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Queens and Ruler Cults in Early Hellenism: Festivals, Administration, and Ideology*

Abstract: How can a new deity, with her/his specific attributes, *timai* and epiphanies, be created? By whom? And for what purposes? Who will her/his priests and believers be? Hellenistic documentation brings an historical perspective to the cultic, social and ideological aspects of religious phenomena, and ruler cults are a particular case of establishing/accepting new gods. Female ruler cults have only recently received specific attention. The paper examines the cases of Berenike I, Arsinoe II, and Laodike IV in order to provide new interpretations of some dynastic festivals and to study the relationship between ruler cults and the legitimation of female power. The discussion relies mostly on papyri and inscriptions, but the final analysis of Theocritus XVII argues that the poetic logic of power legitimation is consistent with the one displayed in non-literary sources.

Résumé : Comment une nouvelle divinité, munie de ses attributs spécifiques, ses *timai* et ses épiphanies, peut-elle être créée ? Par qui ? Et à quelles fins ? Qui seront ses prêtres et ses fidèles ? La documentation hellénistique confère une perspective historique aux aspects cultuels, sociaux et idéologiques de ces phénomènes religieux et les cultes des souverains sont un cas particulier de l'établissement et de l'acceptation de nouveaux dieux. Les cultes de souveraines n'ont que très récemment reçu l'attention qu'ils méritent. L'article étudie les cas de Bérénice I^{re}, Arsinoé II et Laodice V afin de fournir de nouvelles interprétations de quelques fêtes dynastiques et d'étudier la relation entre les cultes de souverains et la légitimation du pouvoir féminin. La discussion repose surtout sur des papyrus et des inscriptions, mais l'analyse conclusive de l'*Idylle* XVII de Théocrite montre que la logique poétique de la légitimation du pouvoir entre en résonance avec celle qu'attestent les sources non littéraires.

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1. Ruler cults: research perspectives

How can a new deity, with her/his specific attributes, *timai* and epiphanies, be created? By whom? And for what purposes? Who will her/his priests and believers be? Do ruler cults represent the ultimate subjection of political culture to the logic of royal power, the new driving force in Greek history after Alexander? Or are they to be considered as a special case of the wider phenomenon of introducing new gods, a substantial aspect in historical updating and the evolution of a polytheistic pantheon?

“When the old gods withdraw, the empty thrones cry out for a successor, and with good management, or even without management, almost any perishable bag of bones may be hoisted into the vacant seat.” By this statement Eric Dodds referred, in *The Greeks and the Irrational*, to the spread of ruler cults and to the divinization of living sovereigns at the beginning of the Hellenistic age in particular.¹ Dodds’s words suggest a clear-cut assessment of the actors and contexts, from which ruler cults originated: the crisis of traditional religion and the intentional manipulation of the people’s superstition and need for protection in order to back the political ascent of powerful individuals.

One can appreciate the distance separating Dodds’s interpretation from the most up to date positions in modern scholarship by considering the reflections made by Andrew Erskine in the epilogue to *The Gods of Ancient Greece*.² Erskine asks provokingly how we would evaluate ruler cults if we did not focus our attention on classical Greece but on the Greco-Roman history of the first centuries AD. The Hellenistic and Imperial perspective sketched by Erskine shows us that cults for sovereigns are attested for a large part of the history of ancient Greek religion: this should be sufficient to prevent scholars from discounting them as an anomaly or a degeneration of religion itself. Furthermore, these cults cannot be simplistically labelled as a rival phenomenon to the so-called traditional religion, as if their success depended on replacing the former gods. On the contrary, their spread stems from the fact that old and new cults are placed side by side in temples and festivals and that the latter are modelled on the former.³ The discussion proposed by Erskine also has a

¹ DODDS (1956), p. 297. Dodds refers, in particular, to the ithyphallic hymn written by Hermokles and sung by the Athenians when Demetrius the Besieger entered their city in 291 or 290 BC (Demochares, *FGrH* 75 F 2 + Duris, *FGrH* 76 F 13 = Athen., VI, 253b-f). On cultic honours for Antigonos and Demetrius in Athens, see HABICHT (1970²), p. 44-58; on Hermokles’ hymn, see VIRGILIO (2003²), p. 87-130; CHANIOTIS (2003), p. 431- 432 and (2011); KOLDE (2003), p. 379-392; VERSNEL (2011), p. 444-456.

² ERSKINE (2010).

³ For this view, which was already asserted by HABICHT (1970²), p. 138-159, 195-200, and forms now the state of the art on the topic, see also BURASELIS – ANEZIRI (2004), p. 175-177; PARKER (2011), p. 279-282; VERSNEL (2011), p. 456-460 (with history of the discussion); CHANIOTIS (2011), p. 170, and esp. 179-180 on l. 15 of the ithyphallic hymn for Demetrius (ἄλλοι ... θεοί, “other gods”, not “the other gods”), implying the elevation of the living king among the

broader relevance: evaluating ruler cults as a phenomenon revealing a proper religious content and, as a consequence, a distinctive socio-political significance, opens the door to a revision of the parameters themselves, by which scholars understand Greek gods.

If we may confidently assert that every divinity undergoes an historical evolution both in rituals and representations, this statement proves even more valid for deified sovereigns, all of whose cults originated in relation to well-defined historical figures and contexts and in many cases would not have survived a change in the socio-political environment where they were created and legitimated. Nevertheless, the possibility that ruler cults may result in ephemeral manifestations should not undermine a comprehensive understanding of their cultural logic and ritual dynamics and of the traits that they share with the worship of traditional gods.

This approach implies as a first step that we rethink the borders separating the spheres of human and superhuman status as well as the channels by which they communicate with each other. Among those, epiphany of divine power has the most conspicuous place.⁴ Secondly, a few methodological reflections on interpreting Hellenistic religious life are necessary. Compared with less documented, archaic periods, for which we can only work on long-term consequences and sedimentations in ritual and culture, Hellenistic documentation often allows us to identify trends in cultural and religious history with greater proximity to the times and places where they occurred. As a consequence, a contextual evaluation of the sources and of the particular dynamics that they highlight will prove more fruitful than a general systematization (as

helpful gods rather than the refusal of their existence; cf. CHANKOWSKI (2011); IOSSIF – LORBER (2011), p. 697, 702-704.

⁴ Effective and helpful manifestations of superhuman power are the most universal aspect of Greek gods: cf. HENRICHS (2010); see also CHANIOTIS (2011), p. 173-178, on presence, efficacy, and affability as the distinctive traits of the gods according to the Athenian hymn for Demetrius. Admittedly, deified humans lack immortality. However, the epiphany of the royal benefiting power towards the subjects' community elevates kings to a special rank. This status suits someone whose acts have shared the same effectiveness as divine interventions against dangerous crises: having rescued individuals, temples and cities from problems whose solution exceeded their individual and social energies, the benefiting ruler may be thought to deserve godlike treatment. In this respect, see also the considerations by CARNEY (2000b), p. 22, n. 3, who suggests that, within Greek tradition, the separation between human and superhuman spheres, although theoretically acknowledged, would in fact be more fluid than has been generally recognized in modern scholarship. While some scholars see a rigid barrier between these two areas and statuses (see PRICE [1984], p. 79-95, and [1984b], p. xi, 7-38; BADIAN [1996], p. 14-15), others point to the application of heroic and godlike honours as a possible point of contact between the two spheres: NOCK (1944); CERFAUX – TONDRIAU (1957), p. 106-108; VERMEULE (1979), p. 126-127; FREDRICKSMEYER (1979); MARI (2008), p. 219-220; PARKER (2011), p. 79; HAUBEN (2011), p. 363-365. Non-royal funerary epigrams from Hellenistic and Roman Asia Minor also testify a progressive heroization of the dead: see LE BRIS 2010. From a theoretical perspective, either assumption results in a different attitude towards Hellenistic and Imperial ruler cults and their contribution to understanding how Greeks and Romans coped with their religions.

tantalizing as that may be). Accordingly, keywords leading the research shall be reception, adaptation, and invention of religious practices and beliefs in specific socio-cultural and geographical contexts. Within this broad framework, the invention and promotion of new cults for mortals form the topic on which I intend to focus here.

