



BERENICE II AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF PTOLEMAIC EGYPT



DEE L. CLAYMAN

WOMEN IN ANTIQUITY

BERENICE II AND THE GOLDEN
AGE OF PTOLEMAIC EGYPT

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Contents

Acknowledgments viii

Abbreviations ix

The Family Tree of Berenice II xi

Map of The Eastern Mediterranean in the 3rd Century BCE xii

Introduction 3

ONE Birth in Cyrene 14

TWO Arrival in Alexandria 42

THREE Callimachus on Murder and Marriage 78

FOUR Apollonius on Murder and Marriage 105

FIVE Ruling and Racing 121

SIX Berenice in Egypt and Another Murder 159

Appendix: Catullus 66 187

Notes 191

Bibliography 229

Index 249

Index Locorum 262

Illustrations follow Chapter Three

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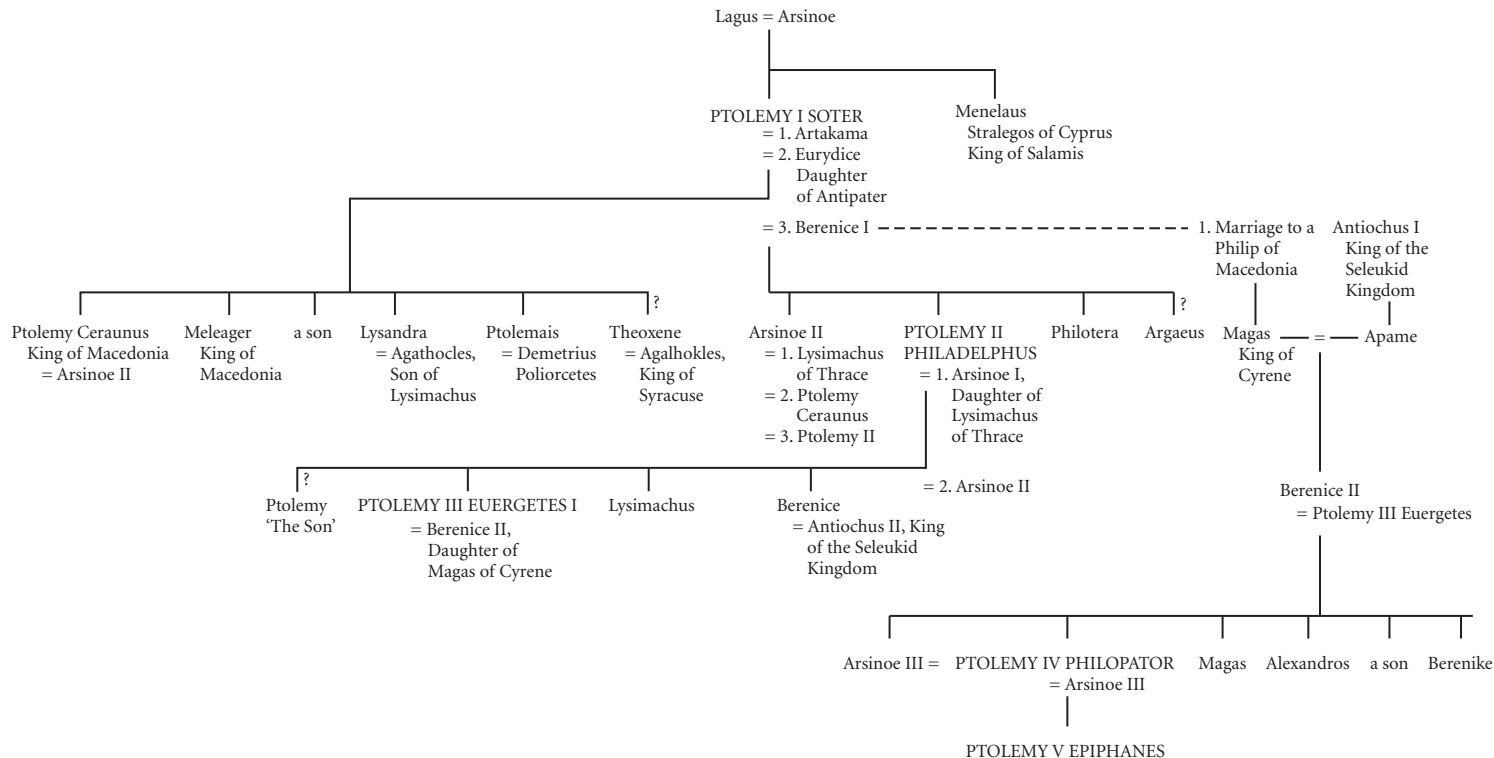
Abbreviations

Standard abbreviations of the names of papyrus collections can be found in Joshua D. Sosin, Roger S. Bagnall et al., *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*, <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/papyrus/texts/clist.html>. Citations of collections of inscriptions follow the standard of Claros. Concordance of Greek Inscriptions: <http://www.dge.filol.csic.es/claros/cnc/2cnc.htm>. Abbreviations of the names and works of ancient authors follow the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd ed. rev. 2003.

- AB Colin Austin and Guido Bastianini. 2002. *Posidippi Pellaei quae supersunt omnia*. Milano: LED.
- AP *Anthologia Palatina*
- BGU *Aegyptische Urkunden aus den koeniglichen Museen zu Berlin. Griechische Urkunden IV*, Berlín 1904–12.
- CCG Kamal, Ahmed. 1904–05. *Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire: Stèles ptolémaïques et romaines*, N^{os} 2201–22208. Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institute français.
- CEG Peter A. Hansen. 1983–89. *Carmina Epigraphica Graeca*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- CIG Boeckh, A., et al. *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum*. 1828–77. Berlin: Officina Academia.
- Diels-Kranz Hermann Diels and W. Kranz. 1951. *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. 6th ed. Berlin: Weidmann.
- FGrH Felix Jacoby, et al. 1923–. *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Berlin: Weidmann.
- GGM Karl Müller. 1855–61. *Geographi Graeci Minores*. Paris: Didot
- G.-P. A. S. F. Gow and D. L. Page. 1965. *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ICairo Milne, Joseph Grafton, *Greek Inscriptions* (Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire 25). Oxford 1905 = CGC.

- IG Inscriptiones Graecae. 1903-.
- IPhilae André Bernard. 1969. *Les inscriptions grecques (et latines) de Philae*, Paris: Ed. Cent. Nat.
- M.-W. R. Merkelbach and M. L. West. 1967. *Fragmenta Hesiodica*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- OGIS Wilhelm Dittenberger. 1903–5. *Orientalis graeci inscriptiones selectae*. Repr. 1960 Hildesheim: Olms.
- Pf. Rudolf Pfeiffer. 1949–53. *Callimachus*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- RE August Friedrich von Pauly, G. Wissowa, et al. 1894–1979. *Pauly's Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Stuttgart.
- SB F. Preisigke, F. Bilabel, et al. 1915–. *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten*.
- SEG *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*.
- SH Hugh Lloyd-Jones and Peter Parsons. 1983. *Supplementum Hellenisticum*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Syll³ Wilhelm Dittenberger. 1915–24. *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, 3rd ed. Leipzig: Hinzel.
- Urkunden II Kurt Sethe. 1904–1916. *Hieroglyphische Urkunden der griechisch-römischen Zeit*, vol. II: *Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums*. Leipzig: Hinrichs.
- W. Chrest L. Mitteis and U. Wilcken. 1912. *Grundzüge und Chrestomathie der Papyruskunde*, I, II. Leipzig: Teubner.

The Family Tree of Berenice II





BERENICE II AND THE GOLDEN
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Introduction

THIS IS AN ACCOUNT of the life of Berenice II, the daughter of King Magas of Cyrene and wife of Ptolemy III Euergetes (reigned in Egypt 246–222 BCE). A mother of six, immensely wealthy and ambitious, she came to embody all the key religious, political, and artistic ideals of Ptolemaic Alexandria. Though she arrived there with a dubious reputation and few friends at court, she became one of the most accomplished and powerful of the Macedonian queens who descended from the successors of Alexander the Great. Uniquely, she was at the center of a group of important poets and intellectuals associated with the Museum and Library. They wrote poems not just for her but about her, and their eloquent voices projected her charisma through the centuries, across the Greek-speaking world and beyond.

Though the range of Berenice's interests was impressive and the quantity and quality of the poetry she inspired, unparalleled, today she is all but unknown. This was not the case in antiquity. Callimachus, the most important poet of her age, celebrated the queen in some of his best work, and Catullus, who translated Callimachus' "Lock of Berenice" into Latin in the first century BCE, spread her fame in Rome and beyond. By the beginning of the 13th century CE Callimachus' poems were mostly lost, but Catullus' "Lock" has been read and appreciated for more than 2000 years, and in it we can find one possible explanation for her current obscurity. Though the poem makes a passing reference to her strength of character and capacity for action (Catull. 66.25–28), overall it presents her as someone more innocent and therefore less interesting than she actually was.

This positioning of Berenice as a weepy ingénue was an important theme in Callimachus' original, as we now know from papyrus fragments that came to light in the last century. It was calculated to introduce Berenice

as a virtuous and loving bride, just as later the statues with her husband and six children projected an image of her as a fertile wife and exemplary mother. Both were carefully crafted to associate the queen with traditional Greek concepts of ideal womanhood. That she likely colluded in these efforts, and embraced their goals is an indication of her sophistication and an invitation to look with greater care at the available evidence for her life and times. Though the evidence is scattered and uneven, what emerges is a suggestive portrait of a woman who was far more complex than her public images, a woman who had access to great wealth, the cultural riches of both Greece and Egypt, and every kind of human resource; a woman who navigated her way carefully through the challenges and possibilities that these assets presented and who used them to accrue unprecedented honors that were all but equal to those of the king.

Berenice was born sometime before 264 BCE in Cyrene, a wealthy Greek city on the coast of North Africa in what is now Shahat, Libya. After the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE, his close associate Ptolemy I (later Ptolemy Soter) took control of Egypt and soon went to Cyrene to secure his new kingdom on its western flank. There he eliminated the government in place and later put his stepson Magas, Berenice's father, in charge. Magas had bigger dreams, however, and when Ptolemy I died and his son Ptolemy II (later Ptolemy Philadelphus) succeeded him, Magas declared himself king of Cyrene and attempted an invasion of Egypt. It ended in a stalemate, if not a fiasco, the half-brothers reconciled, and Magas betrothed his only child, Berenice, to the future Ptolemy III. The prospective marriage would ensure that his daughter achieved the wealth and position he had wanted for himself.

Unfortunately, Magas did not live long enough to see his dream fulfilled, and his wife Apame made other plans for their daughter. Apame was the granddaughter of Seleucus I, who had taken over Alexander's empire in the East, and she plotted to remove Cyrene from the Ptolemaic sphere of influence by arranging a marriage for Berenice with Demetrius the Fair, half-brother of Antigonus Gonatus, king of Macedonia. Though it was unusual for a mother to arrange a daughter's marriage, which was traditionally the father's prerogative, there were precedents for it in Alexander's own family, and Apame would have succeeded if Berenice had been less her father's daughter. It was she who apparently arranged the murder of her new husband, whom she surprised in her mother's bed, then went triumphantly to Alexandria to marry Ptolemy III. Though Berenice and her new husband had a

successful reign of 24 years, and Ptolemy died of natural causes, her own life ended in a familiar intersection of politics and domestic violence when her oldest son, Ptolemy IV, put her to death in a family purge intended to consolidate his own power.

The sensational story of Berenice's murder of Demetrius the Fair is told by Justin in his epitome of the *Philippic Histories* of Pompeius Trogus (26.3.2–8). Trogus lived in the time of the Roman Emperor Augustus, about 200 years after Berenice. He drew on a variety of sources, and it is likely that he found most, if not all, of his information about Berenice and her times in the work of a Greek predecessor, Phylarchus of Athens (or Naucratis), who was known for his dramatic, sensationalist style of reporting.¹ Only a few fragments of his *Historiae* have survived (FGrH 81), but the historian Polybius, who had the text of Phylarchus before him, accuses his predecessor of exaggeration, carelessness, and a disgraceful emotionalism that turned history into melodrama (Polyb. 2.56–63). Trogus' *Philippic Histories* are also lost, but the dramatic details of Justin's *Epitome* suggest that Phylarchus was the ultimate source, and that Justin should be read with Polybius' criticism in mind. If it were not for a few verses in Callimachus' "Lock of Berenice," which are universally read as confirmation of Berenice's role in Demetrius' murder, it would be tempting to dismiss that story altogether. This impulse should be ignored, however, because Callimachus was closely associated with the queen and was also a native of Cyrene, so he would have known the facts behind the rumors. Though Justin's details may be overdrawn, it is likely that Demetrius met an untimely end and that Berenice herself was implicated in the plot.

The manner of her death and the equally sensational tale of the murders of her son and daughter as well as the courtiers who brought them down, are recorded by the usually sober Polybius. Even as he acknowledges that some of his sources exaggerated their accounts of these events and added material to make the tale more riveting (Polyb. 15.34.1), he retells their narrative anyway in all its chilling detail, and in this way demonstrates his hostility to his subjects. Berenice, then, was not well served by ancient historians.

Historical Sources

The chief difficulty in recreating the life of Berenice is neither her historians' predilection for violence nor their personal prejudices, but a century-long gap in the historical record between the chroniclers of

Alexander the Great, who died in 323 BCE, and Polybius, whose detailed coverage begins in 222.² This makes it impossible to present Berenice's biography in a comprehensive, coherent, and chronologically precise way. Her story, like early Ptolemaic history in general, has to be pieced together from fragments. These are no more than snippets of information in later authors, often without attribution and always lacking their original context. Also important are documentary papyri, a few substantial, but most, small fragments of business documents, private papers, tax receipts, and the like, which can include useful dating formulae, or contribute factoids that illuminate the larger narrative.³

Inscriptions on stone are another valuable source of information. These include extended accounts like one that was once posted at Adoullis, summarizing Ptolemaic claims of sovereignty after the Third Syrian War, or the Canopus decree, announcing in Greek, hieroglyphics, and demotic scripts ceremonies to commemorate the death of Berenice's youngest daughter. Most are short dedications to Berenice and her husband useful for identifying the places where cults were established for them.⁴

Archaeology provides evidence of temples they built or renovated, like the great temple of Serapis in Alexandria and the Euergetes' gate at Karnak.⁵ Some of the extant structures are decorated with friezes depicting Berenice and Ptolemy in Egyptian dress, like those in the temple of Isis at Philae, others have been reduced to their substructures, or have disappeared altogether.

We would like to know what Berenice II looked like, but here too, the evidence is scattered and problematic. Her portraits on coins (Fig. 1) probably provide the most realistic view of her, though they do not always resemble each other, while images of her in the act of pouring libations on faience jugs (Fig. 4), show her full-length in Greek dress, apparently at various ages. There are also images in mosaics, marble busts, cameos, and seals that scholars have identified as hers. These are not labeled with her name like the coins, and some of the jugs, but are said to have features that resemble the coin portraits. The busts are particularly challenging because in this medium it is often difficult to distinguish goddesses from queens, one queen from another, and queens from non-royal women.⁶ Even busts with promising archeological contexts are often problematic. An example is a bust of a young woman found in the Temple of the Egyptian Gods on the Acropolis at Cyrene and identified as Berenice II, but it dates most likely from the Antonine

period (138–193 CE).⁷ Pieces like these require careful evaluation, and some of the portrait heads alleged to be Berenice, but lacking distinctive features or suggestive contexts, are not included in the discussion below.⁸ In these cases the identification is largely subjective, and I have tried to resist the temptation to see Berenice everywhere.

Literary Sources

Beyond references in ancient historians and material remains, there is literary evidence of the highest significance. Berenice was close to the greatest poet of the age, Callimachus of Cyrene, whose work for her includes the famous “Lock of Berenice” that concludes the fourth book of his elegiac *Aetia* (“Causes”), and the “Victoria Berenices,” introducing the third book, which celebrates her victory in a four-horse chariot race at Nemea. Catullus’ Latin translation of the “Lock” is almost complete, while the Greek text and that of the “Victoria” are extant only in fragments, though some are substantial. There are also fragments of several *aetia* of book 3 that likely reflect on her, and much smaller bits from other elegies for Berenice, including one with her father’s name. In addition, I will argue below that his hymns for Athena and Demeter also suggest something about her nature and experiences, while his *Hymn to Apollo* celebrates their common homeland and by extension, their special relationship. Finally, one of his epigrams recognizes her support for the arts and sciences.

Callimachus’ connection to Berenice is clear, and a case can also be made for the relevance of two other contemporary poets. One is Apollonius Rhodius, the “student” of Callimachus, who was dismissed from his position as librarian at Alexandria early in Berenice’s reign. The other is Posidippus of Pella who wrote a series of epigrams, the “Hippika,” on the equestrian victories of a Berenice and her family at three of the crown contests. Some scholars now believe that he was writing about another Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his first wife Arsinoe I, but I have demonstrated elsewhere that his honoree was more likely Berenice II.⁹

The use of poetry as a source of information about the life of an historical person is not a straightforward matter. A literary work in an historical context is an historical document, but poetry is imaginative and often indirect in its mode of communication. The images it creates

are complex, nuanced, and allusive in ways that cannot always be perfectly understood after 2000 years by readers who are living in a changed world. There is much about the works of Callimachus, Apollonius, and Posidippus that we do not know, and may never know. When read in an historical context, however, they can yield valuable clues about it, and these combined with other fragments of information from histories and material remains add depth and color to a portrait of the queen.

A sophisticated piece of literature may be aimed at more than one audience and speak to each in different ways. For ancient literature it is particularly challenging to take this complexity into account. We do not know who all the possible readers were, let alone the agendas of each group, but I have given priority in this instance to one identifiable subgroup. All of the poets discussed below were resident at the court of the Ptolemies, some for very long periods of time, and therefore it is safe to say that the king and queen, as well as their royal entourage, were the poets' most immediate audience. If a detail can be understood as a compliment to one or both of them, it will be taken that way, even if there are other valid ways of understanding the same words. In my treatment of the texts below I focus exclusively on how Berenice might have heard these works at the expense of more balanced interpretations.¹⁰ Mine are partial readings that may seem to exhibit a certain single-mindedness not entirely worthy of the complexity of great poetry. If much has been left out, the gain is a view, however distorted and incomplete, into the minds of the authors and their special audience, with the aim of conveying a sense of the dynamics of patronage and how such fraught relationships were negotiated at this time.

A key text for the contemporary study of Hellenistic poetry in its context at the court of the Ptolemies is Frederick Griffiths' *Theocritus at Court*, which offers a reading of several of Theocritus' poems as a mirror the poet held up to Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his sister and second wife Arsinoe II.¹¹ Here they were invited to see their own reflection as divinely sanctioned rulers who could look forward to joining that select company of mortals who had in the remote past been translated to Olympus.¹² Convincingly argued and eloquently written, *Theocritus at Court* inspired a whole generation to look again at Alexandrian poetry in the expectation of uncovering subtle expressions of political realities.

A central point in the argument is that the Ptolemies themselves were Theocritus' audience of two. They supported the poets financially and expected to receive something from them in return. How these gifts

of poetry were delivered is not known. Possibly they were sent to their honorees in written form, but more likely they were recited before audiences that included the sovereigns and selected courtiers. The setting likely resembled a symposium more than a formal lecture room, but if the king and queen were present, it was not an ordinary dinner party at which the participants might extemporize their verse.¹³ In addition to symposia, there were many festivals where poetry might have been performed for larger audiences. The sovereigns could also have been in the audience on these occasions, or they could have been presented with copies of the poems after a successful performance.¹⁴ The best Alexandrian poetry is artful in the extreme, and required careful preparation and research to bring it to the expected level of complexity. Though the opinions of the other listeners might matter, nothing was more important than the responses of the king and queen who had the power to give or withhold their support, banish the poets or worse.¹⁵

Circumstances like these might bring out the worst in a court poet, but Callimachus and Apollonius, at least, were not sycophants. Callimachus can be witty beyond the reach of any safety net, and he did not shy away from mentioning the murder of Demetrius in the very first poem he wrote for Berenice. Apollonius is even bolder in his treatment of her homicidal past, as he subtly associates her with Medea, a figure of myth best known for killing her own children. This may have caused some trouble for Apollonius, but Callimachus retained the queen's good will for the whole of his professional life. That she valued his challenging, innovative style suggests that she had a good education and sophisticated literary tastes. That she allowed him to tease her in public indicates that she had some personal regard for her poet, and that there were no humorless censors who vetted the poems before they were read to her.

The privilege of having the queen's ear and the power to communicate images of her to a wider audience, including readers in the Greek community outside the Palaces, conferred unique power on Callimachus and the other poets of the Museum and Library. Like other courtiers they were jockeying for position within a competitive, insular society where proximity to the sovereigns was the ultimate prize. They could be successful only to the extent that the king and queen had an interest in literature, and in fact the early Ptolemies did. Ptolemy I, who wrote his own history of Alexander's expedition, hired leading philosophers and poets to tutor his children, and they, in turn, continued the tradition.¹⁶ Ptolemy I is also credited with founding the Museum and Library, which were

vigorously supported by Ptolemy II and expanded by Ptolemy III. Here poets and scholars of all sorts were recruited and given the resources that they needed to produce groundbreaking work in the arts and sciences. Even Berenice's dissolute son, Ptolemy IV, dedicated a temple and established a cult for Homer (Ael. VH 13.22), and along with his wife, who was Berenice's daughter Arsinoe III, financed a festival for the Muses in their traditional homeland of Thespeia.¹⁷ In the court of the early Ptolemies intellectuals and artists had respect that could be turned into political and personal capital by those with the ability and desire to do so. Aratus of Sicyon, for example, successfully curried favor with Ptolemy III by procuring paintings for him by the well-known Sicyonian artists Pamphilus and Mesanthus (Plut. *Arat.* 12.5).

The Chimera of Propaganda

It has often been claimed that the Ptolemies created a propaganda machine that promulgated their political, economic and social policies by producing carefully crafted images of the sovereigns for public consumption. Official inscriptions and larger construction projects must have required official approval, but there is no evidence of the kind of consistent programmatic that state-supported propaganda requires, and no evidence of any specific person or persons whose job it was to manage communications with the public. That is not to say there were not consistent themes, images, and concepts that the early Ptolemies, including Berenice and her husband, used to characterize themselves, but the expression of these varies depending upon the media and context.¹⁸

Rather than propaganda, Jean-Yves Carrez-Maratray prefers to call these kinds of communication "advertising," that is, efforts to invite the public "to share the dream."¹⁹ This seems closer to the reality, though a better word might be "public relations," or perhaps "branding." Berenice's elegant coins and the state-sponsored festivals might be the products of such a campaign, but even these efforts to create a positive image for the Ptolemies had their limits, and the range of products and producers of their likenesses was beyond anyone's control. The images of Berenice II in poetry are too imaginative and sometimes irreverent to have been vetted by any bureaucrat. Likewise, the detailed instructions about how the Princess Berenice was to be honored after her death was

not concocted in the palace, but emerged from the mindset of the Egyptian priesthood. That the priests intended to please the sovereigns goes without saying, but they achieved their goal in their own way. The portraits of Berenice II on faience jugs offer another example of images that were probably not the work of royal policy makers. These products of humble craftsmen, made of cheap material for public consumption, follow a traditional design used for the queen's predecessor Arsinoe II, but exhibit considerable variability. They point to a whole class of missing evidence for the way that the public represented the Ptolemies to itself.

Rather than characterize Ptolemaic images in art as centrally managed propaganda, it would be more accurate to see them as a collage of impressions contributed by a wide variety of sources, some coming from the top down, and others percolating from the bottom up, some from brilliant, creative minds, and others from modest craftsmen, both Egyptian and Greek, adapting traditional designs. Some of these, doubtless, had official approval, but what that meant is impossible to say with any precision. The courtiers never spoke with a single voice and the sovereigns could not have managed to keep an eye on all the details. While the royal couple must have had opinions about the way they wished to be represented to the public, they could not have been entirely in control of the cascade of images that was created for them in many ways and at many levels. Nor was the public itself a homogeneous body prepared to hear messages in a single key; it included Egyptians, Greeks, others, and many of mixed ethnicity.²⁰ They ranged from the poorest farmers and laborers to the wealthiest merchants and courtiers, from those with the best education available to the majority who were illiterate. No program of propaganda or advertising, no matter how broadly conceived, could possibly suit them all.

Methodology

The heterogeneity of the sources is compounded by the fragmentation of the remains, both literary and material. So much has been lost that it can be difficult to draw connections between the pieces that remain and mold them into a meaningful whole. Nonetheless, that is exactly what this book aims to do. Within a simple chronological frame: birth in Cyrene (chapter 1), arrival in Alexandria (chapter 2), marriage

(chapters 3–4), ruling and racing (chapter 5), Egypt and death (chapter 6), all the relevant fragments are gathered, evaluated and fashioned into a story. The result is a variegated, impressionistic picture of Berenice II and her times. Nowhere do I speculate on what she may have thought or said, though from time to time I have allowed myself to consider possible motives for her actions and those of others.

The material remains, such as coins, inscriptions, cameos, and the like, each have their own interpretive traditions that are the province of experts. I have tried to respect these in each case and sought guidance from those who know most about them. The literary evidence also has its own history of interpretation, and here I have from time to time challenged received opinion. Though the relevant texts are quoted in English, all of the readings are based on Greek from the best available editions, and all of the translations (unless indicated otherwise) are my own.

Dating, Spelling, and Naming Conventions

All dates are BCE unless otherwise indicated.

Although it is now considered old-fashioned, the spelling of Greek personal names has been Latinized, and in one case, Ptolemy and the Ptolemies, Anglicized. This not only presents them in the way that is most familiar to English readers, but visually preserves the connection between the Greek Berenike of Callimachus' poem and Catullus' Latin Berenice. In contrast, some place-names and Greek words that are not names are transliterated more precisely. For example, the city in North Africa named for the queen is Berenike rather than Berenice.

Berenice's story cannot be told without including her relatives-by-marriage, who share a very limited repertoire of names. These include Ptolemy I and his last wife, Berenice I; Ptolemy II, his first wife, Arsinoe I, and his sister and second wife, Arsinoe II; their daughter, Berenice Syra; our Berenice II, our Berenice's husband, Ptolemy III; their son, Ptolemy IV, and their daughter, Arsinoe III. In order to keep the relations and generations straight, it is necessary to retain the numerals, even if this occasionally produces some awkward constructions.

Another way to distinguish among the Ptolemies is offered by their use of *epikleseis*, Greek epithets that were acquired by each of the Ptolemies and associated with their cults. Pausanias (1.8.6) says that Ptolemy I received his title Soter, "Savior," from the people of Rhodes. This would

be in 304 BCE in gratitude for his help in their struggle with Demetrius Poliorcetes. Since there is no other evidence to confirm this early date, and all known references to Ptolemy Soter are dated after his death, the title is probably an element of the cult established for him by his son, Ptolemy II Philadelphus.²¹ When Soter's wife was incorporated into the cult following her death in 279 BCE, the couple was worshipped as the *Theoi Soteres*, the "Savior Gods." Likewise, Ptolemy II Philadelphus, "Sibling-lover," or "Beloved by his sibling," appears in the record only after his death, but it is likely that his sister/wife Arsinoe II was known as Arsinoe Philadelphus during her lifetime, and together they were the *Theoi Adelphoi*, the "Sibling Gods."²² By the time Ptolemy III was on the throne, the process of deification had accelerated, and he and Berenice II were called *Theoi Euergetai*, "the Beneficent Gods," by the fourth year of their reign.²³

In referring to these early Ptolemies, I try to achieve the greatest clarity by use of both their numerals and epithets. Below, our Berenice is Berenice II and her husband is Ptolemy III, but sometimes for the sake of variety he is simply Euergetes, and the couple is the Euergetae. Where the reference is unambiguous, I call them simply the king and queen. "King" is not problematic, because in Greek Euergetes' title is *basileus*, "king,"²⁴ while Berenice's title, *basilissa*, is a term which can be used of any royal female.²⁵ As Sarah Pomeroy has observed, the queen did not hold a public office, so the role could only be construed as private.²⁶ Though she lacked specific, definable powers, her title conveys the highest status, and offers its holders many possibilities to exploit their position for better or worse.²⁷ How Berenice II used it to great effect is the story that is told below.

CHAPTER ONE

Birth in Cyrene

Berenice Enters the World

THOUGH BERENICE WAS LATER celebrated as a murderess who surprised her husband in bed with her own mother, her early life is a blank slate without any hints of what was to come. She was born in Cyrene, a Greek city on the coast of North Africa, in the late 260s BCE. Her exact date of birth is not recorded in any ancient source, but it can be extrapolated backwards from the dates of her marriages, first to Demetrius the Fair following her father's death in c. 250, and then to Ptolemy III Euergetes in 246.¹ Her parents were both Macedonian aristocrats closely related to the successors of Alexander the Great. Her father, Magas, was the son of Philip, otherwise unknown, and Berenice I, who later became the wife of Ptolemy I Soter.² Pausanias (1.7.1) says that Philip was neither prominent nor noble, but in all likelihood he came from the same social stratum as his wife, the well-born Apame, daughter of the Seleucid king Antiochus I and his wife Stratonice I. They married in about 275, and Berenice was their only child.³

Though she left Cyrene as a young woman, and may never have returned, Berenice's identity as a Cyrenean continued to be important throughout her life. This was the outcome of a deliberate strategy on the part of Callimachus of Cyrene, the most prominent poet of the age, to promote his own interests at court by reminding her, and the other courtiers, of their shared heritage. He presented himself not only as a Cyrenean, but as a member of the city's aristocracy with ties that reached

back to its founder and first king, Battus I whose story is told below. In a mock-epitaph he composed for himself his grave marker announces to an imagined passer-by:

You walk beside the tomb of a son of Battus, who knew song well,
and how to laugh in a timely way over wine.

(30 G-P = 7.415 AP)

By calling himself a Battiad, the poet convinced his ancient biographer that Battus was the name of his father, but this is too literal a reading. Except for the founder himself and three of his direct descendants who were also kings, the name hardly appears in the extensive prosopographical record of ancient Cyrene.⁴ Herodotus says it was a Libyan word for king (Hdt. 4.155), and whether or not this is true, the name retained a royal resonance throughout Cyrenean history. Battus I had the unique privilege of being buried within the city's walls at the eastern edge of the agora. His tomb had an altar with an eternal flame that was the site of sacrifices and celebratory songs.⁵ In calling himself "son of Battus" the poet integrates the most potent aspects of the city's self-fashioning with his own, and reminds his readers, including his most important reader, Berenice, of his family's position in the city's aristocracy.⁶ This mattered because her own father, Magas, had made himself king of Cyrene after the city had had a more or less democratic government for roughly 150 years. His precedents in this role were the eight generations of Battiad kings, who founded the city and maintained their sovereignty until the mid-fifth century. Magas took on their traditional role as priests of Apollo and some of the symbols and privileges of their office.⁷ To speak enthusiastically of Battus was a not so subtle way of supporting the newest claimant to the throne, Berenice's father.

Callimachus' devotion to Cyrene and its Battiad past (see his *Hymn to Apollo* discussed below) was a strategy designed to bring him closer to Berenice and to craft a unique and secure place for himself among the poets and courtiers jockeying for position in the court of Ptolemy III where she presided as queen. The campaign must have been successful because Callimachus continued to write for and about Berenice as long as he lived. One consequence of it is that no one was ever allowed to forget the queen's Cyrenean origins. As will be clear below, this could also be turned against her.

Cyrene Before the Greeks

Cyrene was by no means a typical Greek city. It was founded around 631 BCE by a small group of immigrants escaping from a long drought on the Island of Thera.⁸ Their need for arable land led them to the coast of North Africa in modern Libya, where they built a large urban center in the Greek manner in a hostile, exotic landscape.

The Greek settlers, arriving by sea, would have welcomed the sight of the Green Mountain (Jebel el-Akhdar), well-watered and covered with evergreens.⁹ This was the site of Cyrene, modern Shahat, Libya. It is not easily approached, since it rises steeply above a narrow coast that provides few natural harbors, even for the Greeks' small ships. Above the coast, and running parallel to it, are two terraces, the first, low and shallow, widens out to the west to form the plain of Tocra, and the middle, deeper terrace above, broadens westward to become the fertile plain of Barka. This is where the ancient city was located, and above it, the summit rolls southward to form a wide plateau that quickly becomes steppe, and then desert. Herodotus says the land was home to foxes, hyenas, porcupines, jackals, panthers, land crocodiles three cubits long, and one-horned serpents (Hdt. 4.192). Alongside the palm trees and pines, silphium, an ancient wonder drug, grew wild and made the settlers rich until it disappeared altogether from over-harvesting and foraging goats (Pliny *HN* 19.38–45, 22.100). It was an important feature of the city's iconography that figures prominently on the earliest Cyrenean coins (about 560 BCE).¹⁰

For the early settlers, at least, Cyrene was a dangerous place, but filled with opportunity. The land was fertile beyond their imagination thanks to three continuous harvest seasons, first on the seacoast, then on the middle level, which they called the Hills, and finally on the high plateau. In a good season the triple harvest lasted eight months with the highest-lying crops coming in just as the earliest were consumed or shipped abroad (Hdt. 4.199). There was plenty of pasturage on the plateau, forests full of game, and plains for exercising the horses for which Cyrene became famous. Pindar calls it "fruit-bearing" (*Pyth.* 4.6) and "lovely with horses" (*Pyth.* 4.2); Callimachus, "deep-soiled" (*Hymn* 2.65); Herodotus, "flock-feeding" (Hdt. 4.155), and Homer notes that ewes in Libya bear young three times a year and give milk continuously (*Od.* 4.85–89). To Greeks long accustomed to eking out a meager living in a mountainous, rocky landscape it was paradise. Berenice's own extraordinary fertility—she

had six children in seven years—is prefigured in the land from which she came.

All three levels of the Green Mountain are cut by stream beds (*wadis*) running north-south. These impeded the movement of men and animals east-to-west, but gave access to the interior and the caravan routes running south towards the Sudan. The Greeks, however, clung to the coast, and left trade with the interior to the people they met when they stepped off the boat. These were Berber tribes called Meshwesh and the Libu in Egyptian inscriptions and friezes of the 14th and 13th centuries BCE when war scenes were carved at Karnak depicting the Pharaoh Sethos I (c. 1294–1279 BCE) as he exulted in victory over Libyan invaders.¹¹ Among the tribes that Herodotus knew were the Asbystae, who lived to the south of Cyrene and taught the Greeks how to use four-horsed chariots (Hdt. 4.170); the semi-nomadic Nasamones, who left their flocks by the sea in summer when they went south to harvest dates in the oases (Hdt. 4.172); and the Garamantes, who lived inland among the wild beasts and shunned all human interaction (Hdt. 4.174). Other tribes in the area also had distinctive traits, such as the Zaukes whose women drove their own chariots to war (Hdt. 4.193). It is clear, then, that Berenice's victories in the four-horse chariot races at Olympia and in other crown contests had a place in the complex culture of her homeland.

Libya in the Argonautica of Apollonius

It was this Libya, primitive and untamed, that captured the imagination of Apollonius of Rhodes, who served as librarian at Alexandria and was tutor to Berenice's husband, Ptolemy III. Apollonius' description of it in his masterpiece, the *Argonautica*, paints a picture of Berenice's homeland as an uncivilized wasteland, unfit for human habitation and a menace to civilized Greeks.¹² The latter are Jason and the Argonauts who arrive there by mischance in their erratic journey home from the East in the magical ship Argo.¹³ The Golden Fleece, which Jason has stolen from the Colchian King Aeetes, is already aboard along with the king's daughter, Medea, who assisted them in acquiring it and in murdering her own brother who followed in pursuit.

The Greek mainland is almost in view when the North wind blasts them for nine days and nights into the Libyan Sea, where they become stranded in the shallows of the Sirtis from which no ship ever returns

(*Argon.* 4.1228–49). The Argonauts panic, and when their helmsman confirms that the water will never rise high enough to refloat the ship, they are overcome with grief. They walk aimlessly along the shore until nightfall when each of them drops to the sand, wraps himself in his cloak, and waits to die of thirst and starvation (*Argon.* 4.1259–1304).

The first impression of Libya, then, is a place without features and without life, a primordial world where the most basic requirements for human sustenance are absent. There are only salt-pans, seaweed, and the desert rising endlessly as far as the eye can see. The barren land is not as empty as it seems, however, and there are indigenous spirits in the place who come to the Argonauts' assistance. The first are the Heroines, the Guardians and daughters of Libya, who had once bathed Athena when she was born fully armed from the head of Zeus by the shore of Lake Triton.¹⁴ They appear to Jason in a midday vision under a scorching sun, and offer riddling advice which soon has the Argonauts carrying the ship on their backs for 12 days and nights across the desert.¹⁵ When they come to Triton's Lake they begin to look for potable water, and wander without knowing it into the magical realm of the Garden of the Hesperides.

The startled Hesperides turn instantly to earth and dust, and only after eloquent pleas for help from the Argonaut's poet Orpheus, do they reconstitute their verdant oasis and show themselves as the tree nymphs they are: a poplar, an elm, and a willow. They tell how a monstrous man had come the day before and shot Ladon, the giant serpent who guarded their golden apples. In this description the Argonauts immediately recognize Heracles, who had left their expedition during the outbound voyage. Though they fail to locate him, they drink from a spring that burst out where he had kicked over a rock, and in this way they benefit from his brute strength even in his absence (*Argon.* 4. 1393–1460).

Though the landscape had initially appeared empty of man and beast, it turns out that both are present, though primitive and hostile. Mopsus, the Argonauts' seer, is bitten by a venomous serpent (*Argon.* 4.1502–36), and their comrade Canthus is slaughtered by a shepherd defending his flock against the Greek marauders (*Argon.* 4.1485–1501).¹⁶ The assailant is attacked and killed, in turn, by the other Argonauts. He was Caphaurus, whose father Garamas and brother Nasamon have the same names as two tribes of Libyan nomads known to Herodotus (4.174–75).

Back in their ship, the Argonauts look in vain for an outlet to the sea and are assisted by a third local deity, Triton, who appears at first as a handsome young man, with whom they exchange guest gifts, Apollo's

tripod for a clod of Libyan soil. This seems like a hint of civilization, but as Triton conducts the ship to the sea, he reveals himself in his true form, a humanoid divinity above the hips, and below, a scaly sea monster with a forked tail (*Argon.* 4.1537–85).

This, then, is Apollonius' Libya, an unformed, primeval landscape where the human population is still in the pastoral stage, the land is overrun by reptiles, and the Argonauts are in constant danger. Though the Libyan episode shares symbolic space with the Egyptian Night Voyage of the Sun,¹⁷ it has signposts pointing to Greek and even specifically Ptolemaic claims. These include the two groups of female spirits, the Heroines of Libya, who had assisted at the birth of Athena and now save the party of Greeks, whose descendants will one day return, and the Hesperides, whose garden is located at precisely the spot where Berenice II will found a city, named for herself. The presence of Heracles in this vignette also looks to the Ptolemies who counted him among their ancestors.¹⁸ Finally there is the clod, a sample of Libyan soil given by Triton to the Argonaut Euphemus. He will follow riddling instructions received in a dream oracle to throw it into the sea near Apollo's own Island of Revelation, where it will become a new island, Calliste, "Most Beautiful," later called Thera (*Argon.* 4. 1731–64). It is from the historical Thera that Greek colonists in the seventh century BCE went out to plant a settlement in Cyrene.

Though Apollonius' account concludes in a way that valorizes Greek possession of North Africa by giving it the blessings of Libya's own guardian spirits, the land itself hardly seems like a prize worth winning. Far from it, it is hell on earth, a savage, inchoate landscape infused with primitive power that may or may not be amenable to the strictures of civilization. Had Apollonius seen the place himself? He might have; it was not far from Alexandria, though there is no evidence that he did. Yet what he would have seen, had he paid it a visit, was not the scene he describes in his poem, but the fully formed Greek city of Cyrene complete with temples, gymnasias, theaters, racecourses, and all the amenities required for comfortable urban living. What he would have grasped, though, as he approached it by sea coming from Alexandria, is that this mirage-like Greek city was perched on or just over the water's edge, and that behind it was an endless sea of sand, not unlike what he describes in his poem. Though the Greeks were in constant communication with the nomadic peoples who made their homes there, the desert never ceased to evoke terror in them as they clung to its periphery. It is this

quality of awe at the unknown and unknowable Sahara that Apollonius' description of Libya expresses so eloquently.

Though Apollonius' Libya is forbidding, his account of it provides a powerful rationale for colonization.¹⁹ Its vastness and emptiness suggest that there would be plenty of room for the Greeks, and that they would not be stealing space from indigenous people. The fallow state of the land means that it was not being used productively, and that much would be gained if it were cultivated in the Greek manner. Finally, the lawlessness and primitiveness of its people implies that they could benefit from the civilizing influence of the Greeks, whose intrusion is made to seem almost high-minded. Since the Argonauts make the point that they did not come purposefully but were blown there by a storm at sea (*Argon.* 4. 1566–70), their arrival does not appear to be motivated by greed, but rather by an act of providence. At the same time there is a suggestion in the death of Canthus at the hands of the shepherd Canthaurus that the Greeks' presence might not be welcomed by the indigenous tribes who will meet it with violence. The retribution that the Greeks exact in return seems to validate their impulse to respond in kind, and in this way justifies their colonial aggression. At the same time, the despair of the Hesperides at Heracles' murder of their guardian serpent and theft of their golden apples expresses the viewpoint of the oppressed natives. From their perspective the Greeks had come to destroy their environment and steal their treasure.

The Libyan episode can also be understood in the context of the whole fourth book of the *Argonautica* as part of a larger foundation narrative. This is the foundation of Alexandria itself and of the whole North African seaboard. As defined by Carol Dougherty, a Greek foundation has three key elements: a civic or personal crisis in the life of the city founder (*oikistes*), often a murder; a search for ritual purification; and an oracle from Apollo in the form of a riddle which orders the founder to establish a new city.²⁰ In this case the crisis is the murder of Medea's young brother Apsyrtus (*Argon.* 4.421–81), and the purification begins with the Argonauts' visit to Circe's Island (*Argon.* 4.659–752), but extends, in the words of the ship itself, to "passages through the wearisome sea" and "savage storms," (*Argon.* 4.584–88). These travails include the winds that blow the ship to Libya and everything the Argonauts endure there.

Though Jason takes the lead, there is no single founder in this narrative. All the Argonauts are implicated in the murder, and all are purified by their subsequent suffering. When Triton makes his gift of the clod, it

is not to Jason himself but to his shipmate Euphemus (*Argon.* 4.1562–63). It is he who has a prophetic dream from Apollo, which is the same as an oracle, that Jason interprets as a command to throw the clod into the sea where it will become the island Calliste/Thera (*Argon.* 4.1749–64).

Apollonius ends his story with the promise of a future for the descendants of Euphemus on Thera, where they will live after they leave Lemnos. The Argonauts visited that island in book 1 and stayed to repopulate it after discovering that it was inhabited only by women (*Argon.* 1. 607–914).²¹ In later generations they will migrate from Lemnos to Sparta, then to Thera, and finally to Cyrene, whose founders will trace their ancestry back to Euphemus. Apollonius does not tell this part of the story, nor does he give an account of the founding itself, since the conventions of epic seal the narrative in a heroic past which cannot be breached without violating the rules of the genre.²² Nonetheless, readers would know the rest of the tale from Herodotus and Pindar, so even without rehearsing all of the details, the *Argonautica* valorizes the Greek penetration of North Africa and the foundations of Cyrene and Alexandria by demonstrating their roots in the mythical past.

As a description of Berenice's homeland, Apollonius' account of the Cyrenaica is problematic at best. The Greeks will tame it and take from it what they will, but beneath the civilized veneer is a "heart of darkness" that the Greeks will never fully know or control. This wild and dangerous Cyrene is in stark contrast to the bright place of Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*, discussed below, and both images informed Berenice's reputation. Cyrene is a fitting homeland for her in her dual roles as earth mother and murderess.

Founding Historical Cyrene

The historical foundation of Cyrene took place around 631 BCE toward the end of the great age of Greek colonization. It is described in the fifth century by Herodotus, who offers both a Theran (4.150–53) and a Cyrenean version (4.154–58), and by Pindar, who tells the story in three ways in celebratory odes for Cyrenean victors in the Pythian games.²³

The foundation was motivated not by greed, but by necessity. The Therans had endured seven years of famine after a drought that withered every tree on the island except one (Hdt. 4.151). To people their new colony they did not rely on volunteers, but chose by lot one of every pair of brothers, and made Battus leader and king following an oracle from

Apollo (Hdt. 4. 153). When the colonists tried to return, the Therans refused to let them land, stoning them instead, which forced them to go to sea again and search harder for a place to settle (Hdt. 4.156). This narrative is consistent in its main points with the “Oath of the Founders,” recorded on a Cyrenean inscription from the fourth century (SEG IX 3).²⁴

Discussions about the authenticity of the decree, which seems to quote the original document that authorized the foundation, have not reached a definitive conclusion. Though the original itself has not survived, it is probable, as A. J. Graham has argued, that the decree is essentially that of the seventh century, with some revisions to improve its clarity for readers 300 years later.²⁵ The other literary accounts tell more or less the same story though there are differences in the details, including the number of oracles that were received before Battus and his compatriots finally arrived at Cyrene.²⁶

The human foundation story, located in historic times, is projected back into the heroic age in Pindar’s fourth *Pythian*, where Battus is claimed as a descendent in the 17th generation of the Argonaut Euphemus.²⁷ The poem was written for Arcesilas IV, the last of the Battiad kings, who was at the time under intense political pressure. And, as noted above, Euphemus reappears later in Apollonius’ *Argonautica* where his story serves as a more indirect compliment to Cyrene’s newest rulers, the Ptolemies.

In his ninth *Pythian*, Pindar takes the foundation out of human history altogether and presents it as an act of the god Apollo. He happened to see the nymph Cyrene, the daughter of Hypseus, king of the Lapithae, wrestling with a lion in Thessaly on the Greek mainland. She was a virgin shepherdess determined to protect her flock, and Apollo was so impressed with her beauty he asked the Centaur Cheiron who she was and whether he could make love to her. With Cheiron’s tactful consent the god takes her across the sea to Libya where she becomes ruler of a city. A virgin shepherdess who wrestles with lions and becomes Apollo’s lover in Berenice’s homeland seemed to Callimachus like an attractive literary avatar for his queen, and he borrows this detail for his own account of the foundation in his *Hymn to Apollo*.

*Callimachus’ Hymn to Apollo*²⁸

Pindar and Herodotus wrote in the fifth century, relying on still older sources. Two hundred years later, Callimachus of Cyrene was able to draw information from them as well as from local historians such as

Acasander.²⁹ He had included Pindar's works in his own *Pinakes* and knew Herodotus.³⁰ His account of early Cyrene in the *Hymn to Apollo* combines both the human and divine foundations, while it focuses, ostensibly, on the god whose oracle justified the entire enterprise.

The *Hymn to Apollo* is the first of Callimachus' mimetic hymns which purport to describe a ritual taking place as the narrator is singing, or in this case, as he is leading a chorus in song and dance (*Hy.* 2.1–8).³¹ The event appears to be taking place in front of a temple of Apollo which vibrates together with the sacred laurel in anticipation of the god's epiphany. The chorus is ordered to dance and musicians to play while their leader declares: "It is evil to battle against the Blessed Ones. Whoever fights with the Blessed ones would fight with my king, and whoever fights with my king, would fight even with Apollo. Apollo will honor the chorus that sings according to his own heart" (*Hy.* 2.25–29).

With the preliminaries over the hymn proper appears to begin at line 32 with a catalog of the god's defining features: he is a beautiful youth whose every possession is gold (*Hy.* 2. 32–37), a healer whose hair drips a fragrant oil called "heal-all" (*Hy.* 2. 38–41, 46),³² an archer and musician (*Hy.* 2.43–44), a prophet (*Hy.* 2.45), a herdsman who guarantees the fertility of his flocks (*Hy.* 2.47–54), and a builder of altars and cities (*Hy.* 2.60–64). It is in this last capacity that the leader or the chorus says Apollo once told Battus of "my own deep-soiled city," that is, Cyrene. He led them there, taking the form of a crow, and "swore to our kings that he would give them city walls" (*Hy.* 2. 65–68).

It now becomes clear that the celebration is for Carneian Apollo, whose cult was prominent in Dorian cities including Sparta, Thera, and Cyrene. "Many call you Boedromius or Clarius, but I call you Carneius," says the chorus-leader, "for this is my patrimony" (*Hy.* 2.69–71). If the choral leader is the poet himself, it is here that he claims a special relationship with the god and his Cyrenean cults. Then he returns to the narrative and follows the progression of Battus and his fellow-settlers as they bring the cult of Carneian Apollo from Sparta to Thera and from Thera to the Asbystian land, i.e., to Cyrene.³³ There the god rejoiced "as he watched the armored warriors dancing with the yellow-haired Libyan women during the Carneia."³⁴

Apollo not only watched the dancers, he showed them to his bride, the nymph Cyrene, as he stood on the hill Myrtoussa where she had once killed a lion that had been harassing the herds of Eurypylus. "Apollo gazed at no other dance more divine than this one, or gave so many

benefactions as he granted to this city, Cyrene, remembering his earlier rape. Nor have the sons of Battus honored another god more than they honor Apollo" (*Hy.* 2.93–96).

This is the point where the choral song ends, and the poem concludes with a brief defense of Callimachus' literary style which implies that Apollo's epiphany, awaited with such excitement as the poem began, has already occurred. Not only did Apollo appear, but he used the occasion to kick away the poet's critics, here personified as Envy, and speak in support of Callimachus' literary style (*Hy.* 2. 105–13). The poet's surprising identification of the god with his own professional concerns suggests that Callimachus himself has been the choral leader all along, and this is the way the poem has been read since antiquity.³⁵

Callimachus was also an astute student of earlier choral lyric who could exploit the convention commonly used in lyric that the collective identity of the chorus, either real or fictive, might speak of itself in the first person singular or plural with the result that the words of the leader are not always easy to distinguish from those of the chorus.³⁶ In this way, "my king" (*Hy.* 2. 26–27); "my city" (*Hy.* 2.65); "our kings" (*Hy.* 2.68); and "my patrimony" (*Hy.* 2.71) have equal force for both the chorus of Cyrenean youth and the chorus-leader/poet Callimachus. All identify themselves with the city Cyrene, and with the cult of Apollo Carneius who inspired Battus and guided the foundation.³⁷ Their zeal for the god and the city is extended also to "my king," who is equated with Apollo (*Hy.* 2.26–27).

While "our kings" (*Hy.* 2.68) are the descendants of Battus, who ruled Cyrene for eight generations after the foundation, it has seemed to many readers that "my king" (*Hy.* 2. 26–27) must be a monarch contemporary with Callimachus. But which one? When Callimachus composed this poem the Battiads had been off the throne for two centuries, and the rulers of Cyrene were the Ptolemies. The first Ptolemaic connection to rule Cyrene was Magas, Berenice's father. He called himself king of Cyrene, though he was only a governor appointed by his stepfather Ptolemy I. If Magas is meant, the hymn would be one of the earliest of Callimachus' works, written in his youth before he left Cyrene for Alexandria. While some modern readers support this position, most consider the hymn one of Callimachus' more mature works.³⁸ Magas' half-brother, Ptolemy II Philadelphus, also has his supporters, but he abandoned Cyrene to Magas, and a king who could not assert his own authority over the city could hardly feel honored by this hymn. Euergetes, who took firm control of the city after his marriage to Berenice, is

the most plausible candidate and it is he whom the ancient scholia identify as “my king.”³⁹

If Callimachus intended to suggest that Euergetes has something in common with Apollo, a notion that would have pleased the king, the poem can be read as a compliment to Berenice, and the poet’s enthusiasm for his native city would have an obvious motive. It would also explain Callimachus’ unique contribution to the tale of the foundation which halts Battus’ progress at Azilis, where the settlers stopped for six years before they are led to Cyrene itself (Hdt. 4.157). Here they celebrate another Carnea at which the dancers are armed warriors performing in the midst of yellowed-haired Libyan women (*Hy.* 2.85–87).⁴⁰ Callimachus imagines Apollo himself looking on at these dancers and showing them off to his bride, the daughter of Hypseus, who is the nymph Cyrene (*Hy.* 2.88–91). Apollo’s vantage point is the hill of Myrtoussa, just west of Cyrene, which was associated with a cult of Apollo (CIG 3.5138).⁴¹ It was on this spot, Callimachus says, that Cyrene killed a lion that had been ravaging the herds of Eurypylus, and so won his kingdom for herself (*Hy.* 2. 91–92).

Traditionally, Cyrene had done her lion-wrestling on the mainland in Thessaly and come to Libya with Apollo afterwards (Hes. fr. 215 M.-W.; Pind. *Pyth.* 9.1–70). Callimachus’ version, adapted from a local historian, Acasander (FGrH 469 fr. 4 = scholia to *Argon.* 2.498) moves the scene to the prehistoric site of Cyrene, and in this way refashions the tale as a distinctly colonial narrative. With the death of the African lion the untamed forces of nature are put in check and a peaceful agrarian life can take the place of chaos and savagery. Cyrene herself becomes a heroic, civilizing force, a kind of female Heracles, who slew the Nemean Lion in the first of his labors. Since Eurypylus promised his kingdom to whoever could rid the land of this menace, the death of the lion also makes her the ruler of the city that will later bear her name.⁴² Though Callimachus stops well short of allegory,⁴³ it would nonetheless be difficult for the historical Berenice not to see herself in the role of Cyrene’s queen and the guarantor of its fertility.⁴⁴

Apollo’s pleasure in watching the dance and in showering blessings on Cyrene is enhanced by his memory of “the earlier rape” (*Hy.* 2.95). While it is not described here, his sexual encounter with the previously virginal Cyrene is a traditional component of the story, told by Pindar (*Pyth.* 9.26–75). Here in the hymn, where she is called Apollo’s bride (*Hy.* 2.90), the two are already a married couple, but the acknowledgment of a violent beginning to their relationship is clear in the poet’s choice of language. This, too, seems to relate to Berenice, whose own

marriage began with a sexual intrusion followed by an assault. Violence is also implicit in the earlier image of armed Greek warriors dancing in the midst of yellow-haired Libyan maidens. The poet does not make it explicit, but everyone knows what will happen after the dance.

In the Greek rhetoric of colonization, marriage is a potent metaphor for the imposition of male conquerors on a feminized indigenous population.⁴⁵ It acknowledges both the violence that accompanies the act of appropriating another's land and the unequal nature of the relationship between the two parties that inevitably follows. It also contains the promise of future fertility and the possibility of merging the groups into a single clan. Though Callimachus writes about the original Greek settlement of Cyrene, the image is not irrelevant to the new Greek settlement that took place after Berenice's own marriage. At this time the natives, now Greek themselves, lost their independence to her husband. From this perspective Berenice as Cyrene is a complex figure, whose personal power wanes even as she gains new status as an Egyptian queen. As a citizen of Cyrene, which had now surrendered whatever political independence it ever had, Callimachus would be especially sensitive to her situation and what her new marriage will mean for the future of the Cyrenaica. The hymn, then, is not only a graceful compliment to his queen, and an assertion of his own special relationship to her, but a poignant reminder of what she and the Cyreneans have lost.

The images of pre-Greek Cyrene produced by Callimachus and Apollonius, though nuanced, are in stark contrast to each other. This suggests not only a point of contention between the two poets, but a more general ambivalence about the queen in their wider readership and the public. The conflicting signals sent by these poems, if read in the context of the palace, would have fueled the imaginations of both her supporters and detractors, while also, perhaps, determining the fates of their authors.

Cyrene under the Battiads

Battiad kings, each named either Battus or Arcesilas, ruled Cyrene for eight generations. Little is known about them, and most of that information comes from Herodotus. Battus I was both king and high-priest who founded the city's most important cults and built the first temple of Apollo adjacent to a rock-cut processional way described by Pindar. He

ruled for 40 years and was buried at the eastern edge of the agora where his tomb became the focal point of the city's civic cult (*Pyth.* 5.89–93). His successor, Arcesilas I reigned for 16 years, and was succeeded by his son, Battus II (“the fortunate”) in 599 BCE. Though Cyrene was prospering, its population had not grown, and Battus II enlisted the help of the oracle of Delphi in recruiting more settlers by promising them free allotments of land (Hdt. 4.159). Many heeded the call, which forced the Greek Cyreneans to appropriate even more land from their Libyan neighbors—who were not pleased. Their king, Adicran, appealed to the Egyptian pharaoh, Apries, who sent an army that engaged the Cyreneans at Irasa and was utterly defeated (Hdt. 4.159). The next Egyptian king, Amasis, made peace with Cyrene instead. A treaty was signed, and he cemented the relationship by marrying a Cyrenean woman named Ladice, possibly Battus’ daughter (Hdt. 2.181–82).

Battus’ son, Arcesilas II (“the hard”) ruled Cyrene from 560–544 BCE. He found himself at odds with his brothers, who left the city and settled to the west at Barka. Then he clashed with the Libyan tribes whom his brothers incited against him, and later with the Cyrenean aristocracy. He executed his rivals or forced them into exile with the help of mercenaries supplied by the Egyptians, but was ultimately defeated by the Libyans at Leuca, where he lost 7,000 men. Afterwards, according to Herodotus, the king was poisoned and then strangled by his brother Haliarchus, who was killed, in turn, by Arcesilas’ wife Eryxo (Hdt. 4.160).

Plutarch (*de Mul. Virt.* 25, 260e–261d) tells the story differently. He says that the king had a vicious friend, Laarchus, who was aiming at tyranny himself. First he attacked the nobles, then poisoned Arcesilas before turning his attention to the widow, Eryxo, whom he wanted to marry in order to put aside her young son, Battus III. After consulting her brothers, she lured Laarchus to her bedroom by suggesting that if their union were consummated her brothers would agree to the match. He arrived unescorted, and they killed him in an ambush. The Egyptian soldiers in Cyrene, who had been in the pay of Laarchus, accused Eryxo and her eldest brother, Polyarchus, of treason, but the two siblings and their mother traveled to Egypt to plead their case with the king. He was so impressed by the self-control and courage of the women that he sent them home with much praise and many gifts.

Eryxo is a model for Berenice’s own handling of Demetrius the Fair. Both Demetrius and Laarchus were outsiders who treated the local aristocracy badly in their attempts to establish a tyranny at Cyrene. Both

Eryxo and Berenice were closely related to the late king, and both participated in a bedroom drama in which the usurper was lured to his death with the promise of sex and power. While it is impossible to know whether Berenice was aware of Eryxo's story, it was part of the historical fabric of Cyrene and of the Battiads whom her own family imitated—for better and for worse. While she did not grow up wishing to be like Eryxo, the Battiads' tradition of mistreating their aristocracy and insisting on monarchical rights created a similar crisis in which the outcome depended on the cooperation of a pliant woman. Neither Eryxo nor Berenice filled that description. Both met violence with violence and chose the story's ending themselves. Unlike the men, they acted in what seemed to them to be the best interests of their families, and not necessarily of themselves. Eryxo acted on behalf of her son, following the wishes of her husband, and Berenice followed the directives of her late father, on behalf of the Ptolemies.

Thanks to his mother's resolve, Battus III succeeded his father, but the social and economic strains that created rebellion under Arcesilas II could not be resolved by the young king. To address these, a request for assistance was sent to Delphi and the oracle appointed Demonax of Mantinea to arbitrate. He created a new, democratic constitution which left the king certain royal prerogatives and priesthoods, while handing over all the other affairs of state to the people.⁴⁶

Though the reforms of Demonax probably limited participation to property-owning classes,⁴⁷ it was unacceptable to Battus' successor, Arcesilas III, who found himself banished to Samos. He raised an army there, returned with it to Cyrene and succeeded in re-establishing his position. Some of his enemies went into exile, but others he burned alive in the tower of Aglomachus. Then, fearing an oracle he had received at Delphi he went at once to Barka and lived there while his mother, Pheretime, remained at Cyrene sitting with the council and administering the affairs of state. He was soon assassinated while walking in the streets of Barka with his father-in-law. When Pheretime heard, she escaped to Egypt, which was at this time ruled by the Persians. She personally persuaded them to send an army against the Libyans and install her son as king (Hdt. 4.164–65; Polyaeus 8.47).

Like Eryxo, Pheretime intervened on behalf of male relatives to try to assure her family's continued power. Eryxo did not hesitate to commit a political assassination, and Pheretime, not only took an active role in the government, but traveled abroad where she successfully negotiated

an agreement with a foreign government. Apparently, in Cyrene women of the ruling class were not inhibited by the norms of female behavior that restricted their sisters on the mainland and the islands. It was probably significant that Cyrene was a Dorian state settled from Sparta, where women traditionally had more freedom than those at Athens and other Greek states.⁴⁸ Another important factor was Cyrene's monarchical form of government, which made ruling a family affair. This gave women scope to influence the men in power even when there were no internal or external threats, and to act decisively when there were. Berenice would later benefit from the latter, as well as from Macedonian traditions of strong women acting in roles usually reserved for men.⁴⁹

The Persians sent an expedition to Cyrene in 514/13, but it is not clear whether they occupied the city because Herodotus' account ends here. It seems likely, however, that the last Battiads ruled Cyrene as Persian vassals. Little is known about them except for the last, Arcesilas IV, who commissioned Pindar to write two odes celebrating his success in the chariot races at Delphi in 462 (*Pyth.* 4 and 5). Pausanias (10.15.6) describes a statue of Battus, crowned by the nymph Cyrene, riding in a chariot driven by a female figure personifying Libya. He identifies it as the work of Amphion of Cnossos, who lived at about the same time as this Arcesilas, who likely commissioned it.⁵⁰ The poetry, art, and crown victories all suggest that Arcesilas IV was both wealthy and cultured, but these attainments did not protect him from the aggression of his own nobles. After his death, his son Battus IV fled to Euhesperides where his father had settled some Greek mercenaries, but they cut off his head and threw it in the sea.⁵¹

So the Battiad dynasty came to an end with the conflicts and violence that characterized most of its history. Cyrene was not an easy place. Though it prospered economically, the aristocracy was often at odds with the royal house, and the local tribes agitated against them both. Where some details have survived it appears that most of the Battiad kings met an untimely end.

Cyrene after the Battiads

The Battiad dynasty ended about 440 BCE with the death of Arcesilas IV.⁵² Little is known about conditions in Cyrene between that time and 331 BCE when the city concluded a treaty with Alexander the Great. Its

government seems to have had a republican character though it was not clearly a democracy. Prosperity continued, however, and it was able to export large quantities of grain to a variety of Greek cities between 330 and 325 BCE when they were suffering from a severe famine.⁵³

Cyrenean ambassadors met Alexander when he was on his way to visit the oracle of Zeus Ammon in the oasis of Siwa (Diod. Sic. 17.49.2–6; Quintus Curtius 4.7.8–9) and voluntarily surrendered their city to him. Among the many gifts they offered was a crown, three hundred war horses, and five magnificent four-horse chariots. He, in turn, granted them his friendship and their independence, which lasted until 322 BCE. In that year a group of Cyrenean aristocrats appealed to Ptolemy I Soter, then satrap of Egypt, to intervene on their behalf in an armed conflict with Thibron, an adventurer from Laconia on the Greek mainland who threatened Cyrene and the whole Libyan seaboard with an army of mercenaries (Diod. Sic. 18.19–21; Strabo 17.3.21).⁵⁴ Soter had made the trip to Egypt with Alexander and was well aware of Cyrene's strategic importance and economic value. He installed his own governor, Ophellas, who easily disposed of Thibron, and then came in person to Cyrene in 321 to reorganize the government.⁵⁵ In this way Cyrene became the first large foreign territory under Soter's control.

This was not to be the end of troubles in Cyrene, however. Nine years later in 313 BCE Cyrenean nationalists organized an armed rebellion and were forced to yield by an army and navy from Alexandria (Diod. Sic. 19.79.1–3). Ophellas himself came to an inglorious end five years later when he was drawn into an alliance with Agathocles of Syracuse and was killed by his ostensible ally during a joint attack against Carthage around 308 (Diod. Sic. 20.40–43; The Marmor Parium, FGrH 239 B 27; Justin *Epit.* 22.7). Whether this western adventure was undertaken with Soter's knowledge or was essentially an independent action in defiance of Alexandria is not clear.⁵⁶

Berenice's Father, Magas

Following Ophellas' death, Cyrenean nationalists made yet another attempt at pulling free from Alexandria, but after five years Soter intervened again. This time, around 300 BCE he sent his stepson Magas to take charge (Paus. 1.6.8).⁵⁷

Magas was the son of Soter's last wife, Berenice I, and her first husband, Philip (Paus. 1.7.1). His mother was born about 340 BCE in Macedonia in the same northern Greek town that the Ptolemies called home.⁵⁸ She came to Alexandria with Soter's second wife, Eurydice. Soter apparently preferred Berenice I for she took Eurydice's place as the favored wife and had four children with him, including a son who was later to become Ptolemy II Philadelphus.⁵⁹

Magas was born around 320 BCE and must have come with his mother to Alexandria where he settled in with the royal family.⁶⁰ At about age 20 Soter sent him to Cyrene to make one more effort to establish Ptolemaic control of the city and its surrounding territory (Paus. 1.7.1).⁶¹ At first he was governor, and faithful to his stepfather, but he had his own dreams of glory. On Soter's death in 283 he did not continue to serve the successor, his half-brother, Philadelphus, but declared himself king of Cyrene, as is clear from inscriptions on which he is styled "King Magas."⁶² Nonetheless, he never minted coins with his own image, but piously continued to use portraits of his mother, Berenice I, and stepfather, Ptolemy I Soter.⁶³ Cyrene had not had a king since the inglorious end of the last Battiad, Arcesilas IV, about 440 BCE,⁶⁴ and it is easy to imagine that objections to it were raised both by the aristocracy and the people. Nonetheless, Magas reigned until his death from natural causes about 250.⁶⁵

Magas' coup did not stop at simply assuming the title "king." Philadelphus' murder of Magas' two half-brothers (Paus. 1.7.1), in an effort to eliminate all possible rivals to the throne would have made Magas anxious, and he very likely believed that he had an equal right to rule Egypt because he invaded it sometime between 279 and 274 BCE (Paus. 1.7.1–3; Polyae. 2.28).⁶⁶ He knew his countrymen well, however, and did not forget the civil discord that Cyrene was prone to, even as he took the chance of leaving it for greater gains. Before his departure he took the precaution of leaving some of his own partisans behind and of stowing all the remaining munitions and instruments of war in the city's Acropolis. If a revolt broke out while he was away he did not want to find himself locked outside of the city gates when he returned (Polyae. 2.28).

As he marched toward Alexandria he was probably accompanied by a fleet, sailing along the shore parallel to his line of march, which could keep his troops supplied and also handle any naval resistance sent from Alexandria.⁶⁷ At first he met with success, seizing the key town of Paraitonium, and arrived within 60 kilometers of Alexandria. It was

just at this point that a tribe of Libyan nomads took the opportunity to revolt, and he was forced back to Cyrene to deal with the situation. Philadelphus, who had been waiting in Alexandria for Magas' attack, did not follow up on this unexpected opportunity because he was distracted, in turn, by uncooperative Gallic mercenaries, who planned to seize Egypt for themselves. Philadelphus herded them onto a deserted island where they killed each other or starved to death (Paus. 1.7.2-3; Callim. *Hy.* 4.185-87 and scholia to 175-78).

In the end Magas' efforts at a dynastic coup ended in fiasco. But in spite of the invasion, or possibly because of it, Magas continued his reign in Cyrene unmolested until his death some 25 years later. Philadelphus had other more important rivals to deal with in Syria and Macedonia, and he gave no priority to a new campaign in Libya. Magas, however, was concerned about the possible consequences of his rebellion. To assure support in case of future clashes with Alexandria, he joined an alliance of cities in western Crete, sponsored by the Seleucids who wanted a counterweight to the Ptolemaic naval base at Itanos on the eastern side of the island.⁶⁸ Nothing came of this, however, and a lasting peace between Magas and Philadelphus was ultimately achieved, though it may have taken some time in coming. To seal this agreement Magas betrothed his only child, Berenice II, to Philadelphus' son (Justin *Epit.* 26.3). The date of engagement is not known, but it must have been after 259 BCE.⁶⁹ Magas no doubt wanted to secure for his daughter the wealth and power of his family, the Ptolemies, by marrying off his daughter to her cousin. There were advantages in the agreement for Philadelphus as well. Cyrene would be a good defense against any future incursions into Egypt from the west.⁷⁰ Its agricultural riches could sustain Egypt in the years when the Nile failed to flood, as in fact happened early in the reign of Berenice and Euergetes, and its naval power in the western Mediterranean would add to his own in the east. It had been the first area outside of Egypt that Soter acquired after he became Satrap of Egypt in 323, and this was an opportunity to bring it back into the Egyptian fold.

After his adventure in Egypt, Magas' reign was peaceful, at least in the historical record, and that, in turn, seems to have created an environment in Cyrene favoring the arts and sciences. In particular Magas was connected to the Cyrenaic school of philosophy, which arose in the fourth century under the leadership of Aristippus, a pupil of Socrates.⁷¹ Among the most prominent representatives of the school in the third century was Theodorus, "the Atheist," who was born in Cyrene and had

studied with Aristippus' grandson. After being expelled from the city for unknown reasons he spent some time in Athens where he met Demetrius of Phalerum, a pupil of Aristotle's who was then ruling the city. When Demetrius was expelled, in turn, from Athens, Theodorus went with him to Alexandria, where he stayed at the court of Magas' stepfather, Ptolemy I Soter. There he became a trusted courtier and was sent on a diplomatic mission to the court of Lysimachus in Thrace.⁷² Ultimately, he returned home again to Cyrene where Magas gladly received him (Diog. Laert. 2.97–103).⁷³

The Cyrenaics, like the Epicureans after them, taught that the highest good was pleasure, including physical pleasures and pleasures of the moment.⁷⁴ Like the Epicureans, their views were often the butt of ridicule, and they were misrepresented as hedonists and gluttons.⁷⁵ It is very likely that Magas' connections to Theodorus and his school are responsible for the story that the king literally ate himself to death.⁷⁶

Cyrenaic philosophy as it was interpreted by Theodorus elevated mental pleasure over the physical kinds and taught that the wise man was completely self-sufficient. This brought the Cyrenaics close to other Hellenistic philosophies, like Skepticism, Epicureanism, and also Buddhism. Magas' interest in them or in philosophy generally, may have inspired Asoka, the Mauryan king, to send Buddhist missionaries to his court in Cyrene. In any case, Magas is listed in Asoka's great rock-cut inscription bearing the names of five Hellenistic rulers who received his ambassadors.⁷⁷

Through his connections to Demetrius of Phalerum, Theodorus may have been involved in planning the great Library at Alexandria.⁷⁸ However that may be, Cyrene was closely connected to the Library. Callimachus, who created its first catalogs, the *Pinakes*, began his literary career in Cyrene during Magas' lifetime, and he wrote at least one poem for or about Magas, fr. 388 Pf. Unfortunately, the papyrus is so badly damaged that it is impossible to determine its contents, but Berenice's name is mentioned and one readable word suggests that she is holding a weapon.⁷⁹ This hints at a military context and the poem may be connected in some way with a story in Hyginus (*Astr.* 2.24.11–18) that Berenice once came to her father's assistance when his troops were in difficulty on the battlefield. Though the scenario seems hard to believe, women on the battlefield are very much in the tradition of earlier Macedonian queens, like Alexander's mother Olympias and her adversary, Adea-Eurydice.⁸⁰

Eratosthenes, the mathematician, astronomer, and poet, who later became chief librarian, also lived and worked in Cyrene. His biography in the *Suda* (ε 2898 Adler) lists Callimachus and Lysanias of Cyrene among his teachers. Lysanias was a distinguished grammarian who wrote *On the Iambic Poets* (Athen. 7.304b; 14.620c) as well as critical works on Homer and Euripides. Like the other two, he ultimately moved to Alexandria and was associated with the Museum.⁸¹

During Berenice's childhood in Cyrene, then, there was a community of scholars working at the highest levels. Berenice's own interest in both Callimachus and Eratosthenes, who was appointed tutor to her children, may have been inspired by her father's example. And if there is any truth to Callimachus' claim in his *Hymn to Apollo* that he was a connection of the Battiads, Magas and his family would have welcomed a relationship with him. As relative newcomers they would benefit by reaching out to the local aristocracy in an effort to establish a political base. More likely, though, it was Callimachus who constructed a Battiad ancestry for himself to invite Magas' and later Berenice's patronage by suggesting that it was an expression of *philia*. This was a kind of ritual friendship that defined the relationship between a Macedonian king and his courtiers. It was based on a fiction that the two parties were social equals and is characterized by exchanges of gifts and services. In this context a court poet, like Callimachus, could make gifts of his poems to his "friends" the king and queen who would respond with gifts of money.

