

# STATUE OF ISIS-LACTANS

Artist: Unknown  
 Date: Ptolemaic Period (304-30 BC)  
 Dimensions: 29 x 14 cm  
 Material: Terracotta  
 Inventory Number: 37429

Total Cost € 3.160,00

## STATE OF PRESERVATION:

This statuette is missing several pieces. These deficiencies need to be filled with plaster. After completing a full scientific investigation, the restorers will clean and rebalance the surface of the statuette. Based on experience with similar pieces as these, the laboratory expects to complete a full cleaning.

## RESTORATION PROCESS INCLUDES:

- Removal of dust
- Complete cleaning with distilled water
- Consolidation of cracks and gaps
- Reintegration of missing parts
- Application of a protective varnish
- Scientific research
- Photographic documentation

The goddess Isis is portrayed seated on a throne, holding her son Horus on her knees, cradling him with her left arm and providing him with her breast with her right hand. Horus is unclothed with his braid on one side of his head, a typical attribute of the god-child. Scenes featuring the breastfeeding of a young god or pharaoh have appeared since ancient times as milk is considered a symbol of eternal regeneration. The symbolic image of divine milk as the spiritual nourishment carried over to early Christian iconography of the Middle Ages with the Virgin nursing the Child.

This type of lactans Isis, "Isis suckling," highlights one of the most significant aspects of the goddess - that of the mother and protector. This image is associated with the legend of Isis in which, to escape the god Seth, she kills her husband Osiris and takes refuge in the protected wetland of the Delta. There she is able to give birth to her son, Horus. Using her supernatural gifts she was able to protect her baby until he reached adulthood, at which point he revenged the death of his father and inherited the title of "sovereign on earth."

This statuette, a rare example in terracotta, was intended to ensure the same magical protection the goddess Isis had guaranteed to her son Horus.

