

Dejana PRNJAT\*

## CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION: A LOOK AT THE HELLENISTIC MEDITERRANEAN

**Abstract:** After the conquests of Alexander the Great, a large part of the world would never remain the same. His empire spread from Greece to India, establishing a common language, a common market, and a common currency. On his way, he built colonies where Macedonians and Greeks existed as privileged members of society.

Coexistence with other populations enabled the culture of the invader to come into contact with local cultures, resulting in the two cultures influencing one another. However, this process was only characteristic in urban centers, since farmers did not have much contact with the populations that lived in cities. After Alexander's death, successors continued to practice the same policy for three hundred years, and even after Rome took over all the Hellenistic kingdoms, the process of Hellenization continued to spread for a while.

In this research we are going to focus on Hellenized Egypt under the rule of the Ptolemaic Dynasty, since it is there that we find some of most remarkable examples of cultural interaction, from Greek rulers declaring themselves pharaohs and constructing new deities for themselves, to building and sponsoring the Museon and the Library of Alexandria.

**Key words:** *Hellenization, Hellenistic Culture and Deity, Ptolemies, Hellenized Egypt, Alexander the Great, Museon with the Library of Alexandria*

*People shape their memory according  
to their present experience*

Thucydides

The history of the Hellenistic era is one of intense interaction between the Macedonian-Greek dynasties and the countries with which they came into contact through the campaigns of Alexander, as his empire spread from the Mediterranean basin to India. In these interactions, a process of mixing

---

\* Academy of Arts, University in Novi Sad; Faculty of Arts, University Donja Gorica, Podgorica.

Greek culture with local culture occurred in different forms and with different degrees of intensity.

In this paper we are going to focus on some key points of mutual cultural influence during the Macedonian-Greek Ptolemaic Dynasty, which ruled Egypt for three hundred years. We will also look at the culture it presided over, since only in Egypt during the Hellenistic period do we find quite so unique a fusion of three different cultures.

Firstly, it is well known that the Hellenistic kings, following the example of Alexander, associated themselves and their origins with different divinities, though always ones from the Greek tradition. The only exception to this was the Macedonian general, Ptolemy I, who ruled Egypt after Alexander's death. He instead declared himself the descendant of the Egyptian pharaoh, in order to appeal more to the Egyptian masses. In this way did he and his offspring find their place in history as the 13<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of pharaoh.

Secondly, one of the core characteristics of the Hellenistic period is the mixing of some elements of the conqueror culture with elements of the local culture, and the result was usually seen in some changes of presentation with regards to those cultures' goddesses. But it was only in Egypt that a new deity was created. This was done by Ptolemy I in cooperation with two priests — one from Greece and another from Egypt. This deity became the protector of his dynasty and also of Egyptian capital, Alexandria.

Thirdly, in Alexandria a supreme research center of the ancient world was established called the Museon, which also contained the most important library of the Hellenistic world: the Library of Alexandria. In the Museon there lived and worked a large number of the most educated people of that time, all operating under the patronage of Ptolemy. Thanks to this project, remarkable progress was made during the Hellenistic period in the field of science and philosophy.

When exploring this period, we encounter several key issues. The first relates to the fact that even though there were numerous historians in the Hellenistic period, very "few of their works survive. Local, regional, and antiquarian history flourished as genres, but most of the authors are no more than names to us... The major third-century historians are all lost: Hieronymos, Douris, Timaios, Phylarchos, and Aratos of Sikyon."<sup>1</sup> Another very important problem is that the historical vision of this period is too often Hellenocentric.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Shipley, G. 2000 *The Greek World after Alexander 323–30 BC* London & New York: Routledge, p. 7

<sup>2</sup> More in: Swain, S. (1996) *Hellenism and empire: language, classicism, and power in the Greek world, AD 50–250*, Oxford.

When speaking of the Hellenistic period, a distinction should be made between the terms Hellenic and Hellenistic. “The period name ‘hellenistic’... derives from the ancient Greek verb *hellenizō*, ‘I behave like a Greek’, ‘I adopt Greek ways’, or ‘I speak Greek’, and therefore ultimately from the Greeks’ name for themselves, *Hellenes*. It is however, a modern coinage, based on the term *Hellenismus*, which the mid-nineteenth-century Prussian historian J. G. Droysen employed to describe the period when the spread of Greek culture to parts of the non-Greek world was given new impetus by the invasion of Asia by Alexander.”<sup>3</sup>

As Shipley has observed, all “periods” in history are largely arbitrary constructs,<sup>4</sup> so there are some authors who disagree with Droysen’s definition. They believe that the period of Alexander’s conquests should also be understood as a period of Hellenization, as it continued the intense dissemination of Greek influences — including cultural ones — other societies. This view also makes sense, but Droysen’s vision of Hellenism as encountered in his two-volume work, “History of Hellenism,” remains the most widely accepted one.

It should also be noted that the idea of affiliation has a different meaning from the contemporary one, so that “the term *Hellenismos* from which we have the term ‘Hellenism’, refers not to cultural characteristics as a whole, but to a pure Greek style — a desideratum of the rhetorical schools that prepared young men for social advancement. Thus *Hellenismos* was not limited to those Greek by birth, but was available to non-Greeks seeking advancement by learning Greek as well.”<sup>5</sup> In fact, in many Hellenistic sources “Greek” were also people “who had received a Greek education, adopted a Greek lifestyle (and frequently a Greek name), and worshiped their old gods under Greek names.”<sup>6</sup>

## ACHIEVEMENTS OF ALEXANDER

Alexander, the most powerful individual of his time, was born in 356 BC in Pella, the son of the Macedonian king Philip II and one of his wives Olympias, Princess of Epirus. Philip engaged Aristotle, who was considered the

<sup>3</sup> Shipley, G. *Ibid.* p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 2.

<sup>5</sup> Stephens, S. 2009. *Hellenistic Culture* In: *The Oxford Handbook of Hellenic Studies* Boys-Stones, G, Graziosi, B, Vasunia, P. (eds.), Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 90.

<sup>6</sup> Pomeroy, S. B. et. al. 2004. *A Brief History of Ancient Greece, Politics, Society, and Culture*, Oxford. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 324.

most educated man of that time, as a tutor for the little prince. At the age of 20, he became the King of Macedonia in 336 BC, and for over a decade he expanded his empire into three continents: Europe, Africa and Asia.<sup>7</sup> In this way, he finished the conquest which his father had begun.

When we talk about Alexander, one must not overlook the extent to which his father influenced him and drove his actions. When Philip II at 23 became the king of Macedonia in 359 BC, he inherited an army that was not particularly effective because, although there were mercenaries in it, the majority of the soldiers were peasants who had been conscripted to defend the land. For this reason, he immediately started a series of military reforms to perfect his army. First of all, he significantly increased the size of the army. Second of all, he introduced a high standard of training and discipline<sup>8</sup> to his troops. This was the army which Alexander inherited and to which he gave even more training, and which he demanded strict obedience from.

