



## Cleopatra: Last Queen of Egypt

By Joyce A. Tyldesley

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### **Cleopatra: Last Queen of Egypt** By Joyce A. Tyldesley

She was the last effective ruler of the Macedonian dynasty of Ptolemies who had ruled Egypt for three centuries from their magnificent multi-cultural capital of Alexandria, the largest city of the Mediterranean world. The images on the front and back of this jacket show the two faces of Cleopatra -the Egyptian living goddess and the Macedonian queen. Highly intelligent, Cleopatra spoke many languages and was rumoured to be the only Ptolemy to read and speak Egyptian. Her famous liaisons with Julius Caesar and Mark Antony were as much to do with politics as the heart. Ruthless in dealing with her enemies, many within her own family, Cleopatra steered her kingdom through difficult times. She very nearly succeeded in creating an eastern empire to rival the growing might of Rome. Stripping away our preconceptions, many of them as old as Egypt's Roman conquerors, Joyce Tyldesley uses all her skills as an Egyptologist to give us a rich picture of a country and its Egyptian queen in this engrossing biography.

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. This entertaining biography hits the elusive sweet spot between scholarship and readability. British archeologist Tyldesley (*Daughters of Isis*) is charmingly transparent about the unreliability of her sources. She tells us that when the Roman poet Lucan describes Cleopatra's ineffable night of shame with Julius Caesar, he is writing the equivalent of modern tabloid journalism. In spite of the lack of eyewitness descriptions of Cleopatra, the question, for instance, of what she looked like becomes a fast-moving amusing discussion of statuary as royal propaganda, the modern perception of Cleopatra's nose as way too big and the difference between beauty and sexiness. Writing with an easy mastery of her subject, Tyldesley always seems to be able to lay her hands on the perfect lively detail, whether an excerpt from an obscure bureaucratic document or a description of a kind of giant robot that paraded through the streets of Alexandria pouring libations of milk from a gold bottle. Though she makes it clear we'll never know what Cleopatra was really like, Tyldesley provides a memorable journey through the rich and contradictory sources of our knowledge about her. 8 pages of illus., 3 maps. (*Sept.*) ""

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From [Booklist](#)

Though you might think everything you need to know about Cleopatra has already been written, think again. The life story of Cleopatra has become so distorted and embellished through the multiple lenses of history, legend, film, fiction, and archaeology, it is often difficult to tell the difference between fact and fiction. Egyptologist Tyldesley undertakes the daunting task of separating myth from reality in this slightly revisionist biography of the last of the Ptolemies. By juxtaposing her reign with the decline of the Egyptian Empire rather than the rise of Rome, the author is able to place Cleopatra firmly into historical and cultural context. What emerges is a portrait of a cunning political operator ruthlessly attempting to reestablish Egyptian supremacy in a rapidly shrinking world overwhelmed by the vast power of the mighty Roman Empire. --Margaret Flanagan

Review

Mail on Sunday - '4 Stars: [A] sympathetic biographyA... she is able to place Cleopatra securely in Egyptian culture and history.' Sunday Telegraph - 'Tyldesley's strength has always been her storytelling, and here she is on top form.'

## **Users Review**

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