



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TORINO

Department of Historical Studies

PhD Programme in:

“SCIENZE ARCHEOLOGICHE, STORICHE E STORICO-ARTISTICHE”

Cycle: XXXV

THESIS TITLE

“Perception of Hellenistic and Roman Egypt in the Levant through Materiality”

Thesis’ author: Aliaa Mohamed Hassan Nematallah

Code of Scientific discipline: L-OR/02

Tutor:

Prof. Paolo Gallo

PhD Programme Co-ordinator:

Prof. Massimo Valerio Vallerani

**© Aliaa Mohamed Hassan Nematallah
All rights reserved
2024**

To my dearest parents, may God rest their souls in peace, and to my only family, my sisters and my aunt. Without their support and love, I would not have conducted this work.

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	I
ABSTRACT.....	IV
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	VI
LIST OF FIGURES.....	VIII
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Subject and Issues.....	1
History of the Research.....	4
Chapter outlines.....	5
CHAPTER I.....	8
I.1. A geographic overview of the Levant.....	8
I.2. Historical background.....	13
I.2.1. Political Relationships between Ptolemies and Seleucids.....	13
I.2.1.1. The First Syrian War (274-271 BC).....	17
I.2.1.2. The Second Syrian War (260-253 BC).....	18
I.2.1.3. The Third Syrian War (246-241 BC).....	19
I.2.1.4. The Fourth Syrian War (219-217 BC).....	20
I.2.1.5. The Fifth Syrian War (202-199 BC).....	22
I.2.1.6. The Sixth Syrian War (170- 168 BC).....	23
I.2.2. The Levant (Ancient Syria) under Roman Rule.....	25
CHAPTER II.....	28
SYRIA-PHOENICIA.....	28
II.1. Syria.....	28
II.1.1. Antioch on the Orontes.....	31
II.1.2. Seleucia by the Sea.....	42
II.1.3. Laodicea by the Sea.....	48
II.1.4. Balanea.....	51
II.1.5. Antaradus.....	57
II.1.6. Epiphaneia.....	70
II.1.7. Abila of Lysanias.....	74

II.1.8. Sarrin.....	80
II.1.9. Dura Europos.....	83
II. 2. Phoenicia.....	86
II.2.1. Byblos.....	92
II.2.2. Porphyreon.....	100
II.2.3. Tyre.....	102
II.2.4. Umm el-Amed	105
II.2.5. Sanctuaries in the hinterland of Tyre.....	116
II. 2.5.1. Mispè-Yamim.....	116
II.2.5.2. Kharayeb.....	121
II.2.6. Akko-Ptolemais.....	132
II.2.7. Heliopolis- Baalbek.....	136
CHAPTER III.....	139
THE DECAPOLIS.....	139
III.1. Introduction.....	139
III.2. Gerasa.....	142
III.3. Gadara.....	166
III.4. Philadelphia.....	171
III.5. Pella.....	179
III.6. Scythopolis.....	185
III.7. Dion.....	198
III.8. The Village of Marwa.....	200
CHAPTER IV.....	203
ARABIA.....	203
IV.1. Petra.....	203
IV.2. Khirbet et-Tannur	248
IV.3. Sia.....	251
IV.4. Ghariye Shoubeih.....	253
IV.5. Palmyra.....	255
CHAPTER V.....	259
PALESTINE.....	259
V.1. Introduction.....	259
V.2. Caesarea Maritime.....	263
V.3. Ascalon.....	283
V.4. Azotus.....	299
V.5. Marisa.....	303
V.6. Beersheba.....	309
V.7. Haifa.....	311
V.8. Yavneh Yam.....	313
V.9. Jerusalem-Aelia Capitolina	314
V.10. Legio.....	324
V. 11. Sepphoris.....	327

CONCLUSIONS.....	337
ABBREVIATIONS.....	350
ANCIENT SOURCES.....	352
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	353

ABSTRACT

The Levant has played an important role in the history of human civilization since ancient times, primarily due to its distinctive geographical location as a link between the continents of Africa and Asia. The political and commercial relations between Egypt and the Levant, dating back to the Ptolemaic period, resulted in the diffusion of numerous Alexandrian influences within this region. These influences continued until the late Roman period, impacting various architectural, religious, and artistic aspects. However, it is important to note that while political and commercial relationships between Egypt and the Levant have historical significance during the ancient Egyptian dynasties, this dissertation primarily focuses on the interactions during the Ptolemaic and Roman periods for the purpose of analysis and exploration within a specific historical context. The study aims to explore the cultural impact of Egyptian deities outside the borders of Egypt during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Their far-reaching influence can be best exemplified by their spread across the eastern Mediterranean basin, demonstrating the profound extent of Egyptian religious and civilizational influence in the ancient world.

This thesis is divided into an introduction, which highlights the issues and the importance of the topic. The text are divided into five chapters depending on the geographical area, which deals with the different types of monuments that could prove knowledge or even worship of the Egyptian gods. The first chapter discusses the geographical location of the Levant and its historical background following the death of Alexander the Great, focusing on the power struggle between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids for control over the region of Coele-Syria, which was known as "the Syrian Wars". The second chapter provides insights into the significance of Egyptian gods in the regions of Syria and the Phoenician coastal area, encompassing sites such as Antioch, Seleucia, Laodicea, Byblos, Tyre, Umm el-Amed, Mispe-Yamim, and Kharayeb. Moving on, the third chapter discusses the Egyptian religious artifacts discovered in the Decapolis, including the cities of Gerasa, Gadara, Pella, Philadelphia, Scythopolis, and Dion. The fourth chapter deals with Egyptian testimonies from the province of Arabia, with a particular emphasis on the Nabatean city of Petra. The fifth chapter explores the Egyptian religious findings in Palestine. Finally, the conclusion aims to

summarize the historical foundations underlying the development of the cult of Egyptian gods in the Levant.

Keywords: The Levant, Isiac worship, Syria, Phoenicia, the Decapolis, Arabia, Palestine, Hellenistic and Roman periods.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This work would certainly not have evolved in the same way without the assistance of various aids, meetings, inspirations, and support, for which I feel extremely indebted.

I would like to begin by expressing my deep gratitude to my advisor Prof. Paolo Gallo for all his efforts and the endless support throughout my PhD study. His patience, motivation, and vast knowledge have been invaluable to me. I also send him warm thanks for being a constant source of kindness and encouragement and for helping me find the 'right frequency' with his sometimes unexpected bibliographical orientations.

I am enormously grateful to the members of my dissertation committee, Prof. Paola Buzi and Prof. Rosanna Pirelli, for their unwavering consideration, sage advice, and expert guidance. Their insightful questions and challenges have not only improved my research but also inspired me to approach my work from various perspectives.

I am deeply grateful to the Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (AICS) for their generous scholarship, which made my research project possible. Their faith in me and their financial support were instrumental in my work.

With all my heart, I thank Prof. Mervat Seif El-Din, the former general director of the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria, who patiently guided me with wit, generosity, structure, and kindness. I would also like to thank Prof. Hassan Selim, professor of Egyptology at the University of Ain Shams, for his valuable assistance.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Catreena Hamarneh and Mr. Ahmad Othman at the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology in Amman (GPIA) for welcoming me for a month in the privileged setting of the institute and library and for their friendliness and helpfulness during my various visits to Petra. My gratitude also goes to Prof. Zeyad Al-Salameen, professor of Nabataean archaeology and epigraphy, who shared with me his exceptional experience in Petra and granted me essential notes to enhance my thesis. I also acknowledge the assistance of Mr. Hussein Saidet at the Petra Museum and Mr. Nayel Al-Salameen at the

Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority. Special thanks to the librarians and research assistants at IFAO (Cairo), Biblioteca Silvio Curto del Museo Egizio (Turin), DAI (Cairo), and Biblioteca "G. TABACCO" at the University of Turin for their invaluable support in accessing critical resources.

Finally, I wish to express my deepest appreciation to my family (my aunt and sisters, Hanaa, Safaa, and Shaimaa) and friends (especially Federico Scribante, Hala Mostafa, Nora Mohamed, Rania Zidan, and Amal Hassan) for their unwavering belief in me and constant encouragement. Their emotional support was essential to completing this challenging journey. Without the backing of these individuals, this accomplishment would not have been possible.

Of course, I take full responsibility for my ignorance and my mistakes.

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Map of the Levant, Butcher, 2003.

Figure 2. Map of Roman Syria, Butcher, 2003, fig. 31.

Figure 3. A mosaic pavement of the "Navigium Isidis", the House of the Calendar.

Figure 4. A mosaic pavement of the "Navigium Isidis", the House of the Mysteries of Isis.

Figure 5. A wall painting of the "Navigium Isidis", Ostia.

Figure 6. The mosaic of "mors voluntaria" in the House of the Mysteries of Isis.

Figure 7. The mosaic of Isis ceremony, the House of the Isiac Ceremony, in Daphne.

Figure 8. A coin of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Antioch, SC 1413; Hoover HGC 643.

Figure 9. A coin of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Antioch, CSE, 121.

Figure 10. A coin of Antioch, AE, 179 BC, Veymiers, 2011, p. 211, Fig. 9.13.

Figure 11. A coin of Ptolemais, AE, 125-121 BC, Cleopatra Théa and her son Antiochus VIII, Veymiers, 2011, p. 212, Fig. 9.14.

Figure 12. A statue of Serapis, Seleucia Pieria, Antakya Museum, Inv. No. 10799.

Figure 13. A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite, Seleucia Pieria.

Figure 14. A bronze statuette of Isis from Balanea, Syria, Bricault, 2020, Fig. 96.

Figure 15. The bronze statuette of Isis-Tyche from Balanea (in detail).

Figure 16. A terracotta seal of Isis with a rudder from Paphos, Cyprus, Bricault, 2020, Fig. 97.

Figure 17. A marble statue of Isis with a rudder, Athens, Bricault, 2020, Fig. 99.

Figure 18. A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite from Tartous, the Louvre Museum.

Figure 19. A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite from Syria, the British Museum.

Figure 20. A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite from Homs, the National Museum of Damascus.

Figure 21. A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite, the Louvre Museum.

Figure 22. A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite, from Sais, Tanta Museum, Inv. No. Ta3371.

Figure 23. A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite from Tartous, the Louvre Museum, H. 34 cm.

Figure 24. A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite from Sais, Egypt, Tanta Museum, Inv. No. Ta. 3377.

- Figure 25.** A painting of Queen Nefertari from her tomb in the Valley of the Queens.
- Figure 26.** A stela of the king of Byblos Yehawmilk from Byblos, the Louvre Museum, Inv. No. AO 22368.
- Figure 27.** A marble head of Serapis from Tartous, Syria, H. 33cm.
- Figure 28.** A marble bust of Serapis from Hama, the National Museum of Copenhagen, Inv. No., V17.
- Figure 29.** A marble bust of Serapis from Hama, Hornbostel, 1973, p. 218, no. 3, pl. 99. 168.
- Figure 30.** A lamp with the bust of Serapis, Hama, the National Museum of Damascus, Inv. No. 2160.
- Figure 31.** A dedication of an altar from Brahlia to Zeus of Heliopolis and Apis, Hajjar 1977, p. 179-181, no. 165.
- Figure 32.** An Altar found in Brahlia depicted Apis and Tyche.
- Figure 33.** The Mosaic of Sarrin depicted Nilus, Syria.
- Figure 34.** The Mosaic of the Villa del Nilo in Leptis Magna.
- Figure 35.** A bas-relief of Mithra depicted a bust of Serapis, Dura Europos.
- Figure 36.** Map of Phoenicia.
- Figure 37.** The Naos of the Maabed Amrit.
- Figure 38.** A basalt sarcophagus of the king of Sidon Tabnit.
- Figure 39.** A sarcophagus of Eshmunazar II, the son of Tabnit.
- Figure 40.** Anthropoid sarcophagi from the Royal Sidon Necropolis, The National Museum of Beirut.
- Figure 41.** A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite-Astarte from Byblos, the British Museum, 22 cm.
- Figure 42.** A limestone head of Isis-Aphrodite from Sidon, the British Museum, 26 cm.
- Figure 43.** A coin of Antiochus IV, Byblos, SC 2, pl.65, 1445.
- Figure 44.** A coin of Antiochus IV, Byblos, SC 2, pl.65, 1446.
- Figure 45.** A coin of Antiochus IV, Byblos, SC 2, pl.65, 1447.
- Figure 46.** A coin of Antiochus IV, Byblos, SC 2, pl.64, 1442.
- Figure 47.** The mosaic of Jiyeh, Phoenicia.
- Figure 48.** A figurine of Osirophoros, British Museum, Inv. No., EA24784.
- Figure 49.** The Milk'ashtart temple, Umm el-Amed, Nitschke, 2011, fig. 4.
- Figure 50.** The East Temple, Umm el-Amed, Nitschke, 2011, fig. 5.

- Figure 51.** Reconstruction of the façades of the side rooms, Milk'ashtart temple, Umm el-Amed,
- Figure 52.** A limestone statue of Egyptian style Umm el-Amed, Beirut, National Museum, Inv. No. 2004, H. 102 cm.
- Figure 53.** A limestone statue of Egyptian style Umm el-Amed, Louvre Museum, Inv. No., AO 4401, H. 60 cm.
- Figure 54.** A limestone statue of Egyptian style from Tyre, Beirut, National Museum, Inv. No. 2265.
- Figure 55.** A limestone statue of Egyptian style from Sarepta, Louvre Museum, Inv. No. AO 4805.
- Figure 56.** A limestone statue of Egyptian style, Beirut, the National Museum.
- Figure 57.** A throne of Astarte from Umm el-Amed, the East Temple.
- Figure 58.** A throne of Astarte from Umm el-Amed, the East Temple.
- Figure 59.** A limestone stela, Umm el-Amed, Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Inv. No. 1835, H. 181 cm.
- Figure 60.** A limestone stela, Umm el- Amed, Louvre Museum, Inv. No. AO 3135, H. 147 cm.
- Figure 61.** The god Hapy on the Hadrian's Gate at the Isis Temple of Philae in Egypt.
- Figure 62.** A limestone stela, Umm el- Amed, The National Museum of Beirut, Inv. No. 2072, H. 127 cm.
- Figure 63.** A bronze situla, Mispé-Yamim, 16.7 cm.
- Figure 64.** A statue of schist of Osiris, Isis, Horus, Mispé-Yamim, 13.5 cm.
- Figure 65.** A bronze statue of Osiris, Mispé-Yamim, 10.2 cm.
- Figure 66.** A bronze statue of the Apis bull, Mispé-Yamim, H. 7.5 cm.
- Figure 67.** A terracotta figurine of Isis- Lactans, Kharayeb, the Archaeological Museum of Beirut, Inv. No. 223.
- Figure 68.** A marble statue of Isis-Lactans, Aboukir Bay by Omar Toussoun, Maritime Museum in Alexandria, MMA. No. 56.
- Figure 69.** A terracotta figurine of Harpocrates from Kharayeb, Chehab, 1953-1954, Pl. III, 3.
- Figure 70.** A terracotta figurine of Harpocrates, Lebanon, the Museum of the American University of Beirut.

- Figure 71.** A terracotta figurine of Harpocrates from Kharayeb, Chehab, 1953-1954, Pl. Chehab, 1953-1954, Pl. V, 4.
- Figure 72.** A terracotta statuette of Bes, Kharayeb, Chehab, 1953-1954, Pl. VI.
- Figure 73.** A limestone relief of Bes, Egypt, the Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam.
- Figure 74.** A terracotta statuette of Baubo, Kharayeb, Chehab, 1953-1954, Pl. XXX, 4.
- Figure 75.** An Isis attendant from Kharayeb, Chehab, 1953-1954, Pl. LXVIII, 2.
- Figure 76.** A coin of Akko-ptolemais, Bricault, 2006b, pl. 18:11.
- Figure 77.** A coin of Akko-ptolemais, Bricault, 2006b, pl. 18:12.
- Figure 78.** A coin of Akko-ptolemais, Bricault, 2006b, pl. 18:13.
- Figure 79.** A coin of Akko-ptolemais, Bricault, 2006b, pl. 19: 14.
- Figure 80.** A coin of Akko-ptolemais, Bricault, 2006b, pl. 19:16.
- Figure 81.** A jasper intaglio of Serapis-Zeus, Nemsis, Jupiter- Heliopolitanus.
- Figure 82.** A Carnelian intaglio of Serapis, Jupiter Heliopolitanus.
- Figure 83.** A bronze statuette of Jupiter Heliopolitanus, Kafr Yasin, 13. 3 cm.
- Figure 84.** The Map of the Decapolis.
- Figure 85.** A basalt disc of Serapis-Helios, the British Museum, Inv., No., 1929, 0419.1.
- Figure 86.** A bronze figurine of Zeus Helios Megas Serapis, British Museum, Inv. No., GRA 1772, 0302.172.
- Figure 87.** A jasper gem, collections of the Cabinet des Médailles de Paris.
- Figure 88a-b.** a. A bronze statuette of Serapis, Gerasa, the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, Amman, Inv. No. G.139, H. 9.3 cm, W. 4cm. b. drawing by Abd El-Halim.
- Figure 89.** A terracotta medallion of Serapis, Gerasa, Jordan Archaeological Museum, Inv. No. 2364/38.1813.
- Figure 90.** A limestone head of Serapis-Zeus-Ammon, Gerasa, the Department of Antiquities, Inv. No. Magazin im Artemision, 1990, H 9.7 cm.
- Figure 91a-b.** a. A terracotta lamp of Serapis-Ammon, Gerasa, Jordan Archaeological Museum, Amman (formerly Jerusalem, Rockefeller Archaeological Museum 38.1769). b. Drawing by Abd El-Halim.
- Figure 92.** Alexandrian coin of Antoninus Pius, Hornbostel, 1973, p. 300, fig. 313.
- Figure 93.** A marble statue from Gerasa, the Archaeological Museum of the University of Jordan, Amman, Inv. No. 967.
- Figure 94.** A marble head of Isis-Io, Louvre Museum, Inv. No., MA 223.

- Figure 95.** A marble head of Isis-Io, Kunsthistorisches Museum, I 625.
- Figure 96.** A terracotta statuette of Isis-Tyche, Gerasa, Jordan Archaeological Museum, Amman, Inv. No., J. 15506.
- Figure 97.** A bronze statuette of Harpocrates or Khonsu, Gerasa.
- Figure 98.** An oil lamp of Harpocrates, Gerasa, Barakat Gallery, L0249, H. 20. 3 cm.
- Figure 99.** An oil lamp of Osiris, the Athenian Agora.
- Figure 100.** An oil lamp of Osiris-Attis, Fitzwilliam Museum.
- Figure 101.** An oil lamp of Osiris, the Museum of Hatay.
- Figure 102a-b.** a. A white marble head of Serapis from Gadara, Jordan Archaeological Museum Amman, Inv. No. J. 9529, H. 31 cm. b. Drawing by Abd El-Halim.
- Figure 103.** A bronze statuette of Serapis, Gadara.
- Figure 104.** A bronze of Jupiter Capitolinus, the Munich Collection of Antiquities.
- Figure 105.** A bronze statuette of Serapis, the National Museum of Damascus.
- Figure 106.** A figurine of Serapis, Khirbet Ramadan, The National Museum of Damascus, Inv. No., 2504/ 5066.
- Figure 107.** A basalt monolith with a relief of an Egyptian deity, the citadel hill of Amman, Inv. No. 19602.
- Figure 108.** A basalt monolith with a relief of an Egyptian deity, the citadel hill of Amman.
- Figure 109.** A basalt monolith with a relief of an Egyptian deity, the citadel hill of Amman, Inv. No., 19603.
- Figure 110.** A bronze statuette of Harpocrates, Philadelphia.
- Figure 111a-b.** a. A Statue of Serapis, Pella, Depot of the University of Sydney Archaeological Mission at Tabaqat Fahil/Pella – Department of Antiquities, Inv.No. 45325, H. 74.1 cm, w. 55cm. b. Drawing by Abd El-Halim.
- Figure 112.** A porphyry statue at Caesarea Maritima.
- Figure 113.** A statue of Serapis from Bostra, the Archaeological Museum of Bostra, Inv. No., 72, H: 77cm.
- Figure 114.** Plan of the house of Leontis in Beit She'an.
- Figure 115.** The mosaic of the house of Leontis, Scythopolis" Beit She'an".
- Figure 116.** The upper panel of the mosaic of the house of Leontis in Beit She'an, Habas, 2021, Fig.3.

Figure 117. The middle panel of the mosaic of the house of Leontis in Beit She'an, Habas, 2021, Fig.4.

Figure 118. The lower panel of the mosaic of the house of Leontis in Beit She'an, Habas, 2021, Fig.5.

Figure 119. A mosaic of the Church of St. John the Baptist, Gerasa.

Figure 120. A mosaic of the Church of St. Peter and Paul, Gerasa.

Figure 121. The Nile mosaic in the church of St. Stephan, Umm el-Rasas.

Figure 122. Sketch of the composition of the mosaic of St. Stephan, Umm el-Rasas.

Figure 123. A terracotta statuette of Isis- Lactans, Tafas, the National Museum of Damascus. Inv. No. 3226, H. 16 cm.

Figure 124. A mural painting in a tomb in the village of Marwa.

Figure 125. A limestone statue of Isis and Osiris, Heliopolis, Egyptian Museum, Inv. No. JE 92591.

Figure 126. The Nabataean Kingdom, Tuttle, 2009, p.7, Map.1.

Figure 127. The sites of Petra, Vaelske, 2011, Karte, IX.

Figure 128. A sanctuary of Isis, Sidd el-Mreriyye, Petra. Alpass, 2010, fig.1.

Figure 129. A sanctuary of Isis, Sidd el-Mreriyye, Petra.

Figure 130. The representation of Isis in Sidd el-Mreriyye, Petra, the height of relief 59 cm.

Figure 131. A terracotta statuette of a woman, Naukratis, the British Museum, Inv. No. GR 1886.4-I.1446.

Figure 132. A stela from Edessa, the Urfa Museum, Turkey, Janif, 2004, fig. 4.

Figure 133. A relief of Hadad and Atargatis from Dura Europos, Yale University, Inv. No. 1930.319.

Figure 134. A sanctuary of Isis, Wadi Abu Olleqa, Petra, the height of the relief is 74 cm.

Figure 135. A sandstone statuette of Isis, the Temple of the Winged Lions, Archaeological Museum Amman, Inv. No. J16271.

Figure 136. A terracotta statuette, the Temple of the Winged Lions, Jordan Archaeological Museum, Inv. No. J16274.

Figure 137. An Egyptian statuette of Osirophoros, the Temple of the Winged Lions, Jordan Archaeological Museum of Amman, Inv. No. J16193, H. 20.5 cm.

Figure 138. A bronze bust of Serapis from the Temple of the Winged Lions.

Figure 139. A bust of Dushara- Zeus- Serapis? Petra.

- Figure 140.** A cult statue of Dushara-Qōs, the sanctuary of Khirbet et-Tannur.
- Figure 141.** A wooden statue of Serapis, Theadelphia, Egypt.
- Figure 142.** A betyl from the Temple of the Winged Lions, Department of Antiquities, Amman, Inv. No. JP 13483.
- Figure 143.** Khasneh, Petra.
- Figure 144.** The basileion crown of Isis on the pediment as Acroterion, Khasneh.
- Figure 145.** An oinochoe of Arsinoe II, British Museum, Inv., No., 1873,0820.389.
- Figure 146.** A bronze statuette of Isis-Tyche, Petra, Musée de la Bible, Paris, Inv. No. CB7187.
- Figure 147.** An alabaster statuette of Isis from Ez-Zantur, Archaeological Museum Petra, Inv. No. EZ I/89/400, H. 9 cm.
- Figure 148.** A terracotta statuette of Isis, Ez- Zantur IV, Archaeological Museum Petra, Inv, No. JP2318.
- Figure 149.** A betyl from Ez-Zantur, Petra, Museum of Petra, H.50 cm.
- Figure 150.** A betyl from the sanctuary of Ain es-shalaleh in Wadi Rumm, southern Jordan.
- Figure 151.** A terracotta statuette of Isis, potter's kiln at Zurrebah, Jordan Archaeological Museum, H. 17 cm.
- Figure 152.** A terracotta statuette of Isis, at Zurrebah, Museum of Jordanian Heritage, Inv. No. A684.
- Figure 153.** A terracotta statuette of Isis, at Zurrebah, Archaeological Museum Petra, Inv. No. JP862.
- Figure 154.** A fragment of the statuette of Isis, Petra, private collection.
- Figure 155.** The lower part of Isis, Petra, Private collection, Parlasca, 1991, Abb.16.
- Figure 156.** A statue of Demeter, Heraklion Museum, the temple of Demeter in Gortyn, Crete.
- Figure 157.** A bronze statue of Isis-dolente, Ägyptisches Museum Berlin, Inv. No. 12674
- Figure 158.** A terracotta statuette of Isis-dolente, Memphis, Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Inv. No. JE 55242.
- Figure 159.** A terracotta figurine of Isis-dolente, The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, Inv. I, 1a 2903 (IG 2978)), 15.0 x 7.7 x 4.4 cm.
- Figure 160.** A marble statue of Isis, Fiesole, Museo Civico Archeologico, Inv. No. 21.
- Figure 161.** Queen Huldu wearing the basileion, Schwentzel, 2005, p. 157, Fig.7.1-7.3.

- Figure 162.** Aretas IV and Shaqilat with the basileion, Veymiers, 2011, p. 230, Fig.9.32.
- Figure 163.** A bronze statuette of Harpocrates, Petra, Archaeological Museum Petra, Inv. No. JP4762.
- Figure 164.** A bronze statuette of Harpocrates, Petra, private collection.
- Figure 165.** A head of Harpocrates, Petra, Petra Archaeological Museum, Inv. No. JP 156.
- Figure 166.** A head of Harpocrates, Petra, private collection.
- Figure 167.** A terracotta fragment of Harpocrates, Petra, private collection.
- Figure 168.** A terracotta plaque of Harpocrates, Petra, private collection.
- Figure 169.** A terracotta plaque of Harpocrates, the Great Temple, Petra, Archaeological Museum Petra, Inv. No. JP3934, H. 8.4 cm.
- Figure 170.** A terracotta plaque of Harpocrates, the British Museum.
- Figure 171.** The Zodiac of Tyche, the temple of Khirbet et-Tannur, the Cincinnati Art Museum.
- Figure 172.** The Zodiac of Tyche.
- Figure 173.** A zodiac ring in Rome.
- Figure 174.** The wooden coffin of Heter, probably from Thebes.
- Figure 175.** A bronze statuette of Harpocrates from Sia, Syria.
- Figure 176.** A bronze statuette of Harpocrates from Bostra.
- Figure 177.** A marble statue of Harpocrates in el-Ras el-Soda temple, the Antiquities Museum in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina.
- Figure 178.** A basalt statue of Serapis from Ghariyé Shoubeih, H. 1.48 m.
- Figure 179.** A statuette of Serapis, Alexandria, the von Bissing collection at Allard Pierson Museum
- Figure 180.** A relief of Serapis and Isis, Delos.
- Figure 181.** A terracotta plaque from Palmyra, the British Museum, Inv. No., 1885, 1010. 28.
- Figure 182.** Map of Roman Palestine, Oxford.
- Figure 183.** The Caesarea Cup, Louvre Museum, Inv. No., Br 4391; MND 2249.
- Figure 184.** A statuette of Isis with Harpocrates, Caesarea, Sdot Yam Museum, In. No. CM.81.2, H.7.2 cm.
- Figure 185.** A marble statue of Isis, Caesarea, Gersht, 2017, p. 81, fig. 6.12.
- Figure 186.** A figurine of Serapis, Caesarea Maritima, Gersht, 2015, no. 7, H. 9.4 cm.
- Figure 187.** A bronze bust of Serapis from Caesarea Maritime, H. 10 cm.

- Figure 188.** A bust of Serapis from Caesarea Maritima carved on a marble frieze, Israel Museum, H. 37.5 cm.
- Figure 189.** A gem of Serapis, Isis, Demeter, Caesarea Maritime.
- Figure 190.** A gem of Serapis-Ammon, Caesarea Maritime.
- Figure 191.** A coin of Caesarea, Bricault, 2006b, pl. 17:1.
- Figure 192.** A coin of Trajan Decius, Caesarea, Bricault, 2006b, pl. 17: 2.
- Figure 193.** The shrine of Isis and Serapis in the hippodrome, Caesarea Maritima, Turnheim, Ovadiah 2002, fig. III.41.
- Figure 194.** A votive Foot of Serapis, Caesarea Maritima, Gersht, 2015, fig. 24, H. 16.4 cm.
- Figure 195.** A votive Foot of Serapis, Caesarea Maritima, Gersht, 2017, fig. 6.10.
- Figure 196.** A votive Foot of Isis, Caesarea Maritima, Gersht, 2015, fig. 22, H. 13.2 cm.
- Figure 197.** A votive Foot from the Temple of Ras el-Soda, Antiquities Museum in Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Inv. No. T0027.
- Figure 198.** A votive foot in the Egyptian Museum of Turin, Inv. No. S. 17137.
- Figure 199.** A reconstruction of the obelisk stands in the center of the hippodrome.
- Figure 200.** An Egyptian bronze statuette of Horus the child, Ascalon, H. 12.5 cm.
- Figure 201.** An Egyptian bronze statuette of Horus the child, Ascalon, H. 11.2 cm.
- Figure 202.** An Egyptian bronze statuette of Osiris, Ascalon, H. 9.9 cm.
- Figure 203.** An Egyptian bronze statuette of Apis bull, Ascalon, H. 7. 2 cm.
- Figure 204.** An Egyptian bronze statuette of Bastet, Ascalon, H. 8 cm.
- Figure 205.** An Egyptian bronze statuette of Isis and Horus the child, Ascalon, H. 9.1 cm.
- Figure 206.** A reconstruction of the basilica in Ascalon, Palestine.
- Figure 207.** A relief of Nike and Atlas in Ascalon, Palestine.
- Figure 208.** A relief of Isis-Tyche in Ascalon, Palestine.
- Figure 209.** A terracotta bust of Isis-Tyche, Ascalon.
- Figure 210.** A portrait of Serapis priest, Hawara, British Museum, Inv. No. EA 747.
- Figure 211.** A relief of Isis, the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Inv. No. JE 47108.
- Figure 212.** A Palmyrene funerary relief, Colledge, 1976, p. 68, Fig. 83.
- Figure 213.** A relief from Dura Europos, Colledge, 1976, p. 227, Fig. 146.
- Figure 214.** A coin of Marcus Aurelius, Ascalon, Shaick, 2012, pl. 14:1.
- Figure 215.** A coin of Elagabalus, Ascalon, Shaick, 2012, pl. 14:3.
- Figure 216.** A gem from Ascalon tomb I, Shaick, 2012, pl. 14:9.

- Figure 217.** A gem in München, Auction Catalog of Karl Kress, Shaick, 2012, pl. 14:8.
- Figure 218.** A coin of Caracalla, Ascalon, Bricault, 2006b, p.131, pl.19:20.
- Figure 219.** A coin from the reign of Antoninus Pius, Ascalon, Belayche, 2007, Fig.4.
- Figure 220.** A terracotta bust of Serapis, Ashdod, Palestine, H. 7 cm.
- Figure 221.** A bronze statuette of standing Serapis-Ammon, Karanis, Fayoum.
- Figure 222.** A torso of Isis, Marisa, Erlich, Kloner, 2008, pl. 6:25.
- Figure 223.** A fragment of Isis-Aphrodite, Marisa, Erlich, Kloner, 2008, pl. 7:27.
- Figure 224.** A fragment of Isis-Aphrodite, Marisa, Erlich, Kloner, 2008, pl. 7:28.
- Figure 225.** A head of Isis-Aphrodite, Marisa, Erlich, Kloner, 2008, pl. 7:29.
- Figure 226.** A bronze statuette of Horus, Marisa, Palestine, H. 16 cm.
- Figure 227.** A terracotta statuette of Harpocrates, Marisa, Palestine, H. 4.7 cm.
- Figure 228.** The Tomb I, Marisa.
- Figure 229.** The painted frieze in Tomb I, Marisa.
- Figure 230.** The painted frieze in Tomb I, Marisa.
- Figure 231.** A bronze pendant of Harpocrates from Beersheba of Galilee, H. 2 cm.
- Figure 232.** A bronze base of Apis from Beersheba of Galilee.
- Figure 233.** A bronze statuette of Serapis, bay of Haifa, H. 22 cm.
- Figure 234.** A relief of Serapis, the Egyptian Museum of Turin.
- Figure 235.** A blue glass pendant of Harpocrates from Yavneh Yam.
- Figure 236.** The therapeutic sanctuary in Bethesda.
- Figure 237.** A fragmentary relief from Aelia Capitolina, Museum of st. Anna, Jerusalem.
- Figure 238.** A terracotta figurine of Serapis-Agathodaimon, Lower Egyptian, Qasr Dawud.
- Figure 239.** A limestone stela preserved in the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, Inv. No. F 1960/ 9.1.
- Figure 240.** A coin of Aelia Capitolina.
- Figure 241.** A coin of Aelia Capitolina.
- Figure 242.** A coin of Aelia Capitolina.
- Figure 243.** An altar from Legio (Kefar' Otnay), Palestine, H. 1.05 m.
- Figure 244.** A reconstruction of the altar, Legio, Eck, Tepper, 2019, fig. 2.
- Figure 245.** The Mosaic of the Nile Festival building in Sepphoris, Palestine, 6.2 x 6.7 m.
- Figure 246.** The depiction of Aigyptus, the Mosaic of the Nile Festival building in Sepphoris.
- Figure 247.** The nilometer, the Mosaic of the Nile Festival building in Sepphoris.

Figure 248. The depiction of Alexandria and Semasia, the Mosaic of the Nile Festival building in Sepphoris.

Figure 249. A marble statue of Nilus in the Vatican, Inv. No. 2300.

Figure 250. A marble statue of Nilus in Kynopolis, Egypt, the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization.

Figure 251. A silver Trulla from Perm in Russia, the Hermitage Museum.

Figure 252. A Coptic tapestry, Louvre Museum, Inv. No. AF 3448.

Figure 253. The distribution of Egyptian gods in the Levant.

INTRODUCTION

The Levant has been a significant cultural crossroads for numerous civilizations over many centuries. The archaeological discoveries have provided insights into the depth of relationships that existed between the successive Egyptian kingdom and the cities of the Levant, stretching from northern Syria to southern Palestine. In fact, the political and economic ties that linked the two countries for a long time served as the foundation for Egypt's profound cultural influences on the Levant, giving rise to intricate cultural phenomena that can be verified on the levels of history, religion, and art. It was almost always a natural and spontaneous osmosis related to Egypt's centuries-long dominance over the countries of ancient Asia. In addition to smaller states and principalities, great powers such as the Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Persian empires played an essential role in shaping the region's culture. With the campaign of Alexander the Great, Diadokois rule, and the Roman conquest of the Levant, these were joined primarily by other western influences. This complex intercultural exchange was also reflected in religion, which often became the subject of individual studies and comprehensive investigations.

Subject and Issues

This study focuses on the cultural influences of Egyptian deities in the Levant during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. These influences are best illustrated by their spread in the east of the Mediterranean basin, which shows the extent of the Egyptian religious and civilizational influence in the ancient world. The study also aims to investigate the depths of these deities in their new home, examine their nature, and analyze the changes that occurred to them in a new environment. This exploration will shed light on the developments in their forms and functions during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, which had the most significant impact for the purposes of this research. However, the main reason that leads me to limit the

scope of the investigation into the Egyptian deities is due to the complexity of the problem in these regions.

The study of the expansion of the cult of Egyptian gods raises the issue of the relationship between the development of this cult and the political role played by the Ptolemies in the region. The complexity arises from the fact that it is not merely a matter of direct or indirect "influences," but rather that Ptolemaic power exerted its control over several cities in the Levant for nearly a century. Many cities, such as Akko-Ptolemais, Philadelphia, and Scythopolis, were founded by Ptolemies and experienced the presence of the Egyptian cult. However, it is worth noting that while the cult emerged in certain cities during the Hellenistic period, it also appeared well after the Levant had escaped Ptolemaic influence. Here again, it will therefore be necessary to see to what extent private initiatives and political designs were able to meet and reinforce each other or, on the contrary, follow their own paths. It is therefore necessary to evaluate the political and socio-economic conditions that allowed the emergence of the religious phenomenon in question.

It is also all the more important to remain open to all sorts of special forms since Egyptian culture in the pre-Hellenistic period was more influential in the Levant than in any other region of the ancient world. The Levant, especially the area envisaged here, was always in close proximity to Egypt. Although it was not part of the Nile land, ancient Egyptians claimed it at various times in the pre-Hellenistic centuries due to strategic, economic, and ideological reasons. Until Roman times, the interaction between these two regions occurred more naturally and swiftly compared to other Mediterranean areas. The proximity of the Delta ports to those in the southern Levant, along with the utilization of the well-traveled land route known as the "Horus Military Route," ensured swift communication¹.

¹ The Horus Military Route, also known as the "Way of Horus" or "Road of Horus", was a strategic military route in ancient Egypt. It was named after the Egyptian god Horus, who was associated with war and protection. This route played a significant role in the exchange of goods, military campaigns, and cultural interactions during ancient times. It provided a direct link between Egypt and the southern regions of Canaan, ensuring a faster and more accessible connection between the two areas compared to other regions of the Mediterranean. The military road of Horus was strategically significant during different periods of ancient Egyptian history, particularly during the New Kingdom. Hussein, Abdel Alim, 2015, pp. 1-13.

The Egyptian influence is evident in various aspects, such as the motif of the winged sun, which has been used in Levantine art for more than two millennia². In the Egyptian imagination, the winged sun symbol represented the sky, sun gods, and royalty. Throughout the Levant, signs and remnants of Egyptian religious concepts were discovered, including statuettes, reliefs, and amulets³. These objects were either exported, brought to the region, or even replicated locally. Additionally, the associated iconographies were believed to have originated in Egypt and incorporated a wide range of deities from the Pharaonic pantheon. It would be intriguing to explore the extent to which Hellenized portraits align with this tradition.

This research aims to collect and systematically present the material culture related to the Isiac gods in the Levant, while recording them within their context whenever possible⁴. I focus on the material evidence (including sculpture, architecture, inscriptions, and coins) found in the sanctuaries of the Isiac deities, and I also include cases from public spaces within cities, cemeteries, and domestic contexts. Additionally, I pay special attention to how people structured their religious experiences through this material culture. The objective is to contribute new evidence or shed light on previously overlooked testimonies by organizing them in geographical order and subjecting existing material to a more comprehensive analysis.

The understanding of Egyptian deities, particularly their modes of representation, underwent significant changes during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The extent of this transformation raises questions about its depth. Therefore, it is worthwhile to investigate the origin and cultural background of the source material, whether it originated directly from Egypt to the Levant or from other parts of the Mediterranean. It is important to determine to what extent authentic Egyptian ideas of god are still expressed or whether Isis, Serapis,

² Aliquot, 2004, pp. 204-205.

³ Haider, 2018, pp. 269-285.

⁴ The term "Isiac" is used in this context to encompass all aspects related to the worship of the divine figures originating from the Nile Valley, such as Anubis, Apis, Bubastis, Harpocrates, Hermanubis, Horus, Hydreios, Isis, Neilos, Nephthys, Osiris, and Serapis. This cult of deities was present outside of Egypt between the end of the fourth century BC and the end of the fourth century AD. Since all these deities are encompassed under the term "Isiac", the plural term "Isiac cults" is preferred for description. Bricault, 2000a, p. 91; Bricault, 2000b, p. 194.

Harpocrates, and other Egyptian gods were understood in the Levant as Graeco-Roman gods. Furthermore, the distribution routes, stations, individuals, and communities involved in the dissemination of the Egyptian religion are of interest. An examination of potential long-term connections between immigrant gods and local deities also raises additional inquiries.

History of the Research

There have been a few concise works that focused mainly on written material. Bricault, for instance, worked on an atlas of the Isiac presence outside Egypt, "Atlas de la Diffusion des Cultes Isiaques" (2001). Additionally, he compiled corpora of inscriptions with Isiac motifs in "Recueil des Inscriptions Concernant les Cultes Isiaques" (2005) with supplements in 2008, 2011, 2014, and 2020, as well as a work on numismatics titled "Sylloge Nummorum Religionis Isiacae et Sarapiacae" (2008).

Despite the scarcity of comprehensive studies, there are valuable individual research works that offer geographically limited but insightful access to various sources. For instance, the fundamental work of Dunand, "Le culte d'Isis dans le bassin oriental de la Méditerranée" (1973), which dedicates only a twelve-page "appendix" to Egyptian devotions in the Syrian-Palestinian Levant. Weber's extensive research contributions, particularly "Gadara–Umm Qes I, Gadara Decapolitana" (2002), hold immense value for understanding the Decapolis region as he primarily focuses on the analysis of archaeological material. Additionally, Lichtenberger's "Kulte und Kultur der Dekapolis" (2003) and Riedl's "Gottheiten und Kulte in der Dekapolis" (2003) have both examined evidence concerning the presence of Egyptian gods in the Decapolis area. Another article by Bricault, "Deities from Egypt on the Coins of the Southern Levant" (2006), delves into the numismatic evidence concerning the cult of Egyptian deities, including Isis, Serapis, and Harpocrates, in the Roman southern Levant. The study reveals that this cult's prevalence varied over different periods and geographical regions, making it challenging to draw generalizations. Instead, the cult's manifestations varied, and in some cases, the coins provided evidence of local cult practices. According to the author's findings, only nine cities in Palestine utilized Egyptian types on their coins, with a particular focus on the colonies of Caesarea, Aelia Capitolina, and Akko-Ptolemais.

Furthermore, the article by Aliquot, “Aegyptiaca et Isiaca de la Phénicie et du Liban aux Époques Hellénistique et Romaine” (2004), examines the role and significance of Egyptian and Isiac cults within Phoenician culture, with a particular emphasis on the cities of Byblos and Tyre. The research concludes that while there were some indications of Egyptization in Phoenicia before the era of Alexander the Great, the significant influence of Egyptian elements in architecture and culture mainly occurred during the process of Hellenization. In a conference contribution, Belayche explored “Les dévotions à Isis et Serapis dans la Judée-Palestine Romaine” (2007), which centers on the diffusion of Greco-Egyptian gods in Palestine, shedding light on their worship in the broader region. Moreover, an important dissertation by Vaelske, titled “Isis im Osten” (2011), provides compelling evidence for the presence of Egyptian gods in the Near East, excluding the northern Levant. Among the more in-depth studies that have emerged, the Isis cult in Petra has been a subject of significant scholarly attention: Roche, “Le culte d'Isis et l'influence égyptienne à Pétra” (1987), as well as Zayadine, “L'iconographie d'Isis à Pétra” (1991), and Merklein, Wenning, “Ein Verehrungsplatz der Isis in Petra neu untersucht” (1998), and more recently, Alpass, “the Basileion of Isis and the Religion Art of Nabataean Petra” (2010). Despite the focus on specific regions and limited source availability, these works collectively contribute valuable insights into the diffusion and worship of Egyptian gods in the eastern Mediterranean during the Roman period. However, further research and interdisciplinary approaches are necessary to gain a comprehensive understanding of the extent and significance of these religious practices in the broader context of ancient history.

Chapter Outlines

In terms of content, the work is divided into an introduction that highlights the issues and the importance of the topic. The subsequent chapters are organized based on geographical areas, exploring various types of monuments that provide evidence of knowledge and worship of Egyptian gods:

The First Chapter delves into the geographical location of the Levant and its historical background, with a particular focus on the period following the death of Alexander the Great. The conflicts that emerged between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids over the region of Coele-

Syria, known as the Syrian Wars, during this time, shaped the cultural landscape, resulting in significant interactions between Egyptian and Hellenistic cultures. These interactions played an essential role in the diffusion of Egyptian religious practices and beliefs throughout the area. Furthermore, the chapter provides a concise overview of the Levant during Roman rule. The Roman influence on the region brought about further changes in religious dynamics, as Egyptian deities continued to find their place alongside local and Roman gods.

The Second Chapter provides valuable insights into the significance of Egyptian gods in various regions of Syria-Phoenicia. The first part covers cities in Syria, such as Antioch on the Orontes, Seleucia in Pieria, and Laodicea by the sea. Additionally, the influence of Egyptian deities extended beyond the Tetrapolis to other cities like Balanea and Antaradus. Moreover, the ancient Hauran, near the border with Jordan, was home to significant cities such as Epiphaneia and Emesa, all of which embraced Egyptian religious practices. Along the Euphrates, Dura-Europos was another significant site where Egyptian religious influences were detected. The second part provides a historical background on the interactions between Phoenician and Egyptian cultures, including trade relationships and diplomatic ties that facilitated the exchange of religious ideas and practices. Furthermore, it explores the Phoenician coastal area, encompassing prominent cities such as Byblos, Tyre, Umm el-Amed, Mispè-Yamim, and Kharayeb. This region was a vibrant center for cultural exchange, and the chapter uncovers compelling evidence of Egyptian religious artifacts, underscoring the presence of Egyptian cults and their integration into the local religious landscape.

The Third Chapter focuses on the discoveries of Egyptian religious artifacts in the Decapolis cities. Among the notable cities explored in this chapter are Gerasa, Gadara, Pella, Philadelphia, Scythopolis, and Dion.

The Fourth Chapter extensively explores Egyptian testimonies from Arabia, with a specific focus on the Nabatean city of Petra. The chapter sheds light on two sanctuaries dedicated to the goddess Isis, which were unearthed in the locations of Sidd el-Mreriyye and Wadi Abu Olleqa. These discoveries provide crucial evidence of the influence and worship of Egyptian deities within the Nabatean civilization. The archaeological findings presented in this chapter include a diverse array of statuettes representing prominent Egyptian gods such as Isis,

Harpocrates, Serapis, and Osiris. These artifacts were discovered in significant locations within Petra and serve as compelling indicators of the city's religious and cultural connections to ancient Egypt. Among the notable sites where these religious artifacts were unearthed are the temple of the winged lions, EZ-Zantur, and the ez-zurrabeh pottery kiln. Each of these locations holds its own unique historical and religious significance, contributing to our understanding of the intertwining religious practices in the Hellenistic and Roman Levant. Furthermore, the study includes the cities of Khirbet et-Tannur, Sia, Gharie Shoubeih, and Palmyra.

The Fifth Chapter deals with the Egyptian religious findings in Palestine, with a focus on significant locations such as Caesarea Maritime, Ascalon, Aelia Capitolina (Jerusalem), and Sepphoris.

The conclusion aims to summarize the historical foundations discussed throughout the work. Additionally, it raises thought-provoking questions about the extent and mechanisms of the diffusion of Isiac cults in the Hellenistic and Roman Levant.

CHAPTER I

I.1. A geographic overview of the Levant

In the beginning, the terms "the Levant" and "ancient Syria" were often used interchangeably to refer to the collection of disparate geographic areas at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea⁵. Due to the lack of political unity, precisely defining the boundaries of "the Levant" during antiquity was challenging, although it has been confined within fairly clear geographical limits between the Mediterranean in the west and the desert and the Euphrates in the east. The term "Levant" is derived from the Latin word "*Levatio*", which means "raising, lifting up", and is broadly equivalent to the Arabic term "al-Mashriq, meaning "the eastern place where the Sun rises". In contemporary times, this region is commonly known as "Bilad Al-Sham" by the Arabs⁶.

Before the Hellenistic period, the Levantine countries were divided and scattered between the two dominant powers of the ancient world, Egypt and Mesopotamia, due to internal and external factors. It is critical to note that while much of modern Syria falls within its ancient counterpart, "ancient Syria", the Hellenistic designation encompasses a much larger area. It is approximately bounded by the Taurus Mountains in the north and Mount Carmel in Palestine to the south. Its western border is the Mediterranean Sea, while to the east, it extends to the Euphrates River and the Syrian Desert, which is located in the northern Arabian Peninsula (**Fig. 1**). This region is also a part of the so-called "Fertile Crescent", a curved strip of agricultural land stretching from Mesopotamia across northern Syria and down to Egypt⁷.The

⁵ Strabo divides ancient Syria into four regions: 1. Commagene and Samosata as its capital; 2. the Seleucid of Syria, named by Seleucus Nicator, who founded four important cities there: Antioch, Seleucia, Apamea, and Laodicea; 3. Coele-Syria or Hollow Syria, including in particular the high valleys of the Orontes and Jordan; 4. a territory comprising a maritime part, Phoenicia, and a continental part, Palestine. Strabo, *Geography*, 16, 11, 2.

⁶ Dever, 1997, pp. 350-351; Bienkowski, Millard, 2000, p. 181; Green, 2003, pp. 153-154; Naim, 2011, p. 921.

⁷ Strabo, *Geography*, 16.2.1-2; Sartre, 2001, pp.11-12; Butcher, 2003, pp. 10-15; Green, 2003, pp. 153-154; Cohen, 2006, pp. 21-22; Wright, 2010, pp. 12-15; Suriano, 2014, pp. 42-43.

Levant encompassed territories that are part of present-day countries included Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, and part of Turkey⁸.

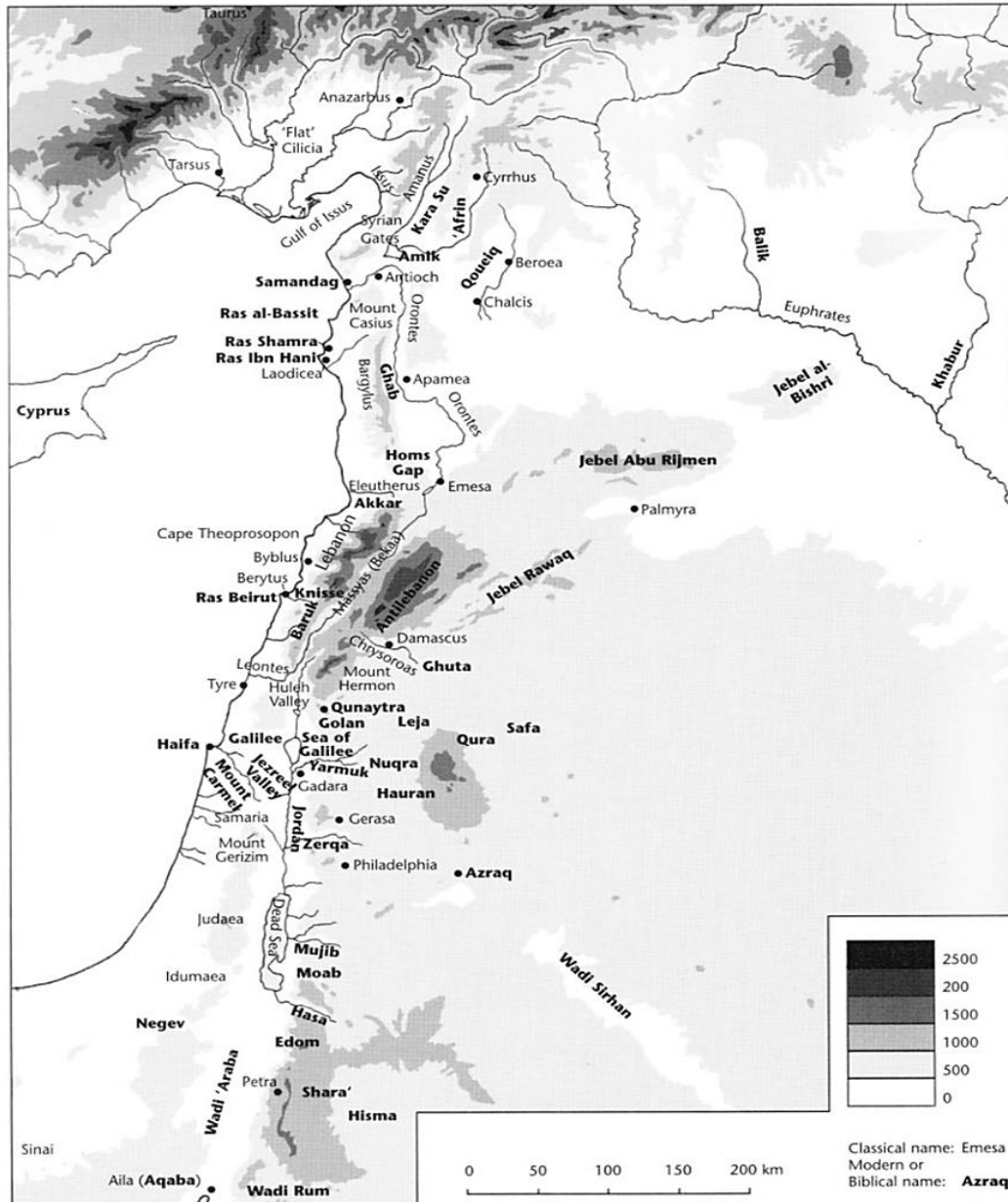


Figure 1. Map of the Levant, Butcher, 2003.

⁸ Bienkowski, Millard, 2000, p.181; Butcher, 2003, p.10; Wright, 2010, p. 14; Greenberg, 2019.

Geographically, the Levant is a region located in southwestern Asia that serves as a natural bridge connecting the continents of Asia and Africa⁹. Moreover, it represents a strategic stake of prime importance: a defensive glacis necessary for the security of Egypt. It also constitutes the most useful seafront for Mesopotamia and Iran as long as the navigation of the Arabian Peninsula remains unpredictable. The Levant can be divided into five parallel sections based on the topography of its lands, each of which has its own distinctive characteristics, which are as follows:

1. The Coastal Plain: it stretches along the shore of the Eastern Mediterranean, typically narrow but widening in Palestine. It extends from the north at the Gulf of Iskenderunah (ancient Issus) and ends south at the Sinai Peninsula¹⁰. This coast does not form a homogeneous whole, as much by its population as by its maritime vocation. The coast of northern Syria, which is poorly known around 333 BC, the Phoenician coast, in the center, active and populated, and the Palestinian coast, in the south, which is more inhospitable despite some well-frequented commercial places¹¹. The coast was crossed by the so-called “Via Maris”¹², and the most important cities, also commercially, were Byblos, Sidon, Tyre, Ashdod, and Ascalon.

2. The Mountain Ranges: The coastal plain is supervised by mountain ranges and plateaus, running north-south, starting with the Amanus range in northern Syria and ending with the towering massif of Sinai¹³. The most important are the two parallel mountain ranges, the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon (Sirion)¹⁴, separated by a cleft through which two major rivers

⁹ Suriano, 2014, p. 42.

¹⁰ Greenberg, 2019, p. 4.

¹¹ Sartre, 2001, p.37; Green, 2003, p. 153.

¹² The *Via Maris*, "the way of the sea," was an ancient trade route that connected Egypt with the regions of the Levant. It was a significant commercial and military route in antiquity, facilitating trade and cultural exchange between various civilizations. The *Via Maris* followed the Mediterranean coastline, starting from Egypt and stretching northward through cities such as Gaza, Ascalon, Jaffa, and Caesarea, and continuing into the northern Levant. From there, it branched out to various inland cities, connecting major centers like Jerusalem, Damascus, and beyond. Throughout different periods of history, the *Via Maris* was used by various civilizations, including the ancient Egyptians, Canaanites, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans. Beitzel, 1991, pp. 65-75.

¹³ The Amanus, Jabal al-Aqra' (ancient Mount Casius), Jabal Ansariya (Bargylus), and the high Lebanon range. Butcher, 2003, pp. 11-12, fig. 2.

¹⁴ The Amanus ranges, the Bargylus and the mountains of Galilee and Judaea form the northern and southern extensions of Lebanon. Cohen, 2006, p. 21; Wright, 2010, p. 14.

flow from a central watershed: the Jordan River south into the Dead Sea and the Orontes River north into the Mediterranean¹⁵.

3. The Region of Rifts: It represents a long, narrow basin at a plain rising from the Hama region; between the ranges of Lebanon and Antilebanon is the Syro-African Rift Valley, called "the Beqaa Valley" (ancient Massyas), which forms a high plateau with its watershed in the vicinity of Baalbek¹⁶. The central and southern parts of the Beqaa are highly fertile, but the northern part is arider and consequently less productive and more thinly populated, then continuing south into the fertile Jordan Valley until it reaches the Dead Sea and continues in the Araba Valley, a broad and arid basin of saline soils, which extends south to the Gulf of Aqaba on the Red Sea¹⁷. It is bounded on the west and east by highlands ranging in elevation from 600 to 1200 meters above sea level¹⁸.

4. The Eastern Highlands zones: This zone, east of the rift and the Trans-Jordan Plateau, is known as the Mountain Ridge and the Eastern Highlands. It slopes gently towards the central plateau in the east and drops steeply towards the Dead Sea Rift in the west¹⁹.

5. The Eastern Deserts: bounding Syria on the east from the Euphrates River to the Red Sea and sweeping around to the Mediterranean's coast on the south²⁰.

The Levant has always served as a corridor, conduit, and receptacle for people, materials, technologies, ideologies, and experiments in social organization originating from points to the north, east, and south²¹. In addition to its cultural influence on various ancient civilizations, it was the focal point between the civilizations of the ancient Near East and Europe, making it easier to play the role of commercial mediator since ancient times. The relations between

¹⁵ The Jordan River has its source in Mount Hermon (2700 m), on the border with Lebanon and Syria. It flows from north to south and forms the ancient Lake Huleh, then continues to the great Lake of Galilee (also called the Sea of Galilee) and then flows into the Dead Sea.

¹⁶ Suriano, 2014, pp. 49-50.

¹⁷ Suriano, 2014, p. 57.

¹⁸In the classical sources, the Beqaa was known as Coele-Syria, a name given to it after the Alexander's conquest. During the subsequent wars between the Ptolemies and Seleucids, the name was expanded to include all southern Syria, but under the Roman, it was limited to Coele-Syria, Hauran, and a part of Transjordan. Butcher, 2003, pp. 13-15; Wright, 2010, p. 14.

¹⁹ Wright, 2010, p.14.

²⁰ Bevan, 1902, pp. 207- 208; Butcher, 2003, p.11; Green, 2003, p. 153; Cohen, 2006, p. 21.

²¹ Suriano, 2014, p. 42.

Egypt and the Levant have evolved over time, including overland and sea trade, alliances, and immigration²². These interactions contributed to the enrichment of architecture, art, literature, and religion, with both imported elements and local modifications by each host culture. During Egypt's flourishing periods, such as the Old and Middle Kingdoms, Egypt launched periodic attacks on Palestine and occasionally engaged in more significant sea trade with Syria²³. However, during Egypt's unstable internal political situations, such as the intermediate periods, Egyptian exports and local copies of Egyptian forms, motifs, and concepts generally declined. This period of instability led to a decrease in direct Egyptian influence on Levantine cultures²⁴. Nevertheless, trade continued to serve as a principal mode of transmitting Egyptian objects and influences to the region²⁵.

I have included historical names whenever they are available and contextually appropriate in the geographic descriptions and locales throughout the work. The study will be divided into different regions: Syria-Phoenicia, the Decapolis, Arabia, and Palestine. Starting with northern Syria, which consists of Antioch on the Orontes, Apamea on the Orontes, Seleucia by the sea, and Laodicea by the sea²⁶. In addition, Phoenicia was located between the coast and the Mount Lebanon ridge. To the east of Jordan, we find the smaller regions of Peraea, Ammanitis, and Moab, a substantial section of which would later become the Decapolis²⁷. At the same time, the tribes seem to have been the dominant settlement type of the interior except for a few centers, such as Petra. The Nabataeans maintained a culturally complex, mixed

²² Mumford, 2014, pp. 206-207.

²³ During the reign of Amenemhat III, relations between Egypt and the Levant were not only kept very close, but the pharaoh also used the logistical support of the Palestinians in expeditions to the mines, and there were also peaceful migrations to Egypt. What transpires very clearly through the Egyptian-style architecture, the pottery, the statuary, and the inscriptions present in both royal and private tombs is the link between Byblos and Egypt. Furthermore, two sphinxes of Amenemhat III were found in Ugarit, and a sphinx of Amenemhat II's daughter was found in Qatna. Sharon, 2014, pp. 83-112.

²⁴ In 1922, the directors of the archeology schools of Jerusalem met to decide on a conventional chronology for the Levant, and the European tripartite one with the Stone, Bronze, and Iron Ages was taken as an example. Each age was further divided into Ancient, Middle and Late with the sole exception of the Iron Age, which had only Ancient and Late. Within each of these sub-periods, Roman numerals were used to further divide time (for example, the Middle Bronze Age is divided into MB I, MB IIA, and IIB, etc.). Generally, the first part of the Middle Bronze Age MB I, is compared with the Middle Egyptian Kingdom, while the second part, or MB II, corresponds to the Second Egyptian Intermediate Period. Sharon, 2014, pp. 83-112.

²⁵ Mumford, 2014, pp. 206-207.

²⁶ Strabo, *Geography*, 16.2.4; Butcher, 2003, p. 25; Cohen, 2006, pp. 28-29.

²⁷ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 5, 16, 74; Flavius Josephus, *Bellum*, III, 9.7; the evangelist Mark, 5, 20; 7, 31; the evangelist Matthew, 4, 25; Parker, 1975, pp. 43-441; Isaac, 1981, pp. 67-74; Wenning, 1994, pp.1-35; Wright, 2010, pp.12-15.

settled-nomadic existence that encompassed not only several small permanent settlement sites but also did much to irrigate and utilize otherwise inhospitable desert areas²⁸. Palestine, located south of Phoenicia, flattened out into Samaria, Judaea, and Idumaea between the Mediterranean and Jordan²⁹.

I.2. Historical background:

I.2.1. Political Relationships between Ptolemies and Seleucids

A closer examination of the history of interactions between the Hellenistic kingdoms, particularly the Ptolemaic-Seleucid dynasties, reveals a shift in the pace and nature of their relationships based on each party's circumstances and interests. This change in dynamics can be traced from the cooperative ties between the two founders, Ptolemy I and Seleucus I, to the competitive and conflicting relations that emerged between their successors, marked by struggles over areas of influence. To understand this transformation from alliance to conflict and war, it is necessary to study the circumstances surrounding the formation of the Hellenistic kingdoms after Alexander the Great's death. Furthermore, a more comprehensive and general evaluation of the nature of relations between the Ptolemaic and Seleucid states is crucial to unraveling the reasons behind this shift.

After the death of Alexander the Great in Babylon in June 323 BC, he left one of the largest empires in antiquity. Immediately, conflicts arose among Alexander's Successors for control of the throne since Alexander died without an heir³⁰. In 323 BC, Alexander's generals held a meeting in Babylon to address the situation of succession. It was eventually agreed that Philip Arrhidaeus, Alexander's half-brother, would be an acceptable successor, at least in a legal sense, as he was unable to fulfill the responsibilities that Alexander had entrusted due to his epilepsy and disability³¹. In addition, the Sogdian wife of Alexander "Rhoxane" was pregnant and thus expected to give birth to a male heir to her deceased husband within a few months. Consequently, Alexander's Successors decided that if the unborn child were a boy, which was

²⁸ Bowersock, 2003, pp.12-27.

²⁹ Sartre, 2001, p. 39; Butcher, 2003, p. 12.

³⁰ Barletta, 2010, p. 20.

³¹ Diodorus, XVIII, 2; Préaux, 1978, p. 127.

indeed the case, he would be named Alexander IV and share power with Arrhidaeus, who assumed the name Philip III³².

However, before the birth of the child, there was a need to govern the inherited Empire, so the generals of Alexander shared out the tasks and the great regional governments amongst themselves. It was decided to assign Craterus the role of prostates of the two heirs to the throne, while Perdikkas was described as Chiliarch (a commander of the army). The remaining leaders were assigned specific territories: Ptolemy I (son of Lagos) was appointed to rule over Egypt³³, Antigonus Monophthalmus (the one-eyed) became the supervisor of Western Anatolia (Phrygia, Lycia, Pamphylia), Eumenes of Cardia was sent to govern Cappadocia and Paphlagonia, Lamedon of Mytilene was entrusted with Syria, Lysimachus assumed control of Thrace, and Greece was assigned to Antipater. Lastly, Seleucus only appears as a leader of the *hetairoi* (cavalry)³⁴.

After that, Craterus had to depart for Greece to assist Antipater in "the Lamian war"³⁵, but Perdikkas seized the opportunity and claimed the throne for himself, leading to a clash with Craterus and Antipater. In any case, Perdikkas was known for his strong belief in maintaining the unity of the empire and was determined to complete Alexander's conquests, countering the separatist tendencies of the Macedonian satraps³⁶. In 321 BC, Perdikkas had to go to war against his rivals; he entrusted the government and defense of Asia Minor to Eumenes while personally leading the charge against Ptolemy I, whom he perceived as a less formidable opponent. Perdikkas resented Ptolemy for diverting the remains of Alexander the Great to Egypt, as Perdikkas had intended to place them in the dynastic vault of Aegae in Macedonia, thereby solidifying his power in Europe³⁷. He advanced as far as Pelusium, but he encountered strong fortifications along the banks of the Nile and was repeatedly repulsed in

³² He is the son of Philip II and a Thessalian woman named Philinna. Diodorus, XVIII, 2,4; Smith, 1855, pp. 514-515; Bevan, 1902, p. 28; Will, 1984, pp. 25-26; Heckel, 2002, pp. 81-95; Will, 1979, p. 29.

³³ Ptolemy I willingly accepted the satrapy of Egypt, which included not only the Nile valley but also Libya and the adjacent region on the Eastern side known as Arabia. Undoubtedly, this Arabia corresponds to the one located by Strabo between the Nile and the Arabian Gulf, which refers to the Red Sea. Pelusium occupied the northern end of this Arabia. Abel, 1935, pp. 559-581.

³⁴ Diodorus, XVIII, 3; Justin Epitome XIII.6.4-20, XIII.8.1; Smith, 1855, p. 515; Abel, 1935, pp. 559-581; Préaux, 1978, p. 127; Will, 1979, pp. 41-43; Cabanes, 1995, p. 17; Wright, 2010, p.18.

³⁵ Diodorus, XVII, 111, 1-3; XVIII, 8-18; Justin Epitome, XIII, 5; Smith, 1855, p. 517; Cary, 1932, pp.7-10; Préaux, 1978, pp. 128-129; Cabanes, 1995, pp. 17-18; Will, 1979, pp. 57-65.

³⁶ Will, 1979, pp. 65-66.

³⁷ Diodorus, XVIII, 26-28; Préaux, 1978, p. 129; Sartre, 1989, p. 33; Will, 1979, p. 70; Barletta, 2010, p. 21.

his attempts to cross the river. During the last attempt, near Memphis, many of his men were lost due to the treacherous currents and depth of the river³⁸. Consequently, a conspiracy was formed by Perdikkas's own generals, including Seleucus, leading to his assassination in his tent³⁹. In 321 BC, the rivals of Perdikkas and Craterus met at Triparadisus, which is located north of Beqaa. It was decided that Antipater would assume the guardianship of the kings, Ptolemy would retain his position in Egypt, and Seleucus would be rewarded for his assistance in killing Perdikkas by receiving the central satrapy of Babylon. Antigonos, on the other hand, maintained his control over Asia Minor and was tasked with confronting Eumenes of Cardia in battle⁴⁰.

After the death of Antipater in 319 BC, Cassander, Antipater's son, believed that he was the rightful successor to the position of overseeing the two kings. However, Antipater had appointed Polyperchon as his successor, who in turn worked towards appointing Eumenes as the commander of the Macedonian forces in Asia Minor⁴¹. Antigonos, seeing an opportunity, launched an attack against Eumenes and successfully compelled him to retreat from Asia. Cassander, in disagreement with Polyperchon, decided to travel to Asia. There, he formed a coalition against the new regent, which included Lysimachus and Antigonos, and Ptolemy joined the coalition soon after⁴². In the midst of these events, Ptolemy seized the opportunity presented by Antipater's death and invaded Coele-Syria⁴³, establishing a military defense area between Egypt and the greater powers of Asia, following the example of his Pharaonic predecessors⁴⁴. Due to the strategic importance of this region to Egypt, which provided essential natural resources such as timber and metals not readily available within Egypt itself, these resources were crucial for Ptolemy's ambition to build a powerful naval fleet, enabling Egypt to exert influence in the Aegean Sea. Additionally, this region controlled important

³⁸ Diodorus, XVIII, 34, 6; Smith, 1855, p. 520; Cary, 1932, pp.14-15.

³⁹ The conspirators offered Ptolemy, who had immediately joined them, to assume the functions of Perdikkas and the guardianship of the kings, but Ptolemy refused. Justin Epitome, XIII, 8. 2; Smith, 1855, p.520; Bevan, 1902, p. 35; Préaux, 1978, p. 130; Will, 1984, p. 37; Wright, 2010, p. 18.

⁴⁰ Diodorus, XVIII, 38-39; Smith, 1855, p. 520.

⁴¹ Diodorus, XVIII, 48, 4-49, 3; 54.

⁴² Diodorus, XVIII, 49, 1; Butcher, 2003, p. 25.

⁴³ Coele-Syria: means "hollow Syria", is the name given to the long depression stretching from Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon through the valleys of the Litani and Jordan to the Dead Sea and beyond to Aqaba on the Red Sea. Designations frequently vary, however, so that Coele-Syria can also mean "southern Syria", including Palestine and the Coast. Heinen, 1984, p. 412.

⁴⁴ Diodorus, XVIII, 43; Heinen, 1984, p. 412; Sartre, 1989, p. 33; Wright, 2010, pp. 18-19; Shipley, 2000, p. 16.

trade routes from the east that flowed into the Mediterranean. It is worthy of note that significant private estates in Coele-Syria were acquired by Apollonius, the finance minister of Ptolemy II Philadelphus. We have a good understanding of the financial operations that were carried out on his behalf, thanks to the communication of his adviser Zenon⁴⁵. Apollonius, for example, possessed a vast vineyards estate at Beit Anat in Galilee, close to Akko-Ptolemais⁴⁶.

Antigonus' victory over Eumenes granted him control over almost all regions in Asia Minor. He seeks to re-establish the unity of the Empire for his own benefit, but the other leaders unite against his claims. In 315 BC, he attacked Babylonia, forcing Seleucus to abandon his government. Seleucus ran to take refuge with Ptolemy to recover his satrapy. In the same year, Antigonus launched an attack on Coele-Syria, advancing along the Syrian coast and eventually reaching the city of Gaza, which led Ptolemy to withdraw from the region⁴⁷. However, in 312 BC, Ptolemy managed to reclaim Coele-Syria, which was being administered by Demetrius, Antigonus's son, and regain control over the area⁴⁸.

On the other hand, the Nabataeans consolidated their rule in Edom and established Petra as their capital. As a result of their entry into the field of trade, their wealth became apparent, which prompted Antigonus to send an expedition by Athenaeus to attack them in the year 311 BC, where he managed to seize the capital, but his soldiers were busy collecting spoils, so the Nabataeans attacked them and crushed the Greek army. Antigonus then launched another unsuccessful campaign, led by Demetrius, against the Nabataeans. However, the Nabataeans offered a sum of money in exchange for peace in the region⁴⁹.

⁴⁵ Apollonius assigned Zenon a mission to Syria that extended for approximately two years, spanning the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh years of Ptolemy Philadelphus' reign, specifically from the autumn of 260 BC. to the early summer of 258 BC. Within the Zenon collection, there are two letters from this period authored by Apollonius. One is addressed to Apollodotus, and the other to Hikesius. These letters contain instructions for them to direct grain exporters in Syria to make specific payments to the bank. Harper, 1928, pp. 1-35.

⁴⁶ Harper, 1928, p. 4; Heinen, 1984, pp. 441-445; Hölbl, 2001, pp. 58-59; Erskine, 2004, pp. 66-67; Cohen, 2006, pp. 32-33.

⁴⁷ While Antigonus was advancing into northern Syria, he was approached by an embassy consisting of Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Cassander. They delivered an ultimatum demanding that he immediately return Babylonia to Seleucus, surrender all of Syria to Ptolemy, hand over Phrygia to Lysimachus, and finally give Cappadocia and Lycia to Cassander. Furthermore, they proposed that he share Eumenes' treasures with the other leaders. However, Antigonus rejected the embassy's requests and accepted war. Smith, 1855, p. 522; Sartre, 1989, p. 33.

⁴⁸ Diodorus, XIX, 80, 6; 93.

⁴⁹ Diodorus, XIX, 94-100; Healey, 2001, p.28; Wenning, 2013, pp. 12-13.

Following Antigonus's defeat in the Battle of Ipsus in 301 BC, the empire of Alexander the Great was once again divided. Lysimachus expanded his power along the coast of Asia Minor, while Seleucus was given Syria and Babylonia, establishing an empire that stretched from the western coast of Asia Minor to India⁵⁰. Ptolemy, who did not participate in the battle, refused to accept the subsequent division⁵¹. Instead, he maintained his authority over Coele-Syria, which led to a series of conflicts known as "the Syrian Wars" between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids⁵². The division of ancient Syria resulted in the northern region falling under Seleucid rule, while the southern part remained under Ptolemaic control. The Eleutheros River (now known as Nahr al-Kebir) south of Aradus marked the northern boundary between the Seleucid and Ptolemaic territories⁵³.

In fact, the opposing interests of Ptolemy and Seleucus did not actually lead to new conflicts in Syria, despite their long-standing friendship. Seleucus, who had sought refuge in Alexandria in 315 BC and received Ptolemy's assistance in reclaiming Mesopotamia in 312 BC, refused to wage war against his adversary without renouncing the claim to possess all of Syria. On the other hand, his successors did not have the same reasons to wait and attempted on several occasions to recover what they considered their own property due to the division at Ipsus⁵⁴.

1.2.1.1. The First Syrian War (274-271 BC)

After Antiochus I resolved the issues in Asia Minor, a new conflict broke out with Ptolemy II in 274 BC, known as "the First Syrian War". Unfortunately, the available sources are deficient, and the chronology of the war is uncertain⁵⁵. Antiochus I departed from his

⁵⁰ Préaux, 1978, p. 134; Butcher, 2003, pp. 25-26.

⁵¹ Sartre, 1989, p. 33; Sartre, 2001, p. 187; Abd-El-Ghani, 2015, p. 475; Fischer-Bovet, Sitta, 2021, pp.4-5.

⁵² Bevan, 1902, pp. 61-62.

⁵³ Among the most important Ptolemaic foundation was Ptolemais, founded at the coastal site of Akko, Philadelphia (Amman), Berenike (Aqaba), and Scythopolis (Beit She'an) in Galilee. Bevan, 1902, p. 208; Sartre, 1989, p. 34; Cohen, 2006, p. 24; Mueller, 2006, pp. 50-51.

⁵⁴ Bevan, 1902, pp. 61-62; Sartre, 1989, pp. 34, 37-38.

⁵⁵ We have knowledge of this war through two documents. One is a Babylonian cuneiform tablet that informs us about Antiochus's activities in 274-273 BC. According to the tablet, Antiochus abandoned his operations in Asia Minor and advanced towards Syria to confront the Egyptian enemy there. The other document is a hieroglyphic stela found in Pithom, known as "the stela of Pithom". This stela commemorates Ptolemy II's victory and records that at the beginning of the year 273 BC, Ptolemy II, in his campaign against the Seleucid Empire, brought back

residence in Sardis in 274 BC, preceding the Egyptian troops who had invaded Damascus⁵⁶. He instructed the troops concentrating in Babylonia to join him there, along with twenty elephants provided by the satrap of Babylon from Bactria⁵⁷. Subsequently, he launched an offensive on Damascus with the intention of invading Egypt. This might explain why Ptolemy II and his sister-wife Arsinoe II personally traveled to Pelusium in early 273 BC, but Antiochus renounced the attack due to troubles in Babylonia⁵⁸. The terms of the war's conclusion and the subsequent peace remain unknown. Nevertheless, in 271/0 BC, the "Ptolemaieia" festivities were celebrated in Alexandria, implying that the king had achieved a recent victory. Hence, it is plausible that the conflict persisted until 271 BC⁵⁹.

I.2.1.2. The Second Syrian War (260-253 BC)

After the death of Antiochus I in 261 BC, who suffered a significant defeat near Sardis against Eumenes I of Pergamon, his son Antiochus II succeeded him on the throne and quickly adopted an aggressive policy. He decided to take revenge on Ptolemy II Philadelphus for supporting Pergamon in the war against his father and retake Coele-Syria and the Egyptian possessions that surrounded the border of his kingdom on various sides. Antiochus II reached an agreement with Antigonus II Gonatas, the king of Macedonia, who also wanted to push Ptolemy II out of the Aegean Sea. Therefore, with Macedonian support, Antiochus II launched an attack on Ptolemy's outposts, leading to what is known as "the Second Syrian War". Despite its name, Asia Minor was the scene of this war⁶⁰.

Most of the information on the Second Syrian War has been lost, but it is clear that Antiochus II achieved victory over the Ptolemaic fleet at the Battle of Cos, which took place around 258 or 256 BC⁶¹. The Seleucid king succeeded in expelling the Ptolemaic forces from Asia Minor,

to Egypt the statues of gods that had been taken by the enemy. Préaux, 1978, p. 139; Heinen, 1984, pp.416-418; Shipley, 2000, p. 16; Erskine, 2004, pp.66-67; Grainger, 2010, p. 84.

⁵⁶ Antiochus went to Sardis with his court to oppose his army to the Gallic invasions. Abel, 2004, p. 45.

⁵⁷ Abel, 2004, pp. 44-45.

⁵⁸ Tarn, 1926, pp. 155-162; Will, 1979, pp. 144-150; Sartre, 1989, pp. 37-38; Davesne, 2000, pp. 11-12; Hölbl, 2001, p.40; Grainger, 2010, pp. 73-87.

⁵⁹ Tarn, 1926, pp. 155-162; Will, 1979, pp. 147-148; Heinen, 1984, p.417; Cabanes, 1995, p. 30; Davesne, 2000, p. 11; Hölbl, 2001, p.40; Sartre, 2001, p.190; Grainger, 2010, p. 83; Fischer-Bovet, 2014, pp. 59-60 .

⁶⁰ Préaux, 1978, pp. 141-142; Will, 1979, pp. 234-243; Heinen, 1984, pp. 418-419; Sartre, 1989, p. 37; Cabanes, 1995, p.30; Hölbl, 2001, pp. 43-45; Erskine, 2004, pp. 70-72; Fischer-Bovet, 2014, pp. 61-62.

⁶¹ Plutarch, *Moralia*, 182, 545b; Athenaeus, 5. 209e, 8.334a.

such as Miletus, Samos, and Ephesus, except for the region of Caria⁶². Moreover, he lost territories in Cilicia, Pamphylia, and Ionia⁶³. However, Macedonia was forced to withdraw due to a rebellion in Corinth and Chalcis in 253 BC, most likely instigated by Ptolemy, as well as the troubles along the northern Macedonian border. Ptolemy II signed a peace treaty with Antiochus II, who married Ptolemy's daughter Berenice Phernephoros "dowry-bearer". Antiochus II abandoned his wife Laodice, and Berenice brought him an "enormous dowry", but the exact nature of the dowry, whether it comprised a territory or the revenues of Coele-Syria, remains unknown⁶⁴. In any case, this marriage marked the end of the war and testified to the two sovereigns' determination to put an end to the conflict by allying with their families. On the other hand, Ptolemy II had some ulterior motives in placing a future grandson on the throne of Antioch⁶⁵.

I.2.1.3. The Third Syrian War (246-241 BC)

The marriage of Antiochus II to Berenice did not achieve the goals expected from such political action. On the contrary, it further complicated the situation, leading to the outbreak of the "Third Syrian War", also known as the "Laodicean War"⁶⁶. After Antiochus II's mysterious death in 246 BC in Ephesus, where his first wife Laodicea was present, some historians believed that he had been assassinated by Laodicea herself. In fear of a potential Ptolemaic regency, Laodicea declared that her son, Seleucus II, would inherit his father's throne⁶⁷. Obviously, this decision was not accepted by all, some declaring themselves for Seleucus II Calinicus and others for the son of Berenice. Berenice appealed to her brother Ptolemy III Euergetes, the new Ptolemaic king, to come to Antioch and help her to place her son on the throne⁶⁸.

In 246 BC, Ptolemy III declared war on the newly crowned Seleucus II, son of Laodice. He arrived in Seleucia in Pieria, the port of Antioch, where he received a warm welcome and

⁶² Abel, 2004, pp. 46-47.

⁶³ Will, 1979, pp. 234-243; Heinen, 1984, pp. 418-419; Cabanes, 1995, p.30.

⁶⁴ Whitehorne, 1994, p. 75; Bowman, 1996, p. 27; Grainger, 2010, pp. 133-134; Shipley, 2000, p. 288.

⁶⁵ Sartre, 1989, p. 37; Sartre, 2001, pp. 190-192; Erskine, 2004, p.72.

⁶⁶ Préaux, 1978, p. 142; Sartre, 1989, p. 37; Cabanes, 1995, pp.30-31; Hölbl, 2001, pp. 48-51; Grainger, 2010, pp. 153- 170; Fischer-Bovet, 2014, pp. 64-65; Shipley, 2000, p. 289; Abd-El-Ghani, 2015, p. 476.

⁶⁷ App, Syr, 65; Will, 1979, pp.248-261; Erskine, 2004, p.72.

⁶⁸ Will, 1979, pp.249-250; Heinen, 1984, pp.420-421; Whitehorne, 1994, p.76; Fischer-Bovet, 2014, p. 65.

took part in the sacrifices offered by the officials and the crowds. He encountered no opposition and received a similarly enthusiastic reception upon reaching Antioch⁶⁹. However, Berenice and her son had already been murdered before his arrival, so his expedition became pointless⁷⁰. In any case, the triumphal advance of Ptolemy III towards Babylonia was stopped by a revolution in Egypt, of which nothing more is known⁷¹. In exchange for peace in 241 BC, Ptolemy obtained new territories along the northern coast of Syria, including Seleucia in Pieria, a few points on the Hellespont and southern Thrace, as well as the island of Samothrace⁷². The victory of Ptolemy III over Seleucus II made him the master of a whole part of Western Asia up to Babylonia and brought the Ptolemaic kingdom to the height of its power.

I.2.1.4. The Fourth Syrian War (219-217 BC)

After the death of Seleucus II in 226 BC, there were no significant changes in Syria. His successor, Seleucus III, briefly considered resuming hostilities in southern Syria but was assassinated in Phrygia while campaigning against Attalus I. Following Seleucus III's death, his younger brother Antiochus III ascended the throne in 223 BC and set out to restore the empire established by Seleucus I, encompassing the Greek Kingdom of East Bactria, the northern reaches of the Hellespont, and the southern regions of Syria⁷³. In his first expedition in 221 BC, Antiochus III successfully regained control over the eastern provinces of Anatolia. However, he faced a setback due to a rebellion led by his cousin Achaïos⁷⁴.

Meanwhile, Egypt was facing internal challenges, with court intrigues and popular discontent significantly weakening the kingdom. Upon the death of Ptolemy III Euergetes, his son

⁶⁹ It is fortunate that the Gurob papyrus has preserved for us part of the report in which Ptolemy III himself describes the operations of the Egyptian fleet, which resulted in the occupation of the port of Seleucia and the city of Antioch. He brought back to Egypt 40,000 talents of silver, precious vases, and images of the gods numbering 2,500, among which were also those that Cambyses had taken to Persia when he captured Egypt. As a result, the Egyptian people called him Euergetes. P. Gurob, col.II, 1.6; Sartre, 1989, p. 37; Sartre, 2001, pp. 193-194; Erskine, 2004, p. 73; Grainger, 2010, pp. 153-170; Fischer-Bovet, 2014, p. 64.

⁷⁰ Abel, 2004, pp. 47-49.

⁷¹ According to the peace treaty, Seleucus II took over Syria and Babylonia, but he had to agree to associate his younger brother Antiochus Hierax with his royalty. Heinen, 1984, p. 421.

⁷² Will, 1979, pp. 250-252; Heinen, 1984, pp.420-421; Whitehorne, 1994, p.76; Fischer-Bovet, 2014, p. 65.

⁷³ Préaux, 1978, pp.150-152; Heinen, 1984, pp. 433-438; Sartre, 1989, p. 38; Hölbl, 2001, pp.128-132; Erskine, 2004, p.76.

⁷⁴ Heinen, 1984, pp. 434-435; Sartre, 1989, p. 38; Abel, 2004, pp. 74-84.

Ptolemy IV Philopator assumed the throne in 221 BC, marked by the assassination of his mother, Queen Berenice II. The young king soon fell under the absolute influence of the royal courtiers under the control of his ministers, Sosibius and Agathocles, who wielded their power for personal gain, causing further dissatisfaction among the populace. Antiochus III saw an opportunity in this chaotic situation and initiated the "Fourth Syrian War" in 219 BC. He successfully conquered Seleucia in Pieria and several cities in Phoenicia⁷⁵. Instead of immediately attacking Egypt, Antiochus III opted to consolidate his new territories in Phoenicia, remaining there for over a year while considering diplomatic proposals from the Ptolemaic kingdom.

Meanwhile, the military situation in Egypt was undoubtedly bad, and the Ptolemaic government recognized the need to recruit native Egyptians for the first time, reflecting their lack of human resources to confront Antiochus III. The Ptolemaic minister Sosibius began the recruitment and training of an army consisting of Greeks, following the typical practice of Hellenistic armies, but he also incorporated over twenty thousand native Egyptians as phalangites⁷⁶. This innovative approach yielded positive results initially but later had disastrous consequences for the stability of the Ptolemaic dynasty⁷⁷. In the spring of 217 BC, the Ptolemaic army achieved a resounding victory at the Battle of Raphia in northern Sinai. Antiochus III suffered defeat and retreated to Antioch, while Ptolemy IV regained control of Coele-Syria, even invading the Seleucid territories, amid popular enthusiasm. A peace agreement was reached in 217 BC, restoring the previous territorial status quo, with the exception of Antiochus III retaining Seleucia in Pieria and likely other Ptolemaic posts located north of the Eleutheros⁷⁸.

⁷⁵ Antiochus conquered Seleucia in Pieria and Phoenicia with the support of the Ptolemaic governor of Coele-Syria, Theodotus, who took his side. Polybius, V, 79-87; Will, 1979, pp. 250-252; Sartre, 1989, p. 38; Hölbl, 2001, pp. 128-132; Grainger, 2010, pp.195-218; Fischer-Bovet, 2014, pp. 86-87.

⁷⁶ Antiochus believed that he had won the war, but he was surprised by an unexpected counter-offensive. The truce had allowed Ptolemy IV to build an army composed mainly of native Egyptian auxiliaries. Will, 1979, pp. 250-252.

⁷⁷ A nationalist feeling had developed among the native Egyptians who had fought at Raphia. They established their own kingdom in Upper Egypt, which was only reconquered by the Ptolemies around 185 BC. Polybius, V, 107, 1-3; Will, 1979, pp. 250-252; Hölbl, 2001, p.134.

⁷⁸ Ptolemy's victory retained control of Coele-Syria, and the king decided not to advance beyond the empire of Antiochus, even to retake Seleucia in Pieria. Polybius, V, 79-87; Sartre, 1989, p. 38; Sartre, 2001, pp.196-199; Wright, 2010, pp. 25, 46.

I.2.1.5. The Fifth Syrian War (202-199 BC)

In 204 BC, Ptolemy IV died and was succeeded by his son Ptolemy V Epiphanes, who was hardly more than five years old at the time, creating a troubling situation in Alexandria⁷⁹. The conflict began with the assassination of the late king's wife and sister, Arsinoe, by the ministers Agathocles and Sosibius. However, Sosibius' fate is still obscure, but Agathocles seems to have held the regency for some time until he and his entire family were murdered by the revolted Alexandrians⁸⁰. On the contrary, Antiochus III did not fail to take advantage of this and invade Coele-Syria. In 203-202 BC, an alliance between Antiochus III and Philip V of Macedonia was formed, which provided for the division of the Ptolemaic kingdom⁸¹.

In 202 BC, Antiochus III went on the offensive in Coele-Syria, which lasted two years. He initially succeeded in invading the whole country, although Gaza resisted until the fall of 201 BC. A savage counter-offensive, led by the Ptolemaic general Scopas, pushed Antiochus III back to the sources of the Jordan. The decisive battle occurred at Mount Panion in 200 BC, and Egypt, after a century of dominance, lost Coele-Syria against Antiochus III. At that time, Egypt had to seek mediation from Rome⁸². In 200 BC, Roman messengers met with Philip V and Antiochus III at the request of the Egyptian embassies. They enjoined Antiochus III not to invade Egypt and Philip V to evacuate the Ptolemaic possessions in Asia Minor since the Romans were suffering from Egypt's interruption of grain export. Indeed, the kings had not planned to invade Egypt, and they readily agreed to Rome's request. Antiochus III completed the conquest of Coele-Syria in 198 BC and continued attacks on the remaining coastal fortresses of Caria and Ptolemy V's Cilicia. After that, Ptolemy signed a treaty of conciliation with Antiochus III in 195 BC, leaving the Seleucid king in possession of Coele-Syria and agreeing to marry Antiochus III's daughter, Cleopatra I Syra, in 194/193 BC⁸³.

⁷⁹ Abel, 2004, pp. 84-87.

⁸⁰ Polybius, XV, 25-33; Préaux, 1978, pp.155; Hölbl, 2001, pp.136-138; Grainger, 2010, pp. 245-271.

⁸¹ Hölbl, 2001, pp.136-138; Fischer-Bovet, 2014, pp. 81, 96.

⁸² Polybius, XVI, 18 -19; 22 bis; 39; Sartre, 1989, p. 38; Sartre, 2001, pp. 200-201; Wright, 2010, pp. 25-26; Fischer-Bovet, 2014, p. 96.

⁸³ Sartre, 1989, p. 38.

I.2.1.6. The Sixth Syrian War (170- 168 BC)

After Ptolemy V was murdered in 180 BC, his son Ptolemy VI Philometor succeeded his father, who was only six years old, with his mother, Cleopatra I, as regent. When Cleopatra I died in 176 BC, Ptolemy VI was still a minor, and he was assisted in his rule by two regents, Eulaeus and Lenaeus. According to Polybius, the regents stated that the Coele-Syria lands were included in Cleopatra I's dowry when she married Ptolemy V, an agreement that Antiochus IV denied ever taking place⁸⁴. Subsequently, they declared war on the Seleucid king Antiochus IV, initiating the Sixth Syrian War (170-168 BC)⁸⁵. To strengthen the unity of Egypt, Ptolemy VI and his wife Cleopatra II were declared co-rulers, and they sent ambassadors to Antiochus IV. After a short armistice and change of political leadership in Egypt, the regents were condemned and replaced by two new regents, Comanes and Cineas. They sent messengers to negotiate a peace treaty with Antiochus IV. The latter took Ptolemy VI, who was his nephew, under his tutelage, leaving him with only control of Egypt. However, this situation was unacceptable to the people of Alexandria, who reacted by proclaiming Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II as the sole king⁸⁶.

Antiochus IV invaded Egypt, defeated the Egyptian army between Pelusium and Mount Kasion, and occupied Pelusium; however, in 169 BC, he was forced to leave Egypt to suppress a rebellion in Jerusalem⁸⁷. In the meantime, Ptolemy VI and his brother Ptolemy VIII reconciled in Alexandria. In the spring of 168 BC, Antiochus IV, enraged by his loss of control over the king, launched a second campaign in Egypt. He took over the Delta and Fayoum, moved into Memphis without encountering resistance, and advanced into the southern part of the country⁸⁸. After achieving some success, Rome compelled Antiochus to abandon Egypt and Cyprus. The Roman senate sent a delegation under the leadership of Gaius Popilius Laenas, who drew a circle on the sand with a stick around Antiochus and forbade

⁸⁴ Polybius, XXVIII, 20.

⁸⁵ Hölbl, 2001, pp.143-148; Grainger, 2010, pp. 291-308; Wright, 2010, p. 27; Fischer-Bovet, 2014, pp. 98-100.

⁸⁶ Polybius, XXIX, 23, 4.

⁸⁷ Hölbl, 2001, p. 146.

⁸⁸ Fischer-Bovet, 2014, pp. 98-100.

him from stepping out until he gives his answer to the note within the circle. Antiochus agreed to the ultimatum of Rome and departed Egypt⁸⁹.

After Antiochus IV's death in 164 BC, conflict erupted among the descendants of Antiochus IV, some of whom had questionable claims to the throne, and the senior branch stemming from Seleucus IV, Demetrius I, who had escaped from Rome and went on to rule Syria from 162 to 150 BC, along with his sons and grandsons⁹⁰. During this period, members of the Ptolemaic dynasty once again gained positions of power within Syria, but this time through marriages to Seleucid princes rather than through military conquest⁹¹. One notable example was the marriage of Cleopatra Thea, daughter of Ptolemy VI, to Alexander I Balas, an illegitimate son of Antiochus IV, shortly after he claimed the Seleucid throne at Akko-Ptolemais in 150 BC. Despite being in her early teens at the time of the marriage, Cleopatra emerged as a prominent figure in the Seleucid court⁹². However, in 148/7 BC, Cleopatra's father, Ptolemy VI, dissolved her marriage to Alexander I Balas and instead aligned with Demetrius II, the son of Demetrius I. The alliance came with the condition that Coele-Syria would be returned to Egyptian control⁹³.

Following Alexander Balas' death in 145 BC, his son from his union with Cleopatra Thea was presented as a new rival king by a Macedonian officer named Diodotus Tryphon, thereby posing a threat to the Seleucid throne⁹⁴. Fearing the aggression of Tryphon, Cleopatra Thea extended an invitation to Antiochus VII Sidetes, Demetrius II's young brother, to marry her and assume the Seleucid throne⁹⁵. Antiochus VII Sidetes successfully consolidated the remnants of the Seleucid kingdom, which had been reduced to Cilicia, northern Syria, and the majority of Phoenicia and Coele-Syria. Antiochus VII also led an expedition against the Parthians, briefly reclaiming Mesopotamia and Babylonia. His brother, Demetrius II, who had been released by the Parthians just weeks prior to Sidetes' death in an effort to sow internal discord among the Seleucids, reclaimed his throne.

⁸⁹ Polybius, XXIX, 27, 5.

⁹⁰ Will, 1979, pp. 365-366.

⁹¹ Strabo Geography 16.2.8; Wright, 2010, p. 28.

⁹² Houghton 1988, pp. 85-93; Whitehorne, 1994, pp.149-63.

⁹³ Will, 1979, pp. 377-378.

⁹⁴ Diodorus, Library of History, 32.27.9d; Justin, Epitome, 36.1.7; Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, 13.131-2.

⁹⁵ Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, 13.222.

I.2.2. The Levant (Ancient Syria) under Roman Rule

It is clear that Rome's expansionist policy was not the only factor behind its ambitions in the Near East in general and Syria in particular. Indeed, widespread piracy across the Mediterranean and the aspirations of Mithridates VI Eupator, the King of Pontus, beyond his own realm threatened Roman merchants and became focal points of concern in Rome's political circles⁹⁶. On the other hand, the weakening of the Seleucid kingdom had resulted in a state of disorder and chaos within Syrian cities, providing fertile ground for banditry to thrive. Syria was therefore, at the beginning of the 1st century BC, an area of anarchy and insecurity, to the detriment of the Roman authority and its interests in the Near East. The Seleucids, faced with this troubled situation, appealed to Tigranes II, king of Armenia in 84-83, believing that he had no ambition for their kingdom. But in fact, the Armenian presence in Syria was undoubtedly in connection with the Roman wars against Mithridates VI, an ally and father-in-law of the King of Armenia. As a result, Rome, under these pressures and motivated by its interests, had only the choice of a more effective presence in the East⁹⁷.

As soon as Pompey arrived in Antioch, he decided to suppress the Seleucid dynasty. He intended to break with the policy led by his rival Lucullus, which had allowed Antiochus XIII to retake his kingdom during the retreat of Tigranes from Syria in 69 BC⁹⁸. Indeed, Pompey wanted to make the most of his victory over Tigranes. As a result, Syria was annexed to Rome in 64 BC, which applied from the beginning an internal policy aimed at stabilizing the general order and Roman power in the region, as well as freedom of movement in the Mediterranean⁹⁹. Pompey's legates, Metellus Nepos and Afranius, were stationed in Damascus and led campaigns against piracy on the coasts from Lycia to Phoenicia and in Amanus¹⁰⁰. To the south, Pompey concluded that the Jews would only be an obstacle to his plans in Syria, as they had been to the Seleucids. That is why, after having reduced the Hasmonean kingdom, he carried out in Judea the policy of the client states¹⁰¹. He also ensured the independence of the emancipated cities during the long crisis of the Seleucid kingdom. He

⁹⁶ Rey-Coquais, 1978, pp. 44-73.

⁹⁷ Sartre, 2001, p. 430, 433.

⁹⁸ Rostovtzeff, Pascal, 1935, pp.1-40.

⁹⁹ Sartre, 2001, p. 444; Erskine, 2004, pp. 131-135.

¹⁰⁰ Smith, 1894, p. 593; Schürer, 1979, pp.125-127; Sartre, 2001, p. 441-451.

¹⁰¹ Jones, 1971, pp. 256-262.

helped them rebuild after the damage caused by the Seleucid wars or later Hasmonean expansion¹⁰². Thus, Syria enters a new era, where the Romans are henceforth the real rulers while keeping the local powers (dynasties and cities) who showed their loyalty to Rome. In the north, there was the Kingdom of Commagene, while in the south, there were the Nabataeans. Pompey had planned an expedition against the Nabataeans, but it was only carried out in 62 BC by his legate, Aemilius Scaurus. However, Scaurus failed to capture their capital¹⁰³.

It should be noted that Syria was on the side of the defeated (Pompey and Mark Antony) during the two civil wars. However, the province has not actually experienced major changes either in its administrative status or in its borders. Except for the few donations made by Mark Antony to client states, such as Gadara and Hippos given to Herod, the province consisted of ancient Seleucia, Phoenicia from Arados to Dora, and the cities of the Decapolis of Transjordan¹⁰⁴. After the battle of Actium, Octavian (later known as Augustus), due to the lack of trustworthy men and support in Syria, chose to maintain most of the administrative structure established by Pompey and later Antony. However, he suppressed the kingship of Tarcondimotus I in Amanus and the principality of Lamblichus of Emesa in Syria¹⁰⁵. Furthermore, in 30 BC, he annexed the eastern portion of Cilicia, which had been granted to Cleopatra by Mark Antony. This annexation included Seleucia on the Euphrates-Zeugma. Moreover, when Herod passed away in 4 BC, Octavian brought the provinces of Gaza, Gadara, Hippos, and Judea under Roman control¹⁰⁶. As the provinces were divided between Augustus and the Senate in 27 BC, Syria transformed into an imperial province. It was governed by a high-ranking legate, typically appointed a few years after his consulship¹⁰⁷. This legate resided in Antioch and managed the extensive territory, encompassing Judea as well, with the assistance of delegated prefects and legates¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰² Sartre, 2001, p.15; Bowersock, 2003, p. 22.

¹⁰³ Jones, 1971, p.258.

¹⁰⁴ Pliny, Nat. Hist. 5,16,74; Josephus, Bellum, III, 9,7; the evangelist Mark, 5,20; 7, 31; the evangelist Matthew, 4,25; Parker, 1975, pp. 437-441; Isaac, 1981, pp. 67-74; Browning, 1982, pp. 11-17; Graf, 1992, pp. 1-48; Wenning, 1994, pp.1-35; Butcher, 2003, pp. 113-114.

¹⁰⁵ Rey-Coquais, 1978, p. 49.

¹⁰⁶ Sartre, 2001, pp. 470-472.

¹⁰⁷ Dąbrowa, 1998.

¹⁰⁸ Josephus, the Jewish War, I, 27, 3.

During the first century AD, the policy of Rome towards its territories varied according to the ruling emperors. Client states were often rewarded for their loyalty and cooperation as long as they adhered to Roman directives and maintained stability within their regions¹⁰⁹. The province of Syria does not experience major administrative changes during this period. It is still governed by a legate of consular rank. The eastern border of the province remained fixed at the Euphrates, while the southern border extended to the boundaries of Egypt¹¹⁰. As early as 70 (or 74) AD, Vespasian had separated Judea from Syria by creating an independent imperial province, led by a senator of praetorian rank, withdrawn from the Syrian garrison and installed in Jerusalem¹¹¹. In 106 AD, most likely upon the death of Rabbel II, the Nabataean kingdom was annexed to the Roman Empire. It was too large to be annexed to an already existing province. Trajan therefore decided to make it a new province named Arabia, even if it was only legally organized after a few years¹¹². Although briefly outlined here, it is evident that Syria's history under Hellenistic and Roman rule was characterized by political turmoil and cultural diversity. The region witnessed frequent shifts in power and governance, with various dynasties and empires vying for control.

¹⁰⁹ Rey-Coquais, 1978, p. 49.

¹¹⁰ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, XVII, 317-321.

¹¹¹ Dąbrowa, 1993.

¹¹² Sartre, 2001, pp. 525-527.

CHAPTER II

SYRIA-PHOENICIA

II.1. Syria

Since the Seleucid rule and during the Roman Empire, Northern Syria had been one of the most important strategic areas of the ancient Mediterranean. The establishment of the four cities of the Syrian Tetrapolis by Seleucus I Nicator between 301 and 299 BC, namely: Antioch on the Orontes (Antakya), Apamea in the Orontes (Qalaat al-Mudiq), Seleucia by the sea "also known as Seleucia in Pieria" (village of Çevlik) and Laodicea by the sea (Latakia), each city was named after a member of the Seleucid family¹¹³. Consequently, these cities had emerged as a secondary area in world politics and were subject to a massive Hellenization and urbanization processes. Laodicea and Seleucia became the central port cities of northern Syria, Apamea had developed into the center of the Seleucid army and Antioch the principal residence of the Seleucids¹¹⁴. In addition to the Tetrapolis, there were also other minor settlements along the coast that played a crucial role in trade and communication, like Balanea (Baniyas) and Antaradus (Tartous). Beroea (Aleppo) was located on the road from Apamea and Chalkis, eastward to Hierapolis (Mambij), and northward to Cyrrhos¹¹⁵. Moving further at the south, there were the ancient Syrian cities of Epiphaneia (Hama), and Emesa (Homs) (**Fig. 2**)¹¹⁶.

¹¹³ Antioch on the Orontes, from the name of his father; Apamea in the Orontes, from the name of his wife Apama; Seleucia on the sea, after his own name; and Laodicea on the sea, named after his mother Laodice. Strabo, *Geography*, 16.2.4; Butcher, 2003, pp. 25, 108-121; Cohen, 2006, pp. 28-29.

¹¹⁴ Sartre, 1989, p. 35; Engels, 2013, pp. 77-78.

¹¹⁵ Butcher, 2003, pp. 108-121; Cohen, 2006, pp. 153-154.

¹¹⁶ Sartre, 1989, p. 35; Cohen, 2006, p. 30.

In the third century BC, the Ptolemaic occupation of Coele-Syria was characterized with the spread of the Egyptian gods' worship in these regions¹¹⁷. Since Early Hellenistic Period, Syrian areas which had not been under Ptolemaic control, showed evidence of the adoption and worship of Egyptian deities¹¹⁸. The Egyptian cults knew their most significant development in this region under the Roman Empire¹¹⁹. Although several iconographic or written evidences prove, with no doubt, the presence of the Isiac cult in Syria, unfortunately, the scattered and isolated nature of these documents cannot give us any information on the introduction of this cult and its function.

¹¹⁷ It actually includes all the regions south of Nahr al Kabir, the Phoenician coast, Beqaa, Damascus, Hauran, Trans-Jordan and Palestine. Between 246 and 219 BC, the Ptolemies also managed to take control of some more northern ports: Seleucia in Pieria and the port near Laodicea, on the current site of Ras Ibn Hani. Sartre, 1989, pp. 36-37.

¹¹⁸ Dunand, 1973, pp.122-123.

¹¹⁹ Aliquot, 2004, p. 202.

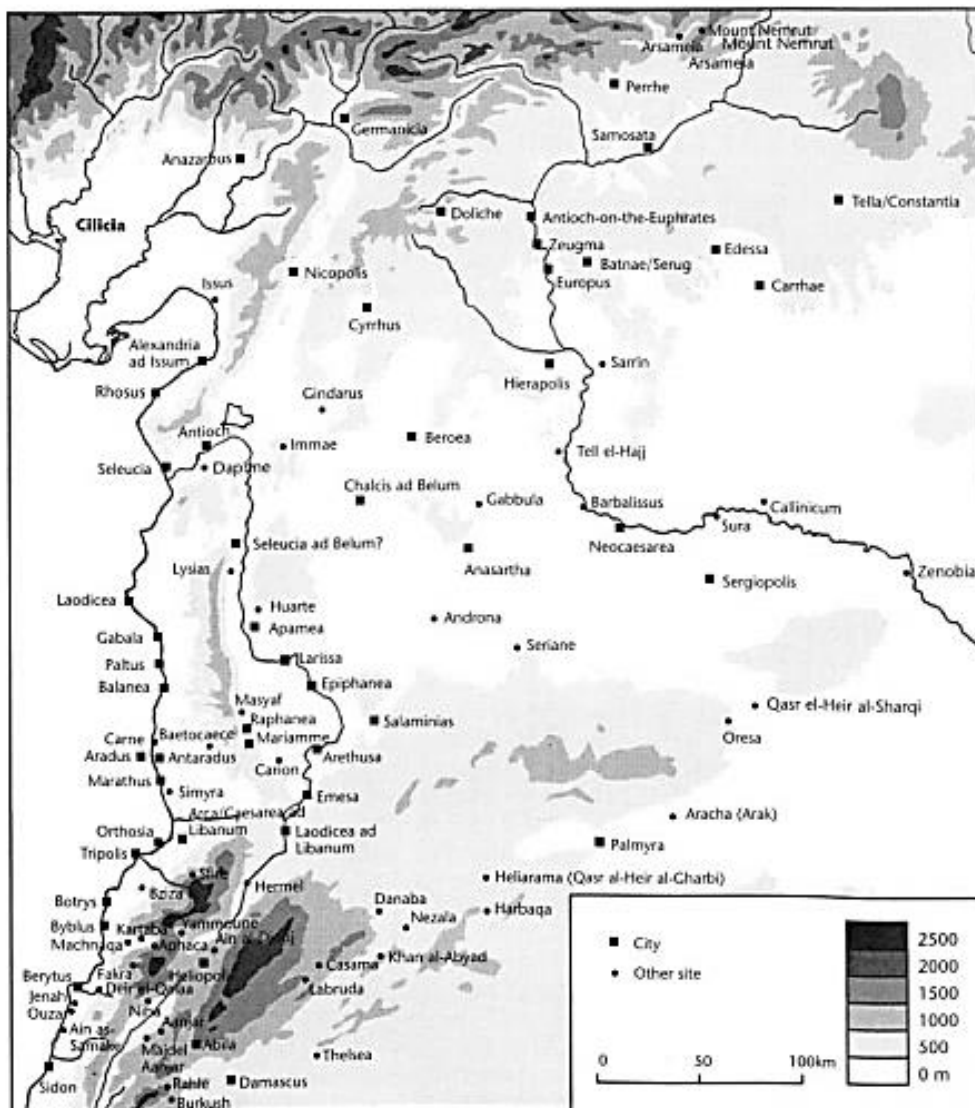


Figure 2. Map of Roman Syria, Butcher, 2003, fig. 31.

II.1.1. Antioch on the Orontes

III.1. 1. 1. The cult of Isis in Antioch

The goddess Isis was initially venerated in Egypt under the name “Aset”. She symbolized the throne, which was believed to metaphorically "give birth" to the pharaoh, who was considered the embodiment of Osiris, the deity associated with vegetation and the afterlife¹²⁰. According to traditional Pharaonic theology, the goddess Isis was the daughter of Geb and Nut, the sister and wife of Osiris, and the mother of Horus. She had two main cult centers in Egypt, Behbeit el Hagara in the north and Philae in the south¹²¹. Additional temples dedicated to the goddess Isis in Egypt, include the Temple of Isis ‘Mistress of the Pyramid’ at Giza, the Temple of Deir el-Shelwit on the western bank of Thebes, south of Medinet Habu, the Temple of Sety I at Abydos, and the Temple of Augustus at Dendera¹²².

In Hellenistic times, Isis was assimilated with various Greek goddesses, for example, Demeter, Aphrodite, Hera, and Tyche¹²³. Moreover, Isis was a main representative of the special type of Hellenistic religiosity known as the mystery religion, in which the believer, after cultic initiation and sworn secrecy towards outsiders, hopes to become one with the deity¹²⁴. She also had cult centers in Alexandria, such as a shrine in the Serapeum, a temple

¹²⁰ Bakhoum, 1999, pp. 59-74; Bailey, 2008, p. 9.

¹²¹ The temple dedicated to Isis in the eastern part of the Delta, at Behbeit el-Hagar, holds significant importance. It was constructed during the 30th dynasty, under the reign of Nectanebo II, but its completion occurred under Ptolemy II. Similarly, the temple of the goddess in Philae also dates back to the 30th dynasty and the reign of Nectanebo I, though there is debate about the extent of the cult's spread during that period. Armour, Baker, 1986, 49-50; Arnold, 1999, pp. 76, 84, 95, 125; Hart, 2005, pp. 82-83; Moss, 2017, pp. 41, 45-49.

¹²² Hart, 2005, pp. 82-83.

¹²³ Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, pp. 761-796; Witt, 1997; Bakhoum, 1999, pp. 59-74; Bailey, 2008, p. 9.

¹²⁴ In an extensively documented study by Burkert, 1987, pp. 8-11, the concept of "mysteries" is defined through the following assertions: “mysteries are initiation ceremonies, cults in which admission and participation depend upon some personal ritual to be performed on the initiand”. “Mysteries were initiation rituals of a voluntary, personal, and secret character that aimed at a change of mind through experience of the sacred”. The origins of the mysteries can be traced back to ancient Greece, with the most renowned center being the Eleusinian mysteries, dating back to the sixth century BC. Another prevalent archetype was associated with Dionysus. However, these mystery religious practices became more widespread during the later period of antiquity. The term predominantly pertains to the worship of deities such as the Egyptian Isis, the Phrygian Mater Magna, and the Indo-Iranian Mithras. Herodotus, 2.171; Diodorus, 1.22.4, 1.96.4f.

on Pharos Island, a temple at Cape Lochias, and the temple of Ras-el-Soda, as well as coastal cities nearby Alexandria, notably at Menouthis, east of Alexandria¹²⁵.

The cult of the Egyptian goddess Isis spread extensively beyond Egypt, as she was revered as a protective deity associated with women, love, marriage, childbirth, and motherhood. She was considered the embodiment of the fertile powers of the soil and was also recognized as the goddess of wheat, rain, and wind. Isis gained fame for her magical abilities and served as the protector of humanity throughout their lives and even in the afterlife. As a result, her worship spread enormously in temples and homes¹²⁶.

According to Libanius, Isis's cult was introduced in Antioch under Seleucus II Callinicus (246-226/5)¹²⁷, the fourth ruler of the Seleucid dynasty; according to him, the goddess appeared to the king in a dream and incited him and Ptolemy to bring her horned statue from Memphis to Antioch; so, the ships were ready, and the statue was brought to Antioch¹²⁸. It is apparent that this story was similar to the introduction of the cult of Serapis to Alexandria¹²⁹. According to the story, Serapis appeared to Ptolemy I in a dream to bring his statue from Sinope on the Black Sea to Alexandria¹³⁰. However, there is no evidence (either historical, epigraphical, or archaeological) that confirms Libanius' statements concerning the introduction of the Isis cult in Antioch by Seleucus II or by one of his predecessors or successors¹³¹. We have to point out that the royal coinage of the Seleucids clearly attests to the use of Isiac imagery, although mainly for commemorative purposes and not before Antiochus IV Epiphanes (see pp. 40-41).

¹²⁵ Moss, 2017, pp. 55-57.

¹²⁶ Bailey, 2008, p.9.

¹²⁷ Witt and Dunand wrongly identified the Seleucid ruler who was mentioned by Libanius as Seleucus IV. Witt, 1997, p. 196; Dunand, 1973, p.123; Norris, 1982, p. 190; Takács, 2000, p. 199; Bricault, 2001, p.70; Belayche, 2007, p.448. In addition to, an inscription from Hyrcania, south of the Caspian Sea, dated to the reign of Antiochus I, records the manumission of a slave dedicated to Serapis, confirming that the god had at least one temple in this distant region at the beginning of the 3rd century BC. Bricault, RICIS, no. 405/0101.

¹²⁸ (ἡ γὰρ δὴ Ἴσις, τὸ βούκερων ἄγαλμα τὸ Αἰγύπτιον, ἀφεῖσα τὴν Μέμφιν δεῦρο μετοικίζεται κινήσασα μὲν ὄνειρασι Σέλευκον τὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ Σελεύκου τέταρτον εἰς τὴν ἑαυτῆς μετάπεμψιν, κινήσασα δὲ Πτολεμαῖον εἰς ἔτοιμον τῆς θεοῦ δόσιν, καὶ νῆες εὐτρεπεῖς, καὶ τὸ ἄγαλμα ἤγαγετο). Libanius, *Antiochikos*, Oratio, XI, 114- 115; Downey, 1959, p.665; Downey, 1961, pp.91-92, Norris, 1982, pp.190- 191; Aliquot, 2014, pp.136-137.

¹²⁹ Dunand, 1973, p.123.

¹³⁰ Tacitus, *Annals*, IV, 83-84; Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 28; Pfeiffer, 2008, pp. 387-408.

¹³¹ Aliquot, 2014, pp. 137-138.

We know that Libanius wrote his work *Antiochikos* in 356 or 360 AD on the occasion of celebrating the local Olympic Games, a festival, in imitation of the ancient Olympic Games, which drew many visitors¹³². According to Norris, his purpose was to praise his native city, highlighting the idea that the gods have always been irresistibly drawn to Antioch so that the city could compete with Olympus¹³³. While Norman mentioned that Seleucus II Callinicus (246-226 BC) lost the Seleucid lands in Asia Minor and the East, so the divine support for Antioch is used to obscure such secular reverses, even if the story is not Libanius' invention to account for the growing popularity of the cult of Isis¹³⁴. However, Aliquot suggested that the role of Ptolemy III appears at least as necessary as that of Seleucus II, suggesting the institution of the cult of Isis in Antioch occurred on the occasion of reconciliation between the two sovereigns, during the peace treaty of 241 BC, marks the end of the Third Syrian War (246- 241BC)¹³⁵.

The resolution of a conflict between two political adversaries following the appearance of an Egyptian god in a dream is also well illustrated by an inscription from Thessalonika¹³⁶. The text, probably dating to the 1st century AD, was copied from an older document and evoked the introduction of the cult of Serapis and Isis to Opous, Eastern Locris, in which two political opponents agreed to accept the cult of Serapis and Isis after receiving a divine announcement in a dream¹³⁷. An individual named Xenainetos dreamed that Serapis ordered him to tell his rival Eurynomos that he should receive Serapis and Isis, which the latter did, leading to the establishment of the Isiac cult in Opous. The parallel between the account of the introduction of the cult of Serapis in Opous and that of the arrival of Isis in Antioch is so striking that one can suppose that Libanius refers to a model drawn from the immense tradition of Greek and Egyptian dreams.

¹³² The oration provides valuable information in many details that do not appear in any other ancient source. For example, it includes the plan of Diocletian's palace at Antioch, the layout of the main streets on the island, the construction of the Nymphaeum, the style of the private houses, the appearance of the road from Antioch to its famous suburb, Daphne, and some of the legends regarding the founding and early history of the city.

