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The Suffering of Isis/IO and Paul's Portrait of Christ Crucified (Gal. 3:1): Frescoes in Pompeian and Roman Houses and in the Temple of Isis in Pompeii*

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INTRODUCTION

Paul was formed by and lived in diverse cultures that included Palestinian and diaspora Judaism but also the dominant, Greco-Roman culture of the eastern Mediterranean, especially, as this article argues, as visually represented on the walls of Greco-Roman houses.¹ In this article, I compare aspects of Pauline Christology and anthropology to myth and ritual in the Isis cult, a comparison developed by the history of religions school beginning in the late nineteenth century, for example, by Hermann Gunkel, Wilhelm Bousset, and Johannes Weiss.² Hans-Josef Klauck has recently observed that such earlier attempts occasionally simplified complicated situations, which exaggerated the results of the research.³ These exaggerations produced a reaction that denied any dependence on non-Jewish and non-Christian religions. But as Eric Gruen observes, "Jews abroad far outnumbered those dwelling in Palestine—and had done so

* For Frederick E. Brenk, S.J. I express gratitude to the librarians of the German Archaeological Institute and of the American Academy in Rome, as well as to my research assistant, Aliou Niang.

¹ E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977). John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1996).

² See Gerd Lüdemann and Martin Schröder, *Die Religionsgeschichtliche Schule in Göttingen: Eine Dokumentation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987).

³ Hans-Josef Klauck, *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A Guide to Graeco-Roman Religions*, Studies of the New Testament and Its World (Edinburgh: Clark, 2000), pp. 4–5.

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for many generations. . . . They evidently preferred it there.”⁴ Paul, a diaspora Jew, founded house churches and also churches in tenement buildings in Asia Minor and Greece. How was Paul’s gospel of Christ crucified received by people living in Greco-Roman houses in those Greco-Roman cities?

GRECO-ROMAN DOMESTIC, TRAGIC ART⁵

Carolyn Osiek and I coauthored a book on early Christian house churches that this article presupposes. We investigated how Christian families lived in the concrete setting of Greco-Roman houses. For example, Paul baptized the household of Stephanas in Corinth, as he remembered while writing from Ephesus (1 Cor. 1:16, 16:15), where the church was meeting in the house of Aquila and Prisca (1 Cor. 16:19).⁶ In this article, I assume that earlier research and ask a related question. Greco-Roman houses, unlike many modern ones, were filled with art, including paintings, mosaics, and sculptures. Greeks and Romans were not left-brained, but were and remain among the most right-brained, artistic peoples on earth.⁷ My question is: When Paul preached in such houses, or when there was a discussion after a Eucharist, might there have been art in the houses related to the sermon or to the Eucharistic conversations that would have shaped how Paul’s audience received his message?⁸

Recent studies of Roman domestic art focus not only on Pompeii and

⁴ Erich S. Gruen, *Diaspora: Jews amidst Greeks and Romans* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), pp. vii, 3.

⁵ This article is a companion piece to another: “Paul’s Portrait of Christ Crucified (Gal 3:1) in Light of Paintings and Sculptures of Suffering and Death in Pompeian and Roman Houses,” in *Early Christian Families in Context: A Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue*, ed. David L. Balch and Carolyn Osiek (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, in press). There I describe and interpret frescoes and sculptures of Iphigenia, Laocoon, and the Dying Galatians found in Greco-Roman houses, as well as the pagan crucifix on the Palatine.

⁶ See Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches*, The Family, Culture and Religion, ed. Don S. Browning and Ian S. Evison; (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1997), pp. 202 and passim. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, “*Domus* and *Insulae* in Rome: Families and Housefuls,” in Balch and Osiek, eds., rejects a rigid distinction between *domus* and *insulae*, suggesting rather that scholars think in terms of neighborhoods (*vici*) of mixed living arrangements that would include both familial relationships and commercial tenancy.

⁷ Michael Corballis and Ivan Beale, *The Psychology of Left and Right* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1976).

⁸ For early Christian development of art despite their critique of pagan art, see Paul Corby Finney, *The Invisible God: The Earliest Christians on Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). Reinhold Merkelbach, *Isis regina—Zeus Sarapis: Die griechisch-ägyptische Religion nach den Quellen dargestellt* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1995), pp. 68, 106, 134, 157, 236–41, only briefly discusses Isis and Sarapis in Greco-Roman houses, but he prints many plates of frescoes and other aesthetic objects found in a dozen such houses (Abbildung 33–85, 148), e.g., the house of Octavius Quartio (Abbildung 33–50), as well as in the Temple of Isis in Pompeii (Abbildung 1–32).

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Herculaneum but also on the Roman West (Spain, Gaul, Germany, Britain, and Dacia) and the Greek East (especially Ephesus). Henri Lavagne observes that the paintings were discussed by those who viewed them at symposia: “at table one must know the classics” (Petronius, *Sat.* 39.4, which Petronius meant ironically).⁹ Tiberius made paintings or mosaics the subject of riddles while at dinner (Suetonius, *Tib.* 56). The paintings could and would have been understood differently by persons of varying intellectual and economic levels, who would have seen diverse symbolic messages in the same picture. Penelope M. Allison has also pointed out that the number of painters at any given time would be limited, and the choice of pictures to be painted would depend on the painters’ abilities.¹⁰ These recent studies show that styles and themes of this art originated in Rome and spread to the provinces both in the East and the West. One would find particular, datable styles and a limited number of themes in Rome and Pompeii and, in the first century B.C.E. and C.E., similar styles and themes in Corinth and Ephesus.

As a novice art historian, I have viewed these pictures asking whether they portray themes in common with Paul’s gospel. Surprisingly perhaps, Paul’s gospel of Christ crucified has far more in common with Greco-Roman domestic art than I would have guessed. The thesis of this article is that Greco-Roman, tragic art emphasizing pathos found both in Greco-Roman houses and, in this instance, in the Temple of Isis in Pompeii would have provided one meaningful cultural context for understanding Paul’s gospel of Christ’s passion. Although Dionysian themes are more prominent than scenes of suffering and death in Roman domestic art, tragic art portraying suffering was surprisingly significant in domestic contexts—where Christians lived and worshiped.¹¹ The gospel itself (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:3–8) and the rituals of baptism (Rom. 6:3–4) and the eucharist (1 Cor. 11:23–26) all focus on the meaning of Christ’s death. Paul observes that “Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified” (1 Cor. 1:22). In fact, Paul declares to the Corinthians that he “decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). He interprets Christ’s death on the cross as

⁹ Henri Lavagne, “Römische Wandmalerei: Bilanz jüngerer Forschungen und neue Sichtweisen,” in *Römische Glaskunst und Wandmalerei*, ed. Michael J. Klein (Mainz: von Zabern, 1999), pp. 21–24, at p. 21.

¹⁰ Lavagne, p. 23, citing a paper by Volker M. Strocka, “Bildprogramme in pompejanischen Häusern” as well as the argument by Penelope M. Allison mentioned in the text. Mythological subjects were beloved in second-style paintings, which were interpreted allegorically and morally, depending on the social status of the viewers. See John R. Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans: Visual Representation and Non-elite Viewers in Italy, 100 B.C.–A.D. 315* (Berkeley: University of California Press, in press).

¹¹ I owe the phrasing of this sentence to John R. Clarke.

an expiation at the cost of his blood (Rom. 3:25–26).¹² Paul proclaimed that Christ's death was voluntary (Gal. 1:4; see 2:20 and 2 Cor. 5:14–15), and he coordinated the confession of Christ's saving death with an anthropology that emphasized believers suffering and dying with Christ (2 Cor. 1:5–6).¹³ If we imagine Christians in Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, or Rome reading and interpreting manuscripts of the Greek Bible (LXX) in their houses, what pictures would they be seeing in the domestic spaces where they were reading or hearing their scriptures? I assume that the interpretation of the biblical texts would have been influenced consciously or unconsciously by the visual representations valued in Greco-Roman domestic culture.

In Gal. 3:1, Paul exclaims, "You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited (προεγράφη) as crucified!" (NRSV).¹⁴ Speakers drawing word pictures in houses that had beautiful frescoes on their walls was common.¹⁵ Lucian, while speaking in such a house, says the following:

To me, at least, it seems that a splendid hall (οἴκου [house]) excites the speaker's fancy and stirs it to speech, as if he were somehow prompted by what he sees. No doubt something of beauty flows through the eyes into the soul, and then fashions into the likeness of itself the words that it sends out. . . . It wants a cultured man for a spectator, who, instead of judging with his eyes, applies thought to what he sees. . . . Certainly, then, the beauty of this hall has power to rouse a man to speech, to spur him on in speaking and to make him succeed in every way. I for my part am trusting in all this and have already trusted in it, in coming to the hall [house] to speak, I was attracted by its beauty as by a magic wheel. . . . The

¹² Sam K. Williams, *Jesus' Death as Saving Event: The Background and Origin of a Concept*, Harvard Theological Review, Harvard Dissertations in Religion no. 2. (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1975), pp. 31, 47, compares 2 Macc. 6:14 and 4 Macc. 6:29.

¹³ See Ernst Käsemann, "On Paul's Anthropology," in *Perspectives on Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), pp. 1–31.

¹⁴ Compare Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), pp. 131–32; contrast B. S. Davis, "The Meaning of προεγράφη in the Context of Galatians 3.1," *New Testament Studies* 45, no. 2 (1999): 194–212.

¹⁵ On description of works of art, see Christiane Reitz and Ulrike Egelhaaf, "Ekphrasis," *Der neue Pauly*, ed. Hubert Cancik et al., vol. 3 (Stuttgart: J. R. Metzler, 1997), pp. 942–50. Examples they give (p. 950) include the Alexander mosaic in the House of the Faun and the Nymphaeum in the garden of the house of Loreius Tiburtinus (Octavius Quartio) in Pompeii, which symbolically represents the Nile; on Lucian and Vergil, see p. 946. Also Glanville Downey, *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, 4th ed., s.v. "Ekphrasis," pp. 922–44. Also Karl Lehmann-Hartleben, "The Imagines of the Elder Philostratus," *Art Bulletin* 23 (1941): 16–44; Jas Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), chap. 1; and Richard Brilliant, *Visual Narratives: Storytelling in Roman and Etruscan Art* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), chap. 2, references for which I thank Clarke. Further, Bettina Bergmann and Christine Kondoleon, eds., *The Art of Ancient Spectacle*, *Studies in the History of Art*, no. 56 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 97–123, 321–41.

