

# ALEXANDRIA

When Alexander the Great arrived in Egypt in 332BC, he ordered the building of a new capital city, to be named after him, on the Mediterranean coast. Although he died before he was able to see it, the city of Alexandria became one of the leading cities in the ancient world.

## CITY OF CULTURE

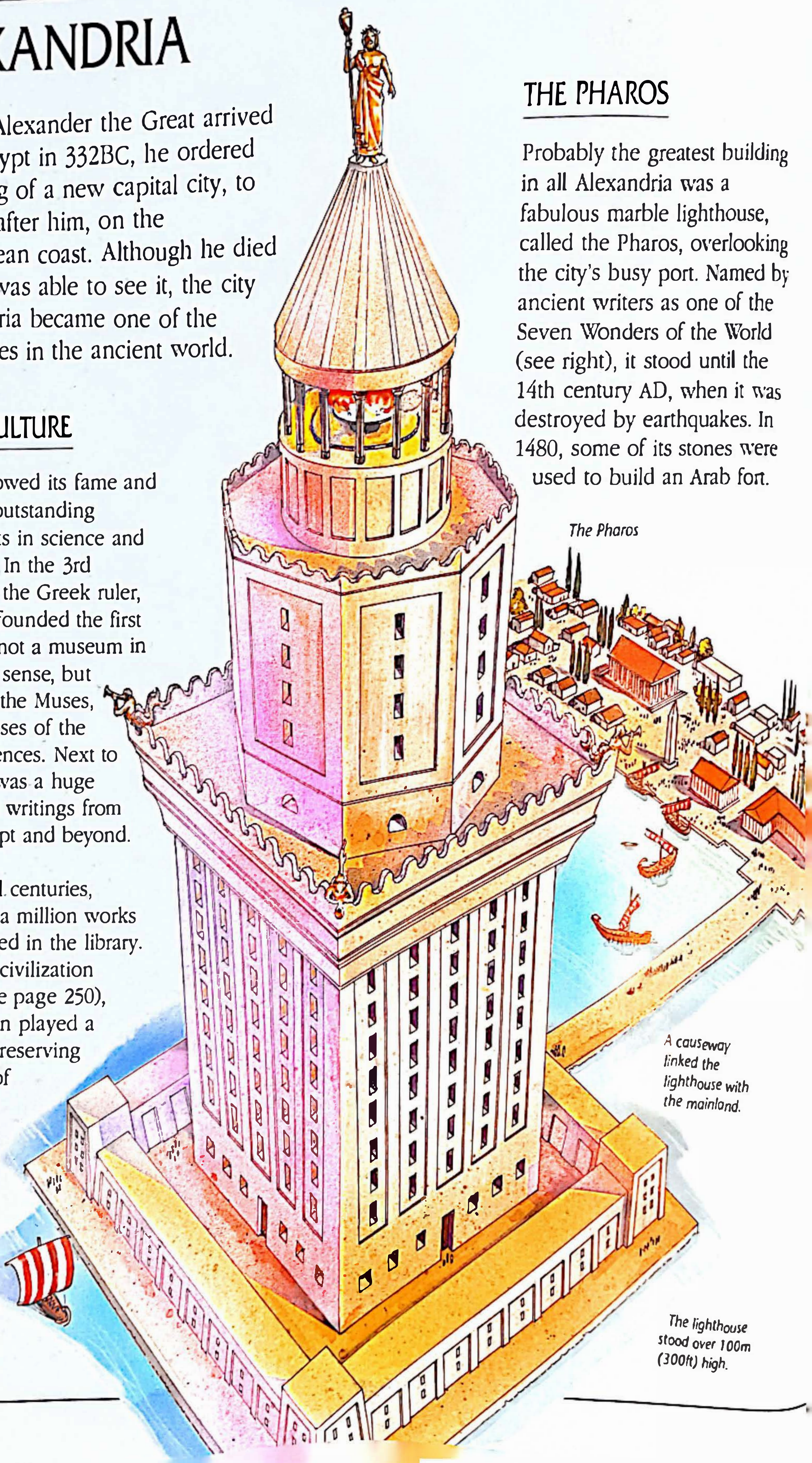
Alexandria owed its fame and prestige to outstanding achievements in science and scholarship. In the 3rd century BC, the Greek ruler, Ptolemy II, founded the first 'museum' - not a museum in the modern sense, but a temple to the Muses, nine goddesses of the arts and sciences. Next to the temple was a huge library, with writings from Greece, Egypt and beyond.

Over several centuries, around half a million works were collected in the library. After Greek civilization declined (see page 250), this collection played a big part in preserving knowledge of Classical Greece for future generations.

## THE PHAROS

Probably the greatest building in all Alexandria was a fabulous marble lighthouse, called the Pharos, overlooking the city's busy port. Named by ancient writers as one of the Seven Wonders of the World (see right), it stood until the 14th century AD, when it was destroyed by earthquakes. In 1480, some of its stones were used to build an Arab fort.

*The Pharos*



*A causeway linked the lighthouse with the mainland.*

*The lighthouse stood over 100m (300ft) high.*