¹³³ Norris, 1982, p. 190.

¹³⁴ Norman, 2000, p. 28, n. 56.

¹³⁵ Aliquot, 2014, pp. 138-139. Aliquot mentioned that the pro-Seleucid bias is indeed a part of the system in *Antiochikos*. This bias led Libanius to reject any successful initiatives by the Ptolemies in their political and religious endeavors: Ptolemy I was only to rule at the discretion of Seleucus I; later, during Antiochus II's rule, the statue of Artemis, which Ptolemy II had wanted to take to Egypt, ultimately chose to return to its original location. Libanius, *Antiochikos*, Oratio, XI, 82, 109.

¹³⁶ Aliquot, 2014, pp. 138-139.

¹³⁷ Bricault, RICIS, no. 113/0536; Martzavou, 2018, p. 137.

We do not have clear evidence about the date on which the cult of Isis was introduced in Antioch. But the so-called Gurob papyrus shed much more interesting light; it told us that Ptolemy III organized an expedition against Syria to help his sister Berenice and that the king entered the cities of Seleucia and Antioch in 246 BC, with full respect to the local divinities. For his behavior, he became extremely popular and honored by the Syrian representatives of the local institutions before disturbances called him back to Egypt¹³⁸. For these reasons, the institution of the cult of Isis in Antioch may have occurred during this time¹³⁹.

II.1.1.2. The mosaics of Isis in Antioch

Among the multitude of mosaics uncovered in Antioch on the Orontes, Levi identified four mosaics as depictions of the Egyptian goddess Isis¹⁴⁰. Two of these mosaics have been linked to the "Navigium Isidis" festival, which took place on March 5th. In the first mosaic, situated in the House of the Calendar (**Fig. 3**) and dating to the 2nd century AD, the month of March is represented as a female figure clad in a white tunic surmounted by a brown mantle knotted over her chest. She is crowned with a wreath of leaves, and her left hand grasps a spear while her right holds a libation cup. Levi postulated that if this figure indeed represents the goddess Isis or an Isis priestess, it might symbolize the "Navigium Isidis" festival, an occasion commemorating the opening of commercial navigation for the year on the 5th of March (see pp. 265-268). However, this hypothesis has encountered opposition from certain researchers, particularly due to Isis's conventional association with the month of November in the Roman calendar. They argue that the depicted figure could potentially be the goddess Demeter instead¹⁴¹.

¹³⁸ P. Gurob, col.II, 1.6; Sartre, 1989, p. 37; Sartre, 2001, pp. 193-194; Erskine, 2004, p. 73; Fischer-Bovet, 2014, p. 64. This aligns with what we understand about Ptolemy III's religious attitude and reverence for the Egyptian gods. The discoveries at the Serapeum of Alexandria, situated on the hill of Rhacôtis, firmly associate Ptolemy III as one of the principal founders of this sanctuary. The king also actively supported the construction of various religious structures throughout Egypt, notably in Canopus and Edfu.

¹³⁹ Aliquot, 2014, pp. 137-138.

¹⁴⁰ Levi, 1947, pp. 27, 49-50, 163-165, pls. Vb, VIIIb, XXXIIIa-c, XXXIVa-b.

¹⁴¹ Norris, 1982, p. 197; Bricault, 2006, p.140.



Figure 3. A mosaic pavement of the "Navigium Isidis", the House of the Calendar.

The second mosaic, discovered in the House of the Mysteries of Isis in room 1, dates from the middle of the 3rd century AD and is partially destroyed (**Fig. 4**)¹⁴². The mosaic depicts two ships, one of which is seen on the left side, anchored at the shore. A man is positioned with a foot on the shore and the other foot on a raised step beside a loading platform. Though his upper body is obscured due to damage, his stance suggests he might be transporting heavy cargo to the ship. A shield, seemingly positioned upright on the ship's gunwales, possibly indicates the presence of a man standing on the ship's deck holding it. The other ship occupies the right side and appears to have embarked on its voyage. The oars extend visibly from the portholes. A man stands aboard this ship. In the sky above the ship on the left, a Victory flies with wings outstretched¹⁴³. Levi suggested that this was undoubtedly an allusion to the "Navigium Isidis", and that the house most likely belonged to a devotee of Isis¹⁴⁴. Nevertheless, Bricault has pointed out that the central panel is severely damaged, making it

¹⁴² The House of the Mysteries of Isis comprises a total of five chambers. Throughout the excavation process, these chambers were designated with specific labels. Notably, the room designated as Room 1 shows the Navigium Isidis mosaic. Room 2 housed the Mors Voluntaria mosaic, and Room 3 unveiled the mosaic, adorned with the Mask Bordered Mosaic. A contemporary pipeline, purposely positioned diagonally through the structure, resulted in the partial degradation of the mosaic flooring throughout the house. Nonetheless, the mosaic border within the third chamber and distinguishable depictions within the first and second chambers have endured. All of these intricate mosaics maintain a shared alignment along the ground's north-south axis. Gencay, 2004, pp. 16-17.

¹⁴³ Gencay, 2004, p. 20, fig. 4.

¹⁴⁴ Antakya Museum, inv. No. 1006. Levi, 1947, pp. 164-165, pl. XXXIIIb.

impossible to identify with certainty, whether as a reference to the "Navigium Isidis" or anything else¹⁴⁵.



Figure 4. A mosaic pavement of the "Navigium Isidis", the House of the Mysteries of Isis.



Figure 5. A wall painting of the "Navigium Isidis", Ostia.

Several figurative representations, paintings and mosaics, have been associated with the Navigium Isidis. One such example can be found in a wall painting discovered in Ostia (**Fig. 5**). In this painting, on the right side, there is a reference to a celebration linked to the

¹⁴⁵ Bricault, 2006, pp.140-141.

Emperor, as indicated by a banner (*vexillum*) bearing the images of three figures, likely representing Septimius Severus and his two sons, Caracalla and Geta¹⁴⁶. On the left side, there is a boat, or more likely a model boat, being transported to the shore by a cart drawn by two children, and then set afloat at sea. Stern has proposed that this scene represents the *Navigium Isidis* of March 5, during which Isis's boat was brought to the shore as part of a procession¹⁴⁷. He mentioned that it was customary, on March 5, to set adrift a ship without a crew, laden with gifts, in order to seek favor and protection from Isis, the goddess of the sea. It appears evident that this fresco depicts this festival, which is detailed in Apuleius's writings, and more specifically, the central ceremony of launching the boat into the sea. The sailboat, transported on a cart to the shore, has just been released, and two slaves are seen returning while pulling the vehicle that had carried the ship¹⁴⁸.

Another painting discovered within the Pompeii Iseum, located in the *sacrarium*, is worth mentioning. This artwork features two Egyptian boats: one containing a female figure, most likely representing Isis, and the other holding a chest with a falcon perched atop it. Several scholars have suggested that this painting depicts the *Navigium Isidis*; however, Bricault has proposed a different perspective. According to him, this scene more likely symbolizes Isis's quest for Osiris, with the falcon representing Sokar-Osiris¹⁴⁹.

Moving to the third mosaic, found in Room 2 of the same House of the Mysteries of Isis, however, the mosaic is significantly damaged (**Fig. 6**). The mosaic portrays three figures: a youthful man is positioned between a female figure on the left and Hermes on the right. The female figure is clothed in a peplos with a veil and a wreath of green leaves on her head. She holds a torch¹⁵⁰, which extends above her head just behind her headdress. Her right hand is

¹⁴⁶ Stern, 1975, pp.121–129.

¹⁴⁷ Stern, 1975, pp.126-127.

¹⁴⁸ Stern, 1975, p. 127.

¹⁴⁹ Bricault, 2020, p. 226.

¹⁵⁰ Levi suggests that the torch in question has a floral origin, resembling a double papyrus stem. This particular torch design can be observed in two instances featuring Demeter's elongated torch in frescoes found in Pompeii. For instance, a depiction of Demeter in the House of the Meleager in Pompeii, which dates back to the Nero or Vespasian period (54-68 or 69-79 AD). In this portrayal, the goddess is seated, clad in a long chiton and a himation, and adorned with ears of wheat. She is holding a torch with a similar double top, resembling the one we are discussing. In front of Demeter stands Hermes, who is depicted with his caduceus on his left arm and holding a moneybag in his right hand. Boyce, 1937, p. 110, no. 10.

extended toward the man in the middle¹⁵¹. Of the man in the middle only part of the torso and his left foot are visible. He wears a headdress and has ribbons hanging from his shoulders. The man appears to be naked, with the possible exception of red drapery on his left shoulder. Levi identified the figure on the right as the god Hermes, recognizable by his caduceus, the winged headdress, and the winged sandals. He stands in front of an architectural complex, and in his right hand is a grey wand with which he is touches the young man¹⁵².



Figure 6. The mosaic of “*mors voluntaria*” in the House of the Mysteries of Isis.

Levi referred to the mosaic as "*mors voluntaria*", suggesting that the young man depicted in the middle was a live person about to be initiated into the mysteries of Isis through the gates of Hades, the god of the underworld, similar to the description of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*¹⁵³. He also directs focus to the magical papyri, in which the name of Isis-

¹⁵¹ Gencay, 2004, pp. 17-18, fig. 8.

¹⁵² Levi, 1947, pp. 164-165.

¹⁵³ The narrative of "*Metamorphoses*" revolves around the adventures of Lucius, who serves as both the protagonist and the narrator of the novel. Driven by an insatiable curiosity about magic, Lucius unexpectedly finds himself undergoing a remarkable transformation, becoming an ass while retaining his human consciousness. In this newfound form, he undergoes a series of imaginative and exhilarating adventures, as well as enduring hardships. These experiences continue until, in the concluding book of the novel known as the "*Apologia Isidis*" or "*Apology for Isis*" (Book 9), Lucius is ultimately restored to his human form with the assistance of the goddess Isis. This final book serves as a fervent tribute to Isis, with the goddess being praised in highly enthusiastic terms. Takács, 2008, pp. 73-87.

Lucius recounts the process of his initiation. Acting upon the divine instruction of the goddess, the high priest proclaimed the arrival of the day when Lucius was to be initiated into the most sacred mysteries of the cult.

Selene appears alongside that of Hermes within the realm of magic¹⁵⁴. On the other hand, Norris rejected Levi's hypothesis, stating that the magical papyri in which Hermes and Isis joined together do not include references to an initiation ceremony¹⁵⁵. Indeed, as Norris points out, it holds true that in the literature concerning mystery rites, there is no explicit mention of Isis accompanying the initiate throughout his mystical journey¹⁵⁶. Furthermore, Norris argued that the goddess cannot be identified as Isis due to the lack of her distinctive features (such as the *basileion* and the Isis-knot). Instead, he proposed the possibility that the figure could represent the Greek goddess Demeter¹⁵⁷.

The fourth mosaic, from the House of the Isiac Ceremony at Daphne (modern Defne-Yakto), a suburb of Antioch, is much more interesting (**Fig. 7**). It clearly depicts two female figures, one wearing a white robe decorated with a moon and stars, and the other carrying the *sistrum*. This may represent an Isis ceremony in which the homeowner participated and wished to commemorate it¹⁵⁸.

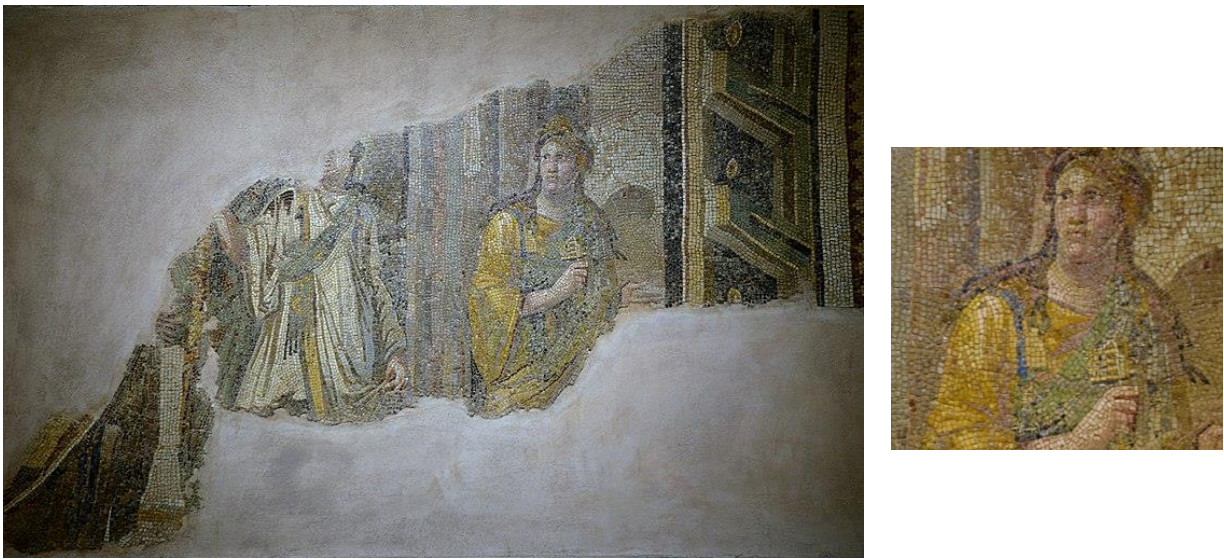


Figure 7. The mosaic of Isis ceremony, the House of the Isiac Ceremony, in Daphne.

Guided by the high priest named Mithras, Lucius was led to the entrance of the grand temple. There, a solemn ceremony was conducted, and Mithras revealed strange books retrieved from the temple's concealed chamber. He proceeded to explain to Lucius the intricate stages involved in the preparation. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, XI.23.

¹⁵⁴ Levi, 1947, pp. 164-165.

¹⁵⁵ Norris, 1982, pp. 199-201.

¹⁵⁶ Norris, 1982, p. 201.

¹⁵⁷ Norris, 1982, p.201.

¹⁵⁸ Levi, 1947, pp. 49-50, pl. VIIIb; Norris, 1982, pp. 196-197; Takács, 2000, p. 200, fig. 1.

II.1.1. 3. Egyptian gods on the coins of Antioch

The earliest appearance of the Egyptian deities on the coins of Syria dates back to the reign of Antiochus IV during his campaign against Ptolemy VI in the Sixth Syrian War (170-168 BC)¹⁵⁹. On this occasion, the workshop of Antioch minted special silver and bronze coins; two types of bronze coins show Egyptian motifs: the first depicts a laureate head of Serapis wearing the *atef* crown (**Fig. 8**), and the second shows the head of Isis crowned with the *basileion* (**Fig. 9**)¹⁶⁰. On the reverse side of both coins, an eagle is depicted standing on a thunderbolt, the attribute of Zeus, which had already been adopted by the Ptolemaic rulers on their coinage¹⁶¹. Bricault suggested that the selection of these specific types could explain the desire of the Seleucid king to declare his claims over Egypt, even though he was forced to abandon Egypt in 168 BC under the Romans' pressure¹⁶². Wright added that the Egyptianising series was probably produced in anticipation of the need for an acceptable and familiar currency in the newly acquired Ptolemaic territories¹⁶³.



Figure 8. A coin of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Antioch, SC 1413; Hoover HGC 643.

Figure 9. A coin of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Antioch, CSE, 121.

¹⁵⁹ Takács, 2000, p. 199; Bricault, SNRIS, p.155; Dodd, 2009, pp. 193-194; Aliquot, 2014, p. 137.

¹⁶⁰ A seal was found during excavations carried out by the University of Michigan at Seleucia on the Tigris in the 1930s, depicting the couple of Serapis and Isis in two bust portraits side by side. The god, who is bearded, wears a derivative of the Osirian crown known as the Atef, while the goddess, in the background, is wearing the basileion. Most scholars date the seal to the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BC), more precisely from the time of the Battle of Raphia and the marriage of the sovereign, which took place in October or November of that same year in 217 BC. Bricault, 1999, pp. 334-335, fig. 2. For other representations of Serapis and Isis in busts: see Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, p. 771, nos. 136-153; Clerc, Leclant, LIMC VII, 1994, s. v. Serapis, p. 680, nos. 130-131.

¹⁶¹ Newell, 1978, pp. 24-27; Bricault, SNRIS, p.155, figs. Antiochia 1c- 2b.

¹⁶² Newell, 1978, pp. 26-27. Additionally, twenty-five lamps discovered during Antioch excavations were identified as being representations of Isis or Serapis. Norris, 1982, p. 195.

¹⁶³ Wright, 2010, p. 66.

The crown of *basileion*, associated with the goddess Isis, also appeared on the reverse side of bronze coins minted in Antioch during the reign of Antiochus VII Sidetes between 139 and 128 BC (**Fig. 10**), with a winged bust of Eros on the obverse¹⁶⁴. Additionally, the crown of Isis *basileion* was featured on the reverse of bronze and silver coins issued in Akko-Ptolemais (**Fig. 11**), during the co-regency of Cleopatra Thea and her son Antiochus VIII between 125 and 121 BC. Notably, the bust of Cleopatra took precedence over that of Antiochus on the obverse, highlighting her primary role as a queen and co-regent¹⁶⁵. These instances of the crown of Isis on Seleucid coins may be attributed to the unions between Seleucid kings and Ptolemaic princesses, serving as a symbolic expression of their connections or affiliations, particularly with Cleopatra Thea¹⁶⁶. It is possible that the usage of the crown signified these matrimonial alliances and emphasized the royal lineage and legitimacy of the rulers. Antiochus X Eusebius, who had also married the Ptolemaic princess Cleopatra Selene, continued the use of the *basileion* crown on a bronze issue during his reign (94-93/2 BC) in Antioch¹⁶⁷. These coinage practices demonstrate the ongoing influence of Ptolemaic connections and the significance of the crown of Isis *basileion* as a symbol of dynastic unions and royal associations.



Figure 10. A coin of Antioch, AE, 179 BC, Veymiers, 2011, p. 211, Fig. 9.13.

Figure 11. A coin of Ptolemais, AE, 125-121 BC, Cleopatra Théa and her son Antiochus VIII, Veymiers, 2011, p. 212, Fig. 9.14.

¹⁶⁴ Veymiers, 2011, pp. 210-212.

¹⁶⁵ The same reverse is found on another series of royal bronzes struck at the same time at Ptolemais, this time with the radiated portrait of Antiochus VIII on the obverse. Bricault, SNRIS, pp. 155- 156, figs. Antiochia 3b, Ptolemais 2-4; Wright, 2010, p.67, figs. 24-25; Aliquot, 2014, pp.137-138; Veymiers, 2011, p. 211.

¹⁶⁶ Dodd, 2009, pp. 100, 151, 210-211.

¹⁶⁷ Veymiers, 2011, p. 211. The royal headband, or diadem, which was originally a symbol of athletic victory, was also adopted by the Seleucids and all Graeco-Macedonian rulers. It first appears as a monarchical attribute on Ptolemy I's coins, and it quickly became the most common feature of Hellenistic-style monarchies. The diadem was supposed to show that the basileus was the earth's champion of the gods, particularly Zeus. Schwentzel, 2005, p.160.

II.1.2. Seleucia by the Sea

II. 1.2. 1. Serapis and Isis

The Alexandrian god Serapis, whose origin and nature have been the subject of intense debate, is a composite deity with an Egyptian theological background and Greek iconography. He was created during the reign of the earliest Ptolemies, and his origins can be traced back to the cult of the Apis bull. This cult was traditionally associated with Pharaonic royalty and centered on the Temple of Ptah in Memphis¹⁶⁸. The worship of the Apis bull continued even after his death, since at least the New Kingdom, with rituals still taking place at Saqqara's necropolis. At that time, the deity was known as *Wsir-Hb* (Osiris-Apis) and was represented as either a bull with a sun disc between its horns or as an anthropomorphic figure with the head of a bull, wearing the sun disc¹⁶⁹. Osiris-Apis became in Greek Osarapis or Oserapis, then finally Serapis¹⁷⁰. The identification of the founder of the cult of Serapis in Alexandria remained uncertain; despite debate between Ptolemy I Soter and Ptolemy II Philadelphus¹⁷¹. This creation is often considered as an act accomplished within the framework of an official religious policy tending to federate the Greeks of Egypt, newcomers and formerly settled, or even to unite Greeks and Egyptians in the same worship¹⁷². However, it is evident that the new god Serapis emerged early on as a patron of the Ptolemaic dynasty.

The Greek rulers bestowed Serapis, the successor of Osiris-Apis, with a Greek iconography that drew inspiration from deities, such as Zeus, Asclepius, and Hades¹⁷³. By the early 3rd century BC, the god Serapis was depicted as a bearded man with curly hair, wearing a basket-shaped headdress "*kalathos*". He was dressed in the chiton and the himation, and was often portrayed standing or seated on a throne, holding a scepter in his left hand and resting his

¹⁶⁸ Plutarch, *Is. Os.*, 28-29; Fraser, 1972, pp. 246-251; Stambaugh, 1972, pp. 2-3; Borgeaud, Volokhine, 2000, pp. 37-76; Dunand, Zivie-Coche, 2006, pp. 285-294; Bergmann, 2010, pp.109-135.

¹⁶⁹ The oldest surviving Greek Memphite papyrus, dating back to the 4th century BC, contains a renowned and frequently referenced text known as the "Oath of Artemisia", in which a woman of Memphis calls on the god "Oserapis" as witness. Devauchelle, 2012, p. 217.

¹⁷⁰ Two terracottas from Egypt reflect the strong connections between Apis and Serapis, as the solar disk crowning the bull is adorned not with a uraeus, but with a Serapis head. Kater-Sibbes, Vermaseren, 1975, nos. 43, 120; Malaise, 2005, p. 43.

¹⁷¹ Devauchelle, 2012, pp. 213-225.

¹⁷² Devauchelle, 2012, p. 216.

¹⁷³ Fraser, 1972, pp. 246-251; Dunand, Zivie-Coche, 2006, pp. 285-294; Bergmann, 2010, pp.109-135.

right hand on a three-headed Kerberos. A wife was attributed to him, Isis, sister-wife of Osiris, as well as a child, Harpocrates, whose name was transcribed in Greek from the Egyptian theonym *Hr-p3-hred* meaning “Horus the child”. This Isiac family became a divine model, portraying a Greek royal family seeking to legitimize their power in a non-Greek land¹⁷⁴.

Seleucia in Pieria, or Seleucia by the sea, the port of Antioch, has been mentioned in some literary sources as the place depicting the god Serapis. Tacitus mentions in a dubious tone that some said that the god was brought to Alexandria from the Syrian city of Seleucia under the reign of Ptolemy III¹⁷⁵. Clement of Alexandria repeats the same story, adding that he read it in the writings of Isidorus as the only witness who connected the incident with a gift of grain during a famine under Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BC)¹⁷⁶.

Some researchers have tried to explain the crossed testimonies of Tacitus and Clement of Alexandria concerning Seleucia. According to Bouché-Leclercq, the statue of Seleucia was part of the spoils of Ptolemy III's war and was believed to have brought back from the East the national gods once carried away by the conquerors of Egypt¹⁷⁷. He mentioned that the town's famine story is an invention, and the alleged motive is suspected of exaggeration unless there is a complete blockade; famine hardly attacks seaports¹⁷⁸. Dunand suggested that Bryaxis, the sculptor of the 4th century BC who was credited with the invention of the statue of Serapis, was active in the region of Antioch at the end of his life, and it was probably when Ptolemy III occupied Seleucia that he may have found there a statue in the style of Bryaxis that he brought back to Egypt¹⁷⁹. In contrast, Aliquot suggested that the most remarkable consequence of the "Third Syrian War" conflict in the Near East was the occupation of

¹⁷⁴Bricault, 2000a, p.91.

¹⁷⁵ Tacitus, History, IV, 84, 4.

¹⁷⁶ Clement of Alexandria, Protrepticus, IV, 48, 3.

¹⁷⁷ According to Saint Jerome's Commentary on Daniel (XI, 7-9), Ptolemy III amassed significant spoils of war during his expedition to the East following the capture of Antioch. His campaign extended to Babylon, where he seized the opportunity to recover Egyptian god statues that had been taken by the Persians during the reign of Cambyses in 525-522 BC. The reported count of two thousand five hundred, as stated by Jerome, may be somewhat exaggerated. Nevertheless, the inscriptions at Adoulis (245-243 BC), the decree at Canopus (238 BC), and that of Raphia (217 BC) all highlight the pivotal role of Ptolemy III in returning these statues to their respective sanctuaries. These testimonies primarily served to reaffirm the traditional clergy's trust and confidence in the sovereign. Aliquot, 2014, pp. 140-141.

¹⁷⁸ Bouché-Leclercq, 1902, pp. 20, 25.

¹⁷⁹ Dunand, 1973, p. 58.

Seleucia by the Ptolemies from 246 to 219 BC¹⁸⁰. Thus, the Ptolemies held the city, which was the port city for Antioch, threatening the heart of the Seleucid kingdom for almost thirty years¹⁸¹. Therefore, it seems probable that the Greeks of Egypt or the Hellenized Egyptians established in Seleucia a sanctuary for the god Serapis.



Figure 12. A statue of Serapis, Seleucia Pieria, Antakya Museum, Inv. No. 10799.

Figure 13. A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite, Seleucia Pieria.

A marble statue of Serapis enthroned with the three-headed dog Kerberos, the guardian of the underworld, at his feet—now preserved in the Antakya Museum—was found in Seleucia in 1954 (**Fig. 12**). The statue depicts Serapis seated on the throne, but unfortunately, the head and arms are broken off. The god is represented wearing a chiton, surmounted by the himation draped over his left shoulder and knees. His right leg is pulled back, while the left leg is extended to the front¹⁸². The discovery of this statue in Seleucia is instructive since the port city was mentioned in the texts of Tacitus and Clement of Alexandria as an early location associated with the worship of Serapis. However, there is no conclusive evidence indicating

¹⁸⁰ Polybius, 5. 58. 10; Aliquot, 2014, pp. 141-142.

¹⁸¹ Aliquot, 2014, pp. 141-142.

¹⁸² Keskil, 1963, pp. 88-89, figs. 1-3; Norris, 1982, p. 194; Kater-Sibbes, 1973, p. 77, no. 439; Weber, 2009, pp. 125-126, Taf. 3A.

that this particular statue was ever housed in a temple, and thereby a cult statue¹⁸³. The statue dates to the Roman period, so the god Serapis probably continued to be honored in Seleucia after the departure of the Ptolemies, albeit in a more private form.

Additionally, another noteworthy artifact discovered in Seleucia Pieria is a bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite, which was found within the Doric temple during excavations conducted by Princeton University in the 1930s (**Fig. 13**). Unfortunately, her face is worn; her right leg broke off below the knee, and her left hand. The representation of the goddess in the statuette shows her naked form, adorned with the sun disc placed between two horns¹⁸⁴. However, similar to the Serapis statue, there is insufficient evidence to determine whether the temple in Seleucia Pieria had any direct association with the worship of Isis. These archaeological discoveries shed light on the religious practices and iconography present in Seleucia and its surrounding regions during the Roman period. They indicate the continued presence and private veneration of Serapis and Isis in these areas, showing the enduring influence of Egyptian deities in the Hellenistic and Roman contexts.

An inscription dating back to the second or third century AD was discovered in Seleucia Pieria, potentially associated with the Isiac cult. The text was inscribed in honor of one Flavius [...] nus, (former?) navarch and perfect of the cohort¹⁸⁵. However, the names of the Egyptian gods are not present in the text, making it difficult to determine whether it relates to a former navarch "leader of the ship" of the Roman fleet or a navarch connected to the "Navigium Isidis" festival. Le Bohec has underlined the importance of the military presence in Seleucia Pieria, especially in the event of a conflict with the Parthians. It is possible that the navarch mentioned in this inscription could have been a soldier¹⁸⁶. Therefore, we cannot affirm whether the "Navigium Isidis" was celebrated in Seleucia Pieria or not. Moreover, the inscription tells us nothing about the beginnings of Egyptian worship in this region.

Several inscriptions have been discovered that link the role of a navarch to the cult of Isis. For instance, an inscription dedicated to Isis and Serapis was uncovered in Byzantium, dating

¹⁸³ Norris, 1982, p. 194.

¹⁸⁴ Norris, 1982, p. 192; Wright, 2010, p. 154, fig. 103.

¹⁸⁵ IGLS, III, 1144; Vidman, SIRIS, no. 355a; Dunand, 1973, pp. 123-124; Bricault, RICIS, no. 402/0201; Bricault, 2020, pp. 217-218.

¹⁸⁶ Le Bohec, 2000, p.136.

back to the early 1st century AD. This inscription originated from an individual who held the position of a navarch during the celebration of Isis “Ploiaphesia”, also called “Navigium Isidis”, which celebrated the annual reopening of navigation¹⁸⁷. Additionally, a marble stela, which was unearthed in the Iseum at Eretria, has preserved an extensive list of navarchs spanning over 80 lines. The names on this list were filled through the years by different people. Every year they would probably fill in the new names of the persons in charge for the sail of the ship during the “Ploiaphesia”¹⁸⁸. A second inscription from the same sanctuary and of the same period mentions again the presence of two navarchs who dedicate to Serapis, Isis, Osiris, Anubis, and Harpocrates¹⁸⁹. In a funerary inscription discovered in Nicomedia, situated in Bithynia, a city renowned for producing numerous coins featuring the depiction of Isis with a sail, the deceased, who reached the age of fifty, is designated as both a priest and a navarch. Bricault suggests that the individual likely held a significant role as a servant of the cult of Isis¹⁹⁰. Finally, a herm unearthed in Tenos features Hercules and includes references to the names of a cultic association dedicated to an unspecified divine figure. Among these names is that of a navarch, which likely suggests a connection to the Isiac deities¹⁹¹.

The discussion revolves around the roles undertaken by these individuals within the festivities, but these navarchs were not mere participants since they had the privilege of wearing a title for the occasion. The navarchs are occasionally identified as members of an association¹⁹², yet the epigraphic evidence alone fails to decisively substantiate this hypothesis. Moreover, they have been recognized as the organizers of the Ploiaphesia festival¹⁹³. As suggested by some scholars, their engagement encompassed financial contributions, overseeing ship construction, and coordinating the ceremony's logistics, all

¹⁸⁷ “For Isis and Sarapis, during the reign of Rhometalces I, the merarchês being Artemidorus, son of Philostratos, in Year 32 Artemidorus, son of Synistor, who was navarch during the great Ploiaphesia, consecrated this telamon”. Vidman, *SIRIS*, no. 130; Bricault, *RICIS*, no. 114/0109; Bricault, 2020, pp. 205-206, fig. 131.

¹⁸⁸ Vidman, *SIRIS*, nos.80-82; Bricault, *RICIS*, no. 104/0109; Bricault, 2020, p. 207.

¹⁸⁹ Bricault, *RICIS*, no. 104/0111; Malaise, Veymiers, 2018, pp. 498-499; Bricault, 2020, p. 207.

¹⁹⁰ Vidman, *SIRIS*, no. 327; Bricault, *RICIS*, no. 308/0601; Bricault, 2020, p. 217.

¹⁹¹ Bricault, *RICIS*, no. 202/0604.

¹⁹² Vidman, 1966, p. 271. Bricault consider that the navarchs did not form a religious association. He also notes that "couples, children, sometimes several members of the same family over three generations were named in the list close to one another, which means that they took part in the same celebration, the same year, or at different feasts celebrated over several successive years. Bricault, 2020, p. 219.

¹⁹³ Malaise, 1972a, p. 149.

while maintaining a seemingly non-participatory stance during the procession¹⁹⁴. Hence, onomastics, which is the study of names, assumes a pivotal role. Especially in the case of Eretria, it becomes apparent that multiple members of the same family undertook the role of navarch within a succinct timeframe¹⁹⁵. This implies that, at least initially, the festivities possessed a private character.

¹⁹⁴ Malaise, Veymiers, 2018, p. 499.

¹⁹⁵ Bricault, 2020, p. 218.

II.1.3. Laodicea by the Sea

II. 1. 3. 1. A sanctuary of Isis and Serapis in Laodicea

A Roman copy of a Greek decree issued in the year 174 BC under the reign of Antiochus IV provides valuable insights into the worship of the Egyptian gods in the city of Laodicea, the main port of Syria¹⁹⁶. The decree legalizes the property rights of a private sanctuary dedicated to Isis and Serapis on the city's land, owned by three priests: Horus, Apollodorus, and Antiochus, who are likely brothers along with their cousins. The translated text of the decree is as follows: *“Year 138 (174 BC), on the thirtieth of the month of Audnaios, proposal of Asklepiades the governor {epistatēs} and the archon. Since Horus and Apollodorus and Antiochus, priests of Serapis and Isis, declared that a block of houses, in which also stands the precinct of the aforesaid gods, belongs to them and to the sons of Apollodorus, their grandpaternal cousins, as private property; and since a decree has been passed that those requesting from the city a place for the dedication of a statue shall pay a fixed fee, and some are seeking places in the precinct; being anxious lest their possessions be dismantled in such a manner, they asked that consideration be given concerning these matters: it is well that their possessions, which they have exhibited, may not be dismantled in such a way: it has been resolved by the peliganes: those who wish to erect (a statue) in the same place shall give the decreed sum, not for the place, but for the statue itself”*¹⁹⁷.

It is worth noting that the presence of a temple within private property, as seen in this decree, was not unusual during this period. For instance, an inscription from Piraeus mentions a

¹⁹⁶ The plaque is broken into two pieces but is complete. It was found south of the city, preserved in the Beirut Museum, dating to the end of the second century AD. Roussel, 1942, p. 21-32; Vidman, SIRIS, no.356; Dunand, 1973, p.124; Bricault, RICIS, no. 402/ 0301; Sosin, 2005, pp. 130-139; Belayche, 2007, p.450; Aliquot, 2014, pp. 143-145; Aliquot, 2015, p.157.

¹⁹⁷ The decree requires the city to be paid in order to secure a location for the placement of votive statues. Many donors chose to place their votive monuments inside the Isiac sanctuary's private grounds rather than on public property in order to avoid paying the taxes. The priests were prompted by this to pursue and obtain an amendment in order to protect their property rights as well as the sanctuary's overall appearance, which was in danger of being damaged and cluttered. From now on, the polis will charge fees for each dedicated statue instead of the location. This decree aims to protect private property owners from unanticipated consequences of public laws, without violating their rights, while also gradually increasing the city's resources. Sosin, 2005, p. 131; Bricault, 2013, pp. 229-231.

sanctuary of Dionysos attached to the priest's house¹⁹⁸. Another dedicatory inscription reveals that the priest Demon of Paiania dedicated his house and adjacent garden to the god Asclepius following the god's oracle¹⁹⁹. Roussel suggested that the priests and their cousins in Laodicea were concerned about the potential destruction of their private property by the worshipers. As a result, the city authorities, following the proposal of the epistate Asclepiades, took measures to prevent the expected destruction of the religious buildings while recovering the income from the tax on erecting statues²⁰⁰. This decree is not the only evidence highlighting the importance of protecting sacred sanctuaries. A Milesian order banned placing dedications near the wood stoa in the sanctuary of Apollo due to the expensive wood that could cause severe damage²⁰¹. Similarly, a Rhodian decree prohibited dedicants from leaving dedications in certain areas within the Asclepius region²⁰².

The presence of the Egyptian name "Horus" among the brothers indicates that they likely belonged to a Hellenized Egyptian or Greek family from Egypt that had settled in Syria for a long time²⁰³. The three priests also assert their ownership of the sanctuary and the islet on which it is built, along with the sons of Apollodorus, their cousins descended from the same ancestor. They are all related by one or more common ancestors for two generations. For example, Apollonius, the priest of Serapis in Delos, who affirms that the sacred objects dedicated to the god Serapis have been passed down through his family for three generations, from his grandfather to his father, and then to himself²⁰⁴. A Ptolemaic decree also required worshipers of Dionysus to present a sealed report to the officials in Alexandria, documenting the transmission of the sacred objects back through three generations²⁰⁵. Thus, it appears that the cult of Serapis and Isis began in Laodicea in the last third of the third century BC.

Based on the evidence, it can be concluded that the status of Egyptian worship in Laodicea during the Hellenistic Period was semi-official. The good relations with the city authorities were likely due to their interest in preserving the property rights of the priests. According to

¹⁹⁸ IG II² 1325, 1326, 2948.

¹⁹⁹ IG II² 4969.

²⁰⁰ Roussel, 1942, pp. 21-32.

²⁰¹ Milet I 3 32. 1-4.

²⁰² Sosin, 2005, pp. 132-133.

²⁰³ Dunand, 1973, pp. 124-125; Sosin, 2005, pp. 134-135.

²⁰⁴ IG XI.4, 1299. 1-13; Dunand, 1973, pp. 124-125; Sosin, 2005, pp. 134-135.

²⁰⁵ Bricault, RICIS, no. 202/0101.

Dunand, the worship of Egyptian gods was undoubtedly significant during this period, as indicated by the employment of three priests in the sanctuary, which was unusual. It is possible that specialized assistants were subordinate to them²⁰⁶.

Another inscription from the early second century AD discovered in Laodicea mentions "*archinakorus of the great Serapis*", i.e. the chief guardian of the temple of Serapis²⁰⁷, possibly referring to the same sanctuary. This suggests that the Egyptian temple was likely still in use and maintained its importance. However, it is unclear whether the Egyptian cult remained under the control of the same priestly family or transitioned into a more official institution over time. Dunand proposed that the temple may have become official over the years²⁰⁸. This transition may be reflected in a unique issue of the city's coinage featuring a bust of Athena on the obverse and Serapis on the reverse, which Bricault dates to the reign of Trajan or possibly Hadrian²⁰⁹. Furthermore, the existence of individuals who privately dedicated sanctuaries to Egyptian gods in Laodicea by the Sea emphasizes the importance of individual initiatives in establishing the cult of Egyptian deities throughout Syria, not limited solely to the regions controlled by the Ptolemies.

²⁰⁶ Dunand, 1973, pp.124-125; Sosin, 2005, p.132.

²⁰⁷ Vidman, SIRIS, no. 357; Dunand, 1973, p.125; Bricault, RICIS, no. 402/ 0302.

²⁰⁸ Dunand, 1973, p.125.

²⁰⁹ Bricault, SNRIS, p.160.

II.1.4. Balanea

The ancient Balanea had multiple toponyms: Balaniyas, Boulniyas, and Banyas²¹⁰. It is identified with the present-day Baniyas, located 40 km north of Tartous in a bend of the Nahr Baniyas, and is dominated by a mountainous buttress that supports the medieval fortress of Marqab. By the sea, the city includes a vast beach, which may have served as a port when it was attached to the province of Apamea.



Figure 14. A bronze statuette of Isis from Balanea, Syria, Bricault, 2020, Fig. 96.

A bronze figurine of Isis-Tyche was discovered in Balanea and is now preserved in the Louvre Museum as part of the collection of Louis de Clerq (**Figs. 14-15**)²¹¹. The figurine depicts the goddess standing upon a rectangular base while donning elevated sandals. Her hair is parted at the center and smoothly pulled back along her temples, forming a short bun at the

²¹⁰ From Greek word Balaneia (Greek public baths).

²¹¹ Its height is 24.2 cm and the height of the base is 4.6 cm. De Ridder, 1905, pp. 225-226, no.321, pl. L, 3; Vidman, SIRIS, no. 358; Dunand, 1973, pp.125- 126; Bruneau,1974, pp. 349- 350, fig. 10; Bricault, RICIS, no. 402/ 0501; Bricault, 2006a, p.84, fig.6; Belayche, 2007, p. 453; Bricault, 2020, pp. 133- 136, fig.96.

nape of her neck from which three vertical braids fall down, and she wears the *kalathos* on her head. She is adorned in a sleeveless, lengthy chiton accompanied by a himation that drapes around her waist. Her right hand, positioned downward on the right side, likely once held a rudder, though this attribute is currently absent. The left hand extends horizontally from her body, holding a *cornucopia*. An inscription appears on the base of the statue, written in inlaid silver letters, however two of its components are largely corroded. The remnants of the inscription seem to be ancient: Εἰς Φαρία "ISIS FARIA"²¹².



Figure 15. The bronze statuette of Isis-Tyche from Balanea (in detail).

It should be noted that her representation as Isis–Tyche/Fortuna does not correspond to the inscription²¹³. Tran Tam Tinh has mentioned that the inscription "Isis Pharia" is written on the base of Fortuna's statuette but bears no resemblance to Isis²¹⁴. De Ridder noted that the base is not undoubtedly associated with the figurine²¹⁵. However, Bricault, after careful examination of the figure, stated that there is a clearly visible hole at the top of the head in front of the *kalathos*, allowing for the attachment of the crown of Isis, the *basileion*²¹⁶. In addition, he explains the origins of these two types: Isis with a sail and Isis with a rudder. On the one hand, statues of Isis with a sail were challenging to create, both in small sculpted works and

²¹² The epithet "Φαρία" or "Pharia" for Isis appears more frequently in various sources. It is found in literary texts since the end of the 1st century BC, in epigraphical records during the 2nd century AD, and even on coins dating back to the 4th century AD. Bricault, 2020, p. 160.

²¹³ Bricault, 2006a, p. 84.

²¹⁴ Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, p.794.

²¹⁵ De Ridder, 1905, p. 225.

²¹⁶ Bricault, 2020, pp. 133- 136.

larger pieces, thus making the type that held the rudder a suitable alternative²¹⁷. On the other hand, this depiction serves a dual function: as a marine goddess, she symbolizes the guidance and the protection of navigation by holding the rudder, while the *cornucopia* is a symbol of prosperity and wealth²¹⁸. This can be understood in a specific context, which may have marked the role of Isis in protecting the Annona, the annual grain supplies brought from Alexandria to Italy²¹⁹. Hence, Bricault speculated that the figurine from Balanea could be the missing link between the representations of Isis with a sail and with a rudder²²⁰.

The representation of Isis-Tyche/Fortuna, adorned with a *kalathos* and *basileion*, is widely recognized in several examples, as can be observed in the relief of Ascalon (**Fig. 208**)²²¹. However, it is worth noting that there are instances where she is depicted solely with the *kalathos*, a relatively uncommon portrayal. For instance, a bronze statuette of Isis-Fortuna in Alsace, France, shows the goddess crowned with a *kalathos* while holding both the rudder and the *cornucopia*. Her hairstyle features the so-called Libyan curls of Isis, and she is draped in a garment fastened between her breasts, which is a characteristic associated with Isis²²². Another statuette of Isis-Tyche/Fortuna is from Yemen. The goddess is depicted standing on a high circular base bearing an Arabian inscription. She is dressed in the chiton and himation tied between her breasts. Her hair is pulled up into headbands surmounted by a tiara, and eight long curls run over her shoulders. She is adorned with a *kalathos*. Unfortunately, both the rudder and the *cornucopia* have been lost. The inscription suggests a dating to the 1st century AD²²³.

²¹⁷ Bruneau has put forth a compelling argument that the original representation of Isis with a sail was likely not a three-dimensional sculpture. This is because no full sculptures in the round of this type have been found, and the intricate composition seems better suited for a two-dimensional medium. Williams has suggested that the prototype may have been a painting, and this idea is supported by the fact that examples of this type are primarily seen in low relief. As for the possible location of this painting, Alexandria is a strong candidate.

²¹⁸ The rudder on which she leans is the sign of her power to direct destiny, but it can also be interpreted that the city of which she is the protector being a port city, or the maritime activities are of paramount importance. Dunand, 1979, p. 71.

²¹⁹ Bricault, 2000, pp. 136-149; Bricault, 2020, pp. 140- 141.

²²⁰ Bricault, 2020, p. 136.

²²¹ Malaise, 2014, pp. 223-265.

²²² Clerc, 1998, pp. 81-90, pl. I.

²²³ Bricault, Podvin, 2008, p. 10, fig. 4.

During the Greek and Roman periods, the type of Isis holding a rudder and *cornucopia* was one of the most famous subjects in many Mediterranean cities²²⁴. There are numerous examples of her, such as a terracotta seal from Paphos, Cyprus, dating from the 2nd-1st centuries BC (**Fig. 16**). The goddess is shown standing, dressed in a long chiton and himation, holding a *cornucopia* in her left hand, a rudder in her right, with the *basileion* adorning her head²²⁵. Another marble statue, preserved in Athens and probably from Alexandria (**Fig. 17**), depicts Isis holding a rudder in her right hand and a *cornucopia* in her left, with a small serpent coiled around the rudder, indicating a connection to the goddess's healing power²²⁶. Since the city of Balanea was a coastal city, it was natural for Isis to be celebrated there as the goddess of navigation and protector of sailors²²⁷.



Figure 16. A terracotta seal of Isis with a rudder from Paphos, Cyprus, Bricault, 2020, Fig. 97.

Figure 17. A marble statue of Isis with a rudder, Athens, Bricault, 2020, Fig. 99.

²²⁴ From all the epigraphic, literary, numismatic and papyrological documents which put Isis in relation to the marine world, four epithets mainly emerge: *Εὔπλοια*, *Πελαγία*, *Σῶτειρα* and *Φαρία*.

²²⁵ Bricault, 2020, pp.136- 137, fig. 97.

²²⁶ It is preserved in National Archaeological Museum Athens, Inv. No. 3426; Bricault, 2020, pp.137- 138, fig. 99.

²²⁷ Dunand, 1973, p.126.

However, Isis-Pharia is usually depicted standing at the bow of a ship, facing right, with her mantle usually blowing out behind her back, her left leg advanced, and her knees slightly bent, resting on the bottom of an inflated sail. Her arms are raised, holding a corner of the sail. There is a rich documentary collection featuring this type of representation of Isis, which appears on various artifacts such as coins (**Byblos Fig. 46**), intaglios, seals, lamps, reliefs, and possibly statues. The role of Isis as the mistress of the sea and protector of sailors has been widely documented from Hellenistic times onward in various Mediterranean sites, including Greece and the coastal cities of Asia²²⁸.

During the Pharaonic period, the connections between Isis and navigation, both in terms of the names attributed to her and the roles ascribed to her, were rather tenuous²²⁹. In contrast, several documents suggest that two Egyptian deities, Amun and Hathor, could assume this role, possibly as a secondary function. From the New Kingdom, Amun is occasionally referred to as the "pilot who knows water"²³⁰, while Hathor makes an appearance from the Middle Kingdom in the Coffin Texts as the "mistress of Byblos [who] holds the rudders of boats"²³¹. Additionally, it is Hathor's boat that leads the Sokar procession²³². In the small temple of Hathor in Deir el Medineh, one aspect of her four-faced is linked with the north wind²³³.

Indeed, much like Hathor, from whom Isis appears to have borrowed this role, she can pilot the solar boat. Additionally, she is often depicted at the bow of a boat during the conflict between Horus and Seth. Furthermore, as the sister-wife of Osiris, she accompanies the deceased on their journey into the underworld, frequently reappearing there, often alongside his sister Nephthys, aboard a boat²³⁴. Finally, during the Late Period, Isis is identified with the moon and is represented traveling the Celestial Ocean on her boat. In this aspect, like Tanit,

²²⁸ Leclant, 1986, pp. 346-347.

²²⁹ Griffiths, 1975, pp. 34-38.

²³⁰ Bricault, 2006, p. 14.

²³¹ Hani, 1976, p. 68; Dunand, 1973, p. 129; Ribichini, 1975, p. 8; Scandone Matthiae, 1981, p. 63-64; Helck, 1994, p. 108; Volokhine, 1995, p. 216; Mettinger, 2001, p. 177; Bricault, 2006, p. 18-19; Bonnet, 2015, p. 158; Bricault, 2020, p. 19.

²³² Griffiths, 1975, p. 36.

²³³ Bricault, 2006, p. 15.

²³⁴ Griffiths, 1975, pp. 34-35, 45.

Astarte, or Aphrodite, she exerts an influence on the tides, and her appearance is reassuring for the sailor navigating between the sky and the water when the night becomes dark²³⁵.

²³⁵ Dunand, 1973, p. 94.

II.1.5. Antaradus

Tartous takes its name from that of the settlement of Antaradus (modern Tartous), coming from its geographical position opposite the island of Arwad (Aradus). The ancient site, like the modern one, occupies a small cove at the foot of Djebel Ansariye (the Alawite Mountains)²³⁶. In the Hellenistic period, it was probably only a town with no major political role. From Hellenistic and Roman times, archaeologists have only found bronze and marble statuettes imitating Greek models, as well as a gold mask whose decoration is reminiscent of those of Homs and Baalbek²³⁷.

II.1.5.1. Isis-Aphrodite-Astarte?

The syncretism of Isis-Aphrodite was established through her association with Hathor, the Egyptian goddess of women, love, and fertility, who has been close to Isis since ancient Egyptian times²³⁸. Indeed, both Aphrodite and Isis were associated with sailors at significant ports throughout the Mediterranean region²³⁹. Unlike the parallel drawn between Demeter and Isis, this connection between Isis and Aphrodite was not explicitly observed by ancient writers during the time of Herodotus. The earliest mention of these two deities in conjunction can be traced back to the mid-third century BC, found within two inscriptions, one originating from Alexandria and the other from Perinthus²⁴⁰. The iconography of Isis-Aphrodite is various, but one distinctive characteristic is the depiction of the goddess as totally or almost completely naked, whether in figurines with an oriental appearance or those inspired by classical types²⁴¹.

²³⁶ Lipiński, 1992, p.442.

²³⁷ Lipiński, 1992, p.442.

²³⁸ Malaise, 2000, pp.8-9.

²³⁹ Pausanias, Desc., 2.34.11.

²⁴⁰ Malaise, 2014, p. 261.

²⁴¹ Malaise, 2014, p. 254.



Figure 18. A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite from Tartous, the Louvre Museum.



Figure 19. A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite from Syria, the British Museum.



Figure 20. A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite from Homs, the National Museum of Damascus.

Several bronze figurines of Isis-Aphrodite have been discovered in Syria. These figurines depict the goddess standing naked, adorned with jewelry, and wearing the crown of the *basileion*. This type of figurine has been found not only in Egypt but also in various areas of the Seleucid world, particularly in the Syria-Phoenicia region, albeit with slight variations in style and hairstyle²⁴². One such bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite was unearthed in Antaradus and is currently housed in the Louvre Museum (**Fig. 18**). The goddess stands naked on her right leg, while her left leg is relaxed and bent towards the back. Her right hand is raised to shoulder height, and her left hand once held a mirror handle, which is now lost. She wears a *stephane* with five cut palmettes and the *basileion*, featuring the sun disc adorned with a raised uraeus between two horns and two pointed feathers²⁴³. Notably, this particular figure appears slenderer than the statuettes discovered in Egypt. The association of Isis with Aphrodite is undoubtedly most common in Egypt and appears to have originated during the early Ptolemaic period²⁴⁴.

A similar type of Isis-Aphrodite has also been discovered in Syria, but in this case, the goddess is depicted wearing a headdress in the form of a bird's cap, crowned by the Egyptian crown of Isis. For instance, a bronze statuette from Syria, now preserved in the British Museum (**Fig. 19**), has an uncertain place of origin, though it may have originated from Tartous, where many similar figurines have been unearthed. This portrayal of Isis-Aphrodite follows the Pudica type "modest", reminiscent of Praxiteles' Knidian Aphrodite. The goddess stands naked on her right leg, with her left leg is relaxed. Her right hand is raised in front of her breast, while her left hand is lowered, attempting to cover the pubic area. Her hair is styled with two rows of short curls, with a single long lock falling over her shoulders. She wears a *stephane* topped by a bird's cap and the *basileion*²⁴⁵. Another notable bronze statuette from Emesa "Homs" (**Fig. 20**), preserved in the National Museum of Damascus, stands as one of the finest examples of Isis-Aphrodite from Syria. This figurine depicts the naked goddess holding a mirror box in her left hand, while the object once held in her right hand is now

²⁴² De Ridder refers to this style as the Syrian Aphrodite. De Ridder, 1905, p. 26; Jentel, 1981, p.152; Bricault, Podvin, 2008, p.16.

²⁴³ De Ridder, 1905, p.77, pl. 21, fig. 106; Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, p.780, no.250c; Further examples from Syria: Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, p.780, no. 250a-b.

²⁴⁴ Dunand, 1973, p. 80.

²⁴⁵ Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, p.780, no. 254a.

missing. She wears a smaller wreath than the Egyptian examples, which is crowned by the Isis headdress²⁴⁶.

The figurines discovered in Tartous and Homs bear resemblances to numerous bronze statuettes found in Egypt, particularly in Lower Egypt²⁴⁷. Therefore, it is possible that the statuettes were produced in Egypt and then exported to Syria. For instance, a bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite, currently preserved in the Louvre Museum (**Fig. 21**), is believed to originate from Lower Egypt²⁴⁸. The goddess is depicted standing naked, with her body resting on the left leg while the right leg is slightly bent. Both arms are raised to shoulder height, with the right hand partially closed and the left fingers appearing to hold the handle of a tool. On her head, the goddess wears an imposing crown adorned with five palmettes framing a central *basileion*, all placed above a diadem decorated with a uraeus. Two curly locks of hair run over her shoulders. Her eyes were originally made of inlaid stones. Her neck is adorned with a necklace featuring multiple pendants. On either side of the necklace, there are busts of Serapis and Isis, and at the center of the necklace, there is an amulet showing three figures on a pedestal: Harpocrates on the left, Osiris Canopus in the middle, and Aphrodite-Anadomene on the right, depicted as half-naked²⁴⁹.

Another noteworthy example is a bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite that is currently preserved in the Tanta Museum. This artifact was discovered within a Roman house in Sais (Sa el-Haggar), situated on the eastern bank of the Rosetta branch of the Nile Delta in Egypt (**Fig. 22**)²⁵⁰. The goddess is shown naked, standing on her left leg while her right leg is relaxed, with a slight bend towards the back, on a round base. The right hand was most likely holding something, but it is now absent. Comparable Isis-Aphrodite statuettes indicate that the figurine once held attributes that have since vanished: in the left hand, it most likely carried a lotus flower from which the young Harpocrates emerged; in the right hand, it could have held

²⁴⁶ Jentel, 1981, p.153, pl. IV, 2.

²⁴⁷ According to Jentel, the statuettes whose provenance is known would all come from Lower Egypt. Jentel, 1981, p. 152.

²⁴⁸ Williams, 1979, p. 98; Jentel, 1981, pp. 152- 153, no. 15, pl. II, 1; Simon, LIMC, II, 1984, s.v. Aphrodite, p.158, no.85.

²⁴⁹ Jentel, 1981, pp. 152- 153.

²⁵⁰ Inv. No. Ta3371. Its height with the base 55cm, dates to the Roman Period. Boussac, Seif El-Din, 1998, p.169, no.118; Seif El-Din, 2001, p. 221, pl. I.2.

a mirror²⁵¹. She wears a *stephane* with four palmette leaves and the crown of Isis *basileion* in the center. The goddess is also dressed in two necklaces, both of which are embellished with various amulets.



Figure 21. A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite, the Louvre Museum.

Figure 22. A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite, from Sais, Tanta Museum, Inv. No. Ta3371.

Additional examples of Isis-Aphrodite have been discovered in Syria, where the goddess is depicted fully attire, wearing a short-sleeved chiton and a himation. This representation adheres to the "Pudica type", wherein the goddess is modestly portrayed, her head adorned with a bird's cap and the crown of Isis. It is noteworthy that this depiction of a clothed and modest Isis-Aphrodite was quite prevalent, particularly in Syria. Consequently, Jentel's research leads to the conclusion that this type was recognized in the Syro-Phoenician world and might not have been known in Egypt before²⁵². One striking example is a bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite discovered in Tartous and currently preserved in the Louvre Museum (**Fig.**

²⁵¹ Williams, 1979, pl. X; Jentel, 1984, no. 85, II.1, p. 158 et II.2, pl.162; Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, no. 249, V.1, p. 779-780, V.2, p. 516-517.

²⁵² Jentel, 1981, p.153.

23). The goddess is attired in a short-sleeved chiton with a himation loosely draped around her hips. Her pose typically conforms to the pudica position, where her right hand is placed in front of her breasts and her left hand covers her pubic area while holding a fold of her himation. The goddess's hair is centrally parted and elegantly pulled back into a bun at the nape of her neck. She is further adorned with a bird's scalp headdress, upon which stand six erect uraei snakes, representing the round crown *polos*²⁵³.



Figure 23. A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite from Tartous, the Louvre Museum, H. 34 cm.

Figure 24. A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite from Sais, Egypt, Tanta Museum, Inv. No. Ta. 3377.

It is comparable to a bronze statuette from Sais, "Sa el-Haggar", which was found in the same house and is now kept in the Tanta Museum (**Fig. 24**). The goddess is depicted standing, fully draped, with a chiton and a himation wrapped around her hips. Her right hand is slightly raised towards her belly, while her left hand holds the folds of the himation, as if attempting to cover her body. It adorned her head with a bird's cap surmounted by a circular uraeus and

²⁵³ A gift of Henri de Boisgelin, Br. 4409. De Ridder, 1905, p. 42, no. 39, pl.6; Jentel, 1981, pp.153- 154, pl. IV, 3; Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, p.780, no.255a; Arslan, 1997, p.110, no. III.25; Takács, 2000, p. 202, no.87.

the crown of Isis²⁵⁴. According to Seif El-Din, the figurines from Sais may have belonged to the *Parapherna*²⁵⁵, which were objects included in the bride's dowry and accompanied her in daily life²⁵⁶. During the second and third centuries AD, Egyptian marriage contracts mentioned small bronze statues of the goddess Aphrodite as part of the bride's dowry, along with a wooden box to keep the figurine²⁵⁷. For instance, a marriage contract from Abydos dating back to 157-158 AD records the mother giving her daughter a statue of the goddess Aphrodite as part of her dowry²⁵⁸. Another marriage contract from 190 AD mentions a small bronze statue of Aphrodite and a box for the figure in the dowry²⁵⁹. These statuettes were intended to bring marital happiness and fertility to the young wife and then became objects of the domestic cult of Aphrodite²⁶⁰.

According to many examples of Egyptian goddesses and queens with the headdress of a bird, this iconographic detail deserves special attention. Most studies describe this bird as a vulture cap, which was highly favored by Egyptian queens who were associated with Nechbet, the goddess of Nekheb (modern El-Kab), the mother goddess and protector of the king²⁶¹. In the tomb of Queen Nefertari (**Fig. 25**), the wife of Ramses II, located in the Valley of the Queens, a vulture with large outstretched wings covers her head. Only the bald neck of the bird, with its head, and the fan-shaped tail feathers extend beyond its outline. Its laterally stretched legs hold a hieroglyphic in its claws as a symbol of "embracing"²⁶². Following this tradition, Ptolemaic queens such as Arsinoe II and Cleopatra VII were frequently depicted wearing vulture caps in the Egyptian style.

²⁵⁴ Inv. No. Ta. 3377, its height without base is 69.5cm; the height of the base is 10.5cm, dates to the Roman period. Boussac, Seif El-Din, 1998, p.167, no.114; Seif El-Din, 2001, pp. 220-221, pl.I.1. For more parallels: Jentel, 1981, pls. IV, 4; V, 1-5.

²⁵⁵ Seif El-Din, 2001, p. 220.

²⁵⁶ Török, 1995, p.29.

²⁵⁷ Burkhalter, 1999, pp.51-59.

²⁵⁸ Bailey, 2008, p.94.

²⁵⁹ Bell, 1948, p.87.

²⁶⁰ Török, 1995, p.29.

²⁶¹ The vulture cap became a symbol of motherhood and was adopted by other mother goddesses, such as Mut and Isis. Cheshire, 2007, pp. 155- 157.

²⁶² Krug, 2004, p. 183, abb. 3.



Figure 25. A painting of Queen Nefertari from her tomb in the Valley of the Queens.

Krug drew a clear division between two specific types of birds used as headdresses, especially in Egyptian statues. The choice of headdress depended on whether it represented a vulture or a dove. The dove cap was used to describe the small-sized bird headdress that covered only the upper part of the head²⁶³. However, in ancient Egypt, the dove was not among the birds typically associated with Egyptian gods, such as the vulture, falcon, or ibis, which either formed part of the representation of the gods or served as their symbols²⁶⁴. During the Greco-Roman periods, the dove became associated with the Egyptian goddess Isis, presumably as a result of syncretism between Isis, Aphrodite, and other goddesses. In Greek mythology, the dove is usually linked with Aphrodite but is depicted near her or on her hand rather than adorning her head²⁶⁵. On the contrary, the Syrian-Phoenician region has a rich history of diverse manifestations of the great female deity dating back to ancient times. However, it is complex to follow this goddess due to many names and amalgamations associated with her, such as Ishtar or Astarte in Syria, Baalat Goubal (the lady of Byblos) in Byblos, Astarte in Sidon, and Berut (the lady of Berytos) in Berytos. Frequently, this goddess is represented naked to emphasize the physical expression of female fertility²⁶⁶. The depiction of a naked

²⁶³ Krug, 2004, p. 183; the dove was associated with various fertility goddesses, such as Dea Syria, Astarte, and Aphrodite. Brody, 2001, p. 99.

²⁶⁴ Störk, 1986, s.v. Taube, pp.240-241.

²⁶⁵ Simon, LIMC, II, 1984, s.v. Aphrodite; Brody, 2001, p p.93-109; Krug, 2004, p. 184; Cheshire, 2007, p.161.

²⁶⁶ Markoe, 2003, p. 126.

Aphrodite, which was unfamiliar to Isis, aligns more closely with the ancient style of portraying Astarte in nudity²⁶⁷. In the Syrian-Phoenician region, there is a long-standing tradition connecting this goddess with the dove, as the sacred bird of Astarte was commonly regarded as the dove²⁶⁸.

The association between Isis and Astarte dates back to ancient Egyptian times, particularly during the New Kingdom. This connection emerged as a result of Egyptian military campaigns in Syria, which brought foreign influences into Egypt, even within its pantheon²⁶⁹. Multiple instances of this association are primarily found in Memphis. For example, there is a figurine of Isis from the fourth century BC, inscribed with a dedication in Phoenician, reading “*to my sovereign, Astarte*”²⁷⁰. Additionally, a stela from the second or first century BC is devoted to Isis-Astarte. Notably, there existed a temple dedicated to the goddess Astarte in Memphis, where a Phoenician colony was established²⁷¹. According to the first hymn of Isidorus, the Syrians refer to Isis as Astarte. Similarly, in the papyrus of Oxyrhynchus 1380, Isis is invoked as Astarte in Sidon²⁷². Furthermore, the assimilation of Isis with Astarte is evident in Delos, as indicated by a votive inscription dedicated to “*Isis Soteira Astarte Aphrodite Euploia Epekoos and Eros Harpocrates Apollon, by Andromachus, son of Phanomachus*”²⁷³. Another dedication from Serapion C at Delos, dating to 130/129 BC, pays tribute to “*Isis-Mother of Gods-Astarte by Dionysius, son of Democles of Sidon*”²⁷⁴.

²⁶⁷ Krug, 2004, p. 188; Burkert, 1985, p. 152; Marcovich, 1996, pp. 43-59.

²⁶⁸ Burkert, 1985, p. 153; Marcovich, 1996, p. 51.

²⁶⁹ Leclant, 1960, pp. 3-4.

²⁷⁰ Hani, 1976, pp. 64-65.

²⁷¹ Hani, 1976, p. 64; Bowman, 1996, p. 179; Bricault, 2006, p. 20; Meza, 2006, pp. 164-165; Wallensten, 2014, p. 3; Bricault, 2020, p. 21, fn. 84.

²⁷² P. Oxy XI, 1380, 117.

²⁷³ IDELOS 2132.

²⁷⁴ IDELOS 2101.



Figure 26. A stela of the king of Byblos Yehawmilk from Byblos, the Louvre Museum, Inv. No. AO 22368.

It is worth noting that before the Ptolemaic period, the representation of Baalat Goubal or Astarte followed the formative image of Isis-Hathor in Egypt. An excellent example is the limestone stela of the king of Byblos, Yehawmilk from Byblos (**Fig. 26**), preserved in the Louvre Museum and dated to the 4th century BC, depicting the king Yehawmilk dressed in the manner of the Persian court in the act of presenting an offering before the goddess Baalat Goubal, the tutelary goddess of the Phoenician city²⁷⁵. Baalat Goubal is represented in the Egyptian form as Isis-Hathor, seated on the throne, holding a scepter, and wearing a vulture cap surmounted by the sun disc between two horns. Above the two figures is the Egyptian winged solar disc, serving as protection for the king against any attack. The rest of the stela is occupied by an inscription of sixteen lines in the Phoenician language²⁷⁶. The goddess Baalat Goubal was assimilated with the Egyptian goddess Hathor as early as the second millennium BC, and this connection is attested in both Egypt and Phoenicia (**see pp. 92-94**). The

²⁷⁵ The Yehawmilk stele, (H.: 1.12 m.; L.: 0.56 m.; Dp.: 0.24 m.), was discovered within the temple of Balat Gebal during the Persian period. It contains a 14-line inscription (KAI 10.6.12) commemorating the temple's restoration and the addition of a porch.

²⁷⁶ Montet, 1928, p.41- 44, fig.10; Stern, 2001, p. 500; Krug, 2004, p. 188; Cheshire, 2007, p. 163; Aliquot, 2004, pp. 214-215; Dixon, 2013, pp.175-178, fig. III.4; Bonnet, 2015, p. 159, fig. 25.

traditional depictions of the "Lady of Byblos" present her in the Egyptian aspect of a woman wearing Hathor's crown with the cow horns and the solar disc. In the first millennium BC, Isis gradually replaced Hathor in Byblos, suggesting that the goddess Baalat Goubal could have followed the change from Isis-Hathor to Isis-Aphrodite, which the dove headdress refers to as an ancient aspect of the Phoenician goddess²⁷⁷.

II. 1.5. 2. Serapis in Antaradus

A marble head of Serapis from the collection of Louis de Clercq was discovered in Tartous (Fig. 27), showing traces of red color over the beard and hair. The head depicts Serapis with his typical features, including a divided beard, a thick mustache connected to the beard, and long hair deeply engraved with a drill. The hair strands are arranged on the forehead and hang down in long, wavy strands. Serapis is also depicted wearing a diadem, and there is evidence of a prepared circular surface that would accommodate a separately made *kalathos*, indicating that the crown was intended to be placed on top of the head²⁷⁸. Based on these characteristics, the current head can be confidently identified as one of the heads of Serapis.



Figure 27. A marble head of Serapis from Tartous, Syria, H. 33cm.

²⁷⁷ Bonnet, 2015, p. 158.

²⁷⁸ De Ridder, 1906, p. 38, no. 34; Kater-Sibbes, 1973, p. 77, no. 438; Hornbostel, 1973, p. 100, no. 6, 282, no. 2.

It is worth noting that representations of Serapis can be categorized into two main types based on the hairstyle: the "Anastoletypus" and the "Fransentypus"²⁷⁹. It appears that the head in question belongs to the second type, which is characterized by a double row of curls low on the forehead. The study and classification of representations of Serapis carried out by Hornbostel show that, of these two types, the first is used above all in the Hellenistic period, while the second type with hanging locks, although it probably appeared at an earlier date, predominates in Imperial times²⁸⁰.

Furthermore, several marble replicas of Serapis were originally gilded, with traces of gold paint and a red painting ground surviving beneath the golden layer, particularly on the face, beard, and hair²⁸¹. The presence of red traces on the faces of Serapis heads served as a definite indication that the faces were gilded at some point in time. For example, a bust of Serapis in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo featured black hair and a robe, a flesh-colored face, and red-painted lips²⁸². There is another example in the Greco-Roman Museum in Alexandria, representing the front part of a colossal head of Serapis, which was discovered in the Serapeum of Alexandria²⁸³. Breccia noted the presence of numerous traces of various colors and observed the existence of gilded remnants during its excavation. There are still plain indications of red sizing on the hair and beard and traces on the face²⁸⁴.

Additionally, a bust of Serapis without a modius in the Greco-Roman Museum of Alexandria, which has traces of red sizing on the hair, beard, and face²⁸⁵. Similarly, another head located in Corinth was excavated by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens²⁸⁶. This head exhibits small traces of various colors on the beard and hair, as well as a notable large patch of gilding on the bridge of the nose and the forehead. Brady noted that it is evident, from an examination of this head, that a red sizing was applied prior to gilding the stone. This red

²⁷⁹ Anastoletypus refers to the depiction of hair rising up and back from the forehead, resembling the anastole commonly found in portraits of Alexander. Hornbostel, 1973, p. 81.

²⁸⁰ Hornbostel, 1973, pp. 207–295.

²⁸¹ Hornbostel, 1973, pp. 100-101, Abb.55.

²⁸² Inv. No. 274331.

²⁸³ Inv.no. 3912.

²⁸⁴ Breccia, 1922, p. 216, no. 52a.

²⁸⁵ Brady, 1940, p. 65. Another marble statuette of Serapis discovered in Corinth features a head with distinct red paint traces evident on the hair, beard, and eyes. It is likely that additional colors were applied over the red, particularly in the case of the beard where traces of gold still exist. Brady's conclusion suggests that the gilding may have been restricted to the beard, and possibly, the hair. Brady, 1940, p. 64.

²⁸⁶ Brady, 1940, p. 63.

sizing, often associated with gilding, is likely what Pliny referred to as a form of rubrica used for this purpose²⁸⁷.

²⁸⁷ Brady, 1940, pp. 63-64.

II.1.6. Epiphaneia

Two marble busts of the god Serapis were discovered in Epiphaneia "Hama" by the Danish mission (**Figs. 28-29**). They probably date back to the 2nd or 3rd century AD²⁸⁸. The first bust of Serapis emerged from acanthus leaves (**Fig. 28**)²⁸⁹. This figure shows the prevailing characteristics commonly found in representations of Serapis: a flat face with high cheekbones and a high, narrow forehead that gradually widens downward, deep-set eyes, and a slightly open mouth. The depiction includes a prominent mustache and a thick beard. Serapis wears the *kalathos*, which is shaped like a truncated cone with completely smooth sides. In addition, there are characteristic folds falling from the neck of the chiton down over the breast, as well as two V-shaped folds framed by distinct vertical folds and a draped himation over the left shoulder. The second Serapis bust from Hama is a less successful representative of the fringed type (**Fig. 29**). The rendering appears schematic and lifeless, with the significant division of the beard abandoned²⁹⁰. The artistic origin of the bust could not be determined, although Hornbostel suggested a local Syrian origin could not be excluded²⁹¹.

²⁸⁸ Ploug, 1985, pp. 194-197, no. 58, fig. 45e-f; no. 59, fig. 46a-b.

²⁸⁹ It is preserved in the National Museum of Copenhagen, Inv. No., V17. Ingholt, 1942, p. 474, fig. 14; Kater-Sibbes, 1973, p. 77, no. 442; Hornbostel, 1973, p. 218, pl. 99, 167; Clerc, Leclant, LIMC VII, 1994, s. v. Serapis, p. 676, no. 93b.

²⁹⁰ Hornbostel, 1973, p. 218, no. 3, pl. 99, 168.

²⁹¹ Hornbostel, 1973, p. 218.



Figure 28. A marble bust of Serapis from Hama, the National Museum of Copenhagen, Inv. No., V17.

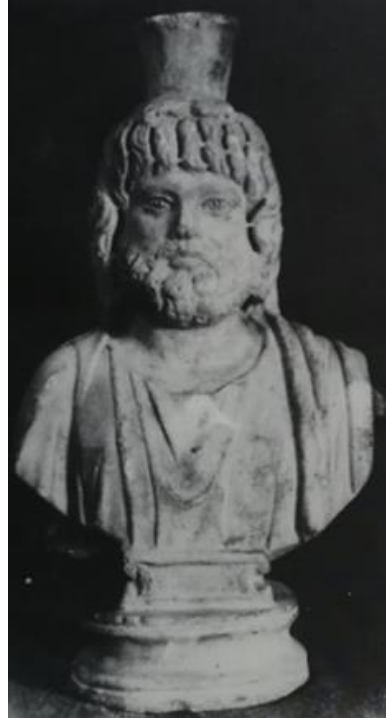


Figure 29. A marble bust of Serapis from Hama, Hornbostel, 1973, p. 218, no. 3, pl. 99. 168.



Figure 30. A lamp with the bust of Serapis, Hama, the National Museum of Damascus, Inv. No. 2160.

We have two additional examples of representation of Serapis from Hama. Firstly, there is a headless fragment discovered within the city, which may depict the god Serapis²⁹². Furthermore, a lamp with the bust of the god Serapis above an eagle with outstretched wings, the bird of Zeus, is of particular significance (**Fig. 30**). This lamp was acquired in 1932 and is now kept in the National Museum of Damascus. It is highly probable that the lamp was imported from Egypt²⁹³, as numerous lamps and handles discovered in Egypt displays a similar depiction of Serapis above an eagle with outstretched wings²⁹⁴.

The motif of Serapis above an eagle exhibits certain recurring characteristics²⁹⁵. The god occupies the upper portion of the composition, adorned with a *kalathos* on his head and a draped himation over his shoulders. His hair and beard are abundant and curly. The eagle is below the god on a strictly vertical axis. His body is seen from the front, while his head is turned sideways and raised towards the god. In general, its wings are widely spread, its tail is shifted to the side, and its legs rest on a line of the ground. The proportional ratios between the eagle and the god are random and are subject to the artisan's interpretation.

The association between the Alexandrian god Serapis and Zeus' bird, the eagle, can only be explained by the syncretism that gained popularity during Roman times, specifically in the form of Zeus/Jupiter-Serapis. In religious depictions, the eagle consistently represents Zeus' bird, symbolizing the power of the father of gods and men, the one who holds in his talons the almighty weapon of the ruler of Olympus, the thunderbolt²⁹⁶. Serapis is occasionally shown enthroned alongside the bird of Zeus in addition to his customary dog, Kerberos. For instance, a marble statue that is currently preserved in the British Museum offers a striking depiction of

²⁹² Ploug, 1985, pp.85, 197, fig.45h.

²⁹³ Zouhdi, 1974, p.180.

²⁹⁴ Hornbostel, 1973, pp. 220-229; Tran Tam Tinh, Jentel, 1993, pp. 177-195, pls. 48-54.

²⁹⁵ The theme involving Serapis and the eagle is various: the bird accompanies the seated god, and it can also function as a cosmic counterpart to the three-headed chthonic Kerberos (Hornbostel, 1973, pp. 94, 189, 220, pl.71, fig. 128) or even stand as the deity's sole companion (Clerc, Leclant, LIMC VII, 1994, s.v. Sarapis, p.689, no. 229). When associated with the standing god, the eagle is positioned either at his feet or perched on the back of one of his hands, often holding a small scepter (Tran Tam Tinh, 1983, pp. 31, 114, 115, no. IB 27, pl. 22, fig. 41; p. 251, no. V 19, pl. 107, fig. 286). On a bronze bust dating from the Antonine period in the East, the bird is seen perched atop Serapis' kalathos (Hornbostel, 1973, pp. 88, 219-220, 227-228, pl. 105, fig. 174; Clerc, Leclant, LIMC VII, 1994, s.v. Sarapis, p. 677, no. 104). Finally, the eagle can appear beneath Serapis, who, in such cases, is usually depicted in bust form. This last composition is by far the most frequent and the most interesting (Hornbostel, 1973, pp. 220-229; Tran Tam Tinh, Jentel, 1993, pp. 177-195).

²⁹⁶ Tran Tam Tinh, Jentel, 1993, p. 177.

Serapis-Zeus/Jupiter seated on the throne. This particular statue portrays Serapis-Zeus/Jupiter holding the thunderbolt in his right hand, the dog Kerberos standing on his right side, and the bird of Zeus standing on the other side²⁹⁷. Additionally, in Rome's Lancellotti Palace, another noteworthy statue can be found. This statue portrays Serapis standing in the company of an eagle²⁹⁸. Furthermore, there are instances where members of the Isiac family take part in this divine manifestation in emissions under Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, with the busts of Serapis and Isis depicted in profile, facing each other, and Harpocrates standing between them, all carried by the wings of the royal bird²⁹⁹.

It is worthy to note that Serapis on the eagle can also be accompanied by Greco-Roman deities who serve as his attendants, emphasizing his divine supremacy. Some intaglios depict one or two winged Nike figures, either hovering in the air or standing on emblems, extending a crown towards the god or above his head³⁰⁰. Other intaglios show Serapis carried by an eagle and watched over by the Dioscuri, standing or bust on either side of the god, leaning on a spear, and wearing a starry headdress³⁰¹. Lastly, a unique gem portrays the god and the eagle flanked on each side by a symbol and a warrior deity armed with a shield and a spear: Mars on the left and Minerva on the right³⁰².

In addition to the presence of Serapis, the figure of Isis is also found in Hama. A standing figurine of Isis-Fortuna or Tyche is now housed in the National Museum of Damascus³⁰³. Another instance of an Isis representation is a large vessel in the form of a bust, currently preserved in Hamburg. It is supposedly linked to Hama, although this connection relies solely on information provided by a Syrian dealer in Paris³⁰⁴.

²⁹⁷ Inv. No. Smith 1531. Clerc, Leclant, LIMC VII, 1994, s.v. Sarapis, p.677, pl. 510, Hornbostel, 1973, pp. 220-229, 189, Taf. LXXI, Abb.128.

²⁹⁸ Tran Tam Tinh, Jentel, 1993, p. 177.

²⁹⁹ Hornbostel, 1973, Abb. 185b, p. 224, no. 3, pl. 114, fig. 190; Tran Tam Tinh, Jentel, 1993, p. 193.

³⁰⁰ Veymiers, 2003, p. 271, fig. 17.

³⁰¹ Veymiers, 2003, p. 272, fig.19.

³⁰² Veymiers, 2003, p. 272, fig.20.

³⁰³ Inv., No., C5961/13751. Zouhdi, 1976, p.89; Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, no. 305c.

³⁰⁴ Inv., No., 1297. Parlasca, 1991a, p.55, Taf. 25a.

II.1.7. Abila of Lysanias

Several Greek inscriptions associated with the cult of Apis bull have been discovered in close proximity to the ancient city of Abila of Lysanias, modern-day Souq Wadi Barada, located northwest of Damascus³⁰⁵. These inscriptions reveal the existence of at least six dedications to the Apis bull, dating from the first to the fourth centuries AD. The remarkable continuity in the practice of the Apis cult outside of Egypt is evident from these findings. However, the specific reasons behind the veneration of the god Apis in this valley, as well as the establishment of the Egyptian cult there, remain unknown³⁰⁶. One notable inscription, engraved on a limestone altar (**Fig. 31**), is particularly significant. This inscription, dating back to 69/70 AD, was uncovered in Brahliya, situated approximately 3 km southwest of Abila. The inscription is addressed to the great Zeus of Heliopolis (Jupiter Heliopolitan) by a priest of the goddess Roma, the imperial cult, as well as Zeus and Apis³⁰⁷. The inscription reads as follows: "In the year 381, in the month of Dios, to Zeus Most Great of Heliopolis, Seleucus, son of Abgaros, priest of the goddess Rome and of the god Augustus Caesar and priest of Zeus and Apis, dedicated (this altar) at his expense and with the assistance of his brother Alexanderos".



Figure 31. A dedication of an altar from Brahliya to Zeus of Heliopolis and Apis, Hajjar 1977, p. 179-181, no. 165.

³⁰⁵ The ancient site of Abila, known as Abila of Lysanias to distinguish it from Abila of the Decapolis, is believed to correspond with the present-day localities of Souq Wadi Barada and its neighboring area downstream, Brahliya. Rey-Coquais, 1997, p. 935.

³⁰⁶ Rey-Coquais, 1997, p. 935. In addition to these inscriptions, Apis undoubtedly still appeared on a dedication (1st century AD), behind the name of Zeus. Bricault, RICIS, no. 402/1006.

³⁰⁷ It is preserved in the National Museum of Damascus, Inv. No., 17580. Hajjar, 1977, pp. 179-181, no. 165; Aliquot, 2003, pp. 242-243; Bricault, RICIS, no. 402/1001; Malaise, 2005, p. 45; Aliquot, 2009, p. 178.

Another dedication to the gods Zeus and Apis is found on an altar from Abila, dated to 245 AD. The inscription reads: *"In the year 556 (of the era of the Seleucids), the 4th of the month of Loos, Dorotheos, son of Alexandros, slave of Dositheos, offers for his salvation to Zeus and Apis, ancestral gods, a "light-bearing" statue [or "of the Door-Light," i.e., Artemis]"*. In this inscription, the two deities of Abila are described as "ancestral gods", which is a very common term in Syria and throughout the Roman world to celebrate the traditional aspect of worship³⁰⁸. The epithet "πατρῶος" is also used in Palmyra to designate Isis, as seen in an inscription from 149 AD that commemorates the dedication of a sanctuary to Baal or Samabaal, Isis, and Aphrodite, all qualified as "ancestral gods" (see pp. 256-257)³⁰⁹.

A third dedication on an altar discovered in Abila, dating from 321/322 AD, presents a rather long but poorly preserved text, making it challenging to interpret. Only the first nine lines provide a certain reading and meaning: *"In the year 633, dedicated this altar to Zeus Aktipegaios and celestial Apis, Anianos, son of Heliodoros, as well as his brothers and his friends, following a vow. [... (because they have not dried up (?)), the seven (?) springs which make the best growth of children and preserve mothers [from sterility (?)], during the magistracy of Herophilus"*³¹⁰. These lines invoke the celestial bull Apis and Zeus Aktipegaios as overseers of the education of human infants and as grantors of fertility to mothers and children, ensuring their good growth³¹¹. The epithet "οὐράνιος", meaning "celestial", attributed to the god Apis, appears foreign to the Egyptian religion but evokes the celestial aspect associated with many Syrian male and female divinities³¹².

³⁰⁸ It is kept in the National Museum of Damascus, Inv. No. 11035. Rey-Coquais, 1997, p. 935; Bricault, RICIS, no. 402/1003.

³⁰⁹ Dunand, 1973, p. 126; Teixidor, 1979, p. 58-59; Parlasca, 1994, p. 409; Sima, 2001, p. 162; Bricault, RICIS, no. 404/0201.

³¹⁰ It is preserved in the Museum of Damascus, Inv. No. 12475. Rey-Coquais, 1997, pp. 935-936; Bricault, RICIS, 402/1004; Malaise, 2005, p. 46. Another dedication for the god Apis from the 1st century AD. Bricault, RICIS, no. 402/1005; Aliquot, 2009, pp. 178-179.

³¹¹ Backe-Dahmen, 2018, p. 510. The epithet "celestial" likely originated during Roman times due to its connection to the moon. Malaise noted the challenge in explaining why Apis received honors alongside Zeus in the Anti-Lebanon valley. One possibility is that the Zeus association with Apis represented not the local deity Baal but rather Serapis. In Asia, specifically in Pergamum, there's evidence of hierophores at the Temple of Isis offering sacrifices to a range of deities, including Serapis, Isis, Anubis, Harpocrates, and Apis. Additionally, in Priene, the prescribed rituals during various Isiac festivals mention a priest who must make offerings to Apis on specific dates. In Greece, there exists a single epigraphic reference to the sacred bull, which is a prayer directed to Serapis, Isis, Anubis, and Apis. Bricault, RICIS, 301/1202, 304/0802, 104/0201; Malaise, 2005, p. 46.

³¹² Rey-Coquais, 1997, pp. 935-936.

An earlier inscription from 166/167 AD on an altar at the entrance of a small sanctuary in Nebi Abel, southwest of Abila, reveals that eleven worshipers dedicated an altar to Kronos Kyrios following an oracle of the gods Zeus and Apis of Abila for the salvation of Marcus Aurelius Verus³¹³. *"In the year 478, ..., to Lord Kronos, following the response of the oracle of the gods Zeus and Apis of Abila, for the salvation of the sovereigns (i. e. Marcus Aurelius and Verus), Diodoros, son of and Klemes the son of Mokimos, and Merkourios the son of Simontion, and Markos the son of Lysimachos, and Annianos the son of Mokimos, and Sarpedon the son of Herodos, and Herophilos the son of Ammonios, and Diodoros the son of 'Abidotaros, and Mauros, son of Alexandros, and Klaudios Merkourialos, and Diodoros, son of Zoilos, dedicated this altar, Soaimos, son of Diodotos, being a priest for life"*. This inscription indicates that the god Apis was not only the subject of a permanent cult performed by local priests in Syria but also had close connections to the local pantheon and the Imperial cult³¹⁴.

One of the inscribed altars was found at Brahlia, dating to 187/188 AD, and it was dedicated to Zeus and Apis, bearing the image of the bull Apis. The inscription on it reads: *"The year 499, [the. (?)] of the month Audnaios, for the salvation of the sovereign (i. e., Commodus), to Zeus and Apis the lords, Lysas, son of Zenon, and Augusta, daughter of Amathana, his wife consecrated (this altar) in a gesture of piety"*. Within a niche adorned with a semicircular arch (**Fig. 32**), Apis is depicted in his typical sacred bull form, standing on a plinth and facing left in profile³¹⁵. It should be noted that although Bricault mentions the presence of a sun disc between the horns, the *kalathos* is clearly depicted³¹⁶. However, other distinctive features associated with the sacred animal, such as the white triangle mark on the forehead, an eagle-shaped mark on the back, and the solar disc between two horns on his head, are not represented³¹⁷. The altar also includes additional elements. On the right side, a bust of a

³¹³ Aliquot, 2003, p. 243; Bricault, RICIS, no. 402/1005; Malaise, 2005, p. 45; Aliquot, 2009, p. 178.

³¹⁴ It should be noted that the oracle of the Apis bull was still well known in Memphis during the imperial period.

³¹⁵ It is preserved in the Museum of Damascus, inv. 12063. Bricault, RICIS, 402/1002; Aliquot, 2009, pp. 178-179, fig. 77.

³¹⁶ Bricault, RICIS, 402/1002.

³¹⁷ Herodotus, III, 28. Several figurative monuments confirm the presence of Apis in Isiac temples. For instance, the famous relief from Ariccia, along with a relief from Berlin, depicts a statue of Apis in an Isiac sanctuary, placed on a high pedestal. In both depictions, the bull bears the solar disk between its horns and stands before a palm tree. In Rome, a magnificent piece of marble relief was discovered on the Velia, featuring a powerful Apis

woman wearing a crown likely represents the city's goddess, Tyche of Abila, while below, a naked young man emerging from the waves possibly represents the river god, Chrysorrhoas, associated with the current Barada River. On the left side, a pinecone is depicted, and the winged caduceus is shown on the back³¹⁸.



Figure 32. An Altar found in Brahliia depicted Apis and Tyche.

The exact nature of the Apis of Abila, as well as the date and circumstances of its introduction to Syria, remain uncertain. However, it is most likely that the Graeco-Egyptian influence played a fundamental role in its development. In the 2nd century AD, perhaps due to the simultaneous worship of Serapis and Ammon or Serapis-Ammon in northern Arabia, the original connection with Apis was likely remembered. Several statues of Apis have also been discovered in the Levant, including in Ascalon (**Fig. 203**), Beersheba (**Fig. 232**), Kharayeb, and Misper Yamim (**Fig. 66**). These findings further support the presence and spread of Apis worship in the region. In addition to that, there is a votive inscription of Apis from the Negev.

bull next to a hydria and a horned altar laden with offerings. This Apis bull is exceptionally adorned with a small feathered Hathoric crown, the basileion. The threshold of the Serapeum in Ostia was adorned with a mosaic representing a bull, likely an Apis, although it lacked the attributes of the basileion. In Pompeii, among the paintings adorning the Sacarium and representing various Egyptian gods, there is a dedicated space for Apis, albeit without any distinctive attributes. Kater-Sibbes, Vermaseren, 1975, II, p. 17-19, no. 293, no. 311, pl. LXX, no. 286, pl. XXXVIII, no. 299, pl. LIV; Kater-Sibbes, Vermaseren, 1975, III, Add. 12, pl. XVI; Malaise, 2005, pp. 46-48.

³¹⁸ Aliquot, 2009, pp. 178- 179, fig. 77.

The inscription is secondarily installed in a church of Oboda and dates back to the late Roman period. It reads: “*one remembers Apis*”. The inscription could suggest that we are dealing here with the god Apis or it could simply be a theophoric name. Regardless, this provides further evidence of the popularity of Apis in this part of the Empire³¹⁹.

The cult of the sacred bull Apis is indeed one of the oldest and most prominent cults in ancient Egypt, with its origins dating back to the early periods of Egyptian history³²⁰. Evidence of the worship of Apis bulls can be traced as far back as the first king of the 1st Dynasty³²¹. Throughout his lifetime, the Apis bull held a prominent association with the god Ptah, the principal deity of Memphis, being referred to as the 'Living Apis, the herald of Ptah'³²². The coronation ceremony of the bull Apis took place inside the temple of Ptah, and according to Roman historians, it was attended by approximately a hundred priests from various regions across Egypt³²³. However, upon his death, the Apis bull underwent a transformation and was believed to merge with the god Osiris³²⁴. In this new form, it became known as Osiris-Apis or Apis-Osiris³²⁵. The theology of the Apis bull revolves around a cycle that carries a double meaning: on the one hand, Apis is the image of the royal succession, and

³¹⁹ Bricault, RICIS, 403/1101.

³²⁰ The cults dedicated to living sacred bulls continued in the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, with the most important ones being the cults of Apis in Memphis, Bouchis in Armant/Hermonthis, and Mnevis in Heliopolis. Bouchis, characterized by a white body with a black head, likely belonged to a species of bulls with short horns and a hump at the level of the withers. On the other hand, Mnevis was black, but the specific marks allowing us to identify him are not known to us except for a coat implanted against the grain. Boutantin, 2013, p. 252.

³²¹ On a seal impression of King Hor-Den of the First Dynasty, found in the tomb of an official named Hemaka, we can identify the bull placed with the king of Lower Egypt as being Apis because of the sign p inscribed above its horns, which forms the end of the legend [H]p; on the other half of the document, the ruler of Upper Egypt seems to be heading towards a cercopithecus. Another limestone fragment (Egyptian Museum, Cairo, JE 70149) found in a store of the same Hemaka tomb can be added to the ancient testimonies concerning Apis. Devauchelle, 2019, pp.165-195.

³²² Vermaseren, LIMC II, 1984, s.v. Apis, pp.177- 182; Malaise, 2005, pp. 41-51; Omran, Zouair, 2014, pp. 44-65.

³²³ Pliny, Nat. Hist., 8.184; Thompson, 1988, p. 183.

³²⁴ Plutarch mentions that the bull Apis is the soul of Osiris; in Egyptian terms, the animal is the *ba* of Osiris. Diodorus reports that, according to some, the soul of the deceased Osiris took refuge in the sacred bull of Memphis. As for Strabo, he reports the presence of a temple dedicated to Apis in Memphis, which is, he specifies, dedicated to Osiris. These connections are reflected at the linguistic level through the Egyptian names Apis-Osiris or Osiris-Apis, with the latter giving rise to the Greek theonym Serapis, which took shape in Ptolemaic iconographic "creation". Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 20, 29, 43; Diodorus, I, 85; Strabo, XVII, 31.

³²⁵ Omran, Zouair, 2014, pp. 44-65. According to some authors, Apis-Osiris must be clearly distinguished from Osiris-Apis. The first is a form of the god Osiris, incarnated in the sacred bull living in Memphis. The second is the deceased bull Apis, buried with great pomp and, in the image of the deceased, transformed into a new Osiris. This differentiation dates back to the New Kingdom. Malaise, 2005, p. 43.

on the other, Apis is the symbol of the Osirian rebirth³²⁶. When Alexander the Great conquered Egypt, he made offerings to the Apis bull in Memphis³²⁷. During the Roman period, the cult of Apis grew in importance, gaining fame and influence not only within Egypt but also throughout the Roman Empire³²⁸. The sacred animal was chosen according to certain peculiarities of the coat. Herodotus reports that the Apis bull was black in color, with a triangular white mark on the forehead and another in the shape of an eagle on the back; the tail hairs should be forked, and the image of a scarab should be visible under the tongue³²⁹. On small bronzes from the Saite period, the motifs of the eagle and the winged scarab are engraved on the back of the animal and could reflect real elements of adornment³³⁰.

³²⁶ Devauchelle, 2010, p. 49-62.

³²⁷ Thompson, 1988, p. 180; Pfeifer, 2008, pp. 387-408.

³²⁸ Kater-Sibbes, Vermaseren, 1975.

³²⁹ Herodotus, III, 28.

³³⁰ Boutantin, 2013, p. 252.

II.1.8. Sarrin

A Nilotic scene is depicted on the outer border of the mosaic in a building of unknown nature in Sarrin, located in the Roman province of Osrhoene, Syria (**Fig. 33**)³³¹. This scene represents the procession of the god Nilus, which begins from the left and moves toward the right. Nilus is shown reclining on a parade chariot with a convex back that ends in the form of an antelope's head, probably pulled by two hippopotami³³². The chariot is led by a naked child, accompanied by two children carrying a wreath in front of the chariot. The god Nilus is portrayed as a bearded old man with thick hair, wearing a wreath on his head³³³. He is depicted half-naked, with a cloak covering his lower body and his right shoulder. Nilus leans on a cushion with his right arm, and in his left hand, he likely holds either the *sistrum*, a ritual instrument associated with the cult of the goddess Isis, or a plant branch. The procession advances towards the nilometer, where a last naked child marks the level reached by the Nile's flooding, recorded at a height of 18 feet (IH). Behind the nilometer, a building suggests the presence of a nearby city. Within this architectural setting, a figure dressed in a short tunic, wearing high boots, and carrying a bag on his back, partially disappears into the structure. It is possible that this city symbolizes Alexandria, based on a comparison with the mosaic of Beit She'an, where an architectural monument placed adjacent to the nilometer is explicitly identified as Alexandria by an inscription (**Fig. 118**).

³³¹ Balty, 1990, pp.14-15, 60-68, pls. XXXI-XXXIII, XXXV, 3: general plan; Hachlili, 2009, p.100, fig. V-3.

³³² The river-god that epitomizes the reclining river god iconographic type par excellence is the Nile, of which a large number of examples are preserved in Roman mosaics throughout the geography of the Empire and of diverse chronology. This is undoubtedly due to the importance it acquired in Greco-Roman culture since Hellenistic times as one of the most significant river divinities, thereby extending the cult of the Egyptian god Hapy beyond Egyptian borders, albeit with a different significance. Several Greek and Roman authors describe the course of the river and refer to the constant benefits it brought to the Egyptian people through its annual flooding. Herodotus (*Historia*, II, 5) is one of the chroniclers who describe it; remember his famous phrase also attributed to Hecataeus, which said that Egypt was a gift from the Nile; or Aristotle (*Meteorologica*, I, 14, 351b), who also attributed the creation of the Egyptian country to its fertile river. Other later authors such as Diodorus of Sicily (*Bibliotheca Historica*, I, 32-41) or Seneca (*Naturales Quaestiones*, IV, 1-2) also testify to the course and floods of the river.

³³³ A famous depiction of Nilus on the Tazza Farnese cameo preserved in the National Museum of Naples, probably dating from the end of the Ptolemaic period, Nilus is associated with his consort Euthenia, the figures of the seasons, a queen in the guise of Isis-Demeter, and a king as Horus-Triptolemus. This representation glorifies the benefits of the flood and the beneficial activities of the royal couple. Turnheim, 2002, p. 24.

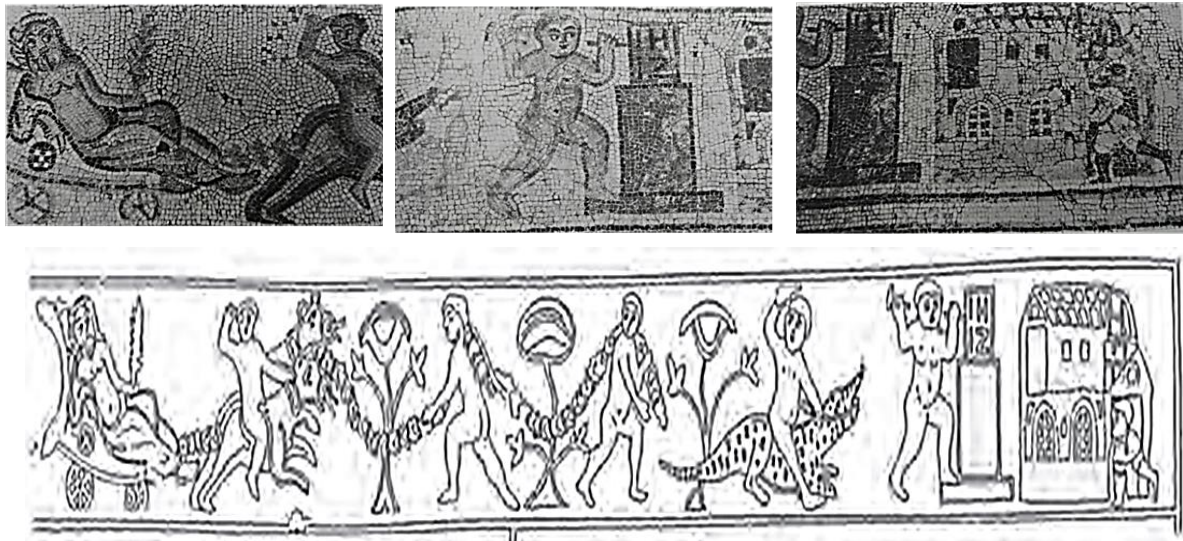


Figure 33. The Mosaic of Sarrin depicted Nilus, Syria.

The term "Nilotic scenes" encompasses a wide range of activities and elements associated with life along the Nile River³³⁴. These scenes include the personification of the Nile, depictions of buildings or cities, sailing boats laden with pottery, various animals, waterfowl, water plants, and people engaged in diverse activities³³⁵. They were a famous topic within mosaics and wall paintings during Hellenistic and Roman times³³⁶. One of the most famous and earliest examples of Nilotic scenes is the Palestrina mosaic, which dates back to the second century BC. It is widely believed to be the work of a Greek artist from Alexandria.

³³⁴ The god of the Nile, Hapy, was directly related to the regenerative nature of the waters and the nutritional power of the annual flood. These values were extrapolated to the consideration of the river by both the Greeks and the Romans later. However, they gave him different meaning and attributes, making him an independent god within Greco-Roman culture, as transmitted by classical sources. For the Greeks, the Nile was another child of Oceanus and Thetis; however, there was a legend that identified the river with a fictional character, a king that only Diodorus documents, called Neilos. The Greek explains that the previous name of the river was Egypt, and that it was renamed the Nile due to this supposed king, who would have built numerous canals and dams, improving the fertility of the river for the Egyptian people (*Bibliotheca Historica*, I, 63, 1). This character was also linked to Io, since her daughter (Memphis) would have joined her son (Epaphos). Relatedly, representations of river gods in Roman art were often metaphors for their military conquests, as we see in triumphal arches or commemorative columns. However, the interpretation that has been given to the Roman representations of the Nile river god also acquires a meaning related to the peace and prosperity of the Empire brought by the emperor (as happened with Augustus after the battle of Actium). This meaning was reinforced in the Flavian era, since the secure control of Egypt and the supply of grain were Vespasian achievements. For all these reasons, the Nile River crossed the Egyptian borders, since it was considered that an important part of the Empire benefited from Egypt. Piccirillo, 1993; Meyboom, 1995; Versluys, 2002; Hachlili, 2009.

³³⁵ Hachlili, 2009, p.97.

³³⁶ Piccirillo, 1993, pp. 15, 37; Meyboom, 1995, p. 100; Versluys, 2002, p. 285. They were found in buildings with different functions, for example dwelling houses, pagan structures and churches. Hachlili, 1998, p. 106.

This mosaic vividly portrays both Lower and Upper Egypt during the annual flooding of the Nile River, capturing the essence of the region's agricultural abundance and prosperity³³⁷. In the Byzantine period, artists continued to draw inspiration from the Classical and Hellenistic traditions, including the incorporation of Nilotic scenes into their works. The Nilotic themes enjoyed considerable success in the late mosaics of the Eastern provinces, both as decorative borders and as expansive compositions covering the entire floor. These depictions of the Nile River were particularly prevalent in areas influenced by Egyptian culture, serving as a testament to the region's abundant resources and symbolizing fertility.

One of the most spectacular representations of the procession of the celebration for the Nile is found at the Villa del Nilo in Leptis Magna in 1930 (**Fig. 34**), which dates back to the second century AD. The god Nilus is depicted reclining on two hippopotami, holding a *cornucopia* in his right hand and a plant branch in his left. A procession of children leads the hippopotami, pulled by a long garland of flowers, towards the nilometer. Two women play the crotala, expressing the joy of the arrival of the Nile, as does one of the priests on the right, playing a long-tube aerophone. A nilometer, a frequent element in this type of landscape, closes the scene. The nilometer itself features a conical roof placed atop a staircase. Instead of indicating the cubits, a Greek inscription, "Agathe Tyche", is present, invoking the "good fortune" of the emperor who presides over the fertile years³³⁸.



Figure 34. The Mosaic of the Villa del Nilo in Leptis Magna.

³³⁷ Meyboom, 1995; Hamarneh, 1999, pp. 185-189; Turnheim, 2002, pp. 24-25, fig. 11; Hachlili, 2009, p.97.

³³⁸ Jentel, LIMC VI, 1992, s.v. Neilos, p.723, fig.45; Meyboom, 1995, n.77,78; Versluys, 2002, pp. 185-186, no. 091, fig.114; Hachlili, 2009, p.101; Sandri, 2013, pp. 203-204, fig.12.

II.1.9. Dura Europos

Throughout its history, Dura-Europos was under the control of three political powers. Europos was initially founded around 300 BC by the Seleucids. Later, in 113 BC, the Parthians successfully conquered the city, ruling it for nearly three centuries until 165 AD, with a brief period of Roman occupation in 116/7 AD. Subsequently, the Romans recaptured Dura-Europos for the second time and held sway over the city as part of the Roman Empire for nearly one hundred years. However, in 256 AD, the city faced a pivotal turning point when it was attacked and conquered by the Sasanians³³⁹.

The testimonies of Serapis from the Euphrates region, such as Dura Europos, are also accessible through literature. In one instance, an inscription was discovered inside a house that mentions Zeus Serapis Εἰς Ζεὺς Σάραπις, dates to the end of the second century and the beginning of the third AD³⁴⁰. It is possible that this inscription represents a private cult of Serapis; however, it is significant to note that it originates from a time when the cult of Serapis was widely spread.

There are also some representations of Zeus-Serapis in Dura Europos; for example, a bas-relief depicting Mithra slaying the bull shows a bust of Zeus-Serapis wearing the *kalathos* positioned above Mithra (**Fig. 35**). During the seventh season of excavations at Dura-Europos in 1933–34, conducted jointly by Yale University and Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, a small shrine dedicated to Mithra was uncovered³⁴¹. The shrine was located along the western fortification wall in the northern part of the city. An important discovery within the shrine was a dedicatory inscription dating back to approximately 168–169 AD by Palmyrene archers who served in the Roman army³⁴². The relief represents Mithra, attired in Persian costume, sitting on the back of the bull and pulling its head back with one hand while he stabs the animal in the neck with the other. A small dog can be seen drinking blood from the wound. The donors or dedicants of the artwork are depicted observing the scene.

³³⁹ Butcher, 2003, pp. 260-261.

³⁴⁰ Vidman, SIRIS, no. 363; Dunand, 1973, p. 126; Bricault, 2001, p.76; Bricault, RICIS, no. 404/ 0101.

³⁴¹ Inv. no. 1935.100. <https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/6746>

³⁴² Rostovtzeff, et al., 1936, pp. 45-46, no. 623; Rostovtzeff, et al., 1939; Vermaseren, 1956, p. 64, no. 40; Kater-Sibbes, 1973, p.79, no. 454.



Figure 35. A bas-relief of Mithra depicted a bust of Serapis, Dura Europos.

We find Serapis among the deities accompanying Mithra on only two reliefs. The first is from Dura-Europos, under discussion here, and the second is from Bologna³⁴³, where Serapis is depicted presiding over the sacrifice alongside Saturn, Venus, Mercury, and Mars. At both ends of the relief, we see Sol with the radiating crown and Luna with the crescent. While the attending deities varied, the presence of the sun and the moon remained constant, forming an astronomical framework. Therefore, Serapis was not an exceptional companion for Mithra, even though these testimonies do not come from Egypt. It is worth noting that there are three notable sculptures in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo depicting the god Mithra. However, these

³⁴³ This relief was part of the Palagi collection of the Civico Museo Archeologico of Bologna (inv.no. G 1051). It was part of the permanent exposition of the Museum until it was stolen in the 1970s. The relief represents Mithras, dressed in his customary clothes, holding the bull firmly by the nostrils with his left hand while thrusting a dagger into the animal's shoulder with his right. The bull is forced to the ground, and its tongue protrudes from its muzzle. Surrounding the scene are the usual depictions of the scorpion, the snake, and the dog, with a raven perched on the rocky vault on the left. Flanking the central scene are the torchbearers: Cautopates on the left and Cautes on the right. On the arched band that delimits the cave, the relief displays the busts of seven deities, ordered from left to right: a) Sol, with a radiating crown, gazes to the right. b) Saturn, bearded, looks to the right. c) Venus, wearing a diadem, looks to the right. d) Serapis-Jupiter, positioned centrally, faces forward with a long beard and hair, and atop his head, he wears a kalathos. e) Mercury, wearing a winged petasus, looks to the left. f) Mars, donning a helmet, looks to the left. g) Luna, with a crescent adorning her forehead, looks to the left. In the lower band of the relief, three additional subjects are depicted: a) Three people recline at a banquet with a small table set in front of them. The first person is draped in a long mantle that leaves his chest bare, and he has a beard. The other two individuals are dressed in tunics, and the last one wears a radiating crown. b) A winged, naked child (Eros) drives a chariot to the right. c) A male, bearded figure reclines on his left elbow, also draped in a long mantle that exposes his chest. Vermaseren, 1956, pp. 252-253, no. 693, fig. 195.

scenes do not include any Egyptian deity accompanying Mithra³⁴⁴. Nevertheless, the cult of Mithra did spread in certain areas of Egypt, such as Alexandria, Memphis, and Fayoum³⁴⁵. This demonstrates the adaptability and acceptance of the Mithraic cult within the cultural and religious landscape of Egypt.

Furthermore, several statues of Serapis that come from locations outside Egypt have been discovered within Mithraea situated in various places, including London (England), Merida (Spain), Ostia, and Rome (Italy)³⁴⁶. In addition to that, individual connections of piety have been noted between the deities Mithra and Serapis. An intriguing example is Apronianus, a local public treasurer who dedicated a sanctuary to both Isis and Serapis at Nersae and a relief to the god Mithra around the year 172 AD³⁴⁷. The syncretic amalgamation of Zeus, Helios, Serapis, and Mithra was notably prevalent during the Imperial period. For instance, at the Baths of Caracalla in Rome (211–217), an inscription was unearthed that paid homage to Zeus-Helios, the Great Serapis with the epithet "savior," and the benevolent and invincible Mithra³⁴⁸. The universal and pantheistic characteristics attributed to Serapis, along with the mystical aspects that developed during the Roman period, might cause a certain fusion between his cult and the cult of Mithra.

³⁴⁴ Vermaseren, 1956, pp. 81- 83, nos. 91-93.

³⁴⁵ Kiss, 2006, p. 166.

³⁴⁶ Turcan, 1994, p.475.

³⁴⁷ Turcan, 1994, p.476.

³⁴⁸ Vermaseren, 1956, p. 180; Friedheim, 2006, pp. 122-123, fn. 436.

II. 2. Phoenicia

Phoenicia was the region of the Levantine coast that stretched from Aradus (Arwad) in the north to Dor in the south (**Fig. 36**)³⁴⁹. Phoenicia was effectively separated from the hinterland by the huge ridges of the Lebanon Mountains. The lowest pass through this range is between Jebel al-Knise and Jebel Baruk, east of Beirut (the ancient port of Berytus). Another higher pass also provided access to the Beqaa from the mountains above Byblos³⁵⁰. The most important cities along the coast were Byblos, Berytus, Sidon, Tyre, and Aradus³⁵¹. Other important cities located in Phoenicia include Marathus (Amrit), Umm el-Amed near Tyre, and Kharayeb in the hinterland of Tyre³⁵².

The Phoenicians had the habit of borrowing religious and cultural elements from the civilizations of the Near East and the rest of their Mediterranean neighbors and reinterpreting them according to their local parameters³⁵³. Phoenicia enjoyed distinguished contacts with the Egyptians and the Greeks even before the conquest of Alexander the Great in ancient Syria. Egypt had established commercial trade with Phoenicia since the early third millennium BC, importing wood, spices, and oils. Byblos was the main center of this trade, which supplied Egypt with cedar wood to build their architectural structures, oil, and the gummy substance of the cedar tree³⁵⁴. The Palermo stone records that King Senefru, the first king of the Fourth Dynasty, brought forty ships loaded with cedar wood from Byblos³⁵⁵. The ships of Byblos are also depicted on the causeways of Fifth Dynasty kings Sahura and Unas³⁵⁶. Furthermore, the religious significance of pine resins and oils, essential ingredients in the mummification

³⁴⁹ Pseudo-Scylax considers Phoenicia the entire coast located from Aradus in the north to Ascalon in the south. However, the cities located south of Mount Carmel do not belong to the traditional historical domain of the Phoenicians, even if some of them are considered countries of Tyr or Sidon. Therefore, we will refer here to the term "Phoenicia," only the cities' territory from Aradus in the north to Dor in the south. Pseudo-Scylax, 104; Sartre, 2001, p.39; Butcher, 2003, pp. 110-112; Vittmann, 2003, pp.44-83; Al-Olabi, 2009, p.7.

³⁵⁰ Butcher, 2003, p.12.

³⁵¹ Butcher, 2003, pp. 110-112.

³⁵² Castiglione, 2019, p.359.

³⁵³ Chéhab, 1968, pp. 1-8; Leclant, 1968, pp. 9-31; Ribichini, 1975, pp. 7-14; Aliquot, 2004, pp. 201-228; Aliquot, 2009, pp. 171- 183.

³⁵⁴ Vittmann, 2003, p. 46; Markoe, 2003, p. 15; Abd-El-Ghani, 2015, p.471.

³⁵⁵ Chéhab, 1968, p. 2; Wright, Pardee, 1988, pp. 143-161; Helck, 1994, pp. 105- 112; Abd-El-Ghani, 2015, pp. 471-472. A fragment of an alabaster vase discovered in Byblos bears an inscription featuring the name of Khasekhemwy, who was the final ruler of the Second Dynasty. Ward, 1991, p. 12.

³⁵⁶ Hollis, 2009, p. 2. The Elephantine tomb inscription of the nobleman Pepi-nacht of the Sixth Dynasty refers to a Byblos ship that was used to sail on the Red Sea to the land of Punt. Wright, Pardee, 1988, p. 148.

process, undoubtedly played a significant role in fostering trade relations between Egypt and Syro-Palestine³⁵⁷. During Thutmose III's reign (1479-1425 BC), Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine became under Egyptian supremacy after the battle of Megiddo, and they paid tributes and taxes³⁵⁸. However, Egypt gradually lost control over these regions in the middle of the Twentieth Dynasty³⁵⁹.

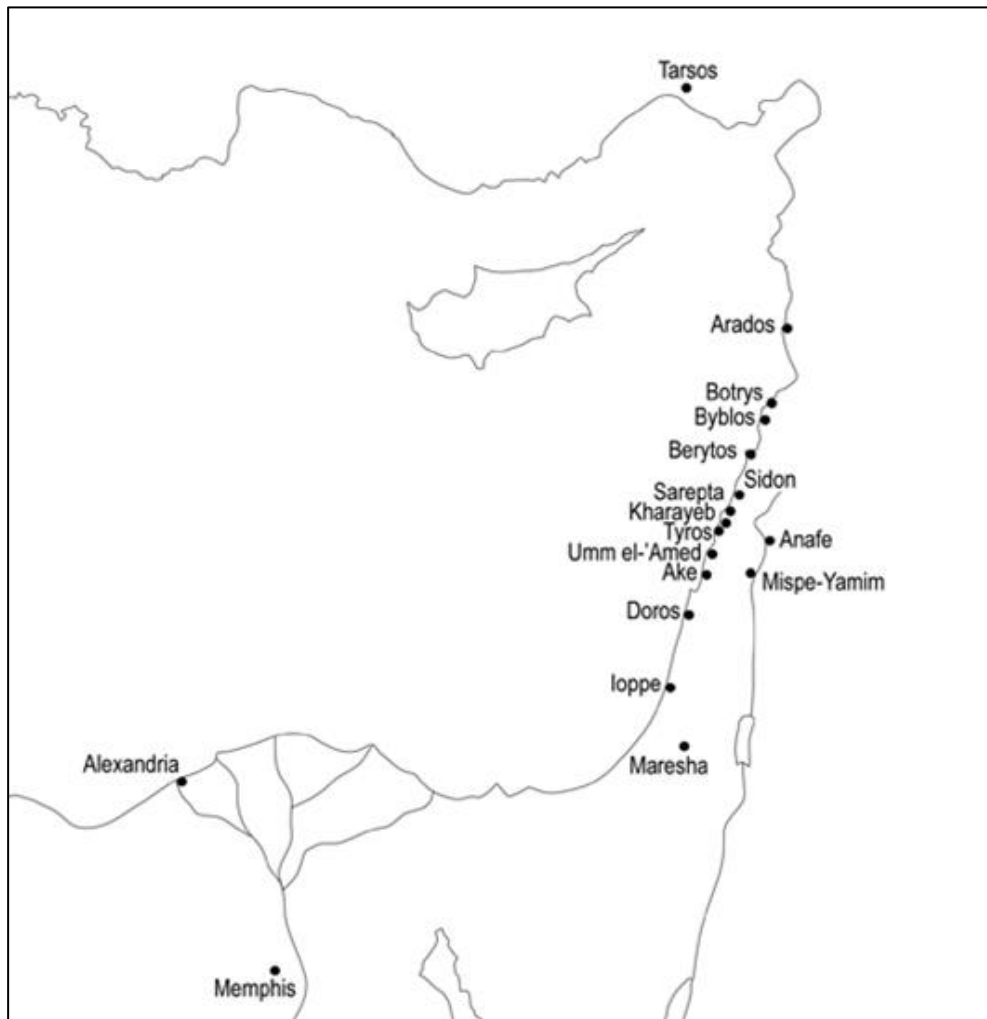


Figure 36. Map of Phoenicia.

³⁵⁷ Wright, Pardee, 1988, p. 147.

³⁵⁸ It was Thutmose I who began campaigns of conquest in the Levantine territories to expand the borders of his kingdom, and Ahmose son of Ibana always talks about it in his biography. The pharaoh extended his dominion to the banks of the Euphrates, where, in memory of him, he erected a stele indicating the most extreme border of his now-definable empire, which extended from Mesopotamia to the Fourth Cataract on the Nile. It was his grandson Thutmose III who followed in his grandfather's footsteps by conducting, as soon as he was elected, a military campaign towards the Levant, which had become agitated again due to the less incisive reigns of Thutmose II and Hatshepsut regarding foreign policy. Markoe, 2003, p. 14.

³⁵⁹ Abd-El-Ghani, 2015, p. 473.

