

Back to Rhodes: Pausanias, Rhodian inscriptions, and Ptolemy's civic acclamation as Soter

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Abstract: *This paper deals with the vexed question of the historicity of Pausanias' statement that Ptolemy I owed his epithet to the Rhodians. Three arguments are made in this contribution. 1) Contrary to old and new criticisms against Pausanias' report, Rhodian inscriptions do not provide any evidence against the use of Soter as the epiclesis of Ptolemy I on the island; on the contrary, a generally overlooked passage of the Lindian Chronicle concerning the epiphany of Athena during Demetrios' siege strengthens the hypothesis that Ptolemy was perceived by the Rhodians as the savior of their city, in a way comparable to Zeus. 2) Pausanias may have misunderstood the actual significance of the bestowal of the epiclesis Soter upon Ptolemy, if indeed he thought that his acclamation in Rhodes after the end of the siege established Soter as his official title in all regions under Ptolemaic control. While this acclamation should be interpreted within the local framework of Rhodian cults for Ptolemy, a comparative analysis of Pausanias' words and of Hellenistic royal titularies suggests that Pausanias relied on Rhodian historiographic sources, which may have magnified the importance of the Rhodian episode for the general scenario of the Diadochi wars. 3) The most plausible context for the acclamation of Ptolemy as Soter in Rhodes is the aftermath of the siege in 305/4. This acclamation, together with the news reaching the court about the end of the Antigonid offensive, triggered the crowning of Ptolemy and his assumption of the royal title in Alexandria.*

Keywords: *Ptolemy I, Soter, Rhodes, civic acclamation, Lindian Chronicle*

Introduction

In a contribution published in 1992, R.A. Hazzard reopened what had long been considered a closed historiographic case: the origin of Ptolemy I's title Soter in Rhodes, in 305/4 BC, after the end of the siege of Demetrios Poliorketes. Hazzard contested the reliability of Pausanias, our only explicit source for the Rhodian origin of Ptolemy's official title, arguing that if the Rhodians had granted Ptolemy the title Soter, they would have used it in their inscriptions, which apparently they did not.¹

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¹ Hazzard (1992) on Paus. 1.8.6: τὸν δὲ τοῦ Λάγου Σωτήρα παραδόντων Ῥοδίων τὸ ὄνομα. See also the lengthier discussion in Hazzard (2000), 3-24.

Hazzard's rejection of Pausanias was part of a major reassessment of the history of Ptolemy's title Soter. According to this scholar, Soter was first associated with the founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty by Cleitarchus, whose inventive historical work contained a fictional episode where Alexander was saved in battle by Ptolemy, during the Indian campaign;² by adding this episode to the report of the events, the Alexandrian historian would have contributed to an ideological and religious program promoted by Ptolemy II, in 263/2 BC, to strengthen the political memory of his father during the final phase of the Chremonidean war.

While many aspects of his thesis have been convincingly rejected,³ Hazzard has had the merit of stimulating a more nuanced evaluation of the origins and early history of Ptolemy's epithet. In a seminal contribution published in 2010, H. Hauben showed that the granting of the epithet Soter in Rhodes was an event related to the establishment of local cultic honors, which should be distinguished from its later use as a standard title throughout the Ptolemaic kingdom. According to Hauben, a fundamental change occurred when the Aegean cities unified in the Nesiotic League again used the denomination Soter as part of the cultic honors they decreed to Ptolemy I. Their initiative should be dated to the last years of Ptolemy I's reign (288-286 BC), when he took over the control of the Aegean from the defeated Demetrios.⁴ More recently, I. Worthington has once again contested the historicity of the Rhodian acclamation, using the same arguments as Hazzard and unconvincingly suggesting that Ptolemy I first received his title Soter in Egypt, in 306 BC, after the repulsion of Demetrios and Antigonos' attempted invasion.⁵ This hypothesis, however fascinating, is not supported by the ancient documentation.⁶

² Paus. 1.6.2 (siege of the Oxydracae); criticism in Arr. An. 6.11.8 (siege of Malli), and Curt. 9.15.21. Ptolemy did not report his presence in this episode: *BNJ* 138 F 26a-b. See the discussion in Hazzard (2000), 7-17; Prandi on *BNJ* 137 F 24 (invention of Cleitarchus, or more probably of Timagenes); see also Muccioli (2013), 91-94.

