Alexandria

Alexandria (Ar. al-Iskandariyya), present-day Egypt's second largest city and most important port, is located at 31°3' N and 29°7' E, on the eastern Mediterranean coast, 70 kilometres west of the Rosetta branch of the Nile Delta.

A. Early period (21/642 to 1213/1798)

Founded by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C.E., Alexandria was the capital of the Byzantine province of Egypt when the Arabs conquered it in the mid-first/seventh century. Although under the Arabs the city lost its place as the political centre of Egypt, replaced by al-Fusṭāṭ, and later Cairo, Alexandria retained its strategic, cultural, and economic importance, and became one of the greatest mercantile centres in the mediaeval Mediterranean world. The Black Plague, other recurrent epidemics, and the sack of the city in 767/1365 by a Crusader army, as well as the Portuguese discovery in 1498 of the sea route to the Indies around the Cape of Good Hope, dealt serious blows to Alexandria's economic vitality. Subsequently, both its economy and its population began a slow decline. In the eighth/fourteenth century, the city's population was estimated at 50–60,000. By the time the French invaded Egypt and captured the city in 1213/1798, the population of the "new" Turkish city, which had grown up on the edge of old Alexandria, had fallen to between 10,000 and 15,000, and the city's total population was perhaps 30–40,000.

1. *History*

Alexandria was the capital of the Byzantine province of Egypt when an Arab army under ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ (d. 42 or 43/662 or 664) invaded Egypt from Palestine in 18/639. The Arab conquest of the city occurred in two phases. The city capitulated to ʿAmr in 21/642, but rebelled and was recaptured by the Byzantines in 25/645. Several months later (25/646), the Arabs occupied Alexandria permanently, although the Byzantines made another attempt to recover it in 31–2/652. Reports that the Arabs burned Alexandria's famous library after capturing the city have no historical basis (the library was probably destroyed in 272 C.E.). The fall of the city to the Arabs sealed the fate of Egypt; the Byzantines could not reclaim the region without it.

Although under Arab Muslim rule al-Fusṭāṭ (established 22/643) became Egypt's new capital, Alexandria retained its strategic, cultural, and economic importance. The Arabs ruled it as an autonomous area for the next two centuries, with a budget separate from that of the rest of Egypt. In Arabic sources, references to Alexandria during this period are few. We know that it became an Umayyad naval base, from which the Umayyad fleet set out to pillage Cyprus (28/649, 80/699–700, and 129/747), Sicily (30/651 and 49/669), and Rhodes (53/673). The fleet also supported the Umayyad siege of Constantinople in 99/717. In the second half of the second/eighth century, Bedouin within Egypt threatened Alexandria. In 202/818 Arab exiles from Córdoba, in al-Andalus, seized the port and, benefiting from unsettled conditions in Egypt, established a kind of republic with local assistance. When Ibn Ṭāhir, the new governor of Egypt, expelled them in 212/827, they attacked and conquered Crete. In 248/862, ʿAlid protest against the ʿAbbāsid caliph sparked a rebellion in Alexandria, which spread throughout the Nile Delta. The revolt was finally suppressed

in 253/867, and the caliph appointed Aḥmad b. Ṭūlūn (220–70/835–84) governor of Egypt the following year. The Ṭūlūnid dynasty (r. 254–92/868–905) began to bind Alexandria ever more tightly to al-Fusṭāṭ. Nonetheless, in 284/897, Ibn Ṭūlūn's son Rabīʿa used Alexandria as a base to challenge his nephew Hārūn b. Khumārawayh (r. 283–92/896–904) for control of Egypt, but his bid for power failed.

Arabic sources for Alexandria are richer beginning with the Fāṭimid dynasty (r. in Egypt 358–567/969–1171). The Fāṭimids made several attempts to conquer Egypt from their Ismāʿīlī state in present-day Tunisia, and they occupied Alexandria for brief periods in 301/913–4, 306–9/919–21, and 323/935. In 358/969, the Fāṭimid commander Jawhar finally captured the city and the rest of Egypt. The Fāṭimids founded a new capital, al-Qāhira (Cairo), next to al-Fusṭāṭ, and brought a complete end to Alexandria's autonomy. The second century of Fāṭimid rule saw Alexandria embroiled at times in political or dynastic turmoil. In 477/1084, al-Awḥad, the elder son of the Fāṭimid *wazīr* Badr al-Jamālī, rebelled against his father and took refuge there but was captured following a siege. During a succession crisis in 487/1094, one of the claimants to the Fāṭimid caliphate, Nizār b. al-Mustanṣir, fled to Alexandria, where his supporters proclaimed him caliph. However, the *wazīr* al-Afḍal, another of Badr al-Jamālī's sons, captured and killed him. In 554/1159, ʿIzz al-Dīn Ṭarkhān Salīṭ, the governor of Alexandria, challenged the *wazīr* Ṭalāʾiʿ b. Ruzzīk (d. 556/1161) for political control of Egypt, but was captured and executed in 555/1160. A combined Byzantine and Venetian fleet attacked the city in 517/1123–4, and a Norman flotilla from Sicily raided it in 550/1155. Pirates attacked Alexandria from time to time, and the city witnessed fighting between the Arab tribe of Lakhm and African ("black") troops sometime during the years 556–63/1160–7.

In 559/1164, the ruler of Syria, Nūr al-Dīn Zangī, sent one of his commanders, Shīrkūh, to Egypt with an expeditionary force to restore to power Shāwar, the ousted Fāṭimid *wazīr*. Once back in power, Shāwar turned to the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem for support. In a second expedition to Egypt, in 562/1167, Shīrkūh occupied Alexandria (which had revolted against Shāwar) and entrusted its defence to his nephew, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Saladin, 532–89/1138–93). The forces of Shāwar and his Crusader allies besieged Alexandria for four months. A treaty allowed Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn to depart and the Crusaders to enter the city briefly before withdrawing. In 564/1168, Shīrkūh and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn returned to Egypt and killed Shāwar. Subsequently, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn founded the Ayyūbid dynasty (r. 567–648/1171–1250).

