

Relevant Aspects of the Fundamental Problems of Hellenism and Its Influence

ელინიზმის ძირითად პრობლემებთან დაკავშირებული შესაბამისი
ასპექტები და მისი გავლენა

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Abstract: Apart from the elements of Hellenism, it is difficult to truly understand the culture in which Christianity was born and to which Jesus Christ was addressed, because Hellenism has left its mark on thought, including that of the Jewish people, creating a discrepancy between biblical teaching and the spirit in which it was interpreted.

The history of Hellenism is an important study for those who want to understand the influence that Greek culture has had on the history of thought and the synthesis of the history of Christianity, through its double influence: that on Jewish culture and then on Christian thought. Although the Hellenistic empire of Alexander and then the Hellenistic states that succeeded it lasted only three centuries, the influence of Hellenism has a wide range and time horizon.

The Hellenistic era saw the birth of scientific, philosophical, ethical and religious ideas that dominated the world for centuries. Important advances were also made in the economic sphere, in the forms of political life, in social consciousness and in culture.

However historically assessed, the changes that took place then cannot be overlooked, because they constitute an essential historical process.

Key words: culture, civilization, Hellenism, Christianity, influence, ideas, changes, progress.

იოან-გეორგ როტარუ

ემერიტუსი პროფესორი, ბუქარესტის ძმები
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ანოტაცია: ელინიზმის ელემენტების გარეშე რთულია ცხადად გაიგო კულტურა, რომელშიც ქრისტიანობა დაიბადა და რომლისკენაც იესო ქრისტე იყო მიმართული, რადგან ელინიზმმა თავისი კვალი დატოვა აზროვნებაზე, მათ შორის ებრაელებზე, ბიბლიური სწავლებისა და იმ სულის რწმენას შორის შეუსაბამობა, რომელშიც იგი ინტერპრეტირდა.

ელინიზმის ისტორია მნიშვნელოვანი კვლევაა იმათთვის, ვისაც სურს გააგებინონ ბერძნული კულტურის გავლენა აზროვნების ისტორიაზე და ქრისტიანობის ისტორიის სინთეზზე, თავისი ორმაგი გავლენით: ჯერ ებრაულ კულტურაზე, შემდეგ კი ქრისტიანულ აზროვნებაზე. მიუხედავად იმისა, რომ ალექსანდრეს ელინისტური იმპერია და მას შემდეგ მისი მემკვიდრე ელინისტური სახელმწიფოები მხოლოდ სამი საუკუნე გაგრძელდა, ელინისტურის გავლენა ფართო დიაპაზონით და დროში იწევს.

ელინისტურმა ეპოქამ იპოვა მეცნიერული, ფილოსოფიური, ეთიკური და რელიგიური იდეების დაბადება, რომლებიც საუკუნეებით მართავდნენ მსოფლიოს. მნიშვნელოვანი პროგრესი მოხდა ეკონომიკურ სფეროში, პოლიტიკური ცხოვრების ფორმებში, სოციალურ ცნობიერებასა და კულტურაში. თუმცა ისტორიულად შეფასებული ცვლილებები მაშინ, არ შეიძლება უყურადღებოდ დარჩეს, რადგან ისინი წარმოადგენენ არსებით ისტორიულ პროცესს.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: კულტურა, ცივილიზაცია, ელინიზმი, ქრისტიანობა, გავლენა, იდეები, ცვლილებები, პროგრესი.

Introduction. The world's Hellenization²⁴¹ was one of the important elements that contributed to the timing of the coming of the Messiah. At least the Koine Greek language (common Greek language) ²⁴², which became the lingua franca of the Roman Empire²⁴³, allowed communication between people of different ethnic groups and thus the transmission of the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire.

²⁴¹ [William Woodthorpe Tarn](#), *Hellenistic Civilisation*, third edition, revised by Author and G.T.Griffith, Cleveland, Ohio, The World Publishing' Company, 1964; Abram Borisovič Ranovič, *Elenismul și rolul său istoric (Hellenism and its historical role)*, București, Editura de stat pentru literatură științifică, 1953.

²⁴² Allen, W. Sidney, *Vox Graeca: a guide to the pronunciation of classical Greek – 3rd ed.*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987; Smyth, Herbert Weir, *Greek Grammar*, Harvard University Press, 1956.

²⁴³ *Viața în alte locuri din Imperiul Roman (Life elsewhere in the Roman Empire)*. <https://povestiriadevarate.ro/istorice/cum-arata-o-zi-obisnuita-in-imperiul-roman/> ; Accesed June 13, 2024.

For some, Hellenism²⁴⁴ means a new culture composed of Greek and Oriental elements; for others it means the extension of Greek culture to the Orientals, and for others the continuation of the pure line of the old Greek civilization.²⁴⁵

Hellenism and its successes. The successes of Hellenism²⁴⁶, especially in the East, were not so great if we look at things numerically. Many Greeks and Macedonians rushed to migrate to the East, but even if we count with them the Hellenized representatives of the subject classes of the local populations, they were a minority. In Egypt²⁴⁷, out of a population of over 7 million at the end of the Hellenistic era, there were about 1 million Hellenists and Hellenized, with the largest concentration in Alexandria.²⁴⁸ In the Seleucid Kingdom²⁴⁹, the Hellenes lived almost exclusively in cities. Both Alexander²⁵⁰ and his successors founded many new towns or reorganised various old towns on the model of Greek cities. Reaching into the farthest corners of the Hellenistic world, these polis broke down the ancient forms of social organisation and brought with them not only a different, higher culture but also different types of economic relations. The successes

²⁴⁴ Adelina Piatkowski, *Istoria epocii elenistice (History of the Hellenistic Age)*, București, Editura Albatros, 1996, 336p.

²⁴⁵ [William Woodthorpe Tarn](#), *Hellenistic Civilisation*, third edition, revised by Author and G.T.Grtiffit, Cleveland, Ohio, The World Publishing' Company, 1964, pp.1-2; François Chamoux, *Civilizația greacă*. Ed. Meridiane, București, 1985; David Salariya, James Evelyn Ford, *Miturile Greciei Antice*, Editura Curtea Veche, 2008; Adelina Piatkowski, *O istorie a Greciei antice (A History of Ancient Greece)*, București, Editura Albatros, 1988, 320p.

²⁴⁶ Abram Borisovič Ranovič, *Elenismul și rolul său istoric (Hellenism and its historical role)*, București, Editura de stat pentru literatură științifică, 1953.

²⁴⁷ Lewis, Naphtali. "Greco-Roman Egypt": Fact or Fiction?" *On Government and Law in Roman Egypt*, ed. Ann Ellis Hanson, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995, pp. 138-149.

²⁴⁸ Bowman, Alan K. and Dominic Rathbone. "Cities and Administration in Roman Egypt." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 82 (1992), pp.107-127.

²⁴⁹ Rein Taagepera. „Size and Duration of Empires: Growth-Decline Curves, 600 B.C. to 600 A.D.”. *Social Science History* [Vol. 3 \(1979\) No. 3/4](#), pp. 115-138; Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art. "The Seleucid Empire (323–64 B.C.)." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/sleu/hd_sleu.htm (October 2004). See also: Yarshater, Ehsan, ed. *The Cambridge History of Iran Volume 3: The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*. 2 vols. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983; [William Woodthorpe Tarn](#), *Hellenistic Civilisation*, third edition, revised by Author and G.T.Grtiffit, Cleveland, Ohio, The World Publishing' Company, 1964, pp.126-176.

²⁵⁰ Dumitru Popa, *Daniel*, vol. I, București, 1991, pp.34-36; Jacques B. Doukhan, *Enigmele Bibliei. Daniel și Apocalips (The riddles of the Bible. Daniel and Revelation)*, Pantelimon, Editura Viață și Sănătate, 2013, p.41; *Alexandria (Titlu complet: Istoriia a Alexandrului celui Mare din Machedonia și a lui Darie din Persida Împăraților)*. (Full title: *History of Alexander the Great of Macedon and Darius of Persida of the Emperors*), Edited edition, with a preface, glossary and notes by Dan Simionescu, 2nd revised edition, București, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă, Biblioteca pentru toți, 1958.

achieved by Hellenism in the economic world become evident only by examining the Hellenistic world as a whole. The unity of the Hellenistic world clearly shows us that the old divisions were no longer of any value and that the old economic centres had lost their significance.