³ The date of Cleitarchus (late third century or early reign of Ptolemy II) is debated: see Prandi (2012). Moreover, Cleitarchus cannot be interpreted as a voice of the official Ptolemaic propaganda, but rather as one of the authors who contributed to the elaboration of Alexander's legend, combining reliable historical reports with marvelous details and with episodes emphasizing the larger-than-life figure of the Macedonian conqueror: on this point, see Prandi (1996), 79-83, 156, 167-168. Equally untenable is Hazzard's late dating of the so-called Nikouria decree (*SIG*³ 390), as shown by Hauben (2004). Johnson (2000) provided an early rejection of Hazzard's Soter thesis, but his treatment of the epigraphic evidence remained superficial and lacked precision in various respects.

⁴ Hauben (2010), 109; see also Constantakopoulou (2017), 40-41. The early history of the League has recently been entirely rewritten in a contribution by Meadows (2013), who rejects its foundation by Antigonos in 314 and conversely ascribes it to Ptolemy II in his early years. However, Meadows' arguments remain unconvincing, as observed by Pfeiffer (2015), 39-40; Buraselis (2015), 360-361; Landucci (2016), 52-55; Constantakopoulou (2017), 33-35.

⁵ Worthington (2016a), 168-169 and Worthington (2016b). Worthington remains surprisingly generic about the agents who would have acclaimed Ptolemy as Soter. See Worthington (2016a), 169 ('his own people') and esp. 228, concerning year 306: 'Egyptians (?) bestow title *soter* ("savior") on Ptolemy'. One may wonder whether the author thinks of Egyptians ethnically (as opposed to Greco-Macedonian agents) or geographically (people living in Egypt). The first hypothesis is certainly to be excluded since the Egyptian epithet *p3-Swtꜣr* is a transliteration of the Greek Soter. On the Egyptian translation of Soter, *ntj nḥm* ('the one who protects'), see Caneva (2020a); Ladynin (2017), 81-92 suggests a link with the Egyptian role of the pharaoh as the preserver of the cosmic order, *Ma'at* (I owe this reference to T. Howe). As regards the second hypothesis, for which Ptolemy would be acclaimed as savior by his subjects in Egypt (with no ethnic connotation), Worthington distinguishes between a royal acclamation by the army and the bestowal of the epithet Soter by the 'civic population' (p. 169). Such an active role of the Alexandrian population does not rely

In this paper, I will show that although Pausanias' statement should not be taken literally as the creation, by the Rhodians, of the standard dynastic title of Ptolemy I, the argument based on the Rhodian inscriptions does not speak against the hypothesis that the citizens of Rhodes actually acclaimed Ptolemy as their savior for his help with the city's defense against Demetrios. Accordingly, in the following discussion I will carefully distinguish between the terms 'epithet' and 'title'. The broader category 'epithet' encompasses any denomination accompanying the personal name of a sovereign, in every medium and context, and regardless of the frequency and degree of standardization of such denomination.⁷ Conversely, by 'title' I mean more precisely an epithet that has large diffusion in royal formulae and which is coherently adopted as a standard protocol by a variety of agents (including the monarchs themselves) and across media and contexts, both institutional and non-institutional.

