

THE CULT OF THE PTOLEMIES IN THE AEGEAN IN THE 3RD CENTURY BC

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Abstract: The cult of the Ptolemies spread in various ways. Apart from the Lagids, the initiative came from *poleis* themselves; private cult was also very important. The ruler cult, both that organised directly by the Ptolemaic authorities and that established by *poleis*, was tangibly beneficial for the Ptolemaic foreign policy. The dynastic cult became one of the basic instruments of political activity in the region, alongside acts of euergetism. It seems that Ptolemy II played the biggest role in introducing the ruler cult as a foreign policy measure. He was probably responsible for bringing his father's nickname *Soter* to prominence. He also played the decisive role in popularising the cult of Arsinoe II, emphasising her role as protector of sailors and guarantor of the monarchy's prosperity and linking her to cults accentuating the warrior nature of female deities. Ptolemy II also used dynastic festivals as vehicles of dynastic propaganda and ideology and a means to popularise the cult. The ruler cult became one of the means of communication between the subordinate cities and the Ptolemies. It also turned out to be an important platform in contacts with the *poleis* which were loosely or not at all subjugated by the Lagids. The establishment of divine honours for the Ptolemies by a *polis* facilitated closer relations and created a friendly atmosphere and a certain emotional bond. The ruler cult also offered many possibilities for Greek cities. Granting kings divine honours was not only an expression of the city's gratefulness for the experienced kindness, but also a way of securing the king's continued favour.

Key words: Ptolemies, Ptolemy II, Arsinoe II, the Aegean area, ruler cult, *poleis*.

Religion was always an important platform for establishing and maintaining contacts between states in the Greek world. It also played an important role in the policies and propaganda of the Hellenistic rulers. One of the tools at their disposal was supporting old traditional cults, both those observed throughout Greece and locally. The monarchs' considerable involvement in the religious life of Greek states, their numerous acts of religious euergetism, the financing of the construction or renovation of temples, and

* The present paper was completed thanks to the support from the National Science Centre (grant: UMO_2012/07/B/HS3/03455).

their support for the organisation of festivals all clearly show that they skilfully used this instrument. However, the new times gave the kings a new weapon: the ruler cult, which was an answer to the new distribution of forces in the sphere of ruling and the emergence of powerful monarchies in the Greek world. The Diadochi had already expertly used the cult of Alexander the Great to legitimise their own rule,¹ and their successors used the cult of their predecessors to strengthen their authority. The development of the ruler cult also opened up interesting prospects in the foreign arena. The ruler cult offered many possibilities not only for the king but also for the Greek cities which initiated the deification of individual kings, particularly in the first generation after Alexander the Great. There is much to suggest that the Diadochi did not pressurise Greek *poleis* into granting them divine honours. Even in the later period the initiative also frequently came from individual cities. Including the king, either alone or with his wife and his ancestors, in the local pantheon of individual *poleis* did not change the legal relationship between the ruler and the city. It is difficult to estimate the significance of the ruler cult in terms of religious feelings, but it was of major political importance. The establishment of divine honours for the ruler or members of his family by a *polis* facilitated closer relations and created a friendly atmosphere and a certain emotional bond.

Of the various dynasties, the Lagids built the ruler cult in the most consistent manner. They also established the most fully formed, complex dynastic cult of all the Hellenistic dynasties. The first steps towards introducing the cult of the Lagid family ruling Egypt were based on the growing Alexandrian cult of Alexander the Great and were taken by Ptolemy I. In approximately 290,² he established the state cult of Alexander,³ which was the basis for further decisive steps taken by his successor, Ptolemy II Philadelphos. Established probably in 272/271,⁴ the cult of the Theoi Adelphoi was an integral part of Ptolemy II's plans for the dynastic cult. Philadelphos did not build a completely new organisational framework for this cult; instead, he linked it to the cult of Alexander the Great. Joint priests performed the ceremonies, and statues of the "divine siblings" were placed in the sanctuary of Alexander the Great in the Lagids' capital city. From that time on, each successive royal couple was included in the cult. The dynastic cult was given its final form by Ptolemy IV; in 215/214 he included the first royal couple, Ptolemy I and Berenike I, in it as the *Theoi Soteres*. The cult became an incredibly important component of the monarchy and one of the most important elements of the politics and religious propaganda of the Macedonian rulers of Egypt. The figure of a charismatic, triumphant king was elevated to a theological dimension, becoming an important factor of legitimising power.⁵ The cult of the Ptolemies also developed in Egyptian temples on the basis of practices from the pharaohs' times after adopting Old Egyptian practices to

¹ Cf. Chaniotis 2003, 434–435; Edelmann 2007, 213–219.

² All dates in this paper, unless otherwise stated, are BC.

³ See Fraser 1972, I: 213–216; Hölbl 2001, 93–94; Edelmann 2007, 254–255. As the titles of their two priests show, this cult was separate from the cult of Alexander as the founder of Alexandria, cf. Edelmann 2007, 255 note 213.

⁴ P. Hib. 199.11–17, cf. Fraser 1972, I: 205, II: 364 note 208.

⁵ Through the dynastic cult, the Lagids brought various aspects of the state under their control (the administrative system, *philois*, the army; Egyptian priests also became connected to the dynastic cult: Hölbl 2001, 95). Placing the name of this cult's priest in the formulae of dating documents emphasised the divine nature of the monarchy and the dynasty's continuity of power.

the new conditions.⁶ From the point of view of Ptolemy's foreign policy, however, the Greek forms of the cult were more important.

In order to estimate the significance of the ruler cult in the foreign policy of the Hellenistic kings, we should distinguish between the cult introduced by *poleis* and the one established by the monarchy itself. Beginning with the first known example, that is the establishment of the cult of Antigonos I Monophthalmos by the assembly of the town of Skepsis in 311, Greek *poleis* very frequently decided to grant the Hellenistic kings divine honours. Worship took on different forms. In the case of the Diadochi, they were most commonly pronounced *isotheoi* and assigned a holy precinct (*temenos*) where an altar or temple was erected; alternatively, an altar and statue of the ruler were placed in an already existing sanctuary devoted to another god. Processions and festivals that included contests (*agon*) and wearing wreaths (*stephanophoria*) were also organised.⁷ The cult was always local, and the assembly's resolution did not make the king god, but proclaimed that he had shown his divine nature in his actions. The Ptolemies, therefore, did not always have to take the initiative of establishing their cult in the Greek world. *Poleis* themselves were also active in this regard; sometimes, it can be presumed, they were inspired by the kings of Egypt or their staff.

The divine honours given to Ptolemy I by the Rhodians are the first instance of the cult of a member of the Lagids. The context of this decision is well known and related to the war fought by the coalition of the Diadochi against Antigonos Monophthalmos and his son Demetrios. In 305, the city besieged by Demetrios turned for support to the other Diadochi, the most actively helpful of whom was Ptolemy, whose ships managed to break through to the Rhodian port three times, bringing military reinforcements and provisions.⁸ In the end, the insular *polis* managed to maintain its autonomy, confirmed by the peace treaty signed in the spring of 304. Although the agreement also stipulated signing an alliance with Antigonos, it did not apply to the war conducted against the king of Egypt.⁹ This was a success not only of Rhodes but also of Ptolemy, who managed to rebuild his prestige a little after the recent military defeats and, importantly, strengthen his image as a defender of Greek freedom. The Rhodians, grateful for the help they had received, established the cult of Ptolemy on the island (after a consultation with the oracle in the Siwah Oasis) and built a place of cult, the Ptolemaion.¹⁰ What is controversial is the information given by Pausanias that this was the first time Ptolemy's name was accompanied by the cult title *Soter*.¹¹ Pausanias' work was written as late as the 2nd century AD, and it has been pointed out that the fact in question is not confirmed

⁶ On the Egyptian cult of the Ptolemies, see Quagebeur 1989; Koenen 1993; Pfeiffer 2008, 77–114; Edelmann 2007, 274–301.

