

STEFANO G. CANEVA

PTOLEMY II, SON OF PTOLEMY SOTER, AND THE IDEOLOGY OF SALVATION:
FROM CIVIC ACCLAMATION TO DYNASTIC TITLE

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1. Introduction

This paper offers a contribution to the study of the development of royal titulary in the early Hellenistic period by reassessing the problematic case study of the epithet Soter and of its affirmation as the standard official title of Ptolemy I under the reign of his son and successor, Ptolemy II (283/2–246 BC). In order to do so, all types of sources are taken into account, from civic decrees to dedications (stemming from both institutional and individual agents), from documentary papyri to literary sources. The geographical scope of this research is also as broad as possible, since it embraces evidence from Egypt, the Aegean world, and Asia Minor. While the major purpose of this contribution is to provide a chronological framework as precise as possible for the dissemination of Ptolemy's epithet Soter in the Ptolemaic kingdom in the first half of the 3rd century, a secondary but broader aim is related to the investigation of the cultural implications of this process, by which σωτηρία – a seminal category for early Hellenistic religion and kingship – was claimed by Ptolemy II (and, later, by his successors) as the fundamental historical trait characterizing the memory of the dynastic founder at both the religious and geo-political level.

In the following discussion, I will carefully distinguish between the terms 'epithet' and 'title'. The broader category 'epithet' encompasses any denomination accompanying the personal name of a sovereign, in every medium and context, and regardless of the frequency and degree of standardization of such denomination. It can be used in a ritual context to refer to the recipient of a cult, in which case the cultic epithet can also be named an epiclesis. Conversely, by 'title' I mean more precisely an epithet that has large diffusion in royal formulae and which is coherently adopted as a standard protocol by a variety of agents (including the monarchs themselves) and across media and contexts, both institutional and non-institutional.¹ This terminological premise having been made, it will be argued that, although originally bestowed upon the living Ptolemy I (at least) in Rhodes and in the Aegean islands, as an epiclesis connected with the establishment of local cultic honors, the epithet Soter did not directly become the standard title of the king: indeed, the evidence allows us to conclude that its use remained occasional and related to regional or personal choices until the end of the years 260s, when Ptolemy II coherently promoted the dissemination of the formula 'Ptolemy Soter' as the standard title of his father across the kingdom, through the various channels of official communication.

A last preliminary word must be spent in relation to R. A. Hazzard's thesis according to which the epithet Soter was never bestowed upon Ptolemy I before the late 260s, not even at the level of local civic acclamations.² Hazzard's arguments have been convincingly rejected by scholars,³ but his contribution has

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¹ For a discussion of this terminology with a focus on the use of compound divine names in Greek religion, see Parker (2003) and Belayche et al. (2005); from the point of view of Hellenistic royal denominations, see Muccioli (2013), 19–25.

² Hazzard (1992) and (2000).

³ See, in particular, Hauben (2004) and (2010). Hauben aptly highlighted the fundamental difference between the local/regional acclamations made by the Rhodians and by the members of the Nesiotic League on the one hand, and the later diffu-

had the merit of drawing new attention to the role that Ptolemy II played in the construction of the ideological and religious memory of his father. While I agree with Hazzard that the late 260s should be seen as a turning point in the history of Ptolemy I's epithet Soter, I will argue that what this scholar pinpointed as an initiative related to a precise historical moment, was in fact a longer process, which unfolded throughout the reign of Ptolemy II.

2. New perspectives on early Ptolemaic royal formulae and its chronology

In his seminal studies in early Ptolemaic epigraphy, P. M. Fraser attempted to establish a precise chronology of the development of royal formulae during the reigns of Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II, but to no avail.⁴ We may now state that his failure to provide a sound general framework of the developments in royal titulature depended to a large extent on some erroneous understandings of the ideological meaning of these changes.

The first issue concerns the relationship between the simple epithet Soter (or the plural Soteres) and the compound one Theos Soter (or Theoi Soteres). It is a common scholarly opinion that the denomination Theos was added to the title Soter of Ptolemy I after the king died and received cultic honors by his son Ptolemy II.⁵ Similarly, it is usually assumed that Ptolemy I and Berenike I may have already borne the plural title Soteres in their lifetime, and that the denomination Theoi was added sometime after the death of the queen (c. 280/79, a few years after the death of her husband) as a consequence of their divinization by their successor Ptolemy II. Nevertheless, neither of these assumptions is supported by the ancient evidence. Thanks to digital search tools, we are now in a much better position to study the developments of royal formulae across a large number of documents spread through time, space, and media. Accordingly, on the grounds of the extant evidence, we may assert that in the inscriptions and papyri of the Hellenistic period, Ptolemy I only appears as Theos Soter in a decree from Ptolemais Hermiou in Upper Egypt, which probably attests to the foundation, or augmentation, of cultic honors for Ptolemy I as the founder of this city. The issue of the decree, which was republished by the civic institutions of Ptolemais in the Imperial period in order to celebrate the antiquity and royal origins of the city, is probably to be dated to the reign of Ptolemy II.⁶ The only partial parallel to the formula used in the decree from Ptolemais is provided by a honorific decree of Miletus for Ptolemy II, which was appended to a letter of the same king in the inscription I.Milet I.3 139 (262/1 BC). Here, Ptolemy I is twice referred to as 'god and savior'.⁷ However, this text offers only an approximate parallel to the denomination Theos Soter in I.Prose 62, since in the Milesian decree the conjunction *καί* establishes a different semantic link between the two words. Much more commonly, Ptolemy I was referred to only with the singular Soter or, as a member of the first dynastic couple, with the plural (Theoi) Soteres.⁸

sion of the epithet at the level of the whole kingdom. On Soter used of Ptolemy I in his lifetime, see now also Caneva (2020a) on Rhodes.

⁴ See especially Fraser (1956); (1972), *passim*.

⁵ See e.g. Fraser (1956), 50–51, and, with more nuances, Fraser (1972), II 367–368, n. 229; Pfeiffer (2008a), 66 and (2008b), 400; Kayser (2017), 48. Muccioli (2013), 83–84 more prudently observes that the plural epithet usually appears without Theoi, but accepts the high chronology of I.Varsovie 50, mentioning 'King Ptolemy and Queen Berenike, Theoi Soteres' during the reign of Ptolemy I and Berenike I. However, this inscription should rather be dated to the early 1st century, as observed by A. Łajtar in his commentary on I.Varsovie 50: on this point, see also Caneva (2019).

⁶ For the text, see Fraser (1959/60); I.Prose 62; Pfeiffer (2015), 24–26, no. 3; Kayser (2017), 47. For the date and a new interpretation of the decree, see Caneva (2020b).

⁷ See lines 24–25: τὴν φιλιάν καὶ τὴν συμμαχίαν τῆμ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ σωτῆρ[α] | Πτολεμαῖον (on the positive relationship between the city and Ptolemy II's father); lines 53–54: στῆσαι εἰς τὸ ἱερ[ὸ]ν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος παρὰ τῆ[ν] | [εἰκόν]α τῆμ Πτολεμαίου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος (on the erection of the decree on a stele to be placed near an existing portrait of Ptolemy I in the sanctuary of Apollo Didymaios).

⁸ This statement is comforted by a research of the compound epithet Theos Soter in all the possible cases in the database of the Packard Humanities Institute (<https://inscriptions.packhum.org>) and in the Papyri.info portal (<https://papyri.info/search>), both accessed on 08/10/2019. Other occurrences of the formula refer to traditional deities. This is the case of some inscriptions and papyri gathered by Fraser (1959/60), 128–129, and erroneously interpreted by this scholar as possible occurrences of the

These observations have seminal implications on the chronology of early Ptolemaic evidence: they allow us to reject the assumption that the death and divinization of Ptolemy (and of his wife Berenike) should be seen as a pivotal chronological reference to date documents on the basis of the appearance of the simple epithets Soter/Soteres or of the compound denominations Theos Soter/Theoi Soteres. The principle by which the death and deification of a sovereign was marked by the addition of the term Theos to his/her personal name or title never became a Ptolemaic tradition, and rather appears as an unwarranted modern generalization of a second-century Attalid habit.⁹ As we shall see below, the diachronic developments concerning the attested variants and their relationships within the system of denominations of Ptolemy I rely on different patterns, identifying which may help us better understand the way Ptolemy II shaped the religious and ideological memory of his father. These considerations enable us to propose a new date for various texts which Fraser and other scholars have attributed to the first years of Ptolemy II, on the basis of the presence of the epithet Soter (without Theos). This argument was often combined with the observation that no reference was made to queen Arsinoe II. By removing the equation between the absence of Theos and a date before 283/2 BC, the absence of Arsinoe II can now, in various cases, be taken as a piece of evidence in favor of a date after the queen's death.

