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“Mobility and socioeconomic dynamics”

The cult of Arsinoe II Philadelphus. The 'international' success of a Greek-Egyptian goddess

by Anita Malagrinò Mustica

P. Oxy. XXVII 2465 has yielded twenty-one fragments, including an excerpt from the work *On the Demes of Alexandria* by Satyrus. In fr. 2, there is the decree prescribing the cult of Arsinoe II Philadelphus and giving the necessary instructions for the procession in Alexandria. The figure of Arsinoe II was discussed by historiographers and intellectuals of the ancient world and inspired the epigrams of Callimachus and Posidippus. She had a strong and active personality in the public sphere, as evidenced by the cities renamed in her honour and the various works of evergetism that she carried out during her lifetime. Initially Queen of Thrace, she married her brother Ptolemy II after the death of Lysimachus. The marriage of brothers was a scandal in the Greek world. The rulers sublimated the idea of an incestuous union by both adopting the epithet Philadelphus and associating themselves with the gods of the Greek and Egyptian pantheons. On this occasion too, the Ptolemaic dynasty realised its syncretic ambitions to hold on to power in a hybrid land. On Arsinoe's death, a cult was established in her honour. She was deified and associated with Hera, Demeter, Aphrodite and Isis. Temples were erected and ceremonies were held in her honour. The extraordinary spread of her cult, which reached as far as the coasts of southern Italy, is striking, as shown by some archaeological finds from cities in Magna Graecia and by the epiclesis found in the epigrams of Callimachus and Posidippus. The cult had a considerable chronological extension. A number of legal papyri confirm the vitality of the cult up to the height of the Roman period, cataloguing the various epithets of Arsinoe within the toponyms of the city of Alexandria and noting their continuous renewal.

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Biography:

I am currently a postgraduate student and I am studying Classical Philology at the University of Bari (Italy). I got my BA (110/110 *cum laude*) in Humanities on the 21st October 2021, with a dissertation in Greek Literature, entitled "*Argive ancestry in the genealogy of Archelaus of Macedon. Euripides, fr. 228 a Kn.*", under the supervision of Prof. Olimpia Imperio.

My main research interests are: Classical philology, ancient Greek theatre, ancient textual tradition, ancient history, epigraphy and archeology.

