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Ptolemy I Soter

A Self-Made Man

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Chapter 5

Ptolemy I: Politics, Religion and the Transition to Hellenistic Egypt

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Introduction: From Macedonia to Egypt

From the hills of Eordaia, in western Macedonia, where he was born in 367/6 BCE,[1] the career of Ptolemy son of Lagos as a follower, bodyguard and then as a Diadoch of Alexander brought him in about fifteen years (336–322 BCE) through Anatolia, Phoenicia, Egypt, Babylonia, Persia, Sogdiana (southern Uzbekistan), Gandhara (northern Afghanistan and Pakistan) and then back to Egypt, where he first served as a provincial governor (satrap), then established his own kingdom, which he shared with his son, Ptolemy II, before dying in 283/2 BCE. The scale and impact of the historical transformations which Ptolemy witnessed, caused, and presided over during his lifespan made him a protagonist in a momentous turning-point for the ancient Mediterranean and Near-Eastern world. Another reason why Ptolemy increasingly sparks the interest of modern historians is that he was faced with the challenge of ruling a multicultural society, where both the practical and ideological aspects of government needed to keep into account a variety of traditions in order to be accepted by, and implemented upon, subjects with different cultural backgrounds and agendas.

In this chapter, the focus is placed on the agency of Ptolemy I in relation to four aspects of the transition from the empire of Alexander to the Ptolemaic kingdom:

1. the relationship between the Macedonian rulers and the indigenous elites
2. the appropriation and diffusion of the cult of Sarapis
3. the rising tradition associating Alexander with Dionysos
4. the response of Ptolemy to the rising success of ruler cults

[1] Worthington 2016a, 9; Heckel 2016, 231; this volume; Howe 2018, "Biographical Essay".

Without pretending to be exhaustive, I will deal with some aspects of these themes that have gone through an intense debate in the recent scholarship, trying to refresh the discussion by means of a cross-media and, when necessary, a cross-cultural approach. Finally, since the analysis of the age of Ptolemy requires an evaluation of what happened before and after him, I will deal with the question of how far the reign of Ptolemy set up later developments in Ptolemaic Egypt. To put it in a more concise way: How "Ptolemaic" was Egypt under Ptolemy I?

Ptolemy and the Egyptian temples

With the advent of Ptolemy, Egypt came under the control of a foreign ruler residing in Egypt, surrounded by a growing network of non-Egyptian collaborators and, after the murders of Kleomenes (323/2 or 322/1 BCE)[2] and Perdikkas (320 BCE),[3] having *de facto* no superior power that might interfere with his plans. Recent scholarship has considerably nuanced a long-lasting binary opposition between an entirely oppressive Persian domination and a fruitful collaboration between the Egyptian elite and the Macedonian liberators, setting the premises for a more fine-grained analysis focusing on social and economic interactions, as well as for a more balanced appreciation of the negotiating processes which led to the maturation of a common anti-Persian discourse legitimating the new rulers.[4]

Within this research framework, however, evaluating the interactions between Ptolemy I and the Egyptian temples is still complicated by three factors concerning the extant evidence: for the period of the satrapy, works in the indigenous sanctuaries were carried out under the name of the Argead pharaohs Philip III and Alexander IV, which makes it difficult to understand Ptolemy's role as the possible sponsor of some of these initiatives;[5] for the period of his reign, we still lack a systematic study of the Egyptian evidence associating his name with building and restoration activities;[6] finally, the contrast between this obscure background and the unique light shed by the Satrap stele hinders a balanced evaluation of whether the positive collaboration between the satrap and the priestly elite evoked by this document actually represented the norm or an exception.[7]

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[2] For these different chronological interpretations, see respectively Anson in this volume and Worthington 2016a, 90–91.

[3] For the events leading to the assassination of the regent during his disastrous Egyptian campaign, see Caneva 2016a, 52–55, and Anson in this volume.

[4] For a political overview of the transitional period from the XXXth dynasty to Ptolemy I, see Wojciekowska 2016; Thompson 2018. Manning 2003 discusses innovation and continuity from an economic point of view. The monetary aspects of the transition are explored by Lorber in this volume. For a discussion focusing on the social composition of the Egyptian elite in this period, see Chauveau and Thiers 2006; Gorre 2009a; 2013; this volume; Weber 2012. Quack 2011 and Schäfer 2001 provide a useful historical profile of the Egyptian anti-Persian feeling in the early Ptolemaic period.

[5] See below, p. 91.

[6] For a preliminary discussion of the evidence, see Seidl 1978; Arnold 1999, 154–157; Thiers 2010; Wojciekowska 2016, 107; Minas-Nerpal 2018a.

[7] Gorre 2013, 101, and in this volume.

The degree by which the first Macedonian rulers of Egypt committed themselves to the promotion of the Egyptian temples, in order to gain support to their legitimacy, is a field of open debate. The recent scholarship has convincingly warned against the generalizing assumption that the kings played an active role in the definition of all the architectural programs of the Egyptian temples.[8] It is reasonable to say that in many cases, local priests would act independently, out of their own commitment to enlarge or renew the temples, in order to ensure the good functioning of the ritual life. The increasing evidence of personal euergetism by members of the priestly elite, from the end of the great architectural programs of the XXXth dynasty down to the Ptolemaic period, lends weight to this interpretation.[9] On the other hand, a plausible hypothesis is that direct contacts and negotiations took place on special occasions, even though no standard methods of collaboration were formalized before the reign of Ptolemy II.[10] Royal finances and logistics were necessary for the local clergy to open a quarry or to enable the transport of building materials: these acts constituted the fundamental premises for the launch of large-scale projects.[11] In its turn, priestly support must have been sought by the Greco-Macedonian rulers to ensure that their legitimacy would be acknowledged and formalized in a way fitting the Egyptian political and religious traditions.[12]

A combination of local priestly interest and of pragmatism on the side of the Macedonian establishment must have led to the convergence between the promotion of the legitimating motif of Alexander as son of Amun and the grandeur of the Ammonian

[8] See especially Chauveau and Thiers 2005; Thiers 2009; 2010.

[9] On the ascension of personal euergetism in Egyptian temples as a response to the decline of pharaonic sponsorship and to the reductions of temple budgets during the Persian occupation, see Meeks 1979, 654–655; Quaegebeur 1979, 714–715. For the Macedonian period, see Huß 1994, 19–25, with the review by Colin 1994; Thiers 2006; Chauveau and Thiers 2006, 397–399; Gorre 2009a, 492–495.

[10] On this point, see Gorre 2013 and in this volume.

[11] See especially Chauveau and Thiers 2006, 396; Thiers 2009; Minas-Nerpel 2018a.

[12] The definition of the pharaonic titulary is a revealing case of this process: see el-Gawad 2011; Bosch-Puche 2013; 2014a; 2014b; Ladynin 2016. A particularly tantalizing issue concerns the role played by the Egyptian priests in the creation of the fictional narrative identifying Nektanebo II as the father of Alexander III, transmitted at the beginning of the Greek *Alexander Romance*. As we learn from Hdt. 3.2, the naturalization of a foreign ruler via a fictional genealogical link with an indigenous pharaoh had already been put in practice by the Egyptian elite for Kambyses, said to be a grand-son of Apries. To date, the question about the origin of the story of Alexander III and Nektanebo II must remain unanswered, due to the difficulty of understanding the actual relationship between the episode of the *Romance* and the Greco-demotic versions of the prophetic narrative known as the *Dream of Nektanebo*, which tells the story of the last indigenous pharaoh being defeated by, and forced to escape from, the Persians. Scholars remain divided over interpreting the *Dream* as the direct prequel of the *Romance*, associating the whole tradition with an early priestly effort to naturalize Alexander as an Egyptian pharaoh (Jasnow 1997; Ryholt 2002, still followed by Matthey 2011 and 2012a), or highlighting the fluidity of Greco-Egyptian narrative traditions in the Hellenistic and Roman periods and the possibility that the various stories about Nektanebo developed at different historical stages, not necessarily in relation to a precise program of propaganda (see Gauger 2002, with an analysis of the Greek *Dream* in comparison with the demotic apocalyptic literature). Matthey 2012b, 359–362 and 2014, 315–316, proposes a nuanced evaluation of the relationship between the *Dream* and the *Romance*. For a general survey of the combination between oral fluidity and literary intertextuality in the demotic narrative literature of the Greco-Roman period, see also Jay 2016.

architectural program developed under the name of the Argead kings at Thebes:[13] at Karnak, the works of XVIIIth-dynasty giants like Thutmosis III and Thutmosis IV underwent a remarkably conservative restoration under the names of Alexander III and Philip III;[14] inside the sanctuary of Amenhotep III at Luxor, the new decoration of the shrine of Amun's barque, carried out in the name of Alexander III, constitutes the most complete manifestation of Alexander's pharaonic naturalization on Egyptian temple friezes.[15] The precise date of these works is debated, yet at least the works for the shrine of Amun's barque at Luxor may have started soon after Alexander's conquest, a point further confirming a link between the beginning of the Theban architectural program and the process of legitimation for the Macedonian conqueror.[16]

If interactions between the local clergy and the Macedonian rulers continued under the reigns of Philip III and Alexander IV, then the works carried out at Thebes and in the rest of Egypt under these pharaohs' names had the satrap Ptolemy as their promoter and financier, even though his name would not be mentioned, in compliance with the traditional acknowledgement of pharaonic agency in temple works. We must therefore work on traces. Ladynin has recently argued in favor of a progressive "decentralization" of the temple programs from the major religious centers to provincial sanctuaries, and from Upper Egypt to the Delta, which might depend on a change of policy by Ptolemy; this change would have occurred in the second half of the 310s BCE.[17] To date, our knowledge of the architectural programs carried out during the satrapy of Ptolemy is too fragmentary to draw conclusions on this point; if confirmed, however, this shift might coincide with the development of a new Mediterranean strategy of the satrap, who in the same years moved his capital from Memphis to Alexandria.[18]

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[13] See also Sheedy and Ockinga 2015, on the symbol of a ram head wearing an Egyptian crown, which figures on two early numismatic types issued by the satrap Ptolemy in the name of Alexander. The authors interpret this detail as an attempt, on the part of the Macedonian establishment, to convey a visual message of continuity between the new foreign rulers and the Egyptian traditions placing pharaonic power under the protection of Amun-Re.

[14] The reliefs were carefully recreated as they were at the time of the original decoration, more than one thousand years before: this strategy, pointing to an extreme respect towards the great past of the New Kingdom, has been inspiringly denominated "faux de révérence" by Vernus 2009, 357.

[15] For the Theban architectural programs of the reigns of the Argeads, see Abd el-Raziq 1984 (Amun's Barque Shrine at Luxor); Winter 2005; Chauveau and Thiers 2006, 390–399; Schäfer 2007; Thiers 2010; Ladynin 2014 (stressing the continuity with the XXXth dynasty).

[16] On this point, see Ladynin 2014, 239–240; Pfeiffer 2014. The date depends on the interpretation of the Luxor graffito of Ankhpakhered: Ladynin 2016, 261–264, and Bosch-Puche 2014a, 81–82, n. 152, date the start of the works at Luxor during the first year of Alexander's reign, 332/1 BCE. Cf. Gorre 2009a, 54–55, suggesting a date between 321/0 and 317/6 BCE, in the early years of Ptolemy's satrapy. However, this late date would imply that architectural activities took place at Luxor under Alexander IV, for which no evidence is preserved (Chauveau and Thiers 2006, 395–396).

[17] Ladynin 2014.

[18] From an Egyptian point of view, Ptolemy's strategy was not a complete innovation: as observed by Hölbl 2011, 28, under the pharaohs of the Saite period, the Delta had already played the role of an economic and political interface between the Mediterranean and the Egyptian inland. See Howe 2014 for the move from Memphis to Alexandria.

For much of the Egyptian temple evidence, however, we do not know whether the architectural initiatives of members of the local clergy were actually backed-up by the Greco-Macedonian governors. In some cases, especially when the architectural initiative was on a small scale, a negative answer is more convincing. A typical example is the small chapel built by Horos, priest of Amun-Re at Tentyris, whose decoration traditionally depicts Ptolemy I in the act of paying cultic homage to the local gods, whereas the accompanying text does not mention the king at all and only ascribes the initiative to Horos.[19] This and other documents show that in a phase in which the interactions between the Macedonian power and the indigenous temples were still far from being institutionally organized, the members of the local clergy could take up euergetic tasks which, at least at an ideal level, would belong to the prerogatives of the monarch.

