

Chapter 1 : The Rise and Fall of Alexandria (Audiobook) by Justin Pollard, Howard Reid | calendrierdelascience.com

*The Rise and Fall of Alexandria: Birthplace of the Modern World [Justin Pollard, Howard Reid] on calendrierdelascience.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. A short history of nearly everything classical. The foundations of the modern world were laid in Alexandria of Egypt at the turn of the first millennium.*

The authors call the city "the greatest mental crucible the world has ever known," the intellectual foundation upon which the later Renaissance forged the minds of modern men. From Constantinople, a copy found its way to the Vatican, and Latin editions were then circulated to royal courts in Western Europe. One Christopher Columbus, intrigued by the possibilities, contemplated a great expedition to sail west around the globe. With this point of the Alexandrian legacy having been made, the next few chapters trace the birth and development of the city. Chapter one highlights the exploits of Alexander the Great, and his founding of a new Greek city in Egypt off the coast of a trading island known to Homer. Chapters two and three recount how the wily Ptolemy, son of Lagos and general of Alexander, wrestled control of Egypt and forged a new culture to compliment the new capitol. Chapters four and five inquire into the philosophical upbringing of Alexander and Ptolemy via Aristotle, and how an inspired Ptolemy attracted some remarkable scholars and philosophers to Alexandria in its nascent phases. The native Egyptians had already developed a considerable expertise in medicine, astronomy and engineering; the Greeks had led the world in advances in mathematics, biology and philosophy. These trends converged in the new Greco-Egyptian port city. Funded by the largesse of the Ptolemaic regime, intellectuals throughout the Mediterranean could live a comfortable life of scientific inquiry and scholarly interaction. Nor were Greeks the only participants; Alexandria the cosmopolitan world city beckoned members of every race, including a large Jewish population. With its impressive array of mathematicians, astronomers, doctors, biologists, geographers, mechanical engineers, theological thinkers and literati, Alexandria produced scientific and artistic heights not approached until modern times. While a long list of intellectual notables might be too unwieldy, a highlight of their fruits of labor can be offered here. In terms of abstract intellectual movements, Alexandria was no stranger either. Egyptian mysticism had long been a source of fascination to Greek intellectuals, and it is said that Pythagoras had learned the nature of his doctrines in the land of the Nile. Ascetic and otherworldly, Neoplatonism was the mental hinge between classical Pagan thought and Christianity. Speaking of Christianity, the world had been well prepared for it when the Jewish Bible was famously translated in Alexandria into the common Greek dialect. The theologian Origen was a son of a Greek father and Jewish mother. He reworked the Jewish based Christian religion into a Neoplatonic intellectual framework that Alexandrian intellectuals could understand. In so doing he earned the wrath of not only the Pagan state, but the leaders of the later Roman Catholic Church. But the intellectual demise of Alexandria coincided with the rise of an intolerant breed of Christianity. Eager to purge the entire Pagan legacy, Christian monks and laymen destroyed temples everywhere, including the famous Serapeum, a city landmark and one of the greatest religious complexes of Antiquity. When Hypatia, a female intellectual prodigy and Neoplatonist thinker, was tortured and killed by Christian monks, a new age dawned. Alexandria had slowly been nudging the world from irrational mythos to scientific logos, but the ascendancy of Christianity reversed the trend. However, political history is skimmed where appropriate. Another factor in the collapse of Alexandria was its failure to truly integrate the native Egyptian population. The Ptolemies ran Egypt as a state controlled economic machine, whose profits existed solely for the benefit of the Greco-Macedonian elite. To the Egyptian peasants, Alexandria was a foreign city on their soil. Their frequent rebellions and strikes betray that this "city of the mind", as the authors ubiquitously call Alexandria, was erected first and foremost for the prestige of the Ptolemies and their functionaries. Its intellectual benefactions to humanity were secondary and subordinate to that end. The book is written in a clear and enjoyable prose. Primary sources are quoted to good effect. There are maps, a chronology and an appendix, but regrettably no photographs or illustrations. It is informative and enjoyable, and now Amazon. Discuss and order this book online at Amazon Get it now!

