

B. 'Bes': The Origins

Object key

BMAG = Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

Eton College = Eton College William Joseph Myers Collection

B1. ECM114 (Eton College)

Flat-backed faience amulet of a Bes-deity

30 x 13 mm

Possibly early New Kingdom

Provenance unknown

The god stands bow-legged, with arms resting on thighs and an animal tail drops between. A suspension loop has been fixed to the top of the head. The lack of definition of the human features may indicate that this amulet is of an early Eighteenth Dynasty type, although lack of detail means that this supposition uncertain.

B2. 1969W1212 (BMAG ~ ex-Wellcome Collection)

Faience amulet of a Bes-deity between two Taweret-deities

22 x 19 mm

Date unknown

Provenance unknown

This small amulet depicts a Bes-deity standing between two Taweret figures. A suspension loop is located above the head of the central figure. Taweret was another household deity whose purpose involved protecting women through pregnancy and childbirth. Here ferocious appearance, a hippopotamus with crocodile tail, was most likely intended to scare away demons. In this example the Bes-image includes an animal tail, as well as a large lion's mane. These features may indicate that this deity's role was also apotropaic in this instance.

B3. 1969W2553 (BMAG ~ ex-Wellcome Collection)

Ovoid amulet of Bes-image in faience

24 x 10 mm

Possibly Late Period

Provenance unknown

This unusual shaped Bes-amulet includes a number of salient features related to the god's iconography. The *wedjat* eye symbol on the lower body of the front of the object indicates the syncretism of the Bes-deity into the iconography of Horus that can be seen during the Late Period. However, a lion mane can be seen on the back of the figure running vertically from the suspension loop on the back of the plumed headdress.