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The Empire of the Ptolemies

The classical scholar J.P. Mahaffy (1839–1919) is known equally for his work on Greek texts and Egyptian papyri (his edition of *The Flinders Petrie Papyri* is reissued in the Cambridge Library Collection). This illustrated work of 1895 is a sort of sequel to his *Alexander's Empire* of 1887 (also reissued in this series), in which he focuses specifically on the dynasty of the Ptolemies, rulers of Egypt, but also, as he points out, of wider territories and subject kingdoms. The study of the successor states of Alexander was in its infancy at this period, and Mahaffy regards this work as a pioneering discussion of various problems raised by the limited literary record, hoping this will stimulate further research, in the welcome context of an increasing number of archaeological discoveries relevant to this late period in the long history of ancient Egypt.



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The Empire of the Ptolemies

J.P. MAHAFFY





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THE EMPIRE OF THE PTOLEMIES







THE

EMPIRE OF THE PTOLEMIES

 $\mathbf{B}\mathbf{Y}$

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'THE GREEK WORLD UNDER ROMAN SWAY,' ETC.

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PREFACE

I HAVE explained at the opening of the following book what need there was for a renewed attempt to write the history of Ptolemaic Egypt. But no intelligent reader will require to be reminded that in a constantly growing subject, where new discoveries are frequent, and are even to be expected in every year of the near future, finality is not to be expected. Though it is, therefore, a humble, it is still an useful task to chronicle what has been discovered for the benefit of those who take interest in this period, even if it be certain that in a few years another book, or a new edition of this, will both amend and enlarge much that is here contained. I have called it the Empire of the Ptolemies, to emphasize the fact that this dynasty were not mere kings of Egypt-indeed the very notion of a defined kingdom as the domain of a sovran was a notion foreign to the old world—but that they ruled over a composite Empire, and were suzerain lords over local dynasts and kings.

Instead of stuffing my pages full of isolated references to classical and post-classical authors, of which the best example may be found in Cless's articles on the Ptolemies in Pauly's *Encyclopaedia*, I have rather striven to cite in



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full such evidence as is not easily accessible; hence the extant Ptolemaic inscriptions, which are important, will be found textually in this volume. The cartouches and coins are added for the convenience of travellers and others who may wish to identify Ptolemaic work in Egypt and elsewhere. A general inquiry into the sources, primary, secondary and otherwise, of this history is an interesting task, but so full of complications and of controversies, that after considerable labour I have desisted from the hope of giving it in this volume, the size of which it must have unduly increased. Meanwhile I can refer the curious reader to the excellent and learned summary in Prof. C. Wachsmuth's Einleitung in das Studium des alten Geschichte (1895) pp. 579 sq., where the literature of the subject up to last year is reviewed.

As regards the chronology, we are confronted at the outset with the difficulty that Olympiad years do not correspond with Julian, and so the accession, say of Philadelphus, seems to be more strictly within 285-4 (November to November) than 285 B.C. This difference in the commencement of the years affects most of the dates. But as the whole scale is only approximate, and as in hardly any cases can we fix the date closer than the year, I regard it sufficient to give the approximate time, simply with a view to the sequence of events. It is for this purpose that there is given a practical chronology, however imperfect, at the end of the Preface. Such collateral events as influenced the course of affairs in Egypt, or hindered interference, are given as bearing upon the



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subject. I have also felt constrained to add, at the end of the book, a few notes containing information either overlooked in the text, or accruing from recent discoveries, while the sheets were going through the press. Even now, since these additional notes were printed, new ideas have occurred to me, and I do not yet know how far my most recent observation—that Egyptian crown-princes did not marry as such, but waited till their accession to do so—may carry us. But when a child has come to the birth, a speedy delivery is the safest and best.

The index has been prepared for me with much care by my friend Mr. J. E. Healy, and will be found a great help through a book full of intricate details, and necessarily containing some repetitions. No teacher of any experience will blame me for these repetitions, seeing that I had no object to gain in changing the original form in which the book was composed. It consists of lectures delivered to my History class in the University of Dublin, without the many digressions suggested by intelligent questions from my hearers, and with the passages given in full (from translations) which the class read in the original texts.