Chapter 2 : The Rise and Fall of Alexandria: Birthplace of the Modern Mind by Justin Pollard

The Rise and Fall of Alexandria. It was in Alexandria, during the six hundred years beginning around B.C., that human beings, in an important sense, began the intellectual adventure that has led us to the shores of the cosmic ocean.

Our politics may be modeled on Greek prototypes, our public architecture on Roman antecedents, but in our minds we are all the children of Alexandria. There were also Greek merchants living in Egypt and adopting elements of its religion, particularly the worship of Isis, which in the following centuries would spread across the Mediterranean and, under Roman rule, reach as far as Britain. A pharaonic canal cut between that river and the Red Sea would provide access to the Indian Ocean for a ruler with the ambition to attempt a conquest of India—a loc: The ruler of Egypt was seen as Horus, the son of the god Osiris and the mediator between the worlds of the everyday and the divine. Then, any bad luck that befell the kingdom during this ominous time would fall on the shoulders of the criminal, not the king and hence the state. When the danger passed, the criminal would be executed, taking his ill fortune to the grave with him. As such he made no pretense of kingship, made no bid for the pharaonic throne so recently vacated by his friend and master. Seizing control of the somber procession, he ordered it to turn south down the Mediterranean coast and across Sinai into Egypt. This spoke to Egyptians, telling them that Egypt—long-suffering, invaded, and despoiled Egypt—was what had mattered most to Alexander and that the greatest general for centuries, perhaps of all time, had known that his spiritual home was here in the greatest of ancient civilizations. This took the form of a foot-wide mole, or causeway, stretching between the mainland and the island of Pharos, which divided the bay in half. As this land bridge was seven times the length of a Greek stadium around 4, feet it was known as the heptastadion. Sited between two harbors, the city stood at the crossroads of the ancient world, where the fine art and technology of the Greek city-states could be traded for the vast food resources of the Nile Valley, the treasures of Africa, and the luxuries of Asia. The number of its inhabitants surpasses that of those in other cities. In their place stood three families. To the east and north he seized Palestine and parts of Syria, as well as Cyprus and the Aegean islands of the Cyclades. This gave him control of lucrative trade routes but, more important, created a buffer zone where he could contest disputes with his Persian and Macedonian rivals, leaving the Egyptian heartland stable and free from warfare for generations to come. Originally it had represented the power and will of the pharaoh himself, later being thought to represent the god Ptah, whose center of worship was at Memphis. He could declare himself a Greek king—a basileus—indeed, that was an essential part of making his claim to Egypt as one of the successors of Alexander. But that title meant precious little to the Egyptians he intended to rule, loc: Of course this required the active cooperation of those priests. Not only did it provide Ptolemy with detailed information about how Egypt was run, but it gave his Greek academics access to the centuries of scientific particularly astronomical and religious thinking of the Egyptians. It also encouraged exchange the other way, helping to Hellenize the priestly caste in the temples and make them look more favorably on Greek rule. To represent his power over the dead, the power of Osiris, the three-headed dog of the Greek underworld, Cerberus, crouched at his right knee. In his left hand he held aloft a wand similar to the staff of the Greek god of healing, Asclepius. In fact his image must have looked remarkably similar to Zeus, but this was Zeus imbued with thousands of years of Egyptian religious power. Importantly, he was cast as a god of healing, a deity who had a practical everyday value that would bring him into the lives of anyone who was or knew someone who was sick. This power was indicated by his Asclepius-like staff, which indicated to the Greeks this facet of his being. For the Egyptian audience he was equated in this to Imhotep, the supposed architect of the first pyramid who was later worshipped as a god of healing. He was a god who stood outside the realms of fate, beyond the fickle chances of the everyday world. He was a god who had beaten death, like Osiris. As such he could see into the future and hence could be appealed to as an oracle, loc: For the Egyptians it was quite the opposite. Egyptians looked forward to death as a time and place where the very best in life was made eternal. He was an ebullient, festive god, filled with life and the love of life, who indulged in banquets and festivals: In short, he was all things to all men and women. His ten-year rule in Athens had brought peace to the city loc: Along with the decline in religious importance, the main arms of

