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The Uses and Abuses of Hellenism by the Diadochi and Their Successors

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The Uses and Abuses of Hellenism by the
Diadochi and Their Successors

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at
Syracuse University

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and Renée Crown University Honors
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Abstract

This paper examines the means by which the Successors to Alexander the Great, known as the Diadochi, fostered and encouraged the growth of Hellenism within their empires. Using this foundation, it goes on to argue that the Diadochi consciously encouraged this growth to help consolidate their unstable regimes and expand their power. The basis for this analysis is largely in academic texts regarding the Hellenistic world and Ancient sources such as Herodotus, Josephus, and Polybius.

The investigation itself looks at four elements of the Hellenistic world that best exemplify the Successors' relationship with Hellenism: Religion, Politics, War, and Cities. Each element is discussed individually, first by relating their importance to the Diadochi and then by analyzing how Hellenism was integrated into them by the Successors. In the end, each element analyzed showed a strong connection between the Successors' use of Hellenism and a strengthening of their influence, either within their empires or abroad.

Executive Summary

Upon the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE, his massive empire began to crumble under its own weight. As it fractured, men with power and ambition scrambled to pick up the pieces. Over time, they would come to form their own empires from the remains of Alexander's Kingdom. These Men would come to be known as the "Diadochi," or Successors, and the Kingdoms they forged would become known as Successor States.

The Successors would inherit Kingdoms they had no right to claim, in lands that were largely not their own (the only real exception being the Kings of Macedon, at first Kassander and his son but afterwards the Antigonid Dynasty). With this reality came instability, something the Diadochi had to quickly manage to retain control. At the same time, they wished to expand their power and influence beyond their borders as the Great Alexander had once done. To achieve both goals in one fell swoop, they attempted to meld the native cultures over which they ruled and the Greek culture with which they were accustomed. In other words, they utilized Hellenism to manage their empires and increase their power.

This paper examines the means by which the Successors to Alexander the Great fostered and encouraged the growth of Hellenism within their empires. It then goes on to argue that the Diadochi consciously encouraged this growth to help consolidate their unstable regimes and expand their power. This conscious encouragement is analyzed in four areas: Religion, Politics, War, and Cities. Polytheistic religions allow for a melding of beliefs and combination of deities that, while largely unfamiliar in a modern context, was quite common in the ancient world. While Hellenization occurred in Religion before the rise of the Diadochi, it was through the

creation and promotion of Hellenized deities that they encouraged its growth. Politics was complex in the Hellenistic world, especially for Macedonian Kings ruling Non-Macedonian subjects. The adoption of native political structures in a Hellenized form and the recognition of a common Greek heritage, among other Hellenistic maneuverings, aided the Successors as they navigated the political landscape of the day. War was a major element of the Hellenistic world, from its creation to its eventual demise in the shadow of Rome. How Hellenistic elements were adopted into warfare, and where Hellenism was expressly rejected, shows both the advantages and limits of Hellenism to the Successors. Cities, old and new, all were influenced by Hellenism in one way or another. In some respects, it was meant for the ease of the ruler; in others, it was meant as a show of power. Whether in the realm of Religion, Politics, War, or Cities, the Successors managed to both foster Hellenism where it best suited them and take advantage of the melded systems they created to secure their authority.

This examination of the Diadochi and their use of Hellenism to their own benefit is done through an analysis of both ancient texts and academic sources. Most research is drawn from the scholarly texts, affirmed through ancient sources such as the Greek Historian Polybius, and then analyzed for its connection to the topic at hand. Many primary sources are also used in analyses of earlier periods to advance the understanding of what cultures are being brought together, like the Classical Greek Historian Herodotus and writings found on Ancient Egyptian Stelae.

The extent to which the Diadochi consciously promoted Hellenism has long been up to debate, and this paper argues for an interpretation of their actions as strongly promotional while providing rationale for this interpretation. It seeks only to readdress the argument and add to the discussion.

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Introduction

In June of 323 BCE, among friends, generals, and confidants, the legendary Alexander the Great succumbed to an illness and died, and with the exhalation of his final breath came the changing winds of fortune. His empire was the largest the world had seen, stretching from Greece to India, and its king would have immeasurable wealth and power; yet the only legitimate heirs to his throne were a feeble man and an unborn child. To many Macedonians with influence, power, and ambition this unique circumstance was too great an opportunity to ignore, and so they began to scramble to control whatever lands they could. Thus the Successors to Alexander, also known as the Diadochi, entered the world stage and established their kingdoms.

As they built their empires, the Diadochi found consolidating their power, let alone expanding it, to be a difficult task. With the exception of Kassander, his son, and the Antigonids, the Successors were foreigners to the lands in which they ruled. They had no legitimate claims to the thrones on which they sat, only the claim of conquest and nothing more. Their situation was unstable, and without action their power would evaporate. They required a stabilizing agent which they could utilize to manage their empires and expand their influence. The stabilizer they found was Hellenism.

Hellenism is, in a general definition, the merging of Greek culture into a separate, different culture. It was not an invention of the Hellenistic age; the Hellenization of religious deities, for example, extends at least as far back as the Classical Period if one looks at

Herodotus.¹ Its association with the Hellenistic age is not due to its inception, but to its rapid growth and expansion. The invasion of the Macedonians allowed for a Greek diaspora to occur, with thousands leaving their homelands to find a new life in the former Persian empire. They brought with them not only their belongings, but their traditions and culture which they would then practice in their new homes. Since they would settle in small townships and large cities, they would interact frequently with the native populations. Over time, this type of interaction and others would lead to a blending of the two cultures into one that wasn't quite Greek, but also wasn't truly native; in other words, Hellenism.

This examination shall argue that Hellenism was not only propagated by the Diadochi following the death of Alexander the Great, but that this propagation was done to help the Diadochi maintain and expand their own power. The analysis of their actions and how they promoted Hellenism to their advantage shall be taken in four parts, each divided into their own subcategories: Religion, Politics, War, and Cities.

The analysis of Religion shall first look at examples of religious syncretism, initially discussing its overall application beyond the Hellenistic world before discussing its involvement by the Successors. Then it will analyze the use of religion as a justification for the rule of the Diadochi, largely based on prior analyses and the use of Ruler-Cults. Finally, it will look to the Hellenistic implications of the Imperial-Cult, as well as their differences from Ruler-Cults.

The analysis of Politics will be divided into two halves. The first half shall discuss Hellenism's impact on political matters within the empires of the Diadochi. The second half will analyze its impact on external political affairs, whether it be with Poleis or other Successors. The

¹ Herodotus; *The Histories* 2.144.2

analysis will then use a political concept which connects to both internal and external affairs, the term “Basileus,” to aid in its interpretations.

The analysis on War shall first discuss the Hellenization of the army, and how it directly benefitted the Successors. Attaching to that study, it will then discuss a portion of the standard Hellenic army that remained unchanged throughout the period, the Macedonian Phalanx, and the implications this brings to the growth of Hellenism. Finally, it will look at how the Diadochi saw war, especially through the use of Hellenism, as a justification for their rule.

The final analysis, on Cities, shall view them in two separate modes. The first will analyze the planning of new cities, the Hellenistic roots of their construction, and how both are related largely to the will of the Successors. The second will look to older cities, especially those with great power under earlier rulers, and how they were affected by the wave of Hellenism.

The Successors and Religion

It has been said that to rule effectively one must have the hearts and minds of the people. To no one could this have been more vital than to the Diadochi and their successors; as conquerors with only victories to their names, they lacked the kind of legitimacy held by longstanding dynasties. In order to make up for this deficiency, many of the new Basileis turned to the aspect of culture which already guided the hearts and minds of many of their subjects: religion.

While in some respects the melding of Greek and Near Eastern religions was inevitable during the Hellenistic Age, this process was reinforced and advanced by the rulers themselves. Syncretism between Greek and foreign customs was by no means a new process, and this was used to great effect by the Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires in order to support gods and cults which were of benefit to them. In the same vein the two empires claimed divine descent, whether or not the custom had already existed in the region, to further their legitimacy and help connect the people. Ruler-cults and Imperial-cults had similar benefits as well, and were for that reason proselytized by the monarchies. In each case, either a Greek or native custom was enhanced or adapted by the other's culture on the urging of the ruler. This state sponsored Hellenism within each region's religious practices was in many ways vital to the continued stability and success of the royal family, and was therefore a key part to their power.

Syncretism of the Native and Greek Religions

For the Polytheistic religions native to Greece and the Near East, finding common ground would not have been difficult. Many of these religions had gods to explain and understand the world around them, such as Re for the sun and Demeter for agriculture. With these similar roles, it was simple enough to identify foreign gods as versions of one's own pantheon. Even if their customs and rituals were different or appeared odd to the Greeks, these deities could be a source of common understanding and appreciation.

By the rise of the Successor States, this practice of god association had long since been utilized by the Greeks and the foreigners with whom they dealt. Since the Greeks started colonizing the Mediterranean, it was as common for them to adopt or identify with native Gods as it was for them to retain the names and customs of the Mainland. This is not to say they abandoned their gods and customs entirely, of course; many of the Greek gods were still treated as these poleis' primary gods, and were the ones who chiefly received honors through festivals and public cults. What is meant is that these gods were matched to divinities in the regions which these colonies found themselves and that by melding the two religions they were able to more easily interact with the peoples they encountered.²

Herodotus, writing about a hundred years before Alexander's conquests, is no stranger to this kind of syncretism. Throughout his *Histories*, he makes reference to gods with dual names and regularly connects the gods of other civilizations to those of his own. He does this most deliberately with the Egyptians, from whom he went so far as to believe the Hellenes gathered

² Adcock, Charlesworth, and Cook; *The Cambridge Ancient History* pgs. 4-5

their knowledge of the gods. When discussing the period of Egyptian History in which the Egyptians believed the divine themselves ruled the land, he says:

“The last of these (the Gods) to reign over Egypt was Horus son of Osiris, whom the Hellenes named Apollo. It was he who had subdued Typhon and became the last of these divine kings of Egypt. His father Osiris is called Dionysus by the Hellenes.”

(Herodotus; *The Histories* 2.144.2)³

Here, although there is not an exact one-to-one correspondence between the two religions (though Horus is the son of Osiris, in Greek tradition Apollo and Dionysus are sons of Zeus, and therefore half-brothers), an effort has been made to relate the gods of the land of Egypt to the largely Greek audience of *The Histories*. This kind of relation, described so bluntly, speaks to the familiarity the Greeks had for this type of comparison.