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painter derived his model, I suppose from Euripides or Sophocles. (*De domo* [περὶ τοῦ οἴκου] 4, 6, 13, and 23).¹⁶

Lucian ("Essays in Portraiture" [Ἐυκόνες]) paints a verbal picture of the Emperor Verus's mistress, Panathea of Smyrna, comparing her, for example, to Alcamenes' Athenian Aphrodite (the Venus Genetrix; 4). He thinks "Homer . . . the best of all painters" (τὸν ἄριστον τῶν γραφέων "Ὅμηρον; 8). Lucian compares Panathea with Aspasia, the consort of Pericles, who was painted (γραφεῖς) by Aeschines, the friend of Socrates, who painted (ἐγγράπτο) on a small canvas, but Lucian says his figure is colossal (17). Lucian uses the same language to characterize a painting on a wall or a colossal statue as he does to paint his word picture. He compares her to Theano, Sappho, and Diotima (18), and Lycinus says, "paint (γράφου) more of them!" (19) Lucian's word picture is painting. Lucian summarizes, "I painted (ἐγραψάμην) her soul, not made of wood and wax and colors, but portrayed with inspirations from the Muses" (23).

Lucian's essay was criticized, so he wrote "Essays in Portraiture Defended." Lucian replied that he had not compared Panathea with goddesses, but with masterpieces by good craftsmen made of stone or bronze or ivory, with what humans have made, which is not impious (23). These images do not attain divinity. But he equivocates: Homer did compare Briseis with Aphrodite (*Iliad* 19.286), and she was a foreign woman (βάρβαρον; 24)!

Persons who lived in Greco-Roman houses outside Israel in the first century C.E. would typically have seen tragic stories on their walls. At the conclusion of his helpful fourth chapter on salvific death in Greek literature, Sam K. Williams cites modern scholars who testify to the influence of Aeschylus and Euripides on literature four or five centuries later.¹⁷ But we do not have to guess which stories Greeks and Romans, including Christians, valued; in Pompeii we can still see which ones they chose to have painted on the walls of their houses. In the first and most of the second century, Christians did not build church buildings; rather, they lived and worshiped in the same houses in which they had lived before they were converted.¹⁸ Neither Greeks nor Romans built Western Protes-

¹⁶ *De Domo*, trans. A. M. Harmon, Loeb Classical Library (1979); Sonia Maffei, ed., *Luciano di Samosata, descrizioni di opere d'arte* (Torino: Einaudi, 1994), discusses *ekphrasis* in seven of Lucian's works.

¹⁷ Williams, p. 159, nn. 41–42.

¹⁸ See L. Michael White, *The Social Origins of Christian Architecture*, Harvard Theological Studies no. 42, vol. 1, *Building God's House in the Roman World: Architectural Adaptation among Pagans, Jews and Christians*, (Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity International, 1990), and vol. 2, *Texts and Monuments for the Christian Domus Ecclesiae in Its Environment* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity International, 1997), pp. 210–11, on the oldest Christian church buildings.

tant houses with bare walls. Greek and Roman cultures were and are right brained; they would have had beautiful visual representations in their homes. My question is: What would Paul's word picture of Christ crucified have looked like, and would some Greco-Roman domestic paintings and sculptures have helped make his gospel comprehensible?

ROMAN "EGYPTOMANIA": FRESCOES OF IO/ISIS IN HOUSES, A MARKET, AND THE ISIS TEMPLE

Visual representations of Io¹⁹ are painted in the House of Livia on the Palatine in Rome (see figs. 1–2),²⁰ in the House of Argos and Io in Herculaneum,²¹ in the House of the Lyre Player in Pompeii (see figs. 3–4),²² and

¹⁹ Nicolas Yalouris, "Io I," in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, 8 vols. (Zurich: Artemis, 1981–97; each vol. in two parts, the first text, the second plates, plus *Indices* [1999]; hereafter *LIMC*), vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 661–76, and vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 442–52. Nikolaos Yalouris, "Le mythe d'Io: Les transformations d'Io dans l'iconographie et la littérature grecques," in *Iconographie Classique et Identités Régionales*, Bulletin de Correspondance Hellenique, Supplément, no. 14 (Paris: École Française d'Athènes, 1986), pp. 3–23. Tran Tam Tinh, "Isis," *LIMC*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 761–96, nos. 265–68. Merkelbach, *Isis regina*, (n. 8 above), pp. 59, 67–69, 91, 104, 135, who cites R. I. Hicks, "Egyptian Elements in Greek Mythology," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 93 (1962): 93–100. My friend, Frederick E. Brenk, S.J., graciously assisted my studies in Rome, for which I am grateful. For his own studies of Isis, see "'Isis' Is a Greek Word": Plutarch's Allegorization of Egyptian Religion," in *Plutarcho, 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 et al. (Madrid, 1999), pp. 227–38, "In the Image, Reflection and Reason of Osiris: Plutarch and the Egyptian Cults," in *Estudios sobre Plutarcho: Misticismo y religiones mistericas en la obra de Plutarcho: Actas del VII Simposio Espanol sobre Plutarcho, Palma de Mallorca, 2–4 noviembre de 2000*, ed. A. Pérez Jiménez and F. Casadesús Bordoy (Madrid: Ediciones Clásicas; Málaga: Charta Antiqua, Distribución Editorial, 2001), pp. 83–98, and "Osirian Reflections: Second Thoughts on the Isaeum Campense at Rome," in *Homages to Carl Deroux*, vol. 4, *Archeologie et histoire de l'art, religion*, ed. Pol Defosse (Brussels, in press).

²⁰ Giulio Emanuele Rizzo, *Le pitture della "Casa di Livia."* Monumenti della Pittura Antika, Sezione Terza, La Pittura Ellenistico-Romana (Rome: Instituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1936), 1:25–30, with Tavola I, II, and III (Sala del Polifemo). Also in H. G. Beyen, *Die Pompejanische Wanddekoration vom Zweiten bis zum Vierten Stil* (Haag: Nijhoff, 1960), 2:1: Tafeln, figs. 228–29, the entire wall of the "Tablinum," with Io, Argos, and Hermes as the central panel. Merkelbach, *Isis regina*, Abbildung 64 and 76/77; Rita Paris, "Le testimonianze pittoriche a Roma," in *Romana Pictura: La pittura romana dalle origini all'età bizantina*, ed. Angela Donati (Milan: Electa, 1998), pp. 73–84, pl. 6 on p. 77; Yalouris, "Io," p. 669, fig. 61, dates this picture ca. 30 B.C.E. Note: in the text, I translate many non-English terms, e.g., *casa* by "house," but in the footnotes I do not.

²¹ Wilhelm Zahn, *Die schönsten Ornamente und merkwürdigsten Gemälde aus Pompei, Herculaneum und Stabiae nebst einigen Grundrissen und Ansichten nach den am Ort und Stelle gemachten Originalzeichnungen* (Berlin: Reimer, 1828–59), 2:83, has a sketch of the entire wall, which is divided into three blocks; Io, Argos, and Hermes is a small painting in the central panel.

²² Casa del Citarista (region I, insula 4, door 5, such cites subsequently in form of, e.g., I 4, 5), in triclinium (37), the central painting on the north wall (*Pompei: Pitture e Mosaici*, 9 vols. [Rome: Instituto della Enciclopedia Italiana]; hereafter *Pompei*, 1:117–77, at pp. 129–30). Triclinium (37) opens onto peristyle (32), the third peristyle approached from the entrance at 4, 25. Olga Elia, *Le Pitture della "Casa del Citarista,"* La Pittura Ellenistico-Romana: Pompei, fasc. no. 1 (Rome: Instituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1937), fig. 14. Yalouris, "Io,"

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in the macellum at Pompeii (see figs. 5–7).²³ Further, the central frescoes on both the north and south walls of the *ekklestiasion* in the Temple of Isis in Pompeii visually represent the myth of Io (VIII 7, 28; see figs. 8–11).²⁴ This *ekklestiasion*, a large room, “was probably the place where worshippers of Isis gathered and ritual banquets were held.”²⁵ The House of Augustus’s wife, Livia, and the House of the Lyre Player in Pompeii belonged to the upper crust of Roman society. After the earthquake in 62 C.E., Numerius, a wealthy Pompeian freedman, quickly restored the Temple of Isis with fourth-style paintings. The leading assembly of the town, that of the decurions, appreciated Numerius’s gesture so much that it was willing to accept his son as a future free man into the curia even though he was only six years old.²⁶ Wealthy, politically powerful Romans commissioned these paintings of Io.²⁷

One may date the beginning of “Egyptomania” in Roman houses rather precisely. Astoundingly, the house of Augustus still stands on the

p. 667, fig. 37, dates this picture to ca. 70 C.E. Merkelbach, *Isis regina*, Abbildung 63; *Le Collezioni del Museo Nazionale di Napoli: I mosaici, le pitture, gli oggetti di uso quotidiano, gli argenti, le terrecotte invetriate, I vetri, I cristalli, gli avori* (hereafter *Collezioni*) (Milan: Di Luca Edizioni d’Arte, 1986), pp. 146–47, fig. 162, inventory 9557.

²³ Martin Robertson, *A History of Greek Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 1:436–39, and vol. 2 with pl. 138c, a fresco of Io and Argos. See also Burkhardt Wesenberg, “Zur Io des Nikias in den Pompeijanischen Wandbildern,” in *Kanon: Festschrift Ernst Berger zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Margot Schmidt, *Antike Kunst*, Beiheft no. 15; (Basel: Vereinigung der Freunde antike Kunst, 1988), pp. 344–52, Tafeln 96.3.

²⁴ Tempio di Iside, two frescoes: the first, Io, Argo ed Hermes, the central painting of three on the north wall of the *ekklestiasion*, and the second, Io a Canopo, the central painting among three on the south wall of the *ekklestiasion* (*Pompei* 8:732–849, at pp. 823–25, 836–37). See *Alla ricerca di Iside: Analisi, studi e restauri dell’Iseo pompeiano nel Museo di Napoli*, ed. Stefano De Caro (Rome: ARTI, 1992), figure on p. 34, and Tavola X, XIV, and XVI. Olga Elia, *Le Pitture del Tempio di Iside*, Monumenti della pittura antica scoperti in Italia, Sezione Terza, La Pittura Ellenistica Romana: Pompei (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1941): Tavola A: Io, Argos, ed Hermes; Tavola B: Arrivo di Io a Canopo. Tran Tam Tinh, *Essai sur le Culte d’Isis a Pompéi* (Paris: di Boccard, 1964), pl. VI: Réceptio d’Io par Isis (in temple of Isis), and pl. XVI.2: Réception d’Io par Isis (in Casa di Duca d’Aumale [VI 9, 1]). Merkelbach, *Isis regina*, Abbildung 20–21. *Iside: Il Mito, il Mistero, la Magia (Mostro Milano)*, ed. Ermanno A. Arslan (Milan: Electa, 1997), p. 439, pl. V.65, places the picture in the Casa di Duca d’Aumale in a room north of the atrium.