administration were also moved from the old capital to the new city. From here the state was reorganized. The son of Sophroniscus derided the more abstruse inquiries and metaphysical researches of his predecessors, and by first introducing moral philosophy, he induced mankind to consider themselves, their passions, their opinions, their duties, actions and faculties. From this it is said that the founder of the Socratic school drew philosophy down from heaven upon the earth. It would feed and be fed by productive knowledge—the ships in the Great Harbor and the markets beyond. It would be governed by practical knowledge in the application of the very best and most efficient forms of government and administration. In response Alexander accused him of treachery and threw him into prison, loc: This was the first museum in Western history, loc: He knew the center of a city, the center of a state, should be more than a palace, a parliament, or an armory. He went on to distinguish correctly between motor and sensory neurons and to establish the link between the eye and the brain in the optic nerve. Ptolemy I had continued this program during his early wars, bringing as many as one hundred thousand Jewish prisoners from Israel to Egypt loc: He then added, almost as an aside: Each one was identical. And so the legend of the creation of the awesomely authentic Septuagint, as it is still known, was born. He was crowned pharaoh of Egypt in the ancient capital of Memphis on January 7, BC, without any real challenge; yet with the cold calculation that his family would become famous for, he promptly had two of his half brothers murdered, loc: Temple building eased this pressure by investing state funds in the priestly caste and by reminding the guardians of Egyptian religion that their new Greek masters respected and needed them. Not just the spoken word but both hieroglyphic and demotic writing blossomed, while the need for translation gave rise to perhaps the most important surviving object from ancient Egypt, the Rosetta stone, loc: Stay true to his Greek roots and shy away from what any Macedonian would certainly have considered incest, or take the opportunity to consolidate his power, free from the influence of alien wives or suitors, and make Ptolemaic rule an entirely family affair. Fortunately for both of them, they lived in a country with a two-thousand-year precedent for this. Egyptians not only approved of incestuous royal marriages, they preferred them. The leading intellectual figure at the time was Theocritus c. In place of the old dormitories and assembly halls, he commissioned a magnificent range of buildings right alongside the royal palace on the waterfront, with expansive lecture theaters, the library and great assembly halls, observatories, and plant and animal collections. Its total height would be at least feet—that is, about the height of a modern forty-floor skyscraper. Infuriated, the pharaoh raged through the region in a campaign that left the whole area stunned. He asserted that earthquakes were the result of waves, disturbances in the water on which the earth floated, and not the acts of irate gods. He also reached the height of perfection in arithmetic and music and the other mathematical sciences taught by the Chaldeans. It implied that there was something that made us, and everything else on the planet, stick to its surface—something we now call gravity. It also implied that there were two ways of getting from any one place to another—by going in opposite directions—and this meant that the whole nature of geography had to be changed. Its true value is 23 degrees 46 minutes. Without this there was nothing. Unable to continue his work, he chose to starve himself to death. He was around eighty-one years old. In his mind all that mattered was the beauty of mathematics and the exploration of pure thought. To him the mechanical marvels for which he is still famous were just toys, demonstrations of principles. Usual policy was to return the copy and keep the original—in case anything had been missed. Nobody removed information from Alexandria. They never received their copies or saw the originals again. Plutarch tells us that Archimedes turned his mind to creating wonderful siege engines which employed the mathematics he so loved to perform similar apparently superhuman acts. Great catapults were designed to rain stones upon the legions who foolishly believed themselves to be out of range. When Roman ships approached the harbor walls, cranes were swung out which either dropped huge rocks on their ships to sink them or hooked them out of the water, loc: Their strength was in books—their arsenal, a library in Alexandria. By turning a crank handle that would have been on the outside of the wooden box it was possible to calculate the time, day, month, season, and year. It even corrected for errors in the old Egyptian calendar, which, without leap years, lost a quarter of a day each year. By the time he came to the throne at about twenty years old in BC, it was clear that he had neither the military genius of a Macedonian king nor the mental sophistication of an Egyptian pharaoh. Unlike his counterpart in Alexandria, this young man kept himself fully informed of all the news from his rival

