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# GALLERIES





# **Colossal Statue of a Pharaoh**, possibly the reign of Ptolemy II (r. 285–246 BCE) red granite

This colossal statue of a pharaoh once stood before the entrance to the temple of Amun-Gereb at Thonis-Heracleion. Found in five separate pieces and measuring over 16 feet tall, the king is nearly complete. He wears the traditional short kilt and the double crown, which symbolizes the unification of the two lands of Egypt: the delta and the Nile valley. The crown is also adorned with the sacred rearing cobra (*uraeus*) to represent supreme power. In his right fist the king holds a small cylinder, possibly the *mekes* case, containing the inventory of Egypt that awarded the king legitimate sovereignty.

The temple of Amun-Gereb at Thonis-Heracleion was an important religious center where new pharaohs were granted royal legitimacy. For the foreign-born Ptolemaic pharaohs, this was an important stop in their quest to appear as the rightful successors to the last native kings of Egypt. The Ptolemaic kings' continued support of the temple is evident by the installation of this colossal statue, as well as the richness of the artifacts found inside.



# **Colossal Statue of a Queen**, possibly the reign of Ptolemy II (r. 285–246 BCE) red granite

This colossal statue, representing a queen, once stood before the entrance to the temple of Amun-Gereb at Thonis-Heracleion. The queen stands in a classical Egyptian pose: upright, with left leg forward, and arms at the sides. Reconstructed from three pieces, she wears a crown formed of three elements: two feathers, cow's horns, and a sun disk. Together, these features refer to the goddesses Hathor and Isis and indicate the queen's status as a royal wife. She also wears an elaborate three-part wig with individual braids and a finely pleated dress that reaches her ankles. Around her shoulders is a shawl hanging diagonally between her breasts, which joins the sash, attached by a knot.

The two colossal statues on view in this space were found in the area around the temple of Amun-Gereb at Thonis-Heracleion, which may suggest they were arranged as a triad. Thus, this colossal female statue could also be a representation of Isis or, more likely, a queen fully assimilated with the goddess, creating a conceptually balanced composition of two deities flanking the king.



# **Colossal Statue of the God Hapy**, c. 664–120 BCE red granite

This colossal statue stands over 17 feet tall and depicts the ancient Egyptian fertility god, Hapy, the personification of Nile floods. The annual flooding of the Nile was essential to Egyptian life as the waters covered the nearby plains with fertile, black soil. Hapy wears a crown with a clump of stylized papyrus and holds an offering table. His striding pose expresses a sense of movement, as if he is presenting an offering outside the temple where he once stood.

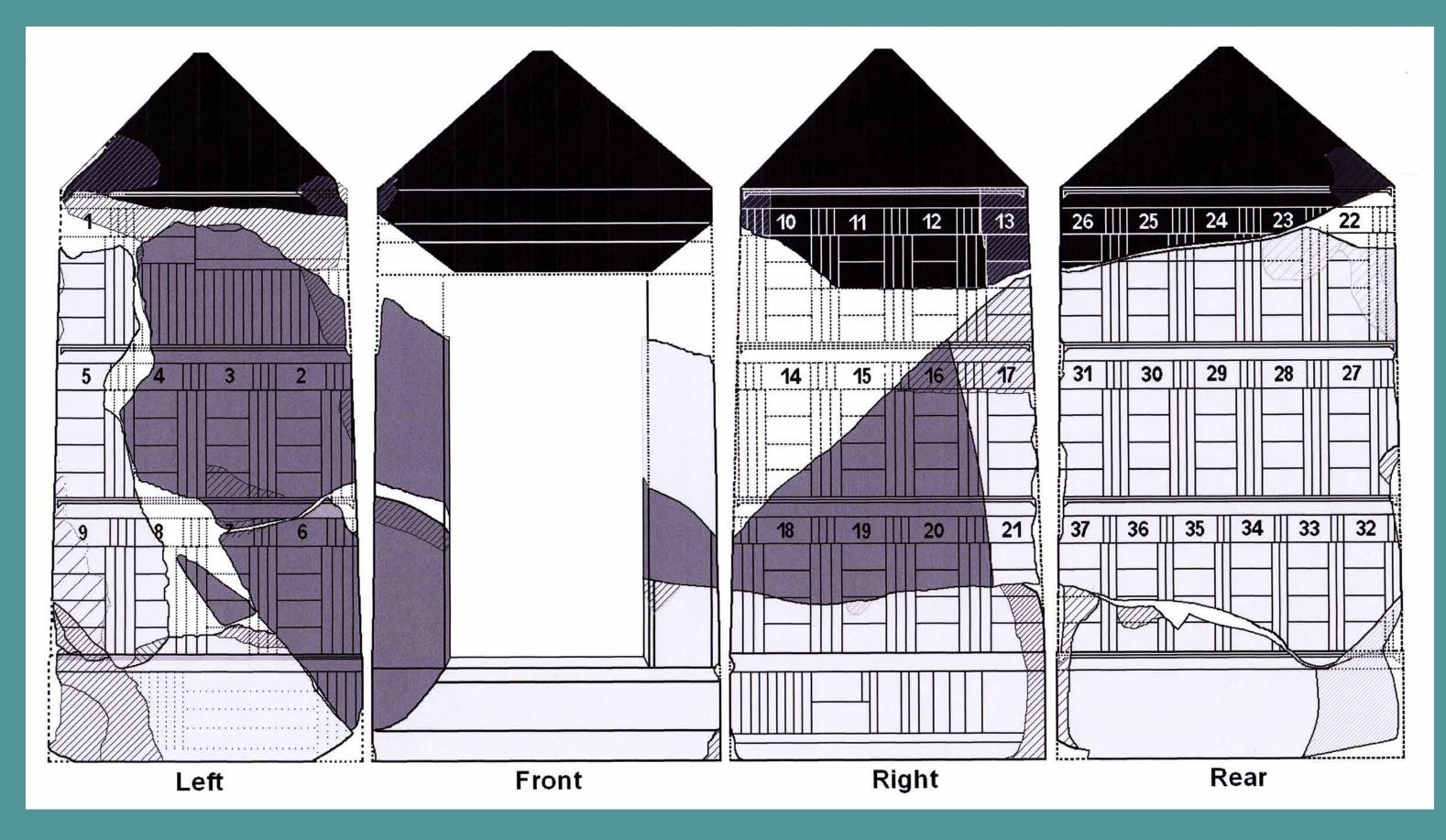


## Naos of the Decades, 380–362 BCE granodiorite Greco-Roman Museum, Alexandria SCA 161, 162, 163, 164, JE 25774

### **Reconstruction of the roof of the** *Naos* **of the Decades** resin Louvre Museum, D 37

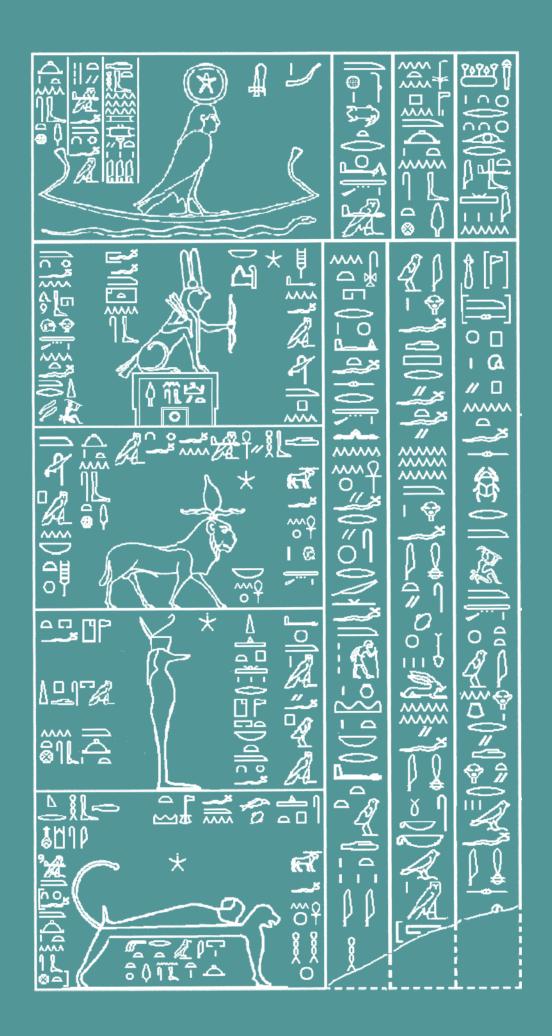
Carved from a single block of stone, this shrine, called a naos, dates to the reign of Nectanebo I (r. 380–362 BCE). This *naos* served as both the structure housing the cult image of the god Shu and a resource of important astronomical information. The exterior surfaces of the naos depict a calendar that divides the Egyptian year into 36 sections of 10 days, called "decades." Each 10-day group is connected to the rising of particular stars called the *decans* stars.

The archaeological history of this monument is exceptional. Its roof was discovered on land at Aboukir in 1777, near the then-lost city of Canopus. Over 100 years later, in 1933, the base and back wall were found underwater in Aboukir Bay. Four more sections were found in 1999, allowing archaeologists to piece the shrine together like a jigsaw puzzle.



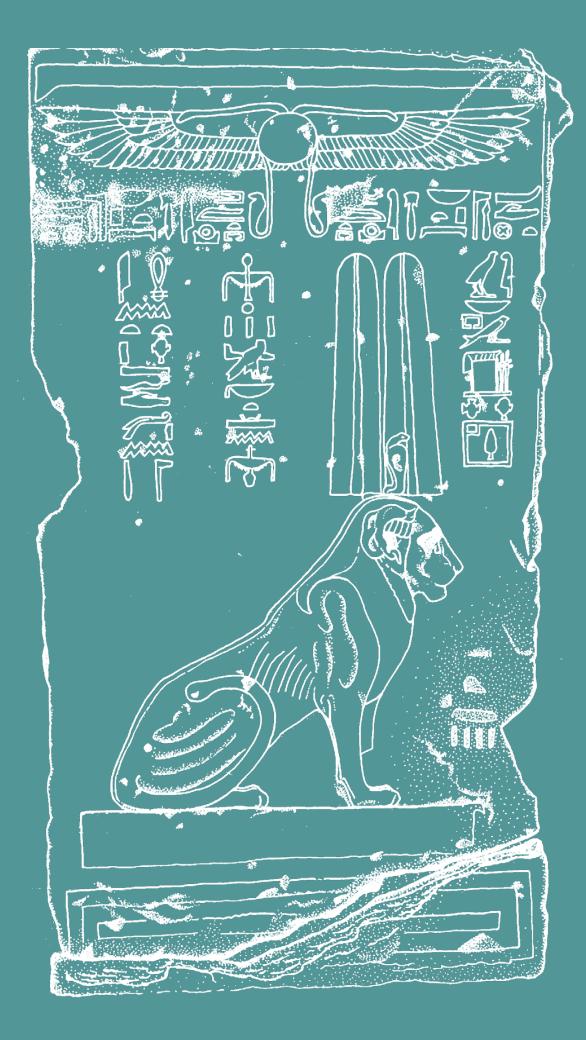
**Black:** roof discovered on land at Aboukir in 1777 White: fragments discovered in Aboukir Bay in 1933

**Purple:** new fragments found at the site of Canopus in Aboukir Bay by Franck Goddio and IEASM in 1999



#### Line Drawings of Outer Panels

The 36 decade panels are all organized the same way. At left, the larger figures indicate the relationship between the sun and each *decan* star. The text at the right explains the different plagues the god Shu delivered to the enemies of Egypt. The decoration focuses on the protection of the pharaoh and Egypt from evil forces and rebels, which were primary concerns during the reign of Nectanebo I (r. 380–362 BCE).



### Line Drawing of Back Panel Showing Shu

The Naos of the Decades was one of many monolithic shrines to have survived from the Egyptian Late period (664–332 BCE). The shrine was set up in a sanctuary dedicated to the god Shu, who is shown as a seated lion on the back wall of the naos. The inscription above Shu's head informs us that the cult image of the god, which would have been housed inside the naos, was made of silver covered with fine gold; the image measured four palms high (approximately 12 inches).

One of the fragments found in 1999 records the story of Shu's role in Creation. As the god of air, Shu separated the earth (Geb) from the sky (Nut), Osiris' parents. He then set in motion the cycles of the sun, stars, and planets and commanded the *decans* stars to eliminate evil.





## Thonis-Heracleion

Late period, Dynasty 30, in the reign of Nectanebo I

## Stele of Thonis-Heracleion, 380 BCE black granodiorite

Found lying face down on the seabed of Aboukir Bay, this magnificent stone slab is perfectly preserved. It was discovered by Franck Goddio and his team nestled within the sunken temple of Amun-Gereb, at the site of Thonis-Heracleion. This stele records a decree issued by the pharaoh Nectanebo I (r. 380–362 BCE). The inscription describes the king's decision to increase subsidies given to the goddess of war and creation, Neith, at her temple at Sais along the Nile. These additional funds were to come from the customs duties collected in the city of Thonis.

The scene at the top of the stele is meant to help reinforce the text of the decree. It shows Nectanebo I presenting offerings to the goddess Neith. At the left he wears the Tcheni crown, and at the right he wears the red crown of northern Egypt. Hovering above, two rearing cobras on a winged solar disk overlook the scene.

Until recently scholars asked the question: Where is Thonis? The discovery of this stele and translation of its text revealed that the cities of Thonis and Heracleion are one and the same. Called Thonis by the Egyptians and Heracleion by the Greeks, the city, known by both names, was the premier port and trading center of Egypt's Mediterranean coast.

