A COMPANION TO ANCIENT EGYPT

VOLUME I

Edited by

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CHAPTER 9

The Ptolemaic Period

Katelijn Vandorpe

Alexander the Great liberated Egypt from Persian rule in 332, facing no resistance and laying the foundations for the longest non-Egyptian dynasty ever, the Graeco-Macedonian Ptolemies. These kings left a deeper mark on the country than any previous foreign dynasty.

1 Ptolemaic Documents and Modern Research

Though papyri are already a feature of Pharaonic Egypt, papyrological material is more abundant for the Graeco-Roman period and has had an enormous impact on Ptolemaic research. Thousands of private and official papyri have come down to us, often bundled in archives; whereas individual texts are like instant snapshots, archives present a coherent sequence of pictures of a person or a family (Vandorpe 2009). Alongside papyrus, large amounts of potsherds (ostraca) and some wooden tablets were used as writing material; Ptolemaic potsherds, abundant and virtually free, were used for tax receipts or private memos but are limited to Upper Egypt. These documents were written either in Greek (the language of the administration) or in Demotic, a very cursive script derived ultimately from hieroglyphs. Greek papyri are the focus of Greek Papyrology (Rupprecht 1994) whereas Demotic papyri are studied as a subdiscipline of Egyptology (Depauw 1997). Both are quite technical disciplines, subdivided into a literary and a documentary branch on the basis of their characteristic script, vocabulary, and contents. Evidently, Greek papyrologists and demotists should collaborate, and historians should rely on both types of source in order to "appreciate the full complexity and dynamics of Ptolemaic Egypt" (Johnson 1987: 324), transcending the narrow confines of "papyrological history" (Bagnall 1995; Manning 2009).

Thousands of papyri have been preserved, though they are unevenly distributed over the country since they only survive in dry conditions. Hence Alexandria, the

Delta, and many places in the Nile Valley have hardly produced any such documents. Most papyri have been discovered by legal or illegal excavators, among the latter *sebakhin* who dig out ancient town mounds in their quest for *sebakh* (fertile dust and debris). Papyri discovered illegally have been sold profitably on the antiquities market and turn up in collections all over the world. From the reign of Ptolemy II onwards there is an increase of official documents on papyrus, due to the new practice of recycling old papyri for mummy-cases made of cartonnage, a practice which disappeared after Augustus. Manufacturers of such *papier mâché* bought up in bulk old documents from the administration, pasted two or three layers of papyri onto each other, and covered them with plaster to be painted.

This papyrological evidence, praised for its "innocent quality" (Van Minnen 2000: 32), is essential for our knowledge of daily life and socio-economic and institutional history, and its large quantity makes Egypt unique among the Hellenistic states. However, papyri are not the appropriate sources to reconstruct political history, and scholars have to rely on Greek and Roman historians like Diodoros, Plutarch, and Dio Cassius since the dynastic histories of the Ptolemies have almost completely disappeared (Ogden 2002: XXII–XXIII n. 20 and XIII–XIV). Nevertheless, papyri may furnish some additional information, as on the Blitzkrieg of Ptolemy III in Syria or the Great Inland Revolt.

2 Overview

Ptolemaic Egypt stands at the crossroads of Egyptian and Hellenistic history. Unfortunately, it is often reduced to a last paragraph of Egyptian history, whereas the term Hellenistic may have overtones of obscurity and complexity. Within the field of Hellenistic studies Ptolemaic history is usually narrowed down to dynastic and political history, whereas the wealth of material in other fields such as law, economy, and religion is passed over as atypical. Alexander and Kleopatra are the exceptions to the rule, being the ancient-history publisher's best man and woman (Ogden 2002).

Ptolemaic history with its 274 years (304–30 BC) yields Egypt's longest-lived dynasty (the Eighteenth Dynasty attained 255 years, Taagepera 1979) and by far the most stable Hellenistic monarchy, thanks to Roman support. No Egyptian or Hellenistic king created a more successful dynastic cult. No Egyptian empire covered an area comparable to that of the early Ptolemies. No Egyptian or Mediterranean city had the international aura of Alexandria with its Pharos lighthouse, one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. The second Ptolemaic king was said to be the richest man of his time, and in no other Hellenistic empire was monetization so far-reaching. Some typical Egyptian features rose to a new high, like the Ptolemaic writing system introducing an enormous number of hieroglyphs and the Ptolemaic temples which are amongst the best preserved examples in the country. The famous trilingual Rosetta stone, a priestly decree honoring Ptolemy V (196 BC), became the key to the decipherment of hieroglyphs by Young and Champollion.

Ptolemaic history is more than a history of superlatives; it is the first multi-cultural society where East meets West: "Ptolemaic rule was the first European political intervention in the Near East" (Manning 2009). Despite Plutarch's claim that

Alexander's mission brought civilization to Asia (*De Alex. fort.* 328–9), in reality these Graeco-Macedonian rulers encountered in Egypt a high and long-standing civilization. How were the Ptolemies able to establish control? The key-word is "balance" (Manning 2009), i.e. balancing innovation and tradition on an institutional level and balancing give-and-take *vis-à-vis* the population and elite groups, resulting in a double-faceted Graeco-Egyptian society. Balance and state control are clear features of the Ptolemaic "Golden Age," the first century when the empire was ruled by Ptolemies I to IV. The last 175 years, the "Age of Crisis," are often considered a period of decline, but this view should be nuanced (Manning 2009; Quack-Jördens 2010), since most intervals of crisis functioned at the same time as driving forces of increasing state intervention.

The "balancing" policy of the Ptolemies is foreshadowed in Alexander's visit to the Siwa Oasis. Why did the great king, who had probably been crowned Pharaoh at Memphis, travel 300 km to the remote oracle of Zeus-Ammon? What exactly happened remains a mystery, but Alexander "received the answer his soul desired" and subsequently he claimed to be the son of Ammon-Zeus. The decision to visit the oracle, sacred to Egyptians and Greeks, must have been calculated. As a descendant of Ammon, an offshoot of Amon-re, Alexander could present himself as a legitimate successor *vis-à-vis* the Egyptians, for whom Pharaoh was the son of Re. A response from an oracle enjoying prestige in the Greek world also legitimized his divine origin *vis-à-vis* Greeks and Macedonians, and indeed, the oracle of the Didymaean Apollo and the Erythraean Sibyl (both in Asia Minor) hastened to confirm his divine birth.

