

ALEXANDRIA AND THE WORLD OF CLEOPATRA VII

THIS WEBSITE IS THE CONCLUSION OF MY EFFORT TO RECONSTRUCT THE CENTRAL PART OF THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, THE PALACE AREA AND SERAPEUM DURING THE REIGN OF CLEOPATRA VII. IT ALSO INCLUDES RECONSTRUCTIONS OF CLEOPATRA HERSELF AND HER ANCESTORS. FINALLY A SECTION OF RECONSTRUCTIONS OF OTHER HELLENISTIC PALACES AND THE PALACE COMPLEX IN IMPERIAL ROME THAT I USED AS REFERENCES FOR MY WORK.

[ALEXANDRIA / RECONSTRUCTIONS](#)

[CLEOPATRA VII AND HER ANCESTORS](#)

[PALACES IN THE HELLENISTIC WORLD AND IMPERIAL ROME](#)

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MY WORK IS MAINLY BASED OF THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATIONS AND ANCIENT WRITERS:

CLEOPATRA OF EGYPT
Walker and Higgs

CLEOPATRA THE GREAT
Joann Fletcher

PTOLEMAIC ALEXANDRIA
P.M. Fraser

ALEXANDRIA
The Submerged Royal Quarters
Franck Goddio

THE ARCHITECTURE OF ALEXANDRIA AND EGYPT
Judith McKenzie

HELLENISTIC PALACES
Inge Nielsen

PALACES AND LARGE RESIDENCES OF THE HELLENISTIC AGE
Bonnie Lea Kutbay

ALEXANDRIA REDISCOVERED
Jean-Yves Empereur

HELLENIC INSTITUTE OF ANCIENT MEDIAVAL ALEXANDRIAN STUDIES
Underwater survey in Alexandria

STUDIES IN HELLENISTIC ARCHITECTURE
Frederick E Winter

PHILO'S ALEXANDRIA
Dorothy I. Sly

ALEXANDER'S TOMB
Nicholas J. Saunders

KONIGINNEN VOM NIL
Michael Pfrommer

ANCIENT CITIES BROUGHT TO LIFE
Jean-Claude Golvin

Callixenus

Theocritus

THE HISTORIES XV
Polybius

THE CIVIL WARS
Caesar

THE BELLO ALEXANDRINO
Caesar

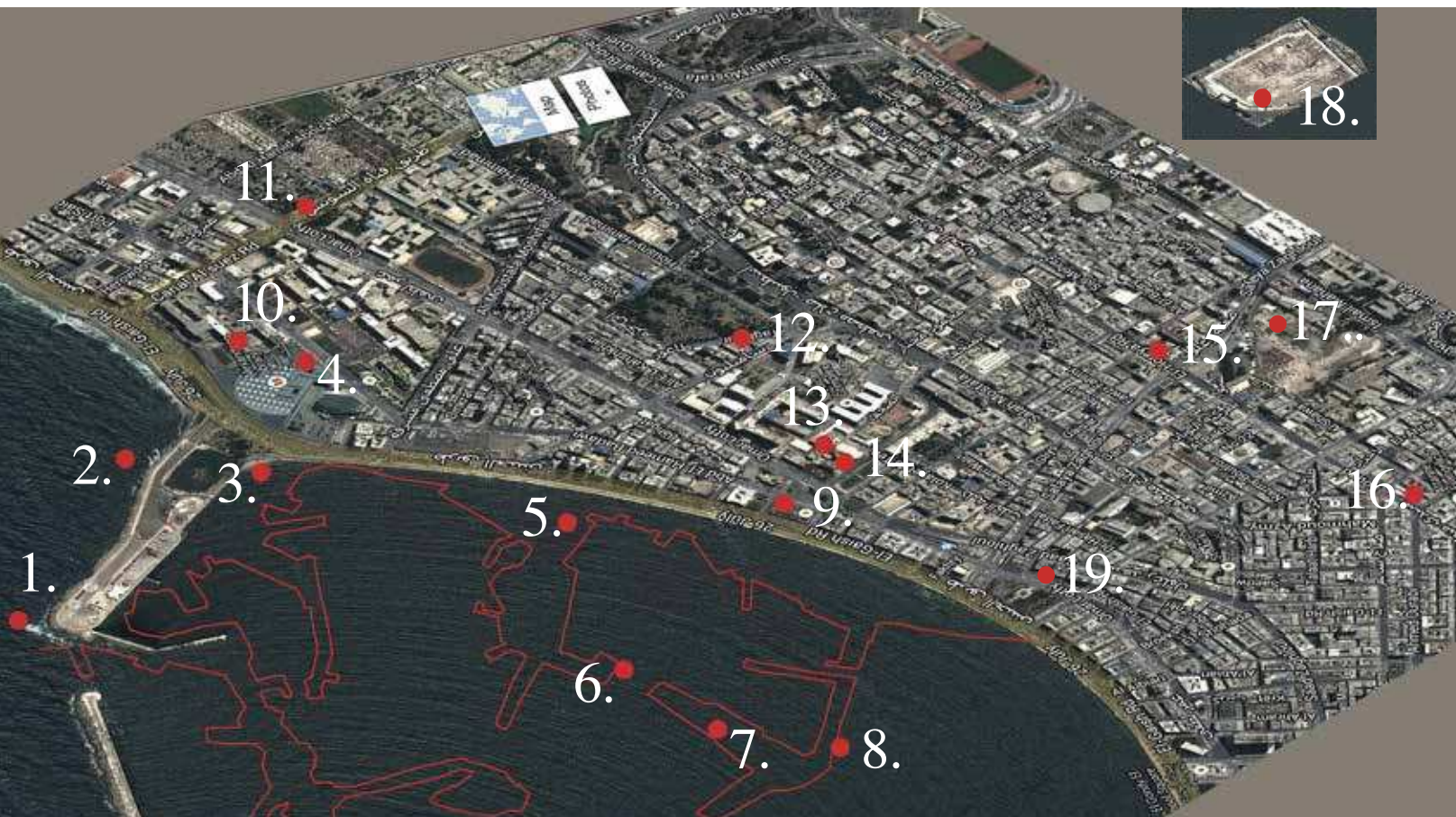
THE CIVIL WAR
Lucan

Strabo

Pliny

Plutarch

REMAINS OF PTOLEMAIC ALEXANDRIA



THE RED LINE REPRESENTS THE ANCIENT COASTLINE DISCOVERED BY FRANCK GODDIO AND HIS TEAM.

1. Granite pedestal, granite Pylon and a granite casing of large door.
2. Longated contours running parallel to the cape. There is also a line of structures parallel to the coast.
3. Foundation of large building.
4. Remains of a massive gate to the palace area.
5. Remains and foundation of the temple of Poseidon.
6. Remains and foundation of Timonium.
7. Remains of the Antirhodos Palace.
8. Remains and foundation of a temple dedicated to Isis.
9. Ionic and Doric orders of a large building. Ca 290 BC.
10. High quality dog and wrestler mosaic. Ca 125 -150 BC.
11. Stag hunt mosaic from a large banqueting room. Ca 290-260 BC.
12. Warrior mosaic, it is not clear to what type of building it belonged. Ca 320-300 BC.
13. House/dining room with Rosette mosaic. Ca 300-250 BC.
14. Centaur and stag mosaic in a Corinthian buliding. Ca 250-225 BC.
15. Monumental Doric stoa.
16. Greco egyptian temple decicated to Serapis, Isis Ptolemy IV Philopator and his wife Arsinoe III.
17. Remains of Ptolemaic houses below Roman constructions.
18. The foundation of Serapium, built by Ptolemy III (reigned 246-222 BC).
19. The location of the obelisks known as Cleopatra's Needles, that syod in front of the Caesareum.

RECONSTRUCTIONS

PALACE AREA

Lochias
Inner palaces
Theatre of Dionysus
Sema
Museum & library
Poseidium, royal emporium and Timonium
Antirhodos

CAESARIUM

EMPORIUM AND THE WAREHOUSES

AGORA

Forum Julium
Quadrangular stoa
Tychaion
Bouleuterion
Prytaneion
Fountain house of Arsinoe

GYMNASIUM

THE COURT OF JUSTICE, THE GROVES AND THE PANEIUM

THE SERAPEUM AND THE LAGEION

ROYAL CULT TEMPLES

THALAMEGOS, NILE PALACE BARGE OF PTOLEMY IV



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LOCHIAS

- 1. Temple of Isis Lochias
- 2. Mausoleum of Cleopatra
- 3. Lochias palace
- 4. Lochias citadel/akra and prison
- 5. First port
- 6. Defense wall
- 7. Causeway
- 8. Peribolos of the Akra

INNER PALACES

- 9. Guesthouses/Katalumata
- 10. Entrance hall/Chrematistikon Pylon
- 11. Forecourt/Megiston Peristylon
- 12. Palace main gate
- 13. Barracks/arsenal
- 14 Inner Palaces
- 15. Groves and Pavilions/Diatai
- 16. Corridor/Syrinx leading to the Theater
- 17. Palaestra
- 18. Canal/Maiandros
- 19. Palace attached to the Theater
- 20. Palace connected to the Inner Palaces

THEATRE OF DIONYSUS

- 21. Theatre of Dionysus

SEMA

- 22. Sema

MUSEUM & LIBRARY

- 23. Museum & Library
- 24. Zoological and botanical gardens

POSEIDIUM

- 25. Second port
- 26. Royal Emporium
- 27. Temple of Poseidon
- 28. Timonium

ANTIRHODES

- 29. Third port
- 30. Palace
- 31. Temple of Isis



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1. TEMPLE OF ISIS LOCHIAS

A pedestal, part of the framing of a gigantic door preserved up to a length of 3.60 m, and a pylon of 2.60 m high been located here the tip of Lochias. Pylons were placed in Ptolemaic times in front of temples imitating the pharaonic style, and this piece was found in the immediate vicinity where it is known that the Temple of Isis Lochias stood. Plutarch records that Cleopatra built her Mausoleum close to the temple of Isis.

2. MAUSOLEUM OF CLEOPATRA

Plutarch records that Cleopatra “fled for refuge into her tomb and let fall the drop doors, which was made strong with bolts and bars. She had a tomb and monuments built surpassingly lofty and beautiful. The chamber in which she died looked out onto the sea. Octavian allowed them both the honour of burial, in the same tomb, giving orders that the tomb which they had begun should be finished”.