Another major reassessment of early Ptolemaic royal formulary is needed with regard to the plural epithet Soteres. The traditional hypothesis that this denomination was already in use during the reign of Ptolemy I does not hold against a detailed analysis of the visibility of royal women in the court of the first Ptolemaic king. The evidence from Ptolemy I's reign frustrates any attempt to attribute to Berenike I a public position comparable to that later held by Arsinoe II on the side of Ptolemy II. Berenike I is never mentioned together with her husband, either in the Greek or in the Egyptian documents, in the dating formulae or in dedications before the reign of Ptolemy II. More precisely, the earliest known literary and iconographic attestations of Ptolemy I and Berenike I being represented together as a couple do not predate the joint reign of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II: the most conspicuous ones are Theocritus' *Encomium of Ptolemy*, written during the marriage of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II;¹⁰ a particularly precious type of golden coin (pentekontadrachms, or $\mu\nu\alpha\iota\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$) issued by the Theoi Adelphoi to commemorate the introduction of their own cult in 272/1 BC (Fig. 1);¹¹ and the references to Ptolemy I and Berenike I in Callixeinus' report about the grand Alexandrian procession organized by Ptolemy II, plausibly to be dated between the late 270s and the early 260s.¹²

During their joint reign, Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II played a decisive role in the definition of the Ptolemaic ideology of love unifying the royal couple and used this motif to give shape to a message of dynastic continuity. This point, together with the multiplication of references to the first dynastic couple under the reign of the Theoi Adelphoi, suggests the working hypothesis of this paper: the passage from the singular

denomination Theos Soter for Ptolemy I, whose personal name, however, does not appear in these documents (this interpretation is followed by É. Bernard in *I.Philae II*, p. 162, but without the nuances expressed by Fraser).

⁹ On the deceased Attalids receiving the epithet Theos in addition to their name and royal title, see M. Fränkel in *IvP I*, p. 38–39; CIG 3070; OGIS 309; Caneva (2020c), n. 116. To my knowledge, the only comparable Ptolemaic case is provided by an altar privately dedicated in Teos, probably in 33/2 BC, to a series of Ptolemaic queens: Jones (2011). Here the living queen Kleopatra VII is contrasted, as βασιλίσσα, to her ancestors who are referred to with the epiclesis Thea. However, the Teos altar is an *unicum* in the Ptolemaic documentation and dates to a period when the royal formulary of the previous centuries had to a large extent been abandoned or reformed.

¹⁰ On the date of the *Encomium*, see Hunter (2003), 7, 'second half of the 270s'. On the representation of Berenike I in the *Encomium*, see Caneva (2012), 92–94, and Caneva (2014a), 31–36, with the previous references. The final verses of the poem (Theocr. 17.121–134) mention Ptolemy II's establishment of the cult of his parents, adding that numerous sacrifices were offered to them by Ptolemy II and his sister wife Arsinoe II. No reference is made to the epiclesis (Theoi) Soteres in this text.

¹¹ The reconstructed date of the issue of the pentekontadrachms (August 272) corresponds to the first evidence of the priest of Alexander and of the Theoi Adelphoi (P.Hib. II 199; 272/1 BC): see Olivier–Lorber (2013), 55. Note that only the denomination Theoi Adelphoi appears in the legend, revealing the ancillary role of Ptolemy I and Berenike I, whose function is limited to a visual expression of the message of dynastic continuity between the two royal couples.

¹² For the date of the procession, see Caneva (2016a), 207–208 and Kuzmin (2017). Ptolemy I and Berenike I are mentioned together in a passage referring to the establishment of three portraits of the royal couple on gilded carts and to the consecration of sacred precincts for them in Dodona (Athen. 5.203a); they also are the recipients of a particular section of the procession (Athen. 5.197d); finally, their thrones appear in the procession together with those of the second ruling couple in Athen. 5.202a–b.

Soter to the plural Soteres logically and chronologically followed the diffusion of the message of dynastic love created by Ptolemy II and Arsinoe, the Theoi Adelphoi.¹³ In the following discussion, this hypothesis will be substantiated by the analysis of the epigraphic evidence concerning the compound epithet (Theoi) Soteres. It will be argued that Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II not only fashioned the numismatic iconography of their predecessors as a couple, but also created the ideological premises of their plural denomination Soteres. These initiatives can be seen as the complementary features of an inter-medial project of legitimation focusing on the transfer of legitimacy between dynastic couples.



Fig. 1. Gold pentekontadrachms (μναιεῖα) of the Theoi Adelphoi, from Caneva (2016b), 164.
Left: Ptolemy I and Berenike I. Right: Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II

The last fundamental novelty in the evaluation of the diachronic development of early Ptolemaic royal titulature concerns the identification of Arsinoe II's death (270 BC)¹⁴ as the event after which the systematic diffusion of the epiclesis Philadelphos caused the replacement of the formula 'king Ptolemy and queen Arsinoe', in use during the joint reign of the Theoi Adelphoi, with a new one, 'king Ptolemy and Arsinoe Philadelphos', still evoking the dynastic couple as symbolically united, while also making a distinction between the living king and the deceased and deified queen.¹⁵ The possibility to link documents mentioning the second formula with the sole reign of the widowed Ptolemy II removes another fundamental obstacle which condemned Fraser's chronological endeavor to failure, allowing us to date to the period 270–246 several documents which were previously generically ascribed to the reign of Ptolemy II (285/4–246).

While not, of course, solving all problems, this reassessment of the fundamental features of early Ptolemaic formulary allows for a more detailed analysis of the way Ptolemy II made use of, and reshaped the memory of his parents at a religious and symbolical level, throughout the duration of his reign. Furthermore, it is now widely acknowledged that Hellenistic royal formulary was not a fixed and unchangeable protocol, but could vary in relation to space, agents, and media, rather than on a purely chronological ground. This observation is particularly important when, as in this paper, one deals with sources stemming from a variety of agents – the monarchs themselves, civic and federal institutions, individuals – who enjoyed different degrees of authority and of freedom of experimentation with regard to the formulary employed in their texts. For this reason, I will pay particular attention to the different registers of texts as well as to the interaction between centralized royal programs and regional/personal initiatives, and between official and unofficial documents. Thus, for instance, it must be borne in mind that the formulae we find in official documents usually point at the establishment of standard protocols, whereas choices made in non-institutional dedications may reflect a greater degree of freedom. On the other hand, such freedom is not accompanied by the same degree of prestige and authority as in the case of texts stemming from institutional initiatives. The formulary adopted by institutional agents such as kings and cities (or leagues) had more chances to become widely acknowledged standards. As we shall see, this is the case of the formulary used by the

¹³ Caneva (2014a) and (2016b), 163–168. This does not mean that Ptolemy II's parents would not have received individual honors since their death. At least for Ptolemy I, the existence of such cults is made sure by the Ptolemaia dossier (see Nikouria decree, issued c. 280 BC and discussed below). The mention of a Berenikeion in Athen. 5.202d suggests that Berenike I too had an individual cult place, yet the date of introduction of her cult cannot be specified.

¹⁴ On the chronology of Arsinoe's death, see the overview of the debate in Caneva (2016b), 135–141, in favor of the traditional date 270 BC against the later chronology (268 BC) proposed by Grzybek (1990), followed by van Oppen (2010) and Bennett (2002–2011a).

¹⁵ Caneva (2013); (2016b), 141–178. The death of Arsinoe seems also to have caused a temporary decline of the use of the plural epiclesis Theoi Adelphoi, which came once again to the foreground of Ptolemaic ideology in the early years of their successor, Ptolemy III: on this point, see Caneva–Bricault (2019).

Nesiotic League and by Ptolemy II in relation to the epithet of Ptolemy I. Conversely, individual dedications more often responded to a logic of conformism and adaptation to existing formulae, even though, as stated above, individual donors could still enjoy a certain degree of autonomy in choosing the language by which they would express their adherence to royal messages.¹⁶ These sociological factors related to the types of agents involved must be taken into account when studying the diachronic developments of royal formulae across different media. Accordingly, in the following discussion, the standards transmitted by official documents will be compared with their reception at the level of individual initiatives. I will first contrast the fluid use of the epithet Soter in the documentation of the Nesiotic League in the 270s to the more standardized use of the denomination ‘Ptolemy Soter’ in Ptolemy II’s official communication around 260, as it emerges from the dating formulae and numismatic legends. I will then compare individual dedications and other types of texts where Ptolemy I is mentioned alone as Soter, or together with Berenike I as the members of the first dynastic couple, the (Theoi) Soteres.

3. The Nesiotic League

The epiclesis Soter was probably bestowed upon Ptolemy for the first time in Rhodes in 305/4 BC, as part of the cultic honors granted by the city as a reward for his help during the siege of Demetrios Poliorketes. However, this denomination did not become the king’s official title at that time.¹⁷ The maturation of this process occurred at a later stage, although the exact sequence of events remains difficult to understand.¹⁸ The Nesiotic League appears to have played a precocious role at the time when the Aegean cities conferred ἰσόθεοι τιμαί on their savior Ptolemy I. With these honors, the League members manifested their gratitude for Ptolemy’s benefactions towards them and all the Greeks, after Ptolemy took over the Aegean Sea from Demetrios (288–286 BC). The bestowal of cultic honors to ‘the savior Ptolemy’ is mentioned as a past event in a famous decree issued by the League representatives in Samos, c. 280 (the so-called ‘Nikouria decree’, SIG³ 390; IG XII 7, 506),¹⁹ by which the Aegean cities agreed to grant Isolympic status to the Alexandrian festival organized by Ptolemy II for his father, the Ptolemaia. Accordingly, they sent θεωροί to Alexandria to accomplish the sacrifice ‘to Ptolemy Soter’ in the name of the League (lines 55–56) and erected the stele containing the decree at the place of their federal meetings in Delos, ‘near the altar of the Savior Ptolemy’.²⁰

¹⁶ Caneva (2014b), 89–92, 92; Caneva–Bricault (2019).

