



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS  
JOURNALS + DIGITAL PUBLISHING

---

Chapter Title: Glamour Girls: Cleomania in Mass Culture

Chapter Author(s): Maria Wyke and Dominic Montserrat

Book Title: Cleopatra

Book Subtitle: A Sphinx Revisited

Book Editor(s): Margaret M. Miles

Published by: University of California Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1pnmvm.13>

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



University of California Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Cleopatra*

JSTOR

# Glamour Girls

## *Cleomania in Mass Culture*

Maria Wyke and Dominic Montserrat<sup>†</sup>

While Elizabeth Taylor was in Rome shooting the spectacular Hollywood epic *Cleopatra*, women's magazines began to advise their readers how to create "a new Egyptian look" whose models were Nefertiti and Cleopatra, Egypt's two most iconic queens.<sup>1</sup> An article in *Look* magazine for 27 February 1962 predicted:

Superimpose two such famous glamour girls as Elizabeth Taylor and Cleopatra, and you are in for a beauty boom. In her role as Egypt's seductive queen, actress Taylor's exotic eye makeup, diverse hair styles (devised with 30 wigs), magnificent jewels and gowns are bound to inspire a new Egyptian look every bit as sweeping as the recent tousled B.B. and pale-lipped Italian looks.

Alongside a glamour photograph of two models, the text indicates what the staff has done to give them "the new Egyptian look reminiscent of the regal, exotic beauties seen on ancient bas-reliefs": eyes lined with kohl to cultivate a sensuous, catlike look; mouths boldly painted to create the illusion of a full lower lip; eye-brows heavily outlined in black; Nile-green eye shadow, henna-colored powder, and a Cleopatra coif applied to the blonde; white shadow, very pale powder, and a high-rising Nefertiti hairstyle applied to the brunette; the necks of both decorated with elaborate beaded collars made out of costume jewelry.<sup>2</sup> The following page instructs the magazine's readers "How to change American girls into Egyptian beauties—with new hairdos," while the article's final page shows "a Liz Taylor look-alike" successfully kitted out for the evening in the Cleopatra look.<sup>3</sup>

This essay explores the most personalized and intimate technology of Egyptomania that has been widely disseminated and even inscribed on the bodies of modern women. Starting in the nineteenth century, we trace a range of female

<sup>†</sup>Deceased 23 September 2004

identifications with Cleopatra and analyze their widespread solicitation in the mass culture of that century and the one that follows. Like the faces of Cleopatra and Nefertiti projected onto those of modern “American girls,” these identifications cross boundaries between past and present made fluid and porous by the familiarity of Egyptian culture and its domestication in popular media. If the American girl becomes the Egyptian beauty, the Egyptian beauty also becomes the American girl. We argue that the thoroughly modern Cleopatras of the Hollywood film stars Theda Bara and Claudette Colbert can be seen as the predictable outcome of many years of such essentialist appropriations of Cleopatra to create star personae. We place these modern embodiments of Cleopatra in their historical contexts, asking what knowledge of Egypt is deployed to shape them and what conceptions of gender and sexuality they parade.<sup>4</sup>

#### VICTORIAN CLEOPATRAS

Victorian England conveniently provides exemplars of the two popular traditions of Cleopatra that were in place by the beginning of the twentieth century. For the Victorians, the name Cleopatra was a signifier for Egypt itself, a transhistorical signifier that marked *any* Egyptian cultural material, of whatever period, as Egyptian. The name “Cleopatra’s Needle,” was applied to the obelisk brought from Alexandria to London in 1870, to enormous media attention. The obelisk itself was carved during the reign of Thutmose III, more than 1,400 years before Cleopatra was born. But a huge range of Cleopatras was available to the Victorian Londoners who walked past the newly erected obelisk on the Thames Embankment, a range that reflected the high profile of Egypt in the media of the time. Political events connected with imperialist government, such as the opening of the Suez Canal in 1870 and the establishment of the British Protectorate in Egypt in 1882, reminded people that in antiquity Egypt itself had ruled a great empire, and that Cleopatra, the Eastern opponent of the West, had been its last queen before she was vanquished by Rome. They would have been able to go to the theater and see plays about her: not only Shakespeare’s canonical *Antony and Cleopatra*, but also burlesques that used the Cleopatra story to satirize contemporary culture and mores, and new treatments by Victorien Sardou and George Bernard Shaw. There was also a proliferation of novels and other fictional treatments that reinforced the connection of Cleopatra with unbridled Eastern sensuality and mystic knowledge, especially those of H. Rider Haggard (1889) and Théophile Gautier (1894). Rider Haggard’s influential *Cleopatra* had been serialized in an illustrated literary magazine before it was published as a book, and its elaborate illustrations (by different artists) created a diversity of images of the Egyptian queen. But there were more sober and historically accurate novels, too, such as Georg Ebers’ successful *Cleopatra* of 1894, the only version ever to

be written by a professional Egyptologist (Ebers was professor of Egyptology at Leipzig). Finally, people were able to bring Cleopatra into their own homes via a variety of objects that ran the gamut from expensive to humble; from an elaborate enameled oil lamp in the shape of Cleopatra's Needle or a framed lithograph of Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's painting of Cleopatra, down to cigarette paper with an image of Cleopatra based on an ancient relief, or postcards of the actress Lillie Langtry in pseudo-Egyptian costume as Cleopatra (Fig. 17). Visions of Cleopatra, in short, were commodities available to almost everyone. Her image, multiply reproduced by modern technology, could be collected and pasted into an album like a family snapshot.

An anecdote often retold about Victorian notions of Cleopatra concerns Sarah Bernhardt's performance in the title role of Sardou's play *Cléopâtre* in London. After watching Bernhardt's erotic contortions, a member of the audience is supposed to have remarked how unlike this was to the home life of "our own dear Queen." Apropos of this, Lucy Hughes-Hallett has commented that this almost certainly apocryphal remark "hints that Cleopatra's attraction lies precisely in her unlikeness, in her embodiment of everything that Victorian England . . . denied."<sup>5</sup> Thus Sarah Bernhardt, to enhance her exotic persona offstage, claimed that the snakes she used on stage in the death scene were live and kept in her house, adorned with jewels.<sup>6</sup> While this use of Cleopatra has been studied, little attention has been paid to the process whereby Cleopatra, and Egypt itself, were also domesticated and rendered everyday. Tamed and domesticated images of Cleopatra were available as commodities in the Victorian home; these need to be seen in terms of the more general presentation of ancient Egypt in popular media at this time. As well as being a place of mystery, magic, and spectacle, Egypt was at the same time the birthplace of Western monotheism and the cradle of Western culture. It was a place where "the utter absence of the social affections, which so painfully characterizes the pictures of the life of man at all other epochs, . . . is greatly mitigated."<sup>7</sup> "The social affections" and domesticity were important foci of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century ideas about Egypt in England, abetted by popular redactions of archaeological expeditions to Egyptian settlement sites in guide books for tourists, general works on Egyptian history, and even magazines that were acceptable reading for sabbatarian households who observed Sunday as a day of complete rest. Ancient Egyptian houses were compared to modern ones, and shops to those in London, even down to "by royal appointment" signs fixed outside.<sup>8</sup> This blurring of the boundaries between past and present, between Egypt and England, sets up the possibility for identifications with Cleopatra unmediated by temporal and cultural difference. A minimum of cultural adjustment is required in order to identify with Cleopatra, because she inhabits an ancient world so closely related to the contemporary.

