Globalizing the Sculptural Landscapes of the Sarapis and Isis Cults in Hellenistic and Roman Greece

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Art, Art History & Visual Studies in the Graduate School of Duke University

2016
ABSTRACT

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Abstract

“Globalizing the Sculptural Landscape of Isis and Sarapis Cults in Roman Greece,” asks questions of cross-cultural exchange and viewership of sculptural assemblages set up in sanctuaries to the Egyptian gods. Focusing on cognitive dissonance, cultural imagining, and manipulations of time and space, I theorize ancient globalization as a set of loosely related processes that shifted a community's connections with place. My case studies range from the 3rd century BCE to the 2nd century CE, including sanctuaries at Rhodes, Thessaloniki, Dion, Marathon, Gortyna, and Delos. At these sites, devotees combined mainstream Greco-Roman sculptures, Egyptian imports, and locally produced imitations of Egyptian artifacts. In the last case, local sculptors represented Egyptian subjects with Greco-Roman naturalistic styles, creating an exoticized visual ideal that had both local and global resonance. My dissertation argues that the sculptural assemblages set up in Egyptian sanctuaries allowed each community to construct complex narratives about the nature of the Egyptian gods. Further, these images participated in a form of globalization that motivated local communities to adopt foreign gods and reinterpret them to suit local needs.

I begin my dissertation by examining how Isis and Sarapis were represented in Greece. My first chapter focuses on single statues of Egyptian gods, describing their iconographies and stylistic tendencies through examples from Corinth and Gortyna. By
comparing Greek examples with images of Sarapis, Isis, and Harpokrates from around the Mediterranean, I demonstrate that Greek communities relied on globally available visual tropes rather than creating site or region-specific interpretations. In the next section, I examine what other sources viewers drew upon to inform their experiences of Egyptian sculpture. In Chapter 3, I survey the textual evidence for Isiac cult practice in Greece as a way to reconstruct devotees’ expectations of sculptures in sanctuary contexts. At the core of this analysis are Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* and Plutarch’s *De Iside et Osiride*, which offer a Greek perspective on the cult’s theology. These literary works rely on a tradition of aretalogical inscriptions—long hymns produced from roughly the late 4th century B.C.E. into the 4th century C.E. that describe the expansive syncretistic powers of Isis, Sarapis, and Harpokrates. This chapter argues that the textual evidence suggests that devotees may have expected their images to be especially miraculous and likely to intervene on their behalf, particularly when involved in ritual activity inside the sanctuary.

In the final two chapters, I consider sculptural programs and ritual activity in concert with sanctuary architecture. My fourth chapter focuses on sanctuaries where large amounts of sculpture were found in underground water crypts: Thessaloniki and Rhodes. These groups of statues can be connected to a particular sanctuary space, but their precise display contexts are not known. By reading these images together, I argue that local communities used these globally available images to construct new
interpretations of these gods, ones that explored the complex intersections of Egyptian,
Greek, and Roman identities in a globalized Mediterranean. My final chapter explores
the Egyptian sanctuary at Marathon, a site where exceptional preservation allows us to
study how viewers would have experienced images in architectural space. Using the
Isiac visuality established in Chapter 3, I reconstruct the viewer’s experience, arguing
that the patron, Herodes Atticus, intended his viewer to inform his experience with the
complex theology of Middle Platonism and prevailing elite attitudes about Roman
imperialism.

Throughout my dissertation, I diverge from traditional approaches to culture
change that center on the concepts of Romanization and identity. In order to access local
experiences of globalization, I examine viewership on a micro-scale. I argue that viewers
brought their concerns about culture change into dialogue with elements of cult, social
status, art, and text to create new interpretations of Roman sculpture sensitive to the
challenges of a highly connected Mediterranean world. In turn, these transcultural
perspectives motivated Isiac devotees to create assemblages that combined elements
from multiple cultures. These expansive attitudes also inspired Isiac devotees to
commission exoticized images that brought together disparate cultures and styles in an
eclectic manner that mirrored the haphazard way that travel brought change to the
Mediterranean world. My dissertation thus offers a more theoretically rigorous way of
modeling culture change in antiquity that recognizes local communities’ agency in
producing their cultural landscapes, reconciling some of the problems of scale that have plagued earlier approaches to provincial Roman art.

These case studies demonstrate that cultural anxieties played a key role in how viewers experienced artistic imagery in the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean. This dissertation thus offers a new component in our understanding of ancient visuality, and, in turn, a better way to analyze how local communities dealt with the rise of connectivity and globalization.
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Ralph and Stacey Mazurek, for their tireless support and enthusiastic love.
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1. Introduction: Egyptian Cults in the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean

1.1 Encounters: Apuleius, The Cult Image, and the Problem of Isis and Sarapis

"For, by the order of the priest, I climbed a wooden pulpit which stood in the middle of the temple before the image of the Goddess. I wore a vestment of linen embroidered with a flower pattern; a costly cope hung down from my shoulders to my ankles; and from whatever angle you inspected me you saw interesting new animal-shapes among the decorations—here Indian serpents, there Hyperborean griffins which the Antipodes incubate like birds. This latter garment was what the priests commonly call an Olympic Stole. In my right hand I held a lighted torch, and a comely chaplet was wound round my head, from which the palm-tree leaves jetted like rays of the sun. Thus decorated like the sun and draped like a statue, the curtains being whisked away, I was suddenly revealed to the gaze of the multitude."—Apuleius, Met. XI 24, trans. J. Lindsay.

In this evocative passage from Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, our protagonist, Lucius, recently returned to human form, continues his initiation into the cult of Isis. Upon the priest's orders, Lucius stands in front of the cult image on a wooden dais, dresses in unusual clothing decorated with symbols of natural fertility, and holds a lit torch. In the guise of the goddess, he is then revealed dramatically to an audience of worshippers.

Here, Lucius *stands in* for the cult image, becoming one with the goddess and her statue within the sanctuary. If we consider this moment in the novel's broader context, we can see how Lucius' final transfiguration provides an excellent case study of the

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¹ I have chosen to rely on Lindsay's more poetic translation of the Latin here for effect. Through the rest of the dissertation I will either provide my own translations of Apuleius or rely on J.G. Griffith's work, as is standard in the field of Isiac studies. For Lindsay's translation of the work as a whole, see J. Lindsay, *The Golden Ass* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1960).
cultural tensions and shifting identities found throughout the Second Sophistic.²

Beginning the novel as part of an (presumably) Italian elite class in Patras, Lucius comes to Corinth after a long journey across Greece in the guise of a donkey. After a miraculous dream encounter with an Egyptian goddess who rises from the sea, Lucius is freed from his beastly body by eating a rose carried by an Isiac devotee involved in a procession. At the end of the novel, Lucius is reunited with his family, who appear to have decamped to Rome, and joins an even more mysterious form of the Egyptian cults there. Lucius’ transformation, then, serves as a moment of cultural collision in which ideas of Greekness, Romanness, and a romanticized Greco-Roman version of Egyiptianness,³ placing him at the center of a complex set of negotiations between disparate cultural identities.


³ In using these terms, I am not arguing that objective ethnic groups existed in the ancient Mediterranean, nor am I suggesting that ancient peoples had a consistent set of cultural principles that constituted Greekness or Romanness. I would argue, however, that ancient peoples had ethnic stereotypes and tropes surrounding these ideas that informed their encounters with others. In taking this approach, I am following an established methodology of describing cultural encounters. In particular, my ideas here have been informed by the work of Marian Feldman, Erich Gruen, and the ideas of Dimitri Plantzos. See M.H. Feldman, Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an 'International Style' in the Ancient Near East, 1400-1200 BCE (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); E. Gruen, Rethinking the Other in Antiquity (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); D. Plantzos, “The Iconography of Assimilation. Isis and Royal Imagery on Ptolemaic Seal Impressions,” in More than Men, Less than Gods: Studies on Royal Cult and Imperial Worship. Proceedings of the International Colloquium Organized by the Belgian School at Athens (November 1-2, 2007), ed. A. Chankowski, P. Ioassif, and C. Lorber (Leuven: Peeters, 2011).
Isis and her cult were a global phenomenon, one that extended beyond the physical borders and endured past the temporal limits of both the Hellenistic and Roman empires. Her worship began in the Old Kingdom and is only properly extinguished after a Theodosian decree in the 4th century CE.4 During the 3rd century BCE, the cult of Isis (and those of her companions Sarapis, Anubis, and Harpokrates) swept through the Greek world. Although frequently absent from discussions of the archaeology of Greek sanctuaries, by the 1st century CE, most Greek cities had a sanctuary to the Egyptian gods (Figure 1).5 Focused on the worship of the Egyptian gods Isis and Sarapis,6 the cult followed what scholars commonly call a "mystery" format.7 Devotees underwent a series of initiation rituals in which specific texts, objects, and myths were revealed to them. Many of these rituals may have been performances of myths in which the devotee acted the part of divine and semi-divine mythological

4 D. Frankfurter, Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 37-75. Frankfurter details how local Christians in Egypt brought about the end of the traditional polytheistic cults in Egypt through iconoclasm, attacks and political pressure. The 4th century also marked the end of the Egyptian cults throughout most of the Mediterranean.

5 On this topic, I refer the reader to Figure 1, which reproduces a map from L. Bricault, Atlas de la diffusion des cultes isiaques : IVe s. av. J.-C.- IVe s. apr. J.-C, Mémoires de l’académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres (Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 2001). This map indicates the frequency of Isiac artifacts across time and space. Although the map is nearly 15 years old, it remains mostly representative. I would note that in the intervening decade and a half, many more Isiac artifacts have been found and published in Greece, prompting the need for this dissertation.

6 Epigraphic attestations reveal that other Egyptian gods were also worshipped in Greece. Dedications to Anubis and Harpokrates appear most frequently, but we also see dedications to Bubastis, Osiris, Thermouthis, and Bes. Artistically, Harpokrates is the most frequently depicted, though statues of the sphinx god Tutu are known from at least two sites.

7 I will delve more fully into the cult’s rituals and mythology in Chapter 3.
figures, rendering performances like the one described at the beginning of the chapter a key part of the devotee's relationship with the god. As part of their religious practice, these initiates wore unusual clothes and participated in processions and ritual dramas that performed the cult's Otherness. Many of the cult's sanctuaries were clearly demarcated with high walls and easily enclosed interior spaces. The cult as practiced in Greece emphasized its own strangeness and performed it for others, creating a cultic community that felt separated from more mainstream religious experiences.

During the Hellenistic period, Isiac worship spread beyond Egypt and Nubia into distant lands. In its new homes, the cult changed in ways that permitted the Egyptian gods to adapt to the needs of a wide audience of devotees. Often on the outskirts of major cities, temples to Isis and Sarapis tended to mix prevailing trends in Hellenistic and Roman sanctuary architecture with the cult's peculiar needs for secluded meeting spaces and processional routes. Many sanctuaries served a large, ethnically diverse devotee population that included Italian merchants, Greeks from the

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9 Though our best evidence for these practices comes from Apuleius' descriptions in the *Metamorphoses*, the archaeological evidence does suggest that many sanctuaries were built to house the types of rituals Apuleius describes. For example, H. Siard argues that the long paved walkway in Sarapieion C at Delos probably framed a ritual procession of some sort: H. Siard, "L'Hydreion du Serapieion C de Délos: la divination de l'eau dans un sanctuaire isiaque," in *Nile into Tiber: Egypt in the Roman world. Proceedings of the IIIrd International Conference of Isis studies, Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University, May 11-14 2005*, ed. L. Bricault, M.J. Versluys, and P.G.P Meyboom (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 428-31.
surrounding regions, and merchants from around the Mediterranean basin.\textsuperscript{11} By the early Roman period (the mid 1st century BCE) the cults had become a Mediterranean-wide phenomenon.

While the Egyptian cults used material culture and secrecy to emphasize their own strangeness, they actually shared many ritual components with Greek-style mystery cults.\textsuperscript{12} Although Apuleius’s account cannot be considered a completely factual representation of Isiac cult practice,\textsuperscript{13} the questions this passage raises are familiar from other Greek mystery cults of the Hellenistic and Roman period: what did the devotees believe? what were their rites? In the case of Lucius, what was the purpose of this ritual in the broader context of the cult? Most importantly (at least for me): why was he standing like a statue \textit{in front of another statue}?

This dissertation takes an essayistic approach to the last question. I am interested in exploring how Greek devotees encountered cult images of Isis and Sarapis in their


\textsuperscript{13} While Apuleius’ \textit{Metamorphoses} cannot be considered an uncomplicated historical representation of the Egyptian cults, I follow most scholars of the Isis cults in accepting it as a useful source for reconstructing rituals and cult mythology, especially when read together with archaeological and epigraphic evidence.
sanctuaries. These statues, as innovative visual adaptations of several cultural shifts in Hellenistic and Roman Greece, speak to several key interpretative issues in Classical art history: how culture was represented, how Greeks thought of themselves and others, how new gods join the Greek pantheon, and how we as scholars of ancient art history should conceptualize the ancient Mediterranean and its internal relationships. This dissertation analyzes these problems from an art historical and anthropological perspective, examining how these statues were made, what kinds of meaning viewers attached to them, how they were displayed in sanctuaries, and what kinds of roles they played in religious rituals.

Further, I argue that we must analyze these artistic and phenomenological inquiries in their historical and cultural context. In particular, I am interested in how the images produced for Egyptian sanctuaries responded to the cult's intermediate cultural identity. As such, this dissertation approaches its subject with the assumption that these images inflect, reproduce, or reimagine the existing cultural tensions and debates of their time: the 3rd century BCE through the 3rd century CE. In particular, I argue that these images acted as agents of a form of ancient globalization by demanding that their users, here defined as small communities of initiated cult devotees derived from the nearby population, deal with the rapidly expanding connectivity of the Mediterranean world. Isiac cult images, then, are an example of such a defined local community using
visual forms available across the Mediterranean to make sense of new connections with strange and distant lands.

This chapter introduces the cults of Isis and Sarapis and organization of the dissertation. I begin with a historical discussion of how the cult spread from Egypt into Greece, focusing on the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Next, I give an overview of the dissertation’s chapters, outlining the archaeological material covered and the main arguments of each chapter. I then offer of my theoretical orientation, examining the scholarly history of Isis studies and of globalization in classical archaeology. I conclude with a brief summary of the dissertations’ contributions to the field, an issue to be explored further in the concluding chapter.

1.2 Bringing Isis to Greece: Egypt, Delos, and the Spread of the Egyptian Cults

The ancient Mediterranean was not a simple geographic fact, but rather a concept, one that included the effects of movement across this geographic feature.14 Ships carrying people and commodities crisscrossed the ocean constantly, constructing links between distant places and cultures. Though this movement of people, goods, and ideas was largely directed toward economic ends, it also brought about significant

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cultural change. One such Mediterranean traveler was the Egyptian priest Apollonios, who brought a statue of Sarapis with him when he immigrated to Delos, a major regional trading center, at the end of the fourth century BCE (Figure 2). According to the legend Apollonios’ followers inscribed on a column, this priest from the Egyptian sanctuary at Memphis gave rise to a private cult association and eventually a large public sanctuary dedicated to the cult of Isis and Serapis near one of the island’s most important water sources. Based on the inscribed account, it seems that Apollonios founded a small cult inside his home. His congregation grew and grew, leading him to find another home for his private sanctuary. Alongside his group of devotees, other

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15 N. Morely, *Trade in classical antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 10-11. P. Harland surveys the impact of religious travel (i.e. pilgrimage) in the ancient and late antique Mediterranean. L. Blumell’s survey of Christian papyri from Oxyrhynchus ultimately concludes that religion and other social factors were the motivating factor in a minority of textually documented instances. Economic and political motivations, such as taxpaying or trade, incited most of the movement documented in this corpus. See P. Harland, "Pausing at the intersection of religion and travel," in *Travel and religion in antiquity*, ed. P. Harland (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2011); L. Blumell, "Christians on the Move in Late Antique Oxyrhynchus," in *Travel and Religion in Antiquity*, ed. P. Harland, *Studies in Christianity and Judaism* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier Press, 2011).


18 We will come back to Apollonios’ account in more detail in Chapter 3.
sanctuaries to the Egyptian gods operated in the town of Delos, forming a small but key part of the Delian religious landscape.  

Recent discoveries at Rhodes and Argos suggest that Apollonios was not the only Egyptian who brought the cult to Greece during the Hellenistic period. At Rhodes, new excavations (to be discussed in Chapter 4) have revealed a sanctuary that C. Fantaoutsaki argues should be roughly contemporary with the Delian sanctuaries, and only slightly later than the 4th century BCE sanctuary built in Piraeus to serve a community of Egyptian merchants resident there. At Argos, a Hellenistic inscription lists a woman with a seemingly Egyptian name (Thaeis) as a founder of the Egyptian sanctuary there (Figure 3). At Demetrias, a grave stele for Ouapheres, an Isiac priest from Egypt, should date to the 3rd century BCE, providing yet another example of an

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19 French excavators termed Apollonios' sanctuary "Sarapieion A" and two other known sanctuaries Sarapieions B and C. Epigraphic evidence suggests that there may have been other private cult associations devoted to the Egyptian gods. See I. Moyer, *Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 197-200.


21 C. Fantaoutsaki, "Preliminary Report on the Excavation of the Sanctuary of Isis in Ancient Rhodes: Identification, Topography, and Finds," in *Bibliotheca Isiaca II*, ed. L. Bricault and R. Veymiers (Bordeaux: Ausonius Éditions, 2011), 63. Sanctuaries at Halicarnassus and Thera probably date to the mid-Hellenistic period as well, though the Thera sanctuary preserves mostly architecture and cannot be dated more precisely. See the relevant section in Kleibl, *Ision*. While the Piraeus community is well known from a single well published inscription, I, like most other Isiac scholars, consider them to be part of a separate cultural phenomenon and will not discuss them here. I will note that there is another known 5th century temple to the Egyptian gods at Aphytos, but there is no published information about the cult's devotee community as of yet. See the relevant sections in M. Bommas, *Heiligtum und Mysterium. Griechenland und seine ägyptischen Gottheiten* (Mainz am Rhein: von Zabern, 2005).

Egyptian priest active in the early history of Greece’s Isis cults (Figure 4). Many other sanctuaries seem to have foundation dates in the 2nd century BCE, including Daulia and Tithorea in Phocis, Naupactus in Aetolia, Larissa in Thessaly, Thasos in Macedonia, Gortyna on Crete, and several shrines dedicated in Athens. These inscriptions suggest that Apollonios' tale should be seen as the best-attested example of a broader group of Hellenistic period Egyptians that brought their Egyptian religious practices to Greece.

1.2.1 Ptolemaic Power and Mediterranean Networks: A Primer for Diaspora

Given that we now know of several Egyptian founders active in late Classical and early Hellenistic Greece, we might consider why they came. Early scholars of the Isiac cults like F. Cumont suggested that the Ptolemies actively promoted the cult’s spread into the eastern Mediterranean as a form of cultural warfare. In this model, the Ptolemaic dynasts would have commissioned someone like Apollonios to travel the Mediterranean to spread the cult. This politically motivated missionary-style approach characterized many studies of Egyptian cults up to the 1980s and 1990s, casting the

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Egyptian cults as agents of Ptolemaic political design. More recent studies, particularly by L. Bricault and his followers, note that the Ptolemies are curiously absent from dedicatory inscriptions in Isiac sanctuaries found outside of Egypt, and that there was very little interest in promoting cooperation and intermingling between the disparate populations around the Ptolemaic Empire.\textsuperscript{26} Further, the epigraphic record suggests that most of these early sanctuaries were privately controlled by their devotee communities.\textsuperscript{27} Instead, these scholars tended to consider the Egyptian cults as a symptom of popular religion, a method for those outside elite power structures to find community and status in a privately controlled group. This approach focused particularly on epigraphic evidence to analyze the ways that individual devotee communities structured their priestly hierarchies and managed their accounts. Reading this early scholarship, the Egyptian cults come across as type of "resistant" cult, one closely aligned with freed


\textsuperscript{27} A brief survey of Dunand’s 1973 gazetteer, which relies heavily on epigraphic attestations, suggests that at least 7 of the Greek sanctuaries were private at the time of their foundation, and only one (Istros), may have been founded at the behest of the city. Most inscriptions, however, do not provide clear evidence regarding this fact, and this division should be considered preliminary and possibly unrepresentative. One notable suggestion to this tendency in the early Hellenistic period is a recent essay by E. Matricon-Thomas, who suggests that the sanctuary at Piraeus came under civic control when Athens officially allied with the Ptolemies in the later part of the third century. The sanctuary would have transitioned at that time to more of a political instrument rather than an active sanctuary. E. Matricon-Thomas, "Le culte d’Isis à Athènes: entre aspect ‘universel’ et spécificités locales," in Egyptian gods in the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean: image and reality between local and global, ed. L. Bricault and M.J. Versluys, Supplemento a Mythos (Palermo: Salvatore Sciascia Editore, 2012), 43-6.
slaves and the middle class that sought to thwart the Roman power structure by embracing cultural plurality.28

In recent years, scholars have revived interest in the Ptolemies and the Ptolemaic Empire’s connections with other Hellenistic states as a key component in the Egyptian cults’ rise across the Mediterranean. In the lengthy introduction to her book on Egyptianizing terracotta figurines on Delos, C. Barrett highlights the potential role of the Ptolemies in the cults’ spread, emphasizing the iconographic connections between Delian figurines and the royally connected festival of the Inundation of the Nile.29 Her point here is well taken: while the Ptolemies probably did not actively promulgate the cult’s spread, their increasing presence in the eastern Mediterranean certainly did not hinder it. Perhaps we should think of the Ptolemies and their empire as a primer for the cult’s spread. Their frequent wars brought their soldiers, many of whom were of Greek origin, onto the shores of Mediterranean islands and into the paths of Mediterranean

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28 See, for example, interpretations put forth in Bricault, “La diffusion isiaque,” 551-52. This approach relies heavily accounts from ancient literary sources that detail Roman anxieties about the cult, particularly the episode of Paulina’s rape by Decius Mundus detailed in Josephus (AJ 18.65-80). In this passage, as D. Edwards argues, Paulina’s involvement in foreign cults leads to the defilement of her Roman womanly virtue, illustrated dramatically by how Mundus, disguised as the jackal-headed Egyptian god Anubis, ripped off her stola in the rape. This episode, accompanied by contemporary Augustan laws that banned the practice of Egyptian cults in Roman cities, have been interpreted as evidence of the cult’s subaltern status in the Hellenistic and Roman world. As we will see in Chapter 3, however, the cult was not banned from the entire empire, and in fact did occasionally receive official support from imperial power structures. See D.E. Edwards, “The Social, Religious, and Political Aspects of Costume in Josephus,” in The World of Roman Costume, ed. J.L. Sebesta and L. Bonfante (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin press, 2001), 153-54. 29 C. Barrett, Egyptianizing Figurines from Delos, Columbia Studies in the Classical Traditions (Leiden: Brill, 2011).
The increase in trade during the Hellenistic period would have further supported the cult's spread: as traders traveled the Mediterranean, cultural products like the Egyptian cults traveled alongside material goods. Still, I do not think it is a coincidence that this renewed interest in the seafaring Ptolemies coincides with a discipline-wide turn towards network theory and the new "network archaeology." Indeed, my own approach to the Egyptian cults invests heavily in such approaches. Going forward, it is important that we recognize how much the rise of the Ptolemies embedded itself in local consciousness, while recognizing that the Ptolemies had limited power and, indeed, limited interest in promoting Egyptian culture throughout the Mediterranean.

We must admit that contemporary concerns about globalization and technological networking probably inform networked approaches to the ancient world. Still, the archaeological and epigraphic evidence does seem to support the idea that Hellenistic connectivity, as well as the rising yet constantly shifting power of the Ptolemaic dynasty, aided in the cult's spread across the Mediterranean. While there is

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30 Indeed, the sanctuary on the island of Thera has been considered as part of a Ptolemaic military encampment on the island. See Kleibl, *Iseion*, 209-10.
32 Network archaeology refers to a field focused on interactions between communities as a driver of change. This approach highlights the role of landscape and other non-human agents as well as decentralizing the process of change, but in practice such studies read as traditional pottery and architecture focused approaches to ancient material culture. For a further definition, see A. Collar, *Religious networks in the Roman Empire: the spread of new ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 6-36.
33 We might cite, for example, epigraphic attestations of Italian merchant families or the remains of North African animals found in several Italian Isis sanctuaries, as well as the prevalence of imported Egyptian
insufficient evidence to suggest that the Ptolemies sent Isiac "missionaries" into the Mediterranean, the "popular" approach fails to recognize that the rise of the Ptolemaic Empire gave rise to a certain set of conditions that brought the Egyptian priests Apollonios to Delos, Thaies to Argos, and Ouapheres to Demetrias, among others. While we cannot reconstruct their precise motivations, we can recognize that these Egyptian founders probably set sail for Greece across a very receptive Mediterranean Sea.

1.2.2 Late Hellenistic and Roman Period Spread

After the island's devastating sacks in 88 and 69 BCE, the large Isiac community of Delos scattered across the seas, resulting in a global distribution of a previously localized cult.34 The next 150 years saw a "blossoming" of the cult. By the first century


34 Dunand, Fantaoutsaki, Martzavou, and Steimle all trace epigraphic and architectural evidence from individual sites (in particular, Thessaloniki, Rhodes, Eretria, and Maroneia) back to specific Delian antecedents. The idea of Delos as the origin point for sculptural types has gained popularity in recent years (see Aurenhammer’s claim that veristic portraiture styles used in Augustan Ephesus resulted from the Delian diaspora): Dunand, Le culte d’Isis II; C. Steimle, Religion im römischen Thessaloniki. Sakraltopographie, Kult und Gesellschaft 168 . Chr.-324 n. Chr., Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Martzavou, "Les cultes isiaques,”; Fantaoutsaki, "Preliminary Report,”; S. Aurenhammer, "Late Hellenistic and Early Roman Imperial Portraits from Ephesos,” in Roman Sculpture in Asia Minor. Proceedings of the International Conference to Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Italian excavations at Hierapolis.
CE, Isiac shrines, inscriptions, and material culture were found throughout the Mediterranean world, appearing in nearly every area connected in some way to the Roman Empire, from the Straits of Gibraltar to modern-day Afghanistan. In Greece, many existing sanctuaries expanded or saw an influx of new dedications in the imperial period, and many new sanctuaries were founded ex novo.

Trade must have played a key role in this expansion. It has long been recognized that the Delian diaspora was a major factor in bringing the Egyptian cults to Italy, but P. Martzavou has argued convincingly that patterns in dedicatory inscriptions suggest that the Delian diaspora also brought Isiac communities to places like Eretria, Thessaloniki, and, in later years (ca. 1st century CE), the cults at Gortyna and Amphipolis.

Martzavou offers a "trickle down" model of diffusion, suggesting that Delian expatriates, particularly traders with Italian origins, arrived in popular early imperial port cities and founded cults closely modeled on Delian practices and hierarchies. This model casts Delos as an origin point, and most later sanctuaries as part of the Delian diaspora. At Thessaloniki, for example, Martzavou finds the names of 11 gens known at Delos, as well as similarities in material culture and sculpture, that further highlights the relationship between these two communities.35 It is important to note that these Delian

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expatriates often went to cities that already had Egyptian sanctuaries.\textsuperscript{36} Thus, the Delian exodus Martzavou describes may have played a more important role in strengthening and altering existing cult centers than in expanding the cult's reach into new regions.

The Delian diaspora, however, was not the only way that the Egyptian cults spread across Greece. Groups traveling short distances, even intra-regional travelers, also helped spread the cult. Most past discussions of Isiac diffusion rely on the assumption that visitors from the hinterlands came to port centers, encountered the cult, and brought it back to their hometowns.\textsuperscript{37} One inscription (RJCIS 113/0536) details how a man named Xenainetos came to Thessaloniki to seek counsel from Sarapis, where he had a dream encounter with the god.\textsuperscript{38} In this dream, Sarapis told Xenainetos to give a letter to Eurynomos the son of Timastitheos. When he awoke, Xenainetos found a letter under his pillow and gave it to Eurynomos, who founded the cult and appointed its first

\textsuperscript{36} Thessaloniki's sanctuary, for example, dates back to the 3rd century BCE, not long after the city's original foundation: Dunand, Le culte d'Isis II, 54; M. Bommas, "Apostel Paulus und die ägyptischen Heiligtümer Makedoniens," in Ägyptische Mysterien, ed. J. Assman and M. Bommas (München: 2002). Dunand also references an inscription that mentions a man named Phylakides, who is known from other dedications to Osiris, dedicating a ritual bark. Ritual barks are unknown in Greek cults but well known in Egyptian religion, which may suggest that Thessaloniki also had an Egyptian founding priest. Dunand, however, doubts the presence of an Egyptian founder because all of the earliest inscriptions for the cult are in Greek and feature Macedonian names.

\textsuperscript{37} Even M. Malaise's eminently well considered and terminologically precise works on Isiac diffusion focus on the results of that diaspora rather than its mechanisms. Malaise probably avoids this precise topic because of its complications, but in taking a syncretic approach, he necessarily assumes a trickle down model (similar to Martzavou's) that Bricault and Versluys rightly caution us against. See M. Malaise, Pour une terminologie et une analyse des cultes isiaques, Memoire de la Classe des Letters (Bruxelles: Académie royale de Belgique, 2005); Les conditions de pénétration et de diffusion des cultes égyptiens en Italie, Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’Empire romain (Leiden: Brill, 1972).

\textsuperscript{38} On the role of dream oracles in Isiac cults in Greece and Italy, see the discussion of the Chronicle of Maiistas in Chapter 4 and Alvar, Romanising Oriental Gods, 333-35.
priestess at Opous. This apocryphal story not only represents an attempt to connect the
cult at Opous with a more established cult center, but also exemplifies the passive
diffusion model that Martzavou (and many early scholars) assumed. This model,
however, is too linear. Delos cannot be the sole origin point for a religious phenomenon
as widespread and and varied as the Isis cults.

More recent scholarship by L. Bricault and M.J. Versluys suggests that we should
reconsider the Isiac diaspora, large and small, as independent instances of local
appropriation of an internationally available culture.39 Taking this approach recasts the
Xenainetos inscription described above. Instead of recounting a linear, one-way
transmission from active originator to passive receptor, this inscription depicts a Greek
founder, Xenainetos, miraculously founding the cult after having direct experience of
the god. Instead of Martzavou’s trickle-down model, we see the cult as an active creation
justified by firsthand experience of the god. Still, it is important to note how this account
closely connects Xenainetos’ miraculous experience with the sanctuary at Thessaloniki.
In doing so, the Opous cultic community legitimizes itself as part of a long-standing
tradition of Isis worship.40 The new method for understanding Isiac diasporas proposed
by Bricault and Versluys, then, does not suggest that we completely ignore how
established cult centers aided in the cult’s spread. Rather, it suggests that we see the

40 I have discussed this phenomenon at length elsewhere: Mazurek, "Material and Textual Narratives."
spread as active engagement with existing cult practice. Both regional and Mediterranean-wide connectivity thus played an integral role in the spread of Egyptian cults, demonstrating how both large and small scale trade and transport allowed a small, local cult to diffuse throughout the Mediterranean world.

1.3 Organization

Globalizing the Sculptural Landscapes of the Isis and Sarapis Cults in Roman Greece is organized into six chapters. The current chapter serves as a methodological introduction. I introduce the dissertation’s main themes and arguments and survey contemporary approaches to Isiac cults. I explain my working methodology and analytical assumptions. I conclude this chapter with an introduction to the forthcoming chapters and a summation of the major questions my dissertation attempts to answer.

In Chapter 2, I analyze the form and style of images of the Egyptian gods Isis and Sarapis found at Gortyna, Corinth, and Marathon. These three gods are the most frequently depicted in Egyptian sanctuaries and are often carved in exoticized styles that combine Greek cultural imaginings of Egypt with canonical representations of Greco-Roman gods. By comparing these Greek examples with statues from around the Mediterranean, I argue that Greek communities relied on internationally available concepts when visualizing these new gods instead of creating novel or local interpretations of their own. As a result, these images carry little intrinsic meaning and must be interpreted in relation to other ideas and objects. In Chapter 3, I examine the
texts and rituals that likely informed the viewer’s interpretation of sanctuary sculptures. Building on existing text and image approaches, this chapter examines the depictions of Isiac rituals in Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*, Plutarch’s description of the cult’s theology and cosmology in *De Iside et Osiride*, and a series of aretalogical inscriptions found throughout Greece and Asia Minor. I argue that these works provide us with a sense of what "initiated viewers" (viewers who were at least partially educated in the cult’s ritual activities and texts) may have expected from their gods and cult images. In particular, these texts suggest that Isiac devotees had heightened expectations of their deities: that the deities would directly intervene on behalf of devotees, that they appeared to devotees within the sanctuary space, and that Isis and Sarapis assimilated frequently with other deities, a trait that H. Versnel calls henotheism. While these texts provide a deeper context for understanding some of ritual values devotees attached to Isis’ and Sarapis’ images, they fail to fully clarify much of the Egyptian gods’ cultural affiliations.

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In Chapters 4 and 5, I bring the artistic and textual evidence into conversation with archaeological data to explore how local communities dealt with the gods’ innate ambiguity. Chapter 4 focuses on the question of the gods’ cultural identities. I take as my case studies the sanctuaries at Rhodes and Thessaloniki, where large quantities of sculptures were found buried in underground crypts. Working with the assumption that these sculptures were displayed together in the sanctuary at some point in antiquity, I examine these images as a form of dialogue with text, ritual, and one another. At both sites, high-quality sculpture of traditional Greek deities like Artemis and Aphrodite were found interspersed with statues of Isis, Serapis and Harpokrates inside sanctuaries dedicated to the Egyptian gods.\textsuperscript{43}

Both sites also preserve high quality statuettes most likely made in Egypt, introducing another cultural element. I argue that these assemblages demonstrate a high level of integration and cultural ambivalence about the Egyptian and Greek aspects of these deities, suggesting that the Greek relationship with Egyptian gods was more nuanced than simply Greek and foreign. These sentiments reflect attitudes visible even as early as in the second century BCE Isis aretology from Maroneia, wherein the author establishes Isis as a deity fundamentally attached to the Greek landscape (RICIS

Here, Isis is depicted as a primordial Hellenistic deity whose Egyptian
identity is not compromised by the Greek origins that the author attributes to her. Thus, even in antiquity, devotees of the Egyptianizing cults are considering the ethnic
identities of their divinities in a fluid, adaptive way. I conclude that these assemblages
serve two purposes: to contextualize the gods within a Greek worldview and to express
the devotees’ ambivalences and unstable definitions of the Egyptian gods.

The fifth and final chapter examines how viewers would have experienced these
images in their ritual and architectural contexts. I focus on the Isiac sanctuaries at
Marathon, where large portions of the sculptural programs remain in situ. The
exceptional preservation at these sanctuaries allows us to interrogate what these
sculptures did for their viewers: how devotees interacted with images, what roles
sculptures may have played in rituals, and how they interacted with architecture to
define the gods in ever-more-nuanced ways. The Marathon sanctuary features
archaizing images set up inside a massive Egyptianizing temple compound that alludes
to its owner's, Herodes Atticus', philosophical interests in the gods. I argue that the

44 An aretalogy is a religious inscription that praises the god (or in this case, goddess) for her virtues. To the
modern reader, these texts read like the Catholic catechism, and provide a clear list of the devotee’s
understanding of the gods and their powers. See further Y. Grandjean, Une nouvelle arétalogie d’Isis à Maronée
46 Unfortunately, with very minor exceptions, the types of wall paintings known from the Iseum at Pompeii
are no longer preserved at any of the Greek sanctuaries to Isis and Sarapis. Although I believe these
sanctuaries were likely painted, I have omitted discussion of the roles wall painting may have played in
Isiac rituals.
sanctuary operated on an intellectual and cultural level. The sculptures are set up in a way that carefully echoes the Middle Platonic theology of the single, unified deity that takes many forms. At the same time, the sanctuary engages with cultural conflict, finding innovative ways to reconcile an imagined Egyptian with an idealized Greco-Roman present.

Throughout this dissertation, I argue that these cults demonstrate the variety of responses available within the growing connectivity and transnationalism of cult and cult practice occasioned by the rise of the Roman Empire. As such, Isis should be considered as an instance of a globalized phenomenon that displays a certain level of consistency alongside a deeply localized group of adaptations and preferences. In order to do so, I focus on a series of key questions. What is the artistic and iconographic character of the Isiac sculpture from Imperial Greece? Who is the Greek Isis, and why was she culturally relevant? Do these sites display local or regional characters in their visual cultures and styles of worship? How do images of Isis and her worshippers participate in “cultural imaginings” about Egypt, and what do these imaginings tell us about how participants interpreted their own expanding phenomenological worlds?

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47 Transnationalism forms a major part of Lewellen’s definition of globalization. He defines the term as a practice whereby people maintain lives in multiple communities. These relationships can be political, social and economic in nature. T.C. Lewellen, The anthropology of globalization: cultural anthropology enters the 21st century (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 2002), 150-52.

Most importantly, how does the image of Isis help us to construct a fuller image not only of the cult, but also of cultural movement and interaction in antiquity? *Globalizing the Sculptural Landscapes of the Isis and Sarapis Cults in Roman Greece*’s main contributions will be the careful advancement of these questions through new art historical and theoretical approaches.

### 1.4 Previous Research

The present work draws from previous research into two main topic areas: the networked Mediterranean ideal of Fernand Braudel and Isis studies. In the following sections, I explain how my work intervenes in these two discussions.

#### 1.4.1 Studying Isis in the Greco-Roman Mediterranean

The scholarship of Isis cults has blossomed in the past few years, in no small part due to Laurent Bricault’s biannual International Conference on Isiac Studies and its

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resulting published papers. Scholarship on the cults of Isis falls into three major categories: epigraphy, archaeology, and theology. Most scholars focus on epigraphy. Bricault has created an authoritative compendium of epigraphic material related to the Isis cult from around the Mediterranean, *Recueil des inscriptions concernant les cultes isiaques (RICIS)*. Bricault’s study is of the highest quality and offers inscriptions in Greek, translations into French of most inscriptions, and a then-current list of publications related to each inscription. These studies represent a well-developed and vibrant field of research. For a selection of inscriptions, particularly the corpus from Delos, Bricault also offers black and white photographs of the original inscriptions. Bricault’s project is a significant improvement on a 1969 survey, L. Vidman’s *Sylloge inscriptionum religionis Isiaceae et Sarapiaeae* (51) Bricault has also collected the published sculpture and small finds along with epigraphic and literary evidence to create a comprehensive atlas of the material remains of the Isis cult in the Mediterranean, published in 2001 as the *Atlas de la diffusion des cultes isiaques*. Beyond these compendia, several French scholars have

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50 Bricault, *RICIS*.


52 Bricault, *Atlas de la diffusion*. 

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offered crucial historical interpretations of these inscriptions. Most notable among these is Fr. Dunand, who has published numerous articles on individual cult inscriptions throughout the Mediterranean world and authoritative studies on the cult in Egypt. In 2000, she published a small monograph Isis: mère des dieux, which constructs a brief narrative for the nature of the goddess in Egypt, Greece, and Italy from the Old Kingdom through the 18th century.\textsuperscript{53}

The publication record for the archaeological material, on the other hand, has not been as routinely excellent. Most volumes on this topic are catalogues or partial gazeteers. The only book devoted solely to the topic of Isis cults in Greece is M. Bommas’ Heiligtum und Mysterium. Griechenland und seine ägyptischen Gottheiten (2005),\textsuperscript{54} a brief book intended for a non-specialist audience. More substantive volumes on the Isis cults in the Mediterranean have been published, but in each the sections on Greece comprise a relatively small proportion of the discussion. The first of these trans-regional studies was Fr. Dunand’s wide-ranging three-volume study of the sanctuaries, sculptures and epigraphy of the cults in the eastern Mediterranean, Le culte d’Isis dans le bassin oriental de la Méditerranée (1973). Though Dunand’s work includes a large number of sites and is still frequently cited, her treatment of each site is necessarily topical and omits important recent finds, including the sanctuary at Dion. R.A. Wild offered an

\textsuperscript{53} Dunand, Le culte d’Isis II; F. Dunand, Isis, mère des dieux (Paris: Errance, 2000); Zivie-Coche, Gods and men in Egypt: 3000 BCE to 395 CE.

\textsuperscript{54} Bommas, Heiligtum und Mysterium.
updated version of Dunand’s work in *ANRW II* (1984), but his treatment was similarly topical and covered only the largest sites in Greece. In 2009, K. Kleibl published a detailed catalogue of the architecture of Isis sanctuaries in the Mediterranean, according a small but significant portion of her research to areas of Cyprus and Greece. Her volume updates and expands the original catalogue of Isis and Serapis temples published by K. Salditt-Trappmann in 1970, *Tempel der ägyptischen Götter in Griechenland und an der Westküste Kleinasien*. In both of these volumes, sculpture is a secondary concern, often relegated to lists in the catalogue rather than informing analytical discussions of sacred architecture.

Beyond these general treatments, some archaeologists have published monographic treatments of excavated Isis sanctuaries, including P. Bruneau’s 1975 publication of the sanctuary at Eretria and P. Roussel’s highly problematic 1916 book on the excavations at the Serapieia of Delos, which publishes almost exclusively epigraphic finds and offers no information on where most non-epigraphic finds were found. In some cases, large finds, such as the famous statue of Diadora from Serapieion C, are not mentioned. More often, publication of these Isiac sanctuaries has been in the form of brief articles and site reports, such as D. Pandermalis’ 1982 article on the excavation of

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the Isis sanctuary at Dion and S. Walker’s 1979 identification of a small cella temple on
the south side of the Athenian Akropolis as an Isis sanctuary. 58 Sculptural finds do not
play a prominent role in any of these studies. Most publications list the available
sculpture but make little use of these objects to draw larger conclusions about the nature
of the cult or its worshippers. Some sculptural small find corpuses have been published
on their own, including the Egyptianizing terracotta figurines of Delos and the Isiac
grave reliefs from Attica, Boeotia and Euboea, 59 but these are exceptional.

In recent years, Bricault has joined forces with scholars like R. Veymiers and M.J.
Versluys to turn the field in a more theoretical direction. In particular, Bricault and
Versluys have produced an important pair of edited volumes focused on Isis’
relationship with political power and globalization. 60 These works build on M. Malaise’s
theoretically oriented analyses of Isiac cult, which focused on developing a glossary of
intellectual terms that would clarify discussions of the complex cultural exchanges at the
discipline’s core. 61 Though the epigraphic, historical, and archaeological studies that
have characterized the discipline revealed much about the cult’s daily life, these new
studies expand the cult’s relevance. Now, Isiac scholars are asking bigger questions

59 E.J. Walters, Attic grave reliefs that represent women in the dress of Isis, Hesperia Supplement (Princeton, NJ:
ASCSA, 1988); Barrett, Egyptianizing Figurines from Delos.
between Local and Global (Palermo: Salvatore Sciascia Editore, 2012); Versluys, Power, Politics and the Cults of
Isis.
61 Malaise, Les conditions de pénétration; Pour une terminologie.
about the cult, about how religion, globalization, and art interacted with one another in the ancient world. By asking how the Isis cults participated in globalizing phenomena, my work contributes to this new direction.

In sum, the majority of scholarship on Isiac cults has focused on epigraphy and sanctuary architecture. Though these studies have generally been of high quality, they have tended to prefer traditional epigraphic and historical approaches to the questions surrounding the cult and its practices. As a result of these circumstances, the sculpture from these sanctuaries has not been fully addressed, leaving a critical area open for further research. An art historical approach offers a new vantage point on the cult, one that offers a richer understanding of the initiate’s experience within the cult sanctuary and the imagery inherent in the cult’s religious experience. By considering the cult’s sculptural landscape, we may be able to supplement our existing knowledge of the cult’s character and expand the variety of viewpoints that make up our current reconstruction. My work contributes to this vein of scholarship by applying this theorizing methodology to Isiac material culture. The works studied above mostly operate at the meta-level, making broad arguments about the cult as a whole and its involvement in very broad processes of globalization. My dissertation, on the other hand, identifies specific globalizing processes and connects them with the material world Greek devotees experienced as they worshipped their gods.
1.4.2 Deterritorialization as Globalization: Describing a Networked Mediterranean

The Egyptian cults are a paradox. The gods themselves are closely associated with the Egyptian landscape: with the Nile, the desert, and the mountains where they were first worshipped.\(^62\) Greek devotees, however, needed to deal with the fact that their versions of the Egyptian gods were no longer embedded in their native landscape. Greek Isis devotees, then, intimately reckoned with the problem of deterritorialization: that something identified by its connection to a specific place has become separated from that place.\(^63\) The Egyptian cults are a perfect example of a cult divorced from their original location: removed from the Nile Valley and Delta, Isis and Sarapis must now be adapted not only to suit their new location, but also to remind devotees of the gods’ origins. This adaptive process, I argue, is part of a larger trend of globalization in the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean.

For the purposes of my dissertation, I am primarily interested in how Isis comes to be part of Greek religious and artistic paradigms. Clearly, this process is part of

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globalization, but my narrow interest requires a modified definition. I define globalization in this context as a series of loosely related cross-cultural and cross-regional processes that loosen ties between peoples and places, resulting in disjointed sense of identity that challenges existing community and political boundaries. As groups moved from one place to another, the communities they encountered were forced to redefine themselves and their fundamental ideas about foreignness and belonging. On the ground, globalization can look small-scale and prosaic: communities accepting increasing contact with places and peoples at least partially foreign to indigenous lifestyles and constructing new ways of seeing themselves in the context of a more connected, globally-oriented world. These minor shifts, however, significantly change the ways that individuals and communities experience the world around them. A caveat: this definition is closer to Deleuze and Guattari’s definitions of deterritorialization and reterritorialization than most definitions of globalization used in the ancient world. Thus, one of my main goals is to construct a more nuanced theory of ancient globalization specific to the Isis cults, one that accounts for how globalization is practiced-small scale, intentionally and unintentionally, with a constant redefinition of self and other in reaction to larger changes.

64 My definition here owes much to the discussions of translocality and glocalization in “Territory and Translocality.” While Mandaville is particularly concerned about the baggage attached to the term of globalization in contemporary studies, I do not believe that the same problems are present for ancient studies.
1.4.2.1 Globalization in Classical Archaeology

Contemporary classicists and classical archaeologists are finding globalization’s central principles useful for describing how cultural shifts and exchanges took place in the ancient world. Although globalization as a theoretical concept derives from studies of contemporary capitalism and imperialism, many scholars of the ancient world have turned to globalization as a way forward for ancient archaeology. In particular, scholars like I. Morris, R. Pitts, R. Hingley, and M.J. Versluys have suggested that, when viewed relatively, the ancient Mediterranean also experienced a similar tightening of connections on a seemingly planetary scale. As such, there is a growing consensus that globalization theory is an appropriate heuristic framework for the study of the ancient Mediterranean.

Their definitions are broad. Pitts and Versluys, for example, define globalization as “processes by which localities and people become increasingly interconnected and

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65 Notably, Ian Morris pushes globalization as a critical methodology for the future of Mediterranean archaeology: “We should push the globalization analogy harder, applying to the ancient Mediterranean the same tough question that scholars ask about connectedness in our own time.” I. Morris, “Mediterraneanization,” in Mediterranean paradigms and classical antiquity, ed. I. Malkin (New York: Routledge, 2005), 33. Pitts and Versluys use this quote as the epigram for their new book on ancient globalization, highlighting globalization as an urgently needed viewpoint in Mediterranean archaeology. See the introductory chapter to M. Pitts and M.J. Versluys, ed. Globalisation and the Roman World: World History, Connectivity, and Material Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

66 M. Pitts, “Globalizing the local in Roman Britain: an anthropological approach to social change,” Journal of Anthropological Archaeology 27(2008). Pitts offers an excellent argument for adapting globalization theory to the ancient world.

interdependent,” highlighting common themes like increasing connectivity and
deterritorialization. Despite these processes challenging existing cultural and
political boundaries, ancient globalization is not necessarily a homogenizing
phenomenon. These approaches highlight how individual communities chose to adopt
foreign cultures and adapted those cultures to suit local needs. In other words, each
community has the agency to construct or deconstruct globalization in its own way,
whether by fully accepting globalization, mounting an outright rebellion against it, or
some position between these two extremes. As a result, each devotee community
created a slightly different version of international culture.

Previous studies of acculturation in the Roman and Hellenistic worlds have
largely relied on theories of Romanization and identity to explain the impacts of cross-
cultural contact and ancient imperialism. Both of these concepts have advanced our

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69 For a basic overview of modeling indigenous agency in contemporary cultural anthropology, see Lewellen, Anthropology of globalization, 7-11, 150-52; Rosalda, The anthropology of globalization, 13-33. Within the discipline of classical archaeology, local agency has been a major issue, one that I will treat in further detail in future research. See P. van Dommelen, On colonial grounds: a comparative study of colonialism and rural settlement (Leiden: University of Leiden Press, 1998), 24-34; P. van Dommelen, "Beyond Resistance: Roman Power and Local Traditions in Punic Sardinia," in Articulating Local Cultures: Power and Identity under the Expanding Roman Republic, ed. P. van Dommelen and N. Terrenato, JRA Supplementary Series (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2007); N. Terrenato, "Patterns of cultural change in Roman Italy. Non-elite religion and the defense of cultural self-consistency," in Religiöse Vielfalt und soziale Integration. Die bedeutung der Religion für die kulturelle identität und politische stabilität im republikanischen Italien., ed. B. Linke and J. Rüpke M. Jehne (Heidelberg: Verlag Antike, 2013).
70 For the Hellenistic world, the term Hellenization has occasionally been used. Hellenization is a poorly defined concept that arises in response to Romanization, and in most cases it is envisioned as a less pernicious additive cultural phenomenon wherein people accept Greek cultural practices and institutions
understanding of ancient culture change, but each faces its own analytical challenges. Romanization, a term found frequently in the works of foundational 19th and early 20th century scholars like Mommsen and Haverfield, has been roundly criticized for a variety of analytical problems, including implying one-way cultural exchange, constructing a trickle-down model of non-elite acculturation, and ignoring the violence and resistance inherent in imperial expansion.

In the 1990s, scholars began to shift away from Romanization and focus more on defining cultural identities as a way to describe ancient cultural shifts in the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean. Among these scholars were Louise Revel, Tamar Hodos, and Bernard Knapp. Their approaches to identity focused on how communities interacted to define themselves against other groups, but struggled to identify material


72 Very briefly, Romanization can be defined as the processes through which local people adopted Roman culture and lifeways into local societies. It has been roundly criticized in recent years for focusing on a one-way model of diffusion that assumes provinces passively accepted Roman culture. For these critiques, see E. Curti, "The archaeology of central and southern Roman Italy: recent trends and approaches,"; Rosalda, The anthropology of globalization, 25; S. James, "Romanization' and the peoples of Britain,” in Italy and the west: comparative issues in Romanization, ed. S. Keay and N. Terrenato (Oxford: Oxbow, 2001); van Dommelen, On colonial grounds, 28-30.

culture could reflect these delicate interactions. Ultimately, the shift towards identity studies did not solve Romanization's problems. Many of these studies even found themselves grappling with the same intellectual and social problems that Romanization had posed. Identity studies did, however, offer a viewpoint more useful for recognizing the agency of local people in the construction of globalized material culture. Still, for studies rooted in classical antiquity, it is necessary to recognize the analytic connections between globalization, identity, and Romanization. Globalization does not preclude the consideration of issues of ethnic identity and the impact of Roman cultural imperialism on local peoples, and these issues influence my consideration of globalizing processes in the ancient world.