This study consists of two sections. In the first, I demonstrate that the absence of the title Soter in the two Rhodian inscriptions mentioned by Hazzard and Worthington is irrelevant for the evaluation of Pausanias' reliability about the Rhodian acclamation of Ptolemy. Conversely, I will show that a section of the *Lindian Chronicle* actually provides some positive evidence of the depiction of Ptolemy as a city savior in relation to the end of Demetrios' siege. In the second part, I contextualize Pausanias' statement in the historical framework of the early-Hellenistic practice of civic acclamations of benefactors, while also arguing that Pausanias' erroneous understanding of the Rhodians' initiative as the origin of the standard dynastic title of Ptolemy, rather than as a case of local acclamation, must depend on the ideological orientation of his sources.

1. The supposed silence of the Rhodian inscriptions

The first document used by Hazzard and Worthington to reject Pausanias' authority is an entry of the *Lindian Chronicle* (BNJ 532, C 39.111-113), which refers to Ptolemy I's offering to Athena without mentioning the epithet Soter. This absence is however a non-issue, since Hellenistic temple archives (on which the *Chronicle* is largely based)⁸ did not register the

on any ancient source and might be anachronistic in relation to the limited political agency of Alexandrian masses at this early date.

⁶ The sole occurrence of the epithet Soter in Egypt possibly to be dated under Ptolemy I is provided by the pedestal of a small (lost) statue bearing a bilingual dedication. For the Greek text, see *OGIS* 19; for the demotic, Vleeming (2011), 68-69, no. 98 A-B. I discuss this document briefly in Caneva (2018), 112-113, and more in detail in Caneva (2020a), arguing for a later date, under Ptolemy II. Other documents that have long been thought to attest to the use of the title Soter for Ptolemy I in his life are also in fact of later date: see Caneva (2020a) on the demotic graffito from Deir el-Bahari *MDAI(K)* 39 (1983), 103-105 (reign of Ptolemy II) and on the Greek inscription *I.Varsovie* 50 (late-2nd / early 1st cent. BC); Caneva (2020b) on *I.Prose* 62 (2nd cent. AD, probably a copy of a decree issued under Ptolemy II); Caneva (2020c) offers a general overview of the transformation of the epithet Soter from a local epicleris into a standard dynastic title of Ptolemy I under the reign of his son, Ptolemy II.

⁷ For a comprehensive study of Hellenistic royal epithets, see Muccioli (2013).

⁸ The *Chronicle* explicitly states that the entry concerning Ptolemy I's donation depends on the public archives (*chrēmatismoi*) of the Lindians (line 113). The donation plausibly took place in 304, after the end of the siege, yet this must remain a hypothesis because of the fragmentary state of the Lindian list of priests of Athena. Blinkenberg (1941), no. 1, integrates in fr. B1, line 20a (304 BC) the name of Athanas, son of Athanagoras, during whose priesthood the donation is registered in the *Chronicle* (lines 112-113). This date is accepted by Badoud (2015), 68.

epithets of royal donors. Therefore, we should not be surprised that Ptolemy is simply mentioned with his personal name.⁹

The second document deserves a lengthier discussion. It is a base containing a list of Rhodian priests published by M. Segre in 1941 (FIG. 1),¹⁰ which names three civic priests of ruler cults: Ainesagoras son of Agepolis, priest of Alexander; Charmylos son of Thrasonidas, priest of a Ptolemy; Tritylos son of Anaxagoras, priest of Ptolemy and Berenike. The inscription has been dated variously. Segre argued in favor of the late third century on paleographic grounds, suggesting a date during the early years of Ptolemy IV. He consequently identified Ainesagoras son of Agepolis, priest of Alexander, as the grandfather of an homonymous priest of Apollo at Kamiros, documented on an inscription dated to the year of the demiurgy of Agetor son of Damostratos (c. 170 according to Segre).¹¹ However, N. Badoud now dates the demiurgy of Agetor to 187 BC.¹² Considering that the paleographic lower limit of the base with the priestly list can be reasonably extended down to the end of the third / beginning of the second century, the two attestations of Ainesagoras son of Agepolis may refer to the same person.¹³

