THE BARAKAT GALLERY

Chinese Art

Han Dynasty 206 BC - 220 AD



The Han Dynasty

The overextension of the labor force during the Qin Dynasty would result in a popular uprising against the empire. In 206 B.C., Liu Bang, a Qin official, led an army composed of peasants and some lower nobility to victory and established his own Dynasty in place, the Han. However, unlike the Qin, the Han would unify China and rule virtually uncontested for over four hundred years. It is during this time that much of what is now considered to be Chinese culture was first actualized. The bureaucracy started under the Qin was now firmly established. The vast lands of China were now under the firm grip of a central authority. Confucianism became the state ideology although the worship of Taoist deity remained widespread, both among the peasants and the aristocracy. Ancient histories and texts were analyzed and rewritten to be more objective while new legendary myths and cultural epics were transcribed.

The Han era can also be characterized as one of the greatest artistic outpourings in Chinese history, easily on par with the glories of their Western contemporaries, Greece and Rome. Wealth pouring into China from trade along the Silk Road initiated a period of unprecedented luxury. Stunning bronze vessels were created, decorated with elegant inlaid gold and silver motifs. Jade carvings reached a new level of technical brilliance. But perhaps the artistic revival of the Han Dynasty is nowhere better represented than in their sculptures and vessels that were interred with deceased nobles. Called mingqi, literally meaning "spirit articles," these works depicted a vast array of subject, from warriors and horses to ovens and livestock, which were buried alongside the dead for use in the next world, reflecting the Chinese belief that the afterlife was an extension of our earthy existence. Thus, quite logically, the things we require to sustain and nurture our bodies in this life would be just as necessary in our next life. The Han Dynasty is divided into two distinct periods, the Western Han (206 B.C.-9 A.D.) and the Eastern Han (23- 220 A.D.) with a brief interlude. Towards the end of the Western period, a series of weak emperors ruled the throne, controlled from behind the scenes by Wang Mang and Huo Guang, both relatives of empresses. They both exerted enormous influence over the government and when the last emperor suddenly passed away, Mang became ruling advisor, seizing this opportunity to declare his own Dynasty, the Xin, or "New." However, another popular uprising began joined by the members of the Liu clan, the family that ruled the Han Dynasty, the Xin came to a quick end and the Eastern Han was established in its place with its capital at Loyang (Chang'an, the capital of the Western Han, was completely destroyed).

However, even as Chinese influence spread across Southeastern Asia into new lands, the Eastern Han Dynasty was unable to recreate the glories of the Western Period. In fact, this period can be characterized by a bitter power struggle amongst a group of five consortial clans. These families sought to control the young, weak emperors with their court influence. Yet, as the emperors became distrustful of the rising power of the clans, they relied upon their eunuchs to defend them, often eliminating entire families at a time. During the Western Han, the Emperor was viewed as the centre of the universe. However, this philosophy slowly disintegrated under the weak, vulnerable rulers of the Eastern Han, leading many scholars and officials to abandon the court. Eventually, the power of the Han would completely erode, ending with its dissolution and the beginning of the period known as the "Three Kingdoms."



H.019 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 14" (35.6cm) high x 8.625" (21.9cm) wide Collection: Chinese Style: Han Dynasty Medium: Terracotta Location: United States This figurine is depicted with one arm raised and the other to the side propped on the thigh while riding a horse. Its hair, eyes, eyebrow, beard and moustache are painted in black pigment over a white flush, while its bulbous nose has been molded directly from clay. The rider wears a fitting black upper garment lined in red with a voluminous white collar and draping sleeves that cover the forearm. Tight white pants and dark blue-black boots protect his lower body. By the fact that many burial objects were molded as separate pieces, it is easy to understand how, after hundreds of years, the rider became detached from the horse. It is also evident in the formation of the rider's legs--elongated, flattened on the inner side, shaped in the form of an inverted U--that this figurine was once part of an assembled set. The tiny holes that appear where the hands should protrude from the cuffs of the sleeve indicate that a separate object such as a weapon, emblem or horse trapping was held by the rider. From the distinctive style and form in which this object was created, one can appreciate its artistic and historical value. - (H.019)



H.021 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD

By the Han Dynasty, the custom of burying objects with the dead had become an established practice among the Chinese people. Representations of the imperial officialdom were often cast in stone, while clay models served the needs of the lower stratum of ruling classes. The clay figurines stood at ground level, depicting scenes and images of ordinary life from a Confucian moralistic point of view. Based on the belief that the spirit and vitality of the subjects were embodied in the figurines, the burial objects served an important role in the ancestral belief system of ancient Chinese society. Modeled in gray clay with a covering of white slip and a red colored body harness, this canine is a fine representation of the naturalistic style of Han burial art. With its head jetted forward, the dog snarls exposing its large fangs and nostrils. As it contracts its muscles, the body stiffens, the eyes bulge and ears stand on end, assuming a menacing yet graceful pose. The arches that form the line of its massive neck, body and legs enhance the attributes of this watch dog, whose function it was to protect the burial site of the deceased. - (H.021)