There are many interesting problems for which I have yet found no solution. What was the origin of the proverbial 'seven wonders of the world,' which Diodorus knows, but concerning which we have only a late and worthless tract?

What is the real history of the translation known as the LXX and what is its age?

What are we to understand by the joint government of



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a king and queen so estranged that each would seek to thwart the other in every detail of the administration?

How far does the observation, that we only know of one crown-prince with a wife (Soter II.) account for the divorce of that wife after his accession, and for other apparent heartlessnesses in Ptolemaic history? Is the hereditary title recognised in the princesses, which no doubt led to their marriages with their reigning brothers, a relic of Pharaonic ideas, or a mere imitation of the successful experiment of Philadelphus? Some day a catalogue of these problems may be set by some Academy for a special essay, and then we may attain to some satisfactory replies regarding most of them. But we may have long to wait before such another prize-essay is published as that of Giacomo Lumbroso, which marks one of the epochs in Ptolemaic studies. Yet even as I write, there are before me the proofs of Mr. Grenfell's Appendix III to our joint edition of the Revenue Papyrus—an appendix which marks another epoch in the explanation of the Ptolemaic coinage.

A few proper names (Polyperchon, Arrabaeus, Trogodyte, etc.) have been altered from their usual form on the ground of better authority for the new form. With regard to the rest, the current forms are not changed where they have become ordinary English words, or where the modern spelling did not affect the pronunciation. In lesser known names I have taken the frequent liberty of preserving the Greek forms; but without any desire to defend this inconsistency, or to impugn any other rule on the subject. Provided the reader is not misled, con-



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sistency is not important, and inconsistency quite excusable. As regards the accentuation of Greek, I have avoided doing so where our originals (on stone or papyrus) have no accents; when I quote from literary texts, handed down to us accentuated, the accents found in the MSS. have been retained.

One serious disadvantage under which the historian of later Hellenism suffers may be noted in conclusion. In every university the student of classical Greek subjects finds many highly-trained colleagues to assist and criticise him. But in the later epochs of Greek life it is not yet so, and he must work well-nigh alone, were it not for the broad sympathy of those who come to the subject almost as a novelty. Hence, though I have received most valuable aid from several of my younger colleagues, it is not easy to find, even in so great an array of scholars as we possess, any specialist to sift and correct the many statements made, and conjectures hazarded, upon this wide and intricate field of study.

In a few more years of discovery and criticism we may expect this epoch to be as carefully surveyed and dissected as the older epochs of Greek history have been. But as yet the writer on Ptolemaic history feels himself in some sort a pioneer, who is liable to be baulked by unexpected obstacles, misled by ardent expectations, diverted from his path by false informations. Yet are all these risks and dangers unable to outweigh the intense interest of penetrating a country either unexplored or imperfectly described by former travellers.

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CHRONOLOGY

NOTE.—I regret that after much labour we have not yet been able to fix the closer dates (i.e. the months) of the accession of the various kings. Even the year is often uncertain. But I hope ere long to be able to say something more definite on this question.

- 332 Alexander III. of Macedon (the Great) conquers Egypt.
- Visit to the oasis of Amon. Submission of Cyrene. 33I
- 331-0 Alexandria founded (winter).
- Cleomenes practically Satrap of Egypt. 330 Ptolemy marries Artakama, daughter of Artabazus.
- (Summer). Death of Alexander. Philip Arridaeus nominal king. 323 Ptolemy Satrap. Intimacy with Lais.
- Transference of Alexander's body to Egypt. 322 Ptolemy's alliance with the kings of Cyprus.
- 322-I Subjugation of Cyrene by means of Ophelas.
- Invasion of Egypt by Perdikkas. His defeat and death. 321 The division of Triparadeisus.
 - Ptolemy's marriage with Eurydike, daughter of Antipater.
- 320 Ptolemy occupies Cyprus and Syria.
- His alliance with Casander. Proclamation of Polyperchon. 319
- Alexander IV. (Aegus) nominal king. 317
 - Ptolemy marries Berenike.
 - Restoration of the cella at Luxor in Alexander's name.
- Seleukos flies from Antigonus. Arrives in Egypt. 316
 - (?) Birth of Berenike's daughter Arsinoe.
- War of Ptolemy (and Seleukos) against Antigonus. Antigonus 315 seizes Cyprus, and the Philistine coast.
- 314-3 Reconquest of Cyprus by Ptolemy and revolt of Cyrene (?). Meeting at Ekregma.



