



Coptic Limestone Funerary Stele - Egypt, Coptic Period - 6th-9th Centuries Ce



1 200 EUR

Period : Before 16th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Stone

Width : 12

Height : 30.5

Depth : 4

Description

Coptic limestone funerary stele - Egypt, Coptic period
A beautiful funerary stele carved from soft limestone, with a particularly original and unusual shape, featuring a stylized cruciform silhouette with a rounded upper section. The piece is carved and retains significant traces of ancient polychromy on one of its sides, attesting to its original painted decoration. The composition, very simple in design, is characterized by an elongated vertical body, two lateral projections forming the "arms" of the cross, and a circular upper section. This unique form is part of the tradition of funerary monuments in Christian Egypt, where the cross sometimes takes on highly stylized forms, drawing in particular from the ancient Egyptian symbolism of the ankh. A particularly interesting

Dealer

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parallel is housed at the Louvre Museum under inventory number E 25091. This funerary stele, from Tebtynis in the Fayoum and dated 925, is also described by the Louvre as a "funerary stele in the shape of an ankh". Carved from tamarisk wood, it has an overall shape very similar to that of our specimen, with a long vertical shaft and a rounded upper section. The Louvre also notes traces of polychrome highlights on this piece. This stele, however, is made of limestone, a material also widely used for Christian funerary monuments in Egypt. The piece features a beautiful antique patina as well as some irregularities and signs of wear consistent with its age. The traces of pigments, particularly visible on one side, are a remarkable aspect of its preservation. Provenance: Dutch collection. This piece was acquired in Amsterdam from Mieke Zilverberg, an antiquities dealer and recognized specialist in Egyptian art. It thus comes from a former European collection specializing in Egyptian antiquities. Dimensions: height 30.5 cm; width 10.5 cm at the base and approximately 12 cm at the side projections; width of the upper part 8 cm; thickness 4 cm. Weight: 1.9 kg. Material: soft limestone. Period: Coptic period, probably 6th-9th century. Provenance: former Dutch collection, acquired in Amsterdam from Mieke Zilverberg. Finally, it is worth noting a particularly striking resemblance to certain Punic stelae. The silhouette of our specimen is, in fact, strikingly reminiscent of a famous stele in the shape of the sign of Tanit, housed at the Bardo National Museum in Tunis. This formal similarity is remarkable and attests to the persistence and transformation of certain symbolic patterns in the art of the Mediterranean ancient world. However, this comparison does not call into question the attribution to Christian Egypt proposed here. A rare and particularly original piece, still bearing traces of its original polychromy, which provides an interesting insight into Coptic Egyptian funerary sculpture.