National Museum, Alexandria SCA 277





## Bust of Neilos, God of the Nile, c.100–200 CE graywacke

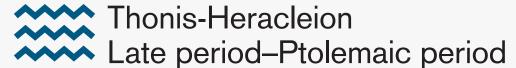
This sculpture depicts Neilos, the Greek god of the Nile River. It shows the god in typical Greek fashion: with thick curly hair and heavy beard, and wearing a cloak called a *himation*. Ancient Greeks living in Egypt came to worship the Nile River and added Neilos to their own traditional group of gods.

Discovered underwater in the submerged city of Canopus, this sculpture shows how the Greco-Roman population of Egypt adopted and adapted traditional Egyptian religious beliefs. For thousands of years the Egyptians honored, celebrated, and worshipped the Nile River as the giver of life. Without its annual flooding to fertilize Egypt's fields, life in the region could not be sustained. While the Egyptians worshipped Hapy, the god of the Nile flooding, the Greeks created and venerated Neilos.



#### Archaeological Stratigraphy

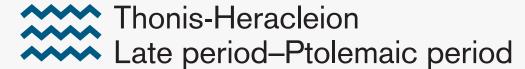
This photograph illustrates the archaeological concept of stratigraphy. Over time, layers of soil or strata are deposited, one over another, burying the past as the ground level rises. Thus, the top layers are newer than the lower layers. When archaeologists excavate, they peel back layer after layer of dirt, debris and sediment, as well as objects and architectural remains, traveling back in time the deeper they dig.



Five Bowls, c. 500–300 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 940, 1045, 390, 897, 961

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

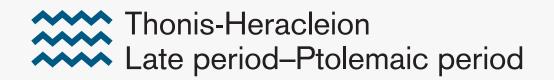


Libation Bowl, c. 500–120 BCE bronze

Incense Burner, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 222

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1058



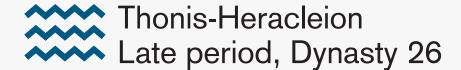
**Spoon**, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Thonis-Heracleion Late period, Dynasty 26, in the reign of Psamtik I

#### Plaque with Horus Name of Psamtik I, 664–610 BCE bronze

This *Plaque* and *Pyramidal Form* are among the oldest works in this exhibition. Bearing the royal names of the pharaoh Amasis (r. 570–526 BCE), they were discovered at the temple of Khonsu-Thoth in Thonis-Heracleion. The building was originally located in the northern section of the city. At some point, this area was filled with silt from the river, so the focus of further building and activity shifted to the southern part of the city.



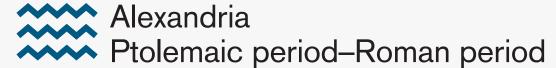


#### Pyramidal Form, c. 664–525 BCE

bronze

This small bronze pyramid-shaped object shows the pharaoh Amasis presenting vases as an offering. The king is identified by the two oval frames containing his royal names, which are inscribed above him. The wider sides of this pyramid each has two sections and display some of the Egyptian gods who were worshipped at Thonis-Heracleion. In the center of the upper register is the ibis-headed Thoth, the scribe of the gods who assisted Osiris with the judgment of the dead. On the bottom register, third from the left, is Isis, the wife of Osiris, who is wearing a crown consisting of a solar disk with two cow's horns and a rearing cobra (*uraeus*).

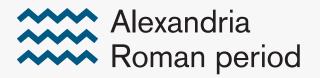




Ring with Eagle Intaglio, c.100 BCE-100 CE gold, chalcedony

This gold ring is made of three thick intertwined threads that cradle a stone carved with the design of an eagle. The gem carver used the various colors of the chalcedony stone when crafting the engraved design. The eagle of the Greek god Zeus holding a lightning bolt had become the mark of the Ptolemaic dynasty. The Ptolemies incorporated the eagle on their coins as a symbol of the celestial forces of universal domination. During the Roman period the eagle was associated with the Roman god Jupiter. The crown seen here introduces notions of glory and victory, and adorns many Greco-Roman gems.

Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum, Alexandria SCA 84



Ring with Bezel-set Stone, c.100-200 CE gold, agate

Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum, Alexandria SCA 626

Thonis-Heracleion Late period, Dynasty 26, in the reign of Psamtik I

**Plaque with Horus Name of Psamtik I**, 664–610 BCE bronze

This *Plaque* is one of the oldest works in this exhibition. Bearing the royal name of the pharaoh Psamtik I (r. 664–610 BCE), it was discovered at the temple of Khonsu-Thoth in Thonis-Heracleion. The building was originally located in the northern section of the city. At some point, this area was filled with silt from the river, so the focus of further building and activity shifted to the southern part of the city.

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1392

Thonis-Heracleion Late period, Dynasty 26

**Pyramidal Form**, c. 664–525 BCE bronze

This small bronze pyramid-shaped object shows the pharaoh Amasis presenting vases as an offering. The king is identified by the two oval frames containing his royal names, which are inscribed above him. The wider sides of this pyramid each has two registers and display some of the Egyptian gods who were worshipped at Thonis-Heracleion. In the center of the upper register is the ibis-headed Thoth, the scribe of the gods who assisted Osiris with the judgment of the dead. On the bottom register, third from the left, is Isis, the wife of Osiris, who is wearing a crown consisting of a solar disk with two cow's horns and a rearing cobra (*uraeus*).

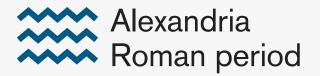
#### Alexandria Ptolemaic period–Roman period

#### **Ring with Eagle Intaglio**, c.100 BCE–100 CE gold, chalcedony

Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum, Alexandria SCA 84

This gold ring is made of three thick intertwined threads that cradle a stone carved with the design of an eagle. The gem carver used the various colors of the chalcedony stone when crafting the engraved design. The eagle of the Greek god Zeus holding a lightning bolt had become the mark of the Ptolemaic dynasty (332–30 BCE). The Ptolemies incorporated the eagle on their coins as a symbol of universal domination. During the Roman period the eagle was associated with the Roman god Jupiter. The crown seen here introduces notions of glory and victory, and adorns many Greco-Roman gems.

The ring was discovered during excavations of a shipwreck off the coast of Alexandria, close to the island of Antirhodos. This island was once home to royal palaces and an Iseum, a temple of Isis. The ring and its carved stone are perfectly preserved.



