

Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic Age

Part I

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Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic Age

Scope:

This series of lectures examines a crucial but often neglected period in the history of the ancient world, the age ushered in by the extraordinary conquests of Alexander the Great. In the opening lectures, we explore the enigma of Alexander, son of a brilliant father, yet always at odds with the man whom he succeeded. We trace his early campaigns against the Persians and follow him to Egypt, where he was acclaimed as the son of god. We look at his career after this and find in him a blend of greatness and madness as he strove to replace the Persian empire of the Achaemenid dynasty with a new, mixed ruling class of Macedonians and Persians.

Alexander's death in 323 BC ushered in a period of catastrophic change as ambitious warlords carved up Alexander's realm into their own separate empires, especially Seleucid Syria and Ptolemaic Egypt. In a series of lectures, we look at how a small ruling class of Macedonian nobles established their rule from the eastern Mediterranean to the Hindu Kush. In the Nile valley, the Ptolemies played the role of pharaohs and were treated by their subjects as gods. At the same time, however, their capital, Alexandria, was cut off from Egypt and run by Greek bureaucrats. Greek culture flourished here in the museum and library, and the Ptolemies were great patrons of the arts.

In the Seleucid empire, the rulers also built Greek cities, such as Antioch, but in older regions, including Mesopotamia, they too were ready to be worshipped as living gods. On the edges of the Hellenistic world, in places as far away as Afghanistan and Pakistan, Greek cities grew up around trading posts and military settlements. Here, philosophy and literature from old Greece went hand in hand with gymnasiums and theatres to plant Greek culture far from the Mediterranean. By military and cultural conquest, then, much of central Asia was incorporated into the Greek world.

Despite the geographic extent of this civilization, we shall see that the heartland remained the eastern Mediterranean. It was here, in such new cities as Alexandria and Pergamum and such old ones as Athens, that Greek culture developed its distinctive Hellenistic appearance. Philosophy became more academic, as different schools of philosophy emerged. Stoicism, epicureanism, and skepticism all looked for ways to teach people to avoid the emotional upheavals of life in an age of anxiety. At the same time, art rejoiced in exploring the very same turmoil of the age. Hellenistic sculptors looked at the old, the young, the ugly, and the tortured instead of merely fashioning images of the perfect athlete. Novelists also played with themes of the reversal of fortune in the lives of their characters, because such tumult was part of the experiences of so many people. Piracy, brigandage, physical hardship, and the supreme power of great kings were all realities of the age and left their marks on ordinary people.

As we shall see, these conditions helped spawn a vital interest in magic, spells, and incantations and in religions that offered people the promise of redemption and salvation. The cults of Isis, Serapis, and Cybele all grew in popularity throughout the Hellenistic world. This was the climate of the world in which Christianity was born.

Although the Hellenistic Age would result in some of the greatest accomplishments in Greek culture, especially in the poetry of Callimachus, Theocritus, and Apollonius, the political power of the age was overshadowed by the growth of Rome. Hence, we conclude the lectures with a study of the growth of Roman power, its expansion into the eastern Mediterranean, and the inevitable clash of Greek and Roman civilizations. As we shall see, Rome conquered, but Rome would be forever changed by the contact with Greek culture. In the words of the Roman poet Horace, "Captured Greece took captive her captor."

Lecture One

Greeks and Macedonians

Scope: In this lecture, we examine the relations between Philip II of Macedon and the Greeks. We will look at the earlier history of Macedon and chart the region's growth up to the battle of Chaeroneia in 338 BC and Philip's assassination two years later. In particular we will pay attention to Macedon's position on the margins of the Greek world.

Outline

- I. Alexander the Great is the watershed figure between the Hellenistic Age and what preceded it.
 - A. According to conventional formulations, the Hellenistic Age followed the Archaic and Classical stages of Greek civilization. It was, in other words, a "decadent" phase.
 - B. But the Hellenistic Age is a dynamic period, one in which the Greek world was vibrant and vast.
- II. The relationship between Macedon and Greece is historically complex. Although the Greek city-states were primarily democracies or oligarchies, Macedonia was a kingdom composed of separate cantons ruled by powerful local chieftains. We can use Herodotus's criteria to judge whether the Macedonians were Greek: genealogy, language, religion, and custom.
 - A. Even in the heroic genealogies of the Greeks, the Macedonians were seen as on the very border of being Greek.
 - B. Inscriptions and many personal names from Macedon are primarily Greek, and it is a safe, but not watertight, conclusion that Macedonian is a part of the family of northwest Greek dialects.
 - C. Good evidence exists to show the widespread worship of Zeus and Artemis, two clearly Greek gods. Evidence also exists of the popularity of Bendis, a Thracian goddess, and Enodia, a goddess shown on horseback and holding a torch, who is without any close Greek parallels.
 - D. The Greeks expected certain behaviors to demonstrate that you were Greek, including participation in the panhellenic games and consultation of the panhellenic oracles. Macedonians took part in these events, but it was usually the Macedonian kings who asserted that they were Greek.
- III. Philip II was seen as the man who transformed Macedonia and made the Macedonians fully Greek.
 - A. Philip probably never even expected to become king of Macedon. Although his father, Amyntas III (393–370 BC), was king, Philip had two older brothers who preceded him to the throne: Alexander II (370–368 BC), who was murdered by his brother-in-law, and Perdiccas III, who ruled in 360–359.
 - B. The early history of Macedon is one of territorial expansion under powerful kings acting on the threat of invasion from neighboring tribes, including the Illyrians, the Triballi, and the Pacones, and internal discord between powerful clans vying for power.
 1. At times, the inland mountain regions were under central authority.
 2. At other times, these regions were relatively independent. This combination of internal discord and external threat kept Macedon a peripheral power in the Greek world for 300 years.
 - C. When his brother, Perdiccas III, died, Philip took over as regent for his nephew before killing him and establishing his own dynasty.
 1. His early reign was taken up with border wars involving various northern tribes, whom he pacified using the three techniques that were the hallmark of his success: diplomacy, bribery, and military alliance.
 2. Some tribes he conquered in battle through deploying the infantry phalanx; some he bought off with huge indemnities; and some he mollified by marriage alliances.
 - D. After securing the western and northern borders of his kingdom, Philip's ambitions moved south and east.
 1. Once he had captured the gold mines of Mt. Pangaion, the next step was to deal with the cities of the Chalcidice: Torone, Olynthus, and Amphipolis. This move brought him into conflict with Athens, which regarded Amphipolis as its own colony.

2. His thirst for expansion was endless, taking him eventually all the way across the Thracian coast to the Hellespont and south into Thessaly, where he intervened in a civil war before becoming the commander-in-chief of the Thessalians.
- IV. Philip moved into southern Greece as a result of the Sacred War (357–346 BC), when Delphi was seized by the neighboring people of Phocis.
- A. Philip marched south to liberate Delphi in 350.
 1. The Athenians were alarmed and sent a force to Thermopylae (where the Spartans had headed off the Persians 130 years before) to block his way. Philip retreated, as he said, like a battering ram in order to strike harder the second time. This second attempt came in 346, when he seized Thermopylae and Delphi at the same time.
 2. Aware that they had been outmaneuvered, the Athenians under Demosthenes began frantically trying to raise an alliance against Philip. But Philip withdrew from Delphi, and most Greek states believed that he had kept his word: he had only come south to liberate Delphi.
 - B. When war at Delphi broke out again in 338 BC, Philip again marched south, but this time, after he had passed through Thermopylae, he turned southeast.
 1. Hurriedly, an Athenian army marched north, joined the Thebans, and continued west to Chaironeia.
 2. There, in 338, the last free army of Greeks was destroyed by the Macedonians, with Philip commanding the right wing and his 16-year-old son, Alexander, the heir designate, holding the left.
 - C. At Corinth, Philip established a Hellenic league without claiming royal authority. Because the Greeks were unified in their hatred of Persians, Philip proposed an invasion of Persia.
 - D. Two years later, in 336, Philip was assassinated in Macedon and succeeded by his son, Alexander.
- V. The Macedonian victory would initiate a new era, during which Alexander’s armies would take Greek culture from Athens to Afghanistan, but not until the war of independence against the Turks, 2,100 years later, would the Greeks be free.
- A. The Hellenistic Age began with an irony: as Greece lost its independence, its culture was exported far and wide.
 - B. This culture, however, was little more than a thin veneer in the lands to be conquered.
 - C. Even so, new cities would be planted by the Greeks and ruled by urban elites steeped in Hellenism.

Suggested Reading:

- R. M. Errington, *A History of Macedonia*.
 E. N. Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus: The Emergence of Macedon*.
 N. G. L. Hammond, *Philip of Macedon*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What motivated Philip’s relentless campaigns of expansion?
2. Why were the Greeks unable to resist the advance of Macedonian power?

Lecture Two

Alexander the Divine?

Scope: Alexander's path was prepared by his father, Philip, but few could predict how the son would eclipse the father. After only two battles, Alexander would command more territory than any Greek before him and would demand that the Persian king address him as an equal. At the height of his power, he would visit Egypt, where he would not only assume the role of pharaoh but would be greeted as the son of god.

Outline

- I. Philip's murder in 336 BC came at an opportune moment for Alexander, because Philip's most recent marriage was to a young Macedonian woman, named Cleopatra, daughter of a powerful general named Attalus.
 - A. At the betrothal feast in 337, Attalus had toasted the couple, wishing them a fruitful marriage that would produce a legitimate Macedonian heir.
 1. Alexander, then 17 years of age, interpreted this as a slight: because his mother, Olympias, was from Epirus, he could be said to be only half-Macedonian.
 2. When he flew into a rage and cried out, "So what does that make me, a bastard, you villain?" Philip drew his sword and the two very nearly cut each other to pieces.
 3. Olympias withdrew from Macedon, and Philip and Alexander were temporarily estranged, though later reconciled.
 - B. In 336, Philip celebrated the marriage with a festival at which his own statue was carried behind the statues of the twelve Olympian Gods. As Philip entered the theatre, he was stabbed in the chest and died.
 - C. The circumstances of Philip's death have resulted in the theory that Alexander plotted his father's death to get to the throne. Some believed this in antiquity, but the charge cannot be proved. Nonetheless, Alexander profited greatly from the timing of his father's death.
- II. At the time of his death, Philip had been preparing for the invasion of Persia. He would lead a combined army of Greeks and Macedonians in a quest to avenge the sack of Greece by the Persians 150 years earlier. Alexander continued with this plan, crossing into Asia Minor in 334 BC.
 - A. At the Granicus River in northwestern Asia Minor, Alexander defeated an army assembled by the various satraps of Asia Minor.
 1. The ancient sources put the victory down to the reckless courage of Alexander, who led his cavalry across the river, forcing the infantry to follow them.
 2. Alexander's tactics represent an innovation in Greek warfare. Until then, Greeks had fought either massed hoplite engagements or had relied on skirmishing troops with light arms. Cavalry had remained a neglected tactical weapon, used primarily to sweep up after the hoplite army had broken the opponent.
 3. Alexander appreciated the potential of the cavalry to function as a wedge, capable of splitting the enemy and turning the tide of battle.
 - B. Alexander presented his expedition as a new Trojan War, with himself as the new Achilles.
 1. His campaign was compared with the labors of Heracles and the epic journey of the god Dionysos. He was a superhuman hero.
 2. Alexander cultivated these comparisons, wandering as he did far and wide like Heracles, casting his conquest of the East as divinely inspired.
 - C. The victory at the Granicus left Alexander in control of much of Asia Minor. This was followed the next year by Alexander's victory at Issus (333 BC), just beyond the point where the pass through the Taurus Mountains leads down into the Syrian plain.
 1. On this occasion, the Persians were led by the Great King himself, Darius III. The armies passed each other while jockeying for position and, when they eventually met, the narrow coastal strip prevented Darius from employing his superior numbers.
 2. The result was a second overwhelming victory that left Alexander in command of all the former Persian possessions from the Aegean to the headwaters of the Euphrates.

- III.** The rapid and massive success of Alexander posed some interesting problems for the 21-year-old king. How should he behave toward the Greeks and the Persians? What was the basis of his authority?
- A.** To the Greeks, he addressed himself still as King Alexander, that is, as King of the Macedonians.
1. A decree from 334 BC—revealing democratic concerns while announcing a military levy—shows Alexander’s mix of idealism and pragmatism.
 2. He arranged affairs in the Greek cities now under his control but encouraged the Greeks to submit conflicts to arbitration by a Hellenic council.
 3. Alexander saw that he could not afford disruptions and endemic warfare behind him, because he needed the resources of the Greek cities—either their manpower or their navies.
- B.** But to the Persians, Alexander was much more.
1. He had captured the Great King’s family, his possessions, and his gold and had conquered his army and even driven Darius from the field. Not surprisingly, then, Alexander presented a very different face to the Persians, styling himself “Lord of Asia.”
 2. This is the key to understanding Alexander: he was caught between two cultures that could not be reconciled. You cannot be both first among equals, as a Greek, and semi-divine, as a Persian.
- C.** After the battle of Issus, Alexander turned south to secure the coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon. From here, before pursuing Darius inland, Alexander headed for Egypt, anxious not to leave a large Persian presence in his rear.
1. The Egyptian campaign included a march across the Libyan desert to the oracle of Zeus Ammon at Siwah, where Alexander, in one account, was greeted by the oracle as the son of Zeus Ammon. Another possibility is that he was called “son of Amun,” or pharaoh, a ritual recognition of his new position.
 2. Did Alexander believe in his own divinity? Did the event give shape to incipient delusions? Some have tried to psychoanalyze him 2,500 years after the fact to ascertain whether he actually considered himself a god.
 3. But the event does highlight the dilemma facing Alexander: his Greek and non-Greek subjects expected him to play very different, perhaps irreconcilable, roles. None of his generals would attempt to bridge this difficult gap.

Suggested Reading:

R. Lane Fox, *Alexander the Great*.

J. Roisman, *Alexander the Great: Ancient and Modern Perspectives*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How were Alexander’s claims to divinity received by the Greeks?
2. What does the episode at Siwah reveal about the attitudes of the conquered toward Alexander?

Lecture Three

The Blazing Star

Scope: The visit to Siwah may have convinced Alexander he was a god, or he may have recognized the value of blurring the lines between human and divine. Whatever his motives, he still faced the matter of bringing the Great King Darius to battle. The second half of his campaign would be spent pushing further east.

Outline

- I. Leaving Egypt after installing Macedonian garrisons and a Macedonian governor, Alexander marched north, following the caravan trails across northern Syria and into Mesopotamia. He had left the Mediterranean and was headed toward the heartland of Persia.
 - A. Descending into Mesopotamia, Alexander made his way toward the headwaters of the Tigris River.
 - B. Here, at Gaugamela, in 331 BC, he met and destroyed the army of Darius, who fled north and east. Alexander was now Lord of Asia in deed as much as in title.
 - C. Babylon surrendered to him, as did the royal capital of Susa, and the wealth that fell into Alexander's hands vastly outweighed anything previously known to the Greek world.
 - D. A comparison demonstrates the scale of this wealth: the revenues of the Athenian empire in about 480 BC amounted to 460 talents. At Susa, Alexander captured 40,000 talents of coined money, along with such riches as 5,000 talents worth of purple cloth.
- II. Now began the pursuit of Darius.
 - A. The Achaemenid king had been retreating into the wild northern regions of Hyrcania and Media in northern Iran and near the region bordering modern Turkmenistan.
 - B. Once Alexander's army closed in on Darius, however, the Persian king's own men turned on him and he was assassinated by a Persian nobleman named Bessos.
 - C. This was an anticlimax to the great personal rivalry between Alexander and Darius (descended from the Darius who had invaded Greece 150 years before), but Alexander brilliantly turned it into an opportunity to refashion himself as both the Lord of Asia and the legitimate successor of Darius.
 - D. Alexander continued his pursuit of Bessos until he was captured and executed, torn in two.
- III. Alexander was now king of Macedon, Lord of Asia, and heir to the Achaemenid throne. Could these be reconciled? Could he be all things to all men?
 - A. Alexander's veterans grew unhappy with the king's adoption of Persian practices and announced a litany of complaints against their leader. In a tense face-off, Alexander won back their loyalty.
 - B. At a banquet at Opis, near Babylon, in 324 BC, Alexander initiated a policy of reconciliation between Greeks and Persians, praying for harmony between the two peoples.
 1. He and thousands of his men took Persian wives, and plans were made for training their children as the new, mixed ruling class of the empire.
 2. Persian nobles were integrated into the army, and new battalions were created to blend the skills of both groups. Overnight, the long-standing enemy, the Persians, became close allies.
 - C. Alexander also introduced the rituals of the Persian court and began dressing in Persian garb. These actions failed to reconcile the conflicting demands of Macedonians and Persians and prompted misgivings about Alexander's "orientalism."
 - D. The Persian court ritual of obeisance, or prostration, was disdained by the Greeks.
 - E. None of Alexander's successors embraced his attempt at cultural fusion.

- IV. Even after his conquest of Darius, Alexander's campaigns continued. He pushed the Macedonian army into the mountain passes of the Hindu Kush, into Pakistan, and on toward India in an effort to supersede the mythical exploits of Heracles.
- A. In each of these regions, he conquered enemies whom he then befriended, such as Taxiles, and made allies of men like Porus, whom he would never see again, because his armies had had enough. By the Indus River they mutinied, refusing to follow Alexander any further.
 - B. The return from India has sometimes been interpreted by Alexander's critics as evidence for his megalomania. The march across the Gedrosian desert looks like punishment inflicted on the Macedonians by a spoiled boy-king, though now he was close to 30 and had nothing left to prove.
 - C. His disastrous return from the east was followed shortly after by his death in Babylon in 323 BC.
 - 1. Because he had known only conquest, it is difficult to evaluate Alexander as a ruler.
 - 2. His policy of administration appears to be more of the same as the Persian system. Sometimes, Greeks were left in charge of newly acquired territories but just as often, Persians were, too.
 - D. At the time of his death, Alexander may have been planning further campaigns to the west. Like many other conquerors, he found it easier to wage war than to rule a stable domain.

Suggested Reading:

R. Lane Fox, *Alexander the Great*.

Questions to Consider:

- 1. What motivated Alexander to pursue conquest so relentlessly?
- 2. How durable were the administrative arrangements made by Alexander?

Lecture Four

Alexander—Myth and Reality

Scope: Alexander had an astonishing effect on the political development of the eastern Mediterranean, yet opinions remain deeply divided about him. This was true in antiquity and remains true now. The man is lost inside the mythmaking, leaving the historical Alexander only a shadow of the fantastic Alexander of romance and folklore.

Outline

- I. The career and accomplishments of Alexander have always been the subject of widely different interpretations.
 - A. To some, he was an idealist, attempting to create a new world in which Greeks and non-Greeks would live in peace and harmony.
 - B. To others, he appears a drunken despot unable to envisage anything more than ever-greater feats of conquest. History gives us two very different Alexanders: the altruist and the megalomaniac.
 - C. The most positive interpretation of Alexander was offered by W. W. Tarn, a historian writing in the aftermath of World War I at the time of the League of Nations. Influenced by contemporary ideas concerning international harmony, Tarn imagined Alexander's empire as an ancient forerunner of the twentieth century's experiment in international cooperation. He even likened Alexander to St. Paul.
 - D. At the other extreme are the views of such scholars as Ernst Badian, for whom Alexander is a paranoid tyrant, continually engaged in conspiracies against real and imagined enemies and relentlessly driving his troops forward in his maniacal and bloody quest for personal glory, no matter what the cost to his innocent victims, including his own men. Indeed, we know of summary executions committed during his reign, sometimes proceeding on flimsy evidence.
 1. At one banquet, Cleitus, a Macedonian general, objected to Alexander's being compared to a deity.
 2. Alexander, in a drunken rage, killed him on the spot.
- II. These conflicting views of Alexander were already in place in antiquity and can be traced to two quite separate traditions.
 - A. Alexander was accompanied by a historian, Callisthenes, who appears to have recorded the great man's deeds even as the campaigns were in progress.
 1. Although Callisthenes was eventually executed by Alexander, he lived long enough to produce a highly eulogistic account that compared Alexander to the Homeric heroes and Dionysos. He established a "court tradition," in which Alexander was heroic, semi-divine, and always right, inspired by an unidentified yearning.
 2. Other accounts, written soon after Alexander's death by men who had marched with him, such as Ptolemy and Aristoboulus, also depicted a sanitized, godlike figure.
 - B. A more popular tradition also developed that emphasized the passion, drama, and bloodshed of Alexander's reign.
 1. The first author associated with this tradition was Cleitarchus and, although his work was hated by the critics, it was immensely popular with the public. Here was an Alexander who flew into rages—then became extravagantly remorseful. This was the Alexander who killed Black Cleitus in a drunken brawl and was prostrate with grief afterwards.
 2. This colorful tradition survives in the work of Diodorus Siculus and Justin.
 - C. Eventually, both traditions would be combined in the works of later historians, such as Plutarch, who had to sift between two very different approaches.
 1. The court tradition lived on in the theme of Alexander's *pothos* or yearning, the semi-divine quality that leads him onward to his destiny.
 2. The vulgate lived on in fantastic stories that Alexander had been visited by the Queen of the Amazons, a story soundly rejected by those who followed the court tradition.