Unlike most of the Battiads, Magas died of natural causes. The date remains controversial, though the weight of scholarly opinion has favored c. 250 BCE ever since it was first proposed by Barthold Niebuhr.⁸² The alternative "high" dating for Magas' death is 258 BCE. This is based on Eusebius,⁸³ who puts the death of Demetrius the Fair, which must follow Magas', in the second year of the 130th Olympiad or 259/8 BCE. This evidence is widely rejected, however, because it is clear that Eusebius has confused Demetrius II of Macedon with Demetrius the Fair.⁸⁴ Other equally imprecise evidence has also been brought to bear on the question with no clear-cut conclusion. Berenice herself has been nowhere in the argument, yet in determining the date of her father's death it is important to take her own history into account. A date of 259/8 for the death of Demetrius the Fair would mean that she remained in Cyrene for more than 10 years without a husband before her wedding to Ptolemy III in 246 BCE. Since they went on to have six children who lived beyond infancy, and may have had others that did not, this

long a span as unmarried seems highly unlikely. Another difficulty with the “high” dating is the date of Berenice’s betrothal to the future Ptolemy III. Before 259/8 Philadelphus’ heir was not the man Berenice ultimately married, but “Ptolemy the Son,” who was co-regent with Philadelphus from 268/7 to 259/8 (PSorb inv. 2440 and PCairZen 59003). Her betrothal to the future Euergetes must be dated after this Ptolemy’s death unless the agreement was later revised to suit the changed circumstances.

Berenice’s Mother, Apame

Apame was the daughter of the Seleucid King, Antiochus I Soter (reigned 280–261), and the sister of his successor Antiochus II Theios (261–246). She was named for her grandmother, the daughter of Spitamenes, a Bactrian warlord who resisted the forces of Alexander the Great until he was betrayed in 328 by his allies, the Massegetae, who sent his head to Alexander (Arr. *Anab.* 4.17.7; Strabo 11.11.6). Quintus Curtius (8.3.1–16) preserves an alternative version of the story in which Spitamenes is murdered by his wife who delivers his head to the Macedonians.⁸⁵ The sensationalist details include a colluding slave who hides Spitamenes’ severed head under his shirt and a murderess dripping with gore as she presents it in person to Alexander. He is alternately horrified that a woman would do such a thing and relieved to be rid of an able opponent.

The wife’s name has not been preserved, but Quintus Curtius paints her as a hotheaded woman who was angry at her husband for making her move with him from place to place as he and his forces pursued their enemies. This explanation, along with the other dramatic details, does not have the ring of truth, but the historian is clearly embellishing a tradition that locates the betrayal of Spitamenes in his own camp and associates it with his wife. Alexander’s willingness to admit her to his presence suggests that she had had some communication with him in advance, and far from dismissing her, as Quintus Curtius says, Alexander arranged for her daughter to marry one his most important associates, Seleucus. Their nuptials were part of a mass marriage ceremony in Susa in 324 where he and 80 or 90 of Alexander’s officers married Persian wives in the presence of thousands of guests (Arr. *Anab.* 7.4.4–8; Plut. *Alex.* 70.3; Athen. 12.538b–539a).

The daughter's name was Apame, and judging by the fact that her son by Seleucus succeeded him on the throne of his new empire, she skillfully maintained her position at court. Her son was Antiochus I Soter and his wife was Stratonice I, who had once been married to Seleucus, but the old king stepped aside so that Antiochus could marry his stepmother (Plut. *Dem.* 38). Berenice's mother, Apame, was their daughter. Magas' powerbase in North Africa, not far by sea from Alexandria, made him an attractive candidate when her father was looking for a match for her in the mid-270s. His calculations proved to be accurate. When Magas invaded Egypt in the years leading up to the First Syrian War that pitted the Seleucids against the Ptolemies, his father-in-law stood to gain.

Like some other successor queens, Apame continued to act in the interests of her birth family even after marriage into another.⁸⁶ After Magas' death around 250 BCE, she unilaterally broke Berenice's engagement to Philadelphus' son and invited Demetrius the Fair to take his place (Justin *Epit.* 26.3.3). Demetrius was a grandson, son, and father of kings. His father was the Antigonid king Demetrius I Poliorcetes (coregent 306–301; king 301–283) and his mother was Ptolemais, the daughter of Ptolemy I Soter and his second wife, Eurydice. On his mother's side, then, Demetrius was as closely related to Soter as the future Euergetes whom he was supposed to replace. He was also a grandson of Antigonus I "the one-eyed" (reigned 306–301), and his own first marriage to Olympias of Larissa produced a son who later became Antigonus III Doson.

Clearly, Demetrius the Fair was not the adventurer he seems in the story, told by Justin in his *Epitome*, of his affair in Cyrene, but a Macedonian nobleman with close ties to both the Ptolemies and the Antigonids. His decision to accept Apame's invitation to marry her daughter Berenice must have met with the approval of his half-brother, Antigonus II Gonatus, who was married to Apame's half-sister, Phila. With Demetrius in place in Cyrene, the Antigonids would control access to Egypt by land and sea on its western side where neither the Ptolemies nor the Seleucids had any bases.⁸⁷

Why Apame hatched this plan is not discussed in the ancient sources, but there was no reason for her to follow her late husband's wishes. After Magas' death the détente that he established between the competing forces in Cyrene—the aristocrats, the people, and the Libyans—collapsed, and Apame must have given thought to how she

could best shore up her own position. Since she belonged to none of the three competing parties she could not rely on any of them. Outside of Cyrene she could take her chances with the Ptolemies with whom she personally had no ties, or reach out to one of their competitors, among whom were members of her own family. Her choice of the latter made sense under the circumstances.

Justin tells the story this way:

Demetrius wasted no time. The winds in his favor, he came swiftly to Cyrene; but from the start he behaved arrogantly through confidence in his good looks, with which his mother-in-law had already started to become infatuated. He was overbearing in his dealings with the royal family and the military; and he had also turned his attempts to ingratiate himself from the girl to her mother. This first made the girl suspicious, then it provoked the animosity of the people and the soldiers. Consequently, the support of the entire population veered towards the son of Ptolemy, and a plot was hatched against Demetrius. Assassins were dispatched to deal with him when he had come to the bed of his mother-in-law. Arsinoe [*sic*], however, heard her daughter's voice as the latter stood at the door giving orders for her mother to be spared, and for a little while she protected her lover by shielding him with her body. But killed he was, and Berenice, while satisfying her filial duty, at one stroke punished her mother's scandalous conduct and also complied with her father's judgment in her choice of a husband.

Justin *Epit.* 26.4–8 (trans. Yardly)

Though Justin, our only source on the subject, says that Demetrius was vain on account of his good looks, this is a misunderstanding of the epithet. He was not called Demetrius “the fair,” because he was actually good-looking, but by way of an insult. “The fair” was a standard code word in Greek graffiti for a young male prostitute. Applied to someone like Demetrius, it was an insult, in this case the witticism of a political opponent which was read too literally by an earnest scholar in a later age looking for biographical clues. Though Demetrius’ regime was short and unsuccessful, it was not because of his looks.

Just how short a reign he had in Cyrene is not clear. Justin makes it seem very brief: his attitude towards the people and his behavior with

Apame managed to infuriate the entire population, and he was dispatched by Berenice almost immediately. But an inscription that proclaims him king (IG V, 2 299) suggests otherwise, and there is even a suggestion in Eusebius that he led a campaign to expand the city's territory westward.⁸⁸ Whatever the length of his stay, Demetrius failed to understand that the groups competing for power in Cyrene had no motive for continuing the Magid monarchy and that none would be inclined to assist him. As an outsider, he had no natural allies in the stew of Cyrenean politics, except, perhaps, Apame herself who was not able to save him. She only survived, if she did, by the good graces of her daughter. Though Justin describes how Berenice II shielded her mother with her own body as the soldiers did away with Demetrius, Apame is never heard from again.⁸⁹

When Demetrius' end came, he was ambushed in Apame's bedroom, or so Justin says. The story of their romantic relationship might be true, but it could also have been concocted to improve the daughter's reputation. Efforts to exonerate Berenice, or at least to reinterpret the incident so that her action seemed justified, continued for her whole life. The rumor of Demetrius' liaison with Apame can be read as the first of these defenses. It goes without saying that had Berenice been a man, none of these efforts would have been necessary. But a female assassin, even if she only called in the troops, is another matter altogether, especially if her victim was also her husband.

Whether or not Berenice and Demetrius were ever married cannot be established with certainty because Justin, our only source, is inconsistent on this point. He calls Berenice a virgin, while simultaneously referring to Apame as Demetrius' mother-in-law. If she were old enough to marry when he arrived, that is, at least 14, there would certainly have been a hasty wedding. He needed the marriage to justify his claim to the throne, and since her father was already dead there would have been no one to object and no reason to put it off. The argument that she was still a young girl when the incident took place, and by implication, pure of heart, does not have the ring of unbiased reporting. Demetrius had come to marry her, and undoubtedly he did.

Ptolemy III Euergetes became Pharaoh of Egypt in 246 BCE following the death of his father, so three, or at the most, four years intervened between Demetrius' death and Berenice's transformation into a Ptolemaic queen. It is usually assumed that she married Euergetes in 246, just after his coronation, but there is no evidence of the date, and it

is theoretically possible that they were married a few years earlier.⁹⁰ This seems unlikely, however, because after Demetrius' assassination Cyrene was once again engulfed in civil unrest. Again the Cyreneans appealed for help from the outside, and one of the factions invited the Arcadian reformers Ecdelos and Demophanes to mediate the dispute and reorganize the government. Plutarch places their arrival in Cyrene after the liberation of Sicyon where they assisted in driving out the tyrant Nicocles (Plut. *Phil.* 1.3–4; Polyb. 10.22.2–3). Since this event is securely dated to May 251, they probably came to Cyrene in 249 or 248.⁹¹ Nothing is known about the nature of the government they put in place, or whether Berenice was involved in any way, but it must have been at this time that Magas' coins were over-struck with the word KOINON, which is clearly a repudiation of Ptolemaic claims of sovereignty.⁹² The Koinon was soon displaced by a new Ptolemaic presence that reintroduced coins with images of Ptolemy Soter and a personification of Libya similar to those in use during Magas' reign.⁹³

Euergetes and Berenice Reorganize the Cyrenaica

Sometime early in their reign Euergetes and Berenice took dramatic measures to consolidate their position in the Cyrenaica. It was not about to go quietly into the Ptolemaic fold, though it was, in a sense, her dowry. At least it was the expectation of possessing it that motivated Euergetes to marry her. Based on archaeological evidence the consolidation did not directly involve Cyrene itself, which may have been tranquil following the reforms of Ecdelos and Demophanes, but rather the smaller cities nearby. These had been settled from Cyrene, some as early as the end of the seventh century BCE. The oldest was Barka, which was founded by the brothers of Arcesilas II. Euhesperides, the furthest west, was minting its own coins at the end of the sixth century and Tauchira, between the two, had a good port. In the mid-third century all three received new names. Euhesperides became Berenike, Barka became Ptolemais, and Tauchira, Arsinoe. It is not necessary to look far to see where the names came from and who was responsible for the changes.

The new names were symbolic of much greater, structural alterations. When Barka became Ptolemais it was substantially rebuilt and given a new port that made it more accessible to the sea. The construction was of excellent quality, and the new city's streets were organized on

a grid plan.⁹⁴ The new Arsinoe was given an artificial port, traces of which have been identified in underwater excavations.⁹⁵ The old city of Euhesperides was completely rebuilt and moved 3 km closer to the water on the height of the Pseudopenias, between a salt lagoon and the sea.⁹⁶ Numismatic evidence indicates that the move most likely took place before 246 BCE, but the name-change, which was accompanied by an official re-foundation, is associated with Berenice II: "The Berenice who married the third Ptolemy, gave the city walls and located it in the Grand Syrtis" (Solinus 27.54).⁹⁷ This certainly suggests that she took a personal interest in the project, even if it began sometime earlier.

Though successfully executed, the re-foundations may not have been so easily accomplished. Callimachus wrote an epigram that seems to hint at armed resistance:

Menitas the Lyctian dedicated these weapons, with these words: I give to you, Serapis, my bow and quiver. The arrows the Hesperitae have.

Callim. *Ep.* 17 G.-P. = 5.146 AP

Here a Cretan mercenary dedicates his weapons to the god Serapis as a thank-offering for his success in battle against the people of Euhesperides. It is not known when the conflict took place, but the choice of divine dedicatee suggests a Ptolemaic context. The Ptolemies cultivated the cult of Serapis throughout Egypt, and although it was closely tied to the Egyptian cults of Osiris and Apis, it would not have been widely known among the Greeks before the third century BCE. Since Callimachus himself did not live any later than the mid-230s, it seems reasonable to associate it with Berenike's foundation.⁹⁸ Given Cyrene's history it is not hard to imagine that the Euergetae's plan for the Libyan cities would have been met with armed resistance. The Cyreneans had a long history of struggling against authority of any kind, and this would have seemed like a heavy-handed intervention.

Callimachus' epigram suggests that the rebels were easily put down, leaving Berenice and Euergetes unquestionably in control. There is no evidence of what kind of administration the Euergetae put in place in the Cyrenaica, but it seems likely that a governor was appointed from Alexandria.⁹⁹

Even though there is no evidence that Berenice ever returned to Libya, the city which bore her name would continue to give her publicity there. A citizen's devotion to her is attested by a small faience jug, found

intact at Berenike, with an image of Berenice wearing the dress of Isis.¹⁰⁰ It was probably brought there by someone who had purchased it in Alexandria where other examples of similar, apparently mass-produced items have been found. These are incised with her name so the identification is secure, but other so-called images of her in Cyrene are more problematic. For example, a marble bust of a young woman recovered from a temple of the Egyptian Gods in Cyrene has been identified as Berenice, but it likely dates from the Roman Imperial period. Likewise, a large, ruined statue commemorating a naval victory in the agora at Cyrene once had the shape of a ship's prow with a female figurehead that has been said to resemble Berenice, but this, too, is far from certain.¹⁰¹ Finally, Berenice's features have been discerned in a relief of Aphrodite in the Cyrenean Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore within the walls.¹⁰² In truth, Berenice's image has been seen everywhere and proven to be nowhere. From a distance of more than 2000 years her continued presence in Cyrene has no firm foundation, yet it is hard to believe that her own people would have forgotten her, or that she would not have found ways of reminding them that the Queen of Egypt was also a Queen of Cyrene, who had once lived among them.

At Alexandria Callimachus made great efforts to remind his readers of Berenice's Cyrenean background because he had much to gain personally by making the label stick. It was a mixed blessing for her, however. It fixed her forever in a colonial narrative in which she was simultaneously victor and victim, both the beloved of Apollo who civilized the countryside to make it safe for Greek civilization, and his rape victim. In Apollonius' *Argonautica*, her Libyan origins reach all the way back to the prehistoric age, where she is associated with black magic, venomous snakes, and primordial forces that have to be forcibly controlled. These connections make her a continually interesting character, whose murder of Demetrius appeared to be only the first act in an unfolding drama that could turn tragic at any moment. Ultimately, her potential for violence frightened her son, the successor Ptolemy IV, into repeating her crime.

CHAPTER TWO

Arrival in Alexandria

AFTER THE MURDER OF Demetrius the Fair, Berenice came to Alexandria and married Ptolemy III Euergetes. How much time passed between these events is not known, though it was probably not much, since Magas died c. 250 BCE, and they were already married when Euergetes went to Syria in 246. Nor is there any description of the ceremony itself, which, given the circumstances, must have taken place in Egypt. She probably brought some personal retainers along with her from Cyrene, but otherwise she arrived alone. Her father was dead, her mother, disgraced, and she had no siblings. Though Berenice and Euergetes were cousins, and Cyrene and Alexandria were not far apart, it is unlikely that they had met before her arrival. There is no record of either Euergetes or his father Philadelphus ever going to Cyrene, nor of Berenice traveling to Alexandria.

Other relatives of her father were in Alexandria when she arrived. His sister Theoxena had married Agathocles, the king of Sicily, around 300 BCE, and after his death in 289 she returned to Egypt with her children, Archagathas and another Theoxena (Justin *Epit.* 23.2.6).¹ Archagathas is called *Epistates* of Libya in an inscription marking the donation of a shrine to Serapis and Isis which was found near Alexandria and dated early in the reign of Ptolemy II (SEG XVIII 636).²

Epistates is a minor administrative post that must have been given to him by his uncle Magas. If it also means that he spent some time in Libya, Berenice would have known him there when she was a child. Magas' niece, Theoxena, was banished by Ptolemy II for making false accusations against some unknown party (POxy 37.2821).³ She had a son named

Agathocles, who would have been present in the court of Euergetes and known to Berenice there. He is the likely father of the Agathocles who later exploited, then ruined Berenice's son, Ptolemy IV Philopator.⁴

Berenice's Alexandria

Alexander the Great arrived in Egypt in 332 BCE fresh from his hard-won success besieging Tyre. Egypt was controlled at the time by the Persians, who made no effort to resist since their forces on hand were not adequate to put up a fight (Arr. *Anab.* 3.1.2). He did not stay for long, but it was long enough to establish a firm basis for Greek rule. This he did by positioning himself as a new Pharaoh.

The Pharaohs were both kings and priests, whose special relationship to the gods was believed to safeguard the land and its people. Alexander stepped easily into the dual role, which proved to be a template for his Ptolemaic successors.⁵ In Heliopolis he exercised a special prerogative of the Pharaohs by making sacrifices to Apis whose manifestation on earth was a living bull, then marched his troops through the Western Desert to the Siwa oasis, where he consulted the resident priests at the oracle of Ammon. It was on his way to Siwa, while he was still near the coast, that he met the party from Cyrene which had come to offer him their city (Diod. Sic. 17.49.2–3; Quintus Curtius 4.7.9).

Ammon was also worshipped in Cyrene, where he had a temple larger than the Parthenon and was called Zeus Ammon. At Siwa Alexander hoped to confirm his divine parentage, and the oracle was willing to oblige, but there was likely another motive for the trip as well.⁶ Alexander was about to found a city, and no Greek would undertake such a responsibility without first consulting an oracle.⁷ Like Battus, Alexander acted the role of *oikistes*, “city founder,” whose tomb would later be venerated because it was thought to possess unique power that valorized the new foundation and guaranteed prosperity to its future inhabitants.⁸

Alexander died far from Alexandria, however, and a competition for his body ensued among some of his successors. After his death in Babylon in 323 BCE, Perdiccas, who was acting as regent, had an elaborate gold hearse made for it that was intended to take it to Macedonia for internment with the other Argead kings.⁹ It never made the journey north because another member of Alexander's inner circle, Ptolemy the son of Lagus, who later became Ptolemy I Soter, diverted it

from the funeral cortege in Syria. He brought it to Egypt instead, first to the old capital in Memphis (Paus. 1.6.3), and later he or his son took it to Alexandria (Paus. 1.7.1; QC 10.10.20), where the body was placed in a golden casket that was displayed conspicuously in the center of the city. Later, Berenice's son Ptolemy IV moved it again, this time to a burial ground where he interred his own ancestors, including his mother, with Alexander to give the impression of a family relationship.

Alexander himself had selected the site for his new city (Arr. *Anab.* 3.1.5), which seemed through Greek eyes to be ideal. The Egyptians built their cities along the Nile, but Alexander chose a location on the Mediterranean shore where it would be accessible to his fleet and to commercial shipping along the Mediterranean seaboard. Offshore to the west the Island of Pharos protected its harbors from the silt brought down-river, and canals, built later, connected the city to the Nile via Lake Mareotis, which bordered the city on its south side. In this way goods could move from the interior of Egypt to the Greek world and beyond.¹⁰

With so many natural advantages Alexandria prospered and it was already a bustling metropolis when Berenice arrived about 246. Herodas, an older contemporary of Callimachus, captures the spirit of the place in his first *Mimiambus*:¹¹

For everything, whatever is and comes forth anywhere, is in Egypt: wealth, wrestling schools, power, prosperity, reputation, sights, philosophers, gold, young men, the temple of the Sibling Gods, the great King, the Museum, wine, all the good things that a man could want, women, as many, by Persephone, as there are stars in heaven, and in appearance like the goddesses, who were once judged by Paris for their beauty.

Herodas 1.26–35

The reference to the shrine of the Sibling Gods, the Philadelphi, indicates that the poem was written after their deification in 272/1. This is an indication, then, of how Alexandria seemed about 25 years before Berenice's arrival.¹² In the intervening years the place would have grown even larger and more sophisticated.

Herodas puts his description in the mouth of a fictional match-maker Gyllis, who is trying to persuade a young woman that her love interest, Mandris, has gone off to Egypt, that is, Alexandria, and will not return to her. The list of what is on offer to him there is meant to include aspects of life that would especially appeal to a young man who is

seeking wealth, fame, diversion, intellectual stimulation, and sex. In short, the city was a magnet for the young and ambitious, who gave back to it their own energy and talents.

Though Herodas' Alexandria was not Berenice's, and she would never have had the freedom of movement and association that was available to a man, Alexandria's wealth, its learning and its religious life would be hers to enjoy privately. She would never be alone in public, but she could be present at public events with a suitable escort. Athenaeus (7.276 B–C), quoting from Eratosthenes' remembrance of Berenice's daughter, Arsinoe III, reports a conversation in which she asked a man on the street what festival he was celebrating, and when she was told it was the Lagnophoria, and that each participant had to provide his own food and drink, she addressed some critical remarks about the poverty of these arrangements to Eratosthenes who was looking on. He was a distinguished scholar and head of the Library who had been her husband's tutor and possibly her own as well. He was close to the royal family and apparently among the company of trusted men who might accompany royal women outside their residences. Berenice would have had the same opportunities as her daughter to go about the city, not with complete freedom, but in approved male company.

The City

Modern Alexandria is not a city that reveals its ancient dimensions, organization, or structures easily. Several factors make archaeology there challenging when it is not impossible. The first is that much of the city that bordered on the ancient harbors has sunk below sea level and is now completely submerged. Systematic underwater excavations have been in progress since 1994, and promising results have begun to emerge, but they raise as many questions as they answer and the rewards of these efforts are still in the future.¹³ Construction of the modern shoreline has destroyed the ancient one or made it inaccessible. Also, Roman ruins obscure the earlier Greek structures and much of the original building material has been removed from its original site to be reused elsewhere.

Fortunately there is a detailed description of the city by Strabo, who was resident there at the very end of the Ptolemaic period (24–20 BCE), in the seventeenth book of his *Geographia*.¹⁴ It is missing some vital

information, such as the location of the city walls and its gates, but it does convey a sense of how the city and its principal monuments appeared.

The Lighthouse

The first impression of a visitor to Alexandria arriving by sea would be the Lighthouse, an imposing structure of white marble or limestone that rose above the harbor at the eastern end of the Island of Pharos. It was one of the Seven Wonders of the World and stood until it was toppled by a series of earthquakes in the 14th century CE. Its image appears regularly on Roman coins of Alexandria, which show that it was a polygonal structure in three tiers that grew successively narrower.¹⁵ A large fire, magnified by a mirror, or system of mirrors, projected its light toward the sea, and on top was a statue of Zeus Soter, “the savior.”¹⁶

Though the Ptolemies themselves were prodigious builders, some of the most famous monuments in the city were gifts from their wealthiest courtiers, and the lighthouse was dedicated by Sostratus, an envoy of Philadelphus’ to Delos.¹⁷ The evidence for the date of construction or dedication is inconsistent, but it was likely sometime between 280–270 BCE. It is the earliest known building in Alexandria and certainly its most famous.

In antiquity Pharos was connected to the mainland by a causeway, the Heptastadion, which separated the Great (western) Harbor from the eastern harbor called Eunostos, “Good Return.” It contained a passage through which boats could pass from one harbor to the other (the *diolkos*), and an aqueduct that provided water to the island’s residents. No trace of it remains today.

Temples

The city was filled with shrines and temples dedicated to both Egyptian and Greek deities, as well as the Ptolemies themselves who shared sacred space with them. Among the most celebrated was the temple of Arsinoe-Aphrodite Zephyritis, built on a promontory looking out to sea just to the east of the city (Posid. 39, 116, 119 AB; Callim. *Ep.* 14 G.-P.; Hedylus 4 G.-P.). It was dedicated to Arsinoe II, the sister/wife of Philadelphus and Berenice’s immediate predecessor as queen. Her many cults are documented in inscriptions from all over Ptolemaic Egypt. Here, in Posidippus’ dedicatory

epigram, she is associated with Aphrodite in her capacity as protector of sailors:

On land and sea propitiate Aphrodite-Arsinoe Philadelphus in this temple; she whom Callicrates the admiral first honored, ruling on the heights of Zephyritis. She will vouchsafe a fair voyage even in mid-storm, and make slick the broad sea for those who ask.

Posid. 119 AB

Like Sostratus' lighthouse, the shrine was a gift to Ptolemy from a wealthy and powerful member of his court. This was Callicrates of Samos who commanded Philadelphus' navy and was an important figure among the king's "friends."¹⁸ Callimachus and Hedylus both wrote epigrams to accompany dedications in the temple (Callim. *Ep.* 14 G.-P. and Hedylus *Ep.* 4 G.-P.).

The Zephyreum is significant for Berenice as the temple where she dedicates her famous lock after the safe return of her husband from the Syrian War, and the place from which it is swept away by the North Wind on its way to the heavens and its transformation into a constellation.¹⁹ There is no evidence to confirm that Berenice was worshipped here along with Aphrodite-Arsinoe, but her son, Ptolemy IV built her a shrine where she was worshipped as "Berenice the savior," which indicates that she, too, was given a cult for sailors.²⁰

There was also a mortuary temple for Arsinoe in Alexandria with a magnetic roof constructed by its architect Timocrates so that an iron statue of her appeared to be suspended in mid-air (Pliny *HN* 34.148). Philadelphus intended it to honor his wife, but the project was interrupted by his death, and it is unclear whether it was ever completed.

Another important temple was the Serapeum, a large temple of Serapis at Rhakotis. It was built by Berenice's husband, and is discussed below.

The Palaces

Strabo (17.18) says that the area along the harbor, which took up a quarter or even a third of the whole city, was called the Palaces and that within it was a smaller area, known as the Inner Palaces. These were the royal residences set among gardens, statues, and shrines, and other

landmarks including Alexander's tomb, the zoo of Ptolemy Philadelphus, the Museum and the Library. This was the cultural heart of the city where the Ptolemies gave physical expression to their intellectual, artistic, and religious aspirations.

Some sense of the Palaces, including the kinds of events that took place there and the way they contrasted with the city around them can be found in Theocritus' 15th *Idyll*.²¹ This is a mime featuring two middle-class Greek housewives, Gorgo and Proxinoa, who go on an outing to the Palaces to see a festival for Adonis that Arsinoe II has arranged to honor the deification of her mother, Berenice I.²² The mime is an informal, comic genre featuring vignettes of the lives of unglamorous people, and this one, at the high end of the genre, takes the form of a conversation between the women as they prepare for the outing, and then make their way through the crowded streets of Alexandria to the festival site in the Palaces.

Gorgo arrives at Proxinoa's house in the suburbs exclaiming that she was barely safe on the street what with the huge crowds, the chariots, the hobnailed boots, and men with cloaks—clearly soldiers (*Id.* 15.4–6).

GOR: Let's go to see the Adonis in our rich King Ptolemy's palace. I hear that the queen has organized something beautiful.

PR: Among the rich, everything is rich.

GOR: What you've seen you can talk about to someone who hasn't. It's time to go.

PR: It's always a holiday for those who don't have to work.

Theoc. *Id.* 15.22–26

Though Proxinoa does not share Gorgo's enthusiasm for the queen's wealth and ostentatious lifestyle, she allows herself to be taken along, and after arrangements are made for child and pet care they manage to get out the door. Here in the streets they battle the crowds again, but they say a brief prayer to Philadelphus for reducing street crime, "now that his father is among the immortals" (*Id.* 15.47). Though they are almost run down by the king's war horses that are being led through the streets on their way to the hippodrome, they finally find themselves in front of the palace gates, which they have to push through to get inside (*Id.* 15.51–59).

Here they see exquisite tapestries of Adonis reclining on a silver chair (*Id.* 15.80–86). It is not clear exactly where they are at this point,

perhaps in a tent, a pavilion of some kind, or as Gow thinks, a garden where the tapestries are hung under a canopy.²³ A singer, whom Gorgo recognizes as a former prize-winner, is there to provide entertainment and may be a participant in a musical contest that is part of the festival. She addresses Aphrodite, not only because of her connection with Adonis, but because the occasion of the festival is the deification of Berenice I:

Cyprian, daughter of Dione, you made Berenice immortal,
who was once mortal, as men say, when you dripped ambrosia
on her womanly breast. Pleasing you, who have many names
and many temples, Berenice's daughter, Arsinoe, like Helen,
tends Adonis with many lovely things.

Theoc. *Id.* 15.106–11

These verses introduce a description of a tableau of Adonis and Aphrodite lying together on a couch that is also on display at the festival site. Before it lies a bounty of fruits in silver baskets, Syrian perfume in golden flasks, trays of cakes, meat, and fish. Above them are green canopies or perhaps bowers plaited with dill and hung with tiny cupids. The couch is decorated with gold, ebony, and renderings in ivory of an eagle carrying Ganymede, Zeus' cupbearer. It is topped with a crimson cover "softer than sleep" (*Id.* 15.112–27). The singer concludes by describing the next day's event when they will take the statue of Adonis to the sea and sing a dirge for him (*Id.* 15.132–44). The mime concludes with Gorgo's appreciation of the singer's skill followed by a quick return to the everyday reality of worrying about getting dinner on the table on time to please an irascible husband (*Id.* 15.145–49).

This, then, is a poem of contrasts between the queen with her extravagant wealth on display in a beautifully designed setting and the everyday realities of urban life in an overcrowded city with a large, diverse population. There is some interaction between the two in a carefully stage-managed environment, but for the women, at least, this visit to the Palaces is a special occasion. The gates are open for this event, and there do not appear to be any controls in place to manage the assortment of guests who turn up to gawk, but the sense is that they are generally kept closed. It was in the gated community of the Palaces that Berenice would have spent her time overseeing her large family and entertaining invited guests.

One of the most important features of the Palaces was the Museum and Library.²⁴ There are no physical remains of the building or buildings, but Strabo says that the Museum had a cloister (*peripatos*), a hall with seats (*exedra*), and a large house in which the scholars dined together.²⁵ Whether they actually lived in the building or taught there is not recorded. Even less is known about the Library. There is no evidence of what the Library looked like or how it was organized, and there are widely conflicting estimates of the number of books it contained.²⁶

Strabo notes that the Museum had its own endowment and that there was a priest in charge who was appointed by the king (Strabo 17.18). The priest presided over a shrine of the Muses, and from this it was called the Museum. This likely indicates the influence of Aristotle whose school at Athens, the Lyceum, also had a shrine of the Muses, as well a cloister or *peripatos*, which gave its name to his followers: the Peripatetics. He also had a large, private library, and although the ancient evidence is confused and contradictory, it is generally agreed that both the Alexandrian Museum and its Library, were inspired by Peripatetic example, and that this reflects the interests of Ptolemy I.²⁷ It was he who invited Theophrastus, Aristotle's successor, to Alexandria (Diog. Laert. 5.37), and when Theophrastus would not come, hired his associate, the physicist Strato of Lampsacus, to be the future Philadelphus' tutor.²⁸ Soter also gave refuge to Demetrius of Phaleron, a former student of both Aristotle and Theophrastus, who had been run out of Athens in 307 BCE after ruling it for 10 years on behalf of Cassander.²⁹

Demetrius' role in establishing the Library seems to be confirmed in a 12th-century preface to a commentary on Aristophanes (*Proleg. de com. Aristophanes* 2). Here John Tzetzes says that "Ptolemy" collected books "through" Demetrius.³⁰ This Ptolemy could only be Ptolemy I because Demetrius did not survive long after Philadelphus became king.³¹ The value of this evidence is unclear, however, because Tzetzes also says that books were acquired for the library by Alexander the Aetolian, Lycophron of Chalcis, and Zenodotus of Ephesus in service to Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Zenodotus' name, in fact, is first on a list of chief librarians found on a papyrus of the second century CE (POxy 1241), and his scholarly editions of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are often cited in the Homeric scholia. Zenodotus produced these new editions by comparing earlier versions of the text, indicating which verses seemed

spurious, and proposing emendations in others to correct errors that had been introduced through centuries of copying the texts by hand. His contemporaries, Alexander the Aetolian and Lycophron of Chalcis, are said to have done the same for tragedy and comedy. Zenodotus also made lists of rare words in Homer, and edited texts of Hesiod, Anacreon, and Pindar.³² His scholarly work created a model for the sort of activities that went on in the Library in the early Ptolemaic period. Even if it is correct to say that the Library was founded by Ptolemy I, its mission was refined, developed, and supported during the reign of Ptolemy II, and this work was continued zealously by Berenice's husband. He is the Ptolemy who is credited with "borrowing" the official copies of the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides so they could be copied for the Library, then failing to return them.³³ It was also Euergetes who demanded that passengers of ships arriving at Alexandria loan him their books so copies could be made for the Library (Galen, *Comm. II in Hipp. Librum VII Epidemiarium* 239).³⁴ When Berenice and her husband constructed a "daughter" library as an annex in a new temple of Serapis, they may have been adding space to accommodate the rapid growth of the collection under their regime.

Callimachus

If Berenice was interested in the Library, it was probably the doing of Callimachus of Cyrene. The ancient sources offer two accounts of his early life. In one, the 10th century *Suda*, he was a schoolteacher at Eleusis, a village outside of Alexandria, but this is not likely to be true. Being called a schoolteacher is a common insult attested in both comedy and the poetry of abuse like Timon's *Silloi*.³⁵ Callimachus himself uses it in his fifth *Iamb*, written against a lascivious "schoolteacher" named Apollonius (fr. 195 Pf.). As in the case of Demetrius "the fair," Callimachus' biographer has read an old witticism too literally.³⁶

More likely to be true is Tzetzes' description of Callimachus as "a young man of the court." These were royal pages who were part of the entourage of kings and princes in the Macedonian tradition. In adulthood they became the king's *philoi* or "friends," who held senior advisory and administrative positions at court. The Stele of the Founders at Cyrene includes the name of a certain Androcles, son of a Callimachus who holds a high office there (SEG IX 1. 84, 87), and this Callimachus has been identified as the grandfather whom the poet describes as a

general, “who led the armies of his fatherland,” in an epigram (29 G.-P. = 7.525 AP) that pretends to be the epitaph of his father. If this is correct, the poet himself belonged to the class from which the “young men of the court” and king’s “friends” were drawn.³⁷

If Callimachus was at court in this capacity as a young man, he would have had no difficulties years later in approaching and addressing Berenice. He certainly wasted no time in beginning to write for her. The “Lock,” which celebrates her marriage, was composed soon after that event when her husband returned from the Third Syrian War in 245. Here he seems clearly to be positioning himself as an old family connection with a license to indulge her vanity and celebrate her charm. That the strategy worked seems clear from the fact that he continued to pursue it right up to the end of his long creative life. It also may have helped engage her support for the major expansion of the Library and its collection that took place during her reign.

Callimachus was a poet of great charm and erudition whose works were admired by the innovative Roman poets of the first century BCE, who embraced his graceful style in their own poetry.³⁸ To say that he was a prolific author, understates his achievement. There are six *Hymns* and 63 *Epigrams* that have come down complete through the medieval manuscript tradition, and hundreds of fragments of other work, some substantial, have been identified on papyri.³⁹ These include parts of the *Aetia*, a catalogue elegy in four books, 13 *Iambi*, the epic *Hecale*, and a variety of lyric poems. A number of these were explicitly written for the court during the reigns of Ptolemy II and III. Poems for and about Berenice are among the most important and these are discussed throughout this book where they are most relevant. In addition to his works from which fragments have survived, the *Suda* lists a number of titles, mostly prose, that have been entirely lost and claims that he was the author of 800 books in all.⁴⁰ The number seems fantastic, even considering the modest size of an ancient book scroll, but the extant fragments indicate that his oeuvre was impressively large.

In addition to his work as a creative poet, Callimachus was an important scholar. Though he was never appointed head librarian, he cataloged the Library’s collection in a compendium called the *Pinakes*, “Tables of all those who were eminent in any kind of literature and of their writings in 120 books.”⁴¹ These are all now lost, but references and reflections of them in later literature give a sense of how he approached the task. The *Pinakes* were organized by author within each genre (rhetoricians, epic,

lyric, tragic, and comic poets, philosophers, historians, medical writers, etc.). The authors themselves were ordered alphabetically, and their work sometimes organized into subcategories. The victory odes of Simonides, for example, were arranged by type of contest (footrace, etc.) and the odes of Pindar by location of the contest (Olympia, Nemea, etc.). Callimachus also added some biographical details for each author, and citations of opening verses to disambiguate similar titles or substitute for nonexistent ones. The breadth of knowledge required to compile a general finding-tool like this is impressive, and its contribution to the work of succeeding scholars, beyond measure. Callimachus may never have held the post of Library head, but he contributed more than anyone to making the Library usable.

Besides the *Pinakes*, Callimachus produced compilations of information such as *Foreign Customs*, *About Games*, *A Collection of Marvels in all the Earth according to Locality*, *Local Nomenclature*, and books on fishes, birds, winds, local month-names, rivers of the world, the foundations of cities, and many others.⁴² The habit of collecting facts of this sort was already a preoccupation of the Peripatetics and it was given impetus during the expedition of Alexander the Great, who traveled through the east with scientists, historians, and philosophers in his train. In Alexandria it blossomed in the Library where works of every type were read, compared, and mined for information. Callimachus was foremost in this effort to discover new knowledge and organize it in a comprehensive way. His pleasure in the task can be seen by the way unusual customs, rare words, and *recherché* cult observances find their way into his own poetry, where together with literary references, direct and oblique, they form the building blocks of a new literary style that became characteristic of the age.

It is not possible to establish precise dates for Callimachus' life in Alexandria or for each of his most important poems. While it is agreed that he was born in the waning years of the fourth century BCE and died sometime in the middle of the third, estimates of his birth date go from about 315 to 300, and scholars put his death as early as 245 or as late as the mid-230s.⁴³ Dating his poems is even more difficult, when it is not completely impossible. A few refer to historical events which can serve to set broad limits. The earliest is his *Hymn to Delos*, which includes a reference to the defeat of Gaulish mercenaries in 275 BCE.⁴⁴ Fr. 392 Pf. was written for the marriage of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II c. 276,⁴⁵ and the "Deification of Arsinoe" (fr. 228 Pf.) must have followed the queen's

death around 270.⁴⁶ A quarter century later Callimachus composed the “Lock of Berenice” (fr. 110 Pf.), which presupposes the safe return of Ptolemy III from the Third Syrian War in 245,⁴⁷ and the “Victoria Berenice,” on the queen’s victory in the four-horse chariot race at Nemea, must also postdate her marriage. Since the “Victoria” introduces book 3 of the *Aetia*, and the “Lock” concludes *Aetia* 4, it seems reasonable to assume that all the poems in *Aetia* 3 and 4 were written or at least revised after 245. Callimachus continued to be active in the early 240s since he notes in his *Pinakes* that an unknown Lysimachus wrote something about the education of Attalus (Athen. 6.252C). This is presumably Attalus I of Pergamum, whose reign began in 241 BCE. Finally, the Sosibius honored in frs. 384 and 384a Pf. was probably the minister of Ptolemy IV, who was already active during the reign of Ptolemy III, but not before the 230s.⁴⁸ In sum, Callimachus was already established as an important court poet when Berenice II arrived c. 246 BCE, was active for another decade or so, but predeceased her by at least 10 years and possibly more.

Apollonius of Rhodes

Another key personality at the Library when Berenice arrived in the city was Apollonius of Rhodes, who was at that time the head librarian and her new husband’s former tutor. Though the king was no longer a child, Apollonius would still have had lines of communication to his inner circle, and he must have been well informed about his employer’s new bride even before she stepped off the ship. How he felt about her is not revealed in any direct evidence, but something about it can be teased from his major work, the *Argonautica*. This is an epic account in four books of another marriage preceded by a murder, which is followed by a long stop in prehistoric Libya at the future site of Cyrene.

It features a problematic portrait of another bride who might sometimes remind the new queen of herself, and it may be linked to the story in the ancient *Lives* of Apollonius that he fled Alexandria for Rhodes after an unsuccessful reading of the poem.⁴⁹

This is not a common interpretation of this bit of his biography. More often it is said that Apollonius was driven from Alexandria because the style of his poetry was old-fashioned. *Life A*, for example, says that other poets abused him, and this has been understood by both ancient and modern readers to point at Callimachus who has a habit in his own poetry of defending his literary values by pretending that they are under

attack by carping critics whom he then answers in the same aggressive manner.⁵⁰

Against this reading is a long list of the many ways in which Apollonius' poetry is stylistically of one piece with that of Callimachus. Though Apollonius' most important work is a lengthy epic on a heroic subject—Jason's pursuit of the Golden Fleece—and Callimachus claims that he has been criticized for refusing to write "a continuous poem with many thousands of lines on kings and heroes" (fr. 1.1–5 Pf.), their poetry is more alike than different.⁵¹ Both prefer an episodic narrative style, both have a penchant for *aitia*, that is, explanations of origins, often the origins of unusual cults, and both rely on references to and quotations from earlier literature as a means of locating their own work in literary history and generating meaning by manipulating traditional language. Both make use of the new editions of Homer produced by Zenodotus, and both critique his preferred readings by their own choice of Homeric diction.⁵² Both are interested in geography, ethnography, and medicine. Both wrote epigrams and choliambi, though none of Apollonius' survive. And both wrote on the foundations of cities, though Callimachus' was a prose work and Apollonius' a series of poems on the foundations of Alexandria, Caunus, Naucratis, Rhodes, and Cnidus, all lost except for a few small fragments.⁵³ If there had been tension between the two of them, it is unlikely that literary issues were at the heart of it.

All four of the *Lives* say that Callimachus was Apollonius' teacher. Ancient biographers typically express chronologies as pupil/teacher relationships, so this can mean simply that Callimachus was older. An older Callimachus probably supported Apollonius' appointment as librarian, but it does not mean that they were always on good terms afterwards. Courtiers by definition constantly jockey with each other for position and power, and Apollonius' exit from his prestigious positions as librarian and tutor in favor of Eratosthenes, another man from Cyrene, suggests that Callimachus may have had a role in the process, or at least staked out a position for himself that he hoped would be congenial to a new monarch who was also from Cyrene.

The range of dates for the composition of the *Argonautica* is difficult to determine from the literary evidence alone. There are many parallels, linguistic and otherwise, between the works of the two poets. Where they both treat identical subject matter Apollonius is in every case the borrower.⁵⁴ Parallels with *Aetia* 4 and with Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*, both dated after Berenice's arrival, suggest that the *Argonautica* was not

complete before that time.⁵⁵ This conjecture has been confirmed by a new, less subjective approach to dating the poem recently introduced by Jackie Murray, who uses astronomical references to the heliacal rising of Arcturus in *Argonautica* 2.1097–99, mapped to the real sky of the third century BCE, to prove that the events in books 1 and 2 must be dated in 238 BCE, the jubilee year of Ptolemy III.⁵⁶ This places the poem unequivocally in the time of Berenice II.

Eratosthenes

Apollonius was replaced by Eratosthenes, who was born in Cyrene in the mid-280s.⁵⁷ His short biography in the *Suda* (ε 2898 Adler) lists Callimachus as one of his teachers, and again, it is unlikely that this was literally true. Eratosthenes left Cyrene for an extended stay at Athens beginning in the late 260s. Though Callimachus may have met him there in 247, it is unlikely that they spent much time together until Eratosthenes came to Alexandria as a fully accomplished professional.⁵⁸ Their association in the *Suda*'s life indicates their relative ages, their common birthplace, and their later activity in the Library. Ancient biographers searching for clues in Eratosthenes' writing may also have noticed that he criticized Callimachus' knowledge of geography in his own book on that subject.⁵⁹ This too suggests their relative chronology and the possibility of a formal relationship.

During his stay in Athens, Eratosthenes had the opportunity to study with a variety of philosophers and apparently gained his knowledge of mathematics there as well. There is no evidence that he came to Alexandria before 246 when Berenice and Euergetes were married, and he may have arrived a few years afterwards. At some time after that he was appointed to succeed Apollonius of Rhodes as head of the Library (POxy. 1241), and he also became tutor to the couple's children. Since her first child was not born before 245, and would not have needed a tutor of the stature of Apollonius or Eratosthenes before adolescence, some years may have passed before Eratosthenes' appointment. It is hard to believe that his Cyrenean connections were not a key factor in his selection, or that Berenice herself was not consulted. He was in his forties during this period, and even though he had spent about 20 years in Athens before taking up his new post, he probably retained some connections in Cyrene that proved useful in the circumstances.

Eratosthenes had a wide range of intellectual interests including philosophy, mathematics, and philology. He was on friendly terms with

the great mathematician Archimedes,⁶⁰ who praised him in the preface of his *On the Method of Mechanical Theorems*, and he invented the scientific study of geography, which he set out in three books in his monumental *Geographica*.⁶¹ His most stunning achievement was measuring the circumference of the earth using Euclidean geometry that he described in *On the Measurement of the Earth*.

Eratosthenes was also a poet whose works included an elegiac *Erigone*, a didactic *Hermes*, poetic versions of parts of his *Geographica*, and a versified proof of how to double the cube, which he dedicated to his pupil, the future Ptolemy IV Philopator and had inscribed on a votive column in the city.⁶² Although only a few, small fragments remain, it is clear that his poetic style was a close fit with Callimachus', and Longinus (33.5) calls it "faultless."⁶³ He was also a grammarian and the first to call himself *philologus* in reference to his study of texts in the Library (Suet. *Gramm.* 10). The range of Eratosthenes' work is extraordinary, but his nickname, "Beta" (*Suda* s.v. Eratosthenes = ε 2898 Adler), captures a perception that he never achieved top place in the many fields in which he worked.⁶⁴ He lived on after Berenice's death, and his final work was a eulogy of her daughter, Arsinoe III (Athen. 7.276A–C), who was murdered in a palace intrigue in 204 BCE. He died shortly afterward.

Other poets and scholars

Which other poets and scholars active in Alexandria were known to Berenice personally is impossible to say, but she probably made the acquaintance of other fellow Cyreneans, especially the students of Callimachus and Eratosthenes.⁶⁵ Among these were Callimachus' nephew, Callimachus the younger, his sister Megasthenes' son, who wrote an epic poem *On Islands*, Istrus "the Callimachean" who collected stories of Attica, and Philostephanos of Cyrene, a geographer and poet. Four verses remain of his poem on paradoxes relating to swamps (691 SH).⁶⁶

Royal Patronage

Without the support of the monarchs the scholarly mission and continued expansion of the Museum and Library would be at risk; these institutions would always have to compete with other demands on the Ptolemies' financial resources. There was no guarantee that Soter's successors would

share his scholarly and artistic enthusiasms, and in the face of this uncertainty Callimachus' poetry for Berenice was intended to do more than justify his own meal ticket. It was also an effort to cultivate her as a patron of the arts. His intention is clear from this epigram:

Four are the Graces. For in addition to those three, one has
just now been modeled and is still damp with perfumes.
Fortunate Berenice! And envied among all! Apart from whom,
not even the Graces themselves are Graces.

Callim. Ep. 15 G.-P. = AP 5.146

In theory this epigram could be a compliment to Berenice I, the wife of Ptolemy I, or Berenice Syra, the sister of Ptolemy II, but since it is written in Doric Greek, the dialect of Cyrene, it is more likely intended for Berenice II. It is one among only five of Callimachus' 70 epigrams that use Doric forms,⁶⁷ and here the Cyrenean poet speaks directly to his Cyrenean queen in their local dialect. This creates the illusion of intimacy that is so central to Callimachus' strategy in his approach to Berenice.

Hesiod says that the Graces (Charites) are the daughters of Zeus and the nymph Eurynome (*Theog.* 907–09).⁶⁸ In his *Hymn to Zeus*, Callimachus equates Ptolemy II Philadelphus with the king of the gods,⁶⁹ and since Philadelphus was Berenice's honorary father, in the Ptolemies' revised family tree she is also a daughter of Zeus, at least in Callimachus' personal mythology.

As daughters of Zeus, the Charites occupy a liminal space between Olympic deities and ordinary humans. Like nymphs, they have human form, cult, and festivals held in their honor, but they were not quite immortal Olympians. In the epigram, Callimachus claims this middling space for his Berenice. She is godlike in many ways, and treated accordingly, but not yet a veritable goddess.

Like Berenice, the Charites were associated with the gods, particularly with Aphrodite, whose birth they attended (Paus. 6.24.7). Berenice II is also associated with Aphrodite through the dedication of her "Lock" at the temple of Aphrodite-Zephyritis. Callimachus' poetic celebration of this event focuses single-mindedly on love authorized by marriage, and it is surely relevant that unlike other nymphs, none of the Charites ever had a sexual liaison with a mortal or immortal.⁷⁰ Though they embody the charms of sexual attraction, they do not ever follow these impulses to their typical conclusion. Their attractiveness is forever preserved in the full glory of its potentiality. In this they are the perfect

mirrors of Callimachus' Berenice, whose purity, in poetry, must be beyond reproach.

In his Epilogue to *Aetia* 4 (fr. 112 Pf.), which follows the "Lock" and takes the form of a hymnic farewell addressed to Berenice and her husband, the Charites are also associated with the Muses.⁷¹ The Alexandrian Museum was organized around a cult of the Muses, who personify various artistic and intellectual endeavors. The Charites, who represent music, dance, and more general notions of "loveliness" and "charm," have a narrower, but overlapping range. Specifically they assist poets (Pind. *Pyth.* 9.1–4). Pindar, in his 14th *Olympian* written for Asopichus of Orchomenus, which was home to the oldest shrine and festival of the Charites (Paus. 9.35.3), addresses them individually: Aglaia is a queen, while Euphrosyne and Thalia are lovers of song (Pind. *Ol.* 14.13–17). "Oh Graces, Queens, sung about in shining Orchomenus, lookouts of the ancient Minyans, listen when I pray. With you, all pleasant and sweet things come to men" (Pind. *Ol.* 14.3–6). The Charites' association with song, and with Pindar, a poet well-known to Callimachus and often imitated by him, makes them the perfect supporters of his poetry, while their association with the Muses locates the poet in the Museum.

The Charites recall Theocritus' *Charites* also known as *Idyll* 16, where the poet makes a request for patronage to Hieron II of Syracuse. Although the date is not certain, Gow argues that it belongs to the period immediately following Hieron's succession to power in 275/4, so it would precede Callimachus' epigram by several decades.⁷²

After a brief opening addressed to the Muses, the poet asks "Who of those who live in the bright light of day will open their house gladly to our Charites, and will not send them away without gifts? (*Id.* 16.5–7). Here the Charites are Theocritus' poems seeking a patron who will support them, and the poet seems unsure of their success. He complains that there is no one nowadays who is willing to pay for praise (*Id.* 16.16–21), and explains to his would-be patron how poetry confers immortality: "Who would ever know the heroes of the Lycians, or Priam's long-haired sons, or Cynus with skin like a woman's, if poets had never sung the battle-cries of those who came before us?" (*Id.* 16.48–50). Theocritus is available at a price to do the job: "I seek some mortal who would welcome me with my Muses" (*Id.* 16.68–69), but only someone worthy of his song. This idea then prompts him to imagine that Hieron might become an epic hero and he prays for the peace and prosperity that would follow his victory (*Id.* 6.73–100). This is a kind of advertisement of Theocritus'

potential as a praise poet and it is full of references to Pindar, Simonides, and Homer which become a subtle history of the literature of praise.⁷³ At the end, Theocritus regains his dignity; he will not go where he has not been invited:

Oh Graces, goddesses of Eteocles, who love Minyan
Orchomenus which was once hated by Thebes, without an
invitation, I would remain at home, but I would take heart and
go with our Muses into the house of those who invite me, and
I will not leave you. For apart from the Graces what is loveable
for men? May I always be with them.

Theoc. *Id.* 16.104–09

As the poem concludes the Graces are goddesses again and the poet is their devotee. Theocritus, then, ends up where Callimachus begins, and by conjuring up the 16th *Idyll*, which is also in literary Doric to suit its Syracusan poet and addressee, Callimachus brings the complexity of Theocritus' vexed relationship with his patron and the dual role of his Graces, to his own more graceful and deceptively simple epigram. By channeling Theocritus, Callimachus is asking for Berenice's support without appearing to ask at all, and acknowledging the awkwardness of the relationship even while he embraces it. Like Theocritus he hates to ask, but he will perform enthusiastically for a worthy patron. Since Berenice has been gifted with the epigram, she is, *ipso facto*, worthy of song. In this Callimachus is more fortunate than Theocritus, who may never have been invited inside Hieron's door.

As the Graces of the *Idyll* have a dual identity, Callimachus' Berenice is both a woman and a statue. She is "newly modeled" and "damp with perfume" (Ep. 15.2 G–P).⁷⁴ The perfume was likely used in the dedication, but it may also look to the fragrance industry at Cyrene which was a significant source of Berenice's wealth (Athen. 15.689A). It was based on crops of roses, cultivated widely in the Cyrenaica, and the flower is associated specifically with the Charites (Athen. 15.682E, quoting the *Cypria*).

The queen herself is not separate from her statue, and it is to the living Berenice that the poet appeals in her role as *Charis*. Beyond simply "grace" and "favor," *charis* is "gratitude" for favors done. In Hellenistic Athens the statues of benefactors and decrees in their honor were set up in the precinct of the Demos (the "people") and the Charites. Aristotle explains "the sanctuary of the Charites is placed in a prominent position so that those seeing it may be reminded to repay one another's

benefits" (*Eth. Nic.* 5.1133^a3–5). The precinct was set up soon after 229 by Eurycleides as part of a renewal of Athenian democracy following the withdrawal of Macedonian garrisons from the city.⁷⁵ Soon afterwards a statue of Berenice's husband Euergetes was added as thanks for his support against Macedonian threats. The cult was administered by a priest whose honors included a reserved seat in the *prohedria*, the "front seats," of the Theater of Dionysus in Athens that was shared by the priest of Euergetes and Berenice II. It is likely, then, that Callimachus' epigram was written to commemorate this foundation.⁷⁶

Though the epigram has an historical context, Callimachus uses the occasion to make an additional point: Berenice's benefactions would be for poets and the Museum and Library that sustained them. In his expression of gratitude, couched as it is in subtle flattery, he sounds less like a sycophant and more like a polished fundraiser. Without royal support the institutions to which he had committed his life could not survive. Without Berenice the other Graces would not be Graces, that is, without her, poetry could not survive. His arguments for her support had to be powerful, even compelling, and fortunately Callimachus had the gift of eloquence. The dramatic growth of the Library and the construction of its annex in the Serapeum that took place during Berenice's reign, are clear evidence that his appeal succeeded.

Court Life

Callimachus, Apollonius, and Eratosthenes were all courtiers who served the king and carried out essential functions on his behalf.⁷⁷ In the early Ptolemaic period before the proliferation of formal titles tied to fixed roles, they were called "those at the court," "the courtiers," or "the ones associated with the king."⁷⁸ They might perform domestic roles, like the chamberlain, or court physicians, or at the highest level, they might be the king's counselors, the commanders of his armed forces, or the chief administrators of his government. These were the king's *philoi*, his "friends," though needless to say, they did not necessarily share warm feelings. It was a term of art that persisted from the days when the Macedonian monarch ruled in his homeland with the consent and assistance of a small band of noblemen. In the Hellenistic royal courts the "friends" were many and they were not necessarily Macedonian or noble. They

could come from any Greek city, some were not Greeks at all, and many had special skills required by their position.⁷⁹

The “friends” relationship with the king imitated genuine *philia* in that value that passed between the two was understood as gifts. The courtiers gifted the king with their services, as well as actual gifts, which could be modest or as large as a lighthouse, and the king responded with gifts of money, land, appointments, etc. that were not exactly salaries. This maintained a semblance, at least, of equality between the two parties.

Following the deaths of his son and brother in 306 BCE, Alexander’s successors began to take the title of *basileus* “king,” (Diod. Sic. 20.53.2–4; Plut. *Dem.* 18.1–2), and at the same time or soon afterwards, royal women took the title of *basilissa*.⁸⁰ The latter is not precisely equivalent to “queen” in the sense of a wife of the king or an independent female ruler, though it could be used of either. In the Ptolemaic court, for example, it was also the title of a princess.⁸¹ Berenice was *basilissa* while still in Cyrene, and her title does not change in Alexandria, where in English she is rightly called a queen. Though Hellenistic queens were not public officials, they were public figures, and Berenice’s physical image was an essential feature of the Ptolemies’ presentation of themselves to the public.⁸² This is evident in the number of statues and inscriptions bearing her name and in her public appearances, which are discussed in the following chapters.

Not all of the king’s “friends” were also the “friends” of the queen, and it is likely that only a select subset of the courtiers had access to her.⁸³ Among these would be the royal tutors, including Eratosthenes, who was also devoted to her daughter Arsinoe III. His requiem for her shows that the “friends” were sometimes actually friends. It is likely that such was the case for Callimachus as well, though his closeness to the queen was achieved by some careful calculations on his part. And perhaps she spent time with poets because she genuinely enjoyed poetry and the kind of attention the poets gave her. Even if she did not attend their performances at the king’s symposia, which seems unlikely since a traditional Macedonian symposium could easily turn into a drunken brawl, she could have heard their verse at more decorous readings like the one that apparently undid Apollonius. The poets’ contribution at these events was to provide entertainment, but even more crucially, to represent the court to itself, i.e., to reflect back on the Ptolemies and their associates images of themselves that they would find gratifying.⁸⁴

They might also respond in an authentic way to the realities of life as their audience was experiencing it, though this might carry some risks.⁸⁵

Beyond her circle of poets, royal women would interact with those who ran the household and rendered personal services such as the court physicians. Sometimes these interacted a little too closely, as was the case of the physician Chrysippus from Cnidus who was caught up in the alleged conspiracy of Arsinoe I and was executed with his co-conspirator when Arsinoe was banished to Coptus.⁸⁶ Another influential court physician was Philippus of Cos, whom Callimachus gifted with an epigram constructed of artfully repurposed medical terms (3 G.-P. = AP 12.150).⁸⁷ His son, Caphisophon, was not a medical man, but he was also a courtier with access to Euergetes.⁸⁸ Two other doctors associated with him were the son of Sosicrates, whom Euergetes honored with a statue, and Neon, who was said in a letter of 242 to be “in good favor with the king.”⁸⁹

Though in theory, “friends” acted on behalf of the king, they also acted on behalf of themselves, sometimes to the detriment of the royal couple. Agathocles and Sosibius were powerful courtiers active at court in the period that overlapped the end of the reign of the Euergetae and that of Philopator. Their actions, separately and together resulted in the deaths of Berenice, her daughter, and two of her sons. With “friends” like these there was no need for enemies. Their stories are told below.

The In-Laws

When Berenice came to Alexandria, some of her father’s relations were present, but there were no in-laws to welcome her into the family. Her father-in-law, Ptolemy II Philadelphus, was already dead (246 BCE), and his sister and last wife, Arsinoe II, had predeceased him. Nonetheless, Ptolemaic predecessors were everywhere to be seen in statues, reliefs, inscriptions, and public events commemorating them. The policies they established determined how Euergetes would rule, and the roles that their wives played showed Berenice the options that would be available to her.

Ptolemy I Soter

The founder of the dynasty was Ptolemy I, son of Lagus and Arsinoe. He was born in Macedonia in the mid-fourth century BCE and died of natural causes in 282. He was a trusted member of Alexander’s inner circle

from adolescence, if not childhood, and was with him throughout his march to the East.⁹⁰ In Egypt with Alexander, Soter came to appreciate at firsthand its economic potential, strategic advantages, and cultural capital. He also seemed to see more clearly than the other successors that the empire, as Alexander left it, would not be stable (Diod. Sic. 18.36.6–7). Rather than struggle with the others to take over the whole of it, he concentrated on securing Egypt, first by having himself declared satrap immediately after Alexander's death, then by hijacking Alexander's body, eliminating Cleomenes, whom Alexander had put in charge of Egypt when he left, and defending it against his Macedonian rivals beginning with Perdiccas, who lost 2000 men in a botched invasion (Diod. Sic. 18.25.6–36.7). He also began at once to look to Egypt's defense, first by asserting himself in Cyrene through his governor Ophellas,⁹¹ and then by making alliances with some of the kings of Cyprus. After a series of struggles with the other successors, he successfully defended Egypt against a second invasion, this time by Antigonos' son Demetrius (Diod. Sic. 20.73–76; Plut. *Dem.* 19.1–2), and declared himself king of Egypt in 306 BCE.

Under Soter Egyptian foreign policy was oriented across the Mediterranean towards the north and east. To defend Egypt's economic interests he supported the island of Rhodes when it was under siege by Demetrius in 305/4.⁹² He also took over a number of coastal cities in Coele-Syria, and asserted himself over the Cycladic islands by becoming Protector of the Island League in 287. By these strategies Soter was able to defend Egypt successfully on all sides and protect its trade routes, a policy followed by Ptolemy III.

In Egypt itself Soter began the challenging job of creating a government that would be acceptable to the Egyptians, especially the priests, soldiers, and bureaucrats, as well as the ever increasing number of Greek settlers. Greek was used as the administrative language, and the introduction of coinage with a concomitant fiscal policy enriched the monarchy, but on the whole, the administrative structure that was in place during the Saite (650–525 BCE) and Persian periods was left as it was.⁹³

One key strategy in developing support for his government was to engage the goodwill of the priests who controlled much of Egypt's land and wealth. Soter and his successors did this by building and repairing temples, and generally showing respect for the priests' authority in religious matters. Since both Greeks and Egyptians were polytheistic there was plenty of room for accommodation. It has often been said that Ptolemy "invented"

the god Serapis as a fusion-deity to bring Greeks and Egyptians together in a single cult, but the evidence is clear that the god had been long established in Egypt before Alexander's arrival, especially in Memphis and Rhacotis where he had sanctuaries.⁹⁴ However, the early Ptolemies, beginning with Soter, understood Serapis' potential appeal to Greeks, and cultivated precisely those aspects of his worship that reminded them of their own Asclepius (healing), Dionysus (fertility), and especially Zeus. Following this trend, Berenice II and her husband later built a large, new temple for Serapis in Alexandria.

Traditionally Macedonian kings had a penchant for polygamy, and Soter was not an exception. His first wife was Thais, an Athenian *hetaira*, who had once been attached to Alexander (Athen. 13.576E). His second wife was Artakama, whom he married in the mass ceremony that Alexander orchestrated at Susa (Arr. *Anab.* 7.4.6), and his third was Eurydice, the daughter of Antipater, the regent of Macedon (Paus. 1.6.8). She came to Alexandria with her second cousin, Berenice, now known as Berenice I, and Soter seems to have maintained recognized relationships with both of them. With Eurydice he had at least four children, but possibly as many as six, and with Berenice I, three more including Ptolemy II, Arsinoe II, and Philotera.⁹⁵ To fill out the household, Berenice I brought along three children from her previous marriage: Antigone, Theoxena, and Magas, the father of Berenice II.

Berenice I

Berenice I was born about 340 BCE in Eordaea, the same town in Macedonia as her second husband, Ptolemy I, so it is not a stretch to suggest that their families were known to each other prior to her arrival in Egypt. His marriage to her second cousin Eurydice was a dynastic arrangement between two of Alexander's successors, but his relationship with Berenice I was a love-match, or so it seems.

She was apparently an impressive woman. In 298 Pyrrhus I, former king of Epirus, came to Alexandria as a hostage under the terms of a peace treaty between his brother-in-law, Demetrius Poliorcetes, and Ptolemy I. There he met Berenice I whom he declared "the most powerful" and "first in virtue and intelligence of the wives of Ptolemy" (Plut. *Pyrrh.* 4). So impressed was he that he founded a city named for her in Epirus after Soter helped him regain the throne, and married her daughter Antigone, Magas' sister.⁹⁶ An even more dramatic sign of her influence over

Soter was her success in convincing him to appoint their son Ptolemy (II) Philadelphus as co-regent in 285–283/2, above Eurydice's older son, Ptolemy Ceraunus, who left Egypt at once after he saw that his claim to the throne had been lost to his half-brother.

Soter had an interest in racing chariots in the crown contests and so did Berenice I. He won a victory in a chariot race with foals at the Pythia in the first year the contest was introduced there (Paus. 10.7.8), and Pausanias saw statues of him at Olympia. Though neither seem like victory statues (Paus. 6.15.10; 6.16.3), he was in fact an Olympic victor in a four-horse chariot race that is celebrated in an epigram of Posidippus (78 AB). The poem lists other Olympic victories by family members, including his wife Berenice I, their daughter Arsinoe II, and Berenice II. Female Olympic victors were very few, and Berenice I is the first Hellenistic woman known to have had success in the competitions. Her feats were emulated by other women in her family who must have kept stables and probably raced their horses in the Alexandrian hippodrome as well.

After Berenice I's death she was honored extravagantly by her children and their descendants. Ptolemy II founded cities named for her on and near the Red Sea, and his wife Arsinoe II sponsored a festival in honor of her deification c. 272, described above.⁹⁷ There she is associated with Aphrodite, and Theocritus picks up this theme again in his *Encomium to Ptolemy II* (*Id.* 17.34–52). Here she is “among the wisest of women” (*Id.* 17.34–35), on whose fragrant breast Aphrodite pressed her slender hands (*Id.* 17.36–37), “so that they say no other woman pleased her husband as much as she pleased Ptolemy, yet much more was he loved in return by her (*Id.* 17.38–40). . . . Queen Aphrodite, most excellent of Goddesses in beauty, thanks to you Berenice did not pass to the lugubrious underworld, but you snatched her away before she embarked on the dark, grim ship of the dead. You established her in your temple and gave her a share of your honor” (*Id.* 17.45–50).

Here Aphrodite confers a benediction on Berenice I with whom she now shares a temple.⁹⁸ She is the first of the Ptolemaic queens to be associated with Aphrodite who is presented here as a patron of married love (*Id.* 17.40–44). This is a new and unexpected role for this goddess who assisted Paris and Helen in the *Iliad*, and whose own affairs were the stuff of myth. Many explanations have been offered for this paradox, which changes its meaning through time, but a key factor, as Gutzwiller argues, is how well it fits Berenice I.⁹⁹ That she had some of Aphrodite's

charisma is easy to believe given her ability to attract Ptolemy I and maintain her considerable influence on him throughout their lives together. As *Idyll* 15.106–11 makes clear, her daughter, Arsinoe II, had a role in translating it into cult practice, while Theocritus and other poets expressed it in the language of myth.¹⁰⁰ In elevating her mother in this way, Arsinoe II also raised her own status, since now she was the daughter of a goddess, and invited others to view her own problematic marriage through an Olympian lens. There is more on this below.

Among the other posthumous honors accorded to Berenice I was a temple, the Bereniceum (Athen. 5.202D), built at an uncertain date, but probably during the reign of her son Ptolemy II. Much later her great-grandson, Ptolemy IV, included her and Soter in the reorganized family cult where they were worshipped as the *Theoi Soteres*, the Savior Gods.¹⁰¹

Ptolemy II Philadelphus

The second Ptolemy was the son of Ptolemy I and Berenice I, born on the island of Cos in 309/8. The event celebrated retrospectively by Callimachus who started his Alexandrian career in Philadelphus' court.¹⁰² Here in his *Hymn to Delos* Apollo speaks from the womb to his mother Leto who is wandering the earth looking for a place to deliver him:

Do not give birth to me here on Cos, Mother; I do not blame the island nor bear a grudge, since she is fruitful and rich in pastureland, as any other. But the Fates owe it another god, the highest race of the Soteres, under whose crown will come the two lands and the islands set in the sea, willing to be ruled by a Macedonian, until the furthest point from where his swift horses carry Helios, and he will know the customs of his father.

Callim. *Hy.* 4.162–70

The scene is set in mythological time which looks forward to the historical present. Apollo, who is yet unborn, predicts the birth of an unconceived human king and yields Cos to him as a potential birth-place. This will be Philadelphus, and the Soteres, Ptolemy I and Berenice I, will be the parents who will teach their son to be just like them. This concept, that each successive pair of Ptolemies is a precise copy of the one before, is a key element of the Ptolemaic family myth that will have important consequences for Berenice II. The god also prophesizes the

extent of their kingdom: the “two lands” are upper and lower Egypt, and the islands are the Cyclades, Cyprus, and Crete which were vital to Ptolemaic interests. Ultimately, the empire will reach to the ends of the earth, and its constituents will accept Ptolemaic rule without compulsion. This prophecy was never fulfilled, but a court poet could hope.

In the next passage, Apollo becomes more specific and prophesizes Philadelphus’ future military victory against the Celts (*Hy.* 4 171–87). Though he seems to be referring to a full-scale war, he is actually describing the rebellion of the Gallic mercenaries which took place at end of Magas’ invasion in the mid-270s, discussed above. Apollo’s speech concludes:

Oh Ptolemy who is yet to be, these are the prophecies of
Phoebus for you. You will greatly praise the seer-in-the-belly
for all the days to come.

Callim. *Hy.* 4. 188–90

The actual seer-in-the-belly is the poet Callimachus, who is more obviously sycophantic here than he is in his later poems. Though it can probably be put down to Callimachus’ youthful enthusiasm, Philadelphus must have enjoyed being praised this way because it was the beginning of a long and successful career for the poet.

After a childhood studying with the Peripatetic Strato of Lampascus, the poet Philitas of Cos, and Zenodotus, the scholar and first librarian, Philadelphus became co-regent with Soter in about 285.¹⁰³ He was not the only contender for the throne. Soter’s son by Eurydice, Ptolemy Ceraunus, was the eldest of Philadelphus’ legitimate sons and would have been the obvious successor, but he left Egypt in fear for his life (Appian *Syr.* 10.62; Nepos 21.3) at about the same time that Philadelphus killed two of Eurydice’s other sons who were plotting against him (Paus. 1.7.1). The rest of his story and its aftermath is briefly told below.

Philadelphus became king on Soter’s death in 282, and at once he began a series of military actions to preserve and extend the empire that his father had created. These began with the last of the wars of succession, this one against Antiochus I, king of Syria in 280/279. After that, c. 275, he defended Egypt against Magas, and this was followed by the First Syrian War, 274–271, then the Chremonidean War (267) in which Philadelphus supported Sparta and Athens against the Antigonids, and finally the Second Syrian War, 260–253. Like his father, his goals were to defend Egypt by taking control of a buffer zone around it, and by asserting Ptolemaic

power over the Greek islands. The central parts of his overseas empire were the Cyrenaica on the west, Syria and Phoenicia to the northeast, and the island of Cyprus to the north.¹⁰⁴ He also sent military expeditions south to Nubia, rebuilt a canal linking Alexandria to the Red Sea, and founded the city of Arsinoe on the Gulf of Suez to facilitate the elephant hunts that were so vital to his military efforts.¹⁰⁵

The wonders and riches of the world poured into Alexandria, and Philadelphus celebrated them all in the Grand Procession (*pompe* in Greek) of 275. This took place on the occasion of the Ptolemaia festival that was first celebrated in 279 in honor of Ptolemy Soter.¹⁰⁶ The founding decrees specify that it was to be attended by ambassadors from other Greek cities, and to include a sacrifice and competitions involving gymnastics, music, and equestrian sports. Ptolemy I was to be given honors equal to those offered to the gods (Syll.³ 390; SEG 13, 351).

The procession itself is described by Athenaeus (5.201B–F, 202F–203A), who quotes in detail from Callixenus, probably Callixenus of Rhodes, who was likely an eyewitness.¹⁰⁷ The marchers included 57,600 infantry and 23,200 cavalry troops and richly adorned people of all ages carrying a sumptuous array of objects and including a cart with a 15 ft. statue of Dionysus pouring wine from a golden *karchesion*; a mechanical statue of Nysa that could stand up and sit down after pouring a libation of milk from a golden jug; wagons of gold and silver plate and hundreds of exotic animals including leopards, cheetahs, and a rhinoceros. It was a celebration of the diversity and prosperity of the kingdom and, especially, the generosity of the king.

In its breathtaking display of wealth and power, the Grand Procession advertised the Ptolemaic empire to the world outside and also to the residents of Alexandria who watched or participated in the performance. It was the ultimate expression of what the Greeks called *tryphe*, extravagance and liberality, even to the point of dissipation. It includes in its range of meanings eating too much, drinking too much, and having so many possessions one can literally throw them away. As an official policy it gives publicity not only to the wealth, but also to the generosity of a king who is an endless source of sustenance for his kingdom. On a smaller scale it is the array of local and exotic food on display at Arsinoe's Festival of Adonis, and, later, it will be Berenice's cornucopias and the corpulence of her images in mosaics and on coins.¹⁰⁸ *Tryphe* is not necessarily morally corrupt, but it can become that, as in the spectacle of

Berenice's father Magas eating himself to death and the debauchery of Ptolemy IV.

