3.12 **Lion-headed goddess**

Copper alloy, solid cast.
Late Period, Dynasty 26 – 30, 664 – 343 BC.
H. 15.5 cm.

Although the figure itself is largely intact, a large part of the hollow rectangular base is broken off. The thumb on the left hand is also missing, as are the attributes that were once held in the hands.

The goddess is represented as a striding female with the head of a maned lion. Her crown is a solar disc which is convex on both sides. An openwork ureaus rears prominently above her head. It is cast onto the disc and the tail with herringbone decoration emerges underneath the disc on the back of her head. At the back the tripartite wig consists of vertical strands that start under the crown and end in a horizontal band.

The deity has a particularly well-modelled face with incised whiskers and eyebrows, while her mane partly covers the tripartite wig in front. Her sheath dress outlines her feminine contours. Both arms have armlets but no bracelets. Her left arm is held forward but was not completely freed from the hip where a tiny attachment remains. The overall impression evoked by the statuette is both fierce and feminine.

Lion-headed goddesses in bronze have come down to us seated on a throne or standing, either with both arms pendant, sometimes standing with the back to an obelisk, or striding with the left arm advanced, as in our example. Such lion-headed divinities can represent a wide variety of goddesses, such as Sakhmet, Mut, Tefnut, Bastet or Wadjet. Despite the lack of inscription, Late Period bronze lioness statuettes are usually considered to be representations of Sakhmet.

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**Feline goddesses**

Lion-headed goddesses can have a wide variety of names, such as Sakhmet, Mut, Tefnut, Bastet or Wadjet. In fact, many local goddesses can assume the aspect of either a fierce lioness or a gentle cat. One of the oldest deities with this dual aspect is the goddess Bastet. She is attested since the Old Kingdom and Bubastis, in the Eastern Delta, was her town of origin. The two capital cities of Egypt each had a goddess of this type as well: in Memphis, she was called Sakhmet and in Thebes the goddess Mut assumed this aspect during the New Kingdom. During the reign of Amenhotep III, hundreds of statues of Sakhmet were erected in the temple precinct of Mut at Karnak and in other Theban temples, including the King’s mortuary complex in western Thebes. Feline goddesses are often called the Eye of Re and were considered to be the sun god’s daughter. One of the myths associated with this goddess relates that Re and his daughter quarrel and that the angry goddess abandons her father and withdraws to Nubia. Re then sends an emissary, usually Thoth or Onuris, to calm her
down, and this god eventually succeeds in making her come back to Egypt and make peace with her father. In a related myth, known as the *Myth of the Destruction of Mankind*, the sun god has created mankind from his tears but becomes disenchanted with them when they rebel against him. Re sends his daughter Sakhmet to wipe out mankind, but after a while regrets his decision. In order to stop the carnage and to satisfy the blood lust of Sakhmet, he orders that beer mixed with red ochre be poured out over the fields. The goddess mistakes this red beer for blood, gets drunk and is no longer able to recognize the people, who are thus able to escape. The angry, destructive aspect of this type of goddess is symbolized by the lioness, whereas the more gentle aspect of the appeased goddess is expressed by the form of the cat. The fearsome lioness is associated with plague and destruction and with warfare, while the cat is linked with female fertility, sexuality and protection during pregnancy and childhood. Despite this seemingly clear distinction, however, lioness goddesses could also be
invoked for protection against evil: “behind Mut there is no fear”, as texts on amulets sometimes express it. The aggressive nature of the lioness could also be beneficial to those who worshipped her, not least the king, whom she protects against his enemies. Although the dual aspect symbolized by lioness and cat applies to all goddesses of this type, in the Late Period in particular the lioness was primarily associated with Sakhmet, while the cat was linked to Bastet. It has therefore become customary to consider Late Period bronze lioness statuettes, even when there is no inscription on them, as representations of Sakhmet and the famous Late Period bronze cats as depictions of Bastet.


### 3.13 Anubis

Copper alloy, solid cast. 
Late Period, Dynasty 26 – 30, 664 – 343 BC. 
H. 15.9 cm (17.0 cm incl. tangs).

The front of this statuette has been very carefully cleaned whereas the back was left untouched. This means that information about the way the corrosion has formed has been preserved. The outer layer is mainly green with many tiny blue crystals. Underneath the colour is reddish-brown, and the deepest layer is black. In particular the inside of the rectangular base, with two diagonally placed casting tangs and the remains of at least three air vents, shows an interesting build-up of crystals and other deposits. Standing with his left leg advanced, the sturdy canine-headed deity is holding a flail, one of the attributes associated with Osiris. The flail is held in the right hand in front of the chest. The left arm is pendant alongside the body and only a very small part is separated from the body. His clenched fist may also have once held an attribute since a small part of the hand is broken away. There are armbands and wristlets on both arms. In between the two striated lappets in front, a simple collar can be seen. At the back the wig is arranged in arches with the smallest arch in the centre of the head. The strands in front as well as behind do not end in a band but fall freely. The face has upstanding ears and a fierce expression in spite of the differently sized eyes. Although some features are crudely executed, such as the left arm and the toes, the artisan was able to capture a stern and superior expression. In bronze Anubis is usually depicted standing with both arms held pendant or with the left arm held forward, while seated figures