

**KLEOPATRA III: A REVISIONIST VIEW**

**by**

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## HIGHER DEGREE THESIS (MASTER'S)

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## CONTENTS

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<b>Certificate</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>1.</b>
<b>Foreword</b>	<b>2.</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5.</b>
<b>1. The Religious Inventiveness of the Ptolemies and the Place of the Divine Queen</b>	<b>20.</b>
<b>2. Divine and Powerful Queens</b>	<b>41.</b>
<b>3. Queen Consort</b>	<b>80.</b>
<b>4. Queen Regnant, Part 1</b>	<b>120.</b>
<b>5. Queen Regnant, Part 2</b>	<b>159.</b>
<b>6. Kleopatra III in Retrospect</b>	<b>192.</b>
<b>Conclusion - The Proper Place of Kleopatra III</b>	<b>219.</b>
<b>Notes to Chapter 1</b>	<b>233.</b>
<b>Notes to Chapter 2</b>	<b>234.</b>
<b>Notes to Chapter 3</b>	<b>235.</b>
<b>Notes to Chapter 4</b>	<b>236.</b>
<b>Notes to Chapter 5</b>	<b>238.</b>
<b>Notes to Chapter 6</b>	<b>240.</b>
<b>Notes to Conclusion</b>	<b>241.</b>
<b>Appendix A - Stemma</b>	<b>242.</b>
<b>Appendix B - Chronology of Major Events</b>	<b>243.</b>
<b>Appendix C - Priesthoods and Titles of Kleopatra III</b>	<b>245.</b>
<b>Appendix D - S.E.G. 18.727</b>	<b>246.</b>
<b>Appendix E - S.E.G. 9.5</b>	<b>247.</b>
<b>Appendix F - P. Brussels E 7155/6</b>	<b>248.</b>
<b>Appendix G - P. Ashmolean Gr.49</b>	<b>250.</b>
<b>Appendix H - The Iconography</b>	<b>252.</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>254.</b>
<b>Addenda to Bibliography</b>	<b>276</b>
<b>Appendix I</b>	<b>277</b>
<b>Bibliography to Appendix I</b>	<b>285</b>

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This is to certify that this thesis "Kleopatra III: A Revisionist View"  
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(Signed)

Dated this.....*22<sup>nd</sup>*.....day of.....*March*.....1991.

# **KLEOPATRA III: A REVISIONIST VIEW**

## **SUMMARY**

The purpose of this thesis is to review the historical role of Kleopatra III and to restore her good name, as a woman and as a queen, lost in the pejorative assessment of ancient and modern historians. Particular emphasis is laid upon her place in Ptolemaic ruler cult, principally manifested through the dynastic Alexander Cult of the Ptolemies.

<b><u>Foreword</u></b>	Explanation and acknowledgement.
<b><u>Introduction</u></b>	The sources, previous treatments and Kleopatra III's place in Ptolemaic ruler cult.
<b><u>Chapter 1</u></b>	The background of Ptolemaic religious innovation.
<b><u>Chapter 2</u></b>	The careers of the immediate ancestresses of Kleopatra III, her early years and the circumstances of her marriage to Ptolemy VIII.
<b><u>Chapter 3</u></b>	The triad rule of Ptolemy VIII, Kleopatra II and Kleopatra III.
<b><u>Chapter 4</u></b>	The joint rule of Kleopatra III and Ptolemy IX, Soter II.
<b><u>Chapter 5</u></b>	The joint rule of Kleopatra III and Ptolemy X, Alexander I.
<b><u>Chapter 6</u></b>	Reviews and assesses the career of Kleopatra III.
<b><u>Conclusion</u></b>	Assesses the proper historical place of Kleopatra III.

A stemma, tables of principal events and honours, principal documentation and iconography are appended. Also appended is a discussion of an article published in 1984 by Sylvie Cauville and Didier Devauchelle on inscriptions from the temple of Edfou.