The irony of a public festival celebrating Philadelphus' generosity is that the people of Egypt were the source of his wealth. While he followed his father's foreign policies, the economic reforms that he put in place within Egypt itself produced his proverbial riches.¹⁰⁹ The introduction of the salt tax in 264/63, to be paid in cash by all adults, was a major innovation that not only generated revenue, but helped to monetize the whole economy. The cash, in turn, was used to pay the expenses of the king's military initiatives. Tax farmers also collected levies on the production of vineyards, orchards, and other crops that were identified in a formal census, and additional farmland was added by draining swampland in the Fayyum and other construction projects.

Philadelphus had two wives and numerous mistresses, nine of whom are known by name, including the famous Bilistiche, who was twice an Olympic victor and was honored in a shrine for Bilistiche-Aphrodite as if she were a queen.¹¹⁰ The sheer number of his mistresses and the luxury in which he kept them is another example of *tryphe*.¹¹¹ In addition, he also had two recognized wives. His first, Arsinoe I, the daughter of Lysimachus, a successor of Alexander and king of Thrace, produced three children before she was implicated in a plot against her husband and exiled to Coptus (*Schol. Theoc. Id.* 17.128).¹¹² Her children were Lysimachus, about whom little is known, Berenice (Syra or Phernophorus), who was married to Antiochus II and killed along with her infant son shortly after his death on orders from his ex-wife Laodice and her son Seleucus II. The third child, who became Ptolemy III Euergetes, attempted in vain to save his sister just after he married Berenice II. Philadelphus also had another son, who was co-regent with him from 268/67 (PSorb. inv. 2440 = inv. 3.71) until 259 (PCair. Zen. 59003), when he rebelled against his father (*Trog. Prol.* 26) and was apparently removed. In the sources he is called "Ptolemy the son of Ptolemy" and his mother has not been securely identified.¹¹³

Unless this son was Euergetes himself, which is highly doubtful, Berenice II may well have had a different husband. As it happened the rebellion took place in 259, nine years before Magas' death, and his reconciliation with Philadelphus must have taken place afterwards.

Philadelphus died of natural causes in 246 after a reign of 36 years in which the fundamental political, economic, and cultural policies that guided the subsequent history of the Ptolemaic empire were put in

place. It was his Egypt that Berenice's husband Euergetes inherited when he became king and Pharaoh.

Arsinoe II

Philadelphus' second wife was his full-sister, known in the historical record as Arsinoe II. If Philadelphus initiated the policies that set the parameters for Euergetes' government, Arsinoe II defined the possibilities of Berenice II's role as queen. She was born about 316 and married Lysimachus, King of Thrace, around 300 (Plut. *Dem.* 31.3). He was about 60 at the time, and the match was a political one designed to strengthen the alliance between the two parties against the ambitions of Seleucus. The couple had three sons: Ptolemy, Lysimachus, and Philip (Just. 24.2.10; 24.3.5).

Though Arsinoe II was generously provided for—Lysimachus gave her the city of Heracleia Ponticus c. 284 for her enjoyment (Memnon FGrH 434 F5.4–5)—her husband was polygamous in the Macedonian tradition (Plut. *Dem.* and *Ant.* 4.1), and there were other wives and offspring who threatened the position of Arsinoe and her sons. Agathocles, Lysimachus' eldest son by his first wife Nicaea, was his heir and apparent successor. He was married to Arsinoe's half-sister Lysandra, the daughter of Ptolemy Soter and his first wife Eurydice. The faceoff between Arsinoe II and Lysandra in Thrace mirrored the struggle at the court in Alexandria between their mothers Berenice I and Eurydice, who both had sons they hoped would succeed Soter.¹¹⁴

When he left Alexandria, Eurydice's son Ceraunus came to the court of Lysimachus where his half-sister, Arsinoe II, and his full sister, Lysandra, were at odds over the succession there. By 283/2 the heir apparent, Lysimachus' son Agathocles, was eliminated by order of his father on suspicion of plotting against him, and Arsinoe II was implicated in his death.¹¹⁵ Although her involvement cannot be proven, she had both the motive and the means. Had she not removed Agathocles her own situation and that of her sons would have been precarious to say the least. His death, however, did not assure that one of her own sons would succeed his father.

Agathocles had been an experienced and successful military commander, and his death gave Seleucus an opening to invade Asia Minor where he was joined by Lysandra, her children, and her brother Ceraunus (Paus. 1.10.4). In the battle that followed at Corupedium Lysimachus

was killed, and in the aftermath, Arsinoe II and her sons escaped (Polyaenus 8.57). Soon afterwards Ceraunus killed Seleucus and made himself the king of Macedon (Paus. 1.16.2, 10.19.7; Strabo 13.4.1; Just. 17.2.4–5).

Arsinoe II and her sons had taken refuge in the citadel of Cassandrea (Just. *Epit.* 24.2.1–10) when Ceraunus offered to marry her. She accepted, though her motives are unclear, and was rewarded by watching Ceraunus murder her two youngest sons.¹¹⁶ The eldest had escaped, though he never became king. When Ceraunus was murdered during an invasion by the Celts in 279 (Porph. FGrH 260 F 3 10; Diod. Sic. 22.3.2) his own brother, Meleager, inherited the throne.

Arsinoe II left Macedonia as soon as she could, and went first to Samothrace, and then to Egypt where she married her younger brother Ptolemy II some time between 276 and 273/72.¹¹⁷ Her arrival in Alexandria is likely related to the departure under a cloud of his first wife Arsinoe I, though that was not the most controversial aspect of her marriage. The role of explaining their incestuous relationship to their Greek subjects seems to have fallen to the poets.¹¹⁸ Though not all were willing to accept it, there were eloquent voices raised in celebration.¹¹⁹

Only the first line of Callimachus' elegy for that occasion is extant:

Of Arsinoe's marriage, oh stranger, I now begin to sing.

Callim. fr. 392 Pf.¹²⁰

And it is impossible to say how he developed the theme. Theocritus' *Encomium to Ptolemy* is fully extant and here the matter is handled deftly. He begins with Zeus, who is the best of the immortals as Ptolemy is the best of men (*Id.* 17.1–4), and this equation is still active at the conclusion, where the poet speaks of the king's marriage:

He himself and his stately wife, than whom no one better
embraces in her arms a bridegroom at home, loving with her
heart her brother and husband. In this way even the holy
matrimony of the immortals came to pass, whom Queen Rhea
bore to be rulers of Olympus. And Iris, still a virgin, after
cleansing her hands with myrrh, strews a single bed for Zeus
and Hera to sleep.

Theoc. *Id.* 7. 128–34

It is impossible here to miss the equation of Arsinoe II and Ptolemy II with Zeus and Hera who were also brother and sister, and whose "holy marriage" was featured in the *Iliad* (*Il.* 14.293–96). Like Arsinoe II, Hera

had been married before and had born a child. A scholion on *Il.* 14.256 notes that when she was still a virgin, Hera slept with Eurymedon, one of the Giants, and gave birth to Prometheus. When Zeus discovered it he punished both her lover and son, but did not, apparently, blame Hera whom he married himself.¹²¹ Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus* had already established Zeus as Philadelphus' mythological exemplar, and extending this concept to include Arsinoe II and Hera was an easy step. The analogy already had wide currency by the day of the wedding (Plut. *Quaest. Conviv.* 736F). Theocritus' image of Iris, "virgin, still," making the marriage bed suggests the purity of the bride whose virginity is renewed in the very act of losing it again.¹²²

In this way the normally monogamous Greeks were invited to see one of the points that Arsinoe II and Ptolemy II were making through their marriage: if this is how the King and Queen of the gods conducted themselves, then it is appropriate for their human avatars to do the same.

Much has been written about their incestuous union, and a comprehensive review of the most influential views can be found in Ager 2005.¹²³ From her perspective the phenomenon has a complex causation, and the reasons for its origin in the time of the Philadelphoi might not account for its persistence throughout the Ptolemaic dynasty.¹²⁴ Her interest is in its symbolic meaning, and she argues that it is closely linked with *tryphe*. Overindulgence of every sort, whether it seems like overflowing generosity or unbridled self-indulgence, removes all constraints on behavior, whether imposed by oneself or society. It is directly tied to absolute power and absolute freedom which can be expressed by behavior that is prohibited to everyone else, such as incest.¹²⁵

Total freedom and absolute power are essential traits of divinity, and so it seems appropriate that Philadelphus, the great enactor of *tryphe*, who produced the Grand Procession and had nine mistresses, would also be the first Ptolemy to establish cults for his parents, his sister/wife, and himself. The cults for Arsinoe are numerous and they take many forms, including major buildings, like the Arsinoeion at Alexandria, and the temple of Arsinoe-Aphrodite at Cape Zephyrium (above).¹²⁶ She also had a cult with a priestess called the *Canephorus* (POxy 2465, fr. 2 col. 1)¹²⁷ and was a co-divinity with her husband worshipped as the gods *Adelphoi*.¹²⁸ The cult was founded by Ptolemy II about 272/1 when Arsinoe was already called *Philadelphos* (PHib 2.199).¹²⁹ She was also assimilated to various deities in addition to Aphrodite, most conspicuously to Isis and to Agathe Tyche.¹³⁰ Many of the cults were established

posthumously, but her institution of the Adonis cult for her mother shows her own interest in religious festivals and her appreciation of their power to promote dynastic interests. Her husband created the Arsinoeia festival in her honor with a similar motive.¹³¹

Beyond cult, her image was displayed outside of Egypt where the Ptolemies had a wide range of strategic interests. Pausanias (1.8.6) saw statues of the Philadelphoi in Athens, and Callicrates, the admiral who dedicated her temple at Cape Zephyrium, put up twin columns in their honor in Olympia (OGIS 26–27). At least 26 cities were named for her throughout the islands, but also on the Greek mainland, the Red Sea Basin, and the coast of Coele-Syria.¹³² Most were ports for Philadelphus' large fleet, and there is a link between her role as Aphrodite who saves mariners in distress and the naming of safe harbors for her. Another indication of her naval interests is the visit she paid with Philadelphus to inspect the renovation of the Nile canal in 274/3.¹³³

How great a role Arsinoe II played in the formulation of overseas policy is controversial. The evidence of an inscription of 268/7 in which the Athenian Chremonides asks other Greek cities to join an anti-Macedonian coalition of Athens and Sparta backed by King Ptolemy who "in accordance with the attitude of his ancestors and of his sister is openly zealous for the common freedom of the Greeks" has been cited as an example of her asserting herself directly in international affairs (IG II² 687.16–18). A suggestion that this was a practice of long standing has been found in another inscription (Syll.³ 381.21–22) from the period when she was still married to Lysimachus. This records the promise of the royal agent Demaratus to bring King Lysimachus and Queen Arsinoe the goodwill of the people of Delos. The interpretation of both of these decrees as they relate to Arsinoe II has a long history, but however they are read, they make clear how important she seemed to officials outside of Egypt, who had the impression at least that her opinions mattered, or that she mattered to the people who were making the decisions. Whether this reflects direct power, the power of persuasion, or the rhetoric of diplomacy is not clear.¹³⁴

Arsinoe died in July 268 or 270,¹³⁵ and her death was commemorated by Callimachus in "The Deification of Arsinoe" (fr. 228 Pf.). According to the *Diegeseis* (*Abstracts*) the poet says that she was taken up by the Dioscuri, and that an altar and sacred enclosure (*temenos*) were established in her honor near the market (*agora*).

The poem, which is very fragmentary, begins with an invitation to Apollo to come and lead the chorus of Muses. The queen's soul is

already on its way up under the stars of the Wagon, and in this it resembles Berenice's Lock. The poet addresses her as *nympha*, "bride," and unconnected phrases follow: "laments . . . one voice. . . Queen Arsinoe gone . . . unquenchable . . . grief overflowing taught the great husband to light fire for his wife, an offering before the altars of Thetis." Then the text improves and it becomes clear that at verse 42 the focus shifts to Arsinoe's sister Philotera, who was already dead. She noticed the smoke from the funeral pyre as she was leaving Sicily where she was visiting Demeter. She is on the island of Lemnos when she asks one of the Graces to go and see where the smoke is coming from. "What city has burnt?" she wants to know (fr. 228.49 Pf.), "Has my Libya been harmed?" (fr. 228.51 Pf.). Libya here is Egypt. Charis, the Grace, goes up to Mt. Athos, looks towards Pharos, and is able to report that the city is not burning, but something important has happened (fr. 228.71–72 Pf.). "They weep for your only sister from the same womb" (fr. 228.73 Pf.), she says. "Wherever you look the cities of the land are black" (fr. 228.74–75 Pf.). And here the papyrus breaks off.

The establishment of the cult for Arsinoe must have come toward the end of the poem, which is typical in Callimachus' *Aetia*. Its lyric meter (archebulions) is rare in Callimachus, and indicates that the words were sung rather than recited. The invocation to Apollo at the beginning as the leader of a chorus of Muses seems to support this, and to add the detail that it was performed by a chorus, perhaps with a soloist, or the choral leader taking Philotera's part.

The designation of Philotera, not just as sister, but as "coming from the same womb" (73) seems like a subtle reminder of Arsinoe's relationship to Philadelphus, but in the part of the poem that is extant, the totality of their relationship is not mentioned. In fact, Philadelphus is given only a small part with no words to say. While he silently burns sacrifices, the focus is on Arsinoe, her sister, and of the gods, Thetis and Demeter. Lamenting for the dead is traditionally the prerogative of women, and so it seems here.

The altars of Thetis (fr. 228.15 Pf.) are unexpected since she usually has no part in Ptolemaic mythology. However, as a sea nymph and daughter of the Old Man of the Sea, who leads a chorus of Nereids in mourning for Patroclus in the *Iliad* (18.35–64), she is a suitable participant in a dirge for Arsinoe, who as Arsinoe-Zephyritis has become a minor sea deity herself. This is the first of three references to the *Iliad* in this scrap of papyrus. The next is Philotera's first clue about her sister's death, the

sounds of lamentation and sorrow, which echoes the moment when Andromache first hears the cries of her mother-in-law (*Il.* 22.447–59) and suspects that her husband Hector has been killed. The third is the smoke mixed with lamentation rising from the funeral pyre, which recalls *Il.* 22.408–11 where the groaning for Hector pervades Ilium, as if the whole city was burning. The overall effect is to equate Arsinoe with Hector and Patroclus, and in this way to heroize her. A chorus of women may be singing the dirge, but the deceased herself is being honored as a heroic male. And just as heroes like Patroclus in *Iliad* 23 are celebrated with ritual and athletic contests, so Arsinoe will be honored with cult at the conclusion of Callimachus’ “Deification.”¹³⁶

Succession

Arsinoe II had no children by her brother Philadelphus (*Schol. Theoc. Id.* 17.128; Paus 1.7.3) and after the rebellion of Ptolemy the Son, he appointed as co-regent the future Ptolemy III Euergetes, who was his son by Arsinoe I. Whether the children of his first wife were adopted by Arsinoe II during her lifetime or whether an “adoption” was arranged after her death is not clear from the evidence, but in official decrees, Euergetes is called the son of Arsinoe Philadelphus.¹³⁷ In designating Euergetes as heir, Philadelphus passed over both the surviving son of Arsinoe II and her first husband, whose name was also Ptolemy, and Euergetes’ older brother Lysimachus. Arsinoe’s surviving son became a dynast in Lycia,¹³⁸ and an inscription of c. 240 (OGIS 55) indicates that Euergetes gave him Telmessos to rule, where his descendants remained at least until the second century.¹³⁹ Euergetes’ brother Lysimachus was murdered by Ptolemy IV in the bloodbath that included his mother and his own brother Magas (*Plut. Cleom.* 33; *Polyb.* 15.25.2). It is not known why Lysimachus was passed over for the kingship, but he lived peacefully, perhaps at Alexandria, throughout his brother’s reign.

Immediately upon his succession Ptolemy III and his new wife took up residence in the royal quarters of the Palaces, and now the competition for their time and attention began in earnest among the courtiers. We do not know any of the details of these intrigues, which had a social as well as a practical side. Presumably most of the individuals who had served the king’s father remained at their usual posts, but the future Euergetes would have had his own favorites too, who could be expected

to make the most of their newly acquired influence. Certainly Callimachus was a big winner, since he had the ear and the good will of Berenice. If he had ever aimed at becoming librarian and royal tutor this might have been his moment, but it did not happen. Perhaps he was already too old for the job but had a role to play in recruiting Eratosthenes, a fellow-countryman, for this plum appointment.

Berenice, on her part, must have quickly become pregnant because she gave birth to six children in the first seven years of her marriage. Contraceptives were available to members of the upper classes, who had the best available medical care, as she surely did, but at this point, when it was imperative that an heir be produced, she would not have wanted any.¹⁴⁰ While Berenice was making herself at home in the domestic scene, Ptolemy III was taking control of an empire that included for the first time in a long time the whole of the Cyrenaica. The changes that were made there shortly after his succession were discussed earlier, pp. 39–40. Though he may not have wished to rush immediately into war, it happened anyway when his sister, Berenice Syra, who had been married to the Seleucid King Antiochus II, asked for his help after her husband suddenly died and her infant son was in danger of being ousted by his older stepbrothers. The war and Berenice's time at Alexandria in her husband's absence are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Callimachus on Murder and Marriage

IN THE MACEDONIAN MONARCHY and the successor kingdoms, murdering family to gain or consolidate personal power was not a rare event. Nonetheless, the sensational story of how Berenice II secured her place in the royal palace at Alexandria was likely to follow her to her new home. It was a tale of murder and revenge with lurid details that could capture the imagination of the public or be exploited by manipulative courtiers. The goal for Berenice and her supporters, then, was to control the narrative: to retell the story of Demetrius' murder in their own way so that her collusion in it would appear to be justified. Most of all they needed to show that she would not repeat the crime, and that she would not put at risk her new husband or his kingdom.

Justin's treatment reflects one such effort (*Epit.* 26.3.2–8). As he tells the tale, Magas had betrothed his daughter Berenice to the son of his half-brother Ptolemy II to end the quarrel that had begun with his attempted invasion of Egypt. After the king's death, however, his wife Apame decided to cancel the arrangement. She invited Demetrius the Fair to marry Berenice instead and assume the throne of Cyrene. Things did not work out quite the way she planned, however. From the start Demetrius alienated everyone, ignored Berenice, and focused his attention on her mother. His arrogant behavior soon brought public opinion to the side of Ptolemy III, and a plot was hatched to do away with Demetrius. Assassins were sent to surprise him in his mother-in-law's bed, and when Apame heard Berenice giving orders to spare her, she tried to shield Demetrius with her own body. He was killed despite her efforts, and Berenice in a single act punished her mother and honored her father's judgment.

Justin's account insists on Berenice's piety in wishing to follow the plans of her father to reunite Cyrene with Egypt, and in saving her mother in spite of Apame's outrageous behavior. The explanations he offers are emotional, political, and moral, but because Justin's work is an epitome of the much fuller and now lost history of Trogus, the details of the original argument cannot be recovered. Nonetheless, a central irony emerges: in judging the two women the murderess is presented as a paragon of virtue, while the political opportunist is a villain. Surprisingly, this is in line with traditional ideas of how Greek women should behave. In a perfect Greek world, a woman should honor her father's wishes, like Berenice, and not try to meddle with her husband's plans, like Apame.

Trogus, Justin's source, wrote during the first century BCE about 200 years after the events, and his own sources are not known. Even if he made up the salacious details himself, which is not impossible since he is fond of stories about women behaving badly, the defense of Berenice II already had a long tradition which began immediately after the event. It took a number of different forms, some originating with Callimachus, but Apollonius also took up the subject. This trend is explored below in Callimachus' *Hymn to Athena* and *Hymn to Demeter*, two segments from book 3 of Callimachus' elegiac *Aetia*: "Acontius and Cydippe" and "Phrygius and Pieria," with a glance at some others, and the concluding *aition* of book 4: the "Coma Berenices" or "Lock of Berenice."

Rape and Revenge: Hymns to Athena and Demeter

Callimachus' fifth and sixth *Hymns*, the *Hymn to Athena* and the *Hymn to Demeter*, are not explicitly about Berenice II. Her name appears nowhere in the text, but their subject matter, both generally and in detail, can be read as commentary on the events which led to Berenice's departure from Cyrene. Both are stories of sexual intrusion, in the first instance, on a virgin goddess, and in the second, on a nymph who stands in for a goddess' young daughter. In both cases the goddesses exact vengeance on the perpetrators, vengeance that is as appropriate as it is violent.

The fifth and sixth hymns stand apart from Callimachus' other four, and though they are composed in different meters, the two are very much a pair.¹

Unlike the others, their dialect is a literary Doric.² Though it is the form of Greek that Callimachus spoke in his homeland, he uses it only

occasionally in his literary compositions, where his choice of dialect is generally determined by genre.³ When Callimachus does write in literary Doric it is often possible to uncover the reasons. For example, in an epigram for Kimon of Elis, a western Greek state (39 G-P = AP 7.523), he addresses a Doric speaker in their shared dialect, and in *Ep.* 15 G-P = AP 5.146, he uses Doric when he speaks directly to Berenice II, as if they were having a personal conversation. The *Hymn to Athena* and *Hymn to Demeter* are not addressed to her in the same way, but his use of the dialect here is a suggestion to keep Berenice in mind as the poems go forward.⁴ The *Hymns* to Athena and Demeter are two of Callimachus' three mimetic hymns that recreate, or seem to recreate a religious festival as it unfolds in real time.⁵ The vivid sense of being present at a ceremony with a community of participants as the sacred rites proceed has enticed many readers into thinking that these poems were actually performed at events similar to the ones they describe. Though his view has been decisively rejected by Legrand, who demonstrates why the *Hymn to Athena* could not have been performed at an ongoing, authentic ritual, the case no longer seems so clear. Petrovic's comparison of the *Hymn to Apollo* with contemporary inscriptions of sacred regulations shows that Callimachus was well aware of the nature of actual hymns and that his own are closer to them in form and spirit than some commentators have imagined.⁶ In any case, the sense of immediacy that the poet creates in the hymns to Athena and Demeter suggests that they relate somehow to the here and now, that is, to the time of their composition and recital. This is also operative in the *Hymn to Apollo*, Callimachus' other mimetic hymn, where its message about the poet's connection to Cyrene and its founders also defines his current relationship to his queen.

Beyond dialect and mimesis, Hopkinson lists 38 other ways in which the *Hymn to Athena* and *Hymn to Demeter* resemble one another in structure and language.⁷ To these should be added some additional, and for this discussion, essential, similarities: both hymns feature young men who commit sexual crimes against a divine virgin; both are punished by powerful goddesses in unique, but appropriate ways; and both goddesses share traits with Berenice II.

*The Hymn to Athena*⁸

There is no evidence that Athena was worshipped in Ptolemaic Egypt, but a cameo (Fig. 3), now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, has an image of

Berenice II dressed in a plumed helmet as Athena Parthenos.⁹ The famous sculpture Phidias made in the fifth century for the Parthenon in Athens was well-known throughout the Greek world through many copies made in various sizes and media that were distributed widely. Likewise, images of Berenice II on coins would have provided the cameo's designer with the details of her physiognomy. In fact, the striking similarity between her coin portraits and the cameo confirm the identification of the subject.¹⁰

Beyond the cameo, Berenice has many points in common with Athena. Both goddess and queen honored their fathers above their mothers.¹¹ Like Berenice, Athena was born in Libya where she leapt out of Zeus' head near the shore of Lake Tritonis (Aesch. *Eum.* 292–93) and was given her first bath by the Heroines of Libya (*Argon.* 4.1308–11). Athena's connections to Libya were clear to Herodotus (4.189) who recognizes Athena's *aegis* in the goatskin mantles worn by Libyan women. Beyond this, the Libyans worshipped an armed goddess exactly like Athena, who wore the same Corinthian helmet and shield, and was worshipped in festivals there featuring ritual combat between teams of young women (Hdt. 4.180). Also like Athena, who assisted her father Zeus in the battle of the Giants, it is said that Berenice fought bravely on the battlefield for her father (Hyginus, *Astr.* 2.24.11–18).¹² On the home front, both Athena and Berenice II were patrons of the arts and sciences, Athena, in the context of the Panathenaic Festival at Athens, and Berenice, through the Euergetae's support of the Library and Museum at Alexandria.

There is also a political aspect to the identification, since the Ptolemies have a history of supporting Athens in its struggle against the Macedonians beginning with Soter's failed effort to relieve the city during the siege of Demetrius Poliorcetes in 295/4.¹³ In the reign of Ptolemy III, Athens was again menaced by the Macedonians in the person of Antigonos Doson, and in their eagerness to thank him for his assistance the Athenians made Euergetes an eponymous hero in 224/3 (Polyb. 5.106.6–8). A new tribe (*phyle*) was introduced in Athens called *Ptolemais* (Paus. 1.5.5) as well as a deme known as *Berenikidai*, "the descendants of Berenice." Both Euergetae were given cults with a priest who was given preferential seating in the theater of Dionysus (IG II² 4676 and 5029a). Beyond these honors, Pausanias (10.10.2) says that there was a statue of Berenice II in the agora, and Olga Palagia has identified a colossal marble head from the Athenian agora as a portrait of her that probably stood in the gymnasium there.¹⁴ This was the *Ptolemaion*, built by her husband for the Ptolemaia festival in the early years of his reign.¹⁵

Callimachus' *Hymn to Athena* begins as a statue of Athena is about to emerge from her temple in Argos to be carried in procession to the river Inachus where it will receive a ritual bath.¹⁶ There is no evidence for a ritual of this type in Argos, but the Athenian Plynteria is a well-documented example, and similar ceremonies may also have been performed elsewhere in the Greek world.¹⁷ The Argive location chosen by the poet reflects the efforts of the Macedonian royal house to enhance the perception of their Greek ancestry by ignoring the obscure village of Argos in northern Macedon, which was originally the seat of the Argeads, and forging ties instead with the more famous city of Argos in the Peloponnesus. This bit of improvised history took the form of a family tree which traced the family back to Archelaus, son of Temenus, one of the Heraclidae who was expelled from Argos and settled afterwards in Macedonia (Hdt. 8.137; Thuc. 2.99.3). Theocritus, writing under Ptolemy II, presents Heracles as a Ptolemaic ancestor in *Ids.* 17 and 24, and the Euergetae took pains to perpetuate the notion.¹⁸ Ptolemy III claims descent from Heracles in the opening lines of the Adoulis decree (OGIS 54), and Callimachus' *Victoria Berenice* has a long central myth which tells the story of Heracles and Molorchus (254–268 SH). Berenice II in particular is associated with Argos in ways that will be explored below.

Callimachus brings us right into the moment in the opening lines of the hymn when the ceremony is already under way. The sacred mares are neighing and the goddess herself will soon appear (*Hy.* 5.1–3). The arrival of the mares, which are conveying her statue on a cart, introduces a short reflection on Athena's devotion to horses (*Hy.* 5.5–12). So concerned was the goddess with their well-being that after her battle with the Giants, when her armor was covered with gore, she washed the horses down before she bathed herself.

This section is widely read as interrupting the flow of the narrative and parenthetical to it.¹⁹ It has puzzled readers because Athena is not a deity, such as Poseidon or Zeus, with a traditional connection to horses.²⁰ It can, however, be read as a point of contact between Athena and Berenice, whose equestrian teams won victories at the Olympian, Pythian, and Nemean games which are celebrated by Posidippus and Callimachus.

The digression on Athena's love of horses is followed immediately by a second. The statue is going to have a bath and the narrator tells the goddess's attendants what *not* to bring for the ritual: jars of myrrh and mixed oils. These are irrelevant because Athena anoints herself only

with pure olive oil (*Hy.* 5.31–32). As Herter first observed, Athena’s “plain oil” seems like a reference to the “simple oil” that Berenice’s Lock says that he drank while the queen was unmarried and he was in a position to enjoy her toilette (fr. 110.77–78 Pf.).²¹ While Athena prefers the olive oil favored by Castor and Heracles, who were both co-opted by the Ptolemies as divinized ancestors, she does require a gold comb to run through her shining hair (*Hy.* 5.31–32). Athena’s interest in maintaining her coiffure after running 120 double laps, and especially Callimachus’ choice to call her hair *plokamos*, a “lock,” also looks to Berenice’s famous “Lock,” discussed below. We have two more points of contact, then, between the maidenly Berenice and the virgin, martial goddess.

Following the digressions, the ceremony begins in earnest. The narrator urges everyone to be ready, then calls on Athena herself to appear (*Hy.* 5.33–34). Now the statue is about to emerge from the shrine, when he warns the men in the crowd, “Do not look at the queen,” meaning “do not look at the statue,” or “do not look at the Goddess” who is both the statue and the queen (*Hy.* 5.51–54). But all of a sudden there is an unexplained delay, and the poet takes this opportunity, which he has created himself, to tell the worshippers a cautionary tale that illustrates his point about the danger of looking at naked goddesses (*Hy.* 5.57–136).

This is the story of Teiresias and how he lost his sight. One day Athena and her dearest friend, the nymph Chariclo, were together on Mt. Helicon when they decided to have a bath in the spring Hippocrene and undid their robes (*Hy.* 5.70–72). The choice of the site is significant because Hippocrene is not in Argos, where the ceremony is taking place, or in Athens, where Athena had her great temple. Rather, it is on Mt. Helicon where Hesiod first met the Muses (*Theog.* 1–34) and Callimachus says he was carried in a dream (fr. 2 Pf.). Athena and Chariclo are playing at being Muses here,²² and this makes another connection to Berenice II, who, like Athena, was a patron of the arts.

At just this moment, when the goddesses had removed their clothes, Chariclo’s son, Teiresias, arrived. He had been hunting in the area and was searching for water when he saw them naked. Athena became outraged and Night came to take away his eyes (*Hy.* 5.57–82). Even the bare plotline has some parallels to Berenice’s own history. Teiresias’ misdemeanor is clearly a sexual one. He has seen what no man should see, and in Callimachus’ version of the tale, Athena is not the only object of his intruding eyes, but the mother is as well. Two women have been violated, though only one seems to care—the one

who is not the mother. It is she who has both the motive and the power to punish the aggressor.

Although Teiresias is silent, perhaps in a state of shock, his mother directs her anger at Athena, whose apologia suggests another way to think about Berenice's revenge on Demetrius. Athena insists she had no choice in the matter. She cites the law of Cronus which stipulates that anyone who sees an immortal without the god's permission must pay. This was to be Teiresias' fate from the moment he was born, and compared to Actaeon, who was torn limb from limb by his hounds when he stumbled upon Artemis in the bath, Teiresias was treated lightly. She concludes by giving him the gift of prophecy to demonstrate her compassion (*Hy.* 5.97–130).

Berenice II did not share the goddess' magnanimity, but the death and dismemberment of Acteon, cited by Athena, shows that the penalty exacted by Berenice on Demetrius was appropriate for this kind of crime. Athena's denial of personal responsibility can also be construed as a defense of Berenice. Neither the gods, nor humans who are like them, are constrained by ordinary custom or law. Only the rules of Cronus apply. Though Berenice's actions may not be appropriate for an ordinary mortal, they are altogether fitting for a queen who is godlike in her power, if not actually divine, and like Athena, she bears no blame.

The Hymn to Demeter

In a similar fashion, *Hymn* 6 associates Berenice with Demeter, the goddess of agricultural abundance. Unlike Athena, who was not among the Olympians worshipped in Alexandria or Cyrene, Demeter had a shrine in an area of Alexandria called Eleusis in honor of the village near Athens where her most important cult center was located.²³ There was also a temple of Demeter and her daughter Kore called the Thesmophorion near the Inner Palaces.²⁴ Even more impressive than the Alexandrian site was her temple complex just outside the walls of Cyrene, with ties to an older shrine of Demeter within the walls, where her festival, the Thesmophoria, was celebrated each year as it was at a number of sites throughout the Greek world.²⁵ Given the fertility of the land, and Cyrene's role as an important exporter of wheat and other grains, Demeter's importance there is unsurprising.

Berenice II is assimilated to Demeter in portraits from a collection of seal-impressions found in Aetolian Kallipolis/Kallion and dated early

in the reign of the Euergetae.²⁶ Here she wears a crown of corn-ears and seedpods of poppies. This combination of grains and flowers of the field is an important element of Demeter's iconography, illustrated in the third century by a statue of Demeter of the Threshing Floor, described by Theocritus, with sheaves and poppies in each hand (Theoc. *Id.* 7.155–57). The cornucopias that regularly appear on Berenice II's coins (Fig. 1) and oenochoes (Fig. 4) overflow with similar items, including ears of grain, cakes, apples, grapes, and pomegranates.²⁷

In real life Berenice II and her husband acted like agents of Demeter by donating critical supplies of wheat during the famine years of 245 and 240 BCE when the annual flooding of the Nile was insufficient. For their generosity in buying grain at high prices and bringing it to Egypt they received public thanks in the Canopus Decree (OGIS 56). Berenice II herself owned grain ships which would have been part of the fleet that saved the Egyptians from starvation (PRyl. IV 576).²⁸

The clearest indication that Berenice II should be understood as an avatar of the Demeter of Callimachus' hymn comes from the poem itself. It begins, like *Hymn* 5, in the middle of the ceremony with the voice of a narrator/choral leader addressing the participants as they wait for a ritual object to appear: "Women, as the basket returns say: 'Hail, great Demeter, the nourisher of all, rich in bushels'" (*Hy.* 6.1–2). In this case they are waiting not for a statue, but a *kalathos*, a basket filled with ritual objects. The appearance of Hesperus, the evening star, provides a transition to a brief description of Demeter's wandering in search of her lost daughter, Kore/Persephone, who had been abducted by Hades and taken to the underworld.²⁹

The story of Demeter's response to the loss of her daughter is told in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, but here it is only alluded to in the narrator's address to the goddess, which emphasizes her suffering: "Queen, how were your feet able to carry you to the west, to the Black Men and the Golden Apples. Neither did you eat or drink at that time, or wash; and three times you crossed the Achelous with its silver ripples." (*Hy.* 6.10–13). In the *Homeric Hymn* Demeter's search for her daughter is defined by its length, nine days (*Hom. Hym. Cer.* 47), but geographical names and terms are absent.³⁰ The goddess does not travel through any recognizable landscape. Callimachus, in contrast, specifies the direction in which she wandered, toward the west, and three places that she passed through on her way to a well called *Kallichora*, "lovely pouring," which could be anywhere.³¹ The first ("the Black Men") points

to Africa, the second, to the Garden of the Hesperides, which Apollonius locates in the Cyrenaica, and the third, the river Achelous, is in Aitolia, an area of great diplomatic interest to the Ptolemies.³² Laronde concludes, on the basis of the first two locations, that the ceremony Callimachus describes took place at the sanctuary of Demeter outside the walls of Cyrene, but it is not necessary to carry the argument this far. The important point is that this Demeter is marking off Ptolemaic and specifically Euergetid landmarks on her travels.³³

Callimachus' Demeter, like her Homeric counterpart, is suffering and fasting while she looks for a lost daughter. Unlike the *Homeric Hymn*, which has this plot for its central subject, Callimachus puts it aside in a single verse: "No, No! Let us not speak of the things that brought a tear to Demeter" (*Hy.* 6.17). In the *Homeric Hymn* Demeter does not cry. She suffers grief in her heart and becomes very angry, but tears are a human attribute, and it may be significant that Berenice II lost a daughter herself, who, like Persephone/Kore, was snatched away to Hades at a young age, and was revered afterwards as a minor fertility goddess.³⁴

In any case, Callimachus chooses other topics, including how Demeter established the rules for observing her rites, how she taught the arts of agriculture to Triptolemus, and a third activity which has dropped out of the text, but which served to introduce the story of Erysichthon (*Hy.* 6.18–23). This cautionary tale forms the longest part of the *Hymn*. It begins in a beautiful natural setting (*Hy.* 6.25–29), like the tranquil spot near Hippocrene where Athena and Chariclo were bathing in *Hymn* 5 (70–74), or the meadow where Kore was picking flowers before her rape in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (5–14). As usual, the inviolate grove represents virginity, and in each case it is about to be violently assaulted.³⁵

Here the assailant is the king's son, Erysichthon, whose connection to royalty suits both Hades in the *Homeric Hymn*, who was the brother of a king (Zeus), and Berenice's first husband, Demetrius, whose father was the Antigonid king Demetrius I Poliorcetes. Erysichthon rushed into the sacred grove with a crew of 20 giant servants armed with axes and struck a huge poplar that shrieked in pain (*Hy.* 6.33–39). This tree was evidently coexistent with a nymph whose life came to a brutal end when the tree was destroyed. Demeter heard the cry and at once "made herself like Nicippe, the priestess whom the city appointed, and she had in her hand garlands and poppies, and a key to the shrine hung from her shoulder" (*Hy.* 6.42–44).

There are many versions of the Erysichthon story, but the priestess Nicippe appears in none of the others.³⁶ An argument *ex silentio* is never definitive, but it is reasonable to assume in this case that Nicippe is the poet's own creation because the name is very rare and especially significant. *Nik-ippe* is "she who is victorious with horses." Berenice's own name is a similar construction: *bere-* or in Ionic, *fere-nike*, "she who brings victory." Names with components like (h)*ippos*, "horse," and *nike*, "victory," were common among the Greek aristocracy, yet Nicippe is hardly attested.³⁷ It points not only to Berenice's name, but to her reputation as a victor in four-horse chariot races at the Olympic, Pythian, and Nemean games.

In Callimachus' hymn, then, Demeter assumes the human form of Berenice, who is her priestess appointed by the city, that is, she has a public role and all the accoutrements of her office. This offers a model for how to understand a poet's assimilation of a human queen to a goddess. The mortal Berenice does not become immortal, nor does she look like the goddess in every respect. Rather, she looks like a priestess, the goddess' human representative on earth, but she speaks in the authentic voice of the goddess, thinks the goddess' thoughts, and has a share of the goddess' power. Since Berenice herself received cult in her lifetime as one of the *Theoi Euergetai*, "The Beneficent Gods," it is plausible within the world of the hymn that in performing rites for Demeter one also honors Berenice. This, in turn, explains the religious fervor with which the poet opens the hymn. Readers have wondered how a sophisticated, Hellenistic poet like Callimachus could bring so much feeling to an antiquated cult, as he does both here and in the *Hymn to Athena*, but if he is also honoring his own queen in the same breath, it seems entirely reasonable.³⁸

In the voice of the goddess, then, Nicippe speaks to the wicked and shameless Erysichthon in an effort to soothe his anger, but the furious young man glares at her more fiercely than a lioness who has just given birth, and then in a sexually charged image threatens "to stick his ax in her flesh" as he did to the poplar (*Hy.* 6.50–53). These trees, he says, will be the roof of his dining hall where he and his companions will have pleasing banquets (*Hy.* 6.53–55). In short, he is contemplating mass rape and mass murder. Ever more tree nymphs will be sacrificed to satisfy his hunger.

This is too much for the goddess to bear; in her fury she appears in her own godlike shape, with her feet on the ground and her head

touching Olympus, like the oversized poplar that Erysichthon assaulted first. Leaving his henchmen unharmed, since they acted out of compulsion, she casts on Erysichthon a terrible and savage hunger that no amount of food could ever satiate (*Hy.* 6.65–68).³⁹ The punishment fits the crime, but at this point the hymn takes a comic turn. When Erysichthon has exhausted his father's herds he eats the mules, the heifer that his mother was saving to sacrifice to Hestia, the racehorse, the warhorse, and even the cat (*Hy.* 6.105–10). His parents try to keep his malady a secret by isolating him at home and refusing all social invitations on his behalf (*Hy.* 6.81–88), but he literally eats them out of house and home, until he is finally reduced to sitting at the crossroads where all could see him, begging for crusts (*Hy.* 6.111–15).

The combination of sexual depravity, gluttony, and intemperate speech that characterize Erysichthon is a fixture of iambic poetry, comedy, and rhetoric.⁴⁰ Indeed, Erysichthon is something of a stock literary character, who is equally capable of engaging the sympathies of readers as he is of appalling them. Callimachus' account of his punishment has a marked playfulness that contrasts with the attitudes of the female characters within his own *Hymn*. From their perspective, Erysichthon is a threat to be taken seriously, and if Nicippe's name suggests Berenice to some readers, Erysichthon's behavior may recall Demetrius the Fair, whom Justin (26.4) describes as "arrogant" and "overbearing." Justin says nothing about his eating habits, but his appetite for sex was outside acceptable social norms. Like the excesses of his literary counterpart, it would be easy to believe that Demetrius' were kept within the family until the anger of Berenice-Demeter brought them out into the open and her revenge destroyed him.

In her own story Berenice is not only the avenging deity, but also the rape victim. Unlike Kore she did not have a loving, divine mother who mourned for her even to the point of pretending that she herself had been abducted (*Hom. Hymn to Cer.* 122–25), and afterwards developed an Olympian-sized anger at the aggressor (*Hom. Hymn to Cer.* 354–56). On the contrary, it was Berenice's mother who arranged the unwanted marriage, then co-opted the new husband for her own pleasure. In Callimachus' mythical world outrageous and arrogant sexual behavior is a male prerogative, but in Berenice's own experience, it was not just for men.

Berenice's part in Callimachus' version of the drama is to follow the goddess' lead: to embody good *tryphe* by continuing to be generous to

others, and to distinguish herself from the purveyors of bad *tryphe* by practicing austerities like Demeter, who responded to distress by refusing to eat, drink, or even wash (*Hy.* 6.12). The women participating in the Thesmophoria, like those in the *Hymn*, fasted on the second day of the festival to mark Demeter's suffering, and *Hymn* 6 is set at the end of the second day when their discomfort would be most acute. Demetrius-Erysichthon is repaid for his excessive appetite with a protracted and painful death, but Demeter's devotees expect to be rewarded for their suffering with baskets full of gold (*Hy.* 6.126–27). And so presumably will Berenice. In *Hymn* 6, then, she is not only an avenging deity, or a woman so powerful that she could be one, but also a virtuous, generous, and above all self-controlled woman, who is worthy of receiving her due reward.

Remarriage: "Acontius and Cydippe"

While the *Hymns* to Athena and Demeter focus on sexual crimes and vengeance, Callimachus puts a more positive spin on Berenice's story in the third and fourth books of his *Aetia*. The *Aetia* is a catalog poem assembled from individual segments, each explaining the origin (*aition*) of something out of the ordinary, usually a religious rite or custom. Most of the text is lost, but substantial fragments have been recovered from papyri of the "Prolog" to book 1 (fr. 1 Pf.), the opening *aition* of book 3, ("The Victoria Berenice"),⁴¹ the conclusion of book 4 ("The Lock of Berenice" = fr. 110 Pf. & Catullus 66), and the longest *aition* in book 3, "Acontius and Cydippe" (frr. 67–75 Pf.).⁴²

Although it has been argued that "Acontius and Cydippe" was composed early in Callimachus' life and incorporated into the *Aetia* later, there is no direct evidence of this.⁴³ No papyrus has been found that puts it in a context other than that of book 3, which has a sustained introduction honoring Berenice's victory in a four-horse chariot race at Nemea.⁴⁴ Since book 4 ends with "The Lock of Berenice," in which she is a principal character, and the last two books are structurally distinct from books 1 and 2, it seems likely that some of the other *aitia* in books 3 and 4 might also reflect on her in some way.⁴⁵

"Acontius and Cydippe" is a case in point. Only a few fragments remain of the first part, but the storyline is known from later sources which all go back to Callimachus.⁴⁶ These two attractive young people

were attending a festival on the Island of Delos. He came from Ioulis on the island of Ceos, and she, from nearby Naxos. He fell in love with her at first sight, and although she was totally unaware of it, she inadvertently vowed to marry him when she read aloud some words he had carved on an apple, which he rolled to a place where it could be seen by her attendant: "By Artemis, I will marry Acontius."

The next part of the story is lost, and the principal surviving fragment (fr. 75 Pf.)⁴⁷ begins as her father, who knows nothing about Acontius or his daughter's oath, makes three failed attempts to marry her off to someone else. Each time she becomes dangerously ill before the wedding can take place, and each time the ceremony has to be canceled. After the third attempt he consults the oracle at Delphi where he learns about the frustrated vow, and is advised to marry his daughter to Acontius, who is a distinguished match for her. Their wedding follows, though the poet declines to describe it. Instead, he announces the source of his story, a mythico-history of Ceos by ancient Xenomedes, which he summarizes in some detail (fr. 75.54–77 Pf.).

As in the *Hymn to Demeter*, above, the names of the central characters are significant. Acontius is the eponymous founder of the Acontidai, a family of the Cean city Ioulis, still influential there in Callimachus' time (fr. 75.50–52 Pf.). Why the poet wished to honor them in this way is not known.

"Cydiippe" is a construction exactly parallel to "Nikippe." "*Kyd-*" is the root of *kydos* "glory" or "fame," and the name literally means "glory from horses." Though Callimachus claims that he found the story in a local Cean history, there is no evidence that her character by this or any other name predates Callimachus himself. In selecting this name he likely had in mind another heroine who won glory from horses, Berenice II.⁴⁸

The location of the poem in Ceos is another clue that Callimachus is thinking of the Ptolemies. Callimachus' interest in the island and its history, which he summarizes in 23 verses extending from the island's original inhabitants, the nymphs of Corcyra, to the founders of each of its most important cities (fr. 75.56–77 Pf.), probably relates to the fact that another of its four cities, Koresia, became an important Ptolemaic naval base during the Chremonidean War in 267.⁴⁹ Though the base was built during the reign of Philadelphus, Ptolemaic interests there extended well into the time of Ptolemy III who presided over the Ptolemaic naval empire when it was at its greatest expansion.⁵⁰

As the principal fragment of “Acontius and Cydippe” begins, the father’s first attempt to marry off his daughter is under way:

Already the bride was in bed with the boy, for ritual ordered
that she sleep on the night before the wedding with a male
child whose two parents were both alive. For they say that once
upon a time Hera—Dog, dog, hold back, impudent soul! You
would sing even what is not lawful (fr. 75.1–5 Pf.).

The poet is referring to an unusual custom that required each bride to sleep with a boy whose parents were both alive on the night before her marriage (fr. 75.2 Pf.). This is presumably a kind of fertility magic that imitates marriage, performed in the expectation that the bride will produce a son who resembles the boy. This sexless imitation of marriage is never consummated, however, so Cydippe’s purity endures. Only the marriage with Acontius, her true lover, leads to the birth of progeny, the Acontidae, who still inhabit Ioulis (fr. 75.51–52 Pf.).

Berenice II, herself, was the mother of six children who had a preliminary, brief and infertile marriage, so it is not hard to read “Acontius and Cydippe” as a mythologized and poeticized construction of Berenice’s own experience which amplifies and romanticizes it.⁵¹ Like Cydippe, her destined husband was not the man whom her uncomprehending parent chose for her, and, also like Cydippe, Berenice’s well-being was at risk until the error was recognized. By implication, Berenice also takes on some other aspects of the purportedly historical narrative. Just as Cydippe’s marriage is validated by Artemis, Berenice’s is safeguarded by Arsinoe-Aphrodite in whose temple she will dedicate a lock to celebrate her new husband’s safe return from war.⁵² Also, Cydippe’s sexual purity, despite an earlier experience in bed with a male, makes the point that Berenice, too, was untainted by her own previous marriage. In both cases the faux marriage was forced upon them by social expectations that they could not escape. Finally, Cydippe’s numerous future offspring are mirrored by Berenice’s own.

Acontius is the very archetype of a passionate lover who abandons the town for the country and carves on a tree “Cydippe is beautiful.” As Cydippe makes some readers think of Berenice, Acontius’ passion for his bride may suggest Euergetes’. His desire for his bride is apparent in the “Coma” (Catull. 66.11–14), though he himself is silent there and mostly absent. Here in the *Aetia* their roles are reversed and the groom is the one who is pining away. In both poems Callimachus is intent on

portraying their relationship as a love-match, whatever the reality may have been.

The prenuptial ritual, i.e., the first false marriage, is a significant detail and Callimachus provides an explanation by means of a mythological analogy: “for they say that once upon a time Hera—dog, dog, hold back, impudent soul! You would sing even what is not lawful” (75.4–5 Pf.). Though the poet coyly breaks off the narrative, it is clear that he is about to describe the *hieros gamos*, the “sacred marriage” of Hera and Zeus, well known from *Iliad* (14.292–96). Since Hera and Zeus were brother and sister, their marriage had been cited as a divine parallel for the incestuous union of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II by Theocritus (*Id.* 17.131–34), who makes the reference positive, and also by Sotades, who had a more negative view.⁵³ Although Berenice II and Euergetes were honorary siblings, it is unlikely that Callimachus was thinking of incest here. The issue he is addressing is more likely the sexually mature bride. Hera’s marriage to Zeus was not her first experience with sex, or so we learn from a scholion on *Iliad* 14.256. When she was still a virgin, Hera slept with Eurymedon, one of the Giants, and gave birth to Prometheus. When Zeus discovered it he punished both her lover and son, but did not, apparently, blame Hera whom he married himself.⁵⁴ Similarly, Demetrius was soon dispatched, but Ptolemy married Berenice whom he must have held blameless.

Just as Callimachus suggests ways that Berenice II resembles Athena and Demeter, the queen also has traits in common with Hera. Both are wives of a great king and both are associated with Argos, where the goddess had an important sanctuary, and with Olympia, where Berenice II won a victory in the four-horse chariot race (Hyg. *Astr.* 2.24.11–18). Though primarily a goddess of marriage, Hera, like Berenice, sometimes has the character of a warrior,⁵⁵ and on Samos it is said that Hera Kourothophos, Hera “the nurse,” suckled Heracles, whom Euergetes claimed as an ancestor.⁵⁶

Hera’s purview extended over the entire life cycle of women and she was worshipped in Stymphalos as Hera Parthenos (Hera the Virgin), Hera Teleia (Hera “fulfilled,” i.e., married), and Hera Chera (Hera “bereft” or “widowed”) (Paus 8.22.2, Pind. *Ol.* 6.88). In the normal course of things these three stages of life are experienced sequentially, but Berenice II went through all three while still in Cyrene. The last two stages can be repeated by any woman, but Hera is able to re-experience all three through the miracle of ritual bathing. Such a ceremony was

held near Naphlion every year where her statue was dipped in the river Kanthos and her virginity restored (Paus. 2.38.2; Schol. Pind. *Ol.* 6.88). In Callimachus' "Lock" Berenice's virginity is also renewed before her wedding night with Euergetes, who goes to war carrying the traces of a nocturnal battle that he carried on for "virgin spoils" (Catull. 66.13–14).

Callimachus reinforces the divine parallel by giving Cydippe the same name as a famous priestess of Hera, whose story is told in Herodotus (1.31).⁵⁷ This Cydippe was expected to appear at a ceremony in her Argive temple when the oxen, who were to pull her in a cart, failed to return in time from the field. Her excellent sons, Cleobis and Biton, put the yoke on themselves instead, and conveyed her to the temple to the great glory of their mother, who asked the goddess to give them the best reward a man could receive. They promptly fell asleep and died. Cydippe, the priestess of Hera, suggests a pious Berenice who is the virtuous mother of excellent sons. She is the envy of all, with power equal to the gods, but sometimes that has consequences which even she does not wish for or understand.

Virtuous Marriage: "Phrygius and Pieria"

The *aition* of "Phrygius and Pieria" (fr. 80–83 Pf.), which was placed near "Acontius and Cydippe," but later in book 3, is also about love and marriage.⁵⁸ As in the previous *aition* the impetus for the relationship comes from a passionate groom who meets his modest and beautiful bride at a religious festival. Here he is king of the great city of Miletus which has been in conflict for some time with the nearby city of Myous, home of the bride.

The Phrygians were early inhabitants of western and central Asia Minor whose territory once included the Ionian coast where settlers, perhaps from Crete, built Miletus. Phrygius' name, then, indicates his attachment to the region, and the status accorded to a member of a founding family. Pieria is also a geographic name, but it has nothing to do with little Myous. Rather, it is the region just north of Mt. Olympus best known as the birthplace of the Muses, who are sometimes called Pierides (Solon 13.2; Hes. [*Scut.*] 206).⁵⁹ Like Athena and Chariclo bathing in Hippocrene in *Hymn* 5, Pieria is a Muse, or rather a woman very like one.

Pieria's name also has a political dimension. Pieria-in-Seleucia was the port city where Ptolemy III landed with his fleet on his way to

Antioch (246 BCE) as his first gesture in the conflict with the Seleucids now called the Third Syrian War. He took Pieria without a struggle and went from there to nearby Antioch in a vain attempt to save his sister, Berenice Syra. Pieria was an important homeport of the Seleucid fleet, which Ptolemy gained easily and maintained control of throughout his reign. From there he could readily defend his key bases on Cyprus and Ptolemaic interests in Coele-Syria.

As the poem opens, a temporary peace is in place which allows the women of Myous, including Pieria, to attend a festival of Artemis in Miletus. The original text is lost for the most part, but some of the details of the story are preserved in later epitomes.⁶⁰ Unlike the careful Acontius, the more self-confident and kingly Phrygius makes direct contact with Pieria and asks what he could do to please her. Unlike the modest Cydippe, Pieria speaks up herself with a request that she and her companions be allowed to come to Miletus as often as they wish, and Phrygius understands this to mean that there should be perpetual peace between the two cities, which he promises to bring about.

One source records the detail that the cities had been settled by kinsmen who were in conflict, but who had never actually been at war, and another adds that the enmity between the two states had lasted a long time and seemed intractable. Finally, the fragments themselves⁶¹ indicate that the poet addressed Pieria directly, saying that many ambassadors had come from both cities and returned home with no success. But she obtained peace between them by love because Phrygius heard of her noble preoccupation, conceded what she asked, and made the war cease. From that time on, Ionian women say, "May I be able to honor my husband as Phrygius honors Pieria."

Miletus was a large and prosperous Greek city on the Ionian coast that had been a political football bounced back and forth between the Seleucids and the Ptolemies. It had been taken by Antiochus II in the course of the Second Syrian War, but after the Third, which was successfully executed by Euergetes, it returned to Ptolemaic control soon after 245 BCE. This establishes a *terminus post quem* for the poem, although the dynamic of a long-standing conflict between a smaller city, like Myous, with a larger, richer one, like Miletus, looks not only to Ionia, but to Africa where it describes the relations between Alexandria and Cyrene. Both pairs of cities were settled by kinsmen, and though they were at odds over a long period of time, they had never been at war exactly. In both cases diplomacy failed to bring about a durable peace, and

what brought them together at last was a princess, Berenice II, and her devoted lover, Euergetes, who, like Phrygius, was king of the larger, wealthier city.

When Callimachus asserts that the story is an *aition* for the saying: “May I be able to honor my husband as Phrygius honors Pieria,” he is also implying that the ultimate merging of Cyrene with Alexandria resulted from a love-match, and when he makes Pieria the agent of the peace, he implies that Berenice was as well. This assignment of agency to Berenice is consistent with the presentation of her in the “Lock,” where the poet remarks on her strength of character and the way she obtained a royal marriage. Pieria also becomes a queen, and in so doing acts for the sake of her people.⁶² The purity of her motives is here extended to Berenice, as well as her assertive personality. Unlike Cydippe, who does not speak, Pieria and Berenice both assert themselves for a common good.

Other Aitia from Book 3

“Acontius and Cydippe” is one of several *aitia* from books 3 and 4 that feature Hera, marriage, and Argos where the goddess had her principal shrine. Another is the “Fountains of Argos” (fr. 65–66 Pf.) of which only two small fragments remain. The fountains were named for four of the fifty daughters of Danaus. They had been living in Libya, but fled to Argos to avoid marriage with the fifty sons of Danaus’ brother Aegyptus. Their jilted fiancés came after them, but like Berenice II they killed their husbands rather than endure an unwanted marriage.⁶³ Though traditionally the Danaids paid for their crime in Hades where they had to collect water in a sieve, another version of the tale finds them happily remarried in Argos (Pind. *Pyth.* 9. 111–16). Berenice traveled in the opposite direction, from Libya to Egypt, for her second marriage, which she also accomplished through murder.

The tale of the Danaids and the sons of Aegyptus is part of a cycle of myths promoted by Callimachus because they connect Egypt to Argos and the Greek mainland, highlighting the traffic back and forth between the two. They also have a featured role in the opening of the “Victoria Berenice” which introduced *Aetia* book 3, and is discussed below. They create a mythological genealogy for Berenice and all the Ptolemies which ties them and their home in Egypt to traditional Greek culture by

creating a past for them constructed from traditional narratives with well-known plots and characters.

Heracles looms large among the characters, and he is at the center of the *aition* known as “The Marriage Rites of Elis” (fr. 76–77a Pf.). In addition to her other victories, Berenice won at Olympia, which was for most of its history under the control of the city of Elis, just to the west of Argos. The *aition* describes the origin of an unusual marriage rite there. Only two small fragments are extant, but with the help of some Homeric scholia it is possible to recover some of the details of the story, and with them to establish some suggestive parallels to Berenice’s history.

In this *aition*, the unjust king of Elis, Augeas, refuses to pay Heracles after he cleans his stables, and Heracles becomes angry as only Heracles can. He is supported by Augeas’ son, Phyleus, but a war ensues in any case. Heracles triumphs over the unjust king, places young Phyleus on the throne, and the widows of the slain Elians marry Heracles’ men.

The Ptolemies, like Alexander, claimed Heracles as an ancestor, and the hero’s role in the early history of the Nemean contests is narrated at length in the “Victoria Berenice” which introduces *Aetia* book 3. While the fragments are only suggestive, it is possible that the “Marriage Rites of the Eleans” invites Berenice to see herself as one of the widows who marry Heracles’ men. After all, she was once the wife of a wicked king, but then married Heracles’ man, Ptolemy. The marriage rite itself, which is explained here, is the visit of an armed warrior to the bride before the wedding (*Dieg.* I 3). This also seems to suit Berenice II, who called in the troops to murder Demetrius the Fair before she was wedded to Euergetes.

A connection between weaponry and marriage is also made in a mutilated elegy of Callimachus (fr. 388 Pf.).⁶⁴ The first verse of the fragment, which is not the first verse of the poem in its original form, contains the words “much vibrating” (used only of spears), and “marriage.” That the marriage in question is that of Berenice II is made clear in a second fragment separated from the first by 21 lost verses, where her father’s name, “King Magas,” can be read as well as a description of someone’s determination, which is as firm as the oath sworn by the Phoceans when they abandoned their city rather than yield it to the invading Persians (Hdt. 1.165).⁶⁵ It is not clear here who is standing firm and on what issue, but it is tempting to conjecture that Callimachus is describing Berenice’s steadfast decision to follow her father’s plan for

her marriage and abandon Cyrene rather than yield to Demetrius. His Seleucid connections might inspire the poet to imagine him as an invading Persian. Berenice herself is named in the final verses of the fragment where the narrator wishes her all good things forever, that is, until Athena gives birth and Artemis marries (fr. 388.7–11 Pf.). Berenice herself will soon do both, but her intention in Cyrene is as steady as that of the goddesses who are virginal forever. Here is another hint that the poet is suggesting connections between them.

The “Lock of Berenice”

The “Coma” or “Lock of Berenice,” which concludes the four books of the *Aetia*, focuses exclusively on Berenice II. Like the other *aitia*, it was almost entirely lost, but in 1929 the first of several papyrus discoveries made it possible to restore some of the Greek text.⁶⁶ We now have roughly a third of the original plus a translation into 94 Latin verses made by the Roman poet Catullus in the first century BCE (Catullus 66). It is not a literal translation at every point, but where the Greek is missing Catullus is an indispensable guide to the contents of Callimachus’ poem.⁶⁷

The poem begins by introducing Conon, an astronomer and mathematician who, the Lock says, first saw him, a lock of hair from the queen’s head that she dedicated to the gods, shining brightly in the sky.⁶⁸ Then, in a flashback, the Lock explains how it happened. Shortly after Berenice’s marriage to the king, her husband went off to war. His queen, in a frenzy of anxiety and despair at his absence, vowed to the gods that she would sacrifice a lock of her hair if her husband returned safely. He quickly captured Asia, returned in triumph, and the queen fulfilled her vow (Catull. 66.1–38). The lock is dedicated at the Temple of Arsinoe-Zephyritis, and promptly disappears.

The experience of separation is more than the lock can bear. “When mountains yield to iron?” he asks rhetorically, “What can hair do?” (Catull. 66.47). He melodramatically recounts the trauma of being swept from the temple by Zephyr, into the sea and then up to the sky among the other constellations (Catull. 66. 39–68). Not only is the Lock himself overwrought, but he describes the queen as “distraught” (Catull. 66.21–30). This behavior, the Lock says, contrasted with the character of the queen in her youth:

But certainly I knew you to be bold from the time you were a small girl. Or have you forgotten the noble act by which you acquired a royal marriage, which no stronger person dared?

Catull. 66.25–28

That “noble act” or “noble crime” (both possibilities are contained in the Latin *facinus*) is universally understood to be the assassination of Demetrius “the Fair.” While these are not the exact words of Callimachus, the Latin verses give a sense of what Callimachus had written. They are notable for facing the issue of the queen’s questionable act straight on, even as they launch the poet’s defense of her. The Lock notes that she was very young when the incident occurred, and by implication, innocent. The rhetorical question, “Or have you forgotten the noble act . . . ?” suggests that it took place so long ago and mattered so little at the time that Berenice might not even remember it. Most of all the Lock, and by extension, the poet, stresses the queen’s strength and daring. It was these traits that facilitated the noble deed that is attributed directly to her without mention of any aid or advice she might have received, divine or human. No one else could do it, the Lock is saying, so she did it herself. But was this really the case?

Seen from a Ptolemaic perspective, the death of Demetrius was a positive development. Had he lived, he would have put himself in the way of Ptolemaic interests in Cyrene that dated back two generations. In colluding with his assassination Berenice was acting as an agent of the Ptolemies who would have provided material as well as moral support for her. Indeed, it is clear from Justin’s account that Berenice’s will was accomplished with the help of soldiers, who did the deed on her behalf. They might have been supplied by one of several groups vying for power in Cyrene, but it is not irrelevant that her marriage to Ptolemy III soon followed. His representatives would have held out to her the prospect of being queen of Egypt and the life of wealth and prestige that that implied. This would be an attractive choice for her in contrast to the alternative that she knew only too well. And if she gave it any thought, she would have understood how unlikely it was that she could rule Cyrene very long on her own. If Ptolemy wanted it, why not give it to him and reap the promised reward? To her great, good fortune he kept his end of the bargain.

While Callimachus explains the assassination in terms of the queen’s strength of character, in the rhetoric of the poem it is set up to contrast

with her state of mind at the time of Euergetes' departure for the East. Then the queen was resolute, but at her husband's departure she was "distraught," with a "mind in turmoil" (Catull. 66.23–25). Sad words were spoken, and Berenice wept (Catull. 66.29–30). "What great god changed you?" "Or is it a lover's wish not to be absent from the beloved body for long?" (Catull. 66.31–32). The marriage apparently has wrought a miracle, and the brave, resolute little girl has become a love-sick adolescent. The girl-bride may have dispatched her unwelcome husband, but Ptolemy's bride loves him to distraction, so he and his kingdom will not be at risk.

Euergetes' feelings are not discussed, but he goes off to lay waste to the borders of Assyria "carrying sweet traces of nocturnal strife, those that are brought about by virgin spoils." The warrior king is engaged in two separate conflicts that would test his virility, one, with a happy result in the bridal chamber, and the other, soon to be decided, on the battlefield. Both will produce spoils of war that enhance his reputation.

A king needs a virgin bride to guarantee the legitimacy of his offspring, and Berenice is here projected as one even if the historical circumstances suggest otherwise. In Callimachus' poetry, however, she is not an altogether ordinary mortal, and the subtext of her assimilation to Hera, whose virginity is constantly renewed, is that this too is within Berenice's power. In the very act of marrying Euergetes she becomes *parthenos* again, and the process makes her marriage, like Hera's, a *hieros gamos*.

Also like Hera, Berenice is called her husband's sister, not only in this poem (Catull. 66.21–22), but in inscriptions and papyri where the fiction is a feature of official protocol.⁶⁹ This is generally understood as an imitation of the incestuous marriage of her predecessor Arsinoë II and her full-brother Ptolemy II, but the point of the imitation is that both queens are said to resemble Hera.⁷⁰ In Arsinoë's case the assimilation to Hera may have begun as a convenient way to present her marriage to a Greek audience, but it was not intended to excuse the transgressive nature of the relationship. Far from apologizing for it, the Philadelphi flaunted their irregular marriage because it efficiently conveyed how very close they were to the gods, and not just any deities, but the king and queen of heaven.⁷¹ For Berenice II and Ptolemy III, who are only cousins, there was never a reason to explain their marriage away. They chose to represent themselves as brother and sister so that they too could be projected onto Olympus.

Though the Euergetae called themselves siblings, the emphasis in Callimachus' poem on Euergetes' virility and his bride's unabashed desire for her new husband announces that sex in the royal marriage is no longer problematic; indeed, it can now be celebrated again as a promise of future fertility. Though the Philadelphi were unapologetic about their incestuous marriage, from a traditional Greek perspective it was not acceptable, and Ogden has argued that the public promotion of Philadelphus' courtesans as well as their sheer number was an effort to demonstrate that his relationship with his sister/wife was something other than erotic.⁷² Callimachus makes it clear that a new moral era has now dawned, and normalcy has returned to the palace.

The poem continues: Euergetes returns soon from the battlefield, the dedication is made, and the remainder of the poem is about the experience of the unhappy Lock, wafted from the temple of Arsinoe-Aphrodite Zephyritis, the site of the dedication, and translated to the heavens where it became the constellation still known as "Coma Berenices."⁷³ There is ample evidence in Greek literature and tradition for dedicating a lock of hair to signify changes in social status. These are mainly initiation rituals marking a transition between childhood and adulthood, and are often accompanied by a dedication to a god or hero.⁷⁴ Since Berenice II was already married to Euergetes when her lock is dedicated, these rituals are not precisely analogous to the action of the poem.

A closer parallel often cited by commentators is *Iliad* 23.140–51, where Achilles cuts a lock of his hair over the funeral pyre of his friend Patroclus. He says that he had been grooming it to fulfill a vow his father had made to the River Spercheius that he would receive a lock of hair if his son returned safely from the war. The dedication of the lock to Patroclus seals Achilles' fate. While Berenice would look forward to fulfilling her vow, Achilles already knew that his father's had been made in vain.

Achilles' lock is both a sacrifice to the ghost of his deceased friend, and also a token of his own mourning. The lock as an emblem of loss has a significant parallel in an Egyptian context where it recalls Isis, who cut her hair when she first heard of the death and dismemberment of Osiris, her brother and husband. Berenice's lock disappears very quickly from the temple at Zephyrium, but Isis' was on display in her own temple at Coptos, where she left it as a token of her bereavement, then wept so many tears that the Nile began to flood, a phenomenon that begins the annual cycle of growth and renewal for the surrounding region.⁷⁵ Here Isis' hair is associated with fertility and her powers of

regeneration that will bring agricultural abundance to her people and new life to her brother-husband.⁷⁶ In both her function and her attributes she has points in common with Demeter, as Herodotus noticed several centuries earlier. "According to the Greeks," he says, "Isis is the same as Demeter" (Hdt. 2.59), and Berenice II, whom Callimachus associates with Demeter in his sixth *Hymn*, is also portrayed as the Egyptian Isis. A contemporary papyrus calls her "Isis Mother of the Gods" (PPetr. iii 1 col. 2.6), and she is dressed in the traditional garb of Isis on one of her oenochoes and elsewhere.⁷⁷ Isis herself sometimes merges her identity with Hathor, an even older Egyptian fertility goddess, who lends some of her own attributes, such as her luxurious locks, to both Isis and Berenice.⁷⁸

Isis' lock remained in her temple, but Callimachus tells us that Berenice's was swept away by Zephyr, whose winds were metaphorical horses, placed in Aphrodite's chaste lap, i.e., dipped in the sea, and still damp, rose at dawn to take its place among the constellations of the Northern hemisphere between Virgo and savage Leo, next to Ursa Major, with slow Bootes following (see Fig. 11).⁷⁹

From an Egyptian perspective, Daniel Selden explains, the Lock, who died when he was severed from Berenice's head, is mourned in the customary way by his female relatives, that is, his sister locks, and takes his place among the stars like other souls of the dead in the traditional Egyptian manner as described in the *Coffin texts*.⁸⁰ Selden calculates that the Lock's location in Egyptian terms is precisely where Isis, in the form of a Hippopotamus, holds in check the forces of chaos, represented by a Bull's Thigh, which is Ursa Major. He concludes that the Lock, which once belonged to Berenice, who is Isis' incarnation on earth, has now joined the goddess and her crew of celestial helpers in their never-ending struggle to maintain order in the universe.⁸¹ The Lock has become immortal, in both Egyptian and Greek terms, and this in turn implies that Berenice herself can look forward to the same future.

Callimachus' poem must have been very popular in Alexandria because Berenice's sacrifice and her lock seem to have become a part of the queen's iconography. A lock of hair creeps out from under Athena's helmet in the cameo portrait of her described above, and a fragment from a small faience vessel shows a queen, perhaps Berenice, in the dress of Isis with her left hand on a cornucopia and her right carried to her temple in the act of grabbing hold of a lock of hair.⁸² Even more dramatic is a plaster mold for a large medallion, found near Memphis in

a cache of 92 similar molds, once used to manufacture metal plate and decorative objects embossed with reliefs, and dating from the mid-third century BCE (Fig. 5). It shows a beautiful seated woman nude to the waist with one hand extended while making an offering to a statue of a goddess, which stands opposite on a pedestal. Behind the seated figure is a hut constructed of woven osiers which situates the scene in the damp countryside of lower Egypt. A cupid flies above holding a wreath which he is about to place on the sacrificer's head. This detail suggests that her prayers were amorous in nature and that they have been granted. While it is not possible to determine what object is being offered to the goddess, it is consistent in size and shape with a lock, and Carrez-Maratray has argued convincingly that the scene is set within the temple of Arsinoe-Aphrodite and that the woman making the offering is Berenice.⁸³

The Lock's catasterism is high drama, but it does not end the poem.⁸⁴ He has not yet acquiesced to his fate; rather, humanoid emotions emerge as he expresses his regret at being parted forever from the head of his mistress. He remembers with pleasure the simple hair oils he used to drink before her marriage (fr. 110.77–78 Pf.), and asks for generous gifts of unguents whenever she propitiates Venus, that is, Aphrodite (Catull. 66.89–92). In Catullus' text the Lock's reminiscences are interrupted with an aside of 10 verses (Catull. 66.79–88) where he speaks not to Berenice alone, but to all brides "who cherish marriage on a chaste bed," and asks that they offer him gifts of perfume from their onyx jars. But "whoever has given herself to impure adultery, let the light dust drink up her unfavorable and useless gifts." He wants no offerings from the unworthy, but wishes them all faithful love.⁸⁵

Some readers have wondered whether the Lock's lecture on fidelity calls into question Berenice's own marriage, which would be indiscreet, to say the least, but this misses the point.⁸⁶ Her current marriage is never in question. It is her first one that the poet alludes to here—the one desecrated by her husband and her mother. This is the kind of marriage the Lock abhors, and here at the conclusion of the poem, Callimachus comes round to the point where he started out—to Berenice's transformation into a virtuous, loving bride, whose offerings the Lock welcomes.

The nature of the offering—perfumed oil—is especially suited to Berenice. Flowers, particularly roses, as well as the aromatics made from them, made a substantial contribution to the economy of Cyrene, which was, in effect, her dowry, and Athenaeus notes that the perfume industry

was associated explicitly with Berenice (Athen. 15.689A). In an epigram in which Callimachus appoints her as a fourth Grace, her statue is “newly made and dripping with perfume” (15 G–P = AP 5.146). Fragrant skin is a feature of divinity, particularly of Isis, but here it is also an acknowledgment of an important source of her wealth.

The “Lock” represents Callimachus’ hopes for Berenice’s new marriage. With that marriage she acquired a new family, a husband who was also called her brother, and a new set of parents. Although it was not a secret that her biological parents were Magas of Cyrene and his Seleucid wife Apame, both Berenice and her husband are presented in contemporary inscriptions as the children of Arsinoë II and Ptolemy II.⁸⁷ Not only was this untrue for her, but for him as well.⁸⁸ Both Ptolemy II and Arsinoë II were dead by the time Berenice came to Alexandria, so the fiction was not created for their sake. Rather it was a claim to dynastic legitimacy—to a place in the succession of Ptolemaic couples that each descended directly from the preceding one. This message is conveyed pictorially in gold coins struck by Ptolemy II in the 260s with portraits of him and Arsinoë II on the obverse and their parents, Ptolemy I and Berenice I on the reverse (Fig. 6).⁸⁹ One effect of applying this concept as official policy was to literally make Berenice a new woman. With a new mother and a new father, she was no longer the same person who had murdered her first husband.

