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Power, Royal Agency, and Elite Women in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds

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NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS AND SUBSCRIBERS

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Preface

This special issue of *Ancient History Bulletin* presents some of the fruits of the *Power, Royal Agency, and Elite Women in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* project whose sessions ran from September 2021 to May 2022. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic we thought to capitalise on one of the few beneficial things to emerge from that difficult period: our (rapidly enforced) familiarity with Zoom and presenting online from the comfort of our homes and offices to an audience spread across the globe.

The *PRAEW* project took the form of a 'distributed conference' in which academics from throughout the Northern Hemisphere gathered once a month for eight months to hear and discuss papers presented by two colleagues. The format was unique, and, to our mind, beneficial: the participants were able to reflect on each other's contributions and integrate them into their own, all the while taking part in a long and fascinating conversation which provided a welcome and stimulating respite from the cycles of lockdown and self-isolation which became the new norm at the time.

Reflection—enforced by covid or otherwise—lies at the core of the project and thus this special issue of *AHB:* the past two decades have seen a wave of scholarly interest in ancient women in positions of power, especially royalty. The Hellenistic world was no exception to this trend, and studies of individual royal women or groups of queens emerged which profoundly shifted our understanding of the prominence and influence of elite women in the Period. New methodological approaches, new evidence, and new interest in the topic took us beyond the traditional notion that female power was *in se* transgressive, intermittent, and contingent. Instead, it has become clear that the authority and influence of elite women was part and parcel of the power structure of the Hellenistic world and beyond.

Amid these broader developments, it seemed an opportune time to pause and reflect on what exactly we meant by 'power'. There was a tendency to describe the power of women rather than to define it, and so this project was launched in order to examine the nature and understanding of elite female power directly. In the same vein, the evolution of female power and responses to it beyond the Hellenistic Period and into the Roman Republic and later Empire was needed to maintain a broader perspective. The tie that binds the contributions that follow is the question of how the power of elite women in a given place, time, literary genre, document, or institution can be understood, and how it relates to broader structures of power. By moving beyond the biographical mode they begin to create a more conceptual approach to female influence in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds.

The *PRAEW* project and this volume are the product of many hands who deserve our thanks and recognition. Support for the distributed conference was provided by the Waterloo Institute for Hellenistic Studies, and as ever Brigitte Schneebeli was instrumental in its organisation and administration. The sixteen contributors to the project and all those who attended its sessions provided lively discussion and fascinating insights to the edification of all, and we thank them for their time, energy, and accommodation of time zones which could be antisocial depending on their location.[1] Due to prior commitments not all these contributions to the distributed conference are published here, but they were nevertheless instrumental in stimulating the scholarly conversation for which we are greatly indebted to these colleagues. *Ancient History Bulletin* and the University of Waterloo likewise provided

[1] The full programme and recordings of the distributed conference's sessions are available on the WIHS website.

valuable support for the project. The editors would also like to thank Francesca Taylor at the University of Auckland for her excellent work proofreading the contributions to this issue. As ever, we hope that this special issue continues this fascinating and necessary line of research and stimulates further debate into a topic that is of intrinsic interest beyond Antiquity.

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Archein and/or *Archesthai*: Exploring Ancient Approaches to Female Agency

Alex McAuley

One of the hurdles we encounter when studying royal and elite women is grappling with how female power and influence are articulated. The semantics with which we categorise female influence – soft or hand, direct or indirect, derivative or inherent, institutional or charismatic, to list a few – implicitly inform the paradigms through which it is analysed. In the unique context of the Hellenistic and Roman world, understanding how female power is articulated is further complicated by the disconnect between the ancient and modern vocabularies of power.[1] Many contemporary studies have tried to massage the former to sit more neatly with the latter; in the process, ancient *testimonia* for female influence are reworked to align with 'current' glossaries or paradigms of power through the vagaries of translation.

In this article my aim is to get back to basics and reconsider how the ancients identified and articulated the power of these undoubtedly influential women in a variety of contexts. My title is taken from Aristotle's famous formulation of the duties of the citizen in book three of his *Politics:*

> ἀλλὰ μὴν ἐπαινεῖταί γε τὸ δύνασθαι ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι, καὶ πολίτου δοκεῖ που ἡ ἀρετὴ εἶναι τὸ δύνασθαι καὶ ἄρχειν καὶ ἄρχεσθαι καλῶς
>
> Moreover the ability to rule and to be ruled is praised, and it seems, I suppose, that the virtue of a citizen is the ability both to rule and to be ruled well (Arist. *Pol*. 1277a)[2]

This combination of the active and the passive, of governing and being governed, of ruling and being ruled, lies at the core of Aristotle's philosophy of an ideal civic community – a point to which we shall return later.[3] But in the context of this special issue which seeks to consider concepts of power and agency among elite women in the Hellenistic and Roman world, there is some insight to be had in Aristotle's ideal of a balance between active and passive agency. This is neither meant to be a comprehensive discussion of all the source material at our disposal nor intended to put the *point finale* on any aspect of the subject. Instead, I hope to pose some questions of methodology and terminology that might give us some insight into the many perspectives on female power explored in the contributions to this issue. In order to do so, I aim to shift our focus back to ancient descriptions of elite and royal women and how they conceive of and articulate the sort of female influence that has

[1] This paper was first presented as part of the *Power, Royal Agency, and Elite Women in the Hellenistic World* distributed conference on 24 September 2021, and later as a paper in the seminar series of the Department of Classics & Ancient History at the University of Auckland Waipapa Taumata Rau in August 2023. I thank the participants to the distributed conference and my colleagues here in Auckland for their invaluable feedback. All errors and omissions remain my own. Given that this article provides a methodological overview rather than a precise reading of a given text or theme, citations of relevant scholarly literature are not meant to be exhaustive.

[2] On this balance of active and passive authority in the context of the Classical Greek city-state see McAuley 2013.

[3] See Kraut 2022: 306-427 for a thorough analysis and discussion of Book 3 of Aristotle's *Politics*, especially 306-356 on the overlap between family, household, and civic community. Miller 1995 remains an authoritative overview of Aristotle's political thought.

been studied with increasing interest in the past few decades and which is the subject of the current volume. How did they – the ancients – rather than we understand female power, and what was the vocabulary with which they described it?

My argument largely emerges from an observation by Gilliam Ramsey in her contribution to Elizabeth Carney and Sabine Müller's *Companion to Women and Monarchy in the Ancient Mediterranean*. Discussing the use of the increasingly common use of title *basilissa* for royal women early in the period she writes:

> If the new dynasties came to require the title as a sign of respect, they probably got the idea from the cities and thought it fit nicely with their aspirations. The traditional language of the polis provided a lexicon for new monarchical power and dominance. (Ramsey 2021: 189)

In addition to providing a semantic template for monarchical power writ large, I argue further that the language of the Classical *polis* and its constituent unit of the *oikos* forms the basis of the ancient lexicon for articulating royal and elite female power. In order to develop this, we shall consider how female influence is expressed in a sample of epigraphic testimonia. We shall then turn to literary accounts of elite and royal women to consider how they fit into the broader project of each author before putting forward some more general observations on how we can approach the ancient articulation of Hellenistic queenship and by extension elite female influence more generally. First, however, three methodological observations need to be made in order to situate this discussion in the broader – and ever-expanding – body of research on elite women.

From Royal Woman to Royal Women, and the *vocabula potestatis reginarum*

The past few decades have seen a proliferation of approaches to and perspectives on elite women in Antiquity more generally and in the Hellenistic Period in particular.[4] Much of this work has been predicated on trying to better understand the institutional place of the queen in the system of Hellenistic royalty through individual case studies; in other words, we have tried to understand the institution of queenship through exemplary queens.[5] This approach out of necessity tends to be biographical, and the scholarly exercise becomes one of reconstructing in as much detail as possible the life and legacy of a given royal woman, be it Olympias of Macedon, Berenice II, Cleopatra VII, Arsinoe II, or others who have been the subject of recent monographs and articles.[6] This has undoubtedly advanced our understanding of these royal women by both recreating a coherent biography from evidence that is often all too fragmentary, as well as by excising the scepticism or outright misogyny that so long guided ancient (and many modern) assumptions regarding female power. A side

[4] The 2021 companion edited by Carney & Müller is a massive contribution to the field which provides an authoritative overview of elite and royal women in a wide variety of geographical and chronological contexts. Other such recent titles are the edited volumes of Bielman Sánchez 2021, Bielman Sánchez, Cogitore, and Kolb 20 16), Coşkun and McAuley 2016, Droß-Krüpe & Fink 2021, and Kunst 2013, along with many of the contributions to Erskine, Llewellyn-Jones, and Wallace 2017.

[5] The notable exception to this is Kunst 2021, which provides an overview of Hellenistic queenship as a concept distilled from a broad survey of the elite women of the period. The same is true of Carney 2000 in the Macedonian context.

[6] The clearest example of this biographical approach is OUP's *Women in Antiquity* series, which has produced several fascinating and thorough biographies of individual Hellenistic and Roman elite women.

effect of this biographical focus, however, is a tendency to seek out what is exceptional in the life and career of the subject rather than what might have rendered her conventional.[7] To use the hackneyed metaphor, we often seek to identify how a royal women broke the mould rather than re-creating what the mould itself might have been. This is not to say that there is nothing exceptional in the careers of these royal women – far from it – but a focus on individual idiosyncrasy can steer our gaze away from a more commonly-held understanding of female agency and authority in the period.[8] It is precisely thanks to this bedrock of individual studies of Hellenistic queens that we are now able to move towards an understanding of Hellenistic queenship as a concept – and from here towards elite femininity more broadly.

The need to balance this institutional focus of ancient queenship, however, with the pivotal role played by relationships in the articulation of female power is becoming increasingly clear. The edited volume of Ed Anson, Monica D'Agostini, and Frances Pownall in honour of Elizabeth Carney has recently made a very compelling call to shift our focus towards the personal bonds and relationships that drove the Period. In this pre-modern context we are, at the end of the day, dealing with a royal system that was comprised of personal bonds of loyalty and relationships among individuals rather than a really 'abstract' system of power. In the context of this discussion, one of editors' observations in the introduction to the volume is particularly poignant: 'because of the very personal nature of the exercise of power, the Argead courts of Philip and Alexander can be seen as analogous to the *oikos*, or the household, the building block of ancient Greek society'.[9] They go on to elaborate that 'Although the courts of Philip and Alexander operated necessarily on a much larger scale than the *oikos* of the Classical Greek *polis*, the basic structure was the same.'[10] Rolf Strootman has convincingly shown that the basic structure of Hellenistic royal court was essentially the same as an extended *oikos*, and one which was maintained more by interpersonal bonds than institutional connections.[11] Omar Coloru has also demonstrated that this is true of the Seleucids in particular, whose royal ideology I have argued elsewhere is conceived of and expressed as a familial endeavour.[12] In addition to the same basic structure, as I hope to show the vocabulary of the *oikos* was the same as the vocabulary of the court, particularly when it comes to its female members.

The second comment relates to our own scholarly terminology. The fact has been well established that Hellenistic elite women were 'powerful' and 'influential', but what does this really mean in practice? A precise definition of 'power' as it relates to Hellenistic royal women is not often directly proposed, and the same is true of the term 'influence' with which it has become nearly synonymous. When we speak of 'female power', are we discussing something that is institutional or personal? Is it something specific to female rulers, or is there a non-gendered sense of royal power? How does this relate to – and is differentiated

[7] Notably the case with discussions of Cleopatra VII, who by Roller 2010 is treated as a queen who largely breaks with precedent rather than reinforces it.

[8] The commonly-held understanding of female power in the Ptolemaic context was the object of study of Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023: 26-71.

[9] Anson, D'Agostini, and Pownall 2021: 4

[10] Ibid.

[11] Strootman 2014: 96-98, see also chapters 5 and 7. On the familial ideology of Ptolemaic rulers see Muller 2009, and Coloru 2011 in the Seleucid context. For the Seleucid royal family as reigning triad see McAuley 2022.

[12] McAuley 2022.

from – the power of male members of the royal household? The same questions could be posed of female influence and the cognate terms 'agency' or 'role'. This terminological roundabout calls to mind the scholarship of the ethnic and cultural turn of the 1990s and 2000s, by the end of which ethnicity, culture, and identity had each taken on such broad meanings that it became difficult to distinguish one from the other.[13] In the process, various studies were often discussing different concepts using the same terminology. The same risk is perhaps present in how the terms power, influence, and agency have become interchangeable. Added to this was the disconnect that Jeremy McInerney mentioned between what contemporary scholars mean by ethnicity and what the Greeks understood as ethnicity.[14] The same trap presents itself with the study of royal women, and thus better understanding how female power was articulated by the ancients will allow it to be sidestepped.

My third point relates to how we interact with the ancient source material, particularly literary. Take, for example, two emblematic passages from Appian's *Syriaka*. The first concerns the marriage alliances of Antiochus III:

> Ἀντιοχίδα δ' ἔπεμπεν Ἀριαράθῃ τῷ Καππαδοκῶν βασιλεῖ, καὶ τὴν ἔτι λοιπὴν Εὐμένει τῷ Περγάμου βασιλεῖ
>
> To Ariarathes king of Cappadocia, he sent Antiochis, and to Eumenes king of Pergamum, his last remaining daughter. App. *Syr*. 5

This passage is fairly typical of how royal women appear in sources such as Appian. Antiochis, the daughter of Antiochus III, is the direct object of the verb ἔπεμπεν and thus receives the action of which her father is the grammatical subject. She is grammatically as well as politically devoid of agency. The other royal woman in the passage is identified unhelpfully as 'τὴν ἔτι λοιπὴν ' – 'the one still remaining' or even 'leftover', and again she is the direct object of the transitive verb. It is noteworthy that Appian, as is the case with many ancient authors, does not provide (or is not aware of) this royal woman's name. Even these few lines of Appian are illustrative of how ancient authors tend to narrate royal women: meriting mention only at the moment of their birth or their marriage, they often are the objects of the actions of their male relatives in which they have little say or involvement. After such brief appearances in the record, they then fade back into obscurity.

The second passage is Appian's account of Cleopatra Thea's murder of her son Seleucus:

> Σέλευκον δ' εὐθὺς ἐπὶ τῷ πατρὶ Δημητρίῳ τὸ διάδημα ἐπιθέμενον ἐπιτοξεύσασα ἔκτεινεν εἴτε δείσασα περὶ τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς δολοφονήσεως, εἴτε καὶ μανιώδει πρὸς πάντας μίσει
>
> She [Thea] killed Seleucus as soon as he took the diadem of his father, shooting him with an arrow either because she was afraid for having

[13] See, for instance, the introduction to Mitchell and Greatrex 2000: xiv, a volume dedicated to ethnicity and culture and late Antiquity which acknowledges the ambiguity of the terms: 'since definitions of ethnicity and culture are bound to be subjective, there is a particular value in the pluralistic approach of an academic conference which does not seek to harmonise views of approaches to the subject.'

[14] As McInerney writes in his introduction: 'it is apparent therefore that there is a wide gap between what the Greeks meant by an *ethnos* and what most Greek historians have chosen to study under that name' (1999, 25). Rachel Mairs, in the context of Hellenistic Bactria, summed the issue up perfectly: 'our perceived cultural indicia of ethnic identity may not coincide with the indicia selected or emphasized by the agents themselves' (2006, 14).

> murdered his father, or because she had a manic loathing for all people. App. *Syr.* 69.

Unlike the unnamed 'leftover' daughter we have encountered above, in this instance Cleopatra Thea is the subject – and thus agent – of an active verb and participle, and her son is instead the object of both transitive verbal forms. This situation is troubling enough to Appian that he feels compelled to explain why this happened, and he offers two possible motives: either paranoiac fear because of her deceptive assassination of his father, or a generic manic hatred of people in general. Neither motive is particularly compelling and it does not seem as if Appian is entirely *au fait* with the subtleties of the incident, hence he has fallen back on two motivations of elite women that had become commonplace by the Imperial period.[15] While these are only two small sections of Appian, the general pattern is nevertheless clear: when they are passive, women are passed over with little or no comment; when they are active, an account of their actions is often provided with recourse to generic (negative) assumptions about elite women. In this Appian stands as an instar for many ancient accounts of elite women in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds.

The scholarly challenge, then, as it has typically been addressed is how to see through the *eidōlon* – the literary 'phantom' or 'image' – of a given queen or princess in ancient sources and try to work through them to recreate the historical *gynē* – 'woman' – herself. In other words, we often treat the sources for the ancient women we study as a problem, a riddle, or a puzzle to be solved; we often work against them and try to work out what they *really* tell us about the subject. In this chapter, however, I aim to instead lean into the *eidōlon* itself in order to illustrate how elite women are identified and their influence articulated in first a sample of epigraphic sources and then the role they play as characters in some of our major literary sources.

The Model Citizen: Elite Women in Greek Epigraphy

With all of this as prelude, we can now turn to how royal women appear in epigraphic corpora. What follows is a limited sample taken from across the dynasties, but nevertheless the vocabulary of royal women is striking for both its consistency and its fundamentally civic character. Beginning with the Seleucids, in 299/298, the Ionian city of Miletus, at the instigation of the courtier Demodamas, passed a decree in honour of Apama, wife of Seleucus I.[16] Apama is honoured for having displayed *pollēn eunoian kai prothumian* – 'great goodwill and eagerness' towards the Milesians who were in Seleucus' army, and had responded with no accidental diligence (*ou' tēn tychousan spoudēn*) to an embassy sent to Seleucus regarding the temple of Apollo at Didyma. *Eunoia* – the goodwill a citizen cultivates between themselves and another, the ready generosity and eagerness that is *prothumia*, the zeal and diligence of *spoudē*, are all identified in the queen and she is justifiably praised for them.[17] All of these concepts are deeply rooted in the vocabulary of civic virtue, and she seems to display a sense of *sophrosynē* that would typically be associated with citizen men alone.[18] As an added

[15] On this particular passage see Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023: 146-151.

[16] I. Didyma 480 = Austin[2] no. 51. The relevant lines are ll. 1-10 of the inscription, See Ramsey 2016: 88-98 for the background of Apama up to this point, and the discussion of McAuley 2022: 24-6 on this inscription.

[17] Definitions and attestations of these terms are taken from their respective entries in the *LSJ*.

[18] For the Aristotelian foundation of these concepts see Kraut 2022: 50-97.

element of praise, both verbs of which Apama is the subject in this inscription - παρείχετο and ἐποιεῖτο –are in the imperfect, so this is a habitual or ongoing action rather than a one-off display that would have been rendered in the aorist.[19] It should also be noted that there is a sister decree to this that honours her son Antiochus I for displaying the same virtues in perpetuating his father's goodwill towards the city, thus here we see an urban community interacting with Seleucids not as an overlord, but as a city speaking to an *oikos* marked by *homophrosynē* – likeness of thought, a common agenda.[20]

Just over a century later we are given another glimpse of the internal harmony of the royal *oikos* – though this time from the other direction - in the letter of Laodice III to Iasos in Caria, dated to 196/195.[21] After praising her 'brother's' goodwill and help to the city and its allies in restoring its *nomoi* and *eleutheria*, she then writes that she is motivated by this same *spoudē* and *ekteneia*, - diligence and zeal - to make a benefaction on the city (*euergesia*) to the common benefit (*euchrestian koinēn*) of all the city.[22] Again, here we have royal women being presented as members of an *oikos* interacting with a city through the familiar – and therefore unthreatening – vocabulary of civic participation in the community's common welfare. Were it not for the fact that she and Apama bear the title *basilissa* in these inscriptions once could plausibly think that these were citizen women rather than Hellenistic monarchs. The means by which she displays this *aretē* is likewise closely linked to a traditional sense of civic femininity: her benefaction to Iasos is intended to provide dowries for the daughters of poor citizens, thereby enabling the perpetuation of the civic community itself.[23] All of this is done in accordance with the goodwill and wishes of her husband for the prosperity of the city, again demonstrating the elision of the royal *oikos* and the *polis* community.

The same civic sensibility of royalty also appears in a decree of Attalus III honouring his mother queen Stratonice, where again the royal woman is praised through the language of civic virtue couched in domestic loyalty and piety.[24] Attalus captures this duality with a *men/de* clause praising her, on the one hand, as 'εὐσεβεστάτη μὲγ γενομένη πασῶμ' – 'the most pious of all women' with regards to the gods, and on the other hand, as 'φιλο-στοργοτάτη δὲ διαφερόντως πρός τε τὸμ πατέρα μου καὶ πρὸς ἐμέ' 'the most affectionate in many ways towards my father and me'. The superlative adjectives unsubtly declare her extraordinary virtue in the religious and domestic realms. Attalus' use of the term *philostorgia* likewise demonstrates that the virtue of the ideal queen begins in the private sphere of the royal *oikos* and radiates publicly: *philostorgia* is tender love and affection, but of an especially devoted kind that implies selflessness of the sort found in ideal marriage or parenthood.[25] The fact that this was displayed to both him and his father shows the continuity of her idealised devotion to subsequent generations of the royal household. Her domestic virtue likewise expands into the public realm through her piety: she is said to have displayed piety towards all the gods but especially Zeus Sabazius, devotion to whom she inherited from her

[19] Lines 10 and 6 of the inscription.

[20] I. Didyma 479 = OGIS 213, discussed by Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 25-27.

[21] Austin^2 no. 198 for the full scholarly history of the decree, which is SEG 26.1226. the key lines for us are ll. 11-15. The document is also no. 26 in Ma 1999, discussed at pp. 329-335.

[22] For a thorough discussion of the relationship between Antiochus III and Iasos see Ma 1999: 216-226.

[23] On the civic dynamics of this benefaction see Ramsey 2011.

[24] In a document dated to 5 October 135 BC: Austin^2 no. 247c = *RC* 65-67 and *OGIS* 331 II-IV. The relevant lines are 45-40.

[25] Discussed in this Hellenistic context by Van Bremen 2003: 327-328. Note that *philostorgia* was also used to describe the harmonious relationship between Laodice III and her husband Antiochus III.

family (πατροπαράδοτον) and then introduced as a civic god of their homeland (κομίσασα εἰς τὴμ πατρίδα ἡμῶν).[26] In these three epigraphic renderings we thus find an idealised form of royal female influence communicated through the synonymous language of domestic and civic virtue in which the queen's devotion in the former expands into the latter. The ideal queen is therefore the good mother, wife, and citizen woman in the eyes of a male audience.[27]

The epithets of queens likewise testify to this sense of civic sensibility. Berenice II and her husband Ptolemy III are always identified as the *theoi euergetai* in the epigraphic dossier, and again this is predicated on exchange between the royal family and the cities of the realm. *Euergesia* is precisely the same virtue for which Apama and Laodice were praised in the inscriptions we have just discussed above.[28] In the successive generations of Ptolemaic royal epithets we again find this overlap between domestic and public virtue: the first generation of paired rulers are the *theoi philadelphoi* whose fraternal intimacy is, in this case, idiosyncratically augmented by marriage. The domestic harmony among this royal couple in turn gives way to the public *euergesia* of Berenice II and Ptolemy III, before the image of hereditary fidelity reappears with the epithet of next generation of *theoi philopatores*.[29] In all three generations the epithet of the royal male is projected onto the royal woman, and thereby his particular virtue becomes hers as well in yet another indication of how royal men in no small part derive their virtue from that of the women with which they are associated. The Ptolemies of course almost always depict themselves as a pair of rulers rather than just one in what Sabine Müller has identified as the *Königspaar* in Ptolemaic public image that appears in representations of the couple in many media.[30] This occurs in both how the royal couple identify themselves in their regnal years (e.g. SEG 36.1218) and in how they are identified by their subjects (e.g. OGIS 65 and 86).[31] Here too in the epithetical context we find this intersection of private and public virtue in public representations royal women that we have seen in the epigraphic record above. The message is the same: 'good' royal women contribute to the harmony of the royal *oikos*, which in turn creates the harmony of the *basileia* and its subjects.

The manner in which the individual virtue of the queen extends to the wellbeing of the kingdom is aptly captured much later in the period in Cleopatra Thea's two titles *thea* and *euetēria* which appear both in her coinage and an inscription. In 130 BC a dedication at the temple of Zeus in Ptolemais-Ake by the archigrammateus of the army is made on behalf of the royal family, including *basilissa kleopatra thea euetēria*.[32] Thea – goddess – speaks for itself, but *euetēria* is a bit more enigmatic but further underscores the civic character of royal

[26] Ll. 49-50 of the document. On this series of documents see Hansen 1971: 440-469 and Allen 1983: 174-185.

[27] The same notion of a Hellenistic queen as the idealised 'good wife' is found in how Loadice wife of Achaeus the Younger is identified as an Andromache-like figure by Polybius following the excellent discussion of D'Agostini 2014.

[28] On the development of euergetism in the Greek civic context see chapter 5 of Gygax 2016. See also the relevant discussion of Ma 1999 on the euergesia of Laodice and Antiochus III.

[29] On the evolution of Ptolemaic epithets see the magisterial work of Muccioli 2013: 109-115 as well as his discussion of the epithets *philopatōr* (220-235) and *euergetēs* (178-192) and

[30] Müller 2009.

[31] See also SEG 38.1476; 39.1426; 39.1596, Syll. 463. See recently Pfeiffer 2024 on the representation of the Ptolemies as a generational family unit.

[32] *SEG* 19.904, the deposition of which is discussed by Cohen 2006: 214-215.

female virtue.[33] The word is usually translated as 'bountiful' or 'plentiful' in a bucolic sense, but it we dig a bit deeper the word is almost always used with regards to the provisioning and wellbeing of a civic community. In Plato, *euetēria* is the product of orderly Eros mixing the elements in harmony to produce abundance and health, *euetērian* and *hygieian*.[34] In Xenophon, Demosthenes, and Aristotle, *euetēria* always refers to the abundance of a city's harvest and provisions, and Aristotle discusses how this relates to the success or failure of various types of government.[35] This patently civic titulary combined with Thea's recurrent identification with Tyche in her coinage makes it clear that her public image across various media is deeply grounded in the vocabulary of civic culture and its general wellbeing.[36] As we have seen, she was certainly not the first queen to be identified with an *oikos* and a civic community, and would not be the last.

Although they might seem obvious there are some points to be made before we turn to how the influence of royal women is articulated in literary sources. Across the small sample that we have discussed an idealised form of royal female influence is consistently described in which domestic and familial loyalty extends into the public realm and foments imperial harmony and prosperity. In this articulation female agency appears only inasmuch as it complements or furthers the agenda of a royal woman's principal male relative, be it her husband, son, or father. Royal women thus 'reign' in the active sense, and yet are also subject in a passive sense to the initiative of their male relatives. This idealised royal feminine influence is articulated using vocabulary that has a dual resonance in both the domestic and public spheres: *spoudē*, *ekteneia*, *prothumia*, and the like. The queen clearly has influence of her own, but this is employed in a selfless manner which serves the collective good of the royal family and thus the community as a whole. The public authority of the queen stems from both her position and influence within the royal family, yet is also fundamentally relational. The queen acts not in her capacity as an individual authority figure, but by virtue of her status of wife, mother, daughter, etc. But this idealised royal femininity appears in a fundamentally masculine medium. Even the letter of Laodice appears as part of a decree ordered by a strictly male citizen assembly and destined presumably for a male audience, thus this epigraphic articulation of elite female influence reflects a contemporary male gaze on female power more than anything else. Nevertheless, even in such a medium there is a normative sense of royal femininity which implicitly endorses the authority of royal women in the first place. Even in this restrictive context, the authority of royal women is not *in se* transgressive, but can in certain circumstances align with a masculine concept of ideal civic conduct.

People or Tropes? A Survey of Elite Women in the Literary Tradition

Epigraphy is one medium, but how are royal women identified and described in literary sources, and how does this relate to the thematic agenda of the work as a whole? Again this

[33] See the longer discussion of Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023: 193-195 on euetēria in the longer literary tradition.

[34] Plato, *Sym.* 188a: τά τε θερμὰ καὶ τὰ ψυχρὰ καὶ ξηρὰ καὶ ὑγρά, καὶ ἁρμονίαν καὶ κρᾶσιν λάβῃ σώφρονα, ἥκει φέροντα εὐετηρίαν τε καὶ ὑγίειαν ἀνθρώποις καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ζῴοις τε καὶ φυτοῖς, καὶ οὐδὲν ἠδίκησεν.

56 ὅταν δὲ ὁ μετὰ τῆς ὕβρεως Ἔρως ἐγκρατέστερος περὶ τὰς τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ ὥρας γένηται,

[35] Xen. *Hell.* 5.2.5, Demosthenes 10.49, Aristotle *Pol.* 5.1306b.

[36] Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023: 188-195.

overview has to be brief, but what follows is particularly interesting in relation to the general assumption that ancient authors were fundamentally misogynistic and viewed female power as being inherently transgressive. Accordingly, any display of agency by an elite woman with a whiff of independence becomes a threat to the established social order. We have already encountered this seemingly prevailing paradigm in the two passages from Appian discussed at the beginning of this article. If, like Antiochis and 'the leftover daughter', women are passive figures in the designs of their male relatives, then all is well – in this case both are the direct object of the actions of their father Antiochus III. This passive side of female power is usually assumed to be acceptable to male authors like Appian. If, however, like Cleopatra Thea, women become more active – if they *archein* – and take the initiative, then they are dangerous, transgressive, and their actions go against the social order – in this case leading to Appian accusing Thea of having a manic loathing for all people.[37] It is tempting to fall into this trap of assuming that ancient authors viewed the passive and active actions of royal women as being good and bad, respectively, but doing so ultimately takes women out of the broader thematic context of each author and their work. Again, an obvious point deserves to be made here: depictions of women in our literary sources are almost never about the women themselves, but rather how they reflect the character of the men in their lives and the households of which they are a part. To illustrate the point we shall briefly survey the literary role of women in Appian, Diodorus, and Plutarch.

In the *Syriaka*, Appian conceives of Seleucid history on the whole as being a succession of kings – some good, some bad, others mediocre – who leave their mark on the kingdom. The kingdom, for its part, is understood as a sort of extended household whose fortunes reflect the virtue – or lack thereof – of its *kyrios*. This sequence begins in *Syriaka* 65, where Appian relates that the after the death of Seleucus the kingdom of Syria passes 'in regular succession from father to son as follows' and then begins a generational account of Seleucid history that continues until the end of the work.[38] Appian provides terse judgements of the rule of each, and the general pattern again is that a virtuous and strong king results in a strong and unified kingdom, while a corrupt or inept monarch in turn results in a feeble kingdom.[39] Weakness takes different forms in Appian, sometimes physical, other times strategic, and the interference of women in the rule of the men to whom they were related is almost always an indication thereof. Antiochus II, Appian summarises, was poisoned by his wife and this led to the invasion of Syria by Ptolemy III in revenge, in turn sparking the revolt of the Parthians who took advantage of the disturbed and troubled *archē* of the Seleucids.[40] This sequence then culminates in *Syriaka* 68 and 69, when Thea kills first Demetrios II and then her son Seleucus, only for the son of Antiochus Cyzicenus to come to the throne, marry Selene, and thereby bring divine vengeance upon himself. Indeed Thea's appearance as a prominent figure in her own right comes during what is identified by Appian as a period of

[37] This is essentially the conclusion at which Macurdy arrived in 1932 by reading the evidence directly. The same idea of the 'good' queen as one who largely conforms with her (perceived) social role is also found in early 20th century historians such as Bevan and Bouché-Leclercq. On the longer history of this trope see Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023: 5-9. Bevan's (1902: 2.250) staggering judgement that Cleopatra Thea's machinations of individual power made her become 'a politician whose heart was dead' is the most direct instance of this.

[38] App. *Syr* 65: 'Σελεύκου δ' ἀποθανόντος διάδοχοι, παῖς παρὰ πατρὸς ἐκδεχόμενοι τὴν Σύρων ἀρχήν, ἐγένοντο οἵδε' This aligns neatly with Brodersen 1989's argument that the Appian based the *Syriaka* on a list of Seleucid kings with basic details of the reign of each to which he added other stories encountered elsewhere.

[39] On Appian's place in Seleukid historiography see the relevant sections of Primo 2009.

[40] App. *Syr*. 65.

anarchy that arose during the reign of Demetrius II, thus her agency is also παρὰ δὲ τὴν ἀναρχίαν. Seleucid history, in Appian's conclusion, is therefore a succession of seventeen kings over the course of 230 years.[41] Any women who appear in the narrative are not rulers in their own right but rather figures whose character is indicative of the health of the *oikos* and the kingdom as a whole. This framework therefore compels us not to discard any mention of women as casual ancient misogyny, but instead to consider how their appearances in Appian relate to his overarching project.

The same metonymic function of elite women is also found in Diodorus. Following the work of Kenneth Sacks in 1990, Diodorus understands his history as a series of illustrative examples that relate to overarching themes – morality, fortune, progress, philanthropy, and perhaps above all what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate government.[42] Women in Diodorus are a critical constituent part of the social whole who can act as litmus tests for the health of their society and its government. The apparent agency he ascribes to Thais of Athens in the burning of Persepolis, for instance, is more an indication of the ease with which the heavily inebriated Alexander and his *hetairoi* are steered towards ill-considered action than an analysis of who was the driving force behind the act.[43] Thais' literary role in this passage is to emphasise the lack of *sophrosynē* among the Macedonians at Persepolis, and to provide another instance of Alexander's susceptibility to flattery.[44] The implied message to the reader is not so much the power of Thais but the vice of Alexander. The conduct of royal women also reflects on the integrity of the kingdom itself: Diodorus' archaeology of the Ariarathids of Cappadocia in the fragments of book 31 narrates a rather bizarre tale in which the queen Antiochis – charmingly described as πάνουργος μάλιστα, 'totally wicked' – foisted two false sons on her unsuspecting son Ariarathes IV only to palm them off when she suddenly gave birth to a legitimate son, Mithridates.[45] This imprecise dynastic reshuffle took place at a time when the kingdom of Cappadocia was vacillating between loyalty to Rome and loyalty to the Seleucids in the 180s and 170s BC, thus it seems that Diodorus is using this story (which is perplexing at best) to illustrate the deep instability in the kingdom both in terms of internal succession and external relations.[46] In both cases, though, it is easy to take these mentions of royal women out of context and conclude that Diodorus is simply being derisive – which in part he is, though this too serves a literary purpose. Women, however, are not exclusively negative *topoi*, as virtuous women could equally be symptomatic of their household or kingdom in a positive way. Earlier in Diodorus' Cappadocian archaeology he recounts the marriage of Stratonice to Ariaramnes, who at the same time as his marriage placed the diadem on his son (Ariarathes III's) head as a means of indicating succession through co-regency *à la séleucide.*[47] The Sicilian passes over this Stratonice without comment, thereby reinforcing the notion that this family, like Cappadocia itself, was marked by cohesion and harmony (31.19.6). Earlier in his history Diodorus presents Lucretia as the instar of the virtuous woman *par excellence*, not only for her selfless consideration of her husband's reputation but also the manner in which her conduct inspired virtue to the point

[41] App. *Syr.* 70: ἡ δὲ ἀρχὴ τῶν Σελευκιδῶν ἐς τριάκοντα ἐπὶ διακοσίοις ἐνιαυτοὺς διίκετο: καὶ εἴ τις ἐπισκοποίη τὸν ἐς Ῥωμαίους χρόνον ἀπ᾽ Ἀλεξάνδρου, προσθετέον ἐπὶ τοῖς διακοσίοις τριάκοντα ἔτεσι τὰ Τιγράνους τεσσαρεσκαίδεκα.

[42] Sacks 1990, reprinted in 2016, especially chapters 1-4.

[43] Diodorus 17.72.

[44] See the broader discussion of this and other accounts of the event in McAuley 2018: 720-725.

[45] Diodorus 31.19, discussed by McAuley 2017: 198-201.

[46] McAuley 2017: 198 with references.

[47] McAuley 2017: 194-196 on this passage and its context.

of obligation in men and women alike (10.20-21).[48] Such an understanding of the ethical 'ideal' elite woman as a harmonious contributor to a collective family endeavour is evocative of the epigraphic praises of royal women vis-à-vis their *oikos* and *basileia* that we have seen above. With this capacity for virtue, though, also comes a capacity for vice, and it is this potential for impact in either direction that seems to guide much of Diodorus' anxiety towards the agency of elite women. In light of all of this his quotation of the comic poet Philemon regarding the perils of marriage and the discord sown by female members of the family takes on an axiomatic role in his history:

> Similarly one may say that one is not amazed if a man has married, but if he has married a second time; for it is better to expose oneself twice to the sea than to a woman. [3] Indeed the greatest and most grievous quarrels in homes between children and fathers are caused by stepmothers, and this fact is the cause of many lawless acts which are portrayed in tragic scenes upon the stage. Philemon fr 183 Kock, Diod. 12.14.2-4[49]

When we turn to Plutarch we find that women hardly melt into the background of his *Parallel Lives* but rather are characters in their own right who can serve a similarly exemplary function as men. Plutarch narrates women who have their own characters, their own agency, their own initiative within the walls of the household and without, and who in their *logoi* and *erga* are able to serve as moral exempla not just for women, but for me as well. As Cullhed and Juchnevičienė have described in a recent article, every life in Plutarch's biographical corpus with the exception of Marcellus has at least one female figure, and these prominent characters are depicted as being autonomous and mature.[50] Yet women in Plutarch are not relegated to the *Parallel Lives* alone, but like their male counterparts they form part of his broader attempt to substantiate the abstract moral and ethical principles in the *Moralia* in the lives of historical figures. In this framework, as Cullhed and Juchnevičienė summarise, 'women are seen as historical figures but also as embodiments of the ethical precents that Plutarch outlines in his works, thus becoming part of the bridge between his thinking in *Lives* and in *Moralia*.[51]' In the end, however, individual men are still the subject of Plutarch's biographies and we must accordingly bear in mind that the characters with whom the subject interacts - men and women alike – ultimately serve to further reveal his character.

They do so not merely by presence or description, but in their own words: a recent study by Macaulay has identified over thirty instances of female direct discourse in Plutarch's lives, all of which occur at moments of crisis in which the male protagonist is unsure how to respond to a given moral predicament.[52] Interestingly, the vast majority of these instances of female exhortation are 'positive' in the sense that they compel their male counterpart to virtuous and moderate action, often in service to the state. In the life of *Romulus*, for instance,

[48] Especially Diodorus' concluding statement at 10.21.5: τοιγαροῦν οὐ μόνον θνητοῦ βίου δόξαν ἀθάνατον ἀντικατηλλάξατο διὰ τῆς ἰδίας ἀρετῆς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς συγγενεῖς καὶ πάντας τοὺς πολίτας προετρέψατο λαβεῖν ἀπαραίτητον τιμωρίαν παρὰ τῶν εἰς αὐτὴν παρανομησάντων.

[49] The Greek text is: καὶ Φιλήμονος τοῦ κωμῳδιογράφου γράφοντος τοὺς πολλάκις ναυτιλλομένους καὶ συνειπόντος τῷ νόμῳ" τεθαύμακ' οὐκέτ' εἰ πέπλευκέ τις, ἀλλ' εἰ πέπλευκε δίς: τὸ παραπλήσιον ἄν τις ἀποφαίνοιτο μὴ θαυμάζειν εἴ τις γεγάμηκεν, ἀλλ' εἰ δὶς γεγάμηκε: κρεῖττον γὰρ εἶναι δὶς ἑαυτὸν θαλάττῃ παραβαλεῖν ἢ γυναικί. [3] μέγισται γὰρ καὶ χαλεπώταται στάσεις ἐν ταῖς οἰκίαις γίνονται διὰ μητρυιὰς τέκνοις πρὸς πατέρας, καὶ διὰ ταῦτα πολλαὶ καὶ παράνομοι πράξεις ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις τραγῳδοῦνται.

[50] Cullhed and Juchnevičienė 2023.

[51] Cullhed and Juchnevičienė 2023: 402.

[52] Macaulay 2016, especially appendices 1 and 2.

the subject's wife Hersilia negotiates peace between the Romans and Sabines after the Rape of the Sabine women through a speech at 19.3-5 which on the one hand appeals to cooperation and peace while also validating the ethical strengths of Romulus.[53] After the speech the un-named women then facilitate the reconciliation of the two sides and thereby greatly increase the ranks of the fledgling Roman legions. In a similar vein Plutarch also has Coriolanus' mother Volumnia make a long intercessory speech at the head of a delegation of Roman women begging him to cease his siege of Rome, in the process providing another exemplar of female exhortation of male virtue while also highlighting Coriolanus' somewhat excessive lifelong devotion to his mother.[54]

Such female intercession in Plutarch is not limited to Rome but also appears in biographies of Greek and Persian men, thus this is not meant to be something unique to the Roman tradition. Plutarch's concept of ideal femininity among elite women is fundamentally rooted in the roles of wife and mother.[55] The ideal mother, as seen in the examples of Volumnia to Coriolanus and Cornelia to the Gracchi, is meant to cultivate the virtue and ethical conduct of her sons in private and exhort them to beneficence in the public sphere.[56] Public male virtue thus flows from private female virtue in much the same way we have seen suggested in the epigraphic tradition above. The domestic and political spheres are, as ever, intrinsically linked. The same is as true of maternity as it is of marriage. When a morally good man marries a woman, according to Plutarch, their mutual virtue is cultivated through attention and affection which are developed by reason.[57] This in turn leads the pair to exercise their virtue and reason in the public sphere as well, while at the same time conjugal virtue is microcosmic of public harmony in a given polity in much the same way that we have seen above in our epigraphic sample. Cleopatra, of course, is the negative example of this given her corrupting role in the *Life of Antony*. While Cleopatra certainly does not come off well in Plutarch's account, again the literary portrait painted of her is ultimately the means through which Plutarch assesses Antony character, not the queens.[58] Her deception, ambition, and sexuality are presented as diametric opposites to the virtue of Octavia, and in the fact that Antony is torn between the two we find the struggle between his inner angels and daemons. That he ultimately chose Cleopatra is meant to be an indictment of him, not of her. His personal choices in turn ripple outward into the public sphere with profoundly deleterious consequences for the Mediterranean as a whole.

Appian, Diodorus, and Plutarch are hardly a definitive sample of how the influence of elite women was articulated and understood by (male) ancient authors, but they nonetheless make a methodological point that ought to guide our own reconstruction of them. Given the scarcity with which women often appear in these literary traditions the tendency is to find an attestation and then skip to the next point at which a woman or women are mentioned by an author, but the intervening sections are often the most critical in determining how and why an author has described an elite woman as he has. These elite women are an intrinsic part of the analytical, ethical, or historiographical approach of the author and as such are depicted with a level of nuance that merits our critical consideration in the context of whichever work is being considered. Considering the standard questions of aims,

[53] Mcaulay 2016:117.

[54] Plut. *Cor*. 35.1-36.4

[55] See again the appendix of Macaulay 2016.

[56] Following Cullhed and Juchnevičienė 2023

[57] On love and marriage in Plutarch see the survey of Tsouvala 2013.

[58] Macaulay 2017: 54-80.

audience, agenda, and genre are fundamental methodological questions, yet they are all the more critical in trying to grasp the agency and authority of ancient women. In the end, these authors are describing what are often 'historical' women, but filtered through the lens of their own literary project and approach. Oftentimes descriptions of these women are not about them at all but rather a commentary on individuals or societies. Trying to glimpse the person through this fog is difficult, but all the more necessary for it.

Conclusion: Apollonis of Pergamon.

On the surface there is a great disconnect between the media of epigraphy and literature when it comes to the portrayal of elite and influential women. At first glance women are directly identified, praised, spoken to by citizen communities through the epigraphic record. Virtues are extolled, thanks given in return for generosity, and the subtle invitation to continue this in the future is extended through a fairly direct exchange. In literature, however, women are rather more spectral: they appear as individual characters but are often not themselves in a teleological sense; rather, they act as mirrors which capture and reflect the virtue or vice of the men with which they are associated or, in the case of Plutarch, as levers compelling men to certain courses of action. But as we dig deeper we find elements of commonality between how female influence is articulated by these two media. In both, women are individuals, yes, but they are ultimately dependent individuals in the sense that they derive their status from their relationships with men. Accordingly, their conduct influences and is influenced by the conduct of these men in a reciprocal relationship that determines the character of all involved. In both media, the line between public and private is highly permeable: private conduct by women and men alike guides the public wellbeing of a given polity or kingdom. The ideal is a harmonious and collaborative relationship of *synergesia* in an elite *oikos* which in turn cultivates a harmonious and successful community. In this, women are collaborators in the beneficial exercise of power, not automatic barriers to it, and again we compelled to move beyond the simple active/passive bad/good characterisation of elite female agency in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds. This congruence between female agency in epigraphy and literary source is uniquely visible in the case of Apollonis, the queen mother for whom we have both an epigraphic and literary attestation which paint a remarkably consistent – and laudatory – view of this elite-then-royal woman.[59]

Apollonis hailed from an elite family of Cyzicus and went on to marry Attalus I in 223 as a means of reflecting the importance of Greek cities to the Attalid monarchs, thus she is unique in bridging the divide between 'civic' elite and 'royal' families of the period.[60] It is thus perhaps little surprise that attestations of her would emphasise the fact that was a citizen-woman who was elevated to the heights of royalty through marriage.[61] Strabo recounts that the marriage produced four sons 'from Apollonis, a woman of Cycizus,' as he identifies her, the two youngest of which remained private citizens (διετέλεσαν ἰδιῶται, Strabo. 13. 4. 2). Epigraphic attestations of the queen paint her as a paragon of royal femininity again using language couched in civic sensibility and propriety. An inscription from Hierapolis dated to between 167-159 BC after the queen's death is downright glowing

[59] For the life and career of Apollonis see the classic article by Van Looy 1976.

[60] See the entry on Apollonis by Iossif in the *EAH* for all attestations of the queen.

