

WAR IN THE HELLENISTIC WORLD

A Social and Cultural History

Angelos Chaniotis

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BLACKWELL PUBLISHING
350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA
108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF, UK
550 Swanston Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia

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First published 2005 by Blackwell Publishing Ltd

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Chaniotis, Angelos.

War in the Hellenistic world : a social and cultural history / Angelos Chaniotis.

p. cm. — (Ancient world at war)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-631-22607-9 (hardback : alk. paper) —

ISBN 0-631-22608-7 (pbk. : alk. paper)

I. Military art and science—Middle East—History. 2. Wars of the Hellenistic Monarchies, 301–146 B.C. I. Title. II. Series.

U31.C49 2005

938'.08—dc22

2004008897

A catalogue record for this title is available from the British Library.

Set in 10/12pt Galliard
by Graphicraft Limited, Hong Kong
Printed and bound in the United Kingdom
by MPG Books Ltd, Bodmin

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To Professor Fritz Gschnitzer
on the occasion of his 75th birthday

CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	x
<i>List of Maps</i>	xi
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xiii
<i>Table of Important Events</i>	xvii
<i>Preface</i>	xxi
1 The Ubiquitous War	1
1.1. The Visibility of War 1.2. The Frequency of Wars 1.3. Reasons to Fight	
2 Between Civic Duties and Oligarchic Aspirations: Devoted Citizens, Brave Generals, and Generous Benefactors	18
2.1. Fighting Against a Neighbor: A Privilege of the Polis 2.2. Warfare as a Citizen's Duty 2.3. City and Land: Structure and Hierarchy 2.4. The Defense of the City as the Stage of Civic Elites 2.5. Local Hero: The Statesman as a Military Leader 2.6. Euergetism in War and the Ideology of Inequality 2.7. From Individual Services to the Heredity of Leadership	
3 The Age of War: Fighting Young Men	44
3.1. Restless Warriors 3.2. Training Fighters 3.3. Rituals for Young Warriors	
4 The Interactive King: War and the Ideology of Hellenistic Monarchy	57
4.1. War and the Acceptance of Monarchical Rule 4.2. The King and His Army 4.3. The King and the City 4.4. The Wolf as a Sheep: Royal Peace-makers 4.5. War and Mortal Divinity	

5	War as a Profession: Officers, Trainers, Doctors, Engineers	78
	5.1. The Professionalization of Hellenistic Warfare: Definitions and Modifications 5.2. The Social Context of Mercenary Service 5.3. The Conditions of Service 5.4. Garrisons and Foreign Troops in Hellenistic Cities 5.5. Professional Ideals: Discipline, Solidarity, Masculinity 5.6. Professional Risks: Doctors and Patients 5.7. War as a Science: Trainers, Tacticians, and Inventors	
6	The Gender of War: Masculine Warriors, Defenseless Women, and Beyond	102
	6.1. War and Masculinity 6.2. In the Shadow of Soldiers: Women in Garrisons and Forts 6.3. Spectators, Judges, and Defenders: Women's Share of War 6.4. Anonymous Victims	
7	The Cost and Profit of War: Economic Aspects of Hellenistic Warfare	115
	7.1. The Budget of War: Fiscal Aspects of Hellenistic Warfare 7.2. War and Agriculture 7.3. The Economy of Booty 7.4. Winners and Losers: The Impact of War on the Hellenistic Economy	
8	An Age of Miracles and Saviors: The Effects of Hellenistic Wars on Religion	143
	8.1. Communicating with the Gods, Boasting to Mortals 8.2. War and Cult Transfer 8.3. Violence against Sanctuaries and the Discourse of War 8.4. War and the Supernatural 8.5. Pragmatism Versus Tradition: War and the Dynamics of Rituals	
9	The Discourse of War	166
	9.1. War Reflections 9.2. War Reveals the Character of Men and Groups 9.3. Naming Wars 9.4. Deciding and Justifying War 9.5. The Right of Conquest 9.6. Longing for Peace	
10	Aesthetics of War	189
	10.1. Images of Violence in Hellenistic Literature and Art 10.2. Blood is Beautiful: Realism and Subtlety in the Representation of Violence 10.3. The Beauty of the Unexpected: Peripeteia and the Paradoxon in Narratives of War	

CONTENTS

11	The Memory of War	214
	11.1. The Memory of War: Individual, Collective, Cultural	
	11.2. War in Hellenistic Historiography	
	11.3. The Monumental Historiography of War	
	11.4. Oral Commemoration of War	
	11.5. Commemorative Anniversaries	
	11.6. War Monuments	
	11.7. Collective Identity and the Glorification of the Individual	
12	Breaking Boundaries: How War Shaped the Hellenistic World	245
	<i>Bibliography</i>	256
	<i>Name Index</i>	282
	<i>Subject Index</i>	293
	<i>Source Index</i>	304