- III. Alexander continued to influence the Mediterranean and Near East long after his death, both because of his accomplishments and because of his legend.
- A. We will examine the changes wrought by the Greek and Macedonian control of the eastern Mediterranean up to the time of the Romans. It is worth remembering, however, that as a figure of legend, Alexander, like King Arthur, exerted an enormous influence over a vast area for even longer than the duration of the Hellenistic *oecumene*, or commonwealth, ruled by Alexander and his successors.
 - B. The Alexander legend, beginning about the third century AD, is a collection of stories from different lands and shows Alexander's mythic status even among later peoples.
 - 1. The *Ishkandanamah*, for example, makes Alexander a good Muslim who is actually the son of Darab, the Persian King, and falsely presented as the son or brother of the Caesar of Rum, Filqus. This story appropriates Alexander and makes him Persian and Muslim, despite the fact that Islam did not even come into existence until 1,000 years after his death. In this work, Alexander is frequently referred to as "the two-horned one," a reference to attributes of Zeus Ammon in his official graven image.
 - 2. The Alexander legend would eventually reach from Britain to Yemen and Sri Lanka.
 - 3. In a later medieval Christian story, Alexander is depicted as ascending into heaven before being rebuffed by an angel.
- IV. We may glimpse why Alexander became even more important as a figure in myth than in real life if we consider the Greek tale of Alexander's sister.
- A. Alexander gave his sister the water of immortality to guard, but she foolishly lost it, went mad, and was turned into the *gorgona*, or mermaid.
 - B. Now the mother of storms, she stops passing ships and asks, "Does Alexander live?" Sailors must answer, "Yes, Alexander lives and rules the world," otherwise Alexander's sister will destroy their ship.
- V. Alexander may be dead, but so mighty is his power that he is still a cosmic force who must be honored by the living.
- A. The story of the Gorgon illustrates the place of Alexander in myth.
 - B. But Alexander is in many ways a normal man, somewhere between the two extremes favored by historians.
 - 1. He is much like his father, Philip, extending the territorial claims of his people.
 - 2. Though a great general, he was only mortal. The reason he failed to create a lasting, united empire was that he died so young.

Suggested Reading:

Lionel Pearson, *The Lost Histories of Alexander the Great*.

Richard Stoneman, ed., *The Alexander Romance*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is it possible to reconstruct the character of Alexander with any accuracy?
2. Why does Alexander's legend continue to fascinate us?

Lecture Five

The Formation of the Kingdoms

Scope: A generation of warfare between Alexander's successors saw the end of his empire. Alexander's death created a crisis that would not be resolved until a series of wars had destroyed the possibility of a united empire. In the aftermath of the wars of the Diadochi, the major Hellenistic kingdoms would emerge under the control of Alexander's former generals and staff officers.

Outline

- I. Alexander died having attempted to reconcile two irreconcilable systems: the hierarchical Persian system, which demanded an absolute monarchy, and a Macedonian system, with its emphasis on performance, achievement, and the leadership of the best and the bravest.
 - A. The dream of a new, mixed Macedonian and Persian nobility died with Alexander. Instead, Alexander's officers would plunge the eastern Mediterranean into continuous war for a generation, until the emergence of separate Hellenistic kingdoms extending from Macedon to Egypt, through Asia Minor and Syria.
 - B. To understand the resistance of Alexander's officers to the prospect of sharing power with the Persians, we must remember that the Macedonian nobles were not just subjects of the king; they were also his *philoi*, his companions.
 1. Among the nobility, a strongly egalitarian ideology existed; the king was not king by divine right but because of his preeminence among men who were his peers.
 2. Just as the king ate and drank among these equals, so too they fought as equals. The elite battalions of the army were labeled "the Companion Cavalry" or, in the infantry, the *Pezetairoi*, "the Foot-Companions."
 - C. For men who had proved their valor by defeating the Great King and his armies, Persia was not a noble adversary to be treated as an equal but a conquered empire to be divided up like the carcass of a beast that they had hunted down and slaughtered.
- II. Alexander was the glue that kept the Macedonian enterprise together, and his death created a void, especially given that he had no clear successor. The issue of succession was complicated by two factors.
 - A. The first was that Alexander left a wife, Roxane, who was pregnant. The complication this presented was obvious.
 1. In a matter of months, she might bear a son, Alexander's heir, who would have an obvious claim to the throne.
 2. On the other hand, she might bear a girl, and the Macedonians had never been ruled by a queen. Even if she bore a son, the child would be in no position to assert himself as the legitimate Macedonian king for at least another 16 years.
 3. Nor was there any guarantee that the Macedonians would recognize a son born not to a Greek or Macedonian, but to the daughter of a mountain chieftain from Bactria.
 - B. The second complication was that all the negotiations conducted by Alexander's successors were done in the belief that the army officers would have the final say.
 1. As Perdikkas, Ptolemy, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and the rest bargained with each other, they failed to reckon on another factor in the equation of power: the Macedonian army, the Macedonian state under arms.
 2. The Macedonian infantry in Babylon wanted a king of the blood of Alexander. In the midst of the deliberations being held by the cavalry officers, the infantry went into revolt and insisted that Alexander's half brother, Arrhidaeus, be acknowledged as king.
 3. Perdikkas and the other power brokers had no choice but to accept. Alexander was succeeded by a half-witted brother and an unborn child.
- III. The early Hellenistic Age, from 323–301 BC, can largely be told as the quarter century during which two men fought to reclaim the unity of Alexander's empire and failed. At the same time, it was the quarter century in

which Alexander's successors moved from thinking of themselves as Macedonian officers to considering themselves as kings in their own right.

- A.** The first of the two men to try to reunify the kingdom was Perdiccas.
 - 1.** After the decision at Babylon, he found himself in a powerful position. He had control of Alexander's army, and he possessed the two kings in his entourage, acting as their guardian.
 - 2.** But Perdiccas's power evaporated in his first campaign to Egypt, where Ptolemy, one of Alexander's bodyguards, had established himself nominally as satrap but really as an independent ruler. It is fairly certain that Ptolemy managed to infiltrate Perdiccas's army and engineered his assassination.
 - B.** With Perdiccas dead, in 321 BC, a second round of negotiations took place in Syria at Triparadeisus.
 - 1.** The two kings, Philip Arrhidaeus and Alexander IV, were escorted home by the regent of Macedonia, Antipater.
 - 2.** Ptolemy retained Egypt and Seleucus received Babylon, but the most powerful figure to emerge, and perhaps the last man to dream of uniting Alexander's empire once again, was Antigonus, the satrap of Asia.
 - C.** From 320–311 BC, Antigonus was opposed by an alliance of Ptolemy, Seleucus, Lysimachus, and Cassander. When these men reached a peace settlement in 311 BC, the terms reflected the status quo that had operated for the last decade but had also been marked by continuous warfare.
- IV.** This was to be the legacy of Alexander's successors: intermittent yet virtually continuous warfare between great dynastic and regional blocks.
- A.** The issue of ruling an empire was always subordinate to the more pressing issue of acquiring or securing an empire.
 - B.** Because external warfare and foreign policy were the driving concerns of these men, internal questions of defining the relationship of ruler to ruled were worked out only in the most haphazard fashion, without much planning.
 - C.** For the first generation, at least, the new rulers of the Hellenistic world were uninterested in marrying Greek and non-Greek cultures. They were too busy trying to kill each other.
- V.** By 310, the political landscape of Alexander's empire had assumed the shape of the new Hellenistic kingdoms. The Ptolemies controlled Egypt; the Seleucids held Syria and Babylon; Macedon remained a separate region, now ruled by Antipater's son, Cassander; and the Antigonids controlled most of Asia Minor.
- VI.** Even so, all these rulers still ruled nominally as governors of territory conquered by Alexander.
- A.** In 310 BC, Cassander, aware that Alexander's son was approaching adolescence, executed Alexander's widow, Roxane, and his 12-year-old son, Alexander IV.
 - B.** Philip Arrhidaeus had been killed 7 years earlier, leaving no legitimate heir of Alexander's blood.
- VII.** The final stage in the dissolution of Alexander's empire came only 4 years later when, after a naval victory off Cyprus, Antigonus and his son Demetrius were hailed by their men as kings.
- A.** Kings of what? It didn't matter. This new notion of kingship was not tied to a particular territory but to a man.
 - B.** Ptolemy's men, it is said, didn't want him to be downhearted because of the defeat of his navy, so they, too, acclaimed him as king.
 - C.** The origins of his kingship, therefore, lay not in his control of a particular territory—in this case Egypt—but in his men's acclamation.
- VIII.** No constitutional guidelines existed for the formation of the Hellenistic kingdoms, only charismatic leadership and the need of people, Greek and non-Greek, to give the authority that ruled their lives a shape and a form that they could understand.
- A.** The philosophers of the Hellenistic Age describe the ability to handle the army and administer competently as justification for kingship.
 - B.** Syria, Egypt, and Macedon, born of this void, will be major dynastic blocks until the rise of the Roman Empire, 300 years in the future.

Suggested Reading:

Peter Green, *From Alexander to Actium*.

Questions to Consider:

1. When did the idea of a single empire of Alexander die?
2. What prevented Alexander's successors from taking the title of king until 17 years after his death?

Lecture Six

Egypt Under the Early Ptolemies

Scope: Ptolemaic Egypt is probably the most familiar and best documented of the Hellenistic kingdoms. In Egypt, Ptolemy, one of Alexander's companions and bodyguards, transformed himself into a new pharaoh, even as he remained separate from the conquered Egyptians. We investigate the Ptolemaic kingdom and examine how the Ptolemies blended pharaonic and Macedonian practices to create a new kingdom.

Outline

- I. In Egypt, the Macedonian conquerors encountered conditions such as they experienced nowhere else in the areas of the old Persian empire.
 - A. Geographic unity, historic unity, and ethnic unity created a system of immense stability.
 1. Egyptian society was arranged like a pyramid. It was a hierarchical system in which the mass of peasants was dominated by a priestly, scribal class and topped by a pharaoh.
 2. The Graeco-Macedonian elite replaced the upper echelons of this hierarchy but continued to rule over the Egyptians as a foreign power. Locals who couldn't speak Greek were considered barbarians.
 - B. Little intermarriage took place between the Macedonians and Egyptians, and few Egyptians served in the upper ranks of the massive Ptolemaic bureaucracy.
 - C. The firm division of Egypt into two ethnic groups is mirrored in the distinction between Alexandria and the rest of Egypt. Alexandria was said to lie "next to Egypt," and ordinary Egyptians needed permission to enter the city.
 - D. This split between the two cultures resulted in Ptolemaic rule being almost schizophrenic. The monarch was a pharaoh to the Egyptians and a Macedonian king to Greeks. Unlike Alexander's approach, the Ptolemaic solution was to keep the two realms strictly separate.
 - E. In the great temples of Egypt, the Ptolemies are depicted on stone reliefs as pharaohs, while in Alexandria, their court was filled with Greek advisors, scholars, and generals.
- II. The Ptolemaic system abandoned Alexander's notion of a fusion. Instead the entire system was arranged with a view to the most thorough exploitation of Egypt's natural wealth, especially land.
 - A. Egypt is cut off from the outside world by seas, deserts, and cataracts. It was possible, therefore, to minimize outside influence and to concentrate on keeping the economy hermetically sealed.
 - B. Mediterranean merchants had to conduct their commerce directly with the king's agents. Such international transactions were made with silver and gold coinage, but trade within Egypt was conducted in worthless copper, making it impossible for any private commerce to challenge the control exercised by the crown.
 - C. The Ptolemies enjoyed monopolies in oil and grain, staples produced in abundance by the fertile Nile valley and exported throughout the eastern Mediterranean.
 1. The monopolies were not confined to the sale of produce but extended into every aspect of production as well.
 2. The king's agents determined how much land was to be planted, distributed seed, monitored the use of tools, announced the time of harvest, and arranged for storage and transportation to Alexandria.
 3. Every aspect of production was overseen by a Greek bureaucracy that reached from the court in Alexandria all the way to the local village officials.
 4. Such micromanagement incurred local resistance, and petitions proliferated. Ultimately, the system was more concerned with exploitation than justice.
 - D. This controlled economy relied on treating the *laoi* (peasants) just as the pharaohs had done and required the complicity of temple estates or the priestly class.
 1. The Egyptian priestly class was, for the most part, protected by the Ptolemies. Their rights and privileges, including their ownership of large parcels of land, were acknowledged by successive Ptolemies. This situation was especially true from the late third century BC, after which Ptolemaic control grew weaker.

2. The famous Rosetta stone, the inscription that allowed modern scholars to read hieroglyphics for the first time, dates to 196 BC, in the reign of Ptolemy V, The inscription gives details of a series of tax breaks and remittances, reflecting the young king's desire to win the backing of the powerful Memphite priesthood.

III. Despite the coercive and top-heavy control of Egypt by the Graeco-Macedonian elite, the Ptolemies did attempt to make their power more acceptable to their Egyptian subjects.

- A. Perhaps the most curious action of the Ptolemies to gain legitimacy in the eyes of their Egyptian subjects was the marriage of Ptolemy II in 275 BC to Arsinoe, his sister.
 1. Some Greek gods, such as Zeus and Hera, enjoyed incestuous marriages.
 2. Still, the Ptolemaic practice was offensive to Greek sensibilities and was probably designed to evoke parallels with the Egyptian pantheon, especially Isis and Osiris.
- B. The other attempt to blend the two cultures was the creation of an entirely new religious cult to Serapis.
 1. Figures from Egyptian religion, such as Osiris and Apis, were syncretized with Greek gods, such as Zeus, to create this new god Serapis, whose cult was meant to be a fusion of the two religious cultures.
 2. Strangely, this and the cult of Isis became two of Egypt's principal contributions to the Hellenistic world, although they were much more popular outside of Egypt than amongst the Egyptians.

Suggested Reading:

- A. Bowman, *Egypt after the Pharaohs, 323 B.C.–A.D. 642*.
- D. Thompson, *Memphis under the Ptolemies*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How important was the pharaonic system of absolute rule to the later success of the Ptolemies?
2. What role did the priestly class play in the Ptolemaic control of Egypt?

Lecture Seven

Alexandria and the Library

Scope: Alexandria, the capital of Ptolemaic Egypt, was the jewel of the Hellenistic world. Not only was it the seat of Ptolemy's court, but its library and museum were the two premier cultural institutions of the Hellenistic world. We examine the city and its institutions and ask whether they represent a blending of Greek and Egyptian elements or the imposition of one culture over the other.

Outline

- I. Located at the west end of the Nile delta, Alexandria's very location evoked its ambiguous nature.
 - A. It is not in the Nile valley, as were the great pharaonic cities and temples, but in the region bordering Egypt on one side and the Mediterranean on the other. An important Greek emporium had existed in the same region at Naukratis as early as the sixth century, so the notion of keeping the Greek presence on the edge of Egypt already had a precedent.
 - B. Alexander was responsible for the city's foundation, a fact remembered with pride to this day. According to Plutarch, he laid out a city plan in the shape of a Macedonian military cloak, a story that recalls the Macedonian notion that conquered lands were "spear-won" territory.
 1. Alexander did not live to see the building of the city, and it is entirely likely that the city was originally planned to be nothing more than one of the many garrisons that Alexander left throughout his empire.
 2. It was the first Ptolemies who brought the city into existence. They ennobled the city and themselves by making it "Alexander's city," a fact that they advertised by hijacking Alexander's corpse and making his mausoleum, the Soma, the central attraction in the city.
 - C. Alexandria is the quintessential Hellenistic creation: a city that bears Alexander's name and evokes the magic of his physical being. In many ways, however, the city is more truly that of the Ptolemies, because they developed it and made it into the Greek capital of a Hellenistic kingdom.
- II. Alexandria was different from the rest of Egypt.
 - A. Here, the population was not composed of what the Greeks called the *laoi*, the Egyptian peasants, but was primarily Greek and Macedonian.
 - B. Even those who came to the city from other regions, such as North Africa, Judaea, or Babylon, tended to be Hellenized; they spoke and read Greek and had adopted Greek manners. One such group was the large Jewish community that lived in the northeastern quarter of the city.
 - C. Many of these non-Egyptians were connected directly or indirectly to the court, the *aulos*, which in some estimates physically occupied one-quarter of the entire space of Alexandria.
 - D. Craftsmen, such as silversmiths, goldsmiths and jewelers, sculptors and painters, and mosaic makers, made the city an artistic capital. Dyers, weavers, merchants, teachers, and doctors came from all parts of the Greek world. Soldiers came to enroll in Ptolemy's army.
 - E. At the same time, because Egypt was a massive producer of oil and grain, Alexandria was also a mercantile center through which Egypt's produce was exported to the rest of the Mediterranean.
 - F. The confluence of these factors—dynastic power, phenomenal wealth, and the exclusivity of Greek culture—arguably made Alexandria the most creative center of Hellenistic culture.
- III. The heart of Hellenistic culture was the museum, the temple of the Muses.
 - A. It was founded by Ptolemy I Soter and modeled on the Athenian institution of the same name that housed the library of Aristotle. The library and museum went hand in hand; the entire institution revolved around the library.
 - B. Ptolemy Soter appointed Demetrius of Phaleron, a pro-Macedonian Athenian philosopher, to organize the collection of texts that eventually grew to 500,000 books. The post of librarian, which also covered the running of the museum, was one of the most influential at the Ptolemaic court.
 - C. Throughout most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, modern scholars have been fascinated by the library, but no physical remains of it exist and even its exact location is disputed.

1. Scholars usually assume that the entire institution of library and museum represented an attempt by the Ptolemies to connect themselves with the great history of Athenian philosophy, especially the Aristotelian tradition.
 2. This desire to replicate Athenian culture, it seems to some, represents the typical apathy of the Hellenistic Greeks toward native and indigenous cultures.
- D. It is possible, however, that a pharaonic antecedent to the Library of Alexandria may have existed.
1. Descriptions of the library and museum suggest that the complex may have resembled the funerary temple of Ramses at Thebes.
 2. At the back of the temple was a set of banquet chambers with depictions of the king doing homage to Osiris. In this area were shelves housing scrolls, probably sacred texts.
 3. Like the Ramasseum, the library had communal dining rooms for the scholars and priests who worked there.
 4. It, too, housed books, including the sacred texts of foreign cults.
 5. The buildings of the library and museum were probably built abutting the tomb of Alexander, just as the Ramasseum included the tomb of the pharaoh. This quintessentially Hellenistic Greek institution may owe more to pharaonic practice than has generally been perceived.
- IV. Inside the museum and library, scholars, poets, and scientists toiled away producing some of the most innovative thought and art of the Hellenistic Age.
- A. Callimachus, Theocritus, and Apollonius represent the new directions of Hellenistic poetry, to be discussed in more detail in Lecture Twelve.
1. Pastoral poetry, which purports to concern the life of shepherds, is actually a carefully wrought and highly artificial genre destined for an elite, courtly audience.
 2. Poems dense with allusion to mythology also supposed an audience that was well educated in Greek culture.
 3. Epic poetry was still being composed as well, but it was now infused with a spirit of uncertainty and psychological drama that would have a deep impact on Virgil's Latin epic, the *Aeneid*.
- B. Scientific inquiry begun in Alexandria produced remarkable results.
1. Eratosthenes, for example, observed that at Assouan, in upper Egypt, a vertical pole in mid-summer cast no shadow.
 2. By measuring the shadow of a similar pole on the same day in Alexandria, he calculated that the distance between the two sites was $7 \frac{1}{5}$ degrees, or one-fiftieth of a circle.
 3. Because the actual distance between the two is 500 miles, the total circumference of the globe calculated by Eratosthenes was 25,000 miles with a diameter of 7,850 miles, an error of only 50 miles.
- C. Other scientific advancements included the work of Euclid, whose theorems remained the basis of Western mathematics for another 2,000 years. Less well known is Hypsikles, who divided the circle into 360 degrees.
- D. Although the library was not concerned with applied science, the speculative brilliance of Greek thinking continued to flourish under royal patronage.
- E. Also in Alexandria, scholars first began the systematic study of texts, especially that of Homer. Studies in textual analysis, philology, etymology, and grammar all flourished as never before. In many ways, the library and museum were the ancient forerunners of the modern research university.