The wealth he gained by winning new territories he invested in his army. He engaged a team for improving the soldiers' weapons, and he also worked to protect the soldiers better by modifying their headpieces and armors. Alexander continued to use the uniforms that his father has introduced, because they contributed to a feeling of unity, as opposed to the Greeks who were dressed in a more inconsistent manner and armed differently. The exception to this was the Spartans.

Also like his father, he encouraged his soldiers with pre-battle speeches, a practice that the Greeks had already employed for years in order to prevent anxious peasant-militia members from fleeing when the battle started. The Greek soldiers also liked to rouse themselves with loud shouting while entering the fray. The Spartans were again the exception to this, preferring to march slowly into battle while accompanied by music.<sup>9</sup>

At the end of the Classical period, around 360 BC, Greek city-states were exhausted by long waged conflicts between each other. This situation was exploited by Macedonia whose army Philip II led. He had, unlike the

---

<sup>7</sup> Cyrus the Great in 6<sup>th</sup> century BC already built his empire from some of the Greek city states in the west, as far as the Indus River in the east.

<sup>8</sup> It is also well known that Alexander rewarded greatly his soldiers for courage. For example, when Peukestus rescued his life in India, he was immediately promoted to the commander of the Royal Guard. This was unprecedented, as the number of these commanders was sever and that number was maintained very strictly. Only if a commander died or was set up for a satrap the other general was able to take his place.

<sup>9</sup> Taylor, P. M. 2003. *Munitions of the Mind, A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Era*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, p. 28.

Greeks, a strong and centralized rule, and so he decided to expand his territory. Firstly, he made several minor interventions in the southern polities, and then he finally decided to invade them in 338 BC. After winning several city-states, Philip II formed the Corinthian League, which brought a large number of city-states under his control. He had also planned to embark on a war with Persia, but was prevented from doing so by his premature death; he was killed by his personal bodyguard Pausanias of Orestis.

His son however didn't let go of the idea. He fulfilled his father's plans by starting a ten-year war with Persia. In this he succeeded, defeating the Persian king Darius III and completely destroying the Achemenid Empire claiming the territory for Macedonia, this is how he earned for himself the epithet of "Great." He defeated Darius in the battle of Gaugamela in 331 BC. During the conquest he collected a huge fortune, and hugely influenced that part of the world which he had just conquered. When he died on June 10<sup>th</sup> in 323 BC in Babylon, the Macedonian-Greek influence was at its peak. However, there are several interpretations of the cause of his death. All agree that he became sick one night during a party while surrounded by his generals. Some think that he remained alive for several days after that,<sup>10</sup> others believe that he collapsed immediately after drinking wine. This points to the theory that he was likely poisoned, probably by his general Antipater and his son Cassander.<sup>11</sup> There are also authors who think that he had never recovered from the wounds he was incurred in India, and today some medical experts have speculated that he died from disease and overall exhaustion. "More likely, his body, exhausted by the strain of constant campaigning and numerous wounds, was unable to fight off a disease, possibly malaria, that he contracted while at Babylon. He was not yet thirty-three years old."<sup>12</sup> The site of his tomb is in Alexandria.

In favor of this conspiracy theory is the fact that many changes had been observed in Alexander's behavior after so many years of the war. Even while in India, he had a problem maintaining discipline in his army due to the extreme length of the campaign, not to mention the fact that his soldiers were subjected to conditions which they were unaccustomed to. "Alexander had barely dissuaded his troops from going home as soon as they learned of Darius' death. The miseries of the subsequent struggles in Bactria and

---

<sup>10</sup> Freeman, C. 2014 *Egypt, Greece, and Rnd rome, Civilizations of the Ancient Mediterranean*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p 328.

<sup>11</sup> Later on he was the one who ordered the murders of both Roxana and their son Alexander IV when he was 13 or 14 years.

<sup>12</sup> Pomeroy, S. B. et. al. *Ibid.* p 292.

Sogdiana only increased their frustration and longing for home.”<sup>13</sup> Additionally, concerns over his behavior were sparked by the fact that he had abandoned the traditional Macedonian style of kingship for the Persian one. Finally, when they entered India, Alexander “believed he was approaching the end of the inhabited world. For Greeks and Persians alike, India was the land of the Indus River, essentially modern Pakistan.”<sup>14</sup>

Upon returning to his homeland, he immediately executed eight satraps and generals “as the Roman historian Curtius Rufus perceptively noted, most were guilty of the one unforgivable crime: They had assumed Alexander would not survive and had begun to exploit his empire for their own personal benefit.”<sup>15</sup> To ensure that no one would pose a problem in the future, he also ordered all the satraps to disband their mercenary forces.<sup>16</sup>

However, this was not the last surprise. During the celebration of the conquest of India, although he was already married to Roxana (Rauxnaka, meaning “Little Star” in Persian and pronounced Roxane by the Greeks),<sup>17</sup> he married two other women,<sup>18</sup> the daughters of enemies whom he had defeated — Artaxerxes III and Darius III. “In the same ceremony ninety of Alexander’s principal officers married noble Persian and Median wives. Gifts also were distributed to ten thousand of his soldiers who had followed Alexander’s example and married Asian women.”<sup>19</sup>

And even that was not all. He took into his army thirty thousand Iranians trained to fight in the Macedonian style whom he referred to as his “Successors.”<sup>20</sup> He tried to discharge many of his Macedonian soldiers, who were not in great shape, but the army strongly protested. “Only after Alexander reassured them that his Macedonians were his only true ‘companions’ did the mutiny subside.”<sup>21</sup> But then he did another unusual thing. He was “retaining the children produced by their marriages to Asian women with him as the nucleus of a new generation of soldiers loyal only to himself.”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 284

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p. 287

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 291

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Holt, F. L. 2005. *Into the Land of Bones, Alexander the Great in Afghanistan*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, p. 75.

<sup>18</sup> It seems that Alexander followed the example of his father again, since Philip II took seven women from the nations he conquered.

<sup>19</sup> Pomeroy, S. B. (et al). Ibid. p. 291.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 291.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. pp. 291–292

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. pp. 291–292



Nor less important was the fact that his soldiers and their families (who followed with the army) were exhausted by years of war. He already, on his arrival started to plan another war, this time with Arabians. There is no doubt that his officers had had enough of war and that they didn't have any sympathy for his plan.

### ALEXANDER'S LEADERSHIP

Since he was extraordinarily successful in his conquests and according to many sources never lost a single battle, it is important to pay attention to some of the strategies he used to gain his army's respect and to become the first ruler who was worshiped as a deity. "The association of Alexandre and Herakles is crucial for a number of reasons. Firstly, the emulation of and competition with Herakles helped Alexander navigate his own way from humanity to Divinity. This transition, extraordinary in the Greek world before Alexander, become quite fashionable after him."<sup>23</sup>

Obviously, he had to be an excellent strategist and so, he divided his plan into three different goals:

1. To defeat his enemies.
2. To maintain his soldiers willingness to fight.
3. To make sure that no one would replace him in his homeland during the decade he was away.

