

The Suffering of Isis in Rome (80 B.C- 37 A.D)

Wahid Omran

Doctorate lecturer of Guidance Dep. Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, Fayoum Univ.

Wao00@fayoum.edu.eg

Introduction

The worship of Isis was among the first Egyptian cults to spread through the Mediterranean world since the 4th century B.C. Her Hellenization process occurred in Egypt itself accompanying the creation of the cult of Serapis himself during the fourth century B.C. By the second century B.C Isis and Serapis were already known in Italy; their worship seems to have been carried there by merchants, legates and lesser government-officials, and to have spread from Rome through the Italian peninsula and beyond reaching the Great Brittan.

Isis became the beloved goddess of Roman merchants on their way to the Delian market. Later by the conquest of Egypt by Octavian, a direct connection between Egypt and Rome was created; which facilitates the introduction of Isis in Rome. Isis suffered a lot by the Senators and by Augustus himself, but finally she was able to dominate Rome, and many believers and followers from all Roman social classes were adherents of Isis and the Roman Emperors considered her cult as protector of their rule; so many Isaeums were erected for her cult inside Rome.

The problem

Isis suffered in both Republican and the first year of Imperial Rome for many years, this suffering take the forms of deportations of believers, the destruction of temples and sanctuaries, the crucifixion of priests, the destruction of images of the divinity. The research studies the phases of the introduction of the cult of Isis in Rome, if the political conflict between the conservatives against the populists caused negative impact on the Egyptian cults, especially on the cult of Isis in the Republican Rome?. Did the personal hostility by the Senate and the Romans against Cleopatra have a negative role of the Isiac cult in Rome?. Especially Cleopatra resembled with Isis and connected with her worship in Egypt. Finally the research follows the reasons how Isis cult succeeded to be one of the most important state-cult in Rome? though all of these hostile's conditions.

Conclusion

The spread of the Egyptian cults- especially the cult of Isis- from Alexandria to the whole world, not only the Hellenistic one, is considered one of the most remarkable religious developments in antiquity. The suffering of the Isiac cult in Rome was mainly for both special and political reasons, mainly in Republican Rome. The bad propaganda of Augustus and the Roman poets against Antony and Cleopatra integrated anti-Egyptian attitude against the Egyptian cults. The special attributes and aspects of Isis, in addition to her assimilation with many other goddesses in the Hellenistic world was a main real guarantor for the success of her worship.