

ISIS IN A GLOBAL EMPIRE

In *Isis in a Global Empire*, Lindsey Mazurek explores the growing popularity of Egyptian gods and its impact on Greek identity in the Roman Empire. Bringing together archaeological, art historical, and textual evidence, she demonstrates how the diverse devotees of gods such as Isis and Sarapis considered Greek ethnicity in ways that differed significantly from those of the Greek male elites whose opinions have long shaped our understanding of Roman Greece. These ideas were expressed in various ways – sculptures of Egyptian deities rendered in a Greek style, hymns to Isis that grounded her in Greek geography and mythology, funerary portraits that depicted devotees dressed as Isis, and sanctuaries that used natural and artistic features to evoke stereotypes of the Nile. Mazurek's volume offers a fresh, material history of ancient globalization, one that highlights the role that religion played in the self-identification of provincial Romans and their place in the Mediterranean world.

LINDSEY A. MAZUREK is Assistant Professor of Classical Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington and co-editor of *Across the Corrupting Sea: Post-Braudelian Approaches to the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean*. Her scholarship has been supported by the Loeb Classical Library Foundation, the Archaeological Institute of America, the Hardt Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

ISIS IN A GLOBAL EMPIRE

GREEK IDENTITY THROUGH EGYPTIAN RELIGION IN ROMAN GREECE

LINDSEY A. MAZUREK

Indiana University, Bloomington



Cambridge University Press & Assessment
 978-1-009-01690-2 — Isis in a Global Empire
 Greek Identity through Egyptian Religion in Roman Greece
 Lindsey A. Mazurek
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
 103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009016902

DOI: 10.1017/9781009032209

© Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2022

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2022

First paperback edition 2024

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-316-51701-7 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-009-01690-2 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

.....
 Publication of this book has been aided by a grant from the von Bothmer Publication Fund of the Archaeological Institute of America.



CONTENTS

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	page vii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
1 EGYPTIAN RELIGION AND THE PROBLEM OF GREEKNESS	I
2 BUILDING GROUPNESS: ISIS' DEVOTEES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES	29
3 DETERRITORIALIZING THEOLOGY? BRINGING THE EGYPTIAN GODS TO GREECE	59
4 SELF-UNDERSTANDING: VISUALIZING ISIS IN STONE	88
5 SELF-FASHIONING: DRESSING THE DEVOTEES OF ISIS IN ATHENIAN PORTRAITS	120
6 SELF-LOCATION: ISIAC SANCTUARIES AND NILOTIC FICTIONS	145
7 CONCLUSION: GRAECIA CAPTA, AEGYPTA CAPTA	186
<i>Appendix: Catalogue of Sculpture Associated with the Thessaloniki Sarapeum</i>	195
<i>Notes</i>	201
<i>Bibliography</i>	245
<i>Index</i>	275
<i>Color plates can be found between pages 144 and 145</i>	

ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATES

- 1 Mosaic depicting Rome and the personifications of several provinces from the House of Africa in Thysdrus, second half of the 2nd century CE
- 2 Personification of Egypt from Plate 1
- 3 Calendar mosaic from Thysdrus depicting the month of November, 3rd century CE
- 4 Votive relief of Ignatia Herennia dedicated to Hermanubis, featuring relief footprints in two different sizes, late 2nd–early 3rd century CE
- 5 Nilotic wall painting from the Casa del Medico at Pompeii, 1st century CE
- 6 Group of sculptures depicting Isis, Kerberos, and Sarapis from the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Gortyna, 3rd century CE
- 7 Statue of Aphrodite of the Louvre–Naples type from the Thessaloniki Sarapeum, 2nd century CE
- 8 Head of Isis with corkscrew curls from Thessaloniki, Antonine period
- 9 Statuette of Harpokrates from the Thessaloniki Sarapeum, second half of the 2nd century CE
- 10 Interior of the Tomb of Iarhai in Palmyra, 2nd century CE
- 11 Wall painting of an Isiac priest making an offering to a statue of Harpokrates from the portico of Pompeii’s Iseum, mid–1st century CE
- 12 The Iseum at Dion, 1st century BCE–4th century CE
- 13 Section VI 6 A of the Nilotic panels of colored *sectile* glass from Kenchreai, 4th century CE
- 14 Replica of Isis and Osiris statues displayed in situ at the North Pylon of the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Marathon

