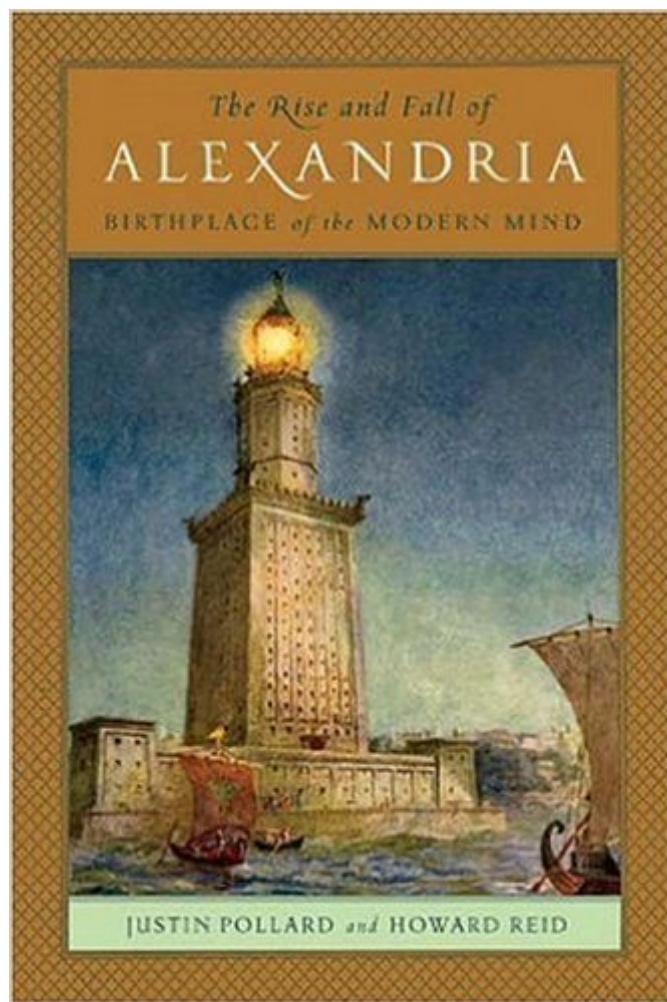


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The Rise And Fall Of Alexandria: Birthplace Of The Modern Mind



Synopsis

The astonishing story of the ancient city that invented the modern world. Founded by Alexander the Great and built by Greek pharaohs, the city of Alexandria at its height dwarfed both Athens and Rome. It was the marvel of its age-legendary for its vast palaces, safe harbors, and magnificent lighthouse. But it was most famous for the astonishing intellectual fluorescence it fostered and the library it produced. If the European Renaissance was the "rebirth" of Western culture, then Alexandria, Egypt, was its birthplace. It was here mankind first discovered that the earth was not flat, originated atomic theory, invented geometry, systematized grammar, translated the Old Testament into Greek, built the steam engine, and passed their discoveries on to future generations via the written word. Julius Caesar, Anthony and Cleopatra, Jewish scholars, Greek philosophers, and devout early Christians all play a part in the rise and fall of the city that stood "at the conjunction of the whole world." Compulsively readable and sparkling with fresh insights into science, philosophy, culture, and invention, this is an irresistible, eye-opening delight.

Book Information

Hardcover: 352 pages

Publisher: Viking Adult; 1st. edition (October 19, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0670037974

ISBN-13: 978-0670037971

Product Dimensions: 6.3 x 1.2 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (67 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #355,260 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #155 inÂ Books > History > Africa > Egypt #332 inÂ Books > History > Ancient Civilizations > Egypt #1536 inÂ Books > History > Middle East

Customer Reviews

An outstanding book written about Alexandria Egypt. There are barely any books written on this old and historical city. Having lived there for 30 years, it certainly appealed to me to purchase this book. Rise and Fall of Alexandria is not only about the Ptolomies, and the library of Alexandria, or the Roman Empire. It is the history of: philosophy, mathematics, geography, astrology, medicine, and all the intellectual minds that were born, and came to research, study and die in Alexandria. The beginning of Christianity, the translation of the Bible from Hebrew to Greek, what was Christianity and

Judaism seen from the eyes of the intellectual Philosophers in Alexandria. Who created the Pharos of Alexandria one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world. Who created roads, palaces, gardens, and libraries. How it all started and how it all ended. It is a very easy book to read, with so much knowledge, that it would have certainly been kept in the old Alexandria Library had it survived the fire. A must read for those who like ancient history.

