



Media Dossier

“Osiris – Egypt’s Sunken Mysteries”

After Paris and London for the first time in a German-speaking country: A fascinating exhibition at Museum Rietberg in Zurich shows the latest underwater archaeological finds.

On 10 February 2017, the exhibition *Osiris – Egypt’s Sunken Mysteries* will open at Museum Rietberg in Zurich. The exhibition brings to light one of the founding myths of ancient Egypt: the Mysteries of Osiris.

Osiris – Egypt’s Sunken Mysteries presents highlights of the excavations directed by Franck Goddio and his team from the European Institute for Underwater Archaeology (IEASM) in collaboration with the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities in the western part of the Nile Delta. Some 300 artefacts are presented in a 1300 m² display space. Most were discovered in the recent underwater excavations and are augmented by some forty splendid exhibits on loan from the museums of Cairo and Alexandria — rare objects which have never before been seen in a German-speaking country, and even some that have never been seen outside Egypt.

The exhibition consists of three sections. The first presents the myth of Osiris and its protagonists. The second, most important section is devoted to the archaeological sites and the evidence for the ritual celebration of the Mysteries of Osiris. In the third and last section, visitors will discover how the ancient myth evolved and how the representation of the gods changed over time.

The objects discovered by the archaeological divers at the bottom of the sea are set against a spectacular backdrop of changing mood, colours and lighting, featuring underwater photographs and videos.

www.osiris-zuerich.ch

Press images for download: www.osiris-zuerich.ch/medieninformationen/

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The Legend of Osiris

Osiris, the son of the Earth and the Sky was killed by his brother Seth, who cut his body into 14 pieces and threw them into the Nile. Isis, sister and wife of Osiris, put the body of the god back together again using her magical powers, and conceived their son, Horus. Osiris then became the Lord of the Afterlife, and Horus, victorious against Seth, received Egypt as his heritage.

We know from the so called "Decree of Canopus" (238 BC), one copy of which was discovered in 1881 at Kom el-Hisn, that in a town called Heracleion, as in most other towns of Egypt, the Mysteries of Osiris were celebrated in the great temple of Amun-Gereb. According to the text on the stela, in the delta the ritual culminated in a long nautical procession along the canals, which took Osiris from the temple of Amun-Gereb to his sanctuary in the town of Canopus.

Preface

THE EXHIBITION AS SEEN BY DR ALBERT LUTZ, DIRECTOR, MUSEUM RIETBERG

Egypt with its art treasures and mysteries has already featured in several special exhibitions at Museum Rietberg. *OSIRIS – Egypt's Sunken Mysteries* is, however, something quite unique in terms of size and significance and a first in Zurich. The exhibition shows the sunken trading cities discovered by archaeologists under the sea together with the god Osiris and his cult, and it writes history by shining new light on the late period of pharaonic rule.

The OSIRIS exhibition with its monumental stone sculptures is an unparalleled logistical challenge. The display, previously on show at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris and later at the British Museum in London, is so far the largest and most elaborate exhibition project to be undertaken by our museum. We are proud to be able to present this exhibition exclusively in the German-speaking region in Zurich.

The exhibition is yet another pearl in our string of archaeological displays. It will continue in November 2017 with a presentation of the secret culture of the Nazca in Peru. With these exhibitions, we intend to reach a broad public, especially a young public, that will enjoy being enraptured by mysterious stories and superb works of art that testify to cultures of long ago.

Albert Lutz

INTRODUCTORY DESCRIPTION BY THE CURATOR OF THE EXHIBITION AND PRESIDENT OF THE IEASM, FRANCK GODDIO

July 1984. When I was invited to excavate the wreck of the *Orient*, the flagship of Napoleon's fleet, which was sunk by Admiral Nelson in Abukir Bay, my archaeological dives were the first steps in an extraordinary scientific adventure, for this spot, the scene of a catastrophic event in French history, was to reveal the secrets of Egypt's sunken cities. Despite its size, Abukir Bay, extending north-east of Alexandria, is a particularly shallow water which concealed monuments and relics never dreamt of. The comprehensive documentation in the form of inscriptions and papyrus texts, accounts by the first researchers and remarks by archaeologists at the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities led me to conclude that a great deal was to be harvested from this area. The names of the cities Canopus, Thonis, Heracleion, known to us from the works of antiquity, had for centuries conjured up dreams of inconceivable treasures, yet archaeologists had been unable to define their exact position. To solve the puzzle of the sunken Egyptian cities and undertake an expedition of this magnitude, I founded the European Institute for Underwater Archaeology (Institut Européen d'Archéologie Sous-Marine, IEASM) in 1985. This independent, privately financed institute has taken on the task of cooperating with the national authorities in order to find sunken archaeological sites and restore the finds located there, and to make these accessible to the public at large.

The IEASM began searching in Egypt for the first time in 1992, starting in the waters of the *Portus Magnus*, the great eastern harbour of Alexandria. We proceeded in a similar way to our search for the Spanish galleon *San Diego* off the Philippines. However, we also developed new methods specifically aimed at working in waters with low visibility owing to the intensive natural sedimentation. The research work produced results that went far beyond our expectations. Using texts by Greek and Latin authors from antiquity and the finds previously uncovered, it was possible to compile a detailed map of the *Portus Magnus*.

