

Welcome to Art Adventure

What is Art Adventure?

Art Adventure is a program that engages students with artworks from the Minneapolis Institute of Art's collection. Through the support of thousands of trained volunteers, Art Adventure brings visual arts into K–6 classrooms across Minnesota and beyond. The program encourages creativity, critical thinking, and global awareness through in-depth explorations of art across various cultures and time periods. Art Adventure is an opportunity for students to experience art up close and personal through reproductions, technology, and touch-and-feel props.

Who are Picture People?

Picture People bring Art Adventure into classrooms around Minnesota. They are volunteers from the school's community who facilitate discussions about selected artworks, forming a vital link between the museum and children in the schools. Before visiting a classroom, Picture People come to the museum for a training session on the theme and artworks their school will be experiencing that year. They also receive printed background material, learn engagement techniques, and—most importantly—gain knowledge of the original objects they'll soon be introducing to students using reproductions.

What does the Art Adventure Program do for students?

An evaluation of Art Adventure showed that, in addition to fostering an interest in art, the program fosters five major critical thinking skills. The skills and experiences students gain through Art Adventure will benefit them the rest of their lives.

5 Critical Thinking Skills

1. Describe what you see.
2. Notice details.
3. Understand how the parts form a whole idea or artwork.
4. Support interpretations with sufficient reasons.
5. Support opinions or preferences with sound reasons.

Generous support provided by:

UNITED HEALTH FOUNDATION®

Additional support provided by The Eugene U. and Mary F. Frey Family Fund of The Saint Paul Foundation and Archie D. and Bertha H. Walker Foundation.

Art Adventure Program
A program of the Minneapolis
Institute of Art—Revised 2018

Once You're in the Classroom

Relax!

The information provided in this booklet is intended as background material to help you feel confident when you share artworks with children. Don't feel you have to cover everything. Rather, choose two or three key ideas you think will be compelling. Kids love stories—what stories might you tell? What parallels can you draw to their lives?

Be sure everyone can see you and the reproduction.

Talk with the teacher to understand routines the class follows when gathering for a visitor. Aim for a setup that will get the students as close to the reproduction as possible. Keep the students' eyes on you, too, by making regular eye contact with everyone in the group.

Set up the students for successful exploration.

- Have the children wear nametags so you can call them by name.
- Set your own preferences aside to allow students to form their own opinions.
- Encourage the students to take turns speaking.
- Paraphrase what the students have said to let them know that you have been listening and help clarify each student's statement for the class.

Begin each discussion with a moment of silent looking.

Begin by introducing the lesson, yourself, and the reproductions. Review with the class what a museum is and what you'll be doing with them. You might build suspense by keeping each image hidden. Start by having the students observe the artwork in total silence. Model your expectations by spending time quietly looking, too.

Give students time to talk about what they have observed.

Start with questions like "What's going on here?" and "What do you see that makes you say that?" Be sure to use your finger to point to the part of the picture the child is talking about. Paraphrase his or her words to clarify the observation for others. You'll be surprised how quickly students learn to justify their comments with evidence they can see in the picture! Asking "What else can you find?" or connecting historical content can help generate further comments.

Connect your key ideas to the students' observations.

When the students' observations begin to slow down, use what you've learned about their interests to steer the discussion toward your key ideas. Try to ask questions that will draw connections between what they have said and what you would like them to consider. If they pose questions you can't answer, admit it! Brainstorm ways you might find out together.

Keep the age of your class in mind.

Don't expect young children to be able to focus for longer than 20 minutes. Plan your presentations accordingly. Consider your grade level's ability to understand time—will students understand a date or phrase such as "colonial times" (fifth graders might) or should you stick with "a long time ago" or "about 100 years ago"? Keep in mind that younger children are more likely to accept the abstract than older students, who may want concrete content.

Talk to other Picture People.

Experienced Picture People have great ideas about how to capture the imagination of a class. Don't hesitate to borrow and adapt their suggestions, but remember to bring your own creativity along, too.

Talking about Art

These questions encourage students to look closely and find their own meaning and relevance in works of art. This process fosters the development of the five Critical Thinking Skills listed on page 1. Please keep in mind that not every question will work for every artwork.

What do you see in this artwork?

What else can you find?

This is the best line of questioning to begin conversations with K-2 students. For students who seem ready to dive deeper ask, “What do you see that makes you say that?”

What’s going on in this picture?

What do you see that makes you say that?

You’ll notice this question is different than “What do you see?” “What’s going on?” invites a consideration of relationships and interactions and taps into children’s natural interest to find stories. “What do you see that makes you say that?” focuses comments on the evidence in the artwork and helps kids explain their assumptions.

How would you feel if you were “in” this work of art?

What would you hear? How might this feel if you could touch it? What path would you take through the picture? What do you see that makes you say that?

What does this artwork remind you of?

What would you use this object for? What about this scene is familiar or unfamiliar to you? What do you see that makes you say that?

What person or object in this picture do you think was most important to the artist?

What are people in the picture looking at?
Where are there bright colors? What is biggest?

How would the artwork be different if you could make a change?

What would happen if you changed a color?
Moved an object or person? Left something out?

How is this work of art similar to or different from another one you’ve seen in this set?

