

Q: Why do we call the period following Alexander the Great's death "Hellenistic"?

A: The adjective "Hellenistic" is derived from the adjective "Hellenic." The word "Hellenic" was used by the Greeks themselves to qualify their culture. After Alexander the Great's conquests, Hellenic culture was diffused to subjugated regions. The resulting mixed cultures and their productions are called "Hellenistic," since they bear the mark of the Hellenic without necessarily being completely Greek.

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Q: Was Macedonia Greek?

A: Macedonians spoke Greek. However, ancient Macedonia is usually differentiated from ancient Greece because Macedonians lived differently from citizens of city-states, such as Athens. Macedonia was a kingdom dependent upon its highly trained warriors and was often seen as barbaric by Greek city-states. Macedonian kings, however, traced their origins to Greece and Greek mythology. Philip and Alexander the Great thought of themselves as descendants of great Greek heroes and of Macedonia as Greek. Though they conquered Greek city-states, the culture that they wanted to spread was Greek. In his father's court, Alexander was tutored by Aristotle.

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