Like with the *Portus Magnus*, we also wanted to define the ancient topography in Abukir Bay and the Canopic region, which is submerged under the sea. Geophysical and geological investigations were conducted and supplemented by the archaeological data from excavations. With the aid of these investigations, it was possible to map out the contours of the Canopic region located below water level, the position of the most significant archaeological sites and the course of the former western branch of the Nile. The cities Canopus and Thonis-Heracleion flourished in this submerged region in former times, as is described in the ancient texts. Step by step, each new dive unlocked the secrets of the sunken Egyptian cities. Sixteen centuries of history gradually became visible, ranking among the richest in the Mediterranean region. During the course of the excavations, it became clear that the cities Canopus and Heracleion concealed more secrets. To an ever-increasing extent, proof of the ancient feasts celebrated during the Osiris Mysteries became evident. They confirmed the text of the Canopus Decree on the tri-lingual stele known since the end of the 19th century and in which the sacred bond between the two cities in the Canopic region is described. In 238 BC, the deceased princess Berenice joined the god Osiris in order to accompany him from the temple of Amun-Gereb in Heracleion "on the 29th Choiak" to the shrine in Canopus and thus to benefit from the hymns and songs and the rites practised by priests and consecrated virgins – holy men and women embodying the deity of the Egyptian pantheon who took part in the death vigil for the god Osiris, who had died and was resurrected every year.

It is an ambitious task even today to attempt to understand the ceremonies that were held in honour of Osiris. For this reason it is more feasible to try to give visitors a sense of how these celebrations proceeded by presenting tangible objects found in the two sunken Egyptian ports of Canopus and Thonis-Heracleion, combined with the masterpieces of Egyptian art from the museums in Cairo and Alexandria. The sunken treasures of Egypt do not claim to clarify all aspects of the Osirian mysteries that occurred as a sacred drama in the area of the Nile Delta, and even less so, to unlock all their secrets. Would this even be possible at all? In any case, this exhibition shows – as if through a diving mask in the water of Abukir Bay – the extraordinary fate of a slain god who, thanks to the perseverance of his wife-sister Isis, arose from the dead, and whose cult status extended far beyond the boundaries of Egypt and wrote a chapter in the history of the Mediterranean region.

Franck Goddio

1. INTRODUCTION

The exhibition is based on archaeological underwater finds excavated and raised to the surface by Franck Goddio and the IEASM from the western Nile Delta in Egypt.

In this region, the excavations in Abukir Bay a few kilometres east of Alexandria have brought to light the remains of the cities Thonis-Heracleion and Canopus, submerged owing to seismic movement and geological developments since the eighth century. Here on the seabed the foundations of temples together with numerous artefacts, statues and liturgical objects were discovered that are associated with the god Osiris and the annual ceremony held in his honour: the famous Mysteries of Osiris. They were celebrated throughout Egypt and resulted in the revival and immortalisation of one of the country's founding legends: that of the divine triad of Osiris, Isis and Horus.

The results of 20 years of archaeological excavations were compared with the text of the Canopus Decree, which dates from the year 238 BC and has been known since the beginning of the 19th century. The edict mentions how each year a procession took place between the towns of Canopus and Thonis-Heracleion on a route that was exactly defined: It began in the Amun-Gereb Temple in Thonis-Heracleion and ended at the Osiris shrine in Canopus. The finds coming to light in Aboukir Bay illustrate this text, showing us for the first time the objects used and consequently providing more exact details of these celebrations.

The exhibition invites visitors to examine these centuries-old objects which testify to the grand ceremonies that took place in the north of Egypt.

The founding legend of Osiris, Isis and Horus

Osiris is the most human of the Egyptian gods. Motionless and swathed in mummy bandages, this god differed from the supernatural deities – the half-human, half-animal elemental forces that formed the pantheon of Egypt in the age of the pharaohs. According to the legend, Osiris was the son of Nut, goddess of the sky, and Geb, god of the Earth, who inherited earthly kingship from his parents. He taught the people how to till the land, gave them laws, taught them to show reverence for the gods and brought them civilisation. Himself a benefactor, he was betrayed by his brother Set, overthrown in a plot devised by the latter and met his death.

His body was dismembered into many parts and spread over the whole of Egypt. Osiris' sister and wife Isis gathered together the parts and put the body of her dead husband together again.

Osiris owes his salvation to the love and piety of his wife, through which he returned to life. With her sister Nephthys and Anubis, the jackal-headed god, Isis also invented mummification to protect everyone. The god came back to life at her pleading. This is how Osiris conquered death and gave mankind the promise of eternal life. He became the ruler of the afterlife and judge of the dead. The fruit of the association of Isis and Osiris after his death was Horus. He is often depicted in statues in the form of a child sucking his finger or a child urging silence. Horus revenged the death of his father and became the rightful King of Egypt. He was also Horus, the falcon god, god of celestial beings, who conquered the universe and prevailed over the country's enemies. He was the divine paragon of the pharaohs and every ruler both wanted to identify with him and indeed was obliged to do so.

Plutarch recounted this myth of Isis and Osiris in the second century. He countered the lost or fragmented Egyptian sources with a coherent legend most certainly adapted to the Greek, which forms a continuous story whose authenticity is not questioned. Its ending, the resurrection of the god, was a leitmotif. The Osiris myth described an order that threatened to dissolve at any time.

Chaos could be averted through the celebration of rites to preserve order in the world. Only the pharaoh as the son and heir of the gods was allowed to practice these rites inside the shrines – priests only conducted everyday cult practices as delegates of the king in his name. In particular, the pharaoh offered the gods prayers for *maat*. In Egyptian mythology *maat* symbolises the concept of justice, balance and harmony that formed the order of the world. Its master was Osiris.