This tendency can perhaps be seen best in Victorian stage burlesques of the Cleopatra story. As performance pieces that included many of the same mise-



FIGURE 17. Cigarette paper (1912).  
Private collection of D. Montserrat.  
Photo by Dominic Montserrat.

en-scènes as early films, burlesques are a useful place to investigate the cultural antecedents of filmic Cleopatras; also, their part in the development of the Cleopatra myth has received almost no attention. Burlesque was a theatrical form that combined political and social satire, broad (sometimes bawdy) comedy with spectacular sets and costumes, music and dance numbers. Often they took caricatures of famous literary texts as their point of departure, and Cleopatra's story was obviously ripe for appropriation by the genre. The titles of some of the Victorian burlesques give a sense of the way they conflate ancient and modern, thus allowing for the possibility of audience identification: *A Grand, New and Original Burlesque Entitled Antony and Cleopatra, or, His-tory and Her-story in a modern Nilo-metre* (1866); *Antony & Cleopatra: A Classical, Historical, Musical, Mock-Tragical Burlesque* (1870); *Antony and Cleopatra Married and Settled* (1885); *Miss Cleopatra: A Farce* (1891). At the center of all these burlesques

lies the humorous projection of the luxury and grandeur that was Cleopatra's Egypt onto modern domestic life and manners. One episode in James Draper's *Antony & Cleopatra: A Classical, Historical, Musical, Mock-Tragical Burlesque* has a maid doing the dusting—but “with a silver-handled dusting brush and gold-embroidered dusting cloth.”

As an illustration of the relationship between Cleopatra, modern women, and commodity culture, one of the most interesting burlesques is Francis Cowley Burnand's *Antony and Cleopatra, or, His-tory and Her-story in a modern Nilo-metre*, first performed at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, London, on 21 November 1866. Burnand (1836–1917) was a prolific man of letters: the author of many burlesques satirizing classical themes (one of them titled *Sappho, or, Look Before You Leap*), he was also an editor of the satirical magazine *Punch*, and was later knighted. His *Antony and Cleopatra* illustrates the filtering-down of a variety of sources about Egypt, combining references from Plutarch and Shakespeare with punning references to contemporary archaeologists, such as Sir Austin Henry Layard. In the burlesque Burnand demotes Antony from a world statesman to a tourist trying to learn a foreign language by staying with a local family. He is first encountered sipping chocolate and trying to learn hieroglyphs out of a book:

I at the language each day take a spell,  
And I'm progressing moderately well;  
The folks are very right, I find, in saying  
That there is nothing that can equal staying  
In a nice native family such as this is  
To learn a language—teaching from the Missis.

In spite of the familiar picture this evokes, the stage directions show that the set was anything but domestic and homely: “Sphinxes support the roof. Steps lead up to a terrace at the back. Beyond the terrace is water. The palace is full of exotics.”

Cleopatra then enters “in an elegant pony-carriage, two little grooms sitting behind” with her son Caesarion, whom she repeatedly scolds like any harassed mother. She is in need of a restorative drink, and Burnand brings Plutarch's famous story of the pearl dissolved in wine right up to date:

CLEOPATRA: I'll feel a little better when I've quaffed  
My new invented drink.

CHARMIAN: A pearl dissolved in wine.  
(*Cleopatra takes off pearl and puts it in cup*)

CLEOPATRA: Yes. Fill up, girl.  
Moderns will call this drink: The early Purl.

Purl was a mixture of hot beer and gin, reputed in nineteenth-century England to cure hangovers and as a general morning pick-me-up. Elsewhere in Burnand's burlesque, Cleopatra is associated with other modern drinks: mint juleps and gin-slings are consumed "in the American fashion," and Cleopatra's beauty is compared to the effervescence of ginger beer, a novelty in the 1860s, when advances in bottling technology stopped it from going flat. Burnand's Cleopatra is, in fact, poised at the limits of the technologies of the day, including, significantly, cosmetic ones:

- ANTONY: Why, it's very strange,  
 But in your hair, don't I observe some change?  
 I know it is a little rude to stare.
- CLEOPATRA: The fashion, Antony. I've bleached my hair.  
 'Tis dyed. The fact, before them [i.e., the slaves] don't remark.
- ANTONY: You've made it light, and wish to *keep it dark*.

As permanently fizzy as the new ginger beer, her dark hair dyed blonde with one of the new patent bleaches, Burnand's Cleopatra is a Cleopatra transposed from the East to the West and made into a modern northern European. Yet at the same time she is still the familiar siren from the unknowable East, as in the scene where she flies into a rage with Antony, who is paying too much attention to studying Egyptian language and not enough to her:

- Put down that book, your brains are getting muddy.  
 D'you want Egyptian characters to study?  
 For if Egyptian character you need,  
 Here's one you'll find mighty hard to read.  
 I change from fair into a storm terrific—  
 In fact, I'm an Egyptian hieroglyphic.  
 Make a shot at my meaning. You've an eye for me.  
 Riddle me, riddle-me-ree, you can't decipher me.

Burnand's polysemic interpretation of Cleopatra prefigures many of her filmic incarnations in some significant ways, especially in its combination of the spectacular with the mundane and the extraordinary with the quotidian. What is striking, in the context of late-nineteenth-century receptions of Cleopatra, is that two distinct versions of her were available. The first and most familiar is the projection of Cleopatra's image to exoticize the modern woman, as exemplified by Bernhardt. The second, less familiar, is the rendering of Cleopatra as everyday by her incorporation into contemporary commodity culture, as the burlesques show. The following examination of a series of Cleopatra films reveals that while early cinema picked up on the first aspect of this tradition, in the cinema of the 1930s and later both aspects were in simultaneous operation.