Obviously, in this paper I will not go down the numerous paths opened up by such a wide-ranging theme, nor do I intend to sketch an evolutionary history of the links between personal charisma, euergetism, and cults in the Greek world.⁵ I will rather focus on a particular aspect of ruler cults: that of queens. Although not ignored by some previous studies on Hellenistic political and religious history, this research field has only recently become the specific focus in discussing the relationship between religion and a gender-related representation of power within royal couples.⁶ Accordingly, I will discuss some cases from the third century BC, mainly documented by papyri and inscriptions, disclosing some ritual, social, and ideological aspects of the cults of queens. The documentation on Arsinoe II sheds light on the organization of the cult and its social spread as well as on the characterization of the new goddess by means of association with traditional deities. The dossier on Laodike V gives the definition of female euergetism and its prerogatives. Finally, the section of Theocritus' *Encomium of Ptolemy* (Theocr., XVII) concerning Berenike I's divinization shows that a consistent logic underlies the institution and legitimation of female ruler cults in both poetry and non-literary texts, although different source types imply different communicative patterns and strategies.

2. The contribution of papyri and inscriptions

Studies in papyrology and epigraphy of recent decades have highlighted many aspects of the institution and administration of ruler cults since their first spread, at the end of the fourth century BC.⁷ A complex and varied framework

⁵ For a sketchy history of cults paid to living leaders (from the fifth cent. BC onwards), see WINIARCZYK (2002), 29-74; CHANIOTIS (2003), MARI (2004) and (2008), MUCCIOLI (2011). For a discussion of the status accorded to the dedicatees, between *berōikai timai*, *isotheoi timai* and honours *bōs theōi*, cf. PRÉAUX (1978), p. 238-271; WALBANK (1987); HAUBEN (1989); VAN NUFFELEN (1998/1999); BURASELIS (2003); CHANIOTIS (2003; 2007); IOSSIF (2005); MARI (2008); ERSKINE (2010). On the status of *synnaos theos*, cf. NOCK (1930); SCHMIDT-DOUNAS (1993/1994); TRIBULATO (2007). The issue of the new gods' place within the traditional pantheon has been approached in terms of association, identification or symbiosis by FRASER (1972), I p. 236-246; HAUBEN (1989); CARNEY (2000b), p. 34.

⁶ In this respect, see esp. MIRÓN PÉREZ (1998) and (1998b); VAN NUFFELEN (1998/1999), p. 178-188; CARNEY (2000b; 2010; 2011); CHANIOTIS (2007); VAN MINNEN (2010); CANEVA (forthcoming).

⁷ In this respect, CERFAUX – TONDRIAU (1957) is largely out of date. HABICHT (1970²) is still a valuable starting point, although it needs to be updated with recent evidence, mainly from inscriptions, and with greater attention to the religious aspects of the cults: see CHANKOWSKI

is reconstructed where cultic honours paid to rulers significantly differ from each other not only in terms of the nature of the cult and the status accorded to the worshipped kings and queens, but also in terms of the political contexts and the social actors involved.⁸ The nature of the evidence plays a prominent role in the discussion because the material medium is intertwined with specific textual genres and contexts and these are traditionally connected to distinctive communicative strategies, thus approaching the same phenomenon from different perspectives. As an example, epigraphic documentation (honorific decrees and royal letters) contributes to understanding how the relationships between rulers and subjected cities are rhetorically represented in terms of evergetic discourse.⁹ Epigraphic sources also provide a major opportunity to investigate the spread of ruler cults in the *poleis* and sanctuaries of Asia Minor, while inscriptions from Egypt shed light on how the indigenous priestly elite appropriated a Greek legitimating discourse to shape its relations with the Macedonian rulers. Secondly, Egyptian papyri allow a prosopographic survey of the Greco-Macedonian elite involved in the administration of the dynastic cults, but they also disclose some fragments of the tax apparatus that made the management of these cults possible, as in the case of the *apomoira* in the Egyptian cult of Arsinoe II.¹⁰

3. Ruler cults as a religious phenomenon. Notes on the cult of Arsinoe *Philadelphos*

In addition to a long list of cults whose ephemeral life originated and ended within a few years or decades, closely linked with the contemporary changes in the international politics, sources also attest a few cultic honours that successfully took root in their social environment, thus revealing something different from a mere act of interstate diplomacy or of servitude towards rulers. A remarkable case is provided by the institution of cults for Arsinoe II in the third century BC. Arsinoe was worshipped both during her life within the ruling couple of the *Theoi Adelphoi* and individually, probably after her death, with the

(2011), p. 2-7. On the contribution of epigraphy, see also the remarks by VIRGILIO (2003b). Insights into the contribution of papyrology for the Ptolemaic area have been offered by the papers collected in MELAERTS (1998) and CLARYSSE – SCHOORS – WILLEMS (1998). Recent contributions to the topic are also available in IOSSIF – CHANKOWSKI – LORBER (2011).

⁸ Cf. CHANIOTIS (2007), p. 155: “Relativisation, contextualisation et différenciation sont des *desiderata* urgents si l'on veut traiter d'une thématique qui, d'une part, est d'une importance centrale pour la compréhension de la religiosité, de la politique et de la culture hellénistiques, mais, de l'autre, présente également beaucoup de facettes, de particularités régionales et connaît une évolution.”

⁹ For this reading, cf. esp. MA (20042).

¹⁰ See below, n. 56.

personal epiclesis *Philadelphos*.¹¹ Her cult reveals a successful synergy between the court's cultic policies and popular religious zeal.¹² To give an example: while the nesiarch Hermias founded an official festival in Delos, the *Philadelphbeia*, where Arsinoe received a cult alongside Apollo, Artemis and Leto,¹³ private worship may be inferred from votive plates, small altars and cultic tools found in Egypt, Cyprus and the Aegean islands.¹⁴

A corpus of third-century papyri, mainly from the Zenon archive, testifies that a festival *Arsinoeia* was celebrated in Alexandria, whereas a fragment of Satyrus' work *On the demes of Alexandria* quotes the text of a *lex sacra* concerning

¹¹ On the cult of the *Theoi Adelfhoi* in Alexandria, see FRASER (1972), I p. 194, 215-217, 225-228. For the *kanephoros* in the Alexandrian cult of Arsinoe *Philadelphos*: SCHELB (1975), p. 15-21 (general observations on the role of *kanephoroi* within Greek cults and processions); MINAS (1998); BAILEY (1999); COLIN (2002). This priesthood is first attested in *P. Sorb.* III 71, dated 268/7. On the (re)foundation of cities after Arsinoe's name, cf. CARNEY (1988) and (2000), 207-209; COHEN (1995); BOUNEGRU (2002); MÜLLER (2006), p. 9-14, 149-159. Since PFEIFFER (1922), p. 8, it has been common opinion that Arsinoe died on July 9th 270. The date was inferred from the combination of the year indicated in the Mendes stele (15th year of the kingdom of Ptolemy II, l. 11-14) with the full moon mentioned in *P. Berol.* 13417, an ancient scholium to the *Ektheōsis Arsinoēs*; cf. D'ALESSIO (1997), p. 661; LELLI (2005), p. 165-166; VAN OPPEN (2010). On the basis of a different interpretation of both passages, GRZYBEK (1990) proposed a later date, 1 Lōios = 1/2 July 268. Grzybek's reading of the scholium has been rejected: cf. VAN OPPEN (2010). The date 268, however, has met with the acceptance of HAUBEN (1992), p. 162; *contra*, see CRISCUOLO (1991); MINAS (1994); CADELL (1998), developed in *P. Sorb.* III, p. 14-21; MUHS (2005), p. 31-36. VAN OPPEN (2010) offers a good *status quaestionis* of the debate and further backs the 268 BC hypothesis, yet he does not put forward any new argument. All in all, although the early date still seems to me more probable, the point risks becoming a fetish for modern scholarship and at the present state of documentation none of the alternative reconstructions can be accepted without any doubt.

