

His concessions to his new subjects were probably intended to secure their loyalty, while preserving Greek supremacy. His romantic figure has exercised an unceasing fascination over the centuries, though usually with minimal acknowledgement of his bisexual appetites, which supreme rule allowed him to gratify to the full.

Although he entered into a state marriage with the Sogdian Roxane and had relations with other women, all his life Alexander was subject to unbounded passions for beautiful boys (Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists*, XIII, 603a). From childhood Alexander had been closely bonded with his friend Hephaestion, whose death in 324 he mourned extravagantly, reportedly devastating whole districts to assuage his grief. His relationship with a beautiful eunuch Bagoas, formerly the favorite of king Darius, is the subject of Mary Renault's novel *The Persian Boy* (New York, 1972).

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ALEXANDRIA

Ptolemy I, Alexander the Great's successor in Egypt, transferred the capital from Memphis to the city near the Nile's western mouth, which had been founded by Alexander after he conquered Egypt to accommodate large fleets and thus secure his communications with Europe. Ptolemy II and Ptolemy III made Alexandria the center of Hellenic learning by endowing (1) the Museum, where Herophilus and his younger contemporary Erasistratus conducted vivisection on condemned slaves to advance surgery, anatomy and physiology, while Eratosthenes calculated the circumference of the globe; and (2) the Library, arranged by Aristotle's pupil Demetrius of Phalerum according to the Master's cataloguing system, which grew

to contain over 100,000 (perhaps even 700,000 scrolls) where Callimachus, Apollonius, and Theocritus vied with one another in editing classical Greek texts and in composing pederastic verses. From 300 B.C. until 145—when Ptolemy VII Physcon expelled the scholars—and again after order was restored, Alexandria was also the literary center of Hellas. The golden age of Alexandrian poetry lasted from ca. 280 to ca. 240 with an Indian summer in the early first century B.C., when Meleager produced his *Garland*, so important a part of the **Greek Anthology**, and his contemporaries wrote other works that soon became popular in Rome and influenced Latin literature.

Imitating the elegists and lyricists who had flourished in the Aegean ca. 600 B.C., the Alexandrians of the golden age enthusiastically composed pederastic verse. The seven greatest Alexandrian tragedians were dubbed the Pleiad. In the second century B.C. Phanus, Moschus, and Bion continued the traditions of Callimachus, Apollonius, and **Theocritus** with archaic fastidiousness and recondite allusions of the earlier librarians there. Big city inconveniences produced a longing for the rural life expressed in pastoral poetry. Whether ideal or sensual, love—especially pederastic—held a central position.

The luxurious **gymnasia**, temples, and baths erected by the Ptolemies, of whom the seventh kept a harem of boys, surpassed those of the homeland. A local peculiarity was the Serapeum, a temple which attempted to fuse Dionysiac with Egyptian religion.

This commercial port linked Europe with Africa, and via the canal built by the ancient Pharaohs that the Ptolemies reopened between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, also with India, for the Greeks learned to follow the monsoon to complete the periplus there and back. Its great Pharos (lighthouse) symbolized its maritime dominance, and Ptolemaic fleets often ruled the Aegean. Alexandria, whose synagogues overshadowed those in

Palestine, attracted diaspora Jews even before the Seleucid Antiochus IV began to persecute them and the Diaspora began in earnest, continuing during and after the Maccabean uprisings. In Alexandria seventy Jewish scholars were believed in later legend to have translated the Pentateuch into the *koine*, as the Hellenistic Greek of the newly acquired colonial regions was styled. Riots often occurred among the ethnic groups, especially against the Jews, who had their own quarter in the capital. Resembling New York, with a true cacophony of languages, Alexandria became the largest Greek as well as the largest Jewish city and certainly the richest in the world. Philo Judaeus, who clearly judged the homosexual behavior of the Sodomites responsible for the destruction of the Cities of the Plain, synthesized Old Testament homophobia with Greek philosophical condemnation: the Mosaic prohibition with Plato's notion of "against nature," while the Ptolemies married their sisters and nude Greek men chased *eromenoi* in gymnasia or hired poor boys in the teeming streets or bazaars.

Lavishing the wealth for which the Ptolemies were famous, Cleopatra married first three of her brothers (Ptolemy XIII, XIV, and XV), then Julius Caesar (if she was not merely his mistress), and finally Mark Antony. She committed suicide to avoid gracing the triumph of Octavian, who annexed Egypt for Rome, as Augustus, administering it as a special, incomparably valuable province. Trade with India via Alexandria reached such a height during the Pax Romana (31 B.C.—A.D. 180) that the Empire was drained of specie to pay for Eastern luxuries. The later "Alexandrian" Latin poets of the first century B.C., of whom Catullus is the only surviving exemplar, wrote bisexual verses, like those of their models. In the early Empire, even more than in the last century of the Republic, things Egyptians were the rage. Athenaeus of Naucratis, another seaport at a mouth of the Nile, ca. A.D. 200 wrote of an elaborate symposium where

scholars discussed pederasty as well as fine foods and wines, and pagan learning continued in Alexandria until Hypatia, a female mathematician and Neo-Platonist, was torn limb from limb by a mob of Christian fanatics incited by their bishop St. Cyril in 415, after which pagan learning declined. The neglected Library repeatedly suffered from fires, book burnings, and other catastrophes, perishing in the Arab conquest of 641.