Western Han Terracotta Sculpture of an

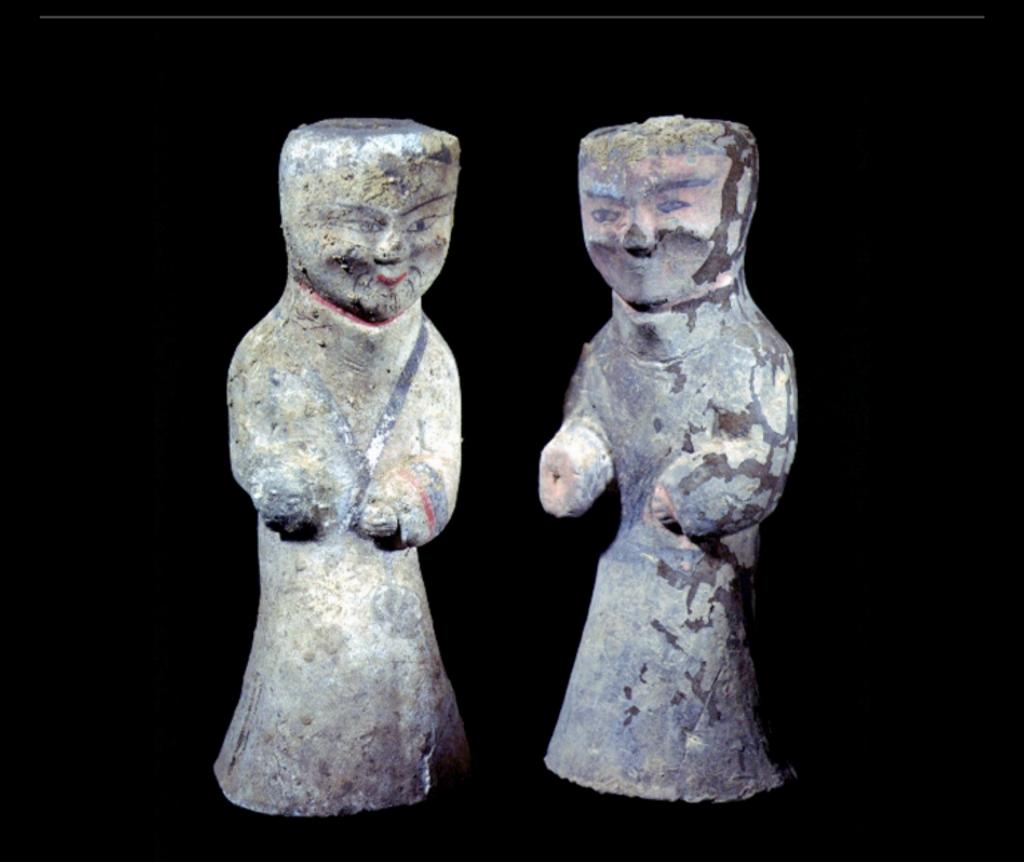
Attendant



H.024 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 9 AD Dimensions: 18.5" (47.0cm) high x 6" (15.2cm) wide Collection: Chinese Style: Western Han Dynasty Medium: Terracotta Location: United States The tall slender figure is shown with hands hidden within the full sleeves of long robes, which are tightly gathered around the legs, before flaring widely to the sides. The various layered robes are visible at the neck and chest, molded in V-shaped necklines painted in red, white, and then a faint black border on the outermost robe. Two small holes appear in the portion that encapsules the hidden hands, perhaps to hoist an unattached object such as a staff or candle holder, or to link the figurine as if in a procession. The facial features are delicately painted over white slip, the elongated eye area in black pigment and mouth in red, while the nose is slightly molded in the middle and raised high above the ears. Han Dynasty tomb figures are noted for their naturalistic style and gracful, slender portrayals of human figures. They are not created as works of art; they were made to answer the needs of a particular belief about life after death and the spiritual world. The sculptor strove to capture the life and vitality of the subject rather than create a meticulous portrait, as their work was commissioned by the ruling classes to accompany the body and soul of the deceased into the realm of the spiritual world. - (H.024)

Pair of Western Han Painted Terracotta

Attendants



H.025 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 9 AD Dimensions: 11.25" (28.6cm) high x 4.25" (10.8cm) wide

Wearing short, snug caps, the attendants are positioned with their arms forward and body slightly tilted perhaps as a gesture of humility. The face of one man is painted in a reddish, flesh tone while the other is painted white. The cheeks, nose and high brow are delicately impressed as the remaining features are painted on such as the sparse beard, red lips, eyes, and eyebrows of the white faced figurine. This attendant wears a crossover white robe with contrasting black/blue borders at the collar and sleeves, carrying an object in the left hand that is painted on the robe. Layers of red and white undergarments are shown at the neck and wrist. The other attendant is dressed in similar attire, though the surface has been darkened and faded in areas. Both men are missing the right hand; a hole in the arm indicates that an object was once attached. By the Han Dynasty, the custom of burying objects with the dead had become an established practice among the Chinese people. Representations of the imperial officialdom were often cast in stone, while clay models served the needs of the lower stratum of ruling classes. The clay figurines stood at ground level, depicting scenes and images of ordinary life from a Confucian moralistic point of view. Based on the belief that the spirit and vitality of the subjects were embodied in the figurines, the burial objects served an important role in the ancestral belief system of ancient Chinese society. - (H.025)

Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Rider



H.036 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 20.75" (52.7cm) high x 11" (27.9cm) wide

This pottery of a figurine of a rider is painted in various hues of red, blue, and white though years of encrustation have dulled the original color of the object that can now only be percieved in traces. However, its beautiful form and naturalistic expression remain as it did at its creation. The coiffured hair is delicately sculpted into a flattened top parted in the middle, separated by a distinct hairline that follows the curvature of the forhead and tucks behind the ears. The face is heart-shaped, carefully molded to depict the three-dimensionality of the facial features as well as the individual personality of the rider who appears smiling and cheerful. The absence of arms indicate that this figurine was an assembled piece as does the flattened inner side of the elongated U-shaped legs which was designed to fit a horse. This figurine is distinguished by the sculptor's attention to detail; the pierced belly button, molded chest and belly, and foot impressions meant to represent the toes add to the liveliness and humor of this object. Han Dynasty tomb figurines are noted for their naturalistic style and graceful, slender portrayals of human figures. They were not created as works of art; they were made to answer the needs of a particular belief about life after death and the spiritual world. The sculptor strove to capture the life and vitality of the subject rather than create a meticulous portrait as their work was commissioned by the ruling classes to accompany the body and soul of the deceased into the realm of the spiritual world. - (H.036)