[61] The civic ideology of Pergamene royal women and the dynasty more generally is discussed by Mirón 2021.

in its praise for her – and again this is all couched in the language of the oikos as a microcosm of the kingdom.[62] The opening lines identify her as 'the pious', *eusebēs*, and through this piety along with her reverence for her family, her life with her husband, the *omonoia* of her family with children, she has displayed in a fitting and glorious way among men her *idia aretē*, her own glory. The inscription then goes on to describe her as a paragon of the 'good wife': she acted piously towards the gods, reverently towards her parents, and then towards her husband with whom she lived together magnificently (μεγαλοπρεπῶς). She acted towards her noble children 'with total harmony' (μετὰ πάσης ὁμονοίας), not as an artifice of self-promotion but genuinely with great affection. This fidelity to her family continued after the death of her husband and extended to her husband's wife, Stratonice, towards whom she 'always acted with goodwill' and 'treated as a companion of her own maternal affection', believing her to be someone who shared in it. [63]

By virtue of all of this, the inscription ends with the extraordinary declaration that Apollonis, 'having passed away she attained immortal honour among all men, pure to all the Greeks, and to King Eumenes the saviour and to her other children.' [64] This eulogy to Apollonis conveys an ideal of elite femininity that almost transcends into the realm of masculine virtue: her *timē* and *doxa* are an inspiration to not just all women, but to men as well, beyond her native Cyzicus and marital Pergamon to all Greeks. What lies at the core of this praise is almost a sense of inhibitive *aidōs* taken to its extreme: she is selfless before the gods, her parents, her husband, her children, and her son's wife, always seeking the good of the *oikos* – and thus the good of the community and kingdom – before her own gain.[65] She seems utterly devoid of duplicitousness or self-advancement, but rather derives her own *aretē* from her dedication to the *aretē* of others to whom she is related. Because she is the perfect wife she is the perfect female citizen, and because she is the perfect female citizen she becomes the ideal queen in a syllogism that neatly captures ancient articulations of female power.

What is remarkable in the case of Apollonis is the fidelity of the literary tradition to this epigraphic account of her character which complements the praise of what she was with comparison to what she was not. In 185 the royal family visited her native Cyzicus in an elaborated curated demonstration of the unity and beneficence of the royal family. Polybius account of this and his judgement of Apollonis merit quotation in full:

> ὅτι Ἀπολλωνίς, ἡ Ἀττάλου τοῦ πατρὸς Εὐμένους τοῦ βασιλέως γαμετή, Κυζικηνὴ ἦν, γυνὴ διὰ πλείους αἰτίας ἀξία μνήμης καὶ παρασημασίας. [2] καὶ γὰρ ὅτι δημότις ὑπάρχουσα βασίλισσα ἐγεγόνει καὶ ταύτην διεφύλαξε τὴν ὑπεροχὴν μέχρι τῆς τελευταίας, οὐχ ἑταιρικὴν προσφερομένη πιθανότητα, σωφρονικὴν δὲ καὶ πολιτικὴν σεμνότητα καὶ καλοκαγαθίαν, δικαία τυγχάνειν τῆς ἐπ᾽ ἀγαθῷ μνήμης ἐστίν

[62] The inscription is Austin[2] 240a = OGIS 308. See also the discussion of Mirón 2020 on the intersection of religion, motherhood, and politics in the Hellenistic world which uses Apollonis as its main example.

[63] **τῆι δὲ τοῦ βασιλέως Εὐμένου [Σωτῆρος γυναικὶ]** / βασιλίσσηι Στρατονίκηι / ἐν ἅπασιν μ[ετ᾽] εὐνοίας/ [ἀεὶ προσεφέρετο, αὐτ(?)]ὴν γενομένην κοινωνὸν / **τέκνο[υ] τῆς ἰδί-[ας φιλοστοργίας] / κοιν(?)]ωνὸν νομίσασα**

[64] διὸ καὶ στοιχοῦσα να- [— — — ἀποφθιμέ(?)]νη τιμῆς ἀθανάτου τέτευχεν ἐ[ν] [πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἁγνὴ γενομ(?)]ένη πᾶσίν τε τοῖς Ἕλλησιν [καὶ πρὸ πάντων βασιλεῖ τε] Ε[ὐ]μένει Σωτῆρι καὶ τοῖς 25 [ἄλλοις τέκνοις(?) — — —]

[65] Following Cairns 1993: 2, and his broader argument that *aidōs* fundamentally involves striking a balance between one's own time and that of others.

> Apollonis, the wife of Attalus, father of King Eumenes, was a woman of Kyzikos, and a woman who for many reasons is worthy of memory and praise. Her claims upon a favourable recollection are that, though born a citizen, she became a queen, and protected that pre-eminence to the end of her life, not exhibiting the persuasiveness of a courtesan, but by always exhibiting the gravity and excellence of a woman strict in her life and courteous in her demeanour.

The nuances of Polybius' choice of vocabulary are striking. Apollonis is identified not merely as the *gynē* of Attalus, but as his *gametē*, his spouse – a word which primarily appears in tragedy as an identification of a full wife or partner as opposed to a concubine or possession, notably used by Cassandra in her *hymenaios* of the Trojan Women.[66] That she is worthy of memory and praise seems to be a comment paraphrased from the inscription we have just encountered. But it is the next few lines of Polybius' eulogy to Apollonis that are the most revelatory for us and the contributions to this special issue. Polybius praises her for what she did not do: she did not demonstrate the hollow flattery or charm of a courtesan as one perhaps would expect at a royal court, neither did she have any sense of individual ambition or self-advancement. Rather, she displayed a prudently virtuous and civic dignity (σωφρονικὴν δὲ καὶ πολιτικὴν σεμνότητα, not the superlative) and, interestingly, καλοκαγαθίαν, which one would usually expect to be honoured among citizen men rather than women. On account of all of this she rightly deserves to be remembered for her goodness and nobility (τῆς ἐπ' ἀγαθῷ μνήμης ἐστίν).[67] This all aligns neatly with the epigraphic portrait of Apollonis' virtue from Hierapolis, but Polybius adds one additional cause for remembering her with reverence: even though she was a common citizen (δημότις ὑπάρχουσα), she became a queen, and she then defended this pre-eminence (καὶ ταύτην διεφύλαξε τὴν ὑπεροχὴν) for the rest of her life. (μέχρι τῆς τελευταίας). According to Polybius in Apollonis we find the fulfilment of an ideal sense of civic femininity matched with what Polybius describes as the pre-eminence or dignity of a queen. The status (ὑπεροχή) of the queen, to Polybius, is something that a good queen must protect and uphold – his use of διεφύλαξε is equal parts striking and deliberate. There is, then, in Polybius an abstract ideal of queenship and royal femininity, one that is rooted not in the customs of the court or courtesans, but in the common sensibility of the Greek *oikos* and the Greek civic community – and I hope to have shown that Polybius is not unique in this respect.

From our contemporary perspective we are inclined to view – perhaps to dismiss – Apollonis as the ideal of the passive royal woman devoted to family, and praised by men for having conformed faithfully to these gender ideals. We are perhaps inclined to put her firmly in the passive *archesthai* category – the good wife who did not rock the boat, and was remembered fondly by her male contemporaries for it. But as many recent studies have highlighted it was precisely her place as wife, mother, and queen that would allow an elite woman like her to cultivate the personal bonds through which she could exert her own influence – and thus be in the active *archein* category. We tend to privilege the latter over the former, but the position of royal women is in no small part derived from precisely those roles that we identify as passive, as conforming to social expectations. The passive and the active, *archesthai* and *archein*, thus feed into one another in a cycle that creates the possibility

[66] Eur. *Tro.* 310, and also Aesch. PB 897

[67] See Pomeroy 1986: 420 and the rest of his article for how the death notice of Apollonis relates to other 'obituaries' in Polybius. As ever with any passage of Polybius, Walbank's commentary (volume 3) should be consulted.

– the potential – for female influence. To fully grasp it we need to be awake to both sides of this cycle, and to realise that even attestations of elite women that seem superficially to confirm their lack of agency can indeed be indirect indicators of it. Finally, I think that Gilliam Ramsey was quite right to say that the traditional language of the polis provided a lexicon for new monarchical power and dominance, and it is through this lexicon that our ancient sources try to formulate and express what we identify as female influence. In the process of examining this we gain greater understanding of the *eidōlon*, the phantom, of female power in the ancient tradition. While it may not align neatly with our own preferences of vocabulary and terminology for female influence, it nevertheless allows us to understand how *they* conceived of female influence. And that, at the very least, gives us a solid starting point for trying to find the historical women beneath this linguistic phantom in the contributions to this issue that follow.

ALEX MCAULEY

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How Did the Agency of Royal Women Work?

Elizabeth Carney

A cloud of others surrounded royal women, but it's hard now to see that cloud crowd and thus easy to underestimate the contributions many persons made to the agency of individual royal women. We know that individual women managed to achieve certain goals and that, in other cases, they tried and failed to do so, but rarely does information survive about how these successes or failures were accomplished, let alone how the actions or skills of others coloured the goals of royal women. The ability of royal women to act could be shaped by or depend upon their own staff, allies foreign and domestic, military forces, the presence and support of family members, and on the quality and timeliness of the information available to royal women, information acquired by others. Our narratives only directly inform us about these topics occasionally. To gather information and reach conclusions about the issues I have posed, we must often read against the grain of our sources since their focus is typically the actions of "great" men, occasionally those of "great" women, and on major events like great battles.

In this paper, I want to recognise the choices that individuals or groups at various levels of the power structure made to assist or prevent the agency of assorted royal women. My examples are taken from the early Hellenistic period. Situations differed, naturally, with period and dynasty, but these examples are suggestive. I will conclude with a reconsideration of the agency of Cynnane, daughter of Philip II and wife of Amyntas son of Perdiccas III, and her daughter Adea Eurydice, wife of Philip III Arrhidaeus, in the light of the concerns I have raised.

Extant sources rarely directly refer to the existence of women's staff, let alone name them. It is difficult to determine the status of those serving royal women. Some may have remained with the women constantly, others may have been local, and yet others may have served for a time, only to depart, perhaps as messengers. Justin (14.6.9) calls the women who accompanied Olympias to her death "*ancillae*", a word that usually refers to enslaved women. Similarly, he describes (24.3.9) women who accompanied Arsinoë II when she was forced into exile, as "*servulae*", another term often used about enslaved women. Polyaenus (8.57) recounts that, after her husband Lysimachus fell in battle, Arsinoë escaped from Ephesus by dressing a "*therapaina*" (maid or female slave) in royal clothes: while she, dressed in rags, survived, her maid was slaughtered. The authors' diction could simply reflect presuppositions about what would have been appropriate for high status women in such dire circumstance but could be roughly correct. Though the likely fate of these enslaved women was grim, they continued to function as embodiments of the royal woman's rank. Diodorus (20.37.5-6) says that after the attempt of Cleopatra, sister of Alexander, to escape the control of Antigonus' governor in Sardis and flee to Ptolemy, Antigonus, through his governor, had women (γυναίκες) murder her and then had some of them killed, in turn, so that he could claim that they, rather than he, had plotted against her. Diodorus' diction does not specify the possibly mixed rank of these women; Antigonus considered them expendable, whatever their status. Cleopatra's ability to act was effectively eliminated by the fact that the women around her, powerless in themselves, could easily be turned against her, likely because they hoped to save their own lives.

Male and female members of relatively elite families also formed part of the households of royal women. Members of Olympias' family were present at Philip's court, some likely

functioning as advisers and supporters of Olympias. [1]According to a speech in Curtius attributed to Amyntas, son of Andromenes (7.1.12, 37-40), Olympias sheltered in her household many young men avoiding military service, but Amyntas forced them to serve. Though he implies there were many more, Curtius names three young men in this group (Gorgias, Hecataeus, and Gorgatas); they are often assumed to have been recruited for the elite *Basilikoi Paides*.[2] The presence of these youths in her household initially made Olympias look powerful, but their removal demonstrated that her son's agents willingly acted in a way to display her comparative lack of power. After the death of Alexander and Olympias' attempt to support her grandson Alexander IV's royal status, when Cassander besieged Olympias at Pydna, Diodorus specifies that Alexander IV and his mother Roxane, Thessalonice (Alexander's half-sister), Deidameia (the daughter of Aeacides, king of Molossia and the possible fiancée of Alexander IV), and the daughters of Attalus,[3] accompanied her, as well as relatives of Olympias' most distinguished friends. Diodorus (19.35.5-7) criticises her for having so many people around her not useful in war, but this criticism presupposes that she knew from the start that she would be besieged. [4] Moreover, her grandson, Roxane, Thessalonice, and Deidameia would not have been safe anywhere else. Olympias' real problem was that she lacked sustained military protection, not that she had courtiers. One wonders if Diodorus/Hieronymus was really criticising her for acting like a king in having a largish court. In 316, that was probably exceptional for a royal woman (though soon it would not be) and her entourage should be understood as a sign of the kind of public persona Olympias wanted to generate. Her elite entourage of noncombatants did not cause her defeat but was certainly no help to her in wartime.

Free males, some likely elite, did serve royal women in advisory and military capacities. After the death of Antipater, when Polyperchon became regent, he offered Olympias a position of authority in charge of her grandson (18.57.2) and helped to lead the military effort that brought her and Alexander IV to Macedonia. Eumenes, whom she asked for help, gave her advice (Diod. 18.58.3-4). However, neither Polyperchon nor her nephew Aeacides (who had also brought military aid when she returned) were able to come back to Macedonia when Cassander returned and threatened her, though both tried (Diod. 19.36.3-4, 52.6) At the beginning of the siege of Pydna, Olympias appointed as her *strategos* Aristonous (Diod. 19.35.4), one of the royal bodyguards of Alexander, later a supporter of Perdiccas and then of Polyperchon. He took charge of the remaining troops loyal to the Argead house; when Olympias surrendered, she ordered him to do so as well (Diod. 19.50.8).[5] Adea Eurydice, granddaughter of Philip II,[6] once she had married Philip III Arrhidaeus, tried, via stump speeches, to woo the army in Asia away from the control of the male commanders and regents; Diodorus (19.60.2) and Arrian (Arrian *FGrH* 156

[1] See Carney 2006: 28-30.

[2] Heckel 2006: 127, 131 deduces that all three were members of the *Paides,* brought to Asia in 331.

[3] Heckel 2006: 64 suggests that these were the daughter of Attalus, son of Andromenes, a prominent member of the Macedonian elite and commander in Alexander's army and of Atalante, the sister of Perdiccas; their parents were dead by this point.

[4] Diod. 19.49.4 refers to court women, accustomed to luxury, being upset by the unburied dead, a gratuitous criticism of their presence. The diction of Justin 14.6.3, that they were a crowd more impressive than useful, implies a similar criticism.

[5] Heckel 2006: 50.

[6] See Carney 1987: 496-502, Carney 2000: 132-37 on her career.

F1.33) both refer to a man named Asclepiodorus, described as a *grammateus* (secretary), who aided in her efforts. He may have been a prominent member of the Macedonian elite or simply a secretary but was probably not a slave.[7] Arrian (*FGrH 156 F 1.33, 39*) also mentions a certain Attalus as assisting in this effort; he too was surely not a slave.[8] After the home army abandoned Adea Eurydice for Olympias in 317, she was captured along with a man named Polycles, whom Diodorus describes as one of her counselors (*symboloi*; Diod. 19.11.3); he too was possibly a member of the elite.[9] All these politically knowledgeable men aided in the agency of these royal women, but not enough to keep them alive. For that, successful military support was needed and wanting.

Allies and enemies could empower or betray royal women. Olympias and Antipater became enemies early in Alexander's reign, a fact that so weakened her position that she felt compelled to leave Macedonia (Diod. 18.43.4; Paus. 1.1.3), though, later in Alexander's reign, her continuing enmity with Antipater empowered her (Plut. *Alex* 68.3; see below). The feud continued after Alexander's death and after Antipater's death, now extending to the sons of Antipater, particularly Cassander. Olympias believed that Antipater and his sons were responsible for Alexander's death (Diod. 19.11.8; Plut. *Alex.* 77.1). As we have seen, the feud ultimately cost Olympias her life.

Adea Eurydice formed some sort of alliance with Cassander after his father's death (Just. 14.5.4). Since she was married to Philip Arrhidaeus, Cassander could not have been hoping, at least immediately, for marriage,[10] but for women of marriageable age, allies were often suitors. Diodorus (20.37.4-6) claims that all Alexander's generals at one point or another had negotiated to marry Cleopatra (though he specifies Cassander, Lysimachus, Antigonus, and Ptolemy). Soon after Alexander's death, Cleopatra, still in Macedonia, proffered herself in marriage to Leonnatus (Plut. *Eum.* 3.5**),** to whom Antipater had already offered a daughter (Diod. 18.12.1), a fact that may have prompted Cleopatra's negotiations. Leonnatus was in Asia Minor when these discussions began, though he died at Lamia soon after his return to the Greek peninsula (Diod. 18.15.3; Just. 13.5.14). Next, Cleopatra entered negotiations with Perdiccas, who was in Asia; she was doubtless aware that Antipater had already sent his daughter to Perdiccas.[11] Cleopatra likely had advocates and opponents in the courts of various Successors, particularly in the years before the death of Antipater in 319, when Cleopatra and Antipater's daughters functioned as rival brides for rival political alliances. After the death of Perdiccas, Antipater scolded Cleopatra for *philia* with Perdiccas and Eumenes (Arrian *FGrH* 156, F 11.40), though in the latter's case, we do not know, specifically, of discussions of marriage. Much later Cleopatra, long under the control of Antigonus at Sardis, had a falling out with him (Diodorus' diction implies that initially they had been, if not allies, then not enemies) and tried to escape to Ptolemy, presumably to marry him (Diod. 20.37.3). These marriage alliances sometimes postponed the deaths of royal women,

[7] Heckel 2006: 57-58 considers the possibility that he was a prominent figure, the father of one of the "pages" involved in the Hermolaus conspiracy. See also Berve (1926) 2.88, no. 167.

[8] Billows 1990: 68, n.31 thinks that he was Perdiccas' brother-in-law, the son of Andromenes. See also Heckel 2006: 63.

[9] Heckel 2006: 225 speculates that he had been an officer in Alexander's army.

[10] Orosius 3.23.39-40 concludes implausibly that Cassander connected to Adea Eurydice out of lust. Carney 2000: 294, n. 61 points out that it may relate to his political plans. These plans could have included marriage.

[11] See references in Carney 2000: 124-25.

but none saved them, excepting Thessalonice's marriage to Cassander, after her capture (Just. 14.6.13; Diod. 19.52.1-2; *Heidel. Ept. FGrH* 155, F 2.4).

Military support often proved critical for the exercise of agency. That support might involve members of the elite, as we have seen. Troops could enable women to act. Cynnane, daughter of Philip II and mother of Adea Eurydice, took military forces with her which enabled her to escape Antipater in Macedonia and reach the army in Asia (Polyaen. 8.60; Arr. *FGrH* 156, F 9.22). Later troops forced Perdiccas to allow the marriage of Adea Eurydice to Philip III Arrhidaeus (Arr. *FGrH* 156 F 9.22-23). Regular troops or mercenaries sometimes helped, but could destroy these women. Soldiers attached to Olympias' court and other contingents supported her (Diod. 19.35.7), but troops associated with Cassander were involved in her trial (19.51.2-4). Polyaenus (8.57) implies that a naval force stayed loyal to Arsinoë II, enabling her to escape from Sardis after her husband Lysimachus' death. The lack of long-term control of significant military forces was a chronic problem for royal women and a serious limit on their agency. Only Cynnane is said to have engaged in combat herself (Polyaen. 8.60), though her daughter, as noted, appeared in front of armies, and gave speeches to soldiers.

Families were vital to the agency of royal women. Blood kin could provide or withhold military support. Justin twice tells us that offended royal wives — Olympias and Stratonice, wife of Demetrius II (9.7.7; 28.1.4) — tried and failed to persuade their kin to attack an offending husband. Neither story may be true; this could be a kind of *topos* of Justin's. Still, these two passages demonstrate how limited the agency of women was because of their perceived inability to directly lead military forces. On the other hand, as we've seen, Olympias' nephew Aeacides, king of Molossia, twice tried (once successfully, once not) to give her military aid (Diod. 19.35.5; Plut. *Pyrrh.* 4.2; Just. 17.3.16). Later in the Hellenistic period, women did, through generals, command forces; moreover, granted that Ptolemaic kings did not go into battle and employed generals as did royal women, at least for this dynasty, the distinction disappeared.

Fathers, sons, or brothers usually decided whom royal women would marry. Since royal marriages frequently involved alliances with foreign powers, the birth family could be at a distance from a royal woman once the marriage had happened. Sabine Müller has argued that the distance of her family was a critical factor in limiting Roxane's career once she was widowed.[12] Barsine, daughter of Artabazus and mother of Alexander's son Heracles, safely spent years with her son in Pergamum, probably near her family's traditional seat of power (Just. 13.2.7), but likely gave up that security up to support her son's claim to his father's throne and, in so doing, lost her life (Just. 15.2.3).[13] The Ptolemaic pattern of brother-sister marriage meant that Ptolemaic women were not as isolated as royal daughters in other dynasties often were. The fate of Berenice Phernophoros, widow of Antiochus II Theos, murdered by her husband's earlier wife before her brother, Ptolemy III, could come to her aid,[14] demonstrates how dangerous foreign marriage could be, but sibling marriage could render one's close kin dangerous too (e. g. Berenice III, murdered by her half-brother, co-ruler and probable husband (Porphyry in Eusebius, *Chronicorum* I (ed. Schoene) 163, 165.).

[12] Müller 2013.

[13] See Carney 2000: 149-50; Heckel 2006: 70.

[14] See Clayman 2014: 125-27.

The inaction or action of family members could also render non-military initiatives by royal women possible or impossible. Our sources sometimes make this phenomenon explicit, but they more often just imply it. Olympias almost certainly killed Philip's last wife, Cleopatra (Just. 9.7.12; Paus. 8.7.7). Plutarch (*Alex. 10.4)* asserts that Alexander was angry with his mother for having treated Cleopatra "savagely" (presumably a euphemism), but whether Alexander was angry or complicit, he did not kill Olympias, as she was doubtless sure he would not. Arsinoë II was both protected and endangered by her family. At the court of Lysimachus, her first husband, she and her young sons by Lysimachus became embroiled in a succession struggle with her husband's older son Agathocles. Lysimachus let this rivalry brew — arguably, he encouraged it — for some years. Agathocles was killed in the end, whether by Arsinoë's agency or that of Lysimachus.[15] After her husband's death, Arsinoë returned to Macedonia and controlled a portion of it, but was persuaded to marry her half-brother Ptolemy Ceraunus, by then king of Macedonia, over the objections of her eldest son. Ceraunus then killed her two younger sons but allowed her to flee to Samothrace and, of course, ultimately back to Egypt, to the court of her brother Ptolemy II. Ptolemy II did not rush to defend her cause in Macedonia after Lysimachus' death, but surely Ceraunus didn't kill her because he was concerned that Ptolemy II would act if he did. Ultimately, she married Ptolemy II.[16]

Royal women would always have needed information/intelligence about the court and relevant foreign powers: Philip II's mother, Eurydice, for instance, apparently had knowledge at a critical moment of the location of the Athenian admiral Iphicrates; Aeschin. 2.26-29. Acquisition of information became more difficult as Alexander's campaign moved east and later in the era of Hellenistic dynasties. Women's agency, particularly the ability of their families to help or hurt, was affected by the distances that separated them, as we noted in the case of Roxane. This raises the interrelated issues of intelligence acquisition about the distant court and communication between Alexander's court and army and important figures and states on the Greek peninsula. Scholarship on intelligence gathering in the Greek world has focused nearly exclusively on men, military intelligence, and heavily on city-states, not monarchies and courts.[17] We need to broaden the scope of the discussion.

Like Antipater, Olympias, her daughter Cleopatra, and Cynnane needed to know about the successes and failures of the campaign, but like him, they also required information about what was going on in Alexander's court and to maintain their ties with Alexander and others at court.[18] The literary tradition preserves many references to correspondence between Olympias and Alexander; other passages indicate correspondence between Alexander and Antipater and Alexander and Cleopatra and that, more generally, the king had knowledge of their affairs. It may be true that Alexander kept Olympias' correspondence secret (Plut. *Alex.* 39.5); she was his

[15] Carney 2013: 40-48.

[16] See discussion and references in Carney 2013: 51-64.

[17] Starr 1974; Engels 1980; Gerolymatos 1986; Richmond 1998; Russel 1999 (something of an exception). Macedonia had a long history of conspiracies and assassination, mostly court based. Information gathering in such a circumstance had a different context, but one more accessible to women present at court.

[18] While I consider it likely that Olympias and other royal women were literate, as her mother-in-law Eurydice was (Plut. *Mor. 14b-c)*, literacy was not necessary since they had staff, though personal literacy might have proved an advantage in terms of maintaining secrecy of communication. On, the other hand, see Langenfeld's forthcoming discussion of Roman elite women and their female staff's secret correspondence and use of some sort of cyphers.

informant, likely a useful one. She also gave advice, apparently based on her knowledge of people and events in Asia. Alexander needed to know what was happening at home. Both, after all, were veterans of court intrigue. Considerable communication happened between those on campaign and those at home. Olympias' actions demonstrate that she possessed detailed knowledge of people and tensions at her son's court. Before Olympias joined Cleopatra in Molossia, mother and daughter probably exchanged information and again when Olympias remained in Molossia, but her daughter returned to Macedonia.[19]

How could these women acquire information? The social rank of human sources of information probably varied. Some were members of the elite. For instance, officers returning to Macedonia with veterans could have served as sources. Members of Olympias' Aeacid dynasty served in Alexander's campaign (and in the era of the Successors).[20] Polyperchon, regent after Antipater's death and ally of Olympias, came from Tymphaea, a region considered Molossian until the reign of Philip II. He returned to Macedonia with veterans in 324. He could easily have been an informant of Olympias.[21] Some informants probably included the letter carriers themselves. Olympias offered to send Alexander a slave for him to buy, one who had skill at various rituals, but perhaps he also had intelligence skills Olympias hoped to use (Ath. 14.659f). Enslaved people, especially women, may have offered information. The story of Antigone (Plut. *Alex.* 48.4; *Mor.* 339e), a captive enslaved to Philotas, son Parmenion, who served as informant, first to Craterus and later to Alexander himself, is suggestive. Merchants and people carrying out religious/civic tasks might have been sources.[22]

Overall, however, the most likely agents, ambassadors, and sources of information for royal women were artists and actors, just as they were for royal men.[23] Artists traveled for competitions and commissions and did so in increasing numbers as Alexander's campaign went on. Philip II and Alexander after him developed the theatricality of Macedonian monarchy, eliding the difference between political and theatrical events.[24] Many actors performed at Philip's court and then at Alexander's. Aristocritus acted for Philip in his negotiations over the projected marriage of his son Arrhidaeus to the daughter of the Carian satrap Pixodarus whereas Thessalus, another tragic actor, worked for Alexander, in his attempt to substitute himself as the groom of Pixodarus' daughter (Plut. *Alex.* 10. 1-3). After the marriage alliance collapsed, Philip wanted Thessalus arrested and imprisoned for these actions, but Alexander, once king, favoured him (Plut. *Alex.* 29.2; *Mor. 334e*).[25] These star actors could have done much the same for

[19] D'Agostini 2021: 22 suggests that, while Alexander and Olympias were in exile and Cleopatra remained at her father's court, she represented their interests there. It seems reasonable to believe that she continued to work with her mother not only after Alexander's death, but while they remained in different courts.

[20] See Carney 2006: 29-30.

[21] Heckel 2006: 226-31 gives an overview of his long career.

[22] Richmond 1998: 20 suggests the use of merchants; see also Russel 1999: 106. Cleopatra received a delegation from Athens after her husband's death (Aeschin. 3.242) that carried condolences, but likely other messages. She shipped grain to Corinth (Lycurg. *Leoc.* 26) and received some (*SEG IX 2),* suggesting dealings with merchants and she served as *thearodoch* (SEG XXIII 198), a task that required reception of envoys.

[23] See Tritle 2009: 122-29.

[24] See Spawforth 2007 and Chaniotis 1997; Moloney 2014.

[25] Tritle 2009: 123-24 discusses their role and that of other actors and artists. See also Le Guen 2014 and Wallace 2016: 26.

royal women as well, as may other artists and entertainers.[26] Olympias, after all, had also been involved in the Pixodarus affair (Plut. *Alex.* 10.1). Cleopatra erected a tomb for a Samian flute player (Paus. 1. 44.6) who could have provided more than musical entertainment. Arsinoë funded the Arsinoeum at Samothrace (*OGIS* 15=*IG* XII 27); the artists she patronised then and later could also have acted as her agents since they, like actors, traveled for the competitions Alexander frequently sponsored; some remained with the campaign, but others went back and forth.[27] All of these people could have assisted the agency of Olympias and Cleopatra and other royal women by providing information.

Wallace has argued persuasively that communication between Alexander and the Greek world was likely good 334-330, and again 324-3, but during Alexander's time in central Asia, communication was poor to non-existent.[28] As we shall see, the actions of Olympias and Alexander's only full sister Cleopatra appear to confirm his general view, not simply in terms of known communications, but in their apparent low profile during Alexander's time in central Asia, suggesting that they did not want to risk more aggressive actions when his support could not be known or assumed. Olympias' interventions seem to have happened either early in Alexander's invasion of the Persian Empire when his forces were not incredibly distant from Greece, or after his return from India.

In the initial period, communication seems good. Tradition says that Olympias wrote her son often in this period, giving advice. Whatever the veracity of individual letters, they do, across multiple sources, fit a pattern. Olympias seemed knowledgeable about happenings in Asia, often advising Alexander on people or matters happening at his court. Plutarch (*Alex.* 39.4-5) has Olympias warn Alexander against giving too much of his wealth to his friends, not simply because it would impoverish him, but also because it meant that he was giving power away as well. In c. 334-333, she warned him against Lyncestian Alexander (Diod. 17.32.1), who was arrested and subsequently executed.[29] In this early period, c. 332, Alexander sent plunder from the siege of Gaza to Olympias and Cleopatra, as well as others (*FGrH* 151 F 1; Plut. *Alex.* 15.4).[30] Olympias complained to her son about Amyntas son of Andromenes, perhaps because c. 332 he forced supporters of hers to leave for the Asian campaign. She wrote her son an accusatory letter about this Amyntas, prior to 330 (Curt. 7.1.37-38). Olympias and Cleopatra appear as major recipients of grain on the Cyrene inscriptions (*SEG* IX 2); they probably purchased the grain at a

[26] See Easterling 2002 on the growth of actors as icons and their intimacy with courts and kings, sometimes performing individually at recitations.

[27] Le Guen 2014: 269 notes a time frame for activity of actors during Alexander's reign like that I note for the information and communication activities of Olympias and Cleopatra: in the first four years of his reign and again in the last two; this similarity not only confirms Wallace's observations but further supports the suggestion that Olympias and Cleopatra may have used artists as sources.

[28] See Wallace 2016 for conclusions and references. Borza 1977 gives a more optimistic view, though noting a somewhat similar if shorter gap; he argues (1977: 336-37) for a developed intelligence system.

[29] Olympias' advice was hardly the only reason for the Lyncestian's downfall; see Carney 2006: 56 for discussion and references.

[30] *SIG I* 252N 5-8 with n.3 has been understood as an offering of gold crowns made by Olympias. In fact, it is unlikely that the gold was ever turned into crowns and uncertain whether the plan to do so was that of Olympias or someone else's made on her behalf. In any case, it is likely that the offering was contemplated shortly before the death of Alexander: see Marchetti 2011. If so, whether her own offering or that of someone else for her, the date fits the pattern of her greater prominence in the last years of her son's reign.

cheap price to distribute in Molossia and Macedonia in a time of scarcity, their activity most likely dates no later 330.[31] A quarrel between Olympias and Antipater, Alexander's regent, developed, one Olympias was losing, and she left Macedonia for her Molossian homeland, probably no later than 330 (Diod. 18.49.4; Paus. 1.11.3; Liv. 8.24.17). Her brother had died while on campaign and Olympias' daughter, his widow, dominated Molossia, quite possibly along with Olympias. Olympias' departure roughly coincides with Alexander's entry into Afghanistan.

Olympias and Cleopatra become active again c. 324, in the context of Alexander's return from western Asia and his apparently increasingly difficult relationship with Antipater, leading to Alexander's decision to replace him with Craterus (Arr. 7.12.4). Plutarch (*Alex.* 68.3), referring to this period), says that Olympias and Cleopatra formed a faction against Antipater, and shared Alexander's *arche* (rule*)* with him, Cleopatra taking Macedonia and Olympias Molossia. Hypereides' *Defense of Euxenippus*, which may date to this period too since Hypereides asserts that Olympias said Molossia belonged to her (3.25), describes an aggressive Olympias who confronts the Athenians about their actions at Dodona. He assumes Olympias and Alexander have a common policy (3.19). When Alexander's treasurer Harpalus fled to Athens, Olympias and Antipater (Diod. 17.108.7) both demanded his extradition. Cleopatra acted as an advocate with her brother for the tyrant of Heraclea (Memnon *FGrH* 434 F 4.37), almost certainly in the same period. Alexander's return to the western part of his empire re-empowered his mother and sister; quite possibly the king was employing them as counter measures to Antipater. All these events assume better communication between Alexander and his mother and sister and indicate that they were able to be much more aggressive in their actions.

The actions of Olympias and of Cleopatra in the period after Alexander's death indicate that they knew that they were no longer safe: Cleopatra suddenly demonstrated interest in remarriage and Olympias remained in Molossia, protected by her nephew. Olympias, supported by Eumenes, was hesitant to accept Polyperchon's offer to return to Macedonia and take charge of her grandson until matters were clearer (Diod. 18.58.2-3; Nepos (*Eum.* 6.1-2)). When Olympias did venture into succession politics, Polyperchon proved a slender reed and Cassander was able to eliminate her. Cleopatra passed into the control of Antigonus and, without adult male kin, was ultimately killed. Olympias' ability to acquire information must have waned after Alexander's death: poor intelligence (particularly after her daughter's "house arrest" in Asia) about Asian events and about the deterioration of her interests in the Greek peninsula, not simply wishful thinking, could have been a factor in her defeat and death.[32] Once under siege at Pydna, she could not have known about Eumenes' equally perilous situation in Asia. Ignorance about other events may also have contributed to her subsequent decisions.[33]

[31] See discussion in Carney 2006: 50-51 and Antela-Hernandez 2021.

[32] Her intelligence appears weaker than Cassander's: Diod. 19.35.3 says that though Olympias sent men to mountain passes to prevent the return of Cassander's troops but that her men got there only after Cassander's troops had passed through. Aeacides' effort to help was ended by his own troops and he was dethroned, likely through Cassander's efforts (Diod. 19.36.2-4).

[33] For instance, she may have remained at Pydna when she could still have escaped by sea (Diod. 19.35.6) because she was waiting for help, unaware of Aeacides' fall and Polyperchon's inability to help. (Diod. 19.36.6). Aristonous wanted to hold out (Diod. 19.50.8) when Olympias wanted to surrender, partly because of a recent victory; neither knew of Eumenes' situation.

Let me now focus on Cynnane, Alexander's half-sister, and her daughter Adea Eurydice.[34] Their circumstances and daring actions look different when one thinks of them not simply as plucky individuals — though they were — but also as part of a faction, one going back to Philip II's nephew, Amyntas son of Perdiccas III.[35] After the battlefield death of Perdiccas, the infant Amyntas may briefly have been king, but Philip II quickly was recognised as the ruler. Toward the end of his reign, Philip arranged the marriage of Cynnane, his daughter by his Illyrian wife Audata, to his nephew, Amyntas. By this point Philip was planning the Asian expedition and yet had only one viable son (his son Arrhidaeus was understood to have mental limitations); likely he intended Amyntas to be the backup heir. After Philip's assassination, Macedonia was in turmoil and Alexander apparently executed Amyntas and some of the sons of Aeropus, justly or not, for plotting against him (Plut. *Mor.* 327c; Curt. 6.9.17). Soon after, Alexander tried to arrange Cynnane's remarriage to an ally of his, but the prospective groom died suddenly, so Cynnane remained a widow; supposedly by choice (Arr. 1.5.4-5; Polyaen. 8.60). Cynnane taught her daughter the arts of warfare, as she had presumably been taught. Her situation and that of her daughter changed after the death of Alexander, when the army in Babylon forced the officers to accept Alexander's half-brother, now called Philip III Arrhidaeus, as king.

Cynnane escaped from Macedonia to Asia after the death of Alexander, in company with her daughter Adea Eurydice. Granted that she planned to marry her daughter to Philip Arrhidaeus, Cynnane must have been aware that the army had forced the elite to recognise him as king (perhaps seeing this event as a model for her own ambitions for her daughter). She would have been familiar with her half-brother's limitations, whatever exactly they were. Cynnane, as we have noted, utilised a military force to defeat two attempts by Antipater to prevent her passage to Asia. In Asia, however, Perdiccas' faction managed to defeat and kill her, but the Macedonian army, outraged by the murder of Philip's daughter, forced through the marriage of Adea Eurydice's to Philip Arrhidaeus (Arr. *FGrH* 156 F 9. 22-23; Polyaen. 8.60). Given her daughter's success with the army, Cynnane must, prior to her arrival in Asia, have had information about the mood and views of the soldiers (critically, their hostility to the idea of a half-Asian heir; Curt. 10.6.13)) and probably had some elite support, perhaps had had for some time.

Adea Eurydice, though likely in her early teens at the time of her mother's death, regularly spoke to the army in Asia, nearly succeeding in winning control of them away from the generals and Antipater (Arr. *FGrH* F9. 30-33; Diod. 18.39.1-4). However natural a public speaker she may have been, and however useful her mother's earlier training, the advice of Asclepiodorus (see above) must have been critical to her remarkable success in addressing to the army. After Antipater finally ended her Asian speaking career and brought her and her husband, along with his young co-king Alexander IV, to Macedonia, she could do little, but the death of Antipater in 319 made possible the last and most dramatic part of her career. How she managed to get to Macedonia with her husband but without Polyperchon, who had replaced Antipater as regent, is unclear but, again, she must have been getting information, advice, and support to bring it about. Once there, she took effective control of the kingdom and made an alliance with

[34] See Carney 2000: 69-70, 129-31 and Carney 2019: 22-25. Russel 1999: 54 thinks Diodorus' narrativ(probably 19.50.4) implies she was still getting news during the siege. My view is that Cassander, as Diodorus hints, was controlling her access to information in hopes of getting her to surrender.

[35] Heckel 2006: 23.

Cassander, son of Antipater (Just. 14.5.2-4; Diod. 19.11.1).[36] When Cassander was out of the country, concerned about the imminent return of Olympias, Adea Eurydice sent a messenger to Cassander asking for immediate assistance, but also, by means of gifts and big promises to the most prominent Macedonians, tried to make them loyal. She marched out an army against one led by Polyperchon and Aeacides on behalf on Olympias and her grandson. The Macedonian army went over to Olympias' forces; Philip Arrhidaeus was captured immediately and Adea Eurydice and her advisor Polycles soon after and Olympias had the pair killed (Diod. 19.11.1-7; Just. 14.5.8-10).

Thus between 323 and 317, the daughter of Philip and widow of Amyntas Perdikka and her daughter, the wife of Philip III Arrhidaeus, retained and/or generated support from various members of the Macedonian elite and from regular troops; this support was not, for a variety of reasons, enough to keep them alive, but it demonstrates how embedded they were with the Macedonian elite, and how relatively well connected they were with them and with some wider elements in Macedonian armies. They were supported by a faction, probably one not friendly to new practices or half Asian heirs. Thrilled though the Macedonians may have been to see Olympias again, the important truth is that while Olympias appeared in support of a young male Argead heir Adea Eurydice had no son though she had been married for nearly five years. She and her mother got as far as they did because they were not just risk-taking individuals but leaders or figure heads (depending on one's point of view) of a faction or factions.

The decade after Adea Eurydice's death saw the institutionalisation of the entourages of royal women; by c. 305 Phila, wife of Demetrius Poliorcetes, had officials in her employ (Demarchos, a guard in her entourage; Syll. 333.6-7) and Phila, daughter of Seleucus Nicator and wife of Antigonus Gonatas, had officials who reported to her.[37] Royal *philoi*, sometimes the *philoi* of both husbands and wives, played established roles. [38] In Seleucid and Ptolemaic lands this sometimes increased the possibility of female agency but could narrow it. Antigonid women, like the kings themselves, became officials of a sort, but ones with a somewhat defined and thus narrower job description. Thinking about women's agency in the context of the actions of others makes one newly aware of how much monarchy depended on a host of differently placed actors, many not part of a ruling dynasty.

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[36] See Meeus 2022: 110-112 on the situation.

[37] See Carney 2000: 183, n. 19 for references to a Cassandreian inscription that refers to an official who seems to serve as a liaison between Phila and the city.

[38] Adeimantus of Lampsacus was the most important of Demetrius Poliorcetes' *philoi*; he established a private cult for Phila in Athens (Ath. 254a, 255c). See Wallace 2013.

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Olympias and the *Prostasia*

Edward M. Anson

In 318, Olympias, the mother of Alexander the Great, was invited by Polyperchon, the *Epimeletes* of the kings[1] and the *Strategos Autokrator* (Diod. 18. 48. 4) for Alexander's former empire (Diod. 18. 49. 4, 55. 1), to come to Macedonia to become the *Epimelete*s of the young Alexander IV and the royal *Prostatês* of Macedonia (Diod. 18. 49. 4; cf. 57. 2):

> Πολυπέρχων δὲ παραλαβὼν τὴν τῶν βασιλέων ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ συνεδρεύσας μετὰ τῶν φίλων Ὀλυμπιάδα μὲν σὺν τῇ τῶν συνέδρων γνώμῃ μετεπέμπετο, παρακαλῶν τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου υἱοῦ παιδὸς ὄντος παραλαβεῖν καὶ διατρίβειν ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ τὴν βασιλικὴν ἔχουσαν προστασίαν.

For Macedonian royal women, official titles of any kind had been virtually unknown. In the case of Olympias, her husband was polygamous and there was no recognition of any particular wife being a *Basilissa*, or of another title in recognition of any hierarchy.[2] Even in inscriptions where Olympias is noted, she is simply referred to as Olympias (Carney 1991: 157 and 166n. 16), her authority coming from her influence over her son and heir to the throne Alexander, the future Great.[3] Of course, even the king was seldom referred to by title, but instead most often identified by his name only. Monarchy in Macedonia was not a bureaucratic affair, but rather a very personal one. The king was a theoretical autocrat but limited by his dependence on an entrenched landed aristocracy who filled virtually all subsidiary roles in the state as the need arose.[4] Titles, then, would in general be rare and would exist only for those special circumstances where a particular task or responsibility was necessary but not so common — or the individual holding that task or responsibility so associated with that task or responsibility — that a title was necessary. Where kings, royal wives, daughters, and sons were identified by their names because their roles were clearly defined by that very status and largely consistent over time, state officials, however few, would likely be rotated over time and particular tasks not necessarily associated with one individual; hence the need for a title to confer the necessary authority on that individual. For kings and their wives their roles were common knowledge. However, when Philip II acquired a royal secretary and ultimately a secretariat, then there was a need for a title: ἀρχιγραμματεύς (Plut. *Eum*. 1. 2; cf. Arr *Anab*. 7. 4.6). When Alexander required an official second-in-command during his campaign in Asia, he borrowed the Persian term,

[1] After Alexander's death, there was a very limited number of candidates for the throne. The one seeming inescapable requirement was that a king had to be a member of the Argead clan. This once very populous clan had been whittled down through the actions of Philip II and Alexander III (the Great) to three possible candidates: Alexander's half-brother Arrhidaeus, his illegitimate son Heracles, and a soon to be infant son, Alexander. After a brief civil disturbance, the resulting succession was a dual monarchy of Alexander's half-brother and infant son, who would reign as Philip III and Alexander IV. Neither was capable of ruling, however. Obviously, the infant was not able, but the adult Philip had some sort of diminished capacity and was not capable either (Greenwalt 1984: 69-77; Carney 2001: 63-89).

[2] Carney 1991: 155-158

[3] Her influence with her husband had waned over the years and now could be described as hostile. So hostile in fact that she was even thought by some to have been responsible for Philip's assassination (Anson 2020: 177-179). She certainly did not mourn his departure from this life.

[4] See Anson 2020: 16-18.

chiliarch (Collins 2001: 265-274). The position was new to Macedonians, and both identified what the individual did but also gave that individual a measure of importance. Most of the terminology of Macedonian society before Philip and Alexander dealt with social position. To be a kings' *hetairos* identified you as one of the king's elite companions, but with Alexander's acquisition of an empire, the title of satrap was borrowed from the Persians to designate governors of conquered areas.

Due to the chaos occasioned by Alexander's death, there was also a greater need for regular officials to administer the empire at its highest level. Whereas before the king was the head of the state in theory and practice with respect to administration, the military, and religion, after Alexander's death there were two ineffectual monarchs, and now a need for regular officials with official titles invented or borrowed, but also those that may have been temporary in the past but were now necessary to define permanent positions and authority.

In the case of the offices offered to Olympias, these were traditional titles that previously had responsibilities circumscribed by limited terms of duration and infrequent usage. However, given the contemporary circumstances of a dual monarchy in which neither king was able to rule and, indeed, with one only in his sixth year of existence, those positions once extraordinary, now involved far more power, independence, and duration. Indeed, with respect to Olympias, what is offered to her by Polyperchon represents two positions with separate responsibilities, hence the two titles. The *Epimeleia* is for Alexander IV only. Given the context, this can only be a guardianship. Polyperchon would then keep this duty with respect to Philip III, who, though an adult, was judged incapable of ruling (cf. Diod. 18. 49. 4; *Mor*. 337d).

The term *Epimeletes* has a general meaning of "one who is in charge" or "a manager,"[5] and *epimeleia*, as the "care bestowed upon a thing" and "attention paid to it."[6] The latter is the common usage in Arrian's *Anabasis*, as attention to a common danger (3. 9. 8) or to the truth (7. 18. 4). Diodorus uses the terms in several general contexts also to designate a manager (11. 39. 1, 71. 6; 12. 13. 3; 13. 55. 7; 14. 84. 2, 97. 3; 15. 24. 1, 31. 1, 35. 1). For example, in such diverse contexts as the supervisor of an artistic project (12. 39. 1), a military commander (13. 68. 2), an individual in charge of a city's pavilions and entrees at Olympia (14. 109. 2), and a Persian provincial official (14. 19. 6). However, for the period following Alexander's death, while *epimeleia* and *epimeletes* continue to be used in the general managerial sense by our sources, such as supervising the strengthening of city walls (Diod. 18. 70. 1) and outfitting warships for service (Diod. 20. 52. 6), the term comes to be used most often to refer to some political or military office, such as guardian (18. 36. 6, 39. 1, 2, 47. 4, 48. 4, 49. 4, 50. 2, 55. 1, 57. 2, 3, 58. 3, 62. 2, 65. 1), regent (18. 2. 4; 19. 29. 4, 36. 6, 61. 3), governor (18. 74. 3; 19. 8. 2, 64. 1, 70. 3; 19. 100. 1; 20. 4. 1, 37. 5, 45. 2, 56. 3), general (19. 106. 5), or ruler (19. 9. 3, 4). This more focused usage during the period following Alexander's death is likely the result of Diodorus' use of the history of the Successor period written by Hieronymus of Cardia.[7] Hieronymus, having participated in the early phases of the Hellenistic Age at the highest level, was in a position to know the actual titles that were in use in this period,[8] and hence was able to use them appropriately, not that Diodorus always

[5] See *LSJ* s. v. *epimeletes.*

[6] See *LSJ* s. v. *epimeleia.*

[7] Anson 2015: 4-40.

