

## THE GOD SERAPIS, HIS CULT AND THE BEGINNINGS OF THE RULER CULT IN PTOLEMAIC EGYPT\*

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When Egypt became the kingdom of the Ptolemies, they found a thousand-year-old culture with a flourishing religiosity focused on the Pharaoh. In order to establish a stable power base in the country, the foreign rulers had to respond to the needs of their Egyptian subjects, who made up most of the population of their kingdom. For their official public image, the Ptolemies therefore assumed not only the Hellenistic portrayal of a *basileus*, but they also became Egyptian Pharaohs. On the bas-reliefs in Egyptian temples, the Ptolemaic kings are depicted during sacrifices to the Egyptian gods as native Pharaohs.

The obvious appropriation of pharaonic tradition occurred, on the one hand, because of the basic necessity of adapting to the native environment; on the other hand, the prerogatives and modes of public display accompanying the office of the Pharaoh seem to have held a great attraction for the foreign ruler. The two colossal statues, about 40ft/12m high, found during underwater excavations at Qait-Bey, Alexandria, and said to be Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II, demonstrate how much, for example, the royal couple were concerned with an identification with Egypt and especially with the Egyptian kingship.<sup>1</sup> Ptolemy is depicted here as Pharaoh, his consort as Isis, both at the main entry harbour to Egypt. The first thing that foreigners saw of the ruler upon landing in Egypt was thus his depiction as the Egyptian Pharaoh. Accordingly, Ptolemy II placed a strong accent

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<sup>1</sup> Veisse (2004), 193; Corteggiani (1998), 103; Empereur (1998), 76-77.

on the Egyptian perception of his rule, not only for his Egyptian subjects but also for the Hellenistic *oikumene*, Hellenistic Greek for 'the inhabited part of the world'. The Greeks and Macedonians who came to Egypt also seemed to have been quite impressed with the Egyptian religion and its universe of deities. Baines, for example, has recently demonstrated that, within the country's administrative elite, there was very quickly no distinction according to ethnic classification, because the inhabitants liked to switch between cultures and religions.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the immigrants were given the opportunity through the *interpretatio Graeca* of viewing their popular Greek gods in equivalents to the Egyptian gods. Thus, Zeus was the Egyptian Amun, Aphrodite the Egyptian Isis. The cult of the Graeco-Egyptian god Serapis, created by Ptolemy I or at least strongly promoted by the dynasty, became of great importance for the leadership elite of the kingdom and their identification with it.<sup>3</sup> In the second generation, the Ptolemies took a second approach to bind the subjects to them and to the kingdom: Ptolemy II introduced an official ruler cult. In the course of Ptolemaic propaganda, and based on Greek ideas, the monarch developed into a god king, who together with his consort was accorded a divine cult. Ptolemy II did thus not in any way stop at the religious expression of the Egyptian cult of the Pharaoh—before Ptolemy II, the Pharaoh was never a god; only his office was divine; the traditional Pharaoh himself never became the object of a deity cult.

In this chapter, the god Serapis and his importance for the Hellenistic ruler cult are to be an example of how the newly created official ruler cult was linked to the Serapis cult from the previous generation in order to offer the subjects of various ethnic origins a common focus for their religiosity. This close connection of the Serapis and the ruler cult has already been noted in various places in research,<sup>4</sup> but nowhere has a connection between both phenomena been investigated. However, before we can make a connection between the ruler cult and the Serapis cult, we need to look in the following at the deity Serapis himself, his origins and his cult.

<sup>2</sup> Baines (2004), 33–61.

<sup>3</sup> Basic information: Huss (1994), 58–68; cf. Fraser (1960), 2, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Bommas (2005), 44; Brady (1978), 22–23; Fraser (1960), 18 and 24; Fraser (1972), I, 227; 263; Grimm (1983), 73; Hölbl (1994), 94; Hölbl (1993), 25.

*The Pharaoh and the Apis Bull*

From time immemorial, in Memphis, the old capital of the Pharaonic kingdom, the living Apis bull along with Ptah was accorded special veneration. Since the period of the Old Kingdom, the cult of the bull thrived in an extremely close religious relationship to the Egyptian Pharaoh.<sup>5</sup> According to Kessler, the Apis led “to the merging of the king with the transregional king-father-god, the creator god Ptah”.<sup>6</sup> With the words of Hölbl, we may state that the king as bearer of the divine office was theologically related to the Memphite Apis, when it played a significant role during “the royal calendar and coronation festivals and, as city god on the king’s standard, protected him at his enthronement.”<sup>7</sup> Thus the Apis was a royal god to the fullest extent.

The first and most important act conducted by Alexander the Great after the ‘liberation’ of Egypt from foreign Persian rule was to sacrifice to the bull: “Thence he crossed the river and went to Memphis, where he sacrificed to the gods especially Apis, and held athletic and musical games.”<sup>8</sup> For the first time, we find Egyptian divinity cult united with Greek cult elements—which is how we must view the games. Not only Alexander the Great worshipped Apis, but the Ptolemies especially were to become aware of the legitimising significance of Apis for their power.<sup>9</sup> Thus they also made particular use of the deceased Apis, that is, the Osiris-Apis. According to Diodorus for example (I 84.8), Ptolemy I donated 50 silver talents to its burial.<sup>10</sup>

*Osiris-Apis, Osiris and Serapis*

When it died, every Apis bull was transformed into the deity Osiris-Apis.<sup>11</sup> This deity had already been worshipped under the name Oso-rapis by the Greeks living in Memphis, the so-called Hellenomemphites

<sup>5</sup> Thompson (1988), 199–207; Kessler (1989). See also Steve Vinson’s contribution in this volume.

<sup>6</sup> Kessler (1989), 74.

<sup>7</sup> Hölbl (1994), 73.

<sup>8</sup> Arrianus, *Anabasis* III, 1.3–4; see Hölbl (1994), 9.

<sup>9</sup> See Assmann (1996), 414–415.

<sup>10</sup> Thompson (1988), 212–265; Crawford (1980), 12–15.