⁷ Cf. decree from Skepsis (*OGIS* 6); the cult of Antigonos Monophthalmos and Demetrios Poliorketes established in Athens in 307 (Plut., *Demetr.* 10.8.13; cf. Habicht 1956, 44.48); honours for Lysimachos adopted by citizens of Priene and Samothrace (*OGIS* 11; *Syll.*³ 372).

⁸ Diod. 20.84.1; 88.9; 96.1; 98.1; 99.2.

⁹ Diod. 20.99.3; Plut., *Demetr.* 22.8.

¹⁰ Diod. 20.100.3–4; Paus. 1.8.6; Ath. 15.696 = Gorgon, *FGH* 515 F 19. The Rhodians also received support from Kassandros and Lysimachos (Diod. 20.96.3), who were also honoured, but only by having their statues erected (Diod. 20.100.2). Wiemer (2002, 92) presumes that the Rhodians may have established the cult after the Battle of Ipsus in 301, since it was only then that the threat from Antigonos was fully eliminated.

¹¹ Paus. 1.8.6.

by any other sources; not by Diodoros, whose work includes a detailed and continuous account of the events of this period, but most importantly not by the documents of Rhodian priests.¹² This further led to questioning of the whole theory that Ptolemy I used the nickname *Soter* during his lifetime, whether as a cult title or simply as a regular epithet. Ptolemy I supposedly received the title *Soter* from his son, Ptolemy II Philadelphos, as late as 263/262.¹³ In fact, in 282 Philadelphos established the cult of his deceased parents, Ptolemy I and Berenike I, as the *Theoi Soteres*,¹⁴ and the title was always associated with both of them, never just the father.¹⁵ The introduction of the epithet *Soter* only in reference to the founder of the dynasty was supposedly related to the changes occurring in the propaganda and ideology of Philadelphos, mainly in the context of his internal policy. At that time, Ptolemy II made his son, also Ptolemy, his co-regent at the expense of his sons from the first marriage to Arsinoe I.¹⁶ Giving Ptolemy I the epithet *Soter* was supposed to make it easier to distinguish between himself and his son and grandson. Additionally, considering the unsuccessful Chremonidean War, this might have been the right moment for evoking his father as the king who had supported the Greeks in their struggle against the Antigonids.¹⁷ Soon after taking these steps, in 262, Ptolemy II reportedly organised a grand *pompe* of great propaganda significance in Alexandria, which is known to us from the account of Kallixeinos of Rhodes.¹⁸ According to this theory, all inscriptions referring to Ptolemy I Soter which cannot be dated with certainty come from the period after 263/262 BC.¹⁹

¹² Cf. mainly Hazzard 1992, 52–56 and 2000, 3–17. His position is accepted by Hölbl 2001, 116 note 79; Wiemer 2002, 9, among others Pachidis (2008, 356 note 1) is also inclined to agree. Earlier, the hypothesis about the Rhodians granting Ptolemy this cult title had almost been accepted as a given, cf. e.g. Habicht 1956, 109; Hauben 1977, 339; Will 1979–1982, I: 201; Berthold 1984, 78; Ellis 1994, 49–50. At present, this position is maintained by Pfeiffer (2008, 49), Hauben (2010) and others. Huss (2001, 239) also accepts that this is a possibility. For the – questionable on paleographic grounds – demotic document from Deir El-Bahari, dated to 28 November 304, cf. Clarysse 1987, 30 note 78. In any case, the title *Soter* stems from the Greek rather than the Egyptian sphere of culture: Huss 2001, 239 note 19. Johnson (2000, 102, 105) accepted the validity of Pausanias' account, but in his opinion this did not imply divine honours (however, cf. Hauben's remarks (2010, 106). For the epithet *Soter* in reference to Ptolemy I see also Muccioli 2013, 94.

¹³ Hazard 1992, 56 note 35; 2000, 3–24.

¹⁴ On this topic, see Müller 2009, 251–262.

¹⁵ Hazzard (2000, 5–6) draws attention to the dating protocol of Ptolemaic documents, poetry (e.g. Call., *Del.* 165–166) and coins minted by Ptolemy II.

¹⁶ The identification of this figure, referred to as “Ptolemy the son” in the sources, is still uncertain. He may have been the son of Arsinoe II from her first marriage to Lysimachos, adopted by Philadelphos; or the son of Philadelphos and one of his numerous lovers; or an otherwise unknown son of Ptolemy II from his first marriage. On this topic, see De Groot 1917/1918; Burstein 1982, 205–206; Huss 1998; Domingo Gyax 2000; 2002; Tunny 2000.

¹⁷ Hazzard (2000, 7–17). In his opinion, it was on Philadelphos' inspiration that Cleitarchus popularised the story that Ptolemy I received the nickname *Soter* because he had rescued Alexander the Great during the war with the Oxydracians (cf. Arr., *Anab.* 6.11.8).

¹⁸ Kallixeinos, *FGH* 627, F2 = Athen. 5.196a-203b. So dates Hazzard (2000, 60). Scholars usually place these events in 283/2–270, see Hazzard 2000, 60–65; Müller 2009, 177. On *pompe*, see Rice 1983, 182–187; Thompson 2000; Müller 2009, 176–205.

¹⁹ Hazzard 1992, 56 note 35; 2000, 5–6. In his opinion, the earliest reliable sources containing the title *Soter* in reference to Ptolemy I are tetradrachms with the legend ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΣΩΤΕΡΟΣ minted in 261/260 r., cf. Mørkholm 1991, 102.

However, at least one of these inscriptions can hardly be dated to the period after 262. The text in question is a decree of the Nesiotic League, which survived in an inscription discovered on the island of Nicouria near Amorgos.²⁰ In the document, the League of Islanders accepted Ptolemy II's request regarding the participation in the festival of Ptolemaia, which he organised in Alexandria in honour of Ptolemy I. In consideration of the contributions made by Ptolemy I, who had returned their freedom and rights to them, the islanders decided to participate in the festival and to declare it of equal rank with the Olympic Games. In the text of the inscription, Ptolemy is referred to as [β]ασιλεὺς καὶ σωτὴρ Πτολεμαῖος. As has been pointed out, the dating of this document to the period after 263/262 is almost impossible, mainly due to the chronology of the careers of the men mentioned in the text, the Ptolemaic *nauarchos* Philokles of Sidon and the *nesiarchos* Bacchon.²¹ The date of the issue of the Nicouria Decree, traditionally accepted as circa 280, is more likely.²² Moreover, the text of the inscription seems to indicate that a new festival was established, rather than an old one being revived. The Ptolemaia, by all accounts, were first organised in 279/278.²³ Finally, the existence of a local cult of Ptolemy with the nickname *Soter* in the Cyclades already circa 280 fits in with the situation in the Aegean at the time. Around 288/287, Ptolemy I had got rid of Demetrios Poliorketes' influence in this region and taken over his control of the Nesiotic League.²⁴ This marked the beginning of the Ptolemaic protectorate of the members of this *koinon*, and, according to the propaganda which the Lagids had used very skilfully since 311, it marked the return of freedom to the insular *poleis*.²⁵ Therefore, there is much to indicate that long before 263/262, the cult nickname had been given to the founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty. Of course, also in the case of the inscription of the League of Islanders we are dealing with an image of Ptolemy I from the time of his son's reign. We cannot definitively

²⁰ IG XII 7, 506 = Syll.³ 390.

