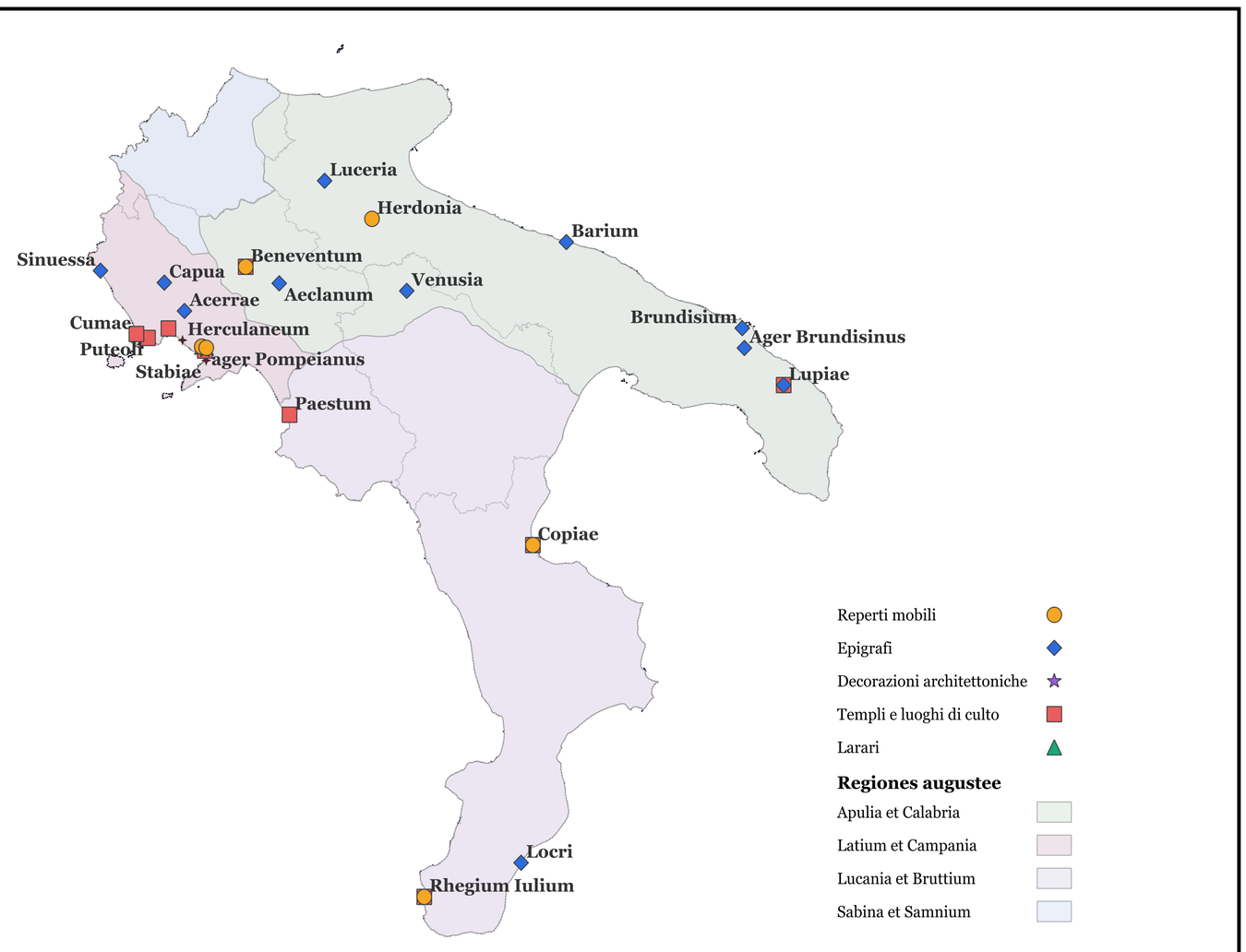
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Gods in the City: Preliminary Evidence for Isiac Cults in Public and Private Contexts in Roman Southern Italy

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Research question. What can "public" and "private" explain about Isiac cults in Roman southern Italy (Augustan Regiones I–III)? Sanctuaries, inscriptions, household assemblages and funerary monuments document different activities, not a single religious affiliation. This study examines how spaces, initiatives and practices intersected with civic, domestic and commemorative settings.

