

**Cleopatra II and III:
The queens of Ptolemy VI and VIII
as guarantors of kingship and rivals for power**

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Introduction

The second half of the Ptolemaic period was marked by power struggles not only among the male rulers of the dynasty, but also among its female members. Starting with Arsinoe II, the Ptolemaic queens had always been powerful and strong-willed and had been a decisive factor in domestic policy. From the death of Ptolemy V Epiphanes onwards, the queens controlled the political developments in Egypt to a still greater extent. Cleopatra II and especially Cleopatra III became all-dominant, in politics and in the ruler-cult, and they were often depicted in Egyptian temple-reliefs—more often than any of her dynastic predecessors and successors. Mother and/or daughter reigned with Ptolemy VI Philometor to Ptolemy X Alexander I, from 175 to 101 BC, that is, for a quarter of the entire Ptolemaic period.

Egyptian queenship was complementary to kingship, both in dynastic and Ptolemaic Egypt: No queen could exist without a king, but at the same time the queen was a necessary component of kingship. According to Lana Troy, the pattern of Egyptian queenship “reflects the interaction of male and female as dualistic elements of the creative dynamics”.¹ The king and the queen functioned as the basic duality through which regeneration of the creative power of the kingship was accomplished. The queen was considered to be a manifestation of Hathor, the female prototype of creation. The kingship was not complete without a queen who could be designated as a female Horus.² As Troy has described, the analogy between kingship and the androgyny of the creator enables the female monarch to manifest herself in the masculine role: “The female Horus provides a shift in emphasis in the character of the king but remains consistent with the basic worldview of the Egyptian”.³ It has never been discussed in detail how the Ptolemaic queens fit into this concept.

This paper concentrates on two of the most powerful Ptolemaic queens, Cleopatra II and her daughter, Cleopatra III. As queens, they stood for the necessary female element in the dual Egyptian conception of kingship. They were thus

1 TROY, L., *Patterns of Queenship in Ancient Egyptian Myth and History*, Boreas: Uppsala Studies in Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Civilizations 14, Uppsala 1986, 12.

2 MINAS, M., ‘Macht und Ohnmacht. Die Repräsentation ptolemäischer Königinnen in ägyptischen Tempeln’, *APF* 51, 2005, 130. For further information on the Ptolemaic queens as female Horus see the article by M. ELDAMATY in this volume.

3 TROY, *Patterns of Queenship*, 132, 150.

guarantors for kingship, but at times, power shifted from the king to the queen, and the female Horus was not only a co-regent but also a rival. Thus, the balance of dynastic power between Ptolemy VI Philometor, his brother Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II, and their queens was often at stake. Husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, mothers and daughters struggled among themselves, culminating in the highly unorthodox joint ruling arrangements. Nothing else shows more forcefully how much the position of the queen had changed since the early Ptolemaic period. Here, I examine how the political facts of the reigns of Ptolemy VI and VIII were reflected in the decoration and inscriptions of the Egyptian temples. This paper is a sequel to my article 'Macht und Ohnmacht. Die Repräsentation ptolemäischer Königinnen in ägyptischen Tempeln', in which I have discussed the differences and analogies of dynastic and Ptolemaic queens until the end of the dynasty.⁴

Under Philometor and Euergetes II many indigenous temples were expanded and decorated, more than in any other reign of a Ptolemaic king.⁵ This development led to the display of many Ptolemaic ancestor lines⁶ and scenes of the veneration of ancestors,⁷ all of which provide important dynastic information from the Egyptian perspective. At the same time, huge numbers of documentary papyri in both Greek and demotic are dated according to the eponymous priesthoods that not only included all queens, but were substantially modified for Cleopatra II and Cleopatra III.⁸

Although Ptolemaic queens participated so decisively in political and religious developments, very few scholars focus on them, and still fewer on their images and titles in indigenous temples. The royal titles of the Ptolemaic queens in papyri and in the Egyptian temple inscriptions are quite different. Their titles in the native context, in particular, have not been studied for their political and religious meaning, with very few exceptions.⁹

4 MINAS, *APF* 51, 2005.

5 See MINAS, M., 'Die Dekorationstätigkeit von Ptolemaios VI. Philometor und Ptolemaios VIII. Euergetes II. an altägyptischen Tempeln', 1. Teil, *OLP* 27, 1996, 51–78. EAD., 'Die Dekorationstätigkeit von Ptolemaios VI. Philometor und Ptolemaios VIII. Euergetes II. an altägyptischen Tempeln', 2. Teil, *OLP* 28, 1997, 87–121.

6 MINAS, M., *Die hieroglyphischen Ahnenreihen der ptolemäischen Könige. Ein Vergleich mit den Titeln der eponymen Priester in den griechischen und demotischen Papyri*, Aegyptiaca Treverensia 9, Trier 2000.

7 WINTER, E., 'Der Herrscherkult in den ägyptischen Ptolemäertempeln', in: H. Maehler & V.M. Strocka (eds.), *Das ptolemäische Ägypten. Akten des internationalen Symposions, 27.–29. September 1976 in Berlin*, Mainz 1978, 147–60.

8 MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, 133–62.

9 D. DEVAUCHELLE, Brèves communications: notes ptolémaïques, § 3, *RdE* 40, 1989, 190 (Rait). HÖLBL, G., 'Ptolemäische Königin und weiblicher Pharao', in: N. Bonacasa et al. (eds.), *Faraoni come dei, Tolemei come faraoni. Atti del V Congresso Internazionale Italo-Egiziano, Torino, Archivio di Stato, 8–12 dicembre 2001*, Torino/Palermo 2003, 88–97. MINAS, *OLP* 27/28, 1996–97 (sn.t=f or hm.t=f).

Jan Quaegebeur contributed fundamentally to our understanding of the Ptolemaic queens, in particular of Arsinoe II.¹⁰ Several other scholars have clarified specific issues relating to them, discussing religious matters and details of the statuary,¹¹ or the role of the queen in Ptolemaic propaganda.¹² However, there is no synthesis on the Ptolemaic queens, nor an analysis that would take into account all the evidence, written and iconographic, Greek and Egyptian. A comprehensive publication on all Ptolemaic queens, covering religious, archaeological, philological, and iconographical aspects, is a real *desideratum*.

