

Treasures of Ancient Egypt

SUNKEN CITIES

Family
Gallery
Guide

Treasures of Ancient Egypt: Sunken Cities

This guide will help you explore some of the fascinating objects in ***Treasures of Ancient Egypt: Sunken Cities***. The order of the pages follows the sequence of the exhibition, and each page has the same title as the large informational panel in the associated gallery.

Many of the objects in this exhibition were found underwater. Look for this symbol on labels to indicate which objects were discovered underwater.



The Time

Look closely at these pharaohs to spot the decoration in the middle of their foreheads.

This is called a *ureaus* (your-ay-us)—a cobra—which is a kind of poisonous snake.

Why might a pharaoh want to be connected with a poisonous snake?



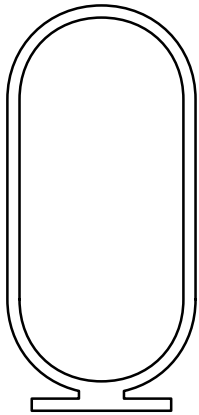
Head of a Pharaoh, Canopus, Aboukir Bay.
Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum,
Alexandria. IEASM Excavations (SCA 166)



Head of a Pharaoh, Canopus, Aboukir Bay.
Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum,
Alexandria. IEASM Excavations (SCA 168)

Thonis-Heracleion

Ancient Egyptian kings are called pharaohs. When a pharaoh's name was written in hieroglyphs, it was surrounded by a cartouche, an oval with a line at the bottom. The cartouche was thought to protect the pharaoh from evil in life and after death.



How many cartouches can you find on this big stone tablet? Each one is a little different, but they all name the same pharaoh. Pharaohs had at least five different names!

Stele of Thonis-Heracleion, Thonis-Heracleion, Aboukir Bay. Alexandria National Museum. IEASM Excavations (SCA 277)



Egyptians often depicted their gods as animals or, at least, with animal features. The animals represented important, powerful qualities and characteristics that the gods and goddesses shared.

This relief shows the most important god worshipped in the city of Thonis-Heracleion, Amun, represented as a ram.

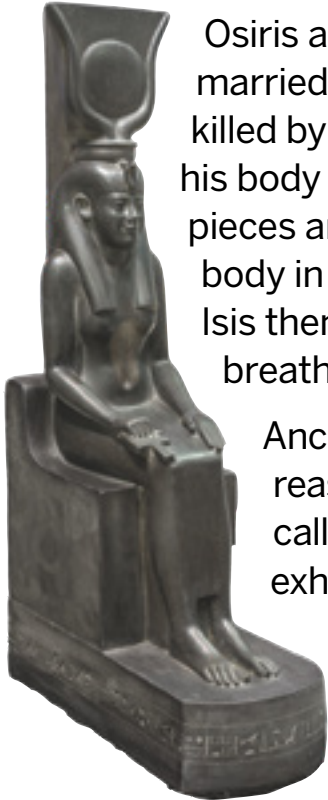
What animal would you like to be associated with? What qualities does that animal have?

You will see many kinds of animals in this exhibition, so keep an eye out for more!



Plaque with Amun as a Ram, Thonis-Heracleion. Maritime Museum, Alexandria. Bottom photo shows the object on the seafloor during excavation. IEASM Excavations (SCA 1579)

Osiris: Life, Death, Resurrection



Osiris and Isis were ancient Egyptian gods who were married to each other. According to mythology, Osiris was killed by his jealous brother, Seth, who scattered pieces of his body across Egypt. Their sister, Isis, collected all of the pieces and put Osiris back together. She wrapped the body in fine linen bandages, creating the first mummy. Isis then turned herself into a bird and restored living breath to Osiris with her beating wings.

Ancient Egyptians celebrated Osiris's death, reassembly, and rebirth every year with a festival called the Mysteries of Osiris. Many objects in this exhibition were used during that celebration.

What kinds of things do you celebrate?
How many images of Osiris can you find?



Statues of Isis (left) and Osiris (right), Saqqara.
Egyptian Museum, Cairo (CG 38884 and CG 38358)

Taweret

This is Taweret, an ancient Egyptian goddess who protects mothers and children. Under her paws is a symbol, pronounced za. It means, “to protect.”

Taweret is a combination of a few different animals. Can you tell which ones?



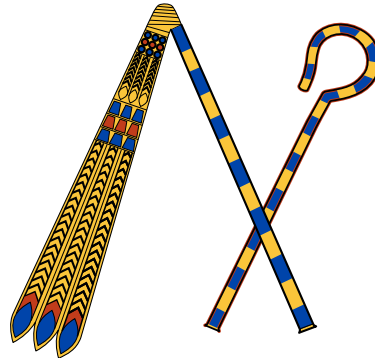
The Goddess Taweret, Luxor. Egyptian Museum, Cairo (CG 39145)

Answer: Her head and body look like a hippopotamus, but she has crocodile teeth and a lion's paws.)

Gods of Egypt

When Isis put the pieces of Osiris back together, she made the first mummy. He is almost always shown with his body, arms, and legs wrapped like a mummy. Because Egyptians thought that Osiris was their first king, he is shown with symbols of kingship. He holds two of these symbols crossed over his chest: the crook and the flail. The crook is a symbol for kingship and the flail represents the fertility of the land. Both were originally symbols of Osiris but came to be symbols for pharaohs too.

What are some symbols that you know?



Standing Statue of Osiris, Medinet Habu.
Egyptian Museum, Cairo (JE 30997)

The Mysteries of Osiris

Most of the objects in this gallery were used to celebrate the Mysteries of Osiris. Look for a special gold dish called a *phiale* (fee-ah-lay) that was used to make offerings, or gifts, to gods. Gifts were made to gain favor with a god or ask for something in return.

What kinds of gifts do you like to give?



Phiale, Thonis-Heracleion. Alexandria National Museum.
IEASM Excavations (SCA 296)

Scuttled Boat

The objects in these cases were part of processions for the Mysteries of Osiris. These processions included special boats that traveled along a canal, with celebrators watching from the banks.

Look for bells and a *sistrum*, which is a special kind of rattle or noisemaker. These instruments made festive music to celebrate Osiris during the procession.

What do you celebrate with special songs or music?



Lead Votive Barques, Thonis-Heracleion.
Maritime Museum, Alexandria (SCA 1606-1617, 1591)

Serapis: The Making of a God

In this room, you can find several sculptures of the god Serapis. Serapis was a combination of many gods, including the Egyptian god Osiris and the ancient Greek god Zeus.

This is a sculpture of Zeus made around the same time as the Serapis sculptures in this gallery. How are the two sculptures different? How are they alike?



Marble Colossal Head of Zeus from Aigeira, Achaia.
National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Greece, 3377

Thank you for visiting!

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