



### Geography Skills

Alexander the Great established his empire over three continents. The smaller map on the right outlines the present-day equivalent of Alexander's empire.

- 1. Interpreting Maps** Did physical boundaries appear to have limited Alexander's conquests?
- 2. Applying Geography Skills** Compare the inset map to the large map. What modern states correspond to Alexander's empire?



of this action that the water wasted by Alexander was as good as a drink for every man in the army."

Alexander returned to Babylon, where he planned more campaigns. However, in June 323 B.C., exhausted from wounds, fever, and too much alcohol, he died at the age of 32.

**The Legacy of Alexander** What explains Alexander's extraordinary military success? No doubt, he was a great military leader—a master of strategy and tactics, fighting in every kind of terrain and facing every kind of opponent. Alexander was a brave and even reckless fighter who was quite willing to lead his men into battle and risk his own life. His example inspired his men to follow him into unknown lands and difficult situations. Alexander sought to imitate Achilles, the warrior-hero of Homer's *Iliad*, who was an ideal still important in Greek culture. Alexander kept a copy of the *Iliad*—and a dagger—under his pillow.

Alexander's military skill created an enormous legacy. He had extended Greek and Macedonian rule over a vast area. This brought large quantities of gold and silver to Greece and Macedonia, stimulating their economies.

Alexander's successors tried to imitate him, using force and claims of divine rule to create military monarchies. Although mainland Greeks remained committed to the ideals of the city-state, the creation of the monarchies became part of Alexander's political legacy.

Alexander also left a cultural legacy. Due to his conquests, Greek language, architecture, literature, and art spread throughout Southwest Asia and the Near East. The cultural influences did not, however, flow in only one direction. The Greeks also absorbed aspects of Eastern culture.

**✓ Reading Check Identifying** What were the different aspects of Alexander's legacy?





*Modern Alexandria is the main port of Egypt and its second largest city. It has been a prominent cultural and economic metropolis for thousands of years.*

## The Hellenistic Kingdoms

Alexander created a new age, the **Hellenistic Era**. The word *Hellenistic* is derived from a Greek word meaning “to imitate Greeks.” It is an appropriate way, then, to describe an age that saw the expansion of the Greek language and ideas to the non-Greek world of Southwest Asia and beyond.

The united empire that Alexander created by his conquests fell apart soon after his death as the most important Macedonian generals engaged in a struggle for power. By 300 B.C., any hope of unity was dead. Eventually, four Hellenistic kingdoms emerged as the successors to Alexander: Macedonia, Syria in the east, the kingdom of **Pergamum** in western Asia Minor, and Egypt. All were eventually conquered by the Romans.

Alexander the Great had planned to fuse Macedonians, Greeks, and Persians in his new empire by using Persians as officials and encouraging his soldiers to marry native women. The Hellenistic monarchs who succeeded him, however, relied only on Greeks and Macedonians to form the new ruling class. Even those easterners who did advance to important government posts had learned Greek, for all government business was transacted in Greek. The Greek ruling class was determined to maintain its privileged position.

In his conquests, Alexander had created a series of new cities and military settlements. Hellenistic kings did likewise. These new population centers varied in size from military settlements of only a few hundred men to cities with thousands of people. Alexandria, which Alexander had founded in Egypt, was the largest city in the Mediterranean region by the first century B.C.

Hellenistic rulers encouraged a massive spread of Greek colonists to Southwest Asia. Greeks (and

Macedonians) provided not only new recruits for the army but also a pool of civilian administrators and workers. Architects, engineers, dramatists, and actors were all in demand in the new Greek cities. The Greek cities of the Hellenistic Era became the chief agents in the spread of Greek culture in Southwest Asia—as far, in fact, as modern Afghanistan and India.

**Reading Check Identifying** Which four kingdoms emerged following Alexander’s death?



### Geography Skills

After Alexander’s death, the Greek world separated into four emerging kingdoms.

**1. Interpreting Maps** Which kingdom appears to have had the most extensive territory?