<sup>11</sup> For the different connections between Osiris and Apis, see Kessler (2000), 163, 172–188, who, unfortunately, cites no sources that can confirm his thoughts; cf. also the remarks by Schmidt (2005), 292.

of the pre-Hellenistic era.<sup>12</sup> Ptolemy I and his advisory staff probably then subjected the Osiris-Apis to a partial *interpretatio Graeca*. The specifically Memphite deity was, however, not given the name of any of the known Greek deities (such as Zeus), but Osiris-Apis received the name Serapis.<sup>13</sup> We see the deity for the first time with this name in the sources since the reign of Ptolemy I.<sup>14</sup> With the appellation Serapis, the god Osiris-Apis bore a Graecised Egyptian name, which was phonetically still recognisable as an originally Egyptian name for this deity.<sup>15</sup> The new name Serapis was in all likelihood promoted by the rulers, for only in this way can the spread of the form Serapis and not in the form Osorapis be explained throughout the *oikumene*.<sup>16</sup>

Yet the bilingual temple dedication plaques of the Serapieion in Alexandria document the equation of Osiris-Apis with Serapis.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the cult temple of Osiris-Apis in Memphis is described in the papyri as Serapieion, that is, as Temple of Serapis.<sup>18</sup> Naturally, the Serapis of Alexandria displayed other local characteristics than those of Serapis of Memphis or, for example, of Kanopos,<sup>19</sup> a peculiarity inher-

<sup>12</sup> Hölbl (1994), 93.

<sup>13</sup> Swiderek (1975), 674, based on Wilcken *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit*, 86–87. Bommas (2005), 25, thinks that the creation of the god can be traced to the Hellenomemphites living in Memphis, which is also possible.

<sup>14</sup> The oldest documentation for the god Serapis is a fragment from the writings of Menander (Körte, fr. 139), who died in 291 BC, cf. Fraser (1960), 2, n. 1; Weinreich (1931), 13–15; Vidman (1970), 31.

<sup>15</sup> Despite doubts in the research, I think Mussies' explanation is quite possible: that the initial sound O in the name OSerapis was felt to be the vocative case by the creators of Serapis (Mussies [1978]); Bommas is of the opinion that the O (*W*) in Osiris (*Wsjr*) could not drop out, that the name Serapis thus could not be a short form for OSerapis at all. However, the Egyptian personal name *Weser-maat-Ra*, which can be rendered in the Greek as *Zmanre*, shows that this is at least possible (Lüddeckens and Thissen [2000], 128 and 134). Bommas (2005), 25, in contrast, believes that the name Serapis should be understood etymologically as the translation of the expression "Apis proclaims (the oracle)" (*ser Apis*)—documentation, however, does not yet exist. Another possible but also controversial view is that the Greeks took the O to be an article, this was most recently the opinion of Quack (2001), see, however, the contrasting opinion of Wilcken *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit*, 86.

<sup>16</sup> In this case, Wilcken *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit*, 87, seems the most convincing to me.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Tod (1942); Grimm (1998), 84–85; see also the Roman Demotic-Greek dedication to Serapis: Vleeming (2001), No. 260, and the notice of the "great temple of Osiris-Apis which is in Rhakotis": Ray (1976), No. 3, verso 18–20.

<sup>18</sup> Borgeaud and Volokhine (2000), 71–72; Bommas is of a different opinion (2005), 24.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. most recently Kiss (2004).

ent in most Egyptian deities. That also explains why the deity retained the old name Osorapis especially in the Memphite Serapieion, there where the cult of the deceased Apis bull held pride of place.<sup>20</sup>

A 'simple' *interpretatio Graeca* of the Egyptian god, that is, equating it with a Greek deity, was not possible, however, and most certainly was not what the founder of the cult in Alexandria, Ptolemy I, wanted. For Serapis, established as the kingdom's god,<sup>21</sup> was to unite in its nature many more basic functions than any other Greek deity could offer. Among these were its specifically Egyptian features: presumably primarily the success and good fortune guaranteed by the Apis and perhaps also the possible convergence of the king with Ptah accomplished in completion of the ritual during the feast. Serapis could also have assumed from Apis the task as oracle deity.<sup>22</sup> In addition, however, power over the underworld and the guarantee of fertility for the land embodied by the pan-Egyptian God Osiris were of unusual significance.

Despite the emphasis on the Apis aspect in the name, the Osiris element of the deity in public and private *perception* of the cult clearly played the leading role.<sup>23</sup> For Egyptians, Serapis was often nothing other than an *interpretatio Graeca* of Osiris. Thus they were able to render the Greek personal name Sarapion in the Egyptian form with 'The son of Osiris'.<sup>24</sup> How close Osiris and Serapis were in the Egyptian imagination can be demonstrated as well by a bilingual dedication. In Greek, the inscription reads: "To Serapis, the great god, Paniskos, son of Sarapion." The Demotic 'translation' reads: "Koptite Osiris, Foremost of the Gold House, gives life to Pamin, son of Pa-she-Usir".<sup>25</sup> The Egyptian Pamin/Paniskos thus viewed Serapis as an *interpretatio Graeca* for Osiris of Koptos, just as he rendered his theophoric name "He of Min" in the Greek with "He who is consecrated to Pan". But he not only translated the name Osiris as the recipient of the donation with the name Serapis but chose for the equivalent of his patronymic

<sup>20</sup> See UPZ I 19,3 (163 BC); 54,22 (161 BC); 57,7 (164–161 BC); 106,10–11 (99 BC); 107,12 (99 BC); 108,10 and 22 (99 BC); a temple of Serapis in Oxyrhynchos/Fayyum would be called Osorapieion as late as the 3rd century AD: PSI X 1128,22.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Fraser (1972), I, 227 and 263.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Bommas (2005), 25.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Stambaugh (1972), 37.

<sup>24</sup> Lüddeckens and Thissen (2000), 232. However, the name could also simply be a consonant transfer into Demotic (*ibid.*, 933).

<sup>25</sup> Vleeming (2001), No. 250 A and B.

“Child of Osiris” the Greek form Sarapion.<sup>26</sup> Other documents show, however, that Osiris and Serapis were to be viewed as two distinct deities. Thus they could occur side by side in dedications.<sup>27</sup> Serapis is normally to be viewed as a deity all his own.

If we look at the Greek view of the deity, it can be said that, with this deity, aspects of the father god and saviour god Zeus and the underworld god Pluto were also merged with aspects of the fertility god Dionysos and the healing god Asklepios.<sup>28</sup> The perception of Serapis as a Greek deity occurred, however, only among the Egyptians, who were never able to become reconciled with worshipping him. For Greeks—and, later, Romans—the god was an Egyptian god: the consort of Isis.

### *Cult for the Deity*

The cult for Serapis forged Greek and Egyptian elements into something new which appealed especially to the non-Egyptian subjects of the kingdom but also to the subjects of other Diadochi states.<sup>29</sup> Primarily the appearance of the god was Greek; possibly the cult statue created by Bryaxis was to become the model: a statue depicting a seated man with a beard (as a mark of the father deity), wearing the *kalathos* on his head (as a mark of the fertility deity), with the three-headed dog Cerberus seated at his side, the guardian of the underworld (to indicate the underworld deity).<sup>30</sup> In addition, significant elements of the tradition of Greek Mysteries appear to have been incorporated into the cult rituals.<sup>31</sup> The annual replacement of the temple priests in many

<sup>26</sup> On the identification of both gods in the Osiris sanctuary of Abydos, cf. *SB* I 169; I 1046; I 1053–1059; I 3731; 3742; I 3750/52; I 3776; Stambaugh (1972), 37–38; Fraser (1960), 6, n. 6; cf. also the grave stele Bernard (1992), No. 92, where Osiris is identified with Serapis.