## **FOREWORD**

The purpose of this thesis is to reassess the career and achievements of Kleopatra III by examining the known evidence and the kind of comment which this has aroused. As this involves the examination of common assumptions considerable reference is made to secondary argument rather than to material not previously collected or considered. My hope in this is to rebut earlier criticism of both her character and accomplishments and to gain some long overdue recognition for this remarkable woman.

Historical comment upon this queen is sparse and, where it exists, almost always pejorative. The scant attention paid her by the ancient historians is echoed by their modern counterparts, even those engaged in the contemporary pursuit of women's history. One reason for this can be found in the extreme paucity of the sources; never good for Ptolemaic history, for Kleopatra III they are made very much worse by the *damnatio memoriae* seemingly practised by her son Ptolemy X, Alexander I, and probably by her son Ptolemy IX, Soter II as well. That an attempt to obliterate her memory should apparently have been made in itself establishes her importance and perversely illustrates her impact upon her time and upon her successors.

Because the exploits of Kleopatra III are principally revealed by the protocols of papyri which list the deified Ptolemies and their place in the dynastic Alexander Cult, and because her place in that cult is a singular one, an examination of the Alexander Cult in the setting in which it evolved and of its allotted place for Ptolemaic queens is requisite to a proper assessment of the historical role of Kleopatra III. As well, the status gained by her immediate predecessors, Kleopatras I and II, upon which she was able to build, was of vital importance to the third Kleopatra in gaining and exercising a power unique among the queens of her house.

To substantiate this claim it is necessary to examine the achievement of Kleopatra III and briefly to compare it with that of other Ptolemaic queens, of whom the most famous are her predecessor, Arsinoë II and her successor, Kleopatra VII. An estimation of the importance for later practitioners of the kind of propaganda used by Kleopatra III to disseminate her chosen image is also intrinsic to an evaluation of her contribution to the phenomenon of ruler cult.

A fresh examination of the existing sources for Kleopatra III is long overdue in order to assist the interpretation of new evidence should it emerge. In attempting this, through a thesis which has been at once a burden and a panacea over a long period of time and many personal vicissitudes, the problem of a title for such an exercise has received much thought and many and varied solutions. Recently, however, I came across Stanley M. Burstein's (1982) *Arsinoë II, Philadelphos: A Revisionist View*, his contribution to Adams and Borza's *Philip II, Alexander the Great and the Macedonian Heritage*. The phrase "a revisionist view" so precisely encapsulated what I had so fruitlessly tried to express for so long that I have refused to be parted from it on grounds of mere plagiarism, but instead have adopted it as my final choice of title with profound thanks to Professor Burstein and an earnest hope to have, to some small extent, approached his achievement.

Many other people deserve my sincere gratitude. Professor Raoul Mortley supervised the inception of this thesis with a genuine interest and concern which was of great value and assistance to me. Dr. David Phillips took over the supervision of its final stages with a most generous and supremely helpful contribution of time and expertise when more than fully occupied elsewhere, his invaluable suggestions and careful scrutiny of the work clarified both its content and form. To the staff of Macquarie University's Inter-Library Loan department go my profound thanks and great admiration for their efficiency and persistence in

tracking down obscure texts from sometimes recalcitrant institutions. To my family, for the tolerance of my late husband for my attention to Kleopatra III at his expense, and for the skills, support and input of my daughters Elizabeth and Sarina, my debt is boundless and cannot now be repaid. To them this work, such as it is, is dedicated.



## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The Biographical Imperative**

In concentrating upon a biographical study rather than upon the wider economic and social issues of Ptolemaic history the objectivity more easily displayed in such analyses is in danger of seeming to be lost in too partisan a view of one's subject and particular hazards arise in attempting to discover the truth of events and disinter their motivation. Nevertheless, much of the evidence of the sources for the Ptolemaic period is of such a biographical nature that it is difficult to avoid the study of the powerful individual. In wielding absolute power those who ruled undeniably shaped social and economic conditions, and as the way in which that power was wielded depended upon the personality and ability of the monarch enquiry inevitably returns to a study of individuals in order to understand the wider canvas which they did so much to create. The activities of the great figures of the past are more significant than those of the small ones simply because the great had the individual power to shape events which was denied to their subjects, their experience has, therefore, real historical importance and for the study of numbers to obliterate the study of individuals would be unfortunate. In the study of the individual it is possible to illuminate wider issues through the microcosm of particular experience and two issues of current debate which are relevant to a study of Kleopatra III are the need for women's studies to move beyond images of women to their role in the historical process and the place of religion in social change (Berling, 1987, 331). It was through the social and political use of religion that the historical role of this queen manifested itself. She used Ptolemaic ruler cult, already a significant instrument for social change in Egypt, to uphold an unprecedented female power and furnished an example to her successors of the practical use of religious propaganda