Various Ayyūbid sultans visited Alexandria to inspect or strengthen its defences against possible Crusader attacks, including Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (567/1172, 572/1177, 577/1182), al-Malik al-ʿĀdil (608/1211–2, 613/1216–7), and al-Malik al-Kāmil (628/1231, 634/1237). After a Norman armada from Sicily attacked the city in 570/1174, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn stationed a fleet there, a base from which it raided Acre and the Syrian coast in 575/1179. He gave Alexandria as an *iqṭāʿ* (land grant), first to his father, Ayyūb (565/1169), then to his brother Tūrānshāh (575/1179), and finally to his nephew Taqī al-Dīn (579/1183). The city suffered from epidemics of plague, in 536/1142, 555/

1160, 581/1186, 592/1196, 597/1200, and 633/1236. Sailors rioted in 581/1185, and Bedouin inflicted damage in 590/1194. Earthquakes also shook Alexandria periodically.

During the Mamlūk dynasty (r. 648–923/1250–1517), the sultans continued to take great interest in the city. Sulṭān Baybars (r. 658–76/1260–77) first visited the city in 661/1263. In 702/1302, a massive earthquake struck Alexandria, which caused considerable loss of life and the final collapse of the renowned Pharos Lighthouse. Major reconstruction was required. Sulṭān Shaʿbān II (al-Malik al-Ashraf, r. 764–78/1363–77) paid a long visit to the city in 769/1368. Under the Mamlūks, Alexandria often became a place of exile for *amīrs*, deposed sultans, and "shadow" ʿAbbāsid caliphs from Cairo.

Anti-Christian and anti-foreign riots erupted in Alexandria in 727/1327. In 748/1347 the Black Death arrived in the port on Italian ships from Crimea and spread throughout Egypt with devastating effect. Between then and 864/1459–60, pneumonic plague visited the city with almost cyclical recurrence. (The mediaeval decline of Alexandria is generally considered to have begun with the Black Death.) A disaster almost equal in magnitude to the arrival of the Black Death ensued in 767/1365 when the king of Cyprus, Peter I de Lusignan (r. 1359–69), supported by Venice and Genoa, sailed from Rhodes with an armada and stormed and sacked the poorly defended city. This was the first step in a Crusade in which Peter planned to make Alexandria a beachhead for the conquest of Cairo and the eventual recovery of Jerusalem. He could not, however, hold Alexandria, and as his forces withdrew, they destroyed whatever they could not carry away. The devastation was enormous. The walls were never restored and certain areas became derelict. The city never recovered fully. In 815–6/1413 Catalan pirates raided the port, and more pirates plundered it in 839–41/1436–8.

References to Alexandria in Arabic historical works are again scarce after 854/1450. Mamlūk Sulṭāns Qāʾit Bāy (r. 872–901/1468–96) and al-Ghawrī (r. 906–22/1501–16) made notable tours of the city in 882/1477 and 920/1515, respectively. The latter armed Alexandria with cannon to bolster defences against a growing Ottoman threat to Egypt. Nevertheless, the city fell without resistance to the Ottoman army and navy shortly after Sulṭān Selīm I (r. 918–26/1512–20) invaded Egypt from Palestine in 923/1517. The Ottomans stationed a fleet at Alexandria, and it became their most important Mediterranean naval base. The fleet protected merchant ships from pirates and participated in campaigns against Rhodes (928–9/1522), Chios (973–4/1566), Cyprus (978/1570–1), and Crete (1077–80/1667–9). Alexandria did not face external threats during the Ottoman period until the late twelfth/eighteenth century.

There were, however, threats from within Egypt. In the early tenth/sixteenth century, Bedouin again pillaged the city's environs. When the governor of Egypt, Aḥmed Pasha "al-Khāʾin" ("the traitor"), revolted in 930/1524, Alexandria fell into turmoil and was cut off temporarily from the outside world. In the eleventh/seventeenth century, Alexandria's garrison of Janissaries and Mamlūks took control of customs and neglected their military function. Central authority from Cairo was reasserted only during the (third) rule of ʿAlī Bey al-Kabīr (1181–6/1767–72);

however, this did not end the struggle among various factions for control of Alexandria's lucrative revenue.

The city suffered frequent outbreaks of plague throughout the twelfth/eighteenth century. When Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Egypt in 1213/1798, coming ashore 15 kilometres west of Alexandria, he found the city neglected and undefended. It fell to the French within a few hours.

2. *Social, cultural, and economic life*

When the Arabs conquered Alexandria, it was the greatest city of Byzantium after Constantinople, as well as the most important intellectual and cultural centre in the East. The city was also the leading commercial entrepôt of the eastern Mediterranean and the main outlet for Egyptian grain shipments to Rome and Constantinople. Greeks comprised the majority of the population, which was perhaps as high as half a million (writing in the third/ninth century, Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam gave numbers of 200,000 and 600,000). The rest of the populace was composed of Egyptians, Syrians, and Jews. Apart from the Jewish community, the population was Christian. Indeed, Christianity had spread from Alexandria throughout Egypt. The city's Christians were either Melkites or Copts (usually classified as Monophysites). The former were loyal to the Orthodox Patriarch in Constantinople, whereas the latter belonged to the Church of Saint Mark the Evangelist. According to tradition, Saint Mark had established the see of Alexandria and was buried there. The dominant language in the city was Greek, followed by Coptic.

As a result of the fall of Alexandria, much of the Greek population, especially the Melkites, departed for Constantinople, even though there was a Melkite patriarch in Alexandria as late as the third/ninth century. With the departure of most of the Melkites, the patriarch of the Coptic Church was able to consolidate his position with respect to the Christians of the city and the rest of Egypt. Alexandria remained the seat of the Coptic patriarch until the second half of the fifth/eleventh century, when the patriarch transferred his residence to Cairo. Greek was the language used in the bureaucracy until the second/eighth century, and bilingual Greek/Arabic papyri exist from the late fourth/tenth century. Arabic did not take hold for at least a century after the conquest, and conversion to Islam was slow. A majority of the populace may not have become Muslim until the fifth/eleventh century.