The Osiris Mysteries

The Osiris Mysteries were the most significant ritual feasts that took place in Egypt each year. By no later than the Middle Kingdom (1850 BC), the image of the god was adorned with lapis lazuli, turquoise, gold and precious stones, initially in Abydos, the holy city of Osiris, and later in all Egyptian metropoli. The image of Osiris was carried in his barge from the temple to the celebrating masses. Priests depicted certain episodes of the god's grief and suffering, recited burial litanies and sang of the victory of Osiris. The divine procession led to his grave. In these mysteries, other ceremonies – secret ones, held in “most sacred seclusion” –celebrated the resurrection of the god.

The bas-reliefs of the Osiris cult sites on the roof of the temple of Dendera illustrate how the priests in the fourth month of each year – during the ritual for the month Choiak – made small Osiris figures, shaped from the seeded earth when the floods receded and uncovered the fields and cultivation areas saturated by the waters of the new flood. The germination of these “Osiris *vegetar*” figures symbolised the eternal renewal of life. The balance of world order was thus preserved through this process of renewing creation.

The same process also allowed the sun to triumph over darkness every day. Celestial bodies appeared out of the darkness of night, rejuvenated every morning, as if for the first time.

Osiris Mysteries in Thonis-Heracleion and Canopus: the Canopus Decree

In 1881, a stele in three languages was discovered in Kom el-Hisn bearing hieroglyphics and demotic and Greek inscriptions. It mentions a decree compiled by priests who convened in

Canopus during 238 BC for a synod to celebrate the annual days marking the birth and accession of Ptolemy III, the benefactor. With this decree, the priests' council agreed on the honours to be bestowed on the ruler and his recently deceased daughter Berenice.

The priests carried out the traditional burial rituals for Princess Berenice. Her image was displayed in the Osiris temple in Canopus; she became a divine companion of Osiris. The princess was invited to accompany the god in his processional barge at the ceremonies in honour of Osiris in the month Choiak in order to travel “from the Amun-Gereb Temple” or expressed in Greek “from the shrine of Heracles” to the Osiris Temple in Canopus. The research work of Franck Goddio and his team from the IEASM in Thonis-Heracleion and Canopus have brought to light collections of ritual and cult objects, which were used without doubt during the processions of the Osiris Mysteries between the two most important shrines of the city.

The objects discovered also suggest that the followers of Dionysus accompanied the procession of Osiris on its return to his temple. The theological interaction of Osiris and Dionysus began in the 7th century BC. At this time, the Greeks settled in Egypt, in particular in the Canopus region in the northwest Nile delta. Herodotus, who travelled through Egypt in the 5th century BC, recounts that Egyptian priests actually told him about the correlation between Osiris and Dionysus. The association of the two gods, both dead and resurrected, illustrates reincarnation in the burial cult and the return to life in the rituals or feasts celebrated in the temples. As redeeming gods, they were guarantors of a mysterious hope of salvation. The Dionysus mysteries, during the course of which the god rose to become a light, have an analogy in the Osiris Mysteries, which honour the sun birth of the god.

Thonis-Heracleion and Canopus were two religious sites that served to consolidate royal power and to support the dynastic cult of Alexander the Great's successors. This religious policy of the Ptolemies, reflected in the concurrent development of the Osiris and Dionysus cults, finally led to the promotion of another divinity: Serapis. First in Alexandria and later in Canopus – where the IEASM discovered temple foundations and statues of Serapis – the new Hellenic god Serapis combined traits of both the Egyptian gods Osiris and Apis as well as the Greek gods Zeus, Hades and Dionysus. He was also a symbol of royal succession and the reincarnation of Osiris. Serapis was perceived as King Osiris, husband of Isis, goddess of the universe.

At the side of Serapis, Isis was the goddess “of the thousand names”. As nurturing mother, loving wife and protectress of people, she first captured the hearts of the Egyptians and later of all the inhabitants of the Mediterranean region. In this way, an Isis cult gradually developed which, after the Roman conquest in 31 BC, spread through all provinces of the Empire and as far as Rome. The growing interest in the Egyptian mysteries is proven by the creation of Isis communities and temples, for instance that discovered by the IEASM on Antirrhodos island in the eastern harbour of Alexandria, which was home to a granite statue of a priest holding Osiris in his hands in the form of a Canopic jar. This Canopic jar was to save the viscera from the body of the god which could generate new life.

2. GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

The Nile Delta, the mouth of the sacred river of Egypt, has changed its course over time.

The archaeological sites were submerged as a result of several different forces:

- The slow sinking – or subsidence – of parts of the eastern Mediterranean;
- The rise in the sea level since antiquity;
- Ground collapse or landslides due to seismic activity;
- Local liquefaction of underlying clay and limestone deposits, especially where heavy buildings had been constructed.
- Finally, either a catastrophic Nile flood or a tidal wave caused destructive flooding.

Any or all these factors resulted in a change in level of some 8 metres compared with ancient times. The cities of Thonis-Heracleion and Canopus are today submerged, situated off the current shore of Abukir Bay.

A sizeable part of the work consisted of establishing detailed maps of the sunken landscape, which then enabled archaeologists to precisely locate the remains of sites underwater and to decide where to direct and organise diving and excavation. Charts also served to reconstruct the appearance of these ancient cities: the contours of the land, the course of the canals, the infrastructure and the position of the monuments.

In order to create these maps, the team made use of the most sophisticated electronic equipment available, such as nuclear magnetic resonance magnetometers developed in 1990 by the French Atomic Energy Commission (CEA). These extremely sensitive devices can detect any kind of submerged object, even buried under layers of sediment.