kingdoms, and so soon realized that the young Ptolemy was both weak and ensnared by a corrupt and self-serving court. The Syrians facing them resisted briefly, but soon crumbled under the overwhelming pressure and turned and fled. They had seen the magnificence of the Greek Ptolemaic court, they had seen the plunder, and now they had returned to the reality of life in their country. Many of these highly trained warriors made their way back to the heartland of the ancient capital of Thebes modern Luxor , only to find their families in extreme poverty and much of the land in disrepair. Upper Egypt, backed by the kings of Nubia, now effectively seceded from the north, and the rebels declared their leader, an Egyptian named Herwennefer, their pharaoh in BC. How had she come to die simultaneously with her husband, and what, or who, had killed her? It proved a mistake, and now, following his defeat at the battle of Pharsalus, loc: Instead of taking the war away from Egypt, as Ptolemy had hoped, Caesar ordered his troops to land and occupy Alexandria. First the warehouses on the wharves caught alight, then the dockyards themselves. When Caesar returned to Alexandria he was the victor, loc: They commented that the Alexandrine War, unlike his other victories, was an unnecessary diversion, and one he undertook not for the glory of Rome but out of his love for Cleopatra. For a moment it seemed that together they could do more than save Egypt. The Alexandrians loved Antony, loc: Alexander Helios the sun and Cleopatra Selene the moon. In return he gave her the one present every Ptolemy coveted. In short, he had claimed half the known world. On August 1, when Octavian walked into Alexandria, the Ptolemaic kingdom came to an end. He was a designer and builder of automatonsâ€™”automatically operated machinesâ€™”with loc: If machines had replaced slaves, where would the slaves have gone?

Chapter 3 : The Rise And Fall Of Alexandria's Library - UA Magazine

"The Rise and Fall of Alexandria" was an absolutely fascinating read of classical history. The authors but we appreciate that the history of Alexandria is as much about its intellectual community of philosophers, mathematicians, and astronomers as it is about its rulers, and armies.

Historical overview[edit] With the death of Muhammad in AD, the Muslim world began a period of rapid expansion. Under the rule of the first caliphs , the Rashidun , Muslim armies began assaulting the borders of both Sassanid Persia and the Byzantine Empire. Following Muslim conquest, the local populace and political infrastructure was left largely intact, albeit under Muslim control. Some groups were persecuted, namely anyone deemed to be "pagan" or an "idolater". The Muslim people were tolerant of the Jews and Christians of captured regions. Many rose to positions of relative power and affluence in the new cities like Baghdad. The only major difference in treatment between Muslims and non-Muslims was the taxation system. Byzantine Alexandria[edit] The rulers of Alexandria before the arrival of Islam were the Byzantines. A heavily trafficked port city, Alexandria was crucial to maintaining imperial control over the region, based on its large Greco-Egyptian population and economic importance. The population of Alexandria was heavily influenced by both the cultural and religious views of their Eastern Roman Empire rulers; nevertheless, the majority of the population spoke Coptic, rather than Latin or Greek. Thus, the main agents of cultural diffusion at the time of the arrival of Islam were the Coptic Christians led by Cyrus of Alexandria. Even though they would be able to successfully hold Asia Minor and retain it as an imperial base province, as time went on, Egypt became increasingly difficult to defend. Rashidun conquest of Egypt[edit] Main article: Muslim conquest of Egypt In , the Muslim leader Umar ascended to the role of caliph and inherited a heterogeneous and rapidly expanding Islamic empire. Throughout the early s, he set his sights on the economically desirable province of Egypt and its capital city of Alexandria. The Muslim invasion of Egypt was led by the commander Amr ibn Al-Aas , who commanded a force larger than any army that the Byzantines could field at the time, as a result of their crushing defeat at Yarmuk four years earlier. The original attempts by the Arab forces were not directed solely towards Alexandria, but rather at removing the Byzantine fortress of Babylon Siege of Babylon Fortress on the Nile Delta. Fall of Alexandria and aftermath[edit] Following the destruction of the Byzantine forces at Heliopolis, the city of Alexandria was left virtually defenseless and it is likely that only a fraction of provincial forces remained garrisoned in the city itself. However, in September , after a six-month siege, Byzantine officials led by Theodore at last capitulated to Amr, turning the city over to Muslim hands. An armistice of about eleven months, to expire the first day of the Coptic month Paophi, i. During the armistice the Arab forces to maintain their positions, but to keep apart and undertake no military operations against Alexandria; the Roman forces to cease all acts of hostility. The garrison of Alexandria and all troops there to embark and depart by sea, carrying all their possessions and treasure with them: No Roman army to return or attempt the recovery of Egypt. The Muslims to desist from all seizure of churches, and not to interfere in any way with the Christians. The Jews to be suffered to remain at Alexandria. Hostages to be given by the Romans, viz. The impact of such a major event as the loss of Alexandria to Muslim forces was felt throughout the Mediterranean world. The decrease in the annual grain shipments from Egypt struck a decisive blow to the Byzantine economy; besides the simple fact of fewer available resources, the empire lost untold thousands in taxes from the grain merchants now traveling southward towards Damascus and Alexandria. Though none of these were successful for a sustained period of time, Byzantine forces were able to briefly regain control of the city in Arab chroniclers tell of a massive fleet and army sent by the Byzantines with the goal of retaking Alexandria. The imperial forces were led by a lower ranking imperial official named Manuel. After entering the city without facing much resistance, the Byzantines were able to regain control of both Alexandria and the surrounding Egyptian countryside. The Muslims retaliated by readying a large force of 15, who promptly set out to retake the city under command of the veteran Amr ibn Al-As. The Byzantines, following their standard tactical doctrine, advanced out of the city and sought an open battle away from the shelter of their fortifications. Accounts of the battle portray the Muslim forces as relying heavily on their archers before