Hellenism²⁵¹ meant a development on a higher stage of slave relations, but appearing as a result of the slave crisis in Greece and the East, it did not and could not solve the situation. It could only cause a short-lived upsurge, particularly in the Eastern regions, without creating sufficient conditions to bring about a just society in place of slave relations, which is why Hellenism also entered a crisis, which was only partially resolved by the Roman conquest and a repetition of the process on another stage. The Roman conquest was the inevitable result of the crisis of the Hellenistic economy, which had begun as early as the beginning of the 3rd century BC. It should be noted that in the 1st century AD the idea of equality between people was born within Christianity, but not on the basis of social and economic relations, but by virtue of the teaching of Christendom, losing this feature with the gaining of the status of state religion, when the Church became a large landowner. The idea of equality between people would not, however, disappear as a desideratum, being expressed by the precursors of the Reformers and the Reformers. For example, the lollards²⁵² of John Wycliffe's²⁵³ time said that when father Adam ploughed and mother Eve sewed, the noble where bad ?

The conservatism of the technical base, this shortcoming of slavery, could not be removed as long as work was considered to be the sole prerogative of slaves, and no one was interested in making their work easier. The unity forged in the Hellenistic era was not organic and durable enough to overcome regionalism and to break the individual from the limited collectivity to which he was bound by age-old habits. Instead of the Oriental despotisms and the Greek state-state²⁵⁴, Hellenism introduced other forms of state, but the Hellenistic monarchies of the Orient the Macedonian coalition and the Achaic and Aeolian leagues of the Balkan Peninsula had not yet liquidated the Greek state-state with its narrow interests; the Hellenization of the regions of the Orient itself was achieved through the

²⁵¹ Abram Borisovič Ranovič. *Elenismul și rolul său istoric (Hellenism and its historical role)*. București, Editura de stat pentru literatură științifică, 1953.

²⁵² Ellen G.White. *Tragedia veacurilor (The Great Controversy)*. Pantelimon, Editura Viață și Sănătate, 2020, pp.80-81.

²⁵³ Andrew Larsen. *John Wyclif c. 1331–1384*, in Ian Christopher Levy (ed.), *A Companion to John Wyclif. Late Medieval Theologian*. Leiden. Brill, 2006, pp. 1–61; Lacey Baldwin Smith. *This Realm of England: 1399 to 1688*, 3rd ed. 1976, p. 41; Emily Michael. "John Wyclif on body and mind". *Journal of the History of Ideas* (2003) p. 343.

²⁵⁴ Georges Lescuyer. *Histoire des idées politiques*. Paris, Ed. Dalloz, 2001, p. 29.

organization of polis. However, these were not independent city-states, but merely cities that enjoyed greater or lesser autonomy, and the citizens were still tied to the old city institutions, which still nurtured local patriotism despite the lack of a real social life. Even in the new towns and in the Greek-Macedonian colonies, new Greek settlers had long maintained links with the homeland, setting up associations of people from the same region of the homeland, religious associations and the like.

The process of levelling and liquidating the old barriers between tribes, nations and cities is visible in the Hellenistic era and was not a decisive success. Even in the field of culture, where Hellenism marked a radical turning point, things did not go all the way, because on the one hand Eastern cultures were not assimilated, and on the other hand the Hellenic culture of the classical period was not forgotten. Many fragments of classical Greek literature have been preserved in the newer papyri, but there are no fragments of Hellenistic-Roman literature, for example from Strabo²⁵⁵, Diodorus²⁵⁶, Plutarch²⁵⁷, Lucian²⁵⁸, Clement²⁵⁹, Origen²⁶⁰ or Plotinus²⁶¹.

²⁵⁵ H.L. Jones (Ed.). „[The Geography of Strabo](#)” (html). LacusCurtius. Bill Thayer. pp. Books 1-9, 15-17, 1924. H.L. Jones (Ed.). „[The Geography of Strabo](#)” (html). The Perseus Digital Library. Tufts University. pp. Books 6-14, 1924; H.C. Hamilton & W. Falconer (Eds.). „[Strabo. Geography](#)” (html). The Perseus Project. Tufts University, 1903; Meineke A. (Ed.). „[Geographica](#)” (html). The Perseus Project. Tufts University. pp. Books 6–14, 1952.

²⁵⁶ Braithwaite-Westoby, Kara. "Diodorus and the Alleged Revolts of 374–373 BCE". *Classical Philology* 115, no. 2 (April 2020), pp. 265–270; Clarke, Katherine. "Universal perspectives in Historiography." In *The Limits of Historiography: Genre and Narrative in Ancient Historical Texts*. Edited by Christina Shuttleworth Kraus, Mnemosyne. Supplementum 191. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1999, pp.249–279; Hammond, Nicholas G. L. "Portents, Prophecies, and Dreams in Diodorus' Books 14–17." *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 39 (1998), 4, pp. 407–428; Hau, Lisa Irene, Alexander Meeus, and Brian Sheridan (eds.). *Diodoros of Sicily: Historiographical Theory and Practice in the Bibliothek*. Peeters: Leuven, 2018; McQueen, Earl I. *Diodorus Siculus. The Reign of Philip II: The Greek and Macedonian Narrative from Book XVI. A Companion*. London: Bristol Classical Press, 1995; Muntz, Charles E. *Diodorus Siculus and the World of the Late Roman Republic*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2017; Pfuntner, Laura. "Reading Diodorus through Photius: The Case of the Sicilian Slave Revolts." *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 55. (2015)1, pp. 256–272; Rubincam, Catherine. "The Organization and Composition of Diodorus' Bibliothek." *Échos du monde classique (= Classical views)* 31 (1987), pp. 313–328; Sacks, Kenneth S. *Diodorus Siculus and the First Century*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1990; Sinclair, Robert K. "Diodorus Siculus and the Writing of History." *Proceedings of the African Classical Association* 6 (1963), pp. 36–45; Stronk, Jan P. *Semiramis' Legacy. The History of Persia According to Diodorus of Sicily*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2017; Sulimani, Iris. "Diodorus' Source-Citations: A Turn in the Attitude of Ancient Authors Towards their Predecessors?". *Athenaeum* 96 (2008), 2, pp. 535–567.

²⁵⁷ Russell, Donald. "Plutarch". In Hornblower, Simon; Spawforth, Antony; Eidinow, Esther (eds.). *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (4th ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012, pp.1165–1166; Honigmann, E.A.J. "Shakespeare's Plutarch". *Shakespeare Quarterly* 10 (1959),1, pp. 25–33; Stadter, Philip A. "Plutarch and Rome". In Beck, Mark