Christians played an important role in building and manning the Arab fleet in the first centuries after the conquest. They held municipal administrative posts throughout the Middle Ages and were active in the city's economic life. Documents show that Saint Catherine's Monastery in Sinai owned property in Alexandria in 528/1134. European pilgrims to the Holy Land frequently visited Alexandria, where they could visit the remains of Saint Mark in the church dedicated to him. In 213/828, two Venetian merchants removed the saint's body to Venice. Coptic tradition relates that his head remained in Alexandria and had various resting places until it was finally returned to the Church of Saint Mark.

Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam recorded that 40,000 Jews lived in Alexandria at the time of the conquest. Many may have left subsequently, but their community remained one of the largest in the Mediterranean world. It comprised the Pales-

tinian and Babylonian congregations, and also included Karaites. Much is known of Jewish life in Alexandria thanks to the Geniza documents, which date from the fifth/eleventh through the seventh/thirteenth centuries. These documents reveal that, in general, the city was cosmopolitan and pleasure loving. The Jewish community (or rather communities) had close ties with coreligionists around the Mediterranean (contracting marriages abroad was fairly common), and the population was augmented periodically by immigrants from the Maghrib, al-Andalus (especially during various phases of the Reconquista), and even France. Like the Christians, Jews often held important civic posts and were extremely active in local economic life. They had their own religious college *(midrash)* and well-organised community services. Benjamin of Tudela, who visited Alexandria around 565/1170, stated that the Jewish population was 3,000 (families?). Over the following centuries, the number of Jews, like the rest of the population, seems to have declined slowly.

ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ had a mosque built in his name in Alexandria as soon as he took permanent control of the city, and a companion of the Prophet, al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām, was said to have acquired a city quarter. The propagation of Islam began at once but the Muslim community grew slowly. It consisted primarily of converts—Arab inhabitants or troops were few in Alexandria, although various Arab tribes, such as Judhām and Lakhm, were settled in the area.

Abū Bakr al-Ṭurṭūshī (451–520/1059–1126), from al-Andalus, who settled in Alexandria in 490/1097, was the city's first prominent Muslim religious scholar. He founded Egypt's first *madrasa* in his home. He followed the Mālikī school of law, which had predominated among the city's Muslims since the conquest. Its closest rival was the Shāfiʿī school, which emerged after the third/ninth century. Even during the Fāṭimid period, the city remained staunchly Sunnī. Until the end of the sixth/twelfth century, Alexandria saw a continuous stream of Mālikī Sunnīs migrating from the Maghrib and al-Andalus—refugees, merchants, students, and pilgrims en route to Mecca—many of whom settled in the city permanently. Later migrants included the ousted Ḥafṣid ruler of Tunis, Zakariyyāʾ I, who in 719/1319 fled to Alexandria with all his treasure. By the seventh/thirteenth century, Ṣūfism had become a significant factor in the life of the city, and the Shādhilī, Badawī, and Rifāʿī brotherhoods took firm root. Institutions associated with Ṣūfism—*khānqāh*s, *mashhad*s, *ribāṭ*s, and *zāwiyya*s *(tekke*s*)*—began to flourish after the eighth/fourteenth century. By the Ottoman period, the tombs of many local mystics had become pilgrimage sites.

Trade was Alexandria's lifeblood. After the Arab conquest, the city's stature as a port declined but was revived in the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries in conjunction with the growth of intra-Mediterranean trade and the rise of the Italian maritime states. The population increased during this period of economic expansion but the numbers are difficult to estimate. In any case, Alexandria grew rapidly, and, as the Geniza documents testify, between the fifth/eleventh and seventh/thirteenth centuries it became one of the greatest mercantile centres in the Mediterranean world. The Venetians were trading there by the third/ninth century, and the Pisans, Genoese, Amalfians, and others were well established by the

fifth/eleventh century. In the sixth/twelfth century, Benjamin of Tudela described a cosmopolitan city, listing "Frankish" merchants from 28 countries, as well as Muslims from al-Andalus, (sub-Saharan) Africa, Arabia, Syria, and other countries along the route to India. The traders from each land (including the Kārimī merchants who traded with India in the seventh/thirteenth and eighth/fourteenth centuries) had their own warehouse, or *funduq*, where they resided and stored their goods.

Above all, Alexandria became a transit point for an enormous range of products and commodities to and from the Mediterranean, the upper reaches of the Nile, and India (via the Red Sea). Alexandria's pivotal role as a centre of exchange is evidenced by the great variety of pottery that has been excavated there, produced in the vast area stretching from al-Andalus to China. In the spring, convoys set out from Alexandria to numerous ports around the Mediterranean; in the autumn, arriving in Alexandria were convoys mainly from al-Andalus, Italy, Tunisia, and Byzantium. By the mid-sixth/twelfth century, the city was the terminus of the major east-west caravan route that extended via Qayrawān to Sijilmāsa, in Morocco.

Alexandria was also an industrial centre, especially renowned for its manufacture of textiles. By the third/ninth century, its *ṭirāz* brocade was being sent to the ʿAbbāsid caliphs, as well as to Mecca, for the covering for the Kaʿba *(kiswa)*. The city also produced linen and silk, woollen and cotton goods, and glass. In addition, it was a place where captives were ransomed and slaves were purchased. Some children from the Children's Crusade (608–9/1212) may have been sold there, and it became the port of entry for Mamlūk slaves.

As a major international seaport, Alexandria was a hub for news and intelligence, and fast, regular postal service connected it with Cairo. The tolls, taxes, and other duties generated by the port's trade were a major source of revenue for the rulers of Egypt. Yet, it must be emphasised that despite this trade, it was al-Fusṭāṭ/Cairo, and not Alexandria, that was Egypt's commercial and financial metropolis. Alexandria, though, was closely bound to the capital by the Nile and by overland routes.

