



# Cleopatra of Egypt: From History to Myth

*From Princeton University Press*



**Cleopatra of Egypt: From History to Myth** From Princeton University Press

Fabled for her sexual allure and cunning intelligence, Cleopatra VII of Egypt has fascinated generations of admirers and detractors since her tumultuous life ended in suicide in 30 B.C. The last of the Ptolemaic monarchs who had ruled Egypt for three centuries, Cleopatra created her own mythology. She became an icon in her own lifetime and a legend after her death.

This lavishly illustrated catalogue coincides with a major international exhibition celebrating images of Cleopatra. It explores how she was depicted during her own era, in works ranging from coins to life-size sculpture. Exciting new discoveries are featured--including seven Egyptian-style statues believed to represent Cleopatra, and two portraits probably commissioned while she was living in Rome with Julius Caesar. The book also examines interpretations of Cleopatra from the Renaissance to modern times, as seen in paintings, ceramics, jewelry, plays, operas, and film. In addition, recent archaeological finds from Alexandria (Cleopatra's capital) and from Rome illustrate aspects of life in Cleopatra's day.

## EXHIBITION SCHEDULE:

Palazzo Ruspoli, Rome  
October 12, 2000-February 25, 2001

The British Museum, London  
April 12-August 28, 2001

The Field Museum, Chicago  
October 20, 2001-March 2, 2002

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Was Egypt's last queen a female Machiavelli, a goddess, femme fatale or worse? Was she beautiful or woefully overrated? Cleopatra, who died in 30 B.C., has long had fantasy and slander directed at her, without anyone from beyond her time and place knowing what she looked like. Timed to coincide with a British Museum exhibit (which then travels to Rome and Chicago) *Cleopatra of Egypt: From History to Myth* analyzes the ways the queen's image has changed from the Renaissance to the present. Edited by Susan Walker (Roman Art) and Peter Higgs, deputy keeper and curator, respectively, in the department of Greek and Roman antiquities at the British Museum, the book presents 364 color and 261 b&w illustrations of pieces from the exhibit, including jewelry, sculpture, ceramics, painting and mosaic.

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From Library Journal

The British Museum's Walker and Higgs assembled a team of 39 international scholars to join them in the production of this lavish catalog for an exhibition that travels from the Palazzo Ruspoli in Rome to the British Museum to Chicago's Field Museum. The historical and legendary Cleopatra VII is brought to life through 394 objects from 35 museums and private collections in Africa, Europe, and North America. In addition to the catalog entries for each object, the background of Egypt's Ptolemaic Dynasty (323-30 B.C.E.), Cleopatra's turbulent reign, and her subsequent passage into myth are explored through 11 essays divided into four topical sections: "The Ptolemies and Alexandria," "Cleopatra, Lady of the Two Lands," "Cleopatra and the Power of Rome," and "Egypt in Rome/The Myth of Cleopatra." One controversial aspect of the exhibition is a corpus of Egyptian-style statues attributed to Cleopatra solely on the basis of stylistic elements. Enhanced by 625 illustrations (364 in color), a chronology, a glossary, an excellent bibliography, and a concordance of objects, this publication is suitable for public and academic libraries. Edward K. Werner, St. Lucie Cty. Lib. Syst., Ft. Pierce, FL  
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From [Booklist](#)

This sumptuously illustrated catalog attempts to demythologize the historical legend of Cleopatra. Designed to complement the current international retrospective of Cleopatra images, put together by the British Museum, the written text, although informative, plays a secondary role to the photographs of paintings, sculptures, ceramics, jewelry, pottery, and coins featured in the exhibition. The essays provided include, among others, a brief introduction to Cleopatra's history and family lineage, a speculative review of her religious strategy, a lively debate concerning her feminine beauty, a discussion of her impact on Rome and the Roman Empire's impact on Egypt, and an overview of Cleopatra's shifting historical and cultural image from the Renaissance through the modern era. This browsable homage to one of the most intriguing figures in all of antiquity will be a welcome addition to most Egyptology collections. *Margaret Flanagan*  
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