In addition to revealing a sincere commitment towards the temple, personal euergetism offered benefactors an opportunity for self-promotion in the local communities. This trend was not limited to the members of the highest-ranking elite families,[20] but was also exploited by agents of lower origins. Thus, during a period spanning between the XXXth dynasty down and the reign of Philip III, Djedhor, a guardian of the sacred falcon at Athribis, distinguished himself for his commitment to the restoration and maintenance of the sanctuary and for the protection of its purity, which was threatened by soldiers having set up their barracks within the sacred enclosure.[21] His services even granted him the title *p3- šd*, "Savior," connected with the belief that his statue ensured protection against the bite of poisonous animals.[22] Nothing in the autobiographical texts of Djedhor points to a royal initiative, yet a passage on his statue CGC 46341 explicitly states that the benefactor erected the *wabet* shrine of the sacred falcon and placed at its entrance an inscription attributing the dedication to the name of the pharaoh.[23]

Another (possibly) early case of personal euergetism combining religious piety and self-promotion comes from a stone altar (or perhaps a pedestal) dedicated by Horetep, first prophet of Amun-Re in the sanctuary of this god in the oasis of Bahariya (Figs. 5.1a-b).[24] Since the publication of its bilingual, hieroglyphic and Greek

[19] Cauville 1989; Gorre 2009a, 119–121, no. 28, and in this volume.

[20] See, for instance, the well-known case of Petosiris at Hermoupolis, discussed in Thiers 2009, 283–284; Gorre 2009a, 176–193, no. 39; this volume.

[21] In times of military instability, the powerful walls of the Egyptian temples made them suitable places to host military and civic barracks (Thiers 1995). The issues caused by the dwelling of Macedonian soldiers in a sacred complex is evoked by a famous papyrus containing the order of a commander named Peukestas to respect the house of a priest, at Saqqara, under the reign of an Argead pharaoh or of Ptolemy I (Turner 1974). For Ptolemaic soldiers stationing near or even inside the wall of Egyptian temples in the 2nd century Thebaid and Lower Nubia, see Dietze 2000; Fischer-Bovet 2014, 329–262.

[22] Jélinkova-Reymond 1956; Sherman 1981; Thiers 1995 (for the protection of the sanctuary against pollution caused by the soldiers residing there); Gorre 2009a, 353–364, no. 70; 2013, 102–103. All these authors stress the fact that Djedhor was a self-made man who managed to acquire his prestige and to have it religiously sanctioned merely on the base of his deeds.

[23] CGC 46341, line 19, with Gorre 2009a, 360, arguing that this claim of proximity with the monarch was part of Djedhor's strategy of self-promotion.

[24] Bosch-Puche 2008, 37. For Horetep, see also Gorre 2009a, 450, no. 86 (only referring to the hieroglyphic

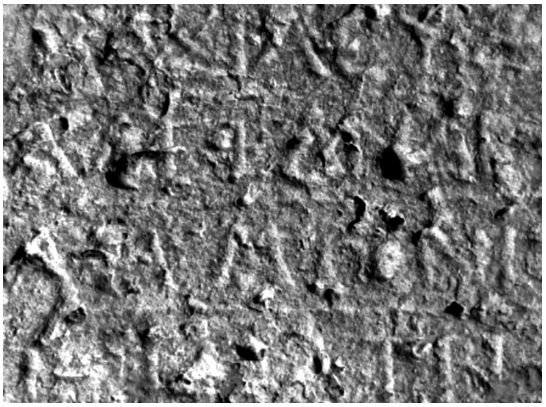

Fig 5.1.a Detail of the Greek dedication to Ammon at Bahariya (from Bosch-Puche 2008; augmented contrast to facilitate reading)

Fig. 5.1b Drawing of the inscription (from Bosch-Puche 2008)

inscription, this humble object has attracted the attention of scholars because it provides the only known specimen of the full pharaonic titulary of Alexander the Great.[25] Based on a palaeographic analysis of the Greek inscription, the editor dated the whole monument to the reign of Alexander (332–323 BCE).[26]

In a series of recent contributions, Ladynin has contested this chronology, instead interpreting the monument as a later imitation of the Argead or early Ptolemaic period.[27] I would like to add that this dedication could hardly point to a direct, or even to a mediated initiative of Alexander. To begin with, the two columns of the hieroglyphic text juxtapose the titulary of Alexander with Horetep's name and function, the first increasing the prestige of the latter, rather than the opposite. Moreover, the mediocre style of the Greek text is far from what one can expect from the dedication of a member of the Greco-Macedonian elite,[28] not to mention of a king.[29]

text). For a discussion of the temple, erected in the name of Alexander, see Colin 1997; Hirzbauer 2011. Neither the construction, nor the decoration of the sanctuary were finished: see Chauveau and Thiers 2006, 393, with further references

[25] For the discussion of Alexander's title on the "Bahariya altar," see Bosch-Puche 2008; 2013, 132; 2014b, 91. For a critical revision, cf. Ladynin 2016.

[26] Bosch-Puche 2008, 37. Note, however, that there is no certainty about the two inscriptions having been written at the same time; the marginal position of the Greek text might rather suggest the opposite.

[27] Ladynin 2016, 258–259 with further references.

[28] In addition to the irregular letter shape, one may note the unpolished surface with stonecutter guidelines almost as deep as the letters themselves. These features jointly reveal a low-quality execution: see for instance *I. Breccia* 3, a small plaque from Naukratis, probably from a private altar of the ruler cult; *I. Ptol. Alex.* 53, a dedication to Osiris by a Cretan. The use of deep guidelines in a Greek inscription stemming from an Egyptian milieu is paralleled by *I. Ptol. Alex.* 34, a small stele with a dedication to Isis and Sarapis *hyper* Ptolemy XII and his children.

[29] Cf. the high quality of *I. Priene* 156 (= *I. Priene*^{2} 149), a dedication by Alexander III at Priene; *SEG* 29 800, a dedication by Philip III and Alexander IV to the Great Gods of Samothrace. Even more relevant is an elegant inscription from Memphis, recently published by Bowman, Crowther and Savvopoulos 2016, 100–102, no. 1.

Regardless of its original function, the Bahariya bilingual inscription cannot be seen as a sign of the passage of Alexander at Bahariya. While analogy with the aforementioned documents allows us to interpret the hieroglyphic inscription of Horetep as a manifestation of loyalism by a priest who also wanted to increase his own prestige in the local community, the exact purpose of the Greek inscription remains unknown. All in all, the later chronology proposed by Ladynin for the Egyptian dedication could apply to the Greek text as well: the latter could have been written under the influence of the rising tradition about Alexander's visit to the Libyan desert and his recognition as the son of Zeus Ammon.[30]

The ethnicity of the audience for the Bahariya dedication raises the question of what impact such personal initiatives could have on the Greco-Macedonian establishment. Given that, in general, non-Egyptians were not able to read these texts (and in many cases agents other than priests were not even allowed to enter the inner sacred areas of temples where they were inscribed), members of the Greco-Macedonian elite could only understand their meaning thanks to the help of cultural mediators. That these mediators also acted as political negotiators is made clear by the Satrap stele (CG 221821; 311/0),[31] where the fruitful interaction between Ptolemy and the priests of Buto is enabled by the work of the counselors of the satrap (line 7).[32] The ideological importance of this cultural brokerage cannot be overestimated, since the Satrap stele

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The text is probably a dedication by Alexander (III or IV); the editors tentatively restore the preserved text, ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΑΠ[...] as a dedication to Apis. One can also mention the five small plaques with genitive dedications to gods found at Persepolis (*IK Estremo Oriente* 241–245). Probably belonging to altars, these inscriptions can be dated on paleographic grounds to the reign of Alexander III in Asia (330–323) or to the government of Peukestas (323–316). They show a fine quality of execution, and even though the name of the donor is not mentioned, they can stem from the initiative of the Macedonian establishment in the former Persian capital.

[30] The place of Ptolemy's *Hypomnemata* in the historiographic tradition about Siwah is much debated. In his report, the satrap (or king, according to the high or low chronology of this work: see Worthington 2016a, 213–219) apparently advocated an alternative version of the return of Alexander from Siwah to Memphis via the internal desert routes (thus via Bahariya), rather than along the Cyrenaic coastline, as suggested by the other ancient historiographers: see Arr. *Anab.* 3.5, with Howe 2013 and 2014; but cf. Bosworth 1976, 136–138, arguing for a mistake of Arrian misinterpreting a concise passage of Ptolemy. Two mentions of a similar dedication appear in literary works of the imperial period, pointing to a long-lasting success of the Siwah episode in the literary traditions concerning Alexander: the *Alexander Romance* (Ps.-Call. A 1.30.5) mentions an altar dedicated by Alexander to Ammon in Alexandria, while a similar one is referred to in Philostr. *Vita Apoll.* 2.43, at the Hyphasis river. Conversely, when we leave the literary evidence in search for archaeological traces of the importance of Siwah, we must remain disappointed: nothing on the terrain suggests that, after Alexander's visit, the sanctuary in the desert received the attention that one would expect for a major *lieu de mémoire* in the Alexander tradition. On the contrary, Strabo 17.41.3 states that by his time, the oracle of Siwah had lost most of its prestige. To date, we can only speculate about why Siwah soon lost the ideological relevance that the visit of Alexander had bestowed upon it. In the early Ptolemaic period, the importance of the Siwah episode is echoed by the Alexandrian demotic *Ammonieus*, probably created under Ptolemy I (*P. Sorb.* I 7; 257 BCE). Later on, however, it was only the role Siwah played in the historiographic tradition about the Macedonian conqueror which ensured the long survival of its fame in literature.

[31] Remarkably, the date of this text, which portrays Ptolemy as a ruler *de facto* in contrast to the absence of the institutional authority of Alexander IV, is the same as *P. Eleph.* 1, where Ptolemy experiments with a double dating formula referring to the regnal years of the legitimate pharaoh and of his own satrapy (Caneva 2016a, 59–60).

[32] Schäfer 2011, 132–133 (text and translation) and 136–138 (commentary); Ockinga 2018.

sheds light on the processes by which the Greco-Macedonian and the Egyptian elites fashioned an anti-Persian discourse favorably portraying the Macedonian rule.[33]

In the report of the priests of Buto, the Egyptian motif of the king's impiety precipitating the kingdom into chaos and preventing the passage of power from father to son combines with a hint to the traditional target of Greek anti-Persian feelings, Xerxes I,[34] and with a celebration of Ptolemy for punishing the eastern enemies of Egypt and bringing back the sacred properties of the temples, stolen by the Persians.[35] The bringing back of temple goods to Egypt would become a common topic of Egyptian celebrations of Ptolemaic kings in the 3rd century, with the Seleucids playing the part of the Persians. However, this theme was a novelty at the time of the Satrap stele. In 311/0 BCE, such a reference would still point to Alexander's propaganda depicting the Asian campaign as a revenge against the Persians, guilty, among other crimes, of impiety against the temples in the regions they invaded or subdued to their domination. Herodotus' treatment of the impiety of Cambyses against the Apis bull, certainly drawn from an Egyptian priestly source,[36] allows us to understand how the topic of punishing the impious Persians could offer Greek and Egyptian negotiators a common ground of shared traditions to establish consensus and promote internal legitimacy against a common external enemy. Moreover, in the Satrap stele, the seminal binary opposition between the good and the bad monarch is not only reinforced by the continuity between the indigenous king Khababash and Ptolemy, both acting as benefactors of the goddess of Buto; it is also updated to the new agenda of the Macedonian ruler: the comparison between past and present implicitly equates the archetypal Persian enemy, Xerxes I, with Ptolemy's rivals Demetrios and Antigonos, recently defeated by the satrap in the battle of Gaza (early winter 312/1 BCE). The text issued by the priests of Buto therefore sheds light on a religious, ideological and geopolitical laboratory whereby the respective traditions of the involved parties are scanned in search for ideological common grounds capable of promoting collaboration.

The diplomatic dynamics on which the Satrap stele sheds light would not have been possible without the presence of cultural mediators on both sides. However, drawing a list of Egyptian collaborators of Ptolemy I is a challenge made complex by the scarcity of sources and by the difficulty of evaluating the actual forms of interaction between the indigenous elites and the central power at this early stage.[37] The issue is even bigger when it comes to considering the identity of Greek intellectuals and elite

[33] Klintott 2007; Ladynin 2007; Caneva 2016a, 59–68.
[34] Ladynin 2007, 342–345; Schäfer 2011, 146–151.
[35] Caneva 2016a, 66–68.
[36] Hdt. 3.27–29, with discussion in Pfeiffer 2014, 94–96.
[37] See Derchain 2000; Lloyd 2002; Legras 2004; Gorre in this volume. A prominent place among the Egyptian collaborators of the early Ptolemies is attributed to the priest Manetho of Sebennytos, the author of the first Egyptian historiographic work in Greek (Moyer 2011, 84–141; Dillery 2015). Plut. *De Is.* 28 even ascribes to Manetho a role in the creation of the Hellenistic god Sarapis. However, evaluating the actual impact of this figure on the process of acculturation between Greeks and Egyptians under Ptolemy I remains particularly

members who could have played a part in this process of cultural interpretation. For a large amount of scholars of Hellenistic Greek historiography, the most famous among these figures is Hekataios of Abdera, credited with a work *On Egypt* written during the satrapy of Ptolemy and transmitted in excerpts in Diodorus' Book I. However, the actual extent and degree of proximity by which Diodorus quotes Hekataios is debated, nowadays more than ever.[38] Without directly addressing this issue here, a few observations are needed concerning the philosophical representation of the relationship between the pharaoh and the priestly elite in a section of Diodorus (1.70–72) that might depend on Hekataios. According to this text, the illustrious past of Egypt was ensured by the fact that the monarch was not allowed to act independently without being held to account,[39] but rather followed the suggestions of the priests in every detail of his private and official life, thus ensuring that his wise and moderate government would elicit the benevolence of his subjects. Diodorus' Egyptian priests are deeply influenced by the late developments of Plato's political thought (especially in the *Laws*), replacing the rule of ideal philosophers with that of real politicians, whose activity must be directed by the respect of legal norms. Moreover, the biographic tone of the excursus, by which the principles of the good government are not discussed *in abstracto*, but in relation to the education and government of a monarch, closely recalls the Hellenistic genre *On Kingship*,[40] with the difference that here, Greek philosophers are replaced by Egyptian priests.