THE VAMPIRE QUEEN:  
THEDA BARA AS CLEOPATRA (1917)

A publicity blurb released by the Fox Film Corporation in October 1917 to coincide with the opening of its spectacular epic *Cleopatra* asked moviegoers portentously: “What will be your verdict after you see Theda Bara’s portrayal of the passions and pageants of Egypt’s vampire queen?”<sup>9</sup> Both film (now sadly lost) and marketing framed the cinematic representation of the Ptolemaic ruler as a promised authentication of the star image long since established for the American actress. According to film historians, no discursive apparatus existed before 1907 for the production of film stars. By 1914, however, a star system was in place as knowledge concerning the picture-players was expanded and transformed to not only include their acting skills and their personality as constituted across their films, but also address questions about their extra-cinematic existence.<sup>10</sup> Bara was the first American film actress to have a star image manufactured for her by studio press agents, and this image was heavily invested in nineteenth-century Orientalist constructions of Egypt (Fig. 18).<sup>11</sup>

As an industrial marketing device to create and organize audiences for its films, the Fox studio invented an alluring past and an exotic, occult lifestyle for the Cincinnati-born actress. Theodosia Goodman was to star in almost forty of their films from 1915 to 1919, largely in the role of a modern “vamp” or home-breaker who takes pleasure in ruthlessly seducing men, and abandons them, once drained of their fortunes and their will to live, and she was placed under contract both to play and seemingly be the part. Press releases fed to newspapers and fan magazines claimed fantastically that the star had been born at an Egyptian oasis in the shadow of the Sphinx and had sucked the venom of serpents as an infant. Her stage name, they noted, was an anagram of “Arab death.” Her home in Los Angeles (to which she moved in mid-1917) was reportedly furnished in “Early Vampire” ottomans, rugs, and beaded curtains, and reeked with musk. In the presence of the press she would stroke a snake and speak of her attachment to a statue of Amun-Ra. She was not to be seen outdoors in daylight. More specifically, in anticipation of the release of *Cleopatra*, Fox suggested that Bara had received a tribute in hieroglyphs from a reincarnated servant of Cleopatra, then posed her in a museum gazing reflectively at “her own” mummified remains, and quoted their star as proclaiming:

I know that I am a reincarnation of Cleopatra. It is not a mere theory in my mind. I have positive knowledge that such is the case. I live Cleopatra, I breathe Cleopatra, I am Cleopatra.<sup>12</sup>

Drawing on nineteenth-century fantasies of Egypt, the Fox studio dressed its star in the aesthetics of occult ritual, despotic power, a dripping and languid sexuality, and perverse death.<sup>13</sup>





FIGURE 18. Bara's Cleopatra. 1917: Promotional portrait of American actor Theda Bara (1885–1955) wearing an Egyptian headdress and breast plates with a snake design for director J. Gordon Edwards' film, *Cleopatra*. Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images.

Star images are marketing devices in the economy of the film industry, but they are also cultural commodities or discursive sites for the exploration of threatened social values.<sup>14</sup> The particular star image of the vamp (so popular in the 1910s) has been interpreted as an index of the struggle at the beginning of the twentieth century to define appropriate genders and sexualities for an America that, faced with the growth of immigration, feminism, and a multicultural urban life, could no longer sustain a picture of itself as an agrarian, small-town, Anglo-Saxon republic of domesticated wives and puritan husbands. The vamp and her foolish victims played out fears concerning man's frailty in relation to sexuality, and woman's potential power, projected onto Orientalism's Other.<sup>15</sup> The perceived problem of female self-gratification is clothed in the antiquity and occult mystery of Egypt, and the modern woman of the 1910s reassuringly figured as a social hieroglyph, her desires an eternal riddle as indecipherable as the Sphinx.<sup>16</sup> Thus according to surviving descriptions of the opening sequence of *Cleopatra*, after a long shot of the "desert wastes" of Ventura County, the camera races toward the studio-produced pyramids and next the Sphinx, which

then dissolves into the features of Theda Bara (as Cleopatra) suddenly opening her eyes.

The Orient of Fox's *Cleopatra* provides an imaginative field of free play for a shamelessly paranoid, hyperbolic elaboration of American traumas about gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and race,<sup>17</sup> set safely in a distant elsewhere and elsewhere that offers the historical guarantee of woman's ultimate subjugation. In a film that, according to Fox publicity, generally cast Mexicans as Egyptians, "fair-haired Americans" as Romans, and "real negroes" as slaves,<sup>18</sup> Cleopatra is shaped as an alarmingly literal version of the twentieth century's metaphoric vamp. Drawing on the nineteenth-century "man killer" fantasies of Rider Haggard and Victorien Sardou (as well as the more customary Plutarch and Shakespeare), the film's narrative drive displays no fewer than three examples of transgressive female sexuality.<sup>19</sup> For sandwiched between the expected seductions of Julius Caesar and Marc Antony is that of the fictional Pharon who steals from the tombs of his ancestors, the Pharaohs, in order to please his demanding mistress. In an earlier draft of the scenario, still preserved in the archives of the University of Southern California, explicit instructions are given that Cleopatra's love scenes "should be as strong and 'Oriental' as will be allowed. Cleopatra when she did love must have been a 'bear.'"<sup>20</sup>

Driving an Orientalist narrative of a deadly but seductive Egypt, Cleopatra provides seemingly historical justification for a cinematic parade of aggressive female sexuality and a spectacle of erotic excess. Alongside claims that the production cost over half a million dollars, the Fox pressbooks illustrated and dwelt lovingly on the numerous exotic costumes in which Theda Bara could be viewed seducing her on- (and off-) screen admirers:

It was an age of barbaric splendor in everything, and with all the ruby and sapphire mines of the East to call upon, a Queen went robed in brilliance. There is one filmy robe of gold tissue, and with it are worn a perfect outfit of pearls and rubies which are so remarkable a specimen of jeweler's art that they must be seen to be believed. The headpiece of massed pearls with its great cabochon rubies inset in it, matched by the great ruby star worn at the breast, must be seen to be realized.<sup>21</sup>

The accompanying photograph displays Theda Bara so costumed, seated majestically so as to look back and down at the humbled viewer of her jeweled splendors.<sup>22</sup> The star image, film, and marketing that encourage the identification of Theda Bara with Cleopatra can all be read as conforming to the structures of an Orientalist cinema that creates a "colonialist imaginary" and solicits a "gendered Western gaze." The spectator is constituted as a Western traveler who is being initiated into the barbaric splendors of an unknown culture, their gendered male gaze drawn to an East embodied as a mysterious but alluring woman.<sup>23</sup>

In contrast with later studio descriptions of the costumes paraded in "Cleo-

patra” films, the Fox pressbooks do not offer details of jeweler and fabric in terms that a woman could or would attempt to reproduce in her life outside the cinema. They do not solicit from women audiences their own practical identification with the star-as-Cleopatra. Instead the studio press agents fed to fan magazines representative “examples” of audience responses to Bara’s image as Oriental vamp. In *Picture-Play Magazine* for 15 February 1916, for example, an article supposedly written by the star herself talks of letters of abuse received from angry women and letters of love from desirous men. One of the latter, writing all the way from Australia, is said to have declared:

I have gone insane over dreams of you, my Egyptian queen, soul of my soul!  
Without you, life is but a void, and earth a desert drear. Come to my arms, oh,  
Cleopatra; my heart is burning for you! I want you. I want you!

