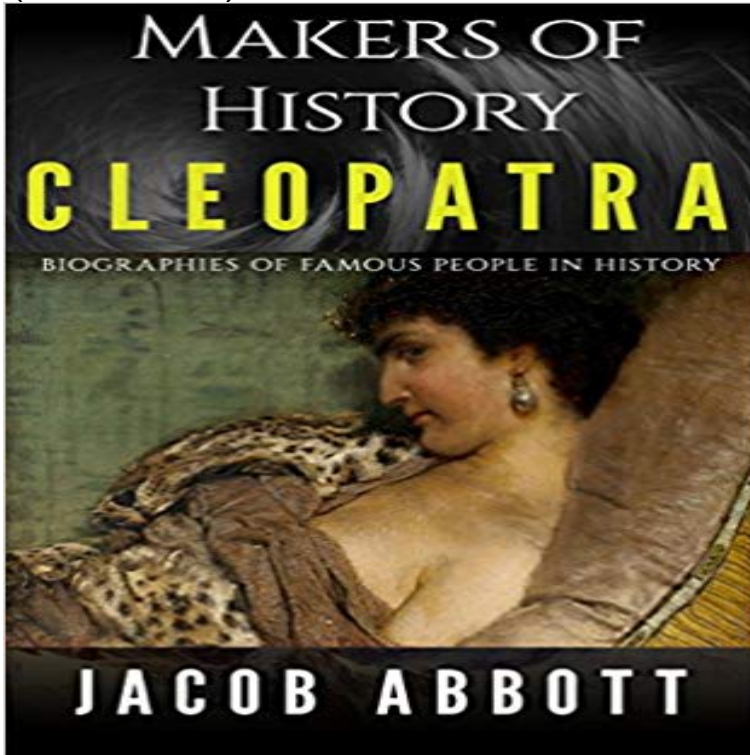


Makers of History - Cleopatra: Biographies of Famous People in History (Illustrated)



Cleopatra VII Philopator (Greek: ?????????; 69[1] August 12, 30 BC[2]), known to history simply as Cleopatra, was the last active pharaoh of Ptolemaic Egypt, shortly survived as pharaoh by her son Caesarion. After her reign, Egypt became a province of the then-recently established Roman Empire. Cleopatra was a member of the Ptolemaic dynasty, a family of Macedonian Greek[3] origin that ruled Egypt after Alexander the Great's death during the Hellenistic period. The Ptolemies, throughout their dynasty, spoke Greek[4] and refused to speak Egyptian, which is the reason that Greek as well as Egyptian languages were used on official court documents such as the Rosetta Stone.[5] By contrast, Cleopatra did learn to speak Egyptian[6] and represented herself as the reincarnation of an Egyptian goddess, Isis. Cleopatra originally ruled jointly with her father, Ptolemy XII Auletes, and later with her brothers, Ptolemy XIII and Ptolemy XIV, whom she married as per Egyptian custom, but eventually she became sole ruler. As pharaoh she consummated a liaison with Julius Caesar that solidified her grip on the throne. She later elevated her son with Caesar, Caesarion, to co-ruler in name. After Caesar's assassination in 44 BC, she aligned with Mark Antony in opposition to Caesar's legal heir, Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus (later known as Augustus). With Antony, she bore the twins Cleopatra Selene II and Alexander Helios, and another son, Ptolemy Philadelphus (her unions with her brothers had produced no children). After losing the Battle of Actium to Octavian's forces, Antony committed suicide. Cleopatra followed suit. According to tradition, she killed herself by means of an asp bite on August 12, 30 BC.[7] She was outlived by Caesarion, who was declared pharaoh by his supporters, but soon killed on Octavian's orders. Egypt then became the Roman province of

Aegyptus. To this day, Cleopatra remains a source of perpetual fascination in Western culture. Her legacy survives in numerous works of art and many dramatizations of incidents from her life in literature and other media, including William Shakespeares tragedy Antony and Cleopatra, George Bernard Shaws play Caesar and Cleopatra, Jules Massenets opera Cleopatre and the 1934 and 1963 films Cleopatra.

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