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Christopher Haas

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Christopher Haas : Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict (Ancient Society and History) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict (Ancient Society and History):

18 of 19 people found the following review helpful. Alexandria: Second City of the Roman Empire By A Customer In this well organized and information filled study on Late Antique Alexandria, Haas presents a city second only to Rome in population (probably) which surpassed Rome in education and perhaps culture. While his title would lead you to believe that there are a lot of maps, most of the topographical references deal with intercommunal conflict and travel systems within the city. He admits that no one really knows exactly what the city looked like since archaeological excavations are very difficult to undertake in modern day Alexandria. The strengths of the book are in the vast amount of knowledge presented on the Christian community and also in shedding new light on the intercommunal conflict. He does not take the position that intercommunal violence was the norm. My only criticisms of the book are a lack of a true bibliography, though there are extensive endnotes and also that he does not do enough with Paganism and especially Judaism in late antique Alexandria although that is mostly due to the lack of primary sources. Do not expect this book to talk about Alexandria in the wider context of Late Antiquity. Although there is some mention of Alexandria's extensive shipping industry and trading connections, most of the work deals with events that took place within Alexandria. A must have book for those interested in Late Antiquity, Roman Egypt, or Roman cities.

Second only to Rome in the ancient world, Alexandria was home to many of late antiquity's most brilliant writers, philosophers, and theologians among them Philo, Origen, Arius, Athanasius, Hypatia, Cyril, and John Philoponus. Now, in *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, Christopher Haas offers the first book to place these figures within the physical and social context of Alexandria's bustling urban milieu. Because of its clear demarcation of communal boundaries, Alexandria provides the modern historian with an ideal opportunity to probe the multicultural makeup of an ancient urban unit. Haas explores the broad avenues and back alleys of Alexandria's neighborhoods, its suburbs and waterfront, and aspects of material culture that underlay Alexandrian social and intellectual life. Organizing his discussion around the city's religious and ethnic blocs—Jews, pagans, and Christians—he details the fiercely competitive nature of Alexandrian social dynamics. In contrast to recent scholarship, which cites Alexandria as a model for peaceful coexistence within a culturally diverse community, Haas finds that the diverse groups' struggles for social dominance and cultural hegemony often resulted in violence and bloodshed—a volatile situation frequently exacerbated by imperial intervention on one side or the other. Eventually, Haas concludes, Alexandrian society achieved a certain stability and reintegration—a process that resulted in the transformation of Alexandrian civic identity during the crucial centuries between antiquity and the Middle Ages.

"Until now... Alexandria, the greatest city of the region, has lacked a major study. With the publication of Christopher Haas's fine work, that gap in the scholarly literature has been filled... Integrating evidence from a wide variety of texts and the limited archaeological evidence, he has produced a vivid account of late antique Alexandria." (American Historical) "A valuable and much needed contribution to the study of Alexandria and late antiquity... Haas has produced a vivid and interesting portrait." (Classical) From the Back Cover Second only to Rome in the ancient world, Alexandria was home to many of late antiquity's most brilliant writers, philosophers, and theologians - among them, Philo, Origen, Arius, Athanasius, Hypatia, Cyril, and John Philoponus. Now, in *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, Christopher Haas offers the first book to place these figures within the physical and social context of Alexandria's bustling urban milieu. About the Author Christopher Haas is an associate professor of history at Villanova University.