**Ring with Bezel-set Stone**, c. 100–200 CE gold, agate

Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum, Alexandria SCA 626



Crown of Amun, c. 332–120 BCE bronze

	Thonis-Heracleion Late period
~~~~	Late period

Plaque with Amun as a Ram, c. 600–500 BCE limestone

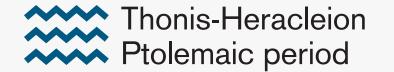
Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 967

Maritime Museum of Alexandria SCA 1579

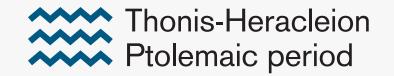
This beautifully carved limestone plaque is more than 2,500 years old. It was excavated just north of the sanctuary of Khonsu-Thoth in the city of Thonis-Heracleion. Carved on both sides is the head of a ram, an animal sacred to Amun, the patron god of Thonis-Heracleion. The precise function of this particular object is still unclear. It might have been a sculptor's model or a devotional offering. However, given the location in which it was found, the plaque was most likely invested with some ritual significance that is not yet fully understood.



Slab engraved with the ram-headed god Amun, Thonis-Heracleion, Egypt, 6th century BCE; length: 41/2 inches; Maritime Museum, Alexandria (SCA1579); IEASM Excavations; Photo: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio / Hilti Foundation



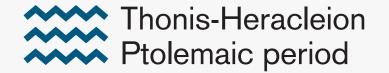
#### **Ring with Round Bezel and Image of Nike**, c. 332–120 BCE gold



**Ring with Oval Stone**, c. 332–120 BCE gold, stone, or glass

National Museum, Alexandria SCA 290

National Museum, Alexandria SCA 286



#### **Two Earrings with Animal Heads**, c. 332–120 BCE gold

National Museum, Alexandria SCA 1408 Greco-Roman Museum, Alexandria SCA 298

This group of jewelry reflects the increasing influence of Greece in Egypt during the reign of the Ptolemaic pharaohs. Animal-headed jewelry and rings with inset stones or engraved bezels were extremely popular throughout the Greek world. These examples were recovered from temples at Thonis-Heracleion, which were decidedly Egyptian in their architecture and the gods worshipped there. Note that one ring is decorated with the Greek goddess of victory, Nike. Yet this was still considered a suitable dedication at an Egyptian temple, demonstrating that the population of Thonis-Heracleion was both diverse and accepting of foreign gods.



#### Hemistater of Cyprus, 355–354 BCE gold

National Museum, Alexandria SCA 287

The front of this coin features Melgart, the Phoenician god that the Greeks identified as Herakles. He wears a lion skin and carries a bow and club—typical attributes of Herakles/Melqart. Despite the city's bearing the Greek name Heracleion, this coin is the only image of Herakles found at the site.

This coin belongs to a remarkable series of gold coins from Cyprus, a Mediterranean island north of the Egyptian coast. A scientific analysis of the coin's material suggests that Egypt was the source for much of the gold. This information implies that there was a considerable exchange of goods and money between Cyprus and Egypt, much of which would have passed through the port of Thonis-Heracleion.

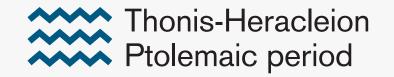


## Earring with Flower, c.332–120 BCE

Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

Two Sickle-shaped Earrings, c. 332–120 BCE gold



Earring with Pyramid of Eighteen Granules, c. 332–120 BCE gold

National Museum, Alexandria SCA 14174

National Museum, Alexandria SCA 14372; Greco-Roman Museum, Alexandria SCA 297

Greco-Roman Museum, Alexandria SCA 308



Ring with Engraved Bezel, c. 332–120 BCE gold



Earring with Animal Head, c. 332–120 BCE

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Uraeus, c. 400–300 BCE gold

National Museum, Alexandria SCA 1344

National Museum, Alexandria SCA 288

National Museum, Alexandria SCA 14333



Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

Bird-shaped Pendant, c. 332–120 BCE golo

This collection of gold jewelry was recovered during underwater excavations of the temples at Thonis-Heracleion. These items were likely religious offerings or gifts for the gods. The different styles on view here are significant for what they reveal about the people who presented them as dedications.

The animal-headed earrings and rings with carved bezels, or inset stones, were popular in the Greek world. The image of a rearing cobra, or *uraeus*, was reserved for Egyptian gods and royalty. The semicircle earrings and the earring with a pyramid of 18 granules are typical of jewelry from the eastern Mediterranean region. Thus, while the temples where these votive gifts were found were dedicated to Egyptian gods, and Egyptian in architectural design, the jewelry itself is international in style, reflecting the cosmopolitan character of the donors.



#### Incense Burner in the Shape of a Sphinx, c.600–475 BCE limestone

This incense burner takes the form of a seated sphinx carrying a bowl on its head; the teats on the belly show that the figure is female. It is carved in a style that combines Greek and Cypriot elements, including the almond-shaped eyes and the slight smile. The pedestal and the creature's forefeet are broken and the object has been worn from exposure to seawater.

The mythical sphinx was a mixed being, part human and part lion. In ancient Egypt the creature had a long history as the male incarnation of the pharaoh and a powerful guardian figure. Cultures from Greece and Cyprus later transformed the sphinx into a winged female monster associated with the transition between life and death.



limestone

Thonis-Heracleion

Head of a Statue, c. 425–375 BCE

This head may depict an elite male from Cyprus. Alternatively, given the unusual head covering, the sculpture may represent a Phoenician deity, perhaps the fertility god Baal, or the god Melqart. Both of these foreign gods had Egyptian equivalents—Baal was identified with Amun, and Melgart with Herakles. And both Amun and Herakles had temples in Thonis-Heracleion. Whatever its identity, the figure illustrates the cultural, religious, and commercial exchanges that took place between Thonis-Heracleion and the Cypriot-Phoenician communities on the southern coast of Cyprus.



#### Flat Plate with Mythical Animals, c.664–332 BCE lead

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1394

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 907

Thonis-Heracleion Late period

Lekythos (perfume bottle), c. 400 BCE terra-cotta



Skyphoid Pyxis (round cup), c. 350 BCE terra-cotta



National Museum, Alexandria SCA 247

National Museum, Alexandria SCA 590

This group of vessels attests to the wide-reaching trade connections that Thonis-Heracleion had with its Mediterranean neighbors. The bronze bowl represents a popular Persian shape. Persia invaded Egypt in 525 BCE and ruled the country for over a century.

The small perfume bottle (*lekythos*) was likely a product of a workshop in Athens, Greece. The larger red-and-black Athenian vases, common around the Mediterranean as prestigious dining ware, were of limited popularity in Egypt. Instead Egyptians preferred small vessels like cups and perfume jars.

Finally, though Athenian in appearance, the small round cup (*skyphoid pyxis*) actually comes from southern Italy. This shape was typically found in tombs in Campania, a region of southern Italy, so its appearance at distant Thonis-Heracleion is surprising.

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

**Bowl**, c. 500–300 BCE bronze

Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period, in the reign of Ptolemy I

## Coins with Head of Ptolemy I, 305–287 BCE gold

These five coins all bear the portrait of Ptolemy I, founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty (305–31 BCE). On the back of each coin, an inscription meaning "of King Ptolemy" frames an image of an eagle perched on a thunderbolt. Both the eagle and thunderbolt are associated with Zeus, the Greek god of sky and thunder. These coins were found at the temple of Khonsu at Thonis-Heracleion, where they were left as dedications to the god.

The Ptolemaic rulers emphasized their Greek identity on the coins they minted. In sculpture, however, the Ptolemies adopted Egyptian traditions. Compare Ptolemy I's appearance on his coinage—note his hooked nose, weak chin, short unruly curled hair, and headband—with the pharaoh heads on view nearby. One of the three heads dates to the Ptolemaic period and is Egyptian in style.

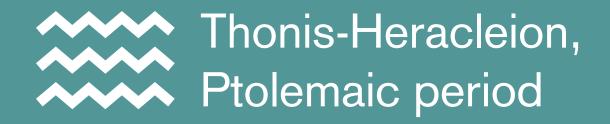


## Statue of a Benefactor, c. 332–120 BCE granodiorite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 455

Slightly smaller than life-size, this fragmentary sculpture depicts an unknown man. The torso and leg sections were discovered years apart, and it is possible that more segments will be located in the future. Underwater for centuries, the stone has significantly eroded; however, a partial hieroglyphic inscription can be seen, carved across the folds of the man's garment. The text mentions a noble who presented gifts to the "two lords of Gereb."

While the name of the man is unknown, it is clear that he must have been a benefactor of the two main gods of Thonis-Heracleion: Amun-Gereb and his son, Khonsu. He was likely part of the city's elite, one whose donations were significant enough that his statue was erected within the sacred sanctuary of the great temple.



## *Naos* of Amun-Gereb, c. 332–120 BCE red granite

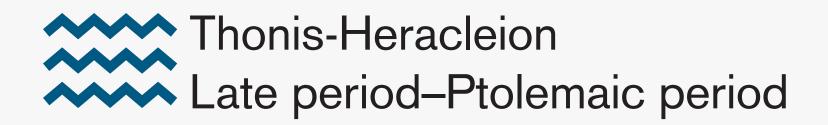
Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 457

This *naos* was discovered within the ruins of the main temple in Thonis-Heracleion. A *naos* is a shrine that contained a cult statue of a god, serving as a physical representation of the deity. Within the shrine, the statue was decorated, clothed, and fitted with a crown similar to the nearby bronze *Crown of Amun*. The *naos*, and the statue within it, were the focal points of most ceremonies performed in a temple.

Inscriptions on the exterior of this *naos*, although heavily worn, reference the god who was once housed inside: Amun-Gereb. This form of the god Amun served as the source of a new pharaoh's divine legitimacy to rule. According to ancient texts, the main temple in Thonis-Heracleion, the temple of Amun-Gereb, was also known as the "Sanctuary of Heracleion." Since the Egyptians called the city "Thonis," the port is known today by both names: Thonis-Heracleion.



Naos of the temple of Amun-Gereb, Thonis-Heracleion, Ptolemaic period (332–30 BCE); red granite; 5 feet 9¼ x 365 x 393 inches; Maritime Museum of Alexandria (SCA 457); IEASM Excavations; Photo: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio / Hilti Foundation



## Objects from the Crypt of the Temple of Amun-Gereb, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

The artifacts in this case, found close to or within the underwater ruins of the temple of Amun-Gereb, provide a glimpse of the kinds of objects necessary to furnish a great religious site. Bronze hand basins were required for the ceremonial washing of hands before holy ceremonies. Oil lamps lit the temple, metal containers, called braziers, provided heat or cooked food, and incense burners filled the air with purifying aromas. The bowls were probably used for pouring libations, or liquid offerings, to the gods. The two mirrors, too heavy for personal use, were likely made as gifts of offering to the gods.

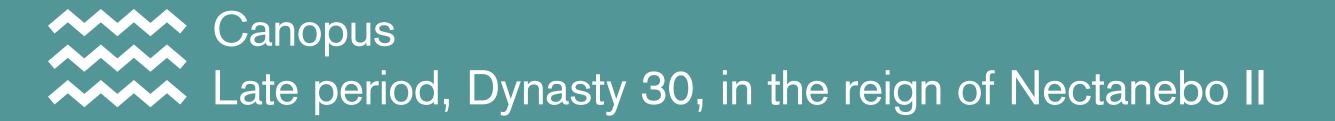
Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1011, 1568, 985, 1016, 1086, 904, 992, 987, 586, 1380, 899, 900, 406, 912, 407

Thonis-Heracleion Late period, Dynasty 26 or 29

#### Statuette of a Pharaoh, c. 664–380 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum Alexandria SCA 1305 This statuette shows a pharaoh in a classic Egyptian pose, striding forward with his left leg. He wears a short kilt and the ceremonial *khepresh* crown with a rearing cobra (*uraeus*). His hands once held a cane and an ankh (an ancient Egyptian symbol of life), symbols of royal power.

The identity of this pharaoh is still uncertain; the hieroglyphs incised on his belt buckle are difficult to interpret. Scholars believe they most likely read "Neferibre," one of the royal names of King Psamtik II (r. 595–589 BCE). The statuette was found in the sanctuary of the temple of Amun-Gereb, which was built almost 200 years after the reign of Psamtik II. This suggests that the statuette was relocated to Amun-Gereb from an older temple in another part of the city.



## Head of a Pharaoh, 360–343 BCE granodiorite

This portrait head depicts a pharaoh with a small mouth, almond-shaped eyes, and just a hint of a smile. The four-looped rearing cobra, called a *uraeus*, on the forehead of his headdress is typical of representations of the pharaoh Nectanebo II (r. 360–343 BCE). This head was found underwater along with several other statues near the temple of Serapis at Canopus, originally located at the Nile delta. The statues appear to have been intentionally dumped by later Christian occupants of the city.

Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum, Alexandria SCA 168



## Head of a Pharaoh, c. 200–1 BCE quartzite

Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum, Alexandria SCA 166 This sculpted head features a traditional Egyptian headdress called a *nemes*. The *nemes* had a wide forehead band with two broad side flaps and a rearing cobra (at center). This type of headdress dates to the Old Kingdom period (2700–2200 BCE), a time over 2,000 years before this statue was carved.

This head may have belonged to a sculpture of a sphinx; it dates to the Ptolemaic period (332–30 BCE), when a family of Greek kings and queens became rulers of Egypt. In order to appeal to the multicultural population of Egypt, the Ptolemies adopted traditional Egyptian styles of dress and display.



## Head of a Pharaoh, c. 664–525 BCE diorite

This sculpture, found during underwater excavations at Canopus, once featured distinctive eyes that set it apart from others like it. The eyes on this head were originally inlaid with a separate material—either glass or colored stone—a rather unusual feature for royal statues, whose eyes were typically unadorned.

Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum, Alexandria SCA 167



## **Queen Dressed as Isis**, c. 200–100 BCE granodiorite

Discovered in several pieces, this over-life-size statue depicts a Ptolemaic queen dressed as the goddess Isis. The sculpture includes both Egyptian and Greek characteristics. The queen's pose, standing with the left foot forward, her rigid posture, and the pillar running up her back are typical of Egyptian statues. She also holds two traditional Egyptian objects in her hands: a *sistrum*, a type of rattle, in her left, and an ankh, the symbol of life, in her right. In contrast, her corkscrew curls and elaborately draped garment are typical Greek features. Her dress is tightly knotted between her breasts with an Isis knot, which has the effect of pulling the drapery tightly around her body, creating a cascade of pleats that hug her figure.

National Museum of Alexandria SCA 283