Yet the same *Picture-Play* article also clearly acknowledges that any identification of Bara with a vamping Cleopatra is but an entertaining charade. Bara professes herself amused by letters that suggest some spectators have been duped by her star image. The photographs that illustrate Bara’s account of her birth in the desert sands of Egypt and her subsequently strange life carry captions such as “Theda Bara’s greatest ambition away from the screen is to live down her film reputation—and look as unlike a vampire as possible.” The largely female readership of the magazine is drawn into a community of women utterly aware of the film industry’s machinations. They understand that Theda Bara’s brand of femininity is performative and therefore, if anything, more appealing. Divested of any real dangers, it offers a momentary escape from the domestic constraints of the 1910s into an Orient figured (both on and off screen) as home to a woman of power and sexual passion.<sup>24</sup> Too extraordinary to be imitable, Theda Bara’s performance of *Cleopatra* was the biggest American box-office success of 1917. The most advertised, written-about, and talked-about film of the year formed part of an early-twentieth-century Cleomania that concerned spectator desire but only star identification.

#### GO CLEOPATRA!:

#### CLAUDETTE COLBERT AS CLEOPATRA (1934)

In sharp contrast, a press sheet released by Paramount around November 1934 (and designed to aid exhibitors in selling to British audiences the Hollywood studio’s new release *Cleopatra*) carried the dramatic headline “Season’s Styles Go ‘Cleopatra’! From Head to Toe Fashionable Ladies Emulate Egypt’s Queen.” Below examples of “Egyptian” styles inspired by Paramount’s film, exhibitors were also conveniently supplied with a sample article for placement in national newspapers and women’s magazines:

“Cleopatra” has gone to the ladies’ heads! And to their feet—and into almost every article of apparel, judging by the growing vogue of “Cleopatra” styles, following the release of the Paramount picture of that name, which comes \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ Theatre. Directed by Cecil B. DeMille, it features Claudette Colbert, Warren William and Henry Wilcoxon.

A few of the highlights of the “Cleopatra” vogue are illustrated here in the two dresses designed by Travis Banton for Miss Colbert, and the “Cleopatra” hat and coiffure, the marked influence of Egyptian style and designs is evident in the sandals, jewelry and buckles selected to illustrate the new season’s offerings.<sup>25</sup>

Elsewhere in the studio’s publicity, British exhibitors were notified that Selfridge’s department store had brought out a special “Cleopatra” hat that had been posed on a wax model of Colbert-as-Cleopatra and displayed in a dedicated window of its Oxford Street store in London, while Dolcis had brought out a special sandal for evening dress wear and, for the duration of the film’s run, was displaying it and other “Cleopatra models” in all its shoe shops throughout Great Britain. Similarly the manufacturers of Lux soap and Marcovitch Egyptian cigarettes were running special advertising campaigns that used stills of the star of *Cleopatra* and thereby tied up their products with the glamour of Hollywood’s Egypt. It would be a different and more difficult project to establish whether these tactics did indeed generate a genuine Cleopatran vogue or sell more soap and cigarettes, but proof that they were actually deployed is much easier to find. Another Paramount campaign book, for example, illustrates its suggestions for selling the film with photographs of those shop windows of R.H. Macy & Co. (the smart New York department store) that had been given over to “Cleopatra” gowns and shoes, or “Egyptian” backgammon sets, and to copies of newspaper advertisements for “Jewel-Studded Cleopatra Sandals” or the evening dresses worn by Colbert as the “Queen of Glamour.” By 1934 Cleopatra and her Egypt had been commodified as a glamorous fashion-style that was now widely available for purchase in all good department stores.

The bond between the Hollywood film industry and the institution of the department store was at its most intimate in the 1930s. Film historians generally place the director DeMille at the point of origin of this process whereby a department store aesthetic entered American cinema. During the course of the 1910s and 1920s, DeMille perfected a technique for turning the film frame into a living display window occupied by marvelous mannequins. His stylish sex comedies regularly showcased modern fashions, furnishings, accessories, and cosmetics in fetishized form as commodities. In numerous bathroom and bedroom scenes, DeMille’s glamorous heroines ostentatiously put products to use in an appeal to middle-class female spectators with disposable incomes. His chic sets and costumes in which love affairs were played out received such strong and attractive visual emphasis that they set American consumer trends.<sup>26</sup> By the 1930s, as

women became its core audience, the Hollywood film industry gave female stars a central role both on- and off-screen in differentiating its mass production of films, and in glamorizing commodities and activating their consumption.<sup>27</sup> With the advent of the technology of sound, and in the era of the Depression, such stars had also become less divine and extraordinary in status and appearance, their screen characters more commonly motivated by a credible psychology than by occult possession. Stars continued to be special but now combined the exceptional with the ordinary and the everyday.<sup>28</sup> Claudette Colbert, the Paramount star whose function was to display and endorse a Cleopatra vogue, was among the top five female box-office draws of the early 1930s (and by 1938 Hollywood's highest earner). Her star image was that of a modern American woman who was sleek, sophisticated, witty, resourceful, and chic. Immediately prior to the production of *Cleopatra*, that image had been reinforced by the extraordinary success of her contemporary role as an American heiress in *It Happened One Night*.<sup>29</sup> How then could Cleopatra and ancient Egypt be drawn into the economy of a film industry committed to an aesthetics of commodity display, dominated by modern star images, and driven by a desire to encourage among female spectators the purchase of star-inspired products?

