, Clearchus erected a column inscribed with 140 moral maxims taken from a similar pillar near the shrine of Apollo at Delphi. Like the Rock Edicts of Aśoka, the pillar of Clearchus preserves in stone the mingling of ideas at the fringes of the Hellenistic world.

Struggles and Successes: Life in the Cosmopolitan Cities

The new cities founded by Alexander and his successors were in many ways artificial structures—they did not grow up in response to local manufacturing or commercial needs. Instead, they were simply created by rulers as showcases of their wealth and power. Expensive to maintain, these cities burdened local peasants with extra taxes and produced little wealth of their own. However, they played a crucial role as cultural and administrative centers, and they became a distinctive feature of Hellenistic life. Modeled on the Greek city-states, these cities still differed markedly from the poleis in several important ways, including the opportunities for women.

The travelers and the diversity of the cities helped break down the tight family life and female seclusion



FIGURE 3.6 African Musician, second century B.C.E. The Hellenistic kingdoms were characterized by a movement of peoples and a resulting cultural blending, exemplified by this African musician playing a Greek musical instrument.

that had marked traditional Greek cities. Women were more free to move about in public. Furthermore, many texts indicate that Hellenistic women had more independence of action than their Greek counterparts. For example, a marriage contract explicitly insists that a couple will make joint decisions: “We shall live together in whatever place seems best to Leptines and Heraclides, deciding together.” These new opportunities for independence made possible the situation at the opening of this chapter, when the young working woman ran off with her lover.

The Hellenistic cities also differed from their Greek counterparts in that they owed allegiance to larger political entities, the kingdoms. Now Greek monarchies had

Women

Cities and kings

DOCUMENT 3.2

Cities Celebrate Professional Women

Throughout the Hellenistic age, there is evidence of women whose public service brought them to the attention of their communities. The following three inscriptions commemorate women who served as a physician, a public official, and a musician. Notice that the inscription for the public official indicates that she was the first woman to serve, so this reflects a change from previous practice.

1. Physician and Midwife: Phanostrate of Athens, fourth century [B.C.E.]

Funeral inscription

Phanostrate . . . , the wife of Melitos, midwife and doctor, lies here. In life she caused no one pain, in death she is regretted by all.

2. Public Servant: Phile of Priene, first century [B.C.E.]

Public inscription

Phile daughter of Apollonius and wife of Thessalus, the son of Polydectes, having held the office of stephanephoros, the first woman

[to do so], constructed at her own expense the reservoir for water and the city aqueduct.

3. Harpist: Polygnota of Thebes, Delphi, 86 [B.C.E.]

Public inscription
Since Polygnota, daughter of Sokrates, a harpist from Thebes, was staying at Delphi at the time the Pythian games were to be held, but because of the present war, the games were not held, on that same day she performed without charge and contributed her services for the day; and having been asked by the magistrates and the citizens, she played for three days and earned great distinction in a manner worthy of the god and of the Theban people and of our city, and we rewarded her also with five hundred drachmas; with good fortune, the city shall praise Polygnota, daughter of Sokrates, a Theban for her reverent attitude toward the god and her piety and her conduct with regard to her manner of life and art; and there shall be given by our city to her and to her descendants the status of a proxenos, priority in consulting the oracle, priority

of trial, inviolability, exemption from taxes, a front seat at the contests which the city holds, and the right to own land and a house. . . .

SOURCES:

1. *Inscriptiones Graecae* 2.3(2), 6873, in *The Ancient World: Readings in Social and Cultural History*, ed. D. Brendan Nagle (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), p. 174.
2. *Die Inschriften von Priene*, 208, in *Women in the Classical World*, ed. Elaine Fantham et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 156.
3. *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum* (3) 738, in ed. D. Brendan Nagle, p. 174.

Analyze the Document

1. What are the contributions of each woman, and how do their communities recognize their contributions (money, acclaim, and so on)?
2. What evidence do you see for the continued importance of families in the Hellenistic world?
3. What aspects of Hellenistic cities allow women to become prominent?

replaced Greek city-states as the influential political form in the developing history of the West. The relationship between the Hellenistic kings and the new cities derived from both Macedonian and Greek traditions. For example, during and after Alexander's reign, monarchs advocated democracy within the cities they founded. Cities were governed by magistrates and councils, and popular assemblies handled internal affairs. In return, the kings demanded tribute and special taxes during times of war. However, these taxes were not onerous, and a king might even exempt a city from taxation. In response, many cities introduced a civic religious cult honoring their kings. As one example, to show this dual allegiance to both their king and city, citizens of the city of Cos had to swear the following oath: "I will abide by the established democracy . . . and the ancestral laws of Cos, . . . and I will also abide by the friendship and alliance with King Ptolemy."

These cities flourished under the patronage of their kings, but they also struggled with all the problems endemic in any urban area. To feed the townspeople, city officials often

had to import supplies from distant sources. Following Hellenistic ideas of a command economy, these urban leaders set grain prices and sometimes subsidized food to keep the costs manageable. They also regulated millers and bakers to prevent them from making large profits from cheap grain. Finally, the cities suffered the unavoidable problems of what to do about sewerage and water drainage; the largest urban centers had drainpipes under the streets for these purposes. Gangs of slaves owned by the city maintained the drainage system and cleared the streets.

City leaders gave little attention to public safety. They hired a few night watchmen to guard some public spaces, but for the most part, they considered safety a personal matter. Consequently, people mingling in the crowded markets or venturing out at night were often victims of robberies, or worse. Danger lurked everywhere, but especially in the many fires that broke out from residents' use of open flames to cook and heat their wooden homes. Despite the perils of fire, crime, and lack of sanitation, however, cities still offered the best hope of success for enterprising people.

Urban problems

The greatest of the new cities—Alexandria, Antioch, Seleucia—drew people from around the world. No longer connected to the original Greek city-states, such newcomers felt little obligation to participate in democratic politics or to profess loyalty to a clan or polis. Greeks, Phoenicians, Jews, Babylonians, Arabs, and others gathered in the cosmopolitan centers to make their fortunes. As the most ambitious among them took Greek names, the old divisions between Greek and “barbarian” blurred. Traditional family ties dissolved, too, as we saw in the story that opened this chapter.

