The Hellenistic World: New Trends and Directions*

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It is almost fifty years since Rostovtzeff published his masterly and influential study of *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*,[1] in which for the first time the work of art historians and archaeologists was integrated into the history of the period. So 1990 is perhaps a suitable date at which to reflect on the directions which work on the Hellenistic age has taken during the intervening years. It has been a time rich in exciting results and excellent publications, especially in recent decades. One thinks, for example, of Claire Préaux's *Le monde hellénistique* (1978)[2] and, a little earlier, in 1972, the second volume of *Le monde grec et l'orient* by Ed. Will, Claude Mossé and Paul Goukowsky.[3] From Italy there is a new series of *Studi ellenistici* edited by Biagio Virgilio;[4] while in English we have had historical source books from Michael Austin

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[1] M. Rostovtzeff, *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* I-III (Oxford, 1941).

[2] Claire Préaux, *Le monde hellénistique: La Grèce et l'orient (323-146 av. J.-C.)* I-II, *Nouvelle Clio* 6 et 6 bis (Paris, 1978). For a shorter survey in English, see F.W. Walbank, *The Hellenistic World* (London, 1981); a new edition is to appear in 1992. In Hebrew there is D. Golan, *History of the Hellenistic World* (Jerusalem, 1983).

[3] Ed. Will, Claude Mossé and Paul Goukowsky, edd., *Le monde grec et l'orient* II: *Le quatrième siècle et l'époque hellénistique* (Paris, 1975).

[4] Biagio Virgilio, ed., *Studi ellenistici* I (Pisa, 1984), II (Pisa, 1987).

(1981),[5] from Roger Bagnall and Peter Derow (1981)[6] and from
Stanley Burstein (1985),[7] an invaluable selection of Hellenistic
philosophical texts by A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley (1987)[8] and a
sensitive and percipient study of *Art in the Hellenistic Age* by J.J.
Pollitt (Cambridge, 1986) — to mention but a few works taken
more or less at random.

In Germany, for particular reasons, study of the Hellenistic age
has been less popular. In the proceedings of a conference on Ptole-
maic Egypt held in Bologna in the summer of 1987, Heinz Heinen[9]
pointed out that under the Nazi regime the Hellenistic period was de-
spised on ideological grounds as an age characterised by racial mix-
ture; that had been Droysen's view, but, as we shall see, it is one
that is now being increasingly questioned. Since the restoration of
democracy in Germany after 1945 the Hellenistic age has remained
unpopular through its association with monarchy, authoritarianism
and colonialism with echoes of racial superiority in the Greek domi-
nation over native peoples in Egypt, Asia Minor, Palestine and
Babylonia. But Germany has been an exception. Elsewhere the
centuries from Alexander to Augustus have aroused a growing inter-
est, which has perhaps also been fuelled by widespread experience
of multiracial societies and the problems they can create. This is true
not only in America and the Soviet Union, but also in Great Britain,
many other countries of Europe and, of course, Israel. Undoubtedly
the present interest in the Hellenistic period in some degree reflects
current concerns.

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5   M.M. Austin, *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman
     Conquest: A Selection of Ancient Sources in Translation* (Cambridge,
     1981).
6   R.S. Bagnall and P. Derow, *Greek Historical Documents: The Hellenistic
     Period* (Chico, California, 1981).
7   S.M. Burstein, *The Hellenistic Age from the Battle of Ipsus to the Death
     of Kleopatra VII. Translated Documents of Greece and Rome 3* (Cambridge,
     1985).
8   A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers* I-II (Cambridge,
     1987).
9   L. Criscuolo and Giovanni Geraci, edd., *Egitto e storia antica dall'
     ellenismo all' età araba. Atti del colloquio internazionale, Bologna, 31
     augusto - 2 settembre 1987* (Bologna, 1989), 105-35.

II

In this paper, I want to look briefly at some of the reasons for that interest and the directions in which research has developed. I will begin with an issue which has dominated one section of the literature, although I do not myself believe that it has contributed very much to our understanding of the Hellenistic age. The publication since the second world war of an early unpublished work by Karl Marx[10] has led scholars in communist countries and occasionally elsewhere to concentrate on what he there termed the Asiatic mode of production. By that he meant a system involving agricultural labour resembling serfdom, with the land worked by semi-free but dependent peasants. Such a system, Marx assumed, might remain stagnant and unchanged for long periods of time; and this Asiatic mode of production was contrasted with the more dynamic "ancient" or "classical" mode of production, resting on slavery and occupying a place within the well-publicised Marxist sequence of primitive communism, the slave-owners' state, feudalism, capitalism and, at the end, communism once again. In fact the Asiatic mode of production disappeared from Marx's later work and it was more or less ignored in Russia under Stalin. But from the early sixties it began to dominate much theorising in Marxist historiography — although not all Marxists accepted its validity.[11] However, to take one accessible and typical example, Heinz Kreissig's *Geschichte des Hellenismus,* published in East Berlin in 1982, is largely devoted to tracing the extension of this "Asiatic mode" during the Hellenistic period, following a model which saw it gradually engulfing the "classical" slave economy until society became bogged down in the colonate of the later Roman empire. Kreissig extends the term "Asiatic mode of production" to take in the system of labour land-tenure in such areas as Aetolia and Epirus, where slavery was less widely developed —

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10   K. Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Oekonomie (Rohentwurf)* (Berlin, 1953). The section on pre-capitalist economic formations is included in E.J. Hobsbawm, *Karl Marx, Pre-Capitalist Economic Foundations,* trans. Jack Cohen (1964), 375-413, and in *Grundrisse. Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft),* trans. M. Nicolaus (1973), 471-514.

11   For discussion see S.P. Dunn, *The Fall and Rise of the Asiatic Mode of Production* (London, 1983).

thereby making a nonsense of the phrase.[12] In fact an economic system in which chattel-slavery plays a predominant part, such as we meet in fifth- and fourth-century Athens or Rome of the late Republic and early Empire, is exceptional in antiquity. As Eduard Meyer pointed out nearly a hundred years ago,[13] the growth of slavery in the Greek world accompanied the growth of city-state freedom, democracy and, often, imperial conquest and declined along with these.

