



Philo's Alexandria

Dorothy I. Sly

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First-century Alexandria vied with Rome to be the greatest city of the Roman empire. More than half a million people lived in its cosmopolitan four square miles. It was a major centre for international trade and shipping.

Little remains of Alexandria's golden age. Few papyrus records of the city survive. Archaeologists' attempts to reveal its past have been frustrated by years of subsidence, earthquakes and continuous demolition and rebuilding. Our main guide to the city is Philo, an Alexandrian Jew, who, sometimes inadvertently, incorporated information about his home city into his copious religious writings.

In this compelling new study, Dorothy I. Sly searches through Philo's treatises for information about Alexandria. By recognising his shortcomings and prejudices, and questioning his judgements, she builds up an authentic picture of life in the first century.

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