Bust of the statue of a queen set up underwater on-site, Thonis-Heracleion, Ptolemaic period (332–30 BCE); granodiorite; height: 86<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches; National Museum of Alexandria (SCA 283); IEASM Excavations; Photo: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio / Hilti Foundation

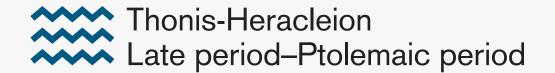


Buto Late period

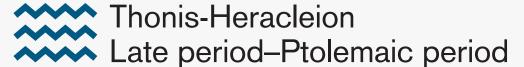
Horus as a Falcon, c.664–332 BCE bronze

This falcon statuette represents the god Horus. The name Horus comes from the Egyptian word meaning "above" or "one who is above." With its keen sense of sight, the falcon rules the sky, soaring above all the land and its inhabitants. Here Horus as a falcon wears the double crown (*pshent*) of Egypt, which symbolizes the unification of southern and northern Egypt.

Greco-Roman Museum, Alexandria GRM 247



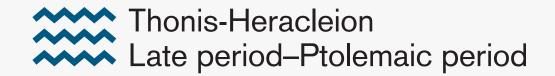
Statuette of Osiris, c. 664–120 BCE bronze



Statuette of Isis Nursing Infant Horus, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1081

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1093



#### Statuette of Harpokrates (Horus-the-child), c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Karnak Late period, Dynasty 30–Ptolemaic period

## **Osiris Stele**, c. 380–30 BCE sandstone

This stele, found at Karnak roughly 400 miles south of the Nile delta, features an unusual design. The lower half contains a domed structure with the name of Osiris carved inside—the eye, god with ankh, and throne together make up the hieroglyph for Osiris. Above the dome is a plant with lush leaves, most likely an *iched* tree. Now nearly extinct, the *iched* was once common in southern Egypt and was associated with dynastic continuity. The shape of the overall design is similar to that of the hieroglyph for "mound." Scholars have concluded this stele is likely a representation of an Osirian mound, a site within a temple where figures of Osiris were buried.

Thonis-Heracleion Late period

Statuette of Osiris, c. 664–332 BCE bronze, gold

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1267



## Wedjat-eye Amulet, c. 664–332 BCE gold

This small amulet represents the Eye of Horus, or the *wedjat* eye. According to myth, Horus, the falcon-headed son of Osiris, was wounded in the eye by his uncle Seth. Later, he was healed by the god Thoth. The *wedjat* eye is therefore a symbol of bodily wholeness and health. It was also associated with the moon, which recovers its fullness over 14 days of waxing, and the reconstitution of Osiris after his corpse was cut into 14 pieces. The *wedjat* eye, an enormously popular image in Egyptian art, was used for millennia, from the Old Kingdom period through Roman times.

## Tell el-Qalah Late period, Dynasty 30

# **Stele of Horus**, 380–280 BCE graywacke (stele), limestone (base)

This small sculpture served as a site for healing and protective powers. Horus, the child of Osiris and Isis, stands naked on the upturned heads of crocodiles. He wears the thick sidelock hairstyle associated with childhood and a protective amulet. In his fists he grasps animals seen as evil, absorbing their power for his own benefit: arched scorpions, snakes, a chained oryx with sharpened horns (right), and a lion (left).

The images work together with the inscription to counter any deadly attack from the animals, particularly bites and stings. Water would be poured over the inscriptions to absorb the power of the words. This act transformed the water into a precious fluid, which was collected in the limestone's hollow base and used for healing—either by drinking or applying to the body.

Egyptian Museum, Cairo CG 9402.1 and .2

Unknown origin Late period, Dynasty 30, in the reign of Nectanebo II

#### **Statue of Horus Protecting Pharaoh**, c. 350 BCE quartzite

This remarkable statue shows the divine falcon, Horus, protecting Nectanebo II (r. 360–343 BCE), the last native pharaoh of Egypt. The falcon's eyes were originally inlaid with glass, but only its left eye is completely preserved today. The Egyptians believed every pharaoh was an incarnation of Horus on earth, god and ruler of the two lands of southern and northern Egypt. The king depicted between the bird's legs is wearing a long kilt, with his palms resting flat against his thighs and his legs together—a position of prayer.

Although there is no inscription to confirm the name of the king, it is highly likely that the statue can be identified as Nectanebo II, because similar examples exist with his name. This figure suggests that he is simultaneously the falcon god, Horus, and the human ruler and protector of Egypt. Sais Late period

## **Temple Stele**, c. 664–332 BCE limestone

Here Osiris stands in the doorway of this sculpture in the form of a temple façade. He is flanked by his wife Isis (left) and his sister Nephthys (right).

After his murder by Seth, Osiris was resurrected by Isis, with the help of Nephthys. Because of the role of these women in his resurrection, they became Osiris' chief mourners. Together, they protected Osiris' body while trying to revive him, enabling his rebirth. As a result, Isis in particular became known as "the mourner of all mourners." During funeral ceremonies and festivals honoring Osiris, the lamentations of Isis and Nephthys would be recited and reenacted.

Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum, Alexandria CG 42879

Located within the complex dedicated to Amun-Gereb was a temple for Khonsu-the-child. Egyptians saw Khonsu-the-child as a divine personification of Amun-Gereb's human heir, the pharaoh. The Greeks assimilated Khonsu-the-child to the hero Herakles. Pharaohs from the Ptolemaic dynasty (332–30 BCE) claimed they descended from Herakles, which influenced their continued support of the temples of Amun-Gereb and Khonsu-the-child.

Evidence suggests that the original temple of Khonsu-the-child was located somewhere in the northern section of the city. It likely began to sink even at the height of Thonis-Heracleion's prominence, and the temple was moved to the northern part of the Amun-Gereb complex.

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

c. 425–350 BCE bronze

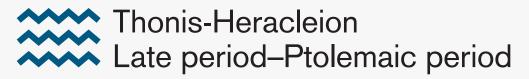
Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 401

Thonis-Heracleion Late period

Statuette of Khonsu, c. 664–332 BCE bronze

National Museum, Alexandria SCA 387

Hem-hem Crown of Khonsu-the-child,



Statuettes of Harpokrates (Horus-the-child), c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1268, 1008, 1059, 1565, 1269

Thonis-Heracleion Late period

Statuette of Khonsu, c. 664–332 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1567



Statue of Horus as a Falcon, c. 664–120 BCE black granite

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period Thonis-Heracleion Late period, Dynasty 30

Foundation Deposit from the Temple of Khonsu-the-child, 380–332 BCE faience, wood

This exceptional group of delicate objects has endured more than 2,000 years of seismic catastrophes and cultural change. Except for the small wooden *naos*, all these artifacts were made of faience at the same time and were meant to remain together. Seawater has changed the color of the faience, a quartz-based glass paste mineral, from its original turquoise green. Central to the group is the small figure of the child god Khonsu-the-child with a sidelock of hair and a finger at his mouth.

Maritime Museum, Alexandria; National Museum, Alexandria; *uraeus* SCA 552; plaque SCA 560; miniature naos SCA 583; papyrus-shaped column SCA 565; *wedjat*-eye amulet SCA 558; Khonsu SCA 562; Shu SCA 553; double vase amulet SCA 559

In 2012, Franck Goddio and his team discovered a temple dedicated to the god Khonsu-Thoth in Thonis-Heracleion. This composite deity blended aspects of the adult Khonsu, known as an avenger and healer, with those of the Egyptian god of integrity and knowledge, Thoth. Khonsu-Thoth was recognized in the region as a dispenser of justice, a healer, and a guardian of passages.

Fittingly, his shrine was located at the mouth of the northern canal, which led into the harbors of Thonis-Heracleion. There, Khonsu-Thoth, the "keeper of gates, entrances, and passages," protected Egypt's most crucial maritime border. Excavation in this area is still ongoing, and it is hoped that further investigations will continue to expand our understanding of this fascinating deity.

Thonis-Heracleion Late period, Dynasty 26

Fragment of Furniture, c.664–525 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1309

Thonis-Heracleion Late period, Dynasty 26

**Plaque**, c. 664–525 BCE bronze

Thonis-Heracleion Late period

Kneeling Pharaoh, c. 664–332 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1310

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1582



Head of a Statuette, c. 664–525 BCE bronze

Thonis-Heracleion Late period, Dynasty 26

**Double Ring**, c. 664–525 BCE gold

Thonis-Heracleion Late period, Dynasty 26

Three Sarcophagi, possibly for Bird Mummies, c. 664–525 BCE limestone

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1615

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1404

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1514, 1513, 1517

These small sarcophagi, discovered near the temple of Khonsu-Thoth, are made of very fine white limestone, a color that the ancient Egyptians associated with purity. These coffins probably once contained the mummies of ibises, hawks, or both, as these birds were sacred to Khonsu-Thoth. When worshipped in their individual forms, Thoth is frequently depicted with the head of an ibis, and Khonsu with that of a hawk. The hawk was also connected with the god Sokar, whose ancient ritual of resurrection was incorporated into ceremonies for Osiris.



Small sarcophagi, Thonis-Heracleion, Egypt; 26th dynasty (664–525 BCE); limestone; length: 13¾ inches; Maritime Museum of Alexandria (SCA 1513, 1514, 1517); IEASM Excavations; Photo: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio / Hilti Foundation

Southwest of the great temple of Amun-Gereb, archaeologists uncovered traces of a shrine dedicated to the god Bes. Bes is often portrayed in ways we today might find ugly or monstrous. This was intentional; Bes was a protective god, who warded off evil forces with his grotesque appearance and behavior.

He was also thought to ensure peaceful sleep, frighten away wild animals, protect children and homes, and watch over pregnant women. Because of these associations, Bes is sometimes depicted with female traits, such as breasts, as seen on the bronze vase nearby. Little is known about the rituals surrounding Bes and his worship, but he was clearly an important god in the region; in Canopus, monuments honoring him were erected next to the main temple.

Thonis-Heracleion **Ptolemaic period** 

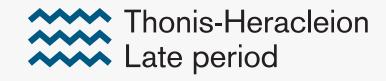
Statuette of Bes as a Warrior, c. 300–120 BCE terra-cotta

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1586

Thonis-Heracleion **A** Late period

Vase with Image of Bes, c. 425–350 BCE lead

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1234



Vase with Image of Bes, c. 500–350 BCE bronze



Fragment of Vase with Serapis, Isis, and Bes, c. 300–120 BCE terra-cotta

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1235

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1588

Even as a fragment, this statuette displays aspects of Bes that made him a popular god. He holds a short sword in his raised right hand; his left arm, now lost, probably once held either a shield or a snake. Bes's face is modeled in beautiful detail, with staring eyes below bushy eyebrows, rounded ears, and a corkscrew beard.

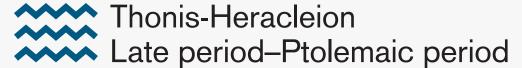
The terri-cotta statue of Bes wears a headdress of six stylized ostrich feathers, but with an unusual addition: in the upper half is a bull crowned by a sun disk. This element almost certainly represents the bull-god, Apis. While Apis was worshipped throughout ancient Egypt, he was particularly important to the Greeks. King Ptolemy I (r. 323–285 BCE), the successor of Alexander the Great, brought the cult of Apis to northern Egypt. The inclusion of a divine bull on this figure of Bes is a testament to the intermingling faiths of Egyptians and Greeks in this region.

These votive gifts were offered to the gods for many reasons: to ask for blessings, to ward off hardship, or to give thanks for good fortune. The Book of the Temple, an ancient manual for religious practice, stated that votives should be blessed by destroying them or throwing them into sacred waters. As a result, the majority of these objects were found in the Grand Canal or surrounding harbor basins in Thonis-Heracleion.

Among this group are numerous small lead containers; many contain the residue of plants and animals, suggesting they were used for food offerings. After filling the boxes, believers would often crush the opening by hand. Occasionally, a lead cover was added, which created a perfect seal; one such example is shown here. Lead is impermeable to X-rays, and archaeologists have chosen not to open this box, so the contents remain a mystery to all but its original donor.

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Votive Boxes, c. 664–120 BCE lead



Votive Deposit, c. 664–120 BCE limestone; lead

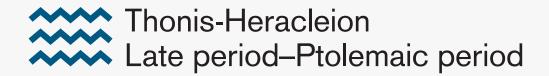
Maritime Museum, Alexandria; statuette of an owl (?) SCA 1050; statuette of a child deity SCA 1052; miniature bowl SCA 1053; miniature vessel SCA 1051; statuette of Harpokrates (Horus-the-child) SCA 925

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 938, 939, 923, 914

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

#### Miniature Headrest, c. 664–120 BCE lead

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1005



#### **Vessel**, c. 664–120 BCE lead

Saqqara Late period, Dynasty 26, in the reign of Amasis

# **Statue of Osiris**, 570–526 BCE graywacke

Here Osiris is shown wrapped in a fine cloth from which his hands emerge holding the crook and flail, symbols of kingship. He wears the *atef* crown, consisting of the rounded crown of southern Egypt flanked with two ostrich feathers and a sacred cobra (*uraeus*) at the front. The inscription reads "Osiris, who resides in the west, great god, lord of Ro-Setaou." The mention of "the west" refers to the land of the dead, over which Osiris ruled.

Egyptian Museum, Cairo CG 38358

Saqqara Late period, Dynasty 26, in the reign of Amasis

# Statue of Isis, 570–526 BCE graywacke

Egyptian Museum, Cairo CG 38884

Seated on a low-backed throne, the goddess Isis wears a slim-fitting sheath dress and a large crown with a solar disk set between cow's horns. In her right hand she holds the ankh, the sign of life. The inscription around the bottom of her throne reads "Isis, mother of the god, great in magic, mistress of the Two Lands." Together, the inscription and ankh symbol refer to Isis' powerful magic—a force stronger than death, which allowed her to resurrect her murdered husband, Osiris.



Tihna el-Gebel Third Intermediate period

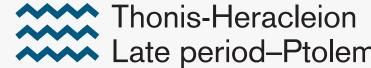