City dwellers improved their lot in several ways, some of them advancing through successful military activities. The Greek Scopas, for example, unable to

New opportunities

find work in his home city, “turned his hopes toward Alexandria,” where he got a job in the army.

Within three years, Scopas had risen to command the armies of Ptolemy V. Women, too, had opportunities to participate in the public sphere. Document 3.2 offers examples of women who were remembered for their contributions to their cities.

Though cities opened up new opportunities, they also spawned miseries. Many poor people were forced to continue working well into their old age; indeed, the elderly market woman shown at the beginning of the chapter would have been a common sight in the Hellenistic period. The father in the chapter’s opening story looked to his king to spare him an impoverished old age. His pleas probably went unheard, however; cities and their royal patrons tended to ignore the mounting problems of poverty. Slums cropped up, becoming just as characteristic of Hellenistic cities as the palaces of the wealthy and the libraries of the wise.

In some cities, destitute people designed institutions to help themselves. Artisans’ guilds, for example, offered a sense of social connection to people bewildered by the large, anonymous cosmopolitan cities. Some people organized burial clubs, in which members contributed money to ensure themselves a decent interment at the end of lives that had little material security. Historical evidence suggests that some rich city dwellers worried about the possibility of social revolution. As one illustration of this fear, the citizens of a city in Crete were required to include the following statement in their oath of citizenship: “I will not initiate a redistribution of land or of houses or a cancellation of debts.”

Patronage, Planning, and Passion: Hellenistic Art

The monarchs who were becoming fabulously wealthy did not spend much money on the urban poor. What did they do with the mounds of coins

that filled their coffers? In part, they spent fortunes as patrons of the arts, commissioning magnificent pieces that continue to be treasured today. However, not all critics have admired the products of the Hellenistic artists. For example, early in the first century C.E., the prolific Roman commentator Pliny the Elder (23–79 C.E.) energetically discussed Greek art. A passionate admirer of classical Athenian art, Pliny claimed that after the accomplishments of Lysippus (ca. 380–ca. 318 B.C.E.), “art stopped.” His dismissal of the Hellenistic world’s artistic contributions has since been shared by many observers who admire the idealized poses of classical Greek works. But art did not stop with Lysippus; it merely changed as its center migrated from Athens to the great cosmopolitan centers of the East.

Classical Greek artists had been supported by public funding by democratic poleis. By contrast, Hellenistic artists received their funding from wealthy kings seeking to build and decorate their new cities. Royal

Royal patrons

patronage began with monarchs who wanted their newly established cities to reflect the highest ideals of Greek aesthetics. At the same time, this policy served the political agenda of promoting Greek culture. These rulers hired architects to design cities conducive to traditional Greek life, with its outdoor markets and meeting places, and employed artists to decorate the public spaces. Pergamum (see **Map 3.2**) posed a special challenge to architects: Its center was perched on a high hill, so city planners had to take the steep slopes into account in designing the city. In the end, they arranged the royal palaces at the top of the hill—visibly proclaiming the king’s ascendancy—and the markets at the bottom. The layout of this magnificent city is typical of many Hellenistic urban centers.

Citizens in Pergamum shopped in the colonnaded building shown at the lower left corner of **Figure 3.7**. Higher up the hill was an altar to Zeus and higher still, a temple to Athena that served as the entrance to the library. The heights were dominated by the royal palaces and barracks. (The temple shown at the center of the hilltop was built later by Roman conquerors.) On the left side of the model, there are theater seats built into the hillside, where some 10,000 spectators could gather to watch the latest dramatic productions. The city preserved the gracious outdoor life of the classical Greek cities, yet was dominated by the majesty and power of the new kings.

After cities were designed, kings commissioned sculptors to decorate the great public buildings, especially temples. Throughout the Hellenistic period, sculptors also found a market in the newly wealthy, who hired these artists to create works of beauty to decorate their homes. Hellenistic sculpture built on classical

Sculpture

models in the skill with which artists depicted the human form and in the themes that harked back to the age of Greek heroes and the Trojan War. Still, Hellenistic artists departed from the classical style in significant ways. Classical Greek sculptors sought to portray the ideal—that is, they depicted scenes and subjects that were above the tumult and passion of this world. By contrast, Hellenistic artists faced passion and emotion head-on. Their works exhibit a striking expressiveness, violence, and sense of movement, along with contorted poses that demonstrate these artists' talents for capturing human emotion in marble.

Hellenistic artists also portrayed themes that the classical artists in Athens would have considered undignified or even demeaning. These themes included realistic portrayals of everyday life. For example, classical artists, in their search for ideal beauty instead of imperfect reality, would have ignored subjects such as the market woman shown at the beginning of the chapter. The boxer in **Figure 3.8** also exemplifies the contrast to the Olympic heroism that we saw in Chapter 2. Here the artist shows his knowledge of Greek idealism in the perfectly crafted hair and musculature of the bronze figure. Yet this boxer is tired, not heroic. He rests his taped hands on his knees and his shoulders sag in exhaustion, or perhaps defeat. The marks of his contest show clearly on his face—his cheek bleeds, his nose is broken, and his ear is deformed from too many blows. Many art critics, like Pliny, who mourned the “death of art,” have condemned Hellenistic artists for not striving to portray perfection. Nonetheless, they had

remarkable courage in showing the flawed reality of cosmopolitan life.

Resistance to Hellenism: Judaism, 323–76 B.C.E.