FIGURES

1.1.	Silver coin issued by Demetrios the Besieger after his victory in Salamis (Cyprus), 306 BC	3
1.2.	Athenian honorary decree for Euphron of Sikyon, an ally of the Athenians in their wars for freedom against the Macedonians (323–18 BC)	4
2.1.	Golden stater of the Aitolian League with the personification of Aitolia as a seated woman, stepping on the shields of the defeated Gauls	25
2.2.	Graphic reconstruction of part of the walls of Herakleia-under-Latmos by Fritz Krischen	27
10.1.	Battle scene between a Macedonain horseman and a Persian infantry-man in the painted “Kinch tomb” (Naousa, ca. 300 BC)	196
10.2.	Funerary relief from Bithynia with a battle scene between a Bithynian horseman and a Galatian warrior	201
10.3.	Reconstruction of “the Large Gallic group” dedicated by Attalos I in the temple of Athena in Pergamon	202
10.4.	Statue of Apollo dedicated in Delphi after the victory over the Galatians (278/7 BC)	203
10.5.	The grave relief and epigram of the Bithynian officer Menas, who was killed in a battle at Kouropedion (Nikaia, 281 or rather 190 BC)	205
10.6.	Representations of the weapons of the Macedonian soldiers Lyson and Kallikles decorate their tomb in Lefkadia (ancient Mieza, ca. 200 BC)	206
11.1.	Tetradrachm of Agathokles	234
11.2.	Grave relief of a young soldier in Rhodes	238

MAPS

Map 1.	The Hellenistic World	xxiv
Map 2.	Hellenistic Crete	10
Map 3.	The expansion of Cretan cities in the Hellenistic period	131
Map 4.	Mainland Greece, the Aegean, and Asia Minor	254
Map 5.	Asia Minor	255

ABBREVIATIONS

1. Ancient authors

- Appian, *Syr.*: Appian, *Syrian Wars*
App., *Mithr.*: Appian, *Mithridatic Wars*
App., *b. civ.*: Appian, *Bella civilia* (*Civil Wars*)
App., *Illyr.*: Appian, *Illyrian Wars*
Arist., *Ath. Pol.*: Aristotle, *Athenaion Politeia* (*Constitution of the Athenians*)
Arist., *Polit.*: Aristotle, *Politics*
Athen.: Athenaios, *The Deipnosophists*
Cic., *Flacc.*: Cicero, *Pro Flacco*
Demosth.: Demosthenes
Diod.: Diodorus Siculus
FgrHist: F. Jacoby et al., *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, ++1923–
Jos., *Ant. Jud.*: Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*
Just., *epit.*: Justinus, *Epitome historiarum Philippicarum*
Maccab.: *Maccabees* (Old Testament)
Paus.: Pausanias
Plut., *Demetr.*: Plutarch, *Demetrios*
Plut., *mor.*: Plutarch, *moralia*
Plut., *Philop.*: Plutarch, *Philpoemen*
Polyb.: Polybios
Theophr., *Char.*: Theophrastos, *Characteres*
Xen., *Cyr. paed.*: Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*

2. Works of reference

- Amyzon*: J. Robert and L. Robert, *Fouilles d' Amyzon en Carie. I. Exploration, histoire, monnaies et inscriptions*, Paris 1983.
BE: *Bulletin épigraphique* in *Revue des Études Grecques*.
BGU: *Ägyptische Urkunden aus den königlichen Museen zu Berlin. Griechische Urkunden*, Berlin 1895–1976.
*CAH VII.1*²: F. W. Walbank, A. E. Astin, M. W. Frederiksen, and R. M. Ogilvie (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History. Volume VII. Part I. The Hellenistic World*, Cambridge 1984 (second edition).

