

Archaeoastronomers claim Alexandria was built to align with Alexander the Great's birth date

October 17 2012, by Bob Yirka



A photograph of the early 19th century showing the Canopic road, looking west (courtesy C. Pallini).

(Phys.org)—Giulio Magli and Luisa Ferro with the Politecnico of Milan claim in a paper published in the *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* that new evidence they've uncovered shows that the ancient city of

Alexandria in Egypt was built to align with the sun on the date that Alexander the Great was born. Instead of running parallel to the Mediterranean Sea, they say, the city's main thoroughfare Canopic Road aligns nearly perfectly with the rising sun as it would have appeared July 20, 356 BC by the Julian calendar.

Historians and archeologists have been studying Alexandria in an attempt to locate the Macedonian king's tomb which is believed to be in the [city](#) in a gold casket inside of a glass sarcophagus. This new research, the authors write, may help with that search.

Suspecting that Alexandria may have been built around a solar event occurring during Alexander's lifetime, the researchers used [simulation software](#) to plot the rise of the sun for the day he was born. Doing so revealed that it rose less than half of a degree off the route of the city's main course. They also found that the "King's Star" Regulus, located in the head of the [constellation Leo](#), rose in a similar alignment.

The researchers note that it was a common practice in ancient times to base architectural designs on [astronomical events](#), pointing out that the Great Pyramid at Giza has been found to be aligned along compass points.



Alexandria, the original town plan superimposed on the reconstruction by Mahmoud-Bey (1866) (Courtesy of CEAlex Archives J-Y. Empereur).

Alexander III, known more commonly as Alexander the Great was King of Macedon, a state that existed in northern [ancient Greece](#). By the age of thirty he had built one of the largest empires of the ancient world, running from Egypt in the west, to the Indus River in the east. At the time of his birth, the city of Alexandria had not yet been built; he founded the city in 331 BC realizing its future importance as a shipping hub. Since that time, the city has become famous as the site of one of the seven wonders of the ancient world; it's 400 foot lighthouse at the mouth of its harbor and as the home of Cleopatra and the Royal Library of Alexandria.

The researchers write that aligning the city with Alexander's birth date

would have been a way to highlight the king's power. They next plan to study other cities that were part of the ancient king's empire to see if they can find other solar patterns.

More information: THE ASTRONOMICAL ORIENTATION OF THE URBAN PLAN OF ALEXANDRIA, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-0092.2012.00394.x ([ArXiv PDF](#))

Abstract

Alexander the Great founded Alexandria in 331 BC. An examination of the topography of the city today allows the identification of the essential elements of the original urban system, and shows that the site was chosen mainly for religious and symbolic reasons. In fact, Alexandria was the prototype of a series of Hellenistic towns designed as 'king's towns' that aimed to make explicit the divine power of their founder. We examine the orientation of the orthogonal grid, which was based on a main longitudinal axis, and show that this axis is orientated to the rising sun on the day of Alexander the Great's birth. At the time of foundation, 'King's Star' Regulus was also rising along the same direction.

via [DailyMail](#)

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Citation: Archaeoastronomers claim Alexandria was built to align with Alexander the Great's birth date (2012, October 17) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-10-archaeoastronomers-alexandria-built-align-alexander.html>

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