

3275

Bust from an Enthroned Statue of Sakhmet

Richard Fazzini: The statue you're looking at shows a human female body with the head of a lioness. The very fact that she's got a leonine head will tell you that she is other than human—more than human, a symbol of power.

Hugh Wilson: The bust of the goddess Sakhmet highlights the extensive use of African lions and lionesses to represent the power of the Egyptian gods and goddesses. This African king of the jungle is a homegrown animal to represent homegrown rulers and divinities.

Richard Fazzini: This goddess's name is Sakhmet, a feminine word that means either “the power” or “the powerful one.” We know from various archaeological excavations that this statue was made during the reign of King Amunhotep III of the 18th Dynasty, and that it was part of one of the largest sculptural programs ever undertaken in ancient Egypt.

Although the ancient Egyptians certainly thought male gods could be dangerous, they were more afraid of their goddesses becoming angry and wrathful, because the goddess might be kind and the goddess might not be kind. And if she wasn't kind, the fate of the universe was at stake.