- CAH VII.2²: F. W. Walbank, A. E. Astin, M. W. Frederiksen, and R. M. Ogilvie (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History. Volume VII. Part 2. The Rise of Rome to 220 B.C.*, Cambridge 1989 (second edition).
- CAH VII.3²: A. E. Astin, F. W. Walbank, M. W. Frederiksen, and R. M. Ogilvie (eds) *The Cambridge Ancient History. Volume VII. Part 3. Rome and the Mediterranean to 133 B.C.*, Cambridge 1989 (second edition).
- CIG: *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*, Berlin 1828–77.
- DGE: E. Schwyzer, *Dialectorum Graecorum exempla epigraphica potiora*, Leipzig 1923.
- EBGR: A. Chaniotis et al., *Epigraphic Bulletin for Greek Religion*, *Kernos* 4, 1991– .
- F.Delphes: *Fouilles de Delphes. III. Épigraphie*, Paris 1929– .
- Gonnoi: B. Helly, *Gonnoi*, Amsterdam 1973.
- I.Arykanda: S. Sahin, *Die Inschriften von Arykanda (IGSK 48)*, Bonn 1994.
- I.Beroia: L. Gounaropoulou – M. B. Hatzopoulos, *Ἐπιγραφές Κάτω Μακεδονίας (μεταξὺ τοῦ Βερμίου Ὄρους καὶ τοῦ Ἄξιου Ποταμοῦ). Τεύχος Α'.* *Ἐπιγραφές Βεροίας*, Athens 1998.
- I.Byzantion: A. Lajtar, *Die Inschriften von Byzantion. Teil I. Die Inschriften (IGSK 58)*, Bonn 2000.
- I.Cret.: M. Guarducci, *Inscriptiones Creticae*, Rome 1935–50.
- I.Ephesos: H. Wankel et alii, *Die Inschriften von Ephesos (IGSK II)*, Bonn 1979–81.
- I.Erythrai: H. Engelmann and R. Merkelbach, *Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai (IGSK 1–2)*, Bonn 1972–73.
- IG: *Inscriptiones Graecae*, Berlin 1873– .
- IGBulg: G. Mihailov, *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae*, Sofia 1956–1997.
- IGR: *Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes*, Paris 1911–1927.
- IGSK: *Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien*, Bonn 1972– .
- I.Iasos: W. Blümel, *Die Inschriften von Iasos (IGSK 28)*, Bonn 1985.
- I.Ilion: P. Frisch, *Die Inschriften von Ilion (IGSK 3)*, Bonn 1975.
- I.Kalchedon: R. Merkelbach, *Die Inschriften von Kalchedon (IGSK 20)*, Bonn 1980.
- I.Kourion: T. B. Mitford, *Die Inschriften von Kourion*, Philadelphia 1971.
- I.Lampsakos: P. Frisch, *Die Inschriften von Lampsakos (IGSK 6)* Bonn 1978.
- I.Laodikeia: T. Corsten, *Die Inschriften von Laodikeia am Lykos I (IGSK 49)*, Bonn 1997.
- I.Lindos: C. Blinkenberg, *Lindos. Fouilles et recherches. II. Fouilles de l'acropole. Inscriptions*, Berlin 1941.
- I.Magnesia: O. Kern, *Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Mäander*, Berlin 1908.
- I.Mylasa: W. Blümel, *Die Inschriften von Mylasa. I. Inschriften der Stadt. II. Inschriften aus der Umgebung der Stadt (IGSK 34–5)*, Bonn 1987–88.
- I.Oropos: B. C. Petrakos, *Οἱ Ἐπιγραφές τοῦ Ὀρωποῦ*, Athens 1997.