## The Sources

As Skinner, (1986, 3), has pointed out "Real women.....are not to be found so much in the explicit text of the historical record as in its gaps and silences - a circumstance that requires the application of research methods based largely upon controlled inferences". This is a comment of great relevance to an attempt to find the "real" Kleopatra III, for whom much must be inferred from the all too frequent gaps and silences.

New methods and discoveries have recently done much to fill in the background to Ptolemaic history. Not only have social attitudes to the value of the female experience changed but the work of the papyrologists and archaeologists in painstakingly analysing and assembling collections of texts and iconography has brought illumination unavailable when such publications were either non-existent or far less comprehensive. Conclusions can now, at times, be drawn upon firmer grounds and even though the sources for Ptolemaic Egypt are still incomplete the amount of information available upon Hellenistic women in general is surprisingly large when compared to the dearth of material of Greek women in earlier periods. Although specific evidence for Kleopatra III herself is not abundant there is some considerable quantity of information about royal women of Greek descent during the Hellenistic era, which might be attributed to the impact their political activities had upon the historians. Much information can also be gained from the public record found in the papyri of the social activities of women of lesser status in regard to marriage and their rights of property; sculpture, vase painting and other art forms also provide information on the everyday lives of these women.

Conversely, however, when compared to their actual presence in the ancient population and probable contribution to their society the data available upon ancient women is proportionately less than that available for ancient men, a

discrepancy which in itself indicates the bias of the sources against women's experience as unworthy of record (Skinner, 1985, 6). Texts produced by men for a predominantly male readership tend to portray women as stereotypes of vice or virtue, singling out only their most exceptional actions and judging them by masculine perceptions of their conduct in relation to the welfare of the men with whom they were involved, "our relics of antiquity include little that preserves genuine female experience, much that distorts or fictionalizes it" (Skinner, 1985, 6 and 1986,1). With the exception of Kleopatra VII, and, more recently and to a much more limited extent, of Arsinoë II, the women of the Ptolemaic royal house have commonly been viewed by historians as adjuncts; daughters, sisters, mothers or wives of the kings. The sources do give a general impression of greater cultic honours granted to the Ptolemaic queens than to the kings but these honours were usually granted by husbands and fathers to enhance the image of the men to whose authority the royal women were subject. It is difficult to extricate the Ptolemaic queens from the context of the traditional female role and to establish their individuality but that the context is difficult to escape is not, however, necessarily unhelpful in reconstructing the political position of these women as it reflects the reality of the situation in which they found themselves. Their social, political and religious environment was undeniably shaped by the kings to whom they were related and to ignore this is to reject the illumination which the bias of the sources in itself provides. Because this bias is so consistent any divergence from it becomes the more remarkable; if a woman is given particular attention this is the more striking for its rarity and such comment communicates by its unusual nature the importance of the political activities of the woman it discusses. This is the case with Kleopatra III. The attention paid her in the historical sources is not lengthy but by its very existence it emphasises the striking nature of her actions and the profound effect made by her upon her society. Alone of the Ptolemaic queens Kleopatra III combined the unique advantages of independence from male authority as widow, not wife and *primus*

*inter pares* in co-rulerships with her sons and was therefore able to grant her own honours to herself rather than depend upon the goodwill of a male associate or foreign power. She gained more real political power in her own right than any other woman of her house and to some extent the ancient historians have recognised this; nevertheless it is still frequently necessary to view her activities through the veil cast over them by the concentration of the sources upon the activities of the kings who ruled with her.