Much of Hellenistic art and life in the cosmopolitan cities reflected a deep and, in many ways, successful blending of classical Greek culture with that of the ancient Middle East and Egypt. Yet Alexander's desire to make “all mankind a single people” did not appeal to everyone in the Hellenistic world. Throughout their history, Jews had worked to preserve their distinctive identity, and this desire came directly into conflict with spreading Hellenism (ancient Greek culture). Although Judea remained an independent political unit under Alexander and the Ptolemies, the successor kingdoms offered opportunities for Jews from Palestine to trade and settle throughout the Hellenistic world. In the new multiethnic areas, urban Jews struggled to clarify and sustain their sense of identity. The most pious among them lived together in Jewish quarters where they could observe the old laws and maintain a sense of separate community. Alexandria and Antioch had substantial Jewish quarters, and most large cities had a strong Jewish presence.

Some Jews compromised with Hellenism, learning Greek and taking advantage of the opportunities available to those who at least had the appearance of Hellenism. As they learned to speak and write in Greek and studied the classical texts, some of their

Hellenized Jews



FIGURE 3.7 Restored Model of Pergamum Hellenistic rulers built great new cities such as Pergamum in what today is the country of Turkey. The city spread over a high hill, from the royal palace at the top to markets at the bottom. A new style of life developed in the royal cities.



FIGURE 3.8 Seated Boxer, second century B.C.E. This bronze sculpture reveals much about the Hellenistic world. Hellenistic peoples still praised the Greek sports contests, but they recognized and documented emotions other than the joy of victory. This boxer, for example, appears to be dejected, tired, and bruised.

traditional beliefs changed, especially where they sought to reconcile Judaism with Hellenism. Sometime in the third century B.C.E., the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, in the influential document known as the **Septuagint**. (The name derives from the Latin word for “seventy,” recalling the legendary group of 72 translators who were credited with the accomplishment.) In great cities like Alexandria, Jews gathered in synagogues to pray in a traditional fashion, but in many of these centers of worship, the Scriptures were read in Greek.

In Palestine, too, Jews and Gentiles, or non-Jews, met and mingled. Palestine had many Greek settlements, and even in Jerusalem Jews faced the question of what it meant for them to compromise with Hellenism. Jesus Ben Sirach, a Jewish scribe and teacher in Jerusalem, wrote a text called *Ecclesiasticus* (ca. 180 B.C.E.) in which he scolded believers who had turned away from the traditional Jewish Law of Moses and warned

them that God would exact vengeance for their impiety. In an ironic twist, his text was translated into Greek by his grandson.

These uncertainties within the Jewish community came to a head when the Seleucid kings wrested Palestine from the Ptolemies in 200 B.C.E. The pace of Hellenization quickened after this pivotal event. Both Jewish and pagan historical sources claim that the Seleucid king Antiochus IV (r. 175–163 B.C.E.) intended to change Jewish observance in order to “combine the peoples”—that is, to Hellenize the Jews. According to an early Jewish text, even the high priest of Jerusalem supported the king and “exercised his influence in order to bring over his fellow-countrymen to the Greek ways of life.” Antiochus established Greek schools in Jerusalem and went so far as to enter Jewish contestants in the Greek-style athletic games celebrated at Tyre. In 168 B.C.E., he ordered an altar to Zeus to be erected in the Temple of Jerusalem and sacrifices to be offered to the Greek god. The Roman historian Josephus (75 C.E.) later described the sacrilege: “He sacrificed swine upon the altars and bespattered the temple with their grease, thus perverting the rites of the Jews and the piety of their fathers.”

Antiochus’s policies proved too much for pious Jews, and in ca. 166 B.C.E., Judas Maccabeus (Judas the Hammer) led an armed revolt against the Seleucids. (See Document 3.3.) The account of the **Maccabean Revolt** is preserved in a text titled *The First Book of the Maccabees*, probably written in 140 B.C.E. by a Jew in Judea. The author articulated the goal of Antiochus clearly: “Then the king wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people, and that each should give up his customs.” This decree of Antiochus is reminiscent of Plutarch’s praise of Alexander quoted at the beginning of this chapter, and it confirms the differing, intensely felt opinions that people often have about cultural blending.

In the end, the Maccabees prevailed. In 164 B.C.E. the Jewish priests rededicated the Temple, and the Jews celebrated the restoration of their separate identity. The historian of *First Maccabees* wrote that “Judas and his brothers and all the assembly of Israel determined that every year at that season the days of the dedication of the altar should be observed with gladness and joy for eight days.” This declaration instituted the feast of Hanukkah, which Jews continue to celebrate today.

The Maccabean revolutionaries established a new theocratic state of Judea, which the Seleucids were too busy with war on their eastern borders to challenge. The reinvigorated Jewish state continued its conquests of neighboring states, including Greek cities in Galilee, and by 76 B.C.E. the Jews had established a kingdom almost as extensive as

Maccabean Revolt

Independent Judea

DOCUMENT 3.3

Judas Maccabeus Liberates Jerusalem

In the first century C.E., the Jewish historian Josephus wrote a history of the Jews in which he described the revolt of Judas Maccabeus against the Hellenistic king Antiochus in ca. 166 B.C.E. As part of his desire to bring together his diverse peoples, Antiochus erected an altar to Zeus in the Temple at Jerusalem.

[Judas Maccabeus] overthrew the idol altar and cried out, "If," said he, "anyone be zealous for the laws of his country and for the worship of God, let him follow me"; and when he had said this he made haste into the desert with his sons, and left all his substance in the village. Many others did the same also, and fled with their children and wives into the desert and dwelt in caves; but when the King's generals heard this, they took all the forces they then had in the citadel at Jerusalem, and pursued the Jews into the desert; and when they had overtaken them, they in the

first place endeavored to persuade them to repent, and to choose what was most for their advantage and not put them to the necessity of using them according to the law of war; but when they would not comply with their persuasions, but continued to be of a different mind, they fought against them on the Sabbath day, and they burned them as they were in the caves, without resistance, and without so much as stopping up the entrances of the caves. And they avoided to defend themselves on that day because they were not willing to break in upon the honor they owed the Sabbath, even in such distresses; for our law requires that we rest upon that day.

