

### *All My Children: The Offspring of Cleopatra in Recent Fiction*

Cleopatra VII had four children. Caesarion (Ptolemy XV Philopator Philometor Caesar) was the purported son of Julius Caesar and as a consequence short lived. He has nevertheless enjoyed a prominent position within the reception of his mother. The three children of Cleopatra and Marc Anthony were spared and raised by Octavia Minor. Ptolemy Philadelphus and Alexander Helios may not have survived to the triumph or adulthood, but Helios' twin, Cleopatra Selene, had a long and eventful life which has been well documented by Duane Roller (*The World of Juba II and Kleopatra Selene*. London: Routledge, 2004.) Since 1970 there have been over a dozen English language novels featuring her progeny, but the most recent have tended to focus on the various stages of the life of her daughter.

A skeletal biography set against the rich and boisterous tapestry of the Roman Revolution creates the ideal medium for the writer of historical and/or romantic fiction. This paper will briefly sketch the known facts surrounding each child, and then survey the book length contributions of authors such as Naomi Mitchison, Andrea Ashton, Wallace Breem, Alice Curtis Desmond, Tommy Wieringa, Gillian Bradshaw, Colleen McCullough, Stephanie Dray, Michelle Moran, Vicky Alvear Schecter, Phyllis T. Smith and Michael Livingston. Attention will be paid to cultural context, intended audience and "agenda" of each version, focusing especially on the gender issues raised in the novels devoted to Selene. Since ancient artistic images and modern lurid covers are available, the paper will be accompanied by a Power Point presentation.