Alexandria endures in our imagination as the first model of cultural interaction – of cosmopolitanism, to use both classical and contemporary terminology – and as the cultural and intellectual capital of the ancient world. The intermingling of races and beliefs, and the exchange of ideas, undoubtedly produced the knowledge that modern scholarship still celebrates.

This book is a testimony that the value embodied by Alexandria and its Library continue to inspire noble-minded scholars whose pursuit for knowledge transcends boundaries and time. The breadth and scope of the papers presented do credit to the spirit of Alexandria – its multiculturalism, and its passion for science and scholarship. The book in our hands confirm that the multiculturalism of the Ancient World, rippling out from Alexandria to extend throughout the Hellenistic period and beyond, is as valid now as it was then – perhaps more so today, when globalization has given a new meaning to the internationalism envisioned by Alexander the Great centuries ago. Now, with the "clash of civilizations" dominating our discourse, it is pertinent to remember the lesson Alexandrea ad Aegyptum taught us: that the interaction between cultures can only lead to the betterment of the human condition and carry us to heights unimagined.

Ismail Serageldin
Librarian of Alexandria

The excellent contributions gathered in this book dedicated to the city of books, Alexandria, are undoubtedly traced along the lines of Amr and John’s dialogue. Intolerance, which is borne almost always out of ignorance, threatens continuously the peaceful meeting and coexistence of peoples and cultures nowadays. Alexandria, its people and books remind us that the search for dialogue, the reflection on the forms of unity in diversity are at the same time our greatest heritage and the most dramatically pressing agenda.

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Abstract: Our paper intends to focus on Alexandria after the Roman annexation: what traces of its splendour and glory do we find in classical Latin literature? What repercussions of the changes suffered after 30 B.C. called the attention of these authors? What did the Romans think of the inhabitants of Alexandria, and what relationship did they have with the history of that part of the world? Greek literature is rich in information on Egypt and Alexandria, but from this image of a magnificent city that the Greeks have left us, what do the Latin authors echo? What is made of its population, Greeks, Egyptians, Syrians, Jews, people coming from all parts of the world? The portrait we can trace is, of course, imperfect. To get as close as possible to Roman Egypt, we would have to rely on the information provided by Greek Literature, by Papyrology, Numismatics, Epigraphy, Archaeology, reading ostraka, etc. We will try, however, to list this information according to different thematic areas, such as: The description of the city; The wonders of Alexandria; The way the Alexandrians are seen and portrayed by the Roman authors; The history of Alexandria and its relations with Rome; What the Romans got from Egypt and Alexandria; What the Alexandrians got from the Romans; The attraction of Alexandria and Egypt among the Romans.

When, on August 1 of the year 30 B.C., Octavian, having taken Alexandria, entered the city on foot, while engaged in casual conversation with one of the Museum’s philosophers, his attitude was characteristic of the meticulousness with which, at this time, a certain