# Antony and Cleopatra

Simone Cecire

## Luogo (ambientazione)

Alexandria and Rome

## Anno di pubblicazione

1607 (performed)/1623 (First Folio)

## Epoca

Ptolemaic Egypt/Ancient Rome

## Soggetto (descrizione dell’opera e del luogo)

Antony and Cleopatra is a tragedy that follows the relationship between Mark Antony (one of the ruler of the Roman Republic after the death of Julius Caesar) and Cleopatra (queen of Egypt).

The entire opera is largely based on a transaltion of a Plutarch’s (an ancient greek philosopher) biografy.

The tragedy is divided into five acts.

ACT I:

After the death of Julius Caesar, the Roman Empire is ruled by a triumvirate made of Mark Antony, Octavius Caesar, and Lepidus.

Mark Antony commands the eastern Mediterranean and lives in Egypt. He fell in love with Cleopatra. After the death of his wife, Fulvia, and the rebellion of Pompey against his ruler Octavius, Antony is forced to go to Rome.

ACT II:

In Rome, Antony and Octavius Caesar decide to seal their friendship with a political marriage between Antony and Octavia (Octavius’ sister). Enobarbus (a friend of Antony) refuses to believe that Antony will leave Cleopatra and tells his Roman friends about the situation in Egypt. The rulers, including Lepidus, make peace with the rebellious Pompey, who entertains them on his ship in the harbour. During the feast, Pompey refuses to allow his men to murder the Lepidus.

ACT III:

Cleopatra receives the news of Antony's marriage and after a moment of jealousy (and also rage), she realises that Octavia isn’t a real romantic opponent. When Antony and Octavia reach Athens, they hear that Octavius has revoked his peace treaty, attacked Pompey and also betrayed the triumvirate agreement by imprisoning Lepidus. Antony sends Octavia back to Rome to try to make peace with Caesar and he goes to Egypt to raise an army with Cleopatra. Caesar, angry for Antony's betrayal with Octavia, declares war on Antony and Cleopatra. Antony decides to fight at sea but during the battle, Cleopatra's ships leave the Roman fleet, and Antony is defeated.

ACT IV:

Antony chooses to fight Caesar on land but his army has lost faith in his leader. Enobarbus joins ocatvius army betraying Antony and leaving him saddened (he will die alone). At the battle, Cleopatra's men leave Antony. Fearing Antony's anger, Cleopatra takes refuge in her monument. Antony thinks that she has betrayed him to Octavius, so she sends messengers to say that she is dead. Antony is devastated by the news so he falls onto his sword. At this point, Cleopatra's messenger goes to inform him that the queen is still alive and finds him dying alone. He is taken up into the monument and dies in Cleopatra's arms.

ACT V:

Cleopatra doesn’t want to be a prisoner of the Romans so she and her women commit suicide. Then Caesar discovers the body and orders that Antony and Cleopatra be buried together. After that he returns to Rome and becomes the first Emperor.

The story largely takes place in Alexandria, where Cleopatra lived. Unfortunately Cleopatra’s palace and many other monument of that time are now destroyed, underwater or no longer accessible.

Sources:

<https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespedia/shakespeares-plays/antony-and-cleopatra/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antony_and_Cleopatra>

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## Immagini (elenco)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FdvGXljOUOFKntgPiACiwu5pdaUdGvkB/view?usp=sharing> (A view of the modern city of Alexandria)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GeK_Y-IQGDrZmSY9JuC8ShyqK_zTH-SC/view?usp=sharing> (Bibliotheca Alexandrina, a commemoration of the ancient Library of Alexandria, destroyed by Julius Caesar)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_Q7Lgk1BiTN6hYeInmJcaZ0F1KXm54E1/view?usp=sharing> (Interior of Bibliotheca Alexandrina)

## Personaggi principali

* **Mark Antony** – Triumvir Roman Republic
* **Octavius Caesar** – adopted son of Julius Caesar and future Emperor
* **Lepidus** – another triumvir
* **Cleopatra** – Queen of Egypt
* **Octavia** – Octavius' sister
* **Pompey** – rebel against the triumvirate
* **Enobarbus** – friend of Antony