The numerous archaeological finds discovered in the sites of Phoenicia confirm the Egyptian influence, both in artistic, religious, and funerary contexts³⁶⁰. It is worth noting that Egyptian influences appear to have had a significant impact on Phoenician art during the Iron Age. In this regard, the metal bowls and Phoenician ivories demonstrate a strong Egyptian style and iconography³⁶¹. The Egyptian character that qualified the amulets in Egyptian faience remained dominant in Phoenicia even later during the Hellenistic and Roman times, most notably the Udjat Eye, Ptah, and Bes³⁶². Such small items were cheap to manufacture or obtain, easy to transport, and often had a special apotropaic value for the user. Moreover, specific Egyptian iconographic elements were used on coins and in religious art and architecture in Phoenicia, such as the Egyptian cavetto cornice, architraves with winged solar discs and uraei, sphinxes, and the small *naiskos*³⁶³. The Ma'abed "sanctuary" of Amrit is a well-known example from the Persian period that combines the Egyptian cavetto cornice (**Fig. 37**), the Greek dentils, and the row of merlons, a motif of Mesopotamian origin³⁶⁴.

³⁶⁰ Chéhab, 1968, pp. 1-8; Leclant, 1968, pp. 9-31; Ribichini, 1975, pp. 7-14; Lemaire, 1986, pp. 87-98.

³⁶¹ Haider, 2018, pp. 269-285.

³⁶² Vittmann, 2003, p.61; Nunn, 2008, p.102, fig. 5; Al-Olabi, 2009, p 22.

³⁶³ The Egyptian cavetto cornice is the most distinctive architectural element of the Egyptian cultural heritage in Phoenicia. This cavetto cornice was widespread through the Hellenistic until the Roman time in Phoenicia, which crowned religious monuments of all types: small altars, temples, shrines, porticoes in sanctuaries, for example, in Byblos, Umm el-Amed, Qalaat Faqra, and Chhim. Collart, 1973, pp. 137-161; Wagner, 1980; Dentzer-Feydy, 2003, p. 434; Aliquot, 2004, p. 204; Quinn, 2013, pp. 190, 208.

³⁶⁴ The combination of the Egyptian cavetto cornice crowning with a row of merlons would have been made in Phoenicia and western Syria during the Achaemenid period or even during the Hellenistic period. The use of the cavetto cornice is common in phoenicia's religious monuments, as is the use of merlons in Roman times, but the association of these two elements appears to be less common. It is, however, found at Qalaat Faqra on the crowning of the high altar and tower. Furthermore, the Byblos region yielded several imperial votive altars, the crowning of which features a row of merlons, sometimes associated with the Egyptian cavetto cornice. Dentzer-Feydy, 2003, p. 432, fig. 1; Markoe, 2003, p. 128; Aliquot, 2004, p. 204; Aliquot, 2009, p. 173; Al-Olabi, 2009, p 76, fig. 56.



Figure 37. The Naos of the Maabed Amrit.

Here we recall the first anthropoid sarcophagi in Phoenicia, particularly in Sidon and Amrit; some were imported from Egypt, while others were more or less skillfully imitated. During excavations in Sidon in the 19th century, three colossal Egyptian mummy sarcophagi made of basalt were found, which can be dated to the end of the 26th dynasty. One of these examples is the black basalt sarcophagus of the king of Sidon Tabnit, kept in the Istanbul Archaeology Museum, which was found in hypogeum B of the necropolis of Ayaa and is thought to have been produced in Egypt. The coffin was entirely covered in Egyptian hieroglyphs, which were spared during the subsequent addition of the Phoenician text in the early fifth century BC **(Fig. 38)**³⁶⁵.

³⁶⁵ Inv. No. RES 1202; KAI 13; Cos 2.56. Several hypotheses were made about the presence of this double inscription: literary texts mention that during the sixth century BC, Cambyses, king of Persia, campaigned against Egypt, accompanied by the king of Sidon Tabnit. After the battle of Pelusium in 525 BC, the necropolis of Memphis was sacked, and the Sidonian king took three Egyptian sarcophagi as spoils of war. His sarcophagus retained its hieroglyphic inscription, identifying it as originally intended for an Egyptian general named Pentah. Another theory advanced during the study of sarcophagi was that they were commissioned for royal use in Sidon since the existence of an important Phoenician colony in Memphis is known. Another theory was that Pentah lived in Phoenicia and ordered this sarcophagus to ensure a good Egyptian-style burial. Vittmann, 2003, pp.



Figure 38. A basalt sarcophagus of the king of Sidon Tabnit.

Figure 39. A sarcophagus of Eshmunazar II, the son of Tabnit.

The second coffin of Eshmunazar II, the son of Tabnit (**Fig. 39**), had been imported from Egypt and brought to Phoenicia, most likely from the same shop as his father's. Although the hair and the rendering of the braided beard indicated total Egyptian influence, the inscription on the lid in Phoenician characters had been added to describe the king's exploits and loyalty to the local divinities, Astarte and Baal, despite the Egyptian religious iconography that characterized the decoration³⁶⁶.

58-61, Abb. 22; Bol, Frede, 2005, pp.172- 173, fig. 3; Dixon, 2013, pp.179-182, fig.III.5; Haider, 2018, pp. 269-285.

³⁶⁶ Vittmann, 2003, pp. 58- 61, Taf. 5; Bol, Frede, 2005, pp.172- 173; Nitschke, 2011, p. 100, fig. 14. Two Egyptian sarcophagi, which probably date back to the late Hellenistic or early Roman periods, were discovered during excavations in the northern Syrian port city of Laodicea. These sarcophagi are made of limestone and are currently preserved in the Museum of Tartous. The first sarcophagus depicts a scene with six people in low relief, symmetrically positioned. In the center, two figures are preserved up to their knees. Behind this couple, some distance away, stands another person with a wide stance, also preserved up to the knee, with no visible robe. On both the right and left sides of the scene, there are winged figures in a close-walking position, likely representing Isis and Nephthys, who are typically seen as mourning women in burial rituals. In front of Isis and Nephthys, there are two male figures who can be identified as deities due to their attributes, including the presence of a was-scepter. The second sarcophagus features two image fields preserved in low relief, each framed by surrounding bands. In the left, approximately square field, there is a winged figure standing in a close walking position on a pedestal. The right-hand panel forms the main scene, portraying a ship. This ship is a

After that, when the anthropoid sarcophagi were produced directly in Phoenicia between the fifth and fourth centuries BC, lasting for almost two centuries and spreading from the Levant to the Western Mediterranean, they combined Egyptian form, Greek motifs, and stylistic elements with local Phoenician influences (**Fig. 40**). These sarcophagi, mostly made of Greek marble of Paros, were finished by Greek artists resident in Phoenicia who decorated the lids with human features, clothes, and other accessories in Hellenizing style. The shaping of the body is barely hinted at or missing, while the head is sculpted in a totally Greek way³⁶⁷.



Figure 40. Anthropoid sarcophagi from the Royal Sidon Necropolis, The National Museum of Beirut.

papyrus boat with the stern curved in a crescent shape. At the stern of the boat, there is a figure holding a rudder, preserved up to the waist. To the right of this figure stands another figure, probably a woman, dressed in an ankle-length robe. In front of the woman is a figure wrapped in mummy bandages with a net pattern. Lembke suggested that the two sarcophagi probably depict the Egyptian burial ritual. It is likely that a woman was buried in the sarcophagus with the couple scene, and a man was probably buried in the coffin with the boat depiction. Due to the close stylistic and formal connections between the sarcophagi, it could represent a married couple. It is likely that the two sarcophagi were made in Laodicea itself. The themes were probably chosen by the clients, who clearly had an appreciation for Egyptian culture and may have been Egyptian emigrants. Lembke, 2001, pp. 261-271.

³⁶⁷ Bol, Frede, 2005, pp.171-177.

II.2.1. Byblos

Byblos located about 25 miles north of modern Beirut on the Mediterranean coast, was situated at the foot of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains. Since ancient times, Byblos maintained the closest relations with Egypt—relations of an economic character above all and whose wood was the main material. Egypt got the cedar wood from Byblos because only the softwoods of Lebanon supplied the solid and straight trunks necessary for the large constructions³⁶⁸. The story of Wen Amun “the high priest of the god Amun in Thebes”, which dates back to 1075 BC, exemplifies this point. He travels to Byblos in search of cedar wood for the "great ship of Amun-Re"³⁶⁹.

Moreover, the connections between the Egyptian deities and the gods of Byblos were of a special kind and very old. The goddess Hathor has been attested in Byblos since the third millennium BC; she was well-known in Egyptian sources as *nbt kpn (Kbn)*, "the lady of Byblos". Several copies from the Coffin Texts mentioned Hathor as "the Lady of Byblos, who holds the steering oar of barks"³⁷⁰. On the other hand, some documents have also been discovered in Byblos, identifying Hathor as "the Lady of Byblos"; an inscription adorning a statuette of a scribe of Pepy I from Byblos specifies that "Hathor, lady of Dendera, who lives in Byblos"³⁷¹. In the temple of Asherah, who is the protector and mother of the gods and the consort of El, the creator god in Phoenicia, Hathor is also present, but she remains a foreign goddess³⁷². Plutarch mentions an Iseion in Byblos, but its identification remains unclear.

³⁶⁸ Egypt did possess native trees like acacia and tamarisk, as well as various fruit and palm tree species useful for crafts, domestic architecture, and small boats. However, they lacked the type of wood required to construct massive architectural monuments and seafaring vessels, so they had to import it. Wright, Pardee, 1988, p. 146.

³⁶⁹ In the story, Wenamun experiences a lack of warm reception and suffers a series of unfortunate incidents. Hani, 1976, p. 63; Helck, 1994, pp. 105- 112

³⁷⁰ Hani, 1976, p. 68; Dunand, 1973, p. 129; Ribichini, 1975, p. 8; Scandone Matthiae, 1981, p. 63-64; Helck, 1994, p. 108; Volokhine, 1995, p. 216; Mettinger, 2001, p. 177; Bricault, 2006, p. 18-19; Bonnet, 2015, p. 158; Bricault, 2020, p.19.

³⁷¹ Egyptian stone vessels with the names of the pharaohs of the Old Kingdom were found in Byblos, they are dedications of Egyptian expeditions in the temple of the main goddess of Byblos, Baalat Goubal. Hani, 1976, p. 63; Chéhab, 1968, p. 3; Helck, 1994, pp. 105- 112; Hollis, 2009, p. 1.

³⁷² Mesnil du Buisson, 1970, p. 74.

Bricault suggested that the Iseion quoted by Plutarch could indicate the temple of Asherah, as we know since the New Kingdom Hathor and Isis became one divinity³⁷³.

As previously stated, the limestone stela of the king of Byblos Yehawmilk in the Persian period (**Fig. 26**), in which the goddess Baalat Goubal, "the Lady of Byblos", the tutelary goddess of the ruling house, was assimilated with the Egyptian goddess Isis-Hathor, but her relations with the Egyptian goddess are far from clear³⁷⁴. We can notice the amalgamation of Egyptian and Persian themes: the Egyptian winged solar disc, while the king is dressed in a long robe and crowned with the Persian tiara, and the goddess, seated on a typically Egyptian throne, is represented as Isis-Hathor, wears the cap of a vulture, and is crowned with the disc encircled by the horns, holding the scepter in front of her. The attestations of Baalat Goubal, which refer to her assimilation to Hathor, are dated between the middle of the third millennium BC and the end of the second millennium BC³⁷⁵.

Since the first Millennium BC, the popularity of Isis prepared the way for the assimilation of this universal Egyptian goddess to the goddess Baalat Goubal³⁷⁶. The Lady of Byblos appears to have been venerated under her traditional Phoenician name, "Baalat Goubal," until the beginning of the Hellenistic period³⁷⁷. However, she will then be named Astarte and assimilated to the goddess Aphrodite³⁷⁸, as Philon of Byblos attests: "Astarte, according to the

³⁷³ The sacred tree resembles the biblical Asherah, which was similarly made of wood, draped in cloths, and erected in the temple. Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 16; Bricault, 2006, pp. 18-19; Bricault, 2020, p.19.

³⁷⁴ Montet, 1928, pp.41- 44, fig.10; Chéhab, 1968, p. 2; Scandone Matthiae, 1981, pp. 63-64; Krug, 2004, p. 188; Cheshire, 2007, p. 163; Aliquot, 2004, pp. 214-215; Dixon, 2013, pp.175-178, fig. III.4; Michelau, 2014, p.79, Abb. 2. A large cylinder discovered in Byblos in the third millennium BC, covered in hieroglyphics, belongs to a character who declares himself: "The praised; of the goddess, son of the lion, son of the Ra of foreign countries, god of foreign countries and of the god Routi, in Byblos. The beloved of the god Khay-Taou in (Nega), to whom is given eternal life". Baalat Goubal also appears on the cylinder as a seated goddess, her head surmounted by the disc flanked by Hathorian horns. Chéhab, 1968, pp. 1-2, pl. Ia.

³⁷⁵ Ribichini, 1975, p. 9; Soyez, 1977, pp. 77-80; Markoe, 2003, p. 118.

³⁷⁶ A fragment of a statue of Osorkon II (874-ca 850 BC) discovered in Byblos bears a hieroglyphic dedication to Isis that the king "is loved by Isis the great, the divine mother", but the Lady of Byblos is not named here. Leclant, 1968, p. 13, pl. VIIIb; Aliquot, 2004, p. 215; Zernecke, 2013, pp. 226-242.

³⁷⁷ Aliquot, 2004, p. 215; Bonnet, 2015, p.158.

³⁷⁸ An empty terracotta throne bears a bilingual inscription in Greek "To Astarte, the very great goddess", and Phoenician "To the lady of Byblos". This throne presents the first epigraphic attestation of a formal correspondence between the Lady of Byblos and Astarte. The throne's dating is debatable; its discoverers date the Phoenician part to the 4th century BC, while other researchers, based on the Greek text, date it to the end of the Hellenistic period, or even to the Roman period. Bordreuil, Gubel, 1985, pp.182-183, fig. 8, no. IV.3; Bonnet, 2015, pp. 165-167, fig. 27.

Phoenicians, is none other than Aphrodite"³⁷⁹. This can be proven by numerous bronze figurines in the Syria-Phoenicia region from the Roman period depicting Isis-Aphrodite, suggesting that these figurines are representations of the Syrian goddess Astarte or, possibly, the city goddess of Byblos assimilated with Isis-Aphrodite (see pp. 57-67). A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite-Astarte from Byblos (Fig. 41), preserved in the British Museum, shows the goddess naked with a headdress in the shape of a bird's scalp, surmounted by the *basileion*. She holds a wreath in her right hand and an apple in her left. She stands on a broad, semi-circular base with a staircase (see also Fig. 20)³⁸⁰. Indeed, this form of the base is assimilated to the cult pedestal in the temples of Syrian-Phoenician deities³⁸¹; it is typical of the representation of Syrian-Phoenician goddesses such as Baalat Goubal, Berut, and Astarte³⁸².



Figure 41. A bronze statuette of Isis-Aphrodite-Astarte from Byblos, the British Museum, 22 cm.

Figure 42. A limestone head of Isis-Aphrodite from Sidon, the British Museum, 26 cm.

³⁷⁹ Philon of Byblos, *Phoenician history*, 2.

³⁸⁰ Fleischer, 1983, p. 34, no. 16, Taf. 7c. Another example of Isis-Aphrodite with Eros is kept in the National Museum of Damascus, inv. No. 7620. Fleischer, 1983, p. 34, no. 15, Taf. 7b.

³⁸¹ Fleischer, 1983, pp. 31-42.

³⁸² Tran Tam Tinh, *LIMC V*. 1990, s.v. Isis, p. 780, no. 252e; Krug, 2004, p. 188, Abb.10. There is a similar bronze statuette in the Louvre museum from Lower Egypt; the goddess is standing naked, wears a bird's cap, and is surmounted by the *basileion*. She holds a wreath in her right hand and an apple in her left, sometimes the apple is replaced by a mirror. Inv. No. Br 386; Cheshire, 2007, p.152, fig. 1a-b.

Another limestone head depicting Isis-Aphrodite from Sidon (**Fig. 42**), preserved in the British Museum, could be a local Roman work; it is slightly larger than the average size and was designed to be attached to a statue. Her head is adorned with a simple bird, topped by the crown of Isis, which consists of the sun disc between two cow horns and two feathers³⁸³. It is worth noting that the principal goddess of Sidon was Astarte, who was worshiped as the patron of the dynasty and goddess of the sky, sea, and fertility³⁸⁴. In addition, the papyrus of Oxyrhynchus 1380 mentions that Isis was worshiped in Sidon under the name Astarte³⁸⁵.

II.2.1.1. Byblos in the myth of Isis and Osiris by Plutarch

According to Plutarch in *De Iside et Osiride*, Isis found the chest containing the body of her husband Osiris in Byblos³⁸⁶. However, this testimony does not find an echo in Egyptian sources, and the geographical place of this account is ambiguous³⁸⁷. Plutarch describes the events following the god Seth's desire to take the throne from his brother Osiris. One day, he offered his guests, among them Osiris, a well-crafted chest to any man who would exactly fit into it when they lay down. As none of the guests succeeded, Osiris finally tried his hand at this foolish game with success because this chest was deliberately designed according to his measurements. In fact, so many co-conspirators, including the queen of Ethiopia, promptly closed the box and dropped it into the river Nile to make it reach the sea via the tanitic branch. He drifted there for a considerable distance since the waves threw him back to the coast of the territory of Byblos³⁸⁸, where he ran aground in a bush that gradually turned into a remarkable tree that was enclosed in its trunk³⁸⁹. One day, the king of Byblos, passing through, decided to

³⁸³ Krug, 2004, pp. 187-188, Abb.9a, b.

³⁸⁴ Markoe, 2003, p. 119.

³⁸⁵ P. Oxy. XI, 1380, 117.

³⁸⁶ Plu., *De Iside et Osiride*, 13-17; Hani, 1976, pp. 62-79; Dunand, 1973, p. 129; Koemoth, 1994, pp. 275-279, 298; Mettinger, 2001, pp. 176-177; Vandersleyen, 2004, pp. 97-112; Aliquot, 2004, pp. 214-217; Koemoth, 2005, pp. 37-47; Koemoth, 2010, pp. 462-487; Bonnet, 2015, p. 169; Bricault, 2020, pp. 19-21.

³⁸⁷ Koemoth, 2010, p. 462.

³⁸⁸ Vandersleyen concluded that Plutarch misinterprets the word Βύβλος, which means the Nile delta, "the region of the papyri", and not the Phoenician city of Byblos. It is therefore in the marshes of the Delta and not in Byblos that Isis would have sought and found the body of Osiris. Vandersleyen, 2004, p. 97.

³⁸⁹ Koemoth related the presence of Osiris in the tree's trunk, probably a species of tamarisk, to the birth of the local Adonis, from a myrrh tree in which his mother had taken refuge to hide her incestuous affair; this shrubby

cut the trunk to make it a supporting column for the roof of his palace³⁹⁰. In the meantime, after a long quest, Isis found her husband's coffin and freed it from the trunk that enveloped it. She put aside the pieces of wood and wrapped them in an aromatic cloth, which she entrusted to the king of Byblos and she brought her husband back to Egypt, where she intended to give him a royal burial³⁹¹. This episode's legend probably refers to the veneration of a relic in an Isiac sanctuary in Byblos. Plutarch writes, "The people of Byblos, to this very date, venerate the piece of wood, in which was embedded the coffin of Osiris, deposited in the temple of Isis"³⁹².

It has been pointed out that Plutarch's account of Isis's arrival and stay in Byblos had a parallel in the Homeric hymn to Demeter, in which both goddesses were searching for their loved ones: Demeter for her daughter Kore and Isis for her husband and brother Osiris. Both wander in despair, eventually settling near a town at a watering hole: Isis in Byblos and Demeter in Eleusis. Moreover, Isis acts as a nurse to the young prince in the royal court of Byblos, whom she attempts to make immortal, evoking Demeter's nurse of Demophon at the palace of Eleusis³⁹³. Consequently, the Eleusinian legend must have influenced Plutarch's account. However, the Egyptian sources are little explanatory on the circumstances of the myth of Isis searching for her husband Osiris in Byblos, but it must indeed have Egyptian roots³⁹⁴. Beinlich suggested that Plutarch's tradition of the Isis and Osiris story was not about an episode in which Osiris reached Byblos in a coffin and was freed from his situation by Isis, but about a mythical description of the finding of the wood destined for Osiris' coffin³⁹⁵. As noted above, Byblos has been the center of Lebanon's timber trade with Egypt since ancient times. Various valuable types of wood were brought by sea from Byblos to wood-poor Egypt, where they were used, among other things, to make valuable wooden coffins.

bush is presented as a place of rebirth of the deceased in Pharaonic Egypt, from the texts of the Sarcophagi. Koemoth, 1994, p.275-279; Koemoth, 2010, p. 463.

³⁹⁰ It is worth noting that, according to Plutarch, the queen was called Astarte, whose servants had seen their hair braided and then perfumed by Isis with sweet fragrances, whose links with the Phoenician goddess are also attested. Plu., *De Iside et Osiride*, 15; Hani, 1976, p. 74.

³⁹¹ Plu., *De Iside et Osiride*, 14-17; Dunand, 1973, p. 129; Bricault, 2020, pp. 19-21; Bonnet, Bricault, 2021, pp. 137-145.

³⁹² Plu., *De Iside et Osiride*, 16. A demotic magical papyrus refers to the king's first-born son, Anubis, whose mother, Sekhmet-Isis, went to seek him in the land of Syria and return to Egypt to help his father, Osiris. Lexa, 1925, pp. 144-145, XXIII, 20/1-20/27.

³⁹³ Hermann, 1957, pp. 48-55; Bonnet, 2015, pp. 170-171; Bonnet, Bricault, 2021, pp. 145- 146.

³⁹⁴ Hani, 1976, pp. 62-79; Koemoth, 2010, pp. 462- 487.

³⁹⁵ Beinlich, 1983, pp. 63-66.

Bonnet and Bricault concluded that in the Gublite episode, what appears as an interesting innovation is not only the underlining of Isis' qualities as a wife and mother but also an absolutely original prerogative: that of power capable of dominating the marine element and mastering the guidance of a ship. Because if you look closely, its navigation and its dangers play an important role in the episode, delimiting it. Navigation is present at the beginning of chapter 15 and at the end of chapter 16 in Plutarch's work. Between the arrival of the chest in Byblos and the departure of Osiris' body towards Egypt, many things have changed. The favorable season for navigation has passed, and Isis has to leave the Phoenician coasts in bad weather. Even though the return journey is uncomfortable and dangerous, she nevertheless manages to complete it perfectly³⁹⁶.

II.2. 1.2. Adonis festival in Byblos

Some researchers proposed a link between the myth of Isis and Osiris and the Adonis festival in Byblos, referring to the Phoenicians' cult borrowings from the Egyptian ritual³⁹⁷. We have to wonder if it is just a coincidence that one of the main gods of Byblos, whom the Greeks call Adonis, was assassinated by the spirit of evil, the wild boar, and died and rose again, like Osiris. The author of *De Dea Syria*, attributed to Lucian, connects the cult of Adonis-Osiris with the yearly swelling of the River of Adonis (Nahr Ibrahim). He claims that some inhabitants of Byblos believe that Osiris of Egypt is buried among them, and these rites would be intended for him rather than for Adonis. Lucian considers the assertion plausible since a papyrus head—that of Osiris—floats on the sea from Egypt to Byblos every year after a seven-day journey³⁹⁸. In the 5th century AD, Cyril of Alexandria described a similar practice among the followers of the Phoenician god installed in the city when they threw into the sea a sealed vase containing a message, by which the Egyptians encouraged the Phoenicians to rejoice because Adonis had been found³⁹⁹. The syncretism with Osiris had then reached such a point that at the end of the celebration of Adonis, a figurine of the Phoenician god Adonis was thrown into the sea, as reported by Theocritus, a gesture that recalls the circumstances of the assassination of Osiris, whose remains were then thrown into the Nile⁴⁰⁰. However, there is no monument or inscription that attests to the equivalence between Aphrodite of Byblos and Isis

³⁹⁶ Bonnet, Bricault, 2021, p. 146.

³⁹⁷ Soyez, 1977, pp. 67-75; Koemoth, 2010, p. 464; Bonnet, 2015, pp. 171- 188.

³⁹⁸ Lucian, *De dea Syria*, VII, 454-455.

³⁹⁹ Cyril of Alex., *Isaiah*, 18, 2.

⁴⁰⁰ Theocritus, 15, 132-135.

or between Adonis and Osiris. Aliquot has pointed out that the comparison of Lucian between the rituals of Adonis in Byblos and that of Osiris is only justified by their shared funereal character. In contrast, the meeting of Osiris's members and the sacred rites to become king of the underworld are joyfully celebrated in Egyptian rituals, but the tone of the Adonis ceremonies remains depressing. It is more similar to the rites that took place in Athens since the 5th century BC and in Alexandria during the Hellenistic period without being Egyptianized in Byblos⁴⁰¹.

II.2.1.3. Egyptian gods on the coins of Byblos

During the reign of Antiochus IV, the Egyptian deities first appeared in the coins of Byblos (**Figs. 43-46**); among the types depicted on the reverse of these coins are: **1)** A standing Isis wearing the *kalathos* and holding a scepter. **2)** Harpocrates is sitting on a lotus flower, putting his index finger to his mouth. **3)** A bovine head wears the *basileion*⁴⁰². **4)** Isis with a sail, in which she is represented sailing to the left while holding the sail in her right hand and a rudder depicted behind her in the left hand, marks the earliest known appearance of Isis in association with a sail⁴⁰³. Bricault has connected the appearance of Isis with a sail in certain coinages from Byblos to the version of the Osirian myth by Plutarch. Byblos, the city in question, unmistakably sought and capitalized on this connection to assert its claim to the myth's prestige and simultaneously promote the image of Isis in connection with navigation⁴⁰⁴. This depiction of Isis with a sail reappeared during the reign of Antiochus VII and gained prominence during Roman times⁴⁰⁵. This specific representation became a recurring motif on numerous coins originating from Alexandria, Rome, various cities in Asia Minor, and Thrace, all dating from the Roman period, spanning from the reign of Domitian to

⁴⁰¹ Aliquot, 2004, pp.215-216; Aliquot, 2009, p. 177.

⁴⁰² Bricault, SNRIS, pp. 157-158; Wright, 2010, p. 66, figs. 20- 23.

⁴⁰³ Bruneau, 1963, p.303, fig. 3.

⁴⁰⁴ Bricault, 2006, p. 20; Bonnet, 2015, p.168, figs. 29-30; Bricault, 2020, p. 206, figs. 44-46. Bricault proposed that Byblos might have played a role in the development of the maritime aspect of Isis on two occasions. The first instance pertains to when Hathor, revered as the lady of Byblos, acquired her maritime attributes as the lady of the sea. The second instance relates to the Gible episode in the quest for Osiris, during which Isis traveled to Byblos by sea, showcasing both ingenuity and courage.

⁴⁰⁵ It is worth emphasizing that Byblos maintained exclusive use of the iconographic representation of Isis with a sail for a period spanning two and a half centuries, until Alexandria adopted this type during the reign of Domitian. The depiction of Isis with a sail on coins did not achieve widespread popularity until the commencement of Antoninus' reign. Bricault, 2020, p. 207.

Gratian⁴⁰⁶. This suggests a strong veneration of Isis in Byblos, possibly as the guardian deity of sailors and navigation, or even as the Tyche of the city⁴⁰⁷.



Figure 43. A coin of Antiochus IV, Byblos, SC 2, pl.65, 1445.



Figure 44. A coin of Antiochus IV, Byblos, SC 2, pl.65, 1446.



Figure 45. A coin of Antiochus IV, Byblos, SC 2, pl.65, 1447.



Figure 46. A coin of Antiochus IV, Byblos, SC 2, pl.64, 1442.

Furthermore, the crown of Isis *basileion* appears on various Byblos issues from the middle of the second century and the region's annexation by Rome, as a symbol on coins produced under Tryphon in 141/140 and 139/138 BC⁴⁰⁸, or as a countermark on coins from 94 and 74 BC⁴⁰⁹. Another interesting issue, possibly dating from the early 1st century BC, depicts a goddess standing to the left, wearing the *basileion*, her hair falling on the nape of the neck, and dressed in a long chiton. The goddess stretches her raised right hand and rests her left hand on a long scepter; at her feet, in front of her, is a murex. On the other hand, the Phoenician legend accompanying this type is sometimes LGBL QDŠT "Holy Byblos", sometimes ŠTRT, which confirms the triple connection between Baalat Goubal, Astarte, and Isis, as well as the role of the goddess in the consecration of Byblos⁴¹⁰. The coinage of Isiac types from Byblos, which was not isolated in Phoenicia during the Roman period, is exceptional only for its continuity. Nevertheless, we note the rarity of Serapis at Byblos, with only a headless marble bust of him uncovered on the surface of a basilica building and a head of Zeus-Serapis⁴¹¹, implying that he did not find his place in Byblos, a site long occupied by Osiris.

⁴⁰⁶ Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, p.794.

⁴⁰⁷ Bricault, 2001, p.70.

⁴⁰⁸ Le Rider, Seyrig, 1967, p.33, no. 180, pl. VII.

⁴⁰⁹ Bricault, SNRIS, p. 157, figs. Byblus 5, 7, 8.

⁴¹⁰ Bonnet, 2015, p.168; Bricault, SNRIS, p. 157.

⁴¹¹ Kater- Sibbes, 1973, p.76, nos. 436-437.

II.2.2. Porphyreon

The archaeological site of Jiyeh, located 25 kilometers south of Beirut along the route to Saida, bears the name of the neighboring village, Jiyeh-Nebi Younes. Along the sea, on the frequented route of the Via Maris, the site, before the excavations of Saidah, was buried under dunes extending over more than 30 hectares. Identified with the ancient Porphyreon, Jiyeh is located in a shallow bay formed by three capes, the northernmost of which, Ras Nabi Younes, supports the remains⁴¹². In the Hellenistic period, Porphyreon was, according to historical sources, a prosperous city. However, no coherent structure was identified at the site of the excavations. At the end of the Hellenistic period or at the beginning of the Roman period, the area silted up and was certainly abandoned⁴¹³.

An interesting Nilotic scene appears on a mosaic pavement now exhibited in the Museum of the Palace of Beiteddine, Lebanon (**Fig. 47**)⁴¹⁴. The mosaic is dated to the second half of the fifth century or the beginning of the sixth century AD and covers the entire surface of a rectangular room; the work is framed by a wide border decorated by floral and animal scenes surrounding a field made of white tesserae. The central mosaic is divided into two levels through two main lines; the upper part is occupied by a figure of the god Nilus reclining on a chariot. He is depicted as a bearded man, adorned his head with a wreath, half-naked, and a branch of a plant comes out of his chest. He holds a plant branch in his left hand while his right hand raises up and holds something unclear that can be identified with a *sistrum*. The chariot is pulled by two animals with short ears; these animals appear mainly in Nilotic scenes. Therefore, they can be identified as hippopotami, and a naked child leads them, his head turned to the back, holding in his right hand the bridle and in his left hand a branch of a plant. On each side of Nilus, a couple of birds are represented, each one on top of a lotus flower. On the right, a large fish is heading to the left. The lower part depicts a convex boat with two naked children inside; there was something in the middle of them, but this part of the scene is now destroyed. In the right corner of the scene, another animal is represented; it is

⁴¹² Ortali-Tarazi, Waliszewski, 2000, pp. 165- 166.

⁴¹³ Waliszewski et al., 2006, pp. 5-84.

⁴¹⁴ Ortali-Tarazi, Waliszewski, 2000, pp. 165-177, fig.3; Hachlili, 2009, p.100.

probably a crocodile hunting a flying bird⁴¹⁵. On both sides, lotus flowers are also depicted, possibly referring to the river's banks⁴¹⁶. We can compare this mosaic to the one found in Sarrin, Syria (**Fig. 33**), where a procession of Nilus is described. All these elements belong to the standard scheme of a Nilotic scene that we know through various monuments scattered from Spain and Gaul to Asia Minor and Mesopotamia.



Figure 47.The mosaic of Jiyeh, Phoenicia.

⁴¹⁵ Regarding the depiction of the hippopotamus and the crocodile in the mosaic of Jiyeh, Ortali-Tarazi and Waliszewski point out that the Galilean craftsmen and Phoenicia had never seen these exotic animals before. Ortali-Tarazi, Waliszewski, 2000, p.173.

⁴¹⁶ Ortali-Tarazi, Waliszewski, 2000, pp. 165-177, fig.3.

II.2.3. Tyre

It is probable that the Egyptian gods were also the object of a cult in Tyre " today: Sūr", as in other large towns on the coast. A Greek inscription engraved on a fragment of white marble from Tyre dates to the third century BC; the dedication was addressed to Serapis and *synnaoi theoi*, among whom Isis was probably included but was not explicitly named⁴¹⁷. The mention of gods sharing the naos with Serapis confirms the existence of a sanctuary for the Egyptian gods in Tyre since at least that time. However, it is unknown who flanked the Alexandrian god, which could be Isis, Osiris, or Harpocrates.

Another Greek inscription on a marble block from Libo (Labwe), at the extreme north of the Beqaa, or from Tyre itself, attests that the Alexandrian Marsyas, son of Demetrius, presents vows to Serapis and Isis, Savior gods, in favor of Ptolemy IV Philopator and of Arsinoe III, his sister and wife⁴¹⁸. This dedication must have been engraved after the victory of the battle of Raphia over Antiochus III in 217 BC, when the Ptolemies recovered their Syrian possessions⁴¹⁹. Marsyas was undoubtedly among the senior officials close to the Ptolemies, sent to the Beqaa or to Tyre to regain control and management of the territory previously under Seleucid rule⁴²⁰. Furthermore, Bricault stated that Serapis and Isis are invoked as *θεοι σωτηρες* "Savior gods" in seven inscriptions dating from the reign of Ptolemy IV, possibly in

⁴¹⁷ Another altar dedicated to Ptolemy II and Arsinoe, was discovered near the Protestant School of Tyre, and it was later sold to an American amateur, with the following translation: "Of King Ptolemy, son of Ptolemy, and of Arsinoe, gods adelphes". Bricault, RICIS, 402/0801; Aliquot, 2004, p. 217-218; Bricault, SNRIS, p. 158; Aliquot, 2009, p. 175; Bonnet, 2014, pp. 35-37.

⁴¹⁸ The slab, the upper part of which was previously broken, measures 25.0 cm in height, 23.5 cm in width, and 8.0 cm in thickness. Salamé-Sarkis, 1986, pp. 207-210; Bricault, RICIS, 402/0601; Aliquot, 2004, p. 218; Aliquot, 2009, p. 175; Bonnet, 2014, pp.36-37.

⁴¹⁹ After the battle of Raphia, Ptolemy IV assumed the title of "great savior and victorious god" (OGIS I 89). However, according to Polybius (V 84-85), the initial course of the battle favored the Seleucid forces, and it was a tactical error by the young Antiochus III that ultimately led to victory for the Ptolemaic dynasty. Nevertheless, Ptolemy IV and his inner circle attributed this fortuitous victory to the favor of the divine couple. This attribution of victory to Serapis and, most notably, Isis, came after the incorporation of indigenous troops into Ptolemy IV's army. This recognition of the deities could have been seen as a means to garner favor among the Egyptian population. Bricault, 1999, p. 337.

⁴²⁰ Bricault, 1999, pp. 334-343; Bonnet, 2014, pp. 36-37. It was known that Ptolemy IV held a deep reverence for Dionysus. However, unlike Isis and Serapis, the god Dionysus never appears on the sovereign's coinage. Bricault suggested that it could be argued that Ptolemy IV continued and expanded upon the religious policy established by Ptolemy III. For instance, Ptolemy III dedicated the great Serapeum of Alexandria, which included a temple (naos) and precinct (temenos) designed by the architect Parmenion. Ptolemy IV followed this tradition by dedicating numerous buildings to deities within the Isiac circle. In the case of Alexandria alone, the sovereign dedicated a sanctuary to Isis and another to Harpocrates. Bricault, 1999, p. 336.

gratitude for their benevolent attitude during the battle of Raphia⁴²¹. Bonnet concluded that Isis and Serapis protect the royal dynasty in the same way that the Ptolemies ensure the safety of the Phoenician populations placed under their authority⁴²². At the same time, Aliquot proposed that a sanctuary devoted to Egyptian gods was built at Tyre during the Hellenistic period and that the use of marble as a support for the inscription allows us to propose a Tyrian provenance of the devotion to the Alexandrian divinities as protectors of the Ptolemaic dynasty⁴²³.



Figure 48. A figurine of Osirophoros, British Museum, Inv. No., EA24784.

It is likely that the cult of Egyptian gods was still celebrated in Tyre during Roman times, as attested by a statuette in the Egyptian style of Osirophoros (Fig. 48), currently in the British Museum, which bears three inscriptions (hieroglyphic, Latin, and Greek). The first, prior to 238 BC, can be read on the dorsal pillar of the statue, while the other two were engraved together on the side parts of the base in the 2nd or 3rd AD⁴²⁴. The text mentions in Latin a

⁴²¹ One inscription was discovered in Libo under discussion, three from Philae, two from Alexandria, and one from Kom Abu Afrita. Bricault, 1999, pp. 334-343.

⁴²² Bonnet, 2014, p. 37.

⁴²³ Aliquot, 2004, pp. 217-218; Aliquot, 2009, p. 175.

⁴²⁴ Vidman, SIRIS, p. 182, no. 359; Dunand, 1973, p. 128; Bricault, 2001, p.74; Aliquot, 2004, p. 218; Bricault, RICIS, 402/ 0802; Bricault, 2018, p. 177.

"priest carrying Osiris" (*sacerdos Osirim ferens*), whose Greek equivalent is "priest carrying Osiris in procession" (προφή[της] Ὀσειριν κώμ[α]ζω[ν]). The Greek term "προφήτης", which represents the highest degree of the Egyptian priestly hierarchy, implies the existence of subordinate cult servants; it also evokes an essential function of Egyptian priests, that of carrying the god's statues in procession⁴²⁵. A comparable fragment, which also portrays an Osirophoros from Petra (**Fig. 137**), provides evidence that the distinctive iconography continued to be recognized during the Roman period. Dunand assumed that the figure of Osirophoros in Tyre was imported from Egypt because of the hieroglyphics on the back, albeit this does not refer to the existence of an Isiac cult at Tyre during Roman times⁴²⁶. A late testimony for the presence of Isis in Tyre, according to Epiphanius of Salamis, Isis lived in Tyre for ten years as a prostitute⁴²⁷. This was probably due to the assimilation of the goddess Isis to Astarte and the practice of sacred prostitution in the Phoenician sanctuaries, which appears to be extremely foreign to Egyptian legend⁴²⁸.

⁴²⁵ Dunand, 1973, p. 128; Aliquot, 2004, pp. 217-218; Aliquot, 2009, pp. 175- 176.

⁴²⁶ Dunand, 1973, p. 128.

⁴²⁷ Epiphanius, *Ancoratus*, 104. 11.

⁴²⁸ Dunand, 1973, p. 132; Markoe, 2003, pp. 121-122.

II. 2.4. Umm el-Amed

The best-known cultic center in Phoenicia showing Egyptian influences is the site of Umm el-Amed, situated 19 km south of ancient Tyre, where two well-preserved temple complexes dating to the Persian and Hellenistic periods were unearthed⁴²⁹. They contained many Egyptian objects and architectural features, such as the lintels decorated with Egyptian solar discs flanked by uraei on either side, cavetto cornices, sphinxes, and statues in the Egyptian style⁴³⁰, in addition to cultic representations in Achaemenid, Cypriot, Greek, and Phoenician styles. Of the two temples, the largest one, located to the west of the site on the acropolis overlooking the sea, can be identified as the temple of Milk'ashtart, a local manifestation of Astarte and Melkart (**Figs. 49, 51**). The second sacred area, about 160 m east of the Milk'ashtart temple, is called "East Temple", and perhaps was dedicated to the cult of Astarte as a consort to Milk'ashtart (**Fig. 50**)⁴³¹. The two temples are quite similar in layout; both consist of the main structure surrounded by an enclosure wall and various rooms. The temples were erected on top of an artificial podium, accessible by an east staircase leading to the portico⁴³².

⁴²⁹ The first excavations in Umm el-Amed took place as early as 1861 by the French Semitist, religious historian, and philosopher Renan. Renan uncovered parts of an architectural complex that he correctly identified as a temple precinct. His excavations unearthed three Phoenician inscriptions, one of which was found in the temple precinct and is a dedicatory inscription on a fragment of a stone sundial. The inscription includes the ancient Phoenician name of the village (Hammon) and the name of the main deity: Milkaštart. Further inscriptions were subsequently discovered following Renan's investigations, and to this day, a total of 16 Phoenician inscriptions from Umm el-Amed are known. Based on the votive formulas found in these inscriptions and the theophoric personal names appearing in them, it is evident that several deities were worshipped in Umm el-Amed. Alongside Milk'ashtart, these include Astarte, Baalshamem, Baal, and Eshmun, as well as the Egyptian deities Osiris, Isis, Horus, Amun, and Bastet. Renan, 1864, pp. 695-749; Dunand, Duru, 1962, pp.89, 233, fig. 20; Faegersten, 2003, pp. 190-196; Nitschke, 2011, pp. 85-104; Annan, 2013, pp. 39-52.

⁴³⁰ Dunand, Duru, 1962, pp. 112, 114, fig. 32, pl. 25.3; pp. 169–170, pls. 83.1, 87.2–3. Wagner's treatise on the Egyptian influence on Phoenician architecture expertly examines the temple floor plans from Umm el-Amed, the building decor, and the iconographic representations of various architectural elements found on-site. Wagner, 1980, pp. 27-35, 85-89, 102-103, 110-111, 131, 140-149, 166-168.

⁴³¹ Dunand, Duru, 1962, p. 169; Markoe, 2003, p. 119.

⁴³² Nitschke, 2011, pp. 85-104.

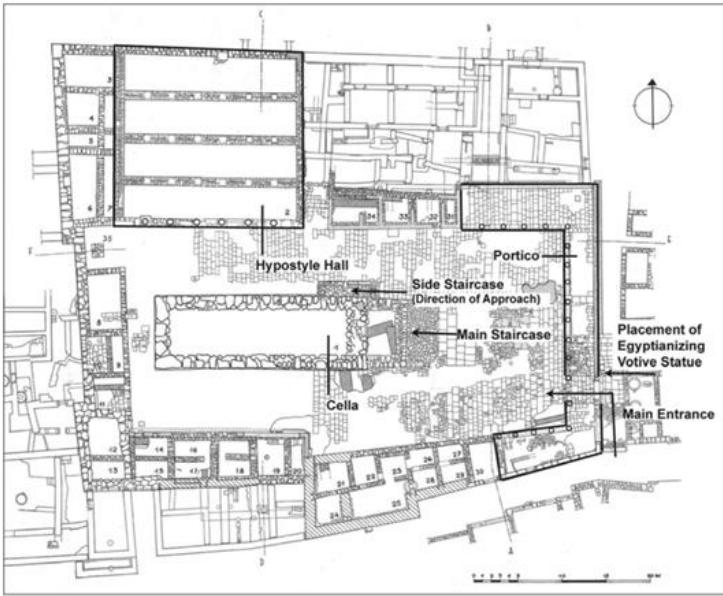


Figure 49. The Milk'ashtart temple, Umm el-Amed, Nitschke, 2011, fig. 4.

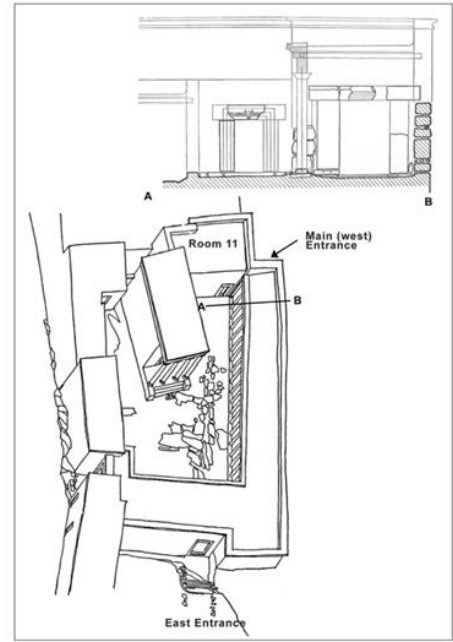


Figure 50. The East Temple, Umm el-Amed, Nitschke, 2011, fig. 5.

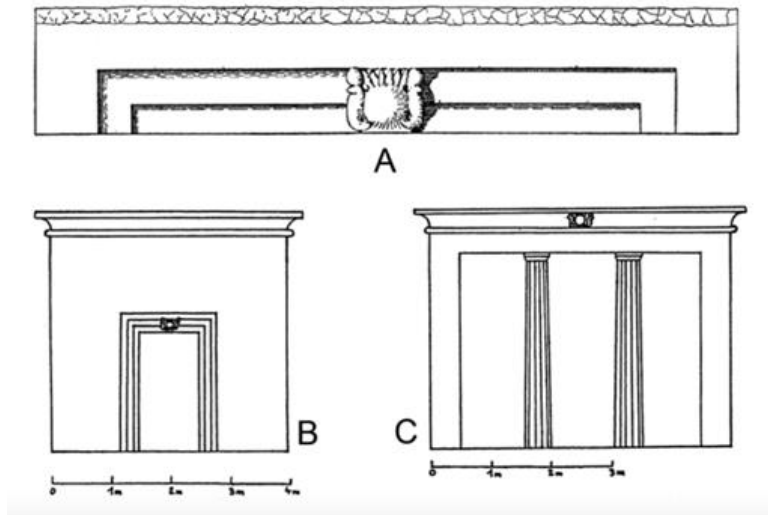


Figure 51. Reconstruction of the façades of the side rooms, Milk'ashtart temple, Umm el-Amed, Wagner, 1980, pl. 1:1-2.

II. 2. 4.1. Votive statues with Egyptian – style Shendyt

Several examples of votive statues uncovered in Umm el-Amed are distinguished by an Egyptian-style *shendyt*⁴³³. Two of these statues have a back pillar with a Phoenician dedicatory inscription. According to the inscriptions, both statues were donated by a man named Baalshillem, one dedicated to the god El and the other possibly to Osiris⁴³⁴. Another limestone votive statue was found lying on the ground in front of the main entrance to the sanctuary of Milk'ashtart (**Fig. 52**). Unfortunately, the head, the right hand, and the lower legs are missing, but the base with the feet was found *in situ*, which bears a Phoenician inscription revealing the name of the dedicatee, "Abdosir to the god Milk'ashtart, the god of Hammon". The male figure is depicted barefoot, leaning on the left leg, the right leg advanced. He wears an Egyptian *shendyt*, a simple loincloth with a median tongue, with two flaps folded over the front of the body and tightened by a wide belt. The left arm is hanging along the side of the body, holding a cylindrical object, and the other is bent forward, perhaps in a gesture of supplication. The back of the statue, presenting a dorsal pillar, was neglected by the sculptor, which clearly reinforces the frontal destination of the work⁴³⁵. According to excavators, this statue had its symmetrical counterpart to the left of the entrance to the sanctuary⁴³⁶. The inscriptions on the two rear pillars and the one on the base date to the Hellenistic period; however, these statues could be older, belonging to the Cypriot-Egyptian group of the 6th century BC⁴³⁷. They were probably in a temple that existed throughout the Achaemenid period and was only replaced by a new one in the Hellenistic period⁴³⁸.

⁴³³ Six votive statues made of local limestone were discovered in Umm El-Amed and depicting Egyptian-style *shendyt* and broad decorated collars, dated to the Hellenistic period. Dunand, Duru, 1962, pp. 156–158, pls. 30.1–2, 81.2–3, 83.2–3; Markoe, 1990; Faegersten, 2003, pp. 160–162, pls. 44–45, nos. 32–37.

⁴³⁴ Dunand, Duru, 1962, pls. 30. 2-3, 31.1, 81. 2-3, 83. 2 -3; Ribichini, 1975, p. 10; Nunn, 2000, p. 20; Kamlah, 2008, p. 130.

⁴³⁵ Dunand, Duru, 1962, pp. 48, 156–157, 181–196, pl. 30.1; Markoe, 1990, p. 118, no. 36; Nunn, 2000, p. 20, Tafel. 4.11; Faegersten, 2003, pp. 161–162, pl. 45, no. 35; Wright, 2010, p. 231, figs. 156–157; Nitschke, 2011, p. 96, fig. 9; Oggiano, 2013, p. 353, pl. II, 1–2; Annan, 2013, pp. 44–45, fig. 2; Martin, 2017, p. 114, fig. 32.

⁴³⁶ Dunand, Duru, 1962, p. 48, pls. 8, 19.1.

⁴³⁷ Several examples are known in Phoenicia from Sarepta, Amrit, Byblos, Sidon, Tyre, and Umm el-'Amed, as well as Cyprus, where they are widespread starting from the sixth century BC. Karageorghis, et al., 2000.

⁴³⁸ Nunn, 2000, p. 20, Kamlah, 2008, p. 130.



Figure 52. A limestone statue of Egyptian style Umm el-Amed, Beirut, National Museum, Inv. No. 2004, H. 102 cm.

Figure 53. A limestone statue of Egyptian style Umm el-Amed, Louvre Museum, Inv. No., AO 4401, H. 60 cm.

Furthermore, a votive statue of a male figure standing probably with the left leg advanced (**Fig. 53**), the left arm hanging along the side, and the right bent and raised. It can be noted that the statue differs from the previous example in the treatment of the *shendyt*, whose sides meet behind a front panel that falls in a fan in its upper part and is decorated with double uraei in its lower part. The statue is also distinguished by the Egyptian *usekh* collar, which has a semi-circular pectoral with three rows of ornaments⁴³⁹. In the original Egyptian context, the *usekh* was an essential part of both male and female official dress in Egypt since ancient times, and during the New Kingdom period, it became more elaborate, consisting of a sheet of papyrus embroidered with olive leaves and lotus petals⁴⁴⁰. On the other hand, the *shendyt* was made of a piece of cloth, mostly linen, wrapped around the waist. In front of the kilt, a metal plate was suspended, decorated with metallic uraei, and the sun disc crowned their heads. This

⁴³⁹ Dunand, Duru, 1962, pp. 157, 184, pl. 81.3; Faegersten, 2003, pp. 160-161, pl. 44, no. 32; Annan, 2013, pp. 45-46, fig. 3.

⁴⁴⁰ Faegersten, 2003, pp. 45-48; Faegersten, 2005, pp. 268-270.

kilt was introduced into the sculpture in the round as early as the reign of Amenhotep III⁴⁴¹. These Egyptianising statues are carved by local sculptors who re-interpret Egyptian features.

The cylindrical object carried by some statues of Umm el-Amed is an iconographic derivative of a papyrus roll attesting to the king's divine power⁴⁴². As a result, *usekh*, *shendyt*, and the papyrus roll were initially closely associated with the royalty or divinity spheres⁴⁴³. Finally, the donors' names are inscribed on most of these statues; however, none of these texts explicitly mentions any priestly function. Annan suggested that the choice to represent the donor as a praying Egyptian is thus not synonymous with an attachment to the local clergy, and it must regard these dedicants as mere devotees who, no doubt, belonged to the social elites of Hammon⁴⁴⁴.

The group of sculptures of the worshippers with an Egyptian *shendyt* was introduced in Phoenicia from the seventh century BC until the Hellenistic period. This is illustrated in particular by a statuette from Tyre, which is kept in the National Museum of Beirut and dated to 675 BC (**Fig. 54**)⁴⁴⁵, as well as the statue with the dorsal pillar from Sarepta, situated between Tyre and Sidon, in the Louvre Museum, dated to 650 BC, which could represent a divinity (**Fig. 55**)⁴⁴⁶. Moreover, Oggiano published a limestone statue comparable to the figures of Umm el-Amed, which is preserved in the National Museum of Beirut (**Fig. 56**); the provenance of the discovery is unknown, but Oggiano specifies that it would have been acquired by G. Farah in Sarepta. The male figure wears the *usekh* collar and a *shendyt* adorned with the double uraei, and his left hand encloses a scroll. The statue has a pillar on the back that was used to insert the artifact inside an architectural structure, similar to the Egyptian originals that inspired the Phoenician statues of this type. An incised inscription on the back of the leg identifies the dedicatee as 'Abdhor to "the holy god"⁴⁴⁷. Oggiano suggested that there were two productions in Phoenicia. An older one, clearly local, born around the eighth century BC in imitation of Egyptian statuary; examples include the torso of

⁴⁴¹ Annan, 2013, p. 46.

⁴⁴² Fischer, 1975, pp. 9-21.

⁴⁴³ Markoe, 1990, p. 113; Annan, 2013, pp. 46-47.

⁴⁴⁴ Annan, 2013, pp. 45-46.

⁴⁴⁵ Inv. No. 2265. Faegersten, 2003, p. 160, pl. 43, no. 31; Annan, 2013, p.46.

⁴⁴⁶ Inv. No. AO 4805. Faegersten, 2003, p. 159, pl. 43, no. 28; Annan, 2013, p.46.

⁴⁴⁷ Oggiano, 2013, pp. 351-360, fig. 1.

Tyre and that of Sarepta. The second, dating back to the Persian period, was strongly influenced by the tradition of Cypriot votive sculpture, implying, in more than one case, the importation from Cyprus of the same statues discovered in Phoenicia or perhaps of the craftsmen who produced them on the site⁴⁴⁸. Several Egyptianizing male votive statues found in Cyprus date from 520-480 BC. For example, a fragmentary life-sized statue was discovered in the fill of the Persian siege mound at PalaePaphos, dating to 515- 500 BC⁴⁴⁹. The male figure stands with his left leg advanced, and both arms hang along the sides of his body. He is depicted wearing a broad belt adorned with raised, rounded outer ridges. This belt serves to support a finely pleated kilt cloth, with two very thin and elongated cobra bodies hanging down along the front of the kilt, positioned at a specific distance from each other. Another notable life-sized limestone statue of a male was found in Golgoi, featuring the head of Hathor on the kilt flap⁴⁵⁰.



Figure 54. A limestone statue of Egyptian style from Tyre, Beirut, National Museum, Inv. No. 2265.

Figure 55. A limestone statue of Egyptian style from Sarepta, Louvre Museum, Inv. No. AO 4805.

Figure 56. A limestone statue of Egyptian style, Beirut, the National Museum.

⁴⁴⁸ Oggiano, 2013, pp. 351-360.

⁴⁴⁹ The District Museum, Paphos. Inv. nos. KA 3, KA 248. Markoe, 1990, p. 112, fig. 3.

⁴⁵⁰ Sarasota, the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Inv. no. SN 28.1923. Markoe, 1990, p. 113, fig. 5.

II.2.4.2. Thrones of Astarte

It is worth noting that two large thrones supported by two Egyptian sphinxes were found in the East Temple (**Figs. 57-58**)⁴⁵¹. The first throne was found by Renan in 1861 and is now kept in the Louvre Museum. The throne is in poor condition, but it is clearly flanked by two sphinxes, and the front of the backrest is decorated with a winged solar disc⁴⁵². The second throne was discovered in room 11 on the northwest end of the courtyard near the Podium. This area was accessible through a large doorway surmounted by another lintel adorned with a winged solar disc flanked by uraei. Kamlah suggested that the throne was once located on the Podium or in the niche in the room's south wall⁴⁵³. It is noteworthy that these thrones are predominantly empty. As a result, they represent an aniconic conception of the deity, avoiding the direct depiction of the god itself in an image and its establishment within a cult setting⁴⁵⁴.



Figure 57. A throne of Astarte from Umm el-Amed, the East Temple.



Figure 58. A throne of Astarte from Umm el-Amed, the East Temple.

⁴⁵¹ Nitschke, 2011, p. 96, fig.8. The term "thrones of Astarte" refers to a collection of around twelve artifacts originating from the Sidon and Tyre regions. These pieces are distinguished by their armrests fashioned in the likeness of female winged sphinxes. Generally dating back to the Hellenistic and Roman periods, these thrones are typically found either empty or with a carved area for the placement of a cult object, such as a betyl. Some examples may also feature cultic scenes or symbols on the front or backrest. The dimensions of these thrones vary, with one monumental example serving as a central feature in the "Astarte pool" at the Bostan esh-Sheikh sanctuary.

⁴⁵² Kamlah, 2008, p. 137.

⁴⁵³ Kamlah, 2008, pp. 134-136.

⁴⁵⁴ Kamlah, 2008, p. 138.

There are examples of limestone models depicting thrones with sphinxes:

- 1) A sphinx throne from Sidon, standing 52 cm in height, likely dating back to the 7th century BC.
- 2) Another sphinx throne from the 7th century BC, found in southern Lebanon, with a height of 73 cm.
- 3) A throne of sphinxes from Byblos, standing at a height of 57 cm and dating from the Hellenistic period⁴⁵⁵.

An additional example can be observed in a scene portrayed on a scarab that was unearthed within one of the Sidon necropolises. This scene serves as an illustration of a Phoenician goddess elegantly seated upon a throne supported by sphinxes. The scarab is attached to a silver bracelet with a gold setting and originates from a grave dating back to the 5th to 4th centuries BC, making it one of the oldest burial objects found in that location. The scene portrays a distinctive sacrificial ritual: above it, the winged disk of the sun is depicted, and a female worshiper stands in front of the goddess' throne. Between the two figures, a thymiaterion rises from a flat, expansive base. In an offering gesture, the woman extends both forearms with open palms upwards towards the incense offering and the goddess. The smoke from the sacrifice ascends towards the goddess, who, with a raised hand in a blessing gesture, signifies her acceptance of the offering⁴⁵⁶. Most scholars suggest that the throne supported by winged sphinxes refers to the symbolic seat of the goddess Astarte⁴⁵⁷. In accordance with this interpretation, a throne of sphinxes from Hirbet et-Tayyibe in south Lebanon, from the Hellenistic period, stands at 47 cm in height and bears a Phoenician dedicatory inscription stating that it was dedicated to the goddess Astarte⁴⁵⁸.

⁴⁵⁵ Kamlah, 2008, p. 137.

⁴⁵⁶ Kamlah, 2008, pp. 134-136, tafel. 8.

⁴⁵⁷ Markoe, 2003, pp. 124-125. Kamlah mentioned that the thrones were not exclusively assigned to a specific deity but served as cult objects for various female and male deities. Kamlah, 2008, p. 138.

⁴⁵⁸ Kamlah, 2008, p. 137. Its identification with Astarte is fairly secure, thanks to a bilingual Phoenician-Greek inscription that dedicates an empty terracotta throne to "Astarte, the very great goddess in Greek", and "the lady of Byblos" in Phoenician. This throne presents the first epigraphic attestation of a formal correspondence between the Lady of Byblos and Astarte. The throne's dating is debatable; its discoverers date the Phoenician part to the 4th century BC, while other researchers, based on the Greek text, date it to the end of the Hellenistic period or even to the Roman period. Bordreuil, Gubel, 1985, pp.182-183, fig. 8, no. IV.3; Bonnet, 2015, pp. 165-167, fig. 27.

II.2.4.3. The Hellenistic stelae of Umm el-Amed

Twenty-three Hellenistic limestone stelae produced in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC are also said to come from Umm el-Amed⁴⁵⁹. Most of them depict the same scene, where a male figure is engaged in ritual activities, while some others represent a female subject. As this *ensemble* comes from illegal excavations at the beginning of the 19th century AD, unfortunately, it is impossible to link it with certainty to one of the sanctuaries of the site⁴⁶⁰. The inscriptions present some of these subjects as "priests" some others as "chief" or "chief of gates"⁴⁶¹. The purpose of these stelae is still strongly debated; it remains unclear if they are votive monuments deposited in the temple of Milk'ashtart or if they are tombstones⁴⁶². The best-preserved example reproducing a masculine subject is kept at the Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek in Copenhagen (Fig. 59). At the top of the stela, the Egyptian winged solar disc flanked by uraei crowns the scene. The male figure is depicted barefoot and dressed in a long pleated tunic with wide sleeves. The head is topped with a high cylindrical cap; one hand is raised in the gesture of supplication, while the left hand holds an incense burner surmounted by a crouching sphinx wearing a *pschent*. An inscription, engraved under his left forearm, gives us the identity of the character:



Figure 59. A limestone stela, Umm el-Amed, Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek, Inv. No. 1835, H. 181 cm.

⁴⁵⁹ Dunand, Duru, 1962, pp. 160-167, pls. 38:2, 38:6, 77, 78:1-2, 79, 80:1-2, 81:1, 82:1-2, 84:3, 85:1, 88 bis: 1-3; Annan, 2013, pp. 52-54; Michelau, 2014, pp. 77-95; Martin, 2017, pp. 115-117, figs. 33-34.

⁴⁶⁰ The area where the steles were found can be located between the west end of the Milkashtart Temple and the Northwest Necropolis. Michelau, 2014, p. 77.

⁴⁶¹ Michelau, 2014, p. 81-83.

⁴⁶² Dunand, Duru, 1962, p. 165; Markoe, 2003, p. 122; Nitschke, 2011, pp. 98-99; Martin, 2017, pp. 115-117.

“This commemorative stela is that of Ba‘alyaton, son of Ba‘alyaton, the chief of the presses”⁴⁶³.



Figure 60. A limestone stela, Umm el- Amed, Louvre Museum, Inv. No. AO 3135, H. 147 cm.

Figure 61. The god Hapy on the Hadrian’s Gate at the Isis Temple of Philae in Egypt.

Another stela preserved in the Louvre Museum has lost its upper part, which must have been crowned with a winged solar disc (**Fig. 60**). The sculpted female figure is dressed in a Greek style: a chiton surmounted by a pleated himation brought back over the head. Her right hand is raised, palm open outward, while her left hand holds the edge of the himation. The main interest of this document resides in the scene sculpted in the base, representing an arched niche, in which two kneeling opposing females, dressed in Egyptian style are watering a three-stemmed lotus with a jar placed on their laps. Dunand and Duru interpreted this scene as the tree of life watered by the nymphs. The fertilization of plants would be a prelude to seasonal renewal, a concept very close to that of bringing the dead back to life or preservation of their pale existence beyond the grave⁴⁶⁴. We can draw a comparison between the described

⁴⁶³ Dunand, Duru, 1962, p. 160, pl. LXXVII; Annan, 2013, p. 52, fig. 12; Martin, 2017, p. 115, fig. 33. Some scholars described the object as a sacrificial bowl with a goddess figure as a handle, in the style of Egyptian spoons. Michelau, 2014, pp. 84-95.

⁴⁶⁴ Dunand, Duru, 1962, p. 163; Annan, 2013, pp. 52-53, fig. 13.

scene and the representation of the god Hapy found on the Hadrian's Gate at the Isis Temple of Philae in Egypt (**Fig. 61**). The source of the Nile is represented by an accumulation of rocks above a cave of which a coiled serpent guards the entrance. Inside, the god Hapy is squatting, adorned with papyrus, he holds two vases in his hands, from which the water of the Nile flows⁴⁶⁵.

Finally, a stela exhibited at the National Museum of Beirut shows, under the winged solar disc, a male figure standing on a trapezoidal base with an Egyptian cornice, barefoot, facing left, wearing a long tunic (**Fig. 62**). His right hand is raised to face level in a sign of adoration, while the left hand holds a richly molded casket that could have contained the ritual incense, and a band around the head is surmounted by a sort of cap. A Phoenician inscription engraved on the base explains this character and his role: "To ba'alshamar, chief of the gatekeepers, son of 'Abdosir, commemorative stela that 'Abdosir, chief of the gatekeepers, erected for his father"⁴⁶⁶. As we already mentioned, the Phoenicians considered it convenient and desirable to borrow foreign iconographies, particularly Egyptian ones. In ritual contexts, the winged solar disc, which associates Ra and Horus, seems to have been the most widely understood symbol, having a particularly religious sense for the Phoenicians starting from the fifth century BC.

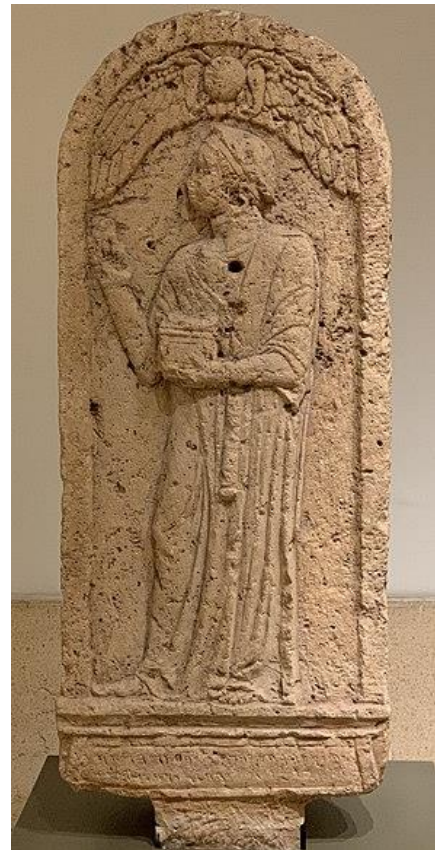


Figure 62. A limestone stela, Umm el- Amed, The National Museum of Beirut, Inv. No. 2072, H. 127 cm.

⁴⁶⁵ <http://www.temple-egypte.net/philae/hadrien/paroiNord/registreMilieu.html#B1>; Cauville, 2021, pp. 143-145.

⁴⁶⁶ Dunand, Duru, 1962, p. 165, pl. LXXXVIII bis, 1.

II.2.5. Sanctuaries in the hinterland of Tyre

The Egyptian monuments discovered at two rural sanctuary sites in the hinterland of Tyre, Mispe-Yamim, and Kharayeb reflect a certain degree of Egyptianization of the Phoenician religion and show the relative depth of the rural hinterland of the Phoenician coastal cities during the Persian and early Hellenistic periods⁴⁶⁷.

II.2.5.1. Mispe-Yamim

A votive bronze situla with Egyptian motifs was found in a small Phoenician temple at the site of Mount Mispe-Yamim (Arabic Jebel el-Arbain), five kilometers southwest of Safad, in the Upper Galilee, which includes southern Lebanon and northern Palestine (**Fig. 63**)⁴⁶⁸. The temple was excavated by Frankel from 1988 to 1989 on behalf of the Institute of Archeology at Haifa University⁴⁶⁹. The sanctuary dates to the Persian period but was still in use during the Hellenistic period⁴⁷⁰. It has the traditional appearance of a Phoenician place of worship, a courtyard, and adjoining buildings. The temple is described as a broad house structure consisting of two rooms: the main room on the west consists of a long rectangular hall (6 by 13.7 m) and a side room annexed to its eastern wall (4.8 by 10.4 m). The hall's floor is paved with slabs of stone, and there are three stone pillar bases and two platforms that probably served as altars, one standing against the south wall and the second in the north-west corner of the temple⁴⁷¹. The side room is believed to have functioned as the temple's storeroom, as substantiated by the presence of a notable quantity of shattered pottery vessels, particularly

⁴⁶⁷ Aliquot, 2004, p. 208.

⁴⁶⁸ The summit of the mount rises to an elevation of 734 meters above sea level and spans dimensions of 90 by 30 meters. It commands a view over several regions: the "Mountain of the Chief" (Jebel el-Shaykh) to the north, Mount Tabor (Jebel at-Tūr) to the south, the Lower Galilee to the south, the Jordan Valley, Golan Plateau, and Sea of Galilee to the east and southeast, and the Mediterranean Sea to the west. Frankel, NEAEHL, 1993, s. v. Mizpe Yamim, pp. 991-993; Berlin, Frankel, 2012, p. 25.

⁴⁶⁹ Frankel, Ventura, 1998, pp. 40-49; Kamlah, 1999, p. 164; Weippert, 1999, pp. 191-200; Vittmann, 2003, p.81; Aviam, 2004, p.8, fig. 2.3b; Erlich, 2009, pp. 31-32; Dixon, 2013, pp. 187-190.

⁴⁷⁰ The pottery and votive offerings uncovered in the lower foundation courses exhibit characteristics of the late sixth century BC, the beginning of the Persian period. The upper layers have produced Hellenistic pottery, including a bronze coin of Antiochus IV, along with a single coin from the Byzantine era, a few glazed dishes, and a Roman-period lamp. None of these findings directly indicate a sacred nature; instead, they suggest a more mundane aspect. This may imply that the temple ceased to function as a place of worship concurrent with the conclusion of the Persian rule, although sporadic visits cannot be ruled out. Stern, 2001, pp. 483- 485, 500-501.

⁴⁷¹ Stern, 2001, pp. 483- 485; Berlin, Frankel, 2012, pp. 26-33.

storage jars. In contrast, the main hall hosted religious festivals, as suggested by the presence of altars, benches, and the discovery of 99 votive offerings within it⁴⁷². In a broader sense, the sanctuary's compact dimensions limited its capacity to accommodate a substantial number of visitors. Consequently, it likely served as a minor cultic site rather than a principal temple, serving the needs of the local settlement and occasional passersby⁴⁷³.

The situla is a type of vessel that became a characteristic vase often depicted alongside Isis in the Mediterranean during the Hellenistic period. In general, situlae were regarded as ceremonial vessels, serving various purposes both in temple settings and funerary contexts, such as carrying and sprinkling liquids in rituals⁴⁷⁴. They were usually made of bronze, but some situlae were represented on reliefs, statues, paintings, or coins. The situla of Misp-Yamim is decorated with a single worshiper making an offering to several Egyptian deities (Amun-Ipy, Isis, Nephthys, Montu, Haroeris, Re, Nefertem, and Sekhmet), whose names are specified in Egyptian hieroglyphic, accompanied by a dedication to Astarte in the Phoenician language reads as: "(belonging) to 'kbw the son of bd'smn/ I am making (this inscription?) for Astarte because/ (she) heard (my) voice"⁴⁷⁵. Another bronze situla should also be noted as a relevant example. This situla was published in 1993 by McCarter and preserved in the Art Museum of Princeton University, albeit without precise location information. It features a Phoenician inscription from the 6th or 5th century BC that surrounds the rim of the situla and reads: "May Isis grant favor and life to 'Abdi-ptah son of Abdo"⁴⁷⁶.

⁴⁷² Berlin, Frankel, 2012, pp. 26-33.

⁴⁷³ Stern, 2001, p. 485.

⁴⁷⁴ Lichtheim 1947, 171-173.

⁴⁷⁵ The situla is decorated with three horizontal registers featuring religious scenes, the upper register depicts a sun boat pulled by four jackals, in the center of which stands the falcon-headed sun god with a *was* scepter and *ankh*, and the bark is worshiped by four baboons. The central register shows a man, the donor of the situla, making an offering of flower, food, and drinks in front of a series of seven Egyptian deities. All seven deities are identified by hieroglyphic inscriptions filling the writing spaces at the top of the register. The gods are led by the mummy-like and ithyphallic Amun of Luxor, who is highlighted as the first god. Isis, Nephthys, Haroeris, Montu, Nefertem, and Sekhmet follow. In the third register, three falcon-headed and three jackal-headed human figures kneel, representing the souls of Pe and Nekhen, alongside and elaborate lotus flower. The Phoenician inscription runs around the situla under the rim and continues with its last six letters on the vertical stripe that marks the beginning and end of the sacrificial scene in the main register. Frankel, Ventura, 1998, pp. 40-49, figs.1-14; Weippert, 1999, pp. 193- 197; Kamlah, 1999, pp. 164-170, Abb. 2; Stern, 2001, pp. 483- 484; Vittmann, 2003, p.81; Aliquot, 2004, pp. 207-208; Freyne, 2007, pp. 16-19; Aliquot, 2009, p.173; Erlich, 2009, pp. 31-32; Berlin, Frankel, 2012, p. 46, fig. 30.

⁴⁷⁶ Inv. No., y 1938-20; 13.5 cm tall. McCarter, 1993, pp. 115-120.



Figure 63. A bronze situla, Mispè-Yamim, 16.7 cm.



Figure 64. A statue of schist of Osiris, Isis, Horus, Mispè-Yamim, 13.5 cm.



Figure 65. A bronze statue of Osiris, Mispè-Yamim, 10.2 cm.



Figure 66. A bronze statue of the Apis bull, Mispè-Yamim, H. 7.5 cm.

Furthermore, other votive offerings discovered in the temple of Mispē-Yamim with the *situla* are mostly in Egyptian style (**Figs. 64-66**)⁴⁷⁷, including a green schist figurine carved in relief, representing the triad Osiris, Isis, and their son Horus, found broken in two pieces near the altar and dated to the Hellenistic period (**Fig. 64**)⁴⁷⁸. The figures stand upon a base, erect and facing forward. To the left stands Isis, adorned with the Hathoric crown upon her head; her left arm stretches straight down along her body; her right arm is broken at the elbow, but the remaining space suggests that it was slightly extended. In the center stands Osiris, wearing the Atef crown, with his arms crossed closely to his chest. On the right, Horus is only partially preserved. He is depicted wearing the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt, and his hair extends down and over his shoulder. His right arm hangs rigidly by his side⁴⁷⁹.

Another bronze statuette of Osiris as a mummy with crook and flail (**Fig. 65**), depicts a bearded figure standing upright on a small square pedestal, which features a vertical peg beneath it and a small loop on its left side. Adorning his head are the Atef crown and uraeus, consisting of the crown of Upper Egypt flanked by two ostrich feathers with the sun disk above it. His arms are crossed closely to his chest, and he holds his distinctive attributes—a crook in his right hand and a flail in his left hand⁴⁸⁰. The Osiris figurine from Mispē Yamim bears resemblance to one of the seven Osiris figurines discovered in the collection of bronze figurines at Ascalon (**Fig. 202**). Noteworthy aspects of style and proportion, particularly the arrangement of the hands in a stiff opposing manner, correspond with Osiris figurines originating from Egypt and dating back to the 26th Dynasty (664–525 BC).

Moreover, a bronze figure of an Apis bull was discovered with its left hind leg missing (**Fig. 66**). The leg was later uncovered during the excavation within the sanctuary. It is probable that the bull was initially positioned on a rectangular base, which appears to have been intentionally broken off at a later time. The Apis bull features a sun disk with a uraeus positioned between its horns, an upside-down triangle incised on its forehead, a decorative

⁴⁷⁷ Kamlah, 1999, pp. 169-170; Stern, 2001, pp. 483- 485; Vittmann, 2003, p.81; Aviam, 2004, p.8, fig. 2.3; Erlich, 2009, pp. 31-32, figs. 29, 32; Berlin, Frankel, 2012, pp. 43-47, figs. 28-29, 31. Freyne mentioned that these finds suggest that Mispē-Yamim belonged to a network of Egyptian cult centers found in Palestine, particularly but not exclusively along the coast. Freyne, 2007, p. 18.

⁴⁷⁸ Frankel suggests that it is likely that the triad belongs to the late Hellenistic phase of use in Mispē Yamim.

⁴⁷⁹ Kamlah, 1999, p. 169; Berlin, Frankel, 2012, pp. 44-45, fig. 29.

⁴⁸⁰ Berlin, Frankel, 2012, pp. 43-44, fig. 28.

ribbon adorning its neck, a pattern resembling a blanket etched onto its back, and winged scarabs located both in front and behind the blanket⁴⁸¹. While the iconographic and stylistic peculiarities of the Apis might suggest that it is of non-Egyptian production⁴⁸², the situla was certainly made in Egypt during the 6th or 5th century BC, and at the same time, or not much later, a Phoenician dedicatory inscription for Astarte was added⁴⁸³. This habit is also manifested in Phoenicia in the various scarabs found in different burials of the Iron Ages II and III and on coffins. It is striking that although this Phoenician inscription may be secondary, the original decoration of the votive situla was taken into account and placed in places that fit in with the Egyptian pictorial program⁴⁸⁴.

Frankel and Ventura concluded that these bronze figurines were initially related to the temple of the Persian period, probably having been brought to it as votive offerings, and that, in some way, they were kept at the cult center till its final abandonment⁴⁸⁵. On the other hand, Aliquot stated that these objects do not imply compulsorily the existence of a local cult of Egyptian deities in Mispé-Yamim and thinks that the objects could simply be votive objects offered to the great Phoenician goddess Astarte, to whom the only dedication found on the site is addressed⁴⁸⁶. However, the presence of these Egyptian figurines in Mispé-Yamim at the same sanctuary site is impressive; it seems that the donor was aware of the meaning of these votive figures in more or less the same way as an Egyptian. Moreover, Astarte and Isis were brought closer or assimilated to one another, which could imply here a connection between the cult of Astarte and the votive objects associated with Isis.

⁴⁸¹ Frankel, Ventura, 1998, pp. 49-51; Kamlah, 1999, p. 167; Berlin, Frankel, 2012, p. 47, fig. 31.

⁴⁸² Erlich, 2009, p. 31.

⁴⁸³ Kamlah, 1999, p.168.

⁴⁸⁴ Kamlah proposed that vessels of this type were probably created as "blank votive offerings" and then distributed through trade. Those who wished to donate such a situla and could afford the additional costs for the scribe would have the inscription added after the purchase. Kamlah, 1999, p. 168.

⁴⁸⁵ The site was abandoned at the end of the second century BC due to a violent event that desecrated the statues and figurines. According to Frankel, the destruction occurred during the Hasmonaean conquest. Frankel, Ventura, 1998, p.54.

⁴⁸⁶ Aliquot, 2004, p.208.

II.2.5.2. Kharayeb

The rural temple of Kharayeb is located in the vicinity of the modern town of Kharayeb, in the hinterland of Tyre, approximately 15 km to the north. The architectural plan of the building is difficult to reconstruct in detail, but in certain aspects it evokes the sanctuary of Umm el-Amed, such as the Egyptian cavetto cornice decorated with the solar disc flanked by uraei⁴⁸⁷. A large number of Egyptianizing terracotta figurines dating from the end of the fourth to the first century BC were discovered in the so-called *favissa* of the sanctuary. These Egyptian figurines represent the Apis bull, Isis, Harpocrates, Bes, Baubo, and Ptah-Pataikos⁴⁸⁸; however, different artistic styles from other areas, such as the Near East and Cyprus, also appear to be represented in the temple of Kharayeb. During the Persian period, the character of the iconographic documentation can be defined as a hybrid derived from the contacts between the coastal region, Syria, and the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly renewed contacts with Egypt and Cyprus. With the end of the Persian Empire and Phoenicia falling under the control of the Ptolemies, relations with the Egyptian and Greek worlds became even closer⁴⁸⁹.

Isis-Lactans is associated with at least five similar figurines in the *favissa* of Kharayeb⁴⁹⁰. One of these figurines, preserved in the Archaeological Museum of Beirut, is a terracotta statue representing the goddess Isis seated on a throne with naked Harpocrates seated on her left thigh (**Fig. 67**). Strands of hair fall on the shoulders, and she wears a sleeveless chiton that leaves the left breast naked, surmounted by the fringed himation with the distinctive Isis-knot

⁴⁸⁷ The sanctuary of Kharayeb was excavated between 1946 and 1970 by Chéhab (1951–1952; 1953–1954) and Kaoukabani in 1973. It was probably founded in the Persian period, about the seventh century BC, and later modified under the Ptolemies. It consists of a rectangular structure containing a large paved courtyard surrounded by rectangular chambers; finally, a *favissa* was excavated. Oggiano, 2015b, pp. 239-266; Castiglione, 2019, p. 359.

⁴⁸⁸ Chéhab, 1951-1952; 1953-1954, p. 23, pl. X, 4; p. 84, 129, pl. VII, 2, 4-6; Kater-Sibbes, Vermaseren, 1975, p. 2, no. 257; Aliquot, 2004, pp. 208-210; Aliquot, 2009, pp.174-175; Castiglione, 2019, p.362.

⁴⁸⁹ Oggiano, 2015b, pp. 242-243.

⁴⁹⁰ A bronze statuette of Isis-Lactans was also found in Syria, but the exact location is not known. The goddess is seated on a chair, apparently without a backrest, with high armrests, and a high stool is placed under her feet. Her head is tilted slightly to the right, and she is depicted with rich hair framing her face and falling over her shoulder and back. Her head was surmounted by the basileion; she wears a sleeveless chiton and a fringed himation that forms a knot on her chest; her right hand squeezes the left breast to which Harpocrates clings, who is naked, his legs bent, and his left hand is caressing his mother's breast. Tran Tam Tinh, 1973, p. 66, A-16, fig. 35.

between her breasts⁴⁹¹. A remarkable example of a marble statue depicting Isis-Lactans originates from the underwater research conducted in 1934 in Aboukir Bay by Omar Toussoun (**Fig. 68**). It is currently preserved in the Maritime Museum in Alexandria and is similar to the statue of Kharayeb. After many years, Franck Goddio made a fascinating discovery at the bottom of Aboukir Bay, precisely where the statue of Isis had originally been found. He discovered her son, Harpocrates, whom she originally held in her hand. The statue portrays Isis as a seated woman with Harpocrates seated on her left thigh, although her head and arms have suffered damage. She is gracefully adorned in a long, fine dress adorned with a series of tight vertical folds that elegantly cascade down to the ground. Additionally, a loose himation covers her legs. The arrangement of the himation indicates the presence of the characteristic knot typically seen in Isis' garments⁴⁹².



Figure 67. A terracotta figurine of Isis- Lactans, Kharayeb, the Archaeological Museum of Beirut, Inv. No. 223.

Figure 68. A marble statue of Isis-Lactans, Aboukir Bay by Omar Toussoun, Maritime Museum in Alexandria, MMA. No. 56.

In contrast to the Egyptian examples of Isis-Lactans, the Isis of Kharayeb does not touch her left breast with her right hand but instead places it on the throne. Her left hand supports

⁴⁹¹ Inv. No. 223. The head of Isis, the right hand, part of the left arm, and the feet are missing. On the back, there is a round vent hole. Tran Tam Tinh, 1973, pp. 75-76, A-27, fig. 54.

⁴⁹² Goddio, Clauss, 2006, pp. 119-120, figs. 24-26; Goddio, 2007, pp. 19-22, Fig. 1.17.

Harpocrates, who is naked and sitting on his mother's left thigh; his face is turned towards his mother. Another statuette of Isis-Lactans is kept in the Archaeological Museum of Beirut, similar to the previous example but with some differences; on her left side are the front legs of an animal, possibly a dog⁴⁹³. According to most scholars, the figurines of Kharayeb were a local elaboration of Egyptian models that originated in Alexandria or Memphis, where various types of Hellenized Isis were created⁴⁹⁴. Oggiano added that the arrival of Egyptian iconographies at Kharayeb should be seen as a reflection of what was happening along the Phoenician coast, where changes in local workshop productions led to the acquisition of techniques from the West Mediterranean⁴⁹⁵.

The depiction of Isis breastfeeding her son Harpocrates, held on her knees, became widely popular in Egypt and outside⁴⁹⁶. Even before Alexander the Great's conquest of Egypt, most Mediterranean civilizations were acquainted with the image of "Isis-Lactans," thanks to thriving trade activities⁴⁹⁷. This portrayal of Isis nursing her son is related to the ancient Egyptians' beliefs in her magical powers of caring for and protecting children. Many statues representing Isis-Lactans were offered as ex-votos in temples, serving as expressions of gratitude or requests for protection. Moreover, the smaller versions of these statues were used as amulets attached to mothers' or children's chests to protect them against the risks of pregnancy and childbirth, symbolizing the flow of milk from the goddess's breast to the nursing woman to give life longevity, salvation, and divinity⁴⁹⁸. In addition to her role in childcare, Isis also had a significant association with the fertility of agricultural lands and the bountiful harvests they yielded. Some representations depicted her seated upon a basket of grain while breastfeeding her son Harpocrates, emphasizing her connection to agricultural abundance⁴⁹⁹. Regarding the figurines of Kharayeb, it is highly likely that they represented a local deity to whom a sanctuary was dedicated during the Persian period. One plausible

⁴⁹³ Inv. No.224. The upper part of Isis and the head of Harpocrates are missing. Chéhab, 1951-1952; 1953-1954, p.33, pl. XXXIII, 3-4; Tran Tam Tinh, 1973, p. 76, A-28, fig. 55.

⁴⁹⁴ Tran Tam Tinh, 1973, pp. 75-76; Oggiano, 2015a, pp. 516-518, figs. 8-9; Castiglione, 2019, p.362.

⁴⁹⁵ Oggiano, 2015b, p. 244.

⁴⁹⁶ Tran Tam Tinh, 1973; Swan Hall, 1977.

⁴⁹⁷ Tran Tam Tinh, 1973, pp. 9-10.

⁴⁹⁸ Tran Tam Tinh, 1973, p.1; Dunand, 1979, p.62. This belief has also been found in Greek mythology, where Heracles had to nurse from the breast of the goddess Hera for immortality. Heyob, 1975, p.75.

⁴⁹⁹ Dunand, 1979, p. 62.

candidate is the goddess Astarte, who was initially associated with agrarian and initiatory cults and subsequently assimilated into the Egyptian goddess Isis⁵⁰⁰.

The third member of the Alexandrian triad is Harpocrates, a child-form incarnation of the god Horus⁵⁰¹. Harpocrates is derived from the Greek translation of the Egyptian name *Hr-pꜣ-hrd*, which means "Horus-the-child"⁵⁰². In ancient Egyptian representations, Horus is depicted as a young man with a shaved head, except for a large lock of hair falling on the right ear. On the other hand, Harpocrates is depicted as a child, varying in age from an infant to more advanced ages, often with his index finger to his mouth. The representations of Harpocrates are particularly numerous on Roman terracotta, in which he appears in various aspects. He played a significant role in the Isiac cult during the Greek and Roman Periods⁵⁰³. During the Ptolemaic period, Harpocrates primarily appeared in temples located in Philae and Nubia, as well as in Edfu and Kom Ombo. In the Roman period, representations of Harpocrates expanded to include sites such as Armant and Dendera.

The figurines of Harpocrates, which we recognize here for similar remarks, fall into the category of monuments of Greek inspiration, such as the *cornucopia* in his left hand and wreaths of flowers, but the god keeps the Egyptian crown, "*the pschent*"⁵⁰⁴. As we mentioned above, he appeared with his mother as Isis-Lactans, and he also appeared alone in various types. In some of his examples, he is depicted standing, holding a *cornucopia* in his left hand (**Fig. 69**), and placing the index of the right hand in his mouth; his head is sometimes decorated with a wreath of flowers, topped by the *pschent*. These examples have numerous parallels in Alexandria⁵⁰⁵. There is also another type of Harpocrates found in Kharayeb, where the child-god is riding a horse and heading toward the viewer with the upper part of his

⁵⁰⁰ Chéhab, 1951-1952, p.23.

⁵⁰¹ Harpocrates is the son of the king-god Osiris and his sister-wife Isis, whom she received from him posthumously. As already described, she has to hide her son from Osiris's murderer and new ruler Seth in the papyrus swamps of the Delta, where she raises him and to protects him from Seth's access. Horus finally confronts his uncle as the rightful heir to the throne and, after a long struggle, achieves victory and is installed as the ruler of the land. In Hellenistic-Roman times, Osiris often replaced by the Hellenized form of Serapis. Mercer, 1942, p.181; Bakhoun, 1999, pp.75-86; Bailey, 2008, p.13.

⁵⁰² Tran Tam Tinh, Jaeger, Poulin, LIMC IV, 1988, s.v. Harpocrates, pp. 415-417.

⁵⁰³ Tran Tam Tinh, Jaeger, Poulin, LIMC IV, 1988, s.v. Harpocrates, pp. 415-445; Mercer, 1942, p.181; Bakhoun, 1999, pp.75-86; Bailey, 2008, p.13.

⁵⁰⁴ Chéhab, 1951-1952; 1953-1954, pp.81-82, no.58-76; Castiglione, 2019, p.364, fig. 25.6.

⁵⁰⁵ Ballet, 1998, pp. 222- 223.

body⁵⁰⁶; a similar figurine from Lebanon is preserved in the Museum of the American University of Beirut (**Fig. 70**)⁵⁰⁷.



Figure 69. A terracotta figurine of Harpocrates from Kharayeb, Chehab, 1953-1954, Pl. III, 3.

Figure 70. A terracotta figurine of Harpocrates, Lebanon, the Museum of the American University of Beirut.

It is generally accepted that Harpocrates on horseback first appeared in Egypt during the 1st century BC. Harpocrates riding the horse was a favorite topic in Harpocrate's terracotta; this iconography may illustrate the protection exercised by the god who guarantees agrarian fertility over domestic animals, but this is probably not the only reason⁵⁰⁸. Maybe we can find the association between Harpocrates and the horse in the account of Plutarch: he says that Osiris asked his son which animal he considered the most useful for those going into battle; Horus would have chosen the horse⁵⁰⁹. However, it is difficult to explain the very large number of terracottas of Harpocrates riding a horse solely from this testimony.

The god Harpocrates is also depicted in Kharayeb riding a goose (**Fig. 71**)⁵¹⁰, an animal which evokes the assimilation between Horus and Amun; the goose had an early connection with

⁵⁰⁶ Chéhab, 1951-1952; 1953-1954, p.81, Pl.V, 1-3, nos.73-76.

⁵⁰⁷ Castiglione, 2019, fig. 25.7.

⁵⁰⁸ Boutantin, 2013, pp. 163-168.

⁵⁰⁹ Plu., De Iside et Osiride, 19.

⁵¹⁰ Chéhab, 1951-1952; 1953-1954, p.81, pl.V, 4, no.77; Castiglione, 2019, p.364, fig. 25.6.

Amun-Re and Geb⁵¹¹. On the one hand, Chéhab agrees that the various Harpocrates figurines from Kharayeb present a close comparison with the Egyptian specimens produced in Egyptian workshops; on the other hand, he points out that none of them has been modeled using an Egyptian mold; many details, such as the fineness of the wreaths, the size of the crown, and the dimension of the *pschent*, do not find any parallels in the Egyptian examples. For this reason, it seems likely that the Harpocrates figurines of Kharayeb were made in Phoenicia itself⁵¹².



Figure 71. A terracotta figurine of Harpocrates from Kharayeb, Chehab, 1953-1954, Pl. Chehab, 1953-1954, Pl. V, 4.

The Egyptian god Bes is also represented in Kharayeb, with at least seven figurines discovered in the temple⁵¹³, one of them depicts the god strangling snakes in his hands (**Fig. 72**). Aliquot argued that these figurines do not represent the god Bes, but just a local genius, of which Herodotus describes the type and whose head appears on the coins of Sidon and Arwad during the Persian period⁵¹⁴. On the contrary, there are a lot of examples of Bes

⁵¹¹ Bailey, 2008, p. 16.

⁵¹² Chéhab, 1951-1952, p.82.

⁵¹³ Chéhab, 1951-1952; 1953-1954, pp. 20, 84, Pls. VI , VII, 1 , 3, Kh. 32-37; Castiglione, 2019, p. 362, fig. 25.4.

⁵¹⁴ Herodotus, Histories III, 37; Aliquot, 2004, p. 209; Aliquot, 2009, p.175. The Egyptian god Bes appeared on the Phoenician coins of the Persian period, for Arwad: Hill, 1910, p. 12, no. 79, pl. II, 26; for Sidon: p. 139, no. 2, pl. XVII, 13; p. 142, no. 13. Nunn refers to the Bes figurines discovered long ago in Tel Sukas, in Sidon, the sanctuary of Eshmun, and the necropolis of Ayaa. Nunn, 2000, pp. 60-61,

holding a snake in his hand⁵¹⁵. For instance, he appears on a limestone stela preserved in the Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam, holding a snake in his left hand and a sword in his raised right hand above his head (Fig. 73)⁵¹⁶.



Figure 72. A terracotta statuette of Bes, Kharayeb, Chehab, 1953-1954, Pl. VI.

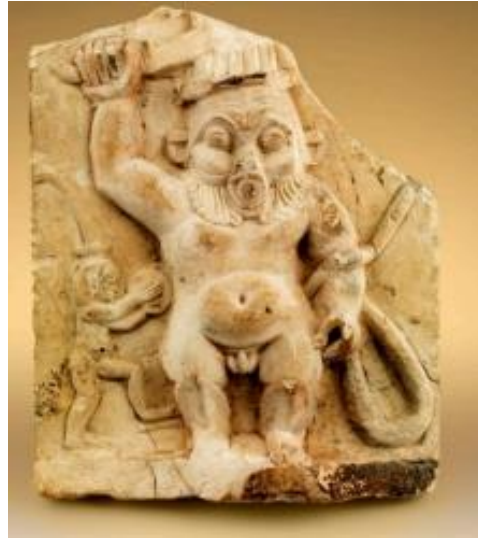


Figure 73. A limestone relief of Bes, Egypt, the Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam.

While Bes is not traditionally categorized among the principal Egyptian deities and lacks the prominence of dedicated temples as the primary deity, he nevertheless maintains a deep-seated presence within Egyptian religious tradition and exhibits significant popularity within popular belief⁵¹⁷. This is expressed by the fact that he frequently appears in Egyptian terracottas from the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The god Bes belongs to the circle of the goddess Hathor, who is primarily associated with motherhood⁵¹⁸. In her entourage, he appears as a musician and dancer. According to Hathor's sphere of activity, Bes is mainly the guardian of pregnant women, childbirth, and children, which adequately explains his figurines in the

⁵¹⁵ Bes is associated with various attributes, including scepters or weapons like a short sword or knife, a mace or club, as well as musical instruments such as the lyre, lute, tambourine, cymbal, rattle, or double flute. He is also linked to amulets like the *udjat* or *anch-sign*, as well as plants such as lotus or papyrus. Van Oppen de Ruiter, 2020, p. 6.

⁵¹⁶ Inv. no. 7947. Van Oppen de Ruiter, 2020, pp. 1-27. Snakes appear frequently in Bes's iconography. In most depictions, he is clutching them, but in others, they are painted on and wrapped around his legs. He is usually full-faced and carries a snake in either hand. Dasen, 1993, p. 58.

⁵¹⁷ Wiedemann, 1897, p. 159; Romano, 1980, p. 41; Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC III, 1986, s.v. Bes, pp. 98-108; Dasen, 1993, pp. 55-57; Frankfurter, 1998, pp. 125-126, 131; Bailey, 2008, pp. 17-18; Volokhine, 2010, pp. 233-255.

⁵¹⁸ Török, 1995, p. 33.

domestic context⁵¹⁹. For instance, a papyrus from Oxyrhynchus in which a woman complains about the stealing of a gold statue of the god Bes from her house⁵²⁰. Another example is a stela from a villa in Tell Atrib, dating to the Ptolemaic period, depicts the god Bes, naked, brandishing a sword in one hand and probably holding a serpent in the other⁵²¹.

In the service of this function, he places his wild, combative qualities, which are also illustrated by his crown, whose ostrich feathers symbolize hunting and war success⁵²². With these qualities, he not only wards off the evil powers of mother and child⁵²³. These malign forces are traditionally depicted in Egyptian art as dangerous beasts, such as snakes and scorpions. It is precisely these that the god fights, and so his protective function is ultimately a general one. His function as a protective guardian extends to sleep and the dead on the way to the Dead Judgment⁵²⁴. Bes amulets were worn by the living and included in the wrappings of mummies for the deceased⁵²⁵. It also encompassed furniture, cosmetics, and jewelry, etc.⁵²⁶. Moreover, he appeared in the prominent Egyptian sanctuaries of Edfu, Dendera, and Philae, specifically within the precincts of the *mammisis*, or birth houses, where he played a crucial role in safeguarding the divine child in conjunction with other prophylactic deities⁵²⁷. It is worth noting that a temple dedicated to Bes was erected in the Bahariya Oasis during the Roman period⁵²⁸.

There are also two examples of "Baubo" (**Fig. 74**), depicts a naked woman sitting on the ground and extending her legs. She points to the genital area with her right hand while resting her other hand on her left knee⁵²⁹. The term "Baubo" usually refers to naked, plump women

⁵¹⁹ Bell, 1948, p.87; Dasen, 1993, pp.68-76; Boutantin, 2013, pp.103-104.

⁵²⁰ P. Oxy. X, 1272; Bell, 1948, p.87.

⁵²¹ Dasen, 1993, pp.68-76; Boutantin, 2013, pp.103-104.

⁵²² Bes representations typically depict him in a state of undress, although he may occasionally be portrayed with a loincloth or kilt. Frequently, he is shown wearing a leopard's skin draped over his shoulders, featuring the feline's head and forelegs suspended from his chest. The image of the leopard's head on his chest bears a resemblance to a gorgoneum, which is the protective head of Medusa. Additionally, Bes may sport a belt tied in a reef knot, also known as the knot of Heracles (nodo herculis), a symbol associated with healing. During the Graeco-Roman era, the warrior-like depiction of Bes evolved to include a breastplate, a leather-strapped kilt, and an oval Galatian or round Roman shield. Van Oppen de Ruiter, 2020, p. 6.

⁵²³ Van Oppen de Ruiter, 2020, p. 2.

⁵²⁴ Roehrig, et al., 2005, pp. 256-257, no.190.

⁵²⁵ Bonner, 1950, p. 25; Bailey 2008, p. 17.

⁵²⁶ Van Oppen de Ruiter, 2020, p. 22.

⁵²⁷ Volokhine, 2010, pp. 238- 240; Barrett, 2011, p. 274.

⁵²⁸ Hawass, 2000, pp.169-173.

⁵²⁹ Castiglione, 2019, p.362, fig. 25.3.

with sagging breasts and a distended abdomen, legs spread outward, in a position of childbirth⁵³⁰. Most scholars differed regarding the interpretation of these figurines: Weber believed that these figurines were amulets for the purpose of protection⁵³¹. Dunand and Bayer-Niemeier added that these statuettes were used as votive offerings for fertility and good luck during the process of giving birth⁵³². Furthermore, Török indicates that these women were associated with the festival of Demeter (Isis), *i.e.*, the Eleusinia in the early Ptolemaic period and, subsequently, with the Thesmophoria in Alexandria⁵³³.



Figure 74. A terracotta statuette of Baubo, Kharayeb, Chehab, 1953-1954, Pl.XXX, 4.

Figure 75. An Isis attendant from Kharayeb, Chehab, 1953-1954, Pl. LXVIII, 2.

The term "Baubo" references the Greek goddess of Mirth, who plays a significant role within the myth of Demeter and Persephone. Ancient sources offer two variations of the account concerning the ceremonial act undertaken to alleviate Demeter's despondency following her daughter's abduction by Hades. This act, in turn, led to her laughter and the ending of her

⁵³⁰ In Egypt, the earliest instances of terracotta figurines in the Baubo type, dating back to the first half of the 2nd century BC, depict a tight, crouched position featuring elevated knees, and arms are placed close to the body, extending toward the genital region or resting upon the lap. Subsequent artifacts from the 1st century AD exhibit a more relaxed posture, occasionally presenting raised arms and legs symmetrically spread apart. Török categorizes these figurines with uplifted arms as orants, even if they show their genitalia. Török 1995, pp.130–133, pl. C, 186–188; n. 169, male; pl. XCIII, 171; pl. XCIV, 170, 173; pl. XCV, 172, 174; pl. XCVII, 178, 179, 180; pl. XCVIII, 181

Fig. 7.2

⁵³¹ Weber, 1914, p.165.

⁵³² Dunand, 1979, p.102; Bayer-Niemeier, 1988, p.149.

⁵³³ Török, 1995, pp .132-133; Bailey, 2008, pp. 46-47.

fasting⁵³⁴. The initial version details a respectful form of jesting and playful banter orchestrated by Iambe⁵³⁵. In contrast, the second version involves a more unconventional approach attributed to Baubo. Baubo's method entailed an entertaining display, encompassing dancing and a unique gesture of lifting her skirt and revealing her body to the goddess. According to one account, during this skirt-lifting action, a boy's face was artfully drawn on her abdomen. The unexpected sight of this face in place of the anticipated anatomical features brought about a sense of surprise that effectively alleviated the goddess from her sorrow⁵³⁶.

Indeed, the practice of *anasyrma* was not unfamiliar in Egypt, having been well documented through funerary paddle dolls, particularly from the Middle Kingdom⁵³⁷. These dolls, lacking legs, portray the exposed pubic region while the fabric of a skirt conceals the buttocks, suggesting a deliberate unveiling of the vulva. The underlying mythical incident is tangentially depicted in the Contending of Horus and Seth; here, Hathor, the goddess, revives Re, the sun god, by revealing her genitalia, inducing his laughter⁵³⁸. This narrative serves as the origin of the significance of genital exposure in rituals venerating Hathor, often intertwined with dance⁵³⁹. It's possible that both Greeks and Egyptians perceived this gesture as a potent religious rite capable of eliciting laughter, especially in the case of distressed deities.

In addition, two figurines were found in Kharayeb with an Isis-knot, probably representing an Isis attendant, one of which performs a sacrifice on an altar, and the other holds a plate perhaps with some offerings (**Fig. 75**)⁵⁴⁰. Finally, we notice that the Egyptian figurines in the sanctuary of Kharayeb have an agrarian nature in connection with a local fertility goddess, no doubt the goddess Astarte, who was very early identified with Isis before becoming assimilated with Aphrodite and, later, with Demeter. In addition, Bes, Harpocrates, and Baubo

⁵³⁴ Marcovich, 1986, pp. 294-301.

⁵³⁵ Marcovich, 1986, p. 294.

⁵³⁶ Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* II, 20.1-21.1.

⁵³⁷ Morris, 2011, pp. 71-103.

⁵³⁸ Morris, 2011, p. 85.

⁵³⁹ Morris, 2011, p. 85. This particular gesture was also documented on specific occasions in ancient Egypt, a phenomenon recorded by Greek historians. During the 5th century BC, Herodotus recounted that women, on their way to the Bubastis festival in honor of Bastet, would raise their clothing and reveal their bodies. Similarly, during the 1st century BC, a distinct ritual was performed by women for a span of forty days prior to the introduction of the new bull chosen to replace the deceased Apis in Memphis. This ritual entailed the lifting of their attire and the exposure of their bodies. Herodotus, II.60; Diodorus Siculus, I. 85.

⁵⁴⁰ Castiglione, 2019, p. 366, fig. 25.10.

have the same functions in protecting and promoting the fertility of the earth and its inhabitants, men, women, and animals.

II.2.6. Akko-Ptolemais

The ancient city of Akko is one of the only coastal cities in Palestine to be located near a natural bay, thirteen or fourteen kilometers north of Haifa⁵⁴¹. In Iron Age II, Akko was an important Phoenician city, but it has historically maintained close ties with the Palestinian hinterland and the southern coastal strip, rendering it vulnerable to external influences and pressures from this direction⁵⁴². Akko was situated at the meeting point of several important communication routes in Antiquity: the coastal road, the *Via Maris* of the Romans, and the route leading to the east, towards Syria and Jordan. This strategic location made Akko one of the primary coastal cities in the region, and its significance as a prominent coastal settlement dates back to the beginning of the second millennium BC and continued onward⁵⁴³.

The earliest reference to Akko can be traced back to the Execration texts of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom⁵⁴⁴. Within these texts, the king of Akko, named Turi-Ammu, is mentioned as one of the local rulers who posed a threat to Egyptian rule along the Canaanite coast⁵⁴⁵. Thutmose III included Akko among the cities he conquered, and it appears in the Amarna letters on thirteen occasions⁵⁴⁶. During the Hellenistic period, under Ptolemy II, a significant shift occurred when the city's minted coins bore a monogram indicating a change in its name; it adopted the name "Ptolemais"⁵⁴⁷. This name alteration happened again when the city came under the influence of the Seleucid domain and transformed into "Antioch", following the conquest by Antiochus III around 200 BC⁵⁴⁸. Subsequently, it enjoyed a notable degree of autonomy, a status that was officially confirmed through its coinage shortly before the arrival of Pompey in the East. After being incorporated into the Roman province of Syria, it fell under the dominion of Herod in 39 BC, later becoming a Roman colony during the 1st century

⁵⁴¹ Dothan, NEAEHL, 1993, s. v. Acco, pp. 16-18.

⁵⁴² Regev, 2009/10, pp. 115–191.

⁵⁴³ Beeri, 2008, pp. 195-210.

⁵⁴⁴ Artzy, 2015, pp. 205-212.

⁵⁴⁵ Dothan, NEAEHL, 1993, s. v. Acco, pp. 16-18.

⁵⁴⁶ Dothan, NEAEHL, 1993, s. v. Acco, pp. 16-18; Artzy, 2015, p. 207. .

⁵⁴⁷ Kindler, 1978, pp. 51-55.

⁵⁴⁸ "Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who was eager to hellenize the areas under his rule, which were basically of eastern culture, founded new cities and also refounded certain old cities of importance, all of which he named "Antiochia" after his father or him". Kindler, 1978, pp. 51-52; Beeri, 2008, p. 195.

AD with the appellation “Germanicia”⁵⁴⁹. Nevertheless, this change was short-lived, as the city swiftly reverted to its original name “Akko”⁵⁵⁰.

The evidence of the cult of Egyptian gods during the Hellenistic period in Akko-Ptolemais is indeed scarce; a fragment of a small statuette of Bes was discovered in a Hellenistic context, but it cannot be considered strong evidence of widespread Egyptian religious practice in the region⁵⁵¹. Another discovery comprises a fragment of Isis-Aphrodite dating back to the second century BC⁵⁵². Of particular interest is an amulet made of dark blue glass, taking the form of a crouching Baubo, also found in Akko-Ptolemais (**see also the example of Kharayeb Fig. 74**). This figurine portrays a woman squatting with her legs apart, one hand cradling her abdomen, and adorned with a pointed cap⁵⁵³. Comparable depictions of the squatting Baubo exist in Egypt, often serving as fertility or birth amulets⁵⁵⁴. Nevertheless, this increase in Graeco-Egyptian material is modest. At present, only the reverse sides of local coins endure, potentially offering insights into Egyptian gods involvement within the Akko-Ptolemais pantheon.

Several representation of Serapis on city coins came into use during the Roman period. This range has led to recognizing here an indication of Serapis worship in Akko-Ptolemais. Besides the traditional bust of Serapis, which is by far the most frequent depiction (**Fig. 76**)⁵⁵⁵, and also Serapis enthroned⁵⁵⁶, there are more complex scenes found on the coins of Akko-ptolemais. One of these scenes depicts Caracalla and later Severus Alexander in military clothes, standing on the left and leaning on a lance while behind the emperor, Serapis, dressed in a himation and wearing a *kalathos*, holds a scepter in the left hand and

⁵⁴⁹ During Claudius' rule, the town was given the new name "Germanicia". Kindler, 1978, p. 54.

⁵⁵⁰ Beerli, 2008, p. 196.

⁵⁵¹ Messika, 1997, p. 123, figs. 2:9; 2a.

⁵⁵² Messika, 1997, p. 123, figs. 2:9; 2a.

⁵⁵³ Messika, 1997, p. 127, figs. 2:17. It is 2cm high and 1.2 cm wide.

⁵⁵⁴ Török, 1995, pp. 132-133; Bailey, 2008, pp. 46-47.

⁵⁵⁵ A bust of Serapis appeared on coins of Marcus Aurelius (Kadman, 1961, pp. 112-113, no. 110, pl. 7), Commodus (Kadman, 1961, pp. 114-115, no. 117, pl. 7), Septimius Severus (Kadman, 1961, pp. 116-117, no. 122, pl. 8), Caracalla (Kadman, 1961, pp. 116-117, nos. 128, 131, pl. 8), Marcinius (Kadman, 1961, pp. 122-123, no. 154, pl. 10), Elagabalus (Kadman, 1961, pp. 124-125, no. 162, pl. 11), Saloninus (Kadman, 1961, pp. 144-145, no. 263, pl. 18); Bricault, 2006b, p. 129, pl. 18:11; Bricault, SNRIS, p. 162, nos. 5-6, 8-10, 12-13, 19.

⁵⁵⁶ Kadman, 1961, pp. 114-115, no. 118; Bricault, 2006b, p. 129; Bricault, SNRIS, p. 162, no. 5.

raises the right to crown the emperor (**Fig. 77**)⁵⁵⁷. In this case, one must reckon with the connection to historical events, for example, Caracalla's campaign in Syria.



Figure 76. A coin of Akko-PTOLEMAIS, Bricault, 2006b, pl. 18:11.

Figure 77. A coin of Akko-PTOLEMAIS, Bricault, 2006b, pl. 18:12.

Another coin, belonging to Julia Maesa, shows a tetrastyle temple with a triangular pediment (**Fig. 78**). Within the temple, Serapis is seated to the left, holding a scepter with his left hand while wearing a *kalathos*. He is flanked by the goddess Isis, recognizable by her crown, the *basileion*, and Tyche, adorning her head with a *kalathos* and dressed in a *peplos*⁵⁵⁸. Whether this indicates that the goddess Isis received equal attention with her husband Serapis in Akko-PTOLEMAIS must remain open for the time being, as must the question of whether the local Serapis temple, which is to be assumed, was reproduced exactly here.



Figure 78. A coin of Akko-PTOLEMAIS, Bricault, 2006b, pl. 18:13.

Figure 79. A coin of Akko-PTOLEMAIS, Bricault, 2006b, pl. 19: 14.

Figure 80. A coin of Akko-PTOLEMAIS, Bricault, 2006b, pl. 19:16.

⁵⁵⁷ Kadman, 1961, pp. 130-131, no. 195, pl. 13; Bricault, 2006b, p. 129, pl. 18:12; Bricault, SNRIS, p. 162, nos. 11, 15.

⁵⁵⁸ Kadman, 1961, pp. 128-129, no. 183, pl. 12; Bricault, 2006b, p. 129, pl. 18:13; Bricault, SNRIS, pp. 162-163, no. 14.

On a distinct coin minted during the reign of Philip Arab, Isis stands beside her son Harpocrates (**Fig. 79**). He is depicted holding a *cornucopia*, while a thunderbolt is situated in the right field and a caduceus in the left field⁵⁵⁹. Subsequently, during Valerian I's era, Isis is portrayed as an enthroned female figure (**Fig. 80**), her right hand raised and holding an unclear object, with a kalathos adorning her head. At her feet, two recumbent sphinxes flank her throne, while a winged caduceus can be seen behind her in the lower right field⁵⁶⁰. Bricault suggested that from this very rich iconographic *ensemble*, it emerges that Serapis, but also Isis and Harpocrates, must have benefited from public recognition in the city from the Severian period and perhaps even before. Significantly, Serapis assumed a multitude of privileges within this context, as healer-deity, imperial protector, and patron of the colony⁵⁶¹.

⁵⁵⁹ Kadman, 1961, pp. 136-137, no. 224, pl. 15; Bricault, 2006b, p. 129, pl. 19: 14; Bricault, SNRIS , p. 163, no. 16.

⁵⁶⁰ Kadman, 1961, pp. 138-139, no. 239, pl. 16; Bricault, 2006b, pp. 129-130, pl. 19:16; Bricault, SNRIS 163, no. 18.

⁵⁶¹ Bricault, 2006b, p. 130.

II.2.7. Heliopolis- Baalbek

The allusion to Egypt is significant in the creation of the gods of Heliopolis-Baalbek. First and foremost, it has been proposed that Jupiter Heliopolitanus was imported from the Egyptian town of Heliopolis during the Ptolemaic domination over the region in the third century BC⁵⁶². According to Lucian of *De Dea Syria*, the cult or sanctuary of Baalbek is of Egyptian and not Syrian nature, and its transfer from Heliopolis in Egypt to Phoenicia⁵⁶³. He also devotes a paragraph to the antiquity of the Egyptian religion, which is at the origin of the knowledge of the gods and their worship among the "Assyrians", *i.e.*, the Syrians⁵⁶⁴. Also, Macrobius writes that the cult statue of Jupiter Heliopolitanus in Baalbek had been taken from a city in Egypt called Heliopolis⁵⁶⁵. However, such information must be treated with caution because there is no historical evidence that the Ptolemies were involved in the establishment of Egyptian cults there⁵⁶⁶.

In any case, a Roman inscription from the sanctuary of Baalbek dedicated by two villagers from the Syrian countryside mentions, together, an "Egyptian god" besides Jupiter Heliopolitanus. Whether we deal here with two different gods or simply with a single god having two names, it is not clear. However, some scholars believe that this mention would confirm the statements of Macrobius and Lucian⁵⁶⁷. Indeed, this unique testimony shows that this local cult of Egyptian origin involved not only theologians and priests but also common people. This inscription, however, does not indicate whether the dedication is addressed to two distinct divinities or to a mere epithet of Jupiter Heliopolitanus, who is designated as an Egyptian god. The most acceptable opinion is that they represented two deities; Hajjar

⁵⁶² Haider, 2002; Aliquot, 2009, pp. 181-183; Kropp, 2010, pp. 237-240.

⁵⁶³ "The Phoenicians have another temple, not Assyrian, but Egyptian, which came from Heliopolis to Phoenicia. I haven't seen it, but it is tall and old". Lucian, *De dea Syria*, 5; Hajjar, 1977, pp. 436-438, no. 330.

⁵⁶⁴ Lucian, *De Dea Syria*, 6-9.

⁵⁶⁵ "The Assyrians too, in a city called Heliopolis, worship the sun with an elaborate ritual under the name of Jupiter, calling him "Zeus of Heliopolis". The statue of the god was brought from the Egyptian town also called Heliopolis. The statue, a figure of gold in the likeness of a beardless man, presses forward with the right hand raised and holding a whip, after the manner of a charioteer; in the left hand are a thunderbolt and ears of corn; and all these attributes symbolize the conjoined power of Jupiter and the sun". Macrobius, *Saturnales* 1, 23, 10-12; Hajjar, 1977, pp. 439-457, no.331.

⁵⁶⁶ Kropp, 2010, pp. 237-240.

⁵⁶⁷ "To Zeus Most Great of Heliopolis and to the Egyptian god, Salamanes and Mercurius, sons of Mambogaios, of the township of Maarra of Samethos, buying the land thereof, consecrated the statue of Hermes". Hajjar, 1977, pp. 29-32, no. 15;

suggested that the god could be the god Serapis, who is associated with the god of Baalbek on two intaglios, or Jupiter-Ammon, whose bust sometimes adorns the sheath of Jupiter Heliopolitanus⁵⁶⁸. Nonetheless, this interesting inscription offers no evidence regarding the official worship of the Egyptian gods in Baalbek.

In addition to that, some of Jupiter Heliopolitanus's depiction was borrowed from Egyptian iconographic features (the Egyptian stepped wig made of corkscrew curls, with the crown of *kalathos* or *pschent*, a winged solar disc flanked by uraei replacing several times the eagle, and accompanying two striding bulls, most likely Mnevis and Apis)⁵⁶⁹, Aliquot proposed that this probably proceeds from the intention to give a prestigious luster to the local cult in Baalbek, in accordance with the Egyptomania that was popular throughout the Empire⁵⁷⁰.

Furthermore, two gems representing the figure of Serapis near that of Jupiter Heliopolitanus prove the links between the two gods, and the relationship between Baalbek and Egypt, but unfortunately, their provenance is unknown. The first gem, now in the British Museum, is made of red jasper and shows Zeus-Serapis, Nemesis, and Jupiter Heliopolitanus (**Fig. 81**). Zeus-Serapis is seated on a throne in the middle, his head in profile to the right, wearing the *kalathos*, the scepter in his right hand, and an eagle at his feet. Nemesis stands to the right, holding a branch in her right hand, a griffin, and a wheel at her feet. On the other side, Jupiter Heliopolitanus is facing to the left, flanked by two bulls, holding the whip and the ears of grain. He is wearing the *kalathos*, and his sheath is divided into horizontal stripes⁵⁷¹. The second gem is a Carnelian intaglio (**Fig. 82**), representing a bust of Serapis facing a full image of Jupiter Heliopolitanus; in the field between the two figures, a seven-pointed star is represented, probably symbolizing the sun, inside a crescent (perhaps the wheel of Nemesis)⁵⁷².