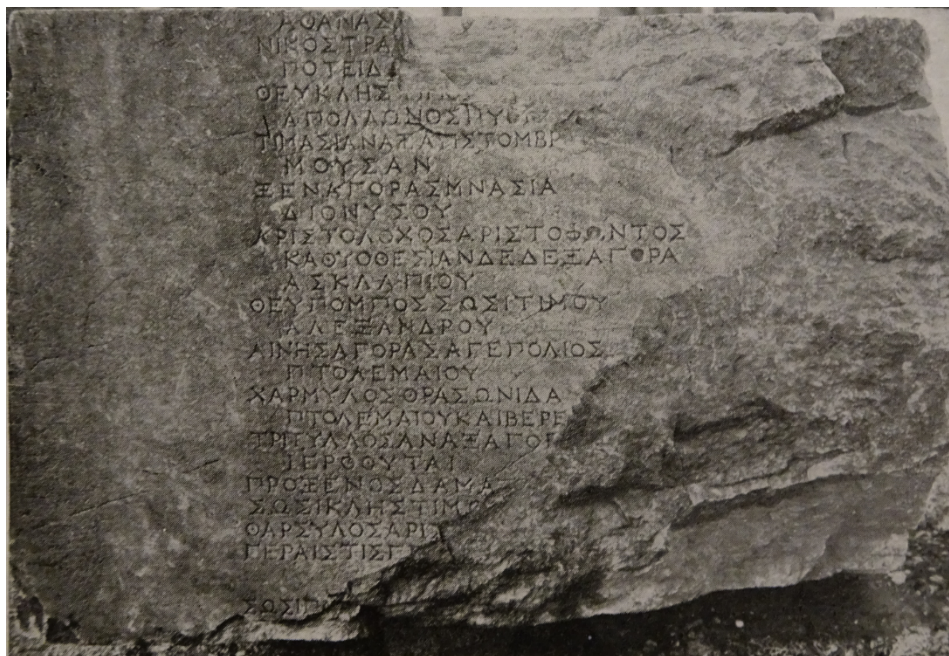


FIG. 1. List of Rhodian priests, from Segre (1941), 31, fig. 2.

⁹ A comparison with the Delian archives is compelling; see the evidence discussed in Bruneau (1970), 515-576. On early Hellenistic offerings to Athena Lindia, see Squillace (2013); Higbie (2003). Only one standard title of a Hellenistic king appears in the *Lindian Chronicle*, in relation to a war opposing Rhodes “to Ptolemy Philadelphos” (BNJ 532, C 37.99). Note, however, that in this entry of the *Chronicle*, Ptolemy is not the author of the dedication. Rather, the mention of the title follows a standard use in late-Hellenistic historiography, on which this entry is based: see lines 100-101 identifying Book 4 of Timokritos’ *Chronikē Syntaxis* as the source of the narrative, with the commentary of C. Higbie on BNJ 522 F 6. On the date of the *Chronicle* (99 BC) see Higbie (2003), 51. On late-Hellenistic and Imperial historians making use of epithets to disambiguate the identity of homonymous kings, see Van Nuffelen (2009).

¹⁰ Segre (1941), 29-31, no. 7.

¹¹ *Clara Rhodos* 6/7, no. 42, line 26.

¹² Badoud (2015), 256.

¹³ This implies that the *damiourgos* for 188 BC, Agepolis son of Agepolis, might be the father of Ainesagoras. Badoud (2015), 112, n. 12, considers the two inscriptions as contemporaneous, 190-180 BC.

