

***Bronze Figure of Harpokrates***  
**The British Museum**

From Egypt  
Late Period, after 600 BC

**Horus the child**



The name Harpokrates is the Hellenized version of the Egyptian phrase meaning 'Horus the child'. Harpokrates was a form of the god Horus, son of Isis and Osiris. He was represented as a naked child, with a sidelock of youth and his finger to his mouth. He is often shown on the lap of his enthroned mother, in bronze statue groups of the Late Period (661-332 BC), when these deities were particularly popular. They were seen as members of the ideal family, consisting of Osiris, Isis and Harpokrates.

According to myth, Isis revived her murdered husband Osiris to conceive a child. She fled to the Delta to give birth, hiding from her brother Seth, who was intent on seizing the throne of Egypt. When her son, Harpokrates, was born he was attacked by snakes, crocodiles and scorpions sent by his uncle. He was protected by the gods, and given power over dangerous creatures. This figure of Harpokrates was originally seated on a throne, or perhaps on the lap of his mother. Isis was revered for her magical abilities, and the power that Harpokrates had over dangerous animals meant that both were regarded as protective deities.

Source URL: [http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/aes/b/bronze\\_figure\\_of\\_harpokrates.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aes/b/bronze_figure_of_harpokrates.aspx)  
Saylor URL: <http://www.saylor.org/courses/arth201>