1.4.2.2 Globalization and Globalizing Processes in the Egyptian Cults

My definition of globalization revolves around the idea of loosely interrelated trans-regional processes inspiring cultural changes on a local level. Among these processes are smaller, better-studied phenomena like *bricolage*, cognitive dissonance, manipulating expectations of time and space, and cultural imagining, which I consider to be constituent processes that contribute to the overarching phenomenon of globalization. These processes are explored in fuller details in later chapters, but I will

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74 Identity as an analytical concept examines the ways in which people constructed and perceived ethnic identity as a means of coping with imperialism and transculturation. Among the most strident critics of identity studies is R. Pitt, who argues that the concept of identity is merely Romanization by a different name. See M. Pitts, "The emperor's new clothes? The utility of identity in Roman archaeology," *AJA* 111, no. 4 (2007).
introduce them briefly here. It is important to note that these are only a few of the processes that contributed to ancient globalization, and future research will reveal more of these interrelated processes.

Chapters 2 and 4 will examine the issue of cognitive dissonance in greater detail. These chapters explore how patrons and sculptors reconciled the Greek and Egyptian contradictory aspects of Isis' and Sarapis' cultural identities by creating images and assemblages in sanctuaries.\textsuperscript{75} Egyptian gods offered a new challenge to sculptors: how should an Egyptian god be rendered for a Greek audience? Solving this challenge required suspending disbelief and holding contradictory viewpoints about the gods' cultural identities, a key component of cognitive dissonance. As I argue, Greek communities seem to have preferred images of Isis and Sarapis that followed earlier Greek models. Imported images, which will be examined in Chapter 4, are often small-scale and depict votaries or sphinxes rather than the gods themselves. Still, these imported images played a key part in enhancing the gods' Egyptianness. The end result is a dissonance between the Egyptian origins of the gods and their new place in Greece and Greek culture. I call this stage an intermediate cultural identity, one that can be redefined as needed by the communities using the images. As a result, Egyptian gods in Greece have an unstable cultural identity, one prone to subjective interpretation.

At the core of this cognitive dissonance is a practice of redefining space and time. As I discussed at the beginning of section 1.4.2, Isis and Sarapis have theological relationships with specific features in the Egyptian landscape, particularly with the Nile valley. Bringing the gods to Greece complicates those relationships with space. In Chapter 5, I examine a sanctuary where architecture and natural features were enhanced to create an artificial, imagined Egypt. The Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Marathon, I argue, sought to clarify the cultural cognitive dissonance inherent in the cult by manufacturing an idea of Egypt long part of the Greek cultural imagination. In order to legitimize these new Egyptians, local communities sought to connect them with existing Greek mytho-historical narratives. At Marathon, the gods were carved in an archaizing style that recalled earlier Greek sculptures. These techniques offered a solution to the problems of cultural cognitive dissonance, but at the same time made the gods and their spaces intermediate and indefinable.

At a deeper level, adapting the Egyptian cults to Greece relies on how Greece perceived itself and Egypt. Chapter 3 examines the stereotypes that drove the cult, a process that I call cultural imagining. I define cultural imagining as a method of understanding an "othered" cultural group that does not require a material basis.

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76 C. Barrett's recent examination of Egyptian and Egyptianizing figurines on Hellenistic Delos suggests that some of these connections may have transferred to early Hellenistic communities. She argues that the figurines made and brought to Delos had specific connotations to the festival of the inundation of the Nile, suggesting that the figurines' artisans and possibly users connected the images to a specific theology rooted in Egypt's natural landscape. See Barrett, *Egyptianizing Figurines from Delos*, 119-34.
Instead, the culturally imagined reality finds its justification in existing cultural stereotypes rooted in other sources like luxury items, mythologies, texts, or even imported material culture, creating a "hybrid" culture that mixes desirable aspects of the othered culture with the cultural structures of the imagining culture.\footnote{This definition is based on Barker, "Imagining the New Order."} In the case of the Egyptian cults, I argue that Greeks culturally imagined Egypt by mapping Egyptian symbols and iconography onto recognizably Greek forms. As E. Manolaraki has argued in her book about Egypt's presence in Latin literature, Egypt's increasing participation in Greek and Roman affairs during the Hellenistic and Roman period inspired Latin authors to map otherness onto Egyptians.

"As Rome gradually absorbs Egypt and opens to Egypt's seductive exoticism, authors exploit the capacious symbolism of the Nile to articulate perennial ontological, epistemological, and ethical questions: these include the allure and threat of the unfamiliar; the collaborative dynamic between conquest and knowledge; the tension between political pedagogy and imperial authority; the ability and validity of human desire to master the unknowable; the humanocentric personification of the natural world; the immanent presence of the divine; the transience of humans within space and time; the disconnection between human time and cosmic time; the process by which human meaning is mapped onto plain geology; and the relation between nature and artifice or reality and perception."\footnote{Manolaraki, Noscendi Nilum, 6.}

Manolaraki here provides a useful, if lengthy, definition of Greco-Roman cultural imagining. Cultural imagining is a way of reconciling diametrically opposed concepts, a method of constructing middle ground in which both sides of the cognitive
dissonance can operate harmoniously. When we talk about the Egyptian cults in Greece, we cannot avoid the fact that we are talking about cultural appropriation rooted in long-standing stereotypes. This does not mean that Greeks did not earnestly and authentically believe in the Egyptian gods. I would argue the opposite. Rather, it means that their cultural anxieties about Egypt, about foreigners, about their increasing connections with far-flung cultures they have long feared, are informing the versions of the cults Greeks construct in the shadows of the Hellenistic and Roman Empires.

1.5 Contributions

This dissertation has three main objectives. The first is to present an analysis of a previously understudied corpus of images. As I have elsewhere argued, despite its wide presence across Hellenistic and Roman cities, Egyptianizing art has long been treated at the margins of classical art history. My work repositions Egyptianizing sculpture as a key part of the Greco-Roman canon, as much a part of Greek and Roman art as statues of Zeus and Juno. The second objective is to better understand how sculptures functioned in sanctuaries. Relying on textual and archaeological sources, I investigate how devotees interpreted images and what kinds of "miraculous" interventions they expected from these images. Third, my project considers Isiac imagery in the broader context of cultural change and globalization. As products of a

L. Mazurek, "Reconsidering the role of Egyptianizing material culture in Hellenistic and Roman Greece," *JRA* 26(2013).
cross-Mediterranean migration, these images ask complex questions about how Greeks understood their relationship with ideas of foreignness and strangeness, and, more importantly, their own position in a rapidly changing Roman world.

My dissertation offers the first real analysis of Greek art related to the Egyptian cults. While the reception of the Egyptian cults in Italy has been at the forefront of Isiac studies for a generation, recent archaeological discoveries at Dion, Marathon, Messene, and Rhodes offer us the chance to explore the cult’s material footprint in a new network of local communities in Greece. Historically, Greek Isiac cults and their sculptures have been treated as footnotes in the broader field of Isis studies. Despite the presence of over 240 known Isiac sculptures in Greece, there exists neither a systematic treatment of sculpture related to the cult nor a comprehensive analysis of the cult’s presence in Greece. My project thus expands our understanding of Egyptian cults in the Classical world by examining an overlooked set of case studies.

In order to achieve its objectives, my dissertation focuses on how Greek viewers interpreted these images. Previous research on Isis cults has focused on the epigraphy, particularly the catechism-like aretalogy inscriptions found throughout the eastern

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80 For example: Malaise, Les conditions de pénétration; M.J. Versluys, Aegyptiaca Romana: nilotic scenes and the Roman views of Egypt, Religions in the Graeco-Roman world (Leiden: Brill, 2002).
81 See the essays in Veymiers, Bibliotheca Isiaca II. These works build on Dunand, Le culte d’Isis II.
82 For example, Schacter’s study of Boiotia devotes only a few paragraphs of a 25-page article to material culture, including imported basalt statues and a possible relief depicting the dedicant’s footprints. The rest focuses entirely on dedicatory inscriptions. See A. Schachter, "Egyptian cults and local elites in Boiotia," in Nile into Tiber: Egypt in the Roman world, ed. M.J. Versluys, L. Bricault, and P.G.P Meybook (Leiden: Brill, 2007).
Mediterranean, with sculpture and artistic decoration playing a secondary role. My work suggests that visual culture played a key role in the cult's ritual practice, and should hold a similarly central position in our analyses of devotees' experiences. I build on previous work by J. Elsner, V. Platt, and M. Squire, suggesting that viewers informed their experiences of art with ideas derived from rituals and texts, creating a dynamic, unstable understanding of ancient myths and divinities.

Through a careful analysis of texts and archaeological evidence, my dissertation reconstructs viewers' multifaceted experiences. In the case of the Egyptian cults, I argue, ritual texts like those described in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* and Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* inspired Isiac devotees to demand more from their images than they would from other sculptures. Consequently, Isis devotees believed that the goddess could take any visual form, overcome any obstacle, and intervene on their behalf in daily life. By applying this interdisciplinary approach to the Egyptian cults in Greece, we can reconstruct how viewers might have encountered sculpture in a sanctuary context and examine the key role that cult-specific knowledge played in informing viewers' experiences.

Recognizing viewers' agency also allows us to access local responses to the globally popular Isis cults. Globalizing processes demand that local communities

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interact more frequently with distant cultures and construct new ways of seeing themselves within an ever-expanding concept of the Greek world. Part of this new self-fashioning happened through the creation of new subaltern communities, like the groups of Isis devotees who patronized the sanctuaries studied here. I argue that the sculptural landscapes of Isis sanctuaries, as interpreted by their users, are products of complex artistic and cultural dialogues between the global Roman Empire and local communities’ concerns about their place in this Empire. While a recent volume edited by L. Bricault and M.J. Versluys introduced the concept of globalization into Isiac studies, art’s role in these exchanges has played only a peripheral role in previous scholarship. The Apuleius passage that begins this chapter, however, demonstrates that art was central to the cult. By introducing art to the discussion, my work offers a more holistic, theoretically rigorous way of modeling the Egyptian cults. In turn, this approach allows us to analyze ancient culture change in a way that recognizes local communities’ agency in using material culture. This approach thus reconciles some of the problems of scale that have plagued earlier approaches to provincial Roman art.85

In sum, this dissertation analyzes newly available case studies as a way to examine how several key globalizing processes worked in the Hellenistic and Roman

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84 Versluys, Power, Politics and the Cults of Isis.
85 Here, I am referring to the challenge of reconciling the idea of trans-regional cultural phenomena with the material evidence from individual sites. For a history of the problem of scale, see Collar, Religious networks, 6-36.
eastern Mediterranean. These contributions advance our understanding of subaltern religious groups and cultural self-definition in the ancient world.
2. Designing Deterritorialized Gods: Greek Representations of Isis and Sarapis

2.1 Chapter Overview

To begin our study of the sculptural landscapes of the Isis and Sarapis cults in Hellenistic and Roman Greece, I want to start at the heart of the cult: the cult image. Within the context of Greco-Roman religion, cult images communicated the cult’s mythology and values to devotees and provided a focal point for ritual activity in the sanctuary.¹ In mainstream Greek and Roman sanctuaries, cult images were often heavily retrospective, frequently copying and adapting Classical models for Hellenistic and Roman audiences.² Because the Greeks only adopted the Egyptian gods in the Hellenistic period, however, there were no earlier examples upon which sculptors could draw. In order to represent this new goddess, Greek dedicators had three options: they could import images of Isis from Egypt, they could commission imitations of Egyptian sculptures from local sculptors, and they could carve statues of her as if she were a Greek goddess. Greek devotees overwhelmingly preferred the last option. Sculptors charged with depicting the Egyptian gods often elaborated on types used for Greco-

¹ Most of the sculptures discussed in this chapter lack archaeological provenance. Not all of these examples served as cult images. Rather, I am using the examples discussed here as a representative sample of cult image types in use during the Hellenistic and Roman period.
Roman gods and goddesses, adding foreign and exotic attributes and identifying inscriptions to differentiate the Egyptian gods from their Greek counterparts.

The result was a complicated image of the Egyptian gods,\(^3\) one that reconciled Isis with the dominant visual paradigms of Greco-Roman art.\(^4\) The new image of Isis and her companions follows neither Egyptian nor Greco-Roman precedents closely, instead combining the two to create an eclectic form of ideal sculpture that participates in the process of cultural imagining key to ancient globalization. Because of Isis’ history of deterritorialization, this novel image is inherently dissonant. In Egypt, Isis and Sarapis are intimately connected with the natural landscape, giving Isis and Sarapis a sense of autochthony. For example, in one of the central myths of Hellenistic Egyptian religion, Isis travels up and down the Nile, collecting Sarapis’ body parts from the disparate locations where the god Seth has spread them. Using magic, she revives his reconstituted, mummified body, even using his disembodied penis to impregnate herself.\(^5\) If we compare this myth with the Greek foundation myths that Christopher

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\(^3\) Here, I am referring to choice to render a concept or person according to the conceptions of naturalism and idealization of form that characterize Greek and Roman sculptures, particularly those that conform to the styles observed in Classical and Hellenistic Greek art. Detailed renderings of anatomy, impassive expressions, and heavy drapery are hallmarks of this mode of representation, which refers back to Classical sculpture.

\(^4\) Many scholars have noted the Hellenization of Isis in visual media. See, in particular, R.S. Bianchi, “Images of Isis and her cultic shrines reconsidered. Towards an Egyptian understanding of the interpretatio graeca,” in *Nile into Tiber: Egypt in the Roman world*, ed. M.J. Versluys, L. Bricault, and P.G.P Meybook (Leiden: Brill, 2011); V. Tran tam Tinh, “Isis,” in *LIMC* (Zürich: Artemis Verlag, 1990), 791-95; Malaise, *Les conditions de pénétration*, 176-81; Plantzos, “The Iconography of Assimilation.”

\(^5\) Most later Greek readers would have encountered this myth in Plutarch’s *De Iside et Osiride*, chapters 12-20. A useful summary of Plutarch’s myth, including a discussion of his Egyptian sources, can be found in J.G.
Jones collects in his book *Kinship Diplomacy in the Ancient World*, it is clear that this myth serves as a method of connecting regions across Hellenistic Egypt. Just as cities in Asia Minor could build new economic and social ties with distant states by claiming Bellerophon or Herakles visited both places, Egyptian cities could build status and connections with other polities by linking themselves to Isis’ voyage. In this way, Isis and Sarapis, in their pre-Greek forms, are connected intimately to the physical landscape of Egypt.

I would argue, then, that these new Greek images of the Egyptian gods used artistic style to disconnect Isis and Sarapis from their relationship with the Egyptian physical landscape. In turn, these new ways of depicting the gods forged new

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Griffiths, Plutarch’s *De Iside et Osiride* (Swansea: University of Wales Press, 1970), 56-106. For an Egyptian perspective, see Frankfurter, Religion in Roman Egypt, 42-56; C. Riggs, The beautiful burial in Roman Egypt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 26-35.


7 These connections with the natural landscape of Egypt also had ritual resonance. In her recent book, C. Barrett traces the connections between Egyptian terracotta figurines, including a corpus of Egyptianizing terracotta figurines from Delos, and their connections with quite specific aspects of the Hellenistic version of the festival of the inundation of the Nile: Barrett, Egyptianizing Figurines from Delos, 119-250. It is important to note that the connections between Egyptian and Greek figurines that Barrett discovered do not carry over to sculpture in the round. In the fall of 2013, I studied the representations of female goddesses from the University of Pennsylvania’s early 20th century excavations at Memphis, under the guidance of David Silverman. Based on my analyses, there are no iconographic connections between the Egyptian mode of representing Isis and the Greco-Roman examples. I thank Drs. David Silverman and Jennifer Houser Wegner and University of Pennsylvania’s Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology for making this material available to me.

8 It should be mentioned that Greek colonist communities in Egypt adopted and adapted Egyptian gods as early as the 6th century BCE. See (with relevant bibliography) L. Bricault, “Du nom des images d’Isis polymorphe,” in Religions orientales - culti misterici. Neue perspektiven - nouvelles perspectives - prospettive
relationships with existing Greco Roman artistic traditions, developing images of the
gods that were rooted in both an imagined idea of Egyptian religion and culture and a
more accessible, "real" visual paradigm.

Consequently, I argue that these images are fraught with cognitive dissonance. In
order to made sense of Isis' dual Greek and Egyptian identities, Greek sculptors and
patrons chose to depict her in a naturalistic Greco-Roman style. Artistic style thus
becomes a form of cultural imagining, creating an imagined space in which Isis and
Sarapis can retain their fundamental otherness while simultaneously belonging to Greek
visual and religious paradigms.

2.2 A Greco-Egyptian god? Sarapis' Origins and Iconographies

For early Hellenistic audiences in the Greek world, Sarapis was the most popular
of the Egyptian deities. The god’s iconography and mode of representation fit easily
within Greek and Hellenistic paradigms for representing gods and goddesses, easing his
entry into local pantheons and visual landscapes. He tends to have an idealized face,
long flowing locks of hair parted down the middle, and an ample beard divided in two
sections under the center of the lips. He frequently wears a chiton and himation or just
the himation. Several attributes can be used in an eclectic set of combinations: a *modius* or *kalathos* on the top of the head, a scepter or cornucopia in the left hand, a Cerberus seated to the god’s right, a *patera* in the right hand, and a characteristic vertical flap of drapery on the left-hand side that often connects with the plinth.\textsuperscript{10} Not all of these elements are essential or even exclusive to Sarapis: several of the attributes may be used in tandem with one another, or can be omitted entirely. Still, the only features that belong to Sarapis particularly are the *modius* or *kalathos*, a round hat based on the shape of a grain measure, and the vertically hanging fold of drapery that often appears on the god’s left hand side.\textsuperscript{11} Most of this iconography appears frequently in Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman art throughout the Mediterranean, and none of these symbols has any particular connection with Egyptian modes of representation. Sarapis’ Greek image was intended to set the deity within an existing paradigm of masculine divinity, to remind the viewer of familiar deities like Zeus or Poseidon.\textsuperscript{12}

In this section, I explore how this Hellenized image of Sarapis developed and appeared throughout Greece. I begin by examining the history of the Sarapis image, which seems to have evolved in the early Hellenistic period in Egypt before spreading

\textsuperscript{10} For more on this trait in the standing Sarapis statues, see Sérapis debout, Chapter 1.

\textsuperscript{11} Neither of these attributes would be inappropriate to another deity, particularly the drapery fold, but seem to appear most frequently in Sarapis’ representations. The drapery fold in particular appears in nearly every marble image of the god found in Greece and in most other examples from around the Mediterranean.

\textsuperscript{12} Of course, this choice also represents a road not taken: Greek communities chose not to follow the Egyptian methods of representing male deities like Osiris. In doing so, however, Greek communities are following a long tradition of representing Sarapis as a Greek deity, one that may go back to the god’s creation under the Ptolemies. Studying Sarapis’ origins is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but form a fascinating body of literature of their own, which I will discuss in the next section.
northward. I then discuss the main types used in Greece, noting comparable examples in Greece and elsewhere in the Empire. These analyses reveal that Greek communities adapted internationally available images in order to suit their own need, much as they did with more mainstream images like those of Roman emperors and local women.\textsuperscript{13} Greeks thus treated images of Sarapis like many other transcultural parts of the Roman visual \textit{koiné}, reimagining foreign subjects into locally legible forms.

### 2.2.1 Creating an Image for Sarapis: Textual and Visual Sources

Several competing narratives derived from multiple conflicting sources recount Sarapis’ early history in Ptolemaic Egypt. The one thing that these diverse texts have in common is that all promote the cult image as a major player in the cult’s foundation.\textsuperscript{14} Unfortunately for modern scholars, these sources do not agree on what the image looked like, who made it, or where it came from. Our main sources come from passages in Plutarch’s \textit{De Iside et Osiride}, Tacitus’ \textit{Historia}, Clement of Alexandria’s \textit{Protrepticus}, and Rufinus’s \textit{Historia Ecclesiastica}. All recount the sculpture’s origins, but none of these

\textsuperscript{13} The question of local adaptations of international types in more mainstream Greek and Roman sculpture has been a popular topic in the last few decades. See, for example, C.B. Rose, \textit{Dynastic commemoration and imperial portraiture in the Julio-Claudian period} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 73-77; J. Webster, “Creolizing the Roman provinces,” \textit{AJA} 105, no. 2 (2001); J. Feijer, \textit{Roman Portraits in Context: Image and Context} (Mainz: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 419-29; J. Trimble, \textit{Women and visual replication in Roman imperial art and culture} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 127-36.

\textsuperscript{14} Tran tam Tinh, \textit{Sérapis debout}, 1-5. The cult’s origins are similarly fraught with historical and theological arguments, and the bibliography surrounding the topic is massive. For our purposes, the cult’s theological and historical origins are less important than its artistic and geographical ones, but I refer the curious reader to P.M. Fraser, “Two studies on the cult of Sarapis in the Hellenistic world,” \textit{OpAth} 3(1960); C.B. Welles, “The discovery of Sarapis and the foundation of Alexandria,” \textit{Historia} 11(1962). For more recent bibliography, see Versluys, "Isis and Empires," n.20. Tran tam Tinh’s introduction provides a useful summary of the relevant bibliography, as does E.J. Milleker, “Three heads of Sarapis from Corinth,” \textit{Hesperia} 54, no. 2 (1985): 121-24; Malaise, \textit{Pour une terminologie}, 127-38.
tales reconcile easily with one another.\textsuperscript{15} Plutarch tells us that the god himself called to Ptolemy I from Pontus, and the legendary scholar Timotheus and the Delphic oracle confirmed the god’s mysterious identity (\textit{DIO} 361F-362).\textsuperscript{16} Tacitus offers a similar account, in which Ptolemy I dreamt of an “infernal” Zeus and then imported a sculpture of Pluto or Zeus from Sinope in Asia Minor (\textit{Hist.} 4.83-84). Clement’s account is much more prosaic, attributing the cult image to a non-Athenian sculptor named Bryaxis who crafted the image from a panoply of valuable materials, including gold, silver, bronze, iron, lead, sapphire, hematite, emeralds, and topaz, all mixed together to form a powder (Clement of Alexandria \textit{Protr.} 4.48).

Most modern scholars follow Clement’s account, arguing that there existed a major sculpture of Sarapis by a sculptor named Bryaxis in the Serapeum of Alexandria.\textsuperscript{17} This image was probably a cult statue, and in any case was one of the major artistic highlights of the Hellenistic city. If we believe that Bryaxis’ sculpture existed, we must ask whether his image was the only, or even the most important, depiction of the god.

The presence of several distinct formats of Sarapis statues found throughout the Empire

\textsuperscript{15} The principal literary sources are Tacitus \textit{Hist.} 4, 83-84; Plutarch \textit{De Iside} 361F-362; Clement of Alexandria \textit{Protr.} 4.48; Rufinus \textit{Hist. Eccl.} 2.23. More dubious is the claim in Pseudo-Callimachus’ ca. 200 CE \textit{vit. Alex.} 1,33 that the cult of Sarapis was founded by Alexander. Most scholars writing after the 1980s omit this account from the canon of foundational narratives and the cult’s early history, probably because the Alexandrian sanctuary to Sarapis cannot predate Ptolemy I in its earliest phase. All of these sources significantly postdate the proposed date of the cult’s image, which Tran tam Tinh suggests would have been produced in the late 4th or early 3rd century BCE.

\textsuperscript{16} Tacitus \textit{Hist.} 4.84.5, W. Amlung, “Le Sarapis de Bryaxis,” \textit{RA} 4, no. 2 (1903): 177-79.

\textsuperscript{17} For example, J.J. Pollitt includes Clement’s testimony in his standard handbook of Greek artists as evidence for Bryaxis’ major works. J.J. Pollitt, \textit{The art of ancient Greece: sources and documents} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 91-92.
suggests the contrary; rather, there must have been at least two major Sarapis prototypes or types available in the early Hellenistic period: Sarapis standing, often with a scepter or a three-headed Cerberus; Sarapis seated on a throne, often with a scepter or a three-headed Cerberus, and Sarapis as a bust.

Which one of these types corresponds to Bryaxis’ image, the “original” or earliest versions of the cult statue? Since our literary sources described a cult statue, it is more likely that one of the full-length images of Sarapis, rather than his busts, hearkens back to an Alexandrian original. J. Stambaugh, who originally divided the corpus of Sarapis monument into two main types based on whether the god was sitting or standing, argued that the standing version of the god came from Memphis and the seated version from Alexandria. In his model, the different postures mirrored different theological priorities in Memphite and Alexandrian versions of Sarapis. The seated Sarapis would have reflected a greater interest in a “royal” theology, in which the king and his queen served as worldly incarnations of the gods and received their right to rule directly from

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18 I would argue that a Hellenistic master like Bryaxis, whose work appeared primarily in Greek and Roman contexts, probably sculpted a classicizing image of Sarapis rather than an Egyptianizing image. Pliny NH 34.42 and 34.73 describe Bryaxis’ work in Greco-Roman terms, naming him as the sculptor of a famous Asklepios, a portrait of Seleukos, and five colossal sculptures of the gods in Rhodes. It is worth noting that A. Stewart, arguing against Pliny NH 36.30-31, does not believe that this Bryaxis can be the same as the Bryaxis who carved the north side of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus due to reasons of chronology. See A. Stewart, *Greek sculpture: an exploration.*, 2 vols (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 300-1. Even if Bryaxis did not sculpt the cult image of Sarapis at Alexandria, Plutarch’s and Tacitus’ accounts of the image (see note 6) compare the Alexandrian Sarapis with images of Pluto and give its point of origin as Sinope, a city in Asia Minor. Most Greco-Roman cult statues, including those from Asia Minor, depict the full extent of the god’s body, and often add in attributes, dress, and companions that are appropriate to the god’s local identity.

19 Stambaugh, *Sarapis under the Ptolemies*, 21, 90-93.
the divinity, while the standing image supposedly referenced Anatolian agricultural divinities through the incorporation of the cornucopia and modius, and dressing the god in a chiton.\textsuperscript{20} Bryaxis probably sculpted the standing image, Stambaugh argues, and the seated image came to Alexandria from Sinope.\textsuperscript{21} While the elegant simplicity of Stambaugh’s reasoning is tempting, there is no literary or archaeological evidence to suggest that Bryaxis sculpted another image of Sarapis, let alone one that would have stood in the Serapeum in Memphis.

Instead of investing in a \textit{Kopienkritik} analysis of these copies, the best approach may be to look at more mainstream images of Greek and Roman gods. I argue that the standing images of Sarapis owe much to representations of Asklepios. Many scholars have noticed the striking similarities between Sarapis \textit{debout} types and Asklepios types, though more variations in arm positions and attributes are possible in the Sarapis statues.\textsuperscript{22} For example, one might profitably compare a Sarapis statuette from the Bardo


\textsuperscript{21} Most scholars agree that the seated image is more likely to be Bryaxis’ work. For a summary of the general consensus, see Leclant, “Sarapis,” 666-68.

\textsuperscript{22} Indeed, Paus. VII.26.7 mentions a Sarapis-Isis-Aklepios statue group in a temple at Aigeira, creating a triad that Bricault calls “les dieux guérisseurs:” Bricault, \textit{Atlas de la diffusion}, 8.
Museum in Tunis, which depicts the god in his normal attire and hairstyles standing while resting his left hand on a snake-wrapped trunk, with any of the Asklepios of Giustini types (Figures 5, 6). As even the casual viewer can see, the two images are composed in a very similar manner, using the same arrangement of dress folds, the same pose, the same iconography, and even the same hairstyle. One might even argue that, in some cases, Sarapis is an Asklepios statue with a kalathos added. The visual connections between these two images underscore the theological similarities between the two gods: both gods are latecomers to the Greek pantheon, responsible for healing, associated with dreams and dream oracles, and expected to intervene in the affairs of mortals. Adopting Asklepios as a visual model, then, makes an easily-understood statement of who Sarapis is and what the viewer might expect from him, attaching particular religious meanings to Sarapis’ standing type.

Given the popularity of Sarapis debout in multiple media found throughout the Empire, Stambaugh’s idea of a cult statue depicting a standing Sarapis, probably created separately from the seated image, cannot be discounted. As V. Tran tam Tinh has argued, private religious works like the bronze statuettes, terracotta figurines, and

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marble reliefs and statues highlighted in his 1983 catalog often reference publicly available images of the gods, suggesting that there must have been an original standing Sarapis statue upon which these varied representations relied. These images of Sarapis *debout*, however, employ a dizzying variety of attributes and arm positions, making this type particularly variegated. Tran tam Tinh divides these examples into five main types, described in the table below:

**Table 1: Tran tam Tinh’s Major Types of Sarapis *debout* Images (summarized from Tran tam Tinh, *Serapis debout*, 37-38).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tran tam Tinh Type</th>
<th>Left Hand</th>
<th>Right Hand</th>
<th>Optional Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Raised, on scepter</td>
<td>Lowered</td>
<td>Patera, Three-Headed Kerberos, in right hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Lowered</td>
<td>Raised, on scepter</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Holding a cornucopia</td>
<td>Lowered</td>
<td>Patera, in right hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Holding a scepter (optional)</td>
<td>Raised, with crown (optional)</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Lowered</td>
<td>Lowered</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though ideal sculptures of most Greco-Roman deities also employ a wide variety of types, these disparities in body positioning and attributes are unusually high for the

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25 “Comme on le sait, dans toutes les religions institutionnelles, surtout dans celles régies par un clergé bien structuré, l’imagerie cultuelle publique correspond toujours à une théologie bien déterminée, à des critères de représentations plastique conformes à la doctrine officielle, acceptés par le clergé et le peuple.” Tran tam Tinh, *Sérapis debout*, 10-11.

26 Ibid., 37-38. Note that each major type has several subtypes based on the presence or absence of the optional attributes. Tran tam Tinh’s typology relies heavily on earlier work on Sarapis’ sculptural and terracotta types, especially A. Michaelis, “Sarapis standing on a Xanthian marble in the British Museum,” *JHS* 6 (1885). He also cites an unpublished thesis: N. Goodwin Reynolds, “The Archaeological Evidence for the Iconography of Sarapis” (1948), 156-77.
relatively small number of Sarapis sculptures known. For example, in the *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae* (*LIMC*), G. Clerc and J. Leclant identify 43 modes of representation for Sarapis, most known in three or four discrete examples. They argue that Sarapis’ representations are especially varied, suggesting that fidelity to particular sculptural types was not a priority for local communities employing this type to represent the god. Regardless of what the Bryaxis Sarapis looked like, then, Sarapis was a god whose general form was well known and found throughout the Empire, but whose representations were inconsistent at best, creating an eclectic corpus of Sarapis images upon which Greek communities could draw in sculpting the god.

Both types appeared throughout the Mediterranean as cult statues, without any strong indication of regional preferences. The *debout* type seems to have been used as a main cult statue in sanctuaries at Ephesus and Xanthos in Asia Minor, Pozzuoli in Italy, and Dougga in Tunisia, as well as popularly in private metal and terracotta statuettes found throughout the Empire. Sarapis *debout* types appear relatively infrequently in Greece, though their relative paucity may be explained by the large number of detached marble and terracotta Sarapis heads known from sites like Thessaloniki and Corinth, as well as the long-standing trade in metal and terracotta statuettes known from antiquity.

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27 Leclant, “Sarapis,” 666-67. For purposes of comparison, Theseus, whom Greeks and Roman worshipped for much longer and depicted more frequently in vase painting, has 53 known modes of representation in his *LIMC* article, and Asklepios, from whom Sarapis borrows much of his Greco-Roman representation, has 37 types in his *LIMC*. Of course, every scholar can define types differently, so we cannot conclude that Sarapis’ depictions were objectively more variable than those of more mainstream Greco-Roman deity.
into the modern day. The known examples of Sarapis debout from secure contexts in Greece include and the Gortyna example discussed below (Figure 7), two marble statues from Delos (one specifically from Sarapieion C: Delos A 126), a silver statuette from Paramythia in Epirus, now in the British Museum, a relief on the smaller arch of Galerius from Thessaloniki.

Though busts of the god seem to have been the most popular format for Sarapis, the enthroned image of Sarapis may have been another popular way to represent the god. This format was used as a cult statue at Delos, Corinth, and Gortyna in Greece, as well as in Perge in Asia Minor, Seleucia Pieria in Syria, Leptis Magna, and Sarsina in Umbria (Figure 8). In the next few sections, I turn to examples of the debout and enthroned types from Greece, exploring their composition and attributes as well as their artistic relationships with statues from elsewhere in the Empire, in order to demonstrate the lack of local adaptation we see in these images.

28 Tran tam Tinh, Sérapis debout. IB 24 and fig. 38; IB 25 and fig. 39
29 Ibid., no. III, 10, fig. 100.
30 Ibid., no. VI, 3, fig. 291.
31 Kater-Sibbes, Preliminary catalogue, no. 422.
32 F.W. Norris, "Isis, Sarapis and Demeter in Antioch of Syria," HThR 1982(1982): 194. Because the statue was not found associated with Seleucia Pieria’s Sarapis temple, Norris argues that it cannot be safely assumed to have been a cult statue. The size, material (marble) and association with the area of Antioch in Syria, long associated with the cult of Sarapis (as Tacitus’ account of the original Sarapis statue’s journey from Sinope tells us), suggests that this statue is a strong candidate for a cult statue or a privately used copy of a cult statue.
34 M.-C. Budischovsky, La diffusion des cultes isiaques autour de la mer Adriatique., vol. 1(Leiden: Brill, 1977), no. VII,1 and pl. XXIIIa, with extensive bibliography.
2.2.2 Sarapis _debout_ at Gortyna and Leptis Magna

I turn here to the most complete example of Sarapis _debout_ known from Greece: the statue of Sarapis found in the sanctuary of the Egyptian gods at Gortyna on southern Crete (Figure 7). G. Olivero’s 1913-1914 excavations revealed an over-life-sized white marble image of a standing Sarapis, left hand resting on a scepter, flanked on the right by a seated Cerberus. The statue was found in a slump layer in front of a podium that ran along the temple cella’s eastern wall, along with three other large scale marble sculptures: a statue of a garlanded Isis or Isis devotee, a headless statue of Hermes, and a base of a statue that I. Romeo argues belongs to a sculpture of the Orontes River. Given the context, scholars agree that the Sarapis, Isis, and Hermes probably served as cult images set up on the podium. To the south of the cella stood a water crypt,

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36 Tran tam Tinh identifies this sculpture as Hermanubis, but the head is broken in such a way that prevents any clear identification. Tran tam Tinh, _Sérapis debout_, 13.

37 Romeo, _Gortina III: Le sculture_, 35.

38 Guerrini argues that these sculptures were probably copied from an Alexandrian cult group, but Romeo correctly points out that the Sarapis is known from several minor examples in Egypt and around the eastern Mediterranean, and the Isis is also well known from Hellenistic prototypes copied elsewhere in the Mediterranean. Tran tam Tinh collects 41 examples of the Sarapis type. (See Tran tam Tinh, _Sérapis debout_, 92-106.) Instead, Romeo argues, it is more likely that these two common types were reproduced in monumental form and combined to form a program of cult images for the Gortyna sanctuary: L. Guerrini, "La statua femminile DP 1159 dei giardini del Quirinale," in _Il palazzo del Quirinale: studi preliminari sulle collezioni di antichità_, ed. L. Guerrini and C. Gasparri (Roma: L’erma di Bretschneider, 1985), fig. 10; Romeo, _Gortina III: Le sculture_, 37.
accessed by a set of descending stairs beginning at the cella’s upper southeastern edge.\textsuperscript{39} Remnants of a columned portico remain to the sanctuary’s west, but further excavation is required to understand its relationship to the Egyptian sanctuary.

The Gortyna Sarapis is remarkably well preserved: only the lower part of the right arm and most of the staff is missing. Sarapis stands with both knees slightly bent and his weight balanced on the straighter right leg. The god wears his hair parted in the middle in an \textit{anastole} hairstyle, with the front pair of locks crowned by another set of paired locks above.\textsuperscript{40} A large \textit{modius}, decorated with raised vertical bands occasionally arranged in groups of three, sits atop the head. The hair hangs to the shoulders, carved in deeply drilled, spiraling locks of hair that cover the ears. The face below the hair is consistent with other Roman ideal sculptures: arched brows, clearly defined lids, almond shaped eyes, broad and fleshy nose, and an elongated oval face shape with a thick, bushy beard and moustache.

A three-headed Cerberus sits next to the left leg, attached up to the level of Sarapis’ ankle. The dog has slightly rounded legs, large and heavily articulated paws, shaggy necks, and small heads with mouths opened slightly. Sarapis wears a heavy

\textsuperscript{39} The water-crypt’s architecture clearly intended to replicate the experience of going underground. Many water-crypts at other Egyptian sanctuaries in Greece, such as those at Rhodes, Thessaloniki, and Sarapieion A on Delos, actually went underground. See R.A. Wild, \textit{Water in the Worship of Isis and Sarapis} (Leiden: Brill, 1981); H. Siard, “La crypte du Sarapieion A de Délos et le procès d’Apollônios,” \textit{BCH} 122(1998); “L’Hydreion.”

\textsuperscript{40} The \textit{anastole} has strong associations with Alexander the Great and other late Classical works. Romeo compares this example’s hairstyle with the \textit{anastole} that appears in a head of Asklepios now in the Ny Carlsburg Glyptothek: F. Poulsen, \textit{Catalogue of ancient sculpture in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek} (Copenhagen 1951), 89f; Plate 2, 95a; Romeo, \textit{Gortina III: Le sculture}, 101. For the \textit{anastole} in images of Sarapis, see LIMC “Sarapis,” Tran tam Tinh, \textit{Sérapis debout}, 14 and 39.
himation and a thin, baggy, short-sleeved chiton with a set of characteristic V-shaped folds at the neckline. The himation loops diagonally across the body, with a rolled band stretching from the left shoulder to the right hip. Because the chiton is so loose, a flap of drapery bunches near the right hip where it meets the himation’s rolled band. A vertical flap of drapery hangs from the left shoulder to the plinth. His large, heavily muscled arms are part of the same stone, not attached or joined, and an odd rounded strut connects the left forearm to the left bicep. The remnants of another strut are visible on the left vertical drapery fold, and would have connected the sculpture’s body to the now-missing center part of the scepter. The missing right arm would have extended downward and probably rested on the top of Cerberus’ head.

The Gortyna example employs several key components used to represent the god throughout the Mediterranean: Greco-Roman style, voluminous hair, the cylindrical modius headdress, the scepter, Cerberus, the V-shaped neck folds in the chiton, and the diagonally-arranged himation with its vertical folds that extend to the statue’s plinth. These attributes and styles closely follow several other examples of this type around the Empire. For example, Tran tam Tinh compares the Gortyna example to a cult statue of Sarapis from Leptis Magna (Figure 9). The North African example, which slightly predates the Gortyna Sarapis, depicts the god in the same form: standing with the left arm resting on a scepter and the right hand (now missing) resting on or near Kerberos’

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41 Sérapis debout, 13-16, 37-44.
The two statues share a similar attitude towards the body, covering the right arm with a loose chiton sleeve and leaving the left arm bare to reach upward, grasping the staff. They wear similar sandals, pose their lower bodies in the same way, and even arrange the curls of their beard in the same way.

Alongside the overarching similarities, however, are several major differences between the two that give each image its own distinctive style. The Leptis Magna Sarapis has a snake winding around its scepter that must allude to Asklepios and a crescent moon on its modius. Near the crown of the head are two oversized curls that may refer to the horns of Ammon, a common motif in Hellenistic ruler portraits. The drapery hangs in a different way, creating more of a right angle than a diagonal across the body, with a heavy loop of drapery falling over the left shoulder down to the hip. The chiton has a more intensive and schematic set of folds, and the right sleeve seems to tuck into the mantle. From a more technical standpoint, the proportions on the Leptis Magna example are less harmonious: Kerberos is much smaller and less menacing and the lower half of the body is undersized and leans sideways at a precarious angle.

Given these symbolic and technical differences, these two images interpret the internationally available image of Sarapis in locally appropriate style and technique. The Leptis Magna example is iconographically overdetermined, combining most of Sarapis’

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more canonical iconography with Asklepios’ snake and Ammon’s horns to create a new, highly syncretic image of the god. The snake winding around the staff alludes to Asklepios’ rod, one of the god’s most common attributes, and the horns refer to Zeus Ammon or Ammon, a god associated with kingship in both the Greek East and North Africa. The Gortyna Sarapis, on the other hand, depicts the god in a much simpler and more idealizing format with more lifelike proportions. Kerberos is much more prominent in this example, perhaps alluding to Sarapis’ role as a soter in Greek religion, someone who has tamed fate and even death. Both choices are well within the realm of Sarapis’ established roles. By highlighting certain roles over others within the internationally available framework of Tran tam Tinh’s Type 1A, these devotees imagined a global version of Sarapis, one that successfully combined Egyptian religious priorities with Greco-Roman artistic style.

2.2.3 Sarapis Enthroned at Corinth, Alexandria, and Rome

The iconography of the seated Sarapis type is more consistent than that of the Sarapis debout type. In most cases, Sarapis sits on a high-backed chair, with the left leg held close to the chair and the right splayed slightly forward to give the body a more dynamic seat. Sarapis usually wears a sleeved chiton with a mantle draped across the lap and over the left shoulder, though there are semi-nude examples from Rhodes, and

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44 Asklepios' rod is much shorter than Sarapis' scepter, and rarely comes above waist height. The best comparanda for the Leptis Magna statue’s snake-wrapped scepter is a scepter from a statue of Asklepios found on the Quirinal in Rome (Amelung, Die Skulpturen, 29 no. 17, pl. 4). The rest of the statue should not be compared with the Leptis Magna example.
Delos.\textsuperscript{45} The god’s left arm is usually raised to hold a long scepter (missing from every currently known example), and the right hand usually falls to rest on the head of a one or three-headed Kerberos dog. The god’s general dress and hairstyles remain the same, with long hair and beard shown in tight ringlets and an idealized mature male face and body. Sarapis usually wears sandals, and occasionally rests his feet on a shallow footstool.

One such Sarapis was found just south of the west end of the northwest stoa at Corinth (Figure 10).\textsuperscript{46} The statue is only preserved to .79m high, broken roughly at waist height. The plinth is broken into two parts, along the right edge of the throne. On the plinth’s right portion are four remaining paws of a dog, most likely another three-headed Cerberus, as is typical in depictions of Sarapis. The dog’s hind quarters were carved from the same piece of marble as the throne in such a way that the dog’s left leg now looks like a high relief carving on the throne’s right side. Cerberus clearly faced the viewer, and did not rear to place his legs on the throne in the manner of lions in Kybele statues, as Johnson claimed.\textsuperscript{47} Beneath the dog’s belly sprouts a pair of wheat stalks. Because of the point at which the main break occurs, we cannot determine whether the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{45} Delos Museum A 1990, which dates to before 166 BCE; Rhodes Museum T2772, which should date to roughly the same period (see Chapter 4).
\textsuperscript{47} Johnson, \textit{Corinth IX}, 1, 31. Johnson’s reconstruction was proposed before a new piece of the plinth, containing Cerberus’ front paws, was found.
\end{flushright}
sculpture wore a *chiton* or not. Some examples of the seated Sarapis wear a *chiton*, such as the two partial torsos from Gortyna,\(^4^8\) while others, mostly statuettes like the marble example from Sarapieion B on Delos, depict the god semi-nude (without the *chiton*) in a manner more consistent with enthroned representations of Zeus.\(^4^9\) In either case, the god probably sat with his right arm resting on the throne’s armrest and his left arm raised to grasp a scepter.\(^5^0\)

Although this example is also lacking its head, we can reconstruct the god’s facial features through several heads of Sarapis that have been found at Corinth. One such head, Corinth Museum S-1982-3, may have come from a similar but smaller statuette of Sarapis enthroned and probably reproduces a likely option for the seated Corinth example (Figure 11).\(^5^1\) The white marble head, broken off from the rest of the statuette, was found in unstratified fill to the east of the Theater. E. Milleker identifies the head as Sarapis based on the presence of a dowel-hole at the top of the head for a *kalathos* or *modius*.\(^5^2\) Based on the hair’s flattened surface and the presence of narrow drill channels between the hair’s locks, Milleker dates this head to the Severan period, placing it slightly later than the seated Sarapis.

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\(^4^8\) Romeo, *Gortina III: Le sculture*, cat. nos. 17, 18.


\(^5^0\) Nearly all examples of the seated Sarapis type depict the god raising his left arm, almost certainly towards a scepter. For several examples, see Leclant, “Sarapis,” nos. 1-19 and the accompanying illustrations.

\(^5^1\) Milleker, “Three heads of Sarapis from Corinth,” 134.

\(^5^2\) Ibid.
This head depicts Sarapis in the same Greco-Roman classicizing mode as the debout example from Gortyna: with neck-length drilled curls crowned by an anastole, a shaggy beard of snail curls covering the lower half of an oval-shaped face, prominent cheekbones, a fleshy nose, and almond-shaped eyes with defined upper and lower lids. There are a few key differences between the Corinth and the Gortyna example: The Corinth Sarapis’ beard is divided by a drilled line, the hair closest to the face is drilled in vertical columns of curls, and the curls at the back of the head are flatter and less well-defined, giving the impression that a fillet held the hair in place.\(^53\) Still, the two representations are closely related, demonstrating at least some interest in representing the god’s face and hair in a consistent manner.

There is no contextual evidence to suggest that the Corinth statue served as a cult image, though its large scale, careful carving, and findspot near two Sarapis sanctuaries and two Isis sanctuaries attested by Pausanias strongly suggest the possibility.\(^54\) No scholar has suggested a date for the sculpture, but nearly all the examples of the seated Sarapis type date generally to the Roman period, and most dated examples in the round belong to the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE. A 2nd century CE date is consistent with the sharp, schematic drapery folds and the detailed carving of the feet and sandals, as well

\(^{53}\) Ibid.

\(^{54}\) Pausanias II, 4,6 also places two precincts of Sarapis in this area, which leads Johnson to associate this statue tentatively with those buildings. Johnson, *Corinth IX*, 1, 31.
as the dates that E. Milleker gives three other heads of Sarapis from Corinth.\textsuperscript{55} Stuart Jones dates the object’s closest comparanda, a seated Sarapis from the Capitoline Museum in Rome, to the 2nd century CE, further supporting a 2nd century CE date for the Corinth example.\textsuperscript{56} The statue is also quite close to a marble statuette, supposedly from Alexandria but now in Cambridge, that depicts the god seated on an elaborate high-backed chair, with a single-headed Sarapis and resting his feet on a shallow footrest turned at an oblique angle to the viewer.\textsuperscript{57}

The close relationships between the Greek Sarapis statues and their international counterparts suggest that images of Sarapis are operating in much the same way as more mainstream images of the Greek gods and goddesses. While there is occasional evidence for local adaptation and production in local techniques and styles, as in the case of the Gortyna and Leptis Magna Sarapis \textit{debout} statues, the enthroned Sarapis statues seem to follow an internationally available mode of representing the god. In this way, communities are using and circulating these images in the same way that they might an image of Asklepios or Zeus: they might add a locally-appropriate symbol or have sculptors produce the images using local sculpting techniques, but these images are ultimately designed for translocal and transregional legibility.\textsuperscript{58} Sarapis is not an

\textsuperscript{55} When I examined the statue during the summer of 2012, I did not observe any visible toolmarks. Because the statue has been stored outdoors for a long time, the original surface has weathered significantly.

\textsuperscript{56} Capitoline Museum 217; Kater-Sibbes, \textit{Preliminary catalogue}, no. 626; Leclant, "Sarapis," no. 10b.

\textsuperscript{57} Kater-Sibbes, \textit{Preliminary catalogue}, no. 8, pl. 1.

\textsuperscript{58} See the discussion of these terms in Chapter 1 and Mandaville, "Territory and Translocality."
image designed only for Gortynians, Cretans, or even Greeks, but one meant to speak to the international audiences that used these sanctuaries.

2.3 The Guise of the Goddess: Isis' Iconography

In turning to Isis' iconography, several new challenges arise. First, as mentioned in the introduction, Isis’ types vary considerably more than those of Sarapis. Even in her earliest incarnations, Egyptian artists lacked a clearly defined iconography for depicting the goddess; instead she frequently syncretizes with and subsumes other deities. Her only clear identifier in Egyptian art prior to the Ptolemaic period is the occasional use of the set hieroglyph, which depicts a stepped seat, as a headdress. Despite the wide variety of precedents to choose from, however, it seems that Isis’ Egyptian image did not journey across the sea with her, leading us to yet another interpretive issue: Isis, as depicted by Greek sculptors, looks like a Greek goddess. While Egyptian-produced statues of Sarapis almost invariably depicted the god in a Greco-Roman naturalistic style, Isis’ Hellenized image represents a fundamental shift in her representation from her previous life in Egyptian religion and art. Thus, in analyzing images of Isis, modern scholars and ancient viewers have both experienced cognitive dissonance. Why is the Egyptian goddess par excellence, the goddess arguably most closely associated with the

idea of foreignness and exotic rituals in the Greco-Roman imagination, so carefully reinterpreted in this way?

On a more conceptual level, Isis’ representation in Greece is further complicated by issues of chronology, a lack of regional preferences for types, and the significant formal overlaps between representations of the goddess and her devotees. As I will demonstrate in this section, local communities produced images of Isis that used the Hellenizing artistic *koiné* of the Roman Empire, but also employed a wide and inconsistent variety of Egyptianizing symbols. By combining a Greco-Roman body with Egyptianizing attributes, these images walked a delicate line between Greek, Egyptian, and Roman visual cultures while creating an overall image that fit in well with artistic traditions of female representation in Greek and Roman art. I argue that these statues altered the goddess in two key ways. First, these images recontextualize Isis within the Greco-Roman pantheon. Paired with a male divinity that looked much like Asklepios or Zeus, these new Greek images of Isis presented her as a natural continuation of the Greek pantheon, as a goddess who could similarly be connected to familiar figures like Aphrodite or Demeter. Isis’ new relationship with Greece, however, deterritorializes her. As I discussed in the introduction to this chapter, this new Isis belongs to a broader expanse of space and time: to Greece, Egypt, and all the new places she will appear, to the present and also her Egyptian past. Semantically, this Isis is stretched too thin.

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60 These problems will be discussed further in the next section.
Hellenizing Isis makes her mean too many things to too many people, rendering the goddess an empty *sema* whose meaning must be reconstructed by building spatial and contextual relationships with other objects and ideas.