[8] So Rosen 1967A: 41-94.

did so. When Diodorus is describing the various guardianships related to the two kings, he often uses the following phrases: *Epimeletes Autokrator* (Diod. 18. 36. 7, 39. 2), *Epimeletes kai Strategos Autokrator* (Diod. 18. 48. 4), or simply *Epimeletes kai Strategos* (Diod. 19. 36. 5). The addition of *autokrator* designates that the holder of this position has absolute authority, is the complete master, of the particular defined responsibility. *Strategos* expresses a different office and responsibility that of control of the army, a general: two offices with separate responsibilities but which often combined in particular instances. It is to be noted that in Polyperchon's offer to Olympias, he retains the title of *strategos* and does not offer to share that with her.

Therefore, with respect to the office offered to Olympias, *Epimeletes* refers to a guardianship specifically for her grandson. The use of *autokrator* confirms that there is no one else with higher authority in this particular context, and the absence of the term *strategos* implies that this military aspect was not part of the authority associated with her *epimeleia.* Olympias' *epimeleia* was the guardianship of the young child-King Alexander IV. In the Latin sources, *tutor* is often used in these contexts to mean a guardianship (Curt. 10. 6. 21; Just.13. 2. 13, cf. 7. 5. 9). Guardianship of young kings was not that common before Alexander's death. In the one clear example, that of Ptolemy of Alorus for the young Perdiccas III, the guardian was not of the Argead royal clan and therefore theoretically ineligible for the monarchy.[9] Typically, if there was an adult Argead available that individual would be made king. That individual, however, could also be a guardian for a future potential heir. In the case of Philip II, he became king in his own right on the death of his brother, but also guardian of his brother's young son. Such an arrangement would hopefully guarantee the continuance of the monarchy in a particular branch of the Argead clan. When Philip had his own sons then this young man, his nephew, for whom he was guardian would descend to a second rung on the very shaky Macedonian ladder of succession.[10] One issue that arose with this monarchy being held by a clan and not a particular family was that anyone within the clan was eligible to be king. As a result, most successions were contested.

Olympias' *Epimeleia* was then to become the guardian of her young grandson. The question then becomes: what was the *Prostasia* that was also offered? The *Prostasia* has been described in modern literature as "an undefined prominence and power," but not an actual office,[11] or in sharp contrast, as the most powerful post in the new order.[12] The word comes from the verb, προίστημι, "to stand before, be ruler over, domineer over, to be a guardian or protector."[13] Given this general definition and noting that the term with respect to Olympias is clearly applied to Macedonia itself, the basic meaning might vary from ruler to some kind of protector or guardian of the nation, i.e. a regent. Apparently, no surviving history of the title's usage to refer to an office in Macedonia can be found prior to the crisis occasioned by Alexander's death in Babylon in June of 323 BC. Does this mean that the title did not exist and was invented after Alexander's

[9] On the necessity that kings be from this particular clan, see Carney 2000: 7-8; Mitchell 2007: 62-63; Anson 2013: 21-22.

[10] On Ptolemy of Alorus' and Philip's respective guardianships, see Anson 2009: 276-286.

[11] Carney 2006: 70

[12] Rosen 1967B: 102-109; Heckel 1988: 19-20.

[13] *LSJ* s. v. *prostatês*; cf. s. v. *prostasia.*

death? Perhaps, but as Alexander Meeus (2009: 288-292) has emphasized our sources are not very attentive to office titles and often settle for a generic description of responsibilities as opposed to using the correct terminology.

After the death of Alexander and during the brief civil strife that arose almost immediately thereafter, during the struggle to find a path forward, a preliminary solution was proposed in which Perdiccas was to retain his position as chiliarch (Arr. *Succ.* 1a. 3),[14] and Craterus, who was not present in Babylon, was granted the "*Prostasia* of Arrhidaeus' kingdom" (*Succ*. la. 3; *Succ*. lb. 4). Arrian, *à la* Dexippus (*Succ*. 1b. 4), calls the *prostasia* "the highest honour for Macedonians" (ὃ δὴ πρώτιστον τιμῆς τέλος παρὰ Μακεδόσι). Given that Perdiccas' title relates to the army, as does Antipater's with respect to Macedonia and Europe, as the latter was to remain "*Strategos* in Europe" (Arr. *Succ*. la. 3;), the title *prostatês* would appear to imply that Craterus was to be the political head of the state, in short, the official regent, exercising the political authority for the two kings, while Antipater and Perdiccas were the generals of respectively Europe and Asia. However, confusing the issue is that Antipater, Alexander's long-standing commander in Europe, is never in our sources called the *prostatês,* but referred to as "*hegemon*" (Diod. 17. 17. 5),[15] or "*epitropos*" (Arr. *Anab*. 1. 11. 3), or *strategos* (Diod. 17. 118. 1-2), even though he clearly possessed both military and civilian authority in Macedonia during Alexander's absence. *Epitropos*, in general, was "one to whom the charge of anything is entrusted, steward, trustee, administrator."[16]

Plutarch (*Alex.* 9. 1-2) may hold the key to a solution to the origin and nature of the office of *prostatês*. During King Philip's campaign against Byzantium in 340, Plutarch relates that Philip left the sixteen-year-old Alexander in charge of Macedonia referring to him as "*kurios* in Macedonia." What is to be noted is that he was given the "royal seal" (σφραγίς) making him, in effect, the regent during his father's absence. In this particular case, Alexander was entrusted with both military and civilian authority. During his time as *kurios* he subdued the rebellious Maedi and drove them from their city. Philip was often out of Macedonia on campaign and would have routinely appointed someone to be his regent in Macedonia during these absences. What caught Plutarch's attention was that Alexander was given this responsibility at the young age of sixteen. He appears to regard the leaving of a regent when the king was out of the realm as an ordinary occurrence. This would explain Arrian's comment on the *prostasia* being a great honour. To be the individual the king depended on to hold the fort, so to speak, displayed a great deal of trust in that individual. In this new age where Macedonia was ostensibly led by both an infant and an incapacitated adult, the regent became the political and most often also the military head of the nation and, after Alexander's death, of an empire. The regent was, then, in theory the true ruler.

[14] Arrian goes on to say, "amounted to entrusting him with the care of the whole empire." It is very likely that in this context Perdiccas' power was to be confined to Asia (Rosen 1967B: 108–109; Hammond 1985: 157; Collins 2001: 266–274). This would explain why there is no evidence of Antipater's position in the new order being changed from *strategos*, general, for Macedonia.

[15] Diodorus uses *epitropos* frequently in reference to either a guardian or a regent (11. 29. 4, 66. 2, 79. 6; 14. 37. 6; 16. 38. 6)

[16] *LSJ* s. v. *epitropos.*

However, during the reigns of Philip and Alexander and likely their predecessors as well, the *prostasia* was a routine office carried out by the king's trusted subordinates in his absence.[17] Alexander placed Antipater in this role when he left for Asia (Arr. *Anab.* 1. 11. 3). Moreover, since in Alexander's early campaigns north and south after he came to the throne, Antipater is not mentioned as participating, likely because he was the individual left behind to deal with Macedonia while Alexander was on these early campaigns. Antipater then continued what had been his sporadic regency on a more permanent basis when Alexander crossed to Asia. Plutarch, writing in the second century AD, did not use the proper term, but the responsibility given to Alexander by his father, and that given by Alexander to Antipater when he left for Asia, is clear.

Whether *kurios*, *hegemon*, or *epitropos* these are clearly generic terms for the person in charge.[18] Arrian proclaims that Perdiccas, after Alexander's death, ultimately became "*epitropos* of the whole kingdom" (Arr. *Succ.* La. 3). What is likely the case with respect to Antipater during Alexander's reign was that he was Alexander's *prostatês*, regent, in Europe, and, after the conqueror's death, he remained in the same capacity, with Perdiccas holding a similar position in Asia. The office was divided between Antipater in Europe and Perdiccas in Asia. In the initial proposal to reconcile the feuding infantry and cavalry, the *prostasia,* the regency, appeared as the perfect office to present to a very popular commander, so well thought of by the Macedonians still in Babylon and rebellious, not to mention the sizable number of Macedonians who had accompanied Craterus west on their way to retirement in Macedonia when Alexander died. It would mollify them. The office was indeed the "highest honour" and the "most powerful office in the kingdom," now that there was in effect no true king, but since Craterus was not in Babylon or in Macedonia, but with his homeward bound veterans in Cilicia in Asia Minor, whatever the office's theoretical authority, Craterus found himself in a most precarious position. He was presumably the man in charge politically, but caught in no-man's land. But, then, the office was never to be actually bestowed on Craterus. It was put on the table by those commanders in Babylon, Curtius' so-called *principes* (4. 11. 1) or Arrian's *hegemones* (*Succ.* 1a. 2), to pacify those Macedonian soldiers present in Babylon and currently mutinying. Once the reconciliation was achieved and the dual monarchy created a *prostasia* for Craterus was quietly dropped.[19]

Diodorus proclaims that after Perdiccas secured the "*basilikas dunamis*" (royal power) and the "*prostatês basileôn*" (royal *prostasia*) (18. 23. 2), he aspired to the monarchy in his own right. The juxtapositioning of the two phrases, "*basilikas dunamis*" and "*prostatês basileôn*", certainly suggests that in this context at least the *prostasia* was not some simple honour.[20] Nor is it such elsewhere in Diodorus' history. In his account of the Third Sacred War, Diodorus repeatedly refers to the Phocians' attempt to secure control of Delphi as attempting to gain the *prostasia* of the oracular site (16. 23.5, 24. 1, 27. 3, 29. 4). On one occasion, Diodorus (17. 34. 6) even refers to the king of Persia's position as a *prostasia.*

[17] Heckel (2021: 69) believes that Antipater did act as regent in Philip's absence.

[18] See Anson 2009: 281-285. Aeschines (2.29) refers to Ptolemy of Alorus as *Epitropos.*

[19] Errington 1970: 56-57; Anson 1992: 42-44.

[20] Rosen 1967B: 103.

In the final settlement in Babylon, Perdiccas was the guardian of both kings and the commander of the royal army. He had the power and the authority of a king, but not the title. The power clearly was from his command, of course in the kings' names, of the royal army in Asia, as Arrian explained through his position as chiliarch, and also the authority as guardian of his royal charges and regent for the Kingdom of Asia.[21] Appian (*Mith* 2. 8) describes Perdiccas as ruling Alexander's empire after the latter's death as the *Epitropos*, and in his *Syrian Wars* (9. 52) states that Perdiccas' authority to dispense satrapies derived from King Philip through Perdiccas' possession of the *Prostasia*. Appian further states in this passage that Laomedon, the first satrap of Syria after Alexander's death, received his authority through the *Prostasia* of Perdiccas. Without question, then, for Appian this *prostasia* is a regency. After Perdiccas' death, Appian refers to Antipater as the *prostatês* of the kings (προστατεύσαντος τῶν βασιλέων) (App. *Syr*. 52). Arrian and Diodorus use both what is the official title, *prostatês*, for the position, but also routinely refer to it by generic terms.

Diodorus (18. 75. 2) refers to Polyperchon as *prostatês* after Antipater's death ("*prostatein tês te basileias*"), and in 317, Eurydice, the wife of Philip III, in Polyperchon's absence, usurped the administration of the *prostasia* (τῆς βασιλείας προεστηκυῖα) (Diod. 19. 11. 1; cf. Just. 14. 5. 1-4).[22] Clearly, as with the passages from Appian, these from Diodorus can only be making reference to a regency. Since Olympias is offered the *prostasia* separately from the guardianship of her grandson, the "royal *prostasia*" must also refer to an office of state.[23] Here, unlike in the cases of Antipater, Perdiccas and Polyperchon, Olympias' *prostasia* would only refer to political and civilian activities. The overall military authority would remain with Polyperchon as *Strategos Autokrator* (cf. Diod. 19. 48. 4). While Perdiccas, Antipater, and Polyperchon held both civil and military authority, Olympias received only the civilian position. This reflects what was initially put forward in the disturbance in Babylon for Craterus. There would, of course, be situations where this division of labour between Olympias and Polyperchon would be difficult to maintain. If Polyperchon was not in Macedonia, then her role as regent would fully come into play in both the civilian and military sphere, unless Polyperchon designated someone else to be *strategos* in his absence. The evidence would suggest that he did not do so.

Formal regencies for an underage or incapacitated ruler were virtually unknown in Macedonia, with the only clear example, as noted, being that of Ptolemy of Alorus for Perdiccas III. Antipater, when he was left behind, when Alexander left for Asia, is described as "*epitropos* (trustee or guardian) for Macedonian and Greek affairs" (Arr. *Anab*. 1. 11. 3). The one true regent for an underaged king prior to Alexander's death, Ptolemy of Alorus, is called the *epitropos* by Aeschines (2. 29). While likely aprocryphal, Antipater's death-bed pronouncement, "never let a

[21] Alexander's preferred title for his empire (Fredricksmeyer 2000: 136-166). Here, in this context a reference to Alexander's northeastern African and Asia possessions.

[22] Eurydice had interfered with the then regents in 320 forcing them to resign in favor of Antipater (Arr. *Succ*. 1a. 31-33; Diod. 18. 39. 1-4; Polyaen. 4. 6. 4; Just. 14. 5. 2).

[23] Olympias was not the first Macedonian woman to appear in a role more commonly associated with males. "Cynnane, the daughter of Philip, trained for war, commanded armies, and took her place in the ranks against enemies. In a battle with the Illyrians, she slew their queen Caeria with a blow to the throat and killed many Illyrians in the fight." (Polyaen. 8. 60). She is reported to have trained her daughter Adea also in the art of war (*FGrH* 76 F52), and after Alexander the Great's death, in command of a military force, after circumventing Antipater's attempt to stop her, and with her daughter journeyed to Asia, planning to arrange a marriage of her daughter to the new king Philip III (Polyaen. 8. 60). See also BNJ 76 F52

woman rule over the kingdom," ("μηδέποτε συγχωρῆσαι γυναικὶ τῆς βασιλείας προστατῆσαι") (Diod. 19. 11. 9) may be more narrowly focused than the usual generic translation would suggest. The use of the verb may be telling. Maybe the warning's meaning is not so general, but rather declares: never let a woman hold the *prostasia*.[24] Kingship for a woman at the time would remain unthinkable, but a regency with true power had been held by a woman, and that woman was Olympias.

The *prostasia*, the regency, was what was offered and what was accepted by Olympias. Eurydice had recently claimed the regency in Polyperchon's absence (Just. 14. 5. 1-3),[25] which Diodorus (19. 11. 1) calls the *proestêkuia basileias* (Diod. 19. 11. 1). Having waited more than a year from the initial invitation,[26] perhaps, following the advice of Eumenes to remain in Epirus (Diod. 18. 58. 3), it was Eurydice's action that precipitated Olympias' return (Diod. 19. 11. 1).[27] Now it would have appeared urgent for her to accept Polyperchon's invitation in order to protect her interests and those of her grandson. Apparently, in some fashion Alexander IV had been removed by Eurydice from the monarchy. Diodorus (19. 11. 2) relates that Polyperchon not only restored Olympias but also Alexander's son. Olympias arrived in Macedonia accompanied by Polyperchon and the royal army (Diod. 19. 11. 2; Just. 14. 5. 1).

That the terms *prostasia* or *prostatês*, when associated with royal power or institutions, referred to a regency or a regent becomes much clearer during the Antigonid dynasty. Antigonus Doson was selected by the *principes* as the *Prostatês* of Macedonia ("*proestôti Makedonôn*") and "*Epitropos* for the young Philip [V]."[28] In this context, Antigonus as *prostatês* was regent for the kingdom and also *epitropo*s, guardian, for the young boy. In this dual capacity, Antigonus was, in the words of Polybius (2. 45. 3), the (*κυριεύοντα*) "master of Macedonia." Within a couple of years, Doson became king in his own right but remained guardian for the future Philip V (Polyb. 4. 87. 6; cf. Polyb. 2. 47. 5, 70. 7-8; 4. 69. 5; Just. 28. 3. 12). While Polybius in general uses *prostasia* to indicate authority or high position or reputation (1. 5. 8; 2. 39. 12; 5. 90. 5; 7. 10. 3; 8. 15. 1; 10. 18. 8; 12. 28. 6; 15. 30. 4; 22. 3. 1), he clearly, in appropriate contexts, uses the word to indicate a regency. In 2. 45. 2, Polybius associates *prostatês* and *epitropos* with Doson in the clear context of regent and guardian with respect to the future Philip V.[29] Again, in Book 15, Tlepolemus, after the death of the Egyptian ruler Ptolemy Epiphanes, understood that there would be a council charged with the guardianship (*epitropeia*) of the new king during his minority and with the *prostasia* for everything else (*tôn olôn*) (Polyb. 15. 25. 27, 29). The meaning here is again crystal clear. There is the guardianship for the new king, separate from the regency for the kingdom, i.e. the everything else. Polybius (4. 2. 6) referring to the

[24] Russel Geer in the Loeb Classical Library translation: "never to let a woman hold first place in the kingdom." Robin Waterfield (2019: 250), "he had warned never them to let a woman become the head of state."

[25] Eurydice had learned that Polyperchon was returning from Greece (Just. 14. 5. 1).

[26] Eumenes accepted the alliance with Polyperchon that was offered according to Diodorus (18. 57. 2-4, 58. 3) at the same time as the offer to Olympias, but her return is in the Fall of 317 (Anson 2014: 117-121).

[27] Diodorus reports that "when Eurydice who had assumed the regency heard that Olympias was preparing to return . . ."

[28] Polyb. 2. 45. 2; cf. Polyb. 20. 5. 7; Plut. *Aem*. 8. 2; Paus. 2. 8. 4; 6. 16. 3; 7. 7. 4; 8. 8. 11; cf. Just. 28. 3. 10; Liv. 40. 54. 5.

[29] See D'Agostini 2019: 22-23.

usurpation of Achaeus in 220 BC, states "Achaeus held not only the *prostasia basilikê* but also the *dunamis*." Achaeus had initially been appointed to oversee the territory west of the Taurus (his official *prostasia*) in the name of the king, but had usurped the authority and had proclaimed himself ruler of these territories.[30] Later, in 206/205, Polybius describes Euthydemus, the king of Bactria, pleading with the agent of Antiochus the Great to convince the king not to deprive him of "the name and *prostasia* of a king" (11. 39. 3); cf. 22. 3. 1). In these particular contexts, Polybius consistently associates the authority of a king with the *prostasia*.[31]

Polybius is, however, describing a different time and, with respect to Macedonia, a different dynasty. During the Argead dynasty, the Macedonian kingship was not a clearly defined constitutional office with either distinct powers or, for that matter, clearly defined limitations. It also lacked most of the formality ordinarily associated with royalty. The ruling dynasty was not a family but a clan with members of different branches of the clan all viable candidates for the throne. Moreover, as Elizabeth Carney has shown that power in Argead, pre-Alexander times, was not clearly designated by office (Carney 1995: 367-391). Argead "regencies" then must also be considered in the context of a "royal" clan, which clearly complicates the issue of guardianship and regency. And yet, the title of *prostasia* had to have some previous agency or it would not have figured so prominently in the events after Alexander's death and subsequently. As claimed earlier, the office originated as a temporary official left in charge while the king was busy elsewhere.

The references from Polybius, although closer in time than our Roman sources for Alexander, do describe incidents from a later century, and it is then questionable whether titles from the Antigonid dynasty also apply to the Argead era. However, certain titles used by those historians of the earlier period are often associated with the same individual and suggest they share a common meaning with those of the later period. Diodorus calls Perdiccas the *Epimeletes tês basileias* (18. 2. 4), *hegemon tôn olôn* (18. 3. 1), *basilikas dunamis kai prostatês basileon* (18. 23. 2). Arrian (*Succ.* la. 3) refers to the same individual as the *Epitropos* of the kingdom ("*epitropos tês xummasês basileias*") and Appian (*Syr.* 9. 52) declares that both Perdiccas and later Antipater were the *prostatai* of the kings ("*Perdikkou kai ex Antipatrou tou meta ton Perdikkan prostateusantos tôn basileôv*"). After Perdiccas' death and the assignment of the kings to Antipater, he is also called (Paus. 1. 25. 3) the "*Epitropos* of all of Alexander's *archê.*" Diodorus calls him "*epimeletes autokrator*" (18. 39. 1-2) and his immediate predecessors Pithon and Arrhidaeus as "*epimeletai autokratores.*" Polyperchon is later called by the same author "*epimeletes kai strategos autokrator*" (Diod. 18. 48. 4, 49. 4, 55. 1), and also referred to as holding the royal *prostasia* (Diod. 18. 23. 2). What appears clear is that *prostatês* or *epitropos* of the kingdom or *epimeletes* and *strategos autokrator* are often equivalent terms for what amounts to a regency, the traditional and correct term for which was *prostasia.*

Whatever the more casual use of these terms in the surviving historians for the Argead period, they did have basic definitions, as shown by their later usage both in the aftermath of Alexander the Great's death and during the Antigonid period of rule. Given the powers associated with the *prostasia* by the sources, the office can refer only to some sort of state

[30] See Chrubasik 2016: 84-86 and D'Agnostini 2018: 59-81.

[31] Walbank (1979: 177) believes that the term *prostasia* refers to the pomp and show dignity of a king, but as shown this is a consequence of the office.

regency. Only the authority usually associated with a regent covers the broad range of powers associated with the *prostatês*. The *prostasia* was, then, the traditional title for what amounted to a Macedonian regency, temporary as a place holder for the monarch who was elsewhere, or, in the case of Ptolemy of Alorus, as a regent for a sitting and present underage king. *Prostatês* and *epitropos* occur in the later and more structured Antigonid monarchy. Carney has shown that under the Antigonids, kingship was a position of state rather than the dominant member of a ruling clan as in the Argead dynasty.[32] There is another major difference between the Argead and Antigonid dynasties that would lead to greater clarity being applied to the use of these terms. Until the reigns of Philip and Alexander, the number of possible candidates for the Argead throne was large, given that such candidates could be drawn from an extensive Argead clan, not a specific royal family. All members of the clan were royal. The Antigonid royal pool was, from the beginning, small and drawn from a family and not a clan. Moreover, as Carney has pointed out, the Antigonids were also by and large monogamous, which cut down considerably on those eligible to become king.[33] With dynastic rules more focused, those destined to rule could less easily be turned aside and replaced.

Olympias was then given the *prostasia*, the regency, along with the guardianship of her young grandson. That this was an office conferring power and authority over the Macedonian state was clear even to a Roman imperial philosopher. Porphyry proclaimed that Olympias "assumed rule over the Macedonians" (Eusebius [Porphyry] *BNJ* 260 F-3. 3). The actual division of other responsibilities between the two guardians and the *prostatês* and the *strategos* was likely rather nebulous. But, what is beyond dispute is that Olympias clearly did not see her authority in Macedonia as purely honorary or in any way ceremonial, nor was it. During her time in Macedonia as *prostatês*, she dispatched orders to garrison commanders (Diod. 18. 65. 1), commanded troops (Diod. 19. 35. 3), appointed generals (Diod. 19. 35. 4) and saw to the execution of King Philip III, his wife, and a hundred other prominent Macedonians (Diod. 19. 11. 8-9). In Diodorus 18. 65. 1, Nicanor, the Macedonian garrison commander in Athens, when ordered by Olympias to restore Munychia and Piraeus to the Athenians, did not tell her that she had no authority to order this restoration, but rather promised to return these to Athenian authority but kept delaying doing so.[34] Certainly in the aftermath of Alexander's death, his mother was still held in high esteem. Her request to the argyraspids to support Eumenes was cited, along with the call from the kings and Polyperchon, as responsible for their adherence to the Cardian Greek (Diod 18. 59. 3).

Polyperchon offered Olympias the *prostasia*, the very position that the leaders in Babylon had briefly bestowed after Alexander's death on Craterus. While Olympias' *prostasia* was a true regency, it was tempered by the retention of the office of *strategos autokrator* by Polyperchon. Polyperchon recognized Olympias as the kingdom's regent, an office of state, but he retained his title of *strategos autokrator* and thus his control of the royal army. Polyperchon needed something or someone to boost his shrinking authority. Olympias seemed ideal. She had the honor and personal authority that went with her status as grandmother of King Alexander IV

[32] Carney 1995: 370-371; 2000: 7-8, 200; but not as amorphous as Carney, however, suggests (2006: 70).

[33] Carney 2015: 161.

[34] While this particular passage does not directly refer to the *prostasia*, it does refer to Olympias being restored to her *timê*.

and mother of Alexander the Great. The office of *prostatês* may have been offered to make her authority more official, as well as tied to her familial connections. As shown, in this new age, titles took on a significance they had not had before. Olympias was to receive the authority of office to go along with that derived from her position in the royal family. To rely solely on the familial connection was problematic, since she was an Argead by marriage, and although the grandmother of King Alexander IV and mother of Alexander the Great, Eurydice and King Philip were both Argeads by birth. Eurydice, in fact, was descended from Argeads on both sides, being the daughter of Philip II's daughter Cynnane and Philip's brother and previous king Perdiccas III's son Amyntas.[35]

As *prostatês*, however, and even though no more bloodthirsty than her male counterparts, she did make one serious error, which likely proved fatal. The power of the Argead name was still strong. Apparently, greater than that of Alexander the Great. Earlier when Cynnane, Alexander the Great's half-sister, had brought her daughter to Asia in hopes of marrying her to the new king Philip III, she was murdered by the brother of the then regent Perdiccas, likely on his orders.[36] The royal army reacted to her death with great indignation and the regent was forced to accede to the marriage (Arr. *Succ*. 1a. 22-23; Polyaen. 8.60). Cynnane's influence came from her connection to the royal Argead clan. Olympias, perhaps, had she been more circumspect in her dealings with King Philip at least, might have prevailed and shared the triumph with the lacklustre Polyperchon.[37] Olympias was the mother of Alexander, but not an Argead by birth. More importantly, she was hampered by her erstwhile allies who proved to be incapable of achieving their goals — let alone hers.

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[35] Heckel 2021: 6.

[36] Anson 2015: 100-101.

[37] Lacklustre is likely being much too kind. With the possible exception of King Philip III, no one else was so "indecisive, unlucky, and more than a little incompetent" (Wheatley 1998; 1). See most recently Carney (2014) who entitles her article "Successful Mediocrity: The Career of Polyperchon." I am not certain successful is apt, however.

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In a Man's World: The Royal Agency of Phila of Macedon

Frances Pownall

Phila, the first royal woman to receive the title of *basilissa*, remains somewhat of a paradox. Daughter of Antipater, sister of Cassander, wife of Demetrius Poliorcetes (and therefore daughter-in-law of Antigonus Monophthalmus), and mother of Antigonus Gonatas, she was directly connected by birth, marriage, or motherhood to the most powerful men of her time. Despite the usual hostility of the ancient sources towards women who exercise political or military power (and are thus perceived as transgressive), she is portrayed in the historiographical tradition as a paragon of traditional feminine virtue. Two recent studies have reached what seem rather to be complementary rather than mutually exclusive positions on Phila as a source of (male) legitimacy: Franca Landucci (2021a: 102–104) argues that Antigonus Gonatas is largely responsible for her virtuous reputation as part of his ongoing efforts to stake his claim to the kingdom of Macedonia, whereas Elizabeth Carney (2021) suggests that Phila was bestowed a royal title by her husband and father-in-law in order to bolster their own ruling authority.[1] Building on these studies, the time is ripe for another look at Phila, particularly in light of some of the issues that have come up in the highly stimulating distributed conference *Power, Royal Agency, and Elite Women in the Hellenistic and Roman World*, hosted by the Waterloo Institute for Hellenistic Studies. In this contribution, I shall focus my re-examination of Phila around the following interrelated questions: how much agency did she exercise in her own right? What were the sources of her power? Why is she singled out in the source tradition in such an overwhelmingly positive way? Who ultimately controlled the narrative on this fascinating but elusive figure?

Before attempting to address any of these questions, it is important to review what we actually know about Phila. No securely-attested images of Phila survive from antiquity. Two figures in the gorgeous series of first-century Roman frescoes (copies of lost Hellenistic royal paintings) from the villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale near Pompeii (buried in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius) have at various times been identified as Phila, but neither attribution rests on any tangible evidence. One of the paintings (now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Naples) that originally adorned the west wall of the largest room in the villa was once thought to portray a seated Phila with her son Antigonus Gonatas,[2] although the figures are now more commonly believed to be allegorical rather than historical. Similarly, the seated royal couple on the opposite wall (now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York) could represent any Hellenistic king and queen (that is, assuming that they represent historical

[1] On Phila, see also Macurdy 1932: 58–69; Wehrli 1964; Carney 2000b: 165–169 and 2020: 327–329; D'Agostini 2020: 75–80; Heckel 2021:377–378; Ogden 2023: 173–175.

[2] A photo of the painting can be seen at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pompejanischer_Maler_um_40_v._Chr._001.jpg; see also Palagia 2014: 221 Fig. 1.

figures, and not divinities),[3] and there is nothing explicitly tying them to Phila and her husband Demetrius Poliorcetes.

Nor are we much better informed on the events of Phila's life. She was the eldest of the four marriageable daughters of the "inveterate matchmaker" Antipater (Diod. Sic. 18.18.7),[4] the seasoned commander to whom Alexander had entrusted control of Macedonia during his campaign against Persia, a post he retained at the time of Alexander's death despite his falling-out with Olympias and the subsequent announcement that he was to be replaced by Craterus (Arr. *Anab*. 7.12.4; Just. 12.12.9).[5] Phila's first, poorly attested, marriage, was to Balacrus the son of Nicanor, who had been Alexander's *somatophylax* until after the Battle of Issus, when he was appointed satrap of Cilicia (Arr. *Anab*. 2.12.2; cf. Diod. Sic. 18.22.1).[6] The only direct testimony of this marriage is a clearly fictitious letter of a certain "Balagrus" allegedly composed to his wife Phila, identified as the daughter of Antipater, purporting to describe a marvel that took place during Alexander's siege of Tyre, narrated by Antonius Diogenes, a novelist of the second century AD.[7] But Balacrus' nearly decade-long administration of Cilicia would explain the later importance of this region for Demetrius later, as Phila would have had the opportunity to establish a solid network there (a skill at which she particularly excelled, as we shall see), from which he was able to benefit.[8] Furthermore, as Waldemar Heckel has observed, the reference in a third-century Delian inscription to a dedication by an Antipater the son of Balagrus suggests that this marriage produced a son named after his maternal grandfather.[9] Brian Bosworth (1994) has proposed that the Nicanor who was Cassander's garrison commander at Munychia (Plut. *Phoc*. 31.1; cf. Diod. Sic. 18.64.1) is not (as is generally assumed) the infamous Nicanor of Stageira, the nephew and son-in-law of Aristotle (Diog. Laert. 5.11–16) whom Alexander chose to announce the highly unpopular Exiles' Decree at the Olympic Games of 324,[10] but instead his own

[3] A photo of the painting can be seen at https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/cubi/hd_cubi.htm; see also Palagia 2014: 224 Fig. 4. A full discussion of the paintings and their interpretation can be found in Palagia 2014; cf. Landucci Gattinoni 2009: 271–275.

[4] Quotation from Macurdy 1932: 47. On the marriages of Antipater's daughters, see Baynham 1994: 334–335; Heckel 2016: 39 and n. 40 and 2021: 194–195, 327, 377–378, and 502 (A18); Landucci 2021a: 101–107.

[5] On Antipater, see Baynham 1994 and Heckel 2016: 33–43.

[6] For what we know of this Balacrus (there are at least two other contemporary homonyms), see Heckel 2021: 126–127. On Balacrus as satrap of Cilicia, see Jacobs 1994: 63.

[7] *apud* Phot. Bibl. *Cod*. 166 111b2–31; cf. 2–3: ἀλλ' οὖν ἐισάγει Βάλαγρον πρὸς τὴν οἰκίαν γυναῖκα Φίλαν τοὔνομα γράφοντα, θυγατὴρ δ' ἦν Ἀντιπάτρου αὕτη ("But then he brings up Balagrus, who writes to his wife, whose name was Phila; she was the daughter of Antipater"). All translations are my own.

[8] Rose 2015: 180; cf. Wheatley/Dunn 2020: 49.

[9] Heckel 1987; cf. Heckel 2007: 406 n. 17: "The naming of the first son for the maternal grandfather often indicates that the groom has 'married up'." A temple dedication dating to the middle of the third century includes Antipater's patronymic (*IG* XI.2 287b l. 5); cf. similar dedications from several decades earlier by an Antipater without the patronymic (*IG* XI.2 161b l. 85 and 203b l. 49). On the variant "Balagrus" for "Balacrus," see Badian 1988: 116 n. 2 and Bosworth 1994: 60 n. 27 (although he is less confident on the identification of Antipater's father with Alexander's *somatophylax*). A mysterious entry in the Delian temple accounts for 296 mentions the arrival of a Balagrus (*IG* XI.2 154a l. 42), and another Delian inscription (dating to the first half of the third century) honours a Macedonian called Thraseas, the son of Balagrus (*IG* IX.4 585 l. 3–4); Reger 1991 argues that that all three —Antipater, Thraseas, and this Balagrus — are the sons of Phila and her first husband Balacrus/Balagrus.

[10] Diod. Sic. 18.8.3; cf. Din. 1.81–82 and Hyp. 5 col. 18.

nephew, Nicanor the son of Balacrus, who is attested by the lexicographical tradition.[11] Then the marriage of Phila and Balacrus may have produced an elder son, named after his paternal grandfather in the traditional fashion. This is an attractive suggestion,[12] not least because there is a neat parallel with the future appointment by Antigonus Gonatas of his half-brother Craterus as governor of Corinth.[13] Whatever children may (or may not) have resulted from this union, there is enough circumstantial evidence to suggest that the marriage is historical, and probably took place, as Elizabeth Carney (2021: 48) suggests, in Antipater's first round of dynastic matchmaking, before Alexander and his army departed for Asia in 334.

Balacrus was killed in a skirmish with the Pisidians prior to Alexander's death (Diod. Sic. 18.22.1), and Phila likely remained in Cilicia, where Alexander's right-hand-man Craterus also landed late in 324 (Diod. Sic. 18.4.1), on his way back to Macedonia to replace Antipater. Craterus was still in Cilicia when Alexander died in 323 (Diod. Sic. 18.12.1),[14] and subsequent negotiations with Antipater, who needed reinforcements in the Lamian War, resulted in his betrothal to Antipater's now widowed eldest daughter (cf. Diod. Sic. 18.12.1), whom he accompanied back to Macedonia. The most respected of Alexander's generals,[15] Craterus was positioned to play a dominant role in the wars of the Successors, as well as to offer immediate support in putting down the Greek rebellion, and so Antipater chose wisely. According to Diodorus (18.18.8), the marriage itself took place after Craterus helped Antipater bring a successful conclusion to the Lamian War: "When Antipater returned to Macedonia, he awarded Craterus the appropriate honours and gifts and gave him in marriage one of his daughters, Phila, who was the eldest; then he assisted him in preparing for his return to Asia."[16] Whether or not their previous relationship had been acrimonious,[17] Craterus showed himself willing to co-operate with Antipater, setting

[11] There are duplicate entries in the *Suda*, Harpocration, and Photius s.v. Νικάνωρ: τρεῖς γεγόνασι Νικάνορες, ὁ μὲν υἱὸς Βαλάκρου, ἕτερος δὲ Παρμενίωνος, ἄλλος δὲ Σταγειρίτης τὸ γένος ("there have been three Nicanors: one the son of Balacus, another the son of Parmenion, and a third from Stageira"). Heckel 2021: 328–331 identifies 11 individuals by that name attested during this period.

[12] For arguments against the identification of the garrison commander as the son of Balacrus, however, see Heckel 2007.

[13] On the younger Craterus' later career, see Billows 1990: 396–397.

[14] On possible reasons for the lengthy delay, see Anson 2012: 50–51 and 53–55; Ashton 2015: 109–110; Heckel 2016: 141–144; Pitt/Richardson 2017; Wheatley/Dunn 2020: 31 n. 18.

[15] Plutarch (*Demetr.* 14.2) describes Craterus as follows: "of the successors to Alexander, it was he who left behind the greatest good-will among the Macedonians" (τῷ πλείστην εὔνοιαν αὐτοῦ παρὰ Μακεδόσι τῶν Ἀλεξάνδρου διαδόχων ἀπολιπόντι); cf. Plut. *Eum.* 6.1–2. On Craterus' reputation, Anson 2012; Ashton 2015; Heckel 2016: 122–152; Wheatley/Dunn: 32 and n. 22.

[16] Diod. Sic. 18.8.8: ὁ δ' Ἀντίπατρος ἐπανελθὼν εἰς τὴν Μακεδονίαν τὸν μὲν Κρατερὸν ταῖς ἁρμοζούσαις τιμαῖς τε καὶ δωρεαῖς ἐκόσμησε καὶ τῶν θυγατέρων μίαν συνοικίσας αὐτῷ τὴν πρεσβυτάτην Φίλαν τὴν εἰς τὴν Ἀσίαν ἐπάνοδον συγκατεσκεύασεν. Cf. Plut. *Demetr.* 14.2 and Memnon of Heraclea *BNJ* 434 F 1, 4.4.

[17] A competitive relationship between the two is suggested by the fact that Alexander had intended Craterus to replace Antipater in Macedonia, as well as a passage in the *Suda* (s.v. Κρατερός) comparing Antipater unfavourably to Craterus. This passage was formerly thought to be derived from Arrian (and thus appears as *FGrH* 156 F 177a = F 19 Arr. *Succ.* Roos/Wirth), but this attribution has been rejected by the author of the Arrian entry in *BNJ* (Roller 2014: Contextual Notes on F 4); accordingly, it appears separately as *BNJ* 156a F 5a. Antagonism between Craterus and Antipater is accepted by e.g. Heckel 2016: 148–50; Carney 2021: 49, who comments: "Phila cannot have had an easy time serving as the human link between these two men." More sceptical of any putative antagonism are Baynham 1994: 345 and Pitt/Richardson 2017: 82–84.

out to Asia on his new father-in-law's behalf to confront Perdiccas who was entertaining alarmingly regal ambitions. In the meantime, Phila presumably remained behind in Macedonia, with her infant son by Craterus, named after his father,[18] who eventually became the trusted lieutenant of his younger half-brother Antigonus Gonatas (as noted above). Soon after Craterus' arrival in Asia, however, he was killed in battle against Perdiccas' ally Eumenes.[19]

Widowed once again, Phila was conveniently available when Antipater began a new round of power brokering and marriage alliances in the settlement at Triparadeisus.[20] This time around, she was married to the teenaged Demetrius, the future Besieger, her third and final marriage, his first. According to Plutarch (*Demetr*. 14.2–4; cf. 27.4; *Synk*. 1), Demetrius was greatly displeased at the prospect of marrying an older woman, and had to be coerced into the match by his formidable father, Antigonus Monophthalmus, who wanted to tap into the reputations of both Antipater and Phila's former husband Craterus. At that point, it seems, Phila joined Demetrius and his father in Asia, where the marriage took place,[21] a region with which she was already very familiar, as Antigonus' satrapy in Phrygia bordered that of her former husband Balacrus in Cilicia.[22] Despite the groom's initial misgivings, Phila soon bore Demetrius a son, Antigonus Gonatas,[23] the future king of Macedonia, and a daughter, Stratonice, who eventually had a rather unconventional marital history of her own.[24] Phila seems to have remained loyal to Demetrius throughout the vicissitudes of his colorful career and (eventually) his other marriages, although Daniel Ogden has suggested that he did not marry again until Phila was post-menopausal; as he notes (2023: 175), "she retained symbolic value even if her fertility was gone." Plutarch (*Demetr*. 45.1) tells us that the last straw for Phila was Demetrius' loss of control of Macedonia, when she gave up all hope and decided not to join her husband in exile, choosing instead to commit suicide.[25]

This overview of the events of Phila's life brings us back to first of the questions with which we began: how much agency did she exercise in her own right? Diodorus offers some concrete examples of her agency in a laudatory digression, for which the point of departure is Phila's

[18] The younger Craterus dedicated a lion hunt monument in honour of his father at Delphi; the monument itself has not survived, but the epigram that originally accompanied it has (*ISE* no. 73). The wording of the inscription implies (but does not necessarily require) that the younger Craterus was born prior to his father's death; on this question, see Dunn/Wheatley 2012: 41–42; Heckel 2016: 147–148.

[19] On the various versions of Craterus' death, see Anson 2015: 121–122; Heckel 2016: 151–152.

[20] On the historical context, see Wheatley/Dunn 2020: 29–30.

[21] Wheatley/Dunn 2020: 32–34, who observe (n. 25) that the women in these dynastic marriages tended to travel to the men (rather than vice versa); cf. Ager 2021: 118–119.

[22] Cf. Wheatley/Dunn 2020: 31 and n. 17.

[23] On the date of Antigonus' birth, see Wheatley/Dunn 2020: 33–34.

[24] On Stratonice, see Engels and Erickson 2016; Almagor 2016; Harders 2016; Ramsey 2016 and 2020; Ogden 2023: 119–125.

[25] As noted by Savalli-Lestrade 2015: 215, the suicides of Hellenistic royal women were rare; the only other attested example is Cleopatra VII.By contrast, Demetrius himself does not choose the more honourable option of suicide but instead surrenders to Seleucus, spending his final years in captivity.

recuperation of the remains of her previous husband Craterus, some years after his death,[26] during the Antigonid siege of Tyre in 315.[27] After noting that Phila was by now the wife of Demetrius (a detail not included in his narrative of the settlement of Triparadeisus), Diodorus (19.59.4–6) continues:

> This woman seems to have been of exceptional intelligence. For example, she used to quell those who were causing problems in the camp by managing them individually in an appropriate way. She also provided for the marriages of the sisters and daughters of those without means at her own expense, and freed from the threat of trial many who were the victims of false slanders. It is even said that her father Antipater, who had the reputation of being the wisest of the rulers of his time, used to consult with Phila when she was still a girl about the weightiest matters. My subsequent narrative will reveal the character of the woman more precisely when it reaches the events that brought about a transition and final crisis of the kingship of Demetrius.[28]

Diodorus' statement that Phila advised her father on important state decisions even as a child seems suspiciously reminiscent of Herodotus' portrayal of Gorgo of Sparta,[29] and one wonders if this is a literary *topos* applied to selected royal females who are portrayed positively in the source tradition.[30] Perhaps more importantly, Diodorus attests that Phila was directly involved in the administration of Demetrius' camp, handling trouble-makers,[31] arranging marriages for the female relatives of impecunious soldiers at her own expense, and intervening in legal matters. In other words, their marriage was a partnership,[32] where Demetrius' role was primarily a military one as the commander of the army, while Phila efficiently and delicately handled administrative and personnel issues. Although Diodorus' remarks on Phila are not dated to any specific period, the narrative context suggests that she accompanied her husband and his army

[26] Diod. Sic. 19.59.3. Nepos (*Eum*. 4.4) is clearly wrong when he claims that Eumenes returned Craterus' remains to Phila in Macedonia immediately after the battle. Nor is it clear why Eumenes in fact did not do so; Heckel 2016; 152 n. 172; Wheatley/Dunn 2020: 49 n. 3.

[27] On the date, see Wheatley/Dunn 2020: 50–51.

[28] αὕτη δ' ἡ γυνὴ συνέσει δοκεῖ διενηνοχέναι· τούς τε γὰρ ταραχώδεις τῶν ἐν τῷ στρατοπέδῳ κατέπαυεν ἁρμοζόντως πολιτευομένη πρὸς ἕκαστον, τάς τε ἀδελφὰς καὶ θυγατέρας τῶν ἀπόρων ἐξεδίδου τοῖς ἰδίοις δαπανήμασι, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τῶν διαβολαῖς περιπιπτόντων μὴ δικαίαις ἀπήλλασσε τῶν κινδύνων. λέγεται δὲ καὶ Ἀντίπατρον τὸν πατέρα αὐτῆς, ὃς δοκεῖ γεγονέναι φρονιμώτατος τῶν ἐν δυναστείαις γεγονότων κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἡλικίαν, κόρης οὔσης ἔτι τῆς Φίλας συμβουλεύεσθαι πρὸς ταύτην περὶ τῶν μεγίστων. μηνύσει δ' ἀκριβέστερον τὸ τῆς γυναικὸς ἦθος προϊὼν ὁ λόγος καὶ τὰ πράγματα λαμβάνοντα μεταβολὴν καὶ κρίσιν ἐσχάτην τῆς περὶ Δημήτριον βασιλείας.

[29] Hdt. 5.51 (where Gorgo is identified as a girl of eight or nine years); cf. another anecdote of Gorgo's exceptional intelligence as an adult at 7.39.4 (where Herodotus, like Diodorus, distances himself with the verb λέγεται).

[30] Another parallel is Plutarch's positive characterisation of the young Cleobulina as the political advisor of her father in the *Symposium of the Seven Sages* (*Mor*. 148c–d); cf. Stamatopoulou 2019 (my thanks to the audience members for pointing out this parallel following my talk).

[31] Note that the verb Diodorus uses (πολιτευομένη) to describe Phila's management of troublemakers at camp is normally one in the context of governing or administering; cf. Carney 2021: 52.

[32] Cf. Carney 2021: 54: "This was not an intimate relationship but quite literally an alliance."

in the Antigonid campaigns of the Third Diadoch War to Cilicia and Phoenicia (cf. Wheatley and Dunn 2020: 49), where her long apprenticeship in the region as Balacrus' wife may have been a particular asset. In any case, Phila has clearly been empowered to act independently, albeit on her husband's behalf, a prerogative that she likely maintained throughout their long marriage, as the generalising tenor of Diodorus' encomium implies. As Elizabeth Carney (2021: 56) observes: "[Diodorus] makes Phila a kind of mini-king (or king substitute): she makes her own decisions, has her own funds, and has some sort of authority over the troops and sailors and their families."