FIGURES

- | | | |
|---|--|---------------|
| 1 | Relief from the Hadrianeum in Rome depicting the province of Egypt, later Antonine period | <i>page 2</i> |
| 2 | Statue of Isis in diagonally draped <i>diplox</i> costume, thought to be from Rome, Hadrianic period | 3 |

viii LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

3	Map of Greece	5
4	The Arch of Hadrian at Athens, dedicated 131–132 CE	11
5	Temple of Olympian Zeus at Athens, dedicated 131–132 CE	12
6	Portrait of a man in chiton and himation, Antonine period	24
7	Grave relief of Alexandra of Oe, wife of Ktetos, from Athens, mid-2nd century CE	30
8	Votive relief dedicated to Osiris μύστης, 2nd century BCE	43
9	Axiometric reconstruction drawing of the Iseum at Dion	46
10	Statue of Aphrodite Hypolympidia from her temple in Dion's Iseum, 150–100 BCE	48
11	Axiometric reconstruction drawing of the temple to Aphrodite Hypolimpidia in the Dion Iseum	49
12	Statue bases for Anthestia Maxima, daughter of Publius, Severan period	49
13	Plan of the Inopos Quarter and the Terrace of the Foreign Gods on Delos.	68
14	Excavation photograph of the central court, staircase, and ekklesiasterion of Sarapieion A, viewed from the southwest	83
15	Votive relief depicting two footprints, dedicated by several freedwomen (?) of Caecilia Polla, Roman period	84
16	Votive relief of Marcus Agellius found in the Thessaloniki Sarapeum and featuring an ear, early 1st century BCE	85
17	Statue of Sarapis <i>débout</i> from the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Gortyna, 3rd century CE	91
18	Statue of a seated Sarapis from the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Gortyna, 2nd century CE	92
19	Statue of a seated Sarapis from Sarapieion B on Delos, 2nd–1st century BCE	93
20	Statuette of Isis in the <i>Knotenpalla</i> costume, Roman period	95
21	Statuette of Isis in the <i>Knotenpalla</i> costume from Delos, 2nd–1st century BCE	97
22	Statue of Isis in the <i>diplox</i> costume from the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Gortyna, 3rd century CE	98
23	Statue of Isis Tyche from the northern shrine of Dion's Iseum, 2nd century CE	99
24	Terracotta statuette of Isis <i>lactans</i> from Herculaneum, 1st century CE	100
25	Reconstructed plan of the Thessaloniki Sarapeum	103
26	Statue of a female goddess, perhaps Artemis of the Ariccia type or Athena, from the Thessaloniki Sarapeum, 2nd century CE	105
27	Head of Sarapis, later 2nd century CE	107
28	Head of Sarapis found in the Vasiloglou plot near the Thessaloniki Sarapeum, 2nd century CE	108
29	Head of Isis from the Thessaloniki Sarapeum, 3rd century BCE	109
30	Detail of right side of Figure 29	111
31	Torso of a statuette of Athena Parthenos from the Thessaloniki Sarapeum, 2nd century CE	113
32	Black basalt statuette of a sphinx found in the Thessaloniki Sarapeum, late Ptolemaic period	118