ABBREVIATIONS

- IOSPE*: B. Latysev, *Inscriptiones antiquae orae septentrionalis Ponti Euxini Graecae et Latinae*, St. Petersburg 1885–1901.
- I.Pergamon*: M. Fraenkel, *Die Inschriften von Pergamon*, Berlin 1890–95.
- I.Perge*: S. Sahin, *Die Inschriften von Perge. Teil I. Vorrömische Zeit, frühe und hohe Kaiserzeit (IGSK 54.1)*, Bonn 1999.
- I.Priene*: F. Hiller von Gaertringen, *Inschriften von Priene*, Berlin 1906.
- I.Prusa*: Th. Corsten, *Die Inschriften von Prusa ad Olympum I–II (IGSK 39–40)*, Bonn 1991–93.
- IscrCos*: M. Segre, *Iscrizioni di Cos*, Rome 1994.
- ISE*: L. Moretti, *Iscrizioni storiche ellenistiche I–II*, Florence 1967–75.
- I.Selge*: J. Nollé and F. Schindler, *Die Inschriften von Selge (IGSK 37)*, Bonn 1991.
- I.Sestos*: J. Krauss, *Die Inschriften von Sestos und der thrakischen Chersones (IGSK 19)*, Bonn 1980.
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- I.Stratonikeia*: S. Sahin, *Die Inschriften von Stratonikeia (IGSK 21–22)*, Bonn 1981–82.
- I.Tralleis*: F. B. Poljakov, *Die Inschriften von Tralleis und Nysa. I. Die Inschriften von Tralleis (IGSK 36)*, Bonn 1989.
- IvO*: W. Dittenberger and K. Purgold, *Die Inschriften von Olympia*, Berlin 1896.
- Labraunda*: J. Cramba, *Labraunda. Swedisch Excavations and Researches. III 1/2. Greek Inscriptions*, Lund–Stockholm 1969–72.
- LBW*: P. Le Bas and W. H. Waddington, *Voyage archéologique en Grèce et en Asie Mineure fait pendant les années 1834 et 1844. Inscriptions grecques et latines*, Paris 1870.
- LGPN*: P. M. Fraser and E. Matthews (eds), *The Greek Lexikon of Personal Names, Vol. I–IIIb*, Oxford 1987–2000.
- MAMA*: *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua*, London 1928–93.
- Milet I.2*: C. Friedrich, *Die Inschriften*, in H. Knackfuß (ed.) *Milet. I 2. Das Rathaus in Milet*, Berlin 1908.
- Milet I.3*: A. Rehm, *Die Inschriften*, in G. Kawerau and A. Rehm, *Milet I. 3. Das Delphinion in Milet*, Berlin 1914: 162–406.
- OGIS*: W. Dittenberger, *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, Leipzig 1903–5.
- PH*: W. R. Paton and E. L. Hicks, *The Inscriptions of Cos*, Oxford 1891.
- RC*: C. B. Welles, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period*, New Haven 1934.
- SB*: *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten*, Strassburg-Wiesbaden 1915– .
- Sardis VII*: W. H. Buckler and D. M. Robinson, *Sardis VII. Greek and Latin Inscriptions*, Leiden 1932.
- SEG*: *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, Leiden 1923– .

ABBREVIATIONS

- Select Papyri* II: A. S. Hunt and C. C. Edgar, *Select Papyri. Non-literary Papyri. Public Documents*, London–Cambridge, Mass. 1934.
- SGO I: R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten. Band 1. Die Westküste Kleinasiens von Knidos bis Ilion*, Stuttgart–Leipzig 1998.
- SGO II: R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten. Band 2: Die Nordküste Kleinasiens (Marmarameer und Pontos)*, Leipzig 2001.
- SGO III: R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten. Band 3: Der "ferne Osten" und das Landesinnere bis zum Tauros*, Leipzig 2001.
- SGO IV: R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten. Band 4: Die Südküste Kleinasiens, Syrien und Palaestina*, Leipzig 2002.
- Staatsverträge: Die Staatsverträge des Altertums.*
- H. Bengtson, *Die Staatsverträge des Altertums. Zweiter Band. Die Verträge der griechisch-römischen Welt von 700 bis 338 v. Chr.*, Munich 1975 (second edition).
- H. H. Schmitt, *Die Staatsverträge des Altertums. Dritter Band. Die Verträge der griechisch-römischen Welt von 338 bis 200 v. Chr.*, Munich 1969.
- Syll.*³: W. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, Leipzig 1915–24 (third edition).
- TAM: Tituli Asiae Minoris*, Vienna 1901– .
- Tod, *GHI*: M. N. Tod, *Greek Historical Inscriptions*, Oxford 1933–1948.

TABLE OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

334–324	Conquests of Alexander the Great.
323	Death of Alexander the Great.
323–22	The Hellenic or Lamian War (revolt of Greek cities against the Macedonian supremacy). Defeat of Athens.
321–281	Wars of the Successors for the division of Alexander’s empire
321/320	Perdikkas and Eumenes against Antipatros, Krateros, Antigonos the One-Eyed, and Ptolemaios.
319	Kassandros against Polyperchon and Olympias; Antigonos against Eumenes.
314–311	Kassandros, Lysimachos, Ptolemaios, and Seleukos against Antigonos the One-Eyed and his son Demetrios the Besieger.
307	Liberation of Athens from Macedonian occupation by Demetrios.
306	Victory of Demetrios over Ptolemaios near Salamis in Cyprus; the “Year of the Kings”; Antigonos the One-Eyed and Demetrios assume the title of the king; their example is followed by Ptolemaios, Kassandros, Lysimachos, and Seleukos.
305–304	Siege of Rhodes by Demetrios the Besieger.
303–301	Ptolemaios, Kassandros, Lysimachos, and Seleukos against Antigonos and Demetrios. Antigonos and Demetrios found a Hellenic Alliance.
301	Antigonos is killed at the Battle of Ipsos.
297	Death of Kassandros, king of Macedonia.
294	Demetrios occupies Athens and becomes king of Macedonia.
288	Lysimachos and Pyrrhos expell Demetrios from Macedonia.
287	Athens revolts from Demetrios.
282/281	War between Seleukos and Lysimachos. 281: Lysimachos is killed in the Battle of Kouropedion; Seleukos is