²⁵ Salvatore Nappo, *Pompeii: Guide to the Lost City* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998), pp. 89–91.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

²⁷ On the sociology of the Isis devotees see, Tinh, *Essai*, pp. 39–61; and Reinhold Merkelbach, “Der Isiskult im Pompei,” *Latomus* 24 (January–March 1965): 144–49, at 145, n. 3. Also Mariette De Vos, “‘Egittomania’ nelle case di Pompei ed Ercolano,” in *Civiltà dell’Antico Egitto in Campania*, ed. Enrica Pozzi, Mostra allestita nel Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Napoli-Giugno-Settembre 1983 (Naples: Tempi Moderni, 1984), pp. 59–72, at p. 69: archaeologists have found twenty sistri in houses whose owners had not provided a lararium for Isis worship; household members not of the highest status brought these musical instruments home after temple functions or processions. De Vos discusses numerous houses where other cultic images were painted or items found.



FIG. 1.—House of Livia, Rome (fresco as actually preserved): Hermes, Io seated on rock, Argos. Published by permission of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici di Roma.



FIG. 2.—House of Livia, Rome (same fresco as fig. 1, restored): Hermes, Io, and Argos. Published by permission of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici di Roma.

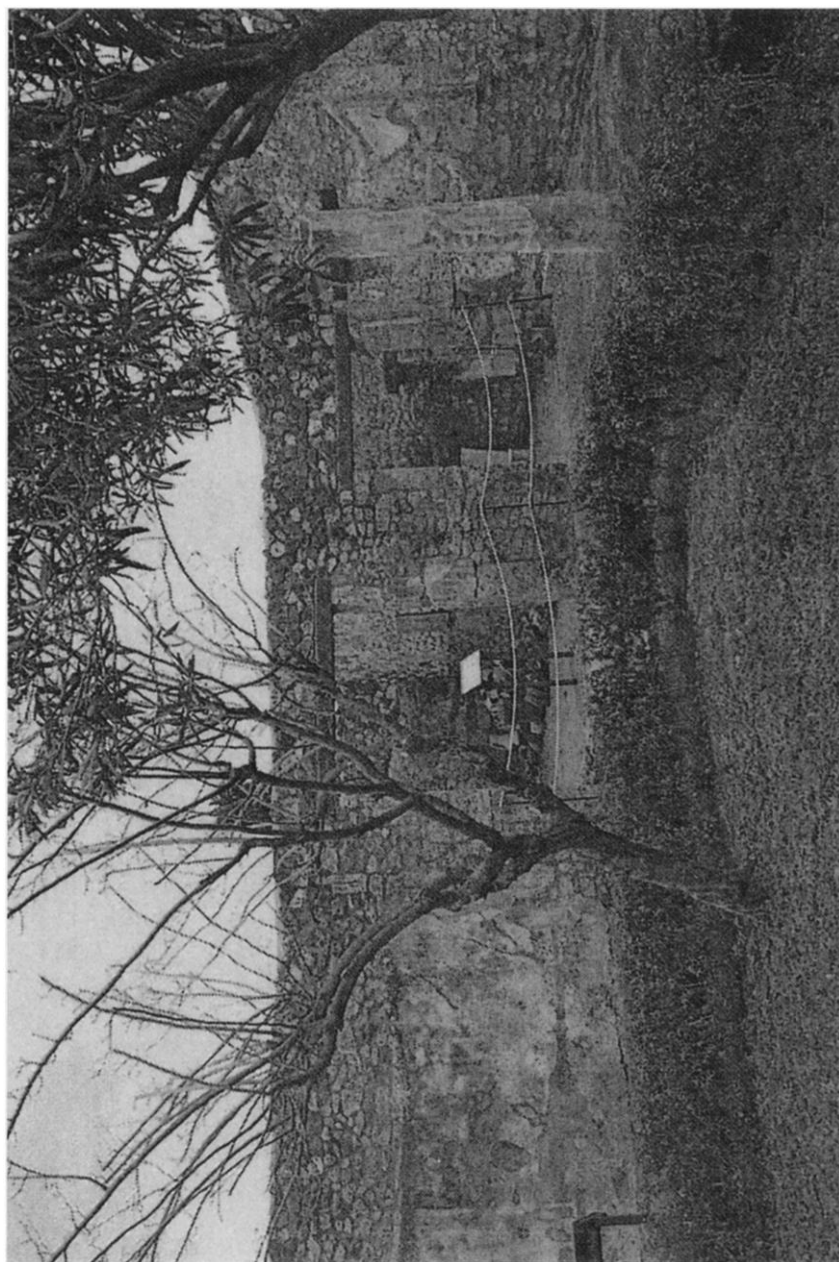


FIG. 3.—House of Lyre Player (I 4, 5.25), Pompeii: view from peristyle 32 into *triclinium* 37. One can see a copy of the fresco of Argos, Io, and Hermes from the peristyle.



FIG. 4.—House of Lyre Player, Pompeii: fresco of Argos, Io seated above, a cow below, and Hermes. Now in National Archaeological Museum, Naples, inventory 9557. Published by permission of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici delle province di Napoli e Caserta.

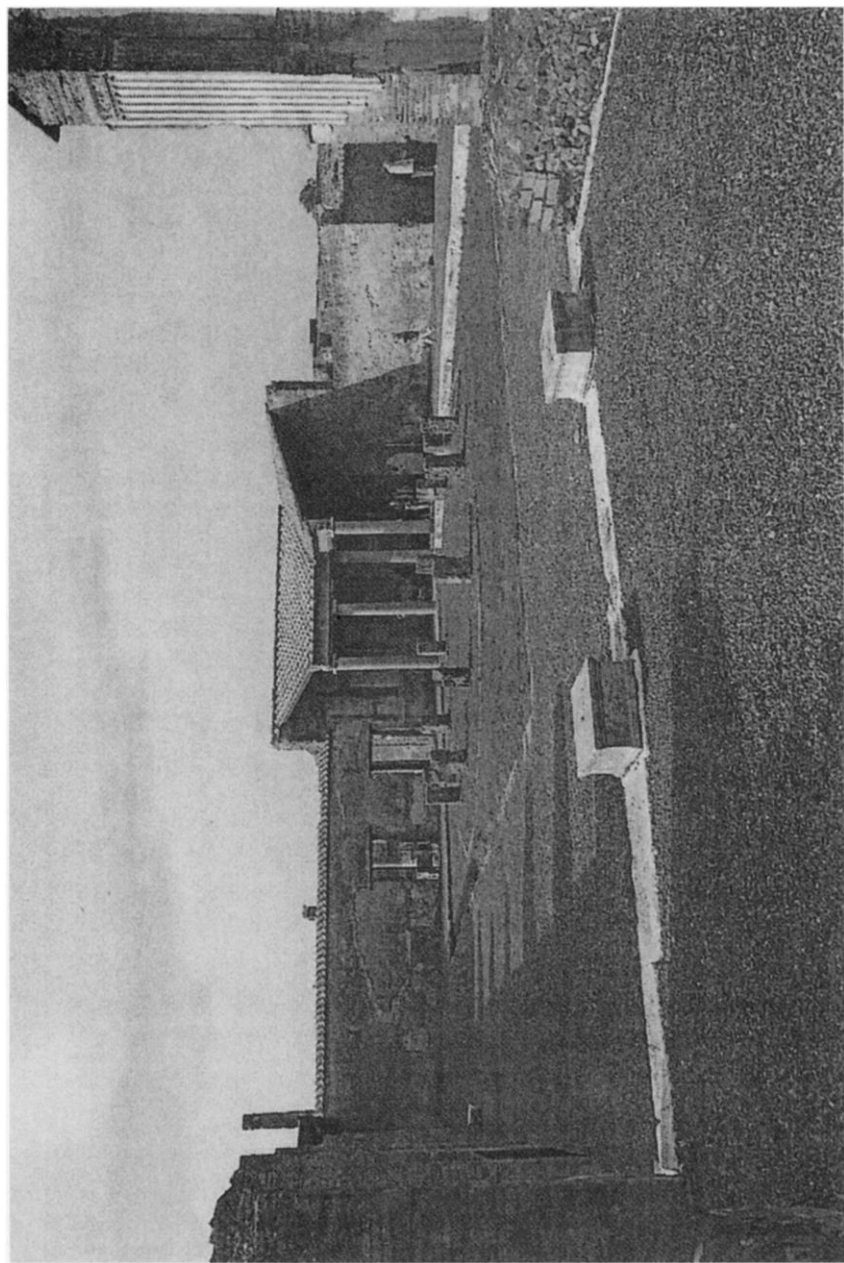


FIG. 5.—*Macellum* (the meat, fish, and vegetable market; VII 9, 7.8), Pompeii. Two entrances at the far, west end open onto the forum. The reconstructed stoa in the far corner covers a painted wall. Published by permission of the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Pompei.

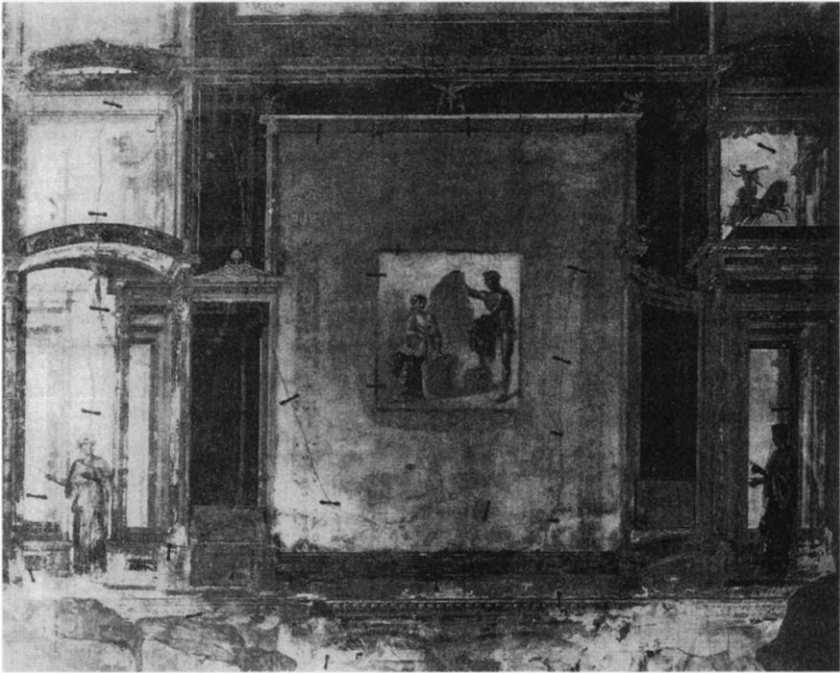


FIG. 6.—The large painted wall located near entrance from the forum into the *macellum*. A fresco of Io and Argos is in the center of the wall. Published by permission of the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Pompei.