3. LOCHIAS PALACE

Strabo writes: “In the great harbor at the entrance, on the right hand, are the island and the Pharos tower; on the left are the reef of rocks and the promontory Lochias, with a palace upon it.” Lucan writes: “Caesar, on his part, distrusted the city walls and defended himself by closing the gates of the palace, thus submitting to an unworthy hiding-place. Hemmed in as he was, the whole palace was not at his disposal. He had gathered his forces in one corner of it.” I believe this palace could have been fortified with towers and was part of the Citadel. Ref: Anaktoron of Demetrias in Macedonia and the Hasmonean winter palace in Jericho.

4. LOCHIAS CITADEL/AKRA AND PRISON

Polybius writes around 180BC: “Cleomenes of Sparta was imprisoned in a huge house from he escaped and his supporters met in the plateia/square. When the populace did not join the uprising they retraced their steps and made for the citadel /akra with the intension of forcing the gates and getting the prisoners to join them, but they were foiled by the guards and killed.” Polybius writes of the revolt against Agathocles under the Ptolemy V in 203 BC: “Agathocles at once gave orders to Nicostratus, his secretary of state, to arrest Moeragenes and examine him diligently, menacing him with every kind of torture. Moeragenes was instantly arrested and conducted to a remote part of the palace.” It probably housed, among others, the royal bodyguard.

5. FIRST PORT

Strabo writes: Below (the inner palaces) lies the harbour that was dug by the hand of man and is hidden from view, the private property of the kings. Goddio estimates that this harbour could shelter easily 10 large vessels.

6. DEFENSE WALL

Lucan writes: “Already missiles are falling upon the palace and battering the dwelling, but with no plan they split up into parties and surround the vast circuit of the walls and at no point does the host attack in full strength. They assailed the palace also by means of ships, at the point where the splendid pile projected with bold frontage right over the water”. Strabo writes that the harbour were hidden from view”. It seems likely that the Lochias palace, the citadel and the first port was surrounded by a defense wall, like the harbours of Pireaus.

7. CAUSEWAY

Goddio writes: “The entrance to the port was restricted by a narrow breakwater. On the adjacent reef some masonry is still visible underwater and could be the remains of a building to which a chain could be attached in order to close this passageway.

8. PERIBOLOS OF THE AKRA

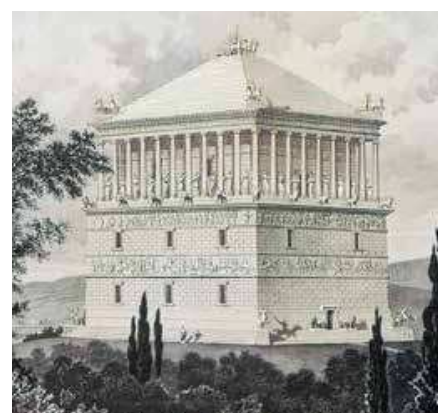
Callixenus writes a about Ptolemy II’s Pavillion that was raised to house a symposium in the connection of the Grand Procession of Ptolemy II in 278 BC. There were room for over 100 guests, and many flowers and plants afforded the diners with a beautiful view. It was placed in the peribolos (court enclosed by a wall) of the Akra at a distance from the palace, not in the palace garden.



pedestal



pylon



Mausoleum of Halicarnassus



Ptolemy II's Pavilion



Corridor/Syrinx leading to the theater

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9. GUESTHOUSES/KATALUMATA

The Letters of Aristeas describes guest-apartments that housed 72 translators from Jerusalem and were sited near the Akra. Remains have been located of column shafts and bases in red granite, and the foundations of walls made of dressed limestone.

10. ENTRANCE HALL/CHREMATISTIKON PYLON

A large portal and hall/ Chrematistikon Pylon used for audiences and banquets are described in many ancient sources. A banquetting hall is mentioned in The Letters of Aristeas and that the banquet followed upon the audience and movable klinai could be placed in the audience hall.

Lucan writes: The place itself was the size of a temple, the panels of the ceiling displayed wealth, and the rafters were hidden beneath a thick coating of gold. The walls shone with marble, nor were they merely overlaid with a thin surface of it and agate stood there on its own account, no useless ornament, and porphyry. Alabaster was laid all over the hall to tread on and the ebony of Meroe, covering for the great doors, took the place of common wood. Ivory clothed the entrance-hall and Indian tortoise-shell, artificially coloured, was inlaid upon the doors, and its spots were adorned with many an emerald. Jewels glittered on the couches, the cups, tawny with jasper, loaded the tables, and the sofas were bright with coverlets of divers colours, most had long been steeped in Tyrian dye and took their hue from repeated soakings, while others were embroidered with bright gold, and others blazed with scarlet. Ref: royal summer palace of Aigai in Macedonia, the royal palace of Pella in Macedonia

11. FORECOURT/MEGISTON PERISTYLON

A forecourt was placed in front of the entrance hall. The name indicates that there were several peristyl buildings, which the largest (megiston) was used for official purposes.

Polybius writes: "After four or five days, erecting a tribune in the largest colonnade of the palace, they summoned a meeting of the bodyguard and household troops as well as of the officers of the infantry and cavalry. When all these had collected, Agathocles and Sosibius mounted the tribune, and in the first place acknowledged the death of the king and queen and enjoined the populace to go into mourning as was their usual practice." Ref: Ai Khanoum, hellenistic palace in Afghanistan.

12. PALACE MAIN GATE

The remains of a massive gate to the palace area indicates that the whole palace area was surrounded by a wall and maybe with towers. "When Ptolemy IV decided to persecute the Jews, he erected a pillar on the tower near the palace with an inscription against them." Maccabees III

13. BARRACKS/ARSENAL

Polybius writes: "Moeragenes was instantly arrested and conducted to a remote part of the palace. "After that he was able, much to his surprise, to traverse the palace, and naked as he was rushed into a tent belonging to the Macedonian troops not far from the palace." Philo also mentions an armory in the palace area past the harbour.

14. INNER PALACES

Strabo writes: "Just as each king, for the love of splendour, was wont to add some adornment to the public monuments, so also he would invest himself at his own expense with a residence, in addition to those already built so that now, to quote the words of the poet, "there is building upon building". All however are connected with one another and the harbour, even those that lie outside the harbour." He continues: "On the left are the promontory Lochias, with a palace upon it. At the entrance, on the left hand, are the inner palaces, which are continuous with those on the Lochias, and contain numerous painted lodges/pavilions (diatai) and groves. Ref: the royal palace of Pella in Macedonia, Hasmonean winter palace in Jericho and Herod's 2nd and 3rd winter palaces in Jericho, private roman villas in Stabiae and Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli.

15. GROVES AND PAVILIONS/DIAITAI

Primary for private use were the recreational elements of the palaces, consisting of gardens inside the palace or in peristyle courts, or a park around the palace. Elements connected with these areas of the palace are pavilions, pools, nymphaea, promenades. The inner palaces were laid in a park with pavilions that undoubtedly belonged to the private sphere, and could be used as private dining rooms.



Sea villa in Stabiae, Italy

16. CORRIDOR/SYRINX LEADING TO THE THEATER

Polybius writes: After lamenting his ill-fortune to the boy king in a few words, Agathocles took him by the hand and went up to the gallery/syrinx between the Maeander and the palaestra leading to the entrance/parodos to the theatre. After this, having made fast the first two doors, he retired to the third with a few of the bodyguard, the king, and his own relatives. The doors were of open lattice-work and one could see through them, and they were each secured by two bolts. He continues: At first the Macedonians got up and seized the gate of audience of the palace, but shortly after, when they discovered in what part of the building the king was, they went round and after taking the first door of the gallery off its hinges approached the second and clamoured loudly for the king."

17. PALAESTRA

It seems that it was a royal palaestra in the palace area.

18. CANAL/MAIANDROS

Probably a winding water-channel or canal, perhaps for swimming.