¹² However, on the methodological problems raised by the "public vs. private" dichotomy, see ANEZIRI (2005).

¹³ Only *ID* 298 A, 79-80 adds at the fifth place a dedication to King Ptolemy. Although unique, this document shows that Ptolemy could be associated with the deified *Philadelphos* in her festival. On the Delos *Philadelphbeia*, see BRUNEAU (1970), p. 528-531. A sanctuary *Philadelphbeion* is documented in two Delian inscriptions of the early 2nd cent. (*ID* 400, 38-40, dated 192 BC; *ID* 440 A, 91, between 190 and 180 BC). Nevertheless, its construction may have occurred earlier and date back to the period after the queen's death. This is suggested by the fact that by 192 BC the temple needed restoration, probably because it was already quite old: see BRUNEAU (1970), p. 533-534.

¹⁴ For the votive plaques and altars, see ROBERT (1966), p. 202 ss.; BRUNEAU (1970), p. 544 n. 4; FRASER (1972), I p. 216-218; BRICAULT (2006), p. 28-29. With the exception of *I. Louvre* 9, whose Egyptian provenance cannot be more accurately specified, all of the discovered items have a link with the sea and corroborate the characterization of Arsinoe as a protector of navigation. The same can be inferred for the private altars for the *Philadelphos* mentioned in the *lex sacra* quoted by Satyrus, l. 13-15 (for this text, see below in this paragraph); some of these altars are prescribed to be made of sand, so their existence is ephemeral, yet others are pre-existing stone altars that must be covered in sand for the special occasion of the procession for Arsinoe: cf. l. 18-23. As noted by ROBERT (1966), p. 199-201, sand provides a conspicuous parallel to the function of Arsinoe as *Euploia*, a divine protector of navigation. On the cult vases for Arsinoe, see THOMPSON (1973). On altars and vases in the private cult for kings and queens, see ANEZIRI (2005), p. 222-223.

a procession for Arsinoe *Philadelphos* where people are invited to prepare their own altars and to make offerings along the streets crossed by the parade.¹⁵

The dossiers concerning these two festivals deserve a closer look and a partial reappraisal. To begin with, as most of the letters referring to the *Arsinoeia* come from the *dōrea* of Apollonios in the Fayum, Perpillou-Thomas suggested that the festival was celebrated not only in the capital, but also in the *chōra*. In fact, while some papyri clearly attest a movement of participants (*P.Col.Zen.* I 56) and offerings (*P.Lond.* VII 2000) toward Alexandria, no document is available to support the hypothesis that a public festival was also organized in Philadelphia or in any other village of the Arsinoites nomos. In fact, there are two letters that might at first sight suggest a celebration in the province, yet their meaning can be rather explained in different ways. In *P.Cair.Zen.* I 59096, the *oikonomos* Zoilos asks Zenon to write and inform him where Apollonios will be during the festival, so that he can get ready in advance to host him: l. 3: εἰ παρ' ἡμῖν ἔγει τὴν ἑορτήν. If we follow the editor Edgar in identifying the festival in Zoilos' letter as the *Arsinoeia*, the preparations for Apollonios' possible arrival seem to be meant just to welcome this important figure rather than being related to the organization of a regular, official festival in the Fayum. Moreover, in the account letter *P.Cair.Zen.* III 59398, the house-steward Artemidoros informs Apollonios of an amount of money that was given to the servants on the occasion of the *Arsinoeia* (l. 12): here again the donation cannot be sufficient proof that the festival was also officially celebrated in the province.

An explanation must therefore be sought elsewhere. *P.Lond.* VII 2000 refers to the dispatch of pigs, boars and goat kids from the Fayum to Alexandria as τὰ ζένια τὰ καταγόμενα τῷ βασιλεῖ εἰς τὴν θυσίαν τῶν Ἀρσινοείων (l. 2-5). The rest of our sources show that everyone in the staff of Apollonios' *dōrea* is expected to provide a pig as a gift for the sovereign at the festival,¹⁶ whereas the *dioiketēs* himself collects a larger number of animals.¹⁷ Thus, participating in the celebration proves the loyalty of the establishment in the *chōra* at two levels, by sending animals for sacrifice and by personally attending the festival in the capital. In the case of attendance at the festival being hampered for any reason,¹⁸ the journey to Alexandria may be replaced by a sacrifice *in loco* but, in any case, *Arsinoeia* cannot be considered as a regular public festival. The

¹⁵ Evidence on *Arsinoeia* is collected in PERPILLOU-THOMAS (1993), p. 155-158. On the Alexandrian procession (*P.Oxy.* XXVII 2465, fr. 2), see ROBERT (1966); FRASER (1972), I p. 217-218, 225-230, 237-245; SCHORN (2001). Separating active participants from spectators is a trait shared by the *pompē* described in Kallixenos (Athen., V, 197c-203b): in this regard, cf. esp. DUNAND (1981), p. 27; on the Grand Procession of Ptolemy II, cf. RICE (1983) and recently MÜLLER (2009), p. 176-205; CANEVA (2010).

¹⁶ *P.Cair.Zen.* II 59217; III 59298, 59412.

¹⁷ *P.Cair.Zen.* III 59501.

¹⁸ *PSI* IV 364 shows that Zenon is not in Alexandria for the 250 BC festival; for this reason, Zenodoros writes to him to request a *himation* that must be sent to his brother, an athlete.

donation of money to the servants further confirms the private nature of the festival, as displayed by Apollonios' celebration of the *Arsinoeia* in the Fayum.

The choice of offerings is another point for discussion, as from this element one can infer the kind of cultic associations relating to the goddess *Philadelphos* in the *Arsinoeia* and in the procession described by Satyrus. Pigs and boars are the most common offerings at the *Arsinoeia*, sometimes accompanied by goats. Pigs are also attested at the *Theadelphieia*, the festival celebrated in Alexandria for the divinized ruling couple.¹⁹ The prominent role of pork suggests an association between Arsinoe and Demeter rather than Aphrodite (for whom this animal is generally prohibited in Greece)²⁰, whereas on the Egyptian side, the offering of pigs sets the deified queen in the cultic area of Isis, the only goddess, together with Osiris, to accept pigs as offerings.²¹

The *lex sacra* quoted by Satyrus lists the kinds of offerings that are admitted during the procession (l. 15-18): this section of the papyrus is fragmentary but we can clearly read that, besides vegetables, which must be burnt on small fires made of sticks on sand altars, birds are also permitted. The section concerning prohibitions raises more difficulties: Louis Robert read $\pi\lambda\lambda\eta[\nu \tau\iota\rho\acute{\alpha} | \gamma\omicron\upsilon \kappa\alpha\iota \acute{\alpha}\lambda\gamma\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ at l. 17-18 and suggested an identification between Arsinoe and Aphrodite *Ourania* and an explicit distinction from Aphrodite *Pandemos*, for whom no goat sacrifices are attested.²² By proposing a new reading of the papyrus, $\pi\lambda\lambda\eta[\nu \pi\rho\omicron]|\beta\acute{\epsilon}\alpha | \tau\omicron\upsilon \kappa\alpha\iota \acute{\alpha}\lambda\gamma\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$,²³ Stefan Schorn has pointed to the prohibitions concerning sheep meat in the cults of Isis.²⁴ The association of Aphrodite and Isis with Arsinoe is supported by the fact that both the sacrifice of birds and the link with the sea are common traits of the three goddesses.²⁵ Further evidence is provided by the use of vegetables as offerings, which Robert uncon-

¹⁹ PSI IV 431.2-4 (undated): εἰς τὴν | θυσίαν τῶν Θεαδελφείων ἱερῶτα | υἱικά γ.