#### TUTMANIA AND NEFERTITIANA

As part of the nineteenth century's colonialist project to claim territories and subjects by their visual reproduction and display, ancient Egypt had already been reified and turned into a spectacle of material abundance in exhibitions in museums and world's fairs, in magic lantern shows, panoramas, dioramas, photography and documentary footage.<sup>30</sup> More recently, the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb and the widespread and persistent dissemination of details of its contents in the mass media (from the famous first report in the *Times* on 30 November 1922 into the early 1930s) gave impetus to the mass production and consumption of Nilotic designs, from ashtrays to ocean liners, from evening gowns to pseudo-Egyptian cinemas. Already in April 1923, American *Vogue* carried the headline "The Mode Has a Rendezvous by the Nile" and predicted that New York fashions would soon be gripped by a taste for the Egyptian.<sup>31</sup> While Tutmania gave modern mass-produced objects a sheen of luxury, exoticism, and exclusivity, Egypt could also be clothed in the ordinary, the everyday, and the accessible. It was precisely this combination of resonances that made Egypt so marketable in British and American mass culture in the 1920s and 1930s. Tutankhamen and Cleopatra were by no means the only ancient Egyptian celebrities on offer to the public. The rediscovery by British archaeologists of the ruins of el-Amarna, the city of the pharaoh Akhenaten and his wife Nefertiti, received unprecedented coverage in magazines and papers on both sides of the Atlantic, such as the

*Illustrated London News* and the *National Geographic* for the duration of the expedition (1921–36). This coverage enabled Akhenaten and Nefertiti to join the pantheon of Egyptian stars, having the required star combination of the ordinary and accessible with the extraordinary and inaccessible.

The archaeological rediscovery of el-Amarna was an important moment in Western appropriations of Egypt. It was the first time that the houses of “real” ancient Egyptians had been revealed—Amarna’s unique archaeology, with many houses but few tombs, enabled its excavators to show the public the homes and workplaces of ancient Egypt’s ordinary people. The articles accompanying their photographs, all written by the archaeologists themselves, explicitly encouraged the reader/viewer to identify with the ancient inhabitants of el-Amarna, a city that was associated with daily life, knowableness, and bourgeois comforts. In the *Illustrated London News* of 6 August 1921, the byline was “Home Life in Egypt 3000 years ago,” and a double-page spread featured a photograph captioned “A convenience as much demanded in Ancient Egypt as modern London: a bath-room of 1350 B.C., the bath being a limestone slab with a raised edge and runnel.” The difference between the excavations at el-Amarna and the clearing of Tutankhamen’s tomb were discussed in the popular press. An article in the large-circulation British newspaper the *Daily Chronicle* (18 June 1923) made this clear. Praising the fact that the publicity surrounding Tutankhamen’s tomb had raised money for the dig at el-Amarna to resume, it went on to say:

This work promises far more interesting results than any so far yielded up at Luxor. Whatever may be thought of the artistic value of the discoveries in the tomb of Tutankhamun, there can be no doubt that the accumulation of such a vast hoard of property in a temple of the dead made a rather unpleasant appeal to the materialistic side of our nature. Investigators at Tell el-Amarna will not be digging among the houses of the dead, but will seek for knowledge among dwellings that were once inhabited by the living.

As well as being associated with daily life, el-Amarna was also associated with glamour and beauty via Egypt’s other most iconic queen, Nefertiti. El-Amarna was the findspot of the famous bust of Nefertiti (now in Berlin), the exemplar for the brunette model’s swept-up coiffure in the magazine article with which we began. Women had begun to identify with Nefertiti’s beauty well before the 1960s, however. She was a popular guise for American women to assume at fancy-dress parties in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>32</sup> Nefertiti appeared as the cover girl for the *National Geographic* and the *Illustrated London News*. In the latter she is dubbed “The Loveliest Woman of Antiquity? A Rival to Helen of Troy” (13 December 1924) and “Ancient Egypt’s Queen of Beauty” (6 May 1933): like a Hollywood star, her celebrity is such that her image needs no identification. Even though dead for over three thousand years, Nefertiti in the 1930s was the focus for a type of



FIGURE 19. *Cleopatra*. 1934: Claudette Colbert (Lily Chauchoin, 1903–96), as she appears in the title role of Cecil B. DeMille’s *Cleopatra*. Costume designed by Travis Banton. Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images.

journalism increasingly reliant on photographs and fascination with celebrity that is also associated with film stars. Apart from her beauty, Nefertiti’s modernity was augmented by the garments of her and her daughters in sculpture from el-Amarna. They wear floating, figure-hugging dresses, similar to the clinging, bias-cut clothes that would be worn by Colbert as Cleopatra.

Given this range of Egypt made available by popularized archaeology in the 1920s and 1930s, it was unsurprising that by the mid-1920s American women were shopping in emporia laden with examples of an Egypt simultaneously commodified and domesticated.<sup>33</sup> Consequently the spectacular art deco sets of DeMille’s *Cleopatra*, awash with feathers, fans, pearls, and leopard skins, evoked

the Orientalist aesthetic of the department store, while Travis Banton's designs for Cleopatra's costumes (elegantly understated, cut on the bias, in soft, smooth fabrics that clung to the contours of Colbert's slim body) could appear to be simultaneously of an Other and of this world (Fig. 19).

The narrative of Cleopatra's relations with Rome could also be adapted very easily to suit the commercial concerns of the Hollywood film industry. For, in her Western tradition, this Ptolemaic ruler was already the supreme historical embodiment of Woman engineered as seductive spectacle—a queen unraveled from a rug for the pleasure of Caesar, a Venus riding on her barge to capture Antony. The union in her person of a seductive sexuality with political power gave Cleopatra special modern currency. Her screen characterization in DeMille's film could incorporate a flattering recognition of the growing economic and sexual independence that American women had been achieving since they won the vote in 1920.<sup>34</sup> At a time when Hollywood was attempting to prove the respectability of cinema and regulate its content in the face of considerable municipal and state censorship,<sup>35</sup> DeMille was able to justify the production of another suggestive sex comedy by putting it in fancy dress and calling it high art. A study guide distributed to schools on the treatment of history in *Cleopatra* claimed for the film the accuracy of a Plutarchian biography and the cultural prestige of a Shakespearean or Shavian drama, but reviewers remarked (often unhappily) upon the privileging of the present that seemed to undercut all such claims: "all the early Romans and Egyptians seem so definitely like modern Americans, all ready for the costume ball" (*New York Herald Tribune*, 17 August 1934). Thus it was not difficult for Claudette Colbert, in keeping with her star image and aided by the modernity of the film's dialogue, to play Cleopatra as a sassy, easy-going, glamour girl who finds herself on a journey between public responsibility and romantic love, nor for female spectators of the thirties to consume her as deserving of imitation.

#### CLEOMANIA FOR SALE

Hollywood pressbooks of the 1930s included articles on the costumes and cosmetics of female stars, suitable for reprinting in women's magazines, that were designed to encourage a *practical*, not just a fantastical, identification between women audiences and the character who appeared on the screen.<sup>36</sup> From 1930 the Modern Merchandising Bureau, acting as a middleman between studios and retailers, regularly adapted screen fashions for promotion in an international mass market. Reproduced in the Paramount pressbook, the Bureau's suggested copy in connection with the costumes designed by Travis Banton for *Cleopatra* declares:



They are lavish, glamorous gowns with authentic details in jewels and trimming. From these we have made exciting adaptations in evening gowns and accessories. Our copies have all the allure of the original with exotic edges rubbed down and subdued into fashions that are definitely 1934 and wearable.