¹⁷ The reference comes from Paus. 1.8.6 (τὸν δὲ τοῦ Λάγου Σωτήρα παραδόντων Ῥοδίων τὸ ὄνομα). This author probably relied on a Rhodian historical source, which explains why he erroneously interpreted this local acclamation as the act of foundation of the standard title of Ptolemy I. On cultic honors for Ptolemy in Rhodes, see Diod. 20.100 (explicitly associating them with the end of the siege); Gorgon of Rhodes (*On the sacrifices in Rhodes*, FGrH 515 F 19); for the epigraphic evidence see the priestly list published by Segre (1941), 29–31, no. 7, with the emendations in Caneva (2020a). Some scholars (Hazzard [1992] and [2000]; Worthington [2016a], 168–169, and [2016b]) have contested the historicity of the Rhodian acclamation of Ptolemy as Saviour in 305/4 BC, but their arguments rely on an unconvincing interpretation of the Rhodian evidence: see Caneva (2020a) for a reassessment of the dossier.

¹⁸ It is important to observe that no preserved text surely datable to the reign of Ptolemy I mentions the king as Soter. A bilingual basis belonging to a statue of ‘King Ptolemy Soter’ dedicated by a certain Diodotos, son of Achaios (Egypt, unknown provenance), has often been considered as a particularly early attestation of the epithet Soter used for the living Ptolemy I in combination with the royal title βασιλεύς. For the text, see Breccia (1911), no. 1 (Greek); Vleeming (2011), I 68–69, no. 98 A–B (demotic). See however, Caneva (2019) in favor of a date during the reign of Ptolemy II. The Nikouria decree (SIG³ 390) and the decree of Ptolemais (I.Prose 62) show that the royal title could still exceptionally be used in relation to the deceased Ptolemy I in contexts referring to his past euergetic actions. The context of the dedication of Diodotos’ statue is unknown, but it is possible that it belonged to a group representing various members of the Ptolemaic dynasty, which would explain the posthumous use of the title βασιλεύς in this case.

¹⁹ Lines 26–28: προ[σῆκ]ει πάσι τοῖς νησιώταις τιμηκόσιμ πρότερον τῶν σωτήρα Πτολεμαῖον ἰσοθέοις τιμαί[ς]. Concerning the chronology of the decree, see Hauben (2004), esp. 38–44; Hauben (2010), with notes on the text at p. 114–118; Constantakopoulou (2017), 41–43. A date during the early years of Ptolemy II is made sure by the chronology of the careers of Philokles, king of the Sidonians, and of the League’s commander Bakchon, who summoned the Aegean cities in Samos: the evidence places their activity as Ptolemaic collaborators during the decades around 300 BC. On the recent re-discovery of the decree in the village of Tholaria, Amorgos, see Fischer–Perrakis (2019).

²⁰ Lines 48–49: παρὰ τὸν βωμὸν τοῦ σωτήρος | [Πτ]ολε[μ]αίου.

The variable syntactic organization of the occurrences of the denomination Soter in the Nikouria decree speaks against the existence of an already fixed protocol concerning the use of Ptolemy I's title in his lifetime,²¹ since in the opposite case the Nesiotic League would have followed the existing standard, either spontaneously or under the influence of the nesiarch Bakchon. On the other hand, comparison between the Nikouria decree and other contemporaneous documents of the Nesiotic League points to the diplomatic exchanges between Ptolemy II and the Islanders as an important laboratory for the standardization of Ptolemy I's title. In an honorific decree for the Ptolemaic collaborator Sostratos of Knidos (IG XI 4, 1038; early 270s),²² the League members stipulate that the honorific crown of Sostratos shall be announced during the League's Ptolemaia in Delos (lines 13–17);²³ an honorific part of the victims, which are offered on that occasion 'to the other gods, to Savior Ptolemy (I) and to King Ptolemy (II)', shall be sent to Sostratos, his children and brothers in Knidos.²⁴ A decree of the city of Naxos, a League member (IG XII 4, 135; c. 280), mentions the celebration of a thanksgiving offering to the gods on the occasion of the voting sessions of the βουλή and δῆμος, together with the sacrifice of a full-grown victim 'to the Savior Ptolemy'.²⁵

The epigraphic documentation concerning the use of Ptolemy I's epithet Soter by the Nesiotic League, or by one of its members, does not only consist of federal and civic decrees, but also include a few dedications. Two inscribed white marble blocks belonged to statue bases of 'King Ptolemy, (son) of Ptolemy Soter', erected by the Islanders in Delos.²⁶ In the light of the intense honorific activity of the Islanders in the early years of Ptolemy II, a high chronology for the two Delian statues in the 270s is a plausible hypothesis, especially if we bear in mind that the League already referred to Ptolemy I with the formula 'King and Savior' as early as c. 280, in the Nikouria decree.²⁷ The evidence about the initiative of the League in Delos is completed by a dedication by the city of Samos, probably another member of the League.²⁸

²¹ In two cases, the epithet Soter appears in combination with the royal title, before the personal name of Ptolemy (SIG³ 390, lines 10–11: ὁ | [β]ασιλεὺς καὶ σωτὴρ Πτολεμαῖος; the second case appears in the name of Ptolemy II's father, lines 43–44: τὸ μ βασιλέα Πτολεμαῖον βασιλέως καὶ | [σ]ωτῆρος Πτολεμαίου). In the other occurrences, Soter is not accompanied by the royal title, but precedes Ptolemy's name in ritual contexts: line 28, τὸν σωτήρα Πτολεμαῖον as the addressee of the cultic honors of the Nesiotic League; lines 48–49, παρὰ τὸν βωμὸν τοῦ σωτήρος | [Π]τολε[μ]αίου referring to Ptolemy I's altar in Delos; lines 55–56, θύσουσιν τε ὑπὲρ τοῦ | [κ]οινοῦ τῶν νησιωτῶν Πτολεμαίω Σωτήρι, provide the sole case of the epithet Soter following Ptolemy's name without the article.

²² For a discussion of this text, see OGIS 67; Dürrbach, *Choix d'inscriptions de Délos* no. 21; Kotsidu (2000), 206–207, no. 131 [E2]; Constantakopoulou (2017), 44. The date of the decree can be established by combining the evidence of the career of Sostratos on the side of Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II: see Hauben (2004), 42. Besides, the text mentions cultic honors for both Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II at Delos: the addition of the new king suggests a date slightly later than the Nikouria decree.

²³ On this festival, see Bruneau (1970), 531–533; Hauben (2010), 111–112; Constantakopoulou (2017), 44–45, n. 71.

²⁴ Lines 23–28. The relevant royal formula appears at lines 24–25: τοῖς τε ἄλλοις θεοῖς καὶ | σωτήρι Πτολεμαίω καὶ βασιλεῖ Πτολεμαίω. Of course, we must understand that the League representatives did not send the sacrificial meat to Knidos, but the money earned from its selling.

²⁵ Lines 28–32: ἐπιεὶ δὲ πάντα συντετέλεσται κατὰ τὰς | [εὐχὰς τὰς πρότερον γενηθείσας, ἀποδοῦναι τὰς | [χάριτας τοῖς θεοῖς ὅταν ἡ βουλή καὶ ὁ δῆμος ψηφίσῃ|ται καὶ θύσῃ] τῷ σωτήρι Πτολεμαίω ἱερεῖον τέλει[ον]. The citizens of Naxos honored the foreign judges who had been sent by the city of Cos on the initiative of Ptolemy II, probably to solve a problem concerning debts. The nesiarch Bakchon, mentioned in section A, line 15 of the decree, is a plausible candidate for the mediation between Naxos and Cos. A date c. 280 was already proposed by the earlier editors of the text: Holleaux (1942), 33–37; OGIS 43; I.Cos ED 129. This chronology has been confirmed by Crowther (2004) in a detailed paleographic study of the Hellenistic inscriptions of Cos, which has enabled the identification of a number of distinct stonecutters: see p. 26, no. 3 for the texts written by the same person as IG XII 4, 135. See also Crowther (1999), 266, n. 34, for other contemporaneous cases of Ptolemaic indirect intervention in the political life of the Aegean cities through the service of foreign judges.

²⁶ IG XI 4, 1123 (Dürrbach, *Choix d'inscriptions de Délos* no. 17), and IG XI 4, 1124 (OGIS 25).

²⁷ However, the statues could also have been dedicated at a later date: there is no reason to assume that the Aegean cities, who precociously hailed Ptolemy I as their savior, would abandon this epithet at the time when Ptolemy II made it his father's official title across the kingdom.