3 Founding a New Dynasty

After Alexander's untimely death in Babylon in 323 BC his empire was inherited by his mentally deficient half-brother Philip III Arrhidaios and by his posthumous son Alexander IV. These absentee kings were accepted in Egypt as the new rulers and recorded as such in papyri and on temple walls. Real power, however, rested with the military elite, the Diadochs or "Successors" of Alexander, who fought each other in a series of wars (Errington 2008). Three independent powers eventually came into being: Macedonia, the Seleucid kingdom based on Syria and Mesopotamia, and the Ptolemaic empire. When in 306 BC Antigonos Monophthalmos laid claim to Alexander's empire by assuming the title of king, the other Diadochs soon followed, though becoming kings of their personal territory only. With the defeat of Antigonos at Ipsos in 301 BC the last defender of a unified empire dropped out of the picture, but peace remained utopian.

The Diadoch Ptolemy, son of a Macedonian nobleman Lagos, had been one of Alexander's most trusted generals, the man who captured Bessos, murderer of the Persian king Darius III. In 323 BC he went to Egypt and ruled as satrap (governor) for almost 20 years before he was acclaimed king by his army in 306 BC and crowned on January 12, 304 BC, the anniversary of Alexander's death according to the Macedonian calendar (Grzybek 1990: 96). A new dynasty was founded, that of the Ptolemies, also called the Lagids after Ptolemy's father.



Figure 9.1 Egypt and the Near East. From Erskine (ed.), *A Companion to the Hellenistic World* (Blackwell, 2009).

The male representatives of the dynasty all bore the name of Ptolemaios. In antiquity they were distinguished from one another through their cult names created from Ptolemy II onwards. (Ptolemy I became Soter (Savior).) The Roman numerals I–XV attached to the kings are a device of modern scholars. Since the seventh, the boy-king and co-regent Ptolemy, should be eliminated from the list of rulers (Huss 2001; already Bouché-Leclerq 1963; Bevan 1968), the later Ptolemies should be renumbered, but for the sake of clarity most scholars stick to the prevailing numbering, and Ptolemy Euergetes, brother of Ptolemy VI, remains number VIII. The names of the queens are more varied: Arsinoe, Berenike, and Kleopatra, the Kleopatra of Caesar and Antony being the seventh Ptolemaic queen to bear that name. These are typical Macedonian names, taken over in the Graeco-Macedonian elite groups in Ptolemaic Egypt.

4 Creating a Strong Dynasty: Internal Harmony and Dynastic Cult

The monarchy was very much a "family affair" (Bowman 1996b), passed on from father to son after a period of co-regency. The internal harmony is reflected in some of their cult names: Ptolemy IV was "father-loving" (Philopator), Ptolemy VI "mother-loving" (Philometor). The strongest ties are reflected by consanguineous marriages. Ptolemy II started a tradition of incest under pressure from his ambitious sister Arsinoe II. After being married to king Lysimachos of Thrace and, disastrously, to her half-brother Ptolemy Keraunos, Arsinoe II fled to Egypt where she became queen for the third time: Ptolemy II divorced his first wife to marry her, though they were full siblings. In order to legitimize this marriage, it was compared by the court poet Theokritos to that of Zeus and Hera, thus claiming a divine prerogative for the king (*Idyll* 17.128–34), paralleled by the marriage of Osiris and Isis. (The long series of incestuous marriages at the Ptolemaic court was not an isolated incident in the Hellenistic world (Hornblower 1982)). The practice was rarely followed by their subjects, but in Roman times the phenomenon appears to have been common among Egyptians (see, however, Huebner 2007; Remijsen and Clarysse 2008).

The dynastic cult contributed to the legitimization of kingship (Pfeiffer 2008). The first steps were taken by Ptolemy I who continued Alexander's idea of the king as a being of divine origin, claiming to be a descendant of Zeus and spreading rumors that he was a secret son of Philip II (Pausanias 1.6.2). He even carried off the body of Alexander, embalmed in Babylon and on its way to Macedon, and buried him in Alexandria where a "Priest of Alexander" was installed. With Ptolemy II and his sister-wife the foundation of a successful dynastic cult was laid, resulting in the worship of living kings as gods. The Egyptians considered Pharaoh the son of a god, an idea expressed in Graeco-Roman temples in the mammisi or birthhouses, associating the birth of a local child divinity with that of king, but the attribution of divine honors to the living Pharaoh and his wife had no recent parallels in Egypt.

Ptolemy II elevated his parents to divine rank, whereas the king and Arsinoe II became the Brother-Sister Gods in 272/1 BC. After her death in 270 (Cadell 1998),

Arsinoe received a priestess of her own, called the *kanephoros* or "basket-carrier" in good Greek tradition (Minas 1998). Her cult was propagated throughout the country: temples were constructed for her; her image had to be placed as guest-goddess (*synnaos*) in all the houses of the gods; and a specific tax on vineyards and gardens financed libations in honor of the new goddess (Clarysse & Vandorpe 1998). Many Egyptian documents mention or represent the queen (Quaegebeur 1998), and a dozen cities in the empire were named after her. The new goddess was worshipped throughout Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Greek dynastic cult received its final form in 215/4 BC, when a marvellous mausoleum was constructed for Alexander and the Ptolemaic kings in Alexandria's palace precinct, and when the dynastic cult was extended to the Greek city of Ptolemais in the south of the country. The Greek cult was maintained by an increasing number of Greek priests and priestesses in both Alexandria and Ptolemais. As "eponymous priests" in the tradition of Greek cities, they figured in all Greek and even Egyptian Demotic contracts after the statement of the regnal year of the king. These ever growing lists of priests' names are helpful for modern researchers in dating texts (Clarysse & Van der Veken 1983) but were purely symbolic in antiquity.

After Ptolemy II the hint was taken by the Egyptian clergy, and an Egyptian dynastic cult developed, of which Alexander was not part (Pfeiffer 2008: 108). Under Ptolemy III a fifth *phyle* (tribe) of priests was added to temple staffs, which served the royal couple and their divine ancestors. Whereas in pre-Ptolemaic times Pharaoh had always faced the gods as the representative of humanity, he now also faced his ancestors alongside of the gods. The Egyptian version of the Ptolemaic dynastic cult was truly imbedded in Egyptian tradition, and the king's initiative was manifestly supported by the Egyptian elite.

The king was double-faceted, but the Greek and Egyptian aspects were not separate. The idea behind legitimation, ideology, and propaganda was the same for both constituencies but is "expressed in forms and conventions that render the idea understandable for the other segment of the population" (Koenen 1994: 29). The dynastic cult remained successful throughout the Ptolemaic period but became a weapon in dynastic strife. The Romans would put an end to the Janus head of Ptolemaic kingship, since the Roman Pharaoh again represented humanity facing the gods, and the emperor would receive only Greek-style divine honors (Heinen 1995).