<sup>27</sup> Stambaugh (1972), 50–51; see, for example, Vidman (1969), No. 3132–3133, from Mysia: “Serapis, Isis, Anubis, Harpokrates, Osiris, Apis, Helios”; see also OGIS I 97,4–7, which Fraser (1972), 253, translates as “Osoros who is also Serapis”. I do not think it is possible to translate the Greek conjunction “te kai” as an equivalent of “ho kai” and would prefer to translate “Osoros and Serapis”.

<sup>28</sup> Stambaugh (1972).

<sup>29</sup> Huss (2001), 245–247; Fraser (1960), 19: “I would suggest that, in creating Serapis, Ptolemy did not have the Egyptian population in his mind at all, but aimed at giving the Greek population of Egypt ... a patron deity.”

<sup>30</sup> See Hornbostel (1973); Schmidt (2005), who rejects a creation by Bryaxis.

<sup>31</sup> Bommas (2005), 31, even assumes that the cult for Serapis was wholly Greek, which I think goes too far.

cult sites outside Egypt can also be traced back to Greek influence.<sup>32</sup> The existence of the temple servant office of a *neokoros* could also indicate a strong Greek influence.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, many typically Egyptian priestly titles are represented in the Serapis cult, for example, the prophets, *stolistai* (responsible for clothing the deity), chanters and *pastophorai* (bearers of the deity's dwelling during processions).<sup>34</sup> The Egyptian element in the deity's appearance is indicated by the *atef* crown in some depictions, a crown the bearded god can be seen to wear on coins since the time of Ptolemy II.<sup>35</sup> But the cult and festival trappings associated with the deity likely assumed Egyptian forms of expression as well.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, the Serapis priesthood seems to have been subject to an Egyptian training. For example, a sacred law from Priene has been preserved from the end of the third century BC according to which only Egyptians were allowed to perform cult proceedings for Isis, Serapis and Anubis.<sup>37</sup> On Delos as well, initially only Egyptians, descendants of a Memphite immigrant, practiced as priests of the deity.<sup>38</sup> And, finally, the union of Greek and Egyptian elements can be found most significantly in the Serapieion in Alexandria, which was a Greek temple, but which contained a Nilometer and the subterranean galleries emulated from the Memphite Serapieion.<sup>39</sup>

The amalgam of Greek and Egyptian cult forms arising in such a manner are repeated even in the legend of the founding of the cult, handed down to us in greatest detail by Plutarch and Tacitus.<sup>40</sup> They report that Serapis appeared twice to Ptolemy I in a dream. According to the story, the deity had given the king the task of bringing his statue located in Sinope on the Black Sea to Alexandria.<sup>41</sup> The god was worshipped in Sinope under the name Pluto. The king learned that the

<sup>32</sup> Vidman (1970), 37: "In the beginnings of the cult, there were, in contrast, often many hereditary lifelong priestly offices"; *ibid.*, 48.

<sup>33</sup> Vidman (1970), 53–60.

<sup>34</sup> Otto (1905), I, p. 115; Vidman (1970), 60–65.

<sup>35</sup> Castiglione (1978), 208–232, pl. XIX–XXVII.

<sup>36</sup> Kessler (2000), 208–211; Wilcken *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit*, 92–95, is still important; he supposes it to have been an amalgam of Greek and Egyptian cult forms; Borgeaud and Volokhine (2000), 75–76, emphasise the strong Egyptian or Memphite relation to the Serapis cult.

<sup>37</sup> Vidman (1969), No. 291.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Engelmann (1975); Vidman (1970), 35–36; Fraser (1972), 254.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. McKenzie et al. (2004), 111.

<sup>40</sup> Tacitus, *Annales* IV, 83–84; Plutarch, *de Iside* 28; cf. Fauth (1976); Scheer (2000), 260–266.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. most recently Borgeaud and Volokhine (2000), 38–46.

statue was of Serapis after advice by the Egyptian priest Manetho and the Athenian Timotheus, who was descended from the priestly caste of the Eumolpidae that conducted the Eleusinian Mysteries. Whereupon Ptolemy had the statue brought to his new capital city and had a new cult site erected where an ancient Serapis and Isis sanctuary had stood. The god had therefore already existed; only his appearance in the form of the statue was new. Ptolemy's support handed down in this manner through the Greek Mysteries expert Timotheus and the Egyptian priest Manetho may be considered as a reaction to the efforts of the king to create a cult which united the tradition of the Greek Mysteries with the Egyptian cult of the gods.

### *Serapis and the Greek Subjects*

The earliest Greek inscriptions transmitted from Alexandria are dedications to Serapis and Isis.<sup>42</sup> For example, the following statue dedication was found in the Alexandrian Serapicium, dating from the time of Ptolemy I:

Delok[les had it (i.e. the statue) m]ade. Aristodemos, son of Dio[.]os, Athenian, had it (dedicated) to Serapis and to Isis.<sup>43</sup>

It is most probable that the benefactor belonged to the *classe supérieure*,<sup>44</sup> so that the inscription may be considered as documentation for the influence of the new cult on the ruling elite.<sup>45</sup> During the reign of Ptolemy II as well, there were two Alexandrian dedications to Serapis. One is addressed solely to the deity,<sup>46</sup> the second concerns the endowment of a sacred precinct for Serapis and his cult companion Isis:

On behalf of King Ptolemy, son of Ptolemy and Berenike, the saviours, Archagathos, son of Agathokles, the overseer of the (nome [district])

<sup>42</sup> Bernand (2001), Nos. 1 and 2.

<sup>43</sup> Bernand (2001), No. 2; incorrectly cited by Borgeaud and Volokhine (2000), 58, n. 92, as the dedication of an altar.

<sup>44</sup> Bernand (2001), 18.

<sup>45</sup> Even the Fayyum yielded a dedication to Serapis and Isis, established by a Thessalonian soldier called Aristophanes, son of Aristophanes. The stone is dated to the end of the 4th century BC (SB I 2596 = SEG XVIII 657 = XXIV 1207; for the dating, see Launey (1987), 216, n. 1).

<sup>46</sup> See Bernand (2001), No. 4. Some date the inscription to the rule of Ptolemy I; see Borgeaud and Volokhine (2000), 58, n. 92, with additional literature.