(ed.). *A Companion to Plutarch*. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Wiley Blackwell, 2014, pp. 13–31; Beck, Mark. "Anecdote and the representation of Plutarch's ethos" (1996). In van der Stockt, Luc (ed.). *Rhetorical theory and praxis in Plutarch. The IVth International Congress of the International Plutarch Society. Collection d'Études Classiques. Vol. 11*. Leuven, Belgium, Peeters, published 2000, pp. 15–32; Georgiadou, Aristoula (1992). "Idealistic and realistic portraiture in the Lives of Plutarch". In Haase, Wolfgang (ed.). *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung. Sprache und Literatur: Allgemeines zur Literatur des 2. Jahrhunderts und einzelne Autoren der trajanischen und frühhadrianischen Zeit. Vol. 2.33.6*. Berlin, DE / New York, NY, Walter de Gruyter. pp. 4616–4623; Gill, Christopher. "The question of character-development: Plutarch and Tacitus". *Classical Quarterly* 33 (1983), 2, pp. 469–487; McInerney, Jeremy. "Plutarch's manly women". In Rosen, Ralph M.; Sluiter, Ineke (eds.). *Andreia: Studies in manliness and courage in classical Athens. Mnemosyne, Bibliotheca Classica Batava, Supplementum. Vol. 238*. Leiden, NL / Boston, MA, Brill, 2003, pp. 319–344; Mossman, Judith. "Dressed for success? Clothing in Plutarch's Demetrius". In Ash, Rhiannon; Mossman, Judith; Titchener, Frances B. (eds.). *Fame and infamy: Essays for Christopher Pelling on characterization and Roman biography and historiography*. Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 149–160; Stadter, Philip. "Anecdotes and the thematic structure of Plutarchean biography". Written at Salamanca, ES, 26–28 May 1994. In Fernández Delgado, José Antonio; Pordomingo Pardo, Francisca (eds.). *Estudios sobre Plutarco: Aspectos formales. IV Simposio español sobre Plutarco*. Madrid, ES, Ediciones Clásicas (published 1996), pp. 291–303; Stadter, Philip A. "*The rhetoric of virtue in Plutarch's Lives*". *Plutarch and his Roman Readers*. Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 231–245; Wardman, Alan E. "Description of personal appearance in Plutarch and Suetonius: The use of statues as evidence". *Classical Quarterly* 17 (1967), 2, pp. 414–420; Zadorojnyi, Alexei V. "Mimesis and the (plu)past in Plutarch's Lives". In Grethlein, Jonas; Krebs, Christopher B. (eds.). *Time and Narrative in Ancient Historiography: The "plupast" from Herodotus to Appian*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 175–198.

²⁵⁸ Turner, Paul. "Lucian of Samosata". In Edwards, Paul (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 5, New York City, New York, The MacMillan Company & The Free Press, 1967, pp. 98–99; Mesis, Charis. "The Fortune of Lucian in Byzantium". In Marciniak, Przemysław; Nilsson, Ingela (eds.). *Satire in the Middle Byzantine Period: The Golden Age of Laughter?*. Leiden, Brill, 2021, pp. 13–38; Marsh, David. "Lucian". In Grafton, Anthony; Most, Glenn W.; Settis, Salvatore (eds.), *The Classical Tradition*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010, pp. 544–546; Marciniak, Przemysław. "Reinventing Lucian in Byzantium", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 70 (2016), pp. 209–224; Anderson, Graham. *Lucian: Theme and Variation in the Second Sophistic*, Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1976; Branham, Bracht. "Satire". In Grafton, Anthony; Most, Glenn W.; Settis, Salvatore (eds.), *The Classical Tradition*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010, pp. 862–865.

²⁵⁹ Ashwin-Siejkowski, Piotr. *Clement of Alexandria on trial: the evidence of "heresy" from Photius' Bibliotheca*. Leiden, Brill, 2010; Ferguson, John. *Clement of Alexandria*. New York, Ardent Media, 1974; Berger, Teresa. *Gender Differences and the Making of Liturgical History: Lifting a Veil on Liturgy's Past*. Teresa Berger. London: Ashgate Publishing, 2011; Osborn, Eric. *Clement of Alexandria*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008; Bucur, Bogdan G. „The Other Clement of Alexandria: Cosmic Hierarchy and Interiorized Apocalypticism”. *Vigiliae Christianae* 60 (2006), 3, pp. 251–268; Outler, Albert C. „The "Platonism" of Clement of Alexandria”. *The Journal of Religion* 20 (1940), 3, pp. 217–240;

In conclusion, Hellenism²⁶² can be seen as a step forward in the history of antiquity, although the process is uneven. In the beginning some new forms of economic, political and spiritual life were created, which made it possible for the slave society to reach a stage when it became a social-economic form superior to the pre-Hellenistic one, but the changes that took place in all areas of life in the Hellenistic period were not deep enough. The causes that lay at the root of the crisis of the Hellenic states were not eliminated, and Hellenism itself soon enough ended in a crisis. The Roman conquest meant a way out of this situation and a shift to a new stage.

Rome's conquest²⁶³ of the Orient was not, therefore, the manifestation of a special spirit peculiar only to the Romans, so that Roman expansion in the East was the most brutal and ruthless manifestation that occurs when one state is weakened by internal crises and conquered by a stronger one. The causes of the Romans' successes in the Orient must be sought primarily, not in their military virtues, not in their diplomatic skill or military training, though all these must be taken into account, but primarily in the fact that the Hellenistic world was rapidly expanding and its inclusion within the new world state had become a possibility. The Hellenistic states resisted Rome, but the collapse not only militarily but politically of Mithridates VI²⁶⁴ proved that the defeat of the Orient was inevitable.

Osborn, Eric. „Arguments for Faith in Clement of Alexandria”. *Vigiliae Christianae* 48 (1994), 1, pp. 1–24.

²⁶⁰ Origene. *Scrieri Alese, Vol. III : Despre Principii. Convorbiri cu Heraclide. Exortatie la martiriu (Writings, Vol. III : On Principles. Conversations with Heraclides. Exhortation to Martyrdom)*. Translations by T. Bodogae, N. Neaga, Zorica Lațcu, C. Galeriu, București, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1984; John Meyendorff. *Teologia bizantină (Byzantine theology)*. Translations by Alexandru I. Stan, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1996; Jean Daniélou. *Origène*. Paris, 1948, rééd. Les Éditions du Cerf, 2012.

²⁶¹ Erik Emilsson. *Plotinus*. New York, Routledge, 2017; Lloyd P. Gerson. *Plotinus*. New York, Routledge, 1994; Kevin Corrigan. *Reading Plotinus. A Practical Introduction to Neoplatonism*, Purdue University Press, 1995; Lloyd P. Gerson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, Cambridge, 1996; Émile Bréhier. *Plotin: Ennéades* (with French translation). Collection Budé, 1924–1938; Dominic J. O'Meara. *Plotinus. An Introduction to the Enneads*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993. (Reprinted 2005); John M. Rist. *Plotinus. The Road to Reality*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967.

²⁶² Piérart Marcel. Edouard Will, Claude Mossé, Paul Goukowski. *Le monde grec et l'Orient. II. Le IV^e siècle et l'époque hellénistique*. In *L'antiquité classique*, Tome 47, fasc. 2, 1978. pp. 683-684.

²⁶³ Adelina Piatkovski. *Istoria epocii elenistice*. București, Editura Albatros, 1996, p. 208.

²⁶⁴ **Alexandru Avram, Octavian Bounegru**. “[Mithridates al VI-lea Eupator și coasta de vest a Pontului Euxin. În jurul unui decret inedit de la Histria](#)” (Mithridates VI Eupator and the west coast of the Pontus Euxinus. Around an unpublished decree of Histria). *Pontica* 30 (1997), pp.155-165.

If this was perhaps not very clear in the consciousness of the contemporaries, they were vaguely aware of it, and with the beginning of the 2nd century, both in Greece and in the Orient, pro-Roman political moods and currents appeared, and small cities and states sought the so-called protection of Rome. The Hellenistic world was absorbed by Rome, with the exception of a few remote lands in the Orient, which found sufficient strength to defend their independence and, by appropriating many elements of Hellenistic culture, independently built up their later social and economic life, but by submitting to Rome and merging with it into a single political and economic whole, Hellenism retained the fundamental elements of its culture and even developed them further. The changes in the economy and social relations of the Hellenistic world, and not only of Greece but also of the Orient, led to radical changes in the cultural field. Links with Greek culture had existed in the Orient even before Alexander, but it was not until the Hellenistic period that Greek culture became widely interwoven in all the countries of the Orient that came within the political and economic sphere of influence of the Hellenistic states, in other words, a penetration so strong that it left indelible traces. At that time, if you spoke Koine Greek, you could travel from one end to the other of the entire world inhabited and known by the Greeks at that time, which also made it possible, in the first Christian century, to spread the Gospel from one end of the Roman Empire to the other.

Apart from the elements of Hellenism, it is difficult to truly understand the culture in which Christianity was born and to which Jesus Christ was addressed, because Hellenism has left its mark on thought, including that of the Jewish people, creating a discrepancy between biblical teaching and the spirit in which it was interpreted.

