

Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic Age

- Brought Afghans into his army and trained them to fight
- Adopted Persian dress and customs
- Married the daughter of Darius, and married 5000 Macedonian men to 5000 Persian women to create even more unity
- For some Greeks it was too much, but whether they liked it or not, they were experiencing the full force of Near Eastern culture
- 323 BCE established a capital at Babylon
 - Diplomats from all areas, including Carthage and Rome, came to congratulate him
 - Wanted to continue his conquests, starting with the Arabs, moving into the western Mediterranean, all the way to the Strait of Gibraltar
- Alexander was distraught when his closest friend and trusted commander Hephaestion died, and in 325 BCE Alexander himself died
 - He assumed legendary status and is now known as Alexander the Great

The Hellenistic Kingdoms (323-120 BCE)

- After Alexander died, Ptolemy, Antigonos, and Seleucid established the Hellenistic Kingdoms that survived until the coming of the Romans in the second century BCE

The Divisions of Alexander's Empire

- Alexander's sons were born after his death, and both of them were mentally handicapped
- His generals, the Diadochi, were squabbling amongst themselves over the kingdom
- The partition of Babylon, 323 BCE, gave land to certain generals
 - Antipater received Macedonia and Greece
 - Lysimachus received Thrace
 - Antigonos I gained most of Anatolia
 - Ptolemy obtained Egypt
 - Seleucus was assigned Babylonia
- Antipater was named regent after Perdiccas was killed, but holdings remained the same
- Wars of the Diadochi in which the generals tried to increase their land holdings
 - Hellenistic commanders focused on reaching accommodation and preserving forces
 - Soldiers were expensive to train, difficult to recruit, and not to be wasted
 - Usually, fighting would stop as soon as one side had an upper hand
 - Power switched hands constantly, with the exception of Ptolemy's Egypt
- In 305 BCE Cassander named himself king of Macedon
- Antigonos gained control of Persia, but Cassander, Ptolemy, and Seleucus allied against him, so Seleucus reoccupied Babylonia
- In 305 BCE, Demetrius tried to take Rhodes, but failed
 - Rhodes became a city with harbor tolls and a powerful navy to protect its trade

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- Ptolemaic System
 - The earth was the center of the universe, and the planets around it moved in a complicated pattern of circles within circles

Hellenistic Technology

- Ctesibius of Alexandria invented devices using water and air pressure in 250 BCE
 - Water clock, and a high pressure pump to shoot water at fires
- Hero of Alexandria created more machines based on air and water pressure
 - Hydraulic devices to force oil out of olives, automatic door openers, odometer, etc
- Archimedes invented mathematical physics
 - The body will displace its own volume of water
 - Allowed for calculation of specific gravity based on the weight and volume of water displaced by any object
 - 212 BCE used engineering skills to help defend Syracuse from the Romans
 - Said to have invented a system of mirrors that set fire to Roman ships

Art and Literature

- Classical Greece was homogenous, and Hellenistic Greece was heterogeneous
- Characterized by baroque and emotional extravagance
- Doric and Ionic capitals were being replaced with floral Corinthian capitals
- Under Ptolemy I Alexandria became the literary capital of the world
 - Library housed epic poems such as *The Iliad* and *Argonautica*
- Mass entertainment became important
 - Plays now focused more on romantic love and marriage over politics
 - Mime was a brief portrayal of a scene from domestic life with barely any content
 - Little Hellenistic poetry or drama has really stood the test of time
- Saw an explosion in geographical exploration, and literary works called a periplus described strange places and peoples
- Creative literature was replaced with practical authorship
 - Literature was known for its attention to practical application
 - Geographical treatises, school handbooks, philosophical systems, etc
- Koine, or common form, became the literary language in the Mediterranean and Near East

Looking Back

- The Greeks weakened themselves so much after the Peloponnesian War that they were under the rule of the Persians and the Macedonians
- Alexander the Great defeated the Persians and created the largest empire in the world