²⁰ In Egypt pork is also attested in the festival called *Demetria* or *Thesmophoria*: cf. PERPILLOU-THOMAS (1993), p. 78-81. On pork prohibited in the cult of Aphrodite, cf. PIRENNE-DELFORGE (1994), p. 388-393, with the few exceptions cited on p. 390.

²¹ PERPILLOU-THOMAS (1993), p. 203-209; SCHORN (2001), p. 217-219.

²² The connection of *Ourania* with the sea would fit the prerogatives of Arsinoe *Philadelphos* at Cape Zephyrion. On the distinction *Ourania/Pandemos*, see ROBERT (1966), p. 198-201; PIRENNE-DELFORGE (1994), p. 384-388; SCHORN (2001), p. 210-211.

²³ See the palaeographic discussion in SCHORN (2001), p. 207-208.

²⁴ SCHORN (2001), p. 213-214; cf. Paus., X, 32, 16; Plut., *De Is.*, 352f; Sext. Emp. *Pyrrh.* III, 220. It is worth noting, however, that the statements by Greek authors require caution: according to Pausanias and Plutarch, the prohibition would be associated, with regard to Isis, to pork as well (Plutarch mentions a single annual exception, *De Is.*, 354a); nevertheless, according to Hdt, II, 47, although regarded as impure and related to Seth (cf. TE VELDE [1967], p. 26), pork is a peculiar trait of the cult of Isis and Osiris. In fact, archaeological and literary sources show a much more nuanced attitude both in time and space: cf. PERPILLOU-THOMAS (1993), p. 204 n. 125.

²⁵ For Aphrodite, cf. KADLETZ (1976), p. 10-25; PIRENNE-DELFORGE (1994), *passim*. For Isis, see esp. *I. Priene* 195 = *LSAM* 36.10; cf. DUNAND (1973), III p. 204-205; SCHORN (2001), p. 213. On the relationship of Aphrodite and Isis with the sea, cf. BRICAULT (2006); DEMETRIOU (2010).

vincingly tried to explain by referring to the cult of Aphrodite *en kêpois*, whereas Isis' cults give a closer parallel.²⁶ Finally, a role for Demeter in the procession for the *Philadelphos* is suggested by the fact that the parade shall pass in front of a temple of the goddess, the *Thesmophorion* quoted at l. 5.

The offerings listed in Satyrus' text strengthen the impression that the characterization of Arsinoe *Philadelphos* passed through a process of selecting and combining the traits of different goddesses, such as Aphrodite, Demeter, and Isis. Isis was already known to the Greeks and was associated with Demeter;²⁷ this link must have played a significant role in the spread of the cults of Arsinoe/Isis in the *chōra* as well as in the creation of the Sarapis-Isis couple as a divine parallel of the ruling pair. Signs of this trend can be detected both in Alexandria and in the Egyptian inland. On the hill of Rhakotis, underneath the eastern edge of Euergetes' Serapeum, a small *temenos* has been excavated with an altar devoted to Ptolemy and Arsinoe *Philadelphos*.²⁸ The shrine must date to the reign of Ptolemy II because it was filled in when the new Serapeum of his successor was built. Besides confirming the existence of a cult of Sarapis at Rhakotis before the Euergetes, the altar and the dedication provide proof that Ptolemy II and Arsinoe *Philadelphos* were involved in the Alexandrian cult of this Greco-Egyptian god and that this interest resulted in a precocious association between the ruling pair and the gods Sarapis-Isis. Confirmation seems to come from Philadelphia, the main village of Apollonios' estate in the Arsinoites nomos. A letter sent by Apollonios to his agent Zenon (*P.Cair.Zen.* II 59169) mentions what may be a statue or a shrine (the word is in lacuna) for Ptolemy and the *Philadelphos*, which must have been established by Apollonios himself and his emissaries. Another letter from Apollonios to Zenon (*P.Cair.Zen.* II 59168) orders the construction of a temple of Sarapis that shall accompany a pre-existing one for Isis and explicitly requires it be placed side by side with the sanctuary of the Dioskouroi, whose cult was allegedly promoted both in Alexandria and in the *chōra* in relation to Arsinoe *Philadelphos*.²⁹ Therefore, the documentation from Apollonios' estate in the Fayum sketches out the installation in the Egyptian inland of a pantheon that is closely related to the religious policy of the Alexandrian court and to the cultic

²⁶ Examples of vegetables offered are listed in ROBERT (1966), p. 199; no cult for Aphrodite is attested. On Aphrodite of the gardens, cf. PIRENNE-DELFORGE (1994), p. 48-50, and p. 382-383 on non-bloody offerings to Aphrodite. With regard to vegetables in the cult for Isis, see DUNAND (1973), I p. 235.

²⁷ See already Hdt, II, 59; 156. On the relationship between Isis and Demeter, cf. DUNAND (1973), I p. 85-91; TOBIN (1991); COLIN (1994); MERKELBACH (1995), p. 51-53, 60-62; THOMPSON (1998).

²⁸ OGIS 725. For discussion of textual issues, cf. FRASER (1972), II p. 385-386, n. 367; GRIMM (1983). On the connections between the deified couple Ptolemy II – Arsinoe II and the divine pair Sarapis – Isis, see PFEIFFER (2008b).

²⁹ Cf. FRASER (1972), I p. 207; LELLI (2005), p. 38-40; in the Egyptian *chōra*, QUAEGERBEUR (1983), p. 312-316.

associations that spread from it. We cannot exclude the possibility, however, that this geographical vector was double-directed: the increasing success of the Egyptian cults for Ptolemaic queens may have strengthened the correspondence between Arsinoe and Demeter through the mediation of Isis and this could help us better understand why the identification between Arsinoe and Demeter seems to have had great success during the following centuries, when papyri attest the use of the epicleses *καροπόρορος* (*P.Tebt.* III 879.15; 190 BC) and *Ἐλευσίνα* (*SB* III 7239.17-18; AD 140/141) for Arsinoe.³⁰

Let us now come back to the two Alexandrian festivals. The hypothesis that the procession was a part of the *Arsinoeia* is plausible, though not certain. The role played by Demeter in both cases provides support for this interpretation, yet an opposing argument comes from the use of goats in the rites for the *Arsinoeia*.³¹ Banned from the procession, goats could have been admitted in some other parts of the festival but this explanation remains a hypothesis and the issue must be prudently left open.³²

4. Administrating cults, building empires: priests, priestesses and the promoters of the cults for Arsinoe II

Hierarchic and centralized administrative networks offer a multifold contribution to the creation of an empire: appointments, taxes, decrees and letters do not just fulfil the specific need to keep together regions geographically far from each other and different political or social environments; they also contribute, symbolically, to the perception of an ordered, centralized space where every political and geographical level of the network is permeated by the power of the sovereign.³³ Religious organization is a part of this complex mechanism.

From this perspective, the dossier on Arsinoe II allows us to discuss the role played by ruler cults in creating the Greco-Macedonian elite of the Ptolemaic kingdom as well as in shaping diplomatic relations between the Egyptian aristocracy and the new rulers. Since the Alexandrian priests in charge of the dynastic cult were eponymous, the date formulas on Greek and Demotic papyri provide a precise list of the priests in the third century.³⁴ Administration of the Alexandrian cult appears to be closely associated with the court and the group of the king's *philoi*, marshals and officials: the first priest of Alexander under

³⁰ In this regard, see MINAS (1998).