Segre identified the Ptolemaic kings mentioned in the priestly list with Ptolemy I and the couple Ptolemy III and Berenike II.¹⁴ Even though other identifications remain possible,¹⁵ Segre's suggestion seems more plausible since it involves only those kings for whom the bestowal of cultic honors could be seen as a civic response to a documented act of royal euergetism.¹⁶ Given these premises, Hazzard drew attention to the fact that in line 18, Segre's proposed text reads Πτολεμαίου καὶ Βερε[νίκης Θεῶν Εὐεργετᾶν], whereas in line 16, the priesthood of Ptolemy I is only referred to as Πτολεμαίου. This would imply that the Rhodians used the standard epiclesis of the third Ptolemaic couple but not that of Ptolemy I, which they had supposedly created. However, Segre's integration makes line 18 unacceptably long, a problem which does not arise if we exclude the royal epiclesis.¹⁷ Hazzard's argument therefore becomes groundless once we acknowledge that neither entry concerning the priests of the Ptolemies actually contains a royal epiclesis. A plausible reason for this is that because Rhodes was not a Ptolemaic dominion, a list of civic priests did not need follow the Ptolemaic formulary to refer to the spontaneous cult of the city for its benefactors.

The Rhodian epigraphic evidence actually contains an overlooked detail which may confirm the historical reliability of the acclamation of Ptolemy I as Soter after the end of Demetrios' siege of Rhodes: the epiphany of Athena during the siege and the consequent request for Ptolemy's intervention in the *Lindian Chronicle*.¹⁸ As suggested by the heading Ἐπιφάνειαι (BJN 532, D, line 1), the last legible section of the *Chronicle* is not a list of dedications to Athena, but an anthology of longer narratives, three of which are preserved, concerning historical moments when the goddess manifested herself in order to preserve the city against a terrible threat: a Persian invasion in the early fifth century (lines 2-59);¹⁹ the pollution of the goddess' statue, caused by a suicide having occurred near the cult statue sometime in the mid-fourth century (lines 60-93); and the siege of Demetrios Poliorketes (lines 94-115). The pattern of the three preserved episodes is similar: while the Lindians are in despair for their survival, the goddess appears in a dream to a prominent citizen (a magistrate, a priest of Athena in charge, a retired priest) announcing that she will invoke the help of a third agent who will provide the city with what it needs.²⁰ In the first two cases, the solution comes from Athena's father, Zeus, who gives rainwater to help the Lindians resist against the Persian siege and to cleanse the goddess' cult statue

¹⁴ See also Habicht (2017³), 196-197, no. 43 (= [1970²], 257-258).

¹⁵ If we accept Segre's dating, the single Ptolemy could be the living king. Habicht (2017³), 196-197 leaves open the possibility that the priests respectively served the cults of Ptolemy I separately and Ptolemy I with Berenike I combined.

¹⁶ See the evidence discussed in Bringmann – von Steuben (1995), 236-237, no. 203 [L] (Diodorus on Ptolemy I at the time of the siege of Rhodes, 305/4 BC), and 238, no. 205 [L] (Polyb. 5.89.1-5, on Ptolemy III after the earthquake of 227/6 BC).

¹⁷ Without the epiclesis, line 18 contains 22 characters (cf. line 10, the longest fully preserved line, with 23 characters), whereas the number of characters rises to 35 if we follow Segre's integration. See also Habicht (2017³), 80, n. 430, and 196-197, no. 43 (= [1970²], 110, n. 7, and 257-258).

¹⁸ For an analysis of this source from the perspective of the establishment of Hellenistic ruler cults, see Petrovic (2015), 429-431.

¹⁹ On the possible chronology of the invasion which is referred to in this passage, see Higbie (2003), 141-142.

²⁰ For an analysis of the narrative pattern, see Higbie (2003), 186-187, 273-288 (comparison with other narratives of salvific divine epiphanies).

respectively. On her third epiphany, however, Athena replaces Zeus with Ptolemy (retrospectively referred to as *basileus*): the goddess commands to her former priest Kallikles “to announce to one of the *prytaneis*, Anaxipolis, that he should write to King Ptolemy and should invite (him) to come to the aid of the city, since she would lead and she

would secure both victory and dominance. But if he did not announce this to the *prytanis* and if the man (=Anaxipolis) did not write to Ptolemy, they would be sorry”.²¹ At first, Kallikles does not obey Athena, but after the same dream occurs for six nights in a row, the former priest informs the council and Anaxipolis is dispatched with a letter for Ptolemy. The legible text regrettably stops here, so that we do not know whether the *Chronicle* also contained a reference to the granting of cultic honors to Ptolemy as a reward for his intervention. However, when we combine this narrative with the information Greek historiographers provide about cults being granted to Ptolemy in Rhodes,²² it is highly plausible that the Rhodians established a parallel between the merits of their human benefactor and Zeus’ interventions in the previous epiphanies of Athena, and that this link provided the religious background for the bestowal of the *epiclesis Soter* upon Ptolemy.

