



# Deities from Egypt on Coins of Southern Levant

Laurent Bricault

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## Upon the Appearance of the First Issue of *Israel Numismatic Research*

The Israel Numismatic Society (INS) is happy to announce the publication of its new peer-reviewed journal, *Israel Numismatic Research*.

Research of the ancient, medieval and modern coinage of this region has become increasingly relevant to multi-disciplinary studies in fields such as archaeology, history and iconography.

In inaugurating *Israel Numismatic Research* the INS national board wishes to stress the importance of having a high level numismatic journal which appears regularly, at the end of each calendar year. The ability to publish a true annual reflects the advances in the field of numismatics in Israel over the past decade. The title of the journal signals the Society's wish to encourage comprehensive and innovative research in the field.

The focus of *Israel Numismatic Research* will be on coinages circulating in the southern Levant, from antiquity through to the modern era. Articles on medals, tokens, metrology, sealings and minor arts related to numismatics will also be considered for inclusion, as will book reviews.

The Israel Numismatic Society is indebted to the Founders of *Israel Numismatic Research* without whose generosity the publication of the journal would not have been possible: David Hendin, Gil and Lisa Chaya, Stephen N. Gerson, Aba Neeman, Jonathan Rosen, Harlan J. Berk, Jay Galst, Gabriel Brener, Herbert L. Kreindler, Paul-Francis Jacquier and Ziv Zur.

It is our intention that *Israel Numismatic Research* will offer an academic forum for both Israeli and foreign numismatists. Contributions of original research should be sent to: *Israel Numismatic Research*, c/o Haim Gitler, The Israel Museum, P.O. Box 71117, Jerusalem 91710 ISRAEL, or to the Editor ([dtariel@ins.org.il](mailto:dtariel@ins.org.il)).

*Guidelines for Contributors* appear on page 177, followed by *Abbreviations* used in this volume.

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# Deities from Egypt on Coins of the Southern Levant<sup>1</sup>

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## *Abstract*

This paper presents the numismatic evidence on the subject of the Isiac diffusion in the southern Levant during the Greco-Roman period. The phenomenon does not allow for generalization varying in different time periods, geographical areas, and even from one city to another. In several cases (Aelia Capitolina, Ascalon, Caesarea, 'Akko-Ptolemais), the Isiac types on local coinage suggests the existence of a public cult.

## INTRODUCTION

Numismatics is a source of primary importance for studying the dissemination of the Isis cults outside Egypt during the Greco-Roman period. These cults, centered around Isis and associated divinities like Serapis, Osiris, Harpocrates, Apis and Anubis, enjoyed a lasting success.<sup>2</sup>

The abundant source material consisting of tens of thousands of coins permitted the creation of a database of 3,000 files embracing the Greco-Roman Mediterranean world, from the borders of the Rhine, the Iberian Peninsula, the Mauritanian shore to the Danube, the Euphrates and the Arabian desert.<sup>3</sup> As proof of the vitality of the Isis cults in antiquity, its numismatic expressions can be traced as far as the northern and eastern shores of the Black Sea and even further eastward, in the Kushan empire (Bricault 1998:249–254). At the heart of this vast expanse, the southern Levant occupied a singular position, being subject to Phoenician, Egyptian, Hellenistic and Roman influences.

Of the approximately 30 cities that struck coins during the Roman period in the provinces of Judea, Samaria and the Galilee — to which we add for sake of coherence, 'Akko-Ptolemais — only nine used Isis or Egyptian types: six very infrequently (Ascalon, Diospolis, Eleutheropolis, Neapolis, Raphia and Tiberias), and three almost continuously from the middle of the second to the middle of the third century CE (the colonies of Caesarea Maritima, Aelia Capitolina and 'Akko-Ptolemais).

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1 Many thanks to Robert Kool who translated this paper from French, and to Michel Amandry who provided some useful references.