Once we go beyond this surface reading, however, the assumption that the Egyptian priests held the key for a legitimate government faithfully mirrors the native elite members' claim to be the holders of the traditions according to which the difference between a legitimate or illegitimate pharaoh could be evaluated.[41] While the importance of Egyptian temples for monarchic legitimacy had already been made clear to Alexander, who initiated his rule of Egypt by paying homage to the Apis bull, Greek intellectuals residing in Egypt in the early Hellenistic period may have exploited the multiplied occasions for deeper exchanges with their Egyptian counterpart and consequently refined the Greek understanding of the priests' key cultural and socio-political role. With all the caution required by the complex state of *Quellenforschung*

risky: under debate is not only the chronology of his work (under Ptolemy I or II), but even the possibility of distinguishing it from the later tradition which grew around his name (see Aufrère 2007 and 2012).

[38] See the overview of the debate in Caneva 2019; Muntz 2011 and 2017, 22–23, comes to a perhaps too skeptical conclusion about the possibility of understanding some aspects of Hekataios' work through Diodorus.

[39] Interestingly, this statement puts Diodorus' interpretation of pharaonic kingship in clear contrast to late-classical and early-Hellenistic philosophical understandings of Greek *basileia* as *anhypeuthynos arche*, "unaccountable power" (Murray 2007).

[40] On this Hellenistic genre, see Bertelli 2002; Murray 2007; Haake 2013.

[41] On the role of Egyptian priests in late-pharaonic Egypt, see Moyer 2002 and 2011, 42–83. Blasius and Schipper 2002 and Hoffmann and Quack 2007, 148–161, cover various aspects of the discussion concerning Egyptian prophetic and apocalyptic literature, by which Egyptian priests could express negative evaluations of past pharaohs in relation to their own expectations of royal piety and euergetism towards the temples. Conversely, the Ptolemaic priestly decrees shed light on the positive aspects of pharaonic euergetism: see Clarysse 2000; Pfeiffer 2004, 200–229; Caneva 2019.

concerning Diodorus' Egyptian excursus, it is tempting to imagine that at least some of the observations made, among others, by Hekataios, may have provided the Greco-Macedonian entourage of Ptolemy with more refined cultural tools to improve negotiations for power legitimacy, by leveraging the right aspects of the Egyptian theology of power and by stressing common ideological motifs which would ultimately lead to a discourse of fruitful collaboration between Macedonians and Egyptians.

Ptolemy and Sarapis: Between royal promotion and *laissez-faire*?

Scholars agree that intercultural contacts in late-dynastic Egypt, and more precisely the Greek reception of Egyptian cults in 4th century Memphis, constituted the first historical environment where the cult of the Hellenistic god Sarapis came to existence.[42] The Greek interpretation of the deceased Apis bull, embalmed and unified with Osiris as Osiris-Apis (*Wsỉr-Ḥp*) in the necropolis of Saqqara, preluded the success of the Hellenized cult of Sarapis in Alexandria, from which the fame of the god further spread to the Eastern Mediterranean world.[43] Within this framework, a still open issue concerns the evaluation of the role played by the first Macedonian rulers in the introduction of Sarapis' cult in Alexandria. Keeping aside the unconvincing hypothesis that this process was directly patronized by Alexander,[44] scholars usually assign Ptolemy I a proactive role in the process of cross-cultural synthesis that led to the rise of this new god, even though the ultimate objectives of this program escape us. Once the hypothesis of a cult meant to reach both the Greek and Egyptian subjects has been rightfully rejected,[45] the promotion of Sarapis' cult by Ptolemy I has been associated with the royal connotation that this god inherited from Osiris.[46]

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[42] Borgeaud and Volokhine 2000; Quack 2013; see already Wilcken in *UPZ* I, p. 18–29, and Fraser 1967. The non-Egyptian provenance of the god in a part of the Greek and Latin sources of the imperial period must be seen as a narrative device translating the process of *interpretatio* of the Egyptian god in geographical terms (Fassa 2013, 120–121). On the fictional narrative identifying the Pontic city of Sinope as the provenance of the statue of Sarapis, see Barat 2009 and 2010, arguing for an early-Imperial invention of this tradition.

[43] That Greek intellectuals soon saw the dead Apis behind Sarapis is suggested by a passage of Nymphodoros of Amphipolis' work *On the customs of Asia* (or *of the barbarians*), thought to have been composed around 300 BCE and transmitted in Clem. *Strom.* 1.21.106 (Müller *FGH* II 380). The author speculated on the etymology of the god's name, which he derived from Soroapis, "Apis of the coffin." The source of this discussion must have been Egypt, probably the intellectual milieu of the Alexandrian court, which confirms that the definition of the Greek identity of the god was an ongoing process during the reign of Ptolemy I.

[44] See Fraser 1967 for a rejection of this hypothesis, which had been advocated by Welles 1962. More recently, Alexander's initiative has been restated by Legras 2014, 102, who thinks of a plan, established by the king and implemented by Kleomenes, to provide Alexandria with a poliadic god. However, the idea that Sarapis was the poliadic god of Alexandria seems to be based on hindsight, since the epiclesis *Polieus* is not used for Sarapis (or for Zeus Sarapis) before the Roman period. Moreover, neither the cultic honors paid by Alexander III to the sacred bull Apis (Arr. *Anab.* 3.1.4–5), nor those financed by Ptolemy I (Diod. 1.84.8), can be interpreted in relation to the cult of Sarapis. These were acts of piety meant to create a positive bond with the priestly elite and thus to have the new sovereigns inscribed within the tradition of good and legitimate Egyptian rulers.

[45] Against this hypothesis, see among others Quack 2013.

[46] See e.g. Pfeiffer 2008a; Fassa 2013; Legras 2014.

While this assumption may be to a certain extent correct, much of its success seems to depend on the authority of the ancient aetiological narratives transmitted by Tacitus and Plutarch, which give Ptolemy I the protagonist role.[47] However, these stories, probably based on a common source of the Flavian period (1st century CE), have been proved to re-elaborate a limited and hardly detectable core of historical events with a large amount of later materials and standard storytelling patterns. Accordingly, the protagonist role that they ascribe to Ptolemy I can be seen as a combination between the acknowledgement of the early success of Sarapis in Ptolemaic Egypt, historical hindsight based on the later patronizing policy of Ptolemy III and IV,[48] and the storytelling pattern of the Egyptian *Königsnovelle*, traditionally presenting ancient pharaohs as the protagonists of stories explaining the cause of historical events.[49] Starting from these premises, in what follows I argue that even though the royal connotations of Osiris-Apis may have been known to Ptolemy since the time when he held his capital in Memphis,[50] our evidence does not allow us to project back onto his rule the growing commitment of his successors and of their court to the promotion of Sarapis as a royal deity and a divine counterpart of the king.[51]

The few preserved traces of the intellectual discussion about Sarapis under Ptolemy I point to the healing and funerary aspects of the god, rather than to his royal connotation, as those which drew more attention in the cultural milieu hosted at the Alexandrian court.[52] These features equally emerge from the early-Ptolemaic epigraphic

[47] Tac. *Hist.* 4.83–84; Plut. *De Is.* 27–28.

[48] On Ptolemy III's commitment to the promotion of the cult of Sarapis, see McKenzie, Gibson and Reyes 2004; Sabottka 2008; Bergman 2010, 126–127; Bricault 2013, 92–94; Caneva and Bricault 2019. On Sarapis and Isis as Savior Gods in the dedications concerning Ptolemy IV, after the battle of Raphia, 217 BCE, see Bricault 1999.

[49] See Borgeaud and Volokhine 2000; Burstein 2012; Paarmann 2013.

[50] The XXXth dynasty architectural program at Saqqara is fundamental in this respect (Arnold 1999, 109–111, 130–131; Devauchelle 2010, 60; Wojciekowska 2016, 44, 59). The age of the Nektanebids strengthened the link between the cult of Osiris-Apis and pharaonic kingship in Memphis at a dual level: 1) through the royal commitment to the building program of the Saqqara Serapeum, and 2) through the introduction of priests of the statue cult of the Nektanebids (especially of Nektanebo II). While traces of this cult have been found in various locations in Egypt, the concentration of the evidence and the longer duration of the cult in Memphis (down to the end of the 3rd century: see De Meulenaere 1960; Gorre 2009b) could be explained as a consequence of the particular importance of the architectural program of the dynasty in this area.

[51] A specific link between the cult of Sarapis and the rising Ptolemaic ruler cult has been proposed by Pfeiffer 2008a for the reign of Ptolemy II, with arguments that I share in many respects (see also Caneva and Bricault 2019). To the scenario evoked by Pfeiffer, one can add the analysis, by Thiers 2007b, of lines 10–11 of the Mendes stele (written *ca.* 263–257 BCE), where Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II (by then already deceased and deified) are allusively equated to the divine couple Osiris and Isis; this detail provides the first known Egyptian parallel to the sibling-marriage of Zeus and Hera of the Greek court poetry.

[52] For the funerary dimension of Sarapis, see above. Concerning the medical characterization of the god, see Diog. Laert. 5.76, reporting that Demetrios of Phaleron, who arrived in Alexandria in 297 BCE, wrote paeans to Sarapis after personally experiencing the healing power of the god. Artem. *Oneirocritika* 2.44 adds that Demetrios wrote a compilation of cases of divine healing, many of which were caused by Sarapis. The historicity of Demetrios' interest in Sarapis is accepted by Fraser 1967, 41 and Borgeaud and Volokhine 2000, 50. In agreement with these scholars, I find it unlikely that the works concerning Sarapis which were transmitted in antiquity under the name Demetrios could have entirely circulated via a pseudepigraphic tradition (*contra*, cf. Renberg 2016, 342).

documentation from Saqqara, where the religious participation of the Greeks reveals a high degree of continuity with the local traditions of the pre-Macedonian period.[53] Conversely, the Alexandrian documentation (if we accept the chronology dating it under Ptolemy I) is too vague in this respect, but is interesting inasmuch as it supports an early association of Sarapis and Isis in personal dedications, a feature which could mirror the situation at Saqqara.[54] Of particular importance is a dedication to Sarapis and Isis *hyper* a king Ptolemy and his sons by two Alexandrian citizens (*I. Ptol. Alex.* 1). The text is usually dated to the reign of Ptolemy I because of the absence of the patronymic accompanying the name of later kings.[55] With this early chronology, the dedication provides the first specimen of a type of text well documented under Ptolemy II, and which reveals a link between the promotion of the cult of Sarapis by the members of the Greco-Macedonian elite and their self-promotion in relation to rulers.[56]

A tentative evaluation of the degree of involvement of Ptolemy I in the promotion of the cult of Sarapis at Alexandria cannot overlook the archaeological evidence, which suggests the probable existence, at Rhakotis, of a sanctuary of the god before that of Euergetes, under the reign of Ptolemy I or II.[57] However, even if we accept a

[53] For the Egyptian documentation, see Devauchelle 2010, 57–59, focusing on the hieroglyphic funerary stelae of the Memphis high priests. For the Greek documents, see Nachtergael 1999 (*SEG* 49 2260–2314) on the graffiti written on the sphinxes of the Serapeum *dromos*; Renberg 2016, 403–423, provides an extensive discussion of the Greek and demotic evidence concerning incubation rituals at Saqqara.

[54] See the formula "servant (s) of Sarapis and Isis" by which the pilgrims of the Saqqara Serapeum define themselves in the early Ptolemaic graffiti of the sphinx alley (Nachtergael 1999, 351–352). On Temple A of the Serapeum, jointly dedicated to Osiris-Apis and Isis by Nektanebo II, see Arnold 1999, 130–131. A direct influence of the sanctuary of Osiris-Apis at Saqqara on Serapea of the Ptolemaic period has been argued on an architectural level for Alexandria (McKenzie, Gibson and Ryes 2004, 83–84; Yoyotte 2010, 34) and Philadelphia (Hölbl 1993, 24; Pfeiffer 2008a, 404).