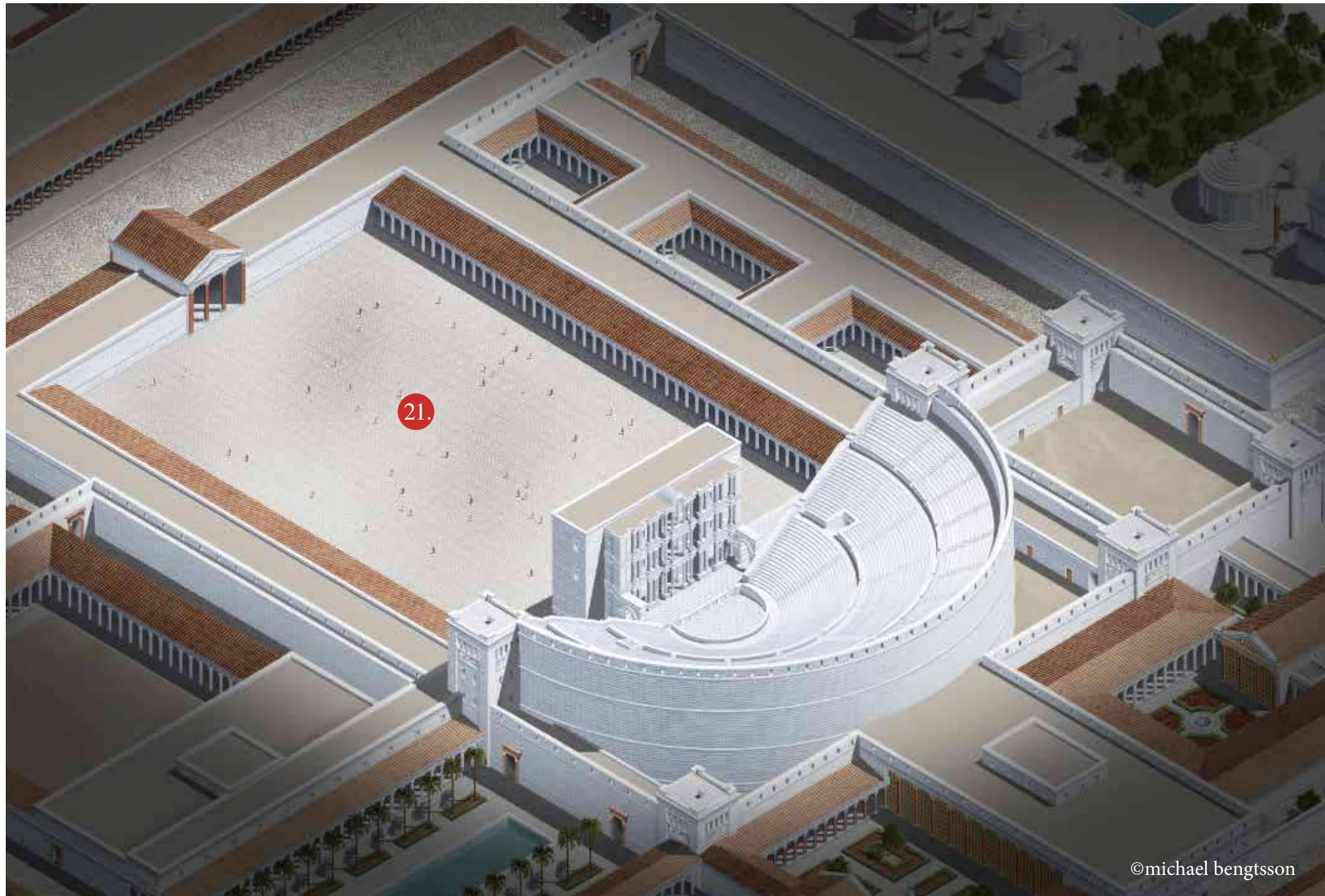
19. PALACE ATTACHED TO THE THEATER

Cesar, De bello civili III: "In this quarter of the town was a wing of the king's palace, in which Caesar was lodged on his first arrival, and a theater adjoining the house which served as for a citadel, and had approaches to the port and to the rest of the dockyards. These fortifications he increased during the succeeding days, that he might have them before him as a rampart, and not be obliged to fight against his will.

20. PALACE CONNECTED TO THE INNER PALACES

Strabo writes: "All however are connected with one another and the harbour, even those that lie outside the harbour." Polybius writes: "When the boy king nodded his head in assent Sosibius bade some of the bodyguard communicate the royal decision, and making the boy get up led him away to join his household at his own house which was quite near the Gymnasium."

It seems that Strabo makes a point of a palace that lies outside the area of the harbour but still connected to the inner palaces. This might be a palace that Polybius calls the household of the young boy king Ptolemy V.



21. THEATRE OF DIONYSUS

Strabo writes: "Above the artificial harbor lies the theatre, then the Poseidionum."

Caesar, De bello civili III: "In this quarter of the town was a wing of the king's palace, in which Caesar was lodged on his first arrival, and a theater adjoining the house which served as for a citadel, and had approaches to the port and to the rest of the dockyards. These fortifications he increased during the succeeding days, that he might have them before him as a rampart, and not be obliged to fight against his will."

Polybius writes: The open spaces round the palace, the stadium, and the great square were now filled with a mixed multitude, including the portico of the theatre of Dionysus. Polybius writes: Agathocles took the boy king by the hand and went up to the gallery/ syrinx between the Maeander and the palaestra leading to the entrance to the theatre.

The original theatre was probably built by Ptolemy I, and it seems that when the inner palaces complex was expanded one of the new palace wings was adjoining the theatre and maybe constructed with some fortifications. A vaulted corridor lead from the inner palaces to the entrance/parodos.

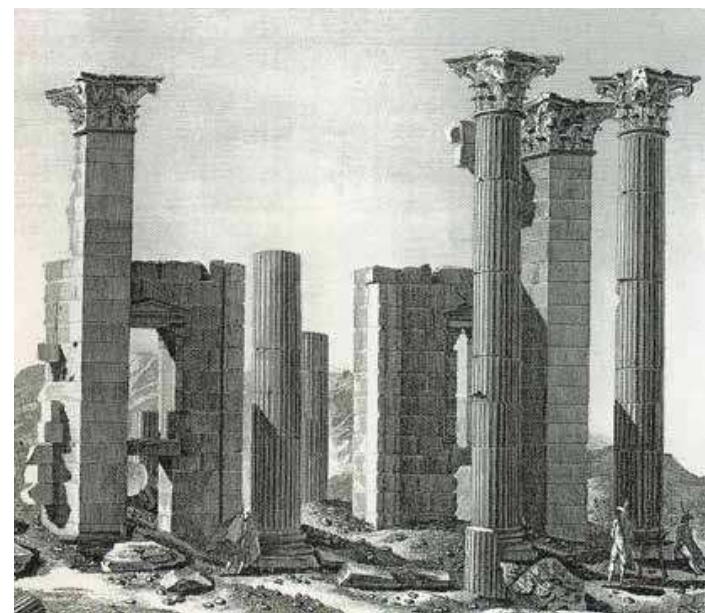
The theatre must have undergone renovations to accommodate more seats as the city grew and the demands of the New Comedy, with the shift of action from the circular orchestra to the roof of the stage building, the facade of the upper story of the stage building became the backdrop for the action.

I'm basing the design and size with a seating capacity for ca. 15,000 people/ the last stage of the Theatre in Miletus. I also based it on the theatre in Antinoopolis/Egypt, built by Hadrian around 130 AD. It had a monumental gate which led into a colonnaded court and to the theatre.

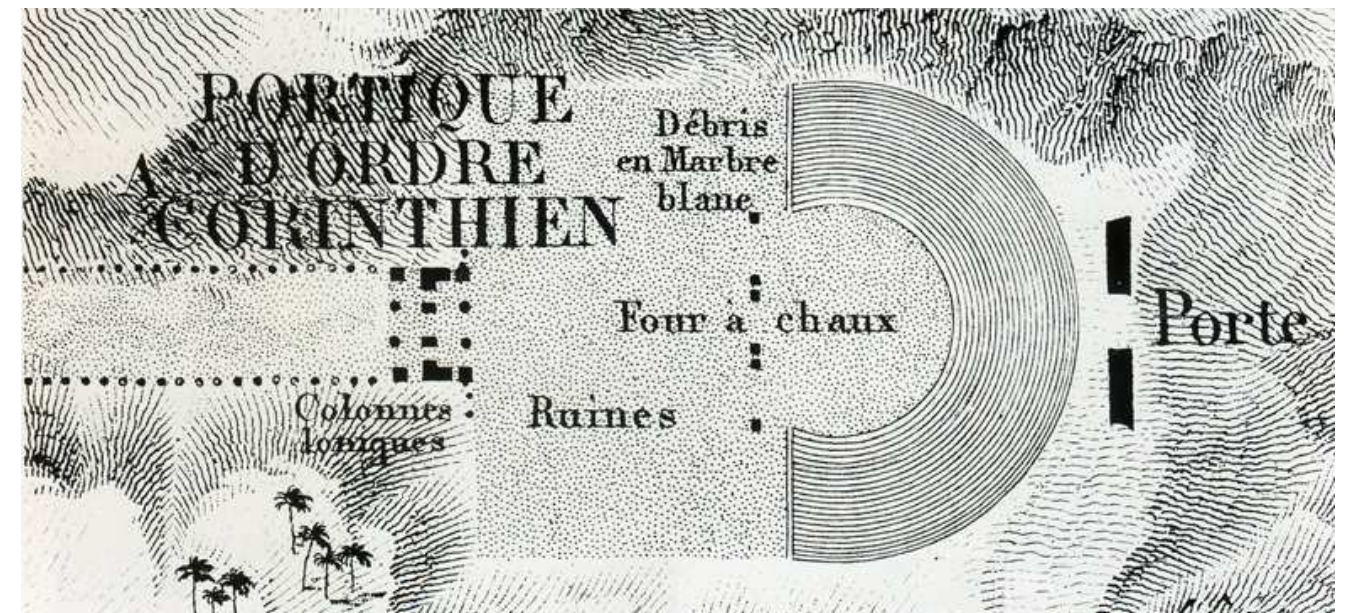
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The Theatre in Miletus



Antinoopolis, theatre gate in 1799



Antinoopolis, theatre plan in 1799



22 . SEMA

Zenobius writes during Hadrian 117-38 AD: Ptolemy IV built a monument/mnema in the middle of the city, which now is called the Sema. He put in there all his ancestors and Alexander the Macedonian.

Strabo writes: A part belonging to the palaces consists of that called Sema, an enclosure/peribolos, which contained the burial places/taphai of the kings and that of Alexander. Within the complex was the excavated vault which contained the shrine with the sarcophagus and body of Alexander. It wasn't the original coffin, for the present one is of alabaster whereas the original one was of gold. It was plundered by Ptolemy IX. Suetonius indicates that the Ptolemaeum contained remains of the Ptolemies. It seems to have been within the same complex as th tomb of Alexander.

Lucan writes: "though you preserve the Macedonian in consecrated vault and the ashes of the Pharaohs rest beneath a mountain of masonry, though the dead Ptolemies and their unworthy dynasty are covered by pyramids and mausoleums."

The tomb of Alexander where his body probably lay in public display, was visited in antiquity by important personalities, scholars, and common tourists alike. Alexander's illustrious visitors included Julius Caesar who visited Alexandria in 45 BC.

When Augustus defeated Marc Anthony and Cleopatra at Actium in 31 B.C. and subsequently conquered Alexandria in 30 BC, he was taken to see Alexander on whose body he dedicated a wreath. Augustus's guides offered to take him next to the tombs of the Ptolemaic dynasty which were located nearby. To that Augustus answered that he came to see a king and not dead people.

Several other Roman emperors reportedly visited the tomb of Alexander in Alexandria. Caligula, according to Dio, went to Alexandria, paid a visit to the Sema and left with Alexander's cuirass. Septimus Severus (early third century AD) eventually closed the tomb to the public because he was nervous about its safety under the hoards of tourists who rushed to visit. The last reported imperial visit that we know of was made by Caracalla (3rd century A.D.), who believed that he was Alexander's reincarnation.

