Cleopatra III's Marriage with Ptolemy VIII and the Start of her Queenship:

Notes on Some Greek and Demotic Sources

The date and circumstances of Ptolemy VIII's marriage with his niece and step-daughter Cleopatra III occasioned much brain-racking in the past. Nowadays, most scholars follow Pestman in regarding 8 May 141 BC (year 29, 14 Pharmouthi) as the *terminus post quem* and 14 January 140 BC (year 30, 20 Choiak) as the *terminus ante quem* for this event[1]. The first date is based on *P. dem. Berlin* 3113 (*TM* 3639)[2], where Cleopatra III according to Pestman appears as "the woman Euergetis" (*t3 sḥm.t mnḫ.t*) but without the designation "wife" or "queen". His view is challenged by Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo, who assume that the scribe made a mistake and propose to read[3]:

> *ḥ3.t-sp 29 ibd 4 pr.t sw 14 Pr-ʿ3 Ptlwmys p3 mnḫ s3 Ptlwmys irm {t3 Pr-ʿ3.t} Glwptr irm <t3 Pr-ʿ3.t> Glwptr t3 sḥm.t mnḫ.t*
>
> "Year 29, 4th month of the *pr.t*-season (= Pharmouthi), day 14, of King Ptolemy the Benefactor, son of Ptolemy and {the Queen} Cleopatra, and <the Queen> Cleopatra, the Beneficent woman".

Their reconstruction implies that only Cleopatra II was mentioned in the dating formula[4]. Whatever the correct explanation, the conclusion remains the same: on 8 May 141 BC Cleopatra III was neither designated as the king's wife nor as queen.

Cleopatra III appears for the first time as "wife" of Ptolemy VIII (*t3j.f ḥm.t*) in the unpublished *P. dem. Amherst* 51 (*TM* 48908) of 14 January 140 BC[5]. It is, however, uncertain whether she was immediately appointed "queen", as co-ruler of Ptolemy VIII and her own mother Cleopatra II. The relevant passage in *P. dem. Amherst* 51 is unfortunately difficult to decipher. Pestman states: "I do not know if the faint traces of ink warrant the reading *t3 Pr-ʿ3ʿ.w.s.t*"[6]. Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo on the other hand conclude : "Cependant, après un examen attentif du papyrus, ce terme nous paraît bien

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[1] See Pestman's discussion in *P.Survey*, 82 n. a and 86 n. b. His date is accepted by Huß (2001) 606, Hölbl (2001) 217 n. 72, Bielman Sánchez & Lenzo (2015) 222, and Pfeiffer (2017) 154. Another theory is defended by Minas (2000) 146 n. 563 and Nadig (2007) 40, who regard 6 April 141 BC as the *terminus ante quem*, because in *P. dem. BM Andrews* 32 l. 1 (*TM* 47522) the queen mentioned together with Ptolemy VIII is called "Cleopatra, his wife", which became the usual designation of Cleopatra III, while Cleopatra II was known as "his sister". Bielman Sánchez & Lenzo (2015) 217-220, however, convincingly identify Cleopatra "the wife" in this text as Cleopatra II. The addition "sister" was indeed not consistently used for Cleopatra II before Ptolemy VIII's marriage with her daughter Cleopatra III: see Lanciers (1988) 426 n. 71, *P.Horak* I, 150-151 (Br. McGing).

[2] Cf. *P.Survey* 14.

[3] Bielman Sánchez & Lenzo (2015) 219-221.

[4] In the titulature of the eponymous priests in Ptolemais we find a priestess for "Queen Cleopatra (II)", "Cleopatra (III), daughter of the king" - a priesthood created at the end of Philometor's reign: Minas (2000) 147-149 – and "Cleopatra (I), the mother". For the correct reading and interpretation, see *P.Dion.*, 65 with n. 8.

[5] Cf. *P.Survey* 15.