[55] I see this date as plausible, despite the skepticism of Legras 2014, 105–106. Two other inscriptions (*I. Ptol. Alex.* 2 and 4) are statue bases, found within the enclosure of the Serapeum of Rhakotis. Because neither text preserves a royal dedicatory formula, the proposed date *ca.* 300–275 BCE exclusively depends on paleographic grounds and should therefore be taken with caution.

[56] We do not know what the two donors of *I. Ptol. Alex.* 1 dedicated to the divine couple, but this lack of precision points by itself to a difference with the later dedications of the reign of Ptolemy II. All of these testify to major initiatives concerning the establishment of Serapea in Alexandria (*I. Ptol. Alex.* 5 for the *temenos* dedicated by the governor of Libya, Archagathos, and his wife; *P. Cair. Zen.* III 59355, v°, cl. I, l. 128; Ps.-Call. A 1.33.13, and Call. *Iamb.* 1, fr. 191 and *Dieg.* for the Serapeum of Parmeniskos, whose relation with the Rhakotis Serapeum is disputed), probably at Memphis (*P. Cair. Zen.* I 59024, the famous letter of Zoilos to the *dioiketes* Apollonios), at Philadelpheia (Fayum; *P. Cair. Zen.* II 59168, Serapeum built under the direction of the same Apollonios, near an already existing Iseum); cf. the *hieron* of Isis and Anubis dedicated by the admiral Kallikrates at Kanopos (*SB* I 429). Outside Egypt, see the *hieron* dedicated to Sarapis, Isis and Arsinoe Philadelphos at Halikarnassos (Caneva and Bricault 2019, with a correction and new interpretation of *RICIS* 305/1702); the so-called "sanctuary of the Egyptian gods" at Thera, used by an association of Ptolemaic soldiers called Basilistai (*RICIS* 202/1202), might point to the same kind of initiative. For a discussion of these texts and the light they shed on the role of Ptolemaic elites in the dissemination of the cult of Sarapis, see Pfeiffer 2008a; Renberg and Bubelis 2011; Legras 2014, 106–109.

[57] McKenzie, Gibson and Reyes 2004, 83–84. The identification of these early structures as a sanctuary of Sarapis, or of his Egyptian counterpart Osiris-Apis, seems plausible (*contra*, cf. Sabottka 2008, 66, who sees this interpretation as purely speculative). The question of the building date cannot be solved by the ancient chronographic texts, who date the "arrival" of Sarapis in Alexandria either at the end of the reign of Ptolemy I or during the early years of his son (Legras 2014, 102).

date under Ptolemy I, and we assume that the sanctuary was indeed founded on royal rather than on private initiative (a point which remains uncertain), the establishment of a new cult place for the god in a city which was still largely under construction does not imply *per se* that Ptolemy was pursuing a specific program of promotion of Sarapis as a royal deity.

A more fruitful path to reassess the role of Ptolemy I is to view it within the broader framework of the success of Osiriac cults in the Memphite and western Delta areas in the transitional period between the XXXth dynasty and the consolidation of the Macedonian rule over Egypt.[58] Devauchelle's study of the Osiriac cults in 1st millennium Saqqara compellingly shows that in the religious framework in which the Hellenomemphites met the god later named Sarapis, Osiris had long been the major deity, honored in funerary contexts via his various manifestations as Osiris-Apis, Apis-Osiris, and Ptah-Sokar-Osiris.[59] The attention paid by the XXXth dynasty to the cult of the funerary Osiris of Saqqara and the continuity shown by the early Hellenistic religious life there, urge us to reconsider the agency of Ptolemy I beyond the narrow scope of a personal religious policy. The question is therefore how Ptolemy I and his court positioned themselves in relation to this proto-Hellenistic, Greco-Egyptian Delta *koine*.

The recent archaeological explorations of the western Delta point to a diffused spread of Osiriac cults during the period that interests us, with Memphis as the epicenter with regard to the dominating theological and ritual traditions.[60] The scale of this phenomenon exceeds the possible reach of a religious program of Ptolemy I, which is usually associated with the sole Alexandria. Moreover, the evidence points to a role of non-royal personal euergetism in the dissemination of Osiriac cults in

[58] Goddio 2007a and 2007b offer an overview of the archaeological campaigns conducted between 1996 and 2006 on the sites of (from west to east) Alexandria, Taposiris Parva, Herakleopolis/Thonis, and Kanopos. Devauchelle 2010 and 2012 provide the preliminary results of a study of the cult of Apis in Egypt, with focus on the relationship between the sacred bull of Memphis and the cult of Osiris at Saqqara in the 1st millennium BCE.

[59] As pointed out by Devauchelle 2010 and 2012, the denominations Osiris-Apis, or Apis-Osiris, by which the deceased and embalmed Apis is venerated at Saqqara, constitute a central aspect of Osiris' cult as the god supervising the cycle of death and rejuvenation in 1st millennium Memphis. The cult of Apis remained substantially untouched during the Hellenistic period, whereas bilingual texts point to Osiris as the Egyptian counterpart of the Hellenistic god Sarapis. The priority of Osiris over Apis when it comes to identifying the Egyptian correspondent of Sarapis in bilingual sources was already stressed by Stambaugh 1972, 36–52; see also Pfeiffer 2008a. However, Devauchelle 2012 seems to go too far when he concludes that Apis did not play any role in the interpretation of Sarapis: cf. the text of Nymphodoros mentioned at n. 43; for a restatement of the role of the deceased Apis, see Quack 2013.

[60] The site of Taposiris Parva hosted a necropolis with underground tombs of individuals and of sacred animals, the earliest among which date to the end of the 4th century (Yoyotte 2010, 36; for the close link between Osiris and Sarapis on this site, see the dedication *OGIS* 97, with discussion in Caneva 2016b, 50–57). The sacred enclosure of Amun and Khonsu-Herakles at Thonis/Herakleion, whose maximum splendor is archaeologically dated to the period between the 4th and 2nd century BCE, contained a large stone basin, which has been interpreted as an "Osiris bed" filled with seeded earth, following a long-existing tradition in Egypt (Goddio 2007a, 78, 88; Yoyotte 2010, 37). Another factor of continuity between the late-dynastic and the early-Ptolemaic periods is provided by the cult of Isis at Naukratis, for which see Legras 2014, 99–101.

the Delta.[61] By adopting a chronological perspective embracing the long transitional phase between the late-dynastic and the early-Hellenistic period, we may wonder if the importance of these personal initiatives in the promotion of Osiriac cults should not be seen as an Egyptian model for the numerous Greek personal dedications to Sarapis documented at the beginning of the Ptolemaic period.[62]

The reign of Ptolemy I therefore appears as a transitional period between the Nektanebids' architectural program at Saqqara, with its long-term impact on the Memphite and western Delta areas, and the new impetus given under Ptolemy II by the promotion of a link between the royal pair and the Osiris/Sarapis-Isis couple.[63] When compared with his Egyptian forerunners and his Ptolemaic successors, Ptolemy I did not do more than accompany an ongoing process. His most direct legacy perhaps consisted of hosting Greek and Egyptian intellectuals at court, who actively contributed to the cultural exchange leading to the definition of the Hellenistic god Sarapis. However, the degree to which this process was actively steered by Ptolemy remains impossible to grasp beyond the standard narrative patterns of the aetiological traditions transmitted by the Greek and Latin sources of the Roman period.

Within this framework, the seminal contribution given by Ptolemy I to the rise of Sarapis rather seems to have been an indirect one: the movement of the capital from Memphis to Alexandria. By making Alexandria the new political and cultural motor of Egypt, Ptolemy substantially changed the social and ethnic setting in which the cross-cultural interpretation of the god of Saqqara took place. The passage from the Memphite Oserapis, the god invoked in the famous 4th century curse of Artemisia (*UPZ* I 1), to Sarapis as the recipient of the earliest Alexandrian inscriptions reflects the shift from a traditional Egyptian setting frequented by Greek residents to a newly founded, ethnically mixed city (but in most respects properly Greek), rapidly ascending to the role of a Mediterranean metropolis.

In search for a political significance of Sarapis for Ptolemy I as satrap and king, one may suggest that the integration of this god in the pantheon of Alexandria provided Ptolemy with the cultural leverage to achieve two objectives: building up bonds between the old and new Greek inhabitants of the Delta, and imposing Alexandria as a new epicenter of the cultural and religious trends of the region. However, the consequences of this process would only come to maturity under his successors, and its full exploitation for the promotion of Ptolemaic kingship could hardly be dissociated from the agenda of these later kings.

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[61] Several small chapels used in contexts of personal devotion have been found both within the sanctuary at Herakleion and along the canal connecting this town with Canopus, which was used on the occasion of the Khoiak festival (Yoyotte 2010, 37–38). Regrettably, Thiers 2005's analysis of personal euergetism in the Egyptian temples of the Hellenistic period does not specifically address the case of Sarapis.

[62] Fassa 2015.

[63] In its turn, the reign of Ptolemy II preluded the golden age of Ptolemaic royal support to the cult of Sarapis, inaugurated by the monumentalization of the Rhakotis Serapeum by Ptolemy III. This is the first architectural intervention in favor of Sarapis that can be unmistakably attributed to a Ptolemy.

Dionysos, Alexander and Ptolemaic kingship: The importance of a cross-media analysis

One of the strong points in the modern portraits of Ptolemy is the assumption that he was a restrained, practical person who did not indulge in the most colorful aspects of Alexander's career and even went so far as to censor some troublesome episodes from his historical account of the Asian campaign, thus fashioning a figure of the Macedonian king in compliance with his own view of leadership.[64] While not intending to question this evaluation as regards the focus and tone of Ptolemy's *Hypomnemata* or his role in the historiographical tradition on Alexander, I see it necessary to re-contextualize it within the broader picture of Ptolemy's representation of Alexander by taking into account not only his literary work, but also the channels of visual communication. In a multicultural society with a low degree of literacy, we can assume that the visual language of the sculptural and numismatic iconography would play a greater role in shaping the memory of Alexander for Ptolemy's subjects in Egypt than a Greek historiographic work, the latter rather addressing a Greek-speaking elite across the Hellenistic world.

In this section, I will especially focus on the numismatic evidence from the satrapy and reign of Ptolemy,[65] arguing that the portrait of Alexander provided by this visual medium stands close to the exotic grandeur characterizing the so-called "Vulgate" historiographic tradition about the Macedonian conqueror.[66] When seen from this perspective, Ptolemy's contribution to the definition of Alexander's legend becomes crucial. This impression can be further strengthened by a comparison between his numismatic iconography and the similar motifs later selected and staged by Ptolemy II in his grand procession at Alexandria.

A revealing case is provided by the place attributed to Dionysos in the elaboration of the figure of Alexander as a deified world conqueror, as well as in the establishment of an ideological link between Alexander, Dionysos and Ptolemy. The starting point of the discussion can be the Dionysiac characterization of Alexander in Ptolemy II's procession, where the statues of the king and of the god make their appearance on elephants. In Athen. 5.200d, a statue of Dionysos in a royal attire enters the scene lying

[64] See among others Bingen 2007, 22, and Dreyer 2009. Worthington 2016a, 214–215 suggests that Ptolemy may have omitted some episodes (like the murder of Kleitos) also because they would have shed a negative light on his efficacy as a bodyguard of Alexander. On Ptolemy's report and Arrian's statement about the truthfulness of a king, see Howe in this volume.

[65] For a detailed analysis of the monetary strategies of Ptolemy I, see Lorber 2005; 2012a, 211–214; 2012b; 2014a, 111–117. See also Lorber's chapter in this volume for images of the coins discussed below.

[66] In what follows, I will not address the question of whether Kleitarchos wrote about a decade after Alexander's campaign (and could therefore be known by Ptolemy) or later, during the reign of Ptolemy II. For a recent overview of the debate about the relationship between Ptolemy's and Kleitarchos' historiographic work, see Prandi 2012; Howe 2013. For the present discussion, this point is largely irrelevant, because at whichever time he wrote, Kleitarchos did not represent the official historiographical voice of the Ptolemaic court; this author should rather be understood against the background of the thriving genre of narratives on Alexander, which started circulating soon after his Asian campaign and variably combined eye-witness report and imaginative elaborations (see Prandi 1996, 79–83, 156, 167–168; Caneva 2013a, 194–199; 2016a, 121–124).

on an elephant which bears a golden wreath and is driven by a performer dressed up as a Satyr. The appearance of this statue, which marks the beginning of the section staging Dionysos' triumphal return from India, is paralleled, at 202a, by a golden statue of Alexander, flanked by Nike and Athena and brought on a cart pulled by real elephants.