As a model for understanding the societies of the Hellenistic world and their evolution, the contrast between the "classical" and "Asiatic" modes of production does not seem to me at all helpful. It oversimplifies the differences between various regions and it obscures the wide range of alternative patterns of social and economic organisation to be found on the Greek mainland and within the different Hellenistic kingdoms. Many areas show a combination of elements characteristic of the two so-called "modes", so that we find forms of serfdom side-by-side with degrees of chattel-slavery (in Crete, for example, and in Sparta, not to mention Syria and Babylonia).[14] Analysis of these social systems has been a special concern of recent scholarship and if any general conclusion has been reached it is to recognize the great variety which could exist in different places and at different times even within one and the same kingdom. This is especially true of Seleucid Asia with its wide range of subject peoples and local traditions going back to many different earlier cultures. Firm conclusions can only apply to the area from which the evidence is derived.

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12   For further criticism of the concept of an "Asiatic mode of production" see G. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient World* (London, 1981), 155-7, who, however, seems to me to underestimate the importance of serfdom in the Hellenistic period; contrast D. Rathbone, "The Ancient Economy in Graeco-Roman Egypt", in Criscuolo-Geraci (n. 9 above), 161-2, on the "normality" of something like serfdom as the condition of the mass of agricultural producers in the ancient world.

13   Ed. Meyer, "Die Sklaverei im Altertum", *Kleine Schriften* I (Halle, 1910), 171-212 (originally published in 1898).

14   For references see John Davies, *Cambridge Ancient History* VII.1², edd. F. W. Walbank, A.E. Astin, M.W. Frederiksen and R.M. Ogilvie (Cambridge, 1984), 294-300.

A great deal of work has gone into assembling that evidence. It has been directed not only to problems of land tenure, but also to the status of agricultural workers in relation to the state and the king, the balance between pastoralism and agriculture,[15] and — what is fundamental for both the countryman and the city-dweller — the question of the food-supply and measures taken to cope with food-shortage or famine.[16] These matters, which had formerly received only fleeting and scanty attention, have been brought to the forefront partly at least through a better appreciation of the fact that, as Anthony Snodgrass points out in his recent Sather Lectures (1987),[17] what happens in the countryside underpins life in the city.

III

Rostovtzeff's work laid special emphasis on the cities and their inhabitants, that "bourgeoisie" which figures so largely in his pages. The Greek cities have continued to be one of the main objects of recent critical investigation, for it is of course in the cities that the main cultural and political activity takes place. The fourth century has often been regarded as a time of crisis for the *polis,* ushering in the end of classical Greek civilisation, a view exemplified in Claude Mossé's section of *Le monde grec et l' orient,*[18] already mentioned. I think, however, that the word crisis is better avoided in connection

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[15]   See C.R. Whittaker, ed., *Pastoral Economies in Classical Antiquity. Cambridge Philological Society* Suppl. *Proceedings of the Section for Ancient History of the IXth International Economic History Congress held in Bern in August 1986* (Cambridge, 1988).

[16]   P. Garnsey and C.R. Whittaker, edd., *Trade and Famine in Classical Antiquity. Cambridge Philological Society* Suppl. *Proceedings of the Section for Ancient History of the VIIIth International Economic History Congress held in Budapest in August 1982* (Cambridge, 1983); P. Garnsey, *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World: Responses to Risk and Crisis* (Cambridge, 1988).

[17]   A. Snodgrass, *An Archaeology of Greece: The Present State and Future Scope of a Discipline. Sather Classical Lectures* 53 (Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1987).

[18]   See, for instance, Claude Mossé, "La crise de la 'polis' et la fin de la civilisation grecque classique", *op. cit.* (n. 3), 187ff., dealing however, only with the fourth century down to 336.

with the *polis* of the fourth and third centuries, for it gives a wrong impression of the radical yet not wholly negative changes that took place in the political, religious and general cultural attitudes among citizens of the *polis* during this period. There were indeed losses but there were also gains. The losses may at first sight be more apparent. In mainland Greece Chaeronea clearly spelt an end to real *polis*-independence for Athens and for many other cities as well. There Macedonian domination was certainly followed by some sort of failure of confidence. But for most Greeks domination from outside — either by Persia or Carthage or by some Greek hegemonic power like Sparta, Athens, Thebes or Syracuse — had always been a normal feature of city life. Political independence, *eleutheria,* was important, but it had never been universally enjoyed nor had it been for any the *only* "good" within a Greek *polis*.[19] The Hellenistic city capable of maintaining genuine political independence — Rhodes, for instance, or Byzantium and for many years Sparta — was, it is true, a rare phenomenon. But many cities were now free from garrisons, that irksome reminder of monarchic sovereignty, and their citizens could go about their business enjoying many of the outward signs of freedom. Within limitations which the existence of monarchies imposed, many Greek cities now developed a flourishing social and intellectual life. Indeed, in his important chapter in Volume VII.1 of the new edition of the *Cambridge Ancient History* (1984), John Davies writes of the "transformation and revitalising" of the *polis*.[20] As he there shows, the Greek cities found new avenues to self-definition. Examples of these are competitive sport, closely linked with religious cult and the great panhellenic festivals and life in the gymnasium, an institution which often served as a focus for Hellenic self-assertion, especially in cities situated in the midst of non-Greek populations — one thinks of the list of Delphic aphorisms set up self-consciously in the gymnasium at Miletopolis in Mysia.[21] Fur-

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[19]   See A. Giovannini, "Greek Cities and Greek Commonwealth", in the proceedings of the conference held in Berkeley in spring 1988 on "Images and Ideologies: Self-Definition in the Hellenistic World", forthcoming.

[20]   *CAH* VII.1² (above, n. 14), 257-320, esp. 304-20.

[21]   See *Syll.* 1268 (Miletopolis); for a similar display of Delphic aphorisms at Ai Khanum on the Oxus see L. Robert, *CRAI* (1968), 422. They were a symbol of Greekness. For a brief summary of the Ai Khanum finds, em-

thermore, as we learn from the inscriptions, a wide range of clubs and associations, *eranoi* and *thiasoi,* nominally devoted to the promotion of the cult of some god, but in fact often occupied primarily in social and commercial activities, provided for people of different classes, sometimes even including slaves, burial after death and in this life an active round of communal meals and meetings reminiscent of Working Men's Clubs, Rotary Clubs, Masonic Lodges and the like in a modern European or American city.[22] Perhaps more important is the fact that to counter the threat from monarchic domination new political forms of collaboration were developed; I shall return to these shortly.