Christianity, too, flourished in Alexandria from the time the Apostle Mark introduced it there. Combining Platonic with Biblical homophobia in the tradition of Philo Judaeus, Clement, Origen, Arian, and Athanasius and other Patristic writers shaped Orthodox dogma.

As the center of learning of the Hellenistic world and the rival of Rome for wealth and population, it was naturally the home of the most erudite Christians. They were as shocked as the Jews by the lasciviousness of the pagans with whom they rubbed shoulders in the cosmopolitan streets of the metropolis. "Nothing," it was said, "was not available in Alexandria except snow." This applied to sex where the vices, like the merchandise, of Asia, Africa, and Europe met and were exchanged amid great wealth and extreme poverty. The Patriarch of Alexandria, like that of its Hellenistic competitor Antioch, rivaled the one Constantine appointed at the new capital in 330 and the one at Jerusalem—all of whom vied with the bishop of Rome.

Alexandria was scarcely affected by the Germanic occupation of the West. Arab hordes newly inspired by the religion of Islam, however, invaded Egypt in 638 and captured Alexandria in 641, the grief of the loss causing the death of the Emperor Heraclius (610–641). Although the Moslems removed the capital to Fustat (Old Cairo), near ancient Memphis, Alexandria remained a vital port as long as they dominated the Mediterranean, a Moslem lake from about 700 to about 1100, when the crusaders regained dominance of that

sea for Christendom. With its women secluded even more than in the Ptolemaic and Byzantine epochs, Moslem Alexandria, now called al-Iskandariya, continued the tradition of pederasty.

Dynasties followed one another, the Shiite Fatimids (965–1171), the Sunnite Ayyubids (1171–1250), whose Saladin fought Richard I the Lionhearted, followed by the Mamluks, a group of unmarried, often castrated Slavic bodyguards known for pederasty, one of whose number was chosen Sultan from 1250 to 1519. Under the Mamluks Cairo completely outshone Alexandria, which declined to little more than a fishing village.

In 1881 the British established a protectorate over Egypt, Turkish sovereignty being purely nominal. Thereafter Alexandria became the center of a cosmopolitan blend of Eastern and Western civilization known as Levantine. With its languid sensuousness and sexual promiscuity, Alexandria, like other Levantine ports, attracted gay writers and expatriates in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The modern Greek poet Cavafy, the Russian writer Mikhail Kuzmin, Lawrence Durrell and others put the city permanently on the literary map of the world. In his lyric poems Constantine Cavafy (1863–1933) evoked the moods and memories of Hellenistic Alexandria at its zenith—as the capital of the cosmopolitan civilization his ancestors had created. E. M. Forster had a love affair with an Egyptian tram-conductor, Mohammed el-Adl, in 1917, during World War I. He also wrote a guide to the city, and introduced Cavafy's poems to English-speaking readers.

The resurgence of Arab and Egyptian nationalism spelled the death of the "colonial," Levantine Alexandria by forcing most of the permanent foreign residents to emigrate. Now the premier beach resort of Egyptians, the city abounds in summer with homosexual activity in spite of the revival of Moslem puritanism.

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ALGER, HORATIO, JR. (1832–1899)

American novelist. The son of a clergyman, he sought to emulate his father's career in a church in Brewster, Massachusetts. In 1866, however, he abruptly left the ministry and went to New York City, where he devoted the rest of his life to grinding out an enormous number of books for boys, most of which have the same plot, the legendary "rags to riches" tale about a poor boy who makes good. The most famous of these books were *Ragged Dick* (1868) and *Tattered Tom* (1871). The total number of Alger books sold, both before and after his death, is estimated at being anywhere from one to four hundred million. Alger became known as the inspiration for many of the American boys who in real life went from poverty to wealth, and even today it is said in obituaries that a man's "life was like a Horatio Alger story."

Alger's status as a wholesome legend was ironically the cause of his eventually being found out. In *The American Idea of Success* (1971), Richard Huber told how he had discovered in the archives of the church in Brewster evidence that Alger had "been charged with gross immorality and a most heinous crime, a crime of no less magnitude than the abominable and revolting crime of unnatural familiarity with boys." Alger had gone to New York to escape the wrath of the parents of Brewster. This bombshell lay dormant until a journalist read Huber's book and broadcast the news across the United States.

Alger was included in Jonathan Katz' *Gay American History* (1976) and is now a standard member of everybody's list