Dear Educators,

Fact and fiction collide in Shakespeare’s dramatic telling of the story of *Antony and Cleopatra*, a historical romance that is larger than life, and had an impact on the Roman Empire that shaped much of the Mediterranean for years to come. Seattle Shakespeare Company’s fall production of this play is no less dramatic, and no less epic in scope.

But of course, as educators we already know that any retelling of history is as much fact as we can manage, told as a story from a certain point of view, necessarily adding some element of the fictitious. But it is these stories we tell about history that capture our imagination — it is the headdresses of Cleopatra, the fantastically adorned tomb of King Tut, the glory of ancient Rome and the Empire that we sometimes compare America to, for better or for worse.

Stories can teach us something about ourselves, even as much as they teach us about history. Stories about history can highlight the folly of hubris, the danger of ambition, or the horrors of war. They can show that people have always been motivated by many of the same feelings, even when the time and place feel foreign to us.

This year, I invite you to indulge in the stories at Seattle Shakespeare Company. We’ll take you from Rome at the fall of the Republic in *Antony and Cleopatra*, to the turn of the 20th century Norway, where women are struggling for rights in *A Doll’s House*. We will tell you a story of unexpected love in the courts of France in this spring’s *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, and finally take you to find love in a trailer park in *The Taming of the Shrew*.

We hope to share our stories with you.

Best,

Michelle Burce
*Education Director*

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A biography of Mark Antony.

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A biography of Octavius Caesar.

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Challenge students to review what they already know, and to reflect
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Director John Langs shares his inspiration and ideas behind
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perspective on these historical characters stacks up against other historical views.

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Octavius, Octavian, Augustus — keep the names straight.

Pre-Show Activity: Poster Design ........................................ 12
In this activity, students imagine their owntake on Shakespeare's play, and design a poster and marketing language to match their highlighted themes.
Antony addresses his followers, inspiring them for battle but Enobarbus deserts Antony, leaving his personal treasure behind. When Antony sends the treasure after him, Enobarbus is so overcome by Antony's generosity in the face of betrayal that he dies from shame.

Antony and Octavius again engage in battle, and Antony does well until the fighting moves to sea. Once again Cleopatra's ships break off from the battle, and the rest of the fleet surrenders. Antony curses Cleopatra and declares that he will kill her for her treachery.

Hearing of this, Cleopatra decides the only way to win back Antony is to send word that she has killed herself, dying with his name on her lips. She locks herself in her monument to await Antony's visit. However Antony, hearing that his love is dead, decides to end his life and begs his attendant Eros to run him through with a sword. Eros refuses and takes his own life instead. Antony falls on his own sword, but fails to die — gravely wounding himself. At that moment, Cleopatra's attendant arrives to report that Cleopatra has not died at all and has never betrayed Antony. Antony is taken to her monument and dies in her arms.

Upon hearing of Antony's suicide, Octavius sends word to Cleopatra that he shall treat her kindly, and that if she lives her children shall grow up to inherit Egypt. Cleopatra refuses to be taken captive and paraded through Rome, so she resolves to kill herself. She orders her robe and crown be brought to her, allows herself to be bitten by poisonous asps, and dies.

Octavius is filled with mixed emotions when he hears of Cleopatra's death. He is triumphant in becoming the sole leader of the Roman Empire, but he is filled with grief at witnessing the fatal love of Antony and Cleopatra. He orders a royal funeral for them both.
CHARACTER LIST

The Triumvirs of Rome

MARK ANTONY
OCTAVIUS CAESAR
M. AEMILIUS LEPIDUS

CLEOPATRA: the Queen of Egypt
SEXTUS POMPEY: the son of Pompey the Great, revolting against Rome
OCTAVIA: Caesar’s sister
EUPHRONIUS: an ambassador
LAMPIRIUS: a soothsayer
A CLOWN

Followers of Antony

DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS: Antony’s friend and aide
VENTIDIUS: a general
EROS: an attendant
DECRETAS: a guard
PHILO: a soldier
CANIDIIUS: a lieutenant-general
SILIUS: a soldier
SCARUS: a commander

Followers of Caesar

MAECENAS
AGrippa: a general
DOLABELLA
PROCULEIUS
THIDIAS: a servant
GALLUS
TAURUS: a lieutenant

Followers of Cleopatra

CHARMIAN: a lady-in-waiting
IRAS: a lady-in-waiting
ALEXAS: an attendant
MARDIAN: a eunich and singer
SELEUCUS: a treasurer
DIOMEDES

Followers of Pompey

MENAS
MENECRATES
VARRIUS

Various other Romans, Guardsmen, Watchmen, Sentries, Soldiers, Messengers, Servants, and Attendants

A TIMELINE OF TWO EMPIRES

All dates are BCE, many early dates are approximate.

