

Padiuf's False Canopic Jars

Probably region of Thebes 3rd intermediate period

Painted wood

H.: 32.5 cm; W.: 13.6 cm

Department of Egyptian Antiquities, Musée du Louvre (N 2952)

These “canopic jars” get their name from the city of Canopus on the Nile delta, where Osiris was worshipped in the form of a vase crowning a human head. They contained the deceased's main organs—liver, lungs, intestines, and stomach—all withdrawn from the body during mummification. These viscera were placed under the protection of male deities, the four sons of Horus, Amsit, Hapy, Duamutef, and Kebehesennuf, depicted respectively with the head of a man, monkey, dog, and falcon. These deities were associated with the goddesses Isis, Nephthys, Neith and Selkit. These four jars are in fact false jars made of a single piece—the tops are contiguous with the bottoms and there is no inner cavity. During the Third Intermediate Period, between the 21st and 25th dynasties, a change in embalming practices led to the temporary abandonment of canopic jars. The mummified viscera were returned to the abdomen, accompanied by four wax figurines of the four sons of Horus. Imitation jars were then produced. The painted text gives the name of the owner of these jars, along with the name of the protective spirit: “Osiris, priest of Amun and pure initiated priest of Karnak, royal carpenter of the estate of Amun, Padiuf, son of Penpy, discharged.”



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