

DAVID AARON



Wooden Anubis

Circa: C. 751- 414 B.C.

Third Intermediate Period to Late Period, C. 751- 414 B.C.

H: 24.8 x L: 90 cm

Wood, Stucco, Paint traces

A statue of the Egyptian god Anubis in the form of a recumbent jackal with pricked-up ears. Formed from once stuccoed wood, painted black, its body and muzzle finely carved, with a curving belly and alert snout, its paws and fore and hind quarters carefully delineated. The tail extending straight behind.

The funerary god Anubis, who was represented either as a man with the head of a jackal or as a jackal, was associated with death and the embalming process. His association with the jackal may have begun due to jackals living on the desert's edge, where cemeteries were often located. The black paint, the symbolic colour of Anubis, represents both death and decay, and the Nile mud and therefore regeneration – an important distinction given that the Egyptians understood life in terms of cycles.

Recumbent statues such as this one were commonly found near burial sites and may have been designed to rest on the sarcophagus, guarding the dead. The most famous of these guardian Anubis' was discovered in the tomb of Tutankhamun, the Anubis Shrine (now in the Egyptian Museum, Cairo). The shrine was found at the entrance to the Treasury, which held the most sacred of the grave goods and the body of the Pharaoh. Mounted on a palanquin, the 3-foot long statue faced towards the west, the direction of the Egyptian afterlife, and in front of the shrine was a brick inscribed with a magic formula which read: "It is I who hinder the sand from choking the secret chamber, and who repel that one who would repel him with the desert flame. I have set aflame the desert, I have caused the path to be mistaken. I am for the protection of the deceased", enforcing Anubis' role as guardian of the tomb.

Literature:

David Aaron Ltd, 2023, No. 5.