Libya and his wife Stratonike, (have dedicated) the *temenos* [precinct] to Serapis and Isis.<sup>47</sup>

It is not surprising that the endowment of the *temenos* occurred for the health and good fortune of the ruler, as Greeks often linked dedications to deities with the hope for the protection and the health of the king. Serapis especially was doubtless popular in this respect because of his healing function as the guaranteeing deity. The dedication clearly shows that the cult for Serapis had already been taken up by the Greek elite during the reign of Ptolemy II and that the Greeks not only worshipped the deity with a cult but even erected a sacred precinct for the god out of their own pockets.

It is remarkable, however, that, in the present case, a sacred precinct was provided for by private citizens for Serapis as well as for Isis. In fact, no documentation exists showing that the royal dynasty founded a temple at any time for both deities *together*.<sup>48</sup> The great Alexandrian Serapieion, for example, was a temple dedicated to Serapis alone but one where naturally other deities—primarily Isis and Harpokrates—were worshipped in side chapels. The king viewed Serapis primarily as an independent deity perhaps because he wished to emphasise the Apis aspect of the god.<sup>49</sup> The Greek subjects, in contrast, seem to have viewed the new deity primarily as an *interpretatio Graeca* of the pan-Egyptian Osiris. When they spoke of Serapis, they were not thinking principally of Apis but of Osiris, the god of the underworld and of fertility who almost always appeared together with his cult companion and consort Isis. The popular union of the two deities also found its way into the official King's Oaths, which have been known in the Greek and Egyptian languages since the time of Ptolemy III.<sup>50</sup> They read as follows:

I swear by King Ptolemy, son of King Ptolemy and Arsinoe, the sibling gods, and by Queen Berenike, the sister and consort of the king, and by the sibling gods and the saviour gods, by their ancestors and by Isis and Serapis.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Bernand (2001), No. 5; cf. Bagnall (1976).

<sup>48</sup> Fraser (1960), 4–5: "Possibly, therefore, the association of the two in Egypt was due rather to popular ideas than to official encouragement."

<sup>49</sup> There was a separate cult for the mother of Apis, the Isis cow, at the Serapieion as well; see Thompson (1988), 194.

<sup>50</sup> Wilcken *Urkunden der Ptolemäerzeit*, 84; Minas (2000), 167; a compilation of the oaths can be found in the latter, p. 168, n. 643.

<sup>51</sup> P.Eleph. 23,8–12; P.Tebt. III 1, 815, col. IV 21–23; cf. Minas (2000), 165; 163–171.

Thus it is clear that Serapis and Isis, besides the reigning divine royal pair and their ancestors, had become the most important gods of the Ptolemaic kingdom, on whom oaths were taken. The ruling divine pair on earth had thus found its counterpart in the cosmic divine pair Isis and Serapis.<sup>52</sup> In addition, the placement of Serapis and Isis alongside the royal pair could point out that the cult for these gods was closely tied to the cult for the other and thus also supported the identification with the Ptolemaic kingdom and the royal dynasty.

### *Zoilos and his Dream of Serapis*

The following illustrates how Greeks during the reign of Ptolemy II actively attempted to participate in spreading the Serapis cult. A petition from 257 BC to Apollonios, the "Finance Minister" (*dioiketes*) of Ptolemy II, was submitted by a Greek named Zoilos from Aspendos in Pamphylia (Asia Minor).<sup>53</sup> At that time, the area belonged to the Ptolemaic kingdom. Zoilos wrote that as he "was worshipping the god Serapis for your good health (*hugieia*) and your success (*euhermeria*) by the King Ptolemy (II), it happened that Serapis [enjoined] to me several times in my dreams to sail to visit you and [tell you about] this injunction: a [temple]<sup>54</sup> must be built for him together with a precinct (*temenos*) in the Greek quarter near the harbour, and a priest must preside over the sacrifices and the cult on your behalf."

Serapis appeared to the Greek as an oracle deity in a dream after the Greek had prayed to the deity, evidently in private, for the good health of Apollonios and his success with the king. In this manner Zoilos placed the establishment of the cult and the temple in connection with the well-being of Apollonios. If the temple were erected, then Apollonios as well would continue to stand in the good graces of the king and remain healthy.

The sacrifices in the projected temple were to be made then for Serapis, but "on behalf of Apollonios". This wording is extremely unusual. Normally sacrifices were made to the respective deities in the

<sup>52</sup> Stambaugh (1972), 32–33, dedicated to Serapis and Isis as "cosmic counterpart for the man and woman on the throne of Alexandria".

<sup>53</sup> Hölbl's statements demonstrate that this letter counts among the most commented of the Zenon Archives (Hölbl (1993), 29, with literature on the letter in n. 113).

<sup>54</sup> I think that 'altar' as a possible reconstruction is less probable, as a *temenos* must normally have a *naos*.

temples, frequently “on behalf of the king”.<sup>55</sup> It is also known from other Ptolemaic documents that sacrifices dedicated to gods were made in favour of functionaries<sup>56</sup>—but, as far as I know, these sacrifices did not occur in a temple. In the present case, the *dioiketes* of the king had assumed a royal position in the temple. From that alone, it can be seen how much the petitioner acting as the endower of a cult wished to influence Apollonios in his own favour.

Zoilos twice refused to grant the deity the wish expressed in the dream, for which he was struck with grave illness. He finally wrote this letter in which he described the whole story to the Finance Minister, and he closed the letter by returning to the essence of his prayer:

It is therefore right, Apollonios, for you to follow the god’s commands so that Serapis may be merciful to you and may greatly increase your standing with the king and your prestige (*poludoxoteron*), and make you enjoy good bodily health. Do not therefore fear that the expense will prove to be great, for it will be very profitable; I shall jointly supervise all these works. Farewell.<sup>57</sup>

The petitioner thus set the second most important man in the Ptolemaic kingdom under pressure: If Apollonios made constructing the temple possible, then one could pray for his welfare—this was, according to the information of the dream oracle, guaranteed solely by the founding of the cult for Serapis in the city concerned.<sup>58</sup> In addition, Zoilos indirectly pointed out that the endowment was to be entirely according to the wishes of the king, as the financing by Apollonios would also raise his prestige (*doxa*). The costs incurred from the construction were admittedly rather high, but they would be nothing in comparison to the health of Apollonios and his success with the king, all of which may be implied from the statement “it will be very profitable”.

Thus, since the reign of Ptolemy II, not only dedications to Serapis can be documented in union with Isis, but even temple endowments or attempts at private temple endowments for the god by Greeks. The new

<sup>55</sup> Cf., for example, IG Fayoum II 118,11–13.

<sup>56</sup> Cf., for example, the endowment (on behalf of) the Epistrategos Boethos OGIS I 111.