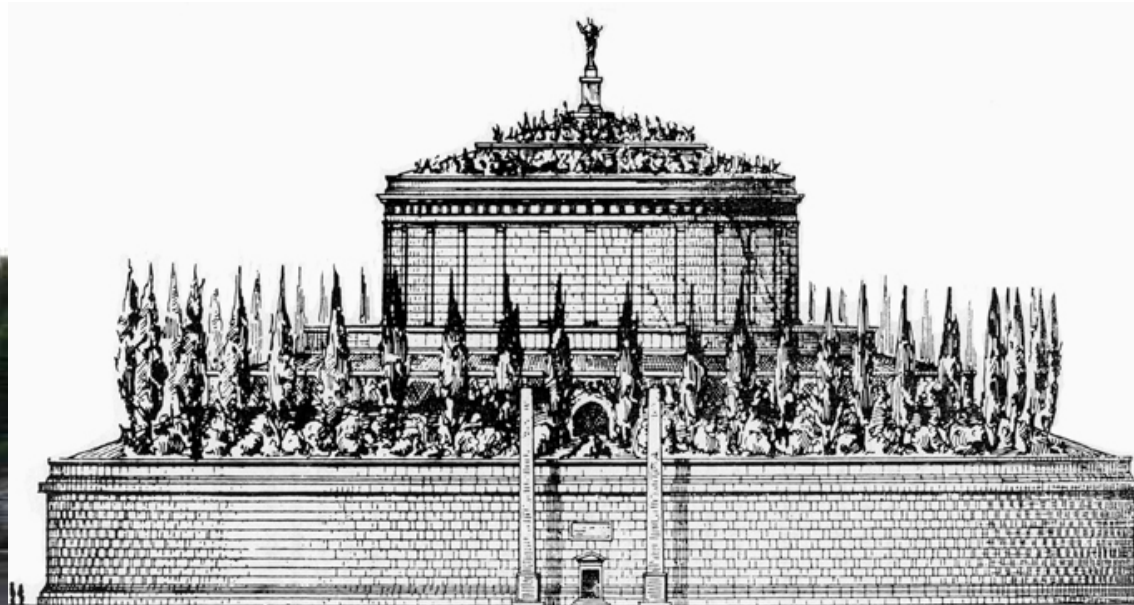
I'm basing the reconstruction of Alexander's tomb after the Royal Mausoleum of Mauretania and The Mausoleum of Augustus built by the Roman Emperor in 28 BC. Royal Mausoleum of Mauretania was built in 3 BC by the King of Mauretania, Juba II, and his wife Cleopatra Selene II. Cleopatra Selene II was the daughter of Cleopatra VII and Mark Antony.

The striking similarity between the Algerian tomb and Augustus's cylindrical mausoleum may suggest that Alexander's tomb was a prototype for both.

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Royal Mausoleum of Mauretania

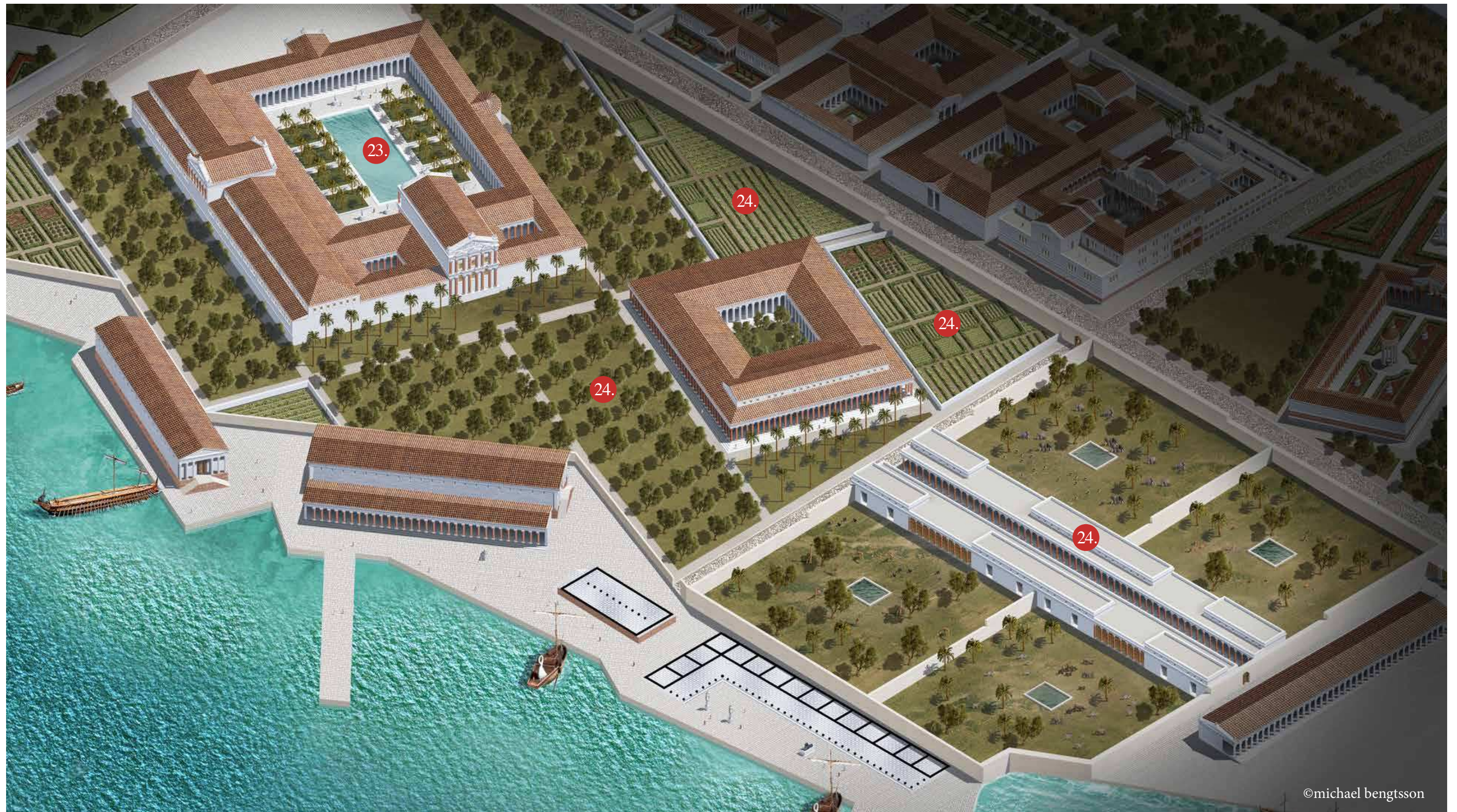


The Mausoleum of Augustus



The vault which contained the shrine with the sarcophagus and body of Alexander.

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23. MUSEUM & LIBRARY

In 295 BC, the Egyptian Ruler Ptolemy I Soter, commissioned the construction of the Great Library of Alexandria (one of the cultural wonders of the ancient world). In the following years, local scientists traveled through the region to purchase books for the library. The Library held many copies of important books of the ancient world as well as the originals of Euripides and Sophocles. All human knowledge of the ancient world was stored in the Library, not just of Egypt or the Greek territories, for Ptolemy I sent his representatives throughout the known world to collect reference works.

In 48 BC, at least 40,000 scrolls were burnt when Julius Caesar attacked the city (during the Alexandrian war). The description of Caesar's attack provide the only indication we have of the location of the library which seems to have been sufficiently close to the dockyards for the fire to have spread to them. According to Plutarch this fire spread from the dockyards/neoria and destroyed the Great Library/megale bibliotheke. The historian Dio Cassius states "that many places were set on fire with the result that among other buildings burnt were the dockyard/neorion and the store houses/apothekai of grains and books/biblio."

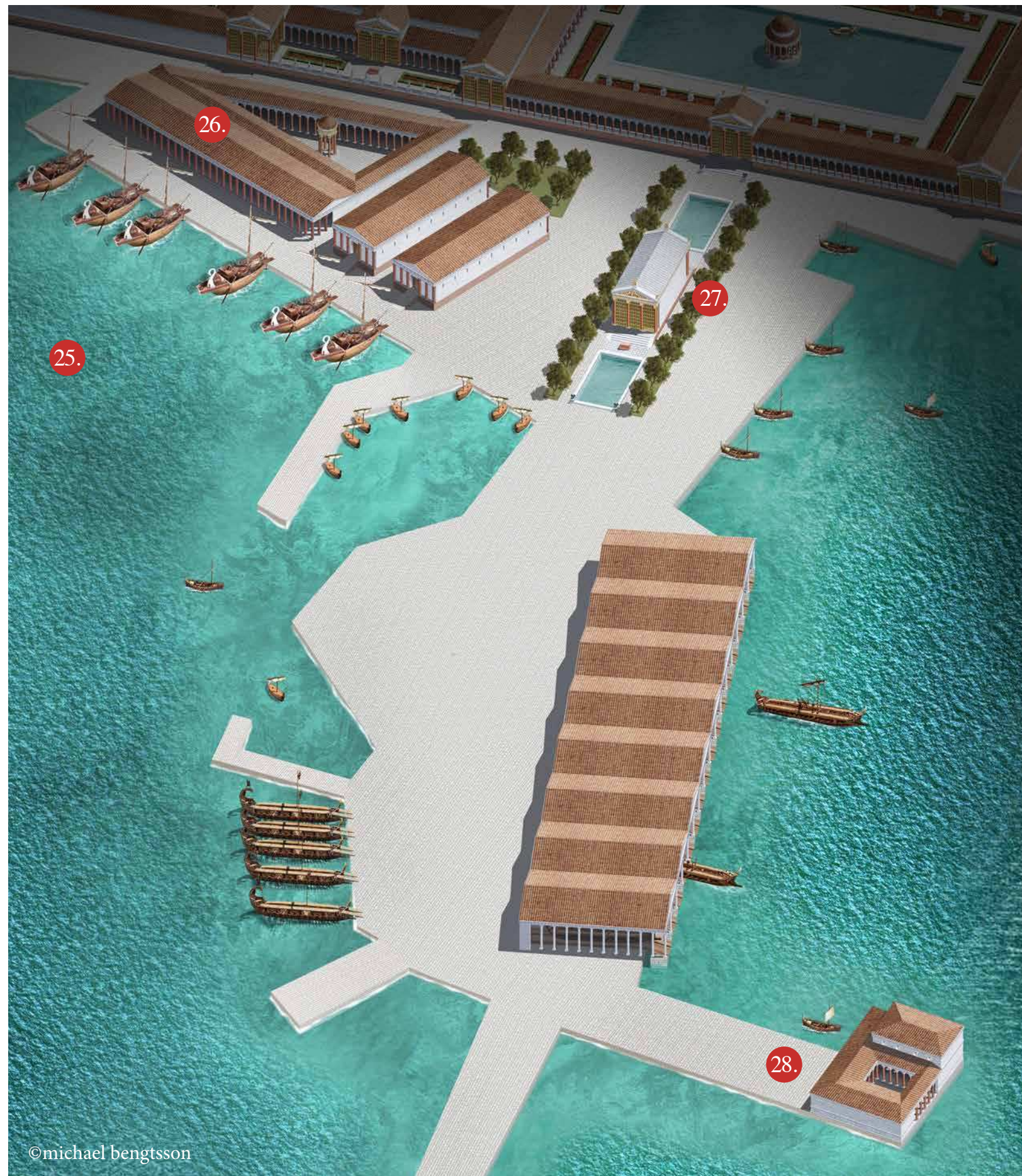
Strabo describes the Museum: "The Museum is also part of the royal palaces; it has a public walk, an Exedra with seats, and a large house, in which is the common mess-hall of the men of learning who share the Museum. This group of men not only hold property in common, but also have a priest in charge of the Museum.

