specimens of the art, dating from this period, are the work of second-rate painters. In vase-painting, as the demand for Attic vases increased, the artistic quality fell off; and the vases do not convey, as precisely as they once did, the style and peculiar features of painting on a larger scale.

On the whole, the fourth century was a worthy successor of the fifth. The creative power of the Greek people was as strong as ever. It grew and flourished, conquering one new domain after another and attaining in some of them the same perfection that stamps the literature and art of the preceding century.
XV


When Alexander had conquered the Persian monarchy, he was faced by a further problem. What was to become of the huge empire, of which he found himself the supreme and absolute ruler? How he intended to organize these vast dominions, we do not know. Indeed, it is possible that he had no clear notions himself on the subject. Death came upon him at Babylon in 323 B.C., at a time when he considered his military problem, the problem of conquest, as still unfinished. On the eve of his sickness and death, which took him entirely by surprise, he was planning an expedition to Arabia. Perhaps the conquest of Arabia seemed to him necessary, partly to protect the frontier of his empire in Hither Asia, and partly that he might be able to continue the task of conquering India. And another scheme may have appealed to his adventurous nature, the scheme which had attracted Themistocles and Alcibiades and became later the object of Pyrrhus, King of Epirus. This was the annexation of the western Greeks to his empire. Had he done this, he must infallibly have come into collision with Carthage and with the Italian tribes, who had by this time formed more than one powerful state.
Hence it is not surprising that Alexander gave less attention to organization than to purely military problems and matters affecting the basis of his own personal power. He governed his empire partly in accordance with the traditions of the Persian monarchy, and partly by means of temporary and purely military instruments—the generals commanding divisions of his army: it became their business to control the conquered countries and supply Alexander with the means for carrying out his further military enterprises.

He attached more importance to two questions. How was he to replenish the strength of his armies? And what source would supply him with additional staff-officers and coadjutors in the task of ruling the empire? As at the beginning of his campaigns, he placed little reliance upon the Greeks, whose political ideals were unchanged, and to whom Alexander and his power were an object of hatred rather than of attraction. There remained the Macedonians. But the resources of Macedonia were not inexhaustible, and a country of her size could only supply a limited number of men. The power of direction must, no doubt, be reserved for the Macedonians; but they must have help, and for this purpose other men must be found, as fit instruments as the Macedonians to carry out military and administrative business for their master.

It seemed to Alexander that the Iranians would answer his purpose. They were still a warlike and powerful nation, with the habit of war and the power to govern. He had learnt on the battle-field to respect their military capacity; and while governing the East he had seen their administrative powers and come to value their efficiency in organizing the Persian satrapies conquered by him. Thus impressed, Alexander set himself to bring together the Macedonians and Iranians, as the two most efficient elements of his empire; he even wished to blend them into one, at least in the army and in administration. The conversion of the army into a joint force of Macedonians and Iranians, the appointment of Iranians as military governors of provinces, his
Plate XXX  ALEXANDER AND DARIUS III

1. Alexander and Darius III. Mosaic found at Pompeii at the House of the Faun. It reproduces an early Hellenistic painting. The artist shows one of the decisive moments in the war between Alexander and Darius (the battle of Issus or that of Gaugamela). He shows the fierce determination of Alexander and his army to conquer, as contrasted with the distress, fright, and bewilderment of the Persians.

2. Head of Alexander. (Detail.)
marriage with the Persian princess Roxana, and a number of similar mixed marriages between Persian women and generals, officers, and men of the Macedonian army—such were the first steps in that direction.

Alexander was anxious to be at once the Great King of Persia and the king of a small European people. This endeavour I should be inclined to regard as chimerical. To unite the dynasties of Macedonia and Persia was easy enough; but to establish the new dynasty upon an aristocracy and an army, which should be half Macedonian and half Iranian, was probably beyond the limits of what is possible for man. The difference was too great between the historical traditions of the two nations; and their mental attitude, the growth of ages, was too unlike. Yet the project itself is quite in keeping with Greek ideas of that time, and is entirely in the spirit of Plato's political fancies. To the speculative Greek mind no scheme seemed impossible, provided that the purely logical structure was harmonious and pleasing.

The second point that troubled Alexander was the nature of his own power. Philip, his father, had felt no anxiety about his position: he was the lawful King of Macedonia, inheriting his power from his ancestors and acknowledged by his people, while he ruled the Greeks because they had chosen him as their commander-in-chief. But for Alexander, a king of kings and ruler of a world-empire, more was needed. In the East kingly power was closely connected with religion, and to break that connexion would be a serious mistake. But there were many religions in Alexander's empire, and each had its own way of deciding whether kings were divine beings. How Alexander himself regarded this question, we do not know. He may, as a pupil of Aristotle, have taken the rationalistic view and treated it as a mere matter of politics; or the mystical side of the Greek mind, which saw no absolute distinction between the divine and the human and fully accepted the possibility of a divine incarnation, may have made itself audible in the conqueror's breast. We have no certain knowledge; but I am inclined to believe that Alexan-
der ranked himself above ordinary mortals, not merely because he was a king and a distant descendant of Heracles. A man's thoughts are apt to take a mystical direction, when death threatens him every day, when his victories are checked by no limits, and when the flattery of those around him—flattery which in the ancient world, and especially in the East, took the shape of religious worship—went beyond all bounds.

The tendency of religious thought, both in the East and in the West, fell in with Alexander's own feeling. The conception of divinity became more and more spiritualized at this time, losing its local impress and breaking free from national limits. Religious bodies, unconnected with government and united only by a common belief and a common worship, came into existence again and again. The god of that period was not necessarily Zeus, or Ammon, or Ahuramazda, or Jehovah; often he was simply God. Hence it was not difficult for Alexander to believe the oracles of Apollo at Didyma and Ammon in Egypt, and at the same time to believe the priests of Babylon, when they assured him with one voice of his divine origin. It is certain that vast numbers of the people who inhabited his empire believed in his divinity. The legend of the 'divine Iskander' survives to this day in the Iranian world. The collapse of the Persian Monarchy at a single touch from the young King of Macedonia could not but seem a miracle to the mystical Oriental mind; and it could not fail to impress the Greeks also, especially the Anatolian Greeks, who had been inclined to pay divine honours even to Lysonder and Agesilaus. To them Alexander's Indian campaign really seemed to be a repetition of the conquest of India by Dionysus. Thus it is natural enough that Alexander's power was formally pronounced to be divine; it became the custom everywhere to pay him divine honours, and this state of things was accepted by the inhabitants of his empire. Rationalists and sceptics in Greece might smile and return sarcastic answers when Alexander urged the recognition of his claim; but the divine nature of his power remained, for all that, a real and powerful factor in the life of
his empire, even if we assume that he did not believe in it himself.

When Alexander died, leaving no legal heir of full age, it became an acute question whether the world-wide monarchy which he had left unfinished could still continue to exist. It was an artificial creation of a purely military kind, in which the disruptive forces were stronger than those which made for unity; and his personality was indispensable to its continuance. We have seen how strong a tendency there was in the Persian Monarchy, before the coming of Alexander, to dissolve into its component parts. Greece resented her submission as tantamount to slavery, and showed this feeling immediately after Alexander’s death, till Macedonia was obliged once again to restore order by force. In fact, the only bond of union in the empire was the army, especially the Macedonian army with its hereditary devotion to the Macedonian dynasty. But this devotion of the soldiers to their lawful king could not maintain unity for ever, especially when the dynasty came to be represented by a feeble-minded youth and an infant.

Either Philip Arridæus, Alexander’s half-brother, or Alexander’s posthumous son by Roxana, might be considered the lawful heir. But personal ambition and thirst for power prevailed over devotion to the dynasty in the minds of Alexander’s generals. A prolonged conflict ensued, in which the question of supporting one or other of the heirs to the succession sank by degrees out of sight, and another question came to the front—whether Alexander’s empire should hold together or split up into separate kingdoms, ruled by those who had been his closest companions and coadjutors. In this confused struggle for power all Alexander’s heirs and all the members of the ruling house perished one after another; each of them was removed by one or other of the generals, who wished to secure the succession for themselves and to rule that vast empire without a rival.

Not one of them, however, had sufficient ability or sufficient influence over the soldiers, to compel the obedience of the whole
army and to force the other generals to admit his supremacy. Each pretender to power had to meet a strong coalition of his rivals who commanded divisions of Alexander's army stationed in the different parts of the empire; and nearly all of them died a violent death. In this way Perdiccas, Antipater, and Polyperchon disappeared one after another. Antigonus, surnamed The One-eyed, one of the ablest generals, who also possessed a capable assistant in his son, Demetrius Poliorcetes, came nearest to realizing the conception of an undivided empire under his personal rule. But even his authority was not recognized by the other generals who ruled separate provinces—Lysimachus in Thrace, Seleucus in Babylonia, Ptolemy in Egypt, and Cassander in Macedonia. They united to inflict a decisive blow on Antigonus in a battle at Ipsus in Asia Minor in 301 B.C., which cost Antigonus his life.

The battle of Ipsus settled the question: the undivided monarchy of Alexander ceased to exist. It split up into a number of component parts, of which the three most important were these: Syria, including all the eastern parts of Alexander's kingdom and some of Asia Minor; Egypt; and Macedonia. The Seleucidae, or dynasty of Seleucus, established themselves in Syria; the Ptolemies or Lagidae, descendants of Ptolemy Lagos, ruled Egypt; while Macedonia, of which Greece was still a dependency, became, after much strife and bloodshed, the kingdom of the Antigonidae, or descendants of Antigonus the One-eyed. In Egypt and Syria the 'kings', as they styled themselves after 307 B.C., based their power on the right of conquest, as successors of Alexander. Foreigners in the countries they ruled, they relied upon a mercenary army for support. The population submitted to them, as they had submitted to their predecessors, growing accustomed to them by degrees, until they settled down in the belief that it was impossible to resist their power and the power of the Greeks and Macedonians who came with them. In Macedonia the new dynasty of the Antigonidae considered themselves lawful successors of Philip's family, and acquired by degrees the
confidence and support of the people. All three dynasties ruled over countries which had long been accustomed to absolute monarchy; and for this reason they were likely to last longer.

These powers are commonly called 'Hellenistic', a term which is applied also to the whole period between Alexander's death and the conquest of the East by Rome. Each of them, especially at the beginning of its independent existence, had aspirations to political supremacy and a restoration of the world-wide empire. But, apart from these pretensions, each had to face immediate problems, connected with the past history and economic needs of his realm. The situation led to constant wars between them; in consequence of war each was weakened, and a number of new independent kingdoms were formed by secession. These were mainly military monarchies, like the powers from which they seceded.

The first object of the Ptolemies was to secure the safety of Egypt, the country from which they derived all their political importance. Egypt was in constant danger, because the flat coast at the mouths of the Nile was at the mercy of any invader with a powerful fleet; and to conquer Egypt by land was easy for any enemy who controlled the Syrian and Phoenician coast. Thus to Egypt it was a matter of life and death, no less than in the age of the Pharaohs, to have a strong fleet and a good maritime base at home, and, as far as possible, to control the coast to the north. For the reasons that have been indicated, Alexandria, a Greek city founded by Alexander, became the key to Egypt and its capital. Alexandria had strong walls and a splendid harbour, partly artificial. Under Alexander and the Ptolemies Egypt turned definitely towards the sea and finally became one of the Mediterranean empires. Her wealth was based partly upon exports, and on the office discharged by the Nile as a cheap and convenient trade-route for Egypt and Central Africa. The wares of Arabia also were brought in caravans to the Nile from the Red Sea ports; and part of the trade between Hither Asia and India passed through the harbours of Arabia. Thus the chief anxiety
of the Ptolemies was to develop and defend Alexandria, and to assure to Egyptian trade a free and wide market.

These objects brought Egypt in collision first of all with Syria, the empire of the Seleucidae, and formerly the Persian kingdom. It was as important to Syria as it had been to the Persian kings to command the coast-line of Palestine, Phoenicia, Syria, and Asia Minor: otherwise she would become an inland Asiatic power unconnected with the Greek world, and her kings would be unable to recruit her composite army with Greek and Macedonian mercenaries. The Iranian element in the population was never a support to the power of their new masters, and later seceded from Syria altogether. Hence the Seleucidae and the Ptolemies were constantly fighting for Palestine, Phoenicia, and south Syria; and the Anatolian coast was constantly passing from one rival to the other. The fortune of war was fickle, and neither combatant could claim a decisive victory. Their forces were approximately equal. The earlier Ptolemies—Soter, Philadelphus, Euergetes, and Philopator—succeeded in creating a great empire with a number of foreign possessions in Palestine, Phoenicia, south Syria, south and central Asia Minor, and on the coast of the Hellespont. But in the beginning of the second century B.C. the Seleucidae had the advantage of the later Ptolemies—Eiphphanes, Philometor, and Euergetes II—till Egypt was in danger of becoming a province of an Asiatic kingdom. The former struggle of Egypt in the Eighteenth Dynasty against Hither Asia, and later against the Assyrian and Persian kingdoms, was repeated again in its main features. But eventually Syria's gradual disintegration left Egypt the sole and last heir to Alexander's Empire.

In fighting for supremacy at sea and control of the sea-routes, Egypt came into collision with the Greek city-states, especially Athens, and with the islands of the Archipelago. In disputing the command of the Aegean against Macedonia and Syria, the Ptolemies stuck to the former policy of Persia, which was afterwards adopted by the Romans also: they professed to defend the
freedom of the Greek states, while within their own empire they
demanded entire subservience from the Greek cities in Asia
Minor and the islands. This policy brought against them the
forces of the Macedonian kings. Antigonus Gonatas, son of
Demetrius Poliorcetes, established himself as King of Mac-
edonia in 276 B.C., and was followed by a line of active and able
monarchs—Antigonus Doson, Demetrius, Philip V. To them
control of Greece was highly important; because, without it,
Macedonia would be exposed to attack by sea; and the master
of Greece must also be master of the Aegean. Thus there was
constant fighting between Macedonia and Egypt; the presidency
over the league of Aegean islands was the prize for which they
fought, and this presidency passed again and again from one
rival to the other.

Constant warfare swallowed up the resources of the three
great Hellenistic powers, drained their strength, and made them
incapable of coping with the ever accelerating forces of internal
disruption. Syria was the most heterogeneous of the three and
suffered most from this cause. First to separate from her in 280
B.C. were Armenia, Cappadocia, Pontus, and Bithynia, formerly
called satrapies of the Persian Empire, but, in fact, tributary
kingdoms. Native kings with a veneer of Greek culture estab-
lished themselves in all these countries, and tried to seize such
Greek cities as lay within their domains; the form of government
adopted was absolute monarchy of the type familiar in the East.
The most civilized of these kingdoms was Bithynia, with its
Thracian population and a whole row of ancient Greek cities on
the Euxine and the Sea of Marmora.

The political life of Asia Minor was much complicated by the
coming of the Celts (the Greeks called them Galatians), who
crossed over about 278 B.C. from the Balkan peninsula, where
the Macedonian Monarchy had been carrying on an obstinate
struggle against them. They penetrated far into Asia Minor and
established themselves on the plains of Phrygia, where they
formed a strong alliance of several clans under the leadership of
the clan-kings or princes. From this base they constantly threatened the peace of the country, bearing plunder, murder, and devastation in their train, and destroying the promising prospects of trade and industry. The Seleucidae were powerless to cope with the invaders, and therefore the inhabitants were forced themselves to undertake the task of defending their lands from these formidable barbarians. This state of affairs was the main reason which induced so large a part of Asia Minor to secede from the Seleucid monarchy and set up kingdoms of their own.

One of these independent powers was the kingdom of Pergamum. Pergamum was a fortified Greek city of moderate size which commanded the whole valley of the Caycus in Mysia; it had long been ruled by Greek tyrants who paid tribute to the Persian monarchy while it existed. When Alexander's generals were fighting against Antigonus the One-eyed, Lysimachus, who was one of them, adopted Pergamum as his base and entrusted the defence of it to one of his officers—Philetærus, a Greek by one parent. The fort contained also a large sum of money, the general's war-chest. When Lysimachus fell in battle with Seleucus in 283 B.C., Philetærus set up for himself and offered his aid to Seleucus. From that date Pergamum was a separate kingdom, at first tributary to Syria, but from the time of Eumenes I (263 B.C.) entirely independent.

This kingdom owed its stability to the bold and sagacious policy of Philetærus and his successors, Eumenes I and Attalus I, who reigned from 241 to 197 B.C. They gained the attachment of the Greeks in the north-west of Asia Minor by their skill and courage in fighting the Galatians; they successfully defended against the invader not only their own domains but also the central and southern region of the country. At the same time they increased the prosperity of their kingdom by sensible and prudent management, and thus were able to maintain constantly a strong mercenary army and efficient fleet. This military strength made it possible to veer about at the right moment be-
tween Egypt, Syria, and Macedonia, and to increase their territory by degrees. They, too, were the first to realize the strength of Rome, relying upon whom they became in the second century B.C. masters of almost all central and southern Anatolia, by annexing the dominions which Syria and Egypt had held there.

Somewhat later than Asia Minor, central Asia also finally severed its connexion with Syria. Bactria, a half-Greek country, broke away c. 250 B.C.; and in 248 the territory of the old Medo-Persian kingdom was invaded by the Parthians, a semi-nomadic people of Iranian stock. By the middle of the second century B.C. they had acquired Media, and at the death of their king Mithridates I (138–7) they also dominated Mesopotamia and Persia. The Parthians founded a strong state with a viceroy of Greek civilization, which lasted for many centuries, terrifying the eastern provinces of Syria and proving itself later the most powerful and formidable neighbour of the Roman Empire.

In Greece the forces of disruption never ceased working for a single moment. Macedonia tried every means to consolidate her authority and to convert the Greek city-states into administrative departments of the kingdom; but these attempts had no lasting results. Fresh revolts were constantly stirred up by the intrigues of Egypt and Syria. Sparta, which had never become a part of the Macedonian monarchy, played a conspicuous part in the struggle against Macedonia. Of special significance was her political action during the short period when two of her kings—Agis IV about 245–241 B.C., and then, with more success, Cleomenes from 227 to 222 B.C.—carried through a radical programme of economic and social reform. They divided up all the land among a large number of Lacedaemonians, and thus restored for a time the military strength of Sparta. Antigonus Doson, the Macedonian king, defeated Cleomenes in a decisive battle at Sellasia in 222 B.C.; but Sparta, even under the successors of Cleomenes, still preserved her political independence.

Athens was less successful in her attempts to recover freedom. During the Hellenistic Age she kept her democratic constitution
and some of her foreign possessions, and enjoyed periods of marked commercial prosperity; but all her endeavours to regain complete political independence miscarried. Her most considerable effort was the so-called Chremonidean war (267–263 B.C.), when, having Sparta and Egypt for allies, she sought to shake off the Macedonian yoke; but the yoke only became tighter because of her action. At a later time, in the reigns of Antigonus Doson and Demetrius, Macedonia was content with friendly neutrality on the part of Athens; but this neutrality was hardly distinguishable from tributary dependence.

Macedonia found stronger and more serious opponents in two leagues of city-states which were formed in Greece at this time—the Achaean League in the north of the Peloponnese, and the Aetolian League in north-west Greece. The constitution of both was federal; that is, each state included in the league had a vote on all matters of business which was proportionate to its own size and military strength. Though these leagues were tough and long-lived institutions, yet they were never able to unite under their banner any considerable part of Greece. Their endeavours to gain additional territory led to frequent wars against individual states and between the two leagues; and Macedonia made skilful use of these quarrels, interfering now on one side and now on the other.

As a result of the unceasing strife between governments the island of Rhodes now asserted itself as an entirely independent power in the Hellenistic world and the Archipelago. Her favourable situation on the main trade-routes from the East to Greece, and from Italy to Greece and the East, made Rhodes one of the largest seaport towns in Hellas, more important even than Athens. Her fleet became by degrees one of the strongest in the Hellenistic world; and at the end of the third century B.C. and throughout the second, it fell to her, with the tacit consent of the three great powers, to fight against piracy and secure the safety of navigation in the Aegean. In this task she was guided by a law devised by Rhodes herself and recognized by all Hel-
lenistic powers, great and small, for regulating international trade and shipping. Cyzicus and Byzantium, large cities and ports, discharged the same office in the Hellespont and the Sea of Marmora, patrolling the seas in defence of commerce; while the Bosporan kingdom, which had now become powerful both by land and sea, maintained peace and order on the Black Sea from its capital Panticapaeum, the modern Kerch.

Thus by degrees there grew up in the Hellenistic world a very complicated and confused political situation. There were a large number of independent and partly independent powers, each jealously watching the movements of its neighbours. The attempt of any single community to extend its territory and its power at the expense of others met with vigorous opposition, for coalitions were constantly being formed to suppress such land-grabbers. Something like a balance of power was reached, which made it impossible for any of the powers to keep the lead for long. The members of this Hellenistic family were as follows: three great powers—Egypt, Macedonia, Syria; about a dozen petty Greek and half-Greek monarchies—Epirus in the Balkan peninsula; Pergamum, Bithynia, Pontus, Armenia, Cappadocia, and Galatia, in Asia Minor; the Bosporan kingdom on the Black Sea; Parthia and Bactria in central Asia, Cyrene and the Nubian kingdom in Africa; and also a number of independent Greek city-states, and the two Greek Leagues. Meanwhile, new states were growing up on the outskirts of the Greek world, and these began to pay some attention to Hellenistic affairs and the balance of power that ruled there. In the north of the Balkan peninsula a number of Thracian and Celtic states came into existence; in the steppes of southern Russia a Scythian kingdom was followed by several kingdoms of Sarmatians. In the West the strongest powers were these: Carthage; the Sicilian Greeks, who had united again in the third century B.C. under the direction of Syracuse and her able ruler, Hiero II; various alliances of Italian clans, among which the league of Latin cities under the presidency of Rome was steadily growing in importance; and lastly,
an alliance of Gallic or Celtic tribes in what is now France and in north Italy.

Thus the Greek world, even in the monarchical phase of its development, was reverting to the conditions of the fourth century B.C., that is, to extreme subdivision of political and military strength. Now, as then, war was the rule, not peace. Not a single one of the Hellenistic governments of this period possessed either a great extent of territory or a strong army. Egypt, under the weak and incompetent kings of the second century B.C., had lost nearly all her foreign possessions. Syria was crippled by constant internal commotions. Macedonia was perpetually at war with her Greek vassals and allies, especially with the Aetolian and Achaean Leagues. Nor did individual states enjoy peace at home. The strife of parties and classes was perhaps smothered in monarchies by the absolute power of the ruler, and came to the surface only in revolts of the natives against Greek rule; but it burned all the more fiercely in the Greek city-states. In most of them the same struggle of classes which marked the domestic politics of the fourth century B.C. was equally rife two centuries later.
After the death of Alexander the chief political powers in the Greek world were the so-called Hellenistic monarchies, which, with the exception of Macedonia, had once formed parts of the ancient kingdom of Persia. All these were ruled by kings of Macedonian birth and Greek culture, relying upon mercenary troops, who were either Macedonians or Greeks or Hellenized 'barbarians'. These men were recruited by agents in the great markets for mercenary soldiers in Greece and Macedonia, or among the Thracian and Celtic tribes which inhabited Asia Minor and the north of the Balkan peninsula. The kingdoms of Asia and Egypt found support also in the numbers of foreign settlers whom they attracted to their dominions. A medley of races—Macedonians, Greeks, Jews, Syrians, Persians, and others—the immigrants soon became Greek in their mode of life and civilization. They formed a privileged class, comprising the well-to-do citizens and the numerous officials of the kingdom.

Though these upstart Eastern dynasties were entirely strange to the natives over whom they ruled, yet they had reason to believe that their position was secure. Their chief security was in the economic prosperity of their subjects: they made it possible to use the natural wealth of the country and the labour of the inhabitants, both natives and settlers upon a wider scale and with more system. This methodical exploitation of natural re-