<sup>57</sup> P.Cair. Zen. I 59034 with the reconstructions according to Clarysse and Vandorpe (1995), 78.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Clarysse and Vandorpe (1995), 85: le culte “reste fondé sur le principe primitif du do ut des: érige un temple et tu obtiendras la faveur du roi; sinon, tu seras frappé de maladie”.

cult had, as can be seen, found its devotees especially among the Greeks and obviously enjoyed certain popularity. It was particularly in those possessions outside Egypt that the Graeco-Egyptian hybrid cult may have, in addition, supported identification with Egypt and its Ptolemaic ruling power. Whoever performed the Serapis cult, that is, a cult with Greek and Egyptian elements, identified himself with the power and rule of the Ptolemies, who also sought to unite Greek with Egyptian elements in their official representation.

*Ptolemy II and the Beginnings of the Ruler Cult*

Ptolemy II went one step further than his father, who had the cult created for Serapis and ultimately also the Greek form of the Egyptian god. Whereas his father had been interested in using the Serapis cult to strengthen his royal power especially with his non-Egyptian subjects, his son recognised the possibilities of being deified as a living ruler by grateful subjects and the thus inherent possibilities of creating a religious bond for the various ethnic groups of his kingdom. In certain circles, Ptolemy I had already been worshipped as saviour, indeed even as a deity.<sup>59</sup> Ptolemy II then had his deceased parents officially deified as gods of the Ptolemaic kingdom.<sup>60</sup> In 272/271 BC, he had himself and his consort Arsinoe II associated with the cult for Alexander the Great under the name "sibling gods" (*theoi adelphoi*).<sup>61</sup> With this act, he created an official ruler cult with the purpose of better propagating it through association with the cult for Alexander the Great. The Alexander priest residing in Alexandria, by whom the respective records were dated, had then become a priest of the sibling gods as well. In this manner, the second Ptolemy pair became gods sharing the temple of Alexander. As the Alexander priest must be named in the dating prescript of every Greek and Demotic record, the subjects were reminded daily of the divinity of the ruler. The new cult demonstrated its autonomy and independence from the Alexander cult in that Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II received their own sacred precinct (*temenos*) in Alexandria.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Habicht (1970), 109–110.

<sup>60</sup> Hölbl (1994), 87.

<sup>61</sup> Huss (2001), 325; cf. P.Hib. II 199,15–17; on the latter, see Hauben (1983), 113, n. 57; Fraser (1972), I, 216.

<sup>62</sup> Herodas I 30; see Fraser (1972), I, 228; Grimm (1998), 73.

The sister consort of Ptolemy II, Arsinoe II, played an exceptional role in this new ruler cult.<sup>63</sup> Ptolemy had already scandalised the Greek world when he married his own sister. Those who scoffed at the incest between king and queen, as did the poet Sotades, had to pay with their lives for their mockery. The court poets, however, compared the sibling marriage with the *hieros gamos* of Zeus and Hera.<sup>64</sup> Even during her lifetime, the queen was worshipped under the invocation 'the brother loving' (*philadelphos*).<sup>65</sup> She had probably already been the object of a cult by this time as Arsinoe-Philadelphos. Even during her lifetime,<sup>66</sup> Arsinoe had received her own temple at the Cape of Zephyrion and, there, became the patron goddess of seafaring as the Cypriot Aphrodite-Arsinoe. Outside Egypt, the cult for Arsinoe II was also to achieve great significance; even towns were named after Arsinoe.<sup>67</sup>

According to the Mendes Stele inscription written in hieroglyphics, Arsinoe's consort elevated her after her death to the temple-sharing goddess of all Egyptian temples.<sup>68</sup> An Egyptian goddess had now emerged from the Greek goddess Arsinoe, appearing in a completely Egyptian form on the temple reliefs and votive steles.<sup>69</sup> In Memphis in particular, within the sphere of influence of the high priests of Ptah and of the Serapiclion, the Egyptian cult for the new goddess was accorded great significance.<sup>70</sup> It even seems that she received the honour of temple-sharing not only in the realm of the Egyptian cult but that Arsinoe was also able to become the temple-sharing goddess in the Greek sanctuaries. At least this is suggested in a papyrus from the end of the third century BC. We meet there a "priest of Arsinoe and of Zeus Kasios".<sup>71</sup> It is probable that the priest in the temple of Zeus Kasios in Pelusion performed duties where Arsinoe was worshipped as a temple-sharing goddess.<sup>72</sup> It is also important to point out that Arsinoe was identified not only with the Greek Aphrodite<sup>73</sup> but also

<sup>63</sup> Basic information: Hölbl (1994), 94–98.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Grimm (1998), 70.

<sup>65</sup> According to Fraser (1972), 217; cf. Theokrit XVII 128–130.

<sup>66</sup> Hauben (1970), 42–46.

<sup>67</sup> Compiled in Hölbl (1994), 391 [Register 2].

<sup>68</sup> Mendes Stele, Z. 13–14; Sethe (1904), 41.

<sup>69</sup> Quaegebeur 'Arsinoe Philadelphos at Memphis', 239–270; Quaegebeur 'Ptolémée II en adoration', 191–217; Albersmeier and Minas (1998).

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Crawford (1980), 23–31.

<sup>71</sup> P.Heid. VI 378,3–4.

<sup>72</sup> Duttonhöfer (1994), 120.

<sup>73</sup> Tondriau (1948), 16–18.

with the Egyptian counterpart Isis—and not simply by Egyptians<sup>74</sup> but also by Greeks.<sup>75</sup>

*The Merging of the Ruler and Serapis Cult and its Spread*

Research is divided on whether a temple for the dynasty god had existed before Ptolemy III erected the great Serapieion in the Alexandrian district of Rhakotis,<sup>76</sup> but it is very probable that Ptolemy I had already had a sanctuary for Serapis erected on the same spot.<sup>77</sup> In fact, floors of polished gravel were found under the Serapieion built by Ptolemy III, floors presumably belonging to a preceding structure—an older *temenos* for Serapis.<sup>78</sup> On one of these floors, a Greek altar was found still showing painted garlands and cyma and bearing the dedication inscription “(Altar) of King Ptolemy and Arsinoe Philadelphos, (descendants) of the saviour gods”.<sup>79</sup> The ruler cult for Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II was thus evidently performed in the *temenos*, next to the sanctuary.<sup>80</sup>

As Ptolemy and Arsinoe do not appear on the altar under the cult name *theoi philadelphoi*, a *terminus ante quem* of 272/271 is highly likely because the ruling couple appeared under this cult name after that time. The fact that it was placed in the Serapieion erected, in all likelihood, by Ptolemy I suggests that the altar was a site for the official cult of the ruling pair. A *terminus post quem* for the place of sacrifice would be the year Berenike I, the consort of Ptolemy I, died, for both had been worshipped under the name of ‘saviour gods’ after that time, i.e., since 279 BC. Arsinoe, who came to Egypt around 279 BC, was the consort of Ptolemy II in 274 BC, at the latest. Thus the altar was probably erected between 279/274 BC and 272/271 BC.<sup>81</sup> For the official ruler

<sup>74</sup> Sethe (1904), 80,10; Quaegebeur ‘Arsinoe Philadelphos at Memphis’, 242; 246–248.