### 2.3.1 Previous Research on Isis Typologies

Unlike Sarapis, no literary accounts exist of any particular images of Isis in Ptolemaic Egypt.\(^6\) This lack of textual evidence and the diversity of her visual modes of representation led R.S. Bianchi to conclude Isis has no single antecedent or ür-image.\(^6\) Despite the lack of an “original,” Isis’ sculpture in Greece almost uniformly depicts the goddess in a Hellenized style. Not a single Egyptian statue of Isis, imported or locally made, has been found in a Greek sanctuary.\(^6\) Indeed, there exists only one site where

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\(^6\) Some scholars argue that the new Sarapis statue may have also prompted the creation of a new Isis statue in Ptolemaic Egypt: S. Albersmaier, *Untersuchungen zu den Frauenstatuen des ptolemäischen Ägypten*, Aegyptiaca Trevernsia (Mainz: von Zabern, 2002), 99-103. This theory has not been well received by Isis scholars. Contra Albersmaier, see R.S. Bianchi, “Not the Isis knot.,” *Bulletin of the Egyptological Seminar* 2(1980): 18-23; J. Eingartner, *Isis und ihre Dienerinnen in der Kunst der römischen Kaiserzeit. Mmemosyne Supplement* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 30-32; S. Nagel, “The Goddess’s New Clothes. Conceptualising an ‘Eastern’ Goddess for a ‘Western’ Audience,” in *The Dynamics of Transculturality: Concepts and Institutions in Motion*, ed. A. Flüchter and J. Schlöttli (New York: Springer Publishing, 2015). In particular, Eingartner suggests that the *Knotenpalla* developed in Athens in the 2nd century BCE. As argued elsewhere in this chapter, statues from Delos and Rhodes demonstrates that a mature version of this type was available to Greek devotees in the Cyclades in the 3rd century BCE. Perhaps the idea of a Ptolemaic cult statue to Isis should be reconsidered, though the lack of clear literary or art historical evidence would hinder such a project.

\(^6\) Eingartner, “Images of Isis.”

\(^6\) Romeo argues that the Gortyna Sarapis and Isis were carved by an Alexandrian school working in southern Crete. This argument is intensely problematic. Her definition of the Alexandrian style is vague: she describes the style as a mixture of Classicizing style with the Alexandrian cultural experience. This definition could be applied to nearly every image of the Egyptian gods throughout the entire Mediterranean, and many are known to be products of local workshops. While Marcadé does argue for the existence of an Alexandrian school at Alexandria, Romeo offers no evidence (artists’ signatures, for example) to support the specific presence of an Alexandrian school working at Gortyna. Further, even if we accept that Egyptian sculptors worked on the island during the late 2nd century CE, it is more likely that
Greek imitations of Egyptian styles of Isis sculptures may have been used as cult images, which will be discussed at length in Chapter 5. Instead, Greek sculptors tended to represent Isis’ body and face in a Greco-Roman naturalistic style, adding on exotic costumes and attributes to differentiate her from other deities. Isis’ images thus employed eclecticism and overused symbolism, packing attribute upon attribute to ensure that the goddess’ statues could make precise theological allusions.64

The first work to cover Isis’ representation in the Greek world was G. Vandebeek’s 1946 book, De interpretatio graeca van de Isisfigur.65 The book is heavily philological, but attempts to consider whether the Isis worshipped in Greece was Hellenized. Using contemporary (and thus theoretically obsolete) ideas about the process of Hellenization and the relationships between texts and images, Vandebeek’s work argues that the version of Isis worshipped in Greece is almost exclusively Greek, a shift achieved through the process of syncretizing Isis with Greek deities. Vandebeek’s work was not picked up by other scholars, perhaps because Isis was not a popular topic of study at the time. His work still remains a marginal footnote in Isiac scholarship, and is not frequently discussed.

64 Bianchi, “Images of Isis.” On eclecticism, see Perry, Aesthetics of emulation, 112-49.
65 Because the book is in Dutch, I have not read this work. Rather, as is standard among most Isiac scholars, I summarize the work through the French summary provided by author.
J. Eingartner’s 1990 book, *Isis und ihre Dienerinnen in der Kunst der römischen Kaiserzeit*, divided the corpus of Isis sculpture from the entire Roman Empire into two main types based on the goddess’ costume: Isis in the *chiton* with a *palla* knotted between the breasts (*Knotenpalla*), and Isis in a long *chiton* with a floral garland, special sash, or fringed mantle wrapped in a diagonal band across the chest (*diplax*).\(^{66}\) While Eingartner dates the “original” image of the *diplax* type to the 1st century CE, the *Knotenpalla* type first appears in Rhodian examples from the 3rd century BCE; both types continued well into the 3rd century CE.\(^{67}\) Eingartner associates the *Knotenpalla* with Greece and the Greek east, but his argument relies on images of Isiac devotees more than images of the goddess.\(^{68}\) In fact there are only a few Greek sites where Isis is depicted in this costume (Rhodes, Delos, Marathon),\(^{69}\) while the *diplax* and its more Hellenizing subtypes appears at Gortyna, Ierapetra, Dion, and probably Thessaloniki (as I will argue in Chapter 4).

\(^{66}\) Eingartner, *Isis und ihre Dienerinnen*, 25-33, 45-48. Eingartner’s argument is based on Kopienkritik approaches to these images, particularly the idea of reconstructing an ür-image through the commonalities found in copies, but his dating of the earliest appearances of the diplax type to the 1st century BCE is sound. Owing to the difficulty in identifying fragments of diplax types as Isis, I am reluctant to pronounce Eingartner’s dates or any others as absolute. Briefer commentaries on Isiac iconography and types are available in Malaise, *Les conditions de pénétration*, 170-81; Walters, *Attic grave reliefs*.


\(^{68}\) These depictions of devotees in Isiac dress appear primarily in funerary reliefs, and have been well studied by Eingartner and Walters.

\(^{69}\) These are the examples from Marathon, Delos, and Rhodes, described here and in the next section. Only the example from Marathon, described below, can be securely identified as a cult statue. On Delos, there are several statuettes of the goddess in this costume, all of which are much smaller than the securely identified cult statue of Isis from Sarapielon C. These examples include Delos Museum A 2255 and A 378, as well as the variants A 5370 and A 5373. See Marcardé, *Au musée*, 418-44, pl. LVII. The Rhodian example will be analyzed further below. There is a sculpture in the round from Lakonia, now in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, that depicts the subject in a modified *Knotenpalla* (NM 1617, N. Kalsas, *Sculpture in the*...
E. Walter’s 1988 book, *Attic grave reliefs that represent women in the dress of Isis*, dominates English-language scholarship on Isiac dress. Though her corpus primarily considers funerary reliefs depicting women dressed in the *Knotenpalla* costume, Walter’s well-structured typology and thorough analysis of case studies offered the first chronological analysis of Isiac sculpture. Her work demonstrated that these statues tend to follow the stylistic *zeitgeist*, and could even have been the work of one or two workshops active in Athens. Most importantly, Walter’s work helped begin a broader discussion about how Egyptianizing iconography integrated into the artistic and cultural landscapes of Greek cities by suggesting that these stelai belonged to came from mainstream workshops and stood in public cemetery spaces in Hellenistic and Roman Attica.

From a Greek perspective, at least, there is no evidence to suggest a strong affinity for one type over the other. The only possible connection is one of chronology. The Rhodes and Delos *Knotenpalla* statues date to the early Hellenistic period, while the Dion, Ierapetra, and Gortyna *diplax* and other more Hellenized costumes date to the High Empire.\(^{70}\) It has been suggested that the *Knotenpalla*, which has antecedents in

\(^{70}\) N. Kaltsas has identified this image as an image of the goddess herself, which conflicts with Eingartner’s and Walters’ more thorough analyses of this image.

\(^{70}\) The *Knotenpalla* type’s persistence into the Roman period, as evidenced by its repeated use in the funerary portraits from the 1st century BCE into the 4th century CE further undercuts the weak correlations between

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Ptolemaic representations of Egyptian goddesses, was used to depict the goddess in the Hellenistic and early Roman period. In later periods, when we see more cult images using the diplax type, it is possible the Knotenpalla becomes more closely associated with Isis devotees and the cult in general than the goddess herself. As with all ideal sculpture, it is difficult to draw this distinction with certainty, especially given the large corpus of funerary reliefs that depict women in the guise of Isis. At this point, we have too few examples to secure a more detailed timeline; even one or two new objects could upset this fragile chronology.

There are also a two other types of Isis statues that borrow heavily from more traditional Greco-Roman goddess types: the Isis Fortuna and the Isis lactans type. The Isis Fortuna, which appears frequently in bronze statuettes across Greece, particularly in Macedonia and western Thrace, and as an over life-sized cult statue at Dion, largely

the Hellenistic period and the Knotenpalla. I plan to explore this issue further in an article discussing the portrait stelai and the Knotenpalla's miraculous connotations in portraiture.

71 See, among many examples, Plantzos, "The Iconography of Assimilation," 390-2; Albersmaier, "Griechisch-römische Bildnisse der Isis," 310-11; Walters, Attic grave reliefs, 4-15. Regarding the Egyptian antecedents of the Knotenpalla type, which are not in dispute, see also Bianchi, "Not the Isis knot.," 10-12; Albersmaier, Untersuchungen zu den Frauenstatuen, 91-4; Nagel, "The Goddess's New Clothes," 196-97. Nagel notes that the costume is also used for representations of non-royal women, suggesting that the knot is part of normal Ptolemaic-period Egyptian fashion and thus not specifically associated with Isis or Ptolemaic queens.

72 This corpus has been published in Walters, Attic grave reliefs. Despite Paraskevi Martzavou's recent argument that these reliefs were displayed in the Isis sanctuary in Athens, these reliefs were probably not included in a sanctuary's sculptural assemblage and are thus not included in this dissertation (see Martzavou, "Priests and Priestly Roles," 69. I am planning to deal with these objects in an article covering Isiac portraiture more broadly.

73 As the publication of Bricault and Veymiers' Bibliotheca Isiaca II demonstrates, there is a wealth of unpublished Isiac material in the storerooms of Greek museums. On the impact of that volume, see Mazurek, "Reconsidering the role."
borrows from Fortuna’s standard chiton and mantle attire, cornucopia, and occasionally rudder while adding Isiac attributes, particularly the basileion crown, which features a solar disc at the center usually crowned with feathers and/or a hooded cobra. The Isis lactans, which appears in only one life-sized example at Messene24 a bronze statuette from Delphi,25 and an ivory example from Attica,26 derives from images of Eleusinian Demeter. This type depicts the goddess seated on a rounded cista in a Greek-style dress belted under the breasts, nursing an infant Harpokrates balanced on her lap. Since these types do not appear as commonly in Greece as the Knotenpalla and diplax types, and their iconography should be known to the average reader, I will focus my attention here on the more Isis-centered types.

Like the two main Sarapis types, there is considerable variety in these modes of representing Isis and the attributes used to modify the goddess and her identity. Depending on the particular type or syncretization of Isis shown, sculptors added in a wide variety of attributes, from Demeter’s sheaves of wheat to Fortuna’s rudder and cornucopia. In the paragraphs to follow, I analyze representative examples of the Knotenpalla and diplax/chiton and mantle types and organize their main iconographic

25 V. Tran tam Tinh, Isis lactans. Corpus des monuments gréco-romains d’Isis allaitant Harpocrate (Leiden: Brill, 1973), no. A-14, fig. 36-37. It is important to note how popular the Isis lactans type is outside of Greece, appearing throughout Italy, Asia Minor, and the rest of the western Empire. See Bricault’s atlas for an excellent, if slightly out of date, representation of the distribution of this type outside of Greece (Bricault, Atlas de la diffusion.)
26 Tran tam Tinh, Isis lactans, no. A-23, fig. 46-47.
features. I argue that these two types represented different priorities. The Knotenpalla, recognizable as Isis to any viewer, ensures that viewers would recognize the Egyptian goddess at the expense of making obvious allusions to Greco-Roman deities. The diplax/chiton and mantle types, on the other hand, asked the viewer to find allusions to other Greek and Roman deities at the expense of easy recognition. In the chapters to come, we will see how both types could be effectively deployed as part of a sanctuary’s broader sculptural landscape.

2.3.2 The Knotenpalla Type at Marathon

The best-preserved statue of Isis in the Knotenpalla comes from Herodes Atticus’ villa at Marathon. That sanctuary contained an unusual stepped pyramid set in an open square courtyard ringed with Egyptian-style pylons (Figures 12-14). Built in the 2nd century CE, the sanctuary featured a complex sculptural program that paired over life-sized images of Isis and Osiris-Antinous at the four entryways to the main sanctuary square. Of the 8 original Isis statues, four are preserved. Three wear a long-sleeved

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77 The sanctuary’s architecture and archaeology will play a major role in Chapter 5, and as such I only summarize briefly the most relevant contextual information.
chiton over a thin undergarment, a costume uncommon in Greco-Roman sculpture but canonical in Egyptian art (Figure 14).

The fourth, though stylistically similar to her counterparts, wears a mantle knotted between the breasts (the Knotenpalla) over a thin short-sleeved chiton (Figure 13). Careful attention has been paid to separate the mantle from the chiton, creating straps of fabric that emphasize the X that the mantle creates over the top half of the body.79 Because of the mantle’s arrangement around the shoulders and chest, the drapery falls in a paired set of diagonal folds that descend from the knot towards the hip, seen in all Knotenpalla examples. In most Knotenpalla images, Isis and her devotees hold a sistrum (a ritual rattle consisting of based on the shape of the ank in Egyptian hieroglyphs) in the left hand and a situla (a small ritual vessel in the shape of a female breast) in the right hand.80 The Marathon example, however, holds a strange hooked implement that Dekoulakou calls a seshed band close to the thigh in the right hand, and bends the left arm into a right angle at the elbow to create a semicircular curtain of drapery clutched in the left hand.81 Given the nearly 2400 years between Dekoulakou’s best comparanda for the seshed band and its associations with Horus and other male

79 In other examples of the Knotenpalla type, the straps flow into the fabric of the chiton more naturally, creating less of a separation. Eingartner includes an example from a German auction catalog that looks like a similar arrangement; Eingartner, Isis und ihre Dienerinnen, 8. I have not been able to track this piece down further or view it myself.

80 See, for example, the relief of Alexandra now in the National Archaeological Museum of Athens (NM 1193) and the sculpture of Isis in the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wiens. Kaltzsa, Sculpture in the National Archaeological Museum, 354; Walters, Attic grave reliefs, 36-40, 75-76, 97, 98 pl. 24a-b.

divinities, it is more likely that the object held in the right hand is either a reference to the more contemporaneous crooks used in New Kingdom and Late Period Egyptian funerary art or, conversely, a completely imagined Egyptianizing object. In addition to this hook, the goddess wears a short stepped wig with small curls set over six of Isis’ characteristic corkscrew curls, divided into sets of three that hang over each shoulder. Over the wig and curls is a thin cap with a rolled edge, featuring the front of a hooded cobra centered over the goddess’ face.

Although the knees and left arm are slightly bent, creating more dynamic planes in the composition, the statue on the whole follows Egyptian sculptural traditions in the body’s posture. The goddess stands in a rigid, frontal posture, with the body and right leg connected to a back pillar. The back pillar is practically unknown in Greek and Roman art, but a hallmark of Egyptian sculptural and compositional techniques. The left leg strides forward, but in a static fashion unusual in Hellenistic and Roman art. Rather than creating balance between the two sides by distributing weight unevenly between the limbs, this statue keeps both of its feet firmly planted on the plinth and balances the weight evenly across the body. This allusion to Egyptian techniques and composition reinforces the archaistic style used in depicting the body. Isis’ face has strong features

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82 Ibid., 32; Albersmaier, Untersuchungen zu den Frauenstatuen, 29; H. de Meulenaere, B. von Bothmer, and H.W. Müller, “Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period. 700 BC to AD 100. An Exhibition Held at the Brooklyn Museum, 18 October 1960 to 9 January 1961,” ed. Brooklyn Museum (New York: Brooklyn Museum, 1973), pl. 6, fig. 13, no. 6; pl. 30, fig. 68-69, no. 32; pl. 70, fig. 181, no. 74; pl. 86, fig. 230, no. 92.
83 Though Egyptian sculptures depicting members of both genders often use wigs of a similar texture, this layered combination of wig and corkscrew curls is unparalleled in Greco-Roman depictions of Isis.
reminiscent of an archaic kouros: rounded full cheeks, a bulbous chin, a broad nose with fleshy nostrils, and a slight smile in the lips. This archaic face mirrors the rigid frontal posture of the body, the elaborate hairstyle and dress, and the heaviness in the body’s proportions. The statue as a whole, then, gives a sense of belonging to both a distant past and place, as part of a nostalgic view towards the deep past that can be traced throughout Greek art and thought.\footnote{The bibliography on such a topic is enormous, but in this particularly case the most relevant works on this phenomena in literature are Vasunia, The gift of the Nile; Manolaraki, Noscendi Nilum. On the material side, see M.D. Fullerton, The Archaistic Style in Roman Statuary, Mnemosyne Supplementum (Leiden: Brill, 1990); C. Hallett, “The Archaic Style in Sculpture in the Eyes of Ancient and Modern Viewers,” in Making Sense of Greek Art, ed. V. Coltman (Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press, 2011).}

The Knotenpalla, with its characteristic drapery forming an X across the breasts, its cascading diagonal dress folds, and the central knot, would have been immediately recognizable as Isis. The earliest examples of this type date to the Hellenistic period, and are found in some of the cult’s earliest sanctuaries. Though it is not possible to date these examples definitely before the 2nd century BCE, their style suggests an earlier production in the 3rd century BCE. The type, however, continued in popularity in other media into the Roman period. By the time this statue was produced in the 2nd century CE, this image was distributed throughout Greece because of its popularity as a portrait type. As E. Walters and D.W. von Moock’s studies of Attic grave reliefs in the Roman period has demonstrated, grave reliefs depicting the devotee in the Knotenpalla make up
nearly one third of the known Athenian grave corpus in this period.\textsuperscript{85} Given these numbers and the high density of Isis shrines in Hellenistic and Roman shrines throughout Greece, we might assume that even the most disinterested viewer would have been able to recognize this type as an image of Isis.\textsuperscript{86} Even viewers who were not Isis devotees would have noticed how different this costume was from the clothes (or lack thereof) that other Greek female deities wore. The costume’s most immediate message, then, was one of difference. Isis in the Knotenpalla is a goddess whose attire and attributes seemed strange and new.

In this case, difference equated easily with foreignness. Because the costume departs so drastically from normal costumes worn by Greek goddesses and Greek women, viewers would need to look beyond familiar Greek works to understand these images. One possible point of connection would be the portraits of Ptolemaic queens, several of which use forms of the Knotenpalla as a way to align themselves with Isis. In an article examining Ptolemaic gem portraits, Dimitris Plantzos argues for a close relationship between images of Isis and the various Ptolemaic queens in the Hellenistic period. In fact, he argues, Greek producers of the gems probably composed their images


\textsuperscript{86} The relevant maps in Bricault’s atlas (Bricault, Atlas de la diffusion.) clarify just how many sites in Greece preserve some mention or evidence of Isiac worship. Indeed, nearly every Greek city active in the Hellenistic and Roman period has some evidence of an Isis sanctuary, whether literary, epigraphic, or archaeological.

77
of Isis based on royal portraits, a process that ultimately resulted in a generalized image of Isis that could be productively paired with images of Ptolemaic kings.\textsuperscript{87}

Other aspects of Isis’ image also connected her with the Ptolemies. As S. Albersmaier has noted, most of the type’s characteristic features (the Isiac knot, the corkscrew curls, the Hathoric elements of the crown, the \textit{situla} and the rattle-like \textit{sistrum}) have their origins in Ptolemaic queens and their appropriations of the goddess for their own royal representations.\textsuperscript{88} These images integrated Greek and Egyptian arts in complex ways, however, and we cannot think of the Ptolemaic dynasty’s art as purely Egyptian. Further, the traditional arrangement of the knot and its cascading diagonal dress folds do not appear on temple walls or stelai in Egypt before the Roman period, suggesting that the powerful priestly classes of ancient Egypt only adopted this artistic type after it appeared in the Greco-Roman world.\textsuperscript{89} As M.J. Versluys has argued in a recent essay, Hellenistic and Roman cults of Isis viewed Egyptian gods and the idea of Egypt more generally through an Orientalizing lens, constructing an imagery of Isis that prioritized the idea of the foreign that would resonate best with a Greco-Roman

\textsuperscript{87} Plantzos, "The Iconography of Assimilation," 402.
\textsuperscript{88} Albersmaier, "Griechisch-römische Bildnisse der Isis."
\textsuperscript{89} Similar arguments have been made by Malaise, "À propos de l'iconographie,"; "Note sur le noeud isiaque," \textit{Göttinger Miszellen} 143(1994). E. Walters argues that the knot and several other aspects of the \textit{Knotenpalla} costume are related to Isis’ New Kingdom depictions. While Isis does occasionally have a small knot in her dress set above the left breast, the relationship between these two knots is not clear. Further, the characteristic symbols associated with the \textit{Knotenpalla} do not appear in Egypt until the reign of Ptolemy V, further separating the two examples. She probably bases her argument on an out-of-date essay written by R.S. Bianchi on the topic of the knot. Bianchi, "Not the Isis knot,"; Walters, \textit{Attic grave reliefs}, 11-15.
Rather than a borrowed artifact of a foreign cult, this costume originated in Greco-Roman cultural imaginings about Egyptian goddesses.

For Greek communities, the \textit{Knotenpalla} thus constructed Isis’ distant origins, one of the three main tenets of the Isiac visuality. The \textit{Knotenpalla} does not invert completely the Greco-Roman paradigms of ideal sculpture, but this invented costume certainly played a key role in constructing Isis’ difference from other deities. While other Greek goddesses often wear characteristic costumes, these costumes are usually variations on the \textit{chitons} and mantles worn by mortal women. The point of the \textit{Knotenpalla}, then, is to remove Isis from the realm of the everyday and to place her and her unusual dress in the realm of exotic fantasy.

Though the Marathon \textit{Knotenpalla} is unusual in its archaistic style and imagined attributes, the costume appears frequently throughout the Empire. The most notable example is the Capitoline Isis, found at Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli, now in the Capitoline Museum (Figure 15). This finely carved image of translucent white marble most likely

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\textsuperscript{91} Capitoline Museum (Palazzo Nuovo) MC 744. Excavated by L. Michilli in the campaign of 1738-1740. Based on original location in the Canopeum of Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli, generally dated to 117-138 CE. Part of the Albani Collection. See (with attendant literature) Malaise, \textit{Les conditions de pénétration}, cat. 110, no 1433. Räder is skeptical about the statue’s original provenance and argues that it should not be considered part of the sculptural assemblage from Hadrian’s Villa: J. Räder, \textit{Die Statuarische Ausstattung der Villa Hadriana bei Tivoli} (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1983), cat. IV.18. Other scholars do not agree with Räder’s proposal. For example, Bricault includes this statue in his catalogue of Isiac objects from the Villa Adriana: Bricault, \textit{Atlas de la diffusion}, 157. For the purposes of this chapter, the statue’s iconography is more important than its context. It should be noted that Raeder, following J.R. Vulpio’s description of the statue in its first historical mention, argues that this is a statue of an Isiac priestess. While the features on this image are less idealized...
belonged to the sculptural program of the Canopeum. This statue depicts Isis wearing her trademark *Knotenpalla* costume: a long sleeved, clingy chiton under a heavier, fringed mantle knotted between the breasts. The mantle veils the head and hangs down the back to the plinth, creating a cape effect. Isis’ face and body are idealized, depicting the goddess with a rounded face, symmetrical features, and graceful positioning of the arms. Her features are a bit sharper than most Greek or Roman goddesses, with rather small eyes and lips and an angular nose. These idiosyncrasies do not rise to the level of portraiture, but do give the goddess more specificity in her bodily representation. On her feet, Isis wears a pair of thong sandals, as is common in representations of the goddess.

In addition to a very elegantly draped *Knotenpalla*, the Capitoline Isis has several other attributes that clarify her identity. On her head, the goddess wears an adaptation of the uraeus, featuring a solar disc crowned by a chevron of hooded snakes. The uraeus crowns a subtle version of Isis’ corkscrew locks hairstyle: the hair over the ears is arranged in loose, symmetrical waves parted down the middle, while the longer hair under the veil is arranged in corkscrew curls close to the neck. Isis also carries a sistrum and a situla, rounding out the usual repertoire of Isiac attributes.

than some images of Isis and other female deities in the Graeco-Roman world, they are not idiosyncratic enough to make a clear argument for identification as a personal portrait.

Although these two images are carved in vastly different styles (archaistic and naturalistic, respectively), the overall similarity between the two images demonstrates that there was consistency in the way Isis was represented across the Mediterranean. Both statues use the same iconography, the same dress, and the same hairstyles to identify a female goddess as Isis. Despite their stylistic differences, these iconographies "track" as Isis across the Mediterranean. The situla, sistrum, uraeus, and Isis knot form a set of what S. Nagel has called "transported iconographies."\textsuperscript{93} Much like the more syncretistic forms of Isis, such as Isis-Fortuna, these images redefine the classical and archaic ideas of the female divine form by implanting exoticizing iconographies into these familiar compositions. In doing so, these images remain legible and in some sense familiar to a broad audience of Greco-Roman viewers, while simultaneously highlighting the strangeness and foreignness that defined Isis as a deity. It is this tension, this cognitive dissonance between foreign and familiar, that made these images such effective signifiers of the cult for a public audience.

2.3.3 The Diplax Type at Gortyna and Rome

The more traditionally Greco-Roman diplax type appears at many other sites, including Thessaloniki, Dion, Athens, Delos, and Messene. The Isis statues of diplax type vary considerably in their attributes, arrangement of drapery and hair, and other

stylistic details, producing another heterogeneous corpus of Isis monuments.\textsuperscript{94} The costume itself stems from Classical and Hellenistic Greek sculpture and their Roman copies, and features a doubled-over mantle slung diagonally across the body.\textsuperscript{95} In the case of Isis and Isis devotees, the addition of a folded band at the top of the mantle or a floral garland often emphasizes the diagonal line. Isis statues of this type frequently carry the sistrum and situla as a way to further differentiate Isis from other subjects in the same costume.

An excellent example of this type joined the standing Sarapis described above in the sanctuary of the Egyptian gods at Gortyna (Figure 16).\textsuperscript{96} Found in the same context as the Sarapis statue described above, this image most likely functioned as a cult statue. The sculptor depicted Isis standing with her left hand lowered at her side, probably holding a now-missing situla, and her right hand raised to shake her sistrum. The goddess wears a thin, high-necked and sleeveless chiton with delicately carved folds covered by a diagonally draped mantle that hangs from her right shoulder down to her right hip. A fringed veil covers her head and hangs down to the shoulders, with the fringe almost brushing the elbows. At the top of the veil, directly in line with the nose, stands a round disc set inside another disc. This disc is an abbreviated form of Isis’ normal headgear, the basileion, which included the crown of Hathor and maa\textsuperscript{t} feathers.

\textsuperscript{94} Eingartner, \textit{Isis und ihre Dienerinnen}, 8-9, 33-34.
\textsuperscript{95} B.S. Ridgway, \textit{Hellenistic sculpture: the styles of ca. 100-31 BC} (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 166-68.
\textsuperscript{96} Romeo, \textit{Gortina III: Le sculture}, 33-39.
Many Isis statues throughout the Mediterranean feature this headpiece, which has its best comparanda in Late Period and Ptolemaic representations of Isis.⁹⁷

Under the veil, Isis wears her hair in corkscrew curls, with doughy, loose waves near the head’s crown. Her face has a classicizing look: oval face shape, fleshy nose, almond-shaped eyes with a strong brow, broad lips, and no signs of aging or individualized expression. Obvious struts connect the top of the sistrum to the right forearm and the lowered right wrist to the right hip. Because of the doughy curls and the heavy use of the drill in the chiton folds, I. Romeo dates this example to the late 2nd or early 3rd century CE.⁹⁸

Eingartner’s typology closely associates the diplax type with the Latin west. While the connection is not as close as Eingartner’s work would suggest, his research and Bricault’s atlas of Isiac material culture does demonstrate the wide distribution this type has across the Roman Empire. As such, we might productively compare the Gortyna diplax with two examples from Rome and its environs, now in the Capitoline Museum. The first, found in the Passo Corese to the northwest of Rome in 1953,⁹⁹ is perhaps the closest comparanda possible for the Gortyna example (Figure 17). The

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⁹⁸ Romeo, Gortina III: Le sculture.
⁹⁹ H.-J. Kruse, “Römische weibliche Gewandstatuen des zweiten Jahrhunderts n. Chr.,” (Georg-August Universität zu Göttingen, 1968 (1975)), 134, D34; Guerrini, "La statua femminile DP 1159," 64-66; Eingartner, Isis und ihre Dienerinnen, no. 94. Eingartner and Kruse both provide further bibliography, consisting of brief allusions to the statue in footnotes or catalogues.
goddess here wears the *diplox* over a peplos belted under the breasts, hanging from the right shoulder to cover the left hip. The peplos fold is visible just below the right hip, and the rest of the chiton hangs down in deeply drilled vertical folds. Like the Gortyna Isis, this example depicts the goddess with her corkscrew curls veiled by a short piece of cloth crowned with an Isiac symbol, here a triple uraeus behind which sprout sheaves of wheat.\(^{100}\) The Rome example, however, has a more classicizing face, and her head looks up and to the right. The statue’s raised right hand almost certainly held a sistrum, and the now missing left arm has a strut that could have supported a situla held close to the statue’s side. Based on stylistic and technical details, both Guerrini and Eingartner date this statue to the first half of the 2nd century CE, predating its counterpart at Gortyna by almost a century. Though it is worth noting that there is another statue of this type from the Pretorio at Gortyna,\(^{101}\) similar statues can be found throughout the empire, including another example from Rome,\(^ {102}\) Miletus,\(^ {103}\) and possibly North Africa.\(^ {104}\)

\(^{100}\) Guerrini, “La statua femminile DP 1159,” 63. Kruse also identifies these attributes as a sheaf of wheat, but I am not certain that it is not a solar disc.


\(^{103}\) Guerrini compares the Gortyna and Rome examples to a “Muse” from the Baths of Faustina at Miletus missing her hands and head. Without these parts of the statue, it’s impossible to tell whether this Muse could have been a statue of Isis, but the arrangement of the drapery is very similar to the Isis statues in the Capitoline and Terme museums. The Miletus statue now stands in the Archaeological Museum at Istanbul (no. 1999). Further bibliography can be found at H. Manderscheid, *Die Skulpturenausstattung der Kaiserzeitlichen Thermenanlagen* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1981), cat. 219; Guerrini, "La statua femminile DP 1159," 58.
The diplax type and its other counterparts, as it appears in Greece, cannot be considered part of a local/regional trend. Most examples date to the 2nd century CE or later, though again the sample size here is too small to make any definite statements on chronology. Though I have chosen the Gortyna example as a representation of this type, there exists extensive variation in this type: from the diplax with floral garland from Gortyna’s pretorio to the physically dynamic Isis Pelagia wearing a falling diplax and floral garland from Messene (Figure 18), this type comprises as series of unique images of Isis. If there were a localizing trend in the Isis diplax statues, the localism would have to have been context-specific, permitting different variations of the type to be displayed even at the same site. The trend seems to be a lack of pattern rather than a recognizable tendency to treat Isis in any particular way.

Still, a deep sense of Greek identity runs through these images. Choosing to employ a more Classicizing image of Isis like the diplax type also made several key arguments about the dedicator’s ideas of the goddess. Viewers might not have immediately recognized the diplax format, with its more Greco-Roman form of dress, as Isis. Indeed, there are several examples where context is our only indication that a sculpture represented Isis and not another Greek goddess. For instance, on Delos, the

\[\footnote{Archaeological Museum of Alexandria inv. 3882. Guerrini devotes a footnote explaining the problematic provenance of this object, which seems to have been first recorded at Lycopolis but may not belong to that site. See “La statua femminile DP 1159,” n. 14.} \]
cult image set up inside Sarapieion C depicts a female divinity in a chiton and mantle, leaning on her right leg and bending her left slightly (Figure 19). The body above the waist is missing, but nothing about this image would be inappropriate to a sculpture of Aphrodite. Only the statue’s location, on a platform inside a securely identified temple of Isis, fully identifies this image as Isis. Because the sculpture’s format alluded to a more traditional Greco-Roman goddess, the image prompted the viewer to connect these two disparate aspects of the goddess’ identity: Greek and Egyptian, familiar and foreign. By appropriating an Aphrodite type, Isis takes over the Greek goddess’ visual appearance while also subsuming Aphrodite within her henotheistic divinity.

Clearly, context cannot be ignored if we are to discuss images of Isis effectively. Had the cult statue been moved from its location, as several sculptures were in the early days of tourism and excavation on Delos, scholars probably would have identified this image as an Aphrodite. Still, the goal of the diplax and its variations was to allude to better-known depictions of Greco-Roman goddesses. In the sections that follow, I examine these images of Isis and Sarapis alongside the sculptures that accompanied

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105 The connection between the Delian cult image of Isis and Aphrodite types was first made by J. Marcadé in reference to a statuette of the same type, A 2399, found in the cistern of the Grand Palestra. See Kruse, "Römische weibliche Gewandstatuen," 134, no. D34; Guerrini, "La statua femminile DP 1159," 63-65; Eingartner, Isis und ihre Dienerinnen, no. 94; Marcadé, Au musée, 228-29. Marcadé must be referring to Aphrodite’s more clothed types that appeared in the late Hellenistic period, such as the Tiepolo Aphrodite. Of course, the allusion would be to an artistic cousin of that type, in which the mantle drapes over both legs to the left hip, as in Delos Museum A 4289, from the Nymphaeum in the House of Hermes. For that sculpture, see Walters, Attic grave reliefs, 15.

them from Rhodes and Thessaloniki. At Rhodes, Isis and Sarapis appeared alongside several sculptures imported from Egypt, as well as locally-made Egyptianizing sculptures. The result, I argue, was a landscape that illustrated Isis’ negotiated personality as a foreign yet Greek divinity through a practice of distributed personhood. At Thessaloniki, only one imported sculpture has been found, placing Isis and Sarapis within a highly Hellenized sculptural landscape. Here, the devotees translated Isis even further, constructing a space in which Isiac devotees could read Isis into traditionally Greco-Roman images of the gods.

2.4 Regional Distributions of the Knotenpalla and Diplax Types

In the above sections, I have explored the prevailing types used to depict Sarapis and Isis in Greek sanctuaries of the Hellenistic and Roman period. My analyses have demonstrated that these images have clear comparanda from sites around the Mediterranean and that there is little formal evidence to suggest the existence of local adaptation of the Egyptian gods. Instead of producing Egyptianizing statues, Greek

107 There is one potential exception at Argos. R. Veymiers has effectively argued that a Peloponnesian-made statue of Harpokrates (Argos Archaeological Museum) depicts the god in a costume and cylindrical format often used for Telesphoros, a companion of Asklepios often found in the region and frequently associated with the Egyptian deities. Most statues of Harpokrates in Greece follow the format seen at Thessaloniki (MΘ 844, included in the discussion of the Thessaloniki Sarapieion in Chapter 4): a voluptuous, nude adolescent with a chlamys draped over the shoulder, leaning against a support, carrying a cornucopia and holding their right arm near his mouth, index finger outstretched. Even this seemingly local adaptation, however, has comparanda from around Greece and the Empire, suggesting that even this idiosyncratic image is part of a broader, Mediterranean-wide interpretation of the Egyptian deities. Veymiers notes other examples of Telesphoros statues in Isiac sanctuaries at Philippi (H. Rühfel, "Telesphoros," ibid. (1994), 871 no.4.) and at Carthage (perhaps part of a group with a statue of Sarapis-Asklepios; Kater-Sibbes, Preliminary catalogue, no. 739, pl. XXIV). See Veymiers, "Les cultes isiaques à Argos," 115-16, fig. 8.
communities are drawing from Mediterranean-wide forms and iconographies. Just as we find examples of the Aphrodite Fréjus or Athena Medici or Dresden Zeus around the Mediterranean, often without much local intervention in the forms, this chapter has demonstrated that the main images of Isis and Sarapis were meant to be palatable and, more importantly, legible, to a wide audience.

This legibility was achieved through two methods. First, the Egyptian gods were reimagined in Greco-Roman styles. This artistic choice helped to resolve some of the cognitive dissonance inherent in the cult. In representing the Egyptian gods in such a Hellenized manner, however, these Greek communities integrated these gods into a local visual language. As we will see in the next chapter, this approach extends through the cult’s textual and theological spheres. These three types of Isis and Sarapis statues refashion the Egyptian gods into deterritorialized deities, and it is precisely this process that presents an interpretive problem. What do Egyptian gods, as the Greeks usually referred to them in dedicatory inscriptions, mean when represented in such a Greek way? As I will argue through the rest of this dissertation, meaning is best derived through context, through the object’s relationships with architecture, other sculptures, religious rituals, and textually-derived knowledge.

Given the lack of formal differentiation between sites, might we consider consumption practices as a way to argue for local adaptation? It has been suggested in epigraphic works that certain epithets of Isis and Sarapis were more popular in
particular regions of Greece. Are certain types of images also more common in one region over another? Using Tables 2 and 3, which stand at the end of this chapter, I examine the distribution of types throughout Greece and the Greek islands. While there are some small patterns, I would argue against the idea of strong regional associations.

In the case of Sarapis, there are probably too few examples to make specific claims. Because of his similarity to Asklepios and Zeus, it is likely that Sarapis is under-identified. A few instances in the archaeological record may suggest that the two images carried different meanings to Greeks. On 2nd century BCE Delos, a standing Sarapis stood in Sarapieion C, while a seated Sarapis stood in Sarapieion B. As Ian Moyer has argued, these two sanctuaries competed with one another and other Egyptian sanctuaries on the island. Perhaps displaying different types of Sarapis statues could have been part of this competition. At 3rd century CE Gortyna, two different images of

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108 Bommas argues that the Macedonians had a specific interpretation of the Egyptian gods that favored water crypts, Isis Lochia, and sanctuaries outside the city walls. While Bommas is correct that epigraphic references to Isis Lochia are not found outside Macedonia, his other two criteria are not specific to Macedonia. Furthermore, from a sculptural standpoint, the images that can be connected with bases infrequently have a “local” character. See Bommas, "Apostel Paulus und die ägyptischen Heiligtümer Makedoniens."

109 In preparing these tables, I have relied heavily on Bricault, RICIS; Atlas de la diffusion; Veymiers, Bibliotheca Isiaca II; Marcadé, Au musée. These tables exclude terracotta figurines and examples of sculpture without archaeological provenance. The egyptianizing terracotta figurines seem to follow a different attitude towards the Egyptian gods and cultural exchanges that those that informed the cult images and larger-scale sculptures used in Egyptian sanctuaries (Nagel, "The Goddess's New Clothes," 205.) For those interested in these terracottas, I would recommend Barrett, Egyptianizing Figurines from Delos. Further, because this dissertation focuses on sculptural assemblages in context, sculptures without provenance are beyond the scope of my discussion.

Sarapis, one seated and one standing, were displayed. The standing image stood on the main “altar” along with the Isis statue (both of which were discussed in detail above). The seated statue, however, sat outside in the sanctuary’s main courtyard. The separation of these two images, each set into its own area of focalization, suggests that the Gortyna community could have attached different meanings to these images. In addition to inscriptions on the now-lost bases, spatial organization would have contributed further to the community’s attempt to differentiate these two forms of Sarapis in meanings and uses.

The strongest association between a sculptural seems to be between the Cycladic islands and the Knotenpalla type. Most Hellenistic Knotenpalla come from island contexts, while most of the Roman-period diplax and other Hellenizing types come from the Greek mainland. As we saw in Chapter 1, however, this seems to follow the historical route that the Isiac cults took over time. Again, there is insufficient evidence to draw a clear chronological or regional line between these types, and I look forward to the future publication of more Isiac sculpture from Greece that might shed further light on the issues of typological chronology and regionalism.

Consumer practices may have altered the meaning of these images over time. Beginning in the early Roman period, the Knotenpalla type served as a model for depictions of Isis devotees. Attic women frequently used the Knotenpalla costume for
grave reliefs and possibly sculpture in the round. There is also a slight correlation between later images of Isis and the diplax or Tyche/Fortuna types. After the 1st century CE, more statues of Isis take on Greek or Roman styles that elide the foreignness so critical to the Knotenpalla. Perhaps by that point the Knotenpalla had become more popular as a portrait type, more closely associated with devotees and cult practice than with the goddess herself.

In any case, all of these conclusions must be considered preliminary. This chapter has examined the formal characteristics of Isiac sculpture in Greece during the Hellenistic and Roman period. The goal of future chapters is to expand our scope of analysis, to consider how texts and contexts informed how viewers dealt more thoroughly with the cognitive dissonance set up in these images.

Table 2: Sarapis Statues Found in Hellenistic and Roman Greece

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statue Type</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Findspot</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Amorgos</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kater-Sibbes 1973, no. 358</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos, Sarapieion C</td>
<td>2nd century BCE</td>
<td>Delos Museum A 126</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As with much female portraiture, it is very difficult to distinguish a statue of Isis from a devotee portrait without an inscribed base. Consequently, there is much debate surrounding sculptures in the round in Isiac costume.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Museum/Location</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos, Agora of the Compitaliastes</td>
<td>Hellenistic</td>
<td>Delos Museum A 5850</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bust</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos</td>
<td>Hellenistic</td>
<td>Delos Museum A 5853</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bust</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos</td>
<td>Hellenistic</td>
<td>Delos Museum A 5854</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agathodaimon (relief)</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos</td>
<td>Hellenistic</td>
<td>Delos Museum A 3195</td>
<td>Depicts the bust form of the god attached to a snake, paired with an Isis Tyche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seated</td>
<td>Dodecanese</td>
<td>Rhodes</td>
<td>Hellenistic, 2nd century BCE (LM)</td>
<td>Rhodes Museum Γ2772</td>
<td>Identified by comparison with Delian example</td>
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<td>Rhodes</td>
<td>Hellenistic, 2nd century BCE (LM)</td>
<td>Rhodes Museum Γ2538</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<td>Rhodes</td>
<td>Hellenistic, 2nd century BCE (LM)</td>
<td>Rhodes Museum 5299</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bust</td>
<td>Attica</td>
<td>Athenian Agora, Section Z, 68/ΚΓ</td>
<td>Late 2nd- Early 3rd century CE (LM)</td>
<td>Agora Museum 6554-S 355</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head of Sarapis</td>
<td>Attica</td>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>KS 475</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Head of Sarapis</td>
<td>Attica</td>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>2nd century CE</td>
<td>BCH 73, 1949, p. 517</td>
<td>Bronze</td>
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<td>Lafayette 1884, 270 no 18</td>
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<td>Standing</td>
<td>Attica</td>
<td>Athens</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dunand 1973,</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Context</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head, no body</td>
<td>Attica</td>
<td>Athens, Iseion on the South Slope of the Acropolis</td>
<td>Lost, last seen in the antiquarium at Hadrian's Library (S. Walker, pers. comm.)</td>
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<td>Attica</td>
<td>Eleusis</td>
<td>Fitzwilliam Museum (Budde, Nicholls 1964 30 no. 55, pl. XCIII)</td>
<td>Headless</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osiris-</td>
<td>Attica</td>
<td>Marathon, Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods</td>
<td>Marathon Archaeological Museum</td>
<td>Archaizing, compare with the examples from Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli</td>
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<td>Antinoo s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bust</td>
<td>Attica</td>
<td>Piraeus</td>
<td>2nd CE</td>
<td>Piraeus Archaeological Museum (BCH 94, 1970, 190 no. 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seated</td>
<td>Isthmus</td>
<td>Corinth, &quot;at the bridge&quot;</td>
<td>2nd century CE (LM)</td>
<td>Corinth Archaeological Museum 908</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-no body</td>
<td>Isthmus</td>
<td>Corinth, east of the Theater in unstratified fill</td>
<td>Late 2nd-Early 3rd CE (LM)</td>
<td>Corinth Archaeological Museum 1982 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-no body</td>
<td>Isthmus</td>
<td>Corinth, South Stoa, room XX</td>
<td>Late 2nd-Early 3rd CE (LM)</td>
<td>Corinth Archaeological Museum S 2387</td>
<td>More likely to belong to a standing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Museum</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bust</td>
<td>Isthmus</td>
<td>Corinth, &quot;Byzantine level north of the Basilica along the Lechaion Road&quot;</td>
<td>2nd-3rd century CE</td>
<td>Corinth Archaeological Museum S 1457</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bust</td>
<td>Peloponnesian</td>
<td>Argos, &quot;dans un puits mis au jour l’année précédents à l’est de la fontaine carrée de l’agora&quot;</td>
<td>Antonine Period</td>
<td>Argos Museum 91.310J</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing</td>
<td>Epirus</td>
<td>Paramythia</td>
<td>2nd century BCE</td>
<td>British Museum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing</td>
<td>Macedoniana</td>
<td>Amphipolis</td>
<td>Or. 64, 1995, 351</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head, no body</td>
<td>Macedoniana</td>
<td>Amphipolis, Koukles</td>
<td>Hellenistic</td>
<td>PAE 1981, 22 pl. 31b</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-no body</td>
<td>Macedoniana</td>
<td>Thessaloniki, Sarapieion?</td>
<td>Middle Antonine Period</td>
<td>Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum 897</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-no body</td>
<td>Macedoniana</td>
<td>Thessaloniki, Sarapieion?</td>
<td>2nd century CE</td>
<td>Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum 1017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-no body</td>
<td>Macedoniana</td>
<td>Thessaloniki, Sarapieion?</td>
<td>2nd century BCE or earlier (Despinis)</td>
<td>Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum 1019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head, no body</td>
<td>Macedoniana</td>
<td>Dion, Iseion</td>
<td>2nd century CE</td>
<td>Dion Archaeological Museum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing</td>
<td>Crete</td>
<td>Gortyna</td>
<td>3rd century CE</td>
<td>Heraklion Archaeological Museum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statue Type</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Find Spot</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis du Cynthe</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos, Sarapieion C</td>
<td>Hellenistic, 3rd BCE</td>
<td>Remains <em>in situ</em> in Sarapieion C</td>
<td>Body format similar to that of Aphrodite-detailed, clingy drapery with hip mantle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis-Aphrodite (?)</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos, cistern of the grand palestra</td>
<td>Hellenistic</td>
<td>Delos Museum A 2399</td>
<td>Very similar to the Isis du Cynthe, Marcadé 1969 connects with the Phidian statue of Aphrodite at Daphni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knotenpalla</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos</td>
<td>Hellenistic</td>
<td>Delos Museum A 5370</td>
<td>Unusual arrangement of drapery:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statue Type</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Find Spot</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knotenpalla</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos</td>
<td>Hellenistic</td>
<td>Delos Museum A 5302</td>
<td>Knee down preserved, drapery pattern suggests <em>Knotenpalla</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knotenpalla</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos</td>
<td>Hellenistic</td>
<td>Delos Museum A 5373</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis Fortuna with Knot</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos</td>
<td>Hellenistic</td>
<td>Delos Museum A 378</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imported Egyptian statuette of Isis (?)</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos (originally from Saïs)</td>
<td>Late Period</td>
<td>Delos Museum A 379</td>
<td>Red stone, back pillar with hieroglyph inscription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis Fortuna with Knot</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos</td>
<td>Hellenistic</td>
<td>Delos Museum A 2255</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basileion</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos</td>
<td>Hellenistic</td>
<td>Delos Museum A 4452</td>
<td>Alabaster, Perhaps for insertion into a very large statue?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isiac headgear ?</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos</td>
<td>Hellenistic</td>
<td>Delos Museum A 4453</td>
<td>Alabaster, Perhaps for insertion into a very large statue?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head-no body</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos</td>
<td>2nd century BCE</td>
<td>Delos Museum A 6000</td>
<td>Missing attachment on head,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statue Type</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Find Spot</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis Pelagia (relief)</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos</td>
<td>2nd century BCE</td>
<td>Delos Museum A 3287</td>
<td>probably part of a <em>basileion</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis Tyche/Agathodaimon (relief)</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Delos</td>
<td>Hellenistic</td>
<td>Delos Museum A 3195</td>
<td>Depicts Isis Tyche as a snake, paired with a Sarapis bust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis-Aphrodite</td>
<td>Cyclades</td>
<td>Thera</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dunand 1979, pl. 42</td>
<td>statuette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Knotenpalla</em></td>
<td>Dodecanese</td>
<td>Rhodes, Sanctuary of Isis</td>
<td>Hellenistic, 2nd century BCE (LM)</td>
<td>Rhodes Museum Г2765</td>
<td>Dated by comparison to Delian examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis Pelagia (unfinished)</td>
<td>Attica</td>
<td>Athenian Agora</td>
<td>2nd century BCE</td>
<td>Agora Museum ST 527</td>
<td>Matrix for a relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis Lactans</td>
<td>Attica</td>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>2nd-3rd century CE</td>
<td><em>Isis lactans</em> no. A-23, fig. 46-47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Knotenpalla</em></td>
<td>Attica</td>
<td>Marathon, Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods</td>
<td>Middle Antonine Period</td>
<td>Marathon Archaeological Museum</td>
<td>Archaizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptianizing (Isis-Aphrodite, Isis-Demeter, Isis-Aegyptia?)</td>
<td>Attica</td>
<td>Marathon, Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods</td>
<td>Middle Antonine Period</td>
<td>Marathon Archaeological Museum</td>
<td>Archaizing, unusual long-sleeved shift costume.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis ?</td>
<td>Attica</td>
<td>Piraeus</td>
<td>3rd-2nd century</td>
<td>Piraeus Archaeological</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statue Type</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Find Spot</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis Fortuna</td>
<td>Peloponnese</td>
<td>Messene, &quot;fill of the cella of the Doric temple recently uncovered in the agora of Messene&quot;</td>
<td>BCE</td>
<td>al Museum (Leclant Or. 40, 1971, 261)</td>
<td>Bronze. Surface heavily worn, cornucopia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis Fortuna</td>
<td>Peloponnese</td>
<td>Messene, Theater</td>
<td></td>
<td>Messene Archaeological Museum 14613</td>
<td>Only forearm with fruits of abundance preserved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis Pelagia</td>
<td>Peloponnese</td>
<td>Messene, Theater</td>
<td>2nd century CE</td>
<td>Messene Archaeological Museum 15194</td>
<td>Wearing the diplax costume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis Lactans</td>
<td>Peloponnese</td>
<td>Messene, Iseion?</td>
<td>2nd century CE</td>
<td>Messene Archaeological Museum 13545</td>
<td>Closely related to example from Perge (Antalya Museum A3279+A3070)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knotenpalla</td>
<td>Peloponnese</td>
<td>Sparta</td>
<td>3rd century CE</td>
<td>National Archaeological Museum 1617</td>
<td>Veiled; often identified as simply coming from Lakonia. Unusual knot: only knotted around the waist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis lactans</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Delphi</td>
<td></td>
<td>Isis lactans no.</td>
<td>bronze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statue Type</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Find Spot</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greece</strong></td>
<td>Phocis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A-14, fig. 36-7</td>
<td>statuette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Isis lactans</strong></td>
<td>Central Greece (Thessaly)</td>
<td>Pherae</td>
<td></td>
<td>ZÄS 1890, 60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis Fortuna (3 examples)</td>
<td>Macedonía</td>
<td>Ceramiae</td>
<td>1st century CE, end of the 2nd century CE</td>
<td>Düll 1977, 411-12 nos. 272-4</td>
<td>bronze statuettes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis Pelagia (relief)</td>
<td>Macedonía</td>
<td>Pylaia</td>
<td>2nd or 3rd century CE</td>
<td>Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki 6976</td>
<td>Altar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplax</td>
<td>Macedonía, Thessaloniki, Sarapieion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Second half of the 2nd century CE</td>
<td>Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki 843</td>
<td>Body borrows from the Munich 310 Hygeia type. Eingartner dates to 80-100 CE; black marble with white marble arms and head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis Orgia (base only)</td>
<td>Macedonía, Thessaloniki, Sarapieion</td>
<td></td>
<td>dedication by Folounios Oueros in 2nd century CE</td>
<td>Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki 986</td>
<td>Statue base originally an altar dedicated in 35 BCE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head, no Body</td>
<td>Macedonía, Thessaloniki, Sarapieion?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Early Antonine Period</td>
<td>Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki 2490</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head, no Body</td>
<td>Macedonía, Thessaloniki</td>
<td>Hellenistic, early 3rd</td>
<td></td>
<td>Archaeological Museum of Despinis unclear on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statue Type</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Find Spot</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head, no body</td>
<td>Macedoniana</td>
<td>Dion, Iseion</td>
<td>Late Hellenistic (LM)</td>
<td>Dion Archaeological Museum</td>
<td>unpublished, break in the shape of a uraeus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis Tyche</td>
<td>Macedoniana</td>
<td>Dion, Iseion</td>
<td>Roman, 2nd century CE? (LM)</td>
<td>Dion Archaeological Museum</td>
<td>unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aphrodite Hyperolympia</td>
<td>Macedoniana</td>
<td>Dion, Iseion</td>
<td>Roman, 2nd century CE (LM)</td>
<td>Dion Archaeological Museum</td>
<td>unpublished, only instance of this goddess known (possibly an avatar of Isis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head (relief) of an exoticizing goddess?</td>
<td>Macedoniana</td>
<td>Dion</td>
<td>Roman, late? (LM)</td>
<td>Dion Archaeological Museum</td>
<td>unpublished, no label, archaizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knotenpalla (relief)</td>
<td>Macedoniana</td>
<td>Dion, Iseion</td>
<td>Hellenistic, 2nd century BCE</td>
<td>Dion Archaeological Museum 410</td>
<td>Unusual Knotenpalla: knot to side, locally relevant iconography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isis Fortuna (bust)</td>
<td>Macedoniana</td>
<td>Heracleia</td>
<td>2nd century CE</td>
<td>Düll 1977, 410 no 270</td>
<td>bronze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplax</td>
<td>Crete</td>
<td>Gortyna, cella of the temple of the Egyptian gods</td>
<td>3rd century CE</td>
<td>Heraklion Archaeological Museum H 260</td>
<td>I. Romeo compares with the Euterpe of Miletus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplax</td>
<td>Crete</td>
<td>Gortyna, Praetorium</td>
<td>Roman Period</td>
<td>Gortyna site antiquarium, Porro 1913, fig. 9</td>
<td>Floral garland, possible portrait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statue Type</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Find Spot</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bust</td>
<td>Crete</td>
<td>Siteia</td>
<td>2nd-1st century BCE</td>
<td>ΚΡΗΤΗ ΑΙΓΥΠΠΟΣ no. 499</td>
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</table>
3. Viewing Theology? Towards an Isiac Mode of Viewership

3.1 Chapter Overview

In the previous chapter, I explored the iconography and visual formats used to represent Isis and Sarapis in Roman Greece, arguing that these images of Isis and Sarapis divorced the goddess from her cultural context (Figure 19). By representing Isis in a way that combined Greek and Egyptian styles, sculptors and patrons created a deterritorialized goddess, one whose connections to Egypt were loosened. As a result, Isis became a goddess without a country, an empty *sema* that required viewers to create new cultural meanings around her images. Viewers consequently brought outside influences into their encounters with Isiac sculpture as a way to interrogate and reshape her nebulous cultural identity. In this chapter, I explore the textual and ritual experiences that enabled Greek communities to make meaning from Isiac images. The chapters to come will explore how these sculptures, in concert with the theological priorities outlined below, operated in their programmatic and architectural contexts.