There were about a thousand, with their wives and children, who were smothered and died in these caves; but many of those that escaped joined themselves to Mattathias and appointed him to be their ruler, who taught them to fight even on the Sabbath day, and told them that unless they would do so they would

become their own enemies by observing the law [so rigorously] while their adversaries would still assault them on this day, and they would not then defend themselves; and that nothing could then hinder but they must all perish without fighting. This speech persuaded them, and this rule continues among us to this day, that if there be a necessity we may fight on Sabbath days.

SOURCE: Josephus, "The Jewish Wars," in *The Great Events by Famous Historians*, vol. II, ed. Rossiter Johnson (The National Alumni, 1905), p. 247.

Analyze the Document

1. What religious motivations undergirded this war?
2. How did the Maccabees compromise their own religious beliefs to fight the war?
3. How did this conflict resemble modern controversies regarding fighting during Ramadan or Christmas?

that of Solomon (r. 970–931 B.C.E.) (see Chapter 1). Though they had revolted to preserve their cultural and religious purity, the new rulers proved intolerant of their Gentile subjects, forcing many to convert and insisting that non-Jewish infant boys be circumcised. These practices worsened the instability already plaguing the region.

THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH: HELLENISTIC THOUGHT, RELIGION, AND SCIENCE

Hellenistic rulers from Alexander on consciously spread Greek ideas and learning. To do this, they vigorously supported education, which they saw as key to the preservation of Greek ideals and the training ground for new Hellenized civil servants. Within these educated circles occurred most of the intellectual and cultural blending that created the brilliance of Hellenistic art as well as the struggles of cultural identity. However, these communities of the educated also proved a fertile ground for intellectual inquiry in which great minds eagerly sought truth about the world, religion, and the meaning of life.

A Life of Learning

Great speculations, however, began first in the schoolrooms. Families who wanted their boys to succeed invested heavily in education. At the age of 7, boys attended privately funded schools and practiced Greek and writing. The parchment samples of their

INTELLECTUAL LIFE

- ca. 400–ca. 325 B.C.E. Diogenes advocates Cynicism
- ca. 342–ca. 292 B.C.E. Life of playwright Menander
- ca. 335–ca. 280 B.C.E. Life of physician Herophilus
- ca. 312 B.C.E. Zeno founds Stoicism
- ca. 310–ca. 230 B.C.E. Life of Aristarchus, who posited heliocentric universe
- ca. 306 B.C.E. Epicurus founds school of philosophy
- ca. 300 B.C.E. Euclid publishes *Elements* on mathematics
- ca. 220 B.C.E. Archimedes advances engineering

assignments reveal a strong anti-“barbarian” prejudice in which the culture of all non-Greeks was dismissed. Thus, even early schooling aimed to inculcate Greek values among non-Greek peoples. This indoctrination was reinforced by an emphasis on Homer’s works as the primary literary texts.

At 14, boys expanded their education to include literary exercises, geography, and advanced studies of Homer. Successful students then continued their studies in the gymnasium, the heart of Hellenistic education and culture. Most cities boasted splendid gymnasia as their central educational institutions. Often the most beautiful building in the city, the gymnasium sported a running track, an area for discus and javelin throwing, a wrestling pit, and baths, lecture halls, and libraries. Here Greek-speaking boys of all ethnic backgrounds gathered, exercised naked, and finished an education that allowed them to enter the Greek ruling class.

Hellenistic kings cultivated education just as they served as patrons of the arts. They competed fiercely to hire sought-after tutors for their families and schools and to purchase texts for their libraries. The best texts were copied by hand on Egyptian papyrus or carefully prepared animal hide called parchment. (The word *parchment* derives from *Pergamena charta*, or “Pergamum paper,” which refers to where the best-quality parchment was made.) Texts were prepared in scrolls rather than bound in books and were designed to be unrolled and read aloud.

This advocacy of education yielded diverse results. Many scholars produced nothing more than rather shallow literary criticism; others created literature that captured the superficial values of much of Hellenistic life; and some created highly sophisticated philosophy and science. The range of these works, however, contributed important threads to the tapestry of Western civilization.

Theater and Literature

The tragedies and comedies of classical Greek theater had illuminated profound public and heroic themes ranging from fate and responsibility to politics and ethics. Theater proved extremely popular in the Hellenistic cities as well. Though some cosmopolitan playwrights wrote tragedies, few of these works have survived. We do have many comedies from this era, which contrast so starkly with the classic Greek examples of this genre that this body of work is called New Comedy. Hellenistic plays were almost devoid of political satire and focused instead on the plights of individuals.

The best-known playwright of New Comedy is Menander (ca. 342–ca. 292 B.C.E.), whose works often centered on young men who fell in love with women who were unattainable for some reason. Most of these

plots ended happily with the couples overcoming all obstacles. In general, New Comedy characters were preoccupied with making money or indulging themselves in other ways.

New comedies

This focus on individual concerns reflected the realities of cosmopolitan life—ruled by powerful and distant kings, individuals had limited personal power. Menander and the other playwrights of the age shed light on this impotence by focusing on the personal rather than on larger questions of good and evil.

A new genre of escapist literature—the Hellenistic novel—also emerged in this environment. The themes in these novels echo those of the plays: Very young men and women fall in love (usually at first sight), but circumstances separate them. They must endure hardships and surmount obstacles before they can be reunited. Surprisingly, most of these novels portray young women as resourceful and outspoken individuals. For example, a remarkable heroine in the novel *Ninos* dresses in gender-ambiguous clothing and leads a band of Assyrians to capture a fortified city. Although wounded, she makes a brave escape while elephants trample her soldiers.

Hellenistic novels

Both the New Comedy and the Hellenistic novel sought to provide an escape from the realities of cosmopolitan life. Yet they also reflected new ideals in this society that often looked to the personal rather than to the polis for meaning. For example, unlike the writings of classical Greece, Hellenistic texts expressed an ideal of affection within marriage. The philosopher Antipater of Tarsus wrote, “The man who has had no experience of a married woman and children has not tasted true and noble happiness.” The literature of the day also revealed an increased freedom of Hellenistic women to choose their partners. While families still arranged most marriages, some women (and men) began to follow their hearts in choosing a spouse. Women also gained more freedom in divorce laws. Like men, they could seek divorce if their husbands committed adultery. One marriage contract from as early as 311 B.C.E. included clauses forbidding the husband to “insult” his wife with another woman. Taken together, all these themes expressed a new emphasis on love within the family.