These Hellenistic cities to an extent not observable earlier relied largely on the benefactions of rich citizens to provide many amenities. In return for honours and prestige such individuals often shouldered the burden of endowing charities, tiding over food shortages and financing essential or desirable public works — aqueducts, temples, public libraries, theatres and gymnasia — either as pure gifts or in fulfilment of the obligations of magistracies, the holding of which depended increasingly on the possession of private wealth.[23] Others served the city through their influence at court, either as ambassadors or as Friends of the king acting as intermediaries between him and the city. The king's Friends have received considerable attention from several scholars, including Christian Habicht, Gabriel Herman and Paul McKechnie.[24] They were a group of men drawn from within and without the kingdom, who both provided the king with essential advisers and helpers — for obviously no government can be run by a single individual — and also served as useful spokesmen for the communities from which they

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phasising the mixture there of Greek, Persian and Central Asian influences, see A.K. Narain, *CAH* VIII[2] (1989), 418-19.

22   For examples see Davies, *CAH* VII.1[2], 318-19.

23   For "euergetism", especially in relation to food supply, see Garnsey 1988 (above, note 16), 82ff. An example is Protogenes of Olbia, *cf. Syll.* 495.

24   *Cf.* Ch. Habicht, "Die herrschende Gesellschaft in den hellenistischen Monarchien", *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 45 (1958), 1-16; G. Herman, "The 'Friends' of Early Hellenistic Rulers: Servants or Officials?" *Talanta* 12-13 (1980-81), 103-49; P. McKechnie, *Outsiders in the Greek Cities in the Fourth Century B.C.* (London-New York, 1989), 204-15.

had sprung and with which they often maintained their connection. These two roles — king's Friends and city benefactors — were not necessarily always combined in the same person. This reliance by cities on patronage can be paralleled in earlier times, but now it becomes much more important. Moreover, as Simon Price points out in his chapter in *Greece and the Hellenistic World* (1988),[25] despite the democratic forms of government usually to be found in Hellenistic cities — assembly, council and annual magistrates[26] — the effect of such patronage was non-democratic and it was accompanied by a decline in real democracy, that is, genuine popular control over political life.

Greek cities were not, however, the only urban centres that mattered, at any rate in the large Seleucid kingdom; and attention has recently been focussed also on the cities of Babylonia and the non-Greek but partially hellenised citites of Syria and Palestine. In this context I would draw your attention to the lively papers presented to a London seminar in 1984 and published in 1987 by Amélie Kuhrt and Susan Sherwin-White under the title *Hellenism in the East*.[27] I shall say something about the general topic of Greeks and non-Greeks later.

Meanwhile, before leaving the Greek city, I want to say a word about a political development of particular importance in mainland Greece, where it provided a defence against the ambitions of the Macedonian dynasty at Pella. I refer to the fourth- and third-century growth of federalism and the proliferation of federal states, *sympoliteiai*.[28] These often arose in such areas as Achaea, Aetolia

25 J. Boardman, J. Griffin and O. Murray, edd., *Greece and the Hellenistic World* (Oxford, 1988), 327.

26 *Cf.* J. Touloumakos, *Der Einfluss Roms auf die Staatsform der griechischen Stadtstaaten des Festlandes und der Inseln im ersten und zweiten Jhdt. v. Chr.* (Göttingen, 1967).

27 A. Kuhrt and S. Sherwin-White, edd., *Hellenism in the East: The Interaction of Greek and Non-Greek Civilizations from Syria to Central Asia after Alexander* (London, 1987).

28 See in general J.A.O. Larsen, *Greek Federal States* (Oxford, 1967); A. Giovannini, *Untersuchungen über die Natur und die Anfänge der bundesstaatlichen Sympolitie in Griechenland. Hypomnemata* 55 (Göttingen, 1971); F.W. Walbank, "Were there Greek Federal States?" *SCI*

and Epirus, where *poleis* were insignificant or few in number in classical times. Indeed, one can trace a direct line of descent from *ethne,* whose members lived in villages, down to the Aetolian and Molossian federations. Achaea, perhaps the most successful of these federations, was, however, an association of *poleis,* not of ethnic communities; and the importance of Greek federalism is as a political device enabling both regional communities and cities, *ethne* and *poleis,* to confront larger cities like Athens and monarchies like Macedonia on something like an equal footing. The growth of federalism and the rise of vigorous Greek cities within monarchic states such as Macedonia and the Seleucid realm are both part of the process by which this central institution of Greek political life adapted itself to the new conditions of the world after Alexander.

This process of adaptation involved other political devices serving the same end. I am thinking of such institutions as *isopoliteia,* a kind of interchange of citizenship;[29] *proxenia,* by which the privileges formerly associated with a position similar to the modern consulate inside another community was now widely conferred on members of other states as a reward for services (and was frequently combined with a grant of citizenship);[30] and *synoikismos,* by which cities actually merged or small communities were brought together (often in fact by some outside agency, as in the case of Cassandreia), to form a large or more viable new city.[31]

<center>IV</center>

Droysen, who in his *Geschichte Alexanders des Grossen* (1833) and his *Geschichte des Hellenismus* (1836-43) formulated the modern concept of *Hellenismus,* the Hellenistic age (there is no single

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3 (1976-77), 27-51 = *Selected Papers: Studies in Greek and Roman History and Historiography* (Cambridge, 1985), 20-37.

29   See W. Gawantka, *Isopoliteia. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der zwischenstaatlichen Beziehungen in der griechischen Antike* (Munich, 1975).