eventually assaulting the Byzantine positions, driving many back and routing the rest in the process. In , yet another attempt to bring Alexandria back into imperial hands failed when an invasion force sent by Constans II was repulsed. This generally marks the end of Byzantine attempts to retake the city. Life under Rashidun rule[edit] In regards to the treatment of the native population, many sources point out visible persecution towards the native Coptic Christian population in Alexandria, a "religious tax" was imposed on any Dhimmi un-converted Egyptian. The protection of the Dhimmi unconverted was guaranteed in return for a payment of Jizyah poll tax of supposedly fixed taxes, which were embodied in the terms of the capitulation, at two dinars per adult male, and an additional kharaj land tax payable by those including churches possessing land in the provinces. In addition, the protected population was required to provide a measure of clothing and hospitality to any itinerant Muslim. This description is vague enough to cover the innumerable variations of interpretation offered by Arab chroniclers, jurists, and writers on taxation, to say nothing of many of their modern successors concerning the imposition of these taxes. Much of this confused material reflects the theoretical variations of a later date. Nevertheless, contemporary papyri as well as some historical sources show clearly that the Dhimmi in early Muslim Egypt were, in fact, the victims not so much of a system fixed ab origine by the capitulation but of frequent and seemingly haphazard changes in status and in levels and incidence of taxation. Egypt is the most evident proof of this. It adopted what the Arabs had brought over, and reserved it. It was not by mere numbers that we conquered those we have conquered. We have met your king Heraclius, and there befell him what has befallen him. They have chased our king from his kingdom as far as Constantinople. It is much more preferable, therefore, that we submit. The Moslems fought fiercely against them and invested them for three months. He reduced them to the position of dhimmi like the people of Alyunah. Then Amr turned to him, and said to him: And if you will pray for me, that I may go to the West and to Pentapolis, and take possession of them, as I have of Egypt, and return to you in safety and speedily, I will do for you all that you shall ask of me. Greek, Coptic, and Arabic were all spoken fluently throughout the city and documents continued to be published in Greek and Coptic for some time following the takeover. Coptic was also continued in the fields of medicine, mathematics, and alchemy, whose practices thrived under the budding advances of Islamic intellectualism. However, after the 11th century, Arabic replaced Greek and Coptic as the principal language of the city. Indeed, from the third century on, Alexandria served as a major base for both the practice of Monophysitism and Nestorianism , as well as a surprising[citation needed] number of other Christian sects that found refuge in Egypt. From a cultural perspective the practice of marriage between Muslim men and non-Muslim women was a fairly common one, and at least a sizeable portion of the Muslim invasion force that settled in and around the city of Alexandria took native Berber women as their brides. The importance of Alexandria as the staging point for future conquests and economic purposes should not be dismissed. Islam and the Medieval West. Capital Cities of Arab Islam.

Chapter 4 : The Rise and Fall of Alexandria: Birthplace of the Modern World

Alexandria was a magnet for advanced thought, and over time that quality came to be perceived as a threat. In 48 b.c., Julius Caesar's impulsive (or deliberate) torching of the library destroyed a vast archive of knowledge accumulated over generations.