Further details on Phila's agency can be gleaned from a late fourth-century inscription (discussion of the date will appear below) found in the Heraion at Samos that honours a certain Demarchus of Lycia, who appears to have been one of the Antigonid *philoi*.[33] The inscription alludes (in somewhat vague terms) to the assistance that Demarchus has rendered to the citizens of Samos, and mentions in passing that he is currently staying with *basilissa* Phila, and has been appointed as her bodyguard.[34] A similar inscription from Ephesus, which probably dates from the same period, honours a Boeotian called Melesippus for his benefactions to the Ephesians while he has been staying with *basilissa* Phila, a phrase that is virtually identical to the Samian inscription.[35] As these inscriptions attest, Phila has her own court and officials under her employ, including her personal bodyguard. Furthermore, these honourific decrees indicate that Demarchus and Melesippus have been interceding with Phila directly on behalf of the Samians and Ephesians respectively while they are residing at her court. The actual location of Phila's court is not indicated in these inscriptions, but we learn from another (unrelated) piece of evidence that she was based (before Ipsus, at least) in Cilicia (see below). This evidence from these inscriptions on Phila's activities dovetails with Diodorus' testimony, demonstrating that her agency extended beyond the administration of her own court in the regions under Antigonid control. Moreover, it is clear that intercession with Phila through her court officials was something that was highly valued by the Greek *poleis* of Asia Minor.

It may not be coincidental that Demetrius spent most of the years before Ipsus on active campaign, leaving Phila on her own to deal with any diplomatic matters that came up as well as the oversight of the royal court. Nevertheless, there was evidently close communication between Phila and Demetrius during this period. Diodorus mentions the Rhodian commander Menedemus' interception of a ship that was conveying ceremonial garments and other household accoutrements that Phila was sending her husband in late 304, during Demetrius' siege of Rhodes (Diod. Sic. 20.93.4):

> He (i.e. Menedemus) captured a quadrieme that was sailing from Cilicia and contained royal garments and other attire that Phila, Demetrius' wife, had very

[33] On Demarchus, see Billows 1990: 379. On the important role of *philoi* in Hellenistic courts as intermediaries between the kings and the *poleis*, see Strootman 2014: esp. 124–144 (cf. Strootman 2020) and Savalli-Lestrade 2017.

[34] *Syll*[3] 333 (= *IG* XII.6 1.30) l. 8–9: καὶ νῦν διατρίβων παρὰ τῆι βασιλίσηι Φίλαι καὶ τεταγμένος ἐπὶ τῆς φυλακῆς. Cf. LSJ s.v. παρὰ IV B II.2: "at one's house."

[35] *IEph* 2003 (= *FiE* II,3 = Ephesos 57 PHI on-line): διατρίβωμ παρὰ τῆι βασιλίσσηι Φίλαι.

> lavishly prepared and sent to her husband. He sent off the apparel to Egypt, because the mantles were purple and appropriate for a king to wear.[36]

Plutarch (*Demetr*. 22.1) adds some further details about the cargo from Phila that the intercepted ship was conveying to Demetrius:

> The Rhodians were defending themselves vigorously, and Demetrius, although he was accomplishing nothing noteworthy, nevertheless continued to fight furiously against them, because when his wife Phila had sent him letters, bedding, and mantles, they captured the ship and sent it off, just as it was, to Ptolemy.[37]

Demetrius was notorious for the extravagance and theatricality of his ceremonial attire, which (although universally condemned by the censorious Greek sources) played a large role in his self-fashioning as he attempted to elevate the Antigonids above all the other Successors by any means at his disposal. In fact, the elaborate royal garments on the ship sound very similar to the disapproving descriptions found in both Duris of Samos (*BNJ* 76 F14) and Plutarch (*Demetr*. 41.3–5) of Demetrius' purple and gold festival attire, which was topped by an intricately-embroidered star-studded mantle that overtly symbolised his desire for world domination.[38] Phila was clearly supportive of her husband's royal ambitions, and played a significant role behind the scenes ensuring that he was properly equipped and outfitted to assert his new status. In other words, as Elizabeth Carney (2021: 56) notes, she played the role of stage manager of Demetrius' famous theatricality.

Another example where Phila can be seen furthering her husband's cause through independent action occurs during in a new round of alliance-making after the disastrous Antigonid loss at Ipsus (which had resulted in the death of Antigonus on the battlefield), when Demetrius married Stratonice, his daughter with Phila, to Seleucus,[39] probably c. 298.[40] On his way to the wedding celebration in Syria with his daughter, wife, and the whole of his fleet in tow (Plut. *Demetr*. 31.4), Demetrius seized the opportunity to raid the coast of Cilicia along the way, territory that now belonged to Pleistarchus, the brother of Cassander and Phila, who had received it in the settlement after Ipsus. After re-uniting with Phila,[41] Demetrius proceeded to

[36] εἶλε δὲ καὶ τετρήρη πλέουσαν μὲν ἐκ Κιλικίας, ἔχουσαν δ' ἐσθῆτα βασιλικὴν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀποσκευὴν ἣν ἡ γυνὴ Δημητρίου Φίλα παρασκευασαμένη φιλοτιμότερον ἀπεστάλκει τἀνδρί. τὸν μὲν οὖν ἱματισμὸν ἀπέστειλεν εἰς Αἴγυπτον, οὐσῶν τῶν στολῶν ἁλουργῶν καὶ βασιλεῖ φορεῖν πρεπουσῶν.

[37] Εὐρώστως δὲ καὶ τῶν Ῥοδίων ἀμυνομένων, οὐδὲν ἄξιον λόγου πράττων ὁ Δημήτριος ὅμως ἐθυμομάχει πρὸς αὐτούς, ὅτι, Φίλας τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτῷ γράμματα καὶ στρώματα καὶ ἱμάτια πεμψάσης, λαβόντες τὸ πλοῖον. ὥσπερ εἶχε, πρὸς Πτολεμαῖον ἀπέστειλαν. Plutarch provides a different version of the fate of the ship, saying it went to Ptolemy intact, whereas Diodorus (20.93.4) goes on to say that the ship was beached and the crew was sold. There is a mysterious mention of "royal items" (β]ασιλικοῖσι) that went unused at the fragmentary beginning of a papyrus (*BNJ* 533 F 2) narrating Demetrius' siege of Rhodes (if the reference is indeed to this episode, as seems likely, apparently Ptolemy was not interested in Demetrius' purple finery); cf. Wheatley/Dunn 2020: 194 n. 56.

[38] On the celestial imagery of Demetrius' attire, see O'Sullivan 2008 and Holton 2014. On Demetrius' royal self-fashioning, see Müller 2010 and Pownall 2016: esp. 54–56; cf. Mossman 2015.

[39] On the dynastic marriages that took place after Ipsus, see Wheatley/Dunn 2020: 284–288.

[40] On the date, see Wheatley/Dunn 2020: 288.

[41] Plut. *Demetr*. 32.2. Plutarch does not specify where Phila had been located prior to the arrival of Demetrius, but she is generally assumed to taken refuge after Ipsus in Cyprus, which remained under Antigonid control (cf. Diod. Sic. 21.1.4b); Bosworth 2002: 262 and n. 61; cf. Wheatley/Dunn 2020: 289 n. 48.

seize 1200 talents from the former Antigonid treasury at Cyinda, which suggests that he waited for her to arrive back in the region where she had been based for so many years before doing so. After the conclusion of the wedding festivities, emboldened by Seleucus' departure to Antioch with his new bride and the failure of Pleistarchus to fend off any of his depredations (instead, he had scuttled back to appeal to his brother Cassander in Macedonia), Demetrius took the rather more drastic step of re-occupying Cilicia altogether (Plut. *Demetr.* 32.3). In the meantime, at Demetrius' request, Phila went off on her own to smooth things over with Cassander (Plut. *Demetr*. 32.3), who was at that time ruling Macedonia. Although she was looking after Demetrius' interests, Phila was empowered to act independently, in this case to negotiate with her birth family on her husband's behalf. She must have been successful (unless Cassander had already made up his mind that it did not further his own cause to help his brother),[42] for no military action is recorded against Demetrius. It is also tempting to suppose that Phila gained intelligence on this visit on the precarious state of the Macedonian throne, with both Cassander and his eldest son suffering from serious health issues, and his two younger sons still teenagers.[43] As it turned out, Cassander did in fact die after a long illness the following year, followed shortly after by his eldest son,[44] by which point Demetrius was well prepared to make a bid for the throne himself.

It is most unfortunate that Diodorus' fuller narrative (promised at 19.59.6, in the passage cited above) has not survived of Phila's activities from the period when Demetrius gained (and subsequently lost) the throne of Macedonia, where she had spent her childhood at the court of her father Antipater. Given Demetrius' frequent absences from Macedonia during this period,[45] it is likely that she continued to act on her husband's behalf, administering the court in much the same way that she had done previously. It is clear from the tenor of the earlier Diodoran passage that the lost narrative on Phila was equally encomiastic. It is tempting to suppose that it contained praise of Phila's "people skills," particularly her diplomacy and accessibility, possibly in stark contrast to the harshness, highhanded behavior, and (especially) lack of accessibility for which her husband was notorious during the period he ruled Macedonia,[46] as attested by Plutarch at some length in his *Life* (esp. chap. 42).

Returning to the second in the series of questions with which we began: what were the sources of Phila's power? All uncomplimentary anecdotes on the alleged reluctance of Demetrius to marry her aside, the connection to Phila's birth family proved to be a hugely important asset for him. In particular, Plutarch (*Demetr*. 37.2–3) demonstrates how it served to

[42] Cf. Bosworth 2002: 263: "She would have forcibly represented the dangers of challenging the formidable new military coalition, especially when Cassander's niece was married to its senior partner." Bosworth (2002: 263 n. 64) also notes that Cassander was likely already suffering from the long illness that eventually killed him in the following year.

[43] Wheatley/ Dunn 2020: 325; cf. Carney 2015: 154.

[44] Plut. *Demetr*. 36.1; Paus. 9.7.2–3; Just. 15.4.24 and 16.1.1; Anonymous Olympic Chronicle *BNJ* 257a F 3 (= *P.Oxy*. 2802); Porphyry *BNJ* 260 F 3.5.

[45] For Demetrius' activities between 294 and 278, see Wheatley/Dunn 2020: 333–378.

[46] It seems that he was unable to "read the room," and failed to realise the innovations brought into the Macedonian kingship by Alexander (who never returned to Macedonia once he crossed the Hellespont in 334) and the Successors would not fly in the heartland, which had only experienced the traditional Argead monarchy practised by Philip II and Antipater.

legitimise Demetrius' eventual take-over of Macedonia, when he took advantage of the chaos following the death of Cassander to seize the throne by ousting one of his predecessor's surviving sons (Antipater),[47] and murdering the other (Alexander):[48]

> When he (i.e., Demetrius) came before them (i.e., the Macedonian troops), he had no need of long speeches, but partly because of their hatred of Antipater (i.e., Cassander's son), who was the murderer of his mother, and partly because there was no better alternative, they proclaimed him king of the Macedonians, and they immediately accompanied him back to Macedonia. The change was not at all unwelcome to the Macedonians at home, who still remembered with hatred the crimes that Cassander had committed against Alexander's line. And if any memory of the moderation of the elder Antipater still remained, Demetrius benefited from it as well, because he was married to Phila, and had a son from her to serve as his successor, who was already by now a youth and was campaigning with his father.[49]

Plutarch's vivid narrative of how Demetrius pled his case to the Macedonians reflects how he attempted to justify his seizure of the Macedonian throne by demonising his predecessors,[50] particularly Cassander, who was responsible for the elimination of Alexander's line,[51] and his son Antipater, who had murdered his mother, Thessalonice (the daughter of Philip II), in the recent struggle for power with his younger brother.[52] Demetrius' father Antigonus had levied similar sorts of inflammatory allegations against Cassander almost two decades earlier in the proclamation of Tyre (Diod. Sic. 19.61.1–3), but Demetrius' successful deployment of this virulently hostile rhetoric against Cassander and his progeny in establishing his claim to the Macedonian throne enshrined it in the subsequent historiographical tradition.[53] Equally

[47] Although Plutarch (*Pyrrh.* 6.3) claims that Pyrrhus was responsible for the expulsion of Antipater, Pausanias (9.7.3) says it was Demetrius, and the vaguer narratives of both Plutarch (*Demetr.* 36.2–3) and Justin (16.1.6–8), emphasising Demetrius' pretence at assisting Alexander against his brother, concur (by implication, at least). Even after his departure from Macedonia, Antipater was still a potential threat, having taken refuge with Lysimachus, who soon however had him eliminated (Just. 16.2.4; Porphyry *BNJ* 260 F 3.5.)

[48] On Demetrius' murder of Alexander, see Plut. *Demetr.* 36; cf. *Synk.* 5.2, *Pyrrh.* 7.1–2, *Mor.* 530c; Diod. Sic. 21.7.1; Paus. 9.7.3; Just. 16.1.1–9; Porphyry *BNJ* 260 F 3.5.

[49] ὡς δὲ ἦλθεν, οὐ μακρῶν ἐδέησεν αὐτῷ λόγων, ἀλλὰ τῷ μισεῖν μὲν τὸν Ἀντίπατρον, φονέα μητρὸς ὄντα, βελτίονος δὲ ἀπορεῖν, ἐκεῖνον ἀνηγόρευσαν βασιλέα Μακεδόνων, καὶ παραλαβόντες εὐθὺς κατῆγον εἰς Μακεδονίαν. ἦν δὲ καὶ τοῖς οἴκοι Μακεδόσιν οὐκ ἀκούσιος ἡ μεταβολή, μεμνημένοις ἀεὶ καὶ μισοῦσιν ἃ Κάσανδρος εἰς Ἀλέξανδρον τεθνηκότα παρηνόμησεν. εἰ δέ τις ἔτι μνήμη τῆς Αντιπάτρου τοῦ παλαιοῦ μετριότητος ὑπελείπετο, καὶ ταύτην Δημήτριος ἐκαρποῦτο Φίλᾳ συνοικῶν καὶ τὸν ἐξ ἐκείνης υἱὸν ἔχων διάδοχον τῆς ἀρχῆς, ἤδη τότε μειράκιον ὄντα καὶ τῷ πατρὶ συστρατευόμενον.

[50] The reported speech in Justin (16.15–17) contains a similar demonisation of Cassander, which confirms its Antigonid origin; cf. Landucci Gattinoni 2009: 265–266.

[51] Cassander was responsible for the murders of Olympias (Diod. Sic. 19.51; Paus. 9.7.2; Just. 15.1.7–12 and 15.2.5), Alexander IV, Alexander's son by Roxane (Diod. Sic. 19.105.2 cf. 19.52.4; Paus. 9.7.2; Just. 15.2.5), and also Heracles, Alexander's alleged son by Barsine (Diod. Sic. 20.28.2–3; Paus. 9.7.2; Just. 15.2.3; Plut. *Mor.* 530d); cf. Porphyry *BNJ* 260 F 3.3. These allegations naturally sharpened the persistent rumour that the Antipatrids had poisoned Alexander himself: Diod. Sic. 17.118.1–2; Arr. *Anab.* 7.27.1–2; Curt. 10.10.14–19; Just. 12.14; Val. Max. 1.7.ext.2; *LM* 96–100; cf. Plut. *Alex.* 77.1–3. Cf. Landucci Gattinoni 2009 and Carney 2015: 152–155.

[52] Diod. Sic. 21.7.1; Just. 16.1.1–4; Paus. 9.7.3; Porphyry *BNJ* 260 F 3.5.

[53] Cf. Landucci Gattinoni 2009 and 2021a: 103; Rose 2015: 281.

importantly, however, Demetrius' connection to Phila allowed him to assert simultaneously that he was the legitimate heir of the elder Antipater, who epitomised traditional Macedonian virtues.[54] Phila was also the conduit through which Demetrius' heir, Antigonus Gonatas, was endowed with the old-school moderation of his grandfather.[55] This passage likely reflects Antigonus Gonatas' distancing himself from the excesses of his mercurial father, a distancing that ironically he too achieved through Phila, who served to connect him not only to the well-respected Antipater, but also to the very popular Craterus.

Thus, the obvious sources of Phila's power are her family connections: her father, with his enduringly powerful reputation and the popularity he retained within Macedonia, her husbands, including Craterus, whose untimely death may well have enhanced his reputation for traditional Macedonian virtue, and Demetrius, whose fortunes oscillated between brilliant military success and utter disaster, and finally her son Antigonus Gonatas, who ultimately established a solid and enduring Antigonid hold on the Macedonian throne.[56] But none of these familial connections really sets Phila apart; she may have been the eldest, but she was not Antipater's only daughter to be pressed into diplomatic marriages to enhance the family's position. Nor, for that matter, was she Demetrius' only wife, or the only one to bear him a son,[57] though presumably it helped that Antigonus Gonatas was much older than his half-brothers, and therefore was in a position to be able to succeed him immediately, avoiding the kind of turbulent succession issues that the Macedonians had recently experienced after Cassander's death.[58]

In addition to her own innate royal status, as the wife, sister, and mother of kings, Phila undoubtedly benefitted from the public conferral of the title of *basilissa*, which confirmed her royal status and enhanced her personal authority independent of her husband and father-in-law. As Sheila Ager observes in this volume, one of the ways to measure authority is through the external bestowal of power. The Samian inscription (discussed above) offers the first attested example in the Hellenistic world of the royal title *basilissa*,[59] which could not have been used before Phila's father-in-law and husband adopted the title of *basileus* (a theatrical event stage managed through their *philoi*) after Demetrius' stunning victory over Ptolemy at Cyprus in 306,[60]

[54] So Landucci 2021a: 103. This is the one place where Justin diverges from Plutarch's version, for he says (16.1.15) that Antipater had always been crueller than his predecessors, a doubtful claim as Antigonus Gonatas later capitalised upon Antipater's reputation in his own successful bid for the throne; cf. Wheatley/Dunn 2020: 329 n. 32.

[55] Landucci 2021a: 103–104; cf. Landucci 2021b: 96. Antigonus was probably in his early twenties by now (that is, not a callow youth as Plutarch implies).

[56] See Waterfield 2022 for a new popularising biography of Antigonus Gonatas, although Tarn (1913) remains fundamental.

[57] Although the Greek sources condemn Demetrius' polygamy (Ogden 2023: 173–177) and very public display of his liaisons with his mistresses as evidence of his debauchery and promiscuity (Wheatley/Dunn 2020: 163–171), these are probably deliberate aspects of the creation of his royal image (in addition, of course, to the strategic advantages each of his unions brought); Müller 2009; Harders 2013: 45–46; Pownall 2016: 55–56; Carney 2021b: 309.

[58] Cf. Wheatley/Dunn 2020: 330.

[59] As noted by e.g. Harders 2016: 30; D'Agostini 2020: 75; Ramsey 2020: 188–193; Carney 2021; cf. Carney 1991.

[60] On Antigonus' assumption of the royal title and simultaneous conferral of it upon Demetrius, see Wheatley/Dunn 2020: 159–163.

and is unlikely to have occurred after the disastrous Antigonid defeat at Ipsus in 301.[61] The application of the title *basilissa* to the king's wife surely has a legitimising function intended to parallel the royal status of the male Antigonids, although it is unclear if the title originated with the courts of Antigonus and Demetrius or with Phila's own *philoi*.[62] For what it is worth, none of Demetrius' other wives was ever proclaimed *basilissa*, suggesting that Phila was the only one viewed as having authority *in loco regis*.[63]

It did not take long for the title to spread to the other dynasties. Soon after Phila, the title of *basilissa* was bestowed upon Seleucus' first wife Apama as the Successors competed for legitimacy and status in the new world order.[64] The title was also conferred upon Stratonice, Phila's daughter by Demetrius, after her marriage to Seleucus, and she retained it subsequent to her later marriage to Seleucus' son (and eventual heir) Antiochus, possibly as a way of strengthening his authority in the east while his father was still alive.[65] Interestingly, however, temple inventories at Delos beginning around 278 (that is, long after Stratonice's marriage into the Seleucid dynasty) testify that she dedicated numerous gold and silver items which she had engraved with the label "*basilissa* Stratonice, daughter of *basileus* Demetrius and *basilissa* Phila;"[66] her current husband (by this time, Antiochus) is conspicuous by his absence. Thus, Stratonice still clearly derives her royal status from her parents. Possibly, she was taking a leaf out of her mother's book. In the chaos that beset the Seleucid kingdom in the wake of the assassination of Seleucus by Ptolemy Ceraunus, Stratonice may have attempted to assist her husband's bid for the throne by emphasising the royal status that she brought through her birth family, in much the same way that Demetrius solidified his claim to the Macedonian throne just over a decade earlier by highlighting Phila's lineage. Thus, as Edward Anson observes (in this volume),[67] formal titles offered a combination of familial and official status, particularly crucial as the first generation of Successors were establishing their own dynasties in the new world order. Furthermore, the title of *basilissa* was a particularly useful one to deploy in diplomatic relations with the Greek cities,[68] for as Gillian Ramsey has recently observed, it is rooted in the traditional language of the *polis*, which "provided a lexicon for new monarchical power and dominance."[69]

Another way in which Phila represents a link between the new world of Hellenistic monarchy and the traditional civic practices of the Greek *polis* can be seen in a late fourth-century Samian inscription found on Cos, which mentions the performance of honours (*tîmai*)

[61] On the date of the Samian inscription, see Carney 2021: 46–47. The very similar inscription from Ephesus (also discussed above) likely dates from around the same time; Carney 2021: 46 n. 6.

[62] Harders 2013: 47–48 and 2016: 30; Carney 2020a: 327 and 2021: 46–47.

[63] Cf. however Coşkun 2022, who argues that the title was reserved to designate the mother of the designated successor, in response to recent discussions of the *basilissa*'s agency by Hämmerling 2019 and Kunst 2021 (neither of which I have been able to access).

[64] Ramsey 2020; cf. Carney 2000b: 225–226 and 2011: 202–203; Harders 2016: 34.

[65] Ramsey 2020: 191; cf. Harders 2016: 35–38.

[66] The earliest (*IG* XI.2 161b l. 15) reference to a dedication by *basilissa* Stratonice dates to 278; the longer entries with the full attribution (βασίλισσα Στρατονίκη βασιλέως Δημητρίου καὶ βασιλίσσης Φίλας) are copies from the early second century (*ID* 421 l. 61; 439a l. 31; 442b l. 33). See Ramsey 2016: 98–99 and 2020: 188.

[67] Cf. Ramsey 2020.

[68] On the diplomatic role played by Apama and Stratonice, see Ramsey 2016.

[69] Ramsey 2020: 189; cf. Alex McAuley's discussion of the vocabulary of female power in this volume.

to *basilissa* Phila and a sanctuary (*temenos*) dedicated to her.[70] The presence of what seems to be a civic cult devoted to Phila at Samos is corroborated by literary evidence in Athenaeus (6.254a and 255c), who refers to a civic cult to Phila Aphrodite (255c; cf. 254a) established in Athens (the context suggests as part of the exaggerated honours offered to Demetrius and his father by the Athenians in the wake of his "liberation" of the city in 307) by one of the Antigonid *philoi*, who built a temple and dedicated statues to her. Once again, Phila is the first royal woman attested to receive cult worship (just as Antigonus and Demetrius were the first of the Successors) and this innovation, like the royal title, represents a way of integrating the power of the Antigonids into the existing *polis* religious and cultural context.[71]

In addition to these formal confirmations of her royal status to the wider world through cult and title, Phila clearly had access to a wide range of financial and administrative resources that allowed her to act independently, particularly when Demetrius was away on campaign. As Monica D'Agostini observes (in this volume), the power of the *basilissa* rested on a network, and the evidence that we have examined suggests that Phila had a court entourage through whom she interacted diplomatically with the Greek *poleis*. One wonders however how much independent power Phila would have had if Demetrius had not been on active campaign for so much of his reign.

Likewise, although Phila seems to have achieved a larger degree of prominence and independence than other royal Hellenistic women of her generation, her agency seems largely to be directed at furthering the career of her husband (and presumably advancing the interests of her son, although this is less visible in the sources). As we have seen, Demetrius' support base from the beginning of their marriage rested largely on Phila and her existing networks. But had Phila's own goals and ambitions not aligned so closely with those of her husband, the question remains whether she would have enjoyed as much independent agency. As Sheila Ager (in this volume) suggests, the degree of alignment with the king is one possible metric for how we measure a queen's power. Had Phila ceased to work on her husband's behalf and decided to pursue a different personal agenda, what repercussions would there have been on her ability to act independently from Demetrius?

This brings us to the third question I posed at the beginning of this chapter: why is Phila singled out in the source tradition in such an overwhelmingly positive way? Once again, there is no simple answer to the question of why Phila receives such favorable treatment in the literary sources in comparison with other royal women. As Alex McAuley observes (in this volume), it is a modern assumption that the literary sources view female power as transgressive and that women have to be perceived as passive to be slotted into the "good" category. But, as we have seen, Phila did exert a certain amount of active agency on her husband's behalf. But, presumably, the reason why her agency is acceptable is that her public actions do further the interests of the dynasty: *oikos* keeping, as Elizabeth Carney (2012) has termed it. In other words, Phila successfully negotiated the tightrope between the traditional role of women in the domestic sphere looking after the needs of the family and the new more prominent role in public and political sphere, where royal women not only work to advance the interests of the dynasty,

[70] *IG* XII.6 1.150, l. 23–24: ὅταν αἱ τῆς βασιλίσσης Φίλας τιμα[ὶ] συντελεσθῶσι, εἰς τὸ τέμενος τὸ ἀποδειχθὲν Φίλαι. On the identification of the Phila of this inscription with Demetrius' wife, see Carney 2021: 50 n. 27.

[71] Carney 2000a: 31–32.

but also act as intercessors between the king and his subjects; the power of royal Hellenistic women lies in their liminal existence between these two worlds.[72]

Another explanation for the positive portrayal of Phila in the source tradition is that she seems to have operated within the conventional norms of acceptable behavior for royal women, even as those norms were being rewritten in the first generation of the Successors. For example, she is not attested to have exerted military authority of any kind. In other words, Phila did not attempt to wield hard or coercive power, which would have been viewed as transgressive, but soft or co-optive power through her networks, religious duties, and ability to access material and financial resources, all of which would have been viewed as legitimate sources of female power.[73]

Finally, it is interesting that despite the innovations that Phila brought to the role of royal women, the ancient literary sources depict her in idealising terms as exhibiting traditional feminine virtue, particularly loyalty. But, as Franca Landucci (2021a: 102) has remarked: "It cannot be denied. . . that her fame as an ideal wife is directly proportional to the excesses and intemperance of her husband Demetrius." One wonders, then, how much the sources' portrayal of Phila as the longsuffering but virtuous wife is intended as a contrast to Demetrius, with a specific aim in mind: the legitimation of their son as ruler of Macedonia. Of course, we cannot even pretend to know what Phila's feelings were, but her apparent loyalty to Demetrius was not motivated by whatever emotional tie she had to him, but that her interests aligned with his; that is, that he maintain control over Macedonia and eventually transfer the realm to their son Antigonus Gonatas.

To return to the final question that I posed at the beginning of this paper: who ultimately controlled the narrative on Phila? The emphasis on Phila's parentage in the encomiastic passages in both Diodorus and Plutarch, especially when coupled in Diodorus with the special relationship that she allegedly enjoyed with her father and in Plutarch with the statement that Antigonus Gonatas was an appropriate successor, suggest very strongly that Antigonus Gonatas himself is the origin of the idealising tradition on Phila. After all, it was just as crucial for him to establish the legitimacy of his own claim to the throne when he recovered control of Macedonia in the 270s as it had been for Demetrius almost two decades previously. It was probably Antigonus Gonatas himself who was responsible for the tradition that Phila was her father's favorite daughter and exhibited conventional feminine virtues, in effect, making her the female equivalent to Craterus and Antipater, who epitomised traditional Macedonian royal virtue. The historian Hieronymus of Cardia likely wrote his history at the Antigonid court under the patronage of Antigonus Gonatas, which in itself points to him as the source of the idealising portrayal of Phila in the literary tradition.[74] Despite the fact that Phila carved out a new and highly influential public role for royal women in the turbulent world of the first generation of the Diadochi, in the end she was not able to determine her own legacy, which was written by the male members of the dynasty that she had worked so hard to establish in Macedonia.

[72] Cf. Eran Almagor in this volume.

[73] On the theoretical vocabulary of power, see the contributions of Ana García Espinosa and Monica D'Agostini in this volume.

[74] Landucci 2021a: 103 and 2021b: 96–97; cf. Hornblower 1981: 226–227.

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Defining Woman-power among the Second Century Seleukids and Ptolemies

Gillian Ramsey Neugebauer

This paper began life asking whether Grace Macurdy's "woman-power" can be defined using newer models of Hellenistic rulership and more recently examined bodies of evidence with all the force that she originally argued. That is, are there any Hellenistic queens whose power and leadership appear like that of Hellenistic kings, on a comparative footing when it comes to expressions of territorial dominance and appeasement from the subjugated. In order to serve as a case-study on the question, the focus narrowed considerably to consider women who were members of just one lineage, the Kleopatras of the Ptolemies and Seleukids during the second century BCE, and to trace out particular expressions of ruling power as found in papyrological, epigraphic, iconographic, and numismatic sources. Before looking at this evidence for expressions of queenly domination, a few preliminary considerations regarding how we might define royal woman-power can be addressed.

Woman-power?

Grace Macurdy argued that the woman-power of the Hellenistic queens was categorically the same as the man-power expressed by their fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons—the Hellenistic kings. She made her case that Hellenistic queens exhibited the same qualities of leadership and made the same kinds of decisions for increasing their power as did contemporary kings. In short, their inherent capacity for exercising power was not lesser than the kings' simply because they were women.[1] As described in its rationale, the *Power, Royal Agency, and Elite Women* conference wished to revisit Macurdy's object of study and reassess whether, and how, we might now apply the newer theoretical discourses on royal power, plus the much-expanded body of evidence, to the effort of defining Hellenistic royal woman-power as a concept, or perhaps even an institution, rather than describing it as a phenomenon.[2]

There are numerous approaches possible in the effort to define Hellenistic royal woman-power, many deftly handled by the other presenters at the conference and the authors in this volume. The choice here was to take the argument of John Ma regarding Antiochos III (and to a limited extent his queen Laodike) and see if it works as well to reveal instances of ruling queens. His paradigm configures the evidence for the mechanisms of Hellenistic (particularly Seleukid) royal power as the propagandistic outcome of a negotiated relationship of domination and acquiescence.[3] Other studies likewise argue for and build upon the notion that they were continually consolidating their domains through dialogues with subject polities and those

[1] Macurdy 1932: ix-x.

[2] https://uwaterloo.ca/waterloo-institute-for-hellenistic-studies/power-royal-agency-and-elite-women-hellenistic-and-roman (accessed March 21, 2023).

[3] Ma 2000: 8-10, 20-24; for Laodike, Ramsey 2011.

groups' different political heritages.[4] So, the approach here starts with the premise that Seleukid and Ptolemaic rulers exercised their authority within ideological frameworks which were shaped considerably by a variety of older political traditions in their domains, as well as creative representations of power emerging out of confrontations between their dynasties and their subjects. We will consider how this dialogical and representational framework applies to the evidence for the second-century Ptolemaic and Seleukid queens, and where it might generate more nuance for the definition of woman-power for that period and those kingdoms.

A Problem with Titles

The English language hinders us when it comes to gendered titles, such as that of queen. Do we mean a *queen consort* or a *queen regnant*? It might be pointed out here that for parts of their careers the women discussed below were both of those at the same time. (For purposes here, a queen is considered regnant if she is operating as a regent for a young son.[5]) Perhaps we need a title for a female king. There was a grammatically feminine form of the Demotic for *Pharaoh*: *Pr-ʿ3.t*.[6] Is this the kind of queenly woman-power that Macurdy saw and that we wish to define? That is, was it power that remained the same whether it belonged to a male ruler or a female one? From the Egyptological field the answer is no: queenly woman-power was ideologically distinct, but also highly entangled with notions of kingly power and royal ideology generally.[7] For example, Minas-Nerpel argues that the historic examples of female Pharaohs up to the New Kingdom show regnant women bringing a specifically female authority and adding it to the ideology of the pharaonic office which they also held.[8] Regarding women having the office of king, in his summary of the Second Dynasty Pharaohs, Manetho notes that "it was judged that women are entitled to kingship."[9] The Greek he used reads: ἐκρίθη καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας βασιλείας γέρας ἔχειν.[10] This seems to be a clear attestation of women operating as kings. Tyldesley states regarding female vs. male kings: "None of that mattered. Once a pharaoh had undergone the correct coronation rituals, he, or she, acquired a veneer of divinity that would allow him, or her, to function as a proper king."[11] That is, to be a legitimate Pharaoh was not so much a question of gender as whether one had undergone the transformation to divinity.

In the Greek or Macedonian context, the *basilissa* had a specific gender association which made her a different kind of powerful person than a *basileus*, but there was no superseding process for turning a male or female ruler into a pharaonic-style king. One paradigm for defining

[4] For example, Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 1, 38-39; Anagnostou-Laoutides and Pfeiffer 2022: 7-15.

[5] As Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 147-148 observe, the scholarly terminology of regency and co-rule cover a variety of power-holding and power-sharing arrangements.

[6] This first appeared for Berenike II, Bielman Sánchez and Joliton 2019: 72 (n. 22 for list of papyri).

[7] See Troy 2002.

[8] Minas-Nerpel 2021: 29.

[9] Translation: Verbrugghe and Wickersham 1996: 133 (= Manetho F2a, II.3).

[10] Loeb edition: Waddell 1940. The same phrase appears in the fragments of Syncellus and Eusebius. The Armenian version of Eusebius gives in Latin: "*statutum est, ut feminae quoque regiam dignitatem obtinerent*."

[11] Tyldesley 2012: 7; see also Norrie 2019: 503.

Hellenistic royal woman-power aligns with what John Ma had to say about the dialogue between king and city: the (re)presentation of a *basilissa* by herself and by others serves as the very mechanism for generating and augmenting her power. In the *basilissa*'s case, representations of queenly femininity directly fed into a specific kind of authority and a specific exercise of power.[12] We might hypothesize, although as will be the seen below the evidence does not quite bear this out, that a regnant *basilissa*, like a female Pharaoh, was capable of bringing this particular womanly power to bear on the office of territorial ruler which she occupied, and therefore actually augmenting the pre-existing kingship of that office with something more.

A Note on 'Power'

Power is actually very challenging to define. What it is, what it looks like, how it is obtained, how and by what it can be counteracted—all this is very much contingent on the immediate cultural, religious, socio-economic, and political context. And within that context, there are polyvalent forces at work for each of those dimensions.

In their *The Dawn of Everything*, David Graeber and David Wengrow discuss a few historical examples of royalties where the ruler's power was so unfettered that they could arbitrarily kill anyone in their vicinity, much less order them to do anything else. To counteract this, these royalties operated within civilizations where the primordial individual freedoms still existed, specifically the freedom to move wherever one wishes and the freedom to disregard orders. So, people simply avoided these absolute rulers by leaving their courts.[13] These extreme examples highlight that effective leadership, rulership, or statecraft requires cooperation from the ruled and the delegation of power beyond the immediate royal court, usually through some bureaucratic system. A truly absolutist ruler cannot delegate their power without appearing to lose some of it—at least not without some clever manipulation of the propaganda about themselves.

Thus, we should expect to see Hellenistic woman-power operating within a scenario where the queen cooperates with a bureaucratic system and traditional forms of government, essentially lessening her individual arbitrary power but perhaps bespeaking a higher degree of effectiveness and successful rule. Equally, the scenario might have a queen appearing or attempting to appear more authoritarian by being physically or charismatically dominant, which reads as powerful, but she might be characterized as a failure or come to a premature end. In point of fact, if longevity is a marker of regnal success, most of the queens considered here had careers lasting around three decades and thus must have been, to some degree, successful.

[12] For example, the PRAEW papers by Ager, McAuley, Carney, Lorber, and D'Agostini.

[13] Graeber and Wengrow 2021: 156-7, 392-398, 413.

The Problem of Misogyny

Misogyny in the ancient source materials (and modern scholarship) was one of the problems Macurdy tackled in her work.[14] How can we disentangle past and present patriarchal assumptions about, and denigrations of, women with power from the practical, day-to-day realities of rulership? On the one hand, we might understand misogynistic reactions to a powerful woman as the negative end of the spectrum of contemporary political attitudes. On the other hand, we can view them as distractions from whatever political issues were really at stake. The approach here is mostly to set aside the literary sources of evidence with their more blatant misogynistic tropes and focus more on the evidence which was immediate in time and place to the queens' worlds: documentary papyri, inscriptions, coins, seals, and iconographic representations created in their lifetimes. What we can see with this material are fewer negative assessments based on gender. The creators of these materials had to address their present political realities of life under a given queen, and it was largely business as usual. Negative assessments in these materials should have more to do with various political and economic crises, and so critiques of a queen, however subtle, are more against her as a ruler, less as a woman.

The Queens

The examples below all come from the queenly careers of a lineage of women belonging to both the Ptolemaic and Seleukid dynasties: Kleopatra I (204-176 BCE), Kleopatra II (c. 189-c. 115 BCE), Kleopatra III (160-101 BCE), and Kleopatra Thea (163?-121 BCE). The main details of their queenly careers are outlined here.

i. Kleopatra I was daughter of Antiochos III and Laodike III. Her marriage to Ptolemy V was planned out in 196/5 and formalised (probably) in 194/3.[15] Her husband was killed in 180, leading to her becoming the first Ptolemaic queen to co-rule with her son, the young Ptolemy VI Philometor. She had two other children, Ptolemy VIII and Kleopatra II. Conventional scholarship dates her death to 176, but Lanciers recently argued that she may have died as early as 178, and certainly before summer 177.[16]

ii. Kleopatra II married her brother Ptolemy VI Philometor in spring 175, a date reached from the existence of a papyrus dated 15 April 175 which mentions the "Theoi Philometores".[17] By him, she had several children: Ptolemy Eupator, Kleopatra Thea, Kleopatra III, and Ptolemy VII Neos Philopator. After Ptolemy VIII departed for Cyrenaica in 163, Kleopatra II co-ruled with her husband until his death in 145, whereupon Ptolemy VIII returned to Egypt and they married and co-ruled. They were joined by Kleopatra III after she married Ptolemy VIII in 141/0. Civil war ensued after

[14] For example, Macurdy 1932: 2-12.

[15] Polyb. 18.51.10; Livy 33.40.3; Bielman Sánchez 2017: 405-406, n. 4.

[16] Lanciers 2020: 183-184.

[17] P.BM EA 10589; Lanciers 2020: 182.

132/1 among these spouses and co-rulers, with a peace restored between 124 and 116. Then the co-rulership shifted; Ptolemy VIII died in 116 and the two queens brought in Kleopatra III's son Ptolemy IX. Kleopatra II disappears from the sources around 115, probably because she had died.[18]

iii. Kleopatra III, as already mentioned, became co-ruler with her mother after marrying her uncle, their joint spouse and co-ruler, Ptolemy VIII.[19] With him she had several children, all future rulers: Kleopatra IV, Ptolemy IX, Ptolemy X, Kleopatra V, and Tryphaina. The political tumult of the civil war with her mother repeated itself with her own children after 116, during which period she co-ruled with both sons. In the end, she was assassinated on 26 October 101.[20]

iv. Kleopatra Thea was the elder daughter of Kleopatra II and married Alexander Balas at Ptolemaïs-Ake in 150, shortly after he became king in Syria.[21] In 146, her father (Ptolemy VI Philometor) decided to remove his support from Alexander and give it to his rival, Demetrios II, and so made him king by giving him Kleopatra Thea in marriage. Soon after, in 145, Alexander was killed, reducing Kleopatra's husbands to just one.[22] Kleopatra's son was taken away from her and raised by Alexander's supporters who hailed him king; she then had children with Demetrios, including two sons, Seleukos V and Antiochos VIII Grypos. In 141/0 Antiochos VI was killed, and in 138 Demetrios was captured by the Parthians; Kleopatra then agreed to a marriage and alliance with her brother-in-law Antiochos VII.[23] In 129 Demetrios returned with backing from the Parthians, Antiochos VII died, and then in 125 Demetrios was killed.[24] It seems that from here on Kleopatra ruled, at times alone and at times co-ruling with first Seleukos V and then Antiochos VIII. She died in 121.

So, in summary, these four women represent three generations of a royal lineage, each with queenly careers both consort and regnant spanning multiple decades. Kleopatra I was queen for almost twenty years. Kleopatra II lasted the longest with sixty years. Sisters Kleopatra III and Kleopatra Thea had approximately forty-four years and thirty years respectively.

Domination

Aggression was a quintessential component of Hellenistic kingship, and one might argue that it was a key component of Hellenistic rulership as a whole. Even 'quiet' rulers have various

[18] Bielman Sánchez 2017: 409-410.

[19] For dating her marriage and receipt of the title 'queen', see Lanciers 2019.

[20] See Whitehorne 1995: 204 n. 26 for attestations.

[21] *I Macc.* 10.51-58.

[22] Jos. *AJ* 13.80-82, 109-119.

[23] Jos. *AJ* 13.221-222.

[24] App. *Syr.* 68 says Kleopatra killed him; see D'Agostini 2019 for the period of Thea's marriages. See also Muccioli 2003.

aggressive acts on their records.[25] It really was more a matter of the degree of aggression, such as can be found in the differences between violent conquest, state terrorism, seizure of material wealth, or limiting access to justice or natural resources, to name a few examples.[26] Aggression, including especially the threat of violence, is a crucial first stage in the negotiatory dynamic seen among the Hellenistic kingdoms with their subject polities, since it was anxiety about potential royal violence which pushed subjects into the process of compliance and appeasement through gifts, honours, and representations of good relations (however fictional they might have been).[27]

In considering the activities to be associated with woman-power, then, can we see our queens represented as aggressors? Queenly participation in violent events is known for numerous royal women, but here we are interested not in violence at the royal court against courtiers, servants, or family members, but in examples of queenly violence toward ordinary people in their realms, or episodes of warfare outside their realms, perhaps even territorial conquest.

One example comes from the later career of Kleopatra III. In summer 103 BCE she led the Ptolemaic army in a siege of Ptolemaïs-Ake, which had been seized along with Gaza by her son, the self-declared king of Cyprus Ptolemy IX. He was attempting to invade Egypt, and had been behaving cruelly toward the people in the lands he had occupied. Kleopatra wanted to end the threat he posed, both to Judea and Egypt. She sent her grandchildren and most of her wealth to safety on Cos and travelled with her army, which was led by the two Jewish generals Chelkias and Ananias. She also sent an Egyptian fleet to Ptolemaïs to double the fronts attacking Ptolemy IX's position. She besieged and took Ptolemaïs, pursued Ptolemy as he fled, and created an alliance with the Hasmonean king Alexander Jannaeus.[28] The fact that Kleopatra did not take any territory during this expedition has in the past caused scholars to characterise it as a failed attempt at conquest. Whitehorne argues that this was never her aim, rather she wanted to remove Ptolemy IX from his threatening position, obtain a military victory over him, and avoid a prolonged campaign in Syria. In addition, her relationship with Jannaeus, who took on the task of dealing out reprisals to those who had supported Ptolemy IX, was a successful diplomatic outcome from the campaign. Viewed thusly, her Syrian expedition was a military success. Kleopatra's choices for handling the conflict, however, may have hastened her subsequent death in 101 BCE, because her decision *not* to pursue the chance to reconquer Koile Syria alienated her other son Ptolemy X and the military officers with him, leading them to kill her.[29] That then would make this an instance where leadership choices by a queen led to her vilification, perhaps on misogynistic grounds, but also on a disagreement of policy. It thus does not exactly map onto

[25] For example, the Heliodorus at the Jerusalem temple episode under Seleukos IV, who did not have a war of conquest during his reign, *2 Macc*. 3; Rappaport 2011 addresses the historicity of this event, but it is still the case that the literary trope of a hubristic king was believable.

[26] On the latter, consider the aggression inherent in the stories of kings restricting traditional access to local food sources, freshwater springs, and salt marshes: Athenaeus 3.73b-d.

[27] For example the citizens of Ilion appeasing the Seleukid king as he arrived on their doorstep with his *philoi* and army, *I.Ilion* 32. See Domingo Gygax 2009.

[28] Jos. *AJ* 13.348-355. It is true that this example contradicts the stated method of this paper, as it is from a literary source, but Josephus here is quite free from misogynistic criticism of Kleopatra.

[29] Whitehorne 1995.

the paradigm (best seen with Antiochos III) where a ruler conquers and leverages this violence and threat against the subjugated for expressions of loyalty, devotion, and good-will. Kleopatra III intentionally avoided that route to power, perhaps making this a case of the exception that proves the rule.

An example of violence against the subjects at home comes in the Amnesty Decree of 118 BCE, issued by Kleopatra II, Kleopatra III, and Ptolemy VIII.[30] Among other things, they make a long list of restorations: restored property rights, access to justice, status, access to the means of production, safeguards on personal freedoms, and so on. It does not automatically follow that everything on this list had been suspended during the preceding years of civil warfare, but we can deduce that many people in Egypt had experienced considerable threat and violence at the hands of royal forces and at the hands of people claiming to act on behalf of the king and queens, or taking advantage of the rulers' neglectfulness. A few examples of the threats and injustices include:

- there had been forcible, unjustified seizure of ship cargos on the wharfs at Alexandria, even after importation duties had been paid (ll. 25-27);
- travellers on foot inside Egypt were being extorted for safe passage (ll.28-31);
- temple lands, revenues, and tithes had been diverted from their rightful temples; people had taken away dedications and temple revenues by force, and taxes had been exacted on non-taxable temple properties (l. 50 ff.);
- people had been dragged out of places of asylum (ll. 83-4);
- people's houses had been burned down or torn down (ll. 134-136);
- people had persons forcibly quartered in their homes or were pressured to provide services to royal officials, in effect forced labour (ll. 168-187);
- native Egyptians had been dragged into Greek courts for cases which ought to have been seen by native judges (ll. 217-220).

The implication here is that royal agents acting on direct orders, or with some royally permitted latitude, had been dealing out abuses to Ptolemaic subjects. Ultimately, the queens and king were responsible for all this. Their personal quests for dominance over each other resulted in years of mayhem and injury among their subjects, or rather, their pursuit of power necessitated a great deal of collateral damage.