Eastern Han Terracotta Lamp in the Form of a Mother and Child



PF.3592 Origin: China Circa: 23 AD to 220 AD Dimensions: 10.75" (27.3cm) high x 4.5" (11.4cm) wide Collection: Chinese Style: Eastern Han Dynasty Medium: Terracotta Location: United States The Han pottery shows a considerable advance in ceramic technique. Many of Han vessels, such as the wine vases or the oil lamps, are elegant in form. They are ornamented with artistic designs in a variety of ways, by painting with unfired pigments, by stamping, by the application of reliefs that have been separately formed in moulds, and by incising. For the first time, Han dynasty potters used glaze, a transparent lead glaze of yellowish tone which is colored green with copper oxide and variegated by the use of liquid clays or slips of different color. The underlying body of the glazed ware is usually red and this showing through the transparent glaze gives a brown or reddish brown surface, when the glaze has not been colored green by the use of copper. This magnificent pottery lamp depicts a kneeling figure holding a small child, whose arms are outstretched. The figure wears a long robe that cascades over the curves of the body, and the facial features are rendered distinctly in proportion. The oil vessel is placed on the top of the head, as if the figure is wearing a large headdress. The vessel's form is vertical and long, and the top and bottom are decorated with incised lines. The pottery lamp is also beautifully enhanced with light reddish-brown color, over which traces of green glaze accentuate graceful curves of the sculpture. As we contemplate this lamp, we can envision an enchanting place in ancient china that was lit by this lamp. - (PF.3592)

Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Dog



PF.4268 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 19.25" (48.9cm) high x 23.5" (59.7cm) wide

One of the most exciting and expressive Chinese art styles belongs to the Han dynasty. Here, artisans modeled in clay a rich assortment of human and animal figures, a striking example of which comes alive in this sculpture of a dog. Portrayed with exceptional realism, this canine was created as a burial object, and its function to accompany the deceased to his long journey to the afterlife, the dog's spirit acting as both guide and guard. One can almost see his ever-alert ears twitching and hear his deep gnarl, as he attentively stands ready for his master's every command. This sculpted canine expresses most ardently an ancient peoples extreme regard for, and intimate relationship with the natural world that surrounded them. Today, the spirit of this dog endures ever so proudly, one need only to gaze at his face to experience its age-old guardian powers. - (PF.4268)

Pair of Western Han Painted Terracotta Officials



PF.5616 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 9 AD Dimensions: 10.5" (26.7cm) high Catalogue: V30 Collection: Chinese Medium: Terracotta Location: United States

Wearing short, snug caps, the attendants stand with their arms forward and body slightly tilted, perhaps as a gesture of humility. The face of one man is painted in a reddish, fleshy tone while the other is painted white. The cheeks, nose and high brow are delicately impressed as the remaining features are painted on such as the moustaches, eyes, eyebrows, and red lips. Both attendants wear crossover white robes with contrasting black borders at the collar and the sleeves of the red-faced figure. Layers of red and white undergarments are shown at the neck and wrist. Both men are missing their hands; holes in the arms indicate that hands or objects were once attached. By the Han Dynasty, the custom of burying objects with the dead had become an established practice among the Chinese people. Representations of the imperial elite were often cast in stone, while clay models such as these served the needs of the lower stratum of the ruling classes. The clay figures stood at ground level, depicting scenes and images of ordinary life from a Confucian moralistic point of view. Based on the belief that the spirit and vitality of the subjects were embodied in the figurines, the burial objects served an important role in the ancestral belief system of ancient Chinese society. - (PF.5616)

Han Green-Glazed Stove in the Form of a

Dragon



H.628 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 12.25" (31.1cm) high Collection: Chinese Style: Han Dynasty Medium: Glazed Terracotta Location: United States This green-glazed stove, elevated upon four small legs, takes on the form of a stylized dragon. Wood would have been placed inside the arched opening in the back and burned, heating up the three pots. Smoke would have risen out of the dragon-headed spout, producing an eerie, mystical effect. Row of incised dashes produce the effect of the dragon's scaly skin while the elegantly modeled head, including two bulging eyes and a central horn, transforms into a spherical pot. This unusual feature may relate to an ancient proverb or myth that associated the dragon with the culinary arts. Three vessels have become encrusted onto the surface of the stove. Originally, these vessels would have held stews and boiled foods or boil water for steamed dishes. Despite the beauty and value of this stove, it is possible that it never cooked a meal. This possibility is reinforced by the fact that the floor of the stove is absent, although the entire work may have been placed over a fire. Discovered buried inside a tomb, next to an important member of the social hierarchy during the Han Dynasty, perhaps its intended function was purely symbolic. The Han culture believed that the afterlife was an extension of our earthly existence. Thus, logically, as we require food to nourish our bodies on earth, so too will we require food to nourish our souls in the afterlife. It is likely that this stove served a greater purpose than cooking food; it provided eternal sustenance for the deceased. Clearly, the luxury of this work attests to the importance of the individual with whom it was entombed. There, beneath the earth, this stove burned eternally, nourishing the spirit in the next world much as it nourishes our eyes with beauty and fills our heads with history today. - (H.628)