In most instances, the gods of these regions were referred to by a combined name, in Hellenic texts usually with the Greek name first and a variation on the name second. Looking again at Herodotus, while describing the city of Babylon he remarks: “In the other district they built the sanctuary of Zeus Belos.”⁴ Here he is describing Zeus as analogous to the Babylonian god Baal. At other times these native gods were referenced as being the “Greek god” of their respective cult centers, such as “Theban Zeus”⁵ being used as a denotation of the Egyptian god Amun. In both cases a genuine commonality between various gods of the Near East and Greece is reflected; a commonality which was ripe for exploitation by the Ptolemies and Seleucids. It

³ From Strasser; *The Landmark Herodotus: The Histories*

⁴ Herodotus; *The Histories* 1.181.2

⁵ Herodotus; *The Histories* 1.182.2

was within this culture of blended religiosity, for example, where the god Sarapis found his home.

Sarapis was not an invention of the Ptolemies. A combination of the god Osiris and the dead Apis Bull, Sarapis had found a following in Memphis long before the arrival of the Macedonians. At that time his role was similar to that of his partial namesake, Osiris, dealing mainly with the afterlife. Over time, the deity managed to attain different roles. By the ascension of Ptolemy I, Sarapis had become known (especially amongst the Greeks) as more of a “cult” deity with a focus on healing and mysticism. Sarapis, at this point, had been anthropomorphized as well, with some of his rituals being Graecized in order to attract a more Hellenic clientele and expand the cult’s base. As Ptolemy I took power, he noted this god with a Greek and Egyptian following and set about utilizing it to his advantage.⁶

The unique and diverse qualities of Sarapis made him a valuable asset to the Ptolemies, who quickly promoted the cult within Egypt. Starting with Ptolemy I Soter and continuing for successive generations, Sarapis was adopted as the chief deity of Alexandria and the major cult of the ruling family outside of the cult of Alexander. Sarapis was given many honors by the Ptolemies, including recognition in the royal oath:

“I swear by King Ptolemy, son of Ptolemy and Arsinoe, Father-Loving Gods, and by the Father-Loving Gods, and by the Brother-and-Sister Gods, and by the Benefactor Gods, and by the Savior Gods, and by Sarapis and by Isis and by all the other Gods.”⁷

Recognition such as this was of immense importance. First, it is vital to note that Sarapis is placed alongside the names of the previous Ptolemaic rulers who have by this time been labeled

⁶ Adcock, Charlesworth, and Cook; *The Cambridge Ancient History* pgs. 144-6

⁷ From Bevan; *The House of Ptolemy* pgs. 130-1

as gods (a point which will be discussed shortly). Sarapis is, in a sense, a part of the royal family and, though not a direct part of their cult, a protector and ally in this respect. It is also important to note that Sarapis is one of only two non-Ptolemaic gods mentioned by name in that oath, and is the first of the two. The significance of the deity was incredible, and for good reason. No other Egyptian god truly encapsulated the world of Ptolemaic Egypt quite like Sarapis, as few shared the god's universal appeal with both Greeks and native Egyptians. Through Sarapis common ground could be forged, much like with the combination of Greek and native names for the gods, and it was because of this that Sarapis was raised to the status he received.⁸

With Sarapis already having the groundwork in place to appeal to both an Egyptian and Greek audience, it's not difficult to imagine why the cult's popularity boomed following its acceptance and ascendance in the Early Ptolemaic Dynasty. For a deity with the mysticism of a cult to appeal to Greeks, a preexisting standing in the native pantheon to appeal to Egyptians, and the attention of the Pharaoh, it would be all but impossible not to see a spike in devotees. This is something Ptolemy I and his successors would have been aware of when they were choosing a principal deity for their reign, and likely why they chose to enhance Sarapis. They could have chosen a Greek god such as Zeus as their principle deity, especially since he was linked to their rule through the Cult of Alexander, but to do so would mean alienating a large portion of their subjects. Had they chosen a more pure Egyptian god, however, they would have both given off an air of 'non-Greekness,' something none of the Diadochi wished to do for fear of appearing weak or seeming to renounce their homeland, and would have alienated the Greeks and Macedonians which formed the bulk of their court and a majority of their army. By choosing Sarapis, they essentially compromised with an Egyptian god possessing Greek elements which

⁸ Bevan; *The House of Ptolemy* pgs. 130-1

would appeal to most of their subjects. In this way, Sarapis was used by the Ptolemies to maintain their image while also fostering some form of intercultural bond between the two prevailing groups in Egypt at the time. Similar acceptance of deities was performed by the Seleucids in their Empire, especially in Mesopotamia, but the reasoning is the same and so in an effort to avoid repetition shall not be discussed here.⁹

Much like combined gods, it was not uncommon for divinities to move from pantheon to pantheon, slowly being accepted in multiple cultures. The most radical of these movements can be seen in Herodotus, who as previously mentioned believed the Greek gods were taken from Egypt:

“By making inquiries, I discovered that the names of the gods came to Hellas from Barbarians, and I myself concluded that they derive specifically from Egypt, for the names of the gods have been known in Egypt since the earliest times.”

(Herodotus, *The Histories* 2.50.1-2)¹⁰

Though Herodotus was incorrect in his assumption, the idea arises that the Greek Pantheon, and to some extent all religious pantheons of the age, was not a monolith with fixed parts and no room for entry. These were very much living entities, capable of change and evolution over time.

Before Alexander’s conquests, it was not unheard of to see cults moving throughout the Mediterranean; such events were common enough that the arrival of one such cult goddess is found at the beginning of Plato’s *Republic*:

⁹ Shipley, *The Greek World After Alexander* pgs. 165-6

¹⁰ From Strasser; *The Landmark Herodotus: The Histories*

“I went down yesterday to the Peiraeus with Glaucon, the son of Ariston, to pay my devotions to the Goddess, and also because I wished to see how they would conduct the festival since this was its inauguration. I thought the procession of the citizens very fine, but it was no better than the show, made by the marching of the Thracian contingent.”

(Plato, *Republic* 1.327a)¹¹

The goddess described as being “inaugurated” is believed to be Bendis, a foreign cult deity. This inclusion speaks to the relative approval of cults such as this and at least the willingness to admit new religious figures into one’s local pantheon. A culture such as this could be exploited for influence, as it was by the Ptolemies and Seleucids.

For the Ptolemies, accessing cults such as these was an easy endeavor. By this time the Egyptian Goddess Isis already had a devout following extending beyond the Nile. For example, a temple to her was founded in Piraeus in the year 333 BCE.¹² Even within the borders of Egypt, Isis managed to gather the adoration of foreigners; as described by Herodotus:

“I have already described how the one (festival) at the city of Bousiris in honor of Isis is observed, and the fact that they beat their breasts in mourning after the sacrifice... Those Carians who live in Egypt go so much further than the Egyptians in their mourning that they cut their faces with knives, and thereby reveal themselves to be foreigners, not Egyptians.”

(Herodotus, *The Histories* 2.61)

¹¹ From The Perseus Project, Tufts University

¹² Shipley, *The Greek World After Alexander* pg. 165

By the time of the Ptolemies, the cult of Isis was in a position to thrive in the more syncretic Hellenistic age, and to some extent they knew this. Rituals associated with Isis were Hellenized in this period and she was honored like Sarapis by the Ptolemaic royal family, also finding a place in their royal oath.¹³ Though it would not reach its apex until the rise of Rome, the groundwork of the cult's expansion was here in Ptolemaic Egypt. With Sarapis, her cult was extended throughout the Mediterranean. The Seleucids found a similar cult deity to export in the Syrian Goddess Atargatis. Like Isis, Atargatis was Hellenized and sent across the Mediterranean.

The reason for the success of the two goddesses can simply be an increase in travel during this period, but there can be no doubt that this was at least somewhat influenced by the ruling families themselves. Both the Seleucids and Ptolemies wished to extend their empires and influence across the Mediterranean into Greece and the other's kingdom. While this was possible to achieve through war, it was also possible through religions such as the cult of Isis and the cult of Atargatis. Both cults' Hellenization and expansion was effectuated to appeal to a wider, mainly Greek audience. Through these cults, the two empires could spread the wonders of their corners of the Near East in a way that gave the Greeks a sense of familiarity. If the intention of either empire was to eventually retake Greece or Macedon, something both kingdoms demonstrated through repeatedly meddling in the region, it would be key to normalize their current base of power to ensure they would appear Greek and not foreign; a cult such as Isis and Atargatis was the perfect means to this end.¹⁴

Though syncretism of these kinds had existed long before Alexander, the Ptolemies and Seleucids used them to decrease internal strife and expand their influence. Without their action

¹³ Bevan; *The House of Ptolemy* pgs. 130-1

¹⁴ Shipley, *The Greek World After Alexander* pgs. 165-8

these effects might have occurred naturally, but not to this scale and with such speed. Relying on the gods is only one matter, however; religion could also be used to grant high divine properties to a ruler, and therefore legitimize their claim to power.

Religion as a Justification for Power

To use religion as a justification for one's power is likely as old as power itself; many civilizations have risen with and fallen to leaders claiming such standing. It should not come as a shock, therefore, that this justification existed in the reigns of the Diadochi. Whether by claiming divine descent, being proclaimed like gods outright, or, as was often the case, a combination of both, the Successors utilized religion as a means to legitimize themselves as the true heirs to the lands over which they ruled.

Of these justifications, the more important was to claim divine descent. By doing so, the Kings or Pharaohs position themselves not only as a ruler but as a link of sorts between the people they ruled and their gods. Although this wasn't the only step necessary to secure the reign of the Ptolemies and Seleucids, it was one of the most vital. It set what would appear to be the conquerors of the land apart from any other claimant to their throne, and bestowed the legitimacy they would not be granted in any other way as foreigners.

Ptolemy I quickly understood the value of divine descent, and luckily had a means through which it could be rightfully granted. As Alexander the Great, the first Macedonian Pharaoh, was found to be descended from the god Amun by the Oracle at Siwah, Ptolemy only had to tie himself to Alexander as his true successor.¹⁵ Among other things, he produced

¹⁵ Bevan; *The House of Ptolemy* pgs.10-11

currency with the late leader's likeness¹⁶ and helped create and proliferate the Cult of Alexander, which he linked to his family. By the time his son Ptolemy II Philadelphos ruled, the family was tied to Zeus-Amun.