The function of the Library is based on the following historical records: "A covered marble colonnade connected the Museum with an adjacent stately building, also in white marble, architecturally harmonious, dedicated to learning by Ptolemy I, and the advice and genius of Demetrios of Pharos. This was the famous Library of Alexandria, the "Mother" library of the Museum. Here in 10 great halls, whose ample walls are lined with spacious armaria, numbered and titled, were housed the myriad manuscripts containing the wisdom accumulated by the genius of the Hellenic peoples. Each of the 10 halls was assigned to a separate department of learning embracing the assumed ten divisions of Hellenic knowledge. The halls were used by the scholars for general research, although there were smaller separate rooms for individuals or groups engaged in special studies."

24. ZOOLOGICAL AND BOTANICAL GARDENS

Athenaeus wrote that Ptolemy VIII wrote a treatise on the breeding of birds in the palace area, as does the presence of zoological and botanical gardens. According to a Zenon papyrus, the Ptolemaic official Tobias of Tranjordan sent rare animals to Ptolemy II for the zoo.

I'm placing the Museum / Great Library in the western part off the palace area, facing the third harbor. Maybe the foundation of the monumental doric and ionic building found in this area are the remains of the Museum. In front, along the harbour could have been store houses and other monuments.



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25 . SECOND PORT

Goddio writes: "80 medium sized vessels as well as 25 small ones could be lined up side by side, stern to quay and been sheltered in the second harbour."

26 . ROYAL EMPORIUM

Strabo: "Above this is the theatre, then the Poseidium, a kind of elbow projecting from the Emporium, as it is called..."
It could have been two places called Emporion, (place for commerce): the vast market proper and its warehouses and ship-houses towards the Heptastadion and another landing place for foodstuff for the royal harbor, situated at the base of the peninsula. Maybe also royal dockyards and store houses of grains and books, Dio Cassius states was destroyed during the Alexandrian war.

27 . TEMPLE OF POSEIDON/NEPTUNE

Strabo: "... with a temple of Neptune upon it."
Remains of a temple from Roman times has been found.

28 . TIMONIUM

STRABO: "To this Antony added a mound, projecting still further into the middle of the harbour, and built at the extremity a royal mansion, which he called Timonium. This was his last act, when, deserted by his partisans, he retired to Alexandria after his defeat at Actium, and intended, being forsaken by so many friends, to lead the solitary life of Timon for the rest of his days."
Goddio writes: "The mole ends with an esplanade 50 x 22 metres. Limestone blocks of varying size are strewn about the area. Red granite column shafts 90 cm in diameter, related to items in marble and limestone, lie at the foot of this esplanade."



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Timonium



29. THIRD PORT

This port could have sheltered up to 250 small ships.

30. PALACE

Strabo writes: "...and Antirhodos a small island, facing the artificial harbour, with a palace on it, and a small port. It was called Antirhodos, a rival as it were of Rhodes.

The remains of the palace has been discovered. The foundations were built approximately 250 BC. Red granite column shaft discovered on the island are aligned in a band 350 metres long and 45 metres wide and are associated with granite blocks as well as 7 pedestals of statues.

The area for the palace is very narrow so I based my construction of the palace of Thalamegos, the Nile river palace barge commissioned by Ptolemy IV and the Governors' palace Araq el Amir. A palace 2 stories high and with a forecourt and a peristyle garden.

31. TEMPLE OF ISIS

At the south-west end of the main branch is an important accumulation of about 50 column shafts. Their diameters, between 95 and 110 cm. It was noted that these column shafts were broken when they fell. In these area two sphinxes came to light, one of them identified as Ptolemy XII, father of Cleopatra. Also a statue made of grey granite of a priest of Isis were found. The conclusion is that a small Isis temple once were built there. Because of the narrow space and so many columns, it must have been a small temple with a peristyle court surrounding it.





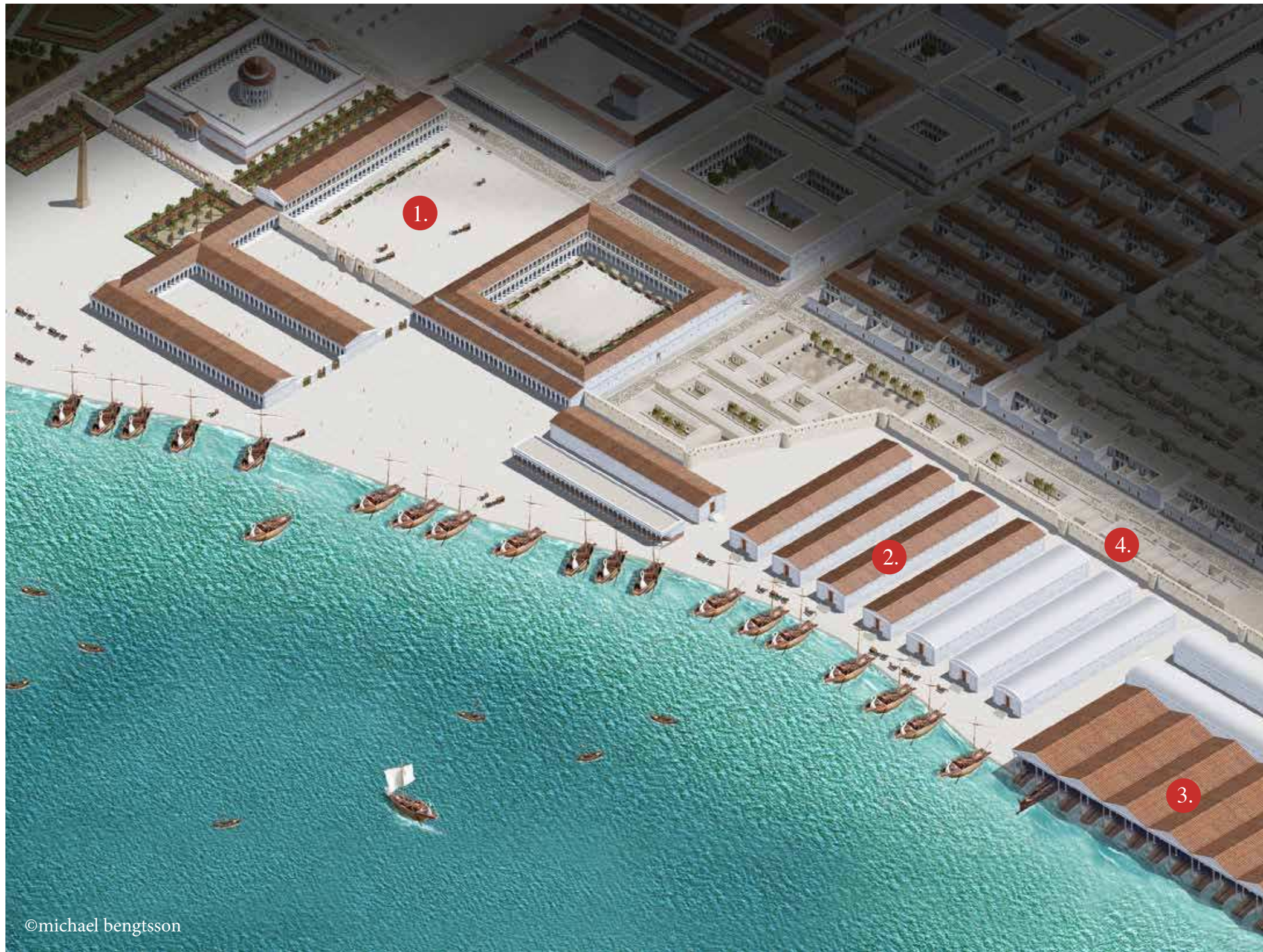
CAESARIUM

Cleopatra VII, began the construction of the temple called the Caesareum, in honor of Julius Caesar and later Mark Antony. According to Strabo and the Alexandrian Jewish writer Philo, the temenos/enclosure faced the harbor. It seems to have been oriented at an angle to the city grid plan to make it easier to view as the ships came into the harbour. It contained porticoes, propylaea/gateways, libraries, men's banqueting halls, groves, spacious courts, open-air rooms, all richly decorated. It was decorated with pictures and gold and silver statues.

After the suicide of Mark Antony and Cleopatra in 30 BC, the victor, Octavian, was determined to erase every memory of Mark Antony and had all his statues knocked down. As for the Caesareum, he decided to complete the building by dedicating it apparently to his own cult. It was clearly a major project, since two obelisks that Pharaoh Tuthmosis III had consecrated fourteen centuries earlier to Re, the Sun god and lord of Heliopolis, were brought from the sanctuary of Heliopolis. During the early fourth century, as Christianity spread, it was converted into a Church of Saint Michael and survived until the tenth century. Long after the disappearance of the Caesareum, these two obelisks were moved once again: during the nineteenth century the Viceroy of Egypt offered one to Great Britain and the other to the United States of America.

