



## China - Group Of Three Female Musicians - Northern Wei Dynasty - T1



5 800 EUR

Period : Before 16th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Terracotta

Width : 9 cm

Height : 13 cm

### Description

Rare and delicate gray terracotta set features a trio of court musicians, captured in an attitude of artistic devotion suspended in time. Sitting on heels, their legs concealed beneath the ample flare of their robes, they embody the refined, fluid and vigorous aesthetic characteristic of statuary from the Wei period. Each figure displays facial features of great gentleness, characterized by finely stretched, hand-incised eyes and a slight, archaic smile, imbued with a serene inwardness. Their dark hair is carefully pulled up into a high bun capped at the crown of the skull, clearing a graceful neck. The musician on the left brings to her lips an upright flute (xiao), her fingers precisely positioned on the instrument. The musician on the right holds and strikes a cylindrical drum arranged transversely on her

### Dealer

**Galerie Raoul Dutilleul**

Arts Asiatiques et Porcelaines de Tournai

Mobile : +32 474 472 168

24, Rue des Chapeliers

Tournai 7500

lap. The central figure, body leaning slightly forward and left arm delicately raised, seems to be directing the tempo or preparing to intone a court song. The pieces display important and precious remnants of their original polychromy, laid cold on a protective white slip. Vibrant highlights of orange and red pigments can be seen emphasizing crossed necklines, drapery borders and lip details. The surface bears witness to natural earthy concretions, whitish excavation sediments and an oxidative patina perfectly consistent with long burial. Small firing vents are visible at the back of the pieces, a classic technique for venting gases during the firing of terracotta. Under the Wei dynasty, funerary art underwent a major transition. Leaving behind the monumental realism of the Han, sculptors favored stretched silhouettes, geometric drapery with angular lines and spiritually expressive faces, strongly influenced by the contemporary introduction of Buddhism along the Silk Road. These female musicians were intended to accompany the departed members of the high aristocracy into the afterlife, recreating the refined atmosphere of banquets and court rituals. The dramatic tension contained in the sinuosity of their sleeves and the purity of their features make them exceptional testimonies to the refinement of high Chinese antiquity. The historical authenticity of this group has been fully corroborated by scientific thermoluminescence (TL) analysis. The test results confirm that the last firing of the terracotta dates back to a period compatible with the chronology of the Northern Wei dynasty (c. 439-534 AD). Origin: China. Era: Wei dynasty (439-534 AD.C.) - Thermoluminescence test. Dimensions: Height: 13 cm; Length: 9 cm approx. Conditions: Very good condition and very nice polychrome remains. Provenance: Private French collection.