“Compare and contrast” encourages close looking and reinforces the theme. Get together with your fellow volunteers to coordinate some provocative pairs.

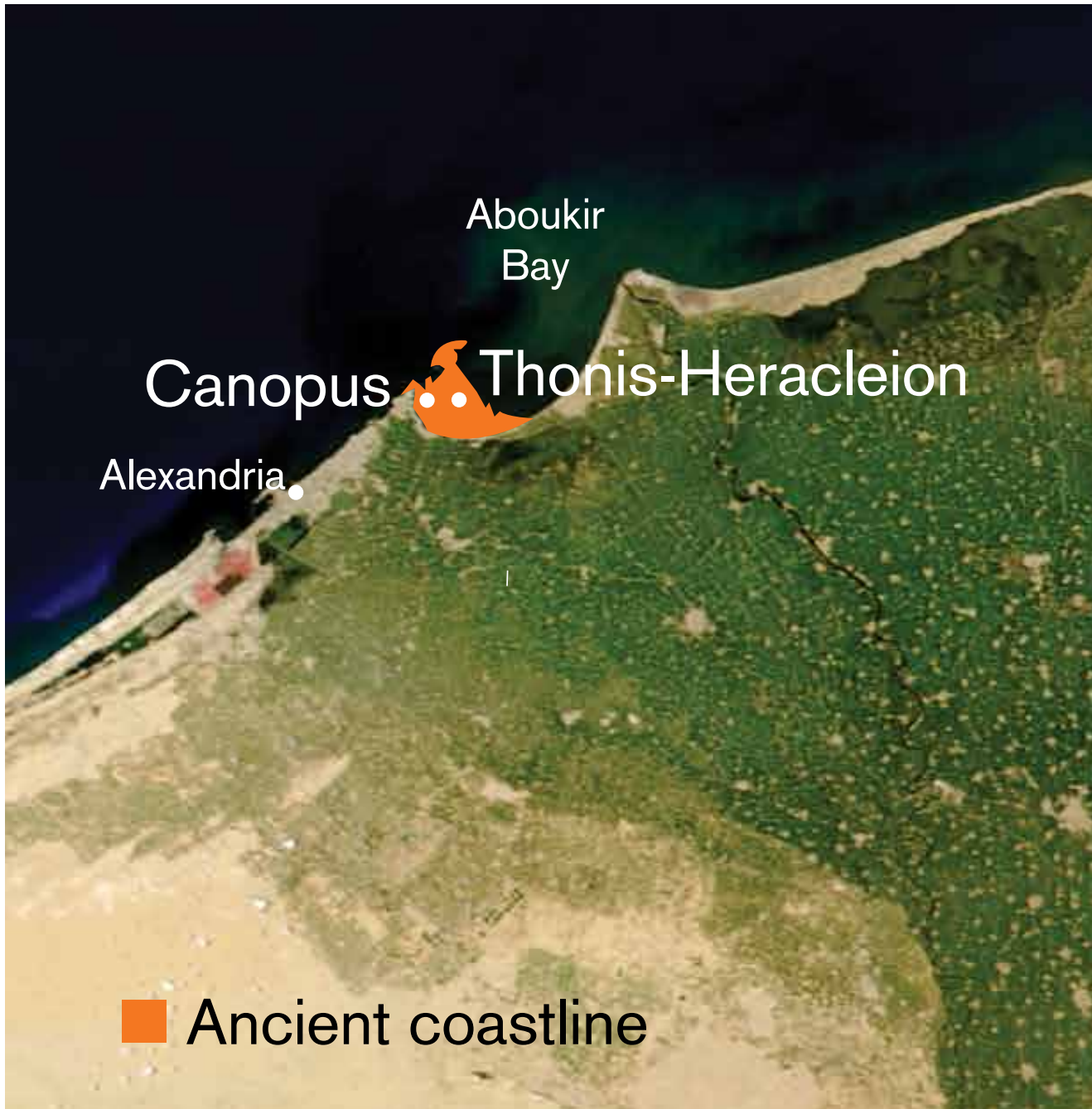
How does this work of art relate to the theme of the set?

Let the students pull it all together! What connections do they see between the theme and what they’ve noticed and learned about the work of art?

What do you like most about this artwork? Why? What do you like least?

If you could keep one artwork from this set, what artwork would you pick? Why?

'Egypt's Sunken Cities' Excavation Site





Pronunciation guide

Prepared by Mia educators from a variety of scholarly materials, and also some educated guessing.