Han Bronze Stove in the Form of a Dragon



H.652 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 6.5" (16.5cm) high Collection: Chinese Medium: Bronze Location: United States This bronze stove, elevated upon four stylized animal legs, takes on the form of a dragon. Wood would have been placed inside the wide slot in the back and burned, heating up the three pots. Smoke would have risen out of the dragon-headed spout, producing an eerie, mystical effect. The largest hole is covered by a bronze pot that would have contained boiling water, sending the steam upwards through the grated vessel, thereby cooking the food within. A cover, now vanished, would have sealed the steam inside, cooking the food more quickly. Perhaps the other two smaller pots would have served the same function, although the vessels that would have been attached are lost to us. Despite the beauty and value of this stove, it is possible that it never cooked a meal. Discovered buried inside a tomb, next to an important member of the social hierarchy during the Han Dynasty, perhaps its intended function was purely symbolic. The Han culture believed that the afterlife was an extension of our earthly existence. Thus, logically, as we require food to nourish our bodies on earth, so too will we require food to nourish our souls in the afterlife. It is likely that this stove served a greater purpose that cooking food; it provided eternal sustenance for the deceased. Clearly, the luxury of this work attests to the importance of the individual with whom it was entombed. There, beneath the earth, this stove burned eternally, nourishing the spirit in the next world much as it nourishes our eyes with beauty and fills our heads with history today. - (H.652)

Eastern Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Chicken



H.633 Origin: China Circa: 23 AD to 220 AD Dimensions: 8.75" (22.2cm) high

Sculptures of animals are frequently buried alongside noble members of society during the Han Dynasty. Sculpted in all media, these animal effigies were both a symbol of wealth and a source of food for the afterlife. While some creatures were meant to labor in the next world, others, such as this chicken, were clearly meant for consumption. The Han culture viewed the afterlife as an extension of our earthly lives. Thus, the things that we enjoyed in this world continued to be enjoyed in the next. Likewise, logically, as humans require food to nourish and sustain our bodies on earth, sculpted animals were buried to provide energy for the soul in the afterlife. This sculpted chicken would have been a tasty treat in the next world. Standing on wonderfully rendered feet, we can almost picture this bird waddling along, pecking at a few grains scattered along the ground. While the representation of the bird is quite naturalistic and charming, this sculpture was not meant to depict and earthly chicken, but an eternal chicken. The energy and power provided by this bird shall last throughout all time, nourishing the spirit of the deceased on into the next world and beyond. While time ravishes our physical manifestations, this terracotta bird can (and has) triumph over death. Today, this chicken is more than food for the afterlife; it is a relic of a lost culture. As the chicken nourished the soul of the deceased in the next world, so the chicken nourishes our souls with its historical significance and aesthetic beauty. - (H. 633)

Western Han Painted Terracotta Sculpture of a Bird





H.634 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 9 AD Dimensions: 3.5" (8.9cm) high

During the Han Dynasty, animal effigies were often interred inside the tombs of nobility and elite members of the social hierarchy. Rendered in all media, these sculptures were either meant to function as beasts of burden or, as in the case of this spectacular bird, as sources of nourishment in the afterlife. The Han culture viewed the next world as a continuation of our earthly existence. Thus, logically, as humans require food to survive on earth, so our spirits must find sustenance in the afterlife. However, for the wealthy elite, fully catered feasts were provided. Wine vessels, food storage containers, cooking utensils, and sculpted animal food sources can all be found buried alongside the deceased. Yet these supplies were not earthly treasure interred as symbols of wealth; they were manufactured specifically for use in the afterlife. Alas, the beauty of this polychrome bird would not have been appreciated at the time it was fired and painted; instead, the spirit of the deceased would have cherished this work for its life-giving qualities, for the energy its "meat" provides. Today, we marvel at the aesthetic beauty of the bird and its historical and cultural significance. We treasure this bird as a stunning work of art (remarkably preserved) and value the insight it provides into the religious and philosophical beliefs of the Han Dynasty. This piece was not created to provide temporary pleasure, but to eternally nourish our souls. Much more than food for the afterlife, the glory of this bird continues to shine, filling our minds with questions and nourishing our eyes with beauty. - (H.634)

Eastern Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Chicken



H.635 Origin: China Circa: 23 AD to 220 AD Dimensions: 8.5" (21.6cm) high

Sculptures of animals are frequently buried alongside noble members of society during the Han Dynasty. Sculpted in all media, these animal effigies were both a symbol of wealth and a source of food for the afterlife. While some creatures were meant to labor in the next world, others, such as this chicken, were clearly meant for consumption. The Han culture viewed the afterlife as an extension of our earthly lives. Thus, the things that we enjoyed in this world continued to be enjoyed in the next. Likewise, logically, as humans require food to nourish and sustain our bodies on earth, sculpted animals were buried to provide energy for the soul in the afterlife. This sculpted chicken would have been a tasty treat in the next world. Standing on wonderfully rendered feet, we can almost picture this bird waddling along, pecking at a few grains scattered along the ground. The large opening underneath the tail feathers suggests that this sculpture also might have served as a wine vessel, or might be influenced by such bird-shaped containers that were known to be popular at this time. While the representation of the bird is quite naturalistic and charming, this sculpture was not meant to depict and earthly chicken, but an eternal chicken. The energy and power provided by this bird shall last throughout all time, nourishing the spirit of the deceased on into the next world and beyond. While time ravishes our physical manifestations, this terracotta bird can (and has) triumph over death. Today, this chicken is more than food for the afterlife; it is a relic of a lost culture. As the chicken nourished the soul of the deceased in the next world, so the chicken nourishes our souls with its historical significance and aesthetic beauty. - (H.635)