The city was founded by Alexander the Great who encouraged respect for alien cultures and the open-minded pursuit of knowledge. He encouraged his generals and soldiers to marry Persian and Indian women. He respected the gods of other nations. He collected exotic lifeforms, including an elephant for Aristotle, his teacher. His city was constructed on a lavish scale, to be the world center of commerce, culture, and learning. But the greatest marvel of Alexandria was the Library and the associated Museum literally, an institution devoted to the specialties of the Nine Muses. It was the citadel of a brilliant scientific tradition. The Library was constructed and supported by the Ptolemys, the Greek kings who inherited the Egyptian portion of the empire of Alexander the Great. From the time of its creation until its destruction seven centuries later, it was the brain and heart of the ancient world. Alexandria was the publishing capital of the planet. Of course, there were no printing presses then. Books were expensive; every one of them was copied by hand. The Library was the repository of the most accurate copies in the world. The art of critical editing was invented there. The Old Testament comes down to us mainly from the Greek translations made in the Alexandrian Library. The Ptolemys devoted much of their enormous wealth to the acquisition of every Greek book, as well as works from Africa, Persia, India, Israel and other parts of the world. Ptolemy III Euergetes wished to borrow from Athens the original manuscripts or official state copies of the great ancient tragedies of Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides. To the Athenians, these were a kind of cultural patrimony-- something like the original handwritten copies and first folios of Shakespeare might be in England. They were reluctant to let the manuscripts out of their hands even for a moment. Only after Ptolemy guaranteed their return with an enormous cash deposit did they agree to lend the plays. But Ptolemy valued these scrolls more than gold or silver. He forfeited the deposit gladly and enshrined, as well he might, the originals in the Library. The outraged Athenians had to content themselves with the copies that Ptolemy, only a little shamefacedly, presented to them. Rarely has a state so avidly supported the pursuit of knowledge. The Ptolemys did not merely collect established knowledge; they encouraged and financed scientific research and so generated new knowledge. The results were amazing. Eratosthenes accurately calculated the size of the Earth, mapped it, and argued that India could be reached by sailing westward from Spain. Hipparchus anticipated that stars come into being, slowly move during the course of centuries, and eventually perish; it was he who first catalogued the positions and magnitudes of the stars to detect such changes. Euclid brilliantly systematized geometry and produced a textbook from which humans learned for twenty-three centuries, a work that was to help awaken the scientific interest of Kepler, Newton, and Einstein. Dionysius of Thrace defined the parts of speech and did for the study of language what Euclid did for geometry. Galen wrote basic works on healing and anatomy which dominated the medicine until the Renaissance. Herophilus, the physiologist, firmly established that the brain rather than the heart is the seat of intelligence. There were also Heron of Alexandria, inventor of gear trains and steam engines and the author of *Automata*, the first book on robots; Apollonius of Perga, the mathematician who demonstrated the forms of the conic sections; Archimedes, the greatest mechanical genius until Leonardo da Vinci; and the astronomer and geographer Ptolemy, who compiled much of what is the pseudoscience of astrology: And among those great men was a great woman, Hypatia, mathematician and astronomer, the last light of the library, whose martyrdom was bound up with the destruction of the library seven centuries after its founding, a story to which we will return. The scholars of the Library studied the entire Cosmos. Cosmos is a Greek word for the order of the universe. It is, in a way, the opposite of Chaos. It implies the deep interconnectedness of all things. It conveys awe for the intricate and subtle way in which the universe is put together. Here was a community of scholars, exploring physics, literature, medicine, astronomy, geography, philosophy, mathematics, biology, and engineering. Beneficiary of the Ionian Awakening, science and scholarship had come of age, 2, years ago. The Alexandrian Library is where we