EGYPT

3100
Upper and Lower Egypt are united.

2560
Construction begins on Great Pyramid of Giza and Great Sphinx.

2181
Egypt fractures and regions develop distinct cultures.

1985
Egypt is unified. Large-scale irrigation projects expand farming land.

1674
The northern capital is taken over by a Semitic population from Canaan. Pharaohs rule from the south for nearly a century.

1069
After the collapse of the Bronze Age Egypt divides in to Upper and Lower Kingdoms. Pharaohs relocate to the north and priests of Amun take political control of the south.

753
King Romulus founds the city of Rome and appoints the community’s first Senate.

669
Egypt undertakes a cultural revival. Across the Mediterranean new super powers celebrated their Bronze Age heritage.

525
Persia occupies Egypt. The Greeks send military aide to expel the Persians from Egypt several times.

509
The last Roman monarch is overthrown and the Republic established.

494
Secession of Plebs forces the extension of political representation to the larger population of Roman citizens.

493
Events of Coriolanus

343
The last native Pharaoh of Egypt flees into Nubia when Persia invades.

332
Alexander the Great liberates Egypt. After his death, his half-brother Ptolemy takes rule and establishes the Ptolemaic Dynasty.

273
Ptolemaic Pharaoh’s send a diplomatic party to Rome. The young Republic is delighted to be recognized by such a prestigious new ally.

217
Egypt sends relief supplies of grain to Rome during their war with Hannibal of Carthage.

200
Egypt and Rome collaborate against the a military campaign by the combined forces of Macedonia and the Seleucid Empire.

55
Rome sends military forces to help the exiled Pharaoh Auletes and his daughter Cleopatra to retake Egypt from her usurping older sister. Auletes is paying a yearly bribe to Rome in order to retain Egypt’s independence.

47
Julius Caesar is sent to Alexandria to settle a dispute between the new co-Pharaohs Cleopatra and Ptolemy XIII.

44
Events of Julius Caesar. Cleopatra and Caesarian have lived in Rome for two years.

41
Mark Antony invites Cleopatra to meet at Tarsus.

40–30
Events of Antony and Cleopatra.
**CULTURE CLASH: ROME VS. EGYPT**

The open contempt that Octavius and his supporters in the Senate displayed toward Cleopatra can be understood by looking at the many opposing values between Roman and Egyptian culture.

### CIVIC Rulers vs. Divine Rulers

Since 509 BCE, Romans valued the ideal of civic rulers whose authority was bestowed by peers and whose terms were limited by law. While rulers were selected from and by an elite minority of the population, the restricted power of civic leaders was central to the Republic’s identity, and the concept of monarchy was vilified.

In Egypt, and much of the Ancient Near East, the tradition of divine rule had been practiced for over 3,000 years. Unlike “Divine Right” that authorized the rule of later European monarchs, divine monarchs were believed to be living incarnations of a deity. Regardless of length of rule or continuation of succession, the current Pharaoh ruled as a God on Earth. Cleopatra was understood by Egyptians to literally embody the Goddess Isis, giving her sway among Isis worshippers across Rome’s territories.

### IN THE HOME vs. IN THE WAR ROOM

The Republic of Rome was a warrior’s society centered on masculinity. It was illegal for women to dress in men’s clothing and distasteful to demonstrate intellectual achievement in conversation. While the wives and mothers of the Roman elite could influence intrigues and special interests under the surface of politics, women were denied political representation at any level.

While most Pharaohs of Egypt had been male, rare female Pharaohs existed as early as the 3rd millennia BCE. Female co-rulers began to emerge in the 2nd millennia BCE. When the Ptolemies took rule of Egypt after the death of Alexander the Great, co-monarchs with shared power became standard. The degree of power available to Ptolemaic ruling women leading up to Cleopatra’s reign was unprecedented. During this same period the Goddess Isis had gradually gained primacy in the Egyptian pantheon. As a scholar, politician, military strategist, and living deity — Cleopatra deviated from the Roman concept of femininity.

### AUSTERITY vs. ORNAMENTATION

As the Roman Republic expanded and gained power, the ruling class began imposing laws to limit public displays of wealth among “new money.” These laws dictated everything from the amount of jewelry a woman could own (no more than half an ounce of gold) to how many colors a person could wear at once. Roman women were expected to enhance their beauty with cosmetics while retaining a believably natural appearance. Men were expected to favor a simple, functional appearance. Publicly at least, Octavius was a stringent moral reformer and supported these values.

