

The ptolemaic, seleucid, and antigonid kingdoms

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Alexander, son of king Philip II and Olympias was born in 356 B. C. E, and at age 19, became king of Macedon. With a great army at his disposal and his brilliant military mind, he started his conquest. From 337-323 B. C. E Alexander conquered Greece, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and a large part of Asia. Alexander ruled from Macedonia to the northern part of India. He defeated the Persians numerous times with his incredible military strategies, even when his armies were outnumbered by almost 200, 000 Persian soldiers.

The sheer size of his empire was unlike anything ever seen before but when he died in 323 B. C. E, the three main areas he conquered

(Greece/Macedonia, Egypt, and Mesopotamia/ Asia) were split up and became their own kingdoms. The area that was once Greece and Macedonia became the Antigonid Kingdom, the Egyptian area became the Ptolemaic Kingdom and the Asia/ Mesopotamia area became the Seleucid Kingdom.

The Ptolemaic Kingdom came about when one of Alexander's cavalry companions, Ptolemy, took his loyal troops to the Egyptian area to take over the wealthy land. Once there, Ptolemy diverted Alexander's body to Egypt, which was originally being sent to Macedonia for burial.

Once in Alexandria, Ptolemy took Alexander's body and built a massive and imposing tomb for his late king. After defending Egypt from some of Alexander's other generals who wanted Egypt, the Ptolemies ruled Egypt as their god/kings. This only took place after they struck up a bargain with the Egyptian priests and in which the Egyptians could continue living under the same Egyptian god belief system while the Ptolemies ruled as kings. Along with that agreement, the Ptolemies promised to allow the priests to maintain the up keeping of their temples and deceased pharaohs.

The Ptolemies departed from the beliefs and rules set forth by Philip and Alexander by allowing the Queens of the rulers more power than they ever had before. The perfect example of this was Cleopatra VII who even challenged the growing power of Rome. The Ptolemies also didn't really blend with the Egyptians, which was a major idea Alexander wanted to make happen (the blending of Page 2 cultures). This can be seen when the Ptolemies stayed in Alexandria conducting business and trading with Rome, where the Egyptians maintained their old religion.

The Seleucid Kingdom is named after one of Ptolemy's generals, Seleucid. After the death of Alexander, Seleucid entered Babylon in 311 B. C. E and captured the imperial treasure there. With the vast wealth at his disposal, Seleucid claimed the land as the old heartland of Persia. Unfortunately because the area was so large, Seleucid had to trade back northern India and eventually lost Asia Minor. Seleucid imported Greek and Macedonian bureaucrats and colonists. North of Babylonia a new city was built and it was named Seleucia and would eventually become its capital.

Knowing that trade with the eastern countries were vital to their survival, Seleucid's major cities were built around trade routes that connected the countries. Around 20, 000 Macedonians came to Seleucid and they felt as if they were world conquerors and felt they needed to be compensated. The Macedonians were given a significant amount of farmland because when they arrived, Seleucid realized that these people were the backbone of their society because they had no religion already set up in the area. Unlike the past rulers, Philip and Alexander, Seleucid was very worried about expanding, rather he was worried about losing land.

This was because when Seleucid came to Babylon to start his new Kingdom, he had only brought a few military forces with him. This was a problem because he controlled so much land that he didn't have enough military personnel to control the kingdom. If I was in Seleucid's position I would have asked for everyone in the old countries such as Greece and Macedonia to come over. Doing so would give me a much larger army and then I would not have to worry about losing land, rather I could expand. The last area of land left was Alexander's home country, Macedonia, and Greece which he conquered.

This land would become Antigonids once Alexander died and would be situated in Greece. The kings of Antigonids were descendants of Antigonus the one eyed, who was a general in Alexander's army when Alexander died. Unfortunately, Antigonus died without conquering the land, but his descendants eventually claimed Macedonia and Greece as Antigonids. At the time of Alexander's death, many of Alexander's treasures that he took were taken back to Macedonia. It was said that the last shipment taken back to Macedonia before Alexander's death took 110 warships just to carry all the treasure back.

So the country was very wealthy but the wealth hardly even changed society. In fact, hardly anything had changed in Macedonia since Philip II was king. The army in the kingdom still consisted of only Macedonia nobles who fought for the king and unfortunately in the 280's B. C. E the Gauls (group from the north) invaded Antigonids and caused them serious damage. Along with the damage from the north, in the south, the Greeks, who had never really accepted the Macedonians, started revolting against the Antigonids.

The Antigonids branched away from their past rulers, Philip II and Alexander by never expanding and never blending the neighboring cultures together. The Greeks never accepted the Antigonids' rule and although total warfare never broke out, it damaged the Kingdom as a whole. Not only did the Kingdom fail to expand, they couldn't even keep their own citizens in tact. If I were any of the kings in the Antigonids kingdom, I would have tried to resolve the differences with Greece and the Gauls because if they could have become allies, there would have been room for expansion.