Of the temple itself nothing survives beyond descriptions by the ancient authors. Its location is certain, however, both because the obelisks stood there until recently and because in 1874 Neroutzos found some massive foundations. Works carried out between the two obelisks and the modern cinema revealed the foundation courses of a wall 3.5 meters thick.

1. TEMENOS
Enclosure containing libraries and banqueting halls.
2. PROPYLEA
3. TEMPLE
4. GROVES
5. "OPEN-AIR ROOMS"



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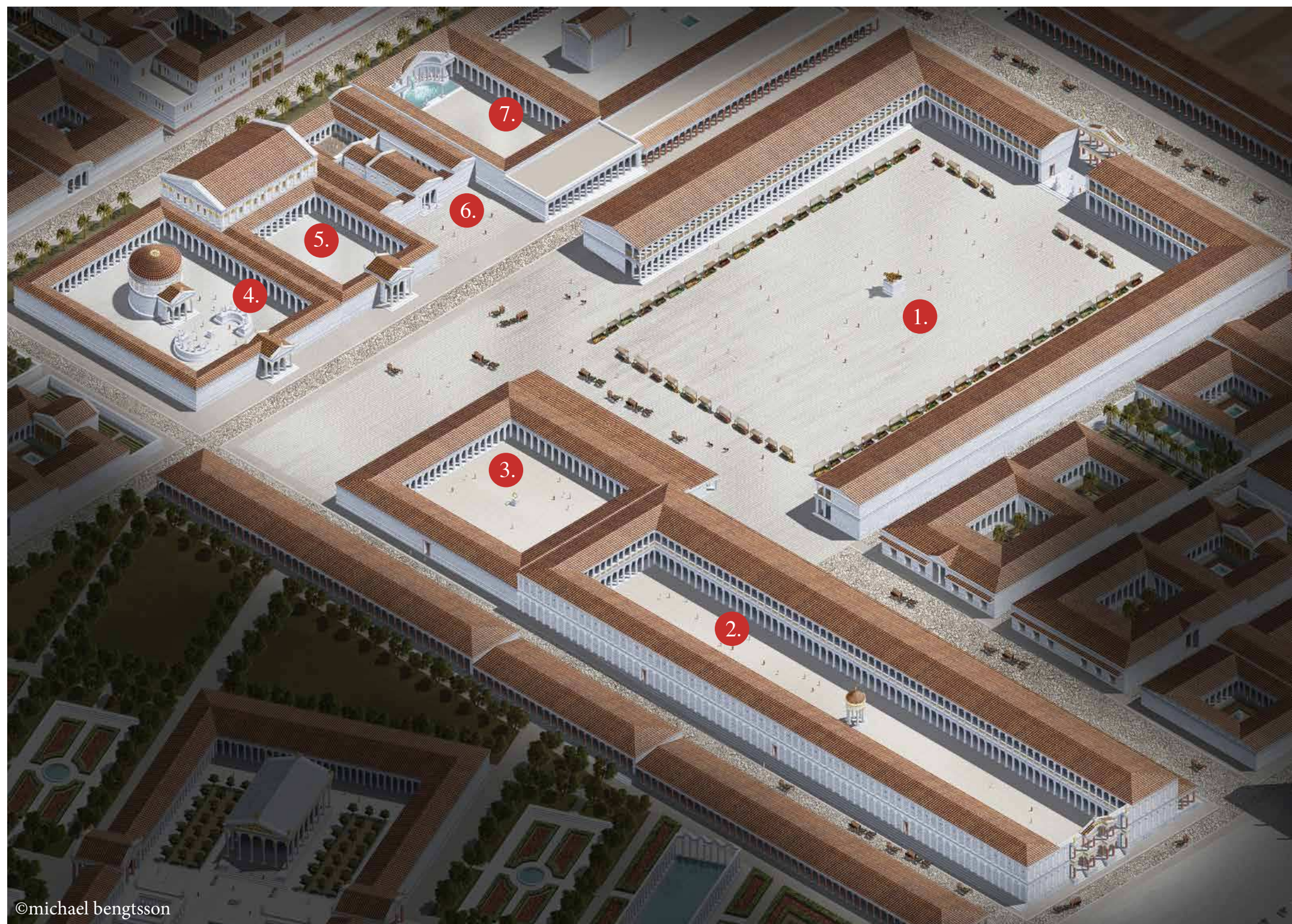
1. EMPORIUM

The Emporium was the place at which goods imported from abroad were checked and subjected to custom dues, and also a general centre for trading in merchandise. Strabo writes: "Next are the Caesareion, the Emporion, and the magazines, these are followed the ship-houses extending to the Heptastadion." I'm basing the reconstruction of The Emporium of the harbours of Delos and Piraeus.

2. WAREHOUSES

3. SHIP-HOUSES

4. CITY WALL



1 . AGORA

The literal meaning of the word is “gathering place” or “assembly”. The agora also served as a marketplace where merchants kept stalls or shops to sell their goods. The Agora could have been surrounded on four sides by continuous colonnaded court, like the one in Pella. Philo’s advice to genteel ladies were to wait until afternoon in order to avoid the crowds.

2 . FORUM JULIUM

It might have been a forum in honour of Julius Caesar adjoined the temple of Caesareum.

3 . QUADRANGULAR STOA

Perhaps within this Ptolemaic agora that lay the Square Stoa, which forming part of Quarter Beta, was the site of an important astronomical instrument in the time of Hipparchus in 146 BC.

4 . TYCHAION

The Tychaion of Alexandria, named for the city goddess of Fortune “in the middle of the city”. It had a temenos and a circular temple with exedras with statues of Alexander, Ptolemy I, Tyche, Gaia and Nike.

5 . BOULEUTERION

A bouleuterion was a building which housed the council of citizens (boule). The boule consisted of the citizens’ representatives who assembled in order to confer and decide about public affairs. The bouleuterion could have been close to the agora like in Olympia and Miletus.

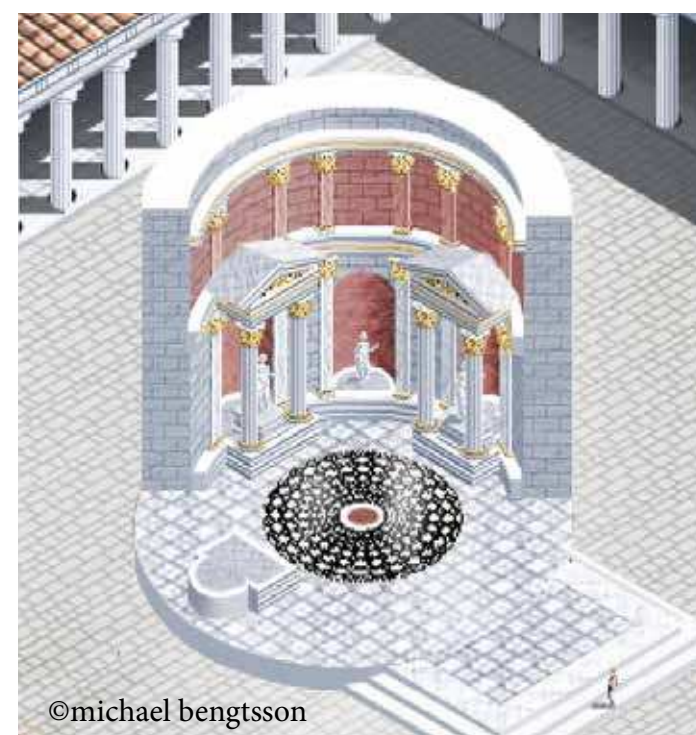
6 . PRYTANEION

Prytaneion was seat of the Prytaneis (executive), and so the seat of government in ancient Greece. The Prytaneion normally stood in centre of the city, in the agora. The building contained the holy fire of Hestia, the goddess of the hearth, and symbol of the life of the city. The boule and the prytaneis both formed part of the Alexandrian constitution. I’m basing my design of the prytaneion at Olympia.

7 . FOUNTAIN HOUSE OF ARSINOE

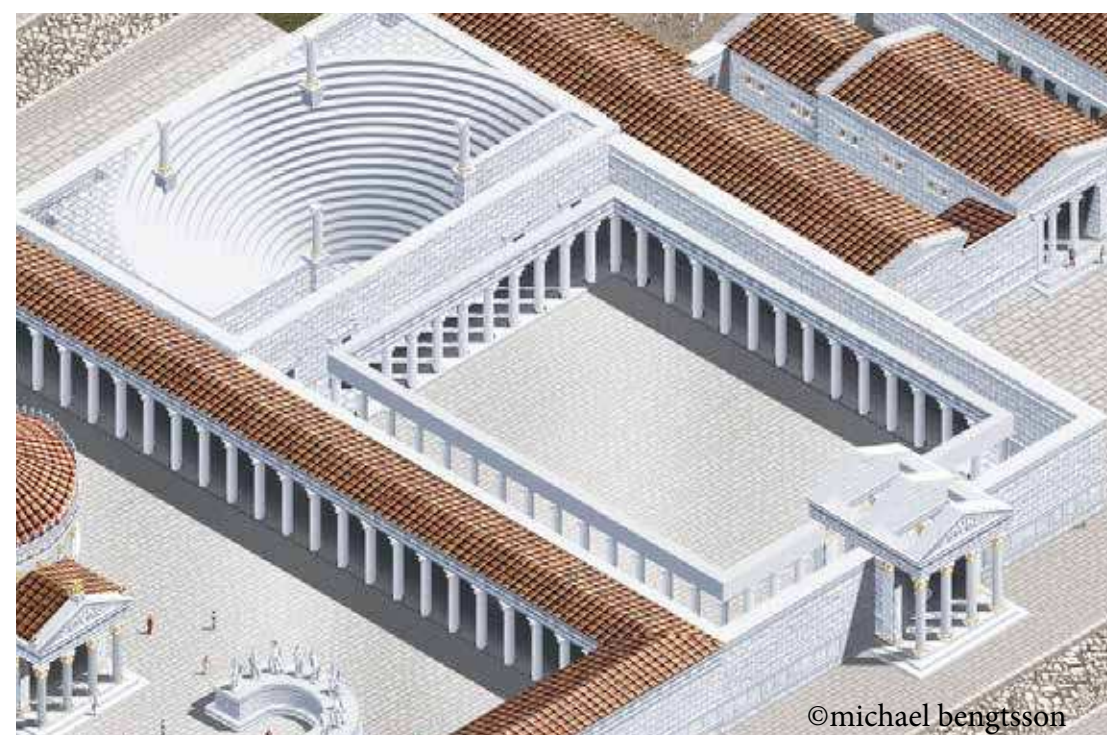
This fountain house was dedicated to Arsinoe II or Arsinoe III. It was a semi-circular structure of Parian marble, with an Ionic entablature and a base of red granite. It had running water from the “Hymetten stone” and was decorated with statues of Arsinoe and the nymphs in white marble. Ref: the hellenistic palaestra in Miletos.