The history of Hellenism is an important study for those who want to understand the influence of Greek culture in the history of thought and in the synthesis of the history of Christianity, through its double influence: on Jewish culture and then on Christian thought. Although the Hellenistic empire of Alexander and then the Hellenistic states that succeeded it lasted only three centuries, the influence of Hellenism has a wide range and time horizon.

Despite this reality, the history of Hellenism has attracted little scholarly attention, so that until the mid-19th century its study was not studied in depth. In the course of the study we will present some major aspects of Hellenism and its influence.

After the great achievements of the culture of Athenian democracy in the 5th century, a culture which created the wonderful works of art that captivate us to this day and which produced brilliant philosophers, eminent statesmen and renowned masters of the art of the word, the entire subsequent history of Greece

appeared faded, poor in content, undeserving of any attention. From the charming classical Greece, historians have preferred to pass directly to republican Rome, in whose traditions we find, as an instructive example of civic virtue and military art, dealing only in passing with the history of Hellenism. The one Alexander Macedon²⁶⁵, the great conqueror, who astonished not only his contemporaries but also subsequent generations, occupies in the works of the history of antiquity the place which is his due. But in studying Alexander's reign, historians are content to note that after his death the great edifice he built collapsed.

Besides, the insufficiency of the sources, the difficulty of interpreting and coordinating them, and the extremely complicated political history of Hellenism frightened scholars, who considered the task of unravelling such a tangled source too onerous, just for the sake of clarifying an uninteresting period of history, namely the period of the decline of the creative forces of the Greek people.

But nevertheless Hellenism constitutes an entire epoch in the history of antiquity, spanning three centuries, from 336 BC, the date of Alexander's accession to the throne, to 30 BC, the year of the Roman conquest of Egypt²⁶⁶, the last great Hellenistic state²⁶⁷. It encompassed almost the entire civilised world of the time²⁶⁸, from Sicily to India, from Nubia to the Bosporan (Bosporan) Kingdom, i.e. the Cimmerian Kingdom of the Bosphorus²⁶⁹ and Scythia. Its influence penetrated as far

²⁶⁵ Pierre Briant.1985. *Alexandru cel Mare (Alexander the Great)*, București, Editura Corint, 2001; Hans Joachim Gehrke. 2014. *Alexandru cel Mare (Alexander the Great)*. București, Editura All; Francois Chamoux.1985. *Civilizația elenistică (Hellenistic Civilization)*. București, Editura Meridiane; Debra Skelton, Pamela Dell, *Empire of Alexander the Great*. New York, Chelsea House Publishers, 2009; Jacob Abbott. *Alexander the Great Makers of History*, Project Gutenberg Online, 2009; Ernest A. Wallis Budge. *The History of Alexander the Great*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1889; A. B. Bosworth.*Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 1988; Peter Green. *Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic Age*. London, Phoenix, 2007.

²⁶⁶ Peacock, David. "The Roman Period (30 BC–AD 311)". In *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, edited by Ian Shaw. Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 422–445; Chauveau, Michel, *Egypt in the Age of Cleopatra: History and Society under the Ptolemies*, Translated by David Lorton, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2000.

²⁶⁷ E.G. Turner. "Oxyrhynchus and Rome." *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 79 (1975), p. 3.

²⁶⁸ Bowman, Alan Keir. *Egypt After the Pharaohs: 332 BC–AD 642; From Alexander to the Arab Conquest*, 2nd ed. Berkeley, University of [California](#) Press, 1996.

²⁶⁹ Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*, cartea a XII-a, capitolul 31; Hatto H. Schmitt, Ernst Vogt, *Lexikon des Hellenismus*, Otto Harrassowitz GmbH & Co, Wiesbaden, 2005, « Bosporanisches Reich 4 », p.206.

west as Italy²⁷⁰ and Spain, and as far east as China. One might even say that the history of Hellenism was the universal history of those times.

In the Hellenistic era, scientific, philosophical, ethical and religious ideas were born and have dominated the world for centuries. Important advances were also made in the economy, in the forms of political life, in social consciousness and in culture. However historically assessed, the changes that took place then cannot be overlooked, because they constitute an essential historical process.

The terms *Hellenism* and *Hellenistic* were introduced into historiographical terminology by the German historian Johann Gustav Droysen²⁷¹ in the mid-19th century. Since then this important period in human history has been increasingly studied. His study has been aided by the ever-increasing number of archaeological finds. It was at first rather difficult for historiography to create a unified and harmonious system of the history of Hellenism, to work out a single conception of its historical essence and role, and to arrive at a unity of views in determining its geographical and chronological limits.

Thus Droysen went on to expound the history of Hellenism, especially the political history, and from this only the politico-military one, up to 222 BC. In the third volume of his *History of Greece*, published in the early years of the 20th century, the German historian Karl Julius Beloch²⁷² considers 217 BC to be the watershed of Hellenism, the date on which the Romans first entered the Balkan Peninsula, specifically Illyria, and the beginning of the Roman period of ancient history. Most historians of the time, however, have placed the end of Hellenism either in 146 BC or 31 BC. Subsequently, serious studies have been written on various Hellenistic countries and on various problems of Hellenistic history, but no major work has appeared on Hellenism as a whole. The only exception is the book by the English historian Sir William Woodthorpe Tarn²⁷³, with his *Hellenistic Civilisation*, first published in 1927, which is of undoubted interest. Tarn was seriously concerned with the Hellenistic world, especially the Empire of Alexander the Great and its successor states.

²⁷⁰ Ellis, Simon P. *Graeco-Roman Egypt. Shire Egyptology 17*, ser. ed. Barbara G. Adams. Aylesbury, Shire Publications Ltd. 1992.

²⁷¹ Johann Gustav Droysen (n. [6 iulie 1808](#) – d. [19 iunie 1884](#)) was a German historian. His "History of Alexander the Great" was the first work to represent a new school of historical thought, which idealized the (historical) power of the so-called "great" men. Johann Gustav Droysen, *Alexander der Große. Die Biographie*. Insel-Verlag, Frankfurt/M. 2004.

²⁷² Karl Julius Beloch (21 January 1854 in Nieder-Petschkendorf – 1 February 1929 in Rome).

²⁷³ Sir William Woodthorpe Tarn (26 February 1869 – 7 November 1957). [William Woodthorpe Tarn](#), *Hellenistic Civilisation*, third edition, revised by Author and G.T.Grtiffit, Cleveland, Ohio, The World Publishing' Company, 1964.

Historiography had not yet arrived at a generally accepted view as to the definition of the essence of Hellenism, nor had it at least found a way to arrive at a satisfactory understanding of that essence. The question launched by Sir William Woodthorpe Tarn, namely: what is Hellenism? For some, Hellenism means a new form of civilisation, made up of Greek and Oriental elements. For others Hellenism means the penetration and spread of Greek culture in the Orient. For others Hellenism means the continuation of the pure line of ancient Greek civilisation. For others, Hellenism means the same civilization, but modified according to new conditions. Sir William Woodthorpe Tarn agrees that all these definitions contain some truth, but not the whole truth, because these views regard Hellenism only as a phenomenon of culture, which is insufficient, especially as this culture is required to be explained by the material conditions of life. Tarn confined himself to a formal definition, formulated thus: Hellenism is the conventional name for the civilization of the three centuries during which Greek culture shone far beyond the borders of the homeland.

It is true that immediately after this, establishing the two stages of Hellenism, Tarn gives them a more comprehensive characterization. The first stage is a period of creation, in which something new is achieved in philosophy, in science, in literature, in politics and in forms of state organization, and in which we have an independent Greco-Macedonian world spreading its civilization to the East. The second stage is characterised by the unleashing of creative forces, by the spiritual and material influence of the East on the West, with the Greek-Macedonians finding themselves between this Eastern influence and Rome. Tarn, however, leaves it to the reader to make the definitive judgement on the essence of Hellenism. Other historians, however, have sought the roots of Hellenism and the causes of its decline in the peculiar characteristics of the Greek spirit and in the domination of certain ideas.