²¹ Cf. SEG 53,907 (A. Chaniotis' remarks); Hauben 2004, 38–44. Philokles of Sidon served as an admiral in Ptolemy I's fleet at least from 308, and it is almost impossible that he was a *nauarchos* over forty years later. Additionally, the sources last mention him in 282 (Wörrle 1978, 201–202; Hazzard 1987, 146–147; Grzybek 1990, 124–129) and – significantly – he does not appear in any texts about the Chremonidean War (Hauben 2004, 44). If he had been performing his function at the time, it would be difficult to explain the fact that Patroklos is the only admiral of the Ptolemaic fleet known from this period and conducting military operations to us from the sources. In Bacchon's case, Hermias – another man performing the same function from 267 BC – is attested in the sources. Another problematic figure is Pleiston, the Delphi *archon* appearing in the document declaring the Ptolemaia as Panhellenic games equal to the Olympic ones, issued by the Delphi Amphictyony (FD III 4.357 = CID 4.40). Bousquet (1958, 77–82) dated this event to 269 or 265, but Pleiston was *archon* most likely in 262/261 (Lefèbvre 1995, 179). This would mean that the Amphictyony issued the decree after the date of the first Ptolemaia equal to the Olympic Games (January 262), as put forward by Hazzard (2000, 57).

²² This date is given by Fraser 1954, 55–62; 1961, 141–145; Habicht 1956, 111; Hintzen-Bohlen 1992, 75–76; Huss 2001, 262 note 61; Chaniotis (SEG 53,907); Perpillou-Thomas 1993, 154; Hauben 2004, 38; Meadows 2013, 32, among others.

²³ Rice 1983, 182; Foertmeyer 1988, 39; Huss 2001, 320 note 123; Perpillou-Thomas 1993, 154.

²⁴ Will 1979–82, I: 96; Buraselis 1982, 87–106; Hauben 2010, 108–109; Huss 2011, 173 *contra* Bagnall 1976, 136–138; Meadows 2013, 33.

²⁵ On Ptolemaic propaganda under the slogan of granting freedom to Greek cities, see Grabowski 2008, 37–43.

conclude whether Ptolemy I officially used the nickname *Soter* during his lifetime.²⁶ The official cult of Ptolemy I Soter established by his son Ptolemy II in Alexandria probably had earlier local versions, on Rhodes and in the cities allied in the League of Islanders. This was the first case of a deceased Ptolemy being given an official nickname and cult title, which meant that there were no established principles in this regard and they needed to be worked out.²⁷

Considering the entirety of the religious policy, ideology, and propaganda carried out by Ptolemy II, it is very likely that he was the one to give more prominence to his father's nickname *Soter*. In Philadelphos' Greek policy, evoking his father's achievements as a defender of Greek freedom was a natural thing to do.²⁸ Ptolemy II was the first Lagid to use cults in his political activity to such a significant extent. The individual steps he took with regard to religious policy together form a picture of a multidimensional, deliberately formulated, and consistently developed ideological and propaganda programme. Establishing the cult of his deceased parents, Ptolemy I and Berenike I, as the *Theoi Soteres* was only the first in a series of decisions in this regard. His sister Arsinoe, whom he married in the 270s, played an important role in these plans. We can only speculate about the reasons that led Ptolemy II to take such a step. The marriage to his sister was probably part of the king's planned religious policy with regard to the dynastic cult: the brother and sister were joined in matrimony, following in the footsteps of Zeus and Hera,²⁹ which gave an impulse to the development of the cult of *Theoi Adelphoi*.³⁰ Ptolemy II's actions also show a great deal of concern for the development of the cult

²⁶ Nevertheless, it is very likely that the nickname *Soter* had unofficially been used earlier in reference to Ptolemy I: Johnson 2000, 106 (the cult of Ptolemy I was, however, undoubtedly official, cf. Hauben 2010, 107–108).

²⁷ Cf. Hauben 2004, 40; 2010, 111.

²⁸ Apart from Ptolemy I's activities in Asia Minor and the Aegean islands, it is worth mentioning the expedition to Greece in 308, and especially the help given to the Athenians in 287, when they rebelled against Demetrios Poliorketes. Athens owed the following period of twenty-five years of freedom and democracy mainly to Ptolemy I, and then to his son's policy.

²⁹ Allusions to the marriage of Zeus and Hera, present in Alexandrian poetry (cf. Theoc., *Id.* 17.131–134; Call., fr. 392 Pfeiffer), were probably not only an attempt made by the poets associated with the court to justify the king in the eyes of the Greeks (as it is often believed), but also reflected the king's actual intentions. It was also no coincidence that Kallikrates of Samos placed the statues of Ptolemy and Arsinoe opposite the temple of Zeus and Hera at Olympia (*OGIS* I, 26, 27). In the eyes of the Greeks, marriages between the children of the same father but different mothers were not considered incestuous (Seibert 1967, 83, Carney 1987, 420). Marriages between the children of the same parents were regarded differently. In this sense, the siblings' match could have been considered scandalous and a breaking of a certain taboo. For the attitude of the Greeks towards marriage between siblings, see Carney 1987, 420–425; Ager 2005, 1–3.

³⁰ Cf. Seibert 1967, 83; Carney 1987, 430; Hazzard 2000, 89–90; Müller 2009, 128–130. Historians have proposed various hypotheses. On the basis of the accounts of Memnon (*FGH* 434, F 8) and Pausanias (1.7.1), among others, who write that Ptolemy II observed Egyptian customs in marrying Arsinoe, some scholars concluded that the marriage may have been aimed at winning the favour of the Egyptians, for whom sibling marriages were customary. This was the case with e.g. Wilcken 1895, 1283; Macurdy 1932, 118 (who saw this as the Ptolemaic monarchy's move aimed at winning over the Egyptians by referring to the model of the king and queen as Osiris and Isis); Hombert/Préaux 1949, 137; Ager 2005, 17 (who is more cautious). According to Burstein (1982, 211–212), Ptolemy II intended the marriage to unite the descendants of Ptolemy I and his third wife Berenike around him. This would strengthen their position as legal successors of Ptolemy I, who had removed from the throne his children from the marriage to Eurydice (including Ptolemy Keraunos). Droysen (1877–1878, III: 265) is alone in his theory that the marriage to Arsinoe allowed Ptolemy II to lay

of his dead sister, also established by him.³¹ Ptolemy managed to spread the Egyptian form of the cult of Arsinoe in his kingdom;³² he also took steps to ensure the success of the Greek form of the cult. Sanctuaries devoted to Arsinoe were built, the festival of Arsinoeia was organised in her honour,³³ coins propagating her cult were minted,³⁴ and the divine queen and her cult became the subject of poems written by poets connected with the Alexandrian court.³⁵ Most importantly, the king ensured its economic foundations by allocating part of the income from the *apomoira* tax (imposed on the production of wine and fruit across the whole country) to the cult.³⁶ All these steps were successful; the cult of Arsinoe became popular not only in Alexandria, but also throughout Egypt, as indicated by the quite numerous testimonies of private cult.³⁷ From the viewpoint of the Lagids' foreign policy, certain specific features of the cult of Arsinoe were to prove very useful, and Philadelphos knew how to take advantage of this.

Ptolemy II cleverly made dynastic festivals part of his politics and propaganda. They were an excellent vehicle for the dynasty's propaganda and ideology and a means to popularise the dynastic cult. Apart from celebrating the cult in temples, these festivals were the most important way of worshipping rulers as gods. During the celebration of these festivals, the ceremonies of making sacrifices, and processions accompanied by songs appropriate for the festival, the Ptolemies' subjects could have genuine religious

claim to the cities controlled by his sister in 284–281. Carney (2013, 74–80) discusses at length various possible motives behind the marriage.

