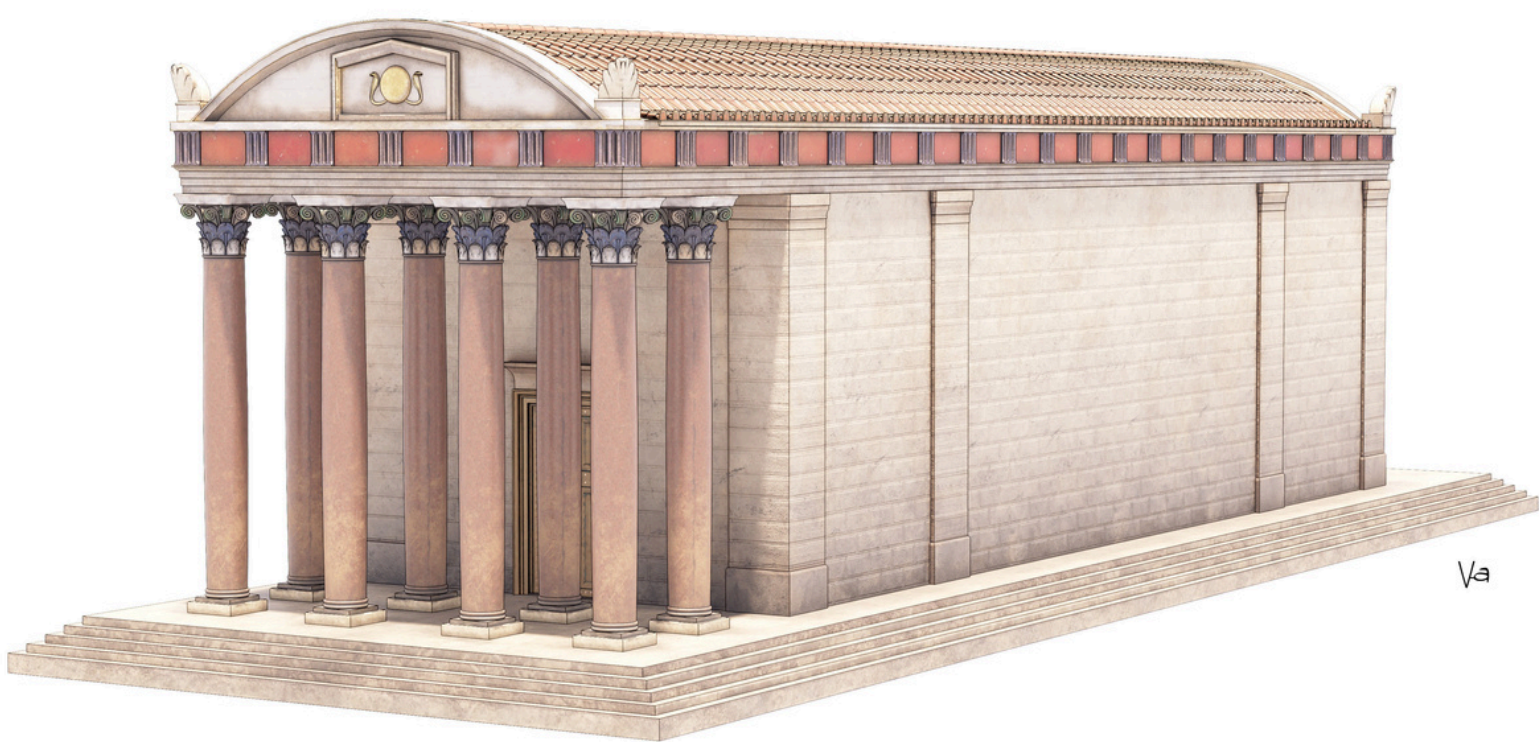


A Temple to Isis in Alexandria



Since 1996, the remains of a temple have been gradually discovered, excavated and identified by the IEASM on the sunken island of Antirhodos in the eastern port of Alexandria – the ancient *Portus Magnus*. Recent finds provide evidence that the temple functioned as a sanctuary for the personal cult of both **Ptolemy XII**, as Neo Osiris-Dionysos, and his daughter the famous **Cleopatra VII** as Nea Isis-Aphrodite.

The publication “**The Iseum of the Royal Island of Antirrhodos**” by the Oxford Centre for Maritime Archaeology (OCMA) presents the results of this long-term research and examines the archaeological finds of the temple and its changing role in Alexandria during the reign of the Ptolemies, which ended with the death of Cleopatra VII, and then in the early years of Roman occupation.

“Based on the archaeological finds, we can now reconstruct the Temple of Isis, the **Iseum**, very well,” says Franck Goddio.



Photo: Christoph Gerigk ©Franck Goddio/Hilti Foundation

Remains of the temple to Isis

“The research results show that it underwent several **phases of renovation and expansion** before it was destroyed by an earthquake somewhere in the middle of the 50’s AD.” Finds from its foundation phase in the 3rd century BC have allowed it to be identified as a temple to the god Osiris. The discovery of this early phase was aided by the use of new geophysical equipment, allowing the team to carefully locate excavations into the earliest deposits from the temple.