²⁸ On Samian membership, see Constantakopoulou (2017), 47–48. The island hosted the League's meeting of c. 280 BC, when the Islanders passed the Nikouria decree. It was also the homeland of the admiral Kallikrates, on whose career see recently Hauben (2013). In the light of the Samian honorific decree for Boulagoras (IG XII 6.1, 11), which praises the honorand for a past diplomatic mission by Antiochos II, it has often been thought that Ptolemy II had lost the city to the Seleucid king at the beginning of the 2nd Syrian war (260–253): see Bagnall (1976a), 81. However, Hallof–Mileta (1997), 278–283 have later

The people of Samos erected in the Heraion a statue of princess Berenike, daughter of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe I. The white marble base of the statue has survived, bearing a dedication to Hera and mentioning Berenike as ‘daughter of King Ptolemy, (son) of Ptolemy Soter’.²⁹ Berenike was born *c.* 278–275 BC and married the Seleucid king Antiochos II in 252.³⁰ Accordingly, scholars long dated this dedication to the late 250s, until S. Tracy was able to attribute the inscription to the hand of a Samian stonemason active as early as 305 BC.³¹ If this identification is correct, then a date much later than 270 BC would be difficult to accept. We should therefore conclude that the Samians erected the statue of Berenike when she was still an unmarried child. This may have happened either during the reign of the Theoi Adelphoi (late 270s) or, as it seems more probable, at a certain point in the 260s, possibly at the time when the children of Arsinoe I were officially declared to be the offspring of the deceased and deified Arsinoe II, and the young Berenike started gaining international fame thanks to her victories in Pan-Hellenic contests.³²

While the evidence concerning the honorific initiatives of the Nesiotic League cannot be taken as the proof of the existence of a standard title of Ptolemy I in the 270s, it also sheds light on the attempt, by the League members, to establish a more formalized denomination of the king in relation to the cultic honors that were bestowed upon him. When, in the Nikouria decree, the Islanders refer to the celebration of a sacrifice by the League’s representatives in Alexandria, they stipulate that the offering shall be made ‘to Ptolemy Soter’ (line 56: Πτολεμαίῳ Σωτῆρι). Here the epithet directly follows the personal name of Ptolemy, without the article, in a way comparable with the most common syntax of Greek divine epicleses and with the formula which would later become the standard denomination of Ptolemy I. Other texts describing rituals accomplished by the Islanders for Ptolemy I in the texts mentioned above refer to the king as ‘the Savior Ptolemy’, or ‘Ptolemy the Savior’. Both formulae find numerous parallels in the syntax of Greek divine names, whereas the presence of the article still points to a preliminary phase in the establishment of the dynastic title as we know it from later sources.

That ritual honors and the related need to provide the recipient with a cultic name played a prominent role in the transformation of the epithet Soter into a standard formula is confirmed by a comparison with a contemporaneous decree concerning the establishment of cultic honors for Seleukos I and Antiochos I at Aigai (Aiolis; 281 BC). In this decree too, the epiclesis Soteris appears in ritual contexts either directly after the names of the kings, or before them, preceded by the article.³³ The ritual use of the epithet Soter made by the institutions of Aigai is therefore similar to that documented by the evidence concerning the Nesiotic League. However, in Aigai this use remained confined to a case of local cultic honors, never turning into a standard protocol adopted across the kingdom.³⁴

shown that Boulagoras’ mission only concerned the Samian continental possessions, which had been occupied by Antiochos II, while the island itself seems to have remained under Ptolemaic control, and therefore occupied a place at the border between the two kingdoms before the Ptolemaic successes at the beginning of the 3rd Syrian war (246/5).

²⁹ IG XII 6.1, 347; SEG I 369: βασιλέως Πτολεμαίου | τοῦ Πτολεμαίου Σωτῆρος | θυγατέρα βασίλισσαν | Βερενίκην ὁ δῆμος ὁ Σαμίων | Ἦρηι. The genealogical reference is given the most prominent place in the dedication, revealing a strong interest in dynastic continuity, which can also be found in Posidippus’ epigrammatic epigrams 78 and 88 AB for female members of the royal house; see Caneva (2016b), 165–166.

³⁰ Bennett (2002–2010).

³¹ Tracy (1990), 66–67, followed by Hallof–Mileta (1997), 285.

³² On this posthumous adoption, see Schol. ad Theocr. 17.128, with the discussion by Bennett (2002–2011a). On the agonistic victories of Berenike, see Posid. 78–80, 82 AB, with discussion in Criscuolo (2003); Thompson (2005). The hypothesis of a date after 270 for the Samian inscription is also shared by Criscuolo (2003), 328, n. 74.

³³ *Ed. pr.* Malay–Riel (2009); see now CGRN 137, with the new readings proposed by Caneva (2020d). Lines 0–2: χάριν λαμπρῶς (?) κ|αὶ καλῶ[ς ἀποδιδό]ναι Σελεύκῳ κ|αὶ | Αντιόχῳ [σωτήρσιν]; lines 16–17: εἰς τὸν περίβολον Σελεύκῳ καὶ Αντι[όχῳ] | σωτήρσιν; line 32: Σέλευκῶν καὶ Αντιόχῶν σωτήρας; lines 46–47: τοῖς σωτήρσιν Σελε[ύ]κῳ καὶ Αντιόχῳ.

³⁴ This different trend can at least partly be explained by the fact that, before Antiochos III, civic cultic honors for the Seleucids were not promoted by the central power, as was instead the case in the Ptolemaic kingdom in general, and in the initiatives of the Nesiotic League in particular. In this respect, it is worth noting that ancient sources do not associate the origins of Antiochos I’s title Soter with the honors of Aigai. According to App. Syr. 65.343–344, the king received this epithet after defeating the Celts, an event to be identified with the so-called “Battle of the Elephants” (275 or 269/8 BC). However, this denomination does not appear in the evidence of Antiochos I’s reign and its importance may have grown under his successors:

4. A turning point: The end of the Chremonidean war

If the diplomatic interactions with the Nesiotic League pinpoint a phase of ‘semi-standardisation’ of the title of Ptolemy II’s father, later developments reveal a work-in-progress which unfolded during the entirety of his reign. The dating formulae used by Ptolemy II can be divided into three distinct phases: the first, when years were counted in relation to the rule of “King Ptolemy, (son) of Ptolemy”, covers about the first 15 years of Ptolemy II’s reign, including his marriages with Arsinoe I and Arsinoe II, and ends up with the 17th regnal year (269/8);³⁵ the second phase, which corresponds to the co-regency with Ptolemy the Son, spans the years 18 to 26 (268/7–260/59) and expands the previous formula with the mention of Ptolemy the Son;³⁶ the last phase, inaugurated in the 27th year (259/8) and in use until the end of the reign, is based on the rule of ‘King Ptolemy, (son) of Ptolemy Soter’.³⁷

The third formula corresponds to the final transformation of the denomination Soter into a standard title valid for the whole kingdom. The process revealed by the dating formulae is in fact part of a bigger picture: in 262/1, Ptolemy II renovated his silver tetradrachms with the portrait of Ptolemy I by introducing the new legend ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ in place of the traditional ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ, thus virtually inscribing the Ptolemaic monetary authority within the legacy of the founder of the dynasty.³⁸ The start of this series is contemporaneous with the correspondence between Ptolemy II and Miletus (262/1 BC), where Ptolemy I is named ‘god and savior’,³⁹ and with the probable date of the decree of the Delphic Amphictyons concerning the granting of Isolympic status to the Alexandrian Ptolemaia, on the request of Ptolemy II (CID IV 40; 262/1 BC).⁴⁰ It appears therefore that the promotion of the figure of his father, and of the message of inter-generational continuity of the Ptolemaic σωτηρία, was at the top of Ptolemy II’s agenda during the last phase of the Chremonidean war, when the negative result of the conflict for the anti-Macedonian alliance had become clear. A plausible motivation for this new strategy, which was meant to reach a public both within the kingdom (via the dating formulae and the numismatic legends) and outside it (through the Pan-Hellenic festival Ptolemaia), would be the necessity to relaunch the king’s prestige and legitimacy at a moment when it had reached its lowest point.

5. Ptolemy II, son of Ptolemy Soter, in individual dedications

Many dedications accomplished by non-institutional agents during the reign of Ptolemy II attest to the use of the epithet Soter for the dynastic founder, both in direct references to the deceased king and in passages where Ptolemy I is referred to in the father’s name of the living Ptolemy II. As pointed out above, particular caution is needed when dealing with the initiative of non-institutional agents. Unlike texts stemming from, or referring to, official authorities (decrees, dating formulae, oaths, numismatic legends), the evaluation of the formulary employed in these dedications is complicated by at least two factors: the lack of chronological context for most of the relevant documents, and the methodological difficulty of comparing the specific choices by which various agents would align themselves with the ideological program of the king. The adaptation to a common, centralized protocol underlining the link between the dynastic founder and the earliest document attesting to the use of Soter for Antiochos I alone comes from Antiocheia in Persis (OGIS 233; 205 BC); see Muccioli (2013), 119–121.

³⁵ For an up-to-date table of correspondences between the regnal years of Ptolemy II and the Julian calendar, see P.Sorb. III, p. 7, based on the discussion of Hazzard (1987) and Muhs (1998). Among the papyri transmitting this early formula, see P.Cair. Zen. I 59001 (year 12 = 274/3); P.Hibeh I 99 (year 15 = 271/0); P.Yale I 28 (same as precedent); P.Sorb. III 70 (year 16 = 270/69).

³⁶ Huß (1998); Criscuolo (2017). The earliest document dated in compliance with this formula is P.Sorb. III 71 (year 18 = 268/7).

³⁷ Hazzard (1992), 56, n. 35.

³⁸ For this series, and the so-called ‘Soter Era’ related to it, see Hazzard (2000), 27–28; Lorber (2007).

³⁹ See above, n. 7. The present study confirms the thesis defended by Bagnall (1976a), 173, n. 46, that the formulary used in the Miletus decree sheds light on the situation in 262/1, not during the reign of Ptolemy I, as argued by Habicht (2017³), 83–84, no. 45 (= [1970²], 114–115), followed by Muccioli (2013), 83, and Bencivenni (2013), 299, n. 2.