Tarn believes that the radical difference between Hellenism and the capitalist world lies in the fact that the Hellenistic world was devoid of machines of production but full of slaves, saying that to see Hellenistic society as it really was we must never lose sight of its slave substrate.

The publication of epigraphic and papyrological sources, which provide a wealth of material on social and economic relations in the Hellenistic period, has made it possible to produce a whole series of specialist works, many of which focus on social, political and economic aspects. What is important for us is that these documents enable us to understand how the Greek world, which had been divided

into city-states, came to encompass, through Alexander the Great²⁷⁴, a huge area and a multitude of peoples who were heterogeneous in every respect.

From an economic point of view, studies highlight the greatest degree of removal from the natural economy. Politically, they highlight the highest form that antiquity had known, namely democracy, and socially²⁷⁵, the emphasis was on slave labour relations, namely the exploitation of slave labour in its purest form.

In the 5th century, Athens reached the peak of its economic and political power, giving the world great achievements in the field of culture, but as it reached this peak, its continuous decline began and the beginning of the crisis took place. Slave labour was an obstacle to the growth of labour productivity and the development of the social division of labour. This is why technical progress was minimal. Slave labour could not stimulate technical thinking because of the unlimited possibilities of procuring slaves and the forced nature of slave labour. One of the purposes of the wars was to procure slaves. The attitude towards work as a slave-worthy occupation and the contempt for labour were serious obstacles to development. Even though in literature the farmer's work was idealised, it came to be seen as less than honourable, which also led to changes in the meaning of terms. Thus in Latin the term *rusticus*, which meant peasant, came to mean coarse and ignorant man. This mentality that work is a worthy occupation only for slaves had the effect of perpetuating a crude technique in all areas of production. Only the military and fine arts have seen technical progress. The great Greek thinkers never raised the question of perfecting the tools of the trade. Slave labour made it not only pointless but also unworthy of their attention, which is why production generally stuck to traditional methods, and this was to bring ancient Greece to a commercial crisis.

The philosophical thinking of the time launched the notions of inner man and outer man. The inner man thinks and the outer man does. The thought or soul, which controls knowledge through the senses and intuition is the inner man, while the man controlled by the world and technology is the outer man, the Greeks said. Socrates, based on this conception, said that the outer man strangles the inner man. From here reasoning went further and a distinction was made between animals, which are without reason, and man, who carries within him a divine spark through the power of his intelligence and reason. As a result, the mastery of creation is for Greek thinkers not merely an intellectual deduction, but belongs to the order of the world view. In sec. In the 1st century A.D. he spoke of the superiority of man in his

²⁷⁴ [William Woodthorpe Tarn](#). "Alexander and the Ganges." *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 43 (1923), pp. 93-101.

²⁷⁵ Richard Alston. "Philo's In Flaccum: Ethnicity and Social Space in Roman Alexandria." *Greece and Rome, Second Series* 44 (1997), 2, p.166.

work On the Creation of the World. Extrapolating this conception to the social level, as long as the slave was regarded as a talkative animal, his status of total subordination to his master forced him to work, without anyone being interested in making it easier for him, on the basis of the invention of perfected tools. Hence Philo's conception of slaves as beasts of burden. He writes: Animals, whose strength and power are so great, being very well armed, for they are naturally endowed with means of defence, come like slaves before their master to kneel before man and do what he commands. Later, these philosophical speculations led Aristotle²⁷⁶ to ask the question Who am I, which starts from the relationship between the inner and the outer man, but carries as the basis of his conception the biblical affirmation of the creation of man in the image and likeness of God, understood by him as the purpose of man and not as a given reality. Such a conception carried within it the seeds of a social revolution, because it undermined the concept of slave-like social subordination.

In Greece a certain crisis was already manifest in the 5th century, after the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC).²⁷⁷ In the 4th century BC, the city-state was no longer economically or politically in line with the conditions that had given it life and given it sufficient stability and strength. The political crisis of the city-state was the first to make itself felt. At first it was reflected only in the ideas of philosophers and in works intended for a small circle of the top of the slave-owning class. In a speech to Olympias, the sophist Gorgias²⁷⁸ urged the Greeks to unite their views and unite against the common enemy - the Persians.

Aristotle, who regarded the city-state as a natural and just form of political organization, nevertheless remarked in his work, *Politics*, that the Greeks could have ruled the world if they had succeeded in achieving a single state organization, and Isocrates²⁷⁹, the founder of the School of Rhetoric of Athens, in a speech to King Philip of Macedon, urged him to become the arbiter of all Greek affairs, and

²⁷⁶ [William Woodthorpe Tarn](#). *Hellenistic Civilisation*, third edition, revised by Author and G.T.Griffith, Cleveland, Ohio: The World Publishing' Company,1964, pp.103,122,269,282,295,302-307,325-326,328.

²⁷⁷ Thucydides. *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, transl. Richard [Crawley, 2004](#) [eBook #7142]

²⁷⁸ [William Woodthorpe Tarn](#). *Hellenistic Civilisation*, third edition, revised by Author and G.T.Griffith..., p.216.

²⁷⁹ Isocrate (Isokrates) (436-338 î. Hr.). Athenian writer and orator. He fought for the unity of the Greek city-states under Athenian rule against Persia. Supporter of King Philip of Macedon. Famous speeches: "*The Panegyric of Athens*", "*About the Pantene Evenings*", "*To Filip*". Founder of a renowned school of rhetoric in Athens. <https://dexonline.ro/definitie/isocrate/725271>: [William Woodthorpe Tarn](#).1964. *Hellenistic Civilisation*, third edition, revised by Author and G.T.Griffith..., pp.15,80,281.

in the Stoic philosopher Zeno²⁸⁰ the idea of the unity not only of the Greeks but of all mankind took on the character of a social utopia. According to Plutarch, the much admired work on the state by the founder of the Stoic school is reduced simply to the idea that we as men should not live organized in cities and demons, each of which differs with its own special laws, and that all men should consider themselves demons, that is, inhabitants of a dem and citizens, so that there should be only one way of life and one order, just as a herd uses, according to well-known rules, the pasture in common.

The tendency to go beyond the boundaries of the city was especially felt in the new conception of Greek culture. Thus Isocrates²⁸¹, in his Panegyric, written in 380 BC, spoke of the fact that, due to Hellenic culture, the name Hellene no longer indicates origin but a certain cultural, spiritual formation, making the observation that Hellenes are those who have shared in Hellenic culture.

Later both Alexander the Great and his descendants began to be credited with a conscious programme of uniting the east with the west in order to create a single world culture. According to Diodorus of Sicily, Alexander is said to have practised city synoecism, i.e. the amalgamation of several cities and their inhabitants and the transfer of people from Asia to Europe and vice versa from Europe to Asia, so that through marriage and other relationships he could bring the two continents to a unity of thought and close friendship. The formation of Hellenistic cities through synoecism, i.e. the merging of localities with different populations had a major impact. Their existence in the Middle Eastern world was the ferment that reshaped thinking, including religious beliefs. In the confrontation of ideas, Judaism itself accumulated Hellenistic elements that we see in the Gospels and that are not found in the Old Testament.

Plutarch²⁸² writes that Alexander: did not follow Aristotle's advice to behave towards the Hellenes as a ruler and towards the barbarians as a despot, towards the former as if he were dealing with friends and relatives, and to treat the latter as if they were animals or plants.

Greek society in the 4th century BC had reached the extreme limit of its development possibilities and had entered a period of economic and political crisis,

²⁸⁰ [William Woodthorpe Tarn.1964.](#) *Hellenistic Civilisation*, third edition, revised by Author and G.T.Grtiffit..., pp. 16, 79-80. 122-3. 326-328, 330-331, 333, 347, 360.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15,80,281.