The Black Plague, other recurrent epidemics, and the sack of 767/1365 dealt serious blows to Alexandria's economic vitality. The textile industry almost collapsed. Moreover, the Portuguese discovery in 1498 of the sea route to the Indies, around the Cape of Good Hope, threatened much of the spice trade that passed through the city. Population began to decline during the eighth/fourteenth century. In 786/1384, two European merchants, Leonardo Frescobaldi and Simone Sigoli, estimated it at 60,000 and 50,000, respectively. After the eighth/fourteenth century, Alexandria's economy began a gradual decline, never returning to its earlier mediaeval level. Nevertheless, the city remained a significant commercial hub during the Ottoman period. Egypt provided Istanbul with wheat, rice, and beans, which transited through the port of Alexandria, and ships laden with other goods—not to mention officials and pilgrims—sailed continuously between Alexandria and Istanbul, Izmir, and Antalya. Asian spices, especially pepper, continued to arrive in quantity until the Dutch took control of the East Indies and England established dominion in the Indian Ocean. New products, such as coffee, also boosted the local economy periodically.

In 966/1559, the Fuggers, the German banking and mercantile dynasty, and the German firm of Ulstetter had agents in Alexandria. The English established a consulate there in 991/1583, and Marseilles had a well-established trading community in the city by the tenth/sixteenth century. By 1082/1671, Alexandria was France's most important commercial port in the Levant, after Izmir. Each European trading community had a *bālyōs* (consular official) who obtained special privileges for it. A large community of Maghribī merchants, who had their own quarter, also was active between the tenth/sixteenth and twelfth/eighteenth centuries. Alexandria continued to be a terminus for caravans from sub-Saharan Africa, as well as from southwest Asia and Yemen. According to Evliyā Çelebi, writing in 1083/1672, 300 to 400 "Frankish" and other ships dropped anchor in the port annually (Evliyā Çelebi, *Seyāḥatnāme*, 10:358). In 1785, 1,172 ships, nearly half of them European, berthed at Alexandria (Panzac, Maritime trade, 197, table 2). A vast array of goods, such as those itemised in the *Description de l'Égypte* (vol. 1), the account compiled by Napoleon Bonaparte's team of savants and published in 1809, continued to pass through the port during the twelfth/eighteenth century.

Alexandria was often the site of important minting facilities. The Umayyads, Fāṭimids, Ayyūbids, and Mamlūks struck copper, silver, and gold coins there. The Crusaders went so far as to issue imitation Fāṭimid gold pieces, giving Alexandria as the mint.

3. *Administration*

During the era between the Arab and French conquests, Alexandria was a *thaghr* (a border town between Islam and Christendom), vulnerable to Christian attack by sea, and, indeed, it was considered the greatest *thaghr* of Islam. From the Arab conquest up until the Fāṭimid period, the city was administered separately from the rest of Egypt. During the Fāṭimid period, it was bound to Cairo and given jurisdiction over much of the northwestern Delta. The leading official was a judge *(qāḍī)*, who exercised civil oversight of the port as controller of the office of revenues *(mushārif)*. He was often referred to as "chief of the city" *(raʾīs al-madīna)*, and he was assisted by the *wālī* (who was the chief of police, according to the Geniza). In the Ayyūbid period, a governor, or *mutawallī*, was appointed. After the sack of 767/1365, the city's military status increased, and its governor (whose post could sometimes be purchased) was called "the sultan's deputy" *(nāʾib al-salṭana)*.

In the Ottoman period, an admiral *(qapudan pasha)*, was responsible for order and security, as well as tax collection and management of the port. A lieutenant *(qāʾim maqām)* carried out his orders with a militia composed of several hundred men *(levendāt)*. A council *(dīwān)* headed by the *qāḍī*, managed the daily operation of the port, including tax collection. Local personnel of all religions were in charge of customs. After the revolt of Aḥmed Pasha al-Khāʾin, the grand vizier, Ibrāhīm Pasha, prepared a code of laws *(qānūnnāme)* governing Alexandria's administrative and financial affairs, and it became a subprovince, or *sanjaq*, subject to a *bey*. The *bey* was assisted by a regional magistrate *(kāshif)*, who maintained the water supply. The *qapudan pasha* and *sanjaq bey* were subordinate to the governor of Egypt in domestic matters and to the sultan in Istanbul for foreign affairs. In the late Ottoman period, the city was often farmed out for taxes.

4. *Topography and monuments*

Alexandria was built on a narrow strip of land (running east-west) that separates Lake Maryūt from the Mediterranean. A causeway (the ancient Heptastadion) connected it to the island of Pharos just offshore, with this land bridge creating harbours on its eastern and western sides. The city was laid out in the classic Hippodamian grid plan, which generally remained intact throughout the Middle Ages. Muslim writers often commented on this layout, which distinguished Alexandria from other cities in the Muslim world. Traces of it are still evident today.

Muslim geographers and travellers invariably commented on Alexandria's monuments from antiquity: the Museum (Mouseion), Caesareum, and Serapeum; the so-called pillar of Pompey and the two obelisks; the unique water system; and—above all—the famed Pharos Lighthouse, built by Ptolemy I (d. 282 B.C.E.) and Ptolemy II (d. 246 B.C.E.). Apart from this heritage, Alexandria's most important architectural feature as a frontier town, or *thaghr*, was its fortifications. An elaborate system of forts, towers, walls, and moats surrounded the city.

Alexandria's walls, which did not encompass the harbours, were pierced by large iron-reinforced gates. The early-eighth/fourteenth-century traveller Ibn Baṭṭūṭa mentions a major gate on either side of the city. Forts guarded the entrances to the harbours. (The eastern harbour, which could be closed with a chain, was restricted to Christians, and the western to Muslims.) After the final collapse of the Pharos Lighthouse, Sulṭān Qā'it Bāy built a new fort on the site (882–4/1477–9) (Illustration 1). Attacks from land and sea, internal strife, and earthquakes damaged Alexandria's fortifications frequently. The rulers in al-Fusṭāṭ or Cairo, beginning with ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, did their best to keep them in repair.