⁴⁰ For the late date of the decree, see Knoepfler (1995); Lefèvre (1995); Sánchez (2001), 338–341 (*contra* Moretti in ISE II 75, p. 11–12, with the earlier date 266/5).

concept of σωτηρία may have taken place with different geographical and diachronic patterns, including local and personal experimentations whose dynamics are very difficult to generalize. By keeping this methodological warning in mind, in this section I discuss the relevant inscriptions with a focus on the possible diachronic developments of anathematic formulae during the reign of Ptolemy II.

In Asia Minor, a text from Halikarnassos attests to the dedication of a ἱερόν to Sarapis, Isis and Arsinoe Philadelphos ‘for King Ptolemy, (son) of Ptolemy Soter, and for the Theoi [Soteres]’.⁴¹ A new edition of the text has restored the name of the Theoi Soteres at the end of line 3 as the only other possible virtual beneficiaries of the dedication alongside Ptolemy II. The donor managed to mention together all the members of the royal house, both living and dead, in compliance with the message of dynastic continuity promoted by Ptolemy II.⁴² As seen above, the presence of Arsinoe’s epiclesis Philadelphos suggests a date after her death in 270 BC.

Other dedications mentioning King Ptolemy II as the son of Ptolemy Soter do not offer any textual or historical element allowing us to confidently narrow down the chronological limits of the inscription.⁴³ In Salamis, Cyprus, the limestone base of a statue depicting ‘King Ptolemy, (son) of Ptolemy Soter’, erected by Satyrion son of Eumelos, from Amphipolis,⁴⁴ has tentatively been dated on prosopographical grounds to the period of the 2nd Syrian war, but the identification of the donor with a person active in Cyprus in the early 250s remains hypothetical.⁴⁵ A white marble plaque, probably from Alexandria, bears a dedication to all the gods ‘for King Ptolemy, (son) of Ptolemy Soter’, by Aristion son of Python.⁴⁶ A plaque of yellow limestone from Naukratis, plausibly from an altar, has preserved the genitive dedication ‘of King Ptolemy, (son) of Ptolemy Soter’.⁴⁷

A limestone plaque of Egyptian provenance deserves a more detailed discussion. It was dedicated ‘for King Ptolemy, (son) of Ptolemy Soter, to ΑΔΩΤΙ (*sic*), the Dioscuri and Ptolemy Soter’, by a certain Simonides.⁴⁸ The first editor, G. Botti, interpreted ΑΔΩΤΙ as a mistake for ΑΔΙΣΤΙ, that is, the Phrygian

⁴¹ RICIS 305/1702, now re-edited by Caneva–Bricault (2019): Ἀγαθῆι τύχηι ὑπὲρ βασιλείως | Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Πτολεμαίου | Σωτήρος καὶ Θεῶ[ν] | Σωτήρων | Σαράπι, Ἴσι, Ἀρσινόη[ι Φιλαδέλφωι] | τὸ ἱερόν ιδρύσατο [...c. 8–10...] | Χαϊρήμονος νε[...]. The same integration at the end of line 3 has been proposed independently by Carbon–Isager–Pedersen (2019).

⁴² At the diplomatic level, this message is made explicit by the Chremonides decree (IG II³ 1, 912; IG II² 687; SIG³ 434/5), which started the war against Antigonos Gonatas by declaring that Ptolemy II had manifested his commitment towards the freedom of the Greeks in line with the attitude of his parents and of his sister; see lines 14–16, with commentary in Caneva (2016b), 176. The traditional date of the decree, 268/7 BC, has been corrected by Osborne (2009), 89, proposing 269/8 BC on the basis of a new understanding of the dates of the Athenian archons of the period. The same purpose of embracing the whole royal family is expressed by Ptolemy II in the dedication of a statue base of Chremonides’ brother Eteokles in Olympia: Eteokles is praised by the king for his zeal towards his father, Ptolemy I, and his sister Arsinoe: see Criscuolo (2003), 322 with a new edition of IvO 296. Dynastic continuity is also highlighted in the above-mentioned diplomatic exchange between Ptolemy II and Miletus, at the end of the same war. Finally, see the scene of Ptolemy II’s grand procession in Alexandria staging Alexander, Ptolemy I and a personification of Corinth, which evokes the legacy of the Greek κοινόν and the function of the king as the leader of the free Greeks: commentary in Caneva (2016b), 112–121.

⁴³ Among these texts, I limit myself to mentioning in passing a decree of the Lycian city of Lissa (TAM II 161), which seems to refer to Ptolemy Soter in the genitive (as the father’s name of Ptolemy II?) at line 2: [ἐ]πειδὴ Καλ[...].σ[---Π]τολε[μ]αίου[ν] Σ[ω]τ[ή]ρος[ος] ἐπ[...]. The text is too fragmentary to allow for any interpretation of the context.

⁴⁴ Salamine XIII 61: βασιλέα Πτολεμαίων | Πτολεμαίου Σωτήρος | Σατυρίων Εὐμήλου Ἀμφιπολίτης.

⁴⁵ It is generally accepted that the author of the dedication is the same person as Satyrion mentioned as ὁ ἐκ Κύπρου οἰκονόμος in a papyrus of the Zenon archive dated 257 BC; see P.Lond. VII 1951, with Pouilloux (1971), 492; Michaelidou-Nicolaou (1976), 108. Mehl (2019), 478 prudently leaves the question open. Our Satyrion is sometimes also identified with the author of an Alexandrian dedication to the Theoi Adelphoi (I.Ptol.Alex. 9), but due to the different geographical context, this hypothesis rests on even less sound grounds.

⁴⁶ I.Ptol.Alex. 6; Breccia (1911), no. 2: ὑπὲρ βασιλείως | Πτολεμαίου | τοῦ Πτολεμαίου | Σωτήρος θεοῖς πᾶσιν | Ἀριστίων Πύθωνος.

⁴⁷ Breccia (1911), no. 2; I.Delta I 747–748, no. 11: βασιλέως | Πτολεμαίου τοῦ | Πτολεμαίου | Σωτήρος.

⁴⁸ Botti (1898), 41, no. 5 (SB I 306): ὑπὲρ βασιλείως Πτολεμαίου | τοῦ Πτολεμαίου Σωτήρος | ΑΔΩΤΙ Διοσκόροις | Πτολεμαίωι Σωτήρι | Σιμωνίδης. Both Botti and Strack (1897), 226, considered this inscription a fake created by the notorious forger K. Simonidis. However, the authenticity of the inscription was later confirmed by Fraser (1967). On the role of the Celtic troops, see Borgeaud (1996), 117.

A(g)distis, also known from a dedication by the priest Moschos ‘for King Ptolemy, (son) of Ptolemy, and Queen Arsinoe’, on which I will come back later.⁴⁹ If we accept Botti’s solution, the probable introduction of this Phrygian goddess in Egypt in the mid-270s, by Ptolemy II’s Celtic mercenaries, would provide a *terminus post quem* for the dedication. Moreover, the lack of mention of Arsinoe II might move the higher chronological limit of the dedication down to a date *post* 270. However, in a later reassessment of the stone, Fraser proposed to read ΑΔΩΤΙ as a mistake for ΑΔΩΝΙ, ‘to Adonis’.⁵⁰ This reading, which has won consensus ever since, deprives us of any support for a chronological contextualization of the text.

If we limit ourselves to the analysis of dedications mentioning Ptolemy I’s epithet Soter, the sole datable text is largely outnumbered by those for which no precise chronological context can be identified. However, an important contribution also comes from datable dedications where this epithet does not appear. None of the dedicatory texts citing Arsinoe II as a living queen (i.e. with the title βασιλίσσα instead of the epiclesis Philadelphos) refers to her father Ptolemy I with the epithet Soter. The above-mentioned dedication by Moschos was made ‘for King Ptolemy, (son) of Ptolemy, and Queen Arsinoe’. Similarly, neither the dedications made by the admiral Kallikrates in Olympia and Kanopos, nor the statue base of the queen erected by Stratonike, the daughter of Demetrios Poliorketes, ascribe any epithet to the predecessors of the ruling couple.⁵¹ It seems probable that these two high-standing members of the Ptolemaic court would have mentioned the official title of Ptolemy I in their dedication, if it had already become part of a standard protocol. An even stronger argument in this direction comes from the fact that the choice made by these individual agents is coherent with the dating formula of the period of the reign of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II, which, as seen above, counted the regnal years of ‘King Ptolemy, (son) of Ptolemy’, without any epithet.

With all the caution needed when we deal with individual dedications, we can therefore observe that the anathematic dossier from the period of the reign of the Theoi Adelphoi, together with the official dating formula, supports the hypothesis that the epithet Soter was not yet the standard official title of Ptolemy I in the 270s. Of course, as we have seen, in the same period the members of the Nesiotic League already made a semi-standard use of this denomination, yet their documents should be seen as reflecting a regional habit, not as the proof of a generalized use of the title Soter across the kingdom, and even less as the consequence of a centralized ideological program supported by Ptolemy II.

6. (Theoi) Soteres

We may now focus on the texts where the plural epithet Soteres, or the longer formula Theoi Soteres, appears in the parents’ name of King Ptolemy II alone or of the king together with the deified queen Arsinoe Philadelphos.