2 For a definition see Malaise 2005, who refers to our study, Bricault 2000a:91.

3 This database in CD-ROM format will accompany the publication of Bricault *forthcoming*.

	SAMARIA			JUDAEA				GALILEE	PHOENICIA
	Caesarea	Diospolis	Neapolis	Aelia Capitolina	Ascalon	Eleuth.	Raphia	Tiberias	'Akko-Ptolemais
Hadrian	Sb								
Antoninus Pius	Sb			Sb, Sstg	Hstg				
Marcus Aurelius	Sb		Sb	Sb, Ssit	Hstg				Sb
Faustina Minor			Isis-Tyche stg						
Marcus Aurelius & Lucius Verus				Sb					
Lucius Verus	Sb			Sb, Ssit					
Marcus Aurelius & Commodus				Sb					
Commodus	Sb			Sb, Sstg				Sb	Sb, Ssit
Septimius Severus	Sb			Sb					Sb
Julia Domna		Sb							
Caracalla	Sb	Sb (?)	Sb, Sstg	Sb	Hb	Sb			
Geta			Sb						
Macrinus	Sb			Sb	Hstg				Sb
Diadumenian	Sb		Sb	Sb, Sstg					
Elagabalus	Sb	Sb	Sb	Sb	Hstg	Sb			Sb
Aquila Severa				Sb					
Severus Alexander	Sb		Sb	Sb	Hb, Hstg				
Julia Maesa	Sb								Ssit, Istg
Maximinus					Hb, Hstg				Sstg
Gordian III							Hb		
Philip Sr			Sstg						
Philip Jr			Sstg						I + Hstg
Trajan Decius	Sstg			Ssit					
Herennia Etruscilla	Sstg			Ssit					
Herennius Etruscus				Sb, Sstg					
Hostilian	Sb, Sstg			Sstg					
Herennius Etruscus & Hostilian				Sstg					
Trebonianus Gallus	Sb								
Volusian	Sstg		Sstg						
Salonina									Sb

Abbreviations for the table: b = bust; H = Harpocrates; I = Isis; S = Sarapis; sit = enthroned; stg = standing

*Caesarea and Aelia Capitolina*: Serapis is the only Egyptian divinity that appears on the coins of Caesarea and Aelia Capitolina. These are the most numerous types after those of Tyche. At Caesarea, the bust of this bearded god, with copious hair, draped and wearing a *calathos*, appeared extensively until 249 CE

(Pl. 17:1).<sup>4</sup> Afterwards Serapis is depicted standing and holding a long scepter on various coins of Trajan Decius and his family (Pl. 17:2).<sup>5</sup> At Aelia Capitolina, the bust of Serapis is depicted (Pl. 17:3),<sup>6</sup> as is the god enthroned with Cerberus at his

4 Citations for the bust of Serapis type (Caesarea):

Emperor	<i>BMC Pal.</i>	<i>CNP2</i>	Rosenberger 1975	<i>SNG ANS 6</i>
Hadrian	58–63	28	29	767
Antoninus Pius		36	30	
Marcus Aurelius Caesar	79–82	38	32	776
Marcus Aurelius Augustus	83–91	40	33	777–779
Lucius Verus	98	52–53	40–41	782
Commodus	100–107	59	45	783–785
Septimus Severus		64		
Caracalla		68–70	54–56	794
Macrinus		76	64	
Diadumenian	110–115	78	67	801
Elagabalus	116–117	82–84	72–75	
Severus Alexander		89	Suppl. 5	
Julia Maesa			Suppl. 4	
Hostilian		194		
Trebonius Gallus		205		

5 Citations for the standing Serapis type (Caesarea):

Emperor	<i>BMC Pal.</i>	<i>CNP2</i>	Rosenberger 1975	<i>SNG ANS 6</i>
Trajan Decius		131	117	
Herennia Etruscilla	171	166	137	
Hostilian	189–190	195–196	159–160	849
Volusian	225	221–222	183	