Osiris Vegetans Figure in a Falcon-headed Coffin, c. 800–600 BCE sycamore wood (sarcophagus); earth, grain (figurine) This Osiris *vegetans* figure, also called a "corn mummy", was formed from earth and seeds and then swaddled in linen. Its face is modeled in wax, and it displays the traditional symbols of Egyptian kingship: the feathered crown (atef) with rearing cobra head (uraeus), and the twin insignia of the crook and flail. Decorated with hieroglyphs, the figure's coffin is topped by a gilded falcon's head wearing a blue wig. These colors were significant: gods were believed to have golden flesh and hair of lapis lazuli, a semiprecious blue stone. The coffin itself was made of sycamore wood, a material sacred to Osiris and symbolic of rebirth.

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Prior to the underwater excavations of Thonis-Heracleion, the only significant sources of information about the Mysteries of Osiris were temple carvings, particularly from the temple of Dendara, located far south of Thonis-Heracleion. The inscriptions from Dendara were studied for years by the French Egyptologist Émile Chassinat (1868–1948). The result of Chassinat's labors was a definitive two-volume text, published after his death, in 1960, The Mystery of Osiris in the Month of Khoiak.

Within this text Chassinat included a drawing, based on his research, of what he imagined the objects used in the Mysteries rituals might look like. His illustration has proven to be remarkably accurate. Note the similarities of the situlae (pails), simpula (ladles), and sistra (rattles) that were found in Thonis-Heracleion. Incense burners, bowls, and votive boats were also integral to the Mysteries of Osiris.



Bowl, c. 500–300 BCE bronze

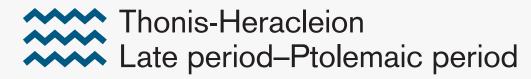
Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 916

Thonis-Heracleion  $\sim$ Late period–Ptolemaic period

Situla (pail), c. 500-120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 223

Late period–Ptolemaic period



Fragment of an Incense Burner, c. 500–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1569

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Sistrum (rattle), c. 332–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1619

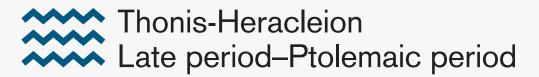
Thonis-Heracleion **Ptolemaic period** 

Three Votive Boats. c. 332–120 BCE lead

Thonis-Heracleion

Two Simpula (ladles), c. 700–120 BCE bronze

- Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1072, 1039, 1017
- Late period–Ptolemaic period
- Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 397, 579



Two Situlae (pails), c. 500–120 BCE bronze

These objects were found among the underwater ruins of the temple of Amun-Gereb in Thonis-Heracleion. Along with the granite basin nearby, they were almost certainly used by priests to create the Osiris *vegetans* figures during the Mysteries of Osiris.

Decorative oil lamps illuminated the work of these priests; one unusual example here is in the shape of a boat with a duck's head. The bell-shaped container with a handle, called a *situla*, carried the holy Nile water that was sprinkled daily on the vegetans figure with long-handled ladles (simpula). Strainers were used to remove sediment from offerings of wine or water. Shallow dishes (*phialae*) such as this one were common in the Greek world but relatively rare in Egypt. Made of a single sheet of hammered gold, this *phiale* would have been a suitably noble dish to bring offerings to the newly risen Osiris.

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Phiale (shallow offering dish), c. 400–300 BCE gold

National Museum, Alexandria SCA 296

Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

**Oil Lamp**, c. 332–120 BCE ceramic

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1307



**Bowl**, c. 500–300 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 964

Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

**Oil Lamp**, c. 332–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1024, 1028

Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

**Strainer**, c. 332–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1062

Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

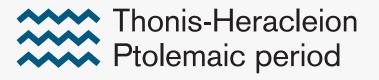
Ladle, c. 332–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1064



*Situla* (pail), c. 332–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1604



**Strainer**, c. 332–120 BCE bronze

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Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

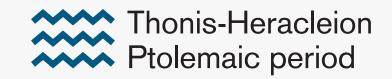
**Strainer**, c. 332–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1063

Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

**Oil Lamp**, c. 332–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1024, 1028



Ladle, c. 332–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1064

Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

**Oil Lamp**, c. 332–120 BCE ceramic

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1307

Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

Strainer, c. 332–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1062

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

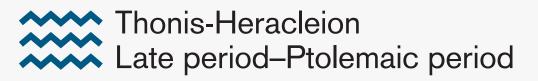
**Bowl**, c. 500–300 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 964

Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

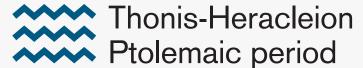
*Situla* (pail), c. 332–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1604



*Phiale* (shallow offering dish), c. 400–300 BCE gold National Museum, Alexandria SCA 296

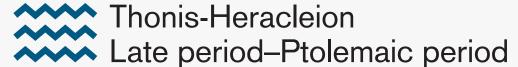
The celebration of the Mysteries of Osiris called for elaborate and extensive materials and ingredients both for making the Osiris models and for purification during various rituals. The incense burners indicate the importance of purified air in the temple while the priests performed their sacred tasks. The mortar and pestle crushed necessary materials, including precious minerals such as amethyst, lapis lazuli, and amber and sweetsmelling aromatic plants like myrrh, mint, and juniper.



#### Incense Burner, c. 332–120 BCE bronze

Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

**Spoon**, c. 332–120 BCE bronze



Mortar and Pestle, c. 500–120 BCE granodiorite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1057

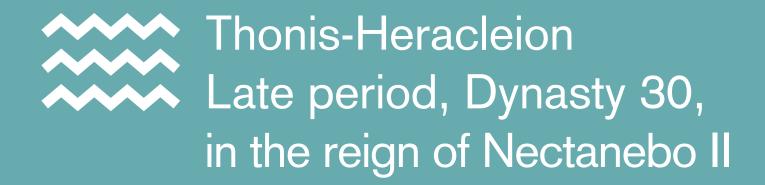


Head of a Priest, c. 332–30 BCE granodiorite

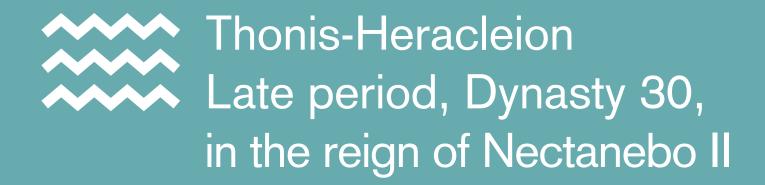
Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1398

The fully shaved head of this figure clearly indicates that this is meant to be a representation of a priest. In ancient Egypt, priests always had clean-shaven heads as a mark of purity. This head was found during underwater excavations of the eastern harbor of Alexandria, and its worn facial features are likely due to the many years it spent under the water.

When the Ptolemies took over rule of Egypt, they respected Egyptian religion and customs, allowing the native Egyptians to worship their gods freely as they had for over 2,000 years. Some Greeks living in Egypt during the Ptolemaic period even became members of the clergy in the service of Egyptian gods. In return, the Egyptian priesthood supported the development of the royal cult and made it acceptable to the Greek and Egyptian communities alike.



## **Sphinx**, 360–343 BCE granodiorite



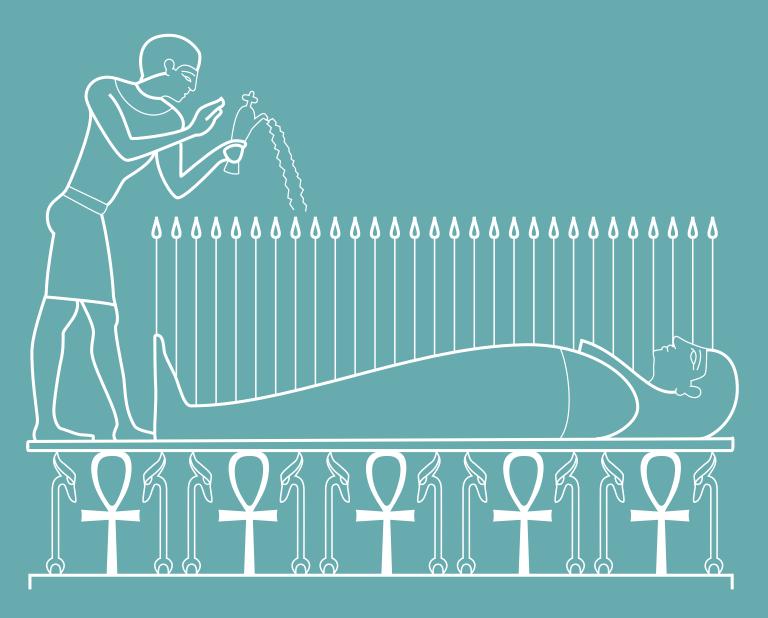
## **Sphinx**, 360–343 BCE granodiorite

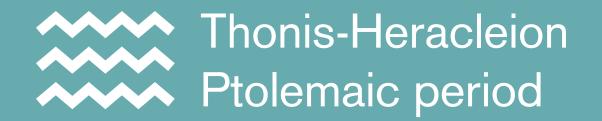
### **Osiris Vegetans**

Creation of sacred figures known as Osiris *vegetans* was an essential task of the Mysteries of Osiris. Working in secret behind temple walls, priests would form these figures in golden molds from a mixture of barley seeds and soil from the recently flooded Nile. The newly created Osiris effigies were then placed in large stone basins, where they were sprinkled with holy water every day until the barley seeds sprouted and grew. This growth symbolized both the rebirth of Osiris and the annual regeneration of Egypt.

Nine days later, the figures were removed from their molds in two halves and tied together with papyrus cords, then dried in the sun. Once dry, the effigies were anointed with holy ointments, decorated, crowned, and wrapped in linen.

According to ancient Egyptian belief, Osiris' spirit then inhabited the earthen figures, which were venerated as living gods and put on public view to reign over the elaborate ceremonies to follow. These rituals culminated in the final burial of the previous year's figures, linking the past to the present and future in an endless cycle of renewal.





# Tank Basin, c. 332–120 BCE pink granite

Basins of this type performed an important function in the celebrations of the Mysteries of Osiris. Figures of Osiris *vegetans*, formed from Nile silt and barley seeds, were placed in tanks such as this one and watered until the seeds sprouted. Carved of pink granite, this example was discovered quite close to the naos of the temple of Amun-Gereb. The proximity of the *naos* shrine and this basin provides evidence that the celebrations for Osiris were closely linked to the reaffirmation of each new Egyptian pharaoh's legitimacy.

#### **Osiris-Sokar**

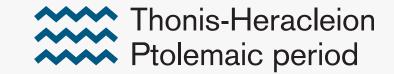
Like many religious practices, the Mysteries of Osiris incorporated elements of older traditions, such as the worship of the falcon-headed funerary god, Sokar. This practice was gradually assimilated into Khoiak, the month-long festival celebrating and reenacting Osiris' murder, reassembly, and rebirth. Around 1850 BCE it had become standard for another divine effigy to be created alongside the Osiris *vegetans*. Called Osiris-Sokar, this figure was believed to represent Osiris in his role as protector of the dead, while the *vegetans* figure focused on the idea of renewal.

Osiris-Sokar figures were formed from a mixture made up of highly symbolic ingredients. The materials included sacred water and earth from the Nile, pine, myrrh, frankincense, mint, juniper, gold, amber, and precious stones such as lapis lazuli and turquoise.



Like Osiris vegetans, the figures of Osiris-Sokar were formed from a basic mixture of Nile silt and water. To this paste, priests would add finely crushed precious minerals in precise amounts, as well as a variety of scented herbs. Aromatic materials, including incense, were believed to possess sacred qualities that could purify the air and even prevent bodily decay. Holy Nile water was added to the mixture with simpula (ladles) like those displayed here.

The Egyptian word for *simpulum* (the singular form of *simpula*) means "she who reunites," which was also a term used for Osiris' mother, the goddess Nut. These objects have both a utilitarian and a symbolic function that are further echoed by the Eye of Horus (wedjat-eye) symbol. Seen on the large simpulum and golden amulet, among others, this emblem is considered a symbol of bodily wholeness.



Spoon, c. 332–120 BCE Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period Tongs,

c. 332–120 BCE

bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1044

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 943 Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 392



Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

Incense Burner, c. 332-120 BCE bronze

Shovel for Incense, c. 332–120 BCE

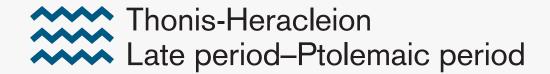
bronze

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

**Ritual Ladle**, c.664–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 580

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 395



Thonis-Heracleion Late Period–Ptolemaic period

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Votive Box, c. 332-30 BCE bronze

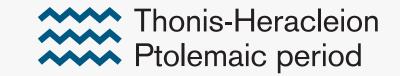
Wedjat-eye Amulet, c. 700–300 BCE gold

Miniature Vase, c.664-120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1605

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1405

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1010



**Ritual Ladle**, c. 332-120 BCE bronze

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Bowl, c. 500-300 BCE bronze

Bowl c. 400-300 BCE silver

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 220

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1228

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 951

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period



Abydos Middle Kingdom, Dynasty 13, in the reign of Khendjer

### Osiris on his Funeral and Revival Bed, 1773–1650 BCE black diorite

This unique cult statue represents a key moment in the story of Osiris, when Isis in the form of a kite (bird of prey) revives Osiris with the breath of her wings. Just at the moment of his resurrection, Isis and Osiris conceive Horus, their son and heir. Here we see Osiris lying on an elaborate funerary bed with a pair of hawks perched at his head and feet.

This image endured over the centuries, and can be found in temples ranging from the New Kingdom period (c. 1290–1279 BCE) to the Ptolemaic period (c. 332–30 BCE). The scene establishes Osiris as the first mythical king to rule the earth. He is the "Perfect Being" who overcomes death to impregnate Isis and create his heir, Horus.

Horbeit Late period, Dynasty 26, possibly in the reign of Apries

### The Awakening of Osiris, c. 664–525 BCE gneiss, gold, electrum, bronze

This statue portrays Osiris, newly awakened after death. The god is covered with a sheath and is stretched out on his stomach. He lifts his head and smiles. He wears the beard—a symbol of his divine kingship—and a crown with ostrich feathers and twisted ram's horns. A sun disk, a symbol of the reborn Osiris, and precious metals also decorate the crown.

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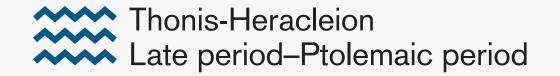
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Abydos Third Intermediate period, Dynasty 25

#### **Statuette of Isis Holding Osiris**, c. 747–656 BCE limestone

A kneeling Isis holds a statuette of a mummified Osiris across her knees. She is smiling, and her slender body is emphasized by the large scale of her head with its distinct hairstyle and hair band. This unusual sculpture, found in a tomb, represents Isis as the "guardian of the heavenly flesh." After she collected the scattered pieces of Osiris' body, Isis still had to perform the necessary rituals to bring him back to life. Osiris' murder and Isis' reassembly and reanimation of him are celebrated and commemorated during the month of Khoiak. The presence of this goddess in a tomb is very significant as it affirms the promise of rebirth for the owner of the tomb, with the goddess at the center of this magical transformation.

Osiris and the celebration of the Mysteries of Osiris were central to the religious identity of Thonis-Heracleion. Thus statuettes of this god are commonly found in the city. Osiris is represented standing and fully draped in a shroud-like garment from which his head and hands emerge. He holds the crook and flail, two symbols related to kingship, and wears a divine beard. Excavations on an island in the southeast port yielded a concentration of statuettes near an offering table and other votive materials. Together, these objects suggest the presence of a sanctuary or temple at this location.



**Osiris Statuettes**, c.664–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 966, 1255, 1560, 1013, 1004, 411

Thonis-Heracleion Late period