When Cleopatra came to Rome with her and Caesar’s son Caesarion in 46 BCE, she brought a culture of personal ornamentation with her. Egyptian men and women alike cultivated a highly decorated appearance. Both genders removed body hair with waxing and wore cosmetics, perfumes, lavish jewelry, and stylized wigs. Caesar’s campaigns had opened trade with Britain and wigs of blond and red hair became the height of fashion among the rich. Much to the alarm of reformers in the Senate, Roman woman began to adopt foreign styles of personal decoration during Cleopatra’s time in Rome.
As a young nation, the Roman Republic had steadily expanded since its founding. The severe cost of constant warfare was curbed by plundering conquered enemies and enforcing heavy tributes on regions that came under Rome’s rule. Even Cleopatra’s father had paid Rome an annual bribe to retain Egypt’s independence.

The bouts of civil war that turned Rome’s military attention inward between Caesar’s assassination and Octavius’ final elimination of his enemies had kept Rome under a heavy economic depression. The combined power of Rome and Egypt that Cleopatra sought first with Caesar and then Mark Antony would have brought trade from the British Isles to Africa’s interior to the coast of India under a central government. Octavius was able to plunder the wealth of Alexandria and use Cleopatra’s personal treasure after her death to make good on pay to his soldiers and fund a massive redevelopment of Rome itself — and to buy himself the island of Capri.

Ancient Egypt held a priceless geographic position that touched the Mediterranean Sea, Indian Ocean, and African continent. Cleopatra reopened direct trade with India and secured Egypt a significant monopoly on trade between the East, West, and South. Though indulgent overspending caused periodic collapse of centralized power throughout Egypt’s history — and the inconsistency of the Nile flood caused frequent famine — Egypt’s location supported economic revival.
CLEOPATRA

For two millennia Cleopatra's name survived as one of history's greatest femme fatales. The ambitious woman who seduced two of the most powerful men in the world. She has been portrayed as the ultimate "other woman," but behind this icon there is a true other woman — the historic Cleopatra.

Much of the European Renaissance was influenced from recent access to Roman texts, art, and architecture. After spending more than 1,400 years in Latin under the care of Catholic clergy, the works of Plutarch were made available to the public in French in 1559 and English in 1579. The new pride for a glorified Roman past altered Europe's literature, art, architecture, and even cuisine. Shakespeare used Plutarch's Parallel Lives as the primary biographical source for Julius Caesar, Coriolanus, and Antony and Cleopatra — pulling some passages directly from the 1579 translation.

But even Plutarch, writing 100 years after Cleopatra's death, was working on the barest of original sources. After plundering the treasures of Alexandria for Rome, Octavian forbade Egyptians from entering Rome and vis versa. A massive collection of correspondences and literary work was burned, including writing by Julius Caesar, and Octavian sponsored poets to pen a favorable account history. In recent decades, there has been a wealth of scholarly investigation into Cleopatra's life using newly discovered evidence and critically reassessing existing sources.

Though Cleopatra was the last Pharaoh of Egypt, her heritage was Macedonian. The descendants of Alexander the Great's half-brother, Ptolemy, ruled Egypt from the collapse of his empire until Cleopatra's death. She was born into a family infamous for inbreeding, extravagant lifestyles, and murderous ambitions. Cleopatra's older sister was executed at their father's order and Cleopatra herself was directly or indirectly responsible for the death of her remaining three siblings. As Cleopatra grew up, the population of Alexandria fostered strong anti-Roman sentiments and Egypt only maintained independence from Rome's expansion by paying a yearly bribe. During her teens, Cleopatra and her father spent time in Rome under exile. A 28 year old Mark Antony was part of the military escort that helped the pair reclaim the throne.

Fluent in more than five languages, Cleopatra was the first of the Ptolemaic rulers to speak Egyptian. Educated in the peerless academic setting of Alexandria, she was a formidable student of philosophy, an influential author and researcher on gynecology and toxicology, and lover of theater. As Pharaoh, Cleopatra was regarded as a living incarnation of the Goddess Isis and actively participated in Egypt's complex religious system.

Ascending the throne at 18, alongside her 10 year old brother and husband, Cleopatra soon took action to establish herself as the sole ruler. Civil war broke out between the siblings and, after Caesar and Cleopatra joined forces, the defeated Ptolemy XIII drowned crossing the Nile. Her sister, Arsinoe IV, had claimed the title Pharaoh during the conflict and was eventually banished to Ephesus (years later, after further attempts to claim Cleopatra's office, Arsinoe was executed at her sister's order). Cleopatra set up her youngest brother, Ptolemy XIV, as her co-ruler to continue tradition but gave him no real power in what was now Cleopatra's Egypt.

During the civil war with Ptolemy XIII, Julius Caesar had been sent by Rome to mend the dispute but Cleopatra had convinced him to back her claim to the throne and became pregnant — and invaluable to the childless (though married) Caesar. Once her authority was cemented, the couple toured the length of the Nile celebrating Cleopatra's pregnancy and securing support from Egypt's influential cult centers.