TABLE OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

	murdered by his ally Ptolemaios Keraunos, who becomes king of Macedonia.
280–275	Wars of Pyrrhos in Italy.
280–278	Invasion of the Gauls (Galatians). Victory of the Aitolians and Antigonos Gonatas over the Gauls. Antigonos Gonatas becomes king of Macedonia.
278	The Gauls invade Asia Minor; continual raids against the Greek cities.
275/4–271	First Syrian War (Antiochos I against Ptolemy II).
274–272	War of Pyrrhos of Epeiros against Antigonos Gonatas.
272	Pyrrhos invades the Peloponnese and is killed in Argos.
268–261	Chremonidean War (Antigonos Gonatas against Ptolemy II, Athens, Sparta, and their allies).
ca. 263/2–229	Antigonos Gonatas occupies Athens.
260–253	Second Syrian War (Antiochos II, Rhodes, and Antigonos Gonatas against Ptolemy II).
255–254	War between Apollonia and Kallatis (west shore of the Black Sea).
255–254	Bithynian Succession War. Kappadokia breaks from the Seleukid kingdom.
ca. 250	Baktria breaks from the Seleukid kingdom, which also loses its eastern satrapies to the Parthians.
249–245	Revolt of Alexander (in Korinth) against Antigonos Gonatas.
245–243	Aratos becomes general of the Achaian League (245) and expels the Macedonia garrison from Korinth (243).
246–241	Third Syrian War or War of Laodike (Ptolemy III against Laodike).
239	Death of Antigonos Gonatas. Alliance of the Aitolian and Achaian Leagues.
239–229	War of Demetrios (Athens against Demetrios II of Macedonia).
238	Victories of Attalos I of Pergamon in wars against the Gauls in Asia Minor.
231–229	Invasion of Dardanians in Macedonia.
229	Liberation of Athens from Macedonian garrison.
227–222	Kleomenes' War (Sparta against the Achaian League).
ca. 229–220	Aitolian raids on the Peloponnese and in Central Greece.
227	Military operations of Antigonos Doson of Macedonia in Karia (Asia Minor).
224–222	Panhellenic alliance under the leadership of Antigonos Doson; war against Kleomenes of Sparta.
222	Defeat of Kleomenes in the Battle of Sellasia.

TABLE OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

221–219	War of Lyttos on Crete (Knossos and Gortyn with their allies against Lyttos, civil war in Gortyn).
220–217	Social War (Philip V of Macedonia and his allies against the Aitolian League, Sparta, and Elis). Dardanian invasions in Macedonia (220–219, 217).
220	War of Rhodes against Byzantion for the abolishment of duties on vessels passing through the straits.
219–217	Fourth Syrian War (Antiochos III invades Koile Syria and Egypt).
217	Victory of Ptolemy IV over Antiochos III in the Battle of Rhabphia.
216–213	War between the Seleukid Antiochos III and the usurper Achaios in Asia Minor.
215–205	First Macedonian War (Philip V, ally of Hannibal, against Rome and the Aitolian League).
212–205	The “Anabasis” of Antiochos III. Temporary recovery of the eastern provinces.
207	War of Machanidas of Sparta against the Achaian League (under Philopoimen).
ca. 206–185	Revolt of the natives in the Thebaid (Ptolemaic Egypt).
205–201	First Cretan War (Cretan cities against Rhodes, Kos, and other islands).
202–200	Fifth Syrian War (Antiochos III against Ptolemy V). Military operations of Philip V in south Asia Minor. War of Philip V against Rhodes.
200–197	Second Macedonian War (Philip V against Rome and her allies Pergamon, Rhodes and Athens).
197	Victory of Titus Quintius Flamininus over Philip V at Kynos Kephalai.
197–185	Revolt of the native population in lower Egypt.
196	Antiochos III occupies Macedonian and Ptolemaic possessions in Asia Minor and Thrace.
195	War of the Romans against king Nabis of Sparta.
191–188	Antiochos’ War (Antiochos III against Rome and her allies).
189	Defeat of Antiochos at Magnesia.
188	Peace of Apameia. Antiochos III loses his possessions in Asia Minor. Eumenes II of Pergamon and Rhodes gain territories.
189–ca. 183	Local wars in Asia Minor.
ca. 187–185	Eumenes II of Pergamon against Prousius I of Bithynia.
183–179	War of Eumenes II against Pontos.
171–168	Third Macedonian War (Rome and her allies against Perseus of Macedonia).