⁵⁶⁸ Hajjar, 1977, p. 31. Haider suggested that he represented Hermes-Thot. Haider, 2002, pp.106-107.

⁵⁶⁹ Jupiter Heliopolitanus is usually portrayed as a young, beardless god wearing a decorated *kalathos*, *polos*, or *pschent*. He is always appears standing on a pedestal, barefoot, enclosed in a narrow sheath decorated with cuirass elements and numerous emblems, and he is frequently flanked on either side by a striding bull. He holds a whip in his raised right hand, and ears of grain in his left. The god of Heliopolis was a fertility god, thunder and rain, oracular god, and supreme deity. He was also a sun deity. Haider, 2002, pp. 85-86; Aliquot, 2004, pp. 210- 211; Aliquot, 2009, pp. 181-182, fig. 78.

⁵⁷⁰ Aliquot, 2009, pp. 181-183.

⁵⁷¹ Both Serapis and Jupiter Heliopolitanus feature prominently on the coinage of Akko-Ptolemais. Hajjar, 1977, pp. 408-409, no. 312, pl. 123.

⁵⁷² Hajjar, 1977, p. 413, no. 317, pl. 125.



Figure 81. A jasper intaglio of Serapis-Zeus, Nemesis, Jupiter- Heliopolitanus.

Figure 82. A Carnelian intaglio of Serapis, Jupiter Heliopolitanus.

A bronze statuette of Jupiter Heliopolitanus was also found at Kafr Yasin, near Tabarga between Beirut and Byblos (**Fig. 83**). He is depicted beardless and wears a layered wig adorned with a tiny *pschent*. He is dressed, as usual, in a short-sleeved tunic surmounted by a *sheath* garment divided into sections decorated with unrecognizable motifs and busts. In the fourth section, two confronting heads of Jupiter-Ammon flanked by two stars with four rays are visible⁵⁷³. In summary the Phoenicians seem to be recognized more often as receptors of foreign cultures while the material culture demonstrates that the Phoenicians were selective cultural consumers, aware of their culture and defined broadly as "Greek" or "Egyptian". The Phoenicians used their status as powerful traders in the Mediterranean to adorn local practices and traditions.



Figure 83. A bronze statuette of Jupiter Heliopolitanus, Kafr Yasin, 13.3 cm.

⁵⁷³ It is preserved in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin. Inv. No. d. VA 3360. Hajjar, 1977, pp. 264- 266, no. 226, pl. 85; Kropp, 2010, fig.4.

CHAPTER III

THE DECAPOLIS

III.1. Introduction

The Decapolis was the name of "a group of ten cities" set up by Pompey after the occupation of Syria in 63 BC, located on the present-day territories of southern Syria, northern Palestine, and eastern Jordan⁵⁷⁴. Many scholars believed that the Decapolis was some sort of league of ten free cities established by Pompey⁵⁷⁵. However, Parker and Wenning rejected the term union or confederation of the Decapolis concept in the second half of the first century AD because there is no clear evidence to support the existence of such a league⁵⁷⁶. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Decapolis was not a fixed entity, denoting any political or administrative alliance in nature. The purpose of this political statement was to keep the cities of the Decapolis out of the hands of neighboring client kings; by emphasizing their membership in the Decapolis, the cities declared their affiliation with the province of Syria or the Roman Empire (which had only geographical significance)⁵⁷⁷. These cities included Abila, Damascus, Dion, Gerasa, Gadara, Hippos, Pella, Philadelphia, Raphana, and Scythopolis⁵⁷⁸.

⁵⁷⁴ Schmid, 2008, p.353.

⁵⁷⁵ Smith, 1894, p. 593; Schürer, 1979, pp.125-127.

⁵⁷⁶ The term Decapolis first appears in the sources of Pliny before 79 AD, Flavius Josephus around 66 AD, the evangelist Mark around 70 AD, and the evangelist Matthew around 70/80 AD. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 5,16,74; Flavius Josephus, *Bellum*, III, 9.7; the evangelist Mark, 5.20; 7. 31; the evangelist Matthew, 4.25; Parker, 1975, pp. 437-441; Isaac, 1981, pp. 67-74; Browning, 1982, pp. 11-17; Graf, 1992, pp. 1-48; Wenning, 1994, pp.1-35; Butcher, 2003, pp. 113-114.

⁵⁷⁷ Parker explained that the term Decapolis was, as in the case of Tetrapolis in northern Syria, which consisted of Antioch, Apamea, Seleucia, and Laodicea, founded by Seleucus I. These cities were not in a league but just a geographical title. Parker, 1975, pp. 437- 441; Wenning, 1994, pp. 11-12.

⁵⁷⁸ Pliny the Elder mentions the oldest list of the Decapolis cities: Damascus, Philadelphia, Raphana, Scythopolis, Gadara, Hippos, Dion, Pella, Gerasa, and Canatha. He interprets the designation as a territorial term

(Fig. 84). Although their number increased with the annexation of other cities, the name of the Decapolis remained for a long time⁵⁷⁹.

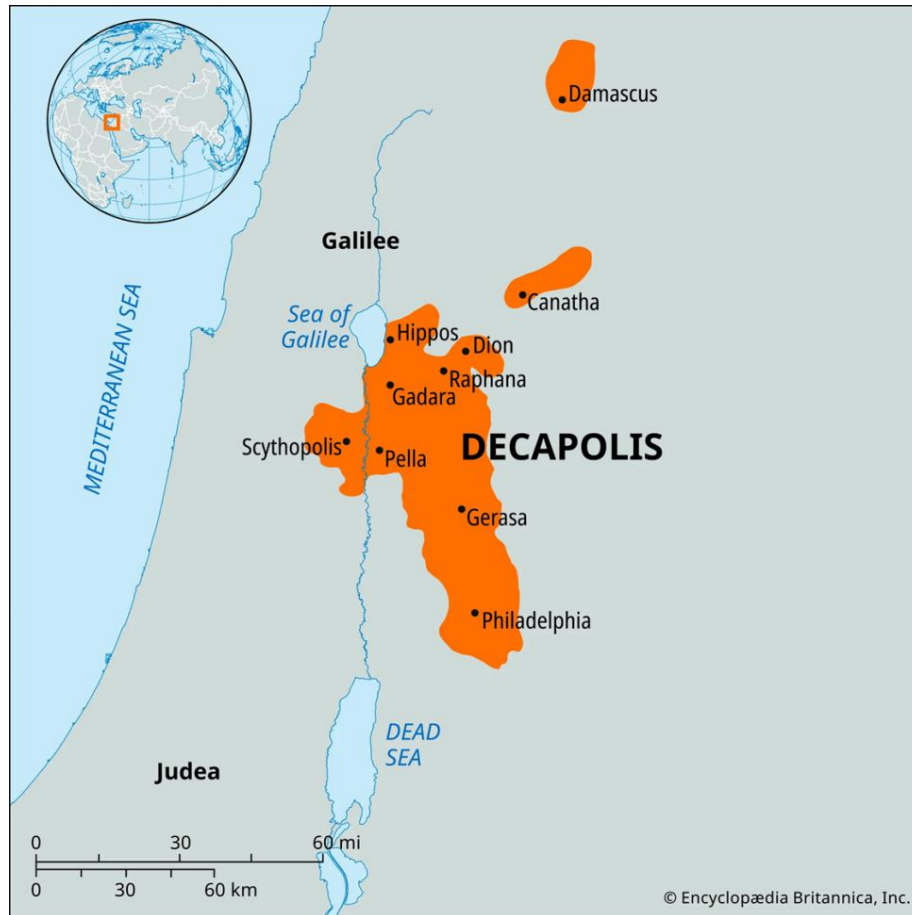


Figure 84. The Map of the Decapolis.

Most cities in the Decapolis region were inhabited during the Bronze Age⁵⁸⁰. In 334 BC, Alexander the Great launched an extensive campaign against the Persian king Darius III, which ended with the defeat of Darius at Gaugamela in 331 BC. Since then, Syria has been administered as a satrapy from Damascus⁵⁸¹. After Alexander's death, the Ptolemies and Seleucids fought for control of the region. As previously stated, part of Syria was under

based on the number of ten towns present in the Coile-Syria region. However, Pliny also reports that other sources have different lists for the region. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, 5, 16, 74

⁵⁷⁹ The geographer Claudius Ptolemy, around 150 AD, already lists 18 cities of the Decapolis. Claudius Ptolemy, *Geogr.*, V, 14-17.

⁵⁸⁰ Riedl, 2003, p. 24.

⁵⁸¹ Wenning, 1994, pp. 15-17.

Ptolemaic rule, but the Seleucids gradually brought the territory under their control around 200 BC⁵⁸².

When the power of the Seleucids declined over the centuries, some cities of the Decapolis were seized by different rulers; the Hasmonean leader Alexander Jannaeus conquered Gerasa, Abila, Dion, Gadara, Pella, and Scythopolis after defeating Antiochus XII. In 87 BC, the Nabatean king Aretas III took control of the region. In 64/63 BC, Pompey invaded the region with his troops and incorporated the Decapolis cities into the newly founded province of Syria after their liberation from the Hasmoneans, the Nabataeans, and other rulers⁵⁸³. From the second century AD, they were incorporated into the Roman provinces of Syria, Syria-Palaestina, and Arabia⁵⁸⁴.

The archaeological findings of these cities in the Hellenistic period are limited, but extensive expansion was established in many places during the Roman Empire, suggesting flourishing city centers based on Hellenistic-Roman culture⁵⁸⁵. Archaeological and epigraphic references to the worship of Egyptian gods have been discovered in the cities of Gerasa, Gadara, Philadelphia, Dion, Scythopolis, and Pella.

⁵⁸² Riedl, 2003, p. 27.

⁵⁸³ Bowersock, 1983, pp.30-31.

⁵⁸⁴ Parker, 1975, pp. 437- 441; Bowersock, 1983, p.91.

⁵⁸⁵ Lichtenberger, 2003, pp.1-4; Schmid, 2008, p.353.

III.2. Gerasa

The city of Gerasa (modern-day Jerash) was situated on one of the tributaries of the Zarqa River, north of Philadelphia. It was also on the road to the west that led to the coast via Pella and Scythopolis. The city's prosperity can be explained by its geographical location for the trade-road connections; Gerasa was situated in a rich and relatively water supply⁵⁸⁶, and because of its accessible location, it benefited from the caravan trade, especially after the decline of the Nabataean trade and Roman control⁵⁸⁷.

We know very little about Gerasa's early history; the Hellenistic Gerasa grew around an old settlement on the so-called "Camp Hill", which was abandoned during the Iron Age⁵⁸⁸. At the time of Alexander's Successors, Gerasa initially belonged to the Ptolemies until the Seleucids captured it and refounded the city under the name "Antioch on Chrysorhoas" (the Golden River)⁵⁸⁹. During the collapse of the Seleucid Empire at the end of the 2nd century BC, Gerasa seems to have been under the influence of the local tyrant Theodorus of Philadelphia before it was conquered by Alexander Jannaeus after a long siege⁵⁹⁰. In 63 BC, Pompey freed Gerasa, which subsequently belonged to the geographical and administrative unit of the Decapolis within the province of Syria⁵⁹¹. Under the emperor Trajan in 106 AD, Gerasa was assigned to the province of Arabia⁵⁹².

III.2.1. Inscriptions of Egyptian gods in Gerasa

The majority of documents related to Egyptian worship in the Decapolis come mainly from Gerasa; two inscriptions prove the veneration of Serapis under the epithet "Zeus Helios Megas Serapis".

⁵⁸⁶ Kraeling, 1938, p. 27.

⁵⁸⁷ Eissfeldt, 1941, pp. 10-16; Lichtenberger, 2003, pp.191- 195.

⁵⁸⁸ Kraeling, 1938, p. 28; Eissfeldt, 1941, pp. 11-12; Lichtenberger, 2003, pp.191- 195.

⁵⁸⁹ Kraeling, 1938, p. 30; Eissfeldt, 1941, p. 10; Gatier, 1996, pp. 251- 259; Riedl, 2003, p.30; Lichtenberger, 2003, p.316; Schmid, 2008, pp. 355-356; Lichtenberger, Raja, 2015, pp.483- 500.

⁵⁹⁰ Kraeling, 1938, p. 33.

⁵⁹¹ Fink, 1933, pp.109-124; Kraeling, 1938, p. 34; Lichtenberger, 2003, pp.191- 195.

⁵⁹² Fink, 1933, p.109; Welles, 1938, pp.437- 438, no. 179; p.442, no. 191.

III.2.1.1. The first inscription

The first inscription, dating from 142-143 AD, was found broken into seven blocks scattered across the ancient Gerasa area. Currently, only four of the seven blocks are still visible. The inscription states: "*For the salvation of Emperors Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Pius Augustus and his sons, and for the concord and prosperity of the council and people of the glorious hometown. The statues of Zeus Helios Megas Serapis, Isis and Neotera of the Synnaoi Theoi, Malchus, son of Demetrios, and grandson of Malchus, were consecrated with their bases and pedestals as dedications to the glorious hometown, on the 22nd of Xandikos of the Year 205, when Malchus was the imperial priest for the first time and continued to do so happily, during the tenure of Aemilius Carus, legatus Augusti pro praetore*"⁵⁹³.

According to the inscription, the dedicant Malchus donated cult statues of these gods, along with *crepidoma* and bases, indicating a sanctuary or a shrine for the Egyptian gods that existed at least since 143 AD⁵⁹⁴. Lichtenberger stated that no specific local expression from the Gerasa context explained this inscription. The Alexandrian god Serapis was a supreme god who could merge with many other gods, and "Zeus Helios Megas Serapis" was one of his most common epithets throughout the Roman Empire. As a result, he excluded the existence of a separate sanctuary for the Egyptian gods in Gerasa⁵⁹⁵. On the contrary, Riedl assumed that the presence of the two dedications proved that the god Serapis had at least his own temple in Gerasa, albeit possibly connected with another sanctuary⁵⁹⁶. Weber emphasized that the statuary group mentioned in the inscription represented a cult image, which could indicate

⁵⁹³ ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας τῶν κυρίων Αὐτοκράτ[ορο]ς Καίσαρος Τ(ίτου) Αἰλίου [Α]δριανοῦ Αντωνεῖνου Εὐ[σ]εβοῦς Σεβαστ[οῦ] καὶ τέκνων αὐτοῦ καὶ ὁμονοίας καὶ ε[ὐ]δαιμονίας βουλῆς [κ]αὶ δήμου τῆς κυρίας πατ[ρ]ίδος, Διὸς Ἥλιου μεγάλου Σαράπιδος καὶ Ἴσιδος καὶ Νεωτέρας τ[ῶ]ν συννάων θεῶν Μάλχος Δημητρίου τοῦ Μάλχου τῆς κυρίας πατρίδι ἐξ ἐπαγγελίας αὐτοῦ τὰ ἀγάλματα ἀνέθηκεν σὺ[ν] κρηπειδώματ[ι] καὶ βάσεσιν αὐτῶν, ἔτους εσ' Ξαν[δ]ικοῦ βκ' ἀφιερωθέντα ἱερωμένου πρώτως καὶ π[ρο]βαίνοντος τοῦ Μάλχου ἐ[πὶ] Αἰμιλίου Κάρου πρεσβ[ευτοῦ] Σεβασ[τοῦ] ἀντι[στ]ρατή[γ]ου. McCown, 1931-1932, pp. 161-163; Welles, 1938, pp. 382- 383, no.15, Pl. 108; Vidman, SIRIS, no. 366; Dunand, 1973, pp. 133- 134; Bricault, 2001, p.76; Belayche, 2001, p. 158; Riedl, 2003, pp.217-218, GE. 116,135; Lichtenberger, 2003, p.227; Friedheim, 2006, p. 117; Bricault, RICIS, 404/ 0401; Vaelske, 2011, pp. 239- 241, Abb. d-13a. The inscription could have been a component of the podium under discussion, which likely comprised a stepped substructure (κρηπειδώμα) and individual statue bases or plinths (βάσεσιν). Neither (κρηπειδώμα) nor (βάσεσιν) are mentioned in inscriptions from Egypt; however, they are prevalent in Asia Minor and might have been incorporated from there into the Levantine inscriptions. Vaelske, 2011, p. 240.

⁵⁹⁴ Dunand, 1973, p. 134.

⁵⁹⁵ Lichtenberger, 2003, p.227.

⁵⁹⁶ Riedl, 2003, pp.217-218.

the existence of a dedicated temple to Serapis⁵⁹⁷. It is worth noting that Gerasa had two major sanctuaries—one dedicated to Olympian Zeus and the other to the goddess Artemis⁵⁹⁸. Therefore, it is possible that the Egyptian gods mentioned in the inscription had a particular structure or shrine inside the temple of Zeus in Gerasa.

Since the second century BC, there had been a connection between Serapis and Helios, giving the Egyptian-Hellenistic Serapis the attributes of the sun god. Many researchers have attempted to demonstrate that the nature of the Serapis-Helios association had its roots in ancient Egyptian theology⁵⁹⁹. This assimilation became widespread and attained general importance during the Roman period, as evidenced by numerous inscriptions and archaeological findings, including bronze and terracotta statuettes, Roman lamps, reliefs, and coins⁶⁰⁰. Several decorated lamp scenes from Alexandria depict a bust of Serapis in the front, bearded and mustached, with vertical locks of hair forming a fringe. He is dressed in a chiton and a himation folded over the left shoulder, and he is wearing the *kalathos*. On the left is the god Helios, in profile, beardless, with curly hair and a radiating head with four rays. He embraces Serapis and gives him a kiss on the cheek⁶⁰¹.

Some scholars compared this scene to a ritual from the Serapeum of Alexandria, as described by Rufinus of Aquileia in his Ecclesiastical History. This text was written shortly after the destruction of the temple and the cult statue of Serapis by the Christians, following the edict

⁵⁹⁷ Weber, 2009, p.94.

⁵⁹⁸ Seigne, 1997, pp. 993-1004; Riedl, 2003, pp. 161- 168, GE.143.

⁵⁹⁹ In several Egyptian documents, the god of the underworld Osiris was associated with the sun god Ra; for example, in the book of "Amduat", during the early 18th dynasty; it was found the idea of the union of Osiris with the sun, as they were connected by the same "*ba*". This connection was based on the concept of the passage of Ra through the empire of Osiris in the underworld at sunset, symbolizing the daily merging of Ra into Osiris and vice versa. Similarly, in the "book of Gates", during the Amarna period, Osiris played an essential role in assisting the sun god's reappearance each morning. In the "book of Caverns" in the Ramesside period, the great god leaves the underworld accompanied by both Osiris and Ra at the same time.

During the Hellenistic period, the Greeks associated their own deities with Egyptian gods. Helios, the Greek god of the sun, was associated with Ra, while Serapis represented the Hellenized form of Osiris. However, Tran Tam Tinh and Jentel indicated that this interpretation could be accepted in the case of the syncretism of Zeus/Jupiter, the god of heaven, with Helios and Serapis. It's important to note that Helios was not considered one of the supreme gods like the Egyptian god Ra, as well as Serapis was not only the god of the dead, but he had many other roles such as fertility, healing, and protection. The intervention of Zeus/Jupiter in this syncretism created a new combination in which Serapis plays the most significant role by unifying the power of Zeus and Helios, becoming a kosmocrator god. Weber, 1911, pp.8-10; Niwinski, 1987, pp.90-91; Hani, 1970, pp. 52-55; Stambaugh, 1972, pp. 80-81; Tran Tam Tinh, Jentel, 1993, pp.130-131, 147.

⁶⁰⁰ Stambaugh, 1972, pp. 80-81; Hornbostel, 1973, pp.23-24, fn. 3; Tran Tam Tinh, Jentel, 1993, pp.130-131.

⁶⁰¹ Tran Tam Tinh, Jentel, 1993, pp.131-142, 147, pls. 34-36.

prohibiting pagan worship in Egypt promulgated by Emperor Theodosius I in 391 AD⁶⁰². Rufinus described the visit of the sun's rays to Serapis as being celebrated in Alexandria on a certain day, before the flooding of the Nile and the beginning of the New Year. The temple of the Serapeum was oriented in such a way that at that specific moment of the year, a ray of sunlight passing through a small window in the temple's façade struck the head of the god, who was otherwise still in the dark, and landed on his lips. The god Serapis was then "awakened", having united with the Sun. Hani suggested that the meaning of such a rite is evident: it represented the revival of the statue and a *unio mystica* of Serapis with his father Helios, or, in terms of Egyptian theology, Osiris with Ra⁶⁰³. Furthermore, Tallet proposed that this depiction on the terracotta lamps was a Hellenized vision of the union of Osiris and Ra. Osiris was represented there in his Greek Alexandrian Serapis form, while Ra came to unite with him in the form of Helios⁶⁰⁴. This interpretation was supported by a passage from Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*, where Osiris is designated as "the one who hides in the arms of Helios"⁶⁰⁵.

In addition, Serapis was often depicted with attributes associated with Helios; for instance, a basalt disc, now preserved in the British Museum (**Fig. 85**), portrays a bust of Serapis adorned with the *kalathos* on its head. This bust is surrounded by six solar rays above the disc, and a seventh solar ray is partially visible, likely hidden behind the *kalathos*⁶⁰⁶. This process of solarization also impacted other deities linked to royal power in Egypt and throughout the Roman world, such as Horus and his youthful form Harpocrates⁶⁰⁷, the warrior god of Thracian origin Heron⁶⁰⁸, the crocodile Sobek⁶⁰⁹, and the sphinx Tutu⁶¹⁰.

⁶⁰² Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, XI, 23; Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 52; Dunand, 1990, p. 271, no. 361, pl. 124; Tran Tam Tinh, Jentel, 1993, pp.131-142, 147.

⁶⁰³ Hani, 1970, p. 53.

⁶⁰⁴ Tallet, 2011, pp. 231-236.

⁶⁰⁵ Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 52.

⁶⁰⁶ *Inv.*, No., 1929, 0419.1; Hornbostel, 1973, Abb.165a-b; Clerc, Leclant, LIMC VII, 1994, s.v. Sarapis, p. 687, no.212, pl. 516.

⁶⁰⁷ Bonner, 1950, p.150, 285, no. 192, pl. 9; El-Khachab, 1971, pp. 132-145; Dunand, 1990, pp. 95-96, no. 210.

⁶⁰⁸ Lefebvre, 1920, pp. 237-250; Roztovtzeff, 1933, p.508; Alston, 1995, p.138.

⁶⁰⁹ Kiss, LIMC VII, 1994, s.v. Souchos, p.802, nos.24-26; Dunand, 1979, p. 274, no.366, Pl.126; Kiss, 1986, p.338, n.32.

⁶¹⁰ Kaper, 2003, p.39, R-35, R-73, S-14, S-42.



Figure 85. A basalt disc of Serapis-Helios, the British Museum, Inv., No., 1929, 0419.1.

On the other hand, the association of Zeus-Serapis was still comparatively uncommon during the Hellenistic period, but this changed in Roman times⁶¹¹. Alexandrian bronze drachms from the time of Neron, in which Zeus and Serapis were regarded as the protective gods of the emperor, showed a pictorial amalgamation of the two gods. This relationship had already been firmly established since the reign of Vespasian⁶¹². Under the rule of the emperor Trajan and even more during the reign of Hadrian, the close association of Zeus Helios Serapis took on a definitive form with the appearance of the god "Zeus Helios Megas Serapis"⁶¹³. According to Tallet, this epithet seems to have been made in an Alexandrian environment⁶¹⁴. On the other hand, a Latin inscription from Phoinix, in Crete, dated to the reign of Trajan, which presents a *Latina interpretatio* of the god, in the form of the "Jupiter Sol Optimus Maximus Serapis"⁶¹⁵. The cult of this deity is well-attested in Alexandria, Canopus, and quickly spread even to the Eastern Desert, including Mons Claudianus and Mons Porphyrites⁶¹⁶. For example, a quadrangular block of black basalt dedicated to Zeus Helios Megas Serapis, discovered accidentally by Mohamed Elmaghrabi in Souq El-Hadara in Alexandria (ancient Eleusis), was

⁶¹¹ Stambaugh, 1972, pp. 83-84.

⁶¹² Hornbostel, 1973, p. 368-369; Bakhoun, 1999, p. 38.

⁶¹³ Riedl, 2003, p.217.

⁶¹⁴ Tallet, 2011, p. 237.

⁶¹⁵ Bricault, RICIS, 203/701; Tallet, 2020, vol. 1, pp.753-754.

⁶¹⁶ At the end of the reign of Trajan, Apollonius, son of Ammonios, an Alexandrian architect from the quarries of Mons Claudianus dedicated a granite altar to the god Zeus Helios Megas Serapis, attesting from that time to the presence of a cult from Serapis to Mons Claudianus and his rapprochement with Zeus Helios. I. Pan 38 = SB 5.8323; Bricault, 2005, pp. 243-254; Tallet, 2011, pp. 227-261.

made by Publius Iulius Pius, who was *centurio cohortis* and *Τριήραρχος* of a Liburnian ship⁶¹⁷.

Nevertheless, the cult was not exclusive to the roads of the Eastern Desert but also became prevalent in the major cities of the Nile Valley, such as Luxor, Antinopolis, and Akoris, where substantial garrisons were stationed⁶¹⁸. Tallet suggested that this particular form of the great god "Zeus Helios Megas Serapis" was elaborated to please the Roman garrison stationed in Nikopolis, located between Alexandria and Canopus⁶¹⁹. Legio XXII Deiotariana was stationed there until Hadrian, Legio III Cyrenaica from the time of Augustus to Trajan or Hadrian, and Legio II Traiana during Hadrian's reign. This could be seen as evidence of an official cult that originated at higher levels of the hierarchy and subsequently spread among the soldiers. The interaction between these cults wouldn't have been complicated, considering that the worship of Zeus and Helios was already prevalent within the army community.

According to Hornbostel, the first inscription from Gerasa represented the earliest evidence of the association of Serapis with Helios among other gods, under the title "Zeus Helios Megas Serapis"⁶²⁰. However, this association can be found earlier in Egypt⁶²¹. Many other inscriptions dedicated to the god "Zeus Helios Megas Serapis" were discovered outside Egypt, including in Mytilene, Ankyra, Adada, Rome, Praeneste, Ostia, Portus Ostia, and Leptis Magna⁶²². This god was often represented, especially in small bronze statuettes, such as the one preserved in the British Museum, depicting "Zeus Helios Megas Serapis" enthroned and radiating like Helios (**Fig. 86**)⁶²³. The raised left hand holds a scepter, and the lowered right

⁶¹⁷ Elmaghrabi, 2016, pp. 219-228.

⁶¹⁸ Bricault, 2005, p. 248; Tallet, 2011, pp. 227-261.

⁶¹⁹ Bricault, 2005, pp. 243-254; Tallet, 2011, p. 242; Tallet, 2020, pp. 762-763.

⁶²⁰ Hornbostel, 1973, pp. 23 – 24, no. 3.

⁶²¹ Tran Tam Tinh, Jentel, 1993, p. 129.

⁶²² Mytilene: Bricault, RICIS, 205/0304; Ankyra: RICIS, 311/0102-03; Adada: RICIS, 312/0601; Rome: RICIS, 501/0107, 501/0118, 501/0120, 501/0126, 501/0142, 501/0144, 501/0145; Praeneste: RICIS, 503/0601 11571 ; Ostia: RICIS 503/1133; Portus Ostiae: RICIS 503/3201, 503/1205, 503/1206 , 503/1211, 503/1214 ; Leptis Magna: RICIS, 702/0103, 702/0106, 702/0107, 702/0109-0112; Bricault, 2005, p. 248.

⁶²³ It was purchased from Hamilton in 1772; it is dated to the Hadrian period or the Antonine period (Kater-Sibbes, 1973, p. 186, no. 948; Tallet, 2011, pp. 238-239, fig. 3; Tallet, 2020, vol. 1, pp. 756-757, II, p.970, 1083, no. B2.2). Another bronze statuette coming from the region of Alexandria, preserved in the Louvre Museum, inv. no. 5401, represents Serapis enthroned. His left hand held a spear, with only the upper part preserved, while his right hand was probably resting on Kerberos but is now missing. The god is dressed in the chiton and the himation, wearing the kalathos, and radiating six rays. The statuette seems to refer to the canonical representation of the god of Alexandria. Based on stylistic criteria, Hornbostel suggests dating this object to the

hand was originally placed above the dog Kerberos, although the animal is now missing⁶²⁴. On the other side of the throne, the attribute of Zeus, the eagle with outstretched wings, is depicted⁶²⁵.



Figure 86. A bronze figurine of Zeus Helios Megas Serapis, British Museum, Inv. No., GRA 1772, 0302.172.

The identity of Neotera "the younger", mentioned in the inscription of Gerasa, remains a matter of speculation. Nonetheless, the epithet "Neotera" seems associated with several deities such as Isis, Kore/Persephone, Hathor-Aphrodite, and Nephtys⁶²⁶. A stela dating back to 98 AD, discovered in the enclosure of the great temple of Dendera, is addressed to the goddess Aphrodite-Hathor under the epithet "Neotera Thea"⁶²⁷. Additionally, a papyrus from Oxyrhynchus dating from 213-217 AD mentioned at least one place of worship for Neotera

time of Hadrian (Hornbostel, 1973, p. 463, Pl. XCV, fig. 162; Tallet, 2011, p. 238, fig. 2). A red jasper, preserved in Cambridge, is decorated with an eagle carrying the bust of Serapis, haloed by the solar rays of Helios, and accompanied by the "henotheistic" acclamation *EIC ZEUS CAPAIIIC* (Zeus Serapis). The god is designated there as a true pantheistic deity, as the incarnation of the divine power "one and all" (Veymiers, 2003, p. 272, fig. 23).

⁶²⁴ Hani mentioned that the three heads of Kerberos represented respectively the past, the present, and the future, symbolizing time, which harmonized perfectly with the fact that Serapis was associated with the Sun. Hani, 1970, p. 52-53.

⁶²⁵ The eagle appeared in association with Serapis on coins at the end of Hadrian's reign, in which a bust of Serapis, his head turned to the left, is placed above an eagle with outstretched wings. Bakhoun, 1999, p.47; Tallet, Zivie-Coche, 2012, p. 448, fig. 26.3.

⁶²⁶ SB 833 I; McCown, 1931-1932, pp. 161-163; Nock, 1953, pp. 283-296; Moretti, 1958, pp.199 – 209; Malaise, 2007, pp. 25-26; Belayche, 2007, p.450; Concannon, 2017, p.168, fn. 44-45.

⁶²⁷ Veymier, 2014, p.49.

and described votive offerings that included the portrait of the imperial family and some representations of the goddess⁶²⁸. There is also a small gem made of green and red-brown jasper (**Fig. 87**), formerly owned by Henri Seyrig before entering the collections of the Cabinet des Médailles de Paris, which associates the goddess called 'Neotera' with Egyptian gods. On one side of the gem, Serapis is mentioned as "Great is the name of Lord Serapis", accompanied by a lunar crescent, while the other bears the inscription "Great is the fortune of Neotera, the invincible", followed by a star, but the real identity of the goddess remains unknown⁶²⁹. In later testimony, Athanasius of Alexandria (4th century AD) railed against the pagans, mentioning "Isis, Kore, and Neotera among the Egyptians, and Aphrodite among other people"⁶³⁰. Neotera was frequently associated with members of the Isiac family⁶³¹. Hence, the inscription from Gerasa was not an isolated example. Furthermore, the epithet "Neotera" appeared on some coins of Cleopatra VII, especially in some of her coins minted in 36 BC in Phoenicia, Cyrenaica, and Chalcis⁶³², as well as an inscription from Cyprus⁶³³. The epithet "Neotera" was also found in Egypt related to Cleopatra VII; a papyrus from Herakleopolis dated 35 BC showed Cleopatra VII as "Neotera"⁶³⁴.



Figure 87. A jasper gem, collections of the Cabinet des Médailles de Paris.

Abel suggested that "Neotera" could also refer to Faustina, *i.e.*, the wife of Antoninus Pius, who died in 140 AD⁶³⁵. Although there was no evidence to support the connection between

⁶²⁸ P.OXY., XII, no. 1449.

⁶²⁹ Bonner, Nock, 1948, pp. 213-215; Veymier, 2014, p. 46, fig.22.

⁶³⁰ Athanasius, *contra gentes*, 10.

⁶³¹ Nock, 1953, p. 284.

⁶³² Nock, 1953, p. 286; Muccioli, 2004, pp. 105- 114.

⁶³³ Muccioli, 2004, pp.106- 108.

⁶³⁴ BGU XIV 2376, II, 1, 20.

⁶³⁵ Abel, 1927, p. 254; McCown, 1931-1932, p. 162.

Neotera and Faustina in Gerasa, Riedl pointed out that Abel's assumption was based mainly on the date of the temple's dedication, which occurred a few years after the death of Faustina⁶³⁶. Meanwhile, Moretti proposed that Neotera was an independent goddess who represented the *interpretatio Graeca* of the Egyptian goddess Nephthys, the younger sister of Isis⁶³⁷, known to accompany Isis in the festivals which commemorated the death of Osiris. Riedl mentioned that in the inscription of Gerasa, Serapis was explicitly characterized as a sun deity with the Helios epithet. In Egyptian mythology, both Isis and Nephthys were closely related to the sun god Ra. Therefore, the consecration of the Gerasene temple to the three Egyptian deities could be traced back to the continued existence of this idea⁶³⁸. However, Nephthys did not belong to the circle of Serapis, and her funerary character in the first place did not fit the Malchus inscription⁶³⁹. In addition, an inscription from the area of Beirut, Deir el-Qal'a, applies to "Neotera-Hera", who, due to the context, was addressed as the daughter of the gods Zeus-Baal and Hera-Juno, which could result in an identification of Hathor-Aphrodite of Byblos⁶⁴⁰. Lichtenberger concluded that the cults of Serapis and Isis arrived in Gerasa through the Phoenician coast⁶⁴¹.

It is worth noting that the epithet "Neotera" was associated with the goddess Kore in three inscriptions from Eleusis, one dating back to the end of the 4th BC, and the others from the imperial period⁶⁴². Furthermore, a dedication on a mosaic mentioning "Neotera" decorated the temple floor in the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore on the northern slope of Acrocorinth, dating to the end of the second or the beginning of the third century AD⁶⁴³. Therefore, it seems likely that the goddess Kore is presented here in the inscription of Gerasa, where a

⁶³⁶ Riedl, 2003, p. 206.

⁶³⁷ Moretti, 1958, p.199 – 209. Two other inscriptions mentioning Neotera are listed by Malaise in Rome and Sicily. Malaise also seems to agree with the hypothesis that identifies Neotera and Nephthys. Malaise, 1972, p. 144, no. 109; 318, no.1.

⁶³⁸ Riedl, 2003, p. 206, GE. 116.

⁶³⁹ Belayche, 2007, p. 450.

⁶⁴⁰ Vaelske agreed with Milik in identifying Neotera in Gerasa with Aphrodite-Hathor, but as an Egyptian deity and an equivalent to Isis, not from Byblos. Milik, 1972, p. 411-420; Vaelske, 2011, pp.248-252.

⁶⁴¹ Lichtenberger, 2003, pp. 227- 228.

⁶⁴² Veymier, 2014, p.48.

⁶⁴³ Veymier, 2014, p.48.

dedication from the second century AD that mentions Kore was discovered (a father and his two sons serve as "archibomistai", *i.e.*, responsible for the altars of Apollo and Kore)⁶⁴⁴.

III.2.1.2. The second inscription

The second inscription mentioning "Zeus Helios Megas Serapis" is written on a cylindrical base found near the east thermal baths in Gerasa and dated to the 2nd-3rd centuries AD. The inscription reads as follows: "*Augas, son of Malchion, set up the statuette for Zeus Helios Megas Serapis on the basis of a vow*"⁶⁴⁵.

This inscription and expression bear similarities with an epigraph found in the small Sarapieion of Luxor. In that inscription, the dedicant Gaius Julius Antoninus, who served as a *neokoros* (temple attendant) of Serapis, rebuilt the small temple at his own expense and consecrated a statue of the god "Zeus Helios Megas Serapis", as a result of a vow⁶⁴⁶. The Luxor inscription is dated to the year 10 of Hadrian, January 24, 126 AD, the day of the emperor's birthday⁶⁴⁷. Bianchi suggested that based on the sculptures discovered in the Temple of Luxor during the excavations of 1950-1951, there was a shrine dedicated to Egyptian deities⁶⁴⁸. As in the case of the shrine of Tyche at San Martino ai Monti near Rome, which dates to the Antonine period, the principal statue of Tyche inside the shrine was accompanied by images of gods, including Serapis⁶⁴⁹. It is plausible that the dedicant of Gerasa Augas built a small temple or a shrine for the god "Zeus Helios Megas Serapis", although there is no concrete evidence to support this hypothesis.

Due to the agreement between the two inscriptions concerning the deity in question, one could consider a form of cult continuity for Gerasa. However, when examining the differences in

⁶⁴⁴ Ovadiah, Mucznik, 2012, p.518.

⁶⁴⁵ Διὸς Ἡλίου με[γάλω] Σαράπιδι Ἀύγᾶς Μαλχίωνος εὐξά-μενος τὸ ζῆλον ἀνέθηκεν. It is preserved in the Museum of Jerash, Inv. No., 24. Welles, 1938, p. 383, no. 16, Pl. 124a; Vidman, SIRIS, no. 367; Dunand, 1973, p.134; Bricault, 2001, p.76; Riedl, 2003, pp.217-218, GE. 136; Bricault, RICIS, 404/ 0402.

⁶⁴⁶ Golvin, et al., 1981, pp.115-148.

⁶⁴⁷ The Sarapieion of Ostia was similarly dedicated on January 24 in the year 127 AD; the dedication is addressed to Serapis. However, "Zeus Helios Megas Serapis" is attested in Ostia from the 3rd AD and at Portus Ostiae from the 2nd AD. Kater-Sibbes, 1973, pp. 22-23, no.122; Hornbostel, 1973, p. 75, pl. XII, fig.14; Tallet, 2020, pp. 767-770.

⁶⁴⁸ Bianchi, 2007, pp. 476-477.

⁶⁴⁹ Bianchi, 2007, pp. 478-480, fig. 1.

motif information, one should also entertain further development: Augas's inscription clearly pertains to a statue dedicated to the god. Consequently, the person making the dedication would be alluding to a cult of gods that has now been established in Gerasa, to which he aligns himself as a devout private citizen. In contrast, with Malchus, the initial focus appears to be on the official framework of the cult of the gods, which may have been introduced only a short while earlier. Unlike Augas, Malchus does not emphasize the intimate relationship between God and the believer; instead, he emphasizes the hometown as the actual beneficiary of the monument.

Another inscription was discovered near the cathedral of Gerasa, dedicated by members of Legio III Cyrenaica to the θεὸς πατρώος, the "Ancestral god"⁶⁵⁰. Eissfeldt suspected that θεὸς πατρώος referred to the Arabian god "Theos Arabios", as some inscriptions dedicated to the Arabian god were found in the same region⁶⁵¹. Nevertheless, the identity of the Arabian god mentioned in the inscriptions is still a subject of debate⁶⁵². Riedl indicated that the "Ancestral god" is more likely to be Zeus-Ammon, the patron god of Legio III Cyrenaica, as the epithet πατρώος has been documented in reference to Zeus-Ammon several times⁶⁵³. The cult of Zeus-Ammon was established when Provincia Arabia was founded in the new capital of Bostra in 106 AD, as the Legio III Cyrenaica was stationed there. It is more likely that the members of this legion donated their dedication to Zeus-Ammon in the sanctuary of the Arabian god, which may have been located in the cathedral area⁶⁵⁴.

⁶⁵⁰ Welles, 1938, p.386, no. 23; p. 450, nos. 211, 213; Sourdél, 1952, p. 92.

⁶⁵¹ Eissfeldt, 1941, p. 23.

⁶⁵² Riedl also agreed with Eissfeldt that the Arabian god is a Nabatean god. There was a lively economic and cultural exchange between Nabataea and Gerasa, at least until their incorporation into the Roman Empire in 106 AD. This suggests that the cult influences also streamed from there to Gerasa. The best-known Nabatean god is Dushara. Eissfeldt, 1941, pp.23- 24; Riedl, 2003, pp. 185- 187.

⁶⁵³ Riedl, 2003, pp.177-178, GE.1; Lichtenberger, 2003, p. 232.

⁶⁵⁴ The Legio III Cyrenaica had been stationed in Alexandria since the time of Augustus. They supported Titus during the siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD and also participated in Hadrian's Jewish War. Later, under Trajan, they settled in the newly established province of Arabia, specifically in the provincial capital Bostra. Bricault, SNRIS, p.166, fn.468.

III.2.2. The archaeological evidence of Egyptian gods in Gerasa

III.2.2. 1. Serapis and Serapis-Ammon

A bronze statuette found in Gerasa represents the god Serapis (**Fig. 88a-b**). The god is depicted sitting upright, with his gaze directed slightly to the right. The right arm is lowered, and its function is not clear, while the left arm is raised, holding a scepter, but it is now missing. The right foot is advanced, and the left is drawn back. Both feet rest on a box-like footstool. The god wears a short-sleeved chiton and a wide cloak that wraps around the thighs in front and diagonally across the back, extending to the left shoulder in the back. He is depicted with a full beard and long hair curls, reaching down from the crown of hair to the shoulders. He wears the *kalathos*, but its precise shape can no longer be recognizable. The figurine seems to follow the well-known type of Serapis sitting on the throne. The position of the right hand- now lost- remembers the attitude of other similar statuettes, where the god is depicted while touching the head of the dog Kerberos, maybe here lost as well as the throne on which Serapis was sitting on⁶⁵⁵.



Figure 88a-b. a. A bronze statuette of Serapis, Gerasa, the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, Amman, Inv. No. G.139, H. 9.3 cm, W. 4cm. b. drawing by Abd El-Halim.

⁶⁵⁵ According to the inventory book, the statuette was donated to the museum in 1986 and came from Gerasa/Jerash. Its height 9.3cm, width 4cm. Vaelske, 2011, pp. 226- 227, no. D1, Abb.d-1a, b.

Another depiction of Serapis in Gerasa can be observed in a terracotta medallion (**Fig. 89**). This medallion portrays the bearded bust of Serapis, adorned with the *kalathos*. A tightly gathered cloak drapes over the left shoulder, revealing the V-shaped folds of a tunic below the neck. At shoulder height, two suspension or attachment holes are prominently featured⁶⁵⁶. It is worth noting that circular terracotta plaques depicting Serapis were notably found in Egypt during the Roman period. For example, an early Imperial tondo in Hamburg is a remarkable example⁶⁵⁷. Additionally, two terracotta medallions with the bust of Serapis originated in Alexandria⁶⁵⁸. The bust displays the characteristic raised left shoulder and lowered right shoulder, supported by the globe of the world. Serapis is depicted wearing a *kalathos*. In addition to these, there is a round, golden pendant with the same motif from Egypt, which is currently preserved in Baltimore⁶⁵⁹.



Figure 89. A terracotta medallion of Serapis, Gerasa, Jordan Archaeological Museum, Inv. No. 2364/38.1813.

Moreover, two objects attesting to the god Serapis associated with Ammon come from Gerasa. The first object is a small limestone head found in a pottery storeroom (**Fig. 90**); despite its bad condition, the subject can be easily identified as Serapis-Zeus-Ammon. The head had a relatively straight break in the base of the neck, except for the chin area to the lower lip. Unfortunately, the entire face, including the skullcap, was destroyed⁶⁶⁰. However,

⁶⁵⁶ Lichtenberger, 2003, p. 232; Riedl, 2003, pp. 178, 408, no. GE 3.

⁶⁵⁷ Inv. No.1962.125. Diam.: 0.14 m. Hornbostel, 1973, p. 210, Abb. 148.

⁶⁵⁸ Breccia, 1934, pl. 41, nos. 202, 203.

⁶⁵⁹ Schulz, Seidel, 2009, pp. 164-165., no. 68.

⁶⁶⁰ Weber, 2002, pp. 500- 501, no. C 48, Taf. 140 B-D; Lichtenberger, 2003, p. 232; Riedl, 2003, p. 407, GE. 2.

traces of hair design can still be seen on the beard and the back of the head; the individual curls are clearly separated, and the strands are divided by incised lines. The upper lip was covered by a mustache, and the beard was split into two strands. While the beard shape is characteristic of Serapis depictions, the twisted ram's horn reproduced in the temple area represented an iconographic reference to the god Ammon⁶⁶¹. The presence of a round recess at the top of the head suggests that it was likely used to attach a *kalathos* made of a different material, commonly observed in Serapis depictions. The dating of the head remains uncertain, but researchers believe the piece dates from the 2nd century AD to the early 3rd century AD, a time in which many repetitions of the classic Ammon portrait can be dated⁶⁶².



Figure 90. A limestone head of Serapis-Zeus-Ammon, Gerasa, the Department of Antiquities, Inv. No. Magazin im Artemision, 1990, H 9.7 cm.

The second object is a lamp decorated with an image of a bust of Serapis-Ammon, found in pottery debris in Gerasa (**Fig. 91a-b**). The central disc of the lamp is decorated with an animal standing facing to the left and flanked by a palm branch. Above the animal, a bust of Serapis-Ammon is depicted, recognizable by his *kalathos* and the ram's horns on his temples. The god's face, also facing to the left, is shown in complete profile, while the shoulders appear to be in a three-quarter view. The head and *kalathos* protrude beyond the edge of the disc onto

⁶⁶¹ Scholars believe that Ammon may have been related to Baal Hammon, a god worshiped by Semitic peoples such as the Phoenicians and Carthaginians; however, this connection has not been conclusively proven. The cult of Ammon was eventually assimilated by the Egyptians, who associated Ammon with their supreme god, Amun. Stambaugh, 1972, pp. 79-82.

⁶⁶² Weber, 2002, pp. 196, 500-501; Riedl, 2003, p. 407.

the shoulder of the lamp⁶⁶³. Vaelske suggested that the depicted animal on the lamp is more likely a billy goat than a ram due to the shape of the horns. He added that the lamp was a local object made in a workshop in Gerasa, and the craftsmen and clients most likely wanted a representation based directly on the Alexandrian type, but for some inexplicable reason, perhaps they did not have an artistic model of a ram⁶⁶⁴.

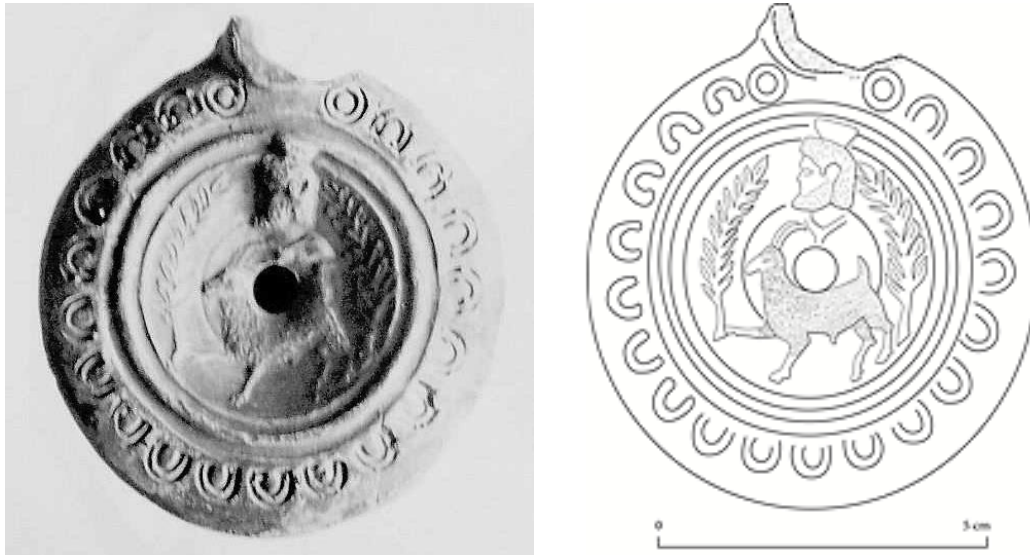


Figure 91 a-b. a. A terracotta lamp of Serapis-Ammon, Gerasa, Jordan Archaeological Museum, Amman (formerly Jerusalem, Rockefeller Archaeological Museum 38.1769). b. Drawing by Abd El-Halim.

This decoration was unusual, and no direct parallel showing a profile view of the Serapis-Ammon bust can be found on the lamps. The god Serapis's association with the ram (the animal sacred to Ammon) was well attested on the Alexandrian coin issues between the 20th year of Hadrian and the 24th year of Antoninus Pius, where a bust of the god is represented over the animal (**Fig. 92**). Therefore, it seems very probable that the strange relief on the lamp of Gerasa was inspired by the Alexandrian coins⁶⁶⁵.



Figure 92. Alexandrian coin of Antoninus Pius, Hornbostel, 1973, p. 300, fig. 313.

⁶⁶³ Rosenthal-Heginbottom, 1981, p. 100, Taf. 16; Lichtenberger, 2003, p. 232; Riedl, 2003, pp. 178, 408, GE. 4.

⁶⁶⁴ Vaelske, 2011, pp. 229-230.

⁶⁶⁵ Hornbostel, 1973, p. 300, figs. 313-314.

Serapis had been associated with Ammon and Zeus since the Hellenistic period⁶⁶⁶. Herodotus mentioned that Ammon was the Egyptian name for Zeus⁶⁶⁷. Accordingly, it was normal to associate Zeus-Serapis with Ammon. In a hymn to Anubis from cius in Bithynia, Asia Minor, Zeus, Ammon, Osiris, and Serapis were all identified as the same god⁶⁶⁸. As already mentioned, Zeus-Ammon was the tutelary god of the Legio III Cyrenaica, which was stationed in Bostra and established a sanctuary of Zeus-Ammon in the city, as attested by numerous documents⁶⁶⁹. The cult of Serapis also found its way into the region through the members of the legion, as shown by private letters from a soldier to his parents at home in Egypt, in which his close relationship with Serapis is expressed. The first letter, he sent from Petra to his father in Karanis on March 26, 107, reads: “*Serapis has so far guided the scribe Iulius Apollinarius safely and protected him from hardship*”⁶⁷⁰. The second letter, sent from Bostra to his mother on February 19/20, 108, states: “*Thanks to Serapis and Agathe Tyche, I have been spared the hard work of breaking stones*”⁶⁷¹.

Additionally, among the coins minted locally by the city of Bostra, five issues feature reverse images depicting Serapis-Zeus-Ammon; four date from the reign of Traianus Decius. Another emission from Bostra under Elagabalus showed on the reverse that the god was standing inside a temple with a podium, his face turned to the left, wearing the *kalathos*, and dressed in a short chiton and himation, holding a *phiale* in his right hand and a long scepter in the left. A small animal, possibly a small ram, was depicted to the left of his feet⁶⁷². He also appeared as a bust on the reverse of a coin of Philip Arab, on which the draped and cuirassed god, wearing

⁶⁶⁶ Stambaugh, 1972, pp. 83-84, 85.

⁶⁶⁷ Herodotus, II, 42, 5.

⁶⁶⁸ Stambaugh, 1972, p. 85.

⁶⁶⁹ Several testimonies of the cult of Ammon were found in Bostra, for example, a fragmentary inscription relating the destruction of a sanctuary of Ammon by the Palmyrenes: “*templum Iovis Hammo[nis dirutum a Pal]myrenis hostibu[s...] quem refecit cum statua argentea et ostea ferrea*”. Another inscription was discovered in the theater of Bostra; it is a dedication due to a Roman officer: “*Io[vi] O[ptimo] Max[imo] / Genio \ sancto / Harmoni / Ulp[io] / Tauri-nus / cornicul[arius] / leg[ionis] | votum solvi(t)*”. The god receives here the Latin qualifiers of Genius sanctus. There is also a basalt relief from Bostra representing Zeus-Ammon. Sourdel, 1952, pp.89-92; Kindler, 1983, pp. 61-63; Weber, 2007, fig. 3; Bricault, SNRIS, pp. 166-167.

⁶⁷⁰ P. Mich. 8. 466 = CPJ. 3. 486b.

⁶⁷¹ P. Mich. 8. 465 = CPJ. 3. 486a.

⁶⁷² The figure was partly interpreted as the native god Dushara, as there are no ram's horns visible on the temples of the god, and the iconography and motif of the figure closely correspond to the typical depictions of the standing Serapis. However, the figure itself lacks a reference to Zeus-Ammon. Sourdel, 1952, p.90; Kindler, 1983, p. 62-63, no.32; Bricault, SNRIS, p. 167, fig. Bostra 2.

the *kalathos* and girded with the ribbon, appeared with the ram's horn on his temple⁶⁷³. Kindler stated in his study of the Bostra coinage that the god on the coins of Bostra should be understood as the emblem of the Legio III Cyrenaica⁶⁷⁴.

The armies were a powerful vehicle for the spread of the Egyptian gods in the Levant, as the legions of the East had been stationed in Egypt. A Greek inscription from Phaena, on the road from Bostra to Damascus, documents that a statue of Isis was consecrated by a centurion of the XVI legion Flavia Firma, during the voyage of Marcus Aurelius and his colleague during the Mesopotamian campaign of 165/166. She had no particular connection with war or victory; she is honored here for beneficially patronizing all areas⁶⁷⁵. Isis had indeed become, in the middle of the second century, one of the principal deities presiding over the fate of the Empire and her cult, celebrated with magnificence by the emperors, had been adopted by imperial legates and army officers.

III.2.2.2. Female (Egyptian) goddess

A marble statue larger than life-size found in Gerasa is now preserved in front of the Archaeological Museum of the University of Jordan, Amman (**Fig. 93**). It represents a standing female figure wearing a peplos and a himation wrapped tightly around the body. Part of the cloak is pulled over the head as a veil; underneath is a *Stephane*. Despite the severe damage to the face, it is clear that it is not a portrait but rather an idealized representation. The hair is parted in the middle and pulled backward in curly strands, and the twisted curls fall onto the shoulders. Weber reconstructed two breakpoints above the forehead, forming small horns, which make a designation as Selene, and another breakpoint at the top of the head as a remnant of a *kalathos*. He then concluded that the statue depicted the goddess Isis-Selene⁶⁷⁶. However, the himation pulled over the figure's head, and the *stephane* is a typical feature that characterizes Demeter⁶⁷⁷, so Reidl suggested that the figure represented Isis-Demeter⁶⁷⁸.

⁶⁷³ Kindler, 1983, pp. 62-63; Bricault, SNRIS, p. 167, fig. Bostra 4.

⁶⁷⁴ Kindler, 1983, pp. 61-63.

⁶⁷⁵ Bricault, RICIS, 402/0901: Belayche, 2007, p.450.

⁶⁷⁶ Weber, 2002, p. 486, no. C4, Taf. 123D-E; 124A-D.

⁶⁷⁷ Herrmann, 1999, pp. 65- 123; Riedl, 2003, pp. 206-208, GE. 117.

⁶⁷⁸ Riedl, 2003, pp. 207-208.



Figure 93. A marble statue from Gerasa, the Archaeological Museum of the University of Jordan, Amman, Inv. No. 967.

We have to point out that Selene is usually characterized by a crescent moon; however, the small horns were more often an iconographic feature of Isis identified with Io⁶⁷⁹, daughter of Inachus and priestess of Hera in Argos⁶⁸⁰. The relationship between Io and Isis is expressed in iconography; for instance, two paintings from Pompeii, one adorning the Ekklesiasterion of Iseum and the other the House of the Duke of Aumale, illustrate the reception of Io by Isis at Canopus⁶⁸¹. This scene evokes a passage from the Oxyrhynchus papyrus 1380 specifying that in Canopus, "*at Meniouis, Isis is seated in front of Io*"⁶⁸².

⁶⁷⁹ Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, nos. 267- 268.

⁶⁸⁰ The young woman Io was one of Zeus' many mistresses, becoming a target of Hera's jealousy. She is changed into a heifer and entrusted to the care of the hundred-eyed Argus, "the one who sees everything," to watch her. Zeus then ordered Hermes to kill the guardian, who was asleep, before cutting his head off. In revenge for the death of Argus, Hera sent a horsefly to Io to sting her relentlessly. The heifer fled and traveled through many countries before arriving in Egypt, where she was welcomed by the goddess Isis, took on human form, and gave birth to Epaphus. When focusing on Egypt, it becomes evident that the cow held a position of great reverence since ancient times. Among the most notable cow deities was Hathor, whose cult dates back to ancient times. Aeschylus, *Suppliants*, 291-315, 561-900; Hicks, 1962, pp. 93-97; Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, pp. 781-782; Veymiers, 2011, pp.111-129; Swetnam-Burland, 2015, pp.125- 137.

⁶⁸¹ Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, pp. 781-782, nos. 265-266; Swetnam-Burland, 2015, p. 129, fig. 3.11.

⁶⁸² P. Oxy., 1380, l. 63-65.



Figure 94.A marble head of Isis-Io, Louvre Museum, Inv. No., MA 223.

Figure 95.A marble head of Isis-Io, Kunsthistorisches Museum, I 625.

After that, Isis ends up being assimilated with Io; other representations of her include a marble head from the 2nd century AD (**Fig. 94**), showing the goddess provided with Libyan curls, small horns, and a diadem adorned with an uraeus between a lunar crescent, which clearly conveys the assimilation between Isis and Io⁶⁸³. Another small marble head from Patras associates the same horns with the remains of a *kalathos*, a lunar crescent, and a diadem⁶⁸⁴. There is also a marble head from Aquileia (**Fig. 95**); she wears a veil surmounted by *kalathos* with the crescent moon and horns emerging from the forehead⁶⁸⁵. Herrmann identified these marble heads as the goddess Demeter-Hera-Isis-Selene⁶⁸⁶. The lack of attributes in the statue of Gerasa prevents it from being clearly identified, even if it is assigned to the Egyptian art center in Alexandria. Perhaps the figure is reconstituting the identification noted by Diodorus between Isis-Io, Demeter, Selene, and Hera⁶⁸⁷.

⁶⁸³Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, p. 782, no. 268; Herrmann, 1999, pp.79-80, 94, fig. 30.

⁶⁸⁴Herrmann, 1999, pp.75, 113, no. 4, fig. 4.

⁶⁸⁵Herrmann, 1999, pp. 68, 113, no. 3, fig. 3.

⁶⁸⁶Herrmann, 1999, pp. 94, 113.

⁶⁸⁷For the same goddess is called by some Isis, by others Demeter, by others Thesmophorus, by others Selene, and by others Hera, while still others apply to her all these names. Diodorus, 1.25.1; Veymiers, 2011, p.112.

III.2.2.3. Isis-Tyche

In Gerasa, a tomb from the end of the 2nd century AD yielded a remarkable terracotta figurine of Isis adorned with attributes associated with the goddess Tyche (**Fig. 96**). The figurine stands on a hexagonal base and is clad in a long tunic and cloak tightly fastened between her breasts. The presence of the *kalathos*, the knot between the breasts, and the inclusion of Tyche's characteristics, such as the *cornucopia*—a significant emblem symbolizing her role as a goddess of fortune—and the rudder, identify the female figure as the goddess Isis-Tyche⁶⁸⁸. Notably, this figurine offers an example of Isis depicted solely wearing the *kalathos*.



Figure 96. A terracotta statuette of Isis-Tyche, Gerasa, Jordan Archaeological Museum, Amman, Inv. No., J. 15506.

Lichtenberger suggests that the statuette is more aligned with the concept of a personal Tyche than with the general tutelary goddess of the city. It emphasizes an individualized aspect of

⁶⁸⁸ Seigne, Rasson, Montlivault, 1987, p. 291, no. 279; Lichtenberger, 2003, pp. 208-209; Riedl, 2003, pp. 208-209, GE. 118. Some researcher mentioned that she wears the mural crown.

Tyche's influence⁶⁸⁹. Furthermore, Riedl noted that the terracotta figurine not only signifies the worship of the goddess in the private sphere but also reflects the belief in Isis as the protector of the deceased. The presence of this figurine suggests the hope placed in Isis's divine protection to ensure a blissful existence in the afterlife⁶⁹⁰.

III.2.2.4. Egyptian god-children: Harpocrates or Khonsu

Harpocrates is also depicted in two examples found in Gerasa. The first object is a bronze statuette representing the god in Egyptian style (**Fig. 97**). The figurine is depicted seated and naked with his left arm resting beside his body, while the right hand is raised with the index finger touching his mouth. The statuette prominently displays the childhood lock of hair on the right side, adorned with the *hem-hem* crown, and a cobra *uraeus* stands on the forehead⁶⁹¹. The *hemhem* consists of three bundles of reeds, each surmounted by a sun disc, erected on the twisted horns of a ram and flanked on either side by an ostrich feather and a *uraeus*⁶⁹². According to its features, this statuette can be dated to the Late Egyptian Dynasties as well as the Hellenistic Period. It is possible that it was brought to Palestine or Transjordan during the Greco-Roman period. It is noteworthy to mention that the identification of this statuette with Harpocrates is uncertain, as the child-god Khonsu, the moon deity and one of the most important gods of the Egyptian city of Heracleion, bears the same crown and attitude. Therefore, the statuette could potentially represent either Harpocrates or Khonsu⁶⁹³.



Figure 97. A bronze statuette of Harpocrates or Khonsu, Gerasa.

⁶⁸⁹ Lichtenberger, 2003, pp. 208-209.

⁶⁹⁰ Riedl, 2003, pp. 208-209.

⁶⁹¹ Podvin, 2011, pp. 314- 315, fig.8.

⁶⁹² Goddio, 2007, p. 120.

⁶⁹³ The name "hem-hem," which means "the roaring," is associated with the purpose of the figure wearing it, which is to instill fear in the enemy. Such crowns are frequently worn by child gods and divine heirs in their role of combating evil. Specifically, the god Khonsu, who was assimilated to Herakles by the Greeks, is often depicted wearing this type of crown. Goddio, 2007, p. 120.

Khonsu was often depicted as a young man or child wearing a crown with a crescent moon and a full moon disk. He was associated with fertility, growth, and the rejuvenating power of the moon's cycles. The worship of Khonsu was particularly prominent during the New Kingdom period, and he had several temples dedicated to him, including the notable Khonsu temple within the precincts of the Karnak Temple complex in Thebes⁶⁹⁴. In addition to his lunar associations, Khonsu was also believed to have the ability to ward off evil spirits, cure diseases, and ensure the well-being of individuals. He was frequently invoked in prayers and rituals for healing and protection.

The second object referring to a child-god is a terracotta lamp with no certain provenance. The piece appeared recently in the market of antiquities in the Barakat Gallery (**Fig. 98**); according to the present owner, the lamp is said to come from Gerasa, although there is no proof of it. The terracotta represents a young god, who could be identified with Harpocrates. He is depicted naked, his arms beside his body, wearing bracelets at the ankles, and his head adorned with the double crown⁶⁹⁵.



Figure 98. An oil lamp of Harpocrates, Gerasa, Barakat Gallery, L0249, H. 20. 3 cm.

⁶⁹⁴ Metwally et al., 2022, pp. 4-6.

⁶⁹⁵ <http://www.barakatgallery.com/store/Index.cfm/FuseAction/ItemDetails/UserID/0/TopMenuID/5/ItemID/5163.htm>; Podvin, 2011, p. 261, pl.64, 2; Podvin, 2016, p.315, fig.10.

There are very few Isiac lamps; only two examples are in terracotta, which incidentally do not concern Harpocrates but Osiris. The first example is from Alexandria and is preserved in the Greco-Roman Museum of Alexandria. Gallo mentioned that the lamp most likely comes from the excavations carried out by H. Riad in Tabiet Saleh-Gabbari, but the exact context of its discovery is unknown, and probably dates to the 2nd- 3rd AD⁶⁹⁶. The second lamp is from the Athenian Agora and is firstly considered the goddess Isis (**Fig. 99**)⁶⁹⁷, but according to some examples of Osiris with the same headdress and the bandages that cover his body, Gallo mentioned that the lamp is depicted Osiris and not Isis⁶⁹⁸. The figure is crowned with a three-part crown, and the hair is falling on the forehead and shoulders. The body is entirely wrapped in stylized bandages except for the head and feet, dating to the 4th century AD.



Figure 99. An oil lamp of Osiris, the Athenian Agora.

Figure 100. An oil lamp of Osiris-Attis, Fitzwilliam Museum.

Figure 101. An oil lamp of Osiris, the Museum of Hatay.

⁶⁹⁶ Inv. No. 30183. Gallo, 1998, pp.149-150, fig. 2-5.

⁶⁹⁷ Dunand, 1973, p. 143, pl. 10, fig.2; Gallo, 1998, p. 149, fig. 1; Podvin, 2011, p. 261, pl.64, 1

⁶⁹⁸ Dunand described the figure as Isis wearing a somewhat deformed basileion, however, Gallo suggested the figure represents the god Osiris according to a statue of Osiris Canopus found in the Serapeum of Soli in Cyprus, the god has the same long hair, and he wears the lotus-shaped diadem. Dunand, 1973, p. 143; Gallo, 1998, p. 149.

These lamps are hardly more numerous in bronze, representing the god Osiris in mummiform. For instance, a bronze lamp was discovered during the excavation in Luni, Liguria, near the Amphitheater in 1882 and kept in the Museo Archeologico Civico, La Spezia; Osiris is depicted wearing the nemes⁶⁹⁹. Gallo suggested that these lamps were used in the ceremony of searching Isis for her husband Osiris in the darkness of the night and discovering his corpse, "Inventio Osiridis"⁷⁰⁰. Another bronze lamp in the form of Osiris-Attis (**Fig. 100**), preserved in the Fitzwilliam Museum, probably from Egypt, dates to the 2nd century AD; the lamp is in the form of a youth enveloped in mummy bandages, wearing an eagle headdress, and encircled by a serpent⁷⁰¹. A bronze mummiform lamp of Osiris was discovered in Antioch (**Fig. 101**) and preserved in the Museum of Hatay, Turkey. He is entirely wrapped in a funerary bandage that only leaves his face uncovered. The head is enclosed in a hood. An elongated and very thin snake winds about the figurine, and its head protrudes on the top of the hood⁷⁰². As in Gerasa, we can notice the similarities between these lamps: the figure forms the lamp's body, the handle is the head, the hole for topping up the oil is on the stomach, and the burning hole is under the feet.

⁶⁹⁹ Inv. No., 1072. Gallo, 1998, p. 151, fig. 6-8; Podvin, 2011, p.261, pl.64, 4.

⁷⁰⁰ Gallo, 1997, p. 500, no. V.183; Gallo, 1998, pp.149–155.

⁷⁰¹ Podvin, 2011, p. 261, pl. 64, 3.

⁷⁰² Lafli, et al., 2012, pp. 421-439, figs. 1-5.

III.3. Gadara

The ancient city of Gadara is located in Umm Qais, on the eastern edge of the fertile Ard el-Ala plateau⁷⁰³. Due to its strategically favorable location, Gadara was of great military importance in the power struggle between Alexander's successors. Presumably, it was the Ptolemies who, in the early 3rd century BC—established a garrison on the later Acropolis hill. In 198 BC, the Seleucids could finally take Gadara into their possession, soon after the conquest⁷⁰⁴. After a century of Seleucid domination, the Hasmonean leader Alexander Jannaeus managed to take the city after a long siege. Pompey freed Gadara, incorporated it into the province of Syria in 64/63 BC, and rebuilt the city because his freedman Demetrius came from Gadara. The inhabitants of Gadara celebrated the liberation of their city through the introduction of the Pompeian era: the year 64/63 BC was referred to as "Year 1 of Rome" on city coins⁷⁰⁵. From 30-4 BC, Gadara belonged to the kingdom of Herod, and this met with resistance from the residents of Gadara, but it was only after Herod's death that Gadara was re-annexed to the province of Syria.

III.3.1. The god Serapis

A white marble head of Serapis was found in Gadara (**Fig. 102a-b**), to which stucco was added to the back of the head, possibly an Alexandrian work from the late Antonine or early Severan period. The face is framed by rich hair and a full beard, and the hair is worked in two sections: nine single or double-curved curls around the face at the front, and five curls stand out above the forehead; the second row of loops that cannot be differentiated in number; the beard is divided from the middle. The head was not intended to be seen in a round shape; the back is worked off flat, like a mask, and jointed at an angle with a pointed iron⁷⁰⁶. Weber convincingly interpreted the marble head as an Alexandrian work of the 2nd century AD; he

⁷⁰³ Lichtenberger, 2003, p.83.

⁷⁰⁴ Schmid, 2008, pp.353- 355.

⁷⁰⁵ Riedl, 2003, pp. 29-30.

⁷⁰⁶The head has an old break in the neck. In the area of the left eyebrow and on various locks of the beard, details have been destroyed. Baratte, Augé, Rasson, 1987, pp. 276- 277, no. 250; Weber, 2002, p.396, no. pL2, Taf. 35a; Lichtenberger, 2003, p.109; Riedl, 2003, pp. 142-143., no. GA.53; Vaelske, 2011, pp.433- 434, no. D10, Abb. d-17.

assumed that the head belonged to the group of the so-called "travel god images", documented by numerous monuments, which have been made in the area of the Serapeum of Alexandria since Hellenistic times and sold to pilgrims; they were widely used as portable devotional objects⁷⁰⁷. However, the size of the head and the heavyweight are incompatible with this opinion. Serapis was widespread not only in the Jordanian area but also throughout the entire Syro-Phoenician region.

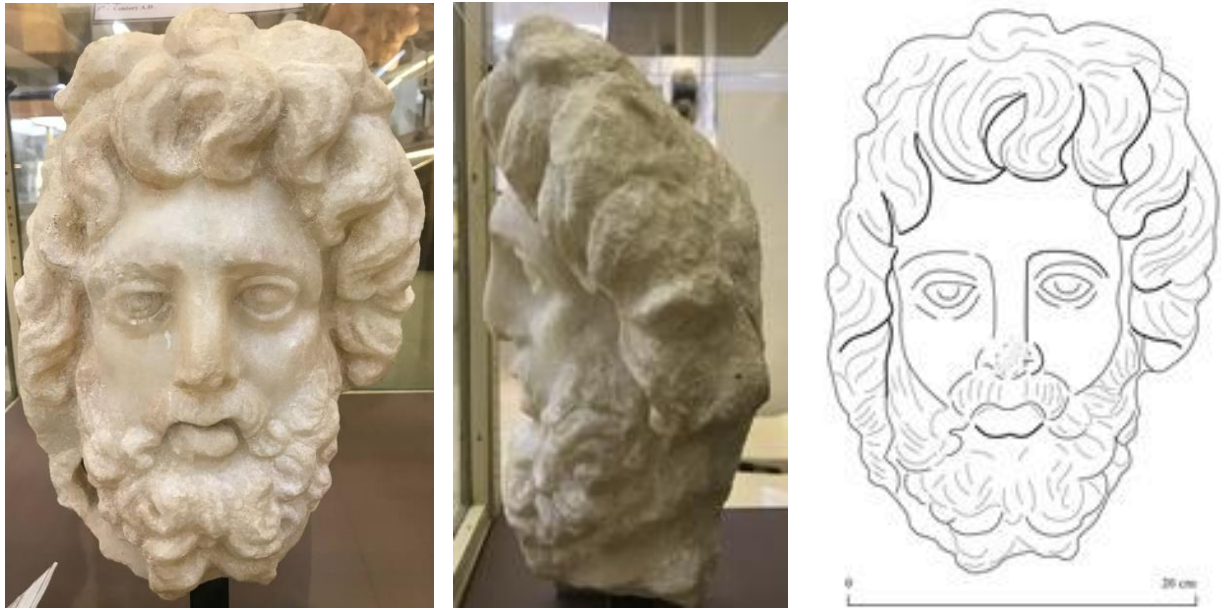


Figure 102a-b. a. A white marble head of Serapis from Gadara, Jordan Archaeological Museum Amman, Inv. No. J. 9529, H. 31 cm. b. Drawing by Abd El-Halim.

Another bronze statuette from Gadara represents Serapis sitting on the throne (**Fig. 103**). He wears a long, short-sleeved chiton with a himation that runs across the back and hangs down on the left shoulder. The right arm is slightly raised, but now missing; it possibly held a patera and is not lowered to the Kerberos dog, whereas the left hand is raised, holding a scepter. The hairstyle is shown in detail, including the forehead fringes and the corkscrew curls of the chin beard; he wears the *kalathos* on his head⁷⁰⁸. The position of the legs and the folds' direction are entirely different. In the statues of the enthroned Serapis, the right leg is consistently presented as a response to the raised left arm, but here it is withdrawn. The movement of the legs and the folds of the garments are very similar to the statue of Jupiter

⁷⁰⁷ Weber, 2002, pp. 194-195, 396.

⁷⁰⁸ Vaelske, 2011, pp.432- 433, no. D9, Abb. d- 15.

Capitolinus in the Munich Collection of Antiquities (**Fig. 104**)⁷⁰⁹ and the statue of Serapis in Seleucia Pieria (**Fig.12**).



Figure 103.A bronze statuette of Serapis, Gadara.

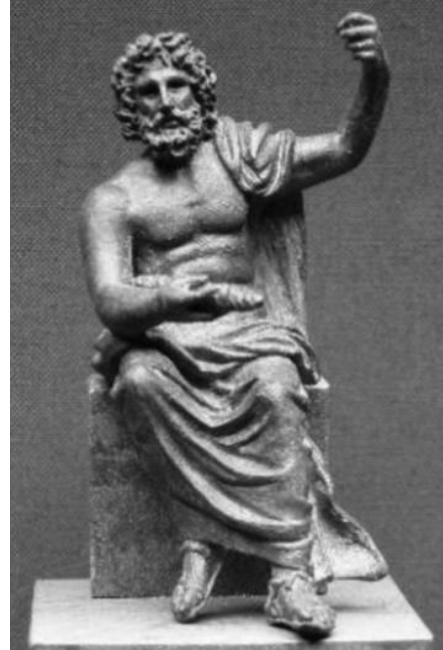


Figure 104.A bronze of Jupiter Capitolinus, the Munich Collection of Antiquities.

However, the iconography of Serapis seated on the throne, dressed in chiton and cloak, with his right hand on Kerberos' head and his left hand holding a scepter, was well-established in the Levant. For example, a bronze statuette of Serapis is kept in the National Museum of Damascus (**Fig. 105**), which probably comes from southern Syria, and represents the same type⁷¹⁰, as well as the example from Gerasa (**Fig. 88**). Another parallel can be found in a marble statuette of Serapis enthroned from Khirbet Ramadan in Syria, now preserved in the National Museum of Damascus (**Fig. 106**)⁷¹¹. It is probable that these bronze figurines, distributed throughout the empire, were imported from Egypt, considering the discovery of numerous similar examples⁷¹².

⁷⁰⁹ Vaelske, 2011, p.261, Abb. d-16.

⁷¹⁰ Abdul-Hak, 1951, pp. 157- 158, no. 6; Kater- Sibbes, 1973, p. 79, no. 450; Weber, 2009, p. 128, pl. 3B.

⁷¹¹ Abdul-Hak , 1951, p. 68, no. 6, pl. XXXVI, 1; Hornbostel, 1973, p. 278, Abb. 279; Kater- Sibbes, 1973, p.78, no. 445.

⁷¹² Weber, 2009, p. 128.



Figure 105. A bronze statuette of Serapis, the National Museum of Damascus.

Figure 106. A figurine of Serapis, Khirbet Ramadan, The National Museum of Damascus, Inv. No., 2504/5066.

The huge number of bronzes and little statues representing Serapis sitting on the throne⁷¹³ were considered miniature copies of the Alexandrian original cult statue of Serapis kept in the Serapeum of Alexandria, sculpted by the famous Carian artist Bryaxis⁷¹⁴. Ancient and early Christian written evidence informs us in detail about the colored appearance of this statue. Rufinus states that at the end of the Serapeum, there was a statue of Serapis, a colossal one, made of various kinds of wood and metal⁷¹⁵. Above his head, the god wore the *kalathos*, the symbol of agricultural fertility. He was sitting on a throne and holding the scepter in his left hand while the right hand touched the three-headed dog Kerberos sitting next to him⁷¹⁶.

Isis is shown nursing Harpocrates in a gem from the first century AD that was found in Gadara⁷¹⁷. Additionally, two gems exclusively featuring Harpocrates were discovered in

⁷¹³ Hornbostel, 1973, figs. 5, 6, 11, 18, 19, 21, 23–26, 59, 124, 127, 128, 146, 274; Clerc, Leclant, LIMC VII, 1994, s.v. Serapis, p. 689.

⁷¹⁴ Hornbostel, 1973, p. 59, 83, fn.5, 84–85.

⁷¹⁵ Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, XI, 23; Empereur, 1998, p. 92.

⁷¹⁶ Clerc, Leclant, LIMC VII, 1994, s. v. Serapis, p. 689.

⁷¹⁷ Henig, Whiting, 1984, p. 24, no. 219. In the Tosefta, the following passage is encountered: "If someone discovers a ring (gem) bearing the images of the Sun, the Moon, and the Serpent, they should cast it into the Dead Sea (i.e., destroy it), as well as the representation of the breastfeeding woman and that of Serapis". According to Lieberman, the depiction of the breastfeeding woman refers to Isis nursing her son Horus-

Gadara⁷¹⁸, as well as a statue of the child-god within the city, found in a late antique water pool in the baths of Heracleides⁷¹⁹. However, we cannot deduce from these findings the establishment of a civic cult dedicated to Isis and Harpocrates in the city of Gadara. Friedheim mentioned that, unlike numismatics, where the presence of a god's image on ancient coins can provide stronger evidence, the existence of a gem portraying a deity within an ancient city does not definitively prove the existence of a civic cult venerating this particular deity. This is mainly because it's nearly impossible to ascertain the exact origin of such a gem⁷²⁰. These gems can offer insights into the potential existence of a private cult only if depictions of pagan figures are recurrent or if we can corroborate the religious symbolism conveyed by the gems through other archaeological or literary sources⁷²¹.

Harpocrates. The subsequent presence of Serapis alongside the nursing woman further strengthens this interpretation. This is because the pairing of Isis and Serapis was widely prevalent across the Mediterranean region during the Imperial period, particularly in the 2nd century. Tosefta 'Abodah Zarah, 5 (6) 1; Lieberman, 1962, pp.136- 138; Friedheim, 2006, pp. 199-208.

⁷¹⁸ Henig, Whiting, 1984, p. 24, nos. 217-218.

⁷¹⁹ Weber, 1991, p. 231, pl. III, 2.

⁷²⁰ Friedheim, 2006, p. 206.

⁷²¹ Friedheim, 2006, pp. 206-207.

II.4. Philadelphia

After the death of Alexander the Great, Philadelphia (modern-day Amman) fell under the control of Ptolemy I. According to Stephanus of Byzantium, the city name Philadelphia can be traced back to Ptolemy II (283-246 BC), who was nicknamed Philadelphus⁷²². During the Fourth Syrian War, the Seleucid Antiochus III conquered Philadelphia and installed a garrison in 217 BC. However, after the defeat of the Seleucid at Raphia in the same year, Philadelphia came under Ptolemaic rule again⁷²³.

At the end of the Fifth Syrian War in 200 BC, the Seleucids regained control of Ptolemaic Syria; it is unknown whether the Seleucids or their allies, the Nabataeans, ruled over Philadelphia⁷²⁴. In any case, Hyrcanus the Tobiad succeeded in conquering the region around Iraq al-Amir in Philadelphia as early as 187 BC, which he ruled until his suicide in 175 BC. After that, Philadelphia was probably controlled by the Nabataeans, who had ruled as client rulers from the early Seleucid period until the Roman conquest⁷²⁵. In 134 and 96 BC, Zeno Kotylas and his son Theodorus ruled over the city⁷²⁶. Whether Philadelphia continued to be controlled by the Nabataeans or, from 63 BC, by the Romans in the province of Syria is disputed in research⁷²⁷.

III.4.1. Three reliefs with Egyptian gods in Amman

Three significant basalt monoliths adorned with relief figures were unearthed on the citadel hill of Amman (**Figs. 107-109**). The original *ensemble* likely consisted of four reliefs, although the fourth has regrettably been lost over time. Presently, these three remarkable reliefs are housed in the Jordan Archaeological Museum, Amman⁷²⁸. The first of these reliefs

⁷²² Stephanus of Byzantium, *Ethnica* s.v. Philadelphia. Furthermore, Stephanos mentions two cities named Arsinoe in the southern Levant. The specific location of one of these Arsinoe cities mentioned by Stephanos remains unknown, and Cohen raises doubts about the existence of two Arsinoes in Coele-Syria. Additionally, Ptolemy II renamed Damascus Arsinoe, and Stephanos notes that Pella was also given the name Berenike. Cohen, 2006, pp. 102-103, 265.

⁷²³ MacAdam, 1992, pp. 27-45.

⁷²⁴ MacAdam, 1992, p. 30; Schmid, 2008, p. 356.

⁷²⁵ MacAdam, 1992, pp. 30-32.

⁷²⁶ Wenning, 1994, pp. 19-22.

⁷²⁷ MacAdam, 1992, pp.31-33.

⁷²⁸ During Italian excavations in the 1930s, two relief basalt blocks were found on the citadel hill of Amman (Jebel el-Qal'a). Since their discovery, these blocks initially adorned the stair stringers at the entrance to the

portrays a deity bearing attributes reminiscent of Osiris. This divine figure is depicted in a mummified form (**Fig. 107**), adorned with the distinctive Atef crown, featuring a prominent uraeus on its front, and a wide pectoral extending up to the shoulders. The deity's arms are gracefully crossed over the chest, while the face and feet are oriented to the left, with the body displayed in a frontal view⁷²⁹. This deity is most likely to be identified as Osiris⁷³⁰, as similar representations are known from Egypt during the Roman Period⁷³¹.



Figure 107. A basalt monolith with a relief of an Egyptian deity, the citadel hill of Amman, Inv. No. 19602.

Italian Mission building before being returned to the citadel in 2004 as part of renovation work. They have been installed there in front of the Archaeological Museum ever since. These two reliefs include another, similar block, which was also discovered on the castle hill a few years ago. None of the sites indicate an original context of use; the first two objects were found in the area of the so-called agora, and the third was built into the Umayyad palace. Atiat, 2003, pp.117-122.

⁷²⁹ It is height 108 cm, width 56 cm. The figure, with the contour drilled except for the feet and the crown, stands with closed legs facing to the right, while the body is depicted in a frontal view. One can observe a network of diagonal, intersecting channels that were used to adorn the figure. The chest is adorned with a pectoral consisting of four rows of teardrop-shaped pendants. Based on the outline, it appears that the arms were bent and positioned in front of the chest; however, the exact course of the limbs is only faintly visible. On the head, whose internal structure is no longer discernible, there is a sun disk framed by horns or snakes. This crown extends into the upper profile. Furthermore, the headdress consists of two elongated elements that protrude beyond the contour in front of the forehead and behind the head. Atiat 2003, p.121, fig. 5b.

⁷³⁰ Meza, 2000, pp.209-210, fig.18; Meza, 2005, pp.104-105, Pl.35.

⁷³¹ Clerc, Leclant, LIMC 7, 1994, s. v. Osiris, pp. 107-116; Gallo, 1998.

The second relief depicts a female deity may be represent the goddess Isis (**Fig. 108**), her head and feet facing to the right, while the body is represented frontally; she wears a long, fringed dress and a waistband⁷³². It adorns her wrist, upper arm, and ankles with bracelets; she wears a wide embroidered pectoral; part of the Egyptian-style wig falls behind the back; and on her right shoulder from the front, her right hand extends beside her body, while she holds in her left hand a scepter which ends with the lotus flower; above it, there are traces of the long tail feathers and claws of a bird; it is probably the falcon god Horus⁷³³.



Figure 108. A basalt monolith with a relief of an Egyptian deity, the citadel hill of Amman.

⁷³² It has a height of 102 cm, a width of 50 cm, and a thickness of 49 cm. Most of the head is missing, the face is worn, and the right arm is missing, but it is restored. While the torso is almost frontal to the viewer, the profile position of the head is visible. The legs are also turned almost into a profile. As far as can be discerned, the head was covered by a hair cap or wig, the ends of which fell on the back or on the front of the chest. The person wears an ankle-length robe that ends in a wide hem at the bottom and only covers the stomach at the top, leaving the chest bare. However, it is adorned with a multi-row pectoral. Just above the horizontal wrap of the robe, a female breast is visible. The figure holds a scepter in the left, which rests at the bottom and is decorated with figures at the upper end. Since the right arm is largely lost, the reconstructed course of it can only be hypothetical, but it certainly hung down to the side. In addition to the pectoral, decorative rings can be seen around the left upper arm, the left wrist, and both ankles. Atiat, 2003, pp.117-118, figs. 3-4.

⁷³³ Meza, 2000, p.211, fig.20. During the excavation of the department of Antiquities of Jordan between 1957-1959, more than 37 Egyptian scarabs and 6 Cylinder seals were unearthed in two cave tombs on the citadel hill, dating to the Bronze Age. Atiat, 2003, p. 120.

The third relief represents a figure in a human body with an animal head (**Fig. 109**); the figure is depicted in a profile position, turned to the right⁷³⁴. He wears a wide embroidered pectoral, a tunic knotted at the bottom of the chest, and holds a scepter in his right hand. On the top of the scepter is a crouching figure that could be Harpocrates. Parallel to this, there are numerous depictions of striding figures of Isis or Isis-Aphrodite, who carry a lotus flower in their hand, upon which Harpocrates is squatting⁷³⁵. In the Cairo Museum, there is a colossal relief that displays, in addition to the better-known male figure, a female goddess who also holds a flower with the Horus child⁷³⁶.

The figure wears a crown consisting of the sun disc between two large horns; Meza suggested that this figure represents the god Ammon, as he interprets the figure depicted on the scepter as the baboon, and the sun disc refers to the god's solar nature⁷³⁷. However, the baboon is a sacred animal to the god Thot. Atiat thinks that this figure representing a female goddess with a cow's head and female breasts, similar to those of the Isis relief, is to be identified with the goddess Hathor⁷³⁸.

⁷³⁴ Inv. no., 19603, it is height 116 cm, width 40 -43 cm. The block has sloping sides, while the front and back are vertical. The sides are adorned at the top with a profile consisting of a cavetto and a bead, followed by a final strip. The entire front features a figure walking to the left with the right foot in front, and the contour of this figure has been partially traced with a drill. Due to damage, the relief depths can no longer be discerned, but the highest remaining point protrudes about 10cm from the relief base. Both the head and the body, along with the legs, are depicted in a side view. The right hand is raised forward with a vertical surface, while the left hand holds a scepter, which has its upper end formed as a crossbar or board on which a person is seated (approximately 15cm in height). The robe is comprised of a wrap-around skirt that extends only over the stomach, leaving the chest exposed. The chest is adorned with a pectoral consisting of at least three rows of round pendants. The non-anthropomorphic head wears a crown composed of a sun disk framed by horns or snakes, and this is further embellished: another spherical or egg-shaped element is recessed within a frame. Atiat, 2003, p.120, fig.5a.

⁷³⁵ Williams, 1979, pl. X; Jentel, 1984, no. 85, II.1, p. 158 et II.2, pl.162; Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, no. 249, V.1, pp. 779-780, V.2, pp. 516-517.

⁷³⁶ Inv. No. JE27572.

⁷³⁷ Meza, 2000, pp. 210- 211, fig. 19.

⁷³⁸ Atiat, 2003, p.120.



Figure 109. A basalt monolith with a relief of an Egyptian deity, the citadel hill of Amman, Inv. No., 19603.

Indeed, the goddess Hathor is relatively uncommon in late period individual reliefs, particularly outside of Egypt. Nevertheless, there are instances where she makes appearances, such as on an imperial-period stele with a Greek inscription found in Middle Egypt. In this stele, the deceased is represented dressed in a long dress, between Anubis with the head of a jackal and Hathor with the head of a cow, who escort him in front of Osiris on the left in his traditional posture⁷³⁹. Moreover, the representation of Harpocrates on Hathor's scepter may symbolize the goddess's unique role in motherhood and her nurturing nature. It's important to note that Hathor, rather than Isis, holds the title of the primary mother goddess of Egypt. She is portrayed as nursing the king, bestowing upon him strength, guiding the departed into the afterlife, and even being described as the mother of Horus⁷⁴⁰. Her name, "House of Horus", attests to this connection⁷⁴¹. During the late period, the convergence of Isis and Hathor is evident in their shared attributes related to fertility and regenerative powers, particularly within the Greek goddess Aphrodite⁷⁴².

⁷³⁹ Bernand, 1992, no. 94, pl. 55.

⁷⁴⁰ Bleeker, 1973, pp. 42-45.

⁷⁴¹ Bleeker, 1973, pp. 24-25., 46-48., 62-64.

⁷⁴² Bleeker, 1973, pp. 38-42.

It's significant to point out that the three reliefs have much in common: the basalt material, the style of carving, the dress, and the iconography of the Egyptian cult figures Hathor, Horus, Isis, and Osiris. Atiat concluded that the date of all three reliefs might be in the Ptolemaic period, so she proposed the existence of a cult addressed to the goddess Isis/Hathor at the citadel hill, where these monumental relief figures must originate from a temple on the site, probably near where they were found on the site of the later Ummayyad palace⁷⁴³.

It should be noted that only the figure of Isis is depicted facing left (**Fig. 108**), while Osiris (**Fig. 107**) and Hathor (**Fig. 109**) face in the opposite direction. Assuming that these reliefs were oriented towards a central figure, it would be expected to have a fourth relief on the side of Isis. This fourth relief likely represented an Egyptian male figure, considering the available range of types. Among the prominent gods in Greco-Roman Egypt, potential candidates would include Serapis, Ammon, Anubis, and Harpocrates. Anubis, who was also widely popular in Egyptian artistic compositions, whether alone or in a group, could also be a viable option⁷⁴⁴. The question arises about the possible location of this series of relief blocks. According to their size, it is more likely that they were intended for an outdoor setting rather than being placed in a confined space of an underground or covered structure. One possibility is that they might have been arranged in front of an architectural façade, perhaps to adorn a forecourt or an ascending flight of stairs.

⁷⁴³ Atiat, 2003, p. 121.

⁷⁴⁴ Vaelske, 2011, pp.281-290, Abb. d-25a-f, d-28a.

III.4.2. The child-god Harpocrates

A bronze statuette of Harpocrates was also discovered in Amman (**Fig. 110**), in which he is depicted standing with his weight on his right leg. He is represented naked except for a cloak on the left shoulder, which falls backward and then hangs down on the left arm. There are remains of a *cornucopia* on his left arm, and as his usual gesture, the right hand is raised with the index finger touching his mouth. He wears the Egyptian double crown, which follows the Greek-Roman style⁷⁴⁵.



Figure 110. A bronze statuette of Harpocrates, Philadelphia.

The typical depiction of Harpocrates circulated throughout the Greco-Roman world exhibits remarkable uniformity: the deity is commonly depicted standing, either naked or draped in a *nebris*—an animal skin garment often associated with the followers of Dionysus—or sometimes adorned with the *chlamys* worn on the left arm. In his left hand, he holds a *cornucopia*, symbolizing fertility, while his right hand is often depicted with the index finger placed upon his lips. A protective amulet, the *bulla*, hangs from his necklace around his neck. His curly hair is crowned with the pschent, the iconic double Egyptian royal crown, composed of the white crown of Upper Egypt inserted into the red crown of Lower Egypt. Occasionally,

⁷⁴⁵ It is preserved in the Jordan Archaeological Museum, Inv. No. J.11695. Podvin, 2016, p. 315, fig.9.

additional attributes are incorporated into this standard portrayal, suggesting connections with other divine children such as little Dionysus, Khonsou, and Eros⁷⁴⁶.

⁷⁴⁶ Bricault, 2013, pp. 47-48.

III.5. Pella

The Hellenistic and Roman Pella has been localized in the modern village of Tabaqat Fahl since the first half of the 19th century⁷⁴⁷. Pella was established by either Alexander the Great or Seleucus I, according to Stephanus of Byzantium and Appian, respectively⁷⁴⁸. The place, which was only sparsely populated during the Achaemenid period, is likely to have been inhabited as early as the late 4th century BC by Antigonus Monophthalmus as a military colony, whereby the old place name "Pihil" became "Pella"⁷⁴⁹. During the Ptolemaic rule, the city was, as Stephanus of Byzantium reports elsewhere, temporarily called Berenice, a name after the wife of Ptolemy I or III, but it is not confirmed anywhere else. The city was also called "Butis", derived from the Egyptian goddess "Buto"⁷⁵⁰.

After the Battle of Panias in 200 BC, Pella became Seleucid property, like most other Transjordan cities. The Seleucid rule ended in 83/82 BC with the conquest of Pella by Hasmonean troops led by Alexander Jannaeus, during which the town was apparently also destroyed. Like the other cities in the region, Pella was liberated by Pompey and annexed to the province of Syria⁷⁵¹. The strategic position of Pella, which ensured control of movements in all four directions, together with the excellent water supply and the fertile surrounding area, had made the city attractive as a settlement site long before the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Several roads crossed at Pella during the imperial period, leading out into the Decapolis, west through Samaria to Caesarea Maritima, and north through Galilee to the southern Phoenician cities.

⁷⁴⁷ Lichtenberger, 2003, pp. 170-173.

⁷⁴⁸ Stephanos of Byzantium, *Ethnica*, 103-104; Appian, *Rom. History*, 11, 57. Both versions are contradicted by the fact that neither Alexander nor Seleucus - as far as can be gathered from the written sources- ever set foot on east Jordanian soil but instead continued their campaign directly to Egypt after the capture of Samaria.

⁷⁴⁹ Weber, 1993, p.13; Riedl, 2003, p. 31.

⁷⁵⁰ Stephanos of Byzantium, *Ethnica*, 229.

⁷⁵¹ Weber, 1993, p. 15-16; Riedl, 2003, p. 31.

III.5.1. The god Serapis?

A fragment of a life-size seated statue, made of black blue slate, was discovered in Pella (**Fig. 111a-b**). The fragment was found within the fill of a 7th century AD staircase leading to the cathedral in the so-called Civic Complex. Only the thighs, with the robe falling down on either side, have survived. Despite the statue's poor preservation, the distinct positions of the legs are visible: the right lower leg is slightly advanced, while the left one is drawn back. This is also evident from the stump of the left foot, which protrudes from beneath the mass of fabric on the underside of the fragment, and three large folds of the himation run down the thighs. Above the left knee, an additional, much higher fold indicates that the actual puff of the himation began here⁷⁵².

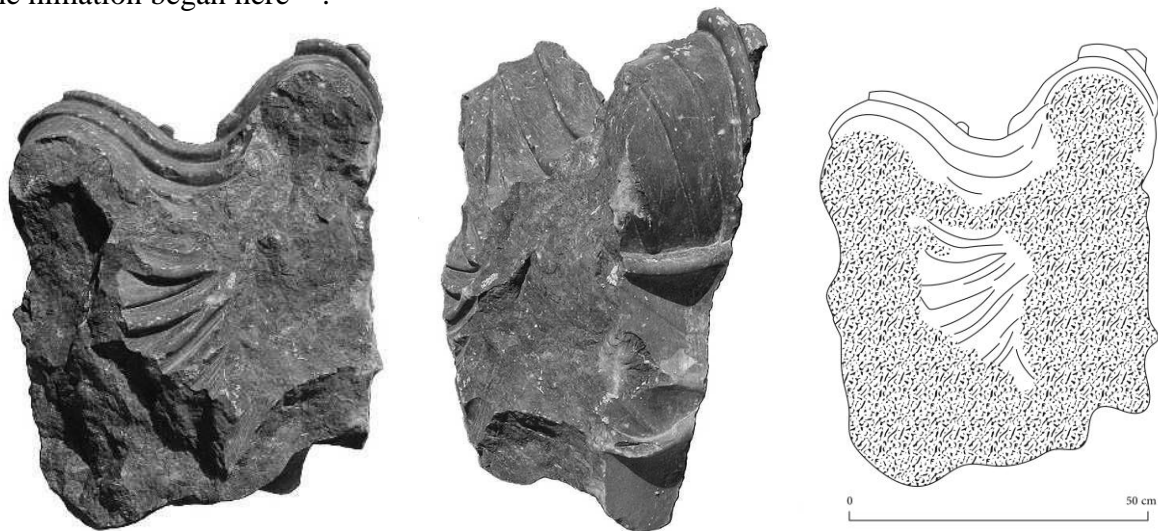


Figure 111a-b. a. A Statue of Serapis, Pella, Depot of the University of Sydney Archaeological Mission at Tabaqat Fahil/Pella – Department of Antiquities, Inv.No. 45325, H. 74.1 cm, w. 55cm. b. Drawing by Abd El-Halim.

Based on factors such as the origin, material color, robe design, and the type of statue depicting a seated male figure in Greek attire, Weber conclude that it was probably a statue of Serapis enthroned. This led him to regard the artifact as evidence of Serapis's cult in Pella⁷⁵³. One could not fail to notice that the distinctive stepped folds of the himation were quite prominent. They run horizontally over the tops of the relatively widespread thighs, sagging

⁷⁵² Smith, 1992, pp. 204-205, fig. 8; Weber, 1993, pp.45-54, taf. 6; Weber, 2002, p.p. 483-484, no. B2, Taf. 119A-C; Lichtenberger, 2003, pp. 187-188; Riedl, 2003, pp. 245- 246, no. PE.17; Vaelske, 2011, pp. 269-272, no. D11, Abb. d-19a-f.

⁷⁵³ Weber, 1993, p.49.

deeply in the lap and stretching between the shins to form thin ridges of folds from the top right to the bottom left. These specific features of the draped mantle were characteristic of the famous Alexandrian cult image of the enthroned Serapis.

It is worth noting that dark blue slate, basalt, and porphyry were all native to Egypt, where they can be found in the quarries of Wadi Hammamat. Thus, it could be concluded that the piece was imported from Egypt⁷⁵⁴. Weber suggested that the statue of Serapis might have been brought to Pella either overland from the south or through one of the nearby Mediterranean ports. The influence of Egypt, both politically and culturally, had been apparent in these regions even during the pre-Hellenistic and Ptolemaic periods⁷⁵⁵. The fragment of the Serapis statue might indicate that these relationships, especially with Alexandria, continued beyond the Hellenistic period⁷⁵⁶.

The statue, which was somewhat larger than life-size, could have stood in a sanctuary, perhaps within the Wadi or on the slope of one of the surrounding hills. This figure dates from the late Hadrianic to the early Antonine periods, when the Serapis cult flourished⁷⁵⁷. We can compare this statue with the porphyry statue at Caesarea Maritima (**Fig. 112**), which represented a seated male wearing a tunic and himation, interpreted as an imperial cult image of the emperor Hadrian⁷⁵⁸. Weber mentioned that the dark red color of the expensive Egyptian stone gave the impression of Phoenician purple, which according to ancient oriental customs, was reserved for kings⁷⁵⁹.

⁷⁵⁴ A series of replicas of the Alexandrian cult image are made of dark stone, such as black and green basalt, black-green granite, or slate. The meaning of this color choice is disputed; some researchers attribute the use of dark material to the intention to emphasize the dark nature of the god of the underworld. The choice of dark stones may reflect the intention to imitate metal; for example, basalt was considered a substitute for bronze in the imperial period because of its color and sharp metallic shapes and was often used to simulate a dark patinated bronze statue. However, shades of green could also refer to Serapis' function as a fertility deity. Hornbostel, 1973, pp.95-102; Riedl, 2003, p. 245.

⁷⁵⁵ Various artifacts from the second half of the 2nd millennium BC, including a wooden box covered with figurative ivory reliefs, testify to close cultural contacts with Egypt. Weber, 1993, pp.12, 14.

⁷⁵⁶ Weber, 1993, p.49.

⁷⁵⁷ Weber, 1993, pp. 45-49; Lichtenberger, 2003, pp. 187-188; Riedl, 2003, pp. 245- 246; Vaelske, 2011, pp. 269-272.

⁷⁵⁸ Avi-Yonah, 1970, pp. 203-208, pl. 44; Fischer, 2019, p. 25, fig. 7.

⁷⁵⁹ Weber, 1993, p. 46.



Figure 112. A porphyry statue at Caesarea Maritima.

It is worth noting that nearby springs located in the center of the ancient of Pella continue to provide water to this day. This observation has led to the consideration of a potential connection between the existence of the Serapis cult and these springs⁷⁶⁰. A thermal spring 2 kilometers north of the city had already been suspected as the cult place for the Sidonian god of healing, Asclepius-Eshmun, depicted on the city's coins⁷⁶¹. Accordingly, many scholars related the cult of Serapis to that of Asclepius-Eshmun⁷⁶². It should be pointed out that a very similar but more complete statue of Serapis, made of schist or dark blue marble, was found in the baths of Bostra (**Fig. 113**), preserved in the Archaeological Museum of Bostra; and dates back to the first half of the 2nd century AD⁷⁶³. The figure was discovered in 1999 during the Syrian excavations under the direction of Riyadh al-Muqdad in the Bostra Baths. The statue depicts a male figure seated on a throne and dressed in an undergarment chiton and a himation that drapes the lower body. On the left side of the throne, one can identify the dog Kerberos, which originally had three heads but is now broken. This arrangement can be interpreted as a representation of Serapis-Hades. Due to the absence of the stone type used in Syria, it is

⁷⁶⁰ Weber, 1993, p.45.

⁷⁶¹ Riedl, 2003, p. 236.

⁷⁶² Lichtenberger, 2003, pp. 187-188; Riedl, 2003, pp. 245- 246.

⁷⁶³ The statue made of a dark blue stone is not completely preserved: the head, which was originally inserted separately, is lost, and the feet with the base are missing. Both arms are broken off from their upper bases. The heads of Kerberos and a smaller part of the bent right knee are also chipped off. Weber, 2007, pp. 44-45, fig. 1.

deduced that this statue was imported from Egypt. Some scholars proposed that it might have been brought from Alexandria by members or veterans of the Legio III Cyrenaica after 106 AD. It is conceivable that this statue venerated in a local Serapeum. This hypothesis gains support from the presence of architectural elements of Egyptian origin crafted from black schist, including a column reused in one of the late shops along the north-south street, situated just opposite these baths⁷⁶⁴.



Figure 113. A statue of Serapis from Bostra, the Archaeological Museum of Bostra, Inv. No., 72, H: 77cm.

Indeed, water played an indispensable role in the worship of Serapis, who was venerated as a fertility deity. During the Hellenistic period, cultural practices associated with Isis and Serapis entailed the utilization of water, often channeled into subterranean constructions inspired by the ancient Egyptian Nilometers⁷⁶⁵. For instance, within the Serapeum of Alexandria, water was collected within an underground basin through an extensive subterranean aqueduct extending over 570 meters, connected to the Alexandria Canal located south of the Serapeum⁷⁶⁶. Similar structures were recorded outside Egypt, within the Mediterranean

⁷⁶⁴ Weber, 2007, pp. 44-45.

⁷⁶⁵ Wild reported in a detailed study all the sanctuaries in honor of Isis and Serapis that worked throughout the Roman Empire. About Roman Levant, he does not mention the existence of any Iseum. Wild, 1981, pp. 28-29.

⁷⁶⁶ Wild, 1981, pp. 29-33, figs. 12-13.

region⁷⁶⁷, where the Isiac cult emerged due to commercial, political, and cultural ties with Ptolemaic Egypt⁷⁶⁸. Delos, for example, boasted sanctuaries devoted to Serapis, featuring two documented instances of water-directing crypts and a potential third crypt for which hypotheses are proposed. Serapeum A, situated at the eastern terminus of the sacred enclosure, comprises an underground structure flooded by the waters of the Inopus River, channeled through an eastward trench adjacent to the central temple⁷⁶⁹. Within the boundaries of the Roman Empire, substantiated examples of subterranean structures also existed. Constructed during the Hellenistic period and subsequently restored during the Roman period, these structures mirrored the configuration of Pharaonic Egyptian Nilometers. A particularly illustrative instance is located at the Iseum of Pompeii, where the crypt designed for lustral water lies to the southeast of the central temple⁷⁷⁰.

⁷⁶⁷ Wild, 1981, pp. 34-47.

⁷⁶⁸ Fontana, 2010, pp. 64-69.

⁷⁶⁹ Wild, 1981, pp. 34-36, fig. 14.

⁷⁷⁰ Wild 1981, pp. 44- 46, fig. 18.

III.6. Scythopolis

Like some other Decapolis cities, Scythopolis (modern-day Beit She'an) was founded by the Ptolemies; originally, it was probably a Macedonian military colony until the second half of the 3rd century BC, when it received the status of a polis. In 218 BC, during the reign of Antiochus III, the city came under Seleucid control for a while but was taken over again by the Ptolemies until 200 BC. From 198 BC to the Hasmonean conquest in 104 BC led to the emigration of numerous pagan inhabitants, who were faced with the choice of converting to Judaism or leaving the city. With the conquest of the region by Pompey in 63 BC, the Hasmonean rule ended, and Scythopolis was incorporated into the province of Syria⁷⁷¹.

III.6.1. Inscriptions of Serapis

A Greek inscription on an altar, dated to the middle of the 3rd century AD, was found in the center of Scythopolis, dedicated to Serapis. Of this inscription today, only a translation in English is available: "I, Seleucus, son of Ariston, keeper of the ointments, have dedicated this beautiful altar as a sign of piety, having accomplished work in honor of holy Serapis". The dedicant Seleucus described himself as the "guardian of the ointments" and probably held a corresponding office in the gymnasium. In the city, two other dedications by the same person were discovered: the first on a statue base bearing the date 303 AD and the other on an altar dedicated to several deities and bearing the date 299, corresponding to 235/6 AD⁷⁷².

The epithet "ἅγιος" or "Sanctus" means "holy" was occupied by several inscriptions for Serapis; however, most of these documents came from the western countries of the Roman Empire⁷⁷³: Portus⁷⁷⁴, Ostia, Asturica (Spain), Eburacum (England), Novae (Moesia), and Malliana (Algeria)⁷⁷⁵. Riedl mentioned that the epithet "Sanctus" could be traced back in the inscription in Scythopolis to oriental origins: it is a transmission of the Semitic Qadosh, a

⁷⁷¹ Mazar, 2006, pp. 37-38.

⁷⁷² Bricault dated the inscription to the beginning of the 1st century AD because the same person dedicated an altar to Dionysus in 12 AD. However, Vaelske argued that the Dionysus altar of Seleucus, son of Ariston, is now correctly dated to 141/142 AD". Bricault, RICIS, 403/0301; Lichtenberger, 2003, pp. 156-157; Riedl, 2003, pp. 312-313, no. SK. 25; Vaelske, 2011, pp. 116-119.

⁷⁷³ Vidman, SIRIS, 533h, 556a, 675, 750, 792.

⁷⁷⁴ Bricault, RICIS, 503/ 1212.

⁷⁷⁵ Bricault, RICIS, 503/1111; 603/1107; 604/0101; 618/0201; 705/0201.

term denoting the state of ritual purity and thus sanctity that is unique to divine beings in a special way. Accordingly, oriental deities were repeatedly assigned this adjective. Three inscriptions are known from Gerasa that designate Pakeidas, the Arabian god, and Baal Bosoros as "Sanctus"⁷⁷⁶.

III.6.2. The mosaic of Nilus

A floor mosaic was found inside a private house in Beit She'an, belonging to a Jewish man named Kyrios Leontis Kloubas and is preserved in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem (**Fig. 114**). The first excavation of the house was conducted by Zori in 1964, followed by another expedition by Bahat and Druks in 1970-1972. The mosaic can be dated according to the phase of the building's use (Level V) to the middle of the fifth century AD. The mosaic consists of three panels arranged one behind the other (**Fig. 115**): the upper panel depicts the Homeric story of Odysseus and the Sirens, the middle panel contains a dedication, and the lower panel represents a Nilotic landscape. The mosaic reveals the interest of the house's owner in Jewish life, classical mythology, and Alexandria⁷⁷⁷.

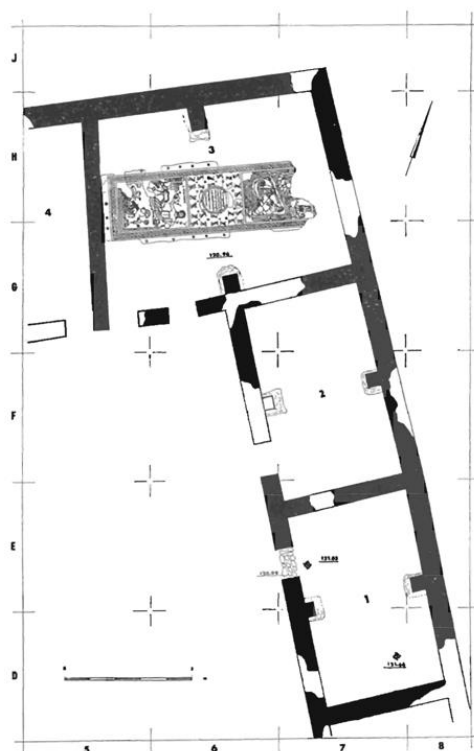


Figure 114. Plan of the house of Leontis in Beit She'an.

⁷⁷⁶ Riedl, 2003, p.3, GE.31,71,108.

⁷⁷⁷ Zori, 1966, pp.123- 134; Hachlili, 1998, pp. 107-108, fig. 1; Hamarneh, 1999, p. 186; Michaeli, 2003, pp. 120-121, fig. 6; Sadeh, 2006, pp. 203-220, fig.1; Hasan-Rokem, 2014, pp.159-189, figs. 1-4; Eckersley, 2016, fig. 95; Habas, 2021, pp.169-197.



Figure 115. The mosaic of the house of Leontis, Scythopolis' Beit She'an".

The upper panel depicts scenes from the *Odyssey* of Homer, in which Odysseus and the Sirens are represented (**Fig. 116**)⁷⁷⁸. Odysseus is represented as a young man is tied to the mast of the ship sailing in stormy waters, where a naked Nereid is riding an Ichthyocentaur, a fantastic animal with horse legs and a fishtail back, but both head is missing. Below is another scene represents Odysseus as a young man, half-naked, sitting on a ship and fighting a sea monster with a three-sided weapon. The creature is similar to the Ichthyocentaur, but his body and tail are shorter. In front of the ship, a Siren is depicted with long wavy hair that falls onto her shoulders; the lower part of her body ends with a bird's tail, and she plays the flute⁷⁷⁹. Between Odysseus and the Siren, there is a Greek inscription of two lines indicating the house owner's name: “Κ(ύρι)ε β(ο)ήθ(ει) Λεοντί/ου κλουβ(ᾶ)” *"Lord, help Leontis Kloubas"*⁷⁸⁰.



Figure 116. The upper panel of the mosaic of the house of Leontis in Beit She'an, Habas, 2021, Fig.3.

⁷⁷⁸ Homer, *Odyssey*, 12, 158-191.

⁷⁷⁹ Some scholars identified the figure as Scylla, while Hasan-Rokem confirmed that the figure's lower body was a fishtail, but she excluded the representation of Scylla because Scylla is depicted as a creature with twelve dangling feet, six long necks, and horrific heads lined with a triple row of sharp teeth while her voice is like the yelping of dogs. She connected the fishtail to a local goddess in the region of Syria-Palestine, such as Atargatis/Derceto, the fish goddess. Hasan-Rokem, 2014, pp.180-183.

⁷⁸⁰ Zori, 1966, pp.132-133, pl. 11.

Regarding the interpretation of the myth of Odysseus and the Siren within the house of Leontis, some researchers have suggested that Jews in the Byzantine period appreciated the poems of Homer. Others have confirmed that the mosaic was a dedication from Leontis, the wealthy merchant, and that this mythical event represents his voyage with his private ship to Egypt or Italy. Adler put forth the argument that scenes featuring Odysseus are typically associated with water, as they are commonly found in baths and basins, implying a potential connection to water in the context of this particular house⁷⁸¹. It is likely that the choice to depict these scenes on the mosaic was made by Leontis himself, who may have originated from Alexandria and intended to reference his sea voyage to Beit She'an⁷⁸².



Figure 117.The middle panel of the mosaic of the house of Leontis in Beit She'an, Habas, 2021, Fig.4.

⁷⁸¹ Adler, 2003, pp.125-128.

⁷⁸² Hachlili, 2009, p. 229. The depiction of Odysseus and the sirens has been commonly understood as a representation of resolute resistance against temptation. Meanwhile, the Nilotic scene has been interpreted through the lens of "the abominations of Egypt," laden with unfavorable implications that conceptualize the land as a symbol of decadence and the consequent moral decay, along with an indulgence in physical desires. An alternative analysis, drawing from Jewish and Christian references, has proposed that the mosaic carries an eschatological message. Contrarily, Sadeh presented the perspective that the themes depicted in the Kyrios Leontis mosaic are rooted in classical origins. According to this viewpoint, Odysseus was in fact persuaded by the sirens and did not relinquish the opportunity to listen to their seductive song, albeit using Circe's magical advice. The notion of not entirely renouncing pleasure and the aspiration to partake in the sensory delights of life align more with a Classical perspective than a Judeo-Christian one. Sadeh, 2006, p. 204.

The middle panel includes a Greek dedication in the center consisting of eight lines inside a circle (**Fig. 117**), flanked by twenty-six pigeons, with diamonds and buds scattered between them. There is a representation of a candlestick (menorah) on the right side of the fourth line, but it is severely damaged⁷⁸³. The dedicatory inscription reads as follows: “Μνησθῆ / εἰς ἀγαθὸν κ(αὶ) ἰς / εὐλογίαὺν ὁ κύριος Λεόντις / ὁ κλουβᾶς ὅτι ὑπὲρ (menorah - candlestick) / σοτηρίας αὐτοῦ κ(αὶ) τοῦ / ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰωναθᾶ / ἐψήφοσεν τὰ ὅδε / ἐξ ἡδῆον” "Be remembered for good and praised, Kyrios Leontis Kloubas, because he paved this with mosaic at his own [expense] for his own salvation and that of his brother Jonathan"⁷⁸⁴. According to the inscription, some scholars prefer the interpretation that it was a synagogue.

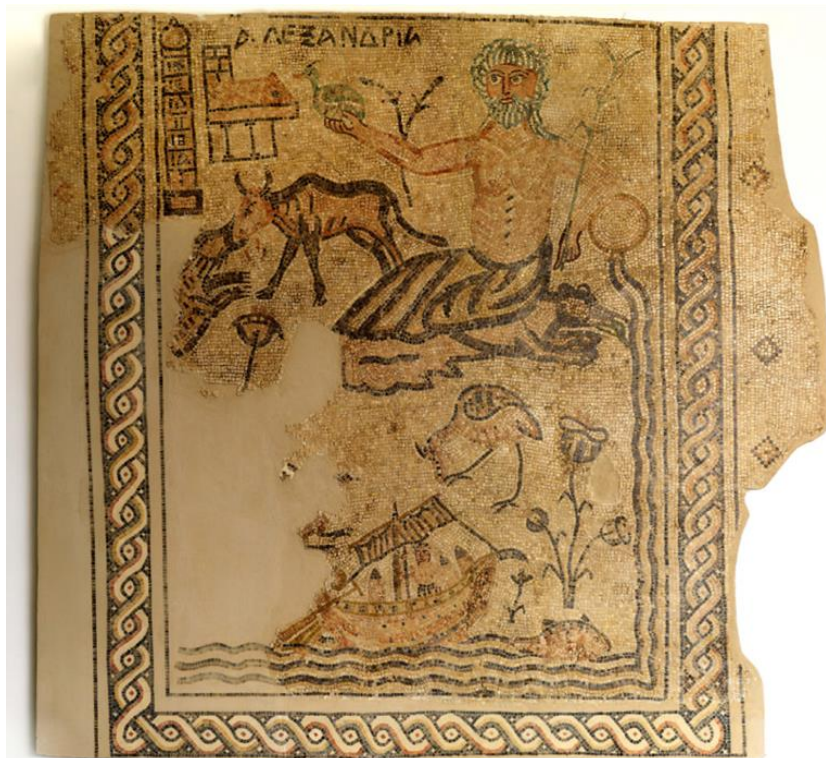


Figure 118. The lower panel of the mosaic of the house of Leontis in Beit She'an, Habas, 2021, Fig.5.