6 Citations for the bust of Serapis type (Aelia Capitolina):

Emperor	<i>BMC Pal</i>	<i>CNP1</i>	Rosenberger 1972	Meshorer 1989	<i>SNG ANS 6</i>	Others
Antoninus Pius Caesar	13–14	18		13–13a	593	
Antoninus Pius Augustus	15–16	19		28		
Marcus Aurelius Caesar		48				
Marcus Aurelius Augustus		47				
Marcus Aurelius & Lucius Verus	51–53	58–60	35			
Lucius Verus		69				
Marcus Aurelius & Commodus	55–56	63		57	607	
Commodus		79–80	43	71	613	
Septimus Severus			44			2 (Barag 1990–1991)
Caracalla		91				55 ( <i>SNG</i> Milan; corrected legend)
Macrinus		101	56	104		
Diadumenian		105	suppl. 6	107	618	
Elagabalus		130–133	69–71	134–136		1985 ( <i>SNG</i> Lewis)
Aquila Severa			suppl. 7	147		
Severus Alexander		159	85	151		
Herennius Etruscus	106	183		167		

side (Pl. 18:4)<sup>7</sup> or standing (Pl. 18:5),<sup>8</sup> in accordance with the deity’s most popular iconographic types on contemporary coinage.

None of the motifs are unique or related only to a particular mint, except for the enthroned Serapis, upholding a bust of the emperor in its right hand as a sign of protection (cf. Veyne 1958–1959:61–78), which Trajan Decius and his family struck on the coins of Aelia Capitolina. These were the last in a series of coins showing Isiatic types struck by that colony.<sup>9</sup>

Aelia Capitolina, founded by Hadrian and placed under the patronage of Jupiter, became a Roman colony in 135 or 136 (Millar 1990:28–30; Isaac 1998; Belayche 1999). Its minters included Serapis among its types beginning in the first year of the reign of Antoninus Pius (138; Pls. 18:6–7).<sup>10</sup> At Caesarea

7 Citations for the enthroned deity type (Aelia Capitolina):

Emperor	<i>BMC Pal.</i>	<i>CNP 1</i>	Rosenberger 1972	Meshorer 1989	<i>SNG ANS 6</i>
Marcus Aurelius Augustus	36	50	28	45	
Lucius Verus	59	70			608
Trajan Decius		169–170	89	154	627
Herennia Etruscilla		178		161	
Septimus Severus					

8 Citations for the standing Serapis type (Aelia Capitolina):

Emperor	<i>BMC Pal</i>	<i>CNP 1</i>	Rosenberger 1972	Meshorer 1989	<i>SNG ANS 6</i>	Others
Antoninus Pius		28				
Commodus		81	45	73		
Diadumenian		106		108		Barag 1990–1991: Pl. 9:6
Elagabalus						Barag 1990–1991: Pl. 9:7
Herennius Etruscus		184	95		631	
Herennius Etruscus & Hostilian	107	190	97			
Hostilian		198				

For Meshorer (1989:36), the emission struck under Commodus was dated to the end of his reign and was inspired by Roman coins of the same type struck in 191 and 192 (*RIC* 3:397, No. 261; 434–435, Nos. 601, 605 and 607, and Bricault 2005a:96–98). Meshorer’s hypothesis of a Roman model is problematic since the same type was already used in the mint of Aelia under Antoninus Pius.

- 9 The deity can be seen portrayed enthroned on an issue under Herennia Etruscilla (*CNP* 1:114–115, No. 178 and pl. XV; Meshorer 1989:112, No. 161) or standing on coins of Herennius Etruscus (*SNG ANS 6*: Pl. 19, No. 631; *CNP* 1:116–117, No. 184 and pl. XV; Rosenberger 1972:16, No. 95), of Herennius Etruscus and Hostilian (*BMC Pal.*:101, No. 107; *CNP* 1:116–117, No. 190 and pl. XVI; Rosenberger 1972:16, No. 97) and Hostilian (*CNP* 1:118–119, No. 198 and pl. XVI).
- 10 The legend IMP C T AEL ANT seems to indicate this early date, based upon an identical inscription on coins for Antoninus Pius minted at Rome in 138 only, and similar bald and bearded head type (Meshorer 1989:24).

Maritima, which had become a Roman colony under Vespasian (Millar 1990:26–28; Isaac 1998:96–98). Serapis first appeared in coins minted under Hadrian, after the Roman presence in the province, provoked by revolt, was strengthened.