Principal changes under Cleopatra I

At the time of his death in 180 BC, Ptolemy V Epiphanes had sired three children, but all were minors. Cleopatra I, the former Seleucid princess, reigned on behalf of her eldest son, Ptolemy VI. For the first time in Ptolemaic history, it was a queen who ruled and was named first in the dating formulas of documentary papyri and inscriptions.¹³ In this respect, she was more successful than her predecessor and mother-in-law, Arsinoe III, the sister-wife of Ptolemy IV Philopator and mother of Ptolemy V Epiphanes. Arsinoe III had indeed intended to reign on behalf of her minor son after Philopator's death, but was killed instead. The dynasty had been on the brink of disaster and almost perished in 204.¹⁴

Cleopatra I, however, survived the death of her husband. Her position seems to have marked a change in the status of the Ptolemaic queens. She laid the foundation for the huge increase in status of her daughter Cleopatra II and granddaughter Cleopatra III. While reigning for and with her son Ptolemy VI Philometor, Cleopatra I demonstrated her power both by being named first in the dating formula and by

- 10 QUAEGBEUR, J., 'Reines ptolémaïques et traditions égyptiennes', in: H. Maehler & V.M. Strocka (eds.), *Das ptolémaïsche Ägypten. Akten des internationalen Symposions, 27.-29. September 1976 in Berlin, Mainz 1978*, 245–62. ID., 'Ptolémée II en adoration devant Arsinoé II divinisée', *BIFAO* 69, 1971, 191–217. ID., Documents Concerning a Cult of Arsinoe Philadelphos at Memphis', *JNES* 30, 1971, 239–70. ID., 'Arsinoé Philadelphie, reine, "roi" et déesse, à Hildesheim', *GM* 87, 1985, 73–8. ID., 'Documents égyptiens anciens et nouveaux relatifs à Arsinoé Philadelphie', in: H. Melaerts (ed.), *Le culte du souverain dans l'Égypte ptolémaïque au IIIe siècle avant notre ère. Actes du colloque international, Bruxelles 10 Mai 1995*, Stud. Hell. 34, Leuven 1998, 73–108.
- 11 For example ALBERSMEIER, S., *Untersuchungen zu den Frauenstatuen des ptolémaïschen Ägypten*, *Aegyptiaca Treverensia* 10, Trier 2002. ASHTON, S.-A., *Ptolemaic Royal Sculpture from Egypt: the Interaction between Greek and Egyptian Traditions*, BAR international series 923, Oxford 2001; HÖLBL, G., 'Ptolémaïsche Königin und weiblicher Pharao'. THOMPSON, D.J. BURR, *Ptolemaic Oinochoai and Portraits in Faience. Aspects of the Ruler-cult*, Oxford 1973.
- 12 HAZZARD, R.A., *Imagination of a Monarchy: Studies in Ptolemaic Propaganda*, Toronto 2000, 103–59.
- 13 P. Freib. III 12–33: In the prescript, Cleopatra I is called 'the goddess Epiphanes' whereas her son is only called Ptolemaios. See MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, 133–4; HAZZARD, *Imagination of a Monarchy*, 125–6.
- 14 See G. GRIMM, 'Verbrannte Pharaonen. Die Feuerbestattung Ptolemaios' IV. Philopator und ein gescheiterter Staatsstreich in Alexandria', *Antike Welt* 3, 1997, 233–49.

establishing a priesthood of 'King Ptolemy and his mother Cleopatra' in the dynastic cult of Ptolemais.¹⁵ In the dynastic cult of Alexander and the Ptolemies in Alexandria, Cleopatra I continued to be venerated together with her deceased husband Ptolemy V under the epithet of the *Theoi Epiphaneis*, whereas Philometor was added only as a king, not as a god.¹⁶ This is remarkable and it emphasizes the political power of Cleopatra I.

This status of Cleopatra I, however, was not reflected in the Egyptian temples in any way. One might expect to find ritual scenes with Cleopatra I as acting queen behind her husband Ptolemy V or her son Ptolemy VI, but very few surviving Egyptian temples were built or decorated under Ptolemy V, due to the unstable political situation in Upper Egypt.¹⁷ Thus, Cleopatra I is not attested in any Egyptian ritual scene in the role of the living queen consort.¹⁸

Cleopatra II and Ptolemy VI

Cleopatra I died in 176, and young Ptolemy VI now ruled under the guardianship of Eulaios and Lenaus. Ptolemy VI married his sister Cleopatra II before April 175;¹⁹ both were now venerated as *ntr.wj mr.wj mw.t* or *Theoi Philometores*. This marriage reaffirmed the stability of Ptolemaic rule. At the same time, the ancient Egyptian concept of duality—of a complementary king- and queenship—was re-enforced, and in many temple ritual scenes the queen was represented standing behind her husband.

The absence of depictions, which is so striking for Cleopatra I, changes dramatically under her daughter. In addition, Cleopatra II was the first Ptolemaic queen occasionally to present a specific offering in her own right to an Egyptian deity, an action otherwise reserved to the king.²⁰ However, she was not empowered to do it by herself, but was always accompanied by her husband. **Fig. 1** shows her with Ptolemy VI on the Great Pylon of Philae offering to Isis, Horus, Hathor, Harpokrates and Meret. Cleopatra II offers ointment to Isis in particular.

¹⁵ MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, 137–8.

¹⁶ MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, 133, 138.

¹⁷ For Ptolemy V Epiphanes see LANCIERS, E., 'Die ägyptischen Tempelbauten zur Zeit des Ptolemaios V. Epiphanes (204–180 v. Chr.)', Teil 1, *MDAIK* 42, 1986, 81–98; id. 'Die ägyptischen Tempelbauten zur Zeit des Ptolemaios V. Epiphanes (204–180 v. Chr.)', Teil 2, *MDAIK* 43, 1987, 173–82. For Ptolemy VI Philometor see MINAS, *OLP* 27–28, 1996–97.