The lower panel, which is of our particular interest, represents the personification of the Nile (**Fig. 118**)⁷⁸⁵. He is depicted as a bearded man, half-naked, sitting on an animal identified as a

⁷⁸³ Positioned on the right side of the fourth line of the inscription, there is a depiction of a candlestick. While Zori initially identified five branches, the mosaic's reconstruction conducted at the Israel Museum revealed that the candlestick actually had seven branches. However, only five of the flames on those branches have endured over time. For more information see: Habas, 2021, pp.172-173.

⁷⁸⁴ Zori, 1966, pp. 130, 132-134 pl.13: B-C; Hasan-Rokem, 2014, p.183; Habas, 2021, p.173.

⁷⁸⁵ The iconography of the Nile is certainly particular, as it includes its own attributes and some variations that other river-gods do not have. He is represented as an old man with a solemn appearance, bearded, and wearing

crocodile by Zori⁷⁸⁶, or a hippopotamus, with his legs extended forward⁷⁸⁷. In this regard, we know many examples of Nilus reclining on a sphinx⁷⁸⁸, a hippopotamus⁷⁸⁹, or a crocodile⁷⁹⁰. Nilus rests his left hand on a globular jug, evocation of his own flow, which water flows and fills the lower section of the panel. He holds in his left hand a branch of a plant, and in his right hand a duck⁷⁹¹. He points in the direction of a building with columns and its roof covered with panels. The building with pillars is surmounted by a pediment roof and a tower, above which is an inscription in Greek letters "Αλεξανδρια" which is a schematic and stylized representation. Next to the building, the nilometer is depicted⁷⁹²; it has a scale from 11 to 16, indicating that this is not just about the Nile in general but about the river in its inundation phase. Between the god and Alexandria, a bull is attacked by a crocodile; only the head and legs are visible⁷⁹³. The lower field is thus bordered by the formation and landscape of the Nile River. We can notice that the Nile River is depicted as a watercourse drawn in the form of wavy lines filled with fish and plants; it comes out of the jug and from the mouth of the crocodile or hippopotamus, where it flows in two wavy lines along the side of the mosaic and turns into four lines at the bottom. It is depicted in the Nile River, a sailing boat with a person and utensils inside, surrounded by Nile birds and plants⁷⁹⁴. The boats and the fishermen are

crowns of river plants. Almost always in a reclining position, leaning on either a crocodile, a hippopotamus or a sphinx, although it can also be leaned on an urn - in the traditional way of the river gods - or on other less common objects such as a tree or a biga. He usually holds a cornucopia loaded with fruits or ears of wheat, or even a rhyton. Finally, he often appears surrounded by children or putti (pecheis), which represented the cubits of height to which the flood of his own flow must have reached.

⁷⁸⁶ Zori, 1966, p.131.

⁷⁸⁷ Versluys, 2002, pp. 226-227, fig. 125; Habas, 2021, pp.173- 174, fig.5.

⁷⁸⁸ Jentel, LIMC VI, 1992, s.v. Neilos, p.720, figs.1-6.

⁷⁸⁹ Jentel, LIMC VI, 1992, s.v. Neilos, pp.720-721, figs.7-18; Bakhoum, 1999, pp.89-91.

⁷⁹⁰ Jentel, LIMC VI, 1992, s.v. Neilos, pp.720-721, figs.7-18.

⁷⁹¹ Zori indicates that it represents a small fowl from the species "Pediceps Cristatus". Zori, 1966, p. 131.

⁷⁹² The nilometer was originally a simple inscription on the wall and later became a covered staircase leading from the temple platform to the Nile River. It is believed that in the Ptolemaic period, a new type of nilometer was introduced consisting of a well with a spiral staircase inside or around it, such as the nilometers of the temples of Kom Ombo and Edfu. Since the early Roman period, we found a kind of nilometer, consisting of a rectangular basin with stairs leading to it, as evidenced by the nilometer of the temple of Khnum at Elephantine described by Strabo. Later in the Roman period, another type was found, which the nilometers were transferred from the wall to the column; it was placed in the center of a well or basin, such as the nilometer of Rhoda island in Cairo, and the column was standing inside the well and not next to it, where the levels of each new flood are recorded on the column. All of these types were used together. Wild, 1981, p. 25-34; Meyboom, 1995, p. 244-245, fn., 77,78.

⁷⁹³ Zori mentioned that it represents a tiger trying to devour a bull.

⁷⁹⁴ Zori, 1966, pp.131-132, fig.4, pl.11-13; Balty, 1984, p.828, pl. CXXXI, 2; Hamarneh, 1999, p. 186; Versluys, 2002, pp. 226-227, Cat.125, fig.147; Turnheim, 2002, pp. 27-28, figs. 5, 13; Sadeh, 2006, pp. 203-220, Fig.1; Hachlili, 2009, p.97, fig. V-1, pls. V.1, XII.1.

often depicted as part of the Nilotic scenes. Actually, the depiction of the sailing boat carrying wine on the mosaics may reflect two traditions: the first is that Egypt is one of the most vital regions in wine production, and the other is that the Nile represents the main transportation route in Egypt⁷⁹⁵. Versluys argued that the boat might have been filled with offerings to the Nile that were made at the height of the flood⁷⁹⁶.

The Nilotic scenes received great success in the Byzantine mosaics in the Levant, whether on the borders of the mosaic or decorating the whole floor, dating back to the fifth and sixth centuries AD. As we mentioned earlier, they were found in Syria in Sarrin (**Fig. 33**), Lebanon in Porphyreon (**Fig. 47**), and Palestine in Sepphoris (**Fig. 245**). There were also found inside churches and houses; for example, two mosaics were discovered in the church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes in Tabgha, Palestine. They depict similar Nilotic scenes, such as the Nile plants and birds, and in the northern part, the nilometer is shown, which bearing Greek numbers A and I, represents the height of the Nile flood, while in the southern part, a city is displayed with a gate and towers⁷⁹⁷. Another mosaic was found in a Byzantine church or perhaps a house in Umm al Manabi on Mount Ajlun in Jordan, but only a sketch of the mosaic is preserved, which contained an image of Egypt with its monuments and the personification of the main river "Νιλως", of which only the inscription on the left of the nilometer for the measurement of floods is preserved⁷⁹⁸.

The geographical conception of Egypt, albeit extremely simplified, is not difficult to recognize in Leontis' mosaic, consisting of the Nile's sources, which coincide with the sources of flood water, protected by the river god himself, the river's favorable course, and finally, its mouth, or the Nile delta, represented by the city of Alexandria. The depiction of the city of Alexandria appeared on the mosaic of Sepphoris in Palestine (**Fig. 245**), in which two knights come from the side of a column with a Corinthian capital, topped with a statue, perhaps a statue of Diocletian⁷⁹⁹, and they go towards the gate to announce the celebration of the Nile. Hachlili mentioned that this depiction is a schematic depiction of a building more than a

⁷⁹⁵ Hachlili, 2009, p.105.

⁷⁹⁶ Versluys, 2002, p. 280.

⁷⁹⁷ Balty, 1984, pp. 227-228, pl. CXXXI, 1; Michaeli, 2003, pp. 127-129, figs. 10a-b; Hachlili, 2009, p.97, fig. V-2a,b.

⁷⁹⁸ Piccirillo, 1993, pp. 37, 341, fig. 752; Hamarneh, 1999, p. 186; Hachlili, 2009, p.100.

⁷⁹⁹ Empereur, 1998, p.103.

city⁸⁰⁰. It can be seen the representation of the walled city in Gerasa in two churches: the Church of Saint John the Baptist around 531 AD and the Church of Saints Peter and Paul around 533 AD (**Figs. 119-120**). In both scenes, the city of Alexandria and its famous lighthouse, Pharos, and the cities of Memphis and Menuthis are depicted separately⁸⁰¹. The walled cities are also represented on the mosaic of the Madaba map, in which two towers surrounding a walled gate are displayed, in addition to the flowing Nile with seven fish⁸⁰². According to Piccirillo and Hachlili, the representations of Egyptian cities in Nile mosaics have been understood as a supplication for the ongoing prosperity⁸⁰³.

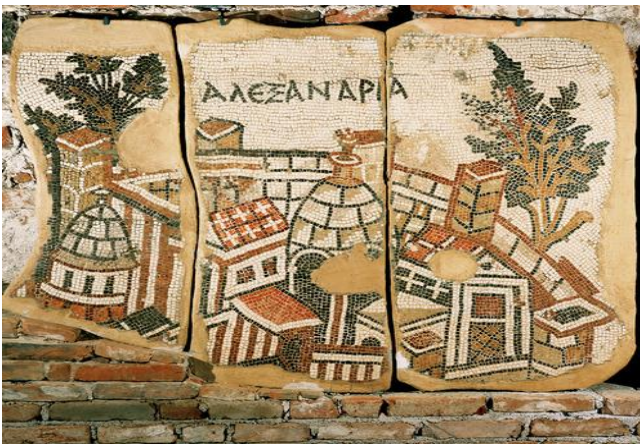


Figure 119. A mosaic of the Church of St. John the Baptist, Gerasa.

Figure 120. A mosaic of the Church of St. Peter and Paul, Gerasa.

Another example is a famous mosaic floor discovered in the central area of the church of St. Stephen in Umm el-Rasas, situated 30 km southeast of Madaba and 50 km south of Amman, Jordan (**Figs. 121-122**). This mosaic contains an outer border depicting fifteen cities from Palestine and Arabia, while the inner border showcases ten Nile Delta cities within a scenic representation of the Nile region⁸⁰⁴. The portrayal of the cities of the Nile Delta is highly

⁸⁰⁰ Hachlili, 2009, p.103.

⁸⁰¹ Hamarneh, 1999, p. 186.

⁸⁰² Piccirillo, 1993, pp.30-34.

⁸⁰³ Piccirillo, 1993, p.34; Hachlili, 1998, p. 113.

⁸⁰⁴ The mosaic was made in the year 785 AD during the Umayyad period, atop a pre-existing mosaic floor that dates back to 587 AD. The mosaic illustrates significant pilgrimage centers on both the western and eastern banks of the Jordan River, representing important pilgrimage routes in the Levant. By showcasing crucial Christian centers and pilgrimage paths within a church setting, visitors may have had the opportunity to engage in a symbolic pilgrimage, reenacting the journey that originally led them to these sites. Therefore, it is logical to propose that the cities located in the Egyptian Delta were integral to religious centers and, as such, served as

stylized, featuring two to four buildings in each vignette. These structures are depicted with a combination of frontal and perspective views. Frequently, tower-like structures with a square floor plan are juxtaposed with longer buildings featuring rectangular floor plans and gabled roofs⁸⁰⁵. The cities of the Nile Delta include Tamiathis (Damietta), Panau (Abusir Bana), Pilusen (Pelusium), Antinau, Iraklion (Thonis-Herakleion), Alexandria, Kasin (Kasion), Thenessos (Tell Tennis), Kynopolis (near Abusir Bana), and Pseudostomon⁸⁰⁶.



Figure 121. The Nile mosaic in the church of St. Stephan, Umm el-Rasas.

significant pilgrimage destinations or, at the very least, popular rest stops for pilgrims. Eckersley, 2016, pp.185, 189-197; Lehmann, Kenawi, 2022, pp. 225-241, figs. 1-6.

⁸⁰⁵ Tower houses were often used as residences and became a prevalent architectural feature in Egyptian cities from the Late Period onward. Depictions and archaeological evidence of these tower houses have been documented in Egypt since the 7th century BC. Numerous towns in the Delta region, including Tell Balamun, Buto, Tell el-Dabaa, Kom al-Ahmer, and Kom Wasit, have revealed the presence of these structures. From Roman times onward, tower houses became a consistent and distinctive element defining Nilotic scenes. Such scenes are evident in various Hellenistic and Roman mosaics and wall paintings, like those found in the Mosaic of Palestrina, as well as in other examples discovered in Pompeii or Herculaneum. Lehmann, Kenawi, 2022, pp. 232-236, fig. 7.

⁸⁰⁶ Antinau and Pseudostomon remain unidentified. Lehmann, Kenawi, 2022, pp. 236-237.

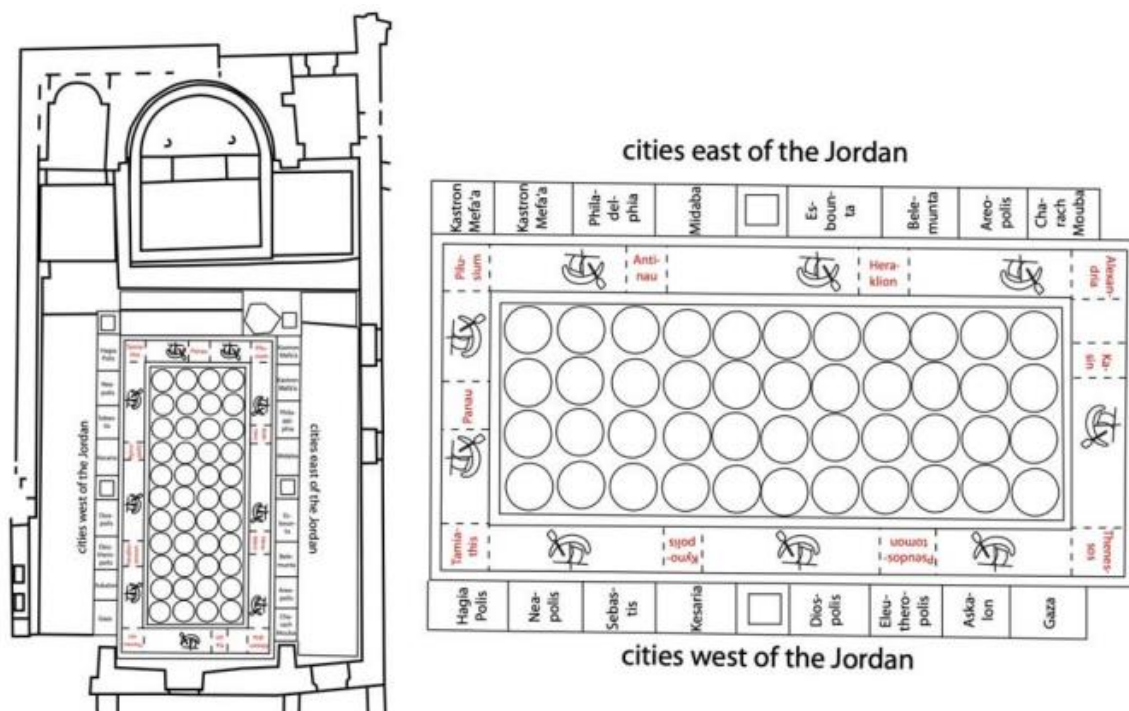


Figure 122. Sketch of the composition of the mosaic of St. Stephan, Umm el-Rasas.

The most distinctive animals in Egypt were the crocodile and the hippopotamus; they were so common in the Nilotic scenes. The hippopotamus is the animal clearly associated with the personification of the Nile⁸⁰⁷, while the crocodile can be seen as a sacred animal in the temples in the worship of the god "Sobek", but its religious aspect in the Nilotic scenes does not appear⁸⁰⁸. The crocodile struggle is usually depicted trying to devour a bull in the Nilotic scenes in Byzantine mosaics and may also have appeared in the frame of the Haditha chapel mosaic⁸⁰⁹. It is suggested that the scene of a crocodile trying to devour a bull or a donkey is derived from the scene of the Greek painter Nealkes which was described by Pliny⁸¹⁰. The crocodile is also depicted in various representations in the Levant, such as on the Sepphoris mosaic, a crocodile attacking a fish (**Fig.245**); on the mosaic of Sarrin, a child riding a

⁸⁰⁷ Jentel, LIMC VI, 1992, s.v. Neilos, pp.720-721, figs.7-18; Bakhoum, 1999, pp.89-91.

⁸⁰⁸ The crocodile appeared all over Egypt in the Nile and many channels and lakes. The Egyptian attitude towards this extremely dangerous animal was ambiguous. On the one hand, it was tracked and hunted; on the other, it was worshiped and honored. Hachlili, 1998, p. 115; Versluys, 2002, p.265; Hachlili, 2009, p.104.

⁸⁰⁹ Avi-Yonah, 1972, pp.118- 120, Pl.20-23; Balty, 1984, pp.228- 229, pl. CXXX, 4; Hachlili, 1998, p. 110, fig. 3; Michaeli, 2003, p. 125, fig. 9; Hachlili, 2009, p.97, fig. pl.V.2b; Eckersley, 2016, fig. 94a-b.

⁸¹⁰ In the time of Ptolemy III, Nealkes drew a naval battle between Egyptians and Persians, and to show that this battle took place on the submerged Nile River and not the sea, he added a donkey to the water's edge that was dragged by a crocodile, and therefore it appears that it is an Egyptian model in the Nilotic scenes. In the Late Period, the donkey sometimes was replaced with a cow. Pliny, Nat. His., 35, 142; Versluys, 2002, p. 267.

crocodile (**Fig. 33**)⁸¹¹, and a crocodile depicted in the bottom of the mosaic of Porphyreon (**Fig. 47**). The Romans considered the crocodile a personification of the Nile's land; it is often depicted to highlight the brutal nature of the animal⁸¹². For Christians in the time of Justinian, the crocodile may have symbolized the forces of evil⁸¹³.

Researchers differed in the interpretation of these Nilotic scenes; Bonneau suggested, and Frankfurter agreed with him, that the veneration of the Nile flood was a tradition linked to popular beliefs because of its strong economic implications and sufficiently independent from the official religion, so it was difficult to stop these pagan rituals. From this point, one may understand the extent of their continuation until the Byzantine period⁸¹⁴. Cyril of Jerusalem condemns this practice among Christians in his mystagogical catecheses⁸¹⁵. A papyrus from Oxyrhynchus addresses the Nile Festival in 424 AD⁸¹⁶. Another Greek document preserved in the British Museum dates to the sixth century AD and mentions the Nile and its sacred rites, which are the source of joy and pleasure⁸¹⁷. There is also a papyrus document from Antinopolis, which dates to the sixth century AD and contains a Christian hymn to the glorification of the Nile, which ends with the call of Christ as the source of its power, the benefactor and the savior of human lives now and forever. Thus, this indicates that the river rises through the power of Christ⁸¹⁸.

While Balty asserts that the Nilotic scenes in the fifth and sixth centuries AD were inherited from the Hellenistic period, in spite of this, they lost their significance, which is the worship of the Nile and the reverence of Egyptian nature, and became merely indefinite decorations bearing different meanings; in some cases, the scenes were considered to have Christian symbolism, as an allegory of Paradise, or Creation⁸¹⁹. Weiss and Talgam agreed with Balty's opinion that the Nilotic scenes in the Byzantine period may express different meanings; they indicate that the Nile was chosen in the mosaic of Sepphoris because of its fertility,

⁸¹¹ Balty, 1990, pl. XXXII, 2.

⁸¹² Versluys, 2002, p. 265.

⁸¹³ Hachlili, 1998, p. 115; Hachlili, 2009, p.105.

⁸¹⁴ Bonneau, 1971, p.54; Frankfurter, 1998, pp.45-46.

⁸¹⁵ Cyril of Jerusalem I. 8; PG, 33, col. 1072B.

⁸¹⁶ P. Oxy, XLIII. 3148; Frankfurter, 1998, p.45.

⁸¹⁷ Bonneau, 1964, pp. 410-413.

⁸¹⁸ Weiss, Talgam, 2002, p. 70.

⁸¹⁹ Balty, 1984, pp. 833-834.

abundance, and decorative value of the composition⁸²⁰. Hachlili mentioned that the Nilotic scenes on Byzantine mosaics were not intended to depict the landscapes of Egypt but rather to reflect the view of the Nile as expressed by the artists of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and these scenes were chosen again by the artists of the Byzantine period, but in their own style. It is likely that the Nile themes in the mosaics, which were very popular and used mainly for decoration, have been taken from stylized books, which enable artists and clients to choose either full Nilotic scenes or separate motifs without any symbolic meaning to them⁸²¹.

⁸²⁰ Weiss and Talgam described that in Sepphoris was found a drainage system in the southeast corner of the room, they suggest that this room was somewhat related to the celebrations held in honor of the Nile flood where water was poured on the celebrants or on the floor of the hall. Weiss, Talgam, 2002, p.71.

⁸²¹ Hachlili, 1998, pp. 118-119; Hachlili, 2009, p.109.

III. 7. Dion

The location of the Decapolis city of Dion (modern-day Tell Al-Ash'ari) is still disputed, but ancient literature has handed down that it was founded by Alexander the Great and that the city was conquered by Alexander Jannaeus⁸²². A terracotta statuette of Isis-Lactans was found in Tafas, located on the site of the ancient city of Dion, about 20 km northeast of the modern city of Der'aa (**Fig. 123**)⁸²³. Isis is seated on a backless chair with turned legs, her legs resting on a footstool; the seat is covered with a cushion; and her head is slightly turned to the right. She is depicted with wavy hair, pulled back behind the ears, and falling with Libyan curls over her shoulders and back. She is adorned with the *basileion* crown, consisting of two horns between the sun disc and two small feathers. She is wearing a chiton surmounted by the himation, which forms the Isis knot on her right breast, and her right-hand puts on her left breast, which she feeds Harpocrates, who is naked; his left hand is holding his mother's right wrist⁸²⁴.



Figure 123. A terracotta statuette of Isis- Lactans, Tafas, the National Museum of Damascus. Inv. No. 3226, H. 16 cm.

⁸²² Riedl, 2003, p. 29.

⁸²³ It is preserved in the National Museum of Damascus, Inv. No. C. 3226 = 6977; Zouhdi, 1976, p. 96, fig. 34; Tran Tam Tinh, 1973, p.77, A-29, fig. 56; Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V. 1990, s.v. Isis, no. 235; Abu al-Faraj al-Ush, 1980, p. 95, fig.15.

⁸²⁴ In Beirut, a white limestone torso dating from the late Hellenistic or early Roman periods was unearthed. This sculpture depicts a deity holding an infant in her left arm while gently pressing her breast with her right hand as if to express the act of nursing. The statue bears a striking resemblance to the iconography associated with Isis-Lactans. However, as noted by Ronzevalle, it remains uncertain whether this portrayal represents Isis breastfeeding her son. The ambiguity arises from the statue's incomplete state and the impression that the goddess may not be actively nursing the seemingly drowsy infant. Ronzevalle, 1927, pp. 161–162, pl. XXII, 1.

The depiction of Isis breastfeeding her son likely existed before the eighth century BC, as evidenced by the statue of Queen Chapenoupet II in the Louvre Museum, where she is portrayed as Isis. In this statue, she is depicted with her right hand holding her left breast and the child on her lap. Although only the arm and left hand of the child are visible, the child's presence is implied as his left hand squeezes his mother's right elbow⁸²⁵. A Hellenized variant of this representation emerged and was introduced in Alexandria around the second century BC⁸²⁶. This variant notably influenced aspects such as clothing, hairstyles, and the design of the throne⁸²⁷. These images of Isis were found in abundance in most materials, especially terracotta⁸²⁸, marble⁸²⁹, and Alexandrian coins⁸³⁰. The depiction of Isis nursing Harpocrates also underwent variations. She was often depicted seated on a throne, which became the most widespread and diverse representation. Additionally, she was occasionally portrayed emerging from a calyx of acanthus leaves, or sitting on a wicker basket, or even standing⁸³¹. A significant quantity of statuettes depicting Isis-Lactans have been unearthed in the eastern Mediterranean, predominantly in northern Egypt. Despite their reduced quantity, these statuettes have also been uncovered in regions such as the Levant, Cyprus, and Turkey⁸³².

In the fourth century AD, statues of Isis-Lactans became extremely rare, exemplified by a statue discovered in El-Sheikh Ibada (Antinopolis) in Egypt⁸³³. This find signifies the transitional period and, consequently, marks the decline of the Isiac cult preceding the ascent of Christianity. In Rome, Constantine's victory and his allegiance to the new religion did not yet mark the death of the Eastern cults, especially Cybele and Isis. Until the decree of 391 under Theodosius I, the Isiac rituals continued to be celebrated. And the coins issued for the health and fortune of the emperor with the effigies of Isis and Serapis seem to have survived until the end of the century⁸³⁴.

⁸²⁵ Tran Tam Tinh, 1973, p.8, fig. 7.

⁸²⁶ Sharpe, 2014, p. 154.

⁸²⁷ Tran Tam Tinh, 1973, p.31.

⁸²⁸ Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, p.778, nos.232-236.

⁸²⁹ Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, p.778, nos.227-231.

⁸³⁰ Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, pp.777-778, nos.217-226.

⁸³¹ Tran Tam Tinh, 1973, p.31.

⁸³² Sharpe, 2014, p. 154.

⁸³³ Tran Tam Tinh, 1973, p. 37, A-2, fig. 17.

⁸³⁴ Tran Tam Tinh, 1973, p. 37.

III.8. The Village of Marwa

In the village of Marwa, located approximately 7 km northeast of Irbid and 2 km from Beit-Ras in Jordan, a tomb with colored wall painting was discovered in 1935 in Trans-Jordan (**Fig. 124**)⁸³⁵. Unfortunately, it is no longer accessible today. The scene depicted in the main chamber, inside the arcosolium, is set against a white background. At the bottom of the arcosolium bench, wreaths adorned with yellow festoons and ribbons are depicted. Among these wreaths, three heads of women with long, curly black hair are portrayed. The facial features of the women appear natural, without bulging eyes or large mouths.

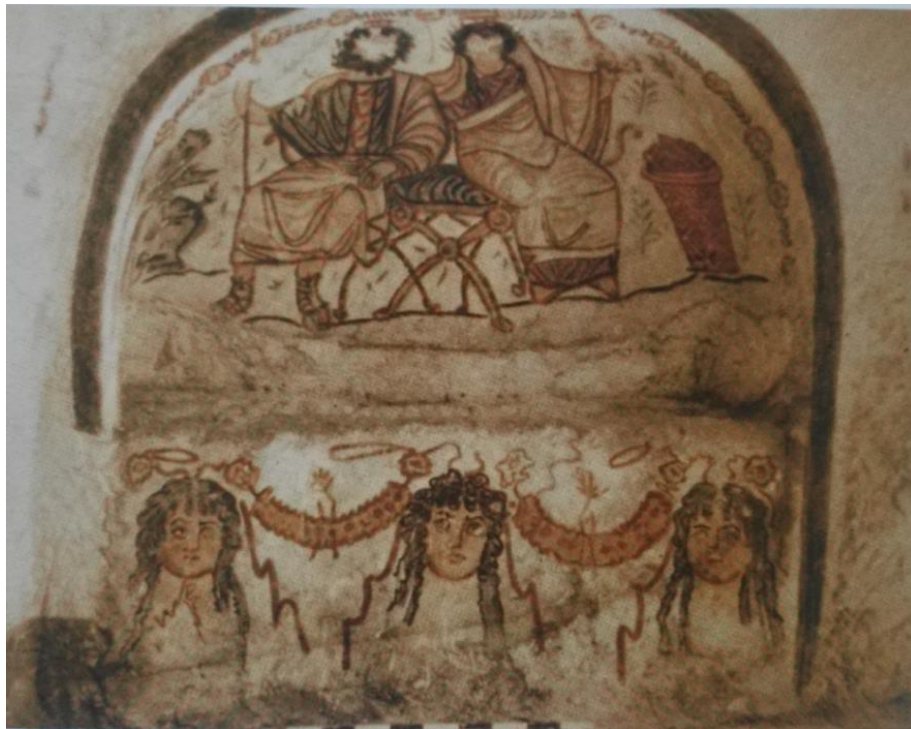


Figure 124. A mural painting in a tomb in the village of Marwa.

From the top of the arcosolium, there is a curved wreath of leaves and flowers surrounding the entrance. Below it, a couple is depicted sitting on a folding throne with crossed legs. Circular rings are visible at the joints of the throne's four feet, although one of them is partially hidden by the woman's seated position. The throne is arranged in an orthogonal shape and features

⁸³⁵ The entrance to the tomb is located in the south, the main room takes a quadrangular shape, and two of the walls contain Loculi openings. To the right of the entrance, the acrosolium was excavated, about a meter from the ground level, it had been covered by a lid. McCown, 1942, pp.1-4; Barbet, Vibert-Guigue, 1994, pp.257-258.

armrests and a cushion with black lines.⁸³⁶ On the left side of the scene, a bearded man is shown holding a scepter with a rounded end in his right hand and placing his left hand on his knee. He is dressed in a green chiton with a red ribbon in the middle, covered by the himation. He wears a long sandal and adorns his head with the *kalathos*. Unfortunately, the facial features of both the male figure and the female accompanying him are damaged. The female figure is depicted with her right arm resting on the man's shoulder, while her left hand is raised, holding a short scepter with a rounded end as well. She wears a veil that partially covers her hair and shoulders. Her attire consists of a red chiton covered by a himation in beige, which matches the color of her companion's himation. She also wears a laurel wreath on her head, with the *kalathos* positioned above it⁸³⁷.

The dog Kerberos, with multiple heads painted in black, is depicted to the right of the male figure. Due to the state of the scene from the side, it is not easy to describe the animal accurately, but one of its heads is depicted frontally and has a rounded ear, while the other head is displayed on the side and has a pointed ear similar to the face of a dog's animal⁸³⁸. The scene's right depicts a large wicker basket filled with yellow-colored objects, apparently like flowers, punctuating the green wreaths that dominate the whole scene. On the right, between the arcosolium and the entrance, is an inscription in black letters framed by *tabula ansata*; it is not easy to read, and only the name "Pluton" can be seen⁸³⁹.

Bricault described the couple as Isis and Serapis in his catalog, but he provided no supporting evidence for this identification⁸⁴⁰. It is well known that Serapis was often equated with Pluto or Hades; the *kalathos* and the Kerberos dog appear together⁸⁴¹. As Plutarch stated, Serapis is none other than Pluto, and Isis is the same as Persephone⁸⁴². Additionally, Clement of Alexandria emphasized that the statue of the Egyptian Serapis represented Pluto⁸⁴³. It is worth noting that Isis is sometimes depicted wearing the *kalathos* when she presents as a syncretic

⁸³⁶ McCown, 1942, pp. 6-7.

⁸³⁷ Barbet, Vibert-Guigue, 1994, pp. 258-259.

⁸³⁸ Barbet, Vibert-Guigue, 1994, p. 259.

⁸³⁹ Barbet, Vibert-Guigue, 1994, p. 259.

⁸⁴⁰ Bricault, 2001, p. 76.

⁸⁴¹ Stambaugh, 1972, pp. 27-35.

⁸⁴² Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 27.

⁸⁴³ Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus*, IV, 48, 2.

figure, such as Isis-Tyche/Fortuna, Isis-Demeter, and Isis-Aphrodite. Therefore, it is possible that the artist of the Marwa painting had Persephone and Isis in mind when creating the depiction.

We can see the female figure depicted putting her right arm on the shoulder of her companion. It is known that the depictions of Egyptian royal couples in their tombs, as well as in statues, depict a woman placing her hand on her husband's shoulder and the representation of the Egyptian gods⁸⁴⁴. For example, a limestone statue representing Isis and Osiris from Heliopolis (**Fig. 125**), east of Ain Shams, was discovered in 1973. It probably dates back to the third intermediate period and depicts Isis and Osiris sitting on the throne. On the left, Osiris is wearing the Atef crown, a uraeus, and a royal beard, his hands on his chest; he holds the flail and crook. Isis sits next to him, wearing a wig decorated with the sun disc between two horns; her left hand rests on her knee, while her right passes behind Osiris's back and is placed on his right shoulder⁸⁴⁵.



Figure 125. A limestone statue of Isis and Osiris, Heliopolis, Egyptian Museum, Inv. No. JE 92591.

⁸⁴⁴ Daumas, 1965, figs. 27, 44, 83.

⁸⁴⁵ It is preserved in the Egyptian Museum, Inv. No. JE 92591, Its height is 73 cm, and its width is 32 cm. Bickel, Tallet, 2000, pp.129-134, figs. 1- 4.

CHAPTER IV

ARABIA

IV.1. Petra

The Nabataean kingdom occupied the territory of Transjordan and the northwest corner of the Arabian Peninsula, southern Syria, and the Negev region (**Fig. 126**)⁸⁴⁶. Petra was the capital city of Nabataea⁸⁴⁷, located in the northeast of the Gulf of Aqaba. The site is now located in the south of Jordan, in Wadi Musa; it can be accessed through a narrow path, which is a groove known today as the Siq. Petra was the central city on the trade routes connecting southern Arabia to the Mediterranean Sea and crossing Jordan⁸⁴⁸. Its location at the crossroads of major trade routes facilitated the flourishing of commerce and cultural exchange between various ancient civilizations. The site of Petra was discovered by the Swiss explorer Johann Burckhardt in 1812. Since then, many systematic expeditions have followed in the region⁸⁴⁹.

The Nabataean history was unknown in the historical sources before 312 BC when Antigonus Monophthalmos occupied the Phoenician coastal cities. He sent an expedition to associate the Nabataeans to his side in his struggle with Ptolemy I, but his attempt failed as they did not accept. Then he prepared another expedition against the Nabataeans; again, this second expedition did not succeed. He then returned with the gifts from them, such as frankincense,

⁸⁴⁶ Bowersock, 2003, p.19.

⁸⁴⁷ Parr, 2003, p. 27.

⁸⁴⁸ Nabataean caravans remained in operation until the Arab conquest in the 7th century AD. Butcher, 2003, pp. 96-98.

⁸⁴⁹ Brünnow, Domaszewski, 1904; Bowersock, 2003.

myrrh, and five hundred talents of silver⁸⁵⁰. By the early first century BC, the Nabataeans stretched from Sinai to Damascus, incorporating the farmland of the Hauran region⁸⁵¹. In that way, they extended their control over the trade routes of the perfumes and spices that passed from the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula into the Jordanian Hisma and crossed the Wadi Araba, reaching the Mediterranean ports of Gaza and Rhinocolura⁸⁵².

The literary sources attest to the existence of relationships between Egypt and the Nabataeans during the 1st century BC. In 47 BC, the Nabataean king Malichus I (58-30 BC) sent his forces to help Julius Caesar during the “Alexandrian War”⁸⁵³, and he also offered his support to Marcus Antonius in the “Battle of Actium”⁸⁵⁴. In 25 BC, Augustus sent an expedition, headed by Aelius Gallus, the prefect of Egypt, to Arabia Felix (modern-day Yemen), with the support of the Nabataeans⁸⁵⁵. At that time, the Egyptians imported from the Nabataean region spices and also bitumen of the Dead Sea, which was used for mummification⁸⁵⁶. Many Nabataean inscriptions were also discovered in Egypt, especially in Upper Egypt, in the northeast of the Delta, and in the Sinai region⁸⁵⁷. One of these inscriptions was found in Tell esh-suqafiya, west of Ismailiya, and it dates back to the year 18 of Cleopatra VII and the year 26 of the Nabataean king Malichus I⁸⁵⁸. It contains a dedication to the god Dushara, the main god of the Nabataeans, and it is possible that there was a Nabataean sanctuary for Dushara at Daphne, modern Tell Defenneh, Egypt⁸⁵⁹. However, these inscriptions provide evidence that the Nabataeans had significant interactions with the Egyptian cities, not only Sinai⁸⁶⁰. In addition to that, some Nabataean painted fine-ware pottery sherds have been found in the

⁸⁵⁰ Diodorus, Library of History, XIX, 94-100. His description derived from Hieronymus of Cardia, a contemporary eyewitness of the actions. Healey, 2001, p.28; Schmid, 2008, p.360-361; Wenning, 2013, pp. 12-13.

⁸⁵¹ Butcher, 2003, p.96.

⁸⁵² Bowersock, 2003, p.19.

⁸⁵³ Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, XIV, 137; Zayadine, 1990, p.151; Schwentzel, 2014, p.147.

⁸⁵⁴ Alpass, 2013, p.15.

⁸⁵⁵ Strabo, Geography., XVI, 4, 22-24.

⁸⁵⁶ Diodorus, Library of History, II, 48; XIX, 98-99, 1-3; Accettola, 2012, p.41.

⁸⁵⁷ Littmann, Meredith, 1953, pp. 1-28; Littmann, Meredith, 1954, pp. 211-276; Jones, Hammond, et al., 1988, pp. 47-57; Zayadine, 1990, pp.151-174; Toll, 1994, pp.381-382; Durand, 2012, pp.85-90. The Nabataeans were Arabs who used an Aramic dialect as their official language.

⁸⁵⁸ Jones, Hammond, et al., 1988, pp. 47-57; Fiema, Jones, 1990, pp. 239-248; Zayadine, 1990, p. 156; Schwentzel, 2014, p. 154.

⁸⁵⁹ Littmann, Meredith, 1954, p. 215.

⁸⁶⁰ Littmann, Meredith, 1953, pp. 1-18; Littmann, Meredith, 1954, pp. 211-246.

Egyptian Red Sea ports in Myos Hormos (Qusayr al-Qadim)⁸⁶¹ and Berenike⁸⁶². Through these close relationships, the Egyptian culture influenced the religious, social, and political life in Petra, and the most significant impact of this influence is visible in the architecture of the massive rock tombs⁸⁶³. Finally, in 106 AD, the emperor Trajan took the opportunity of the death of Rabbel II and transformed the Nabataean kingdom into a Roman province under the name of "Provincia Arabia"⁸⁶⁴.



Figure 126. Map of the Nabataean Kingdom.

⁸⁶¹ Schmid, 2004, p. 418, no.10; Schmid, 2007, p. 66, no.10; Durand, 2012, p. 87.

⁸⁶² Schmid, 2004, p. 418, no.11; Schmid, 2007, p. 66, no.11; Durand, 2012, p. 87.

⁸⁶³ Mckenzie, 1990.

⁸⁶⁴ Bowersock, 2003, p. 22.

IV.1.1. The Nabataean pantheon's main deities

Dushara, the main god of the Nabataeans, was assimilated with the Greek gods such as Zeus and Dionysus during the Hellenistic and Roman periods⁸⁶⁵. Al- Kutba, the god of writing and scribes, was equated with the Egyptian god Thot and the Greek god Hermes. Among the three goddesses revered by the Nabataeans, Al-Uzza, “the mighty one”, played a significant role as the patroness alongside Dushara. She was associated with love, fertility, and vegetation and is often identified with Aphrodite and perhaps even with Isis. Another prominent goddess was Allat, who received veneration in locations like Hauran and Wadi Ramm (Iram). Allat was linked with Athena in her attributes and characteristics. Lastly, Manat, the goddess of human destiny, was assimilated with the Greek goddess Nemesis⁸⁶⁶.

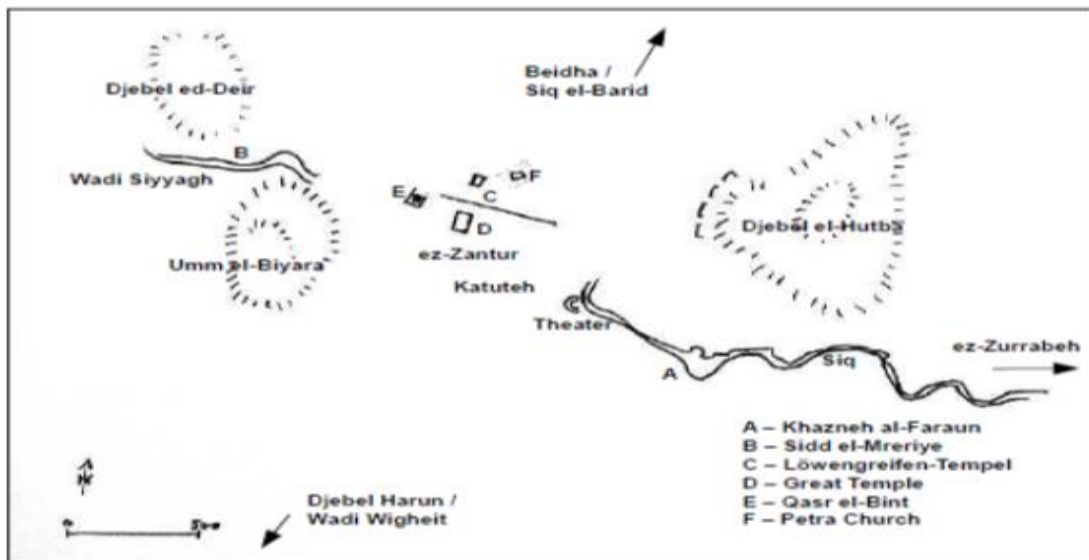


Figure 127. The sites of Petra, Vaelske, 2011, Karte, IX.

In addition to the worship of the Nabataean gods in Petra, the Egyptian deities were also documented in Petra (Fig. 127). Notably, two sanctuaries dedicated to the goddess Isis were discovered in Sidd el-Mreriyye and Wadi Abu Olleqa (Figs. 128-130, 134). One sanctuary is located to the west, above the city center of Petra, while the other is situated several kilometers south of Petra. The archaeological findings include various statuettes of Isis, Harpocrates, Serapis, and Osiris, which were unearthed in Petra (Figs. 135-138, 146-149,

⁸⁶⁵ Healey, 2001, p. 97.

⁸⁶⁶ Healey, 2001; Zayadine, 2003, pp. 57- 64; Alpass, 2013.

151-155, 163-169). These artifacts were discovered in significant locations such as the Temple of the Winged Lions (Figs. 135-138), EZ-Zantur (Fig. 147-149), in the city center, and the Zurrabeh pottery kiln (Fig. 151-153) situated between the modern city in Wadi Musa and the ancient city of Petra.

IV.1. 2. The Sanctuary of Isis in Sidd el-Mreriyye

The representation of Isis was strongly present in Petra during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and it is possible to trace her presence in different types. A representation of Isis was found inside a niche in Sidd el-Mreriyye in Petra in 1964 (Figs. 128-130)⁸⁶⁷, about two hundred meters north of the entrance to Wadi Siyyagh on a high rocky ledge, but unfortunately, the ledge is now collapsed. A row of four niches was found beside a basin carved in the rock (Figs. 129-130), which was probably provided with the necessary water for offerings and purification related to Isis's mystery cult⁸⁶⁸.

The first niche on the left, which is a little bit distant from the other three niches, is empty of decorations. The second niche contains a relief figure of the goddess Isis, and this is confirmed by a Nabataean inscription on both sides of the niche, in six lines on the right and five on the left, which reads, "*This goddess is Isis, which the sons of Bar... of Qaiuma... made on the first (day) of (the month of) Iyyar in the fifth year of the reign of Obodas the king*". Some scholars suggested that the inscription dates from the reign of king Obodas I (96-85 BC), but it is more likely to date from the reign of king Obodas III (30-9 BC), according to the inscription in the year 26/25 BC⁸⁶⁹. The other two niches—the first one seems to show the remnants of a triangular head, while the last consists of two holes, one inside the other—Donner mentioned that this niche might have been intended as a temple façade. It is designed to include a small betyl panel, as elsewhere in Petra⁸⁷⁰.

⁸⁶⁷ The height of the niche is 65 cm, the width 60 cm, and the relief 59 cm. Milik, Starcky, 1975, p. 122, pl. XLIV, 2.

⁸⁶⁸ Donner, 1995, p. 12; Merklein, Wenning, 2001, p. 426; Janif, 2004, p. 124; Alpass, 2010, p. 97.

⁸⁶⁹ Milik, Starcky, 1975, p.121, pl. XLIV, 1; Bricault, 1992, p.39; Donner, 1995, p.13; Merklein, Wenning, 1998, pp. 166-169; Parlasca, 1998, p. 65; Healy, 2001, pp. 138-139; Bricault, RICIS, 404/ 0501; Belayche, 2007, pp.457-458; Alpass, 2010, p. 95.

⁸⁷⁰ Donner, 1995, p.16.



Figure 128. A sanctuary of Isis, Sidd el-Mreriyye, Petra. Alpass, 2010, fig.1.



Figure 129. A sanctuary of Isis, Sidd el-Mreriyye, Petra.



Figure 130. The representation of Isis in Sidd el-Mreriyye, Petra, the height of relief 59 cm.

Most scholars assumed that this place may have been a sanctuary for Isis's worship, and it could have been used by a private religious association “*Mrzh*”, dedicated to the goddess Isis, where this temple cannot contain large groups of worshippers. In contrast, Merklein and Wenning suggested a large terrace in front of this ledge to carry out the rituals⁸⁷¹. The goddess Isis is depicted seated on a chair without a back, with her legs resting on a footstool, and surrounded by round shapes on both sides (**Fig. 130**). Isis is shown wearing a long chiton with thin folds covering her feet, which is surmounted by the himation, which wraps her body and the left shoulder. She does not bear here her distinctive "Isis-knot" between her breasts. Unfortunately, the sculpture is partially destroyed; a few remains of a crown are still visible, possibly indicating that she wore the *basileion* crown. The face of the goddess is lost, but it is clear that she is represented with curly hair strands falling over her right shoulder. Since the sculpture is missing the arms, the goddess's specific pose or gesture cannot be determined with certainty⁸⁷². The ambiguity of the iconography of Isis here has led scholars to propose various interpretations and speculations:

Roche and Bricault, as well as Donner, have suggested that the relief represents Isis mourning her husband Osiris, as this particular form of Isis is well attested in Petra through other statuettes depicting the goddess with her right hand at her chin (**Figs. 135-136, 147-148, 151-155**)⁸⁷³, however, we have to say that here, the right hand of the goddess does not seem to be leaning towards her chin; even if the right hand is cut off at the elbow nowadays, it clearly appears that her arm is bent toward her chest. This detail has led Merklein and Wenning to propose that the representation might be of Isis Lactans (Isis breastfeeding her son Harpocrates)⁸⁷⁴. Nevertheless, against this theory, there is the fact that the relief clearly shows no trace of her son Harpocrates, as we should expect. In any case, we have here a very uncommon representation of Isis because she does not show any of her distinctive patterns

⁸⁷¹ Roche, 1987, pp.217-218; Bricault, 1992, p.39; Merklein, Wenning, 2001, p.424; Alpass, 2010, p. 95.

⁸⁷² Milik, Starcky, 1975, p.122, pl. XLIV, 2; Roche, 1987, pp. 217-218, fig.1; Wenning, 1987, p. 226; Bricault, 1992, p.39, no. I-5; Donner, 1995, pp.12-16, Abb.5-7; Merklein, Wenning, 2001, pp.425-426, figs.9-10; Bricault, 2001, p.76; Zayadine, 2003, pp. 63- 64, fig. 45; Janif, 2004, pp.122-128, figs.1-3, 5; Bartlett, 2007, pp.73-74, fig.19, 1 ; Alpass, 2010, pp. 95-98, figs.1-3; Vaelske, 2011, pp.316-320, Abb. e-19; Podvin, 2016, p.312.

⁸⁷³ Roche, 1987, p. 218; Bricault, 1992, p. 39, Doc. I-5; Donner, 1995, p.14; Parlasca, 1998, p.65; Bricault, 2006a, p.77.

⁸⁷⁴ Merklein, Wenning, 1998, p.172.

(no Isis knot, no presence of Harpocrates, the crown is damaged, and her arm was not directed to the chin).

It is worth noting that the most distinct representation of the goddess Isis in the Graeco-Roman world was the fringed garment with the knot, commonly known as *Knotenpalla*. This attire consisted of a long undergarment and an upper mantle, a large rectangular piece of cloth with a fringe on one side, worn over a simple chiton. The garment was wrapped around the body, crossed in the back, and its right corner was drawn over the right shoulder to create the characteristic knot between the breasts, fastened together with the front part of the wrap-around⁸⁷⁵. However, the goddess in Sidd el-Mreriyye seems to wear an unusual mantle covering the right arm on her breast, which is similar to the "Palliata type"⁸⁷⁶. A very good example of this style, a terracotta figurine excavated at Naukratis, Egypt (**Fig. 131**), which dates to the Ptolemaic Period, bears similarities to the type observed in this relief. The figurine depicts a standing woman holding a child with her left hand, wearing a long chiton and a wide himation; her right arm is almost entirely covered by the himation except for the hand, while her left arm is bare, with part of the himation falls over her left wrist⁸⁷⁷. It is possible that the portrayal of Isis in this relief followed the Hellenistic women in the "Tanagra style"⁸⁷⁸. We must conclude then that the goddess does not show any of her attributes here, and it would have been impossible to identify her as Isis without the inscriptions on both sides of the niche.



Figure 131. A terracotta statuette of a woman, Naukratis, the British Museum, Inv. No. GR 1886.4-I.1446.

⁸⁷⁵ Numerous theories have been put forth regarding the origin of the knot, but the prevailing conclusion points to its Egyptian roots, as it was worn by queens, noblewomen, and commoners from the New Kingdom. Albersmeier, 2018, pp. 458-459.

⁸⁷⁶ Merklein, Wenning, 2001, p.426, fig.10.

⁸⁷⁷ It is preserved in the British Museum, Inv. No. GR 1886, 0401.1446. Bailey, 2008, p. 141, pl.95, fig. 3518.

⁸⁷⁸ Merklein and Wenning suggested that this sculpture follows early Hellenistic models. It is probably that it was produced by a Greek sculptor; they excluded a local Nabataean artist. Merklein, Wenning, 2001, p.426.

According to Zayadine, the niche near the representation of Isis in the relief depicted a triangle-shaped head (**Fig. 129**), as it does not resemble the square betyls that usually represent the goddesses of Petra; he suggested that it probably symbolizes the phallus of Osiris, the husband of Isis⁸⁷⁹. Bricault agreed with his interpretation, arguing that such a presence would not be surprising in the temple of Isis, as this temple may have been linked to the mysteries of Osiris's resurrection⁸⁸⁰. On the other hand, Janif claimed that the two niches beside the one containing Isis represent the triad of Hierapolis, Atargatis, Hadad, and *Semeion*, as mentioned by the ancient writer Lucian⁸⁸¹. Janif drew attention to the resemblance between the unusual depiction of Isis in the relief and a figure found on a stela from Edessa (**Fig. 132**)⁸⁸². This stela represents a cone-shaped block (the *Semeion*) flanked by two sitting gods, Atargatis and Hadad, wearing long dresses and the *kalathos* crowns on their heads⁸⁸³.

However, Alpass criticizes Janif's opinion regarding the depiction of the triad, claiming that Janif's theory does not consider the fourth niche that might have contained an idol in a geometrical form, thus adding a fourth member to the triad. Alpass further argued that if we assume the depiction of the Hierapolis's triad in Sidd el Mreriyye, we can observe that the depiction of *Semeion* appears considerably larger in comparison to Hadad and Atargatis, and this is not the case in the representation of the triad, which Atargatis always depicts slightly larger than Hadad, as exemplified by the famous relief from Dura Europos (**Fig. 133**). Additionally, there is a betyl with stylized eyes located near the city center, identified as the goddess Atargatis through an inscription reading "Atargatis Manbigitess". Interestingly, Janif fails to provide an explanation as to why this particular figure was not depicted in a similar manner to the character under discussion, despite displaying awareness of the inscription⁸⁸⁴.

⁸⁷⁹ Zayadine, 1991, p.291, fig.10. The niche which depicted a triangle head may be represent Serapis sitting on the throne but it is not complete, Merklein and Wenning mentioned that there are remains of folds of dress have survived at the bottom left of the figure. Merklein, Wenning, 1998, p.173.

⁸⁸⁰ Bricault, 1992, p.39, Doc. I-5.

⁸⁸¹ Lucian, *De Dea Syria*, 31-33; Lightfoot, 2003, pp.540-547.

⁸⁸² Janif, 2004, p.123.

⁸⁸³ The stela is made of limestone, preserved in the Urfa Museum, Turkey. The order of the gods in sidd el Mreriyye contrasts with the usual depiction of the Hierapolis triad, where Atargatis usually stands to the left of the *Semeion* and Hadad on her right. Janif, 2004, pp.125-126, fig. 4.

⁸⁸⁴ Alpass, 2010, pp. 97-98.



Figure 132. A stela from Edessa, the Urfa Museum, Turkey, Janif, 2004, fig. 4.

Figure 133. A relief of Hadad and Atargatis from Dura Europos, Yale University, Inv. No. 1930.319.

The shape of the throne on which Isis sits is also intriguing and unusual. Milik and Starcky indicated that the goddess is seated on a seat without a backrest, and they noted the presence of unidentified objects on both sides of the goddess, which they interpreted as animals⁸⁸⁵. Janif supported this interpretation, identifying the objects as lions, thereby suggesting a direct connection with the depiction of Atargatis, who is often portrayed seated between a pair of lions⁸⁸⁶. On the contrary, Roche believed that Isis is seated on a throne with elaborate armrests, following Egyptian tradition⁸⁸⁷. Again, Donner suggested (and his opinion seems to us the most acceptable) that she is sitting on the rocks that could symbolize the rocky areas surrounding the location of Isis; it may be intended to show that Isis presides over the whole of Petra⁸⁸⁸.

The inscription of the Sidd el Mreriyye is considered the first documentary evidence in Petra about Isis's worship: "This goddess is Isis", beside her representation. Donner indicated that

⁸⁸⁵ Milik, Starcky, 1975, p. 122, Pl. XLIV, 2.

⁸⁸⁶ Janif, 2004, p. 124.

⁸⁸⁷ Roche, 1987, p. 218.

⁸⁸⁸ Donner, 1995, p.15; Tyche is also depicted seated on the rocks on Nabataean coins of Aretas III (84-61/60 BC) struck in Damascus. Auge, 1990, p.131, pl.1, fig.1b; Peter, 2012, p.66, Abb. 2; Mckenzie, Reyes, 2013, p. 203.

this inscription represented Isis's introduction, which she was previously unknown in Petra⁸⁸⁹. Wenning and Merklein suggested that the inscription served as an explanation for the mysterious and contradictory depiction of the goddess; likely, stripping her from Egyptian features that do not conform to the Nabataeans' conception may be the reason behind showing her merely as a majestic goddess sitting on the throne⁸⁹⁰. Two noteworthy points emerge from this discovery: firstly, the depiction of the goddess in relief and the accompanying Nabataean text indicate that the goddess Isis was venerated in her anthropomorphic form and that the Nabataeans were indeed the worshipers. Secondly, the isolated and water-rich location of this place of worship seems to have been ideal for the mystery cult of Isis, possibly practiced within the cult communities of the Nabataeans.

IV.1.3. The Sanctuary of Isis in Wadi Abu Olleqa

Another sculpture of the goddess Isis was discovered inside a niche in Wadi Abu Olleqa near Jebel Harun, approximately 5 km southwest of Qasr el-Bint (**Fig. 134**)⁸⁹¹. The site at Wadi Abu Olleqa is more complex than that at Wadi Siyyagh; it is spread across an upper and lower terrace, and the wadi's course divides the site into four quadrants and falls as a waterfall between two terraces⁸⁹². The goddess is represented sitting on a chair with no back, but unfortunately, her head is missing. She is dressed in a long chiton that covers her feet and is surmounted by the himation wrapped around her body. Although there is no inscription beside the figure, the distinctive Isis-knot between the breasts identifies her as the Egyptian goddess Isis⁸⁹³. Her hands are likewise damaged, but it appears that she is holding an attribute, most likely a plant branch or a feather. The top of her left forearm hangs over one of the goddess Isis's distinguishing features, the "situla," which generally houses the Nile's sacred water. Under her feet is a rectangular base; it is possible that the empty front side of the base once contained an inscription. Parr suggested that the inscription might have been carved on a

⁸⁸⁹ Donner, 1995, p. 13.

⁸⁹⁰ Merklein, Wenning, 2001, p.426.

⁸⁹¹ The width of the niche is 91 cm, and its height is 125 cm. The height of the sculpture of the goddess is 74 cm, with the base 88 cm, and the width is 47 cm. Parr, 1962, pp. 21-23, pl. VIII- XI, figs.1-7; Milik, Starcky, 1975, p.123; Roche, 1987, pp. 217-222; Bricault, 2001, p.76; Lindner, 2003, pp. 178- 180, Abb.3-4; Zayadine, 2003, pp. 63- 64, fig. 46; Bartlett, 2007, p.73, fig.19, 2; Alpass, 2010, pp. 98-99, fig.4; Roche, 2012, pp.55-71, fig. 3; Vaelske, 2011, pp.322-324, Abb. e-22a-d; Vaelske, 2012, p.63, Abb.1.

⁸⁹² Roche, 2012, pp. 55-72.

⁸⁹³ Roche, 1987, p.218, fig.2.

plaque made of metal or marble⁸⁹⁴, but no holes were found to indicate the presence of such a dedication. However, her identification as Isis is supported by the discovery of a rock-cut inscription on the wall of a narrow corridor within the lower terrace, written in Nabataean, invoking the "protection of Isis"⁸⁹⁵.



Figure 134. A sanctuary of Isis, Wadi Abu Olleqa, Petra, the height of the relief is 74 cm.

The head and the arms of the goddess are missing, making it difficult to determine her exact attitude here and whether she is depicted wearing the crown of the *basileion* or not⁸⁹⁶. Roche suggested that she might be portrayed in Demeter type, with her hands possibly placed on her knees, but many details have been lost due to the later iconoclasm or deliberate destruction of the image. Roche also proposed a possible explanation for the vandalism of both the inscription and the statue, which may have occurred during the power struggle for the royal

⁸⁹⁴ Parr, 1962, p. 22.

⁸⁹⁵ Roche, 2012, pp. 58-59.

⁸⁹⁶ Alpass, 2010, p. 99.

title between Aretas IV and the minister Syllaeus, which took place in Petra between 6-9 BC. Queen Huldo, the wife of Aretas IV, likely played an essential role during the conflict between Aretas IV and Syllaeus. It is known that she had a close relationship with Isis's cult, which could explain the revenge of the followers of Syllaeus on the image of Isis and her name⁸⁹⁷.

The artistic similarities with several statuettes of "Isis mourning her husband", which have been found in Petra's center and in the Temple of the Winged Lions (**Figs. 135-136, 147-148, 151-155**), seem to prove that the Isis of Wadi Abu Olleqa is to be identified as Isis in the attitude of mourning her husband: the right arm clearly leads to the lost head, and the left forearm is placed on the left thigh. She holds an attribute that, in its outline, is probably to be recognized as a branch of a plant; the "situla" hangs over the left forearm⁸⁹⁸. Wenning dates the sanctuary of Isis to the 1st century BC (time of Obodas III?) according to early Nabataean pottery found there⁸⁹⁹, while Lindner mentioned that finds of painted Nabataean ceramic shards in the area of the sanctuary date to the 1st century AD⁹⁰⁰. It is noteworthy that this sanctuary was located on the vital caravan route heading towards Sinai and Egypt through the Naqb ar-Rubai, so it was probably visited by the worshipers of the goddess Isis⁹⁰¹.

In addition to that, Petra has also been mentioned as a place of worship for Isis in Oxyrhynchus papyrus 1380, known as "the invocation of Isis", which dates back to the second century AD, but the scholars argued that the text itself was composed somewhat earlier, stating that "In Petra Isis is called Soteira (the savior)"⁹⁰²; however, we can't relate Isis here as the protector of navigation⁹⁰³. Some inscriptions mentioning the goddess Isis were also found in Petra. An incomplete Greek inscription dating back to 257 AD testifies to the presence of a priest of Isis in the Siq (canyon), which leads to the Khasneh: "[...] priest of Isis consecrated (this altar) in the year 151 on the 26th of the month of Siwan"⁹⁰⁴. This indicates

⁸⁹⁷ Roche, 1987, pp. 218-219; Roche, 2012, p. 68.

⁸⁹⁸ Parlasca, 1990, p. 89; Parlasca, 1991, p. 116; Vaelske, 2012, p. 63, Abb.1.

⁸⁹⁹ Wenning, 1987, pp. 222-223.

⁹⁰⁰ Lindner, 2003, p. 180, Abb.8.

⁹⁰¹ Roche, 1987, p. 219; Zayadine, 1991, p. 293.

⁹⁰² P.Oxy XI, 1380, 91-92; Zayadine, 2003, p. 64; Roche, 2012, p. 68.

⁹⁰³ Bricault, RICIS, 202/ 0365; Bricault, 2020, pp. 158-160.

⁹⁰⁴ Brünnow, Domaszewski, 1904, p. 222; Vidman, SIRIS, no. 368; Dunand, 1973, p.134; Milik, Starcky, 1975, p.123; Parlasca, 1998, p. 68; Bricault, 2001, p.76; Bricault, RICIS, 404/0502; Podvin, 2016, p. 313.

the continuation of the worship of Isis in Petra during the 3rd century AD. Moreover, the name of the goddess Isis appears four times in the title "Servant of Isis"⁹⁰⁵.

IV.1.4. The Temple of the Winged Lions

Several Egyptian figurines were discovered during excavations in the Temple of the Winged Lions, which is located in the city center of Petra on the northern hill of Wadi Musa, facing the so-called Great Temple. The sanctuary dates back to the reign of King Aretas IV (9 BC-40 AD). According to an inscription found in the vicinity of the building (the marble workshop), it dates from the years 27/28 AD. The excavations at the site, which began in 1974 by Philip Hammond, brought to light residential rooms and three workshops (marble, metal, painters), which were presumably in the service of the temple. Unfortunately, the temple was destroyed by a massive earthquake in 363 AD; until then, it had apparently been rebuilt several times⁹⁰⁶.

A sandstone statuette of the goddess Isis was unearthed in the Temple of the Winged Lions (**Fig. 135**). The goddess is recognizable by her distinctive knot on her chest. She is depicted seated on a rocky throne, with her right foot slightly raised. Her face and the right arm have suffered significant damage; her head is slightly turned to the right. Her left hand rests on her lap while a situla hangs over her arm. The hairstyle consists of at least two rows of Libyan curls, which fall on the shoulders. However, the crown on her head is not distinguishable; it is possible that it either never existed or, though less likely, was made from another material⁹⁰⁷. In addition, another terracotta statuette of Isis was discovered within the temple (**Fig. 136**); only the top part of the figurine is preserved. In this representation, she places her right hand against her cheek. She is attired in a short-sleeved chiton, tightly pleated with vertical folds, and the Isis-knot in the middle with fringes. She wears the *basileion*, which consists of a sun disc between two stylized horns, and a feather emerges from the top⁹⁰⁸.

⁹⁰⁵ Roche, 1987, p. 220.

⁹⁰⁶ Weber, Wenning, 1997, pp. 77-80; Healey, 2001, pp. 42-44; Hammond, 2003, pp. 223-224.

⁹⁰⁷ Zayadine, 1982, p. 387; Hammond, 1990, p. 119, pl. 2, fig.1; Zayadine, 1990, p.156, fig. 8; Vaelske, 2011, pp. 442- 443, no. E7, Abb. e-9.

⁹⁰⁸ Hammond described it as a lamp handle that depicted the Syrian goddess Atargatis. Hammond, 1977-1978, Pl. 48, 1; Hammond, 1990, p.119, pl. 2, 2; El-Khoury, 2002, p. 52, fig. 34.



Figure 135. A sandstone statuette of Isis, the Temple of the Winged Lions, Archaeological Museum Amman, Inv. No. J16271.



Figure 136. A terracotta statuette of Isis, the Temple of the Winged Lions, Jordan Archaeological Museum, Inv. No. J16274.

In the context of the Egyptian references to this temple, an Egyptian votive statuette of Osiris was discovered in the cellar area of the temple during the 1975 excavations of the American Expedition in Petra (**Fig. 137**), made of black-green schist. The statuette depicts an Egyptian priest holding a figurine of the god Osiris (Osirophoros) in front of him. The man wears a long, pleated apron made of transparent fabric that ends just above the ankle and shows the typical stem at the front. His left leg is presented, and between the calf and the rear terminal edge of the back pillar are two vertical registers of a hieroglyphic inscription. The figurine of the gods of Osiris, wrapped in a tight robe, is in the form of a mummy with his arms crossed on his chest; one hand holds a crook, the other a flail. The rest of the twisted beard of the god can be seen on the chest. The figurine is dated by the hieroglyphic inscription on its back to the Late Period, Dynasty XXVI, and the monument's origin is Athribis in the Delta⁹⁰⁹. A

⁹⁰⁹ It is preserved in the Jordan Archaeological Museum of Amman, Inv. No. J 16 193. The head, torso, and feet of the statue of the priest are broken off, as are part of the shoulders, and the base of the entire statue, as well as the head of the Osiris statuette. Hammond, 1990, p. 115, pl. 1, figs.1-2; Zayadine, 1990, p.156, fig. 7; Meza, 1993, pp. 427-432; Meza, 1995, pp. 179- 183, figs. 1-7; Meza, 1996, pp.167 -176; Meza, 2000, pp. 208- 209,

similar fragment that also depicts an Osirophoros from Tyre attests to the fact that the special iconography was still understood in the Roman period (**Fig. 48**).



Figure 137. An Egyptian statuette of Osirophoros, the Temple of the Winged Lions, Jordan Archaeological Museum of Amman, Inv. No. J16193, H. 20.5 cm.

Figure 138. A bronze bust of Serapis from the Temple of the Winged Lions.

Moreover, the worship of Serapis also found a place in Petra, although his cult didn't attain the same level of popularity as that of Isis and Harpocrates. In the "Metal Workshop" of the Temple Complex of the Winged Lions, a solitary bronze bust of Serapis was unearthed (**Fig. 138**)⁹¹⁰. This bust is identifiable as Serapis due to the distinctive curls of hair draping the forehead and the divided beard. He is attired in the customary tight-fitting tunic, with the himation elegantly hung over the left shoulder. Similar to numerous other depictions of Serapis, relaxed garments form a large V-shape in the middle of the chest, clamped between vertical folds running to the side. While the bust lacks arms, it does feature the same raised left shoulder and lowered right shoulder as the complete sculpture. The eyes and pupils have been added using materials distinct from the bust itself, and a silver ring encircles the vertical spike on the crown, likely designed to hold a separate *kalathos*⁹¹¹.

fig.17; Bricault, 2001, p.76; Weber, 2002, p. 541, G 69, Taf. 174: D; 175: A.B; Zayadine, 2003, p.64; Meza, 2005, p.102, pl.31/2; Koemoth, 2010, p. 475; Podvin, 2016, p.312.

⁹¹⁰ Hammond, 2003, p. 227, fig. 247.

⁹¹¹ Malaise, 2009, pp.173-193.

It is worth noting that the anthropomorphic iconography of Dushara may have been influenced by the depiction of Zeus-Serapis, which the representation of Dushara was initially presented in aniconic stone blocks, as some examples were found in Petra depicting him in the form of Zeus-Serapis. There is, for example, a limestone bust of a bearded deity discovered in Petra in 1954 in the southern wall of the temenos gate of Qasr al-Bint (**Fig.139**), the main sanctuary of Dushara; he wears a laurel wreath at the front of which is a large rectangular medallion, and the beard consists of small curls. The bust is naked except for the himation, which covers his left shoulder. The attitude and the features clearly recall the iconography of Serapis, especially in the treatment of the beard and hair associated with the laurel wreath of Zeus. Because of this similarity, the god could be identified as Dushara-Zeus-Serapis⁹¹².

Another cult statue of the Nabataean god Dushara or the Edomite god Qōs found at the sanctuary of Khirbet et-Tannur (**Fig. 140**), located 70 km north of Petra, represents the god sitting on the throne with a bull on each side. He wears a long chiton with a himation draped over his left shoulder; in his raised right hand, now lost, he probably was holding the scepter, while the left hand holds the thunderbolt. He is depicted with curly hair and a beard; above his head remains of the *kalathos*⁹¹³. If we notice here that his clothes are similar to those of Serapis enthroned, in which his himation hangs in a long loop over his left arm, and he is wearing the *kalathos* as on some statues of Serapis in Egypt⁹¹⁴. For example, a wooden statue, now preserved in the Graeco-Roman Museum, was discovered in Theadelphia (Batn Ihrit), Fayoum, and dates to the 2nd century BC (**Fig. 141**). The statue represents the god Serapis, who is portrayed seated on a throne, draped in a loose-fitting tunic that falls on his chest. His left upper arm is covered by a mantle, which extends to his lower torso. The statue would have held a scepter in the left hand while the right hand rested on the three-headed dog Kerberos, but they are now missing. The crown atop Serapis' head would have been adorned by a *kalathos* although only the lower portion of it remains. Serapis is depicted with long, curled hair, a full beard divided into two vertical coiled locks on the chin, and a mustache⁹¹⁵. The iconography of the cult statue in Khirbet et-Tannur includes aspects of Zeus, Serapis, and

⁹¹² Zayadine, 1990, p.156, fig.9; Healey, 2001, p.139; Markoe, 2003, fig.3.

⁹¹³ Bartlett, 2007, p. 64, fig. 10; McKenzie, Reyes, 2013, pp. 195-196, fig. 339.

⁹¹⁴ McKenzie, Reyes, 2013, pp. 195-196.

⁹¹⁵ Clerc, Leclant, LIMC VII, 1994, s.v. Sarapis, nos. 8a-c, 9, pl. 504.

Hadad. We mentioned before that the worship of Dushara was known in Tell Defenneh in Egypt (see p. 204).

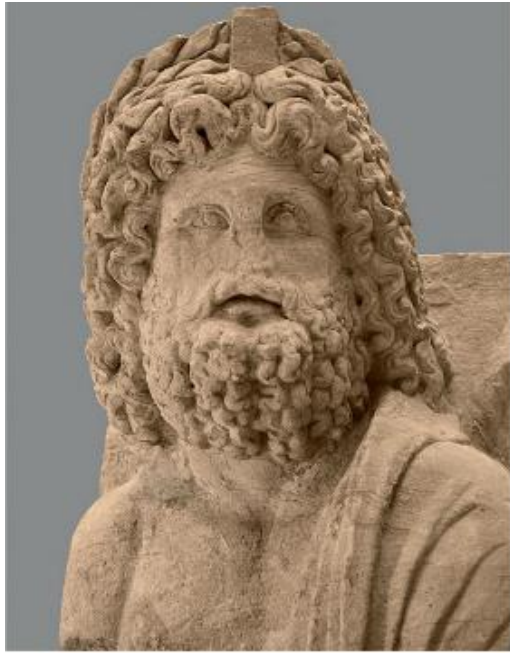


Figure 139. A bust of Dushara- Zeus- Serapis? Petra.



Figure 140. A cult statue of Dushara-Qōs, the sanctuary of Khirbet et-Tannur.



Figure 141. A wooden statue of Serapis, Theadelphia, Egypt.



Figure 142. A betyl from the Temple of the Winged Lions, Department of Antiquities, Amman, Inv. No. JP 13483.

The presence of these Egyptian deities in the temple has led most scholars to suggest that it is dedicated to the Egyptian goddess Isis, but she is associated with the main goddess of the Nabataeans, as indicated by a limestone betyl (an aniconic stone stela) discovered during the excavations of the temple of the Winged Lions in 1975 (**Fig. 142**)⁹¹⁶. The stela dates to the 1st or 2nd century AD and bears a resemblance to a betyl from Ez-zantur, which depicts the crown of Isis in the middle of the wreath that is adorning the betyl itself (**Fig. 149**). The betyl from the Winged Lion's temple depicts a schematic face that consists of oval eyes protruding as rounded ridges, surmounted by thick eyebrows, a long nose, and thick pout lips; the face is crowned by a wreath of three layers of small pointed leaves, with a circular recess at the middle, whose medallion that was once inserted is now missing. The face is framed by architectural elements: two pilasters on either side, topped by a frieze decorated with a dental decoration. In addition, there is a Nabataean inscription on the base of the betyl that reads as follows: "*The goddess of Hayyan, son of Naybat*", but unfortunately, the name of the goddess is not specified: Al-Uzza and Isis have been suggested⁹¹⁷, but we do not have any evidence for such identifications.

According to Zayadine, the Temple of the Winged Lions was probably dedicated to Isis, who assimilated with Al-Uzza-Aphrodite, the main deity of Petra, with her husband Osiris or Serapis⁹¹⁸, and he thought that the pharaonic statuette of Osiris found here may have been deposited in the temple of Isis/Al-Uzza as a votive offering to Isis mourning her husband Osiris⁹¹⁹. On the other hand, Hammond also identified the main goddess of the Temple of the Winged Lions as the goddess Isis, but in association with the goddess Allat⁹²⁰. He also suggested that the altar platform and the temple's decoration were related to the mystery cult practices associated with the Egyptian goddess Isis⁹²¹. However, it is noteworthy that the

⁹¹⁶ The Nabataeans worshipped "betyls" or "geometric idols," and they used the word "*nsb*", which means "upright," to designate them. Several of these monuments, generally quadrangular in shape, have been found at the site of Petra. These carved stones stood in the temples, fixed on a stone base called "motab" "seat". During worship ceremonies, the sacred stones were sprinkled with oil and probably incensed. On certain occasions, they were carried in procession outside the temples to the mountaintops where sacrificial shrines were set up in the open air. Wenning, 2001, pp.79-95; Gaifman, 2008, pp. 37-72.

⁹¹⁷ Zayadine, 1990, p.158, fig.12; Weber, 2002, pp. 527-528, no. G.25, Abb. 135, Taf. 184 C; Bartlett, 2007, p. 68, fig. 15; Alpass, 2010, p.101, fig.7.

⁹¹⁸ Zayadine, 1990, p.156, fig. 7; Zayadine, 2003, p.64.

⁹¹⁹ Zayadine, 1991, pp. 286-287, figs. 5-6.

⁹²⁰ Hammond, 1990, pp.123-124; Hammond, 2003, pp. 224-227.

⁹²¹ Hammond, 2003, p. 224.

worship of Allat was primarily centered in the regions of Hawran and Iram, and there is no mention of her in Petra's inscriptions, which suggests that her worship might not have been prevalent there. It is likely that both deities, Al-Uzza and Allat, were two aspects of the same goddess, as proposed by Healey. The first one, Al-Uzza, was worshiped at Petra, while the second, Allat, was venerated at Iram and Hawran⁹²².

⁹²² Healey mentioned that the absence of Allat from Petra inscriptions might be explained by the suggestion that Al-Uzza was originally a title of Allat. Healey, 2001, p.114.

IV.1.5. Khasneh Faraoun (Treasury of the Pharaoh)

When one attempts to examine and clarify the Alexandrian influences on Nabataean architecture and religion, what immediately comes to mind is undoubtedly the building of khasneh⁹²³, where one can see the crown of Isis, the *basileion*, on the pediment as Acroterion (**Figs. 143-144**)⁹²⁴. This crown is composed of a sun disc between two cow horns and two ears of wheat curl on both sides⁹²⁵, indicating Isis' relationship with Demeter and Persephone⁹²⁶. The *basileion* of Isis also appeared on the Nabataean coins crowning the Nabataean queens (**Figs. 161-162**). Above the crown of Isis, a figure is represented standing on a base in the middle of the *tholos* on the top floor above the entrance to Khasneh (**Fig. 144**); she holds in her left hand a *cornucopia* and a *patra* in her right hand. Unfortunately, the head and the body of the image are not in good condition, so it is difficult to determine if the figure represented here is Isis-Tyche or Tyche only, and this point remains controversial among researchers⁹²⁷.

The typology of this representation is probably inspired by Ptolemaic models, particularly by the figures represented on some of the faience *oinochoai* found in Alexandria⁹²⁸, which depict the Ptolemaic queens (Arsinoe II, Bernice II, and Arsinoe III) standing in the same position as the figure on the façade of the Khasneh, holding a *cornucopia* in the left hand and a *patra* pouring liquids in the right, in front of an altar (**Fig. 145**)⁹²⁹. The dedicatory inscriptions found on these vases show some variations. However, on certain vases dedicated to Queen

⁹²³ Although there are no documents to precisely date this building, the majority of scholars propose a timeframe between the early first century BC and the Romans' annexation in 106 AD. The architectural composition of the structure suggests that it served as a tomb, with strong indications that it might have been a royal tomb, possibly belonging to Aretas IV (9 BC-40 AD). McKenzie, 1990, p.40; Stewart, 2003, p.193; Alpass, 2010, p.104.

⁹²⁴ A terracotta fragment plaque was found in Petra provides an additional indication of the cult of Isis, it shows a richly designed *naiskos* with a triangular pediment and a round arched niche supported by two further columns in the middle, and Isis is depicted inside the niche, only the head is visible, as well as a mask and the crown of Isis *basileion* at the top left of the column. Parlasca, 1991, p.116, Abb.17.

⁹²⁵ Milik, Starcky, 1975, p.123; McKenzie, 1990, pl. 86d; McKenzie, 2003, p.171; Stewart, 2003, pp.194-195, fig.203; Alpass, 2010, p.104, fig.12.

⁹²⁶ McKenzie, 2003, p.171, fig 207.

⁹²⁷ Brünnow, Domaszewski, 1904, no.62, figs. 211-212; Zayadine, 1990, p.155, fig.5; Zayadine, 1991, p.301, figs.18-19; Meza, 2006, p. 163; Schmid, 2008, p. 376.

⁹²⁸ Zayadine, 1990, p.155, fig.6.

⁹²⁹ Thompson, 1973. The Nabatean kings adopted the *cornucopia* on their coins; it is depicted alone under Malichus I, which emerges oval fruits and two bunches of grapes, and sometimes combined the double *cornucopia* on the reverse with the royal couple on the obverse, which has two symmetrical, crossed, and filleted *cornucopias*. Schwentzel, 2005, p. 161, figs. 25-26; Peter, 2012, pp. 68-69, Abbs. 6, 10, 13, 15-16.

Arsinoe II, she is linked with both Isis and Agathe Tyche, indicating a strong connection between these goddesses⁹³⁰.

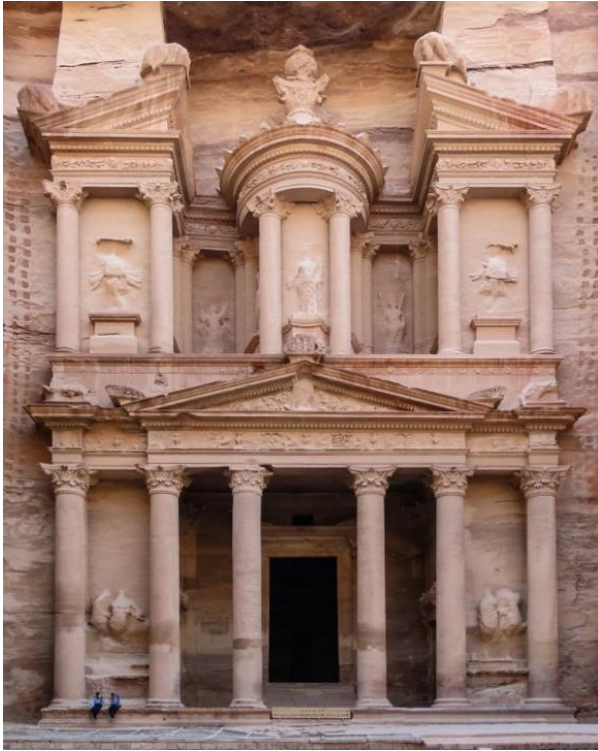


Figure 143. Khasneh, Petra.

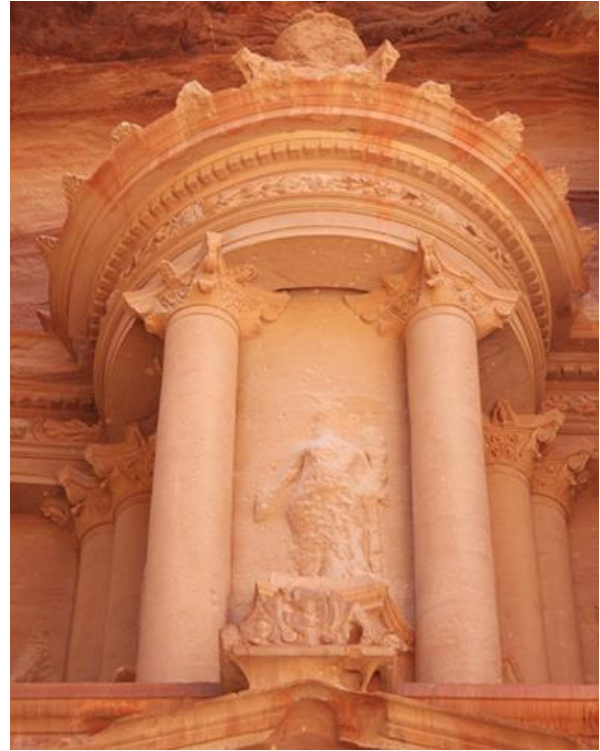


Figure 144. The basileion crown of Isis on the pediment as Acroterion, Khasneh.

On the basis of the iconographic evidence, Zayadine interprets the figure depicted on Khasneh as a Nabataean queen, most probably the wife of the king of Obodas III or Aretas IV, due to the presence of the *basileion* on the pediment at the foot of the Tyche⁹³¹. It is suggested that the Nabataean queens were also identified with Tyche or Isis-Tyche, a phenomenon that can be inspired by the iconography of the Ptolemaic queens⁹³². But this theory relies solely on the interpretation of iconographic sources, as there is no textual or inscriptional evidence confirming the assimilation of the Nabataean queen with Isis-Tyche. Moreover, Schwentzel mentioned that the iconography of Ishtar and Atargatis influenced the portrayal of the

⁹³⁰ In several examples, Isis's name has appeared on altars of Arsinoe jugs. Thompson, 1973, pp. 57-58, figs. 142, 144, 146, and on three jugs, the queen wears Isis's costume. Thompson, 1973, p.58, figs. 122-124.

⁹³¹ Zayadine, 1999, pp. 52-53.

⁹³² Meshorer, 1975, nos. 13, 61-64, 67-78, 112-114, 116, 118, 140, 146, 162- 164; Schwentzel, 2005, p. 161, figs. 25- 26.

Nabataean Tyche in numismatics, while the goddess or queen of the Khazneh reproduces the Alexandrian model of Isis-Tyche⁹³³.



Figure 145. An oinochoe of Arsinoe II, British Museum, Inv., No., 1873,0820.389.

Figure 146. A bronze statuette of Isis-Tyche, Petra, Musée de la Bible, Paris, Inv. No. CB7187.

On the other hand, Vaelske asserted that the façade of Khasneh bears witness to Alexandrian architectural features, such as the depiction of the crown of Isis as an acroterion. However, he argued that the figure depicted in the middle may not be Isis, as the Isis-knot is not visible, nor are the headdress or other essential characteristics of the goddess. He indicated that the figure better recalls the goddess Aphrodite-Tyche holding the rudder in the right hand and the *cornucopia* in the left⁹³⁴. But one must point out that no remains of a rudder are now visible. The presence and iconography of the goddess Isis-Tyche in Petra are already attested by a

⁹³³ Schwentzel, 2014, p.150. Nabataean coins depicting Tyche have been discovered in Petra and other locations within the Nabataean Kingdom. Auge classified four distinct representations of Tyche found on Nabataean coins as follows: the first type portrays Tyche as winged, with a *cornucopia* held in her left hand, seated on a rock with the river god swimming beneath her feet. The second type depicts Tyche standing in profile, holding a mace. The third type shows Tyche as a winged figure standing in profile, holding a palm branch, and wearing a towered crown. The final type represents Tyche in a profile pose, raising her hand in a gesture of blessing. Auge, 1990, pl. 1, figs. 1-6.

⁹³⁴ Vaelske, 2011, pp. 296- 297; Vaelske, 2013, p.351.

bronze figurine discovered at the site (**Fig. 146**)⁹³⁵. Isis-Tyche is shown wearing the *basileion*, but interestingly, the himation does not have the distinctive Isis-knot. Because of its small size, the image was likely used as an amulet⁹³⁶.

The representation of Isis-Tyche/Fortuna holding the *cornucopia*, symbolizing prosperity and wealth, alongside the rudder, symbolizing guidance, was one of the favorite subjects in Egypt during the Hellenistic and Roman periods⁹³⁷. According to Dunand, the depiction of Isis-Tyche holding a *cornucopia* is an Alexandrian innovation⁹³⁸. The origins of this rapprochement might be taking place in Alexandria between Isis-Thermouthis and Agathe-Tyche-Thermouthis⁹³⁹. Isis is referred to as the "mistress of fate" and is invoked with new epithets, assimilating her to various Greek goddesses. The hymns of Isidorus, inscribed on the pillars of the temple of Isis-Thermouthis in Medinet Madi at Fayoum and dating back to the 1st century BC, provide a glimpse into the diverse titles bestowed upon Isis. In these hymns, Isis is invoked as "*Almighty, Good Luck, Isis of the Great Name, Highest Deo (= Demeter), Agathe Tyche, and Pronoia*"⁹⁴⁰. It is plausible that the reason for the widespread popularity of this particular aspect of Isis was its association with the fortunes and prosperity desired by farmers for their crops and merchants for the success of their trade⁹⁴¹. Additionally, Isis-Tyche/Fortuna was believed to safeguard sailors from the perils they might encounter during their maritime ventures, providing protection to commercial shipping routes⁹⁴².

⁹³⁵ Leclant, Gisèle, 1986, p. 313; Roche, 1987, p. 220.

⁹³⁶ Vaelske, 2011, p. 297, no. E1.

⁹³⁷ Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC, V, 1990, s.v. Isis, nos. 303- 318; Malaise, 2000, p. 9.

⁹³⁸ Dunand, 1973, pp.92- 93; there are reliefs dating to the 4th century BC depicting Tyche with *cornucopia* from Piraeus and Asklepieion. Tracy, 1994, p. 243.

⁹³⁹ Malaise, 2000, p. 9.

⁹⁴⁰ In Delos, the syncretism between the cult of Isis, practiced at least since the 3rd century BC, and that of Agathe Tyche is attested. The sanctuary of Agathe Tyche is not mentioned in the inscriptions before 166 BC, but it is subsequently referred to in eight inventories. Therefore, it has been hypothesized that the Philadelphion, originally constructed on the island in honor of Arsinoe II Philadelphus assimilated to Agathe Tyche, later became the sanctuary of Agathe Tyche after 166 BC. Cellini, 2007, pp.165-167.

⁹⁴¹ Orr, Penna, 1978, p.1580.

⁹⁴² The representation of Isis as Tyche is the prevailing choice in Pompeii and, more broadly, in the towns surrounding Mount Vesuvius. These locations hold significant historical importance, serving as a crucial terminus point due to the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 AD. For example, a depiction of Isis-Tyche/Fortuna was found in the house of Domus Accepti et Euhodiae, inside the kitchen located in the southwestern corner of the house. The goddess is dressed in a long yellow chiton and a blue cloak, with a floral wreath on her head. In her right hand, she holds a yellow rudder placed on a globe; in her left hand, she holds a cornucopia. At the bottom of her foot, the globe is depicted. Boyce, 1937, p.78, no.372; Lichocka, 1997, p.170, Fig.423.

It is also worth noting that the Khasneh building in Petra shows many other Alexandrian architectural features, like the "broken pediment"⁹⁴³. This distinctive element of Baroque architecture can trace its oldest examples back to Alexandria, where some models are preserved in the Greco-Roman Museum⁹⁴⁴. Later, it appeared in the second style of Pompeian wall painting, such as the house of the Labyrinth, dating back to the 1st century BC, as a result of the influence of Alexandrian architecture, as mentioned by Mckenzie⁹⁴⁵. There is also the Palazzo delle Colonne at Ptolemais in Cyrenaica in modern Libya, which was under Ptolemaic control for centuries; the façade consists of niche architecture supported by columns with triangular and semicircular gables, dating to around 100 BC⁹⁴⁶. The fact that the central elements of this façade were deeply rooted in the architecture of Alexandria and Egypt is shown by numerous preserved repetitions of gable-topped niches, framed by columns with pointed gables, such as the niche of Marina El-Alamein, about 100 km west of Alexandria, which dates to the first century AD⁹⁴⁷. The broken pediment became extremely familiar in Roman architecture outside Egypt during the first and second centuries AD, with significant examples found in Asia Minor, such as the Market Gate in Miletus, now preserved in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin⁹⁴⁸. Furthermore, this architectural element persisted in Egypt during Late Antiquity and in Coptic architecture⁹⁴⁹, and maybe the strength of continuity of the broken pediment in Egypt is related to its local origin⁹⁵⁰: fragments of niches reproducing "broken pediment" have been found in various sites of Egypt, for example, Ahnas⁹⁵¹, Oxyrhynchus⁹⁵², Ashmounein⁹⁵³, and Bawit⁹⁵⁴.

⁹⁴³Thanks to the efforts of McKenzie in studying the influence of Alexandrian architecture on Petra architecture, she mentioned that Alexandrian architecture was the main source of architectural inspiration in Petra, as evidenced by archaeological discoveries; for example, Qasr al bint or Qasr bint far'un (the palace of the Pharaoh's daughter) shows this influence. Another example is Qasr il-Abd in Iraq el-Amir (Jordan), dating back to the early second century BC, which bears similarities to the Ptolemaic palaces in Alexandria, such as the floating palace of Ptolemy IV. Grimm, 1998, pp.60-63, Abb.54; Mckenzie, 2007, pp. 96-98.

⁹⁴⁴ Mckenzie, 1990, pl. 217d-f; Mckenzie, 1996a, p.134, fig.4a; Mckenzie, 1996b, pp.116-120, figs.17-25.

⁹⁴⁵ Mckenzie, 1990, pp.99-100; Schmid, 2008, pp. 375-376.

⁹⁴⁶ Mckenzie, 2007, p.95, figs. 158- 160; Bergmann, 2012, p. 116, Abb. 12.

⁹⁴⁷ Mckenzie, 2007, p.94, figs. 153-154; Bergmann, 2012, p. 116, Abb. 13.

⁹⁴⁸ Mckenzie, 1996b, p.119, fig.25.

⁹⁴⁹ Török, 2005, pp. 115-137.

⁹⁵⁰ Mckenzie, 2007, p. 94.

⁹⁵¹ Monneret de Villard, 1923, fig.9, 48B; Mckenzie, 1996a, p.137, fig.4d.

⁹⁵² Breccia, 1933, pl.47.124; Mckenzie, 1996a, p.137, fig.4f.

⁹⁵³ Wace, Megaw, Skeat, 1959, pl. 25.2, 3; Mckenzie, 1996a, p.137, fig.4e.

⁹⁵⁴ Duthuit, 1931, pl. 36 a-b.

In addition to the typical "Nabataean capital", which most likely came from Egypt, Mckenzie noted that these styles were originally derived from Alexandrian architecture, along with the study of Lauter, who emphasized the importance of studying the tombs of Petra as a primary source for the characteristics of Alexandrian architecture⁹⁵⁵. In the end, the Isis crown sits on the main gable top of the Khazneh, as well as the Isis-Tyche with *cornucopia* and the Dioscuri in the façade, which were very popular in Egypt⁹⁵⁶, but this also applies to the entire late Hellenistic world. However, the question will remain about the ways of transmission of the characteristics of Alexandrian elements in Khasneh and why the Nabataeans placed the *basileion* as an acroterion. According to Mckenzie, it is possible that the artists and craftsmen of the Alexandrian court, who had become unemployed and may have been looking for work elsewhere, are likely to be the transmitters⁹⁵⁷. However, Vaelske argued that the elaborate religious iconographies that were at hand in Alexandria during the later 1st century BC were not brought to Petra; neither Alexandrians nor Graeco-Egyptians can be observed in Petra as devotees of Isis. Isis was, in fact, continually venerated by Nabataeans, which could hypothetically indicate that the Isis cult was not transferred directly from Egypt to Petra but inherited from somewhere closer by, as would be indicated by a Hellenistic inscription for Isis at Sia/Hauran⁹⁵⁸. It is worth noting that the Nabataeans themselves may have encountered Isis either in the Levant or in Egypt, given our knowledge of Nabataean settlements in the eastern delta of Egypt.

⁹⁵⁵ Lauter, 1971, p. 171.

⁹⁵⁶ Some examples depicting the Dioscuri have been found in Egypt during the Greek and Roman periods. For example, a lamp preserved in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo shows Helen in the middle, with her two brothers, the Dioscuri, positioned behind her in a similar pose. They are dressed in cloaks tied at the right shoulder, leaving their necks exposed, and they hold horses' bridles. Another example is a relief carved into the rock and discovered in Akoris (Tihna el-Gebel) located about 12 km north of Al Minya. This relief portrays the Dioscuri alongside Helen, who is positioned in the middle with a crescent moon depicted above her head. The Dioscuri are depicted symmetrically on either side of Helen, wearing military clothing such as short tunics and cloaks tied at the waist and flowing behind them. They are shown holding the bridles of horses standing behind them. Hermary, LIMC III, 1986, s.v. Dioskouroi, no.137; Barry, 1906, pp.176-177, Pl. I, A; Bissing, 1953, pp. 349-350; Rondot, 2010, p.182; Tallet, Zivie-Coche, 2012, pp. 447-448.

⁹⁵⁷ Mckenzie, 1990, p.117.

⁹⁵⁸ Vaelske, 2013, p. 358.

IV.1.6. Ez-Zantur

The site of Ez-Zantur is located in the center of Petra. In this part of the site, the excavations of Ez-Zantur began in 1988 by the University of Basel on behalf of the Swiss-Liechtenstein Foundation for Archaeological Research Abroad (SLFA) under the direction of Stucky; then, the works were continued by Kolb⁹⁵⁹. The Swiss diggings have uncovered the remains of urban-dwelling complexes from the first century BC through the early fifth century AD. So far, the settlement has been investigated on three terraces (EZ I, III, IV) and in a deep section (EZ II).

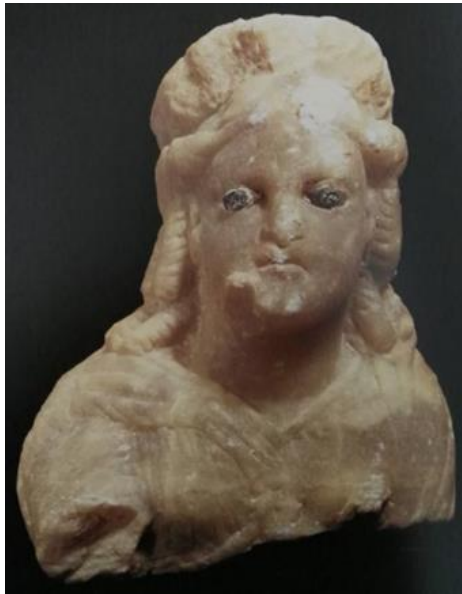


Figure 147. An alabaster statuette of Isis from Ez-Zantur, Archaeological Museum Petra, Inv. No. EZ I/89/400, H. 9 cm.

Figure 148. A terracotta statuette of Isis, Ez- Zantur IV, Archaeological Museum Petra, Inv, No. JP2318.

In the late Roman house (House II), an alabaster statuette of Isis was found on the terrace EZ I, room 27, which was used to store provisions (**Fig. 147**)⁹⁶⁰. Unfortunately, her arms above the elbows and the crown are missing, and the lower part of the body is broken away from the breasts. The goddess is shown here in a mourning gesture (Isis-dolente), which is proved by the remains of her right hand on her chin and by her head position, slightly inclined to the

⁹⁵⁹ Stucky, 1988, pp. 249-283; Stucky et. al., 1991, pp.251-274; Stucky, 1992, pp.175-192; Kolb, Stucky, 1993, pp. 417-425; Stucky, et al., 1994, pp. 271-292; Stucky, et al., 1995, pp. 297-315; Kolb et. al. 1997, pp. 231-254; Kolb et. al., 1998, pp. 259-278; Kolb et. al., 1999, pp. 261-277; Kolb et. al., 2000, pp. 355-372; Kolb, Keller, 2001, pp. 311- 324; Kolb, Keller, 2002, pp. 279-293; Kolb, 2003, p.230, figs. 249, 251.

⁹⁶⁰Archaeological Museum of Petra, Inv.No. EZ I/89/400. Hübner, Weber, 1997, p.115, fig. 126; Weber, 2002, p. 521, no. G7, Taf. 174 C; McKenzie, 2003, p.171, fig.174.

right. The full face is dominated by the eyes inlaid in red-brown stone. The hairstyle typical of Isis consists of corkscrew curls that start from the forehead and go back, and two rows of so-called Libyan curls fall down on the shoulders; her head is adorned with a broad *stephane*, and she wears a thin sleeveless chiton and a himation hanging over her back, where the distinctive Isis-knot is clearly recognizable between her breasts. McKenzie suggested that this figurine had been imported from Egypt and dates to the late Hellenistic period⁹⁶¹. Another terracotta statuette of Isis-dolente was also discovered in Ez-Zantur IV (**Fig. 148**); only the upper part of the body is preserved. We can see the similarities to the figurine of the Temple of the Winged Lions (**Fig.136**), which seems to come from the same mold, but there are minor differences in detail due to post-processing⁹⁶². Kolb and Keller mentioned two other statuettes fragments of enthroned Isis were found in the excavations in EZ IV; the lower part of the statuettes was just preserved, so it is not certain whether she is depicted as Isis-dolente or Isis-lactans⁹⁶³. The fragmentary condition of both pieces makes it challenging to determine their type, but it is clear that they cannot be identified as Isis-lactans. The thighs of one of the statuettes from EZ IV are well-preserved enough to demonstrate that the child of Horus could not have been seated there, nor could his left hand ever have rested in her lap.

Moreover, a small betyl of sandstone was discovered by Manfred Lindner in the residential area of Ez-Zantur, terrace EZ I (**Fig. 149**). It is possibly a local work from the later Nabataean period (late 1st century AD)⁹⁶⁴: its upper part is encircled by a wreath with leaves, which shows in the middle the crown of Isis *basileion*. The shape of the *basileion* closely resembles the one worn by Isis in some statuettes found in Petra (**Figs. 136, 148, 154**); a small round disc with two stylized horns emerges from above. The betyl depicts geometrical forms that symbolize the human face, representing a rectangular nose between two star-like eyes so that they may be indicated to the astronomical aspect of the deity⁹⁶⁵. The absence of the inner

⁹⁶¹ McKenzie, 2003, p. 171.

⁹⁶² The statuette is preserved in the Archaeological Museum of Petra, Inv. No. JP2318. El-Khoury, 2002, p. 53, fig.35; Vaelke, 2011, p. 444, no. E10, Abb. e11; Gorgerat, 2012, p. 281, Abb.7.

⁹⁶³ Kolb, Keller, 2002, p.282, figs. 5-6.

⁹⁶⁴ The betyl is made of sandstone; its height is 50 cm, its width is 27 cm, and its thickness is 12 cm. Lindner, 1988, pp. 89-91, Taf. 10, Abb.5; Zayadine, 1990, p.158, fig.11; Zayadine, 1991, pp.283- 284, fig.1-2; Zayadine, 1991b, fig. 49; Weber, 2002, p. 528, no. G 26, Taf. 184 B; Bartlett, 2007, p.74, fig. 20.

⁹⁶⁵ Lindner, 1988, p.89; Zayadine, 1991, p.284.

details of the eyes suggests that they might have been intended for the placement of precious stones⁹⁶⁶.



Figure 149. A betyl from Ez-Zantur, Petra, Museum of Petra, H.50 cm.

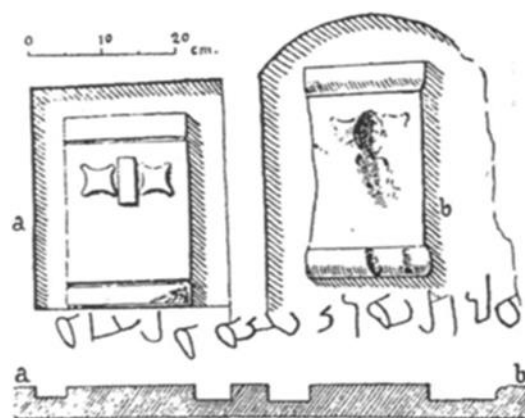


Figure 150. A betyl from the sanctuary of Ain es-shalaleh in Wadi Rumm, southern Jordan.

⁹⁶⁶ Zayadine, 1991, p. 284.

The betyl of Ez-Zantur can be compared to a couple of betyls found in the sanctuary of Ain es-Shalaleh in Wadi Rumm, southern Jordan (**Fig. 150**). These betyls have similar eyes, which depict both Al-Kutba and Al-Uzza, but the deity represented in Ez-Zantur is characterized by a wreath surrounding the crown of Isis *basileion*⁹⁶⁷, which can be interpreted as ears of wheat and could be related to Isis-Demeter. This comparison raises the question of whether Isis was worshiped as a Nabataean goddess rather than being considered a foreign goddess. In this regard, various opinions have associated her with the two goddesses, Allat and Al-Uzza. Lindner described the deity here as Al-Uzza- Isis⁹⁶⁸. Zayadine agrees with his argument by linking her to Aphrodite, indicating that Al-Uzza-Aphrodite was the main goddess in Petra and the wife of Dushara⁹⁶⁹.

IV.1.7. A potter's kiln complex at Zurrabeh

Several pottery kilns were discovered at Zurrabeh, situated between the modern city in Wadi Musa and the ancient city of Petra. The excavations of the area began in 1979, followed by subsequent campaigns extending until 1997. From the second to the sixth century AD, the kilns produced fine wares, kitchen wares, oil lamps, water pipes, roof tiles, and figurines. Zurrabeh is the largest industrial complex in Petra⁹⁷⁰.

A terracotta figurine of Isis was discovered in a potter's kiln in late Roman rubble pits and dates to the second century AD (**Fig. 151**). The goddess is shown seated on a throne, wearing a long chiton topped by a himation with fringes; between her breasts is the distinctive Isis-knot; she wears a bracelet on her right wrist with her hand raised to her chin, while her left hand is resting on her knee and is holding a feather. Her head is crowned with the *basileion*, consisting of a sun disc surrounded by a trefoil plant, as described by Zayadine⁹⁷¹. Two additional similar statuettes of mourning Isis were also discovered at Zurrabeh (**Figs. 152-153**), but unfortunately, the second statuette, only the lower part is preserved. These statuettes

⁹⁶⁷ Bartlett, 2007, pp. 66-67, fig.13.

⁹⁶⁸ Lindner, 1988, pp. 89-91, taf. 10, abb.5.

⁹⁶⁹ Zayadine, 1991, pp. 286-287, figs.5-6.

⁹⁷⁰ Zayadine, 1982, p. 380- 384; Amr, 1986, pp. 319-328; Amr, 1991, pp. 313-323; Amr, al-Momani, 1999, pp. 175-194.

⁹⁷¹ Zayadine, 1982, p. 387, no. 177, pl.136, 1, fig. 14; Parlasca, 1990, pl. IV, fig. 13; Parlasca, 1991, pp.115-116, Abb.15; Zayadine, 1991, p.297, fig.14; Zayadine, 1991b, fig. 59; Bricault, 1992, p.39, no. I-6a; Meza, 1996, p. 168, fig. 2a; El-Khoury, 2002, p. 52, fig.33; Zayadine, 2003, p.64, fig.47; Meza, 2006, p. 163, pl. 50.1.

also show the goddess seated on the throne in a frontal position and wearing a chiton. The right hand is raised to the chin, while the left hand is adorned with a bracelet, resting upon the lap and perhaps holding a feather (**Fig.152**)⁹⁷². Another small statue of Isis-Lactans was found in Wadi Musa; Vaelske suggested that it probably comes from Zurrabeh, preserved in the Jordan Archaeological Museum. Her head is relatively large and the face is long; her eyes consist of pierced holes surrounded by a circular edge; the figure wears the pectoral, earrings, and the double crown, a feature that is not common for Isis statues. Vaelske suggested that the statue was probably produced in one of the Zurrebeh art workshops in the Roman period⁹⁷³.



Figure 151. A terracotta statuette of Isis, potter's kiln at Zurrabah, Jordan Archaeological Museum, H. 17 cm.



Figure 152. A terracotta statuette of Isis, at Zurrabah, Museum of Jordanian Heritage, Inv. No. A684.



Figure 153. A terracotta statuette of Isis, at Zurrabah, Archaeological Museum Petra, Inv. No. JP862.

⁹⁷² The first statuette is preserved in the Museum of Jordanian Heritage, Inv. No., A684. The second statuette is preserved in the Archaeological Museum of Petra, Inv.No., JP862. Zayadine, 1982, p. 387, no. 50, pl. 86, 1; El-Khoury, 2002, pp.53-54, figs.43, 45.

⁹⁷³ Inv. No. J18568. Vaelske 2011, pp.439-440, no. E2, Abb.3.

IV.1.8. Isis mourning her husband "Isis-Dolente."

As previously mentioned, several statuettes were found during the excavations in Petra, depict Isis seated on a throne, wearing the crown of the *basileion*, and placing her right hand on her cheek, expressing sadness and mourning over her husband, Osiris (Figs. 135-136, 147-148, 151-155). This particular representation is commonly referred to as Isis mourning her husband "Isis-Dolente", and Bricault explains that it originates from ancient Egyptian religion⁹⁷⁴.

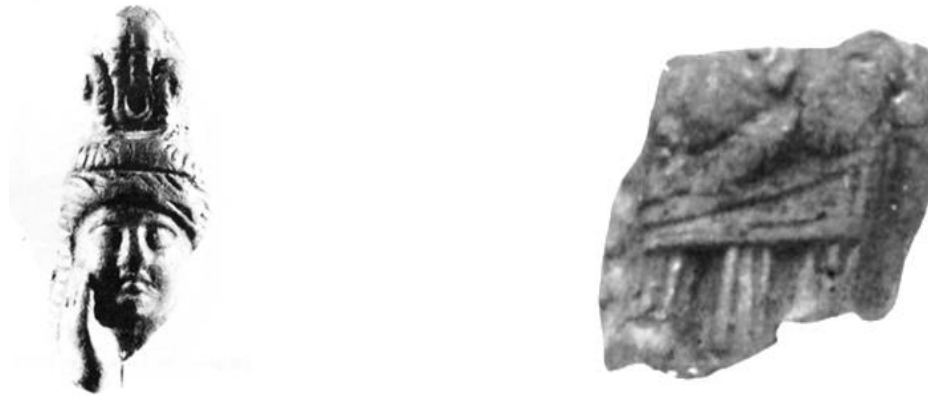


Figure 154. A fragment of the statuette of Isis, Petra, private collection.

Figure 155. The lower part of Isis, Petra, Private collection, Parlasca, 1991, Abb.16.

The representation of Isis resting her face on her left or right hand can be observed in Greek statues dating back to the early fifth century BC⁹⁷⁵. This particular pose seems to have been inspired by various representations, such as Demeter crying over her daughter Persephone, Penelope anxiously awaiting the return of her husband Odysseus⁹⁷⁶, or Electra grieving at the

⁹⁷⁴ In the myth of Isis's search for her husband Osiris, as found in the Pyramid Texts, both sisters Isis and Nephthys lament and seek out Osiris, but there is no mention of Isis presiding over Osiris's resurrection. Instead, the goddess Nut is depicted in this role. The Pyramid Texts do not exhibit a tendency to emphasize the role of Isis, similar to her sister Nephthys. Rather, Isis is portrayed as a grieving sister mourning the loss of her brother. However, over time, the lamentation over the loss of Osiris became a crucial dramatic element in celebratory rituals. It is interesting to note that in ancient times Nephthys was closely associated with Isis in this event, but Isis was later discovered mourning her husband alone, and this clearly reflects the increasing importance of Isis in the myth. At the end of the New Kingdom, a divine entity known as Isis-Shentayet was created, and she played the role of the mourning wife of Osiris, symbolized by the widow goddess Shentayet. During the Late Period, as well as the Greek and Roman Periods, the significance of Isis-Shentayet continued to grow. Her role became indispensable during the festivals of Khoiak, which celebrated the resurrection of Osiris. These Khoiak festivals bear striking similarities to the Eleusinian Mysteries of Demeter. Parlasca, 1990, pl. III-IV, figs. 11-13; Zayadine, 1991, pp.296- 299, figs.6, 14-15; Parlasca, 1991, pp.115-116, Abb14-16; Bricault, 1992, pp. 42- 43; nos. I-6a-b, I-7a-b, I-8, I-9; El-Khoury, 2002, nos.33-39, 43, 45; Bricault, 2006a, pp.77- 82.

⁹⁷⁵ Zayadine, 1991, p.297; Bricault, 1992, p.41; Bricault, 2006a, p.78.

⁹⁷⁶ A plaque of terracotta preserved in the Metropolitan Museum, Inv. No. 9.11.9, dated back to 460 BC, depicts Penelope sitting and putting her left hand at her cheek, her husband Odysseus, who disguised as an old beggar,

tomb of her father, Agamemnon⁹⁷⁷. Hence, this iconographic type has been identified as portraying a more mythical aspect rather than a functional one, which is a rarity within the goddess's imagery.

However, the primary origin of this type can be traced back to the representation of Demeter mourning her daughter, as these two goddesses became closely assimilated with each other⁹⁷⁸. Herodotus even affirmed that he considers Isis to be nothing more than the Greek goddess Demeter, the goddess of fertility⁹⁷⁹. On the other hand, Diodorus, in his attempt to establish the Egyptian origin of Demeter among the Athenians, stated that the rituals of the Eleusinian mysteries were derived from the land of the Nile⁹⁸⁰. The assimilation between Isis and Demeter can be seen through their association with some common characteristics: Plutarch indicated that the Nile, referred to as "Osiris", was married to the earth, known as "Isis", and the name of the earth was also given to Demeter, as the spirit that presides over the earth and its bountiful crops⁹⁸¹. Both goddesses were closely connected to agriculture, fertility, and the abundance of crops that sustain human life. They were credited with the discovery of wheat and were revered as the ones who taught people to cultivate the land. Additionally, both deities were strongly associated with motherhood⁹⁸². Isis was renowned as the nurturing caretaker of her child, Horus, while Demeter was also recognized as Demeter Kourotropos, the goddess who nourishes and cares for children. Furthermore, Isis adopted various attributes of Demeter, particularly the depiction of ears of wheat, which can be seen on the pediment of the Khasneh in Petra, flanking both sides of the sun disc (**Fig. 144**)⁹⁸³. A statue preserved in the Heraklion Museum depicting Demeter in this type can be found at the temple of Demeter in Gortyn, Crete (**Fig. 156**). In this representation, the goddess Demeter is shown seated,

approaches her. Another terracotta plaque depicts the same scene from Melos, in the Louvre Museum, Inv. No. CA 860, dated back to 450 BC. Bothmer, Mertens, 1979, pp. 224-225, nos.180-181.

⁹⁷⁷ A plaque of terracotta from Piraeus, preserved in the Louvre Museum, Inv. No. MNB906, dated around 460-450 BC, depicts Electra visiting the grave of her father Agamemnon, sitting on the grave's steps, and placing her left hand near her cheek as an expression of sadness. Bothmer, Mertens, 1979, p. 222, no.178.

⁹⁷⁸ Zayadine, 1991, p.297; Bricault, 1992, p.41.

⁹⁷⁹ Herodotus, II, 59, 156, 171. According to Herodotus, he asserts that "Isis is Demeter in the Greek language" and he further suggests that the Greek "mysteries" known as the Thesmophoria, dedicated to the goddess Demeter, can trace their origins back to the worship of Isis in Sais.

⁹⁸⁰ Diodorus. I, 13; Dunand, 1979, p.66; Witt, 1997, pp. 16, 67.

⁹⁸¹ Plutarch, De Iside et Osiride, 38.

⁹⁸² Dunand, 1979, p.66; Witt, 1997, pp. 16, 67.

⁹⁸³ Dunand, 1973, pp.87-88.

wearing a cloak, and resting her head on her right hand, conveying a profound sense of sorrow and grief⁹⁸⁴.



Figure 156. A statue of Demeter, Heraklion Museum, the temple of Demeter in Gortyn, Crete.

While there are slight variations in the portrayal of Isis mourning her husband in Petra, there are several recurring characteristics in her depictions. She is consistently illustrated as a seated figure, with her right hand tenderly raised to her cheek and her feet positioned at the same level. Her head is inclined, often gazing downward, and she is frequently presented in a frontal view. Moreover, the crown of the *basileion* frequently adorned her head, and the distinctive Isis-knot is consistently positioned between her breasts. In certain instances, a situla gracefully hangs from her left forearm (**Figs. 135, 155**). Alternatively, other examples showcase her left hand delicately clasping a plant branch or cradling a feather on her lap (**Figs. 151-152, 155**)⁹⁸⁵. Notably, these representations of Isis mourning her husband exhibit impressive consistency in their overall composition and the specific attributes ascribed to her. These depictions underscore the enduring significance of Isis as an emblem of mourning, rebirth, and divine potency within the Petra region's context.

According to Parlasca, these figurines are most likely based on a lost large-scale model, which is supported by the fact that the rock sculpture of Isis in Wadi Abu Olleqa belongs to

⁹⁸⁴ Zayadine, 1991, p.297, fig.16.

⁹⁸⁵ Vaelske, 2011, pp.327-328.

the same type⁹⁸⁶. Although this motif is widespread in Egyptian mythology, it is relatively uncommon among the numerous representations of the goddess in Egypt. An example of a bronze statue of Isis preserved in the Egyptian Museum of Berlin dates to the Roman period (**Fig. 157**). Isis is seated on a throne supported by a pillar on top of a large uraeus with a braided tail, wearing the crown of the *basileion*. The goddess is entirely covered by a heavy cloak, wearing the *basileion* crown, with her head resting on her right hand while her left hand is placed on her thigh⁹⁸⁷.

Additionally, there are two terracotta statuettes of Isis-dolente (**Fig. 158**), one from Memphis⁹⁸⁸ and the other from Mit Rahina⁹⁸⁹, which may originate from the same mold. In both representations, Isis is portrayed seated on a chair; her head is slightly inclined to the right, and her hair has curly strands. She adorns her head with a broad headband, crowned by the *basileion*, and is gracefully draped in a himation that is knotted at its center. A floral wreath delicately graces her left shoulder, and her right hand rests against her cheek, while the situla hangs from her left wrist, and the left hand is most likely holding a wheat branch. Dunand imprecisely described this type as "Isis pensive"⁹⁹⁰.

⁹⁸⁶ Parlasca, 1990, p. 89; Parlasca, 1991, p. 116.

⁹⁸⁷ Inv. No. 12674, the source is unknown. Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC, V, 1990, s.v. Isis, p.769, no. 88; Bricault, 1992, p.38, no. I-3, pl.12.

⁹⁸⁸ The statuette is preserved in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Inv. No. JE 55242. Its height is 22.5 cm and dates back to the Roman period. Dunand, 1979, p.177, no.37, pl. XXIV; Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC, V, 1990, s.v. Isis, p.769, no. 85b; Bricault, 1992, pp. 40-41, no. I-10, a; El-Khoury, 2002, p. 24; Barrett, 2011, fig. C35.

⁹⁸⁹ The statuette is preserved in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Inv. No. JE 43540, its height is 22 cm, dates back to the Roman period. Dunand, 1979, p.178, no.38, pl. XXIV; Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC, V, 1990, s.v. Isis, p.769, no. 85a; Bricault, 1992, pp.40-41, no. I-10, b.

⁹⁹⁰ Dunand, 1979, pp.177- 178.



Figure 157. A bronze statue of Isis-dolente, Ägyptisches Museum Berlin, Inv. No. 12674



Figure 158. A terracotta statuette of Isis-dolente, Memphis, Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Inv. No. JE 55242.