The political refashioning of Berenice’s identity worked to explain her questionable past, while Callimachus’ poetry built a vocabulary of images with the same effect, while also projecting her power as the sort wielded by the great goddesses: Aphrodite, Demeter, Hera, and Isis. This implies a purity of action and heart that exceeds normal human limits, and also the power to hold others accountable. Her evident youth in the *aitia* of book 3 and her romantic relationship with her husband in the “Lock” suggest hope for a happy future, though the message of the hymns is much sterner. In evaluating the whole array of signs it is important to keep in mind that they are reflections on her past, present, and future processed through the imagination of a gifted poet. He knew her well over many years, so they were not made up out of whole cloth, nor are they entirely uncritical. At the same time, Callimachus was also a member of her entourage. She paid his salary and supported the Museum and Library to which he dedicated his whole professional life. He certainly could not afford to antagonize her, yet he took some risks in his poetry about her that might have offended a monarch with a smaller mind or

more delicate ego. This is especially true in the *Hymns*, where his Athena and Demeter are not exactly lovable, or even likeable, characters, and in the “Lock,” where a piece of her own hair skates close to parody when he protests loudly at the indignity of becoming an offering to the gods.

Unless she listened to Callimachus’ work without any comprehension at all, which seems unlikely in the person who hired Eratosthenes to teach her children, she must have had some degree of literary sophistication. She probably acquired it in Cyrene where her father supported a circle of philosophers, scholars, and poets. But to accept Callimachus’ nuanced presentations of her she must also have had a degree of self-awareness that could not be formally taught.

Callimachus, on his part, seems to have had a sympathetic understanding of the human costs of becoming an immortal. The “Lock” is very clear on this topic when he expresses the pain that the queen dare not, of being separated from a person he loves and transformed into a star cluster. It was not easy being queen, and Berenice II, who had to face this issue every day, found in Callimachus a poet who was able to appreciate the difficulties of her circumstances and express her own unsayable thoughts and feelings.



FIGURE 1 Gold octodrachm. On the obverse is the diademed and veiled head of Berenice II. The reverse has a cornucopia bound with diadem. Inv. 90.001. Photo courtesy of the Wriston Art Gallery, Lawrence University, Appleton, WI. All Rights Reserved.



FIGURE 2 Mosaic from Thmouis (Timai el-Amdid). A woman in a naval costume identified as Berenice II. In the collection of the Greco-Roman Museum, Alexandria. © The Bridgeman Art Archive Limited.



FIGURE 3 Cameo, Profile of Berenice II wearing the helmet of Athena Parthenos. ID: Camee 18. Courtesy of the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*.



FIGURE 4 Faience Oenochoe with Berenice II. The Queen's name is inscribed on the shoulder. Found in Libya. ID: Vase 1027. Courtesy of the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*.



FIGURE 5 Plaster mold for a medallion embossed with a relief showing a woman in the act of sacrificing. A cupid flies above. Hildesheim inv. 1128.



FIGURE 6 Gold octadrachm, obverse. Portrait of Ptolemy II Philadelphus and Arsinoe II. On the reverse are portraits of Ptolemy I Soter and Berenice I in a similar pose.

© The Trustees of the British Museum/Art Resource, NY.



FIGURE 7 Gold Octodrachm, Ptolemy III, Euergetes. 1980.109.97. Courtesy of the American Numismatic Society.

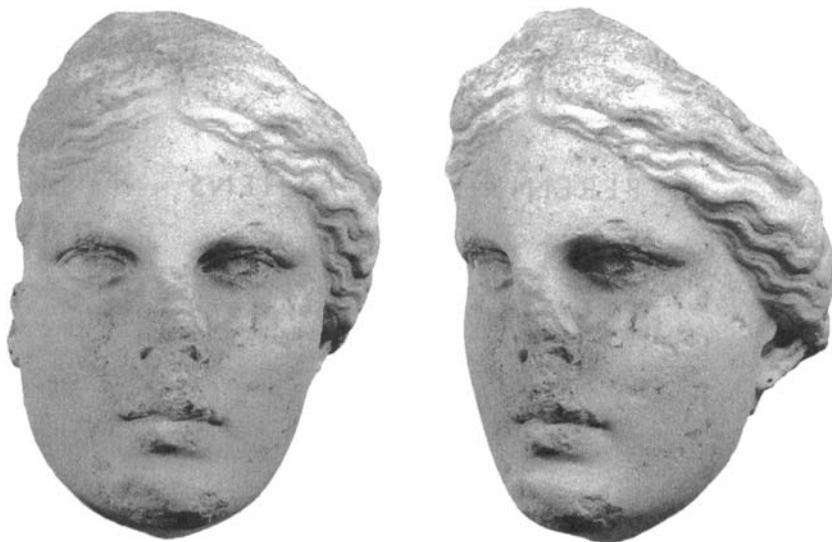


FIGURE 8 Head of an Acrolithic Statue, Berenice II, Athens, Agora S 551 American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Agora Excavations, LIX-55 Date 224/3–221, discovered in 1955. Photo courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

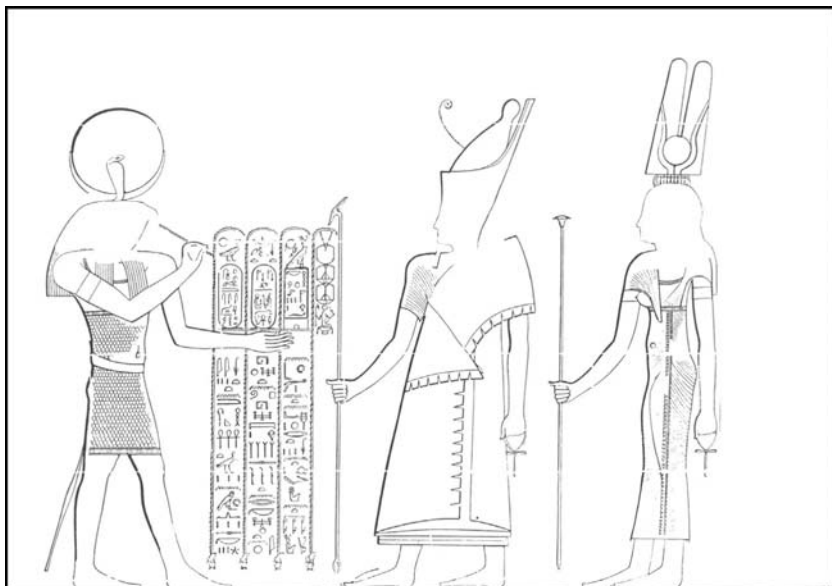


FIGURE 9 The Euergetes Gate at Karnak. Ptolemy III and Berenice II receive their titularies and symbols of perpetual reign from the god Khonsu. Adapted from P. Clere 1961: pl. 43, reproduced in Bianchi 1988 p. 51, fig. 22.

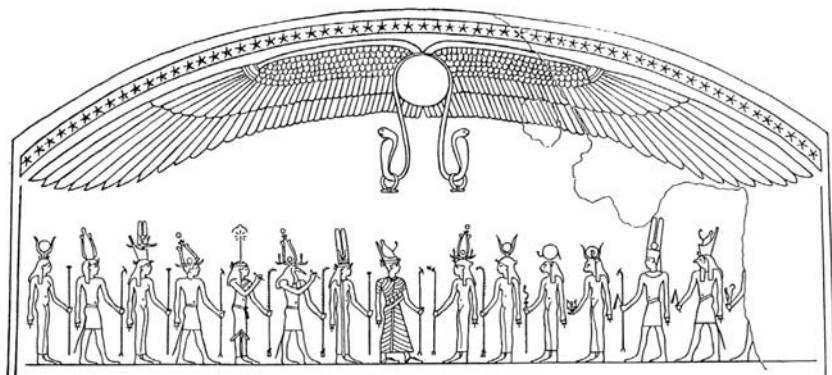


FIGURE 10 The Stela of Kom el Hisn, Canopus Decree. Berenice II, 7th from the left, stands behind her husband, who is wearing striped ceremonial garb. Reproduced in Bianchi 1988 p. 52, fig. 23.



FIGURE 11 Astronomical chart showing the constellation *Coma Berenice* (lower right), embellished with her flowing tresses, near Boötes the Ploughman holding a spear, a sickle, and two dogs, Asterion and Chara. Etching by Sidney Hall (1824). In *A Familiar Treatise on Astronomy*, by Jehoshaphat Aspin (1825). Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

CHAPTER FOUR

Apollonius on Murder and Marriage

IN CALLIMACHUS' *HYMNS* to Athena and Demeter, Berenice II assumes both the privileges and attributes of immortal goddesses who have absolute power over mortal men. They hint at a darker side of Berenice's personality, though in both poems the goddesses do not destroy the male aggressors outright. Their moderation demonstrates the goddesses' and by extension, Berenice's compassion. When the poets treat her experience as a human, however, divine compassion is no longer an option, and in Callimachus' "Lock" the daring Berenice took matters into her own hands.

The "Women of Lemnos"

Ultimately, Berenice's reputation for daring cost her her own life, and it is the human cost of such drastic action that interests Callimachus' younger contemporary, Apollonius of Rhodes. Apollonius' *Argonautica* comments on the present only by allusion because it is sealed by the conventions of epic into a mytho-historical time frame.¹ The characters must always be themselves, playing out the roles given to them in earlier Greek literature, while replaying others familiar from Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, as well as the Athenian tragic stage. Nonetheless, it is hard to believe that Berenice and her courtiers, hearing or reading the *Argonautica*, would not be tempted from time to time to see the queen reflected by some of the poem's most prominent females. This is not a matter of straightforward allegory. There is no character who is simply and consistently Berenice—but at some critical points in the narrative her persona might seem to some readers to emerge from the multiplicity of interpretive possibilities.

This is so in the case of the episode that features the women of Lemnos, where the Argonauts make their first stop after sailing from the Greek mainland in their quest for the Golden Fleece. Briefly, Jason and his crew are hospitably received on an island populated entirely by women. Their queen, Hypsipyle, offers him the kingship as well as herself, and he dallies there in a timeless state of pleasure, only to be recalled to his mission by the promptings of his crewmate Heracles. Though he is reluctant to leave, and she, to see him go, they say gracious farewells and he sails off to his next adventure. This simple plot in which a powerful and sexually attractive female figure detains the hero for a period of time, threatening the success of his mission, but ultimately assists him in achieving it, is familiar from the *Odyssey*, and Hypsipyle shares traits with three Homeric predecessors, Calypso, Circe, and Nausicaa, who all play similar roles.²

The details of what happened on Lemnos, however, point the episode in another direction entirely. After his brief report of the ship's landing, the poet turns immediately to the background story. In the previous year the Lemnian women had murdered all of the men on Lemnos because they had neglected their wives in favor of Thracian women whom they had abducted when conducting raids on the mainland opposite. Aphrodite's terrible anger drove the women to kill not only their husbands and their Thracian consorts, but all of the other males on the island as well. The sole male survivor was the King Thoas, who was put out to sea in a chest by his daughter Hypsipyle (*Argon.* 1.609–26).

The women, now living in a world without men, had stepped into traditionally masculine roles, and when Jason's ship comes into view, they put on the men's armor to defend themselves against the intruders. Hypsipyle, who is living in her father's palace and has assumed his position as ruler, arms herself in his regalia, and the next day, calls a citizen's assembly where her old nurse persuades them to let the Argonauts remain on the island so they can repopulate it (1.654–708). The plan is welcomed by everyone, including the Argonauts, who eagerly pair off with the women. Jason is naturally reserved for Hypsipyle who summons him to the palace. He arrives in the city in a glorious cloak, made for him by Athena (1.721–67), and as he makes his way through town he is compared to a shining star which a young bride sees through her window as she yearns for her fiancé who is traveling abroad. The simile immediately recalls Berenice II in Callimachus' "Lock," who longs for the return of her new husband from the Syrian War and vows to sacrifice a lock of hair when he comes home safely.

Jason finds Hypsipyle in the palace where, before he says a word, she casts down her eyes in modesty and her “virgin” cheeks blush (*Argon.* 1.774–92). The queen assumes that Jason must wonder why there are no men in town, so she tells him an edited version of the story focusing on how badly the Lemnian men had behaved, how they neglected their legitimate wives and how they skewered the traditional relationships between parents and children. Unmarried girls and widows wandered about uncared for, and fathers looked on as wicked stepmothers murdered their daughters. However, she hides the fact that the men were slain, and claims falsely that they are living in Thrace with their new wives and male children. Though she has never laid eyes on Jason until this moment, she concludes by offering him her father’s position as king of Lemnos, which he politely refuses (*Argon.* 1.793–833). Nonetheless, he and his men happily move in and lose themselves in dancing, feasting, and sex, until Heracles, who had declined to get involved in the merriment, reminds the men of their mission and they all decide to leave. The women accept the decision with surprising ease, and off the men go to their ships, though not before Hypsipyle promises Jason that he can return at any time to take up the kingship, and asks him for instructions about what to do if she should bear his child. He says that if the child is male, she should send him to his own parents on the mainland, and in this way acknowledges their potential offspring as his true heir (*Argon.* 1.853–910).

At this point in the narrative, Apollonius does not look into the distant future, but in book 4 it is revealed, literally on the Island of Revelation, that the Argonauts’ descendants will emigrate from Lemnos to Sparta, from there to Thera, and come at last to the coast of Libya as the original Greek settlers of Berenice’s own Cyrene. The Lemnian women can be understood, then, as Berenice’s putative ancestors sprung from the same mold, and they have much in common. Like them her first husband will abandon her for another woman and in a way that will overturn traditional family relationships. Like them she will respond with homicidal passion which will put an end to the offending husband, and her future is also like theirs: she will happily remarry and produce royal heirs.

Apollonius did not invent the most salient facts about the Lemnian Women, whose tale had been told before by Pindar, Aeschylus, and Euripides among others.³ Pindar’s version (*Pyth.* 4. 251–57) is brief, and only a few fragments remain of the tragedians, so it is impossible to say just what innovations Apollonius may have introduced. Nonetheless, he chose to

include this episode and selected certain elements of its traditional plot to bring to the reader's attention. We cannot say for certain that he was thinking of how his treatment would be received by the queen, but it appears to be aimed at softening Berenice's image. In the Lemnian episode there is not just one shameless husband, one murder, and one remarriage, but hundreds, perhaps thousands. The pattern is repeated by every woman on the island. In one sense this increases the horror of it, but in another it universalizes Berenice's experience by magnifying and multiplying it. Though homicide is still a crime, as the poet acknowledges (*Argon.* 1.662–63), on Lemnos it is common to many, rather than the aberrant act of a single madwoman.

Though Hypsipyle had no husband to murder, she too has points in common with Berenice II. Both are descendants of Dionysus, Hypsipyle through the god's marriage with her grandmother Ariadne, another woman abandoned by her first husband, but elevated to the heavens by her second, divine spouse; and Berenice, through her family's mythology that was first promoted by her grandfather, Ptolemy I, and later perpetuated by her husband.⁴ Both are queens, reigning in the absence of their fathers whom they honored above all, Berenice by risking everything to marry the man chosen by her father, and Hypsipyle, by defying her peers to save her father's life. Both put on armor in defense of their fatherland,⁵ live in the royal palace, and maintain a semblance of government in the absence of a king. And both are "rescued" by foreign men of distinguished lineage, one (Jason) who arrives unexpectedly from abroad, and the other (Euergetes) whom Berenice joins abroad. Neither man stays on in the palace, though Berenice's new marriage brings her to a bigger, better one.⁶

Berenice as interpreted by Hypsipyle is gracious to a fault, but clever at concealing a brutal truth when she has to. If Jason at this moment in the narrative can be understood as Euergetes, he does not ask enough questions, and by his innocence is absolved of all guilt in the murder. His refusal to accept the gift of kingship (*Argon.* 1.839–41) is presented as a dedication to duty, rather than the calculated policy of an ambitious monarch who intended to annex the queen's city to his much larger empire.

In the "Women of Lemnos" episode the men's transgression is rejecting their legitimate wives in favor of more alluring relationships, with the result that they mistreat their own children, particularly their female children. This plotline mirrors Berenice's experience even more closely than those of Callimachus' two *Hymns*. The form of the women's revenge is also Berenice's: murder of the miscreants. Human victims, it

seems, cannot afford the compassion showed by deities. Their power, such as it is, can only be demonstrated by exacting the full penalty.

And while the *Hymns* both end with the goddess' revenge, the "Women of Lemnos" does not stop there, but rather it is an early scene in a complex historical drama that will proceed step-by-step to a positive conclusion: the foundation of Cyrene. This, in turn, will be the location of an historical sequel in which the Lemnians' actions will be repeated by a single queen. And these too will play out in a constructive way, as she and her new husband take their rightful place in the Ptolemaic dynasty.

Another Murder

Though Callimachus works hard to justify Demetrius' murder in "The Lock," he never describes it. Apollonius is more straightforward. In the Lemnian episode where Berenice's homicidal outrage is shared by the island's entire female population, their mass murder is called by its real name, *wretched slaughter* (*Argon.* 1.619).⁷

On Lemnos Apollonius is only warming up to his theme. When he brings another murderous princess onto center stage in books 3 and 4, he holds back none of the graphic details. This is Medea, who also has a lot in common with Berenice. Both are princesses in a foreign land: Medea, the daughter of King Aeetes in Colchis, and Berenice, the daughter of King Magas of Cyrene. Both have a chance to win their prince a kingdom through an act of personal daring: Medea, to secure Iolcus for Jason by helping him win the Golden Fleece, and Berenice, to undo her marriage to Demetrius the Fair in order to present Cyrene to Euergetes. Both oppose the wishes of a bad parent: Medea defies her father Aeetes, who wants to kill Jason, whom he sees as a threat to his own power, and Berenice opposes her mother Apame, who insists that her daughter marry Demetrius for precisely the same reason. Both Berenice and Medea plot to murder a close male relative in order to achieve their goals: Medea, conspires with Jason in the butchering of her brother Apsyrtus, and Berenice, with the soldiers who slaughter her husband Demetrius. Both arrange an ambush for their unsuspecting victims: Medea in a temple of Artemis and Berenice in her mother's bedroom. Both choose their own husbands: Medea marries Jason on the island of Drepane, and Berenice weds Euergetes in Alexandria.

Medea's murder of her half-brother Apsyrtus takes place in the midst of a frantic escape scene in an episode that features plots and

counterplots, real and pretended. The Argonauts have just sailed from Colchis with Medea and the Golden Fleece when her father Aeetes sends his own fleet in pursuit. Since the Argonauts are outmanned, Jason and Medea turn to subterfuge. Jason will offer her brother gifts, and she will ask the heralds to arrange that he meet her unaccompanied so she can pretend to contrive a counterplot with him to take back the Fleece. She concludes with these chilling words to Jason, "If the job appeals to you, it is nothing to me. Kill him! Then fight with the Colchians" (*Argon.* 4.419–20).

No time is lost in the execution of the plot. The gifts are sent, the heralds dispatched, and as she sends the deceitful words to her brother she sprinkles magic herbs in the air, drugs so powerful they can lure a wild animal down from a steep mountain (*Argon.* 4.442–44). Apsyrtus appears as planned, and the siblings are soon in deep conversation, when Jason leaps out and Medea hides herself in her cloak so she will not have to see her brother's murder.

Apollonius does not flinch from the horror of their deed, but recreates the moment in graphic detail. Apsyrtus falls to his knees like a sacrificial bull, slaughtered in a ghastly counter-ritual presided over by Jason, the false-priest. In a final gesture, Apsyrtus marks his sister as an accomplice by staining her white veil and robe with his life's blood as she tries to avoid his glance and the consequences of her own complicity. Jason's frantic efforts to ward off the pollution of spilling kindred blood by cutting off the corpse's extremities, licking the victim's blood, and burying the body while it is still warm only increase the horror. And nothing escapes the unforgiving Fury (*Argon.* 4.464–81).

Conspicuous among the gifts used by Jason and Medea to lure Apsyrtus to his doom is a robe that had been given to Jason as a parting gift by Hypsipyle, queen of the husband-slayers of Lemnos, who so resembles Berenice. It had been made by the Graces for Dionysus, the Ptolemies' purported ancestor:

You could not satisfy your sweet desire either by touching it or gazing at it. It retained the scent of ambrosia from the time when the Nysian King himself, Dionysus, lay on it, drunk with wine and nectar, embracing the beautiful breasts of the maiden Ariadne, daughter of Minos, whom once upon a time Theseus left on the Island of Dia after she followed him from Knossos.

Argon. 4.428–34

The daughter of Minos is Ariadne, who ran off with Theseus after she helped him escape from the savage Minotaur, and whom afterwards he left behind on a lonely island. When Jason first persuades Medea to use her magic powers to help him win the Fleece, he cites Ariadne as a mythological exemplum for the role he wants her to play, though he archly forgets to mention that Theseus was not a trustworthy lover (*Argon.* 3.997–1007).

Though the robe's pedigree suggests abandonment, its erotic allure, which works its magic through all of the senses, is irresistible. It is an embodiment of sexual pleasure and the joys of a different kind of abandonment. Apsyrtus is clearly no match for its persuasive power and in this, too, he has something in common with Demetrius, who could not resist the attractions of Berenice's mother, Apame. Her bed became a trap where he was ambushed and slain, like Apsyrtus, who is lured to the temple of the virgin goddess and comes to the same grisly end.

The power of love is an important theme in Medea's story which begins with an address to the Muse Erato asking her to tell how Jason brought back the Fleece from Iolcus with the aid of Medea's love (*Argon.* 3.1–3). That love is induced by Eros, the son of Aphrodite, who shoots an arrow at Medea in sight of Jason, rendering her speechless. The boy-god laughs as the flame burns deeply in her heart and wise thoughts desert her (*Argon.* 3.275–90). She is never the same afterwards.

Love, especially the kind sanctified by marriage, and directed at the king by his adoring queen, was an ideal embraced by the Ptolemies and propagated by their poets. An example is Berenice's innocent and youthful passion for Euergetes celebrated by Callimachus in the "Lock."⁸ Here Berenice is the one who exhibits all the emotion; Euergetes leaves the marital bed proudly displaying "virgin spoils," but if he has any other feelings about his new bride, the poet does not describe them. It is Berenice who does all the feeling and who took all the risks in getting to this point. Her situation is perfectly described by Medea at the precise moment when she understands for the first time that her efforts to get the Fleece for Jason may be repaid with treachery:

Jason, where are the oaths you took before Zeus, the god of suppliants? Where are the promises you made? For these I left the most important things in life in shameless willfulness and against what is right: my fatherland, the famous palace and my own parents. And far from them, I am carried alone on the sea

with the dismal halcyons for the sake of your troubles. And I say that as your daughter, your wife and your own sister I follow you to the Greek land.

(*Argon.* 4.358–69)

Berenice gave up all the same things: her country, her home, and her mother, to become the wife and sister of Euergetes. Fortunately, her Ptolemy proved to be more reliable than Medea's Jason, who tried to leave her for another woman in Euripides' sequel.

It is at this moment, when Medea understands her isolation and the price she has paid for love, that she agrees to collude in the murder, and the poet sings of Love the Destroyer:

Savage Love, great sorrow and great horror for men. From you are grievous quarrels, groaning, toil, and grief without limit is mixed in on top of these. May you rise up and arm yourself against the children of my enemies, O Daimon, who alone casts hateful delusion into the mind of Medea.

(*Argon.* 4.445–49)

In the eye of the poets, at least, it was Love that made her do it, and there is no suggestion that Medea could have resisted its mighty force and done the right and usual things, that is, obey her father, not meet secretly with strangers, not go off with a sweet-talking man, and not murder her brother. Aphrodite's son is by definition irresistible, a god that has the awesome power to turn even innocent princesses into murderous harridans.

Berenice, too, benefits from this argument, especially since Ptolemaic marriages are cast conventionally as love-matches. What was she to do against an irrational force so much greater than herself?

The force of Love may be irresistible, and Medea may be a susceptible young woman, but she is also a witch, a priestess of Hecate, skilled in the use of powerful herbs, and through her grandfather, the Sun, possessor of the evil eye. When she rides with her attendants through the city, people look away for fear of catching her glances (*Argon.* 3.885–86), and when the Argonauts confront Talos, the giant bronze man who is the final obstacle to their homecoming, it is the penetrating gaze of Medea that brings him down (*Argon.* 4.1635–88). Berenice, too, is portrayed with eyes that are larger than life and seem to radiate power. This is especially clear in the mosaic portraits of her in naval uniform found

in Tell Timai (Fig. 2), but it is also evident in coins (Fig. 1).⁹ Alexander the Great was the first to favor this way of expressing his personal charisma, and it was imitated by other Ptolemies, including Berenice's predecessors, Berenice I and Arsinoe II, whose wide, staring eyes were probably meant to suggest nascent divinity rather than temporal powers.

Medea, too, is on her way to revealing her divinity by her superhuman abilities and her disregard for the norms of ordinary human behavior. Though Apollonius does not elevate Medea above the human plane, the *Argonautica* cannot be read except through the lens of Euripides' *Medea* written some two centuries before. There her divinity is revealed at the conclusion when she kills her children with impunity, then summons the chariot of her grandfather, the Sun, and rides off in triumph to sanctuary (Eurip. *Med.* 1293–1414). This tableau is even more horrific than the murder of Apsyrtus, and it is very clear that the perpetrator is in no way bound by the limits of her humanity.

The Ptolemies encouraged their subjects to think of them in similar terms, as if they were endowed with power and freedom of action that had more in common with the gods than their fellow human beings.¹⁰ They set up statues of themselves in Egyptian temples and presided over cults of their own ancestors. Like the Pharaohs before them, they expected to be treated in life as if they were almost already divine, and Berenice was assimilated in literature and art to both Greek and Egyptian goddesses. She was also given her own cult after death complete with shrines and a priestess called the Athlophorus. In life her power and freedom were beyond that of any living woman, and it was easy enough to imagine her taking a place in the variegated and multi-tiered Greco-Egyptian pantheon.

Another Marriage

After Apsyrtus is murdered, the Argonauts seek expiation from the pollution of kindred murder from Medea's aunt Circe, who is proficient in the art of witchcraft, and like Medea as well as Berenice, is said to have had the coruscating, piercing eyes of the Sun god Helios. Circe is not happy to see them though she performs the necessary rites that free them from the religious consequences of shedding kindred blood and sends them quickly on their way.

Circe is a well-known figure from the *Odyssey*, and their visit to her island is the first of a series of challenges the Argo and its crew must

overcome that Apollonius borrows from Homer.¹¹ The last is a stop on the Island of Phaeacia where the second contingent of the Colchian fleet finally catches up to them. Phaeacia is a prosperous kingdom presided over by King Alcinous and his wife Arete who gladly welcome them with gifts and thanksgiving: "You would think they were exulting over their own sons. And the heroes themselves rejoiced amidst the throng, as if they had set foot at the very center of their own city, Harmonia" (*Argon.* 4. 997–1000).

Here the Argonauts are again confronted by the Colchians who have been ordered to bring back Medea and the Fleece. This time, however, Medea is not alone in the company of men, but appeals to Queen Arete, who lobbies her husband at night in their bedroom to decide in Medea's favor. The king is softened by her words (*Argon.* 4.1096–97), but remembering that he is bound to uphold the straight justice of Zeus he lets his wife know exactly how he will make his decision: If Medea is still a virgin, he will return her to her father, but if she has married, he will not separate her from her husband (*Argon.* 4.1098–1109). Arete immediately sends her herald to Jason to tell him of the decision, and a hastily organized wedding takes place that night. The next morning the king makes his proclamation, the marriage is publicly celebrated with feasting and gifts, and the Colchians are resettled in nearby cities (*Argon.* 4.1110–1222).

The marriage would have been impossible without the blessings of Alcinous and Arete whose well-ordered kingdom and dedication to justice represent ideals of enlightened rule. They are also figures from Homer's *Odyssey* where they are uncle and niece, if not brother and sister (*Od.* 7.53–68).¹² Though Apollonius does not mention their consanguinity, he is clear about their association with another brother-sister pair, Zeus and Hera. Alcinous' concern for Zeus' justice and Hera's direct management of the wedding ceremony in place of Arete, associate the Phaeacian monarchs with their divine prototypes, whose own incestuous relationship was used as a paradigm for that of the Philadelphs, Ptolemy II and his sister Arsinoe II.¹³ Anatole Mori argues persuasively that Apollonius' Alcinous and Arete are intended to recall the Philadelphs at an ideological level as well, and it would be hard to imagine an Alexandrian audience that would mistake their identity.¹⁴

Evidence from inscriptions makes clear that Berenice and Euergetes were officially represented as the offspring of the Philadelphs, and this is reflected in Apollonius' Phaeacia, where Alcinous and Arete are foster

parents for Medea and Jason. From their enthusiastic welcome of the Argonauts as their own children, to the queen's tender concern for Medea and her dowering the bride with 12 serving women, Arete acts like Medea's mother, while Alcinous, by tipping off his wife to the details of his decision so that it will turn out to be in Medea's favor, acts like her righteous, but loving, father.

Though Arsinoe II would never have been able to assist Berenice personally since she was already dead by the time her successor arrived in Alexandria, through the timeless magic of poetry, Apollonius contrives to give Berenice and Euergetes the symbolic blessings of their immediate predecessors. It would be especially gratifying to Berenice to hear a rationale for her problematic past offered sympathetically by Arsinoe in the words of Arete.

Though the events on Phaeacia end satisfactorily with the defeat of the pursuing Colchians, the wedding itself has a *noir* character that suits the grim events that gave rise to it. There is no ceremony except the bride's deflowering that takes place at night in a cave once inhabited by a nurse of Dionysus. Hera summons nymphs from the woodlands, mountains, and streams, who fill the cave with flowers and spread the marital bed with the Golden Fleece, while Jason's crew stand guard in full armor, ready to challenge an enemy intruder, then fall into place as a male chorus to sing the traditional wedding song.

There is no romance in this wedding, or even any hope for future happiness, only the acceptance of the consequences that must follow from the acts undertaken to assure the legitimacy of Jason's rule. This point is made clear by the choice of bed linen, the Golden Fleece, without which he cannot be king. Its power may be political, but its radiant glow attracts even Hera's nymphs who struggle to contain their desire to touch it (*Argon.* 4.1145–48). The erotic attraction of power embodied by the Fleece could not be clearer, nor the way that it cast its spell on both of the newlyweds.

There is no description of Berenice's wedding, and it is not possible to know in what way it might be reflected in this account of Medea's. Yet surely it was the case that Berenice, like Medea, was not given in marriage by her father, who was long dead, nor was any other close relative present, since it is inconceivable that her mother was invited, and she had no siblings. Like Medea, she was alone in a foreign land with nothing to rely on except her husband, her own wherewithal, and the kindness of strangers. And if she thought about it at all, she would have understood

that she got from there to here by her own act and that everything that followed could be traced to the murder.

A First Look at Cyrene

What follows the wedding in the *Argonautica* is the ship's immediate departure from Phaeacia, and then, just when the Argonauts are in sight of the Greek mainland, a mighty wind comes up that blows them to the shores of Libya where many centuries afterwards Berenice will be born (*Argon.* 4. 1227–36). The landing in Libya follows Medea's wedding, just as the Ptolemaic re-founding of the cities of the Cyrenean pentapolis followed Berenice's.

The Libyan episode is part of the traditional account of the Argonauts' adventures and is told in detail by Pindar in his fourth *Pythian*, written about 200 years before the *Argonautica* on commission by Arcesilas IV, the last of the Greek kings of Cyrene who were descended from the founder, Battus I. Pindar's treatment of the Argonauts in Libya is an *homage* to Arcesilas, and Apollonius' expansion of it is meant to honor Berenice.

Apollonius' Libya is an unhappy place—suitable for reflecting on a bloody murder and a grim wedding. It is a desolate wasteland bordering on an endless desert where the Argonauts lay down to die under a scorching sun. And they surely would have had it not been for the indigenuous spirits of the place, beginning with three Heroines, Guardians of Libya, dressed all in leather, who appear to Jason in a dream and give riddling instructions, which the Argonauts understand to mean that they must carry the ship on their backs over the sand (*Argon.* 4. 1305–79). On the 12th day of portage they meet a second group of spirits, the Hesperides, in whose garden the giant serpent Ladon had guarded the Golden Apples until the day before when Heracles, once an Argonaut himself and now the Ptolemies' redoubtable ancestor, killed the snake with his arrows and stole the precious fruit (*Argon.* 4. 1393–1460). The nymphs show the desperately thirsty Argonauts a spring that Heracles had kicked open in a rock; they save the Argonauts' lives on the very spot that will become the Libyan city of Euhesperides, which Berenice re-founded, fortified, and renamed for herself.

The third local deity is the merman Triton, who surfaces in the lake that bears his name and proffers as a guest gift a clod of earth that will

become the Island of Thera, the launching point of the Greek settlement of Cyrene (*Argon.* 4. 1537–61). The clod is the physical expression of the Greeks' right to rule North Africa, analogous to the Fleece which guarantees Jason's right to rule Iolcus. It is as potent in its simplicity as the Fleece is in its magnificent sensuality.

Medea's role in this episode is minimal. Her impressive powers are not available to the struggling Argonauts, nor does she assume a public presence as Jason's wife. Rather she is separated from him and the other men, surrounded at all times by the 12 young women who Arete gave to her as attendants. She had a similar group of 12 companions in Colchis where they slept in the vestibule of her room and followed her everywhere (*Argon.* 3.838–41). In Libya they all lay down together on the shore believing, like the others, that they will soon perish, and they wait all night long like unfledged chicks abandoned after falling from a rocky cleft. They let their golden hair drag in the dust and abandon themselves to grief (*Argon.* 4. 1296–1304). Then nothing is heard from them again until one of the Argonauts, Mopsus, is bitten by a viper, and the young women run away in fear (*Argon.* 4. 1518–22).

If anyone could cope with a venomous snake, it should be Medea, whose spells and herbs tranquilized the giant serpent that guarded the Golden Fleece (*Argon.* 4.127–61), yet here in Libya she becomes a younger version of herself, unmarried and transported back in time before her unique powers appeared and she had learned how to exploit them. It is not an accident that this time-warp happens in Libya where Berenice, too, was once young. Here in her homeland the poet offers a glimpse of little Berenice, surrounded by her playmates, innocent, bewildered, and unable to cope in a hostile environment. Berenice's was not a tranquil childhood, and Apollonius' evocation of it strikes a sympathetic note in his otherwise sardonic treatment of her.

The window on Berenice's past quickly closes as the ship leaves Libya, and the full expression of Medea's powers are on display again, as she volunteers to save them all by turning her potent gaze on Talos, the bronze giant. Jason escorts her to the foredeck so she can confront him directly, but she acts alone as she overwhelms the giant with her unique arsenal of weapons (*Argon.* 4. 1654–88). This is what she has finally become—a warrior willing and able to use her power directly for the benefit of the Greek heroes, and this brief episode reads like a final reflection on Berenice, who is not now, and perhaps never was, a lovesick maiden like Medea when Jason first found her in Colchis. Rather, she is

a dangerous operator, albeit female, who agrees to harness her power on behalf of the Ptolemies, or so one hopes.

Apollonius on Berenice

Is Apollonius a reliable witness to the real Berenice? Of course not. The *Argonautica* is a highly literate poem on a mythological subject with many traditional elements that the poet could not alter. Nonetheless, to certain contemporary readers, including the queen herself, it is possible to see Berenice now and then in the character of Medea. Apollonius certainly knew his queen personally. He had been Euergetes' tutor and head of the Library at Alexandria when she arrived there.¹⁵ While the duties of a royal tutor are nowhere described, it seems unlikely that a man of Apollonius' learning taught the prince his ABCs, or had much to do with forming his mind until Euergetes had at least reached adolescence.¹⁶ Apollonius may even have had Euergetes' ear for an indefinite time after that, since Macedonian kings tended to rely on circles of close advisors, as Jason does in the *Argonautica*.¹⁷

Unlike Callimachus, who may have known Berenice's family in Cyrene and who treats her like a doting uncle in the final books of the *Aetia*, Apollonius met Berenice after she came to Alexandria. It would not be hard to guess from the *Argonautica* that he was not entirely pleased by what he saw. The feeling must have been mutual because at some point afterwards he was relieved of his duties at the Library and replaced by the great physicist and polymath, Eratosthenes.¹⁸ The brilliant Eratosthenes was certainly worthy of the appointment, but he was also from Cyrene, and perhaps more enthusiastic about his queen than the Alexandrian Apollonius.

The beginning of Eratosthenes' term as librarian is usually set at 246 BCE, that is, at the very start of Euergetes' reign, but it could just as well have begun somewhat later. A slightly later date would provide a window for Apollonius to create his first edition of the *Argonautica*, which the scholiasts call the *Proekdosis*, or "preliminary edition."¹⁹ Though the six variant readings of the text attributed to the *Proekdosis* give no sense of its character, or whether it differed significantly from the version that has survived, the very existence of the *Proekdosis* seems connected to the stories in the ancient *Lives* of Apollonius that have him reading portions of his poem in Alexandria to general disapproval and fleeing to

Rhodes in embarrassment.²⁰ Ancient biography is usually unreliable, and the *Lives* of Apollonius contradict each other and even themselves in ways that are not reassuring, so it is wise not to rely on the details. Nonetheless, Alexandrian poets did perform their work, and it is possible that the *Argonautica* was not admired by Apollonius' royal audience. Its Berenice-like character, who is self-involved, unpredictable, and willing to kill her own brother when it seems expedient could not have pleased the queen, and it is not surprising that Apollonius had to leave town.²¹

In the *Argonautica*, as we now have it, the murder and marriage lead directly to the ship's arrival at Cyrene, or more precisely Euhesperides, later Berenike. There can be no clearer indication that all of book 4, if not the entire epic, is an elaborate *aition*, or founding myth, for Cyrene and its integration with the Ptolemaic empire, and that Medea and Jason, as presented by Apollonius, can be read as mythological *exempla* for Berenice and Euergetes. This is not an argument for an allegorical reading of the poem, but a suggestion that this gripping tale, constructed from a traditional story and written in an artificial, literary language created from words and phrases of earlier poets, and replete with references to earlier literature and recent discoveries in geography, ethnography, medicine, and more, nonetheless contains certain truths about Berenice.

As Aristotle explains, poetry, unlike history, tells general truths, i.e., "what sort of things it is suitable for a certain sort of person to say or do, either by probability or necessity" (Arist. *Poetics* 1451b4). And it is this quality that makes it more serious and philosophical than history (Arist. *Poetics* 1451b3). Apollonius' Medea is the same sort of person as Berenice, whom the reader can observe in similar circumstances doing and saying, inevitably, the same kinds of things. In this sense, it is true portrait.

If modern readers have resisted seeing Berenice' reflection in Medea, it is partly because Apollonius has been dated incorrectly. Though the scholiasts all agree that he lived in Alexandria during the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes, he has consistently been dated earlier for no reasons that trump the ancient evidence.²² Beyond chronology, readers have difficulty imagining a court poet who would suggest, however indirectly, that his monarch might resemble a character who killed her brother and murdered her children. Yet court poetry at its best is not always about praise, and even Callimachus, who works hard to put Berenice in the

best light, cannot resist noting in the “Lock,” where it is in no way necessary, that she had an aggressive character.

The poets’ fixation on the murder suggests that Berenice’s questionable past had become a fixture in her present, and it is probably right to say that there was no point in her 25-year reign when she ceased to be the self-interested murderess who killed the one she should most have loved to gain a richer kingdom and a more obliging king. Though this kind of behavior was typical of the royal houses of Macedonia both before and after Alexander, and though Berenice was not their first female practitioner of the art of political assassination, a woman who would kill her husband was especially problematic, not only in her own household, but in traditional society generally. She could only be understood in the same terms as a powerful, awe-inspiring goddess like Athena, or a larger-than-life figure from myth like Medea.

CHAPTER FIVE

Ruling and Racing

ONE OF THE PTOLEMIES' most important political innovations was the "power couple." Although Macedonian queens had a tradition of asserting themselves in politics, and even took to the battlefield to protect their own interests and those of their children, the concept of a royal couple at the head of government first appears under the Philadelphi.¹ It is eloquently expressed on their coins with jugate heads on the obverse so closely overlapping that they appear to be attached to one body (Fig. 6).² On the reverse are the heads of their parents, Ptolemy I and Berenice I, in an identical pose. The two images clearly convey the notion that the couples are figuratively, as well as literally, two sides of the same coin. There are no coins with similar images of Ptolemy III and Berenice II, but the honorary designation of her as the king's sister and their self-presentation as the children of the preceding couple, Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II, indicates that they too took their place in the royal succession as a twosome.

Since traditionally only gods were portrayed on the obverse of Greek coins, the jugate portraits also suggest that the couples were divine.³ This was also the case for Berenice II and her husband, who were called the *Theoi Euergetai*, the "Beneficent Gods." The joint title appears in inscriptions beginning in 243/2, just a few years after their marriage.⁴

It is significant that the male head on the jugate coins is closer to the viewer, dominating the image, while the female is behind, though projecting forward so that the outline of her features can be clearly seen in silhouette. Though the images suggest joint rule, the male is dominant, and this was certainly the case in the context of governing. To understand Berenice's role, then, it would seem essential to know something

about her husband. Unfortunately, the narrative sources that have survived say very little about him. This is partly the result of happenstance—no histories of the period have survived—and partly because his two predecessors are both larger than life figures—Soter because he was the dynasty's founder with a direct connection to Alexander, and Philadelphus because of his masterly skills at public relations. Euergetes seems a pale third in comparison. Yet the empire was at its peak during his reign, both militarily and culturally. It is hard to imagine that a truly modest and obscure figure could have been so successful in managing a large and complex state. Clearly there was more to him than we know.

Berenice's Husband

One shred of information that has survived accidentally is that Euergetes may have been called Tryphon.⁵ If this is the case, it would be a reference to *tryphe*, the extravagant display of wealth, generosity, and excess that characterized the reign of his immediate predecessor, and degenerated into hedonism among his successors, beginning with his own son, Ptolemy IV Philopator.⁶ There is, however, only slender and unreliable evidence to suggest that Euergetes' lifestyle could be characterized as hedonistic. The suggestion that he had a mistress named Oenante and that her son Agathocles was his *eromenos* (Schol. Aristoph. *Thes.* 1059) should not be taken at face value. Agathocles was a minister of Ptolemy IV, who, with his sister Agathoclea, debauched and then destroyed Berenice's son and daughter. Their story is told below, but the troubled pair probably had little or nothing to do with Euergetes.⁷

That the Euergetae took credit for Egypt's prosperity and advertised their own generosity to the people is evident in the queen's iconography, which featured an overflowing cornucopia. It was also celebrated by Callimachus in his *Hymn to Demeter*, and received public thanks in the Canopus decree. Nonetheless, they never staged anything like Philadelphus' *pompe* of 275 BCE to display their wealth to the people.

Tryphe also suggests Dionysus, whom the Ptolemies, like Alexander before them, claimed as a divine ancestor.⁸ Ptolemy III put Dionysus at the top of his family tree, along with Heracles, in the Adoulis decree (OGIS 54), set up soon after he returned from the Syrian war. There is more on this below. In addition, an ivory bust of a male wearing a Dionysiac ivy wreath found with a female bust at Thmouis in the Delta has been identified as

Ptolemy III.⁹ A second bust, probably from Crete, shows the king with small bull horns that connect him with Dionysus.¹⁰ This is part of a trend to portray the kings as Dionysus that begins with Ptolemy I and was promoted by Ptolemy II, who gave the god with his maenads a featured role in the great *pompe*.¹¹ Beyond the inscription and the busts, however, which may not be accurately identified, there are no traces of Dionysiac tendencies associated with the Euergetae. Rather, the claims of divine ancestry and wealth and generosity implied by *tryphe*, are meant to legitimize a monarchy lacking a traditional aristocracy to acknowledge its lawfulness.

We know very little else about the person and personality of Berenice's husband, but an anecdote preserved by Aelian (VH 14.43) suggests that early in his reign he was in the habit of enjoying himself at the expense of good government. The story goes that Ptolemy III used to play at dice while a slave read him the names of persons found guilty of crimes and some details about the cases, so that the king could decide which of them should be given the death penalty. One day Berenice took the document from the slave's hands and refused to let the names be read out, asking rhetorically "Is it not necessary to apply one's full attention to issues regarding a human life, rather than playing at childish pursuits? The fall of dice and the fall of bodies are not the same thing." Ptolemy was pleased by this and thereafter never made decisions about capital crimes while playing dice.

Since Aelian does not name his sources it is impossible to know when the story originated, or what its original context may have been. Beyond this, Aelian claims not to know which Ptolemy is meant here, but since the wife's name is Berenice, it could only be Ptolemy I or Ptolemy III, and it is unlikely to be the former whose seriousness of purpose has never been in question.¹² Most likely the couple featured in this anecdote is Ptolemy III and Berenice II. While there is no reason to trust that she is accurately quoted, the anecdote, which preserves the only words of Berenice recorded from antiquity, contains some interesting information. In contrast to Apollonius' innuendos, it presents the queen as a moral, even righteous, person. Although Euergetes is shown at the outset to be an irresponsible ruler, he learns quickly with the help of his much wiser wife who guides him on the path to a more sober dispensation of justice. Though he is far from an admirable character at the start, he is able, with her help, to evolve into a more mature ruler. She, in turn, is portrayed as a positive influence on her husband, whose opinions he takes seriously. She also has an interest in the well-being of her subjects, who can trust her to ensure that they will be treated fairly even in the most dire circumstances.

In Aelian's anecdote, Euergetes makes the decisions, while Berenice works on the sidelines to improve their quality. She does not hesitate to speak out when she sees that justice is not being done, but does not take any direct action either. There is only one shred of evidence that she herself was able to make executive decisions independently. This, significantly, involves a woman's issue. According to Hyginus (*Astr.* 2.24) Berenice once gave an order that no one might liquidate a dowry left by a father to a young woman of Lesbos, and that the woman had a right to petition in such a case.¹³ Hyginus says that his source for the story was Eratosthenes, the geographer whom Berenice brought from Cyrene, by way of Athens, to become librarian at Alexandria and royal tutor. The information, then, is contemporary with Berenice herself, and since it comes from someone close to the royal family, it is likely trustworthy.¹⁴ It shows Berenice issuing orders independently on a legal question originating from a Greek island that must have been under Ptolemaic control at this time.¹⁵ The court at Alexandria would have received a petition from the aggrieved party, who had suffered at the hands of an unscrupulous male relative, and it was given to Berenice to decide presumably because it was a woman's issue.¹⁶ The decision itself is consistent with the Ptolemaic policy of bringing law in the Greek states within their sphere of influence closer to the Attic standard.¹⁷ Whether or not Berenice herself took an active part in this effort, the story is intended to show her both willing and able to act on behalf of her female subjects, and as a ruler who could make legally binding decisions.

A related question is what resources she may have had to underwrite her personal agendas. Her connection to the fragrance and shipping industries in Cyrene is discussed above, but what, if any, wealth they generated, and whether she personally controlled it, is not known. Beyond this, she was publicly thanked along with her husband in the Canopus Decree (OGIS 56) for the help they gave in alleviating the famines of 245 and 240 BCE. This relief was provided by buying grain at high prices abroad and selling it cheaply to the starving Egyptians.¹⁸ Whether any of her private wealth was deployed for this purpose is not known, or what role, if any, she played in organizing the relief effort. It may be significant that the famine of 245 began while Euergetes was in Syria pursuing the war discussed below. With a power vacuum in Alexandria, Berenice herself would have had the opportunity to play a key role in providing the necessary resources, including the use of her own ships to transport the grain.

The Third Syrian War

The first year of Berenice's marriage was dominated by the Third Syrian War, which took her husband from her side and sent him overseas in a vain attempt to save his sister, the wife of Antiochus II, and their young son.¹⁹ Though his motivation was personal at one level, it was also political. In the ongoing struggle among the successors of Alexander to increase their hegemony at each other's expense, Ptolemy II had twice set himself against the Seleucids in conflicts now known as the First and Second Syrian Wars (274–271 and 260–253 BCE).²⁰ The First ended in a stalemate, though Philadelphus appeared to be the victor because Antiochus I was unexpectedly prevented from invading Egypt. Though Egypt itself was not at risk in the Second, Philadelphus did not fare well in that conflict. The war involved a struggle for the Greek cities of Miletus and Ephesus in Ionia and featured a revolt by Philadelphus' then heir apparent, "Ptolemy the Son."²¹ Philadelphus' opponent in the second war was Antiochus II, who was joined by Antigonos, whose fleet severely weakened the Ptolemaic naval forces that had been operating in Ionia and among the Aegean islands. In the upshot, Philadelphus lost control not only of Miletus and Ephesus, but of some of his island bases and territories in Cilicia and Pamphylia.

As part of the negotiated settlement a marriage was arranged between Philadelphus' daughter, Berenice Syra, and the much older Antiochus II in 252 BCE. An account in Porphyry describes how Philadelphus accompanied her to Pelusion, on Egypt's eastern border, where she was handed over to a trusted courtier, who brought her to Antiochus somewhere north of Sidon.²² She had with her a vast amount of gold and silver, which is celebrated by the epithet *Phernophorus*, "the dowry-bringer." It was events stemming from this marriage that brought Ptolemy III into Syria for a third war with the Seleucids.

Antiochus II had a first wife, Laodice, and two grown sons, including the future Seleucus II. Berenice Syra took Laodice's place, and gave birth to an infant son of her own. Laodice did not give up easily, however, and managed to reinstate herself with the king. Like other Macedonian kings Antiochus was not exactly monogamous. Laodice and both of her sons were present in Ephesus with Antiochus when he suddenly died in the summer of 246. She claimed at once that the old king had named their eldest son Seleucus as his successor. This naturally started a rumor that she had poisoned him, but whether or not this was

true, it created a problem for Berenice Syra whose infant son, also named Antiochus, was now in danger.²³ She was in Antioch at the time, where she proclaimed her own son king and sent to her brother, who had recently become Ptolemy III, for help. He made an effort to ensure the support of other cities in the area, as is clear from a letter written to the Cilician city of Kildara by his minister Tlepolemos (SEG 42.994).²⁴ His sister's supporters were also able to capture Cilician Soloi where a treasure that was kept in its citadel was commandeered and brought to her in Antioch. When her brother Euergetes and his fleet arrived at the nearby port of Seleuceia-in-Pieria, he was greeted with great fanfare, as he was in Antioch itself, but he was too late to help her or her son, who had both been assassinated by Seleucus' operatives.²⁵

Direct evidence for this stage of the war is offered by the Gorub papyrus, a document apparently written by the king himself, perhaps as a campaign diary. The fragmentary state of the papyrus as well as uncertainties about its authorship and intended audience make it difficult to evaluate, but it is generally agreed that it is contemporary with the events it describes.²⁶ If it is indeed from the king's hand, it unintentionally reveals aspects of his personality and management style. While offering necessary cautions about the limits of this kind of analysis, Hauben notes how it reveals habits of mind that suit a military officer who values precision (numbers, indications of time, geographic details), and remembers his officers' names.²⁷

The document also shows him euphoric, not to say overwhelmed, by the enthusiasm of the crowds of priests, soldiers, and local officials who gave him a jubilant welcome first at Seleuceia-in-Pieria, and again in Antioch. There he made offerings, poured libations, and as the sun was setting, went in to see "the sister." Since the literary sources all agree that his sister had been murdered before he arrived, this phrase needs some explanation. Bevan suggests that "the sister" was not his biological sister, Berenice Syra, but his wife Berenice II, who is called his sister in both literary and epigraphic sources.²⁸ He imagines that Berenice II came to Antioch for a quick visit to see her husband and encourage the troops. Although Hyginus (*Astr.* 2.24.11–18) portrays her on a battlefield coming to the rescue of her father, and there is a tradition of Macedonian queens taking the field with the troops, Bevan's thesis has generally been dismissed. One sticking point is Callimachus' "Lock," which places the queen firmly in Alexandria while her husband is abroad. A vow is made for his safe return and when that is accomplished, the lock is duly

dedicated at the temple of Arsinoe-Aphrodite. At no point is Berenice II absent from Egypt.

In spite of this contemporary evidence that Berenice remained in Alexandria, Bevan's reading has found support from Llewellyn-Jones and Winder, who see the visit to Antioch as part of a campaign by Berenice II to prevent her husband from putting her aside to marry his own sister. Now that her husband, Antiochus II, was dead, they argue, Ptolemy III suddenly had an unexpected opportunity to imitate the incest of his predecessors, the Philadelphoi.²⁹ While Berenice II may well have feared such an outcome, the timing of the events, though imperfectly known, makes a journey to Syria unlikely. The arrival of Ptolemy III in Seleucia-in-Pieria was followed by his departure the next day for nearby Antioch. If "the sister" whom he went to see there was Berenice II, she either disembarked from Alexandria before him, or came with him and then hurried on ahead to the palace in Antioch before he could get there himself. Neither scenario seems credible, and, beyond this, Berenice was already pregnant with their first child when her husband disembarked for Syria. Surely she would have stayed at home rather than put herself or her unborn child at risk. It is preferable, then, to assume that "the sister" of the Gurob papyrus is Ptolemy's biological sister Berenice Syra. Whether her brother knew of her death before his arrival, or only learned about it on the spot, he could have gained some advantage in not giving it any publicity until he decided on his next steps.³⁰ His hedging about her status suggests that his talent for strategy extended beyond the military to the diplomatic.³¹

The Home Front

Once news of Berenice Syra's death reached Alexandria, Berenice II would have nothing to fear from her sister-in-law, and in a poetic turn-about, the newly wedded queen could now usurp her sister-in-law's role. Callimachus' "Lock," written soon after Ptolemy's return to Alexandria, presents a Berenice II who is both the king's wife and his sister. Here the Lock, speaking of the queen's grief at the departure of her husband says:

Did you not mourn for your deserted marriage bed?
Or was it the tearful parting from a dear brother?

Catull. 66.21–22

At this point the poet only suggests the possibility that Berenice II is her husband's sister, but only 20 verses or so later, Arsinoë's obelisk is "the obelisk of your mother Arsinoë" (fr. 110.45 Pf.), i.e., the husband and wife share the same mother and are now to be thought of as siblings.³² The poem's climax, the dedication of the lock at the shrine of Arsinoë-Aphrodite at Zephyrium, seals the argument. Berenice II has become her mother-in-law's true spiritual daughter and heir.

This is the earliest, roughly datable, evidence for the officially sanctioned myth that Berenice II and Ptolemy III were siblings, the children of Arsinoë II and Ptolemy II.³³ While the notion seems bizarre, and no one at the court would have thought it was literally true, seen as the creative merger of the two Berenices in the imagination of a great poet, it makes a kind of sense. It is both a graceful response to the death of Berenice Syra, and the first step in an extended campaign to fashion Berenice II as a new Arsinoë II. It is she who will provide the template for Berenice's cults, for her representations in art and artifacts, and for the mythology of her marriage.

Though Ptolemy was having a good war, all was not going well on the home front, and ancient sources indicate that a domestic rebellion of some sort motivated his quick return from Syria after only a year on campaign.³⁴ It is unclear what the scope of the uprising was, or its source, but it was put down quickly after his return. If the famine of 245 BCE was not the direct cause, it certainly aggravated the situation.³⁵ It was relieved by the joint action of the king and queen discussed above. Though neither the rebellion nor the famine proved to be disastrous, Berenice's time alone in Alexandria could not have been very comfortable as circumstances began to go out of control. The sedition, whatever it involved, must have been intended to take advantage of Ptolemy's absence. That it did not grow into something larger and more dangerous may reflect on the queen's ability to manage the crisis, or only on the speed at which Ptolemy could return.

Nothing more is known about the period that Berenice spent alone at Alexandria, though Svoronos has hypothesized that an extraordinary series of coins minted at Alexandria bearing a portrait of a youthful Berenice II with a royal diadem and veil were issued at this time (Fig. 1).³⁶ Her hair is in a style that has become known as the *melonenfrisur* because its ridged surface and shape resemble a melon. One small lock escapes just above her ear. The long veil falls over her shoulders and she wears a thin necklace and earrings. Her face is youthful and rounded, with the

beginnings of a double chin; the nose is straight, the lips are full, and her eyes are unusually large.

This portrait of Berenice II has become the baseline reference that art historians use for identifying images of her in other media. On the reverse are her key iconographical figures including her single cornucopia, overflowing with fruits and grains, and the fillets of the royal diadem falling on the right side of the cornucopia.³⁷

On these coins she is posed for an individual portrait like those of Arsinoe II.³⁸ It was long the custom of Greek states to feature only deities on their coins, and Arsinoe's may have appeared only after her death and deification. Berenice's are of the same general design, but began to be circulated while she was still very much alive. If she was not already deified, they suggest that she would be soon.

The Dioscuri, whose stars or pointed caps often appear on either side of Berenice's cornucopia, occupy that space between mortals and immortals that was of such keen interest to the Ptolemies, who hoped themselves to board what Fredrick Griffiths calls "the Olympian shuttle."³⁹ In Homer the Dioscuri are the sons of Leda and Tyndareus, king of Sparta, and the brothers of Helen, who went with Paris to Troy, or in other versions of the story, to Egypt, though she was the wife of the Spartan King Menelaus. A later tradition makes Zeus the Dioscuri's father, and tells how he assumed the form of a swan to seduce Leda, who hatched their three children from a single egg. Both mortal and immortal, heroes and gods, their iconographic stars and caps were traditional symbols of the Spartan double-monarchy. Though the Ptolemies' own construction of monarchical rule was different, Sparta mattered to them as a model of a successful Greek monarchy with long historical roots based in military prestige and legitimacy conferred by descent from royalty. The Ptolemies had the first, but were conspicuously lacking in the second, especially in the view from the Greek mainland.

The Spartans were unique in having two kings simultaneously, each descended from a separate line. This doubleness particularly suited the Ptolemies whose kings and queens shared royal honors from the time of the Philadelphi. It was not without reason that Callimachus' account of Arsinoe's apotheosis features the Dioscuri wafting her off to a new home on Olympus (fr. 228 Pf.). It was not necessary to be dead, however, to benefit from an association with the Dioscuri, and this was particularly true for Berenice II whose Cyrenean homeland was first settled by Spartans. She also has close associations with their sister Helen which are

explored later in this chapter. Of all Ptolemaic royal women Berenice II had the only real claim to a Spartan connection, and so the appearance of the stars and caps of the Dioscuri on many of her coins has a worldly rather than an otherworldly explanation.⁴⁰

This coin series is extraordinary for its wide range of denominations in gold and silver, some in Ptolemaic weights and some minted to the heavier Attic standard, which was no longer current in Alexandria.⁴¹ The largest pieces, such as a Ptolemaic silver pentekaidekadrachm (15-drachms piece), and the Attic gold dekadrachms (10-drachms) were not meant to be used in the normal course of business, but were special issues for unique, probably honorific purposes.⁴² It is significant that the image of Berenice II graced these important occasions where the coins would be distributed. Whether or not she was physically present, she would be associated with the wealth and generosity the gifts implied. In this way her image and special attributes, especially the cornucopia, became synonymous with the positive expression of Ptolemaic *tryphe*.

In contrast, coins with her husband's image issued during his reign were lighter in weight, and clearly intended for general use.⁴³ It was probably not until the reign of their son, Ptolemy IV Philopator that the striking gold octodrachms with Euergetes' portrait on the obverse were put in circulation (Fig. 7).⁴⁴ Here he wears the crown of Helios with projecting rays, the aegis of Zeus in the shape of a cloak, and the trident of Poseidon appears behind him as if he were carrying it over his left shoulder. On the reverse the cornucopia is topped by another radiant crown. The syncretic nature of the symbols invites an association with the gods, but it is not a claim that he is one of them, at least not yet.⁴⁵ Like his wife's, his face is distinctively fleshy and his eyes, preternaturally large. The girth of the rulers has often been associated with *tryphe* in its aspects of wealth and excess consumption, while the large eyes, conspicuous in the Alexander mosaics and seen on images of a number of the Ptolemies, both male and female, are thought to express their divinely inspired power.⁴⁶

The King Returns

Euergetes and his troops managed to cross the Euphrates and get as far north and east as Babylon before returning to Egypt.⁴⁷ Following a policy established by his father and grandfather he made no attempt to

hold on to wide swaths of the Syrian empire which were slowly reclaimed by Seleucus II. Nonetheless, when the war came to a negotiated end in 241 BCE, he had control of Ephesus, Miletus on the Ionian coast, and the nearby island of Samos, some cities in Thrace including Aenos and Maroneia, as well as settlements on the coast of Caria, Lycia, Pamphylia, and Cilicia. Most significantly he retained Seleuceia-in-Pieria where he ousted the Seleucid fleet and based one of his own charged with defending Cyprus and other Ptolemaic interests in the area.

Following the reclamation of Ephesus, gold octodrachms were minted there featuring Berenice II with an idealized portrait in a generic Greek style with features that do not resemble those on her other coins.⁴⁸ On the reverse is her single cornucopia with contents that are more like Arsinoe's than Berenice's,⁴⁹ and if they did not bear her name, it would be difficult to argue that the coins were hers. These also have been dated early in the reign and indicate that the mint, which was far from Alexandria, did not yet have a standard portrait of her on which to base a new design.⁵⁰ Central control of provincial mints was not absolute in this period, and portraits of rulers could differ considerably depending on where the coins were produced.⁵¹ The ideal Berenice II designed at Ephesus is slenderer and more perfectly proportioned than the more realistic portraits from Alexandria. In fact, she looks a lot like Arsinoe II, whose own portraits were probably idealized.⁵² Arsinoe's coins had been in circulation for some time and their value as currency was well established. There were certainly economic reasons to continue the design with the new queen's name, and no harm in making her look better than she did in life.⁵³

After the War: Putting It in Perspective

Soon after Ptolemy III's return, an inscription was posted at Adoulis on the Red Sea summarizing the achievements of the war.⁵⁴ The original is now lost, but a copy made by Cosmas Indicopleustes in the sixth century CE preserves much of the text.⁵⁵ This document succinctly summarizes the official positioning of Ptolemy III after the Syrian War. It begins by styling Ptolemy as the "Great King" descended from the two preceding Ptolemaic couples, who traced their own ancestry back to Heracles and Dionysus (1–5). His epithet, Euergetes, is absent, doubtless because he had not yet received it, though the fiction that his mother

was Arsinoe II is already in evidence. This may have originated with Philadelphus, who had also made a point of his own connection to Dionysus, which the Ptolemies had “inherited” from Alexander. The absence of Berenice’s name is conspicuous. Although she, too, will become a daughter of the Philadelphus, she is not yet, from an official perspective, a co-descendent or co-player in the reign. At the conclusion of the Syrian war, then, Ptolemy the Great King stood alone as the descendent of the two deified couples.

After establishing his ancestry, and with it his right to rule, the inscription lists the lands he inherited from his father, “the kingdom of Egypt and Libya and Syria and Phoenicia and Cyprus and Lycia and Caria and the Cyclades islands” (5–8). The assertion that he received Libya from his father has been interpreted as evidence that he married Berenice II before Philadelphus’ death, but this reads too much into the phrase.⁵⁶ From the moment Cyrene first surrendered itself to Alexander, it seemed to the Macedonians to belong to them. Ptolemy I intervened personally there in times of crisis, and even rewrote the constitution before handing it over to his stepson Magas to rule as governor. Even though Magas later took up arms against Philadelphus and called himself king, there is no reason to think that any Ptolemy ever thought of Cyrene as truly independent.⁵⁷ It had a long history of being unruly and ungovernable, so marrying his son to Magas’ only daughter would have seemed to Philadelphus like a good strategy for securing it in the future, but their marriage did not imply an admission that Cyrene had ever been lost. The claim made by the inscription on behalf of Ptolemy III takes the official Ptolemaic line that Libya was always theirs. Here again, Berenice II is ignored even in the context where she played a decisive role. Though the inscription was posted in a remote part of southern Egypt where she might not have been known, it has the appearance of being an official statement that would have been distributed in multiple copies and put up in various locations. It appears, then, that in the earliest years of Ptolemy III’s reign, Berenice II was invisible outside Alexandria itself, but this would soon change.

After establishing the ancestry of Ptolemy III and his inheritance, the inscription takes up the war itself by focusing first on the scope of the king’s military resources, which included infantry, cavalry, a fleet, and the elephant corps (8–10).⁵⁸ The detail of exactly which elephants were used and how he and his father were the first to hunt them, bring them back to Egypt, and train them for military service suits the location of

the inscription at a port along the Red Sea where the elephants were shipped back from the hunting grounds. It also reflects the king's enthusiasm for these challenging operations, which required complex logistical arrangements involving a variety of specially trained men and animals operating in remote regions among sometimes hostile peoples.⁵⁹

New settlements had to be built, and especially new ports as the herds thinned along the coast and the hunts had to be conducted further and further south. Several of these new cities were called "Berenike," including Berenike Trogodytica (Pliny *HN* 6.168), founded by Ptolemy II and named for his mother, Berenice I; Berenike Ezion Geber (Josephus *AJ* 8.163) probably founded by Ptolemy III and named for Berenice II; Berenike near Sabai, which Strabo (16.4.10) calls "a good-sized city," Berenike Epi Dires ("On the Neck" Pliny *HN* 6.170); and Berenike Panchrysos ("all gold," Pliny *HN* 6.170).⁶⁰ Although there is some inconsistency about the names, and specific information about the founders is lacking, the most southern of the Berenikes were surely founded by Ptolemy III or even Ptolemy IV, and so honor Berenice II. Though she may not have had any interest in elephant hunting, her name is nonetheless securely linked with it.

Following the aside on elephant hunting, the inscription lists some new acquisitions made by Ptolemy III during the war, which include most of Alexander's eastern empire up to Bactria. This is an exaggeration, but it may be, as Hauben suggests, that the king held court in Babylon, which is as far east as his progress can be documented, and received ambassadors from lands beyond who offered him some form of homage.⁶¹ Whatever the reality, the inscription, at least, presents Ptolemy III as a new Alexander. It is a strategic positioning of him at the start of his reign as a true heir of the original Great King.

The extant text, which is broken off, concludes with a description of the booty he brought back: "all the temple belongings that had been carried out of Egypt by the Persians were brought back with the rest of the treasure." Later sources put these at 2500 Egyptian statues and precious metal including over 40,000 talents of silver (Jerome *In Danielam* 11.7–9). Both Ptolemy I and II had also been credited with returning statues stolen by the Persians, and their repatriation by Ptolemy III appears again later as a benefit to the Egyptian people worthy of praise in the Canopus decree.⁶²

It is this kind of public service that is captured in the title Euergetes, the "do-gooder." The earliest surviving evidence for the epithet is

PHib 171, 243/2 BCE, and it is linked with the worship of the *Theoi Euergetai* in a variety of documents, including the Canopus decree, during their lifetime.⁶³

The Overseas Empire

Ptolemaic interests in Syria, especially southern or Coele-Syria, began with Ptolemy I Soter whose twin aims were securing Egypt from Alexander's other successors, and extending his influence over the Greek mainland and islands. Among these an important target was the strategically located island of Cyprus, which he took control of in 295/4 BCE. By 287 he had become Protector of the Island League, which effectively put in his hands all of the Cyclades. The management of these Ptolemaic outposts required a sizable fleet, which was passed down to Ptolemy II who used it in pursuit of the same aims.

Under Ptolemy III, the Ptolemaic overseas empire reached its greatest extent as earlier Ptolemaic holdings were increased and Philadelphus' losses regained by initiatives undertaken during the Third Syrian War. Maintenance of his large fleet required bases in locations all around the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean. Inscriptions at some of these sites honor not only Ptolemy III, but Berenice II as well. In Crete, for example, at Phalasarna a dedication was found to the Great Gods on behalf of Ptolemy and Berenice II (ICret II 19.2), and in Itanos a sacred precinct was dedicated to them where yearly sacrifices were made (ICret. III 4.4).⁶⁴ A fragmentary decree honoring Ptolemy and Berenice was found on the Island of Delos (IG XI 4 677), and on Samos an official by the name of Boulagoras was sent as an ambassador to Alexandria bringing honors and sacrifices to the Euergetae at his own expense (SEG 1.366). In the Northern Aegean where Ptolemy Andromachou was active on behalf of Euergetes, the strategic port of Aenus came under Ptolemaic control.⁶⁵ Here a decree was found which honored the Euergetae, their children, and a priest of their cult.⁶⁶

Callimachus' seventh *Iamb* (fr. 197 Pf.), featuring a primitive but potent statue of Hermes Perpheraeus at Aenus, is a nod to Ptolemy's success there.⁶⁷ Here the statue narrates the story of his own discovery by a group of fisherman, who first try to destroy the wooden object they have pulled up in their nets and set it on fire. The god himself prevents this with the power of his incantations. This convinces the fishermen of the

statue's divinity, which is later confirmed by Delphi. The poem is one of three *Iambi* featuring statues of gods in sites of importance to the Euergetae. The others are *Iamb* 6, (fr. 196 Pf.) which is a technical description of Phidias' famous statue of Zeus at Olympia, and *Iamb* 9 (fr. 199 Pf.), which presents another Hermes, this one of Tyrrhenian origin (*Dieg.* VIII 37–38). Olympia was important for Berenice II as the site of her victories in the four-horse chariot race, and the Tyrrhenians are linked to Samothrace, which was of interest to the Macedonians beginning with Alexander's father, Philip II. The Tyrrhenians are identified with the Pelasgians, whom Herodotus says knew a certain sacred story explaining the god's ithyphallic state (Hdt. 2.51). This, he says, was familiar to those initiated into the rites of the Cabiri, also called the Great Gods, who were worshipped at Samothrace, and whose special concern was the safety of sailors.⁶⁸ The city and its mysteries were patronized in particular by Ptolemy II, who built a monumental propylon for the cult center there,⁶⁹ and it was the first place Arsinoe II sought refuge after she fled from her disastrous marriage to her half-brother Ptolemy Ceraunus. It was also of great importance to the Euergetae.⁷⁰

The island of Samothrace, not far from Aenus, was also a stopping-off point for the Argonauts in Apollonius' epic (*Argon.* 1.915–21).⁷¹ Thanks to the intervention of the Argonaut Orpheus, who had previously been initiated into the mysteries, the Cabiri saved the heroes from a storm at sea and manifested themselves as two stars over the head of the Dioscuri, who were also among the crew (Diod. Sic. 4.43). The stars of the Dioscuri, and sometimes their two caps, appear on the coins of Berenice II, where they also suggest her connection with their sister Helen and the special relationship of Cyrene to Sparta.⁷² Another cult center of the Cabiri was at Lemnos, the original home of the first Greek settlers of Cyrene and another stopping place during the Argonauts' outbound voyage. The climax of their return is at Thera, which materializes from the clod which the Argonauts receive in Lake Triton from the Libyan merman Eurypylos. In historical times a cult of Berenice II and Ptolemy III was established on the island by Artemidorus of Perge.⁷³

Ptolemaic patronage of the cult of the Cabiri is closely tied to their fleet and the role of the gods in protecting sailors. More important even than the Cabiri in this capacity was Arsinoe-Aphrodite Zephyritis for whom the Nauarch Callicrates of Samos built a shrine on Cape Zephyrium near Alexandria.⁷⁴ Here Arsinoe II is expressly identified with the maritime Aphrodite in whose care was the safety of those at sea.⁷⁵ It was

at this shrine that Berenice II dedicated her lock, which, after a sea journey of its own, comes safely to rest in the heavens (fr. 110.51–64 Pf.). Though nothing indicates that Berenice was worshipped there herself, Arsinoë's honors often served as a prototype for those enjoyed by Berenice. Thus, Berenice II, like Arsinoë, had the cult title *Aktia*, “on the heights,” that is, on a promontory overlooking the sea, and *Sozouse*, “the savior.”⁷⁶

The most dramatic evidence of Berenice's role as guardian of the sea comes from two mosaic portraits of her found at Thmouis (modern Tell Timai) and dated to the end of the third century (Fig. 2). They are portraits of a woman in military dress with a silver cuirass inlaid with gold, a purple cloak secured by a gold pin, and a shield behind her left shoulder. On her head is a ship's prow which she wears as a crown, and she holds a mast with its yardarm as if it were a scepter.⁷⁷ The ship is decorated with traditional nautical images, including large eyes, tritons, and snakes, and also with Berenice's iconographic single cornucopia and the fringed tassels (*tania*) that signify royalty found on her coins (Fig. 1). Her coins also provide parallels for the thin gold necklace and golden earrings she wears. The better of the two portraits bears the name of the artist, Sophilus, and the second, poorer rendering is either a copy of the first, or both were copied from the same lost painting of a somewhat earlier date. The second portrait provides important details about the appearance of the subject's face, which is heavy-set with large luminous eyes, that also resembles Berenice's coin portraits. Daszewski argues convincingly that the queen is presented here as a kind of *Agathe Tyche* (“Good fortune”) figure and a deified ruler with a complex iconography, whose very person appears to guarantee both prosperity at home and victory at sea.⁷⁸

Another possible representation of Berenice II as naval deity is a badly damaged monument found in the agora of Cyrene of a warship with the statue of a woman standing on its prow.⁷⁹ On each cheek of the prow is a relief of a winged male sea-person with snaky legs, a trident and shield, and on either side of the *proembolion* above the ram are reliefs of a woman's head. The male figure has been reasonably identified with Eurypylus, who helps the Argonauts escape from Lake Triton and plays a key role in the mythic foundation of Cyrene in Apollonius' epic (*Argon.* 4.1537–1619). Ermeti, in her exhaustive study of the monument, identifies the woman with Berenice II, but the crescent on her forehead and animal ears suggest Isis instead. The role of Isis as a marine goddess

is well documented, and though Berenice is assimilated to her in the “Lock” and elsewhere, it seems unlikely that the queen and the goddess are both to be seen in this figure. The woman standing on the prow is a kind of Nike, but helmeted and without wings. The armor, if that is what it is, suggests Athena, who is also a goddess of victory. Berenice II shares many traits with her as well, but the evidence is insufficient to make a secure identification. The remains of the ship are consistent with a mid-third century date, and the location of the monument in the center of Cyrene points to the era of the Euergetae. It cannot be proved, however, that it has to do specifically with Berenice II.