Of the surviving literary sources few ancient authors mention Kleopatra III and of those who do most pay her only very fleeting attention; there is only one surviving continuous account of the period, that to be found in Justin's epitome of Trogus Pompeius' *Philippic Histories*, written very late, probably in the third century A.D. and considered to contrast unfavourably with the original work (Will, 1966, 493). Whatever Justin's deficiencies, however, and a liking for the melodramatic must be admitted in him, as the sole relatively comprehensive source he is invaluable. Of the historians who mention Kleopatra III more or less in passing, all of whom were writing considerably later than the second century B.C., none are greatly concerned with the Ptolemaic dynasty. Two of these are geographers, Strabo and Pausanias, two are philosophers, Posidonius and Porphyry, two are Christian historians, Eusebius and Orosius and one, Livy, is a historian of Rome not principally concerned with the Hellenistic kingdoms. The Jewish historian, Josephus, devotes rather more space to Kleopatra III in giving information upon her military exploits because of her employment of Jewish generals. Polybius, though contemporary, makes only one brief, indirect reference to Kleopatra III and is, like Livy, largely unconcerned with the Hellenistic kingdoms; in any case the fragments extant of his later books do not continue after about 145. For Kleopatra III, for whom the evidence is never extensive, the harvest gathered for a fuller interpretation of her underrated importance must cover not only the classical authors but the documents and

inscriptions, both Greek and Egyptian, the iconography and the archaeological material. The titulature given by the documents is of especial importance for an appraisal of her proper place in Ptolemaic history during her lifetime; the problem which arises in attempting to assess what role she filled in the historical process after death comes from her lack of posthumous recognition in all these areas. An apparent attempt by her sons to expunge her memory has resulted in a conspicuous shortage of record or recognition of the queen after her death.

In attempting to overcome the tyranny of the literary evidence other avenues yield variable results. Epigraphic sources are not as abundant for Egypt as for Greece, the Aegean and western Asia Minor and in any case present their special problems of random survival, mutilation and the difficulty of establishing date and provenance. For the Ptolemies and Kleopatras there is the extra difficulty of distinguishing between the multiple possessors of the same name. Nevertheless for Kleopatra III some epigraphic evidence has survived of her participation in three reigns and her worship as a divinity within and without Egypt.

Corroborative evidence upon her participation in the rule of Egypt can be found in the coinage, although as a propaganda medium for Kleopatra III's Alexander Cult honours the coinage seems not to have been greatly used. The paucity of extant coins which recognise her complicates this assumption, however, as it is possible that for Kleopatra III the scarcity of coinage may stem equally from the attempt by her sons to obliterate her memory as from the circumstance of the greater space available in the papyri to list her numerous cultic honours making this the preferred medium. In the archaeological evidence of oinochoai and portraits in faience the scarcity of memorabilia is remarkable, however in areas such as temple reliefs, steles and statues valuable information from the native Egyptian tradition, disregarded by earlier authorities, has been collected for all the Ptolemaic queens, including Kleopatra III, by Jan Quaegebeur (1978).

Although of great value for filling in gaps in the literary sources by showing another world than that of the court the greatest problem for the use of the papyri as a source for the Ptolemies themselves comes from its rural imbalance in the dearth of texts from Alexandria. Although the quantity of material from Upper Egypt in the second century is very useful for expanding the historical background, in general the second century is not as well documented as the third even from the countryside, while the large proportion which comes from the Fayûm with its high percentage of Greek settlers tends to somewhat lessen the native Egyptian perspective. For the demotic papyri the difficulty of translation and fragmentary corpus means that publication is necessarily slower than that of the Greek papyri, however several published texts are of great importance in the present context and the growth in demotic studies is most helpful for investigation into the native religion, with which Kleopatra III was concerned, and for understanding of the co-existence of the Greeks and native Egyptians. Despite their various limitations both Greek and demotic papyri are invaluable for a study of Kleopatra III as the formulaic nature of much of the documentation usefully demonstrates continuity and change in the administration of the period. The official protocols with which the documents open were originally included for dating purposes through the eponymity of the Alexander Cult priesthoods but they become at least as valuable when all trace of eponymity ceases with the priesthoods increasingly held by the same individual for a number of years; although then less useful for dating they are most valuable as a statement of the political situation and for information upon the changing power groups within the administration. The reliability of the protocols for this kind of evidence is, however, differently evaluated. Koenen (1970, 71) has seen the official dating formula of the protocols and its variations as a seismograph which registers change in the Alexander Cult and in the circumstances of the government while Fraser, (1972, I.220/1) on the other hand, warns that the proliferation of titles of