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/	THE EMITTRE OF THE PROBLEMEN
B.C.	
312	Demetrius defeated at Gaza. Seleukos returns to Babylon. Antigonus recovers Syria and Palestine.
311	Death of Alexander IV. (but his name appears as king till 305).
310	Peace between Antigonus and Ptolemy. Death of Roxane (Alexander the Great's widow). Grant of land to the temples of Pe and Tep in Alexander Aegus' name, but the titles of the young king are left blank, as he was probably already dead. Ptolemy declares the freedom of the Greeks, and so obtains practical possession of the coasts of Cilicia and Lycia.
309	 He visits the Cyclades, and puts garrisons into Corinth and Sikyon. Death of Alexander the Great's sister Cleopatra, and of his bastard son Herakles.
308	Birth of Berenike's son Ptölemy (afterwards king).
308-7	Demetrius retakes Corinth and Sikyon,
	Ophelas murdered by Agathocles. Ptolemy recovers Cyrene and sends Magas to govern it.
307	Ptolemy marries his daughter Theoxena to Agathocles. He visits Megara.
306	Defeat of Ptolemy at Cyprus by Demetrius, who takes the island. Arrival of Demetrius the Phalerean in Egypt.
306-5	Invasion of Egypt by Antigonus. Its failure.
305	(November). Ptolemy assumes the title of king.Siege of Rhodes by Demetrius.(?) Assumption of the title Soter by Ptolemy.
302	New alliance against Antigonus.
	The campaign of Antigonus against Lysimachus in Asia Minor. Ptolemy re-occupies Syria and Palestine, but again evacuates them.
301	Battle of Ipsus.
300	Lysimachus marries Arsinoe, daughter of Ptolemy and of Bere- nike. His son Agathocles marries Lysandra, daughter of Ptolemy
	and of Eurydike.
299	Pyrrhus a hostage in Egypt.
295	(?) Ptolemy recovers Cyprus from Demetrius. The foundation of the Museum and Library at Alexandria about this time.

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295	Pyrrhus returns to Epirus as king.
294	Demetrius Poliorketes king of Macedonia.
290	Probable time of Ptolemy's composition of his history of Alex-
	ander's campaigns.
289	Begging petition of Demochares (from Athens).
288	Great armaments of Demetrius in Greece.
285-4	Ptolemy practically abdicates by associating his younger son
	Ptolemy in the royalty.
	Eurydike and her children leave Egypt.
	She marries her daughter Ptolemais to Demetrius.
283	Death of Demetrius Poliorketes (Droysen).
	Death of Ptolemy Soter.
281	Battle of Korupedion. Death of Lysimachus.
	Death of Seleukos I. and accession of Antiochus I. (Soter).
280	Pyrrhus lands in Italy. Ptolemy visits Pithom.
278	Antigonus (Gonatas) defeats the Gauls near Lysimacheia, and
	becomes definitively king of Macedon.
277	Pyrrhus in Sicily. (?) Second marriage of Ptolemy to Arsinoe II.
275	Pyrrhus returns to Italy.
274	Pyrrhus returns to Epirus.
273	Ptolemy sends an embassy to Rome. His second visit to Pithom.
	The Romans reply with an embassy to Alexandria.
271	Ptolemy Soter deified.
269	First coinage of silver at Rome.
266	The Canephorus (priestess) of Arsinoe Philadelphus estab-
	lished (?).
265	Beginning of the Chremonidean War (?).
264	The eponymous priests of the gods Adelphi first mentioned.
	First Punic War. Third visit to Pithom, and religious
	endowments.
263	Time of Second Syrian War (?). Eumenes succeeds to the
Ü	throne of Pergamum.
262	The ἀπόμοιρα on wine and fruits settled on the deified Arsinoe.
	Death of Antiochus Soter (king of Syria) and accession of his
	son Antiochus II. (Theos).
260	Progress of the Chremonidean War.
258	Athens subdued by Antigonus. Defeat of Ptolemy's fleet at
- 3-	Kos (?). The Revenue Papyrus.
	Death of Magas. Demetrius the Fair at Cyrene. Ptolemy
	III. (crown prince) declared lord of Cyrene.
	Change in the formula of the king's dates.