H.636 Origin: China Circa: 23 AD to 220 AD Dimensions: 8.5" (21.6cm) high Collection: Chinese Style: Eastern Han Dynasty Medium: Terracotta Location: United States Sculptures of animals are frequently buried alongside noble members of society during the Han Dynasty. Sculpted in all media, these animal effigies were both a symbol of wealth and a source of food for the afterlife. While some creatures were meant to labor in the next world, others, such as this chicken, were clearly meant to be eaten. The Han culture viewed the afterlife as an extension of our earthly lives. Thus, the things that we enjoyed in this world continued to be enjoyed in the next. Likewise, as humans require food to nourish and sustain our bodies on earth, sculpted animals were buried to provide energy for the soul in the afterlife. This sculpted chicken would have been a tasty treat in the next world. Standing on thick, massive feet, we can almost picture this bird waddling along, pecking at a few grains scattered along the ground. While the attention to naturalistic details is impressive, especially along the face and beak, this sculpture was not meant to depict and earthly chicken, but an eternal chicken. The energy and power provided by this bird shall last throughout all time, nourishing the spirit of the deceased on into the next world and beyond. While time ravishes our physical manifestations, this terracotta bird can (and has) triumph over death. Today, this chicken is more than food for the afterlife; it is a relic of a lost culture. As the bird nourished the soul of the deceased in the next world, so the chicken nourishes our souls with its historical significance and aesthetic beauty. - (H.636)



H.638 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 2.5" (6.4cm) high Collection: Chinese Style: Han Dynasty Medium: Terracotta Location: United States Sculptures of pigs are frequently buried alongside noble members of society during the Han Dynasty. Sculpted in all media, the pig was a symbol of wealth as well as a staple of the menu for the afterlife. As was the custom, sculpted effigies of animals were interred as food sources in the next world. While some animals were meant to labor in the next world, others, such as this boar, were clearly meant for consumption. The Han viewed the afterlife as an extension of our earthly lives. Thus, the things that we enjoyed in this world were continually enjoyed in the next. Likewise, as humans require food to nourish and sustain us while on earth, sculpted animals were buried to provide energy in the afterlife. This sculpture of a pig is remarkable for its reclining stance. The pig lies flat on the ground with its head nestled in between its feet. While this posture might suggest it is asleep, it is possible that this pig is pregnant, reclining under the strain of added weight. The full, swollen belly suggests that this might be the case. Thus, the pig provides food for the afterlife, as well as the promise of more on the way. The cycle of life continues even into the next world, offering both herself as well as her unborn to nourish the soul of the deceased. Originally, this pig was created to provide sustenance in the next world. However, today, it nourishes our eyes with its tremendous beauty and fills our minds with its tremendous cultural and historical value. - (H.638)

Eastern Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Boar



H.639 Origin: China Circa: 23 AD to 220 AD Dimensions: 6" (15.2cm) high

Sculptures of pigs are frequently buried alongside noble members of society during the Han Dynasty. Sculpted in all media, the pig was a symbol of wealth as well as a staple of the menu for the afterlife. As was the custom, sculpted effigies of animals were interred as food sources in the next world. While some animals were meant to labor in the next world, others, such as this boar, were clearly meant for consumption. The Han viewed the afterlife as an extension of our earthly lives. Thus, the things that we enjoyed in this world were continually enjoyed in the next. Likewise, as humans require food to nourish and sustain us while on earth, sculpted animals were buried to provide energy in the afterlife. This standing boar appears to comprehend his role in the afterlife. His snarling mouth with subtly suggested fangs reveals his reluctance to be anybody's meal. In fact, the facial structure of this boar is quite reminiscent of snarling terracotta dog sculptures that served the same function. The defined musculature of the beast further emphasizes his power. However, it is this power that will be transferred to the deceased through the symbolic consumption of his "meat." Originally, this boar was created to provide sustenance in the next world. However, today, it nourishes our eyes with its tremendous beauty and fills our minds with its tremendous cultural and historical value. - (H.639)



H.640 Origin: China Circa: 23 AD to 220 AD Dimensions: 7.5" (19.1cm) high

Sculptures of pigs are frequently buried alongside noble members of society during the Han Dynasty. Sculpted in all media, the pig was a symbol of wealth as well as a staple of the menu for the afterlife. As was the custom, sculpted effigies of animals were interred as food sources in the next world. While some animals were meant to labor in the next world, others, such as this boar, were clearly meant for consumption. The Han viewed the afterlife as an extension of our earthly lives. Thus, the things that we enjoyed in this world were continual enjoyed in the next. Likewise, as humans require food to nourish and sustain us while on earth, sculpted animals were buried to provide energy in the afterlife. This standing pig appears to comprehend his role in the afterlife. His snarling mouth with subtle fangs reveals his hesitance to be anybody's meal. In fact, the facial structure of this hog is quite reminiscent of snarling terracotta dog sculptures that served the same function. The defined musculature of the beast further emphasizes his power. However, it is this power that will be transferred to the deceased through the symbolic consumption of his "meat." Originally, this pig was created to provide sustenance in the next world. However, today, it nourishes our eyes with its tremendous beauty and fills our minds with its tremendous cultural and historical value. - (H.640)

Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Pig with Incised Decorations



H.641 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 7.5" (19.1cm) high

Although sculptures of pigs are almost ubiquitous in Han culture, this absolutely delightful pig is quite unusual. Sculpted in all media, the pig was a symbol of wealth as well as a seemingly required feature on the menu for the afterlife. As was the custom, sculpted effigies of common animals were interred with members of the social elite as food sources for the afterlife. While some animals were meant to labor in the next world, others, such as this pig, were clearly meant for consumption. The afterlife was viewed by the Han as an extension of our earthly lives. Thus, the things that we enjoyed in this world were continually enjoyed in the next. Likewise, as we need food to nourish and sustain us while on earth, sculptures of animals were buried to provide energy in the afterlife. Although pig sculptures are quite common during this period (reflecting their popularity as food), this pig is exceptional for its unusual decoration. Perhaps the most noteworthy, and charming, feature is the star-shaped eyes that have been incised onto the surface of the clay. As well, the whole of the pig's body has been incised with horizontal strokes imitating the pig's hairy texture. Other features are more characteristic, including the curly tail, large ears, and upturned snout. Originally, this pig was created to provide sustenance in the next world. However, today, it nourishes our eyes with its tremendous beauty and fills our minds with its tremendous cultural and historical value. - (H.641)

