

## Ptolemy I Soter: A Self-Made Man

The papers presented in this panel will examine one of Alexander the Great's most successful Successors: Ptolemy I Soter, who established the longest-lasting of the great Hellenistic dynasties. The traditions about Ptolemy link him closely with the Argead dynasty: ancient sources report rumours that Ptolemy was a bastard son of Philip II (Pausanias 1.6.2, 1.6.8; Curtius 9.8.22; Ogden 2013) and Ptolemy was evidently close enough to the young Alexander that Philip considered him a potentially dangerous influence on his son (Plutarch *Alexander* 10; Arrian *Anabasis* 3.6.5-6). Yet in spite of the alleged early intimacy between Ptolemy and Alexander, a careful reading of the Alexander historians reveals that Ptolemy was not among Alexander's leading marshals (Heckel 2016): men like Krateros and Perdikkas were regularly entrusted with independent commands in a way that Ptolemy was not. It was with the dissolution of Alexander's empire and the long struggle of the Diadoch wars (and the deaths of Krateros, Perdikkas, and others) that individuals such as Ptolemy and Seleukos rose to command and ultimately to kingship (*int al.* Bosworth 2002; Wheatley and Hannah 2009; Roisman 2012; Anson 2014).

But not only was Ptolemy a soldier and ruler, he was also an historian. His work on Alexander the Great and his campaigns was used by the later Alexander historians, and was one of Arrian's major sources for his *Anabasis*. In the pages of his own *History of Alexander*, Ptolemy constructed a self-portrait characterized by military courage and deep friendship with the Macedonian conqueror (Pearson 1960; Bosworth 1988; Howe forthcoming). He also took advantage of his position as chronicler to inflate the importance of his own role at the expense of other members of Alexander's inner circle, such as Perdikkas, who became Ptolemy's enemy in the years after Alexander's death (Errington 1969).

As ruler of the Egyptian kingdom, Ptolemy experienced an elevated model of kingship very different from the Macedonian one: he would have learned the importance of the exalted figure of the Pharaoh, a construct that had little to do with the real man who wore the crown(s) (Hölbl 2001; Huß 2001; Caroli 2007). Monuments such as the Satrap Stele (311 BCE; Schäfer 2011) provided Ptolemy with the opportunity to advertise his regal qualities even before he became Pharaoh (Alexander IV was still alive when the Stele was erected): “of youthful energy was he, strong in both arms, prudent of mind, powerful amidst men, of firm courage, steady foot, repelling the raging, not turning his back, striking the face of his foes amidst their combat.” The image of the Pharaoh was unchanged through the generations, and the Ptolemaic practice of naming all sons “Ptolemy” enhanced the paradigm of the perfect and eternal ruler.

Ptolemy I’s own inclination and experiences thus facilitated continuous acts of self-creation. This shaping and molding of his image – as warrior, as ruler, as benefactor – took a variety of forms: literary, dynastic, artistic, and political. The papers in this panel will explore these constructs and, insofar as it is possible, the man behind them.