¹⁸ At Edfu, however, her name is mentioned twice beside that of her husband Ptolemy V: *Edfou* I 517 [= B. PORTER and R.L.B. MOSS, *Topographical bibliography of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, reliefs, and paintings*, Vol. VI: *Upper Egypt: chief temples (excluding Thebes); Abydos, Dendera, Esna, Edfu, Kôm Ombo and Philae*, Oxford 1970 = PM VI 142 (166)], *Edfou* II 158–9 [= PM VI 139 (139)]. See LANCIERS, *MDAIK* 42, 1986, 94–5. At Philae a shrine built under Ptolemy V also mentions Cleopatra I: LANCIERS, *MDAIK* 42, 1986, 96 (n. 106a).

¹⁹ HÖLBL, G., *Geschichte des Ptolemäerreiches. Politik, Ideologie und religiöse Kultur von Alexander dem Großen bis zur römischen Eroberung*, Darmstadt 1994, 129.

²⁰ See MINAS, *APF* 51, 2005, 141.

Usually, Ptolemaic queens, even as co-regents, previously stood passively behind the king, holding only flowers or a sistrum in the hand (that is, unspecific offerings) or raising their hand in greeting. It was thereby made emblematically obvious that it was always the king who at least nominally exercised power, never the queen.²¹ This is also true for most of the ritual scenes in which Cleopatra II was depicted, for example in Philae (**Fig. 2**), where she and her husband venerate Khnum, Satet, and Anuket.

It seems that Cleopatra II (or subsequent Ptolemaic queens) would make specific offerings only before the principal deity of a temple, as is the case in Fig. 1. If this working hypothesis is correct, a ritual scene in the Hypostyle hall of the Temple of Isis at Philae should be seen in a new light (**Fig. 3**):²² Both Cleopatra II and III accompany Ptolemy VIII, who offers a field to Isis, the *principal* deity of the temple. Cleopatra II offers wine, whereas Cleopatra III only greets the goddess. This might display different statuses for the two queens, marking Cleopatra II as senior, Cleopatra III as junior queen—a role that Cleopatra III soon tried to shed.

The iconography of the two queens is slightly different: They wear the same crown, the most important element to prove their status, but their wigs and the jewellery vary. In other reliefs, the two queens are differently clothed, for example at Kom Ombo,²³ where they are both depicted behind Ptolemy VIII as passive queen consorts, even before Haroeris, one of the principal deities of the temple (**Fig. 4**).

The iconographic repertoire needs to be studied in more detail. It might make a vital contribution to our understanding, not only of the queens, but also of difference in the styles of various temples.

Cleopatra II with Ptolemy VI and VIII

In preparation for the war against Syria and the recovery of Coele-Syria the majority of Ptolemy VI was proclaimed and the duality of reign was replaced: In October/November 170, their younger brother, Ptolemy (the later Ptolemy VIII), was named as coruler of Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II.²⁴ The coregency of the three *Theoi Philometores* was commemorated with a new sequence of regnal years.

The three siblings are depicted together only once in the Egyptian temples, that is in the pronaos of the Hathor-temple at Deir el-Medineh, where they offer to Amun-Ra, Amun, and Amaunet, members of the ogdoad (**Fig. 5**).²⁵ Cleopatra II is

21 Ptolemaic queens were depicted in Egyptian temples accompanying the king in various ritual scenes, as deceased queens from Berenike I onwards, and as living and acting queens from Arsinoe II. See MINAS, *APF* 51, 2005.

22 PM VI 234 (282)–(283). Berliner Photo 1341.

23 PM VI 189 (74). DE MORGAN, J., *Catalogue des monuments et inscriptions de l'Égypte antique*, Série 1, Haute Égypte, II. *Kom Ombo* I, Wien 1895, no. 462.

24 HÖLBL, *Geschichte*, 130.

25 B. PORTER and R.L.B. MOSS, *Topographical bibliography of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, reliefs, and paintings*, Vol. II: *Theban temples*, Oxford, 1972², 403 (15). DU BOURGUET, P., *Le temple*

placed behind *both* brothers, although she was married to Ptolemy VI and had ruled with him before her younger brother joined them. Ptolemy VI wears the white crown, Ptolemy VIII the red crown. This iconography displays the joined reign of both kings whereas Cleopatra II complemented the male element(s), very much according to Egyptian tradition and not according to the political reality. In the inscription above the scene,²⁶ Cleopatra is mentioned after both brothers and called 'their sister' (sn.t=sn), but also 'the wife of the twin-brother of the living Apis' (ḥm.t n ḥtr ḥp ḥnh), using a part of Philometor's Horus-name (Fig. 5).

In 164, Ptolemy VIII, now called Euergetes for the first time, succeeded in overthrowing his elder brother for one year,²⁷ but already in 163 he was forced to leave Egypt and was installed by Rome as king of Cyrene. This one-year *interregnum* may have been mirrored in temple reliefs but they do not survive.

Cleopatra II and Ptolemy VI

From 163 until 145, Ptolemy VI once again ruled with Cleopatra II. This was a relatively peaceful period in contrast to the previous and the following years, especially in regard to the Ptolemaic dynasty and internal political affairs. Peace resulted in an ambitious programme of temple building and decoration, and Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II were depicted in numerous reliefs.²⁸ In Egyptian temple decoration it is almost impossible to distinguish the two periods of joint rule of Ptolemy VI and his sister-wife Cleopatra II, 175–170 and 163–145. Only if Ptolemy Eupator, the son of Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II, is named among the Ptolemaic ancestors, do we know that a scene or inscription must date between 152 and 145.²⁹

From the reigns of Ptolemy VI and VIII comes the lion's share of inscribed ancestor lines. One reason for this is that Ptolemy VI and his brother Ptolemy VIII built and decorated more Egyptian temples than any other Ptolemaic king, and they evidently felt the need to declare the legitimacy of their rule, which is one motivation for including these hieroglyphic ancestor lines. The dynastic ancestors are usually characterized as *Synnaoi Theoi* or "temple-sharing" gods.³⁰ The Ptolemaic ancestors could only be named after the cartouche or the full fivefold title of the reigning king, often followed by the name of the reigning queen. In this way both the reigning king and the queen were legitimised. Fig. 6 shows an example on the façade of the Ptolemaic temple at Esna, the current rear wall of the pronaos. On

de Deir al-Médîneh, MIFAO 121, Le Caire 2002, 97, No. 103.