The royal ideology of domination makes its way into more systematic modes of representation, such as titles and iconography. As discussed at the PREAW conference, the Greek title *basilissa* in and of itself did not really carry a conquering hero type of connotation, compared to *basileus*, which did. But the evidence for these queens shows that they bore other titles which did connect to the idea of territorial domination. The Kleopatras under investigation here were not necessarily the innovators of using regnant titles (except for the first example below), that fell to their predecessors, but they, or they and their co-rulers and courtiers together, made full use of what was available.

Already mentioned is the existence of the feminine Pharaoh title *Pr-ʿ3.t* in Demotic documents. Kleopatra I, II and III all held this title, as indicated by the dating formulae from Demotic papyri created during their reigns. This usage in the formulae appears to have been an

[30] *P.Tebt.* I 5; *C.Ord.Ptol.* 53; Austin no. 290; Bagnall and Derow no. 54.

innovation under Kleopatra I, who is listed together with her son Ptolemy VI as the "Pharaohs" in the plural.[31] Kleopatra II, Ptolemy VI, and Ptolemy VIII all appear as the "Pharaohs" in the dating formula of Demotic papyri during their co-rule from 170-164 BCE. Kleopatra II and Ptolemy VI retained the title in the dating formula from 163 BCE onwards, and after 145 BCE Kleopatra II and Ptolemy VIII shared it.[32] In a papyrus dated to 14 January 140 BCE Kleopatra III first appears along with her mother as *Pr-ʿȝ.t*.[33] The Greek papyrus dating formula, beginning with Kleopatra I and Ptolemy VI, rendered the Demotic title with the participle βασιλευοντων. Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo argued that this Greek term is best translated as "sous le règne conjoint de..."[34] Of course, the use of the title begs the question: did these queens undergo coronation as Pharaohs? The answer is not apparent from any surviving literary narratives about them, but the iconographic and epigraphic evidence for other titles further hints at their pharaonic status.

Kleopatras I, II, and III all had a feminine Horus name; the only Ptolemaic queen before them to receive this was Berenike II, and the only one after them was Kleopatra VII.[35] In this they followed the mode of titles for female pharaohs like Tausret, although she, at least, had a masculine Horus Name ("Strong Bull: Beloved of Maat, the Lord beautiful of appearance, the ruler like Atum").[36] The Kleopatras' Horus names are all feminine in form, beginning with *Ḥr.t* ("the female Horus"), although at the temple of El-Tod Kleopatra II is named together with Ptolemy VIII with the dual form *Ḥr.wj* ("the two Horus deities").[37] Among other locations for each of them, all three Kleopatras appear with their Horus names inscribed at the Temple of Horus at Edfu. Kleopatra I's Horus name is inscribed in two places within the temple complex:

> female Horus, *Jungfrau*,[38] daughter of a ruler, who was born of a female ruler, beloved of the gods of Egypt, who was formed by Khnum, the vizier, the daughter of Thoth, the Great in power, who pacifies the two lands, given her perfection by Nebtj-rechjt, who was made capable by Neith the lady of Sais, who was made splendid by Hathor with her love, who was made great by Bastet and Mut with their magnificence.[39]

Kleopatra II's Horus name at Edfu is simply "the female Horus"; Kleopatra III's is the same for most of her appearances at Edfu, although one inscription from her later reign, probably after her mother's death (116-101 BCE), gives the name "female Horus, the great, the mother of

[31] Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2021: 76.

[32] Lenzo 2015: 226-227.

[33] *P. dem Amherst* Eg. 51; Lenzo 2015: 228. Should it be Italics? YES

[34] Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 154; Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015b: 11-12.

[35] Eldamaty 2011: 54-55.

[36] Callender 2012: 36, 47.

[37] Eldamaty 2011: 33-34, 55.

[38] This title is the grammatically feminine version of the title commonly translated as "Jungling" or "youth"; as the conventional English rendition of *Jungfrau* is "virgin", Eldamaty's German translation of the hieroglyphic is simply retained here, since the accurate English translation should be something more like "young (female) person", which is rather awkward.

[39] *Edfou* I,517 (the western staircase); *Edfou* II, 159, 7-9 (at the east entrance to the second columned hall); Eldamaty 2011: 31-32 for a German translation of the hieroglyphics.

god", an apparent conflation with Isis.[40] Earlier, during the rupture with Kleopatra II between 132 and 124, Kleopatra III had received her own eponymous priest and was worshipped as "Isis, the lady, mother of the gods, the great goddess".[41]

Another pharaonic title shared by these queens in Egypt was "Lady of the Two Lands". Also at Edfu, as well as in inscriptions at Philae, Karnak and on stelae dating to the period of her marriage to Ptolemy V, Kleopatra I was titled *nb.t. t3.wy*, "Lady of the Two Lands". At Philae she also received the title *ḥq3.t*, or the feminine form of "ruler" or "sovereign".[42] A recently published stele honours Ptolemy VIII together with Kleopatra II and Kleopatra III.[43] The queens have their cartouches in the inscription, which both read *nb(.t) t3.wy* Q*ljwp3dr3*, and translate to "Lady of the Two Lands Kleopatra". Line 3 of the main inscription (referring to Ptolemy VIII) reads *ḥn‘ sn.t=f ḥq3.t nb(.t) t3.wy* Q*lj<wp>3dr3 ḥn‘ ḥm.t=f ḥq3.t nb(.t) t3.wy* Q*lj<wp>3dr3 nṯr.w mnḫ.w ‘nḫ ḏ.t mj R‘*, and translates to "with his sister, the ruler, Lady of the Two Lands Kleopatra, with his wife, the ruler, Lady of the Two Lands Kleopatra, the Benefactor Gods [Euergetai], living forever like Re^{s}".[44] The same titles for sovereign and for Lady of the Two Lands are thus used for all three generations: Kleopatras I, II, and III. They were all represented as sovereign rulers and ladies (that is, female lords) of the historic two lands of Upper and Lower Egypt, the possessors of monarchical authority and territorial dominance. Lest we too hastily think that these queens were on a completely equal footing with their male co-rulers, however, Minas-Nerpel points out that even Kleopatra III, at the period when she was in all practical reality the ruler of Egypt, did not receive the traditional fivefold titles of the pharaoh, and while her portrait alone occupies the place of visual prominence on the facade of the temple of Nekhbet at El-Kab, the priests still ensured that the cartouches of her son Ptolemy IX were inscribed close by.[45]

Scholars examining the coin issues of Kleopatra Thea have observed another instance of a queen represented as a dominant personage. It should be made clear that these were only some of the coins issued by her husbands; what seems to be the message in issues specifically promoting Kleopatra was her pre-eminance as kingmaker through marriage. Silver tetradrachms and bronze coins from the Ptolemaïs-Ake mint celebrating her marriage to Alexander Balas in 150 BCE depicted the royal couple's portrait busts in jugate, with Kleopatra always in the foreground. A bronze issue from Seleukeia on the Tigris also bore the jugate busts with Kleopatra in the foreground, but another issue put in her the background.[46] A Ptolemaïs gold stater bore her portrait only, with Ptolemaic cornucopia on the reverse with the legend ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑΣ.[47] To what extent Kleopatra Thea directly encouraged these issues bearing her portrait is an important question, and Monica D'Agostini argues that she did issue the gold stater herself.[48] Demetrios II did not issue any coins celebrating his partnership with

[40] Eldamaty 2011: 45-48.

[41] Minas-Nerpel 2011: 67; Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023: 195.

[42] Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 150, see nn. 23 and 24 for lists of attestations.

[43] BM EA 612; Lenzo 2015.

[44] Lenzo 2015: 222-223.

[45] Minas-Nerpel 2011: 69; see also Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023: 162.

[46] Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008: 211-212, 243-245, 249-250.

[47] Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008: 242-243;

[48] D'Agostini 2019: 44-48; Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023: 214-215.

Kleopatra; neither did Antiochos VII, but he did, however, issue coins bearing reverse images of the Isis headdress, which might have referenced his marriage and Ptolemaic backing.[49] One of the earlier Ptolemaïs-Ake bronze issues with jugate busts also had an Isis headdress on its reverse.[50] It makes sense if the Isis headdress was a detail introduced by Kleopatra, since it appears again on her joint issues with Antiochos VIII after 125 BCE.[51]

During her later queenly career Kleopatra Thea's presence on coins becomes stronger, when she is co-ruler with some of her sons. Coins from the brief reign of Antiochos Epiphanes in 128 BCE bear the reverse type of Tyche standing with a calathus on her head and holding a cornucopia. One suggestion proposes that this was an allusion to Kleopatra Thea as the power behind the child-king, presumably one of her sons whom she elevated to kingship during the conflict between Demetrios II and Alexander Zabinas.[52] When Kleopatra began her co-rule with Antiochos VIII in 125 BCE, all her silver coins and some of her bronze coins bore their jugate busts with hers in the foreground, and all the coins, including bronzes with no portraits gave her name first in the legend. One bronze issue from Antioch on the Orontes included an Athenian "New Style" owl on the reverse, which Wright argues was a design favoured by Kleopatra since Antiochos VIII abandoned it after her death. The owl also appears earlier in coins from the Ptolemaïs-Ake mint by Antiochos VII, where Kleopatra's presence was strong.[53]

For a brief period in 126/5 BCE, Kleopatra Thea issued coins in her name only at Ptolemaïs-Ake.[54] She issued silver tetradrachms with her obverse portrait done in Ptolemaic style with veil, *stephane*, and Isis-style ringlets. The legend included her *epiklesis*: ΒΑΣΙΛΙΣΣΗΣ ΚΛΕΟΠΑΤΡΑΣ ΘΕΑΣ ΕΥΕΤΗΡΙΑΣ, the "Goddess of Abundance".[55]

Acquiescence & Resistance

The coins just described were, in one sense, dialogical objects between ruler and ruled. On the one hand, they were issued by the ruler, at their behest, and with their approved portraits and favoured iconography. On the other hand, it was up to local mints to actually produce the coins, and local minting officials exercised varying degrees of independence when it came to including city emblems or adhering to traditional dynastic iconography or employing new propagandistic designs. For example, under Alexander Balas the Phoenician cities, including Tyre, Sidon, and Berytus, minted silver coins on the Ptolemaic weight standard and used the Ptolemaic eagle in

[49] Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008: 353, 366 (Antioch on the Orontes), 370 (Seleukeia in Pieria), 393 (Koile Syria?).

[50] Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008: 245.

[51] Wright 2009/10: 195; Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023: 216-217.

[52] Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008: 437-439.

[53] Wright 2008; Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008: 390, 475.

[54] See Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023: 148-149.

[55] Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008: 465-467; Muccioli 2003: 111; see also Ager and Hardiman 2016: 169-170; D'Agostini 2019: 55; Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023: 182-195.

a variety of poses, while the Antioch on the Orontes mint issued silver coins bearing the traditional Seleukid designs of Zeus Nikephoros and Apollo seated on the omphalos.[56]

It is unfortunate that there are no extant civic decrees from the cities of Phoenicia, Koile Syria, or the Seleukis extending thanks and honours to Kleopatra Thea and any of her husbands. These would provide the kind of evidence we seek for the existence of euergetistic relationships between this queen and kings and their subjects, akin to the decrees issued for her great-grandmother Laodike III.[57] Such inscriptions are illuminating, not just as public demonstrations of acquiescence to royal pressure, but because they show how subject polities framed their rulers' power — as part of a royal patrimony or recently won through bloody conquest (or both).

In addition, the expressions of acquiescence often contain important clues as to the narrative being created around queenly identity and power, for example by aligning a queen closely with her husband and children.

The field is not totally devoid of epigraphical representations, however. Excavations performed as part of construction work at Ptolemaïs-Ake in 1959 revealed a dedicatory inscription for Antiochos VII and *basilissa* Kleopatra Thea Eueteria.[58] It was a dedication by one of the *protoi philoi* who served as chief secretary of the army (ἀρχιγραμματεὺς τῶν δυνάμων) and was the deputized regional governor (ἀπολελειμμένος ἐπὶ τῶν τόπων). From Delos come two further inscriptions of the early 120s with dedications for Antiochos VII and Kleopatra Thea by other *protoi philoi.*[59] Such actions by royal agents helped encourage a culture of appeasing kings and queens. A precursor to this dedication type would be the c. 197 BCE dedication to Zeus Kasios at Aigeai, Cilicia by Themison, a minor member of the Seleukid family, for Antiochos III, his co-ruler Antiochos the son, *basilissa* Laodike, and her other children.[60] A bit closer to the regions of our present queens, there is an inscription observed in 1962 and said to have originated at Antioch on the Orontes. It records appreciation by a group of *theoroi* for the *agonothetes* Theophilos of Seleukeia in Pieria for his *philotimia* and *eunoia* toward Antiochos III, Antiochos the son, *basilissa* Laodike, and the children.[61] From the regency of Kleopatra I comes an inscription at Kition in Cyprus honouring someone for their *eunoia* toward "*basilissa* Kleopatra Thea Epiphanes and king Ptolemy and her other children".[62] Also from Kition is an inscribed honourific statue base celebrating a certain Agias the *archisomatophylax* for his *euergesia* to the city and his *eunoia* to Ptolemy VI and "*basilissa* Kleopatra his sister, Theoi Philometores, and their children."[63] These comparative examples show the compounding dialogue of praise for the royal family. One need not genuinely feel acquiescent toward the royals, but one could appear so by celebrating those who did. Put in that context, the inscription by the *protos philos* for Antiochos VII and Kleopatra Thea Eueteria could serve as a key component in a euergetistic process, by

[56] Houghton, Lorber and Hoover 2008: 212, 218-223, 238-241.

[57] Ma 2000: nos. 2, 17, 18, 26, 27, 28.

[58] Landau 1961: 118-119.

[59] *ID* 1547 & 1548; D'Agostini 2019: 54-57.

[60] Ma 2000: no. 20.

[61] Kraeling 1964.

[62] *I.Kition* 2020; see also Cheshire 2009: 360.

[63] *I.Kition* 2021.

modelling the sort of praise people should make and by creating a starting point for a chain of honours.

When papyrus scribes followed the standard formulae or protocols for naming and entitling rulers at the start of their documents, they engaged in a process of acquiescence which still left room for resistance. Formulae were useful for appearing to acquiesce with minimal creative effort: one could simply insert the standard phrase and avoid composing fresh flattery to the domineering ruler. As a sort of institutional acceptance, and a normalizing of the women's queenship (or Pharaoh-ship), the formulae referring to queens are indistinguishable from those referring to kings. They become interchangeable royal actors, from generation to generation. During the civil war, the choice was whether to use the conventional formulae for Ptolemy VIII and Kleopatra III or to use the new regnal dates and eponymous priests of Kleopatra II during her split from them and assertion of her sole rule.[64]

Another body of evidence provides a further instance of the way bureaucracy smoothed out the relationships between our queens and their subjects. The hoard of clay sealings found at Edfu contains slightly over one dozen female portraits which have been identified as portraits of Ptolemaic queens, specifically Kleopatras I, II, and III. Only Kleopatra I can be identified on the basis of comparison with a coin portrait, and the identifications of Kleopatras II and III are proposed on the basis of some divine associations and some jugate portraits with their male co-rulers who are known from coins.[65] From a bureaucratic standpoint, these queenly portraits served as symbolic guarantees of the validity and security of the economic and legal dealings among subject people. Public and private business could run smoothly, all in the queen's name, but it was all habitual and easy to do unthinkingly. Affix the queen's seal, represent your personal and communal acceptance of her dominance, but also keep that royal dominance at bay — reduced to the tiny circumference of the seal.

From an art historical perspective, the Edfu hoard portraits relate to the other known instances of our queens' representations in art. A prominent theme in these portraits is the divine association, a very significant element of the queens' characterization as powerful rulers. For example, the association with Isis, often signalled by the "Isis locks" ringleted hairstyle. This is seen in descriptions of Kleopatra Thea's coins (above) and the famous bronze portrait bust recovered from the Villa dei Papyri.[66] The Edfu hoard editors also point to a sealing portrait of Kleopatra I with ringleted hairstyle combined with an elaborate headdress, part of a jugate portrait with her son in which his identity as Horus makes hers as the queen-mother Isis even stronger.[67] Associations with Hathor are represented by headdresses with cow horns, lyriform around a solar disk, often depicted in combination with the vulture cap which is a significant divine emblem on its own; these are seen in the Edfu seals as well as relief carvings from Egypt and statuettes of Syrian provenance.[68]

[64] Minas-Nerpel 2011: 67.

[65] Van Oppen de Ruiter and Lorber 2017: 374-379.

[66] Ager and Hardiman 2016: 158-159.

[67] Van Oppen de Ruiter and Lorber 2017: 375; see also Cheshire 2009: 362-363, 374.

[68] Van Oppen de Ruiter and Lorber 2017: 375, 377; Lenzo 2015: 219, 221; Cheshire 2007.

There is a plethora of Egyptian evidence only cursorily represented here: Demotic and Greek papyri in the thousands, inscriptions, and numerous images of the queens in reliefs, statuary, and engravings. The examples above were selected as representative of the types of evidence in which queenly power was manifested, and because they correlate with the focus on how the dialogue between ruler and subjects which defined, extended, and limited the ruler's power. Important elements in that dialogue were royal titles and epithets, appearing in positions of prominence, and associations with divinities and supernatural qualities.[69]

The dominance and appeasement paradigm examines kingship, or here queenship, as the result of a dialogue between the ruler and subjects where the ruler's identity and the characteristics of their power are not entirely self-defined, but are also created through subjects' choices of honorific titles, attributions, and associations. Here, the Kleopatras do receive attributions of territorial dominance, for instance as the Ladies of the Two Lands. Other sources attest to their involvement in violent actions which were used to subdue enemies and threaten populations. From the other side, with the acquiescence of subject populations, the conventional usage of ruling titles in dating formulae, the existence of honourific inscriptions, and the use of royal portraits with specific connotations to religion and power can be interpreted as acceptance and encouragement of these queens' rulership.

Concluding Thoughts

It is not a coincidence that the queenly careers of Kleopatra I, Kleopatra II, Kleopatra III, and Kleopatra Thea provide some of the best examples for Hellenistic regnant woman-power. The Egyptian and Ptolemaic context was particularly influential. Ptolemaic methods for managing power struggles within their dynasty were, indeed, not entirely successful given the conflicts among family members of the second century BCE, but they did give rise to powerful queens. While the pharaonic identities of Kleopatra I, Kleopatra II, and Kleopatra III were not completely unprecedented, given the Horus name for Berenike II, it was Kleopatra I who first used the title *Pr-ʿ3.t*. Her daughter and granddaughter followed the practice—but not every other subsequent queen consort of the Ptolemaic realm. That is, it was not a hollow title; it carried historical weight and evinced a very real regnant power. We may well wonder how much of the earlier Egyptian history of female Pharaohs was remembered; Manetho's history writing indicates that it was to a certain degree, and was disseminated through Greek-language literature too. This awareness may have articulated a space within which these Ptolemaic queens could exercise ruling power and be represented as regnant to a greater extent than other Hellenistic queens elsewhere.

Kleopatra Thea, although raised in the Ptolemaic context, did not have the same experience as her sister and mother. Her grandmother Kleopatra I had no difficulty transforming from a Seleukid princess into a Ptolemaic Pharaoh, but she also enjoyed different circumstances, for example not having to deal with a succession of three spouses. Quite likely Thea did her best to live out the kind of woman-power experienced by her grandmother, mother, and sister in Syria, but was markedly less successful due to a different dynastic culture, a different geopolitical

[69] Muccioli 2013.

reality, and the immediate events there. Based on the numismatic evidence, she felt that allusion to Ptolemaic heritage and political backing was a viable route to domination and acceptance among the cities of Phoenicia and Syria, and for a period it was. There were more traditional Seleukid forms of representing her queenly stature, as Thea Eueteria, which worked well, and Kleopatra did also play up this identity through her coins.

As mentioned earlier after the summary of the four queens' careers, we might consider longevity as a criterion for a successful royal career. If so, these women had it. The resiliency to stick around, no matter which king happened to be co-ruler, no matter the war, no matter the economic disasters in the kingdom, can be viewed as a marker of power. Related to the notion that being difficult to remove testifies to a queen's power is the importance of her co-ruling relationships. Unlike Ptolemaic and Seleukid kings, who generally did not swap female co-rulers for each other, these Kleopatras did. Or, alternatively, they transferred from one king to the next, providing a measure of dynastic continuity.

The importance of the royal couple, or trio, has been the subject of study elsewhere, and also emerged in the PRAEW conference discussions.[70] It shifts the emphasis of Macurdy's woman-power away from envisioning a sole-ruling female king, where womanly authority replaces that of masculine kingship. Instead, looking at the ruling couple or trio raises the possibility of defining woman-power as something other which augmented and enhanced man-power, even to the extent of being a necessary part of the total package of ruling authority. If a king could not supply this essential aspect of rulership, then he needed a queen or even queens to complete the construction of ruling power in his domains. Seen in this light, the Kleopatras' careers may represent a peculiar phase of Hellenistic queenship development, when entanglement with Egyptian precedents brought a new dimension to the definition of the *basilissa*. The personalities and circumstances of these specific women opened the door for new configurations of power.

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Prestige or Power? Cleopatra I, II, and III

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In the PRAEW Conference, we have paid particular attention to Olympias and the Argead women as the foundresses of Hellenistic queenship in an unstable political environment. These women displayed many different aspects of power and leadership. In contrast, second-century Ptolemaic queens operated within an established tradition that constrained their freedom of action.[1] Their status derived principally from legitimacy.

When we investigate the prestige and power of Cleopatra I, II, and III, we can draw on a rich dossier of varied primary sources unequalled by any other Hellenistic kingdom. Different sources shed light on different aspects of prestige and power, and they do not necessarily build up a consistent picture. Anne Bielman Sánchez and Giuseppina Lenzo already provided an expansive investigation of the primary sources relating to the two first Cleopatras. The present study adds Cleopatra III, and differs from Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo in other ways. It includes seal impressions with royal portraits as primary sources; and where Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo write of the institutional status of the queen, I distinguish between prestige and power and attempt to define specific powers of the queens as well as avenues of influence that could have enhanced their institutional power. A side issue is the paradigm of male-female duality as the basis for royal legitimacy. The concept is applicable to the Ptolemaic couples of the third century, but loses much of its explanatory power in the period of interest to us.

1. Precedence

Precedence in dating protocols and other primary sources is one of the principal clues for assessing power relationships in the Ptolemaic system. Overwhelmingly, the king took precedence over the queen, but the second century presents us with a few unusual patterns.

Cleopatra I was the first Ptolemaic queen to take official precedence over a male coruler during her brief joint rule with her young son Ptolemy VI, 180–178/7.[2] Historians have had no difficulty in accepting that she was at least titular head of state; in fact this interlude has often been described as a regency.[3] The change in policy toward the Seleucid kingdom after the queen's death tends to support the assumption that she actually directed the government. The

[1] Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023: 27–68.

[2] For the date of her death, see Caimi 1977. In Greek documents the dating protocol typically took the form βασιλευόντων Κλεοπάτρας τῆς μητρὸς θεᾶς Ἐπιφανοῦς καὶ Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Πτολεμαίου θεοῦ Ἐπιφανοῦς (reigning Cleopatra the mother, Thea Epiphanes, and Ptolemy son of Ptolemy, Theos Epiphanes), see Caimi 1977: 125, continuation of note 2. In demotic it typically took the form *nɜ Pr-ꜥɜ.w Klwptrɜ tɜ mw.t tɜ nṯr.t ntj pr jrm Ptlwmjs sɜ Ptlwmjs pɜ nṯr ntj pr* (The pharaohs Cleopatra the mother, the Goddess Who Appears, with Ptolemy son of Ptolemy, the God Who Appears), see Eldamaty 2011: 32–33.

[3] The notion of a regency was challenged by Caimi 1977 and refuted by Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015b.

only previous Ptolemaic widow, Berenice II, was assassinated before she could assume a role in the next regime. So far as we know the first Cleopatra escaped this fate, perhaps because she was the sister of a powerful foreign king.

After the marriage of Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II, the queen is not named in the dating protocols of documents written before 170, even though the title of the priest of Alexander indicates that she was included in the dynastic cult along with the king.[4] Cleopatra II first appears in dating protocols from the triple rule of Ptolemy VI and his two siblings. Most sources give precedence to Ptolemy the Brother over Cleopatra the Sister.[5] But in four of five Greek dedications from Egypt dating before the triple regency, Queen Cleopatra is named before the younger Ptolemy, who is not accorded the royal title.[6]

The royal triad was depicted only once in an Egyptian temple, in a now-destroyed relief from the temple at Deir el-Medina.[7] The rulers appeared in their usual order of precedence — Ptolemy VI, followed by Ptolemy the Brother, with Cleopatra behind. The accompanying hieroglyphic text emphasised the primacy of Ptolemy VI by giving his complete Egyptian titulature, but only one cartouche for each of his coregents.[8] The coregents are similarly subordinated in inscriptions from Esna and other hieroglyphic sources.[9] Ptolemy VI is frequently depicted alone in temple decorations, for example at Esna, yet his dynastic epithet is almost invariably expressed in the plural, as The Gods Who Love Their Mother, even though all associated epithets are expressed in the singular.[10] This usage is not unique to Esna and seems to express divine kingship inherent in all members of the ruling triad. Matters may have been different outside of Egypt: honourary statues of Ptolemy VI and Ptolemy the Brother were erected at Ptolemais in Cyrenaica (*OGIS* 124 = *IGCyr* 843; *IG Cyr* 338), but no evidence survives that Cleopatra II was associated in these honors.

Dating protocols and inscriptions from the reign of Ptolemy VIII, Cleopatra II, and Cleopatra III invariably name King Ptolemy first, then Queen Cleopatra the Sister before Queen Cleopatra the Wife.[11] Temple decorations depicting Ptolemy VIII with his two queens also give precedence to Cleopatra the Sister, who is portrayed standing in front of Cleopatra the Wife.[12] Cleopatra the Sister is omitted from sources dating from the years of her revolt and subsequent exile. But in these same years, the participle of the protocol in Greek changed from the plural βασιλευόντων in use since the joint reign of Cleopatra I and Ptolemy VI (except for the first reign of Ptolemy

[4] *P. Tebt.* 3.1.818 (174 B.C.), *P. Amh.* 2.43 (Soknopaiou Nesos, 16 March 173), *P. Tebt.* 3.1.819 (171).

[5] Blasius 2006: 534–543.

[6] *SB* 5.8956 = *CPI* 132 (Leontopolis); *I.Fay.* 2.120 = *CPI* 231 (Theadelphia); *OGIS* 734 = *CPI* 235 (Qusae); *SB* 8.9822 = *CPI* 587 (Egypt). These are plausibly dated before the triple regency by Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 27–28, 79–80. King Ptolemy the Brother takes precedence over Queen Cleopatra the Sister in *SB* 1.1436 = *CPI* 538 (Egypt).

[7] Egyptian Museum Berlin inv. 2115.

[8] Blasius 2006: 538–540, with pl. 1; Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 43.

[9] Blasius 2006: 540–543; Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 42–43.

[10] Derchain and von Recklingshausen 2004: 18, 24, 27, 31, 33, 43, 50, 53. 57, 61, 64, 75, 81, 89, 93, 97.

[11] Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 245–260.

[12] Minas 2000: 139–140; Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 260–270.

VI), to the singular, βασιλεύοντος Πτολεμαίου καὶ βασιλίσσης Κλεοπάτρας and the singular participle persisted in use even after the restoration of Cleopatra II to the ruling triad.[13] The reformed protocol restored the usage of the kings through Ptolemy V and seems to emphasise the primacy of the king over his coregent(s).

A demotic papyrus from year 2 of the reign of Ptolemy IX, *P. Ryl.* 20 (Pathyris, 29 October 116) informs us that the kingdom was still ruled by a triad, Pharoness Cleopatra, Pharaoness Cleopatra, and Ptolemy the son, Motherloving, Saviour. The two Cleopatras from the preceding reign took precedence over the king, even though he had achieved his majority. All later dating protocols give precedence to a single Cleopatra, usually identified as Cleopatra III, through the first reign of Soter II in Egypt and through that of Ptolemy X Alexander until autumn 101.[14] In temple inscriptions at Edfu and El-Kab (ancient Eileithysiaspolis) the Mistress of the Two Lands Cleopatra also takes precedence over her male coruler, who is sometimes explicitly identified as her son.[15] In a few cases, the cartouche of the king is left empty.

In every case where the corulers belonged to different generations, precedence went to the member or members of the older generation. Evidently, precedence was determined by seniority. Perhaps we should not assume that it was always a proxy for actual authority and power.

2. Coins

Cleopatra I was the last Ptolemaic queen to have an explicitly identified coin portrait, and only the second, after Berenice II, to be portrayed individually on coins struck during her lifetime. At the time of Cleopatra's coin issue, another coinage devoted to a Ptolemaic queen was already current: gold *mnaieia* in the name of Arsinoë Philadelphus, issued with regnal dates by Cypriote mints since 193/2, and by Alexandria without dates, beginning probably after the marriage of Cleopatra I to Ptolemy V. The unique portrait coin of Cleopatra I (BM inv. 1978,1021,1; Fig. 1) is a gold *mnaieion* bearing her portrait on the obverse, with her royal title, but without her cult epithet Thea Epiphanes; the reverse depicts the child Ptolemy VI, also with the royal title.[16] The

[13] Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 303, 347.

[14] At least one royal oath of this period also gives precedence to Queen Cleopatra, see *P. Tebt.* 1.78 (Kerkeosiris).

[15] Eldmatay 2011: 46–50.

[16] The novel character of this coin and its provenance from the commercial market (ex Leu 20, 25–26 April 1978, lot 180) were cited as reasons to doubt its authenticity by Consiglio 2014: 34–36, repeated in his chapter in Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 423–424. In fact, the reputation of the auction house and the numismatists who handled the coin is above reproach, and the monogram cited as problematic also occurs on a tetradrachm depicting Ptolemy VI as an adult (American Numismatic Society inv. 1959.254.66, Fig. 2). Consiglio also assigned a bronze coinage to the joint reign of Cleopatra I and Ptolemy VI, see Consiglio 2014: 62–67; id. in Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 427–428. This coinage, known as Series 6D in current numismatic parlance, usually bears a letter K between the legs of the eagle on the reverse, see Svoronos 1904: nos. 1375–1379; Lorber 2025: B578–B582. Consiglio, Bielman Sánchez, and Lenzo interpreted this letter as the initial of Cleopatra and regarded it as a reflection of the growing

queen is portrayed with three attributes borrowed from the numismatic iconography of Arsinoë Philadelphus, the stephane, the veil, and the lotus sceptre with spiral shaft. These shared attributes tend to assimilate the foreign-born Cleopatra to Arsinoë Philadelphus, who by this time was generally considered as the founding mother of the Ptolemaic line. The spiral shaft of the lotus sceptre was probably intended to evoke the Egyptian uraeus sceptre, a protective symbol often associated with the cartouche of Ptolemy II,[17] and just as it represented the protective function of the deified Arsinoë Philadelphus over her brother, so too here it may symbolise the protection of the queen-mother for her young son the king. Presumably, the ideological function of this coin issue was to honour Cleopatra as head of state and as parent of the king, the former a novelty in the history of Ptolemaic coinage.[18]

A small issue of Egyptian bronze coins, called Series 7A in current numismatic terminology, may reflect a special status for Cleopatra II (Figs. 3–5).[19] Each of its three denominations features a different deity on the obverse—Zeus-Ammon, Alexander or Alexandria in elephant headdress, Isis-Demeter—surrounded by a legend naming Queen Cleopatra in the genitive, while the reverse legend names Ptolemy the King, also in the genitive. The relative rarity of Series 7A implies a limited role in royal propaganda and perhaps a significant historical context. For more than a century this coinage was assigned to the joint reign of Cleopatra I and Ptolemy VI.[20] But a third-century bronze coinage naming and portraying Berenice II on the obverse and naming Ptolemy the King on the reverse demonstrates that the obverse/reverse format need not imply the precedence of the queen (Lorber 2018: B452–B463). Recent work on the chronology of Ptolemaic bronze coinage fixes the probable date of Series 7A after the Syrian invasion of 170/69.[21] Thomas Faucher and I proposed a date in or after 163, when Egyptian documents first attest the joint rule of Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II, and when the king instituted various reforms (Faucher and Lorber 2010: 47). Soon afterward, Olivier Picard and Faucher expressed their preference for a date around 150 and suggested a connection with preparations for the Syrian expedition of Ptolemy VI (Picard and Faucher 2012: 80). Accepting this date, Nicholas Consiglio, Bielman Sánchez, and Lenzo hypothesised that the coinage named both the queen and the king,

prerogatives of the queen and the primacy of Cleopatra I in her joint reign with her son. These authors were unaware that the largest denomination of Series 6D also occurs with an *omega lambda* monogram instead of the letter K, or with nothing between the eagle's legs (*SNG Milano* 310, with five additional examples in Sacred Animal Necropolis hoard F from Saqqara, see Price 1981: nos. 68–72; D. Wolf coll., GAE 698; Lorber 2025: B583–B584). On Series 6D the letter K is merely a control, not an allusion to the ruler.

[17] Cheshire 1982.

[18] The coinage of Berenice II has sometimes been associated with her supposed regency during the Third Syrian War, when Ptolemy III was absent on campaign in Syria, but such interpretations are inconsistent with the actual chronology of the Berenice coinage, see Lorber 2014: 146.

[19] Svoronos 1904: nos. 1380–1382; Faucher and Lorber 2010: 47; Lorber 2025: B643–B645.

[20] Poole 1882: lix–lx and 78; Svoronos 1904: nos. 1380–1383; Kromann and Mørkholm 1977: nos. 274–278; Lorber 2005: 144.

[21] Series 7A is not represented in the Sacred Animal Necropolis hoards from Saqqara (*CH* 9.692–694 = *EH* 1.204–206), deposited at the time of the invasion of Egypt by Antiochus IV, see Price 1981. A single specimen apparently represents the earliest coin in the Corinth hoard of 1948 (*IGCH* 264 = *EH* 1.41), lost in 146 and consisting otherwise of coins of Series 7B, see Thompson 1951; Faucher and Lorber 2010: 47–48.

children of Cleopatra I and parents of Cleopatra Thea, in order to legitimise Lagid intervention in the Seleucid succession.[22] I date the introduction of Series 6 earlier than do Picard and Faucher (Gorre and Lorber 2020: 166–168), and I am concerned that a low date for Series 7A strains the overall chronology of second-century Egyptian bronze coinage.[23] Ultimately, the date and historical context of Series 7A remain debatable, though we can be reasonably certain that the obverse legend refers to Cleopatra II.

A later Egyptian bronze coinage, Series 8 (Figs. 6–9),[24] has surprising implications. Exceptionally for Ptolemaic bronze coinage, it bears regnal dates, year 3 and year 4. These coins have been shown to belong to the reign of Cleopatra III and Ptolemy IX, and the dates are equivalent to 115/4 and 114/3 B.C.[25] In addition to regnal dates, the coins of Series 8 bear a *sigma-omega* monogram on the reverse, which is plausibly identified as an abbreviation of the king's *epiklesis* Soter. Contemporary bronze coinage of Cyrenaica bears the same monogram, usually with the additional abbreviation θε for Theos, occasionally alternating with fuller legends naming King Ptolemy Soter.[26] The practice of identifying the issuing king on Cyrenian bronze coins was introduced by Ptolemy VIII as king of Cyrenaica. But in Egypt there was no precedent for an inscription more specific than Ptolemy the King. Egyptian Series 8 also features a *kappa-rho* monogram or the letter *kappa* on the obverse. While the *kappa* might be the initial of Cleopatra, it is difficult to connect the *kappa-rho* monogram with the queen. This coinage suggests that the ninth Ptolemy used the Alexandria mint to advertise his preeminence over his coregent Cleopatra III, despite her precedence in textual sources. This may imply that the king had sole control of the mint, and perhaps even of the fiscal administration of which it was part. The iconography of Series 8 tends to corroborate this interpretation. From the late third century through the reign of Ptolemy VIII, the head of Isis-Demeter was regularly and prominently displayed on Egyptian bronze coinage. Yet Isis-Demeter was excluded from the obverse types of Series 8, which portrayed only Zeus-Ammon, Heracles, and Athena (the latter a type not used since Series 6). Inasmuch as Ptolemaic queens were identified ideologically with Isis, the exclusion of Isis-Demeter purged the coinage of any allusion to the queen. The next coinage,

[22] Consiglio in Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 434, 443. This is a variation on the earlier interpretation of Consiglio 2014: 73, 93, 95, 98, who dated Series 7A to the years when Ptolemy VI was absent on campaign in Syria, and submitted that the coinage was struck by Cleopatra II to pay mercenaries amid the dual crises of the war in Syria and revolts in the Pathyrite and Apollonopolite nomes. The wide dispersion of the scarce Series 7A could be consistent with a war currency struck to pay mercenaries. But Series 7C, struck under Ptolemy VIII, is also widely dispersed. The return of mercenaries to their homes may not be the sole, or even most important, explanation for such dispersion.

[23] Six coins of Series 6D, the penultimate subseries of Series 6, were found in Sacred Animal Necropolis hoard F at Saqqara, buried in 170/69 (Price 1981: nos. 67–72). If the subseries were produced in the order implied by their designations, we would have to assume either that production of Series 6E lasted for twenty years, or that production of bronze coinage lapsed for a time. Alternatively, it might be hypothesized that Series 7A did not precede Series 7B, but either interrupted or followed it.

[24] Svoronos 1904: nos. 1190–1191, 1193–1194; Lorber 2025: B741–B744.

[25] Faucher and Shahin 2006: 146–152, with discussion of earlier mint attributions and datings.

[26] Svoronos 1904: nos 1717–1722; Asolati 2011: nos. 101–108; Lorber 2025: B798–B806, B808–B809.

Series 9, introduced in 113/2, made the exclusion permanent by eliminating all obverse types except for Zeus-Ammon.[27]

The joint rule of Cleopatra III and Ptolemy X was explicitly recognised on the silver coinage of Alexandria (Fig. 10).[28] It cited the regnal dates of both, with the queen's date in the upper position, the position of precedence. After the exclusion of Cleopatra III from the bronze coinage of Series 8 and then Series 9, issued during her joint reign with Soter II, the double dating of the silver coinage is an official expression of her stronger authority during her joint rule with Ptolemy X.

3. Seal Impressions

Seal impressions with royal portraits are a somewhat ambiguous form of evidence. They may have been impressed by the ruler himself or herself, to guarantee the authenticity of a letter or an order. In other cases, the seal bearer may have been an official, and by impressing the seal he signalled that he was exercising authority delegated by the ruler portrayed on the seal. Still other persons probably used seals with royal portraits simply as an expression of loyalty, so that we cannot automatically infer delegated authority. In general, portraits of high artistic quality are likely to have belonged to the rulers, courtiers, or important officials, whereas those of lower artistic quality probably reflect loyalty to the rulers at lower levels of the administration, in the military, or among the population more generally.

A seal impression from Edfu in the Royal Ontario Museum bears a beautiful veiled portrait probably representing Cleopatra I, exceptionally accompanied by an inscription providing a date, year 20 (ROM 906.12.189; Lorber and van Oppen 2017: 84–85; Fig. 11). That would be equivalent to 186 B.C., the year Cleopatra gave birth to a royal heir (the event presumed to have inspired the synodal decree Philensis I). The seal impression also bears a personal name, Diopha. Such a seal could imply that Diopha was in service to the queen and used the seal as a token of delegated authority, but this is only a possibility and cannot be substantiated.

Cleopatra I is certainly depicted together with her son on a seal impression of unusually large dimensions in the Benaki Museum at Athens (MN 2447; Boussac 1989: 327–328; Fig. 12). The queen appears in the foreground with the attributes of an Egyptian goddess, and the child-king in the background wears the double crown of Egypt. Cleopatra's attributes include, specifically, the Hathoric/Isiac horns and disk crown, a vulture headdress, and the ram's horn of Arsinoë Philadelphus (an element omitted from her coin portrait)—and also a short corkscrew curl before her ear, the earliest incontrovertible evidence for a Ptolemaic queen portrayed with her hair dressed in corkscrew curls. Given the high quality of the portraits, the large size of the seal, and the likelihood that Cleopatra I exercised plenary authority during her joint rule with Ptolemy VI, it is reasonable to assume that the sealing conserved at the Benaki Museum was impressed from the queen's personal seal.

[27] Picard and Faucher 2012: 90–91. For the date of introduction, see Gorre and Lorber 2020: 164.

[28] Svoronos 1904: nos. 1727–1731; Mørkholm 1985: 12; Lorber 2025: nos 1517–1521.

On the whole, however, sphragistic sources suggest that second-century queens only rarely exercised or delegated authority independently of the king. The Edfu hoard of c. 800 clay seal impressions includes a large component of male royal portraits. Cleopatra VII is well represented by sixteen portraits.[29] But apart from the probable portrait of Cleopatra I dated year 20, there are only four good quality impressions of diademed female portraits without divine attributes, which represent at least two different second-century queens (Figs. 13–15).[30] Since these portraits were found in a temple archive, we may suspect that the attached documents, now lost, recorded personal offerings from the queens, an activity well in conformity with traditional female roles.

The Edfu hoard contains a further eight sealings with high quality jugate portraits of a royal pair, impressed from probably six distinct seals and representing three different kings with their consorts.[31] The subjects certainly include Ptolemy VI with Cleopatra II (Figs. 16–17) and Ptolemy VIII with a young consort, probably Cleopatra III (Fig. 18). The third king has been identified as Ptolemy IX and is shown with two different consorts, likely his second wife Cleopatra V Selene and his daughter Cleopatra Berenice (Figs. 19–20). In these conjoined portraits, the king always appears in the foreground, the position of precedence. He usually wears a headdress—the double crown of Egypt, an eagle headdress, or an elephant headdress—whereas the queen is always portrayed wearing the Hathoric/Isiac crown. These jugate portraits may perhaps be associated with benefactions offered to the Edfu temple by the royal couple, or with construction work completed under various rulers.[32] An additional thirteen impressions show crude jugate portraits of a royal couple, but because of their poor artistic quality they can hardly be attributed to particular kings or assumed to be the seals of courtiers or high officials. There are no jugate portraits with a queen in the foreground that might date from the joint rule of Cleopatra III with Ptolemy IX or Ptolemy X, though a large impression from the official Egyptian seal of Ptolemy IX, second reign, serves to date the hoard (ROM 906.12.332; Murray 1907/8: 65). And there are no portraits of a royal triad reflecting the long rule of Ptolemy VIII and his two queens.[33]

There is a group of ten to twelve sealings depicting a female head with corkscrew curls, the Hathoric/Isiac crown, and diadem (van Oppen and Lorber 2017: 356–358, 360–362; Fig. 21). Presumably these represent queens as opposed to goddesses, but most of the portraits are of poor artistic quality and a specific identification might be proposed in only one or two cases.[34]

[29] Lorber and van Oppen 2017: 81; van Oppen and Lorber 2017: 352.

[30] APM 8177-041; APM 8177-042 and 8177-036 (impressed from same seal); APM 8177-049.

[31] APM 8177-083, 8177-095, 8177-267 8177-274; ROM 906.12.192–195; see Van Oppen and Lorber 2017: 370–373, 375–379. See also Lorber 2016: 92–93.

[32] For the stages of temple construction, see Cauville and Devauchelle 1984: especially 36–41, 43–44. The gates were installed in the fifth year of Ptolemy VI and work resumed in his thirtieth year. The temple was consecrated in year 28 of Ptolemy VIII, when his wife was Cleopatra II; the kiosk on the roof was completed at the same time or shortly thereafter, and the pronaos was founded and decorated later in his reign. The contributions of Ptolemy IX are less well documented but probably included the decoration of the pylon.

[33] A triple depiction of Khnum, Satet, and Anuket may perhaps represent the Ptolemaic triad of Ptolemy VIII with his two wives, see van Oppen and Lorber 2017: 370.

[34] Lorber and van Oppen 2017: 83–84; van Oppen and Lorber 2017: 374.

Most of these sealings were probably not attached to a direct communication from a queen or one of her servants, but to documents deposited by persons whose seals expressed loyalty to the queen.

By way of comparison, the thousand portraits published by Helmet Kyrieleis from the Nea Paphos hoard of seal impressions include only three or four portraits of individual queens, one of them of fine Alexandrian style.[35] There are only three conjoined portraits of royal couples, one of a fine local style, none involving Egyptian attributes.[36]

4. Legislation and Administration Documents

The dossier of Egyptian administrative documents provides little evidence that Ptolemaic queens played a role in formulating policy or supervising the administration of the state before the reign of Ptolemy VIII. The surviving *prostagmata* of Ptolemy II, Ptolemy III, and Ptolemy IV were all decrees ordered by the king alone (see *C. Ord. Ptol.* 1–29).

No *prostagmata* of Ptolemy V and Cleopatra I survive. *SB* 16.12519 includes two decrees forbidding the sale of temples without the king's knowledge, one from year 13 (193/2) and the other from year 20 (186/5), both beginning with the words βασιλέος προστάξαντος. A fragmentary amnesty promulgated at the end of the Great Revolt, on 9 October 186, introduces its clauses with verbs expressed in the singular, e.g., προστέταχεν (*C. Ord. Ptol.* 34). There are also two administrative letters concerning judicial procedure, addressed to officials by the king alone and dated 184/3 (*C. Ord. Ptol.* 30–31).

In 165, Ptolemy VI and his two siblings issued a bilingual *prostagma* in Greek and demotic requiring every adult male of the *chora* to lease abandoned land and restore it to cultivation (*SB* 16.12821). But official documents from the beginning of the second reign of Ptolemy VI provide ambiguous evidence for a legislative or administrative role of Cleopatra II. In *C. Ord. Ptol.* 33 (11 August 163), Ptolemy VI alone wrote an order for the restitution of confiscated lands on the island of Thera. A little over a month later, the king alone wrote to an official about the implementation of the amnesty he had promulgated at the beginning of his second reign, but he also used the first-person plural (*C. Ord. Ptol.* 35 = *UPZ* 111, 22 September 163). Although the queen is mentioned alongside the king in petitions and official reports, the resulting orders (*UPZ* 14 and 20, *P. Berl. Zill.* 1) name the officials charged with executing the orders but do not indicate whether the instructions emanated from the king and queen jointly, or from the king alone. Nevertheless, a review of the documents persuaded Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo that the queen was actively involved in many narrowly targeted decisions, including responses to petitions, redaction of ordinances, oversight of military infrastructure, royal patronage of the priesthood, and promotion of gymnasia, even if the king was responsible for major policy decisions.[37] So far

[35] Kyrieleis 2015: Q17, Q18 (apparently representing the same queen as APM 8177-041), Q19, and perhaps Q20 (not certainly a queen). The subject of Q18 is a middle-aged queen, probably Cleopatra II.