<sup>75</sup> Thompson (1973), 67; 70; 74.

<sup>76</sup> For example, Tkaczow (1984), 14.

<sup>77</sup> Hölbl (1994), 93–94; Kessler (2000), 192–194; Grimm (1998), 82.

<sup>78</sup> It has not yet been resolved to what extent this structure is identical with the “Serapeum of Parmeniskos” in Alexandria, built in the era of Ptolemy II mentioned in the Zenon Archive (P.Cair. Zenon 59355,103; 128; 243 BC); Fraser (1967), 39, and Hölbl (1993), 28–29 are opposed; Dunand (1973), 56, thinks it possible.

<sup>79</sup> Bernand (2001), No. 8; Grimm (1983), 70–73.

<sup>80</sup> Fraser (1960), 18; Grimm (1983), 72.

<sup>81</sup> See Grimm (1983), 72–73. He thinks that the mention of the *theoi Adelphoi* is not

cult, this meant that it had, in all probability, existed before the introduction of the name 'sibling gods' for the ruling pair and, in any case, already during the lifetime of Arsinoe. In addition, it can be demonstrated that here, directly at the beginning of the new official ruler cult, it was unified as a cult with the Serapis cult, for, if an altar stood in the Serapieion where sacrifice was offered for the royal pair, it meant that the ruling couple counted among the *synnaoi theoi* of Serapis. In the period following, (colossal) statues of the Ptolemies stood next to those of Serapis in the Serapis temple in Alexandria, as is documented, for example, for Ptolemy III. Thus the successor pair also had themselves elevated to the temple-sharing gods of Serapis.<sup>82</sup> Fragments of statues were also found of which one head could be attributed to Ptolemy IV and one to Arsinoe III.<sup>83</sup> With a third head, that of Serapis, they had formed a larger-than-life acrolithic statue group.<sup>84</sup>

As early as the era of Ptolemy II, the officially instituted ruler cult had frequently been organised by cult associations, so-called *basilistai*. As can be seen in the Boethos inscription from the second century BC, these organisations were under the leadership of high-ranking military officers and administrative functionaries.<sup>85</sup> It can be assumed that the cult associations were organised especially within the military. They offered military personnel from the diverse ethnic groups of southeastern Europe and the Near East an opportunity for religious worship of the ruler transcending cultural and religious strictures, a network of social security and, what was surely very important, also the opportunity of celebrating festivals together. Under the leadership of a certain Diokles, such a *ruler-cult-association* of the Ptolemaic military garrison on the Cyclades island of Thera endowed an offering box or temple repository (*thesauros*) at the local temple of Serapis, Isis and

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necessary, because he supposes that the above-mentioned *temenos* of the *theoi Adelphoi* was in the Serapieion and the same place where the altar was erected. Just as Fraser (1972), II, 386, n. 367, I think this is not likely: "I do not believe that this small and insignificant *temenos* is the *theón Adelfôn temenos* referred to by Herodas in line 26 (...). If it were, that passage would necessarily have been written before Euergetes' Serapeum was built, and the sanctuary demolished. His reference is no doubt to the main shrine of the *Theoi Adelphoi*, wherever that was."

<sup>82</sup> P.Haun 6, Fgt. 1, Z. 21; for this, cf. Habicht (1980), 4–5.

<sup>83</sup> Grimm (1998), 86–87, fig. 85a and 85c.

<sup>84</sup> Kyrieleis (1979), 386–387, who points out, however, that it could not have been cult images, as the cult image of Serapis looked different; see also Grimm and Wildung (1987), Nos. 113–114.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Pfeiffer (2005).

Anubis.<sup>86</sup> The pronounced Egyptian character of the cult site can be found not only in the juxtaposition of Isis to Serapis but primarily because the dog-headed god Anubis, as is often the case, also shares the temple with Serapis.<sup>87</sup> The inscription in question can likely be dated to the time of Ptolemy II; the temple itself was founded on the island perhaps as early as Ptolemy I.<sup>88</sup> I think this suggests that the *basilistai* not only organised the endowment at the temple but also performed the rituals of the ruler cult at the temple, possibly in the temple itself. No doubt an altar stood here for the rulers, just as in the Alexandrian Serapieion. Bommas even thinks that two of the four existing cult niches in the sanctuary were reserved for the statues of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II.<sup>89</sup> The merging of the cult for Serapis with the ruler cult organised by the association might, in any case, have been oriented towards the official model of Alexandria. Apart from that, a dedication to Arsinoe Philadelphos ascribed to the same sanctuary demonstrates the degree to which the cult for Serapis was associated with the ruler cult on the island.<sup>90</sup>

The private endowment of a sanctuary in Halikarnassos also illustrates the close ties of the ruler cult and Serapis cult outside Egyptian territory of the Ptolemaic kingdom.<sup>91</sup> The inscription reads:

Good Fortune! On behalf of Ptolemy, son of Ptolemy the saviour and the god [—], to Serapis, Isis, Arsinoe Philadelphos (or: Isis-Arsinoe Philadelphos), has NN, son of Chairemon, [the templebuilder?], dedicated the temple.

The god of the Ptolemies, Serapis, is united not only with his consort Isis in the cult but also with the goddess Arsinoe. As has been mentioned above, an assimilation of Arsinoe Philadelphos with the Egyptian goddess Isis frequently occurred. Thus the temple in Halikarnassos, as Brady rightly assumes, could have been dedicated to the goddess Isis-Arsinoe as cult companion of Serapis.<sup>92</sup> One can hardly imagine a more explicit relationship of the Serapis cult and the ruler cult.

<sup>86</sup> IG XII 3,443 = Vidmann (1969), Nr. 137; Bagnall (1976), 129; on the significance of the *Thesaurus*, cf. Fraser (1960), 24.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Fraser (1960), 6.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Gaertringen (1899), I, 264.

<sup>89</sup> Bommas (2005), 44; one wonders, however, where Anubis would have been put.

<sup>90</sup> IG XII 3,462 = OGIS I 34.

<sup>91</sup> Vidmann (1969), No. 270. Cf. the remarks by Fraser (1960), 34. The dating by Mayr (2004), 28, to the time of Ptolemy I has been obsolete for a long time.

<sup>92</sup> Brady (1978), 13; cf. OGIS I 31.