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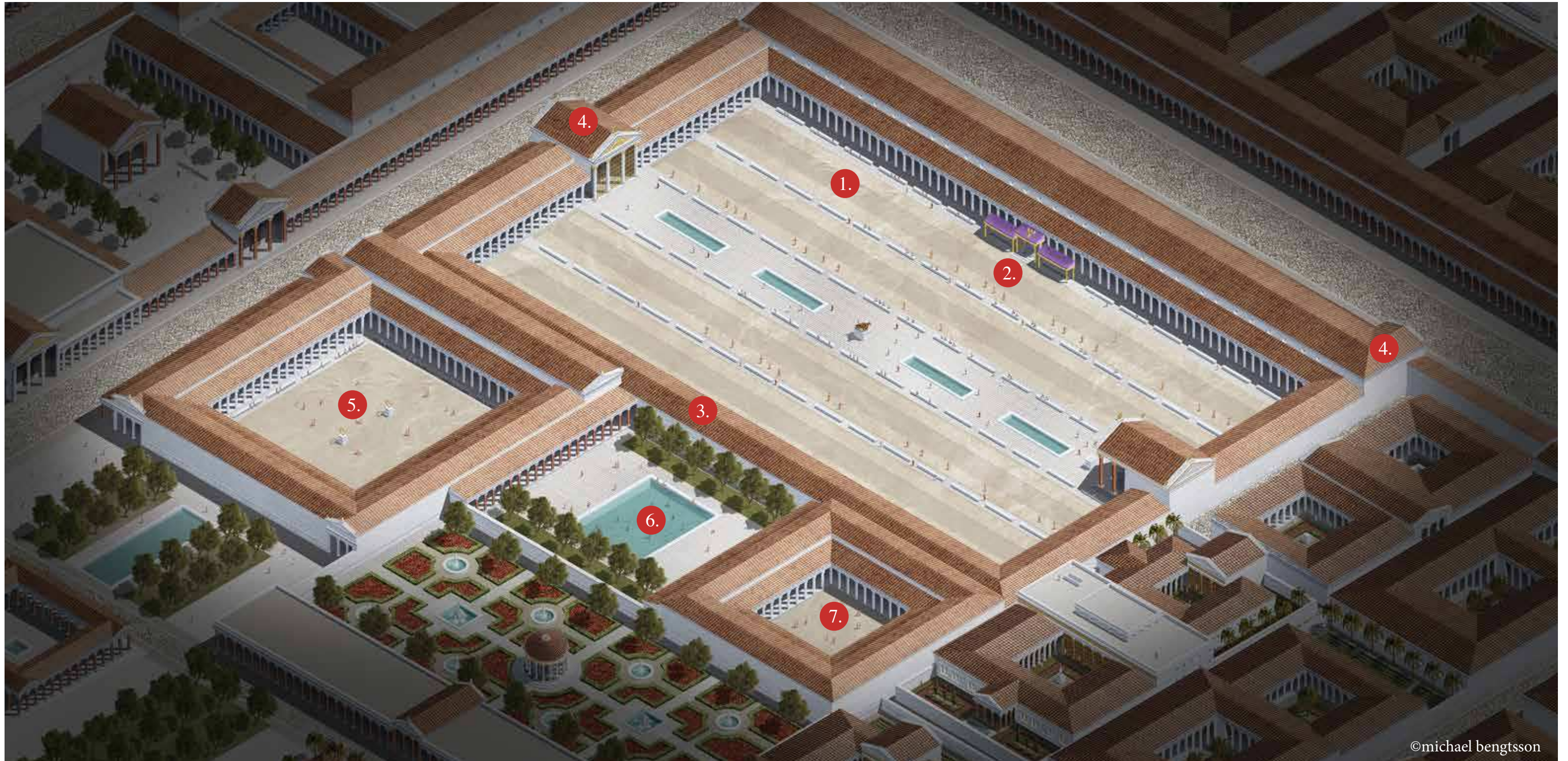
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TYCHAION



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BOULEUTERION



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GYMNASIUM

The gymnasium was formed as a public institution where young men over 18 received training in physical exercises. The supervision of the gymnasiums was entrusted to gymnasiarchs, who were public officials responsible for the conduct of sports and games at public festivals and who directed the schools and supervised the competitors. The gymnastai were the teachers, coaches, and trainers of the athletes. The Greek gymnasiums also held lectures and discussions on philosophy, literature, and music. Athletes competed nude, a practice said to encourage aesthetic appreciation of the male body and a tribute to the gods. Gymnasia and palaestrae (wrestling schools) were under the protection and patronage of Heracles and Hermes. Strabo writes about the Gymnasium in Alexandria: "The most beautiful structure is the Gymnasium, with porticos exceeding a stadium in extent. The wide street extends in length along the Gymnasium from the Necropolis to the Kanopic gate."

1. STADIUM

The term "stadium" comes from the Greek unit of length stade. One stade equals 600 feet, which is about 185-192 metres. This was the length of the first stadiums, like the one in Olympia. Ancient Greek stadiums were primarily designed for sport events: gymnastics, running, javelin and discus throw, wrestling and others. The original Greek stadium has a rectangular shape.

2. ROYAL SEAT

Polybius writes: "The Macedonians then took the king and at once setting him on a horse conducted him to the stadium. His appearance was greeted with loud cheers and clapping of hands, and they now stopped the horse, took him off, and leading him forward placed him in the royal seat."

3. XYSTOS

Xystos was the Greek architectural term for the covered portico of the gymnasium, in which the exercises took place during the winter or in rainy weather.

4. PROPYLON

Monumental entrance and vestibule.

5. MAIN PALAESTRA

Like all palaestra, the palaestra at Alexandria must have been centered around a large courtyard covered with sand for use as a boxing or wrestling surface. Along all four sides of the palaestra were rooms that opened onto the porticoes.

6. BATH

Ref: the plunge bath in the Gymnasium of Delphi.

7. SMALL PALAESTRA

Like in the Gymnasium in Pergamon, it could have been a smaller Palaestra for younger boys.

THE DONATIONS OF ALEXANDRIA 34 BC.

A great crowd gathered in the Stadium in Alexandria. All eyes were on two tiers of thrones. On the upper level sat Antony and his wife Cleopatra, robed as the Egyptian goddess Isis. On four lower thrones were their own three children together with Cleopatra's eldest son, Caesarion, the child of Julius Caesar. In the ensuing ceremony, later known as the Donations of Alexandria, Antony distributed the kingdoms of the eastern Mediterranean to his new family. Antony declared Cleopatra to be the Queen of Kings and Caesarion the King of Kings, jointly ruling over Egypt and Cyprus and joint overlords of the kingdoms of the other children. To Alexander, his own elder son, aged six, he gave the territories east of the Euphrates; to Alexander's twin sister, Cleopatra, he gave Libya and Tunisia; and to his younger son, Ptolemy Philadelphus, aged two and appearing in Macedonian costume, he gave Syria and much of Anatolia.



1 . THE COURT OF JUSTICE

Strabo writes: "In the middle of the city are the Court of Justice and groves."

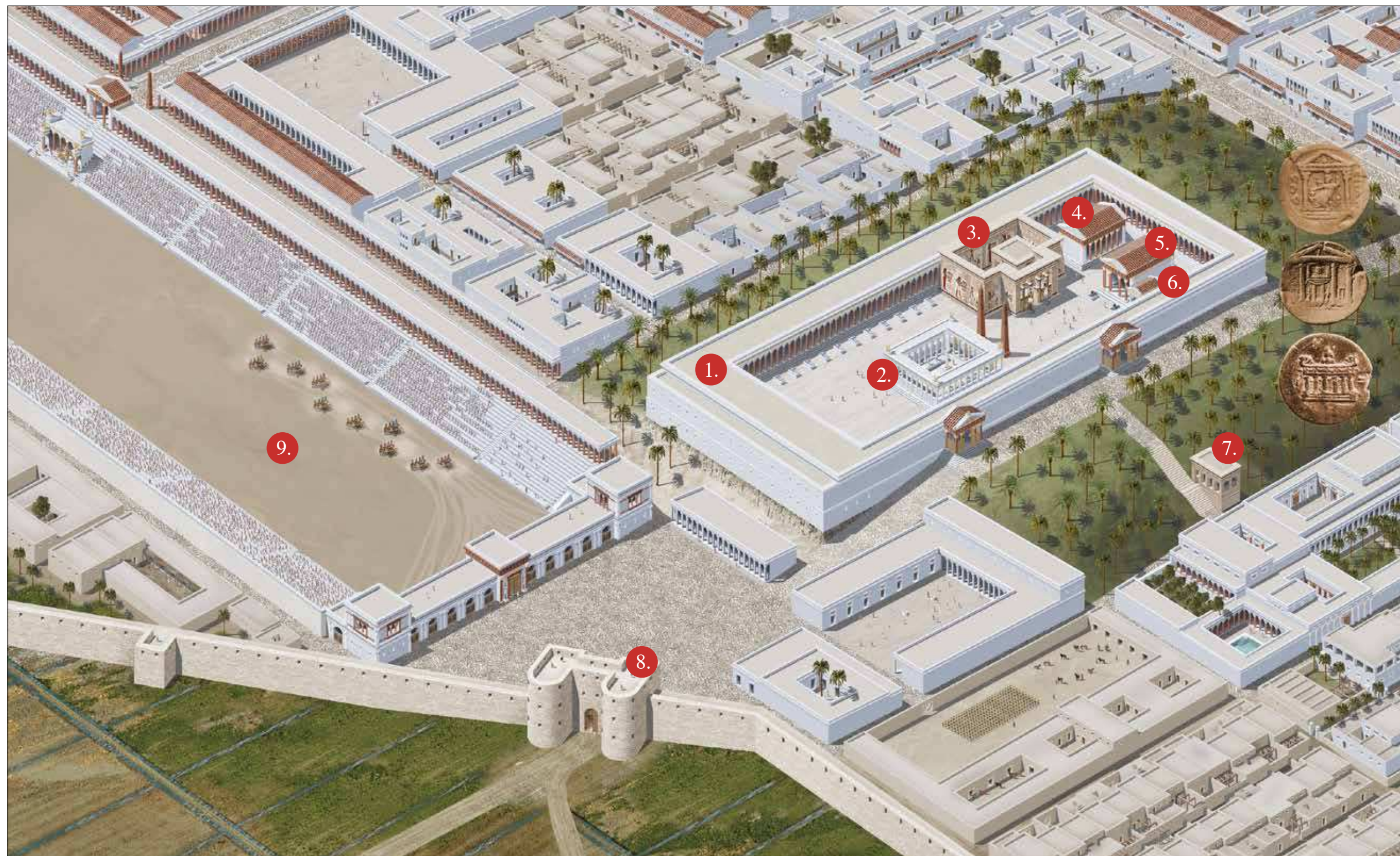
2 . THE GROVES

I imagine this as a huge public park stretching east/west from the Caesarium to the Court of Justice