[36] Kyrieleis 2015: R2, R3, R4.

[37] Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 67–69, 72–75.

we possess no text of a *prostagma* issued jointly by Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II, even if there are allusions to such decrees.[38]

The second marriage of Ptolemy VIII appears to coincide with a new prominence of the queens in legislation and administration. The first amnesty of Euergetes II, decreed in 145/4, was published on Cyprus using the singular verb προστέταχεν (*SEG* 12.549 = *C. Ord. Ptol.* 41). A grant of privileges to the troops, preserved in the same inscription and presumed contemporary, was announced in a letter from the king alone (*SEG* 12.549 = *C. Ord. Ptol.* 42). However, the protocol changed a few years later. An Egyptian papyrus of regnal year 31 (140/39) contains a petition about temple revenues and a royal response using plural terms in several passages, e.g., πρ[ό]τερο[ν] προστετάχαμεν (*P. Tebt.* 1.6 = *C. Ord. Ptol.* 47). In April of 135 Ptolemy VIII and his two queens sent two administrative letters to Boethos, *strategos* of the Thebaid, about the gymnasium of Ombos (*C. Ord. Ptol.* 48–49). Another very fragmentary Egyptian papyrus, *P. Tebt.* 3.1.699, dated to regnal year 36 (135/4), preserves parts of an amnesty decree with the verb expressed in the plural, προστετάχασι. Because no amnesty is otherwise attested for regnal year 36, nor any event that would justify one, Ulrich Wilcken suggested that the papyrus was a later copy of the amnesty of 145/4 and that its later date might explain the plural verb, since Cleopatra II and III were by then associated in the royal power (*C. Ord. Ptol.* 43). Ptolemy and his two queens addressed two letters to the priests of Isis at Philae responding to their complaints about excessive visitation to the island by officials (*OGIS* 137–139 = *C. Ord. Ptol.* 51–52). Finally, a resume of the amnesty of 118 and associated *prostagmata* was issued in the name of King Ptolemy and his two queens (*P. Tebt.* 1.5 = *C. Ord. Ptol.* 53).

This sample indicates that decrees and administrative orders were issued jointly by the eighth Ptolemy VIII and his queens from regnal year 31 to the end of their reign, even though the dating protocols of other documents changed to emphasise the primacy of the king after the revolt of Cleopatra II. Intriguingly, the first instance of a joint administrative order falls shortly after the probable date of the marriage of Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra III. It is natural to suspect there could be some connection between the marriage and the change in practice. It is conceivable that one or both of the royal women made it a condition for the second marriage and the triple regency.

The sharing of administrative power continued in the early reign of Ptolemy IX. In regnal year 2, four administrative letters were sent to the priests of Khnum at Elephantine and inscribed in stone (*OGIS* 168 = *C. Ord. Ptol.* 57–60). The names of the rulers are damaged in all cases, but enough survives to see that the king comes second in the order of precedence. In regnal year 3, on 12 April 114, the sovereigns issued a *prostagma* (βασιλέων προσταξάν[τ]ων) concerning the judicial competence of the *dioiketes* Eirenaios over officials of the fiscal administration (*P. Tebt.* 1.7 = *C. Ord. Ptol.* 61). This appears to limit the implication of the Series 8 bronze coinage, also dated to regnal year 3; evidently Ptolemy Soter excluded Cleopatra III from authority over the Alexandria mint, but not necessarily from authority over the fiscal administration of which it was a part. However, the participial construction is vague by its nature, and we cannot know certainly whether it was intended to include Cleopatra III or Cleopatra Selene or both. Later, in

[38] Van't Dack 1988: 230; Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 57–58.

108/7, Ptolemy Soter issued a *prostagma* to the Cyreneans jointly with his wife Queen Cleopatra (*SEG* 9.5 = *C. Ord. Ptol.* 45–46).[39]

Although it falls outside the scope of our inquiry into the power of the three second century Cleopatras, it is probably worth noting that Ptolemy X, in his interactions with temples and temple personnel, initially wrote administrative letters jointly with his wife Berenice III, but wrote on his own beginning in 96 (*C. Ord. Ptol.* 62–66).

5. State Cult (Greek Forms)

For three generations preceding Cleopatra I, deceased Ptolemaic queens had been enrolled individually in the Alexandrian dynastic cult, each with her own dedicated priestess. This Alexandrian tradition of posthumous individual cults for deceased queens ended with Arsinoë Philopator, so that that the prestige of Cleopatra I in Alexandria eventually declined in comparison with the commemoration of her predecessors. Promptly after her death, however, Cleopatra I was inscribed in the dynastic cult at Ptolemais in the Thebaid. This was a newer dynastic cult than that of Alexandria, having been founded by Ptolemy IV in 215/4, and its practices were apparently more fluid.

So far as we know, Cleopatra I had not been included in the cult of Ptolemais as the consort of Ptolemy V. But in 177/6, the chief priest of Ptolemais — the priest of Ptolemy Soter and Ptolemy Epiphanes Eucharistos — was associated with a priest of Pharaoh Ptolemy and Cleopatra the Mother.[40] Over the years other Cleopatras were added to the dynastic cult of Ptolemais, as attested by the dating protocols of demotic documents from Upper Egypt.[41] After 137 the priesthoods of Ptolemais were usually cited only in abbreviated form, without specifying

[39] Attributed to Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra II by Lenger 1980: 107–108.

[40] First attested in *P. dem. BM EA* 10230 (7 October 177). The priesthood of Queen Cleopatra and King Ptolemy her son, attested in *P. dem. BM EA* 10518 (Pathyris 10 April 176), is probably a scribal error, see Lanciers 2020b: 183. Other attestations in *ÉtP 8, 1957* (17 May 176); *P. dem. Recueil* 9 (14 July 176); *P. dem. BM Andrews* 42 (14 September 176); Minas 2000: 137–138.

[41] *P. dem. BM ined.* 10517 (September 171) lists separate eponymous priesthoods for Ptolemy VI and for Cleopatra II (Minas 2000: 137–138). *P. dem. BM ined.* 10505 (year 6 = 165) lists priesthoods for Ptolemy I, Ptolemy VI, Ptolemy II, Cleopatra II, and Cleopatra I, with the younger queen taking precedence over her mother (Minas 2000: 139). In the last year of Ptolemy VI *P. dem. Schreibertrad.* 42 (Thebes, 15 December 146) added a priestess for Cleopatra Daughter of Pharoah, named in the dating protocol between the priestesses of Cleopatra II and Cleopatra I. This is usually interpreted as evidence for a cult for the future Cleopatra III, see Chauveau 1990: 157–159, 166; Minas 2000: 140–141; Hölbl 2001: 192. C.J. Bennett, at www.instonebrewer.com/TyndaleSites/Egypt/ptolemies/fr.htm, sv. Ptolemy, son of Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II, suggested that the papyrus may refer to a priesthood for Cleopatra II or, because it is a later copy, it may be corrupt. *P. dem. ZÄS 77, 1941* (Thebes, 8 May 141) lists separate priestesses for Pharaoness Cleopatra (Cleopatra II), Cleopatra Daughter of Pharaoh (Cleopatra III), and Cleopatra Mother of Pharaoh (Minas 2000: 147). *P. dem. Tor. Botti* 8 (Deir el-Medina, 14 September 137) names priestesses of Pharaoness Cleopatra the Sister, Pharaoness Cleopatra the Wife, Pharaoness Cleopatra the Daughter (perhaps reflecting a new cult for Cleopatra IV), and Pharaoness Cleopatra the Mother (Minas 2000: 148–149).

the priestly titles or the persons holding them.[42] In 127/6 Ptolemy VIII neglected altogether to nominate eponymous priests at Ptolemais.[43] The last papyrus to cite the eponymous priests of Ptolemais is a Greek document, *P. British Library Gr.* 879 (Pathyris, 3 November 123); it lists two priests for the king (one for his altar of gold) as well as priestesses for Queen Cleopatra the Wife, Cleopatra the Daughter, and Cleopatra the Mother, Thea Epiphanes.[44] After the reign of Ptolemy VIII the priesthoods of Ptolemais were no longer cited at all.

We can assume that public rites were celebrated by the priests and priestesses of Ptolemais, at least in the heyday of the dynastic cult. But we have no information whether there were separate festivals in honor of any of the Cleopatras. Such celebrations, if they existed, were probably limited to the city of Ptolemais.

Artemo, daughter of Seleukos, *strategos* of Cyprus, was priestess of Cleopatra Euergetis from 142 to 131.[45]

In the 130s Ptolemy VIII added a new priesthood to the eponymous Alexandrian dynastic cult, the Hieros Polos of Isis the Great Goddess, Mother of the Gods. For decades the earliest known attestation was in a demotic papyrus believed to have been written during the revolt of Cleopatra II.[46] Otto and Bengtson, followed by most modern scholars, interpreted the new cult as an individual cult to Cleopatra III in the guise of Isis.[47] But Lucia Criscuolo has identified an earlier mention of the Hieros Polos, in an unpublished demotic papyrus from Tebtunis dated to regnal year 38, i.e., to 133/2, before the schism in the royal family (*P. Tebt.* Supp. 155; Criscuolo 2014: 123–125). If Isis is indeed to be understood as representing Ptolemaic queenship, Cleopatra II is implicated as much as Cleopatra III. Alternatively, this may be the first and only case of a traditional deity being added to the dynastic cult.

Cleopatra III did ultimately achieve the unique distinction of being the only queen to have individual cults during her lifetime within the Alexandrian dynastic cult. In year 2 of Ptolemy IX (116/5), three new priestesses of Cleopatra III were added to the eponymous cult at Alexandria. They were first named in dating protocols of demotic documents in April 115,[48] immediately after the Hieros Polos of Isis, and before the Athlophoros of Berenice II, the Kanephoros of Arsinoë Philadelphos, and the priestess of Arsinoë Philopator. Yet in the Greek text of the last synodal decree of the Ptolemaic era, published at Giza in October–November 112

[42] Minas 2000: 145.

[43] *P. Tor. Amen.* 15 (Thebes, 11–20 January 126); *P. Tor. Choach.* 13 (Thebes, 15 June 126); *P. Tor. Choach.* 10 (16 September 126); Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 308.

[44] Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 308.

[45] Mitford 1953: no. 12; *id*. 1959: 112–113. Artemo was also priestess of Arsinoë Philopator from 141 to 115, and this inspired Bagnall 1976: 68–69 to suggest that the cult to Cleopatra II may also have been Alexandrian. In the absence of confirmation from Egyptian documents, it is safer to assume a Cypriote cult.

[46] *P. Eheverträge* 37 (formerly dated 28 May 130). Republished by Martin 2009 as *P. dem. Memphis* 6, it is now dated 30 September 131.

[47] Otto and Bengtson 1938: 71–94.

[48] *P. dem. Cairo* 2.30602 and 30603 (both Memphis, 6 April 115) and *P. dem. Ashm.* 3 (Hawara, 21 April 115); Minas 2000: 157–159.

(*OGIS* 739), the title of the priest of Alexander and the deified Ptolemies is followed by the Hieros Polos of Isis, then the Athlophoros, the Kanephoros, and the priestess of Arsinoë Philopator. We cannot assume scribal error in such a conspicuous official document. The inclusion of the Hieros Polos together with the omission of the three eponymous priestesses of Cleopatra III tends to support the suspicion that the Hieros Polos was not a priesthood of Cleopatra III. Furthermore, the omission of her three priestesses recalls the exclusion of Cleopatra III from the Egyptian bronze coinage beginning in regnal year 3. This seems to be a second reduction in her public honours.

In February 108, the three priestesses of Cleopatra III reappeared in the dating protocols of demotic documents from Memphis.[49] This might seem to reflect another shift in the relations between the king and his nominally senior coregent. Dorothy Thompson has studied the inconsistencies in dating protocols of this period and has inferred that the administration in Alexandria failed to provide a clear standard for dating documents, resulting in inconsistent titulature which we must treat with caution.[50] Geographic patterns in these protocols suggest they may sometimes have been dictated by local officials or local scribal practice. Thus, even during the joint reign of Cleopatra III and Ptolemy X, when the queen's dominance is not in question, the priesthoods of Cleopatra III were omitted from the dating protocols of documents from Akoris.[51]

After Ptolemy Alexander replaced Soter II, yet another priesthood was created for Cleopatra III, a priest for life.[52] In 105 Cleopatra III assumed the priesthood of Alexander, which had always been held by males and had recently been dominated by Ptolemy IX and then Ptolemy X.[53] Cleopatra III thus claimed for herself a public honour strongly associated with the king.

Greek-style portrait heads of late Ptolemaic queens align with the textual evidence that they enjoyed individual worship. But these sculptures are uninscribed, so that the queens depicted can be identified only speculatively and the portraits cannot be dated to a specific reign.

6. Egyptian Temple Cult

Cleopatra I received honours in the Egyptian form of royal cult. The synodal decree Philensis I (issued in 185) incorporated her in the statue cult of Egyptian temples.[54] The authorisation of monthly public celebrations of her birthday repeated an honour earlier conferred on Berenice

[49] *P. dem. Recueil* 5 (Memphis, 6 February 108); *P. dem. Recueil* 4 (Memphis, 14 February 108); *P. dem. Recueil* 6 (Memphis, 15 February 108).

[50] Thompon 1989.

[51] *P. Dion* 20 (Akoris, 1 January 105); *P. Dion* 19 (Akoris, 19 January 105).

[52] Attested by the Greek papyrus *P. Ashm.* 1.22 (Hawara, 107/6) and probably also by a statue base dedicated at Salamis in the same year, honoring Helenos, who held the priesthood for life in addition to being *strategos*, high priest, and navarch of Cyprus, see Mitford 1959: no. 9 = *SEG* 17.577; Minas 2000: 159.

[53] Minas 2000: 160–161.

[54] Sethe 1916: 199–214, no. 37; Müller 1920: 31–56.

II. For the most part, however, the measures of Philensis I pertain to a joint cult for the royal couple. Although the synodal decree ordered that all priests should add the priesthood of the Gods Who Appear to their titles, the cult is only weakly attested by surviving priestly titles, mainly from Memphis, and later from Pathyris and Lyconpolis.[55] No cult statues have been attributed to Cleopatra I, and no surviving statue base is inscribed for her.

We have no synodal decree from the reign of Ptolemy VI establishing the Gods Who Love Their Mother as *synnaoi theoi* in Egyptian temples, but this status is implied by ancestor lists in several temples decorated during the reign.[56] There is a foundational inscription for their cult on Sehel Island (*OGIS* 111 = *I. ThSy* 302, ll. 20–24). Cults of the Gods Who Love Their Mother are also attested by priestly titles at Pathyris, Thebes, and Lyconpolis.[57] Over-lifesize cult statues from Karnak represent both Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II; cult statues of the king alone have survived from Alexandria and Canopus; while Philae has yielded statue bases inscribed for the king alone and for the king, queen, and their son.[58] No evidence suggests that the queen was worshipped separately from the king.

Numerous ancestor lists from temples decorated under Ptolemy VIII imply that he and his queens were *synnaoi theoi* of the principal gods.[59] Greek inscriptions from Kom Ombo, Elephantine, Philae, and Sehel Island also illustrate the integration of the cult of the Gods Who Do Good in Egyptian religious practice (*I. ThSy* 190, 242, 243; *I. Philae* 15, 19; *OGIS* 130 = *I. ThSy* 303). Egyptian worship of the Gods Who Do Good is further attested by priestly titles from Pathyris, Thebes, and Dakke.[60] Yet at Edfu there was a Prophet of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, indicating a separate cult for the king alone.[61]

For the reign of Ptolemy IX priestly titles attest a *w'b* priest of pharaoh at Pathyris in 115/4 (*P. Geb. Heid. dem.* 37; Lanciers 1991: 122) and a priest of Apis-Osiris and the Savior Gods Who Love Their Mother at Memphis (Vienna Stela 5849). Ptolemy X, his family, and his ancestors were *synnaoi theoi of* Isis Sachypsis at Theadelphia (*I. Fay* 2.112–113). But the practice of abbreviating priestly titles leaves us uncertain about contemporary royal cult at Pathyris and Medinet Habu.[62]

Apart from the monthly birthday celebrations for Cleopatra I, we have no evidence for individual worship of a second-century queen in the Egyptian temple cult.

[55] Lanciers 1991: 121, 125–128, 143–144.

[56] Minas 2000: 6–7 (Philae), 14–16 (Kom Ombo), 23–24 (Esna), 37–38 (Medamud, Saqqara).

[57] Lanciers 1991: 121–122, 125.

[58] Stanwick 2002: 107–109, nos. B7, B10–B14.

[59] Minas 2000: 5–6 (Dakke), 7–14 (Philae), 16–20 (Kom Ombo), 24–26 (Tod, Hermonthis), 29 (Qasr el-Aguz), 33–37 (Karnak), 38–39 (Xois).

[60] Lanciers 1991: 121–122.

[61] Lanciers 1991: 121.

[62] Lanciers 1991: 122, 124.

7. Temple Decorations and the Role of the Queen in Egyptian Royal Ideology

Upper Egyptian temple decorations, on the whole, confirm the primacy of the king in Egyptian royal ideology. But some temple decorations imply a rising status for the queens. We don't really know if temple personnel were solely responsible for the conception and design of these decorations, or if the Ptolemaic administration ordered or influenced them. In light of the increasing penetration of the Egyptian priesthood by Ptolemaic agents in the second century, official influence seems likely. Still, most of the examples pertaining to the status of queens are very limited geographically, usually to a single temple. They probably reflect the predilections of local priests and/or local officials rather than policies set by the central administration.

a. Hieroglyphic Inscriptions

The decorations in a very few Egyptian temples indicate that Cleopatra I, Cleopatra II, and Cleopatra III were occasionally accorded female Horus names, presumably by local priestly authorities in collaboration with local officials. This titulature implied the legitimacy of the queens as pharaohs in their own right, as opposed to the traditional view of queens as mothers and wives of Horus. The only previous queen to have had a female Horus name was Berenice II.[63]

The female Horus name of Cleopatra I was conferred during her marriage to Ptolemy V, appearing in both of his inscriptions in the Edfu temple (*Edfou* 1.517; *Edfou* 2.197; Eldamaty 2011: 31–32). The Edfu inscriptions are datable no earlier than c. 185, as the Great Revolt was suppressed only in August of 186. The female Horus name of Cleopatra I is much longer and more fulsome than the Horus name of her husband.

Female Horus name of Cleopatra I, from chapel of west staircase of Edfu temple:

> *Ḥr.t ḥwn.t sꜣ.t ḥqꜣ jr.t n ḥqꜣ.t mrj.t nṯr.w Bꜣq.t ḥts n Ḫnmw ṯꜣtj.t sꜣ.t Ḏḥwtj wr.t phṭj shr.t jb tꜣ.wj rdj.t n=s Nb.tj-rḫj.t nfr.w(=s) sqnj sj N.t nb.t Sꜣw ṯnj sj Ḥt-Ḥr m mrw.t=s wr sj Bꜥs.t Mw.t m ꜣḫ.w=sn*
>
> female Horus, young woman, daughter of a ruler, born of a female ruler, beloved of the gods of Egypt, who was formed by Khnum, female vizier, daughter of Thot, she great of power, she who brings peace to the Two Lands, who was welcomed by Nebtj-rechjt, who was made capable by Neith, Lady of Sais, who was made magnificent by Hathor in her love, who was made great by Bastet and Mut in their majesty).

Horus name of Ptolemy V, from Nobaireh decree: *Ḥr ḥwn ḥꜥj m njswt ḥr st jt.f* (Horus, the youth, who appears as king on the throne of his father).[64]

The language of the Horus name of Cleopatra I makes it clear that its motive was to legitimate a foreign-born princess, a need especially urgent after the prolonged Great Revolt.

[63] Eldamaty 2011: 24–29.

[64] Following Huß 2001: 505.

The long and elaborate female Horus name of Cleopatra I remains an isolated gesture. The female Horus names of Cleopatra II and Cleopatra III are extremely brief.

The great prestige accorded to Cleopatra I appears to have faded relatively quickly. The five-part Egyptian titulature of Ptolemy VI failed to acknowledge her role in ensuring his succession. His Horus name, *ṯnj m ḫt snsn Ḥp ꜥnḫ ḥr msḫnt.sn* (he who excelled in his mother's womb, who shared his birthbrick with the living Apis), alludes to his predestination as pharaoh from his very conception. But his Two Ladies name *m mɜꜥt sḫꜥjn sw jt.f* (in Maat his father caused him to appear) credits his father with his elevation to the throne.[65]

The evidence for Cleopatra II as female Horus dates from the early years of her marriage to Ptolemy VIII and is limited to a single site. In the temple of Montu at El-Tod (ancient Touphion) the cartouches of Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra II are preceded by two Horus falcons (*Ḥr.wj,* in the dual), and in one case they share a Horus name, *Ḥr.wj jr mr nṯr.w nṯr.wt* (two Horuses who do what the gods and goddesses love).[66] Other royal titles are also expressed in the dual in this temple, implying the dyarchy of the royal couple.

In the protocol of the Heraclion stela, dating from the end of the reign of Ptolemy VIII, Cleopatra the Wife has the title female Horus, Mistress of the Two Lands, whereas Cleopatra the Sister is designated with the more traditional title female ruler, Mistress of the Two Lands.[67] This seems to indicate a special distinction for the younger queen despite the precedence of her mother, and it may foreshadow her later use of the female Horus title during her joint reigns with Ptolemy IX and X.[68]

Numerous late first century inscriptions in the Edfu temple refer to the female Horus, Mistress of the Two Lands, Cleopatra.[69] In most but not all cases her single cartouche precedes the cartouche or cartouches of the king. This precedence of the queen corresponds to practice in secular documents, but it was unprecedented in Egyptian temples. The Cleopatra in question was almost certainly the third, though Mamdouh Eldamaty has attributed many of the inscriptions to the second Cleopatra. In any case, the female Horus, Mistress of the Two Lands, never received a full, five-part Egyptian Great Name, which remained the prerogative of pharaoh.

The female Horus title recurs in this period at a few other temples, including the temple of Hathor at Deir-el Medina.[70] Two inscriptions on the façade of the temple of Nekhbet at El-Kab (ancient Eileithyiaspolis) add the male epithet Mighty Bull to the female Horus title: "The words of Horus, the Mighty Bull, female Horus, Mistress of the Two Lands, Cleopatra".[71] This is

[65] The transliterations and translations follow Huß 2001: 546, based on an inscription at Philae.

[66] *Tod* II, nos. 285, 299; Grenier 1983: 34; Eldamaty 2011: 33–34; Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 205–207.

[67] Thiers 2009: 9.

[68] Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 353.

[69] Eldamaty 2011: 40–50.

[70] Eldamaty 2011: 43–45.

[71] Eldamaty 2011: 47–48.

presumed to celebrate the victory of Cleopatra III over Ptolemy IX, who is depicted alone in nearby offering scenes, but whose cartouches are left empty.

b. Offering scenes

In the second reign of Ptolemy VI, Cleopatra II became the first queen of her dynasty to be depicted in temple reliefs making a theologically significant offering to a deity or deities. This was traditionally the prerogative of pharaoh. It symbolised his role in sustaining the gods and thereby preserving the cosmic order. The innovation implies an important blurring of the religious/cosmic roles of king and queen, with the possible corollary that the queen could take the place of the king in preserving the cosmic order. On the great pylon of the temple of Isis at Philae, Ptolemy VI offers scepters to Isis and Cleopatra II is depicted standing behind him making an offering of ointment.[72] There is a second depiction in the hypostyle hall of the same temple of a Cleopatra making a theologically significant offering. According to Martina Minas Nerpel, she is Cleopatra II as wife of Ptolemy VIII.[73] But the same author earlier interpreted the king as Ptolemy IX, and this is the view of other Egyptologists (see below). Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo have identified Cleopatra II in other significant temple reliefs. At Edfu temple, in scenes realized under the reign of Ptolemy VI, Cleopatra II appears three times in the vestibule of the Treasury and once in the Laboratory, standing behind the king but offering the bouquet of eternity (comprising *renpet* palm branches symbolising the year, adorned with the sign of the *sed* festival), an object usually offered by gods to the king as a promise of a long life and reign.[74] In the Laboratory and Nile Chamber of Edfu temple, both Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II offer the *nemset* jug, with the implication that the queen participated along with the king in the purification rituals required before entering the presence of the gods.[75] A double scene on the second pylon of the Isis temple at Philae, decorated under Ptolemy VIII, portrays Cleopatra II as sole officiant before the gods.[76]

It is probably not anodyne that religious decorations at Edfu and especially Philae hinted that Cleopatra II could function as sole ruler. Edfu was home to a military colony. The garrison of Philae was housed in the temple precincts, as was common in Upper Egyptian temples, and soldiers and officers made Greek dedications to the rulers in the forecourt of the temple. Military personnel were involved in all the temples of the First Cataract region. Those at Kom Ombo, Philae, and Debod each left a dedication commemorating their involvement in temple construction on behalf of Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II (*OGIS* 110; *I. Philae* 11; *OGIS* 107).

A famous example of the interpenetration of the military, the bureaucracy, and the Egyptian priesthood is Herodes son of Demophon, garrison commander of Syene, who also held important priestly offices in the temples of Elephantine, Philae, and Abaton. His first dedication

[72] Minas 2005: 140–141 with fig. 9; Minas-Nerpel 2011: 61 with fig. 1.

[73] Minas-Nerpel 2011: 62, followed by Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 268.

[74] *Edfou* 2.161, 167–168, 190, 269–270; Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 122–123.

[75] *Edfou* 2.172, 197, 216–217, 241–242, 249; Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 123.

[76] *PM* 6.232; Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 209.

in the Satet temple of Sehel Island (*I. ThSy* 302) was offered on behalf of Boethos, *strategos* of the Triakontaschoinos and founder of two new military colonies, Philometoris and Cleopatra. The dedication commemorates the resolution of a religious association involving priests of Khnub and the dynastic cult to offer regular sacrifices and libations to Ptolemy VI, Cleopatra II, and their children, to celebrate an annual festival in their honour, and to celebrate the birthday of Boethos on the same day. Herodes offered his second dedication (*I. ThSy* 303) on behalf of Ptolemy VIII, Cleopatra II, and their children. By this time Herodes himself had become *strategos,* and the religious association now involved *basilistai* with both Greek and Egyptian names. Pelaias son of Bienchis, another high priest with offices in Elephantine, Abaton, and Philae, erected a statue at Elephantine to Ptolemy VI, Cleopatra II, and Ptolemy Eupator, with a bilingual inscription.[77] Other dedications from Philae and the First Cataract region, from both reigns, total eighteen and almost invariably include Cleopatra II, with only two exceptions.[78] The respect in which she was held in this militarised zone—also reflected in the names of Boethos' military colonies—probably foreshadows the defection of most southern garrisons to her side when she raised a revolt against Ptolemy VIII.[79]

Although Cleopatra III eventually usurped the king's prerogatives in the Alexandrian dynastic cult, temple offering scenes do not attest a parallel development in Egyptian royal ideology. Instead, they display varied approaches and much ambiguity. In a scene on the first pylon of the Isis temple at Philae Ptolemy IX renews the dedication of the revenues of the Dodekaschoinos by offering a field hieroglyph to Isis.[80] He is followed by two Cleopatras, each with the title female Ra, Mistress of the Two Lands (*Rˁj.t nb.t tꜣ.wj*). The first Cleopatra makes the wine offering, and the second merely offers incense while referring to the king as her beloved brother. Here, the king takes precedence over the two queens, whose identities are ambiguous. They may be Cleopatra II and III at the very beginning of the reign, in which case Cleopatra II has the distinction of making a theologically significant offering while Cleopatra III unexpectedly calls the king her brother.[81] More likely they are Cleopatra III, making the theologically significant offering, and the king's wife Cleopatra Selene, boasting a solar epithet otherwise known only for Cleopatra II and Cleopatra III. A relief from the temple of Hathor at Deir el-Medina, also dating from the first reign of Ptolemy IX, shows a Cleopatra with the title

[77] Maehler and Thissen 2010.

[78] The exceptions are *I.Philae* 10 = *OGIS* 122 = *CPI* 441 and *I.ThSy* 224 = *CPI* 414 (from Elephantine), both from the reign of Ptolemy VI. The former is one of two statue bases altered to eliminate the name of the original dedicant, which was replaced by the names of Isis and Horus. According to Carrez Maratray 2006: 246–249, the base originally named the Thea Philometor as dedicant. The same author assumes there was originally a third statue of Cleopatra II, now lost.

[79] Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015: 316, insisted on the lack of papyrological evidence at Philae using regnal dates of Cleopatra II and assumed that she never controlled the island. *BGU* VI 1448 from Elephantine equates her regnal year 2 with year 41 of Ptolemy VIII, and it is highly unlikely that Philae followed a different path from Elephantine.

[80] Minas 2005: 145 with fig. 6; Caßor-Pfeiffer 2008: 246 with fig. 4; Eldamaty 2011: 36. See. However, Minas-Nerpel 2011: 62, where the worshippers are identified as Ptolemy VIII, Cleopatra the Sister, and Cleopatra the Wife.

[81] Eldamaty 2011: 36 cites this inscription as evidence that Cleopatra II, not Cleopatra III, was the biological mother of Ptolemy IX.

female Horus, Lady of the Two Lands, standing before her son and offering flowers to the Theban triad, while the king offers Maat.[82] The Cleopatra in question has been interpreted both as Cleopatra III (Minas) and as Cleopatra II (Eldamaty). Despite the queen's precedence over the king, not only in the relief but in the accompanying inscription, her offering has been described as not theologically significant but only a generic offering suitable to a female worshipper. At Kom Ombo, Ptolemy IX and Cleopatra III are depicted in separate, parallel panels, each making a specific, theologically significant offering to Khonsu.[83] In this case the format implies the parity of the coregents. On the exterior of the temple of Nekhbet at El-Kab, where Cleopatra III is identified as Horus the Mighty Bull, Female Horus, Mistress of the Two Lands, she is depicted alone offering two sistra.[84] Once again, this might be a generic female offering, though kings could offer sistra to a goddess. The offering of Cleopatra III is countered by nearby scenes of the king offering alone—but with empty cartouches. The representations at El-Kab are generally interpreted as symbolising the victory of Cleopatra III over Ptolemy IX.

c. Investiture scenes

Investiture scenes are of interest mainly for Ptolemy IX and X, as they further reflect priestly uncertainty about the status of Cleopatra III, especially with respect to Ptolemy IX. There are two investiture scenes in the temple of Horus at Edfu, a temple closely associated with dynastic ideology. On the interior of the enclosure wall, Ptolemy IX, unaccompanied by any queen, receives the count of the years of his reign from Thot.[85] On the west exterior wall of the pronaos, Montu presents the sword of victory to Ptolemy IX and a Queen Cleopatra, assumed to be Cleopatra III.[86] The investiture of Ptolemy X is depicted on the gate of the temple of Haroeris at Qus: Haroeris presents the *jjt* sword to the king and an unidentifiable queen, again assumed to be Cleopatra III.[87]

8. Honourary Inscriptions and Dedications

Honourary inscriptions and dedications attest the reception of royal ideology by elite subjects of the rulers, especially officials, military men, and those with paramilitary occupations. In second-century Egypt such inscriptions are concentrated in two regions: Alexandria and its environs and the Arsinoite nome (the Fayum). Under Ptolemy VI and Ptolemy VIII a third concentration emerges in the First Cataract region at Egypt's southern border. The first two of

[82] Minas 2005: 141–143 with fig. 10; Eldamaty 2011: 43–45.

[83] Minas 2005: 144 with figs. 12–13.

[84] Minas 2005: 143–144 with fig. 11; Eldamaty 2011: 47–48.

[85] Preys 2015: 156.

[86] Preys 2015: 161.

[87] Preys 2015: 161.

these regions were heavily impacted by Greek immigration, whereas the last was a militarised zone with scant space for a civilian population.

The following observations are based on a corpus of 152 dedications from territories directly administered by the Ptolemies, of which 112 are from Egypt (including Upper Nubia).[88] The corpus includes both direct dedications expressed in the dative or genitive, and *hyper* dedications to traditional gods on behalf of the rulers. Such *hyper* dedications are especially characteristic of Egypt. On Cyprus, and to a lesser extent in other external territories, it was common to honour the king alone. But Egyptian dedications typically included the queen and sometimes other family members.

Greek dedications provide a window of sorts on the reception of Cleopatra I by the elite of the Ptolemaic kingdom. Of fourteen direct dedications from the reign of Ptolemy V, ten were offered to the king, and only four to the king and queen together. The weak representation of the queen in this group of dedications may be explained in part by the fact that nearly half the reign of Ptolemy V elapsed before his marriage, but arguably more by the fact that five of the ten dedications to the king come from Cyprus. *Hyper* dedications, overwhelmingly from Egypt, attest more favourable reception of the queen. Of fourteen such dedications, only two were offered on behalf of the king alone, one of which definitely antedated his marriage.[89] The majority of the *hyper* dedications, twelve, were offered on behalf of the king and queen. Insofar as we know the occupations of the dedicators, military officers are strongly associated with dedications naming the king alone, while dedicators to or on behalf of the royal couple are more diverse, including not only military officers but a gymnasiarch, a chief of police, priests, and a religious association.

In the reign of Ptolemy VI we again see different patterns in Greek dedications from Egypt as opposed to those from external Ptolemaic possessions. Outside Egypt the king is commonly honoured alone; in addition, three Cypriote dedications honour Ptolemy Eupator.[90] But of four *hyper* dedications from external territories, all include the queen.[91] As noted previously, there are four Egyptian dedications to King Ptolemy and his two siblings datable before their triple regency, but only one from the triple regency itself, a possible sign of negative reaction to the dynastic struggles and disorders in the *chora* that characterised their joint reign. The great majority of dedications from Egypt honour Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II together, often with their children. Still, of twenty-nine Egyptian dedications, five honour the king alone.[92] For both direct and *hyper* dedications the known dedicators are predominantly military men, and nearly all of the military dedicators included the queen in their dedications.

An innovation from the reign of Ptolemy VIII is the offering of dedications to a queen alone. The king himself erected a dedication on Crete to Cleopatra Thea Philometor, his own sister; a

[88] The corpus is a subset of a dossier of honors published in Lorber 2024.

[89] *OGIS* 92 = *CPI* 582; *OGIS* 94 = *I. Akoris* 1 = *CPI* 310.

[90] *OGIS* 125 = *I. Kourion* 39; *OGIS* 126 (Palaipaphos); *OGIS* 127 (Palaipaphos).

[91] *OGIS* 115 (Arsinoë in the Peloponnesus); *SEG* 37.321 (Kalaureia); *IG* 12.3.331 (Thera); *SEG* 20.142 (Amathus).

[92] *I. Fay* 2.120 = *CPI* 231 (Theadelphia, 170/69), a *hyper* dedication; *OGIS* 103 = *CPI* 359 (Ptolemais in the Thebaid); *I. ThSy* 224 = *CPI* 414 (Elephantine), a *hyper* dedication; *OGIS* 122 = *I. Philae* 10 = *CPI* 441 (Philae); *SEG* 55.1847a = *CPI* 589 (Egypt, 152/1).

civic magistrate of Alexandria erected a dedication at Canopus to Cleopatra III; and on Delos King Ptolemy son of King Ptolemy Euergetes made a dedication to his cousin Queen Cleopatra Euergetis, wife of his father.[93] It is noteworthy that two of these three dedications to queens alone were offered by members of the royal family but also noteworthy that a public official dared to exclude the king from his dedication. Remarkably, there are no direct dedications to the king or royal family from Cyprus, and only a single *hyper* dedication from Amathus (*SEG* 38.1501).[94] Otherwise, the dedications from this reign are overwhelmingly consistent: thirty Egyptian dedications honor Ptolemy VIII together with one or both of his queens and sometimes their children, as opposed to a single dedication offered to the king alone (*OGIS* 128 = *CPI* 604). In addition, a single *hyper* dedication from Cyrene names the king alone (*SEG* 18.738). Based on the decline in dedications naming the king alone, it would appear that Ptolemy VIII was held in lower esteem than his older brother, especially on Cyprus but also in Egypt.[95] Once again, the majority of dedications were offered by military men or units, and the relative lack of enthusiasm for the king may correlate with the defection of an important part of the military establishment during the revolt of Cleopatra II. The dedications to queens alone are less significant, since two of the three were made by members of the royal family and thus express official ideology rather than its reception.

For the reigns of Ptolemy VI and of Ptolemy VIII approximately one Egyptian dedication survives for each year of rule (30 for Ptolemy VI, 31 for Ptolemy VIII). The frequency of dedications in Egypt declined under Ptolemy IX and X, especially the frequency of dedications offered directly to the rulers (as opposed to *hyper* dedications).

Only one direct dedication from Egypt can be attributed with certainty to the reign of Ptolemy IX, and it honors the king alone (*OGIS* 169 = *I. Alex* 31 = *CPI* 38). Six additional direct dedications come from Cyprus and Cyrenaica, of which four honour the king alone and two the king, queen, and a child. For Ptolemy X there are no direct dedications from Egypt that can be attributed with certainty. Three direct dedications have been found on Cyprus, two honouring Ptolemy Alexander alone and the third, from Amathus, an altar of King Ptolemy and Queen Berenice Theoi Soteres,[96] proving that they were married before 107, or at latest before 105 when Cyprus became the kingdom in exile of Ptolemy IX. An implication is that dedications including the king's children need not automatically be ascribed to the reign of Ptolemy IX.

The frequency of Egyptian *hyper* dedications may also have been suppressed during the ten-year joint reign of Cleopatra III and Ptolemy IX. One, from Temple A at Narmouthis, names Cleopatra III before the king (*I. Fay* 3.157 = *CPI* 227). A second *hyper* dedication names Queen Cleopatra (III) before King Ptolemy and Queen Cleopatra his sister, i.e., his wife, and the children (*CPI* 592). A third, again from Narmouthis and explicitly dated 116/5, names the king and his wife without the senior ruler (*SEG* 59.1757A–B = *CPI* 275–276). Six *hyper* dedications, five from Egypt

[93] *SEG* 38.918 (Crete); *I. Delt* 1.10 = *CPI* 102 (Canopus); *OGIS* 144 = *I. Delos* 1330.

[94] Mitford 1953, 149–151, cited the meagerness of Cypriote epigraphy regarding Euergetes II as evidence that he was unpopular on Cyprus.

[95] This may be contrasted with the exaggerated claims of popular hatred for Ptolemy VIII in literary sources, e.g., Diod. 33.6, 33.12, 33.22b; Just. 38.8.6–7, 38.7.11; Polyb. 34.14.6–7.

[96] *OGIS* 181 (Palaipaphos); *SEG* 25.1102 (Nea Paphos); *I.Amathonte* 11.

and one from Delos, name the king alone.[97] These are often assigned by epigraphers to the second reign of Ptolemy IX in Egypt, but in fact only one is explicitly dated to the second reign. Two others, paired inscriptions from the temple of Hermouthis in Narmouthis, bear the regnal date year 22 which confusingly implies they were inscribed during the reign of Ptolemy X (*I. Fay* 3.158–159 = *CPI* 279–280).

The seventeen *hyper* dedications from the reign of Ptolemy X, all from Egypt, approximate the earlier frequency of one per each year of reign. Four of these dedications name Cleopatra III before the king.[98] Seven are offered on behalf of the king alone, of which six are explicitly dated after the death of Cleopatra III.[99] Another five name the king and his wife, four of them explicitly dated after the death of Cleopatra III.[100] The last, from Oxyrrhynchus, names the king and his children (*SEG* 40.1573 = *CPI* 309). It appears that the frequency of dedications naming the ruler(s) increased after the death of Cleopatra III.

Because of repetitive epithets, or the lack of epithets altogether, it is not always possible to determine whether a dedication should be attributed to the reign of Ptolemy IX or that of Ptolemy X. A dative dedication from Qus honours Queen Cleopatra and King Ptolemy the Great Gods Philometores and Soteres, and their children (*OGIS* 167 = *I. Pan du désert* 104). The precedence of the queen points to Cleopatra III, in which case the reference to their children must be an inscriptional error or a misreading. A *hyper* dedication from Schedia names Queen Cleopatra and King Ptolemy Theoi Philometores Soteres and dedicates a *temenos* designated as a Cleopatreion (*OGIS* 738 = *I. Delt* 1.4 = *CPI* 110). Another *hyper* dedication from the Thebaid honors Queen Cleopatra and King Ptolemy her son and his children (*SEG* 20.671 = *CPI* 384). All three of these dedications honour Cleopatra III as senior monarch together with a male coruler. If all were erected during the reign of Cleopatra III and Ptolemy IX, they would bring the count of dedications naming Cleopatra III to a maximum of four, one direct and three *hyper.* This still seems a relatively weak showing for a shared reign of ten years. At the other extreme, if all the ambiguous dedications belong to the reign of Cleopatra III and Ptolemy X, they would total seven, one direct and six *hyper,* and this would correspond to the survival rate from the reigns of Ptolemy VI and of Ptolemy VIII.

There are several takeaways from the above analyses. First, the queens were more consistently included in dedications offered in Egypt than in the external possessions. Second, Ptolemy VI was more frequently honoured individually than was Ptolemy VIII, even though the queens were usually included in dedications from both reigns. This is a likely indication that Philometor was held in higher personal esteem by the Greek-speaking elite, who almost

[97] *SB* 5.8957 = *CPI* 222 (Aueris, 87); *I. Fay* 1.8 = *CPI* 261 (Crocodilonpolis, Arsinoites); *I. Fay* 3.203 = *CPI* 594 (Arsinoites or Heracleopolites); *I. Philae* 40; *SEG* 47.2144 = *CPI* 591 (Egypt); *OGIS* 170 (Delos).

[98] *I. Musée d'Alexandrie* 40 = *CPI* 26; *I. Fay* 1.6 = *CPI* 220 (Aueris, 104); *OGIS* 175 = *I. Fay* 1.69 = *CPI* 221 (Soknopaiou Nesos, 104); *I. Fay* 3.209 = *CPI* 246 (Theadelphia).

[99] *OGIS* 176 = *I. Fay* 3.200 = *CPI* 294 (Arsinoites, 98); *OGIS* 178 = *I. Fay* 3.201 = *CPI* 295 (Arsinoites, 95); *I. Fay* 3.202 = *CPI* 296 (Arsinoites, 94); *OGIS* 177 = *I. Fay* 1.70 = *CPI* 207 (Soknopaiou Nesos, 97); *OGIS* 179 = *I. Fay* 1.71 = *CPI* 208 (Soknopaiou Nesos, 21 November 95); *I Fay* 2.110 = *CPI* 242 (Theadelphia); *I. Philae* 270 = *CPI* 458 (101/0).

[100] *I. Fay* 1.7 = *CPI* 296 (Crocodilonpolis, Arsinoites, 101); *I. Fay* 1.84 = *CPI* 215 (Karanis, 95); *OGIS* 740 = *I. Fay* 3.152 (Magdola, 95); *I. Fay* 2.111 = *CPI* 243 (Theadelphia, 25 October 95); *OGIS* 180 = *I. Philae* 35 = *CPI* 459.

invariably expressed their loyalty to Euergetes II not as an individual but as a member of the royal family. Third, in the reign of Ptolemy VIII the queens attracted individual dedications, one of them an expression of loyalty by a civic official of Alexandria who dared to omit the king from his dedication. Fourth, the frequency with which subjects in Egypt offered dedications to the rulers seems to have declined during the coregency of Cleopatra III and Ptolemy IX, indicating a softening of elite support for the regime. The results for the reign of Ptolemy X are less clear: possibly there was a decline in dedications during the coregency with Cleopatra III and a rebound after her death, or possibly the frequency of dedications was consistent throughout the reign and consistent with the frequency seen under Ptolemy VI and his successor.

9. Agency and Ability

The first example of agency by a second century queen was the reconciliation by Cleopatra II of her brothers after Ptolemy VI had been a hostage of their uncle Antiochus IV (Liv. 45.11.6). Her success may bespeak good diplomatic skills, or possibly a strong personal influence over the younger of her brothers, since it was he who had to accept the elder brother back into Alexandria and into his position as senior ruler. It is probably also the case that she was advocating an outcome favored by the court and the Alexandrian populace.

The inclusion of Cleopatra II and III as co-issuers of royal decrees after 140/39 may reflect a condition set by one or both of them before allowing the marriage of Ptolemy VIII to the younger Cleopatra.

A seemingly remarkable example of agency by a Ptolemaic queen is the revolt of Cleopatra II against Ptolemy VIII. The revolt is attested in several heavily militarised areas of Egypt, including the First Cataract region, Kom Ombo, Edfu, Thebes, and the Heracleopolite nome. But we have no information about the genesis of the revolt. Did Cleopatra II conspire with military commanders and officials in Upper Egypt, or did the whole affair originate as a military revolt with which she agreed to associate herself?[101] In either case, Boethos, *epistrategos* of the Thebaid, probably played a leading role, at least in Upper Egypt. In an inscription in the gymnasium at Kom Ombo, the names of Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra III are erased, while those of Cleopatra II and Boethos were spared (*I. ThSy* 189 = *C. Ord. Ptol.* 48–49). This, together with the fact that Boethos was replaced as *epistrategos* after the revolt, are reasons for suspecting his involvement.[102]

[101] In the Heracleopolite nome, *potamophylakes* (river guards) were not paid between April and August of 131, and soldiers in the garrisons were unpaid for June–August, both periods antedating documents attesting the authority of Cleopatra II in October–November 131; see *P. Köln* 12.480–481 (dated by year 2 of Cleopatra II) and *P. Köln* 12.482–484 (dated by year 40 of Ptolemy VIII and referring to the arrears); Lanciers 2020a: 39. Arrears of pay were a common cause of military unrest and perhaps contributed to the revolt of 132–131.

[102] Maehler 1992: 210; Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 254.