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2.0
B.C. 256 Reclaiming of the lake Moeris in progress.
255 Ptolemy II. visits the lake Moeris, and (probably) re-names the
district as the Arsinoite nome.
251 Aratus frees Sikyon.
250 Aratus goes to Egypt.
Arsaces founds the Parthian monarchy, and revolts from the Seleukids.
247 Egyptian victory at Andros.
Death of Ptolemy Philadelphus, accession and marriage of Ptolemy III.
246 Third Syrian War. Accession of Seleukos II. Kallinikos.
Ptolemy captures Seleukeia on the Orontes, and Antioch.
245 Ptolemy recalled from the East by domestic troubles.
241 End of the First Punic War. Accession of Attalus I. at Per-
gamum,
239 Death of Antigonus Gonatas.
238 Synod of Canopus. Ptolemy III. and his queen Berenike II.
deified as gods Euergetae.
237 Great temple of Edfu founded.
Death of Demetrius the Aetolian (king of Macedon).
228 First Roman embassy to Greece.
226 Accession of Seleukos III. Keraunos.
Great earthquake at Rhodes (?).
222-I Battle of Sellasia. Cleomenes flies to Egypt.
Death of Euergetes I. and accession of Ptolemy IV. (Philopator).
Death of Antigonus Doson (of Macedon), and accession of Philip V.
221-0 Accession of Antiochus III. (the Great, of Syria). Hannibal
in Spain. Fourth Syrian War.
219 Antiochus recovers Palestine from Egypt.
218 Hannibal crosses the Alps.
217 Battle of Raphia and defeat of Antiochus III.
Peace between Egypt and Syria.
216 Battle of Cannae.
Decius Magius escapes from the Carthaginians, first to Cyrene and then to Egypt.
214 Treaty of Hannibal with Philip V.
213 (?) Insurrection of the natives in Egypt.
Marriage of Ptolemy IV. to his sister, Arsinoe III.
They are deified as gods Philopatores.



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211	Scopas praetor of Aetolia.
210	Birth of Ptolemy V.
	His mother imprisoned, and after some time murdered by
	Sosibius and Agathocles.
209	Ptolemy V. associated in the crown.
205	Accession of Ptolemy V. Epiphanes.
202	Battle of Zama.
201	Roman embassy to Egypt.
	Battle of Chios between the Rhodians, etc. and Philip.
200	Embassy of Ptolemy to offer assistance to Rome agains
	Philip.
198	Battle of Panion. Scopas defeated by Antiochus III.
	Betrothal of Ptolemy V. to Cleopatra I. (of Syria).
197	Battle of Cynoscephalae. Accession of Eumenes II. at Per
	gamum.
196-5	Anacleteria and divine honours to Ptolemy V. (Rosetta stone
	and decree of Memphis).
194	Death of Eratosthenes. Apollonius Rhodius chief librarian a
	Alexandria.
193	Marriage of Ptolemy Epiphanes and Cleopatra I. at Raphia.
192	Antiochus invades Greece.
191	Embassy of Ptolemy with gifts of money to Rome.
190	Battle of Magnesia. Antiochus III. defeated by the Romans.
189	Insurrection in Upper Egypt.
188	Manlius in Asia Minor.
187	Embassy from Egypt to Achaian League (?).
	Death of Antiochus III. and accession of Seleukos IV. (Philo
	pator).
186	The concessions of the king's 9th year (Rosetta stone) renewed.
184	The insurrection subdued.
182	Death of Ptolemy and accession of Ptolemy VI. (Eupator).
	Accession of Ptolemy VII. (Philometor).
179	Death of Philip V. and accession of Perseus in Macedonia.
175	Accession of Antiochus IV. (Epiphanes).
174	Death of Cleopatra I.
173	Marriage of Ptolemy VII. to his sister Cleopatra II.
	Embassy from Rome to Egypt.
171	Invasion of Antiochus IV. Epiphanes. Ptolemy Philometo
	defeated near Mount Casius.
	Antiochus crowned king of Egypt (?).
170	Ptolemy Euergetes II. made king by the Alexandrians.