Palatine.²⁸ The house was decorated in the second style, influenced by visual representations from Roman theater, the stages for which were often built in wood.²⁹ It was also influenced by images from the cult of Apollo.³⁰ The second style depicted realistic architecture; decorative elements were clear, logical, simple, and precise, not dominant. In Au-

²⁸ Gianfilippo Carettoni, *Das Haus des Augustus auf dem Palatin*, Kulturgeschichte der Antiken Welt (Mainz: von Zabern, 1983), and his article "La Decorazione Pittorica della Casa di Augusto sul Palatino," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 90 (1983): 373–419. For the house plan, see Carettoni, *Haus*, pp. 8, 10. Compare Merkelbach, *Isis regina*, pp. 134–37, with Abbildung 64, pp. 74–81. He traces this artistic interest to Augustus's daughter, Julia, who was first the wife of Agrippa; then Augustus forced her to marry Tiberius.

²⁹ See Carettoni, *Haus*, pp. 26, 86, on the prohibition of permanent theaters in Rome until ca. 50 B.C.E., which resulted in the wooden theater stages seen in frescoes on the walls of Augustus's house. Suetonius, *Aug.* 99.2 (trans. J. C. Rolfe in Loeb Classical Library [1970]) narrates Augustus's death: "calling in his friends and asking whether it seemed to them that he had played the comedy of life fitly, he added the tag [switching from Latin to Greek!], 'Since well I've played my part, all clap your hands And from the stage dismiss me with applause.'"

³⁰ See Carettoni, *Haus*, p. 27, on the *κωνοειδὲς κίων* in the room of masks (p. 5).



FIG. 7.—*Macellum*, Pompeii: fresco of Io partially nude guarded by Argos, in situ. Published by permission of the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Pompei.

gustus's house, however, individual artisans added some phantastic, impressionist elements such as knotted garlands, griffins, and Amazons, that H. G. Beyen classifies as a late phase of the second style.³¹ The house of Augustus and the temple of Apollo are architecturally related; the latter was built between 36 and 28 B.C.E. The ground floor of Augustus's house was decorated around the year 30 B.C.E. according to strict, typical Roman tradition, before exotic, decorative fantasies flooded Rome after the battle

³¹ Ibid., p. 89, citing Beyen (n. 20 above).



FIG. 8.— Temple of Isis (VIII 7, 28), Pompeii: picture from beside the temple itself toward a wall with five arched entrances into the *ekklesterion*, a large room (13.2×7.65 meters) probably for rituals and banquets. The north and south walls of this *ekklesterion* each had three large frescoes; the center fresco on both walls was of Io. Here one sees the fresco on the south wall of Isis receiving Io. Published by permission of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici delle province di Napoli e Caserta.

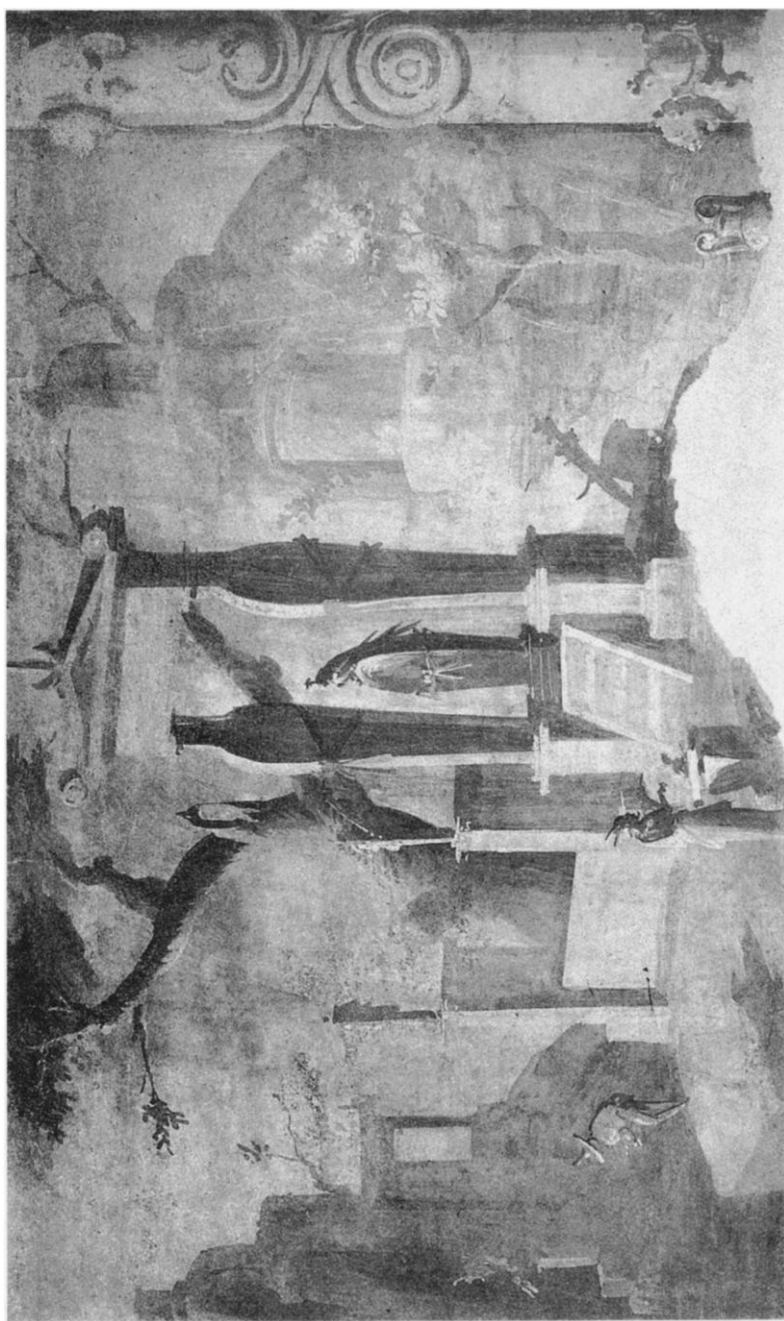


FIG. 9.—*Ekklesiasterion*, temple of Isis, Pompeii: fresco of the sarcophagus of Osiris. The most recent discussion places this fresco on the south wall just to the left of the image of Isis receiving Io. Now in National Archaeological Museum, Naples, inventory 8570. Published by permission of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici delle province di Napoli e Caserta.



FIG. 10.—*Ekklesiasterion*, temple of Isis, Pompeii; fresco on the south wall. Io on the viewer's left born by the river god is received by Isis, who has a cobra wrapped around her left arm and a crocodile below her feet. Horos/Harpocrates, her son, sits on an urn in the lower right. Above Isis are a priest and a priestess of Isis. Now in National Archaeological Museum, Naples, inventory 9558. Published by permission of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici delle province di Napoli e Caserta.

of Actium in 31 B.C.E. The latter artistic development may be seen in the house of his wife Livia, in the *Aula Isiaca* also on the Palatine, and in the *Villa della Farnesina*, also in Rome but across the Tiber.³²

Room 15 on the upper floor of Augustus's house displays this new di-

³² Carettoni, *Haus*, p. 90.



FIG. 11.—*Ekklesiasterion*, temple of Isis, Pompeii: the central fresco on the north wall. A cow, Io, Hermes, and Argos. Now in National Archaeological Museum, Naples, inventory 9548. Published by permission of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici delle province di Napoli e Caserta.

mension: free, playful fantasy. Architecture falls into the background before an ocean of vegetable decorations. Items from the Isis cult (*situlae* [containing sacred milk of Isis for Horus] and *urcei* [symbol of the sacred water of the Nile that fertilizes the earth]) appear with water plants that are unreal. Comparable with the popularity of the Chinese style in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe, many Egyptian forms occur: obelisks, lotus flowers, lions, and snakes. The new style of room 15 was painted between 30 and 28 B.C.E. by an Alexandrian artist now in the ser-

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vice of the victor at Actium.³³ This is probably the studio where “if ever he [Augustus] planned to do anything in private or without interruption, he had a retired place at the top of the house, which he called ‘Syracuse’ and ‘technyphion.’ In this he used to take refuge” (Suetonius, *Aug.* 72.2, trans. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library [1970]). In the Villa della Farnesina, one finds a visual representation of Zeus Ammon as well as of Isis herself.³⁴

The entire decorative repertory of the Farnesina seems to be based on the elaborate structure of Augustan propaganda; the same frequent Egyptianesque motifs, which early scholarship associated with Cleopatra’s stay in Rome (46 B.C.), might be more accurately seen as references to Octavian’s conquest of Egypt following his defeat of Antony and Cleopatra (31 B.C.), and the introduction of this new territory to the Roman Empire. This interpretation fits in well with the hypothesis (supported by archeological data) that the Villa of the Farnesina was decorated on the occasion of the marriage of Augustus’ daughter Julia to Agrippa (19 B.C.), although built twenty to thirty years previously.³⁵

IO’S SUFFERING IN LITERARY SOURCES

I turn from documenting frescoes of Io/Isis on Roman and Pompeian walls and from aesthetic, domestic Egyptomania in Rome to a brief investigation of the myth of Io’s suffering in literary sources. Literature may aid in understanding these visual representations of the myth of Io, whose importance may be seen especially since her image is the central fresco on both the north and south walls of the *ekklesiasterion* in the Temple of Isis in Pompeii. Both Isis and Io are women who suffered while wandering around the world. Isis is Egyptian, but the Greek Argive Io also finally finds refuge in Egypt. Both give birth to royal sons (Horos and Epaphus). The initiates of Isis are transformed into human beings; Io is first transformed into a cow but, after she arrives in Egypt, is again transformed into a human being. “Because of her bovine shape, Io was identified with the Egyptian Isis (who had assumed the bovine characteristics of Hathor).”³⁶ Isis searches the world for her dead husband; Io searches for her stolen child. Both Isis and Io—and later their descendants—rule Egypt. However, aspects of this identification were severely

³³ Ibid., pp. 91–92; see pp. 67–85 with Tafeln 18–22; W. 1–4, X, and Y; also Abbildung 10–17.

