

## CLEOPATRA – THE LAST QUEEN OF EGYPT AND A HISTORICAL LEGEND

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ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
This article explores the life, political activity and historical legacy of Cleopatra VII Philopator — the last queen of Ancient Egypt. It analyzes her background, alliances with Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, conflict with Rome, the Battle of Actium and her death, as well as Cleopatra's role in global culture. The material is based on historical sources and modern research.	Cleopatra, Ptolemaic dynasty, Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, Roman Empire, Egyptian history, Battle of Actium, ancient history.

### Introduction

In the history of the ancient world, one of the women who stood out for her political intelligence, beauty, and courage was Cleopatra VII. As the last independent queen of Egypt, she remained one of the most famous women not only of her era but in all of history. Although Cleopatra was of Greek origin, she was closely connected with the people of Egypt, deeply understood and defended their culture. Her life was full of politics, love, war, and tragedy, and it has inspired many historical novels and films.

Cleopatra was born in 69 BCE in the city of Alexandria. She belonged to the Ptolemaic dynasty, which ruled Egypt after the death of Alexander the Great and was of Greek origin. After the death of her father, Ptolemy XII, Cleopatra ascended to the throne together with her brother Ptolemy XIII, but political conflicts began between them [1].

Cleopatra distinguished herself from other Ptolemies by her intelligence, knowledge of languages – she spoke seven languages – and her close relationship with the people. She was the first Ptolemaic ruler to learn the Egyptian language [2]. In 48 BCE, when the Roman commander Julius Caesar came to Egypt, Cleopatra relied on his political support. A political alliance and also a personal relationship developed between them. Their son Kaisarion (Caesarion) was born. Caesar restored Cleopatra to the throne of Egypt, and her ties with Rome grew stronger. This caused dissatisfaction among the Roman Senate. Cleopatra came to Rome with her son, hoping to unite the two major powers – Rome and Egypt – under the name of Caesar. But her hopes were dashed on March 15, 44 BCE. On that day, Caesar was killed in the Senate hall. According to the will announced during the funeral, Caesar had adopted his sister's grandson – Gaius Octavius – and appointed him as heir, while there was not a single word

about Ptolemy in the will. Cleopatra had to return to Egypt and made her son co-ruler. Three years later, the queen met Mark Antony, who was co-ruling the Roman Empire with Octavian. In 42 BCE, Antony won the battle of Philippi against Caesar's assassins [3]. After that, Mark Antony settled in Alexandria and became the ruler of several Eastern territories, including Egypt. Mark Antony was a successful commander who loved feasting, women, and life itself, and on top of that, he was in love with Cleopatra. In 36 BCE, Antony divorced Octavian's sister and married Cleopatra. After this event, his luck changed. Failed campaigns in Parthia and Armenia led to a deterioration of relations between Octavian Augustus and Mark Antony, and a brutal war began between them. In 31 BCE, the Battle of Actium took place. Octavian's fleet defeated the forces of Cleopatra and Antony. In 30 BCE, Roman forces occupied Alexandria. Antony and Cleopatra, after learning of each other's death, committed suicide. There are various legends about Cleopatra's death. The most famous one is that she allowed herself to be bitten by a snake (asp) [4]. According to some historians, she may have taken poison instead.

Cleopatra was a figure who established herself not only as a woman but also as a ruler in the ancient world. She captivated two of the most powerful men of the Roman Empire – Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. Historians evaluate her as “powerful not only for her beauty but also for her intellect.” Her image has also played a significant role in art [5]. Shakespeare portrayed her in the drama “Antony and Cleopatra,” while Hollywood immortalized her in the 1963 film “Cleopatra.”

Cleopatra was one of the strong female leaders of her time and left an unforgettable mark in history. Her life shows us the complexity of ancient world politics, the role of women on the political stage, and the power of human qualities. Even today, she is remembered as a symbol of strength, intellect, and beauty.

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