Aboukir Bay: Ah-BOO-keer	Memphis: mem-fis
Amun: AH-moon	Mortise: mawr-tis
Ankh: AHnk	Naukratis: naw-kruh-tis
Antirhodos: ahn-tee-roh-doz	Necropolis: ne-KROP-uh-lis
Apis: ey-pis	Nectanebo: Neck-tan-EE-bo
Atef: ah-tef	Nemes: NEM-iss
Auletes: OW-let-tes	Nephthys: nef-this
Barque: bahrk	Osiris: Oh-SIGH-ris
Canopic: kuh-noh-pik	Papyrus: puh-PAHY-ruh-s
Canopus: kuh-noh-piss	Pharaoh: FEH-ro
Diorite: DAHY-uh-rahyt	Phoenician: fe-NEE-shen
Franck Goddio: Frahnk GOH-dee-oh	Psamtik: sam-tik
Greywacke: gray-wak	Ptah: TAH
Hathor: HATH-er	Ptolemaic: TAWL-eh-may-ick
Hapy: hah-pee	Ptolemy: TAWL-eh-may
Heqa: heh-kah	Sais: sey-is
Herakles: Her-a-kleez	Saite: sey-ahyt
Hieroglyphics: HI-ro-glif-iks	Sarcophagus: sar-COFF-a-gus
Hieroglyphs: HI-ro-glifs	Serapeum: ser-uh-PEE-uh-m
Horus: hohr-uhs	Sheshonq: shay-shonk
Iseum: iz-ee-um	Sphinx: sfinks
Isis: EYE-sis	Tcheni: chay-ni
Khonsu: Kon-su	Thonis-Heracleion: THOH-niss Her-ACK-lee-on
Lapis lazuli: la-pis la-zu-lee	Thoth: Tawth
Ma'at: Mah-ut	Uraeus: yoo-RAY-us

Egypt's Sunken Cities

More than 1,200 years ago, two ancient cities were lost to natural disasters and the rising tides of the Mediterranean Sea. Two decades ago, underwater archaeologist Franck Goddio (Frahnk GOH-dee-oh) and his team discovered those cities, revealing monumental statues, religious images carved in stone, exquisite jewelry, and delicate ceramics. Taken together, this discovery has provided a better understanding of life during the age of the pharaohs. This is your chance to dive down and explore Egypt's "sunken cities."

Where are the cities?

In Egypt's northwestern Nile Delta, under the Canopic (kuh-noh-pik) region, lies a sunken landscape of lakes and marshes scattered with islands and sandbanks in Aboukir Bay. This region, named after the town of Canopus (kuh-noh-piss), was well known in the ancient world because of its role as a place where traveling Greeks came into contact with Egyptian civilization. In 1996, the European Institute for Underwater Archaeology (IEASM) began exploration of Aboukir Bay under Goddio's direction. The rediscovery aimed to uncover two lost cities, Canopus and Thonis-Heracleion (THOH-niss Her-ACK-lee-on), and educate the public about the relationship between ancient Egypt and Greece.

Why are the cities underwater?

The team has suggested various reasons, such as flooding, tsunamis, earthquakes, variation in sea level, or geological collapse. Whether both cities were lost at the same or different times is a question

for future research. There is evidence that both were totally submerged by the end of the 700s CE. As a result, the explorers faced archaeological challenges, among them poor visibility and the enormity of the search area.

What did the team find?

The team's earliest findings were carvings that confirmed the city names: Thonis-Heracleion and Canopus. Thonis-Heracleion was Egypt's main trading center with the Greek world in the 4th and 5th century BCE. Evidence of this hub are the 750 ancient anchors and 69 ships found on the harbor floor. Thonis-Heracleion housed a temple where new pharaohs (FEH-ro)—as ancient Egyptian kings were called—came to receive the title of their power as universal sovereign by the god Amun (AH-moon). Amun was the supreme god of ancient Egyptians. The nearby city of Canopus held the region's largest temple, which acted as an important shrine.

What about the recovered objects?

This exhibition presents more than 200 objects from the excavations. Those artifacts reflect the range of human experience in this ancient land. Examples include colossal statuary, humble votive offerings, beautiful jewelry and ornaments, imported goods, and relics.

What's next?

Though the excavations are ongoing, the rediscovery of the lost cities uncovers a further understanding of the cultures, faiths, and history of the Egyptian coastal region. There are still unknowns: What treasures still lie beneath the sea? What new discoveries will surface? And what do we have yet to learn?

Crossroads of Trade Goods and Sacred Beliefs

In 700 BCE, Thonis-Heracleion was positioned at the westernmost branch of the Nile River, where it flourished as a trade harbor.

In 700 BCE, Thonis-Heracleion was positioned at the westernmost branch of the Nile River, where it flourished as a trade harbor.

At the time, trade between Egypt and the Mediterranean, especially Greece, was booming. Close relations between the two great civilizations were forged by Psamtik I (sam-tik) (664–610 BCE), the founder of Egypt's Saite (sey-ahyt) dynasty. Greek soldiers joined his army to defend the country's borders. As a result, goods of both nations were exchanged.

Goods traded

In the 5th century BCE, the trade through Thonis-Heracleion and Naukratis (naw-kruh-tis), a nearby port, on Greek and Phoenician (fe-NEE-shen) ships included a variety of supplies: copper, tin, iron, wine, oil, wool, and wood. Silver was the basis of economic exchange and taxation. Egypt, lacking in metal resources, imported precious metals mostly from the Greece. Egyptian exports to Greece included grain, papyrus, perfume, charms, and natural resources such as alum and natron, used for dyeing fabric.

A religious seat

Foreign influence on Thonis-Heracleion went beyond trade to the most personal of activities: religious faith. The city became a busy place for cross-cultural religious devotion. Religious spaces played a major role for Egyptians and Greeks. Egyptians viewed faith as a way to retain their own identity and culture. Greeks sought divine protection at trading ports for sea journeys.

