The Educational Role of Higher Education Hellenistic Institutions in Egypt (290 B.C - 391 A.C)

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Abstract

The history of Egypt is classified into the following eras: Pharaonic, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Islami, Ottoman, and modern eras. The most important era in the history of Egypt was the Ptolemaic era when the Ptolemaists governed it. Although Egypt became a Roman mandate after the Ptolemaic and the Byzantine eras, the effect of the Greek civilization and its culture continued during this era. Preserving their cultural heritage was a main aim the Greeks tried to realize when they came to Egypt. They were proud of the Hellenistic culture and interested in founding an educational system that preserved their Hellenistic heritage and their cultural identity in Egypt.

The Greek educational stages in Egypt were three: the primary, the general culture and the higher education stages. The higher education stage was one of the most important stages which played an effective role in the civilization of Egypt through its authentication of sciences and its production of arts by its scientists who came from every country to settle on the land of Egypt during the Roman Greek era. Alexandria was the center of the Greek civilization and education, and the Hellenistic world also during this period. It produced a mixed civilization for us; the Greek civilization mixed with the elements of the Oriental civilization and then it was named the Hellenistic civilization. Under this civilization, the Hellenistic higher education institutions were founded in many parts in Egypt, particularly in Alexandria.

Although the higher education institutions spread in the Hellenistic world in some cities such as Marsalia, Athens and Tarsus, the city of Alexandria was a distinctive place of the higher education with its institutions including Museion, the greater library and Serapeum Temple. The historians termed all these institutions "the Ancient Alexandria University". The present study tried to examine the educational role of these institutions between 290 B.C and 391 A.C.

Keywords: Higher education; Egypt; Hellenistic; Greco; Roman egypt; Ptolemaic egypt; Ancient alexandria; The Alexandrian library; The Museum, academic of alexandria; School of alexandria; Mousieon.