So, in order to reduce the number of cities that would oppose him, he exercised great cruelty in subjugating the inhabitants of those cities that did not surrender immediately. In order to motivate his army and maintain discipline, he rewarded courage, rigorously punished disobedience, but also made various specious appeals to gods, prophecy, and favorable marks. Thus, "when the Tyrians rejected Alexander's request to enter the city... he besieged the city for almost eight months. After its capture in August 332, Tyre also suffered the same brutal fate as Thebes: slaughter of most of the male population and sale of the surviving women and children."<sup>24</sup>

He used priests help to motivate his soldiers. "No Greek army was complete without a 'chaplains' department', whose job was to provide favourable omens by augury to satisfy the suspicious soldiery... A passage in Fortinus describes how Alexander... used a special preparation to write 'victory is ordained for Alexander' on Aristander's hand before a sacrifice. During the ceremony the priest would put his hand under the victim's innards,

---

<sup>23</sup> Amitay, O. 2010. *From Alexander to Jesus*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, p. 24.

<sup>24</sup> Pomeroy, S. B. (et al). *Ibid.* p. 278.

and would magically acquire the divine message to be shown to the gaping army.”<sup>25</sup> His priests and prophets also read natural phenomena in such a way that favored him, whether this came in the form of thunder or an eagle flying above the king. In some situations, dream-interpretation was also useful. For example, to encourage an army whose self-confidence was shaken after an unsuccessful first attack, he told them that Herakles had visited him in a dream, and his “faithful court prophet Aristandros of Telmessos” quickly provided an interpretation: the city would indeed be taken; yet, just like the great feats of Herakles, it would take much pain and effort.”<sup>26</sup> ...“Yet, some authors claim that he himself was very superstitious and that he could be disturbed only with “the series of omens which preceded his early death, such as witnessing the fighting of ravens with some falling dead at his feet.”<sup>27</sup>

Since his army was extremely heterogeneous, it was not easy to manage them. Though there were mercenaries present at the beginning of its formation, the greatest number of soldiers of the Alexandrian Army consisted of Macedonians and Greeks,<sup>28</sup> but “the Greeks could not understand the strange patois of their language spoken by the Macedonians... To the Greeks they were uncourt, semi-civilised barbarians. The Macedonians for their part despised the Greeks as effete, wishy-washy Greeklings. Both regarded the Thracians as scarcely capable of walking on their hind legs.”<sup>29</sup>

During the time, there mercenaries were predominant, but they came from different countries, spoke different languages, and sometimes came from areas that were in conflict with each other.<sup>30</sup> For example, after Alexander defeated Darius III, he took a large number of soldiers with him from Persia. The only thing that united his soldiers was the fact that they were well trained in the Macedonian style of combat.

And in order to maintain his power in his homeland while absent, he led with him, just like his father did, the sons of his most prominent citizens. “It was a practice going back to Philip’s time that the sons of the Macedonian nobility who had reached adolescence should be enrolled into

<sup>25</sup> Sekunda, N. 1995. *The Army of Alexander the Great*, London: Reed International Books Ltd, p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> Amitay, O. Ibid. p. 48.

<sup>27</sup> Taylor, P. M. Ibid. p. 29.

<sup>28</sup> The members of the Corinthian Alliance were obliged to supply him with some soldiers and horses.

<sup>29</sup> Sekunda, N. Ibid. p. 12.

<sup>30</sup> More in: Anson, E. M. 2004. *Eumenes of Cardia. A Greek among Macedonians*, Boston, Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers. Inc, pp. 234–258.



the Royal Pages (*basilikoi paides*). At court these young men received their education, and at the same time they served as a guarantee of their parents' loyalty. (Should any Macedonian be found guilty for treason, the custom was that the whole family involved should be wiped out root and branch).<sup>31</sup>

He also made his presence felt there through his image. "Like his father, Alexander employed Greek artists and craftsmen to depict him in bronze statues and in paintings... He realized that propaganda was an excellent substitute for his actual presence, which is why his image — on coins, buildings, statues, pottery, and in art was ever-present throughout his empire."<sup>32</sup> And another fact that shows that Alexander understood very well the importance of propaganda is that, just like his father before him, he took writers, historians and other intellectuals along with him. "During Alexander's campaigns in Asia, a large band of poets, historians, and scientists followed him, among them the prominent intellectuals Anaxarchos and Pyrrho. Like Alexander, the Diadochs were accompanied on their campaigns by writers and historians."<sup>33</sup>

## IMPORTANCE OF COLONIES

Ancient Greeks were seamen and their city-states had a long tradition of colonization. During the periods when their resources were exhausted and their populations increased, colonies were founded all over the Mediterranean. In some cases, the colonies remained completely Greek, and at other times they became closely enmeshed with the local population. Some of them remained in strong contact with the homeland, but some were completely independent. Colonies were not unique to the Greek population. Others were founded by them too, such as Phoenician or Etruscans.

However, colonies from the Hellenistic period had a completely different character. As Alexander and his army went deeper into the East in order to acquire food and other supplies, he founded new cities along the way. He left in those cities Macedonian and Greek soldiers who were no longer able to fight, and he also imported noble families from Macedonia, giving them properties in conquered countries. Since colonists were quite privileged in those cities, there were others from the homeland who joined them as well.

Colonists soon imposed their identities onto the region. New cities were very much like Greek ones. Agoras formed in the center of these cities, and

<sup>31</sup> Sekunda, N. Ibid. pp. 8–9.

<sup>32</sup> Taylor, P. M. Ibid. pp. 33–34.

<sup>33</sup> Strootman, R. 2007. *The Hellenistic Royal Court. Court Culture, Ceremonial and Ideology in Greece, Egypt and the Near East, 336–30 BCE* (Doctoral dissertation) Retrieved from <https://dspace.library.uu.nl/handle/1874/22154>, 03. 09. 2018.

other important Greek buildings were erected such as theaters and gymnasia. “The gymnasium was the most typical symbol of Greek culture. It was not simply a place for exercise. There were often libraries and lecture halls attached with classes held in rhetoric or philosophy.”<sup>34</sup> There was, however, a significant difference between these newly established cities and Greek city-states, and that is their governmental organization.

