Etruscan Hollow Terracotta Votive Head -- Certificate + Qed Test + Expert Report



6 885 EUR

Period : Before 16th century

Condition : Très bon état

Description

Impressive Etruscan votive head representing a male figure, mould-made in hollow terracotta with a flat back pierced by a ventilation hole. This type of production, known as a testa votiva, belonged to the Etruscan religious ritual system and was offered in sanctuaries as an ex-voto.The modelling is sober yet expressive, showing a balanced facial structure: marked brows, straight nose, fine mouth, stylized beard and hair. The archaeological patina, warm brown in tone with natural mineral inclusions, testifies to genuine ancient burial. The piece embodies the solemn restraint typical of central Etruscan workshops.Technical characteristicsCulture: EtruscanPeriod: 5th-4th century B.C.Material: Oxidized-fired terracottaDimensions: 30 × 19 × 10 cmCondition: Good overall condition; stable

Dealer

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surface, homogeneous ancient patina consistent with age.Provenance: Former Belgian private collection -> Spanish antiquarian (2022) -> Belgian private collection, BrusselsAuthenticity: Certificate of authenticity and QED thermoluminescence test ref. QED2533/EG-0103 (Marseille, 2025)Sale: European specialized auction, conducted under the supervision of accredited experts.Archaeological and museum expertiseOfficial classification: Votive Head / Testa votiva according to the nomenclature of the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. These votive heads symbolized either the devotee himself or the healed body part.Scientific dating: The QED thermoluminescence test (Marseille) establishes a last firing between 2,200 and 2,700 years ago (1?), fully consistent with the 4th-3rd century B.C., the peak period of Etruscan votive head production.Technique: Two-part mould joined and hand-finished, hollow interior with dorsal vent hole -- features typical of the sanctuaries of Cerveteri (Vignaccia), Veii, and Falerii.Museum comparisonsVotive Head, British Museum, inv. 1843,0507.334 (4th-2nd century B.C.)Terracotta Head of a Woman, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 4th century B.C.Votive Head, Bristol Museums, "mould-made, hollow inside", 300-100 B.C.Head of a Woman with Earrings, Walters Art Museum, H. 29.5 cmReference bibliographyDe Puma & Lightfoot, Etruscan Art in The Met, 2013.Comella & Mele, Depositi votivi e culti dell'Italia antica, 2005.Nagy, Votive Terracottas from the Vignaccia, Cerveteri, 1988.Cultural significanceThis Etruscan votive head embodies the union of art, faith, and sacred medicine. Offered to obtain healing or divine protection, it expresses both the symbolic realism and the spiritual intimacy of the Etruscan world. Its authentic patina, complete form, and scientifically confirmed dating make it a museum-quality reference piece, a rare testimony to the spirituality and ceramic mastery of the ancient Mediterranean.Expert conclusionEtruscan votive head in hollow mould-made terracotta,

dated 5th-4th century B.C., confirmed by QED TL analysis (2,200-2,700 years).A work of high scientific and aesthetic value, comparable to examples held in the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art -- an object of study, admiration, and collection: authenticated, certified, and fully documented.