Figure 159. A terracotta figurine of Isis-dolente, The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, Inv. I, 1a 2903 (IG 2978)), 15.0 x 7.7 x 4.4 cm.

An additional instance can be observed in a terracotta statuette housed in the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow, which dates back to the Roman period (**Fig. 159**)⁹⁹¹. The statuette depicts Isis-dolente seated on a throne with a tall rectangular backrest and feet on a plinth. The figure's facial features are boyish and express profound sorrow, suggesting she is in a state of mourning. The woman's undergarment includes a short-sleeved pleated chiton, a lengthy himation, and a fold of fabric across her shoulder. She wears jewelry, including a bracelet on her right wrist and earrings in both ears. The situla attached to her right wrist is a characteristic attribute of either Isis or her attendant. In her left hand, she clutches an uncertain object resembling a piece of bread. The statuette captures a subtle motion with the right hand raised to touch the head, the head tilted toward the right shoulder, and the left hand resting on the knees. Atop her head, she wears a headdress featuring a sun disc and plumes, part of the traditional crown of Isis known as the basileion. Encircling her head is a semicircular element resembling either a sun disc or a nimbus⁹⁹².

Finally, a marble statue of Isis-dolente was found in the 19th century in the ruins of a sacellum on the acropolis of Fiesole, located north of Florence (**Fig. 160**). The statue, undoubtedly of Egyptian origin and dating back to the 2nd century AD, portrays Isis seated on a rock. Unfortunately, her head and left forearm are missing. Her right hand rests on her knee and holds ears of wheat, while her left hand seems to be leaning towards her chin, and a situla is suspended from her left elbow. The statue's base bears a dedication to "Isis of Taposiris by the veteran Maximus Gargennius", who likely resided in Egypt in favor of his brother Macrinus Gargennius⁹⁹³. Malaise suggests that the sculptor chose this attitude to honor Isis at the burial site of her husband, Osiris⁹⁹⁴. Bricault concludes that the epithet of the goddess Isis "*Ταποσείριας*" indicates her state of grief over the death of her husband, Osiris. Therefore, Isis of Taposiris is unquestionably none other than Isis mourning her husband⁹⁹⁵. The exact date

⁹⁹¹ Vasilyeva, Svetlana, 2020, pp. 199-204, Fig. 1.

⁹⁹² Vasilyeva, Svetlana, 2020, pp. 200-201.

⁹⁹³ Inv. No. 21. Malaise, 1972, p. 44; Bricault, 1992, pp. 38-39, doc. I-4, a-c; Bricault, RICIS, 511/0102; Bricault, 2006a, p. 77, fig. 2.

⁹⁹⁴ Malaise, 1972, p. 44.

⁹⁹⁵ Isis of Taposiris had a sanctuary at Oxyrhynchus, the city named after the fish that swallowed Osiris' phallus. A priest of Athenian origin placed a dedication to Isis of Taposiris in the Sarapieion C of Delos at the end of the 2nd century BC. Female priesthoods of Isis of Taposiris are attested in Athens and in Chaeronea in Boeotia in the 3rd century AD. P. OXY. 12, 1434; Bricault, 1992, pp. 45-47; Bricault, RICIS, 202/0313, 101/0216, 105/0895; Bricault, 2006a, pp. 81-82.

when this transformation in the iconography of Isis occurred remains uncertain. The reasons behind and the individuals responsible for the plastic transcription of Isis, portraying her as distressed by the disappearance of Osiris, are questions that have yet to be answered. However, what is certain is that the new representation of the goddess adopted a posture that was already familiar within the Hellenistic world.



Figure 160. A marble statue of Isis, Fiesole, Museo Civico Archeologico, Inv. No. 21.

The presence of molds and manufacturing techniques observed in Petra, such as the lack of attention to anatomical details, varied sizes of body parts, round faces, and asymmetrical limbs, provides evidence that the great majority of these figurines were produced locally rather than being imported from Egypt⁹⁹⁶. The best evidence of this is the terracotta figurine discovered at the potter's kiln at Zurrabeh (**Fig. 151**), suggesting that Petra may have been the center of this distinctive type, which refers to local piety for the goddess⁹⁹⁷. According to this documentary series, the mysteries of Osiris were celebrated in Petra, and Isis had a small

⁹⁹⁶ El-Khouri, 2002, pp.45- 47.

⁹⁹⁷ Alpass, 2010, p.100; Vaelske refers to the contradiction in the relaxed and calm depiction of Isis mourning her husband that expresses sadness, while both Plutarch and other writers who talked about the clamor caused by the sadness of the followers of the Egyptian gods. Vaelske, 2012, p.64.

temple dedicated to her, located away from the heart of the caravan city, where she was venerated in her role as a grieving wife.

IV.1.9. Nabataean coins with Isis's crown

The first appearance of the Nabataean queen in the second half of the first century BC was represented on the coins of Obodas III (30-9 BC)⁹⁹⁸; she was depicted in a bust next to the king and sometimes alone on the reverse of the coin. A silver coin showed a bust of the queen alone on the reverse side⁹⁹⁹; she was identified as the queen Hagiru through a coin in year 10 (21/20 BC.) with her name written beside her depiction¹⁰⁰⁰. This shows that the status of the queen has improved considerably under Obodas III¹⁰⁰¹. Actually, the position of the busts is inspired by the Ptolemaic coins; whether it is the busts of kings and queens or the couple assimilated with Isis and Serapis, it is possible that the Nabataean king wanted to imitate the Ptolemaic kings' portraits¹⁰⁰².

On the coins of Aretas IV (9 BC- 40 AD), he appears on the obverse and his first wife, queen Huldu, on the reverse; each occupies one side of the coin, and they are no longer united. She is always depicted veiled, but the veil is pushed back over the forehead and reveals a *stephane*, a thin necklace around her neck. Sometimes it is visible at the top of her head; the Isis's crown, which consists of the sun disc and two horns (**Fig. 161**), testifies to her equation with the Egyptian goddess Isis¹⁰⁰³. Later, the *stephane* was replaced with a laurel wreath, but the *basielion* is still shown at the top of her head¹⁰⁰⁴. After the death of queen Huldu at the end of year 24 (15/16AD), the king had a new wife, Shaqilat, who began to be depicted on the coins in year 27. She is shown like Huldu, veiled, with a wreath on her head and the Isis crown, but it emerges with two feathers (**Fig. 162**)¹⁰⁰⁵.

⁹⁹⁸ Barkay mentioned him as Obodas II. Barkay, 2015-2016, p.13.

⁹⁹⁹ Meshorer, 1975, no. 21.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Schwentzel, 2014, p.155; Barkay, 2015-2016, p. 13, fig.5.

¹⁰⁰¹ Schwentzel, 2005, p.155.

¹⁰⁰² Schwentzel, 2014, p.154.

¹⁰⁰³ Meshorer, 1975, nos. 49-49a, 53; Schwentzel, 2005, p.156, figs. 10-11; Schwentzel, 2014, p.156, fig.7.1-7.3; Barkay, 2015-2016, p. 19, figs.11, 13, 15, 18.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Meshorer, 1975, no. 79-79a; Schwentzel, 2014, p.156.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Veymiers, 2011, pp. 229-232.



Figure 161. Queen Huldu wearing the basileion, Schwentzel, 2005, p. 157, Fig.7.1-7.3.

Figure 162. Aretas IV and Shaqilat with the basileion, Veymiers, 2011, p. 230, Fig.9.32.

After that, the wives of Malichus II and Rabbel II still appear on the coinage, and the Isis crown appears at least identifiable on the foreheads of the last two Nabataean queens, Gamilat and Hagiru, successive wives of Rabbel II, the last king of Nabataeans¹⁰⁰⁶. Then, Nabataea was annexed by Rome in 106 AD¹⁰⁰⁷. The Isis crown, thus, was provided to the Nabataean coins from the reign of queen Huldu; actually, the appearance of the Isis crown is not surprising in Petra; as already noted, it is depicted on the pediment of Khasneh and the stela from Ez-Zantur. Schwentzel suggested that the Nabataean queens were assimilated with Isis-Al-Uzza¹⁰⁰⁸. The assimilation of the Ptolemaic queens with the goddess Isis was familiar, beginning with Arsinoe II, for whom was designated as Isis in her cartouche, until Cleopatra VII, which one of the queen's titles was "*Nea Isis*". According to Plutarch, after the celebration of Antony's triumph over Armenia in Alexandria in 34 BC, Cleopatra bore the title "*Nea Isis*"¹⁰⁰⁹.

The Nabataean coins also showed some Ptolemaic characteristics, such as the depiction of the eagle, which appears on the reverse of all the currencies of Obodas II¹⁰¹⁰, and frequently under Malichus I¹⁰¹¹, Obodas III¹⁰¹², and Aretas IV. It appeared with closed wings, standing to

¹⁰⁰⁶ Meshorer, 1975, nos.163-164.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Schwentzel, 2014, p.158.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Schwentzel, 2014, p. 164.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Schwentzel concluded that the Nabataean queen adopted the Isiac headdress but "ethnicized" it. It represented a localized adaptation of a Hellenistic model that had been "revised and corrected" in accordance with Nabataean traditions. In essence, the Nabataean queen can be seen as neither fully assimilated to Isis nor deified. The apparent "Ptolemaic" character of the Nabataean monarchy served as a sort of aesthetic veneer overlaid onto a foundation that fundamentally retained its Semitic essence. Plut., Antonius, 54, 9; Schwentzel, 2005, p. 162; Fulińska, 2010, p.87; Schwentzel, 2014, p.160; Veymiers, 2011, pp. 218-222.

¹⁰¹⁰ Meshorer, 1975, nos. 9 - 11A.

¹⁰¹¹ Meshorer, 1975, nos. 12, 14-16.

¹⁰¹² Meshorer, 1975, nos. 20-23, 25, 27.

the left¹⁰¹³; it also adorned the façade of Khazneh. This representation of the eagle is recognizable as an indication of Ptolemaic coins, the attribute of Zeus, which is depicted with outstretching wings standing on a thunderbolt. Then, the eagle continued to be used by the Seleucids after the withdrawal of Ptolemaic control¹⁰¹⁴.

It is worth noting that the *cornucopia*, the Greek attribute of Tyche, the goddess of abundance, and also the attribute of the Ptolemaic royal house, appeared on the Nabataean coins. It is shown alone under Malichus I, from which emerge oval fruits and two bunches of grapes¹⁰¹⁵. Under Obodas III, it is displayed the double *cornucopia* "dikeras", which are two symmetrical, crossed, and filleted. The double *cornucopia* was invented in Egypt and became the symbol of the Ptolemaic ruling couple and their blessing function. According to Athenaeus, the double *cornucopia* is associated with Arsinoe II, which Ptolemy II explicitly made for her¹⁰¹⁶; it linked the fertility of Egypt with the Ptolemaic queen¹⁰¹⁷, but it has also appeared on the coins of Arsinoe III and Cleopatra VII¹⁰¹⁸. It was adopted by the Seleucid kings and appeared on Jewish coins around 130 BC¹⁰¹⁹. Furthermore, under Aretas IV, the *cornucopia* is also doubled, crossed, and filleted¹⁰²⁰, sometimes parallel to each other and accompanied by a palm branch¹⁰²¹. Charbonneaux mentioned that the double *cornucopia* evokes the divine couple of Isis and Serapis in Greco-Roman Egypt¹⁰²².

¹⁰¹³ Meshorer, 1975, no. 46, 80, 84, 88, 93; Schwentzel, 2005, p. 161, fig. 24.

¹⁰¹⁴ Stewart, 2003, p. 193.

¹⁰¹⁵ Meshorer, 1975, no. 13; Schwentzel, 2005, p. 161, fig. 25.

¹⁰¹⁶ Athen. XI.497b-c; Thompson, 1973, pp.32-33; Ashton, 2001, pp.151-152. A limestone statuette preserved in the Metropolitan Museum depicted Arsinoe with corkscrew locks, wearing an Egyptian knotted dress, and holding the double *cornucopia*. Another statue from black basalt, preserved in the Hermitage Museum, represented Arsinoe II or Cleopatra VII according to Ashton for the triple ureaus, and holding the double *cornucopia*. On Oinochoe, Arsinoe represented standing, holding a patera in her right hand, pouring libation, and holding the double *cornucopia* in her left hand. Fraser, 1972, 1, pp. 240-241; Thompson, 1973, p. 126; Ashton, 2001, pp. 160-161, no. 160; 166- 167, no.166; Van Oppen de Ruiter, 2007, p.427.

¹⁰¹⁷ Fulińska, 2010, pp. 73-92.

¹⁰¹⁸ Ashton, 2001, p. 178, no.186.

¹⁰¹⁹ Bergmann, 2012, p. 119.

¹⁰²⁰ Robinson, 1936, p. 288, pl. XVII; Meshorer, 1975, nos. 64, 67-78, 112-114.

¹⁰²¹ Schwentzel, 2005, p. 161, fig. 26; Meshorer, 1975, nos. 61 - 63.

¹⁰²² Charbonneaux, 1957, pp. 131-141.

IV.1.10. Harpocrates

A group of bronze figurines depicting the child god Harpocrates was discovered in Petra¹⁰²³. One notable example is a small bronze statuette of Harpocrates (**Fig. 163**) found in Wadi Musa in 1996 by Amer. The statuette depicts Harpocrates as a naked child, seated with both legs pulled close to the body. His left arm is slightly lowered and rests on the knee, holding an unidentified attribute whose purpose remains unclear, while the index finger of his right hand touches his mouth. His head is adorned with a small emblem, although it is difficult to distinguish. Additionally, there is a ring at the back, positioned between the neck and the middle of the back, which allows the statuette to be worn as a pendant or amulet around the neck¹⁰²⁴.



Figure 163. A bronze statuette of Harpocrates, Petra, Archaeological Museum Petra, Inv. No. JP4762.

Figure 164. A bronze statuette of Harpocrates, Petra, private collection.

Another bronze statuette of Harpocrates from Petra (**Fig. 164**) is similar to the previous one. In this depiction, the god is shown as a naked child seated; his right arm is raised with his index finger touching his mouth in the characteristic manner associated with Harpocrates. The left arm was probably holding a *cornucopia*, symbolizing abundance and prosperity.

¹⁰²³ Podvin mentioned that there is another unpublished copy of Harpocrates, also discovered in Petra, and kept in a private collection in Nuremberg. Podvin, 2016, p.312.

¹⁰²⁴Podvin, 2016, p.312, fig.1.

Moreover, there is a ring extending from the top of the head, designed for wearing the statuette as an amulet¹⁰²⁵.

As for the terracotta figurines, there are several examples found in Petra, including two heads of Harpocrates that date to the Roman Period. It is possible that these heads were part of a complete statuette. The first head (**Fig. 165**) was discovered during the British excavations in al-Katuteh from 1958-1964, in the area between the temple of Qasr al-Bint and the Temple of the Winged Lions along the colonnaded street¹⁰²⁶. It is likely associated with the temple of the Winged Lions, where several Egyptian statues were found. Harpocrates can be identified by the index finger of his right hand, which is pointed towards his mouth. The hairstyle consists of two rows of circular curls, and the head is crowned with an emblem, but it is significantly damaged. Unfortunately, due to the extent of the damage, it is difficult to determine whether the crown represents a lotus bud or a double crown¹⁰²⁷. The other head (**Fig. 166**) is in good condition and depicts Harpocrates wearing the Egyptian double crown. The remains of the index finger of his right hand, touching his mouth, are still visible. The style and quality of the head suggest that it is an imported Egyptian piece¹⁰²⁸. Additionally, there is a terracotta fragment (**Fig. 167**), but only the lower part is preserved. This fragment may serve as an excellent parallel to the aforementioned heads. It represents a seated naked boy on a hemispherical base, adorned with bracelets around his ankles. The outlines of a garment are clearly visible on the left thigh. This terracotta fragment likely represents Harpocrates, depicted with a *cornucopia* and a cloak draped over his left arm¹⁰²⁹.

¹⁰²⁵ Vaelske, 2005/2006, p.133, Taf. 42, 1; Podvin, 2016, p.312, fig.2.

¹⁰²⁶ No fewer than 182 terracottas were found by the British expedition alone, although their comprehensive publication has not yet taken place. Many of the statuettes come from layers of rubbish that covered earlier Nabataean houses and, therefore, cannot be dated any better than the 1st or 2nd century AD. Due to the finding situation, it is not possible to decide whether the Katuteh terracottas were formerly placed in a private or public context. Parr, 1990, p. 77.

¹⁰²⁷ Parr, 1990, pl. II,3; El-Khoury, 2002, p. 61, no.102; Podvin, 2016, p.312, fig.3.

¹⁰²⁸ Parlasca 1990, pl. IV, fig. 15; Parlasca, 1991, Abb. 18; El- Khoury, 2002, pp.60-61, no.101; Podvin, 2016, pp.313-314, fig.4.

¹⁰²⁹ Parlasca 1990, Pl. V, fig. 16; Parlasca, 1991, fig. 19; El-Khoury, 2002, p.61, no. 105.



Figure 165. A head of Harpocrates, Petra, Petra Archaeological Museum, Inv. No. JP 156.

Figure 166. A head of Harpocrates, Petra, private collection.

Figure 167. A terracotta fragment of Harpocrates, Petra, private collection.

Finally, there are also two terracotta plaques found in Petra (**Figs. 168-169**). They represent the same motif: Harpocrates stands on a decorated rectangular base, portrayed naked except for a himation on his left shoulder¹⁰³⁰. The index finger of his right hand touches his mouth, while he holds a *cornucopia* in his left hand¹⁰³¹. Some scholars mentioned that there is a coiling snake next to Harpocrates on one of the two plaques, and it is possible that it is also present on the other plaque, but it is broken¹⁰³². We can compare them to a plaque of Harpocrates standing in a posture similar to our plaques, preserved in the British Museum and probably dating to the Roman period (**Fig. 170**). Harpocrates is depicted holding a *cornucopia* inside a shrine decorated with a cobra frieze. The god stands on a molded plinth in the shrine with his right finger to his mouth and wearing a himation over his left shoulder while holding a *cornucopia*¹⁰³³. The depiction of Harpocrates holding a *cornucopia* in his left arm spread widely in Egypt during the Hellenistic and Roman periods¹⁰³⁴. It may have originated in Alexandria; his representation with a *cornucopia* indicates the god's ability to provide

¹⁰³⁰ Parlasca 1990, p. 90; El-Khouri, 2002, p.61; Podvin, 2016, p. 314.

¹⁰³¹ Parlasca 1990, pl. V, fig. 18; Barrett, 1998, p. 300, figs. 6-90, 6-91; El-Khouri, 2002, p.61, nos.103-104; Tuttle, 2009, p. 565, no. 231; Podvin, 2016, p. 314, fig.5-6.

¹⁰³² Podvin, 2016, p. 314.

¹⁰³³ It is preserved in the British Museum, Inv. No., EA 1889.10-14.2010; E24379. Parlasca, 1990, Taf. V17; Bailey, 2008, pl. 9, no. 3041.

¹⁰³⁴ Tran Tam Tinh, Jaeger, Poulin, LIMC IV, 1988, s.v. Harpokrates, nos.23-105; Dunand, 1979, pp.76-77; Török, 1995, p. 59, no.58, pl.8; Ballet, 1998, pp. 223-225, figs.5-10; Ballet, 2000, pp.100-101; Bailey, 2008, pp.31-32, nos. 3043-3048.

sustenance and aid humans and animals, as well as his role as a fertility god¹⁰³⁵. Compared to the rarity of large statues of Harpocrates, the enormous quantity of terracotta figurines of Harpocrates bears witness, as Dunand has pointed out, to the clear-cut existence between official worship and popular religion¹⁰³⁶.



Figure 168. A terracotta plaque of Harpocrates, Petra, private collection.



Figure 169. A terracotta plaque of Harpocrates, the Great Temple, Petra, Archaeological Museum Petra, Inv. No. JP3934, H. 8.4 cm.



Figure 170. A terracotta plaque of Harpocrates, the British Museum.

¹⁰³⁵ Bailey, 2008, pp.13-14.

¹⁰³⁶ Dunand, 1979, pp. 134-135.

IV.2. Khirbet et-Tannur

A limestone relief depicting the goddess Tyche was discovered at the temple of Khirbet et-Tannur, situated 70 km north of Petra (Figs. 171-172). The temple was excavated by Nelson Glueck in 1937¹⁰³⁷. Tyche, the goddess of good fortune, is represented in the zodiac. She is adorned with a mural crown topped by a veil, and her hair falls in a single curl on each side. The distinguishing feature of Tyche is the mural crown representing city walls. Additionally, two symbols are portrayed alongside her: a crescent moon and two rods bound together. One of the rods is topped with a crescent moon, while the other may depict an ear of wheat or a pine cone, potentially symbolizing a *thyrsus*, the attribute of Dionysus. McKenzie and Reyes have proposed that these symbols may indicate Tyche's dual role as a goddess associated with both astral influences and fertility¹⁰³⁸.

Supporting the zodiac ring is the winged goddess Nike, the winged victory. Unfortunately, her right arm and feet are missing, but she is seen wearing a peplos adorned with a rosette on each clasp¹⁰³⁹.

The symbols on the zodiac in the relief follow a specific order, which is different from the usual cyclic arrangement of the signs. Instead, they are organized into two sequences: starting from the top on the left side and running counterclockwise for the first half of the year, from



Figure 171. The Zodiac of Tyche, the temple of Khirbet et-Tannur, the Cincinnati Art Museum.

¹⁰³⁷ Glueck, 1937, pp. 6-16.

¹⁰³⁸ There are also two other busts of Tyche at Khirbet et-Tannur depicting this symbol, but they are in bad condition; however, no example is known from any other site, either in classical or Near Eastern contexts. She is also depicted wearing the mural crown and a veil, with a single curl of her hair falling on each side. McKenzie, Reyes, 2013, p.206, Figs. 361, 363.

¹⁰³⁹ McKenzie, 2003, p. 186-188, figs.197, 199; McKenzie, Reyes, 2013, p.206, 213, figs. 357-358.

Aries to Virgo. Then, the sequence returns from the top on the right side and runs downward for the second half of the year, from Libra to Pisces¹⁰⁴⁰. In other examples, such as a zodiac ring in Rome supported by Atlas (**Fig. 173**), the symbols typically follow a continuous direction. It begins from the top left with Aries to Virgo and continues from the bottom right with Libra to Pisces¹⁰⁴¹.

Glueck proposed that the change in direction of the symbols was meant to signify the two halves of the Nabataean calendar, where the natural new year commenced in spring while the civil new year started in autumn¹⁰⁴². On the other hand, McKenzie suggested an Egyptian influence on the Nabatean zodiac, citing examples found on Egyptian coffins from the first and second centuries AD. These examples, similar to the Nabataean sculpture at Khirbet et-Tannur, combine both clockwise and counterclockwise directions. One instance is the wooden coffin of Kornelios Pollios from Sheikh Abd el-Qurna in Luxor, currently preserved in the British Museum, which dates back to the first century AD. It depicts the goddess Nut, surrounded by the zodiac. On the right side, the signs Leo to Capricorn turn in a clockwise direction, while on the left side, the final signs, Aquarius and Cancer, also move clockwise. However, the four inner signs, Pisces to Gemini, run counterclockwise¹⁰⁴³.

Another wooden coffin of Heter, possibly from Thebes, is now missing (**Fig. 174**). It dates back to 125 AD and features the goddess Nut at its center, with the zodiac on both sides. On her right, the signs Cancer to Sagittarius run counterclockwise, while on her left, Capricorn to Gemini are depicted clockwise¹⁰⁴⁴. Notably, the sign of Pisces, which typically portrays two fish facing opposite directions in Roman examples, is represented in the same direction as the Egyptian examples¹⁰⁴⁵.

¹⁰⁴⁰ McKenzie, 2003, p. 188, fig. 198; McKenzie, Reyes, 2013, pp.213-214, figs. 357- 358.

¹⁰⁴¹ Glueck, 1937, p. 14, fig.7; McKenzie, Reyes, 2013, p.213, fig. 359.

¹⁰⁴² Glueck, 1937, p. 14.

¹⁰⁴³ McKenzie, 2001, p.108, fig.19; McKenzie, Reyes, 2013, p.219.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Neugebauer, Parker, 1969, pp. 93- 95, no. 71, pl.50.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Neugebauer, Parker, 1969, pls. 47a-b, 48, 50; Cauville, 1997, p.27. There have been debates regarding the interpretation of these observations. Wenning argues that while there are Egyptian parallels for a divided zodiac, there are no parallels for a divided zodiac ring or a change in the sequence of zodiacs. Wenning suggests a Babylonian influence, as the Hellenistic-Roman world was familiar with Babylonian astronomy, and there is evidence of Nabataean engagement with Babylonian astronomy as well. Wenning, 2009, pp, 577- 579, Figs.1-2.



Figure 172. The Zodiac of Tyche.

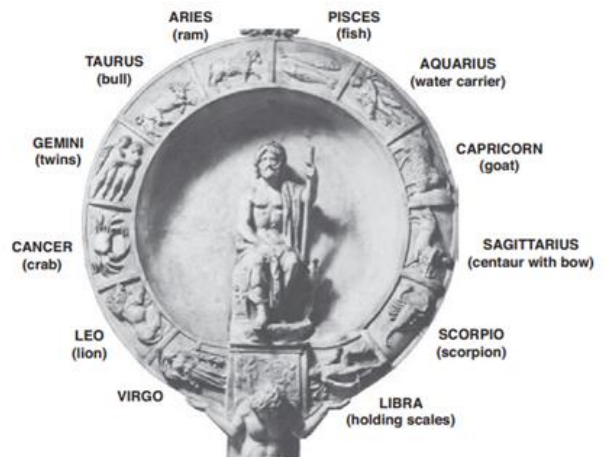


Figure 173. A zodiac ring in Rome.

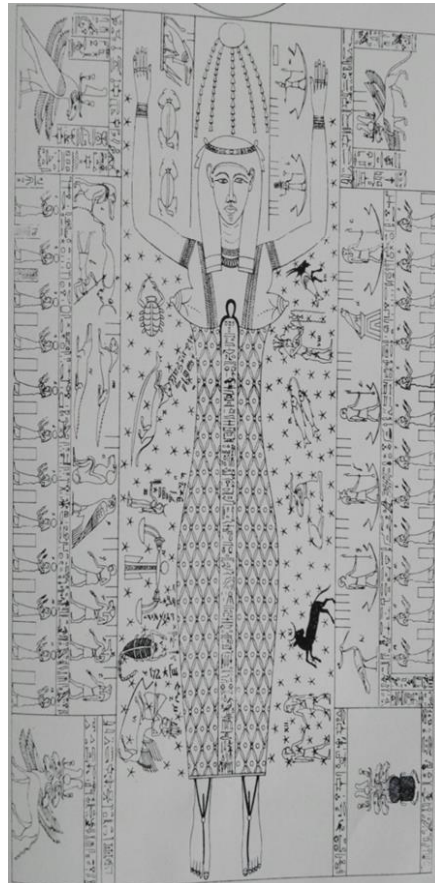


Figure 174. The wooden coffin of Heter, probably from Thebes.

IV.3. Sia

A bronze statuette of the child-god Harpocrates from Sia, 3 km south of Qanawat (**Fig. 175**), depicts him standing naked with his left foot slightly forward. He leans against a small pillar with his left hand, holding a *cornucopia*. In a characteristic gesture, he raises the index finger of his right hand to his mouth. It is possible that he wore the "double crown," which represents the crown of Upper and Lower Egypt, but this detail remains unclear¹⁰⁴⁶. Numerous small-scale bronze sculptures of Harpocrates have survived and can be found throughout the Roman Empire. A similar bronze statuette was discovered in Bostra (**Fig. 176**), Harpocrates as a naked young boy wearing the double crown. In this depiction, he leans on a vine with his left elbow and likely holds a *cornucopia* in his hand. His right hand is extended upwards, and his outstretched index finger touches his lips, a typical gesture associated with this Egyptian child god¹⁰⁴⁷.



Figure 175. A bronze statuette of Harpocrates from Sia, Syria.



Figure 176. A bronze statuette of Harpocrates from Bostra.

The representation of Harpocrates seen in these statues bears resemblance to the works of Praxiteles, where the figurine rests on one leg, creating an S-shaped body leaning on a pillar. Sculptures of Harpocrates portrayed in a Greco-Roman style are mostly Roman in date¹⁰⁴⁸.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Dentzer- Feydy, Weber, et al., 2010, p.8, figs.16-17; Podvin, 2016, p.316, fig.11.

¹⁰⁴⁷ It is preserved in the National Museum of Damascus, Inv. No. 6299. Weber, 2007, p. 46, fig. 4.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Tran Tam Tinh, Jaeger, Poulin, LIMC IV, 1988, s.v. Harpocrates, p. 416.

One famous example is the marble statue of Harpocrates from the temple of el-Ras el-Soda, which is now housed in the Antiquities Museum of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. This statue shows the god in a Greco-Roman style (**Fig. 177**)¹⁰⁴⁹.



Figure 177. A marble statue of Harpocrates in el-Ras el-Soda temple, the Antiquities Museum in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Inv. No. T0018. Tran Tam Tinh, Jaeger, Poulin, LIMC IV, 1988, s.v. Harpocrates, p. 418, no.5; Adriani, 1940, p.140, no. II, pls.56-57; Kiss, 2006, p.164.

IV.4. Ghariye Shoubeih

A basalt statue of a male figure was found at Ghariye Shoubeih, located south of Jabal al-Druze, Syria (**Fig. 178**). The statue is now preserved in the Soueida Museum. It portrays a standing man depicted barefoot on a base, dressed in a short-sleeved tunic fastened with a cord at the chest. The tunic is covered by a himation that drapes over the lower body, with its folds falling on the left arm. The figure features thick hair and a beard, and is adorned with a *kalathos*. The rough expression of the face, with the slightly hooked nose, is framed by a full beard. In his right hand, he holds a *patera*, while his left hand grasps a *cornucopia*¹⁰⁵⁰.

Some scholars have suggested that the figure represents the Nabataean god Dushara, who is associated with Dionysus. However, Kater-Sibbes has proposed an alternative interpretation, identifying the figure as the god Serapis¹⁰⁵¹. Comparing the statue with other depictions of Serapis holding a *patera* and *cornucopia*, it is likely that this representation represents Serapis in association with Dushara. It is worth noting the weightiness of the statue's execution and certain distinctive features, such as the elongated eyes observed in other regional heads, which indicate a local artistic influence.



Figure 178. A basalt statue of Serapis from Ghariyé Shoubeih, H. 1.48 m.

The depiction of Serapis holding a *cornucopia* and *patera* has appeared on Alexandrian coins. Only four coin issues are specifically devoted to Serapis: in the years 16 and 17 of Trajan and in the years 9 and 11 of Hadrian¹⁰⁵². These coins have been found not only in Egypt but also

¹⁰⁵⁰ Dussaud, 1923, pp. 397-401.

¹⁰⁵¹ Virolleaud, 1924, pp. 51-52, pl. XX, 2; Dunand, 1934, p. 37, pl. VII, no. 42; Kater-Sibbes, 1973, p.78, no. 449.

¹⁰⁵² Michaelis, 1885, pp. 300-301; Tran Tam Tinh, 1983, pp. 57-58, no. III.21-24, figs. 111,114.

in locations outside of Egypt, including Thrace, Odessos, Dionysopolis, Perinthus, and Deultum, during a relatively short period between the reigns of Caracalla and Gordian III¹⁰⁵³. In most depictions, Serapis is typically portrayed wearing a *kalathos*, a chiton, and a himation. He holds the *cornucopia* in his left hand and a *patera* in his right hand, as if making a libation, often positioned above an altar. Serapis is also depicted in various statuettes and reliefs; for example, there is a figurine of Serapis from the second half of the 2nd century BC (**Fig. 179**) that is part of the von Bissing collection at the Allard Pierson Museum. This figurine, discovered in Alexandria, portrays the god with a high *kalathos* on his head, an elongated face, dressed in a short-sleeved chiton and himation, and holding a *cornucopia* in his left hand and a *patera* in his right hand¹⁰⁵⁴. Another example is a relief from Delos dating to the 2nd century BC (**Fig. 180**). Serapis is depicted standing alongside Isis or Isis-Tyche, with a large serpent positioned on an altar between them¹⁰⁵⁵.



Figure 179. A statuette of Serapis, Alexandria, the von Bissing collection at Allard Pierson Museum.

Figure 180. A relief of Serapis and Isis, Delos.

¹⁰⁵³ Michaelis, 1885, pp. 301- 302, pls. E.9 -11; Tran Tam Tinh, 1983, pp.57-58, no. III.25-31, figs. 112,113, 115-117.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Tran Tam Tinh, 1983, pp. 58-59, no. III.9, fig. 98.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Tran Tam Tinh, 1983, p. 59, no. III.2, fig. 91.

IV.5. Palmyra

The ancient city of Tadmor, known by its Greek name Palmyra, lies amidst the Syrian Desert, approximately midway between Damascus and Deir ez-Zur, near the Euphrates River. Palmyra was an important stopover for direct caravan trade between the Syrian region and Mesopotamia¹⁰⁵⁶. The historical connections between Egypt and Palmyra can be traced back to the Hellenistic period, with particular prominence during Roman times¹⁰⁵⁷. While there are limited literary sources available, there is evidence of a Palmyrene named Zabdibelos who commanded a contingent of the Seleucid army in the famous “Battle of Raphia”¹⁰⁵⁸.

A terracotta plaque, currently preserved in the British Museum (**Fig. 181**), takes the form of a shrine with a triangular pediment. It was acquired from Greville Chester in 1885 and is believed to have originated from Palmyra, dating to the late period or early Ptolemaic period. The architrave of the shrine is supported by columns in the form of two Bes figures standing on a plinth. Each Bes figure is depicted naked, with hands resting on their thighs. Their tall feathered crowns extend to the architrave, and beneath them is a reclining lion with its head turned forward and front paws crossed in an Egyptian style. Inside the shrine, there is a depiction of a naked female deity with her hands by her sides, wearing a short but full wig with layered locks¹⁰⁵⁹. The piece is undoubtedly a work of an Egyptian workshop and shares similarities with a similar plaque excavated at Naukratis, likely originating from the same mold¹⁰⁶⁰. Bailey suggested that these depictions of the goddess were probably intended as *ex-votos*, dedicated at a temple¹⁰⁶¹. Some scholars have suggested that plaques like this one frequently portray significant individuals, objects, or events associated with the "festival of drunkenness". This festival commemorated the return of Isis from the southern region to reunite with her husband Osiris, a union that led to the conception of Horus, the divine child.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Will, 1957, pp. 262-277; Gawlikowski, 1996, pp.139-45.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Butcher, 2003, pp. 58-60.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Parlasca, 1994, p.405.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Parlasca, 1994, pp.405-406; Bailey, 2008, no. 3108. Bailey mentioned that Greville J. Chester did travel to Syria, but it is possible that he forgot the find spots of these two plaques. Since they are undoubtedly of Egyptian manufacture, it is extremely unlikely that they originated from Palmyra. Bailey, 2008, p.19-20.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Bailey, 2008, no. 3109. A similar plaque from a different mold series was also purchased by the British Museum from Greville J. Chester, said to have been acquired at Palmyra, Inv. No., 1885,1010.29. Bailey, 2008, no. 3110; For parallels: Török, 1995, p.138, no. 203; Bailey, 2008, no. 3107.

¹⁰⁶¹ Bailey, 2008, pp.19-20.

Symbolically, this religious celebration held great importance for the renewal of both the royal dynasty and the fertile land, as it immediately preceded the Nile Inundation¹⁰⁶².



Figure 181. A terracotta plaque from Palmyra, the British Museum, Inv. No., 1885, 1010. 28.

A Greek inscription dating to 149 AD indicates that Isis was known in Palmyra, which was discovered by the archaeological mission of the Department of Antiquities of Syria between the Agora and the theater. The inscription reads as follows: "Bariki, son of Zabdibol, son of Bariki, son of Zabdibol, son of Maliku, son of Arzagad, dedicated to Samabol (= Astarte?), to Isis and to Aphrodite, ancestral gods, at his expense, a small temple in marble with all the decoration and the chancel, for his salvation and that of his children and his brothers, the year 460, in the month of Loos"¹⁰⁶³.

It is noteworthy that Isis and Aphrodite also appeared in other inscriptions outside of Egypt. The oldest record can be traced back to the Serapeum C of Delos, dating to the mid-second century BC, which mentions Serapis, Isis, Anubis, and Aphrodite¹⁰⁶⁴. In Athens, within the sanctuary of Asklepieion located on the south slope of the Acropolis, an inscribed base lists

¹⁰⁶² Goddio, 2007, p. 213.

¹⁰⁶³ The inscription on a lintel with a molded cornice reused in a Byzantine shop. Dunand, 1973, p. 126; Teixidor, 1979, pp. 58-59; Parlasca, 1994, p. 409; Sima, 2001, p. 162; Bricault, RICIS, no. 404/ 0201.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Pakkanen, 1996, p.117.

various deities, including Hermes and Pan, among them Aphrodite and Isis¹⁰⁶⁵. Similarly, in Larissa, a Latin dedication acknowledges numerous gods, including Isis and Venus¹⁰⁶⁶. In Thrace, particularly in Mesembria Pontica, a dedication by five individuals attests to their recognition of Serapis, Isis, Anubis, and Aphrodite¹⁰⁶⁷.

Furthermore, we know from the inscription that a small private temple was built for (Sama) Bol, Isis, and Aphrodite by an Arab family in 149 AD. Indeed, Isis was associated with Aphrodite and another divinity named Samabol, the "name of Baal" in the text. Teixidor suggested that she could be the goddess Astarte, who bears this epithet in Sidon and Ugarit, or another goddess whose identity is unknown¹⁰⁶⁸. It is interesting to note that these three divinities are referred to as "ancestral gods". Dunand noted that this epithet naturally applies to Astarte and Aphrodite; it is unclear why it is also given to Isis. This could indicate that Isis was introduced to Palmyra at an early date, although it cannot be considered an official worship as it was dedicated by a private individual¹⁰⁶⁹.

There are also a few small finds with Egyptian motifs; for example, a carnel gem in the National Library in Paris depicts the busts of Isis and Serapis¹⁰⁷⁰. Furthermore, Isis-Pharia and Harpocrates are documented on Palmyrene tesserae seal impressions¹⁰⁷¹. The Palmyrene series includes three examples of Harpocrates. Two tesserae are particularly interesting: the first, a three-sided tessera, depicts Athena, a reclining figure pointing to the Nile, along with a crouching boy whose identification is secured by the inscription ΑΠΙΟ (ΚΡΑΤΗΣ), although the right hand is not placed over the mouth¹⁰⁷². The second example shows the god standing in an aedicule with the usual finger gestures, leaning on a tree trunk, and holding a *cornucopia* in his left arm¹⁰⁷³. Parlasca mentioned that these tesserae do not provide evidence for the worship of these deities. However, the association with similarly depicted child gods

¹⁰⁶⁵ IG II 1671; IG II/ III² 4994; Bricault, RICIS, no. 101/0219. The marble base of the Hymettus was found in Asklepieion, dating back to the second half of the 1st century BC. It seems that this base supported the statuary set corresponding to the inscription.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Bricault, RICIS, no. 112/0506.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Bricault, RICIS, no.114/1402.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Teixidor, 1968, pp. 353-389.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Dunand, 1973, pp. 126-127.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Kater-Sibbes, 1973, p.78, no. 448.

¹⁰⁷¹ Parlasca, 1994, p. 406.

¹⁰⁷² Parlasca, 1994, p. 406.

¹⁰⁷³ Parlasca, 1994, p. 406.

in the Mesopotamian region may have played a role in the choice of Harpocrates as the seal motif¹⁰⁷⁴. Another Palmyrene tessera shows a priest wearing a chiton and himation, reclining on a couch, and holding a cup in his left hand. On the side of the tessera, there is a head of Serapis wearing the *kalathos*¹⁰⁷⁵. Lastly, in the coinage of Palmyra, some issues dating to the 1st-3rd centuries AD present a bust of Serapis on the obverse¹⁰⁷⁶.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Parlasca, 1994, p. 407.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Kater-Sibbes, 1973, p.78, no. 446.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Bricault, SNRIS, p. 167, figs. Palmyra 1-4.

CHAPTER V

PALESTINE

V.1. Introduction

The general boundaries of Palestine have included the area between the mountain ranges of Mount Carmel and Hermon in the north, the expansive Hauran desert and the Jordan valley to the east, the Mediterranean Sea to the west, and the Negev desert to the south¹⁰⁷⁷. The border of Egypt lies slightly south of Raphia, where Palestine formed a corridor leading to Egypt (**Fig. 182**)¹⁰⁷⁸. Actually, Palestine's strategic location at the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe, facilitated its extensive commercial and cultural interactions with distant and diverse countries. However, it also experienced the influence and domination of powerful empires that emerged in the fertile plains between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers or in northern Syria, starting from the Third Millennium BC.

During the Third Millennium BC, Palestine maintained significant connections with Egypt, leading to the discovery of numerous Egyptian artifacts in various locations throughout the Palestinian territories¹⁰⁷⁹. For example, the numerous Egyptian amulets and scarabs from

¹⁰⁷⁷ Mueller, 2006, p.51.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Mueller, 2006, pp.51- 52.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Some scholars contend that Egypt's significant interactions with Byblos can be traced back to the middle of the fourth millennium BC. They argue that these interactions involved direct maritime trade, wherein Egyptians imported cedar wood and assorted resins from Byblos, and in exchange, they provided small luxury items that eventually found their way into Byblite tombs. These exchanges also had a broader impact on the material culture of the region, extending to areas such as Palestine. Ben-Tor, 1981, pp. 449-452; Ben-Tor, 1991, pp. 3-10; Schipper, 1999, pp. 6-10; Mumford, 2014, pp. 206-207.

Palestine indicate that there was some kind of contact with Egypt¹⁰⁸⁰. A small number of Egyptian sherds were unearthed at Tel Arad¹⁰⁸¹, alongside a fragment from an Egyptian vessel adorned with an incised *serekh* of King Narmer¹⁰⁸². Additionally, notable findings include an Egyptian cylinder seal from the Sharon Plain and a clay cylinder seal from Gezer, likely crafted locally, both featuring Egyptian motifs¹⁰⁸³. However, it is important to note that Palestine also had a notable influence on Egypt. Egyptian royal tombs, as well as private tombs, have yielded numerous vessels, possibly used for transporting oils or perfumes, originating from Palestine¹⁰⁸⁴. The most significant group among these Canaanite vessels is referred to as "Abydos Ware"¹⁰⁸⁵. At the burial site of Minshat Abu Omar, Canaanite pottery and cast metal tools and weapons have already been discovered¹⁰⁸⁶. Meanwhile, the Amsterdam University Survey Expedition unearthed a Palestinian-handled jar and numerous copper containers in an ancient grave located at Tell Ibrahim Awad¹⁰⁸⁷.

The mutual trade relationship between Egypt and Palestine is further evidenced by Zenon's papyri from the Hellenistic period¹⁰⁸⁸. These documents provide valuable information regarding the exchange of commodities such as wheat, oil, wine, fish, and meat. During Roman period, frequent voyages occurred between Pelusium and Gaza, which were just a

¹⁰⁸⁰ Herrmann, 1994. The story of Sinuhe's adventures in the Middle Kingdom testifies to the fact that the Egyptians had knowledge of the nearest Asian countries and even visited them.

¹⁰⁸¹ Amiran's initial examination of these Egyptian categories leads him to propose that they are characteristic of the earliest period of the First Dynasty. In our context, we can associate these findings with tombs 301, 382, 409, and 438 at Abu Roash. Amiran, 1965, pp. 30-33, figs. 1-3; Amiran, 1969, pp. 50-53, fig. 1.

¹⁰⁸² Amiran, 1974, pp. 4-12; Ben-Tor, 1981, p. 449.

¹⁰⁸³ In several smaller sites in southern Canaan, such as En Besor and Tel Maahaz, Egyptian ceramics constitute approximately 90% of the entire ceramic assemblage. These sites likely housed Egyptian inhabitants, mirroring the likelihood of a more substantial settlement like Tel Gath in the region. The presence of Egyptians in Canaan is further evidenced by the Azor cemetery. Ben-Tor, 1981, p. 449.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Schipper, 1999, pp. 6-10.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Ben-Tor, 1981, p. 449. Ben-Tor's study of Egyptian interactions with Canaan appears plausible: intermittent during the Chalcolithic era (corresponding to the Egyptian Badarian and Amratian periods), significantly increasing during the Early Bronze Age I (including the Gerzean and very early First Dynasty), witnessing a noticeable decline during the Early Bronze Age II (Protodynastic/Archaic period), and nearly absent during the Early Bronze Age III (Old Kingdom period).

¹⁰⁸⁶ Ward, 1991, pp. 11-26.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Ward, 1991, p. 11.

¹⁰⁸⁸ The Zenon papyri represent the earliest Greek records originating from Ptolemaic Egypt and hold significant historical value as they provide crucial insights into the period when Palestine was governed as a part of Egypt. One of the noteworthy pieces of information found in these documents is the reestablishment of Akke as Ptolemais during the reign of Ptolemy II. Furthermore, the Zenon papyri contain references to an individual named Tobias, who held a position of authority in the military in Transjordan. According to the historical account provided by Josephus, Joseph, the son of Tobias, played a pivotal role as a representative for the Jewish community in their dealings with the Ptolemaic rulers. Harper, 1928, pp. 1-35.

two-day boat journey apart, and there were also camel caravans that traversed the desert for an overland route between these two locations¹⁰⁸⁹.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Sperber, 1976, pp.113-147. Josephus mentions two instances of importing wheat from Egypt to alleviate severe famines. In one account, it is recorded that around 24 BC, Herod arranged for a substantial quantity of wheat to be imported from Egypt with the assistance of his friend Petronius, the prefect of Egypt. In another instance, which took place in 46 or 47 AD, Queen Helena took action by sending her attendants to Alexandria to purchase a significant amount of grain at a high cost. This grain was intended to provide relief to the famine-stricken city of Jerusalem.

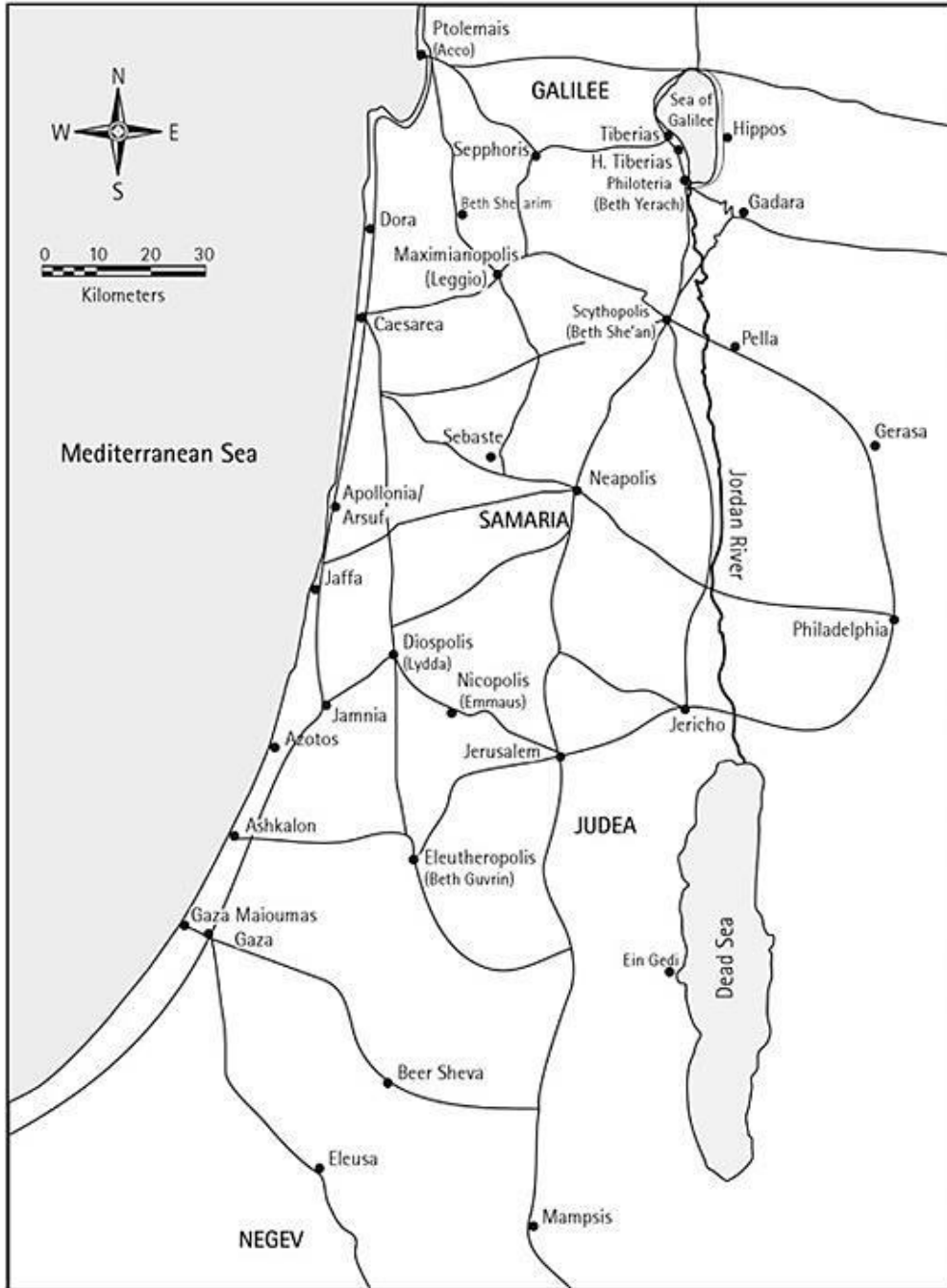


Figure 182. Map of Roman Palestine, Oxford.

V.2. Caesarea Maritime

The city of Caesarea is located on the Mediterranean coast of Palestine, approximately midway between the towns of Haifa and Jaffa¹⁰⁹⁰. In the years 22-10/9 BC, Caesarea and its harbor "Sebastos" were founded by Herod the Great, king of Judaea, on remains of a Hellenistic settlement known as "Straton's Tower" in honor of his patron Caesar Augustus¹⁰⁹¹. According to the historian Josephus Flavius, Herod the Great constructed various notable structures in Caesarea, including a port, the temple of Roma and Augustus, a royal palace, a theater, an amphitheater, a hippodrome, an administration building, pagan temples, and sewers¹⁰⁹².

During the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, Caesarea became one of the most influential eastern cities of the Roman Empire. It was the city of residence of the Roman procurators of Judaea under Augustus, and a legion was stationed there. After the great Jewish revolt in 70 AD, Caesarea Maritime, the great city of Herod, became the capital of Palestine, a status that was maintained until the Roman Empire became Christianized under the emperor Constantine in 325 AD. In the early 1950s, excavations were conducted in various parts of the city, yielding significant discoveries that shed light on its history¹⁰⁹³.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Caesarea Maritime should not be confused with other cities bearing the same name of the emperors, such as "Caesarea Philippi" in the Golan Heights or "Caesarea Mazaca" in Anatolia.

¹⁰⁹¹ Some scholars suggested that Straton's Tower was built as a trading center by the Ptolemies, while others believed that it was founded by the king of Sidon, Straton. Although at the end of the second century BC, a local tyrant named Zoilus strengthened Straton's Tower, but this did not prevent Alexander Jannaeus from seizing the city for the expanding Hasmonean kingdom and introducing a Jewish population around 100 BC. In 63 BC, the Roman leader Pompey added Straton's Tower and other coastal cities to Syria in order to weaken the Hasmonean influence. In 31 BC, it was one of the cities given to Herod by Octavian following the battle of Actium. P. Zen. 71; Levine, 1975, pp. 3-56; Meshorer, 1985, p. 20; Holum, K., Raban, A., NEAEHL, 1993, s. v. Caesarea, pp. 270-272; Lichtenberger, 1999, pp. 116-130; Patrich, 2008, p. 1; Patrich, 2011, pp. 1-3.

¹⁰⁹² Josephus, War, I.408-415; Antiq. 15.331-341.

¹⁰⁹³ Levine, 1975, pp.3-5; Meshorer, 1985, p.20; Holum, Raban, NEAEHL, 1993, s. v. Caesarea, pp. 270-272; Lichtenberger, 1999, pp. 116-130; Patrich, 2011, pp. 1-3.

V.2.1. Evidence for the worship of Isis in Caesarea

The worship of Isis at Straton's Tower is mentioned in the Oxyrhynchus papyrus 1380 as *Hellas*, "the personification of Greece," and *Agathe*, meaning "the good one"¹⁰⁹⁴. This led to the assumption that the cult of Isis already existed in the Hellenistic settlement, despite the fact that the archaeological location of the temple of Isis cannot be confirmed. Stiglitz proposed that the Hellenistic temple of Isis-Helas-Agathe occupied the same site where King Herod later constructed the temple of Augustus and Dea Roma¹⁰⁹⁵. However, there is no supporting evidence for this claim. On the other hand, Patrich suggested that the temple of Isis-Tyche is situated beneath the Acropolis, in the location of the citadel of the local tyrant Zoilus¹⁰⁹⁶.

In 1993, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) discovered a shrine built in the eastern seats of Herod's hippodrome. The shrine was divided into three small rooms with niches dedicated to Isis and Serapis, along with another deity. As a result, Gersht pointed out that the Hellenistic temple of Isis was likely built where Herod constructed the hippodrome, as the underground crypt beneath the east cavea of the hippodrome had already been devoted to Isis and Serapis¹⁰⁹⁷. Gersht also suggested that the third deity dedicated in the shrine is the goddess Agathe Tyche¹⁰⁹⁸.

According to "the Caesarea Cup", which is currently preserved in the Louvre Museum and dates back to the second or third quarter of the fourth century AD, it depicts Apollo, Asclepius, Hygieia, and Tyche adjacent to one of the temples of Caesarea (**Fig. 183**)¹⁰⁹⁹. Gersht argued that the niches depicted on the cup resemble the three-room shrine of Isis and Serapis at Herod's hippodrome (**Fig. 193**). Gersht further proposes that the two healing deities, Asclepius and Hygieia, depicted on the cup, deviate from their standard iconography and instead bear resemblance to Egyptian gods, with Serapis assuming the role of Asclepius and

¹⁰⁹⁴ P. Oxy. 1380, 94-95.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Stieglitz, 1996, pp. 593-594.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Patrich, 2011, p. 12.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Gersht, 1996, pp. 306- 317; Gersht, 2015, pp. 147-148; Gersht, 2017, p.77.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Gersht, 1996, pp. 306- 307; Gersht, 2015, p. 149; Gersht, 2017, p. 81.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Will, 1983, pp. 1-24.

Isis representing Hygieia¹¹⁰⁰. However, no specific feature or detail in the scene explicitly references these interpretations.



Figure 183. The Caesarea Cup, Louvre Museum, Inv. No., Br 4391; MND 2249.

Another testimony of the cult of Isis in Caesarea can be found in the description of the martyrs of Palestine by Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea in the fourth century AD, who reports that Hadrian and Euboulus of Batanea were made prey for beasts in Caesarea in 310 AD and that Hadrian was thrown to a lion on March 5, the birthday of the one called Tyche, by the people of Caesarea¹¹⁰¹. Many scholars suggested that this event bore resemblance to the "Navigium Isidis" festival, which also took place on March 5, and it is plausible that it could have been celebrated at Caesarea Maritima¹¹⁰². The association of Isis with Tyche in Caesarea

¹¹⁰⁰Gersht mentioned that the depictions of Asclepius and Hygieia on the cup differ from the sculpted images found in Caesarea. In the Caesarea statues, Asclepius is shown with his upper body partially exposed, accompanied by his serpent. However, on the cup, Asclepius is depicted wearing a long-sleeved tunic and cloak, and his serpent attribute is missing. Additionally, a small kalathos can be seen on his head. Based on the dress and kalathos, the figure is identified as Asclepius-Serapis, as the two deities were often associated and represented in syncretic images.

Similarly, the statues of Hygieia in Caesarea typically depict her feeding a snake from a patera. On the cup, however, Hygieia is shown holding a palm branch instead of a snake in one hand, and an egg instead of a patera in the other. The egg was used in the purification of ships during the Navigium Isidis celebrations, and the palm branch was an attribute of both Hygieia and Isis. This suggests that Hygieia on the cup may be assimilated with Isis. Gersht, 2015, p. 150; Gersht, 2017, p. 81; Gersht, 2020, pp. 85- 116.

¹¹⁰¹Eusebius, *De Mart. Pal.*, XI. 30.

¹¹⁰²Gersht suggested that the cup of Caesarea commemorates the city's high status with the presence of Asclepius-Serapis, Hygeia-Isis, and Apollo. It signifies the celebration of Tyche's birthday and the annual Navigium Isidis, which took place from March 5th to 7th. This event is highlighted by the engraving of the title

dates back to the Hellenistic period. As mentioned earlier, she was worshiped in Straton Tower under the name “Agathe”¹¹⁰³.

The "Navigium Isidis" festival, as mentioned in the eleventh book of the *Metamorphoses* by Apuleius, known as “the Golden Ass”, was one of the most prominent celebrations dedicated to the goddess Isis¹¹⁰⁴. Since the end of the Hellenistic period, this festival, also known as "Ploiaphesia"¹¹⁰⁵, has taken place on March 5. It served as a commemoration of the reopening of maritime routes and symbolized the renewal of life and vegetation¹¹⁰⁶. First of all, the festival began with an imposing procession, most likely nocturnal due to the need for (torches, oil lamps, and candles) to light the way in which both women and men participated. Women carried objects associated with female beauty, such as combs, mirrors, flowers, and perfumes, while men enjoyed musical accompaniment during the sacred procession¹¹⁰⁷. The procession was followed by initiates of the Isiac mysteries, with men having shaved heads and women with perfumed hair. They were accompanied by ministers of worship holding various sacred items, including a golden boat-shaped lamp, a small altar, a palm made of gold leaf, the caduceus of Mercury, a small rounded golden vase in the form of an udder for milk libations, a sacred basket laden with golden boughs, and an amphora¹¹⁰⁸. Next in the procession were the images of the gods Anubis and Isis, followed by two priests bearing a basket and a golden vase containing Nile water, symbolizing the incarnation of Osiris. The final moment of the "Navigium Isidis" was represented by the moment when the high priest consecrated to the goddess a decorated ship to which the faithful brought gifts and votive offerings along the seashore¹¹⁰⁹. The ship was released from its bonds and no doubt controlled by the *Navarchs* on this occasion. During the return to the temple of Isis, the *grammateus* (writer) expressed wishes of prosperity for the emperor, the Senate, the equestrian order, the Roman people, all

"Colonia" next to the image of Tyche, and it is celebrated in front of the shrine of Isis and Serapis located in the Western hippodrome of Caesarea. Gersht, 2020, p. 96.

¹¹⁰³ Belayche, 2007, p. 453; Patrich, 2011, pp. 84-89; Bricault, 2006, p. 204.

¹¹⁰⁴ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, XI, 5-17.

¹¹⁰⁵ The first mention of the festival, "Ploiaphesia", appeared in a Greek inscription from Byzantium dating to the 1st century AD. Perpillou-Thomas, 1993, pp. 114-116; Bricault, *RICIS*, 114/0703; Bricault, 2006, p. 138; Bricault, 2020, pp. 203-204, fig. 131.

¹¹⁰⁶ This festival is known by various names, including “Πλοιαφέσια” in a Greek context. “Navigium Isidis” in the Latin context, but also “De Isidis navigio”, “natalis ratis isiacae”, and “Natalis navigationis”. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, XI, 17; Bricault, *RICIS*, 114/0703, 501/0219, 501/0221; Bricault, 2006, pp. 134-136.

¹¹⁰⁷ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, XI, 9.

¹¹⁰⁸ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, XI, 10-11.

¹¹⁰⁹ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, XI, 16-17.

navigators, and all ships; then, he announces the "launching of the ship"¹¹¹⁰. This reference to the boat highlighted Isis's role as the lady of the sea¹¹¹¹.

It is worth noting that in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, the goddess Isis is described as the one who regulates "the healthy winds of the sea" and "protects men, both on land and at sea"¹¹¹². The origins of the celebration specifically dedicated to Isis's marine aspect are not easy to determine. However, Bricault suggests that although the association between the goddess and navigation is well-known from Greek sources, it is unclear whether this connection immediately led to worship ceremonies. It is likely that the "Navigium Isidis" festival was not celebrated until imperial times¹¹¹³. The role of Isis in the Navigium festival has been a subject of debate. Was it an ancient tradition, possibly originating in Egypt? The festival is not attested in Egyptian records, leading to the assumption that it was originally a Greek or Greco-Roman festival unrelated to Egyptian cults. It is important to note that the role of Isis as the patroness of navigation is not attested in Egyptian religion. However, Griffiths detects for this function of Isis antecedents in Egypt that the goddess sometimes ensures the role, rather than Hathor, of piloting the solar boat. Isis also appears in the boat of Osiris, most often in funeral rites or in connection with Osirian mythology. Griffiths finally attempts to locate the festival's origin in the Delta region, particularly in Alexandria¹¹¹⁴. Regarding the equating of the city Tyche of Caesarea with Isis, the passage from Eusebius does not provide convincing evidence to support this claim. According to Williams-Reed, the act of feeding Christians to the lions was not a daily occurrence; instead, it was likely a part of a larger celebration, possibly even the "sacred games" held in honor of the Tyche of Caesarea Maritima, as referenced on the so-called 'Caesarea Cup'¹¹¹⁵. The evidence supporting a celebration of the "Isis Navigation" festival at Caesarea Maritima is primarily circumstantial. However, the Temple of Roma and Augustus, along with its associated harbor, were

¹¹¹⁰ Perpillou-Thomas, 1993, pp. 114-115.

¹¹¹¹ Bricault, 2020, pp. 203-229. The places of celebration of the "Navigium Isidis" and thus identified Rome, Tomis, Amphipolis, Byzantium, Seleucia Pieria, Kios, Eretria, Ephesus, and Cenchræa. Vidman, *SIRIS*, 355a, 709; Bricault, *RICIS*, 618/1007, 113/0908, 402/0201, 308/0301; Bricault, 2006, pp. 135, 143; Bricault, 2020, p. 210.

¹¹¹² Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, XI, 5, 25.

¹¹¹³ Bricault, 2006, pp. 134-150; Bricault, 2020, pp. 203-229.

¹¹¹⁴ For full discussion of Apuleius' description of the festival. Griffiths, 1975, pp. 31-45.

¹¹¹⁵ Williams-Reed, 2018, pp. 215-217.

purposefully designed to support and accommodate cultic activities related to seafaring, making them well-suited to host such a festival.



Figure 184. A statuette of Isis with Harpocrates, Caesarea, Sdot Yam Museum, In. No. CM.81.2, H.7.2 cm.

Figure 185. A marble statue of Isis, Caesarea, Gersht, 2017, p. 81, fig. 6.12.

A lead statuette discovered in Caesarea Maritime represented Isis holding a *cornucopia* while her son Harpocrates accompanied her (**Fig. 184**)¹¹¹⁶. Vaelske proposed an alternative interpretation, suggesting that the figurine actually represents a partially clothed Aphrodite-Anadyomene with Eros, which is a more plausible explanation¹¹¹⁷. Another fragment of a marble statue of Isis was unearthed by Peter Gendelman of the Israel Antiquities Authority in 1999 at the theater of Caesarea (**Fig. 185**). Unfortunately, the head, forearms, and lower body of the statue are missing. The figure is depicted wearing a short-sleeved chiton covered by a himation, with the Isis knot tied between her breasts¹¹¹⁸. However, it is also possible that this figure found in Caesarea represents a woman wearing the robe of Isis or a priestess of Isis, designed in accordance with contemporary styles prevalent in the western Mediterranean region.

¹¹¹⁶ Gersht, 1996, p. 311, fig.7; Belayche, 2007, pp. 459-460, fig. 5a.

¹¹¹⁷ Vaelske, 2011, p. 49.

¹¹¹⁸ The fragment of the statue of Isis was found in the theater lying within the inner perimeter of the sigma west of the *scaena*. Gersht, 1996, p. 344; Gersht, 2008, p. 513, fig. 2,16; Gersht, 2017, p. 81, fig. 6.12.

V.2.2. Evidence for the worship of Serapis in Caesarea

The archaeological evidence for the worship of Serapis in Caesarea Maritime during the Roman period is more extensive than that for Isis. Serapis appears in various forms on public and private documents such as figurines, reliefs, coins, and gems that were found across different social strata¹¹¹⁹. An example is a headless statuette of Serapis enthroned with the dog Kerberos, which was found east of the vomitorium of Herod's hippodrome in 1993. The statuette is made of dark Egyptian greywacke (**Fig. 186**). Unfortunately, his head, left shoulder, right foot, and most of the arms with the attributes are broken off, and one of Kerberos's heads and his right foreleg are completely worn out¹¹²⁰.

The god Serapis is seated on the throne, with the dog Kerberos to his right. He is depicted wearing a chiton surmounted by a himation, and the folds of the chiton take the V-shape on his chest. It is likely that he held a scepter in his left hand while his right hand stretched towards Kerberos. This figurine was produced in Egypt, where the dark Egyptian greywacke comes from the quarries of Wadi Hammamat. Gersht suggested that the Serapis-Hades statuette could potentially fit into one of the six niches and be suitable for the shrine, taking into account the chthonic (underworld) nature of Serapis. However, the fact that the statuette was found east of the vomitorium makes it impossible to definitively associate it with the shrine. Nonetheless, this finding does strengthen the hypothesis that the entire area along the shore was dedicated to the worship of Isis and Serapis¹¹²¹.

¹¹¹⁹ Gersht, 1996, p. 313.

¹¹²⁰ Gersht, 1996, pp.312- 313, fig. 8; Vaelske, 2011, p.397, no. B16, Abb. b-23; Gersht, 2015, p.161, no. 7; Gersht, 2017, pp.78-79, fig. 6.8.

¹¹²¹ Gersht, 2015, pp. 141, 150, 161.



Figure 186. A figurine of Serapis, Caesarea Maritima, Gersht, 2015, no. 7, H. 9.4 cm.

In addition, a small bronze bust of Serapis was discovered in Caesarea in 1953 (**Fig. 187**), which is currently preserved in the Sdot Yam Museum. Despite its small size, approximately 10 cm in height, the bust exhibits the distinctive features of the god Serapis, including long curly hair, a full beard, and the *kalathos* on his head. Serapis is depicted wearing a chiton topped by a himation with vertical and V-shaped folds¹¹²². Due to its size, the bust might have been used on a folding mirror from the Roman period, where the handles often featured attached busts of Isis and Serapis¹¹²³.



Figure 187. A bronze bust of Serapis from Caesarea Maritima, H. 10 cm.

¹¹²² Gersht, 1996, p. 313, fig.9; Turnheim, Ovadiah, 2002, p. 49, fn. 117; Vaelske, 2011, p. 37, no. B8, Abb.b-10.

¹¹²³ Vaelske, 2011, p. 37.

Another bust of Serapis from Caesarea Maritima is carved on a marble frieze (**Fig. 188**). On his right is a branch of twisted acanthus leaves and a four-petaled flower inside. The bearded god is depicted wearing the *kalathos*¹¹²⁴. Turnheim and Ovadia dated the frieze based on the presence of the half-palmettes sprouting from the scroll, which are known as a common motive of Severan ornamentation¹¹²⁵. It is possible that this frieze adorned one of the temples dedicated to the god Serapis. As we know the interest of the Severan family in the worship of Serapis, it is worth noting that Emperor Septimius Severus was depicted as the god Serapis, and he also visited the temple of Serapeum in Alexandria¹¹²⁶. Images of Egyptian gods were incorporated into the decoration of public buildings throughout the Levant. In most cases, this underscores the significant public importance attributed to the worship of Egyptian deities. A similar representation can also be observed in Ascalon for the representation of Isis (**Fig. 208**).



Figure 188. A bust of Serapis from Caesarea Maritima carved on a marble frieze, Israel Museum, H. 37.5 cm.

Serapis is prominently featured in several gems that are reported to have originated from Caesarea¹¹²⁷. In one of the examples, he is represented standing with his right arm raised and holding a scepter on his left hand¹¹²⁸. Another gem portrays Serapis enthroned, accompanied by two deities (**Fig. 189**): Demeter, veiled and crowned with the *kalathos*, holds a torch in one

¹¹²⁴ Turnheim, Ovadia, 1996, pp.300-301, fig. 45; Turnheim, Ovadia 2002, p. 18, fn. 19, p.49. fig. III. 94; Vaelske, 2011, pp. 393-394, no. B9, Abb.b-11.

¹¹²⁵ Turnheim, Ovadia, 1996, pp. 300-301; Gersht, 1996, p. 313; Veymiers, 2009, p. 57.

¹¹²⁶ Tackacs, 1995, pp.115-116.

¹¹²⁷ Isis is represented in various gems at Caesarea as Tyche-Fortuna. Hornbostel, 1973, pp. 169-170, fn.11.

¹¹²⁸ Tran Tam Tinh, 1983, p. 185, no. IVB 33, fig. 156.

hand and ears of corn in the other, while Isis, wearing the *basileion*, stands behind him, carrying a scepter¹¹²⁹. Serapis-Ammon is also found on a gem in Caesarea dating from the second to the third centuries AD (**Fig. 190**)¹¹³⁰.



Figure 189. A gem of Serapis, Isis, Demeter, Caesarea Maritime.

Figure 190. A gem of Serapis-Ammon, Caesarea Maritime.

Two rings depicting Serapis were also unearthed in Caesarea. In one of the rings, the god is shown inside a temple¹¹³¹. Veymiers mentioned that such jewelry items could have followed many routes before being left in the sands of Caesarea¹¹³². Additionally, a bronze amulet from Caesarea bears the inscription Εἰς Ζεὺς Σάραπις¹¹³³. Actually, this epithet is associated with numerous amulets, some of which have been found in Cyprus, Perinthus, and Caesarea Philippi¹¹³⁴. It is worth mentioning in this regard a bronze medallion discovered in the vicinity of Jerusalem, dating from the 2nd century AD, on which the god Serapis is acclaimed both as εἰς Ζεὺς Σάραπις and μέγας ὁ ἐπήκοος Σάραπις (one is Zeus Serapis, great is Serapis attentive to prayers)¹¹³⁵.

¹¹²⁹ Veymiers, 2009, p. 141, no.V. BBC31, pl. 56.

¹¹³⁰ It is preserved in Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum, Jerusalem, Inv. No. 8.116. Veymiers, 2009, p. 187, 349, no. VI.BA10, pl. 61.

¹¹³¹ Gersht, 1996, p. 313.

¹¹³² Veymiers, 2009, p. 57.

¹¹³³ Lifshitz, 1964, pp. 81-82, no. VIII; Di Segni, 1994, p. 99, no. 11; Belayche, 2001, p. 159; Belayche, 2007, p. 461; Veymiers, 2009, pp. 205, 372, no. A.24; Gersht, 2020, p.90, fn. 26.

¹¹³⁴ Veymiers, 2009, p. 205, A. 4-6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 20-21, 27, 32, 34, 38, 41, pls. 71-72, XXVI.

¹¹³⁵ Di Segni, 1994, p. 103, no. 28; Belayche, 2001, pp. 158-159; Belayche, 2007, p. 461; Friedheim, 2007, p. 133; Veymiers, 2009, p. 369, no. A.6.

V.2.3. The coins of Caesarea Maritima

On the coins of Caesarea Maritima, the types featuring the image of Serapis ranked second in number after those of the goddess Tyche¹¹³⁶. Serapis was the only Egyptian god to appear on the coins of both Caesarea and Aelia Capitolina¹¹³⁷. In the beginning, he was portrayed as a bearded bust with thick hair, wearing the *kalathos* (**Fig. 191**). This depiction remained exclusive until 249 AD¹¹³⁸. Other types of Serapis only appeared towards the end of urban coinage and replaced the traditional reverse image of Serapis for a short time. Under the emperor Trajan Decius and his family, the reverse image shows Serapis standing, always looking facing right, with his right hand raised in salute and holding a long scepter in his left hand (**Fig. 192**)¹¹³⁹.



Figure 191. A coin of Caesarea, Bricault, 2006b, pl. 17:1.

Figure 192. A coin of Trajan Decius, Caesarea, Bricault, 2006b, pl. 17: 2.

However, Caesarea became a Roman colony under the emperor Vespasian in 68 AD¹¹⁴⁰. The inclusion of the Alexandrian god Serapis in the monetary repertoire of Caesarea occurred under the emperor Hadrian when the Roman settlement in the province was strengthened¹¹⁴¹. The use of Serapis's images on city coins could be interpreted as an expression of imperial loyalty rather than reflecting a local cult¹¹⁴². Nonetheless, it should be noted that the image of Serapis dominated the coins of Caesarea almost continuously for more than 100 years. This

¹¹³⁶ Meshorer, 1985, pp. 20-21.

¹¹³⁷ Bricault, 2006b, p. 124; Bricault, SNRIS, p.160.

¹¹³⁸ Bricault, 2006b, pp. 124-125, pl. 17:1.

¹¹³⁹ Bricault, 2006b, p. 125, pl. 17: 2.

¹¹⁴⁰ Meshorer, 1985, p.20.

¹¹⁴¹ Belayche, 2007, p. 258.

¹¹⁴² Bricault, SNRIS, p.160.

suggests that the god may have held some significance in the city's daily life during the 2nd century AD and likely well into the 3rd century AD¹¹⁴³.

V.2.4. Votive feet of Serapis, Isis, and Kore in Caesarea

Six votive feet were discovered in Caesarea Maritima, either in the shrine on the west Cavea of Herod's hippodrome or in its vicinity (western hippodrome), during the years 1993-1994 (**Fig. 193**). These feet are now kept in the Sdot Yam Museum. Among the six feet, two feature an image of Serapis, while two bear a Greek inscription (with only one being readable). The first foot, a bust of Serapis, is depicted inside a medallion at the foot and leg's joint (**Fig. 194**)¹¹⁴⁴. The second example represents a bust of Serapis that ends with the body of a snake (**Fig. 195**). This foot had been repurposed in the construction of a Byzantine bath, although it may have previously been part of one of Caesarea's temples dedicated to the worship of Isis and Serapis¹¹⁴⁵. In addition, one of the feet contains a Greek inscription engraved on the stump, indicating that it was dedicated to the goddess Kore by someone named Barbaros. The remaining three feet feature snakes coiling around them, including one foot adorned with a cobra snake (**Fig. 196**)¹¹⁴⁶.



Figure 193. The shrine of Isis and Serapis in the hippodrome, Caesarea Maritima, Turnheim, Ovadiah 2002, fig. III.41.

¹¹⁴³ Vaelske, 2011, p. 34.

¹¹⁴⁴ Gersht, 2017, p. 79, fig.6.9.

¹¹⁴⁵ Gersht, 1996, p.310, fig.6; Gersht, 2017, p. 79, fig.6.10.

¹¹⁴⁶ Gersht, 1996, p.310, fig.5; Gersht, 2008, pp. 513-516, fig. 4; Gersht, 2017, p.80, fig.6.11. Vaelske mentioned that it is noticeable that all votives show similar injuries, in that the big toe is particularly regularly damaged or even completely missing. The question would be whether this damage occurred when the feet fell - intentionally or accidentally - from a higher position to the ground. Vaelske, 2011, p. 40.

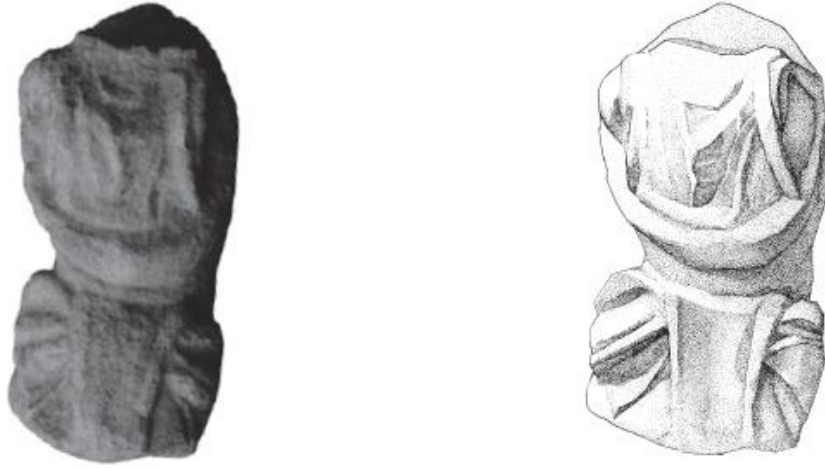


Figure 194. A votive Foot of Serapis, Caesarea Maritima, Gersht, 2015, fig. 24, H. 16.4 cm.

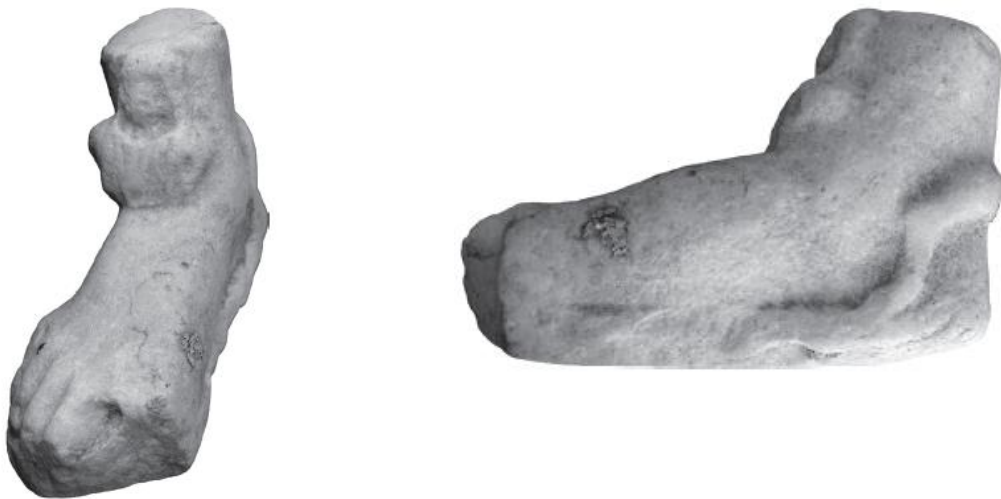


Figure 195. A votive Foot of Serapis, Caesarea Maritima, Gersht, 2017, fig. 6.10.



Figure 196. A votive Foot of Isis, Caesarea Maritima, Gersht, 2015, fig. 22, H. 13.2 cm.

Most of these feet were designated under the term "feet of Serapis", consisting of a large marble foot, larger than the average size (from 40 to 70 cm), usually representing the right foot wearing a sandal, and sometimes surmounted by a bust of Serapis wearing a *kalathos*, who was represented alone or accompanied by various Isiac figures such as Isis, Harpocrates, Anubis, the snake, the crocodile, or Kerberos¹¹⁴⁷. The feet come mainly from Alexandria and date from the Imperial period, more precisely from the 2nd century AD. Henrichs considered that these feet were inspired by the representation of Serapis's right foot in the cult statue of Serapeum in Alexandria, which was destroyed in the fourth century AD, and this is supported by the presence of a bust of Serapis placed on top of some examples¹¹⁴⁸. However, it seems to be an independent votive offering in which the foot is separated from the beginning.

In any case, the well-known story, reported by both Tacitus and Suetonius, is generally invoked to explain the existence of these peculiar sculptures. This comes during Vespasian's visit to the Serapeum of Alexandria in 69 AD, just before his accession to the throne. He healed a blind person and another paralyzed by standing on their diseased organs with his feet in the temple¹¹⁴⁹. Thus, according to this story, Vespasian, who was still only legate of Judea, found himself invested with the healing power of the god, legitimizing, by this means, his accession to the throne¹¹⁵⁰. We know that Serapis, the oracular god, exercises his healing power in the same way as Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine¹¹⁵¹. Serapis, like Asclepius, used to talk to devotees through dreams, either while incubating in the temple or while sleeping at home¹¹⁵². However, there is no identical foot sculpture dedicated to the Greek god. We can therefore assume that the model was originally specific to Serapis. Another noteworthy account of Serapis's healing miracles comes from Demetrius of Phaleron. When Demetrius lost his sight in Alexandria, Serapis treated him and restored his vision; thus, he

¹¹⁴⁷Henrichs, 1968, p.70.

¹¹⁴⁸Henrichs, 1968, p.70

¹¹⁴⁹Tacitus, *Histories*, IV 81, 1; Suetonius, *Life of Vespasian*, VII.

¹¹⁵⁰In 69 AD, Vespasian was proclaimed emperor while staying in Caesarea. According to Pliny, Vespasian elevated Caesarea to the rank of a Roman colony. It might have been during one of these significant events that the foot of Serapis was introduced into the shrine. Tacitus, *Historiae* II.79; Pliny, *NH* V.14.69; Henrichs, 1968, pp. 69-72; Gersht, 2015, p. 148.

¹¹⁵¹Artemidorus, II 44; Cicero, *Divination*. II 59, 123.

¹¹⁵²Fraser, 1972, pp. 256- 258; Dunand, *Zivie- Coche*, 2006, p. 218. An inscription from Lebena in Crete, dated to the third-fourth century, which was dedicated to Zeus Serapis Asclepius the healer. Vidman, *SIRIS*, no.161.

wrote a hymn to the god Serapis expressing his gratitude "*sung even today*"¹¹⁵³. The goddess Isis also had the power of healing, which is why the healing ability of Serapis can be traced back to Isis. Diodorus reports that Isis healed a large number of cripples¹¹⁵⁴. Tibullus, in his poems, recognizes the healing power of Isis outside Egypt in the 1st century BC¹¹⁵⁵.

Many anatomical feet with religious significance have been traced back to Alexandria, where they were dedicated to the gods to ensure healing or to express the patient's gratitude to the deity after his recovery. For instance, a marble foot wearing a Greek sandal was found in the Temple of Ras el-Soda in Alexandria (**Fig. 197**)¹¹⁵⁶. Another marble foot from el-Dabaa near Marsa Matruh was dedicated to the goddess Isis¹¹⁵⁷. Additionally, a colossal marble foot of Serapis was also discovered in Alexandria; it depicts a foot wearing a sandal and a bust of Serapis above it, but his head is missing. It is adorned from the back with a cobra snake wearing the *basileion* crown on the left, referring to the goddess Isis-Thermouthis in the form of a snake¹¹⁵⁸. Another snake is depicted on the right but is damaged and difficult to identify, possibly representing the Agathodaimon. In the midst of these protective deities, the figure of Harpocrates is depicted, although only the lower part of him is visible¹¹⁵⁹.

Furthermore, a marble votive foot is preserved in the Egyptian Museum of Turin (**Fig. 198**), depicting Isis-Thermouthis and Serapis-Agathodaimon in the form of snakes with human heads. The representation also includes Harpocrates seen from behind¹¹⁶⁰. These votive feet also appeared on many Alexandrian coins during the reign of Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, and Commodus. The coins feature a barefoot figure with a bust of Serapis above it, indicating the deity's mystical healing abilities¹¹⁶¹.

¹¹⁵³ Fraser, 1972, pp. 256- 258.

¹¹⁵⁴ Diodorus, Library of History, I, 25, 2-5.

¹¹⁵⁵ Tibullus, Elegy, I, 3, V. 1-34.

¹¹⁵⁶ Naerebout, 2007, p. 511, fig.6.

¹¹⁵⁷ Naerebout, 2007, p. 511.

¹¹⁵⁸ Isis-Thermouthis is *interpretatio graeca*, from the Ptolemaic period, of the goddess-cobra Renenutet. In ancient Egypt, the goddess Renenutet had a double function, both as protector of food and provisions, and in the funerary context, as protector of the deceased. D'Ascoli, 2015, pp. 7-14.

¹¹⁵⁹ Dow, Upson, 1944, p. 60-64, no.1, figs.1-4; Kayser, 1994, pp. 172-176, pl.XXVI, fig.47.

¹¹⁶⁰ Inv. No. S. 17137; D'Ascoli, 2015, pp. 7-24, fig.3.

¹¹⁶¹ Henrichs, 1968, p.69.

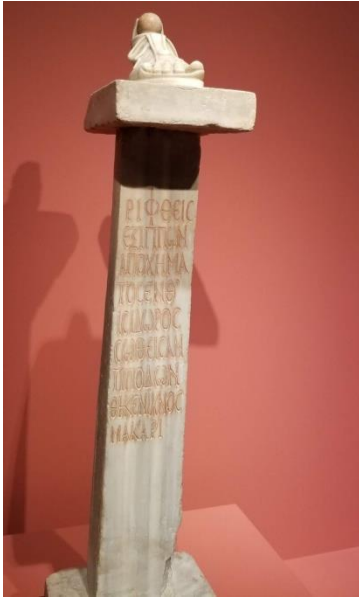


Figure 197. A votive Foot from the Temple of Ras el-Soda, Antiquities Museum in Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Inv. No. T0027.



Figure 198. A votive foot in the Egyptian Museum of Turin, Inv. No. S. 17137.

As previously mentioned, these votive offerings were a common practice in the worship of Egyptian gods, particularly Serapis and Isis. It is evident that both Serapis and Isis were widely revered in Caesarea, serving as patrons not only for the city but also for the hippodrome that housed their temple, as well as their roles as deities of healing and prosperity¹¹⁶². The shrine in the hippodrome, therefore, could have been dedicated to Serapis,

¹¹⁶² Fraser, 1972, pp. 210-211.

Isis, and Kore/Persephone, as opposed to the triad represented on the city coinage, which consisted of Tyche, Dionysos, and Demeter¹¹⁶³. Belayche proposed that, given the context of the location, these votive feet could have served as expressions of gratitude for victories or as witnesses to the efficacy of defense rituals. These rituals were intended to invoke divine protection, or perhaps even curses, upon the horses and charioteers who participated in the hippodrome¹¹⁶⁴.

It is worth noting that Isis is occasionally associated with Demeter and Kore/Persephone, implying that Isis in the hippodrome of Caesarea might have been called there by Kore. As we know, the invocation of Isis from Oxyrhynchus 1380 mentions in two places that Isis is referred to as Kore¹¹⁶⁵. Additionally, Plutarch's account of Isis' quest at Byblos draws parallels to the story of the Greek goddess Demeter mourning her daughter, further strengthening the connection (see pp. 95-96). Furthermore, Apuleius, in his writings, describes Isis as "*Proserpina, who caused the horror of her howling at night*", among other names¹¹⁶⁶. At the same time, Serapis appears in the form of Pluto, as depicted on figurines and gems discovered in the sands of Caesarea. Tacitus, in his account on the establishment of the Serapis cult in Alexandria, mentions not only the image of the god in the temple of Jupiter Dis at Sinope being brought to Egypt but also the presence of a female figure next to him, often identified as Proserpina¹¹⁶⁷. This hypothesis can be supported by a parallel in Samaria-Sebaste, where Kore succeeded Isis in the temple of Samaria-Sebaste in the Roman period¹¹⁶⁸. The association between Isis, Demeter, and Kore was widespread so intensively in Egypt in the Late Antique that Athanasius, in the 4th century, saw the worship of female deities as a remarkable example

¹¹⁶³ Meshorer, 1985, p. 21.

¹¹⁶⁴ Belayche, 2007, pp. 458-459.

¹¹⁶⁵ P. Oxyr. 1380, 104-105.

¹¹⁶⁶ Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 11, 2, 4.

¹¹⁶⁷ According to Tacitus, Serapis derives from Hades/Pluto, in the form of Jupiter Dis. Tacitus, *Hist.*, 4, 83-84; Borgeaud, Volokhine, 2000, pp. 37-76.

¹¹⁶⁸ An inscription from Samaria-Sebaste, dates to the third century BC, dedicated to Serapis and Isis by Hegesander, Xenarchis, and their children. Magness also mentioned that Hellenistic and early Roman period ceramic bowls, which were stamped with Isis crowns or headdresses, were discovered from the Samaria excavations. These findings provide additional, indirect evidence for the existence of the cult of Isis in the region. Furthermore, a head of Serapis was discovered in Samaria. Magness, 2001, pp. 158-161.

of idolatry turning away from the true God: *"Isis, Kore, Neotera, the Egyptians, and Aphrodite, among others"*¹¹⁶⁹.

It is noteworthy to highlight that an Egyptian obelisk made of red Egyptian granite was discovered in another hippodrome dating back to the second (or third) century AD at Caesarea Maritima in the southeastern periphery of the city (**Fig. 199**)¹¹⁷⁰. The obelisk was initially positioned on a base above the spina (the central stone embankment, which likely carried statues of divinities or emperors). Unfortunately, the obelisk suffered a fracture into two distinct pieces upon impact with the ground. Both the base and the pyramidal tip of the obelisk have been successfully uncovered within the confines of the hippodrome. In addition to Caesarea, archaeological evidence of Egyptian obelisks has been discovered at hippodromes in Antioch, Tyre, and Constantinople¹¹⁷¹.



Figure 199. A reconstruction of the obelisk stands in the center of the hippodrome.

¹¹⁶⁹ Athanasius, *contra gentes*, 10.

¹¹⁷⁰ Humphrey, 1974, pp. 20-27, figs. 14-18; Patrich, 2019, p. 402, fig. 22a.

¹¹⁷¹ Humphrey, 1974, p. 27.

V.2.5. Inscription of Osiris in Caesarea

An inscription of Osiris, dating to the first to third centuries AD, was found south of the theater in 1968-1969, not too far from the shrine in the hippodrome¹¹⁷². This plaque not only provides evidence of the worship of the Egyptian deity in Caesarea Maritima but also suggests a funerary context. The inscription reads as follows: *"Farewell, my dear children. Farewell, Priscus Nemonianus, fifteen years old. May Osiris give you the cold water, together with your sister, who died at the same time as you. And you, Isidora, seven years old, farewell. May Osiris give you the cold water, together with your brother, who was taken away at the same time as you. May the earth be light to you and good for you the things that he gives below"*.

Most scholars have assumed that the family of Priscus and Isidora originated from Egypt, primarily due to the presence of an Egyptian god mentioned several times in the inscription. In addition to, the name "Nemonianus" was widespread in Egypt during the second and third centuries¹¹⁷³. However, Solin rejected the idea of any Egyptian influence in this inscription and suggested the dedicant could have come from Asia Minor instead. He argued that the name "Nemonianus" was not exclusive to Egypt, just as the name "Isidorus" or "Isidora" was not distinctly Egyptian because this name became fashionable all over the Mediterranean world¹¹⁷⁴.

The phrase "the cool or fresh water of Osiris" is a creation of Alexandrian origin, heavily influenced by ancient Egyptian beliefs, and appears exclusively in funerary contexts¹¹⁷⁵. It is found on steles belonging to individuals of various ages (ranging from ten to thirty-five years) with Egyptian, Greek, and Roman names. These inscriptions were predominantly written during the first three centuries AD¹¹⁷⁶. The formula is likely related to the representations of Osiris-Canopus, who symbolically represent the water of the Nile, and the jug mentioned by

¹¹⁷² Lehmann, Kenneth 2000, pp. 139-140, no.158, pl. 104; Solin, 2001; Bricault, RICIS, 403/0401; Ecker, 2017, p. 64.

¹¹⁷³ Lehmann, Kenneth 2000, p. 140.

¹¹⁷⁴ Solin, 2001, pp. 239-240.

¹¹⁷⁵ Wild, 1981 pp. 123-126; Delia, 1992, pp. 181-190.

¹¹⁷⁶ Delia, 1992, p. 181.

Apuleius in the Navigium Isidis festival, which contained the water during ceremonies¹¹⁷⁷. Several examples of such inscriptions have been discovered in Alexandria, for instance, the stela of Isidora found at the excavation site of Kom el-Dikka, dating back to the second or early third centuries AD, which reads *"farewell Isidora, 28 years old, may Osiris give you cold water"*¹¹⁷⁸. This formula also appears at other sites in Egypt, such as Saqqara and Theadelphia¹¹⁷⁹. For example, the stela of Taesis from Saqqara states, *"And in the netherworld Osiris gave the fresh water"*¹¹⁸⁰. It is worthy of note that this formula for "fresh water" was also found outside Egypt, in Carthage, and Rome¹¹⁸¹. The stela of Olympia from Rome reads, *"Share the fresh water with a thirsting soul"*¹¹⁸². Within this context, the water obtained through Osiris is believed to guarantee immortality for the deceased who faithfully worshiped him¹¹⁸³.

¹¹⁷⁷ Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride*, 38, 366a; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, XI, 11; Gasparini, 2016, pp. 128-133.

¹¹⁷⁸ We can notice the similarity of the name "Isidora". The theophoric name of their daughter, Isidora, may be a sign of her parents' religious preference. Łukaszewicz, 1989, pp. 195-196; Gasparini, 2016, p. 129.

¹¹⁷⁹ SB III 6941, 3.

¹¹⁸⁰ SB I 5037, 4.

¹¹⁸¹ Delia, 1992, p. 190; Bricault, *RICIS*, 703/0111.

¹¹⁸² IG XIV 1890.

¹¹⁸³ Bricault, *RICIS*, 403/0401.

V.3. Ascalon

Ascalon is situated along the Mediterranean coast in the southern Levant, approximately 63 km south of Jaffa and 16 km north of Gaza¹¹⁸⁴. The ancient city occupies an ideal space for maritime trade but also for irrigated agriculture due to numerous underground springs, which make it, so to speak, an oasis¹¹⁸⁵. Moreover, its name comes from a particular variety of onions grown locally and then exported all around the Mediterranean to numerous Roman cities¹¹⁸⁶. Like other harbor cities along the Phoenician and Palestinian coasts, its port facilitated trade with the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly with Phoenicia to the north and Cyprus. The city's coastal road connected it with Egypt and Syria¹¹⁸⁷.

During the late Bronze Age, Ascalon was under the dominion of the Egyptian kingdom. Numerous letters exchanged between its rulers and the kings of Egypt were discovered in the Amarna archive¹¹⁸⁸. During the Hellenistic period, part of Ascalon was destroyed around 300 BC, but the excavations show a phase of immediate reconstruction¹¹⁸⁹. During the Hellenistic period, Ascalon knew the domination of the Ptolemies and then that of the Seleucids. Notably, several Ptolemies, including Cleopatra IV, were honored with coins minted in their names at Ascalon¹¹⁹⁰. In the 1st century BC, the city minted its own coins, bearing the effigy of Phoenician gods, often linked to Tyre. In the Byzantine period, Ascalon flourished as a trading and port city, and it served as the seat of a bishop.

V.3.1. Egyptian bronze figurines in Ascalon

Several Egyptian bronze statuettes were found in the ruins of the city of Ascalon in 1933 (**Figs. 200-205**). The collection consisted of 33 bronze figurines and seven bronze weights. Some of these objects were discovered in a "square room", while others were obtained from an antiquities dealer. Some scholars have debated the identification of this room, with some

¹¹⁸⁴ Stager, NEAEHL, 1993, s. v. Ashkelon, pp. 103-112; Schloen, 1997, pp. 220-223; Stager, Schloen, 2008, pp. 3-10.

¹¹⁸⁵ Stager, Schloen, 2008, p. 3.

¹¹⁸⁶ Stager, NEAEHL, 1993, s. v. Ashkelon, p. 103.

¹¹⁸⁷ Fischer, et al., 1995, pp.121-123, figs.1-2.

¹¹⁸⁸ Keel, Küchler, 1982, pp. 50-53.

¹¹⁸⁹ Stager, Schloen, 2008, p. 3.

¹¹⁹⁰ Stager, Schloen, 2008, p. 9.

suggesting it was an ancient metal workshop described by the excavator¹¹⁹¹. However, Roeder proposed an alternative theory, suggesting that the objects were actually part of a depot belonging to a Syrian trader and were produced in Egypt rather than in the workshop itself¹¹⁹².

According to the pottery found at the site, these bronze objects have been dated to the fifth to second centuries BC¹¹⁹³. It is important to note that despite their production in earlier periods, as was the case for the Mispè-Yamim statuettes (**Figs. 63-66**), they were retained and used at least until the Hellenistic period. It is striking that in none of these places have new, Hellenistic interpreted iconographies of Egyptian deities been found together with the Pharaonic material. Among the notable pieces are seven figures of Osiris depicted as a standing mummy. Although these figures share the characteristic Egyptian hand position (side by side), they appear to come from different castings and were likely produced in Egyptian workshops rather than Syrian ones¹¹⁹⁴.

Similar diversity is observed in the seven figures of the child Horus, with five different types represented, indicating the involvement of multiple modelers. Other deities represented in the collection include two bronze figurines of Isis nursing her son Horus¹¹⁹⁵, one of which still shows the traces of gilding¹¹⁹⁶. Furthermore, there are figures of Anubis, Bastet, Re, three representations of the Apis bull, priests, and various animals¹¹⁹⁷. Based on the evidence, it is likely that these bronze figures from Ascalon were votive offerings intended for placement in a sanctuary during their time of use. The variety of deities represented suggests a diverse range of religious practices and beliefs present in the region. The collection provides valuable insights into the religious and artistic connections between ancient Egypt and the city of Ascalon.

¹¹⁹¹ Stern, 2001, pp. 408-411; Stager, Schloen, 2008, pp. 3-10.

¹¹⁹² Roeder, 1956, p. 545.

¹¹⁹³ Erlich, 2009, pp. 30-31, fig. 28.

¹¹⁹⁴ Roeder, 1956, p. 545.

¹¹⁹⁵ Friedheim, 2006, pp. 205-206.

¹¹⁹⁶ Tran Tam Tinh dedicated an exhaustive and highly significant collection, encompassing remnants of Isis Lactans spanning from Great Britain to the borders of Syria. However, within Roman Palestine, this scholar did not identify any remnants of this goddess, except for archaeological discoveries dating back to the period predating the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great in 331 BC, as we observed in the case of Ascalon. Tran Tam Tinh, 1973.

¹¹⁹⁷ Stern, 2001, pp. 497-500.



Figure 200. An Egyptian bronze statuette of Horus the child, Ascalon, H. 12.5 cm.



Figure 201. An Egyptian bronze statuette of Horus the child, Ascalon, H. 11.2 cm.



Figure 202. An Egyptian bronze statuette of Osiris, Ascalon, H. 9.9 cm.



Figure 203. An Egyptian bronze statuette of Apis bull, Ascalon, H. 7.2 cm.



Figure 204. An Egyptian bronze statuette of Bastet, Ascalon, H. 8 cm.



Figure 205. An Egyptian bronze statuette of Isis and Horus the child, Ascalon, H. 9.1 cm.

V.3.2. The representation of Isis in Ascalon

During the Hellenistic period, Isis was worshiped at Ascalon, as indicated by the famous hymn of Oxyrhynchus 1380, which mentions the cities along the Palestinian coast, including Ascalon and Caesarea Maritima, as places for Isis worship. According to the Papyrus, Isis was honored in Ascalon with the epithet (Κρατιστη), meaning "the mightiest", highlighting her local nature as a protective and martial deity associated with safeguarding the city¹¹⁹⁸. However, it wasn't until the late second century AD that Isis made her appearance in the public sphere of Ascalon. A notable representation of the Egyptian goddess was discovered within the Basilica or Bouleuterion building, dating to the Roman period¹¹⁹⁹. Four marble pilasters were discovered in bas-relief, believed to have adorned the attic of the central nave (**Fig. 206**). Three of these pilasters are decorated with winged Victories standing on a globe carried by a kneeling Atlas (**Fig. 207**)¹²⁰⁰, presumably symbolizing the dominance of the Roman Empire over the world¹²⁰¹.

¹¹⁹⁸ P.Oxy, XI, no.1380, 93-99; Fischer, et al., 1995, p.135; Fuks, 2000, p.41; Fischer, 2008, p. 489; Le Blanc, 2010, p.55-58, fig. 28.

¹¹⁹⁹ Albright, 1922, pp. 11-18; Watzinger, 1935, p.97, Taf. 31, Abb. 71; Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC, V, 1990, s.v. Isis, no. 175; Wenning, 1992, pp.506-510; Fischer, et al., 1995, pp.133-139, figs.20-21; Fischer, 1998, pp.136-137, no.100; Belayche, 2007, pp.454- 455, fig.3; Fischer, 2008, pp. 493- 502, figs.2-3; Boehm, et al., 2016, p.310, fig. 26e.

¹²⁰⁰ Two Victorious pilasters come from the front wall of the Peristyle. On the left was a Victoria wearing the *kalathos*, holding a palm branch in her lowered right hand while the left is raised. The *kalathos* served as a support for protruding parts of the entablature, which rested on the architrave worked together with the pilaster's reliefs, supported by the Victoria with her left hand; therefore, the Victorias were also caryatids. Wenning, 1992, p. 505.

¹²⁰¹ Fischer, et al., 1995, p.130, fig. 14a-d, 15; Fischer, 1998, pp.134- 136, nos. 97-99; Belayche, 2007, pp.454-455; Fischer, 2019, p. 28, figs. 8-9. The representation of victoria with Atlas was quite rare, Atlas is usually the support figure of architectures, but her depiction holds a wreath and stands on a globe was so common. Wenning, 1992, pp. 505-506; Fischer, et al., 1995, p.130; Fischer, 1998, p. 135.

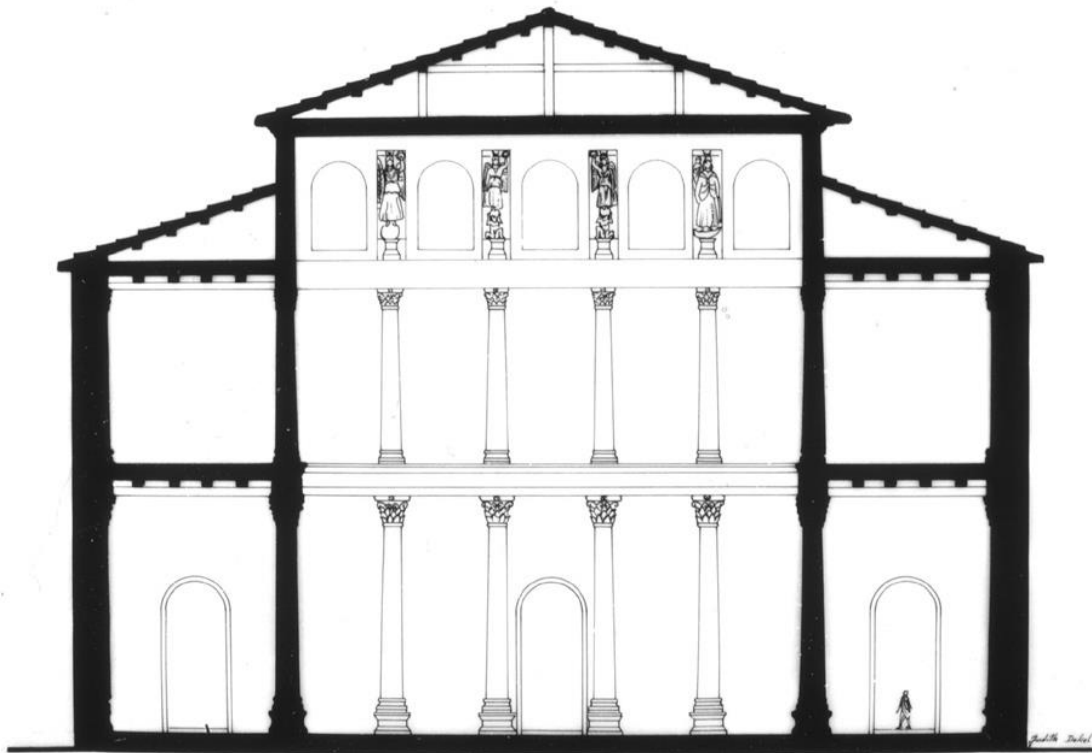


Figure 206. A reconstruction of the basilica in Ascalon, Palestine.



Figure 207. A relief of Nike and Atlas in Ascalon, Palestine.



Figure 208. A relief of Isis-Tyche in Ascalon, Palestine.

The fourth pilaster depicts two figures, with the main figure being a frontal female character reminiscent of the Korai girls in the Caryatid style (**Fig. 208**). She wears the *kalathos* and a band with a round emblem; the *kalathos* is decorated with the Isis crown, the *basileion*, which consists of the sun disc between two cow horns and two feathers¹²⁰². She is dressed in a short-sleeved chiton and a cloak with fringes, fastened with the distinctive Isis knot between her breasts. Her hair is neatly arranged, with two long strands falling over her shoulders. Unfortunately, her hands are missing, but it is possible that her right hand was slightly extended forward.

Behind her right shoulder stands a second figure, a young boy depicted in a three-quarter position. He is draped in a himation wrapped around his body, leaving his left shoulder bare. His left arm is hidden behind the female's shoulder, while his right hand holds the edge of the himation. The boy's face is round and chubby, and he wears a band with a round emblem in the middle, possibly a star, but it is damaged, and short strands of hair are visible on the forehead.

According to Fischer, the goddess is depicted in the guise of Isis, who shares an association with Tyche/Fortuna. In these representations, she is portrayed holding a *cornucopia* in her left hand and a ship's rudder in her right¹²⁰³. Notably, a terracotta bust of Isis-Tyche was found in Ascalon and dating back to the Roman Period, further exemplifies this concept (**Fig. 209**). The combined symbolism of the Isis-knot and the mural crown effectively presents the city's deity, Tyche, assuming the form of Isis¹²⁰⁴. Nevertheless, Krug presents a differing perspective on this interpretation. She suggests that the goddess's left arm extends further downward, making it challenging to hold a *cornucopia*. It's plausible that she may have been carrying a *situla* in her left hand while her right hand held a *sistrum* or rudder, with the rudder blade resting against her right side¹²⁰⁵.

¹²⁰² Le Blanc described the crown of Isis as a crescent moon, stars, and sheaves of wheat. Le Blanc, 2010, p.56.

¹²⁰³ Fischer, et al., 1995, p.135; Fischer, 1998, p.136; Fischer, 2008, p.496.

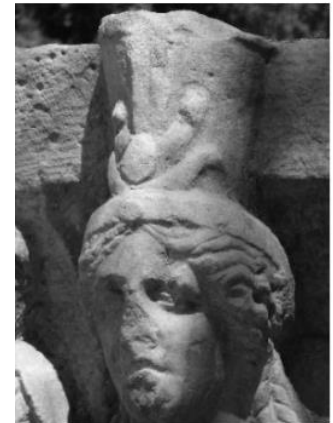
¹²⁰⁴ Flusser, 1969-71, p. 29, pl. IV, 7; Fuks, 2000, p.41.

¹²⁰⁵ Krug, 1995, p.135.



Figure 209. A terracotta bust of Isis-Tyche, Ascalon.

It is worth noting that the representation of the crown *basileion* consists of a sun disc between two cow's horns and two feathers, but here the sun disc and feathers appear in stylized form. Under the sun disc, there are two shapes that some scholars propose may resemble bird's heads, precisely a dove's head¹²⁰⁶. Notably, the dove has been observed in some examples of Isis's iconography, often assimilated with the goddess Aphrodite-Astarte (see pp. 63-67)¹²⁰⁷. Furthermore, during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the coins from Ascalon prominently showcased the image of a dove, serving as a distinctive 'mint mark' to indicate their origin from the city¹²⁰⁸. According to Philo, Ascalon was known for hosting numerous flocks of doves, which were protected by local laws and deemed sacred, prohibiting their consumption¹²⁰⁹. Eusebius also described the dove as a sacred bird in the city of Ascalon¹²¹⁰. Interestingly, the coins of the goddess Derceto in Ascalon, the main goddess of Ascalon, during the reign of Antoninus Pius depict her standing on the back of a triton, holding a dove in one hand and a scepter in the other, while wearing a crescent moon¹²¹¹. Therefore, this



¹²⁰⁶ Vaelske, 2011, p.70.

¹²⁰⁷ On a coin of Ascalon from the reign of Vespasian, Astarte is shown standing and holding a scepter and aphlaston, with a dove on her right side. She also wears the mural crown, which could possibly indicate that the figure represents the city goddess Tyche. Meshorer, 1985, p. 26, no. 45; Fuks, 2000, pp. 30-31.

¹²⁰⁸ Voulgaridis 2008, p. 67, 74.

¹²⁰⁹ Phil.De.Provid.2.64.

¹²¹⁰ Eusebius, Praeparatio 8, 16, 64.

¹²¹¹ Meshorer, 1985, p. 26, no.43; Fuks, 2000, p.30. The story of the local Ascalonian goddess Derceto is first mentioned in writings from the fifth century BC, and the most detailed account comes from Diodorus. He mentions the existence of a temenos located near the city, close to a deep lake filled with fish. However, there is

suggests that the goddess in the relief from Ascalon represents not only Isis but also a Phoenician goddess in Egyptian form.

On the other hand, many researchers have identified the male figure behind the goddess as the god Harpocrates, as he is depicted as a boy and accompanying his mother, Isis. However, in the Ascalon relief, the male figure lacks the distinctive features of Harpocrates, such as the side lock of hair, the Egyptian crown, and the finger of his right hand at his mouth. Watzinger suggests that the male figure bore personal features similar to the portraits, indicating that the shape of the round head, strong forehead, and short hair resemble the portraits of Caracalla in the form of a boy¹²¹². Wenning accepts Watzinger's opinion and identifies him as the emperor Caracalla in the form of Harpocrates, accompanied by his mother, Julia Domna, in the form of Isis¹²¹³.



Figure 210. A portrait of Serapis priest, Hawara, British Museum, Inv. No. EA 747.

currently no archaeological evidence supporting the existence of this temenos or the sacred pool mentioned by Diodorus. The goddess Derceto, assimilated with Atargatis, the Dea Syria, represented the female consort of the Syrian triads. She was worshipped in numerous cities in Palestine apart from Ascalon, including Neapolis, Caesarea-Maritime, and Akko-Ptolemais. Diodorus, 2.4.1; Friedheim, 2006, p. 271.

¹²¹² Watzinger points out that this interpretation fits well with the architectural style of the building. Excavations have uncovered inscriptions dedicated to certain individuals in the Ascalon Council, describing the entire structure as the Bouleuterion Council. However, the adjacent hall with an apse differs from the traditional shape of the old city hall, indicating that it may have functioned as a hall for the imperial cult, where the gods and emperors were honored side by side. Watzinger, 1935, p.98, Taf. 31, Abb. 72; Seyrig, 1955, p. 46 n. 2. Friedheim, 2006, p. 205, fn.740.

¹²¹³ Wenning excludes the portrayal of Geta because he fell into disrepair with the *Damnatio memoriae* in 212 AD, which was taken into account at least for the public buildings. Wenning, 1992, pp.506-510.

Nevertheless, it is noted that there is a round emblem above the band with a star inside it, implying that the male figure could be one of Serapis' priests¹²¹⁴. Many examples of men's portraits found in Egypt during the Roman Period depict a ribbon on their heads and a seven-pointed star in the middle. Parlasca suggests that the seven-pointed star symbolizes the sun, representing the priests of the god Helios¹²¹⁵. On the other hand, Goette proposes, which is the most acceptable opinion that the seven-pointed star refers to the priests of Serapis, the high-ranking "Neokoroi" of the Serapion of Alexandria (**Fig. 210**)¹²¹⁶.

According to this, Krug suggests that the depiction of the second person in the form of a boy is likely due to the formation of the sculpture as a whole. The majestic goddess occupies the entire center of the relief, leaving only a small space for her attributes, while the only available space for the other person is above her shoulders¹²¹⁷. Nevertheless, there are examples in Egypt where Harpocrates is portrayed with his usual attributes, such as a relief preserved in the Egyptian Museum (**Fig. 211**), showing Isis wearing the *basileion* and holding the ears of wheat and lotus flowers in her right hand, with her son Harpocrates behind her right shoulder, wearing the pschent crown, and putting his index finger to his mouth¹²¹⁸.

¹²¹⁴ Krug, 1995, p.136.

¹²¹⁵ Parlasca, 1966, p.85.

¹²¹⁶ Goette, 1989, pp. 178-181. Evans further noted that the seven-pointed star, in addition to symbolizing the sun, was also associated with astrology. This association connected Serapis with astronomy and astrology. Many depictions of Serapis show him with the twelve zodiac signs or the seven planets, sometimes even both together. The number seven in the star symbol represented Serapis as a kosmokrator god, signifying his dominion over the seven planets. For example, a herm discovered in Carthage and housed in the Louvre Museum, dating back to the third century AD, portrays the head of a priest of Serapis. The priest's head is surmounted by a diadem with a seven-pointed star. Furthermore, the base of the herm diagonally depicts the zodiac signs. Another significant artifact is a Greek papyrus, considered the oldest Greek astronomical document, dating back to the first half of the second century BC, and also housed in the Louvre Museum. At the bottom of the papyrus, there is a reference to the oracle of Serapis. This suggests that the movement of the seven planets through the zodiac circle was believed to determine the fate of individuals and cities, with the seven gods protecting each of the seven planets. Evans, 2004, pp.27- 36, fig. 6.

¹²¹⁷ Krug, 1995, p.136.

¹²¹⁸ Inv. No. JE 47108; Tran Tam Tinh, LIMC V, 1990, s.v. Isis, p.773, no. 174, pl. 510.



Figure 211. A relief of Isis, the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, Inv. No. JE 47108.

Accordingly, the male figure in the relief could possibly represent the donor involved in the construction of the building¹²¹⁹. In the Levant region, it was not unusual to depict gods and donors together in dedication scenes. For example, there is a Palmyrene funerary relief bust depicting a female with her son and daughter positioned behind her shoulder (**Fig. 212**)¹²²⁰. Another example from Dura Europos shows the Gad of Palmyra "Fortune", inspired by the famous Hellenistic statue of Tyche or possibly even the goddess Tyche herself. In this depiction, the Gad is seated and surrounded by the priestly donor and victory, all depicted at the same size (**Fig. 213**)¹²²¹. In any case, if the identification of the male figure as a priest of Serapis is correct, this indicates the presence of a temple of Serapis in Ascalon. This raises the possibility that there may be another pilaster depicting the rest of the Alexandrian triad, with Serapis as the central deity¹²²². However, there is currently no evidence to confirm this hypothesis.

¹²¹⁹ Krug, 1995, p.136.

¹²²⁰ Colledge, 1976, p. 68, fig. 83,

¹²²¹ Rostovtzeff et al., 1939, pp. 260- 262, pl. XXXIV; Colledge, 1976, p. 227, fig. 146.

¹²²² Krug, 1995, p.138. The passage from Avodah Zarah 11b appears to suggest that there is a reference to a temple of Serapis, which is situated to the north of Ascalon at a location identified by the toponym "Khirbet a-Saraf [= Serapis?]." Friedheim, 2006, pp. 271-272, fn. 1023.



Figure 212. A Palmyrene funerary relief, Colledge, 1976, p. 68, Fig. 83.



Figure 213. A relief from Dura Europos, Colledge, 1976, p. 227, Fig. 146.

As for the location of these four pilasters, a very close parallel can be found in the decoration of the Severan Basilica of Leptis Magna, where nine small pilasters represented caryatids in different positions¹²²³. Therefore, it can be inferred that the presence of the Isis cult in Ascalon during the early Hellenistic period is less relevant for interpreting the relief. This is due to the significant time difference and the fact that the sculptural program of this complex is based on Roman imperial ideology rather than local cults. These remarkable marble pilasters offer valuable insights into the representation of Isis and associated deities in Ascalon during the Roman period. The presence of Isis in the city's religious and artistic contexts underscores her significance and the influence of Egyptian cults in the region. While Isis is prominently featured in the bouleuterion, her presence on the city's coinage during the Roman period is not unequivocally established.