Suggested Reading:

Luciano Canfora, *The Library of Alexandria: A Wonder of the Ancient World*.

Geoffrey Lloyd, *Greek Science after Aristotle*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why was Greek science so uninterested in the practical applications of scientific principles?
2. Was the scientific work of the library compatible with royal patronage and the authority of the Ptolemies?

Lecture Eight

The Seleucid Realm

Scope: The second great Hellenistic kingdom was ruled by the Seleucid dynasty, which built cities from Syria to Iran. We examine their ways of ruling a kingdom that stretched across all of Central Asia. Like the Ptolemies, the Seleucids would not create a fusion of Greek and eastern cultures but would impose Hellenism. Even so, on the eastern edges of their realm, a hybrid culture would emerge in the Greek kingdoms of Bactria.

Outline

- I. Seleucus was assigned the satrapy of Babylon upon Alexander's death.
 - A. Although this was a potentially rich power base, Seleucus was left to assert control of his territory and fend for himself when Antigonus marched east in 316 BC. From this unpromising start, Seleucus went on to assert control over a greater expanse of territory than that governed by any of Alexander's successors.
 - B. In fact, so considerable was his success in reclaiming control of the upper satrapies in eastern Asia that many historians have seen the entire flow of Seleucid history as a gradual decline from a high point coinciding with its first ruler. Instead of emphasizing decline, we should rather ask how Seleucus and his descendents managed to rule and control a territory that was everything Ptolemaic Egypt was not—geographically vast and ethnically diverse.
- II. Intelligently, Seleucus adopted a range of different strategies to establish his power, depending on the particular circumstances of each region.
 - A. In the far east, Seleucus confirmed his hold on territory by giving up territory.
 1. In 306 BC, Seleucus established the eastern border of his domain, ceding the Indus valley and adjoining desert regions to the Mauryan king, Chandragupta.
 2. In return for renouncing claims to any lands further east, Seleucus was given 500 elephants, the heavy armor of Hellenistic warfare.
 - B. In the remote upper satrapies of central Asia, Bactria and Sogdiana, Seleucus and his son Antiochus founded dozens of cities with Macedonian veterans and Greek settlers.
 - C. These swelled to become thriving emporiums on the trade routes that cross central Asia. Antioch Persis, Antioch Margiana near Merv, Soteira, Ai Khanum, and the island city of Falaika off Kuwait were all Seleucid foundations or thrived under the Seleucids.
 1. Margiana is a typical example of Seleucid urbanization. It is located in an oasis of fertile territory surrounded by mountains and high desert. An Achaemenid citadel was here, captured by Alexander, but archaeology has shown rapid expansion at the time of Seleucus, with pottery dating from the same time as the expansion of Ai Khanum and Samarkhand.
 2. With the erection of inner and outer walls, the garrison was transformed into the acropolis of a much larger settlement capable of supporting a large population and protecting the caravan routes bringing silk, spices, and other precious commodities into the Seleucid realm. The presence of canals also attests to the greater exploitation of land.
 3. This occupation was essentially Greek, with little sign of intermarriage or ethnic mixing.
 - D. Greek colonization was stressed in more remote areas, because there was no lack of poor Greeks hungry for opportunity on the borders of the empire.
- III. A second region that was heavily colonized was Syria.
 - A. From the Mediterranean across the Fertile Crescent stretched a network of Seleucid cities: Laodicea by the Sea, Apamea on the Orontes, Seleucia Pieria, Antioch on the Orontes, and Seleucia on the Tigris.
 - B. These show a heavy concentration on the western end of the empire and reveal the continuing concern of the Seleucid kings to be participants in the Mediterranean world.
 - C. In addition, Greek cities were already established in Asia Minor that fell under Seleucid control through much of the third century, and here we find the typical pattern of a reciprocal patron-client relationship.

This relationship is well attested in many long “formulaic” letters and petitions in which the people offer honors in return for royal favors, such as tax exemptions.

- IV. Between the Mediterranean and the upper satrapies lay Babylon, the heart of the ancient culture first taken over by Persians and now Greeks.
- A. Here, the Seleucids could not hope to impress an ancient culture with their Greek manners any more than the Ptolemies could impose Hellenism on the priests of Memphis. Instead, the Seleucids presented themselves as pious successors of the Achaemenids and as legitimate Babylonian rulers.
 - B. At Borsippa and in Babylon, we have building inscriptions in which Antiochus presents himself as the anointed priest-king who built the very bricks of the temple.
 - C. What lay behind this utterly non-Greek approach was a sensible policy of confirming, rather than stripping, the rights of temple estates. As focal points of power and social organization, the temples remained central to the stability of the region and were, therefore, protected by the Seleucids.
- V. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to think that this was simply a world of Greek cities ruled by a distant, benevolent Hellenistic king.
- A. A good deal of the best territory and many of its people would have felt Seleucid rule quite directly. The administration reached to every corner of the kingdom, which borrowed the Persian system of satrapies and included a slew of minor officials, such as *dioiketes* (manager) and *logistes* (accountant).
 - B. Large swathes of land were owned by the king. The people of these regions, the *basilikoi laoi*, were tied to the land. They paid either a tithe or a fixed tax each year and these revenues, along with the land and the people, could be apportioned out or sold by the crown, as is attested in the divorce documents of King Antiochus.
 - C. The chief beneficiaries were the king’s friends, the *philoï*—the commanders, officers, and bureaucrats who served as the administration of the empire. These men were reinforced by the soldiers and military contingents that were settled on land holdings around the empire and remained liable for military service.
 - D. Only the nomads of the mountains or the deserts remained free of active interference. With these people, the Seleucids carried on the Achaemenid practice of gift-exchange.
 - 1. They confirmed desert chiefs as independent potentates as long as they provided contingents in the great musters of troops for the royal army.
 - 2. The camel corps from the Arabian dessert and cavalry from Armenia were both contributed to the Seleucid army in this way.
- VI. The Seleucid realm presents an approach to the problem of Hellenistic rule that may be called “polyvalent kingship.”
- A. The Seleucid kings would play different roles and use different institutions, depending on which audience they were playing to and which subjects they were dealing with.
 - B. The one true innovation of the Seleucids was a system of shared kingship, whereby the senior king held the western domains and his son, as junior partner, held the east. The size of the empire required some such arrangement, and it is not coincidental that the Ottoman Empire followed the same practice centuries later.
 - C. The Seleucid Empire, then, can be thought of as a complex mixture.
 - 1. It was influenced by the history of Persian control.
 - 2. The Seleucids also practiced sensible policies of noninterference, in which territorial control was out of the question. Religious respect was also maintained in situations in which cooperation was as strategically profitable as confrontation.
 - D. As was the case in all the realms of the Hellenistic world, the institutions of the Seleucid empire were not designed to create harmony or fuse races but to establish order and royal control of a vast geographic area dominated by a small Graeco-Macedonian elite.

Suggested Reading:

S. Sherwin-White and A. Kuhrt, *From Sardis to Samarkhand*.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways did the geography of the Seleucid Empire shape the nature of Seleucid kingship?
2. In what sense could the urbanization encouraged by the Seleucids be termed imperialistic?

Lecture Nine

Pergamum

Scope: Our survey of the Hellenistic kingdoms continues with the Attalid dynasty of Pergamum, whose dominion rose from a simple garrison to embrace all of Asia Minor and whose cultural influence rivaled that of Alexandria.

Outline

- I. The Attalid kingdom of Pergamum, in present-day Turkey, was born in the chaos of the wars of the Diadochi, Alexander's successors.
 - A. One of the successors, Lysimachus, seized control of Thrace and territory between Macedon and Asia Minor.
 1. During the 290s and 280s BC, while embroiled in various campaigns, Lysimachus entrusted the fortress of Pergamum to a eunuch, Philetaerus.
 2. The site was located high on a crag and was virtually impregnable, giving Lysimachus a powerful base for controlling the Asian side of the Hellespont.
 3. Lysimachus died at the Battle of Corupedium (281 BC), and much of his territory fell to the victor, Seleucus I.
 - B. Philetaerus, however, remained firmly in control of Pergamum, its fortress, and the royal treasure of 9,000 talents.
 - C. Upon his death in 263 BC, Philetaerus left his power and money to his nephew, Eumenes I, who ruled until 241 BC, having defeated Antiochus I and put an end to the Seleucid claim to Pergamum.
 - D. From the reign of Philetaerus until the death of the last king of the dynasty, Attalus III, in 133 BC, the Attalid dynasty ruled over much of Asia Minor.
- II. The success of the dynasty is remarkable, considering that no kingdom existed here before the Attalids, and they had no claim to the control of Pergamum based on inheritance, territory, or ancestral right.
 - A. We should ask, then, how the Attalids legitimized their rule and how they organized their kingdom.
 - B. Attalid rule relied on generosity.
 1. Rulers showered their subjects with gifts. These gifts were made not just to individuals, but also to entire cities.
 2. They might include gifts of money to pay for mercenaries, horses for territorial defense, tax exemptions during time of hardship, and supplies of olive oil and wheat, given either during famine or to hold public feasts.
- III. The Attalids did not confine their generosity to the cities of Asia Minor.
 - A. Entire buildings, such as *stoas*, or theatres, were also given by the Attalids to sanctuaries at Pessinus, near the Black Sea Coast; on Delos, at Delphi; and in Athens. In return, these sanctuaries gave the dynasty respect in the eyes of the Greeks.
 - B. At Delphi, a generous gift of 21,000 drachmas from Attalus II paid for the salaries of teachers, supported an annual festival called the Attaleia, and provided a surplus that the sanctuary was able to lend out at 6.6 percent interest. Every Greek who went to Delphi saw the generosity of Attalus.
 - C. The Stoa of Attalos, rebuilt in the 1950s, is a remarkable example of the Attalids' concern for public opinion. Built in Athens, the *stoa* physically links Athens and Pergamum, the cultural centers of the Hellenistic world.
- IV. In their dealings with the Greek cities of their domain, the Attalids maintained the fiction that the cities were independent and autonomous.
 - A. This was true insofar as the cities continued to appoint minor officials in charge of waterworks, streets, sewers, and so forth, but it is clear that real power was in the hands of the ruler.

- B. Eumenes I, for example, wrote to the city of Pergamum to commend the performance of its generals, who had balanced their budget.
 1. He notifies the city of his decision to award the generals honorific crowns and advises the city whether it might wish to honor them as well.
 2. Only in the city's response (written to the man who lived in a palace above the city) do we discover that the generals were appointed by Eumenes. Nor were these generals real commanders of Pergamene armies, but city magistrates responsible for administering revenues.
 3. Pergamum's autonomy, then, was a polite fiction that existed only in the language of diplomacy between king and subject.

- V. The real power of the Attalids rested on the judicious use of military force, especially mercenaries, who both provided a standing army that was loyal to the monarch and served as the administrators of the kingdom.
 - A. Rather than relying on a national army, which might then agitate for some voice in affairs, Eumenes I entered into an elaborate contract with Greek mercenaries.
 - B. In the contract, Eumenes set out pay scales, agreed to a 10-month campaign year, made arrangements for the care of orphans, offered tax concessions, and agreed to back payments.
 - C. In return, the mercenaries swore to serve Eumenes and his descendants to the death.
 - D. The mercenaries also swore to guard any cities, fortresses, fleets, or money entrusted to them.
 - E. The contract reveals an elaborate system not of civil bureaucracy, but of military commands. The focus of this system is not a state or kingdom, but a single man, Eumenes.

- VI. The transformation of Attalid power from simple, autocratic rule to legitimate kingship was brought about in the reign of the third ruler of the dynasty, Attalus I (241–197 BC).
 - A. Early in the reign of Attalus I, Asia Minor was invaded by the Gauls, a Celtic people whose periodic migrations west included an invasion of Greece and the sacking of Rome.
 - B. Attalus defeated two branches of these Gallic tribes, the Tolistoagian and Tectosagian Gauls, in the 230s, at the same time as he defeated his Seleucid rivals, Antiochus Hierax and Seleucus III.
 - C. On the victory dedications made by Attalus, he styles himself “king” for the first time. The monument dates to the 220s, and King Attalus would go on to rule for another 20 years.
 - D. For nearly a century, then, Pergamum was ruled by only three men from one dynasty. By the end of that time, these rulers could claim to be kings, based primarily on their defense of Pergamum from a foreign foe.
 - E. These victories were a lynchpin of their propaganda. Both at home and abroad, Attalus celebrated these victories in sculptures that treated the Gauls as noble and heroic opponents. Greek order had once again triumphed over barbarian chaos, and the Attalid king could claim to be the savior of Greek culture.

- VII. By 133 BC, even the power of Pergamum and its kings was unable to withstand the inexorable rise of Roman power.
 - A. Greece and the Hellenistic kingdoms would alternate between alliances with and rebellions against Rome, but Pergamum remained Rome's most steadfast ally in the east.
 1. This alliance meant that when Rome confronted the power of the Seleucid king Antiochus III early in the second century, Pergamum was well placed to benefit.
 2. Antiochus was defeated in 189 BC at the battle of Magnesia, and he lost most of his holdings in Asia Minor the following year in the Treaty of Apamea.
 - B. Uninterested in acquiring more overseas provinces, Rome handed much of the land over to Eumenes II, under whom Pergamene territorial holdings were at their greatest.
 - C. Pergamum remained allied to Rome under Attalus II (160–139 BC), but Attalus III died without a successor in 133 BC and bequeathed his entire kingdom to the Romans.
 - D. In this way, Pergamum was at one stroke changed from a Hellenistic kingdom into the Roman province of Asia Minor.

- E. The great altar of Pergamum illustrates how the city proclaimed itself both an embodiment of the Greek legacy and the way of the future. The rulers proclaimed that the city was Greek in spite of Pergamum's garrison heritage.

Suggested Reading:

E. V. Hansen, *The Attalids of Pergamon*.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways did Pergamum differ from the other major Hellenistic kingdoms?
2. Why was acceptance from the other Greeks so important to the Attalid kings?

Lecture Ten

Bactria, the Edge of the Hellenistic World

Scope: Hellenism, the transplanted culture of the Greeks, flourished primarily around the eastern Mediterranean seaboard. Even so, the Greeks traveled further than the coast and left their imprint on areas far from the Mediterranean. In this lecture, we look at one region where Hellenism established itself far from its Mediterranean roots: Ai Khanum, in Afghanistan.

Outline

- I. When Alexander turned back from the Indus River toward Babylon, he did not withdraw all his troops from the eastern portions of the newly conquered empire.
 - A. In Bactria and Sogdiana, which correspond today to the high regions of northern Iran, Afghanistan, and the other republics of central Asia, Alexander left behind garrisons of Macedonian soldiers and Greek settlers, totaling around 23,000 men.
 - B. Already by 325, some of these regions had gone into revolt; a further military occupation took place in 323 BC, when Macedonian veterans were sent to settle the area once again.
 - C. After Alexander's death, the region was assigned to a Cypriot Greek named Stasanor. That it was a Greek and not a Macedonian who received these territories may suggest that the region was not highly prized by Alexander's successors.
 - D. Nevertheless, the first Seleucid kings, Seleucus I and his son Antiochus I, were unwilling to cede territory they considered part of their domain, and they campaigned vigorously to recapture control of the so-called Upper Satrapies.
- II. Their policy was to pour settlers and troops into the region.
 - A. This vigorous colonization can still be seen in the names of various famous cities of central Asia, such as Samarkhand and Kandahar, both originally Seleucid cities named Alexandria.
 - B. By 250 BC, the region was under the control of a Greek satrap, or governor, named Diodotus, who profited from the vast distance between Bactria and the Mediterranean to establish an independent kingdom.
 - C. Over the next 300 years, 40 different kings from Greek dynasties would rule over the Indo-Greek kingdoms of Bactria and Gandhara.
- III. Evidence concerning these Indo-Greek kingdoms is limited in comparison with the rich documentation of Ptolemaic Egypt or the archaeological record of Pergamum.
 - A. For a long time, scholars relied primarily on numismatic evidence.
 1. The coins of such kings as Euthydemus and Antimachus tell us how these kings wished to be understood.
 2. The message is simple: they were the successors of Alexander. Their coins show no hint of any local influence.
 - B. A second body of evidence has been furnished in the last generation by French excavations at the site of Ai Khanum on the banks of the Amu Darya River in northwestern Afghanistan.
 1. Ai Khanum sits on a fertile plain situated on a caravan crossroads. The buildings uncovered there include a palatial complex with peristyle courtyard; a cult shrine, or *heroon*; and a hypostyle hall adorned with lush Corinthian-column capitals.
 2. On the blocks of the *heroon* were inscribed philosophical maxims, such as the Delphic oracle's injunction "Know thyself"—3,000 miles from Delphi!
 3. Papyri have also been recovered showing that the transplanted Greek population enjoyed the same Greek philosophy and literature as was being read and discussed thousands of miles away.
 4. Just as at Alexandria or Athens, the Greeks here could exercise in a Greek-style *palaestra* at the gymnasium.

5. Greek fountains with dolphin-head spouts and country villas adorned with mosaics outside the town center point to a transplanted Greek culture.
- IV.** Around 200 BC, the Bactrian kingdom expanded east and annexed territory on the western side of the Indus Valley. Increasingly cut off from the west, the Indo-Greek kingdoms came to display a genuine fusion of Eastern and Western elements.
- A.** A statue of the Greek character Marsyas found at Ai Khanum was dedicated to the god Oxus by a certain Atrosokes.
 1. Oxus was the local river god, and Atrosokes's name suggests his Iranian background; his name means "he who shines with sacred fire." He has been identified as a priest of the old Persian fire cult.
 2. In this dedication, we find a fusion of Greek, Iranian, and local elements, unlike anything found in the Mediterranean basin.
 - B.** A pillar dedicated to Garuda and Vishnu has been found in the Punjab district of India. Inscribed in Prakrit, an Indian language, the pillar copies Achaemenid Persian models, but was dedicated by a Greek ambassador named Heliiodorus on the occasion of his visit to the court of the Indian king, Bhagabhadra. This syncretism, however, isn't typical of the Hellenistic world.
- V.** The Bactrian kingdoms were assaulted by invading tribes, known as the Saca, from the middle of the second century, and the last Greek king, Heliokles, was replaced by the Saca chief Azes around 50 BC.
- A.** In trying to evaluate the significance of the Greek control of this region, historians have tended to look for evidence of Greek influence on local cultural traditions. The line of transmission, however, may have been from the East to the West.
 - B.** One of the Greek Bactrian kings who invaded northwestern India, named Menander, was well remembered in Indian tradition, not as a great conqueror but as a Greek who converted to Buddhism. He is still known in Buddhist writings as Milinda.
 - C.** Perhaps the most dramatic evidence for the relationship between the two great cultural traditions of Greece and India is to be found in the career of Asoka the Great, king of the Mauryan empire of northwestern India from c. 268–232 BC.
 1. Seleucid kings had had dealings with the Mauryans from as early as 305, when Seleucus I gave up claims to the eastern satrapies in return for 500 war elephants from Chandragupta, grandfather of Asoka.
 2. Asoka had united virtually the entire Indian subcontinent.
 3. A convert to Buddhism, he proselytized vigorously. Buddhist edicts were inscribed and erected throughout his empire.
 4. He sent embassies to Hellenistic monarchs, such as Antiochus II, Ptolemy II, Antigonus Gonatas of Macedon, and Alexander of Epirus, introducing them to the tenets of his religion and trying to win their conversion.
 5. At Kandahar, which lay outside his kingdom, he set up bilingual inscriptions using both Aramaic, the language of the Persian empire, and Greek to appeal to the Greek colonists and lead them toward Buddhism.
- VI.** The eventual disappearance of the Greeks of Bactria as a separate state and culture can probably be attributed to a complex set of factors.
- A.** First was the isolation of the Greeks from the cultural heartland of Hellenism, the Mediterranean.
 - B.** Second was the pressure of outside populations, such as the nomads of central Asia, ever ready to plunder the riches of the Silk Route.
 - C.** Finally, there was the presence on the very edges of this Hellenistic outpost of a complex and powerful empire, the Mauryan, itself gripped by the struggle between Vedic and Buddhist culture.
 - D.** Against such a tumultuous background, the Greeks of Bactria gave way, eventually to be swallowed up by the world around them.
 - E.** What if the Greek Bactrians had survived longer? As it is, the gulf between East and West eventually led India to be considered an exotic locale. The Greeks were in the world of the East but not of it.

Suggested Reading:

A. K. Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*.

P. Bernard, "Ai Khanum on the Oxus," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 53, 71–95.

Questions to Consider:

1. Can the culture of Greek Bactria be properly termed a fusion?
2. What other cultures, if any, have colonized foreign territory by importing a dominant culture, as the Greeks did in Ai Khanum?