The press books for the 1930s *Cleopatra* provide vivid evidence of how Hollywood's Egypt was brought out of the film frame and the cinema and, after slight adjustments, transferred to retail outlets throughout the United States and abroad in order to encourage a very personal (and purchasable) Cleomania.

Such marketing strategies have been condemned by some feminist film historians as examples of how Hollywood cinema's commodity logic was designed to deflect women's dissatisfaction with their social conditions onto an intensified concern with their bodies and an overriding interest in romance.<sup>37</sup> Other feminist theorizations of the relationship between the female spectacle and the female spectatorship of Hollywood cinema have considered how women moviegoers actually (and actively) responded to the invitation to purchase an apparently traditional feminine identity.<sup>38</sup> On this basis, contradictions have been explored between the narrative drives and the visual styles of films directed at women. Although the narratives of Hollywood cinema often closed with a last-gasp reassertion of male dominance (in DeMille's film, *Cleopatra* eventually gives up politics and patriotism and submits to personal love for a newly virile Antony), their visual discourses of clothing and cosmetics often transcended such conventional narrative structures and frequently paraded before spectators a vision of femininity as masquerade, that is as a mask or dress that must be worn to hide female strength from anxious males. Thus, although DeMille's *Cleopatra* closes with the apparent submission of the queen to tragic romance, Colbert-as-Cleopatra acknowledges in the film that the paraphernalia of her glamorous femininity are designed to seduce Roman statesmen to her political ambitions. In an amusing double-bluff, she even talks to a foolish Antony explicitly of the plans she had had to dazzle him, at the very moment that she proves their usefulness. If we had access to the recollections of those female moviegoers who might once have bought and worn *Cleopatra* sandals, gowns, hair curlers, and hats, who washed with Lux soap or smoked Egyptian cigarettes, it is just possible that they too may have thought of these rituals of femininity as cunning acts of public empowerment. The reviewer of the *New York Herald Tribune* may have caught a glimpse of just such a response to *Cleopatra* when he wrote with clear irritation of its double romance: "In each case the conquering Roman is determined to break the will and the spirit of the Egyptian woman only to find that her wiles are just a bit too much for him."

## LIZPATRA: ELIZABETH TAYLOR AS CLEOPATRA (1963)

Western representations of ancient Egypt have their own history and their own national specificities. Although American cinematic visions of that past often appropriated the structures of Orientalist discourse, until the 1950s (unlike France or Great Britain) the United States had no concrete colonial or political connection with Egypt. Once the United States took on its new postwar imperial role and became heavily invested in the Middle East, present political concerns came to the surface of Hollywood's ancient histories.<sup>39</sup> Thus desires for an Arab-Israeli settlement enter the epic film *Ben-Hur* (1959) in the shape of an amenable sheik who offers support to the film's fictional Jewish hero. Given American concerns about the presidency of Gamal Abdel Nasser and his vision of an Arab nationalism for Egypt, it is no surprise that the *Cleopatra* released by 20th Century Fox in 1963 constructs the political vision of Egypt's earlier leader in less problematic, utterly Western terms. In the first half of the film, before the tomb of Alexander, Cleopatra talks to Julius Caesar of her desire for one world, one nation, one people living in peace. In an early draft of the screenplay, the director Joseph L. Mankiewicz described this Cleopatra as "an early-day Kennedy,"<sup>40</sup> but in response, a newspaper review at the time of the film's release derided her as "a World Federalist at heart,"<sup>41</sup> while ten years later a film historian observed her to be "a kind of Eleanor Roosevelt captivated by the ideal of one-world unity."<sup>42</sup> Most commentators on the film have also observed that its attempt at a contemporary political resonance is both fragmentary and fragile, because the film was radically cut before and after its release, and because whatever political narrative it possessed was utterly swamped by the star image of the film's true protagonist, Elizabeth Taylor.

In her previous screen roles Taylor's ambitions had never exceeded those of romance, nor could her stardom carry a performance of international statecraft.<sup>43</sup> During the 1950s, the narrative and visual style of Marilyn Monroe's films and the extra-cinematic discourses about her (such as film reviews, studio promotions, and mass media publicity) gave that film star a popularity that became an intertext in discourses of female sexuality and even figured in the publication of Alfred Kinsey's reports on sexual behavior and the launch of *Playboy* magazine.<sup>44</sup> By the beginning of the 1960s, however, Elizabeth Taylor's star image had become a common reference point more specifically for discourses of adultery. The high-class prostitute she played in *Butterfield 8* (1960) bore a significant resemblance to the free-living and free-loving playgirl articulated each month in *Playboy* magazine, while the screen character's self-indulgence and freedom from moral constraints appeared to match the manners of the actress herself who was by now notorious for her extramarital affairs and for apparently breaking up the ideal marriage of Debbie Reynolds.<sup>45</sup> Taylor's star status as a serial adulteress was

radically reinforced early in 1962, when rumors of an on-set affair with Richard Burton, one of her co-stars in *Cleopatra*, drew uninvited publicity and within a matter of months had grown into an international sex scandal condemned by both members of Congress and the Vatican. According to a recent resume of the events in *Vanity Fair*, “When Liz Met Dick,” the celebrity scandal was taken up so intensely in the popular press that on front pages worldwide it soon superseded news of John Glenn’s orbiting of the earth or details of the U.S.-Soviet tensions that by year’s end would lead to the Cuban missile crisis.<sup>46</sup> The sex scandal had a significant impact on the production and reception of *Cleopatra* and on the formation of a new superstar image for Taylor as “Lizpatra.”<sup>47</sup>

Ultimately almost three years passed between initial shooting for *Cleopatra* (begun in October 1960) and its premiere in June 1963.<sup>48</sup> At the start of 1962, the studio publicity that was fed into magazines like *Look* and *Vogue* attempted to pre-sell interest in the troubled film by twinning Taylor and Cleopatra as two legendary glamour girls who both enjoyed a fabulously luxurious lifestyle. But, at the very same time, the Taylor/Cleopatra link was being taken out of the hands of the studio and redirected to signify not glamour and luxury but wastefulness and adultery. In February 1962, for example, *The Perry Como Show* ran a comic sketch in which a slave going by the name of Taylor’s husband kept getting in Marc Antony’s way. The opportunities provided by both the shooting of the film and the rhetoric of studio promotions to trope the affair in terms of Cleopatra high farce were too splendid to miss, and in the excitable gossip of newspapers, magazines, and television shows the Ptolemaic queen was reconfigured exactly to match Elizabeth Taylor as a classic Other Woman.<sup>49</sup> This Cleomania, unlike that concerning Theda Bara, operated outside the control of the Hollywood studio. Its apparent escape from the star image 20th Century Fox had attempted to promote made it seem more authentic and, therefore, more like a privileged glimpse of a real Lizpatra.<sup>50</sup>

