

DAVID AARON



Comic Face Pendant

Circa 600 B.C. – end of the 3rd century B.C.

Phoenician

Glass

H: 4.1cm x W: 2.6 cm, Diameter: 2.5cm

A glass bead in the shape of a bearded male head. The head is created on the turquoise base of the bead with a translucent yellow face and modelled nose and ears, with white and blue additions to create the other facial features. A row of tightly spiralled blue curls runs across the top of the face, with strong eyebrows and the beard, incised with lines for texture, in the same colour. The eyes are created in the typical style for these beads, with three successive dots in blue, white, and then another blue, to create an outline, sclera, and pupil. Further adornment is provided in the form of raised white dots, one in the centre of the forehead, two on the tips of the eyebrows, and one on each ear. The turquoise suspension ring for hanging the bead at the top of the head also serves as the turban. This is a large example of the type, with excellent fire polish. The head is fragmented at the mouth, with part of the beard broken away.

The ancient society of Phoenicia originated in modern Lebanon, but its reach spread across the Mediterranean region from 1200 B.C., with territories ranging from the Syro-Palestinian coast to north Africa. They were skilled glassworkers, with great technical proficiency, and developed unique beads using core forming. These beads were traded throughout the eastern littoral of the Mediterranean and

Egypt. In the ninth century, centres of glassmaking were revived, including the powerful port city of Carthage. Face beads were produced in these centres, and remained in vogue until the end of the third century B.C.. Pendants such as this one, with bearded men's heads, are the most well-known cultural production of the Phoenicians today. Crafted using similar techniques to core-molded vessels, with contrasting coloured features applied either in relief or marvered (pressed into the face). Pendants have been found in various sites across the region of the Levantine coast, both as individual artefacts and as part of larger pieces of jewellery. For instance, a necklace found at the necropolis of Fontana Noa in Olbia is composed of eighteen beads, including five pendant heads.

Exhibitions

Love for Antiquity: Selections from the Joukowsky Collection, Bell Gallery, List Art Center, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, 12 October – 8 November 1985.

Literature:

Rolf Winkes (ed.), Love for Antiquity: Selections from the Joukowsky Collection (Lovain-la-Neuve, Belgium, 1985), no. 35, pp. 43-44.