Lecture Eleven

Sculpture

Scope: The Greeks will always be associated with such masterpieces as the Parthenon, but Hellenistic art is very different from the Classical art that precedes it. Excessive, gargantuan, and emotional, Hellenistic art explores aspects of the human experience that were previously outside the concerns of the Greeks.

Outline

- I. Classical sculpture is a model of calm and repose—typically, it doesn't explore emotions or inner states. By the fourth century BC, Greek art had enjoyed more than 200 years of sculpting in stone, but three masters dominated the field of sculpture in that century. They were Polyclitus, Scopas, and Lysippus.
 - A. The works of Polyclitus frequently concentrated on young male athletes, the living embodiment of manly excellence. The Spear-Bearer, or Doryphorus, was famous for establishing “the canon,” the correct set of proportions and stances to capture the ideal figure in stone. But what comes after such an image of perfection?
 - B. Scopas was famous for a wide variety of statues of the gods and for sculptural representations of such concepts as *pathos*, or yearning, a favorite theme of the Hellenistic Age. He was the first to convey human emotion in stone.
 - C. Lysippus may have been the most influential of the fourth century sculptors, because Alexander preferred his portraits to those of any other sculptor. The Lysippan image of Alexander would be copied throughout the Hellenistic world on coins and gems and adapted by kings after Alexander.
- II. Originally, the sculptors of the Hellenistic Age were fascinated by the great men of their time. Their patrons were kings, and they created statues of gods and kings for the new temples and palaces of their world.
 - A. Soon, however, sculpture was put to a new use.
 1. Intellectual heroes, such as Socrates, great orators, such as Demosthenes (who had opposed the Macedonians), and historians, such as Herodotus, were all treated as suitable subjects for sculpture.
 2. Clearly, earlier Greek culture was being packaged for the new age.
 - B. Eventually, busts of philosophers would become as common as those of kings.
 1. Many philosophers acted as the advisors of kings, but their status was especially enhanced by the Hellenistic view that philosophy offered an alternative avenue to power: self-mastery.
 2. Philosophers were the negative images of kings.
- III. The human form doesn't have to be ideal in Hellenistic art. The artists' interest in people other than those in power led them to explore the poor, the disfigured, and the pathetic. Hellenistic art explores the extremities of human experience.
 - A. The statue known as the Old Fisherman demonstrates a fascination with the effects of age on the body. The stoic posture of the old man conveys a moral heroism, but there is nothing heroic in his physical body, as had always been the case before this.
 - B. Similarly, the Boxer shows a face to us that is battered and smashed. The position of hands and head suggest a terrible resignation and deep pain. Although the figure is heroic to our sensibilities because it evinces endurance and resignation, it is not heroic in the way that classical Greek art understood heroism. Also, the statue is intended to be looked at from various angles, not from a single perspective.
 - C. Similarly, such statues as that of the Old Drunken Woman or the Barbarini Faun represent a break from the earlier traditions, when the emphasis had been on poise and restrained power.
 1. The old woman is grotesquely hunched over her amphora so that the sculptor must render the body into a compact ball rather than the elongated, upright figure familiar from the Classical age.
 2. The faun is shamelessly and provocatively posed in a way that violates all earlier canons in the same way that another faun's, Nijinsky's, would violate the canons of dance, both in terms of theme and technique.

- IV. The entire sensibility of this sculpture is different. Where once Greek sculptures were either immobile or about to move, Hellenistic sculptures are caught right in the act of movement.
- A. Laocoon wrestles with the serpents sent to punish him for warning the Trojans of the Greeks' gift. We watch as the snakes coil around his body and prepare to crush the life out of his children. This pathos in Greek sculpture is new.
 - B. The young jockey thrashes his horse on even as he turns back to see his competitors. There is nothing noble or Olympian about his pose.
 - C. Even when the figure is at rest, as is the Farnese Heracles, his rest is the rest of defeat, of endurance, of pain, not the immanent victory of a god.
 - D. Nudity is also treated differently. Whereas once only heroes and gods were naked and all females were clothed, a prurient fascination develops with showing Aphrodite stepping from her bath, exposing enough flesh to leave nothing to the imagination.
 - E. Ironically, so aware are the Hellenistic sculptors of the past that they also recreate it in an archaizing movement, producing statues that seem to date from the Classical period but are actually produced much later. A strange combination of nostalgia, taste, and historical sense combine as the Hellenistic Age packages its own glorious past for cultural consumption.

Suggested Reading:

J. J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Can the term "baroque" be used to describe Hellenistic art?
2. Is it appropriate to judge Hellenistic art against Classical art and call it decadent?

Lecture Twelve

Poetry

Scope: Callimachus, Apollonius, and Theocritus are the three most well-known Hellenistic poets. The differences between them in temperament, style, and voice demonstrate the new directions of Hellenistic poetry. All, however, wrote for an audience that was expected to be immersed in Greek culture. Reflecting a complex world in which Greek was now an international culture, their poems also point to the concerns of the day: anxiety, nostalgia, and refinement all combine to make Hellenistic poetry quite unlike its classical antecedents.

Outline

- I. Callimachus is well remembered for his remark that a big book is a big evil. He preferred shorter styles: epigrams, hymns, and brief lyric poems.
 - A. Today, in an age that doesn't understand the artifice that goes into art, his poems can seem stylized and overwrought, but at times his work displays a depth of feeling that is powerfully moving.
 - B. Consider the elegy written on the death of a friend:

Someone told me, Heracleitus,
that you were dead, and brought me
close to tears, for I remembered
how often in our talk we put
the sun to bed. You, I suppose,
my Halicarnassian friend,
are ashes four times long ago,
but your nightingales still live.
On then Hades who snatches all
away shall not cast his hand.
 - C. The poem has the theme that later Roman poets would summarize as "Ars longa, vita brevis," (Art is long, life is short).
 1. It has the mood of resignation, of a gentle pervasive melancholy that would find its clearest voice, ironically, not in an Alexandrian poet but in one who had read the Alexandrian poets and was infused with their spirit, Virgil.
 2. It was, after all, the Roman poet whose work expressed a view of the universe summed up in the line "*sunt lacrimae rerum*," (the world is full of tears).
- II. But Alexandrian poetry wasn't all gloom and shades of murky night. One Alexandrian, Apollonius, even tried his hand at epic, the great ancient tradition of singing the tales of heroes.
 - A. He chose as his hero not Achilles or Odysseus but Jason, whose expedition to the far side of the Black Sea in search of the Golden Fleece was a staple of Greek mythology.
 1. Apollonius's audience knew the story; the challenge was to tell it in a new and original manner.
 2. What he produced, in the *Argonautica*, was an extraordinary piece that in some ways is the first psychological novel, one with an anti-hero at the center.
 - B. Consider, for example, the following episode:
 1. The Argonauts have landed on the coast of Mysia. One of them, Hylas, goes off into the bush, where he meets a water nymph who seduces him. He slides into her pool and she drowns him.
 2. When Heracles gets the news, he slips into a blood-curdling rage and storms off in search of his young friend. He disappears, and the Argonauts don't see him again.
 3. Next morning, the wind freshens, and one of the Argonauts urges them to set sail. They do so, but later realize that they have left without Heracles, the bravest and strongest of the Argonauts.
 4. A terrible fight ensues among the Argonauts, as recriminations fly and the band almost disintegrates. The leader must come forward and impose his will. Instead, says Apollonius, "Jason, paralysed by an utter sense of helplessness, added no word to either side in the dispute. He sat and ate his heart out crushed by the calamity."

5. Ironically, in an age of supermen and god-kings, the hero has been reduced to the level of a wimp, literally speechless when faced with calamity. And this, in the age of Alexander!
- C. Apollonius's work reveals the fascination felt by the people of the Hellenistic Age toward the inner workings of the human heart and mind.
 1. The emotional states that take us beyond our ordinary selves and those situations in which our actions are dictated by irrational feelings became key concerns of the poets.
 2. Rage is one such state, but even more common is passion, as when Medea falls in love with Jason.
 - D. Part of the complexity of the Hellenistic Age arises from the fact that artists and thinkers offered such different answers to human dilemmas.
 1. Philosophers were trying to teach people how to control their passions and appetites, while sculptors were exploring the human body as a vessel for these passions and emotions.
 2. The poets, too, were exploring in words the sensation of losing your wits to passion. Apollonius's description of Medea, for example, is the literary antecedent of both Juliet and Lady Macbeth. Apollonius, as much as Shakespeare, is fascinated by the inner turmoil we experience when our emotions are driven to fever pitch.
- III. Alexandrian poetry could also explore aspects of life and art that strike us as much less significant. The psychological drama of a woman torn between lover and family resonates for us, but pastoral poetry and bucolic themes strike us as quaint and curiously affected. That is why the poetry of Theocritus is, in some ways, hardest for a modern audience to understand.
- A. Pastoral poetry, which purports to concern the life of shepherds, is actually a carefully wrought and highly artificial genre destined for an elite, courtly audience.
 - B. Consider, for example, the singing competition of Daphnis and Menalcas in Theocritus's thirty-seventh idyll.
 1. No one would suggest that such an event is realistic, and the poet is not exploring the psychology of "cowboys."
 2. Instead, this poetry is largely about the artifice of art, the skill of finding sounds and words that go together to produce euphony. Tightly arranged, carefully conventional, these poems are the delight of an urbane society that enjoys the game of recreating the countryside, a countryside they have never set foot in, with this imaginary, purified, sanitized landscape.
 3. Like Disney's Main Street, it does not reflect life so much as project an imaginary picture of how life might be if all the anxieties of crime, disease, and poverty were taken out—all that one is left with is pure art.
 - C. For this reason, pastoral poetry has rarely been produced by poets from the countryside, but by poets writing for a court that prefers the image of the country to its reality. In the world of a self-absorbed court, pastoral fiction was vastly more entertaining than reality.
 - D. Theocritus, however, was more than a dreamer. Some of his poems are written as if he had eavesdropped on the conversations going on around him in Alexandria.
 1. He was able, for example, to catch the babble of two Alexandrian ladies hurrying to a recital.
 2. Poems such as this chart new territory. They are not heroic, nor are they the laments of lovers, nor hymns to the gods. Instead, here is the speech of everyday life transformed just enough to make it literary.
- IV. Whether writing for the court in epigrams or capturing the lives of ordinary people, all the poems share a common feature: their world is exclusively Greek.
- A. Hellenism produces virtually nothing comparable to the modern literatures of the Caribbean, Africa, or India, where indigenous and colonial cultures collided but produced exhilarating new works.
 - B. Instead, these poets worked within the parameters of Greek culture alone, reacting to their own cultural heritage in the works of Homer, the lyric poets, and the dramatists of an earlier age.

Suggested Reading:

Barbara Hughes Fowler, *Hellenistic Poetry: An Anthology*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Does the lack of any non-Greek element in Hellenistic poetry suggest an active resistance on the part of the Greeks to any culture other than their own?
2. Should the *Argonautica* be read as mock-epic and, if so, what does this suggest about Hellenistic attitudes toward earlier Greek culture?

Timeline

- 359 Philip II comes to the Macedonian throne
- 356 Birth of Alexander
- 338 Philip and Alexander defeat the Greeks at Chaeroneia
- 336 Assassination of Philip and accession of Alexander the Great
- 334 Battle of the Granicus River
- 333 Battle of Issus
- 331 Alexander's visit to the oracle of Siwah; Battle of Gaugemala
- 330 Death of Darius, King of Persia
- 329 Alexander's Bactrian campaign
- 326 Mutiny of Alexander's army at the Hyphasis River
- 325 Alexander's return through the Gedrosian desert
- 324 Mutiny and banquet of reconciliation at Opis
- 323 Alexander dies in Babylon; beginning of the Wars of the Diadochi
- 321 Death of Perdiccas during campaign against Ptolemy; division of Alexander's empire at Triparadeisus
- 317 Murder of Philip Arrhidaeus by Olympias
- 315 Coalition against Antigonus
- 311 Peace treaty signed by Antigonus and the other Diadochi
- 310 Cassander murders Alexander IV
- 306 Ptolemy defeated off Cyprus; Diadochi assume the title of kings; Seleucus cedes eastern borders to Chandragupta in exchange for war elephants
- 301 Death of Antigonus at Ipsus
- 283 Death of Ptolemy I; death of Demetrius, son of Antigonus
- 281 Death of Seleucus I; defeat and death of Lysimachus (Battle of Corupedium)
- 280 Pyrrhus of Epirus crosses to southern Italy
- 274 Withdrawal of Pyrrhus from Italy
- 272 Sack of Tarentum by Rome
- 264–241 First Punic War
- 263 Eumenes I succeeds Philetaerus (Pergamum)
- 246–241 Third Syrian War (Ptolemy III versus Seleucus II)
- 241–197 Reign of Attalus I (Pergamum)
- 240 Diodotus of Bactria assumes title of king
- 238–227 Attalid victories against Celts (Galatians)
- 229 First Illyrian War
- 219 Second Illyrian War
- 218–202 Second Punic War

217	Battle of Raphia
215	Alliance of Philip V (Macedon) and Hannibal
214	Roman alliance with Aetolia; First Macedonian War
212–205	Eastern expedition of Antiochus III
202	Battle of Zama (Roman victory over Hannibal)
199–196	Second Macedonian War
197	Defeat of Philip V at Battle of Cynoscephalae
196	Roman declaration of the freedom of the Greeks
191	Defeat of Antiochus III by Rome at Thermopylae
189	Defeat of Antiochus III by Rome at Magnesia
188	Peace of Apamea
168	Antiochus IV receives Roman ultimatum during campaign against Ptolemy; Battle of Pydna; partitioning of Macedon by Rome
148	Macedon reduced to status of a Roman province
146	Destruction of Corinth and Carthage by Rome
133	Death of Attalus III of Pergamum; creation of province of Asia Minor
96	Cyrenaica bequeathed to Rome
75	Bithynia bequeathed to Rome
66–62	Eastern campaigns of Pompey
48	Defeat of Pompey at Pharsalus
48–47	Caesar in Alexandria
44	Assassination of Caesar
31	Battle of Actium; defeat of Marc Antony and Cleopatra

Glossary

- Akatalapsia:** Sceptic doctrine that holds that absolutely certain knowledge is impossible.
- Amicitia:** Roman term for friendship; often applied to Rome's alliances with foreign kings and states.
- Asclepieum:** Any sanctuary of the healing god Asclepius, often including buildings for the diagnosis and treatment of disease.
- Asyilia:** Inviolability, especially the right of sanctuaries to be left unmolested, formally recognized by other states.
- Ataraxia:** Imperturbability, a state of calm sought by many Hellenistic philosophical schools.
- Aulos:** The court of a Hellenistic king, including his advisors, military officers, and officials.
- Basilikoi laoi:** Royal peasants, i.e., peasants living on and tied to estates owned by the king.
- Catochi:** Recluses. Individuals who withdrew from life in the world at large to live wholly within a temple precinct.
- Choregos:** Citizen responsible for paying for a dramatic production at a religious festival.
- Dioiketes:** A high-ranking government official responsible usually for taxation and financial affairs.
- Epiphanes:** An epithet applied to Antiochus IV meaning "god made manifest."
- Epoche:** A term from Sceptic philosophy asserting the need to suspend judgment because of the impossibility of absolute knowledge.
- Euergesia:** Benefaction. The institution of public assistance offered by the wealthy to Greek states, especially in times of crisis.
- Euergetes:** Benefactor. A term applied to wealthy citizens who assisted a city with gifts of food or money; often adopted as a royal title.
- Gymnasia:** Cultural institutions, common in Greek cities, combining athletic training, poetic performances, and philosophy lectures.
- Gymnasiarch:** Official in charge of the gymnasium, appointed by the city to oversee the training of young men.
- Heroon:** A shrine dedicated to a man of heroic, i.e., semi-divine, status.
- Hoplite:** Heavily armed Greek infantry soldier.
- Koine:** "Common" Greek, the dialect of Greek based on the Attic (Athenian) dialect, common throughout the eastern Mediterranean.
- Laoi:** The people, but usually used in Hellenistic times to refer to non-Greek peasants.
- Logistes:** An official of the Hellenistic kings primarily concerned with record-keeping and accounts.
- Megalopsychus:** An Aristotelian doctrine that identified the great man as the possessor of a "great soul."
- Oecumene:** A general term referring to the sphere of Greek culture and language extending throughout the eastern Mediterranean.
- Palaestra:** The wrestling ground of a gymnasium where young men took their exercise and underwent military training.
- Pezetairoi:** Literally "foot companions." Elite infantry battalions of the Macedonian army.
- Phalanx:** The massed formation of heavily armed infantrymen, equipped with pikes, forming the core of the Hellenistic armies.
- Philo:** Literally "friends." The noble companions of a Hellenistic king; the core of his military and administrative staff.

Philoromaioi: A term increasingly adopted from the second century on, meaning “Rome lover,” used by Rome’s allies to advertise their friendship with Rome.

Pothos: A popular expression in the ancient literature about Alexander meaning “yearning” or “desire,” often linked to Alexander’s divine status.

Stoas: Open colonnaded buildings popular in the Greek world as public buildings for commerce, judicial hearings, and civic administration.

Technitai: A general term for craftsmen but often used specifically for the guild of actors known as the technitai of Dionysos.

Trierarchs: Citizens who undertook the task of manning and equipping a trireme or warship.

Tyche: Fortune. A popular deity of the Hellenistic Age; often associated with either personal destiny or the fate of an entire community.

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Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic Age

Part II

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Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic Age

Scope:

This series of lectures examines a crucial but often neglected period in the history of the ancient world, the age ushered in by the extraordinary conquests of Alexander the Great. In the opening lectures, we explore the enigma of Alexander, son of a brilliant father, yet always at odds with the man whom he succeeded. We trace his early campaigns against the Persians and follow him to Egypt, where he was acclaimed as the son of god. We look at his career after this and find in him a blend of greatness and madness as he strove to replace the Persian empire of the Achaemenid dynasty with a new, mixed ruling class of Macedonians and Persians.

Alexander's death in 323 BC ushered in a period of catastrophic change as ambitious warlords carved up Alexander's realm into their own separate empires, especially Seleucid Syria and Ptolemaic Egypt. In a series of lectures, we look at how a small ruling class of Macedonian nobles established their rule from the eastern Mediterranean to the Hindu Kush. In the Nile valley, the Ptolemies played the role of pharaohs and were treated by their subjects as gods. At the same time, however, their capital, Alexandria, was cut off from Egypt and run by Greek bureaucrats. Greek culture flourished here in the museum and library, and the Ptolemies were great patrons of the arts.

In the Seleucid empire, the rulers also built Greek cities, such as Antioch, but in older regions, including Mesopotamia, they too were ready to be worshipped as living gods. On the edges of the Hellenistic world, in places as far away as Afghanistan and Pakistan, Greek cities grew up around trading posts and military settlements. Here, philosophy and literature from old Greece went hand in hand with gymnasiums and theatres to plant Greek culture far from the Mediterranean. By military and cultural conquest, then, much of central Asia was incorporated into the Greek world.

Despite the geographic extent of this civilization, we shall see that the heartland remained the eastern Mediterranean. It was here, in such new cities as Alexandria and Pergamum and such old ones as Athens, that Greek culture developed its distinctive Hellenistic appearance. Philosophy became more academic, as different schools of philosophy emerged. Stoicism, epicureanism, and skepticism all looked for ways to teach people to avoid the emotional upheavals of life in an age of anxiety. At the same time, art rejoiced in exploring the very same turmoil of the age. Hellenistic sculptors looked at the old, the young, the ugly, and the tortured instead of merely fashioning images of the perfect athlete. Novelists also played with themes of the reversal of fortune in the lives of their characters, because such tumult was part of the experiences of so many people. Piracy, brigandage, physical hardship, and the supreme power of great kings were all realities of the age and left their marks on ordinary people.

As we shall see, these conditions helped spawn a vital interest in magic, spells, and incantations and in religions that offered people the promise of redemption and salvation. The cults of Isis, Serapis, and Cybele all grew in popularity throughout the Hellenistic world. This was the climate of the world in which Christianity was born.

Although the Hellenistic Age would result in some of the greatest accomplishments in Greek culture, especially in the poetry of Callimachus, Theocritus, and Apollonius, the political power of the age was overshadowed by the growth of Rome. Hence, we conclude the lectures with a study of the growth of Roman power, its expansion into the eastern Mediterranean, and the inevitable clash of Greek and Roman civilizations. As we shall see, Rome conquered, but Rome would be forever changed by the contact with Greek culture. In the words of the Roman poet Horace, "Captured Greece took captive her captor."