The last bit of evidence suggesting Berenice II’s role as a naval deity are her coins from Marathos with the prow of a ship on the reverse.⁸⁰ This is unique among the coins for Hellenistic women. Though Arsinoe II played the same role, it was never indicated on her coinage.

The Greek Mainland

Ptolemaic ambitions were not limited to the Greek islands and shore of the eastern Mediterranean. They tried to assert themselves in the politics of the Greek mainland as well. The city-states had all come under the thumb of Macedon after the victory of Philip II in the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BCE. After his assassination in 336, they briefly hoped again for full independence, until Alexander showed them why it would not be possible by annihilating Thebes in 335. After Alexander’s own death in 323, his generals struggled with one another over his empire, and the Greek mainland fell to Antipater in 322.

The Greek states, alone and in shifting alliances, saw this as an opportunity to break free, though in their desire for freedom they tended to get in each other’s way. The power struggles between them continued until the Romans took control in 146 BCE following the battle of Corinth, and it was still going strong during the reign of Ptolemy III. Like his father and grandfather, he made continuing efforts to thwart the ambitions of the Macedonian kings, who sought to maintain the regimes of client tyrannies in various Greek city-states by establishing garrisons in key cities including Athens. The dream of freedom did not die easily, however, and the city-states had political ambitions of their own. These they attempted to achieve either through coalitions like the Aetolian and Achaean leagues, or individually, like Athens and Sparta.

The ongoing rivalries and ever-changing alliances gave Euergetes the opportunity to assert himself at a safe distance. He did not use Egyptian troops on the Greek mainland, but preferred instead to support the efforts of Greek states or coalitions which were opposed to the Macedonians. One important anti-Macedonian leader was Aratus of Sicyon who rose to prominence in the Achaean League, an association of Greek cities in the Peloponnese, which aimed at freeing them from the puppet regimes that supported the Macedonian King Antigonos Gonatus and his successors. In a spectacular raid in 243 BCE, Aratus liberated Corinth, the site of the Isthmian games, and soon formed a relationship with Ptolemy III. Ptolemy was subsequently elected *hegemon* ("Leader") of the League (Plut. *Arat.* 24.4), which he supported financially for almost 17 years. In 229 it also included Argos, where the Nemean games had been celebrated since 271 BCE when they were moved from their original site in Nemea.

Euergetes' policies in the Peloponnese and the efforts of Aratus to eliminate Antigonid domination there are a likely backdrop for Berenice's competitions at the crown contests. The sites of three of the four contests, Elis, Argos, and Corinth, all came under the aegis of the Achaean League in this period. It would have been difficult for the Ptolemies to compete at these contests earlier when the host cities and surrounding areas were controlled by rulers friendly to the Antigonids. As Ptolemy's policy of supporting Aratus and the Achaean League began to bear fruit, a Ptolemaic presence at the games offered an opportunity to put on display for all to see their wealth, power, and alleged concern for the freedom of their fellow Greeks. This window of opportunity would only have lasted until 226/5 when Ptolemy III lost confidence in Aratus, withdrew his financing of the League, and gave it instead to the Spartans and their ambitious king Cleomenes III.⁸¹ A portrait head of Euergetes found in Sparta likely dates from this period.⁸²

While the Achaean League concentrated on opposing the Antigonids in the Peloponnese, another group of Greek cities, the Aetolian League, was active against the Macedonians in central Greece, sometimes at odds with the Achaeans and sometimes co-operating with them. After the able Antigonos Doson seized power in Macedonia and began to assert himself in Thessaly, the Aetolians looked to Ptolemy III for support. They expressed their hopes and their gratitude by erecting family-group statues of the Euergetae at Delphi and at their meeting place in Thermos.⁸³ There is little left of the monument in Delphi, but

enough of the inscribed statue bases survive at Thermos to give some sense of how it was set up.⁸⁴ Three of the original seven blocks are now lost and all of the statues, but it is clear from the surviving inscriptions that the monument included Ptolemy III, Berenice II, and all six of their children plus one other male figure, who cannot be identified.⁸⁵ The inscriptions give some information about the names of Berenice's children and suggest some possibilities for their birth order that are discussed in the next chapter, p. 171.

For each figure there is a title, personal name, patronymic, and ethnic identifier. Berenice's inscription reads "Queen Berenice, daughter of King Magas, Macedonian." The choice to use her birth father, Magas, rather than her honorary father, Ptolemy II, reflects the setting of the monument on the Greek mainland. It was constructed by Greeks for a Greek audience to whom the incest implied by the Ptolemies' reconfiguration of their family tree was irrelevant, if not unacceptable. Since in this case the incest was only imaginary, it could easily be undone when circumstances required. Magas' title, "king," can be read as an explicit compliment to Berenice II, since Ptolemy I appointed him as governor.

The repetition of the ethnic "Macedonian" for all the family members also reflects the way the Ptolemies wished to be perceived on the mainland, that is, not as Egyptians but as fellow Greeks. They would be the good Macedonians, as opposed to the others who were depriving the Greeks of their freedom. This was literally true of both Berenice II and her husband, whose parents on both sides could trace their origins to Macedonia. Here Berenice's secure bloodlines were proof of her children's legitimacy and aptness for rule. Indeed, the monument as a whole seems designed to create an impression of dynastic health and vigor. The rest of the Greek world may have been beset by the economic, political, and psychological strains that come from living in a state of constant warfare, and consumed with fear for their future, but the Euergetae are positioned in this monument as secure in all respects and serenely above the fray. Berenice herself plays an important role in the communication of this message. Far from the scheming murderess of her youth, she is now a paragon of Greek motherhood, standing beside her husband with their throng of six children in the shrine of Apollo.

Athens during this period was burdened by the presence of Macedonian garrisons at strategic points, including the Piraeus, the island of Salamis, and the fortresses of Munychia and Rhamnus. These limited

the Athenians' options for a time, but taking advantage of the death of Demetrius II, and banking on the extreme youth of his heir, they declared their freedom in 229 BCE.⁸⁶ The Macedonian soldiers were paid off with the help of Aratus and probably Ptolemy III, and Athens attempted to pursue a policy of neutrality among the tussling factions. This was not easy, especially after Antigonos Doson put aside the young Macedonian prince and made himself king. By 224 he had formed an alliance with the Achaeans and created the new Hellenic League. It was then that the Athenians turned to Egypt and offered extraordinary honors to the Euergetae with a view to solidifying their ties. They created a new tribe called Ptolemais with a deme named Berenicidae ("the sons of Berenice"). A statue of Ptolemy was put up at the Monument of the Founders in the agora, and a hereditary priesthood was founded for both Euergetae, with a special seat reserved for their priest in the theater of Dionysus (IG II² 4676). Another honor was the foundation of the Ptolemaia, which was held then for the first time, and then repeated every four years like other traditional Panhellenic festivals.⁸⁷

These honors were like those offered by the Athenians in 307 BCE to Antigonos I and Demetrius Poliorcetes, who had helped Athens deal with the threats of the Macedonian king Cassander. The circumstances of 224 were similar in a general way, but this time a queen was also included in the honors. For Athens, where women had no civic roles outside of religion, this was a notable event, probably best understood in a religious context. Even in Athens a divine Berenice could be given an honorable place in the city's public sphere.

For their part, the Euergetae gave Athens a gymnasium called the Ptolemaeum. Pausanias (1.17.2) locates it on the lower north slope of the acropolis and notes that it contained a bronze statue of the king. In addition to exercise facilities it included lecture halls and a library where philosophy was taught even in Cicero's time, some 200 years later.⁸⁸ It cannot be proven that the Euergetae encouraged the Athenians to use the space in this way, but the extensive educational and cultural features of the building seem designed to reflect their own enthusiastic support of the Library and Museum at Alexandria.

The Ptolemaeum seems to Palagia to be the most likely site of a larger than life statue of Berenice II that once stood in Athens (Fig. 8).⁸⁹ Its marble head was preserved in a late Roman wall opposite the Athenian agora, and the statue was generally thought on account of its size

to represent a goddess.⁹⁰ A careful study of the technique and material of the head, which would have been mounted like a mask on a wooden body with details filled in with plaster, confirms its Hellenistic date, and a comparison of its badly battered features with portraits of Berenice II strongly support the identification.⁹¹ The colossal size of the head and its narrow eyes, unusual for Berenice, suggest that it was an idealized cult statue, and since it was made mainly of wood, it would have been housed indoors.⁹² Here again Berenice II is presented in a religious and civic context in a manner that was not available to Athenian women.

Goddesses at Athens were, of course, in a category of their own, and Phidias' colossal statue of Athena Parthenos filled her temple on the Acropolis. Cameos of Berenice II dressed in Athena's helmet, resembling the statue, can be understood as another expression of Euergetid solidarity with Athens. If her naval uniform presents her as sea deity, her assimilation to Athena Parthenos on the cameos and in Callimachus' *Hymn to Athena*, extend her potency over the entire martial realm. This concept also finds expression in the curious story told by Hyginus (*Astr.* 2.24.11–18) that she once rescued her father Ptolemy II (*sic*) when he was pressed by enemies on the battlefield. Hyginus cites as his source "Callimachus and other poets," but he is not more specific. Rudolf Pfeiffer notes a possible connection with Callimachus' fr. 388, an elegiac scrap that includes the name of her actual father Magas, as well as Berenice herself, and at least one word that is used uniquely to describe spears.⁹³ Stephens sees this constellation of images as an important element of the Ptolemies' iconographic repertory that represents power as female.⁹⁴

On the whole it is clear that Berenice's power was of two kinds, influential and symbolic. The vignette in which she insists that her husband take more care in the sentencing of criminals suggests that she was a power for good behind the throne, but she is not portrayed as acting directly as a ruler except in one case involving a women's issue. There is considerable evidence, however, for Berenice's importance as a symbol of Ptolemaic values. The mosaic depicting her in naval costume projects the Ptolemy's military power; her magnificent coinage expresses their wealth and generosity, the statues at Thermos and Delphi, suggests the fertility, vigor, and stability of their regime, while the humble oenochoae illustrate her piety. The weight of these symbols is impressive and Berenice carries it with grace.

Another way of accruing the prestige associated with power was victory in the crown contests, especially victory at Olympia in the four-horse chariot race. This concept is crystalized in Pindar's first *Olympian Ode*, written in 476 BCE for Hieron, tyrant of Syracuse (Pind. *Ol.* 1.1–22). His great horse Pherenike, “bringer of victory,” shares a name with Berenice II, who was also an Olympic victor.⁹⁵

Even in antiquity racing was the “sport of kings” who never had to do the hard work of training or driving the horses. This was left, instead, to professionals hired for the purpose, while the glory of the victory accrued first to the owners, and secondarily to the horses. It is not surprising, then, that horse and especially chariot races had long been attractive to Greek tyrants and kings, who could acquire the prestige that came with an Olympic victory simply by assuming the exorbitant expense involved in breeding, training, and shipping the horses.⁹⁶

The Macedonian monarchs and their successors were enthusiastic horsemen and competitors in the Olympic games. The precedent was set by Alexander I (c. 495–452) who, Herodotus says (5.22), competed in the stadion and tied for first place.⁹⁷ His competitors questioned his qualifications to enter the competition on the grounds that he was not really Greek, but his account of his descent from the Heraclids convinced the judges that his family hailed from Argos on the Peloponnese. This may have been the beginning, or at least the first publicity given to the connection between the Macedonian royal house and Argos that became so important for the Ptolemies and especially Berenice II. Callimachus makes much of it in his poem celebrating Berenice's victory at the Nemean games, which is discussed below.

Closer to the Ptolemies was the precedent set by Philip II, father of Alexander the Great, who won Olympic victories in the single horse race in 356 and then in the four-horse chariot race in 352. He commemorated his successes first with a coin depicting the horse and driver in full flight,⁹⁸ and then in 338, with the Philippeion, a round temple-like building still partially preserved at Olympia.⁹⁹ Inside were chryselephantine statues of Philip himself, his wife, his son, and his parents.¹⁰⁰ The family grouping was meant to suggest that victory was in their blood, and the material used for the statues sent a second important message. The only other gold and ivory statue at Olympia was that of Zeus whose

temple dominates the site. While it would be an exaggeration to say that Philip set himself up as a rival of Zeus, he was certainly suggesting that he and his family were more than ordinary mortals.

Philip's example was not followed by his own son,¹⁰¹ but Alexander's successors, especially the Ptolemies, were great devotees of the crown contests. Ptolemy I won a chariot race there with a pair of foals the first year this event was introduced at the Pythian festival (Paus. 10.7.8),¹⁰² and an inscription records the victory of his son Lagus at the Lycaean festival.¹⁰³ Pausanias also says that he saw a statue of a man in Olympia "with boys standing around him" and that he was told it was Ptolemy, the son of Lagus (6.15.10). This is probably a family-group statue of Ptolemy I Soter and his sons minus the inscribed base that would have identified them. It was not nearly as elaborate as the Philippeion, but along the same lines ideologically. Since Pausanias did not see the inscription, both the occasion and the identity of the boys are not known. There is evidence that both Soter and one of his sons competed at the games, however, so it seems likely that the statues mark a victory for one or more of them. In any case, it sends a message that the victory belongs to the family with the father at its center. Pausanias (6.17.3) also saw a statue of Ptolemy II Philadelphus at Olympia, which is probably a victory statue.

Cynisca of Sparta

Unlike the victories of the Ptolemaic kings, Berenice's Olympic victory was unusual, to say the least, because adult women were traditionally banned from the contest site during the festivals.¹⁰⁴ They were not unprecedented, however, and her most distinguished forerunner was Cynisca of Sparta, who won the prize in the four-horse chariot races at the beginning of the fourth century.¹⁰⁵ Her victory was celebrated at Olympia with a statue group, now lost, that included her team of four-horses and her driver with a separate portrait statue of the princess herself.¹⁰⁶ There was also a second statue with this inscription carved on its base:

My fathers and brothers are Spartan kings; and I, Cynisca,
dedicated this statue after I won with a chariot of swift-footed
horses. I say that I am the only woman of all Greece to take up
this crown.¹⁰⁷

Like Philip, she situates herself and her victory within her family. “My fathers and brothers are Kings of Sparta,” she says, and in fact she was the daughter of King Archidamus II, half-sister to King Agis II (427–400) and full-sister to King Agesilaus (400–360). One aspect of the complex set of qualities suggested by an Olympic victory is breeding, and Cynisca, like her horses, was a thoroughbred. In fact, her family was so illustrious that the inscription does not even mention their names on the assumption that passersby, who read these words, could fill in the names themselves. In any case, she is a daughter and a sister first, and only after these, an Olympic victor—a daughter and a sister, not a wife or a mother. It may be that she never married, though this would be unusual among aristocratic Greek women. There is no evidence either way, but whatever her marital status, it is clear that her victory belongs to her birth family. Only after this point has been made is there mention of the contest, the chariot race.

Finally, she boasts that she is unique among Greek women in winning the victory crown. A claim of exceptionality is not uncommon in agonistic inscriptions like this one. They served as a form of record-keeping that preserved information about who was first or who was the only one to win some such event or combination of events.¹⁰⁸ Inscriptions recording athletic victories have been found both at the festival sites and in the victors’ home cities. In form, they tend to be prose or epigrams short enough to be engraved on statue bases, and their contents are usually limited to the most important information about the victor: name, father’s name, home city, and the event.

Cynisca’s epigram, then, is in many ways a typical example of the genre, but it celebrates an atypical victory that required more detailed explanation. This came soon afterwards, beginning with the historian Xenophon (*Agesilaus* 9.6), a friend of her brother Agesilaus. It was he, Xenophon says, who persuaded Cynisca to breed chariot horses and to enter them at Olympia in order to show that victory is a mark of wealth rather than of “excellence” (*arete*). Pausanias, who visited Olympia many years later and described Cynisca’s monuments there, leaves her brother out of the picture altogether and simply says that she was “most ambitious” to win at Olympia (3.8.1). This suggests that Cynisca herself was interested in the raising and racing of horses, and this may have been the case.¹⁰⁹

It will never be possible to know Cynisca’s true motives or appreciate the circumstances in which her Olympic victories took place, but

Xenophon was right about the role of wealth. It was then, and still is now, expensive to race horses, and one motive for participating is to demonstrate to the whole world just how wealthy the owner is. Cynisca was not the only woman in Sparta who could afford this kind of display, and she had successors, including Euryleonis whose statue Pausanias saw in Sparta (3.17.6). Nothing more is known about her, but she is probably the one who negated Cynisca's boast of being the only female victor.

Apart from the Spartan women, the next known female victors had Ptolemaic connections, including Berenice II.¹¹⁰ Her interest in racing has long been known from Hyginus who cites Callimachus as one of his sources: "Some have said, with Callimachus, that this Berenice raised horses and was accustomed to send them to Olympia" (*Astr.* 2.24). Hyginus does not say that Berenice actually won an Olympic victory, but in the absence of one, Callimachus would have had little motivation to bring up the subject.¹¹¹

Callimachus' "Victoria Berenice"

Though his extant fragments do not include any references to Berenice's activity at Olympia, Callimachus celebrates her victory in the four-horse chariot race at Nemea in a poem of about 200 verses that introduces the third book of the *Aetia*.¹¹² It was called the "Victoria Berenice" by Peter Parsons in his groundbreaking text and commentary and has been known by that title ever since. It begins:

To Zeus and to Nemea I owe a debt of gratitude, Bride, sacred
blood of the Sibling Gods, a victory song for your horses. . . .

254 SH (*P.Lille* 82.1a)

Here, in the first sentence the poem identifies itself as a victory ode or *epinicion*, a genre that had its peak in the last part of the fifth century in the poetry of Pindar and Bacchylides. By the third century it had apparently disappeared, but Callimachus knew his predecessors' work well,¹¹³ and their influence can be found in both the details and the overall structure of the poem.¹¹⁴ Unlike fifth century *epinicia*, which were lyrics designed for choral performance, Callimachus' poem is an elegy meant to be recited in public or simply read.¹¹⁵

It begins with an invocation to Zeus and to the eponymous nymph who presided over the games at Nemea which took place in Argos on the eastern side of the Peloponnesus. The song characterizes itself as a

“gift” for a “bride,” but this does not mean that it was written soon after her marriage. In the eyes of their poets the Ptolemies were forever young.¹¹⁶ “The sacred blood of the sibling gods,” is running through the bride’s veins indicating that she can be no one else but Berenice II.

Next, Callimachus describes the itinerary of the victory announcement and the speed of her horses:

From the land of Danaus, descendant of Io, to the island of Helen and the Pallenean Seer, shepherd of seals, lately the golden news came that [your horses] ran like the wind beside the shrine of Opheltes, the son of Euphetes, with no one running beside them.

254.4–9 SH

The golden word of her victory came from Argos, site of the Nemean games, to Egypt, and Callimachus’ elaborate rendering emphasizes the complex connections between the two in Greek myth. The land of Danaus is Argos, where Danaus became king after fleeing from his brother Aegyptus. Their ancestor, Io, had traveled from Greece to Egypt after she was transformed into a cow, and during the Ptolemaic period she was often assimilated to the Egyptian cow goddess Isis. So also had Helen, the daughter of Zeus, who in one mythological tradition went from Sparta to Egypt where she virtuously sat out the Trojan war.¹¹⁷ The “island of Helen” is Pharos, just off the coast of Alexandria, which is also associated with Proteus, Callimachus’ “Pallenean seer” (*Od.* 4.383–93), who took a magical undersea route from Thrace to Egypt. The effect of these references is to create a mythological genealogy for Berenice II that connects her, through her victory, to Argos and the Greek mainland, as well as to Zeus and his daughter Helen and who was at one time resident in Egypt.¹¹⁸

The “shrine of Opheltes,” a landmark at Nemea, honored the hero for whom the contest was founded, though there is a parallel tradition in which the founder is Heracles, son of Zeus, who put on a wreath of celery to mark his slaying of the Nemean lion. It is Heracles’ story that apparently took up the bulk of Callimachus’ poem, and in putting the heroic achievement of Heracles beside Berenice’s victory, the poet suggests a parallel between the two. This also recalls Cyrene, the lion-slayer, in Callimachus’ *Hymn to Apollo*, and reminds the reader that the Ptolemies claimed Heracles as one of their ancestors.¹¹⁹ Most of the Heracles episode is missing from the fragmentary text, but it appears that the

poet focused most of the narrative on the hero's visit to the hut of an impoverished Nemean farmer named Molorchus, who described the lion's desecration of the countryside and entertained the hero as best he could.

This emphasis on the minutia of rustic detail has the effect of humanizing Heracles, which makes him a more plausible ancestor for the Ptolemies. In Callimachus' telling, Molorchus is every bit as noble as Heracles, though the former slays mice instead of lions. In honoring the son of Zeus and Berenice, he also honors the peasant whose labor is necessary to the hero's success, which, in turn, is an essential contribution to the return of peace and agricultural productivity on which the farmer's life depends. The Euergetae might well imagine themselves in a similar role.

The movement from praising the winner to recounting the mythical founding of the contest is borrowed from Pindar,¹²⁰ and some kind of transition must connect the two parts. In Callimachus' poem that piece is very fragmentary, but it is still possible to glean something of its contents. Krevans has identified a scholion on this section which describes a bronze statue, and notes that other poems of Callimachus about athletic victors all feature statues.¹²¹ This one would be a dedication marking Berenice's victory, like the statues of Cynisca.

This interpretation is supported by fragments (PLille 82 1a) that have language relating to woven work of the finest quality admired by "women who know how to weep for the bull," that is, Egyptian women who weep for Apis. This, Thomas suggests, would be a beautiful cloth or a robe adorning the statue, which might have been decorated with the story of Heracles and the Nemean Lion.¹²² It is altogether likely, then, that Berenice's victory, like Cynisca's and so many victors before them, was marked by a dedicatory statue, which was celebrated in song. Although the end of Callimachus' victory ode is lost, we can assume that it returned to the royal addressee, and concluded with some kind of final salutation.

Posidippus "Hippika"

Not many Olympic victors could afford to commission a poet like Pindar or Callimachus to write a full-scale victory ode like the "Victoria Berenice." Most made do with epigrams like Cynisca's. And just as Callimachus re-imagined the fifth-century epinician ode for Berenice,

another poet in her circle, Posidippus of Pella, reconceived the traditional agonistic epigram for her.

Posidippus came from the city of Pella in Macedonia, but he traveled widely and was honored in inscriptions in Delphi (276/75) and Thermos (264/63). He spent some time at the Ptolemaic court, though it is not known exactly when, and wrote poems in honor of several Ptolemaic rulers.¹²³ Like other contemporary epigrammatists, Posidippus' poems were not engraved on stone, but were collected in books and exhibit literary qualities that are typical of Hellenistic poetry. In 2001 a papyrus was published containing 112 epigrams, apparently all by Posidippus, copied within a few decades of his death.¹²⁴ The poems are divided into sections by theme, including one titled "Hippika," "On Horseraces." These are a group of 18 epigrams that celebrate crown victories. Five of these for certain, and probably two more, are for Ptolemies.

These poems are interesting in many ways, but one is that they celebrate female victors more often and more fully than the males, and that apart from a single mention of Arsinoe, the other women are all called Berenice. This presents a familiar problem. Which Berenice is meant in each case? In addition to Berenice II, the two other potential candidates are Berenice I and Euergetes' sister, Berenice Syra.¹²⁵ Of these three only Berenice II is known through other sources to have won chariot contests, and it is she who should be considered the presumptive victor in each of Posidippus' Ptolemaic "Hippika," unless there is a clear indication that it must be one of the others. Using this criterion, Berenice I had been rightly awarded an Olympian victory in 78 AB where the narrator, whose name is also Berenice, calls the first winner "my father's mother" (78.5 AB), and probably also in 88 AB where a male narrator calls a victorious Berenice his "parent" (88.4 AB).

The three remaining Berenice victories should belong to Berenice II, but since the publication of Criscuolo 2003 and Thompson 2005, the scholarly consensus has favored Berenice of Syria.¹²⁶ The arguments for this Berenice are discussed in more detail below, but in general they rely on too literal a reading of the poems.¹²⁷ The temptation to assume that the "Hippika" are historical documents is easy to understand because epigrams inscribed on stone are always accorded that status. To make the illusion of historicity even more compelling, literary epigrams, like Posidippus', contain many of the same conventional expressions as inscribed epigrams, that is, they look and sound like their counterparts on stone.¹²⁸ Though it is not impossible that some of Posidippus' epigrams were

intended for actual monuments, there is no evidence that any of them were ever genuine inscriptions, and Fantuzzi has observed that there is no physical evidence of monuments to mark the victories celebrated here so lavishly in poetry.¹²⁹ In their absence there is no choice except to assume that these poems are literary art, intended to be read on papyrus or recited at symposia and on other occasions.

While it seems natural, then, to assume that the “Hippika” can be read as if they were inscribed, their true nature as works of literature presented as a collection written on papyrus invites very different readings. These include readings that attend to the ways that the poet plays with the forms of traditional agonistic epigrams on stone, how he exploits the stylistic parameters of Hellenistic poetry, and how he observes the conventions of expression in the Ptolemaic court. Beyond that, the collection invites a reader to view it as a whole and appreciate the artistry of the arrangement, which can have meaning beyond the text itself.¹³⁰

The “Hippika” are part of a larger collection of epigrams in which descriptions of works of art (*ecphraseis*) are of central importance. Among them are detailed descriptions of intricately carved gems, of grave steles, of dedications, and of statues. A collection of poems on statues, the *Andriantopoiika*, immediately precedes the “Hippika,” which begins with epigrams that present themselves as inscriptions that accompany statues of victorious horses.¹³¹ These set the expectations for the poems that follow, which include three that were definitely written as if to accompany statues (85–87 AB), and three others that can be read this way (82, 78, and 88 AB).

The statues are not always of horses; in fact, the first of the Ptolemaic “Hippika” in many ways resembles a family group statue.

Tell, all you poets, of my fame, . . . to say that my glory is well known. . . . My grandfather Ptolemy won with his chariot, when he drove his horse at the stadium at Pisa, and so did my father’s mother Berenice, and again with a chariot my father won the prize, a king, son of a king, with the same name as his father. And Arsinoe won all three harness races in one contest. . . . holy race of women . . . maidenly . . . Olympia saw these [victories] with chariots from one house and the prize-winning children of children. Sing, oh Macedonians, of the victory crown of your ruler, Berenice, with her team of horses.

Posid. 78 AB

Here, three generations of women victors take center stage, though, like Cynisca, they are presented in a family context that includes men. The first person narrator, again like Cynisca, is the victor herself.¹³² She begins with a request to unspecified poets to tell of her fame, presumably poets in the queen's own circle. In this case, the answering poet must be the author, Posidippus, who takes up the challenge of publicizing her fame that she says is already "well-known" and is thus in no apparent need of retelling. It seems possible, then, that another poet had already treated the same theme, and this was probably Callimachus, who celebrated her victories at Nemea and Olympia.¹³³ The challenge to Posidippus, then, is to find a way to tell of it again, in a new, compelling form.¹³⁴

The new form is actually an old one—a catalog of victories condensed into an epigram. These are very common in epigrams on stone. Though usually the victories are all the work of one person, some, like this one, record a list of triumphs at various athletic venues achieved by the members of one family.¹³⁵ Posidippus' list is chronological. The first generation of victors begins with "grandfather Ptolemy" (78.3 AB), that is, Ptolemy I, whose statue Pausanias (6.17.3) says he saw at Olympia. The next victory, in the same generation, is that of his last wife, "Berenice, the mother of my father" (78.5 AB). This is Berenice I, the mother of both Magas of Cyrene, who was the biological father of Berenice II, and also the mother of Ptolemy II, her honorary father. He is "a king, son of a king, with the same name as his father" (78.6–7 AB),¹³⁶ and a victor in the second generation along with Arsinoe (78.8 AB), most likely his sister and wife, Arsinoe II.¹³⁷

Though the number of male and female victors is equal up to this point, the next very fragmentary verses indicate that special recognition was given to the women's achievements: ". . . the holy tribe of women" (78.9 AB); "... maidenly . . ." (78.10 AB).¹³⁸ These are then put into a wider context with a summary of the family's achievements at Olympia that immediately follows, "chariots from one house and the prize-winning children of children" (78.11–12 AB).¹³⁹ Though the Ptolemies' victories begin with the first generation, the poem celebrates their climax in the third when it concludes with another request to sing of the speaker's fame: a victory, presumably at Olympia, with a chariot pulled by four mature horses of the "ruler Berenice." This champion is Berenice II. Berenice I has already taken her place in the first generation, and Berenice of Syria could not be described as "ruling" while she was still living in Alexandria.¹⁴⁰

Another indication that the narrator is Berenice II is the poet's characterization of the victorious third generation as "the prize-winning children

of children.” *Athlophorus*, “prize-winning,” was the unique epithet of the priestess who served Berenice’s cult. Though the cult was not founded until after her death, the epithet was very likely associated with a celebratory statue of Berenice II erected soon after an actual victory. The statue described by Callimachus in the “Victoria Berenices” is a possible candidate.¹⁴¹

The final order to “sing” is addressed to the “Macedonians.” This implies a chorus, and since Posidippus was Macedonian, it includes the poet himself, as well as Ptolemies’ other relatives, courtiers, and compatriots.¹⁴² It appears, then, that Berenice is ordering the production of a choral ode, that is, a full-scale epinician like Callimachus’, but what she receives instead are more epigrams. Three for her victories at Nemea follow immediately.¹⁴³ It is impossible to know whether these are for the same or different occasions. The clustering of literary epigrams on the same topic is a common practice in anthologies that put on display the poet’s versatility and ingenuity, so it is entirely possible that a given victory is treated more than once. Two of these are only fragments, but one is in much better condition:

The virgin Queen with the chariot, yes, Berenice wins all the crowns for harness racing together, at your festival, Nemean Zeus. By the speed of her horses the chariot left behind many a driver when . . . the horses, running with slack reins, reached the Argive judges first.

Posid. 79 AB

Like the beginning of the “Victoria Berenice,” which may have been written for the same occasion, this epigram is a brief description of the race itself.¹⁴⁴ Besides her name, the only information offered here about Berenice is the fact of her victory, expressed by the keyword *athlophorei*,¹⁴⁵ which points to Berenice II, and the first word, “virgin.” The poet’s characterization of the victorious Berenice as either *parthenos*, “virgin” (here and perhaps in 78 AB) or *pais*, “youth” (80 and 82 AB) lead Dorothy Thompson and others to conclude that the victories were actually achieved during Berenice’s girlhood.¹⁴⁶ If this were the case, Berenice II would not be a likely victor since it would mean that the contest took place in the narrow window between her father’s death in 250 BCE and her marriage to Ptolemy III in 246. After that she could no longer be called either “virgin” or “youth.”

This reading ignores the fact that adult women were barred from Olympia during the contests, while virgins were explicitly admitted

(Paus. 5.6.7–8; 6.20.9). It is not known how long the ban lasted, or if it was ever true of the other crown contests, but that does not really matter.¹⁴⁷ It was once true at Olympia, which set the standard in many ways for all the crown contests. In a poem written for the pious Ptolemies the ban could be extended indefinitely in both time and space. Whatever her age when the team was entered in her name, Berenice could be represented in an image that commemorated the event as an honorary virgin.

Beyond this, an emphasis on youth in an epinician epigram suggests what Deborah Steiner has aptly called the “allure of the athlete.”¹⁴⁸ With examples from statues and vase paintings and descriptions of victorious athletes in poetry, Steiner demonstrates how the images are fashioned as “erotically charged, aestheticized “objects of desire.” Pindar, she says, encourages his audience to “look on the laudandus with delight and to fall in love with what he sees.”¹⁴⁹ The images, of course, are idealized and this is achieved by what she calls “youthening,” which is evident in both actual statues and Pindar’s descriptions.¹⁵⁰ The ideal athlete is the same as the ideal object of desire addressed in erotic epigrams, an adolescent, trembling on the brink of adulthood. Whatever the true age of the victor, or the beloved, it was the artist’s prerogative to present the public with a younger, more attractive version.

While it may offend modern expectations of how royal patrons liked their court poets to present them, it appears that the Ptolemies welcomed this kind of treatment. Arsinoe II was assimilated to Aphrodite, of all goddesses, in her temple at Cape Zephyrium, where Berenice II dedicated her famous lock.¹⁵¹ An example in verse is Callimachus’ treatment of Berenice II in the “Lock,” where the queen, “holding out her smooth arms,” promises to sacrifice a lock of her hair when her husband leaves their wedding chamber on his way to the Third Syrian War “bearing the sweet traces of a nocturnal battle carried on for virgin spoils” (Catull. 66.13–14). Here Berenice II is not only sexually attractive, but also a virgin, though it is likely that she had been married before.

Another of the “Hippika” emphasizing Berenice’s youth is 82 AB:

... of Berenice ... the horse on the racetrack ...
 near the Acrocorinth the holy water of Peirene marveled at the
 Macedonian child with her father Ptolemy. You announced
 at the Isthmus so often the prize-bearing house, the only
 Queen.

Posid. 82 AB

This poem is for a victory at the Isthmian games, which took place in Corinth where the citadel, called the Acrocorinth, and the river Peirene were important features of the landscape. Thompson reads this as a literal description of an historical moment when Ptolemy II visited the Isthmus with his young daughter, Berenice Syra, to watch her horses compete in the games. A literary reading, however, puts it into a radically different perspective.¹⁵²

The river Peirene is said to “marvel at the Macedonian child.” This phrase is a variation of a more pedestrian trope found in both inscribed agonistic epigrams and in the “Hippika,” which announces that a feature of the landscape “saw” the moment of victory.¹⁵³ Here Posidippus substitutes a more emotive verb, “to marvel,” especially “to marvel at an exquisite object.”¹⁵⁴ In this epigram Berenice, who is equally amazing, a wonder to behold, is an exquisite work of art—a statue. As a statue “youthened” to increase the queen’s charisma, it tells us nothing about her age at the time of the victory.

It is a statue not only of the queen, but includes her “honorary” father, Ptolemy Philadelphus, because her victory, like Cynisca’s, belonged to her father’s family. It is a family-group statue, like that of the first Ptolemy and his sons at Olympia. In Berenice’s other family group at Thermos, where the statue bases have survived, each member is identified as Macedonian, just like Berenice in this epigram. And also like the group at Thermos, Posidippus’ statue, whether real or imagined, is located on the Greek mainland where it claims a Greek patrimony for its honoree, who was born in North Africa.

If it is agreed that the first verses of the epigram describe a statue, it becomes clear that the last two verses paraphrase the inscription below it. It must have gone something like this: “I say that I am the only Queen who took up the crown so often at the Isthmus.” This is very like the claim made by Cynisca, “I say that I am the only . . .,” but Posidippus has updated the details. Here the competition is not between all women, but between Ptolemaic queens; the site is not Olympia, but the Isthmus, and the issue is not the fact of a victory, but the number of victories. The times and the circumstances have changed, but the form is the same.¹⁵⁵

Claims to be the only champion to win this or that are common in inscribed epigrams, and so are statues of victors who speak in the first person. Posidippus is using a well-attested formula, but the poet’s knowledge of Cynisca’s epigram is clear from 87 AB, which follows after four short epigrams for non-Ptolemaic victors, each built around a statue:

When we were still the horses of Macedonian Berenice, we won an Olympic crown, [O people of Pisa], which has much-celebrated fame by which we took away Cynisca's ancient glory in Sparta.

Posid. 87 AB

Like the four poems just before it, this one imagines a monument commemorating a victory, in this case, a four-horse chariot race at Olympia. The speaker is the victorious team of horses, now frozen in time on the monument, which seems to be addressing a crowd at the contest site. Monuments often speak in agonistic and other epigrams, where they call a passerby's attention to their significance.¹⁵⁶ Here, the horses assert their role in negating Cynisca's fame.

This poem has been generally understood to answer Cynisca's epigram claiming that she is the "only" Greek woman to win at Olympia. Further, it is assumed that the speaker is Berenice I because she was the earliest Ptolemaic female victor. It is not clear, however, that Berenice I was the first woman victor after Cynisca. Though the dates of the Spartan Euryleonis are not certain, this distinction most likely belongs to her.¹⁵⁷ In any case, Berenice I is not a fitting rival for Cynisca or Euryleonis for the glory that Posidippus locates specifically in Sparta. To take away "the ancient glory in Sparta," the new victor should ideally be a Spartan queen. This suggests the possibility, at least, that the Berenice here who relieved Cynisca of her royal Spartan glory is not Berenice I, but our Berenice of the Lock, Berenice II.

The original Greek settlers of her birthplace, Cyrene, were Spartans who came there by way of the island of Thera. Battos, the Spartan founder, had a shrine at the entrance of the agora of Cyrene,¹⁵⁸ whose inhabitants practiced some of the same cults and spoke the same Doric dialect as the Spartans.¹⁵⁹ Retellings of the foundation story by Callimachus, a fellow-Cyrenean, in his *Hymn to Apollo*, and by Apollonius of Rhodes, in his *Argonautica*, demonstrate the continuing significance of this connection to the queen.¹⁶⁰ From this perspective, the claim for Berenice II in 87 AB is that among royal Spartan women, she has won greater glory than even Cynisca, by winning more victories. No such claim could be made for Berenice I, who was never in any sense Spartan.

The "Hippika" concludes with 88 AB:

We are the first three kings and the only three to win with chariots at Olympia, my forbearers and I. I am one, with the

same name as Ptolemy, the son of Berenice of Eordean birth, and my two forbears. To the great glory of my father, I add my own. But the fact that my mother, a woman, won a victory with a chariot, this is something great.

Posid. 88 AB

This poem celebrates an athletic record employing all the key words used for this purpose in agonistic epigrams on stone: “first,” “only,” and “one.”¹⁶¹ In this instance the record is for the family with the most number of kings to win chariot races at Olympia. The emphasis on dynastic achievement and the promotion of a female victor over the males connects the poem to the first of Posidippus’ Ptolemaic “Hippika,” 78 AB. It, too, evokes family-group statues featuring women.

78 AB is narrated by Berenice II, but here the speaker is male, usually taken to be Ptolemy II, who identifies himself in the third verse: “I am one, [I] who have the same name as Ptolemy, [I am] the son of Berenice of Eordean descent.”¹⁶² 78 AB provides evidence that all three were Olympic victors. An alternative reading gives the speaker’s role to Ptolemy III. In this interpretation the third verse is read, “I am one, [I] who have the same name as Ptolemy [who was] the son of Berenice of Eordean descent.” In this reading the speaker identifies his father, whose name he shares, by means of a matronymic, that is, his father is the son of Berenice I. In a poem emphasizing the remarkable triumph of a female victor, this would be a nice inversion of the usual patronymic.¹⁶³ If this surmise is correct, the three kingly victors are Ptolemy I, Ptolemy II, plus the speaker, Ptolemy III, and the record is for the first and only three kings in a single family to win at Olympia. His “mother,” whose victory the speaker modestly elevates above his own, would be Arsinoe II, whose triple win at Olympia is also celebrated in 78 AB.

There are no clear criteria for choosing one or the other reading. Nonetheless, the second seems preferable because it continues the emphasis on the achievements of the third generation of Ptolemies, which the poet has maintained throughout. It also makes a better balance with 78 AB where another member of the younger generation, Berenice II, presents the family’s triumphal history. Finally, the speaker’s self-deprecating insistence that his mother’s victory is more important than his own seems to suit Euergetes better than his father, whose attitude towards women was not noticeably deferential. Readers have wondered about the apparent absence of Ptolemy III in these poems,¹⁶⁴ and the answer seems to

be that he is here at the conclusion, promoting the interests of his family above his own.

These poems, taking the form of traditional agonistic epigrams, present a family in which victory in crown contests runs through all three generations known to the poet. What is especially remarkable is not the number of male victories, but the number of females, and the prominence they receive. Chief among these is Berenice II, the most winning female of all. Though other Ptolemaic women, including her grandmother, Berenice I, and her husband's aunt and stepmother, Arsinoe II, had stables and raced their teams, no one, it seems, won more contests than she did.

Though literary epigrams do not provide the solid evidence of a victory guaranteed by an epigram on stone, and no actual monuments have been found that mark the queens' victories,¹⁶⁵ it seems likely that Posidippus did not invent the occasions he celebrates in these poems.¹⁶⁶ Other elements in the epigrams are certainly fiction, and the statues described in many of the poems may or may not have been real, but there would be no point in attributing faux victories to the Ptolemies, especially since there is external evidence that some of them competed. It is not possible, however, to say exactly when each of these contests took place.¹⁶⁷ Scholars generally try to locate those involving Berenice II in the years between the death of her father (c. 250 BCE) and her marriage to Ptolemy III (usually put at 246 BCE), but this is unlikely.¹⁶⁸ It requires a scenario in which a virginal Berenice II is adopted by Ptolemy II even before her marriage to Euergetes, and sails with the elderly, gouty king and her horses to Corinth before October 249, when winter weather would make the crossing impossible.¹⁶⁹

This fantasy is universally rejected, and with good reason, but another has been put in its place that is equally improbable. This proposes that the Berenice of these poems is Berenice Syra, Euergetes' sister. In this scenario she became prominent in the Ptolemaic court after the death of Arsinoe II and competed in the crown contests between then and her marriage to Antiochus II in 252.¹⁷⁰ There is no external evidence, however, to support this view, and since it has become clear that Posidippus is not celebrating the victories of a child, there is no reason to look for any other honoree except Berenice II, or to assign the victories to the years before her marriage. In fact, the years following her marriage, when Euergetes was *hegemon* of the Achaean League (Plut. *Arat.* 24.4), are the most likely time for his wife to send her teams to compete at the Isthmus and the other crown contests.¹⁷¹

Dating Posidippus' poems is even more problematic than dating the contests. One possible clue lies in the similarity in structure that Fantuzzi has discovered between the "Hippika" and Callimachus' *Aetia*.¹⁷² The correspondences between the two offer the only explanation to date of why all the "Hippika" for the royal family are not clustered together in a single place. This is a literary argument, but it has historical significance since it implies that the epigrams were edited, and probably written, after the last two books of the *Aetia* were complete. Since *Aetia* 4 concludes with the "Lock of Berenice" which is set at a time after Ptolemy III returned to Alexandria from the Third Syrian War, it must be dated around 245 BCE, and the "Hippika" would have to follow sometime after that. This is consistent with the time frame suggested above. The only other limiting factors would be the lifetimes of the poets, and here there is no certain knowledge. Callimachus lived into the reign of Ptolemy III, and Posidippus could have, though neither is likely to have seen it to its conclusion.

Berenice's passion for raising and racing horses, for that is what it appears to be, may well have begun in Cyrene, which was famous in antiquity for the excellence of its horses. The superiority of Cyrenean horses is celebrated by Pindar in his *Pythian Ode* for Arcesilas IV of Cyrene, the last in the original line of Cyrenean kings, who won a chariot race in 462 BCE (*Pyth.* 4.17–18).¹⁷³ A large hippodrome dominated the east of the city, and in *Pythian* 9, for Telesikrates of Cyrene, Pindar lists some local athletic festivals that took place there (*Pyth.* 9.97–103). Horse racing is depicted often on Cyrenean coins and featured in artwork there.¹⁷⁴ Suggestively, Hyginus' note on Berenice's interest in horses (*Astr.* 2.24) is part of a description of her on horseback giving aid to her biological father, Magas of Cyrene. There is no other evidence that she, or any of the Ptolemaic queens rode themselves, but it is not, on the face of it, impossible.

In any case, it was for her winning ways that Berenice's son, Ptolemy IV, instituted a cult for her with a priestess called *athlophorus*, "the prize bearer." This title is similar to traditional sacred titles like *canephorus*, "the basket carrier," the title adopted by Ptolemy II for Arsinoe's cult.¹⁷⁵ It suggests that the priestess took part in processions where she carried sacred objects used in a ritual.¹⁷⁶

If the *canephorus* carried a basket, the *athlophorus* must have carried a prize, or prizes. These would be crowns of olive, parsley, and celery leaves that were the traditional prizes of the victors at Olympia,

Nemea, and the Isthmus. It seems reasonable to speculate that the priestess not only carried the crowns in procession, but that crowning Berenice's statue was part of the ritual—something like clothing the statue of Athena Parthenos, or Hera, who was presented with a new *peplos* at her eponymous festival featuring girls' races at Olympia.¹⁷⁷ If this is true, Berenice was crowned over and over again, and her victories were proclaimed year after year.¹⁷⁸ In any case, it was her winning ways in the crown contests that seemed to her son, who established the cult, to be her essential quality—the one that distinguished her from the other Ptolemaic queens, whose victories were not on the same scale. This was apparent even before her death, and it was celebrated not only by Callimachus, but also by Posidippus, who uses *athlophoros* in various forms five times in the fragments that remain of his “Hippika”: once of the distinction Berenice has brought to the house of Ptolemy (82 AB); once of Berenice herself (79 AB); twice of victorious horses (76 and 85 AB); and once, in the first poem of the “Hippika,” of both a horse and its human owner (71 AB). The identification of the horse with its owner, where both are *athlophoroi*, takes a different form in the fantasy of 74 AB where a dynamic filly wins the race by outwitting her male competitors, both equine and human. The trope may have been suggested by Berenice's name, which means “the bearer of victory,” a precise synonym of *athlophoros* and the name of the famous horse celebrated by Pindar in his first *Olympian*.

It is not difficult to understand why the Ptolemies promoted themselves at the games. The Greek mainland and islands were the playing fields where the successors of Alexander the Great squared off against each other in the years following his death. The crown contests offered them a public forum where they could remind the local inhabitants of their wealth and power, and themselves, of their own Greekness. They competed in the contests like ordinary Greeks, but the playing fields were never really level, and by entering female as well as male competitors, they highlighted their own specialness. The women's victories were a public performance of the ease and the glamour of life at Alexandria, where horses were fast, kings were rich, and royal women savored their victories with the best poets at their side to celebrate the moment. No Greek woman on the mainland could ever have hoped to live such a life, and the star of this performance was Berenice II, prize-winner-in-chief.

Berenice in Egypt and Another Murder

ALTHOUGH THE PTOLEMIES' commercial and political interests reached into all parts of Alexander's former empire, their central concern, of course, was Egypt. Thanks to the preservation of many documentary papyri in both Greek and demotic, much is known about the internal administration of Egypt during the Ptolemaic period, but that will not be discussed here.¹ There is no evidence that Berenice II had a major role to play in the day-to-day governance of the state. Rather the queen took her place in the Ptolemaic pantheon as a symbol of its cultural aspirations and religious ideals.

Both originated with Alexander the Great, who surrounded himself with philosophers,² slept with a copy of the *Iliad* under his pillow (Plut. *Alex.* 8.2), staged festivals of Greek drama with the most famous actors of his time,³ commissioned the great Lysippus of Sicyon to create statues for him (Arr. *Anab.* 1.16.4), and Apelles of Cos to paint his portraits (Pliny *HN* 7.125; 35.85–6). His devotion to Greek culture was equaled only by his devotion to the gods (Arr. *Anab.* 7.28.1), including the gods of the non-Greek peoples he met in the course of his expedition.⁴ He never failed to make the customary daily sacrifices even when he was gravely ill (Arr. *Anab.* 7.25.2). At the same time, he claimed to be a descendent of Heracles and was prepared to accept the obeisance (*proskynesis*) not only of his Persian subjects, who were accustomed to venerating their kings as if they were gods, but also of his own Macedonians who were not always willing to acknowledge his divinity.⁵ There is evidence of cults of Alexander in Asia Minor perhaps as early as 334/3, and in 324/3, shortly before his death, he requested the Greeks on the mainland to grant him divine honors.⁶

Alexander's Ptolemaic successors continued along the same path, supporting the arts and sciences through the Museum and Library, honoring non-Greek deities by building and renovating Egyptian temples, cooperating with the influential Egyptian priesthood, and succeeding beyond Alexander's dreams in deifying themselves and each other. Berenice II was a visible presence in all of these aspects of the domestic agenda, and her role model in this endeavor was Arsinoe II.

The Serapeum

The twin goals of honoring local religious cults and supporting the Library came together in the Euergetae's rebuilding of the temple of Serapis in Alexandria. This deity, once thought to have been invented by Ptolemy I, was known to the Egyptians as Osiris-Apis.⁷ Osiris' cult center in Memphis had a long history before the Ptolemies, and his manifestation as the living Apis bull was of special concern to the Pharaohs. The Greeks later saw in him similarities to Zeus, Hades, and Dionysus, and his cult became an example of successful religious syncretism that appealed to both the Greek and Egyptian communities. Serapis also had a center in Rhacotis, a village later subsumed by Alexandria, where Alexander employed the architect Parmenio (or Parmeniscus) to build a temple after visiting the site just before or after the city's foundation.⁸ Ptolemies I and II improved the shrine there as well, but under Ptolemy III and Berenice II it was substantially enlarged and rebuilt.

The Euergetid temple stood in a colonnaded court, within a sacred precinct (*temenos*) that also included a stoa-like building, probably built at the same time, and two older buildings of unknown date connected by an underground passage.⁹ A retaining wall surrounded the *temenos* and it was in its southeast and southwest cornerstones that 10 plaques were found in a variety of media, including gold and silver, with Greek and Egyptian inscriptions that clearly identify the dedicator as Ptolemy III. The temple housed Serapis' cult statue, attributed by Clement (*Protr.* 4.48) to the sculptor Bryaxis, which predated the Euergetae's renovation.¹⁰

Literary evidence from the Roman period identifies the Serapeum as the site of a second Ptolemaic library, apparently an extension of the first. Epiphanius, for example, says "the first library was built in the area of the palaces, still later, another library was built in the Serapeum, smaller than the first, which was called the daughter of the first one."¹¹

And John Tzetzes describes a “library outside the Palace” and a “library within the Palace.”¹² Excavators of the Rhacotis site found a row of rooms along the west side of the colonnaded court, and two stories of rooms along the south side that would have been suitable for book storage. Though it cannot be proven that these rooms were actually used for this purpose, it seems likely that this was the site of the second library.

Two stories told by Galen offer independent evidence of Euergetes’ enthusiasm for book collecting.¹³ In the first he recounts how the king ordered all the books found onboard ships arriving at Alexandria to be seized and deposited in the library, and only copies returned to the owners. In the second, Galen describes how Ptolemy borrowed the official manuscripts of the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides from Athens on security of 15 talents. He then had copies made to the highest standard which he returned to the Athenians, and kept the originals for the Library. These tales may not have been literally true, but Galen’s account is accompanied by technical descriptions of a system of labeling newly acquired books by provenance that gives it an aura of authenticity. In any case, the stories are intended to present Berenice’s husband as a serious, if not always discriminating, book collector, willing to use the perquisites of his position and wealth to obtain what he wanted. That this zeal for collecting could be interpreted as support for the Library and its mission by those who worked there seems altogether reasonable, and so when the scholiast to Callimachus’ *Hymn* 2.26 says that Ptolemy III was being honored in that poem because of his devotion to philology, there is no reason to think, as some have, that this is an error for Ptolemy II.¹⁴

The style of Serapis’ temple was Greek, but Egyptian as well as Greek sculpture has been found in and around the buildings. The Greek sculpture includes portrait heads of Serapis and Berenice’s son and daughter, Ptolemy IV and Arsinoe III, who later added a small temple dedicated to Serapis’ son Harpocrates. It also seems likely that the site once featured a group of statues of Greek poets and philosophers. The key literary evidence is Callimachus’ first *Iamb* (fr. 191 Pf.) where the ghost of the sixth-century poet Hipponax of Colophon, newly arrived from Hades, assembles a crowd of poets and philosophers at “a temple in front of the wall” (fr. 191.9 Pf.) identified by *Dieg.* (VI 3–4) as the Great Serapeum of Parmenio. The name refers to the older temple built by Parmenio for Alexander, whose name had apparently remained attached to the site after the older temple had been incorporated into the new construction.¹⁵

Hipponax's ghost gathers a group of third-century poets and philosophers in front of the temple "where the man who invented ancient Panchaean Zeus, the old babblers, scratches out his impious books" (fr. 191.10–11 Pf.). This is Euhemerus, a fourth-century philosopher who is not present in person but is represented by a statue.¹⁶ A group of statues of philosophers and poets dating from the second half of the third century BCE was found near the Serapeum in Memphis. It has not been possible to identify them individually though one figure holding a kithara is clearly a poet, and another with bare feet and a wooly garment is likely a philosopher.¹⁷ The style of the carving is technically sophisticated, though the limestone from which the statues were made is a poor material. This suggests, in turn, that the group was copied from an original, more sumptuous one created for the wealthier Serapeum at Alexandria.¹⁸ The location of the statues at the Serapeum is likely determined by its associations with the underworld, specifically as the site of an entrance to Hades, where poets and philosophers were said to inhabit the Elysian Fields.¹⁹ Callimachus' Hipponax emerges from Hades just before his speech to the poets and philosophers in *Iamb* 1, and returns to it immediately afterwards. It is possible, then, that Callimachus' poem is a humorous tribute to the inauguration of the Great Serapeum by the Euergetae.

Other Egyptian Foundations

The Serapeum at Alexandria was one of more than a dozen major Euergetid construction projects, some new buildings, some additions, and some renovations of important Egyptian shrines.²⁰ Of particular interest for Berenice II is the magnificent gate (Bab el-Amara) at the temple of Khonsu at Karnak, which is rich with inscriptions and reliefs. One shows Berenice and her husband receiving their formal titles and the symbols of their rule from the Egyptian god Khonsu, identified by his Falcon-head (Fig. 9).²¹ On the god's right is Ptolemy III in his ceremonial coat wearing the crown of upper and lower Egypt with a uraeus,²² and Berenice II stands behind him, holding a papyrus scepter in her right hand, and an ankh, symbolizing life, in her right. She is wearing a crown with two plumes, the horns of the Egyptian goddess Hathor, and a sun disk. The style of their dress is wholly Egyptian, and the couple's apparently deferential relationship with Khonsu, the scribe, who is in

the act of legitimizing their rule, illustrates the reciprocal relationship carefully maintained by the Ptolemies with the powerful Egyptian religious establishment.

Egyptian temple reliefs like this one show the Ptolemies in the same sorts of scenes as their Pharaonic predecessors, demonstrating their piety and interacting with Egyptian gods, but unlike the Pharaohs, the Ptolemaic kings are often shown together with their spouses.²³ The inscription accompanying this relief acknowledges Berenice's elevated status, as the god bestows on "the two *kas* of the Benefactor Gods eternally, forever and ever, tens of millions of jubilees."²⁴

Unfortunately, the faces were erased long ago by vandals, but the identification of the figures is clear from their cartouches and titles. In addition to her personal name, Berenice II is the first Egyptian queen not reigning on her own to have a royal title created from a Horus-name and her birth name in her own lifetime.²⁵ The status implied by this is consistent with the dating protocols of some demotic documents that call her "the female Pharaoh, Berenice."²⁶ Both visually and in official language, Berenice II enjoys a different status than Egyptian queens of tradition.

The Ptolemies not only built and rebuilt Egyptian temples, but traveled to visit construction sites or newly finished projects. An inscription of 243 or 242 (OGIS 61 = IPhilae I 4) marks a visit by the Euergetae accompanied by some of their children to the temple of Isis at Philae where they made a dedication to the goddess and her son Harpocrates.²⁷ It was carved at the top of the gateway where it would be seen by the royal couple as they entered the *naos* and painted in red. It reads:

King Ptolemy, the son of King Ptolemy and Arsinoe, the Sibling Gods, and Queen Berenice, the sister and wife of King Ptolemy, and their small children, dedicate this temple to Isis and Harpocrates.²⁸

Not only did they bring their small children with them, but it seems likely that Berenice was pregnant during the event. Her condition is suggested by a relief on the north wall of the temple's *pronaos* that shows the king, followed by Berenice with her belly bulging, offering the goddess a gift of sewn fields.²⁹ The figures are dressed in Egyptian garb, consistent with all the temple reliefs, so here Berenice wears a diaphanous sheath that reveals her body underneath it. The mantle she wears over it is parted in front to clearly display her enlarged abdomen. While Egyptian

art often depicts individuals, both male and female, with soft, fleshy paunches, Berenice's is unusually prominent, and since she had six children in seven years, there could hardly have been a time early in her marriage when she was not pregnant.

The dedicators, then, are not only the parents and children, but also their future offspring. The sense of marking an historical moment is enhanced by the specificity of the children's ages and Berenice's condition.³⁰ The historical marker was contemporary with the visit because details such as these would be out of place in an inscription and relief that had been added after the fact. Such royal visits, which were made by all the Ptolemies, entailed complicated logistics requiring large expenses borne by the local populace.³¹ They were met by cheering crowds, as Euergetes was at Antioch, and their arrival was celebrated with sacrifices and feasting.³²

The theme of fertility is given even greater prominence at Philae in the Mammisi, the "birth house," built and decorated by Ptolemy III.³³ This is a separate structure near the temple of Isis that celebrated the birth of Isis' child Harpocrates. His story was told in reliefs around the interior culminating on the north wall, which was drastically altered during a renovation by Ptolemy VIII. The presence of cartouches of Ptolemy III suggests to Vassilika that the king and queen were represented here heading the processions of fecundity figures seen on the west and east walls.³⁴

From one perspective, the Euergetae can be understood as human worshippers thanking the goddess for the queen's exceptional fertility. From another, Berenice is identified with Isis whose fertility is synonymous with her own. This is implied by the language of the inscription which echoes that of the King's oath, found in a number of papyri in both Greek and Egyptian:

I swear by King Ptolemy, son of King Ptolemy and Arsinoe, the Sibling Gods, and by Queen Berenice, the sister and wife of the king, and by the Sibling Gods, and the Savior Gods, by their ancestors and by Isis and Serapis.³⁵

Here Berenice II is associated with Isis, and by extension, in the inscription from Philae Berenice's children are equated with Isis' son, Harpocrates.³⁶ Alexandrian shrines dedicated to Serapis and Isis in general do not include Harpocrates, and his presence here along with the participation of the royal children seems intended to emphasize the Ptolemies' dynastic claims.³⁷ The same concept is expressed later in the family group statues at Thermos and Delphi.

Berenice II and her husband not only followed the precedent of Alexander and their predecessors in venerating the Egyptian gods, but also, like Alexander, they received worship in their own cult.³⁸ The activities of the royal cults such as sacrifices, processions, and festivals were similar to those performed for the traditional gods, and honorific statues for the living gods were commonly set up at shrines, or within Egyptian temples where the Ptolemies were tenants-in-common with the other gods.³⁹ The ruler cults were sometimes created by cities in gratitude for royal protection or hopes for it in the future, like the Athenian cults for the Euergetae. Alternatively they might be inaugurated or expanded by the rulers themselves or their successors.

The Ptolemies' dynastic cult was created in this way by successive additions to the cult, which was initiated by Ptolemy I for Alexander and then expanded by each of the future generations to accommodate their immediate predecessors. It was Berenice's son, Ptolemy IV, who brought them all to a single resting place within the city.⁴⁰ Individual Ptolemies were also honored by personal cults, such as the one Ptolemy II set up for his sister/wife, Arsinoe II, and the cult of Berenice II established by her son Ptolemy IV.⁴¹ This was a posthumous cult, but even in life, she and Ptolemy III were called the *Theoi Euergetai*, the "Beneficent Gods."

Cults could also be created and maintained by garrisons of soldiers sent to enforce the policies of the regime either at home or abroad. An example is the sanctuary of *Theoi Euergetai* at Hermopoulis Magna (el-Ashmunein) in middle Egypt about 450 km south of Alexandria. Its substructure was found under a Christian basilica, and among the many Greek architectural remnants is the complete architrave of a small Doric temple with this inscription:

To King Ptolemy, the son of Ptolemy and Arsinoe, the Sibling Gods, and to Queen Berenice, his sister and wife, the Beneficent Gods, and to Ptolemy and Arsinoe, the Sibling Gods, the statues, and the temple, and the other things within the sacred precinct and the stoa, the domestic cavalry, stationed in the Hermoupolite nome, dedicated to them on account of their beneficence.⁴²

This was a large sanctuary with several Greek buildings, probably typical of the structures erected for the royal cults elsewhere. It was

primarily a space for honoring the Euergetae, but it also included the Philadelphi, who had cult centers of their own. The dedication gives the impression that the cavalry built the sanctuary and maintained the rituals performed there at its own expense.

Additional evidence for the dynastic cult comes from Tell Timai (ancient Thmouis) in the Delta, where fragments of ten statuettes and as many altars were discovered in 1908.⁴³ While the identifications are not all certain, comparison with other portrait sculpture suggests that each of the first four Ptolemaic couples were represented here, as well as Alexander. A marble bust of Berenice II, the top part of an under-life-size statuette made mostly of other materials, is among them (Cairo JE 39525).⁴⁴ While it is not clear whether the images were all created at the same time or added successively, the presence of the altars clearly attests to the religious nature of the assemblage.

Canopus and the Decree

Canopus, east of Alexandria by the western mouth of the Nile at Abukir, was the site of another Ptolemaic temple, this one for Osiris. A gold foundation plaque indicates that Ptolemy III and Berenice II dedicated a sacred precinct there, though no certain remains of the buildings that occupied it have been identified.⁴⁵ Several dedications to Isis and Serapis have also been found, sometimes including Nilus, the river god, and the Euergetae as “divine temple-sharers.”

The sanctuary of Osiris at Canopus was the location of an annual festival celebrating the inundation of the Nile. This seems to be the subject of an elaborate mosaic pavement which once formed the floor of a nymphaeum in Palestrina, ancient Praeneste.⁴⁶ It was disassembled and “restored” more than once beginning in the 17th century and is very difficult to evaluate in its present, mutilated state. It contains scenes of the flooding river from various points along its length from Nubia to the Delta, buildings, a nilometer, soldiers, and people from various walks of life. At the center of the mosaic a royal couple is seated before a colonnaded building, attended by soldiers while a procession and general feasting take place. There is disagreement about the identity of the building and thus, the location of the event, but whether it is the Serapeum in Alexandria, as Burkhalter argues, or the Temple of Osiris at Canopus, following Meyboom, the royal couple is likely Ptolemy III and

Berenice II, who built both sanctuaries.⁴⁷ Though the mosaics are generally dated to the end of the second century BCE, they are probably copies of an earlier painting from one or the other shrine.⁴⁸ In any case, the queen is represented here as central not only to the events taking place around her, but to the annual Nile flood which guaranteed the fertility of the land and the life of its people.

It was in Canopus in the winter of 238 BCE that the synod of Egyptian priests gathered to celebrate the king's birthday and the jubilee of his rule. An official decree (OGIS 56) in hieroglyphics, demotic, and Greek, of which six copies survive in various states of repair, records the decisions of the assembly.⁴⁹ The preamble, which neatly summarizes the main achievements of the first nine years of the reign from the point of view of the Egyptian priesthood, repeats some of the themes of the Adoulis decree. It cites the return of the sacred statues stolen by the Persians, the maintenance of peace, the promulgation of wars against foreign enemies, care for the temples, and the provision of grain for the people in a time of drought as evidence of the Euergetae's benevolence toward the people. In recognition of this the priests declare that they will reorganize themselves by adding a fifth section of priests to be called the "Phyle of the Beneficent Gods" which would include all the priests who had taken office during Euergetes' reign. This change substantially increased his influence in the powerful community of Egyptian priests and it would be hard to believe that the king himself had not lobbied for it in advance of the meeting.

The priests also attempted a calendar reform which involved adding an additional day every four years to the 365-day Egyptian calendar. In this way the New Year, which also marked the beginning of the Nile inundation, would always fall at the same time of year. The intercalary day was to be celebrated as a festival for the *Theoi Euergetai*. The insertion of a leap year must have originated with the Greek administration, perhaps with the support of astronomers at the Museum led by Eratosthenes, but it was never put into practice, despite the synod's support.

During the synod, Berenice's young daughter, the Princess Berenice, suddenly died and was immediately deified. The decree contains many details of the rituals created to memorialize her including a feast and a boat-procession to be held in the month of Tybi in all the temples in the country; sacred images of her were to be made of gold and precious stones, set up in a shrine, and carried by a priest like a child in his arms whenever there were processions for the other gods. She would be called

“Berenice, Mistress of the Maidens” and she would have a distinctive crown, different from her mother’s, constructed from two ears of grain, plus a uraeus, with a papyrus-shaped scepter behind. The daughters of the priests would make their own images of the princess, perform sacrifices and sing hymns for her, especially at the time of the early sowing. Finally, the bread given to the wives of the priests as their share of the sacred revenues would be molded in a unique shape and called the bread of Berenice.

The participation of children in the ritual reflects the age of the princess at death, while her crown of grains, specially designed bread, and rituals timed to sowing the fields, elevate her to the status of fertility goddess. She joins Isis, then, in Osiris’ sanctuary as a symbol of abundance and renewal. To Greek eyes she would resemble Persephone, and this recalls Callimachus’ assimilation of her mother to Persephone’s mother Demeter in his sixth *Hymn*.

The Princess Berenice’s entry into the Egyptian ritual calendar shows how far the Euergetae had succeeded in infiltrating the ranks of the Egyptian pantheon. This point is illustrated in the relief carved at the top of a copy of the Canopus decree from Kom el-Hisn (Fig. 10).⁵⁰ Below the outstretched wings of Horus two processions face each other. The group on the right is composed of eight Egyptian deities, and opposite them, from right to left, are Ptolemy III followed by Berenice II, the Egyptian gods Thoth and Seshat, who are shown recording the Euergetae’s regnal years, followed by the Philadelphi, Ptolemy II and his wife Arsinoe II, and finally the Soteres, Ptolemy I and his wife Berenice I. The groups are perfectly balanced, though damage to the stele has erased two of the deities on the far right. Each figure wears his or her own unique headdress, and the Euergetae are dressed in elaborate ritual garb. The human and divine figures are roughly the same size, suggesting that there is not much, if any, difference in status between them, and they seem completely harmonious in every respect.

Oenochoe

In the relief Berenice II and her fellow Ptolemies appear in Egyptian garb in an Egyptian context, but her assimilation to Isis also has a Greek expression. This can be seen in figures of Berenice that appear on faience *oenochoe*, jugs for pouring wine (Fig. 4).⁵¹ More than 250 shards of

similar jugs and a few complete ones have been found at different sites, mostly in Egypt and North Africa, but some as far away as Corinth and Athens.⁵² The earliest of these feature Arsinoe II, and the latest come from the reign of Berenice's son and daughter, Arsinoe III and Ptolemy IV. On each there is a central figure holding a *phiale* (shallow bowl) in her right hand as if in the act of pouring a libation, and in her left, a cornucopia. Arsinoe's jugs have her double cornucopias, and Berenice's, her singles, some with their characteristic ears of grain still intact. The scene is set with a pillar on the left of the figure, and an altar on the right. A name may be incised above, e.g., *Berenices Basilisses*, "Queen Berenice," and sometimes Berenice's altars are also inscribed with *Theoi Euergetai*.⁵³

In addition to a personal name, sometimes the words *agathe tyche*, "good fortune," are added.⁵⁴ All the words are in the genitive case suggesting that Berenice is literally Agathe Tyche. When worshippers or revelers held the cup and read the words they would be toasting the queen in her role as the goddess. Though Tyche was originally a personification of fortune or luck, by the fourth century BCE she had become a goddess with temples and rites, who could be propitiated with dedications and addressed by prayer.⁵⁵ In the Hellenistic period she was often associated with particular cities and wore the city walls on her head like a crown. In this capacity she was a tutelary deity and sometimes carried a cornucopia to signify the care she took for the prosperity of the city's inhabitants. Berenice's naval mosaic with its elaborate crown decorated with a cornucopia suggests an Agathe Tyche figure, and though she is dressed in an entirely different way on her faience jugs, she performs the same role there in a non-martial setting.

The faces on the figures on the oenochoae have many aspects in common with the portraits of Arsinoe II and Berenice II on coins, which may have provided models for the artists who were unlikely ever to have seen the queens in person. Thompson detects a gradual change in Berenice's appearance over time which she attributes, reasonably enough, to aging.⁵⁶ The queen, who begins to gain weight, gives the impression of weariness. Arsinoe's series may not have begun until after her death, so she is always young and beautiful, but Berenice's continued throughout her adult life.

On some of Arsinoe's jugs the queen is explicitly called Isis.⁵⁷ Whether she should be understood as a worshipper of Isis, as her representative here on earth, or as the goddess herself is not clear, but the

Ptolemies do not distinguish between these categories. Since the iconography on all the *oenochoe* of this type is exactly the same, it seems reasonable to assume that Berenice is also intended to represent Isis, and her relationship with the deity is confirmed by a contemporary papyrus which describes a shrine dedicated to her as “Isis mother of the gods.”⁵⁸ On at least one of the extant *oenochoe* Berenice wears Isis’ distinctive dress.⁵⁹ This is a linen dress, plaited and striped, covered by a mantle tied in a so-called Isis knot.⁶⁰

It is natural to ask whether the *oenochoe* had any particular function, and Thompson theorizes that they were used for the celebration of the Arsinoea, an annual festival for Arsinoe, in which citizens would honor their rulers by pouring ritual libations from these jugs.⁶¹ Unfortunately, the considerable evidence available for this festival does not mention any such ritual, and the fact that the jugs ceased to be made at a particular point in time during the reign of Philopator, while the ruling dynasty went on for another 200 years, suggests that they did not have a ritual use in the dynastic cult. A portrait of Berenice II in the same pose and costume, though without the altar and pillar, appears on a silver plaque of contemporary date, which indicates that the elements of the design were not intrinsically tied to the faience jugs in form or in function.⁶² Its use in different media suggests, instead, that it came from a source external to both, perhaps a well-known painting. Since Arsinoe II seems to be the first queen depicted in this way, the painting would have been of her performing a ritual in some sacred space. Berenice II and her children were then substituted for Arsinoe in the next generations.

The iconography of the *oenochoe* may have been copied from Arsinoe II, but an important new leitmotif in Berenice’s public presentation, absent from her predecessor’s repertoire of images and ideas, is the theme of family. This would not have suited Arsinoe who married her full brother and contributed none of the offspring from her previous marriages to the Ptolemaic line. In contrast, Berenice is portrayed with all of her children in the statue groups at Thermos and Delphi, and her children joined the royal couple founding a temple to Isis and Harpocrates in Philae. The Canopus decree, with its detailed description of the observances of the cult for Berenice’s young daughter as Mistress of the Maidens, requires the entire priesthood to join the family in mourning their very personal loss.

The emphasis on family and children speaks to the purity of their bloodlines and dynastic vigor, while it also makes clear exactly who

Euergetes' heir would be. The many marriages of Ptolemy I created a struggle after his death among several contenders for the throne. Philadelphus, though he had many mistresses, aimed to avoid this kind of uncertainty by making only two marriages, of which only one produced children. Though they were posthumously "adopted" by his sister/wife, Arsinoe II, it would not have occurred to anyone that an emphasis on family would have benefited the Philadelphi, far from it. For the Euergetae, however, with their six boys and girls, and their commitment to monogamy, it was both an advertisement for their moral health, and a clear sign that their eldest son, Philopator, was the chosen heir.

Berenice's Children

The names of five of Berenice's children are known from the statue bases that were part of the family-group monument at Thermos.⁶³ Chris Bennett, putting this information together with the more fragmentary evidence from a second family-group at Delphi, has been able to establish the children's probable birth order, from eldest to youngest: Arsinoe III, Ptolemy IV, name unknown, Alexander, Magas, and the Princess Berenice.⁶⁴ Alexander left no traces in the historical record, and it seems likely that he and the anonymous child died before they reached adulthood, as the princess certainly did.⁶⁵ All were born between the end of 246, nine months after Berenice's marriage, and early 239 BCE. The last date allows about a year between the Princess Berenice's birth and death, which was announced in the Canopus decree of 238. Berenice, then, had six children in the space of seven years, and then no more. Why she abruptly ceased having children is not recorded, but she may simply have been exhausted.

Euergetes died of natural causes at the end of 222 BCE (Polyb. 2.71.3).⁶⁶ On the whole, he had a successful reign, which began auspiciously with his securing the Cyrenaica by his marriage to Berenice. He expanded his father's wide-ranging influence among the Greek islands, the Ionian coast, and most critically, Coele-Syria, during the Third Syrian War, and managed to keep Antigonid and Seleucid influence in check on the Greek mainland by nimble diplomacy. At home in Egypt the Euergetae twice saved the population from threatening famine by purchasing grain abroad when the Nile failed to rise adequately, and launched a broad program of temple building and restoration in

cooperation with the powerful Egyptian religious establishment. Only once, while he was absent in Syria at the very beginning of his reign, was there a hint of revolution among the populace, probably kindled by the threat of famine, but this was quickly and easily resolved. Unlike his predecessors and successors, who tended towards polygamy, serial marriage, incest, and extravagant living, he apparently had a discreet and settled domestic life.⁶⁷ How much this should be credited to his wife is impossible to know.