After returning to Alexandria and giving birth to their son Caesarion, Cleopatra moved to Rome where she lived in an estate of Caesar's. Cleopatra's influence on Rome was dramatic. Caesar drafted and attempted to pass a law that would allow Rome's rulers to enter more than one legal marriage — a law that would legitimize Caesarion as Julius Caesar's heir in addition to successor to the throne of Egypt. Rome adopted Egypt's 365 day calendar, Caesar drew plans and commissioned grand redevelopment schemes for the city, and, with Cleopatra's help, began work to establish a library in Rome furnished with works from the Library of Alexandria. It was also during this time that Cleopatra was reunited with Mark Antony. Cleopatra had captured the city's imagination and the women of Rome imitated her personal fashion and iconic hairstyle.

After Caesar's assassination, Cleopatra returned to Egypt with Caesarion. Ptolemy XIV died shortly afterward (under suspicious conditions) and the child Caesarion, Julius Caesar's only biological descendant, was swiftly proclaimed co-ruler of Egypt. The monarch of the world's oldest continuous superpower living in the city of Rome and flaunting a public relationship with the Republic's leader was a close call that Cleopatra's enemies in the Senate would never forget.

During the Roman civil war Cleopatra sent Egypt's navy to the assistance of Antony and Octavian --- even leading the fleet personally. When Mark Antony invited Cleopatra to meet in Tarsus, their alliance and personal relationship developed quickly. Antony followed her to Alexandria and started their family, renewing the possibility of combining Rome and Egypt's power under a new dynasty and setting the stage for the beginning of Shakespeare's story.

Sources:
Among figures of world history, Cleopatra numbers as one of the most famous. Mark Antony, her great love and partner, is a no less fascinating figure. A consummate soldier and central figure in the drama surrounding the end of the Roman Republic, Antony's story is one which documents a fall from a great height.

Mark Antony's life was well documented in the writings of his contemporaries. He was born in 83 BCE to Marcus Antonio Creticus and Julia Caesaris. Both parents came from elite families whose members had held high political office for generations. Antony's father was portrayed in writings of Cicero (a vehement critic of Antony) as incompetent and corrupt. He died when Antony was twelve, and Julia remarried an infamously heavy drinker and gambler. As a young man Antony studied in Athens where he learned rhetoric and philosophy, and gained a lifelong appreciation for theater. Antony's keen interest in Greek culture was later criticized as un-Roman.

After his studies, Antony joined Rome's military. At 28, Antony led a military escort to help the Pharaoh of Egypt and his teenage daughter, Cleopatra, successfully reclaim the usurped throne. Returning to Rome, Antony served in the military under Julius Caesar. The older soldier became Antony's friend and mentor, and saw great potential in him — potential which Antony was quick to fulfill. In tandem with his celebrated rise in the military, Antony also developed a reputation as a drinker and a gambler, and for a volatile temperament which made him popular among fellow soldiers, but not among the Roman Senate.

Mark Antony developed great renown as a solider and a leader during Caesar's Gallic Wars. Caesar shrewdly made use of Antony's popularity and energy by delegating him authority and power, and putting him in charge of military campaigns. But Antony lacked capacity as an administrator. Antony's use of violence to quell a dispute in Rome led to a falling out between himself and Caesar which lasted several years. When loyalty and friendship between the two men eventually mended, Cleopatra was living in Rome as Caesar's partner and the mother of his infant son. As Caesar rose to power, Antony was ever at his side as his second in command, co-consul, and friend.

It was in the tumultuous aftermath of Julius Caesar's assassination that a different side of Mark Antony began to emerge. Immediately after the assassination Antony escaped from Rome in fear of his life, but soon returned to establish terms with the assassins. This was important to Brutus and Cassius; while they held the support of the Senate, Antony had the support of the army. In his attempt to keep Rome at peace and solidify power for himself after Caesar's death, Antony went to great lengths to work with the Senate to establish an amnesty for the conspirators. It was only when Antony gave his eulogy at Caesar's funeral that his political shrewdness was revealed. As famously portrayed by Shakespeare, Antony's impassioned speech shamed and damned the conspirators, breaking the tense and weak façade of peace. Rome plunged into a civil war which then temporarily stabilized with Antony ruling alongside Lepidus and Octavian.

Antony's political success during these difficult maneuvers is largely credited to his wife, Fulvia. Plutarch writes that she defended her Antony from varied political slander, acquired Caesar's private papers and will, and became Antony's main ally in his tumultuous relationship with Octavian.

In late 42 BCE, Antony defeated the last of Caesar's assassins and shaved the beard he had let grow while his friend and mentor remained un-avenged. The Triumvirate divided Rome's empire and Antony took Gaul and the East. Returning to Athens after more than a decade of war, Antony indulged in theater, academic lectures, sporting events, and all day drinking — fashioning himself in the style of Dionysus. When winter storms that closed transport across the Mediterranean ended, Antony traveled to the city of Tarsus and invited Cleopatra for a diplomatic meeting.