Viewers did not understand their Isiac cult images in a conceptual vacuum. Rather, Isiac devotees contextualized and critiqued their own ideas about the Egyptian gods by representing them in text and image. These initiates informed the sculptural dedications at the heart of this inquiry with a common background in Isiac theology and Greco-Roman culture, constructing a dynamic system of meaning through text, ritual,
and art. The combination of these disparate cultural media created a new mode of viewing in the Egyptian cults, one that encouraged the viewer to read text, culture, and image in dialogue with one another as a way to interrogate the Egyptian gods’ character.\(^1\) I call this way of looking at Egyptianizing art an Isiac visuality.\(^2\) This visuality diverged from standard ways of interpreting art by encouraging devotees to understand Isiac divine images in the same way that they conceived of their gods: exotic, multivalent, and appearing frequently in the mortal sphere. While these themes also informed mainstream Greco-Roman visuality,\(^3\) Isis’ cult was unique in how intensively these theological principles defined the cult’s ritual and visual culture.

Previous discussion of how viewers interpreted Egyptianizing objects has been limited, focusing primarily on developing terminology to describe an object’s time and

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\(^2\) For the purposes of this dissertation, I define Egyptianizing as one of three modes of visual culture consumed in the Isiac sanctuaries of Greece and Italy during the Hellenistic and Roman period. These include Egyptian imports displayed in Isis and Sarapis sanctuaries, locally produced imitations of Egyptian sculptures and subjects in exoticizing formats, and the deterritorialized and Hellenized images of Isis and Sarapis discussed in the previous chapter. Combining these three types under a single umbrella allows us to talk cohesively about the diverse array of objects displayed in Egyptian sanctuaries that were subject to similar processes of interpretation and consumption.

place of creation. Departing from these production-oriented approaches, I argue that considering local consumption and interpretation through the lens of Isis visuality allows us to focus on how local communities made meaning from Egyptianizing art. First and foremost, visuality as a theory emphasizes viewer subjectivity as the defining force in an object’s interpretation. Foster’s introduction to his 1988 edited volume, Vision and Visuality, emphasizes visuality as a way to socialize the gaze and to recognize the importance of textual and historical context in describing and interpreting viewer subjectivities. As a result, visuality provides interpretive room for the viewer’s agency in constructing viewer responses to art. Because visuality promotes the idea of a contextualized viewing experience, it forces modern readers and viewers to confront our preconceived notions about how viewing works in the modern world and to reconsider the ancient viewing experience more carefully. In considering Egyptianizing art from the viewer’s perspective, then, we can understand how consumption practices helped viewers to construct and define themselves within the globalized Roman Empire.

In studies of visuality in classical art, scholars have focused on how the dynamic dialogue between textual and visual narratives intellectualized the viewing experience. For example, M. Squire’s 2009 book, Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity, adapts

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4 For an overview of these terminologies and their flaws, see, Malaise, Pour une terminologie, 201-20.
modern theories of visuality to counter the text-focused approaches often used in studies of Roman literature and art. In this model, reading and viewing are analogous practices. He argues that educated Roman viewers read their textual knowledge into visual experiences, while also employing viewing habits in their reading as a way to make sense of complex texts. V. Platt’s 2011 book, *Facing the Gods: Epiphany and Representation in Graeco-Roman Art, Literature, and Religion*, brought religious experience into discussion with Squire’s methodology. Her work demonstrates that Greeks and Romans saw cult images as catalysts for epiphany and as epiphanies in their own right, introducing the idea of a religiously motivated visuality.

While these innovative studies have made significant contributions to both art history and philology, they have not yet considered how text and art’s discursive relationship was affected by the cultural shifts and rapidly intensifying connectivity that resulted from the rise and expansion of Roman hegemony. In this chapter, I analyze how art, text, ritual, and culture influenced viewer subjectivities in Isiac sanctuaries. These mysterious cults have one of the best-defined bodies of literature and epigraphy, which provides us with an unusually informed view into the cult’s theological foundations and makes them an excellent case study for understanding how cultural and theological principles influenced visual experiences. This approach also offers a new way forward in understanding how local communities made meaning of Roman imperialism and cultural hegemony in the Hellenistic and Imperial periods. Viewership is an inherently
local and subjective phenomenon that grants the viewer active agency in making meaning from an object, no matter where the object came from. By exercising their subjectivities, local communities of Isis devotees interpreted Isis and her visual culture in concert with their experience of the increasing transcultural connectivity of the Roman Empire. Through their local interpretations and reconfigurations of internationally available phenomena like Isis, devotees created new narratives about cultural identity, otherness, and foreignness that helped them to redefine what it meant to be Greek in the globalized Roman Empire.

Before I broaden my analysis to explore how statues of Isis and Sarapis operated in programmatic and architectural contexts, I identify here three aspects of the cult’s theology that I argue distinguished the Isiac devotee’s visual expectations of the Egyptian gods from those of the mainstream Greek or Roman viewer: Isis’ identity as a transgressor of boundaries, her henotheistic relationships with other goddesses, and her ability to intervene directly in mortal affairs. These three theological principles played a particularly prominent role in shaping initiates’ visual subjectivity. More importantly, these three aspects of Isiac visuality provided a foundation for a cultural imagining of Isis and Sarapis that worked in Hellenistic and Roman Greece. Isis’ foreignness clearly connected her with Egypt and the east, areas that served as a paragon of Otherness in Greek texts like Herodotus’ Book II and Lucian’s De Dea Syria. These cultural narratives are complicated by Isis’ henotheistic relationships with goddesses from around the
Mediterranean. Isis’ epiphanic tendencies, however, connect her with the specific space of the Greek sanctuary, challenging the previous two aspects of her divine character. As such, this chapter describes a theology of viewing that is designed to reconcile the cognitive dissonance inherent in the Greek Isis, informing how I treat sculptures in the rest of the dissertation.

In order to reconstruct a cultic mode of viewing, I take a synchronic approach that prioritizes the Egyptian cults’ consistency through time. I do not argue that the cult remained completely consistent across time and space, but that the same religious concepts remained relevant to Isiac devotees and continued to be replicated and reinterpreted by local communities from its beginnings in the 3rd century BCE well into the shuttering of Isiac sanctuaries late in the 3rd century CE. The present discussion defines objects from Isiac sanctuaries as a distinct subset with its own intellectual and theological milieu within the larger corpus of art produced in response to Roman cultural and political hegemony. In the chapters that follow, I argue that many of the sculptures dedicated in Isiac sanctuaries should be reconsidered through the lens of this new Isiac visuality. As a result, statues of Isis and Sarapis signified complex cultural negotiations that took place through the local struggles to define a place for Isiac communities in the increasingly interconnected world of the Roman Empire.

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6 I consider local influence on the character and material culture of the Egyptian gods in subsequent chapters.
3.2 Isis as Boundary-Crosser

In this section, I argue that the cult constructed narratives around its Egyptian founders and their history of long-distance travel in order to define Isis and Sarapis as fundamentally foreign. Admittedly, it is not surprising that Greeks saw an Egyptian goddess as foreign. Rather, what is interesting is the cult’s repeated insistence on that foreignness in its own mythologies and rituals, preserving cognitive dissonance where it could easily be erased. Several inscriptions from Delos, Argos, and Demetrias commemorate priests who brought Isis across the Mediterranean Sea, defining her journey as a central part of her divine identity. The idea of transgressing spatial boundaries extended into the ritual sphere of the cult, where rites of initiation and navigation continued the Isiac cult’s theological emphasis on travel from one place to another. I argue that the cults used Egyptianness to assert the cult’s authentic connection to its origins in the face of local interpretation and adaptation. From a viewer’s perspective, I argue, the cult’s origins embedded Isis and her material culture in discourses of self and “other” that shaped cross-cultural interactions in the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean. As we will see in the chapters to come, devotees often translated Isis’ foreignness into exoticized sculptural and architectural landscapes to create visual arguments about how Isiac cults collapsed the distances, physical and cultural, between ancient Egypt and Roman Greece.
3.2.1 Crossing Physical Boundaries: Apollonios and the Introduction of the Egyptian Gods

Despite the long history of Greek and Egyptian interactions, the Egyptian cults did not find a popular audience among Greeks and Italians until the 4th century BCE. More recent research has demonstrated that individual Egyptian priests drove the initial foundations of many Greek Isiac cults. For example, an inscription at Argos suggests that a local Greek man and his Egyptian wife, Thaeis, founded an early Hellenistic sanctuary in the city, perhaps the one set on the eastern slope of the Larissa. Dunand also argues for an individual Egyptian priest ferrying the Egyptian cults as far north as Demetrias during the 3rd century BCE. A grave stele at Demetrias depicts an Egyptian priest named Ouaphres son of Horus in Greek dress with an Isiac knot, holding a *sistrum* and an inclined *situla* (Figure 4). The priest is represented pouring out a libation to what M. Stamatopoulou interprets as an image of Isis. Dunand and Fraser have both argued

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8 Dunand, *Le culte d’Isis II*, 49. For a greater contextualization of the Egyptian cults in Thessaly, where the cults were small-scale but widespread, see J.-C. Decourt, and A. Tziafalis, "Cultes et divinités isiaques en Thessalie: identité et urbanisation.,” in *Nile into Tiber: Egypt in the Roman world*, ed. L. Bricault, M.J. Versluys, and P.G.P Meybook (Leiden: Brill, 2007).
that Ouaphres’ stele represents a larger trend of individual Egyptian agents founding private cults during the early Hellenistic period.\(^{10}\)

Just before these two examples, near the end of the 4th century, Apollonios, a priest from Memphis, founded a house shrine to Sarapis in the Inopos Quarter of Delos (Figure 20). The Chronicle of Sarapieion A on Delos,\(^ {11}\) set up in one of the earliest Greek sanctuaries to the Egyptian gods, promoted the cult by emphasizing the founding family’s deep connections to Egypt (Figure 2) Carved on a votive marble column that stood near the sanctuary’s main entrance and dating to the early part of the third century, the Chronicle of Sarapieion A contains two separate but complementary accounts of the sanctuary’s myth history, written by two priests named Apollonios and Maiistas.\(^ {12}\) The two accounts differ in composition and detail, but agree on the narrative’s general arc. I focus here on Apollonios’ account, written in a rather spare

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\(^{10}\) Fraser, "Two studies," 44. See also Dunand, *Le culte d’Isis II*, 49. Stamatopoulou is more skeptical, noting that there are three other Hellenistic grave stele of Egyptians from Demetrias (Volos Museum A89, A95, A181, featured in Decourt, “Cultes et divinités isaiques en Thessalie,” figures 4, 5.) For a thorough consideration of the methods and mechanisms that drove the diffusion of the Egyptian cults through the eastern Mediterranean, see Bricault, "La diffusion isiaque."

\(^{11}\) The French excavators of the Delian Egyptianizing sanctuaries coined the term Sarapieion in reference to these particular sanctuaries. Since we are often not sure whether Isis or Sarapis was the principal deity within a particular Egyptianizing sanctuary, I will apply the term generally to any sanctuary or sacred context principally dedicated to a triad of Egyptian gods.

\(^{12}\) Moyer questions Roussel’s early third century date for the inscription, arguing that Roussel’s paleographic argument is based on now-overturned ideas about the accuracy of dating by letter form. He believes that the inscription’s connection with a similar inscription dedicated to Nike should date the inscription more broadly to the end of the 3rd century-first part of the 2nd century BCE, following Fraser, Engelmann, and Reger’s broader picture of a third century Cyclades largely free of imperial hegemony. Moyer, *Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism*, 156-57; "Notes on Re-reading," 101-3; H. Engelmann, *The Delian aretalogy of Sarapis*, Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’Empire romain (Leiden: Brill, 1975); Roussel, *Les cultes égyptiens à Délos*, no. 1, 71-78. For an economic perspective: G. Reger, "The political history of the Kyklades, 260-200 BC," *Historia* 43, no. 1 (1994).
prose. At the end of the chapter, we will return to Maiistas’ more fantastic verse account to discuss the role of divine intervention in Sarapieion A’s myth-history.

The Apollonios account presents its protagonist as a hero, describing the obstacles raised to the cult’s existence on Delos.\textsuperscript{13} The first few lines of the Chronicle emphasize this sanctuary’s deep and authentic connections with Egypt. Apollonios (II) presents himself as the author and highlights his familial connection with his grandfather, Apollonios (I). Apollonios (II) thus establishes two critical components of the Sarapieion A cult: that the original priest came from Egypt (Memphis, as the Hymn of Maiistas specifies), and that he passed the cult’s priesthood down to his descendants. In the case of the former, the author is employing the family’s ethnic origins to emphasize a close connection with the Egyptian cults’ origins in Egypt. The concentration on family lineage also establishes that Apollonios (II) inherited the priesthood from his father, Demetrios (I), who inherited it in turn from his father, Apollonios (I). Given that Greek priesthoods were rarely passed down by inheritance, this brief aside demonstrates how the cult preserved Egyptian religious customs, furthering the Chronicle’s account of Sarapieion A’s authenticity. In connecting to the Egyptian, Apollonios (II) highlighted the primacy and authenticity of Sarapieion A’s priestly family.

\textsuperscript{13} The Apollonios narrative extends from lines 1-28, and the Maiistas narrative consists of lines 29-94. I will return to the Maiistas narrative in section 2.3
Lacking royal patronage, Apollonios (I) and his cult images arrived on Delos in a vulnerable position as one of several Egyptian cults competing for devotees in a foreign city. P. Roussel’s 1916 report on the sanctuaries originally implied that the three Sarapieia on Delos served the same cultic community and did not compete with one another. Relying on both archaeological and epigraphic evidence from Delos’ two other Egyptian sanctuaries, Sarapieia B and C, I. Moyer argued convincingly that both sanctuaries were built and active already in the latter half of the 3rd century BCE, which means that the three sanctuaries operated at the same time. As a result, Moyer argues, the three Sarapieia would have stood in direct competition with one another for devotee attention and dedications. In order to further legitimize the cult for Apollonios (II)’s community, a proper sanctuary was needed. One night, Sarapis appeared to Apollonios (II) in a dream and told him to found a Sarapieion in a particular spot, an order that Apollonios (II) overcame many difficulties to fulfill. The god smiled upon the project, enabling Apollonios (II) to complete the sanctuary in only six months. His troubles, however, were far from over. As Apollonios tells us, a group brought suit against Sarapieion A, demanding that the sanctuary be shut down. Though Sarapis assured

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14 C. Barrett points to an inscription detailing the dedication of a statue of the Egyptian god Ammon in Sarapieion C, arguing that this sculpture represents an attempt to connect with the Egyptian cultic community, but notes that the gesture is an isolated incident. See Barrett, *Egyptianizing Figurines from Delos*, 9-11.

Apollonios that the sanctuary would prevail, this suit certainly represented a major threat to the cult’s development.

The devotees of Sarapieion A successfully defended their sanctuary from its attackers.16 The account of the suit, however, is frustratingly vague and offers no indication of the suit’s legal basis. In the Hymn of Maiistas, the author tells us that κακὸς Φθόνος, motivated his neighbors to sue, but what exactly this κακὸς Φθόνος might be is unclear (line 66). Several scholars have weighed in on the issue, offering explanations ranging from problems surrounding water rights to a failure to secure permission from local authorities.17 H. Siard’s theory that the water-starved residents of Delos may have been upset by the sanctuary’s ad hoc and probably illegal channel to the Inopos River has

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16 Interestingly, a similar or perhaps the same conflict is mentioned in a senatus consultum from 164 BCE (RICIS 202/0195). According to this inscription, a Delian priest of Sarapis named Demetrios appealed to the Roman Senate after the Athenian government shut down his cult. The Roman Senate ruled in favor of the priest, commanding the Athenians to reinstate the cult. As Huzar notes, this inscription marks an unusual instance of Roman intervention into local administration of cults. (Huzar, “Roman-Egyptian relations on Delos;”; Roussel, Les cultes égyptiens à Délos, 310; “Le Sénatus-consulte de Délos,” BCH 37(1913).

17 Engelmann, The Delian aretalogy of Sarapis, 24, 44. Engelmann interprets the incident as a mythological allegory for the battle between Seth and Osiris, which may underlie the presentation of the event. However, the presence of an actual senatus consultum on this issue (RICIS 202/0195; CE 14) argues for its primary purpose as a historical document. Other scholars have argued that the Sarapiastes had failed to properly buy the land: C. Vial, Délos indépendante, Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique Supplement (Paris: De Boccard, 1984), 156. Perhaps the Sarapiastes failed to get permission to build a foreign sanctuary (Roussel, Les cultes égyptiens à Délos, 251; Engelmann, The Delian aretalogy of Sarapis, 44-45; P. Bruneau, “Deliaca (VIII),” BCH 114(1990): 562; Vial, Délos indépendante, 156.) Perhaps they encroached on a neighboring plot (Engelmann, The Delian aretalogy of Sarapis, 45, 52.) or evaded their taxes (Baslez, Recherches sur les conditions de penetration, 47-48.) Encroachment on the Inopos and converting a domestic space into a sanctuary: L.M. White, Building God’s house in the Roman World: Architectural Adaptation among Pagans, Jews, and Christians., ASOR Library of Biblical and Near Eastern Archaeology (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 36. Water use may also have played a large role in the controversy (Siard, “La crypte du Sarapieion A de Délos et le procès d’Apollonios,” 478-81.)
gained considerable traction among scholars, recognizing the prominent role that water played in the sanctuary’s rituals.\textsuperscript{18}

I. Moyer, however, rejects her claims. He argues that we should take the phrase κακὸς Φθόνος quite literally, and see inter-sanctuary competition and jealousy as the motivating factors behind this lawsuit. By re-dating several inscriptions to the 4th and 3rd centuries BCE, Moyer correctly points out that Delos’ two other Egyptian sanctuaries, referred to in contemporary scholarship as Sarapieion B and C, were also active on early Hellenistic Delos. In this historical context, the lawsuit may have been an attempt to shut down the least official of the three Egyptian sanctuaries on Delos. If we view the Chronicle’s claims to Egyptian ancestry in this context, the author’s repeated focus on authenticity can be seen as a way to supersede the other Egyptian cults.\textsuperscript{19} Only two other similar Egyptian cult founders, Ouaphres son of Horus from Demetrias and Thaies wife of Agathokles from Argos, are known from Greece, suggesting that few Egyptians had the connections and financial means to undertake the lengthy journey from Egypt to Greece in the Hellenistic period. Apollonios was an outlier, a valuable


\textsuperscript{19} Moyer, \textit{Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism}, 195-97.
theme in the sanctuary’s diachronic narrative that helped his followers establish a stronger claim to Isis’ homeland over time. It is this aura of authenticity, enabled by Apollonios’ Egyptian identity, that ensured Sarapieion A’s importance in the Delian religious landscape in spite of its humble material culture. Among the Delian Sarapieia, then, foreignness operated as a status marker, and having a connection to Egypt indicated that the priest and his version of the cult had access to the oldest and most original version of the Egyptian gods.

Similar attacks on Sarapieion A continued into the 2nd century BCE, when Rome effectively controlled Delos. A Greek inscription from 164 BC (RICIS 202/0195) illustrates a remarkable instance of Rome’s direct intervention in Delian affairs on behalf of the Sarapieion A community. In this narrative, an Egyptian priest named Demetrios (one of the familial names mentioned in the Chronicle of Sarapieion A) appealed to the Roman Senate after the local Athenian epimele shut down his sanctuary. In an unusual move, the Senate opted to intervene, commanding the Athenians to allow the sanctuary to re-open. E. Huzar suggests that the Athenians may have shut down Sarapieion A because of its independent status.20 The Athenians had assumed at least nominal control of most of the island’s sanctuaries and their treasuries during their takeover in 166, in many places asserting some control over priesthoods.21 Perhaps the familial priesthood of

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20 Huzar, “Roman-Egyptian relations on Delos,” 174.
Sarapieion A would have been erased by Athenian control, leading them to refuse to comply with the change in governance. In any case, this inscription demonstrates that by the middle of the 2nd century BCE, Rome was the final authority in the Cyclades, even in the most local matters, upending our currently Hellenocentric interpretation of “Hellenistic” Delos. Ultimately, this narrative, though better attested historically than the lawsuit outlined in the Chronicle of Sarapieion A, only demonstrates how relevant the narrative of the cults’ persecution by the Delian community remained into the Roman period. Apollonios’ narrative persists through the longue durée of Delian history, constantly redefining his cultic community as special because of its connection with Isis’ origins in Egypt.

3.2.2 Crossing Ritual Boundaries: Isis, Apuleius, and Isiac Initiation

Ritual, as a theoretical concept, involves the idea of the body moving within a specially constructed space. As we have seen above, the foreignness inherent in transgressing ethnic and spatial boundaries played a fundamental role in founding the Greek Isiac cults and constructing Isiac rituals. Ritual, however, provided a key first step in reconciling Isis’ inherent cognitive dissonance. I argue here that devotees used rituals of transgression as a way to render cultural boundaries more porous, to pass from

\[\text{Reference: Roussel argued that Athenians preferred Sarapieion C, and that Sarapieion A may have threatened that sanctuary’s pre-eminence. While Sarapieion C did flourish and expand tremendously under Athenian patronage, Dunand finds that argument unlikely. See Roussel, "Le Sénatus-consulte de Délos,"; Dunand, Le culte d’Isis II, 92.}
\[\text{Reference: C. Bell, Ritual: perspectives and dimensions(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 81-82.} \]
Egyptian to Greek more easily. The paragraphs below analyze the 2nd century CE Roman writer Apuleius’ account of an Isiac initiation that took place at the Isis sanctuary of Kenchreai in the Corinthia of Greece. Based on Apuleius’ account, read in light of existing epigraphic evidence for the cult’s rituals, I analyze the cultural and social meanings behind Lucius’ experiences. I consider these rituals as practices that permitted devotees and Isiac ritual communities to explore and construct conscious meaning in continuous dialogue with their unconscious biases surrounding culture and foreignness in the Roman world. These analyses demonstrate that the beliefs and practices of Egyptian religion relied on theological concepts of transgression as a mechanism for expressing individual rebirth into membership in the cultic community, while also highlighting the importance of Isis’ own journeys to the cult’s theology. Most importantly, these rituals acted as a form of cultic paideia, offering opportunities for new devotees to learn about the Egyptian gods and for experienced devotees to reinforce their existing knowledge with ritual experiences.

It is important to recognize Apuleius’ overriding influence on our knowledge. Despite the Metamorphoses’ many shortcomings, Apuleius’ account still offers exceptional depth and has at least the veneer of first-person experience. As such, I follow most Isis scholars in viewing Apuleius’ tale as useful evidence in reconstructing Isiac

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rituals. Like his main character in the *Metamorphoses*, Apuleius wrote in his *Apologia* that he was initiated at Kenchreai and appears to have spent considerable time in the sanctuary as a devotee before returning to Rome, offering us a particularly contextualized account of ritual life in a Greek Isiac sanctuary.\(^\text{25}\) Still, neither Apuleius’ autobiographical nor his fictional accounts of Isiac initiation amount to irrefutable fact, and we must allow interpretive room for authorial embellishment and invention. Consequently, we cannot treat Apuleius’ accounts of Isiac rituals as unbiased histories of actual practice.\(^\text{26}\)

Initiation rituals educated new devotees in the mystery components and mythology of these mysterious cults, serving not only as “rites of institution” but also as a means for conveying the cult’s values and history to new members.\(^\text{27}\) Lucius’ initiation at Kenchreai began with a dream message from Isis, who told the soon-to-be initiate on what day the rites should take place, which priest should oversee them, and how much

\(^{25}\)J.G. Griffiths, *The Isis-Book (Metamorphoses, Book XI)* (Leiden: Breill, 1975), Introduction. Griffiths cites Apuleius’ *Apologia* 23 and 55, another problematic text, to argue that Apuleius himself underwent initiation into the Egyptian cults in Greece, pursued extensive study in the cults’ theology and rituals, and held them in high esteem throughout his life. These types of seemingly reliable first person accounts are much more rare than this dissertation may lead the reader to believe.


the procedure should cost. Upon waking, Lucius went to see the priest, who took Lucius into the temple and gave Lucius certain practical instructions laid out in a holy book. Next, Lucius procured the specified ritual objects for his initiation, which included a white linen robe. Just prior to the initiation, Lucius purified himself by bathing in the neighborhood baths and abstaining from meat and wine for several days. After this period of ritual cleansing, Lucius began the three-day initiation process, which appears to have involved the entire community of Isiac devotees.

J.G. Griffiths argues that Lucius’ initiation was a rite of transformation, one in which the initiate experiences a symbolic death and rebirth to a new life as an initiated member of the Egyptian cults. On the first night of the initiation process, the community members brought gifts to the new initiate. Lucius dressed himself in a special sacred outfit of linen, marking him as a temporary priest among the Isiac community. J. Alvar suggests that the first initiatory ritual would have revealed the tale of Osiris’ nocturnal journey through the underworld to heaven in his role as a solar deity, quite possibly through some sort of ritual dramatic performance of the myth.

Performances of this myth played a major role in the Egyptian Isia festival, and the ritual plays and processions practiced here featured prominently in Egyptian rituals. On the morning of the second day, Lucius is revealed to his community in the guise of the goddess, dressed in linen cloak and solar crown, carrying a torch and standing on a dais directly in front of the goddess’ own statue. As a simulacrum of the sacred object, Lucius himself became the object of the sacred gaze, receiving veneration in the place of the cult statue. Unfortunately, the activities of the second and third days were not treated in such extensive detail, suggesting that these rites may have been considered too secret to share or less interesting to the novel’s audience (Figure 21).

By reconsidering initiation as an educational practice, we can see how Lucius and the community used the three-day process as a way to introduce the initiate to cultic information. Knowing the goddess was of particular importance, a process that Lucius began before initiation by receiving instructions from a sacred book. Lucius’ education object should probably be considered a cultic implement for the reenactment portion of the initiation rites, perhaps among others.

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31 Griffiths, Plutarch’s De Iside et Osiride, 39; Alvar, Romanising Oriental Gods, 300-3; Nielson, Cultic theatres and ritual drama, 212-36; Heyob, The Cult of Isis, 57-59.
32 Cf Bordieu, Outline of a theory of practice, 151. Bordieu interprets morning as a moment of birth and as a particularly auspicious and apotropaic moment for those that witness it.
33 Alvar, Romanising Oriental Gods, 341. The author argues that this section of the text relies on the oft-employed pun between θεός and θαύμα: Elsner, Roman eyes, 289-300. Chapter 5 will treat issues of viewership and interpreting divine presence in sculpture in much fuller detail.
34 These activities seem to have largely revolved around ritual feasting, which the architectural evidence from most of our sanctuaries suggests played a large role in the Egyptian cult associations. For a discussion on architectural use typologies related to the Egyptian sanctuaries, see also Kleibl, Iseion.
In one strain of Egyptian belief, the sun journeys across the sky during the day and is swallowed by the snake Apophis at night, arriving in the realm of the underworld. Either Osiris or Horus battles the snake, and their victory ensures the return of the sun at dawn. Experiencing this myth through ritual performances offered Greco-Roman initiates a way to explore the complex theological metaphor connecting the sun and rebirth in Egyptian religion, introducing the devotee an entirely new religious vocabulary. Through acquiring this knowledge, Lucius and his fellow

36 Variations of this story extend throughout Egyptian religious history, with the gods names’ and functions changing according to the location and time period. For a historical account of Egyptian solar religion during the New Kingdom, see J. Assmann, *Egyptian Solar Religion in the New Kingdom: Re, Amun, and the Crisis of Polytheism*, trans. A. Alcock (New York: Routledge, 2009).
37 On solarity in Egyptian religion, see Zivie-Coche, *Gods and men in Egypt: 3000 BCE to 395 CE*; L.H. Corcoran, *Portrait mummies from Roman Egypt (I-IV centuries A.D.) : with a catalog of portrait mummies in Egyptian museums*, Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization
initiates reached an educational status that marked them as a member of the cultic community. These practices, like many other rituals, reinforced Lucius’ new identity as an Isiac devotee and his connection to others who had undergone this set of initiation rituals. While Lucius’ experience may not amount to a full conversion, as an initiate he does stand apart from those who are not members of his religious community, becoming someone who identifies himself through his relationship with the goddess.\textsuperscript{38}

The second initiatory act included in Apuleius’ tale also acted as a form of cultic \textit{paideia}, helping Lucius to transcend his own identity in order to align ritually with the Egyptian deities. When Lucius stood, ritually dressed and holding cultic attributes, upon a wooden dais in the place of the god, he stood in the literal and symbolic footsteps of the goddess herself, diverging from his mortality to take on the goddess’ role in the divine-mortal relationship. Taking on the role of the god thus helped to blur the line between the divinity and the worshipper.\textsuperscript{39} This episode relies on a slippage between image, deity, and devotee that encouraged the devotee to see himself mirrored

\textsuperscript{38} Bordieu, ”Les rites comme actes d’institution.”
in both images.\textsuperscript{40} The act of standing on the dais fully connected Lucius with his goddess, empowering him to take on her mythologies and her experiences as his own.\textsuperscript{41}

Among these might be a deeper relationship with the foreign gained through the process of cultic \textit{paideia} that was inherent in the initiation rituals. Engaging in these rituals helped to remove the initiate from his original community and establish himself within a group of people devoted to foreign gods.\textsuperscript{42} From dressing up as a statue of a goddess to receiving visual veneration from his peers, Lucius’ actions represent an educated choice to identify with the foreignness of Isis and her cult. The point here is not that engaging in Isiac ritual required a Roman like Lucius to abandon his own ethnic and cultural identity, but rather that the rite diverged significantly from standard Greek ritual formats. Through initiation, then, an initiate added something new and foreign into his understanding of what cult practice could look like. Engaging with Isis in this

\textsuperscript{40} Too, "Statues, mirrors, gods: controlling images in Apuleius," 142-51. Too treats the alignment of metaphors regarding the self, representation of the self, and the Platonic representation of the gods in Apuleius’ other works, though she does not comment extensively on this episode.

\textsuperscript{41} Platt, \textit{Facing the gods}, 13-14. Platt notes several instances in which human beings are either mistaken or presented as epiphanies of the Greek gods. The situation here is much more complex, but we might note briefly the Platonic analogy between Isis and her role as a seeker of truth in Plutarch and Lucius’ similar role in the \textit{Metamorphoses}. See F. Brenk, ”’Isis is a Greek word’. Plutarch’s allegorization of Egyptian religion,” in \textit{Plutarco, Platón y Aristóteles. Actas del V Congreso Internacional de la I.P.S. (Madrid-Cuenca, 4-7 de mayo de 1999)}, ed. A. Pérez Jiménez, J. García López, and R.M. Aguilar (Madrid: Ed. Clásicas, 1999); ”Plutarch’s Middle-Platonic God: about to enter (or remake) the academy,” in \textit{Gott und die Götter bei Plutarch. Götterbilder- Gottesbilder-Weltbilder}, ed. R. Hirsch-Luipold, \textit{Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten} (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005); Griffiths, \textit{Plutarch’s De Iside et Osiride}, 70-74; Hani, \textit{La religion égyptienne dans la pensée de Plutarque}.

\textsuperscript{42} Bordieu, ”Les rites comme actes d’institution,”; Bell, \textit{Ritual: perspectives and dimensions}, 94-99; Bianchi, “Some observations on the typology of passage,” 45-47. I agree with Alvar that joining the Isiac cults was not a conversion, since both Lucius’ experience and the epigraphic evidence demonstrates that Isiac devotees and cultic functionaries retained important roles in mainstream Greek society (Alvar, \textit{Romanising Oriental Gods}, 164.)
boundary-blurring way also demanded that the devotee take on a new and strange cosmopolitan identity, requiring the initiate to reconfigure his own understanding of his Romanness. It is telling that Apuleius ends Book XI with Lucius’ return to Rome. When he arrives, Lucius not only reunites with his familial and cultural roots, but also begins his initiation into the mysteries of Osiris, reconciling Lucius' Greco-Roman origins with his newfound devotion to Egyptian cults.

3.3 *Henotheism*

In this section, I argue that Isis’ theological ability to unify the pantheon of female divinities within her own *numen*, often referred to as henotheism, inspired her viewers to read a high degree of polysemy into her divine images. This complex set of beliefs was simplified and codified in the Isiac aretalogies, which promote Isis as a goddess of a thousand names who received veneration from the whole world. The earliest extant text dates to the 3rd century BC, and variations appeared throughout Latin and Greek literature into the 3rd century CE. Most of these texts come from the Greek east or aimed to communicate Isis’ peculiar character to a Greek audience.43 The aretalogies promote a very specific idea of Isis as a polymorphic goddess, one whose henotheism exceeds that of traditional Greek or Egyptian deities. While many Hellenistic and Roman period Greek goddesses, such as Dionysus and Aphrodite, were

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worshipped in a semi-henotheistic format, the Isiac theology of henotheism committed fundamentally to polysemy and visual fluidity. These universal and polyvalent characteristics, I argue, informed initiate viewership in such a way that they permitted Isiac viewers to interpret material culture in a new and unusually broad way. More importantly, as these texts demonstrate, Isis’ henotheistic relationships with other deities created new metaphors of interculturality, recasting her pantheism as a cosmopolitan and international religious experience.

2.2.1 Towards a Working Definition of Henotheism

The modern term henotheism derives from the Greek phrase εἰς ὁ θεός (“the single god”), which appears in several inscriptions dedicated to Sarapis. In a henotheistic belief system, the divinity and virtues of multiple gods are comprised within a single god. Devotees view the central god as original and all-powerful; all other gods derive from the central god’s henotheistic power. For the purposes of this discussion, I define henotheism as a theological system in which a particular divinity achieves primacy over other gods by absorbing their attributes, powers, and identities.

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45 Versnel, *Ter unus*, 35.
46 Alvar, *Romanising Oriental Gods*, 161. Alvar argues that the emphasis placed on Isis as the original and superior goddess in the aretalogical literature would have forced converts like Lucius to view Isis as above other deities, thus “converting” to the cult and away from other gods. The prosopography of historical devotees demonstrates that Alvar’s view is false: many of the devotees also made dedications in sanctuaries of more mainstream gods. Gasparini examines the Lucius episode and finds that there is no evidence to suggest that Lucius’ initiation resulted in a philosophical shift away from earlier beliefs (V. Gasparini, “Isis and Osiris: demonology vs. henotheism?,” *Niemun* 58(2011): 706-08.)
The henotheistic god stood above the other gods in the eyes of his devotees, and those devotees in turn especially valued their connections with that god.\textsuperscript{47} In the case of Isis, her primacy was often explored through the metaphor of motherhood, in which she was the creator of life and civilization, and by extension other divinities.\textsuperscript{48} Her status as a mother goddess, however, diverged from that of Demeter or Artemis Eilytheia in that she contained or subsumed her derivative divinities within her godhead. This unifying aspect was central to her theological identity in Greek and Latin literature.\textsuperscript{49}

A group of primarily Greek texts, known as aretalogies, clearly articulated Isis’ henotheistic aspects in order to educate new initiates about Isis’ divine nature and characteristics.\textsuperscript{50} The Isiac aretalogies followed a particular formula, describing the goddess’ family connections, discoveries on behalf of mankind, and her henotheistic unification with deities from across the Mediterranean. These lists of Isis’ powers and characteristics highlighted the idea of Isis as a universal goddess of many forms and names alongside her familial connections with other gods and her tendency to intervene directly in the affairs of mortals, preparing initiates for their interactions with Isiac images. Epigraphic aretalogies, dating from the 3rd century BCE to the 1st century CE,

\textsuperscript{47}Versnel, \textit{Ter unus}, 35. It is important to note the distinction between henotheism and monotheism. The henotheistic god is not the only god, but the best and most important one from which all other gods derive.\textsuperscript{48}Albersmaier, “Griechisch-römische Bildnisse der Isis,” 310-11; Gasparro, “The Hellenistic Face,” 70-71; Heyob, \textit{The Cult of Isis}, 51, 39-51; Žabkar, \textit{Hymns to Isis}, 129-32 and 46.\textsuperscript{49}Dousa, “Imagining Isis.”\textsuperscript{50}Alvar, \textit{Romanising Oriental Gods}, 188; Grandjean, \textit{Une nouvelle arétalogie}, 13. On cultic paideia, see Platt, \textit{Facing the gods}, 215-38.
are known from Delos, Ios, Thessaloniki, Maroneia, Andros, and Telmessos and Kyme in Asia Minor. As P. Martzavou has argued, the Kyme aretalogies stele’s findspot in a publically accessibly part of the sanctuary suggests that even the uninitiated would have had access to aretalogical texts. These aretalogies also found a receptive home in 2nd century CE literature, particularly among the intellectuals of the Second Sophistic. As we will see below, Plutarch’s *De Iside et Osiride* (DIO) and Book XI of Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*, written in the 2nd century CE, contained passages that adapt earlier epigraphic aretalogies. Many scholars include in the corpus the 1st century CE account of Diodorus Siculus 1.27.3-4, which claims to be a translation of the original aretalogy from the Temple of Ptah at Memphis, in the aretalogical canon as well. Isiac aretalogies are also known from the Temple of Isis built by Ptolemy II at Philae and the hymns of Isidorus from the temple of Renenutet at Narmouthis (modern Medinet Madi), sites in Egypt closely associated with Ptolemaic and Roman imperial patronage. These texts thus have a particular relevance to our understanding of Egyptian cults in Greece. As

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51 RICIS 113/0545 (Thessaloniki), 302/0204 (Kyme), 202/1101 (Ios), 306/0201 (Telmessos), 202/0101 (Delos), 114/0202 (Maroneia), 202/1801 (Andros).
53 I include Apuleius’ account among the aretalogical texts in Greece because the episode is set at Kenchreai, where Apuleius himself may have been initiated into the Isiac mysteries. See 2.1.2 regarding the appropriateness of treating *Metamorphoses* as an autobiographical account of Isiac rituals.
54 Dousa includes both texts in his reckoning of the canon. Žabkar finds similarities between Apuleius’ text and the hymns at Philae, leading him to argue that Apuleius may have looked at the Philae texts as inspiration for these passages (Žabkar, *Hymns to Isis*, 143-45). Given that Apuleius’ *Apologia* claims that he was initiated into the Egyptian cults in Greece and belonged to several mystery cults, it seems likely that he may have encountered some form of the Isiac aretalogy and based Lucius’ prayers at Met. XI.5 and 25.
55 These hymns are published in V.F. Vanderlip, *The four Greek hymns of Isidorus and the cult of Isis*, American Studies in Papyrology (Toronto: A.M. Hakkert, 1972); Žabkar, *Hymns to Isis*. 

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Platt argued, hymns like these explained a god’s mythological and theological identity and defined the god’s particular powers and roles. Most importantly, Isiac hymns represented the nature of the goddess, offering the reader a mediated experience of the divine.56

Despite their chronological and geographic disparities, the Greek aretalogies repeated themes and formulae to construct a well-defined theology of the Egyptian gods. Using the Kyme text as a prototype, A.J. Festugière argues Isiac aretalogical texts follow a standard three-part format. In the first part, the aretalogies recount the essential characteristics of the god or goddess to whom the text was directed, usually Isis. Aretalogical authors highlighted her role as patroness of all the earth, inventor of language, and lawgiver to civilized peoples. In the second section, the author expounds on Isis’ genealogy, focusing on her connections to Osiris, Horus/Harpokrates, and other gods connected to cosmic creation, such as Kronos. The final sections focus on Isis’ omnipotence and discoveries (δύναµις and ἑυρήµατα), emphasizing the goddess’ control over the heavens, the seas, and the elements. This third section often includes an assertion of Isis’ complete control over all earthly affairs, with the exhortation that she had mastered fate and thus controlled the mortal sphere. As we will see, not all of the known aretalogies conform exactly to this structure. Still, the thematic consistency and

repeated copying of these texts suggests that they expressed principles that remained relevant to the cult and its devotees regardless of historical or geographic context.

### 3.3.1 Isis as a Transcultural Goddess: The Maroneia Stele and Plutarch’s *De Iside et Osiride*

Diverging from its sisters across eastern Mediterranean, the aretalogy from Maroneia, in Thrace, emphasizes Isis’ close connections with Demeter and the foundation of Greek civilization in order to cast her as a universal goddess (Figure ###). The aretalogy appears on a marble votive stele, dedicated in the 2nd century BCE. Though parts of the inscription are lost, 44 lines are mostly preserved. In his 1975 critical edition, Y. Grandjean divides the text into three parts: the opening prayer to Isis (I.1-15), the description of Isis’ family (I.15-22), and the list of Isis’ characteristic traits (I.22-44). The first portion sets up the dedicatory context of the inscription, thanking Isis for her help in resolving the dedicator’s eye problem. The author then asks for Isis’ assistance in helping him to compose a eulogy of her virtues, which he considers a second prayer to the goddess. The author next presents the family section, diverging from the patterns found in the Ios and Kyme aretalogies, which leave Isis’ family ties and origins to the end. While the Kyme aretalogy describes Isis as the oldest daughter of Kronos, the wife

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58 There is little known of the Karamba area of Maroneia. No Egyptian sanctuary has been identified there. For a catalogue of Isiac finds in area, see the relevant plan in Bricault, *Atlas de la diffusion*.

59 Grandjean, *Une nouvelle arétologie*, 31-44.

60 Ibid., 44-46.
and sister of Osiris, the mother of Horus, and a companion of the Dog-Star Sothis, the Maroneia inscription redefines Isis as the first daughter of the earth, the companion of Sarapis, and the cosmic counterpart of Selene. Her new lineage redefines the goddess’ ethnicity to align her more closely with Greece, demonstrating the complex ways in which theology and cultural values combined to influence Isis’ reception in Greece. The aretalogy’s author must have felt it necessary to change Isis’ familial connections and by extension, her ethnic status, in order to make his text more palatable for a Greek audience.  

The final third of the Maroneia aretalogy lists Isis’ powers. Most of these attributes of Isis appear in the in other Greek aretalogies, including the one from Kyme (V.7), Andros (lines 51-54), Diodorus Siculus (I, 14,1), and Medinet Madi (I. v.8). Isis is here praised as a discoverer of writing, the inventor of justice and Greek and barbarian languages, a lawgiver, and the divinity who defined familial values (I.22-44). The last few lines of the text, however, diverge sharply from other aretalogies to argue for Isis’ special connection to Greece. First, the text describes Isis as only residing in Egypt: “You are pleased with Egypt as your dwelling place; among the Greek cities you most honor Athens.” Though the passage is a non sequitur, the juxtaposition of these two concepts allows the author to question Isis’ real connection to Egypt. Isis only resides in Egypt, 

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62 Σοὶ πρὸς κατοίκησιν Ἁἰγύπτων ἐστέρχθη· σὺ µάλιστα τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἐτίµησας τὰς Ἀθῆνας. Lines 33-36, translation Žabkar, *Hymns to Isis*.  

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but she honors and is honored most of all in Athens, suggesting that she preferred Greece and Greeks to Egypt and Egyptians. Nevertheless, Isis’ foreign origins, then, Isis’ Greek identity diverges from the visual and textual accounts described in the first section, minimizing the expression of foreignness within the text’s construction of Isis.

The next section of the text cements Isis’ relationship with Athens and the rest of Greece by describing her as a central goddess in the Eleusinian Mysteries. First, the author promotes Triptolemos, a hero best known for his central role in the Eleusinian cult, as the first missionary of the Isiac religion (lines 36-38). The final lines preserved continue with this theme, connecting Isis to Eleusis, Athens, and the city Eleusinion through another non sequitur: “Thus we desire to see Athens in Greece, and Eleusis in Athens, believing that the city is the heart of Europe, and that the shrine is the heart of the city” (lines 39-41). Unlike the earlier example, the non sequitur here emphasizes the causality implied within the conjunction τοιγαροῦν. Thus, two concepts that appeared unrelated became intimately intertwined: Triptolemos’ crucial role in the diffusion of the Isis cult resulted in Isis’ special role at Athens and Eleusis, and as such, recontextualized Isis as a Greek goddess.

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63 Gasparro, “The Hellenistic Face,” 40-44.
64 Τριπτόλεμος δὲ τοὺς ἱεροὺς δράκοντας σου καταξείζας ἀρματοφοροῦμενος εἰς πάντας Ἑλλήνας διέδωκε τὸ σπέρμα.
65 Τοιγαροῦν τῆς μὲν Ἑλλάδος ἰδεῖν σπεύδομεν τὰς Ἀθήνας, τῶν δ’ Ἀθηνῶν Ἐλευσίνα, τῆς μὲν Εὐρώπης νομίζοντες τὴν πόλιν, τῆς δὲ πόλεως τὸ ἱερὸν κόσμον.
Though the Maroneia text diverges from the standard aretalogical narrative displayed in the Kyme text, the theological principles used remain the same. Isis remains a universalized goddess who appealed to all, Greek or foreign. Indeed, most of the aretalogies from around the Mediterranean prioritized this comprehensive view of Isis. As Dousa argues, many of the aretalogies, both Greek and Egyptian, focused on Isis as a unifier of various divinities under the aegis of a single goddess. As we saw in the Philae hymn, authors illustrated this principle by listing Isis’ myriads of names among the peoples of the earth. For example, in Isidorus’ Hymn I from Medinet Madi, the author elucidates Isis’ names among the nations of the empire:

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\begin{align*}
\text{All mortals who live on the boundless earth,} \\
\text{Thracians, Hellenes, and all that are barbarians,} \\
\text{call you by your beautiful name, greatly honored among all,} \\
\text{each in his own tongue, each in his own land.} \\
\text{The Syrians call you Astarte, Artemis, Anaia} \\
\text{and the Lycian tribes call you Leto, the Sovereign,} \\
\text{The Thracians call you also Mother of the gods;} \\
\text{the Hellenes call you Hera of the Great Throne and Aphrodite,} \\
\text{and good Hestia and Thea and Demeter;} \\
\text{But the Egyptians call you Thiouis, because you alone are all} \\
\text{other goddesses named by the races of men.} \\
\text{(Isidorus Hymn I, 11-13, trans. Žabkar 1988: 137-138)}
\end{align*}
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66 M. Fantuzzi and R.L. Hunter, Tradition and innovation in Hellenistic poetry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 350-53 and 60-63; Fowden, The Egyptian Hermes, 50; Gasparro, “The Hellenistic Face,” 51; I. Moyer and J. Dieleman, “Egyptian Literature,” in A Companion to Hellenistic Literature, ed. J.J. Clauss and M. Cuypers (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2010). These scholars agree that Isidorus wrote his texts for a Greek audience and made use of a significant Greek literary background to compose these texts. As such, it is appropriate to consider Isidorus as part of the Greek canon of aretalogies.
Isis’ myriads of names operate as a metaphor for her myriads of avatars, which connect Isis with a diverse set of cultures and places. Many Isiac aretalogies explicitly praised her as the “uniform face (uniforma facies) of the gods and goddesses,” the goddess that the whole world worshipped with different rituals and different names.\footnote{Met. 11.5.}

This same aspect of Isis \textit{unica} was also popular in Italy: a dedicatory inscription from a statue base in Capua describes the goddess in what Dousa refers to as “pantheistic dimensions,” referring to her as \textit{una quae es Omnia dea Isis} (RICIS 504/0601).\footnote{Dousa, "Imagining Isis," 168-69.} We might call this expansive interpretation of Isis a hallmark of the Greek and Roman Isiac theology.

In giving a uniform face to these various names, Isis blurs the ethnic, theological, and cultural lines that divided Astarte from Aphrodite, becoming a goddess that belongs to all the peoples of the Mediterranean equally. It is this ability to unify across theological and geographical boundaries that sets Isis apart from more mainstream Greco-Roman divinities. While Artemis, for example, received a number of epithets derived from her representations in local cults, an element that recognized the diversity of belief within her cult, Isis unified all of the Aphrodites, all of the Junos, all of the Demeters, all of the Hathors, all of the Astartes, and all of the remaining goddesses of Egypt and the Mediterranean within one \textit{numen}. Among Greek and Egyptian texts of the
Hellenistic and Roman periods, then, the idea of Isis as a unifier, a goddess whose power encompassed that of all other goddesses, was a well-established theological priority. Additionally, these attitudes divorce Isis from any particular place or people in the Greco-Roman world. By placing Isis everywhere at once, these texts devalue the idea of connectedness. Ultimately, Isis as represented in the aretalogies is so hyper-territorialized that she becomes deterritorialized—a universal goddess with no particular cultural affiliations.

