

***Ancient Egypt: The Roman Period***  
**The British Museum**

**Egypt became a province of the Roman Empire when Mark Antony and Cleopatra VII were defeated at the Battle of Actium in 31 BC. At this time there was no ruling family living in Egypt, and members of Rome's élite classes were forbidden from entering Egypt without the permission of the emperor, in case they should raise an army against him. Like the Ptolemies before them, the Romans left the religion and culture of Egypt intact. Several of the temples of Egypt were completed by Roman emperors, who followed the style of their predecessors and had themselves represented in the Egyptian manner. The Temple of Isis at Philae is one such temple, the cult of this goddess having been incorporated into Roman religion as a 'mystery cult'.**

The Romans installed their own administrative system, which is well documented in papyri of the period. The greatest changes brought by the Romans were in everyday life and included the introduction of various agricultural implements and practices (Egypt had an important role in supplying Rome with grain) and of iron-working. Egyptian culture gradually became subsumed by that of the Roman empire.