²⁸² Plutarh. *Vieti paralele: Alexandru si Cezar (Parallel lives: Alexander and Caesar)*. București, Editura Științifică, 1957; Plutarh. *Vieți Paralele (Parallel lives)*, translation, introductory note, introductory notes and notes by prof. N.I.Barbu, București, Editura Științifică, 1960-1971.

which could no longer be resolved within the existing forms of society. A way out of this situation was impossible, because the social mentality of the time could not change it. Slaves could not overthrow the slave order of their world, and history shows that there were very few slave revolts. The germs of a new way of thinking had not yet been born, and in the end there could be no other solution than the reproduction of the old social process, because the existing social organisation was taken for granted. The crisis that the Greek world had reached found its solution through conquest by other stronger societies, so Greece was conquered by Macedonia and later by Rome, and the clearest biblical example is the declining Babylonian society that was conquered by the Medo-Persians. When the Medo-Persian empire was also in decline it was conquered by Alexander Macedon²⁸³, and when the Hellenistic states, resulting from Alexander's empire, also reached the critical point of decline they were conquered by Rome.

We could say, then, that Greek culture was preserved and spread through the process of Hellenization of the world conquered by Alexander, after he conquered the Greeks first. On the other hand we can say that Alexander's conquest of the Orient was not only in the interest of Greece and Macedonia²⁸⁴, but also in the interest of the ruling class in the most developed regions of the Orient. It is true that here slavery did not play as important a role as in Greece. The maintenance of village communities led to a stagnation of society and development was slow, while decadence on all levels was taking its toll. This explains the relatively easy conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, who met with almost no resistance. Although Alexander's state was also a haphazard conglomeration of loosely-knit peoples united only artificially by force of arms, as was the state of the Achaemenids, Alexander's conquest of Persia meant a step up in development, which meant that the cities of the East, and primarily the wealthy sections of the population, quickly became Hellenised and became supporters of the conquerors.

The Impact of Hellenism on Judaism. Few episodes in ancient history have had more profound and lasting implications than the encounter between Judaism and Hellenism. The spread of Greek culture to the East was the first great encounter

²⁸³ „Alexandru cel Mare”. *Enciclopedia Personalităților* ("Alexander the Great". *Encyclopedia of Personalities*), București, Romprint, nr. 4, 2002; Dumitru Tudor. *Alexandru Macedon (Alexander the Great)*. București, Editura Științifică, 1968; Will Cuppy. *Biografii necenzurate ale unor oameni celebri (Uncensored biographies of famous people)*, București, Editura Litera, 2008; Adelina Piatkowski. *O istorie a Greciei antice (A History of Ancient Greece)*. București, Editura Albatros, 1988.

²⁸⁴ [William Woodthorpe Tarn](#). 1964. *Hellenistic Civilisation*, third edition, revised by Author and G.T.Grtiffit..., pp. 32, 37, 47-8, 51-2, 57-8,60-63, 65, 67-70. 76-77, 98, 102,113,121, 124, 132 n.5, 175, 181, 219, 250,262-263, 257-258, 263, 266, 284-286, 340, 342, 344, 356 n.3.

between East and West, a clash of civilisations that has been repeated in various forms to the present day. Few people of antiquity could have anticipated that the Jews would be the most enduring representatives of ancient culture in the Near East. It certainly did not occur to Alexander the Great that he would have such a far-reaching impact over such a long period of time.

The importance of Judaism on the world stage is due on the one hand to the extraordinarily distinctive self-consciousness of the Jewish people and on the other to its historical link with the Christian religion, which has dominated world history for so long. But for the Christian connection the remarkable body of literature produced by Greek-speaking Jews might have been lost, as might the literature of other peoples of the Near East. Be that as it may, the Jews are the only Eastern people of the Hellenistic world to have left behind a substantial literature. Only in the case of Judaism do we have the material to assess the response of an Eastern people to Hellenism and to see how a tradition oriented in the light of the different and dominant culture of the Greeks was adopted.

The encounter between Judaism and Hellenism took place on two levels: In Judea the majority of the population continued to speak a Semitic language, Aramaic or Hebrew. The initial attempt to turn Jerusalem into a Hellenistic polis met with violent rejection for religious rather than wider cultural reasons. But Hellenistic culture continued to have a profound impact on Judea in the centuries that followed, reaching a climax during the reign of Herod the Great. The dynamics in Judea differed from those in the Diaspora, where Greek had become the language of Jews and Gentiles alike.

In Judea, according to precise evidence, the so-called Hellenists, i.e. supporters of the conquerors, were precisely the aristocrats of Jerusalem, along with the upper clergy. Of course, it is only on the basis of such isolated facts that it is risky to make generalizations about the social spirit found by Alexander and his followers in the East. As far as Judea is concerned, Hellenism crept into the country at a slow pace over two centuries²⁸⁵.

Few episodes in ancient history have had episodes with deeper and more lasting implications than the encounter between Judaism and Hellenism. The spread of Greek culture to the East was the first great encounter between East and West, a clash of civilisations that has been repeated in various forms to the present day. Few people of antiquity could have anticipated that the Jews would be the most enduring representatives of ancient culture in the Near East. It certainly never

²⁸⁵ Ibid., pp.210-238.

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The importance of Judaism on the world stage is due on the one hand to the extraordinarily distinctive self-consciousness of the Jewish people and on the other to the historical link with the Christian religion that has so long dominated world history, but for the Christian link, the remarkable body of literature produced by Greek-speaking Jews could have been lost, as could the literature of other peoples of the Near East. Be that as it may, the Jews are the only Eastern people of the Hellenistic world to have left behind a substantial literature. Only in the case of Judaism do we have the material to assess the response of an Eastern people to Hellenism and to see how an Eastern tradition was adopted in the light of the different and dominant culture of the Greeks. The encounter between Judaism and Hellenism occurred on two levels: in Judea the majority of the population continued to speak a Semitic language, Aramaic or Hebrew. The initial attempt to turn Jerusalem into a Hellenistic polis met with violent rejection for religious rather than wider cultural reasons, but Hellenistic culture and even Hellenistic pagan religion continued to have a profound impact on Judea in the centuries that followed, reaching a climax during the reign of Herod the Great. The dynamics in Judea, however, were different from those in the Diaspora, where Greek had become the language of Jews and Gentiles alike.

What concerns us is the particular nature of this merging of horizons. Initially Hellenism manifested itself in the imitation of Greek ways of life and customs by changing names, attending gymnasiums, participating in Greek parties, a process which gradually led to a change in the mores, mentality, beliefs and outlook on life of a part of the Jewish population, particularly the wealthy. Thus, luxury, parties, the arts, refined taste, which had spread throughout the Hellenistic world, gradually penetrated Israel.

The philosophical doctrine of Epicurus²⁸⁶, which preached pleasure, spread to the Hellenized world, especially to the nobility of Alexandria²⁸⁷, from where the Hellenic spirit also penetrated Jerusalem. The fact that the Greek language became indispensable for communicating with the Greek authorities and in commercial activity, favoured the penetration of Hellenic culture into Judea, especially in the high places of Jewish society. This process led to a division of Jewish society into parties, including the Hellenists.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 99, 231, 308, 325-330, 348.

²⁸⁷ Bell, Idris H. "Hellenic Culture in Egypt". *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 8, (Oct., 1922), 3/4, pp. 139-155; Delia, Diana. *Alexandrian Citizenship During the Roman Principate*. Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1991.

The impact of Hellenism on the Oriental world. From a social point of view, Hellenism played a progressive role in the sense that by mixing the Hellenes among themselves and by mixing with the Eastern peoples, the ethnic barriers that were based on natural tribal and ethnic relations, which still continued to exist, were broken down, which resulted in the formation of a language common to all Greeks called Koine Greek. The only Greek papyrus dating from the time of Alexander that has survived is written mostly in the Ionic dialect. Many of the Greek papyri that have come down to us are written in Koine, sharing Greek culture and also contributing to Hellenistic culture. Many old and new cities like Alexandria, Pergamum, Antioch, Seleucia, Tyre and others became Greek centres. Hellenism is no longer confined to Ellada, but even in Greece there is a shift of political, economic and social centres. Athens cedes its primacy to Corinth, and instead of the Athenian and Peloponnesian leagues, the Aetolian and Achaean²⁸⁸ leagues appear, bringing the most backward regions of Greece into the sphere of an active political life. The process of levelling which took place in this way introduced an intense city life where it had previously been barely perceptible and thereby contributed to a certain revival of economic life in Greece in the early Hellenistic period. On the other hand Hellenism was an indispensable condition for the preparation of the transition to a more advanced social-economic formation.