The texts surveyed above would probably have informed most viewers’ experiences, but more educated and elite viewers may have brought the intellectual developments of the Second Sophistic and Middle Platonism to bear on their viewing experiences. Plutarch’s De Iside et Osiride (abbreviated as DIO) written in the first quarter of the 2nd century CE, follows the epigraphic aretalogies in promoting a polynymic and universalized vision of Isis and Osiris. Written as an address to the Delphic priestess Klea, to whom Plutarch addressed several of the short treatises of his larger work, the Moralia, the DIO offers a mythology of Isis’ genesis, powers, and functions that presents

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69 The text’s date is controversial, with some arguing for dates as late as 125-30 AD (J. Jannoray, “Inscriptions delphiques d’époque tardive. Inscriptions de Lébadée,” BCH 70 (1946). Others suggest a date closer to 100-115 (P.A. Stadter, “Philosophos kai Philandros. Plutarch’s view of women in the Moralia and the Lives,” in Plutarch’s Advice to the Bride and Groom and A Consolation to his Wife, ed. S.A. Pomeroy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 174, n. 4.) See also D. Babut, “Sur Soclaros de Chéronée et sur le nombre des enfants de Plutarque: méthodologie d’une mise au point,” RPh 73 (1999): 178, 81. Griffiths and Brenk agree that the text should be dated to the years just before AD 120. Brenk, however, believes the text should be included in the latter years of Trajan’s reign, while Griffiths is inclined to date it to the beginning of Hadrian’s (Griffiths, Plutarch’s De Iside et Osiride, 16-17; F. Brenk, “Religion under Trajan. Plutarch’s resurrection of Osiris,” in Sage and emperor: Plutarch, Greek intellectuals, and Roman power in the time of Trajan (98-117 A.D.), ed. P.A. Stadter and L. van der Stockt. Symbolae (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 77.
Isis and Osiris as Platonic ideals of the good. The text prioritizes Osiris over Isis, which runs counter to what we know of cult practice at the time.

Plutarch’s text continues many of the Hellenizing themes we saw in the Maroneia inscription by comparing Isis to Demeter and the Eleusinian mythology. For example, in section 378.69.1 E-F, Plutarch rationalizes the more morbid and mournful rituals of the Egyptian cults by comparing them to the celebrations of Demeter’s sorrows inherent in the Eleusinian Mysteries. In this episode, Isis’ mournful search for her deceased husband Osiris brings to Byblos, where the local queen finds her crying and brings her into the royal household as a nurse (357.15 A-16 D). This section of the text clearly recalls Demeter’s tears at Eleusis and her adoption into the royal household there, further highlighting the mythological and aretalogical similarities between the two goddesses in both the Isiac texts and Plutarch’s longer treatise. The Maroneia text

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70 Alvar, Romanising Oriental Gods, 39-51; Dunand, Le culte d’Isis II. 39-40; Griffiths, Plutarch’s De Iside et Osiride, 47-51.
71 Brenk, “Religion under Trajan. Plutarch’s resurrection of Osiris,” 73; Griffiths, Plutarch’s De Iside et Osiride, 41-47; Dunand, Le culte d’Isis II, 71.; Heyob, The Cult of Isis, 51, 39-46. This picture is more complex than Brenk and Griffiths realize. Osiris received veneration at Thessaloniki as a resident god (Dunand, Le culte d’Isis II, 54-59, Voutiras, "Sanctuaire privé -- culte public? Le cas du Sarapieion de Thessalonique," 282-86. Steimle, Religion im römischen Thessaloniki, 102-03.) Osiris also received early and sporadic veneration at Rhodes, Delos, and perhaps even at Herodes Atticus’ villa at Marathon (based on the presence of statues of Osiris-Antinoos, cf Dekoulakou, “Le sanctuaire.”
72 It is worth noting the long time span that separates these two texts. The Maroneia aretalogy, as mentioned above, dates to the 2nd century BCE. Plutarch’s text dates to the 2nd century CE. Though the site of Maroneia does not offer good context for this inscribed stele, we know that these types of texts were still in use during the second century AD due to their reinterpretation in Second Sophistic texts like Apuleius’ Metamorphoses and the DIO.
73 Plutarch, Moralia, Volume V, trans. F.C. Babbitt, Loeb Classical Library, n. 82. See also Alvar, Romanising Oriental Gods, 41-60; Babut, "Sur Soclaros de Chéronée et sur le nombre des enfants de Plutarque: méthodologie d’une mise au point.”
also takes pains to integrate the Greek theology of Eleusinian Demeter into its conception of Isis, particularly in the poem’s Eleusinian and Athenian sections (I.36-344). These lines emphasized heavily the traits of the goddess that would be most legible to a Greek audience: those that were already defined as the special purview of Eleusinian Demeter. Herodotus had already made the connection between Isis and Demeter in the 5th century (2.59.2). Plutarch’s account thus treats the Egyptian gods in a manner fundamentally similar to the Isis of the aretalogical inscriptions.

Plutarch further adapts Egyptian religion through the lens of Middle Platonism. Though Plutarch’s depiction of Isis is consistent with the aretalogical descriptions, his Platonic understanding of Osiris give him a unique perspective on what Isis’ myriads of names might mean. Because Plutarch uses Osiris as a Platonic ideal, Isis’ myriads of names suggest that she is all-knowing and all-receiving. As Plutarch explains it, “Thus Isis is the female principle in nature and that which receives all procreation, and so she is called by Plato the Nurse and the All-Receiving, while most people call her myriad-named because she is transformed by reason and receives all corporal and spiritual forms” (DIO 372E 22-26). Plutarch thus proclaims his philosophical basis for these claims in citing Plato’s Timaeus (49A and 51A) and the reader can easily find Platonic influence in Plutarch’s exploration of Osiris and Isis as ultimate truths only knowable

Plut. De Iside 372E 22-26. Ἡ γάρ Ἰσις ἐστι μὲν τὸ τῆς φύσεως θήλυ, καὶ διεκτικόν ἀπάσης γενέσεως, καθὸ τιθήνη καὶ πανδεχήσῃ ὑπὸ τοῦ Πλάτωνος, ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν πολλῶν μυριώνυμως κέκληται, διὰ τὸ πάσας ὑπὸ τοῦ λόγου τρεπομένη μορφὰς δέχεσθαι καὶ ἰδέας. The Plato referenced is Tim. 49A, 51A.
through rigorous philosophical examination.\(^5\) It is this Platonic foundation that prepares Plutarch’s reader for viewing Isis and her companion deities in multivalent forms.

In providing a Platonic interpretation of the Egyptian cults, Plutarch offers a theoretical basis for representing and encountering the essential truths of Osiris, Isis, and by extension all Egyptian gods. Plutarch here applies the Platonic theory of forms to his exegesis of the nature of the Egyptian gods. Though Plutarch does not cite the Republic directly, we might examine the more concise exploration of the Forms in Book 10.595a-597e of Plato’s Republic to explore Plutarch’s basis for equating the Egyptian gods with Platonic forms.\(^6\) In this discussion, Socrates and Glaucon discuss the problem of form through the example of the three couches: the ideal couch that exists in the abstract world, made by God; the physical couch made by the carpenter; and the representation of the couch made by the painter. In this formulation of the ideal, the abstracted couch stands atop the hierarchy. Plutarch formulates Osiris and Isis in an analogous way,

\(^6\) Plato treats images and reproductions more harshly in the *Republic* than in the *Timaeus*, where he is more inclined to see the world around him as a “perfect image of an eternal paradigm.” J.A. Francis, "Living icons: tracing a motif in verbal and visual representation from the second to fourth centuries CE," *AJP* 124, no. 4 (2003): 584. By Plutarch’s time, the word εἴκον is even used to discuss the Platonic ideal, suggesting a fundamental shift in attitudes towards the image. Some scholars might disapprove of my decision to summarize the Forms with the *Republic* despite Plutarch’s own citation of the *Timaeus* in the relevant passage, particularly C. Gill, "Dialectic and the dialogue Form," in *New perspectives on Plato, modern and ancient*, ed. J. Annas and C. Rowe (Cambridge, MA: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2002). Plutarch himself, however, seems to have thought of Platonic works as a corpus and written about them as a cohesive philosophical system. See Brenk, "Plutarch’s Middle-Platonic God,; Richter, "Plutarch on Isis and Osiris: text, cult, and cultural appropriation.” As such, it seems likely that Plutarch would have seen the Forms as an idea independent of individual texts, and written about Platonism in this way.
setting them atop a hierarchy of gods as abstracted paradigms of Truth and Good.\textsuperscript{77} This ideal of Truth and Good resonates with the aretalogical emphasis on universalism, and Osiris and Isis thus represent these ideals of goodness among all the peoples of the Roman Empire. These ideal gods were represented for their devotees in turn, inviting a wide variety of styles and local influences upon their physical images. Through the philosophical metaphor of the craftsmen and the poets, in which each artist and artisan mimics the ideal form, Isis and Osiris are represented and worshipped in a wide variety of images across the known world. By worshipping the gods and contemplating their nature, the initiate could grow closer to the essential, ideal truth of the Egyptian gods and become one with them.\textsuperscript{78}

Plutarch’s Platonic approach, however, is not as innovative as it might seem. Rather, I argue, the theory of the form serves largely to explain preexisting phenomena. Most of the ideas that Plutarch approaches through Platonic forms, such as the abstraction of the ideal/divine and the idea of multiple physical forms as derivations of the ideal/divine, appear in basic forms in the aretalogical texts as early as the Hellenistic period. For an elite, well-educated initiate, then, Plutarch’s text and his references to Greek philosophers throughout would provide an intellectual framework through


\textsuperscript{78} Richter, “Plutarch on Isis and Osiris: text, cult, and cultural appropriation.”
which this educated initiate might interpret his religious experiences. For a less educated viewer, the aretalogies must have formed the basis of his or her knowledge. As we saw in Apuleius’ account of Lucius’ initiation ritual, joining the cult included a form of ritual paideia in which the new initiate learned the cult’s mythology and theological principles. It is in this context that the aretalogies would have excelled as didactic texts. Pithy, short, and adaptable, they presented a simplified and concrete version of the universal, multiform goddess to a Greek audience, emphasizing Isis’ unifying powers over all others, save her ability to intervene directly in matters of fate.

3.4 Epiphanic and Soteriological Expectations in the Egyptian Cults

In the section above, we determined that Plutarch used Platonic forms to provide a philosophical explanation for Isis’ and Osiris’ role as the ideal Truth and Good. If we were to continue Plato’s metaphor, what would be the carpenter’s version of Isis and Osiris? We might equate the corporeal or dream apparitions of the Egyptian gods with the carpenter’s couch, a concrete but interpreted version of the abstracted ideal. The texts surveyed above and their focus on universalism and multifaceted identity highlight the fact that the goddess, when appearing to her devotees, could take a variety of forms. Forced to choose between all of potential forms and identities available, the god diverged from his abstract or ideal form and took on one specific form in order to interact with his or her devotee. It is these corporeal, personal experiences of the divine
that provided the authoritative basis for the wide vocabulary of forms and symbols used to depict Isis and her companions in art and text.\textsuperscript{79}

Epiphanic encounters with Isis and her companions were then represented in both literary and artistic media (Figures 22, 23). The gods’ appearances to their devotees provided authority for the production of ideal images of the gods and goddesses,\textsuperscript{80} resulting in the third rung in the Platonic hierarchy: the artistic representation of the corporeal god. Translated into locally appropriate modes of representation, the gods became Hellenized in form, reinforcing arguments for Isis’ essentially Greek identity found in texts like the \textit{DIO} and the Maroneia aretalogy (Figure 24).\textsuperscript{81} Plutarch’s readers then would have seen the Egyptian gods as abstractions that could take myriads of physical forms both in epiphanic experiences and artistic representations. Thus, Plutarch’s Platonic polysemy provided a crucial foundation for Isiac viewership, one that predicated on Isis’ power to appear directly to her devotees. These site-specific epiphanic experiences attached Isis to particular spaces in Roman Greece, momentarily giving the goddess and her companions an authentic connection to Greece that complicated the narratives of foreignness inherent in her cult.

\textsuperscript{79}Bianchi, "Images of Isis,"; Albersmaier, "Griechisch-römische Bildnisse der Isis."
\textsuperscript{80}Platt, \textit{Facing the gods}, especially 135-69.
\textsuperscript{81}Brenk, "Isis is a Greek word,"; Richter, "Plutarch on Isis and Osiris: text, cult, and cultural appropriation,“; Gasparro, "The Hellenistic Face,"; Dousa, "Imagining Isis,"; Malaise, \textit{Pour une terminologie}, 15-19.
3.4.1 The Maiistas Chronicle of Sarapieion A and Epiphanic Encounters in the Sanctuary

But where and how might these divine encounters take place? Most of our accounts of epiphanic experiences in Egyptian cults are connected to dreams. While these epiphanic experiences were common in Greek and Roman literature, certain types of dream oracles seem to have been particularly associated with the Egyptian cults.82 Many of these dream oracles are connected with sanctuaries, particularly in the cases of sanctuary foundations. Often, Egyptian sanctuaries and dedications to the Egyptian gods were motivated by dreams, making dream oracles a defining characteristic of the Egyptian cults in Greece.83

Let us return to the inscription that began this chapter: the Chronicle of Sarapieion A. Moyer notes that 60% of inscriptions referring to dream oracles on post-independence Delos belong to the Egyptian cults, and during the period of Delian independence (314-168 BCE), the proportion is close to 100%.84 I argue that these accounts of dream oracles motivated readers to anticipate their own encounters with the

82 On dreams more generally in Greek and Roman literature, see Platt, Facing the gods, 254-87; W.V. Harris, Dreams and experience in classical antiquity (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), particularly 23-76; G. Renberg, “Commanded by the gods: an epigraphical study of dreams and visions in Greek and Roman religious life,” (Duke University, 2003). On the particular importance of dream oracles in Egyptian cults, Moyer, Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism, 165-74; Alvar, Romanising Oriental Gods, 331-35.
83 The only cult that approaches the level of frequency observed in the Greek cults is that of Asklepios. See Moyer, Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism, 165; Alvar, Romanising Oriental Gods, 333-35. More traditional types of oracles also inspired the foundation of Egyptian cults in Greece. At Istros, for example, the city used a traditionally Greek oracle at Kalchedon to determine whether to found a sanctuary of Sarapis (RICIS 618/1101, Histria Museum no. 378, 3rd century BCE).
84 Moyer, Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism, 165-68.
divine, thus setting the sanctuary as a sacred space. In this section, I study the Hymn of Maiistas, the second part of the Chronicle of Sarapieion A, as an example of an Isiac dream oracle from Hellenistic Greece. The contemplation of this text and the sanctuary space in which it was set up formed a discursive practice that encouraged the reader to contemplate the gods and their presences and absences inside the sanctuary space, much as Plutarch had intended for his readers to do.

Soteriological deities played a prominent role in the Egyptian cults on Delos, where the interventionist aspect of the gods played a key role in the narrative of the cult’s foundation. Maiistas’ tale recounts the same historical episode as Apollonios’ account, but includes more details about the cult’s early foundation and takes a deeper interest in the miraculous nature of the dream oracles. Employing a poetic authorial voice, the author emphasizes the role of miraculous intervention in the sanctuary’s foundation, including even a dream apparition that was to have taken place within the sanctuary. The text thus provides a historical basis for expecting divine encounters within the sanctuary space, creating a new realm for interactions with the polymorphic Egyptian gods.

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85 RICIS 202/0101 lines 29-94.
86 Dunand, Le culte d’Isis II, 79-82. The interventionist aspect may not have been as important on Crete, but several inscriptions demonstrate that this theological trait was highly valued at Thessaloniki and the majority of other Egyptian cult centers in Greece.
87 The Maiistas Chronicle includes several pieces of key information, such as Apollonios’ Memphite origins and the cult’s early foundation in Apollonios’ home, omitted in Apollonios’ more terse account. Moyer, Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism, 158.
The author, Maiistas, names himself in the first line in order to set the passage apart from Apollonios’ passage directly above. The passage begins as a hymn of praise, naming Sarapis as a powerful god whose deeds are praised in both Egypt and Greece. Sarapis is recognized in conjunction with his wife Isis. The two are celebrated particularly as gods of salvation who value moral purity. The narrative then turns to the story of Apollonios and the foundation of Egyptian cults on Delos. Maiistas recounts the story as a prayer of thanksgiving, repeatedly noting Sarapis’ miraculous inspiration in Sarapieion A’s foundation. For example, Maiistas credits Sarapis with bestowing divine glory upon Apollonios’ cult images. Maiistas also offers more details about the priestly family and their lives, noting that Apollonios (I) lived a long life and offering a more vivid account of Apollonios (II)’s dream encounter with Sarapis. The last section focuses on the trial, again emphasizing Sarapis’ miraculous intervention. Not only did Sarapis reassure Apollonios (II) in a dream that mortal could not successfully oppose a god, but he also intervened in the trial itself. By paralyzing the plaintiff’s tongue, the god ensured victory for his supporters and a future for his own cult, earning even more praise from Maiistas in the closing lines of the chronicle.

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88 The author was probably a devotee of Sarapis whose limited Greek made heavy use of Homeric idioms. Engelmann, *The Delian aretalogy of Sarapis*, 25-57.
89 Ibid., 27-29.
90 Καὶ γὰρ τ´ ἀμφιλεῖ Δήλωι ἀρίσημα τέλεσας / τάπολλωνίου ἵππα καὶ εἰς μέγαν ἡγαγες αἴνον, lines 35-36.
Sarapis appears directly to his devotees three times in Maiistas’ account, each time as part of a dream oracle. In the first encounter, Sarapis appears to a sleeping man, probably Apollonios II’s father Demetrios, and answers Demetrios’ prayer for a statue to himself in the sanctuary. Like many other accounts of divine epiphanies, Maiistas describes the encounter in the most vague of terms. In his description of the second dream apparition, however, Maiistas offers some tantalizing details. Sarapis came to the sleeping priest and spoke directly to him, directing the dreamer to awaken, walk to a portico entryway, and find a piece of paper that would tell him where to build a sanctuary to the god. Sarapis’ intervention worked: the dreamer, presumably a member of the Apollonios family, arose and found the piece of paper, which led him to

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92 RICIS 202/0101, lines 43-46. These lines are fragmentary, and Engelmann reconstructs them with the problematic term ΑΝΠΑΤΡΟΙΟ referring to the man erecting the statue. He opts to follow Merkelbach in arguing that ἀντίπατρος meant the son who succeeding his father in performing a sacred duty, which Moyer and others believe was a common practice on Delos and in Egypt. Engelmann, *The Delian aretalogy of Sarapis*, 32-36. Moyer, *Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism*, 161-65. For a reasoned interpretation of the two-statue problem, see A. Wilhelm, “Zu dem Gedichte des Maiistas IG XI 1299,” *Symbolae Oslonoenses* 13, no. 1 (1934).

93 RICIS 202/0101, lines 56-59, following Moyer. ἔγρεο· ἔλεος τε καὶ μέσος παστάδος ἀμφι θύρευθρα καὶ ἐσίδε γράμμα τυπωθὲν τυτθῆς ἐκ βόβλῳ τὸ σε φρονέοντα διδάξει ὁ ὁι τέμενος τεχνής καὶ ἐπικλεά νειόν.
the preordained spot. As the Maiistas Chronicle tells us, the Isiac community successfully built their sanctuary according to the god’s wishes, only to be sued by neighbors possessed of a κακὸς Φθόνος (line 66). In response, Sarapis appears a third time, this time to Apollonios (II) in his sleep, to reassure Apollonios that he would prevail in the lawsuit. As in the previous dream apparition, Sarapis’ promises were fulfilled: the god stopped the tongues of Apollonios (II)’s adversaries in court, and the devotees retained their sanctuary.

These dream encounters perform multiple functions within the religious and cultural context of Hellenistic and Roman Delos. First, Maiistas’ descriptions of the dream encounters emphasize Sarapis’ primary identity as a soter. In each instance where Sarapis intervened, the author praised Sarapis and uses active and decisive terms such as τέλεσσας (44) and ἔτευξας (84) to describe the god’s specific, concrete, and miraculous actions on behalf of his devotees. Sarapis here is a god of action, one who paid attention to the everyday needs of his followers in the mortal realm. The narrative thus prioritizes this interventionist aspect of Sarapis’ divine power, a characteristic highly valued across Greece. Further, the dreams establish the religious authority of the priests as men specially connected to the gods they serve. If Sarapieion A competed with other

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95 RICIS 202/0101, lines 77-80, following Moyer, Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism. μέθης ἄλγος ἀπὸ φρενός· οὐ σὲ τὶς ἀνδρὸς ψύχος ἀιστῶσει, ἐπεὶ εἰς (ἐμὲ τείνεται αὐτὸν ἥδε δίκη, τὴν οὔτε ἐμὲ περιώσιον ἄλλος ἀνήρ αὐδήσει, οὐ δὲ μηκέτι δάμαντο ϑυμόν.
Egyptian sanctuaries on Delos, as Moyer argues in his chapter on the Chronicle of Sarapieion A, the ability to claim divine inspiration for the sanctuary’s foundation and persistence would have been another productive way to claim primacy over the non-Egyptian priests at the other Egyptian sanctuaries.96

These two authorial priorities, combined as they are in this text, would have designated the cult, its officials, and its sanctuary as loci for divine encounters. In the case of first dream oracle, the encounter with the god happened within the sanctuary.97 In the case of the other two oracles, the encounter directly related to the sanctuary space. The second oracle decreed where the sanctuary should be, making the space itself a gift of the god. The third oracle helps Apollonios to defend that space against outside attackers and portends another miraculous intervention by Sarapis, preserving the sanctity of the sacred space and the ritual community. Those that read these two texts on the column as they entered the sanctuary’s main square might enhance their expectations of a divine encounter within the sanctuary, making them especially receptive to the sanctuary’s visual rhetoric.98 Maiistas’ account, read together with Apollonios’ more prosaic account, would lend authority to these ideas, since at least two

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* Ibid., 195-205.
9* Apollonios and his family likely housed the early versions of the cult in their own home, rendering the sanctuary itself the location of the divine encounter. *RICIS* 202/0101, lines 15-16ff. Kleibl notes that the sanctuary was built over a private home and may have been directly connected to another. Kleibl, *Iseion*, 211-13.
people had witnessed them and recorded them in a permanent and public way. These
two texts thus worked in tandem to reaffirm the mystic experience of the sanctuary
space for cultic devotees throughout the sanctuary’s lifespan. In the Chronicle’s account,
the sanctuary became a space that the gods frequented and inhabited, a place where the
gods came to speak to men. If the gods visited their priests as frequently as the
Chronicle of Sarapieion A claimed, participating in this particular religious community
might provide a means to access the divine more directly.

As a result of reading the entire Chronicle, I argue, the reader might perceive the
sanctuary and its sculpture as prospective loci for a divine encounter. However, reading
the texts alone was not an epiphanic experience. In our Platonic hierarchy, poetic texts
like the Chronicle of Sarapieion A represent divine encounters in a “natural” way,
emphasizing the absence of the god by describing his former presence.99 The conceit of
naturalism, portraying a person or a god as a realistic interpretation of what that person
or god looks like, fundamentally separates the viewer/reader from the viewed object.100
This separation between the ideal image and its representation in poetic form creates an
cognitive dissonance of its own, forcing the reader to bring in his or her prior knowledge

99 See R.T. Neer, The emergence of the classical style in Greek sculpture (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,
2011), 1-68; Platt, Facing the gods, 101-14; Elsner, Art and the Roman viewer, 30-38.
100 Elsner, Roman eyes, 1-25; Art and the Roman viewer, 1-12; Platt, Facing the gods, 77-83. Regarding visuality
and naturalism, see Squire, Image and text in Graeco-Roman antiquity, 297-99. On the analogous practices of
reading texts and images, see P. Wagner, “Introduction: Ekphrasis, iconotexts, and intermediality - the
state(s) of the art(s),” in Icons-Texts-Iconotexts. Essays on Ekphrasis and intermediality, ed. P. Wagner (Berlin:
Walter de Gruyter, 1996).
of the cult, its gods, and its art to interpret the Chronicle and its reported events.\textsuperscript{101} Much like naturalistic images of the gods, the Maiistas Hymn’s separation from the original epiphanic phenomenon permits the text to anticipate and precipitate epiphanic experiences for its readers; essentially, the textual account represents and reinterprets a historical account for readers.\textsuperscript{102} The act of reading the text, and the physical presence of the textual object, promoted epiphanic experience near and around the sanctuary.

The text thus invites its readers to transcend the deity’s current absence and transform the sanctuary into a conceptual space filled with divinity. In doing so, the viewer would be invited to consider Sarapis’ own interventions in the same sanctuary space. Experiencing the sanctuary and its sculptures thus promoted the types of philosophical and theological contemplation that Plutarch thought critical to the Egyptian cults; as Plutarch wrote, “The name of her sanctuary also clearly offers recognition and knowledge of what really exists; for it is called the Iseion to indicate that we shall know what really exists if we approach the sanctuaries of the goddess with reason and reverence” (\textit{DIO} 352A).\textsuperscript{103} In the process of such learned contemplation of

\textsuperscript{101} Zanker, \textit{Modes of viewing in Hellenistic poetry and art}.

\textsuperscript{102} Platt, \textit{Facing the gods}, 77-113; Elsner, \textit{Roman eyes}, 1-25; Zanker, \textit{Modes of viewing in Hellenistic poetry and art}, 7-15.

\textsuperscript{103} Τὸ δ’ ἱερὸν τούνομα καὶ σαφῶς ἐπαγγέλλεται καὶ γνώσιν καὶ εἰδήσιν τοῦ ὄντος· ὀνομάζεται γάρ Ἰσεῖον ὡς εἰσομένων τὸ ὅν, ἂν μετὰ λόγου καὶ ὀσίως εἰς τὰ ἱερὰ παρέλθωμεν τῆς θεοῦ.
text, image, and sacred space, the reader undergoes that transformative experience with the divine truth that Plutarch associates with the Egyptian cults and their gods.  

3.5 A Theological Mode of Viewing for the Egyptian Cults in Roman Greece

The above sections have explored the evidence for an Isiac mode of viewing in Hellenistic and Roman Greece. I have surveyed how the cult came to Greece, how believers constructed their gods in images and texts, how believers encountered the Egyptian gods, and what major rites and rituals they practiced as part of their membership in an Egyptian cultic community. As viewers encountered the Egyptian cults and their sculptures, they brought these ritual and textual accounts to bear upon those viewing experiences, rendering the acts of viewing, reading, and ritual intertwined exercises in experiencing and understanding the Egyptian gods. These aspects had both intellectual and visual effects as they dynamically defined both the theoretical nature of the gods and how the gods were represented in artistic media. Consequently, these ritual and theological components of the Egyptian cults provided a defined context against which sculpture related to the cults would have been read.

This idea of Isiac polysemy reconciles well with the other major aspects of the cult, particularly with the gods’ direct intervention in the daily lives of mortals. As we

104 Elsner, Art and the Roman viewer, 41-47; Brenk, “Religion under Trajan. Plutarch’s resurrection of Osiris,” 80-81; ”Plutarch’s Middle-Platonic God,”; Griffiths, Plutarch’s De Iside et Osiride, 70-74; Richter, ”Plutarch on Isis and Osiris: text, cult, and cultural appropriation,”; Zanker, Modes of viewing in Hellenistic poetry and art.
have seen, dream oracles formed a major impetus for the cults’ foundation, growth, and expansion in Greece. These soteriological interactions are often under-explained, leaving the reader with only the sense of wonder that surrounds the epiphanic experience. Since sculptors relied on accounts of these epiphanies to lend authority and authenticity to their visual representations of the divine presence, these dreams also motivated the material culture produced for the Egyptian cults. Thus, we should not be surprised when the Egyptian gods, like their Greek counterparts, are depicted in diverse modes by local sculptors. On a cultural level, Isiac polysemy allows the devotee to imagine a world without cultural boundaries, one in which an Egyptian goddess has deep roots in Greece and the Greek pantheon.

Behind these sculptures are visual ideologies of cultural imagining and manipulation of time and space that attempt to resolve the cultural dissonance inherent in the Egyptian cults. The term *henotheism*, described above, rewrites Isis as a unified yet transcultural divinity. In a 1986 *BCH* article, V. Tran tam Tinh argues that ancient viewers, particularly those that embraced cults as theologically flexible as the Egyptian cults, would have granted their images a great deal more polysemy than modern viewers might assume. For the Isiac cults, the multiplicity of Isis’ cultural identities

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105 Bianchi, "Images of Isis." Tran tam Tinh’s *LIMC* article on Isis, which defines Isis’ iconography in a limited and hyper-categorized manner, focuses almost exclusively on objects from Italy and Alexandria and is now out of date.

identity demonstrated in Plutarch and the aretalogical inscriptions suggests that polysemy would be a particularly appropriate method for understanding Egyptianizing cultic images. If Tran tam Tinh’s argument is correct, we should expect representations of Egyptian gods to encourage many viewer interpretations, particularly those that find multiple gods within one image. Still, we cannot assume that Greeks only looked at Isis as another means to access Eleusinian Demeter and the other gods to which the aretalogical texts connected her. As Malaise argues, we should think of the goddess and her polysemic images as a way for multiple ideal and cultural concepts to co-exist, making a henotheistic goddess like Isis an ideal locus for reimagining the long history of Greece and Egypt.

The last element of Isiac theology that is crucial to our discussion is Isis’ foreignness. Inherent in the Egyptian gods’ identity were their Egyptian origins and the idea that these gods had migrated across natural and cultural barriers to arrive in the northern and eastern Mediterranean. In our discussion of the cult’s origins, we saw how individual Egyptian priests carried the cult across the Mediterranean Sea into many different regions of Greece, where local communities adopted and adapted the cult and its religious principles. Isis’ separation from the Nile thus occupied a central role in Greek constructions of the goddess. The aretalogical texts similarly valued the Egyptian

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107 Malaise, Pour une terminologie, 193-97; Elsner, Art and the Roman viewer, 25-47; Squire, Image and text in Graeco-Roman antiquity, 223-29.
gods’ biographies of travel and movement, meditating on the gods’ connections with Egypt and Greece as their native lands. The process of deterritorialization was fundamental to Isis’ identity as a goddess who traveled across the Mediterranean Sea to arrive in Greece, emphasizing her status as foreigner and outsider within the Greek pantheon. At the same time, rituals encouraged viewers to approach Isis and her companions, encountering and connecting with the foreign as a part of joining and participating in the ritual community. These metaphorical and ritual moments of transcendence helped the viewer to identify with Isis’ foreignness in a theological way, providing another means for reckoning with the cognitive dissonance required for understanding the gods.

Alongside these theological principles of polysemy, foreignness, and omnipresence, the present model of Isiac visuality stands on the premise that an individual viewer’s subjectivity played a key role in determining that viewer’s interpretation. Though it is impossible to reconstruct any single viewer from antiquity, we can think about how different subcultures of initiate viewers might have applied their own social and educational contexts to art from the Egyptian cults. In constructing these subjectivities, we should consider the role that literary accounts of the Egyptian cults, from Book II of Herodotus to Plutarch’s Dio to Apuleius’ Metamorphoses, had in constructing Isiac subjectivity. It is unlikely that many people outside the

108 Elsner, Roman eyes. Elsner takes a similar approach to mainstream Roman visuality in part II.
educated elite would have studied them. Education thus seems to have been a critical dividing line between elite viewers and non-elite viewers, one that would help to define the types of textually-derived knowledge these viewers would have brought to bear on their viewing experiences.

For the non-elite viewer, socialization into the cult and its theology came through the initiation rites. As we saw with Lucius’ initiation, which remains our best account of an Isiac initiation, the rites themselves involved a great deal of cultic paideia. Apuleius expresses Lucius’ transition from outsider to inculcated initiate with a spatial metaphor, equating Lucius’ education and initiation into the cult with his descriptions of the Kenchreai sanctuary. In the first phase of his cultic paideia, Lucius attends the opening rites every morning, gathering more and more cultic knowledge by watching the priest perform sacred rites imbued with Isiac mythology (Met. XI.18-21). Though he does not yet possess extensive knowledge of the cult, these rites introduce Lucius to the goddess’ cult image and its customary dress, her connection with the sun, and the ways that initiates venerated that image. Still, Lucius remains outside the sanctuary’s private areas, reinforcing his outsider status. On the morning after Lucius receives a dream vision from Isis, the priest begins to share cultic knowledge from a book written in hieroglyphics “after celebrating with solemn rite the service of the opening of the gates” (Met. XI.22). The process lasted several days. There is no way to know exactly what was

contained within the hieroglyphic book, but the repeated description of the hieroglyphic stele from the Memphite sanctuary of Ptah found in Isiac aretalogies in Greece and Diodorus Siculus’ accounts suggest that an aretalogy of Isis might reasonably appear in such a book. In this case, then, understanding the nature of the Egyptian gods as it had been handed down from Egyptian and Greek forbearers would form a critical part of the initiation process. This process of education ensured a certain level of theological consistency among initiates, one that would inform all of their future encounters with the Egyptian cults.

Elite and educated viewers further informed their own subjective versions of Isiac visuality with the Platonic idea of the form. Both Apuleius and Plutarch brought their philosophical interests in Platonism into their Isiac works. In particular, Plutarch’s application of Platonic forms to his exegesis of Osiris and Isis reconciles the visual polysemy inherent in the cult with the theological flexibility described in the Isiac aretalogies. Essentially, Osiris acts as an ideal abstraction of divinity and Isis represents the soul’s striving to reach that ideal concept.\textsuperscript{110} In attempting to represent these gods and their myriads of names and identities, the gods’ visual forms expand upon even the normal allowance for modes of divine representation. Though this Platonic underpinning for the cult would probably be available only to elites and philosopher-

\textsuperscript{110} Brenk, "Religion under Trajan. Plutarch’s resurrection of Osiris;" "Isis is a Greek word;" "In the image, reflection and reason of Osiris;" Richter, "Plutarch on Isis and Osiris: text, cult, and cultural appropriation."
initiates, the basic idea of Isis as a multiform goddess has deep roots in the Isiac aretalogies. As such, this elite form of Isiac visuality does not conflict drastically from the average initiate viewer’s experience. Rather, these Platonic undertones only expand on principles already available to non-elite viewers, demonstrating the multiple subjectivities that were active within the Egyptian cults of Hellenistic and Roman Greece.
4. Isis is Egyptian, Isis is Greek: The Role of Supplementary Sculptures in Isis and Sarapis Sanctuaries

In this chapter, I explore how devotees integrated the international images of Isis and Sarapis discussed in Chapter 2 into sculptural programs displayed in Egyptian sanctuaries in Roman Greece. In order to consider sculptural programs as an independent entity, this chapter focuses on Isiac sculptures from sanctuaries where part of a sculptural program has been found, but more precise architectural or display information is not available.¹ This chapter focuses on the sculptures set up in the sanctuaries at Rhodes and Thessaloniki. Here, we find assemblages composed of a variety of Greco-Roman subjects, Egyptianizing style, and Egyptian imports. I argue dedicants surrounded their representations of Isis and Sarapis with supplementary images that fleshed out the statue’s cultural, artistic, and religious meaning. The resulting assemblages play with the viewer’s experiences of time and space, bringing Egyptian heirlooms into close contact with familiar Greek subjects.

My main argument in this chapter is that sculptures and artworks displayed in Isis sanctuaries reinterpreted dissonant images of Isis by placing generalized divine images alongside more culturally specific images like Egyptian imports or statues of Greek goddesses. These assemblages thus adjusted the viewer’s experience of time and space by setting up these disparate cultural and sculptural elements as participants in

¹ Chapter 5 will discuss architecture alongside the sculptural program at Marathon.
the same visual culture. In other words, by establishing contextual relationships with the
main cult images, supplementary statues primed viewers to reinterpret the
deterritorialized statues of Isis as belonging to Greek or Egyptian visual and cultural

canons.

Context thus joins text and ritual as another critical influence acting upon Isis
devotees as they read images in the Egyptian sanctuary. Several recent studies of divine
statues recognize the key role display context played in making meaning for ancient
viewers, arguing that display context had the power to direct viewers’ attention to
specific aspects of an image in order to draw specific conclusions.2 My approach here is
based on three key assumptions: that divine statues have agency, or what Gell would
call personhood,3 in their interaction with mortal worshippers, that sanctuaries create a
conceptual boundary that unifies objects set inside that space, and that divine statues’
personhood can be distributed through the network of internal relationships active in
the sanctuary. The resulting approach conceptualizes sculptural programs as a set of
social, theological, and cultural relationships between objects that creates specific
meanings for viewers encountering Isiac images. In this model, items within a bounded

2 Among many, see R.R.R. Smith, "Statue life in the Hadrianic baths at Aphrodisias. Local context and
historical meaning,“ in Statuen in der Spätantike, ed. F.A. Bauer and C. Witschel (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2007);
Perry, Aesthetics of emulation, especially 56-62; Kousser, Ideal sculpture, 40-63; Squire, Image and text in Graeco-
Roman antiquity, 203-29; H. Siard, “Le style égyptien et les échanges d’art dans les Sarapieia de Délos,”
sanctuary like the enclosed sacred areas constructed for Isis in Roman Greece⁴ belong to the same conceptual “body,” creating a unified space that connects all the objects inside through social and ideal relations.

These assumptions have been rigorously studied in anthropological and classical scholarship. In his posthumous book *Art and Agency*, Alfred Gell argued that cult images have sufficient agency in their interactions with humans to be considered non-human “persons” for the sake of theoretical modeling. To quote,

"...The works of art, images, icons and the like have to be treated, in the context of an anthropological theory, as person like; that is, sources of, and targets for, social agency. In this context, image-worship has a central place, since nowhere are images more obviously treated as human persons than in the context of worship and ceremonies.” (Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: an Anthropological theory*, 96.)

While Gell’s work focuses on modern non-Western cultures, his approach is also useful for analyzing divine sculptures in the ancient world. When ancient worshippers encountered the cult statue in its sanctuary, especially during religious rituals or festivals, the statue did not just represent or signify an abstracted divine form. Rather, these images *embodied* the god, coming alive as they returned the worshipper’s theologically informed gaze to create a social and religious relationship between viewer

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⁴ Regarding the types of sanctuaries normally constructed for Isis, see Kleibl, *Iseion*, 48-127. Kleibl’s book builds on Salditt-Trappmann, *Tempel der ägyptischen Götter in Griechenland und an der Westküste Kleinasiens*. While Kleibl proposes a clear set of architectural elements present in all sanctuaries, the plans she presents in her catalogue demonstrate the wide variety of architectural elements used in constructing these sanctuaries. It seems more plausible that the sanctuaries were constructed haphazardly according to local tastes and styles.
and image. Once the relationship was established, the image inspired culturally and
religiously motivated responses in the viewer, participating in what Gell calls
“intersubjective” relationships with its worshippers that allowed both human and object
agency in their encounters.

Equally important were the other statues displayed in the sanctuary as votives and decoration. As “persons,” cult images could extend their identity into other objects that had a relationship with the cult image, making the entire assemblage rather than a sole image represent the god’s identity and powers. To understand how this process operated in Isiac sanctuaries, I apply Gell’s model of distributed personhood to divine sculptures to my discussion of two case studies: Rhodes Town and Thessaloniki. A recent book by A. Whitehead explored distributed divine personhood for contemporary religious images, but conceptual connections between images in ancient religious sculptural programs have not been studied. Constructing a new model of distributed divine personhood for ancient statues helps conceptualize how context, a key element of archaeological analysis, works as an interpretive tool. By understanding how context

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5 Platt, Facing the gods, 77-83; R. Gordon, “The real and the imaginary. Production and religion in the Greco-Roman world,” Art History 2(1979): 10-11; Gell, Art and Agency, 122-53. Gell in particular sees the returning of the viewer’s gaze as the moment in which an image becomes a “person” in his theoretical system.
6 Art and Agency, 117.
7 Gell’s presents this theory in ibid., 96-154. It is important to recognize how much Gell’s work on distributed personhood relies on the work of Marilyn Strathern, as Gell makes clear in an essay published posthumously: “Strathernograms, or, the semiotics of mixed metaphors,” in The art of anthropology: essays and diagrams, ed. E. Hirsch (London: The Athlone Press, 1999).
influenced viewers’ interpretations of the Egyptian gods, we can get a better sense of how devotees constructed complex network of meaning and human interpretation through contextualizing international images in culturally encoded assemblages.  

At both Thessaloniki and Rhodes, devotees employed international sculptural styles to construct representations of Isis and Sarapis. While the Rhodian sanctuary preserved many Egyptian and Egyptianizing sculptures, the Thessaloniki corpus contains only one imported Egyptian sculpture. Instead of using imports, the Thessalonian Isiac devotees dedicated portraits, votives, and ideal sculptures that employed Greco-Roman artistic vocabulary almost exclusively. I argue that the Thessaloniki devotees prioritized a Hellenic image of Isis in order to adapt her identity to a new audience, while the Rhodian devotees promoted Isis as a goddess of Egyptian origins, fundamentally different from traditional Greek and Roman goddesses. These sculptural assemblages demonstrate that the ideal image of the goddess was not read on its own, but interpreted within the visual and theological space these initiate viewers created for their new goddess in Greece. The result was a liminal Isis, international in

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style and meaning, which devotee communities “re-territorialized” by creating internal relationships with culturally encoded images.

4.1 Making Meaning with Materials: Isis as a Foreign Goddess on Rhodes

On Rhodes, dedicators created a multicultural sculptural landscape that featured local Hellenistic styles, imported Egyptian statuettes, and locally produced Egyptianizing styles carved in white marble. Because the central image of Isis here wears the Knotenpalla, I argue that viewers would have seen the goddess as adapted to Greek modes of representation but retaining some of her fundamental Egyptian identity, much as we saw in the Greek aretalogies discussed in Chapter 2. These Hellenizing narratives, however, were disrupted by the presence of Egyptian imports. These sculptures, mostly 26th Dynasty antiques carved in dark Egyptian stones, signified the goddess’ trans-Mediterranean journeys for the viewer. When viewed together, the obvious dissonances between these two artistic elements challenged the Isis statue’s Hellenizing visual narrative. How could Isis belong to Greece when she stood next to these obviously foreign objects? By combining these three styles of sculpture in the sanctuary, devotees created a sculptural landscape that highlighted and challenged aspects of Isis’ identity easily found in the aretalogies: Isis is Egyptian, Isis is Greek, Isis is universal.
4.1.1 The Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods in Rhodes Town

Rhodes, like most other islands of the Dodecanese, had been in close economic and cultural contact with Egypt for centuries. Its strategic location positioned the island and its inhabitants at the center of trade between Egypt, the Levant, and Greece.\textsuperscript{10} While evidence for pre-Hellenistic trade is incomplete, under Alexander the Great Rhodes served as a major shipping base for Egyptian exports, particularly grain, and sent merchants around the entire known world to trade.\textsuperscript{11} As a result, Egyptians and Egyptian artifacts were relatively common sights in Rhodes’ towns. It is not surprising, then, that Rhodes Town features one of our earliest sanctuaries to the Egyptian gods.

Found by the 22nd Ephorate of Prehistoric & Classical Antiquities on the Kypriades plot, the sanctuary lies along the eastern edge of the city near the Hellenistic fortifications. The sanctuary sits at the terminus of road P18, standing not far off from the Ptolemaion (better referred to as the second Hellenistic gymnasium) and at the opposite end of the road from the city’s stadium, occupying a high-status position in the city’s urban


\textsuperscript{11} R.M. Berthold, Rhodes in the Hellenistic Age (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 48-49. Berthold cites Lycur. 15 regarding the worldwide reach of Rhodian trade, and Arist. Occ. 2.33 and Dem. 56 regarding Rhodes’ role as a main emporium for Egyptian exports.
landscape. Though the sanctuary’s modest architectural remains were damaged severely by the construction of a set of warehouses built in the 20th century, the site still preserved 16 sculptures, a crypt, and the foundations of a temple and its surrounding porticoes.12

Little of the sanctuary’s superstructure survives. Ch. Fantaoutsaki, the site’s excavator, provides a partially reconstructed stone plan in her preliminary report.13 The sanctuary contained a temple built in the middle of the northern part of the sanctuary enclosure, suggesting that the sanctuary’s main entrance, probably a propylon of sorts, faced the major P18 road to the south (Figure 25).14 Only parts of the lower courses of the temple foundations remain, preventing Fantaoutsaki from proposing a reconstruction. A foundation deposit containing Rhodian amphorae, pithoi, and some black-glazed bowl fragments of the 4th century BCE date the construction to the first few decades of the 3rd century BCE.15 Remains of partial walls on the sanctuary’s eastern and western side strongly suggest the presence of a peribolos wall. Less certain is the presence of

13 My description here relies on Fantaoutsaki, "Preliminary Report." There are no other published sources that describe this sanctuary.
14 Ibid., 50-51.
15 Ibid., 52-53. Many of the Rhodian amphorae featured stamps with the names of eponyms and potters. Most of these names date to the beginning of the 3rd century, but one potter’s name is attested for three decades, which widens the possible dates from the reign of Ptolemy I Soter to the early years of Ptolemy II Philadelphus.
porticoes surrounding the temple. Fantaoutsaki argues that a portico probably ringed the sanctuary, based on architectural comparisons with other Hellenistic sanctuaries, particularly the sanctuary of the Egyptian gods at Priene.  

Near the temple foundation’s southwest corner stood a subterranean crypt, separate from the temple but aligned with the structure’s western wall. The crypt consists of eleven descending steps within narrow stuccoed sidewalls of uneven porous blocks that led to a well. Because the sidewalls were only .5m apart and narrowed as they reached the well, only one person could enter the crypt at a time. A sloping roof stood approximately 1.8m above the entrance, as evidenced by a cover slab found in situ at the northern edge of the stairway. Fantaoutsaki argues that the crypt’s eastern wall at the southern end preserves irregularities, which leads her to suggest that the staircase took a 90-degree turn and continued for another 5 steps. During the sanctuary’s use phase, which lasted from the 3rd century BCE to the mid to late 3rd century CE, water rituals were probably performed in the crypt. R. Wild has argued that these crypts

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16 Ibid. Regarding the Priene structure, see Salditt-Trappmann, Tempel der ägyptischen Götter in Griechenland und an der Westküste Kleinasiens, 45-46; A. Hennemeyer, “Das Heiligtum der ägyptischen Götter in Priene,” in Ägyptische Kulte und ihre Heiligtümer im osten des römischen Reiches ed. P. Hoffmann (Istanbul: Ege Yaynlar, 2005), 139-53. This architectural format, where a smaller temple stood inside an enclosed, colonnaded courtyard, is typical of the Hellenistic period.

17 The suggestion of five additional steps is based on an estimation of the area’s ground level in the 3rd century BCE.


19 These crypts were common equipment for Egyptian sanctuaries in Greece, and several examples from Italy also exist. The sanctuaries at Messene, Thessaloniki, Gortyna, Argos, and Delos, among others, all preserved crypts with hydraulic features. See Wild, Water in the Worship of Isis and Sarapis; Kleibl, “Water-
alluded to Egyptian Nilometers, which measured the annual inundation of the Nile and symbolized the resulting fertility of the local landscape.  

For our purposes, however, it is the afterlife of the crypt that is most interesting. At some point after the temple went out of use, someone cached several of the temples’ sculptures in the sanctuary’s crypt. The crypt contained sculptures carved in Greek and Egyptianizing style, as well as six sculptures imported from Egypt. Among the Hellenistic-style sculptures are a pair of Isis and Sarapis sculptures depicted under life size. The heads of two Greek-style portrait statues, depicting a young man and a child, along with a torso of a child wearing a himation, also appeared in the crypt cache. If we assume that all the statues cached in the crypt were displayed within the sanctuary at

crypts in sanctuaries,”; Heiligtum und Mysterium, 55-60; Siard, “La crypte du Sarapieion A de Délos et le procès d’Apollônios.”  
21 Sculpture at several other sites, such as Thessaloniki, Marathon, and Messene, was also cached at roughly the same time (the 4th century CE), an interesting phenomenon in need of further investigation. On these, see Koester, “Egyptian religion in Thessalonike,” 34-36; Steimle, Religion im römischen Thessaloniki., 98-103; Themelis, “The cult of Isis at ancient Messene,” 105-8; I. Dekoulakou, “Le sanctuaire des dieux égyptiens à Marathon,” ibid., ed. L. Bricault and R. Veymiers, 34.  
22 It is worth noting that there are at least two other statuettes from Rhodes of similar type that have been previously identified as Zeus: Rhodes Museum 12538, 5299. In light of the Egyptian sanctuary in Rhodes town, Gr. Constantinopoulos has suggested reconsidering these images as possible depictions of Sarapis. C. Fantoutsaki, “Preliminary Report on the Excavation of the Sanctuary of Isis in Ancient Rhodes: Identification, Topography, and Finds,” ibid., 57. See also Gr. Constantinopoulos, Αρχαία Ρόδος. Επισκόπηση της ιστορίας και της τέχνης (Athens: Μορφωτικό Ἴδρυµα Εθνικῆς Τραπέζης 1986), 130, fig. 22.  
23 Fantoutsaki, “Preliminary Report,” 61. Fantoutsaki also mentions the presence of a headless statue of Nike, the foreleg of an animal, and the leg of a statuette, but she does not publish photographs or object numbers of these items.
the end of the 4th century CE, we might analyze these images as some of the more valued elements of the sanctuary’s sculptural program.

4.1.2 The Sarapis and Isis Sculptures

One statue each of Isis and Sarapis of small size were recovered from the Egyptian sanctuary in Rhodes Town. The statues of Sarapis and Isis found in the sanctuary’s crypt depict the gods wearing costumes and hairstyles seen throughout the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean. Sarapis is depicted seated on his throne, with a himation draped over his legs and left arm and hanging down the left side of the throne in its characteristic vertical drapery fold (Figure 26). The statue is fragmentary: the head, right arm, and feet are all missing. Though this sculpture omits Cerberus, the throne’s feet are rendered as animal paws that may allude to the dog’s presence in other images of Sarapis. The Sarapis sculpture is very similar in the arrangement of the drapery folds, composition of the body, and in overall style to the statuette of Sarapis found in Sarapieion B on Delos that J. Marcadé dates to the early Hellenistic period (Figure 27). Given that the Rhodes and Delos sanctuaries were founded in the late 4th/early 3rd centuries BCE, as well as the relative proximity between these two islands, the similarity

24 Rhodes Museum no. Γ2772.
26 Roussel, Les cultes égyptiens à Délos, 45-46; Marcadé, Au musée, 427-28, pl. LVIII.
between the Delian and Rhodian Sarapis sculptures suggests an early Hellenistic date for the Rhodian Sarapis.

The Isis sculpture wears the *Knotenpalla*, but lacks the head, left arm, and plinth and base (Figure 28). The goddess stands with her right leg slightly bent and her weight balanced on the left leg. She wears a long chiton, drilled with deep dress folds, and a mantle knotted between the breasts. The knot itself is constructed by tying two of the mantle’s corners to a twisted part of the mantle’s fabric, but the statue’s breakage makes it difficult to reconstruct the top portion of the garment. Though there is some indication of cascading dress folds radiating down from the knot, these folds are minimal and portrayed much more naturalistically than those seen in Roman examples like the Marathon *Knotenpalla* and Isiac portraits from grave stelai (Figure 29). Another break on the right side may represent the mantle hanging down the back. The arms, as Fantaoutsaki reconstructs them, probably would have been held free from the body, probably to hold attributes like the *sistrum*, the *situla*, or the *patera*.

