



# **Cleopatra: A Sourcebook (Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture Series)**

*Prudence J. Jones*

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# Cleopatra: A Sourcebook (Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture Series)

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Who was Cleopatra? Who is Cleopatra? Viewed as both goddess and monster even in her own lifetime, she has become through the ages saint and sinner, heroine and victim, femme fatale and star-crossed lover, black and white. A protean figure, Cleopatra defies categorization.

Cleopatra's life story, gleaned from contemporary sources, is powerfully intriguing: Married four times, she seduced two of the most powerful men in Rome (Julius Caesar and Marc Antony), became the sole ruler of Egypt, gained legendary status for her lavish banquets, and chose to die rather than endure disgrace as the prisoner of Octavian, Caesar's heir.

This fascinating sourcebook documents what we know of the historical figure and also shows how she has evolved through the lens of interpretation. Arranged both chronologically and thematically, the volume consists of a series of readings about Cleopatra—historical, literary, and documentary—extending from ancient times to the twentieth century, from the European Romantics to the Afro centrists, and from Middle English to modern Arabic.

In her introductions to the readings, Prudence J. Jones provides helpful information about the sources, placing them in historical and cultural context. She includes passages both familiar and unfamiliar, some not easily found in translation. Suitable for classroom use, *Cleopatra: A Sourcebook* reveals a multitude of Cleopatras, raising as many questions as it answers about one of history's most captivating figures.

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