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ix

33	Grave stele of Sosibia, daughter of Eubios, of the <i>dēme</i> of Kephisia, 160–170 CE	121
34	Funerary relief for Maqi, son of M’ani, from Palmyra, ca. 200 CE	123
35	Funerary bust for a woman from Palmyra, 3rd century CE	124
36	Funerary relief of Yarkhai, son of Ogga, and his female relative Balya, mid-2nd century CE	125
37	Tower tombs of Palmyra, 1st century BCE	128
38	Portrait mummy of an adolescent male in Greek clothing from Hawara, 100–120 CE	130
39	Grave stela of Musaios (male), Amaryllis (female, center), and an unnamed woman of Large Herculaneum type (right), Trajanic period	132
40	Grave stela of a couple from Athens (area of modern Pireaus and Salaminos Streets), late 2nd century CE	133
41	Votive relief depicting Isis <i>Dikaiosyne</i> , early 1st century BCE	136
42	Funerary relief of Kallo of Eupuridon and Synpheron of Miletus (right) from Athens, Flavian period	138
43	Portrait bust of a young boy with Isiac tonsure found in the House of Leda at Dion, 2nd century CE and recarved in the 3rd century CE to create the tonsure hairstyle	140
44	Portrait bust of C. Norbanus Sorex from the Pompeii Iseum, mid-1st century CE	141
45	Grave relief of Mousa, daughter of Dionysios, from Halai found in the Herodou Attikou shaft of the Athenian Metro excavations, ca. 150 CE	142
46	Statue of Osiris found at the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Marathon, third quarter of the 2nd century CE	154
47	Statue of Osiris from the North Pylon of the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Marathon, third quarter of the 2nd century CE	155
48	Statue of Isis from the North Pylon of the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Marathon, third quarter of the 2nd century CE	156
49	Plan of the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Marathon	157
50	Portrait bust of Polydeukion found in Room A of the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods’ East Court, ca. 160 CE	158
51	The South Pylon of the West Court, viewed from the south	159
52	The First Pylon of the temple complex at Philae in Egypt	160
53	View of central pyramidal feature of the West Court from the east	161
54	Statue of a sphinx from the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Marathon, third quarter of the 2nd century CE	162
55	Excavation photo showing the findspots of the sphinx, a statue of Isis tentatively associated with the East Pylon, and seventy oversized lamps in Room B	163
56	Statue of Isis <i>unica</i> , tentatively associated with the East Pylon of the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Marathon, third quarter of the 2nd century CE	164

57	Detail of Figure 56 showing the Egyptianizing crook implement held in the right hand	165
58	Statue of Isis-Demeter from the South Pylon of the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Marathon, third quarter of the 2nd century CE	167
59	Statue of Isis-Aphrodite from the West Pylon of the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods, third quarter of the 2nd century CE	168
60	Excavation photograph depicting the statue of Isis-Demeter tipped off of its base	169
61	Statue of Osiris from the South Pylon of the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods, third quarter of the 2nd century CE	171
62	Statue of Osiris-Antinoos from Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli, Hadrianic period	173
63	Statuette of Horus in falcon form from the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Marathon, third quarter of the 2nd century CE	174
64	Bust of Herodes Atticus, thought to be from Marathon, third quarter of the 2nd century CE	176
65	Bust of emperor Marcus Aurelius in cuirass, thought to be from Marathon, mid-2nd century CE	177
66	Water crypt in the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Gortyna	179
67	Central water feature within the Iseum at Dion	181
68	Sima with crocodile spouts from the Praetorium at Gortyna, 4th century CE	182

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

At the end of a long project, there is much pleasure in pausing to remember all of the people and institutions that helped me along the way. Initial research was funded by a Julian Price Fellowship from Duke University's Graduate School and a Postdoctoral Fellowship in Humanities and Social Sciences in the departments of Classics and History at the Memorial University of Newfoundland. The final stages of field research were supported by funding from fellowships from the Loeb Classical Library Foundation and the College of Arts and Sciences and Department of History at the University of Oregon. A residential fellowship from the Oregon Humanities Center allowed me to finalize the initial manuscript. I thank all of them and the many institutions and photographers who allowed me to publish the images that appear in this book.

This project began as a doctoral dissertation in the Department of Art, Art History and Visual Studies at Duke University. The wonderful faculty, staff, and graduate students there challenged and inspired me to think about the ancient world in new ways, and enthusiastically supported every new venture. I am particularly grateful to Sara Galletti, Annabel Wharton, and Caroline Bruzelius for their teaching, advice, and support. The classics community at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill always welcomed me, and I am particularly fortunate to have learned from Monika Trümper-Ritter, Lidewijde de Jong, Mary Sturgeon, Jennifer Gates-Foster, and Richard Talbert.

Throughout my academic career, the staff at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, particularly Ioanna Damanaki, made my research in Greece possible. Thanks to those who facilitated my access to sculptures and sites discussed here, particularly the museum and site staff at the Portland Museum of Art, Getty Villa, National Archaeological Museum, National Epigraphic Museum, and Agora Museum in Athens, the Ephorate of Antiquities of the City of Athens, and the archaeological museums at Delos, Dion, Gortyna, Heraklion, Isthmia, Marathon, Messene, and Thessaloniki. The School of Religion at the University of Southern California hosted me as a visiting scholar in spring 2017, and Ken Lapatin kindly allowed me to use the library at the Getty Villa and research some of the villa's objects during that period, which sparked the ideas that became Chapter 5.