³¹ *P.Wisc.* II 78.28 = *P.Cair.Zen.* III 59328; *P.Lond.* VII 2000.

³² Cf. SCHORN (2001).

³³ Such an approach has been applied, in particular, to the Seleukid kingdom: cf. MA (2004²); CAPDETREY (2007). On Achaemenid precedents, cf. BRIANT (1996), I p. 177-216, 314-530. On Ptolemaic Egypt, cf. MANNING (2009).

³⁴ On eponymous priests in Alexandria and Ptolemais, cf. IJSEWIJN (1961); CLARYSSE – VAN DER VEKEN (1983).

Ptolemy I was Menelaos,³⁵ the king's brother; after the inclusion of the *Theoi Adelfhoi* in the cult, the primacy belonged to Kallikrates of Samos, the admiral of the fleet under Ptolemy II, who commissioned the temple of Arsinoe at Cape Zephyrion, near Kanopos.³⁶ A close tie between dynastic cult and elite is confirmed by a survey of the third century Alexandrian priests, with names such as the Athenian Glaukon, whose brother was the promoter of the decree that started the Chremonidean war,³⁷ and Sosibios, the powerful *philos* of Ptolemy IV who steered Ptolemaic policy in the late third century.³⁸

Rather than on geographical grounds – Ptolemaic sacred and secular officials came from the whole kingdom – appointment to the office of eponymous priest mostly depended on the degree of proximity to the court and to the prominent groups within Ptolemaic society. In some cases it is possible to trace the path of a whole family line through the generations: the complex network of religious, diplomatic, and economic relationships that links the Alexandrian court with the peripheries of the kingdom through the officials' activity can be detected, for instance, in the life and offspring of Aetos, son of Apollonios. Since the '60s to the beginning of the second century we find three members of the same family from Pamphilia becoming an eponymous priest in Alexandria and holding prominent positions in the administration both in their homeland and in Egypt.³⁹ A citizen of Aspensos, Aetos is active in the '60s as a Ptolemaic governor of Kilikia, where he founds the city of Arsinoe.⁴⁰ The loss of Kilikia and Pamphilia to the Seleukids as a consequence of the second Syrian War must have caused a conflict between Aetos' economic interests in his homeland and his loyalty to the Egyptian house. Within this framework, holding the priesthood for Alexander and the *Theoi Adelfhoi* in 253/2 was for Aetos not only a confirmation of his loyalty to the Ptolemies, but also a sign of a political role for the priesthood, which was granted to an important official in order to

³⁵ *P.Eleph.* 2 and *P.Hib.* I 84a; cf. CLARYSSE – VAN DER VEKEN (1983), p. 4.

³⁶ *P.Hib.* II 199.12. On Kallikrates (*Pros. Ptol.* VI 14607) and the shrine of Cape Zephyrion, cf. HAUBEN (1970); GUTZWILLER (1992); BING (2002/2003); BINGEN (2002a) and (2002b); GIGANTE LANZARA (2003); CRISCUOLO (2003); STEPHENS (2004); FANTUZZI (2004); BARBANTANI (2004); MÜLLER (2009), p. 210-244.

³⁷ Glaukon, son of Eteokles (cf. ÉTIENNE – PIÉRART [1975], p. 56-58; POUILLOUX [1975]; JUNG [2006], p. 302-306) is the priest of Alexander and the *Theoi Adelfhoi* in 255/254 BC (*P.Cair.Zen.* II 59173).

³⁸ Sosibios, son of Dioskourides (*Pros. Ptol.* I 48 = II 2179 = III 5272 = IV 10100), is the priest of Alexander, the *Theoi Adelfhoi* and the *Theoi Energetai* in 235/4 BC (*P.Petrie* III 55a; *P.Petrie* IV 22; *P.dem.Mars.* 298, 299).

³⁹ On the family of Aetos (*Pros. Ptol.* III 4988), cf. KIRSTEN – OPELT (1989); JONES – HABICHT (1989); SOSIN (1997), p. 144 revising the stemma by JONES – HABICHT (1989), p. 345. On Ptolemy son of Thraseas, cf. GERA (1987); PIEJKO (1991); MA (2004²), p. 63. CRISCUOLO (1998) proposed to identify Apollonios father of Aetos with the *dioiketes* of Ptolemy II; *contra*, ROWLANDSON (2007), p. 47 n. 18 reasserts the Karian origin of Apollonios.

⁴⁰ KIRSTEN – OPELT (1989); JONES – HABICHT (1989); BENCIVENNI (2003), p. 299-332.

keep him bound to the Egyptian court at a difficult time.⁴¹ After Ptolemy III reconquered the region in 246, Thraseas, son of Aetos,⁴² inherited his father's offices and prerogatives in Kilikia and was granted honorary citizenship in Athens and Alexandria. In the next generation, the family splits in two. Aetos son of Aetos, probably Thraseas' nephew, is *strategos* of the Arsinoites nomos in 202 and eponymous priest in Alexandria in 197/6.⁴³ On the other hand, the major line of the family passes, with Ptolemy son of Thraseas, to Antiochos III after the Seleukid conquest of Koile Syria and Palestine in 202 BC. The dynast changes, yet the close tie between military, administrative, and religious offices remains the same: in a dedication from Soloi to Hermes, Herakles and Antiochos III, Ptolemy mentions himself as *stratagos kai archiereus Syrias Koilas kai Phoinikas*, where the prerogatives implied by the priestly title probably hint at the highest rank within the administrative hierarchy of the temples and the dynastic cult in the satrapy.⁴⁴

The names of the *kanēphoroi*, the holders of the Alexandrian priesthood for Arsinoe *Philadelphos*, also hint at the same court elite: a social group whose hierarchy was still fluid during the third century but from the early second century reached the status of a well-organized aristocracy with internal ranks and specific titles.⁴⁵ Moreover, as soon as the *Athlophoros* of Berenike *Euergetis* is introduced, papyri show the establishment of a *cursus honorum* by which the priestess of Berenike, after achieving her annual office, holds the priesthood for Arsinoe *Philadelphos* during the following year.⁴⁶

Evidently, eponymous priests in the capital do not complete the list of social actors who cooperated in the promotion and administration of the cults. I have already discussed the role of Apollonios and his *entourage* in the spread of court-supported cults in the Arsinoites nomos. A significant parallel is offered, in Hermoupolis Magna in the Hermopolites nomos, by the dedication of a Doric temple to the *Theoi Euergetai* and the *Theoi Adelphei*. The inscription on the architrave, revealing that the donors are soldiers stationed in the region, confirms

⁴¹ *P.Cair.Zen.* II 59248 and *P.dem.Lowre* 2433 = *P.dem.Eheverträge* 14.1; cf. CLARYSSE – VAN DER VEKEN (1983), p. 8.

⁴² *Pros. Ptol.* IV 16181.

⁴³ It is less probable, though not impossible, that Aetos was a much younger brother of Thraseas: cf. ROWLANDSON (2007), p. 38. On Aetos' priesthood, cf. *Rosettana*, OGIS I 90.

⁴⁴ *Pros. Ptol.* VI 15236 = II 2174; OGIS 230 (197 ca). On the prerogatives of the *archiereus*, see MÜLLER (2000) and VAN NUFFELEN (2004).

⁴⁵ In this respect, see CLARYSSE (1998), p. 6-10. On court hierarchies, cf. MOOREN (1975); STROOTMAN (2007), p. 92-188.