Lecture Thirteen

The Greek Novel

Scope: The late Hellenistic world witnessed the emergence of a new literary form that we take for granted: the novel. Written in prose and filled with adventures that take place in contemporary settings, these stories reflect many of the major concerns of the age and are an invaluable guide to the spirit of the Hellenistic world.

Outline

- I. The surviving novels, or romances, as they are often called in English, actually date to the early period of the Roman Empire. In terms of culture, however, the eastern Mediterranean remained Hellenistic after the coming of Rome; it would be artificial to divorce the Greek novel from its Hellenistic setting.
- II. Five novels survive.
 - A. Chariton of Aphrodisias composed his love story, entitled *Callirhoe*, toward the end of the first century BC. It is the first historical novel, set several centuries before it was written.
 - B. Xenophon composed a tale entitled *Anthia and Habrocomes*, set in the region around Ephesus and Rhodes. It included many of the common elements of these tales: two young lovers, pirates, shipwreck, and the eventual triumph of the lovers are all found here.
 - C. Achilles Tatius, according to tradition, eventually became a Christian and a bishop, but not before trying his hand at a similar story about a pair of lovers: Clitophon and Leucippe.
 - D. By far the best known and most widely read in later periods is the novel by Longus, about whom we know nothing except that he wrote *Daphnis and Chloe*.
 1. This novel is remarkable for its treatment of the sexual awakening of the teenage lovers.
 2. Longus wrote for an audience that could recognize allusions to many other genres and writers, including Thucydidean history and Hellenistic pastoral poetry.
 - E. Heliodorus produced a work entitled *The Ethiopian Story*.
 1. Like the other novels, this work revolves around the story of a pair of star-crossed lovers.
 2. Digressions and subplots separate the lovers as the action moves from Ethiopia to Delphi and back to Egypt, reflecting the new geographic realities of the age in a kind of fictional travelogue.
- III. The novels share many patterns and motifs, as well as a common outlook on the unpredictability of life. All the stories concern young lovers. All the stories could be termed adventures.
 - A. Sex, in various forms, lurks beneath the surface. Sometimes it is in the sexual awakening of the couple, the threat of rape endured by the heroine, or the sexual initiation of the young man.
 1. Daphnis, after kissing Chloe, falls into a reverie, trying to understand what has happened to him.
 2. His interior monologue is reminiscent of the description of Medea's passion in the *Argonautica*. The novels display the Hellenistic world's fascination with art as a vehicle for expressing the inner life of a human being.
 - B. Related to this theme is an interest in extreme states of mind. Just as Hellenistic sculpture emphasizes contortion and pain as natural states of the body, so too do the novels give us men and women pushed into emotional torment.
 1. When a Greek general named Charmides cannot contain his desire for Leucippe, she falls into an epileptic fit. With her bloodshot eyes and thrashing, she appears to have been possessed by some kind of madness.
 2. Traditionally, such possession is a religious state of ecstasy, but now it is treated as a human affliction.
 - C. Another common theme of the novels is the unpredictability of life, which is often suggested by the sudden appearance of pirates.
 1. In Xenophon's *Ephesian Tale*, for example, Habrocomes and Anthia are happily sailing from Rhodes to Ephesus when the hero has a dream in which a huge woman clothed in scarlet sets fire to his ship. She is, in fact, Tyche, or Fortune, and the dream portends a pirate attack the next day. As they are

being led off amid a scene of carnage, one of the captives declares, “blessed are those who will happily die before they have become slaves to robbers.”

2. Frequently, the human actors believe that the gods have acted capriciously, and that they, the humans, have no control over their lives. When Chaereas sees the tomb in which he expected to find Callirhoe empty, he cries, “which of the gods is my rival for Callirhoe, and has spirited her away and keeps her against her will, forced by a stronger fate?”
3. The novels reflect a world of uncertainty. The gods cannot be relied on. Although they communicate to us in oracles and dreams, their intentions are mysterious, and we are frequently the victims as much as the beneficiaries of their involvement in the world. The narrator of *Callirhoe* declares, “against Fortune alone, human reason is powerless. She is a spirit who likes to win!”

IV. The novels are linked in the way they reflect the contemporary world.

- A. The novels are confined to the world of the eastern Mediterranean, from Syracuse in Sicily to Alexandria. Any places mentioned beyond this region are really fantasy realms.
- B. Only in religion are non-Greek cultures a part of the world of the romances. Even in these instances, the novels portray a Hellenized religion in which such figures as Isis have been assimilated to Aphrodite.
- C. Non-Greek cultures are seen as either inferior or a threat. Pirates may be Phoenician or Egyptian, but the heroes are clearly Greek.
- D. When Clitophon is captured, he complains to the gods that he cannot even talk to his captors: “In what language should we implore them?”
- E. Kings and courts do not figure in the romances. Instead, power is most often in the hands of pirate chiefs and brigands, many of whom style themselves “kings.” Their world is an inversion of the Hellenistic court.

V. The novels present a view of the Hellenistic world from the bottom up. Power is capricious, law is a joke, and fate is ever ready to dump you. The community exists, but the world of the romance is one of scared and vulnerable individuals. An interest in individual psychology may be what makes the Hellenistic world seem so familiar to us.

Suggested Reading:

B. P. Reardon, ed., *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*.

T. Hägg, *The Novel in Antiquity*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why do the Greek novels rely so heavily on coincidence and surprise to advance the plot?
2. How convincing are the principal characters in the novels?

Lecture Fourteen

Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics

Scope: Hellenistic philosophy demonstrates a very different response to the anxieties of the new age. We examine the major schools of thought and relate them to the social setting of philosophy.

Outline

- I. By the beginning of the Hellenistic period, the Greeks were well aware that their culture was heir to a long and rich tradition of philosophical inquiry. As early as the sixth century, the pre-Socratic philosophers of the Ionian enlightenment had speculated on questions ranging from the cosmological, “What is the essential substance of the cosmos?” to the ethical, “How should the good man live?” The Ionian philosophers were succeeded by the three men who were seen as the fountainheads of Greek philosophy: Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.
 - A. Socrates perfected the art of inquiry through methodical questioning. No assertion was so self-evident that it could not be scrutinized. In this way, Socrates tried to make the philosophical enterprise one of critical inquiry. For him, all virtues were, in essence, the same.
 - B. Plato revered his master, Socrates, and made him the mouthpiece in a series of dramatic dialogues for a philosophy that blends the thinking of both men. The theory of Forms holds that this world is nothing but a poor copy of a more perfect realm and that permanence is an illusion, because at any given time objects are in the process of becoming something else.
 - C. Aristotle brought deductive thinking to new levels by categorizing phenomena as widely different as weather conditions and political constitutions. By amassing as much evidence as possible regarding a phenomenon, Aristotle believed that one would be able to determine what its function or purpose was.
- II. The Hellenistic Age continued these philosophical traditions but in a formal, institutional setting. Philosophers were no longer itinerant teachers but the heads of schools, offering regular courses of lectures and succeeded by specially chosen followers. Two institutions connected Hellenistic philosophy with the earlier age.
 - A. The Academy took its name from the meeting place of the philosophical school that claimed descent from Plato and his followers.
 1. Influenced by Socratic and Platonic doubts regarding the certainty of knowledge, the Academy became most closely associated with skepticism.
 2. Skeptics attempted to demonstrate the impossibility of knowledge (*akatalepsia*) and argued for the suspension of judgment (*epoche*).
 - B. Peripatetic philosophy was associated more closely with the followers of Aristotle, who met at the Lyceum.
 1. Here, as at the Academy, a garden and surrounding buildings provided the school setting in which the Aristotelian tradition of wide-ranging research continued.
 2. Peripatetic philosophy covered topics as different as physical science, geography, astronomy, and literary criticism.
- III. In addition to the older schools, new schools sprang up early in the Hellenistic Age. The two most influential were Stoicism and Epicureanism. Both the older and the newer schools of Hellenistic philosophy divided the discipline into three distinct areas of inquiry: physics, logic, and ethics.
 - A. Stoicism was founded by Zeno of Citium, who taught in Athens at the end of the fourth century BC.
 1. Stoicism placed great emphasis on personal morality and was based on the belief that human reason is capable of grasping the nature of the world in which we live.
 2. The physical theory on which this line of thought was based maintained that everything in the world is composed of a universal world fire.
 - B. Epicureanism was the school of philosophy that derived from the teachings of Epicurus. Often reviled as a hedonist, even in antiquity, because of his dictum that the pleasurable is good, Epicurus in fact advocated an austere and ascetic existence.
 1. Epicureans held that sensual gratification only fueled desire and, therefore, did not contribute to true happiness. Denial and abstinence, however, suppressed desire and made true happiness attainable.

2. In physical terms, Epicureanism was also based on earlier Greek atomic theory. The Roman poet Lucretius would praise Epicurus for freeing us from the fear of death.
- IV. A common theme running through the philosophies of the Hellenistic Age is the search for inner harmony and peace, referred to as *ataraxia*, or freedom from disturbance. This theme led many to look to the philosophical life as an alternative to the turbulent political conditions of the age.
- A. The followers of Epicurus retreated to a compound referred to as the Garden and formed a quasi-religious brotherhood. Because they believed that life consisted of sense perception and rejected all superstitions concerning an afterlife, they regarded death as nothing to be feared. As Epicurus wrote to his friend, “get used to believing that death is nothing to us.”
 - B. The Stoics emphasized indifference toward material wealth. Why must the wise man make money, asked Zeno? Only virtue is worth pursuing for the sake of happiness, and virtue is indifferent to wealth.
 - C. The most extreme expression of this indifference toward every aspect of social life was in the philosophy and behavior of the Cynics. Little of their writing survives and, in any case, Cynicism was never an organized philosophical school comparable to Stoicism or Epicureanism.
 1. Diogenes provided the model for Cynical behavior by living in a barrel and rejecting all social convention.
 2. The aim of the Cynic way of life was to live in accordance with nature. All human conventions, such as clothing, hygiene, and manners, were unnatural and, therefore, rejected.
- V. Despite the tendency toward social withdrawal and the emphasis on purely individual and personal concerns, Hellenistic philosophy played an important role in the communal life of the age.
- A. At Athens, philosophers provided an alternative figure of charismatic leadership. Kings were figures of enormous and unpredictable power, often distant, but the philosophers were human and preached doctrines that emphasized the importance of the inner life.
 - B. These doctrines and their proponents gained popularity throughout the Hellenistic world until it became commonplace for cities to erect statues to philosophers as readily as to their other benefactors. Philosophers, in fact, became both cultural and political ambassadors on behalf of the Greek states.
 - C. As the living embodiment of Greek tradition, these men represented a human, individual Greek culture that was accessible to all in a way that the court of the Hellenistic king was not.
 - D. The writings of the philosophers reflect this unusual pairing of the king and philosopher. When Zeno writes that the means of making money are ridiculous, which include receiving it from a king and therefore yielding to him, his rejection encompasses not just what we would call materialism, but also the contractual arrangement of social relations that was the foundation of Hellenistic social life.
 - E. Other Stoics explicitly likened the virtuous or wise man to a king, claiming that both were self-sufficient and powerful. Often the wise and virtuous man is referred to as blessed. In later antiquity, the authority of the “holy man” would increasingly challenge secular authority. Here was an alternative model of power.
 - F. The Hellenistic philosophers who rejected the material aspects of life are a link to later European history, setting the stage for the growth of the church as an alternative to the power of the state.

Suggested Reading:

- B. Inwood and L. P. Gerson, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory Readings*.
 A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicurans, Sceptics*.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways do the philosophies of the Hellenistic Age represent a different response to contemporary conditions from the responses of Hellenistic artists?
2. Why did such philosophies as Stoicism prove so popular, especially among such groups as the Roman aristocracy?

Lecture Fifteen

Kingship and Legitimacy

Scope: The monarchs of the Hellenistic world were not descended from Persian kings or local rulers. We examine the underpinnings of their power and the administrative arrangements of their realms.

Outline

- I. The monarchs of the Hellenistic world were not descended from Persian kings or local rulers. Instead, they were Greeks and Macedonians who could offer no claim to rule based on descent, territory, or legitimacy, because the founders of their dynasties were soldiers and officials in the Macedonian army.
 - A. What ideology, then, sustained the authority of the Hellenistic kings? By what right did they claim to rule, and how did they support their claim in practice?
 - B. Often, answers to these questions have concentrated primarily on the phenomenon of Hellenization, as if the benefits of Greek culture were enough to justify the rule of these men and to make them acceptable to non-Greek subjects. A second aspect of Hellenistic kingship is that Hellenistic kings usually received cult honors and were worshipped as gods, either in their lifetimes or after their deaths. This has sometimes been seen as an ideological tool used to impress and pacify subject populations.
 - C. In 307 BC, the Athenian reaction to Antigonius and Demetrius was to call them kings and “savior gods.”
 - D. Ptolemy III was traced back to his dynastic beginnings and, even further, to the gods.
 - E. For the Seleucids, the ultimate genealogy was similar.
- II. In fact, the underpinnings of Hellenistic kingship are much more complex and included a variety of institutions, ideas, and methods to assert and maintain authority.
 - A. In the first place, Hellenistic philosophers developed Aristotle’s notion of the *megalopsychus*, “the man of great soul.”
 1. With his slow gait, deep voice, and contempt for anything except his own honor, Aristotle’s “man of great soul” was a model for kings whose claims to kingship had to reside in their own qualities.
 2. The “man of great soul” was also a model for Hellenistic philosophers, who often saw themselves as the intellectual equivalents of kings, as well as their actual advisers. Kingship, said the philosophers, was above review. One definition of kingship of the time frankly stated that it was neither descent nor legitimacy that gave monarchies to men, but the ability to command an army and handle affairs competently.
 - B. Military expenditure was an important part of the equation, not only because kings faced threats from their neighbors, but because great armies, vast fleets, and the latest weapons demonstrated to your own people and the rest of the world that you were powerful.
 - C. Spectacular festivals in honor of the gods gave rulers the opportunity to spend vast amounts of money in displays of their wealth.
 1. The grand procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus lasted a full day. Floats up to 40 feet long pulled by 600 men carried gigantic tripods and statues.
 2. These floats, which were between 15 and 18 feet tall, poured wine and included hundreds of gold and jewel-encrusted vessels and boxes and thousands of men, women, and children in costume, along with elephants and chariots drawn by antelope and ostriches. It was an early case of conspicuous consumption.
 - D. The king’s generosity was not confined to displays of power but was also used to demonstrate his appreciation of Greek culture.
 1. The Attalid kings of Pergamon were especially generous in giving entire buildings to Athens, but they and the Ptolemies also gave money to the Greeks to rebuild after earthquakes and sent grain fleets to Greece during times of famine.
 2. In their own courts, the kings patronized Greek poets, musicians, painters, and sculptors, vying with each other to transform their capitals, Alexandria, Pergamon, Antioch, and Pella, into cities comparable to Athens.

3. Greek artists responded by eulogizing and glorifying their royal patrons, connecting them to the heroes of the glorious past.
- E. The cult of the ruler, either living or dead, also bolstered the kings' claims to legitimacy.
1. Although modern scholarship is often skeptical about whether the subjects believed in the divinity of the Hellenistic dynasts, we now recognize that divine honors offered to a mighty king made royal power tangible to the people of the age.
 2. One might call this divinity the diplomatic language of the time.
- III. Aside from these various forms of patronage, the Hellenistic kings also relied on administrative arrangements to confirm their power.
- A. In the third century, administration was often in the hands of the king's friends, or *philoï*. Drawing on Macedonian traditions of companionship, the Hellenistic kings often relied on these informal close associates and advisers to run the kingdom.
 - B. Gradually, in the second century, this network of associates was complemented by an elaborate fixed hierarchy of officials with titles, grades, and specific duties.
 - C. Together, the *philoï*, the family of the king, and the upper echelons of the bureaucracy constituted the court, a series of concentric circles with the king at the center.

Suggested Reading:

G. Herman, "The Court Society of the Hellenistic Age," in P. Cartledge et al., eds., *Hellenistic Constructs: Essays in Culture, History, and Historiography*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why did Hellenistic kings compete with each other in their philanthropic spending?
2. In what ways did the Hellenistic concept of kingship go back to Alexander the Great?

Lecture Sixteen

Benefaction

Scope: The Hellenistic Age would witness an increasing reliance on individual citizens, often of extraordinary wealth, to keep cities from starving or going bankrupt. Earlier city-state institutions provided a model for this, but in the Hellenistic Age, *euergetism* (voluntary gift giving) became critical to the survival of cities.

Outline

- I. In the Classical period, such cities as Athens had relied on their wealthiest citizens to pay for many of the city's annual expenses. Cities benefited from the wealth of the elite, while the leading members of society enhanced their status in displays of wealth on behalf of the community.
 - A. This system of expenditure on behalf of the public good was broken into different components, known as liturgies.
 - B. There were two main types of liturgy.
 1. The *choregos*, or producer, was responsible for producing a dramatic performance at the festival of Dionysus. He commissioned the playwright, paid the actors, and purchased all the costumes and scenery.
 2. *Trierarchs* were each responsible for the upkeep of a single trireme. They paid for tackle and equipment, guaranteeing the seaworthiness of the vessel for an entire year.
- II. In the fifth century this system operated on a regular annual basis, but in the fourth century, it began to break down as states found it more and more difficult to fill the ranks of the liturgical class.
 - A. In the Hellenistic period, the formal system of liturgies was replaced by ad hoc arrangements in which the super-rich and a narrowly defined elite emerged as the benefactors and sometimes saviors of the Hellenistic cities.
 1. The term for such behavior was *euergesia*, and the title of benefactor (*euergetes*) was adopted by many Hellenistic kings.
 2. The title was also conferred on many ambitious private citizens.
 - B. Euergetism reflects the hierarchical arrangement of Hellenistic societies. It also points to a widening gap between the community as a whole and the few powerful men on whom the communities relied for their survival.
- III. Benefactions could come in a wide variety of services and gifts. Public buildings, shipments of grain, and new fortifications were all regularly given to cities by their wealthy benefactors. Benefactors paid for *gymnasia*, public schools, acting companies, and public doctors. Two towns on the Black Sea, Istria and Olbia, have left us a rich legacy of public documents that show how benefactors were essential to the survival of the cities.
 - A. In one inscription, the council and assembly of Istria record their gratitude to a certain Hephaestion.
 1. The city had taken out a loan of 300 gold pieces, but for nearly 20 years, it had repaid neither the loan nor the interest, which alone now amounted to 400 gold pieces.
 2. Hephaestion canceled the interest altogether, on the condition that the principal be repaid over 2 years.
 - B. In another instance, the Istrians were suffering from raids by marauding Scythians, who had driven off their flocks. A benefactor, Agathocles, served as ambassador to the Scythians, paid them to leave the city alone, and led the Istrian forces into battle when the Scythians broke their word.
 - C. The fullest account of a benefactor's career is that of Protogenes of Olbia, recorded in an inscription that is nearly 200 lines long.
 1. Three times, when the city had no money left, Protogenes gave sums of up to 900 gold pieces to a local chieftain to buy him off.
 2. He redeemed sacred vessels that the city had pawned to pay its debts.
 3. He twice gave the city interest-free loans to pay for grain when the inhabitants faced starvation and bought out the debts owed by the city, which he then forgave.
 4. In time of war, he spent 1,500 gold pieces to rebuild the city's walls, towers, and gates.
 5. Olbia finally owed Protogenes 6,000 gold pieces, a debt that he canceled completely.

- IV. The decrees honoring the benefactors of the Hellenistic states provide some of our richest evidence for daily life in the Hellenistic Age. These documents point to a period of danger and turmoil in which many people must have faced terrifying uncertainty every day. The novels we have discussed also reflect this quality of the age.
- A. A decree from the island of Amorgos in the Aegean recounts a hair-raising episode in which pirates came ashore and kidnapped more than 30 people, including women and girls, both slave and free.
 - 1. Two of the prisoners were brothers named Hegesippus and Antipappus, who successfully negotiated the release of most of the prisoners and offered themselves as hostages.
 - 2. They were subsequently honored for their bravery.
 - B. In other instances, a benefactor might not only negotiate the release of people captured by pirates but also serve as an ambassador to states such as Crete that sponsored piracy. A certain Eumaridas of Cydonia, for example, was awarded a bronze statue in Athens because he ransomed Athenians captured by pirates, then persuaded the Cretan pirates to leave the Athenians alone.
- V. The reality of the Hellenistic Age was that individual cities were far weaker than the kings who now ruled territories as large as all of Greece put together. Cities often lacked the means to rebuild after earthquakes or to defend themselves against outside attack.
- A. Because of this vulnerability, the cities relied more and more on their benefactors to protect them. And because the goodwill of the king was so vital to their survival, cities also relied on benefactors to intercede with the powerful kings of the age.
 - B. One city in Asia Minor received a governor sent by one of the Attalid kings of Pergamum. Corragus proved to be a valuable intermediary between the local population and their monarch.
 - 1. He negotiated the restoration of the city's ancestral constitution, effectively leaving the city to govern itself.
 - 2. He restored the city's sacred precincts and arranged for royal subsidies to pay for the city's cults.
 - 3. At his own expense, Corragus supplied the city with animals for sacrifice.
 - 4. He convinced the king to extend a tax exemption for the city from 3 to 5 years.
 - 5. He also arranged for the royal treasury to purchase private property for indigent citizens.
- VI. Benefaction, therefore, has to be seen as one of the most characteristic and important public institutions of the Hellenistic Age.