[6] *P.Survey*, 86 n. b.

présent"[7]. Their conclusion is somewhat doubtful in the light of *P.Erbstreit* 7 (*TM* 45846) of 14 (?) July 140 BC[8], where the editors have supplemented the names of the king's wives in the dating formula as follows (l. 1):

irm t3 Pr-ʿ3ʿ.w.s G[lwptr3ʿ.w.s t3j.f sn.t irm Glwptr3ʿ.w.s] t3j.f ḥm.t t3 ntr[.t] mnḫ.t

"with the Queen C[leopatra, his sister, with Cleopatra], his wife, the Benefactor Goddess"

Katelijn Vandorpe informed me that the length of the lacuna in l. 1, compared to the portion of text missing in l. 2 in the same lacuna, does not allow the insertion of an additional *t3 Pr-ʿ3ʿ.w.s* before the name of Cleopatra III[9]. The papyrus shows another remarkable element: in the titulature of the eponymous priests in Ptolemais only the priestesses of Cleopatra III as "daughter" of Cleopatra II (and Ptolemy VI) and Cleopatra I as "mother" of Ptolemy VIII are mentioned, but priestesses of Cleopatra II as "sister" and Cleopatra III as "wife" of the ruler are missing. The latter function may not have existed at this date (*see below*), but the omission of a priestess for Cleopatra II is anomalous and probably due to a scribal oversight[10].

A reference to Cleopatra III as "queen" is found in *P.Ryl.* II 252 (*TM* 2933) from Hermopolis, where the dating formula was supplemented as follows (ll. 11-13):

[βασιλευόντων Πτολεμα]ίου καὶ Κλεοπάτρας τῶν Πτολεμαίου
[καὶ Κλεοπάτρας θεῶν Ἐπι]φανῶν καὶ βασιλίσσης Κλεοπάτρας
[τῆς γυναικὸς θεᾶς Εὐεργ]έτιδος ἔτους τριακοστοῦ

There can hardly be any doubt that this supplement is correct and that "queen" Cleopatra III appears here as "wife" of Ptolemy VIII, together with the king and his first wife Cleopatra II[11]. Unfortunately, the indication of the month is partly lost, but the letters preserved in l. 22 allow to limit the possibilities: [μηνὸς ---]αιου ἐνάτηι καὶ εἰκάδι. We are dealing with the genitive of a Macedonian month ending in *-aios*, which can only be Gorpiaios, Hyperberetaios, Apellaios or Audnaios. In this period, called by Samuel the period of the "first equation", a given day of a Macedonian month was always equated with the same day of a predefined Egyptian month[12]. Accordingly, there are four possible dates for the papyrus:

- 29 Gorpiaios = 29 Phamenoth = 23 April 140 BC
- 29 Hyperberetaios = 29 Pharmouthi = 23 May 140 BC
- 29 Apellaios = 29 Payni = 22 July 140 BC
- 29 Audnaios = 29 Epeiph = 21 August 140 BC

[7] Bielman Sánchez & Lenzo (2015) 221.

[8] Only the year and month can be read: year 30, 2nd month of the *šmw*-season = Payni (24 June – 23 July 140 BC). The day date – 21 – is restored on the basis of *P.Erbstreit* 8, but the relation between *P.Erbstreit* 7 and 8 is somewhat uncertain: see *P.Erbstreit*, 82.

[9] E-mail of 11 October 2018.

[10] The priestess appears in *P. dem. Berlin* 3113 of 8 May 141 BC: see n. 4.

[11] That Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra II are not designated as *Theoi Euergetai* but only as the children of the *Theoi Epiphaneis* is not unusual in this period: see *P.Diosk.* 18 (14 November 145 BC); *P.Köln* VIII 350 (28 August 143 BC: the date is now certain: see Lippert [2008] 168).

[12] Samuel (1962) 129-130.

The papyrus proves that Cleopatra III was regarded as queen – and officially associated with Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra II on the throne - at the latest on 21 August 140 BC.