⁴⁶ The first evidence of such a sequence, known as "Bell's law", appears with Iamneia, who served as *athlophoros* of Berenike in 211/0 and as *kanēphoros* of Arsinoe in 210/9 (CLARYSSE – VAN DER VEKEN [1983], p. 3, 17).

what has been detected in the Aegean area: garrisons and cleruchies played a prominent role in the spread of ruler cults and of the loyalty they displayed.⁴⁷

On the Egyptian side, evidence of the cults for Arsinoe has been continuously updated by recent epigraphic and archaeological findings and by the publication of the archives of museums and foundations.⁴⁸ In 1998, a posthumous paper by the late Jan Quaegebeur already listed 83 documents from at least 44 locations where the cult of the queen had been established in the Egyptian temples, usually by means of the appointment of a priest and the installation of a statue as *synnaos thea* of the local deity.⁴⁹ In Memphis, funeral inscriptions of the high priests have enabled reconstruct the name and genealogy of at least ten priests of Arsinoe over a period of about two centuries. The priests all belonged to two aristocratic families that bequeathed their office through generations during the Ptolemaic period.⁵⁰ The evidence from Memphis is paralleled in Thebes, where the funeral monuments of the priestly family reveal a close relationship between the local elite and the Alexandrian court as early as the '60s.⁵¹

That the success of the cults for Ptolemaic queens in Egyptian temples was something more than an ephemeral adaptation to the requests of the rulers is proved by the spread of the names Arsinoe and Berenike through the priestly families of the second century (a phenomenon with no precedent in the history of foreign rules over Egypt). Moreover, the longevity of the Egyptian cult of Arsinoe, the “Brother-Loving goddess”, is testified by the fact that the Egyptian priesthood seems to have survived the canephorate in Alexandria and is attested as late as the reign of Kleopatra VII.⁵²

While the epigraphic evidence related to the Egyptian elite provides information regarding the administration of the cults for Arsinoe *Philadelphos* in the temples of the *chōra*, some official steles shed light on the political framework within which the cults spread. The steles from Mendes (*Urk.* II 28-54) and Sais (*Urk.* II 75-80) show that the installation of statues of the deified queen in the

⁴⁷ The dedication is edited in *JHS* (1945), 109; cf. J. ROBERT, *RÉG* 61 (1948), p. 209 nr. 260; FRASER (1972), I p. 234-235 and II, p. 384. For the relationship between garrisons and the spread of ruler cults, see CHANIOTIS (2002), p. 106-108.

⁴⁸ On the Egyptian cult of Arsinoe in the *chōra*, cf. THOMPSON (2012), p. 118-119, 122-123, 126-127, 134 n. 172; PERPILLOU-THOMAS (1993), p. 155-157; DILS (1998); QUAEGBEUR (1998); COLIN (2002); PFEIFFER (2008a), p. 113-114; GORRE (2009), p. 605-622; NILSSON (2010). An overview of the Egyptian dynastic cults in the Ptolemaic age is provided by PFEIFFER (2008a).

⁴⁹ See the catalogue in QUAEGBEUR (1998).

⁵⁰ On the priests of Arsinoe in Memphis, cf. THOMPSON (2012), and QUAEGBEUR (1989).

⁵¹ QUAEGBEUR (1995).

⁵² On the success of the names Arsinoe and Berenike in both the Greco-Macedonian and Egyptian sides of Ptolemaic aristocracy, see respectively CLARYSSE (1998) and QUAEGBEUR (1986). At the time of Kleopatra VII, the Egyptian cult of Arsinoe is documented by the stele *BM* 392, mentioning the priestly title “scribe of Ptah and of the Brother-Loving (goddess)”.

temples happened at the request of Ptolemy II.⁵³ According to the text of Mendes (l. 11-14), Ptolemy, in particular, seems to have made his request soon after Arsinoe's death, during his 15th regnal year.⁵⁴ Recently, however, Philippe Collombert has drawn attention to the Sais stele (l. 7-8), suggesting that Ptolemy's request actually dated to his 20th year, more precisely to the occasion of a general gathering of the Egyptian priests (in Alexandria?):⁵⁵ the promise that the king would bestow new economic favours on the temples would match, according to Collombert, the reformation of the *apomoira*, the tax on vineyards and orchards.⁵⁶ From Ptolemy's 23rd year onwards (263/2 BC), the *apomoira* was applied to the fields within cleruchies and *doreai* (thus not to the land belonging to the Egyptian temples) with the intention of supporting the expenses of Arsinoe's cult. As a consequence, Egyptian temples were favoured twice because they could profit from a tax from which they were exempted. The seeming chronological gap between the texts of Mendes and Sais could, however, also be explained as the effect of a non-generalized acceptance of Ptolemy's first request by the temple elite.⁵⁷ If so, the tax reform could have been conceived to gratify the Egyptian priestly aristocracy with a further privilege that would strengthen the relationship between the court and the traditional holders of local power. In exchange, they would act as the promoters of the new cult of the queen in the Egyptian inland.

To sum up, whereas in Alexandria a Greco-Macedonian elite organized itself around the court, in Memphis, as in the rest of Egypt, a traditional group of families monopolizing the major priestly, administrative and military offices appropriated from the beginning the new ruler cults as a means to increase their prerogatives and privileges. In return, they would contribute to the consolidation of Ptolemaic power in the *chōra* through the establishment of the dynastic cult in the local temples, a phenomenon whose first exemplary step was marked by the worship of Arsinoe the "Brother-Loving goddess".⁵⁸

⁵³ On the Mendes and Sais steles, see recently MÜLLER (2006); THIERS (2007); COLLOMBERT (2008).

⁵⁴ In 270 BC according to the traditional dating of Arsinoe's death: cf. COLLOMBERT (2008), n. 1.

⁵⁵ COLLOMBERT (2008).

⁵⁶ On the *apomoira*, *P. Rev.* col. 23-37; cf. KOENEN (1993), p. 69; CLARYSSE – VANDORPE (1998); COLLOMBERT (2008), p. 91-92.

⁵⁷ This is true unless one follows Collombert (2008) in assuming that the indication of year 15 refers to the death of Arsinoe but not to Ptolemy's request to the priests, which, however, directly follows the former information in the text.

⁵⁸ QUAEGBEUR (1998), p. 80-84 aptly points to the role of the cults for Arsinoe as a forerunner of the Egyptian dynastic cult for the Ptolemies.

5. Female euergetism: the dossier on Laodike V

Making lists of documented cults is not sufficient to evaluate the ideological importance of ruler cults. What is necessary is to distinguish the communication channels by which the involved parties drew on cults as the ingredients of a political dialectic aiming at legitimating central power as well as at acknowledging the privileges of local groups. Through a process of mutual exchange and influences, the participants applied their contractual power and reached an agreement that in practice revealed itself through the settled characteristics of the cult.⁵⁹

Since we almost entirely lack sources documenting the political dynamics of ruler cults interior to the city governments,⁶⁰ in most cases we have to resign ourselves to studying only the diplomatic role of the cults in international politics. The interstate relevance of the cults is made clear by civic inscriptions, namely the honorific decrees that announce and justify the established cults according to the formulas of honorific decrees.⁶¹ This continuity with the legal and honorific activity of the city, a major mark of its *autonomia*, sets the institution of ruler cults within the comforting framework of the traditional administration of religious life by the *polis*. Accordingly, the language used in the decrees represents cult institutions as being the result of an autonomous decision by the community, choosing this way to show its gratitude towards the ruler.

Epigraphic sources offer a long list of events justifying the bestowal of cults upon a sovereign by a city or a sanctuary: the liberation from a military occupation, the end of a war, the restitution of *autonomia* to a city⁶² or the recognition of its inviolability (*asylia*),⁶³ the concession of land or other incomes, but also the donation of money or foodstuffs and the exemption from taxes and tributes are acts of a political and economic nature testifying the rulers' commitment in assuring their subjects' safety and wealth. Where the combination of some such actions results in surmounting a serious threat to the life of the community, the sovereign's saving intervention justifies a

⁵⁹ A significant step in the definition of this approach has been marked by MA (20042), picking up on the work by PRICE (1984b), p. 25-40, 51-52. Drawing on a dynamic and contractual concept of power, Price and Ma regard ruler cults as the tools making diplomatic manoeuvres effective and acceptable between rulers and the communities that are subject to them.