26 DU BOURGUET, *Le temple de Deir al-Médîneh*, No. 100.

27 LANCIERS, E., 'Die Alleinherrschaft des Ptolemaios VIII. im Jahr 164/63 v. Chr. und der Name Euergetes', in: B.G. Mandilaras et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the XVIII International Congress of Papyrology, Athens 25–31 May 1986*, Athens 1988, vol. II, 405–33.

28 See MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, 142. EAD., *OLP* 27–28, 1996–97. For the peaceful years of Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II see the article by ST. PFEIFFER in this volume.

29 MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, 7, 142.

30 MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, 3–79.

the south part of the inscription, Ptolemy VI, Ptolemy VIII, and Cleopatra II are thus legitimised, on the north part only Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II.³¹

According to newly identified evidence, the custom of naming the dynastic ancestors already started with Ptolemy III Euergetes I.³² Under the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator, the ancestors are only named in the temple of Thoth in Dakke and on twenty foundation plaques from Tanis.³³ There are no ancestor lines from the reign of Ptolemy V Epiphanes, mostly due to his small amount of building and decoration activity.

Under Ptolemy VI we find, for the first time, a considerable number of these ancestor lines in the Egyptian temples.³⁴ The number increased significantly under his brother Ptolemy VIII,³⁵ and then declined again drastically, because building and decoration activities were reduced substantially.³⁶ Very few ancestor lines are known from the reign of Ptolemy IX Soter II,³⁷ and none from that of Ptolemy X Alexander I. From the reign of Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos some are known from Kom Ombo and one from a Buchis stela.³⁸ Although he extended and built numerous Egyptian temples, the ancestor lines were evidently less important by then.

Cleopatra II and Ptolemy VIII

When Ptolemy VI died in Syria in 145, it quickly became obvious that there was no alternative to his brother, his former coregent, Ptolemy VIII. According to both the Greek-Macedonian and Egyptian understanding of kingship, Cleopatra II was not allowed to rule by herself or for her young son,³⁹ as had her mother Cleopatra I. But Cleopatra II wanted to retain her powerful political position and her status, and her brother Ptolemy VIII was looking for a suitable wife in the dynastic sense. The

31 PM VI 116, Cornice etc. SAUNERON, S., *Le Temple d'Esna II*, Le Caire 1963, 7–8, no. 2A–B.

32 MINAS, *MDAIK* 62, 2006, 203–4. Contra MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, 181.

33 Montet, P., *Les nouvelles fouilles de Tanis (1929–1932)*, Paris 1933, 146–8. See MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, Dok. 1, 77–96.

34 MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, Dok. 4–7, 49, 50, 75, 17–22, 74, 97, 98.

35 MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, Dok. 2–3, 8–16, 23–43, 51–2, 55–6, 58, 60–73, 76.

36 For the building and decoration activity under Ptolemy IX and X see S. CABOR-PFEIFFER, 'Zur Reflexion ptolemäischer Geschichte in den ägyptischen Tempeln aus der Zeit Ptolemaios IX. Philometor II./Soter II. und Ptolemaios X. Alexander I. (116–80 v. Chr.)' Teil I: Die Bau- und Dekorationsstätigkeit', *Journal of Egyptian History* 1, 2008, 21–77.

37 MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, Dok. 53, 57, 59, 99, 100.

38 MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, Dok. 44–48, 54.

39 For the discussion whether there existed a son of Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II when Ptolemy VI died in 145, see CHAUVEAU, M., 'Un été 145, *BIFAO* 90, 1990, 135–68. ID., 'Un été 145: Post-scriptum', *BIFAO* 91, 1991, 129–34. HEINEN, H., 'Der Sohn des 6. Ptolemäers im Sommer 145. Zur Frage nach Ptolemaios VII. Neos Philopator und zur Zählung der Ptolemäerkinge', in: B. Kramer et al. (eds.), *Akten des 21. Internationalen Papyrologenkongresses, Berlin, 13.–19.8.1995*, APF Beiheft 3, Stuttgart & Leipzig 1997, 449–60. CHAUVEAU, M., 'Encore Ptolémée «VII» et le dieu Néos Philopator!', *RdE* 51, 2000, 257–61.

obvious solution was that Cleopatra II should now marry her second brother, with whom she had already ruled from 170 to 164. At the same time the Egyptian need for a duality of kingship and queenship was fulfilled.

From 145/4 onwards Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra II were venerated as *Theoi Euergetai* and ruled as coregents.⁴⁰ In the Temple of Tod, for example, they were named with the dual “the two sovereigns of Egypt”: ἡϣβ.ωϣ n b3q.t and ἰτj.ωϣ β mrj.⁴¹ In the temple reliefs, however, the queen was clearly still in a subordinate position, since she was only depicted behind the king, if at all. Typically, the queen accompanied the king in the important dynastic scenes and texts, for example in the scenes of the veneration of ancestors or in the ancestor lines. This is the case in the quite unusual dynastic scene in the temple of Tod, where Ptolemy VIII pours a libation and offers incense while Cleopatra II offers flowers to Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II, Ptolemy III and Berenike II, Ptolemy IV and Arsinoe III, Ptolemy V and Cleopatra I, Ptolemy VI, and Ptolemy Eupator.⁴²

Cleopatra II and Cleopatra III with Ptolemy VIII

Only three years later, in 142, Ptolemy VIII made a move against his dominant sister and wife Cleopatra II and weakened her position as a coregent by marrying his own niece, Cleopatra III, daughter of his two siblings, Cleopatra II and Ptolemy VI. With the joint rule of Ptolemy VIII and his two wives, the ancient Egyptian presentation of dual rule disappeared once again. In contrast to the reign of the three siblings (170–164), this grouping of rulers was not intended to strengthen Egypt in its external affairs (i.e. against Syria), but rather arose from Euergetes’ personal ambitions.