Cynics, Epicureans, and Stoics: Cosmopolitan Philosophy

Like their literary counterparts, Hellenistic philosophers also narrowed the focus of their inquiry. Most of them no longer tackled the lofty questions of truth and justice that had preoccupied Socrates and Plato. Instead, they considered how an individual could achieve happiness in an age in which vast, impersonal kingdoms produced the kind of pain and weariness

embodied by the market woman pictured at the beginning of the chapter.

The sensibilities of the Hellenistic age had been first foreshadowed by Diogenes (ca. 400–ca. 325 B.C.E.), an early proponent of the philosophic school called **Cynicism**. Diogenes was disgusted with the hypocrisy and materialism emerging around him in the transformed life of Athens as traditional polis life deteriorated. Diogenes and his followers believed that the only way for people to live happily in a fundamentally evil world was to involve themselves as little as possible in that world. The Cynics therefore claimed that the more people rejected the goods and connections of this world—property, marriage, religion, luxury—the more they would achieve spiritual happiness.

To demonstrate his rejection of all material things, Diogenes reputedly lived in a large tub. The carving in **Figure 3.9** shows him in the tub, oblivious to the lavish villa behind him. He is talking to Alexander the Great, enacting a likely apocryphal story in which Alexander offers the famous philosopher anything in the world. Diogenes simply asks Alexander to “stand out of my light and let me see the sun.” The dog perched on top of the tub symbolizes Cynicism. (The word *cynic* derives from the Greek word *kunos*, which means “of a dog,” or “doglike,” because Cynics supposedly lived as simply and as filthily as dogs.)

Although Plato had dismissed Diogenes as “Socrates gone mad,” Cynicism became popular during the Hellenistic period as people searched for meaning in their personal lives, rather than justice for their polis. Some men and women chose to live an ascetic life of the mind instead of involving themselves in the day-to-day activities of the Hellenistic cities. However, most found it difficult to reject material goods completely.

Other Hellenistic philosophies offered more practical solutions to the question of where to find personal happiness in an impersonal world. Epicurus (ca. 342–ca. 270 B.C.E.), for example, founded a school of philosophy that built on

Democritus’s (460–370 B.C.E.) theory of a universe made of atoms (described in Chapter 2). Envisioning a purposeless world of randomly colliding atoms, Epicurus proclaimed that happiness came from seeking pleasure while being free from pain in both body and mind. From a practical standpoint, this search for happiness involved pursuing pleasures that did not bring pain. Activities such as overeating or overdrinking, which ended in pain, should thus be avoided. In Epicurus’s view, the ideal life was one of moderation, which consisted of being surrounded by friends and free of the burdens of the public sphere. His circle of

followers included women and slaves. The Roman **Epicurean** Lucretius Carus (ca. 99–ca. 55 B.C.E.) articulated Epicurus’s ideal: “This is the greatest joy of all: to stand aloof in a quiet citadel, stoutly fortified by the teaching of the wise, and to gaze down from that elevation on others wandering aimlessly in a vain search for the way of life.” Of course, this “greatest joy” required money with which to purchase the pain-free pleasures that Epicurus advocated. His was not a philosophy that everyone could afford.

While Epicurus honed his philosophy in his private garden, the public marketplace of Athens gave rise to a third great Hellenistic philosophy: **Stoicism**. Named after **Stoics** *stoa*, the covered walkways surrounding the marketplace, the school of Stoicism was founded by Zeno (ca. 335–ca. 261 B.C.E.). Zeno exemplified the cosmopolitan citizen of the Hellenistic world, for he was born in Cyprus of non-Greek ancestry and spent most of his life in Athens.

At age 22, Zeno was a follower of Crates the Cynic, but later he abandoned his early connection to Cynicism, arguing that people could possess material goods as long as they were not emotionally attached to them. Indeed, the Stoic philosophers advocated indifference to external things. While this attitude paralleled Epicurus’s desire to avoid pain, Zeno and



FIGURE 3.9 Diogenes and Alexander Diogenes argued that people should live a simple life, much like the dog shown sitting on the barrel in which the great philosopher lived. The artist included in this scene Alexander the Great, who reputedly admired the simple lifestyle that was so rare in the Hellenistic kingdoms.

the Stoics did not frame their philosophy in terms of the materialism of an atomic universe. Instead, they argued for the existence of a Universal Reason or God that governed the universe. As they explained, seeds of the Universal Reason lay within each individual, so everyone was linked in a universal brotherhood. In quasi-religious terms, this belief validated Alexander's supposed goal of unifying diverse peoples.

The Stoics' belief in a Universal Reason led them to explain the apparent turbulence of the world differently than the Epicureans. Stoics did not believe in random events but instead posited a rational world with laws and structures—an idea that would have a long history in the West. While individuals could not control this universe, they could control their own responses to the apparent vagaries of the world. Followers were implored to pursue virtue in a way that kept them in harmony with rational nature, not fighting it. The ideal Stoic renounced passions (including anger) even while enduring the pain and suffering that inevitably accompany life. Through self-control, Stoics might achieve the tranquillity that Epicureans and Cynics desired.

Cynicism, Epicureanism, and Stoicism had many things in common. Arising in settings where individuals felt unable to influence their world, they all emphasized control of the self and personal tranquility. Whereas the classical Greeks had found meaning through participation in the public life of their poleis, Hellenistic philosophers claimed that individuals could find contentment through some form of withdrawal from the turbulent life of the impersonal cosmopolitan cities. Moreover, all three philosophies appealed primarily to people with some measure of wealth. The indifferent, pain-free life of both the Epicureans and the Stoics required money, and the self-denial of the Cynics seldom appealed to really destitute people.