⁶⁰ Unfortunately only a few exceptions are available; cf. MA (20042), p. 179-185.

⁶¹ For the standard structure of honorific decrees, cf. MA (20042), p. 151-159; MCLEAN (2002), p. 229-232. With regard to royal letters, see Welles in RC, xli-l. Of major importance is the explicative section where the council or the king's decisions are motivated according to the euergetic rhetoric of reciprocating favours.

⁶² On the link *demokratia* – *eleutheria* – *autonomia* within the Hellenistic political lexicon, see CARLSSON (2005), p. 127-136, 147-161; GRIEB (2008), esp. p. 364-368; MARI (2009).

⁶³ The reference work on *asylia* is RIGSBY (1996).

tribute of honour high enough to integrate the ruler within the religious life and civic memory of the *polis*.

Few documents provide such an explicit explanation of the logic of euergetism underlying the institution of ruler cults as the *dossier* concerning the honours paid by the city of Teos to Antiochos III and his wife Laodike V.⁶⁴ Two decrees dating to about 203 BC follow the king's accordance to the city, recently reconquered from Attalos, of the status of ἱερὸν καὶ ἄσυλον καὶ ἀφορολόγητον, "sacred, inviolable and free from tribute", so that Antiochos became not only a benefactor, but the saviour of the community.⁶⁵ As a consequence, cultic honours aim at marking a perennial memory of the city's gratitude towards the king and the queen by re-elaborating the political and religious life of the city around the saving epiphany of the royal couple.⁶⁶ While the first decree orders the dedication of *agalmata* of the king and queen alongside that of Dionysus, so that they "share in the temple and the other rituals of Dionysus",⁶⁷ the second, a little later, establishes a festival for the ruling couple, the *Antiocheia kai Laodikeia*, which re-organizes times and places of civic life around the memory of their saving intervention. The new festival is recorded in the city sacred calendar (εἰς τὴν ἱερῶν βύβλον), and occurs at the beginning of the year, when new magistrates start their mandate and the ephebs are introduced into public life. In addition, the *Antiocheia kai Laodikeia* are associated with the *Leukathea*, the pre-existing festival of the *symmoriai*: civic associations must add an altar for the new festival to the traditional one for the *Leukathea*, thus guaranteeing that the new rites take deep root within the city. Finally, the model of the old festival is applied to the new one also with regard to the fact that the *Antiocheia*, too, receive state funding and are supervised by a civic priest of Antiochos, just as the *Leukathea* are administered by the civic priest of Poseidon.

Alongside cultic honours for the ruling couple, however, the Teos decrees also mark a distinction between the intervention areas of the king and queen, thus defining the specific traits of female euergetism and the ways it can fruitfully cooperate with the king's benefiting commitment.⁶⁸ An *agalma* of Antiochos is set in the *bouleuterion*, i.e. in the place where the king granted the

⁶⁴ SEG XLI 1003 I-II. Cf. HERRMANN (1965), p. 34-40. Notes on single text sections are available in J. and L. ROBERT, *Bull. Épig.* (1969), nr. 495-499; (1974), nr. 481; (1977), nr. 405; (1984), nr. 365. Recently, RIGSBY (1996), p. 280-292; MA (2004²), p. 351-361; VIRGILIO (2003), p. 41-43; VAN NUFFELEN (2004), p. 289-290; CHANIOTIS (2007); WIEMER (2009).

⁶⁵ SEG XLI 1003 I.18-19, 21-22.

⁶⁶ For the interaction between religion and politics in Hellenistic festivals, see CHANIOTIS (1995); CANEVA (2010).

⁶⁷ SEG XLI 1003 I.43-46, 50-51. The distinction between honorific *eikones* and cult *agalmata* is discussed in KOONCE (1988); DAMASKOS (1999), p. 304-311; SCHEER (2000), p. 8-34.

⁶⁸ The gender-related distinction and integration of the king and queen's euergetic roles, as they emerge from both court literature and inscriptions on the establishment of ruler cults, is discussed in CANEVA (forthcoming).

city its new status in front of the citizens and which is consequently chosen as the “lieu de mémoire” of the king’s godlike epiphany: it is in this place that, on New Year’s Day, 1st *Leukatheon*, new magistrates shall sacrifice to the king, the Charites, and Mneme;⁶⁹ the same sacrifice shall be performed by the epebes when they enter public life as well as by victorious athletes, who are also expected to crown the king’s *agalma*. As for Laodike, a spring placed in the agora will be named after the queen and shall provide water for priests in all public sacrifices and for new brides during their ablutions. While the king’s honours are meant to evoke his commitment in the political and military field, the saving intervention of the queen is therefore more precisely associated with the area of family and marriage.

The picture offered by the decrees from Teos is confirmed by a dossier from Iasos (*I.Iasos* 4; 196 BC),⁷⁰ where Laodike’s intervention expresses itself through a yearly donation of wheat to be sold for the city’s advantage and whose income shall be used to provide the daughters of poor citizens with a dowry (l. 15-25). As a consequence, a priesthood is introduced for ‘Queen Aphrodite Laodike’ (l. 79-82) and a festival is celebrated in the month Aphrodision, on the day of Laodike’s birthday, during which men and women on the threshold of marriage shall sacrifice to ‘Queen Aphrodite Laodike’ (l. 82-86).

The case of Iasos, where the queen follows the king’s precedent (l. 4-15, 25-32) by personally ordering the *dioikētēs* to pay a yearly wheat donation (l. 15, γεγράφεια Στρουθί|ωνι τῷ διοικητῆι), makes necessary a broader political discussion of female euergetism and of the cults that may repay it. This mechanism relies on the concession to Macedonian royal women of great administrative and economic initiative. The possibility of acting as benefactress towards communities and sanctuaries relies in practice on the right that court women have to their own goods and incomes and even to directly administrate *poleis* and *dōraî* within the kingdom.⁷¹ In this case, too, Arsinoe II provides an important model: as the wife of Lysimachos, the queen dedicated a huge *tholos* to the Great Kings in Samothrake. Public funding of such an entity on the part of a woman may evoke the official role of a dynast such as the Karian Artemisia rather than of a normal Macedonian queen.⁷² Again from Lysimachos Arsinoe

⁶⁹ *SEG* XLI 1003 II.33-34. See GEHRKE (1994) and (2001); DILLERY (2005); CLARKE (2008), esp. p. 193-244; cf. p. 313-353 on providing the community with a shared memory through its cults. This process results in what has been defined as *intentional history*: an identity-making history aiming to give a local group a consciousness of its distinctive position within international political networks and historical narratives. A clarifying case of local sacred history is offered by the Lindian Chronicle (*FGrH* 532): cf. HIGBIE (2003); MASSAR (2006).

⁷⁰ MA (2004²), nr. 26 A.

⁷¹ Cf. MÜLLER (2009), p. 56-57.