³⁴ Maria Rita Sanzi Di Mino, ed., *La Villa della Farnesina in Palazzo Massimo alle Terme* (Milan: Electa, 1998), pls. 24, 75, and her “The Villa of the Farnesina,” in *Palazzo Massimo alle Terme* (English edition), ed. Adriano La Regina (Milan: Electa, 1998), pp. 215–35. In the latter volume, cf. Di Mino, “The Painted Garden of the Villa of Livia at Prima Porta,” pp. 208–13. For a representation of Isis at the villa, see Di Mino, ed., pl. 76 (Cubiculo B, right wall). See Mariette De Vos, *LEgyptomania in Pitture e Mosaici Romano-Campani della prima Età Imperiale* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), pp. 76–79.

³⁵ Di Mino, ed., p. 215.

³⁶ Ken Dowden, “Io,” *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3d ed. (1996), p. 763.

criticized by the Greek philosopher Plutarch (*Isis and Osiris* 355B, 358EF, 360E, 361A, 363B, 377F, and 379EF), who ridiculed the Egyptian understanding of animals as gods. Isis and Io have striking similarities but also problematic differences.

Most often in the myth, Io's father is Inachos, the Argive river god (Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 561–89, at 589).³⁷ Alternatively her father is Iasus (Apollodorus, *Library* 2.1.3).³⁸ Her mother, the wife of Inachos, is usually Melia.³⁹ Io is a priestess of Hera, but her beauty inflames Zeus, which, of course, makes his wife jealous. Hera changes Io into a cow, whom she tethers to the olive tree in the sacred grove of the Mycenaeans, and assigns Argos Panoptes ("the all-seeing") to guard her. Some writers say that both Io and Argos were the children of Inachos (Apollodorus). Zeus orders Hermes to steal the cow. Hermes kills Argos, either by throwing a stone at him or by playing his reed pipe, lulling him to sleep so that he can cut off his head with a sword (Ovid, *Met.* 1.679–721).⁴⁰ Hera sends a gadfly after the cow, which drives her mad as she wanders to the north and east, finally arriving in Egypt. Zeus transforms her back into human form, and she bears their son, Epaphos, who continues the royal line.

The myth even in Aeschylus has many variations. In *The Suppliant Maidens*, the tragedian hardly mentions either the sexual encounter with Zeus or Hera's enmity, but in *Prometheus Bound*, in response to night visions

³⁷ Eschyle, *Prométhée Enchaîné* ed. and trans. Paul Mazon Budé (1920–25; reprint, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1995). Aeschylus, trans. Herbert Weir Smyth, in Loeb Classical Library (1922). Compare the more fluent translation by David Grene in *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, vol. 1, Aeschylus, ed. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), pp. 311–51. Bernhard Zimmermann, "Aischylos," in *Der Neue Pauly* (1996), 1:350–57, at p. 353, denies that this work is authentic. Judith A. Swanson, "The Political Philosophy of Aeschylus's Prometheus Bound: Justice as Seen by Prometheus, Zeus, and Io," *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy* 22, no. 2 (1994–95): 215–45, assumes authenticity. Synnove des Bouvrie, "Aiskhulos, Prometheus: An Anthropological Approach," *Méritis: Revue d'anthropologie du monde grec ancien* 8, nos. 1–2 (1993): 187–216, is agnostic. This is not the place to continue the debate. Compare Aeschylus, *The Suppliant Maidens* (also trans. Grene, pp. 179–214), perhaps the oldest extant drama of European literature (Smyth, ed., p. 3), a story of fifty of Io's female descendants, daughters of Danaos, who flee as suppliants to Argos because they refuse to marry fifty of Io's male descendants, sons of Aegyptus. This drama repeatedly refers to Io's suffering, e.g., lines 52, 112–16, 162–63, 291–92, 350–54, 531–99.

³⁸ Apollodorus, *The Library of Greek Mythology* 2.1, "Early Argive Mythology," trans. Robin Hard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 58–60, 196–97, written in the first or second century C.E.

³⁹ S. Eitrem, "Io," *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 9 (1916): 1732–43, at 1732. See K. Waldner, "Io," in *Der neue Pauly* (1998), 5:1053–54.

⁴⁰ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Frank Justus Miller, Loeb Classical Library (1928), p. ix, a work written before his banishment in 7 C.E. For Io's suffering see *Met.* 1.635–39, 646–50, 668, 725, 728; finally she is transformed (738) and worshipped (747). Compare Ovid, *Tristia* 2.297–98. Also Propertius, *Elegies* 2.28.17; 30.29; 33.7, written in the first century B.C.E.; Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.789–92; and Lucan, *The Civil War* 6.363, written in the time of Nero. See also J. Gwyn Griffiths, "Lycophron on Io and Isis," *Classical Quarterly* 36 (1986): 472–77.

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and a riddling oracle, Io's father expels her from the house "that Zeus's eye may cease from longing for you" (654, trans. Grene). She immediately loses her human form and her sanity (674), all because of Zeus. The sexual encounter occurs between cow and bull (651, 676). But in *The Suppliant Maidens* (294), the encounter occurs while Io still has human form. Only after the death of Argos does the goddess send the gadfly who chases the mad Io as she wanders. Madness goes with animal form. In Egypt, Zeus touches the cow with his divine, wonder-working hand, which transforms her into human shape and gives her sanity.

Io wanders to the Io-nian Sea (*Prometheus Bound* 839–41), popularly thought to be named after her, and through the channel of Maeotis, which again according to a popular etymology is then named the Bosphorus ("the passing of the cow," 733). She moves from Europe to Asia (734–35), north to the Caucasus mountains (717–19), and finally to the Nile River (809, 812).⁴¹ In another variation, Lucian skips over this wandering: Hermes escorts her to Egypt where she rules over the winds (Lucian, *Dialogues of the Sea Gods* 318.11).⁴²

The story is known to and criticized by several church fathers, for example, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Lactantius, and Augustine.⁴³ Drawing on diverse evidence, Ferguson concludes: "during the first two centuries of the common era they [Isis and Osiris-Sarapis] were the most popular and widespread of the non-Greek deities."⁴⁴

⁴¹ Jean M. Davison, "Myth and the Periphery," in *Myth and the Polis*, ed. Dora C. Pozzi and J. M. Wickersham (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 49–63, at p. 61: "The major significance of the myth of Io for the Greeks of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. was that it authenticated and legitimated the traditional genealogies on which their history was based—to the extent that they could find a link to Io. Io provides the crucial connection between Greece and Egypt." Apollodorus organized his survey of Greek mythology according to these local genealogies (Argos, Thebes, Athens, Troy, etc.).

⁴² Lucian, trans. M. D. Macleod, Loeb Classical Library (1969).

⁴³ Clement, *Stomateis* 1.75.2, trans. John Ferguson (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1991), p. 79; Eusebius, *Preparation for the Gospel* 2.1, 48cd, trans. Edwin Hamilton Gifford (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1981), 1:53. Daniel E. Gershenson, "A Greek Myth in Jeremiah," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 108 (1996): 192–200, argues that Jer. 46:20–21 reflects the Io/Isis myth. Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* 1.11, trans. Mary Francis McDonald (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1964), p. 47. Augustine, *The City of God* 18.3, trans. Gerald Walsh and Daniel Honan (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1954), pp. 88–89. These church writers' critique was anticipated by Plutarch's sustained, critical allegorization; see *Isis and Osiris* 355B, 358F, 360DEF, 376F–380E, 382BC. For fascinating reflections contrasting the decline of the Isis cult with the rise of Christianity, see Merkelbach, *Isis regina*, (n. 8 above), pp. vii–viii, 66, 72, 82, 87, 118–19, 306, as well as chaps. 10, 20, 24–26.

⁴⁴ Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993), p. 249. See Regina Salditt-Trappmann, *Tempel der Ägyptischen Götter in Griechenland und an der Westküste Kleinasiens*, Études Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain no. 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1970); Michel Malaise, *Les Conditions de pénétration et de diffusion des cultes Égyptiens en Italie*, Études Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain no. 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1972); Günther Höbl, *Zeugnisse Ägyptischer Religion-*

TWO FRESCOES OF IO

Burkhardt Wesenberg discusses the pictures of Io, Argos, and Hermes.⁴⁵ These were originally painted by Nicias of Athens, according to Pliny: “the Athenian Nicias . . . was an extremely careful painter of female portraits. Nicias kept a strict watch on light and shade, and took the greatest pains to make his paintings stand out from the panels. . . . He also executed some large pictures, among them a Calypso, an Io, and an Andromeda” (*Nat. Hist.* 35.130–32, trans. Rackham in LCL).⁴⁶ The earliest of these both chronologically and with respect to its artistic composition is the painting in the House of Livia.⁴⁷ Io, sitting on a rock in the center of the composition, is shown at the initial moment of growing horns and being exposed to suffering.⁴⁸ This is typically indicated in Greco-Roman art by her exposed left breast.⁴⁹ Argos, to the viewer’s right, guards her from behind the rock, and Hermes, to the viewer’s left, is even further in the background behind the rock. Io seems unaware of the two men, who both focus on her, in the picture at least, seemingly unaware of each other. The rock remains in other pictures of this scene but loses its function or even contradicts the scene, which, Wesenberg argues, shows that the other paintings derive from this one. Further, the later paintings are in the third and fourth styles. Several of the later painters cover Io’s

svorstellungen für Ephesus, Études Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l’Empire Romain no. 63 (Leiden: Brill, 1978). Robert A. Wild, “Isis-Sarapis Sanctuaries of the Roman Period,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, Teil II, Band 17, Teilband 4 (1984): 1740–1847, surveys archaeological remains of other such temples, few of which are as early as the first century C.E.—perhaps the one in Campus Martius in Rome is.

⁴⁵ Wesenberg, (n. 23 above), pp. 344–50, with Tafeln 96, 1–3, and Abbildung 1–6, including pictures of Io and Argos (without Hermes) in the Casa dell’Imperatrice di Russia (Abbildung 1), the Casa di Meleagro (Abbildung 2), and in the Macellum at Pompeii (Tafeln 96, 3). See *Collezioni* (n. 22 above), pp. 146–47, no. 43, inventory 9556, Casa di Meleagro (VI 9, 2), tablinio (8).