One result of Euergetae's monogamy was to leave no doubt about the identity of his successor. This would be their eldest son, Ptolemy IV, whose epithet was Philopator, "beloved of his father" or "loving his father." Although the name suggests many good possibilities, Philopator at once set aside his father's moderation, and instead followed the precedent of his grandfather, Philadelphus, by eliminating other possible claimants to the throne. There were only two, his uncle Lysimachus and his younger brother Magas (Polyb. 5.34.1; 5.36.1; 15.25.1–2). Euergetes had never treated Lysimachus as a threat, so there is no obvious motive for Philopator's action except his own anxieties, and those of his courtiers bent on increasing their own power and influence. His brother Magas, on the other hand, had a power-base of his own. He had been sent to Asia Minor following the death of Seleucus III in 223 (P.Haun 6.1.19 and 6.1.28–31), in a vain attempt to reestablish a Ptolemaic presence there, and Plutarch (*Cleom.* 33.3) notes that he was popular with the army.⁶⁸ Accordingly, Philopator had him scalded to death in his bath.⁶⁹

The new king's third victim was his mother, Berenice II. Her sin may have been supporting her youngest son, or perhaps it was only the perception of her "daring" that incited her assassins (Polyb. 5.36.1). This same attitude had been highlighted years earlier in the *Lock* where Calliclimachus addresses the queen this way:

But certainly I knew you to be bold from the time you were a
small girl.

Or have you forgotten the noble act by which you acquired a
royal

marriage, which no stronger person dared?

(Catull. 66.25–28)

After all these years her own homicidal solution to the question of who would be king of Cyrene had not been forgotten, and it appears that she was still a player in the dangerous game of succession politics.

Whatever the justification, she was poisoned as part of the family purge in the first year of Philopator's reign (Zenob. 3.94). Her assassin was working on behalf of the powerful courtier Sosibius, but it is hard to believe that it was done without Philopator's knowledge and approval. Philopator, the "father-lover," was too much like his mother, who had killed in the name of her own father.

The murder plot took a little time to unfold and was widely known beforehand. Sosibius, concerned about its possible failure, "was forced to fawn before the whole court holding out hopes of what would result, if matters were concluded according to the plan" (Polyb. 5.36.1). Polybius says that Sosibius felt threatened by Berenice's "daring," but his need to lobby for wide support for his plot may also be an indication that she, too, had "friends" at court. These may have been real friends, people who cared about her well-being because their own careers depended on perceptions of their closeness to her, or those whose estimates of her power suggested that she might win the contest with Sosibius. As it happened, she did not.

About a decade after Berenice's death, her son officially deified her in a cult celebrating her victories in the crown contests. It seems unlikely that he was motivated by remorse. Rather it served his own needs to make his mother a goddess, and to celebrate an aspect of her life that reflected glory on the whole family. Her body would have been interred with the other Ptolemies where he gathered their remains in a mausoleum in an unknown location within Alexandria.⁷⁰ There is no account of any official mourning at the time of her death.

Sosibius of Alexandria was behind the deaths not only of Berenice II, but of Lysimachus, and Magas, as well (Polyb. 15.25.2).⁷¹ His title was "Head of Affairs" (Polyb. 5.35.7), and his influential position at court may have been inherited from his grandfather or father, Sosibius of Tarentum, who had served Ptolemy II.⁷² He was already prominent under Ptolemy III, who appointed him Priest of Alexander in 235/4, and he was gifted by Callimachus with an epinician poem celebrating his victory at the Isthmean games (fr. 384 Pf.).⁷³ An earlier victory at Nemea, and victories as a youth in wrestling at the Panathenaea and in running at the Ptolemaea are also acknowledged in the poem. He was honored in a decree at Delos and in other ways as well.⁷⁴ In all, Sosibius was a wealthy and successful courtier, who had been willing to serve Euergetes as the king wished.

Though Sosibius began his service to Ptolemy IV with a string of plots and murders aimed at eliminating possible challengers to the throne,

his good diplomatic skills were still in evidence, and he ably led the king's campaign against the Seleucid king Antiochus III, who hoped to reclaim the Ptolemaic possessions in Coele-Syria.⁷⁵ After Seleukia-in-Pieria, Euergetes' prize in the Third Syrian War, was lost to Antiochus through the betrayal of the Ptolemaic commander, Theodotus, in 219, a ceasefire was concluded between the Seleucids and Ptolemies. Through deft negotiations Sosibius was able to use the opportunity to stall for enough time to create an effective fighting force, including a new regiment of Egyptian troops that he personally commanded (Polyb. 5.65.9; 5.85.9).

Indecisive skirmishes followed, but in 217 Ptolemy IV brought an impressive army north from Pelusium to Raphia, and defeated Antiochus there in a pitched battle on June 22nd (Polyb. 5.85–86). It was his finest hour, and with him were Sosibius and his sister, who was also his wife, Arsinoe III (Polyb. 5.83; 5.84.1; 5.87.6–7). Both joined him in addressing the troops before the battle. Here Arsinoe III was performing in the spirit of the Macedonian queens like Olympia and Ardea-Euridice who had taken their place on the battlefield and personally rallied the troops.⁷⁶ She stayed abroad with Philopator for three months afterwards while he settled matters in Syria. At home in Egypt the victory was marked by great celebrations and the synod of priests met in Memphis to pass the resolutions of the Raphia Decree that were posted throughout Egypt in Greek, demotic, and hieroglyphics.⁷⁷

Sosibius, who was in charge of the postwar negotiations, concluded matters in a way that was consistent with earlier Ptolemaic policy. He also tried to maintain Euergetes' policies on the Greek mainland, but Philopator's lack of interest in external affairs made it impossible to follow up on his early victory. The king was equally uninterested in domestic affairs, and it was on his watch that civil war broke out in the Delta, while in the south, the rebel Herwennefer made himself Pharaoh of Thebes. When Philopator died in the summer of 204, a significant portion of Egypt was no longer under Ptolemaic control.

Polybius (5.34) credits the decline of Ptolemaic fortunes to Philopator's neglect of his predecessors' devotion to the duties of ruling and his increasing isolation from the members of his own court who were most responsible for managing policy. Rather than diplomacy and administration, he focused on another interest of his predecessors, literature. He dedicated a temple and established a cult for Homer in Alexandria (Ael. VH 13.22), and along with his wife, financed a festival for the Muses in their traditional homeland of Thespeia.⁷⁸

It was not his devotion to the arts that undid him, however, but an extravagant and dissipated lifestyle. Philopator was notoriously given to feasting, drinking, and riotous entertaining in what became almost a parody of the Dionysiac *tryphe* celebrated by Ptolemy II. In this he was initially encouraged and then dominated by two of his other courtiers, Agathocles and his half-sister Agathocleia.

Agathocles, the son of Agathocles (BGU vi 1262), was probably a distant relative of Berenice II, a descendent of her father Magas' sister Theoxena who had married Agathocles the king of Sicily. One of their children, Archagathas had served for a time as a minor official in Cyrene under his uncle Magas, and a handsome inscription marking the donation of a shrine to Serapis and Isis, found near Alexandria and dated early in the reign of Ptolemy II (SEG 18.636), indicates that he was also present in Alexandria.⁷⁹ The other, named Theoxena for her mother, married someone unknown, and had a child named Agathocles after his grandfather. This Agathocles was the likely father of the Agathocles who was Philopator's notorious courtier. His mother was Oenoanthe, who had come to Alexandria from Samos during the reign of Euergetes. Her name "flower of the wine," suggests that she was a *hetaira*. It has been said that she availed Euergetes of her services, though there is no ancient evidence that supports this.⁸⁰ She also had a daughter named Agathocleia with another man, Diognetus, Theognetus, or Theogenes.⁸¹ It is puzzling that the daughter and son have virtually the same name, but not the same father.⁸² While various possibilities might explain this, the simplest is that she chose the name herself because the connection to Agathocles brought her child closest to the king's family and provided a Macedonian ethnic with all the status that conveyed.

Agathocles, the son of Agathocles and Oenoanthe, was apparently a boyhood companion of Philopator's, one of the "young men of the court," a privilege suitable for a relation in a minor branch of the family.⁸³ Like Sosibius, he became a powerful courtier whom the king entrusted with important administrative tasks. His sister and mother, however, took different routes to power. Both became the king's lovers and played leading roles in the royal debaucheries.⁸⁴ There was plenty of precedent for Ptolemaic courtesans.⁸⁵ Ogden documents three women who were known courtesans of Soter, and 11 of Philadelphus. Some became wealthy in this role and some acquired a social status that was almost equal to the queen's. Soter's Thais, for example, named her son Lagus, after the king's own father, and Philadelphus' Bilistiche was twice an Olympic

victor whose assimilation to Aphrodite included shrines and temples where she received cult (Plutarch *Eroticus* 753e–f).⁸⁶ Bilistiche also had the honor of being priestess (*Canephore*) of Arsinoe II in 251/o, and claimed a Macedonian origin.⁸⁷

Ogden suggests that the prominence of Ptolemaic courtesans was a deliberate strategy on the part of the kings to mitigate the Greek distaste for incestuous marriage.⁸⁸ It may have served that purpose, especially for Philadelphus, who was the first to marry a full sister. It began, however, with Ptolemy I, whose companions are perhaps better described as multiple wives in the tradition of Philip II and the Macedonian kings. In this context, women like Bilistiche, though unauthorized wives, may have come to the arrangement with some social status of their own. Ogden makes this case in his monograph of 1999, and it suits Agathocleia very well. Like Bilistiche, she was also *Canephore* of Arsinoe II, and there is evidence that she was a shipowner, which indicates that she had some personal wealth.⁸⁹ Though there is confusion about her father's name, the fact that he, her mother, and her nameless sisters, as well as her prominent brother appear in the historical record, suggest that the family had a certain status in Alexandria.⁹⁰ Their relationship to the king's family, such as it was, would have brought them to the court and to the attention of the king. The ancient sources that vilify Agathocleia and her mother as musicians (Jerome in *Danielem* 11.13–14; Polyb. 15.25.32), dancing girls (Justin 30.1.9), and even hairdressers (Polyb. 15.25.32) reflects more on their reputation than their origins or skill-sets.

Ironically, it is likely that it was Berenice's own relatives who brought about the downfall of her son, and in such ignominious circumstances. If we can trust the ancient sources, Oenoanthe and her children thoroughly debauched Philopator, and while he was permanently inebriated, took over the kingdom and made him a virtual slave.⁹¹ The women appeared in public, received distinguished visitors, and gave out tribunes, governorships, and military commands to whomever they wished (Justin 30.2.5), all while he was lost in constant carousing. It all came to a predictably unhappy conclusion.

The deaths of Arsinoe III and Ptolemy IV are not directly described in the historical sources, but their aftermath is narrated in detail by Polybius 15.25–37. They died separately of unknown causes which may have been related to a fire in the royal palace, evidently the victims of a conspiracy.⁹² Within a few days Agathocles and Sosibius gathered the bodyguards and household troops, announced the

royals' deaths, proclaimed their young son king, and read aloud a will, perhaps forged, making themselves the boy's guardians. Next, they sent away the most able courtiers on trumped-up missions abroad and took the government into their own hands, while Agathocles resumed the drinking, debauchery, and recklessness that had brought down the king.

Popular anger at the misrule of the usurpers soon found a leader in Tlepolemus, the military governor of the area around Pelusium. Agathocles attempted to shore up his support among the Macedonian troops through a melodramatic address in which he held up the child-king to the crowd, and declared that his father, Philopator, had placed him in the arms of Agathoclea, who was standing near him, and that the prince's safety depended on them. The soldiers responded with hoots of derision, and when Agathocles and his supporters took Tlepolemus' mother-in-law from the temple of Demeter and dragged her through the streets unveiled, the revolution burst out in the open. It came to a climax when Agathocles was dragged into the middle of the stadium and stabbed before a rabid crowd, while Oenoanthe was taken from the Themophorium, where she had sought refuge, and brought to the stadium naked on horseback. Agathocleia, her sisters and all of their relatives were similarly stripped and given over to the mob that bit, stabbed, and tore them limb from limb (Polyb. 15.32–33). Polybius concedes that his sources introduced a sensational element into the narrative, but he tells the story anyway in all its violent detail. He refrains from drawing any philosophical conclusions from Agathocles' downfall on the grounds that the man had no real capacities, but had found himself in a powerful position due entirely to Philopator's own inadequacies, and simply could not maintain it (Polyb. 15.34). Whatever actually transpired, Polybius' conclusion has the ring of truth.

Polybius (15.25.9) attributes the outrage of the people not so much to any regard for Philopator, but to their sympathy for his wife Arsinoe III. Berenice's son and daughter had been married early in his reign, and they both enjoyed a shining moment at Raphia, but the historian reports that the people remembered the insult and mistreatment she had suffered throughout her life, as well as her pitiful death.⁹³ This was presumably her treatment at the hands of Agathoclea, and the others. After her death her old tutor Eratosthenes wrote a remembrance of her, but only a small fragment remains (Athenaeus 7.276b–c). For the rest, she can be known only from images on coins, on *oenochoe*, and some portrait busts.

The couple had only one child, Berenice's grandson, who became Ptolemy V Epiphanes. He was about six years old when his parents died, and had bizarrely been appointed co-regent with his father soon after his birth (PGuob 12). He married Cleopatra I, the daughter of the Seleucid king Antiochus III, and died around age 30. The couple had three children: Cleopatra II and Ptolemies VI and VII. His reign saw the loss of most of the Ptolemaic possessions in Europe and Asia, but upper Egypt was recaptured from the rebellious Pharaoh Ankhwennefer in 191.

Summing Up

In many ways the reign of Ptolemy III and Berenice was a golden age, at least from the perspective of Greek Alexandria. It was an age when the Ptolemaic empire was at its greatest extent, when its influence in the Greek homeland was at its peak, and when the rulers dispensed their wealth on festivals and temples for the gods and on resources for the Library at Alexandria. It was a time when the king and queen were committed to monogamy and produced half a dozen children to ensure the future of their dynasty. In Egypt the crops were mostly plentiful and on the two occasions when they were not (245 and 240 BCE), the royal couple offered their own resources to purchase grain that would save their people from starvation.

This sounds like a fantasy, a Camelot-on-the-Nile, and yet it is documented, on the whole, by the kind of evidence that is hard to discredit: contemporary inscriptions, documentary papyri, art, and archaeology. The first two Ptolemies laid the groundwork for this moment, and their son, Ptolemy IV, began the downward spiral, but for a shining moment, while Callimachus and Apollonius were composing their best verse and Eratosthenes was measuring the earth, it seemed, or was made to seem, like the forces of politics, economics, religion, and culture, Greek and Egyptian, were all in balance. The fragmentary and scattered nature of the evidence doubtless hides strains that lay underneath the glittering surface; in fact, one that emerges clearly is the cost borne by Egyptian farmers, who paid the burdensome taxes that underwrote the whole enterprise.⁹⁴ It may be that the brief rebellion which took place in the first year of the Euergetae's marriage, when the king was away in Syria, was a response to this kind of exploitation, but it was quickly put down, and there was no further trouble until the time of Philopator, when so much else went wrong.

What part Berenice II played in the construction of the golden age is difficult to assess. She came to Egypt and to her marriage as a singularly powerful figure, who dispatched an unwanted husband and chose another who offered more wealth and power. The only account we have of this is Justin's, which is very much later and tends towards the sensational, but it reflects a trend evident in the poetry of her contemporary, Callimachus, to explain away the actions that brought her to Alexandria. In Justin's version the first husband, Demetrius the Fair, is an overbearing lout who had an affair with her mother, while Berenice herself was only following the wishes of her father in preferring Ptolemy. Callimachus, her contemporary, reconstructs her as weepy adolescent, with virginity restored, smitten with love for her new prince, and dedicated to the ideal of faithful marriage.

Did Berenice laugh when she heard these alternative versions of her story? Did she orchestrate them herself? Probably not, but she did allow herself to be co-opted into a culturally defined role as a virtuous wife and mother. She colluded in her servitude to a traditional Greek feminine ideal, and this, in turn, made it possible for her to acquire a different kind of power, which could be exercised on the national and international stage, where she would be admired as paragon of womanhood, and in the temples where she would receive cult as a deity. It is ironic that this extraordinary opportunity presented to Berenice was best exploited by renouncing the very character traits that created it in the first place.

Callimachus' "Lock" is a window on the moment when Berenice transformed herself from murderess to Madonna. The reader finds her already in Alexandria, distraught at the departure of her new husband for Syria and war. She is emotionally unhinged, her mind in turmoil, weeping, and speaking sad words in a frenzy of anxiety and romantic frustration. Her behavior surprises the Lock whose relationship with her goes back to her early childhood. He remembers her as a fearless young girl, capable of taking extreme action to get what she wanted (Catull. 66.25–28). The only explanation offered for the transformation comes in the form of a rhetorical question:

"What great god changed you?" (Catull. 66.31)

Here, Berenice's metamorphosis into a loving bride and faithful wife, underlined by the Lock's closing sermon on marital chastity (Catull. 66.79–88), is presented as the work of an unnamed deity. It was divinely sanctioned, and therefore, he implies, both authentic and trustworthy.

While the poet never calls the defining deed of her girlhood by its true name, as Apollonius did later, he does not gloss over it either, but offers a narrative that brings her from her problematic past to a poetic here and now, where she has become a different person, an apparently helpless young bride, ready to devote herself to her one true love.

Would the real Berenice have appreciated this portrait? Apparently so, because her actions, as best they can be recovered from the scanty evidence, seem consistent with Callimachus' portrayal of her new persona. It seems that she was willing enough to step into this traditional role, and it is even possible that Callimachus had a hand in it. He certainly helped her make it official. Like every other courtier in Alexandria he was jockeying for position in the royal household, and their shared Cyrenean heritage gave him a unique, natural-seeming connection with the queen. It could only be an advantage to him, however, if she herself were successful in her own campaign for power at court.

It was to Callimachus' advantage, then, to give Berenice the best advice he could. She arrived in Alexandria with no notion of how things were done there and how she might represent herself to best advantage. Though she knew something about life at court in a general sense, she had no advisers there whom she knew she could trust. Though others must have offered their services, why would she not listen to her compatriot from Cyrene, who spoke to her in the accents of her homeland and wrote such beautiful poetry? Her education and early life in her father's intellectual circle prepared her to appreciate his recondite genius, and she probably knew of him by reputation. Her own talent for politics, then, must have consisted at first in listening to his advice, and adapting herself to the social and cultural expectations set out for her by her poet and by the culture at large. It was this collaboration, in a sense, that constructed her role as queen, and gave it publicity. It is easy to believe that it was approved by Euergetes himself, and from all appearances, it was a great success.

Her new role as devoted wife was soon given physical form by her amazing fertility which helped her become a literal earth-mother. Whether she willingly chose to have six children in seven years, or whether she had no choice in the matter cannot be known. What is clear is that her physical gifts could be exploited for various agendas. An illustration is the family-group statues in Thermos and Delphi, which celebrated her motherhood so dramatically, and tied it securely to the Euergetid political agenda. We do not know where the impetus for the

statues' construction came from, but since they were erected by the Aetolian League in their own cult centers, Alexandria may not have been consulted about the designs. More likely, the League's leaders asked themselves what kind of monument would most please their Ptolemaic patrons, and these ostentatious displays of dynastic health and physical vigor were the answer. They would have pleased no one more than Berenice herself, and that was, perhaps, the point.

Berenice's persona as *mater familias* also generated power for her at home. This is clear from the extravagant mourning that was arranged by the synod of priests when her youngest daughter, the princess Berenice, died unexpectedly in 238 BCE. Following the decree at Canopus her family's grief was brought into every temple in Egypt, and their private loss was shared by the public not only at the time of the princess' death, but in the ceremonies organized by the priests that were enacted year after year. The symbolic value of her perpetual mourning, like Queen Victoria's for Prince Albert, must have been immensely powerful. The entire populace was invited to share her grief, and this elevated her to the role of mourner-in-chief for the nation. It is hard to imagine anything that could have made her a more sympathetic figure.

In death the Princess Berenice became a junior fertility goddess crowned with ears of grain. She was now Kore to the Demeter of Berenice, who also wore ears of grain and poppies on seals found on letters in an archive in Kallipolis.⁹⁵ The narrative of Demeter grieving for her lost daughter, who had become the bride of Hades, was an integral part of the goddess' rites at Eleusis outside of Athens, in Cyrene at her temples both inside and outside the walls, and in Alexandria itself. Berenice, whose own fertility was on public display, and who fed her people generously in times of famine, could easily be cast in the role of Demeter. Though Arsinoe II was given some of Demeter's epithets, at least in Alexandria's street names, she could not have played the part convincingly.⁹⁶ On the *oenochoe* Arsinoe is assimilated to Isis, who was also a fertility figure, and her iconography included a double cornucopia, but none of her three natural children ever lived at Alexandria or were important there. Aphrodite was a more suitable persona for Arsinoe II, since she was literally *phil-adelphus*. In the "Lock" Callimachus suggests that Berenice might follow this path as well by making her dedication at the Temple of Arsinoe-Aphrodite, but this line of myth-making never gained traction. Berenice, like Arsinoe-Aphrodite, became a goddess of the sea, but on the mosaics from Thmouis, where she plays this role, she is no Aphrodite.

Berenice, as an acolyte of Isis in the temple at Philae, and a devotee in Isis' garb pouring libations on the *oenochoe*, seems like a good and generous spirit, but Callimachus acknowledges the awesome power that generates the gift of fertility in his *Hymn to Demeter*. Here Berenice is assimilated to Demeter's priestess on earth, whose place is taken by the goddess herself when her Olympian anger wreaks vengeance on the enemy who violates her sacred grove. Divine fertility and personal probity do not make Demeter warm or forgiving, and the implication is that Berenice shares these same qualities. The great and righteous mother is someone to be feared.

Just, but devastating punishment for sexual misbehavior is also the theme of the *Hymn to Athena*, where the goddess and Berenice share a devotion to wisdom, war, and horses. The personification of martial power in female form may have a Macedonian or even Indo-European origin, but when Berenice dresses as a naval captain, crowned with the prow of a ship on the mosaics from Tell-Timai, or sends her teams and chariots to compete at the Olympics, Ptolemaic power wears a real and convincing face.

Though other Ptolemaic queens also competed in the four-horse chariot races at the crown contests, Berenice II was distinguished by the number of her victories. She did not enter her teams once for the thrill of it, or to satisfy some courtier's idea of public relations, but over and over again. This persistence suggests that winning, especially in a public forum dominated by men, and participating, if only vicariously, in the kind of violence that was endemic to the Greek contests, gave her pleasure. She apparently liked to win and was not afraid to compete in the most challenging circumstances.

It was this Berenice who became a factor in the maneuverings at court when her husband suddenly died and her eldest son took his place. Since the court at Alexandria, like any other, was organized around the personal power of the king, and a courtier's own power depended on his closeness, or perceived closeness, to the monarch, a change of ruler naturally put the received order in motion, as those around the new king plotted to improve or at least maintain their positions. The Queen Mother herself was in a similar situation. Though she must have had her own staff and personal channels of communication with her late husband's advisers, she now had to establish a new position for herself in competition with them. If her eldest son, Philopator, was already married at the time of his father's death, she was also in competition for influence with his wife, her own daughter, Arsinoe III.⁹⁷

Though Sosibius once worked effectively on behalf of Euergetes, he now had a new master, and was also working, principally, for himself. Callimachus had once thought him important enough to gift with a poem celebrating his own athletic victories, and it may be that he had been part of the circle that included both the poet and his patron Berenice II. At the time of Philopator's ascension, Callimachus was long dead, and it appears that his place in the household was taken by the great Eratosthenes who had come from Cyrene many years before to be chief librarian and tutor to Berenice's children, and who had remained close to her daughter Arsinoe III. Berenice must have had other supporters as well, though their names are not known.

It is easy to believe that both Ptolemy IV and Sosibius genuinely believed that Berenice was a potential threat to them. Her reputation for daring never left her, and someone who had murdered a husband could just as well murder a son, especially if there was another son whom she preferred. Her preference for Magas may not have been personal, but a rational choice based on her eldest son's distaste for administration and the dissolute life that he led after his father's death. Ptolemy IV, on his own part, may have felt insecure on his throne. There is no ancient evidence that Euergetes had ever made him co-regent, as his own father had done for him,⁹⁸ and this must have made him suspicious of his surviving brother. That the issue rankled him is clear from the fact that he appointed his own son, Ptolemy V, co-regent when the boy was only three years old (PGuob 12).⁹⁹

Sosibius must have been in a quandary, initially, about whom to support, then weighed his options carefully and decided that his prospects were better with the careless and irresponsible Philopator. Together they made the new king secure by eliminating the prospective male heirs, Magas and his uncle Lysimachus. But why did they kill Berenice? Once Magas and Lysimachus were gone Berenice had no other candidates for the throne, yet she too was eliminated. Was it simply a gratuitous death? Did Philopator resent her? More likely Sosibius was thinking first of himself, and wanted to shut off any other avenues of influence that might diminish his own. He may even have genuinely feared for his own life. Whatever the reason, Berenice came to a violent end.

Though she had presided over a long and prosperous reign, and personally embodied the early Ptolemies' cultural, religious, and political values, her life at court ended as it had begun, in a bitter palace dispute about who would be king. To the extent that the royal palace was also

the home and hearth of the king, political violence was synonymous with domestic violence. From a public perspective her power must have seemed immense, even superhuman, but within the walls it was not sufficient to save her from her own son and his alleged “friends.”

Berenice II died as she had lived, a formidable player in the 200-year power struggle that followed the death of Alexander the Great. Like all the Ptolemies she hoped for immortality, but unlike most of them, she actually achieved it. It was not the Egyptian priests who were able to confer it on her, but the Greek poets who wrote for her and about her. Whether they were a large part of her day-to-day life, or only a footnote, their words lived on long after the Ptolemies gave way to the Romans, and the Romans themselves yielded Egypt to the Arabs. Perhaps her poets’ art was greater than their subject, but she helped create the conditions in which it could flourish, along with science, and so much other learning. This, in the end, was her greatest achievement, and it seems right that it also became the vehicle for her remembrance.

Callimachus’ “Lock” spread word of her to Rome where it was read in the original as well as in Catullus’ translation, and with his other work inspired a whole generation of Latin poets. Among these was Virgil whose epic *Aeneid*, written about 200 years after the “Lock,” follows the path of its hero, Aeneas, from the ashes of Troy to the future site of Rome in Italy. Along the way he lands at Carthage, a city on the coast of North Africa, which is ruled by a queen who falls madly in love with him. This is Dido, who has some additional points in common with Berenice. Both were the daughters of kings, now dead; both were beset with unwanted political marriages; and both were said to be of Argive descent.¹⁰⁰ Finally, both, under the auspices of Aphrodite/Venus, were in love with powerful men who arrived from abroad and had the capacity to rescue them.

Though these similarities are striking, the outcomes were very different. Berenice married her handsome prince and became queen of his shining city. But when the gods remind Aeneas that he must not abandon his fated goal in Italy, he quickly leaves Dido who laments in her despair that on account of him she has lost her reputation through which “she was ascending to the stars” (*Aen.* 4.322). As if to clarify the contrast with Berenice’s star cluster, Iris completes Dido’s botched suicide by cutting off a lock of her golden hair (*Aen.* 4.700–05), and when Aeneas later confronts the queen in the underworld, he swears by the stars while quoting Catullus’ Lock: “Unwilling, Oh Queen, I departed from your shore” (*Aen.* 6.460; Catull. 66.39).¹⁰¹

Rather than Dido, Virgil tells us in language recalling Catullus 66.55–56 that Aeneas himself will be raised to the stars by his own mother Venus. This image is universally read as an illusion to the *Sidus Iulium*, the comet that was sighted in 44 BCE during preparations for games that Augustus was celebrating in honor of Julius Caesar. The comet, associated with Venus Genetrix, from whom Caesar claimed descent, was widely believed to represent his soul and to guarantee his immortality.¹⁰²

The *Sidus Iulium* also became part of Augustus' self-fashioning and the many references to stars and to flames throughout the *Aeneid* reinforce associations between Aeneas and Augustus. None is more dramatic than the description of Augustus in the sea battle at Actium portrayed at the very center of Aeneas' shield:

Augustus, standing on the high deck, whose brows pour forth
twin flames while the star of his father rises on his head.

(*Aen.* 8.680–81)

Actium (31 BCE) is the battle in which Augustus, then Octavian, defeated the navies of Antony and Cleopatra. It has long been a commonplace in Virgilian scholarship that Dido is in many ways a cipher for Cleopatra. She is the North African queen whose relationships, first with Julius Caesar and later with Antony, stood directly in the path of Augustus' ambitions, and her suicide, like Dido's, set free the future emperor to establish his rule in Italy.

Dido, then, is a composite, literary figure incorporating images and traits shared by Cleopatra and her ancestress, Berenice II.¹⁰³ The historical queens had much in common. Both were Ptolemies whose power-center was at Alexandria. Both chose their own husbands for apparently shrewd, political objectives. Both self-identified with the goddess Isis, both supported the Library and Museum, and both offered critical relief to their subjects during periods of famine.¹⁰⁴ In other ways Cleopatra, whose reign began 170 years after Berenice's death, fully achieved the political goals that her predecessor could only dream about. Berenice wore a naval costume and received cult as a guardian of the seas, but Cleopatra commanded her own impressive navy. Berenice could remonstrate with her husband when she objected to the way he dispensed judgment, but Cleopatra ruled as a single monarch with all the prerogatives and responsibilities that entailed. Though their personal power was not commensurate, both were targets of hostile criticism that characterized

them as witches, vipers, and dangerous females. Berenice's was more subtle and indirect, packaged in an epic poem about the mythological Medea, who shared these same characteristics. Cleopatra's was overt, and clearly political, framed by opponents hoping to please Augustus, who defeated her forces at Actium.

It was the Romans' awe, compounded equally of fear and amazement at the power of a woman, as well as the interplay of sex, wealth, and politics in Cleopatra's story, set off by its exotic setting, that has made her an endlessly fascinating subject of books, plays, and films down to our own times.¹⁰⁵ Berenice's cultural afterlife has an altogether different quality. Though Catullus' "Lock" is still read and loved by Latin students everywhere, and Alexander Pope's 18th-century spoof, "The Rape of the Lock," introduced it to even Latin-less readers, Berenice's most enduring legacy is literally in the stars. As Callimachus reports, the astronomer Conon named an actual constellation "The Lock of Berenice," and the name has endured.¹⁰⁶ It was noted by her own geographer and polymath Eratosthenes of Cyrene, and entered the modern scientific lexicon when it was recorded in the star catalog of Tycho Brahe published in 1602, then illustrated on a copper engraving by Johann Bayer in his *Uranometria Omnium Asterismorum* of 1603.¹⁰⁷ A 19th-century rendering appears as Fig. 11. The "Lock" is the only one of the 88 recognized constellations named for an historical figure, and Berenice's story is told and retold among the myths that organize and vivify the stars.

Catullus 66

He, who observed the lights of the great heavens,
 who discovered the rising and the setting of the stars,
 how the fiery glow of the fierce sun is hidden,
 how the constellations withdraw at certain seasons,
 how sweet Love, hiding the moon secretly under Latmus' rock, 5
 calls her from her aery orbit,
 that same Conon saw me in the heavenly light,
 shining brightly, a lock from Berenice's head,
 which she promised to many goddesses,
 stretching out her smooth arms 10
 at the time her husband, enriched with a new marriage,
 set out to devastate the territory of the Assyrians,
 carrying the sweet traces of a nocturnal battle
 which he waged for virgin spoils.
 Is Venus hated by newlyweds? 15
 Or are the joys of their parents deceived by false tears,
 which they shed abundantly within the bridal chambers?
 No, may the gods help me, their groans are not true.
 This my queen taught me with her many complaints,
 when her new husband went off to savage war. 20
 When he deserted you, did you not grieve for your abandoned
 bed?
 Or was the departure of a dear brother worthy of tears?
 How care ate out your sad marrow deep within,
 so deeply distressed, with senses totally ripped
 from your breast, consciousness left you. But certainly 25
 I knew you to be bold from the time you were a small girl.
 Or have you forgotten the noble act, which no stronger person
 dared,

by which you acquired a royal marriage?
 But then, what unhappy words you spoke as you sent away your
 husband!
 How often did you sadly daub your eyes with your hand? 30
 What great god changed you! Is it because lovers
 do not wish to be separated far from their dear one?
 And there you promised me to all the gods, with the sacrificial
 blood of bulls,
 that your sweet husband might return. And he in no long time
 added captured Asia to the territories of Egypt. 35
 And for these accomplishments, I, translated to the celestial
 assembly,
 discharge your old vow with a new gift.
 Unwilling, Oh Queen, did I leave your tresses,
 Unwilling: I swear by you and your head.
 If anyone should swear vainly by these, may he suffer what is
 fitting. 40
 But who claims that he is equal to iron?
 For even that mountain was overturned, the greatest on the
 shores,
 which the bright descendent of Thia sails past,
 when the Medes created a new sea, and when young men
 sailed in a barbarian fleet through the middle of Athos. 45
 What can hair do when such things yield to iron?
 Jupiter, may the whole race of Chalybes perish,
 and whoever first resolved to search for veins of iron under the
 earth,
 and to refine its hardness.
 Just after I was cut off my sister locks were mourning my fate, 50
 when the sibling of Ethiopian Memnon appeared,
 pulsing the air with quivering wings,
 the flying horses of Locrian Arsinoe,
 and he, carrying me, flew through the shadowy upper air,
 and placed me in the chaste lap of Venus. 55
 For this task Zephyritis herself, the Greek Goddess who dwells
 on the shores of Canopus, selected her own servant.
 Then Venus deposited me, when damp with tears, I was departing
 for the regions of the gods,
 a new constellation among the old,

so the golden crown from Ariadne's brows 60
 not be fixed in the varied lights of heaven alone
 but that we, the promised spoils from Berenice's blond head
 would also gleam.
 Touching the lights of Virgo and of savage Leo,
 joined with Callisto, the daughter of Lycaeon, 65
 I am turned towards my setting, leading slow Bootes,
 who with difficulty submerges late in the deep ocean.
 Though at night the tracks of the gods press me,
 the light of grey Tethys restores me.
 With your permission may I be allowed to speak, Rhamnusian
 Virgin, 70
 for I will not hide the truth on account of any fear,
 not even if the constellations rend me for these dangerous
 words,
 I will disclose the secrets of a true heart.
 I am not so delighted with these things, as I am distressed
 that I will be, always will be, apart from the head of my mistress, 75
 with whom I, while she was still a virgin
 testing all the unguents, drank many thousands.
 When the marriage torch has joined you in its hoped-for light,
 Brides,
 do not surrender your bodies to your like-minded husbands,
 baring your breasts with clothing cast aside, 80
 before the onyx jar offers charming gifts to me,
 your jar, you who cherish your vows with a chaste bed.
 But whoever has given herself to impure adultery,
 let the light dust drink up her unfavorable and useless gifts,
 for I seek no gifts from the unworthy. 85
 But more, Oh brides, may concord always dwell
 in your house, and constant love.
 And you, Queen, whenever watching the stars,
 you propitiate Venus with festive lights,
 let me, your lock, not be without unguents, 90
 but rather offer me large gifts.
 Why do the stars hold me fast? May I become a royal lock again,
 and let Orion glow next to Aquarius.

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Notes

Introduction

1. Phylarchus' *Historiae* began where his predecessor, Duris of Samos, left off in 272 BCE (the death of Pyrrhus) and concluded in 220 BCE with the death of Cleomenes III.
2. The classic discussion of sources for this period is Préaux 1978, 77–112.
3. An example is the Gorub papyrus that purports to be a letter from Berenice's husband describing his arrival at Antioch at the start of the Third Syrian War. On the use of papyri in writing the history of Greco-Roman Egypt, see Bagnall 1995 and Hickey 2009.
4. On the use of inscriptions in writing ancient history see Bodel 2001.
5. For a general survey of Ptolemaic temple building, see Arnold 1999.
6. On the difficulties of identifying Ptolemaic queens, see Smith 1988, 89–90 with examples in n. 24.
7. The original publication of the bust is Ghislanzoni 1927, 165–66. See Ridgway 1990, 147 n. 47 and Laronde 1987, 407–8 for discussion and re-dating.
8. See Hinks 1928 for a discussion of the difficulty of defining a satisfactory iconography for Berenice II and a list of unacceptable identifications, 240–41.
9. On Berenice II as the honoree of Posidippus' "Hippika," see Clayman 2012 and below, pp. 147–158.
10. General introductions to Hellenistic literature include Gutzwiller 2007, Fantuzzi and Richard Hunter 2004, and Hutchinson 1988.
11. Griffiths 1979.
12. Griffiths 1979. Readings of the *Hymns* as historical allegory were produced as early as the end of the nineteenth century, see Ehrlich 1894, criticized by Kuiper 1898. They hardly do justice to a sophisticated poet like Callimachus.
13. On the Hellenistic symposium generally and sympotic epigram see Cameron 1995, 71–103.
14. Weber 1993, 170–79 lists 17 festivals that are known from inscriptions and papyri where music and poetry were likely part of the entertainment.
15. Philadelphus so disliked the verses that Sotades of Maroneia wrote about his incestuous marriage that he had the poet drowned in a lead jar (Athen. 14.620F–621A).
16. The tutors of Ptolemy II included the poet Philitas of Cos and the physicist Straton of Lampsacus, see Fraser 1972, vol. 1 322.

17. See Fraser 1972, vol. 1 313, 316; vol. 2 467 n. 55.
18. For a history of the use of the term “propaganda” in this context and a nuanced discussion on the role of the court poets see Weber 1993, 56–74.
19. Carrez-Maratray 2008, 101.
20. A summary of research in this area with bibliography is in Stephens 2003, 242 n. 15.
21. An argument against the Rhodian source and early date for the epithet “Soter” is given in Hazzard 1992, see especially p. 56, n. 35, and also Hölbl 2001, 92–94.
22. On the *epikleseis* of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II see Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 216–19, and on the likelihood of Arsinoe receiving cult during her lifetime, Carney 2000b, 33 n. 62.
23. As early as 243/2 BCE, see Fraser 1972 vol. I, 219. For the title in PHib I 171 see Ijsewijn 1961, 28. It also appears in OGIS 62, 63, 64 and SB 585, 586, 4624, and 9735. See Johnson 1999, 52.
24. The successors of Alexander the Great began assuming the title of “King” in 306/5 (Diod. Sic. 20.53.2–4; Plut. *Dem.* 18.1–2).
25. Berenice I is first recorded *basilissa* in about 299 BCE (OGIS 14). See Carney 1991, 161–62 who notes that the wives of earlier Macedonian kings were not given this or any other title. *Basilissa* was still in use during the reign of Cleopatra VII, though embellished with other titles (Plut. *Ant.* 54).
26. Pomeroy 1984, 11.
27. Carney 1991, 164.

Chapter 1

1. Greek women, including women of the upper classes, usually married very soon after menarche at about age 14–15. On the status of her relationship with Demetrius, see below in this chapter. On the dates of Magas, see Chamoux 1956, 21–23 and C. J. Bennett, “Magas of Cyrene,” n. 3 at http://www.tyndalehouse.com/egypt/ptolemies/magas_i.htm accessed on November 28, 2012.
2. The name of Magas’ father is also recorded on an inscription from Cyrene listing “Magas the son of Philip” as an eponymous priest of Apollo. See Fraser 1958a, 101 no. 2 at 105 and 108.
3. The marriage took place after Antiochus assumed the throne in 280 BCE and before the Seleucids and Ptolemies went to war in 274/3.
4. See White 1999 for a detailed justification of this argument, especially p. 172 on the rarity of the name Battus.
5. On Battus’ cult, see Malkin 1987, 204–16.
6. On Callimachus’ own Cyrenean ancestors see White 1999, 171–72, Cameron 1995, 3–10, and Laronde 1987, 104, 112–13.
7. Fraser 1958a, 101, 105, 108.
8. On the foundation and its date see Chamoux 1953, 69–91.
9. I rely on descriptions of the geography of the Cyrenaica by Applebaum 1979 and Kitchen 1990.

10. For the earliest coins, Robinson 1965, xxviii–xxix.
11. On the carvings at Karnak, see Kitchen 1990, 16–17.
12. For text and commentary on the *Argonautica*, see Vian and Delage 1976–1981; for book 1, Ardizzoni 1967; book 3, Hunter 1989; and book 4, Livrea 1973. It is an epic poem, in the manner of Homer, whose *Iliad* and *Odyssey* Apollonius mined for language, plot elements, and much else. Its scholarly sophistication is wedded to an adventure story which follows Jason and his crew of Argonauts as they pursue their quest for the mythical Golden Fleece.
13. The Argo was designed following the plans of Athena. The beam that Athena herself made of wood from Dodona speaks in a human voice at *Argon.* 1.524–27 and 4.580–91.
14. Berenice's connections with Athena are made clear in Callimachus' Fifth *Hymn*.
15. Earlier versions of the Argonauts' trek through the desert are in Hes. Fr. 241 M–W; Pindar, *Pyth.* 4.25–27; and Antimachus fr. 65 Wyss.
16. For pastoralism as an indication of primitivism, see Thucydides 1.2.1 and Democritus fr. 68 B 5 Diels-Kranz.
17. This is the reading of Susan Stephens who maps the episode with a tale, well known from the Egyptian coffin texts, that describes the Sun God Re on his journey through the night as he overcomes obstacles on his way to the dawn of a new day Stephens 2003, 218–37.
18. Evidence of this is on the Inscription from Adoulis (OGIS 54).
19. Dougherty 1993, 3–4 discusses how Europeans justified their colonization of the New World in ways that are common to other colonial traditions. Apollonius implies many of the same arguments made more blatantly by the Englishman Robert Cushman in 1621, quoted by Dougherty on p. 3.
20. On the role of oracles and riddles in the rhetoric of colonization, see Dougherty 1993, 45–57.
21. The Lemnian women have, in fact, killed all of the males in revenge after the men rejected them in favor of Thracian women whom they brought over from the mainland.
22. On the challenges of using epic as a medium for contemporary political discourse, see Stephens 2000, 195–97.
23. These include two for King Arcesilas' victory in the chariot race in 462 BCE (*Pyth.* 4 and 5), and one for Telesicrates of Cyrene who triumphed in the footrace in armor in 474 BCE (*Pyth.* 9).
24. The Greek text and an English translation of the oath can be found in Graham 1964, 224–26. On the date of the foundation, see Chamoux 1953a, 120–24, and for a discussion of the foundation oracles, Defradas 1972, 245–57, Fontenrose 1978, 120–23; and Graham 1960. Other brief accounts in ancient sources can be found in Strabo 17.3.21, Pausanias 10.15.6–7, and Diodorus Siculus 8.29.
25. See Graham 1960 which has a full bibliography of previous work on the subject. The argument against authenticity was made by Ferri 1925.
26. In Herodotus' Cyrenean version of the tale, Battus goes to the oracle to seek a cure for his stuttering. His name is related to the Greek *battarizein*, “to stammer,” though Herodotus notes that “Battos” is the Libyan word for king (Hdt. 4.155). Since he also has a Greek name, Aristoteles, “Battos” would be a title that he assumed after the foundation.

27. Text and commentary in Braswell 1988.
28. Text and notes in Pfeiffer 1949–1953, vol. 2; Williams 1978, and D'Alessio 2007, vol. 1.
29. In addition to Pindar and Herodotus, the foundation story was told by Aristotle in his lost *Constitution of the Cyreneans* (Müller 1848: 166–67), #208; Acesander (FGrH 469 F5–6); Menecles of Barca (FGrH 270 F6); and Theochrestus of Cyrene (FGrH 761 F1). Apollonius alludes to it at 4.1749–64 as well as Lycophron, *Alex.* 877–908.
30. On the *Pinakes*, “The Tables of all those who were eminent in any kind of literature and of their writings in 120 books,” see Pfeiffer 1968, 127–30. On Callimachus and Herodotus, see Howald 1923, 133–38.
31. On Callimachus’ mimetic hymns see Falivene 1990. Harder 1992, on the contrary, argues that the distinction between mimetic and non-mimetic is misleading.
32. In a Cyrenean context “heal-all” would be Silphium.
33. Herodotus 4.170 on the Asbystae; and Callim. fr. 37.1 Pf. where “Asbystian” is equivalent to “Libyan.”
34. See Williams 1978, 75–76 on the armed warriors.
35. Calame 1993, 44 notes the possibility that ancient biographers constructed Callimachus’ Cyrenean origins from the hymn and also the epigram quoted above.
36. On the use of the first person singular and plural in choral lyric see Calame 1993, 44 n. 14 and the discussions he cites.
37. Apollo had many cults and several receive brief mention in the hymn where he is called Lyctian, Boedromius, Clarius, and Delian (*Hy.* 2.33, 69, 70, 58–59).
38. See Cameron 1995, 9–10 who imagines that Callimachus returned to Cyrene for a sojourn towards the end of Magas’ life; and Laronde 1987, 362. Among those who argue that “my king” is Philadelphus are Lehnus 1993, 100 and Depew 2004, 125. Another possibility is that Callimachus kept the identity of the king ambiguous so that the *Hymn* would continue to be relevant in the distant future.
39. On the style of the hymn, see Williams 1978, 4. For bibliography on the dating of the hymn from the 19th century to the 1990s, see Weber 1993, 220 n. 2. For a contemporary argument that the poet was being deliberately vague, see Fantuzzi 2011, 444.
40. The Carneia had a military character in Sparta and elsewhere as well. See Farnell 1971, vol. 4, 259–61.
41. In *Argonautica* 2.505, as well, the hill of Myrtoussa is the site of Cyrene.
42. Stephanus of Byzantium s.v. *kyrene* suggests two etymologies for the city’s name: either from Cyrene, daughter of Hypseus or from the native spring Cyra. Chamoux 1953, 126 argues that Cyra is simply a shortened form of Cyrene, which in Libyan means “Asphodel.”
43. Allegorical readings of the hymn in which the nymph Cyrene is a disguised Berenice, Apollo is Euergetes, and the lion is Demetrius are catalogued in Ehrlich 1894 and scorned by Williams 1978, 1. Callimachus was not constructing an allegory, however, but rather offering a mythological parallel for contemporary events.
44. Robinson sees Berenice’s features, especially the prominent eye and double chin, in personifications of Libya on Cyrenean coins dating from the period after Berenice’s

marriage when Cyrene had returned to the Ptolemaic fold. These sometimes include a small cornucopia which was an important element of her personal iconography, Robinson 1965 nos. 39–42, p. 82; Pl. XXXI, 1–4.

45. Dougherty 1993, 140–47 describes in detail how in *Pythian* 9 Pindar uses images of rape and marriage to express the interplay of violence and civilization. The same holds true for Callimachus' version of Cyrene's foundation story.

46. Demonax divided the people into three new tribes consisting of (1) Therans and Libyans who had settled near them, (2) Peloponnesians and Cretans, (3) Greeks from the islands (Hdt. 4.161; Diod. Sic. 8.30; POxy 1367).

47. Applebaum 1979, 24–25.

48. On Spartan women see Pomeroy 2002.

49. A number of examples are in Carney 2000a.

50. Robinson 1975, ccxlviii.

51. On the end of the dynasty, see Schol. Pind. *Pyth.* IV, Drachmann 1903–27, II 93.

52. On the date see Chamoux 1953, 208 and Laronde 1987, 27.

53. The quantities and recipients are detailed in an inscription (SEG IX, 2) first published by Ferri 1925, 24–26. See also Laronde 1987, 30–36.

54. Machu 1951, 42–43. A widely accepted chronology of the events in this and the years following was established by Will 1964, and see also Bagnall 1976a, 25–37.

55. It is widely believed that the *Diagramma* or Constitution of Cyrene, (SEG IX.1 with the corrections in Fraser 1958a, 120–27) was imposed by Soter just at this juncture to reconcile the competing factions and ensure Ptolemy's own ascendancy. See Machu 1951, 43–45 for an analysis of the contents, and Laronde 1987, 85–89 for a description of the circumstances and defense of the date. An analysis of the list of magistrates on the *Diagramma* is in Laronde 1987, 95–128.

56. An account of the events surrounding Ophellas' tenure and a defense of his loyalty to Soter is offered by Laronde 1971. The opposing and more popular view was first proposed by Thrige 1828, 249.

57. On Magas' career see Chamoux 1956 with earlier bibliography, p. 18, n. 4.

58. The town was Eordea (Posid. 88 AB).

59. The story is in Pausanias (1.6.8) who is not clear about Berenice's status as a wife or mistress of Soter. The Macedonian royal house had a penchant for polygamy, and Ptolemy I may not have divorced Eurydice before marrying Berenice I.

60. Magas' dates have been established with as much precision as possible by Chamoux 1956. His probable birth date is extrapolated from the date of his death, which is discussed on pp. 34–35, this volume.

61. Chamoux 1956, 18–21.

62. Chamoux 1956, 25–27. The inscriptions include SEG IX.112, a dedication from the agora in Cyrene; a dedication for a Victory in Apollonia; an inscribed epigram Chamoux 1958; and *IC* II 17.1.10, a treaty between Magas and the Confederation of the Oreioi.

63. On his coins see Buttrey 1984, 37.

64. On the date of the fall of Arcesilas IV, see Chamoux 1953, 209.

65. The date remains controversial though the weight of scholarly opinion has favored c. 250 BCE ever since it was first proposed by Niebuhr 1828–43, 233–38. See also Chamoux 1956, 22–24 and Will 1979, 145, 243–44.

66. The break with Philadelphus might have come earlier, perhaps in 283/4 after Philadelphus executed two of his half-brothers (Paus. 1.7.1) or after the death of Berenice I c. 279.

67. Chamoux 1956, 27.

68. ICreticae II p. 211 ff. and Laronde 1987: 361–62.

69. Before 259 BCE Philadelphus' co-regent and presumed heir was "Ptolemy the son." There is reason to believe that he was not the future Euergetes, but an older brother or perhaps half-brother.

70. Laronde 1987, 380.

71. Strabo 17.3.22; Diog. Laert. 2.65–86.

72. Lysimachus' kingdom included Thrace, and at times, parts of Asia Minor and Macedonia. He was the first husband of Philadelphus' sister/wife, Arsinoe II.

73. The manuscripts of Diogenes Laertius 2.103 read *mariwi* which was corrected to *maga* by Grentemesnil. See Goulet-Cazé 1999, 308 n. 5. Since Diogenes Laertius is talking about Theodorus' old age in Cyrene, the conjecture is plausible.

74. On Cyrenaic philosophy, see Annas 1993, 227–36 and O'Keefe 2002.

75. Athen. 12.544E–F, quoting the comic poet Alexis on Aristippus.

76. Athen. 12.550C citing Agatharcides of Cnidus. Modern historians usually report this story as "fact," but it is actually an example of two separate trends in ancient biographical literature. The first is a tendency of ancient biographers to turn witticisms into objective facts and the other to report embarrassing causes of death for their illustrious subjects. Examples of both are in Lefkowitz 2012, 128–31.

77. *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* I 25 = 13th Rock Edict of Asoka, line 8 in Hultzsck 1969. A number of copies were placed along trade routes around the borders of Asoka's kingdom, some close to the Seleucid empire near Kandahar in southern Afghanistan. See Singh 2008, 327–28.

78. On Demetrius' role in the founding of the Library, Blum 1991, 99–106.

79. The word is *polypaltos*, "much-quivering." On Berenice II as a warrior, see Stephens 2005, 241–43.

80. On Adea-Eurydice and Olympia, see Carney 2006, 72–75; and on Macedonian queens generally, Carney 1987.

81. For details of Lysanias' comments in the scholia of Homer and Euripides, see RE Lysanias 8.

82. Niebuhr 1828–43, 233–38. Influential modern arguments for this "low" dating include Chamoux 1956, 22–24 and Will 1979, 145, 243–44.

83. Eusebius *Chronicorum* Liber I, ed. Schoene, 237–38.

84. Buttrey 1994, 141–42 has argued that the confusion does not negate Eusebius' testimony, but Eusebius' other mistakes in dating suggest that skepticism is justified, see Chamoux 1956, 23.

85. The story is also told in the *Metz Epitome*, 20–21. Burstein 1999 suggests that the biblical story of Judith was influenced by this version of Spitamenes' death.

86. Carney 2011, 200–201.

87. Laronde 1987, 380, on the politics of Apame's decision.
88. See Machu 1951, 49–50 and Plutarch, *Demetrius* 53.4 where Demetrius is called King of Cyrene.
89. There is no evidence of any kind to support the claim of Levin 2009, 236–37 that Demetrius and Apame had a child who became the philosopher Ptolemaïs of Cyrene.
90. Criscuolo 2003, 325–26.
91. Will 1979, 245; Laronde 1987, 382.
92. Buttrey 1994, 142–43.
93. The short life of the Koinon does not seem consistent with the presence of its coins in the numismatic record. To account for this it has been argued that it continued to function in some way after the Euergetae took control of Cyrene, but this is not supported by the numismatic evidence, see Buttrey 1984, 39–40.
94. Kraeling 1962, 3–6; Goodchild 1967.
95. Jones and J. H. Little 1971, 71.
96. The move was apparently motivated by the silting up of the lagoon along which the old harbor had been situated. The archaeological and numismatic evidence yields only a general mid-third-century date. See Laronde 1987, 389–93.
97. Steph. Byz. *sv. Berenikai* confirms that it was Berenice II who was responsible for the re-foundation. On the numismatic evidence for the date of the move to a new location, see Buttrey 1994, 143–44.
98. Laronde 1987, 396. For an earlier dating of the epigram, see Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 582.
99. The governor's title under Ptolemy IV was *Libyarch* (Polyb. 15.25.12).
100. No. 29, Pls. C and XI in Thompson 1973, 134–35.
101. On the naval monument see Ermeti 1981. It would be a particularly suitable monument of her since she was a shipowner herself, and mosaics found near Alexandria show her in naval uniform, holding a yardarm in her hands as if were a scepter. On the mosaic of Berenice in naval attire, see Daszewski 1985, especially p. 147.
102. Ridgway 1990, 366–67 and Il. 40. The likeness was first noticed by Stucchi 1984.

Chapter 2

1. A conclusive argument that Theoxena, like Magas, was the daughter of Berenice I and her first husband, Philip, is made by Will 1964, 325 n. 3.
2. On the identity of this Archagathas, see Bagnall 1976b.
3. Bennett suggests that the charges may have been related to the exile of Arsinoë I, C. J. Bennett, "Theoxena" n. 6 at www.tyndalehouse.com/egypt/ptolemies/theoxena.htm, accessed on November 30, 2012. This is an attractive idea, but there is no ancient corroboration.
4. See Walbank 1957–1979 vol. 2, 438. On the evidence of the papyri that Agathocles' father was also called Agathocles, see Maas 1945. His half-sister's father was Theogenes, and the mother they had in common was Oenanthe, rumored without any basis to have been a mistress of Berenice II's husband Euergetes in Walbank 1957–1979 vol. 2, 438.
5. On Alexander's religiosity and openness to non-Greek cults, see Edmunds 1971.

6. On the sources and the history of the debate about Alexander's motives in going to Siwa see Bloedow 2004 and Bosworth 1977.
7. On the necessity of oracles for city foundations see Welles 1962, 275–76. The ancient sources are not unanimous about whether the trip to Siwa preceded Alexander's foundation of the city or followed it, but most agree that he was at Siwa first and founded the city on his return, Welles 1962, 275–80. See especially Pseudo-Callisthenes 1.30.5, discussed in Welles 1962, 281.
8. On the tomb of Battus and heroic honors for the founder, see Malkin 1987, 204–12.
9. Alexander himself apparently wanted to be buried at Siwa, or so it seems from the sources: Paus. 1.6.3; Strabo 17.18; Diod. Sic. 18.26–28. Perdiccas had given the order that the body be taken to Macedonia probably to create an opportunity to seize power there from Antipater.
10. A detailed account of Alexandria's topography is in Fraser 1972, vol. I, 3–37.
11. Texts and commentaries on Herodas' *Mimiambus* 1 include Zanker 2009, Cunningham and Rusten 2002; Cunningham 1971; Di Gregorio 1997.
12. On the date of the cult of the *Theoi Adelphoi* see Fraser 1972, vol. 1, 216.
13. On the challenges of excavating Alexandria, see McKenzie 2007.
14. Strabo 17.1.6–10. On this see Fraser 1972, vol. 1, 11–37. Another, briefer account written somewhat earlier is in Diod. Sic. 17.52.
15. On the coins, see Handler 1971, 58–61.
16. It is described in a contemporary epigram by Posidippus of Pella (115 AB = 11 G.-P.) and was featured on coins, Fraser 1972, vol. 1, 17–21.
17. On Pliny's mistake in calling Sostratus the architect of the lighthouse (*NH* 36.83) see Fraser 1972, vol. 1, 19–20.
18. Callicrates dedicated statues of Philadelphus and Arsinoe at Olympia (OGIS 26–27) and was honored with them at Samos (OGIS 29.3–4), while at Delos the honor is all his own (Ditt. *Syll.*³ 420). On Callicrates and the shrine of Arsinoe-Aphrodite, see Bing 2002–2003, 255–66.
19. A translation of Callimachus' *Lock* is in App. A.
20. Zenobius 3.94. Greek text in Fraser 1972 vol. 2, 388 n. 385.
21. For text, commentary, and dated English translation of *Id.* 15, see Gow 1952. Literary treatments of the poem are in Griffiths 1979, 82–86, Burton 1995, 133–48, and Hunter 1996, 110–38.
22. The date is somewhere in the mid-270s, after Arsinoe II, who is here called “Queen” (*Id.* 15.24) has already married Philadelphus.
23. Gow 1952, vol. 2, 287.
24. A detailed, balanced account of the ancient evidence for the Museum and Library is in Fraser 1972, vol. 1, 305–35. On the scholarly achievements of its members, see Pfeiffer 1968, 87–233. On the Library generally, and the difficulties of the ancient sources, see El-Abbadi 1990, Bagnall 2002, Berti and Costa 2010, Blum 1991, Delia 1992, and Erskine 1995.
25. Delia 1992, 1454–56 locates the Museum complex using the evidence of two 19th century archaeological finds, but Bagnall 2002, 354 disputes this interpretation.

26. For a review of the evidence and a carefully calculated estimate of the size of the Library see Bagnall 2002, 351–56.
27. Strabo (13.1.54) says that Aristotle taught the Egyptian kings how to organize the Library. Although this cannot be literally true, since Aristotle died before Ptolemy I established himself in Egypt, if taken in a larger sense, it seems to affirm Peripatetic influence on the Library's organization.
28. Strato later went back to Athens and became the third head of the Lyceum after Theophrastus (Diog. Laert. 5.58).
29. Ancient sources on Demetrius include Diog. Laert. 5.75–85; Diod. Sic. 18.74.3, 20.27.1, 20.45; and the *Suda* s.v. Demetrius (δ 429). All of the relevant testimonia are edited with commentary in Wehrli 1949.
30. On Tzetzes' testimonia, see Blum 1991, 104–13.
31. After Soter's death Demetrius made the mistake of supporting one of Ptolemy II's unlucky rivals for the throne. Demetrius was locked up for his efforts and died shortly afterwards.
32. On Zenodotus and his work, see Pfeiffer 1968, 105–19.
33. Blum 1991, 83 n.155.
34. On this evidence see Blum 1991, 103 and n. 40.
35. For examples see Cameron 1995, 5–7. On Timon's insulting Epicurus this way see Clayman 2009, 90–91.
36. On ancient biographers' failure to understand wit and irony in their sources, Lefkowitz 2012, 128.
37. The evidence is evaluated by Cameron 1995, 5–9, with bibliography in n. 27.
38. This topic has a long bibliography, which can be found along with a contemporary treatment of the subject in Hunter 2006.
39. Modern Callimachean studies begin with the authoritative text of Pfeiffer 1949–1953 which should now be supplemented with D'Alessio 2007. An English translation of the most complete poems and fragments is Nisetich 2001 and the Loeb editions of Mair 1960 and Trypanis 1958. Lehnus 2000 provides a complete bibliography up to 1998. Editions and commentaries on individual poems are cited throughout this book where the poems are discussed.
40. On Callimachus' philology, see Krevans 2011.
41. A detailed description of them in English is Pfeiffer 1968, 127–34 whom I follow in this account.
42. On some of Callimachus' titles, see Pfeiffer 1968, 134–37.
43. A review of the evidence for Callimachus' dates is in Fraser 1972 vol. 2, 1004–5. See Lehnus 1995 for an argument in favor of the later dating, and Lehnus 2000, 367–69 for a bibliographical survey of the subject. A review of earlier discussion is in Herter 1937, 82–93, and a recent summary is in Stephens 2011, 10.
44. Callimachus *Hy.* 4.171–87.
45. The early limit for the date of Arsinoe's marriage to Ptolemy II is established by her previous marriage to Ptolemy Ceraunus in 281/80, and the later limit, by a visit to Hieropolis as queen in 274 or 272 noted on the Pithom Stele (CCG 22183). For a date of about 276 and a review of the evidence, see Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 117 and vol. 2, 367, n. 228.

46. The central piece of evidence for Arsinoë's death is the Mendes Stele (CCG 22181), which limits the possibilities to 268 or 270. For discussion see C. J. Bennett, "Arsinoë II" at: http://www.tyndalehouse.com/egypt/ptolemies/arsinoe_ii_fr.htm, n. 17, accessed on November 30, 2012.

47. Hölbl 2001, 48–51 dates the war to 246–241 BCE, but the king seems to have stopped campaigning personally in 245 (Just. 27.1.9; Porph. FGrH 260 F 43). Thus, 245 would be a *terminus post quem* for the poem. It is generally believed that the "Lock" circulated as an independent poem before it was added to the *Aetia* as a dramatic conclusion, and this would push the date of *Aetia* 4 further back. For a summary of the evidence, see Fantuzzi and Hunter 2004, 86.

48. Another candidate is his grandfather, a minister of Ptolemy II whose name was also Sosibius.

49. On Apollonius' *Lives*, see Lefkowitz 2012, 121–24 and 157–58. English translations with discussion can be found in Hunter 1989, 1–3. Supporting the possibility of exile in disgrace followed by a triumphant return are 6 verses in the scholia with alternate readings cited from an earlier edition, the so-called *proekdosis*. On this, see Hunter 1989, 5–6. On the unlikelihood of his exile, see Lefkowitz 2012, 121–22.

50. Examples are the *Aetia* prologue (fr. 1 Pf.), *H.* 2.105–113; and the 13th *Iamb.*, (fr. 203 Pf.).

51. On the many parallels between Apollonius and Callimachus, see Pfeiffer 1949–1953 vol. 2, xli–xlii and Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 637–40.

52. On the Homeric scholarship of the Alexandrian poets, see Rengakos 1994 and Rengakos 2001.

53. Apollonius' foundation poems are discussed in Krevans 2000.

54. This is the argument of Köhnken 2001, but there has been much scholarly debate about who borrowed from whom, and no easy way to resolve the differences of opinion in each instance.

55. On the parallels see Hunter 1989, 7–8. Although the *Hymn to Apollo* is generally dated late in Callimachus' life Vian and Delage 1976–1981 vol. 1 xiii, see Cameron 1995, 407–9 for an argument that it was written in Cyrene in c. 270 BCE and Mori 2008, 9–10 who dates the hymn and *Argonautica* between 270–260 BCE.

56. The argument was made by Jackie Murray in "Read in the Stars: The Date of Apollonius' *Argonautica*" presented at the annual meeting of the American Philological Association, January 5, 2012. An abstract is at: http://apa.classics.org/index.php/annual_meeting/143rd_annual_meeting_abstracts_table/, accessed April 2, 2013.

57. On the life of Eratosthenes see Roller 2010, 1–15; Fraser 1972, vol. 1, 308–10 and vol. 2, 489, n. 205; Blomqvist 1992, and on his life and work generally, Geus 2002. A rationale for his birthdate is in Blomqvist 1992, 53–54.

58. The name Callimachus appears on an inscription listing individuals who had made contributions to an emergency fund in support of Athens c. 247 BCE, Oliver 2002. If this individual is the poet, it is hard to resist speculating without any other evidence that he met with Eratosthenes there. In any case, Eratosthenes came to Alexandria very soon afterwards.

59. In F. 8 and 9 of the *Geography* (Roller 2010, 122–23) Eratosthenes calls Callimachus' ignorance inexcusable.
60. App. 2, 4 in Roller 2010, 270.
61. English translation of the fragments and commentary on the *Geographica* is in Roller 2010.
62. On Eratosthenes' poem for Philopator, see Fraser 1970, 185–86.
63. On the intersection of science and poetry in Alexandria see Netz 2009.
64. For Eratosthenes as "Beta," see Blomqvist 1992, 66 n. 2.
65. A list of names and sources is in Weber 1993, 426–27.
66. On Philostephanos and his work see Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 776–79.
67. The other four Doric epigrams are 44, 45, 39 and 3 G.-P. The last is on the Cyclops Polyphemus and is an homage to Theocritus' Doric *Idyll* 11, on the same subject. The other three are epitaphs. 39 G.-P. for Kimon of Elis is another example of the Dorian poet addressing another Dorian in their shared language. The other two offer no obvious explanation for Callimachus' dialect choice, though the intimate nature of the poems—44 is a poem of condolence rather than an epitaph exactly—suggest to Kerkhecker that Doric is the *vox poetae*, the personal voice of the poet himself. See Kerkhecker 1991, especially 32–34. See Hunter 2005, 195–96 on the political and social resonance of Doric in the Ptolemies' Macedonian court.
68. The ancient testimonia on the Graces is collected in Schwarzenberg 1966 and Deichgräber 1971. For the three Graces in Callimachus, see Prioux 2007, 224–28 and 234–37; and Prioux 2011, 209–11 on this epigram and the role of Ptolemaic queens as patrons of the arts.
69. For the equation of Philadelphus with Zeus in Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus*, see Clauss 1986 with full bibliography on the identity of the addressee. Earlier, Theocritus explored the same notion in *Id.* 17, see Griffiths 1979, 71–82.
70. On Berenice's association with Aphrodite as the goddess of married love, see Gutzwiller 1992a, esp. 367–69.
71. On fr. 112 Pf. see D'Alessio 2007 vol. 2, 541–43 and Harder 2012 vol. 2, 855–70. The Graces are also associated with the Muses in Hesiod's *Theogony* 53–67. Callimachus' address to Berenice in the opening verses of the "Victoria," which introduces book 3 of the *Aetia*, puts her in a role usually reserved for the Muses themselves, Morrison 2011, 246–347.
72. Gow 1952 vol. 2, 305–7. After leaving Syracuse Theocritus came to Alexandria where he wrote at the court of Ptolemy II. Callimachus alludes to his work in a number of places although not every reader has agreed in each case on which author is prior. On Callimachus' dependence on Theocritus, see Köhnken 2001, 80–83, and on the uncertainty of who was alluding to whom, Schlatter 1941, 14 and Hunter 1999, 2.
73. On *Idyll* 16 as a history of literature, Hunter 1996, 77–109.
74. If this is correct, it is one of a number statues described in his work, including another that is likely to be of Berenice. See Thomas 1983, 96–97 for a list and discussion. Another perspective is offered by Acosta-Hughes and Stephens 2012: 222–223, who argue that the four Graces are the four books of the *Aetia*, and the new, fourth Grace, "still

damp with perfume” is the perfumed Lock which is bathed in the sea before it ascends to the heavens.

75. Habicht 1997, 179–82, and on the cult, Palagia 2007, 237–38.

76. For another political reading of the poem, see Prioux 2011, 210–11.

77. On court society generally in the Hellenistic age, see Weber 1993, Herman 1997, and a more concise treatment in Weber 2011.

78. On courtiers in the early Ptolemaic period, see Weber 1997, 29–31.

79. A list of the known courtiers of Ptolemy III, and their positions, if known, can be found in Weber 1993, 149–54.

80. See Carney 1991 on the titles of Hellenistic queens, and on *basilissa*, also Gow 1952, vol. 2, 275 on *Id.* 15.24.

81. E.g., the Canopus decree where *basilissa* describes Berenice’s unmarried daughter who died young.

82. Carney 1991, 162, building on Pomeroy 1984, 11.

83. On “friends” of the queen see Savalli-Lestrade 2003, 63–64 with n. 17. Another of the king’s friends whom Berenice probably knew was Pelops the son of Pelops, who was appointed *Strategos* or *Libyarch* in Cyrene, see Weber 1993, 150 n. 5.

84. On symposia as performance venues, see Asper 2004, 8–9.

85. This is clearest in Callimachus’ *Hymns* to Athena and Demeter.

86. On Chrysippus, see Gorteman 1957, 322–23 and Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 358 and 369. Another “friend” of Arsinoe I who was allegedly part of the conspiracy was Amyntas. On the exile of Arsinoe I and Philadelphus’ possible motivations in putting her aside, see Carney 2013, 67–70.

87. For a list of medical terms in the epigram, Fraser 1972, vol. 2, 545, n. 283.

88. See Gorteman 1957, 325–26 and Coppola 1936, 44–45. The evidence for Caphisophon is PMich. Zen. 55 (240 BCE). See also Fraser 1972, vol. 1, 369.

89. On Neon, see Fraser 1958, 112 no. 26 and Gorteman 1957, 329–31.

90. Plut. *Alex.* 10.3 names Ptolemy as one of Alexander’s young friends who went into exile with him in 337. He became a *somatophylax* (bodyguard) of Alexander’s in 330 (Arr. *Anab.* 3.27.5).

91. Though Ptolemy put himself in charge of the government described on the *Diagramma* of 321 (Laronde 1987, 75–94), Cyrene did not stay quietly in the Ptolemaic fold until Berenice’s marriage to Euergetes.

92. The Rhodians celebrated their victory by building the famous Colossus, a larger-than-life statue of Helios at the entrance to their harbor.

93. On the nature and evolution of Ptolemaic rule in Egypt see Manning 2010.

94. Welles 1962, 295–96. The stories in Tacitus (*Hist.* 4.83–84); Plutarch (*Isis and Osiris* 28, 361F–362B, *Whether Land or Sea Animals are Cleverer*, 36, 984A–B); and Eustathius (Müller, 1882, *Geographi Graeci Minores*, vol. 2, 262) of Ptolemy’s dream and his embassy to Sinope to bring back a cult statue of the god do not contradict the fact that Oserapis (combining Osiris and Apis) already had much older sanctuaries at Memphis and Rhacotis.

95. Eurydice’s children were Ptolemy Ceraunus, Ptolemais, Lysandra (Paus. 1.9.6), an unknown son (Paus. 1.7.1), and possibly two others.

96. On the city Berenike in Epirus, Cohen 1995, 76–78.
97. On the cities named for Berenice I or her granddaughter Berenice II, see Cohen 2006, 313–25. Theoc. *Id.* 15.106–11 indicates that Arsinoe II's festival is meant to honor her mother. On the festival see pp. 48–49 above.
98. Theocritus also wrote a poem wholly for Berenice I, frag. 3 Gow, from Athen. 7.284A–B, which describes a sacrifice of fish that may also relate to Aphrodite.
99. Gutzwiller 1992a, 363–65. A complete review of the theories offered is in Carney 2000b, 34–36. In addition to Gutzwiller, Pomeroy 1984, 30–38 may be consulted for the importance of the island of Cypris, where Aphrodite had a cult, to Ptolemaic strategies for controlling the Mediterranean, and for Aphrodite as “the patroness of the sexually attractive wife.” All of these aspects can be included in Carney's general theory that all the cults for women have to do with power and access to it, Carney 2000b, 40. Cults of women associated with powerful men focus on their sexuality and their domesticity, both associated with Aphrodite.
100. An epigram attributed to either Asclepiades or Posidippus compares a Berenice, thought to be Berenice I, to a statue of Aphrodite (Asclep. 39 G.-P. = *APL* (A) 68).
101. On the cult of the *Theoi Soteres* see Fraser 1972 vol. 2, 367–68, n. 229 and 373, n. 383.
102. Theocritus also celebrates Philadelphus' birth on Cos in his *Encomium for Ptolemy*, *Id.* 17.53–76.
103. It is likely that the occasion of Philadelphus' co-regency and his birthday were celebrated by Callimachus in his *Hymn to Zeus* Clauss 1986 and Stephens 2003, 77–79, although the poet nowhere refers to Philadelphus by name.
104. On the extent and purpose of the Ptolemaic holdings overseas see Marquaille 2008, 42–43.
105. Cohen 2006, 308–13.
106. On the first Grand Procession, see Rice 1983, 182–83.
107. The standard study is Rice 1983. On the identification of the author with Callixenus of Rhodes and his likely floruit in the third century, see pp. 164–71.
108. On Berenice II's official corpulence, Daszewski 1985, 152. See figures 1 and 2 for images of Berenike on coins and in mosaics.
109. A summary is in Thompson 2008, and details in Manning 2010, 117–64.
110. Philadelphus' *hetairai* are listed by Ptolemy VIII in his *Hypomnemata* (FGrH 234F4). Bilistiche's victories of 268 and 264 are known from POxy. 2082 and Paus. 5.8.11. For discussion see Ogden 2008, Kosmetatou 2004a, and Cameron 1995, 239–46.
111. On the houses of Philadelphus' *hetairai*, Athen. 13.576F On the status of the royal courtesans see Carney 2013, 126–28.
112. The text of the scholium is in Fraser 1972, vol. 2, 505, n. 46. For discussion, see Fraser 1972, vol. 1, 347, 369. Fraser suggests that it must have happened at around 280/79 before the Great Processions (275/74) and Philadelphus' marriage to Arsinoe II.
113. Ptolemy the son of Ptolemy was not the son of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II, whose marriage was childless (*Schol. Theoc.* 17.128). Possibilities include Euergetes himself; an illegitimate son of Philadelphus; the eldest son of Arsinoe II by her first husband, Lysimachus, who was also called Ptolemy (Ptolemy Lysimachou); and an unknown older

brother of Euergetes. For a detailed review of the evidence and arguments in favor of the last alternative see Tunny 2000. See also Huss 1998 and Huss 2004 for the arguments in favor of Ptolemy Lysimachou.