³¹ In Alexandria, the priestess holding the title of *kanephoros* is attested for the first time in 269 (Hölbl 2001, 103; cf. Fraser 1972, II: 366 note 225; Pfeiffer 2008, 66–67). Pieces of information about the regulation of the cult of Arsinoe are recorded in a decree concerning the public procession of *kanephoros*, fragments of which are preserved in Satyros' work about Alexandrian *demoi* (FGH 631; *P. Oxy.* 2465, fr. 2. col. 1), cf. Fraser 1972, I: 225–226, 228–229. On the cult of Arsinoe Philadelphos, cf. Colombert 2008; Müller 2009, 280–300.

³² On the king's orders, the queen's images were to be placed as *synnaos thea* in all temples (Mendes Stele 12–14) devoted to Egyptian gods. Ptolemy II also erected temples dedicated solely to his deceased sister as a separate Egyptian deity (e.g. in Memphis, see Quaegebeur 1971, 262–270). The popularity of the Egyptian form of the cult of Arsinoe was increased by the frequent identification of the queen with Isis (see Tondriau 1948, 20; Fraser 1972, I: 240–246, 298; Plantzos 1991–1992, 121–122; 2011, 390–391). On Arsinoe's Egyptian cult, see Quaegebeur 1978, 249–254.

³³ The Arsinoeia festival organised in Alexandria and in the Arsinoite nome in the oasis of Fayum is attested in the sources: *PCol. Zen.* 56.4–6; *PCZ* 59. Mentions made by Satyros (FGH 631; *P. Oxy.* 2465, fr. 2. col. 1) probably also refer to this festival, cf. Fraser 1972, I: 229, 232; Perpillou-Thomas 1993, 155–158; Pfeiffer 2008, 72.

³⁴ Cf. Smith 1988, 40; Hölbl 2001, 103; Svenson 1995, 81–82; Müller 2009, 372.

³⁵ Cf. e.g. Call., *Ep.* 14 Gow-Page = frg. 228 Pfeiffer; Ath. 11.497d–e; Gow-Page, fr. 4. See Fraser 1972, I: 239–240, 567–568, 667–668; Stephens 2004; Prioux 2011, 202–214; 218–224. In *The Lock of Berenice*, created already under the reign of Ptolemy III, the divine Arsinoe appears completely naturally as Arsinoe-Aphrodite, which also attests to an already strongly established cult.

³⁶ Koenen 1993, 66–69; Clarysse/Vandorpe 1998, 5–42.

³⁷ The people's acceptance of the cult is also proved by the numerous surviving *oinochoai* with relief representations of Arsinoe (Fraser 1972, I: 241–245; Plantzos 1991–1992, 120–122). For *oinochoai* with representations of Ptolemaic queens see Thompson 1973. Some street names in Alexandria also referred to Arsinoe and, possibly, shrines of the cult of Arsinoe were built in these streets which were then named after her (Fraser 1972: 35, 237–238). In Egypt several towns bore the name of Arsinoe, although not all are necessarily related to Arsinoe II (cf. Mueller 2006, 100–112, 141). For the private cult of the Ptolemies, cf. also Kyrieleis 1975, 145–147.

experiences related to the cult of their rulers, and most of all could witness the dynasty's splendour in all its glory. Importantly, this did not apply only to the inhabitants of Egypt. The festivals were also attended by visitors from the whole Aegean Basin, both those who came to Egypt on business and those who participated in the festivals as official representatives of their *polis*.³⁸ In this way, festivals became an opportunity to show off prestige and Ptolemaic *tryphé* not only to their direct subjects, but also to citizens of states associated with the Lagids and people from outside the sphere of their direct influence. It was for their support that the Hellenistic powers competed, fighting a political, military, and propaganda campaign. The Lagids organised a number of dynastic festivals, some of which were initiated by Ptolemy II.³⁹ During his reign, the Arsinoeia (devoted to his deified sister-wife), the Theadelphia⁴⁰ (connected with the cult of *Theoi Adelphoi*), and most notably the Ptolemaia, the most important festival of the Ptolemaic dynasty, began to be organised. The latter was established to honour the recently deified Ptolemy I and Berenike I; it was the measure of Philadelphos' success in popularising the Ptolemaia in the Greek world that they were given the rank of Panhellenic games, equal to the Olympic ones.⁴¹ The invitation to participate in the Ptolemaia was addressed to the whole Greek world, which was of enormous importance for the Ptolemaic political activity and propaganda in the foreign arena.⁴² The Ptolemaia quickly rose to the rank of the most important festival of the dynasty and gave the impetus for building the image of Alexandria as the centre of the Greek world, and the Lagid dynasty as powerful kings, with means of conducting a large-scale foreign policy and acting as defenders of Greek freedom. Incidentally, the Ptolemaia were not only held in Alexandria or in Egypt.⁴³ The League of Islanders organised their own Ptolemaia on Delos from the 270s, and in the cult celebrations held there Ptolemy II was connected with the deceased Ptolemy I.⁴⁴ Additionally, probably from 279 onwards, the Ptolemies themselves also sponsored the organisation of the Ptolemaia different from the ones organised by the League.⁴⁵ From 224/223 onwards, the Ptolemaia began to be held in Athens; the celebration of this festival is attested (perhaps with a break in 127/126–101/100) until the 90s.⁴⁶

A special place in Ptolemy II's religious propaganda was given to his deified wife, Arsinoe II. The deceased queen was identified with various goddesses, but the Ptolemaic foreign policy undoubtedly saw the most potential in linking the cult of Arsinoe with the

³⁸ For instance *theoroi* of the Nesiotic League, following the decision recorded in the Nicouria Decree mentioned above (*IG* XII 7, 506 = *Syll.*³ 390), and *theoroi* from Xanthos (*SEG* 36,1218; Bousquet 1986, 22–27).

³⁹ On royal festivals in Ptolemaic Egypt, see Dunand 1981; Perpillou-Thomas 1993, 151–163; Pfeiffer 2008, 71–73.

⁴⁰ Perpillou-Thomas 1993, 154–155.

⁴¹ *FD* III 4.357 = *CID* 4.40.

⁴² *IG* XII 7, 506 = *Syll.*³ 390. On the place of Ptolemaia in the Lagids' foreign policy, cf. Will 1979–1982, II: 202–203.

⁴³ Ptolemaia were held in various places in Egypt: Perpillou-Thomas 1993, 153 note 10.

⁴⁴ *IG* XI.4.1038.17; 1043.14. See Bruneau 1970, 531–533.

⁴⁵ Bruneau 1970, 519–523. Yet another kind of the Ptolemaia (which were, however, different) was also organised on Delos. They were founded by Ptolemy II and Ptolemy III and devoted to local Delian gods, see Bruneau 1970, 523–525; Buraselis 1982, 143–144; 146–147; Bringmann 2000, 85; Hölbl 2001, 117 note 94.