Cleopatra III was already well-known in the dynastic cult. In the last year of her father’s reign, an additional female eponymous priesthood had been established in Ptolemais for “Cleopatra, the daughter of the king”.⁴³ The two earliest sources for this date from 146/5, the last regnal year of her father Ptolemy VI.⁴⁴ The priestess is mentioned directly after that of her mother Cleopatra II. For the first time, a member of the royal household was included in the dynastic cult without being a coregent. This daughter must have been of considerable importance to her parents. The reason may have been that they had no male heir, as Michel Chauveau has proposed,⁴⁵ although his idea has been disputed by Heinz Heinen.⁴⁶ If there was indeed a male heir, the creation of this eponymous priesthood of a royal daughter would be even

40 HÖLBL, *Geschichte*, 172.

41 For references see MINAS, *OLP* 27, 1996, 74.

42 GRENIER, J.-C., ‘Ptolémée Evergète et Cléopâtre II d’après les textes du Temple de Tôd’, in: *Alessandria e il mondo ellenistico-romano – Studi in onore di Achille Adriani* I, Roma 1983, 33, fig. 1.

43 MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, 140.

44 *P. dem. Schreibertrad.* 42 and *P. dem. Strasb.* 21.

45 CHAUVEAU, *BIFAO* 90, 1990, 135–68. ID., *BIFAO* 91, 1991, 129–34.

46 H. HEINEN, ‘Der Sohn des 6. Ptolemäers im Sommer 145’, 449–60.

more exceptional. Why would she receive her own priesthood while the male heir did not receive one? If there was no male heir, the priesthood was probably created mainly for dynastic purposes rather than to please the princess.

In contrast to the priesthoods in the Greek ruler-cult, Cleopatra III was only introduced into the Egyptian temple reliefs after her marriage with Ptolemy VIII in 142, when she was one of the two royal wives. A Ptolemaic heir to the throne is only depicted twice, first on the Mendes stela from the reign of Ptolemy II,⁴⁷ and second in the Edfu temple⁴⁸ and birth house,⁴⁹ where the male heir accompanies Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra II and/or Cleopatra III. The heir's identity is still unresolved. Some scholars have suggested Memphites,⁵⁰ the son of Cleopatra II, but why should he be depicted with Cleopatra III? It seems more likely that this person is the later Ptolemy IX Soter II.

It was quite unusual to include the Ptolemaic heirs into Egyptian ritual scenes.⁵¹ In the case of Edfu, the heir's presence seemed to have been important, especially in scenes such as those in which Thoth records the regnal years. Under Ptolemy VI and VIII noting the regnal year usually involved the queen, but never the heir. The demonstration of dynastic unity by showing both his wives *and* the heir at Edfu temple was obviously the purpose of this atypical *ménage à quatre*, which was also depicted in Edfu birth house. In this way, dynastic requirements and conflicts of the Ptolemaic dynasty were thus incorporated metaphorically, within Egyptian conventions, into the temple reliefs.⁵² However, the Ptolemies stretched those conventions to the limit.

47 SETHE, K., *Hieroglyphische Urkunden der griechisch-römischen Zeit I: Historisch-biographische Urkunden aus den Zeiten der makedonischen Könige und der beiden ersten Ptolemäer*, *Urkunden des Ägyptischen Altertums II*, Leipzig 1904, 30, 46 (Nr. 6). ROEDER, G., *Die ägyptische Götterwelt*, Zürich & Stuttgart 1959, 172–3. See also DERCHAIN, Ph., 'Une mention méconnue de Ptolémée "le fils"', *ZPE* 61, 1985, 35–6.

48 PM VI 157 (291)–(294) and 159 (301)–(305): Eastern and western external walls of the naos (second register, 16th scene in both cases): *Edfou IV*, 91,17–93,5; 248,8–249,9. See MINAS, *OLP* 28, 1997, 93, n. 17.

49 PM VI 173–4 (85); *Mam. Edfou*, 14,9–15,14. See MINAS, *OLP* 28, 1997, 95, n. 27–8.

50 CAUVILLE, S. & D. DEVAUCHELLE, 'Le temple d'Edfou: Étapes de la construction et nouvelles données historiques', *RdE* 35, 1984, 50–2.

51 Like Ptolemy IX, Ptolemy Eupator was never depicted as a living heir of his father Ptolemy VI in any ritual scene. However, at Edfou, Ptolemy Eupator had been included as living heir and co-regent into the hieroglyphic ancestor lines, while at Tod he was depicted as deceased heir and co-regent in an ancestor veneration scene (GRENIER, J.-C., 'Ptolémée Evergète et Cléopâtre II d'après les textes du Temple de Tôd', in: *Alessandria e il mondo ellenistico-romano – Studi in onore di Achille Adriani I*, Roma 1983, 33, fig. 1.).

52 For the question when and why the heir to the Egyptian throne was depicted see MINAS, M., 'Tradition und Innovation: Legitimation ptolemäischer Machtstrukturen in den ägyptischen Tempeln der Ptolemäerzeit', in: W. Held et al. (eds.), *Orient und Okzident – Antagonismus oder Konstrukt? Machtstrukturen, Ideologien und Kulturtransfer in hellenistischer Zeit. Symposium an der Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg vom 10. bis 13. April 2008*, 2010 (in press).