The administration at Thebes may have chosen to support the revolt out of opportunism. Several serious fiscal irregularities occurred in the Theban region during the revolt.[103] But the brevity of the revolt in the *chora* scarcely allows us to criticise Cleopatra's supervision of the administration that acted in her name. It is noteworthy that the miscreants were brought to account as soon as Ptolemy's authority was restored, but perhaps they were removed for supporting Cleopatra, rather than for their fiscal misdeeds. Where the rebel queen displayed real shrewdness was in hostage taking. When she fled Alexandria in spring of 128 for the court of her son-in-law Demetrius II, she took the treasury with her.[104] After Ptolemy VIII recovered Alexandria, his silver coin issues were minimal. Possession of the treasury gave the queen in exile a bargaining chip that very likely enabled her to negotiate favorable terms for her return to power in Egypt in 125/4.

Another example of queenly agency is the response of Cleopatra IV to her rejection by Ptolemy IX, who according to Justin was compelled to divorce her by Cleopatra III, despite still loving her (Just. 39.3.2). Cleopatra IV went to Cyprus and persuaded the garrison to join her, then offered it as her dowry to become the wife of the Seleucid claimant Antiochus IX (Just. 39.3.3). Justin's snippets of late Ptolemaic history do not inspire complete confidence, and we may wonder how the divorced queen managed such an ambitious project without attracting the attention of her inimical mother, unless she had help from powerful co-conspirators. Cleopatra IV is not visible in our primary sources, and she apparently accomplished her daring feat without benefit of any special measures that had enhanced her prestige. This is a reminder that important factors are not accessible to us, such as force of personality, powers of persuasion, and personal networks.

Even more momentous was the deposal of Ptolemy IX by Cleopatra III. Literary sources give her all the credit.[105] We have almost no primary evidence to clarify the course of events. Julian Olivier has pointed to elevated tetradrachm production on Cyprus as a hint that Ptolemy X prepared for several years for an invasion of Egypt.[106] In the pharaonic titulature of Ptolemy Alexander, his Horus name credits his mother for placing him on the throne of his father, and his Horus of Gold name refers to the rejoicing of his soldiers when he took possession of the Beloved Land in peace.[107] But this is ideology and the actual events remain a mystery. For my part, I find Olivier's explanation persuasive. Nothing in the primary sources suggests that Cleopatra III enjoyed sufficient power or elite support in Egypt to depose the king without outside help. The appointment of Helenos, tutor of Ptolemy Alexander on Cyprus, to the newly created post of priest for life of Queen Cleopatra, may have rewarded specific services.[108]

[103] *UPZ* 224 (Thebes, 15 October 131); *UPZ* 199 (Thebes, 10 November 131), with commentary of Bogaert 1988; *UPZ* 225 (Thebes, 18 November 131).

[104] Just. 39.1.4.

[105] Jos. *AJ* 13.278; Just. 39.4.1; Paus. 1.9.1–3; Por. *BNJ* 260 F 2.8.

[106] Olivier 2012: 408, 410.

[107] *Edfou* VIII, 283; Huß 2001: 644.

[108] Mitford 1959: 102–103, no. 9, with historical commentary 124–127.

Josephus represents Cleopatra III as titular head of the Egyptian army during the War of Sceptres.[109] The hieroglyphic inscription of the statue of the general Petimouthes son of Psenobastis seems to confirm this, though of course there are ambiguities.[110] The command authority of Ptolemy X is attested by a demotic letter of the soldier Panobchounis, written to his military unit in Pathyris, from Ptolemais in Phoenicia, which mentions the summons of pharaoh, pharaoh's departure for Damascus, and apparently the disposition of the troops he left behind.[111]

10. Inconsistencies in the Evidence

An important inconsistency in the evidence is between administrative documents and seal impressions. Administrative documents from the reign of Ptolemy VIII reveal a consistent pattern: beginning in 140/39, decrees and administrative orders were issued jointly by the king and his two queens. Yet both the Edfu and Nea Paphos hoards of seal impressions include very numerous impressions from seals depicting Ptolemy VIII alone. I know of no sealing that portrays a king with two queens. In order to reconcile the conflicting evidence, I hypothesise that the king usually acted unilaterally in administrative matters, but chose to associate the queens when issuing certain orders, especially highly visible decrees. We cannot assume that the queens played a role in formulating the content of the orders promulgated by the royal triad.

The disjunction between administrative documents and sealings continues in the joint reign of Cleopatra III and Ptolemy IX. Administrative letters giving precedence to the queen have no counterparts in seal portraits.

A second major inconsistency is in the expressions of support for the queens by elite groups in Egypt. In Egyptian temples reverence was expressed in hieroglyphic inscriptions and in offering scenes, and it appears that each temple devised an individual program with respect to the queen. In contrast, Greek dedications were stereotyped and more-or-less comparable from place to place. What is more, we have only a few offering scenes enhancing the prestige of Cleopatra II under the reign of Ptolemy VI, whereas Greek dedications normally included the queen(s) in his reign and that of Ptolemy VIII. These patterns changed somewhat in the late second century, when female Horus names precede the cartouche of Cleopatra III in several different temples. Yet other evidence, including a decline in Greek dedications giving precedence to Queen Cleopatra, suggests a diminished status for the senior monarch during her joint reign with Ptolemy IX.

11. Conclusions

It is an oversimplification to think of the second century as a period of powerful Ptolemaic queens. The situation changed over time, and not in a linear or cumulative fashion. The status

[109] Jos. *AJ* 13.348–350, 352–353.

[110] Turin, Museo Egizio 3062; Quaegebeur in Van 't Dack *et al.* 1989: 88–108.

[111] *BM dem.* inv. 69008; Clarysse and Winnicki in Van't Dack *et al.* 1989: 50–61.

of Cleopatra I as the first female head of the Ptolemaic state was extraordinary. But apart from the dual participle βασιλευόντων in dating protocols, little suggests that Cleopatra II differed greatly in status from earlier royal wives throughout her joint reign with Ptolemy VI. The reign of Ptolemy VIII seems to have been a key period of change for the queens. After his marriage to Cleopatra III decrees and administrative orders began to be issued not in the name of the king alone, but in the name of the king and his queens. As noted in the preceding section, this acknowledgement of the authority of the queens need not imply their exercise of power over the administrative apparatus.

Evidence of various kinds attests the increasing prestige of the second century Cleopatras, but we still have to make large assumption to tie prestige to actual power. Individual state cults to queens and royal daughters at Ptolemais, and their citation in the dating protocols of Upper Egyptian documents, surely promoted the prestige of royal women among the literate elites of the south. This could perhaps be connected with the fact that the revolt of Cleopatra II first manifested itself in Upper Egypt. The presence of military garrisons in Upper Egyptian temples, religious associations mingling soldiers and officials, and the authority of officials in temple affairs may provide links between temple decorations enhancing queenly prestige, honorary inscriptions including the queen, and the support of the southern garrisons for the revolt of Cleopatra II.

The rivalry between kings and queens reasserted itself after the death of Ptolemy VIII. But Cleopatra III was not the absolutely dominating figure portrayed in literary sources. Coinage from the third year of Ptolemy IX implies that he asserted his preeminence and excluded Cleopatra from authority over the Alexandria mint. The omission of her Alexandrian priestesses from the dating protocol of the synodal decree of 112 suggests a reduction in her public honors. A decline in Egyptian dedications naming the senior monarch during her coregency with Ptolemy IX seems to reflect a cooling of elite enthusiasm for the queen. If we can rely on the dating protocols of a few demotic papyri, Cleopatra III again enjoyed cultic honors in 108. She was at the height of her prestige and actual power during her coregency with Ptolemy X.

A major development with ideological implications is the abandonment, under Ptolemy VIII, of the norm of a ruling dyad in favor of a ruling triad in which the queens outnumbered the king. Dedications by subjects seem to reflect a certain shift in loyalty away from the person of the king to the whole royal family.

It is worth noting that the prestige of royal heirs rose more-or-less in tandem with the prestige of queens. Under Ptolemy VI and VIII, young princes served as priests of Alexander and the dynastic cult.[112] Deceased heirs, like Ptolemy Eupator and Ptolemy Neos Philopator, were enrolled in the dynastic cult.[113] And the Edfu hoard of seal impressions includes a significant group of child portraits, the princes often distinguished as heirs by the presence of a kerykeion.[114] In the context of Egyptian temples, the construction of mammisi tended to balance the emphasis on legitimacy derived from ancestors by adding a new emphasis on legitimacy transmitted to the royal heir. At Edfu there are even three reliefs from the early reign of Ptolemy

[112] Chauveau 2000: 257–259.

[113] Minas 2000: 142, 153–154.

[114] Lorber 2021: 43–49; Fig. 22.

VIII, on the east and west exterior walls of the naos and in the mammisi, that include a royal heir.[115] At Pathyris, the royal children were listed among the rulers in the protocols of demotic papyri.[116]

These developments, together with the recurrence of ruling triads, invite us to reassess the truism that Ptolemaic queenship was based on the principle of male-female duality, though this duality is still reflected in seal iconography. In the second century legitimacy inhered in the entire royal family, and the preferred ruling configuration (when possible) was a group of family members including at least one king, and usually embracing more than one generation. Near the end of our period, precedence may have reflected seniority in age rather than superior authority.

All this changed once again in the first century B.C., when queens several times served as heads of state in the absence of, or in preference to, a king (Berenice III, Berenice IV, Cleopatra VII).

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[115] For the scenes on the exterior of the naos, *Edfou* 4.91–93 and 248–249. Cauville and Devauchelle 1984: 51–52, followed by Chauveau 1990: 154–155, concluded that both reliefs depict Ptolemy Memphites. Minas 1997: 93–94, found the evidence unclear. Bennett at www.instonebrewer.com/TyndaleSites/Egypt/ptolemies/fr.htm sv. Ptolemy, son of Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II, n.5, claimed that both the younger son of Ptolemy Philometor and Ptolemy Memphites are depicted and distinguished by slight differences in their titulature. For the scene in the mammisi, see *Edfou Mammisi* pl. xiii; Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 371–375; Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley 2023: 108. Most scholars follow E. Chassinat in identifying the heir in the mammisi as the future Ptolemy IX, but Llewellyn-Jones and McAuley suggest a composite figure.

[116] Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo 2015a: 355–356.

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Fig. 1B

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Fig. 2



Fig. 2B

A Silver tetradrachm with portrait of Ptolemy VI, Alexandria mint. American Numismatic Society, inv. 1959.234.66.



Fig. 3. Series 7A bronze coin, Zeus-Ammon obverse, Alexandria mint. Courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group.



Fig. 4A



Fig. 4B

Series 7A bronze coin, Alexander or Alexandria obverse, Alexandria mint. Courtesy of Daniel Wolf



Fig. 5A



Fig. 5B

Series 7A bronze coin, Isis-Demeter obverse, Alexandria mint. Formerly Donald Doswell collection, author's photos.



Fig. 6A



Fig. 6B

Series 8 bronze coin, year 3 (115/4 BC), Zeus-Ammon obverse, Alexandria mint. Courtesy of Gemini LLC.



Fig. 7A



Fig. 7B

Series 8 bronze coin, year 3 (115/4 BC), Heracles obverse, Alexandria mint. Courtesy of Gemini LLC.



Fig. 8

Series 8 bronze coin, year 4 (114/3 BC), Zeus-Ammon obverse, Alexandria mint. Courtesy of Roma Numismatics.



Fig. 9
Series 8 bronze coin, year 4 (114/3 BC), Athena obverse, Alexandria mint. Courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group.



Fig. 10A



Fig. 10B
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Fig. 11. Edfu seal impression depicting Cleopatra I? Royal Ontario Museum, 906.12. 189.



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Fig. 13. Edfu seal impression depicting Ptolemaic queen. Allard Pierson Musum, 8177-042.



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Fig. 21. Edfu seal impression depicting Ptolemaic queen in guise of Isis-Demeter. Royal Ontario Museum, 906.12.182.



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Agrippina's Arrogant Fertility: Pregnancy and Power in Tacitus' *Annals*

Caitlin Gillespie

From the beginning of the Empire, imperial motherhood became a political issue of paramount importance. The power of motherhood was encapsulated in the concept of *fecunditas*, a quality that was constructed as a female virtue second only to *pudicitia*.[1] Scholars have shown how Augustus and his successors attempted to regulate and manipulate *fecunditas* through legislation, thereby acknowledging its importance to the Roman state as well as the family.[2] Demonstrable *fecunditas* could increase an elite Roman woman's social capital as well as that of her husband.[3] The *fecunditas* of imperial women had augmented significance, for women were the guarantors of the imperial succession. Imperial motherhood was a means to authority and celebration, as well as contestation and misfortune. It was a way for an imperial woman to claim influence and power, but it was not a means to keep it.[4] *Fecunditas* became especially dangerous if and when the emperor perceived a woman's fertility as threatening. This article considers how Tacitus employs *fecunditas* in his *Annals*. Tacitus records the complexities of imperial motherhood and explores how imperial mothers used their proven *fecunditas* to threaten established power relationships and question stereotypical Roman ideologies of gender and power. Agrippina the Elder embodies this threat.

Agrippina the Elder, wife of Germanicus, provides the central case study for Tacitus' representation of *fecunditas* in early imperial Rome. Tacitus refers to Agrippina's fertility more than any other figure in his surviving literary corpus, prompting reflection on the connection between fertility and female power. Agrippina gave birth to nine children, six of whom survived past infancy and childhood.[5] Her son Caligula succeeded Tiberius to become the next Roman emperor in the Julio-Claudian dynasty, and her daughter Agrippina the Younger became the wife of the emperor Claudius and mother of the emperor Nero. However, Agrippina the Elder was destroyed before she witnessed the rise of her children. Nevertheless, she was remembered as an emblem of exemplary motherhood and the embodiment of traditional Roman values. In Tacitus' representation, Agrippina recognizes her power within the imperial system as a producer of potential heirs. Her productive womb was the embodiment of hope for the continuity of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, but also threatening to rivals within the dynasty. She employs her proven fertility in unexpected ways – as a means to gather supporters in a political protest and to exert authority in primarily masculine spheres. The response of various internal audiences, as reported by Tacitus, has yet to be explored fully in scholarship. This article centers

[1] As is argued by Hug (2023).

[2] On the manipulation of fertility by Augustus and later emperors through legislation see for example Severy (2003) and Milnor (2005); see further Hug (2023, 139-188) on *fecunditas* and the state.

[3] Hug (2023).

[4] On *fecunditas* as a means to obtain power and influence, see for example O'Gorman (2000, 131) and Milnor (2012, 471); on *fecunditas* as a virtue as well as a liability, see Hug (2023, 192-212) on Agrippina the Elder and Octavia, wife of Nero.

[5] See Lindsay (1995) on the birthdates and birth order of her children.

on Agrippina and uses other mothers as comparative figures in order to consider the meaning of imperial fertility in Tacitus' *Annals*. The conclusions turn to the aftermath of the Julio-Claudian dynasty and attempts made by following emperors to control and claim the power of fertility for themselves.

Introducing Agrippina

Tacitus' Agrippina the Elder is a woman of unquestionable sexual chastity, whose ambition and arrogance increase the animosity of Tiberius and eventually lead to her exile and death.[6] She enjoyed popular favour as an imperial mother and reminder of her male ancestors, and travelled with Germanicus, presenting an image of dynastic strength and marital concord parallel to that of Livia and Augustus. She was a vital component of the lasting memory of Augustus during the reign of Tiberius and a symbol of Augustan morality and dynastic continuity. The family of Germanicus and Agrippina had a unique role in the propagation of the imperial dynasty, for their children were the only great-grandchildren that Augustus and Livia shared in common, and thus all the more valued as imperial heirs (cf. *Ann.* 5.1.2). In Tacitus' text, Agrippina is both retrospective and prospective, a mnemonic for Augustus and the mother and grandmother of imperial heirs.[7] Her power lies in her position within the framework of the Julio-Claudian *domus*. As Tacitus' audience knew well, this dynasty came to depend on Agrippina for its survival.

Documentary evidence from Agrippina's lifetime suggests that her single marriage, chaste motherhood, and Augustus' esteem for her were central to her positive evaluation by the populace. The *Senatus Consultum de Cn. Pisone Patre* (*SCPP*) indicates the public approval of Agrippina at the time of Germanicus' death: they recall Augustus' esteem for her, the noteworthy harmony of her marriage to Germanicus, "and the numerous children born by a birth most fortunate for those who survived," (*et tot pignora edita partu felicissumo eorum, qui/ superessent*, *SCPP* 138—39).[8] The document recognises the numerous children that Agrippina bore to Germanicus, as well as the realities of infant mortality. A short life expectancy, high infant mortality rate, and death in childbirth were common in the Roman world.[9] The legal text pays homage to Agrippina, adding a bittersweet note indicative of a social reality in first century Rome. Given the fate of many of her children after the death of Germanicus, the superlative *felicissumo* becomes ironic. Tacitus reflects contemporary opinion by repeating her identification with Augustus, as loyal wife of Germanicus, and as mother of his many children in his introduction to Agrippina in the *Annals* (Tac. *Ann.* 1.33.1). Her fertility gives her a degree of authority within the imperial system. Tacitus traces the vicissitudes of Agrippina's fortunes

[6] On Tacitus' characterisation of Agrippina see McHugh (2012); Kaplan (1979); L'Hoir (1994); Shotter (2000).

[7] O'Gorman (2000, 69) argues that Agrippina the Elder "stands both as *imago* of her ancestry and, through her childbearing potential, as a figure of the future." On Agrippina and the memory of Augustus see Gillespie (2020).

[8] The Latin text and translation of the *SCPP* is Potter and Damon (1999). On Tacitus and the *SCPP* see Talbert (1999); Woodman and Martin (1996, 137-40); Lebek (1999); Barnes (1998).

[9] See French (1986), Todman (2007) on infant mortality.

through four significant references to her fertility (Tac. *Ann.* 1.41.2; Tac. *Ann.* 2.43.6; Tac. *Ann.* 2.75.1; Tac. *Ann.* 4.12.3). Following these references allows us to establish parameters for the citation of fertility as a means to authority in various spheres and before various audiences.

Agrippina accompanied Germanicus on his military expeditions, like other officers' wives.[10] During the mutiny among Germanicus' troops on the Rhine, her status as an imperial mother elicits concern from Germanicus' advisors. Germanicus eventually convinces his pregnant wife to take Caligula and accompany the other officer's wives to safe haven amongst the allied Treveri (Tac. *Ann.* 1.40.2-41.3). Tacitus notes that he persuaded her to leave, "embracing her pregnant belly and their mutual son, lamenting much," (*uterum eius et communem filium multo cum complexus*, Tac. *Ann.* 1.40.3).[11] The embrace augments Agrippina's primary importance as an imperial mother, in the perspective of Tacitus' Germanicus. Germanicus and his officers recognise the vulnerability of a pregnant body, and seek to protect the potential imperial heir she may be harboring in her womb. Tacitus' explicit reference to Agrippina's physical condition creates a dramatic visual. Images of pregnant Roman women are rare, and the dangers of childbearing were well-known. Agrippina has visibly accepted her role as a dynastic mother tasked with the production of heirs. With at least nine pregnancies, Agrippina would have been pregnant or nursing (if she nursed) the majority of the time during the 15 years she was married to Germanicus.[12] Germanicus' embrace of her pregnant belly is loaded with meaning; Agrippina is reduced to her womb, the symbol of her dynastic significance.

The symbolism of the term *uterus* is manifold. Tacitus refers to a woman's womb only eight times in his extant corpus. In the *Dialogus*, he espouses a traditional Roman conception of motherhood that attributed a moral obligation to mothers, who were not only supposed to "reproduce Rome" by producing citizen sons, but also by instilling within them its values of and dedication to the good of the state.[13] Tacitus' Messala proclaims, "In truth, I think that the characteristic and peculiar vices of this city are all but conceived in the mother's womb," (*Iam vero propria et peculiaria huius urbis vitia paene in utero matris concipi mihi videntur*, Tac. *Dial.* 29.3). Women who raise their children themselves earn Tacitus' especial praise, while those who are morally corrupt or rely on wet-nurses are criticised (Tac. *Dial.* 28.1-29.1). A woman's dedication and familial *pietas* can make her an *exemplum*. Within the *Histories*, an unnamed Ligurian mother earns Tacitus' esteem through protecting her grown son from Otho's men: in the face of torture,

[10] Raepsaet-Charlier (1982) documents the presence of wives, daughters, and other female relatives traveling with magistrates across the provinces, including the epigraphic evidence that shows the women's benefactions to local communities and the honors they received in return. See Marshall (1975) on Roman women accompanying their husbands in the provinces, and the conclusion that these wives, especially governor's wives, were "extensions, for purposes of praise or blame, of their husbands' official *personae*" (126).

[11] Text of Tacitus' *Annals* is that of Heubner (1994). Translations are those of Damon (2012) with slight alterations. All other translations are my own.

[12] Swan (2004, 142) notes that Augustus adopted Tiberius in 4 CE after Tiberius adopted Germanicus; Germanicus' marriage to Agrippina was corollary to the adoption. Thus Agrippina and Germanicus were married from 4 or perhaps 5 CE until Germanicus' death in October of 19 CE.

[13] McAuley (2020, 27) observes that exemplary narratives, "show how mothers were supposed to 'reproduce Rome,' not only as bearers of citizen sons but also as transmitters and guarantors of its values of *virtus* and patriotism, which they were supposed to reinforce in their exemplary maternal behaviour and inculcate in their children."

she hides his whereabouts, pointing to her womb and indicating that he was hidden there (*uterum ostendens latere respondit*, Tac. *Hist.* 2.13.2). Among non-Romans, the eastern despot Radamistus escapes the Armenians on horseback with his pregnant wife Zenobia, whose shaken womb and quivering innards (*quati uterus et viscera vibrantur*, Tac. *Ann.* 12.51.2) force her to stop and request that her husband give her a noble death; she survives and is taken care of by his enemy Tiridates instead, and Tacitus presents her as a model of uxorial courage (Tac. *Ann.* 12.51.1-4). These positive models stand in sharp contrast to Agrippina the Younger, who condemned her son for ordering her assassination in her famous last words: "extending her womb, she demanded, 'Strike the belly!'" (*protendens uterum, 'uentrem feri,'* Tac. *Ann.* 14.8.5). On the birth of his daughter Claudia, Nero's senate demonstrated their sycophancy through innovative honors: "They had already commended Poppaea's womb to the gods and undertaken public vows, which were multiplied and discharged," (*iam senatus uterum Poppaeae commendaverat dis votaque publice susceperat, quae multiplicata exsolutaque*, Tac. *Ann.* 15.23.2). The honours reduce Poppaea to her womb, the embodiment of her purpose to become a dynastic mother. The remaining two references to a woman's womb both concern the pregnant wife of Arminius, discussed below (Tac. *Ann.* 1.57.5, 1.59.1). From the *Dialogus* to the *Annals*, the womb facilitates a moral evaluation of both the woman in question and her audience. It can signify domestic *pietas* or domestic disruption, loyalty or treachery, fertility or sycophancy.[14] In praising a woman's womb, men attempt to limit her significance; some women reject this limitation and unexpectedly employ dynastic motherhood as a means to authority in traditionally male spheres.

As a result of the mutiny, the pregnant Agrippina sets out with Caligula in her lap and the other officers' wives. The appearance of their little group is pathetic:

> *Incedebat muliebre et miserabile agmen, profuga ducis uxor, parvulum sinu filium gerens, lamentantes circum amicorum coniuges, quae simul trahebantur; nec minus tristes qui manebant. Non florentis Caesaris neque suis in castris, sed velut in urbe victa facies; gemitusque ac planctus etiam militum aures oraque advertere. progrediuntur contuberniis: quis ille flebilis sonus? quod tam triste <iter>? feminas inlustres, non centurionem ad tutelam, non militem, nihil imperatoriae uxoris aut comitatus soliti: pergere ad Treviros et externae fidei.* (Tac. *Ann.* 1.40.4-41.1)
>
> A female and pitiable column set out, the wife of the general a refugee, carrying her little son in her lap, the wives of friends lamenting around her, who were also being dragged away; no less sad were the men who remained. The sight was not that of a prosperous Caesar in his own camp, but like that in a captured city; the groans and breast-beating turned even the ears and eyes of the soldiers. They came out of their tents: "What is that tearful sound? What journey is so sad? Illustrious women, no centurion for protection, no soldier, nothing characteristic of a commander's wife, nor the usual entourage: they head towards the Treviri and the loyalty of foreigners."

The female *agmen* appears in a state of lamentation, and Tacitus adds pathos to their departure by suggesting that the Roman camp has become more dangerous than an actual

[14] See Ash (2007, 114) on the womb as a sign of loyalty, treachery, fratricide, corruption, sycophancy, and fertility in ancient literature.

battlefield: the image of the wretched band is compared to that of refugees leaving a captured city.[15] The women display a unified appearance of mourning, which has a direct impact on their audience. While Tacitus does not give words to their lament, they follow epic tradition and, like the mother of Euryalus, threaten to dissolve the warlike impulses of the army that witnesses their mourning.[16] The men come from their tents and, upon viewing the female *agmen*, question the absence of a male military escort, resent the Treveri, and demand that they remain (Tac. *Ann.* 1.41.1-3). Agrippina garners individual attention: "Then arose shame and pity and the memory of her father Agrippa, her grandfather Augustus. Drusus her father-in-law, and she herself a woman of remarkable fertility and preeminent modesty," (*pudor inde et miseratio et patris Agrippae, August<i> avi memoria; socer Drusus, ipsa insigni fecunditate, praeclara pudicitia*, Tac. *Ann.* 1.41.2). In envisioning the soldiers' reaction, Tacitus demonstrates that Agrippina's influence depends on her ancestry, her success as an imperial mother, and her noteworthy moral rectitude.[17] Her fertility is as well-known and praiseworthy as her lineage: even common soldiers have knowledge of Agrippina's ability to produce children *as well as* the knowledge that this ability is remarkable. At this point, she already has three sons, and will soon give birth again. By focalising the response to her departure through the soldiers, Tacitus suggests that her physical ability to have children distinguishes her amongst women, no matter their status. Finally, the soldiers are dismayed at the departure of her young son, Caligula (Tac. *Ann.* 1.41.2). Germanicus utilises his family's presence and absence in a speech attacking the actions of his men that assists in the resolution of the mutiny (Tac. *Ann.* 1.42.1-44.4). Agrippina's motherhood and domestic success thus catalyses military action. In Tacitus' text, her husband acknowledges that her presence has an undefinable power in the camp. Agrippina gives birth while away from Germanicus and is honoured by the local community before returning to his camp.[18]

[15] Barrett (2006, 144) clarifies that the women with Agrippina are the wives of other officers. On the *urbs capta* motif see Keitel (2010, 337-52); Paul (1982); Kraus (2020); Joseph (2020). Cf. Tac. *Hist.* 3.83 on the sacking of a city during civil conflict. Gillison (2003, 133-34) compares Agrippina directly to images of conquered non-Roman wives, paraded in Roman triumphs.

[16] On Euryalus' mother and the question of "womanly" wailing see Sharrock (2011).

[17] Koestermann (1.165) posits that the scene has been included in order to motivate the abrupt change in the mutineers. Goodyear (1.280) notes that Tacitus differs from Cassius Dio (57.5.5-7), in which the mutineers capture Agrippina and Caligula. Cf. Hurley (1989) on Suetonius (*Cal.* 9). Malloch (2004) compares Suetonius, Dio, and Tacitus and concludes that all three were using the same source material.

[18] Suetonius (*Cal.* 8.1) records that Pliny the Elder mentions altars at Ambitarvium inscribed, OB AGRIPPINAE PUERPERIUM ("in honor of Agrippina's delivering a child"). This reference is not in Pliny's history, and likely from his lost history of the German Wars. The altar was dedicated to Agrippina on the birth of a child whose identity remains disputed. Furneaux (I.239) argues that this was a child who did not survive; Lindsay (1995, 7-8) reviews the various arguments for Caligula, Agrippina the Younger, Drusilla, or an unknown child who was either stillborn or died in infancy. Other material objects also celebrate Agrippina's presence on the Rhine, as well as that of Caligula. E.g. a number of glass *phalerae* found in the Rhineland portray three figures, identified by Rose (1997, 35) as Germanicus, Agrippina, and Caligula.

Rapta Uxor, Una Muliercula: The Wife of Arminius

Agrippina is effective at motivating change when she follows Germanicus' plea, departs with the military wives, and brings attention to the spectacle through unified lamentation. Her image as both a retrospective and prospective figure of the imperial family is central to her success. Tacitus juxtaposes Agrippina the Elder with the wife of Arminius as expectant mothers on military campaigns with their husbands, the leaders of opposing armies. These women have a mirroring effect in Tacitus' narrative in their visible strength of spirit.[19] Tacitus associates both women with positive qualities of traditional Roman matrons, while also observing their more unfeminine strengths and ambitions.[20] While Agrippina's motherhood becomes a hallmark of her identity and celebration amongst the Roman populace, the pregnant wife of Arminius is captured by the Romans, and her son never meets his father.[21] The comparison between Agrippina and the wife of Arminius confirms that impending motherhood was a source of power unique to women that had an immediate impact on men.

Arminius' wife is unnamed in Tacitus' text, although Strabo identifies her as Thusnelda.[22] Tacitus denies her the individuality provided by a name, instead emphasising her identity as wife of Arminius and daughter of Segestes. Her life depends upon the actions of these two men. Both men are leaders of the Chatti, but Segestes forms an alliance with Rome, while Arminius rages against the Roman army. Segestes' antipathy towards Arminius is fuelled by personal reasons, "since Arminius had seized his daughter, betrothed to another," (*quod Arminius filiam eius alii pactam rapuerat*, Tac. *Ann.* 1.55.3). Tacitus' readers are reminded of Augustus' marriage to Livia, which Tacitus describes as an abduction from her husband Tiberius while she was pregnant with Drusus (*abducta Neroni uxor*, Tac. *Ann.* 1.10.5; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 5.1.2). The act is suggestive of a tyrant and creates an irreconcilable breach of trust between Segestes and Arminius. The animosity between father-in-law and son-in-law blazes during the Chatti's ongoing conflict with Rome, and in 15 CE Germanicus' army gains the advantage. Germanicus receives envoys from Segestes, and the following siege introduces Arminius' wife:

> Germanico pretium fuit convertere agmen, pugnatumque in obsidentes, et ereptus Segestes magna cum propinquorum et clientium manu. [4] inerant feminae nobiles, inter quas uxor Arminii eademque filia Segestis, mariti magis

[19] Cf. Pelling (1993, 79-81) on the mirroring of Germanicus and Arminius in Tacitus' text: both men are viewed in the context of their families, struggle against what they view as tyranny, value *libertas*, and are killed through the machinations of their own people. Cf. Edelmaier (1964, 134-39), who builds on the Vergilian echoes that reinforce this comparison, and Timpe (1970, 131-37).

[20] See Syme (1958, 535 n. 2), "For Tacitus virtue in women consists not merely in *pudicitia* but in *constantia* and *fides*." See McDougall (1981, 104) on Tacitus' Agrippina the Elder as the "embodiment of his ideal Republican matron." By contrast, Baldwin (1972, 90) argues that "the virtue of the elder Agrippina reposed in her unfeminine qualities," and the negative impression of Levick (1976, 207), who argues for Agrippina as "a virago, the weaknesses of her sex destroyed by her ambition." Both Baldwin and Levick base their observations on Tacitus' Tiberius' posthumous critique of Agrippina (*virilibus curis feminarum vitia exuerat*, Tac. *Ann.* 6.25.2).

[21] See Baltrusch (2012) on the question of Thusnelda's political position and the political influence of Germanic women in the first century CE more broadly.

[22] Strabo 7.1.4.

> quam parentis animo, neque <e>victa in lacrimas neque voce supplex, compressis intrasinum manibus gravidum uterum intuens. (Tac. *Ann.* 1.57.3-4)
>
> For Germanicus, it was worthwhile to turn his column around and fight the besiegers. Segestes was snatched away, together with a large band of relatives and dependents. There were noble women, among them the wife of Arminius, daughter of Segestes, more like her husband than her father in spirit, neither overcome by tears nor suppliant speech, with her hands pressed firmly together in her lap she gazed upon her pregnant belly.

The spectacle of the procession of Segestes' family centres on the wife of Arminius. Two aspects of her representation receive narrative attention: her defiance and her gaze. Her character suggests like-mindedness with her husband and an equivalent animosity towards Rome.[23] The wife's strength under pressure is implied by her lack of an emotional response. Rather, she focuses on her pregnant belly, literally clasping her hands over her unborn son, the future of Arminius' bloodline. Her movements are small and her agency limited, but she counters an image of the captive female barbarian as a symbol of Roman dominance and superiority over non-Roman others; rather, her gaze suggests defiance and powerful motherhood. She subverts Roman assumptions concerning women and non-Romans and rejects the model of her father in preference for that of her husband, communicating her entire message through a single gaze. Her pregnancy recalls the departure of Agrippina and the officers' wives, drawing the two women together in a similar moment, encapsulating a dramatic reversal of fortune.[24]

As Thusnelda and her fellows face their Roman captors, Segestes attests to his loyalty towards Rome from the time he was granted Roman citizenship by Augustus, reminding his audience, "Thus I accused my daughter's abductor, the violator of your treaty, Arminius, to Varus, who was then in command of the army," (*ergo raptorem filiae meae, violatorem foederis vestri Arminium apud Varum, qui tum exercitui praesidebat, reum feci*, Tac. *Ann.* 1.58.2). Segestes identifies Arminius as his daughter's abductor, reinforcing his prior language. He seeks clemency for his son (Tac. *Ann.* 1.58.4; cf. Tac. *Ann.* 1.57.2), and closes his speech by giving Germanicus a choice: "I admit that my daughter was led here by force. It will be yours to determine which is stronger, that she conceived a child by Arminius or that she was begotten from me," ('*filiam necessitate huc adductam fateor. tuum erit consultare, utrum praevaleat, quod ex Arminio concepit an quod ex me genita est,*' Tac. *Ann.* 1.58.4). Despite his rage over her capture, he leaves the fate of his pregnant daughter in Rome's hands. Germanicus displays leniency towards Thusnelda, whose fate is concluded in this way: "The wife of Arminius gave birth to a child of the male sex. The boy was raised at Ravenna; he was tormented by mockery which I will report in time," (*Arminii uxor virilis sexus stirpem edidit: educatus Ravennae puer quo mox ludibrio conflictatus sit, in tempore memorabo,* Tac. *Ann.* 1.58.6). Thusnelda and her son become an example of Roman clemency, similar to that

[23] Cf. Tacitus characterizes Livia as well matched to Augustus' arts and to the dissimulation of her son Tiberius (*cum artibus mariti, simulatione filii bene composita*, Tac. *Ann.* 5.1.3). Livia's characterization in her obituary juxtaposes Augustus and Tiberius and serves to increase the oppositional models of leadership and family devotion provided by both men. On Livia's obituary see Barrett (2003).

[24] On Thusnelda's departure, Pelling (1993, 79) notes that Tacitus presents us with a "tableau as memorable as that of Agrippina at 1.40-41." See further Gillison (2003, 131).

of Calgacus and his family under Claudius.[25] The life of Thusnelda after 17 CE is unknown, and Tacitus' account of the fate of her son is lost. Despite her swift exit from the narrative, the wife remains a concern of Arminius, who grieves her loss and utilizes her fate as an incitement to further aggression.

Arminius reacts to his wife's capture with renewed hostility towards Rome: "Seized wife, wife's belly subjected to servitude, drove Arminius mad beyond his innate violence, and he rushed among the Cherusci demanding arms against Segestes, arms against Caesar," (*Arminium super insitam violentiam rapta uxor, subiectus servitio uxoris uterus vaecordem agebant, volitabatque per Cheruscos, arma in Segestem, arma in Caesarem poscens*, Tac. *Ann.* 1.59.1). Arminius rages against the seizure of his wife, employing the same language cast against him by Segestes: from Segestes' perspective, Arminius was a *raptor* (Tac. *Ann.* 1.58.2) who seized his daughter (*rapuerat*, *Ann.* 1.55.3), but in Arminius' view, Rome is the real captor responsible for taking away Thusnelda's freedom and that of her unborn child (*rapta uxor*, Tac. *Ann.* 1.59.1). By defining Thusnelda's womb as subject to servitude, Arminius grieves for the future as well as the present. Similar to Germanicus, Arminius laments the altered fortunes of his wife and child, reducing her to her womb. As the embodiment of Arminius' legacy, her pregnant body is the driving force in his rage against the Romans.

Arminius' singular focus distills the entire defeat and departure of the captives into a personal attack on his individual household. As he speaks to his men, he insults both Segestes and the Romans:

> egregium patrem, magnum imperatorem, fortem exercitum, quorum tot manus unam mulierculam avexerint. sibi tres legiones, totidem legatos procubuisse; non enim se proditione neque adversus feminas gravidas, sed palam adversus armatos bellum tractare. (Tac. *Ann.* 1.59.2)
>
> "Excellent father, great commander, brave army, whose many hands carried off one little woman. Three legions, as many legates, succumbed to me. For I do not wage war through betrayal or against pregnant women, but openly against armed men."

Arminius blames the Roman army for the capture of his wife, adding offense through using the diminutive *mulierculam*. By mocking the Romans in this way, Arminius makes his wife's vulnerable body a symbol for Roman weakness and cowardice. Thusnelda's pregnant body becomes a mnemonic for freedom and the future, the twin aims of the rebellion. He is successful in rousing his people as well as other bordering tribes to warfare, and their revolt continues into *Annals* book two.

When Arminius accosts his brother Flavus, now a member of Germanicus' army, Flavus extols Rome's greatness and attempts to convince Arminius to surrender, saying that "neither his wife nor his son were being treated like enemies," (*neque coniugem et filium eius hostiliter haberi*, *Ann.* 2.10.1). Flavus attempts to assuage Arminius' anxieties about his family, but reminding Arminius of their captive state only increases Arminius' ire. The status of his wife and child continues to provide fodder for insults when he goes to war against Maroboduus and the Suebi. Maroboduus insults Arminius as a madman who took undeserved credit for the victory

[25] Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 12.37.4.

over Varus and his legions, "with great calamity for Germania and his own disgrace, since his wife and son still endure servitude," (*magna cum clade Germaniae et ignominia sua, cum coniunx, cum filius eius servitium adhuc tolerent*, Tac. *Ann.* 2.46.1). Maroboduus attempts to use the captive state of his family to inform his audience's perspective on Arminius. Furthermore, he attempts to erase the memory of Arminius' greatest achievement, the Varian disaster, through drawing attention to his failures as a husband and father. Arminius dies (Tac. *Ann.* 2.88.2), and the fates of his wife and child are not disclosed in the extant *Annals*.

From seized daughter to seized wife, pregnant captive to one little woman, womb subject to servitude to a mother living with her young son in exile, the wife of Arminius' identity shifts according to focalisation and the purpose of the narrative. She is the subject of her own actions when she gazes at her pregnant belly as she is led into captivity (Tac. *Ann.* 1.57.4), and when she gives birth (Tac. *Ann.* 1.57.6). This unnamed woman thus only has active agency when the focus is on her motherhood; motherhood is a form of power, through which women embody past, present, and future. Arminius attempts to harness this power in employing his wife's pregnant condition and sex as incitements to battle. Tacitus aligns Agrippina and the wife of Arminius through their pregnant condition, and each woman embodies both retrospective and prospective images vital to dynastic continuity amongst their respective peoples. The power of the womb is proven by the reactions of Tacitus' internal audience. While Agrippina's departure catalyses a conclusion to the mutiny, Thusnelda's captive state stokes the fires of Arminius' continued rage.[26] Neither woman has an overt political or military role, but both pregnant bodies have military and political effects.

Dux Femina

After her return, Agrippina remains a strong presence among the troops, so much so that she is more effective than the *dux* on one occasion. The army is surrounded by enemies, and Agrippina prevents the Romans from destroying a bridge:

> sed femina ingens animi munia ducis per eos dies induit militibusque, ut quis inops aut saucius, vestem et fomenta dilargita est. [2] tradit C. Plinius, Germanicorum bellorum scriptor, stetisse apud principium po<n>ti<s>, laudes et grates reversis legionibus habentem. [3] id Tiberii animum altius penetravit: non enim simplices eas curas, nec adversus externos <studia> militum quaeri. [4] nihil relictum imperatoribus, ubi femina manipulos intervisat, signa adeat, largitionem temptet, tamquam parum ambitiose filium ducis gregali habitu circumferat Caesaremque Caligulam appellari velit. potiorem iam apud exercitus Agrippinam quam legatos, quam duces; [5] compressam a muliere seditionem, cui nomen principis obsistere non quiverit. (Tac. *Ann.* 1.69.1-5)

[26] The extant *Annals* do not include the fate of Arminius' son; however, in 47 CE, the Cherusci requested that Claudius appoint a king to rule them, and he chose Italicus, the son of Flavus who was living in Rome at the time (*Ann.* 11.16.1). This suggests that Arminius' son did not survive to become a candidate to lead his people.

> However, the woman, great of courage, took on the official duties of a commander during those days, and gave clothing and bandages to the soldiers, when someone was in need or wounded. Gaius Pliny, author of the *German Wars*, writes that she stood at the end of the bridge, giving praise and thanks to the returning legions. That act entered quite deeply into the mind of Tiberius: for these were not guileless concerns, nor were the devotions of the army sought against foreign enemies. Nothing was left for commanders when a woman inspected the infantries, approached the standards, attempted largesse, as though it was not too ambitious that she led around the son of the general in the dress of a common soldier and wanted him called Caesar Caligula. Agrippina was already more powerful among the army than the officers, more powerful than the generals; the mutiny was suppressed by a woman, which not even the name of the emperor was able to check.

Agrippina's authority goes beyond her natal family to reach the entire army.[27] Tacitus cites Pliny the Elder's history of the German wars for his narrative, and his rare citation of a source suggests that Agrippina's actions are inexplicable in themselves. In defending the bridge, she creates a place for herself in the history of Germanicus' military achievements, breaking the invisible boundaries between traditionally male and female spheres of activity. She is assessed in the *Annals* based on her gendered performances – as a woman and productive mother, and as a manly matron performing a role not natural for members of her sex. Agrippina's actions are successful in the present, but negatively impact her future. Tacitus' Tiberius interprets Agrippina's collective actions in the camp as suggestive of a *dux*. Tiberius manages to combine a critique of Agrippina's celebration of her motherhood and the display of her child as a prospective leader with an evaluation of her military action. He also betrays his own anxiety over Agrippina's authority as stronger than his own name as *princeps*. Agrippina's performances on the Rhine allow Tacitus' readership to sympathize with the internal military audience that pities and respects Agrippina, but also prompt consideration of Tiberius' critical analysis. Tiberius identifies an incompatibility between Agrippina's ambition that arises from her motherhood and her actions that do not match expectations for model mothers.

Agrippina's appearances on the Rhine in support of her husband and his army illustrate the power of the image of dynastic motherhood. The combination of her ancestry and her productive marriage increases Agrippina's arrogance and authority, empowering her to adopt a leadership role similar to that of a general. Her continued appearances abroad with Germanicus confirm her importance as the embodiment of her ancestry and the future of the first imperial dynasty. As the year 18 CE opens, Germanicus tours the empire, and Agrippina and their youngest children accompany him (cf. Tac. *Ann.* 3.1.4). After crossing from Euboea to Lesbos, she gives birth for the last time, and Julia Livilla enters the world (Tac. *Ann.* 2.54.1). Agrippina is recognized by the local populace for giving birth away from Rome: in Mytilene and Methymna on Lesbos, Agrippina is honored as Θεά Αἰόλις Καρποφόρος, and is the only imperial woman to

[27] Moore (2010, 49) argues that Agrippina combines her feminine virtues with aspects of the "good general," acts out of loyalty to her husband, and thus receives a positive response from the soldiers. Gillison (2003) compares Agrippina to the wives of Tacitus' *Germania*.

receive this title.[28] This title confirms that Agrippina merited distinction on account of her fertility and the prospective image she offered for the imperial family. In Rome, Agrippina's fertility causes an implicit rivalry within the imperial household. In his second reference to Agrippina's fertility, Tacitus establishes that there is a hierarchy of power implicit in a woman's ability to produce children. The historian observes, "Also the wife of Germanicus, Agrippina, surpassed Livilla, wife of Drusus, in renown and fertility. But the brothers were singularly harmonious and unaffected by the rivalries of their family members," (*et coniunx Germanici Agrippina fecunditate ac fama Liviam uxorem Drusi praecellebat. sed fratres egregie concordes et proximorum certaminibus inconcussi*, Tac. *Ann.* 2.43.6). Tacitus creates an explicit hierarchy of female rivals in which Agrippina emerges victorious over Livilla, and establishes that this rivalry exists independent of their husbands. Drusus' wife gives birth to twin boys, bringing joy to Tiberius but anxiety to the populace, who consider Drusus' success as a misfortune for Germanicus' family (Tac. *Ann.* 2.84.1-2). Only one twin survives infancy (cf. Tac. *Ann.* 4.15.1).

The hierarchy created by successful mothers can be challenged or altered due to the death of a child or to the actions of the man with whom she is associated. For Agrippina, the death of Germanicus causes a swift change in fortune. Germanicus is killed by poison, and in his dying breath he begs his wife to tame her temper and display their children to the populace in order to gain sympathy (Tac. *Ann.* 2.72.1). After his death, the populace mourns for the death of the Republic, as well as the altered fortunes of Agrippina and her children: they pity Agrippina and regard her fertility as now "unfortunate" due to her uncertain future (*infelici fecunditate*, Tac. *Ann.* 2.75.1). Without Germanicus, she and her six children are all potential political targets. While reproductive power lends authority to a woman of a ruling family, that power depends upon the position, reputation, and survival of a woman's husband. Angela Hug argues, "Without the protecting influence of her husband, Agrippina's *fecunditas* was no longer a virtue."[29] I do not argue that the meaning of Agrippina's *fecunditas* has changed, but its valence has shifted. Agrippina has the sympathies of a portion of the populace, who honor her and pray for her children on the day Germanicus' remains are entombed in Rome (Tac. *Ann.* 3.4.2). Unfortunately, their prayers go unanswered.

In his final reference to Agrippina's fertility, Tacitus establishes that a woman's fertility may be weaponised against her. As Sejanus considers how to get rid of Agrippina and her children, he plans to use Livia and Livilla as agents of destruction:

> neque spargi venenum in tres poterat, egregia custodum fide et pudicitia Agrippinae impenetrabili. igitur contumaciam eius insectari, vetus Augustae odium, recentem Liviae conscientiam exagitare, ut superbam fecunditate, subnixam popularibus studiis inhiare dominationi apud Caesarem arguerent.
>
> Nor could he distribute poison amongst the three (sons), due to the exceptional loyalty of their guardians and the unassailable chastity of Agrippina. Thus he inveighed against her arrogance, and worked up the long-standing hatred of Augusta (Livia), the recent guilty conscience of Livilla, urging them to represent

[28] *IGRR* 4.22, 74, 75, 77; *CIL* 6.3998, 4352, 10563, 891; Rose 1997 cat. 90. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 2.54.1, 6.15.1 on which cf. Goodyear II.355; Suet. *Cal.* 7.