⁴⁶ See Jacob Isager, *Pliny on Art and Society: The Elder Pliny’s Chapters on the History of Art*, 2d ed. (London: Routledge, 1998); Robertson (n. 23 above), 1:436–39, and vol. 2 with pl. 138c, a fresco of Io and Argos in the macellum at Pompeii.

⁴⁷ I. Iacopi, “Domus: Livia,” in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, ed. E. M. Steinby (Rome: Quasar, 1995), 2:130–32, notes that the second-style picture belongs to the era of Augustus along with those in the Villa di Boscoreale and the Villa dei Misteri (see also n. 20 above). Rizzo (p. 26) calls the painter a master whose work has an excellence rare in Campanian painting. He also observes that two of the characters have inscriptions: ERMHS and IW, although only the omega of Io’s name is certain. See Merkelbach, *Isis regina*, Abbildung 64.

⁴⁸ *Pompei* (n. 22 above), 8:825.

⁴⁹ Compare the reliefs of Claudius and Britannia (pl. XIV) and of Nero and Armenia (pl. XVI), which represent conquered Britannia and Armenia as women, (R. R. R. Smith, “The Imperial Reliefs from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 77 [1987]: 88–138); the monument was built in the reigns of Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero. Below the relief of Augustus, the visual representation is of Aeneas’s flight from Troy (p. 132).

breast (Casa dell'Imperatrice di Russia, Casa di Meleagro, Casa di Io in Herculaneum, Temple of the Isis in Pompeii, and Villa des P. Fannius Synistor in Boscoreale), so that she becomes a proper lady, but this de-emphasizes the motif of her suffering seen in the other paintings (Casa di Livia, Casa del Citarista, and the Macellum in Pompeii).⁵⁰ Later painters also move Io to the side or put her on a higher plane, so that the interaction occurs between the two male figures, as in the Temple of Isis. This artist who painted the temple fresco sidelined Io by painting her on the viewer's left, while in the foreground Hermes hands Argos the syrinx, which will result in his death.⁵¹ In the Temple of Isis, men have taken over the action—once again. Wesenberg notes that Ovid (*Met.* 1.588–779) first introduced the syrinx into the story and recalls that Nicias was known as a painter of women, from which he concludes that Nicias's original painting was of a beautiful Io alone, sprouting horns and with her breast bare. Not even the painting in the House of Livia is an exact reproduction of Nicias's work.

In the second picture in the Temple of Isis, Io, recognized by the horns on her head, is carried by a personification of the Nile.⁵² Isis, seated with a cobra wrapped around her left arm and her feet on a crocodile, receives Io in her sanctuary at Canopos by reaching out with her right hand, which Io takes with her right hand. A small Harpocrates sits below Isis on an urn with water. Above Isis there is a priestess with a sistrum, a ritual rattle, and a priest who shakes a sistrum and a *caduceus*, a symbol of Hermanubis, that is, a herald's staff.⁵³ On the viewer's lower left there

⁵⁰ Wesenberg (pp. 348–49) prints all the pictures listed in the text above.

⁵¹ A good example of this musical instrument can be seen in Stefano de Caro and Luciano Pedicini, *The National Archaeological Museum of Naples* (Napoli: Electa, 1996), p. 242.

⁵² Compare *Collezioni* 136–37, no. 97, inventory 9555, Casa del Duca di Aumale (VI 9, 1); also in Tinh, *Essai* (n. 24 above), pl. XVI.2. But the authors of *Pompei*, 8:837, fig. 206, assert that the Casa del Duca di Aumale is unknown. Merkelbach, *Isis regina*, Abbildung 21, 65. Jean-Claude Grenier, "Isis assise devant Io," *La Parola del Passato* 49/1–2 (1994):22–36, interprets *Oxyrhynchus Papyrus* 1380.

⁵³ De Caro and Pedicini (p. 132) picture a sistrum found at the entrance to the *ekklesiasterion* of the Temple of Isis in Pompeii, which typically created a "din that was so upsetting to the traditionalists in Rome." On the sistrum shaking the cosmic elements, see Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris* 376CD. De Caro comments that archaeologists found numerous such instruments, showing "just how extensively the cult had permeated the society of this small Campanian city, due in part no doubt to the proximity of the cosmopolitan port of Puteoli" (p. 132). On the temple of Sarapis in Puteoli, dating from at least 105 B.C.E., see Stefano De Caro, "La Campania e l'Egitto in età ellenistica e romana," in Pozzi ed., (n. 27 above), pp. 53–58; and Merkelbach, *Isis regina*, Abbildung 116, 150, 213. Puteoli is the port where Paul landed in Italy according to Acts 28:13, where he found Christians. One might easily compare the city of Corinth and the Isis temple in its port, Cenchreae, the home of Phoebe (Rom. 16:1). De Caro and Pedicini also exhibit (p. 131, inventory 6290) a marble head of Isis found at the entrance to the *ekklesiasterion*; "The iconography of the goddess is derived from Aphrodite, and only the attribute which adorned the head, possibly a plume, made her identity explicit." This was a Hellenized cult.

is a small statue of a sphinx, and in the background a great altar with horns, which makes the scene a sanctuary.⁵⁴ Here Io finally finds refuge.

In Egypt, Io/Isis gives birth to Zeus' son, Epaphus, which Stefano De Caro and Luciano Pedicini observe legitimated the Greek Ptolemies in Alexandria by rooting their dynasty in Heracleian and Argive origins, that is, in Greek-Macedonian ancestors of the new Egyptian kingdom.⁵⁵ They say that the prototype of this painting can then be ascribed to Alexandria of the third century B.C.E. But that cannot be why the painting occurs in Roman Pompeii.

Io/Isis could legitimate various foreign rulers of Egypt. In Rome, Augustus had built an arch to commemorate his victory over Pompey (36 B.C.E.) but replaced it with the Actium Arch celebrating his victory over Antony and Cleopatra (31 B.C.E.), who had styled themselves as Dionysus and Isis. Augustus had also built the Temple of Apollo to commemorate his victory over Pompey but later installed in it the rostra captured from the Egyptian ships of Antony and Cleopatra. He "intended to remove from the city's political center all record of the civil wars in which he was a protagonist. . . . Instead . . . a well-orchestrated propaganda campaign presented it as a war between Romans and Eastern barbarians."⁵⁶ The painting of Io/Isis in his wife Livia's house (ca. 30 B.C.E.) must represent an appropriation of his opponents' religion. In 28 B.C.E., Augustus prohibited Egyptian *sacra* inside the *pomerium*, which Sarolta A. Takács interprets as restricting them to temples, an action not affecting "private" art and literature.⁵⁷ This is an odd distinction: Roman houses were not private. Perhaps we can interpret the picture of Io in Livia's house in light of the image of Augustus on the temple gate from Kalabsha in Egypt. "Augustus, depicted as a pharaoh, stands before Osiris and Isis. He is the one giving. Here Augustus symbolically offers the land of Nubia to Isis, and not the other way around."⁵⁸ Io is closely associated with Isis and her rule in the picture in Pompeii.

Mariette De Vos assembled evidence of Egyptian religion not only in the House of Livia, but in the House of Augustus and in the Aula Isiaca, all three on the Palatine, as well as in the Villa Farnesina, said to be owned by Augustus's associate, Agrippa.⁵⁹ She observes that Isis in her role as

⁵⁴ *Pompei*, 8:837.

⁵⁵ De Caro and Pedicini, p. 133; also De Caro, ed. (n. 24 above), p. 55, no. 1.63.

⁵⁶ Paola Guidobaldi, *The Roman Forum*, Electa Guides for the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma (Milan: Electa, 1998), p. 37.

⁵⁷ Sarolta A. Takács, *Isis and Serapis in the Roman World*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, no. 24 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), pp. 75–76, 78.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 100. But Augustus may have offered Isis the land of Nubia to be put under her protection.

⁵⁹ Mariette De Vos, "Nuove Pitture Egittizzanti di Epoca Augusta," in *L'Egitto fuori dell'Egitto: Dalla riscoperta all'Egittologia*, ed. Cristiana Morigi Govi, Silvio Curto, and Sergio Perni-

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wife and sister of Osiris and mother of Horus guarantees the dynastic succession. At the death of Osiris, his son succeeds to the throne.⁶⁰

This throws light not only on the painting of Io/Isis in Livia's house in Rome but also, I suggest, on paintings in the Temple of Isis in Pompeii. The painting of the sarcophagus of Osiris has recently been located next to the painting of Io's reception by Isis.⁶¹ In this second painting, the son of Osiris and Isis, Horus-Harpocrates, sits below her on an urn of the sacred water, usually interpreted allegorically as the Nile flooding and giving life and opulence to Egypt.⁶² But simultaneously, the sarcophagus of [the dead] Osiris is adjacent to the painting of Io/Isis ruling Egypt, while their son sits below her on the holy water. De Vos relates this to Augustus succeeding his divine father, Caesar. In the Temple of Isis in Pompeii, if the painting of the sarcophagus of Osiris was indeed immediately adjacent to the painting of Io's reception by Isis (with Horus on the urn), De Vos's reading of the myth could be seen at a glance. The political allegory would be capable of multiple reinterpretations. The freedman Numerius rebuilt the Temple of Isis, and his young son was therefore promoted into the Pompeian curia. Might not Horus in the painting of Io's reception by Isis be a portrait of Numerius's young son, Numerio Popidius Celsinus?⁶³

Frederick E. Brenk emphasizes a religious interpretation of the two central Io/Isis panels in the *ekklesiasterion*: both represent the mercy of Isis related to the role she plays in Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*. The new hymns

gotti (Bologna: CLUEB, 1991), pp. 121–27, and also her “Egittomania” (n. 27 above), pp. 59–71.

⁶⁰ De Vos, “Egittomania,” p. 59.

⁶¹ The picture of the Sarcophagus of Osiris is the west painting on the north wall, that is, next to the central painting of Io, Argos and Hermes, according to Valeria Sampaolo in De Caro, ed., pp. 35, 57, and Tavola XIII; see Tinh, *Essai*, pl. X: Adoration de la momie d'Osiris. But in *Pompeii* (n. 22 above), 8:835, fig. 204, Sampaolo argues (six years later) that it was the east painting on the south wall, next to the central painting of the Reception of Io by Isis. Stefano De Caro, Soprintendente di Napoli e Caserta, in a personal letter (January 22, 2002), observes that a reading of the *Pompeianarum Antiquitatum Historia*, ed. G. Fiorelli, 3 vols. (Naples, 1860–64), confirms Sampaolo's later placing of the Sarcophagus of Osiris fresco on the south wall. On the “Adoration of the Mummy of Osiris,” see Frederick E. Brenk, “The Isis Campensis of Katja Lembke,” in *Imago antiquitatis: Religions et iconographie du monde Romain: Mélanges offerts à Robert Turcan*, ed. Nicole Blanc and André Turcan (Paris: de Boccard, 1999), pp. 134–143, with figs. 1–2, p. 140. On the twisted landscape in this and other frescoes in the *ekklesiasterion*, see Barbara Hughes Fowler, *The Hellenistic Aesthetic* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), chaps. 3 and 7, esp. pp. 107–9.