⁷² For the *tholos* in Samothrake, see recently SCHMITT-DOUNAS (2000), p. 19-20; MÜLLER (2009), p. 58-65. The political role of Artemisia, sister and wife of the Hekatomnid Mausolos of Karia, is discussed in HORNBLOWER (1982); RUZICKA (1992); CARNEY (2005).

received a *dōrea* in Bithynia comprising Heraklea Pontica, Tios and Amastris: the area had been governed by the local dynasty of Heraklea, first the tyrant Dionysius and later his wife Amastris, a niece of Darius III who had already been married to Krateros and to Lysimachos himself before Lysimachos chose Arsinoe as his new bride.⁷³

The admiration displayed by Lysimachos for Amastris' firm government of the region as well as the continuity later shown by Arsinoe offer a further opportunity to reflect on the leading political models for Hellenistic queens.⁷⁴ As ephemeral as it proved to be, Lysimachos' reign over Macedonia, Thrace and Asia Minor may have acted as a laboratory for the synthesis of two traditions of female power, providing an alternative to the systems developed by continental Greek *poleis*: first the inheritance of the Argead tradition, within which the queen not only embodies and transmits dynastic legitimacy through marriage and its offspring, but is also invested with personal power deriving from her belonging to the royal house;⁷⁵ second, the secular traditions of dynasties in Asia Minor, which developed at the crossroads of the Greek world and the Persian empire. Therefore, the political and economic autonomy of women like Artemisia of Karia and Amastris of Bithynia offers two chronologically close examples that must be borne in mind when interpreting female power within early Hellenistic dynasties.⁷⁶

6. Why Aphrodite? Theocritus XVII, Berenike I, and the logic of female divinization

Theocritus' *Encomium of Ptolemy* opens with an Olympian banquet that Ptolemy I celebrates with his divine ancestors, Herakles and Alexander, in the house of his father Zeus. Ptolemy's right to participate in the gods' feast depends not only on his divine ascendancy, but also, and specifically, on the direct intervention of Zeus who, as the Soter's father, has made Ptolemy equal in honours to the immortals (l. 16-17, τῆνον καὶ μακαρέσσι πατῆρ ὁμότιμον ἔθηκεν ἀθανάτοις). As coherent with the general encomiastic tone of the poem as this sentence is, it also operates as an adaptation of the poetic discourse to the logic of ruler cults as they are manifested in non-literary documentation: the favour that Zeus

⁷³ On Amastris, who founded through *synoikismos* a city named after her, and on the *dōrea* of Heraklea Pontica, cf. Memnon, *FGrH* 434 F 5; see MÜLLER (2009), p. 33-34, 49-52.

⁷⁴ Memnon, *FGrH* 434 F 5, 4-5.

⁷⁵ Cf. CARNEY (2000a) and (2006), esp. p. 60-87; MIRÓN PÉREZ (2000); MEEUS (2009), p. 301.

⁷⁶ The strategies adopted for the government of Asia Minor under the Achaemenid empire have been fruitfully studied as models for the Hellenistic kingdoms: see BRIANT (1996), I p. 510-521 and II p. 978-980; BILLOWS (1995), p. 81-110. For Seleukid Asia Minor, cf. MA (2004²), p. 23-42.

has bestowed on Ptolemy aptly translates in poetic terms the *isotheoi timai* that a ruler could already obtain in his lifetime.⁷⁷

Even more noteworthy is the correspondence between the legitimation of female ruler cults within inscriptions and the argument that the *Encomium* displays on the divinization of Berenike I, thanks to Aphrodite's intervention. Berenike's extraordinary charm, which has been directly bestowed upon her by the goddess, explains, in Theocritus' account, the unequalled love felt by Ptolemy I for his wife; by repaying such a feeling,⁷⁸ Berenike has ensured the trust bonds which make the royal house flourish and because of her virtue, she has been saved by Aphrodite and is allowed to share in her cult.⁷⁹ If, on the one hand, Aphrodite's favour satisfies a topical celebration of female beauty, on the other hand, the infusion of Aphrodite's divine glamour onto Berenike's breast marks the first step on the assimilating path that finally leads the queen to be associated with the cult of the goddess. Such a path emerges coherently in Theocritus' *Idylls* XV and XVII:

Τῶ μὲν Κύπρον ἔχοισα Διώννας πότνια κόρυα
κόλπον ἐς εὐώδη ῥαδινὰς ἐσεμάξατο χεῖρας

The controller of Cyprus, the powerful daughter of Dione, pressed her delicate hands upon Berenice's fragrant breast.⁸⁰

Κύπρι Διωναία, τὸ μὲν ἀθανάταν ἀπὸ θνατᾶς,
ἀνθρώπων ὡς μῦθος, ἐποίησας Βερενίκαν,
ἀμβροσίαν ἐς στῆθος ἀποστάξασα γυναικός

Cypris, Dione's child, you made mortal Berenice an immortal, so men say, sprinkling ambrosia on her woman's breast.⁸¹

While the *Encomium* focuses on the role that Aphrodite played in making Berenike her human double, the hymnic section of the *Adoniazousae* has ambrosia mark the final step in the divinization of the queen. As a consequence, Berenike becomes a godly donor of gentle love, consistent with the values of reciprocity and cooperation exhibited in the contemporary celebration of royal couples.⁸²

⁷⁷ Cf. HUNTER (2003), p. 110-112. *Isotheoi timai* to Ptolemy I Soter are documented in *SIG*³ 390 (cf. HABICHT (1970²), p. 196-197). Similar honours to Ptolemy II are recorded in Byzantium: cf. Dion. Byz. *GGM* II 34; HABICHT (1970²), p. 116.

⁷⁸ Theocr., XVII, 40: ἧ μὲν ἀντεφιλεῖτο πολὺ πλέον; 42: φιλέων ... φιλεούσης.

⁷⁹ Theocr., XVII, 34-52.

⁸⁰ Theocr., XVII, 36-37, trans. by HUNTER (2003).

⁸¹ Theocr., XV, 106-108, trans. by VERITY – HUNTER (2002), p. 47-48.

⁸² Theocr., XVII, 51-52. A lengthy discussion of requited love as a legitimating motif is provided in CANEVA (forthcoming).

Therefore, the explanation by Theocritus of Berenike's divinity develops according to the same motifs that define female euergetism and justify related thanksgiving cults in epigraphic evidence: a queen is celebrated in court poetry and deserves to be worshipped as a consequence of her piety towards the gods, benevolence in relation to her subjects, devotion towards the king and the house as well as because of her disposition to act in compliance with the philanthropic attitude displayed by her husband.⁸³

Moreover, Theocritus provides another opportunity to discuss the link between ruler cults and the representation of female power. In the *Encomium*, whereas Ptolemy I is rewarded with a double ascendancy, both human (Lagos, l. 14, Λαγείδης Πτολεμαῖος) and godly (Zeus, l. 16, πατήρ), Berenike is only mentioned *qua* daughter of the mortal Antigone (l. 61 Ἀντιγόνης θυγάτηρ). By promoting the divinization of Berenike – the first Ptolemaic queen who received cultic status – Aphrodite fills this gap and this new godly legitimacy of queenship offers a model for the queens to come. Once more, therefore, the *Encomium* translates in a poetically consistent explanation the contemporary logic for the definition of the role of court women.

Within this process, Aphrodite has a crucial function. As seen above, bestowing cultic honours becomes acceptable inasmuch as the ruler's action in one of his/her distinctive intervention areas proves so decisively effective that it can be equal to that performed by a divine epiphany. As a goddess of eros and seduction, but also of fertility within marriage,⁸⁴ Aphrodite is the deity that better matches the effective epiphany of the queen in her two complementary aspects: on the one hand, her female charm, the source of the king's love and, as a consequence, of the legitimacy of her children against the concurrency caused by the Macedonian traditional royal polygamy; on the other hand, her euergetic intervention in the wedding sphere, which justifies her identification/association with Aphrodite as the goddess supervising rituals for marital fertility.⁸⁵

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⁸³ In this respect, cf. the Mendes stele referring to Arsinoe II (*Urk.* II 41, l. 13; THIERS [2007], 190); for Laodike III, cf. *SEG* XLI 1003 II; *OGIS* 224 = *RC* 36/37; *SEG* XXXIX 1284 = *MA* (2004²), p. 324.

⁸⁴ On these two intervention areas of the goddess, cf. PIRENNE-DELFORGE (1994), p. 418-454.

⁸⁵ Aphrodite has played a major role in the definition of female power and cults since at least as early as the end of the 4th cent.: cf. CARNEY (2000b), 30-34.

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