As seen before, the acclamation of Ptolemy as the Savior of the Rhodians after Demetrios’ siege should not be seen as the act definitively establishing his dynastic title. On the contrary, it points to an established and growing habit, on the part of Greek cities, of honoring their great benefactors with outstanding honors. As already observed by Hauben, the Rhodians’ was a local initiative responding to a specific benefaction.²³ The precise context and implications of this initiative are discussed in detail in the following section.

2. Cities and Saviors

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.²⁴ This trend met with growing success in the early Hellenistic period, when it combined with the new civic habit of decreeing cultic honors for living dynasts whose intervention had proved crucial for the survival and freedom of the local communities.²⁵ The increasing importance of *soteria* in the political and religious

²¹ Lines 99-107; Engl. translation by Higbie (2003), 49. On the identity of Kallikles, the priest of Athena in 306/5 BC, see Badoud (2015), 53

²² In addition to Pausanias, see Diod. 20.100, explicitly connecting the bestowal of godlike honors upon Ptolemy with the end of the siege; for the singing of a paean to Ptolemy, see Gorgon of Rhodes, *On the sacrifices in Rhodes* (BNJ 515 F 19).

²³ Hauben (2010).

²⁴ An early case might concern the tyrant Gelon in 479 BC, if we follow the report of Diodorus (11.26) that the people of Syracuse hailed him as “benefactor, savior and king”; but see Hornblower (1991), 48, convincingly arguing that Diodorus projects a Hellenistic formula back onto late-archaic Sicily. At Amphipolis, in 422, the Spartan general Brasidas was posthumously acclaimed as founder and savior and granted heroic honors in place of the Athenian Hagnon: see Thuc. 5.11.1, with Jones (2010), 24-26; Fröhlich (2013), 238-239. Again, at Syracuse, in 356/5, Dion was acclaimed as savior by his citizens (Diod. 16.20.5; Plut. *Dio* 46.1). On literary sources of the classical period mirroring, and sometimes mocking, the political use of the category of *soteria* in the representation of contemporaneous leaders, see Camassa (2018) and (2020).

²⁵ For Athens and the Antigonids, see Plut. *Demetr.* 10.3, 13.2 and Diod. 20.46.2 (Antigonos and Demetrios in 307/6 BC); *Agora* XVI 114.2 (sacrifice to the *Soteres*, probably to be identified with the kings;

vocabulary of the Greek poleis at the dawn of the Hellenistic period is not limited to the honorific sphere, but leaves traces in the evolution of local pantheons; as in the case of Athens, where since the second half of the fourth century, and all along the Hellenistic period, Zeus Soter holds a central place in relation to the political (and therefore also military) survival of the city.²⁶ Despite its growing popularity, however, the acclamation of a political leader as a savior of the city never lost its exceptional nature in the Hellenistic period. The documented cases are usually related to decisive military or diplomatic interventions implying the resolution of what the community considered as a lethal threat, or a change of regime accompanied by the restoration of the city's freedom and autonomy.