According to Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo, Cleopatra III is still omitted in two documents written after 14 January 140 BC[13]. The first is *I.Fay.* II 106 (*TM* 8153) from Theadelpheia:

[ὑ]πὲῤ βασ̣[ι]λ̣έ[ως Πτ]ολεμα[ί]ου καὶ βασιλίσση-
ς Κ̣λ̣ε̣ο̣[πάτρας καὶ τῶν] τέ[κ]νων, Φατρῆς Ὥρου
τὸ ἑστι[α]τ̣[ό]ρ̣ι̣[ο]ν κ̣α[ὶ τὸν βωμ]ὸ̣ν(?) Ἥρωνι μ[εγ]άλωι, (ἔτους) λ΄ Π̣α̣(χὼν) η̣΄

G. Lefebvre, the editor of the inscription, dated it to the reign of Ptolemy VIII; if we accept the tentatively read month and day date, the inscription would have been set up on 14 June 140 BC. The appearance of only one queen at this date would be anomalous in the light of the documents discussed above. Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo tried to explain this by the uncertainty of the stonecutter about the situation at the court in Alexandria: "La constitution du nouveau trio royal aurait-elle mis le lapicide dans l'embarras? Ne sachant quelle reine citer ni de quelle manière, le lapicide aurait-il volontairement omis de préciser le lien de parenté entre cette « reine Cléopâtre » et le roi ?"[14].

In my opinion, we must rather accept that the date proposed by Lefebvre is wrong. He assumed a connection between our document and two other inscriptions from Theadelpheia referring to the dedication of a propylon for the temple of Heron. Since these texts date from the reign of Ptolemy VIII (*I.Fay*. II 105 = *TM* 8152) and Ptolemy XII (*I.Fay*. II 115 = TM 7258), but the latter did not reign together with a queen in his 30th year, Lefebvre retained the 30th year of Ptolemy VIII as the sole possible date for our inscription[15]. His argumentation is far from convincing. There is no compelling reason why Phatres' dedication of a banqueting hall and an altar (?) must have been contemporaneous with one of the two other dedications[16]. The only thing we know for certain is that the inscription was set up by a royal couple Ptolemy and Cleopatra, who had several children in their 30th regnal year[17]. Since the four children of Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II were probably born between 167 BC and 156/5 BC[18], the simplest solution to explain the appearance of a single queen in the inscription is to date it to the reign of this couple: the 30th year is than 152/1 BC and - if the date 8 Pachons is correct - the dedication was made on 4 June 151 BC[19].

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[13] Bielman Sánchez – Lenzo (2015) 222-223.

[14] Bielman Sánchez – Lenzo (2015) 222.

[15] Lefebvre (1921) 164. His date is generally accepted: *SEG* I 568; *SB* III 6596; Rübsam (1974) 202 n. 5; *I.Fay.* II, 18, 20; Bingen (1994) 46; France (1999) 267 n. 88.

[16] Cfr. France (1999) 267, who regards it as uncertain that these monuments were located within the precinct of the Heron temple.

[17] The mention of several "children" does not necessarily exclude the reign of Ptolemy VIII (who only had one son with Cleopatra II, Ptolemy Memphites): for other examples of the (incorrect) use of the plural, see Bielman Sánchez – Lenzo (2015) 202-203.

[18] Bielman Sánchez – Lenzo (2015) 159-173.

[19] The presence of Thracians in Ptolemaic Egypt and in Theadelpheia is attested well before the reign of Ptolemy VIII – see France (1999) 286; Bingen (2007) 83-93 - which makes it likely that a cult for their god Heron already existed under Philometor.

The dating formula of *P. dem. Berl. Kaufv.* 3090 and 3091 (TM 3577 & 43725)[20] from 5 September 140 BC (year 30, 16[21] Mesore) would according to Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo also be irregular (l. 1):

> *ḥ3.t-sp 30 ibd 4 šmw sw 16 n Pr-ᶜ3 Ptlwmjs p3 mnḫ s3 Ptlwmjs irm Glwptr n3 ntr.w ntj pr irm t3 Pr-ᶜ3.t Glwptr t3j.f sn.t t3j.f ḥm.t t3 ntr.t t3 mnḫ.t.*
>
> "Year 30, 4th month of the *šmw*-season (= Mesore), day 16, of King Ptolemy the Benefactor, son of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, the Manifest Gods, with the Queen Cleopatra his Sister, his Wife, the Benefactor Goddess".