In summary, it can be said of the Greek Alexandria and the Ptolemaic possessions outside Egypt that an extremely close relationship existed between the Serapis cult and the ruler cult and that both cults were actively practiced and organised by private groups, whether by soldiers, as in Thera, or by urban civil servants, as in Halikarnassos. It can be assumed that the Alexandrian Serapieion, with its official relationship of Serapis cult and the ruler cult, had adopted a role model function for this merging in the Greek world. As can be observed, Ptolemy II had recognised the popularity of the Serapis cult among his Greek subjects and hoped for a greater propagation of the ruler cult through the ties to the Serapis cult. He was evidently successful, as the cited private endowments involving Serapis demonstrate.

*The Serapis Cult in the Chora—the Exceptional Case of Philadelphia*

From Apollonios, the Finance Minister of Ptolemy II named above, a not insignificant part of the correspondence between the most important man after the king and his administrator Zenon has been transmitted through the so-called Zenon Archive. The letter of Zoilos cited above is ascribed to this collection of writings. Fraser is, of course, correct when he writes that Serapis was barely mentioned in the archive,<sup>93</sup> but what we learn from the archive about the Serapis cult and its relationship to the ruler cult is quite interesting.

Apollonios was responsible for the planning of the village of Philadelphia, located in the northeast of the Fayyum, in the Herakleides district. The village originated from one of the military colonies set up by Ptolemy II and was laid out on the pattern of a chessboard. It was thus a new founding in the Greek sense, designed essentially for the soldiers of Ptolemy's army.<sup>94</sup> The name Philadelphia itself demonstrates the close ties of the founder to the royal house, for it was the cult epithet of the Queen Arsinoe II. A letter concerning Philadelphia by Apollonios from 256 BC<sup>95</sup> to his administrator Zenon has been transmitted as follows:

<sup>93</sup> Fraser (1960), 8; on the namings of Serapis in the Zenon Archive, see Borgeaud and Volokhine (2000), 59, n. 92.

<sup>94</sup> On the settlement of the new founding, see Clarysse (1980), 105–122.

<sup>95</sup> On the dating, see Pestman (1981), I, 103.

Apollonios sends greetings to Zenon. [You should command] a Ser[apis temple (Serapieion)] to be built at the Temple of Isis (Isieion), located [beside the Temple of the] Dioscuri and as far as the measured-off building site for [the sibling gods/the rulers]. See to it that only one *dr[omos]* (passageway) leads [to both] sanctuaries along the side of the canal. Farewell!<sup>96</sup>

The letter indicates that the highest authorities endeavoured to promote the Serapis cult in the *chora* (countryside) as well by having a sanctuary for Serapis erected. The common use of the *dromos* mentioned here was possible at the site because the sanctuaries were located opposite each other to the extent that they were joined by the passageway for cult processions.<sup>97</sup> According to Hölbl, the Serapieion precinct in Memphis served as a model.<sup>98</sup> There, the east temple from the period of Nectanabo II was also linked with the temple of Osiris-Apis by a straight *dromos* which was later also copied at the site of the Isis-Serapis sanctuary on Delos and the Iseum Campense (Isis Temple on the Field of Mars) in Rome.<sup>99</sup> The Isis and Serapis temples were separated physically from each other but united in the cult processions of public festivals by a *dromos*.

Just as on the island of Thera, there in the middle of Egypt, the Serapis cult was to offer chiefly the soldiers of Ptolemy's army, as already mentioned the majority of the Philadelphia inhabitants, a focal point for their religious needs. In addition, such a hybrid cult could facilitate identification with the new homeland in Egypt. The military colony Philadelphia represents one of the very few examples from the early Ptolemaic era for the Serapis cult in the *chora*. It is also one of the few examples of cult massively supported by the official authorities and also established principally for non-Egyptians. Otherwise, there is hardly any evidence for worship of Serapis in the early Ptolemaic era within Egypt; it appears isolated since in the second century BC.<sup>100</sup> One of the few early examples of the Serapis cult practiced by Egyptians comes from a village, not localised in more detail, named Temenus in Fayyum and also mentioned in the Zenon correspondence: the application by an Egyptian priest of Isis and Serapis named Phemennas, who made sacrifices for Isis and Arsinoe-

<sup>96</sup> PCair. Zen. II 59168 (= SB III 6806); cf. Hölbl (1993), 23.

<sup>97</sup> So already Wilcken 'Papyrus-Urkunden', 66; also Hölbl (1993), 23.

<sup>98</sup> Höbl (1993), 24.

<sup>99</sup> Bruneau (1980); Rouillet (1972), 30, fig. 349f. and 352.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Fraser (1960), 8.

Philadelphos on behalf of the king in his Iseion, that is, perhaps in a small private cult chapel.<sup>101</sup> The priest does not mention a sacrifice for Serapis because, in this particular case, the request was for donations for the Isis and Arsinoe sacrifice. Furthermore, because of the Egyptian authorship, an Egyptian cult may be assumed; Arsinoe-Philadelphos was thus worshipped here as an Egyptian goddess as she had been elevated by Ptolemy II to temple-sharing goddess of all Egyptian sanctuaries.<sup>102</sup> The Egyptian priest of Serapis and of Isis represents one of the few examples for the Egyptian Serapis-Isis cult in the *chora* which was furthermore as in Halikarnassos tied to the ruler cult. And this leads then to the question of the relationship of the ruler cult and the Serapis cult in the *chora*.

#### *The Ruler Cult in Philadelphia*

The importance of the papyrus on temple construction cited above is not only that a Serapis temple was to be newly built in Philadelphia but also that another building plot (*topos*) existed and was planned for the construction of a temple for the ruling pair. The text was reconstructed by the first editor with 'to the sibling gods'.<sup>103</sup> Wilcken, however, suggested the reconstruction 'to the kings' (*tois basileusin*), which is the same in content, as this reading also means Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II.<sup>104</sup> P.Cair. Zenon II 59169 also points to this projected temple of the rulers, a text which Tait reconstructed as follows:

Apollonios to Zenon, greetings. [Whenever] Antikritos [arrives, show him] both the [whole] village, and the site where we propose [to construct the temple] of the king and of (Queen) Phila[delphos, the Gods Adelphoi,] and the sacred-way, and the [sacred-grove (?). And show him] both the irrigation-basins and the [—of my estate;] and make it clear that we have only recently [begun] to establish [the village.] Farewell.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>101</sup> PSI V 539; cf. Hölbl (1993), 25; Dunand (1973), I, 137–138; Rübsam (1974), 192.

<sup>102</sup> Less probable is that Egyptian cult and Greek cult were celebrated next to each other in the chapel in question, as Dunand (1973), 166, n. 3, suggests.

<sup>103</sup> P. Edg. 91,3–4.