new priests and priestesses in the protocols of the period from 145 should not necessarily be taken as a criterion by which changes in sovereignty may be detected, and is inclined to view unique prescripts as more probably due to scribal error as the length of the protocols increased than as a true reflection of the political situation at court. Nevertheless, although erroneous prescripts have been isolated (Plaumann, 1913, cols. 1434-6) careful examination of the protocols of the published papyri, particularly those which have become the basis of wide discussion, reveals a surprising correlation between the information they give and what the literary sources say. Despite localised variations which complicate interpretation (on this see Appendix I) it is a correlation which increasingly encourages reliance upon the evidence of the prescripts the more they are examined in the context of the known political situation and which seems at times to be quite extraordinarily close and to impel recognition of the efficiency with which political changes were communicated even to rural scribes. P. Adler G 12 of 26th October, 101 is an instance where a contract for the sale of some land at Gebelên was written on a papyrus whose prescript had been written in advance and probably stored in the office of the public notary with a supply of similar otherwise blank forms; the prescript has been hastily altered to include the name of Berenike, the wife of Ptolemy X, Alexander I, and is itself evidence for the time of their marriage. Changes in the form of the protocols are frequently so detailed and specific that to attribute them to scribal error is impossible; the information they give upon the existence of various priesthoods and the names of their occupants could not have been known by the scribes unless it was officially communicated to them. The accuracy of the scribes may well have been underrated, the prescripts of the papyri which they so painstakingly wrote are an invaluable aid to both substantiating and expanding the information given by the literary sources and to neglect them is to impoverish enquiry.

### **The Critical Neglect of Kleopatra III**

The inattention to Kleopatra III by modern historians in itself makes a study of her place in Ptolemaic ruler-cult both overdue and challenging; no monograph has been written upon this queen since her death in 101 B.C. The "astonishing neglect" of the Ancient Egyptian queens by Egyptologists has been ascribed not only to scarce data but also to male self-complacency and lack of interest, to question which is found "both self-evident and highly interesting" (Bleeker, 1959,261); this is a view equally applicable to the disregard shown to the influential and important role played by Kleopatra III as a queen of the Ptolemaic dynasty. When not entirely ignored Kleopatra III's political career has commonly been severely criticised, making the phrase "critical neglect" applicable in every sense. Nineteenth century historians such as J.P. Mahaffy (1899) and Samuel Sharpe (1836) briefly and most censoriously acknowledge what the sources say of Kleopatra III and return quickly to the history of the kings. A little later Auguste Bouché-Leclerq, (1978, 2.89 and 97) writing in the early twentieth century, displays a somewhat greater interest in the activities of the queen but fails even to acknowledge her existence in co-rulership with her sons in headings to the relevant chapters. More recent evidence has sometimes overtaken the comments of these earlier historians; Bouché-Leclerq (1978, 3.54 f, 4.323 and 333) when discussing, with marked disapproval, Kleopatra III's religious initiatives at times reaches conclusions now known to be incorrect, for example in attributing the inauguration of the priest of the Sacred Foal of Isis as in honour of Kleopatra II rather than Kleopatra III. Since 1921, when volume II of *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie* included a biography of Kleopatra III, newly discovered papyri have shed further light upon her activities in the Alexander Cult, especially in relation to her Alexander priesthood.