Besides fortifications, Alexandria's most noteworthy security feature was its water system, inherited from antiquity. Heavy rainfall filled the city's many cisterns, and they were replenished by the Nile during flood season. A canal, the *khalīj*, brought the water from the Nile, and it flowed into the city through underground aqueducts. Boats also used the canal (which sometimes followed different courses) to sail directly from Alexandria to the capital and beyond. The canal's maintenance was critical to the city's well-being.

Alexandria's earliest important mosque was that of ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, but it was apparently demolished by the Fāṭimid caliph al-Ḥākim (r. 386–411/996–1021). Evliyā Çelebi mentions the existence of the mosque of the caliph ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (r. 13–23/634–44), about which there may have been some confusion. The city's two great mediaeval mosques, al-Jāmiʿ al-Sharqī (or Jāmiʿ al-ʿAṭṭārīn), restored by Badr al-Jamālī in 477/1084 (Illustration 2), and al-Jāmiʿ al-Gharbī, attributed to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, both of which were established on the sites of churches, have also disappeared. These two mosques were located some distance from each other on Alexandria's main commercial and industrial artery, al-Maḥajja, which cut through the middle of town from east to west. Several north-south streets connected this thoroughfare to the two harbours. The customs house, textile factories, and *funduq*s were located near the eastern harbour, which was reserved for Christians; the dockyard, as well as storage for weapons, was in the vicinity of the western (Muslim) harbour.

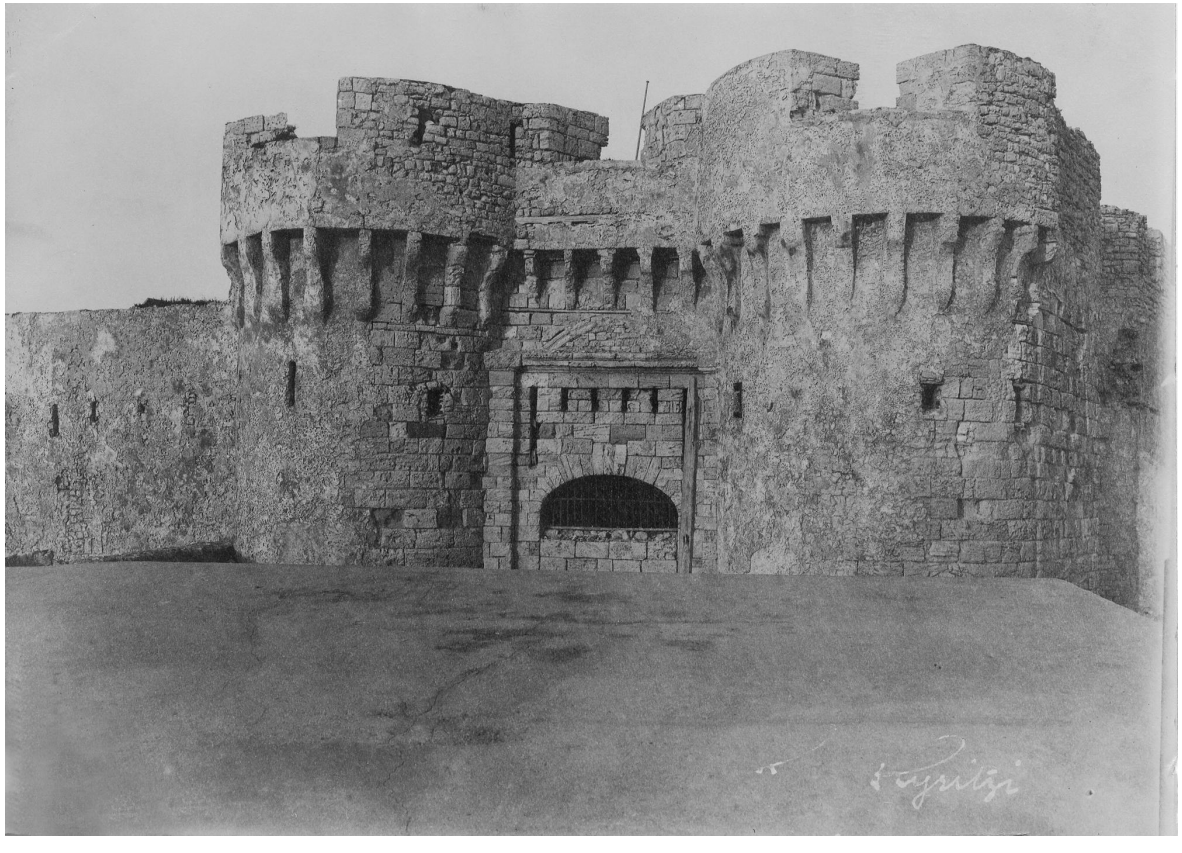

Illustration 1. Sulṭān Qā'it Bāy's fort built on the site of the Pharos Lighthouse at the entrance to the eastern harbour in 882–4/1477–9. Photo c. 1920, photograph courtesy of Rare Books and Special Collections Library, The American University in Cairo.