To do this was especially critical in Egypt. The longstanding tradition of the region held that Pharaohs were children of the gods, and had for many centuries been the link between mortal and immortal.¹⁷ The following excerpt from the beginning of a stele, written about the conquests of Thutmose III, reflects a typical example of this relationship, as well as its importance to the Egyptians:

“Thus speaks Amun-Re, Lord of the Thrones of the Two Lands:
Come to me and rejoice at the sight of my Beauty, my son, my
defender, Men-Kheper-Re (Thutmose III), who lives to eternity.”¹⁸

The Pharaoh is not an ordinary king, but a link between worlds and protector of the gods. In order to adequately fulfill those demands, the Ptolemies required divine descent. As a bonus, the ritual worked to help solidify and justify their reign.

Seleucus I also understood the benefits of connections to the gods. However, instead of attaching himself to Alexander, as was the case with Ptolemy, he claimed personal descent from Apollo. This can be seen in a decree made by a descendant, which says:

“and that the other priests and priestesses should pray together with
the priest of King Antiochus to Apollo, the Ancestor of his
family.”¹⁹

¹⁶ Shipley; *The Greek World After Alexander* pg. 64

¹⁷ Adcock, Charlesworth, and Cook; *The Cambridge Ancient History* pg. 18

¹⁸ From Simpson; *The Literature of Ancient Egypt* pg. 352

¹⁹ From Shipley; *The Greek World After Alexander* pg. 65

In some respects, this is better. To have the claim placed upon oneself means that there is no confusion about one's lineage. On the other hand, Seleucus' descent was based upon his Macedonian ancestry, and therefore held less weight over his new subjects far from his homeland.²⁰

Though divine descent is a valuable asset to any new monarch, simply being related to the gods isn't always enough to validate control. This was especially true for the Ptolemies and Seleucids, who found, in foreign lands they tried to control, that claiming descent could create a justification but could not maintain one. In order to preserve this control, they looked to ruler-cults.

A "Ruler-Cult," as shall be discussed in this chapter, refers to the adoration of a ruler (a King, Pharaoh, Emperor, etc.) during their life to the point of practical deification. In order to be considered a Ruler-Cult, the leaders receiving these honors should have been honored as gods, respected as gods, and admired as gods while they were still alive. It is important to make the distinction, however, that while they were treated as gods the focus of a Ruler-Cult was not actually considered outright divine; they were merely granted the same treatment as a divinity. This distinction is shown in a reply from the city of Skepsis to Antigonos:

"So that Antigonos may receive honors worthy of his achievements and the people should be seen to be returning thanks for the benefits it has received, let it mark off a temenos for him, build an altar, and set up a cult statue as beautiful as possible, and let the sacrifice, the competition, the wearing of the wreath, and the

²⁰ Shipley; *The Greek World After Alexander* pg. 65

rest of the festival be celebrated every {year} in his honor as they were before.”²¹

Note how the city gives him praise as though he was a god (with a festival, altar, and statue) but refrains from referring to him as a god. The fact that they focus on honoring Antigonos’ achievements as opposed to his presence is an important distinction as it keeps him on a level of humanity even though he is treated as a god. It is a vital characteristic which shows the nuances of these cults.

As in many of the Successor states, the Seleucids and Ptolemies cultivated their own Ruler-Cults. The origins of these cults are uniform across the Mediterranean and for each of the Successors. In many cases these cults were established voluntarily by cities within each ruler’s sphere of influence and were founded after a glorious military victory or major building project within or around the city. This was especially true for the Seleucids. Once the groundwork was laid down in these local cults, it was easy enough to link these honors into a more official cult on the level of a typical deity.²²

It is important to note, however, that while this was popular amongst the Greeks in the Seleucid domain, the Ruler-Cult fell flat amongst the native population. By the time Seleucus I entered the region, the major native deities were separated from physicality, being considered more cosmic to their followers. As a result, to put mortals on a level of worship similar to these entities would have seemed almost unimaginable.²³

There was a reason the custom was so quickly adopted by the Greeks, however; the tradition itself comes from Greek sources. Though many of the people given these divine tributes

²¹ From Shipley; *The Greek World After Alexander* pg. 156

²² Shipley; *The Greek World After Alexander* pgs. 157-8

²³ Adcock, Charlesworth, and Cook; *The Cambridge Ancient History* pgs. 14-5

had first died, such as Lykourgos of Sparta,²⁴ it was not impossible to have received these honors while still alive. So the Ruler-Cult of the Seleucids was established more to maintain control over the Greeks than the Empire as a whole.²⁵

In contrast, the Ptolemies used this tradition from Greece and augmented it through the traditional views of the Pharaoh. As previously stated, Pharaohs were thought of as the sons of gods. While this meant the Ptolemies required divine descent, it also meant that as Pharaohs they were guaranteed something akin to a Ruler-Cult for simply being the ruler. They took the two systems and incorporated them into each other to form a Ruler-Cult which was venerated by both Greeks and Egyptians. By doing this, they granted themselves a continuous legitimacy which worked to solidify their reign.²⁶

In either case, Ruler-Cults were established and maintained for stability and control. While claiming descent from the gods was vital to their claims to power, without these Ruler-Cults their legitimacy would have waned over time. With these cults they were able to maintain a hold in some power base they could use to retain their power throughout their lives. Yet while they were able to complete so much in life, it is only through death that they granted their heirs true legitimacy.

Deification and the Imperial-Cult

The Deification of the Rulers of the Successor States was not something out of the question either before, or at the beginning of, the Hellenistic Period. By this point deifying famous figures after death, though certainly not common, was already an established staple of

²⁴ Herodotus, *The Histories* 1.66.1

²⁵ Shipley; *The Greek World After Alexander* pgs. 158-9

²⁶ Adcock, Charlesworth, and Cook; *The Cambridge Ancient History* pgs. 14-5

myth (for example, the myth of Dionysus or of Herakles) and was granted occasionally to figures of great note.²⁷ Therefore it is not surprising that both the Seleucids and Ptolemies used this convention to set up Imperial-Cults surrounding deceased rulers.

It should be noted that “Imperial-Cults” are not to be taken as synonymous with “Ruler-Cults.” The latter is focused on a mortal who is treated like a god during their lifetime; the former is focused on the deification of these rulers after they have died. Though these cult-types may seem similar or even the same as one another, it should be stressed that they are distinctly different entities. Treating a “mortal” like a god is nothing like granting that same mortal ‘god-status’ upon death. Though the cults were regularly intertwined it is important when analyzing them to keep them apart and review both cults separately, even if they tie into one another, as is the case with the Seleucids and the Ptolemies.

For the Ptolemies, the same benefits they received to advance their Ruler-Cults, they also received for their Imperial-Cults: the Pharaohs from time immemorial were believed to become part of Osiris upon death, and through that they were already viewed as gods.²⁸ It was not a stretch to worship the dead Pharaohs as gods outright, as this was merely an extension of an already accepted practice. This is why it was so easy for Ptolemy II to quickly have his father, Ptolemy I Soter, and his last wife Berenike honored as Theoi Soteres (the Savior Gods), and why the continuation of this cult of Ptolemaic Gods continued throughout the Dynasty’s life. It also helped to solidify the reigns of future kings, seeking legitimacy as the sons of gods themselves.

In the same way, the Seleucids had similar difficulties maintaining their Imperial-Cult amongst the masses, as they found when fostering Ruler-Cults. The once mortal kings of the

²⁷ Erskine; *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* pg. 434

²⁸ Adcock, Charlesworth, and Cook; *The Cambridge Ancient History* pgs. 18-9

Seleucids were seen as royalty, but as mortals nonetheless, and as such would receive little worship from locals. Also like their Ruler-Cult, the Imperial-Cult was significantly more popular with the Greeks, as the idea was not unheard of in Greece at the time and served mainly to legitimize the Seleucid's claim to their fellow Hellenes.²⁹

From what has been said thus far, it might be tempting to believe the two cults are in fact the same. It would make sense, as they are influenced by the same factors and resulted in similar outcomes. Due to this, it must be stressed that they are not one in the same. The best way of looking at this is what functions in society each cult emphasizes. The Ruler-Cult, being centered on the living king, is meant in part to establish his legitimacy to his title. That is not why it is created, however. A Ruler-Cult is meant for the common people to feel the protection and influence of their ruler, as though he is always watching them. There is an element of physicality and realness to this Cult, and for that reason it is more effective at granting stability. The Imperial-Cult, being centered on the deceased ancestors of the reigning monarch, is meant solely to legitimize the reigning monarch's title. There is no physicality to it, as the subject of worship is treated as another god instead of an aid on earth. This is why, out of all of the royals to enter these Imperial cults, only Arsinoe was appealed to for protection; through death they shed their mortality, but also what separated them from the preexisting gods and cults of the time.³⁰ In essence, they became lost in the crowd. Their only goal was to help give legitimacy to the reigning monarch so that they could claim to be the child of gods.

This is the most common way the Ptolemies and Seleucids influenced the Hellenization of religion to suit their own ends. By adapting or introducing a system which made the ancestors

²⁹ Adcock, Charlesworth, and Cook; *The Cambridge Ancient History* pgs. 14-5

³⁰ Erskine; *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* pgs. 432-3

of these royal families outright gods, they allowed for a level of legitimization unrivaled by other possible means. It was through the influence of these Imperial-Cults that they maintained the strongest hold on their bases of power, if not the majority of their subjects, and attempted to explain why they controlled regions outside of Macedonia.

The Successors and Politics

From the moment Alexander expanded his empire beyond Greece, the political stage that would be in place for the Diadochi was altered drastically. The empire had become so massive by his death, so diverse, that incorporating some of the rituals and customs of each region into the roles of the king wasn't just important to maintaining control, it was critical. Without this integration the empire would fracture under its own weight, even if Alexander had survived. Realizing this, the young king did take steps to add certain customs to his own reign; plans cut short by his untimely death.

The Diadochi, almost all far from their homeland of Macedon, were the first to truly interact within this new political system. They would soon learn this would be no easy task, as a unilateral approach could spell doom for their young empires. If they were to rule based solely upon the system established by the Argeads, they would alienate themselves from the people over whom they ruled; if they ruled solely on local customs, however, they would instead alienate themselves from the other Successors. A balance between the Macedonian and local traditions was therefore necessary to establish a lasting political system. It was in this way that Hellenism was used to both maintain internal control and interact on an international scale. The clearest and most impactful example of this system in action was the adoption of the title "Basileus" by the Diadochi: primarily, how and when it was adopted and what the title symbolized both internally and externally.