Suggested Reading:

P. Veyne, *Bread and Circuses: Historical Sociology and Political Pluralism*.

Questions to Consider:

- 1. How would the cities of the Hellenistic world have negotiated with the kings of the age had there been no prior institution of liturgical service?
- 2. In the dealings between cities and kings, who gained more from the kings' desire to act as benefactors?

Lecture Seventeen

The Maccabean Revolt, Part I

Scope: The most well-documented example of a rebellion against Hellenistic overlords by their non-Greek subjects is the Maccabean revolt, beginning in 166 BC. The revolt came in response to the desecration of the temple in Jerusalem by the soldiers of Antiochus IV. In two lectures we will examine these events, asking how and why this persecution of the Jews arose and what the revolt tells us about the relationship between Greeks and their non-Greek subjects.

Outline

- I. The persecution of the Jews and the triumph of Jewish independence are themes that resonate in our century.
 - A. It is difficult to delve more deeply into this subject without bringing some modern analogs to bear on the interpretation, for example, to see Antiochus IV as an ancient precursor to Hitler.
 - B. The Maccabean revolt appears as a successful military resistance to what otherwise might have been an ancient Holocaust.
 - C. But the ancient and modern persecutions are actually very different.
 1. The Hellenistic world had no clear anti-Semitic context.
 2. No ancient scientific theory existed that posited the biological inferiority of Jews.
 3. The ancient world did not see the gradual imposition of legal restrictions imposed on the Jews analogous to the German laws of 1933.
- II. The Seleucids had long dealt tolerantly with Jews who had assimilated Greek practices.
 - A. Antiochus repeatedly negotiated with high-ranking Jews who went by such Greek names as Jason, Menelaus, and Lysimachus.
 - B. The Jewish community in Judaea was not like a Jewish ghetto in Antioch or Seleucia, or any other Syrian city, but a separate and completely distinct region within the Seleucid empire.
 1. Judaea paid its taxes, sent tribute to the Seleucid king, and had supported the Seleucids in wars against the Ptolemies.
 2. Judaea was a peaceful, well-integrated part of the Seleucid realm.
 3. The Seleucids ruled a polyethnic empire, and they did so pragmatically; it was not in their interest to antagonize the Jews.
 - C. The Seleucid persecution of the Jews is a puzzle. We have to ask, why did Antiochus IV turn against the Jews, and what does this conflict reveal about the relations between Greeks and non-Greeks in the Hellenistic world?
- III. The oldest interpretation of Antiochus's change of policy is that he saw himself as a champion of Hellenism, which he intended to impose on his entire empire. He tried, it is argued, to create a common culture and worship for all of his kingdom.
 - A. The justification for this view goes back to the First Book of Maccabees, composed around 100 BC, in which we read that the king issued a proclamation to his whole kingdom that all were to become a single people, each renouncing his particular customs.
 - B. This explanation requires a remarkable about-face, because the original Seleucid policy toward the Jews was one of toleration.
 1. Earlier, Antiochus III had expressly confirmed the rights of the Jews. Even in 2 Maccabees 3.2, the compiler of the Jewish record of the revolt says, "It came about that the kings themselves honoured the Holy Place."
 2. Into the first half of the second century, the Seleucids treated the Jews as a distinct people whose traditions were respected in precisely the same manner as the Seleucids treated their other subjects.
 - C. Furthermore, it is unlikely that Antiochus had decided to impose Hellenistic uniformity.
 1. Local coinage continued to use local symbols and types; Hellenistic motifs were not suddenly adopted.

2. Nothing in the records or documents from Uruk or Babylon or elsewhere in Mesopotamia shows a sudden adoption of Hellenistic practices.
 3. Across the Seleucid realm, the record after 167 BC reveals a continuation of the same local and indigenous cults, practices, and titles as before 167 BC.
- D. If Antiochus did issue a royal edict demanding the Hellenization of the entire Seleucid kingdom, the only place where we have evidence of this is the very place that chose to resist. This has led many to suspect that the royal edict is a fiction or at least that the Maccabean version is quite different from whatever the king actually decreed.
- E. Some scholars have argued that what we really have is an attempt by Antiochus to foster a ruler cult in Jerusalem, that he wished to be worshipped as the incarnation of Zeus Olympius, but this explanation, too, falls short of the mark.
1. Antiochus encouraged the worship of many gods and even presented himself as a god made manifest, *epiphanes*, but the practice of all the Hellenistic kings was to graft this worship onto existing religious systems or to encourage it among subjects who shared the outlook of the Greeks.
 2. It is hard to reconcile that flexibility with Antiochus's heavy-handed attack on the Temple.
- IV. The Maccabean interpretation sees the persecutions by Antiochus as evidence of a clash of cultures, Greeks versus Jews. In fact, strong evidence suggests that other conflicts lay behind the rebellion, involving not just Greeks on one side and Jews on the other, but Jews against Jews in Jerusalem and Jews in the countryside against those in the city. There were three major contributing factors.
- A. The first factor was the plummeting fortunes of Antiochus IV, which made him amenable to a change in policy toward the Jews.
 - B. The second was a power struggle in the ranks of the leading families in Jerusalem, most of whom had Hellenized.
 - C. The third factor was a widening gulf between the urban Jews of Jerusalem and those of the countryside, to whom Hellenism was anathema. This volatile mix led to the persecution of the Jews in 168–167 BC and the Maccabean revolt immediately thereafter.
- V. The Seleucid realm underwent a series of setbacks in the generation before the Maccabean revolt.
- A. In 189 BC, at the battle of Magnesia in Asia Minor, the Romans defeated Antiochus, and the following year, in 188, the Syrian king signed a peace treaty at Apamea that essentially gave up all the Seleucid territory in Asia Minor. Rome also imposed a crushing indemnity on the Seleucids.
 - B. In 168, Antiochus IV embarked on a campaign against Ptolemy in Egypt, where he was met by a Roman magistrate, Gaius Popillius Laenas.
 1. Antiochus was ordered to quit Egypt. He left, humiliated.
 2. As if to show the world that Egypt and Rome were of no consequence to him, Antiochus mounted an extraordinary demonstration of his power—a parade comprised of 50,000 men in armor; 800 cadets wearing gold crowns; 1,000 cattle for sacrifice; statues of gods, nymphs, and heroes; and gold and silver plates and vessels.
 3. This display was to show the world that Antiochus had suffered no setback, but the reality was that he had. He had been bluffed by a solitary Roman magistrate and had failed to conquer Egypt.
 4. The date of the persecution of the Jews overlaps with these events entirely and not coincidentally.

Suggested Reading:

V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Had Antiochus III not been defeated by the Romans in 189 would the Jews have been pushed toward revolt one generation later?
2. What was to be gained by reversing the earlier Antiochid policy of tolerance toward the Jews?

Lecture Eighteen

The Maccabean Revolt, Part II

Scope: In December of 167 BC, agents of the Seleucid king, Antiochus IV, entered the Temple in Jerusalem, piled unclean offerings on the altar, and forced Jews to eat sacrificial animals and to parade wearing ivy wreaths in honor of Dionysus. Copies of the Torah were burned. The Temple was rededicated to Zeus Olympius. Ten days later, after a pagan altar had been erected in front of the Temple, a pig was sacrificed, a deed that has been described as “an act of unspeakable desecration of the people of Judaea.” We have seen that this persecution must be set against the collapse of Seleucid fortunes in the eastern Mediterranean between 190 and 167. Now we examine these events from the point of view of Antiochus’s Jewish subjects.

Outline

- I. Through much of the third century, Judaea had been under Ptolemaic rule, and the generosity of Seleucid policy toward the Jews had been prompted by an awareness that Judaea was a buffer between Egypt and Syria. The arrival of the Romans in the eastern Mediterranean, the defeat of Antiochus III in 189 BC, and the prospect of an alliance between Rome and Ptolemaic Egypt all represented severe threats to the power of the Seleucids in this region.
 - A. In 168, Antiochus faced the prospect of a Roman-Egyptian alliance.
 - B. This alliance could be expected to prosecute territorial claims to Judaea, which would leave Rome or its allies in control of the seacoast from Byzantium to Cyrene with Syria the one exception.
 - C. Under those circumstances, the luxury of an autonomous Judaea could no longer be afforded. The shift in policy, then, from Antiochus’s point of view, was a pragmatic, cold-hearted political decision.
- II. Already following his first campaign in 169 BC, Antiochus had carried off treasures from the Temple, making it clear that his policy of generosity could be withheld or reversed when more pressing needs, such as an empty war chest, arose.
 - A. While campaigning in 168, Antiochus received the news that rebellion had broken out in Judaea. In fact, the violence in Judaea was the result of civil unrest between rival Jewish factions and was not an uprising against Antiochus at all. To Antiochus, however, it must have seemed as if the Jews had turned on him when he was most vulnerable.
 1. Furious, he returned to Jerusalem, where his armies slaughtered 40,000 Jews.
 2. The following year, a Seleucid general named Apollonius was dispatched with 22,000 men to Jerusalem, where they occupied the citadel known as the Akra.
 3. From the Jewish point of view, preserved in Maccabees, soldiers were sent to terrorize the population, with orders to kill all the men and enslave the women.
 4. This did not happen, although innocents were killed.
 - B. Once again, if we strip away the preconceived notion of Greek and Jewish antipathy, we can find a more plausible explanation for the event. Apollonius’s army was sent to establish a Seleucid garrison deep in Judaeian territory and to secure this region against a combined Egyptian-Roman attack or a rebellion of the local population against Antiochus or both.
 - C. According to this interpretation, territorial and geopolitical considerations were vastly more important to Antiochus than the questions of Hellenism, Judaism, or any other -ism.
- III. What about the Jewish attitude toward the revolt? Resistance to the Greeks must be put in the context of contemporary Jewish anxieties over assimilation.
 - A. Religious Jews railed against “Apostates from the Law,” that is, Jews who had lapsed in their observance. Yet, many Hellenized Jews lived in Jerusalem.
 - B. These Hellenized Jews in Jerusalem sought to reach an understanding with the pagans around them.
 - C. They approached Antiochus IV and were authorized to introduce Greek social practices.
 - D. It was Hellenizing Jews, not Greek colonists, who built a gymnasium in Jerusalem and who disguised their circumcision.

- E. These Hellenized Jews were blamed by observant Jews for many of the ills that befell Judaea on the grounds that they had deserted Judaism. Nevertheless, the translation of books of the Torah into Greek suggests that many thought that Judaism and Hellenism were not irreconcilable.
- IV. In this society of Hellenized Jews, factional rivalries broke out that would be catastrophic. The key rivalries were among members of a powerful clan, the Tobiads.
- A. Early in his reign, Antiochus IV was approached by a Hellenized Jew named Jason, brother of the high priest, Onias.
 1. He offered to give the king 360 talents of silver if, in return, the king recognized his claim to the high priesthood.
 2. Onias was deposed and Jason took his place.
 - B. Jason seems to have renamed Jerusalem as Antioch. Rather than being a Jewish city, it would become a Seleucid city, leaving Jason, the loyal vassal, free to rule Jerusalem and the Jews.
 - C. In turn, Jason was deposed by his brother, Menelaus, in exactly the same way.
 1. Menelaus went to Antiochus and outbid his brother for the high priesthood.
 2. Antiochus sold the high priesthood to the highest bidder, Menelaus, who took power, forcing Jason to flee.
 - D. In 168, when a false report came back from Egypt that Antiochus had been killed, Jason crossed the Jordan River with 1,000 troops, chased Menelaus into the citadel of Jerusalem, and laid siege unsuccessfully until he was forced to flee back across the Jordan.
 - E. Each of these factional disputes involved only the urban, Hellenized Jews, who saw themselves as being both Jewish and part of the Greek world. Their advocacy of Hellenistic culture was part of their strategy for winning power in the framework of the Hellenistic Near East.
- V. In the countryside and away from Jerusalem, by contrast, Hellenism must have looked much more foreign. The rebellion against Hellenism began as a guerilla opposition to the persecutions of Antiochus. The rebellion started in the countryside, where antipathy toward the Greeks and Hellenizing Jews was fuelled by the antipathy of the country for the city.
- A. In Jewish tradition, the city was distrusted as the place of power, the place of taxes, the place of royal authority.
 1. The story of the Tower of Babel represents a deep aversion to city life, as does the story of Sodom and Gomorrah.
 2. For a culture whose ideology equates foreign cultures with bondage, it is no surprise that the opposition to Antiochus should take root in the countryside and grow from there.
 - B. The first campaigns of the resistance were glorious victories. Supported by his loyal brothers Simon, Joseph, and Jonathon, Judas Maccabaeus defeated the army of Antiochus and captured a number of Seleucid fortresses.
 - C. The Maccabean revolt continued until the death of Antiochus IV in 163. During its course, Antiochus attempted to resolve the revolt diplomatically with a letter invoking the age-old goodwill of the Seleucids and Jews toward each other.
 - D. But the revolt had set the Jews on the path toward independence, and the purification of the Temple by Judas Maccabaeus in 164 must surely have had an extraordinary political effect on the Jewish conceptions of their own separateness and power.
- VI. Nominally, Seleucid governors continued to be appointed to control Judaea, but hostilities were renewed in the reign of Antiochus V and would continue for the next generation.
- A. Eventually, a series of compromises would be worked out. These compromises tell the real story of Hellenism and Judaism.
 1. In 159 BC, the leaders of the Maccabees, Jonathon and his brothers, were granted amnesty on the condition that they leave Jerusalem alone.
 2. In 153, faced with a pretender in his own realm, the Seleucid monarch, Demetrius I Soter, was forced to make more concessions and withdraw the Seleucid garrisons from Judaea.

3. The pretender, Alexander Balas, offered an even better incentive to the Maccabees and offered Jonathon the robes of the high priesthood.
- B. The family that had led a revolt against those who had bartered the high priesthood for their own profit and power was now complicit in the same world of political maneuvering they had rejected.
 1. Jonathon continued in his position until 142, by which time the last Seleucid garrison in Judaea, occupying the citadel of Jerusalem, had been withdrawn.
 2. Judaea had been released from all tributary obligations.
- VII.** Jonathon was succeeded by his son Simon, who in 140 BC was crowned in the manner of a Hellenistic king. Soon his domain would display a bureaucracy full of Greek names, a professional army, a calendar based on his ruling years, a royal mausoleum in the village of Modin (where the first Maccabean resistance had begun), and the unmistakable sign of Hellenistic kingship: royal coinage with Greek inscriptions issued in the name of the dynasty, the Hasmoneans.
- VIII.** The history of Judaea in the second century reveals a mosaic of different cultural positions, beliefs, classes, and tensions.
- A. One strand of Judaism would continue to oppose any accommodation to non-Jewish practice, whether it was the Hasidim of Judah Maccabaeus's day or the Pharisees of the first century. For other groups within Judaism, throughout the diaspora but especially among the elite of Jerusalem, Hellenism was not an alien wisdom.
 - B. It is in that multiplicity of meaning that the relationship between Greek and Jew foreshadows the complexities of the modern world.

Suggested Reading:

E. S. Gruen, "Hellenism and Persecution: Antiochus IV and the Jews," in *Hellenistic History and Culture*, P. Green, ed.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why was it important for Jewish tradition to maintain that Antiochus IV was mad?
2. What does the evolution of the Maccabean rebellion into the Hasmonean dynasty reveal about Hellenism and power?

Lecture Nineteen

Rulers and Saviors

Scope: In the Hellenistic world, traditional Greek religion developed in new ways. An emphasis on personal faith and experience led to the flourishing of mystery cults. At the same time, religion became one of the principal means of recognizing the immense power of Hellenistic kings. The public face of religion changed as more and more rulers were hailed as saviors.

Outline

- I. Mystery cults were not a foreign import entering the Greek world from the East, as has often been argued. Such cults existed in Greece long before Alexander expanded the horizons of the Hellenistic world.
 - A. Dionysiac cults had long offered an intense religious communion with the god, based on divine madness and possession.
 - B. Orphism was another mode of early Greek religious practice that dealt with demonic possession and offered hope for improving one's lot in the afterlife.
 - C. Most famous among mystery religions was the cult of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis. This sanctuary was dedicated to the earth goddess and celebrated the fertility of the soil and the gift of grain.
 1. Successive temples were built here from the Geometric period to the Roman Age, attesting to the ever-increasing popularity of the cult.
 2. Initiates of the cult were purified before a midnight ceremony during which wall torches suddenly illuminated the hall of initiation.
 3. At the climax of the ceremony, the initiate witnessed an epiphany, as the goddess manifested herself. This was not a metaphorical appearance but a literal one.
- II. During the Hellenistic period, the Greeks enthusiastically adapted existing cults in the newly "Hellenized" territories.
 - A. A prime example of this adoption is Cybele, an Anatolian mother goddess. Her worship is known in Greece as early as the fifth century BC, where she was easily associated with Demeter.
 - B. Cybele was attended by a younger consort, Attis, who was remembered as a mortal lover who died and was mourned. Originally, the cult was concerned with the cycle of the seasons, but increasingly it dealt with issues of salvation and the afterlife.
 1. The worship of Cybele in the Hellenistic world was encouraged by the Attalid dynasty, which offered sumptuous endowments to the sanctuary of Cybele at Pessinus, in northern Asia Minor.
 2. The cult of Cybele reached Rome in 204 BC and became immensely popular there.
 3. Much of the popularity of the cult rested on its exotic appearance. The priests of Cybele were eunuchs and were remarkable for their colorful robes, music, and dancing.
- III. The most daring example of the synthesis of Greek and non-Greek elements is found in the cult of the Egyptian gods Serapis and Isis.
 - A. Serapis was a figure from Egyptian religion created from the fusion of Osiris and the Apis bull. His cult was popular and important in Egypt. In the fourth century, immediately before the arrival of the Macedonians, the Serapeum at Memphis was extensively refurbished. The Ptolemies understood the significance of the cult and attempted to Hellenize it.
 1. Greek priests were commissioned to write hymns and prayers to Serapis in Greek.
 2. A Greek sculptor was commissioned to create the cult statue.
 3. Serapis was thus made to look like the Greek god Hades, and his cult was rendered accessible to the Greeks.
 4. Similarly, Imhotep and Aesclepius merged into a syncretized god who combined elements of both cultures.
 - B. A second deity of Egyptian origin who gained immense popularity throughout the Hellenistic world was Isis. Like Serapis, she was already an established figure in Egyptian religion at the time of the Macedonian

conquest. During the Hellenistic period, her worship would outstrip that of Serapis and even the earlier Olympian gods.

1. Prayers composed in her honor and singing her praises became popular throughout the Greek world.
2. Like Demeter, Isis was associated with the fertility of the land.
3. She was seen as a protector of the family and was often shown nursing her child, Harpocrates.
4. In Apuleius's poem, *The Golden Ass*, the narrator tells how the goddess appeared to him and promised him salvation. In her address to Lucius, the goddess explains that she is the same goddess, whether she is called Minerva, Athena, Venus, Aphrodite, Demeter, or Cybele.
5. Her cult demonstrates the syncretistic quality of Hellenistic religion as different gods and goddesses, both Greek and non-Greek, were gradually fused.

IV. Aside from the wide interest in personal religious experience, the other principal feature of Hellenistic religion was the emergence of ruler-cults. In these cults, Hellenistic kings were offered the honors appropriate to gods or semi-divine heroes.

- A. Once again, the origins of this practice lie as much in the Greek world as in the East. Characters such as Heracles were believed to have been human but were assumed into heaven because of their glorious deeds. The Spartan general Lysander had been honored as a hero, receiving cult sacrifices at the end of the fifth century BC.
- B. Alexander experimented with this same status after his visit to the oracle of Zeus Ammon at Siwa.
- C. Among Alexander's successors, establishing the cult of a dynastic founder was a vivid and practical way of legitimizing Macedonian rule.
 1. Ptolemy II established a cult in honor of his father that was gradually extended to include the reigning ruler and his sister-wife as well.
 2. Ruler cults allowed the ruling dynasty to deal with the existing priestly caste, as is illustrated by the Rosetta stone. In this trilingual inscription, Ptolemy V is honored by the priests of Memphis, who, in return, were offered all kinds of concessions and tax breaks by the young king.
 3. Ruler cults also served as a medium for international diplomacy. The League of the Ionian Islands, which was dominated by Ptolemy II in the third century, acknowledged the suzerainty of the king by agreeing to make an annual sacrifice, the Ptolemaieia, in honor of the house of Ptolemy.

