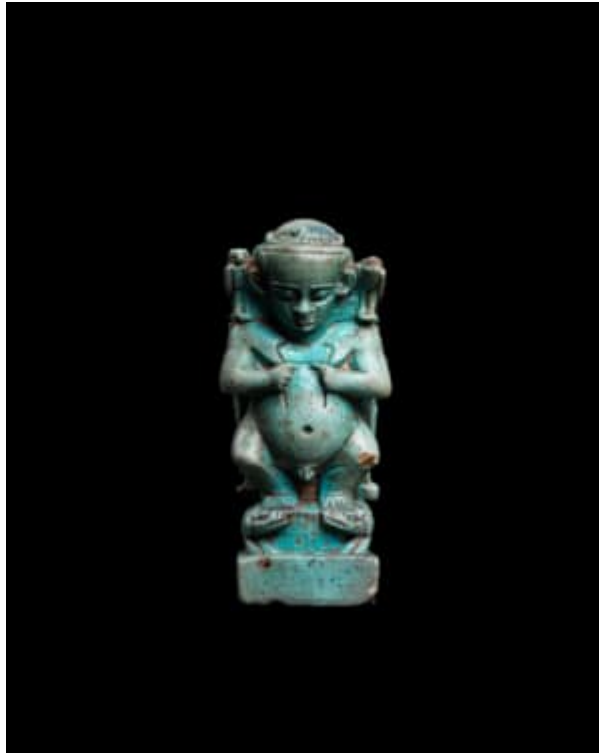


DAVID AARON



Amulet of Ptah-Patek

H: 7.7 cm

Faience

Egypt

664-525 BC, probably 26th Dynasty, Late Period

A blue faience amulet depicting the god Ptah-Patek. Ptah-Patek is represented as a nude bow-legged dwarf with a pronounced pot belly and an overly large, bald head. The god stands with both feet placed on the heads of crocodiles, and holds a serpent in each hand, represented through incised lines on the torso. A falcon stands on each of his shoulders, facing frontally. On his head is a large scarab beetle. On the god's proper right side stands the goddess Nephtys, shown nude and wearing a solar disc and long horns, while on the left side is the goddess Isis wearing a naos headdress. The reverse of the figure is a flat back panel, incised with an image of the goddess truth and justice, Maat, her winged arms outstretched on either side of her body. She, too, wears the solar disc and horns, and a large ostrich feather (Maat's name in hieroglyphs) is reflected on both sides of her head.

Ptah-Patek, also known as Pataikos, was a protective deity in ancient Egypt. The name 'Pataikos' was coined by Herodotus, who refers to the apotropaic dwarf figureheads on Phoenician ships as such in his Histories (c. 440 BC). According to the Greek historian, Ptah-Patek was a son or manifestation of the god Ptah – 'Pataikos' means 'little Ptah'. Ancient Egyptians believed that dwarves were experts in metallurgy and were thus associated with Ptah as the patron god of craftsmen. The cult of Ptah-Patek became popular in the Late Period, and spread throughout the Eastern Mediterranean during the Hellenistic Period. From the 22nd Dynasty, Ptah-Patek was associated with Bes, another protective dwarf-god, as another assistant of hippopotamus-headed Taweret during childbirth and a protector of women and children. He was also linked with Harpocrates and Horus, and shown holding serpents or

knives, with falcons on his shoulders, and standing on crocodiles. Ptah-Patek was frequently represented in the form of small faience amulets which were used to protect the wearer from evil forces, dangerous animals, chaos, and could be placed on the forehead of a pregnant woman during birth.

Exhibitions

Osiris, Kreuz, Halbmond: 5000 Jahre Kunst in Ägypten, Kunstgebäude am Schloßplatz, Stuttgart, 18 February-23 April 1984, Kestner-Museum, Hannover, 10 May-5 August 1984, no. 59.

Literature:

Antike Kunstwerk, Ars Antiqua AG, Lucerne, 2 May 1959, Lot 22, p. 9, pl. 9.

Philipp von Zabern, Osiris, Kreuz, Halbmond:

Die drei Religionen Ägyptens, Kunstgebäude am Schloßplatz, Stuttgart, 18 February-23 April 1984, Kestner-Museum, Hannover, 10 May-5 August 1984, no. 59, pp. 71, 73.

Ingrid Gamer-Wallert, Vermerk: Fundort unbekannt (Tübingen, 1997), no. 387, pp. 245-246, 316, pl. 86.