Internal Politics and Hellenism

Within the confines of their new states, the Diadochi found themselves at a sort of impasse: they had to both be rulers of their homeland and of the lands in which they ruled. If they were to rule solely by local custom, then they would alienate the Macedonian armies which gave them power; if they ruled based on Macedonian custom alone, they risked sparking revolt by the populace. A delicate thread had to be weaved linking the two customs together, and through Hellenism this thread was made strong enough to support the Successor States.

Before they could adequately tackle this issue, however, an urgent and pressing concern had to be dealt with first: the stability of the state itself. Each of the Successors had only recently acquired their territory, and in order to ensure the survival of their states in the long term, they had to ensure internal stability was maintained in the short term. Theoretically the Diadochi could have ruled through the force of their armies, however this method would be costly, both in resources and in manpower which could be used for territorial expansion, and would cause resentment among the local populace. This is why, in multiple instances, the Diadochi elected to insert themselves in already established customs, which they would then tailor to their own customs.³¹

The Seleucids, overall, are the clearest example of this takeover of established systems. The Persian satrapy system had been established long before the arrival of the Macedonians by the Persian King Darius, as stated in Herodotus:

“Next (Darius) established twenty Satrapies...and after he had designated the provinces and the governors in charge of them, he assigned to each nation the tribute it would pay to him, organizing

³¹ Shipley, *The Greek World After Alexander* pgs. 293-4

nations together with the people on their borders, and combining more distant peoples into various single satrapies with one another.”

(Herodotus, *The Histories* 3.89.1)³²

When Alexander first arrived in Persian territory, this system had already been in place for many years and provided a stable structure to support the massive and diverse Persian Empire.

Acknowledging the system’s success, Alexander himself retained its use once the regions became Macedonian territory. When Seleucus came to power, he merely had to adopt the system Alexander left largely intact. If anything, Seleucus had an easier time adopting the system than Alexander, as by the time of his ascension many of the Satrapies, thanks to Hellenism started by Alexander, were run by Macedonians with whom he could deal more easily.³³

This is not to say, however, that all of the Seleucid officials were Macedonian, nor that that outcome was ever their goal; on the contrary, many native officials, especially those at the local level, retained their roles as power transferred from the Persians to the Macedonians. The Macedonian Seleucids were in charge, but the idea of controlling every section of a large multiethnic empire with only one group is at best untenable. In order to ensure loyalty to the state while also acting pragmatically, the Seleucids (usually through seconds like the region’s satraps) instead went to the various autonomous communities of the empire and negotiated both their political status and what was required of them by the empire as a whole. After the initial ascension of Seleucus, these negotiations were normally enacted immediately after a territory entered the empire as a means of quickly ensuring loyalty to the monarch.³⁴

³² From Strasser; *The Landmark Herodotus: The Histories*

³³ Shipley, *The Greek World After Alexander* pgs. 293-5

³⁴ Sherwin-White, *From Samarkand to Sardis* pg. 51

These negotiations weren't only applicable to individual communities, but occasionally to different groups as well. Take, for example, the treatment of the Jewish people in the Seleucid Empire as described by Josephus:

“The Jews also obtained honors from the kings of Asia when they became their auxiliaries; for Seleucus Nicator made them citizens in those cities which he built in Asia, and in the lower Syria, and in the metropolis itself, Antioch; and gave them privileges equal to those of the Macedonians and Greeks, who were the inhabitants, insomuch that these privileges continue to this very day.”

(Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 12.119)³⁵

As Josephus makes clear, the Seleucids not only kept peace by dealing with local governments, but local peoples as well. It is also important to point out that he claims they had “privileges equal to those of Macedonians and Greeks,” as opposed to merely granting citizenship. This emphasizes the lengths which the empire was willing to go to maintain order, and is a true example of Hellenistic influence. It is possible Josephus is somewhat exaggerating, but regardless even the possibility that a local group would be at the same political or social level as the ruling elites makes the case that deliberate steps were made to incorporate local elements into the empire as opposed to forcing them away.

Along with these negotiations came charters granted directly from the King, which granted traditional privileges which had existed since well before the Persians as well as acted as a show of good faith in the preservation of local customs and traditions. A good example of the power of these charters, as well as their importance in retaining local influence, can be found in the charter granted to Jerusalem by Antiochus III. It states:

³⁵ From The Perseus Project, Tufts University, Translation by William Whiston, A.M.

“Since the Jews, when we entered their country, at once displayed their enthusiasm for us...we thought it right on our part to repay them for these services...we have decided because of their piety to provide them with an allowance for sacrifice... to the value of 20,000 silver pieces...All the people of the nation shall govern themselves in accordance with their ancestral laws, and the senate, the priests, the scribes of the temple, and the temple singers shall be exempted from the poll tax, the crown tax, and the salt tax.”³⁶

While the charter grants more privileges than what is described above, these two provide a clear indication of the value of the charter, and Hellenism’s influence within it. In order to prevent strife and rebellion in a newly acquired territory, the Seleucids chose to embrace the region’s heritage and traditions to the benefit of both parties. They weren’t declaring Jerusalem an independent state, but they were acknowledging their right to rule at a local level with their own laws and customs. This practice, which was common across the empire, allowed for a merging of local practice and imperial law and decree in order to maintain a higher level of overall control. Trying to enforce one set of laws at every level, Macedonian or otherwise, over such an expansive state would have ended in failure, and so by integrating local customs and roles into the decrees and duties of the king, the empire was strengthened as a whole.

Much like the Seleucids, Ptolemy I Soter and his descendants integrated themselves into existing political customs and merely shaped them somewhat to suit their needs. In some ways this integration was seamless, benefitting from tradition engrained into Egyptian life far longer than the Persian satrapies. On the other hand, due to its ancient bearings certain elements had to be changed so that the Ptolemies might better use the system.

³⁶ From Sherwin-White, *From Samarkand to Sardis* pgs. 51-52

When the first Ptolemy gained a position of power in Egypt, he was only a Satrap. Granted, this made him the de facto leader of the region, but his power came from that of the Pharaoh, Philip Arrhidaeus (Alexander's half-brother) and later Alexander's son. As the writing was already on the wall regarding both rulers' fates, Ptolemy quickly worked to establish himself as the ruler of the Egyptians and Macedonians in Egypt in everything but name. The most important of these quick actions was the seizure of Alexander's body on its way to Macedon. The most obvious advantage of this decision was the prestige the dead king's body presented Ptolemy, but in many ways this action was a uniquely Hellenistic means of power consolidation. By bringing the Macedonian king to Egypt, he legitimized his own power amongst the Greeks and Macedonians within its borders and presented himself as a viable successor to his legacy. By returning the Egyptian Pharaoh to Egypt, and placing him in one of the old traditional capitals of Memphis no less, he started the process of connecting himself to Alexander while displaying his power and leadership to the native population. The action itself was done to begin truly unifying the Egyptians and Macedonians together under Ptolemaic leadership.³⁷

After Philip and Alexander IV finally met their untimely ends, the path was clear for Ptolemy to finally take the title of Pharaoh for himself. While he took this position of power mainly for the appeasement of the native Egyptians, the way in which he ascended showed he had an interest in the wellbeing of both Egyptians and non-Egyptians. Ptolemy began propagating the beliefs beginning to be argued by the leading philosophies of the age that power should be held by the best man- referring, of course, to himself- who would act as the savior and benefactor of all the people he ruled. Ptolemy was the defender of his land, the employer of his people, the means of justice, and a patron of arts and sciences. This is a role many of the Greeks

³⁷ Shipley, *The Greek World After Alexander* pg. 201

and Macedonians (especially those in his army and working within the bureaucracy) were more than willing to accept from Ptolemy.³⁸ This role also blended well with traditional views of the Pharaoh by the Egyptians. Ptolemy was, for all intents and purposes, establishing a new dynasty, and so as a new ruler certain benefactions were expected of him. As a result he regularly gave these benefactions to the various factions of Egyptian society, especially the priestly class.³⁹ Not only did these actions present him in a positive light to the Egyptians and create the perception that he was in fact the true successor to Alexander, they also gave credence to the philosophies he tried to propagate. The Egyptian concept of the Pharaoh also meshed well with other parts of these philosophies; for example, the Pharaoh as a defender and savior can be seen in the epithet given to Merenptah in the Israel Stela: “possessor of strength, who has slain his enemies, handsome upon the field of valor when his onslaught has succeeded.”⁴⁰ In many ways, Ptolemy utilized a blend of Egyptian tradition and Greco-Macedonian ideology to establish control within Egypt as its king.

After having gathered power, the Ptolemies would soon have to deal with the administrative system of Egypt, broken down into multiple regions commonly referred to as “Nomes.” In essence, this system was much like the satrapies: the bureaucracy and administration of Egypt was divided into various nomes, which were each run by a nomarch. These nomarchs were, in theory, appointed by the king and ran the individual nomes on his behalf; they were only powerful through him, and worked to suit the Pharaoh’s interests. In practice, however, the situation was much more complicated. Many nomarchs inherited their position, and as such had a power base of their own within this system. It is for this reason that

³⁸ Adcock, Charlesworth, and Cook; *The Cambridge Ancient History* pgs. 113-4

³⁹ Shipley, *The Greek World After Alexander* pg. 201

⁴⁰ From Simpson; *The Literature of Ancient Egypt* pg. 357

the Ptolemies were forced to alter the nomarchy system; nomarchs might behave for a time, but their power at a local level was stronger than the new foreign dynasty and this position combined with resentment over being ruled by a foreigner could quickly lead to rebellion. While the nomes were retained by the Ptolemies, the system of governance within them was altered to prevent rebellion based in part on Greek conceptions utilizing mainly Greek or Macedonian bureaucrats. The nomarch's power was divided between various new governors who attended to specific functions; the oikonomos was the nome's financial governor, for example, while its police and military issues were run by a strategos. The position of nomarch did in fact still exist, likely to avoid sparking revolt during the transition of power, but their abilities were largely undefined and they lacked the influence they once held. Each of these new positions were also loyal to the king only, another means of preventing dissent. In the alteration of nomes and nomarchs lies Hellenistic control; the Ptolemies utilized a preexisting system to ease themselves into power, but altered the system to best suit their needs and to act as rulers of both the native and non-native populations.⁴¹

Internally, many of the Successors faced an uphill battle to maintain order. To most, the Seleucids and Ptolemies included, the answer was clear: Hellenism. They inserted themselves into preexisting positions of power and influence, and through those positions they were able to either advance cultural fusion to include the new ruling class or alter the administrative structure to account for it. Hellenism wasn't only present on an internal level, however; at the international level, Hellenization was just as important to the Diadochi.