The shorter formula, which is expressed by the genitive ΣΩΤΗΡΩΝ, is more common than the longer one, especially in inscriptions. Some of the relevant texts are dated, or can be dated on the basis of their formulary or of the historical context to which they refer. For the base of a statue depicting ‘King Ptolemy,

⁴⁹ I.Louvre 8 (c. 274–270). The same text is known in three versions characterized by a different line separation (see commentary of É. Bernand in I.Louvre, p. 32–35). I publish here the version on the plaque preserved at the Musée du Louvre (I.Louvre 8.1): ὑπὲρ βασιλείως Πτολεμαίου τοῦ Πτολεμαίου | καὶ βασιλίσσης Ἀρσινόης | Μόσχος ὁ ἱερεὺς τὸν | ναὸν καὶ τὸ τέμενος | Ἄγδιστι ἐπηκόωι | ἰδρύσατο.

⁵⁰ Fraser (1967), leaving unanswered the question of why these gods were honored in combination with the king (SEG XXIV 1174; *Bull.Ép.* 1968, 540, no. 583). If we accept Fraser’s emendation, it would be tempting to interpret the inscription as stemming from the initiative of the members of a gymnasium, since both the Dioscuri and Adonis are deities closely related to youth. A possible provenance from Fayum could also explain the presence of the Dioscuri, particularly venerated in the area as the Greek correspondent of Egyptian crocodile gods (Quaegebeur [1983a], 313–316), but the origin of the stone is unknown. On dedications to sovereigns and traditional gods by members of gymnasia, see Caneva (2020e), esp. section 5 for dedications to the crocodile gods Sobek and Soknebtynis in Fayum.

⁵¹ Olympia, OGIS 27: βασι[ί]λισσαν Ἀ[ρ]σινόην βα[σ]σιλέως | Πτολεμαίου κ[αί] βασιλίσσης Βερενίκης | Καλλικράτης [Βοίσκου] Σάμιος | Διὶ Ὀ[λ]υμπίῳ (the statue base of Ptolemy II contains the same formula in relation to the couple of the predecessors). Kanopos, SB I 429 (I.Delta I, p. 232, no. 2): ὑπὲρ βασιλείως Πτολεμαίου | καὶ βασιλίσσης Ἀρσινόης, | τὸ ἱερὸν Ἴσσει Ἀνούβει Καλλικράτης | Βοίσκου Σάμιος ναυαρχῶν | ἔδωκεν Πασίτι ἱερεῖ. For Stratonike’s dedication, see OGIS 14; IG XIV 727a: βασιλίσσαν Ἀρσινόην βασιλέως | Πτολεμαίου καὶ βασιλίσσης Βερενίκης | Στρατονίκη βασιλέως Δημητρίου.

(son) of the Soterēs', erected at Cyrene,⁵² a plausible *terminus a quo* can be fixed around 253/2 BC, when the relationship between Alexandria and Cyrene became more peaceful and Magas' daughter Berenike was betrothed to Ptolemy II's son, the future Ptolemy III.⁵³ A basalt stela, perhaps originally erected in the Herakleopolites nome, contains a victory list of the festival Basileia, dated 267 BC and dedicated 'to King Ptolemy, (son) of the Soterēs'.⁵⁴ An altar found in Thera contains a dedication 'to King Ptolemy, (son) of Ptolemy and Berenike, Soterēs, and to Arsinoe Philadelphos'. The dedicatory formula mentioning the living king on the side of the deceased and deified Arsinoe points to a date between 270 and 246.⁵⁵ A white marble plaque with a dedication 'for King Ptolemy and Arsinoe Philadelphos, (children) of the Soterēs', from the area of Damanhur (Hermoupolis Parva), can be dated to the same period.⁵⁶ Although one could observe that the *ὑπέρ*-formula usually appears in relation to living beneficiaries,⁵⁷ the mention of the epiclesis Philadelphos in relation to Arsinoe II suggests a date after her death in 270 BC. Indeed, a broader analysis of the Ptolemaic documentation shows that the choice of this formula does not necessarily mean that both beneficiaries were alive. Rather, it seems more plausible that the donor referred to both Ptolemy and Arsinoe with a *ὑπέρ*-style dedication in order to express his adherence to the contemporaneous royal propaganda, which depicted King Ptolemy and the deified Arsinoe as a symbolically unified couple, even after the queen's death.⁵⁸

A debated piece of evidence comes from Samothrace. Here, at a certain point during his reign, Ptolemy II financed the erection of the monumental *Propylon*, which profoundly reshaped the sacred space of the sanctuary of the Great Gods. The architrave of this building has preserved the royal dedication, whereby Ptolemy II calls himself '(son) of Ptolemy and Berenike, Soterēs'.⁵⁹ Scholars have often taken the absence of the name of Arsinoe II as a proof that the dedication was made before her marriage with Ptolemy II (most probably 285–281).⁶⁰ However, as seen above, the earliest known literary and iconographic attestations of Ptolemy I and Berenike I being represented as a couple do not predate the joint reign of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II. If, therefore, we accepted the early chronology of Ptolemy II's *Propylon*, we would be forced to admit that, although the king personally promoted a new ideological message of dynastic continuity in the early years of his reign, this powerful message remained unexploited for years. The publication of the excavations at Samothrace has brought more clarity to this debate, in particular by re-dating the dedication of

⁵² IGCyr062900: [Βασιλῆ Πτ]ολε[μ]αίων Σωτήρων | [Αρ]ίστων Λουσιφάνευς | ἀνέθηκε. On this text, see also OGIS 22, with the emendation by Fraser (1956), 50, n. 2.

⁵³ For this date, see van Oppen (2015), 39.

⁵⁴ SEG XXVII 1114. Koenen (1977), 3 leaves open the question about the provenance (three options are proposed: Memphites, Herakleopolites, or Arsinoites nome). However, at p. 27–28 this scholar points to the Herakleopolites nome as a plausible hypothesis.

⁵⁵ IG XII 3, 1387 with the emendations proposed by Caneva (2016a), 208–210: [βασιλεῖ Πτ]ολεμαί[ω]ι | [Πτολεμαί]ου καὶ vac. | [Βερενίκης] Σωτή[ρων καὶ] | [Αρσινόη] Φιλαδ[έ]λφωι | [c. 7] Βάτωνο[ς] vac.

⁵⁶ OGIS 724; Breccia (1911), no. 4: ὑπὲρ βασιλέως Πτολεμαίου | καὶ Ἀρσινόης Φιλαδέλφου | Σωτήρων Διονύσιος Ποτάμωνος. The donor might be the same person as Dionysios son of Potamon from Naukratis, who obtained the *προξενία* in Delos in IG XI 4, 561 (300–250 BC). However, both names Dionysios and Potamon are common in Ptolemaic Egypt (see Clarysse–Thompson [2006], I 484, on Potamon), thus this identification based on the sole name should be dealt with cautiously.

⁵⁷ See Jim (2014), with exceptions discussed at p. 626–628.

⁵⁸ See Caneva (2016b), 148 on this text; Caneva–Bricault (2019) on the dedication from Halikarnassos. The use of the *ὑπέρ*-formula to evoke deceased ancestors and thus to stress dynastic continuity is confirmed by later Ptolemaic texts. See, for instance, I.Prose 41 (Aphroditopolis, 57 BC), where the gymnasiarch Herodes celebrates the sacrifice of the festival Nikephoria ὑπὲρ τῆς κυρίας βασιλίσσης (= Berenike IV) καὶ τῶν [προγόνων] (line 33). This supplement is the only acceptable one, because Berenike IV died childless, making τέκνων an impossible alternative.

⁵⁹ OGIS 23; IG XII 8, 228; Samothrace II.1 11: Βασιλεὺς Πτολεμαῖος Πτολεμαίου καὶ Βερενίκης Σωτήρων | Θεοῖς Μεγάλοις.

⁶⁰ The most influential opinion on the matter has been expressed by Fraser in Samothrace II.1, p. 6. Fraser concluded that Ptolemy I dedicated the *Propylon* in the years 285–281, when Arsinoe was still queen of Macedon, erroneously drawing a chronological inference (before 280/79) from the mention of Ptolemy II's parents as Soterēs, not as Theoi Soterēs. Fraser (Samothrace II.1, p. 6) also observed that the writing of Arsinoe's and Ptolemy's dedications in Samothrace is similar enough to consider the two inscriptions roughly contemporaneous. This is true – even though the writing shows some differences in detail – but this similarity must be taken as an indication of relative chronology, not as an argument in favor of a date before 280 BC.