Only one major study of the Ptolemies devotes particular attention to Kleopatra III and in the many years which have elapsed since its publication not only has fresh evidence emerged but social attitudes have changed markedly. *Zur Geschichte des Niederganges des Ptolemäerreiches* by Walter Otto and Hermann Bengtson, was published in 1938 and is now unobtainable outside a very few academic libraries. In their close examination and analysis of the religious honours acquired by Kleopatra III its authors appear to be fascinated but appalled by the audacity of this woman, an attitude now found anachronistic and reminiscent of the view attributable to the concept of fifth century Athenians that women threaten male order, life and sanity (Packer, 1983, 3). The knowledge of Kleopatra III's Alexander priesthood, so vital to a full appreciation of her role was not available in 1938, had it been it would no doubt have increased the horror already felt by Otto and Bengtson at her effrontery. Nevertheless, despite its general air of disapprobation, their meticulous and scholarly study of the period does more to recognise the exceptional accomplishment of this queen than any other work of a similar nature and scrupulously and imaginatively examines the evidence then available. Writing much later of the same period P.M. Fraser (1972, 123) with some perspicacity refers to Kleopatra III as "almost the most remarkable of the queens who dominate Ptolemaic history" but pays little attention to her otherwise.

In the current and increasing examination by feminist historians of the political influence of women in history even the kind of attention paid to Kleopatra III by Otto and Bengtson is lacking, and, in the struggle to disinter from male-oriented sources the evidence necessary for a more complete and accurate picture of the past, surprisingly little notice has been given to this particular example of female sovereignty. Lefkowitz (1983, 57) typifies this disregard in her statement that although Hellenistic queens have been regarded as the first examples of truly independent women "even the most capable of these women worked through or

at least with the titular presence of a male consort" giving several instances of this without reference to Kleopatra III. Sarah B. Pomeroy (1984,23 and n.87) writing quite recently upon women in Hellenistic Egypt gives only the briefest of references to Kleopatra III and in a section on priestesses (55-59) ignores completely the priestesses of this queen. Dorothy Burr Thompson (1973, 3-6) does not mention Kleopatra III in summarising the rulers with whom she treats.

Although Kleopatra III continues to be largely overlooked in the contemporary pursuit of women's history, a singular omission given her singular career, some attention was, however, paid her by an earlier woman historian, Grace Macurdy, who, when writing on the Ptolemaic queens at the unfashionably early time of 1932, devoted a section of her book to this queen. Although the tone of this section is more disapproving than that of others such as that dealing with Arsinoë II, it nevertheless grants Kleopatra III "high courage, endurance and ability to rule" (Macurdy, 1932,170). The most individual aspect of her reign, however, her innovations in the Alexander Cult, are passed over and accounted for by her "love of pomp and magnificence" and her military exploits are equally lightly dismissed (Macurdy, 1932, 167/8).

In more recent times it is Ludwig Koenen (1970) who has done most to acknowledge the importance of Kleopatra III in a significant article which draws attention to the culmination of her self-sanctification in her assumption of the priesthood of the dynastic Alexander Cult and which recognises the extraordinary nature of this daring step. Again, however, fresh evidence has discounted conclusions reached within the article, for example on the family relationships of the priests of Kleopatra III (Koenen, 1970, 78f.)

### **The Social Context.**

It is generally accepted that the centralised economy of Egypt and the great concentration of wealth and revenues in the hands of the monarchy interrelated

with the authority of the ruler as the supreme religious head to establish a rule of personal and absolute power; in principle the monarch was personally responsible for all policy decisions, both foreign and domestic. Ptolemaic economic administration together with the generally tolerant attitude of the dynasty to the native religion and the mingling of Greek and Egyptian religion with the assimilation of Greek citizens into Egypt gave the dynasty its special identity in a unique time and place. In the discussion of Ptolemaic social and economic administration contention persists, however, upon such topics as the actual extent of Greek/Egyptian religious syncretism and assimilation and where conflicting theories of interpretation of the finer points of these issues have been offered I have endeavoured to avoid being drawn into unnecessary theorising irrelevant to my central theme. In areas which are of direct concern and where insufficient evidence exists for any firm conclusion to be reached I have chosen to state the nature of the controversy without offering a definite, but insupportable, solution. The wider social and economic background of Ptolemaic Egypt has been examined over a long period of time in detailed and important works by such historians as Bouché-Leclercq, Rostovtzeff, Bevan and Fraser among others. In the light of such well-known surveys it is not appropriate for me to pursue this theme other than in brief examinations of the particular condition of Egypt when Kleopatra III ruled with her husband and mother, at the time when she inherited the kingdom from her husband and at her death.