⁴⁶ Pélékidis 1962, 288–300; Habicht 1983, 107, 109 note 139; Kotsidu 2000, 67–68. Ptolemaia were also organised in Cyrena and on Thera: Fraser 1972, I: 233.

cult of Aphrodite, particularly in the form connected to Aphrodite's role as a protector of sailors, the goddess of the sea and the sky who helps with navigation.⁴⁷ The goddess was worshipped as such in various parts of the Greek world, under different epithets.⁴⁸ In the case of Arsinoe, the two most frequent ones were *Euploia* and *Zephyritis*.⁴⁹ The latter was, of course, connected with the shrine at Cape Zephyrion, famous from literary accounts.⁵⁰ It seems that the cult of Arsinoe at Zephyrion, organised during her lifetime, was a private one. It was an initiative of one of the royal philoi, a commander of the Ptolemaic fleet, Kallikrates of Samos.⁵¹ It is problematic to say whether this was Kallikrates' original idea, or whether he was following the king's orders. In any case, the initiative fitted Ptolemy II's general programme perfectly. Even though the location of the impressive Arsinoeion is uncertain, it can be supposed to have been situated in the Alexandrian port, which would have been in keeping with the religious programme emphasising the role of the late queen as a protector of sailors. It was not a coincidence that the king ordered an obelisk from the times of Pharaoh Nectanebo II to be placed in front of the sanctuary.⁵² The obelisk became an important landmark in the port and was visible for the ship crews entering Alexandria.⁵³ Like Arsinoe Zephyritis from Cape Zephyrion, Arsinoe Philadelphos from the Alexandrian shrine protected all sailors coming to and going from Alexandria. Ptolemy also carefully designed the statue of the queen to be placed in the sanctuary. Arsinoe was holding the horn of plenty, symbolising her role as the guarantor of the monarchy's prosperity.⁵⁴ The cult of Arsinoe Philadelphos also took on the aspect of Agathe Tyche.⁵⁵ Agathe Tyche, also depicted with the horn of plenty, provided a good complement to the aspect – widely promoted by Ptolemy II – of the cult

⁴⁷ In the case of Greek cults, Arsinoe was primarily identified also with Hera, Demeter, and Artemis, see Tondriau 1948, 15–21. The mechanism of identification is not always clear, see Fraser 1972, I: 237–246; Plantzos 1991–1992, 120–121.

⁴⁸ Pirenne-Delforge 1994, 431–439.

⁴⁹ Posidipp. 39; 116; 119; Call., frg. 5; frg. 110 Pfeiffer. Posidippus' epigrams suggest a full assimilation of Arsinoe and a goddess (Aphrodite is not mentioned by name, there is Arsinoe Euploia and Kypris Arsinoe, cf. Bing 2002–2003, 257). The dedication to Arsinoe with the cult epithet *Akraia* ("At a cape") suggests a connection with the temple at Cape Zephyrion. The epithet was modelled on Hera's epithet *Akraia* at Cape Perachora in Corinth, or Aphrodite at Cnidus, on Cyprus and at Troezen: Paus. 1.1.3; 2.32.6; Strab. 14.6.3, cf. Fraser 1972, I: 240; Pirenne-Delforge 1994, 181–183; 362–363. The queen seems to have been the patron of the cult of the Dioscuri, Helen of Troy's brothers, also patrons of sailors. According to Kallimachos' description, they were the ones who took Arsinoe to Olympus after her death (Call., frg. 228 Pfeiffer). There are two surviving dedications from the times of Ptolemy II and Ptolemy III, in which the Dioscuri are presented as the *synnaoi theoi* of the kings (Fraser 1972, I: 207). Poets of this period frequently made allusions to Arsinoe and Helen in their works, e.g. Theocr., *Id.* 15.110–111, cf. Griffiths 1979, 86–91; Prioux 2011, 219–222.

⁵⁰ Posidipp. 39; 116, 119 Austin-Bastianini; Ath. 318d, 497d–e; see Fraser 1972, I: 239–240, 568–571. It is difficult to determine whether the sanctuary was the most important place of the cult of Arsinoe, since our information about it comes almost solely from poetry and it is not easy to conclude unequivocally whether the epigrams reflected the actual status of the temple or created it to a large extent. Aphrodite Euploia was not Arsinoe's only connection to sailing.

⁵¹ Hauben 1970, 63–66; 1983, 111–114; Weber 2011, 87–88; Carney 2013, 99.

⁵² Plin., *HN* 36, 67–69.

⁵³ This could also be a symbolic reference to the programme towards the Egyptians already implemented by Ptolemy I, cf. Turner 1984, 126; Hölbl 2001, 78–79; Huss 2001, 216–218.

⁵⁴ Ath. 11.497b–c.

⁵⁵ Cf. e.g. inscriptions on faience *oinochoai*: Fraser 1972, I: 241–245; Plantzos 1991–1992, 121–123.

of his dead sister as the one who ensured prosperity. This aspect was very helpful for building an image of a powerful and rich dynasty.

Arsinoe was also depicted as a warrior and linked to those Greek cults that emphasised this aspect of female deities.⁵⁶ Accentuating this image of Arsinoe was connected with Ptolemy II's Greek policy. The king supported the resistance of the Greek *poleis* against the Antigonids' hegemony. Although it is difficult to claim that, by deciding to organise a coalition and to start the Chremonidean War, Ptolemy was implementing his dead sister's political plan, the inscription with Chremonides' *psephisma* indicates that the queen may to some extent have been involved in her brother's schemes.⁵⁷ Ptolemy must have thought it useful to highlight his sister in this context and to present her as the divine protector of his actions in the Aegean.⁵⁸ Street names in Alexandria which took on Arsinoe's cult epithets were also meaningful. Some of them invoke the queen's identification with Athena: *Nikaia*, a reference to Athena *Nike*; and *Chalkioikos*, which was an epithet by which the goddess was known only in Sparta.⁵⁹ The former epithet stressed the key importance of victory in the ideology of a Hellenistic monarchy. The latter in all probability symbolically emphasised Sparta's place in the Lagids' policy, particularly important during the Chremonidean War as the main member of the anti-Macedonian coalition.

The islands in the Aegean Sea occupied an important place in the policy of Hellenistic states. They were a key region for the Ptolemies and for their maritime policy, for their activities in continental Greece throughout the 3rd century, and for protecting dominions on the shores of Asia Minor. The islands were also a bridge to mainland Greece. Consequently, the Ptolemies attached much importance to maintaining friendly relations with the island world and used various instruments to achieve their goals. The Egyptian fleet operating in the Aegean Sea, the protectorate of the Nesiotic League, fleet bases on other islands, and acts of euergetism were the basic means of maintaining the presence of the Ptolemaic influence in the area. The cult of Arsinoe, strongly linked to her role as protector of sailors, fit these purposes perfectly.⁶⁰ The cult of Ptolemy's sister in the

⁵⁶ Posidipp. 36. The description is probably of a cult statue of Arsinoe. Posidippus gave her a spear and a shield. These were the attributes of Athena and Aphrodite, highlighting the goddesses' function as defenders and their victorious disposition. In this case, the goddess in question was probably Aphrodite, cf. Bing 2002–2003, 260; Barbantani 2005, 149; 2008, 116; Müller 2009, 219; *contra* Stephens 2004, 167–168 (who believes this is Arsinoe stylised as Athena). Statues of armed Aphrodite were found in Sparta, Corinth and on Kythira (Paus. 2.5.1; 3.15.10; 23.1; Strab. 8.6.20). For representations of armed Aphrodite in Greek religion and art see Flemberg 1991, 15–23.

⁵⁷ *IG* II.687, 16–17 = *StV* III 476. The text of the document mentions, among others, Arsinoe's efforts supporting the freedom of the Greeks, and it was not necessarily an empty phrase, cf. Carney 2013, 93. The reference to Arsinoe could be required for rhetorical reasons, cf. Paschidis 2008, 168. Arsinoe's influence on her brother's policy, especially on the outbreak of the Chremonidean War, has been exaggerated (e.g. Bouché-Leclercq 1903–1907, I: 188; Tarn 1913, 262, 293; Bevan 1927, 61, 64; Macurdy 1932, 111–130; Longega 1968, 83–95). On Arsinoe's influence on Ptolemaic policy, cf. Burstein 1982; Hauben 1983, 99–111, 114–127; Carney 2013, 91–95.

⁵⁸ Cf. also Caneva 2013, 280–311.

⁵⁹ Paus. 3.17.2–7; cf. Fraser 1972, I: 35, 237, 238.

