

FELINE STATUETTES

Artist: Unknown

Date: Late Period (712-332 BC)

Dimensions: 26.2 x 24.9 x 28.2 cm

Material: Wood

Inventory Number: 18306, 18308, 18310

Total Cost € 9.760,00

As early as the Predynastic Period, around 4,000 BC and through the New Kingdom, 1550-1070 BC, there were several specific animals that the Ancient Egyptians viewed as manifestations of divinity. This religious practice continued to grow throughout the Late Period (712-332 BC).

Among the animals adored by the Egyptians was the cat, the representation of the goddess Bastet, the protector of the home and symbol of fertility. Cats were frequently embalmed and placed in special funerary boxes decorated in the shape of a cat, as shown by the samples proposed for restoration. The main sanctuary of the goddess Bastet was located in Bubastis in the Delta of the Nile and was regarded as an important place of worship as of the 12th Dynasty (945-712 BC). In this period the *faience* cat statues were made in both bronze and wood. In Bubasti, a large cemetery dedicated to cats was found. Cemeteries dedicated to these animals have also been found in a variety of other locations, including Thebes.

The study of the mummified remains of these cats, often still preserved within the urns, has revealed these animals rarely died naturally, but were instead generally killed in order to be sold to pilgrims, who then offered the deceased animals to the goddess Bastet in her temple. The high demand for these animals by pilgrims created a market of urns containing fake or partial mummies in order to sell more offerings.

STATE OF PRESERVATION:

The urns are damaged. There is evidence of pests in the form of holes, trenches, erosion and fissures. There are gaps of various sizes on the pictorial surface from defects in paint adhesion. The surface is covered with a very consistent thick layer of dust.

RESTORATION PROCESS INCLUDES:

- Anti-infestation measures
- Consolidation of wooden supports
- Rehabilitation of the fissures
- Reassembly
- Restabilising of the pictorial surfaces
- Cleaning of surfaces
- Reintegration of pictorial surfaces
- Diagnostic imaging
- Chemical analysis
- Photographic documentation

