

## Building a Dynasty: the Families of Ptolemy I Soter

This paper examines the marital and heritance policies of Ptolemy I Soter, who sired as many as a dozen children with at least three different women: his concubine Thaïs, mother of his first known children; his first Macedonian wife, Eurydike, the daughter of Antipater; and Eurydike's kinswoman Berenike, who was the mother of his heir Ptolemy II Philadelphos (Ogden 1999; Carney 2000; Van Oppen de Ruiters 2011).

In the decades after the death of Alexander the Great, Ptolemy and the other Successors engaged in a series of political marriage alliances. These marriages were meant to serve a strategic end, and the military and political maneuvering of these years is reflected in the shifting matrimonial patterns: so, for example, Ptolemy, Krateros, Perdikkas, Lysimachos, and Demetrios each married a daughter of Antipater. The political marriages contracted by the Successors gained additional meaning with the deaths of the last male Argeads, Philip III Arrhidaios and Alexander IV. Starting in 306/5 BC, Antigonos, Demetrios, Ptolemy, Seleukos, Lysimachos, and Kassander declared themselves kings (Gruen 1985); since a foundational principle of monarchy was blood succession, the offspring of these political marriages now took on a dynastic significance (Seibert 1967; Billows 1995; O'Neil 2000).

Ptolemy I used his many children as a means of forging further alliances abroad and creating his own royal dynasty at home in Egypt. He constructed an image of familial solidarity with his chosen heir, Ptolemy II Philadelphos; Philadelphos in turn emphasized dynastic unity through his marriage to his full sister, Arsinoë II, a few years after Soter's death (Carney 1987; Ager 2005). Family harmony became a signature of the Ptolemaic dynasty; but the sources indicate that mutual amity was not in fact typical of Soter's children or of Soter's relationship with them. Daniel Ogden has identified the phenomenon of "amphimetric strife" among the

Hellenistic dynasties – the rivalry between children of the same father and different mothers – and Ptolemy I's families provide multiple examples of this phenomenon (Ogden 1999). This paper explores the challenges Ptolemy I faced in consolidating and symbolically representing a line that was begun long before he ever became king.