

MARBLE HEAD OF ANTONIA MINOR



This white marble sculpture of Mark Antony's daughter, Antonia Minor, was found by the IEASM in the ancient *Portus Magnus* of Alexandria and dates to the very beginning of Egypt's Roman period, not long after Mark Antony died in Cleopatra's arms.

Time has eroded the mouth, nose and eyes of Antonia Minor's exquisite feminine head. The arrangement of hair,

parted at the middle of the forehead with two wavy masses flowing down the sides, was characteristic of Antonia Minor. This hairstyle was widely followed in private portraiture, but the size of the sculpture suggests that this was an official portrait, perhaps one commissioned by Antonia herself.

Daughter of political marriage

Antonia Minor, mother of Emperor Claudius and general Germanicus, was honoured in the Roman Empire from the reign of Tiberius, her brother-in-law, until that of Claudius. The celebrated woman herself was born of the political marriage between Mark



Antony and Octavius, Octavia's brother. The marriage gave Mark Antony power over the eastern portion of Roman territory, while Octavian maintained control of the west.

Mark Antony and Cleopatra VII

Mark Antony had already been involved with Cleopatra VII at the time Antonia Minor was born. Cleopatra had given birth to twins, Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selena, whom Mark Antony saw when he visited Cleopatra during Octavia's pregnancy. At about that time, Mark Antony married Cleopatra in an Egyptian ceremony, though the marriage was never recognized Rome.



Meanwhile, Antonia Minor was born to Octavia in Greece. Marc Antony died before ever meeting this daughter.



Objects: Marble, Roman Period, 1st c. C. E., H. 35 cm
Great Library of Alexandria (SCA 86)

Sources:

Z. Hawass and F. Goddio (2010): Cleopatra - The search for the last queen of Egypt, National Geographic Society, Washington D.C.: 50/51, catalogue of the exhibitions 2010-2013 in the USA

F. Goddio and D. Fabre (2008): Egypt's Sunken Treasures, Munich, catalogue of the exhibitions 2006-2009 in Berlin, Paris, Bonn, Madrid, Turin, Yokohama.

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