

Obnovljena Aleksandrijska biblioteka

Ove godine predviđeno je otvaranje obnovljene Aleksandrijske biblioteke u Egiptu.

Tom značajnom događaju se pridružuje i Nacionalna i univerzitetska biblioteka Bosne i Hercegovine objavljivanjem uvodnog teksta o ovoj značajnoj instituciji svjetske kulture (BIBLIOTHECA Alexandrina. Alexandria: El-Shattby, str. 4.)

A BRIEF ON THE ANCIENT LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA

The Ancient Library of Alexandria was established by Ptolomy I (Soter) in the year 288 B.C. It was intended as a meeting place of the most eminent minds of the time who would gather in the temple of the muses or the Museum. This was the first research center in the world. It was a sort of scholarly academy attracting prominent scientists and intellectuals, with a library annexed to it. Several buildings were involved of which the most famous were the museum, and the library by the waterfront (both in the royal district called the Brucheion) and the daughter Library in the Temple of Serapis (the Serapeum).

The Library expanded to include all the knowledge in the ancient world. The library at its zenith may have had over 700,000 scrolls, and attracted men of letters, intellectuals, scientists and scholars, inter alia:

- Aristarchus, the first to proclaim that the earth revolves around the sun.
- Hipparchus, the first to measure the solar year with six and a half minutes accuracy.
- Eratosthenes, the first to measure the circumference of the earth.
- Euclid, who wrote the elements of geometry.
- Archimedes, the greatest mathematician of the Ancient World.

- Callimachus, a poet, and the first to write a catalogue for books classified by topic and author, thereby becoming the father of Library Science.

The Ancient Library of Alexandria was open to all civilizations. Systematic efforts were made to collect the best works from all over the world, and any ships that docked in Alexandria were searched, and any books on board were copied. Scholars from all over the world were invited to come. The Old Testament was translated for the first time from Hebrew to Greek.

Thus, the Ancient Library of Alexandria in its first centuries was a mixture of all civilizations, and languages, however the Greek language was most dominant (as English is today). No doubt, the role of Greek thought and philosophy was remarkable in formulating the Hellenistic civilization, for which Alexandria with its great Library was the intellectual capital.

The genius of the Hellenistic Culture was to combine the glory of Ancient Greek (Hellenic) cultures with Egyptian and Asian cultures. It was an enriching result. To the question: Was Alexandrian culture and scholarship Greek or Egyptian? The answer is both. Both peoples should be proud of it.

The Library was not destroyed by the invading Arabs as some stories would have us believe. It was destroyed much earlier, through a long decline punctuated with fires and destruction over four and a half centuries. The first fire came about during the Alexandrian War, when Julius Caesar burnt the Egyptian fleet in 48 B.C. and the fire inadvertently spread to the library buildings near the docks. During the upheavals of the Roman empire in the third century of our era, Alexandria suffered many upheavals and suppressions which led to the city being invaded by roman armies several times and the whole royal district where the old Library and Museum were located was destroyed. Alexandrian scholarships moved to the daughter library in the temple of Searapis (the Serapeum) in the southwest

corner of the city. That too succumbed to destruction in a wave of anti-pagan actions and the rest of the Library was burnt in the Serapeum in 391 A.D. Hypathia (the Mathematician) and the daughter of the Library's last recorded scholar was brutally murdered by the mob in 415 AD bringing a final stop to the seven centuries of Alexandrian scholarship. That was 230 years before Amr Ibn El Aas entered Egypt at the head of the first Arab Muslim army.

Though 1600 years have elapsed since the age of the Ancient Library of Alexandria came to an end, all scholars and scientists still acknowledge their debt to that remarkable institution and look with admiration on the role played by the Ancient Library as a center for dialogue and tolerance as well as science and learning.