Arsinoe's *Rotunda* in the sanctuary of the Great Gods to the years of her marriage with Ptolemy II (second half of the 270s)⁶¹ and not, as had long been thought, to the period when she was queen of Macedon with Lysimachos (287–281).⁶² In the light of the strong similarities concerning the style of the two buildings and the writing of their royal dedications, it is now possible to date both monuments roughly to the beginning of the second fourth of the third century.⁶³ Accordingly, while the *Rotunda* can be interpreted as an initiative of Arsinoe II as queen of Egypt, Ptolemy II's dedication of the *Propylon* may have occurred either in the same period or soon after the death of the queen. Both dedications reveal a strong focus on dynastic unity and continuity, a message systematically promoted by Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II first, and later by the sole Ptolemy. In the light of the importance of Macedonian kings in euergetic initiatives towards the sanctuary in Samothrace, Arsinoe's and Ptolemy's initiatives can also be read against the background of the contemporaneous geopolitical aspirations of the Ptolemaic house and of its interest in challenging, directly or indirectly, Antigonos Gonatas' control over Greece and the throne of Macedon.⁶⁴

The last epigraphic documents of the dossier cannot be dated with more precision than during the reign of Ptolemy II. A white marble plaque from Alexandria contains the dedication of a τέμενος to Sarapis and Isis 'for King Ptolemy, (son) of Ptolemy and Berenike, Soteris', by the governor of Libya, Archagathos son of Agathokles, and his wife Stratonike. The chronological issue concerning this dedication is closely related to the debated identity of the two donors and their possible link with the royal house.⁶⁵ Finally, a block of sandstone found in the temple of Hibis in the el-Khargeh oasis (western desert of Upper Egypt) contains the dedication of the Great Gateway and of the two monumental entrances of the temple, probably by a member of the local clergy, 'for King Ptolemy, (son) of Ptolemy and Berenike, Soteris [...]'. The hypothesis that the lacuna after the denomination Soteris originally contained the epithet Theoi is intriguing, but cannot be accepted without any doubt. In any case, neither the text nor the archaeological data enable us to narrow down the chronology of the dedication to a precise phase of the reign of Ptolemy II, without falling into circular reasoning.⁶⁶

⁶¹ The chronological limits are, on the one hand, Arsinoe's arrival in Egypt from Samothrace (280/79?) and, on the other, the visit of the royal couple to Pithom on 1st January 273 (Pithom stele, lines 15–16). A date in the mid-270s is a plausible hypothesis.

⁶² McCredie–Roux–Shaw–Kurtich (1992), 231–239. The chronological issue concerning the dedication of Arsinoe's *Rotunda* depends on the lacuna with the name of her husband at line 2: [Βασίλισσα Ἀρσινόη βασιλέως Πτολεμαίου θυγάτηρ ἢ βασιλέως - - - γυνὴ εὐχὴν Θεοῦς Μεγάλου]. Conze–Hauser–Benndorf (1875), 16–17 proposed to read Πτολεμαίου and concluded that the *Rotunda* should be dated to the period when Arsinoe was married with Ptolemy II. However, in the second volume of the Samothrace excavations, Conze–Hauser–Benndorf (1880), 111 accepted the proposal Λυσιμάχου made by Wilamowitz, which has become the common opinion ever since: see OGIS 15; IG XII 8, 227; Fraser in Samothrace II.1 10; Longega (1968), 39–42; Bringmann–von Steuben (1995), 265, no. 236 [E]; Carney (2013), 38; Landucci (2015). This would imply a date of the dedication between 299 and 281, when Arsinoe was married with Lysimachos, and more probably between 287 and 281, when Lysimachos was king of Macedon. However, as aptly pointed out by G. Roux in McCredie–Roux–Shaw–Kurtich (1992), 231–233, the restoration Πτολεμαίου makes perfect sense in relation to the dynastic perspective promoted by Arsinoe II and Ptolemy II in the years of their marriage. This ideological argument seems to me more compelling than those proposed by Fraser in Samothrace II.1, p. 6: the first relies on the erroneous assumption that a dedication made by Arsinoe II in the 270s should have mentioned the deceased and deified Ptolemy I as Theos Soter; the second, pointing out that the name of Lysimachos 'provides the necessary contrast to the [- βασιλέως Πτολεμαίου θυγάτηρ of line 1', is of purely rhetorical nature.

⁶³ Frazer (1990), 231–233.

⁶⁴ On Macedonian royal euergetism in Samothrace, see Bringmann–von Steuben (1995), 261–264; Landucci (2015). On the Chremonidean war and the political ambitions of Ptolemy II, see O'Neil (2008); Marquaille (2008); Caneva (2013).

⁶⁵ I.Ptol.Alex. 5; SEG XVIII 636: ὑπὲρ βασιλέως Πτολεμαίου ἢ τοῦ Πτολεμαίου καὶ Βερενίκης ἢ Σωτήρων Ἀρχάγαθος Ἀγαθοκλέους ὁ ἐπιστάτης τῆς Λιβύης καὶ ἡ γυνὴ vac. Στρατονίκη ἢ Σαράπιδι vac. Ἴσιδι vac. τὸ τέμενος. Moretti (1965) tentatively identified Archagathos as a son of Agathokles of Syracuse and Ptolemy I's daughter Theoxena, and Stratonike as a daughter of Demetrios Poliorketes, the author of the dedication of OGIS 14. The hypothesis was firmly rejected by Fraser (1972), II 427, n. 676, but has been accepted and developed in Bagnall (1976b). See also Bennett (2002–2011b).

⁶⁶ I.Hibis II 7: [ὑπὲρ βασιλέως Πτολεμαίου τοῦ ἢ [Πτολεμαίου καὶ Βερενίκη[ς Σω]τήρων ἢ [...c. 4...]] τὸν περίβολον καὶ τὰ πύλωματα ἢ [...?...]]. The traces of a letter after the lacuna at the beginning of line 3 were interpreted as the right *hasta* of N by the first editor, who accordingly restored [θεῶ]ν – this is not impossible, although this reading would invert the normal sequence of words Theoi Soteris. Conversely, the restoration [τὸν ναὸν (?) καί] proposed by Fraser (1956), 50, n. 2, must be rejected not only because it is too long, but also, and especially, in the light of the archaeological context: the inscription was

In addition to these epigraphic documents, a passage of Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos* defines Ptolemy II as 'the supreme race of the Soterēs' (line 166: Σαωτήρων ὕπατον γένος). The *terminus post quem* for the composition of the poem is given by Callimachus' reference to the defeat of the Celtic mercenaries who revolted against Ptolemy II.⁶⁷ The revolt is traditionally dated 274 BC, which would fall during the period of the marriage of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II.⁶⁸ However, a composition of the poem after Arsinoe's death seems more probable as it better explains why Callimachus only mentioned the king instead of the royal couple.⁶⁹

Unlike the short formula ΣΩΤΗΡΩΝ, the longer title ΘΕΩΝ ΣΩΤΗΡΩΝ has a limited use in inscriptions. In addition to the dedication from Halikarnassos and from Hibis discussed above, where the denomination Theoi Soterēs is restored in lacuna (with different degrees of certitude), the only sure epigraphic occurrence of the long denomination appears on a large quadrangular altar from Rhakotis, bearing the painted genitive dedication 'of King Ptolemy and Arsinoe Philadelphos, (children) of the Theoi Soterēs'.⁷⁰ The altar was part of the cultic equipment of a roofed shrine (as proved by the use of stucco for the decoration of the altar) with beautiful mosaics, found within the Sarapeum at Rhakotis, NE of the later temple of Ptolemy III. The royal formula mentioning the living king together with the deceased and deified Arsinoe Philadelphos points to a date after 270 BC.

The long denomination Theoi Soterēs also appears in a series of papyri containing a Greek formula of royal oaths, all of which are surely dated after 260, with the sole exception of one fragmentary text from the period of the co-regency between Ptolemy II and Ptolemy the Son.⁷¹ In these texts, the mention of the Theoi Soterēs follows the second Ptolemaic couple, who is referred to with the formula 'King Ptolemy and Arsinoe Philadelphos'. The sequence shows that the mention of the first ruling couple fulfils the function of conveying a message of dynastic continuity: we can therefore compare this formula with the image of the jugate royal busts on the μνατεῖα of the Theoi Adelphoi, and with the genitive formulae by which Ptolemy I and Berenike I are referred to as the parents and predecessors of the royal couple in epigraphic texts.

The evidence discussed so far allows us to draw the following conclusions. First, when mentioned alone, Ptolemy II's name can be followed by the name of his father, in the singular ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣ, as well as by the plural ΣΩΤΗΡΩΝ. On the other hand, all mentions of the royal pair (Ptolemy II and the deceased and deified Arsinoe Philadelphos) are accompanied by the plural epiclesis, evidently highlighting the correspondence between the two dynastic couples. Second, all the datable epigraphic occurrences of the plural ΣΩΤΗΡΩΝ belong to the period after Arsinoe's death. Besides the undated texts, some uncertainty remains for Ptolemy II's dedication on Samothrace and for the passage of Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos*, suggesting that the use of the plural denomination Soterēs may have started under the joint reign of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II, in the second half of the 270s. The third point deserving attention is that the complete denomination Theoi Soterēs is only rarely documented. Moreover, the sequence of the formula of royal oath in the papyri, where the first dynastic couple is mentioned after the second one, confirms the hypothesis that the epiclesis Theoi Soterēs was modeled after that of the Theoi Adelphoi, not *vice versa*. With one exception mentioning Ptolemy II together with Ptolemy the Son in the dating formula, all the papyri using the epithet

placed on the lintel of one of the doorways of the Great Gateway, which was erected under Ptolemy II, as the dedication states, whereas the Inner Gateway and the temple itself had already been built during the reign of Darius I.

⁶⁷ Call. *Hymn*. 4.171–188, with the ancient scholium; see also Paus. 1.7.2.

⁶⁸ Huß (2001), 268–269, n. 114.

⁶⁹ See Koenen (1993), 82–84, followed by van Oppen (2015), 15.