Against this general background, Pausanias' statement that Ptolemy I was called Savior by the Rhodians, is, even if not explicitly paralleled by other evidence, at least highly plausible, though Pausanias (or already his source) may have misinterpreted a local acclamation as the actual moment of creation of Ptolemy's standard dynastic title. In this respect, it is worth pointing out that Pausanias' treatment of Ptolemaic royal epithets most probably depended on late-Hellenistic historiographical habits rather than directly reflecting the royal titulary in use in the epigraphic sources of the Diadochi period.²⁷ This is proved by his use of Philadelphos as the title of Ptolemy II in the same passage.²⁸ This epithet, which was originally conceived for his sibling-sister Arsinoe II, is common in literature – and has become standard in modern scholarship – in relation to the second Ptolemaic king. However, it was never used for the living king and, even later, the denomination of Ptolemy II as Philadelphos remained limited in the documentary evidence, for it is only attested by the demotic formula *w'b Ptlwmjs p3 mr sn(.t)*, “priest of Ptolemy the Sister-loving”, in the dating formula of papyri from the Thebaid area in the period 165/4-138/7.²⁹

Pausanias' episode concerning the attribution of the epiclesis Soter to Ptolemy was probably drawn from the work of a Rhodian historian.³⁰ This hypothesis offers a clue to better understand Pausanias' statement. Because a Rhodian author may have magnified the general importance of the city's acclamation of Ptolemy as Soter, this local manipulation of events for the sake of the glory of Rhodes could explain the impression Pausanias gives that

304/3 or 303/2); SEG XLI 75 (Antigonos II Gonatas at Rhamnous). For Seleukos I Soter at Lemnos, see Athen. 6.254F (Phylarch. BNJ 81 F 29); Seleukos I and Antiochos I at Aigai, CGRN 137 (SEG LIX 1406); Antiochos I at Antiocheia in Persis (OGIS 233); Antiochos I and Seleukos III at Seleucia Pieria, SEG XXXV 1521. On Antiochos I in Western Asia Minor, see Coşkun (2011). A list of small altars and plaques pertaining to the cultic honors of Attalos I Soter in Pergamon is provided by Caneva (2020d). For Philip V in Thasos, Amphipolis, Berga, Maroneia and Nikiti, see Jim (2017); the author cautiously deals with a date under Philip II for the Thasian inscriptions, as proposed by Hamon (2016), with previous references. On the role of *soteria* in the relationship between cities and kings in the Hellenistic period, see the discussion in Nock (1951); Kolde (2003), 365-366; Muccioli (2013), 81-94, 159-178; Erskine (2014), 584-590; Paul (2016); Jim (2015) and (2017); Habicht (2017³), 113-115 (= [1970²], 156-159).

²⁶ Lebreton (2013), 214-233.

²⁷ Muccioli (2013), 86.

²⁸ Paus. 1.8.6 (just before the mention of Soter's name given by the Rhodians): ὀνόματα μὲν δὴ κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ Πτολεμαῖοι σφισιν, ἄλλη δὲ ἐπικλησις ἄλλω. καὶ γὰρ Φιλομήτορα καλοῦσι καὶ Φιλάδελφον ἕτερον.

²⁹ See *P.dem.* BM 15105 (165/164 BC); Minas (2000), 139.

³⁰ One can only speculate about whether Pausanias might have followed the same source(s) as the *Lindian Chronicle*, since the fragmentary entry concerning Athena's epiphany and the intervention of Ptolemy against Demetrios lacks the final section mentioning the historians reporting the episode. On Rhodian Hellenistic historiography, see Wiemer (2001); Higbie (2003), 204-242 (on Rhodian history through the *Lindian Chronicle*); see also the commentaries to BNJ 508-533.

he interpreted the Rhodian acclamation as the veritable act of creation of Ptolemy I's standard dynastic title.³¹

After the failure of the invasion of Egypt (autumn 306), Demetrios put the city of Rhodes under siege, further refining his war machines which had already proved invincible during the attack against Salamis in Cyprus, one year before.³² However, the joint support of Cassander, Lysimachos, and especially Ptolemy, counterbalanced Demetrios' power. To the eyes of the Rhodians, this episode was so momentous in their history that they decided to commemorate it with the erection of the famous Colossus.³³ Moreover, in order to show their gratitude towards their helpers, they erected portraits of Cassander and Lysimachos, whereas the son of Lagos was honored at a higher, religious level, with the dedication of the Ptolemaion, a large square *temenos* delimited by porticos.³⁴