A royal site

Throughout much of Egyptian history, new pharaohs came to the city to be granted royal status by the creator god, Amun-Gereb. Three colossal statues guarded the massive temple complex dedicated to Amun-Gereb. Only priests could enter the holiest sites within the temple, but everyone else regularly entered the complex to perform their devotions. Near the temple of Amun-Gereb stood a temple dedicated to his son, Khonsu (Kon-su). The Greeks adopted Khonsu, who became their demi-god Herakles (Her-a-kleez). As a result, they knew the city as Heracleion. Scattered across the harbor were many other sanctuaries, each devoted to a specific Greek god.

Contents

Pair of Sphinxes.....	11
Osiris and Isis Seated.....	15
Statue of Horus Protecting Pharaoh	19
Pectoral.....	23
Colossal Statue of the Apis Bull.....	27
Self-Guided Tour.....	29

Pair of Sphinxes

1st century BCE

Alexandria

Granodiorite, H. 75 cm, L. 1.4 m; H. 70 cm, L. 1.5 m

National Museum of Alexandria, Alexandria (SCA 0450/Alex 283; SCA 0451/Alex 284)

Photos: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio/Hilti Foundation



Key Idea

When people think of Egypt, the image of a sphinx often comes to mind. This pair of sphinxes was found on the sunken island of Antirrhodos at a small temple, likely a devotional to Isis. Based on existing imagery, we believe one of the sphinxes represents Ptolemy XII Auletes.

The Sphinx as We Know It

Sphinx (sfinks) imagery is well-known, and there are great consistencies in its design and use. Traditionally, a sphinx is constructed with a human head atop a feline body. Its front feet are extended forward and its back legs bend underneath its rear. Usually the tail curves along its thigh. The human head often represents an actual ruler. It wears a *nemes* (NEM-iss), the head cloth worn by pharaohs. At the front of the *nemes* is a rearing cobra figure, called a royal *uraeus* (yoo-RAY-us).

Sometimes the identity of the portrayed pharaoh—an ancient Egyptian king—is evident from the sphinx’s facial features.

Thanks to other works of art and historical records, sometimes the identity of the portrayed pharaoh—an ancient Egyptian king—is evident from the sphinx’s facial features. For example, the world-famous sphinx of Giza represents the 4th-dynasty pharaoh Khafre. Phenomenal works of art, sphinxes also appear in mythical stories and were commonly used to line a walkway for processions into temples.

A Harbor Temple

This duo was found inside a small temple dedicated to the goddess Isis, called an Iseum (iz-ee-um). The temple was located on the island of Antirrhodos (ahn-tee-roh-doz) in the Portus Magnus, an important harbor in eastern Alexandria. The island was only for royalty, so the Iseum was likely used by royalty. At the time these sphinxes were created, the king lived in Alexandria. Today the capital of Egypt is Cairo, but Alexandria remains one of its largest and most significant cities. Franck Goddio, the archaeologist who organized “Egypt’s Sunken Cities,” discovered Antirrhodos in 1996.

Franck Goddio, the archaeologist who organized “Egypt’s Sunken Cities,” discovered Antirrhodos in 1996.

The island had sunk for a variety of possible reasons, such as an earthquake, tsunami, or flooding. Goddio and his team of archaeologists, scientists, and historians discovered many important things about Antirrhodos. We now know the small island was well paved and had three main thoroughfares organizing the city.

A Royal Likeness?

These rock sculptures were unprotected and under the water for a very long time. Natural wear and deterioration are results of their environment. Of the two sphinxes, one is in better condition. The better preserved sphinx has been compared to other artworks and metalworks, leading scholars to believe it depicts Ptolemy XII Auletes (TAWL-eh-may OWL-let-tes). The rendering of hair is similar to that on coin portraits of the pharaoh. He is often referred to simply as Auletes, which translates loosely to “the flutist.” He was a passionate musician.

Ptolemy Auletes ruled 80–58 BCE and again 55–51 BCE. The three-year lapse came when he and his daughter, Cleopatra VII, fled to Rome. The people of Egypt were frustrated by the pharaoh’s actions, which had resulted in violent conquests and higher taxes. In his will he left his throne to Cleopatra. At this time, Egyptian women could not rule alone, so her younger brother, Ptolemy XIII, was legally required to rule alongside her. Cleopatra VII was the last active pharaoh of Ptolemaic (TAWL-eh-may-ick) Egypt, which refers to the Ptolemaic dynasty that ruled

Egypt for almost 300 years. The royal family lived in and ruled from Alexandria using the Greek language and culture. They ruled until Rome conquered the city.

Decoding the Sphinxes

Found as a pair, each sphinx is approximately two feet tall and five feet long. They are made from granodiorite, a rock similar to granite. Granodiorite was native to Egypt, but it was also quarried and sent to Rome, where the Romans used it in their architecture and sculpture.

Granodiorite was native to Egypt, but it was also quarried and sent to Rome, where the Romans used it in their architecture and sculpture.

The dark gray rock is speckled with lighter markings. While it looks smooth in photographs, if you were to run your hand along its surface, you would feel a grainy texture. It is not polished like some of the other statues in this exhibition.