Thus Hellenistic civilisation represented a fusion of Greek and Middle Eastern culture, that the main cultural centres spread from mainland Greece to Pergamum, Rhodes, Antioch and Alexandria. Studying history, we find that the Hellenistic period begins with Alexander Macedon in 323 BC. Alexander's armies conquered the eastern Mediterranean, Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Iranian Plain, central Asia and parts of India and gave birth to a vast empire, but after his death there was a struggle for succession, known as the War of the Diadochs (i.e. the War of the Successors). The conflict ended in 281 BC with the establishment of four main states: the Ptolemaic Dynasty in Egypt, with its capital at Alexandria; the Seleucid Dynasty in Syria and Mesopotamia, with its capital at Antioch; the Antigonid Dynasty in Macedonia and central Greece, with its capital at Athens; and the Attalid Dynasty in Anatolia, with its capital at Pergamum. Alexander's successors ruled the territories west of the Tigris for a long time and controlled the eastern Mediterranean until the Roman Republic took control of the region. Most of the Orient was eventually occupied by the Parthians, but Hellenistic culture survived in far-flung places such as the Greco-Bactrian kingdom of Bactria or the Indo-Greek kingdom of northern India or the Cimmerian Bosphorus. Hellenistic culture

²⁸⁸ Bell, Idris H. "Hellenic Culture in Egypt". *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 8, (Oct., 1922), 3/4, pp. 139–155; Delia, Diana. *Alexandrian Citizenship During the Roman Principate*. Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1991.

remained dominant in the eastern part of the Roman Empire until its Christianization and transition to the Byzantine Empire. The end of the Hellenistic period is thought to be 31 BC, when the kingdom of Ptolemaic Egypt was defeated by the Romans at the Battle of Actium. As a result, the last monarch of Egypt, Cleopatra, committed suicide and her kingdom was annexed by Octavian.

Thus, the Hellenization of the world was one of the important elements that contributed to the timing of the coming of the Messiah.

Although the influence of Greek culture had been manifest in the Eastern world even before Alexander's great conquest, it was not until the Hellenistic period that Greek culture spread and penetrated widely throughout the countries of the East, which came under the political and economic influence of the Hellenistic states. This penetration was so strong that it obviously left indelible traces. If you spoke Koine Greek, you could traverse the entire inhabited world known to the Greeks at that time. Greek art, literature and philosophy had become common property to millions of people, and even in its period of decline Hellenism was still able to pass on its culture to Rome. Greek culture, however, was no longer the same, because Hellenistic culture continued the characteristics of the classical period as it also preserved the Greek language and the entire Hellenic heritage, but presented an absolutely new element, which would have been impossible in the classical period of Hellas.

As well as the political centres, the cultural centres also moved, not Athens, but Alexandria, Pergamum, Antioch, Syracuse, along with other cities which are now creating scientific, philosophical and literary, legal centres and schools, and the men of culture are often originally from the Orient (Zeno from Citium (Kition)²⁸⁹, i.e. from Cyprus, Hrispos from Soloi, Poseidonius from Apamea²⁹⁰, Syria, Philodemos from Gadara²⁹¹) and many Hellenized men from the Orient will play a

²⁸⁹ Baird, F. E. *Philosophic Classics: Ancient Philosophy, Volume I*. Prentice Hall College Div, 2008; Diogenes Laertius. *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*. Harvard University Press, 1925; Mautner, T. *The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy*. Penguin (Non-Classics), 2005; Plutarch. *Plutarch Lives, I, Theseus and Romulus. Lycurgus and Numa. Solon and Publicola* (Loeb Classical.. Harvard University Press, 1914; Seddon, K. & Yonge, C. D. *A Summary of Stoic Philosophy*. Keith Seddon, 2008.

²⁹⁰ [Chisholm, Hugh](#) (ed.). "Posidonius", *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Vol. 22 (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press, 1911, p. 172.

²⁹¹ Daniel Delattre. *Philodème de Gadara. Sur la Mort*, book IV. Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2022, pp. clxiii, 192; Percy, Lee T., "Does Dying Hurt?: Philodemos of Gadara, De Morte and Asclepiades of Bithynia". *Classical Quarterly* 62 (2012), 1, pp. 211-222; Tsakiropoulou-Summers, Anastasia, "Horace, Philodemos and the Epicureans at Herculaneum." *Mnemosyne* 51 (1998), 1, pp. 20-29; Tsouna, Voula, "Philodemos, Seneca, and

leading role in the creation of the new culture. This is not only a result of the spread of Hellenistic culture in the Orient, but also an indication of the influence of the Orient on Greece. From the mutual Greek and Oriental influence the Orient gained first and foremost. Literature was almost exclusively religious, and religion was severe and demanded blind obedience to the priests of the multiple deities. Art was crushing in the grandeur of palaces, temples and statues, in the faces of gods and demons. Yet Hellenistic culture contributed to the liberation of the individual, even if it concerned only the upper strata of society. Greek philosophy, in its vulgarised form, exerted an influence on Judaism, which was now taking on its definitive aspect and which in turn had an influence on the Hellenistic religions. Tragedy, games, Greek celebrations and Greek art brought with them new elements and love of life into the ideology so bleak in the Orient. The bright patterns of Greek plasticity and architecture softened the harsh lines of Oriental art.

The human being, his thoughts, his states of mind, his interests and concerns, acquire a certain right to existence. In some respects this process reminds us of the age of the Renaissance, which was made fruitful by the achievements of Hellenistic culture. The spiritual life of the Eastern peoples, who had not fallen under the yoke of Rome and had set out on the path of independent development, would continue quietly and later take on the astonishing impetus expressed by the Arab culture of the Middle Ages. In its turn the Orient also adapted much Hellenism. The existence of such close relations with the peoples of the Orient not only widened the horizon which opened up to the Hellenes and extended the boundaries of the known world, but also showed them an original and in some respects even superior and in some cases older culture. The notion of unity of opinion, *homonymy*, which arose on Greek soil because of the crisis of the city-state, found real support in the Orient. World powers had existed here from ancient times and therefore the basis for political superstructures was not so narrow as in the polis of Greece. In the Orient, the Greeks found highly developed beings, such as astronomy, mathematics, medicine or new methods and tools for agricultural work, as well as improved means of transport and communication. The original and unintelligible literature of the Orient now became accessible to the Greeks, as the Greek language became the language of the educated people of the Orient.

It is also worth noting that the Jews translated the Bible into Greek, which today we know as the *Septuagint*²⁹², the translation of the *Pentateuch* and the other books

Plutarch on Anger." In *Epicurus and the Epicurean Tradition*, edited by Jeffery Fish. Cambridge, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 183-210.

²⁹² Meer, Michaël N. van der. ["The Greek and Aramaic Versions of Joshua 3–4". *Septuagint, Targum and Beyond: Comparing Aramaic and Greek Versions from Jewish Antiquity*. Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2020, pp. 58–100; Mihăilă, Alexandru. \["The Septuagint and\]\(#\)](#)

of the *Old Testament* from Hebrew into Greek. In addition to translating the *Bible* into Greek, the Jews also wrote new books in Greek.

Conclusions. In the process of merging cultures, Greece was not only the giver but also the receiver. Just as in the economic and political spheres, in the sphere of intellectual life Hellenism did not fully implement the principles that had been outlined in the wake of Alexander's conquests. On the one hand, Greek culture had enough stability not only to withstand Eastern culture, but also to survive under Roman rule and form the basis of Byzantine culture. On the other hand, the countries of the East, Syria, Palestine, Arabia, Parthia, Armenia and even Egypt, were not completely swallowed up by Hellenism, but retained their original features, languages, religions and historical traditions. These countries defended their political independence and appropriated the heritage of Hellenism to create and develop their own culture. However, Hellenism's successes in the field of culture were not uniform and did not have the same historical importance in the different countries of Hellenism and at different times.