Cleopatra shared Antony's loyalty to Caesar, high level of education, love of theater, and flare for decadent lifestyle. The two became allies and lovers, and Antony followed Cleopatra to Alexandria.

Left alone in Rome, Antony's wife Fulvia began to foment a rebellion against Octavian. Rome was soon embroiled in yet another conflict between the two factions, from which Octavian emerged victorious. Fulvia was forced to flee from Rome and died shortly afterwards of an unknown illness. Antony distanced himself from his wife's actions, and Antony and Octavian reformed their alliance, sealed with Antony's marriage to Octavian's sister, Octavia.

With Antony in Alexandria and no one to defend his name back in Rome, Antony began to slip from favor in Rome, while Octavian worked to strengthen his position as Caesar's heir. Antony's attempts to best his rival in battle ended in defeat at the Battle of Actium, which destroyed much of Antony's and Cleopatra's armies. Octavian swiftly closed in on Antony, who committed suicide followed by Cleopatra. Antony's name was held in disgrace; his images were removed and he was referred to by many as a traitor. It was only in the later years of Octavian's rule that Antony's family would be accepted into Roman society.

According to Roman historians of the time, Mark Antony was portrayed as a Roman who fell in with Cleopatra, succumbed to her charms, and wrecked his life. This does Antony a disservice. Antony had close relationships with two women, who each brought out different aspects in his personality. With Fulvia, Mark Antony seemed to be at his most pragmatic and assured. The two were formidable and even feared, both individually and collectively. Cleopatra and Antony were equally as feared, but not as respected. When Antony was in Egypt, his actions were certainly more rash and impulsive, but one could argue Antony's distance from Rome, his inclination to act rather than think, and his persistent underestimation of Octavian caused his fall more than any influence Cleopatra had over him. For all his faults, Antony's story of one who gained power and then lost it completely is dramatic, heroic and heartbreaking, which is why his name endures even today.

Sources:

Cicero, Letters and Philippics Creations: The fourteen Philippics against Marcus Antonius, Tufts University Classics Collection

One of the most important figures in the history of Rome is Octavius Caesar. Upon the assassination of Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, a longtime friend of Caesar's and his right-hand man, opened his will to discover that Octavius, Caesar's grand-nephew, had been posthumously adopted and given most of Caesar's estate. Though not a military-inclined man, Octavius allied with the right people and was able to impress Caesar with his sharp mind. After battling Pompey in Spain, Caesar returned home, secretly changed his will to name Octavius his heir, and began to groom the young man for public life. This education was never completed, because Caesar was killed soon afterward. After Caesar’s death, Octavius allied with Caesar’s assassins against Mark Antony who was declared an enemy of the state by the Senate. Octavian’s troops entered Rome and seized the Treasury, forcing the Senate to name him consul, he then condemned Caesar’s assassins and confiscated their estates. Despite their rivalry and dislike for each other, Mark Antony and Octavius joined to avenge Caesar’s killers and to shape the future of Rome. They, along with Lepidus, formed the Second Triumvirate to rule Rome. Lepidus was understood to be the silent partner, and both Antony and Octavian knew that their alliance would not last forever. Gradually, Lepidus was pushed out of office with Antony and Octavius going to war for control of the Rome. Antony’s eventual defeat and suicide eliminated the final obstacle to Octavius’ full control of the Roman Empire. Though the Senate still existed, Rome ceased to be a republic and Octavius was given the name by which most people know him: Augustus Caesar.

Under his rule, Rome ushered in an era of relative peace, known as the Pax Romana. The empire spread into modern-day Spain, Germany and parts of Africa and Turkey. Augustus Caesar also built an extensive network of roads through the Roman Empire, created police and fire departments, and formalized the organization of the Roman army. Yet, Augustus was cautious to hide his wealth and scandalous personal life from the public. Like Julius Caesar before him, Octavius refused honors to elevate his station too high in the eyes of the people. He was married to his wife Livia for over fifty years and his rule is often regarded as the pinnacle of the Roman Empire. Historians are divided as to Octavius Caesar’s place in history. He is regarded by many as Rome’s best emperor, and facts support his success in administration and his shrewd political mind. Critics of his character reference the bloody and deceitful path Octavius took to gain power. Regardless of his virtue as an individual, his achievements enabled Rome to become one of the greatest empires in human history. Throughout his life, Octavius had to play many roles for many people in a variety of circumstances. The historian Suetonius wrote that, on his deathbed, Augustus Caesar asked his gathered friends “Did you like the performance?” no doubt referring to the many roles he had played throughout his life. When they replied that they had, Gaius Octavius Augustus Caesar replied: “Since I’ve played my part well, all clap your hands, and from the stage dismiss me with applause.”