The depiction of Isis in the relief indicates the prosperity associated with the connections between the Severan dynasty and the cults of Isis and Serapis. This association is also evident on coins, such as the Denarius of Julia Domna, the wife of Septimius Severus. This coin portrays Isis nursing her son Horus while resting her left foot on a prow, with the inscription "*Saecvli Felicitas*"¹²²⁴. At the same time, the mention of Isis relates to the local Tyche, the city goddess of Ascalon, who held significant importance in Roman Palestine¹²²⁵. The public diffusion of Isis in coastal cities like Ascalon and Caesarea rests on her universal tutelage of maritime activities and, therefore, on her potential quality to be chosen as Civic Fortune¹²²⁶.

¹²²³ Fischer 1995, p. 139.

¹²²⁴ Witt, 1997, p.238, Pl.57; Boehm, et al., 2016, p.311.

¹²²⁵ Fuks, 2000, pp. 30-31.

¹²²⁶ Belayche, 2007, p.449-450.

V.3.3.The coins of Ascalon

A variety of unique coins discovered in Ascalon shows use two types with distinct Egyptian features, which have been subject to various interpretations. The first type portrays an Egyptian god facing right, standing on three lions (**Fig. 214**). The deity is depicted wearing a long crown, likely the *hem-hem* crown, and holds an Egyptian flail in his right hand, while the left hand carries a scepter¹²²⁷. There are also instances where the flail is held in the left hand, while the right is raised without a scepter. These coins first appeared during the reign of Antoninus Pius¹²²⁸, and continued to be minted under Marcus Aurelius¹²²⁹, Geta¹²³⁰, Macrinus¹²³¹, Elagabalus¹²³², Severus Alexander¹²³³, and Maximinus¹²³⁴. In some coins of Emperor Elagabalus, the Egyptian god is shown facing left and standing on the back of three lions, with a star visible above them (**Fig. 215**)¹²³⁵.



Figure 214. A coin of Marcus Aurelius, Ascalon, Shaick, 2012, pl. 14:1.



Figure 215. A coin of Elagabalus, Ascalon, Shaick, 2012, pl. 14:3.

This particular monetary type is also found on some gems. One example was discovered in a tomb in Ascalon in 1958 and is now kept at the Department of Antiquities of Israel (**Fig. 216**). The figure on this gem is depicted standing on three lions, similar to Ascalon's coins, but holding a different scepter, which some scholars identify as a variation of the *was* scepter¹²³⁶.

¹²²⁷ Bricault, 2006b, p.131, pl. 19:19; Bricault, SNRIS, p.164, figs. Ascalon 2, 2A, 4, 5, 8; Shaick, 2012, p.128-129, pl.14:3.

¹²²⁸ Yashin, 2007, p. 58, no. 217.

¹²²⁹ Yashin, 2007, p. 60, no. 231.

¹²³⁰ Yashin, 2007, p. 62, no. 240; Shaick, 2012, pl. 14:2.

¹²³¹ Yashin, 2007, p. 62, no. 243.

¹²³² Yashin, 2007, p. 63, no. 249; p. 64, Nos. 253–254; Shaick, 2012, pl. 14:3.

¹²³³ Shaick, 2012, p.128.

¹²³⁴ Yashin, 2007, p. 66, no. 270.

¹²³⁵ Shaick, 2012, p.128, pl. 14:3.

¹²³⁶ Inv. No. 58-208; Shaick, 2012, pl. 14:9.

Another gem, preserved in Munich, shows the figure standing on the back a lion, wearing a *shendyt* skirt, with a star and crescent on each side (Fig. 217)¹²³⁷.

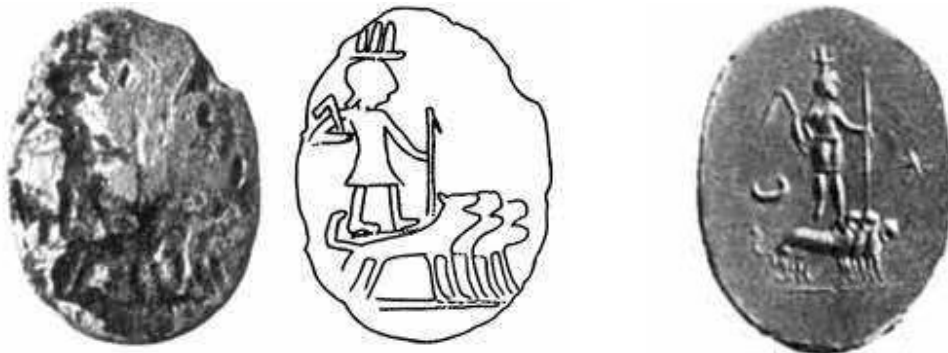


Figure 216. A gem from Ascalon tomb I, Shaick, 2012, pl. 14:9.

Figure 217. A gem in München, Auction Catalog of Karl Kress, Shaick, 2012, pl. 14:8.

The second type represents the Egyptian deity but in the form of a bust, which appeared on the coins minted in Ascalon under the emperors Caracalla, Alexander Severus, and Maximinus (Fig. 218)¹²³⁸. He is depicted as a bust, turned to the right, wearing the *hem-hem* crown, holding a scepter in the left hand, and a flail in the right. Below the bust, three lion heads are turned to the right.



Figure 218. A coin of Caracalla, Ascalon, Bricault, 2006b, p.131, pl.19:20.

The figure depicted on the coins of Ascalon combines Egyptian and Syro-Phoenician features, standing on lions reminiscent of the Phoenician god Baal¹²³⁹. Many scholars initially identified this figure as Osiris¹²⁴⁰ or Isis¹²⁴¹. However, Bricault indicated that he is possibly a

¹²³⁷ It is similar to the star found on Ascalon coins under the emperor Elagabalus. Shaick, 2012, p. 130, pl. 14:8.

¹²³⁸ Fuks, 2000, p. 41; Bricault, 2006b, p.131, pl.19:20; Belayche, 2007, p.455; Bricault, SNRIS, p.164, figs. Ascalon 3, 6, 7.

¹²³⁹ Bricault, 2006b, p.131; Belayche, 2007, p.455; Bricault, SNRIS, p.164.

¹²⁴⁰ Hill, 1914, p. lxi- lxi; Yashin, 2007, p. 57, no. 211; Fuks, 2000, p. 41.

¹²⁴¹ Meshorer, 1985, p.28, No. 52; Friedheim, 2006, p. 205, fn.740; Belayche, 2007, p. 455.

hybrid image of Harpocrates or Horus of Mount Kasion¹²⁴². Harpocrates is known to be depicted holding a flail, which is not limited to Osiris only. For example, in a Theban faience plaque, Harpocrates is depicted sitting on a lotus flower, wearing the *hem-hem* crown, and holding a flail¹²⁴³. In any case, the frequent appearance of this figure on the coins of Ascalon indicates its significance in the city. The figure corresponds to Zeus Kasios, worshiped on Mount Kasion, east of Pelusium, and associated with Horus-Harpocrates. Since the time of the emperor Trajan, Zeus Kasios has been shown on coins as a youthful figure wearing the *hem-hem* crown. It is worth noting that Zeus Kasios originated from the Phoenician god Baal of Mount Kasion near Ugarit¹²⁴⁴. Consequently, the hypothesis of Zeus Kasios being depicted on Ascalon's coins is plausible, considering the city's role as an important port located near the Egyptian border, potentially making it a partner of Pelusium.

Furthermore, the depiction of the temple dedicated to the deity known as Phanebalos in Ascalon is influenced by Egyptian features. The deity first appears on coins, gems, and a lead disc in Ascalon during the mid-first century BC¹²⁴⁵. Although the identity of this deity is subject to debate, it is generally interpreted as *Pane Baal*, which means "face of Baal" or "manifestation of Baal". This particular epithet is associated with the Phoenician goddess Tanith, who is the consort of Baal¹²⁴⁶. A coin dating back to the time of Emperor Antoninus Pius (**Fig. 219**) depicts the temple of Phanebalos as a structure with four doors separated by three courtyards arranged in a row before the naos positioned at the rear. The temple's outer façade showcases Egyptian inspirations prominently, featuring a frieze adorned with uraei that run along the architrave. The columns flanking the sides of the temple support capitals shaped as either a disc or a crescent, while the entrance itself is flanked by two uraei¹²⁴⁷.

¹²⁴² Bricault, 2006b, p.131; Bricault, SNRIS, p. 21, 164; Shaick, 2012, pp.129-131.

¹²⁴³ Shaick, 2012, p. 132, pl. 14:11.

¹²⁴⁴ Bonner, 1946, pp. 51-59.

¹²⁴⁵ The deity usually wears armor and a crested helmet and holds a circular shield in front of a palm branch in one hand. Yashin, 2007, p. 43, nos. 72-75.

¹²⁴⁶ Fuks, 2000, pp.32- 35.

¹²⁴⁷ Fuks suggested that the temple on the coins of Ascalon maybe represent the temple of Isis. Hill, 1914, nos. 191, 231-232; Meshorer, 1985, p. 28, no. 50; Fuks, 2000, pp.32- 35; Belayche, 2007, pp.456-457, fig.4.



Figure 219. A coin from the reign of Antoninus Pius, Ascalon, Belayche, 2007, Fig.4.

The combination of Egyptian and Syro-Phoenician traits can also be observed in Egypt itself. In Canopus, in 218 AD, a resident of Ascalon offered a statue of his ancestral god Heracles-Belos, the invincible, to Zeus-Helios-Serapis. Heracles-Belos could also be compared to the Tyrian god Melkart¹²⁴⁸. However, it should be noted that the god Serapis does not appear on Ascalon's coinage, and no document so far has been discovered to confirm his presence in the city¹²⁴⁹.

¹²⁴⁸ IGRR I 1092; Bonnet, 1988, pp. 131-132; Fuks, 2000, pp.31-32; Belayche, 2007, p. 455.

¹²⁴⁹ Bricault, 2006b, p. 130; Bricault, SNRIS, p.165.

V.4. Azotus

A terracotta bust of Serapis-Ammon was found in Azotus "Ashdod", located 10 km northeast of Ascalon on the Mediterranean Sea Coast (**Fig. 220**)¹²⁵⁰. The bust depicts Serapis with ram horns and wearing the *kalathos* adorned with the *atef* crown on its front. He is dressed in the chiton, surmounted by the himation draped over his left shoulder. The attributes that connect Serapis with other major Egyptian gods can be recognized: the *atef* crown is associated with the god Osiris, and the small ram's horns on the temples point to Ammon. The bust can be dated to the 2nd or 3rd century AD and may have served as the handle of a Roman lamp.



Figure 220. A terracotta bust of Serapis, Ashdod, Palestine, H. 7 cm.

The distinction between the terms "*kalathos*," "*modius*," and "*polos*" is important when discussing the headwear of Serapis. While the headwear is commonly referred to as a "*kalathos*", it is also sometimes called a "*modius*" or "*polos*"¹²⁵¹. It is essential to clarify and differentiate these terms to accurately understand the specific type of headwear associated with Serapis. The *polos* is a high cylindrical headdress without edges, originating from the Near East. It was worn by some female deities like Hera in Samos¹²⁵². The *kalathos* refers to

¹²⁵⁰ Belayche described the crown as a solar disc between two snakes-uraei. Kater-Sibbes, 1973, p. 81, no. 461; Belayche, 2001, p. 224.

¹²⁵¹ Hornbostel, 1973, p. 2.

¹²⁵² Malaise, 2009, pp.173-193.

an open basket, often woven, initially employed by women to store their woolen crafts and other items such as flowers, fruits, corn, and eggs. It was associated with the daily lives and religious practices of Greek women, eventually evolving into a crown adorned by various goddesses and gods, including Artemis, Demeter, Kore, Hecate, Dionysus, and Serapis¹²⁵³. On the other hand, the modius is a Roman measurement unit used mainly to measure grains. It is almost cylindrical and is made of wooden sticks, sometimes provided with handles, and possibly standing on three legs. It was associated with goddesses such as Africa, Keres, and Annona¹²⁵⁴. According to the image of Serapis that appeared during the Hellenistic period in Egypt, Malaise mentioned that using the term *kalathos* is better than modius¹²⁵⁵. Nevertheless, in the Roman period, the crown took the form of a *modius*, symbolizing the god who grants abundant food, but Macrobe still uses the term *kalathos* to refer to the crown of Serapis¹²⁵⁶.

The *kalathos* worn by Serapis often featured naturalistic elements in its adornment, particularly emphasizing olive branches and leaves. The selection of the olive tree motif raises certain inquiries. The cultivation of olive trees, which was introduced to Egypt during the New Kingdom, did not gain widespread prevalence. Strabo's account indicates that olive trees were primarily found in the arsinoite nome¹²⁵⁷, precisely the areas where the highest concentration of Greek population resided. Hence, the incorporation of olive decorations could potentially be attributed to Greek influence while concurrently holding additional symbolic meanings, such as ensuring survival¹²⁵⁸. Other plant elements contribute to embellishing the *kalathos*, such as ears of corn and branches of myrtle¹²⁵⁹.

¹²⁵³ Malaise, 2009, p.173. The date of its introduction has not been thoroughly explored. Some scholars credit the representation of Serapis with *kalathos* to the Hellenistic period, while Ashton suggests that the *kalathos* did not become a feature of Serapis' crown until the start of the Roman period. Ashton, 2003, pp. 13, 65.

¹²⁵⁴ Malaise, 2009, p.173.

¹²⁵⁵ In Bricault's SNRIS, the *kalathos* is featured in 98% of the numismatic depictions of Serapis. Tran Tam Tinh and Jentel, in their 1993 work, observe that in all the Imperial-period lamps depicting Serapis under their study, he is adorned with the *kalathos*. Additionally, Veymiers, 2009, focuses on Serapis on gems exclusively from the Roman period, notes that the god is consistently crowned solely with the *kalathos*. Notably, there is an example on a relief from Pisa where Serapis is recognized solely by the representation of his *kalathos*. Bricault, RICIS, no. 511/0601.

¹²⁵⁶ "Eidem Aegyptio adiacens civitas, quae conditorem Alexandrum Macedonem gloriatur, Sarapin atque Isin cultu paene attonitae venerationis observat. Omnem tamen illam venerationem soli se sub illius nomine testatur inpendere, vel dum calathum capiti eius infigunt". Macr., Saturn., 1.20.13.

¹²⁵⁷ Strabon, XVII, 35.

¹²⁵⁸ Malaise, 2009, p. 180.

¹²⁵⁹ Malaise, 2009, p. 180.

On the other hand, the *atef* crown, which consists of the elongated crown of Upper Egypt, possibly surmounted by a small solar disc and flanked by two large ostrich feathers, the whole resting on the twisted horns of a ram, appears to be the oldest crown associated with Serapis. However, the *kalathos* became the more prevalent emblem and was found adorning the heads of both Isis and Hermanubis¹²⁶⁰. There are various representations of Serapis with the *atef* crown on his head in Egypt. For instance, a silver tetradrachm of Ptolemy IV Philopator is the earliest dated document bearing one of Serapis's representations. In this portrayal, both Serapis and Isis are depicted as busts in profile. Serapis wears a laurel wreath surmounted by the *atef* crown¹²⁶¹. Another well-known example comes from Karanis in Fayoum, depicting Serapis-Ammon standing and wearing the *atef* crown while raising his left hand (**Fig. 221**). According to its findspot, it can be dated to the late 2nd or early 3rd century AD. He is probably holding the scepter, while his right hand is holding a thunderbolt¹²⁶². Moreover, the depiction of Serapis with the *atef* crown above his head was not exclusive to Egypt but extended to other areas where the Alexandrian triad's worship spread outside Egypt. In Pompeii's painting, Serapis is often portrayed standing, holding a *cornucopia*, and wearing the *atef* crown. For example, on the wall of the viridarium of the House of the Amazons, Serapis stands alongside Isis, wearing the *atef* crown and extending a *patera* above Harpocrates' head¹²⁶³.

¹²⁶⁰ Malaise mentioned that the *atef* crown is widespread between the beginning of the Ptolemaic period and the 2nd century AD. However, it disappeared from the coins during the 1st century BC. Malaise, 2009, p.174, fn. 9.

¹²⁶¹ Bakhoum, 1999, pp. 31-32.

¹²⁶² It is preserved in the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, Inv. No. 10881(27-C57-A). Kater-Sibbes, 1973, p. 13, no. 69; Gazda et al., 1978, p.53, fig.47; Leclant, Clerc, LIMC I, 1981, s.v. Ammon, p.681, no.149a; Tran Tam Tinh, 1983, p.118, no. IB.37, fig.51.

¹²⁶³ Tran Tam Tinh, 1983, p.57, no. III.16, fig.106.



Figure 221. A bronze statuette of standing Serapis-Ammon, Karanis, Fayoum.

However, depictions of Serapis wearing both the *kalathos* and the *atef* crown are relatively rare. The most important examples were discovered, such as a porphyry mask of Serapis from the Baths of Caracalla in Rome, where the *atef* crown is executed in high relief in front of the *kalathos*¹²⁶⁴. Another example is a terracotta head of Serapis-Ammon from Hadra in Alexandria, with the *atef* crown depicted in front of the *kalathos*¹²⁶⁵. Additionally, a ring from the 1st century BC represents a bust of Serapis, with the high *kalathos* adorned with a small *atef* crown¹²⁶⁶. In summary, the terracotta bust of Serapis-Ammon found in Azotus shows the combination of Egyptian and Greek features. The *atef* crown and ram horns signify connections to Egyptian deities, while the *kalathos* represents a distinctive Greek element. This synthesis of iconography reflects the blending of Egyptian and Hellenistic cultural influences in the worship and representation of Serapis. The bust of Serapis-Ammon in Azotus indicates the presence and influence of Serapis worship in the city during the Roman period.

¹²⁶⁴ It is preserved in Museo Civico, Vicenza, Inv. No. T82. Delbrueck, 1932, pp. 190-191; Kater-Sibbes, 1973, p. 122, no. 656; Castiglione, 1978, p. 231, no. 61.

¹²⁶⁵ Kater-Sibbes, 1973, p. 6, no. 26; Castiglione, 1978, p. 231, no.62.

¹²⁶⁶ Veymiers, 2009, pl. 61, no. VI.BA 17.

V.5. Marisa

The Hellenistic city of Marisa, also known as "Maresha", is identified with the archaeological site of Tell Sandahanna. It was an Idumean trading city situated on the northern edge of the Negev region, approximately 30 km southeast of Ascalon and 40 km southwest of Jerusalem¹²⁶⁷. The city initially came under the control of the Ptolemies in the third century BC and later fell under Seleucid rule after the Battle of Panion in 200 BC. Ultimately, Marisa was destroyed in 40 BC¹²⁶⁸.

The presence of the cult of Isis in Marisa is attested by the discovery of a limestone altar dedicated to Isis at the site¹²⁶⁹. Recent excavations at Marisa have also yielded two torsos of Isis. One of the two examples, the figurine wearing a himation with an Isis-knot (**Fig. 222**), most likely portrays the goddess Isis or one of her priestesses¹²⁷⁰. In addition, two other statuettes found in Marisa portray a naked goddess standing upright with closed legs and arms set alongside the body (**Figs. 223-224**). These statuettes are identified as Isis-Aphrodite and are dated to the third or second centuries BC. In one case, only the lower legs are preserved, while in the other, only the abdomen with hands laid flat on the sides remains. However, the head with the detailed garland decoration and the *basileion*, which would justify an identification of Isis-Aphrodite, have not been preserved in either case¹²⁷¹. Another example is the head of a woman depicted with an Egyptian wig and crowned with a Stephane (**Fig. 225**). The woman's long corkscrew curls extend to the shoulders, suggesting a possible representation of Isis-Aphrodite¹²⁷².

¹²⁶⁷ Avi-Yonah, Kloner, NEAEHL, 1993, s. v. Mareshah, pp. 948-957.

¹²⁶⁸ Jacobson, 2007, pp. 14-15; Erlich, Kloner, 2008, pp. 1-3.

¹²⁶⁹ Erlich, Kloner, 2008, p. 16.

¹²⁷⁰ Erlich, Kloner, 2008, pp. 15-16, nos. 25-26, pls. 6:25, 7:26.

¹²⁷¹ Erlich, Kloner, 2008, pp. 16-18, nos. 27-28, pls. 7:27-28.

¹²⁷² Erlich, Kloner, 2008, p. 18, no. 29, pl. 7:29; Erlich, 2009, p. 54, fig. 71.



Figure 222. A torso of Isis, Marisa, Erlich, Kloner, 2008, pl. 6:25.



Figure 223. A fragment of Isis-Aphrodite, Marisa, Erlich, Kloner, 2008, pl. 7:27.



Figure 224. A fragment of Isis-Aphrodite, Marisa, Erlich, Kloner, 2008, pl. 7:28.



Figure 225. A head of Isis-Aphrodite, Marisa, Erlich, Kloner, 2008, pl. 7:29.

The goddess Isis is represented in her syncretic form closely associated with Aphrodite. As mentioned before, this syncretism results from the pharaonic fusion of Isis with Hathor, in which both represent two complementary aspects of feminine nature¹²⁷³. The first aspect, the mother-goddess, embodies motherhood: she nurtures and protects her children. The other aspect, the lover-goddess, embodies eroticism, pleasure, drunkenness, and consequently, procreation as well¹²⁷⁴. The assimilation of these two deities took place during the New Kingdom. In Greco-Roman times, this cult was consecrated, as evidenced by the temple of Hathor at Dendera, where Isis had her own sanctuary and also shared the main temple with

¹²⁷³ Dunand, 1979, pp.62-73.

¹²⁷⁴ Malaise, 2000, pp.8-9.

Hathor. In this context, it is natural to note that, in her main function as the goddess of love, Aphrodite was the Greek counterpart of Hathor¹²⁷⁵.

Numerous terracotta statuettes were found in Egypt depict a naked woman standing with her arms down by her sides and the palms of her hands pressed against her thighs¹²⁷⁶. This type is often referred to as the image of the syncretic goddess Isis-Aphrodite. However, it may also represent the goddess Hathor, borrowing certain Isiac elements¹²⁷⁷. Due to their nudity and posture, these figurines stand out from the various representations of Isis as they appear in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, aligning more with the longstanding tradition of pharaonic female figurines. Statuettes portraying naked women have been present in Egypt since the Predynastic period onwards, distributed widely across the region¹²⁷⁸. These figurines underwent changes in their characteristics over time, evolving through the Greco-Roman periods. Initially, these figurines were often perceived as mere "concubines of the dead"¹²⁷⁹. However, their ritual placement in women's tombs, domestic settings, or within sanctuaries required a more nuanced understanding¹²⁸⁰. These female figurines might have also served as catalysts, employed during rituals associated with Hathor¹²⁸¹. They were offered to the goddess to enhance fertility and childbirth, as well as to safeguard children and the departed, facilitating their rebirth in the realm beyond¹²⁸². Consequently, these figurines were deposited in various contexts according to the intentions, explaining their presence in homes, temples, and tombs.

¹²⁷⁵ During Greco-Roman times, the cult centers of Hathor, such as Pathyris (Gebelein) and Artabecheis in the Delta were renamed as Aphroditopolis. In Qusae, Ptolemy IV dedicated a temple to Hathor, whom the local population identified with Aphrodite Ourania. Fraser, 1972, p. 332, no. 2; Malaise, 2000, pp.8-9.

¹²⁷⁶ Bailey, 2008, pl. 1, nos. 2993, 2994; Dunand, 1990, p. 128, no. 334.

¹²⁷⁷ There were differing viewpoints among researchers regarding the characterization of these unclothed female figurines. Bayer-Niemeier identified them as goddesses of fertility, Perdrizet classified them as Isis-Aphrodite, while Dunand asserted that they depicted the goddess Isis. Bayer-Niemeier, 1988, nos.244-248; Perdrizet, 1921, pp.3-4; Dunand, 1990, pp.125-135, nos.327-356.

¹²⁷⁸ They have been grouped into classifications such as 'toys,' 'dolls,' 'concubines,' or 'figurines associated with fertility'. Kamal, 2016, pp. 1-18.

¹²⁷⁹ Weber, 1914, p. 131.

¹²⁸⁰ Kamal, 2016, pp.4-5.

¹²⁸¹ Bailey, 2008, p. 7.

¹²⁸² Bailey, 2008, pp. 7-9.



Figure 226. A bronze statuette of Horus, Marisa, Palestine, H. 16 cm.



Figure 227. A terracotta statuette of Harpocrates, Marisa, Palestine, H. 4.7 cm.

In addition, a bronze statuette of the child Horus in Egyptian style was found in Marisa within Subterranean complex No. 75, at the entrance to one of the chambers (**Fig. 226**). The statuette depicts the god naked, with his left foot advanced in a striding pose on a rectangular base. The god is depicted with his right forefinger placed in his mouth while the other hand is held down alongside his body. Notably, Horus is depicted wearing the double crown. The statuette dates from the Persian period, but continued to be used until the Hellenistic period¹²⁸³. Furthermore, another terracotta figurine found in Marisa represents Harpocrates holding a round pot (**Fig. 227**). Harpocrates is portrayed with a round face and full chubby cheeks. He is naked, leaning on his left arm on a pot, while his right hand appears to be reaching for the pot¹²⁸⁴. The representation of Harpocrates with the round pot was one of the most common attributes associated with the child god in Egypt during the Hellenistic and Roman periods¹²⁸⁵. He usually carried the pot to his left side, while his right hand was often placed inside it; he was depicted sitting rather than standing.

¹²⁸³ Erlich, 2009, p. 33, no. 34.

¹²⁸⁴ Erlich, Kloner, 2008, pp. 10-11, no. 15, pl. 4; Erlich, 2009, p. 52, fig. 65.

¹²⁸⁵ Tran Tam Tinh, Jaeger, Poulin, LIMC IV, 1988, s.v. Harpocrates, nos.133-146; Perdrizet, 1921, pp.30-32, nos. 88-98; Török, 1995, pp.62-70, nos. 62-66, 68-74, pls.38-43; Bailey, 2008, pp. 15, 32-34, nos. 3049-3063.

Many scholars argued about determining its content being liquid, half solid, or solid. Perdrizet suggested that the pot would contain thick porridge as a food for the baby upon weaning¹²⁸⁶. On the other hand, Dunand believed that it held the fertile water of the Nile, which was equated with Osiris by the ancient Egyptians and was known for its fertility¹²⁸⁷. Frankfurter proposed that this pot refers to local worship traditions in preparing food for festivals that were held in honor of the god during a certain festival, most likely the celebration of "Harpokrateia" that appeared in documents since the beginning of the second century in Fayoum, where it was the center of these festivals¹²⁸⁸.

Finally, the necropolis of Marisa, which dates from the late third to the first centuries BC, also shows clear influences from Alexandrian art¹²⁸⁹. According to some scholars, they are considered the transition point of the tombs with rectangular openings carved into the rock "Loculi" from Alexandria to the Asian world¹²⁹⁰. An example is the tomb of E VIII, which has pilasters with Doric capitals between the loculi openings, similar to the Ionic pilasters in Hypogeum A at Shatby in Alexandria, chamber g¹²⁹¹. Another example is the tomb I (**Figs. 228-230**), one of the most important tombs at Marisa, built for the Philhellenic Sidonian leader Apollophanes, son of Sesmaios, which shows Alexandrian influence in its plan and possibly its painting¹²⁹². Along the side walls of the main hall, above the loculi openings, were decorated with a continuous painted frieze representing a row of animals, such as a giraffe, an elephant, a hippopotamus, and a crocodile, as well as imaginary animals such as griffins, personified fish, and a human-faced lion¹²⁹³. The primary source of inspiration for

¹²⁸⁶ Perdrizet, 1921, pp. 30-31, pl.XXI.

¹²⁸⁷ Dunand, 1979, pp. 74-75.

¹²⁸⁸ Frankfurter, 1998, pp. 54, 133.

¹²⁸⁹ Oren, Rappaport, 1984, pp. 114-153; Venit, 2002, pp. 175-179.

¹²⁹⁰ Venit, 2002, pp. 175.

¹²⁹¹ Venit, 2002, p. 175; Erlich, 2009, p. 61.

¹²⁹² Descending into the tomb involves using a short, unadorned flight of stairs, which leads to a small, square, subterranean vestibule. From this vestibule, three lengthy corridors extend outward. These corridors feature continuous raised benches along their walls, and within these benches, there are forty-one loculi, essentially small recesses cut into the bedrock. These loculi were designed for individual inhumations, typically without the use of coffins. The affirmation of this purpose comes from the names painted over many of these recesses. Towards the back of the tomb, one finds three small square chambers. Above the entrance to the right-hand chamber, there is an inscription that serves as confirmation of the Phoenician identity of the tomb's deceased: "Apollophanes, son of Sesmaios, 33 years the head of the Sidonians at Marisa, reputed the best and most kin-loving of all those of his time; he died, having lived 74 years". Berlin, 2002, pp. pp.139-140.

¹²⁹³ Venit, 2002, pp. 175-179, figs. 151, 153-155; Erlich, 2009, pp. 62- 77, figs. 86-91.

this animal parade was Alexandria. According to its famous library, Alexandria possessed a zoo with a collection of rare African species¹²⁹⁴.



Figure 228. The Tomb I, Marisa.



Figure 229. The painted frieze in Tomb I, Marisa.

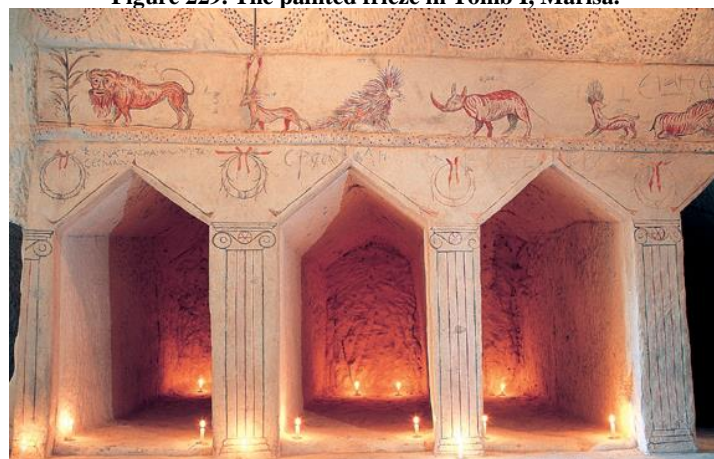


Figure 230. The painted frieze in Tomb I, Marisa.

¹²⁹⁴ Michaeli, 2003, pp. 112-114, figs. 1a-c.

V.6. Beersheba

The popularity of the Egyptian child god Harpocrates seems to have had an impact on Palestine as well. A bronze pendant was found in Beersheba (Khirbet es-Saba), located about 15 km northwest of the Sea of Galilee. This pendant dates back to the Hellenistic period (**Fig. 231**). Aviam identified the figurine as the god Harpocrates, recognizable by the prominent gesture of his right hand raised to his mouth while his left hand hangs beside his side. The figure is depicted standing with his legs closed, and a small loop on its back suggests its use as an amulet¹²⁹⁵. There are many examples of Haropcrates pendants preserved in the museum of Alexandria, show various depictions of the god, such as squatting, sitting on a goose, standing, and sometimes holding a *cornucopia*, a pot, a duck, or without any attributes¹²⁹⁶. These pendants were probably worn by children as well as adults. Pliny's testimony supports this notion, as he mentions that "even men began to wear on their fingers the effigy of Harpocrates and the images of Egyptian deities"¹²⁹⁷.



Figure 231. A bronze pendant of Harpocrates, Beersheba of Galilee, H. 2 cm.

Furthermore, a fragmented statuette of Apis bull was uncovered in Beersheba, also belonging to the Hellenistic period (**Fig. 232**). Its identification was based on the presence of the front hoof of the bull. The base of the statuette features three inscriptions: one in Egyptian hieroglyphics, another in Aramaic reading "sacrifice", and an illegible inscription, perhaps in Greek. Aviam noted that the Greek inscription appears to have been copied without understanding the language¹²⁹⁸. Unfortunately, the Greek and hieroglyphic texts have not been published. It is likely that this artifact was initially transported from Egypt with only the



Figure 232. A bronze base of Apis from Beersheba of Galilee.

¹²⁹⁵ Aviam, 2004, p.10, fig.2.6.

¹²⁹⁶ Seif El-Din, Nenna, 1994, p. 293- 295, figs. 1a-d, 2a-e, pl. I, 1-2.

¹²⁹⁷ Pliny, NH 33, 12, 41. A Tosefta of Avodah Zarah distinguishes between "wanted items such as chains, earrings, necklaces and rings", which are prohibited, and utilitarian items, which are permitted even when bearing pagan images. Belayche, 2007, p. 462.

¹²⁹⁸ Aviam, 2004, pp.8-9, fig.2.4.

hieroglyphic inscription, and the two additional inscriptions were later added in Beersheba¹²⁹⁹. The aforementioned examples serve to illustrate that a gradual adoption and expansion of Egyptian materials were quite prevalent in this region. In this context, the Apis artifact demonstrates the gradual assimilation of Egyptian cultural elements with Greek concepts, set against the background of the Near Eastern context.

It is worth noting that bronze figurines with an Egyptian style were also discovered at Tell Beersheba in the Negev¹³⁰⁰. These figurines include a Pschent (the crown of Upper and Lower Egypt), a statuette of the goddess Neith, a depiction of a striding Apis bull, the Ba bird, a human headed female bird symbolizing the soul, and a reclining Sphinx¹³⁰¹. The first three objects originate from the same context, and based on additional findings, they are believed to date back to the 2nd century BC. During this period, it is possible that the sanctuary underwent reorganization, and votive offerings were removed from the earlier Hellenistic temple, leading to the simultaneous burial of pagan cult objects in favissae dug through phase one floors¹³⁰².

¹²⁹⁹ Aviam, 2004, p.9.

¹³⁰⁰ To avoid confusion, it's important to note that there are two cities named Beersheba: one in the Negev and the other located to the northwest of the Sea of Galilee.

¹³⁰¹ Erlich, 2009, pp. 32-33, fig. 33.

¹³⁰² Erlich, 2009, p. 32.

V.7. Haifa

A bronze statuette of Serapis, among other artifacts, was discovered in the Carmel Beach of Haifa. These artifacts originated from different vessels that had been wrecked at this site (**Fig. 233**). The figurine probably dates to the late second or third century AD. Serapis is depicted standing on a two-part pedestal. He is shown wearing a short-sleeved chiton, with a himation draped from his left shoulder and wrapped around his legs. The right hand is raised forward in the gesture of blessing or salute. Unfortunately, the left hand is missing, and Serapis' head is adorned with a *kalathos*¹³⁰³.



Figure 233. A bronze statuette of Serapis, bay of Haifa, H. 22 cm.

It's worth noting that similar examples of this type of Serapis figurine exist, such as a bronze statue in the Museum of Florence¹³⁰⁴, and a relief in the Egyptian Museum of Turin (**Fig. 234**), both likely originating from Egypt¹³⁰⁵ and dating to the Roman period. These examples

¹³⁰³ Galili, Dahari, Sharvit, 1993, p. 69., fig. 15; Clerc, Leclant, LIMC 7, 1994, s. v. Sarapis, p. 674, no. 65b; Galili, Rosen, Sharvit, 2010, pp. 96-97, fig. 46.

¹³⁰⁴ Tran Tam Tinh, 1983, pS.64, no. IVA.6, fig. 123.

¹³⁰⁵ Inv. No., Cat. 7148; Tran Tam Tinh, 1983, p.64, no. IVA.4, fig. 121a.

share similarities with the statuette of Haifa, including the presence of the *kalathos*, the chiton with a wide neck, the himation with a triangular drape, the gesture of blessing or salute, and the feet with sandals. Another related artifact is a headless marble statue discovered in Kafr el Zayat, near Alexandria, which is kept in the Greco- Roman Museum of Alexandria. This statue further supports the sweeping gesture seen in the Haifa statuette¹³⁰⁶. The presence of parallel objects suggests that the type of Serapis greeting depicted in the Haifa statuette originated in Egypt. Moreover, this type of representation is also found on Alexandrian coins. For example, on the issues of the emperor Antoninus Pius in the year 17, Serapis is depicted triumphing over a quadriga¹³⁰⁷, and similar depictions can be found on coins from Emperor Marcus Aurelius in the years 6 and 7¹³⁰⁸.

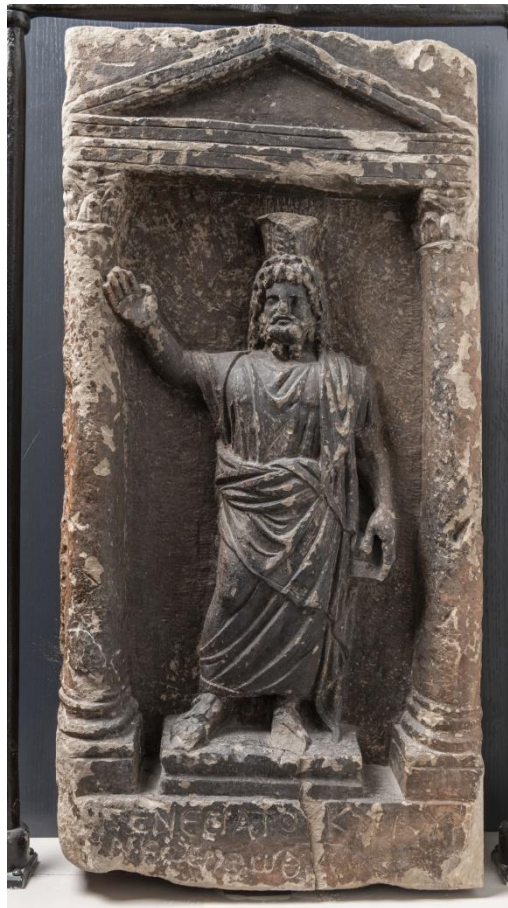


Figure 234. A relief of Serapis, the Egyptian Museum of Turin.

¹³⁰⁶ Hornbostel, 1973, p.309, fn.1, Fig. 326; Tran Tam Tinh, 1983, p.64-65, no. IVA. 1, fig. 118.

¹³⁰⁷ Tran Tam Tinh, 1983, no. IVA.15.

¹³⁰⁸ Tran Tam Tinh, 1983, no. IVA.16,17.

V.8. Yavneh Yam

A blue glass pendant with a silver coating depicting Harpocrates was found in Yavneh Yam, located south of Haifa on the coast (**Fig. 235**), which dates back to the second century BC¹³⁰⁹. Based on the archaeological context, or at least the place of discovery, these pendants were likely made in Egypt during the Hellenistic period but were widespread throughout the Mediterranean region up to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD; this pendant bears a resemblance to the one found in Beersheba (**Fig. 231**)¹³¹⁰. The identification of Harpocrates is based on his distinctive attributes, such as placing the index finger of his right hand toward his mouth and his left hand resting beside his body. The figurine is depicted naked and wears a pearl chain around his neck. On the back of the pendant, there is a rounded loop designed for suspension on a necklace¹³¹¹. Harpocrates pendants made from faience and bronze have gained recognition in the historical record of Palestine, spanning from the Iron Age through the Persian period. Herrmann's assessment, which encompasses instances found at Gezer, Megiddo, Lachish, Ascalon/Ashqelon, and 'Atlit, assigns their origin to the Hellenistic period, drawing conclusions from the archaeological contexts in which they were discovered¹³¹². The discovery of these pendants provides valuable insights into the worship and popular representation of Harpocrates during the Hellenistic period. They were likely worn as personal adornments, possibly by both children and adults, to invoke the protective and auspicious qualities associated with the deity.



Figure 235. A blue glass pendant of Harpocrates from Yavneh Yam.

¹³⁰⁹ Yavneh-Yam (Iamneia-on-Sea), which is roughly 20 km from Ioppe and Azotus, served as the harbor for the town of Yavneh (Iamneia), which was located inland. Fischer, Jackson-Tal, 2003, p. 35.

¹³¹⁰ Vaelske, 2005/2006.

¹³¹¹ Fischer, Jackson-Tal, 2003, pp. 35-40; Erlich, 2009, p. 99, fig. 99.

¹³¹² Herrmann, 1994, pp. 106-109, nos. 9-15.

V.9. Jerusalem-Aelia Capitolina

Jerusalem-Aelia Capitolina is located on the central plateau of Palestine, about 770 m above the Mediterranean and 1,165 m above the Dead Sea. It spreads over two hills, separated by a valley, today largely filled in, called Tyropeon Valley in Roman times. The western hill, the highest and most expansive, is isolated on its western and southern sides by the valley of Gehenna. The eastern hill, around 30 meters lower, is separated from Mount El-Tor (Jabal El-Zaytoon) by the Kidron valley to the east. Traces of human presence in Jerusalem have been discovered through archaeological excavations dating back to 3000 BC¹³¹³.

After the period of the Persian rule, Alexander the Great occupied the city in 332 BC. After Alexander's death, Jerusalem came under the dominion of the Ptolemaic kings of Egypt and later the Seleucid kings of Syria. In 63 BC, the Roman general Pompey intervened to settle the dynastic dispute between the Hasmonean princes Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus. Pompey conquered Jerusalem and installed Herod the Great (37-4 BC) as the king of Palestine. However, in 70 AD, the city was destroyed by the armies of Titus. The walls were dismantled, and the temple was set on fire, marking the end of the First Jewish Revolt¹³¹⁴. After that, the X Legio Fretensis, which had remained in Jerusalem after the initial rebellion, significantly influenced the city's development and played a prominent role in its public, political, religious, and social life¹³¹⁵. A second war was unleashed in 135 AD, during which the emperor Hadrian systematically destroyed the holy city and rebuilt it following the model of the Roman colonial cities. The new layout of Jerusalem, known as Aelia Capitolina, closely resembles the city's present-day structure. The name Aelia Capitolina reflects the intention of its founder, the emperor Hadrian, who placed the colony under the patronage of Jupiter Capitolinus, the supreme god of Rome¹³¹⁶.

¹³¹³ Ma'ani et al., 2014, pp. 139-154.

¹³¹⁴ The city was first destroyed in 587 BC by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II. Bieberstein, 2007, pp. 134-135.

¹³¹⁵ It has been suggested that the camp of the X Legio Fretensis was located southeast of the Medieval citadel. Bieberstein, 2007, p. 135; Friedheim, 2007, p. 125; Weksler-Bdolah, 2020, pp. 81-83, fig. 1.

¹³¹⁶ Meshorer, 1985, p.60; Bieberstein, 2007, pp. 134-168; Friedheim, 2007, pp. 128-130; Weksler-Bdolah, 2020, pp. 51-60.

V. 9. 1. Evidence for the worship of Serapis

It is important to note that our understanding of the Egyptian religious practices in Aelia Capitolina is limited. There is a scarcity of concrete information regarding both private and formal religious activities in the city. The available literary sources are often contentious and suffer from chronological gaps. Consequently, making definitive statements about the cult of Serapis in Aelia Capitolina proves challenging. The ambiguous nature of the available evidence can be exemplified by the discussion presented by Belayche. According to him, Serapis served as a meeting point between public worship and personal religious inclinations. The cult of Serapis potentially reflected the participation of the inhabitants of Aelia Capitolina in the prevalent popular devotions of that era. However, due to the scarcity of reliable information, it becomes difficult to draw significant conclusions about the specific practices and prominence of the cult of Serapis in the city¹³¹⁷.

V. 9. 1. 1. Inscription of Serapis

As mentioned earlier, the Roman army was actually a medium of religious diffusion and an intermediary between imperial religion and local cults. This is evident in the spread of worship for Egyptian gods in regions like Syria and Palestine, as attested by documentary evidence. A Latin dedicatory inscription was found in secondary use in the Ottoman city wall east of the Zion Gate in Aelia Capitolina. The inscription dates back to the reign of the emperor Trajan in 116-117 AD, and it is dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus Serapis by a vexillatio (a detachment) of the Legio III Cyrenaica for the salvation and victory of the emperor Trajan and the Roman people¹³¹⁸: *“To Jupiter Optimus Maximus Serapis. For the health and victory of Emperor Caesar Trajan, (son of) Nerva, Optumus Augustus Germanicus Dacicus Parthicus and the Roman people. The vexillatio of the Legio III Cyrenaica has made (this)”*.

¹³¹⁷ Belayche, 2001, p. 156.

¹³¹⁸ Jalabert, 1907, p. 308, no. 2, 308-312; Hornbostel, 1973, pp. 377-378; Bricault, 2001, p.75; Bricault, RICIS, 403/ 0801; Küchler, 2007, p. 328; Belayche, 2007, p.451; Bieberstein, 2007, pp. 138-139; Weksler-Bdolah, 2020, pp.126, 206.

The presence of this inscription has led some scholars to suggest the existence of a temple of Jupiter-Serapis that was established during the time of Emperor Trajan, predating the foundation of Aelia Capitolina¹³¹⁹. However, it is important to note that such dedications were common among the Roman army¹³²⁰. Before being stationed on the eastern borders, Roman legions had a significant presence in Egypt, particularly in Alexandria¹³²¹. The discovery of the dedicatory inscription indicates the involvement of the Roman army in promoting the worship of Jupiter Optimus Maximus Serapis in the region.

V. 9. 1. 2. A plaque of Serapis-Agathodaimon?

Two fragments of a marble relief were uncovered in the debris of Bethesda's sanctuary in Aelia Capitolina (**Fig. 236**), also known as the "Probatric Pool" mentioned in the Gospel of John. This pool, which possessed healing properties, was already recognized for its therapeutic qualities during Jesus' time in Jerusalem¹³²². The remains of this pagan therapeutic sanctuary were located to the north of the present-day St. Anna church, in close proximity to Lions' Gate. The discovery of pottery shards and coins in the vicinity indicates that the Bethesda baths were completely abandoned after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. After that, the reuse of the baths could only be demonstrated in the third and fourth centuries.

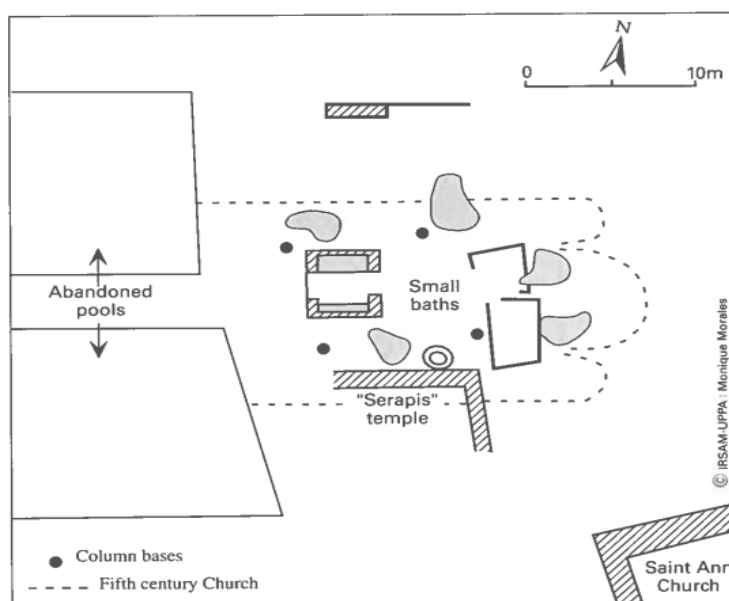


Figure 236. The therapeutic sanctuary in Bethesda.

¹³¹⁹ Bieberstein, 2007, pp. 134-168; Friedheim, 2007, p. 133.

¹³²⁰ Vidman, SIRIS, no. 361; Dunand, 1973, p. 128; Bricault, 2001, p. 75; Bricault, RICIS, 403/ 0201; Belayche, 2007, pp. 451- 453, fig. 1.

¹³²¹ Belayche, 2007, p. 453.

¹³²² According to the Gospel, Jesus cured the paralytic next to the pools of Bethesda (John 5:1-18). Bahat, Rubinstein, 1990, p. 67; Weksler-Bdolah, 2020, p. 126.

The fragments discovered at the Bethesda sanctuary provide compelling evidence of the presence of a cult dedicated to Serapis-Asclepius within the complex (**Fig. 237**)¹³²³. These findings indicate that the site held great religious significance as a place where healing was sought and believed to occur. The first fragment depicts a tetrastyle niche with fluted columns and a triangular pediment. Within this architectural framework, an arch with a conch roof is enclosed, accompanied by two ears of corn underneath. The second shows a lower end with two columns standing on bases. In the center, there are multiple coils of an erected snake body; unfortunately, the head is missing. According to Duprez, the two certainly belong together and can be combined into a motif whose elements are typical of Serapis iconography: an erect snake's body with the head of a man wearing the *kalathos* with ears of corn¹³²⁴. On the other hand, Vincent and Abel propose an alternative interpretation, suggesting that the fragments represent two separate votive steles—one depicting a man carrying ears of corn and the other featuring an upright snake. These interpretations also associate the fragments with the realm of Serapis/Asclepius¹³²⁵. Serapis, a widely venerated deity in the Near East, originated from the cults of the underworld and eventually evolved into a pantheistic universal god. The association of the snake, a companion animal of Serapis, with Asclepius, the Greek god of healing, further reinforces the connections between the two deities. Asclepius is consistently depicted with a snake in Greek mythology. Therefore, the presence of the snake and ears of corn in these fragments strongly indicates the existence of a late Roman cult dedicated to Serapis or Asclepius at the Bethesda sanctuary¹³²⁶.

¹³²³ It is preserved in the Museum of St. Anna, Jerusalem. Belayche, 2007, pp. 464- 465; Weksler-Bdolah, 2020, p.126.

¹³²⁴ Duprez, 1970, p. 48f., Taf. 18; Bahat, Rubinstein, 1990, pp. 66-67; Belayche, 2001, pp. 160-167; Belayche, 2007, pp. 464-465, fig. 6.

¹³²⁵ Vincent, Abel, 1926, pp. 694-696.

¹³²⁶ Belayche, 2007, pp. 464- 465; Weksler-Bdolah, 2020, p.126.



Figure 237. A fragmentary relief from Aelia Capitolina, Museum of st. Anna, Jerusalem.

Several reliefs depicting Serapis-Agathodaimon have been discovered similar to our relief, through which we can obtain a fair picture of his depiction. One such example is a terracotta figurine from Kasr Daoud in Lower Egypt (**Fig. 238**). This figurine depicts Serapis-Agathodaimon with the body of a snake and a human head, adorned with the *kalathos*¹³²⁷. Another significant find is a limestone stela currently preserved in the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden (**Fig. 239**). This stela depicts Isis-Thermouthis alongside Serapis-Agathodaimon, both in the form of snakes with their tails coiled. They are depicted with human heads, with Serapis wearing the *Kalathos* and Isis adorned with the *basileion*. Between them stands Osiris Hydreios¹³²⁸. In addition to reliefs and steles, an inscribed fibula of Palestinian origin from the 2nd century is another noteworthy artifact. This fibula portrays the couple Isis and Serapis in the form of erect serpents. The accompanying inscription praises a female deity: "Great is the name of Neotera" (**see pp. 148-151**)¹³²⁹. These depictions of Egyptian deities, including Serapis-Agathodaimon, actively participate in the practice of

¹³²⁷ In the Fouquet collection, inv. No. E26920. Dunand, 1969, p. 39, fig. 11; Dunand, 1990, pp. 169-170, fig. 460.

¹³²⁸ Inv. No. F 1960/ 9.1. D'Ascoli, 2015, pp. 12-13, fig.1.

¹³²⁹ Merkelbach, 2012, pp. 80-81.

glorifying the gods. This practice is attested from the 1st century and can be observed in other locations, such as Sebaste and Caesarea¹³³⁰.



Figure 238. A terracotta figurine of Serapis-Agathodaimon, Lower Egyptian, Qasr Dawud.

Figure 239. A limestone stela preserved in the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, Inv. No. F 1960/9.1.

The place in question has been identified as a sanctuary of either Asclepius or Serapis since these two deities could be assimilated as patronizing the same functional field. It is worth noting that the Greek god Asclepius was not widely recognized in the region of Syria-Phoenicia, but he could serve as an *interpretatio Graeca* or a comparable figure to the Phoenician god of healing Eshmoun, whose main temple was in Sidon¹³³¹, and interestingly, his symbol was similar to that of Asclepius, featuring a snake¹³³². Despite Asclepius not being prominently worshiped in Syria-Phoenicia, representations of him and his daughter Hygieia frequently appeared on coins in cities within the region, particularly in places that boasted healing baths like Tiberias in the Galilee¹³³³. As an example, a coin from Aelia Capitolina

¹³³⁰ Belayche, 2007, p. 464.

¹³³¹ In the 2nd century BC, a trilingual inscription found in Sardinia was dedicated by a slave, Cleon, to Eshmoun (in Punic), called Asclepius and Aesculapius in Greek and Latin. Belayche, 2007, p. 464.

¹³³² Belayche, 2007, pp. 463-464.

¹³³³ During the reign of Commodus, the city of Tiberias featured the bust of Serapis on some of its coins. According to some scholars, the inclusion of Serapis in the coinage of Tiberias during the late second century AD may have been associated with his role as a healing deity. Tiberias was a renowned resort with thermal springs, and it was claimed to have achieved colony status by the time of Elagabalus' reign. Bricault, 2006b, p.128.

depicts Hygieia, the daughter of Asclepius, depicted on a rock while feeding a serpent. This coin serves as a testament to the presence and influence of Asclepius and his associated figures in the area¹³³⁴.

During the excavation around the Bethesda pools, the remains of related structures and water installations were discovered. Additionally, fragments of votive offerings were found, including a marble votive foot with a Greek inscription attributed to a woman named Pompeia Lucilia¹³³⁵. It is worth mentioning that the presence of Greek text indicates a private context for the offering¹³³⁶. While it is possible that the offering was dedicated to the god Serapis, as discussed earlier, it is important to note that healing through contact with a foot was a favored method associated with Asclepius, which Serapis inherited¹³³⁷. For instance, an account involving Pyrrhus, the king of Epirus, illustrates the use of this method by Asclepius. Pyrrhus would cure spleen ailments by touching the afflicted person's spleen with his right toe after they had offered a white rooster as a sacrifice to Asclepius while lying on their backs¹³³⁸. Belayche speculated that this foot could represent an anatomical ex-voto commemorating the donor's cure or a symbolic figuration of the providential epiphany, which would confirm the identification of the Serapis sanctuary, as they are often dedicated to the Alexandrian god¹³³⁹.

Apart from the aforementioned discoveries, several other votive objects were unearthed in the Bethesda Pools. Among them were two small stone ship models, which are believed to have been offered as a tribute to Serapis, who was revered as the protector of seafarers¹³⁴⁰. Another significant find was a marble fragment relief depicting a reclining naked woman. In the relief, she supports herself on the armrest of a bed with her right elbow while extending her left arm, pointing towards a person whose arm is partially visible on the right edge of the fragment¹³⁴¹.

Some scholars have proposed that these findings might indicate a common theme: individuals who had been healed expressed their gratitude by offering items representing their ailments or

¹³³⁴ Belayche, 2001, p. 165; Küchler, 2007, p. 326.

¹³³⁵ CIIP. 1.2, 709.

¹³³⁶ Belayche, 2001, p. 165; Belayche, 2007, pp. 465- 467, fig.7a; Friedheim, 2007, p. 134.

¹³³⁷ Tacitus, Hist. 4, 84: "As for the god himself [Serapis], many see him as Aesculapius, because he heals diseases".

¹³³⁸ Plutarch, Life of Pyrrhus, III.4.

¹³³⁹ Belayche, 2007, p.467.

¹³⁴⁰ Duprez, 1970, pp. 51-52, Taf. 21-22; Belayche, 2001, p. 166.

¹³⁴¹ Duprez, 1970, Taf. 17, 1; Belayche, 2001, p. 165.

the process of their healing¹³⁴². However, it should be noted that this interpretation is not definitive and remains open to debate. One particular item discovered was a terracotta statuette portraying a woman undressing for a bath¹³⁴³. This statuette can be identified as an Aphrodite pudica, a modestly depicted Aphrodite, and it is a type commonly found in the region of Syria¹³⁴⁴.

Finally, the Bethesda sanctuary, like similar therapeutic places of worship found across the broader empire, held a reputation that transcended cultural and religious boundaries. After the establishment of the colony of Aelia Capitolina on the ruins of Jerusalem, the newly settled pagan population could draw connections between the healing traditions of the area and their own practices involving healing deities from Greco-Roman, Syro-Phoenician, and Egyptian paganism. According to the iconography of the relief in the temple, Serapis is likely to have been the tutelary god of the sanctuary. However, in terms of his role in providing medical assistance and acting as a guarantor of salvation, Serapis bore striking similarities to Asclepius, from whom his figure was partially derived and with whom he was occasionally assimilated. The memory of the healing of the paralytic, a well-known biblical account, persisted among the Christians in Jerusalem for centuries. The texts and stones found within Bethesda serve as examples of how a local tradition in Jerusalem can endure in the same location, albeit undergoing changes in details and acquiring legendary status¹³⁴⁵.

¹³⁴² Küchler, 2007, p. 326.

¹³⁴³ Duprez, 1970, p. 46, Taf. 17, 1.

¹³⁴⁴ Jentel, LIMC 2, 1984, s. v. Aphrodite in Peripheria orientali, nos. 27, 36- 37.

¹³⁴⁵ Küchler, 2007, p. 328.

V.9.2. The coins of Aelia Capitolina

The god Serapis held significant importance in Aelia Capitolina, as evidenced by his appearance on the city's coins from the reign of Antoninus Pius (138-161 AD) to that of Trajan Decius (249-251 AD)¹³⁴⁶. In comparison to other cities in Palestine, Jerusalem/Aelia Capitolina showcased a distinctive range of Serapis depictions. One common portrayal depicts Serapis as a bust facing towards the left (**Fig. 240**).



Figure 240. A coin of Aelia Capitolina.



Figure 241. A coin of Aelia Capitolina.



Figure 242. A coin of Aelia Capitolina.

Another representation depicted him seated on a throne with Kerberos, the three-headed dog, by his side, as seen on coins minted during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (**Fig. 241**). Serapis was also depicted standing with his right arm extended in a gesture of salute. During the reigns of Commodus, Diadumenian, and Elagabalus, when the coin designs expanded to include additional elements, Serapis appeared in a gesture of salute with two torches (**Fig. 242**)¹³⁴⁷. Interestingly, during this period, the previously popular depiction of Serapis as a bust became less frequent. Additionally, under the emperor Trajan Decius and his family, Serapis continued to be depicted on the coins of Aelia Capitolina. In these depictions, Serapis is shown enthroned, holding a bust of the emperor in his right hand as a symbol of protection. These later coin issues are considered to be the final instances of Egyptian-themed designs minted by the colony¹³⁴⁸. The variety and evolution of Serapis depictions on the coins of Aelia Capitolina reflect the changing cultural and political landscape of the city and the enduring significance of Serapis as a revered deity during that time.

¹³⁴⁶ Friedheim, 2007, p. 133.

¹³⁴⁷ Bricault, 2006b, pp. 125-126, pls. 17:3, 18:4-5; Bricault, SNRIS, pp.160-161.

¹³⁴⁸ Bricault, SNRIS, p.160.

The minting of numerous monetary reverses featuring the Serapis type is evidence of the participation of civic elites who embraced this model within the cultural sphere of the eastern part of the Empire. However, it is important to note that the presence of the god's image on these objects alone is not enough to conclude the existence of a cultic establishment associated with him.

V.10. Legio

A marble cylindrical altar, dedicated to the god Serapis for the emperor's health, was discovered in the northwest of Legio (Kefar' Otnay), near the camp of the VI Legio Ferrata (**Fig. 243**). This significant finding was first documented by Avi Yonah in 1946 and is currently preserved at the Israel Museum. The altar is divided into four panels, each depicting a distinct imagery. One panel depicts the winged victory standing on the globe, holding a wreath and a trophy. The other two panels display two eagles with outstretched wings, symbols of the legion, standing on the thunderbolt while carrying a wreath in their beaks. The final panel bears a dedication from the emperor "for salvation and health" to "Serapis, the great and propitious god"¹³⁴⁹. Although the name of the emperor has deliberately been erased from the dedication, it is highly probable that the altar is associated with Elagabalus, given the historical context. Notably, the altar's decorative features do not contain any explicit iconographic references to Egypt or Egyptian motifs¹³⁵⁰.



Figure 243. An altar from Legio (Kefar' Otnay), Palestine, H. 1.05 m.

¹³⁴⁹ The text on the panel reads as follows: "Pro salute et incolumitate/ domini nostri/ [[Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) M(arci) Aur(eli) Antonini Aug(usti)]]/ praesentissimum deum Mag(num) Sarapidem/ leg(io) VI Ferrat(a) F(idelis) C(onstans) [[Antoniniana]]/ Iulius Isidorianus p(rimus) p(ilus)". Avi-Yonah, 1946, pp. 89-91, no. 6; Vidman, *SIRIS*, no. 361; Dunand, 1973, p. 128; Bricault, 2001, p. 75; Belayche, 2001, pp. 60-62; Bricault, *RICIS*, 403/ 0201; Belayche, 2007, pp. 451- 453, fig. 1; Eck, 2016, pp. 211-217; Eck, 2017, pp. 32-34, figs. 11-14; Eck, Tepper, 2019, pp. 120-122, figs. 1-2.

¹³⁵⁰ Bricault attributes the dating of this altar to the reign of Caracalla instead of Elagabalus due to its interest in the Isiac cults. Bricault, *RICIS*, 403/ 0201.

The well-documented salutation, “pro salute”, carries a significant meaning, as it expresses the wish to have a share in the emperor's good governance through the emperor's salvation and consequently to bring salvation for the whole empire¹³⁵¹. In the context of Legio, this assertion holds particular significance, considering that the inscription was written by the highest-ranking centurion of the VI Legio Ferrata, which had been stationed there since the latter part of Hadrian's reign¹³⁵². The presence of the altar suggests the possibility that it served as evidence of a successfully concluded military campaign, although the exact location of the campaign remains unspecified.

The monument in question, commonly described as an altar dedicated to the god Serapis, has been the subject of scholarly interpretation. However, based on the text "praesentissimum deum Mag(num) Sarapidem", Eck has put forth an alternative view suggesting that a statue of Serapis was placed as a votive offering, most likely within a shrine dedicated to Serapis or perhaps to Egyptian gods, primarily Isis, near the camp of the Legio, which was offered here for the health and salvation of the emperor Elagabalus, whose name was later erased¹³⁵³.

Eck further proposed that the monument should not be considered an altar but rather a base for an image of the god Serapis standing on it. This interpretation is supported by the presence of a circular hollow at the top of the monument, with visible rust marks indicating the presence of an iron dowel at its center. These features suggest that the god's image was



Figure 244. A reconstruction of the altar, Legio, Eck, Tepper, 2019, fig. 2.

¹³⁵¹ Moralee, 2004, pp. 39-58.

¹³⁵² Eck, 2016, pp. 211-217.

¹³⁵³ This could have happened shortly after the acclamation of the emperor Elagabalus in 218 when his westward march began. A few years later, the emperor, who was considered "un-Roman" by many soldiers, was murdered. As a consequence, his name was erased from the base of the monument. However, the destruction of the memoria did not impact the votive gift. The entire monument remained in its original dedicated location. Eck, 2016, p. 216.

positioned on a round base, possibly in the shape of a globe (**Fig. 244**)¹³⁵⁴. In conclusion, without overinterpreting the anthroponym, the dedicating units: 16th Flavia, 3rd Cyrenaica, and 6th Ferrata, all three spent a long time in Egypt, mainly in Alexandria, before being transferred to the eastern borders. This privileged connection with the Army obviously leads us to wonder about the spread of the cult of Egyptian deities outside the camps and colonies of veterans and, therefore, about the duration of these devotional manifestations.

¹³⁵⁴Avi-Yonah made an observation regarding the presence of a hollow in the monument, suggesting that it likely held a libation bowl. However, Eck contradicted this notion, stating that libation bowls on altars are typically not deeply embedded in the stone. Instead, they are usually placed directly on the surface of the altar, sometimes within a small indentation. Avi-Yonah, 1946, p. 89; Eck, 2017, pp. 32-34; Eck, Tepper, 2019, pp. 120-122, fig. 2.

V. 11. Sepphoris

An interesting mosaic depicting an Egyptian Nilotic scene was discovered in a public building in Sepphoris, located in the center of the Lower Galilee, approximately 5 km west of the ancient city of Nazareth (**Fig. 245**). The mosaic of Sepphoris is considered the largest and most important mosaic in the Levant. Its dating to around 400 AD is based on the analysis of coins and pottery fragments found in its vicinity¹³⁵⁵. The building is situated to the east of the *cardo* and opposite the bathhouse. Due to the absence of identifiable living quarters, scholars have identified it as a public building that could potentially serve as a civic basilica¹³⁵⁶. This designation is supported by the presence of a pavement mosaic containing a Greek inscription located directly in front of the main entrance, which apparently praises the artisans involved in the decoration of the building, as described by Di Segni¹³⁵⁷. The inscription specifically mentions "Procopius and his son-in-law Patricius", who were probably of Alexandrian origin¹³⁵⁸. On the other hand, Bowersock has put forth an alternative viewpoint, suggesting that the building might have actually been the residence of Procopius, the ruler of *Palestina Secunda*, and his son-in-law, Asbolius Patricius¹³⁵⁹.

The building has a central hall with a raised platform and is furnished with predominantly ornamental mosaics, which also indicates that the building was used for representative purposes. A corridor leads to an open courtyard that is on the same main axis as the aforementioned hall and connects to the rooms, all of which are decorated with large mosaics, some of which are figurative. The specific room housing the Nile mosaic could be accessed via detours from the building, but its main entrance was situated in the open courtyard to the north. Unfortunately, little is known about the further layout of this courtyard, although it appears to have functioned as a public square during that period. It is worth noting that prior to the construction of the current building, a temple had occupied the same location¹³⁶⁰. The Nile Festival mosaic is surrounded by a geometric frame consisting of a simple black strip

¹³⁵⁵ Weiss, Talgam, 2002, pp. 58-61.

¹³⁵⁶ Weiss, Netzer, 1995, pp. 166-171; Weiss, Talgam, 2002, p. 55; Weiss, 2008, pp. 10-11.

¹³⁵⁷ Di Segni, 2002, pp. 91-97.

¹³⁵⁸ Weiss, Talgam, 2002, pp. 55-57.

¹³⁵⁹ Bowersock, 2004, pp. 764-766.

¹³⁶⁰ Weiss, Netzer, 1995, pp. 166-171.

followed by a series of black triangles. This is then followed by a ribbon decorated with plexus decorations. The mosaic is adorned at the top with birds, which in the center depict a pair of birds carrying a wreath in their beaks. Inside the wreath is a Greek inscription that reads, "Use in good luck"¹³⁶¹.



Figure 245. The Mosaic of the Nile Festival building in Sepphoris, Palestine, 6.2 x 6.7 m.

The upper part of the panel represents two reclining figures facing each other: a male and a female. The female figure on the left represents the personification of Egypt, as indicated by the Greek name "Αἰγυπ[πιτο]ς" (**Fig. 246**). She is portrayed in the form of the goddess Euthenia¹³⁶², the goddess of abundance and prosperity and Nilus's wife. She is depicted half-

¹³⁶¹ Weiss, Talgam, 2002, pp.61- 73, figs. 5-11; Versluys, 2002, pp. 233-235, no.130, fig.153; Turnheim, 2002, pp. 26-27, figs. 4, 12; Weiss, 2008, pp. 7-23; Hachlili, 2009, pp.97-99, pls.V.3, VIII.1a; Eckersley, 2016, fig. 93a-b.

¹³⁶² Euthenia first appears on Egyptian coins during the reign of Augustus. The great importance of Euthenia is demonstrated by her frequent presence on Alexandrian coins, which lasted until 272/273 AD. On these coins, she is depicted with ears of wheat adorning her head, either standing or sitting on the throne or a rock. Some coins feature her alongside the Sphinx or positioned between two ships. In other instances, she is shown offering a

naked, except for the cloak that wraps around her shoulder and hangs down to cover her lower part. Her head is adorned with ears of grain. She is reclining on a basket filled with fruit, holding a *cornucopia* in her left hand, and is accompanied by three animals¹³⁶³.

It is noteworthy that the personification of Egypt is usually represented on Roman coins as a woman reclining on the ground, resting on a large basket filled with corn and fruit. She typically holds a sistrum in her right hand and a vine branch in her left. A lotus flower adorns her forehead, and an Ibis is shown in front of her. Sometimes, a snake is depicted behind the basket, possibly symbolizing the sacred snake of Isis¹³⁶⁴. However, in the case of the personification of Egypt in Sepphoris, it is observed that she only adopts the seated position and the basket filled with fruit from Roman models, while the other attributes are borrowed from Euthenia. Nevertheless, the inscription clearly identifies her as "Egypt"¹³⁶⁵.



Figure 246. The depiction of Aigyptus, the Mosaic of the Nile Festival building in Sepphoris.

The male figure sitting in front of Aigyptus, which is very poorly preserved, depicts Nilus, the personification of the Nile River, reclining on the back of a hippopotamus that brings the Nile water out of its mouth¹³⁶⁶. Nilus is represented as a bearded, half-naked man with his arm

crown to her husband, Nilus, or portrayed in a bust side by side with Nilus. Kakosy, 1982, p. 291; Jentel, LIMC IV, 1988, s.v. Euthenia, pp. 120-124; Weiss, Talgam, 2002, p. 66.

¹³⁶³ Hachlili, 1998, pp. 108-109, fig. 4.

¹³⁶⁴ Toynbee, 1967, pp. 28-30.

¹³⁶⁵ Weiss, Talgam, 2002, p.66.

¹³⁶⁶ In Roman numismatics, Nilus appears for the first time after the drowning of Antinous in the Egyptian river. This is obviously not a coincidence but a celebration of the Nile, which was certainly the site of the tragedy but also the source of the apotheosis of the emperor's young favorite. Hadrian also had a temple erected at

resting on an amphora, from which the water of the Nile also flows¹³⁶⁷. In his left hand, he holds a *cornucopia*, while his right hand extends towards three children who carry gifts to the god. One of the children holds a wreath, another holds a scale and a cluster of lotus flowers¹³⁶⁸, and the third child touches Nilus's foot with one hand while offering a wreath with the other¹³⁶⁹. It is worth noting that on Alexandrian coins, sometimes a child or Euthenia herself offers a wreath to Nilus¹³⁷⁰. In the middle between Aigyptus and Nilus, the nilometer is represented as a cylindrical tower standing on a rectangular base with a vaulted opening. Additionally, a naked child stands on the back of another kneeling child, using a chisel and hammer to engrave the Greek number IZ (17) on the nilometer (**Fig. 247**).



Figure 247. The nilometer, the Mosaic of the Nile Festival building in Sepphoris.

In the lower section of the mosaic, the water flowing from the hippopotamus's mouth separates the upper part of the floor, while another stream of water runs diagonally

Antinoopolis in honor of the Nile and became the only emperor whose Egyptian title defined him as "the beloved of Hapy". Malaise, 2005, p. 69.

¹³⁶⁷ The Mosaic of the Eastern Church in Qasr al-Lebiya (Olbia), Libya, features a depiction of a figure resembling Nilus. The river's name in the mosaic was identified as Gehon, one of the four rivers of paradise. This figure was commonly associated with Nilus and portrayed as a bearded man, half-naked, resting on a vessel from which river water flowed, similar to the depiction of Nilus in the Mosaic of Sepphoris. It appears that this figure represents the Nile, as indicated by the presence of a sistrum in his right hand and a cornucopia in his left. Maguire, 1999, pp. 179-184; Hachlili, 2009, p.101, fig. V-4.

¹³⁶⁸ When the Nile flood reaches its ideal height, the lotus flower blooms; therefore, the lotus plant was the first sign of the resurrection of plants. However, when the flood waters recede, the lotus flower withers and dies. Hence, the lotus plant became a symbol of the flood. Weiss, Talgam, 2002, p. 66.

¹³⁶⁹ Hachlili, 1998, pp. 108-109, fig. 4; Weiss, Talgam, 2002, pp.61-72, figs. 5-11; Michaeli, 2003, pp. 122-125, figs. 7a-c.

¹³⁷⁰ Poole, 1892, LXXX- LXXXI.

downward. Within the Nile water, various elements are depicted, including Nilotic plants and fish. Additionally, there is a scene where a crocodile attacks a small animal and a stork devours a snake. On the left side, the city of Alexandria, marked by the Greek inscription "Alexandria", is displayed as a city gate flanked by two round towers. Adjacent to these towers is a taller tower from which a flame rises, likely symbolizing the famous Pharos Lighthouse (**Fig. 248**). Two knights are depicted riding in the direction of the city gates of Alexandria. One of them is a male figure wearing a short tunic and a flowing cloak. The other is a female, representing the so-called "Semasia", who brings news of the Nile flood to the city of Alexandria. She is dressed in ankle-length trousers and holds a branch of a plant. The riders seem to come from a column with an attic base and a Corinthian capital. At the top of the column stands a black statue of a man holding a scepter in his left hand and a torch in his raised right hand. Next to the statue, the same number IZ, as seen on the nilometer, is displayed¹³⁷¹. In fact, the arrival of Semasia indicates that the flood has reached its peak. As a result, the procession celebrates the Nile flood festival, which is believed to ensure a bountiful harvest. The area to the right of the column and the lower part of the mosaic are dedicated to hunting scenes, including a bear devouring a wild boar, a lion attacking a bull, and leopards hunting deer¹³⁷².



Figure 248. The depiction of Alexandria and Semasia, The Mosaic of the Nile Festival building in Sepphoris.

¹³⁷¹ According to Empereur, this column in Alexandria held Diocletian's statue. On the other hand, Vaelske argued that the referenced statue might refer to a particular building in Aswan, which has not yet been discovered. Vaelske further suggests that the messengers depicted in the mosaic are clearly riding from the pillar to Alexandria. Empereur, 1998, pp. 96-103; Vaelske, 2011, pp. 106-111.

¹³⁷² Weiss, Talgam, 2002, p.61-72, figs. 5-11; Versluys, 2002, p.233-235, no.130, fig.153; Hachlili, 2009, p.97-99, pls.V.3, VIII.1a.

The depiction of children's "putti" surrounding Nilus symbolizes the personification of the depth of the flood water. Philostratus mentions that the unit of measure, the "cubit", is represented in the form of children¹³⁷³. As well, Pliny the Elder states in his account of the colossal basalt sculpture of Nilus that was installed by Vespasian in the temple of peace in Rome that sixteen children represent the ideal height of the flood¹³⁷⁴. Furthermore, there is a marble statue of Nilus preserved in the Vatican Museum from the Iseum Campense (**Fig. 249**), which is one of the most important copies of the lost Alexandrian statue representing the fertility of the land of Egypt. This statue includes sixteen children, as described by Pliny¹³⁷⁵.



Figure 249. A marble statue of Nilus in the Vatican Museum, Inv. No. 2300.

Furthermore, the nilometer is a structure used to measure the level of the Nile during the annual flood. It had various representations in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, which is usually depicted on the river banks as a stylized architectural structure for measuring the water inside a well¹³⁷⁶. In Levant's mosaics, the nilometer is displayed as a cylindrical

¹³⁷³ Philostratus, *Imag.*5; one cubit equaling 0.52m.

¹³⁷⁴ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, 36.11. It is possible that this sculpture had a real religious significance because, at the beginning of his principate, Vespasian's arrival in Alexandria was marked by an exceptional flood, which legitimized him as a pharaoh and guarantor of the flood. The oldest representation of this type is found on an Alexandrian coin minted under Domitian in the year 6. Malaise, 2005, p. 67.

¹³⁷⁵ Jentel, *LIMC VI*, 1992, s.v. Nilos, p.720, fig.1; Turnheim, 2002, p. 23, figs. 9-10.

¹³⁷⁶ The nilometers were located in different regions of Egypt; the most famous is the nilometer of Elephantine, which is represented on the mosaic of Preneste. Plutarch mentioned the nilometer of Xoïs in the Delta, the nilometer of Memphis, and Elephantine. Two Nilometers were located north of Aswan. There are also the nilometers of Philae and Achoris. Wild, 1981, pp.25-34; Meyboom, 1995, pp .244-245, notes 77,78; Bakhoum, 1999, p.88.

building with a conical top, with Greek numbers and letters marking its horizontal dimensions to measure the water level in cubits¹³⁷⁷. An early example of Nilus is a headless marble statue discovered in Kynopolis, Egypt, dating back to the second century AD (**Fig. 250**). The statue portrays Nilus sitting on a rock, reclining on a hippopotamus. He holds a *cornucopia* in his left hand and a reed of wheat in his right. On the right side of the rock, two naked children are shown. One child stands on the other's shoulder, raising his hands toward a plate where he carves possibly Greek numbers, although they are not visible¹³⁷⁸. During the Roman period, representations of children climbing the nilometer appeared on Alexandrian coins¹³⁷⁹. In many instances, the nilometer was often attached to temples, even those located very far from the river, so that priests could control the popular rituals¹³⁸⁰.



Figure 250. A marble statue of Nilus in Kynopolis, Egypt, the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization.

There is also a similar scene depicted on a silver *trulla* from Perm, Russia, dating back to Anastasius I (491-518 AD) (**Fig. 251**). In the middle of the scene, the nilometer is depicted, and on the left side, a naked child stands above a kneeling child who seems to be carving the

¹³⁷⁷ Bakhoum, 1999, p. 88; Hachlili, 1998, pp. 110-111, fig. 6; Hachlili, 2009, p.103.

¹³⁷⁸ It was previously preserved in the Greek and Roman Museum in Alexandria, Inv. No. 22173, but is currently kept in the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization. Bonneau, 1964, pp. 282. 347-348; Jentel, 1992, p. 722, no. 35; Bakhoum, 2002, pl. 26, 2; Sandri, 2017, pp. 196-197, fig.5.

¹³⁷⁹ Weiss, Talgam, 2002, p. 68.

¹³⁸⁰ Wild, 1981, p. 26; Weiss, Talgam, 2002, p. 68.

marks at the top of the column with a hammer and chisel¹³⁸¹. Another example can be found on a Coptic tapestry dated to the seventh century AD (**Fig. 252**). In the lower part of the tapestry, the nilometer is represented as a brick wall, interpreted as a well by some scholars. It is topped by a cylindrical building inscribed with the Greek numbers IZ and IH. On the left side of the building, a naked child is depicted making signs using a chisel and hammer, while on the right side of the scene, another child sits in a boat, holding a bird in his hands. In the upper panel, Nilus is depicted as half-reclining, holding a *cornucopia* in his left hand. On the left side, the female consort of the Nile, Euthenia, is depicted half-reclining and surrounded by waterfowl and lotus plants¹³⁸².



Figure 251. A silver Trulla from Perm in Russia, the Hermitage Museum.

Figure 252. A Coptic tapestry, Louvre Museum, Inv. No. AF 3448.

Empereur suggested that the nilometer depicted in Sepphoris, near the other monuments of Alexandria, could represent the same nilometer found in the Serapeum of Alexandria¹³⁸³. However, Weiss and Talgam mentioned that despite the two monuments described in Sepphoris being related to Alexandria, it is unclear whether the nilometer is real or fictional.

¹³⁸¹ It is preserved in the Hermitage Museum. Hachlili, 1998, p.111; Versluys, 2002, p. 216, no. 115; Weiss, 2008, p. 15; Sandri, 2017, p.196, fig.4.

¹³⁸² It is preserved in Louvre AF 3448, it was found in Egypt, possibly from Antinopolis. Sandri, 2017, pp.193-194, fig. 1.

¹³⁸³ Empereur, 1998, pp. 96-103.

If an actual monument exists, it may still stand somewhere in Upper Egypt, as it appears from above in the panel¹³⁸⁴.

On the other hand, Meyboom states that the depiction of the columns representing the nilometer is symbolic because, in reality, the column would not be visible from the outside as it stands inside the well¹³⁸⁵. According to Hachlili, the depiction of the nilometer next to a city inscribed with Alexandria, such as in the Sepphoris and Beit She'an mosaics (**Figs. 118, 245**), indicates that it is simply an element of the Nilotic scenes rather than a depiction of a specific site. Early depictions of the nilometer represented the popular celebration of the Nile flood, but over time, it was depicted in the Byzantine mosaics solely to symbolize the Nile¹³⁸⁶.

It is not difficult to see that all sections of the Mosaic of Sepphoris are coordinated and follow a narrative order, which depicts the announcement of the Nile's water level reaching a certain mark on the nilometer, followed by the festivities. In the beginning, when the Nile flood reaches its peak, the ideal height of the Nile is determined as "16 cubits" on the nilometer, indicated by a sign called "*Semeion*". During the Roman period, one of the names given to this festival was "Semasia", which varied depending on the speed and size of the flood. The mark is reached at the end of August in Aswan and then ten days later in the Delta, at which point a signal is given to lower the dams that block the irrigation canals, allowing the flood to spread throughout the country¹³⁸⁷. This process is symbolically portrayed in the Roman period by the character of "Semasia", who is depicted as a woman riding a horse while holding a palm branch¹³⁸⁸. Her depiction appeared on Alexandrian coinage dating from 165/166 AD¹³⁸⁹. Finally, the Nile flood was celebrated through festivals and celebrations in which everyone participated, accompanied by theatrical performances held in theaters¹³⁹⁰. These festivities

¹³⁸⁴ Weiss, Talgam, 2002, p.68.

¹³⁸⁵ Meyboom, 1995, pp. 244-245, nos. 77,78.

¹³⁸⁶ Hachlili, 2009, p.103.

¹³⁸⁷ Bonneau, 1971, pp.58-59; Meyboom, 1995, p.72.

¹³⁸⁸ Bonneau, 1971, p.59; Meyboom, 1995, pp.72-73; Weiss, Talgam, 2002, p.68.

¹³⁸⁹ Poole, 1892, nos.1293-1294, 1381; Weiss, Talgam, 2002, p.68.

¹³⁹⁰ Meyboom, 1995, p.73; Weiss, Talgam, 2002, p. 68.

spread widely, especially near the temples of Isis and Osiris, where banquets, food, drink, dancing, and boat rides took place¹³⁹¹.

¹³⁹¹ The myth of Isis and Osiris emphasized the relationship of Osiris with the Nile flood. In the work of Plutarch, Osiris is mentioned as the god of the flood, and likewise, Isis, the wife of Osiris, became a symbol of the earth and was fertilized by Osiris-Nilus. Many myths associate the Egyptian goddess with the cult of the good flood of the Nile. She caused the flood by spreading her tears on the body of her husband, Osiris. It was also mentioned by Pausanias that the Nile begins to rise when Isis cries over Osiris. Plu., *De Iside et Osiride*, 33-34, 36; Paus., X, 32, 18; Bakhoum, 1999, p. 88; Meyboom, 1995, p.73.

CONCLUSIONS

In the context of the Levant, the presence of Egyptian gods signifies more than mere replication of their original forms during ancient Egyptian history. Instead, it reflects a dynamic process of adaptation and integration within the Greek, Roman, and local religious landscape. For example, consider the case of Serapis, a deity with origins diverging from traditional Pharaonic Egyptian gods. Serapis emerged as a syncretic figure, combining elements of Egyptian and Greek deities. His widespread popularity in the Levant can be attributed to his ability to resonate with a diverse audience, offering a sense of religious inclusivity and cultural hybridity. On the contrast, Isis appears as a fundamentally Egyptian divinity who, to be accepted in the Hellenic world, had to undergo an *interpretatio Graeca*¹³⁹²

In the public sphere, Egyptian cults were well integrated into the institutional framework in the Levant, which had been established during the Hellenistic period and further supported by Roman influence, facilitated by a significant military presence in the region. Traditional distribution channels, including both maritime and land trade routes, as well as political and ideological networks, played a vital role in spreading the influence of these cults. In the private domain, the presence of Egyptian gods was more widespread in the Levant, with their effigies appearing on gems and amulets. These objects provided individuals with a sense of personal protection, a belief shared both in the study area and elsewhere.

During the Hellenistic period, the presence of figures and symbols from the Egyptian cult in the Levant was quite rare. The available evidence, such as the Oxyrhynchus papyrus 1380

¹³⁹² Bonnet, Bricault, 2021, pp. 137-145. Despite obtaining new traits and modes of expression, Isis maintained her traditional functions as the mother goddess, the giver of life to the dead, and the guardian of royal power. Dunand suggests that while some new divine images may have been adopted due to the presence of foreign residents in Egypt, it's overly simplistic to assign traditional images to Egyptians and new ones to Greeks and other settlers. Instead, what stands out is the simultaneous presence of diverse divine representations. Each individual interpreted these images within the framework of their own culture. Dunand further argues that rather than complete fusion, the Egyptian deities existed alongside each other, emphasizing coexistence rather than outright syncretism. Dunand, 2013, p. 182.

known as “the invocation of Isis”, is uncertain and lacks substantial information to draw definitive conclusions. Furthermore, it is important to note that there is no substantial evidence to suggest that the Ptolemies intentionally engaged in propaganda to promote Serapis and Isis, who were not only the patrons of their dynasty but also the guardian deities of Alexandria, their capital city. However, it is undeniable that the expansion of Ptolemaic rule into specific regions of the Near East during the 3rd century BC created a conducive environment for the establishment of Isiac sanctuaries. The case of the cities within the Syrian Tetrapolis provides a particularly illuminating example of this phenomenon, shedding light on the religious repercussions of the Third Syrian War. With the notable exception of Antioch on the Orontes, where Ptolemy III Euergetes is credited with initiating the cult of Isis, it is essential to underscore the role played by Egyptian devotees who followed the Ptolemaic army into these regions. Their presence and active involvement in religious practices significantly contributed to the perpetuation of local Isiac sanctuaries, as exemplified in Laodicea on the sea, which remained active well into Roman times. Conversely, the reassertion of Seleucid control over Syria, while not necessarily eradicating preexisting foundations, appears to have coincided with a decline in the prominence of Serapis and Isis at Antioch. One potential explanation for these variations lies in the close and deliberate association between the Ptolemies, from the inception of their dynasty throughout the Hellenistic period, and the Isiac cults, emphasizing the nexus between these religious practices and royal authority, not only in the Middle East but also in other regions. However, it was only during the imperial period that the representations of Egyptian divinities became more widespread, especially in the middle of the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. The focus is on the family of gods Serapis, Isis and Harpocrates.

In summarizing the collective findings across various research areas, it becomes evident that within the Isiac circle, Isis stands out as the most widely recognized deity. This recognition extends to both inscriptions and artistic representations (**Fig. 253**)¹³⁹³. Isis serves as a prime example of a deity whose meaning evolved in various contexts. In some depictions, she was

¹³⁹³ It is important to note that the charts depicting evidence of Egyptian gods in the Levant during the Hellenistic and Roman periods do not provide a complete representation of the cults during those times. These charts selectively include artifacts to highlight the ongoing presence and significance of the cults at specific sites in the Levant.

intertwined with the Osirian mythological narrative, as seen in Byblos and Petra. Simultaneously, she could be disconnected from this mythological circle and take on the attributes of an individual goddess within the Greek pantheon, such as her veneration as Isis-Tyche, Isis-Aphrodite, and Isis-Demeter. This suggests that Isis underwent transformations depending on the cultural groups involved. To some, she appeared as a foreign goddess, to others, she was seen as part of the Egyptian cult that had made its way from Egypt to the Levant and had become integrated into local religious practices. Lastly, for another set of believers, she emerged as a goddess detached from her Egyptian origins, assuming a new identity influenced by Ptolemaic politics. These different characterizations of the goddess were accompanied by varying stylistic and iconographic influences each time. All these comparisons underscore that the diverse iconographic and symbolic representations associated with the cult of Isis in different regions of the Levant were the outcomes of a dynamic process that involved a blend of local traits with inter-regional or global events.

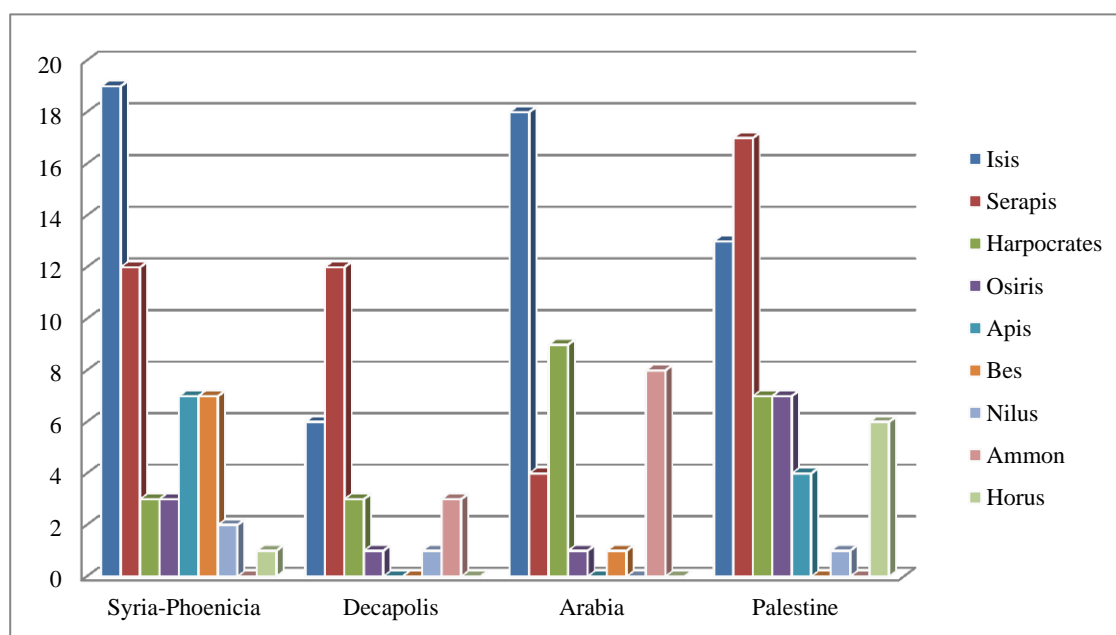


Figure 253. The distribution of Egyptian gods in the Levant.

The cult of Isis gained significant influence and acceptance in the Greco-Roman world for various reasons. According to Solmsen, Isis's appeal stemmed from her diverse patronages and dynamic qualities, catering to the needs of different individuals. Her roles in Egyptian

religion, spanning agriculture, motherhood, healing, and other realms, facilitated her cult's reception in other cultures and its syncretization with similar goddesses¹³⁹⁴. On the other hand, Witt suggests that it was Isis's associations with fertility, healing, and magic, particularly in the Egyptian context that made her attractive to both Egyptians and Greeks¹³⁹⁵.

On the other hand, Serapis ranks as the second most commonly encountered deity within this context. In contrast, other deities associated with the Isiac circle are not as frequently mentioned or depicted such as Anubis. It is noteworthy that the worship of Harpocrates, the son of Isis, enjoys more widespread popularity compared to that of Horus within the Isiac circle. A similar pattern is observed with Osiris, whose presence is localized to specific sites, Mispes-Yamim, Tyre, Petra, and Ascalon, while being entirely absent from others within this sphere of study.

The Egyptian background of numerous objects and contexts is evident, or at least that they are more likely to have come from Egypt than anywhere else. This can be read, for example, from the presence of Serapis, who was undoubtedly so popular in the Levant because of the model effect of his Alexandrian temple. In connection with Ammon, its re-Egyptization and development into Serapis-Ammon were documented. From a typological and stylistic point of view, a number of testimonies can only have been made in Egypt and imported from there. In the case of the inscriptions, such as the Osiris inscription from Caesarea or the Malchus monument from Gerasa, a direct connection to Egypt and parallels there is most likely to be thought of. Interestingly enough, things are a bit different in Ascalon. Here, in the important Philistine port city, one would hastily assume that the focus on Egypt and the Egyptianizing representation of local deities enjoyed an unbroken tradition, and the presentation of the city goddess in the form of Isis really seems to meet this expectation. However, it could be shown that the iconographic patterns and the type of reliefs do not point to Egypt but rather come from the rest of the Mediterranean area.

The cult of the Egyptian goddess Isis was well established in the Nabataean capital of Petra from the 1st century BC, although the exact circumstances of its establishment remain

¹³⁹⁴ Solmsen, 1979, p. 61.

¹³⁹⁵ Witt, 1997, pp. 22-23.

obscure. This religious tradition continued in Petra until the end of the 3rd century AD. Isis appeared in an anthropomorphic form in Petra, which was in contrast to the aniconic representation of the Nabataean deities. Her presence and influence in Petra are attested through various types and associations. These include depictions of Isis nursing her son Harpocrates? (**Fig. 130**), mourning her husband Osiris (**Figs. 134-136, 147-148, 151-155**), and potentially being associated with the Nabataean goddess Al-Uzza, as shown in the eyed baetyl from the ez-Zantur hill in Petra (**Fig. 149**). Furthermore, the existence of a workshop (Zurrebah), which produced clay figurines of Isis in large quantities, demonstrates that the popularity of her worship in Petra and this richness in her depiction corresponds to the different aspects of Isis, as she had to meet the needs of many worshipers, who were divided into several tribes, each with its own sanctuary. The city of Petra may have served as a significant center for the Nabataean worship of Isis, either in her direct form or in a syncretized aspect with a Nabataean goddess such as Al-Uzza, as Isis has always been supplicated as the goddess of innumerable names.

Additionally, she is mentioned in the papyrus of Oxyrhynchus as Isis-Soteira in Petra. However, it is important to note that her presence as the protector of navigators cannot be directly linked in this context. Several inscriptions attribute Isis under the epithet Isis-Soteira and associate her with the protection of sailors. For example, an inscription from Delos pertains to her role as a protector of navigators: “Ἴσιδι Σωτείραι Ἀστάρτει Ἀφροδίτῃ εὐπλοΐαι ἐπ[ηκόωι]¹³⁹⁶. Another dedication from Rhodes, made by a metic named Hippon of Cnidus and dating to the 1st century BC, pays homage as a mark of recognition to 'Isis who saves'¹³⁹⁷. Additionally, there is another dedication from the same period, from Cos, where a neokorus named Glaukias addresses himself, by order of the goddess, to 'Isis who saves'¹³⁹⁸. The Egyptian gods Harpocrates, Osiris, and Serapis, are also documented in Petra but not in writings. Osiris, who, according to the myth, was revived by his wife Isis after his murder and

¹³⁹⁶ CE 194= ID 2132; Bricault, RICIS 202/ 0365. Bricault, 2020, pp. 158-160. The same Oxyrhynchus papyrus mentions that in the city of Naucratis, the goddess Isis was known by the epithet "soteira", located in Egypt's Delta region and heavily reliant on its connections to the Mediterranean Sea. Given the city's dependence on maritime trade and its close ties to the Mediterranean, it's enticing to contemplate that the role of Isis as a savior goddess in this particular context may have held special significance for the community of sailors in Naucratis. P.Oxy. XI, 1380, 20; Bricault, 2020, p. 159.

¹³⁹⁷ Bricault, RICIS, 204/0108.

¹³⁹⁸ Bricault, RICIS, 204/1004.

posthumously begot Horus, is not only a symbol in Hellenistic times for something new to emerge from the past, but he also became a world god, albeit with less charisma as Isis. Serapis was propagated under Ptolemy I in Alexandria as a Hellenistic male deity worshiped jointly by Egyptians and Greeks.

In the religious life of Phoenicia during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, the incorporation of iconography and the adoption of elements from Egyptian cults and mythology played a significant role in the process of Hellenization of local religious practices. It is worth noting that the phenomenon of acculturation between Phoenicia and Egypt had already been evident prior to the conquest of Syria by Alexander the Great. However, the evidence related to Egyptian monuments and the Isiac cults in Phoenicia indicates that the references and borrowings from Egypt were filtered through the prism of Hellenic culture. This evolution becomes noticeable from the early Hellenistic period and likely started during the Persian period. However, the fact that the attestation of Hellenized cults of Egyptian deities is primarily seen in Roman times suggests a gradual process of adoption and integration. It appears that these cults were initially brought into the coastal cities of Phoenicia by individuals before becoming incorporated into certain local pantheons, particularly in places like Byblos and Tyre. It is worthy noting that the veneration of Serapis as a single great god of salvation seems to have been less prevalent compared to regions like Hauran, Decapolis, and Palestine. In these areas, Serapis may have served as a notable indicator of the Romanization of religious practices, especially from the reign of Emperor Hadrian onwards.

The figures from the two different places in Mispè-Yamim and Kharayeb are votive offerings that were placed in a sanctuary at the time (**Figs. 63-66, 67, 69, 71-72, 74-75**). An associated sanctuary is also assumed for the bronzes from Ascalon (**Figs. 200-205**), although its main heyday is dated – and probably incorrectly – to the pre-Hellenistic period. However, it would be difficult to prove that these sanctuaries were temples of Egyptian deities. Although the representations are purely Egyptian, in most cases they also come from Egypt and in any case document a certain preference for this language of form. However, the objects may also have been offered to local gods on site; a common process which is evident, for example, from the secondary inscribed situla of Mispè-Yamim. It is striking that none of the places (Ascalon-

Mispe-Yamim) mentioned have new Hellenistic interpreted iconographies of Egyptian deities been found together with the pharaonic material. The question arises as to whether the appearance of Isis, Osiris, and Harpokates in Palestine may have changed and whether the Hellenization of forms that took place in Egypt in the early or high Ptolemaic period is also tangible in Palestine. Many literary attestations of various kinds which indicate how much the historical and geographical links of Egypt with Judea-Palestine, and more broadly the Near East, constituted a favorable ground there for the diffusion of the Greco-Egyptian gods, installed from the Hellenistic period.

The cult of Serapis in the Decapolis, particularly in cities like Gerasa and Pella, offers significant insights into the syncretism and cultural exchange between Egyptian and Hellenistic religious traditions during the Roman period. It demonstrates the assimilation and adaptation of Egyptian gods into the Roman religious landscape, while also reflecting the unique local expressions and practices within the Decapolis cities. A group of cult images in Gerasa that is only attested by inscriptions is closely based on Egyptian mythology in terms of its composition – probably the sisters Isis and Nephthys and the sun god Serapis. The syncretism of Serapis with Helios Megas highlights the integration of solar aspects and celestial symbolism into the cult. This syncretistic association likely emphasized Serapis' connection to the sun and his role as a cosmic deity. Additionally, the amalgamation of Serapis with Zeus points to the cult's incorporation of attributes of supreme authority and kingship, endowing the deity with an elevated status within the religious landscape of the Decapolis. On the other hand, the possible connection between the existence of the Serapis cult in Pella and the presence of nearby springs further highlights the religious significance attributed to natural water sources. This association may have been influenced by the parallel cult of Asclepius-Eshmun, as suggested by the presence of a suspected thermal spring in the vicinity. While direct evidence of the syncretism of Serapis may be lacking in some Decapolis cities, it is reasonable to assume that similar processes occurred throughout the region. The widespread influence of syncretistic tendencies during the Roman period indicates that the fusion of Serapis with other deities likely extended beyond the documented cases. The interconnected nature of the Decapolis as a network of culturally linked cities would have

facilitated the dissemination of religious ideas and practices, including the syncretism of Serapis with local or regional deities.

On the other hand, the representations of Isis are relatively rare in the Decapolis, corresponding monuments in Nabataean art are plentiful. A singular statue of Isis-Io-Selene in the Museum of Jordan University in Amman was found in Gerasa (**Fig. 93**), and can probably be linked to the local dedication from 143 AD. From Isis or Isis-Tyche (**Fig. 96**), one hoped for divine protection for the way to the afterlife, as a clay figure of the goddess from a tomb in Gerasa. Harpocrates is also represented in the Decapolis region exclusively by coroplastic products. On lamps from Gerasa, the aspect of fertility is in the foreground. Actually, Harpocrates did not occupy a very important place in the official religion of Pharaonic Egypt. However, in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, his touching personality led him to extensively penetrate private homes, where he was one of the gods most present among domestic *lararia*, as regularly highlighted by the numerous excavations undertaken in Egypt¹³⁹⁹. The Greco-Egyptian terracottas with the image of the little god undoubtedly show to what extent the cult of Harpocrates must have been diffused among the most modest layers of the country. Outside of Egypt, he is recognized as the son of Isis and Serapis and plays the role of *synnaos theos* of the couple. The inscriptions dedicated to Harpocrates alone are, however, scarcely numerous, which seems to indicate that his role was secondary in the official Isiac cult, even if he appears, in the Greek world, as a full member of the Isiac triad, invoked in numerous dedications from the Hellenistic period. On the other hand, he enjoys, as in Egypt, great popularity in private and family devotions, as shown by the large quantity of monuments to his image (gems, pendants, and especially statuettes) coming from all the surrounding Mediterranean regions. Within the Isiac family, Harpocrates essentially plays the role of a protector of childhood, guarantor of fertility, very close to the daily demands of his faithful, which ensured him great popularity during the imperial period, from the 1st to the 3rd century AD. Furthermore, Ammon was the protective god of the Legio III Cyrenaica stationed in Bostra. A dedication of soldiers of this legion to their protective god has been handed down from Gerasa, but not only within the military supporters of Zeus-Ammon found. Here it can

¹³⁹⁹ For Harpocrates's depiction in the domestic context in Egypt: Petrie, 1885, pp.41-43; Medeksza, 1999, p.57, fig.5; Wilburn, 2013, pp.185-186, figs.1-3.

be observed how an originally strange cult adapts to the traditional native ritual and was practiced according to this.

Expectations of proper sanctuaries dedicated to Egyptian gods can be held for several locations, although their organization and architectural design remain largely unclear. For instance, in Petra, it is reasonable to assume the presence of such sanctuaries dating back to the end of the Hellenistic period. In addition to the two niche sanctuaries in Sidd el-Mreriye and Wadi Abu Olleqa, the possibility of a more centrally located temple, possibly under public supervision, cannot be ruled out. The historical context raises questions about whether Isis was already a subject of worship at this time or if another queen, with a closer association to Isis, was still being venerated. Moving into the 2nd century AD, it becomes likely that Egyptian deities were worshiped in at least one place in Caesarea, although it is probable that the sanctuary situated in or below the hippodrome was not the sole institution of its kind. In many locations, it appears that the Egyptian gods were merely guests in the temples dedicated to other deities. This scenario is particularly applicable to Jerusalem, where the establishment of a dedicated Serapis sanctuary seemed to be postponed indefinitely. Across various cities in Palestine and the Decapolis, evidence of believers leaving their marks during the imperial period can be found, even though specific cults or cult sites dedicated to Egyptian gods remain elusive. However, in Gerasa, a different situation emerges. Here, the veneration of Egyptian deities was either public or at the very least, publicly promoted. This is evident from various individuals erecting dedicatory inscriptions at different times, all rooted in the same theological concept or idea.

We have delved into a broader historical context encompassing the developments during the Hellenistic and Imperial periods, a context in which the Isiac cults unfold in all their facets: religious, economic, and political. This multifaceted presence of Rome across the Mediterranean, the economic dynamics driving the expansion of an empire, the influential role of Italian traders as intermediaries, the competitive nature of religious practices during the Hellenistic period and the early days of the empire, the transformation of the cities of the Levant as they assimilated into the imperial structure, and the interactions between the Isiac cults and various forms of power—all of these aspects demand careful consideration in our

endeavor to comprehend and interpret this complex phenomenon. In this discussion, I place particular emphasis on what these factors signify in terms of connectivity. Here, connectivity is not merely the capacity for interconnection between different cities but also within the same city, within its intricate network of religious practices. The Isiac cults, originating as foreign beliefs, gradually managed to endure and integrate into the pantheon of each city. Over time, the Isiac deities became interwoven with the local deities of these cities, adopting shared iconographic features or common attributes, reflecting a process of assimilation and fusion within the local religious landscape. The positioning of these sanctuaries within each city reflects the extent of their integration with the local community. Gerasa, Caesarea, Ascalon, and Petra serve as illustrations, as they demonstrate that these sanctuaries were situated in close proximity to other religious shrines.

Simultaneously, it's important to note that the way locals perceived and represented these deities varied from place to place, resulting in diverse forms of interaction with the divine. The factors contributing to these different aspects of deity representation are not always clearly understood. In some locations, there are instances of iconographic depictions of these deities appearing in non-religious public structures, like the basilica or bouleuterion building in Ascalon. Conversely, in other cities, deities like Isis or Serapis were featured on objects that served as identifiers for the city and circulated within the broader region, such as the coins of Byblos, Akko-Ptolemais, Caesarea, and Ascalon. These examples illustrate that these deities had already become integrated into the everyday life of these cities. Initially, they may have been considered as gods with foreign attributes, but their worship and the symbols associated with them – whether Egyptian or Hellenized – had become an integral part of the local community.

The act of visiting a sanctuary typically involved the offering of a votive object. These offerings exhibited a wide range of diversity, encompassing everything from items made of perishable materials to more enduring forms such as simple clay statuettes, elegant marble sculptures, or sturdy bronze statues, and even entire architectural structures, as the case of Misp-Yamim, Kharayeb, and Ascalon. Dedications within these sanctuaries served as a versatile means for individuals to showcase their wealth and political influence. Through the

intricate symbolism embedded in these offerings, they became a flexible tool for communication. It allowed individuals to convey a variety of messages, whether they were expressions of devotion, demonstrations of prestige, or the establishment of social connections.

In the Graeco-Roman world, major festivals associated with the Isiac tradition continued to flourish. Among these, the most widely observed was the "Navigium Isidis" in the cities of Antioch and Caesarea Maritima. During this festival, Isis was venerated as the guardian of navigation, and it commenced on the fifth of March. This timing allowed her devotees to invoke her as "Isis Fortuna," emphasizing her role as a protector who could intervene on behalf of sailors, traders, and travelers needing to traverse the seas. The institutionalization of this festival serves as a remarkable example of how Egyptian cults gradually assimilated into the ideological framework of Graeco-Roman cities. Here, a deity from a foreign tradition transformed over time into a guardian of sea voyages, highlighting the evolving and adaptive nature of religious practices in this cultural context. Because of a scarcity of evidence, it is not feasible to reconstruct the specific rituals associated with the worship of Serapis. Furthermore, we have limited knowledge about the extent of the daily religious practices that connected Serapis with Isis. Despite the common reference to "the cult of Isis and Serapis," it's noteworthy that they frequently appear independently, both in visual representations and inscriptions. There are instances where it is evident that their veneration occurred in distinct sanctuaries or shrines.

The diffusion of the Isiac cult was significantly influenced by a network of road systems, maritime routes, and caravan roads. Once an idea or object was introduced through these channels, a dynamic process began to incorporate them into a specific physical and cognitive environment. This environment interacted with the newly imported concept or object, and this interaction played a crucial role in determining how the integration process unfolded. As a result of this interaction, a unique perception emerged. The environment, with the involvement of various contexts, other objects, and individuals, shaped an appropriate interpretation of the imported element. The introduced parameter was creatively understood and applied accordingly. Importantly, this process was ongoing; the practical applications of

the imported concept or object led to new experiences and a deeper understanding, which in turn generated novel uses and interpretations¹⁴⁰⁰. This fact is widely documented in the urban centers of Balanea, Byblos, Tyre, Akko-Ptolemais, Ascalon, and Caesarea, which are the primary ports in the region and align with the trade routes in the area, and all of them show signs of the presence of the Isiac culture.

The worship of the Isiac cult extended far beyond the Levant, reaching diverse regions across Asia¹⁴⁰¹. The distribution of artifacts associated with this cult, including statues and terracottas, provides captivating insights into the interconnectedness of cultures and trade routes during ancient times. A notable example of this wide distribution is a limestone statuette preserved in the State Museum of History in Moscow, measuring approximately 10 cm in height and resembling the Egyptian god Bes¹⁴⁰². This statuette was discovered in the province of Tolsk in Altai, Russia. The origins of this artifact raise intriguing questions—whether it was produced in Egypt itself or elsewhere remains uncertain¹⁴⁰³. In the oasis of Khotan, located in the southern part of the Tarim Basin within the Chinese province of Xinjiang, another significant discovery was made. A terracotta representation of the enthroned Serapis was found, suggesting the presence of Isiac religious practices in this region¹⁴⁰⁴. Similarly, in the oasis of Turfan, situated east of Khotan, a terracotta figure depicting the mounted Harpocrates was unearthed¹⁴⁰⁵. These artifacts not only highlight the prevalence of

¹⁴⁰⁰ Mol, 2015, pp. 217-218.

¹⁴⁰¹ There is significant interest in the Great Silk Road, a concept that holds immense importance, comparable to the system of interconnected routes that linked the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions to India and China. In its narrower sense, this road originated from the Lazuli Road or Royal Road, stretching from Asia Minor and the coastal areas of Syria to Central Asia. Egypt was linked to this transcontinental route through two main pathways: one along the eastern Mediterranean coast (Strabo, XVI, 1, 31; Pliny, V, 68), and another more direct route through the Sinai Peninsula, leading to Petra along the 'road of incense' (Strabo, XVI, 4, 2; XVII, 1, 30). These routes connected Egypt to various destinations, including Babylon in Mesopotamia, Rynokolura, Gaza on the Mediterranean coast (Strabo, XVI, 4, 24), Ela in the Gulf of Aqaba (Strabo, XVI, 1, 30), and several Near Eastern cities such as Jerusalem, Jericho, and Palmyra.

¹⁴⁰² Brentjes, 1969, p.430. The object originates from the Uvarova collection and bears the Reg. no. 54831.

¹⁴⁰³ The statuette's role and period remain unknown, and although Brentjes suggested some interpretations, there is no certainty. The possibility of the figure being brought to the Altai by Russian settlers or collectors at the time of the Uvarova collection formation seems improbable. Similarly, the assumption that the statuette was found in some Southeastern European locality and mistakenly described as coming from the Altai based on components from the Northern Caucasus is also considered far-fetched. Instead, it is suggested that the Bes figure could have been made during late Hellenistic or Roman times in the Black Sea region and then reached the Altai through journeys that cannot be traced. Brentjes, 1969, p.430.

¹⁴⁰⁴ Sherikova, 2004, pp. 89-92, fig. 1.

¹⁴⁰⁵ Maillard, 1975; Sherikova, 2004, p. 91, fig. 2.

Isiac iconography but also suggest the cultural exchange and diffusion of religious beliefs. Afghanistan also features images of Egyptian gods such as Serapis-Herakles or Harpocrates from Begramnear Kabul¹⁴⁰⁶. In addition to the iconographic material, there are written sources that seem to document the stages of such development: historians of Alexander report the existence of a temple of Serapis in Babylon as early as the end of the 4th century BC¹⁴⁰⁷. Furthermore, the Isis litany from Oxyrhynchus indicates that Isis was worshipped by both magicians and Indians¹⁴⁰⁸.

In summary, during the Roman period, the worship of Isiac deities in the Levant exhibited a delicate balance between global and local attributes. These unique sanctuaries were a result of blending Greek, Roman, and Egyptian elements. It's crucial to understand that these different features didn't exist in isolation but were drawn from various sources across the Mediterranean. As the Levantine region underwent processes of globalization, new iconographic and architectural elements were introduced, while old and traditional characteristics persisted within this new context. The cultural history of these elements took on multiple facets, finding use in various settings with varying meanings. This dynamic process gave rise to numerous evolving religious identities, and this transformation continued over time. The sanctuaries dedicated to Egyptian gods were part of a network that expanded throughout the Levant, and each site combined both the global traits of the cult's spread and the local attributes influenced by the specific social conditions of their respective times and places.

¹⁴⁰⁶ Cambon, 2006, pp. 81-112.

¹⁴⁰⁷ Arrian, *Anabasis*, 7, 26, 2; Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, 76, 9.

¹⁴⁰⁸ P. Oxyr. 1380, 103-105. Chinese written records provide insights into the flourishing maritime trade connecting Egypt and Northeastern India. The renowned Chinese silk made its way to India through the region of Bactria and was then transported by sea to Egypt before reaching Rome. Sherkova, 2004, p. 92.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADAJ	Annual of the Department of Antiquities in Jordan.
ADPV	Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins.
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology.
ASOR	The Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BAAL	Bulletin d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Libanaises.
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research.
BCH	Bulletin de correspondance hellénique.
BIFAO	Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale.
BSOAS	Bulletin of the Schools of Oriental and African Studies.
CdÉ	Chronique d'Égypte, Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth.
DM	Damaszener Mitteilungen.
EPRO	Études Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain.
HarvThR	Harvard Theological Review.
Hesperia	Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.
HSCP	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology.
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal.
INR	Israel Numismatic Research.
JAAUTH	Journal of Association of Arab Universities for Tourism and Hospitality.
JARCE	Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt.
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature.
JHA	Journal for the History of Astronomy.
JMR	Journal of Mosaic Research.
JRS	The Journal of Roman Studies.

JVEG	Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap.
Kernos	Kernos, Revue internationale et pluridisciplinaire de religion grecque antique.
LIMC	Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae.
MDAIK	Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts. Abteilung Kairo.
MEFRA	Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité.
MJTHR	Minia Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research.
MMJ	Metropolitan Museum Journal.
NAC	Numismatica e Antichitantià Classiche.
NC	The Numismatic Chronicle and Journal of the Royal Numismatic Society.
NEAEHL	The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et orbis antiquus.
PAPhS	Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society.
QDAP	Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine.
RB	Revue Biblique.
REG	Revue des Études Grecques.
RGRW	Religions in the Graeco-Roman World.
SHAJ	Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan.
Syria	Syria, Revue d'art Oriental et d'archéologie.
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins.
ZPE	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik.

ANCIENT SOURCES

Appian, Syrian Wars.

Athen. XI.

Athenaeus, 5.

Diodorus Siculus, Library of History.

Eusebius, Praeparatio 8, 16, 64.

Flavius Josephus, Bellum.

Herodotus, II.

Herodotus, The Histories.

Josephus, Jewish Antiquities.

Justin Epitome XIII.

Libanios, Oratio XI.

Philon of Byblos, Phoenician history.

Pliny, Nat. Hist.

Polybius, V.

Plutarch, De Iside et Osiride.

Plutarch, Moralia.

Strabo, Geography.

Strabo, XVI.

The evangelist Mark, 5.20; 7. 31.

The evangelist Matthew, 4.25.

P. Gurob, col.II, 1.6.

Lucian, De Dea Syria.

Claudius Ptolemy, Geogr., V.

