Placing *paniskoi* herms within Augustan propaganda at Pompeii

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The recent publication of a bronze double-sided herm depicting a *paniskos* and a *paniske* from the Los Angeles County Museum\(^1\) inspired this essay, which attempts to correct some errors that have persisted in the literature on a group of 5 herms said to be from Torre del Greco and another group of 5 herms of the same type from Pompeii that are now in the Naples Museum.\(^2\) Although there are slight differences among the extant herms of this type, they share an exuberant Late Hellenistic style, with fine details including inlaid eyes and teeth (apparently of silver but untested) and elaborate hairstyles embellished with ivy leaves, berries and goat horns.\(^3\) Some examples have slightly different base mechanisms, but all once shared interesting details, such as the *paniskos’s* open mouth that reveals a silvery toothed grin, goat ears, and the glands of a male goat incised on his neck. As the publication history of these herms has become thoroughly confused, the first part of this article seeks to correct some errors and to offer an updated catalogue of the herms not in Naples. In the second part, I argue that most of the herms known today probably come from the same balustrade in front of the Temple of Fortuna Augusta at Pompeii, where they contributed to the emperor’s new political ideology.

Five very similar but not completely identical herms (figs. 1-2) were excavated near the Temple of Fortuna Augusta at Pompeii in 1833-34; they are part of the large group

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2 Many of the same errors from the earlier literature can also be found in M. Levkoff, *Hearst, the collector* (New York 2008) 133 and 221-23: “One of seven bronze examples of the same model, all of which are believed to have come from an excavation around Pompeii (probably Torre del Greco) in the second half of the nineteenth century”; E. Gazda in ead. (ed.), *The Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii: ancient ritual, modern muse* (Ann Arbor, MI 2000) no. 65 (p. 197) repeats the errors found in D. Mitten and S. Doeringer, *Master bronzes from the classical world* (Boston, MA 1967) no. 294, p. 296. The literature sometimes describes the herms as satyrs, but the explicit goat attributes on the herms clearly relates them to Pan’s iconography, even if the Romans sometimes conflated Pans and satyrs (who are usually more horse-like); see M. Padgett, *The centaur’s smile: the human animal in early Greek art* (New Haven, CT 2003) 27.
3 The published sizes given are often contradictory for the same herm, but all are c.17 cm tall. I exclude a Pan/satyr bust once in the G. Ortiz Collection because it does not seem to be from the same series; see the exhibition catalogue, *Pompeii: Leben und Kunst in den Vesuvstädten* (Zurich 1974) no. 246 on p. 247. Also very similar is a herm sold at Sotheby’s New York, on Nov. 29, 1989, lot 95: the property of Dennis Branch, an 18.7-cm bronze double-sided herm of a *paniskos* and *paniske* with silvery inlay in the eyes and teeth, but with two drilled holes on a scalloped lower edge for attachment to a shaft; it has a slightly stiffer style, lacking some details like the hoofs of the *nebris*. A single-sided herm of a grinning *paniskos* with silvery inlaid eyes and teeth, but of a different form with an integral shaft, now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon (inv. E 413-8), came from the Feuardent collection in the 19th c. and seems to be of a similar style and date to the Sotheby’s herm: see G. Galliano, “À propos d’un buste de Pan en forme de terme,” *Mélanges en hommage à Dominique Brachlianoff* (Lyon 2003) 10-14. The writer relates the Lyon herm to one recently acquired by the Louvre (inv. Br 46-48), apparently unpublished, and to a double-sided herm of maenads said to have been found in the sea off the coast of Etruria that entered the collection of the Musée d’archéologie médiévalenné de Marseille in 1897 (inv. 2268). All seem to be later than the herms under discussion here (probably late 1st c. A.D.).