



Unknown (Egyptian)
Head of Osiris
26th Dynasty (664–525 BCE)
bronze
Overall: 2 1/2 x 7/8 in. (6.3 x 2.2 cm)
Base: 2 3/16 x 1 1/4 x 1 7/16 in. (5.5 x 3.1 x 3.7 cm)
Gift of Horace Mayer
59.21.22

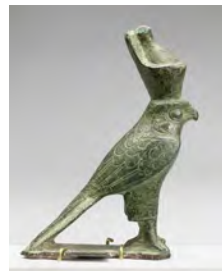
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Head of Osiris 26th Dynasty (664–525 BCE)

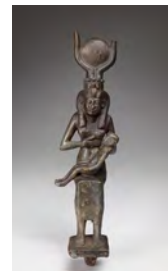
Osiris was perhaps the most important god in Egyptian mythology. He was a god of death, resurrection, and fertility. The crown on the head of this sculpture, known as the atef crown, would have originally had feathers on either side. The atef crown was often worn by Osiris.

Osiris once ruled over Egypt in a mythological golden age, but his brother Seth became jealous and murdered him, dismembered Osiris and scattering the pieces throughout Egypt. Osiris' wife, Isis, and their sister Nephthys, reassembled Osiris and brought him back to life. Osiris was the first mummy and the king of the underworld.

RELATED IMAGES



Horus
date unknown
bronze; 4 x 2 15/16 in. (10.2 x 7.5 cm).
Gift of Horace Mayer (60.36.4)



Isis with the Infant Horus
Greco-Roman Period (332 BCE–32 CE)
bronze; 8 15/16 x 2 3/16 in. (22.7 x 5.6 cm). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Horace Mayer (56.11)

Sources

Global Egyptian Museum, "Atef-Crown"
<http://www.globalegyptianmuseum.org/glossary.aspx?id=77>

Wilkinson, Richard H. *The Complete Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Egypt*.
Thames & Hudson, 2003.



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DISCUSS

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According to Egyptian religious beliefs, Osiris was the first Pharaoh and the first to be reborn into the afterlife. All Pharaohs and individuals who planned to be mummified saw themselves as following in his footsteps.

- Can you think of a person whose example you would like to follow? Maybe it's someone you know or perhaps it's a historical or public figure. It could even be a fictional character.
- What do you admire about that person? Why would you like to follow his or her example?

Use the magnifier (scroll over the image with your cursor) to look closely at Osiris's face. How has the artist modeled or shaped the facial features? Try making a sketch of his face based on your observations. Use your pencil to shade carefully; try to make the transition from light areas to darker areas as gradual as possible.

What colors do you see on the surface of the bronze? Over time, many sculptures made of bronze and copper develop a greenish-brownish patina (a change in surface color due to a chemical reaction when the metal is exposed to the elements).



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CREATE

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This small, bronze sculpture of Osiris is wearing a particular kind of crown known as an Atef crown.



As you can see from the holes above the ears on each side of the crown, some pieces of this sculpture have been lost over time.

Reunite Osiris with the missing pieces of his crown!
Research the Atef crown to find out what it looked like when it was complete. Draw a sketch.

What other details might have been included if this bronze showed Osiris's entire body?