⁶⁰ Mitford (1938, 31–32); Avraamides (1971, 66) concluded that Arsinoe's deification and the popularity of her cult resulted from her management in the First Syrian War (Arsinoe's management was emphasised by Macurdy 1932, 119; Huzar 1966, 337). However, there is no strong evidence for the queen's involvement in

region is also quite well attested. On Delos, the League of Islanders set up the Philadelphia festival devoted to Arsinoe Philadelphos, Apollo, Artemis, and Leto. A temple of the cult of Arsinoe, a Philadelphion was also erected.⁶¹ The festival of Arsinoeia was held on Thera.⁶² Marble and limestone slabs with the inscriptions *ArsinÔhej Filadšlfou* and fragments of altars devoted to her come from Delos and Thera, as well as Amorgos, Ios, Lesbos, and Paros.⁶³ After 267, the cult of Arsinoe was also introduced on the island of Kos, closely connected with the dynasty.⁶⁴ Finally, the cult of Arsinoe Philadelphos is well attested in various parts of Cyprus, the most important and longest-held dominion of the Ptolemies, which was also the main centre of the cult of Aphrodite.⁶⁵

Foundations or re-foundations of new settlements named Arsinoe also attest to the complexity of Ptolemy II's plan with regard to using the cult of Arsinoe Philadelphos as one of the factors consolidating the dynasty's influence in the Aegean basin and to its extensive propaganda aspect.⁶⁶ The settlements were mainly ports which were used by the Ptolemaic fleet, which ideally matched the image of Arsinoe as the guarantor of safe sailing.

The success which the cult of Arsinoe enjoyed outside Egypt was not solely the result of Ptolemy II's deliberate efforts. Like the dynastic cult of the Lagids, this cult also developed partly independently. Considering the enormous religious activity of Philadelphos and his policy in the Aegean, there is no doubt that he was largely responsible for the popularity of the cult of Arsinoe in the area.⁶⁷

Arsinoe II was not the only one; other Ptolemaic queens also had an important place in the cult.⁶⁸ The identification of Arsinoe II with Aphrodite or Agathe Tyche was not exceptional, either.⁶⁹ The steps taken by Ptolemy IV to develop the cult of his mother, Berenike II, are interesting. He is supposed to have built a temple to Berenike II nick-

the war in this region. Most probably the popularity of Arsinoe's cult was the result of Ptolemy II's deliberate efforts.

⁶¹ Bruneau 1970, 528–530; 533–534; Fraser 1972: I, 241; Hintzen-Bohlen 1992, 81.

⁶² *IG* XII.3.1343.

⁶³ *IG* XI.4.1303; XII.2.513; XII.3.462; XII.5.16; *IG* 5.264; XII.7.99; cf. Robert 1966, 202–203; 206–207, no. 167, 168; Brun 1991, 101–102, no. 2. Similar slabs are known from Cyprus and Miletos: *SEG* 54,1531; 1555; Anastassiades 1998, 132.

⁶⁴ RC 21. Temenos and a priestess of Arsinoe are attested. See also Segre 1937, 286–294; Kotsidu 2000, 241–242, no. 159.

⁶⁵ Especially considering the fact that the temple of Arsinoe at Cape Zephyrion was dedicated to Arsinoe-Aphrodite Kypris (Posidipp. 116; 119; Call., *Del.* 21, cf. Mineur 1984, 70–71). However, the most attested *epiklesis* of Arsinoe in Cyprus was *Philadelphos*, and evidence of her identification with Aphrodite is rare, cf. Anastassiades 1998, 132–140. The cult of Arsinoe survived on the island for a long time, at least until the middle of the 2nd century, cf. Nicolaou 1993, 228 E).

⁶⁶ These were Arsinoe/Methana in Argolid, Arsinoe/Koressos on Keos, Arsinoe/Patara in Lycia, Arsinoe in Pamphylia, Arsinoe in Cilicia, two on Crete (Arsinoe/Rithymna and Arsinoe Lyktou) and three on Cyprus (Arsinoe/Marion, Arsinoe near Salamina and Arsinoe near Palaipaphos), cf. Marquillae 2008, 58–59; Grabowski 2013, 70–72; *contra* Mueller 2006, 158.

⁶⁷ Poets praising Arsinoe's virtues and popularising her cult in their verses also played a part. Their works were often connected with geopolitics and the dynasty's propaganda, cf. e.g. Kallimachos on Keos (*Aetia* 3, frg. 65–72 Pfeiffer, cf. Asper 2011, 158, 163); Posidippus about Methymna (37, cf. Bing 2005, 127–131). On the image of Arsinoe in the works of the Alexandrian poets, cf. Stephens 2004; Prioux 2011, 210–224.

⁶⁸ Pfeiffer 2008, 58–64.

⁶⁹ Tondriau 1948, 14, 21, 23, 26–28; Pfeiffer 2008, 62–63.

named Sózousa (*Saviour*) on the coast not far from Alexandria.⁷⁰ The goddess in question was probably a patron of sailors, so she had a similar role to Arsinoe Euploia and Arsinoe Zephiritis.⁷¹ Ptolemy IV probably followed in the footsteps of his grandfather in his foreign propaganda.⁷²

The Aegean basin was the heart of the rivalry between the Hellenistic powers. This was where the vested interests of all the monarchies were concentrated. Maintaining influence over this area provided access to the local recruitment reserves. After the conquests of Alexander the Great, the *oikumene* expanded considerably, but the heart of the Greek-Macedonian world kept on beating in Greece and Asia Minor. Presence in the Aegean basin was therefore also a question of prestige, which is no small matter to any power. Consequently, all available tools needed to be used in order to mark one's presence in the region. This was vital not only to maintain influences in the cities controlled by the Egyptian kings, but also to keep up contacts with the other *poleis* in the region. The Ptolemies had diplomatic relations with numerous cities which were not under their control. A stream of ambassadors from various *poleis* kept coming to Alexandria. The key to success was to combine military presence and skilful diplomacy. Building the prestige of the dynasty and a network of contacts was facilitated by playing the role of a protector of Greek *poleis*, by acts of euergetism, and by promoting Greek culture in Alexandria on an unprecedented scale. An active religious policy also contributed to strengthening such contacts.⁷³ The cult of the Ptolemies became one of the instruments used for conducting political affairs in the region.

The skilful combination of various religious motifs in their politics and propaganda and the Lagids' presence in the Aegean in the 3rd century BC resulted in the development of the Ptolemaic cult in the region, particularly in the cities connected (to a larger or smaller extent) with the dynasty. Epigraphic sources confirm the divine honours given to Ptolemy I in Miletos circa 294–288,⁷⁴ on Delos,⁷⁵ and perhaps on Naxos circa

⁷⁰ Zen 3.94 = Paroem I, p.81.

⁷¹ The epithet Σώζουσα also indicates an attempted assimilation with Isis (Fraser 1972, II: 238), and a vital element of the cult of Arsinoe II was her identification with this particular goddess.

⁷² It cannot be ruled out that Ptolemy IV might have re-founded Arsinoe Lyktou and (or) Arsinoe/Rithymna, which had earlier been founded by his grandfather (in 220–219 the city was destroyed by Knossos: Plb. 4.53.3–54.3). Cf. Tscherikover 1927, 7 (Arsinoe Lyktou); Le Rider 1966, 140; 1968, 239 (Arsinoe/Rithymna); Bagnall 1976, 119, 201; Huss 1976, 154–156; Cohen 1995, 133–134, 139.

⁷³ The Ptolemies provided financial support for the construction of the temple of Apollo at Didyma, the temple of Heracles at Herakleia Pontica and the Asclepeion on Kos. They were also generous to the sanctuaries on Samothrace, Delos and Rodos, in Olympia, Miletos, Oropos, Mylasa and Thespiiai. They also founded the Ptolemaia festival on Delos in honour of the local gods and Ptolemy II supported Panathenaia. See Bringmann/von Steuben 2000, no. 16, 57, 79, 85, 143–150, 204, 236–237, 243, 273, 300, 310, cf.; Bruneau 1970, 531–533; Swinnen 1973, 128–130; McCredie 1992, 238; Frazer 1990; Schmidt Donaus 2000, 19–20, 140–143, 200–205.