TABLE OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

170–167	Wars on Crete (Kydonia against Apollonia, Gortyn and Knossos against Kydonia, Gortyn against Knossos, Gortyn and Knossos against Rhaukos).
169–168	Sixth Syrian War. Antiochos IV invades Egypt.
168	Victory of Aemilius Paullus over Perseus in the Battle of Pydna. The end of the Antigonid monarchy. The Romans force Antiochos IV to leave Egypt.
ca. 167–163	Revolt of the Maccabees in Judea.
156–154	War between Prousius of Bithynia and Attalos II of Pergamon.
155–153	Second Cretan War (Cretan cities against Rhodes).
149–148	Revolt of Macedonians against Rome.
146	Achaian War (the Achaian League against Rome).
146	Sack of Korinth. Macedonia becomes a Roman province. Greece under Roman rule.
133	Attalos III of Pergamon bequeathes his kingdom to the Romans.
132–129	Aristonikos' War: Aristonikos, illegitimate son of Attalos II of Pergamon, fights against the Romans supported by lower social strata.
132–124	Dynastic wars in Ptolemaic Egypt (Kleopatra II against Ptolemy VIII and Kleopatra III).
129	Antiochos VII is killed in a war against the Parthians. The Seleukids loose Mesopotamia to the Parthians. Judea regains its independence.
ca. 121–114	Territorial conflicts in Crete (Gortyn against Knossos, Hierapytna against Itanos, Lato against Olous).
88–83	First Mithridatic War (Mithridates VI, king of Pontos, and his Greek allies against Rome).
77–85	Sulla besieges and sacks Athens.
83–81	Second Mithridatic War (Mithridates VI against Rome).
73–63	Third Mithridatic War (Mithridates VI against Rome).
69–67	Conquest of Crete by the Romans.
63	Suicide of Mithridates VI. The Seleukid kingdom becomes Roman province.
49–48	Roman civil war (Caesar against Pompey) fought in Greece (Pharsalos) and Egypt (Alexandria).
42	Battle of Philippoi. Marc Antony and Octavian defeat the murderers of Caesar.
42–39	Raids of the Roman renegade general Labienus in Syria and Asia Minor.
31	Battle of Actium. Octavian defeats Marc Antony and Kleopatra VII of Egypt.
30	Suicide of Kleopatra. The end of the Ptolemaic kingdom.

PREFACE

One of the best experts on the Hellenistic period, Michel Austin, once criticized the widespread perception of war as an intrusive external force, purely destructive and negative, and never adequately explained (Austin 1986: 451–2). Few historical periods can better demonstrate the complexity of war as a social and cultural force than the 300 years between Alexander’s victories and Kleopatra’s defeat (323–330 BC). The continual and often confusing wars of the Hellenistic Age confront those who study this period, either in academic courses or in scholarly research, with unusual challenges. The geographical range is huge: from Italy to Afghanistan and from the north shore of the Black Sea to the coast of Africa. The sources, especially the hundreds of historical inscriptions (particularly from Asia Minor), and the thousands of papyri from Ptolemaic Egypt, provide an abundance of information, but very frequently uncertain clues (if any) about the historical context in which the information should be placed. The reconstruction of this period resembles a huge jigsaw puzzle, most of the pieces of which have been lost for ever. This explains why scholarship has concentrated on the wars of the kings and the conflicts between the great Hellenistic powers and Rome, for which the sources are somewhat better, rather neglecting the importance of local conflicts and the part played by war in the life of the populations of small urban centres and of the countryside. I hope that this book will demonstrate how rewarding it is, despite the aforementioned difficulties, to turn our attention to these areas of the Greek world.

This book has primarily been written for students of classics and history. It does not aim to cover every aspect of Hellenistic warfare (e.g., tactics and weapons), but rather surveys the various ways in which war shaped Hellenistic society, mentality, and culture, and also the ways in which wars corresponded to contemporary social conditions and reflected the cultural peculiarities of this era.

Let me warn the reader about the faults I am aware of – reviewers will probably discover more. None of the aspects selected for presentation could be discussed in an exhaustive manner. In addition, this study does not cover the entire geographical range of the Hellenistic world. The reader will immediately notice a focus on the world of the cities in mainland Greece,

the Aegean islands, and Asia Minor – although I have included examples from Magna Graecia, the Black Sea, the Seleukid Empire, and Ptolemaic Egypt. Important subjects, such as the emergence of a Galatian state in Anatolia, the cultural background of the wars of the Maccabees, or warfare in the periphery of the Hellenistic world (e.g., in the Greek-Baktrian kingdoms) could not be discussed. The Hellenistic world is a well-defined historical period, but despite the impression of unity, a close study of the evidence always reveals local peculiarities and historical developments. Hellenistic Crete is very different from Hellenistic Ionia or Hellenistic Mesopotamia, and the warfare during the period of the Successors (322–281 BC) differs in aims, dimensions, and form from, for example, the wars of the Roman expansion (ca. 220–146 BC). Although I often draw the reader's attention to the necessity of such distinctions, I could not always avoid some of those more or less misleading generalizations which are inherent in general introductory surveys.