Those cities and colonies were the centers of administrative control and Macedonian power in the newly established regions. One should not fall however, under the illusion that the continuing coexistence of cultures was “an indication of liberal pluralism... The only way to gain entry to the new system of power lay in the adoption of Greek culture.”<sup>35</sup> At the beginning, the colonists were not very fond of indigenous cultures, because they thought of themselves as superiors in relation to the barbarians, who were allowed only less important jobs and who were sometimes made into slaves. In fact, “in many cases social distinctions between Greek and native remained rigid. In... (the former Persian capital of Susa), there is no record of any citizen (in the legal sense of the word) who was not Greek by birth. It takes three generations before the Seleucid rulers are found employing the first non-Greek in their administration.”<sup>36</sup>

At the same time, there are also examples of the strong influence of domestic culture on the conquerors. The most significant example would be the conversion of the Indo-Greek king Menander I to Buddhism. The important thing to note here though is that the conquerors chose when to adopt certain elements of the cultures they colonized, whereas for the conquered, the culture of the conquering culture was something which was imposed on them. As the invaders took over different areas, colonies developed specific characteristics.

Anyhow, Alexander was more interested in conquest than in the administrative organization of the territories he won. He would replace the existing people from the highest positions in the country with Macedonians and Greeks, who would then become the ruling class of the colony. This was done to maintain control over those places and to ensure the making of profit. It was noted that Augustus “was amazed at Alexander’s lack of interest in organizing the territories he had conquered”<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Freeman, C. Ibid. p 338.

<sup>35</sup> Price, S. 2001. *The History of the Hellenistic Period* In Boardman, J, Griffin, J, Murray, O. (eds) *The Oxford history of Greece and the Hellenistic World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 881.

<sup>36</sup> Freeman, C. Ibid. p 341.

<sup>37</sup> Green, P. (ed.) 1993. *Hellenistic History and Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, Retrieved from: <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft0000035f/> 17. 05. 2018.

Since people from many different areas lived in his Empire, one of the most important mechanisms for managing it was the introduction of an official language in the kingdom. This was the standard form of Greek based on the dialect used in Athens, known as Koine — meaning *the common language*. “Greeks spoke a number of dialect... Macedonian is not a Greek dialect, but belongs to a different branch of the family of Greek languages... The development of Attic prose began in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and, due to Athens’ leading position, Attic soon took a dominant role in literature as well as in commerce and diplomacy... Attic was used by Alexander the Great and his successors as the official language of administration, and thus became the *lingua franca* of the Hellenistic world, the Koine, that is, the “common” language of the Hellenistic and Roman period.”<sup>38</sup> The local population who wanted to pursue a state career had to learn it.

This standardization of language was also necessary in his army, since mercenaries came from many different regions. In addition, Alexander also established a common market throughout the Hellenistic world and set a currency standard. Coins were also wisely used for propaganda. “Immediately after the battle of Issos Alexander sacrificed to the three Divinities, who had also protected his crossing of the Hellespont: Zeus, Herakles and Athena. The very same trio appears also on the new coinage minted by Alexander. The types chosen for the new coin of the realm mark out a clear mythological framework, with Herakles as its focal point.”<sup>39</sup> On one side of the coin was Alexander’s image, and on the other the image of the Macedonian-Greek gods.

The influx of Greek colonists continued after Alexander’s death, as the Diadochi maintained control over the captured regions. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the impact of Hellenization was achieved primarily in urban environments, and that most of the local population was agrarian in nature and did not come into contact much with the colonists. In other words, while the urban population was exposed to Greek influence, the rural one was mostly isolated.

## DIADOCHI

Because Alexander’s child was still not born when he suddenly died in 323 BC<sup>40</sup>, his former generals split his kingdom between themselves, and

<sup>38</sup> Koester, H. 1995. *History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age*, New York, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, pp. 104–105.

<sup>39</sup> Amitay, O. *Ibid.*, p. 41

<sup>40</sup> At that time first wife of Alexander Roxane was pregnant with their son Aleksander IV, and his half brother Philip III Arrhidaios was mentally incompetent.

“the bulk of Alexander’s empire was divided into three Macedonian successor-states: the Antigonid kingdom in Macedon, the Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt, and the vast Seleucid realm in western and central Asia.”<sup>41</sup>

The generals fought for power amongst themselves, but also with external enemies, and their progeny continued their fights during the entire Hellenistic period. These fights are today known as the Wars of the Diadochi (Successors). “The primary interests of these rulers were political, and if political control had been established, administrative interference became unnecessary.”<sup>42</sup> During this period, members of Alexander’s family were killed in order to prevent anyone from trying to claim his or her right to the throne. These murders included Alexander’s mother Olympias, his wife Roxane and their son Alexander IV, as well as Alexander’s half-brother and the only surviving son of Philip II — Philip III Arrhidaios and his wife.

Though they were not united politically-speaking, these kingdoms had a lot in common: Alexander left in them a common market, a common currency, a common language, and a recognizable city institution. It is interesting to note that after the establishment of Roman rule in Alexander’s empire, the presence of Hellenistic culture was not interrupted, which is probably due to the admiration that the Romans had for Greek culture.<sup>43</sup> “Even when Greek culture encountered Rome and fell under its political domination, the Greek element prevailed. Rome itself was deeply affected by Greek art, architecture, philosophy, and literature.”<sup>44</sup>

The Hellenistic period brought more possibilities for women.<sup>45</sup> “Marriage contracts... show that women now gained the right to divorce their husbands if they brought home other women or had children by them... This would have been unheard of in fifth-century Athens,”<sup>46</sup> and in some cities

<sup>41</sup> Thonemann, P. 2016 *The Hellenistic Age*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 27.

<sup>42</sup> Dmitriev, S. 2005. *City Government in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 301.

<sup>43</sup> During the Hellenistic period there was an increasing number of collectors of Greek statues in Rome. It is believed that General Lucius Mummius Archaicus first brought Greek sculptures to Rome after he conquered Corinth, and exhibited them in his residence. Soon, many Romans wanted to have such statues, so until the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, Rome was the center of the artistic production of Greek art works. At that time, an art copy, if done well, was not considered less valuable than original.

<sup>44</sup> Koester, H. *Ibid.* pp. 41–42.

<sup>45</sup> Morgan, J. 2007 *Women, Religion, and the Home*, In Ogden, D. (ed.) *A companion to Greek religion*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, pp. 297–310.

<sup>46</sup> Freeman, C. *Ibid.* p. 343, but also in Koester, H. *Ibid.* pp. 62–63, as well as in Pomeroy, S. B. et. al, p. 309.

women were allowed “to hold minor public offices in return for their willingness to use their wealth for civic purposes.”<sup>47</sup>

Egypt was extraordinarily progressive about this matter at that time, since women in Egypt during the Hellenistic age (and even before then) had more rights than they ever had in ancient Greece or Rome. In the kingdom of Ptolemy, some women were rulers such as Arsinoë II and Cleopatra VII, and this might be influenced by the fact that before they came to Egypt female pharaohs had existed, such as Hatshepsut.<sup>48</sup>

## ALEXANDER IN EGYPT

When in 332 BC Alexander entered Egypt and expelled the Persians, he was perceived as a liberator. This event marked the beginning of the Greek period in Egyptian history. The Persians had never respected the gods of Egypt, whereas Alexander publicly honored the Apis bull, a very important deity in Egypt. This made him a more tolerable ruler to the Egyptians than the Persians had been.

Although he was only in Egypt for six months, he achieved a lot. One of two main actions he took, was establishing a city of Alexandria. This is the first city he establish and also the most important in helenistic world.<sup>49</sup> But the second event more important and that is “his consultation of the oracle of Zeus-Ammon... All the ancient accounts agree, however, that the decisive moment of his visit was when the chief priest of the oracle greeted him as *Son of Ammon*.”<sup>50</sup> To solidify the Egyptians’ acceptance of him before leaving the country, Alexander ordered his administrators to rebuild the old temples of their gods. When the Ptolemies came to power, they continued to do the same.

His unification of Egypt was followed by a major influx of Macedon-Greek immigrants, who were very different from the domestic population. They had much bigger houses, a different attitude towards women, etc.<sup>51</sup> Also, apart from the Egyptians, they found there people with different backgrounds, such as Persians, Arabs, Jews and Syrians.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Pomeroy, S. B. (et al). Ibid. p. 308.

<sup>48</sup> Surviving inscriptions on the walls of her temple indicate that she slowly took features of a man before the proclamation of the pharaoh, wearing also a wig and a false beard.

<sup>49</sup> He gave name Alexandria to many cities.

<sup>50</sup> Pomeroy, S. B. (et al). Ibid. p. 279.

<sup>51</sup> More in: Thompson, D. J. 2002. Families in early Ptolemaic Egypt In Ogden, D. (ed.) *The Hellenistic World, New Perspectives*, Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. London, pp. 214–250.

<sup>52</sup> Bubeník, V. 1989, *Hellenistic and Roman Greece as a Sociolinguistic Area*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, p. 57.

## PTOLEMIES

After Alexander's death, the country was led by the Greek-Macedonian Ptolemaic Dynasty for almost 300 years. Alexander's former general, Ptolemy I Soter,<sup>53</sup> created a mighty Hellenistic kingdom there, since Egypt was a very rich country. The main sources of its income were derived from taxes, papyrus exports, but also from grain as it was "the main grain exporter in the Mediterranean... Finally, trade down the Nile for luxury items, such as ivory, ebony, gold and jewels from Africa... It all provided a fabulous income."<sup>54</sup>

In ancient Egyptian civilization, Pharaonic law was based on the divine right of kings. The pharaoh possessed all the land and made all the laws. The Egyptians believed that the pharaoh was a mediator between gods and men and that, when he died, he became a god himself. That is why Ptolemy decided to find a way to proclaim himself the pharaoh of Egypt. He obviously needed assistance in this matter so he asked for help from an Egyptian priest, Manetho of Heliopolis, who "wrote a history of the dynasties of Egypt in Greek for Ptolemy, placing him as the founder of the Thirtieth Dynasty and thus incorporating them into the Egyptian fabric."<sup>55</sup>

Either because they wanted to preserve ethnic purity, or because the Egyptian pharaohs had done so — or perhaps for both reasons — the Ptolemies started to marry among themselves. This habit was introduced by Ptolemy II, whose first wife was Macedonian, but then he married his sister Arsinoe II and proceeded to rule with her. In addition, all Ptolemies carried "traditional five names of pharaoh in the cartouche, only one of which was his actual call name and the rest were connected to the old gods and religious formulas. In short, to the average native, they were still ruled by their own kings,"<sup>56</sup> and all the male members of the family had the name Ptolemy, while the most common names for the women were Cleopatra, Arsinoe and Berenice. During their reigns, not only did they fight with others, but they also struggled for power among themselves, and it was not rare to have a child on the throne, since his or her parents had been killed, while someone else ruled in child's name.

The Ptolemies continued to follow Alexander's practice of restoring Egyptian holy places in order to prevent rebellion and to establish stronger control

<sup>53</sup> The nickname Soter — the savior, he received for his role in helping the Greeks from Rhodes during the siege of the island

<sup>54</sup> Adams, W. L. 2006. *The Hellenistic Kingdoms* In Bugh, G. R. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Hellenistic World* New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 40.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.



as pharaohs. “In a contemporary document dated to 311, the ‘Stele of the Satrap’, Ptolemy is praised by a body of priests from a temple in the Nile delta for restoring objects removed by the Persians and in particular for restoring the temple of income from an estate that had earlier been confiscated”.<sup>57</sup> It is very likely that Ptolemy III, who patronized the Egyptian religion, restored the most Egyptian monuments.

As in the other Hellenistic kingdoms, immigrant Macedonians and Greeks received land and continued to live by Greek laws, to speak Greek, to have their Gymnasium and to receive a Greek education.<sup>58</sup> The largest number of Macedonian veterans inhabited Egypt during the reign of the first three Ptolemies. Since during this time Hellenized members of the Egyptian upper classes could also advance in the king’s service, it was no wonder that “native Egyptians began to learn Greek in order to find employment in the Ptolemaic regime.”<sup>59</sup> It has been noted that in that time some people alternated between used Greek and Egyptian names based on the situation and milieu.<sup>60</sup> Common Egyptian people were largely engaged as “workers in farm and industry were strictly supervised, and what little income they did receive was subject to rigid taxation. In the case of default in debt payments, sale into slavery<sup>61</sup> was a continuous threat.”<sup>62</sup>

## THE RELIGIOUS SPHERE

In all the Hellenistic kingdoms, the Greek religions and the religions of the underprivileged nations underwent a deep change during the Hellenistic Age. Since Greeks worshipped many gods and were not rigidly against adding new ones, their religious purview extended to include new Eastern deities such as Atis and Kibla. Syncretism also took place between Hellenistic religion and Buddhism in Bacteria and Northwest India.

Greeks had already had a practice of identifying their own gods with those of other peoples, but this reached a climax in Egypt. However, what

<sup>57</sup> Errington, R. M., 2008. *A History of the Hellenistic World 323–30 BC*, Malden, Oxford, Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, p. 85.

<sup>58</sup> Apparently they also have a public health service at that time in Egypt. More in: Koester, H. Ibid. p. 57.

<sup>59</sup> Poo, M. C. 2005. *Enemies of civilization: attitudes toward foreigners in ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and China*, Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 132.

<sup>60</sup> Stephens, S. Ibid. p. 90

<sup>61</sup> Children of slaves remained the master’s property, even if the master was their father.

<sup>62</sup> Koester, H. Ibid. p. 54

did not fit into the Greek idea of divinity was “practices such as animal worship or mummification, were purged from the new Hellenized cults.”<sup>63</sup>

There are two significant examples of this. The first is the goddess Isis, who is important not only because she was worshipped by Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, but because in her transformation under Greek influence, there could be recognized “a strong tendency towards universality and monotheism.”<sup>64</sup> The second is the god Sarapis, who did not originate spontaneously, but was deliberately constructed.