3 . PANEIUM

Strabo continues: "Here also is a Paneium, an artificial mound of the shape of a fir-cone, resembling a pile of rock, to the top of which there is an ascent by a spiral path. From the summit may be seen the whole city lying all around and beneath it."

It contained a shrine of Pan.



THE SERAPEUM AND THE LAGEION

This is what I imagine the Serapeum district could have looked like around 31 BC. I have followed the street plan and the topography by Mahmoud-Bey which place the Serapeum 20 meters above the sea level.

I imagine the Serapeum on top of the hill surrounded by a beautiful park. It could have been luxurious villas at the foot of the hill just east of the Nilometer owned by rich Egyptian land owners.

In general I tried to explore how people lived in this area of Alexandria. This is the old Rhakotis district, so mostly Egyptians would have lived there. From two-story apartment buildings with shops on the ground floor to simple two-four family dwellings in sun-dried brick.

The Lageion was built in the natural valley south west of the temple complex. The upper north seat section would have been at the same level as the street just north behind it.

The Stadium could have had a colonnade maybe in red granite, giving some shade to the at least 100.000 spectators visiting the races. A sizzling street life would have surrounded the area with markets, taverns and food stores.

In the center of the north seating section in straight line with the colonnaded main street R9 leading all the way down to the Heptastadium, the royal box could have been situated. A monumental proylon as the entrance. The track would have been wide enough to hold 10 chariots drawn by four horses at the same time.

In front of the starting gate structure to the east I imagine an open space big enough to hold all the participants of the Grand Procession of Ptolemy II in 278 BC.

1. THE TEMENOS OF THE SERAPEUM

A colonnaded court with columns in red granite and Corinthian capitals formed a temenos with the temple placed parallel to it. There were rooms along the western and south side of the court. They housed shrines to the traditional gods and also later a second public library. Two entrances on the eastern long side from street R8 which ran beside the temenos. The northern entrance was also approached by a staircase leading up to the eastern slope of the hill.

2. THE SOUTH BUILDING

Built by Ptolemy I or Ptolemy II.

“A building “kataskeuasma”, distinguished by its gates, each named after the old gods. Two Obelisks stood nearby.” I used an Alexandrian coin from year 17 with an unidentified structure as a reference. It has a Corinthian colonnade, but lacks a pediment or pitched roof. It has sphinxes on its corners, garlands on the entablature and screens between the columns. This structure also reminds me of the Altar of Zeus in Pergamon.

3. THE “T-SHAPED” BUILDING

Built by Ptolemy I or Ptolemy II. Ptolemy I invented a new Greek/Egyptian god, Serapis. I’m guessing that some of the structures could have been built in an Egyptian style. This structure surrounded the entrance to the underground passages that led to the South Building.

4. STOA

5. THE TEMPLE OF SERAPIS

This rendering shows what the temple could have looked like. I based it on Alexandrian coins of emperor Marcus Aurelius and emperor Lucius Verus. It had 4 columns across the front in red granite with Corinthian capitals and a Doric frieze. On the coins you can see two windows and statues, on each side of the entrance. Also a large window above the doorway. Inside the sanctuary a monumental statue of Serapis made of ivory and gold. To the west of the temple stood a stoa-like structure consisting of four rooms.

6. THE TEMPLE OF HARPOCRATES

Adjoining the temple of Serapis, Ptolemy IV Philopator dedicated a small temple to Harpocrates.

7. NILOMETER

The Ptolemaic Nilometer, for measuring the height of the annual Nile flood waters, was located at the base of the hill beside the staircase.

8. CITY WALL

9. THE LAGEION

The racecourse built by Ptolemy I Soter.



EXCEPT FROM THE FINDING 1885 OF THE FOUNDATION PLAQUES OF THE TEMPLE TO SERAPIS, ISIS, PTOLEMY IV & ARISONE III ON THE MAIN EAST-WEST STREET, ALL OTHER LOCATIONS ARE PURE ASSUMPTIONS BY ME.

1. ARSINOEION

Ptolemy II began the temple in the honour of his wife and sister Arsinoe I. The vaulted ceiling had lodestone, so an iron statue of the Queen appeared to suspended in mid-air. According to Callixenus, Ptolemy II erected an obelisk that was 42 m high. In 12-15 AD the obelisk was moved to the Agora because it was in the way of the dockyards. An ancient writer indicates that the temple and sacred enclosure were situated close to the Emporium.
Ref: Arsinoeion of Samothrace and the tholos at Epidaurus.

2. CULT TEMPLE TO BERENICE I & PTOLEMY I

Theocritus writes Ptolemy II founded temples dedicated to his parents with beautiful statues in gold and ivory. I assume that one of this temples could have been close to The Arsinoeion.

3. CULT TEMPLE TO SIBLING GODS ARSINOE I & PTOLEMY II

Ptolemy II deified his wife with him as the Sibling Gods in 272 BC. Herodas writes about the Theoi Adelphoi as one of the attractions of Egypt.
Ref: The temple of Taposiris Magna established in 278 BC by Ptolemy II. The temple had a unique combination of both Egyptian and Greek temple architecture. Thus, within the typical Egyptian-style pylon and surrounding walls, once stood a Hellenistic sanctuary with Doric columns.

4. BERENIKEION

The shrine of Berenice, wife of Ptolemy I. Built by Ptolemy II. It's mentioned in the description of the procession of Ptolemy II 285 BC.

5. CULT TEMPLE TO PTOLEMY III, BERENICE II AND ZEUS

Temple dedicated to Ptolemy III, his wife Berenice II and Zeus. I'm placing it on the main East-West street and using the remains of the Doric stoa as a monumental entrance.

6. CULT TEMPLE TO SERAPIS, ISIS, PTOLEMY IV & ARISONE III

Foundation plaques were found in situ 1885, for a temple dedicated to Serapis, Isis, Ptolemy IV and Arsinoe III. It seems to have been a substantial building and described as a Greco- Egyptian temple. Ref: Temple of Isis in Greco-Egyptian style on Alexandrian coin.

7. THESMOPHORION

Sanctuary of Demeter and the Thesmophorion. It is mentioned by the historian Polybius' of the events of 203 BC. Agathocles' mother Oenante were dragged from the temple and led to the Gymnasium naked on horse-back and killed by the mob.

8. HOMEREION

A sanctuary dedicated to the poet Homer built by Ptolemy IV.



ARSINOEION



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THALAMEGOS

Thalamegos was a Nile river palace barge commissioned by Ptolemy IV Philopator for himself and his wife Arsinoe III ca. 200 BC. It was a 115 by 14 m, 20 m high, and was divided into two storeys with different precious designed rooms and halls. The ship had a twin hull like a catamaran, with one single mast with a yard and sail on the forecastle, and is said to have been towed from the banks of the Nile. Columns surrounded the storeys like a temple. Callixenus' doesn't write where the servants' rooms were installed, probably on both the upper and lower storeys.

1. VESTIBULE

Vestibule flanked by columns and open at the front.

2. PROPYLON

At the rear was a propylon of Ivory and expensive wood, with an interior decoration that looked like a proskenion.

3. INNER VESTIBULE

The inner vestibule was entered by a portal of 4 doors and lighted by portholes on each side.

4. MAIN DINING ROOM

It was the largest cabin on board, fitting 20 couches. It had an internal peristyle with columns of cypress and Corinthian capitals of gilded ivory. The columns supported a gilded entablature with an ivory frieze. Walls of split cedar and cypress, were pierced by 16 doors that had panels of fragrant cedar and ornaments of ivory, covered with red copper studs and gilded handles. Gilded cypress coffers, carved with ornament, adorned the ceiling.

5. THE KING'S SLEEPING APARTMENT

This apartment had 7 berths for the king and his companions.

6. THE QUEEN'S DINING ROOM

The dining room contained 9 couches and was Egyptian in decoration, with a peristyle of Egyptian columns in white and black alternating drums. Walls were decorated with alternating white and black courses of stone.

7. THE QUEEN'S SLEEPING APARTMENT

This apartment had 5 berths for the queen and her companions.

8. STAIRCASE

This companionway led to the upper deck.

ALEXANDRIA / RECONSTRUCTIONS

CLEOPATRA VII AND HER ANCESTORS

PALACES IN THE HELLENISTIC WORLD AND IMPERIAL ROME

BIO/CONTACT

HOME



My name is Michael Bengtsson, a Swedish Creative Director sharing my time between New York City and Fort Lauderdale in Florida. Since my childhood I've been interested in history, especially the Hellenistic and Roman era, combined with a deep interest in ancient architecture.

7 years ago I started to reconstruct the face of Cleopatra based on the statues in Berlin and the Vatican Museum.

It led me to take on a bigger task; reconstructing the Palaces of the Ptolemies. I have taken all the information from the ancient writers and put in context of what we know about ancient Alexandria today.

Contact: swecreator@yahoo.com