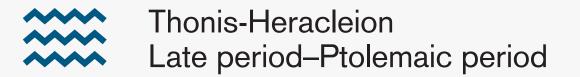
Head of Osiris, c. 664–332 BCE bronze



c.664–332 BCE bronze

Thonis-Heracleion

Beard from a Statue,



Harpokrates (Horus-the-child) Statuettes, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1249, 1572, 423, 1264

These statuettes represent different versions of the child deity Harpokrates, or Horus-the-child. As one of the principal gods, Harpokrates fulfilled different aspects of kingship and strength.

Numerous bronze figures of young deities were found at Thonis-Heracleion. They are one of the most common types of statuettes at the site. Many were found in the northern part of the city and at the temple of Khonsu. The concentration of these statuettes in the north reflects the fact that this location was the cult center during the earlier part of the town's history. This area was subsequently abandoned and the center of the settlement moved to the south.



Osirian divinities set up on the bottom of Aboukir Bay; bronze statuettes discovered on the site of Heracleion, Egypt, 6th–2nd century BCE; IEASM Excavations; Photo: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio/Hilti Foundation

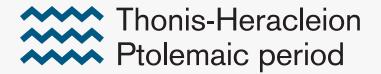
## Medinet Habu Late period, Dynasty 26, in the reign of Psamtik I

## Statue of Osiris, 664–610 BCE graywacke

In this statue the god Osiris wears the crown of southern Egypt adorned with a rearing cobra (*uraeus*). He holds objects signifying royalty, the crook and flail. This figure makes a majestic impression; the god's face is grave. His eyes are emphasized by pronounced lines and prominent eyebrows. The high crown accentuates the shape of his slender body, whose fine muscular form is visible through his robe.

The statue was dedicated to Osiris by Nitokris, daughter of Psamtik I (r. 664–610 BCE). On the back pillar, which simulates the form of an obelisk, she glorifies Osiris as "Lord of Life" and he "who presides over the west," a reference to Osiris' role as ruler of the afterlife.

Egyptian Museum, Cairo CG 38231, JE 30997



Amulet of an Offering Table, c.332–120 BCE bronze

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

**Osiris Statuettes**, c.664-120 BCE bronze

Osiris statuettes are found throughout Thonis-Heracleion, both in the northern areas, where inhabitants first settled, and in the south, where people moved after the north was abandoned. The dual locations of the statuettes suggest that Osiris-related objects maintained their importance throughout the life of the city, from beginning to end. Additionally, they were found predominantly on land. This fact implies they were donated directly to the god, rather than deposited into the waterways for other Osirian rituals, such as the Mysteries of Osiris.

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 982, 1254, 1031, 1266, 1563, 952

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1250

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Head of a Duck, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

Amulet of Osiris-Sokar, c.332–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1561

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1616

Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

Fragment of a Statuette of Isis, c. 332–120 BCE faience

Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

Amulet of Isis, c. 332–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1576

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

#### Statuettes of Isis Nursing Infant Horus, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Offering her left breast to the infant seated in her lap, Isis performs the essential duty of a mother: feeding and nurturing her child. Isis watched over her son Horus, keeping him hidden from his evil uncle Seth, until Horus could avenge his father's murder and claim his rightful role as king. In this pose, the nursing mother can be compared to Christian representations of Mary and Jesus.





### Luxor

Late period, Dynasty 26, in the reign of Psamtik I

### **Statue of Tawaret**, 664–610 BCE graywacke

This finely polished statue represents the goddess Tawaret in the shape of a hippo standing on its hind legs. She is supported at each side by the magic knot, a symbol of protection. Female hippos, peaceful unless defending their young, symbolized maternity and fertility. In the Osiris myth, Tawaret protects Isis and the newly born Horus against Osiris' evil brother Seth.

Luxor New Kingdom

## *Sistrum* (rattle), c.1200–1000 BCE gold

This elegant object is a *sistrum*, a rattle-like musical instrument used in sacred rites and festivals. These instruments were particularly important for the cult of the Egyptian goddesses Hathor and Isis. Here the head of Hathor is shown frontally, with cow's ears, and her distinctive wig with curled-out ends adorns the section between the *sistrum*'s handle and a shrine-shaped frame. Rods, fitted with small disks, run through holes made in the sides of the frame. When shaken, the clattering disks emit a sound believed to soothe the goddesses. Considering its small size, this *sistrum* could have been a model deposited as a votive offering. Similar rattles in bronze have been found at Thonis-Heracleion and Canopus, where it is thought they were used during the celebration of the Mysteries of Osiris.

Tanis, Tombs of Psusennes I and Sheshonq II, Third Intermediate period, Dynasty 22, in the reign of Sheshonq I

**Pectoral**, 945–924 BCE gold, lapis lazuli, glass paste

This extraordinary piece of jewelry, called a "pectoral" and worn on the chest like a pendant, shows the sun boat under a star-filled sky, sailing on primeval waters. On top of the barque, an image of the sun as the seated god Amun-Ra-Horakhty holds an ankh sign (life) and a *was* scepter (power) while the goddess of truth and justice, Ma'at, stands in front of him. The protective deities Isis and Nephthys spread their wings around the sun in order to shelter it from any danger that might be encountered during its voyage across the sky.

Ancient Egyptians believed the gods traveled through the starry sky by boat. Festivals with barque processions evoked this journey by carrying one or more divine statues. The discoveries of numerous sacred barque models, as well as a real one at Thonis-Heracleion, provide extraordinary archaeological evidence of ritual practices that are otherwise known only through texts and images.

Tanis Third Intermediate period, Dynasty 22, in the reign of Osorkon II

## **Osiris Amulet**, 874–850 BCE gold

This small, flat figure cut from a sheet of gold shows Osiris in his most typical form: with crook, flail, and headdress, standing on a base symbolizing Ma'at, the universal order. The amulet originally belonged to Prince Hornakht, the son of Pharaoh Osorkon II (r. 874–850 BCE). The prince died before he could inherit the throne, so Osorkon II had his son buried in the pharaoh's own tomb at the site of Tanis, then the capital of Egypt.

During the excavations of Osorkon II's tomb and the prince's burial, a series of gold amulets was found that covered parts of the prince's mummy. They are small in size but are finished to a high quality and represent various mythical symbols intended to safeguard the sanctity of Hornakht's mummified body. Tanis, Tomb of Psusennes I Third Intermediate period, Dynasty 21, in the reign of Amenemope

Ewer, 993–984 BCE gold

This golden container once belonged to Pharaoh Amenemope (r. 993–984 BCE). The king is mentioned in the engraved inscription and referred to as "beloved of Osiris, lord of Abydos." Although Osiris was extensively worshipped in the Canopic region during the Late and Ptolemaic periods (664–31 BCE), it was the southern Egyptian town of Abydos that, since early dynastic times, was regarded as his main cult center. The area was also believed to be Osiris' resting place. The ewer was probably used for libations, a ritual pouring of a liquid, as an offering to Osiris.

The ewer was discovered in 1940 in the royal burial complex at Tanis, a town in the northeastern Nile delta, where several kings were buried. The tombs contained a large number of objects made of gold, silver, lapis lazuli, and other precious stones.



AND PROCESSION TO CANOPUS GR

On the 29th of Khoiak, the month-long celebration of the Mysteries of Osiris, the Osiris figures from the previous year began their final journey, which took a unique form in Thonis-Heracleion. The figures, concealed in a *naos* (shrine), were placed onto a larger wooden boat, manned by a few select priests. The priests would pray and sing aboard the boats as the figures of Osiris traveled to their final resting place. Bells and *sistra*, rattle-like instruments sacred to Isis, found along the 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-waterway to Canopus, indicate that music was an important part of these ceremonies. Also unearthed were emblems of other gods, particularly Horus and Anubis, which were probably fitted onto the tops of poles so they could stand guard over the procession. This boat traveled down the Grand Canal, following the course of the sun—from east to west until it reached its destination in Canopus.

Throngs of people likely crowded the banks of the canal to witness the funeral procession and to make offerings. Priests would have secretly deposited ritual ladles and model lead bargues along the route of the sacred boat. Stone bowls have been excavated alongside these votive objects, indicating that they were probably used as offering dishes for more modest sacrifices like wine, meat, and flowers. Many of these dishes were found in clusters along the waterway to Canopus, implying that there may have been specific sites designated for the public to place their offerings into the sacred waters.



Offering Table, c. 332–120 BCE granodiorite



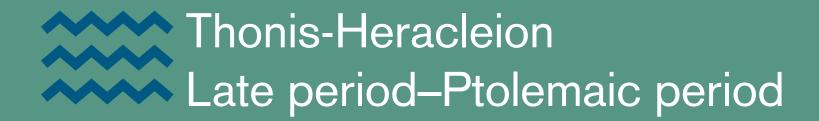
Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BCE granodiorite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1163

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 265

## Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BCE granodiorite





Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BCE quartzite

Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BCE granodiorite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 374

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 373

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Ritual Ladle, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 936



**Ritual Ladle**, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 909

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Ritual Ladle, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

LAND PROCESSION TO CANOPUS GR

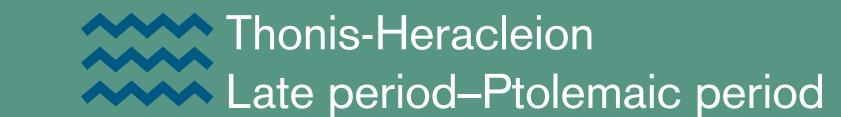
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**Ritual Ladle**, c. 664–120 BCE bronze





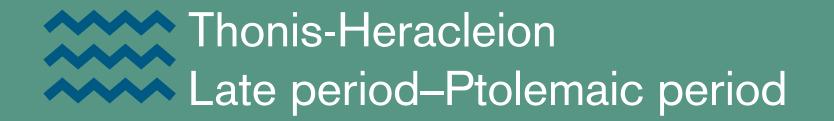
Ritual Ladle, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1032

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1043

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Ritual Ladle, c. 664–120 BCE bronze





Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BCE granodiorite

Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BCE quartzite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 373

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 374

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BCE granodiorite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 358



Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BCE granodiorite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 265



Offering Table, c. 332–120 BCE granodiorite

PROCESSION CANOPUS AND TO C GR

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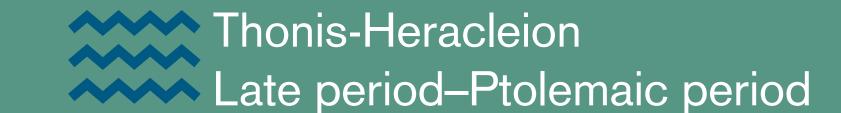
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## Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

**Ritual Ladles**, c. 664–120 BC bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1042,1071,1014

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period



Offering Dishes, c. 700–120 BC granodiorite

Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BC granodiorite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 362, 1091

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1280

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BC granodiorite

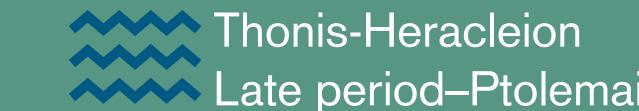


Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BCE granodiorite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1620





Horus Emblem, c. 700–120 BCE bronze

Anubis Emblem, c. 700–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 997

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 981

Late period–Ptolemaic period





Votive Boat, c. 700–120 BCE lead

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 405

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Anubis Emblem, c. 700–120 BCE bronze

PROCESSION CANOPUS AND TO C GR

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### Anubis Emblem, c. 700–120 BCE bronze

Thonis-Heracleion

Late period–Ptolemaic period

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 975

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period



Bell c. 700–120 BCE bronze

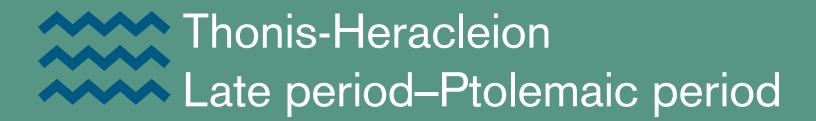
Bells. c. 700–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 388

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 385, 1381

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Sistrum (rattle), c. 700–120 BCE bronze





Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BCE granodiorite

Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BCE granodiorite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1620

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 360

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Offering Dishes, c. 700–120 BCE granodiorite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1280, 1091





Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BCE granodiorite

Ritual Ladle, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 362

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1095

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

**Ritual Ladle**, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 478

PROCESSION CANOPUS AND TO C GR

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## Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 975, 981

Anubis Emblems, c. 700–120 BCE bronze





Bells, c. 700–120 BCE bronze

Offering Dishes, c. 700–120 BCE granodiorite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 388, 385, 1381

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1620, 360, 1280, 1091, 362

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

**Ritual Ladles**, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1095, 478

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period



**Ritual Ladles**, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Offering Dishes, c. 700–120 BCE granodiorite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1042,1071,1014

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 362, 1091, 1280, 360, 1620