V. It is too easy to dismiss the ruler cult as a political tool, designed by rulers to enhance their prestige. Although some Greeks resisted the notion of divine honors for living men, many had no qualms about offering divine honors to the powerful men who controlled their lives.

- A. When Demetrius Poliorcetes, the first of the successors to claim the title of king, sailed into Athens in 291 BC, the local population greeted him with religious songs and dances and exclaimed: "How the greatest and the dearest of the gods have come to the city!... For the other gods are either far way, or don't hear us, or don't exist, or ignore us. But you we can see. You are not made of wood or stone. You are real."
- B. Ruler cults allowed the Greeks to frame the power of Hellenistic kings in terms of a reciprocal relationship: honor for the king and leniency for the community.

Suggested Reading:

S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power*.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways are ruler cults and benefaction parallel institutions?
2. In what ways can the religious developments of the Hellenistic period be said to have influenced early Christianity?

Lecture Twenty

Economic Growth and Social Unrest

Scope: The Hellenistic world witnessed a rapid expansion of economic activity but also an increase in social distress and even resistance to the status quo. This lecture explores evidence for these developments and shows how similar the Hellenistic Age is to our own.

Outline

- I. The ancient economy was always, in comparison with the modern one, a rural economy. Most people were concerned with farming and raising stock. Nevertheless, changes in organization, technology, and trading practices meant that the economy was critical to the stability of the eastern Mediterranean.
 - A. The production of staples increased as the result of the introduction of newer, faster-growing varieties of wheat. Other new varieties of fruits and crops were also encouraged by the Hellenistic kings.
 - B. More iron ploughs and new types of olive presses increased production.
 - C. Irrigation expanded from traditional areas, such as the Nile valley, to regions further afield in Ukraine and Bactria.
 - D. The mass production of pottery increased on a scale previously unknown in the Mediterranean. Luxury trade, lower in volume than staples but potentially more lucrative, also increased dramatically.
 1. Because many amphora types are readily identifiable, it is possible to trace trade patterns across the Mediterranean.
 2. Staple goods, including wine, oil, and grain, were traded from such regions as Egypt and the Black Sea to cities unable to feed themselves, such as Alexandria, Athens, Pergamum, and even Rome.
 3. Luxury goods included spices from India, slaves and ivory from sub-Saharan Africa, Baltic amber, and tin from Cornwall.
 4. Many of the most precious goods originated outside the Mediterranean, adding to their exotic and economic value.
 5. A notable increase in shipwrecks dating after 250 BC attests to the increasing volume of sea-borne trade in the Hellenistic Age.
- II. The increase in economic activity did not lead to increased prosperity for all.
 - A. Reliable evidence in the coins minted during the third and second centuries suggests that money was consistently losing its value.
 1. The Ptolemies gradually lightened the silver tetradrachm from 17 grams of silver to 15, then 13.
 2. Gold and silver coins tended to be used for international trade only; internally, copper was used.
 3. In effect, the profits in international trade were often channeled into the hands of the royal dynasties that monopolized production, their agents, and the cities that acted as free trading ports, especially Delos and Rhodes.
 - B. Devaluation also went hand in hand with inflation.
 1. A measure of wheat that cost 75 copper coins in the third century cost 350 coppers a century later.
 2. At the same time, the ratio of copper to silver had plummeted from 1:60 to 1:455.
 3. Most hoards of Greek coins date to the Hellenistic period, revealing that people wanted to keep coins for their bullion value.
 - C. Other factors limited the development of a free and healthy economy.
 1. Salaries were often paid partially in produce and partially in artificially low wages, making it difficult for the soldiers and low-level bureaucrats to improve their economic positions.
 2. Credit was available but expensive, varying from 10%–12% interest to 18%–22% in times of disturbance.
 3. Insurance was hardly known, except in the case of bottomry (maritime loans), where its cost often added between 20% and 30% to the cost of the loan.

4. Taxation was highly unpopular, not only because taxes are inherently unpopular, but because of the method of collection. Tax collectors not only gathered taxes but also took an extra 5% to 10% as their commission.
- III. As a result of these factors, the Hellenistic period saw widespread social unrest, expressed in a variety of ways.
- A. The most startling evidence of social unrest was the widespread phenomenon of piracy. Originating from Aetolia, Cilicia, and Crete, pirates preyed on the shipping lanes of the entire Mediterranean and often came ashore to raid. They were responsible for much of the trade in slaves that occurred throughout the Mediterranean.
 1. Pirates were not simply single marauding ships, acting on their own. They were often highly organized, their fleets consisting of hundreds of men. They operated wherever central authority was weak and offered an attractive alternative for those who were tired of the taxes and oppression of the Hellenistic kingdoms.
 2. In response to the dangers represented by piracy, many states and sanctuaries agreed to recognize each other's right to grant *asylia* (the right of asylum). Some of the worst areas of piracy negotiated this right.
 3. The *catochi* (recluses) were those whose response to piracy was simply to run away and live in a monastery.
 - B. Similar in significance was the widespread phenomenon of mercenaries, a different reaction to social unrest. Such men had always been a part of the Mediterranean world, but they became much more numerous and prominent in the Hellenistic Age.
 1. Hellenistic monarchs often relied on mercenary forces, preferring them to national armies who might agitate against their Greek overlords.
 2. After the battle of Raphia (217 BC), the first battle in which the Ptolemies relied on Egyptian forces, widespread rebellions weakened the Greek dynasty and forced Ptolemy V to make concessions to the Egyptian priests.
 - C. One of the most interesting forms of resistance to the status quo in the Hellenistic world was through popular literature.
 1. The *Sesostris Romance* promised a rebirth of Egyptian power at the expense of the "belt-wearers," apparently a reference to the sword belts worn by Greek soldiers in their midst.
 2. The *Nectanebo Romance* was like a historical novel, in which the Egyptian pharaoh Nectanebo was presented as the father of Alexander the Great.
 3. The *Potter's Oracle* was dramatically set back in the XVIIIth dynasty and prophesied a future when the Greeks would kill each other and the Nile would once again flow full and straight.
- IV. The institutions of the Hellenistic world had originated either in the cultures of the ancient Near East, such as Egypt and Babylon, or in the city-states of Greece during the Archaic and Classical periods. They were not particularly well adapted to rapid social change.

Suggested Reading:

- M. I. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, 3 vols.
 S. K. Eddy, *The King Is Dead*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why did economic theory remain entirely outside the interest of Greek intellectuals?
2. What influence did Egyptian apocalyptic literature have on other literary genres in the Hellenistic period?

Lecture Twenty-One

The Mood of the Hellenistic Age

Scope: The Hellenistic Age saw cultural contact on an unprecedented scale, as the Greeks established control of areas once ruled by Egyptian pharaohs and Persian kings. The result was something radically different from the Classical Age of mainland Greece. This lecture identifies some of the most characteristic features of the Hellenistic world: internationalism, individualism, and a fascination with fate.

Outline

- I. The Greeks of the Hellenistic world were well aware of the fact that the Greek world was much larger than Greece itself.
 - A. Their word for this larger world was the *oecumene*, meaning “the commonwealth.” It refers to a cultural zone that existed wherever there were Greek communities and corresponds very closely to what in more modern times we would call the Levant, the world of the eastern Mediterranean.
 - B. *Koine* is the term used to describe the Greek language of the age. As Greeks from different parts of the Greek world migrated to new places, their language began to lose some of the distinctive features of its separate dialects, and a new standardized Greek began to emerge.
 1. *Koine* Greek is the language in which the New Testament was composed, although Aramaic elements are also present.
 2. Jewish scriptures were also translated from Hebrew into *koine* Greek at the order of Ptolemy II. Tradition holds that the translation was performed by seventy scholars, from which derives the name of the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint.
 3. *Koine* did not emerge overnight, however, and differences in pronunciation could still be heard. Theocritus’s poems include one, Idyll 15, that captures the broad vowels of Doric Greek spoken by two ladies from Syracuse now living in Alexandria.
 - C. To the Hellenistic world, however, internationalism did not mean fusing with other Greek cultures so much as exporting a uniform Greek culture to a larger area. This exportation was accomplished by a number of new institutions that were characteristic of the age.
 1. Many Greek states employed doctors, architects, and gymnastic trainers on the public payroll. These professionals repeated the same pattern of Greek culture wherever they went, encouraging cultural homogeneity.
 2. Greek drama was now performed by professional troops of actors—also a religious brotherhood—who traveled from city to city, the so-called *technitai* of Dionysus.
 3. Professional teachers brought Greek education wherever Greeks settled. The usual setting for education was the gymnasium, and the presence of a gymnasium and theatre became one of the hallmarks of a Greek city, whether in Greece or Afghanistan. The *gymnasiarch* became an extremely important public official.
- II. The Greeks and Hellenized non-Greeks had international meeting places: sanctuaries. Panhellenic sanctuaries, such as Delphi and Olympia, had long been important meeting places for the Greeks, but now other shrines became just as important.
 - A. Delos emerged as one of the largest and wealthiest sanctuaries of the Mediterranean.
 1. Between 300 and 166 BC, the island was independent and enjoyed prosperity, thanks to its central location and the prestige of the sanctuary of Apollo.
 2. In 166, Rome took control and gave the island to Athens, but the loss of independence was compensated by its tax-free status, making it the busiest port in the Aegean for the next century.
 - B. Various sanctuaries of Asclepius, a healing god, also gained in popularity from the fourth century BC onward.
 1. At Epidaurus, a magnificent complex (an *asclepieum*) included a temple and a dormitory/hospital. People came from all around Greece to be cured by the healer god and left inscriptions giving their thanks.

2. On Kos, another *asclepieum* was located, not far from a famous medical school where doctors were trained in the Hippocratic tradition. The sick could choose their cures, either from the god or from scientific medicine.
- C. Sanctuaries benefited from the generosity of Hellenistic kings and repaid their largesse by conferring prestige on their patrons. The cult of the Cabiri on Samothrace was popular with many Macedonian dynasts, as well as the Ptolemies, and was endowed by them with gates, fountains, and buildings.
- III.** The international character of the age was balanced by an increasing interest in individualism.
- A. We have already seen this in our study of Greek sculpture, in which we saw a type of realism not witnessed in the Classical Age.
 - B. The interest in individualism emerged in our look at Greek philosophy, which increasingly concerned itself with freeing the individual from emotional disturbance.
 - C. The work of major writers also shows an interest in individuality.
 1. Theophrastus wrote a comic treatise that examined different types of characters: the Suspicious Man, the Conservative, and so forth.
 2. Menander's comic plays, unlike the earlier broad farce of Aristophanes, were about familiar and recognizable family problems, the ancient forerunners of modern sitcoms.
- IV.** Many of the writers of the age explored a theme that runs through all Hellenistic art and culture, namely the unpredictability of fortune.
- A. In Greek novels, heroes and heroines constantly suffer reversals of fortune. They are reunited, only to be separated once again by a storm or a pirate attack.
 - B. Many historians of the age also emphasized the role of fortune in determining the course of events.
 1. Both Duris and Phylarchus were notorious for writing highly dramatic and emotional histories that emphasized the feelings of the protagonists.
 2. Polybius, possibly the best Greek historian after Thucydides, deplored this emphasis on sensationalism and the role of fortune in what was sometimes called "tragic history." Occasionally, even he refers to the role of fate.
 - C. The Greek term for fortune was *tyche*; from the fourth century onward, the goddess Tyche received cult honors in Athens and abroad.
 1. In the east, Tyche was associated with a Semitic goddess, Gad, and sometimes with Isis.
 2. Although she could be capricious and malevolent, her power was also harnessed for the protection of cities.
 3. Statues that show her wearing a crown representing the walls of the city became common in the Hellenistic east, and Tyche was often treated synonymously with the spirit of the city.
 - D. This was a culture in the eastern Mediterranean that could genuinely be called "international."

Suggested Reading:

F. Walbank, *Polybius*.

J. J. Pollitt, "Introduction: Hellenistic Art and the Temperament of the Hellenistic Age," in *Art in the Hellenistic Age*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What does the emphasis on fortune tell us about the mood of the Hellenistic Age?
2. In what ways did the Hellenistic Age explore individual experience differently from the Classical period?

Lecture Twenty-Two

Hellenism and the Western Mediterranean

Scope: Following Alexander, the Macedonians marched all the way to the Hindi Kush, yet the western Mediterranean, much nearer to Greece and Macedon, was never politically under the control of Alexander's successors. What prevented Hellenism from moving west? What was the relationship between the Greeks and their western Mediterranean neighbors?

Outline

- I. Hellenism was tied to Alexander's dream of conquering Persia, because the Persians had been the ancestral enemies of the Greeks for 200 years. The territorial limits of Hellenism were first determined by Alexander's agenda: the conquest of an empire to the east.
 - A. Even so, at the time of Alexander's death, he is reported to have had plans for a campaign to the western Mediterranean.
 - B. The authenticity of these plans has been doubted, but Alexander was always happier campaigning than administering.
 - C. It is quite possible that he intended to take an army west once he returned to the Mediterranean from Babylon.
- II. A second reason for the indifference of the Hellenistic world to the western Mediterranean was that it would not have been an easy region to conquer, because Carthage already existed as a superpower there.
 - A. Established as a Phoenician colony as early as 800 BC, Carthage sat at a nodal point where the Mediterranean narrows between Italy, Sicily, and North Africa.
 1. From here, the Carthaginians exercised control over most of the western Mediterranean, sailing and trading from the North African coast west and north up the coast of Portugal and Spain.
 2. The presence of Carthage acted as a buffer, discouraging further Greek expansion beyond Sicily.
 - B. If, during the Classical period, the eastern Mediterranean was littered with Greek cities and colonies, at the same time, Carthage exercised the same position in the west.
 1. For that reason, Greek colonization of the western Mediterranean never went much beyond what it had reached between 700–600 BC.
 2. Sicily was the frontier between these zones of power: the eastern side was largely Greek; the interior, largely indigenous; and the west, largely Punic.
- III. One part of the western Mediterranean did attract the attention of one of Alexander's successors. This was Italy, and the man who tried to conquer it was Pyrrhus, the king of Epirus.
 - A. Pyrrhus was from the same northern Greek world as Philip, Alexander, and the Macedonians. The world of northern Greece was one in which kings ruled, not democracies, and kings were constantly facing the threat of a challenge from the barons and lords who formed their courts.
 1. Pyrrhus's early life reflects this instability. As a child, he had to flee Epirus with his mother as the result of intrigues at court.
 2. As a young man, he was a sort of prince in exile, never giving up his claim to the throne of Epirus but serving first in the army of Antigonos and Demetrius and later living in Egypt as a well-treated, royal hostage of the Ptolemies.
 3. He was trained as a warrior; some said he was the best general after Alexander.
 - B. In the 290s, while still in his twenties, Pyrrhus set about reclaiming Epiros. He fought with his former patron, Demetrius Poliorcetes, and the 290s and 280s saw the two men invade each other's territories with varying degrees of success. In 280, the people of Tarentum called on Pyrrhus to cross into Italy and fight as their ally against Rome.
 1. Over the next 6 years, Pyrrhus fought campaigns in southern Italy and Sicily, once reaching as close as 40 miles south of Rome.

2. He probably won more times than he lost, but an invading army is always limited by its own size and the success with which it can win support from the local population. The defending army, on the other hand, has easier access to supplies and reinforcements from its own territory and population.
 3. After one particularly bloody victory, when he was congratulated by one of his generals, Pyrrhus remarked, "Another victory as costly as that and we'll have lost the war."
 4. Eventually, he did in fact lose the war, quitting Italy entirely in 274 BC and dying in 272 in mainland Greece in an attack on the city of Argos.
 5. His campaigns represent probably the only chance of Rome and Italy to fall under the political control of a Hellenistic dynast.
- IV. Pyrrhus's failure marks a turning point in the history of Hellenism, because it is the first confrontation between a Hellenistic power and Rome.
- A. In military terms, these were the first full-scale campaigns in which Roman legions fought against Greek armies trained in the Macedonian style and led by a general thoroughly imbued with the tactical lessons of Philip and Alexander.
 1. The short-term result had been even, with some battles won by the Romans and some by Pyrrhus, but the long-term result was a clear Roman victory.
 2. As Plutarch notes, shortly after this, Rome was to conquer the rest of Italy and Sicily.
 3. The campaigns of Pyrrhus may have contributed to Roman ideas of territorial expansion.
 - B. In cultural terms, the victories of the Romans over Pyrrhus also played a significant role in determining the complex response of the Romans to Greek culture. In the aftermath of Rome's defeat of Pyrrhus, Greek culture acquired a foothold in Rome.
 1. Some of this was the direct result of Rome's military victory. For example, in 275 BC, following his victory over Pyrrhus, the Roman general Manlius Curius Dentatus put on a triumph, a victory parade in which hundreds of Greek art works captured during the campaign were displayed.
 2. This display encouraged an attitude toward the Greeks that the Romans never entirely lost, namely, that Greek culture was a commodity and that it was part of the spoils of victory.
 3. When Rome sacked the Greek-speaking city of Tarentum in 272, all the statues and other art works, bronze vessels, paintings, silver plate, and so forth were carted off to Rome.
 4. This attitude remained remarkably consistent throughout the Republic, so that by the first century, the Roman general Sulla was exporting not just statues but also the entire temples in which they were housed.
- V. The Roman response to Greek culture was not limited to sacking of Greek treasures. Because Greeks began to enter the population of Rome as merchants, prisoners of war, slaves, and ex-slaves, they also brought with them Greek ideas, Greek beliefs, and Greek letters.
- A. Roman religion easily adapted the gods and goddesses of the Greeks, fusing them with their own deities in an act of syncretism.
 1. In 293 BC, after a plague broke out in Rome, the Romans dedicated a temple to the god of healing, whose Greek name, Asklepios, was changed somewhat into the Latin form of Aesculapius.
 2. In 249, the Greek divine couple Hades and Persephone were honored in a celebration in Rome commemorating the victory over Tarentum. Again, the Greek name Persephone was slightly altered to the Latin Proserpina.
 - B. A cultural transformation was also set in play, thanks to the contact between Rome and its Hellenistic neighbors.
 1. Livius Andronicus, a Greek from Tarentum brought to Rome as a slave, translated Homer's epic poems into Latin.
 2. He also wrote and produced ten tragedies for the Roman stage, plays based on Greek stories.
 - C. Regarding this cultural contact with the Greeks, the Romans were quite ambivalent. They brought home spoils of war, all the while cringing from feelings of cultural inferiority.
 1. In 155, Carneades, a Greek philosopher, came to Rome and delivered two lectures over the course of two days, both for and against the possibility of justice, a display of the power of sophist oratory.

2. Cato, the Roman censor, was so alarmed by this that he had the ambassadors expelled from Rome, worried about their corrupting influence. Yet the speeches were delivered in Greek and could only have corrupted those who understood Greek.
 3. Furthermore, although Cato called the Greeks a vile and unteachable race, he himself knew Greek and was able to read and speak it fluently.
 4. Whether they liked it or not, the Romans were being Hellenized.
- D. Set in motion were two opposite trends: the Hellenization of Rome and the Romanization of the East.

Suggested Reading:

E. Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy* and *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How would Rome's position in Italy have been affected had Pyrrhus been victorious?
2. Why did the Romans experience such anxiety in dealing with Greek culture?

Lecture Twenty-Three

The Freedom of the Greeks

Scope: The political end of the Hellenistic world came about once the Greek kingdoms of the eastern Mediterranean were incorporated into the expanding Roman Empire. How was Rome able to exert the kind of control that no single Hellenistic king had wielded since Alexander? By what stages did Rome come to dominate the Greeks? Was it a planned campaign of imperialism, or do other factors explain Rome's inexorable rise to power?