Only one "queen" is mentioned and Pestman argues that the addition of "sister and wife" allows to identify her as Cleopatra II, while Cleopatra III is left unmentioned; the document would in an anachronistic manner reflect the situation before the king's second marriage[22]. Although Bielman Sánchez and Lenzo consider a possible identification with Cleopatra III, in the end they are also inclined to identify the queen as Cleopatra II[23]. This identification fails to convince me. Above I have concluded that Cleopatra III was regarded as queen at the latest on 21 August 140 BC, *i.e.* before *P. dem. Berl. Kaufv.* 3090 and 3091 were written. Furthermore, *P.Erbstreit* 7 and *P.Ryl.* II 252 show that the element "Benefactor Goddess" at the end of the dating formulas from year 30 applies to Cleopatra III, while Cleopatra II does not bear a specific cult title[24]. Considering both elements, I propose following emendation:

> *ḥ3.t-sp 30 ibd 4 šmw sw 16 n Pr-ᶜ3 Ptlwmjs p3 mnḫ s3 Ptlwmjs irm Glwptr n3 ntr.w ntj pr irm t3 Pr-ᶜ3.t Glwptr t3j.f sn.t < irm t3 Pr-ᶜ3.t Glwptr > t3j.f ḥm.t t3 ntr.t t3 mnḫ.t.*
>
> "Year 30, 4th month of the *šmw*-season (= Mesore), day 16, of King Ptolemy the Benefactor, son of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, the Manifest Gods, with the Queen Cleopatra his Sister <and with the Queen Cleopatra> his Wife, the Benefactor Goddess".

The scribe of the document, who probably rather mechanically copied his template, forgot to add the element *irm t3 Pr-ᶜ3.t Glwptr* ("and the Queen Cleopatra") a second time before the name of Cleopatra III, a clear case of haplography[25].

P. dem. Berl. Kaufv. 3090 and 3091 mention eponymous priestesses in Ptolemais for "Queen Cleopatra" (*pr-ᶜ3.t Glwptr*) = Cleopatra II, "Cleopatra, the King's daughter"[26] (*Glwptr t3 šr.t Pr-ᶜ3*) =

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[20] Cfr. *P.Survey* 16.

[21] For the correct day date, see *P.Survey*, 88 n. c.

[22] *P.Survey*, 88 n. b. Otherwise Heinen (1974) 151, who assumes that the scribe (or his template) mixed up the titles of the two queens.

[23] Bielman Sánchez – Lenzo (2015) 222-223.

[24] Cf. Nadig (2007) 37 n. 86: "In den griechischen und demotischen Aktenpräskripten ist die Bezeichnung von Kleopatra II. als Thea Euergetis im Singular ansonsten nicht belegt", and 43: "In den Präskripten bis etwa zum Jahr 138/7 werden Ptolemaios VIII. und Kleopatra II. oft ohne Epitheton genannt, wohingegen Kleopatra III. als „die wohltätige Göttin" deutlich abgehoben wird". The only exception is *P.Köln* VIII 350 l. 5 (143 BC), but here the epithet Thea Euergetis is used in the filiation of the Alexander priest.

[25] So also Otto – Bengtson (1938) 31 n. 2, and Nadig (2007) 42 with n. 104, who, however, omit the element *t3 pr-ᶜ3.t* in their reconstruction.

[26] According to Otto – Bengtson (1938) 33-35 n. 5 (on p. 34), a priestess of "Königin Kleopatra" and a priestess of "Königin Kleopatra ἡ γυνή" are mentioned, but we must follow the reading of Grunert, since *pr-ᶜ3.t* is clearly

Cleopatra III, and "Cleopatra, the mother, the manifest goddess" (*Glwptr t3 mw.t t3 ntr.t ntj pr*) = Cleopatra I. This enumeration helps us to establish the date of *P.Amh.* II 45 (*TM* 216), where following priestesses appear (ll. 5-7):

> ἱερει[ῶν βασιλίσσ]ης μὲν Κλεοπά[τρας] Τιμαρέ̣[της τῆς . . .]
> βασιλίσσης δὲ Κλεοπάτρας τῆς θυγατρὸς Βερενίκης τῆς Ἑρμίου, Κ[λεο]πάτρας δὲ τῆς μ[ητ]ρὸς θεᾶς [Ἐπιφανοῦς]
> Νικασοῦς τῆς Ἀριστονίκου.