Fantaoutsaki compares this Isis sculpture to an example from Cyrene (Cyrene Museum 14.274, Figure 30) with “Alexandrian characteristics” and another image of the goddess from Rhodes (Rhodes Museum E 425, Figure 31). E. Paribeni, in his brief

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publication of the Cyrene sculpture, does not offer a date for the Isis, but G. Gualandi dates the Rhodian example to the end of the 2nd century or the beginning of the 1st century BCE.\textsuperscript{29} We might also compare this Isis statuette to Delos Museum A 378, which depicts the goddess in a similarly rendered Knotenpalla with realistic cascading dress folds (Figure 32).\textsuperscript{30} In this image, the goddess' knotted mantle makes a similar long drapery fold in the center of the garment, echoed in a set of deeply-carved chiton folds below the mantle’s hem. These recall a similar set of folds in the Rhodian example, though the Delian example has a more dynamic posture. Both the Rhodian and the Delian examples, which should date to the period between the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 1st century BCE based on the Delian cult’s chronology, suggest a similar or perhaps slightly later date of production for the Rhodian Isis sculpture.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{29} Gualandi, "Sculture di Rodi," 166. Gualandi’s date for the Isis, which may come from the site of Camirus, is based on comparison with Delos Museum A 2255 and A 378. Both of the Delian examples should date roughly to the middle to late Hellenistic period. The cult statue of Isis from Sarapieion C, which follows a similar format, dates to 128/127 based on its dedicatory inscription (ID 2044).
\textsuperscript{30} Marcadé, \textit{Au musée}, 431-2, pl. LVII.
\textsuperscript{31} The Delian Sarapieia, like the rest of Delian sanctuaries, probably suspended their activities when Delos was abandoned in 66 BCE. However, H. Siard’s excavations in the shops to the south of Sarapieion C suggest that the sanctuary was abandoned in the later parts of the 1st century, suggesting that worship could have continued in the sanctuary even after the island was largely uninhabited. See P. Bruneau, “Contribution à l’histoire urbaine de Délos à l’époque hellénistique et à l’époque impériale,” \textit{BCH} 92, no. 2 (1968); H. Siard, “Délos, le Sarapieion C,” ibid.126 (2002).
We might consider at this point what cultural allusions these statues made independent of their sculptural program. As we saw in Chapter 2, the Sarapis types used on Rhodes and throughout Roman Greece presented the god as an elaboration on the forms of several Greek gods, creating a visually hybrid form that underscored the god’s theological unification with Zeus, Asklepios, and other Greek gods. While Isis’ Knotenpalla dress alluded to her Egyptian origins, the costume itself may not have held entirely foreign connotations. Because the costume appeared frequently in funerary reliefs displayed in public cemeteries, the Knotenpalla would have played a prominent role in Athenian sculptural landscapes of the early Roman period.\textsuperscript{32} Though these reliefs only appeared in Athens the late 1st century BCE,\textsuperscript{33} the image would only be effective as symbols of Isiac identity for 1st century BCE Rhodians if these viewers were already familiar with the dress and its attendant meanings from previous experiences. Thus, it is not clear whether Rhodian viewers would have recognized the goddess as a familiar form of Isis. Perhaps they might have only considered the dress as different from those worn by other Greek deities.

\textsuperscript{32} In D.W. von Moock’s 1998 study of Imperial period grave stelai from Attica, he determined that one-third of the known corpus depicted a woman dressed in the Knotenpalla costume. Because many were found in the area of the Kerameikos, E. Walters thinks some may have stood in that cemetery (Walters, \textit{Attic grave reliefs}, 33-42.) Martzavou goes further, suggesting that these reliefs may have stood in special burial grounds next to the Egyptian sanctuaries (Martzavou, “Priests and Priestly Roles,” 80-81.) There is no evidence to suggest that the Isiac stelae were grouped in any particular place, but the original contexts of these sculptures cannot be reconstructed with any certainty. See further von Moock, \textit{Die figürlichen Grabstelen Attikas in der Kaiserzeit: Studien zur Verbreitung, Chronologie, Typologie und Ikonographie}.

\textsuperscript{33} Walters, \textit{Attic grave reliefs}, 60.
Given that many Egyptian products moved through Hellenistic Rhodes, however, it is also very possible that Rhodian viewers would have associated Isis’ dress with Egyptian models rather than Greek ones. The average Rhodian should have encountered a relatively high proportion of Egyptian imported art objects. Rhodes and Egypt were in close contact as early as the Bronze Age. Because of the prevailing NE to NW wind in the southeastern Mediterranean, the route from Rhodes to Egypt remains navigable even in the off-season (Dem. 56). 34 Also significant was the Ptolemies’ control of Rhodes, which probably intensified existing trade connections and opened new opportunities for economic and cultural relationships between Egypt and Rhodes. Given this historical context, we should look to Egypt to see what other meanings Rhodian viewers could have brought to these images. In Egypt, the knot is not reserved for Isis, and in fact appears in images of Hathor and her devotees, the Nile’s companion goddess Euthenia, and Ptolemaic queens. 35 For Rhodians, the Knotenpalla must have held particularly foreign implications.

For Rhodian audiences, then, we should expect the statues of Isis and Sarapis to be particularly fraught with cultural dissonance. For these viewers, a foreign costume

35 On Ptolemaic queens and their use of the knot, see Plantzos, "The Iconography of Assimilation." Plantzos argues convincingly that Hellenistic Egyptians, particularly those of Greek origins, may not have cared much about the costume’s history. Consequently, they would have associated the costume with Isis and, by extension, the Ptolemaic queens. The Knotenpalla costume itself, however, was not widely used by the Egyptian priestly class in the pharaonic period: Albersmaier, "Griechisch-römische Bildnisse der Isis," 311.
had been mapped onto a recognizably Greek body, creating a cultural pastiche. How, then, did the sculptor reconcile this dissonance? I argue that the naturalistic Greek style made the image work. By selecting a recognizable and thoroughly Greek method for portraying the material world, the sculptors made this recognizably Egyptian costume legible. Much like the Maroneia aretalogy discussed in Chapter 3, this artistic strategy plays with the viewer’s understanding of space. Through artistic style, the Egyptian meanings of a Knotenpalla become part of a Greek visual heritage, redefining the viewer’s ideas about Greece, Egypt, and the space between these two disparate groups.

4.1.3 Egyptian Sculptures

The Rhodes sanctuary also contained seven imported Egyptian sculptures. Among the Egyptian imports was black stone block statue of a naophoros (Rhodes Museum Γ2756; Figure 33). Though the statue’s dark stone surface is highly degraded, the type’s characteristic posture and elements remain visible. A man wearing a triangular wig sits on a flat surface, hugging his bent knees towards his chest to form a rough cube with the head raised above the surface.36 In front of the figure’s shins stands a rectangular naos with another anthropomorphic figure standing inside. This particular type of figure inside the naos, with a male deity wearing the crown of Upper Egypt, dates the sculpture’s production to sometime after the last few dynasties of the New

36 In fact, the statue’s depth much exceeds its width, giving the image a more rectangular than cubic shape.
Kingdom. The Rhodian naophoros is the only instance of the type from an Isiac sanctuary in Greece, and one of only a few examples found in Isiac sanctuaries of the eastern Mediterranean.

The naophoros statue was accompanied by at least six other Egyptian imports. Four of these are fragmentary black stone sculptures of Horus falcons, at least one of which wears the double crown of Egypt (Figure 34). In Egypt these images would have brought to mind the complex theology of kingship, since the king was thought to be a manifestation of Horus on earth. The other two images image both depicted men in Egyptian style: striding forward with their left legs, hands held close to their sides, and wearing Egyptian dress. Rhodes Museum no. Γ2767, missing its head and lower parts of its legs, depicts it subject wearing an undecorated kilt often seen in depictions of Ptolemaic kings (Figure 35). Another heavily damaged example (Rhodes Museum Γ2760; Figure 36) depicts the figure in the nemes wig, a common headdress worn by gods and pharaohs in Egyptian art (Figure 37). Both sculptures employ a tripartite division of

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38 M. Malaise, “Statues égyptiennes naphores et cultes isiaques,” BSEG 26(2004): 60-83. The type appears more frequently in Roman sanctuaries of Isis, where Egyptian imports seem to have been more popular.


the figure, which is common in Egyptian sculptures of the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE, suggesting that these images were produced around the same time as the more Hellenized Isis and Sarapis images discussed above.⁴¹

I argue that these statues acted as a metaphor for a portable Egypt, foreign and othered, a meaning that translated easily among its broad new audience of cosmopolitan Greeks who used the Rhodian Iseion. In Egypt, naophoros sculptures were votives dedicated in temples or tombs to represent the dedicator’s eternal piety. In Greece, however, the Rhodian naophoros sculpture and its companions probably served a less nuanced function. There are no clear analogues to the statues’ schematic, geometric form of representation in Greek art, highlighting the object’s status as an Egyptian import to a Rhodian viewer. For a Greek viewer, the naophoros sculpture from the Rhodian Iseion could be best identified as something that came from afar, something distinct from what was produced by local sculptors or even itinerant sculptors working in Greece, Asia Minor, or Italy.⁴²

These Egyptian imports, primarily recognizable through their material and style, highlighted Isis’ foreign origins for Greek audiences. Greeks were highly attuned to

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⁴¹ On tripartition, see B. von Bothmer, "Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period," xxxv, nos. 75, 129. Further bibliography on the topic can be found at Fantaoutsaki, "Preliminary Report," 58 n. 75.

materiality, using it as an organizing principle to describe their interactions with objects. As Feldman and I. Winters have demonstrated, ancient temple and treasury accounts of many ancient cultures highlight an object’s material as a testament to its perceived value.\textsuperscript{43} The same organizational principles can be observed in temple accounts throughout Greece, including the temple accounts from the Delian sanctuaries of the Egyptian gods.\textsuperscript{44} From Sarapieion C, the public Egyptian sanctuary on Delos, we have 8 annual inventories of the sanctuary’s various dedications that arrange dedications by material. For example, a temple account from 156/55 BCE (\textit{RICIS} 202/0424) organizes objects first by their locations within the sanctuary, and then by their material. Dedication’s of gold, silver, bronze, wood, and marble are highlighted, with few other materials even mentioned. The rest of the accounts from the Delian sanctuaries do not appear to prioritize material as highly as \textit{RICIS} 202/0424, since they do not organize dedications by material.\textsuperscript{45} Still, even these accounts almost always describe the dedication’s material clearly, demonstrating that materiality remained an organizing principle for Greek viewers. These Delian accounts, though partial and representing only a few years of the sanctuary’s life, do not mention any basalt or black stone objects,

\textsuperscript{43} Feldman, \textit{Diplomacy by Design}, 106-9. Feldman’s analysis demonstrates a consistent method of using material to determine value in both the archives of Amarna and Hattusa, suggesting that these ideas influenced ancient Near Eastern thought processes.

\textsuperscript{44} Also published as ID 1417 AII (59-165) and BI (1-88), previously discussed in C. Prêtre, \textit{Kosmos et kosmema: les offrandes de parure dans les inventaires déliens}, Kernos Supplément (Athens: Centre d’etude de la religion grecque antique, 2012), 203-7 and 19-23.

\textsuperscript{45} \textit{RICIS} 202/0421, 202/0422, 202/0423, 202/0425, 202/0425, 202/0427, 202/0428.
indicating the rarity of such dedications.\textsuperscript{46} Imported objects such as the \textit{naophoros} discussed here would immediately stand out and hold peculiar value among their viewers and users.

A cosmopolitan Rhodian viewer, who would have seen many Egyptian imports, would associate the sculpture’s dark color with production in a foreign land. Though Rhodians probably encountered Egyptian objects more frequently than Delians did, an imported Egyptian statue of exotic material still held considerable value as a luxury item. As a clearly Egyptian object, this \textit{naophoros} worked in tandem with the other Egyptian and Egyptianizing images set up in the Rhodian sanctuary, and in turn contributed to the sanctuary’s attempts to evoke cultural imaginings of Egypt within a Greek space. The stone’s blackness set it apart from the Greek objects carved in white marble. Instead, its materiality connected the image to the other Egyptian sculptures, particularly the dark stone sculptures of Horus falcons.

Though we cannot reconstruct the placement of these objects within the sanctuary, the sharp contrast in sculptural technique and stone created a nuanced division between Egyptian and Hellenized within the sanctuary. The white marble images, usually carved with a characteristic Greco-Roman interest in idealism and naturalism, present Isiac figures and décor within a familiar mode of representation and

\textsuperscript{46} There are a few examples of sculpture carved in imported stone from excavations on Delos. See J. Leclant and H. Meulaere Leclant, "Une statuette égyptienne à Délos," \textit{Kêmi} 14(1957); J. Marcadé, "À propos des statuettes hellénistiques on aragonite du Musée de Délòs," \textit{BCH} 76(1952).
as part of a local dialogue of divinity and mythology. The black stone images, on the other hand, authenticated the sanctuary’s cultural and artistic connections with Egypt, bringing foreignness into the sanctuary’s Greek space. As P. van Dommelen and A.B. Knapp have argued in their book on ancient materiality, objects like this sphinx whose materiality advertised their foreign origins became symbols of mobility and cultural encounters with foreigners for their receiving audiences. As such, these dark stone objects visually attest to the object’s foreign origins, much like that Apollonios narrative displayed in Sarapieion A on Delos.

Materiality then was a synecdoche for the object’s larger biography, a narrative of travel that collapsed distance, time, and space to remind the viewer of the goddess’ own journey from Egypt to Rhodes. The object’s biography, reconstructed in the most general sense, would have been accessible to even the most uninformed Greek viewer: these sculptures were made abroad, probably in Egypt, long ago and came to Rhodes to exist in a secondary use context. Like the emphasis on Egyptian identity seen in the Chronicle of Sarapieion A and the Isiac rituals described in Apuleius, the sphinx asserted a past instance of cultural contact with Egypt and, by extension, the Rhodian sanctuary’s authentic connection with the cult’s origins. The statues’ materiality thus collapsed the viewers’ experiences of time and space, bringing an imagined Egyptian past into the Greek present. Through their relationship with the Sarapis and Isis

47 Van Dommelen, “Material connections: mobility, materiality, and Mediterranean identities.”
statuettes, these images included the Egyptian gods in their narratives of foreignness, contextualizing Isis as part of an Egyptian visual and religious culture.

4.1.4 Egyptianizing Sculpture as Cultural Reconciliation

In contrast to the Egyptian and Hellenizing statues discussed above, the Greek-produced imitations of Egyptian style from the Rhodian sanctuary complicated Isis’ Egyptian identity, creating a more complex and cosmopolitan image of the goddess. These three images, which include two winged sphinxes (Rhodes Museum Г2754 and 2753) and a bovine animal (Rhodes Museum Г2775), depict Egyptian subjects like the sphinx and the Apis bull in a Greco-Roman, naturalistic style. The result is what I have called an international Egyptianizing style, one that employed the art traditions of Greek, Roman, and Egyptian cultures to create new, eclectic pieces.

To explore the implications of this style, I focus on a statue of a sphinx found in the Rhodian sanctuary. The sphinx combines Egyptian and Greek elements to allude to Isis’ henotheistic aspects (Figure 38). In a similar way, this image unites disparate visual traditions into a single, legible style that does not immediately convey its foreignness. Instead, the sphinx occupies an ambiguous position on the spectrum of ancient cultures, not quite Egyptian, not quite Greek, but somewhere between the two. Missing its head and its front legs, the sphinx is carved in a naturalistic style that borders baroque in its

highly defined musculature, visible skeletal structure, and detailed feathers. The sphinx wears a pair of chains that cross over the chest, holding a medallion between the breasts. The feathers sprout backwards, away from the front shoulders, to form a pair of upwardly curving feathered wings. The rear portion of the body takes the form of a lion with back legs are crouched and tail lying across the back.

The sphinx was already part of many cultures’ visual vocabularies. The sphinx had its earliest appearances in Egypt, most notably in the colossal sphinx attached to the Giza pyramid of Khafre. Greeks had picked up the concept of the sphinx by the time of Hesiod, who mentions the sphinx alongside other monstrous children of the Titans. The Rhodian sphinx reinterpreted elements of Greek and Egyptian sphinxes, creating an international composition that mirrored the liminal cultural identities of Isis and Sarapis. The front half of the Rhodian sphinx, with its upward-curving wings, naturalistically rendered feathers, and carefully molded human breasts, employs both archaizing and Hellenistic approaches to rendering natural forms. The rear portion of the sphinx, however, uses Egyptian conventions for representing the sphinx with its tail draped over the hindquarters and schematized representation of the limbs. Though the best

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49 Based on the presence of small anthropomorphic breasts, the missing head probably depicted a woman, following Greek traditions of sphinxes.
50 Barrett notices a similar set of chains and medallions on Oriental Aphrodite figurines from Hellenistic Delos. She argues that these figurines probably represent Isis or are closely connected to her cult. See Barrett, *Egyptianizing Figurines from Delos*, 162-85.
51 *Theog.* 326
comparanda for the hindquarters comes again from Delos’ Sarapieion C, those examples
do not feature the wings, breasts, or crossed chains seen in the Rhodian example.52

I argue that the sphinx bridged the gap between the Egyptian and Greek styles by combining the two cultures’ modes of representation into a new, transcultural style. This style constructed a shared past between Greece and Egypt, using cultural imagining to reconcile the cognitive dissonance inherent in the sanctuary. The Isis and Sarapis sculptures, as we saw in Chapter 2, draw mostly from Greek antecedents in depicting the Egyptian gods. Even if the type itself copies the Bryaxis “original” from Alexandria, that original sculpture must have derived its inspiration from Classical antecedents. The Isis statuette, though employing an foreign costume, also closely resembles images of Greek goddesses. The presence of actual Egyptian sculptures within the same sculptural program highlighted the question of Isis’ cultural identity even further. Through their materiality, these small sculptures created connections between Egypt and the Rhodian sanctuary of the Egyptian gods. Egyptianizing sculpture, however, provided a middle ground to explore how these disparate visual and cultural traditions came together. As part of the sanctuary’s sculptural program, the Rhodian

52 Because we have two identical sphinxes on Rhodes, it is tempting to associate them with the sphinxallée of Sarapieion C, in which two rows of identical calcite sphinxes flanked a processional route within the sanctuary. This feature alludes to similar sphinxallée features at Egyptian sanctuaries in Egypt, such as the sphinxallée outside the pylon of Nectanebo I in Saqqara. See D.J. Thompson, Memphis under the Ptolemies (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 28; Siard, “Le style égyptien et les échanges d’art dans les Sarapieia de Délos,” 134-40; Bommas, Heiligtum und Mysterium, 59-60; Bruneau, “Le dromos et le temple C du Serapieion C de Délos.”
sphinx reconciled Egyptian and Greek modes of representation to visualize the globalized world that enabled the Isiac cults' spread.

This image largely corresponds with the henotheistic image of Isis constructed in Isiac texts. As we saw in the aretalogies, both Egyptian and Greek versions of these texts described Isis as comprising multiple female divinities under her aegis. These divinities, however, are often connected to particular places or peoples, creating a pancultural yet deterritorialized version of the Egyptian gods. By bringing together Egyptian and Greek artistic traditions into a new eclectic style, the Rhodian sphinx visualizes the same type of Isiac polynymy and polysemy found in textual representations of the Egyptian gods.

Rhodes’ sculptural program also challenges these textual depictions. Of our twelve published sculptures from this sanctuary, only the statues of Isis, Sarapis, and Nike have clear comparanda in Hellenistic art. Almost half of sculptures were imported from Egypt. The Rhodian sanctuary’s sculptural program as we can reconstruct it, highly valued Isis’ Egyptian origins and assigned relatively low priority on contextualizing Isis within Greek culture. In prioritizing Egypt over Greece, the Rhodian sculptural program challenges most of our literary and epigraphic depictions of Isis. Most of the literary depictions surveyed in Chapter 3 prioritize a Greek identity for Isis: the Maroneia stele, erected in the 2nd century BCE, represents Isis as specially

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53 Some of the Hellenized images Fantaoutsaki describes in the excavation report might have comparanda, particularly the portraits, but the author does not provide images or object numbers for these images that would allow comparison.
connected to Greece, and most of the other aretalogies from the Greek world describe
the goddess as deterritorialized, lessening Isis’ connection with Egypt.⁵⁴

The Rhodian sculptural program thus departs from the Maroneia aretalogy and
other Hellenizing texts by promoting Isis’ Egyptian origins as the central aspect of her
divine identity. On Rhodes, Isis and Sarapis stood within a landscape of Egyptian and
Egyptianizing sculptures.⁵⁵ These images, through their internal relationality to the
culturally dissonant images of Isis and Sarapis, questioned Isis’ participation in Greek
culture. In particular, the imported Egyptian images redefined Isis and Sarapis as
Egyptian despite their Greco-Roman mode of representation through their proximity to
Isis and Sarapis. Given the already ambiguous cultural allusions inherent in the
Knotenpalla costume, the viewer’s textually and ritually derived narratives of Isis as an
Egyptian deity who belonged to Greece were challenged. Isis could not be as Greek as
the texts claimed if her sanctuary featured a primarily Egyptian visual landscape. The
Egyptian and Egyptianizing sculptures thus functioned as extensions of Isis and Sarapis,

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⁵⁴ Žabkar, Hymns to Isis; Gasparro, "The Hellenistic Face,"; Grandjean, Une nouvelle arétalogie. Though I
disagree with his arguments on the origins of aretalogical thought, D. Papanikolaou is correct to connect the
Maroneia and other Greek aretalogies with Greek and Asiatic compositional and rhetorical priorities. See D.
Papanikolaou, "The aretalogy of Isis from Maroneia and the question of Hellenistic ‘Asianism’," ZPE
168(2009).

⁵⁵ It would not be unusual for Rhodes’ Egyptian sanctuary to have architectural or painted decoration that
would have emphasized the sanctuary’s exotic nature. In Greece, we know that the Kenchreai sanctuary
Brill, Kenchreai II: the Panels of Opus Sectile in Glass (Leiden: Brill, 1976). The Marathon sanctuary, as we will
discuss in Chapter 5, included Egyptian architectural ornaments and even a stepped pyramid: Dekoulakou,
"Le sanctuaire." Egyptianizing painting and décor was also common in Egyptian sanctuaries in Italy
(Bommas, "The Iseum Campanese,"; L. Bricault, Isis, dame des flots, Aegyptiaca Leodiensia (Liège: C.I.P.L.,
2006), 140-46.)
influencing the viewer’s understanding of the gods’ cultural affiliations through their programmatic relationship with the Hellenized images. The resulting image of Isis was conflicted, creating a cultural tension that reflected larger concerns about globalization in the Hellenistic Mediterranean.

4.2 A Localized Landscape: Greece and a Hellenized Egypt on Display at Thessaloniki

Like Rhodes, Thessaloniki was a diverse cosmopolitan port city that received vessels from all over the Mediterranean and served as a prominent political and social capital in the Hellenistic period. Unlike Rhodes, however, Thessaloniki’s devotee community prioritized a Greek interpretation of Isis in their sanctuary to Isis, Sarapis, and Anubis. Except for a small imported statuette of the god Tutu that Thessalonians probably reinterpreted as a standard sphinx, all of the votive dedications, divine images, and portrait statues are of local or Greek manufacture.\(^{56}\) As I argue below, the Thessalonian Isis’ international image stood within a Hellenized visual landscape constructed through Hellenized votives and cult statues. The result was a goddess whose foreignness was downplayed in favor of a more localized form of representation.

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\(^{56}\) Th. Stefanidou-Tiveriou, G. Despinis, Em. Voutiras, *Catalogue of Sculpture in the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki*, 3 vols. (Thessaloniki: National Bank Cultural Foundation, 1997-2010), 64-66. Although I argue that the Thessalonians would not have interpreted this statue as Tutu because of a lack of familiarity with the god, there is a 2nd century CE dedicatory inscription from Amphipolis that mentions one of Tutu’s Greek names, Τοτοή (RICIS 113/0910) carved onto a relief stele featuring a depiction of the god with his characteristic iconography: sphinx heads, crocodiles, snake tail, knives, and a scorpion (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Budapest inv. 50 958). For more on Tutu, see O.E. Kaper, *The Egyptian god Tutu: a study of the sphinx-god and master of demons*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta (Leuven: Peeters, 2003).
To reconstruct Thessaloniki’s sculptural landscape, I survey the sculpture and architecture from Thessaloniki’ Egyptian sanctuary, focusing on formal and cultural allusions made through style and subject. I conclude with an analysis of Thessaloniki’s epigraphic representations of the Egyptian gods, taking an aretalogical inscription as my main case study. I argue that Isiac texts and rituals primed viewers to reinterpret sculptures of common Greek goddesses like Aphrodite or Demeter as Isis to suit the cult’s henotheistic and polysemic model of the Egyptian gods.

4.2.1 Thessaloniki’s Egyptian Sanctuary: a Problem of Evidence

Based on the epigraphic evidence, the Egyptian cults appear to have been introduced to Thessaloniki shortly after the city’s foundation in 316 BCE and cult continued into the fourth century CE. From the second half of the 1st century BCE, the cultic community saw a large increase in the proportion of Italian traders and “sailors.”

Two major factors may have contributed to the increase in the number Italians in Thessaloniki. First, Thessaloniki fell to the Romans in 168 BCE after Perseus’ defeat at Pydna during the Third Macedonian War. Though the nature of Roman imperialism in the 2nd century BCE is hotly debated, it is certainly possible that Rome’s increasing...

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57 On the sanctuary’s foundation, see C. Edson, “Macedonica,” HSCP 51(1940); Kleibl, Iseion, 207; Koester, “Egyptian religion in Thessalonike,” 134; S. Pelekides, “Chroniques des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques dans l’Orient hellénique,” BCH 45(1921); “Ἀπὸ τὴν πολιτεία καὶ τὴν κοινωνία τῆς ἀρχαίας Θεσσαλονίκης,” Παράρτημα 2(1934); Steimle, Religion im römischen Thessaloniki, 79-80.
control over the region inspired some Italians to settle in the region. Second, the gradual abandonment of Delos in the mid first century BCE seems to have inspired many Delians, including the Italian merchants participating in the Delian cultic community, to move to Thessaloniki.

Based on museum records, around 30 pieces of high quality sculpted marble were found within the Sarapeum precinct. Unfortunately, our records for the excavation of the Thessaloniki Sarapeum are sparse. S. Pelekides discovered the sanctuary in rescue excavations shortly after the devastating fire of 1917, and continued his excavations for a few seasons. The area was subsequently overbuilt in 1939. Though post-1917 buildings obscure the site, most scholars agree that the Sarapeum lay somewhere to the west of the city’s main agora within the Hellenistic fortifications. Its exact location is highly contested, and many of the existing explanations cannot be reconciled. S. Pelekides’

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60 Regarding Italian expatriates from Delos in Thessaloniki’s Sarapeum see Martzavou, “Les cultes isiaques,” 183-87; Edson, "Macedonica,” 126ff; Malaise, *Les conditions de pénétration*, 282-303. These connections also exist in the visual realm. At both Thessaloniki and Delos we find comparable relief stelai featuring Isis Pelagia, in which the goddess is depicted on a boat, using her mantle as a sail. See M.-H. Blanchaud, “Un relief Thessalonicien d’Isis Pelagia,” *BCH* 108(1984); P. Bruneau, "Isis Pélagia à Délos (compléments),” ibid.87(1963); “Isis Pélagia à Délos,” *BCH* 85(1961).

61 For a summary of these debates, see Steimle, *Religion im römischen Thessaloniki*, 79-80. Steimle lists a cross-street of Odos Agiou Dimitriou. While this is a common street name in modern Greek cities, there is no such street anywhere near the Plateia Dimokratias. Further, reconstruction at the Plateia Dimokratias would place the sanctuary in the modern suburb of Ambelokopi, far to the northwest of any of the sanctuary’s other reconstructed locations. It is possible that Steimle refers to the pre-1917 fire layout of Thessaloniki such as the one that J.-M. Spieser lays out in his plan of Late Antique Thessaloniki, though Steimle does not make any reference to Spieser’s plan (J.-M. Spieser, *Thessalonique et ses monuments du IVe au VIe siècle. Contribution à l’étude d’une ville paleochrétienne*, BEFAR (Athènes and Paris: École française d’Athènes and Diffusion de
original excavation notes and plans have been lost, and he only produced two brief preliminary reports before his death.  

Our best record of the excavation actually comes from a notebook written by H. van Schoenebeck, a Danish archaeologist who visited the site a few times during his excavations of the Arch of Galerius. Van Schoenebeck’s notes amount mostly to sketches and brief remarks, and their interpretation has sparked a great deal of debate.

Consequently, we have only a vague and highly contested impression of the sanctuary’s layout and architecture and of where the Serapeum lays in the modern topography of Thessaloniki. Based on a sketch in Van Schoenebeck’s notebook, Steimle reconstructed a sanctuary precinct filled with small temples and porticoes, not unlike Boccard, 1984), foldout plan and Appendix I. M. Vickers, an expert in ancient Thessalonian topography agrees with placing the sanctuary in the western portion of the ancient city, but his plan is vague and does not correspond with the city’s modern topography (see M. Vickers, "Hellenistic Thessaloniki," JHS 92(1972): Fig. 4.) M. Bommas argues that the sanctuary lay very close to the ancient agora, north of modern Odos Egnatia at the intersection of Antogonidion and Ptoleou. While Bommas’ proposed site has the benefit of actually existing in modern Thessalonian topography, he does not explain his evidence for locating the site in this area. The Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki has on display a plan that would also place the sanctuary just north of the modern Odos Egnatia. However, the plan does not offer cross-street detail. The Museum’s plan appears to set the sanctuary much further to the south and west of the Agora than Bommas’ reconstruction, but the Sarapeum’s precise location is not described clearly enough to tell for certain.

Pelekides, "Chroniques des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques dans l’Orient hellénique,"; "Ἀπό τήν πολιτεία καὶ τήν κοινωνία τῆς Αρχαίας Θεσσαλονίκης."

For the discussion of van Schoenebeck’s notes, see Bommas, "Apostel Paulus und die ägyptischen Heiligtümer Makedoniens,"; Steimle, Religion in römischen Thessaloniki, 131-32. For discussion and interpretation of van Schoenebeck’s notes. The original notebook is held at the archive of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Berlin (accession number 19.12.1904, gefallen 17.8.1944).
the sanctuary layout of the Rhodian and Delian Sarapieia (Figure 39). He identifies two small temples and a series of rooms as the main identifiable structures. Temple A (Antentempel) is a rectangular pronaos temple, while temple B (Apsistempel) is a square temple with a raised apse and large crypt running under most of the structure (Figure 40). The drawing does not indicate the rest of complex or of the relative size of these buildings.

Using van Schoenebeck’s notes and Pelekides’ brief inventory report of 1940, as well as the Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum’s inventories, we can restore findspots for a few pieces of sculpture. For example, van Schoenebeck mentions the presence of the late Hellenistic archaizing herm MΘ 1074 standing in the Apsistempel’s crypt. A brief report of Pelekides’ excavations in the 1921 Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique places a statue of a female goddess dating to the 3rd century BCE, a 1st century BCE altar that was reused as a statue base for a statue of Isis Orgia in the 2nd century CE (MΘ 986) and a head of Sarapis in the Apsistempel. Museum inventories suggest that a black basalt sphinx (MΘ 4922), the Aphrodite (MΘ 831) and another Greek goddess (MΘ 832) statues

66 Pelekides, "Chroniques des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques dans l’Orient hellénique."
of Roman date, two headless statues, and at least three votive reliefs featuring ears came from the Antentempel, which was probably dedicated to Sarapis. Many other finds, according to the museum’s inventories, must come from the sanctuary, and several others related to the cult of Isis were found around the city, often with only vague provenience.

Our only other evidence of the sanctuary’s architecture comes from a model now on display at the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki. Though the model’s origins and sources are not known, many accept the model as a reliable representation of the sanctuary’s architecture. The model and van Schoenebeck’s notebooks agree on the basic aspects of part of the sanctuary’s architecture: both sources depict two smaller structures, one with a semicircular apse and a barrel-vaulted underground crypt (Steimle’s Apsistemel), and another building of stone orthostadt lower courses and a possible mud brick superstructure. The sanctuary precinct must have been larger and included more buildings, but we have no evidence to verify these assumptions.

Still, from this mysterious precinct came one of our largest corpora of Egyptianizing sculpture in all of Greece. Housed in the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, the sculpture can be generally provenanced to the sanctuary, though more specific findspot identifications are under debate. K. Kleibl and M. Bommas, following general scholarly consensus, have argued that most of the sculpture now in the
Thessaloniki Museum came from the crypt underneath Steimle’s *Apsistempel*. The Museum’s labels and reconstructions follow this narrative, even keeping the controversial model on display without any mention of recent criticisms. Steimle, however, disputes this reconstruction of the sculpture’s findspots. Based on his 2004 study of van Schoenebeck’s notebooks, he argues that there is no indication for the finds to have been grouped in any particular way, much less cached in a crypt.

Though Steimle’s argument is certainly cause for concern, his vitriol in attacking Bommas’ assumption is unwarranted. Modern readers of van Schoenebeck’s notes will find a decided bias towards architectural information, and the same priorities shine through in van Schoenebeck’s own scholarship on the Arch of Galerius. While van Schoenebeck takes great care to note the arch’s architectural details, the sculpture is treated without much regard. For example, van Schoenebeck (as related by Laubscher) argues that one of the pylons depicts historical scenes, while the other depicts symbolic scenes. Even a very cursory glance at a schematic organization of these sculptural programs demonstrates that symbolic and historical reliefs appear interspersed on both

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68 Steimle, “Neue Erkenntnisse.”
pylons (Figure 41). Perhaps van Schoenebeck visited the Thessaloniki Sarapeum in his capacity as an expert in local architecture. It would not be unprecedented for a scholar of the early 20th century to focus on his own specialty at the exclusion of other aspects of a site. Further, van Schoenebeck’s account is merely a few pages in a notebook, not a full publication. It is unreasonable for us to expect him to describe fully the sanctuary, its architecture, and its finds in an architectural historian’s private notebook.

While I agree with Steimle that there is room for doubt regarding the exact findspots of most of these sculptures, comparison with other Egyptian sanctuaries in Roman Greece like the ones in Rhodes and Messene suggests that these sculptures could reasonably have been found in the water crypt underneath the Apsistempel. I assume here that the sculptures listed as from the Sarapeum in the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki’s catalogue of sculpture actually come from the Sarapeum’s crypt. If true, the sculptures preserved would have been, like their counterparts in the Rhodian sanctuary of the Egyptian gods, among the most valued elements of the sanctuary’s sculptural program.

In the sections that follow, I analyze images of Isis and Sarapis that were found in the sanctuary precinct, as well as a statue of Harpokrates. I argue that these sculptures interpret canonical Egyptian aspects of Isis’ imagery, such as Isis’ “Libyan locks” and

70 For example, P. Roussel, an epigrapher and the excavator of the Delian Sarapieia, barely notes any non-epigraphic finds in his 1916 book on the sanctuaries: Roussel, Les cultes égyptiens à Delos.
Harpokrates’ finger-to-mouth gesture, in Greco-Roman style, representing these gods as Greek deities. I then sample the sanctuary’s supplementary sculptures to examine how these sculptures renegotiated the relationship between Greek and Egyptian in Thessaloniki’s Sarapeum. Most important among these are two divine statues of Greek goddesses: one Aphrodite of Naples-Louvre or Fréjus Aphrodite type, and another peplophoros goddess, possibly Demeter or Athena. While it is common for Greek sanctuaries to contain multiple deities and cult statues, Isiac devotees would have interpreted these disparate images differently. By viewing these statues through the lens of Isiac visuality, I argue, initiate viewers would have connected these images with the henotheistic and pan-cultural image of Isis demonstrated Isiac aretalogies like the one found in Thessaloniki. Instead of seeing Isis, Aphrodite, and Athena as separate divinities, the Isiac viewer would unify the three goddesses and their visual representations under the henotheistic ideal that characterized Isis in her textual representation. Seeing Isis and her Greek counterparts in this way thus reconfigured Isis into Greek goddess, making innovative claims about Isis’ deep connections to Greek culture by contextualizing her in a Hellenized visual landscape.

4.2.2 Representations of the Egyptian Gods in Thessaloniki’s Sarapeum

The Thessalonians, like most other Egyptian cultic communities, depicted their gods in a Hellenized and internationally legible mode of representation. Based on Despinis’, Stefanidou-Tiveriou’s, and Voutiras’ sculptural catalog, published in three
volumes between 1997 and 2010, there are 30 pieces of published sculpture and votive dedications from the Thessaloniki Sarapeum, These images were accompanied by the 70 Isiac inscriptions recovered around the city, 45 of which came from the sanctuary.

Central to the sanctuary’s visual landscape were its images of the Egyptian gods: at least two head of Sarapis, two heads of Isis, and a statue of the child-god Harpokrates. Several inscriptions tell us that Anubis was worshipped in the Thessaloniki sanctuary as well, but there are no sculptures of him from the sanctuary. Except for the Harpokrates discussed at the end of this section, each of these sculptures is fragmentary, preserving only the head.

There are three heads of Sarapis that might have come from the Egyptian sanctuary of Thessaloniki: MΘ 897, MΘ 1017, and MΘ 1019. All three images depict the god with the same features that we saw in other examples of Sarapis from Hellenistic and Roman Greece: long curling hair, a spiral-curl beard divided in half, and an idealized face. The first head, MΘ 897, dates to the Antonine period and was found to the east of the Varelas plot in Olympou Street (Figure 42). While Th. Brady described

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72 These items are MΘ 2490 (Head of Isis), MΘ 1011 (Head of Isis), MΘ 897 (Head of Sarapis found east of the Varelas house, near the Agora, see G. Despinis, Catalogue of Sculpture, 109-10, cat. 80.), MΘ 1019 (Head of a bearded god that Despinis reconstructs as the original head of the Sarapis cult statue, see ibid., 57-58.), MΘ 1017 (Head of Sarapis), MΘ 844 (statuette of Harpokrates).
73 Bommas, "Apostel Paulus und die ägyptischen Heiligtümer Makedoniens,”; Dunand, Le culte d’Isis II. One such example is IG Thess 80, a statue base with a dedication to Sarapis, Isis, and Anubis dating to the 2nd or 1st centuries BCE.
74 G. Despinis, Catalogue of Sculpture, 113-14, cat. 84. Despinis’ entry provides a thorough bibliography, but we should mention previous studies by Th.A. Brady, "Repertory of statuary and figured monuments relating to the cult of the Egyptian gods,” ed. University of Missouri (Pamph.folio v. 332, 1938), 7, no. 71; 191
this head as coming from the Thessaloniki Sarapeum, the Museum’s inventory tells us this head actually came from an area closer to the Agora. Several other sculptures, including the head and torso of a statue of Poseidon (MΘ 886+6130) and a head of Alexander the Great or possibly a woman (MΘ 878), were found here, leading Despinis to suggest that the Varelas plot stood over an area of worship for Sarapis and other gods, perhaps even a local pantheon.75 This head has lost most of its surface, the top of the head, and its nose, but is otherwise in good shape. Designed to be set into a larger statue of the god, Sarapis wears his hair in loose, wavy, and deeply curled locks. The hair in the back is subdivided into large sausage curls at the neck.76 His beard features tight snail curls carved with the drill, creating the characteristic detailed locks of the latter part of the second century CE. The head and neck were highly polished, and traces of red in the hair and beard suggest gilding or other coloration in these areas. The top of the head was cut flat, with a square hole in the center meant to hold the tenon of a tall modius that would have stood on top of the god’s head.

Although C. Makaronas identifies the second head, MΘ 1017, as part of a possible Hellenistic cult statue in the Sarapeum, Despinis argues that this head is of far

75 G. Despinis, Catalogue of Sculpture, 114.
76 The arrangement of hair recalls Corinth Museum S 2378, though the lower curls there are carved in a more detailed manner. See Milleker, “Three heads of Sarapis from Corinth,” no. 3.
too low quality and late date (2nd century CE) to have served that function (Figure 43).\textsuperscript{77} The head is carved in an archaizing style used frequently in the 2nd century CE, depicting the god with simple, drilled curls and waves, a broad nose, and clearly lidded eyes. The contrast in style and expressiveness between this example and MΘ 897 is striking: while the present head appears impassive and unengaged with the viewer, MΘ 897 is filled with pathos and expression, looking towards the viewer with wild, unruly hair.

Despinis also argues that the two other Isis heads from Thessaloniki may have belonged to two phases (early Hellenistic and 2nd century CE) of a cult statue of Isis that would have stood in Thessaloniki’s Sarapeum.\textsuperscript{78} The first, MΘ 1011, which dates to the 3rd century BCE, depicts Isis with a very subtle set of corkscrew curls set within a Classicizing set of loose waves gently pulled half-back to frame a naturalistic and idealized female face (Figure 44). Her oval-shaped face is fleshy, with almond shaped eyes, a broad nose, and a small mouth with a rounded chin, following Greco-Roman patterns of depicting Greek goddesses and mortal women with idealized, non-specific faces.\textsuperscript{79} This head would have been attached to a stone or wooden body, and the drilled

\textsuperscript{77} CH. I. Makaronas, \textit{AA} 1940(1940): 465; G. Despinis, \textit{Catalogue of Sculpture}, 110. Because the inventory card for this object was made long after the head was found, Despinis is suspicious of the findspot described on the card.

\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Catalogue of Sculpture}, 48.

\textsuperscript{79} S. Dillon, \textit{The Female Portrait Statue in the Greek World} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 103-34.
dowel hole at the top probably held an identifying attribute like Isis’ basileion crown.\textsuperscript{80} The goddess is represented here in a manner consistent with other early Hellenistic female statues, employing a slight head tilt and detailed hair. Isis’ hairstyle is very similar to that used for Statue C, a portrait of a mortal woman with no know Isiac connections, from the sanctuary of Artemis Polos on Thasos (Figure 45).\textsuperscript{81} The Thasian statue, however, ties the longer ends of the hair up into a bun instead of letting the hair fall loose in Isis’ corkscrew curls. MΘ 1011 from the back (Figure 46), we can see that the long hair is a clumsy adaptation of a simpler hairstyle. The comparison suggests that the sculptor was trying to adapt Isis’ particular iconography to existing modes of representing women in Hellenistic art, perhaps even going so far as to recut an existing female statue to make the goddess familiar and recognizable to an early audience.

The second phase of the Isis statue, represented in MΘ 2490, depicts Isis in a deeply drilled Antonine style that integrated the corkscrew curls more gracefully.\textsuperscript{82} Like the Hellenistic Isis, MΘ 2490 depicted Isis with a smooth, idealized face and loose, wavy

\textsuperscript{80} Isis wears several crowns in Egypt, including the crown of Hathor (horns framing a solar disc), a stepped throne, and several headdresses with the feathers of maat and other vegetal elements. See Tran tam Tinh, "Isis," 762. It is also possible that this head could have held a city Tyche, wearing a walled crown, or another city goddess.


\textsuperscript{82} G. Despinis, Catalogue of Sculpture, 114-15.
hair parted down the middle and gathered in the back. Because the waves were carved with extensive drilling and detailed indications of strands, there is less of a contrast between the loose waves on the top of the head and the short, spiraling corkscrew curls at the bottom of the head. A diadem holds the hair in place, and rounded depressions on the sides of the head probably attached a crowning attribute to the top of the head. The use of depressions on the sides of the head instead of a single hole or cutting centered at the crown of the head is very unusual, suggesting that the missing attributes may have taken an unusual form impossible to reconstruct without more evidence.

We might now consider how these heads and their now-missing bodies worked as cult statues in the sanctuary. In a series of catalogue entries, Despinis identifies MΘ 1019 and MΘ 1011, heads of Sarapis and Isis, as the sanctuary’s original Hellenistic cult statues (Figure 47). MΘ 1019 looks very similar to the Roman-period Sarapis head, MΘ 897, but features a more expressive face, a complex arrangement of curls in the head and beard, and a slightly opened mouth. Despinis correctly dates this head to the Hellenistic period based on its carving style and the arrangement of the curls. If Makaronas was describing this head when he referred to a Sarapis head found in the Sarapeum “of good art of the Hellenistic period,” this head may have belonged to the sanctuary’s original

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83 While no other statue of Isis I know of has a similar set of depressions, many heads of Isis do have holes for attaching diadems and other headpieces. See, for example, the statue of Isis lactans from Perge, Now in the Antalya Museum of Archaeology (A 3279), which features a large rectangular cutting near the front of the head. See Tran tam Tinh, Isis lactans, no. A-1, fig. 15 and 16.
cult statue of Sarapis. That statue was probably paired with a Hellenistic cult statue of Isis, either in the same temple or more conceptually across the sanctuary’s space.

Despinis argues that a female head found at the Vasiloglou plot near the Diikitirion, the aforementioned MΘ 1011 (Figure 44), could have belonged to the Hellenistic phase of Isis’ cult statue. This pairing would have emphasized Isis’ and Sarapis’ roles as ideal husband and wife, a key element of Isis’ identity as described in the aretalogies.

While the Hellenistic statues were paired, it is likely that the Roman period cult statues of Isis and Sarapis were displayed as a triad with a 2nd century CE Harpokrates, found within the temenos of the Thessaloniki Sarapeum. Following the Egyptian cults’ tendency towards triads of gods, the trio of Isis, Sarapis, and Harpokrates appears in many media throughout the Roman period. The Harpokrates statue from the Thessaloniki Sarapeum depicts the god as an almost nude boy, with defined pectoral and abdominal muscles but pudgy thighs and posterior (Figure 48). The god stands,

84 Makaronas, 465; G. Despinis, Catalogue of Sculpture, 48-49, cat. 27.
85 The museum inventories, which provide our best attestations of which heads come from the Sarapeum, often indicate that location clearly on the cards. Other cards, however, frequently list the Vassiloglou plot as “near the Sarapeum.”
86 For example, in lines 17-19 of the Maroneia aretalogy, Isis and Sarapis’ marriage is paired with Isis’ role as the creator of marriage as an institution. “σύνοικον δ᾽ ἔλαβες Σέραπιν, καὶ τὸν κοινὸν ὑμῶν θεμέλων γάμον,/ τοῖς ὑμετέροις οὐ κόσμος ἀνέλαμμεν ἐνομαστικεῖς/ Ἡλίῳ καὶ Σελήνῃ.” The text used here is from Grandjean, Une nouvelle arétalogie, 17-18, with commentary on 54-64. Similar sentiments are expressed in the aretalogies of Kyme (and, by extension, its copy in Thessaloniki), Ios, Andros (v. 15-17), and Diodorus, though in those texts Isis is described as Osiris’ wife, not Sarapis’. Grandjean also makes much of the term κοινὸν used to describe the relationship between these two divinities, suggesting a more egalitarian relationship that corresponds with Isis’ more prominent position in Greek cults.
87 G. Despinis, Catalogue of Sculpture, 86, cat. 86. Although the statue’s provenance is not recorded in the inventory, the statue is identified as one of the more significant finds of the 1923 campaign in a BCH field report: “Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques dans l’Orient hellénique,” BCH 48(1924): 497.
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leaning his left arm on a tree stump and raising his right forefinger to touch the chin in a
gesture well known from Egyptian figurines that depict the god.\textsuperscript{88} In his left arm,
Harpokrates carries a cornucopia. His hair is arranged into large, doughy waves and
crowned with a vegetal wreath. Originally another now-lost crown stood above the
wreath, which Despinis reconstructs as a form of the double crown of Egypt, the \textit{pshent},
based on comparison with Harpokrates normal iconography in figurines and Egyptian
statuary.\textsuperscript{89} Harpokrates here looks very similar to images of Eros; in fact, its closest
comparanda, an unpublished set of Harpokrates statues from the Iseum at Dion, have
slots cut in their backs to hold Eros’ wings.\textsuperscript{90} This statue employs struts liberally, even
connecting the penis to the testicles with a small strut. The mode of representation used
for the face is similar to that of the archaizing Sarapis head, MΘ 1017, but the body
follows more traditional classical models with its contrapposto stance and realistic
modeling of the muscles.

\textsuperscript{88} Harpokrates’ gesture alludes to the idea of childhood and rebirth in Egyptian religion. As one of the most
popular subjects of Egyptian terracottas, there are innumerable examples of Harpokrates making this
gesture in Egyptian art. For relevant examples, see Frankfurter, \textit{Religion in Roman Egypt}, 134.; Barrett,
\textit{Egyptianizing Figurines from Delos}, 180-85, 247-50. For Harpokrates’ standard iconography, see E.S. Hall,
\textsuperscript{89} G. Despinis, \textit{Catalogue of Sculpture}, 116; Hall, "Harpocrates and other child deities in ancient Egyptian
sculpture," 56.
\textsuperscript{90} These statues are on display in the Dion Archaeological Museum but remain unpublished. M.-C.
Budischovsky has assembled a set of bronzes, almost all without provenance, that depict the god with the
cornucopia and \textit{pshent} crown. These bronzes are also excellent comparanda for the Thessaloniki
Harpokrates. See M.-C. Budischovsky, "Petits bronzes d’Égypte gréco-romans: Harpocrate à la \textit{cornucopia},
Ausonius, 2011), figures 1-3. Despinis compares the statue to sculptures of Harpokrates from Ras El-Soda
and the Cleveland Museum of Art (see Hall, "Harpocrates and other child deities in ancient Egyptian
sculpture," pl. XXVII and XXIX.), but these statues are not as closely related as the Dion statue and
Budischovsky’s examples.
Harpokrates’ Hellenized style and Egyptian attributes suggest how we might to reconstruct the bodies of at least one pair of Isis and Sarapis statues in the sanctuary as part of a sculptural group. The key element is Harpokrates’ cornucopia, an attribute commonly associated with Harpokrates in western examples, thought similar statues at Dion and Messene do not use this attribute. Many types of Isis and Sarapis statues carried the cornucopia, particularly the Sarapis débout type defined by Tran tam Tinh and the Isis-Tyche and Isis-Fortuna, which was used for a major cult statue of Isis in the Dion sanctuary. In Greece the Isis-Fortuna type appears mostly in the north, particularly Macedonia and its neighboring provinces, and is not particularly popular outside these areas. Both a statue base and an altar dedicated to Isis Tyche Agathe were

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91 Harpokrates, like Sarapis and Isis, has a stunning variety of iconographic types and subtypes. As the Harpokrates LIMC article demonstrates, the majority of these images were made of terracotta or bronze at the small scale, and either lack provenience or come from sites in the western empire. One notable exception is a marble sculpture of Harpokrates with part of a cornucopia preserved from Hadrian’s villa at Tivoli, now in Rome’s Capitoline Museum (Inv. 646), and a marble statue of Harpokrates with the cornucopia standing with Isis in the Knotenpalla from Rome’s Palazzo Barberini, now in the Munich Glyptothek (Inv. 250). See V. Tran tam Tinh, B. Jaeger and S. Poulin, “Harpokrates,” in LIMC(1988). However, Barrett’s analysis of the Egyptianizing terracotta figurines from Delos does not find a single example of Harpokrates with the cornucopia, despite the relative prevalence of cornucopia in images of Isis, Sarapis, Aphrodite, Arsinoë II, and the Agathoi Daimones. See Barrett, Egyptianizing Figurines from Delos, 119-250.

