

The background of the cover is a large, intricate mosaic. It depicts a panoramic view of a city, likely Alexandria, with a river or harbor in the foreground. The scene is filled with numerous figures and activities: people carrying goods, animals like horses and oxen, and various architectural structures including temples and public buildings. The mosaic is rendered in a classical style with a rich color palette of earthy tones and blues.

ALEXANDRIA

A Cultural and Religious Melting Pot

Edited by George Hinge and Jens A. Krasilnikoff

Aarhus University Press

Alexandria
A Cultural and Religious
Melting Pot

Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity (ASMA)

IX

ASMA is a series which will be published approximately once a year by The Centre for the Study of Antiquity, University of Aarhus, Denmark.

The Centre is a network of cooperating departments: Greek and Latin, Classical Archaeology, History, and the Faculty of Theology. The objective of the series is to advance the interdisciplinary study of Antiquity by publishing articles, e.g., conference papers, or independent monographs, which among other things reflect the current activities of the centre.

Alexandria A Cultural and Religious Melting Pot

Edited by George Hinge and Jens A. Krasilnikoff

Alexandria. A Cultural and Religious Melting Pot

© Aarhus University Press and the authors 2009

Cover by Jørgen Sparre

Illustration: Roman mosaic from Palestrina. Archaeological Museum

© 1990. Photo Scala, Florence – courtesy of the Ministero Beni e Att. Culturali

Typeset with Minion

eISBN 978 87 7934 745 8

ISSN 1399 2686

Aarhus University Press

Langelandsgade 177

DK-8200 Aarhus N

www.unipress.dk

White Cross Mills

Hightown, Lancaster, LA1 4XS

United Kingdom

www.gazellebookservices.co.uk

PO Box 511

Oakville, CT 06779

www.oxbowbooks.com

Published with the financial support of

The Aarhus University Research Foundation

The Danish Research Council for the Humanities

The Centre for the Study of Mediterranean Antiquity at the University of Aarhus is a research forum for the advancement of interdisciplinary studies of Antiquity. The dominant activity of the Centre is to arrange seminars and conferences and to publish the contributions from these events in monographs. Additionally, several individual monographs have been published in the Centres series, Aarhus Studies in Mediterranean Antiquity (ASMA). The Centres seminars and conferences are devoted to the study of such significant fields and topics that will benefit from an interdisciplinary approach. The publications of the Centre is therefore reflections of the ongoing process, which binds the various fields of activity together at the University of Aarhus, and between our university and the international scholarly community.

In May 2004 the Centre hosted an international seminar on Alexandria. Several distinguished colleagues from different countries contributed to this seminar, both as givers of papers and as discussants. Some of these papers have been included in this volume, while other contributions have been added later. First of all, our warmest thanks to the contributors for their professional and scholarly approach and their patience regarding the preparation of this volume. The distinguished Members of the Board of the Centre for the Study of Mediterranean Antiquity, deserves our gratitude because of their never failing enthusiasm and encouragement and Aarhus University Research Foundation for making the necessary donations available in the first place; and the Danish Research Council for Culture and Communication for financial support of the publication. Last but not least we extend our gratitude to the research assistants and secretaries, without whose help and support none of this would have happened.

Aarhus, December 2008
George Hinge and Jens A. Krasilnikoff

- 9 Introduction
George Hinge and Jens A. Krasilnikoff

PART I. ALEXANDRIA FROM GREECE AND EGYPT

- 21 Chapter 1
Alexandria as *Place*: Tempo-Spatial Traits of Royal Ideology
in Early Ptolemaic Egypt
Jens A. Krasilnikoff
- 42 Chapter 2
Theatrical Fiction and Visual Bilingualism in the
Monumental Tombs of Ptolemaic Alexandria
Marjorie Susan Venit
- 66 Chapter 3
Language and Race: Theocritus and the Koine Identity of
Ptolemaic Egypt
George Hinge
- 80 Chapter 4
Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria
Minna Skafte Jensen

PART II. ROME, JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

- 97 Chapter 5
Philo as a Polemist and a Political Apologist
An Investigation of his Two Historical Treatises *Against
Flaccus* and *The Embassy to Gaius*
Per Bilde
- 115 Chapter 6
Alexandrian Judaism: Rethinking a Problematic Cultural
Category
Anders Klostergaard Petersen

- 144 Chapter 7
From School to Patriarchate: Aspects on the
Christianisation of Alexandria
Samuel Rubenson
- 158 Chapter 8
Religious Conflict in Late Antique Alexandria:
Christian Responses to "Pagan" Statues in the Fourth and
Fifth Centuries CE
Troels Myrup Kristensen
- 176 List of Contributors

George Hinge and Jens A. Krasilnikoff

The appreciation amongst the international host of scholars of ancient Alexandria as a field of research has been growing these recent years and one can even suggest that it has been accelerating within the past three decades or more. The continued interest is manifested in increased knowledge of the material culture of Ptolemaic and Roman Alexandria, and the increase in the publication rate of papyri manuscripts and other evidence from Egypt continues to fuel scholarly debate. Moreover, the growing interest among scholars of the humanities worldwide in the mental aspects of past societies invites to develop the tenets of cultural history, language and religion within the wider frame of ancient Alexandria.

This project was conceived in 2002 as part of the continued discussion and charting of the current and future activities of Centre for the Study of Mediterranean Antiquity. The Centre board agreed to the simple observation that most of the partakers of the Centre were all somehow researching aspects of Egypt's culture, history, or religions of the Graeco-Roman period. Further pondering suggested that this rather board scope should be narrowed down to just "Alexandria," in particular those aspects of the Alexandrine past, which encompassed the aforementioned aspects of cultural history, history and religion. Thus, although previous research projects have successfully navigated the difficult waters of interdisciplinary research much reward was to be expected from the insistence upon the combination of a wide thematic scope examined within the confines of the wide chronological spectrum. Consequently, as several contributions demonstrate and observe, the Alexandrine past is notoriously marked by meeting of cultures and frequent and rapid development, which is quite difficult to grasp in its totality if the longer perspective is ignored. Additionally, the long-held insistence of the "fact" that Alexandria represented a world totally different from the parallel cultural and political construct of traditional Egyptian culture is also being challenged. And so are different aspects of the religious and philosophical milieus, which developed almost from the foundation of the city to Late Antiquity and the beginning of the Middle Ages.

As the title of this volume suggests, throughout the entire span of Graeco-Roman antiquity Alexandria represented a meeting place for many ethnic cultures and the city itself was subject to a wide range of local developments, which created and formatted a distinct Alexandrine "culture" as well as several distinct "cultures". Ancient Greek, Roman and Jewish observers communicated or held claim to that particular message. Hence, Arrian, Theocritus, Strabo, and Athenaeus reported their fascination of the Alexandrine melting pot to the wider world and so did Philo, Josephus and Clement.