<sup>104</sup> Wilcken 'Papyrus-Urkunden', 66; cf. Edgar, in: P.Cair. Zen. II 59168 (p. 22, commentary): "It is possible that here too the place in question was the site selected for the cult of the sovereigns".

<sup>105</sup> Tait, in: Pestman (1980), No. 28; cf. Edgar, in: P.Cair. Zen. II 59168 (p. 23, commentary), cf. also Wilcken 'Papyrus-Urkunden', 66–67.

In Philadelphia, besides the temple for Serapis, Isis and the sibling gods, there was also a temple solely for Arsinoe, the eponymous goddess of the village.<sup>106</sup> It is known from an account of payments to workmen that around 255/254 BC a large canal was being built in Philadelphia which was to bring water to this Arsinoeion. This temple is also the topic of the following letter to Zenon:

To Zenon greetings from Peteërmotis, [known to (?)] you from the Serapieion. I petitioned you then about the temple of Arsinoe which is to be built in order that I might come here. So, if you agree, let me serve [under you] here—I am not alone, but have a family—so that I may offer prayers both for the king and [for your own well-being]. I have written to you so that no one else pushes in, but it is I who serves you. Farewell.<sup>107</sup>

In my opinion, the petition shows how closely the ruler cult was amalgamated with the cult for Serapis and what sort of person can be 'read between the lines' of this petition. Peteërmotis seems to have been, as Skeat observed, an employee of the Serapieion of Memphis.<sup>108</sup> This Egyptian saw himself as being able to perform a service, no matter what nature, in the Arsinoe temple in Philadelphia. This temple was still under construction at the time of the petition. Evidently the founder of the village and the Finance Minister of Ptolemy II had the authority to determine the appointment of the employees of the ruler cult temple; perhaps he was even the high priest of the sanctuary himself, for the Egyptian wanted 'to serve under him' or 'to be at his service', 'to be with him' (*huparchein para soi*).

A first, not transmitted petition was not enough for the petitioner to prevail in his application—in fact, he was worried that another could 'worm his way in'—so that he again pressured the *dioiketes* with the present petition to select him for service. He underlined his request by emphasising that he had a family (*oikeious*) whom he probably had to feed, and he argued further that he could also send up prayers for the welfare of the king and doubtless for Apollonios as well—Zoilos submitted a similar reason for his request (see above).

<sup>106</sup> Cf. P.Cair. Zen. II 59169,5 according to the reconstruction by Wilcken 'Papyrus-Urkunden', 280; and P.Cair. Zen. IV 59745,32.

<sup>107</sup> P.Lond. VII 2046; translation: Rowlandson (1998), 28, Doc. 28.

<sup>108</sup> Skeat (1974), 193; PSI V 531 documents Zenon's stay in the Serapeum in Memphis, where the priest of Astarte of Memphis presented him with a petition.

Unfortunately, we do not know what kind of temple of Arsinoe was in Philadelphia, whether it was a Greek or an Egyptian cult structure.<sup>109</sup> The fact that an Egyptian considered himself suited for service in the temple in question and that he emphasised his qualification as a cult servant of Serapis could point to an Egyptian or, as would be possible in the Serapieion in Alexandria, to a Graeco-Egyptian temple for the hybrid cult.

It can be said that the Serapis, Isis, ruler and Arsinoe cult in the Philadelphia military settlement was closely associated in its cult forms and that authorities wished to offer the non-Egyptians the demanded focal point for their religious needs.

### Summary

The fate of the living Apis bull was very closely tied to that of the Pharaoh; the Apis guaranteed the well-being of the king. All the Ptolemaic kings were to take special care of the royal animal's welfare. In its after-death form as Osiris-Apis, the god then entered into one of the most important cults of the kingdom, the cult of Serapis. Obviously Ptolemy I was interested in a relationship between Egyptian ideas of the Memphian royal god Apis, the pan-Egyptian underworld and fertility god Osiris and Greek father deities such as Zeus and Pluto as well as in the fertility and dynasty god Dionysos and the healing god Asklepios. As early as Ptolemy II, the new creation had been so well accepted by the Hellenistic subjects that they actively worked toward spreading the cult of the kingdom—as the four cited temple foundings document.<sup>110</sup> Serapis and Isis had become deities for identification with the motherland of the ruling power, especially in the possessions of the Ptolemaic kingdom outside Egypt. The cult offered the Greeks an inestimable medium for identifying with the kingdom and offered for the soldiers on Thera and doubtless in other places also a means of creating identity in a 'globalised' *oikumene*. The same is true for the ruler cult introduced by Ptolemy II, a cult, as has been demonstrated,

<sup>109</sup> It seems somewhat hastily judged when Skeat (1974), 193, writes about the Arsinoeion: "where the cult was no doubt Greek".

<sup>110</sup> A fifth founding by General Kallikrathes in honour of Isis and Anubis may be added; Fraser (1972), I, 270–272, thinks that they belong to the two named gods as *synnaoi theoi* of Serapis.

which had close ties to the Serapis and Isis cult. Just as had been done probably by officials in the Serapieion in Alexandria, the merging of the ruler cult with the Serapis cult initiated by Ptolemy II was to serve as a model even for the ruler cult instituted privately and by organisations. With the aid of the popular Serapis religion, the new ruler cult could be spread among the 'Greeks' in the kingdom—the examples of the military from Thera and Philadelphia and the example of urban Halikarnossos as well as the petition of Zoilos document this. The merging of the Isis-Serapis cult to the ruler cult was manifested then beginning with Ptolemy III in the oaths to the king as well. Double dedications continued as well for Isis, Serapis and the ruling pair.<sup>111</sup> In addition, Demotic statutes from cult cooperatives have been transmitted from the later Ptolemaic era, in which it is reported that sacrifices for the Pharaohs, Serapis, Isis and all the gods of Egypt had been made.<sup>112</sup> Thus the deified living ruling pair along with Serapis and Isis, their 'cosmic' counterparts, played an exceptional role as the most important deities of the kingdom in the lives of their subjects, as they were present everywhere.

<sup>111</sup> SB I 585 (for Serapis, Isis, the Nile, Ptolemy III and Berenike II); 586 (for Serapis, Isis, Ptolemy III and Berenike II); 631a (for Ptolemy VIII, Cleopatra III, their children, Isis and Serapis); OGIS I 62 (for Ptolemy III, Berenike II, Isis, Serapis and Harpokrates); 63 (for Serapis, Ptolemy III and Berenike II); 82 (for Ptolemy IV, Arsinoe III, Serapis and Isis); Bernand (1970), 235–236, No. 6.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. P.dem.Prag. Z. 5–6; P.dem.Cairo 31178,4–5; cf. De Cenival (1972).