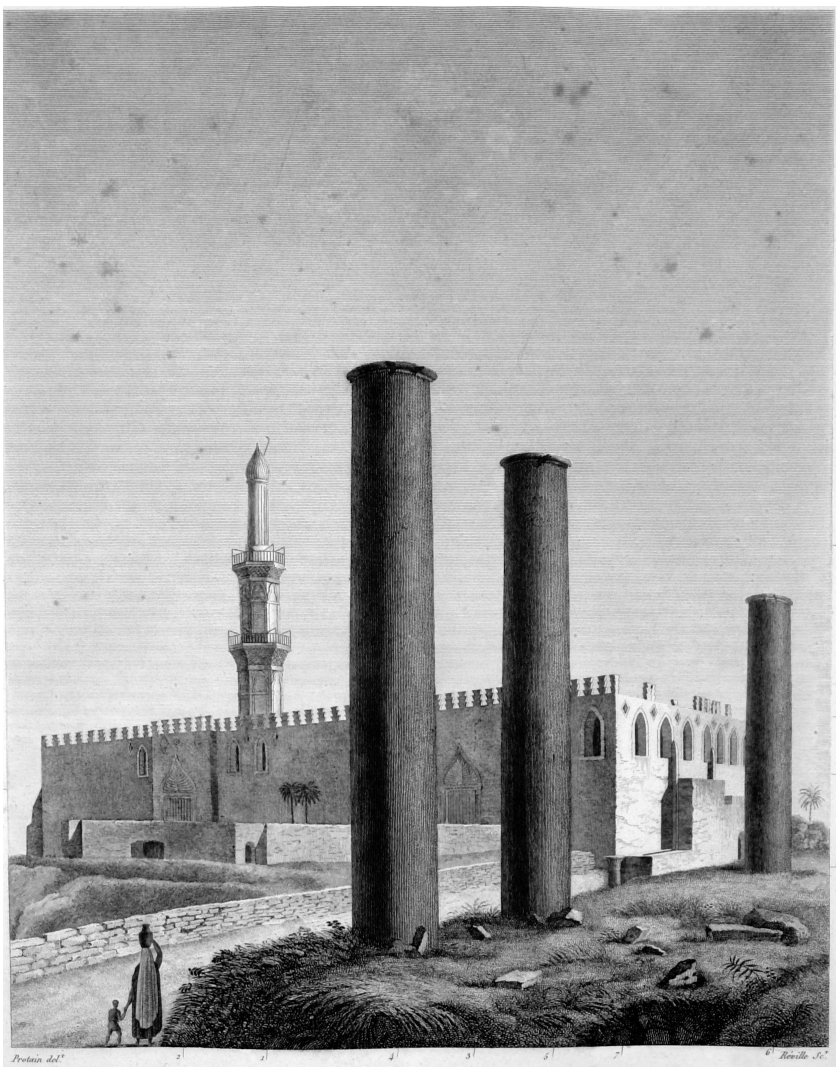

Illustration 2. Jāmiʿ al-Sharqī or Jāmiʿ al-ʿAṭṭārīn, built before 477/1084. Image from *Description de l'Égypte*, photograph courtesy of the Rare Books and Special Collections Library, The American University in Cairo.

New mosques (notably that of Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Mursī) and many *madrasa*s were built in the Mamlūk period. More mosques were constructed in the Ottoman era, such as that of Ibrāhīm Tarbāna (1097/1685). The tombs and *tekke*s of such notables as Jamāl al-Dīn b. al-Ḥājib and Saʿd b. Abī Waqqās, a companion of the Prophet, were located inside Alexandria's mediaeval walls. East of town stood the tombs of Jābir al-Anṣārī (another companion of the Prophet) and several shadow ʿAbbāsid caliphs.

The Ottoman naval captain and cartographer Pīrī Reʾīs (d. 961/1553–4) gave a description of the anchorages of Alexandria in his book on seafaring, *Kitāb-i baḥriyye*, which was completed in 1521 and revised in 1526 (Illustration 3). He added that most of the walls of the city were in ruins. Writing in the late-eleventh/seventeenth-century, Evliyā Çelebi provided the most comprehensive description of Alexandria before the French invasion. He states that the walls were 11,700 paces in circumference and that the land side of the fortress was composed of a double wall, while the side facing the sea was a single wall. There were 366 towers and 25 battlements between each tower. Evliyā describes the city as being in a dilapidated state. He counted 2,000 houses, 380 shops, seven *khān*s, a covered market, and 300 houses whose heirs had not occupied them. He also notes 27 active Friday mosques *(jāmiʿs)* and 25 neighbourhood mosques *(masjids)*, many of which were open only on Fridays because of a lack of congregants. In addition, there were six baths (notably that of Sinān Pasha), 130 cisterns, and six underground aqueducts. The Sināniyya market, which was composed of 50 shops, was on the main street inside the fortress, and there was another market of the Maghribīs, with 300 shops. The consular officials *(bālyōs)* of the Europeans resided in the *khān*s of Sinān Pasha and ʿAlī Pasha, and Maghribī merchants of wool cloth occupied the Dāʾūdiyya *khān*.

Evliyā also notes that about 80 years earlier construction had begun on a new and prosperous city outside the walls, on the expanded causeway between the two harbours. It was called the "Turkish city," although the Turkish element in Alexandria was quite small. As a consequence of the new construction, the old city was gradually being abandoned. He reports that the new city had 325 houses, 700 shops, and 300 warehouses, as well as 12 large coffee houses, where singers, *saz* players, and other musicians performed day and night. He mentions that there were two classes of people, soldiers and merchants, and notes, too, that the dress of the Alexandrians differed from the attire of Egypt's other inhabitants and resembled that of the Maghribīs from Algiers or Tunis. The new city had seven *tekke*s, including a large one for followers of the Ṣūfī master ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166), the eponymous founder of the Qādiriyya, and another for followers of Shaykh Ibrāhīm Gulshanī (d. 940/1534), founder of the Gulshaniyya, a branch of the Khalwatiyya. Travellers from Arabia, Yemen, Iran, and India stayed in these *tekke*s. The new city lacked water, which had to be brought in by camel or mule from the cisterns inside the walls. When the French arrived, the population of the "Turkish city" was 10–15,000.

