



Pantheistic statuette of Bes

On display

Title/Description: Pantheistic statuette of Bes

Object Type: Figure

Materials: Faience

Measurements: h. 154 x w. 57 x d. 34 mm

Accession Number: 639

Historic Period: Ptolemaic/Roman Period (c. 300 BC-AD 100)

Production Place: Africa, Egypt

Credit Line: Purchased with support from Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1975

The basis of the composition is the figure of Bes with his leonine head, the mouth open exposing teeth and a short protruding tongue. His dwarf body has a lion tail and he wears a head-dress of six striated plumes, on the back of which is carved in relief a nestling bird facing right, its wings displayed. In addition, he is shown offering his right breast held with his right hand and he grasps a lizard to his body with his left hand. On each shoulder squats a monkey with spotted pelt at the rear, facing forward behind the large projecting and perforated ear. An antelope stands before his legs.

A hole in the underside of the base is original and was the means of making a stable fixing upon a peg. This suggests that the figure may originally have been a protective household god. The blue-green faience with details in black is in good condition except for a slight chip on the lower front edge of the base.

Cyril Aldred & Geoffrey T. Martin, 1997

Entry taken from Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection 3 volume catalogue, edited by Steven Hooper (Yale University Press, 1997).

Provenance

In the collection of Charles Kelekian, Paris in 1918.

Purchased by the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia from Peter Sharrer in 1975 out of funds provided by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury.
