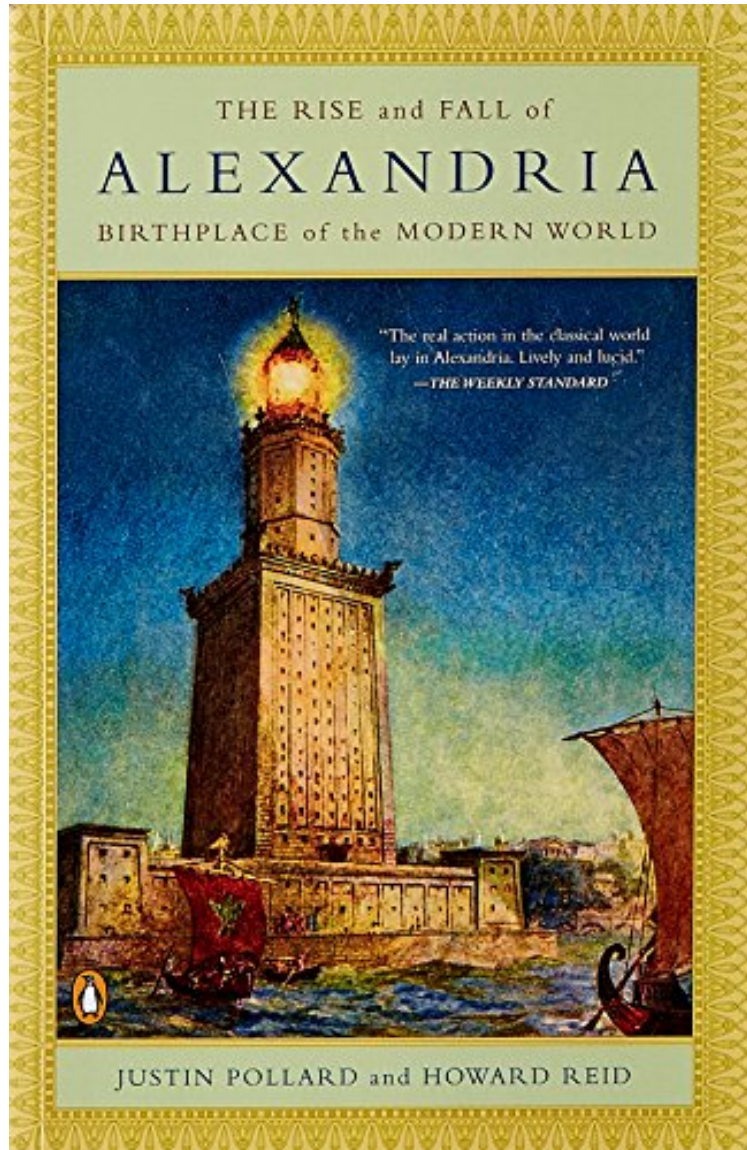


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The Rise and Fall of Alexandria: Birthplace of the Modern World

Justin Pollard, Howard Reid

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Justin Pollard, Howard Reid : The Rise and Fall of Alexandria: Birthplace of the Modern World before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Rise and Fall of Alexandria: Birthplace of the Modern World:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Useful for curricular development By Cantor R. Eichaker Useful for curricular development. Easy to read. Content is, at times, circular in order to provide a contextual understanding of

historic events. Can be confusing when, for instance a reference to the Rosetta Stone is made and later in the book it provides the actual purpose of the text. I find that this information could be better served parenthetically then referred to later as a contextual redundancy. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars By Sharon Very interesting, but lacks references so that part is disappointing. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating and well written By Nancy C. I couldn't stop reading this book once I picked it up. It was a totally delicious book. Wish I could get all my friends to read it.

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, creating a treasure trove of our intellectual and cultural origins. Famous for its lighthouse, its library--the greatest in antiquity--and its fertile intellectual and spiritual life--it was here that Christianity and Islam came to prominence as world religions--Alexandria now takes its rightful place alongside Greece and Rome as a titan of the ancient world. Sparkling with fresh insights on science, philosophy, culture, and invention, this is an irresistible, eye-opening delight.

From Publishers Weekly Ancient Alexandria was first and foremost a Greek city. Its history, however, is framed by two religious events that were alien to Greek intellectual traditions: Ptolemy's creation of the cult of Serapis, which helped him establish rule, and the Christian riots that massacred the pagan philosopher Hypatia in A.D. 415. Between these two events is an unmatched record of intellectual achievement, elegantly chronicled by documentary makers Pollard and Reid. Among the many scientific advances they cover, from Euclid and Archimedes to Claudius Ptolemy, perhaps the most illustrative of the city's cosmopolitanism is human anatomy, the Greeks' limited understanding of which was tremendously aided by contact with Egyptian mummification. Throughout, the authors are eager, at times overly eager, to demonstrate ancient Alexandria's modernity. So it is curious that little is said about the famous feud between Callimachus, poet and cataloguer of the great library, and his former pupil Apollonius. The ingredients of the feud--plagiarism, obscenity, professional envy--are strangely contemporary. The authors also paint an incomplete picture of the city's literary culture and its museum, which functioned like a modern university. These criticisms aside, most readers, especially those interested in the history of science, will find this a nourishing account. (Oct. 23) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist From the city's founding by Alexander the Great in 331 BCE through its Islamic conquest in 646 CE, Pollard and Reid track Alexandria's status as a center of Hellenism in the ancient Mediterranean world. Mysteries such as the fate of Alexandria's famous library are left as that, while the works and authors it certainly housed furnish the authors' basic source material. Both authors have produced many history documentaries, and they write accessibly, not stuffily, as they discuss why Alexandrians such as Euclid and Eratosthenes are stars in the history of science. Parallel to these stories of scholars, among them the pioneer of librarianship, the cataloger Callimachus, the authors recount the fortunes of the Ptolemaic dynasty that expired with Cleopatra. Through it all stood the Pharos lighthouse, one of the Seven Wonders, from which one could have observed the Roman takeover and the growth of Christianity. Classical history buffs will savor this survey. Gilbert Taylor Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Lively and Lucid. The real action [in] the classical world lay in Alexandria. Tells the story of ancient Alexandrian science, Cleopatra, with relish and brio." -The Weekly Standard "A marvelous work, a sweeping narrative, as grand as it is unusual, Pollard and Reid breathe life into the dust of philosophers and kings." -Barry Strauss, author of The Trojan War: A New History and The Battle of Salamis "Lucid, entertaining, full of exquisite images." -Michael Hirst, screenwriter of Elizabeth