30   See F. Gschnitzer, "Proxenos", *RE* Suppl. XIII (1974), 629-730.

31   For the synoecism of Scepsis and Alexandria Troas at the hands of Antigonus I see Strabo 13.1.52; of Teos and Lebedus see Welles, *Roman Correspondence of the Hellenistic Age* (New Haven 1934), nos. 3-4; for the founding of Cassandreia by Cassander see Diod. 19.52.2.

equivalent of *Hellenismus* in English), saw it as a transitional period — from Alexander to Jesus Christ — in which Greek civilization was blended with that of "the east" to form a fertilised soil where Christianity could take root.[32] Such an essentially apocalyptic and teleological interpretation of the period is no longer acceptable. On the contrary, it has now become virtually orthodox doctrine to see the Hellenistic age, not as a "mix" — good or bad — at all, but as a time of multicultural development, with people of different races and religions and different social and political traditions living side by side, but independently. This view has been developed especially for Ptolemaic Egypt in the works of Préaux,[33] Bagnall,[34] Bingen[35] and Samuel.[36] There, as Stanley Burstein observes in a review of *Cambridge Ancient History* VII.1²,[37] there were native as well as Greek élites, especially the priests; and even if their role is obscured in the Greek record, recent work has helped to show some of the ways in which they exercised their considerable influence.

In Egypt the superficial separateness of the two cultures is very evident. Egyptian temples portray the Macedonian Ptolemies in the established mode and with the traditional symbols and cartouches and in stylised communication with the native gods, just as Pharaohs had been portrayed for centuries. But this separateness is

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[32]   See, on Droysen, A. Momigliano, "Hellenismus und Gnosis: Randbemerkungen zu Droysens Geschichte des Hellenismus", *Saeculum* 21 (1970), 185-8, and, earlier, "Per il centenaio dell' 'Alessandro Magno' di Droysen", *Leonardo* 4 (1933), 510-16 = *Contributo alla storia degli studi classici* (Rome, 1955), 263-74.

[33]   C. Préaux, "La culture, critique de l'idée de civilisation mixte", *op. cit.* (n. 2) II, 543-679.

[34]   R.S. Bagnall, "Greeks-Egyptians: Ethnicity, Status and Culture", in *Cleopatra's Egypt, Age of the Ptolemies* (Catalogue Exhibition, New York: Brooklyn Museum, 1988), 21-6; "Egypt, the Ptolemies and the Greek World", *Bull. of the Egyptian Seminar* 3 (1981), 5-21.

[35]   J. Bingen, "L'Egypte gréco-romaine et la problématique des interactions culturelles", *Proceedings of the XIVth International Congress of Papyrology*, edd. R.S. Bagnall, G.M. Browne, A.E. Hanson and L. Koenen (Chico, California, 1981), 3-18.

[36]   A.E. Samuel, *From Athens to Alexandria: Hellenism and Social Goals in Ptolemaic Egypt. Studia Hellenistica* 26 (Leuven, 1983), *passim.*

[37]   S.M. Burstein, *CPh* 82 (1987), 164-8.

not so marked everywhere as it is in Egypt; and indeed, even in Egypt, a picture of two cultures developing side by side without cross-fertilization would be a travesty of the reality. In the Seleucid kingdom, as Malcolm Colledge points out in his chapter in the volume *Hellenism in the East*,[38] more and more examples keep turning up, especially from eastern provinces, of buildings and works of art which combine Mesopotamian, Iranian and Greek traditions. This is still more noticeable after the Parthian takeover and at Ai Khanum on the Oxus, where for example columns in the Ionic and Corinthian orders were raised on column bases of a Persian type. Clearly the cultural legacy of the Greek expansion after Alexander was far more complex than we had thought. The details are of course different for each kingdom; and I should like to say a little about this, as it affects Egypt, Seleucid Asia and Syria and Palestine. For Macedonia the problem does not arise in the same form, since from the fifth century onwards royal patronage had brought Pella into the mainstream of Greek culture and the Antigonids, who claimed to be of the same family as the Argeads, continued that tradition. There was of course no racial problem in Macedonia.

V

The most recent study of the cultural clash in Ptolemaic Egypt is Alan Samuel's book, *The Shifting Sands of History* (1989),[39] in which he develops ideas already delineated in his earlier work, *From Athens to Alexandria* (1983).[40] Samuel's book is in many ways exemplary of the changes that have recently taken place in assessing Ptolemaic society. This, Samuel argues, consists of separate and distinct communities living alongside each other in some sort of harmony. The native risings which occurred in second-century Egypt can be interpreted either as the outcome of racial hostility (as

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[38]   M. Colledge, "Greek and non-Greek Interaction in the Art and Architecture of the Hellenistic East", in *Hellenism in the East* (n. 27), 152ff.

[39]   A.E. Samuel, *The Shifting Sands of History: Interpretations of Ptolemaic Egypt. Publications of the Association of Ancient Historians* 2 (Lanham-New York-London, 1989).

[40]   See above, n. 36.

Koenen believes),[41] or simply as resistance to oppression, regardless of race, which is Claire Préaux's view.[42] What is clear, however, is that, when one comes down to details the new picture of Ptolemaic Egypt is much less coherent than that of fifty years ago. In this respect Egypt is simply a microcosm of the Hellenistic world as a whole, for here too no convincing picture has emerged to take the place of Droysen's construct. In Egypt the role of the Ptolemies themselves is now being questioned. The earlier view, which saw third-century Egypt as a brilliant planned economy set up by Ptolemy Philadelphus, building upon the experience of earlier Pharaonic governments, has been superseded by one in which Alexandria is seen as merely reacting with *ad hoc* decisions to a series of problems as they occur, decisions in which the bureaucracy is not so much the instrument of far-sighted state planning as an unwieldy monster operating almost in its own right.[43] Moreover, if we can go along with Jean Bingen,[44] the royal control of agriculture may have excluded and marginalised many of the Greek immigrants, forcing them to take up a career in the official bureaucracy, where, by generating masses of documents, they have left posterity with an entirely disproportionate picture of the importance of their social group.