5 Internal Harmony Disturbed and the Age of Crisis

As internal harmony in the Golden Age guaranteed a strong policy, so the lack of it from the end of the third century onwards caused times of crisis, exploited by ambitious individuals, resistance groups, and foreign powers. The numerous royal cartouches left blank in temples in this period may reflect cases of dynastic strife. Even though we use explicit terms like "disturbed internal harmony" and "Age of Crisis," the second century BC (mainly the reigns of Ptolemy VI, VIII, and part of the reign of IX) should not be labeled so since state intervention became stronger than ever before.

The complicated dynastic history of the Age of Crisis is dealt with in excellent studies (recently Hölbl 2001 and Huss 2001). In this chapter we focus on the causes of the dynastic strife. Ambitious individuals at court are a first cause of the disturbances. Ptolemy IV was influenced by the unscrupulous Alexandrian Sosibios, who had several members of the royal family murdered and became, together with Agathokles of Samos, the king's counsellor. Their actions would mortgage the succession for the coming two generations in the absence of adult heirs to the throne. When finally Ptolemy VI put the empire back on the rails, the future of the country was mortgaged again, this time by the marriage policy of his brother and successor Ptolemy VIII. In 141/40 BC the latter, already espoused to his sister Kleopatra II, married his step-daughter and niece Kleopatra III and made her queen as well. Mother and daughter became "the fiercest of rivals, without precedent in the Hellenistic world" (Hölbl 2001: 195).

The dynastic cult was also abused to claim the throne, and the cult name became a political identity card. Kleopatra II, for instance, who claimed to be sole queen, replaced her cult name "Benefactor" (Euergetis), which recalled her reign with her rival brother-husband Ptolemy VIII Euergetes, by "Mother-loving Savior" (Philometor Soteira), which referred to her first husband-brother Ptolemy VI Philometor.

The sole inhabitants of Egypt who played a major role in the dynastic strife were the Alexandrians, who did not shrink from using force. Ptolemy's IV counsellor Agathokles, for instance, was lynched by the Alexandrian mob. After 168 BC the Romans intervened increasingly in Ptolemaic affairs (Lampela 1998), and Ptolemaic princes tried to strengthen their position by turning to the Roman senate and even bequeathed foreign possessions and, in the end, Egypt itself to the Romans. Under Ptolemy XII Auletes ("Flute-player") a real clearance-sale was held. Chased away by the Alexandrians, he distributed impressive bribes in Rome and managed to seize the throne, but debts had to be cleared, and Rabirius Postumus, the main creditor of the new king, became Minister of Finances. In the Alexandrian War (48–47 BC), the Alexandrians and Romans finally took a stand against each other. The Alexandrians preferred Ptolemy XIII, whereas Caesar (to whom Ptolemy XIII offered the head of Pompey) decided to support Kleopatra. In this grim struggle the world-famous Alexandrian library accidentally went up in flames spreading from ships in the harbor.

Leaving the Alexandrian and Roman stage, we turn to the consequences of the dynastic strife for the Egyptian countryside (McGing 1997; Veïsse 2004). The inland troubles are often vaguely described as "revolts," but we need to distinguish between (a) revolts by natives, usually concentrated in the south, (b) a *coup d'état* by a confidant of the king, (c) a civil war in which inhabitants did not turn against the foreign rulers but supported one of the rival kings. Two native revolts are attested, of which only the first produced native rebel kings, and even these revolts may not have been a reaction against foreign rule. The main cause was rather the general decline in living conditions.

The Great Revolt (206–186 BC)

The rival kings of the first great revolt must have been in a sense Messianic figures announcing a new Golden Age, as suggested by their names Hurgonaphor ("Horus-Onnophris") and Chaonnophris ("Onnophris lives"). The fiercest and

longest revolt, also known as the Great Theban revolt (Pestman 1995), plagued the country for 20 years and was concentrated in Upper Egypt. (A second center of rebellion was the Delta, but this is not well documented.)

One of the first signs of the Great Revolt was the interruption by "ignorant rebels" (Pestman 1995: text e) of the work on the temple of Edfu at the very end of the reign of Ptolemy IV. On this king's death in 204 BC his son, barely six years old, inherited the crisis, and it may well be only then that the revolt proper started. The two rebel kings Hurgonaphor (205–199 BC) and Chaonnophris (199–186 BC) were at some stage assisted by Nubian troops and made Thebes the center of their territory. The Ptolemaic building and renovating projects in Upper Egypt were halted and even destroyed, like the Ptolemaic temple in Medamud (Vandorpe 1995). The Theban clergy probably did not always receive the rebels with as much enthusiasm as some would have us believe, since there are no indications of repression of the priesthood by the government after the revolt's conclusion.

Coups d'état

In the second half of his reign Ptolemy V put an end to the Great Revolt and regained control over the country. On his death in 180 his wife Kleopatra I was left behind with very young children, and after her demise in 176 she was replaced by incompetent guardians who installed the three minor siblings as kings: Ptolemy VI, VIII, and Kleopatra II (170–163 BC). This situation was exploited not only by the Seleucid Antiochos IV, who invaded Egypt twice, but also by one of the "friends" of the young kings, Dionysios Petosarapis (c.168–167 BC), apparently a Hellenized Egyptian, who carried out a putsch with the help of some thousands of rebel soldiers. The *coup d'état* had repercussions even in the Thebaid, and the country was stabilized only in 165, when the building of a new Satis-temple at Elephantine could start. Ptolemy VI settled things with his rival-brother Ptolemy VIII who had to content himself with Cyrenaica. After Ptolemy's VI unexpected death in 145, Ptolemy VIII Euergetes was brought back to Alexandria and had to deal with an unsuccessful putsch by Galaistes (141/140 BC).

The civil war of 132–124 BC

Ptolemy's marriage policy led to civil war dividing the country into partisans of Ptolemy VIII Euergetes/Kleopatra III and followers of Kleopatra II. It has long been assumed that an Egyptian rebel king Harsiesis instigated a short-lived uprising in the region of Thebes and Karara, but the historicity of this event is now seriously doubted, and Harsiesis is probably a ghost-king (Veïsse 2009). The trio, Ptolemy VIII, Kleopatra II and III, were reconciled by 124 BC, and the ensuing unparalleled triple monarchy led to more instability. As in the aftermath of previous rebellions, a generous amnesty decree in 118 BC brought some relief, but not for long.