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Votive Barque, c. 700–120 BCE ead

Horus Emblem, c. 700–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 405

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 997

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Two Rattle (Sistrum) Frames, c. 700–120 BCE bronze

Anubis Emblem, c. 700–120 BCE bronze



Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 906, 581

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 975

On the 29th day of Khoiak, the month-long celebration of the Mysteries of Osiris, priests would pray and sing aboard boats, similar to the one pictured nearby, as the figures of Osiris traveled to their final resting place. Bells and sistra, rattlelike instruments sacred to Isis, found along the 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-mile waterway from Thonis-Heracleion to Canopus, indicate that music was an important part of these ceremonies. The priests would have secretly deposited ritual ladles and model lead barques along the route of the sacred boat. Also unearthed were emblems of other gods, particularly Horus and Anubis, which were probably fitted onto the tops of poles so they could stand guard over the procession.

Throngs of people likely crowded the banks of the canal to witness the funeral procession and to make offerings. Stone bowls, excavated alongside these votive objects, indicate that they were probably used as offering dishes for more modest sacrifices like wine, meat, and flowers. Many of these dishes were found in clusters along the waterway to Canopus, implying there may have been specific sites designated for the public to place their offerings into the sacred waters.

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

**Ritual Ladles**, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1032, 1043, 1034





Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BCE granodiorite



Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BCE quartzite

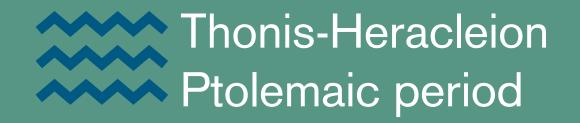
Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 373

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 374

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Offering Dishes, c. 700–120 BCE granodiorite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 358, 265



Offering Table, c. 332–120 BCE granodiorite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1163

Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

**Offering Table**, c. 332–120 BCE granodiorite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1163

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Offering Dishes, c. 700–120 BCE granodiorite

Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BCE quartzite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 265, 358

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 374



Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Offering Dish, c. 700–120 BCE granodiorite

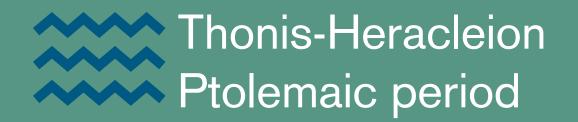
Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 373

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Ritual Ladles, c. 664–120 BCE bronze



Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 936, 909, 931





#### **Oil Lamps**, c. 350–200 BCE terra-cotta

**Oil Lamp**, 664–332 BCE terra-cotta

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1324, 1594, 856, 1589, 1587

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 598

A large number of these oil lamps have been discovered in the canals and basins of Thonis-Heracleion. The examples here may have been part of the Navigation of the 22nd day of Khoiak, the month-long festival celebrating and reenacting Osiris' murder, reassembly, and rebirth. On that day, 365 lamps—one for each day of the year—were placed on boats to accompany Osiris and the other gods on their ceremonial voyage over the water.

Several lamps decorated with black slip, a clay-based paint, are high-quality imports from Athens, while the others were mass-produced in Egypt, though still based on a Greek design. Lamps such as these, like the votive boats on view nearby, could hold great ritual importance. They were essential to a number of ceremonies, including sacrifices and oath taking, as well as the Mysteries of Osiris.

### Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Votive Boats, c. 664–120 BCE lead

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1607, 1606

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Boats like these were immensely important for ancient Egyptians, who believed that the gods, including the sun god, Ra, traveled through the sky on a holy boat. According to traditional religious practice, offerings to Osiris were to be symbolically placed beyond the reach of humanity, either by deliberately damaging them or by throwing them into sacred water. Many of the people who offered these votive boats, it appears, chose to do both.



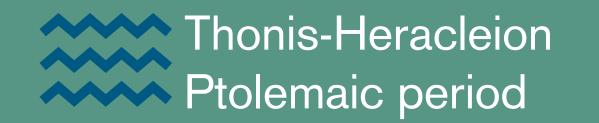
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Figurehead, c. 400–300 BCE bronze



Oil Lamps, c. 350–200 BCE terra-cotta

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1592

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 342, 1584, 1506



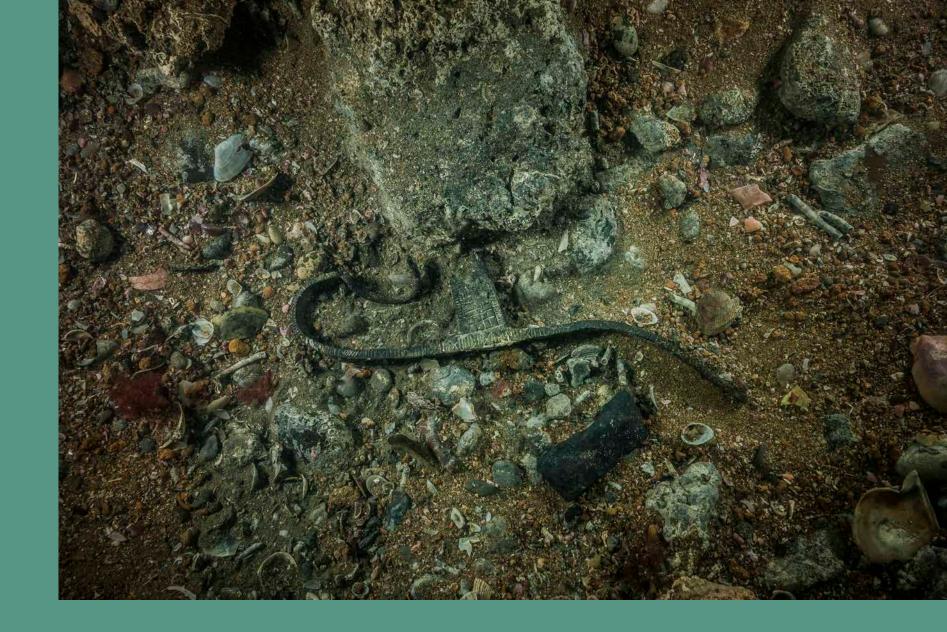
Oil Lamp, 664-332 BCE lead

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Throne of a Votive Boat, c. 664–120 BCE lead

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 998

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1617

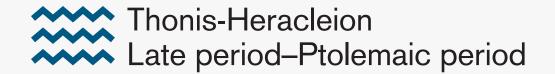


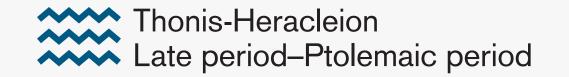
A votive lead model barque as discovered underwater, Thonis-Heracleion, 4th–2nd century BCE; lead; Maritime Museum, Alexandria (SCA 1583); IEASM excavations; Photo: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio/Hilti Foundation



Osiris' journey into the world of the dead was reenacted and celebrated on the 22nd day of Khoiak, the month-long festival celebrating the Mysteries of Osiris. During the Navigation ritual, the newly created figures of Osiris, accompanied by statues of other gods, would travel across sacred waters in 34 papyrus barques, or boats. The exact composition of the divine procession remains unclear and probably varied across the Egyptian empire.

Certainly, representations of Isis, Horus, Thoth, and Anubis were included. In Thonis-Heracleion, figures of other deities have been found. This collection includes the base of a statuette of Ma'at, the goddess of order and balance; a statuette of Sekhmet, the lionheaded goddess who fought the enemies of Ma'at; an amulet of Shu, one of the creator gods; and a head of the mighty god Amun, the king of the gods, who was vital to the city of Thonis-Heracleion.





Head of the God Amun, c. 600–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1019

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Statuette of Bastet, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1562



Amulet of Shu, c. 600–120 BCE steatite

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Head of Nekhbet, c. 600–120 BCE bronze

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Miniature Apis Bull, c. 600-120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 841

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 895

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1001



Statuette of Sekhmet, c. 500–120 BCE bronze

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Amulet of Nefertem, c. 600–120 BCE lead

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Statuette of an Ibis, c.600–120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1041

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 974

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1087



Anubis Emblem, c. 600–120 BCE bronze

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Statuette of the Goddess Ma'at, c. 664–120 BCE bronze

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Statuette of Horus, c. 600-120 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 973

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1003

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1103

GREAT THE

On the 22nd of Khoiak, the month-long festival celebrating and reenacting Osiris' murder, reassembly, and rebirth, Osiris figures were presented to the public before being placed, with statues of other gods, on 34 papyrus boats. As the boats floated across the sacred waters, the public prayed, sang, and offered sacrifices, while priests acted out scenes of Osiris' death. At the end of the voyage, divine figures were wrapped in linen and returned to the mysterious temple.



Oil Lamp, c. 350–200 BCE terra-=cotta

Thonis-Heracleion Ptolemaic period

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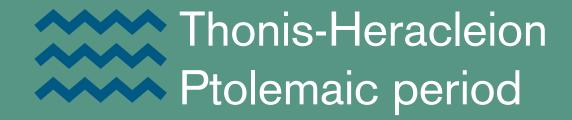


Oil Lamp, c. 350–200 BCE terra-cotta

Oil Lamp, c. 350–200 BCE terra-cotta

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1324 Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1594 Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 856

Thonis-Heracleion







Oil Lamps, c. 350–200 BCE terra-cotta

Oil Lamp, 664–332 BCE terra-cotta

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1589, 1587



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Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 598

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Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

Votive Boat, c. 664–120 BCE ead

Votive Boat, c. 664–120 BCE lead

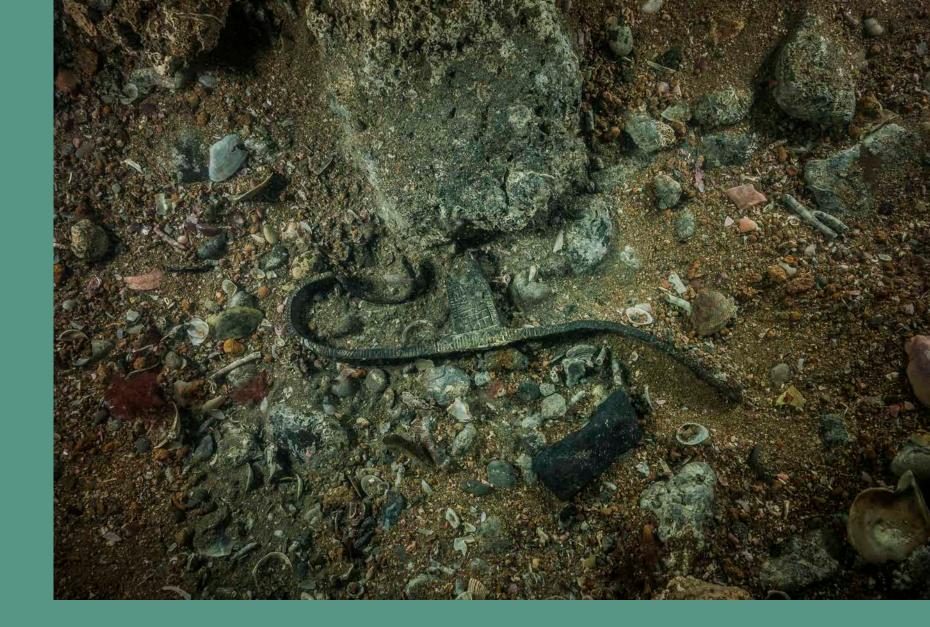
Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1607

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1606



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Barques like these were immensely important for ancient Egyptians, who believed that the gods, including the sun god, Ra, traveled through the sky on a holy boat. According to traditional religious practice, offerings to Osiris were to be symbolically placed beyond the reach of humanity, either by deliberately damaging them or by throwing them into sacred water. Many of the people who offered these votive boats, it appears, chose to do both.



A votive lead model barque as discovered underwater, Thonis-Heracleion, 4th–2nd century BCE; lead; Maritime Museum, Alexandria (SCA 1583); IEASM excavations; Photo: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio/Hilti Foundation THE GREAT NAVIGATION

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Oil Lamps, c. 350–200 BCE terra-cotta



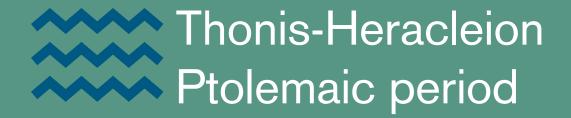
Oil Lamp, 664-332 BCE lead

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 342, 1584, 1506





Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 998



Figurehead, c. 400–300 BCE bronze

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1592

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Votive Boat, c. 664–120 BCE lead

lead

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1574

Thonis-Heracleion Late period–Ptolemaic period

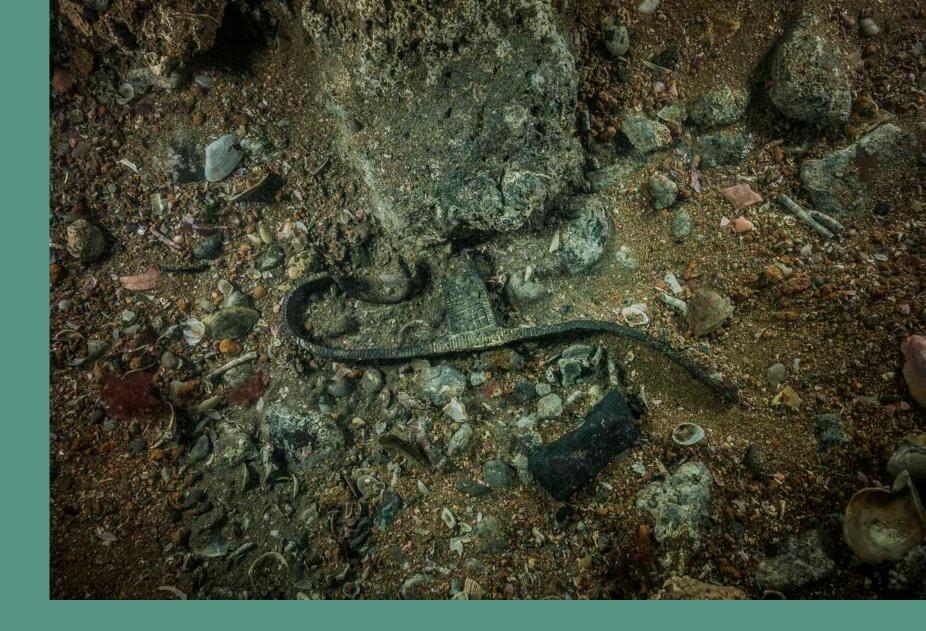
Votive Boat, c. 664–120 BCE



Votive Boat, c. 664–120 BCE lead

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1591

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1583



A votive lead model barque as discovered underwater, Thonis-Heracleion, 4th–2nd century BCE; lead; Maritime Museum, Alexandria (SCA 1583); IEASM excavations; Photo: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio/Hilti Foundation Hermopolis (El Ashmunein) Roman period

**Goblet**, c. 1–200 CE silver

The two vessels in this case share much of the same imagery. The designs focus on revelry within a vineyard. Dionysus, the Greek god of wine and fertility, was one of the deities who were absorbed into the persona of the Greco-Egyptian god Serapis. The gilded silver goblet is shaped much like the *kalathos*, or grain measure, that Serapis characteristically wears on his head.

Greco-Roman Museum, Alexandria GRM 24201

Unknown origin Roman period

**Serapis**, c. 30 BCE–395 CE alabaster

Here Serapis wears a rolled headband with a disk in the center. Small wings are depicted within the curls of hair, just above his temples. These little wings are associated with another Egyptian deity, Hermanubis, whose role as a conductor of souls was absorbed by Serapis. While this sculpture was found in Egypt, similar depictions of Serapis have been discovered across the Roman Empire, including at the capital city, Rome.

Greco-Roman Museum, Alexandria GRM 23925



**Vase**, c. 332–120 BCE terra-cotta

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 1608



#### Amulet in the Form of **Osiris-Canopus**, c. 30 BCE–395 CE bronze

This miniature version of an Osiris *hydreios* contrasts with the larger example nearby. Found at Canopus, such objects are known as an Osiris-Canopus, because this specific shape of Osiris was originally exclusively connected to the Canopic region, where he was worshipped. However, the name has often been confused with "canopic jars," a term used since the 18th century to refer to human- or animal-headed vessels found in Egyptian tombs, which held the mummified organs of the tomb owners.

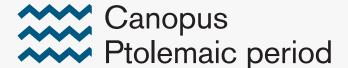


**Osiris-Canopus**, c.1–200 CE marble

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 205

Instead of the usual mummy shape, Osiris is depicted as a jar topped by a human head with a wig. The front side of the vase-like body is decorated with a religious scene; a winged scarab, surrounded by dog-headed figures, is holding the sun disk flanked by two rearing cobras (*uraei*) and surmounted by a *naos* (shrine) crowned with two falcons. On either side two representations of Harpokrates (Horus-the-child) are visible, with the goddesses Isis and Nephthys behind.

This solid marble statue represents a form of Osiris particular to Canopus, known as Osiris hydreios, a form that became popular in the Roman period.



Amulet in the Form of a **Greek-style Temple of Isis** or Serapis, c. 332–30 BCE lead

Maritime Museum, Alexandria SCA 470

Unlike the other amulet in this case, this example is made of lead. Lead was once thought to be used by lower classes because it was a less expensive material than bronze or silver.

However, lead had a strong connection to magic and was used for a wide range of items. Part of the appeal of lead may have been due to its heavy weight, which might have been associated with some sort of supernatural potency. In the Canopic region, lead was commonly used for Greek-style votives.

#### **Scuttled Boat**

The remains of more than 75 sunken boats have been discovered so far in Thonis-Heracleion, but the one pictured here is unique. The form of this skiff, a type of small, shallow boat, closely matches those depicted in temple carvings of religious rituals. This boat is also the only one to have been made of sycamore, a wood sacred to Osiris and symbolic of rebirth.

This 36-foot-long boat was deliberately sunk in the canal between Thonis-Heracleion and Canopus, surrounded by groups of votive offerings. Taken together, the evidence suggests that this vessel may have once served as a ceremonial barque for the Navigation of the 29th of Khoiak, the month-long festival celebrating and reenacting Osiris' murder, reassembly, and rebirth. On that day, a select group of priests would pray and sing aboard the boats as the figures of Osiris traveled to their final resting place.