The link between the elephant and Alexander's military achievements in the East is well-known and its visual expression, first testified by the so-called Poros medallions,[67] was developed in Ptolemy I's numismatic issues at two stages. Starting from 320/19 BCE, soon after his conquest of the body of Alexander and the defeat and murder of Perdikkas in Memphis,[68] the satrap of Egypt was the first to design a new obverse for his tetradrachms depicting Alexander as a young beardless man, wearing a headdress in the form of a trumpeting elephant with an aegis around his neck and a ram's horn curling out at the level of his temple.[69] The replacement of Herakles' *leonte* with an elephant scalp probably suggested that Alexander's achievements had passed those of his mythic ancestor.

A new phase was inaugurated by the elephant *quadriga* depicted on the obverse of Ptolemy's new golden staters issued around 298 BCE.[70] This type has Alexander standing on the cart while holding a thunderbolt and the aegis. The chronological concentration of this issue, the lack of golden emissions between 305 and 298 BCE (pointing to an accumulation of gold during these years)[71] and the new obverse of the staters, for the first time portraying Ptolemy as king with the legend ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ, point together to Ptolemy's intention to express via a new, prestigious issue his claim for a direct link between Alexander's achievements as world conqueror and his own monarchic legitimacy. The parallel between the two figures is further stressed by the fact that the portrait of Alexander and the legend ascribing the monetary issue to his name remained in use for Ptolemy's contemporaneous silver tetradrachms.

Around 294 BCE, both the "syncretistic" Alexander and the elephant *quadriga* disappeared from the precious metal issues of Ptolemy; the *quadriga* would not be used anymore, whereas the image of Alexander still appeared in the later bronze coins. However, their memory survived in both cases, since the elephant *quadriga* was

[67] On the Poros medallions, see Stewart 1993, 201–203; Dahmen 2012, 284–286. On the iconographic link between Alexander and the elephant, and between the elephant and Dionysos' conquest of India, see Schneider 2009; Iossif and Lorber 2010; Meeus 2014, 279–283; Lorber 2014b.

[68] See Lorber 2005, 62–63, and in this volume. Employing the "Low" chronology of Ptolemy's victory over Perdikkas (spring 320, instead of 321 BCE) and of the meeting at Triparadeisos (late summer of the same year) allows us to restate a close chronological sequence between these events and the beginning of the new numismatic issue (Caneva 2016a, 39, n. 34).

[69] On the symbolism of the ram horns in Alexander's portrait, see Fulińska 2014.

[70] Lorber 2005, 60.

[71] As pointed out by Lorber 2005, this issue was not meant to respond to any direct political and military crisis, but must have been prepared in advance. At the same time, the concentrated time of the issue (about half a year) might point to the purpose of celebrating a special event. It would be tempting to surmise that this coincided with the transfer of Alexander's body to Alexandria, yet this remains a hypothesis due to the lack of conclusive evidence. In this volume, Lorber proposes that the issue might correspond to the foundation of Alexander's cult. Unfortunately, the extant papyrological evidence does not allow us to answer the question of whether the priest of Alexander existed before 290 BCE.

directly associated with Alexander in Ptolemy II's procession, while a small bronze statue of Ptolemy II from Alexandria depicts the king with the elephant *exuvia* of Alexander and the club of Herakles.[72]

Another section of Ptolemy II's grand procession presents a cart with statues of Alexander, Ptolemy I, and the god Priapus, each wearing a golden ivy wreath, accompanied by a personification of *Arete* ("Excellence") bearing a golden olive wreath, and by one of the city of Corinth with a golden diadem. After this cart, a number of lavishly ornamented women, also wreathed in gold, personify the cities of Ionia, Asia, and the Aegean islands, which used to be under Persian rule before Alexander's campaign (201d – e).[73] This scene does not only provide an ideologically-oriented reconstruction of Ptolemaic history, whereby the founder of the ruling house is portrayed as Alexander's legitimate heir in the position of *hegemon* of the Greeks, but also, and more poignantly, suggests a correspondence between the two kings and Dionysos through the presence of Priapus, a companion of Dionysos in another scene of the procession,[74] on the side of the two deified kings. Just as the link between Alexander and Dionysos is suggested by the appearance of their statues on elephants in different sections of the parade, so Alexander and Ptolemy take here the place of the god on the side of Priapus.

The birth of the tradition linking Alexander and Dionysos has been studied in detail, revealing that it did not constitute a main ideological motif of Alexander's self-celebration, but rather spread as part of a fast and multi-fold re-elaboration, in the decades after Alexander's death, of some episodes of his Indian campaign, notably the Dionysiac feast of the mount Meros and the Dionysiac march of the Macedonian army through Carmania (eastern Iran).[75] This growing tradition, which played a central role in the "Alexander Vulgate," seems to have been absent or at least of secondary

[72] London, *BM* 38442. The identification is made certain by the fact that this statue makes the pair with one of Arsinoe Philadelphos (*BM* 38443) bearing the double cornucopia (*dikeras*). On this group and its link with the Ptolemaic iconography of Alexander, see Caneva 2016a, 152–153, with further references. It has been suggested that large scale statuary reproductions of these motifs may have existed, in Alexandria and/or elsewhere; Hintzen-Bohlen 1993, 78 even uses the iconography of the British Museum bronzes to imagine Kallikrates' monument at Delphi (*OGIS* 26–27). This remains an intriguing hypothesis, yet the possibility that coins could suffice to keep this memory alive cannot be ruled out.

[73] Here I summarize and complete my discussion in Caneva 2016a, 112–121.

[74] See Athen. 5.201c, staging the arrival of Dionysos and Priapus at the altar of Rhea, to be healed from the *mania* caused by Hera (Caneva 2016a, 108–112). This scene directly precedes that of Alexander and Corinth in the extant report.

[75] The Dionysiac feast of the Mount Meros took place after the capture of the northern Indian city of Nysa (Arr. *Anab.* 5.2.5–7; Curt. 8.10.13–17; Just. 12.7.7–8; *Ep. Metz* 36–37). Despite some minor differences in detail, the ancient sources agree on the fact that the Macedonian soldiers interpreted the place as sacred to Dionysos because of the presence of ivy (and perhaps vine), a plant they had not yet encountered in India. Alexander positively responded to this moment of spontaneous enthusiasm by organizing a sacrifice and a feast for the god. The episode of the Dionysiac procession in Carmania belongs to the west-bound march of the Macedonian army returning from India. In this case, the enthusiasm of the soldiers and its transformation into a feast of the army would have been triggered by the end of the dangerous march through the desert of Gedrosia (Baluchistan). The episode is commented in Theophr. *Hist. Pl.* 4.4.1; Carystius, *FGrH* IV 358 fr. 4 (= Athen. 10.434f); Arr. *Anab.* 6.28.1–3; Diod. 17.106.1; Curt. 9.10.24–27; Put. *Alex.* 67.1–6. In addition to the classical work by Goukowsky 1981, I refer to Caneva 2013a, 175–184 and 2016a, 121–122, for a detailed discussion of these episodes.

importance in the historical work of Ptolemy. In particular, Arrian contested the historicity of the Dionysiac procession of Carmania arguing that this episode was not mentioned by either Aristobulus or Ptolemy.[76]

The silence of Ptolemy has played a major role in the modern *Quellenforschung* concerning the Alexander historiography, in particular as regards the assumed role of Kleitarchos in the promotion of the link between Alexander and Dionysos.[77] A point, however, needs to be corrected as regards the assumed lack of responsibility of Ptolemy I in the success of this tradition. With the exception of a passage where Theophrastos briefly refers to the use of ivy crowns by Alexander's soldiers coming back from India,[78] the only precedent to the exotic scenes of Ptolemy II's procession representing the return of Dionysos and Alexander from India are provided by the *quadriga* motif on the golden staters issued by Ptolemy I around 298 BCE. This observation forces us to reassess Ptolemy I's engagement with the construction of the tradition associating Alexander with Dionysos and India: if not in his historical work, Ptolemy contributed to the development of this tradition through visual media, with a grandeur fitting his royal status.

Further iconographic links between Dionysos, Alexander and Ptolemy I can be spotted through a comparative analysis of the portraits of Alexander and Ptolemy on Ptolemy's numismatic issues. Although the "syncretistic" features of the silver tetradrachms minted since 320/19 BCE would remain exclusive of Ptolemy's Alexander, the addition, around 314/3 BCE, of a headband worn low on Alexander's forehead established a precedent for Ptolemy's later portrait on the gold staters issued in 298 BCE. As shown by Dahmen,[79] this headband is not yet the later royal diadem worn high on the hair, which only appears on the Diadochs' coins from the 290s BCE,[80] but instead Dionysos' *mitra*.[81] This attribute of Alexander is exclusive of the numismatic portraits issued by Ptolemy,[82] and constitutes a sign that the court was actively

[76] Arr. *Anab.* 6.28.1–3, with Goukowsky 1981, 47–64; Caneva 2013a, 180–184, 198.

[77] Prandi 1996, 162–164 convincingly argues against the hypothesis of a unique responsibility of Kleitarchos in the tradition associating Alexander and Dionysos.

[78] Theophr. *Hist. Pl.* 4.4.1, with discussion in Caneva 2013a, 182–183.

[79] Dahmen 2012. On Alexander's *mitra*, see also Kyrieleis 1975, 7–8; Stewart 1993, 233; Dahmen 2007, 11; 2012, 286–287, 291; Lorber 2011, 306–307; 2012a, 212; 2014, 112, 115–116. Kyrieleis 1975, 7–8 also draws attention to a small bronze bust of Ptolemy I wearing a Dionysiac wreath of vine and ivy, in Baltimore (Walters Art Gallery, Inv. no. 54598). The similarity with the numismatic portrait is striking, but the precise date and context of this artwork remain obscure.

[80] See Dahmen 2012, 288–289 and de Callataÿ 2012, 181, with fig. 10.7, on Lysimachos' portrait of Alexander with the diadem worn high on the hair and above the ram horns (*ca.* 297 BCE). For the portrait of Demetrios Poliorketes with the diadem positioned high on the hair, see de Callataÿ 2012, 180, with fig. 10.5 (292/1 BCE).

[81] Meeus 2014, 279, n. 59, skeptically argues against this distinction, pointing out that the elephant scalp made it impossible to depict the diadem at a higher position, on Alexander's hair. However, the fact that the gold staters of Ptolemy I show the headband still worn low on the forehead, despite the absence of the elephant headdress, shows that the iconographic solution was meant to deliver a precise message. Dahmen 2012, 290–291 points out the absence of the diadem in proto-Hellenistic sculptural and numismatic depictions of Alexander and the Diadochs. Similarly, Haake 2012 observes that the diadem was not an essential attribute of Alexander at the time of the struggle over his body.

[82] Dahmen 2012, 287–288, for the bronze types depicting Alexander with the *mitra* and ram horns, issued by

promoting the Dionysiac characterization of Alexander as a new Dionysos.[83] Moreover, the similarity between Alexander's and Ptolemy's *mitra* on Ptolemaic numismatic portraits visually underlines the continuity between the Macedonian king and his successor, via a feature casting a Dionysiac allure on both of them.[84] Remarkably, even Ptolemy I's newly designed tetradrachms (*ca.* 294 BCE) kept on depicting the *mitra* low on Ptolemy's forehead, as in the previous types.[85]

As pointed out by Lorber in this volume,[86] the innovative metallic and iconographic solutions created by Ptolemy I in his numismatic issues resulted into the creation of a distinctive macro-regional currency, financially constructing and ideologically claiming the specificity of Egypt within the global legacy of Alexander's conquest. Ptolemy's coins conveyed a message of grandeur and exoticism for the public of his subjects, whereas the profile of a restrained, pragmatic military man was delivered to his historiographic account,[87] which was meant to circulate throughout the Hellenized Mediterranean.

Cultic honors and the religious figure of the king

The last common assumption reassessed in this chapter concerns the thesis that Ptolemy was particularly cautious in comparison with other successors of Alexander when it came to promoting his figure at a religious level. Reasons adduced to support this statement are various: a psychological evaluation based on a commonly accepted portrait of Ptolemy as a pragmatic and restrained man; the hypothesis that Ptolemy wanted to avoid antagonizing the Greek cities and the Macedonian elite, a risk he would have run if he had tried to replicate the model of Alexander; finally, Ptolemy's awareness that the memory of Alexander was of seminal legitimating importance for his power, whence the necessity of not averting the attention from the eponymous cult of the Macedonian conqueror in Alexandria.[88] While these arguments may

Ptolemy in the periods *ca.* 315–305 and 305–283 BCE. On the absence of the *mitra* on Seleukos' and Agathokles' contemporaneous types inspired by Ptolemaic issues, see Dahmen 2012, 287.