Sacred space: evidence and chronology. At Pompeii, recent excavations near the *Iseum* uncovered archaeobotanical and burnt fauna remains associated with the post-62 CE obliteration of an Augustan exedra. They offer evidence for activities involving offerings, but not an intact ritual sequence. The extent of the post-earthquake rebuilding remains debated. At *Copiae* (Casa Bianca), the Julio-Claudian monumental complex comprised a porticoed courtyard and a podium temple. A later dedication to Isis by C. Marcius Silvanus (RICIS 505/1101; Domitian' period or 2nd c. CE) and Egyptianizing decoration support its Isiac identification. The courtyard's hydraulic system may have enabled temporary flooding, hypothetically interpreted as an evocation of the Nile inundation. At *Lupiae*, excavations revealed a portico, inscribed *labrum* and an underground room tentatively interpreted as a purgatorium in an early Imperial sanctuary. At Beneventum, obelisks of 88/89 CE (RICIS 505/0801–0802) and Egyptian and Graeco-Roman sculptures attest a monumental Isiac presence, although the sanctuary's location is uncertain.



Distribuzione preliminare delle attestazioni isiache nelle regiones I–III. Localizzazioni convenzionali. Elaborazione cartografica dell'autrice.

Who makes a cult public? Individual or family-funded works could receive civic recognition without implying municipal administration of a sanctuary. At Pompeii, the restoration of the *Iseum* attributed to six-year-old N. Popidius Celsinus brought his admission to the *ordo decurionum* (RICIS 504/0202; 62-79 CE). At Paestum, Laureia Polla restored an *aedes Isidis* and porticoes at her expense with a decurional decree (RICIS 507/0101; dating disputed). At *Puteoli*, Cn. Pompeius Euphrosynus contributed works for a temple, consecrated a golden image of Serapis and received civic honours (EDR145163; 129 CE).

Religious roles and civic status. At Acerrae, Cn. Stennius Egnatius Primus held municipal offices and is described as *sacerdos publicus* of Isis and Serapis (RICIS 504/0701; 2nd/3rd c. CE, debated). At *Aeclanum*, Cantria Longina was priestess of Isis Regina and Magna Mater and flaminica of Diva Iulia Pia Augusta (RICIS 505/0901). The identification of Diva Iulia Pia Augusta remains debated: Julia, daughter of Titus, would support a late-1st-c. CE date, whereas Julia Domna would place the inscription after 217 CE. At Brundisium, L. Pacilius Taurus held other priesthoods; his sacra Isidis indicate participation in Isiac rites, not necessarily another priesthood (RICIS 505/0301).

Isiac images in domestic contexts. At Pompeii, the House of the Golden Cupids housed an Isiac shrine alongside a *lararium*, while the *Praedia* of Julia Felix included a painted *sacrarium*. At Boscoreale, Fondo d'Acunzo included Isis-Fortuna alongside other gods; Fondo Giovanni Imperiali yielded more Isiac images and a *sistrum*, although original associations are partly uncertain. At Scafati, Isis Panthea (dated either to the 1st c. BCE or CE) combined attributes of Isis-Hathor, Fortuna and Ceres and was found with Venus and Agathodaimon. Beyond the Vesuvian area, six bronzes from a domestic room at *Copiae* (Parco del Cavallo) have been proposed as a *lararium* assemblage; identifications of the bull as Apis and the nursing cow as Isis-Hathor remain hypotheses, supported by different iconographic evidence.

Isiac references in commemoration. *Sistra* appear on funerary monuments for Caecilia Pyrallis (Lucera; RICIS 505/0701) and C. Antonius Achaicus (Tuturano; RICIS 505/0201). At Locri Epizephyrii, Tauriana's epitaph (RICIS 506/0201; late 2nd–early 3rd c. CE) records a funerary initiative by one association, or perhaps two, linked to Serapis and Juno. Images and collective dedications do not by themselves reveal the deceased's precise cult role or exclusive allegiance.

Interpretation. The comparison reveals different ways in which Isiac cults intersected with urban and social life: monumental sanctuaries and ritual practices; individually financed works receiving civic recognition; priesthoods connected with municipal status; and divine images and symbols in domestic and funerary contexts. These configurations cannot be reduced to a simple public/private divide. Individual initiatives could acquire collective significance without implying civic administration of worship, while domestic and funerary evidence does not necessarily indicate exclusive religious affiliation. The resulting cultic landscape reveals locally specific forms of religious participation, shaped by the interaction of material settings, individual actions and social and institutional relationships.

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