The eponymous priestesses are not known from other sources and the regnal year is lost; only the day date is preserved: 25 Payni. A *terminus post quem* is provided by the appearance of βασίλισσα before the name of Cleopatra III, because this title is not attested for her until year 30[27]. It is remarkable, however, that neither in *P.Erbstreit* 7 of 14 July 140 BC nor in *P. dem. Berl. Kaufv.* 3090-3091 of 5 September 140 BC the element *pr-ʿ3.t* appears in the title of Cleopatra III's priest in Ptolemais, while βασιλίσσης is clearly written in *P.Amh.* II 45. The *terminus ante quem* is found in *P.Grenf.* II 15 (*TM* 274) of 21 October 139 BC (year 32, 25 Thoth), where besides the priest of "Queen Cleopatra, the daughter" an additional priest of "Queen Cleopatra, the wife" appears[28]. In my opinion, the situation could be explained in two different ways:

- If the scribes of *P.Erbstreit* 7, *P. dem. Berl. Kaufv.* 3090-3091 and *P.Amh.* II 45 correctly used the officially prescribed dating formula, the latter document – with the insertion of "queen" in the priestly title - must be the youngest and can only have been written on 18 July 139 BC (year 31, 25 Payni). The addition of "queen" (βασίλισσα / *pr-ʿ3.t*) to the title of the priest of Cleopatra III "the daughter" then represents an intermediate situation, before a separate priesthood for Queen Cleopatra III "the wife" was created, probably at the start of year 32[29].
- It is also conceivable that the scribe of *P.Amh.* II 45 of his own accord adapted the title of Cleopatra III's priest to the changed historical situation in year 30 - *i.e.* the fact that the

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missing before the name of Cleopatra III (see the plate in *P. dem. Berl. Kaufv.*; I thank Willy Clarysse for double-checking the reading).

[27] The appearance of the element "queen" excludes the date "ca. 145-142", proposed by Clarysse & Van der Veken (1983) 50-51 d (see also *PP* III 5064, 5207 and 5280); there is no reason to accept with Huß (2008) 57 and n. 14, that the title βασίλισσα here applies to Cleopatra III as princess and not as queen. Pestman (1985) 16 and 24 no. 2 (followed in *BL* IX 5) dates the text in July 141 BC (year 29) or July 140 BC (year 30), because it must have been written "entre l'accession au trône de Cléopâtre III et le moment où elle est devenue l'épouse de Ptolémée VIII en lieu et place de Cléopâtre II: sept. 142-févr. 139"; this is based upon a now obsolete chronology of the events (see above p. xxx). Although this is theoretically possible, it is in my opinion unlikely that Cleopatra III was recognised as queen in the short period between 8 May 141 BC (the date of *P. dem. Berlin* 3113) and 18 July 141 BC (the date if we would accept that *P.Amh.* II 45 was written on 25 Payni, year 29).

[28] Minas (2000) 148 and 150, erroneously assumes that this priesthood was created in 138/7 BC.

[29] This evolution is accepted by Otto – Bengtson (1938) 33-35 n. 5 (on p. 35): "Man darf somit annehmen, daß zuerst das Priestertum der „Kleopatra, der Tochter" in das der „Königin Kleopatra, der Tochter" umgewandelt worden ist, und man hat dann, als die γυνή-Bezeichnung nach außen besonders betont werden sollte, noch die Priesterin der „Königin Kleopatra, der Frau" hinzugefügt". Based upon their obsolete chronology of the marriage of Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra II they accept, however, that *P.Amh.* II 45 was written in the last months of 142 or the first months of 141 BC.

princess had become queen - while the demotic scribes continued to use the title as mentioned in the templates they had received at the beginning of the year[30]. In that case, *P.Amh.* II 45 could already have been written on 18 July 140 BC (year 30, 25 Payni)[31]. The new priesthood of Cleopatra III "the wife" was then possibly created at the beginning of year 31. Only the publication of new, securely dated documents with the names of the eponymous priests of *P.Amh.* II 45 can bring a final solution in this matter, but this papyrus remains in any case the oldest document known to date from the agoranomic office in Krokodilopolis[32].