### **Kleopatra III and Ptolemaic Ruler Cult.**

Within the dynastic Alexander Cult of the Ptolemies Kleopatra III devised for herself a particular, personal and systematic sanctification. In this she made full use of the opportunities allowed her by her time and place in her attempts to overcome the problems confronting her ambition to rule. The basis of ideology given her by the religious initiatives of earlier Ptolemies and the political situation which confronted her in 116 gave her the means and the need to maintain power

through an ever-increasing personal divinity. More than any other Ptolemaic queen she succeeded in achieving and maintaining political dominance for a long period of time and in her own right as a sovereign and not simply as a consort or regent, her cultic worship exceeded that of any other Ptolemaic queen and prefigured that given to the Roman emperors. The career of Kleopatra III offers an interesting and individual example of ruler cult practised by a forceful and energetic woman who, afforded special opportunities by her own particular milieu, used those opportunities to carry out her designs.

Kleopatra III's contribution to ruler cult has been largely overlooked. Ruler cult is a subject which has been widely analysed and discussed for ancient kingdoms and which continues to operate and claim adherents today, although in a more subtle form which, at least in the West, no longer claims actual divinity; because of this continued existence it is a topic which is very relevant to contemporary society. For ancient societies the ease with which the co-existence of human and divine honours for their rulers could be accepted without mental confusion has its correlation in the Hellenistic kingdoms in the ability of the Hellenistic monarchs to accept without apparent hesitation "the contemporary tendency to recognise something divine in human beings who were clearly out of the ordinary"( Nock, 1930, 61). If the Greeks worshipped the gods for their power to help or harm them then a man who had performed great deeds which had profoundly affected the general welfare clearly emulated the capacity of the gods to affect daily life. Once such a man was treated as if he were a god and became the recipient of cultic worship then for all practical purposes his divinity was established and he became analogous to a god, while the perception of his ability to direct the fates of the many distinctly heightened the perception of him as godlike. Given the polytheistic predilection for human manifestation and the many less than divine foibles and pursuits of the gods even the possibility of a such man actually being a god might be thought acceptable. As Burkert (1990,

182/3) has remarked, "the Greek gods are persons, not abstractions", and in spite of their superhuman physical and mental powers they are neither omniscient nor omnipresent but instead "Vital elements of corporeality belong inalienably to their being".

After the death of Alexander the Great the deification of the living became widespread throughout the Greek world and in the Hellenistic period divinisation which was particular, public and codified came to be conferred first upon the dead and then upon the living monarch as a reward for meritorious rule of the widest sphere which it was possible to claim. The dominant position of the monarch in a social-religious-cultic sense was a clear invitation to rulers to use the regard given them by their subjects as divine beings for political purposes, an invitation which was found irresistible by adventurers like the Diadochi and by their descendants. The apotheosis of the Ptolemies came not just from Greek attitudes but was also a Greek response to Egyptian influence in which the king was seen as a replica of god. A Grecian mental landscape fraught with divinity and in which the divine was all around was able to evolve into an acceptance of divine kingship which conjoined the Egyptian king/priest function, giving a genuinely religious as well as political content to the ruler cult of the Ptolemies. The complex question of the Hellenistic process and its transformation by Egyptian influence necessarily involves an appreciation of Greek respect for Egyptian culture and religion; Bell (1953, 231) has seen the Greek acceptance of Egyptian religion to result in a "monotheistic polytheism" or "polytheistic monotheism" in which multitudes of gods represented aspects of a central divine power. In the combination of Greek and Egyptian perceptions there came about a particular form of divine kingship intrinsic to the domination of Egypt and the empire by the Ptolemies during the three centuries of unbroken rule by this dynasty of direct descendants. The humour which was sometimes extracted from such situations seems to have been sadly lacking, however; Scott (1932, 328)

finds no jokes from Ptolemaic Egypt either by or about the Ptolemies who seem to have taken their divinity very seriously indeed, although the problems of the sources may, to some extent, account for this deficiency.