New Religions of Hope

For most ordinary people, the philosophies of the Hellenistic age had little relevance. These people looked instead to new religious ideas for a sense of meaning and hope. During this period, the gods and goddesses of the poleis gave way to deities that had international appeal and that were accessible to ordinary individuals—two features that marked a dramatic departure from previous religions of the West. Furthermore, the new religions offered hope in an afterlife that provided an escape from the alienation of the Hellenistic world. The international component paved the way for a blending of religious ideas—syncretism—and individuals felt a deeply passionate spiritual connection to their deities. The most popular new cults were known as **mystery religions**

because initiates swore not to reveal the insights they received during the highest ceremonies. The historical roots of these cults stretched back to early Greece, Egypt, and Syria, but they acquired a new relevance throughout the Hellenistic era.

Mystery cults included worship of fertility goddesses like Demeter and Cybele, and a revitalized cult of Dionysus. However, the most popular was that of the Egyptian goddess Isis, who achieved a remarkable universality. **Mystery religion** Inscription stones offering her prayers claim that Isis ruled the world and credited her with inventing writing and cultivation of grain, ruling the heavenly bodies, and even transcending fate itself—the overarching destiny that even the old Homeric gods could not escape. Isis reputedly declared: “I am she who is called Lawgiver. . . . I conquer Fate. Fate heeds me.” In other inscriptions, worshippers claimed that Isis was the same goddess that other peoples called by different names: “In your person alone you are all the other goddesses named by the peoples.”

Figure 3.10, a marble relief from Athens, demonstrates religious syncretism in action. The piece was carved in the classical technique showing an apparently traditional Greek family worshiping at an altar. At the right of the altar, standing before the veil of mystery, is the Egyptian goddess Isis, depicted in traditional Greek style. The god seated at the right resembles Zeus, but he is Isis's brother/husband Osiris, the traditional Egyptian consort of the goddess-queen. This figure shows the syncretic nature of the new Hellenistic religions, in which patron deities of particular cities acquired international appeal. In their worship of these mysteries, the people of the Hellenistic kingdoms may have almost achieved Alexander's rumored ideal of universalism.

Men and women who wanted to experience the mysteries of these new religions believed that they had been summoned by a dream or other supernatural call. They took part in a purification ritual and an elaborate public celebration, including a procession filled with music and, sometimes, ecstatic dance in which people acted as if possessed by the goddess or god. Finally, the procession left the public spaces and entered the sacred space of the deity, where the initiate experienced a profound connection with the god or goddess. Many mysteries involved sacred meals through which people became godlike by eating the flesh of the deity. Such believers emerged from this experience expecting to participate in an afterlife. Here lay the heart of the new religious impulses: the hope for another, better world after death. The mystery religions would continue to draw converts for centuries, and perhaps paved the way for Christianity—the most successful mystery religion of all.

Hellenistic Science

The philosophic and religious longings of the Hellenistic world bred long-standing consequences for the future. People living in later large, impersonal cities turned to the philosophies of indifference and religions of hope. Equally impressive were the improvements on classical Greek science and technology that emerged in the Hellenistic learning centers. This flourish of intellectual activity was fostered in part by the generous royal patronage that made Alexandria and Pergamum scholastic centers, and in part by the creative blending of ideas from old centers of learning.

One scholar who benefited from the new Hellenistic world of learning was Herophilus (ca. 335–ca. 280 B.C.E.), who traveled to Alexandria from the Seleucid lands near the Black Sea to study medicine. The first

Medical advances

physician to break the strong Greek taboo against cutting open a corpse, Herophilus performed dissections that led him to spectacular discoveries about human anatomy. (His curiosity even reputedly led him to perform vivisections on convicted criminals to learn about the motion of living organs.) His careful studies yielded pathbreaking knowledge: He was the first to recognize the brain as the seat of intelligence and to describe accurately the female anatomy, including the ovaries and fallopian tubes. However, all physicians were not as willing as Herophilus to treat the human body as an object of scientific study. Even in intellectually advanced Alexandria, dissection became unpopular, and subsequent physicians focused on techniques of clinical treatment rather than on anatomy. However, they made major strides in pharmacology, carefully studying the influence of drugs and toxins on the body.

In spite of these noteworthy advances, the most important achievements of the Hellenistic scientists occurred in the field of mathematics. Euclid (335–270 B.C.E.), who studied in Alexandria, is considered one of the most accomplished mathematicians of all time. In his most famous work, *Elements* (ca. 300 B.C.E.), Euclid presented a geometry based on increasingly complex

Mathematics and astronomy

axioms and postulates. When Euclid's patron, King Ptolemy, asked the mathematician whether there was an easier way to learn geometry than by struggling through these proofs, Euclid replied that there was no "royal road" (or shortcut) to understanding geometry. Euclid's work became the standard



FIGURE 3.10 Isis and Osiris, later second century B.C.E. This sculpture is a votive relief, a carving that would have been placed in a temple and dedicated to fulfill a vow to a deity. Commissioned in Athens, it shows a family worshipping the Egyptian deities Isis and Osiris, who both look remarkably Greek in this rendering. The work illustrates the blending of religions that occurred in the Hellenistic world.

text on the subject, and, even today, students find his intricate proofs both challenging and vexing.

Euclid's mathematical work laid the foundation for Hellenistic astronomy. Eratosthenes of Cyrene (ca. 275–ca. 195 B.C.E.), for example, used Euclid's theorems to calculate the circumference of the earth with remarkable accuracy—he erred only by about 200 miles. Aristarchus of Samos (ca. 310–ca. 230 B.C.E.) posited a heliocentric, or sun-centered, universe (against prevailing Greek tradition) and attempted to use Euclidean geometry to calculate the size and distance of the moon and sun. Although Aristarchus's contemporaries rejected his work, he and other astronomers introduced a striking change into the study of the heavens: They eliminated superstition and instead approached their work with mathematics.