The rift between Ptolemy VIII and his sister-wife Cleopatra II opened up once again by 132. Cleopatra II established her independence and proclaimed her sole rule as *Cleopatra Philometor Soteira*, ingeniously connecting herself to her brother and first husband Ptolemy VI Philometor and to the dynasty's founder, Ptolemy I Soter. She marked this slip by introducing her own series of regnal years, thus breaking with her brother Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II and the tradition that the queen was only complementary to the king. She now ruled in her own right and appointed her own eponymous priests, as reflected in some papyri.⁵³

This independence is not represented, however, in the Egyptian temples, where Cleopatra II was never depicted just by herself. This might be due to the fact that the Greek and Jewish population were the principal supporters of Cleopatra II, whereas the Egyptian Chora was never entirely under her control. The Egyptians supported Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra III, who continued to sponsor the indigenous temples and were thus depicted together, of course without Cleopatra II.⁵⁴

With Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra III on one side and Cleopatra II on the other, two sets of eponymous priests were nominated for the rival powers, one naming Cleopatra II, the *Thea Philometor Soteira*, the other Ptolemy VIII und Cleopatra III, the *Theoi Euergetai* at the end of the long title of the priest of Alexander.⁵⁵

In addition, Cleopatra III received her own specific eponymous priesthood: For the first time, a queen was venerated by a male priest, the *hieros polos*, who was named after the Alexander priest, and so emphasized Cleopatra's dynastic position. Furthermore, Cleopatra III was not worshipped under her own name, but as Isis, the most important Egyptian goddess of this time. The priest bore the title: "The *hieros polos* of Isis, the lady, the mother of the gods, the great goddess": *hjr̄ḫpwḫ ḫs.t ḫ ḫnw.t ḫ mw.t n̄ n̄r.w ḫ n̄r.t ʕ̄3.t*.⁵⁶ Thus, with the support of the Egyptians, Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra III sought to regain the throne and displace Cleopatra II. As the epiphany of Isis, Cleopatra III probably wished to win over the Egyptians.

These political developments are only partly reflected in the temple reliefs. Some parts of the temples were decorated in the name of Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra III, but the queen was depicted in entirely the same manner as before. The only difference is that Cleopatra II is lacking. These scenes and inscriptions must date to the years 130–124.⁵⁷ The drastic changes in the dynastic cult cannot be traced at all in the Egyptian temple reliefs. The cult of the queen now merged with that of Isis,

53 For example, *P. Bad. II 2* (Cleopatra II) in contrast to *P. dem. Eheverträge 37* (Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra III). For a discussion see Minas, *Ahnenreihen*, 150–4.

54 MINAS, *OLP 28*, 1997, 114.

55 MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, 153.

56 MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, 151 (with n. 586). See *P. dem. Eheverträge 8D* and *Z. P. dem. Eheverträge 37*, and *P. dem. Cairo II 30609*.

57 These occur, for example, in the temple of Khons at Kamak, Armant, El-Kab, several parts of Philae and Debod; for further references see MINAS, *OLP 28*, 1997, 114.

and after Cleopatra III was officially identified with the goddess, the cult of the Ptolemaic queens ceased to function independently, although (or especially because) Cleopatra III created many new priesthoods for herself under Ptolemy VIII and IX.⁵⁸

The identification of Cleopatra III with Isis, mother of the gods, was an adroit move: It strengthened not only her own position but also that of her children, and it weakened that of Cleopatra II in the eyes of the Egyptians. The identification of Cleopatra III with Isis made it possible to interpret any statue of Isis as Cleopatra III, while any statue of Cleopatra III with the typical Isis knot could be seen as a statue of the goddess herself.⁵⁹ Starting with Cleopatra I, the queen was often depicted with this typical Isis-related garment decorated by a knot.⁶⁰ Here too, Cleopatra I laid the foundation for a development that intensified under her daughter and granddaughter.

In 124, the three rulers reached another grudging compromise. Both Cleopatra II and Ptolemy VIII made concessions, and all three continued to rule, once again as *Theoi Euergetai*. In 118, they hoped to put all conflicts behind them for good through the Philanthropa decree, a general amnesty intended to create a lasting order among the supporters of Cleopatra II on one side and Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra III on the other. Part of this reconciliation was the deification of Ptolemy Neos Philopator, who was added as *Theos Neos Philopator* to the title of the Alexander priest in the same year.⁶¹ Neos Philopator was the son of Cleopatra II and Ptolemy VI and is still numbered as Ptolemy VII by some scholars.

Cleopatra III after the death of Cleopatra II

In 116, Ptolemy VIII died. Again, an unusual *ménage à trois* followed: Ptolemy IX ruled together with Cleopatra II and III. The rivalry of mother and daughter ceased only when Cleopatra II died.⁶² Cleopatra III subsequently dominated politically, as we can see from some temple scenes and inscriptions, especially the offering scene in the birth house of the Hathor-temple at Deir el-Medineh.⁶³ Cleopatra III is not only depicted first, but is also mentioned first in the inscription above the figures.⁶⁴ There was no precedent in Egyptian temples giving the names of the female Horus, the lady of the two lands, together with her son. It is only after her that the fivefold name of King Ptolemy IX follows. Among the Ptolemaic ancestors, her mother

58 This is also the reason why the oinochoai ceased to exist in the mid second century BC, after they had played an important role in the third century BC, as THOMPSON, *Ptolemaic Oinochoai*, 122, pointed out.

59 ALBERSMEIER, *Frauenstatuen*, 219.

60 ALBERSMEIER, *Frauenstatuen*, 101–2.

61 MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, 153–4.

62 The traditional view is that Cleopatra II died in 115, but M. EL DAMATY tries to prove that she only died in 108 (see his article in this volume).

63 DU BOURGUET, *Le temple de Deir al-Médineh*, 171, No. 183.

64 DU BOURGUET, *Le temple de Deir al-Médineh*, No. 181. See also MINAS, *Ahnenreihen*, Dok. 57.

Cleopatra II is not mentioned. Her name had been suppressed entirely by her daughter. After her death she was never venerated as a temple-sharing goddess; neither she nor her former priesthoods in the dynastic cult were ever mentioned again in the prescripts of demotic and Greek documents. In this way, Cleopatra III finally overcame her mother for good, both in the Egyptian temples and in the papyri. And she was depicted first and mentioned before the king! This seemed to be a complete victory, but unfortunately, the king was still present, and Cleopatra III never succeeded entirely in getting rid of a male coregent. Moreover, it was the king who received the full fivefold titulary, something that the queen, in contrast, did not have. She thus remained ultimately subordinate in ideology, even though it was she, who ruled in reality.