The survey area was defined after extended archival study of ancient texts. Abukir Bay, which conceals the two towns of Canopus and Thonis-Heracleion, spreads over an area of 10 by 11 km, or more than 110 km².

More on www.franckgoddio.org and www.ieasm.org.

The Late Period and trade in the Mediterranean

1500 years of Egyptian history – a long period marked by the end of the pharaohs and numerous foreign influences: Persian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Arab. This led to extraordinary cultural diversity in Egypt, to which the artefacts in this exhibition bear witness.

The oldest items in the exhibition, dating from the 7th century BC, take us back to the Egyptian Late Period. By then, the era of the pharaohs had already lasted over two thousand years, but the era of territorial expansion under such great kings as Thutmose III (1490–1436 BC) or Ramses II (1290–1224 BC) was long past. The 26th dynasty (664–525 BC), known as the Saïte dynasty, stands out as an exception amid the instability that characterised the Late Period.

Once Egypt was liberated from Assyrian occupation with the particular help of Greek mercenaries, peace and economic prosperity returned to the country. Trade with the Hellenic world, which had begun as early as the 2nd millennium BC, intensified. The town of Naukratis in the Nile Delta near Saïs, the capital of the Saïte pharaohs, became the foremost trading post of the Greeks in Egypt. To reach it, Greek merchants had to pay taxes and dues on their

cargoes at Thonis-Heracleion, the customs post of Egypt situated at the mouth of the westernmost branch of the Nile. Considered the gateway to the country, this was the mandatory entrance for all foreign shipping from the Mediterranean world entering Egypt. In 525 BC, the Persians took control of the country for the next 120 years, until a local dynasty came to power in 404 BC. The victorious general Nectanebo I (380–362 BC) founded the 30th and last indigenous dynasty. Nectanebo II (360-343 BC), the last Egyptian pharaoh in history, capitulated to a renewed, albeit short-lived Persian occupation.

Greek Egypt and the influence of Alexandria

Alexander the Great, the Macedonian king who conquered Egypt, put an end to the reign of the Persian Darius III in 332 BC. The following year, he founded the city of Alexandria, 35 kilometres from Heracleion. Never before had a city outside Greece attained such proportions. Upon his death in 323 BC, his general and friend Ptolemy inherited Egypt.

Ptolemy took the title of king in 305 BC under the name of Ptolemy I Soter and chose Alexandria as his capital. The new sovereign relegated Naukratis and Thonis-Heracleion to the background by diverting port and trade activities to Alexandria. He made the city into a place of science, creating the Museum (which originally signified a “temple dedicated to the muses”), the great library and a university. The construction of the famous lighthouse of Alexandria at the tip of the island of Pharos – considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World – also began under his rule. Hellenistic Egypt reached its apogee during his reign (305–282 BC) and the reign of his son Ptolemy II (282–246 BC). In a few short decades, Alexandria grew to a city of over 100,000 inhabitants, becoming the greatest metropolis of the known world. Canopus, situated near Thonis-Heracleion, was linked to the new capital city by a canal. As a great religious centre reputed for its processions of Osiris and its miraculous healings, it included one of the greatest temples in the land, dedicated to Serapis. This cult probably originated in the region in the 3rd century BC, and subsequently spread throughout the Hellenistic world. The Ptolemy or Lagid dynasty (after Lagos, Ptolemy I's father) ended with the reign of Cleopatra VII, daughter of Ptolemy XII. After alliances with Julius Caesar, with whom she had a son called Ptolemy XV or Caesarion, and later with Mark Anthony, the “queen of kings” was forced to resign to Octavian – the future Augustus – whose legions had invaded the country. She committed suicide in 30 BC and Egypt became a Roman province. Alexandria remained the capital and, although somewhat reduced, retained her predominant economic status.

3. TOUR

The tour of the exhibition comprises three sequences commencing with a prologue. The first sequence describes the myth and its most important characters. The second and most significant sequence is devoted to the rites of Osiris. The third and last sequence returns to the myth, exploring its echo in later times and its diverse characteristics.

Prologue – the founding myth

The prologue allows the visitor to delve into the darkness of the time where the age-old roots lie that gave rise to the Osiris myth. A large fabric wall recounts the story in brief using slow movements of the legendary silhouettes and a few words.

It is no coincidence that Osiris is brought to life again at the same point in time in a ritual when the fields are green again, the barley grows and the Nile floods its banks. Osiris was equated with the Nile floods. If, by acting out the mysteries, abundance could be ensured, then this also guaranteed stability for the dynastic power and cosmic order. The Egyptians, who were well versed in astronomy, developed a sophisticated calendar based on the annual reappearance of Sirius. The Naos of the Decades discovered in the Bay of Aboukir shows the calculation of Egyptian time with twelve months of 30 days, which were divided into three decades of ten days each; five days are added to these 36 decades to make a year.

Sequence 1 – the Osiris myth and the Osiris Mysteries

Who are the protagonists in the myth? Osiris and Isis with their son Horus, who was also called Harpocrates, and Nephthys, the benevolent sister, certainly number among them – they are all represented by wonderful statues and in the case of Harpocrates by a magical stele. Serapis, too, the Greek god, in whom Osiris and Apis are merged and who goes back to the time of Ptolemy I, is also part of the myth, and can be seen as a sculpture made of sycamore wood, a tree associated with Osiris.