[83] An echo of this tradition may be found in Theocr. 17.19, where Alexander is defined Πέρσαισι βαρὺς θεὸς αἰολομίτρας ("god of the quick-moving *mitra*, source of grief for the Persians"); on the possible link between the *mitra* and Alexander's victory over the Persians in Asia, see Fredricksmeyer 1997, followed by Haake 2012, 295–298.

[84] See Lorber 2014a, 115–116.

[85] Under Ptolemy II, some specimens of the numismatic portraits of the dynastic founder depict the royal diadem high on the king's hair (see e.g. Lorber 2007, 105, with figure). However, these should be seen as local variations, whereas the low position of the *mitra*-diadem kept on constituting a distinguishing iconographic marker of the numismatic portraits of Ptolemy I even under the later Ptolemies.

[86] See also Le Rider 1998, 786.

[87] Although this image of Ptolemy, too, is being re-evaluated. See Howe 2018, commentary on T2, F2, F5, F11, F23 and the "Biographical Essay" as well as Howe in this volume.

[88] I limit myself to a few relevant cases. For the argument based on Ptolemy's strategic commitment to the sole cult of Alexander, see Fraser 1972, I 215, who also assumes that the idea of a dynastic cult was probably "foreign to his character"; Worthington 2016a, 51, 169, 192, combines an evaluation of Ptolemy's personal restraint with the assumption that he had learnt the lesson of the negative reaction caused by Alexander's *proskynesis* policy.

contain some truth, in what follows their relevance is double-checked in relation to a broader reassessment of which opportunities were available to the Diadochs in general, and, more specifically, to Ptolemy in the light of the socio-political and cultural environments in which he operated.

To date, no systematic study has been dedicated to the attitude of early Hellenistic dynasts towards divinization,[89] which could be compared with Habicht's seminal work on the interaction between royal euergetism and cultic honors in the Greek cities.[90] Habicht consciously left this issue out of the focus of his study, both geographically (his analysis is limited to mainland Greece and Western Asia Minor) and with regard to his method, explicitly contrasting the spontaneous, bottom-up initiatives of Greek cities and the centralized, top-down self-promotion of the dynasts.[91] A consequence of Habicht's choice is that while his work has paved the way for a series of refined analyses of the role of cultic honors in the diplomatic interaction between kings and cities,[92] we still lack a coherent methodological framework allowing us to discuss effectively the attitude of Hellenistic dynasts towards the promotion of their own cults.[93] A fundamental difference emerges when we consider that, unlike the Greek *poleis* studied by Habicht, the activity of many Hellenistic dynasts spanned large geographical areas and interacted with populations different in terms of ethnic composition, political institutions and cultural traditions. This observation implies that, in order to understand the Diadochs' attitude towards cultic honors, we should adopt a perspective of differential comparatism at a dual level: outside the kingdom, between the various kings and dynasties, and inside it, between its different ethnic and political components.

Thus, when evaluating the choices of Ptolemy I, we must keep in mind that his dominion comprised a Mediterranean, Hellenized area with a rich presence of Greek *poleis* and a variety of non-Greek lands (Syria, Phoenicia, and of course Egypt) with specific traditions of power legitimation and a limited presence of autonomous Greek cities. Given these premises, I first discuss the aspects which make the attitude of Ptolemy similar to that of other early-Hellenistic dynasts in relation to the Greek cities. I then focus on the specific socio-cultural and administrative organization of

[89] In this respect, the works of Cerfaux and Tondriau 1957 and Taeger 1957 are outdated with concern both to the evidence and method.

[90] Habicht 2017. See also Erskine 2014 for the link between the re-establishment of civic autonomy, especially of democratic regimes, and the grant of cultic honors on early-Hellenistic dynasts.

[91] See Habicht 2017, xv and 146, stating the binary opposition between "civic" and "dynastic" cult (for a reassessment of the terminology, see Coppola 2016, 20–21).

[92] See in particular Price 1984; Gauthier 1985; and Ma 2002.

[93] Various methodological needs are at stake: 1) contrasting global trends and diachronic or geographical specificities in the interaction between the initiatives of royal, civic, and non-institutional agents (persons, associations); 2) identifying the strategies imposed by diverse media and occasions; 3) considering the variety of socio-cultural (including ethnic) and political milieus embraced by a kingdom; 4) differentiating posthumous cults of dynastic predecessors, which are comparable, although with a higher level of grandeur, to the contemporaneous cult foundations of elite families for their deceased relatives, and the initiatives establishing the cult of a living member of the royal family (including self-deification).

Egypt and on its impact on the actual possibilities, for Ptolemy, to pursue a strategy of power legitimation comprising the establishment of cultic honors.

As far as we know, Ptolemy did not take up any centralized initiative for the establishment of his own cult. However, neither did the other Diadochs. Our evidence, even that concerning the notorious (following the anti-Macedonian perspective of our literary sources) honors for Antigonos and Demetrios, their women and collaborators at Athens and Thebes, points to the initiative of civic institutions rather than of the dynasts themselves.[94] As a matter of fact, at this early date, civic initiatives for the establishment of ruler cults could not follow, or be guided by, centralized royal initiatives simply because the latter had not yet come into existence. The first case of self-deification of living monarchs belongs to the generation of the Epigoni: Ptolemy II and his sibling-wife Arsinoe II deified themselves as the couple of Theoi Adelphoi in 272/1 BCE,[95] adding their cult to the prerogatives of the eponymous priest which had been established by their father Ptolemy I for the city founder Alexander.[96] Nothing similar had existed during the first generation of Hellenistic rulers, and the Ptolemaic experiment in a centralized self-deification would remain unique until the late 3rd century.[97]

Nothing in our evidence suggests that Ptolemy acted differently from the other Diadochs when faced with the initiatives of Greek cities granting him cultic honors in exchange for an extraordinary act of euergetism.[98] The Rhodians first (in 305/4 BCE), and later the Aegean cities of the League of the Islanders (in 288–86 BCE), acclaimed Ptolemy as their savior and established cults addressed to him out of gratitude for his decisive intervention in moments of greatest danger for the civic communities.[99] One

[94] See Habicht 2017, 31–42, with a chronological discussion of the various phases between 307/6 and 294 BCE; Kuhn 2006 deals with the ritual honors for Demetrios together with the broader category of extraordinary privileges requested by Demetrios, or spontaneously offered by the Athenians, in relation to the religious life of the city. In one case, the initiative of cultic honors stems from some collaborators of Demetrios (Caneva 2016a, 143–145): see below.

[95] *P. Hib.* II 199, with Caneva 2016a, 163.

[96] On the importance of oikists' traditions in the establishment of posthumous cults for the early-Hellenistic dynasts, see Leschhorn 1984; Muccioli 2014.

[97] For the establishment of the Seleucid cult of ancestors under Antiochos III, see Iossif 2014, with references to the previous debate. For the Attalids, see Schwartzer 1999; 2011; Hamon 2004. The Antigonids never developed a centralized dynastic cult (Mari 2008).

[98] Already in the pre-Hellenistic period, exceptional circumstances could lead Greek cities to acclaim their greatest benefactors as saviors, either during their lifetime or on the occasion of their public funerals. Such an honor could be accompanied by the grant of durable cultic honors. See the case of Gelon at Syracuse, in 479 BCE (Diod. 11.26); Brasidas at Amphipolis, in 422 BCE, (Thuc. 5.11.1); Lysander at Samos, in 404 BCE (Plut. *Lys.* 18); Dion at Syracuse, in 356/5 BCE (Diod. 16.20.5; Plut. *Dio* 46.1). For the early Hellenistic period, see Antigonos and Demetrios at Athens, in 307/6 BCE (Plut. *Dem.* 10.3–6, 12.1–2, 13; Diod. 20.46.2); Antigonos II at Rhamnous (*SEG* XLI 75); Seleukos I at Lemnos (Athen. 6.254f = Phylarch. *FGrH* 81 F 29); Seleukos I and Antiochos I at Aigai (*CGRN* 137); Antiochos I and Seleukos III at Seleucia of Pieria (*SEG* 35 1521); Attalos I at Pergamon (see Jim 2017 for a partial list of sources); Aratos at Sikyon, in 213/2 BCE (Polyb. 8.12.7–8; Plut. *Arat.* 53.1–7); Philip V in Macedonia and Thasos (evidence in Jim 2017). For a discussion of *soteria* as a theme closely related to the rise of cultic honors for political leaders, see Nock 1951; Kolde 2003, 365–366; Muccioli 2013, 81–94, 159–178; Erskine 2014, 584–590; Paul 2016; Jim 2015 and 2017; Habicht 2017, 113–115.

[99] On the euergetic activity of Ptolemy in Rhodes, see Squillace 2013. On the Rhodians acclaiming Ptolemy as their savior after the siege of Rhodes, see Paus. 1.8.6; on this occasion, Ptolemy received cultic honors in the

may wonder whether Ptolemy promoted the circulation and diffusion of his epiclesis Soter in his lifetime and, more generally, if stimulating the grant of cultic honors by Greek cities was part of his strategy of power legitimation. To the first question, the analysis of the documents issued by the League of the Islanders during the early years of Ptolemy II gives a negative answer.

We may assume that, if Ptolemy I had promoted the diffusion of the epithet Soter as his official title, the Islanders would have followed the standard protocol in their decrees. On the contrary, the Nikouria decree (*SIG*[3] 390; *ca.* 280 BCE),[100] by which the confederation of the Aegean cities accepted Ptolemy II's request to confer Isolympic status to the Alexandrian festival he organized in honor of his father (the Ptolemaia), employs the epithet Soter in a variety of ways which speak against the existence of an already fixed formulary. On the other hand, the phraseology of the decree also sheds light on a more formulary usage of the epithet. An example comes from Ptolemy I being called "King and Savior" in a passage evoking the past benefactions of this king towards the Islanders.[101] The same formula is repeated in the patronymic of the new king Ptolemy II.[102] A particularly interesting case is provided by the reference to the sacrifice accomplished by the League's representatives in Delos "to Ptolemy Soter" (line 56: Πτολεμαίωι Σωτῆρι): here the epiclesis directly follows the personal name Ptolemy, without the article. Thus, the most plausible scenario is that the Islanders acclaimed Ptolemy I as their savior, as a reaction to his benefactions towards them, and that the process of standardization of this epiclesis, which would ultimately turn into the official title of the dynastic founder, did not start before the last years of Ptolemy I, or even during the early reign of his successor.[103] Around 280, the documents of the Aegean League still shed light on an active laboratory of international diplomacy, promoting what we could call a semi-standard use of Ptolemy I's epithet.

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city, which are described by Diod. 20.99–100 and Gorgon of Rhodes, *FGrH* 515 F 19. On the *isotheoi timai* and the epiclesis Soter granted to Ptolemy by the Islanders, see *SIG*[3] 390 (the so-called "Nikouria decree," with Hauben 2004 and 2010; Constantanopoulou 2017, 41–43), *IG* XI 4, 1038 (honorific decree for Sostratos of Knidos), and *IG* XII 4, 135 (Naxian decree for Koan judges). The origins and developments of the epithet Soter as used of Ptolemy I are also discussed in Muccioli 2013, 81–94. There is no reason to reject the assumption of Ptolemy being acclaimed as Savior in Rhodes for his help against Demetrios' siege. The skeptical arguments made by Hazzard 1992 and Worthington 2016b against the case of Rhodes are based on a too schematic understanding of the sources. However, Pausanias, or his literary source (probably a Rhodian historian), misinterpreted a local acclamation as the act of foundation of the official dynastic title of Ptolemy I. Conversely, the standardization of Ptolemy's epithet Soter took much more time and its final phase can be dated to the end of Ptolemy II's co-regency with Ptolemy the Son (259/8 BCE).

[100] Hauben 2004; 2010; Pfeiffer 2015, 35–41, no. 6; Constantakopoulou 2017, 37–40, 50–51.

[101] Lines 10–11: ἐπειδὴ ὁ | [Β]ασιλεὺς καὶ Σωτὴρ Πτολεμαῖος etc.

[102] Lines 43–44: τὸ[μ Βα]σιλέα Πτολεμαῖον Βασιλέως καὶ | [Σ]ωτῆρος Πτολεμαίου.

[103] *Contra*, see Huß 2001, 239, accepting the date 304 BCE proposed by Bresciani in her edition of an ink graffito from Deir el-Bahari, MDAI (K) 39 (1983), 103–105. According to Bresciani, the dating formula mentions the 2nd year of "Ptolemy I Soter." However, the reading of the *editio princeps* has been rejected by Vleeming (2015), 147–149, no. 1529, who reads Soter as part of the patronymic of Ptolemy II, to whose reign the text should be dated.