Both sphinxes were at one point on thick rectangular slabs. A portion of one is missing, but we can assume it would have matched its mate. Carved into the same piece of stone, the feline body grows from the base. It is easiest to understand the imagery when both sculptures are viewed together. The front feet of one extend outward, and the second sphinx would likely have looked similar. The hindlegs are tucked underneath as the tails swing forward and up.

On both sculptures the *nemes* is visible. The head cloth drapes down the back of the heads and is tucked behind protruding ears.

On both sculptures the *nemes* is visible. The head cloth drapes down the back of the heads and is tucked behind protruding ears. On the sphinx believed to represent Auletes, the royal *uraeus* is clearly defined. The cobra, rearing up, is centered on its forehead. On the second sphinx, the cobra shape is visible but eroded. The Auletes sphinx's face is perfectly defined. Large eyes are balanced around a large nose and straight lips. Distinct parts of its ears are even identifiable. The other sphinx also has visible facial features (eyes, nose, mouth, ears), but they have eroded from the time spent underwater, making further identification impossible.

Suggested Questions

1. Imagine you are walking along a pathway lined with sphinxes. How do you feel? What does it look like? What do you hear?
2. The image of a sphinx is very popular in Egyptian art and mythology. Are there images that are common at your school or in your community? What are they? What do they mean to you?

Osiris and Isis Seated
570–526 BCE (reign of Amasis, 26th dynasty)
Saqqara
Greywacke, satin polish, H. 89 cm and 90 cm
Egyptian Museum, Cairo (CGC 38358, CGC 38354)
Photos: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio/Hilti Foundation



Key Idea

This pair of statues is of Osiris and Isis—husband and wife, Egyptian god and goddess. They were found in an important burial tomb, left there to protect the dead. Both are rich in significant imagery that tells us about the gods. Both Osiris and Isis were incredibly important to the Egyptians and are associated with many mythological moments.

Osiris: God of Many Realms

Osiris (Oh-SIGH-ris) was one of the most important gods in all of Egypt. He had many different roles: god of death and resurrection, god of the underworld, god of fertility and vegetation.

Osiris was one of the most important gods in all of Egypt. He had many different roles: god of death and resurrection, god of the underworld, god of fertility and vegetation.

He was considered to be the first king of human beings. Civilization was chaotic when Osiris was king. Assisted by the god Thoth (Tawth), Osiris organized the culture and ways of Egyptian people. He taught them how to grow grain, plant grapes to make wine, and harvest corn and barley. People recognized how much Osiris improved their lives, and they showed their appreciation in many ways. Mostly associated with the harvest, Osiris has numerous festivals and temples dedicated to him.

Osiris is easy to recognize thanks to his consistent dress. Clad in white mummy's clothes and wearing a fake braided beard, he also has recognizable accessories: a crook, a flail, and a scepter. These are signs of power and items associated with shepherds. Osiris is typically seen judging a dead person's soul. He could be sitting or standing. His skin is either painted white like a mummy, black to represent the underworld, or green to symbolize vegetation and growth—like the resurrection. But the most important is his headdress, an *atef* (ah-tef), the white crown of Lower Egypt flanked by two feathers.

Osiris was born into royalty. He was the oldest child of Geb and Nut. Geb was the god of Earth, and Nut was the goddess of the sky. His younger brother, Seth,

was a troublemaker. Osiris was born a god, but he grew up as a man. For Egyptians, even gods could die.

The Story of Sibling Rivalry

Seth envied his older brother's power and popularity. He wanted to be pharaoh but needed to kill Osiris to take the throne. So Seth devised a plan: he would host a party for his friends and brother. After plenty of drinking and dancing, Seth brought out a beautifully decorated chest. He told the partygoers that whoever could fit inside could keep it. Calculatingly, Seth had the chest designed to Osiris's exact dimensions. One after one, Seth's friends tried and failed to fit. Finally Osiris climbed in, and before he could get out, Seth slammed the chest shut and sealed it. The chest had become a casket!

Seth had the casket thrown into the Nile River, and it floated away. Isis (EYE-sis), Osiris's wife, was devastated. Determined to find her husband's body, she searched all along the Nile and eventually found where the casket had washed ashore. She brought it home, but Seth attacked again and succeeded in taking it over. This time, Seth cut his brother's body in 14 parts and scattered them all over Egypt. After a long and difficult search, Isis found all of the pieces. With the help of fellow gods, she reassembled the body and brought Osiris back to life. In doing so, she invented mummification.

Their son, Horus (hohr-uhs), was angered by his uncle's attempts to murder his father, and he sought revenge. Seth and Horus fought an epic battle, and Horus won back his father's throne, once again restoring peace.

Isis: Goddess of Magic & Healing

Isis, Osiris's wife, was seen as the ideal representation of love and devotion, both as wife and mother.

Isis, Osiris's wife, was seen as the ideal representation of love and devotion, both as wife and mother.

Known as the goddess of magic and healing, Isis was responsible for bringing her husband back to life. She searched tirelessly to find him and worked endlessly to revive him. She was also a protective mother to Horus. Seth, Osiris's brother, was fearful and jealous of his nephew's powers. Isis had to protect Horus until he was old enough to protect himself. She kept him hidden as long as possible.