⁴¹ Adcock, Charlesworth, and Cook; *The Cambridge Ancient History* pgs. 123-4

External Politics and Hellenism

When discussing international relations in the Hellenistic age, especially when referring to the Diadochi, it is important to understand those relations as two separate but equal parts: relations with the Greek Poleis and relations with the other Successors. Both realms of interaction were unique in their own ways, and each had to be dealt with in a different manner. Due to the nature of the Diadochi's power and influence, both also required some level of Hellenism just to adequately function.

At first, discussing interaction with the Poleis as "international relations" can seem like a misnomer; officially, many of the Greek Poleis were within the boundaries of and controlled by the Successors. For realms such as Egypt and Syria this was addressed internally, where, as previously discussed, the rulers would negotiate individually with the Poleis and establish a beneficial relationship between the two.⁴² This was not the case, however, on the Greek Mainland. The Antigonids who ruled over Greece took a forceful approach on retaining control of the Greek Poleis, often forcefully establishing leaders sympathetic to Antigonid control and placing Macedonian garrisons within their cities to keep them propped up.⁴³ This worked against the Antigonids, however, and many of these Poleis would negotiate with the other Diadochi to their own benefit.

Due to the relative unimportance of the Poleis, it wasn't often that they negotiated directly with the Successors. In order to effectively promote their interests within the Successor states, it was more beneficial to instead work their way into each King's Hellenic court. The idea of a King's Court, a group of officials and individuals with whom the king deliberates and seeks

⁴² Sherwin-White, *From Samarkand to Sardis* pg. 51

⁴³ Sabin, Van Wees and Whitby, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, pg. 306

council, is by no means a Hellenic invention; the idea is possibly as old as kingship itself. The Hellenic court is, however, true to its name: an amalgam of the previous interpretations of a court into something uniquely Hellenistic. While some of the more root elements of each court was linked to the region in which the King ruled- the Ptolemies utilizing the base structure of the Egypto-Persian court, for example-many elements of the courts were taken from the Macedonian system. Many titles granted to those within the court were Macedonian in origin, such as the “Philoi,” or “Friends of the King.”⁴⁴ Also, while the classic Macedonian Companions were not universally retained, their function was in part incorporated into the court itself.⁴⁵ This meant the Hellenic Court was more in touch with the King himself, and as such was more able to advance their own agendas. This was used to great effect by the Poleis.

Now, a Polis couldn't force one of its citizens into a royal court; they were a creation of the Kings themselves and were populated on their discretion alone. That being said, most major poleis, such as Athens, regularly found their citizens entering these courts. Due to the instability of mainland Greece, the Diadochi found it beneficial to have a native of the region's major cities on hand for information and, if necessary, tactical strategy.⁴⁶ An early example of this relationship can be found in the court of Lysimachos, who ruled in Thrace. As Lysimachos fought against neighboring Successor Antigonas Monophthalmus and his son Demetrios in order to solidify his control of the region, he found it necessary to gain influence with many of the Poleis with whom they dealt, especially Athens. To aid in this effort, he brought Philippides of Kephale, an Athenian exile, into his court. Through discussions with Philippides, Lysimachos gained the information he required, but was also convinced to provide the city with generous

⁴⁴ Adcock, Charlesworth, and Cook; *The Cambridge Ancient History* pg. 116

⁴⁵ Adcock, Charlesworth, and Cook; *The Cambridge Ancient History* pg. 10-1

⁴⁶ Shipley, *The Greek World After Alexander* pg. 76

benefactions.⁴⁷ It was in this manner that Poleis and the Diadochi negotiated in a way which satisfied both parties. The interaction was facilitated by a Hellenic system, established by the Diadochi for their own benefit.

While international relations between the Poleis and Diadochi were somewhat complex, this relationship pales in comparison to the complexity of interaction between the Diadochi themselves. Each was a man who demanded absolute power, who in most cases ruled a land which was not their own, and who wished to expand their territory, and each knew the other successors felt the same way. In such a climate, lasting peace or an alliance was impossible to achieve. This did not stop the Diadochi, however, who repeatedly created alliances and negotiated with the other kings when it was in their best interest to do so; and whenever the Diadochi negotiated, there was always the shadow of Hellenism surrounding them.

The relationship one Successor had with another was not simply that of two kings. On one level, there was the reality that each was king of a separate, disparate region to their own; Ptolemy was, of course, Pharaoh of Egypt while Seleucus was, among other titles, King of Babylon. Each had to relate to each other differently because while their goals were similar their situations were not. There was, however, the uniquely Hellenistic understanding that each King was Macedonian and that they shared a common identity. Even though the Diadochi often fought with each other, there existed an underlying realization that the Successor States were interconnected with one another. It was for this reason the constantly fighting dynasties often intermarried; these were not foreign kings, but fellow Macedonians merely separated from their homeland. This idea of a foreign yet Macedonian King was central to interaction between the Diadochi, and was utilized both to justify expansion and to aid in peace. It was, in essence, a

⁴⁷ Shipley, *The Greek World After Alexander* pg. 47-8

Hellenic approach to international relations undertaken to suit the interests of the Successors.⁴⁸

This concept also led to an idea which was birthed from Hellenism to solidify the rules of the Diadochi: The Hellenic interpretation of “Basileus.”

The Title “Basileus” in Hellenic Politics

Truly one of the most unique aspects of the Successor States was their use of the title of “Basileus,” the Greek word for King. Monarchy itself was not wholly uncommon in the Greek world, and the Argead Dynasty which had ruled Macedonia up until Alexander the Great’s death was a Monarchy itself. Therefore, using the title Basileus would not have been a surprising outcome for the Diadochi. What is surprising, and uniquely Hellenistic, is the way the title was interpreted and what that interpretation meant for the politics of the Hellenistic age.

The Argead Monarchy was not the same as those of the east which Alexander would come to conquer. It was a hereditary system and gave its king absolute power, but until the rise of Philip and Alexander it was largely decentralized. The consequence of this lies in the Argead ties to the Macedonian nobles and Army. It was understood that the King was in control, but in times of crisis in leadership it was the army which decided who ruled. Nobles of Macedon often travelled with the King as Companions and bodyguards, discussing with him matters of interest and importance. Though the Argeads ruled absolutely in theory, in practice there were expectations which limited their power.⁴⁹

When the Diadochi took power in their respective states, there was a disparity between the type of king expected in the lands they ruled and the Macedonians which largely made their base of support. If they were to fully abandon the Macedonian concept of Kingship, they would

⁴⁸ Sabin, Van Wees and Whitby, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, pgs. 304-5

⁴⁹ Adcock, Charlesworth, and Cook; *The Cambridge Ancient History* pg. 9

cause resentment among the expats which followed them, especially those within their army. They also wanted to retain a claim to Macedon itself to justify any endeavors to return. To solve both problems in one fell swoop, the Diadochi adopted the term Basileus in a new light.

“Basileus” by itself simply means king. There are no additional specifications on the title without one being explicitly applied. By only adopting the title as “Basileus,” the Diadochi were not simply maintaining their control over their own territory or affirming their dominance to the other Successors; they were establishing a new interpretation of monarchy. By claiming themselves as Basileis, they didn’t call themselves the King of the land in which they actually ruled; in most cases they did take local titles to establish their control, but those were separate and meant mainly for the dominion of the native population. As a Basileus, they had no boundaries to their kingdoms. Their rule was created and justified solely by conquest and overall military success and the title reflected that reality.⁵⁰ They were not claiming to be the King of Egypt or the King of Macedon; they were claiming to be the King of all they could command.

In terms of political strategy, this is an intelligent maneuver for three reasons. First, by claiming this title the Diadochi were able to officially ascend to power without causing friction with their armies. It made clear that the kings were in power due to the strength and commitment of their soldiers, emphasizing that the influence of the armies held with the Argeads would not decline with the Successors. As if to drive this point home, it was only after a great Military victory that the first of the Diadochi, Antigonus Monophthalmus, was able to claim the title.⁵¹ Second, because this title essentially stated the bearer was King of whatever they could get their hands on, it opened the door not only for expansion in whatever ways each ruler saw fit, but also

⁵⁰ Billows, *Antigonus the One-Eyed*, pgs. 159-60

⁵¹ Billows, *Antigonus the One-Eyed*, pgs. 156-8

for the potential reconquering of Macedon. As simply a “Basileus,” the King hadn’t rescinded their claim to the entirety of Alexander’s former empire and could therefore still have a legitimate justification for conquest among its former territories.⁵² Third, it allowed for effective negotiations between the Diadochi. Each Successor lived with the belief that they were the inheritor of Alexander’s legacy and the reality that they shared that belief with the other Diadochi. None of them could adequately claim a connection to the Argeads, and most of them rose to power outside of Macedon, so there was no way to ultimately prove their own legitimacy or dispute the legitimacy of the others. By adopting the title “Basileus,” the Successors reconciled their beliefs with the realities of the Hellenistic world in a way which avoided antagonizing the other Diadochi.⁵³

The Title of Basileus is a wonderful example of the use of Hellenization in the politics of the Diadochi. The title itself was a mesh of previous monarchic philosophies and traditions married to the inherent realities of a ruler without a homeland. Internally, it was used to abate potential resentment and begin a unification of native and Macedonian populations under a single ruler. Externally, it was used as a justification for expansion and a means of expressing power to the other Diadochi in a realistic manner.

⁵² Chaniotis, *War in the Hellenistic World*, pg. 57

⁵³ Billows, *Antigonus the One-Eyed*, pgs. 159-60

The Successors and Warfare

War is an inseparable element of the Hellenistic world. It was through the Wars of Alexander that its scope was realized; it was through war that the Diadochi established their kingdoms; it was through war the Successor States maintained their influence and jockeyed for power; it was through war that each state was destroyed or fell into ruin. War is as much a part of the lineage of the Successors as their ties to Alexander. Therefore, it makes no sense to discuss the means by which the Successors utilized Hellenism to their advantage without also at least touching upon a vital component of the age they ruled.

The ways in which the Successor States waged war was forever altered by Hellenism. Being in a unique position, the Diadochi and their descendants managed to retain the core of the Macedonian system while also incorporating newer technologies and strategies to improve their chances in battle. Maintaining this mix of old and new was critical, as it allowed the kings to appease their power base and continually evolve how they waged war to better compete with their rivals. This necessity also stemmed from the understanding that war was one of the central justifications of their rule. The reality that theirs were kingdoms won by the spear mixed with cultural foundations present in both Macedonian and more native beliefs, and produced an ideology which charged the Successors to prove themselves and their role as legitimate on the field of battle. War was not only a means to gain power or resources, but to support the relationship between the King and both his army and his people.