⁶² *Iside: Il Mito, il Mistero, la Magia* (n. 24 above), p. 439.

⁶³ Portraits occur elsewhere in Pompeian frescoes, e.g., in the Villa of the Mysteries. See Günter Zuntz, “On the Dionysiac Fresco in the Villa dei Misteri at Pompeii,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 49 (June 1963): 177–201, with pls. I–VII, at p. 191: “The faces of the human persons on the fresco, almost all of them, are unmistakably portraits.” Iphigenia and her brother Orestes are painted in the House of the Lyre Player (I 4, 5.25), where Orestes is a portrait of Nero (*Pompeii* 1:118).

of the Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman period humanized some of Isis' features: "the destiny of every man then depended on the goddess who, in her love for the suffering, oppressed, imprisoned, and imperiled, became a succor and a savior of mankind. It was this hellenized Isis who conquered the Mediterranean world."⁶⁴

SUFFERING PORTRAYED IN THE RITUALS OF ISIS (AND ELEUSIS)

Io does not die in the myth and ritual of her cult, in contrast to the myth and rituals related to Osiris; this article primarily concerns the goddess Isis, not Osiris. Some argue that it is misleading to speak of "dying and rising gods."⁶⁵ Greece (Eleusis) and the East did know of dying gods; there were always two, usually an older female goddess and a younger male partner who dies. The older female mourns, and death is partially abolished, but Gerd Theissen argues that there is never a real resurrection.⁶⁶ Osiris is killed violently, struck or drowned by his brother Set, then cut to pieces. The overcoming of death is not resurrection: Osiris rules as king of the underworld. The ritual around the fate of dying deities is lamentation: cult members join the female deity in mourning the loss of the partner deity. Cult members do not experience the death themselves but lament it. Other scholars argue that Osiris is indeed raised from the dead.⁶⁷ Since this article focuses on Isis, I will not debate this crucial question. But in the Christian sacraments, adherents experience Jesus' death in symbolic form, being buried in baptism and eating food identified with Jesus' death. The longing for nearness to the deity also found in cults of dying deities becomes central and is transformed. Christ is close to

⁶⁴ Louis V. Zabkar, *Hymns to Isis in Her Temple at Philae* (Hanover, N.H.: Brandeis University Press, 1988), p. 160; see also pp. 153–54. For the comparison with Apuleius, *Met.* 11.25, "thou bringest the sweet love of a mother to the trials of the unfortunate" (Lucius's prayer to Isis, p. 146). I thank Brenk for the reference to Zabkar.

⁶⁵ Gerd Theissen, *The Religion of the Earliest Churches: Creating a Symbolic World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), pp. 58–59.

⁶⁶ Theissen, p. 58, citing Dieter Zeller, "Die Mysterienkulte und die paulinische Soteriologie (Röm 6, 1–11), Eine Fallstudie zum Synkretismus im Neuen Testament," in *Suchbewegungen: Synkretismus-kulturelle Identität und kirchliches Bekenntnis* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991), pp. 42–46. See also A. J. M. Wedderburn, *Baptism and Resurrection: Studies in Pauline Theology against Its Graeco-Roman Background* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1987); Walter Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 23, 27, 87, 99–101. See Frederick Brenk, review of *Ancient Mystery Cults*, by Walter Burkert, *Gnomon* 61 (1989): 289–92.

⁶⁷ R. E. Witt, *Isis in the Graeco-Roman World* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1971), pp. 139, 162–63, 256; Merkelbach, *Isis regina*, (n. 8 above), pp. 19, 178, 232–35, who cites Diodorus Siculus 1.25.6 and the Paris immortality liturgy (the Mithras liturgy). Diodorus is striking: Isis not only "discovered the drug which gives immortality (ἀθανασίας φάρμακον), by means of which she raised from the dead (ἀναστήσαι) her son Horus . . . giving him his soul again, but also made him immortal" (ἀθανασίδε; trans. C. H. Oldfather, Loeb Classical Library [1946]).

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Christians' transitoriness, wretchedness, and guilt.⁶⁸ The Egyptian aretalogies of Isis do not mention her suffering, for example, the epigraphic hymn from Cyme is silent about her suffering.⁶⁹ Plutarch, the Greek philosopher, does:

But the avenger, the sister and wife of Osiris, after she had quenched and suppressed the madness and fury of Typhon, was not indifferent to the contexts and struggles (τοὺς ἄθλους καὶ τοὺς ἀγῶνας) which she had endured, nor to her own wanderings nor to her manifold deeds of wisdom and many feats of bravery, nor would she accept oblivion and silence for them, but she intermingled in the most holy rites portrayals and suggestions and representations of her experiences at that time, and sanctified them, both as a lesson in godliness and an encouragement for men and women who find themselves in the clutch of like calamities (συμφορῶν; Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris* 27 [361DE]).⁷⁰

Isis' suffering as she wanders is a constituent aspect of the myth that can be observed in both Plutarch's text (*Isis and Osiris* 354A, 356E, 358A, 373A) and the popular visual representations of Io at Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Rome.

This myth and ritual is analogous to those at Eleusis, where Demeter is filled with sorrow for her daughter Kore/Persephone (*Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 192–211).⁷¹ The myth has meaning in an agricultural society: Persephone remains in the underworld while the seed is underground, and she returns when it begins growing.⁷² But a second, anthropological meaning is that "the human person, threatened by transience and death, is to receive a share in the vital force of nature, which is ever renewing

⁶⁸ Theissen's phrase for this is "competitive syncretism" (p. 60). Compare Ferguson (n. 44 above), pp. 573–74, 579–83. See Robert A. Wild, S.J., *Water in the Cultic Worship of Isis and Sarapis*, *Études Préliminaires aux Religions Orientales dans l'Empire Romain* no. 87 (Leiden: Brill, 1981), p. 69: "At least one segment of the cult as it is found in the Roman period associated Nile water very strongly with Osiris. For them, the pitcher containing Nile water was the 'summi numinis veneranda effigies,' the revered image of the great Osiris. . . . Perhaps in Roman times Nile water was more often valued as a sign of the presence of the gods rather than of their power. . . . I am reminded of the shift in Christian Eucharistic practice from ancient and patristic times to the medieval era. The Eucharistic bread, once valued as a substance to be shared in the community and eaten on certain occasions, instead became something to be looked at and adored." Compare Wild, p. 128.

⁶⁹ Text in Maria Totti, *Ausgewählte Texte der Isis- und Sarapis-Religion*, *Subsidia Epigraphica*, no. 12 (Hildesheim: Olms, 1985), pp. 1–4. Diodorus of Sicily 1.27 has lines 1–11 and 57. See Zabkar, pp. 140–41; Merkelbach, *Isis regina*, pp. 113–19; Klauck (n. 3 above), p. 132; Ramsay Macmullen and Eugene N. Lane, *Paganism and Christianity, 100–425 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), pp. 53–54.

⁷⁰ Plutarch, *Isis and Osiris*, trans. Babbitt, Loeb Classical Library (1969).

⁷¹ Cited by Klauck, p. 92. *Hesiod, Homeric Hymns and Homerica*, trans. H. G. Evelyn-White, Loeb Classical Library (1977).

⁷² Ken Dowden, *Death and the Maiden: Girls' Initiation Rites in Greek Mythology* (London: Routledge, 1989), chap. 6, "Mycenae: Io and Argos 'All-Seeing,'" interprets these stories as the end of maidenhood terminated by marriage and by the birth of the first child.

itself.”⁷³ A fragment of Plutarch refers to “initiation into the great mysteries” as

straying and wandering, the weariness of running this way and that, and nervous journeys through darkness that reach no goal, and then immediately before the consummation every possible terror, shivering and trembling and sweating and amazement. But after this a marvelous light meets the wanderer. . . . And amidst these, he walks at large in a new freedom, now perfect, and fully initiated, celebrating the sacred rites, a garland upon his head, and converses with pure and holy men; he surveys the uninitiated, unpurified mob here on earth, the mob of living men who, herded together in mirk and deep mire, trample one another down and in their fear of death cling to their ills, since they disbelieve in the blessings of the other world.⁷⁴

Here the mysteries have become gnostic, individualized eschatology.⁷⁵

CONCLUSION: THE CROSS IN EARLY CHRISTIAN ART AND RITUAL

When Io arrives in Egypt, her reason is restored and her sufferings end. In contrast to Jesus’ passion, her suffering and transformation do not conclude in her sacrificial death but, rather, in the death of Argos, her tormentor, and in the political dynasty of her posterity.⁷⁶ She does not arrive in Egypt to a cross, but to a crown, or in political context, she arrives as a Greek (Ptolemaic) or Roman (Antony, Octavian) conqueror. “According to Hermes, she’ll have power over those at sea and be our mistress. . . . No horns now, or tail or cloven hooves, but instead a lovely girl” (Lucian, *Dialogues of the Sea Gods* 318). This transformation from suf-

⁷³ Klauck, p. 104. Compare H. S. Versnel, *Ter Unus: Isis, Dionysos, Hermes: Three Studies in Henotheism*, Studies in Greek and Roman Religion, no. 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1990), p. 46, of Isis, quoting Artemidorus, *Oneir.* 2.39, and Isidorus, *Hymn* 1.26–34.

⁷⁴ Plutarch, frag. 178, trans. Sandbach, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 15 (1969), pp. 318–19. See Burkert, pp. 91, 103; Merkelbach, *Isis regina*, pp. 174, 235; and Klauck, p. 104–5, on this text.

⁷⁵ Hans Dieter Betz, *Plutarch’s Theological Writings and Early Christian Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), p. 321. Frederick E. Brenk, “A Gleaming Ray: Blessed Afterlife in the Mysteries,” in his *Relighting the Souls: Studies in Plutarch, in Greek Literature, Religion, and Philosophy, and in the New Testament Background* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1998), pp. 291–308. First published in *Illinois Classical Studies* 18 (1993): 147–64.