Rufinus, Historia Ecclesiastica, XI.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abd-El-Ghani, 2015** Abd-El-Ghani, M., "Business and Politics in the Egyptian-Syrian Relations during the Hellenistic and Roman Times, some case studies", *Bulletin* 49, 2015, pp.471-501.
- Abdul-Hak, 1951** Abdul-Hak, A. a. S., *Catalogue illustré du Département des antiquités gréco-romaines au Musée de Damas*, Damascus: Direction Générale des Antiquités de Syrie 1951.
- Abel, 1927** Abel, F. M., "Inscriptions de Gerasa", *RB* 36, 1927, pp. 249-256.
- Abu al-Faraj al-Ush, 1980** Abu al-Faraj al-Ush, M., *A Concise Guide to the National Museum of Damascus*, Damascus 1980.
- Accettola, 2012** Accettola, A., *The Nabataean trade nation: the public and private cultures of the Nabataean Kingdom*, Master diss., Brandeis University, 2012.
- Adriani, 1940** Adriani, A., *Annuaire du Musée Gréco-Romain (1935-1939)*, Alexandrie 1940.
- Albright, 1922** Albright, W. F., "The Excavations at Ascalon", *BASOR* 6, 1922, pp.11-18.
- Aliquot, 2003** Aliquot, J., "Les Ituréens et la présence arabe au Liban du II^e siècle a.C. au IV^e siècle p.C.", *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 56, 2003, pp. 161-290.
- Aliquot, 2004** Aliquot, J., "Aegyptiaca et Isiaca de la Phénicie et du Liban aux époques hellénistique et romaine", *Syria* 81, 2004, pp. 201-228.
- Aliquot, 2009** Aliquot, J., *La vie religieuse au Liban sous l'Empire romain*, BAH 189, Beirut 2009.
- Aliquot, 2014** Aliquot, J., "Les cultes isiaques et le pouvoir dans la Tétrapole syrienne", in: Bricault, L., Versluys, M.J., *Power, politics, and the cults of Isis, Proceedings of the Vth International conference of Isis studies, Boulogne-sur-Mer, October 13-15, 2011*, Boston 2014, pp. 135-146.
- Aliquot, 2015** Aliquot, J., A Laodicean on Mount Casius, in: Blömer, M., Lichtenberger, A., Raja, R., (eds.), *Religious identities in the Levant from Alexander to Muhammed, Continuity and change*, Contextualizing the Sacred 4, Brepols Publishers, 2015, pp. 157-167.
- Al-Olabi, 2009** Al-Olabi, I., *La présence phénicienne en Syrie du Nord à l'Âge du Fer, 1000-500 av. JC.*, M.A thesis, Université de Montréal 2009.
- Alpass, 2010** Alpass, P., "the Basileion of Isis and the Religion Art of Nabataean Petra", *Syria* 87, 2010, pp. 93-113.

- Alpass, 2013** Alpass, P., *The religious life of Nabataea*, Brill, Boston 2013.
- Alston, 1995** Alston, R., *Soldier and Society in Roman Egypt, A social History*, London/New York 1995.
- Amiran, 1965** Amiran, R., "A Preliminary Note on the Synchronisms between the Early Bronze strata of Arad and the First Dynasty", *BASOR* 179, 1965, pp. 30-33.
- Amiran, 1969** Amiran, R., "A second note on the synchronism between Early Bronze Arad and the First Dynasty", *BASOR* 195, 1969, pp. 50-53.
- Amiran, 1974** Amiran, R., "An Egyptian jar fragment with the name of Narmer from Arad", *IEJ* 24, 1974, pp. 4-12.
- Amr, 1986** Amr, Kh., "Instrumental Neutron Activation Analysis of Pottery and Clay from the Zurrabeh Kiln Complex", *ADAJ* 30, 1986, pp. 319-328.
- Amr, 1991** Amr, Kh., "The Petra National Trust Site Projects: Preliminary Report on the 1991 Season at Zurrabah", *ADAJ* 35, 1991, pp. 313-323.
- Amr, al-Momani, 1999** Amr, Kh., al-Momani, A., "The Discovery of two additional pottery kilns at az-Zurraba/Wadi Musa", *ADAJ* 43, 1999, pp. 175-194.
- Annan, 2013** Annan, B., "Parce qu'il a entendu sa voix, qu'il le bénisse: représentations d'orants et d'officiants dans les sanctuaires hellénistiques d'Oumm el-'Amed (Liban)", *Histoire de l'art* 73, 2013, pp. 39-52.
- Armour, Baker, 1986** Armour, R., Baker, A., *Gods and Myths of Ancient Egypt*, American University Cairo Press, Cairo 1986.
- Arnold, 1999** Arnold, D., *Temples of the last pharaohs*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1999.
- Arslan, 1997** Arslan, E., *Iside: il mito, il mistero, la magia*, Milano 22 febbraio-1Giugno1997, Milano 1997.
- Artzy, 2015** Artzy, M., "What is in a name? 'Akko-Ptolemais-'Akka-Acre", *Complutum* 26, 2015, pp. 205-212.
- Ashton, 2001** Ashton, S.A., "Identifying the Egyptian style Ptolemaic Queens", in: Walker, S., Higgs, P., (eds.), *Cleopatra of Egypt: From History to Myth*, London 2001, pp.148-55.
- Atiat, 2003** Atiat, T. M., "An Egyptianizing Cult at the Citadel Hill (Jabal al-Qal'a) of Amman, Jordan", *Levant* 35,1, 2003, pp.117-122
- Auge, 1990** Auge, Ch., "Sur la Figure de Tyché en Nabatène et dans la Province d'Arabie", in: Zayadine, F., (ed.), *Petra and the Caravan Cities*, Amman, Department of Antiquities 1990, pp. 131-146.
- Aviam, 2004** Aviam, M., First Century Jewish Galilee, in: Edwards, D., (ed.), *Religion and Society in Roman Palestine*, 2004, pp. 7-27.
- Avi-Yonah,** Avi-Yonah, M., "Newly Discovered Latin and Greek Inscriptions",

- 1946** *QDAP* 12, 1946, pp. 84-102.
- Avi-Yonah, 1970** Avi-Yonah, M., "The Caesarea Porphyry Statue", *IEJ* 20, 1970, pp. 203-208.
- Avi-Yonah, 1972** Avi-Yonah, M., "The Haditha mosaic pavement", *IEJ* 22, 1972, pp. 118-122.
- Backe-Dahmen, 2018** Backe-Dahmen, A., "Roman Children and the "Horus lock" between Cult and Image", in: Veymiers, R., Gasparini, V., (eds.), *Individuals and Materials in the Greco-Roman Cults of Isis*, Leiden 2018, pp. 509-538.
- Bahat, Rubinstein, 1990** Bahat, D., Rubinstein, C. T., *The Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem*, New York 1990.
- Bakhoun, 1999** Bakhoun, S., *Dieux égyptiens à Alexandrie sous les Antonins: recherches numismatiques et historiques*, Paris 1999.
- Bailey, 2008** Bailey, D. M., *Catalogue of the Terracottas in the British Museum: Ptolemaic and Roman Terracottas from Egypt*, Vol. IV, British Museum Press, London 2008.
- Balty, 1984** Balty, J., "Thèmes nilotiques dans la mosaïque tardive du Proche-Orient", in: Bonacasa, N., Di Vita, A., *Alessandria e il mondo ellenistico-romano, studi in onore di Achille Adriani*, Roma 1984, pp. 827-834.
- Balty, 1990** Balty, J., *La mosaïque de Sarrîn (Osrhoène)*, Paris 1990.
- Ballet, 1998** Ballet, P., "Terres cuites d'Alexandrie et de la chôra, Essai d'étude comparative de quelques ateliers: Thémes et techniques", *BCH suppl.* 33, 1998, pp. 217- 243.
- Ballet, 2000** Ballet, P., "Terres cuites isiaques de l'Égypte hellénistique et romaine, État de la recherche et des publications", in: Bricault, L., (ed.), *De Memphis à Rome, Actes du Ier Colloque international sur les études isiaques, Poitiers - Futuroscope, 8-10 avril 1999*, Leiden 2000, pp. 91-110.
- Baratte, Augé, Rasson, 1987** Baratte, F., Augé, Ch., Rasson, A. M., "Gadara Ute Wagner-Lux, Karel J. H. Vriesen Skulpturen, Gefäße, Schmuck no. 248-272", in: Mittmann, S., (ed.), *Der Königsweg: 9000 Jahre Kunst und Kultur in Jordanien und Palästina: Ausstellung, Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum für Völkerkunde, 3. Oktober 1987-27. März 1988; Schallaburg, Niederösterreich, April-November 1988; München, Prähistor, Staatssammlung, Januar-März 1989, von Zabern, 1987*, pp. 266-271.
- Barbet, Vibert - Guigue, 1994** Barbet, A., Vibert-Guigue, C., *Les peintures des nécropoles romaines d'Abila et du nord de la Jordanie*, 1994.
- Barkay, 2015-2016** Barkay, R., "Nabataean Queens as Reflected on Coins", *IES* 19, 2015-2016, pp.13-32.
- Barletta, 2010** Barletta, V., *Death in Babylon: Alexander the Great and Iberian*

- Empire in the Muslim Orient*, University of Chicago Press 2010.
- Barrett, 2011** Barrett, C., *Egyptianizing figurines from Delos: a study in Hellenistic Religion*, Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 36, Leiden-Boston 2011.
- Bartlett, 2007** Bartlett, J. R., "Nabataean Religion", in: Politis, K. D., (ed.), *The World of the Nabataeans, Volume 2 of the International Conference The World of the Herods and the Nabataeans held at the British Museum, 17-19 April 2001*, Oriens et Occidens 15, 2007, pp. 55-78.
- Barry, 1906** Barry, L., "Sur une lampe en terre cuite. Le culte des Tyntarides dans l'Égypte gréco-romaine", *BIFAO* 5, 1906, pp.165-181.
- Bayer-Niemeier, 1988** Bayer-Niemeier, E., *Griechisch-Römische Terrakotten, Bildwerke der Sammlung Kaufmann*, Melsungen: Gutenberg 1988.
- Beeri, 2008** Beeri, R., "Hellenistic Akko", in: Bar, Sh., (ed.), *In the Hill-Country, and in the Shephelah, and in the Arabah (Joshua 12,8), Studies and Researches Presented to Adam Zertal in the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Manasseh Hill-Country Survey*, Jerusalem 2008, pp. 195-210.
- Beinlich, 1983** Beinlich, H., "Osiris in Byblos?", *Die Welt des Orients* 14, 1983, pp. 63-66.
- Beitzel, 1991** Beitzel, B. J., "The Via Maris in Literary and Cartographic Sources." *The Biblical Archaeologist* 54, 1991, pp. 65-75.
- Belayche, 2001** Belayche, N., *Iudaea-Palaestina: The Pagan Cults in Roman Palestine (Second to Fourth Century)*, *Religion der Römischen Provinzen 1*, Tübingen 2001.
- Belayche, 2007** Belayche, Les dévotions a isis et serapis dans la Judée- Palestine Romaine, in: Bricault, L., Versluys, M., Meyboom, P., (eds.), *Nile into Tiber. Egypt in the Roman World, Proceedings of the IIIrd International Conference of Isis Studies*, Boston 2007, pp.448- 469.
- Bell, 1948** Bell, H., "Popular Religion in Graeco-Roman Egypt: I. The Pagan Period", *JEA* 34, 1948, pp.82-97.
- Ben-Tor, 1981** Ben-Tor, A., "The relations between Egypt and the Land of Canaan during the third millennium BC", *AJA* 85, 1981, pp. 449-452.
- Ben-Tor, 1991** Ben-Tor, A., "New light on the relations between Egypt and southern Palestine during the Early Bronze Age", *BASOR* 281, 1991, pp. 3-10.
- Bergmann, 2010** Bergmann, M., "Sarapis im 3. Jahrhundert v.Chr.", in: Weber, G., *Alexandria und das ptolemäische Ägypten*, Berlin 2010, pp.109-135.
- Bergmann, 2012** Bergmann, M., "Petra und Alexandria", in: Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig, (eds.), *Petra—Wunder in der Wüste. Auf den Spuren von J.L. Burckhardt alias Scheich Ibrahim, Begleitbuch zur Ausstellung*, Basel 2012, pp.112-119.
- Berlin, 2002** Berlin, A., "Power and its Afterlife: Tombs in Hellenistic Palestine",

- NEA 65, 2002, pp.138-148.
- Berlin, Frankel, 2012** Berlin, A. M., Frankel, R., "The sanctuary at Mizpe Yammim: Phoenician cult and territory in the Upper Galilee during the Persian Period", *BASOR* 366, 2012, pp. 25-78.
- Bernand, 1992** Bernand, É., *Inscriptions grecques d'Égypte et de Nubie au Musée du Louvre*, 1992.
- Bevan, 1902** Bevan, E., R., *House of Seleucus*, 2 vol., London, 1902.
- Bianchi, 2007** Bianchi, R. S., "Images of Isis and her cultic shrines reconsidered. Towards an Egyptian understanding of the interpretatio graeca." In: Bricault, L., Versluys, M., Meyboom, P., (eds.), *Nile into Tiber, Egypt in the Roman World, Proceedings of the IIIrd International Conference of Isis Studies*, Boston 2007, pp. 470-505.
- Bickel, Tallet, 2000** Bickel, S., Tallet, P., "Quelques monuments privés héliopolitains de la Troisième Période intermédiaire", *BIFAO* 100, 2000, pp. 129-134.
- Bieberstein, 2007** Bieberstein, K., "Aelia Capitolina", in: Kafafi, Z., Schick, R., (eds.), *Jerusalem before Islam*, Oxford 2007, pp.134-168.
- Bienkowski, Millard, 2000** Bienkowski, P., Millard, A., *Dictionary of the ancient Near East*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.
- Bleeker, 1973** Bleeker, C. J., *Hathor und Thoth, Two Key Figures of the Ancient Egyptian Religion*, Studies in the History of Religions 26, 1973.
- Boehm, et al., 2016** Boehm, R., Master, D. M., Le Blanc, R., "The basilica, bouleuterion, and civic center of Ashkelon", *AJA* 120, 2016, pp. 271-324.
- Bol, Frede, 2005** Bol, R., Frede, S., "Anthropoide Sarkophage in Phönizien, Nordafrika und Italien: Akzeptanz und Resistenz", in: Beck, H., Peter, C., Bol, R., Bückling, M. (eds.), *Ägypten, Griechenland, Rom. Abwehr und Berührung. Exh. Catalogue Städelsches Kunstinstitut und Städtische Galerie*, Frankfurt 2005, pp.171-186.
- Bonneau, 1964** Bonneau, D., *La Crue du Nil: divinité égyptienne à travers mille ans d'histoire (332 av.-641 ap. J.-C.); d'après les auteurs grecs et latins, et les documents des époques ptolémaïque, romaine et byzantine*, Études et commentaire, Paris 1964.
- Bonner, 1946** Bonner, C., "Harpokrates (Zeus Kasios) of Pelusium", *Hesperia* 15, 1946, pp. 51-59.
- Bonner, Nock, 1948** Bonner, C., Nock, A. D., "Neotera", *HarvThR* 41, 1948, pp. 213-215.
- Bonner, 1950** Bonner, C., *Studies in Magical Amulets: chiefly Graeco-Egyptian*, University of Michigan studies, Humanistic series 49, Ann Arbor 1950.
- Bonnet, 1988** Bonnet, C., *Melqart: Cultes et mythes de l'Héraclès tyrien en Méditerranée*, Studia Phoenicia 8, Louvain-la-Neuve 1988.
- Bonnet, 2014** Bonnet, C., "Stratégies d'intégration des cultes isiaques et du culte des

- Lagides dans la région de Tyr à l'époque hellénistique”, in: Tallet, G., Zivie-Coche, Ch., (eds.), *Le myrte et la rose, Mélanges offerts à Françoise Dunand par ses élèves, collègues et amis* 9, 2014, pp.35-40,
- Bonnet, 2015** Bonnet, C., *Les enfants de Cadmos. Le paysage religieux de la Phénicie hellénistique*, Paris 2015.
- Bonnet, Bricault, 2021** Bonnet, C., Bricault, L., *Divinità in viaggio, Culti e miti in movimento nel Mediterraneo antico*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2021.
- Bordreuil, Gubel, 1985** Bordreuil, P., Gubel, E., “Bulletin d'Antiquités archéologiques du Levant inédites ou méconnues II”, *Syria* 62, 1985, pp.171-186.
- Borgeaud, Volokhine, 2000** Borgeaud, P., Volokhine, Y., “La formation de la légende de Sarapis une approche transculturelle”, *Archiv fur Religionsgeschichte* 2, 2000, pp 37–76.
- Bothmer, Mertens, 1979** Bothmer, D., Mertens, J. R., *Greek Art of the Aegean Islands, Catalogue of The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York 1979.
- Bouché-Leclercq, 1902** Bouché-Leclercq, A., *La politique religieuse de Ptolémée Soter et le culte de Sérapis*, Paris 1902.
- Boussac, Seif el-Din, 1998** Boussac, M. F., Seif el Din, M., “Le Tresor de Tanta”, *Catalogue d'exposition La Gloire d'Alexandrie 7 mai- 26 juillet 1998*, Paris 1998, pp.166-169.
- Boutantin, 2013** Boutantin, C., *Terres cuites et culte domestique: Bestiaire de l'Égypte gréco-romaine*, RGRW 179, Brill 2013.
- Bowersock, 1983** Bowersock, G. W., *Roman Arabia*, Cambridge 1983.
- Bowersock, 2003** Bowersock, G. W., the Nabataeans in Historical context, in: Markoe, G., (ed.), *Petra Rediscovered: Lost City of the Nabataeans*, London 2003, pp.19-25.
- Bowersock, 2004** Bowersock, G. W., "The mosaic inscription in the Nile Festival Building at Sepphoris: The House of the Daughter of the Governor Procopius (A.D. 517-18?) and Her Husband Asbolius Patricius", *JRA* 17, 2004, pp. 764-766.
- Bowman, 1996** Bowman, A. K., *Egypt after the Pharaohs, 332 BC-AD 642: from Alexander to the Arab conquest*, Univ. of California Press 1996.
- Brady, 1940** Brady, Th. A., "A Head of Sarapis from Corinth", *HSCP* 51, 1940, pp. 61-69.
- Breccia, 1922** Breccia, E., *Alexandria ad Aegyptum: a guide to the ancient and modern town, and to its Graeco-Roman museum*, Bergamo 1922.
- Breccia, 1933** Breccia, E., *Le Musée gréco-romain 1931-1932*, Bergamo 1933.
- Brentjes, 1969** Brentjes, B., "A Bes Statuette from the Altai", *East and West* 19, 1969, p.430.
- Bricault, 1992** Bricault, L., “Isis dolente”, *BIFAO* 92, 1992, pp. 37-49.

- Bricault, 1999** Bricault, L., “Sarapis et Isis, Sauveurs de Ptolémée IV à Raphia”, *CdÉ 148*, 1999, pp. 334-343.
- Bricault, 2000** Bricault, L., “Un phare, une flotte, Isis, Faustine et l'annone”, *CdÉ 150*, 2000, pp. 136-149.
- Bricault, 2000a** Bricault, L., “Bilan et perspective dans les études isiaques”, in: Leospo, E., Taverna, D., (eds.), *La Grande Dea tra passato e presente, Actes du Colloque de Turin, 17-18 mai 1999, Torino*, Tropi isiaci 1, 2000, pp. 91-96.
- Bricault, 2000b** Bricault, L., “Études Isiaques: perspectives”, in: Bricault, L., (ed.), *De Memphis à Rome, Actes du Ier Colloque international sur les études isiaques, Poitiers - Futuroscope, 8-10 avril 1999, Leiden 2000*, pp. 189-210.
- Bricault, 2001** Bricault, L., *Atlas de la diffusion des cultes isiaques*, Paris 2001.
- Bricault, 2005** Bricault, L., Zeus Hélios mégas Sarapis, in: Cannuyer et al., (eds.), *La Langue dans tous ses états. Michel Malaise in honorem*, Acta Orientalia Belgica, XVIII, Louvain 2005, pp. 243-254.
- Bricault, RICIS** Bricault, L., *Recueil des inscriptions concernant les cultes Isiaques*, 3 vols. Paris 2005.
- Bricault, 2006** Bricault, L., *Isis, Dame des flots*, Aegyptiaca Leodiensia 7, Université de Liège, CIPL, Liège 2006.
- Bricault, 2006a** Bricault, L., “Du nom des images d’Isis polymorphe”, in: Bonnet, C., Rüpke, J., Scarpi, P., (eds.), *Religions orientales – culti misterici, Neue Perspektiven – nouvelles perspectives – prospettive nuove*, Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge, 16, Stuttgart 2006, pp.75–94.
- Bricault, 2006b** Bricault, L., Deities from Egypt on Coins of the Southern Levant, *INR 1*, 2006, pp.123-135.
- Bricault, SNRIS** Bricault, L., *Sylloge nummorum religionis Isiacae et Sarapiacae (SNRIS)*, Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 38, 2008.
- Bricault, Podvin, 2008** Bricault, L., Podvin, J.L., "Statuettes d’Isis en argent et en bronze", *Bibliotheca Isiaca I*, 2008, pp. 7-21.
- Bricault, 2013** Bricault, L., *Les cultes isiaques dans le monde gréco-romain*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2013.
- Bricault, 2018** Bricault, L., “Les prêtres isiaques du monde romain”, in: Veymiers, R., Gasparini, V., (eds.), *Individuals and Materials in the Greco-Roman Cults of Isis*, Leiden 2018, pp. 155-197.
- Bricault, 2020** Bricault, L., *Isis Pelagia: Images, Names and Cults of a Goddess of the Seas*, RGRW 190, Brill 2020.
- Brody, 2001** Brody, L.R., “The cult of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias in Caria”, *Kernos 14*, 2001. pp.93-109.

- Browning, 1982** Browning, I., *Jerash and the Decapolis*, London 1982.
- Bruneau, 1963** Bruneau, Ph., "Isis Pélagia à Délos (Compléments)", *BCH* 87, 1963, pp. 301-308.
- Bruneau, 1974** Bruneau, Ph., "Existe-t-il des statues d'Isis Pélagia?", *BCH* 98, 1974, pp. 333-381.
- Brünnow, Domaszewski, 1904** Brünnow, R. E., Domaszewski, V. A., *Die Provincia Arabia*, Vol. I, Strasburg 1904.
- Burkert, 1985** Burkert, W., *Greek Religion*, Harvard University Press 1985.
- Burkert, 1987** Burkert, W., *Ancient mystery cults*, Harvard University Press 1987.
- Burkhalter, 1990** Burkhalter, F., "Les statuettes en bronze d'Aphrodite en Égypte romaine d'après les documents papyrologiques", *RA*, 1990, pp. 51-60.
- Butcher, 2003** Butcher, K., *Roman Syria and the Near East*, London 2003.
- Cabanes, 1995** Cabanes, P., *Le monde hellénistique de la mort d'Alexandre à la paix d'apamée*, Nouvelle Histoire de l'Antiquité 4, 1995.
- Cambon, 2006** Cambon, P., "Begram, ancienne Alexandrie du Caucase ou capitale kouchane", *Afghanistan: les trésors retrouvés. Collections du musée national de Kaboul*, 2006, pp. 81-111.
- Cary, 1932** Cary, M., *A history of the Greek world from 323 to 146 B.C.*, Methuen's history of the Greek and Roman world, London 1932.
- Castiglione, 1978** Castiglione, L., "Nouvelles données archéologiques concernant la genèse du culte de Sarapis", in: de Boer, M. B., Edridge, T. A., (eds.), *Hommages à Maarten J. Vermaseren*, *EPRO* 68, Volume 1, Leiden 1978, pp. 208-232.
- Castiglione, 2019** Castiglione, M., "From Alexandria to Tyros: the Egyptian character of the Hellenistic figurines from Kharayeb", in: Papantoniou, G., Michaelides, D., Dikomitou-Eliadou, M., (eds.), *Hellenistic and Roman Terracottas*, Monumenta Graeca et Eomana 23, Leiden 2019, pp. 359-370.
- Cauville, 1997** Cauville, S., *Le zodiaque d'Osiris*, Peeters 1997.
- Cellini, 2007** Cellini, G.A., "Aspetti iconografici ed ideologici di Tyche", *NAC* 36, 2007, pp.157–190.
- Charbonneaux, 1957** Charbonneaux, J., "Sarapis et Isis et la double corne d'abondance", in: *Hommages à W. Deonna*: coll. Latomus XXVIII, Bruxelles 1957, pp. 131-141.
- Chéhab, 1951-** Chéhab, M., *Les terres cuites de Kharayeb*, *Texte, Bulletin du Musée de*

- 1952** Beyrouth 10, Paris 1951-1952.
- Chéhab, 1953-1954** Chéhab, M., *Les terres cuites de Kharayeb, Planches, Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth* 10, Paris 1953-1954.
- Chéhab, 1968** Chéhab, M., "Relations entre l'Égypte et la Phénicie: des origines à Oun-Amon", in: Ward, W., (ed.), *The Role of the Phoenicians in the Interaction of Mediterranean Civilizations: Papers Presented to the Archaeological Symposium at the American University of Beirut; March, 1967*, American University of Beirut 1968, pp. 1-8.
- Cheshire, 2007** Cheshire, W. A., "Aphrodite Cleopatra", *JARCE* 43, 2007, pp.151-191.
- Clerc, 1998** Clerc, G., Une Isis-Fortuna en Alsace, in: Clarysse, W., Schoors, A., Willems, H. (éds), *Egyptian Religion. The last thousand years, Studies dedicated to the memory of Jan Quaegebeur*, Leuven, 1998, pp.81-90.
- Clifford, 1990** Clifford, R. J., "Phoenician Religion", *BASOR* 279, 1990, p.55-64.
- Cohen, 2006** Cohen, G. M., *The Hellenistic Settlements in Syria, the Red Sea Basin, and North Africa*, University of California Press 2006.
- Collart, 1973** Collart, P., "La tour de Qalaat Fakra", *Syria* 50, 1973, pp. 137-161.
- Colledge, 1976** Colledge, M. A., *the Art of Palmyra*, London 1976.
- Concannon, 2017** Concannon, C. W., *Assembling Early Christianity: Trade, Networks, and the Letters of Dionysios of Corinth*, Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- D'Ascoli, 2015** D'Ascoli, A., "Renenuzet – Iside Thermouthis: una breve nota introduttiva", *Journal of Intercultural and Interdisciplinary Archaeology* 2, 2015, pp.7-24.
- Dąbrowa, 1998** Dąbrowa, E., *The Governors of Roman Syria from Augustus to Septimius Severus*, Bonn 1998.
- Dasen, 1993** Dasen, V., *Dwarfs in ancient Egypt and Greece*, Oxford 1993.
- Daumas, 1965** Daumas, F., *La civilisation de l'Égypte pharaonique*, Paris, 1965.
- Davesne, 2000** Davesne, A., "L'impact des guerres de Syrie sur la politique monétaire de Ptolémée II", *Revue numismatique* 155, 2000, pp. 9-16.
- Delbrueck, 1932** Delbrueck, R., *antike porphyrwerke*, Berlin 1932.
- Delia, 1992** Delia, D., "The refreshing water of Osiris", *JARCE* 29, 1992, pp. 181-190.
- Dentzer-Feydy, Weber, et al., 2010** Dentzer-Feydy, J., Weber, T. M., et al., *Rapport de la mission archéologique syro-française à Si'. Rapport de mission (17 mai-12 juin 2010)*, 2010.
- Dentzer-Feydy, 2003** Dentzer-Feydy, J., "Remarques sur les courants culturels en Syrie hellénistique à partir du décor architectural", *Topoi. Orient-Occident* 4, 2003, pp.431-464.
- Derfler, 1993** Derfler, S. L., *The Hellenistic Temple at Tel Beersheva*, Mellen 1993.

- Devauchelle, 2010** Devauchelle, D., "Osiris, Apis, Sarapis et les Autres, Remarques sur les Osiris Memphites au Ier Millénaire av. J.C", in: Coulon, L., (ed.), *Le Cult d' Osiris au Ier Millénaire AV.J.C. Découvertes et Travaux Recents, Actes de la table ronde Internationale tenue à Lyon Maison de l'orient et de la Méditerranée (Université Lumière- Lyon2) les 8 et 9 Juillet 2005*, IFAO, Cairo 2010, p. 49-62.
- Devauchelle, 2012** Devauchelle, D., "Pas d'Apis pour Sarapis", in: Gasse, A., Servajean, F., Thiers, Ch., (eds.), *Et in Aegypto et ad Aegyptum. Recueil d'études dédiées à Jean-Claude Grenier*, Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry. 2012, pp. 213–225.
- Devauchelle, 2019** Devauchelle, D., "Quel taureau pour Apis ?", in: Aufrère, S.H. (éd.), *Les taureaux de l'ancienne Égypte, Publication éditée à l'occasion de la 14e rencontre d'égyptologie de Nîmes*, Nîmes, 2019, pp.165-195.
- Dever, 1997** Dever, W.G., "Levant", in: Meyers, E.M., (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology of the Near East 3*, New York 1997.
- Di Segni, 1994** Di Segni, L., "Εἷς θεός in Palestinian Inscriptions", *Scripta Classica Israelica* 13, 1994, pp. 94-115.
- Dixon, 2013** Dixon, H., *Phoenician Mortuary Practice in the Iron Age I-III (ca. 1200-ca. 300 BCE) Levantine "Homeland"*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Michigan, 2013.
- Dodd, 2009** Dodd, R., *Coinage and conflict: the manipulation of Seleucid political imagery*, Ph.D. Diss., University of Glasgow, 2009.
- Donner, 1995** Donner, H., *Isis in Petra, Siegfried-Morenz-Gedächtnisvorlesung zur altägyptischen Kultur und ihrer Wirkung auf Mitwelt und Nachwelt*, Leipzig 1995.
- Dow, Upson, 1944** Dow, S., Upson, F.S., "The Foot of Sarapis", *Hesperia* 13, 1944, pp.58-77.
- Downey, 1959** Downey, G., "Libanius' oration in praise of Antioch (Oration XI)", *PAPhS* 103, 1959, pp. 652-686.
- Downey, 1961** Downey, G., *A History of Antioch in Syria*, Princeton 1961.
- Dunand, 1934** Dunand, M., *Le Musée de Soueida, Inscriptions et Monuments Figurés*, Paris 1934.
- Dunand, Duru, 1962** Dunand, M., Duru, R., *Oumm el-'Amed: une ville de l'époque hellénistique aux échelles de Tyr*, Paris 1962.
- Dunand, 1969** Dunand, F., "Les représentations de l'agathodémon à propos de quelques bas-reliefs du Musée d'Alexandrie", *BIFAO* 67, 1969, pp. 9-48.
- Dunand, 1973** Dunand, F., *Le culte d'Isis dans le bassin oriental de la Méditerranée. III. Le culte d'Isis en Asie Mineure. Clergé et rituel des sanctuaires isiaques*, EPRO 26, 1973.

- Dunand, 1979** Dunand, F., *Religion populaire en Égypte romaine: les terres cuites isiaques du Musée du Caire*, EPRO 76, Leiden 1979.
- Dunand, 1990** Dunand, F., *Catalogue des terres cuites gréco-romaines d'Égypte, Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités égyptiennes*, Paris 1990.
- Dunand, Zivie-Coche, 2006** Dunand, F., Zivie-Coche, Ch., *Hommes et dieux en Égypte: 3000 av.J.-C. - 395 apr.J.-C.*, Anthropologie religieuse, Paris 2006.
- Dunand, 2013** Dunand, F., Traditional Religion in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, in: Salzman, M. R. (ed), *The Cambridge History of Religions in the Ancient World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. pp.165-188.
- Duprez, 1970** Duprez, A., Jesus et les dieux guérisseurs. Cahiers de la revue biblique 12, 1970.
- Durand, 2012** Durand, C., "Crossing the Red Sea: The Nabataeans in the Egyptian Eastern Desert", in: Agius, A., Cooper, J. P., Trakadas, A., (eds.), *Navigated, spaces, connected places, Proceedings of Red Sea Project V held at the University of Exeter September 2010*, BAR International Series 2346, Oxford 2012, pp. 85-90.
- Dussaud, 1923** Dussaud, R., "Rapport sur une statue en basalte trouvée dans le Djebel ed-Druze", *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 67.5, 1923, pp. 397-401.
- Duthuit, 1931** Duthuit, G., *Le sculpture copte, statues, bas-reliefs, masques*, Paris 1931.
- Eck, 2016** Eck, W., "Sarapis und die "legio" VI" Ferrata" Die Weihung einer Sarapisbüste für das Wohl des Kaisers", *ZPE* 198, 2016, pp. 211-217.
- Eck, 2017** Eck, W., "Tradition and progress. The Roman world in the Digital Age-seen through inscriptions", in: Orlandi, S., Santucci, R., Mambrini, F., Liuzzo, P.M., (eds.), *Digital and Traditional Epigraphy in Context. Proceedings of the EAGLE 2016 International Conference*, Roma 2017, pp. 19-36.
- Eck, Tepper, 2019** Eck, W., Tepper, Y., "Latin Inscriptions of the Legio VI Ferrata from Legio/Lajjun and its Vicinity", *Scripta Classica Israelica* 38, 2019, pp. 117-128.
- Ecker, 2017** Ecker, A., People and Gods in the Cities of Roman Palestine: A Preliminary Inquiry into the Popularity of Civic Cults, in: Tal, O., Weiss, Z., (eds.), *Expressions of Cult in the Southern Levant in the Greco-Roman Period: Manifestations in Text and Material Culture*, Turnhout 2017, pp. 61-67.
- Eckersley, 2016** Eckersley, T., *Putting Christians on the map: topographic mosaics from late antique Jordan as representations of authority and status*, PhD Dissertation, University of Louisville, 2016.
- Eissfeldt, 1941** Eissfeldt, O., *Tempel und Kulte Syrischer Städte in Hellenistisch-Römischer Zeit*, Leipzig 1941.

- El-Khachab, 1971** El-Khachab, A.M., "Some Gem-Amulets Depicting Harpocrates Seated on a Lotus Flower", *JEA* 57, 1971, pp.132-145.
- El-Khoury, 2002** El-Khoury, L., *The Nabataean terracotta figurines*, BAR International Series 1034, 2002.
- Elmaghrabi, 2016** Elmaghrabi, M. G., "A Dedication to Zeus Helios Megas Sarapis on a gazophylakion from Alexandria", *ZPE* 200, 2016, pp. 219-228.
- Empereur, 1998** Empereur, J.Y., *Alexandrie redécouverte*, Fayard Stock, Paris 1998.
- Engel, 1972** Engel, R., "Zur Chronologie von Perdikkas' Maßnahmen am Vorabend des ersten Koalitionskrieges 321 v.Chr", *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 115, 1972, pp. 215-219.
- Engels, 2013** Engels, D., "Die städtischen Eliten der Kolonien der syrischen Tetrapolis zwischen Seleukiden, Armeniern, Parthern und Römern", *Electrum. Studia z historii starożytnej* 20, 2013, pp.77-115.
- Erlich, 2009** Erlich, A., *The Art of Hellenistic Palestine*, BAR International series 2010, Oxford 2009.
- Erskine, 2004** Erskine, A., *Le monde hellénistique: espaces, sociétés, cultures: 323-31 av. J.-C.*, (traduit de l'anglais par Odin, J., Van Ruymbeke), Rennes 2004.
- Evans, 2004** Evans, J., The astrologer's apparatus: a picture of professional practice in Greco-Roman Egypt, *JHA* 35, 2004, pp.1-44.
- Faegersten, 2003** Faegersten, F., *The Egyptianizing male limestone statuary from Cyprus: A study of a cross-cultural Eastern Mediterranean votive type*, Lund University, Lund 2003.
- Faegersten, 2005** Faegersten, F., "Ivory, wood, and stone: Some suggestions regarding the Egyptianizing votive sculpture from Cyprus", in: Suter, C.E., Uehlinger, C., (eds.), *Crafts and Images in Contact: Studies on Eastern Mediterranean Art of the First millennium BCE*, Fribourg 2005, pp. 265-89.
- Fiema, Jones, 1990** Fiema, Z. T., Jones, R. N., "The Nabataean king-list revised: further observations on the second Nabataean inscription from Tell Esh-Shuqafiya, Egypt", *ADAJ* 34, 1990, pp. 239-248.
- Fink, 1933** Fink, R. O., "Jerash in the First Century AD", *JRS* 23, 1933, pp. 109-124.
- Fischer, 1975** Fischer, H. G.. "An elusive shape within the fistful hands of Egyptian statues", *MMJ* 10, 1975, pp. 9-21.
- Fischer, et al., 1995** Fischer, M., et al., the Basilica of Ascalon: Marble, Imperial Art and Architecture in Roman Palestine, in: *The Roman and Byzantine near East: Some Recent Archaeological Research*, *JRA Suppl. 14*, Ann Arbor 1995. pp. 121–148.
- Fischer,** Fischer, M., Jackson-Tal, R., "A Glass Pendant in the Shape of

- Jackson-Tal, 2003** Harpokrates from Yavneh-Yam, Israel", *JGS* 45, 2003, pp. 35-40.
- Fischer, 2008** Fischer, M., "Sculpture in Roman Palestine and its Architectural and Social Milieu: Adaptability, Imitation, Originality? The Ascalon Basilica as an Example", in: Eliav, Y., Friedland, E., Herbert, S., (eds.), *The Sculptural Environment of the Roman Near East: Reflections on Culture, Ideology, and Power*, 2008, pp. 483-508.
- Fischer, 2019** Fischer, M., "Greek and Roman Impact in the Southern Levant: The Architectural and Artistic Response. Marble as a Cultural Factor", *Dossîê: 'Conexões mediterrânicas: Oriente e Ocidente através da História, Literatura e Arqueologia (Hélade 5.3)*, 2019, pp.13-44.
- Fischer-Bovet, 2014** Fischer-Bovet, Ch., *Army and society in Ptolemaic Egypt*, Cambridge University Press 2014.
- Fischer-Bovet, Sitta, 2021** Fischer-Bovet, Ch., Sitta, R., *Comparing the Ptolemaic and Seleucid Empires: Integration, Communication, and Resistance*, Cambridge University Press, 2021.
- Fleischer, 1983** Fleischer, R., "Eine Gruppe syrisch-phönikischer Bronzestatuetten-Basen", *DM* 1, 1983, pp. 31-42.
- Flusser, 1969-71** Flusser, D., "Gods, Personification and Sea-Monsters", *Sefunim* 3, 1969-71, pp. 22-46.
- Fontana, 2010** Fontana, F., *I culti isiaci nell'Italia settentrionale 1. Verona, Aquileia, Trieste*, EUT Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2010.
- Frankel, Ventura, 1998** Frankel, R., Ventura, R., "The Mišpe Yamim Bronzes", *BASOR* 311, 1998, pp. 39-55.
- Frankfurter, 1998** Frankfurter, D., *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance*, Princeton 1998.
- Fraser, 1972** Fraser, P. M., *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 2 Vols, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1972.
- Freyne, 2007** Freyne, S., "Galilean Issues: Old Issues and New Questions", in: Zangenberg, J., (ed.), *Religion, Ethnicity, and Identity in Ancient Galilee*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 210, 2007, pp. 13-29.
- Friedheim, 2006** Friedheim, E., *Rabbinisme et paganisme en Palestine romaine: étude historique des Realia talmudiques (Ier-IVème siècles)*, RGRW 157, Leiden 2006.
- Friedheim, 2007** Friedheim, E., "The Religious and Cultural World of Aelia Capitolina-A New Perspective", *Archiv orientální* 75, 2007, pp. 125-152.
- Fuks, 2000** Fuks, G., "A Mediterranean pantheon: Cults and deities in Hellenistic and Roman Ashkelon", *Mediterranean Historical Review* 15, 2000, pp. 27-48.

- Fulińska, 2010** Fulińska, A., "Iconography of the Ptolemaic queens on coins: Greek style, Egyptian ideas?", *Studies in Ancient Art and Civilization* 14, 2010, pp. 73-92.
- Gaifman, 2008** Gaifman, M., "The aniconic image of the Roman Near East", in: Kaizer, T., (ed.), *The Variety of Local Religious Life in the Near East*, 2008, pp. 37-72.
- Galili, Dahari, Sharvit, 1993** Galili E., Dahari U., Sharvit J., "Underwater Survey and Rescue Excavations off the Israeli Coast", *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 21, 1993, pp. 61–77.
- Galili, Rosen, Sharvit, 2010** Galili, E., Rosen, B., Sharvit, J., "Artifact Assemblages from Two Roman Shipwrecks off the Carmel Coast", *Atiqot* 63, 2010, pp. 61-110.
- Gallo, 1997** Gallo, P., "Lucerna osiriforme," in: Arslan, E., (ed.), *Iside: il mito, il mistero, la magia*, exh. cat., Milan 1997.
- Gallo, 1998** Gallo, P. "Lucerne osiriformi d'epoca romana," in: Empereur, J.-Y (ed.), *Alexandrina I, Études alexandrines I*, Cairo 1998, pp. 149–155.
- Gasparini, 2016** Gasparini, V., "I will not be thirsty. My lips will not be dry": Individual Strategies of Reconstructing the Afterlife in the Isiac Cults", in: Waldner, K., et al. (eds.), *Burial rituals, ideas of afterlife, and the individual in the hellenistic world and the Roman empire*, Germany 2016, pp.125-150.
- Gatier, 1996** Gatier, P. L., Onomastique et présence romaine à Gêrasa , in: Rizakis A. D. (éd.), *Roman Onomastics in the Greek East, Social and Political Aspects*, Actes du colloque (Athènes, septembre 1993), Athènes, 1996, pp. 251-259.
- Gawlikowski, 1996** Gawlikowski, M., "Palmyra and Its Caravan Trade, Palmyra and the Silk Road", *Les annales archéologiques arabes syriennes* 42, 1996, pp.139-45.
- Gencay, 2004** Gencay, O., *A private spectacle in Antioch: Investigation of an initiation scene*, MA thesis, University of Maryland, College Park, 2004.
- Gersht, 1996** Gersht, R., "Representations of Deities and the Cults of Caesarea", in: Raban, A., Holum, K.G., (eds.), *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective after Two Millennia*, Leiden 1996, pp. 305–324.
- Gersht, 2008** Gersht, R., "Caesarean sculpture in context", Eliav, Y. Z., Friedland, E. A., Herbert, S., (eds.), *The Sculptural Environment of the Roman Near East: Reflections on Culture, Ideology, and Power*, Leuven–Dudley 2008, pp. 509-538.
- Gersht, 2015** Gersht, R., The Sculpture Uncovered in Herod's Circus and Related Buildings. In: Porath, Y., *Caesarea Maritima I/2: Herod's Circus and Related Buildings*, The Finds (IAA Reports 57), Jerusalem 2015. pp. 139–195.

- Gersht, 2017** Gersht, R., Deities at the Service of Cities and People: Sculpted Images from Caesarea Maritima, in: Tal, O., Weiss, Z., (eds.), *Expressions of Cult in the Southern Levant in the Greco-Roman Period: Manifestations in Text and Material Culture*, Turnhout 2017, pp. 65-89.
- Gersht, 2020** Gersht, R., "The Caesarea Maritima Asklepios and the Question of Glykon", *Scripta Classica Israelica* 39, 2020, pp. 85-116.
- Giveon, 1973** Giveon, R., Egyptian Objects in Bronze and Faience, in: Aharoni, Y., (ed.), *Beer-Sheba I: Excavation at Tel Beer-Sheba 1969-1971 Seasons*, 1973, pp. 54-55.
- Glueck, 1937** Glueck, N., "The Nabataean Temple of Khirbet et-Tannûr", *BASOR* 67, 1937, pp. 6-16.
- Goddio, Clauss, 2006** Goddio, F., Clauss, M., *Egypt's sunken treasures*, New York 2006.
- Goddio, 2007** Goddio, F., *The topography and excavation of Heracleion-Thonis and East Canopus (1996-2006)*, Oxford 2007.
- Goette, 1989** Goette, H. R., "Kaiserzeitliche Bildnisse von Sarapis-Priestern", *MDAIK* 45, 1989, pp.173-186.
- Golvin, et al., 1981** Golvin, J., et al., "Le petit Sarapieion romain de Louqsor", *BIFAO* 81, 1981, pp.129-134.
- Gorgerat, 2012** Gorgerat, L., "Die nabatäischen Terrakotta-Figuren", in: Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig, (eds.), *Petra—Wunder in der Wüste. Auf den Spuren von J.L. Burckhardt alias Scheich Ibrahim, Begleitbuch zur Ausstellung*, Basel 2012, pp. 280-284.
- Grainger, 2010** Grainger, J. D., *The Syrian Wars*, Leiden 2010.
- Graf, 1992** Graf, D., "Hellenisation and the Decapolis", *ARAM* 4, 1992, pp. 1-48.
- Green, 2003** Green, A.R.W., *The storm-god in the ancient Near East*, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns 2003.
- Greenberg, 2019** Greenberg, R., *The Archaeology of the Bronze Age Levant, from Urban Origins to the Demise of City-States, 3700–1000 BCE*, Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Griffiths, 1975** Griffiths, J. G., *The Isis-book: (Metamorphoses, Book XI)*, ÉPRO 39. Leiden 1975.
- Grimm, 1998** Grimm, G., Alexandria die erste Königsstadt der hellenistischen Welt, Bilder aus der Nilmetropole von Alexander dem Großen bis Kleopatra VII, Mainz am Rhein 1998.
- Habas, 2021** Habas, L., "The Mosaic Floors of the House of Kyrios Leontis in Nysa Scythopolis (Beth Shean)", *JMR* 14, 2021, pp.169-197.
- Hachlili, 1998** Hachlili, R., "Iconographic elements of Nilotic scenes on Byzantine mosaic pavements in Israel", *PEQ* 130, 1998, pp. 106-120.

- Hachlili, 2009** Hachlili, R., *Ancient Mosaic Pavements, Themes, Issues and Trends*, Boston 2009.
- Haider, 2002** Haider, P. W., "Glaubensvorstellungen in Heliopolis/Baalbek in neuer Sicht", in: Hartmann, U., Luther, A., Schuol, M., (eds.), *Grenzüberschreitungen. Formen des Kontakts zwischen Orient und Okzident*, Stuttgart, 2002, p. 83-122.
- Haider, 2018** Haider, M., "Influenze greche ed egiziane sulla cultura e l'arte funeraria fenicia", in: Vacca, A., Pizzimenti, S., Micale, M.G., (eds.), *A Oriente del Delta, Scritti sull'Egitto ed il Vicino Oriente antico in onore di Gabriella Scandone Matthiae*, Contributi e Materiali di Archeologia Orientale XVIII, 2018, pp. 269-285
- Hajjar, 1977** Hajjar, Y., *La triade d'Héliopolis-Baalbek. Son culte et sa diffusion à travers les textes littéraires et les documents iconographiques et épigraphiques*, EPRO 59, 1977.
- Hammond, 1977-1978** Hammond, Ph., "Excavations at Petra 1975- 1977", *ADAJ* 22, 1977-1978, pp.81- 101.
- Hammond, 1986** Hammond, Ph., "Petra, the Timeless", *Archaeology* 39, 1986, pp. 18-25.
- Hammond, 1990** Hammond, Ph., "The Goddess of the Temple of the Winged Lions at Petra (Jordan)", in: Zayadine, F., (ed.), *Petra and the Caravan Cities*, Amman, Department of Antiquities 1990, pp. 115-127.
- Hammond, 2003** Hammond, Ph., "The temple of the winged lions", in: Markoe, G., (ed.), *Petra Rediscovered: Lost City of the Nabataeans*, London 2003, pp. 223-229.
- Hamarneh, 1999** Hamarneh, B., "The river Nile and Egypt in the Mosaics of the Middle East", in: Piccirillo, M., Alliata, E., (eds.), *The Madaba Map Centenary, 1897-1997: Travelling through the Byzantine Umayyad period. Proceedings of the International Conference, Amman 7-9 April 1997*, Jerusalem 1999, pp. 185-189.
- Hani, 1976** Hani, J., *La religion égyptienne dans la pensée de Plutarque*, Paris 1976.
- Hani, 1970** Hani, J., "Sarapis dieu solaire", *REG* 83, 1970, pp. 52-55.
- Harper, 1928** Harper, G.M., "A Study in the Commercial Relations between Egypt and Syria in the Third Century before Christ", *AJP* 49, 1928, pp.1-35.
- Hart, 2005** Hart, G., *The Routledge dictionary of Egyptian gods and goddesses*, Routledge, 2005.
- Hasan-Rokem, 2014** Hasan-Rokem, G., "Leviticus Rabbah 16, 1— "Odysseus and the Sirens" in the Beit Leontis Mosaic from Beit She'an", in: Fine, S., Koller, A., (eds.), *Talmuda de-Eretz Israel: Archaeology and the Rabbis in Late Antique Palestine*, 2014, pp. 159-89.
- Hawass, 2000** Hawass, Z., *Valley of the Golden Mummies*, New York 2000.

- Healey, 2001** Healey, J.F., *The religion of the Nabataeans: A conspectus*, RGRW 136, Brill, 2001.
- Heckel, 2002** Heckel, W., "The politics of distrust: Alexander and his successors", In Ogden, D. (ed.), *The Hellenistic World: New Perspectives*, London 2002, pp. 81-95.
- Heinen, 1984** Heinen, H., "The Syrian-Egyptian wars and the new kingdoms of Asia Minor", In Walank, F.W., (ed.), *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. VII, Part 1, The Hellenistic world, 1984, pp.412-445.
- Hicks, 1962** Hicks, R. I., "Egyptian elements in Greek mythology", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 93, 1962, pp. 90-108.
- Helck, 1994** Helck, W., "Byblos und Ägypten", in: Acquaro, E., Mazza, F., Ribichini, S., et al., (eds.), *Biblo: Una città e la sua cultura, Atti del Colloquio Internazionale (Roma, 5-7 dicembre 1990)*, Roma 1994, pp. 105-112.
- Henig, Whiting, 1984** Henig, M., Whiting, M., *Engraved Gems from Gadara in Jordan – The Sa'd Collection of Intaglios and Cameos*, Oxford 1984.
- Henrichs, 1968** Henrichs, A., "Vespasian's Visit to Alexandria", *ZPE* 3, 1968, pp. 51-80.
- Herrmann, 1958** Herrmann, S., "Isis in Byblos", *ZÄS* 82, 1957, pp. 48-55.
- Herrmann, 1999** Herrmann, J. J., "Demeter-Isis or the Egyptian Demeter? A Graeco-Roman Sculpture from an Egyptian Workshop in Boston", *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 114, 1999, pp. 65-123.
- Herrmann, 1994** Herrmann, C., *Ägyptische Amulette aus Palästina/Israel: mit einem Ausblick auf ihre Rezeption durch das Alte Testament*, OBO 138, 1994.
- Heyob, 1975** Heyob, Sh., *The Cult of Isis among Women in the Graeco-Roman World*, EPRO 51, 1975.
- Hill, 1914** Hill, G. F., *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Palestine (Galilee, Samaria, and Judaea)*, vol. 27, order of the Trustees: Sold at the British Museum, and by Longmans, 1914.
- Hölbl, 2001** Hölbl, G., *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire*, London 2001.
- Hollis, 2009** Hollis, S. T., "Hathor and Isis in Byblos in the Second and First Millennia BCE", *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections* 1.2, 2009, pp. 1-8.
- Hornbostel, 1973** Hornbostel, W., *Serapis. Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte, den Erscheinungsformen und Wandlungen der Gestalt eines Gottes*, EPRO 32, Leiden 1973.
- Hübner, Weber, 1997** Hübner, U., Weber, Th., "Götterbüsten und Königsstatuen. Nabatäische und römische Plastik im Spannungsfeld zwischen Konvention und Staatsraison", in: Weber, Th., Wenning, R., (eds.), *Petra. Antike Felsstadt zwischen arabischer Tradition und griechischer Norm*, Mainz 1997, pp.111-125.

- Humphrey, 1974** Humphrey, J. H., "Prolegomena to the Study of the Hippodrome at Caesarea Maritima", *BASOR* 213, 1974, pp. 2-45.
- Hussein, Abdel Alim, 2015** Hussein, H., Abdel Alim, E., "The Way (s) of Horus in the Saite Period: Tell El-Kedwa and its key location guarding Egypt's Northeastern frontier", *JAEl* 7, 2015, pp. 1-13.
- Ingholt, 1942** Ingholt, H., "The Danish Excavations at Hama on the Orontes", *AJA* 46, 1942, pp. 469-476.
- Isaac, 1981** Isaac, B., "The Decapolis in Syria, a neglected inscription", *ZPE* 44, 1981, pp. 67-74.
- Jacobson, 2007** Jacobson, D. M., *The Hellenistic Paintings of Marisa (Including a facsimile reprint of Painted Tombs in the Necropolis of Marissa [Mareshah]*, by John P. Peters and Hermann Thiersch, ed. Stanley A. Cook (1905), Maney Publishing, Leeds 2007.
- Jalabert, 1907** Jalabert, L., "Vestiges du culte de Sérapis en Syrie", *MFO* 2, 1907, pp. 307-310.
- Janif, 2004** Janif, M., "L'écrit et le « figuré » dans le domaine religieux des Nabatéens: Le sanctuaire rupestre du Sadd al-Mrëriyyeh à Pétra", *Syria* 81, 2004, pp. 119-130.
- Jentel, 1981** Jentel, M. O., "Quelques aspects d'Aphrodite en Egypte et en Syrie à l'époque hellénistique et romaine", in: *Mythologie gréco-romaine. Mythologies périphériques. Études d'iconographie*, Paris, 1981, pp. 151-155.
- Jones, Hammond, et al., 1988** Jones, R., Hammond, P., et al., "A second Nabataean inscription from Tell esh-Shuqafiya, Egypt", *BASOR* 269, 1988, pp. 47-57.
- Kadman, 1961** Kadman, L., *The Coins of Akko-Ptolemais*, Corpus Nummorum Palaestinensium IV, 1961.
- Kakosy, 1982** Kakosy, L., "The Nile, Euthenia, and the Nymphs", *JEA* 68, 1982, pp. 290-298.
- Kamal, 2016** Kamal, S. M., "Brides of the Dead in Ancient Egypt", *MJTHR* 1, 2016, pp. 1-18.
- Kamlah, 1999** Kamlah, Jens. "Zwei nordpalästinische "Heiligtümer" der persischen Zeit und ihre epigraphischen Funde", *ZDPV* 115, 1999, pp. 163-190.
- Kamlah, 2008** Kamlah, J., "Die Bedeutung der phönizischen Tempel von Umm el-Amed für die Religionsgeschichte der Levante in vorhellenistischer Zeit", in: Witte, M., Diehl, JF., (eds.), *Israeliten und Phönizier. Ihre Beziehungen im Spiegel der Archäologie und der Literatur des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwelt*, Fribourg/Göttingen, 2008, pp. 125-164.
- Kaper, 2003** Kaper, O., *The Egyptian God Tutu: a study of the Sphinx-god and master of demons with a corpus of Mmonuments*, OLA 119, Peeters Publishers 2003.

- Karageorghis, et al., 2000** Karageorghis, V., et al., *Ancient Art from Cyprus: The Cesnola Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York 2000.
- Kayser, 1994** Kayser, F., *Recueil des inscriptions grecques et latines (non funéraires) d'Alexandrie Impériale (Ier- IIIer s.apr.J.-C.)*, IFAO, Le Caire 1994.
- Kater-Sibbes, 1973** Kater-Sibbes, G.J.F., *A Preliminary Catalogue of Sarapis Monuments*, EPRO 36, 1973.
- Kater-Sibbes, Vermaseren, 1975** Kater-Sibbes, G. J. F., Vermaseren, M. J., *Apis: Monuments from outside Egypt*, Vol. 2, Brill, 1975.
- Kerner, 1997** Kerner, S., "Umm Qays- Gadara: A Preliminary Report 1993-1995", *ADAJ 41*, 1997, pp. 283-302.
- Keskil, 1963** Keskil, S., "Hatay Hadesi", *Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi*, 12, 2, 1963, pp. 88-90.
- Kindler, 1978** Kindler, A., "Akko, A City of Many Names", *BASOR* 231, 1978, pp. 51-55.
- Kindler, 1983** Kindler, A., *The coinage of Bostra*, England 1983.
- Kiss, 1986** Kiss, Z., "Antaios et Kronos", in: Kahil, L., Augé, C., Linant de Bellefonds, P. (eds.), *Iconographie classique et identités régionales, Paris 26 et 27 mai 1983*, BCH Suppl.14, Paris 1986, pp.331-337.
- Kiss, 2006** Kiss, Z., "Deux peintures murales de Marina el-Alamein", *BIFAO* 106, 2006, pp.163-170.
- Kolb, Stucky, 1993** Kolb, B., Stucky, R., "Preliminary Report of the Swiss-Liechtenstein Excavations at ez-Zantur in Petra 1992. The Fourth Campaign", *ADAJ* 37, 1993, pp.417-425.
- Kolb et al., 1997** Kolb, B., et al., "Swiss-Liechtenstein excavations at az-Zantur in Petra 1996. The seventh season", *ADAJ 41*, 1997, pp. 231-254.
- Kolb et al., 1998** Kolb, B., et al., "Swiss-Liechtenstein Excavations at ez-Zantur in Petra 1997". *ADAJ 42*, 1998, pp. 259-278.
- Kolb et al., 1999** Kolb, B., et al. "Swiss-Liechtenstein excavations on az-Zantur in Petra, 1998." *ADAJ 43*, 1999, pp. 261-277.
- Kolb et al., 2000** Kolb, B., Keller, D., "Swiss-Liechtenstein excavations at az Zantur/Petra: the tenth season", *ADAJ 44*, 2000, pp. 355-372.
- Kolb, Keller, 2001** Kolb, B., Keller, D., "Swiss-Liechtenstein Excavation at az-Zantur/Petra: The Eleventh Season", *ADAJ 45*, 2001, pp. 311-324.
- Kolb, Keller, 2002** Kolb, B., Keller, D., Swiss-Liechtenstein Excavations at ez-Zantur/Petra: The Twelfth Season, *ADAJ 46*, 2002, pp.279–293.
- Kolb, 2003** Kolb, B., "Petra, From Tent to Mansion: Living on the Terraces of Ez-Zantur", in: Markoe, G., (ed.), *Petra Rediscovered: Lost City of the Nabataeans*, London 2003, pp. 230-237.

- Kondoleon, Ch., *Antioch the Lost ancient City*, Princeton University Press 2000.
- Koemoth, 1994** Koemoth, P., *Osiris et les arbres, Contribution à l'étude des arbres sacrés de l'Égypte ancienne*, *Ægyptiaca Leodiensia* 3, Liège 1994.
- Koemoth, 2005** Koemoth, P., "Byblos, Thessalonique et le mythe hellénise d'Osiris", *Discussions in Egyptology* 61, 2005, pp. 37-47.
- Koemoth, 2010** Koemoth, P., "Du Nil à Byblos, De la dérive du corps au périple maritime du roi Osiris", *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 67.5–6, 2010, pp.461–487.
- Kraeling, 1938** Kraeling, C H., the History of Gerasa, in: Kraeling, C H., (ed.), *Gerasa. City of the Decapolis*, New Haven 1938, pp. 27-69.
- Kropp, 2010** Kropp, A. J. M., "Jupiter, Venus and Mercury of Heliopolis (Baalbek). The images of the "triad" and its alleged syncretisms", *Syria* 87, 2010, pp. 229-264.
- Krug, 2004** Krug, A., "Isis-Aphrodite-Astarte", in: Bol, P. C., Kaminski, G., Maderna, C. (eds.), *Fremdheit–Eigenheit. Ägypten, Griechenland und Rom. Austausch und Verständnis (Städel Jahrbuch, Neue Folge 19)*, München 2004, pp.181–190.
- Küchler, 2007** Küchler, M., *Jerusalem. Ein Handbuch und Studienreiseführer zur Heiligen Stadt*, Orte und Landschaften der Bibel 4/ 2, Göttingen 2007.
- Laflı, et al., 2012** Laflı, E., Buora, M., Mastrocinque, A., "A New Osiriform Lamp from Antioch in the Hatay Archaeological Museum", *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 52, 2012, pp. 421-439.
- Lauter, 1971** Lauter, H., "Ptolemais in Libyen ein Beitrag zur Baukunst Alexandrias", *JDAI* 86, 1971, pp.149-178.
- Le Blanc, 2010** Le Blanc, R. L., *The Roman Bouleuterion and Odeon at Ashkelon*, Unpublished MA thesis. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2010.
- Le Bohec, 2000** Le Bohec, Y., "Isis et Sérapis dans les dévotions de l'armée sous le Haut-Empire", in: Bricault, L., (ed.), *De Memphis à Rome, RGRW 140*, Leiden 2000, pp.129–145.
- Leclant, 1960** Leclant, J., "Astarté à cheval d'après les représentations égyptiennes", *Syria* 37, 1960, pp. 1-67.
- Leclant, 1968** Leclant, J., "Les relations entre l'Égypte et la Phénicie du voyage d'Ounamon à l'expéditions d'Alexandre", in: Ward, W., (ed.), *The Role of the Phoenicians in the Interaction of Mediterranean Civilizations: Papers Presented to the Archaeological Symposium at the American University of Beirut; March, 1967*, American University of Beirut 1968, pp. 9-31.
- Leclant, Gisèle, 1986** Leclant, J., Gisèle, C., "Fouilles et travaux en Égypte et au Soudan, 1984-1985", *Orientalia* 55, 1986, p. 236-319.

- Lefebvre, 1920** Lefebvre, G., "Le dieu "Ἡρῶν d'Égypte", *ASAE* 20, 1920, pp. 237-250.
- Lehmann, Kenneth 2000** Lehmann, C. M, Kenneth G. H., *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Caesarea Maritima*, the Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima, Excavation Reports 5, Boston 2000.
- Lehmann, Kenawi, 2022** Lehmann, M., Kenawi, M., "Cities of the Delta on the mosaic of the church of St. Stephen, Umm el-Rasas, Jordan", in: Wahby, A., Wilson, P., (eds.), *the Delta Survey Workshop: Proceedings from Conferences held in Alexandria (2017) and Mansoura (2019)*, Archaeopress Egyptology, Oxford 2022.
- Lemaire, 1986** Lemaire, A., "Divinités égyptiennes dans l'onomastique phénicienne", in: Bonnet, C. et ali. (éds.), *Religio Phoenicia (Studia Phoenicia IV)*, Namur 1986, pp. 87-98.
- Lembke, 2001** Lembke, K., "Grenzgänger: Zwei ägyptisierende Sarkophage aus Westsyrien", in: Arnst, C.B., Hafemann, I, Lohwasser, A., (eds.), *Begegnungen – Antike Kulturen im Niltal. Festschrift für E. Endesfelder, K.-H. Priese, W.-F. Reineke und S. Wenig*, Leipzig 2001, pp. 261-271.
- Le Rider, Seyrig, 1967** Le Rider, G., Seyrig, H., "Objets de la collection Louis De Clercq, donnés en 1967 au Cabinet des Médailles de la Bibliothèque Nationale par M. et Mme Henri de Boisgelin", *RN* 9, 1967, pp. 7-53.
- Levi, 1947** Levi, D., *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, Princeton University Press, 1947.
- Levine, 1975** Levine, L. I., "Roman Caesarea: an archaeological-topographical study", *Qedem* 2, 1975, pp.1-56.
- Lexa, 1925** Lexa, F., *La magie dans l'Égypte antique: de l'Ancien empire jusqu'a l'époque copte*, Vol. 2, les textes magiques, Paris 1925.
- Lichtenberger, 1999** Lichtenberger, A., *Die Baupolitik Herodes des Grossen*, ADPV 26, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1999.
- Lichtenberger, 2003** Lichtenberger, A., "*Kulte und Kultur der Dekapolis*", *Untersuchungen zu numismatischen, archäologischen und epigraphischen Zeugnissen*, Wiesbaden 2003.
- Lichtenberger, Raja, 2015** Lichtenberger, A., Raja, R., "New archaeological research in the Northwest quarter of Jerash and its implications for the urban development of Roman Gerasa", *AJA* 119, 2015, pp. 483-500.
- Lichtheim, 1947** Lichtheim, M., "Situla No. 11395 and Some Remarks on Egyptian Situlae", *JNES* 63, 1947, pp.169–179.
- Lieberman, 1962** Lieberman, S., *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine: studies in the literary transmission beliefs and manners of Palestine in the I century BCE-IV century CE*, New York 1962.
- Lifshitz, 1964** Lifshitz, B., "Einige Amulette aus Caesarea Palaestinae", *ZDPV* 80, 1964, pp. 80-84.

- Lightfoot, 2003** Lightfoot, J.L., *Lucian on the Syrian Goddess*, Oxford 2003.
- Lindner, 2003** Lindner, M., "Von Isis zu Aaron", in: Lindner, M., (ed.), *Über Petra hinaus. Archäologische Erkundungen im südlichen Jordanien*, Leidorf 2003.
- Lipiński, 1992** Lipiński, E., *Dictionnaire de la civilisation phénicienne et punique*, Turnhout, Brepols, 1992.
- Littman, Meredith, 1953** Littman, E., Meredith, D., "Nabataean Inscriptions from Egypt", *BSOAS* 15, 1953, pp. 1-28.
- Littman, Meredith, 1954** Littman, E., Meredith, D., "Nabataean Inscriptions from Egypt II", *BSOAS* 16, 1954, pp. 212-46.
- de Longpérier, 1868** de Longpérier, A., *Notice sur les bronzes antiques exposés dans les galeries du Musée du Louvre. (Ancien fonds et musée Napoléon III)*, Paris 1868.
- Łukaszewicz, 1989** Łukaszewicz, A., "An Osiris" Cool Water" Inscription from Alexandria", *ZPE* 77, 1989, pp. 195-196.
- Ma'ani et al., 2014** Ma'ani, S. A., Al-Nasarat, M., Al-Maani, A., " Jerusalem in Classical Ages: A Critical Review", *Mediterranean Archaeology & Archaeometry* 14, 2014, pp. 139-154.
- MacAdam, 1992** MacAdam, H. I., "The history of Philadelphia in the classical period", in: Northedge, A., (ed.), *Studies on Roman and Islamic 'Amman. The Excavations of Mrs. CM Bennett and Other Investigations* 1, 1992, pp. 27-45.
- Magness, 2001** Magness, J., "The Cults of Isis and Kore at Samaria-Sebaste in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods", *HTR* 94, 2001, pp. 157-177.
- Maguire, 1999** Maguire, H., "The Nile and the rivers of Paradise", in: Piccirillo, M., Alliata, E., (eds.), *The Madaba Map Centenary, 1897-1997: Travelling through the Byzantine Umayyad period. Proceedings of the International Conference, Amman 7-9 April 1997*, Jerusalem 1999, pp.179-184.
- Maillard, 1975** Maillard, M., "A propos de deux statuettes en terre rapportées par la mission Ôtani: Sarapis et Harpocrates en Asie Centrale", *Journal Asiatique* 263, 1975, pp. 223-230.
- Malaise, 1972** Malaise, M., *Inventaire préliminaire des documents égyptiens découverts en Italie*, EPRO 21, Brill, 1972.
- Malaise, 1972a** Malaise, M., *Les conditions de penetration et de difussion des cultes Egyptiens en Italie*, Leiden, 1972.
- Malaise, 2000** Malaise, M., "Le problème de l'hellénisation d'Isis", in: Bricault, L., (ed.), *De Memphis à Rome, Actes du Ier Colloque international sur les études isiaques, Poitiers - Futuroscope, 8-10 avril 1999*, Leiden 2000, pp. 1-19.

- Malaise, 2007** Malaise, M., "La diffusion des cultes isiaques: un problème de terminologie et de critique", In Bricault, L., Versluys, M., Meyboom, P., (eds.), *Nile into Tiber, Egypt in the Roman World, Proceedings of the IIIrd International Conference of Isis Studies*, Boston 2007, pp.15-39.
- Malaise, 2009** Malaise, M., "Le Calathos de Sérapis", *SAK* 39, 2009, pp.173-193.
- Malaise, 2014** Malaise, M., "Le Calathos sur la tête d'Isis: une enquête", *SAK* 43, 2014, pp. 223-265.
- Marcovich, 1986** Marcovich, M., "Demeter, Baubo, Iacchus—and a redactor", *Vigiliae Christianae* 40, 1986, pp. 294-301.
- Marcovich, 1996** Marcovich, M., "From Ishtar to Aphrodite", *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 30, 2, 1996, pp.43-59.
- Markoe, 2003** Markoe, G., *Die Phönizier, Völker der Antike*, Aus dem Englischen von Tanja Ohlsen, Stuttgart 2003.
- Martin, 2017** Martin, S. R., *The art of contact: comparative approaches to Greek and Phoenician art*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia 2017.
- Martzavou, 2018** Martzavou, P., "What is an Isiac Priest in the Greek World?", in: Gasparini, V., Veymiers, R., (eds.), *Individuals and Materials in the Greco-Roman Cults of Isis: Agents, Images, and Practices*, Brill 2018, pp. 127-154.
- McCarter, 1993** McCarter, P. K., "An inscribed Phoenician funerary situla in the Art Museum of Princeton University", *BASOR* 290/1, 1993, pp. 115-120.
- McCown, 1931-1932** McCown, C., "The Goddesses of Gerasa", *ASOR* 13, 1931-1932, pp. 129-166.
- McCown, 1942** McCown, C., "A painted tomb at Marwa", *QDAP* 9, 1942, pp.1-30.
- Mckenzie, 1990** Mckenzie, J., *the Architecture of Petra*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Mckenzie, 1996a** Mckenzie, J., "The Architectural style of Roman and Byzantine Alexandria and Egypt", in: Bailey, D., (ed.), *Archaeological Research in Roman Egypt*, Ann Arbor 1996, pp. 128-142.
- Mckenzie, 1996b** Mckenzie, J., "Alexandria and the origins of Baroque Architecture", Alexandria and Alexandrianism: Papers Delivered at a Symposium Organized by The J. Paul Getty Museum and The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities and Held at the Museum, April 22–25, 1993, California 1996, pp. 109-125.
- Mckenzie, 2003** McKenzie, J., "Carvings in the desert: The sculpture of Petra and Khirbet et-Tannur", in: Markoe, G., (ed.), *Petra Rediscovered: Lost City of the Nabataeans*, London 2003, pp. 165-91.
- Mckenzie, 2007** McKenzie, J., *The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt C.300 BC-AD 700*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London 2007.
- Mckenzie, Reyes,** McKenzie, J., Reyes, A., "Iconographic Programme", in: Mckenzie, J.,

- 2013** Greene, J., Reyes, A., et al. (eds.), *the Nabataean Temple at Khirbet et-Tannur, Jordan, Vol. I, Architecture and Religion, Final report on Nelson Glueck's 1937 Excavation*, American Schools of Oriental Research 67, Boston 2013.
- Medeksza, 1999** Medeksza, S., "Marina El-Alamein, Conservation work in 1998", *PAM* X, 1999, pp.51-62.
- Mercer, 1942** Mercer, S. A. B., *Horus, Royal God of Egypt*, Society of Oriental research, Grafton 1942.
- Merkelbach, 2012** Merkelbach, R., *Isis regina-Zeus Sarapis: die griechisch-ägyptische Religion nach den Quellen dargestellt*, Walter de Gruyter, 2012.
- Merklein, Wenning, 1998** Merklein, H., Wenning, R., "Ein Verehrungsplatz der Isis in Petra neu untersucht", *ZDPV* 114, 1998, pp. 162-178.
- Merklein, Wenning, 2001** Merklein, H., Wenning, R., "the Veneration Place of Isis at Wadi as-Siyyagh, Petra: New Research", *SHAJ* 7, 2001, pp. 421-432.
- Meshorer, 1975** Meshorer, Y., *Nabataean coins*, Qedem 3, Jerusalem 1975.
- Meshorer, 1985** Meshorer, Y., *City-coins of Eretz-Israel and the Decapolis in the Roman Period*, The Israel Museum: Jerusalem 1985.
- Mesnil du Buisson, 1970** Mesnil du Buisson, R., *Études sur les dieux phéniciens hérités par l'Empire romain*, EPRO 14, Leiden 1970.
- Messika, 1997** Messika, N., "The Hellenistic Terracotta Figurines from Areas TB and TC", *Atiqot* 31, 1997, pp. 121-128.
- Mettinger, 2001** Mettinger, T. N. D., *The Riddle of Resurrection: Dying and Rising Gods in the ancient Near East*, Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament series 50, Stockholm 2001.
- Metwally et al., 2022** Metwally, I., Elelemi, F., Shelaih, R., "Solar Aspects of Child Gods During the Greco-Roman Period in Egypt", *JAAUTH* 22, 2022, pp.1-19.
- Meyboom, 1995** Meyboom, P., *The Nile mosaic of Palestrina: Early Evidence of Egyptian Religion in Italy*, RGRW 121, Leiden 1995.
- Meza, 1993** Meza, A. I., "An Egyptian Statuette in Petra", *ADAJ* 37, 1993, pp. 427-432.
- Meza, 1995** Meza, A. I., "An Egyptian Statuette in Petra", *JARCE* 32, 1995, pp. 179-183.
- Meza, 1996** Meza, A. I., "The Egyptian statuette in Petra and the Isis cult connection", *ADAJ* 40, 1996, pp. 167-176.
- Meza, 2000** Meza, A., "Egyptian Art in Jordan", *JARCE* 37, 2000, pp. 199-212.
- Meza, 2005** Meza, A. I., "Ancient Egyptian Religious Practices in Trans-Jordan", *Aegyptus et Pannonia* 2, 2005, pp. 101- 110.
- Meza, 2006** Meza, A.I., "Egyptian Religion and Magic in the Mediterranean World: Isis, The Goddess of Many Faces", *Aegyptus et Pannonia* 3, 2006, pp.

- 161-168.
- Michaeli, 2003** Michaeli, T., "Allusions to the Nile and Nilotic landscape in Ancient Art in Israel", in: Gangolff, A., (ed.), *Lieux de mémoire en Orient grec à l'époque impériale*, Peter Lang, Bern 2003, pp. 109-138.
- Michaelis, 1885** Michaelis, A., "Sarapis standing on a Xanthian marble in the British Museum", *JHS* 6, 1885, pp. 287-318.
- Michelau, 2014** Michelau, H., "Hellenistische Stelen mit Kultakteuren aus Umm el-‘Amed", *ZDPV* 130, 2014, pp. 77-95.
- Milik, 1972** Milik, J., *Dédicaces faites par des dieux (Palmyre, Hatra, Tyr) et des thiasés sémitiques à l'époque romaine*, Recherches d'épigraphie proche-orientale 92, 1972.
- Milik, Starcky, 1975** Milik, J. T., Starcky, J. "Inscriptions récemment découvertes à Pétra – 5. Un dédicace à Isis de l'an cinq de ‘Obodas III”, *ADAJ* 20, 1975, pp. 120-124.
- Mol, 2015** Mol, E.M., *Egypt in material and mind, The use and perception of Aegyptiaca in Roman domestic contexts of Pompeii*, Leiden university 2015.
- Montet, 1928** Montet, P., *Byblos et l'Égypte, quatre campagnes de fouilles à Gebeil 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924*, Paris 1928.
- Monneret de Villard, 1923** Monneret de Villard, U., *La scultura ad Ahnâs: note sull'origine dell'arte copta*, Milano 1923.
- Moralee, 2004** Moralee, J., *For Salvation's Sake: Provincial Loyalty, Personal Religion, and Epigraphic Production in the Roman and Late Antique Near East*, Routledge 2004.
- Moretti, 1958** Moretti, L., Note egittologiche, *Aegyptus* 38, 1958, pp.199 – 209.
- Morris, 2011** Morris, E. F., "Paddle dolls and performance", *JARCE* 47, 2011, pp. 71-103.
- Moss, 2017** Moss, K. A., *The Development and Diffusion of the Cult of Isis in the Hellenistic Period*, Master's Thesis, University of Arizona, 2017.
- Muccioli, 2004** Muccioli, F., "La titolatura di Cleopatra VII in una nuova iscrizione cipriota e la genesi dell'epiteto Thea Neotera", *ZPE* 146, 2004, pp. 105-114.
- Mueller, 2006** Mueller, K., *Settlements of the Ptolemies: city foundations and new settlement in the Hellenistic world*, Studia Hellenistica, Vol. 43, Peeters Publishers 2006.
- Mumford, 2014** Mumford, G. D., "Egypt and the Levant", in: Killbrew, A.E., Steiner, M., (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant c. 8000-332 BCE*, Oxford 2014, pp. 69-89.
- Mussies, G., The Interpretatio Judaica of Sarapis, in: Vermaseren, M. J., (éd.), *Studies in Hellenistic Religions*, ÉPRO 78, Leyde 1979.

- Naerebout, 2007** Naerebout, F. G., "The temple at Ras el-Soda. Is it an Isis temple? Is it Greek, Roman, Egyptian, or neither? And so what?", in: Bricault, L., Versluys, M., Meyboom, P., (eds.), *Nile into Tiber: Egypt in the Roman World*, Leiden 2007, pp. 506-554.
- Naim, 2011** Naim, S., "Dialects of the Levant", in: Weninger, S. (ed.), *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook*, Berlin 2011, pp. 920-935.
- Neugebauer, Parker, 1969** Neugebauer, O., Parker, R. A., *Egyptian astronomical texts, III: Decans, Planets, Constellations and Zodiacs*, Egyptian astronomical texts, Brown University Press 1969.
- Newell, 1978** Newell, E. T., *The Seleucid Mint of Antioch*, Obol 1978.
- Nitschke, 2011** Nitschke, J. L., "'Hybrid' Art, Hellenism and the Study of Acculturation in the Hellenistic East: The Case of Umm el-'Amed in Phoenicia", in: Kouremenos, A., et al., (eds.), *From Pella to Gandhara, Hybridisation and Identity in the Art and Architecture of the Hellenistic East*, Oxford 2011, pp.87-104.
- Niwinski, 1987** Niwinski, A., "The solar-Osirian unity as principle of the theology of the «State of Amun» in Thebes in the 21st Dynasty", *JVEG* 30, 1987, pp. 89-106.
- Nock, 1953** Nock, A., "Neotera, queen or goddess?", *Aegyptus* 33, 1953, pp. 283-296.
- Norman, 2000** Norman, A. F., *Antioch as a centre of Hellenic culture as observed by Libanius*, Vol. 34, Liverpool University Press 2000.
- Norris, 1982** Norris, F. W., "Isis, Sarapis and Demeter in Antioch of Syria", *HThR* 75, 1982, pp. 189-207.
- Nunn, 2000** Nunn, A., *Der figürliche Motivschatz Phöniziens, Syriens und Transjordaniens vom 6. bis zum 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr.*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, Archeologica 18, Freiburg, Schweiz Universitätsverlag, Göttingen, 2000.
- Nunn, 2008** Nunn, A., "Die Phönizier und ihre südlichen Nachbarn in der achämenidischen und frühhellenistischen Zeit: Ein Bildervergleich", in: Witte, M., Diehl, J.F., (eds.), *Israeliten und Phönizier. Ihre Beziehungen im Spiegel der Archäologie und der Literatur des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwel*, Fribourg/Göttingen, 2008, pp. 95-123.
- Oggiano, 2013** Oggiano, I., "La shendyt e la stola: nuovi dati sull'uso simbolico del vestiario nella Fenicia", in: Arruda, A.M., (ed.), *Fenícios y púnicos por terra e mar. Actas do VI congresso Internacional de Estudos Fenícios e Púnicos*, Lisbonne 2013, pp. 351- 360.
- Oggiano, 2015a** Oggiano, I., "The question of "plasticity" of ethnic and cultural identity: the case study of Kharayeb", *BAAL Hors* 10, 2015, pp. 507-528.
- Oggiano, 2015b** Oggiano, I., "Le sanctuaire de Kharayeb et l'évolution de l'imagerie phénicienne dans l'arrière-pays de Tyr", *Topoi. Orient-Occident* 13,

- 2015, pp. 239-266.
- Omran, Zouair, 2014** Omran, W., Zouair, N., "The Depiction of Apis in the Greco-Roman Tombs of Egypt." *Journal of Association of Arab Universities for Tourism and Hospitality* 11, 2014, pp. 44-65.
- Oren, Rappaport, 1984** Oren, E., Rappaport, U., "The Necropolis of Maresha–Beth Govrin", *IEJ* 34, 1984, pp. 114-153.
- Orr, Penna, 1978** Orr, D., Penna, Ph., "Roman Domestic Religion: The Evidence of the Household Shrines", *ANRW II* 16, 2, 1978, pp. 1557-1591.
- Ortali-Tarazi, Waliszewski, 2000** Ortali-Tarazi, R., Waliszewski, T., "La mosaïque du Nil découverte à Jiyé", *BAAL* 4, 2000, pp. 165-177.
- Ovadiah, Mucznik, 2012** Ovadiah, A., Mucznik, S., "Apollo and Artemis in the Decapolis", *Liber annuus* 62, 2012, pp. 515-534.
- Pakkanen, 1996** Pakkanen, P., *Interpreting early Hellenistic religion: a study based on the mystery cult of Demeter and the cult of Isis*, Suomen Ateenan-instituutin säätiö, 1996.
- Parker, 1975** Parker, S. Th., "The Decapolis Reviewed", *JBL* 94, 1975, pp. 437-441.
- Parlasca, 1966** Parlasca, K., *Mumienporträts und verwandte Denkmäler*, 1966.
- Parlasca, 1990** Parlasca, I., "Terrakotten aus Petra. Ein neues Kapitel nabatäischer Archäologie", in: Zayadine, F., (ed.), *Petra and the Caravan Cities. Symposium Petra 1985*, 1990, pp. 87-105.
- Parlasca, 1991** Parlasca, I., "Terrakottenfunde aus Petra", in: Lindner, M., Zeitler, J., (éd.), *Petra, Königin der Weihrauchstraße*, Fürth, VKA-Verlag, 1991, pp. 111-127.
- Parlasca, 1991a** Parlasca, K., "Einige Meisterwerke syrischer Kleinkunst des Hellenismus und der frühen Kaiserzeit", *DM* 5, 1991, pp. 49-58.
- Parlasca, 1994** Parlasca, K., Die Zeugnisse "Alexandrinischer" Kulte in Palmyra im Rahmen der ägyptischen Kulturbeziehungen, in: Berger el-Naggar, C., (ed.), *Études isiaque. Hommages à Jean Leclant*, BdÉ 106, 3, 1994, pp. 405-410.
- Parlasca, 1998** Parlasca, K., "Bemerkungen zum Isiskult in Petra", in: Hübner, U., Knauf, E.A., Wenning, R., (eds.), *Nach Petra und ins Königreich der Nabatäer*, Bonn 1998, pp. 64-70.
- Parr, 1962** Parr, P. J., "A Nabataean Sanctuary near Petra, a preliminary notice", *ADAJ* 6-7, 1962, pp. 21-23.
- Parr, 1990** Parr, P. J., "A Commentary on the Terracotta Figurines from the British Excavations at Petra, 1958-64", in: Zayadine, F., (ed.), *Petra and the Caravan Cities, Symposium Petra 1985*, Amman 1990, pp. 77-86.
- Parr, 2003** Parr, P. J., "The origins and Emergence of the nabataeans", in: Markoe, G., (ed.), *Petra Rediscovered: Lost City of the Nabataeans*, London

- 2003, pp. 26-36.
- Patrich, 2011** Patrich, J., *Studies in the archaeology and history of Caesarea Maritima: caput Judaeae, metropolis Palaestinae*, Brill 2011.
- Patrich, 2019** Patrich, J., "Caesarea Maritima in the Time of Origen", in: Bitton-Ashkelony, B., Irshai Aryeh Kofsky, O., Newman, H. and Perrone, L., Leuven, (eds.), *Origeniana duodecima : Origen's legacy in the Holy Land - a tale of three cities : Jerusalem, Caesarea and Bethlehem: proceedings of the 12th International Origen Congress, Jerusalem, 25-29 June, 2017*, Paris, Bristol, 2019, pp. 375-412.
- Perdrizet, 1921** Perdrizet, P., *Les terres cuites grecques d'Égypte de la Collection Fouquet*, Nancy, Paris 1921.
- Perpillou-Thomas, 1993** Perpillou-Thomas, F., *Fêtes d'Égypte ptolémaïque et romaine d'après la documentation papyrologique grecque*, *Studia hellenistica* 31, Lovanii 1993.
- Peter, 2012** Peter, M., "Münzen der Nabatäer", in: Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig, (eds.), *Petra—Wunder in der Wüste. Auf den Spuren von J.L. Burckhardt alias Scheich Ibrahim, Begleitbuch zur Ausstellung*, Basel 2012, pp. 66-70.
- Petrie, 1885** Petrie, W.M.F., *Tanis I, 1883-4, EEF 2*, London 1885.
- Pfeiffer, 2008** Pfeiffer, S., "The god Serapis, his cult and the beginnings of the ruler cult in Ptolemaic Egypt", in: Mckechnie, P., Guillaume, P., (eds.), *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and his world*, Leiden 2008, pp.387-408.
- Piccirillo, 1993** Piccirillo, M., *The mosaics of Jordan*, Amman 1993.
- Ploug, 1985** Ploug, G., *Hama: Fouilles et Recherches de la Fondation Carlsberg 1931-1938: III, 1. The Graeco-Roman Town*, Copenhagen 1985.
- Podvin, 2011** Podvin, J., *Luminaire et cultes isiaques, Monographies instrumentum* 38, Montagnac 2011.
- Podvin, 2016** Podvin, J., "Sur la présence d'Harpocrate à Pétra et en Jordanie", *Syria* 93, 2016, pp. 311-319.
- Poole, 1892** Poole, R.S., *A Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum: Catalogue of the Coins of Alexandria and the nomes*, London 1892.
- Préaux, 1978** Préaux, C., *Le monde hellénistique, La Grèce et l'Orient de la mort d'Alexandre à la conquête romaine de la Grèce (323-146 av. J.-C.)*, Tome I, Presses universitaires de France, Paris 1978.
- Quinn, 2013** Quinn, J. C., "Monumental power: Numidian royal Architecture in context", in: Quinn, J., Prag, J., (eds.), *The Hellenistic West: Rethinking the Ancient Mediterranean*, Cambridge 2013, pp. 179-215.
- Regev, 2009/10** Regev, D., "Akko—Ptolemais, a Phoenician City: The Hellenistic Pottery", *MA* 22/23, 2009/10, pp. 115–191.
- Renan, 1864** Renan, E.J., *Mission de Phénicie* (1864, 1874).

- Rey-Coquais, 1978** Rey-Coquais, J.P., "Syrie romaine, de Pompée à Dioclétien", *JRS* 68, 1978, pp. 44-73.
- Rey-Coquais, 1997** Rey-Coquais, J.P., "Note sur deux sanctuaires de la Syrie romaine", *Topoi* 7, 1997, pp. 929-944.
- Ribichini, 1975** Ribichini, S., "Divinità egiziane nelle iscrizioni fenicie d'Oriente", in: Bondi, S.F., et al., (eds.), *Saggi Fenici-I*, Rome 1975, pp. 7-14.
- De Ridder, 1905** De Ridder, A., *Catalogue de la Collection de Clercq, III, Les Bronzes*, Paris 1905.
- De Ridder, 1906** De Ridder, A., *Collection de Clercq: catalogue. 4. Les marbres: les vases peints et les ivoires*, Leroux 1906.
- Riedl, 2003** Riedl, N., *Gottheiten und Kulte in der Dekapolis*, Berlin 2003.
- Robinson, 1936** Robinson, E., "Coins from Petra, etc", *NC* 16, 1936, pp. 288-291.
- Roche, 1987** Roche, M.J., "Le culte d'Isis et l'influence égyptienne à Pétra", *Syria* 64, 1987, pp. 217-222.
- Roche, 2012** Roche, M. J., "A Nabataean shrine to Isis in Wādī Abū 'Ullayqah, in the south-west of Petra", in: Nehmé, L., Wadson, L. (eds.), *the Nabataeans in Focus: Current Archaeological Research at Petra, Papers from the Special Session of the Seminar for Arabian Studies held on 29 July 2011*, Supplement to the Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies, 42, Oxford, 2012, pp. 55-71.
- Roeder, 1956** Roeder, G., *Ägyptische Bronzefiguren, Mitteilungen aus der Ägyptischen Sammlung* 4, Berlin 1956.
- Roehrig, et al., 2005** Roehrig, C. H., Dreyfus, R., and Keller, Cathleen, A., Hatshepsut, from queen to Pharaoh, Metropolitan Museum of art 2005.
- Romano, 1980** Romano, J. F., *The origin of the Bes-image*, BES 2, 1980.
- Rondot, 2010** Rondot, V., *Derniers Visages des dieux d'Égypte, Iconographies, panthéons et cultes dans le Fayoum hellénisé des II^e-III^e siècles*, Tom.I-III, Université Charles-de-Gaulle-Lille 3, UMR 8164 Halma-Ipel, 2010.
- Ronzevalle, 1927** Ronzevalle, S., "Déesses syriennes – 2. Déesse-Mère de Beyrouth", *MUSJ* 12, 1927, pp. 161-162.
- Rosenthal-Heginbottom, 1981** Rosenthal-Heginbottom, R., *Römische Bildlampen aus östlichen Werkstätten, Göttinger Orientforschungen, Studien zur spätantiken und frühchristlichen Kunst* 5, Wiesbaden 1981.
- Roztovtzeff, 1933** Roztovtzeff, M., "Kleinasiatische und syrische Götter im Römischen Ägypten", *Aegyptus* 13, 1933, pp.493-513.
- Rostovtzeff, Pascal, 1935** Rostovtzeff, M., Pascal, P., "La Syrie romaine", *Revue historique* 175, 1935, pp.1-40.
- Rostovtzeff, et al., 1936** Rostovtzeff, M., et al. *The Excavations at Dura-Europos: Preliminary Report of the sixth season of Work 1932– 1933*, New Haven 1936.

- Rostovtzeff, et al., 1939** Rostovtzeff, M., et al., *The excavations at Dura-Europos: Preliminary report of the seventh and eighth seasons 1933- 1934 and 1934- 1935*, New Haven 1939.
- Roussel, 1942** Roussel, P., "Décret des péliganes de Laodicée-sur-mer", *Syria* 23, 1942, pp. 21-32.
- Sadeh, 2006** Sadeh, N. S., "A Promise of Wisdom: The Classical Origins of the Odysseus and the Sirens Mosaic Floor from Scythopolis (Bet-Shean)", in: Verzar, C., Fishhof G., (eds.) *Pictorial Languages and Their Meanings—Liber Amicorum in Honor of Nurith Kenaan-Kedar*, Tel Aviv 2006, pp. 203-20.
- Salamé-Sarkis, 1986** Salamé-Sarkis, H., "Inscription au nom de Ptolémée IV Philopator trouvée dans le nord de la Biqa", *Berytus* 34, 1986, pp. 207-210.
- Sandri, 2013** Sandri, S., "Nilometers—or: Can You Measure Wealth?", in: Willems, H., Dahms, J.M., (eds.), *The Nile: Natural and Cultural Landscape in Egypt*, Bielefeld 2017, pp. 193-214.
- Sartre, 1989** Sartre, M., "La Syrie à l'époque hellénistique", in: Dentzer, J.M., Orthmann, W., (eds.), *Archéologie et Histoire de la Syrie, II, La Syrie de l'époque achéménide à l'avènement de l'Islam*, (Schriften zur vorderasiatischen Archäologie, 1) Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, Sarrebrück, 1989, pp. 31- 44.
- Sartre, 2001** Sartre, M., *D'Alexandre à Zénobie: histoire du Levant antique, IVe siècle avant J.-C., IIIe siècle après J.-C*, Paris 2001.
- Scandone Matthiae, 1981** Scandone Matthiae, G., "Il problema delle influenze egiziane sulla religione fenicia": AA.VV., *La religione fenicia. Matrici orientali e sviluppi occidentali. Atti del colloquio in Roma, 6 marzo 1979*, Roma 1981, pp. 61-80.
- Schipper, 1999** Schipper, B. U., *Israel und Ägypten in der Königszeit: die kulturellen Kontakte von Salomo bis zum Fall Jerusalems*, Vol. 170, Saint-Paul, 1999.
- Schloen, 1997** Schloen, D., Ashkelon, in: Meyers, E. M., (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, 1, Oxford University Press, New York 1997, pp. 220-223.
- Schmid, 2004** Schmid, S. G., The distribution of Nabataean pottery and the organisation of Nabataean long distance trade, *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 8, 2004, pp. 415-426.
- Schmid, 2007** Schmid, S. G., La distribution de la céramique nabatéenne et l'organisation du commerce nabatéen de longue distance, *Topoi. Suppl.* 8, 2007, pp. 61-91.
- Schmid, 2008** Schmid, S. G., The Hellenistic period and the Nabataeans, in: Adams, R. B. (ed.), *The Archaeology of Jordan*, London 2008, pp. 353-411.
- Schürer, 1979** Schürer, E., *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*

(175 BC- 135 AD), Vol. 2, New York 1979.

- Schulz, Seidel, 2009** Schulz, R, Seidel, M., *Egyptian Art*. The Walters Art Museum 2009.
- Schwentzel, 2005** Schwentzel, Ch. G., "Les thèmes du monnayage royal nabatéen et le modèle monarchique hellénistique", *Syria* 82, 2005, pp.149-166.
- Schwentzel, 2014** Schwentzel, Ch.G., "La reine Huldu et la coiffe isiaque. Isis et le pouvoir royal à Pétra (Ier s. av. J.-C.-Ier s. apr. J.-C.)", in: Bricault, L., Versluys, M.J., *Power, politics, and the cults of Isis, Proceedings of the Vth International conference of Isis studies, Boulogne-sur-Mer, October 13-15, 2011*, Boston 2014, pp. 147-162.
- Seif el-Din, 2001** Seif el-Din, M., "Bronze Hoards from Sais (Sa el-Haggar)", *BSAA* 46, Alexandria 2001, pp. 219-236.
- Seif El-Din, Nenna, 1994** Seif El-Din, M., Nenna, M. D., "La petite plastique en faïence du musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie", *BCH* 118, 2, 1994, pp. 291-320.
- Seigne, Rasson, Montlivault, 1987** Seigne, J., Rasson, A. M., Montlivault, E., "Fundobjekte aus Gerasa (Dscharasch) no. 273-319, in: Mittmann, S., *Der Königsweg: 9000 Jahre Kunst und Kultur in Jordanien und Palästina: Ausstellung, Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum für Völkerkunde*, 3. Oktober 1987-27. März 1988; Schallaburg, Niederösterreich, April-November 1988; München, Prähistor. Staatssammlung, Januar-März 1989, von Zabern, 1987, pp. 272-286.
- Seigne, 1997** Seigne, J., "De la grotte au périptère. Le sanctuaire de Zeus à Jerash", *Topoi. Orient-Occident* 7, 1997, pp. 993-1004.
- Seyrig, 1955** Seyrig, H., "La quête d'Osiris", *Syria* 32, 1955, pp. 44-48.
- Shaick, 2012** Shaick, R. P., "Who is standing above the lions in Ascalon?", *INR* 7, 2012, pp. 127-146.
- Sharon, 2014** Sharon, I., "Levantine Chronology", in: Killbrew, A.E., Steiner, M., (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant c. 8000-332 BCE*, Oxford 2014, pp. 83-112.
- Sharpe, 2014** Sharpe, H., "Bronze Statuettes from the Athenian Agora: Evidence for Domestic Cults in Roman Greece", *Hesperia* 83, 2014, pp.143-187.
- Sherkova, 2004** Sherkova, T. A., "Egypt and the Great Silk Road", *Bar International Series*, 2004, pp. 89-92.
- Shiple, 2000** Shipley, G., *The Greek World after Alexander: 323-30 BC*, London 2000.
- Sima, 2001** Sima, A., "Isis und Horus in Arabien?", *Mediterranean Language Review* 13, 2001, pp. 161-174.
- Smith, 1855** Smith, W., *A History of Greece from the Earliest Times to the Roman Conquest*, Boston 1855.
- Smith, 1894** Smith, G. A., *The historical geography of the holy land: especially in*

- relation to the history of Israel and of the early church*, New York 1894.
- Smith, 1992** Smith, R. H., "Some Pre-Christian Religions at Pella of the Decapolis", *ARAM* 4, 1992, pp.197-214.
- Solin, 2001** Solin, H., "Analecta epigraphica CXCII–CXCVIII", *Arctos* 35, 2001, pp.189-241.
- Solmsen, 1979** Solmsen, F., *Isis among the Greeks and Romans*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- Sosin, 2005** Sosin, J. D., "Unwelcome dedications: Public law and private religion in Hellenistic Laodicea by the sea", *CQ* 55, 2005, pp. 130-139.
- Sourdel, 1952** Sourdel, D., *Les cultes du Hauran à l'époque romaine*, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 53, 1952.
- Soyez, 1977** Soyez, B., *Byblos et la fête des Adonies*, EPRO 60, Leiden 1977.
- Sperber, 1976** Sperber, D., "Objects of Trade between Palestine and Egypt in Roman Times", *JESHO* 19, 1976, pp.113-147.
- Stager, Schloen, 2008** Stager, L. E., Schloen, J. D., "Introduction: Ashkelon and its inhabitants", in: Stager, L.E., Schloen, J.D, Master, D. M., s.), *Final reports of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon, Ashkelon I Introduction and overview:(1985-2006)*, Eisenbrauns 2008, pp. 3-10.
- Stambaugh, 1972** Stambaugh, J., *Sarapis under the early Ptolemies*, EPRO 25, Leiden1972.
- Stern, 1975** Stern, H., "Le cycle illustré des mois trouvé à Ostie", *JS*, 1975, pp.121–129.
- Stern, 2001** Stern, E., *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible II, the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian periods (732-332 BC)*, London 2001.
- Stewart, 2003** Stewart, A., The Khazneh, in: Markoe, G., (ed.), *Petra Rediscovered: Lost City of the Nabataeans*, London 2003, pp.193-198.
- Stieglitz, 1996** Stieglitz, R. R., "Stratonos Pyrgos-Migdal Sar-Sebastos: History and Archaeology", in: Raban, A., Holum, K. G., (eds.), *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective after Two Millennia*, Leiden 1996, pp. 593-608.
- Stucky, 1988** Stucky, R., "Schweizer Ausgrabungen in Ez Zantur, Petra. Vorbericht der Kampagne 1988", *ADAJ* 34, 1990, pp. 249-283.
- Stucky, 1992** Stucky, R., "Swiss-Liechtenstein excavations at ez-Zantur in Petra 1991, the third campaign", *ADAJ* 36, 1992, pp.175-192.
- Stucky, et al., 1991** Stucky, R., et al., "Swiss-Liechtenstein Excavations at ez-Zantur in Petra 1989: The Second Campaign" *ADAJ* 35, 1991, pp.251-274.
- Stucky, et al., 1994** Stucky, R., et al., "Swiss-Liechtenstein Excavations at Ez-Zantur in Petra 1993. The Fifth Campaign", *ADAJ* 38, 1994, pp. 271-292.

- Stucky, et al., 1995** Stucky, R., et al., "Swiss-Liechtenstein excavations at az-Zantur in Petra 1994: the sixth campaign", *ADAJ* 39, 1995, pp. 297-315.
- Suriano, 2014** Suriano, M., "Historical geography of the ancient Levant", in: Killbrew, A.E., Steiner, M., (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Levant c. 8000-332 BCE*, Oxford 2014, pp. 9-23.
- Swan Hall, 1977** Swan Hall, E., "Harpocrates and other child deities in ancient Egyptian sculpture", *JARCE* 14, 1977, pp. 55-58.
- Swetnam-Burland, 2015** Swetnam-Burland, M., *Egypt in Italy: Visions of Egypt in Roman Imperial Culture*, Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Takács, 2000** Takács, S. A., "Pagan cults at Antioch", in: Kondoleon, Ch., (ed.), *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City*, Princeton-Worcester 2000, pp. 198-216.
- Takács, 2008** Takács, S. A., "Initiations and mysteries in Apuleius' metamorphoses", *Electronic Antiquity* 12, 2008, pp. 73-87.
- Tallet, Zivie-Coche, 2012** Tallet, G., Zivie-Coche, Ch., "Imported cults", in: Riggs, Ch., (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Egypt*, Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Tallet, 2011** Tallet, G., "Zeus Hélios Megas Sarapis, un dieu égyptien pour les Romains", in: Belayche, N., Dubois J.-D. (eds.), *L'oiseau et le poisson, Cohabitations religieuses dans les mondes grec et romain*, Paris 2011, pp. 227-261.
- Tallet, 2020** Tallet, G., *La splendeur des dieux: Quatre études iconographiques sur l'hellénisme égyptien*, 2 vols., Leiden 2020.
- Tarn, 1926** Tarn, W. W., "The First Syrian War", *JHS* 46, 1926, pp. 155-162.
- Teixidor, 1968** Teixidor, J., "Bulletin d'épigraphie sémitique (1968)", *Syria* 45, 1968, pp. 353-389.
- Teixidor, 1979** Teixidor, J., *the Pantheon of Palmyra*, EPRO 79, Leiden 1979.
- Thompson, 1973** Thompson, D., *Ptolemaic Oinochoai and Portraits in Faience: Aspects of the Ruler-Cult*, Oxford University Press, 1973.
- Thompson, 1988** Thompson, D., *Memphis under the Ptolemies*, Princeton, 1988.
- Toll, 1994** Toll, Ch., Two Nabataean Ostraca from Egypt, *BIFAO* 94, 1994, pp. 381-382.
- Török, 1995** Török, L., *Hellenistic and Roman terracottas from Egypt*, Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider 1995.
- Török, 2005** Török, L., *Transfigurations of Hellenism: aspects of late antique art in Egypt AD 250-700*, Boston 2005.
- Toynbee, 1967** Toynbee, J.M.C., *The Hadrianic School: A Chapter in the History of Greek Art*, Rome 1967.
- Tracy, 1994** Tracy, S. V., IG II2 1195 and Agathe Tyche in Attica, *Hesperia* 63, 1994, pp. 241- 244.
- Tran Tam Tinh,** Tran Tam Tinh, V., *Isis Lactans, Corpus des monuments gréco-romains*

- 1973** *d'Isis allaitant Harpocrate*, EPRO 37, Leiden 1973.
- Tran Tam Tinh, 1983** Tran Tam Tinh, V., *Sérapis debout, Corpus de monuments de Sérapis debout et étude iconographique*, Leiden 1983.
- Tran Tam Tinh, Jentel, 1993** Tran Tam Tinh, V., Jentel, M., *Corpus des lampes à sujets isiaques du Musée gréco-romain d'Alexandrie*, Éditions Hier pour Aujourd'hui, 1993.
- Turnheim, 2002** Turnheim, Y., "Nilotic Motifs and the exotic in Roman and early Byzantine erez Israel", *Assaph* 7, 2002, pp. 17-40.
- Tuttle, 2009** Tuttle, Ch., *The Nabataean coroplastic arts: A synthetic approach for studying terracotta figurines, plaques, vessels, and other clay objects*, PhD diss., Brown University, 2009.
- Vaelske, 2005/2006** Vaelske, V., "Drei Bronzestatuetten aus Petra", *Boreas* 28/29, 2005/2006, pp. 133-140.
- Vaelske, 2011** Vaelske, V., *Isis im Osten: Zeugnisse für die Verehrung der ägyptischen Gottheiten im Vorderen Orient in hellenistischer und römischer Zeit*, Diss., Berlin 2011.
- Vaelske, 2012** Vaelske, V., "Ägyptische Götter in Petra", in: Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig, (eds.), *Petra—Wunder in der Wüste. Auf den Spuren von J.L. Burckhardt alias Scheich Ibrahim*, Begleitbuch zur Ausstellung, Basel 2012, pp. 63-65.
- Vaelske, 2013** Vaelske, V., "Isis in Petra, chronological and topographical aspects", in: Mouton, M., Schmid, S. G., (eds), *Men on the rocks: the formation of Nabataean Petra. Proceedings of a conference held in Berlin, 2–4 December 2011*, 2013, pp. 351-361.
- Vandersleyen, 2004** Vandersleyen, C., "Plutarque et Byblos, De Iside et Osiride 15-16", *Discussions in Egyptology* 60, 2004, pp. 97-112.
- Van Oppen de Ruiter, 2007** Van Oppen de Ruiter, B. F., *The Religious Identification of Ptolemaic Queens with Aphrodite, Demeter, Hathor and Isis*, PhD. Thesis, the City University of New York 2007.
- Van Oppen de Ruiter, 2020** Van Oppen de Ruiter, B. F., "Lovely Ugly Bes! Animalistic Aspects in Ancient Egyptian Popular Religion", *Arts* 9, 2020, pp. 1-27.
- Vasilyeva, Svetlana, 2020** Vasilyeva, O., Svetlana, M., "A Rare Type of Isis Dolente Figurine from the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow", *JEA* 106, 2020, pp.199-204.
- Venit, 2002** Venit, M. S., *Monumental tombs of ancient Alexandria: the theater of the dead*, Cambridge 2002.
- Vermaseren, 1956** Vermaseren, M., *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae*, La Haye 1956.
- Versluys, 2002** Versluys, M. J., *Aegyptiaca Romana. Nilotic Scenes and the Roman Views of Egypt*, RGRW 144, Leiden 2002.

- Veymiers, 2009** Veymiers, R., *Ἐλεως τῶ φοροῦντι. Sérapis sur les gemmes et les bijoux antiques*, Académie Royale de Belgique, Bruxelles 2009.
- Veymiers, 2011** Veymiers, R., "Les cultes isiaques à Argos. Du mythe à l'archéologie", in: Bricault, L., Veymiers, R., (ed.), *Bibliotheca Isiaca II*, Ausonius, Bordeaux, 2011, pp.111-129.
- Veymier, 2014** Veymiers, R., "Sarapis et Neôtera élus parmi les dieux", *RA1*, 2014, pp. 37-56.
- Vidman, SIRIS** Vidman, L., *Sylloge inscriptionum religionis Isiacae et Sarapiacae*, Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 28, Berlin 1969.
- Vincent, 1926** Vincent, A., *Jérusalem II*, 4, 1926.
- Virolleaud, 1924** Virolleaud, Ch., "Les Travaux archéologiques en Syrie en 1922-23", *Syria* 5, 1924, pp. 44-52.
- Vittmann, 2003** Vittmann, G., *Ägypten und die Fremden im ersten vorchristlichen Jahrtausend*, *Kulturgeschichte der antiken Welt* 97, Mainz 2003.
- Volokhine, 1995** Volokhine, Y., "Quelques remarques sur la déesse égyptienne Hathor et ses rapports avec l'étranger", in: Wardenburg, J., (ed.), *Scholarly Approaches to Religion, Interreligious Perceptions and Islam*, *Studia Religiosa Helvetica Jahrbuch* 1, 1995, pp. 209-223.
- Volokhine, 2010** Volokhine, Y., "Quelques aspects de Bès dans les temples égyptiens de l'époque gréco-romaine, in: Bricault, L., Versluys, M. J., (eds.), *Isis on the Nile, Egyptian Gods in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, Proceedings of the IVth International Conference of Isis Studies, Liège, November 27-29, 2008*, *RGRW* 171, Boston 2010, pp. 233-255
- Wace, Megaw, Skeat, 1959** Wace, A. J., Megaw, A. H., Skeat, T.C., *Hermopolis Magna, Ashmunein: the Ptolemaic sanctuary and the Basilica*, Alexandria University Press 1959.
- Wagner, 1980** Wagner, P., *Der ägyptische Einfluss auf die phönizische Architektur*, Bonn 1980.
- Wallensten, 2014** Wallensten, J., "Dedications to Double Deities, Syncretism or simply syntax?", *Kernos, Revue internationale et pluridisciplinaire de religion grecque antique* 27, 2014, pp. 159-176.
- Waliszewski et al., 2006** Waliszewski, T. et al., "Jiyeh (Porphyreon) – Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine Settlement on the Southern Coast of Lebanon. Preliminary Report on the 1997 and 2003-2005 Seasons", *BAAL* 10, 2006, pp. 5-84.
- Ward, 1991** Ward, W. A., "Early contacts between Egypt, Canaan, and Sinai: remarks on the paper by Amnon Ben-Tor", *BASOR* 281, 1991, pp. 11-26.
- Weber, 1911** Weber, W., *Drei Untersuchungen zur ägyptisch-griechischen Religion: Habilitationsschrift zur Erlangung der venia legendi der hohen Philosophischen Fakultät der Ruprecht-Karls-Universität in Heidelberg. J. Hörning*, Heidelberg 1911.

- Weber, 1914** Weber, W., *Die ägyptisch-griechischen Terrakotten*, Berlin 1914.
- Weber, 1991** Weber, T., "Gadara of the Decapolis – Preliminary Report on the 1990 Season at Umm Qeis", *ADAJ* 35, 1991, pp. 223- 235.
- Weber, 1993** Weber, Th., *Pella Decapolitana: Studien zur Geschichte, Architektur und bildenden Kunst einer hellenisierten Stadt des nördlichen Ostjordanlandes*, ADPV 18, Harrassowitz 1993.
- Weber, Wenning, 1997** Weber, Th., Wenning, R., *Petra. Antike Felsstadt zwischen arabischer Tradition und griechischer Norm*, Mainz 1997.
- Weber, 2002** Weber, Th. M., *Gadara – Umm Qes I, Gadara Decapolitana: Untersuchungen zur Topographie, Geschichte, Architektur und der Bildenden Kunst einer "Polis Hellenis" im Ostjordanland*, Wiesbaden 2002.
- Weber, 2007** Weber, Th. M., "La sculpture", in: Dentzer-Feydy, J., Vallerin, M., et al., (eds.), *Bosra: Aux portes de l'Arabie*, Beirut 2007, pp. 44-52.
- Weber, 2009** Weber, Th. S., "Eine zweifarbige Statue des Sarapis aus Bosra", *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis, Folia Archaeologica* 26, 2009, pp. 121-131.
- Weippert, 1999** Weippert, M., "Eine phönizische Inschrift aus Galiläa", *ZDPV* 115, 1999, pp. 191-200.
- Weiss, Talgam, 2002** Weiss, Z., Talgam, R., "The Nile Festival Building and its Mosaics: Mythological representations in the early Byzantine Sepphoris", in: Humphrey, J. H., (ed.), *The Roman and Byzantine near East 3, JRA Suppl. 49*, Ann Arbor 2002, pp. 55-88.
- Weiss, 2008** Weiss, Z., "The mosaics of the Nile Festival Building at Sepphoris and the legacy of the Antiochene tradition", in: Kogman-Appel, K., Meyer, M., (eds.), *Between Judaism and Christianity, Art Historical Essays in honor of Elisheva (Elisabeth) Revel-Neher*, Leiden 2008, pp. 7-23.
- Wenning, 1987** Wenning, R., *Die Nabatäer. Denkmäler und Geschichte: Eine Bestandsaufnahme des archäologischen Befundes*, NTOA 3, 1987.
- Wenning, 1992** Wenning, R., "Eine Darstellung des Caracalla in Aschkelon?", in: Brehm, O., Klie, S., (eds.), *Mousikos Aner, Festschrift für Max Wegner zum 90. Geburtstag. Antiquitas: Reihe 3/32*, Bonn 1992, pp.499- 510.
- Wenning, 1994** Wenning, R., "Die Dekapolis und die Nabatäer", *ZDPV* 110, 1994, pp. 1-35.
- Wenning, 2001** Wenning, R., "The betyls of Petra", *BASOR* 324, 2001, pp.79-95
- Wenning, 2009** Wenning, R., "The Message of the Khirbat at-Tannūr Reliefs", *SHAJ* 10, 2009, pp. 577-584.
- Wenning, 2013** Wenning, R., "Towards "Early Petra": an overview of the early history of the Nabataeans in its context", in: Mouton, M., Schmid, S. G., (eds), *Men on the rocks: the formation of Nabataean Petra. Proceedings of a conference held in Berlin, 2–4 December 2011*, 2013, pp. 7-22.

- Welles, 1938** Welles, C.B., The Inscriptions, in: Kraeling, C H., (ed.), *Gerasa. City of the Decapolis*, New Haven 1938, pp. 355-494.
- Weksler-Bdolah, 2020** Weksler-Bdolah, Sh., *Aelia Capitolina–Jerusalem in the Roman period: in light of archaeological research*, Brill, 2020.
- Whitehorne, 1994** Whitehorne, J., *Cleopatra*, Routledge, London 1994.
- Wiedemann, 1897** Wiedemann, K.A., *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, London 1897.
- Wilburn, 2013** Wilburn, A., "A Wall Painting at Karanis used for Architectural Protection, the Curious Case of Harpocrates and Toutou in Granary C65", in: Arlt, C., Stadler, M., (eds.), *Das Fayyum in Hellenismus und Kaiserzeit, Fallstudien Zu Multikulturellem Leben in der Antike*, Wiesbaden 2013, pp.87-193.
- Wild, 1981** Wild, R., *Water in the cultic worship of Isis and Serapis*, EPRO 87, Leiden 1981.
- Will, 1957** Will, E., "Marchands et chefs de caravanes à Palmyre", *Syria* 34, 1957, pp. 262-277.
- Will, 1979** Will, É., *Histoire politique du monde hellénistique (323-30 av. J.-C.)*, vol. I, 2nd ed., Nancy 1979.
- Will, 1983** Will, E., "La coupe de Césarée de Palestine au Musée du Louvre." *MontPiot* 65, 1983, pp. 1-24.
- Will, 1984** Will, É., The succession to Alexander, in: Walank, F.W., (ed.), *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. VII, Part 1, The Hellenistic world, 1984, pp. 23-61.
- Williams, 1979** Williams, E. R., "A Bronze Statuette of Isis-Aphrodite", *JARCE* 16, 1979, pp. 93-101.
- Williams, 1985** Williams, E. R., "Isis Pelagia and a Roman Marble Matrix from the Athenian Agora", *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 54, 1985, pp. 109-119.
- Williams-Reed, 2018** Williams-Reed, E. K. L., *Water and Religious Life in the Roman Near East. Gods, Spaces and Patterns of Worship*, Doctoral dissertation, Durham University, 2018.
- Witt, 1997** Witt, R. E., *Isis in the ancient world*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1997.
- Wright, 2010** Wright, N. L., *Religion in Seleukid Syria: gods at the crossroads (301-64 BC)*, PhD thesis, Macquarie University, 2010.
- Wright, Pardee, 1988** Wright, M., Pardee, D., "Literary Sources for the History of Palestine and Syria: Contacts between Egypt and Syro-Palestine during the Old Kingdom", *The Biblical Archaeologist* 51, 1988, pp. 143-161.
- Yashin, 2007** Yashin, Ch., *From Ascalon to Raphia: City-coins of the southern*

- Palestinian coast*, Art Plus, 2007.
- Zayadine, 1982** Zayadine, F., "Recent excavations at Petra 1979-81", *ADAJ* 26, 1982, pp.365-393.
- Zayadine, 1990** Zayadine, F., "The pantheon of the Nabataean inscriptions in Egypt and the Sinai", *Aram* 2, 1990, pp. 151-174.
- Zayadine, 1991** Zayadine, F., "L'iconographie d'Isis à Pétra", *MEFRA* 103, 1991, pp. 283-306.
- Zayadine, 1991b** Zayadine, F., "Sculpture in ancient Jordan", in: Bienkowski, P., (ed.), *Treasures from an ancient land, The Art of Jordan*, Liverpool 1991, pp. 31-61.
- Zayadine, 1999** Zayadine, F., "Pétra, le Sîq: Une voie processionnelle", *Les Dossiers d'archéologie* 244, 1999, pp. 46-53.
- Zayadine, 2003** Zayadine, F., "The Nabataean gods and their sanctuaries", in: Markoe, G., (ed.), *Petra Rediscovered: Lost City of the Nabataeans*, London 2003, pp. 57-64.
- Zernecke, 2013** Zernecke, A., "The Lady of the Titles: The Lady of Byblos and the Search for her "True Name", *Die Welt des Orients* 43, 2013, pp. 226-242.
- Zori, 1966** Zori, N., "The House of Kyrios Leontis at Beth Shean", *IEJ* 16, 1966, pp. 123-134.
- Zouhdi, 1974** Zouhdi, B., "Aspect des lampes antiques au Musée de Damas", *Les Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes* 24, 1974, pp. 161-188.
- Zouhdi, 1976** Zouhdi, B., *Musée national de Damas, Département des Antiquités syriennes aux époques grecque, romaine et byzantine*, 1976.