An inscription from Salamis on Cyprus is also thought to reflect the confusion after the second marriage of Ptolemy VIII[33]. It belongs to a statue of Seleukos, the well-known *strategos* of the island, who was honoured because of his virtue and goodwill εἰς β[ασιλέα Πτολεμαῖον καὶ βασίλισσαν] | Κλεοπάτραν τὴν ἀδελφὴν καὶ γυ[ναῖκα, θεοὺς Εὐεργέτας, καὶ βασίλισσαν] | Κλεοπάτραν τὴν ἀδελφὴν κ̣[αὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῶν] (ll. 4-6). The common interpretation of this inscription is based upon the observations of his first editor, T. B. Mitford[34]. In view of the appearance of two queens – one described as "sister and wife", the other only as "sister" - he concludes: "... I do not suggest that what we have in these last two lines is in any sense official. There is here, in my opinion, simply zeal and uncertainty: the news of the elder Cleopatra's repudiation and of her daughter's triumph has clearly just reached Cyprus, and we are given an unofficial reflection of that news"[35]. Since he places the presumed "repudiation" of Cleopatra II[36] and Euergetes' second marriage in 142 BC, he accepts the same date for the inscription, in which he is followed by most scholars[37]. If we follow Mitford's reasoning[38] and his restoration of the title βασίλισσαν before the name of both queens – the first being Cleopatra II[39], the second Cleopatra III -, the inscription reflects the situation in 140 BC – when we find the first

[30] On the use of such templates, see Lippert (2008) 166.

[31] The date July-August 140 BC is suggested by James Cowey in the "Heidelberger Gesamtverzeichnis der griechischen Papyrusurkunden Ägyptens" (http://aquila.zaw.uni-heidelberg.de/hgv/216). It is unclear how Nadig (2007) 37 n. 86, arrives at the date "7. Dezember 140 ?".

[32] See Clarysse (1986) 101-103, followed by K. Vandorpe in *P.Dryton*, 107 n. 8.

[33] Pouilloux *et al.* (1987) 38 no. 75 (where the translation should be corrected) (*TM* 6020).

[34] Mitford (1953) 132-133 no. 3 (edition) and 147 (commentary); cf. Mitford (1961) 26 no. 69 (commentary).

[35] Mitford (1953) 147.

[36] Although four ancient authors mention that Euergetes' first wife was repudiated, this is unlikely in the light of the documentary evidence, where Cleopatra II continues to be mentioned, and always before her daughter: see Bielman Sánchez – Lenzo (2015) 215-216.

[37] SB VIII 9959; SEG XIII 552; Mooren (1975) 189 no. 0353 (B.b); Michaelidou-Nicolaou (1976) 109 no. 5; Bagnall (1976) 259; Pouilloux *et al.* (1987) 38 no. 75.

[38] Although both line 5 and 6 of the inscription start with Κλεοπάτραν τὴν ἀδελφὴν κ[---], I agree with Mitford (1953) 133 n. 8, that we are in all likelihood not dealing with a careless stonecutter, who repeated the words of line 5 in line 6: such an error could easily be committed in a papyrus text, far less in an inscription on stone.

[39] The element ἀδελφὴ καὶ γυνή can only relate to Cleopatra II, who was indeed both sister and wife of Ptolemy VIII and who is designated with both epithets in *P.Köln* XII 479 l. 15 and l. 28, and with the Egyptian equivalent *sn.t.f ḥm.t.f* in several hieroglyphic texts: Nadig (2007) 41 with n. 99; Bielman Sánchez – Lenzo (2015) 204. Heinen (1974) 154-155, correctly identifies the queen with the double title as Cleopatra II; otherwise, Bielman Sánchez – Lenzo (2015) 223, who believe she is Cleopatra III.

attestations for Cleopatra III's queenship - rather than of 142 BC; the inscription was then in any case set up after 8 May 141 BC, the *terminus post quem* for the marriage with Cleopatra III. The date of the text is not without interest, since it contains the earliest reference to the governor of Cyprus as *nauarchos* of the Egyptian fleet and is also used to determine the start of Seleukos' tenure as *strategos* of the island[40].