Many Greek thinkers combined theoretical science with practical applications. One of the most influential in this regard was Hipparchus of Nicaea (160–125 B.C.E.). A brilliant mathematician, Hipparchus invented trigonometry—the mathematics of measuring angles—and applied these insights to measuring the heavens and the earth. His accomplishments demonstrated once again the benefits of cultural blending, for he introduced into Greece the Babylonian mathematical convention of measuring the circle in terms of 360 degrees (see *Global Connections*, Chapter 1), the method by which we

Finding One's Way at Sea: The Invention of Latitude and Longitude

Long before the invention of global positioning system (GPS) devices, ancient mariners faced a nearly impossible task: finding their way when out of sight of land. To avoid disaster, sailors needed to be able to determine where they were in a vast ocean without any landmarks to guide them. But someone would first have to map and measure the earth before sailors would have the essential tools for calculating their location.

Hipparchus of Nicaea developed trigonometry, the mathematics of measuring angles, in the second century B.C.E. He used trigonometry to create an imaginary grid of latitude and longitude lines on the globe of the world (see **Figure 3.11**). Latitude (horizontal) lines measure the angle from the equator, and longitude (vertical) lines measure the angle from the prime meridian. All places on the earth have an address of sorts that we can express by their position on this grid, and because mathematics measures a circle in “degrees,” we use this designation for the globe’s address. Sicily, for example, is about 37 degrees north latitude and 14 degrees east longitude. This “address” is the same on Hipparchus’s chart and in the GPS instruments we use today. Thus, with

trigonometry’s invention, early sailors got the tools to compute their position on the global grid.

Yet mapping the earth and having the means to calculate one’s position was just a first step. Mariners still had to determine their location on the global grid *while sailing on a vast, featureless*

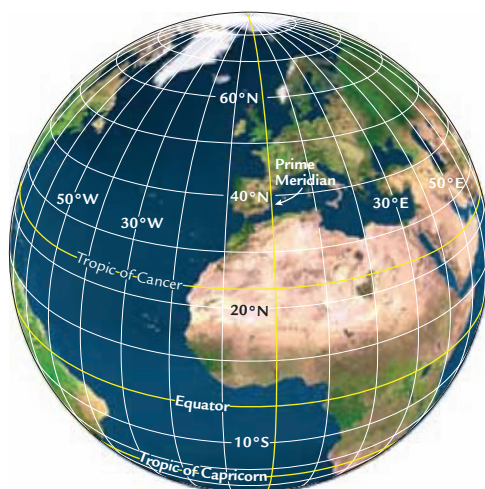


FIGURE 3.11 Global Map Divided by Latitude and Longitude Lines

ocean. Calculating latitude was relatively easy, for that required only measuring the angle between the horizontal and a fixed location in the sky—either Polaris or the sun. Longitude was far more difficult to measure, because as the earth rotates during a 24-hour day, the

positions of Polaris and the sun move across the sky. One therefore has to know the exact time of day to calculate longitude. (For example, at the equator, a one-minute error in time causes about a 17-mile error in computing one’s east-west position.)

Precise measurements of longitude while at sea would have to wait until the eighteenth century, when sophisticated clocks were invented that could compensate for the rough movements, caused by wind and waves, that had thrown off the accuracy of older clocks. Only then, with an accurate measure of the time of day, could a mariner calculate an exact reading of his longitude, just as we can do with our GPS devices.

Follow the development of navigation through the book. See, for example, the astrolabe in Figure 6.14 and the exploration of the world in Chapter 12.

Connecting Science & Society

1. How did Hipparchus’s invention of trigonometry aid ancient sailors? What is the connection between measuring angles and finding one’s way at sea?
2. What does the invention of latitude and longitude suggest about the relationships among science, people’s practical needs, and inventions? What inventions (of new products or new processes) in your own lifetime show these relationships in action?

continue to measure the globe. Among Hipparchus’s other practical applications were measuring the length of the lunar month within an error of one second, a stunning achievement, and being the first to use the ideas of latitude and longitude consistently to measure the earth. The map in Thinking About Science and Technology illustrates this significant application of trigonometry to empirical observation.

Another beneficiary of Greek mathematics was Archimedes (ca. 287–ca. 212 B.C.E.), often considered the greatest inventor of antiquity. Like so many cosmopolitan scholars, Archimedes, who was born in Syracuse, traveled

Archimedes

to Alexandria to study. He later returned to Syracuse, where he worked on both abstract and practical problems. He built further on Euclid’s geometry, applying the theorems to cones and spheres. In the process, he became the first to determine the value of pi—essential in calculating the area of a circle. He also applied geometry to the study of levers, proving that no weight was too heavy to move. He reportedly coined the optimistic declaration “Give me a place to stand, a long enough lever, and I will move the earth.”

Archimedes did more than advance theoretical mathematics: He also had a creative, practical streak. For example, he invented the compound pulley, a

valuable device for moving heavy weights. His real challenge, however, came at the end of his life. As we will see in Chapter 4, Syracuse, the city of Archimedes' birth, was besieged by Rome, a rising power in the Mediterranean. Throughout the siege, Syracuse used both offensive and defensive weapons that Archimedes had invented. Yet the great man's inventions could not save the Sicilian city. The Romans ultimately prevailed, and in 212 B.C.E. Archimedes was struck down by a Roman soldier as he was drawing a figure in the sand.

Archimedes serves as an apt symbol for the Hellenistic world that produced him. He was educated with the best of Greek learning and combined it with the rich diversity of Asia and the Mediterranean lands—a blending that gave Western civilization dramatic impetus. The Hellenistic scientist died at the hands of a new people—the Romans—who embraced the practical applications of men like Archimedes and who next took up the torch of Western culture.

LOOKING BACK MOVING FORWARD

Summary The Macedonian kings Philip and Alexander permanently transformed the life of the polis that had marked the glory of Greece. Their conquests of Greece, and then Egypt and the Asian portion of the Persian Empire, created a unique blend of these ancient civilizations. By establishing a ruling elite of Greeks and Macedonians in cities from the Mediterranean to India, Alexander and his successors spread key elements of Greek civilization. Yet they also reshaped the culture of the polis. Political and cultural centers moved from the Greek city-states to bustling cosmopolitan areas, where people from all over the Hellenistic world mingled. Some benefited greatly from the new opportunities for personal enrichment that cosmopolitan life offered; many more sank to unprecedented levels of poverty. Some peoples embraced the cultural blending; others rejected it.