114. On this important point see Carney 1994, 124–25 and Carney 2013, 41–43

115. Sources on Arsinoe II's role in Agathocles' murder include Memnon FGrH 434 F5.6; Justin *Epit.* 17.1.4; Strabo 13.4.1; Paus. 1.10.3. On the confusing and contradictory sources see Carney 1994, 125–27, Carney 2013, 44–48, Heinen 1972, 4–9, and Lund 1992, 184–206.

116. On the motivations for the marriage between Ceraunus and Arsinoe II, see Carney 1994, 127–28, and Carney 2013, 49–64

117. On the dates of Arsinoe's marriage to Ptolemy II, see Fraser 1972 vol. 2, 367 n. 228 and Carney 2013, 70.

118. In Egypt endogamous marriage was familiar, though not widely practiced. See Hopkins 1980, Ager 2005, 17 and Carney 2013, 70–82.

119. Among the dissenters was the poet Sotades (Athen. 14.621A) who paid for his criticism with his life.

120. See the commentary in D'Alessio 2007, 694–95 on the form, meter, and possible source of the fragment.

121. I am grateful for Marco Fantuzzi for calling my attention to this important evidence.

122. On this theme see Griffiths 1979, 60–61.

123. Ager 2005 and the overview of Carney 2013, 70–82. See also Carney 1987, Hazzard 2000, 85–93, and Hopkins 1980.

124. Ager 2005, 16–22.

125. Ager 2005, 22–27.

126. On the Zephyrium cult see Fraser 1972, vol. 1, 237–46 and Carney 2013, 98–100. Another temple which Berenice co-shares with Aphrodite is that of Arsinoe Aktia (PEnt. 26).

127. On the Canephorus, see Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 217.

128. A sanctuary of the *Theoi Adelphoi* is mentioned by Herodas, p. 44 above, and see also Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 217 and vol. 2, 367 n. 228 and Carney 2013, 97.

129. Koenen 1993, 51.

130. The evidence is a group of faience *oenochoe* with images of Arsinoe II identified as Isis and Agathe Tyche, see Thompson 1973, 49–75.

131. On the Arsinoeia, see Fraser 1972, vol. 1, 232.

132. Names and foundation dates of the cities named for Arsinoe are in Cohen 1995 and Cohen 2006. Ptolemy II was one of the largest shipowners of his age (Athenaeus 5.203D–E).

133. The visit is noted on the Pithom Stele (CCG 22183); English translation in Mueller 2006, 192–99.

134. See Burstein 1982 for arguments against Arsinoe's direct role in determining policy, with bibliography for the opposite side of the argument on pp. 204–5. For an entirely negative view of Arsinoe's influence, see Hazzard 2000, 82 with criticism of it in

Carney 2011, 216 n. 105. For a strongly positive position, see Macurdy 1932, 119–20. Balanced views taking account of the nature and limits of the evidence are Pomeroy 1984, 18–19, Carney 2013, 91–95 and Carney 2011, 208.

135. On the date of the death of Arsinoe II see Carney 2013, 104, Koenen 1993, 51 n. 61 and Van Oppen 2010.

136. Posidippus (36 AB) also presents a heroic image of Arsinoe with a spear in her hand and a hollow shield on her arm in an epigram where a young girl dreams that the queen came to her, handed her a cloth damp with sweat, and asked her to dedicate it in her temple. Discussion of the image is in Stephens 2005, 236–40. Unlike other Macedonian and Ptolemaic queens there is no evidence, however, that Arsinoe ever set foot on a battlefield.

137. On the adoption see Carney 2013, 70. For example, the dedicatory inscription of a temple in Hermoupolis Magna by cavalry offices to “King Ptolemy, the son of Ptolemy and Arsinoe, the ‘Theoi Adelphoi’” and to “Queen Berenice, his sister and wife, the *Theoi Euergetai*.” On the text and translation, see Fraser 1972, vol. 1, 234.

138. See Billows 1995, 100–104.

139. Tunny 2000, 86–87.

140. On contraception in antiquity, see Hopkins 1980.

Chapter 3

1. The *Hymn to Athena* is written in elegiac couplets while The *Hymn to Demeter*, like the first four, is in hexameters, the same meter as the much earlier *Homeric Hymns*. This kind of *variatio* is reminiscent of the *Iambi* where Callimachus begins the collection in stichic choliambics to mark the poems as descending from the choliambics of Hipponax, then moves to other meters, only to return to choliambics in the final poem. More details are in Clayman 1980, 48–51.

2. On the dialect of Cyrene, see Buck 1946. On the Doric element in the *Hymn to Athena*, Bulloch 1985, 26–28 and in the *Hymn to Demeter*, Hopkinson 1984, 43–51.

3. His first four *Hymns*, e.g., use Homeric Greek in homage to the language of the *Homeric Hymns*.

4. On the Doric of the *Hymn to Athena* and *Hymn to Demeter*, and its resonance, see Parsons 2011, 141–45.

5. The *Hymn to Apollo*, discussed above, pp. 22–26, is the third.

6. On the literary nature of the hymn, see Legrand 1901. His argument is focused mainly on the *Hymn to Athena*, but the issues he raises relate to all three hymns. On the *Hymn to Apollo* and contemporary inscriptions of sacred regulations, see Petrovic 2011.

7. Hopkinson 1984, 13–16.

8. On Berenice II and the *Hymn to Athena* see Clayman 2011, which is the basis for the treatment below.

9. No. 63, “Bérénice II assimilée à Athéna Parthénos” in Vollenweider & Avisseau 1995, 80–81. No. 65 is another “Bérénice II assimilée à Athéna” engraved in coraline,

- perhaps for a ring. On the absence of inscriptional, literary, or archeological evidence for Athena's worship in Ptolemaic Egypt, see Fraser 1972, vol. 1, 195.
10. On the details of the identification see Vollenweider & Avisseau 1995, 80. Another possible portrait of Berenice in Athena's helmet (Hildesheim inv. 1113 = Reinsberg 1980, no. 26, fig. 61) has been identified by Jean-Yves Carrez-Maratray 2008, 106–7. This is in a collection of plaster molds used to cast metal objects embossed with decorative images and dated from the middle of the third century BCE.
 11. On Athena's closeness to her father, Aesch. *Eu.* 736–38 and Callim. *Hymn to Athena* 131–36.
 12. On Hyginus' sources see Stephens 2005, 241–42 with an English translation, and Marinone 1997, 22–23 n. 28 with the Greek text.
 13. On relations between Athens and Alexandria, see Habicht 1992.
 14. On the head of Berenice in Athens, see Palagia 2007.
 15. On the ways that the Euergetae were honored in Athens, Paus. 1.5.5, Polyb. 5.106.6, and Palagia 2007, 237–38; Hölbl 2001, 52; Habicht 1992, 74–75; Habicht 1997, 182; Mikalson 1998: 178–81; Kotsidu 2000, 65–66 no. 18L. The first Ptolemaion was held in 224/3 and every fourth year after that.
 16. The bathing ritual resembles the Athenian Plynteria, but there is no evidence except this hymn that a ritual of this sort was enacted in Argos. See Bulloch 1985, 8–13 for a discussion of the details and the Ptolemaic interest in Argos that may have motivated Callimachus' decision to place the ritual there.
 17. Bulloch 1985, 9. Most bathing rituals of this type were performed for Hera to restore her virginity before her sacred marriage to Zeus. See below on how Berenice II was assimilated to Hera.
 18. On Heracles as a Ptolemaic ancestor, see Griffiths 1979, 71–82 and 91–98.
 19. On the parenthetic quality of this passage, Morrison 2005, 31–32 and Hunter 1992, 16.
 20. On Athena and her horses, Kleinknecht 1975, 231–33.
 21. On Athena's oil, see Herter 1975, 195–98.
 22. For Athena as a Muse, see Depew 2004, 128–29. The name of the site, *Hippo-krene*, the “spring of the horse,” also points at Berenice's and Athena's love of horses.
 23. On Alexandrian Eleusis see Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 198–201 and Skowronek & Tkaczow 1981.
 24. On the Thesmophorion, see Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 199.
 25. On the site of the extramural sanctuary of Demeter at Cyrene, see White 1993.
 26. On the collection of seals as a whole, see Pantos 1985 and on the portraits of Berenice II and their date, Pantos 1987. The collection also contains portraits of Euergetes and their young son, who later became Ptolemy IV Philopator.
 27. On the contents of Berenice's cornucopia, see Thompson 1973, 33–34 and Troxell 1983, 65–66. The Oenochoes are small faience jugs with images of Arsinoe II, Berenice II, Arsinoe III, or Ptolemy IV depicted between an altar and sacred pillar in the act of pouring a libation from a shallow bowl. Thompson 1973 is an exhaustive study.
 28. Against this identification of the shipowner, see Hauben 1979, 74.

29. Kore, which means simply ‘young woman,’ is a well-attested alternative name for Persephone that has the virtue, for Callimachus, of making the myth more generic. Every woman on the verge of marriage is Kore.

30. For the text with English commentary and translation of the Homeric Hymn to Demeter see Foley 1994 and Richardson 1974.

31. On Kallichora, see Hopkinson 1984, 94 on *Hy.* 6.15.

32. On Aetolian League and the Ptolemies, see Hölbl 2001, 51–52. Euergetes made a military pact with the Aetolians in 229/8 and statue groups including Berenice II and all of her children were erected in this context at Thermos, where the League met, and at Delphi (IG IX.1², 1:56). See below, pp. 138–39.

33. This argues against Laronde 1987, 365 who dates the poem before 275 on the authority of Wilamowitz who saw an echo of *Hy.* 6.9 in line 45 of Callimachus’ *Apotheosis of Arsinoe* (fr. 228 Pf.), who died that year.

34. Berenice’s daughter, who was also called Berenice, died of natural causes in the ninth year of Euergetae’s rule, 238 BCE (OGIS 56). If Callimachus is referring to her death in this verse, *Hymn* 6 would be among his very last poems. Olympians do occasionally cry, but the Homeric Demeter does not.

35. See Bing 1995, 32 n. 12 on the inviolate grove.

36. See Hopkinson 1984, 18–30 on versions of the story of Erysichthon. In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, the goddess appears on earth as an old woman called Doso. Nicippe’s age is not specified.

37. Among the many examples of Greek names with *hippo-* and *nik-* are Hippocrates, Hippolytus, Philippus, Aristippus, Nicias, etc., yet *RE* 17 col. 342 lists only three other Nicippes, two from the world of myth (Apollod. 2.4.5 and Schol. Townleiana on *Il.* 19.116), and one apparently historical (Paus. 8.9.6).

38. The question of whether Callimachus’ *Hymns* should be read as sincere expressions of religious belief like the *Homeric Hymns* is set out clearly in Bulloch 1977, 3–13. It has been asked and answered in either the affirmative or negative by almost every commentator on these texts.

39. This is in contrast to the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* where the goddess creates a general famine to express her anger at Zeus.

40. This constellation of imagery is discussed in Worman 2008.

41. Fragments of the “Victoria Berenices” include 254–268C SH and frs. 54–59, 383, 176, 177, 590, 557 Pf. See D’Alessio 2007 for commentary, and Parsons 1977 for the first comprehensive edition.

42. Fragment numbers refer to the edition of Pfeiffer 1949–1953, and improvements to the text and commentary can be found in D’Alessio 2007. In addition to the larger fragments there are smaller ones of other *aitia*, and a papyrus calling itself the “Diegeseis” contains titles and opening verses of *aitia* contained in books 3 and 4, as well as other works of Callimachus.

43. See Cameron 1995, 260–62 for the reasons why he believes that “Acontius and Cydippe” was written between 279–274 BCE and arguments against each of these in D. L. Clayman 2013. The discussion of the *aitia* on Acontius & Cydippe and Phrygius & Pieria are based on this article.

44. On the content, date, and placement of the “Victoria” in the *Aetia*, see Parsons 1977.
45. The difference in structure between the two parts of the *Aetia* is clear. Books 1 and 2 are organized as a conversation between a narrator, who appears to be the poet, and the Muses. He asks questions and they answer him. In books 3–4 the Muses are absent and the constituent segments follow one another without a narrative frame.
46. Aristaenetus, *Epist.* 1.10 and Ovid, *Heroides* 20 and 21.
47. With additional commentary in D’Alessio 2007, 480–89.
48. There is more on the significance of the name Cydippe later in this chapter.
49. Cameron 1995, 257–59. On date of war, Cherry and Davis 1991, 12, n. 5. In 267 Koresia was renamed Arsinoe, though it may have reverted to its traditional name later. What exactly the Ptolemies built there is not known. Extensive excavations of the site have uncovered no physical evidence of any Ptolemaic improvements on Ceos, if that is what they were, and demonstrated clearly that the place was in a state of general decline toward the end of the third century, Cherry and Davis 1991, 26–28.
50. On Euergetes’ naval empire see Hölbl 2001, 48–67. Callimachus’ epigram on the Nautilus (14 G–P = AP 7.318B) features a shell that washed ashore near Ioulis and was dedicated by a young woman at the temple of Arsinoe-Aphrodite where Berenice II later dedicated her lock. On the relation between the epigram and the military base on Ceos, see Robert 1960, Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 587–88; vol. 2b, 835–36, n. 263, and on the epigram generally, Gutzwiller 1992b.
51. The names of Berenice’s six children were recorded on a statue base in Thermos (IG IX,1² 1:56).
52. This is the plot of the final *aition* of book 4, the “Lock of Berenice.” See below, pp. 97–104.
53. On Sotades’ use of the analogy of the marriages of Zeus/Hera and Philadelphus/Arsinoe II, Cameron 1995, 18–22. Plutarch also tells the story of an anonymous rhapsode who entertained at Philadelphus’ wedding by beginning his recitation of the *Iliad* with 18.356, “But Zeus spoke to Hera, his dear sister and wife.”
54. I am grateful to Marco Fantuzzi for calling my attention to this.
55. References for warrior cults of Hera are in Farnell 1971 vol. 1, 246 n. 18.
56. The authority for this function of Hera is Eratosthenes of Cyrene (*Kataster.* 3.44 Weidmann), whom the Euergetae appointed Librarian at Alexandria. Euergetes claims Dionysus and Heracles as ancestors on the Adoulis inscription.
57. Herodotus does not identify her by name, but this is known from various later sources including Plut. *Consolatio ad Apollonium* 14.1, Lucian *Charon* 10, Cic. *Tusc.* 1.47.113 and in Plut. fr. 133, Sandbach, from *A Woman should also be Educated*.
58. On other points of contact between “Acontius and Cydippe” and “Phrygius and Pieria” see Harder 2012 vol. 2, 544.
59. On the birth of the Muses in Pieria, Hes. *Theog.* 53.
60. Aristaenetus, *Epist.* 1.15; Plutarch, *de Mulierum Virtutibus* 16, 253F–254B; Polyaeus 8.35. All of these accounts appear to derive from Callimachus.
61. Following the reconstruction of Barigazzi 1976, 12.

62. Before her marriage Pieria was not a royal princess, but from the perspective of the Ptolemies, neither was Berenice. Her father, Magas, called himself a king, but he had been appointed to take charge of Cyrene by his stepfather, Ptolemy I, and later assumed the title of king on his own. Once married to Ptolemy III, Berenice became a proper queen, as Pieria did when she married Phrygius.

63. Only 49 carry out the murders. The 50th, Hypermnestra, spared her husband Lynceus who later avenged his brothers' slaughter by killing Danaus.

64. Text, notes, and Italian translation in D'Alessio 2007. A connection between the vibrating spear and a brief account in Hyginus *Astr.* 2.24.11–18 of Berenice coming to the aid of her "father" Ptolemy on the battlefield has also been suggested. On this possibility and the tradition of Macedonian women at war, see Pfeiffer 1949–1953 vol. 1 321, Stephens 2005, 241–42, and Pillonel 2008, who collects all the evidence.

65. D'Alessio 2007 vol. 1 694 n. 35. The oath was enacted by dropping molten iron into the sea and swearing not to return until it surfaced again.

66. Recent editions of the Greek text are in Marinone 1997, 62–75, D'Alessio 2007, and Massimilla 2010, all with Italian commentary, and Harder 2012 with English commentary. The evidence suggests that there were probably two Greek editions of the poem, and it is generally believed that the second, which concluded the fourth book of Callimachus' *Aetia*, is the version that Catullus knew. This is the hypothesis of Rudolf Pfeiffer 1949–1953, vol. 2, xxxvi–xxxviii, and it is widely accepted.

67. For a Latin text of Catullus 66 considered apart from Callimachus with an English commentary see Fordyce 1961.

68. Below, the gender of the Lock will be Callimachus' masculine *plokamos*, rather than Catullus' feminine *coma*.

69. A sampling of inscriptions that refer to Berenice II as the "sister and wife" of Euergetes include the Canopus decree (OGIS 56); a dedication of a temple at Hermopoulis Magna (Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 234 and vol. 2, p. 384 n. 356); a dedication of a synagogue to the Euergetae (OGIS 726 = CIJ 1440); Fraser 1972, 141 and SEG I 366, the decree for Boulagoras of Samos (Fraser 1972, vol. 2, 380, n. 324).

70. And also Isis who is "the wife and sister of King Osiris" in the aretology of Cyme, Koenen 1993, 62.

71. This is the same message conveyed by Callicrates' dedication to Zeus Olympius in honor of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II at Olympia. See Bing 2002–2003, 252–54 who explains how the monumental statues of the Philadelphi dominate the plaza facing the temples of Zeus and Hera, so that one brother-sister pair becomes the counterpart of the other.

72. On Philadelphus' courtesans and their conspicuous honors as a function of the king's need to respond to criticism of his incestuous marriage such as Sotades Fr. 1 Powell = (Athen. 14.621A), Ogden 1999, 78–79, and Ogden 2008, 380–81.

73. For information about the constellation, see Marinone 1997, 247–59, and on its heliacal rising which suggests a date for Conon's sighting, West 1985, 63–66. A small elegiac fragment of another poem of Callimachus refers to "Berenice's star" (fr. 387 Pf.). This is presumably the constellation, and a later commentator (Achill. *Isag. exc.* C. 14)

criticizes Callimachus for the confusion. On the impossibility of this fragment coming from the “Lock” see D’Alessio 2007 vol. 1 692, n. 31.

74. Gutzwiller 1992a, 369–73 has a detailed account of the various hair-cutting rituals in Greek culture.

75. On the lock of Isis see Nachtergaele 1981, 595–605.

76. On Isis as a fertility goddess see Dunand 1973, I 8–9; Merkelbach 1995, 11, 23–36; Dunand 2000, 40.

77. Berenice II wears Isis’ distinctive clothing on a faience jug, no. 122 in Thompson 1973, 165–66. Some of the jugs with images of Arsinoë II identify her explicitly as Isis (nos. 142, 144, and 146 in Thompson 1973, 171–73, and it is reasonable to assume that Berenice II, who strikes precisely the same pose on her jugs, was also understood to represent Isis. On other evidence see Dunand 1973 vol. 1, 38–39 and pl. XIV. And on Berenice as Isis, Tondrau 1948a, 22 and Selden 1998, 339.

78. On Hathor and Berenice see Selden 1998, 346–49 and Llewellyn-Jones and Winder 2011.

79. The Lock’s itinerary is explained by West 1985, 62–64.

80. For the Egyptian context see Selden 1998, 340–43.

81. Selden 1998, 343–44.

82. Thompson 1980, 182–83, pl. 61.3. On the lock as Berenice’s personal icon, see Carrez-Maratray 2008.

83. Carrez-Maratray 2008, 112–13 and fig. 5.

84. Books recounting catasterism, literally “becoming a star,” had a vogue in the third century BCE. An example is Eratosthenes’ now lost *Hermes*.

85. These verses cannot be found on POxy. 2258, which is the source of the Greek text at this point, nor is there any empty space in which they could be fit. This fact has led scholars, beginning with Pfeiffer, to assume that there were two versions of Callimachus’ poem in circulation: an earlier one represented by the papyrus, and a final version that was revised somewhat before it became the dramatic conclusion of book 4 of the *Aetia* and the inspiration for Catullus 66.

86. An example is Cameron 1995, 106.

87. An example is the Canopus decree (OGIS 56).

88. His mother had been the first Arsinoë, Philadelphus’ first wife, who had been banished on charges of plotting against him. He had no children by his sister.

89. Mørkholm 1991, 103–4, figs. 297–98.

Chapter 4

1. See Bakhtin 1981, 15, quoted in a seminal discussion of reading the *Argonautica* in its Ptolemaic context in Stephens 2000, 195. Mori 2008 explores the richness and complexity of Apollonius’ oblique approach to political issues of various kinds, but places the poet and his poem in the court of the Philadelphus.

2. See Clauss 1993, 129–47 for details of Odyssean parallels to the Argonauts’ stay on Lemnos.

3. Pindar, *Pyth.* 4.251–57, two lost tragedies of Aeschylus, *Hypsipyle* and *Lemniades*, and Euripides' lost *Hypsipyle*. For bibliography on Apollonius' use of earlier treatments of the tale, see Clauss 1993, 106 n. 1.

4. Ariadne married Dionysus after being abandoned on the Island of Naxos by her first husband, Theseus. She is mentioned later in the *Argonautica* at 3.997–1007, 1074–76; 4.424–34, where her story is intended as an ironic paradigm for Medea's. Euergetes asserts his own descent from Dionysus in the Adoulis inscription (OGIS 54) erected after his return from the Syrian War. For an English translation see Bagnall and Derow 2004, 51–53.

5. Berenice II assisting her father on the battlefield is attested by Hyginus (*Astr.* 2.24.11–18).

6. Hypsipyle, in contrast, is sold into slavery by the angry Lemnian women when they discover that their queen had not killed her father on the night when the other men were slain.

7. He uses these words again at *Argon.* 1.834, but when Hypsipyle talks of the murder to the other women in assembly, she prefers a euphemism: *a major deed* (*Argon.* 1.662).

8. On love in the "Lock" see Gutzwiller 1992a, 367–68.

9. On the mosaics as portraits of Berenice, see Daszewski 1985, and on the significance of the eyes, p. 150 with notes.

10. The Greek gods were also notorious for their lack of family values both in their relations with each other and with hapless humanity.

11. Following the visit to Circe's Island the Argo sails past the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, and the Wandering Rocks (*Argon.* 4.753–981), all landmarks from the *Odyssey*.

12. *Od.* 7.55 says that Alcinous and Arete have "the same parents," and some readers, including an ancient scholiast, have assumed that that means they were siblings. Scott 1939 explains the apparent contradiction.

13. Hunter 1993, 161–62.

14. Mori 2001.

15. POxy 1241 from the second century CE contains a fragmentary list of the earliest librarians at Alexandria. An English translation is in Hunter 1989, 1.

16. The Librarianship required a sophisticated grasp of the scholarly activities that took place there, and Apollonius' mastery of the details of text editing and of the research conducted on subjects like geography, ethnography, medicine, and literary history is on display with full force in his *Argonautica*. On Homeric scholarship incorporated directly into the *Argonautica*'s text, see Rengakos 2001, and on his knowledge of geography, Meyer 2001.

17. On the importance of the group in Jason's leadership style see Mori 2008, 90, and on the "friends" of the king in the courts of the Ptolemies, Koenen 1993, 30.

18. POxy. 1241 guarantees the order of the early librarians: "Apollonius of Alexandria, the one called the Rhodian," followed by Eratosthenes.

19. Ancient scholiasts offer variant readings of six passages in book I of the *Argonautica* which they cite from the *proekdosis*. On the meaning of the term see Pfeiffer 1968, 142, Vian and Delage 1976–1981 I XXI–XXIV, and Händel 1962, 440.

20. In both *Lives* Apollonius is exiled to Rhodes following a public rejection of his poetry, though they differ in significant details. Both suggest that the debate turned on

literary issues. On the likely sources of this tradition see Lefkowitz 2012, 121–25. Greek texts of the Lives are in Pfeiffer 1949–1953, vol. 2, xcvi–xcvii and English translations in Hunter 1989, 1–3. For additional discussion see Vian & Delage 1976–1981 vol. 1, VII–XIII and Händel 1962.

21. As a punishment exile is certainly more merciful than the one Ptolemy Philadelphus doled out to the poet Sotades, whose scatological verses on the king's incest led to his drowning in a lead sarcophagus.

22. Scholars like Stephens 2000, Hunter 1993, 152–69, and Mori 2008, who are sympathetic to a political reading of the *Argonautica*, tend to focus on ways in which the epic is broadly Ptolemaic, and Mori 2008 tries to find links with the Philadelphi.

Chapter 5

1. A Macedonian queen who met her rival on the battlefield is Alexander's mother Olympias, on whom see Carney 2006, and on Macedonian royal women, Carney 2000a.

2. On the jugate coin, see Svoronos 1904 no. 613 (pl. XIV 27), 614 (pl. XIV 28), 618 (pl. XIV 29–30), 621 (pl. XIV 31); Kroll 2007, 117 and no. 92a; Troxell 1983, 60–62 and plate 2, A; Mørkholm 1991, 103–4 and figs. 297–98, and Johnson 1999. It appears that all of the Ptolemies struck these coins beginning with Philadelphus, Troxell 1983, 60. On the significance of the image see Carney 2013, 123–24.

3. On the evidence for the cults of the Soteres and Philadelphi, see Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 217–20 and vol. 2, 367–68, notes 228–29.

4. The *epiklesis* was still missing in July 244 (SB XII 11059). On the evidence for the *Theoi Euergetai*, see Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 219 and vol. 2, 369 n. 235. And on the date, Bingen 2007, 38–39 n. 21. The posthumous cults established for Berenice II are also discussed below in this chapter.

5. The sources for Euergetes "tryphon" are both very late (Prol. Trogus 27; 30 and Porphyry in Eusebius *Chronicorum* I p. 251 Schoene). For discussion see C. J. Bennett at, "Ptolemy III" n. 1 at http://www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/Egypt/ptolemies/ptolemy_iii.htm, accessed on December 5, 2012.

6. For *tryphe* among the Ptolemies generally, Tondriau 1948b, Heinen 1978, 188–89 and Ager 2005, 23–24 with earlier bibliography.

7. On Oenoanthe, Pomeroy 1984, 50 and Walbank 1957–1979 vol. 2, 438, who accept that she was Euergetes' mistress, but see C. J. Bennett, "Ptolemy III" n. 18 at http://www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/Egypt/ptolemies/ptolemy_iii.htm, accessed on December 4, 2012 for the difficulties of this argument which entail an overreading of Raubitschek, "Oenoanthe 6," RE 17, col. 2189.

8. On *tryphe* and Dionysus, see Heinen 1978, 188 and Ager 2005, 25–26.

9. A photograph of the female bust is in Walker and Higgs 2001, 25. She is wearing Isis locks and has been identified as Berenice II, but this is uncertain.

10. On the bust from Crete see Hölbl 2001, 97, fig. 3.4. Carlsberg Glyptothek, Inv. 573, and also C 3 Kyrieleis 1975, 32; 168 and taf. 20.

11. On Ptolemy I and Dionysus, Heinen 1978, 188 n. 23. On the Dionysus in the *Pompe*, Rice 1983.
12. The wife of Ptolemy X was Cleopatra Berenice, and in theory, at least, the anecdote may be about this couple.
13. The Latin text and discussion of its meaning is in Marinone 1997, 23, n. 30. On evidence of dowries given to indigent girls either as private charity or by the state, see Pomeroy 1982.
14. For convincing arguments against the assumption that the story comes from Eratosthenes' poem "Catastrophisms" and has an origin in myth, see Marinone 1990.
15. On the likelihood that Lesbos was under Ptolemaic control in the 240s, see Bagnall 1976a, 161–62.
16. These petitions, called *enteuxeis*, which have survived in large numbers, show the king, or in this case the queen, as a generous source of protection for the people. See Samuel 1993, 190.
17. Marinone 1990, 298.
18. The queen herself apparently owned grain ships which would have been part of the fleet that saved the Egyptians from starvation in 245 BCE (P. Ry. IV 576). On royal ship owners, see Hauben 1979, 74. On the role of Alexander's mother Olympias and her daughter in a similar relief effort, see Carney 2006, 50–51. In that case as well, it is impossible to tell whether Olympias acted on her own initiative or paid for the grain with her own funds.
19. Euergetes' departure is dated by West 1985 in September 246. Assuming that the marriage of Berenice II and Ptolemy III took place soon after he succeeded his father in January, 246, they were together about eight months before he left.
20. Hölbl 2001, 39–45 for a summary account of the Syrian wars, and Grainger 2010 for the details.
21. "Ptolemy the Son" disappears from the Egyptian dating formula after 259 BCE and from history as well.
22. PCair.Zen. II 59251; Porphyry (FGrH 260F 43). Philadelphus' minister was the Dioiketes Apollonius. Though the gold and silver were ostensibly her dowry, they may also have been reparations for the war.
23. On the alleged poisoning, Phylarchos, FGrH 81 F 24 in Athenaeus 13.593D; Jerome, *In Danielam* XI.6 and Grainger 2010, 155–56.
24. On SEG 42.994 see Blümel 1992.
25. The story is told in Porphyry FGrH 260 F 43, Justin *Epit.* 27.1.7, and with dramatic details in Polyaeus *Stratagemis* 8.50.
26. The Gorub papyrus, W.Chr. 1 = FGrH 160. English translations are in Austin 1981, 363–64 and Bagnall and Derow 2005, 53–55; analyses in Piejko 1990 and in Grainger 2010, 158–59. Grainger notes that the report seems like a campaign diary. See also Hauben 1990.
27. On the contents of the letter see Hauben 1990, 30–31.
28. Bevan 1968 [1927], 201–3. A number of examples are below in this chapter.

29. Llewellyn-Jones and Winder 2011, 253–54. Had such a marriage taken place the Ptolemaic empire would have been joined to the Seleucid to recreate the largest part of Alexander's empire.

30. On Berenice Syra as an “insubstantial shadow” in the papyrus, see Piejko 1990, 26–27. In conclusion he notes that she does not take part in the welcoming ceremonies and in the deliberations about her own fortunes. He suggests that “going to the sister's” may mean nothing more than going to her residence, but provides no parallels for the expression.

31. On the absence of Berenice Syra see Hauben 1990, 30–31.

32. See Prioux 2011, 212–13 for the significance of these enigmatic verses.

33. The epigraphic evidence begins a year or two later. Criscuolo 2003, 315 n. 14 cites SEG 1.366, the inscription of Boulagoras of Samos, as perhaps the oldest attestation of *adelphē*, “sister,” for Berenice II. The date is c. 246–243 BCE.

34. Ancient sources on the *sedition*: Jerome, *In Danielam* 11.7–9 = FGrH II 260 F 43; PHaun 6; Justin *Epit.* 27.1.9; modern discussion in Grainger 2010, 163–64; Veisse 2004, 3–5; McGing 1997; Hauben 1990, 32–33, and Huss 1978.

35. On the famine as the direct cause of the revolt, Hauben 1990, 33–36.

36. Svoronos 1904, 1114 pl. XXXV 18 and 20; Mørkholm 1991, 106 and nr. 307. An example is ANS 1944.100.76255. Pollux *Onom.* IX 85 called these coins the *Berenikeion nomisma*. A later date, 235/230 BCE, has been proposed by Caccamo Caltabiano 1998, 107–9, and n. 45 on the basis of their absence from the hoard of Gülınar, dated 240–235 BCE. An argument *ex silentio* cannot be decisive, however.

37. On the iconography of Berenice II, see Troxell 1983, 65. The contents of her cornucopia, which differs from Arsinoe's, is from left to right: a cluster of grapes which look as if they are about to fall out, a pomegranate symbolizing fertility, a cake in the shape of a pyramid, and an oversized ear of grain. Details on the coins can differ. Sometimes the stars of the Dioscuri take the place of their pointed caps, and occasionally these symbols are absent altogether.

38. See Mørkholm 1991, no. 313. An example of the Arsinoe type is no. 308.

39. Griffiths 1979, 60.

40. There is no reason to assume, with Hazzard 1995, 5 that the symbols of the Dioscuri refer to the apotheosis of Berenice Syra. The issue is also explored by Vagi 1997, who reviews various explanations for the coins' iconography, and concludes that the portrait is that of Berenice II.

41. On the ranges of denominations and weights see Vagi 1997, 5, and the description in Mørkholm 1991, 106. On the Ptolemaic currency system, Reden 2007, 43–48.

42. On the uses of these heavy, ostentatious coins, see Reden 2007, 54.

43. Examples of Ptolemy III's coins include Svoronos 1904, 995 pl. XXX 1 and ANS 1997.9.178. On the ordinariness of Ptolemy's coins vs. Berenice's splendid ones, Caccamo Caltabiano 1998, 102.

44. On Ptolemy IV as the creator of the deified Euergetes coins, see Mørkholm 1991, 108–9; Smith 1988, 44. For an earlier date, Seltman 1933, 243.

45. On the vagueness of the symbols, see Smith 1988, 44 and plate 75.9, and Johnson 1999, 52.

46. On Ptolemaic portraits with large eyes and their probable meaning, see Daszewski 1985, 150. Alternatively, the Ptolemies may have actually been overweight and bug-eyed. Berenice's father Magas was said to have died from overeating.

47. For accounts of the results of the Third Syrian War, see Hölbl 2001, 50–51 and Grainger 2010, 164–70. Hauben 1990, 32 calculates that Ptolemy III was absent from Egypt for a total of about 10 months.

48. No. 313 Mørkholm 1991, 108; Troxell 1983, 65–66 and Pl. 10; Svoronos 1904 899–900 and pl. XXVI 24 & 26.

49. The cornucopia has two grape clusters, a small round fruit that cannot be identified, and a pomegranate is on the right. A large ear of grain which is typical of Berenice's iconography is on the left.

50. On the coins from Ephesus see Troxell 1983, 65.

51. An example of portraits of rulers veering between the ideal and the realistic are those of Demetrius Poliorcetes, see Mørkholm 1991, 27.

52. Some of the portraits of Arsinoe on coins produced during the reign of Ptolemy III look a lot like Berenice II.

53. I owe the observation about the secure value of coins of familiar design to Andrew Meadows.

54. The Adoulis inscription (OGIS 54). Hauben 1990, 32 calculates that it was put up between July 245 and September 17, 243 since it does not identify the king as Euergetes, an *epiklesis* he received between July 7, 244 and September 17, 243.

55. Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Topographie chrétienne* 2.58–59, Wolska-Conus 1968 vol. I, 364–86.

56. Among those who argue that Berenice's marriage preceded the death of Philadelphus are Hauben 1990, 30, Huss 1976, 177 n. 8, and Laronde 1987, 382.

57. Bagnall 1976a, 24–27. Magas himself issued no coins in his own name, but produced the same type as Ptolemy I, Bagnall 1976a, 185.

58. On Euergetes' interest in war elephants, Diod. Sic. 3.18.4.

59. On elephant hunting by the Ptolemies see Casson 1993 and Burstein 2008. Although elephant hunting had obvious military goals, since their rivals, the Seleucids, had a secure supply of elephants from India, profit could also be gained from the ivory that was harvested from the elephants not suitable for the military or breeding.

60. For what is known about these cities, see Cohen 2006, 313–25.

61. Hauben 1990, 31–32.

62. On Soter bringing back the gods, see the Satrap Stele, 3–6, ICairo 22182, = Sethe, 1904 (*Urkunden* II) 11–22; on Philadelphus, the Pithom Stele, ICairo 22183 = Sethe, 1904 (*Urkunden* II) 81–105; on Euergetes in addition to the above, the Canopus Decree, OGIS 56, and below. See also Winnicki 1994 for the background and an evaluation of the evidence.

63. See the Introduction for discussion of the Ptolemies' epithets. The *Theoi Euergetai* appear in OGIS 62, 64, 65 and SB 585, 586, 4624 and 9735. On the date see Ijsewijn 1961, 28, n.1. Berenice II, however, received her own, personal cult from her son, Ptolemy IV Philopator in 215/14; Fraser 1971 vol. II p. 369 n. 237 and Oates 1971, 55–72.

64. On the dedication in Itanos see Bagnall 1976a, 117 and 121 n. 22, dated probably in 246 BCE.
65. PHaun. 6, fr. 1.4–7. See Hölbl 2001, 50 and Bülow-Jacobsen 1979. Ptolemy Andromachou was likely an illegitimate half-brother of Ptolemy II, Tunny 2000, 88.
66. On the decree in Aenus see Bagnall 1976a, 160.
67. For literary analyses of the poem see Acosta-Hughes 2002, 294–300, Kerkhecker 1999, 182–96, and Clayman 1980, 35–38. Some tetradrachms of Ptolemaiou Soteros and Ptolemaiou Basileos with the head of Ptolemy III on the obverse and a cult statue of Hermes on the reverse were assigned by Svoronos 1904 930–33 pl. XXVII 11–14 to Aenos, but Bagnall 1976a, 206 rejects this.
68. The text of Hdt. 2.51 and an English translation can be found in Acosta-Hughes 2002, 302 n. 66.
69. On the propylon see Frazer 1990.
70. See Will 1979, 139 n. 4 and 232 on Samothrace and the Euergetae.
71. On Samothrace in the *Argonautica*, see Vian and Delage 1976–1981 vol. I, 260–61 and Delage 1930, 85–86.
72. On the Dioscuri as traditional symbols of the Spartan double monarchy in the Archaic and Classical periods see above, this chapter and Cartledge 2001, 62–63.
73. On the cult, see Bagnall 1976a, 134 and Palagia 1992, 171.
74. On Callicrates, see Bing 2002–2003.
75. That the shrine honors Arsinoe as the maritime Aphrodite is clear from two of the epigrams written to mark its dedication, Posidippus 119 AB and 39 AB. On the latter, where Arsinoe and Aphrodite are so completely assimilated that the Goddess' name is entirely absent, see Bing 2002–2003, 255–57. On the distinctly maritime nature of this Aphrodite, see Robert 1966, 201–2.
76. On these titles, see Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 238, and vol. 2, 388 nn. 382 and 385. The cult of Berenice the Savior was established posthumously by her son Philopator, who set up a shrine for her under that name on the seashore.
77. Nos. 38 and 39 plus plates A; B; 32; 33; 42a in Daszewski 1985, 146–60, who provides a detailed description and analysis of the iconography, as well as a persuasive identification of the figure as Berenice II. I rely on his work for the discussion of the portrait below. See also Koenen 1993, 27 and figures 2a and b, who identifies Egyptian influence in the queen's corpulence and her complicated headdress.
78. On the goddess Agatha Tyche, see Matheson 1994 and immediately below.
79. On the naval monument at Cyrene, see Ermeti 1981; the reviews of Casson 1983 and Martin 1983, and summary of more recent opinion in Ridgway 1990, 215–17.
80. The Marathos coins are Svoronos 1904, pl. 22, 23.
81. Euergetes withdrew his support from Cleomenes in 223/2 several days before Gonatus' successor, Antigonos Doson, wiped out the Spartans at Sellasia, Cartledge and Spawforth 1989, 57.
82. On this portrait of Ptolemy III see Palagia 2006, 210–12. The head bears the wings of Hermes which suggests that it once was atop a cult statue.

83. This estimate of the dates for the statues at Delphi and Thermos and the circumstances that prompted the Aetolians to set them up was proposed by Habicht 1997, 177. His account does not take into account the presence of a statue of the Princess Berenice, whose death is securely dated by the Canopus decree to 238. If she was still alive when this statue group was created, it cannot be later than 238, i.e., the date of the death of Antigonos Gonatus. On this see Bennett 2002, 142–45. On the monument and inscription (IG IX 1² 1, 202) at Delphi, Flacelière 1937, 268–70.

84. On the statues at Thermos see Bennett 2002, Huss 1975, and Kosmetatou 2004b, 239–40 with further bibliography. The inscription is IG IX 1² 1, 56 = Moretti II No. 86.

85. Conjectures about the identity of the unknown male include Apollo, whose shrine housed the statue group, Alexander, and one of the earlier Ptolemies.

86. On the history of this period see Habicht 1997, 173–93.

87. On the honors offered by the Athenians to the Euergetae, see Habicht 1997, 182–83 and Mikalson 1998, 168–81.

88. Cicero, *de Finibus*. 5.1. On the location of the Ptolemaeum, see Lippolis 1995.

89. On the statue of Berenice II at Athens, see Palagia 2007.

90. Agora S 551.

91. Acrolithic statues (literally “with a head of stone”) were common during the Hellenistic period. Since Egypt had no marble, it was sparing in the use of this precious substance, and the light weight of the wooden body made it easy to ship.

92. On the location of the statue, see Palagia 2007, 244 n. 52.

93. The adjective is *polypaltos*, “much quivering,” Pfeiffer 1949–1953 vol. 1, 320–22.

94. Stephens 2005, 241–42. A survey of the evidence of Macedonian queens in battle is in Pillionel 2008.

95. The Greek letter phi, rendered as “ph” in English, is the equivalent of Macedonian beta, “B.”

96. Nicholson 2005, 51–52. Many fifth-century victors were kings and tyrants from Cyrene and Sicily. Hieron of Syracuse, e.g., won three Olympic and three Pythian crowns between 476–68. See Fantuzzi 2005, 250 who calculates that 14 or one-third of Pindar’s *epinicia* were written for monarchs and of these, 12 are for equestrian victories.

97. Justin *Epit.* (7.2.14) says that Alexander I competed at the Olympics in a variety of events, which probably means that his source, Trogus, was not able to name them.

98. On Philip’s coins see Le Rider 1977, 366–67.

99. It was begun by Philip after the Battle of Chaeronea in 338, and completed later by his son Alexander the Great. See Schultz 2007 for detailed analysis and drawings.

100. On Hellenistic statue groups, see Kosmetatou 2004b and Geominy 2007.

101. The Alexander Romances (versions A & B, #18–19 in Stoneman 1991, 48–52) make Alexander an Olympic victor, but these are not historical sources.

102. The race for chariots pulled by a pair of foals was introduced in 286 BCE. Other “Ptolemaic” victories are recorded for Ptolemy Philadelphus’ mistress Bilistiche (Paus. 5.8.11). These can be dated to 264 BCE and perhaps 260, though Cameron 1995, 241 prefers 268 and 264. See Bennett’s list of Ptolemaic victories in 2005, 91.

103. IG V, 2 550. Lagus was his son by Thais, his first known wife.

104. See Dillon 2000 for details and discussion. According to Pausanias (5.6.7–8), the Elians, who controlled the festival site, promulgated a law that any women caught present at the games were to be thrown down nearby Mt. Typaion. There is no evidence that any woman ever met her fate there, however, and the only example of a woman challenging the law celebrates an exception to it.

105. On Cynisca (or Kyniska) see Kyle 2003. Her Olympic victories most likely took place in 396 and again in 392, Robert 1900, 195.

106. Cynisca's monuments are described by Pausanias 6.1.6.

107. For the text see *Inscripfen von Olympia* (IvO) 5.160 = IG V 1.1564a = Moretti 17 = Ebert 33. It is also preserved, without attribution, in the *Palatine Anthology* (AP 13.16).

108. See Young 1996 for an explanation of how the Greeks recorded athletic records and other examples. The earliest known epigram of this type is Moretti 16, dated c. 440–435 BCE. It is well represented among historical epigrams.

109. On Cynisca's and Agesilaus' intentions see Kyle 2003 and Pomeroy 2002, 21–24.

110. One was Bilistiche, a mistress of Ptolemy II, whose victories have been dated to 268 and 264 BCE (POxy. 2082) For issues in interpreting this papyrus and the reasons why it makes sense to retain Hunt's restoration of Bilistiche's name, see Kosmetatou 2004a, 21–22.

111. Bennett 2005, 91 n. 5.

112. The *editio princeps* of the Lille papyri which contribute the bulk of the text is Meil-lier 1976, combined with fr. 383 Pf. (= POxy 2173). Parsons 1977 adds new readings, commentary, and the proposal for locating the poem at the beginning of *Aetia* book 3, which is universally accepted. The standard texts are now 254–268c SH and D'Alessio 2007, 447–68.

113. Callimachus included Pindar's *Odes* in that great finding-tool he created for the Library at Alexandria, the *Pinakes*, or "Tables of all those who were eminent in any kind of literature and of their writings in 120 books." This was a kind of library catalog in which Pindar's *Odes* are organized, perhaps for the first time, by the location of the contest. We still follow that plan today. See Pfeiffer 1968, 127–31.

114. On original length and structure see Barbantani 2001, 79–80 and Fuhrer 1992, 96.

115. On Callimachus' elegiac *epinicion*, see Barbantani 2001, 8–37; Fuhrer 1992, 89–97; and Van Bremen 2007, 349.

116. In Callimachus' poem on the death of Arsinoe Philadelphus (fr. 228.5) she is still *nympe* after three marriages and three children. Parsons 1977, 8 with parallels in Theoc. *Id.* 17.129.

117. This version of Helen's story is the background of Euripides' *Helen*.

118. On Callimachus' choice of mythological references here see Stephens 2005, 233.

119. See also Prioux 2011, 211 on Heracles and Berenice the warrior.

120. An example is Pindar's Olympian 1.

121. Krevans 1986, 38. Other victory statues in Callimachus can be found in frs. 84–85; 99; and 384.44–49 Pf.

122. Thomas 1983, 108–10. Among the Greeks it was a common practice to robe a goddess' statue, and the annual renewal of the garment was an important part of her worship. Even if this is not the case here, the exquisiteness of the weaving is clear from the

text, and the admiration of the Egyptian women can be gleaned from a parallel in Tibullus 1.7.28–29, which has clearly been borrowed from Callimachus, as Thomas 1983, 110 explains.

123. What can be known about his life and work is summarized by Gutzwiller 1998, 150–70. See also Criscuolo 2003, 315–16 and 330 who argues for earlier dates. Posidippus' poetry does not often touch upon events that can be dated by modern historians, so the end point of his professional life remains unclear. On the impossibility of establishing dates for Posidippus, see Huss 2008, 55.

124. The papyrus is now known as PMilVogl. VIII 309. The *editio princeps* is Bastianini and Claudio Gallazzi with Colin Austin 2001 and a standard text with English and Italian translations in Austin and Bastianini 2002. The poems below are cited by their numbers in this edition (AB). Since AB is heavily supplemented and does not reflect the improvements which have been made since its publication, I use those in the 12th edition of *Classics@* issue 1 edited by B. Acosta-Hughes, E. Kosmetatou, et al. and published online at: <http://chs.harvard.edu/wa/pageR?tn=ArticleWrapper&bdc=12&mn=1341> and my own translations.

125. On Berenice Syra, see above, pp. 125–28. The least likely contender is the Basilissa Berenice, the daughter of Berenice II and Ptolemy III who died young and whose cult is described in the Canopus decree.

126. The arguments favoring Berenice of Syria are found in Criscuolo 2003, 113–15, 327–31; Thompson 2005, 274–79. Others who support their view include Van Bremen 2007, 164, Remijsen 2010, 104, and Decker 2008, 70–71. Against these, in favor of Berenice II are Clayman 2012 and Huss 2008.

127. Thompson herself 2005, 275 characterizes her reading as “literal.”

128. Bing 1998 is essential reading on the slippage of epigrams between media.

129. See Fantuzzi 2005, 267–68 on the lack of monuments celebrating the victories of Ptolemaic women.

130. On the aesthetics of arrangement in Posidippus' epigrams, see Gutzwiller 2005 and Krevans 2005; on the structure of the “Hippika,” Fantuzzi 2004.

131. In the first (71 AB) the speaker is the victor, in two (73 and 75 AB) it is the horse or team, and in three (72, 74, and 76 AB) an observer describes the statue. The poems with human speakers use demonstratives (“this horse,” “this colt,” “this chariot and driver”) to point to the fictive statue, Kosmetatou 2004b, 233. Epigrams on stone that once accompanied actual statues use the same forms. An example is no. 27 Moretti 1953, 65.

132. An example of an inscribed agonistic epigram in the first person is 73 Ebert 1972, 218.

133. Posidippus was perhaps among the “others” whom Hyginus cites as sources for the information that Berenice entered her horses at Olympia (*Astr.* 2.24). On the rivalry between Callimachus and Posidippus as it relates to the “Hippika,” see Lelli 2005, 123–27.

134. This is the perennial challenge of the Hellenistic poet.

135. An example of an inscribed epigram with a list of victories won by family members is 16 Moretti 1953, 36–37. Catalogs of an individual's victories include Nos. 35, 40, 43, and others.

136. “Having the same name as his father” is a common formula in epigrams on stone, see CEG 383 on Cyniscus of Mantinea from Olympia 450 or 460 BCE, Ebert 1972, 82–84 and Bastianini and Gallazzi 2001, 207. Since he was the stepson of Ptolemy I, Magas might be styled the son of a king by courtesy, but there is no evidence that he was ever called “Ptolemy.”

137. On the probable date of this victory in 272, see Bennett 2005, 94.

138. These are the only readable words in two very fragmentary verses. The supplements offered by AB can be misleading.

139. “Children of children” is common in memorial epigrams on grave steles which mark an event that would naturally inspire contemplative thoughts on the place of an individual in the human chain of succession. Examples are in Bastianini and Gallazzi 2001, 207.

140. Noticed first by Huss 2008, 57. The possessive “your” is more appropriate for a queen than a princess: Bingen 2002, 58.

141. The poem’s construction as a celebration of three generations of victorious Ptolemies suggests a family-group statue as noted by Kosmetatou 2004b, 233. Further discussion of this point is below.

142. Thompson 2005, 270 suggests that the chorus was female, which would be appropriate for a female victor in a poem stressing the achievement of women. See also Van Bremen 2007, 372 and n. 122. All the early Ptolemies were Macedonians through their connection to Ptolemy I and Berenice I. On the wider trend of claiming Macedonian ancestry as a way of establishing connection to the Ptolemies, see Kosmetatou 2004a.

143. 79 and 80 AB are addressed to “Nemean Zeus” and 81 AB features “Doric leaves of celery,” the victory crown at Nemea.

144. The similarity with Callim. 254.8–10 SH is noted by Bastianini and Gallazzi 2001, 209.

145. Athlophoros, “the prize-bearer” was one of Berenice’s cult titles. See below, pp. 157–58. Here Callimachus uses it as a verb meaning “she wins.”

146. Thompson 2005 esp. 275–78; Criscuolo 2003; Bennett 2005.

147. On the issue of women and virgins at the games, see Dillon 2000.

148. Steiner 1998.

149. Steiner 1998, 136–37.

150. On the process of youthening, Steiner 1998, 132, 137–38.

151. Later Berenice herself shared in a similar cult of Aphrodite under the name of Berenice *Sozousa*.

152. The literary reading below is based on Clayman 2012.

153. See No. 26 Ebert 1972, 92 for Nikolades of Corinth, where “the divine shore of Poseidon’s Isthmus saw him take the prize three times in a row.” An example, though emended, in the “Hippika” is the first verse of 82 AB.

154. Gutzwiller 2002, 96–97 has collected some pointed examples that illustrate this use of *thaumazo*, “to marvel at a work of art” in other epigrams. For *thauma* as a statue in epigram, 16.105, 16.251 AP; *thauma* of precious objects in other poems of Posidippus, see 13.2, 15.7, 17.2 AB.

155. See Clayman 2012 for a detailed explanation of this reading and failed efforts to emend the final two verses of 82 AB.
156. An early example of a speaking monument in an agonistic context is No. 6 Moretti 1953, 12.
157. On Euryleonis, Paus. 3.17.6. Cameron 1995, 244 dates Euryleonis' victory to 368.
158. On Battos' *heroon* at Cyrene, Malkin 1987, 204–6.
159. On the dialect of Cyrene see Buck 1946 and on the Doricisms of this poem and their reference to Cynisca, see Bettarini 2005, 21–22.
160. Fantuzzi 2005, 263 makes this argument on behalf of Berenice I, whose son Magas, was given control over Cyrene by her second husband, Ptolemy I. There is no evidence of any direct relationship of Berenice I with the city, and the argument works better for Berenice II who was born there. Cyrene was a monarchy, at least originally, whose heroized kings provide a template of Alexandria's divinized rulers.
161. On athletic records in inscribed epigram see Young 1996.
162. For this reading, *basilêes* are “royal personages,” including kings and queens; and *gonees* are, narrowly, his “parents.” Eordaea in the western part of central Macedonia was the birthplace of Ptolemy I, though any of his offspring could say that they were “of Eordean birth.”
163. This reading is a reminder that both Ptolemy I and Berenice I had more distinguished blood lines on their mother's side than their fathers. See Carney 2013, 21. When read this way *basilêes* are “kings” rather than “royals,” and *gonees* are “forbearers,” rather than “parents.”
164. On the absence of Ptolemy III see Bingen 2002, 53 n. 15.
165. For the absence of commemorative statues, see Decker 2008, 70 and Fantuzzi 2005, 267–68 for a possible explanation.
166. For the historical reality of the victories, a universally accepted view, see Bravi 2002, 292.
167. Nonetheless, scholars have tried to date them. See the charts in Bennett 2005, 96, Decker 2008, 73, and Remijsen 2010, 105.
168. The first to locate the victories of Berenice II between 249 and 247 were Bastianini and Gallazzi 2001, 206, and see also Thompson 2005, 277. Not only is this a very limited time frame in which to fit so many victories, as Thompson 2005, 277 notes, but the prevailing political conditions on the mainland would have made it difficult for any Ptolemy to compete there at that time, Criscuolo 2003, 316–17. The early dating is based on the assumption that Berenice was actually a child at the time of her victories, and when it is coupled with a literal reading of 82 AB, it is necessary to assume that she was at the Isthmian games of 248 BCE with her “father” Ptolemy, Thompson 2005, 275–76.
169. On the constraints of this limited window of opportunity for Berenice II to compete in the games see Thompson 2005, 277–78; Bastianini and Gallazzi 2001, 206; Criscuolo 2003, 313–14.
170. For the ancient evidence relevant to the marriage of Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy II to Antiochus II, see Thompson 2005, 278 n. 56; Criscuolo 2003, 328.

171. For the historical details, see above, p. 138. Cameron 1995, 106 suggests 243 or 241 BCE as likely dates for the Nemean victory of Berenice II celebrated by Callimachus, and Remijsen 2010, 105 assigns her Olympic victory to 244 BCE. Both dates are plausible, but neither is certain.

172. Details in Fantuzzi 2004, 221–24

173. Cyrene is “well-horsed” (*Pyth.* 4.2) and “well-charioted” (*Pyth.* 4.8).

174. An example is a relief dated to the sixth century found in the Temple of Apollo at Cyrene which depicts a driver in a four-horse chariot driving his team around the turning point, Laronde 1987, 130, fig. 35.

Other Cyrenean women won chariot races later, including Zeuxo, the wife of Polycrates, governor of Cyprus, and two of their daughters, Eucrateria and Hermione, who all triumphed at the Panatheneia in 202 BCE (IG II² 2313). See Van Bremen 2007, 360–61.

175. This was the title given by Ptolemy II to the priestess in the cult he established for his sister/wife Arsinoe II in 369/8 BCE. On the canephorus in other Greek rituals, see Rocco 1995.

176. Like the canephorus described by Aristophanes in the Panathenaic procession at Athens (*Ar. Lys.* 641–48). On the carrying of the crowns see Ijsewijn 1961, 136–37.

177. On the duties of the *athlophori*, see Van Bremen 2007, 364.

178. The words of the dedicatory epigram reproduce the original victory announcement which is repeated each time they are read, Kurke 1993, 142.

Chapter 6

1. A comprehensive treatment of the subject is Manning 2010.

2. The philosophers who went along with Alexander included the Democritean Anaxarchus of Abdera, the Peripatetic Callisthenes of Olynthus, the Cynic Onesicritus, and the first Skeptic, Pyrrho of Elis, see Clayman 2009, 25–27.

3. Alexander put on a dramatic festival in Phoenicia to celebrate the return of his army from Egypt in 331 BCE (*Plut. Alex.* 29.1–3), and a second in Susa in 324 (Athen. 12.538B–539A). Among the performers, who included dancers, singers, musicians and whole dithyrambic choirs, were the famous actors Athenadorus and Thessalus, whose relationship with Alexander was of long standing (*Plut. Alex.* 10.2).

4. For example, in Babylon Alexander ordered the rebuilding of the temple of Bel which had been destroyed by Xerxes (*Arr. Anab.* 3.16.4–5). On Alexander's religiosity generally, see Edmunds 1971 and Berve 1926, 85–100.

5. The issue is crystalized in the historical tradition by a debate between Callisthenes and Anaxarchus (or Cleo) reported by Arrian (4.10.6–4.11.9) and Quintus Curtius (8.5.5–21). Callisthenes, who opposed *proskynesis*, shortly faced charges of treason, incarceration, and death.

6. On the cults for Alexander in Asia Minor, see Habicht 1970 24–25, 185 and in Athens, 28–36 and Préaux 1978 vol. 1 241–45. In response to his request for divine honors, Greek cities sent ambassadors to Babylon to honor him as he wished (*Arr. Anab.* 7.23.2).

7. The foundation plaques of the Euergetid temple and the sacred precinct (*temenos*), inscribed in Greek and hieroglyphics, translate Serapis as Osiris-Apis, McKenzie, Gibson, and Reyes 2004, 81–82. For an account of the scholarly tradition that discounts Alexander’s interest in and promotion of a long-standing cult of Serapis in favor of his invention by Ptolemy I, see Fraser 1972, vol. 1 246–52. A list of some of the great names who ascribed to this theory is in Welles 1962, 288 n. 83.

8. On Alexander’s shrine for Serapis at Rhakotis, see Welles 1962, 285–87.

9. For the physical details of the site and history of the excavations, see McKenzie, Gibson, and Reyes 2004. They rely on the notes and plans of Alan Rowe, who excavated the site during World War II, and his 19th-century predecessors.

10. On the question of which Bryaxis made the cult statue, see Pollitt 1986, 279.

11. Evidence of John Tzetzes who attributes them both to Ptolemy II is evaluated by Fraser 1972, vol. 1 323–24 and Blum 1991, 104–6.

12. Fraser 1972, vol. 1 323–24.

13. Citation and texts in Fraser 1972 vol. I, 325–30; vol. II, p. 480, n. 147.

14. The text is in Pfeiffer 1949–1953 vol. II, p. 50, and comments in Fraser 1972 vol. IIb, p. 917, n. 293. Readers who argue that the expression better suits Ptolemy II include Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1924 vol. 2, p. 87.

15. Objections to this interpretation are in Pfeiffer 1949–1953 vol. II xxxix–xl, but see Welles 1962, esp. pp. 297–98 for a brief, but convincing history of the site, and Rees 1961 on the text of the *Diegesis*.

16. For Euhemerus as a statue, Rees 1961, 3.

17. The philosopher was later labeled “Plato” in a graffito, and once it was possible to read “Prota(goras)” on the plinth of a figure seated on an Ionian chair. See Bergmann 2007, 251–52 on the names, none of which were original.

18. On this theory see Bergmann 2007, 263 n. 79.

19. Bergmann 2007, 260–62 who traces the theory to Wilcken.

20. A list of Euergetid work on Egyptian religious sites is in Arnold 1999, 321, with commentary on pp. 162–73.

21. On the relief, see Quaegebeur 1988, 48, with drawing on p. 51 adapted from Clère 1961, pl. 43. See also Pfeiffer 2008, 82–85.

22. The uraeus, an Egyptian symbol of royal power, is a cobra that rears up on the forehead of the king or queen, Stanwick 2002, 34.

23. Quaegebeur 1978, 254.

24. Translation quoted from Stanwick 2002, 37. *Ka* is the royal life force.

25. On Berenice’s royal titulary see Beckerath 1984 and Troy 1986. Her first Horus name is “Daughter of the ruler, created by the ruler,” and the second part is “Berenice the beneficent goddess, beloved of the Gods.” The translations are from Chris Bennett, “Berenice II,” n. 20 at http://www.tyndalehouse.com/egypt/ptolemies/berenice_ii_fr.htm, accessed on December 11, 2012. The royal titles of Arsinoe II were probably posthumus, Carney 2013, 115.

26. On the dating protocols see Quaegebeur 1978, 254–55 and Pestman 1967, 28.

27. On the Euergetae's visit with the family to Philae, see Clarysse 2000, 37–38 and Bingen 1997, 93–94 who suggests an even earlier date. On Philae and its decorative scheme, see Vassilika 1989.

28. The Greek text of the inscription and commentary is in Bingen 1997, 89–91. Since the royal couple are not called the *Theoi Euergetai*, the dedication must have been made early in their reign. On the dates, see Bingen 1997, 94 n. 25. Two other dedications to Berenice and her husband (IPhil. I 1 and 2) are on the west wall of the west portico. Texts of all the inscriptions at Philae and commentary are in Bernard 1969.

29. A photograph of the offering is Vassilika 1989 pl. XXII D. The *sekhet* fields offering is a gift to the temple of income from certain designated pieces of land.

30. On the historicity of the event, see Bingen 1997, 93. The Greek inscription uses a diminutive form to make clear that the children were small.

31. A discussion of the evidence for the details of carrying out these royal visits is in Clarysse 2000.

32. On the reception of the traveling Ptolemies see Savalli-Lestrade 2003, 67–68 and Robert 1985, 469–74. See Clarysse 2000, 37–38 on papyri dated near the time of the visit c. 243 BCE with indirect allusions to an elaborate royal excursion to Philae and its economic impact on the local population.

33. On Mammisi, see Daumas 1958.

34. A detailed description and analysis of the relief of the Mammisi is in Vassilika 1989, 38–43.

35. On the King's oath, see Pfeiffer 2008, 395–96 with examples. Dedications in which the Euergetae are paired with Isis and Serapis are quite common Fraser 1972, vol. 1, 263–64. Another at Philae is IPhil 3, a dedication to Ptolemy III, Berenice II, Isis, Serapis, and Harpocrates by the otherwise unknown Taurinus son of Heracleides.

36. On the Euergetae and Harpocrates, see Bingen 1997, 95.

37. On the absence of Harpocrates from Serapis/Isis shrines in Alexandria, Fraser 1972, vol. 1, p. 261.

38. On Hellenistic ruler cult, generally, see Chaniotis 2003, Koenen 1993; Huss 1994; and Melaerts 1998.

39. The technical term is *sunnaos*, “temple-sharing.” See below on the Canopis decree.

40. It was called the Sema and its exact location is unknown. Zenobius iii 94 (*Paroem. Gr. i. p. 81*). Greek text in Fraser 1972 vol. 2, p. 33, n. 80.

41. Philopator also built a temple for Berenice the Savior (see the reference in Zenobius just above).

42. See Fraser 1972 vol. 2, 384, n. 356 for the Greek text. On the excavations, see Wace 1959; and on the site as evidence for cult, Pfeiffer 2008, 53–54.

43. On the history of the shrine at Tell Timai and the nature of its contents see Lembke 2000, Schernig 2004, and Pfeiffer 2008, 68–70 who puts the evidence in the context of the dynastic cult as a whole.

44. On the portrait of Berenice II, see Lembke 2000, 127.

45. See McKenzie 2007, 58–61 for a description of the material remains.

46. The mosaic is now in the National Archaeological Museum of Palestrina. Accounts of it are in Burkhalter 1999, Meyboom 1995, and Whitehouse 1976.
47. For the Temple of Serapis in Alexandria, Burkhalter 1999, 253–55, for the Temple of Osiris at Canopus, see Meyboom 1995, 77–78, who identifies the royal couple as the Euergetae.
48. On the original painting, Meyboom 1995, 107 and Burkhalter 1999, 255–56.
49. An English translation of the Canopus decree is in Bagnall and Derow 2005, 264–69, and for discussion, see Hölbl 2001, 106–11.
50. A reproduction of the relief is in Fig. 10 and Hölbl 2001, 107.
51. On the royal *oenochoe*, see Thompson 1973 and Pfeiffer 2008, 62–64; and on Egyptian faience generally, Nenna and Seif El-Din 2000.
52. Only four of Berenice's jugs are complete or almost so, Thompson 1973, 47.
53. Examples in Thompson 1973 are nos. 29, 75, 139, 149–54.
54. Examples include Thompson 1973 nos. 29, 75, 139, 190, 192.
55. On Agathe Tyche generally, see Matheson 1994.
56. On changes in Berenice's appearance see Thompson 1973, 85–87.
57. Nos. 142, 144, 146, 147 in Thompson 1973: 171–73.
58. PPetr. iii 1 col. 2.6. The shrine bearing the inscription is on land that is part of the estate of a Libyan national named Maron, Clarysse 1992, 51. This suggests that Berenice was not forgotten by her fellow-countrymen.
59. An example of Berenice as Isis is No. 122 Thompson 1973: 165–66.
60. On the Isis dress, see Thompson 1973, 30–31. This is a Greek-style Isis dress, though in its typical form, the mantle is tied between the breasts.
61. This is the theory of Thompson 1973, 71–75.
62. An unpublished plaque from a private collection in North America shows the *phiale* and cornucopia, but not the altar or pillar. Since the edges of the plaque are indicated with molding and raised dots, these items were deliberately left out of the design, probably because there was no room for them.
63. The Greek text of the inscriptions on the statue bases is IG IX 1² I 56.
64. On the names of Berenice's children, their birth order and birth dates, see Bennett 2002 and also Huss 1975.
65. Had Alexander and his unknown sibling lived into the reign of Ptolemy IV they would surely have been eliminated along with the other possible heirs, Magas and their Uncle Lysimachus, when Ptolemy IV became king. See below, p. 172.
66. On the date, which must be inferred from papyrus sources, see Samuel 1962, Skeat 1954, and C. J. Bennett, "Ptolemy III" n. 7 at www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/Egypt/ptolemies/ptolemy_iii.htm accessed on December 5, 2012. The rumor that he was murdered by his son and successor, Ptolemy IV, repeated by Justin *Epit.* 29.1.5, is not supported by any other source.
67. There is no ancient evidence to support the claim that links Euergetes with Oenoanthe, the mother of the notorious Agathocles and Agathoclea, who destroyed the reign and ended the lives of Arsinoe III and Ptolemy IV. The rumor was apparently started inadvertently by A. Raubitschek, "Oenoanthe 6," RE 17, col. 2189, whose

note that Oenoanthe came to Alexandria perhaps as a *hetaira* in Euergetes' reign was expanded by Walbank 1957–1979 vol. II 438. See also Pomeroy 1984, 49–50. The rumor that her son Agathocles was Euergetes' *eromenos* can be traced to a scholion on Aristophanes *Thes.* 1059 which is confused about the identity of the Ptolemy in question. On the unlikelihood that they were influential under Euergetes, see Maas 1945, 74 n. 2.

68. For what can be known about Magas' expedition and its relation to the start of the Fourth Syrian War, see Hölbl 2001, 54.

69. Theodotus the Aetolian was probably Magas' assassin in PHaun 6. He later served Antiochus III (Polyb. 5.40) and made an attempt on the life of Ptolemy IV (Polyb. 5.81; III Maccabees 1.2). Pseudo-Plut. Proverb. Alexandr. 13 reports that the assassin was Theogos, which may be a corruption of Theogenes, a high official under Ptolemy IV connected with Agathocles and Agathocleia. More on these two is below. On Theogos/Theogenes see Maas 1945, 74 n. 1.

70. On the Sema or Soma, see Fraser 1972, vol. 1 16–17.

71. On Sosibius, Mooren 1975, 63–66 and Huss 1976, 242–55.

72. Josephus, 12.2.2.

73. On the "Victory of Sosibius" see Fuhrer 1993, 81 and Fuhrer 1992. On the issue of the number of victories and their dates, see also Lelli 2008 and Barigazzi 1951.

74. On the decree at Delos see Holleaux 1912. Sosibius was also an eponymous priest of Alexander in 235/4 (PPetrie I 18) and his daughter was *Canephore* of Arsinoe in 215/4 (BGU 6.1264). He was also honored with a statue at Knidos (OGIS 79).

75. A succinct account of Philopator's reign is in Hölbl 2001, 127–34.

76. On Macedonian queens on the battlefield see Carney 2000, 114–52.

77. See Huss 1991, 194 on the text with bibliography. Philopator is represented on horseback holding a lance, on one of the three extant copies, in Egyptian dress, and on another, in Macedonian armor. Arsinoe III stands behind him in ceremonial Egyptian attire wearing the plumed headdress favored by her mother.

78. See Fraser 1972 vol. 1, 313, 316; vol. 2, 467 n. 55.

79. On Archagathas see Bagnall 1976b.

80. On Oenoanthe's possible connection to Euergetes, see Ogden 1999, 242–43.

81. Theogenes is a common name, but if it is correct here, it is likely the Dioiketes of Euergetes, see Bagnall 1972.

82. Various explanations of the name are in Maas 1945, Pomeroy 1984, 49–50 and 186 n. 49.

83. Agathocles as a boyhood friend of Ptolemy IV, Hölbl 2001, 128, who notes that he was a priest of Alexander in 216/215.

84. On Oenoanthe and Agathocleia as Philopator's courtesans, Polyb. 14.11.1; Plut. *Cleom.* 33, *Erot.* 753D; Justin *Epit.* 30.2.3 and on her ultimate fate, Polyb. 15.25.12, 15.29.8–14, 15.33.8. On Agathocles and Agathocleia, Schol. in *Thes.* 1059.

85. On the Ptolemies' courtesans, see especially Ogden 2008 and Ogden 1999.

86. Thais had previously been a companion of Alexander's and it is said that it was on her account that the palace of Persepolis was burned (Plut. *Alex.* 38; Athenaeus 13.576E),

quoting the historian Cleitarchus. Her son Lagus later won a victory in the Lycaean games of 308/7, Syll.³ 314, B v. On Bilistiche, see Cameron 1990, 295–304, Kosmetatou 2004a, C. J. Bennett, “Bilistiche,” at http://www.tyndalehouse.com/Egypt/ptolemies/bilistiche_fr.htm accessed on December 5, 2012, and Ogden 2008, 365–73 where the ancient sources are listed in n. 63.

87. On Bilistiche’s canephorate, see Pomeroy 1984, 55–58 and on her Macedonian origin, real or otherwise, Ogden 2008, 368–72.

88. On the political message of Philadelphus’ courtesans see Ogden 2008, 380–81.

89. On Agathoclea’s canephorate, dated to 213/12 BCE, see Ijsewijn 1961, 159 and Pomeroy 1984, 57. On her ships, PStrasburg i 562, 563; Hauben 1975, and Clarysse and Hauben 1976.

90. On the social status of royal courtesans, see Ogden 1999, 246.

91. The sad state of Philopator’s palace life is also documented by Plut. *Cleom.* 33 and Justin *Epit.* 30.2.

92. John of Antioch in Müller 1848 vol. 4 558, fr. 54.

93. On their marriage, see Lanciers 1988.

94. On tax farming under the Ptolemies, see Manning 2010, 152–57.

95. Significantly there were some discovered in the same group of her husband and a young son as well, see Pantos 1987, 351. The Aetolians apparently enjoyed having images of the whole royal family.

96. Among these were streets named “Arsinoe of Eleusis” and “Arsinoe the Fruit-bearer,” see Fraser 1972 vol. 1 35–36 and 237–39.

97. The date of their marriage is not known.

98. C. J. Bennett, “Ptolemy IV,” n. 9.1 at http://www.tyndalehouse.com/egypt/ptolemies/ptolemy_iv.htm, accessed December 5, 2012.

99. The date was June, 209.

100. Dido’s deceased father was Belus, the king of Tyre and her unwanted husband was the neighboring king Iarbas, who wanted control of her city Carthage. On her “Argive” ancestry see Mackie 1993.

101. The clash in tone between Catullus’ lighthearted “Lock” and Virgil’s tragic representation of Dido has generated a large scholarly bibliography. For a summing up of the issues and additional detail, see Skulsky 1985.

