The Spread of Hellenistic Culture

BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you read about the military conquests of Alexander the Great.

In this section, you will learn about the spread of Hellenistic culture.

AS YOU READ

Use the web below to take notes on developments in Hellenistic culture.

Hellenistic Culture in Alexandria

(pages 146–147)

What was Hellenistic culture?

A new culture arose—the Hellenistic culture. It blended Greek with Egyptian, Persian, and Indian influences. The center of this culture was Alexandria, Egypt. This city was located near the mouth of the Nile River on the Mediterranean Sea. Alexandria had a ship harbor. Trade was lively. Alexandria had a large population. These people were from many different countries.

Alexandria was also a beautiful city. Its huge lighthouse towered over the harbor. Its famous museum had works of art, a zoo, and a garden. Alexandria had the first true research library. It held half-million papyrus scrolls. These contained everything known in the Hellenistic world.

1. Give two reasons why Alexandria became a center of Hellenistic culture.
Science and Technology
(pages 147–148)

**What new ideas arose in science, technology, and mathematics?**

While scholars kept what was known about science alive, others learned new ideas. Some used an observatory to look at the stars and planets. One of these astronomers developed the idea that the sun was actually larger than Earth. No one had believed this before.

The thinkers in Alexandria also made advances in mathematics. **Euclid** wrote a book with the basic ideas of geometry. His approach is still used today. **Archimedes** invented many clever machines. One was the pulley. Another is called Archimedes screw. Its purpose was to bring water from a lower level to a higher one.

2. What two inventions did Archimedes make?

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**Philosophy and Art** (pages 148–149)

**What new developments occurred in philosophy and the arts?**

Two new schools of philosophy arose in these times. The **Stoics** argued that people should live a good life to keep themselves in harmony with natural laws. Desire, power, and wealth led people down the wrong path. The **Epicureans** said that people could rely only on what they learned from their five senses. They urged everyone to live moral lives.

The arts were also important in Hellenistic times. Great achievements occurred in sculpture. Sculpture in the earlier Greek style aimed at showing perfect forms. In the Hellenistic age, sculpted figures were more realistic and emotional. The largest known Hellenistic statue is the **Colossus of Rhodes**. It stood over 100 feet high.

3. How were Hellenistic sculptures different from earlier Greek sculptures?