The tour takes visitors on to Thonis-Heracleion and then to Canopus. Its location in space and time is conveyed using stylised maps integrated in a large time chart, which shows the most significant dates in their history chronologically from the 8th century BC until they were submerged probably in the 8th century AD. During the course of these 16 centuries, the Egyptian pharaohs were followed by Persian occupiers. These, in turn, were ousted in 332 AD by Alexander the Great, who was followed by Greek rulers – the Ptolemies – followed by the Romans, Byzantines and, finally, the Arabs. The Osiris Mysteries for their part survived in the pharaonic, Greek and Roman epochs. Both cities –Thonis-Heracleion and Canopus – are today submerged under the sea; and visitors will also have the impression of diving down into the underwater world. In rooms bathed in shades of blue and green, images from below the sea appear in a regular rhythm: These are clouded to varying degrees by mud and plankton, fish, collections of rubble, stone walls, the seabed strewn with columns, and divers at work.

Thonis-Heracleion. In the exhibition, the first object visitors encounter is an almost two-metre high, perfectly preserved black stele with impeccable hieroglyphics: the Stele of Thonis-Heracleion. This exact double of the Naukratis Stele was found with the inscription turned toward the ground, protecting it for centuries from the erosion caused by the sea's currents. It has solved a mystery that has remained unsolved for over 2,000 years: the famous city Thonis, described in ancient texts, is the same city that Herodotus mentions under the name of Heracleion. Thonis-Heracleion was a port and trading centre that controlled all Egyptian exports from and imports to the Persian empire. It was a rich and cosmopolitan city, as evidenced by the two showcases containing coins and jewellery made of gold, the material that is impervious to time.

Today, scientists are able to describe the rough character of the city with its harbours, wharves, quays, canals, the large lake bordering it to the west and, in the east, the access to one of the seven branches of the Nile. Its “sacred geography” can also be traced: below the outer buildings of the main temple of Amun-Gereb, a temple dedicated to Chons, in particular the child god Chons, a Bes shrine and shrines of Osiris. The numerous objects salvaged, statues and statuettes, amulets, crowns, sculptures, Naoi (Naos, a stone shrine) or foundation depots for temples are ordered in various wall showcases, each devoted to one of the sacred objects. The Osiris statuettes form an impressive ensemble of metal images, which have suffered some

erosion due to the long time they spent underwater but recognisably bear the attributes of the god. Their sheer numbers testify to the fervour with which the god was honoured.

Grouped around the sacred objects, several collections of cult objects illustrate the piety of the inhabitants: These modest objects, such as small boxes and miniatures made of lead, tell a moving story. The visitor continues to the grand Amun-Gereb Temple – the place where the mysteries originated. Here there are various inscribed naoi, one of the entrance sphinxes, the bust of a patron and liturgical vessels made of bronze (a libation chalice, a fire bowl, dishes, oil lamps, mirrors, chalices), all ordered in a deep showcase reminiscent of a crypt. Yet the most amazing find is perhaps a so-called garden tub that was closely connected with the celebration of the mysteries in the month Choiak.

Sequence 2 – from Thonis-Heracleion to Canopus – the mysteries

The ritual prescribed that two different images of Osiris were to be made in the temple each year: the “Osiris *vegetans*”, which thanks to the favourable effect of Nile water would germinate directly in a stone garden tub; and the “Osiris Sokar”, which was made from a combination of precious stones, spices and other ingredients. In this way, the god appeared in two different forms. When these images were made, the priests followed two strictly defined and complex protocols, whose exact descriptions were contained in the inscriptions on the walls of the Osiris Chapels at Dendera.

Apart from these inscriptions, another condition for producing the images of Osiris was the regulations about certain instruments, substances and formulae. The instruments are arranged in two glass showcases with a golden base, one for the Osiris *vegetans*, the other for the Osiris Sokar. Also displayed are ritual scoops, pails, smoke pans for incense, bowls, sieves and processional barges – all saved from the seabed and subsequently wonderfully restored. Some of the substances are also shown. There is loam and sand, barley, flax and wheat seeds, water from the Nile, spices and aromas and semi-precious stones. An impressive priest's head made of granite, also numbering among recent finds, watches over this museum reconstruction.

At the end of long transformations, the Egyptians believed that the god was within these two objects after they had been completed. The exactly prescribed burial rites were thus concluded. A ship procession began in Thonis-Heracleion, moved westwards and ended at the Serapeum of Canopus (a shrine dedicated to the deity Serapis) 3.5 kilometres away, where the images were buried.

Along this long canal the archaeologists discovered a wealth of stone offering bowls, earthenware oil lamps, incense casks, votive barges and ritual ladles made of bronze – which are exactly those cult objects described in the ancient sources. They are in two high cabinets, in which they seem to be reaching for their destination. The processions move under the watchful eyes of the small group of mummified deities led by Anubis, Thot, Sekhmet, Bastet and a number of others represented by figures, amulets and the tops of standards.

The true-to-scale photo mosaic of an eleven-metre long processional barge made of sycamore wood, found by the IEASM at the bottom of the sacred canal and left there after intense study, invites visitors to explore these ancient rituals in an impressive way. But before arriving at the exhibition in Canopus, a short excursion should be undertaken into another area which offers even more unusual exhibits. They do not come from the underwater excavations, but have been borrowed from Egyptian museums for this exhibition. Egyptophiles and those who are

simply curious can, for example, admire “genuine” Osiris *vegetans* as well as a sculpture of black diorite, which shows Osiris on his deathbed surrounded by four falcons, or the equally famous sculpture of the “awakening”, which depicts Osiris returning to life. Three beautiful examples of the goldsmith's art enhance these two objects: a libation ewer, a pectoral decoration and a finely worked Osiris amulet.

