


24

Head of a Bearded Man

300-250 BC

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Object Details

Catalogue Number	24
Inventory Number	96.AD.243 
Typology	Head
Location	Taranto region
Dimensions	H: 11.5 cm; W: 8.2 cm

Fabric

Orange in color (Munsell 5 y 7/6), hard and compact, with small reflective inclusions. The back is formed by a slab of clay; the front was made with a very fresh mold.

Condition

There is a broken edge at the neck. Some of the decorative elements in the headdress have broken off. There are incrustations and dirt accretions in many of the recessed areas and traces of red pigment on the hair.

Provenance

Thomas Virzì, Italian, 1881–1974 (Munich, Germany)¹; by 1994–96, Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman (New York, New York), donated to the J. Paul Getty Museum, 1996.

1. For a discussion of the Virzì Collection, see the discussion section for cat. 4–23.

Bibliography

PASSION FOR ANTIQUITIES 1994, p. 354, no. 217; ACQUISITIONS 1996–1998, p. 67.

Description

The face is elongated, and the brow is furrowed with an especially pronounced crease in the middle; the eyes are small with thickened eyelids; the nose is turned downward, the small mouth is sunken between the mustache and beard, and the lower lip is fleshy. The wavy hair is treated in separate locks marked by a series of pronounced striations, forming three bands in the center of the forehead and falling in an orderly fashion on either side, leaving the ears uncovered. The beard is long, with dense, linear locks; the attachment of the beard to the face is marked. Atop the head is set a convivial wreath that was originally decorated with floral elements.

This head, representing a banqueter, can be linked to a well-known Tarentine typology present in numerous examples in Taranto and in many museum collections. In particular, the head is directly comparable, in the type of hair and the definition of the furrowed brow, with Tarentine examples now in the Basel Antikenmuseum: a head of the same size, but without a wreath, and a bust, both datable to the third quarter of the fourth century BC.¹ This type of bearded banqueter seems to be derived from the Boeotian masks of Dionysos dating from the second half of the fifth century BC, especially in view of the rendering of the lower part of the face, with the projecting lip and the beard with pronounced striations bespeaking an archaizing inflection.²

Notes

1. HERDEJÜRGEN 1971, no. 132, pp. 78–79, with bibliography. There are many comparisons in the Museo Nazionale Archeologico of Taranto, most of which are unpublished, such as the bearded head from a votive deposit in Via D. Peluso (Taranto MN I. G. 3277). See also DE JULIIS AND LOIACONO 1985, p. 348, fig. 416. Also comparable are the heads in the Musei Civici di Trieste datable from the third quarter of the fourth century BC, POLI 2010, nos. 430–31; see other comparisons in BESQUES 1954, pl. LXX, C85, and in BREITENSTEIN 1941, no. 304.
2. For the masks of Dionysos, see C. Gasparri, s.v. “Dionysos,” *LIMC* 3 (1986), pp. 424–25; F. Frontisi-Ducroux, “La masque du dieu ou le dieu masque?” in BERTI 1991, pp. 321–26; F. Frontisi-Ducroux, *Le dieu-masque: Une figure du Dionysos d’Athènes* (Paris and Rome, 1991), pp. 203–11.