The second question, concerning the extent to which the promotion of cultic honors could have constituted an active strategy of Ptolemy (or of other Diadochs) in his interactions with Greek cities, should be answered bearing in mind the broad framework of contemporaneous diplomatic exchanges between *poleis* and kings. To my knowledge, the Hellenistic evidence does not provide any case of civic honors being refused by their recipients,[104] a practice which would become common in the Roman period.[105] Accepting higher-than-normal (i.e. ritual)[106] honors for extraordinary benefactions became a normal practice for the Hellenistic euergetic king, just as granting such honors soon turned into the religious grammar of fruitful diplomatic exchanges between cities and monarchs. Therefore, if we wish to argue that Ptolemy strategically avoided repeating Alexander's active requests for cults not to antagonize the Greek cities, we must accept that this argument applies to his rivals as well. Moving to the internal affairs of the *polis*, the support of the monarchs was essential for the dominant party to keep under control and marginalize the internal opposition.[107] As a consequence, cultic honors provided cities with a solution to sanction successful collaborations ensuring stability at both the internal and international level.[108] Starting from these observations, we can conclude that, at least before the establishment of centralized dynastic cults, the multiplication of civic honorific initiatives does not speak in favor of a certain dynast's particular keenness on cultic honors, but sheds light on the efficacy of his foreign policy and on the proactivity of the *polis* institutions to seize the opportunity of enhancing stability in times of internal and/or external crisis.

We must now leave Greece to move to the core of Ptolemy's reign, Egypt. Again, a comparison with Demetrios Poliorketes is revealing: unlike in mainland Greece and in the Aegean cities,[109] Antigonos' son did not receive any cult in Macedonia

[104] If we believe Democharес, quoted by Athen. 6.253a-b, Demetrios was embarrassed by the excess of flattery expressed by the Athenians through their granting of cultic honors to his mistresses and collaborators. The details of the passage of Clem. *Protrept.* 4.54.6, whereby the Athenians grant Demetrios a symbolic *hierogamia* with Athena, but the dynast disdains the goddess and rather spends the night at the acropolis with his mistress Lamia, should be treated with some reserves (Kuhn 2006, 273–274). In any case, neither episode can be taken as indicating Demetrios' formal refusal of the honors decreed by the city.

[105] For the cases of refusal of cultic honors by Roman Emperors, see Rosso 2016. For the precedent of Cicero (*Att.* 5.21.7), see Price 1980, 39. A decree of the city of Kyme in Aeolis for the civic benefactor Q. Vaccius Labeo provides a case of an elite member rejecting the cultic honors decreed for him by the civic institutions. Labeo acted out of conformism with the contemporaneous policy of Augustus; his Italic origins may have played a role in this (*I. Kyme* 19; 2 BCE–14 CE).

[106] As pointed out by Gauthier 1985 and Habicht 2017, 153, non-ritual honors for traditional civic benefactors and ritual honors for dynasts acting as super-benefactors diverge in terms of grandeur, but originate from the same political culture of the Greek *poleis*.

[107] The link between religious criticism against cultic honors and political opposition to the party decreeing them, is particularly evident at Athens, thanks to the abundancy of anti-Macedonian literary sources (Mari 2003 and 2009, 98–102; Habicht 2017, 41, 93–99); this must have been the case in all contexts where the establishment of cultic honors followed a change of regime; see Erskine 2014.

[108] On this point, se Ma 2002.

[109] For the cults granted by the League of the Islanders to Antigonos and Demetrios (314–288 BCE), see Kotsidu 2000, 193–198, nos. 120–123; Constantakopoulou 2012, 33–37; Habicht 2017, 42–44. The early history of the

during his lifetime.[110] This similarity between Demetrios' Macedonia and Ptolemy's Egypt warns against the methodological risks inherent in psychological evaluations overlooking the socio-political environments in which cultic honor were, or were not, established. Under Ptolemy I, Egypt did not provide a fertile terrain to a strategy of legitimation founded on cultic honors. The traditional theology of pharaonic power depicted the monarch as the earthly incarnation of the royal gods, and the coronation ritual stipulated the fusion of the human leader with his divine *Ka*. However, Egyptian pharaohs did not regularly receive cults during their lifetime, but as deceased ancestors.[111] Besides, specific cults could be introduced for particularly worthy pharaohs who had been responsible for extraordinary accomplishments in supporting the religious life of the local temples, as in the case of the above-mentioned cults for the Nektanebids.[112] While Ptolemy's reign might have paved the way to the development of a fruitful collaboration between the Macedonian rulers and at least a part of the Egyptian priestly elite, it was only under his son Ptolemy II that a strengthened and more organized policy of royal support to the temples set the premises for the first Ptolemaic cult being integrated in the ritual prerogatives of the Egyptian priestly elite: the (posthumous) cult of Arsinoe the "Brother-Loving" goddess.[113]

The situation was, perhaps at first sight surprisingly, not much more favorable on the side of the Greek population in Egypt. With the exception of Alexandria, Greek cities, which as seen above constituted the most important promoters of cultic honors at the time, played a secondary role in Ptolemy's plans for Egypt.[114] Moreover, the limited autonomy they enjoyed, with the reduced space for internal political strife that this entailed, and the relative stability of Egypt under Ptolemy I deprived Egypt of the political scenario that triggered the multiplication of cultic honors in continental Greece and in Asia Minor.

The observation that political stability and a pervasive presence of the royal power would work against the proliferation of cultic honors may appear paradoxical at first view. However, it becomes a plausible interpretation when we bear in mind that the

League has recently been entirely rewritten in a contribution by Meadows 2013, who rejected its foundation by Antigonos in 314 BCE and conversely ascribed it to Ptolemy II in the early years of his reign. However, Meadows' arguments remain unconvincing: see Constantakopoulou 2012, 33–35; Pfeiffer 2015, 39–40; Buraselis 2015, 360–361; Landucci 2016, 52–55.

[110] See Mari 2008, 247–248. The case of Demetrios' son, Antigonos Gonatas, is revealing in the opposite direction: unlike his father, he is credited by the literary tradition with a negative attitude towards cultic honors, yet he received some at Rhamnous, in a context of civic honors, and certainly did not refuse them (see above; Landucci 2016).

[111] Baines 1995; Pfeiffer 2008b, 19–28; Morris 2010.

[112] See above, p. 90, 98–99.

[113] On the introduction of Arsinoe's cult in the Egyptian temples, see Minas-Nerpel 2000, 93–96; 2018; Thiers 2007a; Collombert 2008; Schäfer 2011; Thompson 2012, 118–123; Caneva 2013b, 300–309; 2016a, 129–178.

[114] With the sole foundation of Ptolemais Hermiou, in Upper Egypt, Ptolemy stands out as an exception in an epoch of city-founder sovereigns: see Billows 1995; Cohen 1995; 2006; 2013; Müller 2006 (Ptolemaic settlements). On the other hand, the growth of Alexandria was destined to downgrade the traditional importance of Naukratis as a hub of Mediterranean commerce (Grieb 2014). The limited role of the Greek *polis* will remain a common feature of Hellenistic Egypt until the end of the Ptolemaic dynasty.

continuous effort of Greek *poleis* to preserve or re-establish their autonomy in times of crisis and instability was a crucial factor in the development of the euergetic discourse underpinning the early-Hellenistic multiplication of civic cultic honors.[115] The possibility that cities acknowledged the euergetic vocation of kingship in contexts of political continuity seems to have emerged at a later stage, and to be related to areas characterized by a durable relationship of subjection or alliance with the same royal household. Evidently, this situation would only become possible after the Diadochs' generation, as a consequence of the consolidation of Hellenistic dynasties.[116]

Analyzing the social and political premises of the early Hellenistic ruler cults implies that we still consider a third type of agents operating between cities and kings: the networks of royal collaborators, counselors, military and administrative officers, with the royal *philoi* at their top, acting as personal promoters of the royal ideology and of the related ruler cult.[117] In Ptolemaic Egypt, the activities of royal collaborators (Greco-Macedonian and Egyptian), members of the administrative establishment and military clerouchs occupied the place which elsewhere belonged to the civic institutions and elites, and became the backbone not only of the Ptolemaic government, but also of the circulation of the formulae and practices of the ruler cults.[118] However, even though Ptolemy, as the other Diadochs, certainly surrounded himself with loyal and valuable collaborators since the beginning of his satrapy, to date a quest for traces of personal initiatives in the promotion of cultic honors produces negative results.

A bilingual, Greek and demotic base originally bearing a small statue of "King Ptolemy Soter" was dedicated by an otherwise unknown Diodotos son of Achaios (Fig. 5.2).[119] The document might date to the last years of the reign of Ptolemy I, or perhaps to the first years of his successor.[120] Its precise context is unknown, although

[115] Habicht 2017, 115–123; Price 1984, 23–52.

[116] Commenting on *IC* III iv 4 (*ca.* 246–243 BCE), a decree of the city of Itanos granting cultic honors to Ptolemy III and Berenike II out of gratitude for the king's euergetic attitude towards the city, in continuity with his predecessors, Habicht 2017, 89, no. 43, and especially 175–176, rightfully observed that the mid-3rd century testifies to a shift towards a form of euergetic discourse stipulating the grant of cultic honors not only as a reward for the resolution of punctual crises, but also for the royal capacity to ensure the preservation and endurance of the communities' wealth and peace (see also Jim 2017). On the other hand, Habicht's exclusive focus on civic initiatives prevented him from acknowledging that the civic institutions of Itanos were implementing at a religious level a message of dynastic continuity which Ptolemy III was coherently promoting in the first years of his reign: on this point, see Caneva 2016a, 179–197; 2016c; Caneva and Bricault 2019.

[117] On the social role of *philoi* within and outside the royal court, see Savalli-Lestrade 1998; Paschidis 2008 and 2013; Strootman 2013 and 2014, 111–135, 145–184; Wallace 2013.

[118] See Fischer-Bovet 2014. With specific focus on personal agency in the diffusion of cultic honors for rulers, see Caneva 2014a and 2016d. It is worth noting that the prominent role of these figures is not an exclusive feature of the Ptolemaic kingdom; conversely, what makes Ptolemaic Egypt unique in the Hellenistic world, with the partial exception of the Seleucid East, is the fact that their activity is not intertwined with, or accompanied by an established network of civic institutions.

[119] TM People 6368.

[120] For the Greek text, see Breccia 1911, no. 1, and OGIS 19: Βασιλέα Πτολεμαῖον | Σωτῆρα Διόδοτος Ἀχαίου. The demotic text, essentially a translation of the Greek dedication, was published with different readings by Spiegelberg 1906, 254 no. II, and Vleeming 2011, I, 68–69 no. 98 A-B.

Fig. 5.2 Bilingual statue base, from Breccia 1911, Pl. I.1

the presence of a demotic dedication suggests that the statue was erected in an Egyptian environment, probably a temple. The importance of this inscription derives from the fact that it provides the earliest known evidence for the use of the epithet Soter for Ptolemy I, both in Greek and in Egyptian, in a text issued by a personal agent, perhaps a royal collaborator or an officer, rather than by a civic institution. On the other hand, the lack of information about the context of exposition of the statue prevents us from answering the question of whether this statue played a role in a ritual activity or, perhaps more probably, it was a honorific portrait meant to express Achaios' allegiance to the king.[121]

The identification of Ptolemy I with the recipient (in the dative) of an altar dedicated by an Alexandrian citizen, at Athribis or perhaps at Ptolemais Hermiou, must be rejected on paleographic grounds. The letter forms in this dedication decisively speak against the early date proposed by the editors of the text and rather places the document in the mid/late Ptolemaic period.[122] We may therefore conclude that no clear evidence exists in Egypt, under the reign of Ptolemy I, which could testify to an active role of royal collaborators in the establishment of ruler cults.

The absence of ritual actions addressed by non-institutional agents *to* the monarchs, with the dative equating the human recipients to the traditional gods,

[121] For the problem of distinguishing cultic and honorific statues on the grounds of more or less decontextualized inscribed bases, see Ma 2013, 45–46, focusing on the ambiguity of the accusative used to refer to the person portrayed by the statue, regardless of whether the statue should be interpreted as a cultic *agalma* or an honorific *eikon*. Chankowski 1998, 169–174 provides a case study from Pergamon concerning the interaction between archaeological data and epigraphic texts.