Last Native Revolt (c.88–86 BC)

Ptolemy IX and X and their mother Kleopatra III started a new series of dynastic problems, as the queen manipulated her sons to gain control over the empire. The unstable situation eventually led to a last rebellion in Upper Egypt. The bastion

of the rebels was Thebes. This time no mercy was shown to the city; Ptolemy IX Soter II treated the Thebans so harshly that they did not have any reminiscence at all of their former wealth (Pausanias 1.9.3), and Theban documentary papyri now become rare.

6 The Reign of Kleopatra VII: Towards a New Superpower

In the late Ptolemaic period dynastic troubles were no longer an internal affair and Kleopatra became a major player in world politics (Chauveau 2000, 2002; Schaefer 2006; Ashton 2008). Her liaisons with the world's leading politicians are considered the equivalent of dynastic marriages, her dowry being Egypt (Pomeroy 1990: 25). She gave the Romans clear signals of her ambitions when she built a Caesareum in Alexandria and called her eldest son Ptolemy Caesar Philopator (the Father-loving), thus presenting her son by Caesar to the world, though Caesar's paternity was doubted even in antiquity (Pomeroy 1990: 25–6; Heinen 2009: 154–75). The Alexandrians teasingly called him Caesarion, "Little Caesar" (Schuller 2006: 131).



Figure 9.2 Kleopatra VII and Caesarion making offerings to Hathor at Dendera. Courtesy Martina Minas.

Together with the triumvir Antony, who controlled the eastern part of the Roman Empire, she dreamt of creating a Hellenistic kingdom in the East. They made their dream public in the gymnasium of Alexandria (Plutarch *Ant.* 54) and took the necessary steps by emptying the Egyptian treasury. This explosive alliance was expressed on coins showing both her image and that of Antony, and, at a final stage, in their common burial. The dynastic cult was given a strong boost when Kleopatra reactivated themes from the time of Ptolemy II, though she sometimes exaggerated, as shown by the divine names of her twins by Antony, Helios ("Sun") and Selene ("Moon"). Antony made Kleopatra "Queen of Kings" and her son Caesarion "King of Kings." For Antony these titles were part of the propaganda war against the Parthians, but, when he made his children titular heads of Roman provinces and regions not yet conquered, Octavian interfered promptly and attacked the couple in western Greece where the last great naval battle in antiquity at Actium was won by Octavian. Kleopatra and Antony fled to Egypt, and Kleopatra even entered the Alexandrian harbor accompanied by victory songs. She filled the empty treasury and bargained secretly with Octavian to ensure the succession of her son Caesarion (Dio Cassius 51.6), but one year after Actium Egypt was defeated, and Octavian's reign in the country began when he entered Alexandria on 1 or 3 August 30 BC. Kleopatra, the New Isis, had failed. Her suicide by cobra's poison, if such was the method, could have been symbolic, the cobra being an ancient symbol of Pharaonic power, but recent research rather points to use of a cocktail of deadly poisons, including the hemlock that killed Socrates (Mebs & Schaeffer 2008).

Octavian refused to pay homage to the deceased Ptolemaic kings, but he did show respect to Alexander, wishing to see "a king, not corpses" (Suetonius 2.18). He brought the Ptolemaic dynasty to a swift and efficient end, executing Caesarion ("a plurality of Caesars is not a good thing," Areios in Plutarch *Ant.* 81), but he spared her children by Antony and had her daughter Kleopatra Selene betrothed to the king of Mauretania.

7 Prominent Queens

In Ptolemaic history queens became prominent after Arsinoe's divinization by her husband-brother Ptolemy II, and dynastic women gradually infiltrated both political and cultic spheres. Their political importance is reflected in their royal titulary, applied for the first time to Arsinoe posthumously but after her to all living queens. More active political interference is attested from the Kleopatra's onwards: Kleopatra I became regent for her minor children when her husband died in 180, and Kleopatra II, in the middle of a dynastic conflict, claimed to be sole queen. She even started a new era, and the "reckoning of dates solely on the basis of a woman's rule represented an extremely audacious innovation" (Hölbl 2001: 197). Only the last Kleopatra would be able to follow her example. The more active role of queens in the later Ptolemaic period is reflected in cultic temple scenes where they could now act alone (Minas 2005).

The dynastic cult paid particular attention to queens who were granted their own priestesses and from Kleopatra III onwards even their own priests. Their cult names

reflected their political identity in times of dynastic crisis (Minas 2010), whereas their association with goddesses like Isis and Aphrodite may show the image they wanted to propagate (but see Ashton 2001: 45). The supreme goddess Isis symbolized the mother figure who also took the role of a fertility goddess guaranteeing the Nile inundation. When Kleopatra VII bore her first child Caesarion, she was able to cast herself in the role of Isis in relation to Horus, and at the end of her life she even became the "New Isis," being dressed like her in public, whereas her Antony represented Osiris.

The significance of queens was expressed in an impressive series of statues and coins. A new Ptolemaic style was created for dynastic women on the basis of Egyptian traditions but with new additions and features, containing obviously divine characteristics (Quaegebeur 1978; Albersmeier 2002).

Kleopatra VII is the only Ptolemaic queen who has stood the test of time, becoming an object of Kleopatra-mania. With Amyot's translation of Plutarch's *Life of Antony* in 1559 the legend of Kleopatra was reactivated, and her life became a popular subject for paintings and drama, but was she popular in antiquity? Ancient authors were hostile to the Egyptian queen, but the archaeological and art-historical record may show another picture of a Kleopatra who had a substantial influence on Rome visible in, for instance, the coiffures of Roman women (Kleiner 2005). To the great annoyance of Cicero she stayed in Rome for two years until Caesar was brutally murdered. In Egypt, Kleopatra was venerated shortly after her death in a Cleopatreum-temple and most probably in the Isis temple of Philai as late as AD 373.

8 Egypt as a Mediterranean Power: The Empire at Its Greatest Extent

Though Egypt had indulged in bouts of expansionism from an early period, the early Ptolemies pursued a more ambitious foreign policy than any previous dynasty, undoubtedly dictated by the turbulent context in which their kingdom found itself. There was room for diplomacy, dynastic alliances, and marriages, but also for military aggression and wars, fought by strong armies and fleets. The first Ptolemies created a northern buffer-zone that could protect the homeland in future clashes and at the same time provided Egypt with natural resources. Ptolemaic power and control relied on their naval forces, but, as a thalassocracy had proved to be vulnerable, Ptolemy III expanded the zone to the east and in the northern Aegean. Eventually, the Egyptian empire reached its largest extent ever: the Ptolemies controlled an area embracing Cyrenaica to the west, Syria-Phoenicia, Cyprus, parts of Asia Minor's coast, Greek islands in the Aegean, Thrace, and other regions in the northern Aegean (Bagnall 1976). They had turned the Nilotic kingdom into a Mediterranean kingdom (Manning 2009).