My colleagues at Indiana University, especially Cynthia Bannon, Bill Beck, Nick Blackwell, Kenny Draper, Julie Mebane, and our indomitable chair Matt Christ, have supported my work in countless ways and seen me through to the bitter end of this project. I am grateful for their advice and friendship. I would also like to thank all of my former colleagues at the University of Oregon, particularly chair Brett Rushforth, who went to great lengths to support me and my project. Much of the book was drafted and revised in the University of Oregon's Center on Diversity and Community's and Indiana University's weekly faculty writing circles, and I owe much to my fellow writers and organizers Lara Bovilsky, Laura Plummer, and Michelle Moyd for keeping me motivated and focused as I wrote.

As the project developed, first as a dissertation and then as a book, many people provided generous guidance. Marica Cassis helped me get my academic career off the ground and encouraged me to pursue this project as a book. I owe a tremendous debt to Kate Topper, who has mentored me for the past few years and, along with Ellen Perry and Lowell Bowditch, workshopped my manuscript in August 2019 at the University of Oregon, funded by the Vice-Provost of Equity and Inclusion. They were an ideal set of readers, and this book is much better because of their careful thinking and critiques. Elizabeth Baltes, Steve Beda, Sean Burrus, Valentino Gasparrini, Anneliese Heinz, Patricia Eunji Kim, Eva Mol, Amanda Lazarus, Paraskevi Martzavou, and Stephanie Pearson all read and commented on chapter drafts, and the book is much better for their advice. Others, including Tolly Boatwright, Jacquelyn Clements, Iphigenia Dekoulakou, Christopher Dickenson, Pelly Fotiadi, Bethany Hucks, Rebecca Futo-Kennedy, Anna Kouremenos, Emilie Luse, Ian Moyer, Kathryn McBride, Ian Moyer, Giorgos Spyropoulos, Estelle Strazdins, Molly Swetnam-Burland, Kris Trego, Richard Veymiers, Caroline Vout, and Elizabeth Wolfram-Thill shared their time, expertise, images, and unpublished work with me. Lecture audiences at Brown University, Florida State University, and DEREЕ-The American College of Greece, as well as audiences at the Mediterranean Seminar, Arachne Conference, the Greek Art in Context Conference, TRAC 2018, and many meetings of the Archaeological Institute of America have provided invaluable feedback on my research. Ann-Marie Yasin provided crucial advice when I was at an intellectual crossroads, and I am grateful for the direction she gave me and this project.

Thanks also to my wonderful editor, Beatrice Rehl, and the editorial and production staff at Cambridge University Press. I was especially fortunate to have reviewers (especially Caitlín Barrett, who revealed herself as Reviewer 1) who provided generous, thorough, thought-provoking, and inspiring comments. I am also grateful to the Archaeological Institute of America's Von Bothmer Publication Fund, which supported the book's illustration program.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

xiii

Chapter 5 is a revised and expanded version of an article published in *Hesperia*, and Chapter 6 has its origins in an article published in the *American Journal of Archaeology*, and I thank editors Jane Carter and Jennifer Sacher for allowing me to reprint parts of those works.

My friends and family have provided tremendous support and love throughout. Thank you to Clara Bosak-Schroeder, Carolyn Fish, Diana Garvin, Devin Grammon, Kate Petcosky-Kulkarni, Kathryn Langenfeld, Suzanne Lye, Lauren Pinchin, and Amy Pistone for always offering your help and making me laugh. My parents, Ralph and Stacey Mazurek, and godparents, Tom and Kim Fogarty, have listened to me talk about Isis and the Roman Empire more times than any person should ever have to suffer. Last but not least, my wonderful husband, Noah Eber-Schmid, read many drafts, provided moral support through revisions, and talked me through the depths of critical theory over many long walks with our dogs. His love, support, and enthusiasm have seen me through many of the most difficult parts of this project, and I am so grateful to share my life with him.

My final and greatest thanks go to Cavan Concannon and Sheila Dillon, without whom this book would have never been finished. Cavan has been a research partner, friend, and mentor to me for many years, and I look forward to many more years of working together to untangle the Mediterranean's rhizomes. Sheila was my dissertation adviser at Duke, and through the years has given me her advice, her thorough and thoughtful editing, her support, her wisdom, and, always, the truth. She has made me a better thinker, a better writer, a better scholar, and a better mentor. I am lucky to have worked with her and profoundly grateful for all she has done to support me.

This book is dedicated to all of the women who have gotten me here.