92 This sculpture, like all of the Dion sculptures, has yet to be published but is on display at the Dion Archaeological Museum. A description of the sanctuary and some excavation photos can be found in D. Pandermalis, Discovering Dion(Athens: Adam Editions, 2000), 88-91. Epigraphy also connects Dion and Thessaloniki: RICIS 113/0523, a text dedicating an altar in the Thessaloniki Sarapeum, mentions Isis Lochia, an unusual epithet of Isis seen only in Macedonia.

93 In his atlas of Isiac material culture from the ancient material culture, Bricault lists Isis-Fortuna types at Guberevac in Dalmatia, Viden in Moesia Superior, Ceramiae, Nicea, and Heracleia in Macedonia. The one major exception is at Messene, where we have two examples of the Isis Fortuna type. P. Themelis reconstructs an arm with part of a cornucopia found in the Messene theater as part of an Isis Tyche cult statue from the Messene Egyptian Sanctuary (Messene Museum Inv. 15194; Themelis, “The cult of Isis at ancient Messene,” 103-4). To this we can add the Isis Tyche from Dion and an Isis Fortuna bronze statuette at Messene (Messene Museum Inv. 14613; ibid., 99.). In contrast, the Isis Fortuna type appears at least 3 times
found in the Thessaloniki Sarapeum, suggesting that this particular aspect of Isis was popular in Thessaloniki (RICIS 113/0514 and 113/0515). These dedications make Isis Tyche/Isis Tyche Agathe one of the goddess’ most popular names within the sanctuary, suggesting that at least one cult statue of Isis Tyche might have stood somewhere within the sanctuary.

If, as I suggest here, an Isis Tyche and a standing Sarapis with cornucopia stood in the sanctuary, Harpokrates’ cornucopia would have connected these three images to form a visual triad that echoed the divine triads worshipped at most Egyptian sanctuaries in New Kingdom and Late Period Egypt. Inscriptions tell us that there were two triads of Egyptian gods worshipped at Thessaloniki: Isis, Sarapis, and Anubis, and Isis, Sarapis, and Harpokrates. While more inscriptions praise the Anubis triad, following a trend seen throughout Roman Greece, the Harpokrates triad also appears in at least two inscriptions, one of which mentions a priest of Harpokrates (RICIS 113/0526, later 1st century BCE). These inscriptions, when read in light of the pairs and triads of

in Colonia Agrippinensis in Germania Minor, and 16 examples of the type at Pompeii. See the relevant maps in Bricault, Atlas de la diffusion.
* Other dedicatory inscriptions also mention Isis Tyche, including RICIS 113/0531, RICIS 113/0566 (a footprint relief).
* Again, following the example of the Isis Tyche from Dion, perhaps Isis Tyche has her own small cella or cult area within the sanctuary. A basic plan describing the layout and finds of the Dion sanctuary can be found in Kleibl, Iseion, 201-3, cat. 7.
* The Harpokrates triad is also venerated in RICIS 113/0518, dated to the 1st century BCE. Another inscription from Thessaloniki dating to the 2nd or 3rd century CE, RICIS 113/0564, mentions a possible temple of Horus.
sculptures visible in the sanctuary, argue for the presence of divine groups in the sanctuary. Even if the three statues were not displayed together, the repetition of symbolic elements like the cornucopia would have highlighted the three gods’ relationship in the eyes of the viewer.

Further, the Isis-Sarapis-Harpokrates was often depicted in other artistic media, occasionally employing the cornucopia to connect all three deities into a visual triad. One particularly arresting example of the Isis, Sarapis, and Harpokrates group with cornucopiae appeared in a fresco from a house in Pompeii (Figure 49). In this example, Isis, Sarapis, and Harpokrates stand in an aediculated shrine at the top of a stepped platform, each holding a cornucopia in their left arm. Isis holds a *sistrum* in her left hand, Sarapis holds a *patera*, and Harpokrates makes his traditional gesture towards his mouth. Harpokrates appears nude, but Isis and Sarapis wear Greco-Roman clothing. Since these painted gods stand within a shrine at the top of a platform, the fresco could allude to a specific cult group or common groupings of cult statues seen in Isiac sanctuaries. The cult statues of Isis Tyche, Sarapis, and Harpokrates (ΜΘ 844), all with cornucopiae, might have been displayed in a manner similar to the group depicted in the Pompeii fresco.

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97 From Pompeii VI 2, 14. See Tran tam Tinh, *Sérapis debout*, 157, III 16, figure 06. The painting dates to 62-79 CE.
The Thessalonian divine sculptures were composed in a way that went beyond Isis’ international style to connect the Egyptian gods with Greece by translating Isis and her companions into locally appropriate sculptural models. While nearly all of Sarapis’ sculptural types adhere to Greco-Roman visual priorities, the statues of Harpokrates and Isis displayed at Thessaloniki translated Egyptian iconography into Greek models with varying degrees of success. The statue of Harpokrates, which depicted the god much in the same way as Eros while preserving his trademark Egyptian gesture of childhood, was the more successful of the two. While the gesture is certainly unfamiliar to all but the most knowledgeable viewers, the sculptor has successfully rendered the arms within the confines of existing Greek forms of the young male body, adding in other iconography like the wreath, sun disc, and pshent in ways that harmonize with rather than interrupt the “flow” of the image.

In the case of our Isis heads, the goddess follows traditional modes of representing Greek goddesses while adding on corkscrew locks and her crowning ornaments. The integration of these two aspects was not as seamless as the Harpokrates. The Hellenistic cult statue of Isis, for example, clumsily added a long set of subtle corkscrew curls to a hairstyle commonly used for depictions of women and goddesses in the early Hellenistic eastern Mediterranean. Chronology may play a role

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98 Because of the partial preservation of these statues, we cannot discount the idea that the sculptures’ bodies would have held Egyptianizing iconography. For example, some of the statues of Isis may have held situlae or sistra, or worn the Knotenpalla outfit discussed above.
here. Perhaps 2nd century CE Thessalonian sculptors had learned successful strategies for representing the Egyptian gods in Hellenized fashion by observing the mistakes of their Hellenistic counterparts. By reinterpreting Egyptian subjects and iconography as naturalistic, Hellenized deities, these sculptures translated Egyptian gods into a local mode of representation enabled by exchange, revision, and translation processes that drove globalization in the ancient Mediterranean.

4.2.3 Statues of Greek Gods and a Landscape of Hellenism in the Thessaloniki Sarapeum

Deploying these images in a sanctuary context further reconfigured Isis as part of the Greek pantheon by emphasizing her similarity to other Greek goddesses. In addition to these Hellenized images of Isis and Sarapis, the Thessaloniki Sarapeum contained many images of Greek gods, as well as numerous portraits of men and women carved in contemporary Greco-Roman styles. Apart from a single Egyptian import, a black basalt statue of the god Tutu in the form of a sphinx, none of the over 30 sculptures found in the Thessaloniki Sarapeum makes overt allusions to the cult’s foreign origins. Instead, these images, which depict Greek gods in their canonical types and contemporary styles, prioritize the culturally contextualized, henotheistic Isis that we saw in the Maroneia aretalogy. Most significant among these images were a statue of Aphrodite of the Naples-Louvre or Fréjus types (MΘ 831) and a statue of Athena (MΘ 832). Both are

99 G. Despinis, Catalogue of Sculpture, 64-66.
probably imported from Athens, and Ch. Makaronas lists them as having come from the Antentempel in his partial account of the sanctuary’s finds.¹⁰⁰

The Aphrodite statue depicts the goddess in a thin, slinky chiton that has slipped off of the right shoulder, leaving the breast exposed (Figure 50).¹⁰¹ This Aphrodite type is known from many examples around the empire. Aphrodite wears sandals and stands on an oval plinth, which is preserved, along with a bluish-grey marble base. The head and right arm are broken off, and the left arm would have slotted into the dowel hole near the left elbow. The right arm would have extended upward to raise the mantle over the left shoulder, probably to cover or veil herself. This seductive image of the goddess highlighted Aphrodite’s role as a goddess of sensuality and female beauty, emphasizing her fleshy hips and thighs, her perky breasts, and the sheerness of her drapery. Both M. Brinke and M. Andronikos have dated this statue to the 1st century CE, but Despinis argues that the statue has the same stylistic features of the Athena statue discussed in the next paragraph, and thus follows D. Pandermalis in dating the statue to the early 2nd century CE.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ I thank Dr. P. Hatzinikolaou of the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki for her insights on local sculpture and Athenian imports in Hellenistic and Roman Macedonia. Makaronas. Kleibl reconstructs the findspots based on Makaronas’ summary 1940 report, see Kleibl, Iseion, 205.


¹⁰² “Ἡ Αφροδίτη τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης,” 12; Brinke, Kopienkritische und typologische Untersuchungen, 52; G. Despinis, Catalogue of Sculpture, 105; D. Pandermalis, in Μακεδονία. 4000 χρόνια ελληνικής ιστορίας και πολιτισμού (1986), 216.
MΘ 832 depicts a female *peplophoros* with a short himation crossing from the left shoulder to the right elbow (Figure 51). The life-sized statue, which likely depicts a Greek goddess like Artemis or Demeter, is carved from Dokimeion marble. The woman holds her left hand at her hip, and the right arm bends at the elbow to extend forward. The head, separately pieced, and the right forearm are missing. This statue displays characteristic 2nd century CE carving techniques, including the deep undercutting of vertical folds, a thick Classicizing body, and a doughy feel to the drapery. Because of the long *kolpos* fold on the *peplos* and the way the statue's arms are positioned, Despinis argues that this statue is a copy of a 5th century BCE original. Although the himation's arrangement more closely follows the Ariccia Artemis type, Despinis argues that the arm positioning on this statue does not correspond with that or any other known type, and argues that the statue might also represent Athena or Demeter. Although we cannot precisely determine which goddess is represented in this image, we can assume that this statue represented an easily-recognized Greek divinity.

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103 G. Despinis, *Catalogue of Sculpture*. 106-07, with bibliography. N. Herz conducted an isotopic analysis on the statue to determine the marble's origin, but Despinis does not provide a reference for this study.
104 Ibid.
4.2.4 Rereading Aphrodite in a Egyptianized Landscape: Isiac Viewership and Novel Interpretations in Thessaloniki’s Sarapeum

Alongside international images of Isis and Sarapis, carved in naturalistic formats that prioritized Greco-Roman modes of representation, Thessalonian devotees created a Hellenized visual landscape that interpreted Isis as part of a Greek pantheon of gods. It was not unusual for multiple deities to be worshipped within the same sanctuary in Roman Greece. As viewers experienced in the Greco-Roman canon, Isiac initiates would have recognized these images as Athenas and Aphrodites and Demeters. For Isiac initiates primed by their textual and ritual experiences to see Isis in all goddesses and all goddesses in Isis, however, the presence of several goddesses in Isis’ sanctuary took on a new meaning. When they reconsidered these statues through the lens of cultic visuality, devotees would have interpreted statues of other goddesses within the sanctuary as a testament to Isis’ unifying powers. The sanctuary and its sculptural program thus emulated Isis’ henotheistic theological identity, bringing Macedonian, Greek, and Egyptian divinities together. In this way, devotees experiencing Greek goddesses within Isis’ sanctuary refashioned the standard multifaceted visual experience of a Greek sanctuary into an intellectual and theological exploration of Isiac theology and identity.

All of the Greek goddesses represented in the Thessaloniki sanctuary are frequently associated with Isis in epigraphic aretalogies and Macedonian shrines. At Dion, for example, Isis took over a late Classical period sanctuary of Artemis that stood very close to a sanctuary of Demeter, and a statue of Demeter seated on the Eleusinian
cista on display in the Dion Archaeological Museum may have been found inside the Isis sanctuary. Given the size and quality of the Aphrodite and peplophoros statues under discussion, as well as their location within a sanctuary, these sculptures should be understood as cult statues. The epigraphic evidence further supports the idea that Greek gods were worshipped in the sanctuary. Several inscriptions found in Thessaloniki’s Sarapeum and its environs honor the sunnai theoi (RICIS 113/0508, 113/0509, 113/0511, 113/0534) and theoi sunbomoi (RICIS 113/0534) and theoi entemenoi (RICIS 113/0508). As these epithets suggest, several gods shared the Sarapeum’s sanctuary space, even going so far as to share altars. In each of these inscriptions, however, the Egyptian gods are recognized as distinct divine entities, while the sanctuary’s Greek gods are lumped together under collective titles, creating a clear hierarchy between Isis and Sarapis as ideal, henotheistic deities and Greek deities that initiate viewers could reinterpret as derivations of the Egyptian gods.

The presence of an aretalogy of the “I-am-Isis” format in the Sarapeum further suggests that Thessalonian devotees valued their goddess’ henotheistic aspects on both a theological and cultural level. The Thessaloniki example seems to be a very close 1st-2nd century CE copy of the Hellenistic Kyme aretalogy, but only part of the text is

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106 Pandermalis, Discovering Dion, 89-90; S. Pingiatolglu, “Cults of Female Deities at Dion,” Kernos 23(2010). The Dion statue is unpublished.
107 Martzavou, “Isis Aretalogies.” The sanctuaries at Kyme, Kassandreia, and Ios all have “I am Isis” aretalogies, while Maroneia, discussed in chapter 2, and Andros have what Martzavou and other scholars have called the “You are Isis” type.
preserved. Like the Kyme text, the Thessaloniki aretalogy includes an account of Isis’ family and her divine works on behalf of mankind. Unfortunately the text is broken off before the section where the author would have revealed Isis’ divine powers and roles. If the missing text follows the Kyme example as closely as the existing text suggests, the Thessaloniki aretalogy would have defined Isis in roles often presided over by Greek goddesses. For example, in the Kyme text, Isis is responsible for human justice, a role usually fulfilled in Greek religion by Athena.


“I made good and evil be distinguished by nature. I made nothing more respected than the oath. I delivered the person plotting unjustly against another into the hands of the person plotted against.” (RICIS 302/0204=I.Kyme 41 lines 32-34, trans. Beard, North, and Price)\textsuperscript{109}

Isis here subsumes Athena into her divine identity by taking on Athena’s role as patron of justice and ordering principle of civilized society. Elsewhere in the Kyme text, Isis also takes on aspects of Poseidon, Zeus, Helios, Tyche, Gaia, and many nymphs and natural spirits (lines 39-57). By reassigning these powers to Isis, the Kyme aretalogy (and by extension, the Thessaloniki aretalogy) take an expansive, henotheistic view of the

\textsuperscript{108} RICIS 113/0545; ΜΘ 1683. Found in 1920.
goddess that saw Isis as the ultimate female divinity that filled all divine offices. As I argued in Chapter 3, these theological principles would have influenced the way that initiate viewers saw the statues under discussion, priming the viewer to see Greek goddesses as derivatives of Isis.

Within Thessaloniki’s Hellenized sculptural landscape, where Isis appears in Greco-Roman naturalistic style alongside several Greek deities, I argue that viewers had the opportunity to read the statues of Greek goddesses set up in the Sarapeum as avatars of Isis. Although the Kyme/Thessaloniki aretalogy does not connect Isis with Greek goddesses as explicitly as the Medinet Madi hymns or the Maroneia aretalogy type, the allusions are still clear. In addition to reassigning Athena’s responsibilities to Isis, the aretalogy also defines Isis as the mistress of male-female love and productive sexuality (lines 27, 30), absorbing Aphrodite’s traditional duties that informed her representation in the Fréjus type displayed in the Thessaloniki sanctuary. Having read this aretalogy, then, Isiac devotees would see Athena and Aphrodite as parts of Isis, susbsumed within Isis’ henotheistic numen.

For initiated viewers, then, their Greek viewing habits would be reformed by their experiences with Isiac text and ritual, leading initiates to see Isis in images of traditional Greek goddesses. A devotee looking at MΘ 831, for example, would initially

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recognize the image as Aphrodite. Joining the Egyptian cults, after all, did not erase a lifetime of looking at Greek art. When he reframed the image in its cultic context, however, he might remember the aretalogical texts that he has memorized through countless rituals and cultic performances,\textsuperscript{111} that same viewer would reconsider Aphrodite and her representations. Remembering the henotheistic principles inherent in the cult’s theology, that viewer would assimilate Aphrodite and Isis, allowing the viewer to reinterpret MΘ 831 as an image of Isis.

Several visual and textual factors would support the initiate viewer’s revisionist perspective. First and foremost would have been Isis’ own representations in text and art. In addition to her role defined in the Isiac aretalogies as a protectress of female sexuality and the ancient family, more mainstream ancient writers frequently cast Isis as an agent of uncontrollable sexuality, an uncontrollable Aphrodite. For example, Josephus’ account of Mundus’ rape of the matron Paulina associates the temple of Isis in Rome with illicit sexual encounters (Jos. Jud.Ant. 18.65-80), a stereotype employed frequently by other ancient writers.\textsuperscript{112} Although these authors’ invectives against hypersexuality in Egyptian cult were probably more rhetorically than factually oriented,

\textsuperscript{111} Regarding the use of aretalogical texts in rituals, see Martzavou, ’Isis Aretalogies.’ Lucius’ experiences are a key source for reconstructing these rituals and the worshipper’s experience of Isiac cult.

\textsuperscript{112} For example, Juvenal Sat. 6.488f, 6.511-541; Ovid Epist. ex Pont. 1.1.51-54, Ars amat. 1.78; Tibullus 1.3.27-30; Propertius 2.33a.21f. One might contrast these accounts with Isis’ role as a protector of chastity in Achilles Tatius’ Leucippe and Cleitophon, Xenophon’s Ephesian Tale, or Heliodorus’ Aethiopica. For Isis’ connection with chastity, see also Heyob, The Cult of Isis, 51, 20, 113-20.
they still place Isis squarely within Aphrodite’s sphere, aligning the two goddesses in a way that mimicked the aretalogies.

If we look back at Isis’ main statue types, which frequently borrowed poses, gestures, and iconography from Greek goddesses, we can see that religious appropriation also played a role in revisionist visuality. In his *LIMC* article on Isis, Tran tam Tinh notes that Isis statues often replicate the body types and postures of other Greek goddesses, including Aphrodite, Demeter, Tyche/Fortuna, and Hygeia. Although no Isis statue replicates the Aphrodite Fréjus type, similarities in gesture, dress, style, and attributes between Isis and other Aphrodite types would have encouraged a viewer subjectivity that permitted devotees to find Isis in textual and artistic depictions of Greek goddesses, to see Isis as a polysemic and polynymic divine form that could appear as Aphrodite in sculptural form. In the Egyptian cults, where texts primed viewers for epiphanic experiences connected to the sanctuary space, each and every encounter with a divine statue was an encounter with the idealized, Platonic form of the gods. As a result of these carefully calibrated visual landscapes operating in concert with theological principles, Isiac devotees would see Isis in statues of Greek gods, even goddesses depicted in forms not used for the depiction of Isis.

From a cultural perspective, the assimilation of Isis, Demeter, and Aphrodite reinforces Isis’ new identity as a Greek goddess. Unlike the Rhodian sanctuary, where

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113 Tran tam Tinh, "Isis,” 793-95.
Isis’ cultural dissonance was highlighted, the assemblage in the Thessalonian sanctuary rewrites Isis’ history. The lack of Egyptian imports suggests that the narrative of travel had been minimized, perhaps even subsumed by the prevailing Greco-Roman culture. Isis has been wholly reimagined as a Greek goddess. Isis’ landscape here is Egyptian in name only. Now, with her origin story rewritten, Isis has become the familiar, part of a recognizable Greek artistic and religious landscape.

4.3 Divinity and Ethnicity: Assertions of Local and Foreign in Sculptural Programs

In this chapter, I have argued that local communities reinterpreted internationally available images of the Egyptian gods by contextualizing those statues within a sanctuary’s sculptural program. In the two cases surveyed here, the devotees of Rhodes Town and Thessaloniki placed Isis in vastly different sculptural programs, demonstrating how semantically flexible images of Isis and Sarapis were in practice. Context thus plays a key role in defining these gods’ meaning for local communities. In order to better understand context’s effects, I have theorized sculptural programs as instances of distributed personhood. Through the creation of a bounded sanctuary space, the sculptural programs that decorated these spaces internally related to one another.114 These close relationships result in a “body” of sculpture that connects the

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supplementary statues intimately with the cult images of the Egyptian gods. These close relationships between divine images and their contexts allowed dedicators to renegotiate the visual connections between culture, style, and meaning. The semantic flexibility of Isis and Sarapis thus allowed devotees space to interpret and translate international images to suit local ideas about Isis, Egypt, and the rapidly connecting Mediterranean.

The disparate sculptural landscapes into which Isis was inserted demonstrate how extensively local communities could redefine Isis and Sarapis by bringing cult image and sculptural program in dialogue with one another to create new, culturally motivated meanings for the viewer. Because canonical images of Isis prioritized international appeal, local communities needed to create more specific meanings by reframing these images in culturally encoded sculptural programs. Gell’s principle of distributed personhood provides a theoretical foundation for understanding this process, suggesting that the relationships created between images in the bounded space of the sanctuary allowed devotees to renegotiate the culturally flexible images of Isis and Sarapis by extending their divine personhood from cult statues into the sanctuary’s supplementary statues. In this case, cultural affiliations were expressed through materiality and style: on Rhodes, the Egyptian stones used for nearly half of the sanctuary’s supplementary sculptures would have made the clearest arguments for Isis’

115 Whitehead, Religious statues and personhood, 100-21.
foreign origins, while in Thessaloniki the almost exclusive use of Greco-Roman
naturalistic style aligned the globalized image of Isis more closely with Greek visual
culture. Images of Isis are thus especially difficult to read outside of their context.

On Rhodes, devotees displayed Isis and Sarapis in a sanctuary decorated with an
unusually high proportion of Egyptian imports, highlighting the contrast between
Hellenized, Egyptian, and Egyptianizing ways of visualizing the Egyptian gods. The
result was a delicate yet dynamic visual landscape that highlighted Isis’ position at the
center of cross-cultural exchange in the ancient Mediterranean. On the one hand, these
images argued for an authentic connection to Egypt. Much like the Chronicle of
Sarapieion A from Delos employed Apollonios (I)’s status as an ethnic Egyptian to claim
priority over the other Delian Isis cults, the Rhodes sanctuary’s Egyptian imported
sculptures would have established a clear connection between the Rhodian Isiac
community and distant Egypt. These images thus employed the principle of foreignness,
motivating their viewers to see other images within the sanctuary through a more
Egyptianizing lens. The presence of the Hellenized Isis and Sarapis described above
challenged these narratives of foreignness, contextualizing the gods themselves within
Greek modes of representation. How, then, to reconcile these two competing narratives?
At Rhodes, the devotees also dedicated eclectic Egyptianizing sculptures that employed
aspects of both artistic traditions. These images brought together the goddess’ foreign
and local modes of representation to emphasize her universalizing aspects, encouraging
viewers to look for unification in the sculptural program instead of cultural divisions. While Rhodians probably included Greek gods in their sanctuary, the prevalence and importance of imported Egyptian and Egyptianizing statues suggests that those devotees prioritized foreignness as Isis’ most important aspect.

In Thessaloniki, devotees took a different, more localized approach to the gods. Rather than emphasizing Isis’ foreign origins, as the Rhodians did, the Thessalonians rewrote Isis cultural biography by representing Isis in a familiar Hellenized form alongside Greek goddesses and votive statues. These images, from the proposed Isis-Sarapis-Harpokrates group to the Aphrodite Fréjus, made a cohesive visual argument that Isis belonged in Greece and, more importantly, to Greece. The Thessalonian community thus translated Isis’ Egyptianness to fit more comfortably in a Greek mode of representation, minimizing foreignness in favor of Isis’ henotheistic power in a way that deterritorialized the goddess. The result was a sanctuary that asked viewers to reinterpret familiar images of Greek goddesses through an Isiac lens. Applying a cultic mode of viewing resulted in surprising new interpretations of sculpture that found Isis in images of Aphrodite and Athena and other Greek deities, reinterpreting the Egyptian gods as rightful members of the Greek pantheon that subsumed its existing female divinities under the aegis of a single, all-powerful goddess.

It is important to note at this point what I am not arguing. I am not arguing that Isiac viewers forgot everything they ever knew about Greek and Roman art. Indeed, as I
have argued here, recognizing existing types and attributes of Greco-Roman gods was key to the entire Isiac viewing process. If the viewer did not recognize Aphrodite, how could he then contextualize Aphrodite within the henotheistic theology of Isis? I am also not arguing that statues of Greek gods set up within the Egyptian sanctuaries lacked any connection with their original subjects. Rather, Isiac theology challenged these inscriptions, intertwining visuality with prior experience to challenge the seemingly factual text appended to the image. Instead of serving as an incontrovertible label, inscriptions become only part of a larger, discursive whole.

Instead, this chapter argues that devotees found Isis a flexible god, one capable of making multiple claims on cultural and theological identities. This flexibility resulted from her cross-cultural journeys from her home in Egypt to her new residence in Greece. Like the globalized Mediterranean, Isis had become deterritorialized, a disconcerting prospect for Greeks traditionally concerned with issues of polis, *ethnos*, and language. I have argued that the sculptural programs at Rhodes and Thessaloniki sought to specify Isis, to locate her within specific geographic and cultural spaces, by contextualizing her cult images within specific sculptural landscapes. By juxtaposing the Egyptian gods next to Egyptian and Egyptianizing or Hellenizing images, devotees aligned Isis more closely with Egypt or Greece, depending on their particular needs. Because of the cult’s henotheistic aspects, however, viewers also renegotiated the supplementary images in light of Isis, reading Greek goddesses as possible avatars of Isis. The result was an
expansive visual interpretation of Isis, one that asked viewers to look beyond the familiar and take a broader, more unified approach to sculpture in sanctuaries of Isis and Sarapis.
5. Encountering the Goddess: Reconsidering the Sanctuary at Marathon

5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter applies the conclusions drawn in the preceding chapters to a specific case study, the 2nd century CE sanctuary of the Egyptian gods at Marathon. This sanctuary has been selected because of its excellent state of preservation and relatively strong publication record. I begin by highlighting key arguments made in the preceding chapters, focusing on how sculptural landscapes in Isiac sanctuaries created cognitive dissonance, enabled cultural imaginings, and played with time and space to create a version of the Egyptian cults that is globalized and palatable to Hellenistic and Roman period Greek devotees. I then shift my focus to the Marathon sanctuary.

Founded by the noted 2nd century CE intellectual and imperial official Herodes Atticus, the sanctuary takes an unusual architectural and sculptural format. I examine Herodes’ literary and material biography and the sanctuary’s architectural and sculptural landscapes. The sanctuary, I argue, was designed to explore both philosophical and cultural themes relevant to Herodes’ life. A close friend of the Middle Platonic school,

1 The sanctuaries at Dion and Gortyna have similar levels of preservation. The sculptures from the Dion sanctuary have not been published, and researcher access to the site is very limited. The Gortyna sanctuary has a very small sculptural program preserved, and most of it seems to have been placed or carved in the late 3rd and 4th centuries CE, outside the chronological scope of this dissertation. As such, I have chosen to focus on the Marathon sanctuary. While there are certain aspects that differentiate the Marathon sanctuary from the ones at Gortyna and Dion, particularly in the audience, there are many aspects that are similar to other Egyptian sanctuaries in Greece.
Herodes' sanctuary to the Egyptian gods articulates the Middle Platonic theology of a unified god who takes many material forms. As an imperial official, however, the sanctuary also has colonialist undertones, creating an imagined version of Egypt that is based on Greek stereotypes of foreign lands. The sanctuary thus operates on several intersecting interpretive levels, articulating two of the major themes we see in Philostratus' *Vitae Sophistarum*: Herodes' political and philosophical lives.

### 5.2 The Sophist’s Sanctuary: The Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Marathon

To conclude my dissertation, I turn to a case study where we have excellent findspot information and architectural preservation. Even more remarkable, we can attribute this sanctuary to a particular dedicator, the noted 2nd century CE Athenian, and likely set of users. Herodes Atticus' biography suggests that the sanctuary probably hosted an international group of Greco-Roman intellectuals and elites, including the cream of Athenian philosophical society and the Roman imperial family. In particular, I argue that Herodes used the sanctuary as a way to explore Middle Platonic theologies. If we apply our Isiac visuality to this sanctuary, we see that Herodes' audience expected to commune with the gods through material images, crossing mortal boundaries and accessing divine knowledge through viewing and philosophical contemplation. On an equally important cultural level, the sanctuary portrays the Egyptian gods in a globalized manner that loosens Isis' ties with Egypt and reimagines her as part of a
Greek pantheon without minimizing her Otherness. The sanctuary imagines an ideal Egyptian landscape set in a safely mytho-historical past, one that portrays Egypt as a place consistent with long-standing Greek stereotypes about Egypt.

5.2.1 Herodes Atticus in Roman Greece

Born in 101 CE, Herodes Atticus was the scion of a wealthy Athenian family that traced its lineage back to Theseus and Kekrops. In addition to their prominence in Athens, the family had joined the senatorial class in Rome. His father, Tiberius Claudius Atticus Herodes, was a senator, and his mother, Vibullia Alcia Agrippina, was a wealthy Roman heiress of Greek descent. Herodes Atticus was born on the family estate in Marathon and was tutored by some of the best Greek and Roman philosophical minds. In 125 CE, the emperor Hadrian appointed him prefect of the free cities of Asia, and in 140 CE he was elected archon of Athens. Later that year, the emperor Antoninus Pius brought Herodes to Rome to tutor the future emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. Around this time, Herodes was betrothed to Regilla, his future wife, and appointed consul in 143 CE.

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3 On this, see P. Graindor, Un milliardaire antique: Herode Atticus et sa famille (Le Caire 1930), 20-38.
After their marriage, Herodes and Regilla mostly lived in family estates around Greece, though they also controlled a lavish estate on the third mile of the Appian Way called the Triopio. For our purposes, the Greek estates are more important. Thus far, three “villa” sites in Greece have been linked to Herodes and his family: Kephissia and Marathon in Attica, Eva Loukou in the Peloponnese. At Kephissia, the most significant finds are a familial grave plot that included a high quality series of portrait busts. The villa at Eva Loukou has been partially excavated, and portions, particularly the mosaics, have been published in a preliminary form.

Their primary residence in Greece, however, seems to have been the family estate in Marathon. Lying about 35 kilometers northeast of Athens, Herodes’ villa covered most of the Marathonian plain, including the land where the famous 5th century Battle of Marathon was fought. Because the family traced their lineage back to Miltiades, the great hero of the Battle of Marathon, the Marathon villa was especially important to their self-definition and social status.

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4 This villa is the source of many of the portrait busts now in the National Archaeological Museum of Athens. See H.R. Götte, *Athens, Attica, and the Megarid: an Archaeological Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2001), pl. 64s. The site was first excavated in 1961 and revealed a portrait of Herodes Atticus, a portrait of Polydeukion, a black marble arm (thought to belong to a statue of the slave Memnon) and the head of a horse. See also E. Vanderpool, “News Letter from Greece,” *A/JA* 65, no. 3 (1961).

5 The primary works are G. Spyropoulos, *Drei Meisterwerke Der Griechischen Plastik Aus Der Villa Des Herodes Atticus Zu Eva/Loukou* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001); Η ΕΠΑΥΛΗ ΤΟΥ ΗΡΩΔΗ ΑΤΤΙΚΟΥ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΥΑ/ΛΟΥΚΟΥ ΚΥΝΟΤΡΙΑΣ (Athens: ΟΛΚΟΣ, 2006). While the first offers a preliminary overview of the sculptural program at the villa, it is well known from those that have seen the Loukou storerooms informally that a lot of high quality sculpture has been excavated here, including at least one sphinx and an Egyptianizing head that L. Siskou compares with the Osiris statues described in section 5.2.3. I eagerly await the publication of further excavation results to see if another Egyptianizing shrine was found at Loukou.
At present, we have only a piecemeal understanding of the villa complex. Three sections of the villa have been known in one form or another since the 19th century. These include an arched gateway, a bath complex, and a sanctuary to the Egyptian gods. The oldest and best known of these elements is the "Arch of Eternal Harmony." The arch was found in the 18th century by Louis-François Fauvel in the area of “The Sheepfold of the Old Woman,” a small valley of land between Mount Kotroni and Mount Aphorismos just south of Oinoe. Though its foundations are no longer visible, several pieces of the arch are now in the Archaeological Museum of Marathon (Figure 52).

Based on Fauvel's descriptions, the entrance gate probably stood on a main road, taking the form of a simple arch supported by two molded pillars. Though only the keystone, a few voussoirs, and one of the pillars have been found, the arch’s form closely mimics the shape of the simple and undecorated Roman triumphal arches constructed throughout Greece, such as the propylons at Isthmia and Philippi. On either side of the keystone in Herodes’ arch was an unusual inscription, detailing the division of land between husband and wife. One side read: “The gate of eternal harmony. The place you

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6 On Fauvel and his counterparts, see Dekoulakou, "Le sanctuaire," 23-25.
enter is Regilla’s.” On the other: “The gate of eternal harmony. The place you enter is Herodes’.” The eastern pillar bears a touching verse inscription almost certainly carved after Regilla’s death, providing a *terminus ante quem* for the arch of about 160 CE. A pair of seated statues, now heavily weathered, flanked either side of the arch. These statues depict a man and a woman, very likely Herodes Atticus and Regilla. Because of their poor preservation, it is difficult to say much about what these images looked like.

Further to the east, we find a lavish Roman bath complex closely connected to an unusual sanctuary of the Egyptian gods. The bath complex was excavated in 1974 and published preliminarily in 1993 by X. Arapogianni. Based on the masonry techniques and the style of some vegetal relief sculpture thought to have decorated the walls, Arapogianni has dated the bath to the mid 2nd century CE. Though the complex seems to contain most of the standard rooms used in Roman period baths (a caldarium, a piscina, a tepidarium, a sudatorium), there is no identifiable frigidarium, and the rooms do not appear to be organized in a symmetrical pattern, as is common for imperial baths and public baths of the 2nd century CE. Oriented to the northwest, the complex is lavish, containing 18 rooms that are revetted in colored marbles and received daily sunlight. For our purposes, we should note two key things about the bath. First and foremost, the bath lies only about 40m southwest of the sanctuary, and a wall connects

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9 Given the baths’ close proximity to the sea, perhaps a frigidarium was unnecessary.
the two structures. This suggests that Herodes and his architect considered the two 
buildings part of the same complex. Secondly, the two may be conceptually connected as 
well. As I will argue in section 5.2.4, I believe that the sanctuary had interrelated 
philosophical and religious functions. Baths are a common meeting place in the Roman 
period, and Herodes may have used both the bath and sanctuary for his philosophical 
and education activities.

The final known piece of Herodes' villa at Marathon, which will be the focus of 
the chapter, is the sanctuary of the Egyptian gods. The sanctuary was not fully identified 
until the mid 20th century because 18th century Grand Tour explorers, specifically 
Fauvel, Dodwell, Leake, Clarke, and Lolling, thought this area may have been the 5th 
century BCE burial mound of the Athenians, connected with the Battle of Marathon. In 
particular, Fauvel come to Marathon and performed some perfunctory excavations in 
the area of the Egyptian sanctuary (Figure 53). He found busts of Herodes Atticus, 
Marcus Aurelius, and Lucius Verus now in the Louvre and Ashmolean Museums. He 
connected that large mounds found there with the 5th century BCE burial mounds of the 
Athenians. In 1968, construction on a nearby hotel revealed two Egyptianizing statues, 
now in the National Archaeological Museum. Related rescue excavations found an 
Egyptianizing pylon and the basic outline of the north half of the sanctuary. In 2004, 
excavations revealed a large underground cistern with some terra cotta drain pipes.

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11 See ibid., 23, pl. 2.
Systematic excavations in the area, overseen by I. Dekoulakou, begin in 2001. Dekoulakou's excavations revealed a massive sanctuary space with unusual architectural features, to be explored in the section below. Dekoulakou's work revealed a large complex devoted to the Egyptian gods, which contained several statues, about 70 giant terracotta lamps, and a few inscriptions that suggest that Herodes and his favorite pupil, Polydeukion, used the sanctuary. For our purposes, the most significant finds in the sanctuary were a series of Isis and Sarapis statue pairs that flanked the sanctuary's four entrances.

5.2.2 Sanctuary Architecture and Organization

The sanctuary at Marathon consisted of two connected courtyards (Figure 54). The devotee would have entered the sanctuary from the beach, passing through an eastern court through a large double pylon at the sanctuary's eastern end. Though the main entrance was not discovered, Dekoulakou and her architect, A. Gounaris, reconstruct this structure as a large entrance vestibule, with a footprint not unlike large sanctuary or city gates found elsewhere in the Greco-Roman world. The eastern courtyard, measuring 22x26m, would originally have been enclosed on the other three

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12 Unfortunately, I do not have space to deal with these lamps at length. See P. Fotiadi, "Ritual Terracotta Lamps with Representations of Sarapis and Isis from the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Marathon: the Variation of "Isis with Three Ears of Wheat," ibid.(Ausonius).
13 On the inscriptions, see I. Dekoulakou, "Le sanctuaire," 36-38.
14 My description of the Sanctuary at Marathon are based on I. Dekoulakou's descriptions in the following articles: "Νέα στοιχεία," ; "Le sanctuaire." Additionally, I had the good fortune to receive a tour of the site from I. Dekoulakou in June 2013, where she provided more specific information about excavations and findspots of published and unpublished sculptures.
sides. Most of the north court was destroyed during modern construction, but the southern end preserves a series of rooms.

The second room on the courtyard’s southern end may have held a special cult function. This room, which Dekoulakou refers to as an exedra, contained several sculptures: a bust statue of Polydeukion (Figure. 55), and an unpublished female bronze statue. Portrait busts of Herodes Atticus, Marcus Aurelius, and Lucius Verus that Fauvel took from the area, now in the Louvre and Ashmolean museums, probably were found close to this area, suggesting that the room was filled with portraits of the most valued and most Roman members of Herodes’ inner circle (Figures 56-58). At the back of the room is a "well" that preserves evidence of waterproof cement.

Though the water may have served a decorative function, we should not overlook the religious implications of this water feature. Several scholars of Isiac cult have noted the prevalence of water features in Egyptian sanctuaries, particularly in Greece. Underground water features have been found at Rhodes, Messene, Gortyna, Eretria, all three Delian Sarapieia, and possibly Thessaloniki; many other Greek sanctuaries have water features inside the sanctuary proper or very close by. These

15 Pers. comm. I. Dekoulakou 6/2013. According to the excavator, the statue is now undergoing restoration at the Piraeas Archaeological Museum. I have not had the opportunity to view it myself.
17 See section 4.3.1 regarding the controversy over the water crypt in the Thessaloniki sanctuary. It is also worth noting that the sanctuary at Dion was very close to the river and may have incorporated water in its original formulation. As we will discuss below, the western court at Marathon also featured an aboveground cryptoporticus, though it does not seem that this was filled with water. The sanctuary on the
water crypts, as they are often termed in scholarly literature, are linked with the Nilometer in Egypt, As C. Ando and C. Barrett have noted, the worship of Isis in Egypt is closely related to the Festival of the Inundation of the Nile. Though we have not been able to reconstruct the water rituals performed in Greece, we can suggest that the water feature at Marathon may have served some sort of ritual purpose. The finds elsewhere in the court suggest that ritual dining also took place here. Dekoulakou found large pithoi in the room immediately the west, and the other rooms in this courtyard contained dining equipment.

The western courtyard diverges from nearly every other sanctuary known from Greek, Roman, and Egyptian antiquity, taking the form of a walled court with a large central pyramid. The devotee entered the western court through a massive Egyptian-style pylon (Figure 59). After passing through this gate, the viewer entered a large enclosed sanctuary square, with pylons at each of the four cardinal directions (Figure 54). Aligned with the sanctuary’s peribolos wall, these pylons each consisted of two rectangular towers made of rough stone and bricks. Although the pylons are preserved at a height of roughly 1m today, remains of mortar can be seen, suggesting that the south slope of the Athenian Akropolis is located next to a spring house, which may have provided water for the sanctuary’s use: Walker, "A Sanctuary of Isis," 245. The sanctuary at Kenchreai includes a fountain decorated with opus sectile that seems to belong to the sanctuary’s earlier phases: Kleibl, Iseion, 192-93. The main sanctuary at Argos during the Hadrianic period seems to have been located inside the city’s main bath: Veymiers, "Les cultes isiaques à Argos."

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18 Ando, "Interpretatio Romana," 64; Barrett, Egyptianizing Figurines from Delos, 119-250.
pylons were originally covered in stone veneers. One lintel in Egyptianizing style, featuring cavetto cornices and a solar disc flanked by two hooded cobras, was found in the ravine near the site in 1968 (Figure 60), and two fragments of a second were found outside the eastern pylon in the 2011 excavations. Dekoulakou suggests that each pylon would have had a similar Egyptianizing lintel at the top of the doorway.\textsuperscript{19}

These lintels, along with the Egyptian-style pylons, serve a key function in the sanctuary: they help to create an imagined Egyptian artistic and natural landscape. As several scholars argued,\textsuperscript{20} sanctuaries to the Egyptian gods often sought to create an Egyptianizing landscape. At several sites in Greece, devotees either built sanctuaries near marshy areas or created artificial water features to recreate the atmosphere of the Nile Valley. At Marathon, we have both: directly to the north of the sanctuary lies a saltwater marsh, and the southern portion of the West Court, described above, contains an artificial water feature. At the Iseum Campanese in Rome, the devotees may have even gone further. Relying on artistic depictions of sanctuaries from Herculaneum and Nilotic mosaics, M. Bommas has argued that the sanctuary there may have included

\textsuperscript{19} See Figure 60. Dekoulakou does not include the lintel in her reconstruction of the western pylon.
Egyptian plants and animals, including crocodiles, ibises, and fish. Bommas’ argument has little archaeological or textual evidence to support it, and must be taken with some caution. Still, his artistic parallels demonstrate that for most Greco-Roman devotees to Isis, creating an imagined sense of Egypt was an important part of developing a sanctuary to the Egyptian gods.

Flanking each pylon were two pairs of Egyptianizing statues, one on either side of the pylon (Figure 61 depicts copies set up on site). Each pair featured slightly different versions of a male "Osiris" and a female Isis carved in an Egyptianizing and archaizing style. These statues are slightly over life size and stand on bases. The 1968 excavations revealed a larger male statue (now in the National Archaeological Museum) and the bottom half of a female statue, now in the Marathon Archaeological Museum. The rest of these statues were found tipped off of their bases and buried, perhaps purposefully (Figure 62). I will return to these statues at length in Section 5.2.3.

Each pylon led to a paved walkway that directed the devotee towards a central stepped pyramid, promoting movement towards a central point (Figures 63, 64). At some point along these paved walkways, devotees would have encountered 1m tall marble statuettes of Horus-falcons wearing the double crown of Egypt (Figure 65). These statues are particularly unusual. As local imitations of an entirely Egyptian style and subject, they have almost no parallel in Greece. It seems likely that Herodes

commissioned these statues especially for their use in the sanctuary. After passing these Horus statuettes, the viewer arrived at the base of the pyramid. The pyramid's conglomerate limestone core is visible today (Figure 63), but during antiquity must have been covered with more valuable stones. The pyramid had three "steps." A small series of steps led the devotee past pairs of rooms and over the first "step" of the pyramid. Between the first and second steps ran a lowered cryptoporticus, best accessed through a small opening at the southwest corner. Fragments of roof tiles, two small support pillars, and red painted fresco walls have been found, suggesting that the corridor was roofed and plastered. Dekoulakou suggests that this area may have been a space for ritual perambulation in the darkness, as is common in Egyptian cults.

After passing over the cryptoporticus, the devotee may have proceeded by the second step to the top of the pyramid. At the top we find a rectangular gap in the masonry (1x1.4m, with a depth of .5m). The gap's dimensions roughly correspond with those of a sculpted sphinx statue that was found cemented into a corner of a room in the sanctuary (Figure 66, findspot identified as point A on Figure 54). There is no evidence, however, that would clearly suggest that the sphinx originally stood at the top of the pyramid. Dekoulakou suggests that the top of the pyramid may have held a small naïskos, but its architectural remains have not been found.

22 Unfortunately, no figural frescoes have been found.
23 The footpath here is not clearly marked. Because the roof for the cryptoporticus has not been preserved, we cannot be sure whether the pathway continued to the top of the pyramid. It is possible that the devotee may only have gazed upon the top of the pyramid from the first step.
To the south of the corridor and the west of the south stair, there is an internal room where 70 oversized lamps were found ritually smashed. Dekoulakou connects this room with the interior staircases found frequently in Egyptian temples. Most of these lamps depicted a bust the goddess Isis facing a bust of the god Sarapis, and many showed signs of active use, suggesting that the sanctuary was actually used for ritual purposes. Also found in this room were two statues: the Egyptian-style sphinx discussed in the preceding paragraph and a statue of the Egyptian goddess Isis wearing the Knotenpalla costume. The sphinx was found in the northeast corner of the room, set on a stone base that was subsequently cemented into place. As excavation photos show, the Isis statue was found directly next to the sphinx (Figure 67). Dekoulakou argues that these statues, like their counterparts in the rest of the sanctuary, were purposefully buried. These two were also moved from their original location into an enclosed space, indicating that these Isis and sphinx statues must have held particular significance to the sanctuary’s devotees.

Epigraphic evidence suggests that Herodes himself may have dedicated the sanctuary around 160 CE, while he was probably living in his villa in Kephissia. Dekoulakou’s excavations revealed a dedicatory inscription of Polydeukion, one of

\[24\] This statue looks very similar to photographs I have seen of a similar statue of a sphinx found at Herodes’ villa in Eva Loukou now in the National Archaeological Museum at Athens. See Dekoulakou, "Le sanctuaire," 32.
Herodes' favorite pupils, in the interior corridor of the sanctuary (Figure 68). Because we know that Polydeukion died shortly after Regilla, possibly in the plague of 165 CE, we can date the sanctuary securely to the middle of the 2nd century CE. This date corresponds with the date of the sanctuary's sculptural program.

5.2.3 The Sanctuary's Sculptural Program

We can identify three main components of the sanctuary's sculptural program: the male-female pairs that flanked the west court's pylons, the "decorative sculptures" that provided an Egyptianizing style for the sanctuary, and the Greco-Roman portraits found in the east court. I have already discussed the decorative sculptures in the previous section as a way to provide more context for the male-female pairs and the Greco-Roman portraits. My goal in this section is to describe the main types of anthropomorphic sculptures used in the sanctuary. I will argue in the next section that these anthropomorphic sculptures and their placement in the sanctuary space reinforced some of Herodes' key religious, philosophical, and cultural priorities.

The male-female pairs stood on bases that flanked the four pylons of the west court. Each pylon would have had a pair inside the west court and another outside the west court, giving us a total of eight pairs in all (see Figure 61). Of the 16 original statues, eight have been found: four male statues and four female statues. Preliminary

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25 Ibid., 37, figs. 19, 20.
26 Ibid., 39.
examinations suggest that these statues, as well as the rest of the white marble sculpture from the site, were made in 2nd century CE Athenian workshops. Apart from one of the female statues, which is preserved from the waist down, the rest are almost completely preserved, giving us an unusually complete picture of the sanctuary's sculptural program. One statue (the over-life-sized male statue found by Fauvel and now in the National Archaeological Museum) has no precise findspot; two others (another over life sized male statue and the half-preserved female statue) were found near the northern pylon in 1968. Dekoulakou's 2001 and 2003 excavations revealed male-female pairs at the western and southern pylons and a female statue found cached in an interior room, suggesting a coherent sculptural program that repeated the male-female pairs across all four entrances to the main sanctuary square.

The four male statues found at Marathon combine Greek and Egyptian style in an eclectic way that reflects the cult's global approach (Figure 69-72). Following Egyptian sculptural traditions, these over-life-sized statues depict a male figure striding forward with the left foot, held up by a back pillar. The shoulders are squared and arms are held close to the sides, positioning the body frontally. Each wears a belted Egyptian shendyt kilt with a codpiece and the royal Egyptian nemes headdress with a small uraeus.

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27 Both I. Dekoulakou and M. Sturgeon have discussed the statues' origins with me and agree that the broad chisel work and heavy bodily proportions suggest manufacture in an Athenian workshop. Indeed, these images have much in common with the Antonine period grave reliefs from Athens that depict women in the guise of Isis. On that point, see Walters, Attic grave reliefs, 75-81.
28 Siskou, "The Male Egyptianizing Statues," 79. No more precise information on the findspot is available.
centered over the nose. In their fists, they clench small rods, a common feature of Egyptian statues. The example from the North Pylon preserves a kalathos that stood on top of the nemes wig, adding one of Sarapis' common attributes to the statue (Figure 70). The other examples preserve a similar cutting at the top of the head, suggesting that all of the male statues would have had a kalathos. The style of carving, white marble material, and generally naturalistic style, however, suggests that these statues are made in a mid second century CE Athenian workshop. The body is thick and heavy, with detailed musculature in the legs and arms and a softly muscled abdomen. The face is a soft, lined oval, with heavily lidded eyes, a broad nose, a round chin, and a strong nasio-labial fold. Apart from minor details like nipple spacing and the techniques of rendering the pupils, the images copy each other closely, producing a consistent rhythm for the viewer across the four pylons.29

The male statues closely follow the format of the images of Osiris-Antinoos from Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli (Figure 73). L. Siskou has suggested that these male statues could represent Antinoos,30 but given the intellectual context outlined below, it is much more likely that these statues depict Osiris. The Marathon and Tivoli Osirises wear the same kilt and headdress, depict the body in a similar Greco-Roman style, and were

29 The statues that stood at the North and South Pylons have fewer details in their rendering of the body than the one that stood at the West Pylon and the one now in the National Archaeological Museum. The latter two examples have incised irises, clear depictions of nipples on the chest, an incised groove on the throat, and more careful modeling of the fists, abdominal muscles, and back pillar. See ibid., 83.
30 Ibid., 83-85.
displayed in similar ways. There are some differences between the two types of Osiris statue. The Tivoli examples have more slender proportions, a more detailed wig, and lift the back foot, implying motion. Further, the arms are cut away from the body, connected only by a tiny strut at the hips. Consequently, the Tivoli examples are more "modern," following contemporary rather than archaizing methods of depicting the body. Still, there are definite artistic connections between the two. Given Herodes' connections with the Antonine dynasty, it seems likely that Herodes used the slightly earlier Tivoli Osiris statues as a model for his own home shrine.

The female statues, however, have no real antecedent. As I argue below, these four statues depict different aspects of Isis. All of the statues are carved in an archaizing style that echoes Egyptian sculpture, but has close ties to an archaistic style used in mainstream Roman period art. Three of the statues are best discussed as a group, and the fourth should be treated on its own. The three similar Isises were found next to their original bases at the south, west, and north pylons. The examples from the South (Figure 74) and West Pylons (Figure 14) are almost completely preserved, with only minor chipping, but the example from the North Pylon is preserved only from the

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31 Though no scholar has proposed identifying these particular statues as portraits of Isis devotees, I acknowledge the possibility that these statues could represent mortal devotees of Isis.
32 There are some stylistic overlaps with the statue of Isis found in the Iseum at Pompeii. Both examples depict the goddess in an archaizing style and hold their arms in a similar manner. Given that the Pompeii Iseum would have been buried by ash during Herodes' lifetime, however, I think we can assume that he would not have seen the Pompeii statue. Still, we cannot discount the idea that the Pompeii statue was not the only archaizing image of the goddess in Italy. For the archaistic style in Roman art, see Fullerton, The Archaistic Style; Hallett, "The Archaic Style."
waist down (Figure 75). These over life-sized statues depict Isis wearing a clingy long-sleeved shift dress over a thin, delicate dress that hangs down to the plinth. This costume has no antecedents in Greek art, suggesting that Herodes is looking to Egyptian iconography, where long-sleeved dresses are more common. The body is elongated but thick, with some indications of the breasts and arms and legs coming through the clothes. The face is broad and classicizing, and the goddesses wear their hair in the goddess’ traditional corkscrew curls, divided into sausage locks that hang down over the shoulders. The statues generally offer an exotic, Egyptianizing image of the goddess that is quite distinctive.