A thorough analysis of all ancient sources (documentary, literary, chronographic) points to the end of the siege of Rhodes (305/4), rather than to the aftermath of Antigonos' failed invasion of Egypt (306/5), as the most plausible moment for Ptolemy's appropriation of the royal title *basileus*.³⁵ In order to fully understand the significance of the Rhodes episode, we must keep in mind that while the acclamation of Ptolemy as Savior belonged to the civic tradition mentioned above, the granting of the royal title built upon this local success while also exceeding it, thus combining into one fundamental step two previous episodes in the ascension of Ptolemy's rivals, Antigonos and Demetrios. The latter had been jointly acclaimed Savors and Kings after their liberation of Athens in 307/6 (Plut. *Demetr.* 10.3), an episode whose impact on the life of the polis could be compared with the end of Demetrios' aggression against Rhodes. However, that acclamation, made by a Greek city as an expression of enthusiasm towards its liberators, could hardly have any relevance in terms of legitimate Macedonian kingship.³⁶ It was only after Demetrios' victory at Salamis, in summer 306, that the coronation by the Macedonian army and *philoi* in Antigonia

³¹ I point out in passing that this prominently local perspective on the Diadochi history is in line with, and completes the convincing analysis offered by Heitmann-Gordon (2017), 341-409, of the process of self-promotion and identity-making which Rhodes underwent in the 4th and 3rd cent. BC, that is, a long century after the synoecism of the island. In this period, Rhodian institutional and non-institutional agents contributed to constructing the image of a community playing the role of an autonomous and prominent agent in the contemporaneous political scenario of the Eastern Mediterranean.

³² See Plut. *Demetr.* 20.7-8, with the commentary of Caneva (2014), 69-70, for the mixture of terror and awe inspired by Demetrios' new war machine, the 'destroyer of cities' (ἐλέπολις, a name cunningly evoking Helen's epithet in Aesch. Ag. 689). On the narratives of the siege, see also Wheatley (2016/17); Heitmann-Gordon (2017), 378-387. On the political and military importance of Salamis in the war opposing Ptolemy against Antigonos and Demetrios, Billows (2019).

³³ Worthington (2016a), 166-167; Heitmann-Gordon (2017), 387-407.

³⁴ Kotsidu (2000), 228-229, no. 152. For the role of the oracle of Zeus Ammon at Siwa in this episode, see Caneva (2016), 73. For the identification of the Ptolemaion with a gymnasium see Hoepfner – Schwandner (1994), 64-65; Kotsidu (2000), 229, no. 152 [A]. The singing of paeans reported by Gorgon of Rhodes (*BNJ* 515 F 19) probably took place there.

³⁵ For a discussion of the evidence dating Ptolemy's coronation 305/4 rather than 306/5, see Caneva (2016), 68-72; in favor of the late date, see already Yardley – Wheatley – Heckel 2011, 244-245. On the ideological and religious construction of Ptolemy's royal figure prior to his coronation, see Caneva (2016), 29-79, and Caneva (2018); Anson (2018); Howe (2018), with the previous refs.

³⁶ For this reason, we should not be surprised by the fact that the title *basileus* was not used for Antigonos and Demetrios in the Attic epigraphic evidence of the period: see Caneva (2016), 74, *contra* Paschidis (2013).

provided Antigonos with the legitimate status of a Macedonian *basileus*.³⁷ This episode, which completely changed the geopolitical significance of the Diadochi wars, provided Ptolemy's entourage with a suitable precedent: the news of the end of the siege at Rhodes and of the consequent acclamation of Ptolemy as Savior must have soon reached Alexandria and triggered the coronation of Ptolemy by his army and court.

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³⁷ Plut. *Demetr.* 17-18, with discussion in Caneva (2016), 56-59.

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