humans first collected, seriously and systematically, the knowledge of the world. We build on those foundations still. Alexandria was the greatest city the Western world had ever seen. People of all nations came there to live, to trade, to learn. On any given day, its harbors were thronged with merchants, scholars, and tourists. It is probably here that the word cosmopolitan realized its true meaning--citizen, not just of a nation, but of the Cosmos. To be a citizen of the Cosmos Here clearly were the seeds of the modern world. What prevented them from taking root and flourishing? Why instead did the West slumber through a thousand years of darkness until Columbus and Copernicus and their contemporaries rediscovered the work done in Alexandria? I cannot give you a simple answer. But I do know this: The permanence of the stars was questioned; the justice of slavery was not. Science and learning in general were the preserve of a privileged few. The vast population of the city had not the vaguest notion of the great discoveries taking place within the Library. New findings were not explained or popularized. The research benefited them little. Discoveries in mechanics and steam technology were applied mainly to the perfection of weapons, the encouragement of superstition, the amusement of kings. The scientists never grasped the potential of machines to free people. The great intellectual achievements of antiquity had few immediate practical implications. Science never captured the imagination of the multitude. There was no counterbalance to stagnation, to pessimism, to the most abject surrenders to mysticism. When, at long last, the mob came to burn the Library down, there was nobody to stop them. The last scientist who worked in the Library was a mathematician, astronomer, physicist and the head of the Neoplatonic school of philosophy--an extraordinary range of accomplishments for any individual in any age. Her name was Hypatia. She was born in Alexandria in A. At a time when women had few options and were treated as property, Hypatia moved freely and unselfconsciously through traditional male domains. By all accounts she was a great beauty. She had many suitors but rejected all offers of marriage. Slavery had sapped classical civilization of its vitality. The growing Christian Church was consolidating its power and attempting to eradicate pagan influence and culture. Hypatia stood at the epicenter of these mighty social forces. Cyril, the Archbishop of Alexandria, despised her because of her close friendship with the Roman governor, and because she was a symbol of learning and science, which were largely identified by the early Church with paganism. They dragged her from her chariot, tore off her clothes, and, armed with abalone shells, flayed her flesh from her bones. Her remains were burned, her works obliterated, her name forgotten. Cyril was made a saint. The glory of the Alexandrian Library is a dim memory. It was as if the entire civilization had undergone some self-inflicted brain surgery, and most of its memories, discoveries, ideas and passions were extinguished irrevocably. The loss was incalculable. Of the physical contents of that glorious Library not a single scroll remains. Only a small fraction of the books survived, in copies preserved in other libraries, along with a few pathetic scattered fragments. And how tantalizing those bits and pieces are! We know, for example, that there was on the library shelves a book by the astronomer Aristarchus of Samos, who argued that the Earth is one of the planets, which like them orbits the Sun, and that the stars are enormously far away. Each of these conclusions is entirely correct, but we had to wait nearly two thousand years for their rediscovery. In some cases, we know only the tantalizing titles of the works that were destroyed. In most cases, we know neither the titles nor the authors. We do know that of the plays of Sophocles in the Library, only seven survived. One of those seven is Oedipus Rex. Similar numbers apply to the works of Aeschylus and Euripides.

Chapter 5 : G Free: The Rise and Fall of Alexandria

A short history of nearly everything classical. The foundations of the modern world were laid in Alexandria of Egypt at the turn of the first millennium. In this compulsively readable narrative, Justin Pollard and Howard Reid bring one of history's most fascinating and prolific cities to life.

Chapter 6 : THE RISE AND FALL OF ALEXANDRIA by Justin Pollard , Howard Reid | Kirkus Reviews

A Literature Review of The Rise and Fall of Alexandria Book Review of The Rise and Fall of Alexandria How the modern

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world was actually established is often overlooked and attributed to the powers and domination of Athens and Rome.

Chapter 7 : The Rise and Fall of Alexandria by Justin Pollard, Howard Reid | calendrierdelascience.com

About The Rise and Fall of Alexandria. A short history of nearly everything classical. The foundations of the modern world were laid in Alexandria of Egypt at the turn of the first millennium.

Chapter 8 : Siege of Alexandria () - Wikipedia

The Rise and Fall of Alexandria: Birthplace of the Modern Mind by Justin Pollard, Howard Reid, Simon Vance Founded by Alexander the Great and built by self-styled Greek pharaohs, the city of Alexandria at its height dwarfed both Athens and Rome.

Chapter 9 : The Rise and Fall of Alexandria : Justin Pollard :

"The Rise and Fall of Alexandria" is a delightful and informative read that effectively waves the banner of an unappreciated aspect of the Western legacy. The author's preface and epilogue recount how the scholar Claudius Ptolemy indirectly changed the world.