



Mummy pectoral

On display

Title/Description: Mummy pectoral

Born: 0100 BC - 0100 AD

Object Type: Plaque, Relief

Materials: Silver

Measurements: h. 86 x w. 86 x d. 9 mm

Accession Number: 320

Historic Period: Ptolemaic (late), Roman period, 1st century BC, 1st century AD

Production Place: Africa, Egypt

Cultural Group: Egyptian, Roman

Credit Line: Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1973

The pectoral is formed from a rectangular sheet of metal worked in *repoussé* in the form of the inner part of a temple (the *naos*). There is a cavetto cornice above a portico chased with two lines marking the upper ends of the architrave, and a group of six vertical lines in the centre. Within this frame stands a figure of Horus (son of (Osiris, god of the Underworld) as a falcon-headed man wearing a kilt with bull's tail at the rear, and holding a *was*-sceptre and *ankh*. Confronting Horus is a figure of Thoth with the head of an ibis also holding a *was*-sceptre and *ankh*. Thoth, god of wisdom, stands here, as often elsewhere, for the similar figure of the later proscribed Seth who murdered his brother Osiris. Seth, together With Hocus, represent the old guardian gods of the four quarters of the universe.

The toes shown on the rear feet of the figures and the style and proportions point to a late date, probably at beginning of the first millenium AD. The object is intact, and there are traces of black resin or woodpitch from the mummy wrappings in which it was originally embedded, though much has been cleaned off. The upper edge is formed with a loop at the rear which has been crushed on to the remains of a linen (?) cord by which it was suspended around the neck of the mummy. Metal pectorals of this type are not particularly common.

Provenance

Formerly in the Alexander Collection, Edinburgh.

Purchased by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury from K. J. Hewett in 1959.

Donated to the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia in 1973 as part of the original gift.
