

THE ROMAN CONQUEST

While Alexander's inheritance was in political disarray, there was a formidable new power rising in the west: Rome. By 200BC, the Romans dominated much of Italy and were pushing their frontiers in all directions. It was just a matter of time before they would threaten the stability of the fragile Hellenistic kingdoms.



Although this portrait of Cleopatra VII was carved in Egyptian style, the Ptolemies kept their Greek culture. Cleopatra was the only ruler who learned the Egyptian language.

THE CONQUEST OF GREECE

At the end of a long series of wars against the Romans, the Antigonid rulers were defeated and removed from power in 168BC. Greece was split into Roman provinces in 147-146BC.

THE END OF THE SELEUCIDS

Meanwhile, the Seleucids were finding it impossible to control the vast, rambling territory they had inherited, and their empire was gradually falling apart. The final blow came in 64BC. After two years of successful campaigning, the Roman general Pompey conquered the remaining Seleucid territory and added it to the ever-expanding Roman empire.



ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Ptolemaic Egypt was caught up in a power struggle between two Roman leaders: Octavian and

Mark Antony, who was having an affair with the Queen of Egypt, Cleopatra VII. Octavian defeated them at Actium

in 31BC and landed in Alexandria the following year. Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide and the last of Alexander's kingdoms fell into Roman hands (see pages 282-283).



The face on this coin is Mark Antony.

THE GRAECO- -ROMAN WORLD

Although the Romans were the conquerors, they were influenced by the Greeks' ideas and culture. So many aspects of Greek art, architecture, religion and customs survived, even after the Hellenistic

Age (see page 340). Greek remained a major language, and cities like Athens became financial and administrative bases within the Roman empire.

These are Roman legionaries, the well-trained soldiers who conquered a huge empire.



INTERNET LINK

For links to websites where you can explore an online exhibit about Cleopatra and read how the Greeks influenced Roman culture, go to www.usborne-quicklinks.com