[29] Hug 2023: 202.

> to Tiberius that she, haughty because of her fertility, relying on popular enthusiasm, was eager for rule. (Tac. *Ann.* 4.12.3)

Sejanus advises the other women of the imperial household to attack the source of female power and represent a positive quality – a physical capability likened to a virtue – as a vice. The women should attest that Agrippina has become arrogant because of her fertility and that this superlative female quality has led to masculine ambitions to rule. After the death of Livia, Tiberius charges Agrippina and her son Nero with treason. Agrippina is exiled to Pandateria and dies. After her death, Tiberius accuses her of a masculine desire to rule, reflecting Sejanus' accusations, cited above (cf. Tac. *Ann.* 6.25.2).

Fertility and Co-Rule

Tacitus' repeated references to Agrippina's *fecunditas* prove that an imperial Roman woman's fertility was publicly known and celebrated by all levels of society. Agrippina's productive womb allowed her to lay claim to a type of power, but her unfeminine employment of her authority led to her destruction. Despite her pitiable end, Tacitus' Agrippina established that an imperial woman's successful motherhood could be a means to exert authority in non-domestic spheres, and other imperial women followed her lead. In *Annals* book 11, Messalina becomes a moral foil to Agrippina, known for her infidelities rather than her unquestionable chastity; nevertheless, Messalina still attempts to use her children with Claudius as props in her intended self-defense. As Claudius returns home and learns of her marriage to Gaius Silius, Messalina sends Britannicus and Octavia, proof of her own imperial fertility, to run to their father's embrace and encourage sympathy for their mother (cf. *Ann.* 11.32.2). When she comes within sight of Claudius, Messalina cries out for him to listen to her as the mother of Octavia and Britannicus; their common children wait for him at the gates of the city, but Narcissus prevents an interaction (Tac. *Ann.* 11.34.2-3). Messalina's plan and the children's presence suggest that proof of imperial fertility could be a powerful defense tactic even in a case of sexual misconduct; Messalina displays a villainous agency in deploying *fecunditas* as a means of self-defense. She is a shadow of the chaste Agrippina, whose mind is so corrupted by licentiousness that there is nothing honourable left (cf. Tac. *Ann.* 11.37.4). Agrippina's daughter takes a different tack.

As Claudius searches for a new wife after the death of Messalina, Agrippina the Younger's advocates employ her "proven fertility" and Augustan descent as key components in her bid to become his wife (*expertae fecunditatis*, Tac. *Ann.* 12.2.3). The freedman Pallas warns Claudius not to allow her to bring her son Nero into another household, and Vitellius cites her fertility again in his speech before the senate advocating for the change to the laws that will allow the marriage between uncle and niece. Tacitus' Vitellius argues, "Since everyone advises that the emperor marry, it is necessary to choose a woman notable for nobility, childbearing, and purity. Nor must we look far, for Agrippina is first in the eminence of her birth. Proof is given of her fertility and she is a match in probity," (*quando maritandum principem cuncti suaderent, deligi oportere feminam nobilitate puerperiis sanctimonia insignem. Nec diu anquirendum quin Agrippina claritudine generis anteiret; datum ab ea fecunditatis experimentum et congruere artes honestas.* Tac. *Ann.* 12.6.1). Vitellius' speech presents an ideology of rulership in Rome in which the emperor and his wife present a ruling unit. Agrippina is presented as a new Livia, who will co-rule with her husband (and

eventually with her son). Vitellius persuades the senate, Claudius marries his niece, and she becomes ruler in all but name (cf. Tac. *Ann.* 12.7.3).

Agrippina operates as if Roman rule is comprised of a husband-and-wife pair. This image is reflective of Hellenistic monarchs and represented on coinage. As Plantzos observes, the image of a male ruler and female consort was first designed in Ptolemaic Egypt and used in the Hellenistic East at large and in Rome during the late Republic and Julio-Claudian era; the image provided a symbol of "political strength and permanence".[30] Ptolemaic coinage featured current rulers on one side and their parents on the other, such as a series of gold octodrachms with King Ptolemy II Philadelphos and Arsinoë II on the obverse and Ptolemy I and Berenike I on the reverse.[31] The image of dynastic continuity shows a clear transfer of power from one ruling couple to the next. In the Julio-Claudian era, a sardonyx cameo known as the Gemma Claudia suggests an affinity with the Hellenistic predecessor: the two Agrippinas appear in jugate profiles with their husbands and facing each other, suggesting that Agrippina and Claudius presented a similar image of marital *concordia* as her parents.[32] Using the jugate portrait coins of Hellenistic ruling couples as a model, Roman moneyers presented a similar image of co-rule. Agrippina appears in jugate profile with the emperor Claudius on Roman coinage, and their profiles appear on opposite sides of Roman coinage as well (e.g. *RIC* 1^2 Claudius 119; *BMC* 75, *RIC* I^2 Claudius 81). Upon her son's accession, Agrippina appears with Nero in jugate profile or facing each other (e.g. *BMC* 8, *RIC* 1^2 Nero 6-7; *BMC* 1, *RIC* 1^2 Nero 1).[33] From one series to the next, Agrippina remains a constant. The coinage presents a problematic paradigm in which Agrippina maintains continuity in her own powerful role within Rome from one regime to the next. The images of Agrippina and Nero facing each other especially present an image of equal co-rulership in which a mother and son form a political unit. Nero fulfills his mother's intended role for him as an imperial successor, while claiming a place for herself in his principate.

Agrippina is noteworthy for appearing on coinage with her husband and her son during her lifetime: in this scheme, *she* is the symbol of dynastic continuity and political strength from one ruling pair to the next. While Agrippina herself was unlikely to have chosen her numismatic representations, Ginsburg observes, "coins presented the regime as it wished – or was thought to wish – to be seen".[34] The portrait scheme is inherited from Hellenistic royals and images of Agrippina as co-ruler are part of a new ideology for Rome. Each set of paired rulers are clearly modeled on the Hellenistic monarchs in composition and style; the scheme devised in the Ptolemaic court is thus adopted by the Roman ruling family and intended to give a similar impression of "dynastic unity, stability, and prosperity".[35] This idea is present in other public imagery as well, and prominent on the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias, where Agrippina appears on

[30] Plantzos 2021: 359.

[31] See Plantzos (2021) 360-361, Fig. 30.1, 30.2; the octodrachms are dated to c. 261/260-240 BCE. On the imagery of Ptolemy II and Arsinoë II across various media see Müller (2009, 156-386); on double-portraits of the Ptolemaic king and queen on coins see Müller (2009, 353-364).

[32] Wood 1988: 422 Fig. 13; Ginsburg 2006: 91-93.

[33] Mattingly I, clxxi-clxxii, 200, nos. 1-3; Rose 1997, Plate 36.

[34] Ginsburg 2006: 56 n.2.

[35] Plantzos 2021: 367-68.

a panel hand-in-hand with Claudius as well as one with Nero, where she crowns her son as Claudius' successor.[36] This image of Agrippina portrays her as having an active role in the succession.[37] By adopting a Hellenistic image and adapting it to current circumstances, Roman moneyers and image creators recognized Agrippina's claim to imperial authority across several regimes. From the coinage with Claudius to her images with Nero, she appears as the woman responsible for the successful transfer of power from one emperor to the next; remarkably, she retains her own position as the most powerful woman in the empire. She thereby separates herself from Hellenistic predecessors in image and ideology.

Tacitus acknowledges an ideology of shared rule in his text, as well as the view that this ideology was problematic. Both Tacitus' Livia and Agrippina the Younger imply that they had given their sons the rule of Rome as a gift that was intended to be shared (cf. Tac. *Ann.* 4.57.3, 13.13.4). Agrippina situates herself as the lynchpin of the dynasty, and Tacitus acknowledges her unique position as the daughter of Germanicus, sister of Caligula, wife of Claudius, and mother of Nero (Tac. *Ann.* 12.42.2). As the wife of Claudius, she appears as the co-ruler in a dynasty created by her family.[38] Agrippina's claims to co-rule with Nero eventually result in her assassination on his orders. In the midst of this plot, Nero's lover Poppaea Sabina refers to her own fertility as one of the reasons why she should replace Octavia as the emperor's wife (*fecunditatem*, Tac. *Ann.* 14.1.2). After Octavia's death, Nero appears with his wife Poppaea on provincial coinage (e.g. *RPC* I 3562). Poppaea became the mother of Nero's child, Claudia Augusta, and in addition to commending her womb to the gods, as was mentioned above, the senate vowed a Temple to Fertility (*templumque fecunditatis*, Tac. *Ann.* 15.23.2); the infant died within four months and was deified, and the temple was likely never built. The death of Poppaea precipitates the end of the dynasty. Poppaea died while pregnant with another child, after Nero kicked her in the stomach in a chance fit of rage; although the cause of death is not entirely clear, she may have suffered a miscarriage and died as a result.[39]

Conclusion

The power of a woman's productive body poses an irresolvable challenge to the patriarchy, giving rise to fear and anxiety in ruling men. In the case of Agrippina the Elder, motherhood is connected to her political aspirations for her family. Agrippina performs her power through advertising her visible pregnancies and emphasizing her revered place as the one woman capable of producing children who could claim both Augustus and Livia as ancestors. The audiences of her female power are significant. Agrippina advertises her motherhood and has the courage to give birth outside of Rome, and is honoured by local populations. Her ancestry, fertility, and chastity grant her authority amongst the troops; Tiberius responds with fear and anxiety. After the death of Germanicus, Agrippina continues to receive public approval,

[36] Ginsburg 2006: 85-90; Smith 1987, Plates VIII and XXIV; Rose 1997: 166-67.

[37] Gillespie 2014a: 276-78.

[38] Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 12.37.4; Gillespie 2014a: 284-287.

[39] Tac. *Ann.* 16.6.1; Gillespie 2014b: 124.

although her exceptional fertility proves unfortunate. The final Chorus of the pseudo-Senecan *Octavia* provides a suggestive, if pitiable, point of contact: as the Chorus bewails the fate of many Julio-Claudian women, they first celebrate and mourn the demise of Agrippina the Elder and her children, defined as so many potential "tokens of peace," (*pignora pacis*, *Oct.* 938). The Chorus commemorates the imperial women while presenting a history of political strife, in which women in the first imperial dynasty are inscribed within the masculine political sphere as "engenderers of *discordia*" (Ginsberg 2017: 175).

In the *Annals*, Tacitus sets out parameters for a typology of female power that recognises motherhood as a form of power unique to women. Although a Roman mother cannot hold an official political position, the ability of her body to bear children allows for the transfer of hereditary political power. When fertility becomes politicised, hierarchies are created. The womb is both threatening and hopeful in this discourse. In his narrative, Tacitus consistently alludes to the fundamental femaleness of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. This prevarication suggests that Tacitus finds the very concept of a hereditary dynasty inherently flawed due to its dependency on the reproductive capabilities of the female body. The Julio-Claudian dynasty, matrilinear by accident rather than design, is his foremost example of this concerning dependency.

The authority claimed by mothers is not a type of power that is defined, and thus it is more difficult to regulate. After the Julio-Claudian dynasty, later rulers betrayed their anxieties concerning female fertility as a source of power by controlling its celebration and connecting it to their own political programs. The Antonine emperors preferred the adoption of the "best man" as part of a strategy to reduce the importance of *fecunditas* and thus take the power of succession away from women.[40] However, the Antonine period also saw an increased focus on motherhood and child-bearing in the number and range of honors paid to imperial women (cf. Schnegg 2021: 416). The Augustae were identified with fertility goddesses on coinage and had alimentary charities named after them; such accolades were symbolic without attributing an actual level of power to women.[41] Schnegg argues that this image of the emperor's wife was vital to the advertisement of dynastic continuity and stability, as well as the growth of the Empire's population at large, "something for which the emperor and his wife bore a shared responsibility".[42] This suggests a type of co-rulership, or at least co-responsibility, on the part of the ruling couple. Imperial wives were thus connected to programs pertaining to the Roman community at large. They became symbols of motherhood, without a claim to power fueled by arrogant fertility.

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[40] As is argued by Boatwright (1991, 536); contra Hug (2023, 229-240), who argues that there was still a preference for a blood connection in imperial successors and that imperial women were still pressured to produce children.

[41] See Schnegg (2021, 416) with references.

[42] Schnegg 2014: 416.

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Macedonian Elite Women, War, and Stratagems: Views from Polyainos

Sabine Müller

Introduction: "Power"? — Reflections and Approaches

Contributing to the proceedings of a conference on female power and agency in the Hellenistic and Roman world, it seems justified to start with some preliminary remarks on terminology and definition of the complex phenomenon of "power."[1] In German scholarship on ancient elite women, due to its vague nature, the term "power" (*Macht*) is increasingly avoided. Rather than speaking of "power," research centers about female "*Handlungsräume*," spaces of action.[2]

This development has formed part of the changing scholarly perspective by focusing on the political structures and social circumstances instead of concentrating on the constitutional system.[3] Thus, the activities of elite women are explored in the context of their socio-political, familial, and courtly structures and traditions, role expectations, trends of self-fashioning, underlying personal networks, and political tides.

As for a definition, "spaces of actions" are those fields of action associated with appearances of elite women who became active (and visible) by adapting different roles, for example as diplomats or as dedicants, as benefactresses or as patrons. In general, they acted as agents of their house or more specifically, of their dynastic branch, representing it, protecting its interests, acting for the sake of supporting its agenda.

The extent to which elite women became visible and had influence on matters varies individually. These differences regarding the dimension, frame, and limit of their spaces of action depend on the following factors: (1) the standing, status, and degree of influence of the woman's (natal and/or marital) family in the political structures and among the leading circles of their family's zone of influence, (2) the status, influence, personal networks, and courtly support of the respective woman (a) in her (natal and/or marital) house and (b) among the leading circles of her country and beyond its borders, (3) the individual skills of an elite woman to make use of the prestige and connections of her natal and her marital family, (4) the contemporary political situation of the country in which she lives—particularly the absence of adult males served to trigger female intervention and had a positive effect on the acceptance in the population—, (5) the expectations of the population regarding the role and visibility of elite women as a factor defining the degree of acceptance of their actions, and (6) the existence of (mythological or historical) examples of female agents in the collective memory of the respective house or country, worthwhile to imitate.

Accordingly, the paper examines the spaces of action—the different dimensions of freedom of action, visibility, influence, and agency of political actors—of selected Argead and early Hellenistic royal women associated with ruses in Polyainos' writing.

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[2] Schnegg 2021a; cf. Müller 2009.

[3] Hölkeskamp 2004: 31. Applied to studies on ancient women, see, e.g., van Bremen 1996; Waldner 2000.

Polyainos, His Cultural Background, Persia, and Macedonia

In the early 160s AD, Polyainos wrote a "guidebook of military knowledge"[4] in eight books, ranging in time from the mythological era to Augustus with a particular focus on the 5th, 4th and 3rd centuries BC.[5] It was a period piece, set against the background of Lucius Verus' contemporary campaign against the Parthians—Polyainos calls rebels (*Strat*. 1 pr. 6)—under Vologeses IV.[6] The work was dedicated to Verus and his co-emperor Marcus Aurelius (*Strat*. 1 pr. 1).

As a child of the Second Sophistic with its artificial perceptions of the past, characteristically, Polyainos builds a bridge between past and present times by treating the knowledge of the — predominantly Greek and Macedonian — history as a helpful tool to cope with contemporary concerns (*Strat*. 1 pr. 2).[7] Accordingly, Polyainos perceives, stages, and (re)arranges history as a museal space, providing historical examples perceived as universal lessons.

In order to stage the collected ruses in a most instructive, praiseworthy, and impressive way, he changes, varies, and reworks some of them.[8] Thereby, he creates "historical vignettes",[9] a kind of mental *tableaux vivants*. Polyainos seems to invite his audience — assumedly an educated, non-specialist elite interested in military history —[10] to follow him into a mental library and revisit famous works of the icons of the literary heritage. At the same time, this mental space seems resemble a hall of fame in honour of most famous commanders, revealing the secrets to their success.[11]

To this end, Polyainos includes only successful ruses as examples of clever and effective leadership.[12] A rare example of Greek and Roman writers, Polyainos refrains from adapting a moral point of view and from criticising his protagonists. He does not even object to stratagems involving sacrilege (e.g., *Strat*. 1.45.4; 3.9.40; 7.35.2), perjury (e.g., *Strat*. 1.45.3),

[4] Wheeler 2010: 30.

[5] Beek 2021: 128. The work is commonly known by the title Στρατηγήματα, while the manuscript tradition gives the title as Στρατηγικά. Cf. Wheeler 2010: 35–36; Morton 2010: 115.

[6] On the Verus' Parthian campaign: Dio 71.1–3.1; Oros. 7.15.1–3; HA *Aur*. 8.6–12; 9.1–2. Cf. Hackl 2010: 74; Schlude 2021: 166–167.

[7] On Polyainos as a Second Sophistic author and the importance of Greek *paideia* to him, see Pretzler 2010: 86–90, 106; Morton 2010: 109–112; Wheeler 2010: 36–37; Beek 2021: 121–122. On the date of his work, see Schettino 1998: 25, 195; Geus 2010: 67–68; Wheeler 2010: 8–9.

[8] Morton 2010: 122. For example, Whitehead 2003: 616 points out that Polyainos (*Strat*. 3.9.30) recasted an episode on Hippias of Athens as a deviser of an economic stratagem ([Aristot.] *Oik*. (2) 1347a4-8) by substituting the Peisitratid tyrant by Iphikrates, the Athenian general whom Polyainos depicts as "the most rusé of all generals" (Wheeler 2012: 157) and as particularly clever when it came to cashflow problems and how to solve them. Cf. Beek 2021: 124, 126–127 on Polyainos' interest in financial matters.

[9] Pretzler 2010: 98.

[10] Pretzler 2010: 104–107 thinks that his audience was interested in military history either from a philosophical perspective or to solidify their identity. On the audience of military manuals in general see Williams 2021: 70–71. Polyainos indicates his expectation or hope that the emperors gave his work some notice (*Strat*. 5 pr.). Cf. Wheeler 2010: 12; Beek 2021: 122.

[11] Sprawski 2010 speaks about Roman "tourists" whom Polyainos wanted to show historical sites.

[12] Cf. Rosenberger 2010: 148; Morton 2010: 124; Wheeler 2010: 17; Beek 2021: 129; Whately 2021b: 18. On the terminology of stratagems, see Wheeler 1988.

abuse of the *ekklesia* (*Strat.* 4.4.12) or threats against a jury in court (*Strat.* 3.9.15; 3.9.29).[13] All that counts is success, the ultimate factor of legitimisation. Polyainos favours the victorious general, accepting that ruthlessness, deceit, and unscrupulousness were occasionally required.[14] In his eyes, wise commanders were capable of minimising the risk of fighting (*Strat.* 1 pr. 3) and events were influenced by their skills—divine interference seem to be mostly absent.[15]

As for the structure of the stratagem collection, starting with several references to the Homeric epics (*Strat.* 1 pr. 4–11), Polyainos selects an ethnographical and prosopographical approach, includes mythological figures such as Dionysos, Herakles or Theseus (*Strat.* 1.1; 1.3; 1.4), and combines lessons on war and political power.[16]

Proudly stressing his Macedonian ancestry (*Strat.* 1 pr. 1; pr. 4; cf. Suda s.v. Polyainos), Polyainos integrates himself into history as the link between past and present. His claim to Macedonian roots, his "Macedonian *persona*",[17] "Macedonian masquerade",[18] or identity as a "self-proclaimed Macedonian"[19] is regarded as crucial to the design of his work.[20]

Creating the impression that, due to the Macedonian victories under Alexander III's command, Polyainos belongs to an ethnic group that traditionally supplies the model for how to defeat eastern enemies, he portrays himself as a naturally born expert in victories over eastern opponents. In the literature of the Roman Empire, the Persians under the Teispids and Achaimenids are conventionally equated with (or redefined as) the contemporary Parthians under the Arsakids.[21] However, regarding Polyainos' preface, there is apparently more to this parallel than literary convention. He justifies his literary activity by displaying his identity: according to him, he has the "Macedonian spirit" enabling him to provide knowledge about how to defeat the Persians-Parthians (*Strat.* 1 pr. 1).[22]

Some years earlier, another Second Sophistic author, Arrian, writing his *Anabasis*, had staged himself as the link between past and present by claiming to be most predestined to write the history of the "true" Alexander (*Anab.* 1.12.4–5). Polyainos chose another way to link past glory and present *paideia* (represented by himself) by adding the factors of identity and cultural heritage. His collection is perceived as "a work stressing Macedonians",[23] "played

[13] Polyainos does not bat an eyelid when a truce negotiated to the end of burying dead warriors is violated (*Strat.* 4.4.5).

[14] Maybe his images of good generals are faintly reminiscent of the ideal commander described in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*: among many other things, the good commander had to be rusé, clever, and tough (Xen. *Mem.* 3.1.6, 2.1). However, Xenophon's good commander also had to be pious and not inclined to become involved in sacrilege or perjury. Cf. Pownall 1998; Pownall 2016: 52–53.

[15] Rosenberger 2010: 148.

[16] Cf. Whately 2021b: 25. Not all of the stratagems are set in a battlefield context, e.g., Polyain. *Strat.* 1.40.1; 1.45.3; 3.9.15–16; 3.9.29–30; 4.4.9; 7.31–32.

[17] Pretzler 2010: 94.

[18] Krentz and Wheeler 1994: xi-xii.

[19] Beek 2021: 124.

[20] Pretzler 2010: 86–87.

[21] Hornblower 2006: 316. E.g., Hor. *Carm.* 1.21.13–16; 3.5.1–4. Cf. Krentz and Wheeler 1994: 25–28; Pretzler 2010: 86–87, 95; Geus 2010: 57–59; Morton 2010: 112–113; Wheeler 2010: 37.

[22] Wheeler 2010: 7, 12, 54 suggests that Polyainos' stratagem collection was tied to his search for literary patronage. As for the generals, Iphikrates ranks first (Wheeler 2012: 157), Alexander III rests in third place. The fact that Athenian stratagems outnumber Macedonian ruses is explained by the Second Sophistic focus on classical Athens, cf. Wheeler 2010: 37.

[23] Wheeler 2010: 37.

out in Macedonian disguise for an eastern war",[24] with Polyainos as a "Macedonian advocate".[25]

Polyainos used to have a bad reputation as an unreliable armchair general.[26] However, his image has begun to change: in the current debate, it is stressed that he was thorough in his own research, and used a lot of sources lost to the afterworld.[27] In any case, he provided some unique information and some very detailed material about Macedonian political actors.[28] Polyainos' Macedonian *persona* and interest in Macedonian matters may have motivated him to include some useful information on the spaces of action of individual Macedonian elite women involved in war—without the usual bias of Greek and Roman authors.

Polyainos and the *Mimallones*

Reminding his audience again of his Macedonian descent, Polyainos states to have written the fourth book with particular pleasure, because it is about the deeds of his *progonoi* (forefathers) who had ruled Macedonia (*Strat*. 4 pr).[29]

Already, the first ruse in Polyainos' favorite book connects women and war favourably. While Polyainos generally refrains from using stereotypical dichotomies such as ascribing "virtuous" trickery to male and/or western protagonists and "bad" trickery to female and/or eastern protagonists,[30] his Macedonian self-image and research on Macedonian history may have additionally provided him with a deeper understanding and acceptance of female military spaces of action as a means of dynastic agency.

Polyainos does not mention explicitly that the Macedonian females involved in *Strat*. 4.1. were royal or elite women. However, scholars suppose that the legend reflects the military spaces of action of Argead and early Ptolemaic women.[31] The ruse is ascribed to the proto-historical Argead ruler Argaios (6th century BC).[32] When confronted by the invading Illyrians, Argaios was outnumbered but not helpless. He tricked the invaders into believing that his

[24] Wheeler 2010: 36.

[25] Morton 2010: 132.

[26] Wheeler 2010: 7; Whately 2021b: 33; Beek 2021: 122–124.

[27] Beek 2021:126.

[28] To list some of his unique stratagems, e.g., Arsinoë escaping from Ephesos after the death of her first husband Lysimachos (*Strat*. 8.57), Alexander in the Tempe valley (*Strat*. 4.3.23; while Polyainos ascribes the ruse to Alexander III, Sprawski 2010: 433–443 argues in favour of Alexander II when he occupied the Thessalian cities of Larisa and Krannon: Diod. 15.61.4); the field exercise of Philip (*Strat*. 4.2.10), who marched his army in full armor carrying its food and baggage for thirty stades—one of Polyainos' most frequently cited examples, as it is a rare explicit testimony of Philip's military reforms (besides Diod. 16.3.1). On Philip II see Wirth 2020; Hatzopoulos 2020: 128–130; Anson 2022: 17–23. On Polyainos' reception see Krentz and Wheeler 1994: xvi –xx; Wheeler 2012: 161.

[29] Cf. Geus 2010: 58–59.

[30] Polyainos did not stress any difference between male and female ruses, cf. Harder 2007: 191–192. On the usual biased attitude of Roman writers on women in war (misogyny and a male focus) see Harder 2007: 189; Schnegg 2010: 40, 44, 46; Carney 2015: 12; Whately 2021a: 186, 211.

[31] Angiò 2018 and 2020; Müller 2021a: 301. See also Caneva 2016: 99-101.

[32] Argaios is mentioned in the Argead genealogy preserved by Hdt. 8.139. His name points to the Argead claim to descent from Argive Temenos, earliest attested under Alexander I. On Alexander I, see Heinrichs 2020. On Argaios see Borza 1990: 81, 98; Asirvatham 2020: 100.

small force was a huge one. To this end, he let Macedonian girls, female devotees of Dionysos, appear who carried *thyrsoi* instead of spears and had their faces covered with wreaths. The Illyrian ruler mistook them for men and retreated. A grateful Argaios built a temple to Dionysos Pseudanor ("sham man") and called the priestesses *Mimallones* ("imitators of men").[33]

Since the earliest mention of this tradition is by Kallimachos (F 503 Pf.), it may have emerged in an early Ptolemaic context. This would suit the pre-eminence of Dionysos, the mythical progenitor of the Ptolemaic house (*OGIS* 54; Satyros, *BNJ* 631 F 1). According to Francesca Angiò (2018: 7–16 and 2020: 344–345), the legend of the *Mimallones* may hint at the military aspect and respective space of action (at least regarding symbolic leadership) of some Ptolemaic royal women. For example, in an epigram of the Milan Papyrus, ascribed to Poseidippos of Pella who flourished under Ptolemy II, Arsinoë II is depicted as apparently returning from the battlefield, sweating and carrying a spear and shield (Poseidipp. *Ep*. 36 AB).[34] As for other early Ptolemaic royal women, BereniKe II is credited with a warlike image (Catull. *Carm*. 66.25–28; Hyg. *Astron*. 2.24.11–18),[35] and Arsinoë III is known for her appearance together with her sibling husband Ptolemy IV at the battlefield of Raphia (Polyb. 5.83.3; 5.84.1; 5.87.6).[36]

The legend of the *Mimallones* is supposed to associate Ptolemaic royal women with those Argead royal women who were said to have been militarily trained or to have gone into combat,[37] such as Audata and her daughter Kynnane (Polyain. *Strat*. 8.60), or Adea-Eurydike.[38] It may have been reminiscent also of Olympias since she was associated with Dionysiac rites (Plut. *Alex.* 2.5-6; Ath. 13.560f) and made an appearance at the battle of Euia, reportedly dressed like a devotee of Dionysos, thus like one of the *Mimallones*.[39]

[33] On reflections about the background of this tale, see Greenwalt 2010: 281; Carney 2015: 147 ("folk-tale"). On the role of Dionysos in this legend, see Rosenberger 2010: 143–144; Angiò 2018: 7–16; Angiò 2020: 344–345. On reflections on the etymology of the term *Mimallones*, see Macurdy 1913.

[34] Cf. Gigante Lanzara 2003: 343–344; Angiò 2004: 15–17; Müller 2009: 216–229; Carney 2013: 91; Wessels and Stähli 2015: 157–160; Lorber 2018: 93–98. On Arsinoë II in Hellenistic poetry in general, see Barbantani 2021: 111–113. On the *mnaineia* in the name of Arsinoë Philadelphos, cf. Lorber 2018: 107–111. On her iconography on coins see Lorber 2018: 124–127. On the cults in honor of Arsinoë Philadelphos, cf. Lorber 2022: 56.

[35] Cf. Lorber 2018: 176–182.

[36] Cf. Bielman-Sánchez and Lenzo 2021: 75; Carney 2021b: 337. On Berenike II and Arsinoë III in Hellenistic poetry, see Barbantani 2021: 113–114. On Berenike II, see also Carney 2013: 128–129, 131; Lorber 2018: 142, 153–154; McAuley 2020; Müller 2021b. On the coins minted in the name of Berenike II, perhaps in honor of her, see LeRider and de Callataÿ 2006: 37, 52–53; Lorber 2018: 153, 163, 389, 391–392, nos. 728–731.

[37] Angiò 2018: 7–16; 2020: 344–345.

[38] Cf. Carney 2021b: 335–337. On Audata see Ogden 1999: 22–24; Heckel 2021: 121. Adea-Eurydike: Diod. 19.11.2; 19.11.9; Ath. 13.560f; Arr. *Succ*. 1.23. On Adea-Eurydike, see Carney 1987; Carney 2021a: 325–326; Carney 2021b: 335–336; Kunst 2021: 96–99; Heckel 2021: 6–7.

[39] She was said to have appeared on the battlefield of Euia surrounded by snakes (Ath. 13.560f). On Olympias, see Macurdy 1932: 22–46; Carney 2000: 62–68, 85–90, 119–123; Carney 2006; Carney 2019b: 379–381; Carney 2019c; Carney 2020; Müller 2020; Carney 2021b: 336–337; Heckel 2021: 336–339; Kunst 2021: 99–100. It is supposed that Olympias was a priestess of Dionysos, cf. Carney 2006: 96–101; Carney 2010b: 46. An alternative view is brought forward by Asirvatham 2001: 95–96. She thinks that Plutarch uses an image of Olympias' "depraved religion" to stress Alexander's non-Greek sides. In any case, since the iconographic attribute of the goddess Hygieia is a serpent that she characteristically feeds from a *phiale* (already during the 4th century BC, cf. Ogden 2011: 53–54; Ogden 2015: 120–121), and since Olympias dedicated a *phiale* to the statue of Hygieia in Athens (Hyp. *Eux*. 24–25), this votive may have somehow influenced the perception of her as surrounded by snakes in her afterlife and be artifice, cf. Ogden 2011: 53; Ogden 2015: 121.

In a Ptolemaic context, this dual connection with Dionysos, the patron of the empire's welfare, and with the Argeads would have been useful to elaborate. As for the ideological usefulness of the latter, the most prominent Argead, Alexander III, and his positive commemoration as a god-sent ideal commander were crucial to the legitimisation of the founder of the Ptolemaic Empire, Ptolemy I, one of Alexander's generals, and still of Ptolemy II and Ptolemy III.[40]

Polyainos emphasises the association of Argaios and the *Mimallones* with Dionysos: in his first book, Polyainos ascribes a similar ruse to the god himself. When Dionysos conquered India, he ordered his army to hide their weapons under *thyrsoi* and ivy in order to trick the inhabitants of the cities into letting them in (*Strat.* 1.1.1). Again, waging war against the Baktrians, Dionysos, supported by the Amazons and his female bacchants, tricked the Baktrians in leaving their safe camp and entering the trap of his camp (*Strat.* 1.1.3).[41]

Summing up, the first Macedonian ruse in Polyainos' book four, a legend with an apparently Ptolemaic colouring (and perhaps origin), is about a clever Argead ruler who was successful because he granted female Macedonians a military space of action. According to Elizabeth Carney's categorisation of warlike appearances of royal women — battlefield command, symbolic leadership, and administrative leadership (2004: 184 and 2021b: 336–337) — this activity of the *Mimallones* may perhaps be classified as 'symbolic leadership as part of a ruse.' The girls did not fight but were crucial to the victory of Argaios, the survival of the army involved and the defense of the interests of the Argead house.

Polyainos and the Theme of Female Fights for the Dynasty: Kynnane, Laodike, and Arsinoë

Polyainos' eighth book, devoted to the ruses of women (*Strat.* 8.26–71), contains nine groups of collective women and thirty-seven individual women. It is supposed that he drew upon Plutarch's work on the *Mulierum Virtutes* (*Virtue of Women*), among many other sources.[42] Due to the uncertainty about its date, however, it is debated if he also used the *Anonymous Tractatus de Mulieribus* (*Women [who showed themselves] wise and brave in situations of war*).[43]

The following selected three examples are mentioned by neither Plutarch nor by the *De mulieribus*: ruses involving Kynnane, the daughter of Philip II, Arsinoë, the daughter of Ptolemy I and widow of Lysimachos (the future Arsinoë II), and Laodike I, the wife of Antiochos II. These stratagems were Polyainos' own selection and perhaps of special value regarding his museal space, a mental hall of fame, in which clever political and military acts were highlighted. Unfortunately, his sources are uncertain.[44]

The three cases are united by the theme of female spaces of action provided and defined by the fight for the dynastic family branch, particularly in times of crisis. While this was a theme not unfamiliar to ancient literature — for example, it was present in Plutarch's *Virtue of women* —,[45] in the special case of the Macedonian royal women treated by the proud

[40] Cf. Müller 2015; Barbantani 2017: 55–57, 90–101; Angiò 2020. On Ptolemy I's legitimisation via his participation in Alexander's campaigns, see Howe 2008 and 2015; Thomas 2022 (image of the "right-hand-man").

[41] Cf. Rosenberger 2010: 134; Geus 2011.

[42] Cf. Stadter 1965: 13–29; Morton 2010: 124; Pretzler 2010: 91–92; Wheeler 2010: 17; Tanga 2019: lxxiv–lxxvi; Beek 2021: 121.

[43] Pro: Gera 1997: 37. Contra: Harder 2007: 192; Brodersen 2010: 152–153. Unsure: Morton 2010: 124.

[44] Tanga 2019: lxxiv.

[45] Tanga 2019: lxvi.

Macedonian Polyainos, there may be more to it than literary convention. It may show his familiarity with the connections between dynastic agency and royal women's spaces of action, particularly when it came to safeguarding the succession.

Because of the clan nature of the Macedonian *basileia*, all of its members, male and female, could act as representatives of their house; occasionally, this space of action could encompass the military sphere.[46] The extent and dimension of these spaces of actions were dependent on the respective political situation, courtly status, support by the leading officials, and individual factors such as the ability of the individual woman to establish and make use of personal networks. This may be illustrated by the different ruses and wide span of actions Polyainos mentions.

As for the first example, Kynnane, the daughter of Philip II and his Illyrian wife Audata, is described as a warrior, "famous for her military expertise," who actively supported her father in his Illyrian campaign in the 340s BC (*Strat.* 8.60).[47] Kynnane is portrayed as a fierce fighter and ideal support of Philip, a devoted daughter, assisting him in neutralising the Illyrian threat. Reported to have defeated and killed a female Illyrian royal woman on the battlefield, Kynnane is represented as the female mirror image of her father. However, she was also victorious over the male soldiers and receives no different treatment than a male soldier by Polyainos.

The theme of fighting for the dynasty and its survival is particularly emphasised in the second part on the account of Kynnane that is more of a short biography including an appraisal than a stratagem. Polyainos stresses that his heroine tried to preserve the interests of her family branch after the death of Alexander III, acting as a staunch supporter of her daughter Adea's royal future. Notably, Polyainos characterises Kynnane as Philip's child no less than three times, stressing that she acted for the sake of the dynasty.[48]

Crucial to the episodes mentioning Laodike and Arsinoë are the elements of disguise, doubles, and efforts to ensure the survival of a royal branch.[49] The former example (*Strat.* 8.50) is set against the background of the struggle for the succession of Antiochos II following his death in 246 BC. The rivals were the house of Achaios, represented by Laodike and her son Seleukos II, and the Ptolemies, represented by Antiochos II's later wife Berenike Syra, her minor son Antiochos, and, after their assassination, by Berenike Syra's brother Ptolemy III. The latter invaded the Seleukid territory in the Third Syrian War (246-241 BC) (*OGIS* 54).[50]

Monica D'Agostini (2021: 200–201) has shown that Berenike acted as a military and political leader in Antiocheia and exploited her Ptolemaic connections while Laodike used

[46] Cf. Carney 1993; Carney 1995; Carney 2010: 409; Carney 2015: 7–8, 11; Carney 2019: 8; Müller 2021a: 294.

[47] On Kynnane, see Heckel 1983-1984; Ogden 1999: 16–26; Carney 2000: 69–70, 129–131; Müller 2021: 300; Heckel 2021: 267–268; Carney 2021a: 325; Carney 2021b: 335; Kunst 2021: 94–96.

[48] Elizabeth Carney (2021b: 335) has pointed out that no such military role of female Argeads was visible before the reign of Philip II.

[49] On Laodike, wife of Antiochos II, see Macurdy 1932: 82–87; Ager 2003: 41–44; Savalli-Lestrade 2015: 187–219; D'Agostini 2016; D'Agostini 2021: 189–200; Olbrycht 2021: 175; Kunst 2021: 139–145; McAuley 2022: 73. On the ceremonies of Hellenistic weddings, see Ager 2017.

[50] On the background of the events surrounding the accession of Seleukos II and the quarrel about the succession, see Ager 2003: 41–44; Ehling 2003: 304–313; Coşkun 2016: 123–125; Chrubasik 2016: 67; D'Agostini 2016; Lorber 2018: 132–134; Ramsey 2019: 243–263; D'Agostini 2021: 200–201; Olbrycht 2021: 175; Ager 2021: 350; Müller 2021: 87–88; on the clan of Achaios, see D'Agostini 2013: 87–106; D'Agostini 2014: 37–60; D'Agostini 2018; McAuley 2018: 37–58; Olbrycht 2021: 175. On the spaces of action of Seleukid royal women regarding dynastic politics, see McAuley 2019.

her Anatolian base to enhance the support of her son. Polyainos' focus is on murder and tricks: the episode contains the double of the murdered boy, staged by Laodike's faction, and the double of the murdered Berenike, staged by her own faction.[51] In particular, Polyainos praises the stratagem of Panariste, a woman belonging to Berenike's inner circle: she is credited with the successful staging of a double of the murdered Berenike and keeping the illusion alive that she was still among the living until Ptolemy III arrived. In this case, Panariste stepped in to intervene for the sake of the rights of Berenike Syra's natal family.

A double is also crucial to the episode about Arsinoë (*Strat*. 8.57), a unique information about her at the time when her first husband Lysimachos had died on the battlefield, defeated by Seleukos in 281 BC.[52] She stayed at Ephesos and the city was in an uproar. In fear of the pro-Seleukid faction tearing down walls and opening gates, Arsinoë made her escape by dressing one of her maids in her royal robes and putting her in her litter with an escort. While her double was confused with her and promptly murdered, she, alone and disguised by putting on rags and making herself unrecognisable, escaped through the back entrance, hurried to the ships and sailed away.

Scholars' opinions are divided regarding the historicity of this account. Elizabeth Carney (2013: 48) supposes that the part with the disguised escape may be a literary construct while the element of the elaborate robes and entourage of a royal woman was plausible. Waldemar Heckel (2021: 103) assumes that Arsinoë used a familiar stratagem involving the royal disguise of a double in order to make her escape to the harbour.

In any case, escaping in disguise (e.g., as a servant or any other person of a lower social rank) or getting rid of one's socially distinctive clothes or royal insignia on a flight is a frequent theme in Roman historiography, particularly after a defeat, in situations of danger, or in civil wars.[53] While stratagems of this type can occasionally be perceived in a negative way as cowardly (cf. Curt. 3.11.11–12), Polyainos approves of Arsinoë's cleverness and successful ruse and does not bat an eyelid when she sacrificed her maid. In general, Polyainos seems to have had no problems with ruses involving a disguise. According to him, the famous fourth century BC-general Iphikrates, the most rusé commander in Polyainos' collection, once motivated his weary and unwilling soldiers to go into combat by appearing in shabby rags with bare feet (*Strat*. 3.9.34).

The last two examples show that for Polyainos, ruses by Macedonian royal women for the sake of the dynasty were acceptable and praiseworthy. However, his approval was not restricted to them alone. This might be illustrated by his portrayal of the Massagetean ruler Tomyris.

Polyainos, Tomyris, and Dionysos

[51] Just. 27.1.7. They were assassinated and the exact date is debated, cf. Austin 2006: 463–464, with n. 6; Strootman 2014: 236–237.

[52] Müller 2009: 44–46; Carney 2013: 47–48.

[53] E.g., escaping in disguise: Tac. *Hist*. 3.74.1 (Domitian in late 68 AD); Suet. *Nero* 48.1 (Nero in 68 AD); getting rid of royal robe and insignia: Curt. 3.11.11–12 (Dareios III after Issos, cf. Arr. *Anab*. 2.11.6–7); Plut. *Aem*. 22.5 (Perseus after the battle of Pydna); hiding naked in the mud of a swamp: Plut. *Mar*. 37 (Marius in Minturnae). Also in modern popular culture, doubles meant to impersonate famous persons in public in order to keep them safe are still a theme. For example, Andy Warhol is reported to have used doubles and several dictators are said to have sent doubles to public meetings in order to avoid being killed. As for popular culture, the movie *Star Wars— The Phantom Menace* provides an example. Princess Padme Amidala disguises herself as her maid while the maid has to wear the distinctive royal robe, hair style, and makeup to protect Amidala in times of trouble.

The events date to the last campaign of Kyros II's reign (559–530 BC). He was reported to have died in battle against the Massagetai northeast the Kaspian Sea.[54] The earliest literary version of Tomyris' fight against Kyros is Herodotos' moral tale: a lesson of immoderation and punishment.

Herodotos' Kyros II has transformed from a wise king into a tyrant believing himself to be invincible and superior to all others (Hdt. 1.204.2). Driven by an insatiable greed for power, he invades the territory of the Massagetai with their modest and sparse lifestyle. Portrayed as his counterpart, Tomyris, the widow of the Massagetan ruler, appears as a tragic warner, wise, brave, and virtuous.[55] Using a perfidious trick, Kyros lures a third of the Massagetean army into a trap by laying out a feast for them involving plenty of food and wine, making them drunken and overfed, thus easy prey (Hdt. 1.211.1–3). As a consequence, Tomyris loses her young son, the future of her house (Hdt. 1.213). Adopting the role of a commander, she defeats the Persians in an open battle and takes revenge for Kyros' bloodthirst (Hdt. 1.214.4–5).

Polyainos reverses Herodotos' account, attributes the ruse to Tomyris, and isolates her fight from its dynastic context by failing to mention her son. According to his version, Tomyris retreats before Kyros and his advancing troops, lets them plunder her camp, lavishly equipped with wine and food, and kills them in their drunken debauchery (*Strat.* 8.28). However, Polyainos does not fit in with the other authors in Roman times who tended to portray Tomyris less favorably and Kyros in a more positive way.[56]

He depicts her as a clever commander who carefully laid out a successful trap, thereby proving her mastery of the "trinity of stratagemic doctrine",[57] planning, foresight, and timing. In addition, while Herodotos creates the image of her as a tragic winner who has lost her son, the embodiment of the future of her house, Polyainos portrays her as the victorious defender of her ruling position, realm, and dynasty.

His Tomyris is no stereotypical representative of "eastern vices." While in the preface of his book on the ruses of "barbarians," Polyainos duly pays tribute to the conventional Greek and Roman literary clichés regarding the notorious trickery, extreme deceitful and perfidious nature of "barbarians" in general (*Strat.* 7 pr.),[58] in accordance with his actually universal worldview, he makes no real difference between "barbarian" and "non-barbarian" ruses and shows his approval of both.[59]

Furthermore, the ruse he attributes to Tomyris resembles the stratagem Polyainos ascribes to Dionysos when conquering India: he used wine to befuddle the enemies and defeated them when they were drunk (*Strat.* 1.1).[60] It may have been a hint at Euripides' *Bakchai* (*Bakch.* 409–411, 565–575), written under the patronage of the Argead ruler Archelaos and held in special honour in Macedonia.[61] Thus, Polyainos establishes a link between

[54] Briant 1996: 60; Brosius 2021: 30.

[55] Gera 1997: 197; Weststeijn 2016: 93, 95.

[56] Cf. Gera 1997: 187–204. See, e.g., Just. 1.8.1–9.13; Val. Max. 9.10.ext. 1 (focus on her mutilation of Kyros' head); Oros. 2.7.1–6 (Tomyris as vengeful). The Anonymous *Tractatus de mulieribus* 12 omits any ruse.

[57] Wheeler 2010: 29.

[58] Cf. Wheeler 2010: 49, 51, 54.

[59] Pretzler 2010: 99–101.

[60] Cf. Rosenberger 2010: 134.

[61] Pownall 2020a: 97, and 2020c: 228–229.

Tomyris and Dionysos. whom he connects with the *Mimallones*.[62] Apparently, he could make sense of the dynastic background of Tomyris' military space of action.

Conclusions: Polyainos and Spaces of Action of Macedonian Elite Women

Polyainos wants to provide his audience with successful, memorable ruses. Thereby, he provides examples of the spaces of action of Macedonian royal women as representatives of their respective house involved in different situations of war, particularly when safeguarding its dynastic future. Polyainos' Macedonian identity may have contributed to his positive attitude regarding their involvement in the military sphere.[63]

Despite his Second Sophistic background and museal approach, Polyainos offers some insight regarding the factors that define the military spaces of action of Macedonian royal women: their right to intervene for the sake of the realm, dynasty, family branch, or regnal claims of male members of their family, and the importance of their personal networks and courtly factions.

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[62] While it is generally suggested that he published his collection in different stages (cf. Whately 2021b:18), he will have been aware of the links. This is even more likely since it is supposed that he wrote his work very rapidly (Beek 2021: 122).

[63] Harder 2007: 197–198 suggests that it was a way to pay respect to Marcus Aurelius' wife Faustina. This may or not be the case. On the importance of Faustina Minor to Marcus Aurelius, already to his succession, see Schnegg 2021b: 413–414.

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