⁷⁴ *I. Milet* I 3.139 = *RC* 14. The inscription dates back to 262/261, but the cult could have been established already circa 294–288 BC, cf. Habicht 1956, 114–115; Kotsidu 2000, 385, no 264; Muccioli 2013, 83 note 264 *contra* Bagnall 1976, 173 note 46; Hazzard 2000, 6 note 16. For the relations between Ptolemy I and Miletos, see Seibert 1971.

⁷⁵ *IG* XII 7, 506 = *Syll.*³ 390; *IG* XI 4, 1038; 1043; Kotsidu 2000, 203–208, no. 131.

287–280.⁷⁶ Ptolemy II's support for Byzantium led to the grateful *polis* honouring him with a cult and a temple devoted to him.⁷⁷ Epigraphic material also suggests sacrifices made in connection with his cult on Delos.⁷⁸ On Lesbos, in turn, sacrifices were made, the Ptolemaia and *agon* were organised from the times of Ptolemy IV, and priests of the Ptolemaic cult are attested.⁷⁹ The cult of *Theoi Adelphoi* had a significant place among the cults observed in Arsinoe and Nagidos in Cilicia; in the former, the cult of Arsinoe was eponymic.⁸⁰ The cults of *Theoi Soteres*, Ptolemy II and Berenike II, as well as Ptolemy IV Philopator, are attested on Samos, although in this case it was less likely an independent initiative of the *polis* and more probably an effect of the city's dependence on the Ptolemies.⁸¹ On Crete, the cult of Ptolemy III and Berenike II as the *Theoi Euergetai* is attested in Itanos and Phalasarna.⁸² Historical sources show a development of the cult of this king in the Aegean, which particularly corresponded to his successes during the Third Syrian War. A priest of the cult of Ptolemy III appeared even in Ainos on the Thracian coast.⁸³ This ruler's most spectacular success in terms of the Ptolemaic cult came in the form of the honours he was granted by the Athenians. Athens was always at the heart of the Greek policy of the Lagids, including Ptolemy III, and it played a vital role in Ptolemy III's complicated diplomatic activities in continental Greece in the 230s.⁸⁴ The king probably gave financial support to the Athenians in 229, when they were overthrowing Macedonian rule,⁸⁵ and his response to the alliance between Macedonia and the Achaean League was to tighten the ties with the Aetolian League and Athens. A new *phyla*, *Ptolemais*, and a *deme* named *Berenikidai* were created in Athens, the cult of Ptolemy III and Berenike II was established with its own priestly office, and the king's statues were placed on the Athenian agora and in Delphi; the king in turn sponsored the construction of a *gymnasion* called the Ptolemaion. Finally, from 224/223 onwards, the

⁷⁶ *I.Cos* 16; Kotsidu 2000, 385, no. 172. However, this case may have been an individual sacrifice, without the introduction of a proper cult. The case of Kalymnos is even more debatable (Habicht 1956, 113–114; Kotsidu 2000, 385, no. 345).

⁷⁷ Steph. Byz., s.v. Ἀγκυρα; Dion. Byz. 2.34; see Habicht 1956, 116–121 (dates the establishment of the cult to 280/279 and associates this event with providing support against the Galatians); Will 1979–1982, I: 147, 149 (dates to 271/270); Wörrle 1975, 69 note 45 (early 70s).

⁷⁸ *IG XI* 4, 1038. We do not know the exact circumstances of the establishment of the cult, but it happened during the Ptolemaic hegemony in the Aegean Sea.

⁷⁹ *IG XII* 2, 527; 528; XII Suppl. 36; 115; PP 15015 (Eresos); 15020 (Methymna); Brun 1991, 99–101, no. 1; Labarre 1996, 57–58; Kotsidu 2000, 230–233, no. 154.

⁸⁰ *SEG* 39,1426; cf. Jones/Habicht 1989, 326; Cohen 1995, 363.

⁸¹ Transier 1985, 123–125; Hallof/Mileta 1997, 259–260; Kotsidu 2000, 262–264, no. 179; 267–268, no. 181; 466, no. 348. It is unknown whether there was a separate *temenos* devoted to the *Theoi Soteres*, and most importantly whether the cult was established by the city or was a part of the dynastic cult; after their death Ptolemy III and Berenike II were worshipped on Samos as the *Theoi Euergetai*. One of the inscriptions, honouring Ptolemy III, also includes references to the cult of *Theoi Adelphoi*, but its content does not imply that such a cult was observed there (Transier 1985, 123).

⁸² *I.Cret* II, 2; III, 4; Habicht 1956, 122; Kotsidu 2000, 284–286, no. 195–196.

⁸³ Hölbl 2001, 50.

⁸⁴ See Beyer-Rothhof 1993, 90–195; Grabowski 2012.

⁸⁵ Possibly by Aratus, who handed over 20 or 25 talents to the Athenians (Plut., *Arat.* 34.6; Paus. 2.8.6), *contra* Habicht 1997, 174.

festival of Ptolemaia began to be held.⁸⁶ Considering the prestige of Athens in the Greek world and the role it played in the Lagids' policy, this was an event of great propaganda significance. The cult of Ptolemy IV is attested in Xanthos and on Kos.⁸⁷ The ruins of the Ptolemaion at Limyra in Lycia date back to the times of Ptolemy III.⁸⁸ On Thera, there was an organisation of the so-called *basilistai*, responsible for the royal cult.⁸⁹ An interesting object from Rhodes indicates what aspects were emphasised in the Ptolemaic dynastic cult. The stone throne with a cult representation of a double cornucopia – a typical Ptolemaic symbol – probably referred to the *Theoi Euergetai* and to one of the most important tasks of the Hellenistic kings, which was to ensure the well-being of his friends and subjects.⁹⁰ The lack of sources confirming the cult of *Theoi Adelphoi* on the island can at least partly be explained by the period of hostility between the two sides following the Chremonidean War.⁹¹ On the other hand, the cult of Ptolemy IV (who kept up close contacts with the *polis*) is attested on Rhodes.⁹² Incidentally, Philopator was also very active in establishing the cult by himself. After the victorious Fourth Syrian War, he established his cult in Joppa; inscriptions referring to him as *Theos Philopator* and to Arsinoe III as *Thea Philopator* also come from other places in Coele-Syria.⁹³

The most important island in the Ptolemies' possession, due to its strategic location as well as its wood and metal resources, was Cyprus. Epigraphic testimonies of the cults of individual members of the dynasty on this island are exceptionally numerous.⁹⁴ The development of the dynastic and individual ruler cults evoked the special interest of the authorities and served the Lagids as one of the tools for consolidating their influences on the island. From the times of Ptolemy V, the organisation of cults on Cyprus was brought under the control of the *strategos*. The official in this position also held the title of *archiereus*, that is the high priest of all cults on the island, which meant that he was also in charge of the state Ptolemaic cult.⁹⁵ From then on, no sanctuary could be

⁸⁶ *IG* II² 836; Paus. 1.5.5; 10.10.2; Steph. Byz., s.v. Βερενικκδα. Priest: PP 15022; 15024. See also Bringmann 2000, 85; Bringmann/von Steuben 2000, 45–48, no. 17; Kotsidu 2000, 65–69, no. 18.

⁸⁷ Kotsidu 2000, 243–244, no. 161; 413–414, no. 294.

⁸⁸ See Borchhardt 1991; 1993.

⁸⁹ *IG* XII 3, 443.

