

# EGYPTIAN FAIENCE AMULET REPRESENTING AN UDJAT-EYE WITH A ROYAL CARTOUCHE

Egyptian, 570-526 B.C.)

Faience

L : 4.3 cm

Reference: 13766



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The amulet, carved on both sides, represents a left eye and a right eye in low relief. Under the right eye, the presence of a cartouche containing three imprinted hieroglyphic signs makes this small piece unusual. The cartouche reads Khenem-ib-Re, one of the names of Amasis, the penultimate pharaoh of Dynasty 26. During his long and peaceful reign, Amasis endowed Egypt with great monuments and favored foreign trade, especially with areas in the Mediterranean region (Greece, Caria, and Lydia). Although he is known from Assyrian, Greek, and Persian texts, monuments bearing his name are rare because of the destruction caused by the conquest of Egypt by the Persian king Cambyses (525 B.C.).

The udjat-eye was a prophylactic symbol par excellence of ancient Egypt; it appears on a great variety of objects utilized by all classes of the population. A hybrid that combines a human eye (conjunctiva, pupil, and eyebrow) and markings that adorn the eye of a hawk, this amulet evokes the idea of fullness and of the integrity of the reconstituted body of the deceased an allusion to the legend of the eye of Horus, which was snatched away during the battle with Seth, and finally recovered by Thoth. The presence of the name Amasis indicates that this piece could have been part of a collection of funerary amulets belonging to a member of the pharaoh's court.

## CONDITION

This amulet, molded in a uniform, slightly friable pale blue frit, is complete and in a good state of preservation. The surface shows a superficial wear in places and/or is covered with a grayish patina. The hole for suspension was pierced horizontally, at the eye level.

## PROVENANCE

Bonham's London, April 26, 2001, lot 204.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

On udjat-eye amulets:

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CHAPPAZ, J.-L., and J. CHAMAY, *Refl ets du divin: Antiquités pharaoniques et classiques d'une collection privée*, (Geneva, 2001), p. 95.

On Amasis:

HELCK, W., et al., *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden, 1975), cols., 181-82.

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