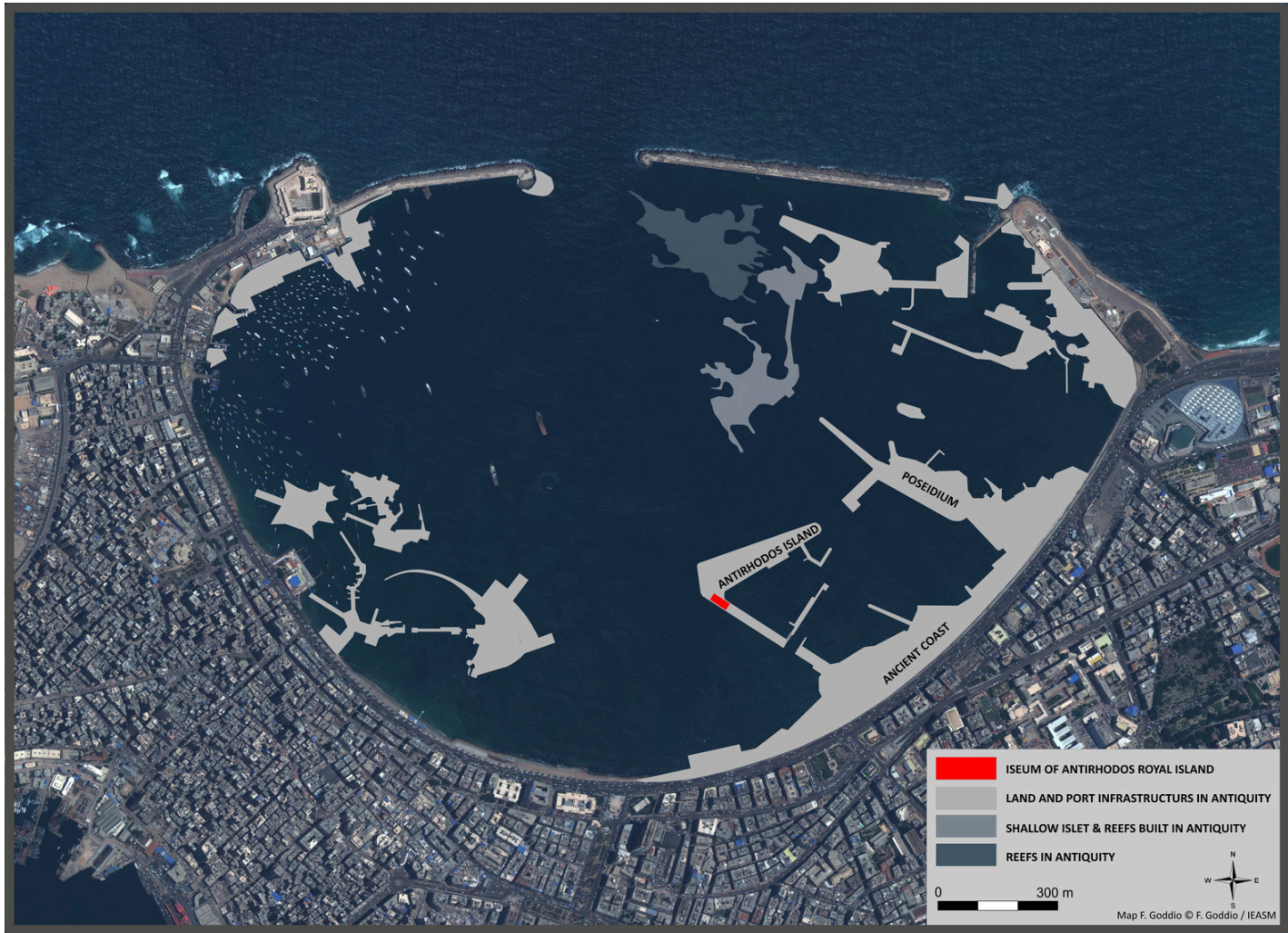
Numerous artifacts from the time of Cleopatra VII and her father, Ptolemy XII, have been recovered, including 21 silver and bronze coins of the rulers. Objects from the temple's treasury, eight-meter-high granite columns, statues, building decorations and mosaic elements were also found. The finds also include parts of frescoes with preserved colour pigments.



Architectual elements of the temple to Isis.

The discoveries are due to the fact that parts of the temple collapsed into the harbour during the **earthquake** and these remains were protected from the clearing up and removal of the ruins that remained on land.

Investigations into the Temple to Isis are still ongoing. However, experts are already classifying the discovery as a significant milestone in the study of Cleopatra VII.



Map of the ancient remains of the Portus Magnus with the Iseum on the Island of Antirhodos identified by the IEASM superimposed over a satellite image.

Objects: Temple to Isis. Antirhodos Island, eastern harbour of Alexandria
 Source:

Franck Goddio: The Iseum of the Royal Island of Antirhodos – Excavations in the Portus Magnus of Alexandria, 12th volume in the Oxford Centre for Maritime Archaeology series, 2025.
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