Stars are cast in Hollywood’s histories not as characters but in character and thus they people the represented past with the present, while extracinematic discourses about them and about the moment of film production further extend the temporality of the time represented into the here-and-now.<sup>51</sup> In the same year as the release of the film *Cleopatra*, two insider accounts of its production were published and widely sold. *My Life with Cleopatra* written (with the aid of the reporter Joe Hyams) by Walter Wanger, himself the producer, and *The Cleopatra Papers: A Private Correspondence* written by two studio publicists, Jack Brodsky and Nathan Weiss, both worked to suggest that the discourses of film-star adultery had infected the film-making process itself, in particular the overnight revisions of the script by Mankiewicz and its performance by the two stars. For example, in a vivid diary-format Wanger recalls what happened on 5 March 1962:

Today we filmed the bath scene [ . . . ]

Cleopatra comes in to see Antony, who is in the bath [ . . . ] They commence a beautiful love scene.

JLM's [Mankiewicz's] dialogue is right out of real life, with Cleopatra telling how she will feel if Antony leaves her. "Love can stab the heart," she says.

It was hard to tell whether Liz and Burton were reading lines or living the parts.<sup>52</sup>

Wanger's biographer notes that his account of events (published before the film opened) is full of petty deceptions designed to help publicize the much-criticized film and its much-maligned star. Given the immense public fascination with the adultery, the producer took up the trope of a Cleopatran romance in order to suggest that cinemagoers could now see that notorious adultery played out before their eyes in Technicolor and on wide screen.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, to coincide with the month in which *Cleopatra* was finally released, 20th Century Fox cooperated in the reprint of a novel about Cleopatra by Carlo Maria Franzero that was illustrated with stills from the film and production photographs showing Taylor-as-Cleopatra *between* takes, as if Taylor had lived Cleopatra off-set as well as on (Fig. 20).<sup>54</sup>

Reviewers certainly read Elizabeth Taylor's performance of the title role as utterly of the present. In a blistering critique, the *New York Herald Tribune* of 13 June 1963 said of Taylor that "out of royal regalia, en negligee or au naturel she gives the impression that she is really carrying on in one of Miami Beach's more exotic resorts rather than inhabiting a palace in ancient Alexandria or even a villa in Rome." For this critic, even the elaborate detail of the sets did not help to place the performances in the past of ancient Egypt: "Even in their most dramatic moment, when Cleopatra and Antony are slapping each other around in her tomb, one's immediate image is of Miss Taylor and Mr. Burton having it out in the Egyptian Wing of the Metropolitan Museum." Interestingly, for our purposes, the critic also scoffs at the "orgy" that takes place on Cleopatra's barge:

skimpy—and not helped one bit by having one of the dancing girls decked out as a double for Cleopatra. We should not be reminded that other girls can look just like Elizabeth Taylor, particularly when she is trying to portray the Queen of Queens.

In her effort to deride the film, the critic clearly missed the full significance of this sequence, which closes with Antony angrily abandoning the fake queen he has just kissed in order to track down the real one in her boudoir. Here, we would argue, is made visible the outcome of the film's opportunistic promotional strategies.<sup>55</sup> By placing so much emphasis on Taylor's new superstar image as Lizpatra, the studio solicited from spectators a hermeneutic reading of Cleopatra's representation on screen, that is an interpretation directed at the discovery of a "real" Lizpatra lying behind the screen performance.<sup>56</sup> The attempt to solicit a Cleopatra look for "other girls" is abandoned, recognized as fake, as a matter of superficial



FIGURE 20. Set of *Cleopatra*. Film actors Richard Burton (1925–84) and Elizabeth Taylor on the set of *Cleopatra*. Photo by Ron Gerelli/Getty Images.

appearance, while the film itself invites us instead to track down the only woman who can now truly embody the Egyptian queen.

#### NOTES

1. Dominic Montserrat died a while after the completion of this essay and before we could initiate a planned monograph together on antiquity in popular culture. I would like to acknowledge here what a great privilege and, more importantly, pleasure it was to have worked with him however briefly.
2. Illustrated in Wyke (2002): 280, fig. 8.1.
3. Cf. an earlier article in *Vogue* for 15 January 1962, which focuses rather more on the supposed

Cleopatra lifestyle of Elizabeth Taylor but also talks in terms of “a new Cleopatra complex” in fashions, hairstyles, and cosmetics. Our thanks are due to Peter Kramer for the very welcome advice he gave on recent literature concerning film stardom and commodity tie-ins.

4. For a broad survey of the reception and appropriation of Cleopatra from antiquity to the present, see L. Hughes-Hallett, *Cleopatra: Histories, Dreams and Distortions* (1990). For a close reading of some specific examples, see M. Hamer, *Signs of Cleopatra: History, Politics, Representation* (1993). On Cleopatra and cinema see Maria Wyke, *Projecting the Past: Ancient Rome, Cinema and History* (1997): 73–109. Some parts of the material in this essay (without the input of Dominic Montserrat) also have been published in Maria Wyke, *The Roman Mistress: Ancient and Modern Representations* (2002): 244–320.

5. Hughes-Hallett (1993): 258. See also Smith’s paper in this volume.

6. Hughes-Hallett (1993): 346–48.

7. W. Osburn, *The Monumental History of Egypt as Recorded on the Ruins of Her Temples, Palaces and Tombs* (1854): 333.

8. D. Montserrat, *Akhenaten: History, Fantasy, Representation* (2000): 55–94.

9. Quoted in F. N. Magill, *Magill’s Survey of Cinema: Silent Films*<sup>1</sup> (1982): 322. Cf. the very favorable verdict on *Cleopatra* in *Moving Picture World* for 3 November 1917, which reproduces the studio description of Theda Bara as acting “the Egyptian vampire.”

10. See esp. R. de Cordova, *Picture Personalities: The Emergence of the Star System in America* (1990).

11. That is, in Edward Said’s terms, the imaginative geography of colonialist discourses, for which see *Orientalism* (1978).

12. Quoted in E. Golden, *Vamp: The Rise and Fall of Theda Bara* (1996): 130. For other accounts of Theda Bara’s star image, see also J. R. Parish, *The Fox Girls* (1971): 17–47; D. Bodeen, *From Hollywood: The Careers of 15 Great American Stars* (1976): 13–28; R. Genini, *Theda Bara: A Biography of the Silent Screen Vamp* (1996).