Isis's dedication to her son's safety and her never-ending love for Horus and Osiris earned her the title of "great mother." The goddess used her magic to heal the people she loved and to harm those she did not. She is associated with the invention of the rites of mummification. Isis is usually depicted with human characteristics. She wears a headdress of horns that hug a solar disc. Sometimes her headdress is a small throne, conferring royal status. It is also common for her to be depicted in art nursing Horus.

Osiris and Isis Seated

This pair of statues stands approximately three feet tall. Each is made from greywacke (gray-wack), a natural mixture of sandstone and clay. The stone was polished and sanded to a smooth, shiny surface. The god and goddess are shown seated on simple thrones. Each platform has an inscription. Osiris's inscription reads: "Osiris who presides in the west, great god, lord of Ro-Setaou." Isis's inscription reads: "Isis, mother of the god, great in magic, mistress of the Two Lands." At a glance, these two artworks look similar in size, material, design elements, and artistic style. After looking closely, the individual attributes of Osiris and Isis are visible.

At a glance, these two artworks look similar in size, material, design elements, and artistic style. After looking closely, the individual attributes of Osiris and Isis are visible.

Osiris Imagery

Osiris sits upright, legs pressed together, and arms crossed on his stomach. He is wrapped in smooth cloth from neck to toe. His hands stick out of the fabric, and he's holding his associated symbols. His right hand holds a flail (a handle with hanging straps or ropes), and his left hand holds a *heqa* (heh-kah) (a crook). A shepherd might use these accessories, which also represent power and authority. On his head he wears the *atef*, a feathered white crown flanked by two ostrich feathers. A sacred rearing cobra (*uraeus*) is in the center of his forehead. As in typical Osiris depictions, he also wears a braided, false beard.

Isis Imagery

Isis is depicted wearing a sheath dress. It is fitted to her body, has no seams, and ends just above her ankles. Isis's crown is a set of cow horns flanking a smooth solar disc. These are the symbols of the goddess Hathor (HATH-er), who is represented as either a cow or as a woman with a cow head. Isis's right hand holds the sign of life, known as the *ankh* (AHnk). Her mouth wears a gentle smile, and her eyes are wide open. This warm expression reflects her motherly and wifely devotions.

Suggested Questions

1. Look closely at the two statues. They were made to protect an important tomb. What about them makes them look like guardians? Where do you see strength and power in them?
2. Osiris and Isis are known for specific attributes and powers. How do they each express their personalities? What does "motherly" mean to you? What does it mean to be a protector? How are those qualities expressed in these statues?
3. If you could choose to have Osiris or Isis be your protector, which one would you choose? Why did you choose that specific deity?

Statue of Horus Protecting Pharaoh

c. 350 BCE

Egypt

Limestone and glass, H. 55 cm

Egyptian Museum, Cairo (JE 33262)

Photo: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio/Hilti Foundation



Key Idea

Two important people are portrayed in this statue. The first is the god Horus, represented here as the divine falcon. Falcons are powerful birds of prey. Standing between Horus's legs is Nectanebo II, the last native pharaoh of Egypt (reign 360–342 BCE). In Egyptian history and during the time of the pharaohs, every king was considered to be a reincarnation of Horus on Earth.

Horus, Son of Osiris & Isis

Though many Egyptian gods are represented as falcons or seen wearing falcon heads, the most important one is Horus. He is one of the earliest known Egyptian gods. Long before the story of his childhood was told, the god Horus existed. He is best known as the son of Osiris and Isis. After Isis gave birth to Horus, she hid him to protect him from his uncle, the god Seth. Seth envied Osiris, his older brother and Horus's father, and after murdering him, he wanted to kill Horus, too. This would have made Seth the pharaoh, his ultimate goal. Horus wanted to avenge his father's death. Horus and Seth fought an epic battle, during which Horus lost an eye. He eventually won and reclaimed his father's throne.

Horus as a God and King

One of the most important and powerful gods, Horus is almost always represented as a falcon or as a man with a falcon head.

One of the most important and powerful gods, Horus is almost always represented as a falcon or as a man with a falcon head.

Falcons are large, intimidating birds with great speed and strength. Across Egyptian history, there are more than 20 different Horuses. He is often associated with creation, the protection of kings and of the underworld. Though it may seem odd for a god to be connected to both creation and death, Horus inherited his role in the underworld from his father. In general, Horus is a protagonist who defeats evil and keeps the world and its people safe.

Horus is a protagonist who defeats evil and keeps the world and its people safe.

Statue of Horus Protecting Pharaoh

Standing just short of two feet, this Horus statue is made of smooth limestone and embellished with bits of glass. The wings and body are carved in a very simple design. Long, curved lines show where the massive wings begin and fade at the back. The body looks soft, but it is made from hard rock. These simple elements contrast to the highly detailed head and feet. The facial features are deep, textured carvings that frame the eyes, once filled with colorful glass. Egyptians believed that a falcon's right eye represented the sun, and the left eye represented the moon.

Egyptians believed that a falcon's right eye represented the sun, and the left eye represented the moon.

The falcon's belly, covered in speckled feathers, represented the stars. The feet are so precise, you can see individual toes and nails emerging from the large claws.