The strong identification between Jupiter and Serapis dating from the ascendancy of the Flavian dynasty resulted in the appearance of Serapis as a Roman divinity, protector of the emperor and, by extension, of the empire.<sup>11</sup> It is thus in year 8 of Vespasian's reign (75/6 CE) that the mint of Alexandria introduced a new and durable iconographic type, Serapis standing with Cerberus at his side.<sup>12</sup> An essential detail is the legend ΖΕΥΣ ΣΑΡΑΠΙΣ accompanying the reverse type. The inscription also appears on contemporary issues (years 8 and 9) showing Serapis enthroned (*RPC* 2:326, Nos. 2450 and 2457, respectively). By associating this divinity with the Olympian chief deity, Vespasian added Serapis to the Roman pantheon and inaugurated what can be called the second Isiatic diffusion (Bricault 2004). Possibly for this reason, Serapis, the god from Memphis, made its appearance on Roman provincial coinage in Judea and Samaria.

With regard to other evidence for the cult of the Isiatic family in the two colonies of Aelia Capitolina and Caesarea, traces are small but do exist. In contrast to his consort Isis, who is virtually absent in Aelia Capitolina, it seems that Serapis was in one way or another assimilated to Asklepios, worshipped at a healing shrine of Bethesda.<sup>13</sup> At Caesarea, where documentation for the cult has accumulated in the last few years (Gersht 1996:305–317; Stieglitz 1996:593–594; Bricault 2001:75; Belayche 2006:458–463), the Isiatic divinities (Serapis as well as Isis and Harpocrates) appear on various media (inscriptions, reliefs, gems, coinage) attesting to their acceptance both in the colony's public and private spheres. It is quite possible that the shrine of the Caesarean hippodrome was consecrated (Belayche 2006:459) to the Kore-Isis-Serapis triad in contrast to the

11 Bricault *forthcoming*. On the use of Serapis by Vespasian and Titus in the Jewish War, see Gagé 1959:73–100; 1968:127–135.

12 *RPC* 2: pl. 104, No. 2449 (with date and legend) and 2451 (only with date). The type with date and the legend ΖΕΥΣ ΣΑΡΑΠΙΣ is used once more in year 9 of Vespasian rule (*RPC* 2:pl. 105, No. 2458).

13 Belayche 1999:335–344; and 2006:463–468. For several documents demonstrating the presence of an Isiatic cult in the colony during the second and third centuries CE, see Bricault 2001:75. An exemplary case is the inscription *Iovi Optimo Maximo Sarapidi* dedicated by a unit of the *legio III Cyrenaica* to the health and victory of Trajan and the Roman people (116/7 CE; Bricault 2005b:403/0801). Was it possibly located — as Meshorer 1989:25–26 argued — in a temple constructed on the ruins of the Jewish Temple? Or was it in a simple, possibly temporary shrine of the unit — owing to the mobile character of these units as proposed by Belayche 2006:451? The second hypothesis seems more probable. On the presence of the *legio III Cyrenaica* at Bostra and Arabia, see P.-L. Gatier 2000:341–349.



Tyche-Dionysus-Demeter triad usually appearing on other civic coinage (*CNP* 2:53–56 and *BMC Pal.*:30, Nos.142–143 [Philip Sr]).

As Belayche (2006:449) wrote “the striking of numerous coin reverses with the Serapis type, attests to the entry of civic elites who preserved its representation in the cultural *koine* of the Eastern part of the Empire.” She justifiably extended this remark to other cities in Judea-Palestine, specifying that “the image of the deity on these objects [is not] a sufficient indication to deduct *ipso facto* a cultural installation”. For a similar view see Hornbostel 1973:323.

*Diospolis-Lod and Eleutheropolis*: Regarding Diospolis-Lod, however, it is difficult to imagine that the depiction of Serapis on several coins (Pl. 18:8)<sup>14</sup> can justify the existence of a public cult of the god in this Palestinian city — the seat of the Patriarch (*nasi*) during the second and third centuries (Levine 1979; Belayche 2001:39–42). It should be noted that the city was founded for the second time by Septimius Severus possibly in 199 CE, and that its mint only struck coins for a decade, between 209/10 and 218/19 CE. Without doubt the presence of Serapis among the other types used (Tyche, Zeus Heliopolitanus, Demeter, Dionysus) must be related in this case directly to the privileged relations existing between the Severans and the god, and the dominant position he had acquired in the Roman pantheon at the end of the second and beginning of the third centuries CE. The same observation can be made for Eleutheropolis, which struck coins at approximately the same time, including at least three issues with Serapis *en buste* types (Pl. 18:9).<sup>15</sup>

