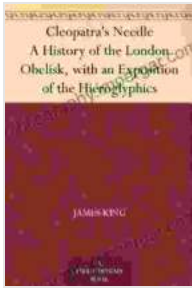


# Cleopatra's Needle: Unveiling the History of London's Iconic Obelisk



Standing majestically on the Embankment in London, Cleopatra's Needle is an ancient Egyptian obelisk that has captured the imagination of countless visitors. This enigmatic monument, steeped in history and intrigue, has witnessed the rise and fall of civilizations and now serves as a testament to the enduring legacy of ancient Egypt in the heart of modern London.



## Cleopatra's Needle A History of the London Obelisk, with an Exposition of the Hieroglyphics by Frank McLynn

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 427 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
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### Origins in Heliopolis

Cleopatra's Needle, originally known as the Needle of Thutmose III, was erected around 1450 BC in the ancient city of Heliopolis, Egypt.

Commissioned by Pharaoh Thutmose III to mark his military victories, the obelisk was one of a pair that flanked the entrance to his Temple of Ra.

These towering monoliths were symbols of power, representing the Pharaoh's connection to the gods and his authority over both the natural and celestial realms.

### Journey to Alexandria

Around 12 BC, during the reign of Cleopatra VII, the obelisk was transported to the bustling port city of Alexandria. It is unclear why the obelisk was moved, but some historians suggest that it was a gift from the Egyptian queen to her Roman lover, Julius Caesar, or her son, Caesarion. The obelisk was placed in the Caesareum, a temple dedicated to the

Roman emperor, where it served as a symbol of Roman power and the dominance of Egypt.

## **Transport to London**

In 1819, the British government acquired Cleopatra's Needle from the Ottoman Empire, which had control of Egypt at the time. The obelisk was gifted to the British people by the viceroy of Egypt, Muhammad Ali Pasha, as a gesture of friendship and gratitude for British support during the Napoleonic Wars.

The task of transporting the massive obelisk to London proved to be a formidable challenge. The obelisk was carefully disassembled and loaded onto the ship HMS Goliath in 1877. The ship encountered rough seas during the journey, and the obelisk was damaged as it swayed back and forth in the hold.

## **Arrival in London**

Finally, on January 21, 1878, Cleopatra's Needle arrived in London and was erected on the Victoria Embankment, overlooking the River Thames. The obelisk was reassembled and placed on a granite pedestal, where it has stood ever since.

## **Symbolism and Meaning**

Cleopatra's Needle holds multiple layers of symbolism and meaning. As a monolithic structure, it represents strength, stability, and the enduring power of the Pharaohs. The obelisk's tapered shape, resembling a sunbeam, symbolizes the life-giving power of the sun god Ra.

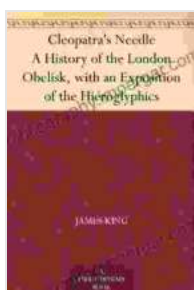
The hieroglyphs inscribed on the obelisk recount the military victories of Thutmose III, as well as his dedication to the gods. These inscriptions provide valuable insights into the religion and culture of ancient Egypt.

## Modern Legacy

Today, Cleopatra's Needle is one of London's most iconic landmarks. Its presence on the Embankment has shaped the cityscape and become a symbol of the city's rich history and cultural diversity.

The obelisk has been immortalized in literature, art, and popular culture. It has been depicted in paintings by renowned artists such as Monet and Turner, and featured in films such as "Batman Begins" and "The Mummy."

Cleopatra's Needle is a testament to the enduring legacy of ancient Egypt and the power of cultural exchange. This magnificent obelisk has journeyed across continents and centuries, embodying the strength, resilience, and the enduring fascination of ancient civilizations. Standing proudly on the banks of the Thames, Cleopatra's Needle continues to inspire awe and wonder, connecting the past with the present and serving as a symbol of the enduring bonds between civilizations.



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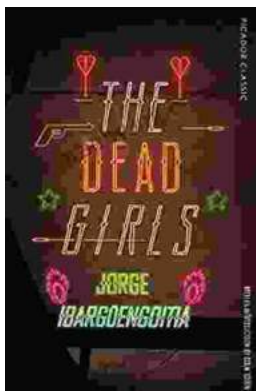
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