Despite the clear similarities between these three images, each statue holds a different set of attributes that identifies her with one of the several syncretized versions of Isis popular throughout the Mediterranean. One statue holds sheaves of wheat, alluding to Isis-Demeter (Figure 74). Another holds roses to represent Isis-Aphrodite (Figure 14). A third holds small rolls of papyrus, a common feature of Egyptian statuary, to refer to an Egyptian version of Isis (Figure 75). These attributes are very small and best seen from the side, suggesting that only the careful viewer would notice the subtle differences between these images. The prominent Egyptianizing headdresses, a tall polos for Isis-Aphrodite and an Isiac solar disc set in cow horns for Isis-Demeter, telegraphed the differences more clearly. In this way, these three images of Isis exploit their similarities to reinforce the idea that they are the same goddess, but they use
iconographic differences to distinguish between the goddess’ distinct syncretized identities.

The fourth Isis statue, the one found hidden in the room with the colossal lamps, breaks the pattern (Figures 13, 77). Though it was not found in its original display context, similarities in style and size strongly suggest this statue participated in the same sculptural program as the rest of the statues. All four depict versions of the goddess Isis in a stiff, frontal posture and archaizing style. This Isis wears, however, a different costume: a thin, short sleeved tunic under a heavy mantle knotted at the breast that falls in a cascading set of dress folds. This dress follows the Knotenpalla schema, seen at Rhodes and Delos as early as the 3rd century BCE. This version depicts the top portions of costume as a pair of crossed straps, with the majority of the mantle hanging down over the body’s lower half. While her face is rendered in classicizing style, with large, rounded features, this Isis wears her hair in the goddesses’ traditional set of corkscrew curls, which fall over her shoulders in evenly divided sausage curls. Over this hairstyle, Isis wears a cap with a hooded cobra uraeus, continuing the pattern of Egyptianizing headgear seen in the other three Isis statues.

Through dress and posture, the fourth statue differentiates itself from the other Isis statues. The fourth Isis raises her folded-over mantle in her left hand, extending a curtain of drapery towards the viewer to construct a dynamic new plane in the composition. In her right hand she holds a hook close to the right thigh, probably an
adaptation of the crooks seen frequently in New Kingdom and later Egyptian funerary art. Though not easily visible from the front, a careful viewer would have been able to note the exotic symbol and connect it. On the whole, the statue is meant to differ significantly from its counterparts. As I argue below, this difference has a strong theological component, seen elsewhere in Isiac texts and rituals.

In addition to the Osiris-Isis statues that flanked the sanctuary’s pylons and the Egyptianizing architectural sculpture, several Greco-Roman style portraits of the mid-2nd century were found. In the water-feature room in the southern half of the western court (Point A on Figure 54), Dekoulakou uncovered two portrait busts, one depicting Herodes' student Polydeukion. More recently, a famous trio of portrait busts taken by Fauvel has been associated with the complex at Brexiza, either with the baths or with the same room on the south side of the West Court.33 These portraits depict Marcus Aurelius (now in the Louvre), Lucius Verus (now in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford) and Herodes Atticus (now in the Louvre). The busts, which depict their subjects down to the bottom of the chest, represent two types of idealized male identities: generals and intellectuals. The two emperors wear military cloaks and breastplates and follow imperial models for their portrait types. Lucius Verus has his normal brooding expression, large curly hair and beard, and sharp features, while Marcus Aurelius has a neater beard and hairstyle and more placid, classicizing features. Herodes Atticus, on

33 Fejfer, Roman Portraits in Context: Image and Context, 309-12, n. 84, figs. 227-29.
the other hand, follows portrait norms for Greek intellectuals. Clad in chiton and himation, his brow is furrowed and his face is thin and careworn. Polydeukion, though younger and beardless, wears the same costume and expression as his teacher. These portraits have no Isiac iconography, and only their findspot clearly connects them with the cult at all.

Herodes probably included these portrait busts in the sanctuary to highlight his dual identity as a Greek philosopher and Roman political official. First, the busts promote Herodes' identity as an intellectual, connecting him with a long tradition of philosopher portraits in the Greek East. Even the other three portraits connect him with his role as a prominent philosopher. As the former tutor of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, as well as a major patron of the Middle Platonists and perhaps even dean of the philosophical chairs of Athens, Herodes had a prominent role in the Athenian philosophical community that granted him high status among the intellectuals who would have visited this sanctuary. These images, however, also draw attention to another aspect of Herodes' biography: his participation in the central and provincial governments of the Roman Empire. Though most accounts of Herodes focus on his philosophical activities and erratic personal behavior, his political resumé should not be

overlooked. Having served as archon at Athens, senator at Rome, and as prefect of Asia, Herodes spent much of his time involved in the administration of Rome and its provinces. Including military rather than intellectual portraits of the emperors may have alluded to this aspect of his life, highlighting his political power alongside his academic prominence.

The West Court also contained at least one mortal portrait. On the interior of the East Pylon, a male portrait statue was found (Figure 76). The statue is missing its head and forearms, but is otherwise in excellent condition. The portrait is slightly under life sized (1.54m reconstructed) and depicts a man dressed in chiton and fringed himation, with his arms bent at the elbows. On the right thigh, there is a break that suggests a missing strut that would have helped support a now-lost attribute in the right hand. The man is barefoot and leans against a tree trunk. This portrait, like the busts, is carved in contemporary Greco-Roman style, differing significantly from the archaizing Isis and Osiris statues. The fringed himation, commonly worn by Isiac priests, suggests that the subject held some status in the cult, perhaps even serving as a priest.

Looking at these sculptures together as a whole, we can draw some conclusions about the sculptures set up in the Marathon sanctuary. First, most, if not all, of the pieces

35 The fringed cloak is a common part of the female Isiac costume, particularly the Knotenpalla: Eingartner, *Isis und ihre Dienerinnen*, 1-12; Albersmaier, "Griechisch-römische Bildnisse der Isis," 311; Tran tam Tinh, "Isis," 764. The male priestly costume, however, is not as well understood. On this topic, see Swetnam-Burland, "Egyptian" Priests in Roman Italy." It should be noted that other males in Greco-Roman sculpture, including soldiers, wear fringed himations. Their fringed himations are usually worn with other identifiers like clasps or cuirasses, neither of which are present in this case.
I have examined above were made in the mid second century CE and by similar Athenian workshops. This suggests that these elements were planned as a cohesive group and executed by a group of sculptors working together. As such, we should interpret them as a consciously planned sculptural program. Second, many of these pieces either directly imitate Egyptian subjects or are carved in an archaizing style that feels Egyptianizing. This style, used elsewhere in both Greco-Roman sculpture of the Roman period and the Egyptian cults, performs a specific function: they rewrite the ancient past for the contemporary viewer.\footnote{Hallett, "The Archaic Style," 85-86.} First, the archaizing style suggests that contemporary statues actually belong to the archaic period, playing with the viewer's experience of time. In this way, these images project Isiac cult into the distant past, establishing Isis as a part of Greek religious and artistic history. Still, Isis and Osiris have not been completely "hellenized." The gods retain a fundamental Egyptianness that is part of a broader sense of exoticism in the sanctuary. Together with the marshy natural landscape, pyramid, and Egyptian style pylons, the sculptures create an imagined version of Egypt.\footnote{On the creation of imagined world and territorial imagining in the modern world, see Barker, "Imagining the New Order." For this practice in literature, see Vasunia, \textit{The gift of the Nile}; Manolaraki, \textit{Nosce ndi Nilum}.} This sanctuary, then, becomes a way for its audience to envision a foreign landscape safely, creatively reflecting not only on Greco-Roman cultural
attitudes about Egypt but also reflecting on the changing nature of Greek and Roman identities through this period.³⁸

Third, we should note that all the mortal portraits found in the sanctuary depict their subjects according to Greco-Roman norms.³⁹ Instead of depicting themselves as devotees or priests, the dedicators at Marathon preferred more mainstream portrait types. This is consistent with sanctuaries elsewhere in Greece, where many devotees dedicated fairly standard portraits within the sanctuary.⁴⁰ Alongside the Egyptianizing divine statues, these commonplace portraits create two visual registers: a familiar mortal world and an unfamiliar and fantastic divine one. Together, these disparate elements construct a complex and negotiated cultural landscape.

5.2.4 Reading the Sanctuary: Herodes Atticus and the Henotheistic Philosophy of Middle Platonism

Now that we have established Herodes Atticus’ biography, the layout of the sanctuary, and its sculptural program, we should step back and consider why Herodes’ sanctuary takes such an unusual form. The Marathon sanctuary has almost no

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³⁸ Chaniotis, "Ritual dynamics in the eastern Mediterranean," 161-62; Manolaraki, Noscendi Nilum, 10.
³⁹ We should note that the head of the full-length male statue is missing. It is possible that the statue would have depicted the man with a shaved head, as many Isiac priests wore their hair: Swetnam-Burland, "Egyptian’ Priests in Roman Italy," 339. There are partial examples of this type from Delos and Athens, both of which are only preserved as heads: Agora Museum S 333; C. Michalowski, Les portraits hellénistiques et romains, vol. 13, Exploration archéologique de Délos (1932), pl. XXXCIII, no. 3. Since we cannot attach these portrait heads to bodies, it is not clear what type of costume these heads would have worn. In either case, even the priestly costume is not nearly as Othered as the Knotenpalla that female devotees wore in public portraiture.
architectural or sculptural parallels, suggesting that Herodes designed and built this sanctuary to suit a very particular set of needs. Some might argue that the Egyptian sanctuary may not have been a sanctuary at all, but an architectural folly or museum showpiece. Epigraphic evidence and the ritual deposition of objects in later phases strongly contradict this evidence (Figure 68), suggesting that, despite the lack of direct evidence, it is quite possible that Herodes himself was an Isiac devotee. In the broader context of the second century and the Second Sophistic, it would not be unusual for Herodes to be an Isiac devotee alongside his better-known philosophical and political activities. Further, if we look at Herodes' biography, we can see that he was probably interested in the contemporary philosophical and theosophical arguments around Middle Platonism. As I demonstrate below, the Middle Platonists took particular interest in the Egyptian cults, using Isis and Sarapis/Osiris as case studies to explore their theology of an ideal Platonic god. The sanctuary, then, could have held a religious and didactic function, allowing Herodes to teach his pupils about Middle Platonic philosophy while simultaneously providing a space to worship in a philosophically, culturally, and theologically motivated way.

Though we do not have any of Herodes' own philosophical writings, there is strong evidence to suggest he was quite familiar with Middle Platonic thought. While

\[41\] In addition to Polydeukion’s dedicatory inscription, Dekoulakou found a dedication by a xystarch that may date to the 180s CE. The term xystarch is attested in an inscription from Rome (RICIS 501/0203-0206) that refer to a man named Markos Aurelios Asklepiades, also known as Hermodoros, serving in this position in the grand cult of Sarapis. See Dekoulakou, “Le sanctuaire,” 36-37.
most second century CE intellectuals would have been well-versed in the traditional Platonic philosophical works, Middle Platonism was a philosophical movement in its own right. Though Herodes is never explicitly named as a member of the Middle Platonic School, we know from literary evidence that he was in contact with many of the school’s more prominent members. His own teacher, Calvenus Taurus, was head of the Middle Platonic school as early as the 140s CE, and may have been head of something with the auspicious name of "the Academy." In Gellius’ *Noctae Atticae*, Taurus, along with several unnamed members of the school, visit Herodes’ villa at Kephissia (*AN* 18.10), where Gellius himself is recovering from a bad bout of diarrhea. The incident suggests that Herodes kept up his relationship with Calvenus and the other Middle Platonists. In 176 CE (Dio Cassius LXXII, 31), Herodes was charge of selecting the chair of Platonic philosophy for emperor Marcus Aurelius’ new chairs of philosophy in Athens (Phil. VS 566). J. Dillon suggests that he selected a Middle Platonist: the philosopher Atticus. If Dillon’s argument is correct, it suggests that Herodes continued to act as a patron to Middle Platonic philosophers into the last few years of his life.

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42 J. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 248-49. Dillon’s argument is based on quotations from Atticus that appear in Books 11 and 15 of Eusebius’ *Preparatio Evangelica*. It is also worth noting that Dillon believes that the philosopher Atticus may have been related to Herodes Atticus.
Indeed, it is people like Calvenus Taurus and Favorinus that would have been the sanctuary’s main audience.\textsuperscript{43} As part of Herodes’ family estate, it seems highly unlikely that the sanctuary would have been open to the public.\textsuperscript{44} Rather, we can safely assume that only family, friends, and guests would have visited the sanctuary regularly. Among the guests, I argue, would have been his philosophical students. The neighboring bath complex might even have served as a place for philosophical instruction. In any case, given Herodes’ social circle, we can assume that the sanctuary had a highly educated, cosmopolitan audience.

One of the Middle Platonists’ main concerns was the nature of the gods. In the Middle Platonic theology, at least as described by Plutarch, the many gods worshipped around the Mediterranean were actually avatars of a single, perfect divine being that came to the aid of mortals through divine intervention.\textsuperscript{45} As F. Brenk describes it, Plutarch’s idea of the Middle Platonic god is a creative, intellectual, indivisible deity that embodies the good, the destiny of the soul, and the "knowable."\textsuperscript{46} In his treatise on the Egyptian gods, \textit{De Iside et Osiride} (DIO), Plutarch uses an adapted form of the Egyptian mythology of Isis and Osiris to analyze his religious interpretations of the Platonic

\textsuperscript{43} Dio Chrysostom (\textit{Or. 37}, attribution to Dio dubious) proclaims Herodes Atticus one of Favorinus’ students and his heir.
\textsuperscript{44} Less is known about the sanctuary’s later periods. It is possible that by the 4th century CE, the sanctuary’s audience could have shifted to include a broader or narrower spectrum of users.
\textsuperscript{46} Brenk, "Plutarch’s Middle-Platonic God," 47. Brenk’s definition here focuses primarily on the \textit{De E apud Delphos}, which he dates to the end of the 1st century CE.
forms. For Plutarch, the Forms explain the nature of the gods. In Plutarch's formulation, Osiris represents the "divine intellect," and brings all life into being through his relationship with Isis.\textsuperscript{47} G. Karamanolis suggests that Plutarch has set up Osiris as a parallel to Plutarch's demiurge in the \textit{Timaeus}: the true maker of the world. For our purposes, it is most interesting that Plutarch describes the Middle Platonic god elsewhere as the totality of the forms and as a unity (\textit{De sera} 550D), and in the \textit{DIO} he argues that myths and symbols are reflections of the divine truth in the corporeal world (345B-C), that images and the stories that motivate them are a Form of the true divinity.\textsuperscript{48}

The Middle Platonic god thus shares many qualities with the Greek view of Isis expressed in the aretalogies. In section 2.2, I established that Greek devotees were particularly interested in Isis' henotheism. For Middle Platonists or Platonists in general, Isis' henotheistic nature must have seemed like a perfect example of a Middle Platonic god. Just like the Middle Platonic deity, Isis is multiform, absorbing the attributes, powers, and even identities of other gods. Through her relationship with the gods of \textit{logos} Sarapis/Osiris, which stands as a metaphor for the unification of reason and the materiality,\textsuperscript{49} she creates all life and all knowledge. For a Middle Platonist, worshipping the Egyptian gods became a method for gaining sacred knowledge and transcending mortality. Essentially, to know Isis is to become one with her.

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{47} G. Karamanolis, "Plutarch," Stanford University, \url{<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/plutarch/>}. For the original text, see \textit{DIO} 372E-F.
\textsuperscript{49} Karamanolis, "Plutarch,"; Brenk, "Isis is a Greek word."
\end{quote}
Several scholars have highlighted the cultural anxieties that contributed to the DIO. E. Gruen, in his essay on Egypt's role in the classical imagination, argues that Plutarch’s text assumes a universalistic and pluralistic relationship between Greek and Egyptian cultures. In Plutarch’s reckoning, none of the gods belong to Egypt or to Greece, or to any other group in particular, but to the world as a whole.50 F. Brenk, on the other hand, believes that Plutarch’s Platonism extensively rewrites Isis into a Greek god, noting in particular the phrase "Isis is a Greek word," (DIO 351F).51 Brenk’s research considers the entire DIO as an exercise in cultural imagining. Much like the archaizing style used to represent Isis and Osiris at Marathon, Brenk argues that Plutarch’s version of the Egyptian cults searches for a fundamentally Greek origin, continually rewriting mythology and history to fit his cultural and political ideology. Brenk’s and Gruen’s arguments actually have much in common. Both suggest that Plutarch’s version of the Egyptian gods globalizes them, separating Isis and Osiris from their land of origin and relocating them across the Mediterranean. In particular, both recognize the importance Plutarch lays upon a shared Greek and Egyptian history.

Just like Plutarch’s DIO, Herodes’ sanctuary constructs a shared Greek and Egyptian history. I argue that Herodes Atticus’ cosmopolitan lifestyle suggests that we

51 Brenk, "'Isis is a Greek word'." "Ἑλληνικὸν γὰρ ἦ Ἦσις ἑστὶ..."
should consider Egypianness and Otherness as a central theme in the sanctuary’s sculptural landscape. Traditionally, scholars have focused on Herodes as a key example of a “bicultural” elite class in Roman Greece, one that embraced Greek and Roman culture in complex, situational manners. Although we do not have any evidence that Herodes went to Egypt himself, it is quite possible that he did so. Perhaps, like many Greeks, his only encounters with Egyptian culture were literary, through reading Herodotus Book 2, Isocrates’ Busiris, Aeschylus’ Suppliants, Euripides’ Helen, and the many Hellenistic novels that were set partially in Egypt. As P. Vasunia argues in his book on the 5th and 4th centuries BCE Greek literary image of Egypt, classical Greek authors frequently characterized Egypt as an antithesis of Greece, but an antithesis that has the potential to grant tremendous wisdom and self-understanding. Moving into the Roman period, E. Manolaraki has argued that Latin authors often took a similar approach to Egypt, using the Nile as a symbol to examine emergent concepts like the unfamiliar, the relationship between conquest and knowledge, control over the natural world, and the destabilization of relationships between humans, time, and space. Herodes, as an avid intellectual of the 2nd century CE, was probably enmeshed in these prevailing cultural attitudes, seeing Egypt as an exotic land filled with mystical wisdom.

52 See, in particular, Gleason, “Making Space for Bicultural Identity.” Gleason’s article makes explicit an assumption that underlies most scholarship on Herodes and fits in well with more nuanced discussions of the Second Sophistic world more generally, including Whitmarsh, Greek Literature in the Roman Empire.
53 On these texts and their place in the Greek imagination, see Vasunia, The gift of the Nile.
54 Manolaraki, Noscendi Nilum, 5-6.
On a political level, Isis' henotheism unified cultures in a way that would have been politically expedient for Roman officials like Herodes and his circle. If we look back to the aretalogies, we can see how important Isis' relevance to cultures from around the Mediterranean was. In particular, the hymns of the 1st century BCE priest Isidorus from Medinet Madi prioritize this pan-cultural aspect of Isiac henotheism. Isidorus is clear about how Isis acts as a unifier of divinities and cultures across the Mediterranean: she subsumes all goddesses, domestic and foreign, under her aegis. In a portion of Hymn 1, Isidorus illustrates this principle by listing the goddesses through which Isis receives veneration:

> Ἀστάρτην Ἀρτεμίν οὐκ ὕπειροι κληίζουσι Ναναίαν
> καὶ Λυκίων ἔθνη Ἀρτεμίς καλέουσιν Ἀνασαν
> Μητέρα δ' ἐκ κληίζουσι θεοὺς καὶ Ὄρηικες ἄνδρες,
> Ἐλλήνες δ' Ἡρὴν μεγαλὸθρονον ἢ Αφροδίτην
> καὶ Ἡστίαν ἀγαθὴν, καὶ Ἡρήνα, καὶ Δήμητρα,
> Αἰγύπτιοι δὲ Ῥηίους, ὅτι μόνη ἐλευθερία
> καὶ υπὸ τῶν ἐθνῶν ὑπακούει θεαὶ ἄλλαι.

The Syrians call you Astarte, Artemis, Anaia and the Lycian tribes call you Leto, the Sovereign, The Thracians call you also Mother of the gods; the Hellenes call you Hera of the Great Throne and Aphrodite, and good Hestia and Thea and Demeter; But the Egyptians call you Thiouis, because you alone are all other goddesses named by the races of men.

(Isidorus, Hymn I, lines 18-24. Translation from Žabkar, *Hymns to Isis*)

Isis is here a central divine figure from which all other divinities across the world are derived. This inductive model of Isis, which Emmanuel Dousa has called Isis *unica,* seems to have been particularly important to Greek-speaking Isiac communities. As we can see from Isidorus' formulation, however, Isis *unica* is a cultural as well as religious
principle. Isidorus’ Isis, a more pointed version of the Isis that appeared in the Greek aretalogies, is a goddess who brings together disparate cultures through the allegory of her unified divinity.

Isidorus’ pancultural formation, however, deterritorializes Isis. This passage identifies her with goddesses closely connected to particular cultures (Astarte with Syria, Leto with Lycia, Thious with Egypt), making Isis a global goddess rather than an Egyptian one. If we think about the text spatially, Isidorus plays with space, using Isis as a way to unify discrete cultural groups and their disparate territories in a way that is reminiscent of Roman imperialism in general. Isis becomes unmoored from the strictures of spatial and cultural context, a goddess with so many connections that she has no special tie to any place. We are working here in the realm of cognitive dissonance. Isis is pancultural, but her images tend to be decidedly Greco-Roman or occasionally Egyptianizing and archaising. As I will demonstrate below, Herodes’ sanctuary highlights her pancultural nature as part of its exploration of Middle Platonic theological principles.

If we reread Herodes’ sanctuary in light of these texts, we can see that the sanctuary visualizes this global, henotheistic theology of Isis in an innovative format focused on uniting Isis’ and Osiris’ complex cultural affiliations. The sanctuary’s unusual format promoted careful reflection and analysis, asking the viewer to see the

55 On this concept more generally, Versluys, "Isis and Empires," especially 28.
sanctuary and its images as an exploration of Middle Platonic theology and the global nature of Isiac cult. As the viewer entered the main part of the sanctuary from the East Court, the sanctuary’s symmetric organization and open courtyard space invited him to walk around and inspect each of the sculptural pairs carefully. Each pylon, save the eastern one, would look the same: a statue of Osiris, alluding to the emperor Hadrian’s statues at Tivoli, and an syncretized statue of Isis flanking a monumental Egyptianized doorway. The Osiris statues are almost complete replicas of one another. Apart from small technical details that only the most careful viewer would notice, the four appear as near carbon copies of one another, emphasizing the sole nature of the Middle Platonic god. The Isis statues also highlight a second aspect of Middle Platonic theology: the god’s ability to take multiple forms. Though the Isis statues have many stylistic and formal characteristics in common, to the careful viewer it is clear that they represent different versions of the god. The viewer would notice the different attributes each Isis held: wheat for Demeter, roses for Aphrodite, and papyrus rolls for Isis Aegyptiaca. Because of the close physical proximity of each of these statues, their flashes of individuality set them apart. Together, Osiris’ and Isis’ pairing and visual consistency illustrates divine singularity, that through their union the two Egyptian gods represent more fully the nature of the Middle Platonic god.

The Isis from the eastern pylon, however, diverges from the others in order to cast herself as the most important figure in the program. Though we cannot be sure of
its precise location within the sanctuary, its unusual deposition context (taken off of its original base and hidden in a room next to a sphinx) suggest that, at least in the 4th century CE, the sanctuary's devotees found this version of Isis to be especially important. Viewers encountering the image in its original context would have recognized her as Isis from her similarity to other Isis statues in the Knotenpalla costume throughout Greece. We should consider again the role of sameness and difference in these visual representations: three of the Isis statues represent different forms of the same deity, and the fourth disrupts the visual rhythms of sameness established by the rest of the sanctuary's sculpture. Instead of standing still, this statue reaches out to the viewer, creating a sense of motion and intimate interaction. Though she looks particularly unusual to a modern viewer, a 2nd century CE Greek would have been able to recognize the statue as Isis easily. As the most easily recognizable, most different, and most immediate-feeling image, the fourth Isis takes primacy over the rest of the sanctuary's other four statues.

How, then, should we interpret the fourth Isis? Because of her easily recognizable costume and special relationship with the sanctuary's devotees, viewers would have recognized her as Isis immediately. While the other three statues are clearly Egyptianizing, their costumes are not seen elsewhere in Greek art and they lack most of the situlae, sistra or floral garlands seen in other statues of Isis. To an ancient Greek viewer, the three female statues might not have been obviously Isis. On the other hand,
by using some of Isis' familiar symbolism, the fourth Isis had a particular claim to Isis' identity. For Herodes' audience, her primacy suggested that this statue represented the "true" form of the goddess; the true Isis is Isis *unica*, or Isis who unifies all other deities into one. While we do not have any epigraphic evidence that would specifically identify her as *unica*, the viewing context supports such an interpretation. As viewers walked around the sanctuary, they encountered three pairs of Egyptian gods that carefully replicate each other. When she saw the recognizable fourth Isis, the viewer would recognize a specific deity and connect the other three images as Isis. If, as I argued above, this statue stood at the interior of the eastern pylon, the statue would have a special position within the sanctuary. The statue would be one of the first things the viewer saw upon entering the sanctuary, and perhaps one of the last as he exited. Further, the east pylon probably had special significance in the cult. In Egypt, Isis is closely connected to the rising sun and the solar star. Combining the solar symbolism with the similar preference in Greek and Roman architecture for eastern orientation, standing at the eastern pylon would have further indicated the goddess' importance to the viewer. Our fourth Isis then depicts the Middle Platonic version of the goddess, the Isis who appeared in the forms of other divinities as she integrated into new local pantheons across the empire.

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56 Dousa, "Imagining Isis," 168-73.
57 For an account of the solar aspects of Isiac religion, see Barrett, *Egyptianizing Figurines from Delos*, 122-31.
While it might be tempting to view the sanctuary as a sort of diorama, in which viewers can learn abstract philosophical principles from looking at statues, it seems more likely that the statues served a more religious purpose. Plutarch’s *De Iside et Osiride* sets up images as a useful method for accessing the divine realm, suggesting that Middle Platonists found statues and other images particularly important. In *DIO* 372F-373B, Plutarch refers to the material world as an "image of reality" and Isis in particular as a "perceptible image of the whole cosmos." 58 The act of viewing, in Plutarch’s account, has major philosophical and religious implications. By looking at these statues, Herodes’ viewers not only have an opportunity to visualize the complicated aspects of Middle Platonic theology, but to see the gods. In bringing their philosophical, text-derived knowledge to their encounters with the images, the viewers were able to derive sacred knowledge from images, attaining the ever-critical Intellect and Truth central to the Middle Platonic philosophical world. Viewing, in a very real sense, is meant to help the viewer transcend the mortal realm and access the Platonic ideal. 59

As I have argued throughout this dissertation, cultural imagining also informs Herodes’ sanctuary design. Relying on Greek tropes and stereotypes, the sanctuary at Marathon imagines what an ancient Egyptian sanctuary to Isis might have looked like. From an architectural perspective, the sanctuary borrows eclectically from Egyptian

58 εἰκόνα γάρ ἐστιν αὐτός τὸν οὐσίαν ἐν ὕλῃ ἡ γένεσις καὶ μίμησα τοῦ δυναμὸς τὸ γεννόμενον (372F-373A); ὃν ἦ Γήσις εἰκόνα τοῦ θεοῦ κόσμου αἰσθητοῦ 1 ὄντα γεννά (373B). See also Hirsch-Luipold, “Religion and Myth.”
59 Brenk, “Plutarch’s Middle-Platonic God,” 46-47. See also “In the image, reflection and reason of Osiris.”
funerary and temple architecture and sets this pastiche alongside more familiar Greco-Roman models. Combining a pyramid, temple-style pylons, cavetto cornices, and a marshy natural landscape in the West Court with a more familiar courtyard design in the East Court creates quite a bit of cognitive dissonance. The viewer must have felt that he had left Greece and entered the Egypt he had always imagined. The sanctuary’s version of Egypt, however, is rooted firmly in Egypt’s mytho-historical past. By Herodes’ lifetime, the pyramids and temples of pharaonic Egypt had become wonders of the ancient world, popular exotic images in their own right. Herodes designed his sculptures to suit this landscape, using the archaizing style to connect his statues of the Egyptian gods with the distant past as well. The resulting effect manipulated the viewer’s experience of time. By entering the sanctuary’s East Court, the viewer exited the 2nd century CE and entered the realm of myth-history.

Second century concerns, however, still informed the sanctuary’s design. In her book on the Versailles gardens, C. Mukerji argued that Louis XIV’s gardens at Versailles (and 17th century French gardens on the whole) reflected French political concerns, particularly France’s territorial policies across its empire.60 Mukerji’s research suggests that Versailles’ gardens, with their carefully ordered plant-beds and dramatic architectural and sculptural features, articulated Louis XIV’s desire to develop new

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spheres of French control through control of natural landscapes. I argue that Herodes' shrine has similar intentions. As an active member of the Roman imperial administration, Herodes' work brought him in contact with the far-flung peoples that Rome sought to control. While his sanctuary does not have strong overtones or themes of domination or subjugation, the sanctuary clearly reconciles Egyptian material culture with Greek expectations. By bringing these Egyptianized architectural and sculptural elements into a "Nilotic" natural landscape, Herodes' sanctuary also manipulates the viewer's sense of place. Viewers are transported to a version of Egypt focused on Greek ideals of foreignness and exoticism, but this Egypt has a recognizable forecourt, familiar physical landscape, and images that can be easily parsed through the use of Greek philosophy. The viewer here transcends space, ending up in a new Egypt that can be understood using familiar interpretive tools.

The Marathon sanctuary may have had an unusually educated audience and particularly excellent preservation, but its general principles coincide with the evidence surveyed in the previous chapters. The sanctuary’s innovative design suggests that Herodes wanted to achieve a very particular effect on his viewer. The carefully constructed imagery, which visualizes a complex theology of cultural unification, represents the Egyptian cults as a pan-cultural experience, one that brings the foreign into the familiar. Visualizing Isis thus required Herodes to bring the already connected concepts of Greek, Roman, and foreign into the same spaces and images, taking a global
approach to Isis that emphasizes the cult’s globalized perspective. For his viewers, the sanctuary facilitated transcendence. Not only could devotees access the gods directly through contemplation of divine images, but they could also access a version of Egypt that was safe, comprehensible, and palatable.

5.3 Conclusion: Lucius and the Cult Image, Revisited

I began this dissertation with a passage from Book XI of Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*:

"For, by the order of the priest, I climbed a wooden platform which stood in the middle of the temple before the image of the Goddess. I wore a vestment of linen embroidered with a flower pattern; a costly chlamys hung down from my shoulders to my ankles; and from whatever angle you inspected me you saw interesting new animal-shapes among the decorations—here Indian serpents, there Hyperborean griffins which the Antipodes incubate like birds. This latter garment was what the priests commonly call an Olympic Stole. In my right hand I held a lighted torch, and a comely chaplet was wound round my head, from which the palm-tree leaves jetted like rays of the sun.

Thus decorated like the sun and draped like a statue, the curtains being whisked away, I was suddenly revealed to the gaze of the multitude."


After analyzing Herodes’ use of Middle Platonic ideology in his sanctuary at Marathon, we can set this initiatory rite in its proper context. In this passage, Lucius dresses in the guise of the goddess and stands on a wooden platform in front of the cult image. As we have established in chapters 2 and 4, images of Isis normally wore easily recognized costumes that highlighted the goddess’ foreign nature. Lucius’ costume similarly exoticizes the wearer. His garment is multicolored and intricate, featuring floral patterns, intricate animal designs, and luxurious fabrics. In addition to the vestment and chlamys, Lucius carries the goddess’ lighted torch, seen in some sculptural
examples that depict Isis-Demeter,61 and a crown made from palm fronds.62 Much like the Athenian and Attic grave stelae that depict women in the guise of Isis, Lucius in this garment takes on many of the goddess’ Othered characteristics. No longer a Greek man in standard attire, Lucius has literally put down his own cultural and gendered identity to take on a more sacred but more controversial one.

Once dressed in this outfit, Lucius stands on the *tribunal* and is revealed to a *populus* who have come to behold him. Apuleius is careful to highlight the dramatic nature of this encounter by highlighting the role of the curtains: *repente velis reductis, in aspectum populus errabat* (*Met.* 11.24). This passage suggests a group of devotees awaiting the revelation of the divine image, hidden behind a curtain, and instead coming upon Lucius in the guise of the goddess. In this moment, Lucius’ viewers see him occupying both the physical and the symbolic place of the cult image. In donning the goddess’ Othering guise, Lucius has become one with the image and one with the goddess, achieving the ideal moment of transcendence.

Lucius’ moment sets him up as the object of the viewer’s ritually motivated gaze, as a statue. Much like the statues studied here, his viewers would have seen him as

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61 See, for example, a votive relief (Musei Capitoline 4371) that depicts Isis-Demeter standing while holding a torch.
62 There are no known examples of Isis wearing such a headdress. There is a fragmentary example of a 2nd century CE Anubis statue found on Delos that, according to a reconstruction by Perdrizet, depicts the god with a dog’s head on a human body that also carries palm leaves and a caduceus. J. Marcadé is skeptical of this reconstruction, however, and the statue is very partial and abraded. See Marcadé, “À propos des statuettes hellénistiques on aragonite du Musée de Dél,” 123, fig. 22.
caught in between their imagined ideas of Egyptian religion and iconography and his
everyday life as a Greek inhabiting the Roman Empire. Lucius’ moment on the platform
serves as an epiphany, bringing the goddess in mortal form to her devotees in a way that
suggests that these viewers had a common set of values that informed their experiences
(Figure 23).63 His status as a human rewards their enhanced ideas about the power of
images, providing a cult "statue" in the present that embodies the goddess and has the
potential to directly intervene in the viewers’ lives. While Apuleius does not attribute
any action to Lucius in his statue-like state, the devotees still would have recognized his
human agency. Most of all, the encounter suggests how critical imagining was to
viewers’ encounters with these sacred images. Looking at Lucius, just like looking at any
cult image of Isis or Sarapis, required devotees to suspend their disbelief, to allow
humans to be statues, Greeks to be Egyptians, and to allow a mortal man to become a
female goddess.

63 There is precedence for using a human “epiphany” in the guise of the goddess. In Herodotus 1.61.3,
Pisistratus dresses a woman named Phye as Athena and driving her into Athens. According to Herodotus’
account, the Athenians judged Phye to be the real goddess and are fooled, an encounter that Platt describes
as an epiphany. See Platt, Facing the gods, 15-16.
6. Conclusion: Towards a Globalized View of Isis in the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean

6.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter summarizes the dissertation’s main arguments and contributions. My dissertation focused on cult images of Isis and Sarapis from Greek sanctuaries in use between the 3rd century BCE and the 3rd century CE. Throughout, I sought to connect close readings of images and texts with larger cultural phenomena. My main goal was to suggest that considering viewership as a way to reconstruct local experiences offers a way forward for the study of ancient globalization. In order to do so, I began by focusing on cult images in Chapter 2. I then expanded my scope, looking at texts and rituals that informed viewers’ experiences of the cult images in Chapter 3. Chapters 3 and 4 focused on case studies, incorporating votive sculpture and architecture to examine how local communities constructed a world for Isis and Sarapis to inhabit. Chapter 4 focused on sculptural assemblages from Rhodes and Thessaloniki, demonstrating the contrast between a more Egyptian-focused Isis in Rhodes and a reterritorialized Greek version of Isis at Thessaloniki. Chapter 5 focused on the unusually well preserved sanctuary at Marathon. Because we can define a particular audience for that sanctuary, I parsed particularly relevant Middle Platonic and politico-cultural meanings for the sanctuary there.
I concluded my analysis with a return to the episode that began this dissertation: Lucius’ transcendent moment as the stand-in for a cult statue during his initiation at Kenchreai. At the start, this passage prompted several key questions: How do viewers interact with cult images? What does it say about cultural identity and globalization for a Greek man of Italian origin to don the guise of an Egyptian goddess? More importantly, for modern scholars, why is Isis important to our broader discussions of globalization in the ancient world? The rest of this chapter summarizes my preliminary answers to these questions, pointing to my dissertation’s main contributions.

6.2 Cognitive Dissonance, Cultural Imagining, and the Creation of an Isiac Visuality

In this dissertation, I have examined sculptures set up in sanctuaries of the Egyptian gods from a viewer-centered perspective. My main goal was to analyze how these images intersected with contemporaneous questions of cultural identity, cross-cultural interaction, and globalization. Taking an anthropological and art historical approach, I argued that globalization in the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean consisted of a series of interrelated cross-cultural processes that loosened ties between peoples and places, creating disjointed identities that challenged existing ideas about communities and political boundaries.¹ Globalization, as commonly used in the study of the ancient world, asks us to connect patterns observable on the local level with broader

¹ These definitions are explored in more depth in section 1.4.2.
shifts only observable at the pan-Mediterranean or even global level. Building these connections requires us to explain how a global phenomenon can take several different forms at a local level. The question becomes, then, how can we access the smallest scale of analysis, that foundation that is key to the study of broader shifts? While previous scholars have focused on archaeological methods, I argue that art historical approaches focused on viewership provide a better framework for understanding how local communities made sense of globally available culture. By examining what kinds of art a community dedicated, what texts and rituals may have informed those dedications, and how the statues were used within a sanctuary’s space, we can get a better sense of what globalization looked like on a small scale. More importantly, incorporating a diverse body of evidence makes connecting the local and the global easier. Instead of treating these as separate features of Greek religious life in the Hellenistic and Roman period, I have brought the local and global into dialogue with one another, examining how both informed viewers’ interactions with objects in their daily lives.

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2 See, for example, the approaches used in Pitts, "Globalizing the local in Roman Britain: an anthropological approach to social change;"; Hodos, Material culture and social identities in the ancient world; Versluys, "Globalisation and the Roman World: Perspectives and Opportunities.” Though each author offers his or her own interpretation, nearly all suggest that the way forward for globalization studies is to find a method of connecting local activities to cross-regional cultural shifts that preserves local agency while acknowledging the role that imperial power had in these shifts.

3 See, for example, the essays in Hodos, Material culture and social identities in the ancient world. These essays focus on material culture as the best way to establish local identities. In this model, defining a community identity is the key component for understanding a community’s relationship to globally available culture. Though the volume’s introduction cites globalization and glocalization as key interpretive factors for the project, the relationship between local identity and globalization is not clear. See also Pitts, "The emperor's new clothes.” Pitts offers a strong critique of identity studies and its shortcomings.
In order to analyze how the cult loosened the viewer’s connections with place, I highlighted three conceptual strategies that are key to the development of a globalized Isiac cult: cognitive dissonance, cultural imagining, and manipulating time and space. These three aspects of ancient globalization intersect with one another, producing complex images that are still legible to a wide range of viewers across the ancient Mediterranean.

At its core, the Greek practice of worshipping Egyptian gods requires cognitive dissonance. Though ancient Greeks often overlooked foreign influence on their most characteristic cultural institutions, the sculpture used for the Egyptian cults combined the familiar naturalistic styles of Greco-Roman sculpture with foreign iconography and subjects. As I argued in Chapters 2 and 4, these internationally focused images traded in cognitive dissonance, requiring the viewer to consider Isis and Sarapis as simultaneously Greek and Egyptian gods. Despite the long history of trade and cultural interaction between Egypt and Greece, Greek literary traditions had long treated Egyptians as fundamentally foreign and used Egyptians as a literary paradigm for

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strangeness (with some nuance). Indeed, in many cases, the two identities were often treated as mutually exclusive. On the level of the individual sculpture, covered in Chapter 2, the images harmoniously blended these foreign and Greek elements, creating a visual narrative that argues for a connection between the two. At the assemblage level, covered in Chapter 4, groups of Greco-Roman, Egyptian, and Egyptianizing statues not only imply a degree of cultural harmony, but also a long shared history between the two cultures. Many of the Egyptian imports would have been antiques, constructing a mythical history that places the Egyptian cults firmly in Greece. This harmony, then, seems to predate the sanctuaries themselves, providing the cults with validation and a sense of authenticity in a manner that makes sense to Greek devotees.

As demonstrated in Chapter 3, cognitive dissonance also appeared frequently in Isiac texts. In that chapter, I examined the cult's belief system, highlighting three key aspects of Isiac theology that affected how devotees interacted with sculpture: Isis’ henotheistic nature, her tendency towards epiphany, and her ability to transgress political and material boundaries. Many of the aretalogical texts dedicated in Greek sanctuaries dealt with Isis' cultural cognitive dissonance by promoting her henotheistic

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6 It is important to note that the Othering observed in Greek literature has extensive nuance. E. Gruen, for example, argues that authors like Herodotus, Plutarch, and Diodorus Siculus often combine extensive focus on the strangeness and Otherness of Egyptians with a certain sense of respect. See Gruen, "Egypt in the Classical Imagination."
nature. While Isis had henotheistic tendencies long before she arrived in Greece, Greek texts highlight her ability to unify cultures through her absorption of local goddesses. By subsuming Astarte and Leto and Demeter, Isis reconciles some of the cognitive dissonance inherent in her images. This imagining unified Isis with her disparate new homes, creating a version of the goddess that superseded the obvious difficulties of a specifically Egyptian goddess. Alongside her tendency to appear directly to devotees and intervene in their daily lives, Isis' henotheism becomes a way to rationalize her participation not only in Greek pantheons, but also in local pantheons around the Mediterranean.

In order to effect this cultural imagining, devotees often manipulated experiences of time and space. In most cases, devotees attempted to make Egypt seem closer by creating an Egyptianizing landscape within the sanctuary. At Rhodes and Thessaloniki, the sanctuaries discussed in Chapter 4, devotees included imported statuettes in the sanctuary's sculptural programs. These small, distinct sculptures brought a little of Egypt into the sanctuary, building material narratives that collapsed the cultural and spatial distance between Egypt and Greece in the viewer's mind. Even the Greek-produced cult statues covered in Chapter 2 integrated imagined versions of Egyptian symbols, mapping Egyptianness onto the otherwise Greco-Roman bodies of Isiac

7 On Isis' henotheism in Egypt, see (with accompanying bibliography): Heyob, The Cult of Isis, 51, 48-49; Bommas, "The Iseum Campanese," 220, n. 36.
The founder narratives covered in Chapter 3 work similarly. By highlighting local cults' Egyptian founders, devotee communities could validate themselves and their foreign gods as historic participants in local religious landscapes. Instead of newcomers, Isis and Sarapis are rewritten as part of Greece's mytho-historic past.

Consequently, we should view the sculptural landscapes in the Egyptian sanctuaries of Hellenistic and Roman Greece as the product of several interrelated globalizing phenomena. We should recognize, however, that these images respond to a particular audience, one defined in Chapter 3. Isis' particular theology, which admittedly has much in common with Greek mystery cults and the worship of Mithras and Cybele, emphasized the ability to transgress mortal and divine boundaries, her ability to intervene in daily affairs, and her henotheistic nature. This suggests that Isiac devotees had enhanced expectations of their statues. While recent work by V. Platt has argued that many Greeks believed statues could perform miraculous interventions, nearly all of her case studies involve encountering past miraculous deeds. This is consistent with the generally retrospective attitudes of Greek religion: miraculous things happened in the past, and it is for the people of the present to connect these experiences with the images they see before them. For the Isiac viewer, the miracles continue into the present. The inscriptions at Delos, Opous, Maroneia, and the vast majority of the

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9 Platt, Facing the gods., especially 215-229
10 IG XI.4 1299
Greek aretalogies\textsuperscript{13} all mark instances in which the Egyptian gods directly and miraculously appeared to living people or their near ancestors. Isis devotees needed their images more acutely because they expected their gods to reward them immediately. In a very real sense, to their users, these statues were still living. Isis' intervention in the contemporary world may have been one of the reasons Greek devotees found her such an appealing option in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds.

6.3 Isis and the Chronology of the Eastern Mediterranean

My research also suggests that a major component of our discourse about the Eastern Mediterranean during the 3rd century BCE-4th century CE should be reconsidered. Throughout my dissertation, I have treated most of the material in a way that may seem synchronic. Unlike most studies of ancient sculpture, I have not attempted to trace a significant stylistic shift over time. In fact, as I argued in Chapter 2, I can find little evidence for such shifts in the cult's sculptural landscapes. Sculptures of Sarapis continue to demonstrate considerable variety in attributes and arm postures, but continue to follow the standard format of standing or seated on a throne. For Isis, most statues represent the goddess in the Knotenpalla or generalized diplax costume, with a

\textsuperscript{11} RICIS 113/0536
\textsuperscript{12} RICIS 114/0202
\textsuperscript{13} Specific words of thanksgiving to the gods in exchange for particular actions appear at the beginning of nearly all aretalogical texts. For example, the aretalogy from Maroneia was dedicated to thank the goddess for healing the author's eyes (Fowden, The Egyptian Hermes, 48.) On this formulation, see Grandjean, Une nouvelle arétalogie, 6-7.
few examples of Isis Pelagia or *Isis lactans* types. There is very little evidence to suggest strong regional distributions of particular types. All of these types are well known throughout the Mediterranean, and all types are used from the 3rd century BCE-3rd century CE. While there may be changes in sculptural techniques that reflect broader changes in contemporaneous Greek sculpture, I argue that Isiac sculpture in Greece does not demonstrate much stylistic change during the period under study. Essentially, these images suggest that there is a remarkable consistency in how statues of Isis were produced over a nearly 500-year period.

Recently, scholars of more mainstream art in the eastern Mediterranean have come to a similar conclusion—that artistic production does not change significantly between the late Classical and later Roman periods. Historically, scholarship studying this region divides this span into two distinct time periods: the Hellenistic period (post-Alexander the Great to Actium) and the Roman period (Actium to the Fall of Rome, another controversial chronological boundary). The difficulty, however, is that there is not much material evidence to support such a distinctive boundary. Unlike the birth of naturalism, a significant shift in artistic style, the differences between "Hellenistic" and

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"Roman" art and architecture are minor. In a recent essay for the Blackwell *Companion to Roman Art*, R.R.R. Smith systematically examines a wide variety of art and architecture produced in Asia Minor from the late 4th century BCE into the 3rd century CE. For sculpture in particular, he finds no real evidence that local communities would have interpreted most images as "Roman." With the exception of imperial portraits, very few of the artistic forms commonly attributed to Roman influence, such as basilicae, sarcophagai, gladiatorial games, and ideal sculpture, would not have "read" as Roman to eastern Mediterranean audiences. For example, the new basilicae built during the 2nd century CE in places like Aphrodisias and Ephesos tend to follow the form of the stoa, often having an open wall or unusual length that promotes intellectual slippage between the two forms. Further, these buildings often preserve inscriptions that use democratic language, referring to the institutions of the *demos* and the *boule* and their interventions in the civic landscape. In this way, even a seemingly novel Roman form like the basilica borrows from Greek architecture and political history to become part of the Greek past. Thus, dividing the east into Hellenistic and Roman periods belies the actual experience of the people who lived in this time. In Smith’s eyes, these periods are mostly modern scholarly fictions.

16 Ibid., 481-84.
Similarly, in the concluding chapter of his recent book on the Tabulae Illiaceae, M. Squire argues that the idea of "Greek" and "Roman" material culture is a modern construct. Squire’s book studies a set of small marble tablets with images from Homer, the deeds of Herakles, and Greco-Roman history on one side and small portions of texts on the other. Though the objects portray mostly Greek narratives and were probably carved by Greek workshops, Squire argues that they were made for Roman consumption and thus blur our defining lines. Squire’s analysis suggests that previous work on the tablets betrays a common failure in classical scholarship on the whole: hyper-specialization. Because most contemporary scholars increasingly focus on developing specialties rather than gaining a broad familiarity with the wide world of Greek and Roman art, we tend to ignore the rich interplay between text, image, and culture in multivalent objects like the Tabulae Illiaceae. Of particular relevance for the study of Isiac material culture is the problem of dividing between cultures. Squire argues that we, as modern scholars, tend to divide the Greek from the Roman too easily, and fail to recognize the key process of transmission: most of what is Greek has come to us through the Romans.\(^1\) We cannot say anything about the Greeks until we reckon with the Roman interpolations into Greek material culture, and we cannot say much about Roman material culture until we understand how Romans valued Greek culture.\(^2\)


\(^{2}\) Ibid., 373. Squire is very conscious of the debates surrounding copying in Roman sculpture.
Much like the Tabulae Iliaca should be interpreted as both "Greek" and "Roman" objects, the statues of Isis and Sarapis studied here represent Egyptian culture for consumption by Greek audiences enmeshed in Roman political cultural dynamics. While there are no obvious markers of Roman participation in the images I have studied, and indeed the devotees may not have "read" them as Roman, the Greek statues of Isis trade on an increase in connectivity that must be connected to Rome's increasing participation in eastern Mediterranean affairs. Many of the sanctuaries known are located in Roman colonies or in towns where there was a significant Italian population.¹⁹

More importantly, however, questioning the heuristic usefulness of categories like Greek and Roman allows us to reconsider what role Egyptian culture plays in the Isiac cult. As I have argued throughout this dissertation, most of the material culture in Isiac sanctuaries has little relationship with Egyptian precedents. If Greek sculptures of Isis and Sarapis are imagining Egypt, I argue that, like the Tabulae Iliaca, these statues offer a received version of Egypt, one that has a long and complex history of interaction with both Greece and Italy. As Squire has argued, we must be willing to allow our heuristic boundaries to bend and blur in order to understand just how complex these cultural relationships were for ancient Mediterraneans.

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¹⁹ See Martavou, "Les cultes isiaques." The sanctuaries at Gortyna, Dion, Corinth, and Messene might be considered under a similar vein. This does not mean that the cult should be connected with Italians, however, only that these large wealthy cities had Italians involved in their sanctuaries.
In sum, this dissertation demonstrates that our current chronological and cultural divisions used to describe the ancient eastern Mediterranean need to be reconsidered. If not much changes during the so-called Hellenistic and Roman periods, perhaps reuniting our Hellenistic and Roman evidence will offer a more nuanced and locally focused art history. If the divisions between Greek and Roman have allowed us to overlook the long process of ancient reception, perhaps reuniting these cultures will allow us to write better biographies of artistic objects, narratives that allow us to consider culture as a more nuanced, fluid construct. Looking at Isis, with her complicated outsider identity, can offer us a way forward.
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Figure 1 Plan depicting the spread of Isiac material, including inscriptions, from around the Mediterranean. Red dots indicate objects dating from the 4th-2nd centuries BCE. Yellow dots indicate material dating from the 1st century BCE-1st century CE. Green dots indicate objects from the 2nd-4th century CE. Bricault, *Atlas de la diffusion*, fig. 1.
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