Though the armies of the Hellenistic kings competed endlessly for land and power, kings still had the resources to support culture and learning. Scientists, artisans, and scholars of this complex age made impressive advances. However, a new force was gathering momentum in the West, one that would profoundly impact the fate of Hellenistic civilizations.

KEY TERMS

- Ptolemies**, p. 84
- Rosetta Stone**, p. 86
- Seleucids**, p. 87
- Antigonids**, p. 88
- Septuagint**, p. 96
- Maccabean Revolt**, p. 96
- Cynicism**, p. 99
- Epicurean**, p. 99
- Stoicism**, p. 99
- mystery religions**, p. 100

REVIEW, ANALYZE, CONNECT TO TODAY

REVIEW THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

In Chapter 1—"The Roots of Western Civilization"—we explored the beginnings of city life in Mesopotamia. Chapter 2—"The Contest for Excellence"—looked at the life, culture, and political fortunes of the classical Greek city-states.

1. Contrast the culture of classical Athens with artistic and philosophic ideas of the Hellenistic world, and consider what contributed to the transformation in ideas.
2. Review the urban experiences of Mesopotamia and Greece, and compare and contrast them with those of people in the cosmopolitan cities of the Hellenistic world. What do you think are the most significant differences, and what elements of urban life remained constant?

3. Chapter 1 summarized the early history of the Jews. Consider how their past contributed to the Maccabean Revolt under the Seleucids.

ANALYZE THIS CHAPTER

Chapter 3—"The Poleis Become Cosmopolitan"—describes the conquest of Greece by Macedonia and traces the spread of Greek culture as far east as India, as vibrant new monarchies combined Greek culture with the diversity of many other peoples to create the Hellenistic world.

1. What contributed to the conquest of the Greek city-states by Macedonia? Consider both the weaknesses of the poleis and the strengths of Macedonia.

2. What elements of Hellenic culture were most transformed, and in what ways were the cultures of the Persian Empire changed by contact with Greek culture?
3. Describe the changes in economics and warfare that were introduced in the Hellenistic world.
4. How did the opportunities for women change under the Hellenistic monarchies?

1. Does the United States, as a society, share some of these problems today? If so, how have the American people responded?
2. Do religious struggles such as those experienced by the Jews in Hellenistic times have parallels in the contemporary world? If so, how have countries responded?

CONNECT TO TODAY

Think about some of the major issues the Hellenistic kingdoms faced—for example, cultural diversity, urban problems, and people’s struggles to find meaning.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

THE CONQUEST OF THE POLEIS

Borza, Eugene N. *In the Shadow of Olympus: The Emergence of Macedon*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992. A chronological survey seeking to trace the emergence of Macedonia as a major force in the political affairs of the fourth-century B.C.E. Balkans.

Cartledge, Paul. *Alexander the Great*. Woodstock, NY: Overlook Hardcover, 2004. A riveting narrative of the life of Alexander that argues he was more concerned with his own glory than with a spread of Hellenism.

Harding, Philip. *From the End of the Peloponnesian Wars to the Battle of Ipsus*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985. A sophisticated analysis of the late Greek world before its conversion into the Hellenistic world by Alexander’s conquest.

Worthington, Ian. *Philip II of Macedonia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008. Detailed biographical account, nicely illustrated with maps, offering a compelling argument that Philip is to be credited with the military innovations that Alexander put so effectively to use.

THE SUCCESSOR KINGDOMS, 323–ca. 100 B.C.E.

Chaniotis, Angelos. *War in the Hellenistic World: A Social and Cultural History*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005. Excellent discussion of military history and the ways almost-constant warfare shaped the Hellenistic world.

Grant, M. *From Alexander to Cleopatra: The Hellenistic World*. New York: Scribner, 1982. A general survey of the Hellenistic world.

Green, Peter. *From Alexander to Actium*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990. A complex analysis of the Hellenistic world’s politics, literature, art, philosophy, and science.

EAST MEETS WEST IN THE SUCCESSOR KINGDOMS

Bartlett, John. *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities*. London: Routledge, 2002. A collection of essays offering a wide-ranging analysis of Jews in the classical world.

Billows, Richard A. *Kings and Colonists: Aspects of Macedonian Imperialism*. New York: E.J. Brill, 1995. An in-depth study of the problems of Macedonian imperial rule.

Cohen, Getzel M. *The Hellenistic Settlements in Europe, the Islands and Asia Minor*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. A good general history of Hellenistic settlement—its founders, early history, and organization.

Dmitriev, Sviatoslav. *City Government in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. An examination of city governments in the Hellenistic world and of the social and administrative transformation of Greek society.

Laks, Andre, and Malcolm Schofield. *Justice and Generosity: Studies in Hellenistic Social and Political Philosophy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995. A comprehensive guide to the social and political philosophies in a period of increasing interest to classicists, philosophers, and cultural and intellectual historians.

Stewart, Andrew. *Faces of Power: Alexander’s Image and Hellenistic Politics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993. A remarkable look at art as a legitimate source of historical evidence.

THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH: HELLENISTIC THOUGHT, RELIGION, AND SCIENCE

Clauss, James. *Companion to Hellenistic Literature*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2009. Essays exploring the social and intellectual context of literature from the Hellenistic period.

Hicks, R.D., trans. *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*. Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, 1922. An excellent primary source on the giants of speculative thought in Greece.

Martin, Luther H. *Hellenistic Religions: An Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987. A well-written survey of Hellenistic religions, their characteristic forms and expressions, differences and relationships, and their place in the Hellenistic system of thought.

Pollitt, J.J. *Art in the Hellenistic Age*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986. An accessible and well-illustrated look at Hellenistic art as an expression of cultural experience and aspirations of the Hellenistic age.

Sharples, R.W. *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics*. New York: Routledge, 1996. A readable account of the principal doctrines of these Hellenistic philosophies.