The Hellenization of the Army and its Benefits to the King

The Hellenization of the Diadochi's armies was as rapid as it was necessary. Though their armies were originally part of Alexander's, and as such shared many of its tactics and organization, it was clear that this could not be sustained. New, varied sources of recruitment were opened to the Diadochi upon ascending to power, and each realized in their own way that these sources must be exploited to prevent the others from gaining an advantage. As such, tactics and weaponry began to change in order to best utilize these new recruits. While strong vestiges of the old system still remained, the armies of the Successors were forever altered.

The first source of recruitment the Hellenistic kings wished to exploit was, of course, their own subjects. This was done to varying degrees by each of the Successors, but was attempted in some fashion by each. The Seleucids, having a large territory full of numerous ethnic groups, commanded one of the most diverse armies of the age. As recounted by Livy, the forces of Antiochus III when he fought against the Romans at Magnesia was incredibly diverse; included in his army were, among many other groups, "infantry armed in the Macedonian fashion," Medes, "Mysian archers," "Cyrtians, slingers, and Elymaeans, archers," and Syrians.⁵⁴ The benefits of such an approach can be seen in two ways. Militarily, such a force would gain a numerical advantage over its enemies, especially those who recruited mainly from only certain groups or relied more on mercenaries. Politically, by providing military service the Seleucid's subjects were proving loyalty and fealty to the Seleucid King. In either case, the Seleucids profited from the inclusion of their subjects into the army and so promoted it.

⁵⁴ Livy, *The History of Rome*, 37.40.6-14, From The Perseus Project, Tufts University

This is directly opposed by the Ptolemies, who lacked such inclusion. In the Ptolemaic army, there were few positions in which native Egyptians could actively participate. The main role an Egyptian could take in the army was in the Machimoi, the remnant of the true Egyptian army used in earlier periods. On land, this group was normally relegated to transportation, only being called into action in times of crisis. They did, however, act as the bulk of the Ptolemies' standing navy, working as marines in mostly Egyptian-rowed vessels. After a century or so, out of desperation, their power was eventually expanded and they were used more frequently, but that was never the intention of the Ptolemies and was largely out of their control.⁵⁵ This approach was mainly taken out of necessity. The Ptolemies were untrusting of the Egyptians, but still wished to appease the warrior class which had existed there for centuries. The role of the Machimoi in the Ptolemaic army was a compromise between their inherent distrust of their subjects and need for stability. Hellenization still occurred, but it was at the pace of the King to the King's benefit.

Another major source exploited by the Successors was an influx of mercenaries which rose in the beginning of the Hellenistic period. In the century or so before the rise of the Diadochi, the Mediterranean found itself host to several major wars. These wars not only destroyed farmland, but many cities and even states. As a result, there were many men left to drift without home or suitable work, and so they became mercenaries. When the Diadochi finally came to power they needed large quantities of soldiers to help fight their wars, beyond what their armies could provide. The high supply of Mercenaries met these equally high demands well, and many were contracted to fight for the Successors.⁵⁶ By supplementing their forces with mercenaries, the Diadochi not only grew their strength but also allowed for greater specialization

⁵⁵ Adcock, Charlesworth, and Cook; *The Cambridge Ancient History* pgs. 117-9

⁵⁶ Chaniotis, *War in The Hellenistic World*, pgs. 80-1

which would aid them in battle. In fact, specialization was the advantage many mercenaries gave to an army over their standard troops; well-known groups such as Cretan archers were in high demand for their prowess, as they provided an edge that was difficult to replicate with other soldiers.⁵⁷ It was the inclusion of mercenaries into the armies which ultimately required them to combine new and old tactics with those of Alexander's, truly bringing Hellenism into warfare through the melding of different strategies and techniques.

Weapons and strategies of Non-Macedonian origin found their way swiftly into the Successor's armies. The war elephant, first adopted by Alexander, became a staple of Hellenic warfare. They were common in most battles of the period, either as African elephants commonly used by the Ptolemies or Indian elephants often utilized by the Seleucids. They were used by any army able to procure some, and added a new, unique element to warfare which each army worked to implement to their best advantage.⁵⁸ Other technologies and strategies were implemented on a more individual level. For example, the scythed chariot, a Near Eastern invention, was first adopted by Seleucus I and was a common weapon in the Seleucid army at its inception. Being a traditional weapon, it was used almost exclusively by the Seleucids and as a result became a unique factor in how the Seleucids waged war.⁵⁹

The armies of the Successors needed to alter the ways in which they waged war to survive. While relying on traditional methods and tactics would work for a time, the precarious position of the Diadochi and the desire to outpace their rivals quickly led to the Hellenization of their armies as a means of gaining an edge. This is not to say, however, that the entire army was affected by this sweeping change; one section of the army remained purely Macedonian.

⁵⁷ Sabin, Van Wees and Whitby, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, pgs. 343-4

⁵⁸ Sabin, Van Wees and Whitby, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, pgs. 347-8

⁵⁹ Bar-Kochva, *The Seleucid Army*, pgs. 83-4

The Macedonian Phalanx and the Limits of Hellenism

Despite needing to evolve in order to reflect the resources of each region, the armies of the Successor States generally remained reminiscent of the Macedonian structure utilized by Philip and Alexander. This is not to say that the Successors merely copied the Macedonian system, of course; had Alexander the Great fought Antiochus I, he would have found an army as much inspired by the Persians as the Macedonians. Where he would find the most similarities, however, would be in the central force of Antiochus' troops, and the cornerstone of every Successor's army: the Macedonian Phalanx.

The Macedonian Phalanx was a construction of Philip II, and is by all means a marvel of ancient military strategy. Soldiers in this formation were fashioned with a sarissa, an incredibly long spear that could extend anywhere from 12 to 24 feet, and a small shield.⁶⁰ These men were then arranged in files of approximately 16 each, a formation known by the traditional title of "dekas," which were themselves combined into larger formations.⁶¹ The long spears of the Phalanx were used to either outrange more traditional infantrymen or to keep them at bay until another contingent, such as the cavalry, could outflank them. They were by all means a valuable addition to any army of the time, so it is no surprise that the Successors retained their use into the Hellenistic age. What is important is how they viewed the Phalanx, the repercussions of that decision, and its showcase on the limits of Hellenism.

With few exceptions the soldiers within a Macedonian Phalanx were of Macedonian origin, to the point where records often refer to Phalanx contingents as simply "Macedonians."⁶² Phalangites at first came from the army of Alexander itself, but later were recruited from

⁶⁰ Sabin, Van Wees and Whitby, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, pg. 329

⁶¹ Sabin, Van Wees and Whitby, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, pgs. 336-7

⁶² Bar-Kochva, *The Seleucid Army*, pg. 54

numerous sources depending upon the state in question. The Antigonids, who controlled Macedon, obviously had little trouble finding Macedonians for the army; the rest, however, resorted to other methods. Many of the Diadochi established systems for colonization in order to attract Macedonians. Ptolemy, wanting to expand his army in the long term, gave land grants to colonists in a nome near the Delta in exchange for military service, which was passed from father to son with the grant. Seleucus was in a relatively unique position; while he also provided steps for colonization, he benefitted from the numerous colonies of Macedonian soldiers already established by Alexander and so had a more stable base from which to pull in times of war.⁶³ While the Successors did find ways to attract Macedonians to serve in their Phalanx, such actions beg the question of why such measures had to be taken in the first place. To do so is not only strategically limiting, but creates an artificial fragility which could collapse the whole army.

There are few militaristic benefits to keeping the Phalanx purely Macedonian. The most glaring issue is that by limiting the Phalanx to only a subset of the total population limits the overall amount of troops one can deploy at any given time. The Phalangites were far from the only soldiers stationed on the battlefield, but they were a key part of wartime strategy; they were often the largest corps in each army, and were at the center of every major Hellenistic battle.⁶⁴ Limiting recruitment to only those of Macedonian stock actively hindered the Successors' when raising their armies.

Another concern this practice causes is the problem of artificial fragility. Imagine two Hellenistic armies coming together to fight a large battle. Both Kings are young and eager to fight, and have placed a large amount of faith in their Macedonian Phalanx. As the battle

⁶³ Sabin, Van Wees and Whitby, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, pgs. 334-5

⁶⁴ Bar-Kochva, *The Seleucid Army*, pg. 54

commences, the elephants and cavalry of one army begin to take sizable advantages over those of the other, and its King believes he will win the day. These advantages left his Phalanx exposed, however, and because the King expects success he does not return. The Phalanx itself starts to become overwhelmed by that of the enemy, and so retreats. Forced to retreat as well, he sees his infantry routed by the enemy as they fall back. Noting the casualties suffered by his Phalanx, he elects to sue for peace instead of risking the remainder. This scenario depicts the Battle of Raphia, one of the largest of the Hellenistic age, fought between Antiochus III and Ptolemy IV.⁶⁵ Antiochus, the King who lost the battle, originally boasted an infantry of 62,000, 20,000 of which were Phalangites.⁶⁶ By the end of this battle he had lost around 10,000 of his infantrymen, a sizable number of whom can be expected to be from the routed Macedonian Phalanx.⁶⁷ This battle, and many others like it from this period, displays the major issue of a purely Macedonian Phalanx: whatever is destroyed is difficult to replace efficiently. Major battles required the largest pools of manpower that could be mustered by each side; since the Phalanx was an integral part of Hellenistic warfare, this meant everyone capable of fighting was called upon, with few if any left in reserve based on sheer necessity. This meant battles required caution and careful planning, lest an entire generation of soldiers die in one faulty campaign.⁶⁸ If the losing side is badly outmaneuvered or, as in the case of the Battle of Raphia, led by an inexperienced king who makes a strategic blunder, the Phalanx could suffer massive casualties from which it could take years to recover. The system in place was fragile not due to the nature of the Phalanx, which, even with its own flaws, is still a formation which can be learned by anyone given the time and correct weaponry. The limited pool of recruitment for such a vital

⁶⁵ Polybius, *Histories*, 5.83-7, From The Perseus Project, Tufts University

⁶⁶ Polybius, *Histories*, 5.79, From The Perseus Project, Tufts University

⁶⁷ Polybius, *Histories*, 5.86, From The Perseus Project, Tufts University

⁶⁸ Sabin, Van Wees and Whitby, *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Warfare*, pg. 336

component of the army made them equivalent to glass cannons; certainly large and powerful, but easily crippled should the right scenario present itself.