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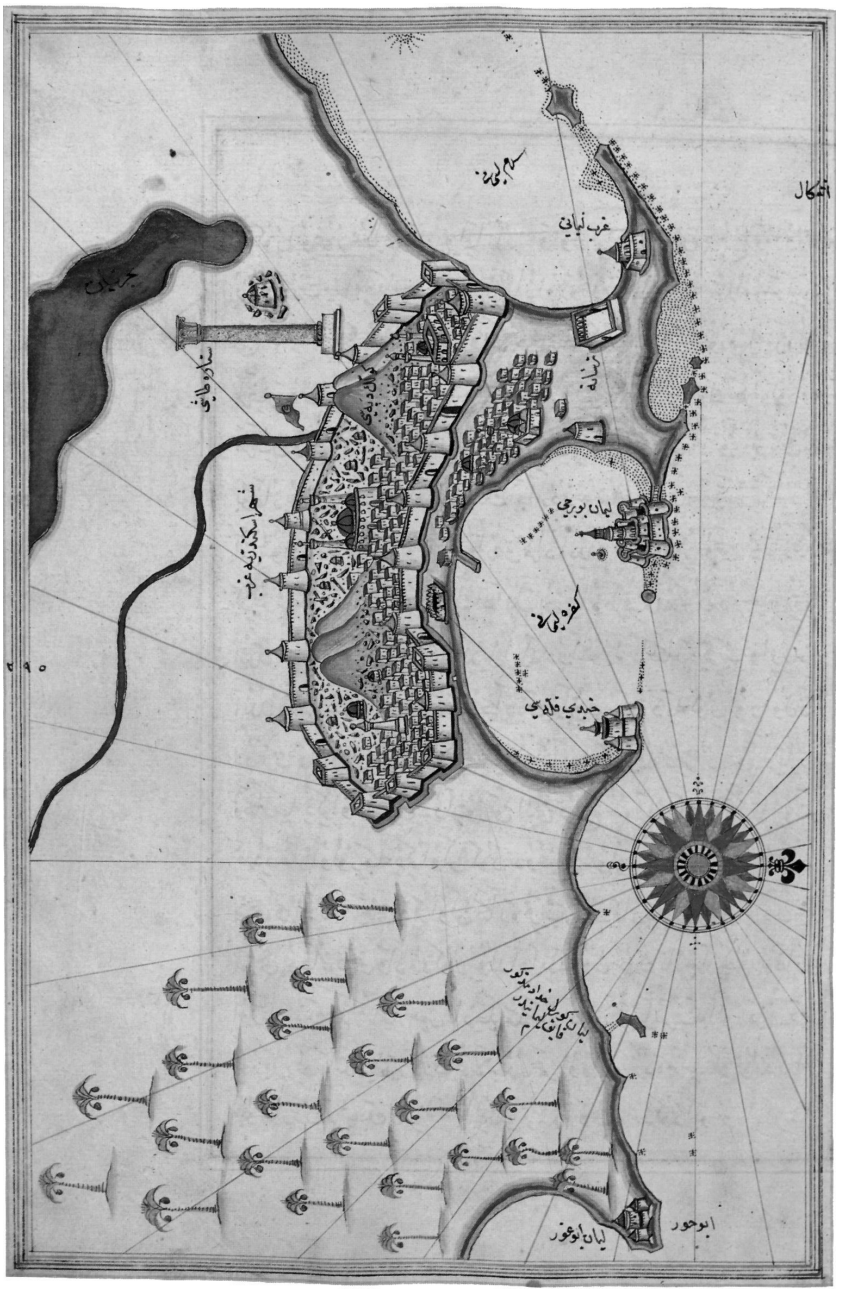

Illustration 3. Alexandria in Pīrī Re'īs' *Kitāb-i bahriyye*, 1521.

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B. MODERN PERIOD

By the time the French invaded Egypt in 1798, Alexandria had lost its former importance and become a small Ottoman port with limited commerce and industry. The French occupied Alexandria from 1798 to 1801. They rebuilt its fortifications but did little else for the city or its economy. Muḥammad ʿAlī (r. 1805–48), sent by the Porte to dislodge the French and confirmed by the sultan as governor of Egypt in 1805, made Alexandria an important component of his political and economic plans. In 1820, he had the Maḥmūdiyya Canal dug (named after Sulṭān Maḥmūd II, r. 1807–39), between the city and the Rosetta branch of the Nile, to provide Alexandria with fresh water. Besides refurbishing and expanding the city's fortifications and stationing troops in its environs, he established an arsenal and military industries, and had new docks constructed in the harbour (1828–33), all of which promoted steady

growth. The Alexandria Convention of 27 November 1840 brought an end to Muḥammad ʿAlī's ambitious foreign policies, but granted him and his successors hereditary rule as viceroy of Egypt.

The city profited from Egypt's two major cotton booms, in the early 1820s and the 1860s (the latter prompted by the Civil War in the United States of America). From 1825 to 1863, Alexandria's population grew tenfold and reached 170,000. Migrants came mainly from other parts of Egypt, but a significant number arrived from Europe, and by 1882 foreigners comprised roughly 25 per cent of the populace. The opening of the first Egyptian railway line in 1854, which linked Alexandria and Cairo, and the Suez Canal, opened in 1869, generated further development, and the city became the fourth most important port in the Mediterranean, after Istanbul, Marseilles, and Genoa. The large number of foreigners in Alexandria made it a "colonial city" even before the British occupation of Egypt, marked by strong spatial divisions and neglect of the native quarters. There were sometimes dramatic uprisings protesting the price of land and the capitulatory privileges. When the Egyptian state fell into bankruptcy, the British and the French assumed financial supervision (known as Dual Control, established in 1875–6), adding to the social and political tension. In June 1882, riots erupted, first in Alexandria and then elsewhere in Egypt. In July 1882, following the so-called ʿUrābī revolt, British forces bombarded Alexandria and occupied Egypt. By World War I, the city's population had reached nearly half a million, and by 1952 a million.

Alexandria was to become an international metropolis by 1900. Governors appointed in Cairo or Istanbul had administered Alexandria for centuries prior to 1834, when the first modern street and building commission in the Middle East, the Conseil de l'Ornato, was formed to partially manage the city. The Ornato consisted of a president, a vice-president, six Ottoman subjects, and six European consuls. At first, it simply regulated the use of urban space, but later became responsible for crucial municipal services, such as maintaining the water supply and drainage. After budget and staff cuts in the 1850s, it was absorbed into the newly created Ministry of Public Works (1864).