A deceptively important piece of this sculpture is the small cube, known as a mortise (mawr-tis), emerging from the top of Horus's head. It was meant to hold a headdress; because of its presence, we know this sculpture once wore a crown. History leads us to believe that Horus would have worn the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt, which represented sovereignty, which means to possess power and authority over people or land.

History leads us to believe that Horus would have worn the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt, representing sovereignty, which means to possess power and authority over people or land.

Although we are able to make assumptions based on what we see, this sculpture does not have an inscription to tell us anything more.

Nectanebo II

Based on other historical artworks, we believe the figure standing beneath Horus is Nectanebo (Nec-tan-EE-bo) II. This statue was part of a series numbering seven total. Of the seven, five statues carried inscriptions naming Nectanebo II as the pharaoh represented. Nectanebo II wears a long kilt (skirt) and stands very tall. His legs and feet are pressed together, and his hands rest open on his thighs. This position is the typical way to represent the act of prayer.

His legs and feet are pressed together, and his hands rest open on his thighs. This position is the typical way to represent the act of prayer.

Many pharaohs are shown standing like this while praying before a god. The statues are possibly from a royal cult dedicated to this king because there is a history of priests devoted to “Nectanebo II the Falcon.”

Questions

1. In this sculpture Horus is seen protecting the pharaoh. He was known for taking care of people. Who in your family, community, or school takes care of you? How do they show it?
2. When you think of animals, which animals seem strong? What about them makes you say that?
3. How did this artist show Horus as strong, protective, and brave? What did they do to make us think that?
4. Why do you think Egyptians believed the eyes of the falcon represent the moon and the sun and the feathers represent the stars? Why would those be important or special?

Pectoral
943–922 BCE (reign of Sheshonq I, 22nd dynasty)
Tanis
Gold, lapis lazuli, glass paste, H. 37.5 cm, W. 19 cm, Th. 1.2 cm
Egyptian Museum, Cairo (JE 72171)
Photo: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio/Hilti Foundation



Key Idea

A pectoral is a piece of jewelry, like a pendant, worn on the chest. This pectoral is full of important gods and goddesses, telling the story of the sun god and fellow deities. Ancient Egyptians believed that gods traveled through the night sky on boats, so it was common for sacred festivals to include long processions where divine statues were carried on a sacred barque (boat). This procession represented a sacred journey.

Decoding the Pectoral

This very busy piece of jewelry is rich in gods, goddesses, symbols, and stories. It is made from gold, glass paste, and lapis lazuli (la-pis la-zu-lee). Gold, a precious metal, represents wealth and power. The gold is embellished with glass paste. Glass paste, in red, was meant to look like semi-precious stones and give the illusion of a high-quality gem. The intense blue color comes from lapis lazuli, a semi-precious stone prized since ancient times for its vibrant color.

The intense blue color comes from lapis lazuli, a semi-precious stone prized since ancient times for its vibrant color.

Lapis lazuli most often was used as an accent on sculptures or incorporated into jewelry, as it is here.

Approximately seven inches long, this pendant is packed with information. At the top are two falcons, standing in the upper-left and upper-right corners. Together, they wear the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt, representing a united Egypt. The falcons stand atop a long strip of lapis lazuli, inside of which are 13 gold stars. (Two appear to be missing.) This blue and gold section represents the night sky. Next, note the bottom portion. The two gold rectangular plaques in the bottom-left and -right corners translate as “Sheshonq, son of Nimlot and Great Chief of the Meshwesh,” eventually known as Sheshonq I, founder of the 22nd dynasty (r. 943–922 BCE). The pendant was found in the grave of King Sheshonq II (r. 887–885 BCE). These plaques sit atop zig-zag lapis lazuli waves, the symbol for water.

Moving inward, we see the plants of Egypt: lotus and papyrus (puh-PAHY-ruh-s). On the left is lotus, recognizable by its budding floral design. Lapis lazuli petals open up to a red glass-paste bud. On the right is papyrus, resembling a fan and made entirely of lapis lazuli. Further inside are Isis and Nephthys (nef-this). They stand in profile facing the central medallion, which represents the sun.

Isis and Nephthys stand in profile facing the center medallion, which represents the sun.

With their wings spread, they protect the sun as it journeys across the night sky. They stand on opposite ends of a solar *barque* (bahrk) (boat). An actual sacred barque was discovered at Thonis-Heracleion. This discovery gave researchers archaeological evidence to the symbols on this artwork.

Inside the Circle: Amun-Ra-Horakhty and Ma'at

Inside the circular medallion is the god Amun-Ra-Horakhty, seated at left. He represents the sun. Amun-Ra is a hybrid god, a combination of Amun, the hidden god, and Ra, the sun god. As the sun god, he was supreme. He created Earth and the other gods. One of his most important tasks was to travel through the night sky to bring the sun's light and warmth to the people on Earth.

Amun-Ra holds two important objects: an *ankh* sign, which means life, in his right hand, and a *was* scepter, which represents power, in his left hand. In front of the sun is Ma'at (Mah-ut), the goddess of truth and justice. Representing order, she was responsible for keeping the world in harmony. Ma'at loosely translates to "truth."

In front of the sun is Ma'at, the goddess of truth and justice. Representing order, she was responsible for keeping the world in harmony. Ma'at loosely translates to "truth."