When Ptolemy took over Egypt, he decided to associate with Egyptians’ tradition to become accepted. “The priests would have informed him about the qualities of the bull-god, especially about his connection with kingship... But Apis, although revered and famous... was still perceived as odd to the Greek mind. Firstly, he had an animal form: he was a living bull with his stall, his cow mother and his offspring... Therefore, given the Greek perception of the divine, the god required some adjustment.”<sup>65</sup> Thus Ptolemy asked two priests, one from Greece, Eumolpid Timotheus, and another from Egypt, Manetho from Heliopolis, to find a solution. So they did.

Apis is one of the oldest and most important Egyptian deities. It was worshipped in Memphis when the Ptolemies came to Egypt. “The dead bull was believed to become Osiris, while the soul of the dying Osiris...was united with the living Apis. From this close connection of Osiris and Apis resulted the composite name Osorapis...The Eumolpid Timotheus, a well-known Eleusinian priest... advised the king about how to institute the new cult and arrange its ritual. The name Osorapis was Hellenized to Sarapis. The cult and ritual followed Greek patterns, though they also contained some Egyptian elements.”<sup>66</sup> That is how Sarapis was born. He was presented like a Greek god, but with Cerberus near his leg. Thus, the new god, “a synthesis of Egyptian and Greek elements, combining aspects of Hades, Dionysus, Zeus, and Osiris,”<sup>67</sup> played the role of uniting the Greeks and Egyptians, and he also became the patron god of the Ptolemaic Dynasty and the patron of the capital of the country, Alexandria. Two priests “introduced Sarapis into the Osirian mythical cycle and adjusted features of Egyptian theology to Greek conceptions of the divine... Finally, they identified the new god

<sup>63</sup> Pomeroy, S. B. *Ibid.* p. 322.

<sup>64</sup> Koester, H. *Ibid.* p. 181.

<sup>65</sup> Fassa, E. 2013. Shifting Conceptions of the Divine: Sarapis as Part of Ptolemaic Egypt’s Social Imaginaries. In Stavrianopoulou, E. (ed.) *Shifting Social Imaginaries in the Hellenistic Period, Narrations, Practices, and Images*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, p. 120.

<sup>66</sup> Koester, H. *Ibid.* p. 179.

<sup>67</sup> Pomeroy, S. B. (et al). *Ibid.* p. 322.

with Pluto... The king's advisors... created a new system of meanings that, in their view, would reflect the complexity and ethnic variety of Ptolemaic society and, at the same time, it would signify its Greek ruling class."<sup>68</sup>

"New deity" addressed the problems and needs of individuals... Sarapis was, therefore, understood as *epekoos*, a god who could listen to their prayers and change the course of events in their favour."<sup>69</sup> When they offered him the sacrifice it was a "combination of gratitude and boast can be seen... in a dedicatory epigram composed by the great Hellenistic poet Kallimachos for a Cretan mercenary who had fought in a campaign of Ptolemy III in Kyrenaika (ca. 246–221): "Menitas from Lyttos dedicated these arches proudly saying: To you, Sarapis, I offer this bone arch and the quiver; as for the arrows, the Esperitai havethem".<sup>70</sup>

Isis, the sister and wife of Osiris, became the companion of the new god "never as Sarapis' wife, but sometimes called his sister. If ever a deity of that time was on the way to becoming the central figure of a world religion,"<sup>71</sup> it was certainly she. The most characteristic descriptions of Isis appear in the Isis aretalogies, which have been preserved in different versions.

So, by being Hellenized, Isis became universalized, and that can be clearly be seen in the document, "The Praises of Isis," found at the stele in Memphis, which displays her in all her might:

"I am Isis, the tyrant of every land;

and I was educated by Hermes, and together with Hermes I invented letters, both the hieroglyphic and the demotic, in order that the same script should not be used to write everything.

I imposed laws on people, and the laws which I laid down no one may change.

I am the eldest daughter of Cronus.

I am the wife and sister of King Osiris.

I am she who discovered the cultivation of grain for people.

I am she who is called goddess by women.

By me the city of Bubastis was built.

I separated Earth from sky.

I designated the paths of the stars.

The sun and the moon's course I laid out.

<sup>68</sup> Fassa, E. *Ibid.* p. 121.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* p. 130.

<sup>70</sup> Chaniotis, A. 2005. *War in the Hellenistic World: A Social and Cultural History*, Malden, Oxford, Victoria: Blackwell publishing, p. 144.

<sup>71</sup> Koester, H. *Ibid.* p. 180.

I invented navigation.  
I caused the just to be strong.  
Woman and man I brought together.  
For woman I determined that in the tenth month she shall deliver a  
baby into the light.  
I ordained that parents be cherished by their children.  
For parents who are cruelly treated I imposed retribution.  
Together with my brother Osiris I stopped cannibalism.  
I revealed initiations to people.  
I taught people to honor the images of the gods.  
I established precincts for the gods.  
The governments of tyrants I suppressed.  
I stopped murders.  
I compelled women to be loved by men.  
I caused the just to be stronger than gold and silver.  
I ordained that the true be considered beautiful.  
I invented marriage contracts.  
Languages I assigned to Greeks and barbarians.  
I caused the honorable and the shameful to be distinguished by Nature.  
I caused nothing to be more fearful than an oath.  
Anyone who unjustly plotted against others I gave into the hands of  
his victim.  
On those who commit unjust acts I imposed retribution.  
I ordained that suppliants be pitied.  
I honor those who justly defend themselves.  
With me the just prevails.  
I am mistress of rivers and winds and the sea.  
No one becomes famous without my knowledge.  
I am the mistress of war.  
I am the mistress of the thunderbolt.  
I calm and stir up the sea.  
I am in the rays of the sun.  
I sit beside the course of the sun.  
Whatever I decide, this also is accomplished.  
For me everything is right.  
I free those who are in bonds.  
I am the mistress of sailing.  
The navigable I make unnavigable whenever I choose.  
I established the boundaries of cities. (do ovde 323)  
I am she who is called Thesmophoros.

The island from the depths I brought up into the light.  
 I conquer Fate. Fate heeds me.  
 Hail Egypt who reared me.”<sup>72</sup>

In spite of obvious differences between Greek and Egyptian gods (while the Greek gods were represented as looking like humans and were immortals who exerted power over some particular domain of existence, the Egyptian gods often had the heads of animals, were mortal but still powerful, and also carried power over many different areas of life), gradually they began to look alike. For example, Isis was dressed like an Egyptian and in the company of the god Anubis, but still, her overall appearance was very Greek.

Magic was used often, also an inherited practice from previous times. “In the hellenistic period there was a great deal of pseudepigraphical writing of magical recipes; they were attributed to Persian sages... At some point, perhaps in the second century BC, claims began to be advanced for Egyptian expertise in magic.”<sup>73</sup> It is believed that the rise of magic-based activity was a direct consequence of scholarly work done at the Alexandria Library and Museum, because some discoveries, for example from astronomy, affected the authority of the gods who were in charge of that area.