This is a book without footnotes, but the reader will find references to the sources and to modern scholarship, either in the main text or in the section on "Further Reading" which concludes every chapter. The Bibliography is long, but not exhaustive. I have preferred to include recent publications (where the reader can find further bibliographies), as well as the books and articles on which my discussion of specific subjects relies. Technical terms (e.g., *sympolity*, *liturgy*, etc.) are usually explained the first time they are used; the reader can find the explanation with the help of the index (under Greek terms).

Among the sources, the inscriptions take the lion's share in my discussions, including some very recent finds. This preference is easy to explain: it is through the discovery of new documentary sources (inscriptions and papyri) that our knowledge of essential aspects of the Hellenistic world is continually enlarged and modified. Many of the texts presented here in translation have already been included in two invaluable selections of sources, compiled by Austin (1981) and Bagnall and Derow (2004). If not otherwise indicated, all translations of Greek texts are mine; sometimes I have modified the translations of other scholars.

I hope that this book will increase the knowledge and interest of students in Hellenistic history, will enable scholars who study the wars of other periods and areas to take the Hellenistic examples into consideration, and will invite my fellow classicists and historians to provide better explanations of some of the questions which have intrigued and puzzled me.

I have never met some of the people I feel the need to thank. F. Walbank's seminal work on the Hellenistic Age and W. K. Pritchett's fundamental surveys on Greek warfare have helped me write this book more than I have been able to recognize in bibliographical references. J. W. Lendon allowed me to consult his forthcoming article on war and society in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds. Charalambos Kritzas (Epigraphical Museum,

PREFACE

Athens), Maria Akamati (Department of Antiquities, Pella), and A. Peschlow (German Archaeological Institute, Berlin) as well as the Numismatic Museum of Athens, the Rhodes Archaeological Museum, the *École Française d'Athènes*, and the British Museum provided photographs. My research assistant Volker Schmidt contributed substantially to the compilation of the bibliography and the preparation of the manuscript. My graduate research assistants Manolis Skountakis and Johannes Stahl offered valuable help in the collection of sources. The source index was compiled by Dr. Gian Franco Chiai. I am very grateful to Jon Ingoldby, who undertook the copy-editing and substantially improved the text, and to Sue Hadden for her patient and attentive work on the production of the manuscript. Without Al Bertrand's continual encouragement and help I would have never started writing this book, and without Angela Cohen's effective assistance in practical matters (and regular reminders), I would have never finished it.

From Fritz Gschnitzer I have learned to read inscriptions as sources for historical phenomena, and to pay attention to the tensions and complexities revealed by the choice of words. To him I gratefully dedicate this book on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday.



Map 1 The Hellenistic World

THE UBIQUITOUS WAR

1.1. The Visibility of War

If we are to believe the healing miracles of Epidauros, inscribed in the Asklepieion around the mid-fourth century BC, a visitor to that most famous Greek sanctuary would not only admire the newly-built temple and the sumptuous dedications, but also see, among the pilgrims seeking healing in that place, men whose bodies and faces had been marked by the wounds inflicted in war (LiDonnici 1995): “Euhippos bore a spear head in his jaw for six years” (A12); “Gorgias of Herakleia . . . was wounded in the lung by an arrow in some battle, and for a year and six months it was festering so badly, that he filled sixty-seven bowls with pus” (B10); “Antikrates of Knidos . . . had been struck with a spear through both his eyes in some battle, and he became blind and carried around the spearhead with him, inside his face” (B12).

Shortly after 197 BC, a traveller in North Thessaly would see, reaching the plain of Kynos Kephalaï, the remains of 8,000 unburied Macedonians, killed at the decisive battle of the Second Macedonian War between Philip V of Macedonia and the Romans. It was not until 191 BC that King Antiochos III gave instructions to built a tomb for their bones (Livy 36.8; Appian, *Syr.* 16). Along the streets that led from the countryside to the city walls of a Hellenistic city, one would see the graves of men who had fallen in war. And a visitor to the Aitolian federal sanctuary of Thermon shortly before 218 BC would have been able to count more than 15,000 *hopla* – unidentifiable pieces of armor, dedicated by victorious parties in wars (Polyb. 5.8).

