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Ancient Sculpture, Roman Period (3rd Century Ad) - Head Of Sol Invictus - Ceramic/terracotta



375 EUR

Period : Before 16th century

Condition : Quelques manques

Material : Terracotta

Height : 9,5 cm (avec socle)

Description

Head  
of Sol Invictus  
Roman  
period  
3rd  
century AD  
Terracotta

Mounted  
on a base

Description

This  
work is a rare representation of the Roman god  
Sol Invictus, the  
"Unconquered Sun."

Dealer

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The head depicts a youthful, beardless face with delicately modelled features. The hair is rendered in thick, stylised locks, arranged symmetrically on either side of the face. The most striking iconographic element is the radiate crown encircling the head, an essential distinctive attribute. The rays, now incomplete, originally formed a stylised halo around the figure's head.

From a stylistic perspective, the relatively schematic treatment of volumes, the frontality of the representation, and the emphasis on iconographic attributes rather than naturalistic portraiture suggest a provincial production or an object of devotion intended for a domestic or cultic context. The patina and slight surface wear lend the object an authentic and particularly evocative presence. Some fragments have been broken and reattached.

#### Context

Under the reign of Aurelian (270 - 275 AD), the cult of the sun god experienced unprecedented growth. After restoring unity to the Empire following the Crisis of the Third Century, the emperor elevated Sol Invictus to one of the principal tutelary figures of Roman imperial power. In 274 AD, he dedicated a large temple to the deity in Rome and closely associated his authority with it. In imperial ideology, Sol Invictus symbolised military victory, the stability of the

Empire, and the cosmic order guaranteed by the emperor. Solar iconography subsequently became widespread on coins, reliefs, statues, and cult objects.

Terracotta was a relatively inexpensive material that allowed for the wide dissemination of religious imagery among both urban and rural populations. This head most likely comes from a small terracotta statue intended for a local sanctuary or domestic worship.

Documentation confirming the lawful acquisition and provenance of the object will be provided to the purchaser upon sale.