



# Mehmet the Conqueror; Cleopatra: Queen of Kings; Razia: Warrior Queen of India

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Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

These small slim books, very attractive in spite of their rather flat illustrations, set out biographies of 'Heroes from the East' in plain and readable language. Simplified maps help to contextualise the information. Factually, the books are fascinating, providing plenty of intriguing detail about periods of history and areas of geography that have been much neglected within the National Curriculum. When the writers embellish their historical prose with narrative, problems arise. Did Cleopatra really emerge from an unrolled carpet to seek Julius Caesar's protection, saying 'There's a high price on my head'? And did he really reply 'And what a lovely head it is'? There are also difficulties in presenting as 'heroic' a figure like Mehmet, who had his brother murdered on his accession, and passed a law which encouraged sultans for the next two centuries to copy his example. This fact is not evaded, but it does make the later statement 'As a wise ruler, he deeply understood the true meaning of the word "tolerance"' sound a little odd. These points might, however, provide opportunities for thought provoking discussion of history and how it is represented if children are encouraged to read these useful little books in a critical way.

Running Order:

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