

*On Imperial Intermediaries: New Elites and the Promotion of the Royal Cult in the Ptolemaic Empire*

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Using Burbank and Cooper's category of "Imperial Intermediaries" (Burbank, Cooper. 2010), I will focus my paper on the Ptolemaic Empire in the Hellenistic and Roman Period. In Phoenicia and in Cyprus, a set of epigraphic documents shed light on the emergence of a royal cult devoted to the Ptolemies (kings, queens, royal couples and royal families) through the agency of specific "go-between" figures, members of the local elites but also of the new imperial "order". I will analyze the association in Greek and bilingual dedicatory inscriptions of the royal family members with different gods in order to legitimize the new power through a connected "politics of difference" based on local traditions reframed in a global imperial dynamic. The paper will move from the specific case study to more general considerations on crosscultural dynamics as an opportunity or a strategy to improve the empire's capacity of appropriation.