Sources:

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE: These questions are open-ended and have no ‘right’ answer. Examples of possible answers are accompany each question.

Who is Cleopatra? What is she best known for? Possible answers:
- Cleopatra was the queen of Egypt from 51 to 30 BCE and was the last pharaoh of that country.
- She is famous for her conflicts with Rome and its leaders, her beauty, her depictions in art, and the movies made about her in the past century.

Who was Julius Caesar? Why is he so important? Possible answers:
- Caesar was the dictator of Rome, Antony’s best friend and a previous lover of Cleopatra’s. He was influential in the transition of Rome from a republic to an empire. He was one of the most popular and influential leaders of the ancient world. He was a shrewd politician, and a model of what a great leader should be, and was named dictator for life. Despite this, he was assassinated by a group of senators, and after a civil war his heir Octavian became Emperor of Rome.

Can you name any other great female leaders like Cleopatra? Possible answers:
- Elizabeth I, Golda Meir, Hillary Clinton, Indira Gandhi

What is Ancient Egypt best known for? What is Rome best known for? Possible answers:
- Egypt is famous for pyramids, advances in art, medicine and sciences. Specifically, it is also known for hieroglyphics, the Sphinx, King Tut, the Nile River, etc.
- Ancient Rome is famous for advances in architecture, government, philosophy and warfare. It is also known for the Colosseum and other landmarks, the Roman pantheon of gods, the Empire and conquests, etc.
Who is the hero/heroine of this play? Possible answers:

- Antony is the hero in this play. He tries to do right by both his country and his love Cleopatra, but he ends up losing it all. He is a tragic hero, and we can identify with him.
- Cleopatra is the heroine. She is a passionate leader of Egypt who allies herself with Rome to strengthen her country. She falls in love with Antony, fights on his side, and ends up dying on her own terms without becoming a captive.
- Octavian is the hero. He fights bravely, thinks clearly, and wins his battles to become emperor at the end of the play.
- There is no hero. Shakespeare is dramatizing history and there are no clear good or bad characters, just complex people making the best decisions they can.

What role does honor play in the story? To Cleopatra? To Antony? Possible answers:

- Cleopatra was very proud of her heritage, even believing she was descended from an Egyptian goddess. She never allowed anyone to forget who she was and what power she had.
- Antony and Cleopatra only care about each other and honoring that love. Anything else is unimportant.
- Honor is very important to both characters. When they lose their fight with Octavius, they believe they have dishonored themselves. It becomes a reason why they both decide to take their lives.

What caused Antony’s fall? What caused Cleopatra’s? Possible answers:

- Antony’s fall was caused by the fact he cared more for Cleopatra than he did for Rome. He let his love for her blind him from the danger he was in.
- Cleopatra fell because of her pride. She underestimated Octavian as an opponent and didn’t take him seriously enough.

What is about Cleopatra that the Romans find so threatening? Possible answers:

- The Romans found Cleopatra threatening because she was a woman and they considered Egypt to be an uncivilized country.
- The Romans also disliked Cleopatra because of her close relationships with their leaders. Her marriages with Caesar and Antony, which both produced children, were also seen as very threatening to the empire and its future.
- Deep down, the Romans were afraid of Cleopatra. They thought she really had enough power to destroy the empire.

Why does Octavian mourn the death of Antony and Cleopatra? Possible answers:

- Octavian, for all his manipulative nature, is not unaware of the greatness of both of these people. He is aware of how important they both were and that the world would never see the like of either of them again.
- Octavian was upset he could not parade him back to Rome to show off how he had won. He’s making a good show in front of his men to seem sad.
- Octavian and Antony had been allies and he’s sad the friendship ended in war and death.

Enobarbus is one of the few characters in the play who did not really exist. What role does he play and why do you think Shakespeare put him into the story? Possible answers:

- Enobarbus is Antony’s right hand man. Through him, we learn more about the conflict between Rome and Egypt and the toll it is places on him. He is the audience’s link with these larger than life historical characters.
- Shakespeare wanted to give a “regular guy” view on all these famous people. Enobarbus serves as that character.
- Enobarbus is the only character with any true sense of honor which is plain when compared to Antony or Octavius.
Director John Langs has been interested in *Antony and Cleopatra* for many years, and is excited to be coming back to it. As the “spine” of the play, the main idea that all other ideas support, Langs sees a love story between two mature people. This sort of love story is not just world-changing, it is personal. It’s the story of the grind between family and work, and the pull Mark Antony feels when he is given the responsibility to run the world, but also finds the love of his life in Cleopatra. It is a pull that many people, in their own way, feel in their own lives.