Even when Cleopatra III was depicted by herself in some offering scenes, the image or the name of the king was never far away. The king, as the necessary male counterpart, is either shown with the queen in a scene or in a neighbouring one,⁶⁵ so that the royal couple was still acting together, as can be seen on a column in Kom Ombo (Fig. 7).⁶⁶

On the façade of sanctuary of Nekhbet at El-Kab, Cleopatra III is depicted without a king.⁶⁷ Ptolemy IX is only shown on the entrance gateway of the temple.⁶⁸ Thus, the visitors would see the king first, but Cleopatra III was more closely connected to the sanctuary, a positioning that emphasizes her status. However, directly above the figure of the queen, the cartouches of Ptolemy IX are displayed in the frieze, making it clear that the queen did not rule by herself. Thus, even here the Ptolemaic queen was shown only as coregent, even though it was she who *de facto* held the power in the Macedonian court at Alexandria.

In contrast to the erasure of her mother's memory, not only was Cleopatra III venerated in the dynastic cult by numerous priests, but she also acted herself as Alexander priest from 105/4 BC onwards, otherwise a privilege of high-ranking officials, male relatives of the king, or of the king himself in the case of Ptolemy IX and X. Sabine Albersmeier is the first to have identified the queen as Alexander priest in a head in Vienna.⁶⁹ Cleopatra III is shown as an elderly woman without a crown or uraeus, but with the circlet or band of a priest. One wonders where this image was set up, tied as it was to the Greek background by depicting the queen as priest, and to the Egyptian background by its style.

Ptolemy X killed his mother Cleopatra III in 101. Thus, there disappeared one of the most powerful Ptolemaic queens.

65 See PERDU, O., 'Souvenir d'une reine ptolémaïque officiant seule', *ZÄS* 127, 2000, 141–52.

66 PM VI 201, Miscellaneous blocks. DE MORGAN, *Kom Ombo* II, p. 341: No. 1063–4, p. 345 (Pl.).

67 DERCHAIN, PH., *El Kab I. Les monuments religieux à l'entrée de l'ouady Hellal*, Bruxelles 1971, 6*–7*, Pl. 14. See also MINAS, *APF* 51, 2005, 143, Abb. 11.

68 DERCHAIN, *El Kab I*, 1*–5*, Pl. 11.

69 ALBERSMEIER, *Frauenstatuen*, 212–4, Kat. 142.

Conclusion

As rivals for power, both Cleopatra III and her mother Cleopatra II manipulated the dynastic cults more than any other queen and contributed substantially to the diversity of Ptolemaic ritual scenes. At the same time they acted as guarantors of Ptolemaic power: As queens, they complemented the kingship. Only Cleopatra II succeeded in surpassing the king for a very short period from 132/1 to 124. With their exceptional ambitions, Cleopatra II and III also almost destroyed the dynasty.

In the Egyptian temples, their status was evident: In the ritual scenes of recording the regnal years both were depicted with their husbands. They were also shown making specific offerings to the principal deities of several temples, just like the king, but—and this is most important—never without his being present, at least in the neighbouring scene or, in one case at El Kab, in the form of his cartouches. The king, by contrast, was shown by himself in the large majority of ritual scenes.

Cleopatra II and III surpassed any other Ptolemaic queen in the ritual scenes in which they appeared. This is a notable difference to their mother or grandmother, Cleopatra I, and all their successors, except perhaps Cleopatra VII. Cleopatra I had changed the status of a Ptolemaic queen considerably, but she was never depicted as a living queen in any Egyptian temple. Because Ptolemy VI and VIII built and decorated so many indigenous temples, it is only natural that their queens were depicted more often than any other Ptolemaic queen. But this was not the only reason for their salience: they also played a more active role in the dynasty, and they were essential to its survival.

The powerful status of Cleopatra II and III, which is evident in some features of the Egyptian temple reliefs, relates directly to the increased emphasis on the dynasty through the ancestor lines. This emphasis on the queen and the dynasty was important for the continuation of the Ptolemaic ruler and became an essential part of temple decoration under Ptolemy VI and VIII. The queen guaranteed the kingship, but she never surpassed it. Queenship was a religious and political complement to kingship; it was never independent.

Richard A. Hazzard analyses the position of Cleopatra II as “a picture of the continuing subordination of the queen under Ptolemy VI, but the picture is not a static one. Because of Cleopatra’s role in 169 and the gentle manner of her husband, her prestige gradually expanded throughout his reign into the reign of his successor, Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II.”⁷⁰ The core of what Hazzard says is correct: Cleopatra’s prestige gradually expanded, as did her status and her importance for the dynasty. However, this was not only due to Ptolemy VI’s gentle manner, which Polybius reported.⁷¹ This would be quite a one-sided picture. Cleopatra II had an effective role model, in the form of her strong-willed mother Cleopatra I. This fact is not

70 HAZZARD, *Imagination of a Monarchy*, 129.

71 POLYBIUS, *Histories*, 39.7.4.

always evident to Egyptologists, because Cleopatra I was never depicted in surviving temple reliefs, due to the small amount of building activity under the reign of Ptolemy V, but surely not due to any deficiency in her status.