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B.C.

170 By Cleopatra II.'s mediation, Ptolemy Philometor returns and the two brothers reign conjointly.

170-69 Renewed invasion of Antiochus IV.

168 Battle of Pydna (June). Antiochus checked and sent home by the embassy of Popilius Laenas.

167 Revolt of Dionysius Petosiris.

165 Revolt at Panopolis subdued by Ptolemy Philometor (?).

164 Accession of Antiochus V. (Eupator).

163 Ptolemy Philometor exiled by his brother and flies to Rome. He is restored by the Senate, and Euergetes II. is sent to Cyrene.

162 Accession of Demetrius II. Soter in Syria.

- 161 Euergetes II. goes to Rome, to obtain new terms (?).
- 160 Visit of Ptolemy Philometor and his queen to Memphis.

159 Accession of Attalus II. at Pergamum.

- 155 Embassy of the three philosophers (on the part of Athens) to Rome.
- 154 Euergetes II. conquered in Cyprus. Settlement of the war between the brothers.
- 151 Demetrius Soter endeavours to annex Cyprus.
- 150 Ptolemy Philometor gives his daughter Cleopatra in marriage to Alexander Bala at Ptolemais.
- 149 Third Punic War.
- 147 Demetrius Nicator claims the crown. Ptolemy gives him his daughter Cleopatra to wife, and is crowned king at Antioch.
- 146 Death of Philometor in battle. Accession and death of Ptolemy VIII. (Philopator Neos).

Fall of Carthage, and of Corinth.

Renewed accession of Ptolemy IX. (Euergetes II.)

He marries the queen Cleopatra II.

145 Birth of his son Memphites.

He issues a decree of Benevolences.

- 144-3 (?) Euergetes II. marries his niece Cleopatra III. (Euergetis).
- 143 (?) Mission of Scipio Aemilianus to Egypt.
- 138 Death of Attalus II. (Philadelphus) and accession of Attalus III.
- 137 Antiochus Sidetes king of Syria.
- 134 Slave war in Sicily.
- 133 Death of Attalus III.
- 132 War of the Romans with Aristonicus of Pergamum.
- 130-29 Ptolemy IX. exiled, and Cleopatra II. reigns. (Nevertheless he appears as king of Egypt in at least two documents of the year 129 B.C.)



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Aristonicus put to death. Death of Scipio Aemilianus. 129 Euergetes II. again recovers Egypt. 127 C. Gracchus tribune. 123 Death of C. Gracchus. 121 Accession of Mithradates VI. (Eupator) in Pontus. 120 Death of Ptolemy IX. His widow Cleopatra rules.
 Association of Ptolemy X. (Lathyrus) with his mother Cleopatra III. in the throne. Ptolemy X. marries his sister Selene. Ptolemy X. visits Elephantine (stele of Aswân). 115 Ptolemy Alexander I. appointed king of Cyprus. 114 114-3 Cleopatra III. and Ptolemy Soter II. assume the title Philometores Soteres. Jugurthine war. Ptolemy Philometor Soter II. (Lathyrus) assumes sole power. 110 107-6 Ptolemy Lathyrus exiled and Alexander I. recalled to reign with his mother. 105 (?) Ptolemy Lathyrus makes war in Palestine. Invasions of the Cimbri into Italy. Triumph of Marius over the Cimbri. 104 Second Servile war in Sicily. 100-99 Berenike III. appears as queen with Alexander I. but also with his mother. Saturninus tribune. Lathyrus king of Cyprus. 99 Death of Ptolemy Apion, who bequeaths Cyrene to Rome. 96 First public transaction (by Sylla) between Rome and Parthia. 92 91 (?) Death of Cleopatra III. Marsian or Social War. 90 88 Alexander I. is exiled, and slain. Soter II. (Lathyrus) returns from exile and again becomes Mithradates invades Asia Minor and massacres the Italians there. He finds Ptolemy Alexander II. at Kos, but the prince escapes to Rome. 87 Lucullus comes to Egypt to seek aid for Sylla. Athens stormed by Sylla. 86 84 (?) Destruction of Thebes by Lathyrus.