⁷⁰ I.Ptol.Alex. 8, following Grimm (1983)'s emendation of Breccia (1911), no. 6; Sabottka (2008), 50–66: βασιλέως Πτολεμαίου ἰ καὶ Ἀρσινόης Φιλαδέλφου ἰ Θεῶν Σωτήρων.

⁷¹ BGU VI 1257 (Oxyrhynchus, before 259/58 BC, on the basis of the reference to the co-regency in the dating formula); P.Cair.Zen. I 59133 (Philadelphæia, 256 BC); P.Hib. I 38 (Hibeh, 252/1 BC); P.Cair.Zen. II 59289 (Philadelphæia, 250 BC); P.Iand.Zen. 49 (Philadelphæia, 250 BC?); P.Sorb. III 80 (Ghoran, 247 BC). All the papyri have the same formula: βασιλέα Πτολεμαῖον καὶ Ἀρσινόην Φιλάδελφον Θεοῦς Ἀδελφοῦς καὶ Θεοῦς Σωτήρας τοὺς τούτων γονεῖς. For the formula of the demotic oaths, which only refers to Ptolemy I and Berenike I as the parents of the Theoi Adelphoi, without the Egyptian epithet for Soterēs, see Caneva (2016b), 228.

Theoi Soter in the royal oath surely date after 260 BC, making it possible that our only exception should also be dated to the final phase of the co-regency. It is therefore probable that the compound denomination Theoi Soter represents a later variant of the short epithet Soter, whose first dated epigraphic attestation is known for 267 BC (SEG XXVII 1114). In any case, the long formula seems to have reached its success in royal formulae at a later stage, perhaps at the end of the Chremonidean war, or even slightly afterwards. This reasoning also points to the period 260–246 as a plausible date for the dedication of the Rhakotis altar as well as of the *ἱερόν* in Halikarnassos.

7. Conclusions and further perspectives

The evolution of Ptolemy's denomination Soter from a local epithet rooted in the traditions of civic acclamations to a standard dynastic title provides a revealing case of the entanglement between, on the one hand, local, bottom-up honorific initiatives of cities towards their benefactors and, on the other hand, the selection, promotion and dissemination of top-down centralized programs by monarchs in the early Hellenistic period. It shows that while the different functioning of civic and monarchic initiatives should always be kept in mind, these two mechanisms did not work apart from each other, but in closely interrelated dynamics.⁷²

The case of Soter is of particular importance because the royal capacity to intervene and save local communities played a seminal role in the definition of early Hellenistic kingship and in the rise of ruler cults. Many kings were occasionally acclaimed as Saviors, but only the existence of a dynastic framework, by which the continuity of the link between kingship and *σωτηρία* could be ensured, eventually enabled the transformation of an occasional honor into a long-lasting ideological motif. Attalid Pergamon provides the best parallel for the Ptolemaic case: the use of Soter for the first βασιλεύς, Attalos I, equally originated from a military success and then became the official title of the king down to the end of the dynasty.⁷³

The history of Ptolemy I's title Soter shows that this process of standardization was deeply intertwined with the development of a message of dynastic continuity. It is useful to remember that, while the Nikouria decree sheds light on this ongoing process in the early years of Ptolemy II, when the new king still needed to gain international legitimacy, its final phase corresponds to the end of the Chremonidean war: when faced with the challenge of promoting his own international prestige, Ptolemy II appears to have found a powerful ideological instrument in the figure of his father and in the message of salvation associated with his epithet. The ascension of Ptolemy I Soter as a symbol of the dynasty responded to a broad geopolitical goal of Ptolemy II: by encapsulating the *σωτηρία* in the core of Ptolemaic dynastic ideology, Ptolemy II found a fitting means to communicate, at a religious level, the statement of political continuity between his father's and his own personal commitment to the freedom and wellbeing of the Greeks.

When we move away from this Pan-Hellenic scenario to Ptolemy II's religious policy in Egypt, the new proposed chronology of the promotion of the plural epithet Soter during the reign of the Theoi Adelfoi helps us rethink some major issues concerning the role assigned to the first dynastic couple under Ptolemy II. First, a difference between the Theoi Adelfoi and the Soter is suggested by the rare and late use of the term Theoi for Ptolemy I and Berenike I. Could this difference imply that the two couples were perceived as different with regard to their relationship with the divine sphere?⁷⁴ The hypothesis may sound intriguing, yet a comparative analysis of the third-century Ptolemaic evidence warns against drawing such conclusions from the nuances of royal epithets. A revealing example is that of the deified Arsinoe II, whose epiclesis Philadelphos is only rarely accompanied by the term Thea (or by the corresponding Egyptian *ntr*) in dedications; when this happens, nothing in either the text or its context reveals a different treatment of

⁷² On official dynastic titles originating from civic denominations, see the brief remarks by Habicht (2017³), 113–115 (= [1970²], 156–159); Muccioli (2013), 23–24. For the interaction between local civic initiatives and centralized royal programs, see also Caneva–Lorenzon (2020) on the early development of the link between Apollo and the Seleucids in Asia Minor.

⁷³ The same can be said of the epiclesis Soter used of Eumenes II. See, briefly, Muccioli (2013), 168–169.

⁷⁴ For this type of 'ontological' reasoning, see Johnson (2000), 105, n. 18, on Ptolemy I.

her cult.⁷⁵ Coming back to the Soter, I propose that this denomination did not need be specified by a term evoking the divine sphere because, as shown by the success of this epiclesis in civic cultic honors for great benefactors, the concept of σωτηρία implied *per se* a link with an intervention whose efficacy could be compared with a divine one.⁷⁶ Conversely, the ‘profane’ denomination Adelphoi needed the further specification Theoi to sanction the endogamic policy of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II at a religious level. Only later, the denomination Theoi was also applied to the Soter for the analogical process described above.

Second, the conclusion that the plural denomination Soteres does not predate the joint reign of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II, and that the ancillary function of the first dynastic couple was to give prestige to the image of their living successors, the Theoi Adelphoi, may explain why the second Ptolemaic couple depicted their predecessors on their gold coinage, but did not integrate their cult among the ritual prerogatives of the eponymous priest of Alexander. These initiatives should be read separately, as the parallel attempts, by the ruling couple, to exploit all the strategies of self-celebration at their disposal: dynastic continuity with Ptolemy I and Berenike I on the one hand; ritual continuity with the founder of Alexandria, and of the Macedonian power in Egypt, on the other.⁷⁷



Fig. 2. Silver tetradrachms of Ptolemy IV, from Caneva (2016a), 175.

Later in the third century, Ptolemy III and Berenike II would build upon the initiative of the Theoi Adelphoi by adding their own cult to the ritual responsibilities of the eponymous priest of Alexandria.⁷⁸ However, it was only under Ptolemy IV that the habit of adding the new royal couple to this priesthood was accompanied by the integration of the Theoi Soteres.⁷⁹ It is perhaps no coincidence that this initiative came from a king who, after the victory of Raphia against Antiochos III (217 BC), reaffirmed the importance of σωτηρία as a crucial motif of his reign, naming Sarapis and Isis Theoi Soteres and visually promoting, in his new silver tetradrachms, the identification between the divine couple and the Ptolemaic royal pair (Fig. 2).⁸⁰ At the same time, Ptolemy IV reorganized the royal funerary monuments so that all the Macedonian kings, from Alexander to the Ptolemies, would be hosted together.⁸¹ With both the eponymous priesthood and the royal mausoleum integrating the Theoi Soteres within the continuous line of the royal couples, Ptolemy IV completed a century-long process turning σωτηρία into the ideological matrix of the Ptolemaic dynasty.

⁷⁵ For Thea in the Greek evidence, see Caneva (2014b), *Appendix*, no. 4, 12, 14 (from Egypt); no. 41 (from Lesbos); Schreiber (2011), 188 (dedication on a small incense burner, probably of Egyptian origin). For the Egyptian sources, Quaegebeur (1983b), 115. It seems that a turning point can only be identified at the end of the third century, when for the first time Ptolemy V integrated the term Theos in his royal title. Together with the epiclesis Epiphanes, this epithet points to a conscious shift towards a royal self-representation as *deus praesens*. For this later evolution, see Johnson (2002); Muccioli (2013), 284–288; Lanciers (2014).

⁷⁶ See also the documentation concerning Antigonos and Demetrios honored as Soter in Athens (Agora XVI 114.2) and Seleukos I and Antiochos I in Aigai (CGRN 137; SEG LIX 1406), where Theoi never appears.

⁷⁷ On the latter point, see already Tondriau (1953), 126, convincingly arguing that the cult of Alexander and of the Theoi Adelphoi could not be seen as a dynastic one at the time of its organization under Ptolemy II.

⁷⁸ Clarysse–Van der Veken (1983), 10–11.

⁷⁹ Clarysse–Van der Veken (1983), 16–17; see also Fraser (1972), II 369, n. 237; Lanciers (1986) and (2014).

⁸⁰ For Sarapis and Isis as Savior Gods in dedications after Raphia, see Bricault (1999) and (2013), 96–99. On Sarapis and Isis on Ptolemy IV’s tetradrachms, where the visual solution of the jugate busts of the gods is directly borrowed from the iconography of Ptolemaic royal couples, see Landvatter (2012).

⁸¹ Zen. *Paroem.* III 94, with Caneva (2016b), 179.

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