The exhibition area devoted to Canopus contains few elements, but they are all extremely significant: an Osiris Canopic jar, an elegant head of Serapis with its kalathos (a grain measure, the sign of the fertility of the soil), a bust of the Nile god in a most attractive classic style. The splendid sculpture of Queen Arsinoe II, depicted as the goddess Isis-Aphrodite, strides with her arm close to her body and her left foot to the fore in traditional pharaonic pose. Her Greek robe – apparently wet – clings to her body, as if she had just come out of the water. All these notable works come from the IEASM excavations.

Now we leave the area of ceremonies and the seabed and return to daylight for the final sequence. It should be noted that visitors here have the opportunity to obtain documentation about the great milestones in underwater archaeology methods and to see the technical developments implemented by the IEASM – in particular in the fields of exploration, bathymetry (surveying topographical features of the seabed) and sounding, excavations, underwater relief imaging as well as the various conservation treatments to which the finds removed from the sea are subjected. Since research began in 1991, Franck Goddio's team has been working on innovations, experimenting and progressing further.

Sequence 3 – the heritage of the Osiris myth

In the third sequence visitors are given an impression of how extraordinarily varied the depictions of the Osiris legend were over its long existence.

The wonderful statue of the Apis bull dates from the reign of the Roman Emperor Hadrian (117–138) and expresses the duality of the sacred animal, being both a portrayal of Royal succession and a symbol of Osiris' reincarnation. The golden foundation plate of the Serapeum of Alexandria, where the statue was found, is exhibited directly adjacent. A granite statue of a priest found in the eastern harbour, which reverently holds an Osiris Canopic jar in its arm, is another exhibit from Alexandria shown a few metres further on. Not far from this, a statue of Antinous can be seen that was found in Canopus. Antinous was the lover of Hadrian and drowned in the Nile during a lion hunt. He was worshipped like a god throughout the Roman world because he suffered the same fate as Osiris.

Osiris, the Egyptian, was also Dionysus the Greek in Egypt. The assimilation can be explained by the fact that the legend shows many analogies – dismembering, returning to life – and that both were international gods. These parallels became evident from the 7th century BC in the Canopic region where very special Dionysian feasts were held, so-called phallophoria, for which some surprising proof was found on the seabed: erotica and drinking vases. Another symbol of Osiris and of the reconstitution of his body is the Udjat Eye or the “Eye of Horus”, of which a golden example is shown here: an amulet accompanied by an Osiris with golden eyes that was found during the excavations. In addition, on a small limestone stele depicting the grave of Osiris a finely drawn eye serves as a hieroglyphic for Osiris.

Other exhibits include a statue of Taweret, a hippopotamus goddess and universal mother; a quartzite sculpture of a beautiful Horus falcon protecting the pharaoh between its claws; beside it a pharaoh statuette rescued from the sea and freed of sediment; and, finally, the last work in

the exhibition: an Osiris statue in the form of a mummy, symbolising the concept of eternal return. It wears the characteristic crown, but the body is covered in bandages reminding us that Osiris had only the love of his wife to thank for his salvation, because Isis, with the help of the jackal-headed god Anubis, invented mummification for him.

* * *

The last part of the exhibition is characterised by a fruitful interaction between the works concealed on the seabed and the exhibits loaned by Egypt and comprises a total of 293 objects. Around 250 of these come from the underwater excavations of the IEASM. They are accompanied by 40 masterpieces from museums in Cairo and Alexandria – rare pieces, many of them being seen outside Egypt for the first time. Everything is of Egyptian origin and the finds discovered by the IEASM belong to the Egyptian state.

* * *

The exhibition is aimed at both laymen and specialists, at male and female visitors of all ages, at Egyptomaniacs as well as art lovers. The various information levels mean that visitors can learn about the exhibits in as much detail as they wish to. The exhibition texts are available in German, French and English. An audio guide is also available in five languages (DE, EN, FR, IT, ES) and in a version for children.

4. HIGHLIGHTS

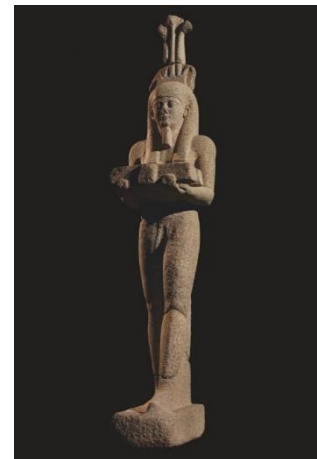
Colossal statue of Hapy

Thonis-Heracleion, 4th century BC

Pink granite

Maritime Museum, Alexandria (SCA 281) – IEASM find.

This colossal image represents Hapy, the god of the Nile, whose floods determined the well-being and wealth of Egypt. Hapy was also directly connected with the Osiris cult as the viscera from the decomposing body of Osiris triggered the life-saving Nile flood. At 5.4 metres in height, it is the largest free-standing Egyptian statue known so far.