In addition to their Greek and Egyptian content Hellenistic ruler cults combined elements of Greek and Oriental formulae, not new in themselves but novel in their combination, in which honours could be conferred upon the sovereigns by their grateful subjects or awarded by themselves to themselves or to other members of their dynasty (Cerfaux and Tondriau, 1957, 440). The derivation of the self-conferred Ptolemaic ruler cult from the monarchy established by Alexander and the question of Alexander's own claim to divinity form the background to the cult and supply its Oriental content (Arrian, Book 3, Pseudo-Callisthenes, 39). Greek, Egyptian and Oriental aspects are all apparent in the personal cult of Kleopatra III manifested within the dynastic Alexander Cult. Particularly Oriental is the inauguration of a priestess in her honour known as a Φωσφόρος or bearer of the sacred fire, which revives a Persian religious conception of kingly glory (Taylor, 1975, 3), and the Persian concept found in Herodotus (3.82) that if the king is virtuous monarchy is the ideal state seems to typify the image of herself which she wished to present to both Greeks and Egyptians as the personification of Isis and as Dikaiosyne. At the same time this identification embodies the Egyptian concept given by Diodorus (1.70), who lists among the multifarious kingly virtues that of upholding and dispensing justice to all. Her long-held title as the goddess Euergetis also accords with Diodorus' catalogue of the virtues necessary for an Egyptian king in its presentation of the queen as Benefactor in the dynastic Alexander Cult, where she appears also as the Greek goddess Aphrodite.

It is my contention that because Kleopatra III was fortified by a tradition of divinity and religious awe built up over some two hundred years by the religious enterprise of her forbears she was enabled to devise her own particular system of

divinity. Without the tradition of her ancestors this would have been immeasurably more difficult to achieve. The particular innovation of her ancestors through which she was most able to enhance her personal power was the dynastic Alexander Cult, which had already contributed so greatly to enhancing the status of the Ptolemaic queens that in exercising his power as a god to make his sister and wife Arsinoë II the Goddess Philadelphos it has been said that Ptolemy II *a préparé une évolution qui allait consacrer la puissance des reines aux dépens des rois* (Vatin, 1970, 77). Through the dissemination of Alexander Cult propaganda by all the Ptolemies after Ptolemy II the religious worship of the dynasty entered so far into daily life that its effect has been seen as the awakening "in all subjects a feeling for the dynasty, so that it became unthinkable for them ever to overthrow it" (Volkmann, 1958, 26 and cf. Hauben, 1987, 466/7 *"Par le biais du culte dynastique, les Ptolémées pouvaient donc relier les gens, aussi bien les Egyptiens que les Grecs, chaque groupe dans sa propre tradition, à l'état ptolémaïque"*). No revolution was strong enough to unseat the Ptolemies, until the coming of Rome their decline came rather from internal strife than from external causes. In the struggle for power within her own family Kleopatra III made good use of the eminence prepared for her by preceding generations of queens whose successive deification within the dynastic cult and ability to exercise power when the opportunity arose paved the way for her to exert an authority not possible for her predecessors. By building upon the evolution of divine queenship within the dynastic Alexander Cult and upon the political power attained by her predecessors, particularly her grandmother and mother Kleopatras I and II, the third Kleopatra was able to achieve her own special pinnacle of worship and to attain a special place in the ruler cult of the Ptolemies. To substantiate this claim I shall first examine the tradition of religious innovation available to Kleopatra III through the initiatives of her ancestors and then consider the impetus given her by the singular achievements of her mother and grandmother.