102. On the many aspects of the *Sidus Iulium* see Williams 2003.

103. On Virgil’s dependence on Horace for his treatment of Dido see Galinsky 2003.

104. On Cleopatra generally see Roller 2010. On Cleopatra as Isis, Griffiths 1961; on the Library and Museum under Cleopatra, Roller 2010, 123–28, and on the famines of the late 40s, 104.

105. On the treatment of Cleopatra by Horace and other Romans, see Johnson 1967.

106. The Coma, as it is now understood, consists of a cluster of galaxies about 250–300 million light years away that would not have been visible to the ancients, as well as a diffuse group of stars, now known as the “Coma Star Cluster.” This is about 280 light years away and would have been visible to Conon under a dark sky. There are also three brighter stars that have become associated with it which are only 65 light years away.

One of these is called “Alpha Coma Berenices,” and unofficially, the “Diadem,” which is the headband worn by Alexander the Great and his successors to indicate their royal status. On Berenice’s diadems, see Daszewski 1985, 149. I am grateful to my colleague Philip Thibodeau for these astronomical details.

107. Brahe, Tycho 1602. *Astronomiae Instauratae Mechanica*. Nuremberg: Levinus Hulsius; Bayer, Johann 1603. *Uranometria Omnium Asterismorum*. Augsburg: Christophorus Mangus.

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Index

Note: Roman numeral page numbers in *italics* indicate images in the gallery.

- Acasander, 23, 25
 Achaean League, 137–38, 140, 156
 Achelous River, 86
 Acontius, 89–93
 Acrocorinth, 153
 Acrolithic Statue, *IV*
 Acropolis at Cyrene, 6
 Actaeon, 84
 Actium, 185
 Adea-Eurydice, 33
Adelphoi, 73
 Adicran, 27
 Adonis, 48–49, 74
 Adoulis Decree, 6, 82, 122, 131–34, 167, 193n18, 208n56, 211n4, 215n54
 Aeetes, 17, 109, 110
 Aegyptus, 95, 146
 Aelian, 123–24
 Aeneas, 184–85
Aeneid (Virgil), 184–85
 Aenus, 131, 134, 216n66, 216n67
 Aeschylus, 51, 107, 161, 211n3
Aetia (Callimachus)
 “Acontius and Cydippe” in, 89–93
 and cults, 75
 dating of, 54, 200n47
 and Egypt-Greece connection, 95–96
 and the “Lock of Berenice,” 7, 97–104
 “Phrygius and Pieria” in, 93–95
 and Posidippus’ “Hippika,” 157
 and royal patronage, 59
 structure of, 89, 208n45
 the “Victoria Berenice” in, 145–47
 Aetolian League, 137, 138, 181, 207n32, 217n83
 Agatharcides of Cnidus, 196n76
 Agathe Tyche, 73–74, 136, 160, 169, 204n130, 216n78, 225n55
 Agathoclea, 122, 175, 176, 177, 225n67
 Agathocles, Father of Agathocles, 42–43, 197n4
 Agathocles, King of Sicily, 42
 Agathocles, son of Agathocles, 63, 122, 175–77, 197n4, 225n67
 Agathocles, son of Lysimachus, 71, 204n115
 Agathocles of Syracuse, 30
 Ager, Sheila, 73
 Agesilaus, 144
 Agis II, 144
aition (founding myths), 55, 119
 Alcinous, 114, 115, 211n12
 Alexander I of Macedon, 142
 Alexander the Aetolian, 50–51
 Alexander the Great
 and ancestry of Ptolemies, 132
 and Apame’s background, 35
 arrival in Egypt, 43
 and Berenice’s ancestry, 3, 14
 burial place, 198n9
 cults of, 159–60
 death, 6, 64
 and diadem symbol, 228n106
 eyes of, 113
 and governance of Cyrene, 29–30
 and the historical record, 6
 patronage of arts and sciences, 159–60
 and *philoï*, 62
 and royal cults, 165–66
 and Serapis, 161
 and Soter, 64, 122
 successors of, 158

Alexandria

- and Alexander's body, 43–44
- and the *Argonautica*, 21
- Berenice's arrival in, 3, 42
- and chariot racing, 158
- and Cyrenean rebellions, 30
- described, 43–51
- Lighthouse, 46
- modern, 45
- Palaces of, 47–49
- and "Phrygius and Pieria," 94–95
- temples of, 46–47

Alpha Coma Berenices, 228n106

Amasis, 27

Amphion of Cnossos, 29

Andriantopoika, 149

Androcles, 51

Andromache, 76

Ankhwennefer, 178

Antigone, daughter of Berenice I, 65

Antigonids, 36, 138, 171

Antigonus I, 36, 140

Antigonus II Gonatus, 4, 36, 125, 138, 217n83

Antigonus III Doson, 36, 81, 138, 140, 216n81

Antiochus, son of Berenice Syra, 126

Antiochus I Soter, 14, 35, 36, 68, 125, 126

Antiochus II Theios, 35, 70, 77, 94, 125, 127, 156, 221n170

Antiochus III, 174, 178, 226n69

Antipater, 65, 137, 198n9

Apame, 4, 14, 35–39, 78, 79, 103, 109, 111

Apelles of Cos, 159

Aphrodite

- and Arsinoe II, 73, 74, 91, 100, 181
- Berenice associated with, 66–67, 184
- Bilistiche associated with, 70, 176
- and the Charites, 58
- and cults for women, 203n98
- and Eros, 111–12
- and festivals of Alexandria, 49
- and the "Lock of Berenice," 101–3, 127, 128, 152, 181
- and maritime safety, 135–36
- and Medea, 111, 112
- and Posidippus' "Hippika," 152
- and relief in Cyrene, 41
- and royal cults, 73–74
- temple of at Zephyrium, 46–47, 135, 152, 181
- and the Women of Lemnos, 106

Apis, 40, 43, 160

Apollo, 7, 20–22, 41

- in Callimachus, Hymn 2, 22–26, 194n43

- in Callimachus, Hymn 4, 67–68

Apollo Carneius, 23–25

Apollonius of Rhodes, 54–56, 105–20

Argonautica, 17–21

- and Berenice, 9, 41, 118–20

- and court life, 61, 62

- on Cyrene, 116–18, 154

- and golden age of Alexandria, 178

- and *Hymn to Apollo*, 26

- and the Library of Alexandria, 54–56, 211n16

- and Libya, 17–20

- literary influences, 193n12

- on Medea, 109–13

- on murder of Demetrius, 180

- as source on Berenice, 7–8

- on the Women of Lemnos, 105–9

Apries, 27

Apsyrtus, 20, 109–10, 111, 113

Aratus of Sicyon, 10, 138, 140

Arcesilas I, 26–27

Arcesilas II, 27, 28, 39

Arcesilas III, 28

Arcesilas IV, 22, 29, 31, 116, 157, 193n23, 195n64

Archagathas, 42, 175, 197n2, 226n79

Archelaus, 81

Archidamus II, 144

Archimedes, 57

Ardea-Euridice, 174

Arete, wife of Alcinous, 114, 115, 117

Argo (ship), 17, 113–14, 193n13

Argonautica (Apollonius)

- and Berenice's Cyrenean background, 41

- composition of, 193n12

- on Cyrene, 22, 116–18

- described, 54

- and the Library of Alexandria, 55–56

- on Libya, 17–21

- and marriage theme, 113–16

- and Medea, 109–13, 113–16

- on Samothrace, 135

- significance to Berenice, 118–20

- and the Women of Lemnos, 105–9

Argos, 82, 83, 92, 95, 96, 138, 142, 145–46, 206n16

Ariadne, 108, 110–11, 189, 211n4

Aristophanes, 50, 222n176, 226n67

Aristoteles, 193n26

Aristotle, 33, 50, 60–61, 119, 194n29, 199n27

Arsinoe (city), 39–40, 69, 208n49

Arsinoe I, 7, 12, 63, 70, 72, 76

Arsinoe II, 46, 71–76

- Adonis associated with, 48–49

- ancestry of, 65

- Aphrodite associated with, 46, 47, 135–36

- and Callimachus, 53–54

- and chariot racing, 150, 152, 155, 156
- and coin portraits, 113, 131
- cult of, 157
- death, 74
- deification of, 128–29
- Dionysus associated with, 132
- and faience jug images, 11, 169
- and foreign policy, 74
- Hera associated with, 99
- and incestuous marriage, 73, 114
- in-law of Berenice II, 63
- Isis associated with, 181
- and the “Lock of Berenice,” 103
- and mythology of marriage, 128
- and naming conventions, 12, 13
- as naval deity, 137, 205n136
- and palaces of Alexandria, 48–49
- and “Ptolemaic power couples,” 121
- and remarriage theme, 92
- as role model for Berenice, 121, 160
- and royal cults, 165
- and succession politics, 76
- and temples of Alexandria, 46–47
- and Theocritus’ poetry, 8
- Arsinoe III
 - competition with Berenice II, 182–83
 - and court life, 62
 - eulogized by Eratosthenes, 57, 62
 - and faience jug images, 169
 - and festivals of Alexandria, 45
 - martial role of, 174
 - and naming conventions, 12
 - popularity of, 177
 - and Serapus, 161
 - and succession politics, 176, 182–83
- Arsinoea (festival), 170
- Arsinoe-Aphrodite (Zephyritis), Temple of,
 - 46, 47, 73, 91, 97, 100, 102, 127, 128, 135, 181, 188, 198n18, 208n50
- Artakama, 65
- Artemidorus of Perge, 135
- Artemis, 84, 90, 91, 94, 97, 109
- Asbystae, 17, 194n33
- Asclepius, 65
- Asoka, 33, 196n77
- Asopichus of Orchomenus, 59
- astronomy, VI, 186
- Athena
 - and the Argo, 193n13
 - and the *Argonautica*, 106
 - Athena Parthenos, II, 81, 141, 158, 205n9, 206n10
 - Berenice associated with, 80–84, 120
 - and the Heroines of Libya, 18
 - Hymn to Athena*, 80–84, 104
 - and the “Lock of Berenice,” 101
 - Panathenaic Festival, 81, 173, 222n174
 - and ship monument in Cyrene, 137
- Athens, 29, 33, 50, 56, 60, 61, 68, 74, 81, 83, 84, 137, 139–41, 161, 169, 181, 200n58, 206n13, 206n15, 217n89, 222n6, 222n176
- athlophorus* epithet, 113, 151, 157, 158
- Attalus I of Pergamum, 54
- Augeas, 96
- Augustus, 4, 185, 186
- Azilis, 25
- Bab el-Amara, 162
- Babylon, 43, 130, 133, 222n4
- Bacchylides, 145
- Barka, 16, 27, 28, 39
- basileus-basilissa* title, 13, 62, 192n25, 202n80, 219n125, 221n162
- Battiads, 15, 22, 24, 26–29, 31, 34
- Battus I, 15, 21–26, 41, 116, 154, 192n4, 193n26, 198n8
- Battus II, 27
- Battus III, 27, 28
- Battus IV, 29
- Bayer, Johann, 186, 228n107
- Bennett, Chris, 171
- Berber tribes, 17
- Berenice (Princess), 167–68, 170, 181, 217n83
- Berenice I
 - and Aphrodite, 66
 - basilissa* title, 192n25
 - and Berenice’s ancestry, 14
 - Callimachus on, 67
 - and Canopus stele, 168
 - and chariot racing, 66, 148, 150, 154, 156
 - children of, 65
 - and coin portrait, III, 113, 121
 - deification of, 47–48, 65–67
 - and Magas’ ancestry, 31
 - and naming conventions, 12, 220n142
 - and polygamy, 195n59
 - and “Ptolemaic power couples,” 121
 - and Theocritus, 66, 203n98
- Berenice II
 - Acrolithic Statue, IV
 - Aphrodite associated with, 58
 - betrothal and marriage, 32, 35, 42
 - birth of, 4, 14
 - and Callimachus, 3–4, 57–59, 61, 118–20, 180
 - cameos of, II, 6, 12, 80–81, 101, 141
 - and the Canopus Decree, V, 166–68, 170, 181, 209n69, 225n49

Berenice II (*continued*)

- and chariot racing, 7, 17, 54, 87, 89, 92, 145–58
 - children of, 171–78
 - and coin portrait, *I*
 - death of, 172–73, 183–84
 - deification of, 13, 113, 157, 173
 - depictions of eyes, 112–13, 129, 136, 141, 215n46
 - and Egyptian religion, 162–64, 165–66
 - Egyptian titles, 163
 - and Eryxo, 27–28
 - and Euergetes Gate at Karnak, V, 6, 162–63
 - and founding myth of Cyrene, 119
 - Graces, associated with, 58–61
 - iconography of, 136, 214n37
 - and incestuous marriage, 114–15, 127–28
 - influence on Euergetes, 123
 - Isis associated with, 41–42, 73, 100–101, 103, 136–37, 164, 168, 169–70, 182, 185, 197n100, 210n77
 - mosaics of, *I*, 6, 69, 112–13, 136, 141, 181, 182, 197n101, 203n108, 211n9
 - and the Museum and Library of Alexandria, 3, 45, 51, 56, 57–61
 - and mythology of marriage, 128
 - and naval costumes, *I*, 112–13, 141, 182, 185, 197n101
 - at Philae, 163–64
 - and “Ptolemaic power couples,” 121
 - and royal cults, 12–13, 87, 113, 128, 135, 136, 151, 157, 165–66, 173
 - statues of, *IV*, 4, 62, 81, 138, 140–41, 147, 153, 158, 166, 171, 201n74
 - and the Third Syrian War, 125–28
- Berenice Phernophorus, 70, 125
- Berenice Syra
- and chariot racing, 148–49, 153, 156, 219n126, 219n127
 - death, 70, 126–27
 - and death of Antiochus II, 77
 - and the Isthmian games, 153
 - marriage to Antiochus II, 125
 - and mythology of marriage, 128
 - and naming conventions, 12
 - and Posidippus’ “Hippika,” 156
 - and royal patronage, 58
 - and the Third Syrian War, 125–26
- Bereniceum, 67
- Berenike (formerly Euhesperides), 12, 39–41, 119
- Berenike Epi Dires, 133
- Berenike Ezion Geber, 133
- Berenike near Sebai, 133

- Berenike Panchrysos, 133
- Berenike Troglodytica, 133
- Berenikidai* deme, 81, 140
- Bevan, Edwyn R., 126–27
- Bilistiche, 70, 175–76, 203n110, 217n102, 218n110, 226n86
- Brahe, Tycho, 186
- Bryaxis, 160
- Buddhism, 33
- Burkhalter, Fabienne, 166
- Cabiri, 135
- calendar reforms, 167
- Callicrates, 47, 74, 135, 198n18, 209n71, 216n74
- Callimachus of Cyrene
- and Alexandria, 51–54
 - and Apollonius, 54–55, 118–19
 - and Arsinoe’s death, 74–76
 - on Berenike’s foundation, 40
 - characterization of Berenice, 3–4, 119–20, 127–28
 - connection to Berenice’s family, 15, 118
 - and court politics, 14–15, 34, 41, 60–62, 183
 - on Cyrene, 16, 21–22, 34 (*see also Hymn to Apollo*)
 - and Eratosthenes, 34, 56, 57, 77, 104, 200n58
 - and fertility theme, 181–82
 - and golden age of Alexandria, 178–80
 - and Greek cultural connections, 142, 146
 - Hymn to Apollo*, 7, 21, 22–26, 34, 55–56, 146–47, 154
 - Hymn to Athena*, 79, 80–84, 141
 - Hymn to Delos*, 53–54, 67–68
 - Hymn to Demeter*, 80, 84–89, 182
 - Hymn to Zeus*, 58, 73
 - key works of, 7, 52, 79
 - and the Library of Alexandria, 9–10, 33, 51–54, 55–56, 77, 103, 161–62 (*see also Pinakes*)
 - on love marriages, 91–92, 95, 98–99, 111
 - and meter of *Hymns*, 205n1
 - modern studies of, 199n39
 - on murder of Demetrius, 9
 - and mythological genealogy of Berenice, 95–97
 - and Posidippus’ “Hippika,” 157, 158
 - and Ptolemy II, 67–68, 72, 194n38
 - and remarriage theme, 89–93
 - return to Cyrene, 194n38
 - and royal patronage, 57–61
 - and structure of *Aetia*, 208n45
 - students of, 57
 - and Theocritus, 201n72
 - on Third Syrian War, 126–28

- and victory odes, 145–47, 150–52
and virtuous marriage theme, 93–95
See also “Lock of Berenice”; “Victoria Berenice”
- Callimachus the younger, 57
- Calliste, 19, 21
- Callixenus of Rhodes, 69, 203n107
- Calypso, 106
- Canephorus*, 73, 157, 204n127, 222n175
- Canopus Decree, V, 6, 85, 122, 124, 133–34, 166–68, 170–71, 217n83, 225n49
- Canthus, 18, 20
- Caphaurus, 18
- Caphisophon, 63
- Caria, 131, 132
- Carneian Apollo, 23
- Carrez-Maratray, Jean-Yves, 10, 102, 206n10
- Cassander, 50, 140
- Castor, 83
- Catullus, 3, 7, 12, 97–98, 102, 184, 186–89
- Celts, 68, 72
- Ceos, 90, 208n49
- Chaeronea, battle of, 137
- Chariclo, 83, 86, 93
- chariot racing, 17, 29, 30, 54, 66, 87, 89, 113, 135, 142–58, 182, 221n168, 222n174
- Charis, 60, 75
- Charites (Graces), 58–60, 201n71, 201n74
- Charites* (Theocritus, *Id.* 16), 59–60
- Cheiron, 22
- Chremonidean War, 68, 90
- Chremonides, 74
- Chrysippus of Cnidos, 62
- Cilicia, 126, 131
- Circe, 106, 113–14
- Circe's Island, 20
- Cleomenes, 64, 138, 216n81
- Cleopatra I, 178
- Cleopatra II, 178
- Cleopatra VII, 186–86, 192n25, 227n104, 227n105
- Coele-Syria, 64, 74, 94, 134, 171, 174
- Coffin* texts, 101, 193n17
- coins, *I*
and appearance of Berenice II, 128–29, 131
and cameo of Berenice II, 81
and depiction of eyes, 113, 129–30
diadem and veil symbols, 128
and iconography of Berenice II, 136, 137
Koinon, 39, 197n93
and the Lighthouse of Alexandria, 46
and Magas, 31
and oenochocae figures, 169
and Ptolemaic power-couples, 121
and *tryphe*, 130
“Coma Berenices” constellation, VI, 100, 227n106
Conon, 97, 186–87, 209n73, 227n106
constellations, VI, 101, 186, 227n106
Corinth, 137, 138, 152–53
cornucopia symbol, *I*, 69, 85, 101, 122, 129–30, 131, 136, 169, 181, 206n27, 214n37, 215n49
Cosmas, 131
courtesans, 175–76, 203n111, 209n72, 226n84
Crete, 32, 68, 93, 123, 134
Criscuolo, Lucia, 148
Cronus, 84
Cyclades, 64, 68, 132, 134
Cydippe, 89–93, 94, 95
Cynisca of Sparta, 143–45, 147, 150, 153–54, 218n105, 218n106
Cyprus, 64, 68, 69, 94, 131, 132, 134
Cyrene
and Ammon worship, 43
and the *Argonautica*, 19, 107, 109, 116–18, 118–19
and Berenice monuments, 136
and Berenice's birth, 4, 14
and Berenice's education, 34, 104
and Berenice's identity, 14, 41
and Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*, 22–26
and chariot racing, 154, 157
Cyrenaic philosophy, 33
founding of, 16, 21–22, 195n45
of government of, 28
and Magas' rule, 30–35
and perfume trade, 60, 102–3
and “Phrygius and Pieria,” 94–95
and Ptolemy I, 30, 64, 195n55, 202n91
and Ptolemy III, 77, 132
reorganization of, 39–41
and the “Victoria Berenice,” 146–47
Cyrene (nymph), 22, 23, 25, 29
- Danaids, 95
- Danaus, 95, 146, 209n63
- Daszewski, Wiktor Andrzej, 136
- “The Deification of Arsinoë” (Callimachus), 53–54, 74–76
- Delos, Island of, 46, 53, 90, 134, 173, 198n18, 226n74
- Delphi, 90, 134–35, 138–39, 141, 148, 164, 170, 171, 180, 207n32, 217n83
- Demaratus, 74
- Demeter, 7, 41, 75, 79, 80, 84–89, 90, 92, 101, 103–4, 105, 122, 168, 177, 181–82, 205n1, 205n2, 206n25, 207n30
- Demetrius I Poliorcetes, 13, 36, 64, 65, 81, 86

- Demetrius II of Macedon, 34
 Demetrius of Phalerum, 33, 50
 Demetrius the Fair
 background of, 27, 36–39, 51, 86
 character flaws of, 38, 88, 179
 and the “Lock of Berenice,” 96–99
 marriage to Berenice, 4, 14, 38
 murder of, 4–5, 9, 34, 37–39, 41, 78, 84, 89,
 92, 96–97, 98, 109, 111
 and politics of Cyrene, 38
 Demonax of Mantinea, 28, 195n46
 Demophanes, 39
 diadem and veil symbol, *I*, 128–29, 228n106
 Dido, 184–85, 227n100, 227n101
Diegesis (Callimachus), 74, 207n42
 Diognetus, 175
 Dionysus
 and the *Argonautica*, 108, 110, 115, 211n4
 and cult of Serapis, 65
 and the *pompe* of Ptolemy II, 69, 213n11
 Ptolemies associated with, 122, 123, 131, 132
 and religious syncretism, 160
 robe of, 110–11
 theater of, 81, 140
 Dioscuri, 74, 129–30, 135, 214n37, 214n40,
 216n72
 divinity of Ptolemies, 121, 129
 Doric dialect, 58, 60, 79–80, 154, 201n67,
 205n2, 221n59
 Dougherty, Carol, 20
 drought, 16, 21, 167
 dynastic legitimacy, 99, 103, 115, 139

 Ecdelos, 39
 Egypt, 159–64
 and connections with Argos, 95–96
 and the extent of Ptolemy III’s kingdom, 132
 and foreign policy, 64
 Ptolemaic administration, 64, 159, 178,
 227n94
 religious establishment in, 11, 43, 160,
 162–64
 and religious syncretism, 160–62, 162–64
 elephant hunting, 69, 132–33, 215n58
 Elians, 96, 218n104
Encomium to Ptolemy II (Theocritus), 66, 72,
 203n98
 Ephesus, 125, 131, 215n50
 Epicureans, 33
Epigrams (Callimachus), 7, 40, 52, 55, 58,
 60–61, 63, 80, 103, 194n35, 201n67,
 208n50
Epigrams (inscribed), 144, 195n62, 218n108,
 219n128, 219n135, 220n136, 221n161,
 222n178
Epigrams (Posidippus), 47, 66, 147–58, 198n16,
 203n100, 205n136, 216n75, 219n131
epikleseis, 12, 212n4, 215n54
 epinician genre, 145, 147
 Epistates of Libya, 42
Epitome (Justin), 5, 36–37, 78–79
 Erato, 111
 Eratosthenes
 and Arsinoe III, 45, 177
 and Berenice’s education, 34
 and calendar reforms, 167
 and Callimachus, 56, 57, 77, 104, 200n58
 and court life, 61, 62, 124
 and golden age of Alexandria, 178
 and the Library of Alexandria, 55, 56–57,
 118, 183
 and “Lock of Berenice” constellation, 186
 students of, 57
Erigone (Eratosthenes), 57
 Ermeti, Anna Lia, 136
 Eros, 111
 Erysichthon, 86–89, 207n36
 Eryxo, 27–28
 Euclidean geometry, 57
 Eucrateria, 222n174
 Euergetae, 13, 40, 63, 81, 82, 85, 100, 122, 123,
 134, 135, 137, 138, 139, 140, 147, 160, 162,
 163, 164, 165, 166, 168, 171, 172
 Euergetes Gate, *V*, 6, 162, 193n11
 Euhemerus, 162, 223n16
 Euhesperides, 29, 39, 40, 116, 119
 Euphemus, 19, 21, 22
 Euripides, 34, 51, 107, 112, 113, 161, 211n3,
 218n117
 Eurycleides, 61
 Eurydice, 31, 36, 65–66, 68, 71, 195n59,
 202n95
 Euryleonis, 145, 154, 221n157
 Eurymedon, 73, 92
 Eurypylus, 23, 25, 135, 136
 Eusebius, 34, 38, 196n83, 196n84

 faience jugs (oenochae), *II*, 6, 11, 40–41,
 101–2, 168–71, 206n27, 210n77, 225n52
 family-group statues, 138, 142–43, 149, 153,
 155, 164, 170, 171, 180, 207n32, 217n83,
 220n141
 famines, 21, 30, 85, 124, 128, 171–72, 181, 185,
 207n39, 213n18, 214n35, 227n104
 Fantuzzi, Marco, 149, 157
 fertility themes, 16, 25, 26, 84–89, 91, 100–101,
 164, 167, 168, 180, 181–82
 First Syrian War, 36, 68, 125
 “Fountains of Argos” (Callimachus), 95
 Fury, 110

- Galen, 51, 161, 223n13
- Ganymede, 49
- Garamantes, 17
- Garamas, 18
- Garden of the Hesperides, 18–20, 86
- Geographia* (Strabo), 45–46
- Geographica* (Eratosthenes), 57
- Golden Apples, 116
- Golden Fleece tale, 17, 55, 106, 109–12, 115–17, 193n12. *See also Argonautica* (Apollonius)
- Gorgo, 48–49
- Gorub papyrus, 126–27, 191n3
- Gow, Arthur S. F., 49, 59
- Graces (Charites), 58–60, 75, 201n71, 201n74
- Graham, A. J., 22
- Grand Procession (*pompe*), 69–70, 73, 122, 123, 213n11
- The Great Gods, 134, 135
- Greece and Greek culture
and Alexander the Great, 159
and Alexandria, 178
and justice standards, 124
marriage practices, 192n1
and religious syncretism, 161
- Green Mountain (Jebel el-Akhdar), 16, 17
- Griffiths, Frederick, 8, 129
- Gutzwiller, Kathryn, 66–67
- Gyllis, 44–45
- Hades, 85, 86, 95, 160, 161–62, 181
- Haliarchus, 27
- Harpocrates, 161, 163, 164
- Hathor, 162, 210n78
- Hauben, Hans, 126, 133
- Hecale* (Callimachus), 52
- Hecate, 112
- Hector, 76
- Hedylus, 46, 47
- Helen, 49, 66, 129, 135, 146, 218n117
- Heliopolis, 43
- Helios, 67, 113, 130, 202n92
- Hellenic League, 140
- helmet of Athena, *II*, 81, 101, 141, 206n10
- Heptastadion, 46
- Hera, 72–73, 91–92, 93, 95, 99, 103, 114, 115, 158, 206n17, 208n53, 208n55, 208n56, 209n71
- Heracles
and the *Aitia*, 96
Alexander the Great associated with, 159
and the *Argonautica*, 18–20, 106, 107, 116
and Hera, 92
and *Hymn to Apollo*, 25
and *Hymn to Athena*, 81, 83
- Ptolemies associated with, 82, 122, 131, 206n18, 208n56
and the “Victoria Berenice,” 82, 146–47
- Heraclids, 142, 182
- Hermes, 134, 135, 216n67, 216n82
- Hermes* (Eratosthenes), 57
- Hermione, 222n174
- Hermopoulis Magna, 165
- Herodas, 44–45, 198n11, 204n128
- Herodotus
and Alexander I, 142
and the *Argonautica*, 21
on Battus, 21
and Berenice’s Cyrenean identity, 15
on Cyrene, 16, 17, 18
and Egypt-Greece connection, 101
on founding of Cyrene, 21–22
and historical sources on Cyrene, 22
on Pelasgians, 135
- Heroines of Libya, 18–19, 81, 116
- Herter, Hans, 82
- Herwennefer, 174
- Hesiod, 51, 58, 83, 201n71
- Hesperides, 18, 19, 20, 86, 116
- Hestia, 88
- Hieron II of Syracuse, 59, 142, 217n96
- hieros gamos*, 92, 99
- “Hippika” (Posidippus), 7, 147–58, 191n9, 219n130, 219n133
- Hippocrene, 83, 86, 93
- Hipponax of Colophon, 161–62, 200n52, 205n1
- Homer, 10, 16, 34, 51, 55, 60, 114, 129, 174, 193n12
- Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 85–86, 207n30, 207n39
- Hopkinson, Neil, 80
- horses and horsemanship, 16, 30, 66, 82, 90, 142–58, 182, 206n20, 219n133. *See also* chariot racing
- Horus, 163, 168, 223n25
- Hyginus, 33, 124, 126, 141, 145, 157, 206n12
- Hymn to Apollo* (Callimachus), 7, 21, 22–26, 34, 55–56, 80, 146–47, 154, 205n6
- Hymn to Athena* (Callimachus), 79, 80–84, 87, 141, 182, 205n1
- Hymn to Delos* (Callimachus), 53–54, 67
- Hymn to Demeter* (Callimachus), 80, 84–89, 142, 182, 205n1
- Hymn to Zeus* (Callimachus), 58, 73, 201n69
- Hypseus, 22, 25, 194n42
- Hypsipyle, 106–7, 108, 110, 211n3, 211n6, 211n7
- Iambi* (Callimachus), 51, 52, 134–35, 161, 162, 205n1
- iconography of Berenice II, 101, 122, 129, 136, 170, 191n8, 195n44, 214n37, 214n40, 215n49, 216n77

Idylls (Theocritus), 48–49, 59–60, 67, 201n67
Iliad (Homer), 50, 66, 72–73, 75–76, 92, 100, 105, 159, 193n12, 208n53
incest, 72–73, 92, 99–100, 114–15, 127, 139, 172, 176, 191n15, 209n72, 212n21
Io, 146
Iolcus, 109, 111, 117
Ioulis, 90–91, 208n50
Irada, 27
Iris, 73, 184
Isis
 Arsinoe II associated with, 73–74, 169–70
 Berenice associated with, 41, 101, 136–37, 164, 168, 182, 185, 210n77
 Cleopatra associated with, 185
 and fertility themes, 164
 and the “Lock of Berenice,” 100–101
 and the Princess Berenice, 168
 temple at Philae, 163
 and the “Victoria Berenice,” 146
Isthmian games, 153, 156–57, 158, 173, 221n168
Istrus “the Callimachean,” 57
Itanos, 32, 216n64

Jason, 17–21, 106–9, 109–12, 114–15, 116–17, 118–19. *See also Argonautica* (Apollonius)
Julius Caesar, 185
justice, 114, 123–24
Justin, 5, 36–38, 78–79, 88, 96, 179

kalathos, 85
karchesion, 69
Khonsu, V, 162
Kimon of Elis, 80, 201n67
Koinon, 39, 197n93
Kom el-Hisn, 168
Kore, 41, 84, 85–86, 88, 181, 207n29
Koresia, 90, 208n49
Krevans, Nita, 147

Laarchus, 27
Ladice, 27
Ladon, 18, 116
Lagus, 43, 63, 143, 175–76, 217n103, 227n86
Lake Mareotis, 44
Lake Triton, 18, 81, 135, 136
Laodice, 70, 125–26
Laronde, André, 86
Leda, 129
Legrand, Philippe-Ernest, 80
Lemnos, 21, 105–9, 135, 193n21, 210n2
Lesbos, 124, 213n15
Leto, 67
Leuca, 27

Library of Alexandria
 and Alexander’s legacy, 160–61
 and Apollonius of Rhodes, 54–56, 211n16
 and Aristotle, 199n27
 and the Athens Ptolemaeum, 140
 and Berenice’s legacy, 3
 and Callimachus, 9–10, 51–54, 55, 103, 161–62
 and Cleopatra, 185
 and cultural life of Alexandria, 48
 and Eratosthenes, 45, 56–57, 118
 establishment, 50–51
 and golden age of Alexandria, 178
 and *Hymn to Athena*, 81
 and the *Pinakes*, 23, 33, 52–53, 54, 218n113
 and royal patronage, 57–61
 scholarly activities of, 211n16
 and Theodorus, 33, 196n73
Libu tribe, 17
Libya, 4, 16, 17–21, 40, 42, 54, 75, 81, 95, 107, 116–18, 132, 135
Lighthouse of Alexandria, 46
lion-slayers, 23, 25, 146–47
Lives (Apollonius), 54, 55, 119
Llewellyn-Jones, Lloyd, 127
“Lock of Berenice” (Callimachus), 97–104
 and associations with Athena, 83
 on Berenice’s character, 120
 on Berenice’s love of Euergetes, 111
 and Callimachus’ role at court, 52
 and Catullus, 3–4
 date of composition, 54, 200n47
 and deification of Berenice, 101
 and golden age of Alexandria, 179–80
 on incestuous marriage, 127–28
 on murder of Demetrius, 172
 and Posidippus’ “Hippika,” 152, 157
 and sea deities, 136
 translations of, 7
 transmission of, 184
Lock of Berenice (constellation), 186, 227n106
Longinus, 57
Love the Destroyer, 112
love themes, 22, 49, 58, 65–66, 90–92, 93–95, 99, 102, 104, 111–12, 117, 152, 179, 180, 184, 186
Lycaean festival, 143, 227n86
Lyceum, 50
Lycia, 76, 131, 132
Lycophron of Chalcis, 50
Lysandra, 71
Lysanias of Cyrene, 34, 196n81
Lysimachus, brother of Ptolemy III, 54, 172–73, 183
Lysimachus, King of Thrace, 33, 70–72, 74

Lysimachus, son of Arsinoe II, 76

Lysippus of Sicyon, 159

Macedon and Macedonian culture

and chariot racing, 142, 151

and gender roles, 29, 33

and Magas, 31

and polygamy, 195n59

and prestige of birthplace, 139, 176, 220n142
and Ptolemaic ambitions on the mainland,

81, 137, 138

and roles of queens, 121, 126

Magas (son of Berenice II), 171–73, 183

Magas of Cyrene

and Apame, 36

appointment as governor, 30, 31, 132,
221n160

background of, 30–35, 65

and Berenice's ancestry, 14, 15, 132, 139

and betrothal of Berenice, 78

and Callimachus, 96, 141

and coinage, 39

death, 42, 70, 78

and *Hymn to Apollo*, 24

invasion of Egypt, 36, 68

and the "Lock of Berenice," 103

and Posidippus' "Hippika," 150

and Ptolemy I, 4, 30, 31, 39, 132

and rebellions in Cyrene, 31, 32

Mandris, 44–45

maritime trade, 64, 213n18

Maroneia, 131

"The Marriage Rites of Elis" (Callimachus), 96

Massegetae, 35

medallions, *III*, 101–2

Medea (Apollonius), 9, 17, 20, 109–13, 113–16,

117–20, 186, 211n4

Medea (Euripides), 113

Megatima, 57

Meleager, 72

melonenfrisur, 128

Menelaus, 129

Menitas the Lyctian, 40

Mesanthus, 10

Meshwesh tribe, 17

Method of Mechanical Theorems

(Archimedes), 57

Meyboom, Paul G. P., 166–67

Miletus, 93, 94, 131

mime (genre), 48

mimetic hymns, 23, 80, 194n31

Mimiambus (Herodas), 44–45, 198n11

Mistress of the Maidens (Princess Berenice),

168, 170, 217n83

Molorchus, 82, 147

Mopsus, 18, 117

Mori, Anatole, 114

mortuary temples, 47

mosaics in Palestrina, 166–67, 225n46

mosaics of Berenice (Tell Timai), *I*, 6, 69, 112,

136, 141, 169, 181, 182, 197n101, 203n108,
211n9

Mt. Helicon, 83

Munychia, 139

Murray, Jackie, 56, 200n56

Muses, 10, 50, 59, 60, 74, 75, 83, 93, 111, 174,

201n71, 206n22, 208n45, 208n59

Museum of Alexandria

and Alexander's legacy, 160

and the Athenian Ptolemaeum, 140

and Berenice's legacy, 3

and Callimachus, 9–10, 34, 103

and Cleopatra, 185

and cultural life of Alexandria, 48

and Lysanias, 34

and royal patronage, 57–61, 81

tourist attraction, 44, 48

Myous, 93–94

Myrtoussa, 25

Nasamon, 18

Nasamonites, 17–18

Nausicaa, 106

naval power, 31–32, 41, 90, 125, 134, 197n101

naval uniforms, *I*, 112–13, 141, 182, 185, 197n101

Nemean Games, 82, 87, 96, 138, 142, 145–46,

151–52, 220n143

Neon, 63, 202n89

Nicaea, 71

Nicippe, 86–87

Nicocles, 39

Niebuhr, Barthold, 34

Nike figures, 137

Nile River, 32, 44, 74, 85, 100, 166, 167, 171

Nilus, 166

nomadic peoples, 19–20

nympha ("bride"), 75, 146, 218n116

nymphs

Chariclo, 79, 83–84

and the Charites, 58

of Corcyra, 90

Cyrene, 22, 23, 25, 29, 194n43

Eurynome, 58

Hesperides, 18, 116

and the *Hymn to Demeter*, 86–87

Nemea, 145

Thetis, 75

Tree, 18, 79, 86, 87, 115–16

octodrachm coins, *I, IV*, 130, 131
Odyssey (Homer), 50, 105, 106, 113, 193n12, 211n11
 Oenanthē, 122, 175–77, 197n4, 225n67
oenochosae, 101, 141, 168–71, 177, 181–82, 204n130, 206n27, 225n51
 Ogden, Daniel, 100, 175, 176
oikistes, 20, 43
 Olympia, 135, 142, 143, 144, 145, 149, 150–53, 154–55, 157, 174, 198n18, 209n71
Olympian Ode (Pindar), 59, 142, 158, 218n120
 Olympias (Alexander's mother), 33, 196n80, 212n1, 213n18
 Olympias of Larissa, 36
 Olympic Games, 66, 87, 142–58, 217n97
On Islands (Callimachus the younger), 57
On the Iambic Poets (Lysanias), 34
On the Measurement of the Earth (Eratosthenes), 57
 Ophellās, 30, 64, 195n56
 oracle of Ammon, 30, 43
 oracle of Delphi, 20, 21, 23, 27, 28, 90
 Orpheus, 18, 135
 Osiris, 40, 100, 160–62, 166–68, 209n70, 223n7, 225n47
 The Palaces, 9, 47–48, 49, 50, 76, 84, 160
 Palaces of Alexandria, 47–49
 Pamphilus, 10
 Pamphylia, 131
 Panathenaic Festival, 81
 Panchaean Zeus, 162
 Paraitonium, 31
 Paris, 44, 66, 129
 Parmenio (Parmeniscus), 160, 161
 Parson, Peter, 145
 Patroclus, 75, 76, 100
 Pausanias, 12, 29, 66, 74, 81, 140, 143, 144, 145, 150, 195n59
 Peirene River, 152–53
 Pelasgians, 135
 Pelusium, 177
 pentekaidekadrachm coins, 130
 Perdiccas, 43, 64, 198n9
 perfume trade, 60, 102–3, 124
 Peripatetics, 50, 53, 68, 199n27
 Persephone, 44, 85–86, 168, 207n29
 Persepolis, 226n86
 Persians, 28–29, 43, 96, 133, 167
 Petrovic, Ivana, 80
 Pfeiffer, Rudolf, 141
 Phaeacia, 114–16
 Pharaohs, 38, 43, 160, 163, 174, 178
 Pharos Island, 44, 46, 146

Pherenike, 142
 Pheretime, 28–29
 Phidias, 81, 135, 141
 Philadelphī (Sibling Gods), *III*, 44, 73, 74, 99, 100, 114, 121, 127, 129, 132, 166, 168, 171, 209n71, 210n1, 212n3, 212n22
 Philadelphus. *See* Ptolemy II Philadelphus
 Philae, 6, 163
 Philip II, 135, 137, 142–43, 176, 217n98
 Philippeion, 142
Philippic Histories, 5
 Philippus of Cos, 63
 Philitas of Cos, 68, 191n16
philoi, 51, 61–62
 Philostephanos of Cyrene, 57, 201n66
 Philotera, 65, 75–76
 Phocceans, 96
 Phoenicia, 69, 132, 222n3, 222n174
 Phrygians, 93
 Phrygius, 93–95
 Phylarchus of Athens, 5, 191n1
 Phyleus, 96
 Pieria, 93–95
Pinakes (Callimachus), 23, 33, 52–53, 54, 218n113, 194n30, 218n113
 Pindar
 and Argonauts tale, 116
 on Battiads, 26–27, 29
 on chariot races, 142
 on the Charites, 59–60
 on founding of Cyrene, 16, 21–22, 25, 195n45
 and historical sources, 22
 and *Hymn to Apollo*, 25
 and the *Pinakes*, 53
 and Posidippus' "Hippika," 152
 and the "Victoria Berenice," 145, 147
 on the Women of Lemnos, 107–8
 Piraeus, 139
 Plutarch, 27, 172
 Plynteria, 81
 Polyarchus, 27
 Polybius, 5, 6, 173, 174, 176, 177
 polygamy, 65, 71, 171–72, 195n59
 Polyphemus, 201n67
 Pomeroy, Sarah, 13
pompe. *See* Grand Procession (*pompe*)
 Pope, Alexander, 186
 Posidippus of Pella, 7, 8, 46–47, 66, 82, 147–58, 191n9, 198n16, 205n136, 219n133
 prenuptial rituals, 92
Proekdosis, 118. *See also* *Argonautica* (Apollonius)
 Prometheus, 73, 92

- Protector of sailors, 47, 135–37, 181–82
 Protector of the Island League, 64, 134
 Proteus, 146
 Proxinoa, 48–49
 Pseudopenias, 40
 Ptolemaeum, 140
 Ptolemaia (festival), 69, 81, 140
 Ptolemais (city), 39
Ptolemais tribe, 81, 140
 Ptolemy Andromachus, 134, 216n65
 Ptolemy Ceraunus, 66, 68, 71, 72, 135, 199n45, 202n95
 Ptolemy I Soter
 and Alexander's body, 43–44
 background, 63–65
 and Berenice's ancestry, 14
 birth place, 65
 and chariot races, 143
 children of, 71
 and coin portraits, *III*, 39
 and courtesans, 175–76, 226n85 (*see also* Bilistiche)
 and Cyrenean rebellions, 30–31
 and Demetrius the Fair, 36
 and Dionysus, 108
 and Egyptian gods, 168
 extent of empire, 134
 and the Library and Museum of Alexandria, 9–10, 50, 51
 and Macedonian connections, 142
 and Magas, 4
 and naming conventions, 12–13, 220n142
 and polygamy, 171
 and "Ptolemaic power couples," 121, 122
 and religious syncretism, 160
 and royal cults, 165
 and Theodorus, 33
 Ptolemy II Philadelphus, 67–71
 ancestry of, 67
 and betrothal of Berenice, 78–79
 and Callimachus, 52, 53–54, 58
 and Callimachus' "Deification of Arsinoe II," 75
 and chariot racing, 143, 153, 154–55
 children of, 8, 35, 70
 cities named for Berenice, 133
 co-regency, 66, 70
 and courtesans, 70, 175–76
 cult of the Cabiri, 135
 death, 63, 70–71
 and Dionysus, 123
 and Egyptian gods, 168
 and *Hymn to Apollo*, 24
 and incestuous marriage, 73, 99–100, 114, 176, 191n15, 212n21
 influence on Euergetes' government, 71
 and Magas, 4, 31–32
 and the Museum and Library of Alexandria, 50, 51
 and mythology of marriage, 128
 and naming conventions, 12–13
 and naval power, 47, 90, 125
 and Palaces of Alexandria, 48
 and polygamy, 171
 and Posidippus' "Hippika," 150, 153, 155
 and "Ptolemaic power couples," 121
 and public relations, 122
 and royal cults, 73, 165, 212n3
 and succession politics, 68, 172
 and Theocritus, 201n72
 and *tryphe*, 69–70, 175
 Ptolemy III Euergetes
 ancestry of, 70, 131–32
 and Apollonius of Rhodes, 17, 118
 and the *Argonautica*, 108–9, 112, 115, 119
 and Callimachus, 97, 99
 and the Canopus Decree, 167–68
 and chariot racing, 155–56
 children of, 139, 163, 164, 171–78
 cities named for Berenice, 133
 and coin portrait, *IV*
 and court life, 63
 death, 171
 and deification, 13
 and Euergetes Gate, *V*, 6, 162, 193n11
 extent of empire, 134–37
 and Greek politics, 137–40
 historical information on, 122–24
 and *Hymn to Apollo*, 24–25
 and incestuous marriage, 99–100, 114–15
 and the Library and Museum of Alexandria, 51, 161
 and the "Lock of Berenice," 99
 marriage to Berenice, 4, 42, 91, 111
 and mythology of marriage, 128
 and naming conventions, 12–13
 and naval power, 90
 origin of epiklesis, 133–34
 and patronage of Library, 10
 as Pharaoh of Egypt, 38–39
 and "Ptolemaic power couples," 121
 reign of, 3
 and religious syncretism, 160, 162
 reorganization of Cyrenaica, 39–41
 and royal cults, 61, 165–66
 and succession politics, 76–77, 173
 and the Third Syrian War, 125–34

Ptolemy IV Philopator
 and Agathocles, 63, 122, 175–77, 197n4, 225n67
 cities named for Berenice, 133
 and coinage, 130
 and court politics, 175–76
 and cult of Homer, 10
 and cults of Berenice II, 154, 173
 death, 176–77
 and death of Berenice II, 5, 41, 172–73
 and faience jugs, 169, 170
 and naming conventions, 12
 reburial of Alexander, 44
 and religious syncretism, 161
 and royal cults, 67, 165
 and succession politics, 171–73, 173–74, 176, 182–83, 225n65
 and temple of the Muses, 10
 and temples of Alexandria, 47
 and *tryphe*, 122
 Ptolemy the Son, 70, 76, 125, 196n69, 203n113
 Ptolemy V Epiphanes, 178, 183
 Ptolemy VI, 178
 Ptolemy VII, 178
 Ptolemy VIII, 164
 Pyrrhus I, 65
 Pythian Games, 81, 82, 87, 143
Pythians (Pindar), 22, 116, 157, 195n45

 Quintus Curtius, 35

 “The Rape of the Lock” (Pope), 186
 Raphia Decree, 174
 religious syncretism, 130, 160, 162–64
 Revelation, Island of, 19, 107
 Rhacotis, 47, 160, 161, 223n8
 Rhamnus, 139
 Rhodes, 12, 54, 64, 211n20
 Roman empire, 137, 185–86

 Sahara Desert, 20
 Salamis, 139
 Samos, 28, 92, 131, 175, 198n18
 Samothrace, 72, 135, 216n70, 216n71
 Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore, 41, 84
 sea goddesses, 135–37, 181
 Second Syrian War, 68, 94, 125
 Selden, Daniel, 101
 Seleucia-in-Pieria, 93, 127, 131
 Seleucids, 32, 36, 94, 125, 174. *See also specific individuals*
 Seleucus I, 4, 36, 72
 Seleucus II, 70, 125, 131
 Seleucus III, 172

Serapeum, 47, 61, 160–62
 Serapis, 6, 40, 42, 47, 51, 65, 160–62, 164, 166, 175, 202n94, 223n7
 Seshat, 168
 Sethos I, 17
 Shahat, Libya, 4, 16
 shrine of Opheltes, 146–47
 Sibling Gods, 44, 163, 164, 165
 Sicyon, 39
Sidus Iulium, 185, 227n102
Silloi (Timon), 51
 silphium, 16, 194n32
 Simonides, 53, 60
 Sirtis, 17–18
 Siwa oasis, 30, 43, 198n7
 Skepticism, 33
 Sophilus, 136
 Sophocles, 51, 161
 Sosibius of Alexandria, 54, 63, 173–76, 176–77, 183, 226n71, 226n73, 226n74
 Sosibius of Tarentum, 173
 Sosicrates, 47, 62, 198n17
 Sostratus, 46
 Sotades of Maroneia, 191n15, 204n119, 208n53, 209n72, 212n21
 Sparta, 21, 23, 29, 68, 74, 107, 129–30, 135, 137–38, 143–44, 145, 146, 154, 216n72
 spelling conventions, 12–13
 Spitamenes, 35, 196n85
 Steiner, Deborah, 152
 Stela of Kom el Hisn, V, 168
 Stele of the Founders, 51
 Stephens, Susan, 141, 193n17
 Strabo, 45–46, 47–48, 50, 133, 191n16, 199n27
 Strato of Lampsacus, 50, 68
 Stratonice I, 14, 36
Suda, 34, 51, 52, 56, 57
 Sun God Re, 193n17
 Svoronos, 128
 symposia, 9, 62, 191n13
 Syria
 and extent of Ptolemaic empires, 132, 134
 First Syrian War, 36, 68, 125
 Second Syrian War, 68, 94, 125
 Third Syrian War, 6, 42, 47, 52, 54, 94, 106, 122, 125–27, 128, 130–31, 134, 171

 Talos, 112, 117
 Tauchira, 39
 Teiresias, 83, 84
 Tell Timai (thmouis), I, 113, 136, 166, 182, 224n43
 Temple of Arsinoe-Zephyritis, 97, 100, 102, 127, 128, 135, 181, 198n18, 208n50

- Temple of Osiris at Canopus, 166–68
 Temple of the Egyptian Gods, 6
 Thais, 65, 175, 217n103
 Theater of Dionysus, 61, 81, 140
 Theocritus
 arrival in Alexandria, 201n72
 and Arsinoe II, 72
 and Berenice I, 66, 203n98
 and the Charites, 59–60
 and Demeter, 85
 and Heracles, 82
 and Hieros Gamos, 92
 and palaces of Alexandria, 48–49
 and patronage, 8–9, 59–60
Theocritus at Court (Griffiths), 8
 Theodorus, 32–33
 Theogenes, 175, 197n4
 Theognetus, 175
Theoi Adelphoi, 13, 198n12, 204n128, 205n137
Theoi Euergetai, 13, 87, 121, 134, 165–66, 167, 169,
 205n137, 212n4, 215n63, 224n28
Theoi Soteres, 13, 67, 203n101
 Theophrastus, 50
 Theoxena, 42, 65, 175, 197n1, 197n3
 Thera, 16, 19, 21, 23, 107, 117, 135, 154
 Thermos, 138–39, 141, 148, 153, 164, 170–71, 180,
 207n32, 208n51, 217n83
 Theseus, 110–11
 Thesmophoria (festival), 84, 89
 Thesmophorion, 84, 206n24
 Thespeia, 10, 174
 Thetis, 75
 Thibron, 30
 Third Syrian War, 6, 42, 47, 52, 54, 94, 106, 122,
 125–27, 128, 130–31, 134, 171
 Thmouis (Timaj el-Amdid) mosaic, I, 6,
 69, 112, 136, 141, 169, 181, 182, 197n101,
 203n108, 211n9
 Thoas, 106
 Thomas, Richard, 147
 Thompson, Dorothy, 148, 151, 153,
 169–70
 Thothis, 168
 Thrace, 33, 70, 71, 107, 131, 196n72
 Timocrates, 47
 Timon, 51
 Tlepolemos, 126, 177
 Triton, 18–19, 20–21, 116–17
 Trogius, Pompeius, 5, 79
tryphe, 69–70, 73, 88–89, 122–23, 130, 175,
 212n6, 212n8
 Tryphon, 122
 Tyndareus, 129
 Tyrrhenians, 135
 Tzetzes, John, 50, 51, 161, 199n30

Uranometria Omnium Asterismorum (Bayer),
 186
 Vassilika, Eleni, 164
 Venus, 102, 184–85, 187–89
 Venus Genetrix, 185
 “Victoria Berenice” (Callimachus), 7, 54, 81, 95,
 145–47, 151
 victory ode genre, 145
 Virgil, 184
 virtuous marriage theme, 93–95

 Winder, Stephanie, 127
 “The Women of Lemnos,” 105–9, 193n21

 Xenomedes, 90
 Xenophon, 144–45

 Zaukes, 17
 Zenodotus of Ephesus, 50–51, 55, 68
 Zephyreum, 47
 Zephyritis, 75
 Zephyrium, 100, 128
 Zeus
 and coin portrait, 130
 and cult of Serapis, 65
 and the Dioscuri, 129
 horses associated with, 81
 and justice, 114
 Ptolemy II associated with, 72–73
 and religious syncretism, 160
 and remarriage theme, 92
 statue at Olympia, 135
 and the “Victoria Berenice,” 7, 54, 82, 89, 93,
 96, 145–47, 151, 207n41
 Zeus Ammon, 30, 43
 Zeus Soter, 46
 Zeuxo, 222n174

Index Locorum

- Acesander** (FGrH)
469 F4: 25
469 F5–6: 194n29
- Achilles Tatius**
Isagoga exc
C. 14: 209n73
- Aelian**
Variae historiae
13.22: 10, 174
14.43: 123
- Aeschylus**
Eumenides
292–93: 81
736–38: 206n11
- Anthologia Palatina**
Adespota
13.16: 218n107
16.105: 220n154
16.251: 220n154
- Antimachus Colophonius** (Wyss)
65: 193n15
- Apollodorus**
2.4.5: 207n37
- Apollonius Rhodius**
1.524–527: 193n13
1.607–914: 21
1.609–26: 106
1.619: 109
1.654–708: 106
1.662: 211n7
1.662–63: 108
1.721–67: 106
1.774–92: 107
1.793–833: 107
1.834: 211n7
1.839–41: 108
1.853–910: 107
1.915–21: 135
2.505: 194n41
2.1097–9: 56
3.1–3: 111
3.275–290: 111
3.838–841: 117
3.885–6: 112
3.997–1007: 111, 211n4
3.1074–6: 211n4
4.127–161: 117
4.358–69: 111–12
4.419–20: 110
4.421–34: 110
4.421–481: 20
4.424–434: 211n4
4.428–34: 110
4.442–4: 110
4.445–9: 112
4.464–481: 110
4.580–591: 193n13
4.584–8: 20
4.659–752: 20
4.753–981: 211n11
4.997–1000: 114
4.1096–7: 114
4.1098–1109: 114
4.1110–1222: 114
4.1145–8: 115
4.1227–1236: 116
4.1228–49: 18
4.1259–1304: 18
4.1296–1304: 117
4.1305–1379: 116
4.1308–1311: 81
4.1393–1460: 18, 116
4.1485–1501: 18
4.1502–36: 18

4.1518–22: 117
 4.1537–61: 117
 4.1537–85: 19
 4.1537–1619: 136
 4.1562–3: 21
 4.1566–70: 20
 4.1635–88: 112
 4.1654–88: 117
 4.1731–64: 19
 4.1749–64: 21, 194n29

Appianus

Syriaca

10.62: 68

Aristaenetus

Epistulae

1.10: 208n46

1.15: 208n60

Aristophanes

Lysistrata

641–8: 222n176

Thesmō

1059: 226n67

Aristotle

Constit. of the Cyreneans

(Müller)

208: 194n29

Eth. Nic

5.1133a3: 61

Poetics

1451b3: 119

1451b4: 119

Arrian

Anabasis

1.16.4: 159

3.1.2: 43

3.1.5: 44

3.16.4–5: 222n4

3.27.5: 202n90

4.10.6–4.11.9: 222n5

4.17.7: 35

7.4.4–8: 35

7.4.6: 65

7.23.2: 222n6

7.25.2: 159

7.28.1: 159

Asclepiades (G.-P.)

39: 68

Athenaeus

5.201b–f: 69

5.202f–203a: 69

5.203d–e: 204n132

6.252c: 54

7.276a–c: 57

7.276b–c: 45, 177

7.304b: 34

12.538b–539a: 35, 222n3

12.544e–f: 196n75

12.550c: 196n76

13.576e: 65, 226n86

13.576f: 203n111

14.620c: 34

14.620f–621a: 191n15, 204n119

14.621a: 209n72

15.682e: 60

15.689a: 60, 103

Callimachus

Epigrams (G.P.)

3: 63, 201n67

14: 46, 47, 208n50

15: 58, 80, 103

15.2: 60

17: 40

29: 52

30: 15

39: 80, 201n67

44: 201n67

45: 201n67

Fragments (Pf.)

1: 89, 200n50

1.1–5: 55

2: 83

37.1: 194n33

54–59: 207n41

65–66: 95

67–75: 89

75: 90

75.1–5: 91

75.2: 91

75.4–5: 92

75.50–52: 70

75.51–52: 91

75.54–77: 90

75.56–77: 90

76–77a: 96

80–83: 93

84–85: 218n121

99: 218n121

110: 54, 89

110.45: 128

110.51–64: 136

110.77–78: 83, 102

112: 59, 201n71

176: 207n41

177: 207n41

191: 161

191.9: 161

191.10–11: 162

Callimachus (*continued*)

195: 51
 196: 135
 197: 134
 199: 135
 203: 200n50
 228: 53, 74, 129, 207n33
 228.5: 218n116
 228.15: 75
 228.49: 75
 228.51: 75
 228.71–72: 75
 228.73: 75
 228.74–75: 75
 383: 218n112
 384: 54, 173
 384.44–49: 218n121
 384a: 54
 387: 209n73
 388: 33, 96, 141
 388.7–11: 97
 392: 53, 72
 557: 207n41
 590: 207n41
 Fragments (SH)
 254: 145
 254.4–9: 146
 254.8–10: 220n144
 254–258: 82

Hymns

2.1–8: 23
 2.25–29: 23
 2.26: 161
 2.26–27: 24
 2.32–37: 23
 2.33: 194n37
 2.38–41: 23
 2.43–44: 23
 2.45: 23
 2.46: 23
 2.47–54: 23
 2.58–59: 194n37
 2.60–64: 23
 2.65: 16, 24
 2.65–68: 23
 2.68: 14, 24
 2.69: 105n37
 2.69–71: 23
 2.70: 194n37
 2.71: 24
 2.85–87: 25
 2.88–91: 25
 2.90: 25

2.91–92: 25
 2.93–96: 24
 2.95: 25
 2.105–113: 24, 200n50
 4.162–170: 67
 4.171–187: 68, 199n44
 4.185–7: 32
 4.188–190: 68
 5.1–3: 82
 5.5–12: 82
 5.31–32: 83
 5.33–34: 83
 5.51–54: 83
 5.57–82: 83
 5.57–136: 83
 5.70–72: 83
 5.70–74: 86
 5.97–130: 84
 5.131–6: 206n11
 6.1–2: 85
 6.9: 207n33
 6.10–13: 85
 6.12: 89
 6.15: 207n31
 6.17: 86
 6.18–23: 86
 6.25–29: 86
 6.33–39: 86
 6.42–44: 86
 6.50–53: 87
 6.53–55: 87
 6.65–68: 88
 6.81–88: 88
 6.105–110: 88
 6.111–5: 88
 6.126–7: 89

Catullus

66.1–38: 97
 66.11–14: 91
 66.13–14: 93, 152
 66.21–22: 99, 127
 66.21–30: 97
 66.23–25: 99
 66.25–28: 3, 98, 172, 179
 66.29–30: 99
 66.31: 179
 66.31–32: 99
 66.39: 184
 66.39–68: 97
 66.47: 97
 66.55–56: 185
 66.79–88: 102, 179
 66.89–92: 102

Cicero*De Fin.*

5.1: 217n88

Tusc.

1.47.113: 208n57

Clement*Protrepticus*

4.48: 160

Democritus, fragments

(D-K)

68 B 5: 193n16

Diegeseis (Pf.)

I 3: 96

VI 3–4: 161

VIII 37–38: 135

Diodorus Siculus

3.18.4: 215n58

4.43: 135

8.29: 193n24

8.30: 195n46

17.49.2–3: 43

17.49.2–6: 30

17.52: 198n14

18.19–21: 30

18.25.6–36.7: 64

18.26–28: 198n9

18.36.6–7: 64

18.74.3: 199n29

19.79.1–3: 30

20.27.1: 199n29

20.40–43: 30

20.45: 199n29

20.53.2–4: 62, 192n24

20.73–76: 64

22.3.2: 72

Diogenes Laertius

2.65–86: 196n71

2.97–103: 33

2.103: 196n73

5.37: 50

5.58: 199n28

5.75–85: 199n29

Eratosthenes

Fragments (Roller)

8: 201n59

9: 201n59

Kataster.

3.44: 208n56

Euripides*Medea*

1293–1414: 113

Eusebius*Chronicon*

Liber 1: 212n5

Galen*Comm. II in Hipp. Librum VII**Epidemiarium*

239: 51, 223n13

Hedylus (G.-P.)

4: 46, 47

Herodas*Mimiambi*

1.26–35: 44

Herodotus

1.3: 93

1.165: 96

2.51: 135, 216n68

2.59: 101

2.181–2: 27

4.150–3: 21

4.151: 21

4.153: 22

4.154–8: 21

4.155: 15, 16, 193n26

4.156: 22

4.157: 25

4.159: 27

4.160: 27

4.161: 195n46

4.164–5: 28

4.170: 17, 194n33

4.172: 17

4.174: 17

4.174–5: 18

4.180: 81

4.189: 81

4.192: 16

4.193: 17

4.199: 16

5.22: 142

8.137: 82

Hesiod

Fragments (M.-W)

215: 25

241: 193n15

Scutum

206: 93

Theogony

1–34: 83

53: 208n59

53–67: 201n71

907–9: 58

Homer

Iliad

14.292–6: 92
14.293–6: 72
18.35–64: 75
18.356: 208n53
22.408–11: 76
22.447–59: 76
23.140–151: 100

Odyssey

4.85–89: 16
4.383–93: 146
7.53–68: 114
7.55: 211n12

Homeric Hymn to Ceres

5–14: 86
47: 85
122–5: 88
354–6: 88

Hyginus

Astronomica

2.24: 124, 145, 157, 219n133
2.24.11–18: 33, 81, 92, 126, 141, 209n64,
211n5

Inscriptions

BGU

vi 1262: 175

CCG

22181: 200n46, 204n133
22183: 199n45

CEG

383: 220

CIG

3.5138: 25

CII

I 25: 196n77

CIJ

1440: 209n69

Ebert

26: 220n153
73: 219n132

IC

II 17.1.10: 195n62

ICairo

22182: 215n62
22183: 215n62

ICret

II 17.1.10: 195n62
II 19.2: 134
III 4.4: 134

IG

II²
687.16–18: 74
2313: 222n174

4676: 81, 140

5029a: 81

IX.1²

1:56: 207n32, 208n51, 217n84, 225n63
1:202: 217n83

IX.12

1:56: 207n32, 208n51, 217n84, 225n63
1:202: 217n83

V

1.1564a: 218n107
2.250: 117n103
2:299: 38

IX.1²

1:56: 207n32, 208n51, 217n84, 225n63

IX.1²

1:202: 217n83

XI

4 677: 134

IPhil

1.1: 224n28
1.2: 224n28
1.3: 224n35
1.4: 163

IvO

5.160: 218n107

Marmor Parium (FGrH)

239 B 27: 30

Moretti

6: 221n156
16: 218n108, 219n135
27: 219n131

OGIS

14: 192n25
26–27: 74, 198n18
29.3–4: 198n18
54: 82, 122, 193n18, 211n4, 215n54
55: 76
56: 85, 124, 167, 207n34, 209n69, 210n87,
215n62

61: 163

62: 192n23, 215n63

63: 192n23

64: 192n23, 215n63

65: 215n63

79: 226n74

726: 209n69

SB

585: 192n23, 215n63

586: 192n23, 215n63

4624: 192n23, 215n63

9735: 192n23, 215n63

11059: 212n4

SEG

I 366: 134, 209n69, 214n33

IX 1: 195n55

IX 1.84: 51
 IX 1.87: 51
 IX 2: 195n53
 IX 3: 22
 IX 84: 51
 IX 87: 51
 IX 112: 195n62
 XIII 351: 69
 XLII 994: 126, 213n24
 XVIII 636: 42, 175

Syll3

314: 227n86
 381.21–22: 74
 390: 69
 420: 198n18

Jerome

In Danielam

11.6: 213n23
 11.7–9: 133, 214n34
 11.13–14: 176

John of Antioch

(Müller)

fr. 54 = IV 558: 227n92

Josephus

Antiquitates Judaicae

8.163: 133
 12.2.2: 226n72

Justin

Epitome

7.1.9: 214n34
 7.2.14: 217n97
 17.1.4: 204n115
 17.2.4–5: 72
 22.7: 30
 23.2.6: 42
 24.2.10: 71, 72
 24.3.5: 71
 26.3: 32
 26.3.2–8: 5, 78
 26.3.3: 36
 26.4: 88
 26.4–8: 37
 27.1.7: 213n25
 27.1.9: 200n47
 29.1.5: 225n66
 30.1.9: 176
 30.2: 227n91
 30.2.3: 226n84
 30.2.5: 176

Longinus

33.5: 57

Lucian

“Charon” 10: 208n57

Lycophron

877–908: 194n29

Maccabees

III 1.2: 126n69

Memnon (FGrH)

434 F 5.4–5: 71
 434 F 5.6: 204n115

Meneseclēs of Barca

(FGrH)

270 F 6: 194n29

Nepos

21.3: 68

Ovid

Heroides 20–21: 208n46

Papyri

BGU

6.1264: 175

PCair Zen.

59003: 35, 70
 59251: 213n22

PEnt

26: 204n126

PGurob

12: 178, 183

PHaun

6: 214n34, 226n69
 6.1.4–7: 216n65
 6.1.19: 172
 6.1.28–31: 172

PHib

1.171: 134, 192n23
 2.199: 73

PLille

82.1a: 145, 147

PMich Zen.

55: 202n88

PMilVogl

VIII 309: 219n124

POxy

1241: 50, 56, 211n15
 1367: 195n46
 2082: 203n110, 218n110
 2173: 218n112
 2258: 210n85
 2465 fr. 2 col. 1: 73
 2821: 42

PPetrie

i 18: 226n74
 iii col. 2.6: 101, 225

PRyl

IV 576: 85, 213n18

Papyri (*continued*)*PSorb*

2440: 35, 70

PStrasburg

i 562–3: 227n89

WChr

1: 213n26

Pausanias

1.5.5: 81, 206n15

1.6.3: 198n9

1.6.8: 30, 65, 195n59

1.7.1: 14, 31, 44, 68, 196n66,
202n95

1.7.1–3: 31

1.7.2–3: 32

1.7.3: 76

1.8.6: 12, 74

1.9.6: 202n95

1.10.3: 204n115

1.10.4: 71

1.16.2: 72

1.17.2: 140

2.38.2: 93

3.8.1: 144

3.17.6: 145

5.6.7–8: 152, 218n104

5.8.11: 203n110, 217n102

6.1.6: 218n106

6.15.10: 66, 143

6.16.3: 66

6.17.3: 145, 150

6.20.9: 152

6.24.7: 58

8.9.6: 207n37

8.22.2: 92

9.35.3: 59

10.7.8: 66, 143

10.10.2: 81

10.15.6: 29

10.15.6–7: 193n24

10.19.7: 72

Philippus (AP)

16.105: 220n154

Philostephanos (SH)

691: 57

Phylarchus of Athens (FGrH)

81: 5

81 F 24: 213n23

Pindar*Olympian*

1.1–22: 142

6.88: 92

14.3–6: 59

14.13–17: 59

Pythian

4: 29, 193n23

4.2: 16, 222n173

4.6: 16

4.8: 222n173

4.17–18: 157

4.25–27: 193n15

4.251–7: 107, 211n3

5: 29, 193n23

5.89–93: 27

9: 22, 193n9

9.1–4: 59

9.1–70: 25

9.26–75: 25

9.97–103: 157

9.111–6: 95

Pliny the Elder*HN*

6.168: 133

6.170: 133

7.125: 159

19.38–45: 16

22.100: 16

34.148: 47

36.83: 27, 198n17

Plutarch*Alex.*

8.2: 159

10.2: 222n3

10.3: 202n90

29.1–3: 222n3

38: 226n86

70.3: 35

Ant.

54: 192n25

Arat.

12.5: 10

24.4: 138, 156

Cleom.

33: 76, 226n84, 227n91

33.3: 172

Consolatio ad Apollonium

14.1: 208n57

De Mul. Virt.

16, 253f–254b: 208n60

25, 260e–261d: 27

Dem.

18.1–2: 62, 192n24

19.1–2: 64

31.3: 71

38: 36

53.4: 197n88

Dem. and Ant.

4.1: 71

- Erot.*
 753d: 226n84
 753e-f: 176
- Fragments (Sandbach)*
 133: 208n57
- Isis and Osiris*
 28, 361f-362b: 202n94
- Philop.*
 1.2-4: 39
- Pyrrh.*
 4: 65
- Quaest. Conviv.*
 736f: 73
- Terrestriane an aquatilia animalia sint
 callidora
 36, 984a-b: 202n94
- Pollux**
Onomasticon
 IX 85: 214n36
- Polyaenus**
Strategemata
 2.28: 31
 8.35: 208n60
 8.47: 28
 8.50: 213n25
 8.57: 72
- Polybius**
 2.56-63: 5
 2.71.3: 171
 5.34: 174
 5.34.1: 172
 5.35.7: 173
 5.36.1: 172, 173
 5.40: 226n69
 5.65.9: 174
 5.81: 226n69
 5.83: 174
 5.84.1: 174
 5.85.9: 174
 5.85-86: 174
 5.87.6-7: 174
 5.106.6: 206n15
 5.106.6-8: 81
 10.22.2-3: 39
 14.11.1: 226n84
 15.25.1-2: 172
 15.25.2: 76, 173
 15.25.9: 177
 15.25.12: 197n99, 226n84
 15.25.32: 176
 15.25-37: 176
 15.29.8-14: 226n84
 15.32-33: 177
 15.33.8: 226n84
- 15.34: 177
 15.34.1: 5
 29.8-14: 226n84
- Porphyry (FGrH)**
 260 F 3 10: 72
 260 F 43: 200n47, 213n22, 213n25
- Posidippus (AB)**
 13.2: 220n154
 15.7: 220n154
 17.2: 220n154
 36: 76
 39: 46, 216n75
 71: 158, 219n131
 72: 219n131
 73: 219n131
 74: 158, 219n131
 75: 219n131
 76: 158, 219n131
 78: 66, 148, 149, 151, 155
 78.3: 150
 78.5: 148, 150
 78.6-7: 150
 78.8: 150
 78.9: 150
 78.10: 150
 78.11-12: 150
 79: 151, 158, 220n143
 80: 151, 220n143
 81: 220n143
 82: 149, 151, 152, 158, 220n153, 221n155,
 221n168
 85: 158
 85-87: 149
 87: 153-54
 88: 149, 154-55, 195n58
 88.4: 148
 115: 198n16
 116: 46
 119: 46, 47, 216n75
- Proleg. de com. Aristophanes*
 2: 59
- Pseudo-Callisthenes**
 1.30.5: 198n7
- Pseudo-Plut.**
Proverb. Alexandr.
 13: 226n69
- Ptolemy VIII**
Hypom. (FGrH)
 234 F 4: 203n110
- Quintus Curtius**
 4.7.8-9: 30
 4.7.9: 43
 8.3.1-16: 35

Quintus Curtius (*continued*)

8.5.5–21: 222n5

10.10.20: 44

Schol. Aristophanes Thesmo.

1059: 12, 226n67, 226n84

Schol. Callimachus Hymn

4. 175–8: 32

Schol. Homer Iliad

14.256: 73, 92

Schol. Pindar Olympian

6.88: 93

Schol. Pindar Pythian

4: 195n51

Schol. Theocritus Idyll

17.128: 70, 76, 203n113

Schol. Townleiana on Iliad

19.116: 207n37

Solinus

27.54: 40

Solon (West)

13.2: 93

Sotades (Powell)

1: 209n72

Strabo

11.11.6: 35

13.1.54: 199n27

13.4.1: 72, 204n115

16.4.10: 133

17.1.6–10: 198n14

17.3.21: 30, 193n24

17.3.22: 196n71

17.18: 47, 50, 198n9

Suda (Adler)

δ429: 199n29

ε2898: 34, 56, 57

Suetonius, *Gramm.*

10: 57

Tacitus

Hist.

4.83–84: 202n94

Theochrestus of Cyrene

(FGrH)

761 F 1: 194n29

Theocritus

Fragments (Gow)

3: 203n98

Idylls

7.128–34: 72

7.155–7: 85

11: 201n67

15: 48–49

15.4–6: 48

15.22–26: 48

15.24: 198n22

15.47: 48

15.51–9: 48

15.80–86: 48

15.106–111: 49, 66, 67

15.112–127: 49

15.132–144: 49

15.145–9: 49

16.5–7: 59

16.16–21: 59

16.48–50: 59

16.68–69: 59

16.73–100: 59

16.104–9: 60

17: 82, 201n69

17.1–4: 72

17.34–35: 66

17.34–52: 66

17.36–37: 66

17.38–40: 66

17.40–44: 66

17.45–50: 66

17.53–76: 203n102

17.128–34: 72

17.129: 218n116

17.131–4: 92

24: 82

Thucydides

1.2.1: 193n16

2.99.3: 82

Tibullus

1.7.28–29: 219n122

Trogus

Proleg.

26: 70

27: 212n5

30: 212n5

Virgil

Aeneid

4.322: 184

4.700–05: 184

6.460: 184

8.680–1: 185

Xenophon

Agesilaus

9.6: 144

Zenobius (*Paroem. Gr.* I p. 81)

3.94: 173, 198n20, 224n40