*Tiberias*: In the Galilee, Tiberias (Avi-Yonah 1950) used the bust of Serapis for one of its coin types under Commodus (Pl. 18:10; Kindler 1961:61, No. 15). For Kindler (1961:40) the presence of Serapis at the end of the second century CE in the coinage of Tiberias, a resort with thermal springs claimed to have become a colony by the reign of Elagabalus,<sup>16</sup> was possibly related to his identification as healer-god. But there is no confirmation that the appearance of Serapis during this period in the three above-mentioned towns indicates that that god had a cult in those places.

<sup>14</sup> The types appear only during the Severan period. A bust of Serapis appears on the reverse of coins of Julia Domna (*BMC Pal.*:43, Nos. 1–2; Rosenberger 1975:5, No. 2), Caracalla (*BMC Pal.*:43, No. 5; 208/9 CE), and Elagabalus (Rosenberger 1975:5, No. 13; Meshorer 1985:55, No. 155; 218/9 CE).

<sup>15</sup> A bust of Serapis appears on the reverses of at least two emissions of Caracalla, the first in year 3 of the colony, 201/2 CE, (Spijkerman 1972:19, No. 7.4; Rosenberger 1975:40, No. 17), the second in year 7 or 205/6 CE (Spijkerman 1972:17, No. 5; Rosenberger 1975:5, No. 16; Meshorer 1985:116, No. 182) and one emission of Elagabalus (*BMC Pal.*:142, No. 6).

<sup>16</sup> The legend on the coin of Elagabalus read as *col(onia)* (Meshorer 1988:96), may now be corrected (Alla Kushnir-Stein, pers. comm).

*'Akko-Ptolemais*: The situation seems to have been different in the cases of 'Akko-Ptolemais, Ascalon and Raphia, and even Neapolis. The Roman-period coinage issued by 'Akko-Ptolemais further developed and enriched its typological repertoire from the Seleucid period. This city, established as a colony at the start of Nero's reign (Applebaum 1989), issued Isiatic types virtually uninterrupted from Marcus Aurelius until Salonina. The motifs are more varied than in any other city in the East and show a number of innovations.

Besides the traditional bust of Serapis — by far the most frequent (Pl. 18:11)<sup>17</sup> — and possibly Serapis enthroned,<sup>18</sup> more complex scenes are depicted here. One such scene has Serapis dressed in an *himation* and wearing a *calathos*, holding a scepter in his left hand, and raising his right hand to crown the emperor (Caracalla and later Alexander Severus) to his right (Pl. 18:12).<sup>19</sup> Another scene, on a coin of Julia Maesa, depicts a tetrastyle temple with a triangular pediment. Inside it is Serapis with *calathos* enthroned to the left, his left hand holding a scepter. Isis with *basileion* stands right before the seated Serapis, while Tyche, with *calathos* and dressed in a *peplos*, is standing behind him (CNP 4:128–129, No. 183; Pl. 18:13). On another coin, of Philip Sr, Isis and Harpocrates appear standing, the latter holding a cornucopia. In the right field is a thunderbolt, in the left field a caduceus (BMC Pal.:136, No. 45; CNP 4:136–137, No. 224; Pl. 19:14). The thaumaturgeous character of Serapis, as in the coinage of Aelia Capitolina and Tiberias, is possibly also reflected at 'Akko-Ptolemais in another issue of Philip Jr, on which a colossal foot — possibly of Serapis himself — is depicted, surmounted by a thunderbolt. A harpoon is located below the foot, and a caduceus in the right field (Pl. 19:15).<sup>20</sup>

Finally, a unique type, minted during the reign of Valerian I, presents a female

17 A bust of Serapis appears on coins of Marcus Aurelius (CNP 4:112–113, No. 110 and pl. VII), Commodus (CNP 4:114–115, No. 117 and pl. VII), Septimius Severus (CNP 4:116–117, No. 122 and pl. VIII; Rosenberger 1972:26, No. 53), Caracalla (CNP 4:116–117, Nos. 128 and 131 and pl. VIII; Rosenberger 1972:27, No. 55), Macrinus (CNP 4:122–123, No. 154 and pl. X), Elagabalus (CNP 4:124–125, No. 162 and pl. XI) and Saloninus (CNP 4:144–145, No. 263 and pl. XVIII).