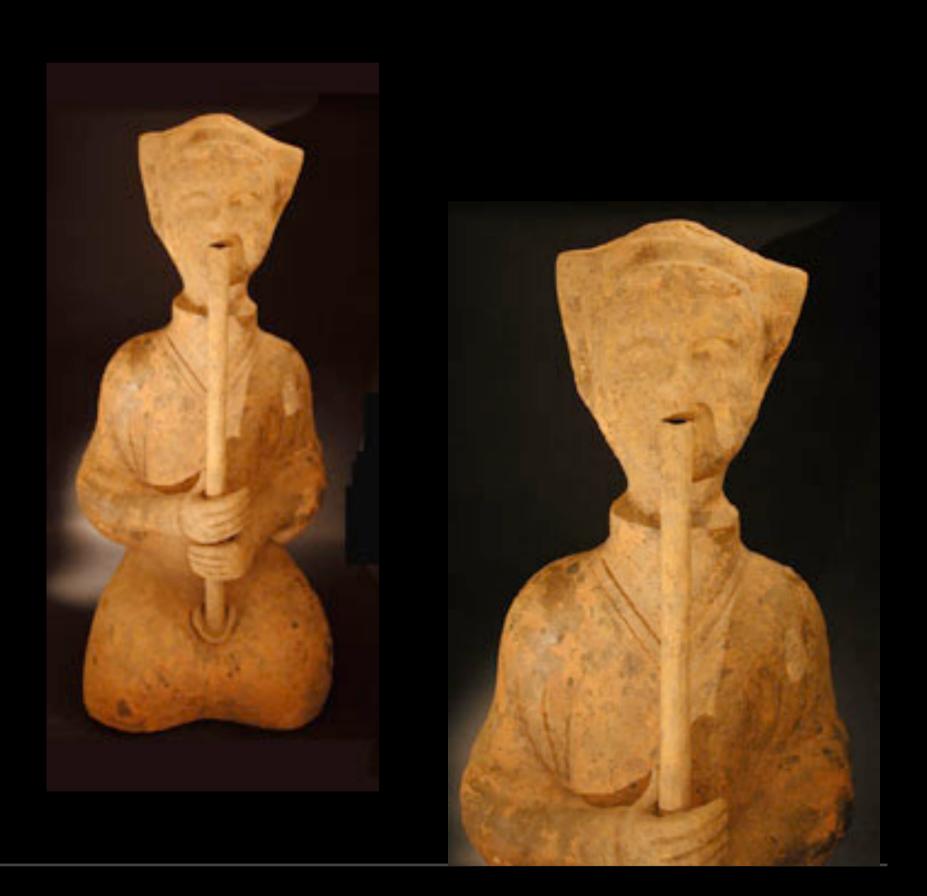
Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Dog with Glazed Highlights



H.643 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 20" (50.8cm) high

This terracotta dog, with rare green-glazed highlights, is a splendid example of mingqi, literally translated as: "items for the next world." During the Hand Dynasty, the ancient Chinese believed that the afterlife was an extension of our earthly existence. Thus high-ranking members of the social hierarchy were buried in splendid tombs replete with replicas of their daily lives rendered in all media. It is not uncommon to find ornate dinner sets with elegantly painted utensils, wine vessels, and food storage containers. Sculpted replica of warriors and guardians provided protection as musicians and entertainers provided company. Likewise, herds of domesticated animals were interred alongside the deceased to serve as food sources in the afterlife. Although it is possible that this dog was entombed for consumption in the next world, the studded collar and harness he wears suggests otherwise. More likely, this dog was a beloved companion who served his owner well both on earth and beyond. His ears stand upwards in attention, as if carefully guarding his master throughout eternity. The heavy folds of skin around the eyes and the curly tail, as well as the general size and stature, suggest that this dog may be an ancestor of the modern Chinese Shar Pei breed. The rare green-glazed strokes that highlight the sides and front of the dog may represent a spotted, or "flowered," coat. Furthermore, these stokes may depict actual spots on a specific dog, making this in essence a portrait of the deceased's faithful companion. Although similar works were meant to serve as food for the afterlife, the love and attention dedicated to the creation of this stunning work of art suggests that this dog is much more than food. Instead, this beloved pet stands faithfully by his master's side throughout eternity. - (H.643)

Eastern Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Seated Flute Player



H.648 Origin: Sichuan Province, China Circa: 23 AD to 220 AD Dimensions: 24.25" (61.6cm) high

Although the music performed by this flute player is now inaudible, we can be sure that the notes filled the tomb in which it was once interred for all eternity. A type of work known as mingqi, literally translated as, "items for the next world," this sculpture was specifically commissioned to be buried alongside the deceased. However, elite members of the social hierarchy were honored with such elaborate burials. During the Han era, the ancient Chinese believed that the afterlife was an extension of our earthly existence. Thus the tombs of nobles and high-ranking officials were filled with sculpted renditions of their earthly entourage. Musicians, chefs, attendants, and guardians were placed alongside pots, vessels, cooking utensil, and herds of livestock. All these mingqi were expected to perform their functions continually throughout the afterlife. The guards would watch over the soul of the deceased, while the chef prepared meals, utilizing the meats of the livestock, and the musicians performed songs to nourish the spirit throughout eternity. Alas, the divine song performed by this flutist was not meant to be heard by earthly ears. A reflection of the wealth and sophistication of ancient China, this sculpture intrigues us with its vast historical and cultural insights. Furthermore, this work is a gorgeous symbol of the philosophical and religious belief of the Han. - (H.648)