Why, then, was the Phalanx never Hellenized? It is possible to say that the reason lies in mistrust between the ruling Macedonians and the native populations from which they could recruit; if they armed the native population, they could theoretically rise against the Macedonians. While that sentiment is true, and was likely a part of the reason why the Phalanx was mainly Macedonian, it can't be the full reason. This is because, at times, native populations were occasionally equipped and trained in Phalanx formation. Looking again to the Battle of Raphia, Polybius notes that before the battle, in the Egyptian army:

They also armed three thousand Libyans in the Macedonian fashion, who were commanded by Ammonius of Barce. The Egyptians themselves supplied twenty thousand soldiers to the phalanx, and were under the command of Sosibius.

(Polybius, *Histories*, 5.65)⁶⁹

It wasn't unknown for non-Macedonians to fight in a Phalanx, albeit in separate contingents. While it is rare, it shows that given the right circumstances the Successors would be willing to arm their subjects in heavy weaponry. What, then, is the main reason the Phalanx was not Hellenized? It helped appease the King's Macedonian power base.

The Macedonian Phalanx is the clearest example that, while Hellenism did not begin at the discretion of the Successors, it did in fact end at their discretion. Militarily, Hellenizing the Phalanx by introducing non-Macedonian elements would solve many of the problems which plagued its Hellenistic incarnations. It was more valuable to the rulers as an unchanged, purely

⁶⁹ From The Perseus Project, Tufts University

Macedonian tradition, however, and so unhellenized it remained. As discussed in the prior chapter on Politics, it was important to the Successors to retain a strong relationship with their Macedonian subjects; they were invaders ruling a foreign land, and the Macedonians were the base from which they could pull the most reliable loyalty. The Phalanx was an integral part of Hellenistic warfare, and as such was an important position to hold. It was also the largest faction of the army, and so held some level of power from the vestiges of Macedonian Kingship adopted by the Diadochi. By ensuring this contingent was only populated by loyal Macedonians, the King promoted favoritism of the Macedonians in an effort to stabilize his power base. This isn't only seen in the Phalanx, either; other important posts in the army, such as the King's personal Bodyguards, were almost exclusively Macedonian as well.⁷⁰

The Successors encouraged Hellenism in many facets to boost their control and influence, but they were just as willing to limit its growth when it best suited their interests. With the Phalanx, we see a major section of the army intentionally spared the touch of Hellenism to support the Kings' power base; a political move meant to retain control in a foreign land. Yet why was the Military so important to the Kings, and how did that impact their utilization of Hellenism?

War as a Justification for Rule

The very foundations of the Successor States were created and maintained by War. It was war that gave each king his kingdom, and war which allowed him to maintain it. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that war was seen as a legitimizing factor for each Diadochi's rule. The reasons for this view can be found in more than just the reality of a conqueror proving his worth

⁷⁰ Adcock, Charlesworth, and Cook; *The Cambridge Ancient History* pg. 117

to his subjects. The legacy of Alexander always overshadowed their own, and his role and renown had a marked effect on how the Successors reacted to warfare. Not only that, but the relationship of the King to his army was still one of mutual necessity, meaning in order to retain power a Successor had to prove legitimacy to their army through battle. Each of these reasons impacted the Diadochi's view of Hellenism differently, and as a result helped shape how it was utilized.

To truly understand the relationship between warfare and the Successors, one must first look to the inception of their power. In the beginning each of the Diadochi was merely part of Alexander's great army, and in their lifetime saw a conquest of territory never before seen. After his sudden death, they then amassed their own forces out of Alexander's and fought for control of kingdoms within these conquered lands. If it were not for great wars, both that of Alexander and those they fought afterwards, the Diadochi would merely be nobility in a kingdom north of Greece instead of kings. It was by right of war, not of birth or claim, that they held their power, something each was acutely aware of; only after a great military victory by his son did the first Successor, Antigonos Monophthalmus, even try to declare himself Basileus even though he held the power in all but name.⁷¹ The Diadochi owed all they were to war, and this relationship would be carried throughout the Hellenistic period by their descendants. Given this connection, it isn't difficult to understand why the Diadochi expended so much effort diversifying and specializing their armies, or why they attracted Macedonians and Greeks to colonize their land in exchange for military service; their position was precarious, and they needed to constantly prepare for inevitable wars which would challenge their power both internally and externally.

⁷¹ Billows, *Antigonos the One-Eyed*, pgs. 156-8

While their inception was a major factor in how they viewed warfare, and as a result how they viewed Hellenism, another influence affected how they viewed their role in war: the legacy of Alexander. To have claimed such a vast territory in such a small stretch of time is no small feat, and one the Diadochi and their descendants tried to connect themselves to often. They saw Alexander as both a model and, in some cases, a predecessor, and this shaped their interactions with war and their armies. Alexander was known to have lead his forces into battle, even against the objections of his officers. Plutarch writes, of his fight with Darius at the River Granicus:

[Alexander] declared that the Hellespont would blush for shame, if, after having crossed that strait, he should be afraid of the Granicus, and plunged into the stream with thirteen troops of horsemen... While Alexander's cavalry were making such a dangerous and furious fight, the Macedonian phalanx crossed the river and the infantry forces on both sides engaged. The enemy, however, did not resist vigorously, nor for a long time, but fled in a rout, all except the Greek mercenaries.

(Plutarch, *Alexander*, 16.2-6)⁷²

In this battle, like many others, Alexander charged into battle ahead of his soldiers and through a mixture of distraction and awe helped rout the enemy's army. Compare this depiction to that of Ptolemy IV by Polybius in the Battle of Raphia:

Meanwhile Antiochus was assisting in gaining the victory on his right wing; while Ptolemy, who had retired behind his phalanx, now came forward in the centre, and showing himself in the view of both armies struck terror in the hearts of the enemy, but inspired great spirit and enthusiasm in his own men; and Andromachus and Sosibius at once ordered them to lower their sarissae and charge.

⁷² From The Perseus Project, Tufts University

The picked Syrian troops stood their ground only for a short time,
and the division of Nicarchus quickly broke and fled.

(Polybius, *Histories*, 5.85)

In both, the king fights at the front of his army, and leads them to victory. This idea of a king, as the one leading his forces into battle, was common among the Successors. Many of them suffered wounds due to combat, and some, like Seleukos II, even fell in battle. The benefits in combat were clear, as it boosted morale and demoralized the enemy in the right circumstances, but it was seen more as a risk of Kingship than a military strategy.⁷³ If a king led his army to victory, all the better, but the greater point was emulation; in evoking Alexander's legacy in the field of battle, the Successor attempts to become like him, and to share in his success and glory. They wished to copy his achievements, to push their own boundaries to be the new Alexander, and it was for this reason they tried to expand their influence and continued to wage war against one another. Hellenism was a tool like any other to help reach this goal, using what was available to best fight their rivals and maintain control.

The last major impact on the relationship between the Successors and Warfare was a holdover of Macedonian origin. The monarchies the Successors most drew from-the Macedonians, Persians, and Egyptians- all held strong beliefs that the King was in command of the army. The Macedonian tradition, however, had a closer connection between the King and his army which bled into Hellenistic kingship. Many of the "Philoi" which were a part of his inner circle were commanders and military advisors, and he worked with them often. On the other hand, the army could make the difference between who ascended the throne and who was labeled a pretender and killed, as when Demetrios was labeled King of Macedon after killing Alexander

⁷³ Chaniotis, *War in The Hellenistic World*, pg.61

V.⁷⁴ The Successors were nothing without their armies, and this reflects most how Hellenism was utilized in warfare. They were willing to augment their forces with newer traditions, weapons, and soldiers, but the bulk of their army had to, by necessity, be a group they could trust implicitly: hence the major value towards the Macedonian Phalanx. While this was not an assurance of stability, the limits of Hellenism in warfare are linked to the Successors' reliance on their armies for legitimacy and the correct justification for their rule.

The Diadochi and their descendants rose to prominence, maintained their status, and fell to ruin by the spears of war. They found in war a legitimizing force and justification for their power, and so it shaped how they approached most things, especially Hellenism. In one manner, they saw it as a vital tool with which they could grow their armies and their power. In another, they saw it as a means of granting larger power to the native populations, and therefore something to be limited. In either case, Hellenism was utilized or prevented at the Successor's discretion, finding a place in war only where it would provide the clearest advantages to their rule.

⁷⁴ Chaniotis, *War in The Hellenistic World*, pgs. 62-6

The Successor States and Cities

While much emphasis is placed on the overarching empires of the Hellenistic age, the period can be defined as much by its relation to cities as it can to states. From sprawling palatial capitals used as the seats of power, to ancient Metropoles retaining relevance in a new age, to even infant cities newly risen from the earth preparing to set their mark on history, cities of all types are of great importance to understanding the Hellenistic world. None would agree more with this sentiment than the Successors, who regularly negotiated with the cities within their empires and authorized the creation of new ones as they saw fit. So frequently did they deal with cities that it isn't difficult to believe that they would utilize Hellenism to ease these interactions.

To best understand the use of Hellenism in the cities of the Hellenistic period, one must look from the perspectives of new cities, those built in the Hellenistic age, and old cities, which were built before. Many cities and towns were built by the Diadochi and their successors, from Thrace to as far east as Persia and as far south as Egypt. These numerous cities were in many ways very alike in construction and reflected Hellenistic themes. The experience of older cities in this period could vary from empire to empire and even from city to city, with some experiencing little Hellenistic influence while others were altered by it completely. However, whether it be as miniscule as adding a theatre or Gymnasium or as expansive as a complete reconstruction, no city in the Hellenistic world was spared from the touch of Hellenism, due in large part to the Successors.

City Planning in the Hellenistic World

A new city under construction requires three important factors: a proper location where it can thrive, a citizenry to populate it, and a large amount of capital with which it can be built. In the Hellenistic period there were enough people wandering without a home to fill dozens of cities, as well as many prime locations where they could be built, and so as part of their efforts to attract mercenaries and Macedonians for their armies the Successors delved into their large royal treasuries and funded the construction of new cities across their empires. The Successors had a hand in many parts of the construction of these cities, and it was through their interference that Hellenism influenced city planning.