## MUSEON OF ALEXANDRIA

The city of Alexandria was very cosmopolitan, containing people of many different ethnic origins, such as Egyptians, Macedonians, Greeks, Jews, and Arabs, who brought with them their own varied religious practices. “The old Egyptian city of Rhakotis had been refounded by Alexander the Great and named for him. It eventually grew to a city of 300,000 people under the Ptolemies.”<sup>74</sup> As was the custom, the Greeks blended their gods’ identities with those of the native deities, imbuing them with similar characteristics. Thus were created hybrids like Zeus-Ammon or Isis-Demeter, few examples of Greek and Egyptian gods mixture.

Besides being the largest port in Egypt, Alexandria was made the country’s capital and the site of the Ptolemaic court.

The court strongly supported cultural and scientific development and the city became the greatest centre of culture and science in the Hellenistic east.

<sup>72</sup> Pomeroy, S. B. *Ibid.* pp. 323–324

<sup>73</sup> Dickie, M. W. 2007. *Magic in Classical and Hellenistic Greece* In Ogden, D. (ed.), *A companion to Greek religion*, Malden, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. p. 365

<sup>74</sup> Adams, W. L. *Ibid.* p. 41.

“The museum was a kind of research academy. Everybody who was anybody went to Alexandria.”<sup>75</sup> Many of the most educated people of the Hellenistic world, such as Euclid and Archimedes, lived there and conducted their research. Some of them were obliged to serve as physicians of the royal family or as tutors to the royal children.

Ptolemies provided them with great conditions for work, from dormitories, servants and food, to great means for their researches, such as observatory, zoological and botanical gardens. To assist the research in the Museum, Ptolemies established a library intended to contain copies of every important book in the world. Firstly, they made copies of books written in Greek, but later on they were also translated books from other languages. That way, the library offered exceptional resources for scholarly research.

Under the Ptolemaic Dynasty, the city soon exceeded Athens as the cultural center of the Hellenic world.

It is quite curious that even though researchers agree that the Ptolemies deserve to be credited for their establishment of the Alexandria library, there is no consensus on which Ptolemy was primarily responsible for this. Some scholars believe that Ptolemy I was its founder but that it was developed into its final form by his son. Other authors think that it was originally only Ptolemy I’s idea, and that Ptolemy II was the one who actually realized that idea. There are also those who believe that Ptolemy II alone was responsible, but “the possibility that any aspect of contemporary *Egyptian* culture may have played a part in the decision to create this institution has been given little if any serious consideration. The inspiration for its creation is usually sought in the Greek world and there alone. There is, however, very limited evidence of institutional libraries in the Greek world before the Hellenistic era. By contrast, Egypt had a millennia-long tradition of temple libraries, and one that is well documented.”<sup>76</sup>

In a word, Ptolemies was using, as well as Alexander “culture as a diplomatic<sup>77</sup> weapon, and it was his deliberate intent to make Alexandria the cultural center of the Hellenistic world.”<sup>78</sup> All Ptolemeian art served to advance the domestic policy of the kingdom and in this respect it was very successful.

<sup>75</sup> Braudel, F. 2001. *The Mediterranean in the Ancient World*, Oxford: Penguin books, p. 489.

<sup>76</sup> Ryholt, K. 2013 Libraries in ancient Egypt, In König, J, Oikonomopoulou, K, Woolf, G. (eds.), *Ancient Libraries*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 23.

<sup>77</sup> More about Ptolemy II skillfulness in diplomacy see in: Grainger, J. D. 2017. *Great Power Diplomacy in the Hellenistic World*, Abingdon: Routledge.

<sup>78</sup> Adams, W. L, Ibid. p. 41.



## SUBMISSION UNDER THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

As Egypt witnessed the fall of various Hellenistic kingdoms to Roman rule, the Ptolemies decided to make an agreement with Rome. They asked them for help occasionally in order to maintain their power, and Romans helped them, mostly because they were interested in stable supply of grain from Egypt. “It was indeed the wealth of Egypt which was noted by visiting Romans. When Scipio Aemilianus visited the country with a Roman embassy in 140–139, the visitors were horrified by the lavishness of Ptolemaic hospitality but impressed by the natural resources of Egypt, particularly the flood of the Nile; all it lacked was rulers worthy of their kingdom.”<sup>79</sup> Gradually, Rome gained more power over Egypt and eventually decided to fully absorb it into the Empire.

After taking Egypt over, which essentially became the granary of Rome, the inhabitants would have noticed no major change in the paces of daily life. Alexandria remained the capital city, Greek was still the common language except in the highest positions of state rulers where Latin. Unlike the Greeks, the Romans did not come in large numbers to Egypt. The Romans also respected the Egyptian religion, and Egyptians continued to worship their gods, and their seemingly very different deities even started to look alike. The Romans gradually introduced the cult of the Emperor to Egypt, just as the Hellenistic kings did, and rejection of the state religion was punished as treason against the Emperor.

## CONCLUSION

Even though the Greeks had a colossal influence on the societies they came into contact through their colonies and through trade, the degree of this influence cannot compare to that which occurred after Alexander’s invasion of the East. Alexander is considered one of the most efficient military leaders of the ancient world. For just over a decade, he won territories ranging from Greece to India, leaving significant changes in the parts of the world he campaigned through. During his wars, he surrounded himself with historians and writers, and probably at least indirectly influenced their work. This custom continued with the Diadochi. In order to preserve power over the defeated territories, to pacify the conquered, and to collect revenue, Alexander and the Diadochi founded new cities and filled them

---

<sup>79</sup> Thompson, D. J. 2005. The Ptolemies and Egypt In Erskine, A. (ed.) *Companion to the Hellenistic World*. Malden, Oxford, Victoria: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. p. 118.

with Greeks and Macedonians. They were not a dominant part of the population, but their culture was.

Although there were significant cultural differences between the Macedonians and the Greeks at the beginning, during the time they emerged in a relatively homogeneous Greek culture. At the beginning, they did not care about the local peoples because they viewed them as insignificant members of the lower class, but in time the situation changed. By coexisting with the domestic population, colonists were exposed to their culture, and inevitably the two cultures influenced by each other. As a result, they started to mix elements of their cultures, a prime feature of what we now call Hellenization. However, this process happened primarily in urban centers. Villagers did not need to communicate much with colonists, and were therefore not affected by Hellenization. To them, the Greeks were people who spoke a strange language and worshipped strange gods.

In ancient times, communication with gods was extremely important, whether the reason was to evade their wrath or to ask for blessings. In Hellenistic kingdoms, the most influential cult was that of the Egyptian Isis, Cybele, the great mother-goddess from Anatolia, and the Indo-Iranian god Mitra. All three cults were worshipped by people who lived in the areas where they originated, as well as by the Greeks, and then later by the Romans. The best example of how local cultures influenced conquerors is the example of the Indo-Greek king Menander I Soter, who converted to Buddhism.