The core of Ptolemaic foreign power was formed by the nearby territories of Cyrenaica, Cyprus, and Syria-Phoenicia which were vital to Egypt's security and placed under strict royal control. The strong bond with the mother country was reflected in Egypt's closed currency zone of which they were part. Syria-Phoenicia

(also called Koile-Syria) was most fought over, as in Pre-Ptolemaic times. The Seleucid kings of Syria and the Ptolemies fought six Syrian Wars, one of the military highlights being the Battle of Raphia in 217 BC during the Fourth Syrian War. The scale of military preparations and the number of troops on both sides in this conflict were most impressive, but Raphia was a spectacular victory for Ptolemy IV, and, as a result, he was able to reconquer Koile-Syria to be lauded in the new Edfu-temple as "ruler of Syria."

Whereas Ptolemy I was responsible for initiating the creation of the empire, Ptolemy II and III take the credit for its organization and systematization. This successful foreign policy collapsed under the weak government of the infant king Ptolemy V when Egypt was subjected to simultaneous assaults by Seleucid and Macedonian kings. The Ptolemaic king had to give up the majority of the foreign possessions except for Cyprus, Cyrenaica, and some Aegean bases. However, later in his reign Ptolemy V would compensate for the losses by implementing a "growing systematization of the administration among the remaining provinces," a policy followed by his successors (Bagnall 1976: 244). Ptolemy VI brought foreign policy to a new peak, though after a few extremely difficult years: with the loss of Syria-Phoenicia, Egypt had become vulnerable and Antiochos IV was the first foreign king to invade Ptolemaic Egypt which he achieved twice in the Sixth Syrian War (170/169 and 168 BC), and he may have gone as far south as Elephantine and destroyed the Satis-temple (Vittmann 1997, but see Quack 2010). Whereas in the past diplomatic contacts with the Romans had remained exceptional (Eckstein 2008), this newly emerging power in the east, which had just defeated the Macedonian king at Pydna (168 BC), intervened. On the famous "day of Eleusis" (a suburb of Alexandria) C. Popilius Laenas demanded the complete withdrawal of Antiochos IV from Egypt (Polybius 29.27.5), and he had no alternative but to obey. Probably out of revenge (Blasius 2010) Ptolemy VI was eager to reconquer Koile-Syria, but, due to his unfortunate death in Syria in 145 BC, this territory was lost for good. The sixth Ptolemy also had intense diplomatic contacts with areas which he never possessed. "This kind of activity extended the Ptolemaic sphere of influence beyond the area of actual control" (Bagnall 1976: 233).

In the second century BC two unfortunate tendencies developed which were linked to dynastic conflicts: appeals by rival kings to the Romans and the abuse of foreign possessions as havens of refuge or as independent kingdoms. The two trends led to the final loss of foreign territories. Ptolemy Apion, illegitimate son of Ptolemy VIII, was responsible for the loss of Cyrenaica after he left this kingdom on his death to the Romans (96 BC), and Cyprus came in Roman hands through its last king Ptolemy the Bastard (80–58 BC). Some possessions reverted for a short while to Egyptian control under Kleopatra VII and her brother, and the ambitious queen tried to create a new Hellenistic empire with Roman aid, but she failed, and Egypt, in its turn, passed into Roman hands.

9 The Dodekaschoinos or Southern Buffer Zone

In the centuries immediately preceding the Ptolemies Egypt's southern border was normally located at the First Cataract of the Nile, but the frontier could move further south creating a kind of buffer zone which provided both natural resources and

military recruits. The idea of a multifunctional buffer zone was taken over by Ptolemy II who turned part of Lower Nubia into the Dodekaschoinos or "Twelve-mile District" (Dietze 1994, Locher 1999). The area was donated to Isis at the expense of Khnum, and on Philai a comprehensive building project was started (Vassilika 1989), turning the island into the main religious center in the area instead of Elephantine. Ptolemy II to IV organized hunting expeditions for war-elephants even further south. Ptolemaic involvement and foundations on the Red Sea coast were equally part of an exploration programme for elephant hunting and ivory and, more generally, harmonized with the spirit of the age to explore the edges of the known world (Burstein 1996; Mueller 2006: 151–7).

In northern Lower Nubia Meroitic and Egyptian ranges of influence met peacefully. Ptolemy IV initiated in Philai the building of the temple of the Meroitic god Arensnuphis, but during the Great Revolt the Nubian king Ergamenes II (Arqamani) occupied Lower Nubia and Philai, where he continued the Arensnuphis building project. After the revolt the border was temporarily brought back to the First Cataract, but a new expansion under Ptolemy VI reestablished control over the buffer zone (Pfeiffer 2010). A votive inscription even testifies to two city foundations in the area (Heinen 2000; Mueller 2006). These cities Philometris and Kleopatra were apparently part of a territory called the Triakontaschoinos, "Thirty-mile District," probably conquered by the high official Boethos and subsuming the Dodekaschoinos. Building projects in Lower Nubia continued, but the Ptolemies had lost control there by the first century BC.

10 A Society with Two Faces

Ptolemaic Egypt was a multicultural and multilingual society (Ray 1992; Thompson 2009) to which immigrants came from all over the Eastern Mediterranean (Mueller 2006). Many Jews settled there, since Palestine was part of the Ptolemaic empire for almost a century. The largest concentration was found in cosmopolitan Alexandria where the Jews became Hellenized, and some had a brilliant career in the Ptolemaic administration, like Dositheos, son of Drimylos, who became a priest of the Greek dynastic cult (Jördens 2008). Greeks and Egyptians were the two largest ethnic groups, already in direct contact from at least the Saite Dynasty (664–525), and they both left a deep mark on Ptolemaic Egypt. The Ptolemaic king was the living symbol of this double society: he was the subject of a Greek dynastic cult, but an Egyptian-style cult was introduced in the countryside; he was portrayed as a Greek-Macedonian king wearing a diadem on his coins, but as a Pharaoh on the walls of Egyptian temples. However, Ptolemaic Egypt was not turned into a double-faceted society at all levels. In public sectors, such as administration, the state chose from the start to apply one system to the entire population, though it did take into account long-standing traditions and privileged the Greek element in the population. On the other hand, in private sectors, like religious life and private law, the state was less dominant. The Egyptians continued to worship their own gods whilst temples were constructed for the Greek gods in the Greek cities. In the countryside the Greek

A



B



Figure 9.3a and 9.3b The two faces of the Ptolemaic Period are reflected in its bilingual documentation. The Egyptian Demotic sale contract is Brussels, Musées Royaux E8252; the Greek sale contract is Brussels, Musées Royaux E8441. © Musées Royaux d'Art.