18 A unique coin is mentioned by de Saulcy 1865:160, No. 2 (= CNP 4:114–115, No. 118), which needs confirmation.

19 BMC Pal.:134, No. 33 (Caracalla); CNP 4:130–131, No. 195 and pl. XIII (Severus Alexander). On the reverse of this coin, in the left field, is a caduceus, a local symbol found on the Isiatic coins of Philip Jr and Saloninus. See Bricault *forthcoming*.

20 On the “feet of Serapis” and their significance, see Castiglione 1971 and Le Glay 1978. The “foot of Serapis” is represented on several coins of Alexandria in the Antonine and Severan periods but in all cases the deity's bust stands above the divine foot. See, e.g., Dattari 1901:233, Nos. 3515–3516 (Marcus Aurelius), 267, Nos. 3938–3939 (Commodus), and an unpublished coin (ANS 1973-56-1005; year 3 of Septimius Severus).

deity with *calathos*, enthroned to the left, her two arms uplifted while at her feet two recumbant sphinxes flank her throne. Behind her in the lower right field, is a winged caduceus (Pl. 19:16). The identification of the female deity on this coin with Isis, nevertheless, must remain uncertain.<sup>21</sup>

This rich iconographic group shows that, in contrast to Aelia Capitolina and Caesarea, Serapis, Isis and Harpocrates were part of a public cult in 'Akko-Ptolemais, from the Severan epoch or possibly earlier. The numismatic evidence from the mint of Byblos leads to a very similar conclusion for that port city.<sup>22</sup> In particular Serapis appears in his many roles as healer-deity and imperial protector, as well as patron of the colony.

*Ascalon*: Turning to Ascalon, there are no coins or inscriptions that shed direct light on the existence of an Isiatic pantheon in the city. However, Isis assimilated to Tyche<sup>23</sup> appears on the decoration of a public monument, the basilica, presumably dating to the Severan epoch (Fischer 1995). Three of the four pilasters found on the site, which possibly adorned the clerestory of the central nave were decorated with winged Victories, standing on a globe, held by a kneeling Atlas. The fourth pilaster showed Isis with an Egyptian style *calathos*. Behind the deity stood a smaller male figure with a diadem, decorated with a star identifying him as a priest rather than Harpocrates or an imperial prince (Savignac [1905], identified it with Harpocrates; Keel and K  chler [1982:69, Fig. 57], with Harpocrates or an imperial prince; and Krug [1995], with a priest. See also Tran tam Tinh 1990:773, No. 175). It is possible that the pilaster had a corresponding twin representing Serapis but this remains a matter of speculation.<sup>24</sup> In fact the god did not appear on Ascalon's coinage and no document so far has been discovered to confirm his presence in the city.<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, several issues use two types with Egyptian traits, which have been interpreted differently. Under Antoninus Pius two coins (Rahmani 1981:47 and Pl. 11:4, 151/2 CE [here, Pl. 19:17]; and Rosenberger 1972:59, No. 182, 156/7 CE) show on the reverse an Egyptian divinity with an *hem-hem* crown standing to

21 This is the identification proposed by, among others, Rouvier (1901:230, No. 1066) and Kadman (*CNP* 4:138–139, No. 239 and pl. XVI).

22 Representations of Isis are particularly abundant in the coinage of Byblos. Harpocrates also appears but Serapis is completely absent. Cf. Bricault *forthcoming*.

23 A terracotta bust of Isis-Tyche was discovered in the vicinity of Ascalon. Flusser 1969–1971:29, Pl.IV:7.

24 The Talmud (BT *Av. Zar.* 11b; Epstein 1935:59) mentioned Ascalon among the pagan enclaves of *Eretz Israel* and the sanctuary of “*  arifa-  aripa*” among the pagan temples of the Near East. Belayche (2006:455) suggests that this refers to a Sarapieion. Cf. Jacobs 2000:150.

