



China - Funeral Guardian Head - Tang Dynasty



2 000 EUR

Period : Before 16th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Terracotta

Width : 10 cm

Height : 14,5 cm

Description

This terracotta head comes from a Chinese funerary figurine intended to accompany and protect the deceased in the afterlife. The face, with its calm yet determined expression, embodies the serene authority characteristic of Tang dynasty tomb guardians. The features are full and controlled: heavy eyelids with elongated eyes, a straight nose, and a full mouth with slightly upturned corners, lending the whole a human and hieratic presence without aggression. The tall, bilobed headdress is a key iconographic element. Visible from both the front and back, it rises above a pronounced forehead band with a central projection that is now partially missing. This type of headdress is characteristic of representations of guardians or mid-ranking officials during the Tang dynasty, distinct from

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more demonstrative warrior figures such as the lokapala. The old break at the top suggests the loss of an upper element or a decorative extension. The material consists of a beige terracotta paste with a pinkish hue, dotted with micro-inclusions and originally covered with a light slip. The abrasions, wear, and dark stains observed on the surface are consistent with prolonged burial in a funerary context. The clean break at the neck indicates an early separation from the body of the figurine, which was probably originally quite large. Origin: China. Period: Tang Dynasty - The typology of the headdress and the quality of the terracotta allow for a confident attribution to the Tang Dynasty, Gaozong to Xuanzong period (7th to early 8th century). Dimensions: Height: 14.5 cm; Width: 10 cm. Provenance: Former Belgian collection.