To support this idea, there are many design choices that will highlight both the historical period and contemporary ideas behind the play. A major design point will be to draw a strong contrast between Egypt and Rome. Egypt is a sensuous place where the pillows are soft and the sand is warm on the characters’ feet. There will be sand onstage to represent Egypt, and it will be constant reminder to Antony of Cleopatra, even as he shakes it out of his boots back in Rome.
In contrast, Rome is a clean and efficient place. It has much harsher lighting, and it has much sharper angles. There is a cooler feel to the world of Rome, and it is not as welcoming or warm as Egypt is. This is the world that Octavius Caesar lives in, and the world that constantly calls Antony back from Cleopatra.

Our final world is that of Pompey. He lives in a wilder world, the world of firelight and torchlight. In his rebellion from Rome, he gave up the ordered efficiency in favor of more dangerous fire and ropes, and the chaos that brings.

By the end of the play, Octavius Caesar has beaten Antony and Cleopatra’s armies, and Egypt starts to feel to the audience like an occupied state. Cleopatra retreats from her throne room into her “panic room,” a much harsher place where she and Antony end their lives together.
In Antony and Cleopatra, we find ourselves rooting for the doomed title couple. They are both in impossible circumstances, steamrolled there by the ruthless Octavius Caesar and his relentless march to becoming Emperor of Rome. The courage of these two characters shows through in their attempts to do right by each other and their countries at the same time, even though their efforts are ultimately unsuccessful and they die in each others’ arms.

Octavius Caesar is described in many different ways in this play. Though in all addresses, characters show the utmost respect for great Caesar, in private Antony and Cleopatra in particular show disdain for him. In act 1, scene 1, Cleopatra calls him “scarce-bearded Caesar,” implying that he is too young for his office. Similarly in act 4, scene 12, Antony describes “blossoming Caesar,” who is always smiled on by luck — perhaps suggesting he is not as skilled of a commander. Perhaps worst, Enobarbus describes Caesar’s shrewd cruelty in act 4, scene 6:

DOMITIUS ENOBARBUS
Alexas did revolt; and went to Jewry on Affairs of Antony; there did persuade Great Herod to incline himself to Caesar, And leave his master Antony: for this pains Caesar hath hang’d him. Canidius and the rest That fell away have entertainment, but No honourable trust. I have done ill; Of which I do accuse myself so sorely, That I will joy no more.

But this picture we get of Octavius Caesar is incomplete. Shakespeare’s play is told from one point of view, but historical figures like Antony and Octavius Caesar are rarely so one-dimensional.

Instructions:
To get a different perspective on Octavius Caesar, do some research on him during the time period this play cover, that of the Second Triumvirate, 40 BCE–30 BCE. Potentially have students listen to Mike Duncan’s podcast The History of Rome, Episode 49: “Apollo and Dionysus.” This podcast provides a different perspective on Antony and Caesar, giving a fair look at why the two men were so different, and how they became at-odds with each other and their preferred ways of living.


After you’ve listened to the podcast, read up on Caesar and Antony in this study guide, and done any extra research, discuss the following questions:

What were some of the pressures put on Octavius Caesar while Antony was away in the East?
• Sextus Pompey’s wars and blockades
• Grain shortages
• A lack of money in the state coffers
• Disgruntled soldiers who wanted land to retire on
• The rebellion against him by Antony’s wife Fulvia
• Public opinion was turning against Octavius during the grain shortage

What were the different pulls put on Mark Antony while he was living in the East?
• His wife Fulvia wanted to rebel against Octavius.
• His honor demanded that he invade Parthia for the glory of Rome.
• Cleopatra wanted him to secure her position in Egypt.

How were the personalities of the two men different?
• Antony was a true soldier, consumed with ambition, reveling in glory and honor, but also decadent and hot-tempered.
• Octavius was an academic, a young man thrust into the political scene, more austere in his presentation of himself, and cold and calculating.

Based on the play and your research, discuss which man was “right,” more honorable, or more understandable.
• Opinions may vary.

One Man, Many Names
Throughout history (and this study guide!) you will see the character of Octavius Caesar referred to by many names. Here is a quick guide to his names, and why and when he was called these different things:
• Born: Gaius Octavius — named after his father.
• Posthumously adopted by Caesar in 44 BCE, Renamed: Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus
• Dropped “Octavianus” making him simply: Gaius Julius Caesar
• Between 44 BCE and 27 BCE, historians refer to him as Octavian, to distinguish him from his adopted father.
• His friends called him: Gaius
• After being named Emperor, he was given the title: Imperator Caesar Divi Filius Augustus, but is normally just referred to as Augustus Caesar.
Many of Shakespeare’s plays are written very long and complex, so directors will often choose to cut them in such a way as to focus on one or two aspects of the play. Then they will communicate their particular take on the play through the marketing and poster design, so that patrons know what to expect when they go to the theatre.

