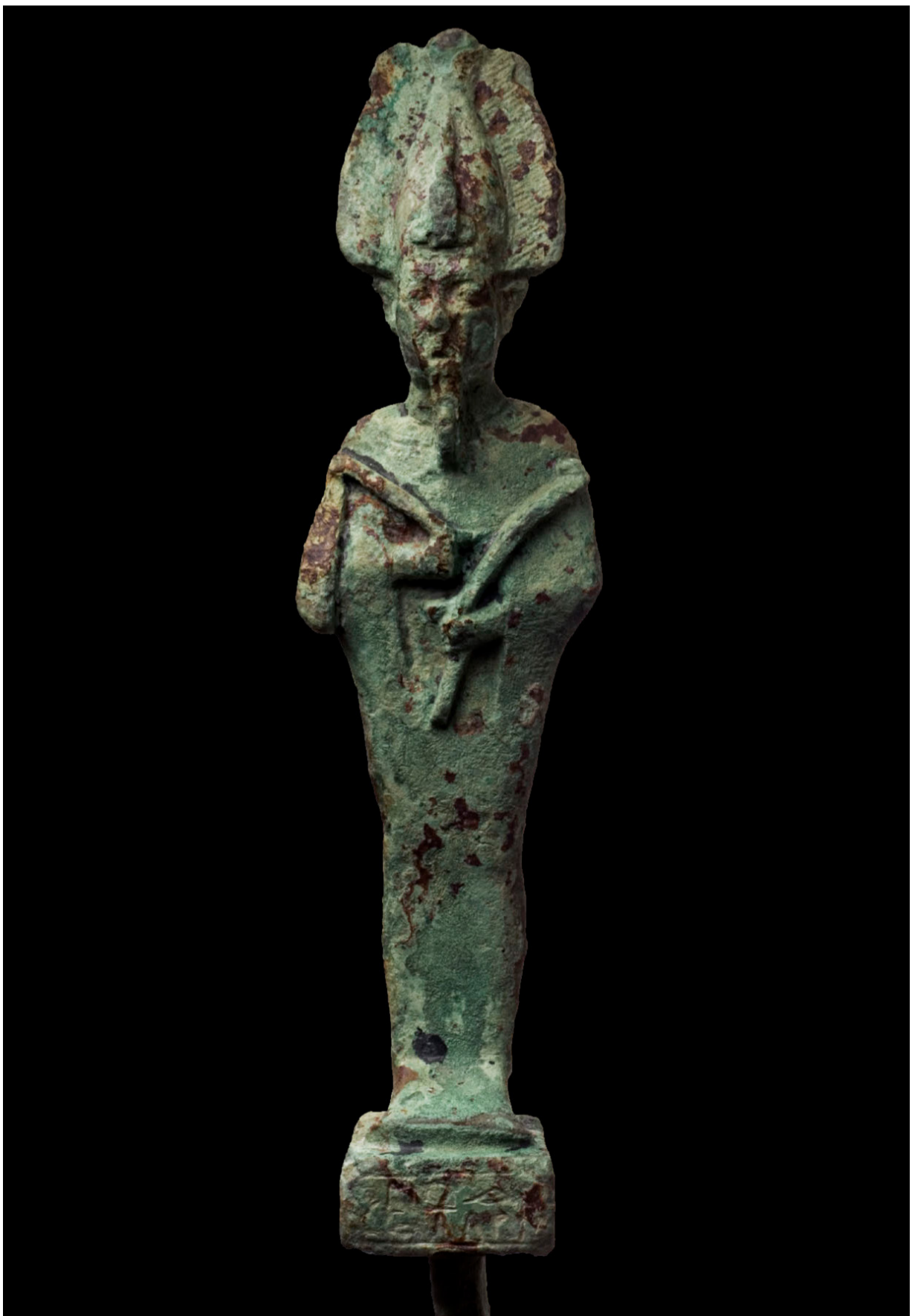


OSIRIS STATUETTES



The numerous Osiris statuettes excavated on the site of Thonis-Heracleion by the IEASM are as many witnesses to the **importance of the Osirian cult** in the Egyptian sanctuaries from the first millennium BC on. Osiris was “Lord of the Occident”, i.e. the kingdom of the hereafter, the dead god who had returned thanks to the rites of mummification practised by his sister and wife Isis.

At the opening of the north-east canal into the northern harbour basin, several statuettes of the god, of elaborate manufacture and taller than those usually found were associated with imposing architectural elements, suggesting that a sanctuary or a landing pier was built there that had some connection to the cult of Osiris.



On an island to the south-east of the harbour basins, in an area containing some scattered limestone blocks and paving slabs, several bronze Osiris figures were found next to a black granite offering table. They were accompanied by bronze statuettes of Harpocrates, a bronze amulet representing the exact same offering table in miniature, as well as silver fragments in the bulbous shape of a lion. These objects may well suggest the presence of a temple.



Osiris Mysteries

The presence of Osiris in Thonis-Heracleion goes beyond the representations of the god. His existence is also revealed by an impressive quantity of objects that can be linked to his cult in one way or another and in particular to the celebration of the Osiris Mysteries during month of Khoiak – as they are referred to on the stele of the royal **Decree of Canopus**, or as they are described in great detail on the walls of the **Osirian chapels at Dendera**.

Object: Bronze statuettes, Late Period, Maritime Museum, Alexandria (SCA 1267, 1081, 966, 1031, 1004, 952, 411)

Source: Original description in exhibition catalogue „Osiris. Egypt’s Sunken Mysteries“, Paris, 2015, re-ed 2018, exh. Egypt’s Sunken Cities, Minneapolis Institute of Art, 4 November 2018 - 14 April 2019

Photos: Christoph Gerigk © Franck Goddio/Hilti Foundation