Olympian gods were frequently referred to, but these were, as a rule, just Greek names for the local Egyptian gods. Thus, Greeks worshipped Egyptian gods in a Greek guise (*interpretatio graeca*): at Thebes the Heraion was Mut's temple; Apollonopolis Magna (Edfu) was the city of Horus/Apollo; and Panopolis (Achmim) was the city of Min/Pan. As to private law, the people continued their own traditions in their own language. A Greek could appeal to a Greek notary to draw up his will, whereas an Egyptian went to the Egyptian temple notary. Greek and Egyptian notarial offices existed alongside each other even in small towns like Pathyris (Pestman 1978). Different courts (*dikasteria*) judged the Greek immigrants whilst Egyptians were served by *laokritai* (literally "people's judges") based in the temples, though they were all subordinate to royal justice in the person of the king or his representatives the *chrematistai*.

Whilst the two ethnic groups could at first be easily identified as Greek or Egyptian, the boundaries became blurred after a while, even at the highest levels. Greek royal portraits increasingly show Egyptian influence, while Egyptian-style royal portraiture adopted Greek features (Ashton 2001), and the Egyptian dynastic cult became popular even among Greeks living in the countryside. There were two main forces causing the ongoing melding of Egyptian and Greek culture: mixed marriages and social mobility. Greek male immigrants living in the countryside married Egyptian

women (Mélèze-Modrzejewski 1984), partly due to the shortage of Greek women (Thompson 2002). Thus the Greek military officer Dryton son of Pamphilos, a citizen of Ptolemais, married the much younger Apollonia *alias* Senmonthis, who descended from a Hellenized Egyptian family and lived in a small Upper-Egyptian town, but the marriage brought a Greek dimension into the family for only one generation (Lewis 1986; Vandorpe 2002). Through social mobility the Egyptian elite managed to penetrate the higher echelons of the army or administration. As a consequence natives who Hellenized to a certain degree took on either a Greek or Egyptian identity, depending on whether they were at work or at home (Clarysse 1985). In the second century BC it is no longer possible to identify a person as a Greek or an Egyptian on the basis of his name or ethnic. Many inhabitants assume a double name, usually a Greek and Egyptian one. As they could even receive a new ethnic as result of a promotion, ethnics no longer referred to origin but rather to status (La'da 1994; Vandorpe 2008). Thus, Dionysios, son of Kephalas, of Egyptian origin, was promoted from "Persian" to "Macedonian" soldier (Boswinkel-Pestman 1982). Even for the Ptolemaic courts it became impossible to make the ethnic distinction: from 118 BC onwards it was the language of the contracts and no longer the ethnicity of the parties that determined the type of court. Inevitably, Greek and Egyptian traditions affected each other. The position of the Greek woman, for instance, improved under the influence of Egyptian traditions, but Greek women would never become as independent as their Egyptian colleagues (Pomeroy 1990).

With the reign of Kleopatra VII a Roman dimension was added; for she was a queen with affinities to three cultures (Schuller 2006): she was of Macedonian descent; she was the first Ptolemaic dynast who could speak Egyptian (Plutarch *Ant.* 27); and through her children there was a physical fusion with the Romans, and her son by Caesar obtained a Roman name alongside his other names as Ptolemy Caesar Philopator.

11 The International Aura of the Ptolemaic Empire

As diverse as Ptolemaic society in reality was, the picture disseminated abroad was very one-sided. It was a Greek-orientated picture of superlatives which the Ptolemaic dynasty presented to its Greek and Macedonian rival kings. They presented themselves as the wealthiest of dynasts; they employed the best Greek scholars and scientists; and they disposed of the greatest Greek library and the most impressive Greek architecture. The Egyptians came into the picture only as the providers of rich resources: the Egyptian countryside was praised because of its "general excellence, in that it is well suited to provide for the security and greatness of an empire," including the blessings of the Nile, the great number of Egyptian cities, and the density of the population (Diodoros 33.28b). As soon as they got to Alexandria foreign visitors got the picture: they confronted the Pharos or great lighthouse, one of the wonders of the Ancient world, dedicated by the Greek Sostratos of Knidos, and flanked by colossal statues of the Ptolemaic royal couples represented as rulers of the wealthy land of the Nile (Empereur 1998b). The Ptolemies seized any opportunity to display

their wealth "at times pushed to the level of megalomania" (Hölbl 2001: 92). Ptolemy II was considered the richest man of his time, and Ptolemy III was the most generous benefactor after an earthquake hit the colossus of Rhodes in 227 BC. Some of their successors in the more turbulent second century BC could still afford the epithet Tryphon, "Luxurious." The Greek dynastic cult and its festivals were a perfect vehicle to display wealth and power. The Ptolemaieia, a four-yearly festival of the dynasty, became a weapon in the arena of world politics since most Greek states were invited (Thompson 2000b). The Ptolemies also created an "image of power" with agonistic successes, using sports as a propaganda tool all over the Greek world (Remijsen 2009). However, Ptolemaic opulence was not always able to impress the Romans, faithful to their sober *mos maiorum*. When Scipio Aemilianus, the destroyer of Carthage, and his fellows came to Alexandria and were welcomed by Ptolemy VIII "with a great reception and much pomp," they were "scornful of his extravagance as detrimental to both body and mind" (Diodoros 33.28b). Kleopatra VII raised the Egyptian image of luxury to new heights when she seduced Mark Antony at Tarsos, but that was only a foretaste of what awaited him at Alexandria.