This is a wonderful book. It charts the history of Alexandria from its inception in the fourth century BC to its tragic demise about a millennium later. The authors describe the great advances made within the walls of this intellectual capital of the ancient world in the fields of science, astronomy, mathematics, geography, medicine, philosophy, religion, etc. They also introduce the reader to the many luminaries who contributed to these giant steps in human knowledge. The great Alexandrian library, the museum and the incomparable Pharos are all discussed here as well. The writing style is clear, friendly and quite captivating. This major contribution to the literature on ancient history aimed at the non-specialist will surely be savored by general readers and completely devoured by ancient history buffs. One can only imagine what the world would be like today if Alexandria had continued to prosper from its peak during the earlier parts of the Ptolemaic dynasty to today.

Rise and Fall of Alexandria: Birthplace of the Modern Mind. - Justin Pollard (2006) ***** For me this was a fabulous introduction to Classical civilization. I sought it out because I wanted to know what was lost at the great library of Alexandria. This book answered my question past my greatest hopes. Not only did I learn the answer to my question, but I learned more about Jewish, Persian, Greek, Roman, and Christian history than I have ever learned in one place. And I was introduced to some of the most interesting historical figures I have ever heard of. Understanding the history of Alexandria seems to be a key to understanding a world's transition from pre-historic to modern. I invested my time well.

Well written, interesting, and engaging! Covers a wide range of scientific learning and philosophical thought. I've heard a lot about the library in Alexandria, but had no idea of its real significance.

This is a very well-written, enjoyable book about one of my favorite periods in history. The ancient city of Alexandria saw the development of algebra, geometry, a prototype of a steam engine and various other examples of unfettered human intelligence at its best. The book chronicles the struggle between those who think and enjoy learning about the world and those who find such

inquiry unsettling and instead retreat into hierarchical lives, whether religious or martial. It's sad to contemplate how much was lost when its wonderful library was gradually destroyed. The potential for an industrial revolution 2000 years before its time was there, just waiting to be grasped. I highly recommend this book to anyone interesting in reliving the vibrant years in ancient Alexandria that tapped into human potential at its best. Inspiring and depressing at the same time, but well worth your time.

A forty-storey lighthouse straight out of George Lucas's imagination - but it did exist 2000 years ago, mathematical formulae measuring the Earth's circumference to unbelievable accuracy based on a well and a stick, a long-lost library including theories about the world not being flat written millenia before the Catholic Church conceded the point, and an accessible turn of phrase make this a good read for students or fans of the ancient world, that criss-cross of Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Jewish, Christian and Muslim civilisations.

For those interested in the history of Alexandria, a city that has had a major impact on both the ancient as well as the modern world, this book is a must read. The Ancient World is one of my favourite subjects, and this book did not disappoint. The writing style was engaging and insightful- a pleasure to read. I would strongly recommend it to anyone interested in the subject. In fact I just bought a copy as a Christmas present for my father.

Those who complain this book isn't "deep" enough for their academic or at least autodidactic brains are missing something wonderful here. How many books are out there at all covering this material? In a word, none. I know because I've looked. Of course there are tomes on various subjects contained therein: individual philosophers, mathematicians, the library, the Ptolemaic dynasty, the rise of Christianity (what a snarl this subject is, and try and find a nice smooth unbiased work on that!), Cleopatras of every sort and size, but to synthesize the oftentimes dubious work of single-focus academia and to then create a flowing narrative like this, well, I am deeply impressed. Synthesis is hard. To stuff your brain with facts is easy. To understand those facts is a little less easy. But to gather the facts, absorb them, and then organize them into a history of an entire city created on a premise that no city I know of has ever attempted and then which succeeded for so long (longer than the US has existed and we're not based on this idea at all)...well, I thought this book breath-taking. As the authors say in their acknowledgement, Bill Bryson woke them up to the fact that you don't have to be an academic to write history. I say amen to that. It's the so-called

"outsiders" looking in who seem best able to see. As a devourer of history, and as one who knows that old dictum that history is written by the victors (and now the tenure seekers), this book was more than fresh air. It was an oxygen mask.

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