


46

Seated Eros B

LATE FOURTH-THIRD CENTURIES BC

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Object Details

Catalogue Number	46
Inventory Number	96.AD.265.2 
Typology	Statuette
Location	Canosa
Dimensions	H: 10.2 cm; W: 5.9 cm

Fabric

A hazelnut brown color (Munsell 7.5 yr 8/6), porous, with numerous reflective inclusions. Thick white slip with polychrome pigments preserved in a number of places: pink (upper section of the wings, complexion), black (hair and eyes), light blue (edge and lower part of the wings), white (wreath), and red (lips and straps). Made with bivalve molds.

Condition

The right hand, *plektron*, and part of the wreath are missing; there are several large chip losses on the left wing, light surface accretions, and black stains overall, probably of biological origin. The right arm has been reattached; there are three repaired breaks on the fret boards of the instrument. The surface under the wing has been abraded by the metal mount. The head is slightly larger than that of cat. 45, and it is crowned with a wreath of leaves and fruit; the lyre has been preserved intact. The straps cross over the chest and run around the attachment points of the thighs; red bands can be seen on the calves.¹

1. For the iconography of Eros in the Hellenistic period, see HERMARY AND CASSIMATIS 1986, pp. 936–42.

Provenance

– 1988, Acanthus Gallery (New York, New York), sold to Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman (New York, New York), 1988; 1988–96, Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman (New York, New York), donated to the J. Paul Getty Museum, 1996.

Bibliography

PASSION FOR ANTIQUITIES 1994, p. 355, no. 241b; ACQUISITIONS 1996–98, p. 67.

Group Discussion

Statuettes of a Seated Eros (cat. 45–46)

This discussion is reproduced on each of the individual object pages

These musician Erotes must originally have been mounted on animals: beneath the buttocks, there are no traces of slip or polychromy. The typology is reminiscent of Daunian examples from Canosa in the third century BC, but is also similar to the Erotes from the Hypogeum of Ganymede in Arpi. Unlike most of the Erotes from Arpi, however, these two still preserve their musical instruments.¹ The effeminate appearance of little Erotes like these is often accentuated, especially in terracotta statuettes, by such ornaments as necklaces and leg bands.

Eros, who in the Classical period is primarily a figure complementary to Aphrodite and Dionysos, enlarged his role in the Hellenistic period to become an interlocutor with the female world and a protector of marriage and female fertility, while continuing to operate in the sphere of Dionysos and Aphrodite in a broad array of situations, with the chief function of spreading good cheer and merriment. The type of the child Eros playing musical instruments was, beginning at the end of the fourth century BC and in the third century BC, widespread throughout the entire Mediterranean and became a point of reference in the iconography of goldwork and toreutics.² In the Daunian area and especially at Canosa, where there was a close relationship between coroplastic art and vase decoration, small Erotes were also attached to polychrome vases of the same period.³ There was an especially close link between Eros and music: in Attic vase-painting, Eros is often shown handing musical instruments to ephebes or watching a musical performance in the context of the gynaikeion (women's quarters), while in the Hellenistic period Eros also accompanied the Muses, as documented by

images on gems.⁴ Similar Erotes from the region of Daunia are now found in many major museum collections and frequently appear on the antiquities market, often in pairs and groups of four, as they must have originally been found in their source contexts.⁵

Notes

1. M. Mazzei, *Arpi: L'ipogeo della Medusa e la necropoli* (Arpi, 1995), pp. 140–41, nos. 142–48, and pp. 261–70, with bibliography. For examples from Canosa, see *ART GREC INSOLITE* 1988, nos. 20–21 (small Erotes on dolphins and an Eros Kitharoidos); and *CASSANO* 1992, pp. 324–25, nos. 63–73, and pp. 520–29.
2. On the multiple roles of Eros, in Magna Graecia in particular, see *HERMARY AND CASSIMATIS* 1986, pp. 941–42; see also nos. 180, 218, 676. For other comparisons, see *BESQUES* 1972, pl. 59b, from Aegina, dating from the third quarter of the third century BC. See also the statuette of Eros with a Deer, cat. 32.
3. On Daunian vases, see M. Mazzei, “Note sulla ceramica policroma di Arpi,” in *Proceedings of the 3rd Symposium on Ancient Greek and Related Pottery, Copenhagen, August 31–September 4, 1987* (Copenhagen, 1988), pp. 407–13.
4. On the relationship between Eros and music, see L. Faedo, “Le Muse suadenti: Contributi sull'iconografia delle Muse,” *Studi classici e orientali* 42 (1992), pp. 165–87.
5. *CERAMIQUES ANTIQUES* 1987, no. 140 (referring to the plastic decoration of a vase from Canosa). On the clandestine excavations of Arpi, see M. Mazzei, “Dalla Puglia, il caso di Arpi,” in *PELAGATTI AND GUZZO* 1997, pp. 95–97. On the archaeological research in Arpi, see M. Mazzei, “Arpi preromana e romana: I dati archeologici: Analisi e proposte d'interpretazione,” *Taras* 4 (1984), pp. 7–46.