The Ptolemaic dynasty lived in Alexandria which was not always considered part of the country, as was well understood by the Romans who created the province of "Alexandria and Egypt." Founded on 7 April 331 BC, it was under construction for years, hence the derisive Egyptian name Rakotis or "Construction Site" (Chauveau 2000: 57). The city enjoyed a favorable climate and established through a web of canals the perfect connection between the Eastern Mediterranean basin and the Nile. Alexandria eclipsed Memphis as the seat of government, surpassed Athens as the cultural metropolis, and became the most important city of the Eastern Mediterranean, only to be superseded after many centuries by Constantinople. The sumptuous royal quarter or Brucheion, expanded by the successive monarchs, harbored the Sema or funerary complex of Alexander and the Ptolemies as well as the Museum. This Center of Excellence was one of the most prestigious institutions, and it housed the greatest scholars of the Hellenistic world. Here Eratosthenes of Cyrene calculated the circumference of the earth and the distance to the moon; here Aristarchos of Samos announced that the earth orbits around the sun; here writers like Theokritos of Syracuse and Kallimachos of Cyrene wrote their poems. The latter also compiled the *Pinakes*, a catalogue of all the works in the Library which was for centuries the largest in the world, the library of Pergamon being its only competitor. Original works of the great authors were bought, and translation of books in other languages were also made, like the Septuagint, the oldest Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, supposedly composed by 70 scholars. For the first time critical editions of classical texts were made, particularly of Homer's epics. The Greek scholars of the Museum were linked to the royal court by their court titles, such as "Friend of the King," and the scholar who was appointed main librarian participated in the education of the prince. Arsitarchos, who produced some 800 books, raised Ptolemy VIII and later Ptolemy VII Neos Philopator. When the latter was murdered by the former, Aristarchos left Egypt for Cyprus followed by at least two of his disciples. There is, though, no evidence of a persecution of scholars by the king, as often suggested. Ptolemy VIII continued the policy of his predecessors, and the Museum remained a Center of Excellence (Horster 2010).

Only one successful export product derived from Egyptian religion: the cult of Sarapis, worshipped in the Greek-style great Serapeum at Alexandria (Hornbostel 1973). The first Ptolemy thought the highly popular Memphite Apis-bull, honored as Osiris-Apis or Sarapis after his death, a perfect god for the new dynasty, provided that he was adapted to Greek tastes. Sarapis formed a couple with Isis which supplanted the ancient couple Osiris and Isis.

The early Ptolemies were proud of their innovative projects, the most impressive being located in the Egyptian countryside. The Fayum, called by the ancient Egyptians "the lake" (*Phiom*, hence the Arab name), is a large depression in the desert, watered by the Bahr Yusuf (Joseph's Canal). In the Middle Kingdom a large-scale reclamation project made parts of the lake and the marshland available for agriculture and settlement. In the early Ptolemaic Period, new large-scale irrigation projects gained more land under the direction of new officials and Macedonian engineers, like Kleon and Theodoros who have left us their archive (Lewis 1986: 37–45) and who followed Greek precedents (Thompson 1999). The cultivated area was almost tripled, and Ptolemy II proudly renamed it after his wife the "Arsinoite Nome." He replaced the old twofold division of the area by a three-part division into *merides* called after their first administrators (Vandorpe 2004). Several new settlements were founded, and old villages were renamed (Clarysse 2007b; Mueller 2006). Greeks and Macedonians serving in the Ptolemaic army settled there and were rewarded with a parcel of land. The minister of finance under Ptolemy II, Apollonios, was even donated a domain of 2750 ha, where new crops, like poppy for oil production, were tried out. His estate manager Zenon has left us the largest archive of Graeco-Roman Egypt, amounting to 2,000 papyri (Pestman 1981; Orrieux 1985; Clarysse-Vandorpe 1995). In the wake of this great agricultural expansion, a new town, Philadelphia, was founded, harboring a residential area for elite members, like Diotimos, the Vice-Minister of Finances whose costly villa boasted a replica of the mosaic floor of the women's baths in the Alexandrian palace. Not surprisingly, therefore, Philadelphia proudly hosted foreign embassies. However it was not only Greeks who were settled in the new area. Egyptians were also transferred from parts of Lower or Middle Egypt, e.g. Oxyrhyncha was founded by people from Oxyrhynchos in the Nile Valley.

12 Controlling the Empire: Balancing Tradition and Innovation

The ultimate aspiration of the Ptolemies was to project an image of power and wealth by generating revenue. State control through a civil administration was one of the main achievements of the Ptolemaic dynasty. A pivotal role was played by Ptolemy II, whose reign has produced a lot of documents, but we may easily underrate Ptolemy I who greatly expanded the empire, made Alexandria the capital of Egypt, founded a new Greek city in the south (Ptolemais), and started land reclamation in the Fayum basin. His successor consolidated the empire, brought the Fayum irrigation works to a new high, carried through fundamental monetary and fiscal reforms, and secured

state income, as shown by his Revenue Laws (Bingen 2007: 157–88). Ptolemies I and II brought prosperity, economic growth, and political stability. Their reigns were milestones in history, and they considered the time ripe to write Egypt's history: by order of one of the two kings the Egyptian priest Manetho produced his *Aigyptiaka*, "History of Egypt," and his division of Egypt's past into dynasties is still used by Egyptologists today.

In the Age of Crisis internal harmony was disturbed, and several foreign possessions were lost. The later Ptolemaic period is characterized by official abuses, inflation, and temporary lack of control of local administration and taxation, but the periods of crisis were, at the same time, the driving forces behind even stronger state intervention and increased administrative systematization. After the Great Revolt, for instance, Ptolemy V successfully installed a hierarchic system of court ranks, such as "kinsman" of the king, assigned to higher officials in Egypt and overseas and thus linking the elite more closely to the royal court (Mooren 1975 and 1977). The control of Upper Egypt is another example. The region was called the Thebaid in Greek sources, as it was, in part, controlled by the mighty Amun priesthood of Thebes. Ptolemy I had already created a political counterweight here by founding Ptolemais, a Greek capital for Upper Egypt perpetuating his name, and Ptolemy III installed a new religious symbol of Ptolemaic rule by initiating the building of a new Horus' temple at Edfu (Manning 2003b: 74). After the revolts the later Ptolemies took a series of measures leading to greater state control in that region. The kings introduced new military camps, sometimes using the enclosure walls of temples like like that still extant in Medinet Habu (Dietze 2000), they employed local soldiers, confiscated land, and sold it at public auctions, and they gradually introduced more state banks, more state granaries, and more Greek notarial offices (Vandorpe 2010). One of the highlights may have been the foundation of a new Greek city Euergetis in 133 BC in the northern Thebaid by the high official Boethos (Heinen 2000).

How were the Ptolemies able to create, almost unopposed, an increasing level of state control? How could they govern through a minority of Greeks who represented 5 to 10% of the population and held higher offices in the administration and the army? The key-word is balance, between tradition and innovation and between give-and-take *vis-à-vis* the native population and Egyptian elite. They ruled over a country that had a well-developed administration adapted to the specific needs of the Nile regime. "The Ptolemies adapted in a practical manner to the realities of Egypt" (Manning 2009), but at the same time they introduced new elements to enhance the control or to adapt to new realities such as the intake of Greek immigrants and the use of coins. The kings preserved the traditional division of the *chora*, the Egyptian countryside, into provinces called "nomes," but replaced the ancient nomarch by a *strategos*, "general," who had by 230 BC become a civil official. Greek replaced Egyptian Demotic as the official language of government. The temples continued their own systems for administering business, but the government supervised them through the newly created office of temple *epistates*, though the function was soon to be taken over by temple personnel (Clarysse 2003). The Egyptian judges (*laokritai*) remained part of the legal system but had to tolerate the supervision of a government clerk, the *eisagogeus* (Allam 1991, 2008). Similarly, the Egyptian temple notaries continued to function but experienced competition from Greek notarial offices.

