

# Anubi Statue



**FIRST RESTORATION REPORT  
APRIL 2025**

# Description

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Artist: **Unknown**

Date: **1st-2nd century A.D.**

Dimensions: **155 x 50 x 28 cm**

Materials: **Marble**

Inventory number: **22840**

The standing figure wears a knee-length tunic with a belt that partially covers the cloak and falls to the side of the body. The right hand holds a sistrum, a musical instrument commonly used in Egyptian religious ceremonies, while the left-hand holds a caduceus, an attribute of the god Mercury.

Between the ears is a solar disc, and to the left is a palm trunk, evoking the Nilotic landscape. The head is that of the god Anubis, one of the oldest and most important deities in the Egyptian pantheon. The deity "Psychopompa" guides the souls of the deceased and presides over the embalming and funeral rites.

The Vatican statue documents the spread of the Egyptian god's cult in Imperial Rome during the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. In Rome, Anubis embodied Mercury, a deity with many similar characteristics to the Egyptian god who guided the souls of the dead into the afterlife.

The fusion of these two deities gave rise to a new iconography. In the Egyptian Gregorian Museum, the statue has the head of a canid and the caduceus, palm, and talar, the winged shoes of Mercury.



Alternatively, the statue could represent a priest of the god, or perhaps one of his followers, marching in a sacred procession during a festival in honor of the god. Epigraphic and literary sources often refer to "Anubofori" (or "bearers of Anubis"), figures at the head of the sacred procession wearing a mask in the shape of a jackal's head.

The writer Apuleius, for example, in the second century AD, describes a priest wearing the mask of Anubis at the head of a sacred procession during the festival of Navigium Isidis, which evoked the jackal god along with other Egyptian deities (*Metamorphoses*, XI, 11).

Emperor Commodus would have played in the *Historia Augusta*, the role of Anubis, wearing a canid mask during a sacred procession (*Historia Augusta, Vita Commodi* IX, 4).

The Roman calendars of the imperial period mention other Isic festivals (festivals with rites celebrated in honor of deities associated with the goddess Isis, including Anubis). These festivals may have involved processions of priests and worshippers.

Several pictorial documents from the imperial period could confirm this interpretation. In Pompeii, for example, the west wall of the portico of the Iseum and the temple are dedicated to the goddess Isis. Isis is depicted as a man, a priest, or perhaps a worshipper wearing an Anubis mask, probably in celebration of Egyptian cults.

One of these canid-headed masks, made of terracotta and in excellent condition, is in the Pelizaeus Museum in Hildesheim (Germany).

The statue was given to Pope Benedict XIV and has been in the Gregorian Egyptian Museum since 1839. It was discovered in 1749 in Anzio, on the estate of the Pamphilj family.





# State of Preservation

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The statue of the god Anubis (1st-2nd century AD), made of white macrocrystalline marble, is in the Egyptian Gregorian Museum, Room IV - Nile.

The incomplete original has been restored to include the lower arms, the lower part of the caduceus, part of the heads of the serpents, the feet with bases, the right leg below the knee, and the lower part of the seat.

The prominent part of the snout is original, found broken, and an ancient reattachment.

The presence of original polychromy on the solar disc will be the subject of preliminary studies by the Diagnostic Laboratory of the Vatican Museums to assess its nature, binder, and adhesion.

A veil of accumulations of protective viruses and cohesive anthropic deposits obscure its material and diminish the natural interaction between light and crystals, altering the color.

On this layer, distributed on all four sides, a lot of graffiti in pencil are visible.

The joints of the various parts integrated into the ancient restoration show plaster fillings chromatically adjusted with altered oil colors.

The exposed needles on the snake and the caduceus represent a risk. They complete the aesthetic aspect. The scaling of various materials is widespread and numerous.



# Restoration Procedures

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- Cyclododecane application to localized areas provides temporary protection for the original painting pigment
- Preliminary tests to identify the organic or inorganic solvents, their concentrations, and their application times for the gradual removal of superimposed substances of various types of oil, paint, and wax
- Progressively remove surface deposits from the entire stone surface, extract chemical residues, and remove any salts on the surface. The laser equipment will remove stains and graffiti
- Fillings from previous procedures that have lost their conservative and aesthetic function are also mechanically removed
- To check the stability of the metal elements supporting the integrations and remove exposed pins of lost integrations
- Consolidation of old adhesives, fixing the grouting of the joints involved in the integrations with slaked lime mortar, and matching the color to the original stone material
- Integration of small missing pieces of stone to uniform the surfaces
- Chromatically balance to eliminate any uneven tones
- Superficial protection of the surface to slow down natural deterioration







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