Peace between Sylla and Mithradates.

Death of Ptolemy X. Philometor Soter II. (Lathyrus).

Accession of Ptolemy XII. Alexander II., who marries

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xxiv	THE EMPIRE OF THE PTOLEMIES
B.C.	Possilla III Dillastona Double (1.4)
81	Berenike III. Philopator. Death of both queen and king in nineteen days.
	Accession of Ptolemy XIII. Neos Dionysus, Philopator (III.) and Philadelphus (II. Auletes).
80	Capture of Mitylene by the Romans. Caesar's first campaign.
79	Auletes marries Cleopatra V. Tryphaena.
78	Death of Sylla.
77 (?)	
75-4	Bithynia bequeathed to Rome. Cyrene occupied by the Romans. Second war with Mithradates.
	Selene and her two sons come from Syria to Rome.
72	The two sons of Selene and Antiochus Grypus leave Rome.
60 9	Wars with Sertorius, Spartacus, and Mithradates in progress.
69–8 67	Birth of Cleopatra VI. Selene put to death by Tigranes. Gabinian Law. Pompey subdues the pirates.
66	Manilian Law. Pompey against Mithradates.
65	Crassus proposes to reduce Egypt to a Roman province.
64	Betrothal of two infant Ptolemies to two daughters of Mithra-
- 4	dates. Pompey in Syria.
63	Death of King Mithradates of Pontus.
-3	Auletes seeks recognition from Pompey.
60 (?)	Diodorus Siculus visits Egypt.
59	Auletes recognised by Julius Caesar as consul.
-	The temple of Edfu completed.
58	Auletes is expelled, and flies to Rome.
	Cyprus reduced to a province by Cato. Death of King Ptolemy of Cyprus.
57	Cleopatra V. Tryphaena remains queen at Alexandria. She dies and Berenike IV. her daughter assumes the throne.
56	Berenike marries Seleukos Kybiosaktes, and rejects him. She marries Archelaus of Komana. Cicero makes his speech pro rege Alexandrino.
55	Restoration of Auletes by Gabinius, with Antony commanding
33	his cavalry. First meeting of Antony and Cleopatra. Rabirius over the finances of Egypt.
54	Cicero's speech pro Rabirio Postumo.
J T	Crassus invades Parthia.
51	Death of Ptolemy XIII. Auletes.
-	Cleopatra VI. and her brother Ptolemy XIV. appointed to the throne by his will.



CHRONOLOGY

xxv

B.C.

49 Caesar crosses the Rubicon.

Cnaeus Pompey goes for levies to Egypt.

48 Battle of Pharsalia.

Cleopatra driven out by her brother. She returns with an army to Pelusium. Pompey arrives at the camp of Ptolemy XIV. and is murdered.

Arrival of Julius Caesar, who is besieged (with Cleopatra) in Alexandria.

- 47 Alexandrian War. Ptolemy XIV. drowned. Cleopatra appointed queen with her younger brother Ptolemy XV.
- 46 (?) Cleopatra goes to Rome. Reform of the Calendar by Julius Caesar.
- 45 Death of Ptolemy XV. Cleopatra assumes her son Caesarion (Ptolemy XVI.) as co-regent.
- 44 Caesar assassinated. Cleopatra returns to Egypt.
- 43-2 Famine in Egypt. Triumvirate of Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus.
- 42 Battle of Philippi.
- 41 Antony summons Cleopatra to Cilicia, and returns with her to Alexandria.
- 40 The Parthians invade Syria. Herod appointed king of Judaea.
- 38 Ventidius conquers the Parthians. Capture of Jerusalem by Sossius. Antony returns to Italy.
- 37-6 Antony returns to the East, and after his Parthian expedition rules at Alexandria with Cleopatra.

War of Octavian and Antony against Sextus Pompey. Antony invades Armenia.

- 34-3 Triumph of Antony at Alexandria. He distributes Eastern provinces to her children.
- 31 Battle of Actium.
- 30 Death of Cleopatra VI., Ptolemy XVI. (Caesarion), and of Antony and his son Antyllus.

Settlement of Egypt as an imperial province under Augustus.