The traditional taxes in kind were retained by the Ptolemies (Muhs 2005b), but the government gradually took over the assessment of several taxes from the temples (Vandorpe 2000), except for taxes which were closely linked to the temple's burial practices (Muhs 2005: 87–103). The government installed instead a civil administration, though the people appointed were often the former priests of the temple. In order to maximize control and minimize risk to the royal treasure the Greek tax-farming system was introduced for several taxes, though in a modified form (Bingen 1978). Other fundamental fiscal reforms were the introduction of money taxes and state banks (Reden 2007) and the creation of census procedures on the basis of which a new poll tax was levied (Clarysse-Thompson 2006).

The army also became a mixture of old and new. The Ptolemies introduced a Graeco-Macedonian army. The immigrants became military settlers called *klerouchoi* (cleruchs) and later on *katoikoi*, as they were allotted an Egyptian *kleros*, a parcel of land for lifetime and eventually inheritable by their offspring (Uebel 1968). The Egyptian army was at first under-utilized (Lloyd 2002a), but Ptolemy IV trained native Egyptian troops to fight in a Macedonian-style phalanx during the Fourth Syrian War, and they proved a great success at the battle of Raphia in 217 BC. Consequently, the Egyptian soldiers were brought into the Greek system of land allotment, though their plots of land were smaller in size and of inferior quality. In Upper Egypt a lot of native Egyptian soldiers were employed in the Age of Crisis, but the system of land allotment was rarely applied there: the soldiers received a salary (Vandorpe 2008).

The Egyptian population were able to continue their traditions: they could turn to their temple notary or Egyptian judge, and they could profess the religion of their choice. The tax burden was heavy but probably not heavier than in previous times. The main difference was that people no longer paid all taxes through the temple which used to control economic life. Taxes were now increasingly levied by state officials, to the advantage of a far away foreign ruler, and the administration became a civil one. The pill was sweetened by calling in local people, often members of the priestly elite, who acted as tax officials or administrators. The royal house was propagandized in the countryside by the Egyptian dynastic cult and by Ptolemaic coinage which was wide-spread in large sections of the population as shown by private money loans. The Ptolemies invested in local traditions by supporting the cults and by impressive building projects as far south as Philai and even beyond. Popular local forms of religion were stimulated, like the oracular cult of Thoth-the-Ibis in Qasr el-Aguz, and local forms of jurisdiction were supported, as shown by the Bab el-Amara, the monumental propylon of Khonsu's temple at Karnak built by Ptolemy III, known as the "Gate of Justice" where oaths were sworn and judgements were pronounced (Quaegebeur 1993). The Ptolemies also from time to time left their home at Alexandria to make a progress through the Egyptian countryside (Clarysse 2000c). Another positive factor was social mobility. Native Egyptians gained promotion in the administration and army, became part of the more privileged and Hellenized groups, and in some cases obtained the highest positions. Even Egyptian women had mobility, since they could marry into the privileged groups.

How did the Egyptian priestly elite feel about the new foreign rulers? The "Greek organization of the country slowly undermined the clerical pillars of the Egyptian



Figure 9.4 Karnak. Propylon of the temple of Khonsu built by Ptolemy III. Courtesy Katelijn Vandorpe.

cultural system'' (Bingen 2007: 254–5), but at the same time the kings supported the temples by setting them free from several taxes, by royal gifts, by paying them a yearly allowance or *syntaxis*, and by generously stimulating temple building and cults in general. Memphis became a second capital, having a palace and being regularly visited by the king. The Memphite coronation of Pharaoh by the High priest of Ptah would become standard (Crawford et al. 1980; Thompson 1988), and the priestly caste was able to strike bargains with the kings as shown directly in the priestly trilingual decrees of Canopus and Rosetta. Moreover, individual priests increased their personal benefits as they received fiscal privileges and had access, from the very start of Ptolemaic rule, to the highest administrative and military offices (Lloyd 2002a). As a result, the priestly elite had no difficulty in supporting the Macedonian dynasty (Huss 1994).

13 Conclusion

The Ptolemies were successful rulers, even in the Age of Crisis, integrating the Egyptian priestly elite and local traditions into their state system. Egypt became a society of two faces, Greek and native Egyptian, resulting in an ongoing symbiosis of both cultures. The Ptolemaic kings were foreign rulers, showing a Greek face

to the world and living in the "city by the sea" that created gods "from new metal," as the anti-Greek propaganda text the Oracle of the Potter put it (Dunand 1977), but they considered Egypt the core of their kingdom and not simply as a lucrative addition. The Ptolemies can, therefore, truly be judged the last Pharaohs.

FURTHER READING

Most accessible and broadest in scope is the overview of history and daily life in Bowman 1996b. A comprehensive account of dynastic and political history is provided by Hölbl 2001 and Huss 2001, while Veïsse 2004 analyses the revolts. Pfeiffer 2008 discusses the new dynastic cult, distinguishing between a ruler's and dynastic variant. Ptolemaic Alexandria is the subject of the fundamental work of Fraser 1972, but see now also Ballet 1999. The foreign Ptolemaic possessions and their administration are dealt with by Bagnall 1976, and the history of Egypt's southern border area is treated by Locher 1999. The way state control was organized has for a long time been determined by the masterly works of Rostovtzcv and Préaux, but their views need modification: see Bingen 1978 and Manning 2009, who moves beyond the prevailing model of despotic one-man-rule and adopts a "bargained incorporation model." Bingen 2007 focuses in a series of collected papers on the nature of the Greek experience in the Ptolemaic world. The Egyptian material and local Upper-Egyptian traditions are analysed by Manning 2003c. The rich archaeological and historical material of the Ptolemaic Period is lavishly illustrated by the guide of Bagnall and Rathbone 2004. A general and accessible introduction to the Greek papyrological material is available in Turner 1980 whilst the handbook edited by Bagnall 2009 provides a detailed overview of this particular kind of evidence. Hunt and Edgar 1932–4 present a fine selection of translated Greek papyrus texts. Depauw 1997 unlocks the Egyptian Demotic material for non-specialists. More and more scholars are now combining the study of Greek and Egyptian sources, as is done at the Leiden and Leuven school.