Amun-Ra and Ma'at are the focal point on the pendant. They ride the ship across the nighttime waters. Egyptians knew that if the sun were to rise out of the water, its flames would be put out by the oceans. Therefore, Amun-Ra is always shown on a boat.

Egyptians knew that if the sun were to rise out of the water, its flames would be put out by the oceans. Therefore, Amun-Ra is always shown on a boat.

His boat would float on top of the water, and he would fly across the sky during the day. In mythology, many gods helped to navigate the ship. Horus steered at the rudder. The god Thoth and goddess Ma'at wrote the ship's directional course and told it to Horus. The mythical fish Abtu and Any helped the boat navigate the sea. While this pendant is one of a kind, it tells a story that would have been familiar to most ancient Egyptians.

Questions

1. This pendant is likely an heirloom made for a person of very high status. An heirloom is something of value that gets passed down in families. Does your family or community have an object they share with one another? Why is it important?
2. Look closely at the pendant. There is a lot to take in. What is your favorite part of the story being told? Why?

Colossal Statue of the Apis Bull
CE 117-38 (reign of Hadrian)
Alexandria
Black diorite, H. 1.9 m, L. 2.05 m
Graeco-Roman Museum, Alexandria (351)
Photo: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio/Hilti Foundation



Key Idea

An Apis bull is a very important creature in Egypt. It represents many godly relationships and holds special powers, and it also exists on Earth for devotees to worship. The life-sized sculpture shows the importance of this animal, as well as the great artistic skill it took to make such a large, balanced artwork.

The Cult of Apis

Tracing back to the earliest dynasties, the cult of Apis (ey-pis) was the most important animal cult in all of Egypt. Because animals lack the ability to verbally communicate with humans, it was believed they communicated with the sacred realm. Memphis, an ancient capital in Egypt, was where most of the pharaohs lived. It was the home of Ptah (TAH), the creator god, and the center for worshipping the Apis bull. In fact, the Apis bull was considered to be the manifestation of Ptah on Earth, making it the most important sacred animal in Egypt.

The Apis Bull in the Flesh

When identifying the flesh-and-bones Apis bull, priests looked for specific markings. The first was a black body. There also needed to be a small white patch, either a square or triangle, at the center of its forehead. Another requirement was a scarab, a type of beetle, underneath its tongue. Also required were the image of an eagle on its upper back, just below its neck, and a white patch on one of its legs. Finally, to be the Apis bull, its tail needed to have two separate tufts of hair at the end.

Whichever cow gave birth to the Apis bull was given special treatment. Called the Isis cow, she was brought to Memphis with her calf to live a luxurious lifestyle. Only one Apis bull lived at a time, and it lived in quarters not far from the temple of Ptah. People would come to worship it among the herd of cows with which it lived. The bull would be taken out of its quarters for special processions and religious rituals. According to records, the Apis bull could interpret dreams, tell fortunes, make prophecies, and deliver oracles. Pilgrims, followers, and worshippers would travel great distances to see it.

According to records, the Apis bull could interpret dreams, tell fortunes, make prophecies, and deliver oracles. Pilgrims, followers, and worshippers would travel great distances to see it.

The entire country mourned when the Apis bull died, and communities paid for the expensive burial. The bull was embalmed and mummified. It was then buried in a large granite *sarcophagus* (sar-COFF-a-gus) (casket) in a *necropolis* (ne-KROP-uh-lis) (cemetery) underneath the *serapeum* (ser-uh-PEE-uh-m) (temple) at Saqqara. Once the Apis bull died, it merged with Osiris. After that, it would be referred to as Apis-Osiris or Osirapis. As deeply as the country mourned the death, it also rejoiced when a new Apis bull was found. It was cause for great celebration.

A Life-Sized Sculpture

Standing over six feet tall and almost seven feet long, this realistic statue of the Apis bull shows all the expected markings in great detail. The artist incorporated each requirement identified by the priests in a highly polished and large-scale sculpture. Its creation would have required great artistic skill because of its stance, balanced on four legs and a single pillar. With right foot striding forward, the bull is shown walking—a common representation. A large crown rests atop its head. This sun disc is balanced between horns, and a cobra emerges headfirst.

Beneath the crown, the bull's tight, curly hair is carefully sculpted. Lines and shape are used to identify what would be the white tuft of hair that qualified him as the Apis bull. These are great examples of the well-defined, naturalistic style the artist employed. The shoulders are muscular and curve down the elongated torso.

Art Adventure

Egypt's Sunken Cities

Self-Guided Tour

1



Pair of Sphinxes

Gallery _____

4



Pectoral

Gallery _____

2



Osiris and Isis Seated

Gallery _____

5



Colossal Statue of the Apis Bull

Gallery _____

3



Statue of Horus Protecting Pharaoh

Gallery _____

GENEROUS SUPPORT PROVIDED BY:

UNITED HEALTH FOUNDATION*

Additional support provided by The Eugene U. and Mary F. Frey Family Fund of The Saint Paul Foundation and Archie D. and Bertha H. Walker Foundation.

SCHOOL TOURS PRESENTED BY:



EDUCATION SUPPORTER:



