

# Cleopatra's relationships with julius caesar and mark antony

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Cleopatra has never appeared on the list of most popular names for babies. Neither has the world known another Cleopatra. There are actually several pharaohs who have adapted the name, but no one came close to Cleopatra VII.

She has surpassed the fame of any Egyptian pharaoh. She has always been depicted in different light, in so many media. However Cleopatra remains as a mother not only to her own but to her people as well. She is a woman who had relationships with two great men, but upheld timeless femininity. She had the power to be every man's aspiration. Cleopatra is the embodiment of love and ambition all at the same time.

Her relationship with them may have the greatest contribution as to the way every one looks at these men today. Ancient Egypt has celebrated the birth of Cleopatra in the year 69 BCE (Stritof, n. d.). She is the daughter of Ptolemy XII but her mother is of unknown identity, it is supposed that her mother is one of the pharaoh's concubines or the pharaoh's sister, Cleopatra VI (Grochowski, 2005).

The death of her father has earned her the throne to be the pharaoh; however, she had to be married to Ptolemy XIII, her brother. This is in accordance to Egyptian rule that a queen has to always lead with a king. There is much account of how 'beautiful' Cleopatra was. She was described as 'a woman of surpassing beauty' by Cassius Dio (as cited in Grout, 2009). On top of the beauty, she is often dubbed as having a 'charming voice'.

Descriptions of her statue are also among the highest praises. Albeit the physical descriptions, it is often said that she is more of a diplomat than <https://assignbuster.com/cleopatras-relationships-with-julius-caesar-and-mark-antony/>

anything else. She is also of Macedonian decent, which they said, bore her of high intellectual power. She is skilled in nine languages and mathematics (Gupta, 2009). Cleopatra was given such responsibility at a young age of 18. She chose to rule almost alone.

She had reforms for Egypt which was solely her doing, rather than consulting her much younger co-ruler/ husband / brother. In the battle of power, of who should rule, she was beaten with the help of the ministers of her younger brother (Grochowski, 2005). In 48, BCE, she was thrown out of power, which leads to her ambition to return to power. Julius Caesar, on the other hand, is a son to the humble family of Aurelia and to Gaius Julius Caesar in Rome. Their family is not wealthy nor is it prominent when he was born in 100 or 102 BCE. By the age 18, he already had two wives, both from prominent families, Cossutia and Cornelia, respectively.

He also joined the military which then earned him with the oak leaves or the civic crown. He had an impressive career and later, he returned home to be an orator. After two other wives, Pompeia, whom he divorce because of scandal with other men; and Calpurnia, he achieved consulship (McManus, 2001). He had an illustrious career.

## **Cleopatra and Julius Caesar: Their Life Intertwined**

The Cleopatra and Julius Caesar connection was formed when Julius Caesar fled to Egypt in pursuit of his enemy Pompey (McManus, 2001).

Pompey has already been executed by the Egyptians. Julius Caesar, however, is not threatened by the same fate for he carried a much greater

army force. Julius Caesar is smitten by the woman delivered through a carpet; it is smuggled through Alexandria and is presented as a gift for the Roman leader (Grochowski, 2005). Cleopatra is then about 21 or 22 years old. Julius Caesar immediately recognized the potential of being lovers and allies. The relationship could have been for love among any other.

However, there are also political agenda behind the union. They are both leaders of influential and powerful nations. They have people under them, armies that could fight battles and win them. Both Rome and Egypt needs intellectual leaders. Specifically, for Cleopatra's side, she saw how a Caesar's fleet could easily return her to power which he eventually did. Julius Caesar killed Cleopatra's brother and husband, Ptolemy XIII when his army drove them away only to drown in the Nile.

This was during the Alexandrian War. Julius Caesar made sure that Cleopatra is firm in her position as the leader of Egypt. He even left three legions to protect Cleopatra's reign of power (McManus, 2001). He made sure that any insurgencies could be dismissed by his powerful army. For Julius Caesar, the union will unite two great lands, Egypt and Rome. He has an ultimate dream that his children would someday rule this land.

Julius Caesar could have also seen Alexandria as a strategic location for his battles and as time pass by, Egypt could also form a powerful army to help him in his conquests. Cleopatra, though said to still be in love Julius Caesar, married her younger brother, Ptolemy XIV, to return her rule over Egypt. However, she was also married to Julius Caesar because Egypt allows

polygamy. Cleopatra and Julius Caesar spent time in Alexandria. The Roman leader, however, is called for to lead his army to battles.

He emerged victorious but returned to Rome instead. Julius Caesar and Cleopatra also had a son, Caesarion. Julius Caesar sent for his wife and son to be brought to Rome, with the great surprise of the Roman people. Out of respect for Julius Caesar, the people did not really give much attention to the fact that Julius Caesar married a foreign woman albeit having a Roman wife (McManus, 2001). The son was later executed for the fear that he can claim the land that is rightfully his father's. During Julius Caesar's reign, he is able to claim much land for his people as well as established a well-settled society.

He was then given the ultimate title as a dictator for life, thus bearing an unmatched power for the rest of his life. This was only a year after being declared a dictator or a ruler who has a complete power. However, Julius Caesar's life was also threatened because of this title. The title has earned him the people's support but he also received the Senate's unworthy action. Since Julius Caesar has made any changes without consulting the Senate, he became an unpopular person for them. Before he is to leave for yet another conquest, he met with the Senate.

There he met his end as he is stabbed to his death by all sixty Senate people, lead by Brutus and Cassius. Cleopatra and son, Caesarion left Rome, where a civil war broke. They returned to Egypt, there, Cleopatra allegedly poisoned her brother / husband / co-regent. Cleopatra then announced her son with Julius Caesar as a co-ruler and re-acquired rule of Egypt. This is

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when her rule was entirely secured locally, unlike the two previous co-regents.

## **Cleopatra and Mark Antony: The Charm and the Power**

Mark Anthony was born in 83 B. C. Unlike Julius Caesar, he was from a prominent family since birth. His grandfather was a known public speaker while his father was a military man. He is well-educated, polishing skills like public speaking and objective questioning.

He is known for both his positive and negative traits which were eminent from his youth. At the course of his career, he kept close to Julius Caesar. Mark Antony became an ally of Julius Caesar. He took care of Julius Caesar's local rebellion in Gaul. He also became second in command during Julius Caesar's defeat of Pompey. It was also Julius Caesar who appointed him as a consul.

It is this status that spared his life after the assassination of Julius Caesar. He then rose to power and hunted those who have assassinated Julius Caesar. Mark Antony also became part of the second Triumvirate. If not for Octavian, who claimed as an adopted son and the rightful successor of Julius Caesar's political position, he might have been the sole leader for Rome. He was the one who was 'in-charge' of the Eastern provinces, which includes Cleopatra's beloved land of Egypt.

Cleopatra and Mark Antony met in Tarsus initially for an inquest of her alleged involvement of Julius Caesar's assassination (Gupta, 2009). Cleopatra and Mark Antony are both connected to Julius Caesar. She is a former wife,

and he is a loyal ally and friend. Mark Antony found amusement with Cleopatra's grandeur. Cleopatra, on the other hand, might have found a sense of stability with him since he is becoming one of the most powerful in Rome. She found in him the opportunity to restore the old glory of her Ptolemaic decent.

Mark Antony possessed characteristics different from that of Julius Caesar but he is of the same political stature. The first meeting after Julius Caesar's death proved a luxuriant one. There are scented flowers in Cleopatra's barge, where she dressed like the Roman goddess, Venus, when they met in 41 BCE. The first supper impressed Mark Antony that he wanted to surpass such splendid preparation, but he miserably failed. With his great humor, he managed to keep a good nature about it. After this, there were accounts which states that they spent holidays together (cited in Cleopatra..., 2006).

Cleopatra is able to charm Mark Antony by being at his side all the time. Mark Antony married Cleopatra. Cleopatra is actually already the fourth wife to Mark Antony. Previous wives include Fadia, Antonia Hybrida Minor and Fulvia Flacca Bambula, respectively. Mark Antony then married Octavia Minor after having children with Cleopatra. He did this to claim a stronger hold of power in Rome.

During his flight to plot a war against Parthia, he was going to need the help of Egyptian army forces, not to mention money. This is when he arranged for a second meeting with Cleopatra. The initial meeting between Cleopatra and Mark Antony bore them with twins, Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene

while the second meeting brought them their third child, Ptolemy Philadelphos (Stritof, n. d.).

These children are well provided for by their father, Mark Antony. They are given part of the land of Rome, including Cyprus, Crete and Syria, through their mother (Lewis, 2006). This distribution, lead to an even wider gap between Octavian and Mark Antony. The second Triumvirate is down to two, and then as Octavian wished to be the sole ruler of the Roman land, he declared war to the queen of Egypt. The battle between the two leading armies of Rome came to an end with Mark Antony on the losing end.

He then fled to Alexandria with Cleopatra. As the forces closed in, he committed suicide. Cleopatra also committed suicide.

## **Cleopatra: the Legacy**

Cleopatra the Philopater, Cleopatra VII or simply Cleopatra has made a legacy for herself. She, whom has captured the hearts of two great men, has left the name to equal beauty, seduction, love and femininity all in one.

There are legacies that no other woman in the world has achieved.

Cleopatra left legacies that have made the past great, the present wondering and the future still searching. Cleopatra was a person who later considered the living representation of divine mother Isis. She was their living goddess (Egyptology. com, 2008). Even during her brief stay in Rome, albeit the love for Julius Caesar, she was firm on her goddess stature and decent.

In the years after, her goddess status has not faded. She became an immortal pharaoh of Egypt. Cleopatra also became an ultimate debate topic

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of historians and archeologists. Her beauty is one legacy that will hold different views. There are different artifacts that state that she does not really have that astonishing physical beauty.

There are accounts that express her utter beauty. At the end of the day, it is her legacy that beauty does not solely rely on physical attributes but on intellect and the way she treated the men in her life. There are different accounts of Cleopatra, some are good and some are bad. The difference lies on whose perception they take. The truth on Cleopatra's life may have been corrupted with the advents of Roma writings, Shakespearean plays and even contemporary films. While Egyptians took on their queen as a powerful leader, the Romans dwell on Cleopatra's personal life.

The Romans have a shady account of her. They looked at her for her relationships with their leaders (Tyldesley, 2008). As mentioned, at an early age, Cleopatra single-handedly led her people. She has made very intelligent reforms in their lives. Though at the verge of a falling Egypt, she had saved her people from famine.

Cleopatra was also able to make some economic reforms. This was all on top of a chauvinistic view that a woman cannot lead a land without the guidance of a man, though in this case a child (Grochowski, 2005). Cleopatra may also have been a great guru of women. She knows her worth as a woman; her femininity is of the right amount. Boldly, if men have their swords and strengths, she showed that woman have charms and wits. Cleopatra was not afraid to seize what is presented (Grochowski, 2005).

She may have done so with Egypt as her inspiration or because she wanted to be a mother and sees that the Roman men are her equal and deserve to bore her a child, or children. Perhaps Cleopatra's greatest legacy to the world is her love story. There is no way to find out about really feelings, then until now. But the world is endowed with one of the greatest love story that can not be undone. Julius Caesar's and Mark Antony's biographies would never be complete without shedding light to Cleopatra.

And to take and even bolder state she may have made these men be the men they became then until tomorrow. Therefore, Cleopatra may have been the leader, the mother and the lover the world is yet to encounter again. She was a leader to Egypt and to say that she started at a really young age. She has bridged them through the tough times, famine, local civil wars and economic instability. She has also made a come back even after he brother has dethroned her.

She has made sacrifices for Egypt. The queen is also a mother. If things might have been different, her children may have been rulers of her land. If history has been kinder to her children, their future may have been secured by vast lands and contented people. If only one battle has turned out differently, Cleopatra may have been alive. There might have been a different view about Cleopatra both from Egypt and other parts of the world.

Cleopatra is a lover. She has surprised, impressed and loved men the way she knows. She tolerated leaving her beloved land to be with her man. She may also have stomached the way she was treated during her stay at a

foreign land. She knows how to pique at her men's fantasies. She also knows how to join her man in their own fancies.

Consequently, Cleopatra has gathered positive and negative evaluations for being a lover. Reference:

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