13. For a convenient summary of nineteenth-century fantasies of Egypt, see L. Meskell, “Consuming Bodies: Cultural Fantasies of Ancient Egypt,” *Body and Society* 4.1 (1998): 64–67. For a more detailed treatment of visual realizations of Cleopatra see J.-M. Humbert, M. Pantazzi, and C. Ziegler, eds., *Egyptomania: Egypt in Western Art 1730–1930* (1994): 552–81 and H. De Meulenaere, *Ancient Egypt in Nineteenth Century Painting* (1992).

14. For theories of film stardom, see esp. R. Dyer, *Stars*<sup>2</sup> (1998); and C. Gledhill, ed., *Stardom: Industry of Desire* (1991).

15. On cinema’s vamps, see S. Higashi, *Virgins, Vamps, and Flappers: The American Silent Movie Heroine* (1978): 55–78; and J. Staiger, *Bad Women: Regulating Sexuality in Early American Cinema* (1995): 147–62.

16. A. Lant, “The Curse of the Pharaoh, or How Cinema Contracted Egyptomania,” *October* 59 (1992): 109–10.

17. We here adapt Peter Wollen’s description of the functions of the Orient in early-twentieth-century visual arts including the scenography of dance, “Fashion/Orientalism/The Body,” *New Formations* 1 (1987): 17. For a feminist and postcolonial cultural critique of Orientalism in cinema, see E. Shohat, “Gender and Culture of Empire: Toward a Feminist Ethnography of the Cinema,” *Quarterly Review of Film & Video* 13 (1991): 45–84; and M. Bernstein and G. Studlar, eds., *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film* (1997), in which the 1991 article by Shohat is also reproduced.

18. Cited from the pressbook produced for the British release of the film that can be found in the Special Collections of the British Film Institute.

19. For nineteenth-century depictions of Cleopatra as a man killer, see Hughes-Hallett (1990): 281–311.

20. USC Film and Television Archive, 20th Century Fox Collection, Box 41, Item 1464.
21. See note 12.
22. Illustrated in Wyke (2002): 276, fig. 75.
23. See esp. Shohat (1991).
24. As argued by G. Studlar in "'Out-Salomeing Salome': Dance, the New Woman, and Fan Magazine Orientalism" in Bernstein and Studlar (1997): esp. 115–19.
25. Several such campaign books for *Cleopatra* (1934) can be viewed in the Special Collections of the British Film Institute.
26. The first history of the relationship between the Hollywood film industry and department store fashions is that of C. Eckert, "The Carole Lombard in Macy's Window," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 3.1 (1978): 1–21. His famous article has been followed by numerous other studies, such as J. Allen, "The film Viewer as Consumer," *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 5.4 (1980): 481–99; M. A. Doane, "The Economy of Desire: The Commodity Form in/of the Cinema," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 11 (1989): 23–33; J. Gaines, "The Queen Christina Tie-ups: Convergence of Show Window and Screen," *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 11 (1989): 35–60; C. C. Herzog and J. M. Gaines, "'Puffed Sleeves Before Tea-Time': Joan Crawford, Adrian and Women Audiences," in Gledhill (1991): 74–91. On DeMille in particular, see also S. Higashi, *Cecil B. DeMille and American Culture: The Silent Era* (1994): 2–4 and 142–78.
27. On the importance of the star system in 1930s Hollywood, see T. Balio, ed., *Grand Design: Hollywood as a Modern Business Enterprise 1930–1939* (1993): 143–77.
28. Dyer (1998): 21–23.
29. J. R. Parish, *The Paramount Pretties* (1972): 92–141; W. K. Everson, *Claudette Colbert* (1976); Balio (1993): 149–50; Hamer (1993): 120–21.
30. Lant (1992): 91–98; Higashi (1994): 154.
31. C. Frayling, *The Face of Tutankhamun* (1992): 10–28. Cf. J. S. Curl, *Egyptomania: The Egyptian Revival: A Recurring Theme in the History of Taste* (1994): 211–20.
32. See G. Stark and E. C. Rayne, *El Delirio: The Santa Fe World of Elizabeth White* (1998).
33. Higashi (1994): 90–92.
34. Hamer (1993): 104–34.
35. R. Maltby, "The Production Code and the Hays Office," in Balio (1993): 37–72.
36. See esp. Herzog and Gaines (1991).
37. Eg. Doane (1989): 26–27, and Gaines (1989): 49–50. For *Cleopatra* specifically, see Hamer (1993): 121–24 and 132–34.
38. See, for example, J. Stacey, *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* (1994), and S. Bruzzi, *Undressing Cinema: Clothing and Identity in the Movies* (1997).
39. Said (1978) and "Egyptian Rites," *Village Voice* August 1983 (reprinted in Frayling [1992]: 276–85).
40. USC Film and Television Archive, 20th Century Fox collection 5042.17. The item is dated 1961.
41. *New York Herald Tribune*, 13 June 1963.
42. F. Hirsch, *Elizabeth Taylor* (1973): 101.
43. For Elizabeth Taylor as film star, see esp. Hirsch (1973); A. Walker, *The Celluloid Sacrifice: Aspects of Sex in the Movies* (1966): 131–45; A. Walker, *Elizabeth* (1990).
44. R. Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (1986): 27–42.
45. Walker (1990): 221–22. Cf. M. Bernstein, *Walter Wanger: Hollywood Independent* (1994): 351.
46. *Vanity Fair* no. 452, April 1998. Cf. Bernstein (1994): 368–69.
47. "Lizpatra" is used by Dwight MacDonald in *Esquire*, February 1965, to describe Taylor's performance of Cleopatra.

48. Full details of the film's troubled production history can be found in Bernstein (1994).
49. For discussion of the *Vogue* piece published on 15 January 1962 and salacious press links made between Cleopatra and Taylor, see Wyke (1997): 101–4, (2002): 307–15. Cf. Hughes-Hallett (1990): 348–50 and 357–60.
50. See Dyer (1986): 61 on the apparent credibility of uninvited publicity concerning star scandals.
51. V. Sobchack, "Surge and Splendor': A Phenomenology of the Hollywood Historical Epic," *Representations* 29 (1990): 35–36.
52. W. Wanger, *My Life with Cleopatra* (1963): 134. See also Wyke (1997): 103–5, (2002): 311–13.
53. Bernstein (1994): 375–80.
54. See for example the British reprint of C. M. Franzero, *Cleopatra Queen of Egypt* (1963), dated June 1963.
55. According to Bernstein (1994): 372–73, after the promotion of hairstyles and costumes in *Look*, *Vogue*, and *Life* early in 1962, Wanger continued to suggest merchandising ideas to sell in connection with *Cleopatra*, but they were all dismissed by the studio.
56. For the concept of the hermeneutic reading of the performance of stars on screen, see de Cordova (1990): 112–13.