Alexandria's European residents strove to preserve their capitulatory rights and blocked several initiatives to establish a municipality during the 1850s and 1860s. In 1869, export merchants set up the Commission du Commerce d'Exportation and collected "voluntary taxes" to pave and repair the city streets. Since the capitulations exempted Europeans from all local taxes, these "voluntary taxes" ensured that non-Egyptians contributed to the costs of urban services. The first municipality *(baladiyya)* was finally established by khedivial decree, on 5 January 1890. The declaration stated that the *majlis baladī*—a locally elected, legally responsible, and fiscally autonomous body—would manage Alexandria's budget, fix and collect local dues and taxes, and oversee city infrastructure in general, as well as charitable institutions, public health, and urban planning. The municipality consisted of fourteen elected members. Three were elected by export merchants, three by importers, and two by property owners. (A property qualification enfranchised less than one per cent of the population.) The remaining members of the municipality were members ex officio, such as medical officers. A tramway was constructed

between 1897 and 1902, which served nearly all quarters of Alexandria. The *baladiyya* was suspended in 1926, after accusations of corruption, but was reconstituted in 1935.

In July 1956, Egyptian president Jamāl ʿAbd al-Nāṣir chose Alexandria as the venue from which to announce the nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company. The ensuing political and military crises, along with large-scale nationalisation, resulted in a mass exodus of the city's population the regime labelled "foreign," during the 1950s and 1960s. Alexandria's Stock and Cotton Exchange, founded in 1883 and one of the oldest stock exchanges in the Middle East and among the oldest commodity futures exchanges in the world, was closed in November 1952 and reopened under strict government control in September 1956, only to become dormant again between 1961 and 1992. In 1992 it was reopened and merged with the Cairo's stock exchange, to become the Egyptian Exchange.

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, Alexandria had become an important manufacturing centre, generating approximately one-third of Egypt's industrial output. Almost all of the country's cotton and other agricultural exports pass through the port of Alexandria, which is also a main point of entry for imports. Since the era of Muḥammad ʿAlī—roughly, the first half of the nineteenth century—the city's western harbour has been the more important of its two principal harbours. Alexandria's old "Turkish city" and western districts display dense, irregular street patterns. Its former European quarters, to the east, are more regular and spacious, and have a number of parks. The famous Corniche, which runs along the curve of the eastern harbour, was begun in the early 1900s and extended eastwards in the 1930s, when a major sewage line was constructed along this curve, to channel waste water and carry it out to sea. The quays and breakwaters required to protect the sewage system allowed for the creation of new seafront properties.

Since the nineteenth century, Alexandria has also been a vibrant cultural centre. Its legendary cosmopolitan, Mediterranean flair (Illustration 4) is celebrated in the works of such authors as E. M. Forster (1879–1970), Lawrence Durrell (1912–90), and Constantine Cavafy (1863–1933). The city's renowned Victoria College was founded in 1901 as a British public school, due to the efforts of affluent foreigners. Farouk University (Alexandria University since 1952), Egypt's second state university, opened in 1942. The Francophone Université Senghor (initiated by UNESCO and named after Léopold Sedar Senghor, the first president of Senegal, d. 2001) was established in 1988. Various renovation and development projects in the 1990s resulted in archaeological discoveries and inspired a cultural renaissance in Alexandria. The Bibliotheca Alexandrina, or "Library of Alexandria," which opened in 2002, was erected to commemorate the city's celebrated library destroyed in antiquity. It is located close to the seafront, near the site of the ancient library.

Currently, Alexandria and its surroundings form a governorate, which is administered by a governor and an elected council. The governorate of Alexandria has a population of about 4.1 million inhabitants (2008 census). A precise figure is impossible to assess, due to the uncontrolled influx of migrants from the countryside into the city and the merging of the core city with its hinterland. Greater

Illustration 4. A main boulevard in Alexandria, c. 1935. This photograph is part of the G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection.

Alexandria extends westward, with beach resorts stretching to the east and west along the coastline.

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ʿAlī Dede, al-Sigetvārī

ʿAlī Dede, al-Sigetvārī (d. 1007/1598–9), or ʿAlā' al-Dīn ʿAlī Dede b. Muṣṭafā al-Bosnawī, also known as al-Sigetvārī, was a *shaykh* of the Khalwatiyya (a Ṣūfī order founded in medieval Herat) and the author of a number of works in Arabic. He was probably born around the beginning of the ninth/sixteenth century in Mostar, where he began his studies. He continued his education in Istanbul, and after obtaining his *icāzāt-i irşād* ("license to teach"), which authorized him to instruct disciples, he travelled widely, visited famous *shaykh*s, and performed the *ḥajj* several times. During a long sojourn in Mecca, ʿAlī Dede adopted the pen name Haramī and acquired an excellent knowledge of Arabic language and poetry, as well as of the works of al-Suyūṭī (849–911/1445–1505) and Ibn ʿArabī (560–638/1165–1240).

After he returned to Rumelia, ʿAlī Dede resided permanently in a *khānqāh* (Ṣūfī lodge) situated near the *türbe* (tomb) where the organs of Süleymān the Magnificent (926–74/1520–66)—whose *türbe* is in Istanbul—were interred when he died on campaign, in the vicinity of Siget (Szigetvár), Hungary: undoubtedly, this was an important site, both on a symbolic level and for its location on the frontiers of Islam. ʿAlī Dede received the title *şeykh ül-türbe* (Ar. *shaykh al-turba*, or "*Shaykh* of the tomb"). He was requested to serve as a cleric during the Ottoman military campaign of Wārād/Nagyvárad and died in 1007/1598–9.

Some 15 texts in Arabic are attributed to ʿAlī Dede. (For a list and references, see Popovic, Cultures, *Livret 5*, 63). Several of these works have been lost, but two enjoyed great success:

(a) *Muḥāḍarat al-awā'il wa musāmarat al-awākhir* ("The Accounts of the First Things and the Conversations on the Last Things") is an anthology of diverse excerpts (legends, pseudo-historical narratives, etc.) taken from a wide range of works and classified according to a system that was made popular by al-Suyūṭī, from whom ʿAlī Dede drew much inspiration. (The title is reminiscent of a work written by Ibn