One of the characteristics of the Hellenistic period was certainly the worship of kings. This was first seen in the cult of Alexander the Great, who was treated with extraordinary religious reverence even during his own lifetime. His cult went on to encourage others, and after his death all the Diadochi liked to claim divine ancestry and associate themselves with favored divinities. The Ptolemies even adopted the earlier traditions of the Egyptian rulers and established themselves as pharaohs.

In the art of this period there was great progress made in the fields of architecture and drama. New holidays were also created, as were new libraries, and this was the period in which the mosaic was invented. Even though it is widely believed that Hellenistic art is far inferior to the art of the Classical Greek period, one should not forget that some of the most prominent works of ancient art like the Venus de Milo, the Winged Victory of Samothrace, and Laocoon and his Sons were creations of Hellenistic artists. The Hellenistic kings lived in lush palaces and gardens, but they were also great patrons of artists.

This was particularly evident in Egypt during the reign of Ptolemy. Their kingdom was the richest and most resilient in comparison to other parts of

the former Alexandrian Empire. The Port of Alexandria made trade easier, so Egypt exported a large amount of grain, generating huge revenue. The fact that they were so rich in grain is what caused Rome to take over Egypt.

In order to gain acceptance with the Egyptians, the Ptolemies paid tribute to their gods, renewed ancient places of worship, supported traditional cults, and represented themselves as pharaohs. Following the pharaonic tradition, they married among themselves, but they also intentionally created a new deity which combined elements of both Greek and Egyptian gods, and made that deity their protector. In Alexandria, the most important Hellenistic city in the Mediterranean, they built a monumental Museon, an amazing research center which contained the most important library of the Ancient World, the Library of Alexandria. Many of the greatest minds of the time lived and worked there, all sponsored by the Ptolemies. The unbelievable developments in science that were made during the Hellenistic period, from medicine to astronomy to mathematics, were the result of the Ptolemies' extraordinary support.

The period following the death of Alexander is characterized by the division of his empire, and by endless wars between the Diadochi and their descendants. Exhausted by these wars, all the Hellenistic kingdoms, one by one, fell to Rome. After Octavian's victory over Antonius and Cleopatra in the Battle of Actium and after Cleopatra's death in 30 BC, the last remnants of the Ptolemaic Empire were swept away. These events do not only mark the end of the Hellenistic era. Since following this event, Octavian quickly proclaimed himself the Emperor Augustus, it is also thought of as the moment that the Roman Republic died, and the Roman Empire was born. The common market, common currency and common language that Alexander had established proved to be very useful to Rome. Rome was also massively influenced by Hellenistic culture, but unlike the peoples who had been forced to live under Hellenistic kings, this happened by the Romans' own free will.

Whether viewed as a hero or a villain, Alexander's conquests initiated the development of a new culture known today as Hellenistic culture, and this process continued not only three hundred years after his death, but even after Rome conquered the last Hellenistic kingdom.

## LITERATURE

- [19] Adams, W. L. 2006. The Hellenistic Kingdoms In Bugh, G. R. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Hellenistic World* New York: Cambridge University Press
- [20] Anson, E. M. 2004. *Eumenes of Cardia. A Greek among Macedonians*, Boston, Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers. Inc.
- [21] Amitay, O. 2010. *From Alexander to Jesus*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
- [22] Braudel, F. 2001. *The Mediterranean in the Ancient World*, Oxford: Penguin books.
- [23] Bubeník, V. 1989, *Hellenistic and Roman Greece as a Sociolinguistic Area*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- [24] Chaniotis, A. 2005. *War in the Hellenistic World: A Social and Cultural History*, Malden, Oxford, Victoria: Blackwell publishing.
- [25] Dickie, M. W. 2007. Magic in Classical and Hellenistic Greece In Ogden, D. (ed.), *A companion to Greek religion*, Malden, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- [26] Dmitriev, S. 2005. *City Government in Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor*, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- [27] Errington, R. M, 2008. *A History of the Hellenistic World 323–30 BC*, Malden, Oxford, Victoria: Blackwell Publishing.
- [28] Fassa, E. 2013. Shifting Conceptions of the Divine: Sarapis as Part of Ptolemaic
- [29] Egypt's Social Imaginaries. In Stavrianopoulou, E. (ed.) *Shifting Social Imaginaries in the Hellenistic Period, Narrations, Practices, and Images*, Leiden, Boston: Brill
- [30] Freeman, C. 2014 *Egypt, Greece, and Rnd rome, Civilizations of the Ancient Mediterranean*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [31] Grainger, J. D. 2017. *Great Power Diplomacy in the Hellenistic World*, Abingdon: Routledge.
- [32] Green, P. (ed.) 1993. *Hellenistic History and Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, Retrived from: <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft0000035f/>
- [33] Holt, F. L. 2005. *Into the Land of Bones, Alexander the Great in Afghanistan*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- [34] Koester, H. 1995. History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age, New York, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- [35] Morgan, J. 2007 Women, Religion, and the Home, In Ogden, D. (ed.) *A companion to Greek religion*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- [36] Pomeroy, S. B. et. al. 2004. *A Brief History of Ancient Greece, Politics, Society, and Culture*, Oxford. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [37] Poo, M. C. 2005. *Enemies of civilization: attitudes toward foreigners in ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and China*, Albany: State University of New York Press.
- [38] Price, S. 2001. The History of the Hellenistic Period In Boardman, J, Griffin, J, Murray, O. (eds) *The Oxford history of Greece and the Hellenistic World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [39] Ryholt, K. 2013 Libraries in ancient Egypt, In Konig, J, Oikonomopoulou, K, Woolf, G. (eds.), *Ancient Libraries*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [40] Taylor, P. M. 2003. *Munitions of the Mind, A History of Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Present Era*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

- [41] Thompson, D. J. 2002. Families in early Ptolemaic Egypt In Ogden, D. (ed.) *The Hellenistic World, New Perspectives*, Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. London,
- [42] Thompson, D. J. 2005. The Ptolernies and Egypt In Erskine, A. (ed.) *Companion to the Hellenistic World*. Malden, Oxford, Victoria: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- [43] Thonemann, P. 2016 *The Hellenistic Age*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [44] Sekunda, N. 1995. *The Army of Alexander the Great*, London: Reed International Books Ltd.
- [45] Shipley, G. 2000 *The Greek World after Alexander* 323–30 BC London & New York: Routledge.
- [46] Stephens, S. 2009. Hellenistic Culture In: *The Oxford Handbook of Hellenic Studies* Boys-Stones, G, Graziosi, B, Vasunia, P. (eds.), Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- [47] Strootman, R. 2007. *The Hellenistic Royal Court. Court Culture, Ceremonial and Ideology in Greece, Egypt and the Near East, 336–30 BCE* (Doctoral dissertation) Retrieved from <https://dspace.library.uu.nl/handle/1874/22154>
- [48] Swain, S. (1996) *Hellenism and empire: language, classicism, and power in the Greek world, AD 50–250*, Oxford.