Osiris on his deathbed

Abydos, Middle Empire, 13th dynasty, Chendjer (reg. 1747 BC)

Black diorite

Egyptian Museum, Cairo (JE 32090)

Finding peace for the last time, Osiris lies on a so-called lion bed. A key moment in the Osiris myth is captured here: Isis, the goddess, sister and wife of Osiris, here depicted in the form of a falcon, has lowered herself onto Osiris' erect penis. She receives his semen and later gives birth to their son Horus. This moment would not have been possible

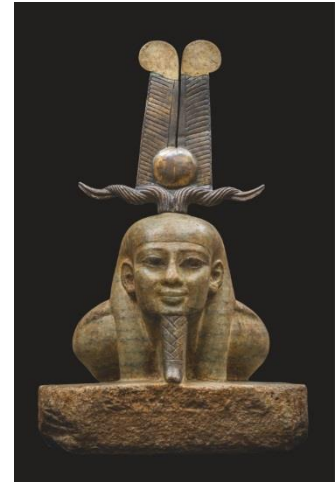


if Isis had not been in possession of magic powers which she used to put Osiris together again and bring him back to life after he had been killed by Set and cut into 14 parts

Osiris awakened

Horbeit, Saite Period, 26th dynasty (664–525 BC)
Gneiss, gold, gold-silver alloy (electrum), bronze
Egyptian Museum, Cairo (CGC 38424)

The sculpture shows Osiris tightly bound in a cloth, lying on his stomach. With clear eyes and a gentle smile he reacts to the incredible moment when he returns from death to life. This “abstracted” artistic depiction is typical of the sophisticated style of the Saite Period. The resurrected god incidentally bears the idealised facial features of the pharaoh Apries, who eternalised himself in this work.



Stele from Thonis-Heracleion

Thonis-Heracleion, 30th dynasty, 380 BC, first year of the rule of Nectanebo I
Black granodiorite
National Museum Alexandria – IEASM (SCA 277)

When this stele was lifted in 2001 and translated, it became clear that Thonis and Heracleion were the Egyptian and Greek names of one and the same city. The stele mainly contains a decree of Pharaoh Nectanebo I (reg. 380–362 BC), in which he announces that part of the customs revenue of the trading city “at the entry to the sea of the Greeks” (Thonis-Heracleion) should go to the main temple. In the crowning semi-circle of the stele is a depiction of Nectanebo I, who passes offerings to the goddess Neith which, among others, were intended for his “father” Osiris. This shows that Nectanebo I is also Osiris’ son Horus, the first Egyptian pharaoh and consequently the rightful ruler. After a century of foreign, Persian rule in Egypt, Nectanebo I, in his equation with Horus, continues an old ruling tradition and at the same time ushers in a cultural renaissance



Naos of decades

Canopus, 30th dynasty, Nectanebo I (reg. 380–362 BC)

Black granite

Greek-Roman Museum, Alexandria – IEASM (JE 25774, SCA 161–164) and Louvre (D 37)

It took 222 years for the shrine with the depiction of the Egyptian calendar to be pieced together again: the roof was discovered in 1777 on land in Abukir; in 1940, Omar Toussoun found the plinth and the rear wall in the Bay of Abukir; and in 1999, divers from the IEASM team finally lifted the four side walls.

Apart from the 37 fields for the 365 days of the year, the inscriptions also tell of battles against Egypt's enemies and evil powers which disturb cosmic harmony. But an undisturbed course for the world is in fact vital so as not to jeopardise the annually returning resurrection of Osiris.



Statue of a queen

Canopus, 3rd century BC

Black granite

Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Antiquities Museum – IEASM (SCA 208)

The fragment originally belonged to a statue of the queen Arsinoe II, the sister and wife of Ptolemy II (reg. 309–246 BC). Her robe consists of a thin cloth, the two ends of which are fastened over her right breast in the so-called Isis knot. It was not uncommon for the Egyptian queens to have themselves depicted as Isis. The sculptural quality of this work is exceptional. The mastery of the sculptor is immediately apparent in the sculptural rendering of a wafer-thin material stretched over a body, which is directly reminiscent of Greek art. The Greek influence is not surprising given that after Alexander's conquests, the Greek-Macedonian Ptolemies ruled Egypt from 305 to 30 BC and Hellenistic culture entered Egypt with them.



Apis bull

Alexandria, Roman times, Hadrian (117–138 AD)
 Granite
 Greek-Roman Museum Alexandria (GRM 351)

Apis, embodying the god Ptah, was a living sacred bull raised in the temple at Memphis. When he died, he was buried according to a strict ritual. The mummification and burial celebrations exactly resembled those for Osiris. The fusion of Osiris and Apis finally gave rise to Serapis.



This impressive stone sculpture is not only a shining example of religious syncretism, which had gained a foothold in Egypt in the Ptolemaic age (305–30 BC), but also of the charisma of the Osiris cult, which spread far beyond the borders of Egypt. The Roman emperor Hadrian commissioned this Apis bull while on a visit to Alexandria, illustrating its appeal to locals and foreigners alike.

5. FRANCK GODDIO, ARCHAEOLOGIST, EXCAVATION DIRECTOR AND CURATOR

Franck Goddio (www.franckgoddio.org) is the founder and president of the European Institute of Underwater Archaeology (www.ieasm.org) and head of the Far East Foundation for Nautical Archaeology (FEFNA). He is also a co-founder of the Oxford Centre for Maritime Archaeology (OCMA) at the University of Oxford. (www.arch.ox.ac.uk/ocma.html).

In 1996, Franck Goddio, in close collaboration with the Egyptian Ministry for Antiquities, launched an extensive geophysical project to survey and map the submerged area of the ancient Canopic region in Abukir Bay, 30 kilometres north-east of Alexandria. The results revealed the topography of the area, the bed of the ancient western branch of the Nile, and led to the discovery in 1997 of the city of Canopus and in 2000 of the city of Thonis-Heracleion with its port and temples. Excavations in both cities continue to this day under Franck Goddio's direction. Franck Goddio has led survey and underwater excavation in the *Portus Magnus* of Alexandria since 1992, constructing a detailed map of the eastern port of the city and its surroundings. Current excavations in the Grand Harbour are identifying and researching the infrastructure of the various ports in the harbour as well as the submerged Ptolemaic and Roman palaces, temples and other buildings.