Instructions:

Look Seattle Shakespeare Company’s poster design and marketing description:

"The Roman General and the Egyptian Queen. Their romance gave birth to an empire, but their fiery longing came at a price. Caught between desire and duty, Antony and Cleopatra’s love affair shook the foundations of the known world. Power politics and passion collide in Shakespeare’s captivating tragedy. Director John Langs, who staged our 2010 production of Hamlet, returns to helm this legendary and tragic affair between two charismatic leaders."

Ask students: What do they imagine our production will focus on?

Note the use of the words romance, longing, desire, love affair, and passion, and the embrace shown on the poster. This director clearly wants to highlight the love story between the title characters.

Then have students look over the plot summary at the beginning of this study guide. There are many pieces of the plot that can be highlighted by how the show is performed, and by which scenes are given the most importance. Here are some suggestions:

- Focus on the love story between Antony and Cleopatra. They have a soap-opera love affair that ends in a Romeo and Juliet style death.
- Focus on the political rivalry between Antony and Octavian. They have very different ideas on what a leader should be, and how Rome should be run.
- Focus on the friendship between Antony and Enobarbus. While Antony often has his mind locked up on Cleopatra, Enobarbus is a loyal friend until he finally senses Antony’s demise and defects to Octavian’s camp.
- Focus on the volatile personality of Cleopatra. She does not seem to care at all about Roman politics, and believes every rumor that arrives in her court from abroad. When she is upset, she flies into a fury and punishes anyone around her.
- Focus on the war story between the triumvirs and Pompey, and then on the civil war itself. The generals prepare, the soldiers fear the morning battle, and the politics of war rage on.

Ask students: Can they think of other pieces of the story to focus on?

Once students have decided what the focus of their production will be, have them design a poster and write a short marketing description of their production of Antony and Cleopatra. They can use images printed from the internet or pulled from magazines and newspapers, or they can draw the posters themselves. Have students think about the words they use to describe the play in a short paragraph. Remember – they do not need to give the summary of the plot, just a taste of what the story is about.

Have students present their final work to the class by hanging them around the room for everyone to look at. Ask students – do these all look like the same play? Or could they be very different experiences?
NEXT ON STAGE:

January 2–27, 2013
By Henrik Ibsen | Translated by Sean Patrick Taylor
Directed by Russ Banham

Darling Nora enjoys a comfortable life with her family and loves her husband Torvald above all else. So much so, that she’s risked a small lie in order to save his reputation and protect their cozy existence. When the truth worms its way out with a threat of blackmail, Nora begins to question her devotion and finds herself forced into making a life-altering decision: honor her marriage or pursue her duty to herself.

Performed at Center House Theatre.

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Love’s Labour’s Lost
By William Shakespeare | Directed by Jon Kretzu

In this exuberant romantic comedy, youthful idealism gets derailed by love. The King of Navarre and his buddies have plans to immerse themselves in their studies swearing off less civilized pursuits — namely girls. After the Princess of France arrives with her ladies on a diplomatic mission, the young men’s hearts melt along with their brainy resolve. Playful pranks, witty wordplay and moony wooing give way to more serious matters that reveal the cost of real love.

Performed at Center Theatre.

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Julius Caesar (tour)
By William Shakespeare | Directed by Kelly Kitchens

Shakespeare’s great political thriller portrays the life-and-death struggle for power in Rome. Envious of the charismatic Caesar and his ambitions, a faction of politicians plot his assassination. After Caesar is killed, chaos consumes Rome. Julius Caesar investigates the turbulent nature of power and the ethics of those who wield it.

Performed at Center Theatre.

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The Taming of the Shrew
By William Shakespeare | Directed by Aimée Bruneau

(Contact Lorri McGinnis for early notification about dates and availability: lorrim@seattleshakespeare.org)

An indoor revival of our popular Wooden O trailer park Shrew! Brought up in a rough and forgotten corner of backwoods America, the tempestuous and sharp-tongued Kate bows down to no man. But then Petruchio swaggerers in to town with a plan to steal Kate’s guarded heart. Through bickering and brawling, their comic courtship is a no-holds-barred battle of the sexes that results in a love and understanding that neither one imagined.

All titles, dates and artists subject to change. Dates in parentheses are tentative matinees.

FREE TEACHER PREVIEWS:

Love’s Labour’s Lost, Tues, March 12 • The Taming of the Shrew, Weds, April 24

Let Seattle Shakespeare Company treat you and one guest to a night at the theatre! Come meet and mingle before the show at a private reception for educators, enjoy complementary refreshments, and hear about what’s new in our education programs. To RSVP, please email caseyb@seattleshakespeare.org