Heinz Heinen warned "... de ne pas tirer parti à outrance de toutes les formules de datation se rencontrant sur papyrus ou sur pierre". At the same time he accepted their historical value: "Mais tant que ces formules n'offrent rien de suspect, on aurait tort de négliger les renseignements sur les luttes dynastiques qu'elles peuvent fournir à une interprétation circonspecte"[41]. A cautious interpretation of the dating formulas in our sources entails several aspects. First, we have to determine whether an apparent anomalous element is really irregular or may be explained in another way; the inscription from Theadelpheia discussed above is an example of this approach. Second, when dealing with official documents, we should examine if deviations in the dating formulas cannot simply be regarded as scribal errors, involving templates that were often rather thoughtlessly copied; I believe this is the case in *P. dem. Berl. Kaufv.* 3090 and 3091. Finally, we should take into account the specific milieu a document originates from. For instance, several examples illustrate that the Egyptian priests did not pay much attention to correctly present the dynastic situation in papyri and inscriptions which were closely related to their temples and cults and were only intended for the eyes of their peers. In the hieratic-demotic texts written above the subterranean niches in the Osireion of Oxyrhynchos, which are preserved almost without interruption for the period between 156 and 132 BC, the name of Cleopatra III is only added in the dating formula from 133/4 BC (year 37) onwards[42]. In the administration of the temple of Soknopaiou Nesos several documents from the 130s BC still mention Ptolemy VIII and a single queen[43].

By way of summary, I give a chronological overview of the documents discussed in this article, with the proposed date and interpretation:

Document	Date	Interpretation
I.Fay. II 106	4 June (?) 151 BC	The inscription dates from the reign of Ptolemy VI and Cleopatra II.
P. dem. BM Andrews 32	6 April 141	Cleopatra "his wife" in this text is Cleopatra II.
P. dem. Berlin 3113	8 May 141 BC	*Terminus post quem* for the marriage of Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra II: Cleopatra III is not mentioned, or in any case not as wife or queen.

[40] The inscriptions Mitford (1953) 131-132 no. 2, where Seleukos is governor but not yet *nauarchos*, and Mitford (1953) 135-137 no. 10, where Seleukos is both *strategos* and *nauarchos*, were dated by Mitford (1953) 147, before the marriage of Ptolemy VIII and Cleopatra, *i.e.* in his view c. 143 BC. Caution is needed since the name Seleukos is restored in both texts.

[41] Heinen (1974) 151.

[42] Coulon (2018) 179, 181.

[43] See the discussion of these documents in Bielman Sánchez - Lenzo (2015) 274-275.

P. dem. Amherst 51	14 January 140 BC	*Terminus ante quem* for the marriage: Cleopatra III appears as "wife", but it is uncertain whether she is already called "queen".
P.Erbstreit 7	14 (?) July 140 BC	Cleopatra III is not called "queen" in the dating formula.
P.Ryl. II 252	23 April or 23 May or 22 July or 21 August 140 BC	Cleopatra III appears as "queen" in the dating formula.
P.Amh. II 45	18 July 140 BC or 18 July 139 BC	The element "queen" appears in the title of the priest of "Cleopatra (III) the daughter" in Ptolemais.
P. dem. Berl. Kaufv. 3090-3091	5 September 140 BC	The scribe has erroneously left out the name of Cleopatra III. The element "queen" is absent in the title of the priest of "Cleopatra (III) the daughter" in Ptolemais.
Pouilloux *et al.* (1987) 38 no. 75	c. 140 BC (?)	Cleopatra II is mentioned as "sister and wife", Cleopatra III as "sister".
P.Grenf. II 15	21 October 139 BC	*Terminus ante quem* for the creation of the priesthood of "Queen Cleopatra (III) the wife" in Ptolemais.

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