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Figures

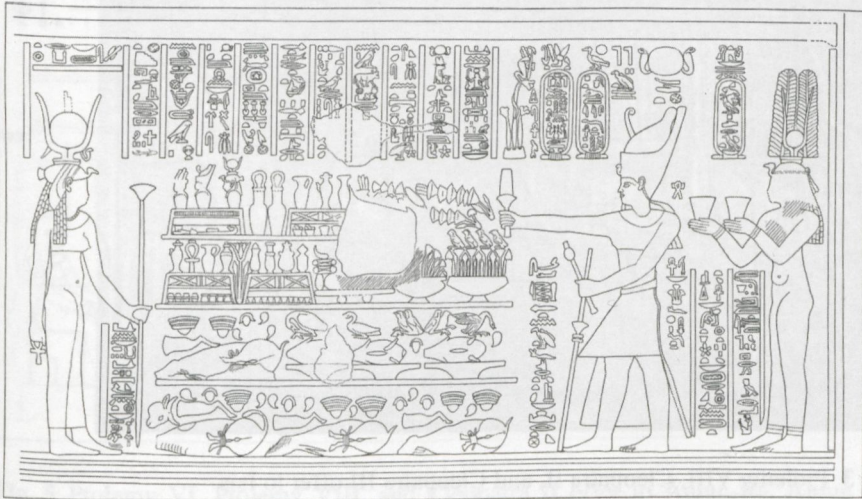


Fig. 1 Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II offer to Isis [and Horus, Hathor, Harpokrates, and Meret] (JUNKER, H., *Der große Pylon des Tempels der Isis in Philä, Philä I, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Denkschriften, Sonderband, Wien 1958, 153*).

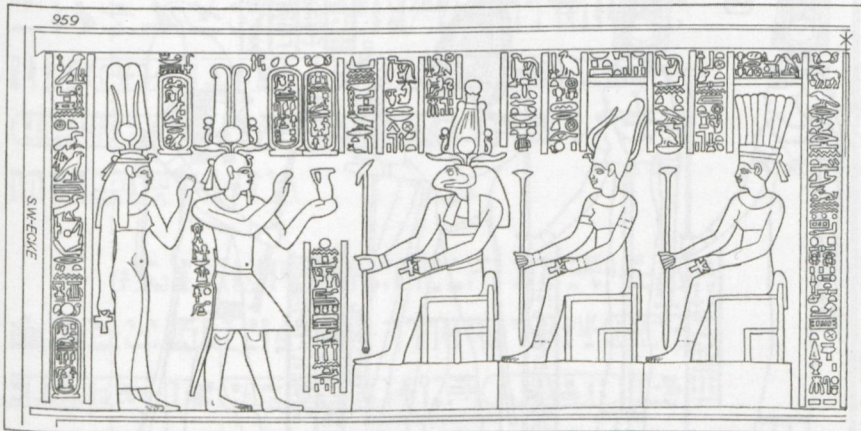


Fig. 2 Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II offer to Khnum, Satet, and Anuket (JUNKER, H. & E. Winter, *Das Geburtshaus des Tempels der Isis in Philä, Philä II, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Denkschriften, Sonderband, Wien 1965, 62*).



Fig. 3 Ptolemy VIII, Cleopatra II, and Cleopatra III offer to Isis (Philae, Berliner Photo 1341).



Fig. 4 Ptolemy VIII, Cleopatra II, and Cleopatra III before Haroeris (DE MORGAN, J., *Catalogue des monuments et inscriptions de l'Égypte antique*, Série 1, Haute Égypte, II. Kom Ombos I, Wien 1895, 462).

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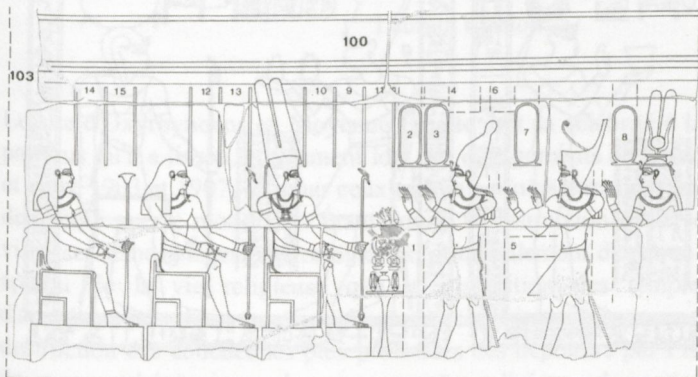


Fig. 5 Ptolemy VI, Ptolemy VIII, and Cleopatra II offer to Amun-Ra, Amun and Amaunet, members of the ogdoad (DU BOURGUET, P., *Le temple de Deir al-Médîneh*, MIFAO 121, Le Caire 2002, No. 100, 103).

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Fig. 6 Ancestor lines of Ptolemy VI, Ptolemy VIII, and Cleopatra II on the façade of the Ptolemaic temple at Esna (SAUNERON, S., *Le Temple d'Esna II*, Le Caire 1963, 7-8, no. 2).

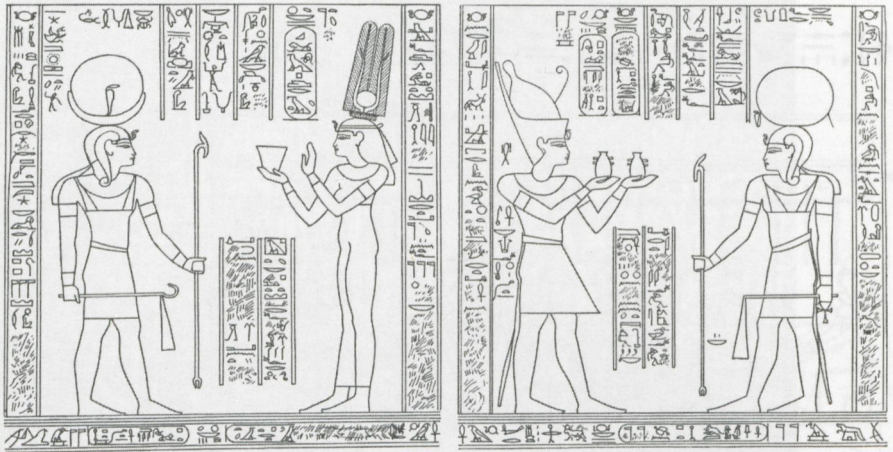


Fig. 7 Cleopatra III and Ptolemy IX (DE MORGAN, J., *Catalogue des monuments et inscriptions de l'Égypte antique*, Série 1, Haute Égypte III. Kom Ombo II, Wien 1902, 1063–4).