Photograph assembly of wreck number 11: sycamore barge, preserved at a length of 10 m, discovered in the Grand Canal, Thonis-Heracleion; Photo: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio / Hilti Foundation

Alexandria Roman period

#### Bust of Serapis with Kalathos, c.100–200 CE marble

Here the hybrid god Serapis wears a headdress derived from a grain measure called a *kalathos*. This vessel serves as a symbol of fertility and is often decorated with olive branches or ears of wheat.

Serapis was a unique figure who blended the functions of the Egyptian deities Osiris (underworld), Apis (sacred bull), and Ptah (creation) with attributes of major Greek gods. These gods included Hades (underworld), Zeus (the king of Greek gods), Asklepius (healing), and Dionysus (fertility, wine, and vegetation).



Canopus Roman period

## Statue of Antinous, c.100–200 CE limestone

This statue depicts Antinous, lover of the Roman emperor Hadrian (r. 117–138 CE). Antinous is modeled with a back pillar, his left foot is slightly forward, and he wears the pleated kilt and striped headdress normally associated with pharaohs.

In 130 CE, Hadrian traveled to Egypt with Antinous, and on October 24, Antinous drowned in the Nile River. Devastated by his death, Hadrian commemorated his friend with countless statues. Soon a cult devoted to Antinous was established throughout the empire, including in Egypt. This statue was found during excavations of a Roman-era cemetery close to Canopus.

Qena Roman period

## Head of a Man, c.100–200 CE bronze

This bronze head may represent the Roman emperor Hadrian, or a private individual trying to imitate the appearance of the emperor, who reigned from 117 to 138 CE. Hadrian traveled widely around his empire and visited Egypt in 130 CE. This head was discovered at a port settlement on the banks of the Nile in southern Egypt.

Theadelphia (Batn Ihrit) Ptolemaic period

#### Statue of Serapis, c. 300–100 BCE sycamore

This wooden statue depicts the god Serapis, the Greek version of the Egyptian god Osiris-Apis. He is seated on a throne, wearing a tunic that falls in a loose fold on his chest. The god's head was once crowned by a *kalathos*—a vessel symbolizing abundance and fertility. Here only the lower part of the vessel is preserved. Serapis is portrayed with long curled hair, a full beard divided into two vertical coiled locks on the chin, and a mustache. The statue was originally painted and gilded, as indicated by the remains of black pigment on the eyes and hair, as well as off-white colors on his face and body and imperial purple on his tunic.

### Minia Late period, Dynasty 26

#### Statue of Osiris, 664–525 BCE sycamore, gold

These two sculptures are both made of wood from the sycamore, a tree known to ancient Egyptians as the "Tree of Life" and associated with Osiris and his rebirth. The remains of gilding on the face of the statue reflect the ancient Egyptian belief that the skin of the gods was gold. Also note the well-preserved inlaid eyes.

Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum SCA 1827

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Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum SCA 1827

Alexandria Ptolemaic period, in the reign of Ptolemy IV

#### Foundation Plaque, 221–204 BCE gold

Greco-Roman Museum, Alexandria GRM P.10035 This golden plaque, discovered among the ruins of the Serapeum in Alexandria, contains a dedication engraved in both Greek letters and hieroglyphs. The inscriptions tell us that King Ptolemy IV (r. 221–204 BCE) was responsible for the consecration of this temple compound to the god Serapis. In hieroglyphic script, this god's name is rendered as "Osiris-Apis." Such foundation deposits were a common feature of ancient Egyptian temples, and were associated with ceremonies designed to purify and sanctify new construction. The willingness of the Ptolemies to adapt to this Egyptian tradition is another indication of how deeply entwined the two cultures had become.

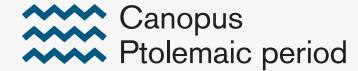
### Alexandria Roman period, in the reign of Hadrian

# **Apis Bull**, 117–138 CE black diorite

Greco-Roman Museum, Alexandria GRM 351

This magnificent life-size statue is a representation of the sacred bull, Apis. The Apis cult—the most important of all animal cults in Egypt honored a living bull, carefully selected by priests based upon specific physical characteristics. The chosen animal was considered a sanctified representation of the god Ptah, and thought to be a powerful oracle and source of prophecy. When an Apis bull died, the nation mourned and joined in a search for its successor. The deceased bull was then mummified and took the form of Osiris-Apis.

The cult of Apis probably originated in the ancient Egyptian capital of Memphis. This city, located far to the south, was home to the pharaohs for most of Egyptian history. This statue was found in the remains of the temple of Serapis, in Alexandria. Although Alexander the Great was known to make sacrifices at the temple of Apis in Memphis, it was his successor, Ptolemy I (r. 323–285 BCE), who brought the cult north to Alexandria.



Head of a Woman, possibly Berenike II, c. 300–200 BCE diorite Found at the underwater site of Canopus, this head may portray a Ptolemaic princess. Berenike II, daughter of Pharaoh Ptolemy III, died tragically. According to an ancient inscription, she was deified, or made a god, because of her royal status and was honored alongside Osiris at the temple of Canopus.

Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum, Alexandria SCA 204

### Temple of Ras el-Soda, Alexandria Roman period

#### **Commemorative Column with Votive Foot**, c.100–200 CE marble

Greco-Roman Museum, Alexandria GRM 25788, 25789 This marble foot on a pedestal was originally located just in front of the altar at the temple of Ras el-Soda in Alexandria. An individual named Isidoros dedicated this sculpture to the "Blessed" after he recovered from a foot injury, possibly sustained during a chariot crash. The Greek inscription reads: "Flung from his carriage by his horses at the spot, Isidoros, restored to health by divine intervention, in exchange for his feet." The Blessed was a name frequently used to describe Isis or her partner, Serapis.

The primary placement of this sculpture within the temple suggests that the grateful Isidoros built the temple at Ras el-Soda, dedicated to Osiris, Isis, and Horus, possibly at the very spot where he was "flung from his carriage."

#### Temple of Ras el-Soda, Alexandria Roman period

# **Osiris-Canopus**, c.100–200 CE marble

Greco-Roman Museum, Alexandria GRM 25787

This marble sculpture depicts Osiris wearing a wig, beard, and a tall crown with ostrich feathers, ram's horns, a sun disk, and a rearing cobra (*uraeus*) at his forehead. The body is decorated with a shrine, with two Horus falcons perched on either side. Below the shrine is another sun disk, which rests upon a winged scarab beetle at the bottom. This scene is flanked by dual representations of Harpokrates (Horus-the-child) and Isis.

Produced only after Egypt became part of the Roman Empire in 31 BCE, such statues are distinctly late Ptolemaic and Roman interpretations of Osiris. This representation in the shape of a water jar is referred to as Osiris *hydreios*, a form of Osiris worshipped in the region of Canopus, where similar examples have been found.

#### Temple of Ras el-Soda, Alexandria Roman period

# **Osiris-Canopus**, c.100–200 CE marble

Greco-Roman Museum, Alexandria GRM 25786

This sculpture features a bearded Osiris wearing a conical crown and dressed in stylized mummy wrapping. A sun disk flanked by two rearing cobras (uraei) adorns the front just above the base. Both this sculpture and the one nearby were found in a small Roman temple at Ras el-Soda, located roughly a mile outside Alexandria on the road to Canopus. The two were placed on a marble bench in the temple alongside statues of Isis and Harpokrates. Representations of Osiris-Canopus, similar to these, are found in Rome and Pompeii.

Osiris-Canopus representations are the source of the modern term "canopic jar." This name is now commonly associated with Egyptian vases used for a very different purpose: housing human organs removed during the mummification process.



#### Head of Serapis with Kalathos, c. 200–100 BCE marble

Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum, Alexandria SCA 169, 206 This colossal male head represents Serapis, a hybrid Greek and Egyptian god. The sculpture features a full beard of tightly wound curls and hair falling in long wavy locks marked by deep grooves on both sides. Atop the head is a grain measure, called a *kalathos*. The size of the sculpture (32 inches with head and *kalathos* combined) would suggest it comes from a monumental statue, over 13 feet high.

This sculpture may well have been the main cult statue from the healing shrine of Serapis at Canopus. The head and the *kalathos* were excavated separately, in an area where sculptures and architectural fragments were dumped in the Byzantine period (325–641 CE) when a Christian shrine was built next to the shrine of Serapis.



Head of Serapis underwater on-site, Canopus, Egypt, 2nd century BCE; marble; height: 23<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches; Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria (SCA 169); IEASM Excavations; Photo: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio / Hilti Foundation





#### Statue of Arsinoë II, c. 300–200 BCE granodiorite

Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum, Alexandria SCA 208 This statue of Arsinoë II discovered at Canopus shows the queen as the goddess Isis-Aphrodite. Cut from a dark and hard stone, this sculpture presents a magnificent example of Greco-Egyptian art. The striding pose, typical of Egyptian statues, is rather traditional and formal. In contrast, the Greek-style drapery both reveals and accentuates the idealized body of the queen. Gone is the traditional Egyptian back pillar; in its place, folds and pleats of the clinging garment provide a sense of dynamism to her rigid posture.

In 270 BCE a royal decree dictated that a statue of Queen Arsinoë had to be placed in all the temples of Egypt. This slightly over-life-size sculpture might have been the cult statue of Arsinoë in the Serapeum of Canopus.



The statue of Arsinoë, mounted on a frame, being raised out of the water of Aboukir Bay, Egypt; IEASM Excavations; Photo: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio / Hilti Foundation

# Eastern Harbor, Alexandria Ptolemaic period–Roman period

#### **Priest Holding an Osiris-Canopus**, c.100 BCE-200 CE granodiorite

National Museum, Alexandria SCA 449

This statue depicts a priest, identified by his shaved head, dressed in a voluminous cloak. His hands, hidden beneath the fabric of his garment, carry a vase with a round body and human head. The beard and headdress identify the sculpture as Osiris-Canopus, a divine image supposed to contain the water of the Nile mingled with the "humors" of the body of Osiris. This sculpture portrays a moment of tender devotion, as the young priest holds the god with his cloak in order to avoid contaminating the holy object with bare hands.

This statue was excavated from a temple dedicated to Isis, on an island in the great eastern harbor of Alexandria. Sculptures such as this are known from antiquity, but they are usually found outside Egypt, as on this wall painting from Herculaneum, a town in southern Italy. In the painting, a priest holds an Osiris-Canopus in exactly the same faithful manner as this statue (see image).



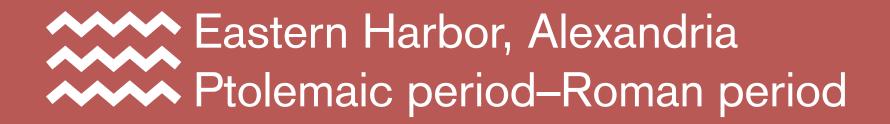
Fresco from Herculaneum, Italy 1st–3rd century CE © akg-images/ Erich Lessing



**Sphinx**, c.100 BCE–100 CE granodiorite These sphinxes are carved in the traditional lionlike pose, with front paws stretched forward, back legs tucked beneath the body, and tail curled against the left thigh. Both sphinxes wear headdresses with rearing cobras (*uraei*) at the front, indicating that they were representations of the reigning pharaoh.

The two sphinxes were discovered alongside the statue of a *Priest Holding an Osiris-Canopus*, on view nearby. Together the three sculptures decorated a small temple on the island of Antirhodos, which was dedicated to royalty. This temple was likely a place of worship for pharaohs and their households, worship that continued well into the Roman period.

National Museum, Alexandria SCA 450



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National Museum, Alexandria SCA 451



Ancient Egyptian colossal statues being raised from an underwater archaeological site, transported, and conserved

duration: 2 minutes and 3 seconds, looped

Archaeologists at work, excavating the stone *Bust of Neilos, God of the Nile* from an underwater site in the ancient Egyptian city of Canopus

duration: 1 minute and 54 seconds, looped

Archaeologists excavating various underwater artifacts from the ancient Egyptian city of Thonis-Heracleion

duration: 2 minutes and 34 seconds, looped

Archaeologists excavating various underwater artifacts from the ancient Egyptian city of Canopus duration: 2 minutes and 17 seconds, looped

## EGYPT THROUGH THE AGES FIRST INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (DYNASTIES 9–10, 2160–2055 BCE)

A time of political instability.

(DYNASTIES 3-8, 2686-2160 BCE)

Initially a time of stability and innovation, this period is known as the "Age of the Pyramids." The first large-scale funerary monuments are completed, including the Step Pyramid and the Great Pyramid and Sphinx at Giza.

Northern and southern Egypt are reunified under Mentuhotep II, who establishes his court at Thebes (present-day Luxor).

MIDDLE KINGDOM (DYNASTIES 11–14, 2055–1650 BCE)



A time of political instability.

#### SECOND INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (DYNASTIES 15–17, 1650–1550 BCE)

A time of political instability.

#### 

(DYNASTIES 18–20, 1550–1069 BCE)

Well-known pharaohs such as Hatshepsut, Tutankhamun, and Rameses II rule at this time. The Valley of the Kings becomes the burial site of royalty. Art and architecture are more refined.

THIRD INTERMEDIATE PERIOD (DYNASTIES 21–25, 1069–664 BCE)

#### ► LATE PERIOD (DYNASTIES 26–30, 664–332 BCE)

The Persians, who ruled the country for over a century, are expelled. Egypt is then governed by several native families from the Nile delta. The cities of Thonis-Heracleion and Canopus are established.



#### PTOLEMAIC PERIOD (332–30 BCE)

Greek general Ptolemy I becomes pharaoh and his heirs rule Egypt for nearly 300 years. In 31 BCE the last of his line, Cleopatra VII, suffers defeat at the Battle of Actium and with it she loses the throne.



Egypt becomes a province of the vast Roman Empire. In 130 CE the emperor Hadrian travels to Egypt and visits Alexandria, where he dedicates a magnificent Apis Bull statue at the temple of Serapis.

