

## HELLENISTIC MONARCHIES (323–31 B.C.)

Alexander the Great's generals, known in the first generation as *diadochoi* (successors), who presided over the new cultural synthesis, half-Greek and half-Oriental, founded by Alexander, seized the fragments of his empire. Ptolemy took Egypt, Antigonus Greece and Macedonia, and Seleucus Asia after the decisive battle of Ipsus in 301 ended the wars that broke out on Alexander's death. They established bureaucratic monarchies, with the Ptolemies becoming the wealthiest from irrigated agriculture and Alexandria's central position in world trade. The Seleucids recreated the Persian Empire with variegated ethnicities loosely supervised from Antioch and Seleucia—new foundations rivaling Alexandria—while the relatively poor Antigonids relied on Hellenic homogeneity.

*Basic Character and Historical Development.* Inspired by the examples of Philip of Macedon and Alexander, the Hellenistic monarchs and their Greek or Hellenized subjects in newly founded or Hellenized cities as far east as India and Bactria practiced pederasty, patronized *gymnasia*, secluded women, and held *symposia*. Eventually Pergamon, under the Attalids, and the island of Rhodes managed to secure independence as buffer states in the Aegean, where Ptolemaic navies contested Antigonid and Seleucid claims. In Alexandria, Ptolemy I established the Museum, subsidizing its learned symposia frequented by leading scholars, and the Library, created by Demetrius of Phaleron on the model of his teacher Aristotle. Aristotle had first systematized the collections of books begun by the sixth-century Polycrates of Samos and Hipparchus of Athens, both pederasts. Other cities, notably Pergamon, Beirut, and Athens, which also created libraries, took the lead in science, culture, and philosophy.

Weakened by internecine rivalries, the Hellenistic monarchies fell one

by one to Rome—Macedonia in 147, Syria, its easternmost provinces in Parthia, Persia, and Mesopotamia long since independent, in 78, and Egypt in 30 B.C. at the death of Cleopatra, last of the Ptolemies. It was Hellenistic rather than Hellenic pederasty that the Romans absorbed, and this more often involved relations between masters and slaves or rich men and poor boys than the classical model of one aristocrat training another, younger one. Further, effeminate boys and transvestites of the type long popular in the East, even eunuchs like Bagoas, seized with the rest of King Darius' harem by Alexander, became fashionable in the Hellenistic cities even among Greeks. The Hellenic institutionalization of pederasty passed into Asia and Africa before it began to penetrate Rome during the middle and late Republic. In the East, as in Rome and in Greece itself, this later pederasty spread to the lower classes, which teemed in the urban slums, separated from families or village stability. The independent citizen hoplite (foot soldier) from the classes wealthy enough to afford their own heavy armor and hence able to fight in the phalanx was replaced by the mercenary recruited abroad or drawn from the lower classes. The new "volunteer" soldiers often regarded the barracks as their homes and the regiment as their family, and were hired by the monarchs who snuffed out the liberties of the Greek city-states.

*Sexual Aspects.* The following monarchs became famous for homosexuality: Demetrius Poliorcetes; his son Antigonus Gonatas; Antiochus I, who loved three boys at the same time; Ptolemy IV; Ptolemy VII, who kept a harem of boys; Ptolemy XIII; and Nicomedes of Bithynia, who paid the 16-year-old Julius Caesar to sodomize him.

Ptolemy II Philadelphus imitated the Pharaonic practice of marrying his sister as did some of his descendants such as Ptolemy XIII, XIV, and XV, each of whom in order married their sister Cleopatra. She was the last of the line and after their deaths Cleopatra became mistress of

Julius Caesar and then wife of Mark Anthony. Even members of the lower classes began to marry their sisters, but many in vast city slums and in the countryside were doubtless too poor to marry: like slaves unable to secure regular access to women they must have often turned to homosexuality. Poets such as **Theocritus** and **Callimachus**, scholars at the Library of Alexandria, testify to the ready availability of boys. Pederasty was a subject for Alexandrian as it had been for Athenian tragedians. Beginning with **Rhianus** of Crete (flourished ca. 275 B.C.), **Aristides** of Miletus (ca. 100 B.C.), **Apollonius** of Rhodes (ca. 295 B.C.), **Diotimus** (third century B.C.), **Moschus** (ca. 150 B.C.), **Bion** (ca. 100 B.C.), and **Meleager** of Gadara (ca. 100 B.C.) number among the pederastic poets. **Phanocles** (ca. 250 B.C.) composed his garland of elegies entitled *Love Stories of Beautiful Boys* (ca. 250 B.C.). The *Musa Paidike*, Book XII of the **Greek Anthology**, contains poems mostly composed in this era exhibiting a frankly sensual pederasty without even a pretext of *paideia* (education). This attitude continued in the Greek-speaking east until the Christian sexual counter-revolution of the fourth century, contemporaneous with the establishment of the **Byzantine Empire**.

Instead of recommending civic virtue as their classical predecessors had done, philosophers argued how one should best inure oneself against the changing fortunes controlled by the goddess *Tyche* or arbitrary despots. These philosophers included: **Epicurus**; **Zeno** of Citium, founder of **Stoicism**; **Peripatetics**, who continued **Aristotle's** tradition in the Lyceum; and members of the Academy of **Plato**. Jews, like **Philo**, especially in Alexandria, where their largest colony lived, and in Jerusalem, where under the **Maccabees** they revolted against **Antiochus IV**, condemned pederasty and some other aspects of Hellenism which they found morally repellent, while absorbing still others.

The lasting importance of the Hellenistic monarchies lies in the interface which they created between Judaic and Hellenic cultures; this setting fostered the new syncretistic religion of Christianity which was destined to embrace the entire Greco-Roman world—with tragic consequences for homosexuality.

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### HEMINGWAY, ERNEST (1899–1961)

American novelist and short story writer. Hemingway first achieved fame as a member of the "Lost Generation" in Paris in the 1920s. His trademark, a lean, almost laconic style, was widely imitated. Noted for his exploration of "supermasculine" subject matter—war, bullfighting, safaris, deep-sea fishing—Hemingway became a veritable icon of heterosexuality.

Yet careful readers could note hints of sexual unorthodoxy. The short story "Mr. and Mrs. Elliott" (1925) concerns lesbianism, and in fact Hemingway was fascinated with the expatriate world of lesbian Paris typified by **Natalie Barney**, **Sylvia Beach**, **Gertrude Stein**, and their associates. In *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) the hero is unable to consummate a sexual relationship because of impotence. The material for the novel derives from a trip to Spain financed by his traveling companion, the bisexual writer **Robert McAlmon**.

Hemingway's mother, **Grace**, who may have been a lesbian, dressed the boy in girl's clothes to make a twin sister of him for the older **Marcelline**. *The Garden of Eden*, a novel published in abridged form only in 1986, reveals homosexual and transsexual fantasies. Rumors that his suicide was the result of an unhappy gay affair have not been substantiated.