25 According to Millar (1990:53–55), Ascalon never became a Roman colony.

the right,<sup>26</sup> holding a scepter in left hand, a whip in the right hand, mounted on three lions moving to the right as in Syrian depictions of Baal. The type was also struck under Marcus Aurelius, Geta Caesar (Pl. 19:18), Macrinus, Elagabalus and Maximinus,<sup>27</sup> and found on two gems. One of these was discovered in a tomb in Ascalon in 1958 (Pl. 19:19).<sup>28</sup> The second Egyptian type was used under Caracalla (Pl. 19:20), Alexander Severus and Maximinus.<sup>29</sup> It depicts a bust of a divinity to the right, with a *hem-hem* crown, holding a scepter in front of her and a whip behind its shoulders. Below, three lion heads are turned to the right. Most certainly all these issues refer to the same deity, possibly a hybrid image<sup>30</sup> of Harpocrates or Horus of Mount Casion, rather than solely identified with Isis<sup>31</sup> or Osiris.<sup>32</sup>

The situation of Ascalon, its successive rulers and the activities of its port can explain these traditional Egyptian influences,<sup>33</sup> mixed with Syro-Phoenician elements.<sup>34</sup> But there is too little documentation to properly evaluate the real status of Isis in that city. The absence of Serapis is no surprise. He is also not present

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- 26 Typologically, the headdress of the divinity is described as an *atef* crown, a *calathos*, or a combination of the two (cf. *BMC Pal.*: 129, Nos. 248, 249, 251 and 252). On a coin of Marcus Aurelius, it is clearly an *hem-hem* crown, which also appears with the other “Egyptian” bust type of the local coinage. Without doubt it is the same crown that appears in the nine issues referred to above.
- 27 Marcus Aurelius (Meshorer 1985:111, No. 52; 178/9 CE); Geta Caesar (Private collection; 205/6 CE); Macrinus (*SNG ANS* 6: Pl. 22: No. 734; Rosenberger 1972:62, No. 207; 217/8 CE); Elagabalus (Rosenberger 1972:64, No. 218; 218/9 CE); Maximinus (Rosenberger 1972:66, No. 236; 235 CE).
- 28 It is preserved at the Israel Antiquities Authority (1958-208). Rahmani 1981:46 and Pl. 11:1-2. The second gem was published by Ben-Dor 1947:171, Pl. 4:3-4 and Rahmani 1981:47 and Pl. 11:3.
- 29 Caracalla (Prieur and Prieur 2000:183, No. 1653; 215-217 CE); Alexander Severus (Rosenberger 1972:66, No. 232; 230/1 CE); Maximinus (Rosenberger 1972: 66, No. 234; 235 CE). These two types were used until the end of local coinage in 235 CE.
- 30 Like Imhoof-Blumer 1884:293-294, No. 150, or Prieur and Prieur 2000:183: “Bust of Isis right wearing Egyptian hem-hem crown.”
- 31 See Meshorer 1985:28 following Bellinger 1940:100 n. 165. According to *BMC Pal.*:lxi-lxii, followed by Rahmani 1981:48, it can refer in one case to Isis and to Osiris in the other.
- 32 The deity seems to hold the *Heqa* scepter and the *flagellum nekhakha*, attributes of royalty and Osiris.
- 33 Three bronze statues of Apis were also rediscovered. See Kater-Sibbes and Vermaseren 1975:1, Nos. 250-252.
- 34 Compare the offering by an Ascalonian citizen of an image of his “invincible ancestral god Herakles-Belos,” the Tyrian god Melqart, to Zeus-Helios-Sarapis (Canope; 228 CE): Bernand 1970:242-244, No. 14; Bonnet 1988:131-132, and, more generally, Quaegebeur 1987. See also the decoration of the temple of Phanebal (Belayche 2006:455-457).

in Raphia,<sup>35</sup> Petra<sup>36</sup> and Byblos (Bricault *forthcoming*). It was the traditional Egyptian cults of Isis with Osiris and Horus which spread to this part of the Mediterranean and not the Hellenized Isiatic cults of Isis with Serapis and Harpocrates.