As you see, revisionism has not suffered from diffidence; and things are very much in the melting pot. Ptolemy II has been a notable victim of the process. After being regarded with great admiration by both Rostovtzeff and Préaux, he is now represented most unfavourably in Eric Turner's striking chapter in the new edition of *Cambridge Ancient History* VII.1[2], where he is portrayed as a king who progressively increased the exploitation of the people, driving

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41   *Cf.* L. Koenen, "Die Adaptation der ägyptischen Königsideologie am Ptolemäerhof", *Egypt and the Hellenistic World: Proceedings of the International Colloquium, Leuven, 24-26 May 1982. Studia Hellenistica* 27, edd. E. Van 't Dack, P. Van Dessel and W. Van Gucht (Leuven, 1983), 143-90.
42   *Op. cit.* (n. 2), 395-6.
43   *Cf.* E. Turner, *CAH* VII.1[2], 133-59.
44   J. Bingen, "Tensions structurelles de la société ptolémaique", *Atti del XVII congresso internazionale di papirologia* III (Naples, 1984), 936, quoted approvingly by Samuel, *op. cit.* (n. 39), 36.

the country towards bankruptcy.[45] Alan Samuel has asked,[46] half seriously, whether this change of approach in the 1970s and 1980s may not perhaps reflect the resentment of middle-class historians, smarting under governments which have operated to their detriment in a climate of financial constraint. There is certainly something attractive in the notion of penurious Egyptologists taking out their resentment against Ronald Reagan or Margaret Thatcher vicariously on Ptolemy Philadelphus; but I fear Samuel exaggerates. It is far more likely that these changes in interpretation result from greater knowledge and greater attention to demotic evidence and a willingness to take the Egyptian side into account. At the same time, several scholars have shown by their detailed study of works of Alexandrian literature and evidence from the sphere of religion that mental attitudes in Ptolemaic Egypt reveal a signficant degree of overlap between what is Greek and what is Egyptian. Ludwig Koenen in particular has demonstrated that imagery in Alexandrian literature is frequently designed to produce both a Greek and an Egyptian resonance and, similarly, that the cult titles adopted by the Ptolemies were carefully chosen for their relationship to traditional Pharaonic concepts, and so helped to bridge the cultural and religious *apartheid* which separated the two peoples.[47]

VI

Arnaldo Momigliano once reminded us of a pregnant observation of Arnold Toynbee, to the effect that "intrinsically the Seleucid monarchy and not the Ptolemaic monarchy, is the field in which the pearl of great price awaits the historical explorer".[48] New evidence for

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[45]   *Op. cit.* (n. 43). For the earlier, favourable view of Ptolemy II see Rostovtzeff, *op. cit.* (n. 1) I, 267-407.

[46]   *Op. cit.* (n. 39), 9.

[47]   See, for example, his discussion of Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos* and the *Lock of Berenice* in his paper presented to the Hellenistic conference held in Berkeley, 1988 (above, n. 19), and his analysis of the Egyptian titulary of the king in the protocol of official documents and the discussion of the Egyptian overtones in the Greek dynastic cult-names of the Ptolemies in the same paper; also the article mentioned above, n. 41.

[48]   *Contributo alla storia degli studi classici* (Rome, 1955), 338, quoting A. Toynbee, *A Study of History* I, 7.

Seleucid Asia has begun slowly to emerge in recent decades. By now there is a rich collection, constantly augmented, of Greek inscriptions from Asia Minor; and the publication or republication of these, grouped under the various cities, has made considerable progress.[49] But in addition we are now beginning to get documents from further east, from Babylonia,[50] Iran[51] and even Afghanistan, where a handful of inscriptions from Ai Khanum on the Oxus[52] can be supplemented by fragments of the moralizing edicts, in Greek and Aramaic, of the Mauryan king Asoka, which employed the language of Greek philosophy to convey the thoughts of a royal convert to Buddhism.[53] Political confusion has unfortunately put a temporary stop to archaeological work in Iran and Afghanistan. We can only hope that conditions there may soon improve and that in addition new material may perhaps be forthcoming from northern Bactria, now in the Soviet Union. Already useful archaeological and epigraphical material has turned up to the south of the Persian Gulf and on the island of Failaka near Kuwait.[54]

In Seleucid Asia, as in Egypt, the main thrust of research has been to direct attention to the non-Greek population. Interest is now being centred on the contribution made from the eastern fringes of the vast Seleucid dominions by the Parthian and Mauryan states and at the centre by the legacy of the Achaemenids. In Babylonia a vast treasure-house exists in the large number of unpublished cuneiform documents which, as they become available, can be expected to shift the balance in a way comparable to what is happening in Egypt as

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49   For a summary, see F.W. Walbank, *CAH* VII.1², 15-16. The inscriptions from the various cities of Asia Minor are published at Bonn.

50   For references to the publication of cuneiform material, see S. Sherwin-White, *op. cit.* (n. 27), 1-2.

51   For the Iranian material, including Greek inscriptions (*e.g.*, *SEG* VII [1934], no. 4 from Susa; L. Robert, *CRAI* 1967, 281-97 from Nehavend, relevant to the Seleucid dynastic cult), see S. Sherwin-White, *op. cit.* (n. 27), 17.

52   On Ai Khanum see the works listed by D. Musti, *CAH* VII.1²,214, n. 67.

53   On Asoka and the bilingual Greek and Aramaic inscription from Kandahar, see Musti, *op. cit.* (previous note), 210-11 with n. 61.

54   On the Persian Gulf and Failaka (ancient Icarus), see J.-F. Salles, "The Arab-Persian Gulf under the Seleucids", in *Hellenism in the East* (above, n. 27), 75-109 (especially 105-8 for Failaka).

more and more demotic documents become accessible. To take one example of this shift in interest, in a recent paper (included in the volume *Hellenism in the East*), Amélie Kuhrt[55] has made a study of the historian Berossus, whom she sees as a Seleucid counterpart to Hecataeus, playing up the Babylonian legacy against the Greek and emphasizing the role of Naboplassar and Nebuchadnezzar as fore-runners of Seleucus I and Antiochus I. This kind of work is in its early stages; and it is naturally liable to the exaggeration which often occurs with a new approach. It remains my personal view, for example, that the Babylonian sympathies of the Seleucids can be easily overplayed. It is significant that as soon as Seleucus I gained access to the Mediterranean he set about developing the area around the mouth of the Orontes with Greco-Macedonian city foundations. There is undoubtedly much more to be learnt about the Achaemenid and Babylonian contributions to Seleucid Asia; and with the new epigraphical and archaeological material which we can hope to see, once peace is restored to the Middle East and passions there subside, our picture of Seleucid Asia may well be transformed in the course of the next twenty years.

VII

I have just spoken of the development of the area around the lower Orontes valley by Seleucus I. This has been analysed in detail by Henri Seyrig,[56] who has argued cogently that by exploiting superior Greek engineering techniques to construct artificial harbours at Se-leucia and Laodicea, Seleucus transformed the whole region (in which the Phoenicians had seen few opportunities) from one of rural farming to one distinguished by highly profitable and developed maritime commerce. As a result Antioch soon grew to be the second

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[55]   *Op. cit.* (n. 27), 32-56.

[56]   H. Seyrig, "Seleucus I and the Foundation of Hellenistic Syria", *The Role of the Phoenicians in the Interaction of Mediterranean Civilization. Papers Presented to the Archaeological Symposium held at the American University of Beirut, March 1967*, ed. W.A. Ward (Beirut, 1968), 53-63; for a later French version, see "Antiquités syriennes 92: Séleucus I et la fondation de la monarchie syrienne", *Syria* 47 (1970), 290-311.

city of the Hellenistic world. But the hellenising of the northern te-
trapolis was exceptional. Elsewhere in the Syro-Judaean area, as
Fergus Millar has argued,[57] we still have far more questions than
answers. Any attempt to find out how far and how soon Hellenism
made progress in the area between the Mediterranean and the
Euphrates meets with formidable difficulties. That is partly because
of inadequate archaeological information once one goes outside
Israel, where in contrast to the remaining areas there has been inten-
sive archaeological and historical work over several decades. For
example, the only significant collection of pre-hellenistic material is
that made by E. Stern for the Persian period;[58] and it is of course
very hard to trace the progress of Hellenisation unlress one knows
what was there before.

In an illuminating paper, published in *Hellenism in the East*,
Millar has shown that except in Samaria and in Dura — both of
which may be Macedonian military settlements rather than Greek
colonies[59] — there is no firm evidence throughout this area for the
kind of Greek influence which is the hallmark of Hellenistic civliza-
tion. There is some evidence for the survival of pre-Greek culture
and a gradual fusion with Greek ways of life and thought in the
coastal cities of Phoenicia; but elsewhere (apart from Judaea) the
evidence is still far too scanty to allow any clear cultural definition.
We know of cities being given Greek names: but we do not know
what that implies in each case in terms of population and the pattern
of life. We are still without information on the economic structure of
the Syrian communities under the Achaemenids and about the
amount of Greek colonisation throughout the area as a whole; nor
can we say very much about the cultural changes that such immigra-
tion may have produced. Where we have a document — the one, for
example, which records the allotment of the village of Baetocaece
(near Arad), formerly the possession of one Demetrius, to the tem-

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57   F. Millar, "The Problem of Hellenistic Syria", *Hellenism in the East*
      (above, n. 27), 110-33.
58   E. Stern, *The Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian
      Period* (Jerusalem, 1982).
59   F. Millar, *Hellenism in the East* (above, n. 27), 115.

ple of Zeus by a king Antiochus[60] — we are quite uncertain what that implies for the previous ownership of the land, since it may have belonged to the temple (as Kreissig believed)[61] or, on the other hand, it may have been royal land temporarily assigned to the previous possessor. The problem here is comparable to those which almost invariably occur when we have Seleucid or Attalid documents relating to land tenure.[62]

Millar's reaction to this depressing absence of firm evidence is cautious and minimal. His conclusion is that until more evidence appears, we should regard the mixed culture later to be found in this area as of Roman rather than Hellenistic origin. The only bilingual Greek and Semitic document to be found up to now from the whole area is a dedication in Greek and Aramaic from Tel Dan, dating to the late third or early second century,[63] by a certain Zoilos "to the god who is in Dan"; occupation of the site itself, which lies near the headwaters of the Jordan, can be traced back to the tenth or ninth centuries. It is, says Millar, the first clear piece of evidence of the

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[60]   *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie* VII, edd. L. Jalabert, R. Mouterde and J.P. Rey-Coquais (Paris, 1929-), no. 4028 = Austin (above, n. 5), no. 178. For bibliography see Millar, *Hellenism in the East* (above, n. 27), 121. See also B. Virgilio, "I *katochoi* del tempio di Zeus a Baitokaike", *La Parola del Passato* 22 (1985), 218-22 = *Studi Ellenistici* (above, n. 4) II (1987), 193-8 = *Epigrafia e storiografia: Studi di Storia Antica* I (Pisa, 1988), 176-81.

[61]   H. Kreissig, *Geschichte des Hellenismus* (Berlin, 1982), 146; "Beobachtungen an hellenistischen Inschriften zur Frage des Tempeleigentums an Land", *Klio* 52 (1970), 231-3 and 59 (1977), 375-80; also his *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im Seleukidenreich* (Berlin, 1978).

[62]   *Cf. OGIS* 221 = Welles, *op. cit.* (n. 31), nos. 10-13 = P. Frisch, *Die Inschriften von Ilion* (Bonn, 1975), no. 33 (gifts of land by Antiochus I); T. Wiegand *et al.*, *Didyma* II (Berlin, 1958), no. 492 = Austin, *op. cit.* (n. 5), no. 185 (sale of land by Antiochus II to Laodice, his divorced wife); Welles, *op.cit.* (n. 31), no. 51 (distribution of land-lots in connection with a *katoikia*). *Cf.* B. Virgilio, "Sui modi di assegnazione agraria Attalide, " *Studi class. orient.* 32 (1982), 236-40 = *Epigrafia e storiografia* (n. 60), 152-7. See also W.H. Buckler and D.M. Robinson, *Sardes* VII.1: *The Greek Inscriptions* (Leiden, 1932), no. 1 (estate granted by Antigonus I to one Mnesimachus).

[63]   *BE* 1977, no. 542; *cf.* Millar, *op. cit.* (n. 57), 132-3 (with bibliography).

meeting of two identifiable cultures in this area during the Hellenistic period.

VIII

I have mentioned one of two parts of the Hellenistic world and some of the problems arising within them which have been the subject of recent work. There are, however, some aspects of the period which are common to all the kingdoms and indeed serve to mark them out as belonging to a single culture. Perhaps the most noteworthy of these is the ubiquitous institution of monarchy . In recent years Hellenistic monarchy has attracted considerable attention as a central feature of life everywhere during the centuries down to the Roman conquest of the East.[64] Alan Samuel, it is true, has challenged the usual notion that Hellenistic monarchy is a single phenomenon.[65] Any attempt to treat the monarchies of Macedonia, Seleucid Asia and Egypt as examples of a single institution has, he thinks, "led to attempts to reconcile items of evidence which relate in fact to quite different kings or institutions". Now there are, I agree, very big differences between the king at Pella and the kings at Antioch or Alexandria; but the military origins of all these three monarchies in the aftermath of Alexander's conquests and death, the element of imitation in those which subsequently sprang up in Asia Minor and further east and certain common features shared by all in my opinion justify our treating this as a single institution with, of course, variations to accommodate the local conditions on which it was superimposed.

Macedonia itself presents a special problem, since the kings there were simply continuing the traditional function of the Argeads, including Philip II and Alexander prior to the great expedition. Here the main controversy has been between those who regard the Macedonian kings as consitutionally limited by traditional powers exercised by the people or the army and those for whom such powers appear to be of negligible importance and the king's authority vir-

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[64] For a survey, see F.W. Walbank, *CAH* VII.1², 62-100; L. Mooren, "The Nature of Hellenistic Monarchy", *Egypt and the Hellenistic World* (n. 41), 205-40.

[65] *Op. cit.* (n. 39), 22.

tually absolute. The most recent protagonists of the two views are N.G.L. Hammond and R.M. Errington, respectively.[66] Alan Samuel has come down on the side of Errington and compares the Macedonian kings to Viking chieftains rather than constitutional monarchs operating within a framework of defined laws and agreed traditions.[67] The truth probably lies somewhere in the middle, inasmuch as strong customs and some constitutional structures existed to control the relations between king and people but, on the other hand, the extent to which these were observed on any particular occasion depended on the forcefulness of the king and on the severity of any crisis in which he might find himself.

Kings of Macedonian origin in Syria and Egypt faced problems of quite a different kind because of the different character and, in the case of Syria, of the variety, of the peoples they had to rule and also because of the different traditions of the Achaemenid, Babylonian and Pharaonic kingships, which they had in a sense inherited. In both Egypt and Syria — and later in Pergamum and the smaller kingdoms of Bithynia, Cappadocia and the rest — an important institution, once regarded as part of the "eastern" legacy of their kingship, is ruler cult. Ruler cult ensured that the king was not merely the object of secular allegiance, but also, along with his ancestors, the object of worship. It has been widely studied. I need mention only the work of L. Cerfaux and J. Tondriau, A.D. Nock, Christian Habicht and Hans Hauben, who are but a few of those who have written on this subject.[68] It is now generally agreed that ruler cult owes far more to Greece than it owes to the traditions of Persia,

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[66]   Hammond's view is made clear in his sections of volumes II and III of his *History of Macedonia* (Oxford, 1979 and 1988) and is fully set out in his recent book, *The Macedonian State: The Origins, Institutions and History* (Oxford, 1989). For the other view see R.M. Errington, "The Nature of the Macedonian State under the Monarchy", *Chiron* 8 (1978), 77-133.

[67]   *Op. cit.* (n. 39), 21-4; see also R. Lock, "The Macedonian Army-Assembly in the Time of Alexander the Great", *CPh* 72 (1977), 92-107.

[68]   L. Cerfaux and J. Tondriau, *Un concurrent du christianisme: le culte des souverains dans la civilisation gréco-romaine* (Paris-Tournai, 1957); A.D. Nock, "Notes on Ruler-Cult", *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* (Oxford, 1972) I, 134-59; Chr. Habicht, *Gottmenschentum und griechische Städte²*. *Zetemata* 14 (Munich, 1970); H. Hauben, "Aspects du culte des souverains à l'époque des Lagides", *Egitto e storia antica* (n. 9), 441-68.

Babylonia or Egypt, and that its main origins are to be sought in the *poleis* of the fourth century, when Lysander was given altars on Samos[69] and Dion was hailed like a god in Syracuse.[70] In the Hellenistic period ruler cult was a convenient bridge between the king and the Greek cities within his dominion or sphere of interest and it has been observed that the inspiration for the cult often came from the city itself and indeed frequently reflected genuine piety on the part of the citizens.[71] This is a difficult area which cannot be understood entirely in terms of *Staatsraison*. It has also been noted that despite their manifest similarities, often in the use of the same cult titles, a distinction must be drawn between cults set up in the various cities, often arising spontaneously (or, should we say, with the appearance of spontaneity?), and official ruler cult, which is much more a state affair and indeed in some ways less simple to interpret.

It is in the latter, at any rate for Egypt (where we know most about the official cult), that the presentation of Ptolemy in a double role as Hellenistic king to the Greeks and the court of Alexandria and as Pharaoh throughout the countryside and in the Egyptian temples, becomes a means of reconciling racial differences. Probably deliberately, ruler cult was developed so as to embody a religious terminology which had significance for both Greeks and Egyptians. And some particularly interesting work has been done to analyse features of ruler cult which carried meaning within both cultures. Of this I will mention two examples: first, the work, to which I have already alluded, by Ludwig Koenen[72] on the Egyptian overtones and echoes in the titles accorded to the Ptolemies in the dynastic cult; and secondly, a particular accompaniment of that cult, the faience wine-jugs with portraits of queens, which were mass-produced for use as offerings at shrines connected with ruler cult. These jugs have been studied by Dorothy Burr Thompson,[73] who

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[69]   Duris, *FGrH* 76 F 26 and 71.
[70]   Plut., *Dem.* 29.1.
[71]   F.W. Walbank, "Könige als Götter: Überlegungen zum Herrscherkult von Alexander bis Augustus", *Chiron* 17 (1987), 365-82; *cf.* Samuel, *op. cit.* (n. 39), 19.
[72]   *Op. cit.* (n. 47).
[73]   D.B. Thompson, *Ptolemaic Oinochoai and Portraits in Faience* (Oxford, 1973); *cf.* J.J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge, 1986), App. II: "The Ruler Cult and its Imagery", 271-5.

draws attention to the interesting combination of Greek and Egyptian artistic motifs which occur, in varying proportions, in the representations of the queens (who are often identified by name). She explains this as arising from the employment of Egyptian craftsmen in Greek-owned workshops. Be that as it may, it is surely significant that as time went on the Egyptian elements came to prevail over the Greek — which mirrors the growth of Egyptianisation in other spheres from the second century onwards.