Travelling in Hellenistic Greece meant travelling in a landscape marked by war. The modern viewer of an aesthetically pleasing Hellenistic statue such as the Nike of Samothrace tends to forget that this statue decorated a victory monument (see chapter 11, section 6) and that ancient warfare could take unpleasant forms of visibility. Burned fields and farms next to trophies, cenotaphs in front of ruined or hastily built fortifications, plundered temples next to statues of war heroes – these are some of the impressions the Hellenistic landscape must have left on a contemporary traveler.

No detailed description of the Hellenistic world survives, but even if such a description had been written, it is doubtful whether the author would have bothered to inform his readers about the devastations caused by war – so familiar would these have been to his eyes, it would be more rewarding to describe impressive monuments. The only lengthy fragment of a Hellenistic periegesis, a work of the late third century attributed to a certain Herakleides, does not say a single word about warfare.

Despite this, among the factors that shaped the Hellenistic world, war seems without doubt to be the most important. The genesis of the Hellenistic world is itself the result of a war – the campaigns of Alexander the Great – and the end of this historical period is also marked by a battle – the Battle of Actium and the defeat of the last Ptolemaic monarch, Kleopatra. Between the violent beginnings, with the Wars of the Successors (322 BC), and the bloody end (31 BC), we have three centuries in which major and minor wars provided contemporary historians with the material for their books, and artists with assignments for grave monuments, war memorials, and dedications. These wars demanded thousands of mortal lives and the attention of those deities who were believed to be the patrons of war. There is hardly any moment in which a geographical region was not directly involved, or indirectly affected, by a military conflict; in fact, the most influential historian of this period, Polybios, regarded the entire Mediterranean as a single battlefield from the late third century onwards, and introduced the notion of the *symploke* (“interweaving”) to characterize the “world history” of his times. The Hellenistic Age is not only the period of a global culture (*koine*), but also – indeed, more so – the period of the ubiquitous war.

The Hellenistic Greeks were surrounded by images of war (see chapter 10). The coins they used were decorated not only with the portraits of kings with military attributes, but also with weapons, war monuments, trophies, and divine patrons of war (especially Athena holding the Victory). Demetrios the Besieger, for example, minted silver coins after his victory in Salamis on Cyprus (307 BC) with the representation of Nike (Victory) standing on the prow of a warship and blowing a trumpet (see figure 1.1), and coins of the Syracusan tyrant Agathokles were decorated with the winged Nike erecting a trophy (see figure 11.1). The public areas of urban centers, such as the market-place, the buildings of the administration, and the sanctuaries, were decorated with the statues of war heroes and memorials of victorious battles, and war booty was dedicated to the gods. Inscriptions praising benefactors who had saved their own or foreign cities during wars were exhibited in the same public areas, and if the passers-by did not have the leisure to read the text of the honorary inscription, a representation would often provide a hint of the military context. For example, the honorary decree for Euphron of Sikyon in Athens (see figure 1.2) is decorated with the images of Athena and the grateful Demos (the personification of



Figure 1.1 Silver coin issued by Demetrios the Besieger after his victory in Salamis (Cyprus), 306 BC. Nike stands on the forecastle of a galley's prow holding a trumpet. Numismatic Museum of Athens (courtesy of the Museum).

the people) on one side, and Euphron, in military attire, standing in front of his horse, on the other.

Military parades were an integral part of public ceremonies, and one of these may be portrayed on the famous mosaic of Praeneste (Pollitt 1986: figure 222; cf. Coarelli 1990). In many regions, the graves of people who had spent a long period in military service were decorated with their images in military attire (see chapter 10, section 2). Even houseware was decorated with military themes – for example, with war elephants (see e.g., Ducrey 1985: 105, figure 76), and it is highly likely that paintings with representations of battle scenes would have adorned private houses.

There are a variety of reasons for the ubiquity of images of war, military equipment, and military personnel: an interest in dramatic changes of fortune, the feeling of compassion, the love of the exotic, and a fondness for the paradoxical (see chapter 10). But in addition to these reasons, which are closely connected with major trends in Hellenistic culture, there is a more pragmatic one: wars were extremely frequent in the Hellenistic period.



Figure 1.2 Athenian honorary decree for Euphron of Sikyon, an ally of the Athenians in their wars for freedom against the Macedonians (323–18 BC). The relief shows Demos (the personification of the people) on the one side and Euphron, in military attire, standing in front of his horse, on the other. Athens National Museum (courtesy of the Museum).