*Neapolis*: We currently know of a dozen issues with Isiatic characteristics from Neapolis, founded by Vespasian in 72 CE. Two of the Antonine age and three of the middle of the third century (Serapis standing: Philip Sr [Rosenberger 1977:19, No. 86] and Philip Jr Augustus [*BMC Pal.*:70, No. 146], can be added to the traditional Severan type with the Serapis bust [Pl. 19:21]).<sup>37</sup> The bust on the reverse of coins of Marcus Aurelius Caesar, dated to 158/9 (*BMC Pal.*:51, Nos. 42–43) and 159/60 CE (*SNG ANS* 6: Pl. 32, Nos. 966–968; *BMC Pal.*:51–52, Nos. 44–50; Rosenberger 1977:7, No. 12; Pl. 19:22), parallels the types minted by Aelia Capitolina and Caesarea. There are also two contemporary but particularly interesting striking of Faustina. Here, the figure of Tyche, depicted on the coin reverses of the same years 158/9 and 159/60 CE, shows not the usual *calathos* but indisputably a *basileion* (Pl. 19:23). The attraction that Isis exercised over the wife of Marcus Aurelius is well known (Bricault 2000b:147). This unique type without doubt is witness to Faustina's desire to be identified with Isis, as well as with the city goddess. Almost a hundred years later, during the reign of Philip Sr, the coinage of the city, now a colony, once more depicted a standing Serapis (Pl. 19:24). The type was later embellished with several elements referring the city's new status of a veteran colony, as attested by a coin of Volusian (Pl. 19:25; 251 CE). These are a ram and an ear of corn associating Serapis with Zeus-Ammon.<sup>38</sup> However, it is difficult to decide, based on the above few coin types, if Serapis (and even less so, Isis) were the objects of a public cult in that city.<sup>39</sup>

35 The bust of Harpocrates with *hem-hem* crown appears on a coin of Raphia in the reign of Gordian III (Rosenberger 1977:52, Nos. 30–31; 240/1 CE). It is not a “Bust of Isis to l., wearing atef-crown,” as written there.

36 On the Egyptian and not the Isiatic aspect of the Isis cult and its adherents at Petra, see Bricault 2006:82–83.

37 Coins showing the bust of Serapis in the reign of Geta (*Schulten* [22–23 April 1985], No. 627); Caracalla (*SNG ANS* 6: Pl. 33, No. 992; *BMC Pal.*:58, No. 86); Diadumenian (Rosenberger 1977:11, No. 34); Elagabalus (*BMC Pal.*:62, No. 106; Rosenberger 1977:13, No. 47); and Alexander Severus (Rosenberger 1977:16, No. 72). Coins with Serapis standing in the reign of Caracalla (*BMC Pal.*:58, No. 86; Kindler 1974:131, No. 201) and Diadumenian (Rosenberger 1977:11, No. 35, who did not identify the deity).

38 Kindler 1980:56–58 and Pl. 16:6. Kindler connected the emission to the presence at Neapolis of an unit (*vexillatio* or *cohors*) of the *legio III Cyrenaica* under Volusian.

39 According to Rosenberger (1977:17, No. 78), on the reverse of the coin struck under Philip Sr was a bust of Serapis right, supported by a spread-winged eagle facing, with head turned right. The absence of the *calathos* encourages the identification of the deity on the reverse with Zeus.

## CONCLUSION

The above discussion presents the contribution of the numismatic evidence to the subject of the Isiac diffusion in the East. The phenomenon is disparate and does not allow for generalization. It varies in different time periods, geographical areas, and even from one city to another. Nevertheless, in several cases (Aelia Capitolina, Ascalon, Caesarea and 'Akko-Ptolemais) the presence of Isiac types on local coinage suggests the existence of a public cult, possibly only to satisfy a small number of the inhabitants of those cities.

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ALLA KUSHNIR-STEIN

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LAURENT BRICAULT

PLATE 18



LAURENT BRICAULT



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