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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HYPATIA AND THE IDIOSYNCRASIES OF CHRISTIANITY IN EGYPT – A STUDY OF THE EVENTS OCCURRED AT EASTER 415 A.D. IN ALEXANDRIA

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Abstract: When compared with other regions of Roman Empire, Egypt was early and intensively converted into Christianity. In Egypt, Christianity was almost a phenomenon of masses, characterized also by a well distinguished militancy, spirit of martyrdom, and popular adhesion. These particularities can be explained by the social, political and religious background. It is our aim, in this paper, to look closer into the context and events which conducted to the Hypatia’s Death, to follow the political response regarding street violence in Alexandria. Far for holding attenuate circumstances to dramatic events, the analysis of literary testimonies and legal documents will frame the Hypatia’s death episode in the major conflictive context of social and religious tensions in Late Egypt.

Since the establishment of the early Christian communities, Egypt has played a prominent role amongst the regions of the Roman Empire in which Christianity was defined by greater popular expression, military display and belligerence. In fact it was in Egypt that Christianity first emerged as a religion on a wide scale, embraced by the masses, a phenomenon in itself greatly determined by the social, political and religious particularities of that region which has welcomed the new religion.

Hypatia of Alexandria was a prominent figure in the classical world. As such this chapter not only takes into account the events surrounding the tragic death of the philosopher but at the same time, through the examination of documents and surviving testimonies, it