Franck Goddio also curated the exhibitions *Cleopatra, the Search for the Last Queen of Egypt* in cooperation with National Geographic in the USA; *Egypt's Sunken Treasures*, on display in Berlin, Paris, Bonn, Madrid, Turin und Yokohama; and the exhibitions *On a retrouvé le trésor du San Diego* and *White Gold*.

The Hilti Foundation has supported Franck Goddio's maritime archaeological projects since 1996. These have been presented in on-going scientific publications, conferences, numerous press articles and documentaries

6. IEASM'S PARTNER: THE HILTI FOUNDATION

The fascination of history: researching the past, making new discoveries, presenting findings to the public. These are the goals shared by Franck Goddio and the Hilti Foundation.

The Hilti Foundation was established in 1996 as a charitable organisation by the Martin Hilti Family Trust. Since 2007, the Hilti Foundation has been a joint organisation of the Martin Hilti Family Trust and the Hilti Group.

Originally, the Foundation was founded to help finance the fascinating underwater archaeological expeditions of Franck Goddio and his team. In the following years, the Foundation extended its activities from science to further educational and social projects.

The Hilti Foundation is committed to a select range of innovative and sustainable projects. The focus of the Hilti Foundation's scientific commitment has been the support of the underwater archaeological work of Franck Goddio and his team off the Egyptian coast. Franck Goddio works closely with respected experts and scientists and enjoys the academic support of the Oxford Centre for Maritime Archaeology (OCMA) at Oxford University.

More on www.hilti-foundation.org

7. PARTNERS

Organised with the **Hilti Foundation** and the **Institut Européen d'Archéologie Sous-Marine (IEASM)** in collaboration with the **Ministry of Antiquities of the Arab Republic of Egypt**.

With the support of Parrotia-Stiftung, Clariant Foundation, Max Kohler Stiftung, Swiss Re, Novartis, Erica Stiftung, Sawiris Foundation For Social Development

Cooperation partner SBB RailAway, Zürich Tourismus

8. CATALOGUE

An English catalogue is also being published for the exhibition in Zurich to explain the Osiris Mysteries and the associated artefacts in detail:

OSIRIS – Egypt's Sunken Mysteries
Franck Goddio and David Fabre (eds.)

250 pages with 200 colour images, hardback, 20 x 26 cm
Flammarion
ISBN 978-2-0813-7873-5

Price for the museum edition: CHF 39

9. SUPPORTING PROGRAMME

The exhibition is being complemented by a series of lectures. The free public presentations focus on three topics: 1. Interdisciplinary and hightech in archaeology; 2. The international trading branches in Egypt in Hellenistic times; 3. Religious syncretism or how Dionysus and Bacchus stemmed from Osiris. Details of the programme will be published at www.osiris-zuerich.ch.

10. ART APPRECIATION

The museum offers regular public tours in German that are free upon purchase of an admission ticket: Wednesdays, 6 p.m. and Thursdays, 12.15 p.m.

Individual visitors may make use of an audio guide (also included in the admission) that is available in various languages (German, French, English, Italian and Spanish).

Apart from the audio guide for adults there is also an audio guide adapted for young visitors (from the age of 6). We also offer a handy discovery booklet for families to use in many different ways. It contains painting, writing and crafting exercises designed to motivate children and accompanying adults to explore the world of underwater archaeology and to get to know the world of Osiris and the Egyptian gods, both while they are at the exhibition and at home. The booklet includes lots of design details and a pencil and is available at the museum till for CHF 3.

Every Sunday, the doors to the Offene Werkstatt (open workshop) will be opened to children, young people and adults. Here various techniques and methods will be used to explore the themes in more detail and the hands-on, creative approach will allow participants to create their own works of art. The Offene Werkstatt begins at 11am (doors open at 10.45am). The cost per person is CHF 15 and is suitable for anyone from the age of 5.

From Monday to Thursday, between 9 and 11.30am we offer school classes exhibition workshops which can be booked directly on our website: www.rietberg.ch/kunstvermittlung

11. VISITING

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www.rietberg.ch
facebook.com/museumrietberg

Opening times and admission (10 Feb.–16 July 2017)

Museum/Café	Tues, Fri+Sat: 10am–5pm
	Wed+Thur: 10am–8pm
	Sun: 10am–6pm
	Closed on Monday

Bank holidays	Normal opening times as stated above
Open workshop	Sun. 11am to 4pm CHF 15 per person, from 5 years
Admission	CHF 25, reduced CHF 20, Children up to 16 years of age free Admission includes use of an audio guide (German, English, French, Italian, Spanish) for duration of exhibition visit.
Public tours (in German)	Wed, 6pm and Thur. 12.15p.m. (free upon purchase of an admission ticket, duration: 60 min., booking not required)
Book a private tour	Guided tour of the exhibition (up to max. 25 persons, duration 1 hour): CHF 180, not including admission Booking: www.rietberg.ch/fuehrungen
Group visits	Please notify us if you are coming with a group, even if you do not book a guided tour. Registration: events.rietberg@zuerich.ch , T +41 44 415 31 11

12. FURTHER MEDIA INFORMATION

Free photo material for media coverage of the exhibition is available to download at:

<http://osiris-zuerich.ch/media-infos/?lang=en>

For **additional photo material** and **more press information**, please contact salaction public relations GmbH, Hamburg:

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