⁹⁰ On that object see Picard 1959a, 409–416; 1959b, 15–154 (in his opinion, it may be connected with *Theoi Adelphoi*). On the cult of *Theoi Euergetai* in Rhodes, cf. also Segre 1941, 36–39; Habicht 1956, 110. The cult may have been introduced in connection with the help given to the Rhodians by Ptolemy III after the earthquake in 227/226 (Habicht 1956, 110; Hölbl 2001, 170 *contra* Huss 1976, 115). The cornucopia and double cornucopia were a frequent motif in the Ptolemaic propaganda, in art, and on coins, cf. Rice 1983, 202–208; Mørkholm 1991, 103, 106, 109, 110; von Reden 2007, 52–55.

⁹¹ Habicht 1956, 110, cf. Berthold 1984, 89–91; Reger 1994, 41–43; Huss 2001, 286.

⁹² *IG* XII 1, 37 = *OGIS* 76. From the times of Ptolemy IV a priest of *Theoi Euergetai* (PP 15028) and a priest of Ptolemy I Soter (PP 15029) are attested. For Ptolemy IV's relations with Rhodes, see Huss 1976, 114–116; Berthold 1984, 95–97.

⁹³ Jøppe: PP 15017; Clermont-Ganneau 1900, 537–538; Huss 1976, 71–73.

⁹⁴ A priest of Ptolemy I is attested in Lapethos (PP 15014); also a *kanephoros* of Arsinoe II in w Idalion/Kition (PP 15016) and Ptolemaic priests in Palaipaphos and Neapaphos (PP 15018; 15019; 15025; 15030). Cf. Mitford 1938; Avraamides 1971, 65–66; Bagnall 1976, 68–73; Teixidor 1988.

⁹⁵ This was the case of Ptolemy from Megalopolis (*strategos* in 197–180), for example. The combination of the title *archiereus* with the office of *strategos* is first attested by Polycrates of Argos (*strategos* circa 203–197), see Bagnall 1976, 253–255; Huss 2011, 151–153. Some changes were introduced under Ptolemy VIII. At that time, the powers of the *archiereus* were divided among a larger number of priests, see Huss 2011, 154.

consecrated and no city cult could be established without his knowledge. Regardless of the Ptolemaic cult administered by the authorities, a local cult, practised by members of the higher classes (among others), also developed. In this way, independent cult centres would appear on the island.⁹⁶ In the later period, the responsibility for the dynastic cult was probably largely transferred to private persons.⁹⁷ However, it cannot be concluded that the development of the Ptolemaic cult on Cyprus was dominated by local efforts.⁹⁸ The Lagids treated the dynastic cult as one of the tools of gaining influence and consolidating their power, and the island was too important for the dynasty to leave this area solely to the local initiative.

The Ptolemaic cult spread in various ways. Apart from the Lagids themselves, the initiative came from the assemblies of individual *poleis*. Private cults, promoted for instance by traders dealing with Egypt, were also vital.⁹⁹ Soldiers in Ptolemaic garrisons also played an important role, as they often initiated the cult of their king, e.g. the cult of Ptolemy III and Berenike II in Itanos. Numerous dedications honouring Egyptian kings or addressed to them played a similar role in spreading the royal ideology.¹⁰⁰ This was a way for Ptolemaic soldiers to emphasise the symbolic presence of the king in the city.¹⁰¹ Associations of Dionysian *technitai* (Dionysus' artists) also played a considerable role,¹⁰² as did *gymnasia*, especially those which experienced the generosity of the kings. Due to the place *gymnasia* had in the life of the Greek elites, their role in popularising specific elements of the ideology was significant.¹⁰³ On Cyprus, apart from the *technitai*, the influence of the *gymnasion*, *basilistai*, and *koinon* of Cyprian cities is well attested.¹⁰⁴

In cities under the direct or indirect control of the Ptolemies, their dependence on the Lagids was emphasised by the presence of the priest of the cult dedicated to the dynasty, the king, or his ancestors.¹⁰⁵ In the dynasty's foreign domains, Greek cities continued to function as *poleis*, but a royal official had superior authority. Cleverness and skilful

⁹⁶ Inscriptions from Lapethos, Idalion and (probably) from Amathous are typical examples of the prerogative of any polis to establish a cult to any god it chose (Bagnall 1976, 72).

⁹⁷ This is indicated by the cases of Onesandros, Onesistimos Aristonos and Asclepiades, see Avraamides 1971, 65–66; 88–94; Bagnall 1976, 70–71; Anastassiades 1998, 130.

⁹⁸ As Volkman (1956, 449–452) concluded. However, cf. the critical remarks of Bagnall (1976, 71–73). Scant historical sources do not allow us to determine how extensive the *strategos*' influence had been in the earlier period. Introducing a new order after the Ptolemies had conquered the island was a process stretched over time. In any case, from Pelops' strategy (217) onwards, the official had a dominant position; he combined political, military, economic, and religious powers, while the autonomy of Cyprian cities was significantly restricted. On Cyprus' *strategos*, see Bagnall 1976, 38–49; Huss 2011, 151–153.

⁹⁹ Cf. e.g. the altars for the cult of Arsinoe II, discovered in the remains of private houses in Eretria, Miletos (*SEG* 40,763; *I.Milet* 1.7, 288; 289); dedication from Ephesos to Ptolemy II, Arsinoe II and Sarapis (*SEG* 39,1232; Kotsidu 2000, 477, no. 358); private dedication to *Theoi Adelphoi* in Xanthos (*SEG* 36,1219, cf. Bousquet 1986, 22–32); sanctuary on Thera established by Artemidoros (Bagnall 1976, 134).

¹⁰⁰ Cf. e.g. dedications to the deified Ptolemies from Thera (Chaniotis 2003, 441); dedication and sacrifice to Ptolemy II, Arsinoe II and *Theoi Soterai* (*SEG* 39,1234, cf. Calapà 2010, 201–206).

¹⁰¹ Chaniotis 2002, 106–109.

¹⁰² *OGIS* I 50; 51; Anastassiades 1998, 130.

¹⁰³ On the role played by *gymnasia*, cf. Chaniotis 2002, 108–110.

¹⁰⁴ *OGIS* I 164; 166; see Hill 1949, 185; Mitford 1961, 39, no. 105; Młynarczyk 1990, 138–142; Pfeiffer 2008, 73–75.

¹⁰⁵ E.g. the eponymous priest of Arsinoe in Arsinoe near Nagidos (*SEG* 39,1426), also eponymous priest of Ptolemy IV, Berenike and Ptolemy V in Xanthos (*SEG* 38,1476), cf. Chaniotis 2003, 441.

diplomacy were required in order to secure the Ptolemies' interests on the one hand, and to maintain the appearance of the city's autonomy on the other. A Ptolemaic official could therefore influence the development of the dynastic cult, but local initiative was also present. With time, the ruler cult, so willingly founded by the *poleis*, became a mere formality,¹⁰⁶ but it did not lose its importance with regard to building mutual relations between the two sides. The ruler cult proved successful as a means of communication between the subordinate cities and the Ptolemies and as an instrument for asserting the authority of the Egyptian kings. It also turned out to be an important platform in contacts with the *poleis* which were loosely or not at all subjugated by the Lagids, such as Rhodes. Festivals in honour of the ruler and other ways of celebrating grounded the ruler cult in the social life of the *polis*. The cult had a prominent place in the collective memory and perpetuated the memory of the king's euergetism.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, granting kings divine honours was not only an expression of the city's gratefulness for the experienced kindness, but also a way of securing the king's continued favour. Therefore, both sides were interested in promoting such relations. As Ptolemaic influences in the Aegean Basin weakened, the evidence of the cult of Lagids being established waned.¹⁰⁸

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¹⁰⁶ Hölbl 2001, 96.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Ma 2000, 219–226 (example of the Seleucid Monarchy).

¹⁰⁸ However, from time to time private dedications were still made, such as the altar for Ptolemy VI founded on Thera by soldiers of the Ptolemaic garrison (*OGIS* I, 102).

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