Outline

- I. After Rome's first serious contact with a Hellenistic ruler, Pyrrhus of Epirus, in the 270s, Rome had little time to deal with the major Hellenistic kingdoms of the eastern Mediterranean. The great power in the western Mediterranean during the third century BC was Carthage.
 - A. During this century, the Romans fought two serious wars against Carthage. Both wars witnessed developments in Rome's approach to warfare and territorial expansion that would set the stage for the Roman expansion eastward in the second century. The First Punic War (264–241 BC) came after Rome had united most of the Italian peninsula under Roman control.
 1. The First Punic War saw the emergence of Rome as a maritime power, winning sea battles at Mylae and Cape Ecnomus.
 2. The Romans demonstrated their ability to win a war of attrition that lasted over 20 years against a tough and wealthy adversary.
 3. The Romans amassed a huge amount of booty and acquired their first overseas province, Sicily, as a result of the victory.
 - B. The Second Punic War was also a protracted conflict, lasting from 218–202 BC. Provoked by differences between the Romans and Carthaginians over the Roman alliance with the Spanish town of Saguntum, the war prefigured much of Rome's involvement with the Hellenistic East.
 1. Although historians often look for economic causes for the war, there is little evidence that the Romans responded to such pressures as competition over natural resources.
 2. The Romans, however, did take seriously the alliances that bound them to smaller and weaker states.
 3. Hannibal, the charismatic Carthaginian commander, resembled Alexander the Great and saw the Romans in much the same way as Alexander saw the Persians.
- II. Rome's victory over Hannibal at the Battle of Zama (202 BC) coincided with Rome's emergence as a state that resembled other Hellenistic states but was also in some ways quite different.
 - A. Unlike the Hellenistic states, which relied heavily on mercenary armies, the Romans had extended the franchise to much of the Italian peninsula, thereby dramatically increasing the manpower available to the Roman army.
 1. Polybius reports that the Romans were able to muster over 700,000 men when Hannibal crossed the Alps into Italy with 90,000.
 2. The Romans survived defeats inflicted by Hannibal at Trebia, Lake Trasimene, and Cannae, where perhaps 25,000 men perished. Any one of these defeats would have demolished most Hellenistic states.
 3. The Romans were able to hold out against Hannibal in Italy for 14 years, while opening new fronts in Sicily and Spain.
 - B. Rome was also different from Carthage and other Hellenistic states from the point of view of its constitution. Polybius, a Greek historian living in Rome in the second century BC, emphasized this as the key to Rome's success—an effective government that included elements of kingship, aristocracy, and democracy.
 1. The Hellenistic east was ruled by kings descended from Alexander's generals; mainland Greece was dominated by regional federations, such as the Achaeans and Aetolians. But the Romans had a mixed constitution.

2. The principle of kingship in Rome was represented by the two consuls, who shared power and were elected for a single year.
 3. The oligarchic principle was represented by the power of the Senate, which came to dominate foreign policy in particular and was made up of ex-magistrates.
 4. The democratic principle was represented by the voting assemblies and the public meetings of the Roman populace, where matters of policy were debated openly.
 5. By creating a mixed constitution, Polybius believed, Rome resolved the tension of competing models of government.
- C. The Roman aristocracy emerging in the late third century BC would also exert a powerful influence on Roman policy toward the Greek east.
1. Power circulated in a small coterie of families. The scions of these families felt an enormous pressure to wage war and win glory for their families and for Rome.
 2. As a result, such families as the Fabii and the Scipios came to see overseas campaigns as their duty and an expression of Rome's good faith toward its allies.
- III. With the defeat of Hannibal and the Carthaginians in 202 BC, the Romans were drawn into affairs in the eastern Mediterranean.
- A. Rome's first eastern involvement had been prompted by piratical raids in the Adriatic, originating in the kingdom of Illyria in the vicinity of modern Albania, Montenegro, and Croatia. Rome fought two Illyrian Wars, in 229 and 219 BC, ending both through treaties rather than by military campaigns.
- B. Rome also became directly involved at this time in the affairs of the Greeks. The Romans wished to prevent Hannibal from receiving aid from his ally, Philip V of Macedon.
1. To keep Philip in check, the Romans formed an alliance with the Aetolians, in northwestern Greece.
 2. The Roman-Aetolian alliance was also joined by King Attalus I of Pergamum.
 3. The First Macedonian War lasted from 214 to 205 BC but saw no major battles involving the Romans.
 4. The war was concluded by the Treaty of Phoenice, which freed Rome to concentrate on Hannibal without fear of an attack from the east.
 5. The war also resulted in Rome's first major alliances in the Greek world.
- IV. Once Hannibal was defeated, the Romans were again free to turn their attention to Philip V and affairs in the Greek world of the eastern Mediterranean. Rome's involvement in the Second Macedonian War (199–196 BC) illustrates the complexities of Rome's emerging role as a Hellenistic superpower.
- A. A number of factors caused the war. One was Roman resentment at Philip V for his alliance with Hannibal during the invasion of Italy. A second factor was the threat to Rome's new allies, Pergamum and Rhodes, from an alliance between Philip V of Macedon and Antiochus III of Syria.
1. According to one interpretation, Rome had taken on the role of power-broker in the eastern Mediterranean and was intervening to break up the powerful alliance of Macedon and the Seleucid dynasty.
 2. In this view, Rome was using its *amicitia* (friendship) with its allies as no more than a pretext to stir up another war.
 3. Such an interpretation lays the blame for the war at the feet of ambitious Roman commanders, such as Titus Quinctius Flaminius, who sought lucrative and impressive military commands in the east now that the Hannibalic war was over.
- B. There may be some truth to these charges; however, there is also a danger in assuming a Roman plan for world conquest when more simple explanations apply. The Romans were successful in the war, defeating Philip's Macedonian phalanx at the Battle of Cynoscephalae in 197 BC, the first victory of a Roman legion over a Macedonian phalanx in pitched battle. But the aftermath of the war tells us a great deal about Rome's plans.
1. In a widely celebrated festival held at the Isthmus of Corinth, the Roman general Flaminius issued a decree declaring the "Freedom of the Greeks" and guaranteeing the various Greek states the right to live independently under their own constitutions.
 2. The Roman Senate also issued instructions to Flaminius to quit the three key garrisons known as "the Fetters of Greece."
 3. By 194 BC, all Roman troops had been withdrawn from Greece.

- C. Taken together, these details strongly suggest that Rome had no long-term plan for the domination of Greece. Rome had been sucked in by its eastern alliances. The same conditions would result in the final incorporation of the entire Hellenistic east into Rome's empire.

Suggested Reading:

E. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*, 2 vols.

W. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome, 320–70 BC*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How well did the Romans understand the diplomatic language of Hellenistic international politics?
2. To what extent was Roman expansion driven by a desire to extend Roman territory?

Lecture Twenty-Four

Pax Romana

Scope: Between 196 and 146 BC, Roman attitudes toward the Hellenistic east changed dramatically, setting the stage for the final century of Roman expansion. After the defeat of Macedon and the Seleucid dynasty in Syria, Rome would become preoccupied in its own civil conflicts, with the Hellenistic east serving as the backdrop for the final conflict between Antony and Caesar's heir, Octavian. Antony's alliance with Cleopatra, his Hellenistic queen, raised the prospect of a joint Roman-Hellenistic hegemony of the eastern Mediterranean, but this passed with their defeat at the Battle of Actium in 31 BC.

Outline

- I. In the aftermath of the Roman declaration of the "Freedom of the Greeks," the Romans found that their former allies, the Aetolians, resented the failure of the Romans to reward them. As a result the Romans looked on as the Aetolians appealed to Antiochus III of Syria to liberate the Greeks. Antiochus's invasion of Greece in 191 BC precipitated the First Syrian War (191–188 BC).
 - A. Antiochus and the Romans had no natural enmity. Nor did the two powers experience any clash of economic or even strategic interests.
 1. Antiochus had hosted Hannibal after his defeat, but this was hardly a cause of war in the eyes of the Romans.
 2. The Romans had already demonstrated they were not interested in annexing Greek territory.
 - B. Instead, the war resulted from the increasing entanglement of the Romans in the shifting and unsteady system of alliances that existed throughout the Hellenistic world.
 1. Rome remained loyal to her ally, Eumenes II of Pergamum.
 2. Roman generals may have looked on this as another opportunity to win glory and booty, but the Senate still demonstrated no desire to acquire more territory.
 - C. Antiochus was defeated at the battle of Thermopylae by L. Cornelius Scipio, brother of the man who defeated Hannibal. Antiochus's army withdrew to Asia Minor, where the Romans were once again successful at the Battle of Magnesia (189 BC). The peace treaty that followed, the Peace of Apamea (188 BC), dramatically altered the geopolitical map of the eastern Mediterranean.
 1. The Romans collected a massive amount of booty, including a large indemnity from Antiochus.
 2. Antiochus was forced to cede virtually the entire western portion of his empire, the region known as Asia Minor, corresponding to much of modern western Turkey.
 3. The Romans granted this new territory to their allies, Eumenes of Pergamum and the people of Rhodes.
- II. The change of heart in the ruling class of Rome in relation to the annexation and administration of foreign territory began in the generation following their victory over Antiochus III. The Senate came to be persuaded that military solutions were not long lasting. The events that started this change of thinking occurred during the Third Macedonian War (171–168 BC).
 - A. In 179, Philip V of Macedon was succeeded by his son Perseus, who was concerned with restoring the prestige of Macedon and its influence in Greece. During the next eight years, Perseus fought a series of campaigns in Greece and was denounced by Eumenes II, who feared the threat to his own kingdom of Pergamum if Macedon once again grew powerful.
 1. The Romans accepted the charges laid against Perseus by Eumenes and dispatched an army to Greece.
 2. In the fourth season of the war, Perseus and the Macedonian army were crushed by the Roman legions at the Battle of Pydna (168 BC).
 3. Perseus was captured, sent to Rome, and paraded in the triumph of the victor, Lucius Aemilius Paulus.
 4. Macedon was partitioned into four republics.
 - B. Gradually, after the partitioning of Macedon, it is possible to detect a hardening in the Roman attitude toward the endless internecine fighting of the Greeks.
 1. Following a fresh revolt in 148 BC, the Romans lost all patience.

2. Once the revolt of Andriscus had been put down, the Roman victor, Quintus Caecilius Metellus, disbanded all forms of autonomous rule, and Macedon became a Roman province, ruled directly by a Roman governor.
- C. As Roman attitudes toward Greece changed, so, too, did the Greek attitude toward Rome sour. In 196 BC, the Romans had been hailed as liberators and saviors. Now they were denounced as hypocrites. As a result, one final war of resistance flared up, organized by the Achaean League, in 146 BC.
1. The war ended with the Roman sack of Corinth. The city was leveled and later rebuilt as a Roman colony.
 2. In the same year, the Romans also faced a final conflict with their old enemies, the Carthaginians. This war also ended with the sack of the enemy's city.
 3. The sack of Corinth and Carthage in 146 BC dramatically marks the Roman conquest of the Mediterranean, leaving only Syria and Egypt of the old Hellenistic kingdoms still independent.
- III.** The emergence of Rome as the greatest single power in the eastern Mediterranean coincided with the annexation of Greece, which was transformed into the province of Achaia in 146 BC, and with the weakening of the older Hellenistic dynasties during a century of instability.
- A. New kingdoms, such as Pontus, Bithynia, and Cyrenaica, were emerging on the edges of the old kingdoms.
1. The kings of these domains often styled themselves *philoromaios*, or lovers of the Romans, as if in recognition of Rome's superpower status.
 2. When Prusias of Bithynia appeared before the Roman Senate in 165, he wore chains, acting the part of a suppliant and even a slave to Rome.
- B. Rome's position in the east gradually solidified as a result of a series of extraordinary episodes.
1. In 133 BC, Attalus III of Pergamum died, bequeathing his entire kingdom to Rome, creating the Roman province of Asia Minor.
 2. In 96 BC, Cyrenaica also passed to Rome as a bequest.
 3. In 75 BC, the kingdom of Bithynia on the Black Sea passed to Rome on the death of its king, Nicomedes IV.
- C. Roman expansion was also helped by the weakness of the Seleucids in Syria. This kingdom had lost its western holdings to Rome and Pergamum and was further buffeted by change.
1. In the east, the rise of Parthia in Mesopotamia and Persia cost the Seleucids their eastern provinces.
 2. Even closer to home, the Maccabean rebellion in Judaea eventually resulted in the founding of the Hasmonean dynasty.
 3. Within the dynasty, as well, was much dissent, as rival claimants weakened the power of the kingdom.
- D. The Ptolemies came under increasing Roman influence during the first century BC.
1. Ptolemy XII Auletes required the intervention of a Roman army to secure his throne, and Roman officers became advisers and officials in the upper echelons of the Ptolemaic bureaucracy.
 2. The last of the Ptolemies was Cleopatra VII, the famous lover of Caesar and Marc Antony. Her career, however, has to be seen against the backdrop of Rome's final annexation of the east.
- IV.** Between 100 and 31 BC, a succession of commanders emerged in Rome who were willing to use overseas campaigns as the basis for establishing their power in Rome.
- A. During the 60s BC, Pompey asserted Roman military might throughout the eastern Mediterranean.
1. He swept the pirates out of the Aegean in 67 BC.
 2. Between 66 and 62, he established a network of provinces and client kingdoms across the east.
- B. Pompey's one-time ally and later enemy was Julius Caesar.
1. The civil war between their armies was fought in Greece, and after his defeat, Pompey fled to Alexandria, where he was killed.
 2. Caesar followed Pompey to Egypt and intervened to help Cleopatra keep her throne.
 3. As a result of their affair, Cleopatra bore a son whom she named Ptolemy Caesar.
 4. Her visit to Rome, however, did little to win over popular opinion.
- C. After Caesar's assassination, in the final round of Rome's civil war, Marc Antony made Egypt his base of operations. With Cleopatra, he had three children. Their royal family was the last expression of independent Hellenistic kingship.

1. After pacifying the western provinces, Caesar's heir, Octavian, marched east to confront Antony and Cleopatra.
 2. At the Battle of Actium, Antony and Cleopatra were defeated.
 3. They fled to Alexandria and, with their suicide, Egypt was annexed as a Roman province.
- D. Though Rome had triumphed, it had been thoroughly Hellenized in the process, as seen in such writers as Ovid and Virgil. This was the real irony of the Hellenistic world: a people that had lost their political independence would live on as a powerful culture.

Suggested Reading:

M. Grant, *Cleopatra*.

E. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae (260–70 BC)*.

Questions to Consider:

1. At what point did the rulers of the Hellenistic world recognize that Rome was more powerful than any other Hellenistic state?
2. From the point of view of the Egyptians and the Ptolemaic dynasty, was Cleopatra a successful ruler?

Timeline

- 359 Philip II comes to the Macedonian throne
- 356 Birth of Alexander
- 338 Philip and Alexander defeat the Greeks at Chaeroneia
- 336 Assassination of Philip and accession of Alexander the Great
- 334 Battle of the Granicus River
- 333 Battle of Issus
- 331 Alexander's visit to the oracle of Siwah; Battle of Gaugemala
- 330 Death of Darius, King of Persia
- 329 Alexander's Bactrian campaign
- 326 Mutiny of Alexander's army at the Hyphasis River
- 325 Alexander's return through the Gedrosian desert
- 324 Mutiny and banquet of reconciliation at Opis
- 323 Alexander dies in Babylon; beginning of the Wars of the Diadochi
- 321 Death of Perdiccas during campaign against Ptolemy; division of Alexander's empire at Triparadeisus
- 317 Murder of Philip Arrhidaeus by Olympias
- 315 Coalition against Antigonus
- 311 Peace treaty signed by Antigonus and the other Diadochi
- 310 Cassander murders Alexander IV
- 306 Ptolemy defeated off Cyprus; Diadochi assume the title of kings; Seleucus cedes eastern borders to Chandragupta in exchange for war elephants
- 301 Death of Antigonus at Ipsus
- 283 Death of Ptolemy I; death of Demetrius, son of Antigonus
- 281 Death of Seleucus I; defeat and death of Lysimachus (Battle of Corupedium)
- 280 Pyrrhus of Epirus crosses to southern Italy
- 274 Withdrawal of Pyrrhus from Italy
- 272 Sack of Tarentum by Rome
- 264–241 First Punic War
- 263 Eumenes I succeeds Philetaerus (Pergamum)
- 246–241 Third Syrian War (Ptolemy III versus Seleucus II)
- 241–197 Reign of Attalus I (Pergamum)
- 240 Diodotus of Bactria assumes title of king
- 238–227 Attalid victories against Celts (Galatians)
- 229 First Illyrian War
- 219 Second Illyrian War
- 218–202 Second Punic War

217	Battle of Raphia
215	Alliance of Philip V (Macedon) and Hannibal
214	Roman alliance with Aetolia; First Macedonian War
212–205	Eastern expedition of Antiochus III
202	Battle of Zama (Roman victory over Hannibal)
199–196	Second Macedonian War
197	Defeat of Philip V at Battle of Cynoscephalae
196	Roman declaration of the freedom of the Greeks
191	Defeat of Antiochus III by Rome at Thermopylae
189	Defeat of Antiochus III by Rome at Magnesia
188	Peace of Apamea
168	Antiochus IV receives Roman ultimatum during campaign against Ptolemy; Battle of Pydna; partitioning of Macedon by Rome
148	Macedon reduced to status of a Roman province
146	Destruction of Corinth and Carthage by Rome
133	Death of Attalus III of Pergamum; creation of province of Asia Minor
96	Cyrenaica bequeathed to Rome
75	Bithynia bequeathed to Rome
66–62	Eastern campaigns of Pompey
48	Defeat of Pompey at Pharsalus
48–47	Caesar in Alexandria
44	Assassination of Caesar
31	Battle of Actium; defeat of Marc Antony and Cleopatra

Glossary

- Akatalapsia:** Sceptic doctrine that holds that absolutely certain knowledge is impossible.
- Amicitia:** Roman term for friendship; often applied to Rome's alliances with foreign kings and states.
- Asclepieum:** Any sanctuary of the healing god Asclepius, often including buildings for the diagnosis and treatment of disease.
- Asyilia:** Inviolability, especially the right of sanctuaries to be left unmolested, formally recognized by other states.
- Ataraxia:** Imperturbability, a state of calm sought by many Hellenistic philosophical schools.
- Aulos:** The court of a Hellenistic king, including his advisors, military officers, and officials.
- Basilikoi laoi:** Royal peasants, i.e., peasants living on and tied to estates owned by the king.
- Catochi:** Recluses. Individuals who withdrew from life in the world at large to live wholly within a temple precinct.
- Choregos:** Citizen responsible for paying for a dramatic production at a religious festival.
- Dioiketes:** A high-ranking government official responsible usually for taxation and financial affairs.
- Epiphanes:** An epithet applied to Antiochus IV meaning "god made manifest."
- Epoche:** A term from Sceptic philosophy asserting the need to suspend judgment because of the impossibility of absolute knowledge.
- Euergesia:** Benefaction. The institution of public assistance offered by the wealthy to Greek states, especially in times of crisis.
- Euergetes:** Benefactor. A term applied to wealthy citizens who assisted a city with gifts of food or money; often adopted as a royal title.
- Gymnasia:** Cultural institutions, common in Greek cities, combining athletic training, poetic performances, and philosophy lectures.
- Gymnasiarch:** Official in charge of the gymnasium, appointed by the city to oversee the training of young men.
- Heroon:** A shrine dedicated to a man of heroic, i.e., semi-divine, status.
- Hoplite:** Heavily armed Greek infantry soldier.
- Koine:** "Common" Greek, the dialect of Greek based on the Attic (Athenian) dialect, common throughout the eastern Mediterranean.
- Laoi:** The people, but usually used in Hellenistic times to refer to non-Greek peasants.
- Logistes:** An official of the Hellenistic kings primarily concerned with record-keeping and accounts.
- Megalopsychus:** An Aristotelian doctrine that identified the great man as the possessor of a "great soul."
- Oecumene:** A general term referring to the sphere of Greek culture and language extending throughout the eastern Mediterranean.
- Palaestra:** The wrestling ground of a gymnasium where young men took their exercise and underwent military training.
- Pezetairoi:** Literally "foot companions." Elite infantry battalions of the Macedonian army.
- Phalanx:** The massed formation of heavily armed infantrymen, equipped with pikes, forming the core of the Hellenistic armies.
- Philo:** Literally "friends." The noble companions of a Hellenistic king; the core of his military and administrative staff.

Philoromaïos: A term increasingly adopted from the second century on, meaning “Rome lover,” used by Rome’s allies to advertise their friendship with Rome.

Pothos: A popular expression in the ancient literature about Alexander meaning “yearning” or “desire,” often linked to Alexander’s divine status.

Stoas: Open colonnaded buildings popular in the Greek world as public buildings for commerce, judicial hearings, and civic administration.

Technitai: A general term for craftsmen but often used specifically for the guild of actors known as the technitai of Dionysos.

Trierarchs: Citizens who undertook the task of manning and equipping a trireme or warship.

Tyche: Fortune. A popular deity of the Hellenistic Age; often associated with either personal destiny or the fate of an entire community.

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