China - Glazed Terracotta Offering Table - Ming Dynasty - Tl



1 800 EUR

Period : Before 16th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Terracotta

Length : 25,5 cm

Width : 15,5 cm

Height : 14 cm

Description

A small terracotta offering table transports us to the heart of Ming dynasty Chinese funeral rituals. Resting on four tubular legs glazed in a deep green, it evokes the rustic furniture of traditional homes, transposed here to the scale of the ancestral world. The rectangular tabletop, patinated by time, still bears traces of a worn brown slip, against which stand out, as if frozen in a motionless banquet, the offerings, each one individually crafted by the artisan. On either side, two stacks of ritual cakes, with striated and vaguely undulating shapes, suggest the abundance of food offered to the deceased. Between them, a pig's head placed on a platter and surrounded by small symbolic vegetables recalls the grand sacrificial meals, where the animal, a symbol of wealth and generosity, was

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presented whole. At the back, a stylized bird--probably a duck or a goose--displays a soft, rounded silhouette, a promise of prosperity and domestic continuity. Two candelabra with curved stems frame the composition and underscore the importance of light in funeral rites: keeping a flame burning near the dead prolongs their benevolent presence. The green and honey glazes, applied with irregular drips and reworkings, are characteristic of provincial workshops from the late medieval period in China. In places, the glaze has receded, revealing the light clay, dusted with calcareous deposits, a sign of a long stay in a funerary context. This matte, almost velvety patina lends the piece a palpable authenticity and a profound visual poetry. In the simplicity of the forms and the boldness of the colors, one perceives a work of art that is both popular and deeply meaningful, created to accompany the deceased and ensure them, in the afterlife, sustenance, light, and companionship. Through its coherence, the completeness of its elements, and the quality of its glaze, this offering table is fully in keeping with the tradition of mingqi, those "luminous objects" placed in Ming tombs to recreate in miniature the gestures of daily life. It testifies to both familial piety and the discreet refinement of Chinese funerary art.The object is accompanied by a thermoluminescence test, confirming the authenticity of the dating.
Origin: ChinaPeriod: Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)Dimensions: Length 25.5 cm; Width 15.5 cm; Height 14 cmProvenance: French private collection.