As far as the East is concerned, Hellenism was an indisputable boom. In Greece, too, Hellenism has meant a superior type of cultural development. In the Hellenistic era philosophy broke away from its natural scientific basis, which led to an impoverishment of philosophy, but at the same time enriched science. The separation of science from philosophy and its specialisation was imposed by the increasingly felt need to know the world and master the forces of nature. The sciences were raised to a high level, a fact demonstrated by names such as Archimedes, Euclid²⁹³, Eratosthenes²⁹⁴, Polybius, Aristotle of Samos, Aristotle of

[the Masoretic Text in the Orthodox Church\(es\)](#)". *Review of Ecumenical Studies Sibiu*. 10 (2018), pp. 30–60; Timothy Michael Law. *When God Spoke Greek*. Oxford University Press, 2013; Stefon, Matt. [Judaism: History, Belief, and Practice](#). The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc., 2011, p. 45; Beckwith, Roger T. *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church: and its Background in Early Judaism*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2008, pp. 382, 383; Dines, Jennifer M. [Knibb, Michael A.](#) (ed.). *The Septuagint*. Understanding the Bible and Its World (1st ed.). London: T&T Clark, 2004; Ziva, Shavitsky. *The Mystery of the Ten Lost Tribes: A Critical Survey of Historical and Archaeological Records relating to the People of Israel in Exile in Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia up to ca. 300 BCE*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012; Siegfried Kreuzer (ed.). *Introduction to the Septuagint*. Waco, TX, Baylor University Press; 2019, 671p.; [Tov, Emanuel](#). "The Septuagint". In Mulder, Martin Jan; Sysling, Harry (eds.). *Mikra: text, translation, reading, and interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in ancient Judaism and early Christianity*. Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1988, pp. 161–162.

²⁹³ E. Rusu. *De la Thales la Einstein - Gîndirea matematică în perspectivă istorică (From Thales to Einstein - Mathematical thinking in historical perspective)*. București, Editura Albatros, 1967, pp. 66-70.

Samothrace²⁹⁵, Hipparchus²⁹⁶, not to mention Aristotle's closest disciples and above all Theophrastus²⁹⁷. Science ceases to be the privilege of a narrow circle of the elect. A sudden turning point has also occurred in religion. With the fall of the polis, their gods also collapsed. Gods confined to the national framework also shared the fate of their peoples. The religious sentiment of yesteryear, which was more of a formal character and was linked to institutions and political conceptions, is now in altered conditions.

At his own expense, the individual now yearns for a closer communication with the divinity, from whom he no longer expects either the prosperity of his homeland or the victory of the armies of his native city, but only personal salvation. The encounter with the Mosaic religion brings great changes in the individual's

²⁹⁴ O'Neill, Melissa E. "[The Genuine Sieve of Eratosthenes](#)". *Journal of Functional Programming*, Published online by Cambridge University Press 9 octombrie, 2008; Pritchard, Paul. "Linear prime-number sieves: a family tree". *Sci. Comput. Programming* 9 (1987) 1, pp. 17–35.

²⁹⁵ Danțiș, Gabriela. *Scrittori străini (Foreign writers)*. București, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1981.

²⁹⁶ Clerke, Agnes Mary. "Hipparchus". *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Vol. 13 (11th ed.), 1911, p. 516; Shcheglov, Dmitry A. "Hipparchus' Table of Climata and Ptolemy's Geography". *Orbis Terrarum* 9 (2007), pp.159–192;

Jones, Alexander. "Ancient Rejection and Adoption of Ptolemy's Frame of Reference for Longitudes". In Jones, Alexander (ed.). *Ptolemy in Perspective*. Archimedes. Vol. 23. Springer, 2010, p. 36; Swerdlow, N. M. "The Enigma of Ptolemy's Catalogue of Stars". *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 23 (1992), 3, pp. 173–183; [Toomer, Gerald J.](#) "Hipparchus' Empirical Basis for his Lunar Mean Motions". *Centaurus* 24 (1980), 1, pp. 97–109; Klintberg, Bo C. "[Hipparchus's 3600'-Based Chord Table and Its Place in the History of Ancient Greek and Indian Trigonometry](#)". *Indian Journal of History of Science* 40 (2005), 2, pp.169–203.

[Toomer, Gerald J.](#) 1988. "Hipparchus and Babylonian Astronomy". In Leichty, Erle; Ellis, Maria deJ. (eds.). *A Scientific Humanist: studies in memory of Abraham Sachs*. Philadelphia, Samuel Noah Kramer Fund, Univ. Museum. pp. 353–362.

Linton, C. M. *From Eudoxus to Einstein: a history of mathematical astronomy*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 52.

²⁹⁷ Earle R. Caley and John F.C. Richards.1956. *Theophrastus: On Stones*. Columbus, Ohio, Ohio State University, 110; Van Raalte, M. *Theophrastus' Metaphysics*. Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill; Pertsinidis, S. 2018. *Theophrastus' Characters: A new introduction*. London, Routledge,1993; [Wöhrlé, G.](#) 2019. *Theophrast von Eresos. Universalwissenschaftler im Kreis des Aristoteles und Begründer der wissenschaftlichen Botanik. Eine Einführung*. Trier, Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier; Mejer, J."A Life in Fragments: The Vita Theophrasti." In *Theophrastus: Reappraising the Sources*. Edited by J. van Ophuijsen and M. van Raalte, 1–28. Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities 8. New Brunswick, NJ, and London, Transaction Books, 1998; Baltussen, H. *The Peripatetics: Aristotle's Heirs 322 BCE–200 CE*. London: Routledge, 2016.; Fortenbaugh, W. W., and D. Gutas (eds.). *Theophrastus: His Psychological, Doxographical and Scientific Writings*. Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities 5. New Brunswick, NJ, and London, Transaction Books, 1992.

religious feeling. As Hellenism is also a period of religious experimentation, the tendency towards monotheism is clearly apparent at this time, and the hope of the coming of a Soter, at least 200 years before the birth of Christ, is assumed. Of course Hellenism does not come close to biblical thinking, especially as Mosaism is not missionary. This syncretism leads to the fact that the old gods are attributed the character of universal gods, and the deities are given new attributes, especially social ones, and new epithets, which are no longer related to the elements of nature, but to their attitude towards man, and the cult turns more and more into mysteries. These new elements which manifested themselves in Hellenistic religion did not, however, develop all the way to the end, but they were sufficient to form a framework in which Christianity later manifested itself.

One thing is certain and that is that apart from the elements of Hellenism, it is difficult to truly understand the culture in which Christianity was born and to which Christ Jesus addressed himself, because Hellenism has left its mark on thought, including that of the Jewish people, which has created a discrepancy between biblical teaching and the spirit in which it was interpreted. The history of Hellenism is an important study for those who want to understand the influence that Greek culture had on the history of thought and the synthesis of the history of Christianity through its double influence, that on Jewish culture and then on Christian thought. Although the Hellenistic empire of Alexander and then the Hellenistic states that succeeded it lasted only three centuries, the influence of Hellenism has a wide range and time horizon. Despite this reality, the history of Hellenism has attracted little scholarly attention, so that it was not until the early 19th century that it was studied in depth. The Hellenization of the world was one of the important elements that contributed to the timing of the coming of the Messiah. At least the Koine Greek language, which became the lingua franca of the Roman Empire, allowed communication between people of different ethnicities and thus the transmission of information, including the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire.

Hellenistic civilization represented a fusion of Greek and Middle Eastern culture, that the main trading centres spread from mainland Greece to Pergamum, Rhodos, Antioch and Alexandria. The Hellenistic period really begins with the death of Alexander Macedon in 323 BC. His armies conquered vast territories, but after his death there was a succession struggle between his generals (the Diadochian War). Hellenistic culture remained dominant in the eastern part of the Roman Empire until its Christianisation and transition to the Byzantine Empire.

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