The first area of construction the Successors involved themselves with was location. A city's location is everything; it could be the difference between a thriving metropolis and a rundown settlement. When the Successors planned a settlement, they made sure it was placed in a location that would help it thrive. Many of these new cities were positioned along major thoroughfares and trade routes for just this reason; a city along these routes would be guaranteed traffic and trade, and as an added bonus could help police and protect these transit routes for the Kings.⁷⁵ This was especially true for the imperial capitals. Seleucia-on-The-Tigris, a major Seleucid capital, was positioned so that it would connect by the Tigris to Arabia and India, and by a canal to Babylon and the Euphrates, thereby linking it to Syria and the Mediterranean.⁷⁶ Alexandria was so well positioned along the coast of Egypt that within a generation or so of its construction it had already attracted a massive enough influx of trade and immigrants to become

⁷⁵ Kosmin, *The Land of The Elephant Kings*, pgs. 190-2

⁷⁶ Kosmin, *The Land of The Elephant Kings*, pg. 187

one of the largest and wealthiest cities in the Greek World.⁷⁷ Trade and travel were not the only determinants of a city's location, however; some were constructed for the ease of the King, and it is in these cities where Hellenism's influence can be best discussed in location planning.

When Seleucus I gained power in the former Persian Empire, he built many cities. Appian attributes over 30 cities to Seleucus alone, including "sixteen of them Antioch after his father, five Laodicea after his mother, nine after himself, and four after his wives."⁷⁸ He also retained under his control many great cities of earlier ages, including Babylon. When setting the locations for many of his new cities, Seleucus appears to have made a conscious effort to migrate political influence and administrative power away from these former centers towards those of his own creation. In effect, he reshaped the political landscape away from the Persian capitals towards new cities based on their location. These cities were often placed on traditionally marginalized zones, meaning the shift was done more as a show of influence than an act of necessity.⁷⁹ It also worked to remove the power of these established centers, making them more dependent on and therefore reliable to the king. This can be seen with Babylon and its Seleucid rival, Seleucia-on-the-Tigris. Babylon's power and influence did not completely diminish, but it was certainly drained by having such an important city built nearby.⁸⁰ This shift was solidified by Antiochus I, who moved Babylon's Macedonian population to Seleucia, effectively curtailing any major administrative presence it could've held in the region.⁸¹ In the positioning of these cities, Hellenism was a factor inasmuch that it adds a purely Graeco-Macedonian element into Seleucid Administration. The administration utilized by the Seleucids was based off of

⁷⁷ Erskine; *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* pg. 251

⁷⁸ Appian, *The Syrian Wars*, 57, From the Perseus Project, Tufts University

⁷⁹ Kosmin, *The Land of The Elephant Kings*, pgs. 186-7

⁸⁰ Erskine; *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* pg. 198

⁸¹ Kosmin, *The Land of The Elephant Kings*, pg. 193

Achaemenid practices, but would be based in cities of Seleucid design. This, of course, brings up the actual construction of the cities themselves and how that relates to Hellenism.

In the Classical period, a style of city planning was developed based on a simplistic grid design. Called the “Hippodamian town plan,” it was formed on a rectangular grid and based around ease of mobility, both internally and externally.⁸² It was also easy to learn and build, meaning whoever commissioned the city didn’t have to supervise every detail of its construction. While this plan was a common sight in the Greek world, however, it was virtually unseen in the Near East until the rise of the Successors. Upon their ascension, virtually every new city constructed within their realms utilized the Hippodamian plan. Even major cities were built with the plan in mind: Seleucia-on-the-Tigris, for example, was divided into urban sections based on this design which spanned 140 meters by 70 meters, the largest of the ancient world.⁸³

The Hippodamian town plan is Hellenism in its purest state: a Graeco-Macedonian concept unknown in other regions brought to them in the Hellenistic age. As in many instances, the influence of Hellenism in this case was brought about for the sake of the Successors as they saw fit. Especially in the case of Seleucus, the Successors built many cities throughout their lifetimes. The adoption of the Hippodamian plan was not done mainly out of a desire for greekness, but to ease the burden of the Kings. The Hippodamian plan not only allows for consistency of production, a useful trait when building multiple cities over a short period of time, but also comes with a set of expectations about important details such as general layout and size, which meant the kings did not have to constantly manage construction and could therefore focus their attention on other projects. The use of the plan in Hellenic city construction isn’t just a good

⁸² Erskine; *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* pgs. 199-200

⁸³ Kosmin, *The Land of The Elephant Kings*, pgs. 202-5

example of Hellenism, but of the ways in which Hellenism was utilized to the Successors' advantage.

As in many aspects of the Hellenistic period, Hellenism is present within the realm of city planning. It influenced location based around divesting older administrative hubs of their power. It influenced construction through the Hippodamian Plan, a blueprint for construction of Greek origin brought to the Near East by the Diadochi. This influence did not stop with new cities, however. No settlement, big or small, was spared the syncretic touch of Hellenism.

Older settlements in the Hellenistic World

In the Hellenistic World, to avoid Hellenization was near impossible. Many cities, towns, and settlements were vastly changed by its influence. Some, but not many, only saw minor changes. In either case, its effects cannot be denied; nor can its encouragement by the Successors. Through Graeco-Macedonian settlement and building projects, among other methods, the Diadochi and their descendants worked to mesh the Greek and Native worlds over which they ruled.

As stated prior, the beginning of the Hellenistic age saw many exiles roam the Mediterranean without a home. Many of these wanderers were welcomed by the Diadochi, and they were settled within their empires. While many were settled into new cities, others were sheltered in older communities. The most prolific example of this tactic was done by the Ptolemies in Egypt. Unlike some of the other Diadochi, and especially Seleucus, Ptolemy I only established one city, Ptolemais, and it was meant more for administration than resettlement. The vast majority of settlers arriving in Ptolemaic Egypt were instead granted allotments of farmland, called *Kleroi*, within already existing Egyptian villages. In these villages, the Egyptians and

Graeco-Macedonian settlers lived more-or-less together and so Hellenized many Egyptian towns.⁸⁴ Philadelphia, one of the more patronized foreign-native villages, was known to have a Greek theatre, stoa, and gymnasium, as well as temples to both Egyptian and Greek gods.⁸⁵ By attracting mercenaries with farmland, the Ptolemies sparked a growth of Hellenism within their kingdom which helped solidify and normalize their reign. There are other examples of the Diadochi settling Greeks and Macedonians into native cities for similar reasons; Seleucus I even built some of his new cities around preexisting native towns, such as what became known as Demetrias (modern day Damascus).⁸⁶ There are also examples of native populations being forced out of their original homes and into new cities for the same purpose, such as when Antiochus I forced the Phrygians of Celaenae to move to his new foundation, Apameia.⁸⁷ This coexistence was an intentional action meant to foster Hellenism within each Successor's Kingdom, through which they could stabilize their power and help foster loyalty.

Other cities, notably powerful and entrenched ones, managed to largely divert the wave of Hellenism from their borders. They could not, however, remove its influence completely. The most notable of these cities is Babylon, which was one of the oldest and most powerful cities of the Near East before the arrival of the Diadochi. After Seleucus and his descendants took power, Babylon's influence wavered and some Greek elements entered the city. A Greek theatre was built, and the city as a whole was flooded with Greek pottery and amphorae.⁸⁸ In many other areas, however, Greek influence was expressly rejected; new temples, for example, were based

⁸⁴ Erskine; *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* pg. 251

⁸⁵ Erskine; *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* pg. 255

⁸⁶ Kosmin, *The Land of The Elephant Kings*, pgs. 203-4

⁸⁷ Strabo, *Geography*, 12.8.15, From Perseus Project, Tufts University

⁸⁸ Sherwin-White, *From Samarkand to Sardis* pg. 156

on the more traditional Babylonian style.⁸⁹ Memphis, an ancient Egyptian city, is another example of this limited Hellenism in action; though well patronized by the Ptolemies, its temples were also constructed in a traditional style.⁹⁰ Other, less influential cities found it more difficult to reject Hellenistic influence. Many older cities had their names changed by the Successors to a Macedonian or Greek name, normally after a dynastic namesake though occasionally after an existing city in the Greek world. The most striking example of this influence can be seen in Uruk, which was renamed “Antioch-on-the-Ishtar-Canal”⁹¹ despite having almost no Greek presence aside from the occasional interaction with Seleucid Administration.⁹² The Hellenism within these cities was not as grand or all-encompassing as in other cities, but its presence is just as important. The influence in these cities, directed by the Kings themselves, was a statement more than a means of integration. The power and influence of the Kings was shown by the influence of Hellenism in these cities, and even a small amount of that influence showed the diminishment of traditional systems as the power of the Successors was augmented. A city largely ignored by a King could revolt, as Thebes did in 207/6 BCE,⁹³ and so the reach of Hellenism could be seen as a marker of the Kings’ control of the older and more established cities.

Settlements and Cities which had existed before the rise of the Diadochi felt the presence of Hellenism in different ways. Towns and smaller cities were Hellenized through colonization, and ended up merging seamlessly native and foreign traditions. Larger cities, especially those with an ancient history and culture behind them, saw only minimal Hellenization, but even the

⁸⁹ Sherwin-White, *From Samarkand to Sardis* pg. 149

⁹⁰ Erskine; *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* pg. 259

⁹¹ Erskine; *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* pg. 198

⁹² Sherwin-White, *From Samarkand to Sardis* pg. 149

⁹³ Erskine; *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* pg. 259

small amount within their borders show the extent Hellenism played in the influence of the Successors. Big or small, wealthy or impoverished, ancient or newly-founded, every city in the Hellenistic world was influenced to some degree by Hellenism. This was done by the order of the Successors, and always, as in many other areas, for their benefit.

Conclusion

As this examination has shown, the Diadochi and their Successors utilized Hellenism in many ways to consolidate their power and advance their rule. In their position of uncertainty, they looked to the melding of native customs and their own to justify their power, ease their transitions, and expand their influence. In Religion, they found a means to do all three with the creation of Ruler-Cults and Imperial-Cults and with the propagation of Graeco-Near Eastern deities such as Serapis. In Politics, Hellenism was seen as a useful tool which could be used to suit many ends, from easing the Successors into power to negotiating successfully with other Kings. Warfare relied on an active, though limited amount of Hellenism, and where it isn't found describes as much about the usage of Hellenism by the Successors as any place it is discovered. Cities, which were the lifeblood of the Hellenistic empires, had a unique and personal relationship with their Kings which was altered for the King's sake by Hellenism. In each case, there is a deliberate usage of Hellenization by the Successors for their benefit. Without Hellenism acting as a stabilizer, the Diadochi could have been cast off of their thrones, and the Successor States would have been nothing more than short-lived grabs for power.

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