⁷⁶ After building the temple of Apollo in 28 B.C.E., Augustus attached to it the colonnade of Danaos’s fifty daughters (descendants of Io; see n. 37 above) in 25 B.C.E. (Carettoni, *Haus* [n. 28 above], p. 9). For clarification of the mythical context of Augustus’s house, see Timothy Peter Wiseman, “Conspicui Postes Tectaque Digna Deo: The Public Image of Aristocratic and Imperial Houses in the Late Republic and Early Empire,” in *L’Urbs: Espace Urbain et Histoire (1er siècle av. J.-C.–IIIe siècle ap. J.-C.)*, Actes du colloque international organisé par le Centre national de la recherche scientifique et l’École française de Rome, Rome, 8–12 mai 1985, Collection de l’École Française de Rome no. 98 (1987), pp. 393–413, p. 403, who cites Ovid, *Tristia* 3.1.27–38, and *Met.* 1.168–76. Heracles was a descendant of Io, and also one of the five founders of Rome (Dionysius, *Ant. Rom.* 1.34.1).

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fering and powerlessness into power is close to what some in Corinth understood Paul to be preaching. “Already you are rich; already you rule as kings!” (1 Cor. 4:8), Paul responds in shock. Rather, he counters, “we have this power in clay pots, in order that the abundance of power might belong to God, and not to us” (2 Cor. 4:7).⁷⁷

The aim of this article has been to present new aesthetic data from Roman houses that may shed light on how Paul’s Greco-Roman auditors—and spectators (Gal. 6:17)—might have heard and even seen his proclamation of Christ’s and his own suffering, not to explicate Pauline texts themselves. I will only point to relevant texts. In 2 Cor. 6:4–5, Paul lists nine hardships (*peristaseis*); the similar catalog in 2 Cor. 4:8–9 attests that he does not despair (4:1, 16).⁷⁸ Paul attributes these hardships to God (1 Cor. 4:9; 2 Cor. 6:9): his suffering plays a role in the divine plan, as it is inseparable from the mission to which God called him. He gives himself up to death for Jesus’ sake (2 Cor. 4:11), joyfully accepting all that his ministry involves (2 Cor. 12:10): “I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties” (NIV). The long catalog in 2 Cor. 11:23–28 includes journeying: “three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers and sisters” (verses 25c–26). Paul’s accomplishments belong to God: “I can do all things in him who gives me strength” (Phil. 4:13). “It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, ‘For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered’ [Ps. 44:22]. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Rom. 8:33b–37 NRSV). Divine power is revealed through Paul’s frailty. Hardships display the power of God and simultaneously Paul’s weakness (2 Cor. 4:7, 11, 11:30, 12:10). “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord” (1 Cor. 1:31, quoting Jer. 9:24).

Second, in conclusion, I must also address a possible objection to my

⁷⁷ See John T. Fitzgerald, *Cracks in an Earthen Vessel: An Examination of the Catalogues of Hardships in the Corinthian Correspondence*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series no. 99 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1984); Scott Hafemann, “‘Because of Weakness’ (Gal. 4:13): The Role of Suffering in the Mission of Paul,” in *The Gospel to the Nations: Perspectives on Paul’s Mission. In honour of Peter T. O’Brien*, ed. Peter Bole and Mark Thompson (Leicester: Apollos, 2000), pp. 131–46. Hafemann cites his two earlier books on the theme.

⁷⁸ Fitzgerald, pp. 204–6, on which this paragraph is dependent.

reconstruction based on the observation that “the earliest known [Christian] representations of Jesus’ crucifixion date to the early fifth century, and are extremely rare until the seventh.”⁷⁹ The lack of early Christian visual representations of Jesus’ death corresponds with scholars’ observations with respect to Paul’s theology in the century after he died: “the authority of Paul is, to be sure, acknowledged in a formal way but Paul’s fundamental view of justification is hardly to be found.”⁸⁰ Robin Margaret Jensen argues that the problem is not as severe as it seems; for example, in those early centuries visual representations such as that of the lamb of God and the sacrifice of Isaac carried similar symbolic value.

On the other hand, Jensen refers to visual representations of the cross (Greek: *stauros*), the staurogram (see below), in early Christian papyri, the oldest Christian artifacts. Christian scribes developed a unique system of abbreviating approximately a dozen words, sacred names (*nomina sacra*) and others, including the noun (σταυρός) and verb (σταυρόω) for “cross/crucify.” Three of the most important of these papyri are papyrus 46 (the Pauline epistles including Hebrews but without the Pastorals), papyrus 66 (the gospel of John 1–21), and papyrus 75 (the gospels of Luke 3–24 and John 1–15). Some scholars date these three papyri in the late second century, while others place them in the early third.⁸¹ Papyrus 46 abbreviates the verb “to crucify” eight times and the noun “cross” twelve times by omitting the diphthong “au” from στ(au)ρός/στ(au)ρόω.⁸² But in papyrus 66, the abbreviation becomes an aesthetic image. Eleven or twelve times in the fragmentary text of John 19 (verses 6 [perhaps 3 times], 15 [perhaps 2 times], 16, 18, 19, 20, 25, 31, and perhaps 41), not only is au omitted, but the letters *tau* (τ) and *rho* (ρ), thrown together in the abbreviation, are combined to form a staurogram, for example, in verse 19, Pilate put the title on the *σ̅ϣ̅ου* (see fig. 12). Curiously, once in papyrus 66, the verb is neither abbreviated nor aesthetically represented but simply

⁷⁹ Robin Margaret Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art* (New York: Routledge, 2000), chap. 5, p. 131. Contrast my argument with Graydon F. Snyder, *Ante Pacem: Archaeological Evidence of Church Life before Constantine* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1985), pp. 165–66, and thus with the argument of my friend Daryl Schmidt, “The Jesus Tradition in the Common Life of the Early Church,” in *Common Life in the Early Church: Essays Honoring Graydon F. Snyder*, ed. Julian V. Hills with Richard B. Gardner, Robert Jewett, Robert Neff, Peter Richardson, David M. Scholer, and Virginia Wiles (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity International, 1998), pp. 135–46.

⁸⁰ Georg Strecker, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. M. E. Boring (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2000), p. 18. This is nuanced in William S. Babcock, ed., *Paul and the Legacies of Paul* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990).

⁸¹ Kurt Aland, *Studien zur Überlieferung des Neuen Testaments und Seines Textes* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967), pp. 91–92, 102, dates papyri 46 and 66 “around 200” and papyrus 75 to “the beginning of the third century.”

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 175.

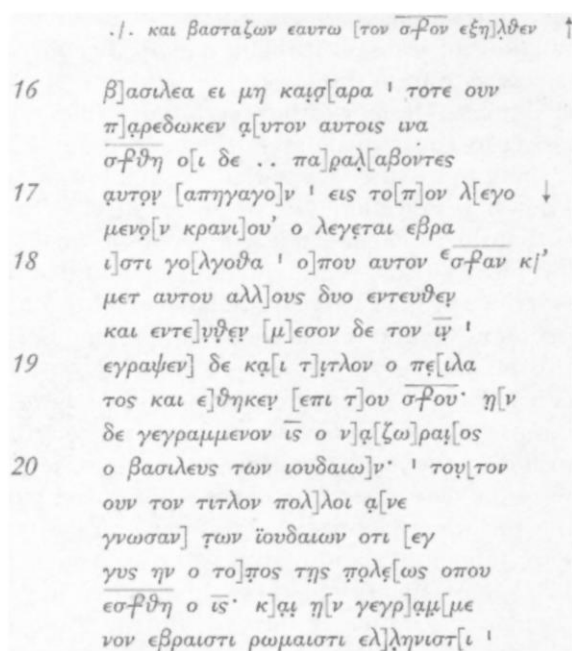


FIG. 12.—Gospel of John 19:16–20 in papyrus 66, dated ca. 200. Staurograms occur in verses 16, 18, 19, and 20. *Papyrus Bodmer II, Supplément, Evangile de Jean, chap. 14–21*, ed. Victor Martin and J. W. B. Barns (Cologny-Geneva: Bibliothèque Bodmer, 1962), p. 37. Published by permission of the Fondation Bodmer, Geneva.

written ἑσταύρωσαν (John 19:23). Thus in one of the earliest Christian artifacts we have, text and art are combined to emphasize “Christus crucifixus.”⁸³ Similarly in papyrus 75, the staurogram occurs twice (Luke 14:27, 24:7) and the abbreviation once (Luke 23:26). Also in the third century, papyrus 45 has the abbreviation twice (Mark 8:34; Luke 14:27); papyrus 80 (consisting of only one verse, John 3:34) has two staurograms,

⁸³ Matthew Black, “The Chi-Rho Sign—Christogram and/or Staurogram?” in *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce on His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1970), pp. 319–27, at p. 327. Now see Larry W. Hurtado, “The Earliest Evidence of an Emerging Christian Material and Visual Culture: The Codex, the *Nomina Sacra* and the Staurogram,” in *Text and Artifact in the Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity: Essays in Honour of Peter Richardson*, ed. Stephen G. Wilson and Michel Desjardins, *Studies in Christianity and Judaism*, no. 9 (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2000), pp. 271–88.

not in the text but concluding the verso and recto sides of the papyrus; and papyrus 91 has one staurogram (Acts 2:36). In conclusion, there are four early papyri with the staurogram (papyruses 66, 75, 80, and 91), and two that abbreviate “cross/crucify” (papyruses 45 and 46).⁸⁴ The staurogram constitutes a Christian artistic emphasis on the cross within the earliest textual tradition. It is not surprising, then, that a Christian apologist, Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 29.6 (closely related to Tertullian’s *Apology*, written in 197 C.E.), responded to critics that “crosses are not objects that we worship.”⁸⁵

⁸⁴ These papyri have been assembled by Philip W. Comfort and David P. Barrett, eds., *The Text of the Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts: New and Complete Transcriptions with Photographs*, 2d ed. (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 2001).

⁸⁵ G. W. Clarke, *The Octavius of Marcus Minucius Felix*, Ancient Christian Writers, no. 39 (New York: Newman, 1974), p. 106, cited by Jensen, p. 141. She also (p. 138) quotes Tertullian, *Adv. Marc.* 3.22, who recommends tracing the symbol of the cross on the forehead “in all the ordinary actions of daily life.” The sign of the cross is made over the bread (διεχ-ἀράξεν τῷ ἄρτῳ τὸν σταυρόν) after the Eucharistic prayer according to the Acts of Thomas 50, written in the second century. R. A. Lipsius and M. Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apochrypha* (1883–91; reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1959), 2:166, 18. I owe this final reference to Salvatore Pricoco and Manlio Simonetti, eds., *La Preghiera dei Cristiani* (Milan: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 2000), pp. 24–25.