<div align="center">IX</div>

Ruler cult is not, however, the only aspect of Hellenistic monarchy to command recent attention. The role of the Ptolemaic monarchy generally in Egypt has been examined by Alan Samuel, who argues that — contrary to the traditional view — it occupied a position independent of the Ptolemaic administrative structure which, in his view, was something quite alien to the Macedonian tradition and had largely evolved on its own out of a series of *ad hoc* and often self-seeking decisions taken by the bureaucrats themselves.[74] This is a view bound to excite controversy. However the machinery operated in fact, it seems hard to demote the Ptolemies from their place at the effective head of the administration; such, at any rate, was not the belief of the countless inhabitants of Egypt who continued to address their appeals through the bureaucratic system to Ptolemy, confident that he would see justice done.

Another area which has been the subject of recent work is the relationship between the kings and the Greek cities, especially in Asia Minor and the Seleucid kingdom. In his role as benefactor the king was looking for a way to approach the citizens of the *poleis*, who formed an important section of his population, hoping thereby to smooth relations between them and himself. In this respect the mutual relationship between the city and its royal benefactor parallels that between the city and the object of royal cult. Both relationships have the effect of relieving possible tension between parties with fundamentally opposite interests. But the role of benefactor was full

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[74]   *Op. cit.* (n. 39), 54-65.

of pitfalls. As Klaus Bringman has shown,[75] the initiative in the making of benefactions usually came from the would-be recipient. The cities were apt to betray the touchiness of poor relatives and offers of gifts which had not been requested might easily give offence — as indeed happened in Achaea in 185, when Eumenes II of Pergamum offered a gift of 120 talents, the interest on which was to be used to pay members of the federal council for their attendance at meetings.[76] Such payments by a city to its citizens were of course a regular feature of democratic government. But on this occasion the Achaean assembly interpreted the offer as an attempted bribe and declined it angrily. The whole area was a delicate one, and an important role in mediating such transactions and ensuring that they did indeed promote goodwill and loyalty fell to the king's Friends, whom I have already mentioned in relation to private city-benefactors. I should perhaps add that in discussing the relations between kings and cities one must distinguish between the old-established cities of Asia Minor and those created further to the east, often to be garrison posts or administrative units. The latter were much more obviously under royal domination.

X

From what I have so far said, it will be evident that the current view — if one may speak of an agreed current view — of the Hellenistic age is one which takes full account of the tensions set up by the co-existence of the Graeco-Macedonian colonising élite and the earlier inhabitants. Those tensions were naturally reflected in the attitudes of the two groups and find their expression in art and literature. Some of the most stimulating work done on the period has been concerned with the study of art and literature not simply in literary and artistic terms, but rather treating the works under consideration as examples of self-evaluation and self-definition. The presence of an alien element — in this case the non-Graeco-Macedonian native populations of Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Babylonia and areas further east — sharpens the need to define one's own culture and values,

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[75]   In a paper entitled "The King as Benefactor", given at the Berkeley conference 1988 (n. 19).

[76]   See Polyb. 22.7.3-13.

not least if one is a minority. But that is not essential to the process of self-expression. As a single example of this highly interesting work I may mention a lecture recently given in Cambridge[77] by P. Zanker of Munich, in which he analysed the domestic fittings and artistic decorations on display in the houses of the bourgeois citizens of various Hellenistic cities of Asia Minor, showing how they reveal a prevailing atmosphere of hedonism, a feature, it seems, of that society. Elsewhere Zanker has used the reliefs on second-century gravestones from Smyrna to analyse the characteristics and ideals of the men and women of that city in some detail.[78]

XI

My purpose in this paper has been to point to some of the ways in which scholars with separate specialities have been trying to penetrate what is increasingly seen as a very varied society, extending widely in space and embracing a large number of separate cultures and races, all of them seeking in different ways to come to terms with the dominant Graeco-Macedonian values of the conquerors. I have been consciously selective and I have necessarily left much of importance unmentioned. For instance, I have said nothing of Bezalel Bar-Kochva's substantial work on the military development of Hellenistic armies,[79] of Eric Marsden's studies of the evolution of ancient artillery,[80] of Pierre Briant's work on nomadic and pastoral peoples,[81] or of the exciting regional surveys now in progress in many parts of mainland Greece, which are producing fresh evidence concerning forms of urban and rural settlement during this and other periods. To attempt any sort of summary is not easy. I think, however, one *can* say — as Samuel says in a review[82] of the new edition

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[77]   Corbett Lecture in the Classics Faculty, 7 December 1989.
[78]   In his paper, "Self-Definition of the Bourgeoisie in the Grave-reliefs from Smyrna", at the Berkeley conference 1988 (n. 19).
[79]   B. Bar-Kochva, *The Seleucid Army: Organization and Tactics in the Great Campaigns* (Cambridge, 1976); *Judas Maccabaeus: The Jewish Struggle against the Seleucids* (Cambridge, 1989).
[80]   E.W. Marsden, *Greek and Roman Artillery* I-II (Oxford, 1969-71).
[81]   P. Briant, *État et pasteurs au Moyen-Orient ancien* (Cambridge and Paris, 1982), which deals in part with the Hellenistic period.
[82]   *Phoenix* 40 (1986), 461-5.

of volume VII.1 of the *Cambridge Ancient History*, comparing it with the first edition — that the last fifty years have brought us many more uncertainties. Scholars today feel much less confident about trying to sketch out the significance of the Hellenistic age in a few deft strokes. The new edition of *CAH* VII.1 has certainly less internal cohesion and greater diversity than that of 1928. That is because the world its authors are describing seems to them to possess less unity than it did to their predecessors of an earlier generation. We can now see divergences where they saw identities. The centuries after Alexander can no longer be glibly interpreted simply as an expansion of Greek civilisation. The Hellenistic world appears rather to be a highly complicated mosaic of separate societies all juxtaposed, Greeks, Jews, Egyptians, Babylonians, Parthians, Bactrians, Indians — and of course, increasingly, Romans. We are all perhaps still too busy sorting out and filling in the details to see the picture as a whole.[83] But as one does so, the impression remains that the Hellenistic period was one of the most dynamic in Mediterranean history and perhaps one of the most influential in respect of what was to follow afterwards.

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[83] For an impressive recent attempt to consider the period as a whole, published since this paper was written, see Peter Green, *Alexander to Actium: the Historical Evolution of the Hellenistic Age* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1990). My reservations about Green's interpretations will appear in a review in a forthcoming number of *The Ancient History Bulletin* (Calgary and Chicago).