[122] Wagner and Rondot 1994; J. Bingen in *Bull. Ep.* 1995, 551, no. 661 proposes a date during the 2nd or 1st century BCE (see also *SEG* 44 1507). Considering that carefully written Ptolemaic inscriptions like this one often show a conservative writing style (see Del Corso 2017), the possible coherence of some paleographic features with an early date is outbalanced by the rendering of A with a broken cross-bar; this detail is later than the reign of Ptolemy I and rather points to the date proposed by Bingen.

should not surprise at this early stage. Indeed, although already documented in the honorific decrees of the Greek cities since the late 4th century,[123] this practice is not surely attested in early Hellenistic personal dedications before the diffusion of the cult of Arsinoe Philadelphos (270–246 BCE).[124] However, a comparison between Ptolemy I and Demetrios Poliorketes can once again point to a useful research path. A passage (Athenaeus 6.253c) concerning the establishment of cultic honors for Demetrios' wife Phila in Attica sheds some revealing light on the role of royal collaborators as promoters of ruler cults in early-Hellenistic courts. The text states that the followers of Adeimantos of Lampsakos, one of the highest-ranking collaborators of Demetrios,[125] erected a temple (*naos*) with cultic statues (*agalmata*) of Aphrodite Phila, later called Philaion, in the locality of Thria, near Eleusis.[126] This initiative reveals that parallel to civic institutions, a circle of followers of a dynast could decide to demonstrate at a religious level their allegiance to their master, no doubt with the purpose of increasing the social prestige and influence of Adeimantos at court, and therefore their own.

The Philaion of Thria provides an interesting precedent to the erection, one generation later, of the Arsinoeion of Cape Zephyrion by the Ptolemaic admiral Kallikrates of Samos.[127] A comparison between these two episodes draws attention to the faster pace at which Demetrios' court reacted to the ongoing diffusion of cultic

[123] This feature appears as early as the first documented case of a civic cult to a Diadoch: *OGIS* 6, lines 22–26, for Antigonos at Skepsis (311/0 BCE), with Habicht 2017, 30–31, no. 19.

[124] See the catalogue of documents in Caneva 2014a, 110–111, 113–114; see also Fassa 2015. Huß 1977, 137 erroneously points to the reign of Ptolemy III as the context of the first rise of this practice. We should rather interpret the reign of Ptolemy III as the period when personal dedications to the monarchs became a well-established habit. Even later, the Ptolemies would remain the most represented dynasty with concern to dative personal dedications to the kings, with a new concentration in Upper Egypt under Ptolemy VI and VIII (Caneva 2016c, 134–142). To my knowledge, only two uncertain dossiers might contradict this chronology. The first comes from Thasos: see Hamon 2015, 116–123, on two blocks with dedications concerning "King Philip Soter," identified by this scholar with Philip II. This early chronology, however, remains uncertain (see also Jim 2017). The second dossier includes two inscriptions by Phoenician subjects of the Ptolemies: a graffito from Wasṭa (near Tyre) with a dedication "to King Ptolemy and Aphrodite Epekoos" (*CIS* I 6; Bonnet 2004) and an inscription from Larnaka tis Lapithou (Northern Cyprus) with a problematic bilingual dedication "to Athena Nike and of King Ptolemy" (*CIS* I 95; Adamasi Guzzo 2015; based on the syntax of the Phoenician version, the genitive in the Greek text can be interpreted as a mistake for a second dative). Neither of these texts can be confidently attributed to Ptolemy I, as has been suggested; a later date is equally possible on both paleographic and historical grounds.

[125] On the crucial role of Adeimantos in the reorganization of the Corinthian League and thus in the interaction between Demetrios and the Greeks, see Robert 1946; Buraselis 2003, 190–191; Wallace 2013; Habicht 2017, 40.

[126] See Carney 2000, 31–32; Wallace 2013, 143–144 (dating the event to the period 307–305 BCE); Caneva 2016a, 143–144. For other cultic honors for Phila, see Kotsidu 2000, 259–261, no. 176 [E], mentioning a *temenos* of the queen in Samos.

[127] On the Arsinoeion and its link with the Ptolemaic maritime power, see Hauben 1970, 42–48, 66–67; Bing 2003; Carney 2013, 98–99; Caneva 2015; 2016a, 146–147. The date of Kallikrates' dedication is unknown, but I am inclined to consider the early 260s as a plausible option: after serving as the first priest of the Theoi Adelphoi in 272/1, Kallikrates promptly adapted to the new scenario entailed by the death of Arsinoe, and to the consequent innovation of the king's religious program, by financing a shrine of the deceased and deified queen. Another Ptolemaic parallel, roughly contemporaneous to that of Kallikrates, is the *hieron* of Arsinoe dedicated in 268/7 by the Athenian general Epichares, near Rhamnous: see *I. Rhamn.* 3, lines 15–16, with the new restoration by Steinhauer 2009.

honors in comparison with Ptolemy's followers. A few concurrent reasons may be proposed to explain this. First, unlike Demetrios, Ptolemy I does not seem to have developed a strategy of legitimation based on the celebration of dynastic women.[128] More in general, it is worth noting that Adeimantos' circle operated in an environment already influenced by the conferral of civic cultic honors to the family of Demetrios. An analysis of later epigraphic dossiers shows that non-institutional practitioners of ruler cults usually did not invent new practices and formulae, but adapted themselves to existing ones, which could be established by cities or, especially in contexts under the influence of centralized dynastic cults, promoted by the monarchs themselves.[129] Coming back to Demetrios' collaborators in late 4th century Attica, we may infer that in a period which did not yet know centralized royal initiatives for ruler cults, the cultic honors promoted by the civic institutions of Athens provided Adeimantos and his followers with a suitable model to promote themselves in front of the king.

Demetrios did not refuse this innovation, yet it seems that he did not cause it either. This episode shows once more that, while not rejecting the biographical portraits of the early Hellenistic dynasts provided by the literary sources, we should reassess in detail the evidence concerning the agency of ruler cults in the early-Hellenistic period and, accordingly, re-balance our judgements about Demetrios' keenness on cultic honors and Ptolemy's restraint towards them. Their strategies cannot be fully understood unless we consider them against the background of the possibilities and social dynamics characterizing the environments in which they acted.

Overview: How "Ptolemaic" was Egypt under Ptolemy I?

When considered from the perspective of Egypt, the reign of Ptolemy I belongs to the transitional period starting at the end of the last indigenous dynasty (the XXXth), passing through the second Persian domination, and ending up with the consolidation of Macedonian power under Ptolemy II and III. During this period, the rapid political changes and the weakness of the central power caused an abrupt stop of the big temple building programs, and a parallel growth of personal euergetism through small-size initiatives of the local priestly elite. The installation of a new foreign power residing in Egypt brought about an increased political stability and an augmentation of the role of the central government, at least partly to the detriment of local elite autonomies.

[128] The first known representation of Berenike I on a royal visual medium is provided by the coins of the Theoi Adelphoi. The representations of Berenike I on earlier coins stem from the initiative of Greek cities, not from royal coinage (Caneva 2016a, 167, n. 130).

[129] For some Ptolemaic case studies under Ptolemy II and III, see Caneva and Bricault 2019. See also Lanciers 2014, 376–380, for Ptolemy V's epiclesis *Eucharistos*. In a Seleucid context, see the dedication made by Ptolemaios son of Thraseas, *strategos* and *archiereus* of Koile Syria and Phoenicia, "to Hermes, Herakles and the Great King Antiochos" (*OGIS* 230). The dedication was made in the gymnasium of Soloi (Pamphylia) in 197 BCE, after the city was taken by Antiochos III at the beginning of his campaign in Asia Minor. By using the title "Great King," the donor followed a use recently introduced by the king himself after the 4th Syrian War (200 BCE; Ma 2002, 73, 275–276).

Indeed, recent research has advanced beyond a long-lasting assumption that the succession of different ethnic groups in power (Egyptian, Persian, Macedonian rulers) would entail a clear-cut sequence of ruptures as regards the social composition of the elites and the policies of the central government. It is now known that many aspects of the Macedonian government in the Argead and early-Ptolemaic periods built more or less directly upon the legacy of the XXXth dynasty, while in other respects the beginning of Macedonian rule was marked by a rupture in the social composition of the Egyptian elite in comparison to the previous transition between the Nektanebids and Persian rule.

If traceable social and cultural changes cannot occur in the timespan of a few years, evidence of the direct impact of Ptolemy's policy from the late 310s BCE might be found, according to Ladynin, in the apparent decentralization of temple programs from Upper Egypt to the Delta, and from major religious centers to provincial sanctuaries. These signs point to a research path which still needs be further tested: the last years of Ptolemy's satrapy would correspond to the conclusion of an early phase of interaction between the Macedonian rulers and the Egyptian temples, which had unfolded under the Argead pharaohs, and could point to the beginning of a new Mediterranean-oriented strategy focusing on the areas of Alexandria and the Delta. In the same period, the Satrap Stele sheds light on a diplomatic laboratory whereby cultural mediators and brokers must have played a fundamental role in selecting and streamlining the ideological motifs which could promote a positive internal collaboration between the Greco-Macedonian and the Egyptian elite, and define common priorities concerning the place Ptolemaic Egypt should have in the new geopolitical scenario of the post-Alexander Mediterranean world.

That the Delta from Memphis to Alexandria constituted the motor of Egypt under Ptolemy I seems confirmed by the role played by this region in the ascension of a cult destined to soon find in the Ptolemies its major promoters: the cult of Sarapis. Once again, however, the long-term cultural and religious processes that crossed the reign of Ptolemy cannot be understood except from a broad perspective. Such a methodological orientation implies that we consider the early ascension of Sarapis against the background of the impact of the Nektanebids' temple programs at Saqqara and of the 4th century dissemination of Osiriac cults from Memphis towards the Delta. When seen from this perspective, the direct agency of Ptolemy I with regard to the affirmation of the Hellenized cult of Sarapis must be reduced in favor of a fundamental indirect responsibility: the transfer of the capital to Alexandria, which replaced the Egyptian setting of Memphis as the political and religious center of the Delta with a newly founded metropolis acting as a dynamic interface between the Egyptian inland and the Greek world, via the Eastern Mediterranean routes.

While the first half of this chapter has focused on long-term processes, on which the contribution of Ptolemy I's policies can only be evaluated on a large chronological scale, the second part has stressed two aspects of the way Ptolemy represented his power at the religious level. In these cases, of course, the personal agency of the

satrap and king of Egypt comes to foreground, and the processes discussed can be analyzed with a narrower chronological focus.

The discussion of the visual propaganda designed by Ptolemy via the numismatic media has shown that he was fully aware of the potential of different communication channels, and ready to use them to disseminate a varied set of messages fitting the expectations of their target public. Ptolemy's currency, which due to the closed monetary system he created would only circulate within the kingdom, was meant to touch on the notes of grandeur, exoticism and divinity of monarchic power as a mark of the continuity between Alexander and Ptolemy. The large impact of this message, not only on the imagery of Ptolemy II's procession but also on the early growth of legends about Alexander's Asian campaign, becomes evident once we pass an arbitrary scholarly separation between written texts and visual media of propaganda. Conversely, Ptolemy's historiographic work designed and spread for the Greek-speaking elites a more purified declination of the same message of continuity, focusing on the legitimating proximity of an honorable and heroic man of arms to the great Argead world conqueror.[130] If everyone among the Successors fashioned his own Alexander, Ptolemy created two, both of which would exert an impact on later traditions, also thanks to his prestige as king and to his chance to reshape the memory of Alexander at an opportune moment.

Ptolemy's capacity to give his public what that public wished to receive, becomes even more evident when we contrast the "discreet" approximation of his royal status to the divine sphere, as it emerges from the numismatic evidence,[131] and the absence of any comparable initiative as regards the promotion of honors establishing the same approximation between divine and human power at the level of ritual performance. A man of his time, Ptolemy did not go beyond the self-evident acceptance of the cultic honors granted to him by the Greek cities, which he had supported during his decade-long war against Antigonos and Demetrios for the control of the Eastern Mediterranean. Generally speaking, however, this did not make Ptolemy an exception in the contemporaneous scenario of the Diadochan period. Conversely, the ascension of Ptolemy II would cause a significant enhancement of the Ptolemaic strategy with regard to cultic honors, as this king proved extremely proactive in establishing centralized cults honoring his family members.

On the other hand, the initiatives taken by Ptolemy II systematically built upon his father's legacy. As shown by the Aegean dossier of the Islanders, the establishment of a pan-Hellenic festival in honor of Ptolemy I was one of the first projects of the new king to promote his legitimacy at the international level. Moreover, the self-deified Theoi Adelphoi attached their cult to the eponymous priesthood of Alexander, which Ptolemy I had established for the Argead founder of Alexandria and which could be

[130] So Howe 2015, 2016 and 2018, commentary on F14, F15, F16, F18, F26a, F35 and in this volume.

[131] On the category of "discreet deification" in the interpretation of divine attributes on royal coins, see Iossif 2012; 2018.

seen *a posteriori* as the matrix of the Ptolemaic dynastic cult.[132] By granting Alexander an oikist's cult, Ptolemy followed a long tradition of cults of city founders in colonial contexts, while also systematically exploiting the possession of Alexander's body, a paramount source of charismatic legitimacy physically and symbolically rooted in the heart of the capital, in the *Soma* erected within the royal quarter.[133]

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[132] However, this priesthood only acquired a dynastic connotation under Ptolemy IV (Tondriau 1953; Caneva 2016a, 179–180).

[133] Caneva 2016a, 42–47.

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