Eastern Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Smiling Attendant



H.651 Origin: Sichuan Province, China Circa: 23 AD to 220 AD Dimensions: 19" (48.3cm) high

A type of work known as mingqi, literally translated as, "items for the next world," this sculpture was specifically commissioned by the family of the deceased to be buried alongside their departed relative, both as a symbol of their wealth and familial piety. However, only elite members of the social hierarchy could afford to be honored with such elaborate burials. During the Han era, the ancient Chinese believed that the afterlife was an extension of our earthly existence. Thus the tombs of nobles and highranking officials were filled with sculpted renditions of their earthly entourage. Musicians, chefs, attendants, and guardians were placed alongside pots, vessels, cooking utensil, and herds of livestock. All these mingqi were expected to perform their functions continually throughout the afterlife. The guards would watch over the soul of the deceased, while the chef prepared meals, utilizing the meats of the livestock, and the musicians performed songs to nourish the spirit throughout eternity. The smile that graces the face of this attendant is typical of the happy entertainers from the Sichuan Province. He carries a round object in his left hand, held against his chest, possibly a mirror or fan, while he holds his right arm in the air, the long robe draped over his hand. The detachable head is characteristic of such works. A reflection of the wealth and sophistication of ancient China, this sculpture intrigues us with its vast historical and cultural insights. Furthermore, this work is a gorgeous symbol of the philosophical and religious belief of the Han. - (H.651)

Western Han Terracotta Sculpture of an Ox



H.663 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 9 AD Dimensions: 15" (38.1cm) high

During the Han Dynasty, sculptural effigies of animals were often interred in the tombs of nobility and elite members of the social hierarchy. Created in all media, these sculptures accompanied the spirit of the deceased into the afterlife. This bovine sculpture is exceptional for two reasons. While similar examples exist, most were found harnessed to wagons and carts and were meant to function as beasts of burden. However, this sculpture was discovered buried as part of a herd, contained inside a pen with other domesticated animals, suggesting that this ox served as food. Besides it function, this sculpture is also remarkable for its massive size. The Han culture believed that the afterlife was a continuation of our earthly existence. Thus, logically, as humans require food to nourish our bodies on earth, so too will we require food to nourish our souls in the afterlife. Originally, this sculpture featured removable horns and a tail that, unfortunately, have been lost to us over time. However, even in this incomplete state, the evocative nature of this sculpture is uncanny. The charming facial structure of this bovine is so naturalistic that one feels the presence of the animal possessing this sculpture. Created to serve as food for the afterlife, this work is more than a mere sculpture; it is a gorgeous memorial to the religious and philosophical beliefs of the Han Dynasty. This ox effigy has served its eternal purpose well. Today, it continues to nourish our souls with its beauty and grace. - (H.663)

Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Goat



H.665 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 11.75" (29.8cm) high

During the Han Dynasty, sculptural effigies of domesticated animals were often interred in the tombs of nobility and elite members of the social hierarchy. Created in all media, these sculptures accompanied the spirit of the deceased into the afterlife. While some animals were arranged together with carts and wagons, suggesting that they were to labor in the next life, others were arranged in pens or herds, such as this goat, implying instead that these animals were to nourish the soul of the deceased with their "meat." The ancient Chinese believed that the afterlife was an extension of our earthly existence. Thus, logically, as we require food and drink to sustain our bodies on earth, the same would be necessary in the next world to nourish our souls. This beautiful sculpture, painted with orange spots imitating the pattern of the goat's hide, would have been appreciated in its time not as a gorgeous work of art, but as a symbolic representation of the journey into the afterlife. Featuring a small beard, up right tail and ears, and two holes where attached horns would have been inserted, this goat was actually meant for consumption in the next world. Furthermore, such extravagant burial rites reflected the earthly wealth of the deceased as well as the familial piety of his relative who commissioned the works specifically to be interred. Today, we appreciate this charming goat as a beautiful work of art. However, this ancient sculpture also reflects the religious and philosophical beliefs of the time and is therefore of tremendous cultural and historical significance. - (H.665)



H.666 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 11.75" (29.8cm) high Collection: Chinese Style: Han Dynasty Medium: Terracotta Location: United States During the Han Dynasty, sculptural effigies of domesticated animals were often interred in the tombs of nobility and elite members of the social hierarchy. Created in all media, these sculptures accompanied the spirit of the deceased into the afterlife. While some animals were arranged together with carts and wagons, suggesting that they were to labor in the next life, others were arranged in pens or herds, such as this goat, implying instead that these animals were to nourish the soul of the deceased with their "meat." The ancient Chinese believed that the afterlife was an extension of our earthly existence. Thus, logically, as we require food and drink to sustain our bodies on earth, the same would be necessary in the next world to nourish our souls. This beautiful sculpture, painted with orange spots imitating the pattern of the goat's hide, would have been appreciated in its time not as a gorgeous work of art, but as a symbolic representation of the journey into the afterlife. Featuring a small beard, up right tail and ears, and two holes where attached horns would have been inserted, this goat was actually meant to be consumed in the next world. Furthermore, such extravagant burial rites reflected the earthly wealth of the deceased as well as the familial piety of his relative who commissioned the works specifically to be interred. Today, we appreciate this charming goat as a beautiful work of art. However, this ancient sculpture also reflects the religious and philosophical beliefs of the time and is therefore of tremendous cultural and historical significance. - (H.666)

Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Goat



H.667 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 15" (38.1cm) high



H.668 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 14.75" (37.5cm) high



H.669 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 14.75" (37.5cm) high



H.670 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 14.5" (36.8cm) high

During the Han Dynasty, sculptural effigies of domesticated animals were often interred in the tombs of nobility and elite members of the social hierarchy. Created in all media, these sculptures accompanied the spirit of the deceased into the afterlife. While some animals were arranged together with carts and wagons, suggesting that they were to labor in the next life, others were arranged in pens or herds, such as this goat, implying instead that these animals were to nourish the soul of the deceased with their "meat." The ancient Chinese believed that the afterlife was an extension of our earthly existence. Thus, logically, as we require food and drink to sustain our bodies on earth, the same would be necessary in the next world to nourish our souls. This beautiful sculpture would have been appreciated in its time not as a gorgeous work of art, but as a symbolic representation of the journey into the afterlife. Quite literally, this magnificent goat was meant to be consumed in the next world, where it would have presumably come to life and returned to full-size. Furthermore, such extravagant burial rites reflected the earthly wealth of the deceased as well as the familial piety of his relative who commissioned the works specifically to be interred. Today, we appreciate this charming goat as a beautiful work of art. However, this ancient sculpture also reflects the religious and philosophical beliefs of the time and is therefore of tremendous cultural and historical significance. - (H.667) - (H.668) - (H.669) - (H.670)



PF.6165CoOrigin: ChinaStyCirca: 23 AD to 220 ADMeDimensions:Lo20.5" (52.1cm) high x 56.875" (144.5cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Style: Eastern Han Dynasty Medium: Terracotta Location: United States Originally, this magnificent terracotta tile would have decorated the walls of a cave tomb traditional to the Sichuan Province. Imagine walking through a cave guided by a torch and discovering a room covered in such tiles. The prancing horses would appear to be galloping in the flickering light. Although the decorative designs and animal motifs that grace this panel appear to be incised, they have actually been impressed with molds or cut away in a low relief technique. Besides the horses, a tree is depicted in the center of one side, marvelously rendered with interweaving branches. Presumably, these decorations were chosen in order to surround the deceased with reminders of daily life. This tile is an impressive example of the richness and luxury afforded to the deceased in Ancient China. Considering the enormous effort expended in the creation and placement of this tile within the tomb, we can assume that such a burial was only reserved for nobility or the wealthy elite. This tile is a perfect example of the great efforts exerted in order to provide the deceased with an afterlife full of the best and most beautiful reminders of this world. - (PF.6165)



 PF.6164
 Co

 Origin: China
 M

 Circa: 23 AD to 220 AD
 Lo

 Dimensions:
 21.25" (54.0cm) high x 47.625" (121.0cm) wide

Originally, this magnificent terracotta tile would have decorated the walls of a cave tomb traditional to the Sichuan Province. Imagine walking through a cave guided by a torch and discovering a room covered in such tiles. The prancing horses would appear to be galloping in the flickering light. Although the decorative designs and animal motifs that grace this panel appear to be incised, they have actually been impressed with molds or cut away in a low relief technique. Besides the horses, representations of court figures carrying halberds, stylized phoenixes, and crane-like birds are also featured. Presumably, these decorations were chosen in order to surround the deceased with reminders of daily life. This tile is an impressive example of the richness and luxury afforded to the deceased in Ancient China. Considering the enormous effort expended in the creation and placement of this tile within the tomb, we can assume that such a burial was only reserved for nobility or the wealthy elite. This tile is a perfect example of the great efforts exerted in order to provide the deceased with an afterlife full of the best and most beautiful reminders of this world. - (PF.6164)





 PF.6167
 Construction

 Origin: China
 Maximum

 Circa: 23 AD to 220 AD
 Loo

 Dimensions:
 20.125" (51.1cm) high x 55.25" (140.3cm) wide

Originally, this magnificent terracotta tile would have decorated the walls of a cave tomb traditional to the Sichuan Province. Imagine walking through a cave guided by a torch and discovering a room covered in such tiles. The prancing horses and running tigers would appear to move in the flickering light. Although the decorative designs and animal motifs that grace this panel appear to be incised, they have actually been impressed with molds or cut away in a low relief technique. Besides the horses and tigers, a court figure carrying a halberd, stylized phoenixes, and crane-like birds are also featured. Presumably, these decorations were chosen in order to surround the deceased with reminders of daily life. Of great significance is the calligraphic writing rendered in red pigment. While appearing to be modern graffiti, this writing is in fact ancient and details the particular placement of the tile within the tomb; for example, "Westside of the entrance," or some such direction. This tile is an impressive example of the richness and luxury afforded to the deceased in Ancient China. Considering the enormous effort expended in the creation and placement of this tile within the tomb, we can assume that such a burial was only reserved for nobility or the wealthy elite. This tile is a perfect example of the great efforts exerted in order to provide the deceased with an afterlife full of the best and most beautiful reminders of this world. -(PF.6167)

Eastern Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Smiling Chef



H.649 Origin: Sichuan Province, China Circa: 23 AD to 220 AD Dimensions: 19.25" (48.9cm) high

Although the culinary delights conceived by this smiling chef is have vanished, we can rest assure that he prepared bountiful feasts that were enjoyed in the afterlife. A type of work known as mingqi, literally translated as, "items for the next world," this sculpture was specifically commissioned by the family of the deceased to be buried alongside their departed relative, both as a symbol of their wealth and familial piety. However, only elite members of the social hierarchy could afford to be honored with such elaborate burials. During the Han era, the ancient Chinese believed that the afterlife was an extension of our earthly existences. Thus the tombs of nobles and high-ranking officials were filled with sculpted renditions of their earthly entourage. Musicians, chefs, attendants, and guardians were placed alongside pots, vessels, cooking utensil, and herds of livestock. All these mingqi were expected to perform their functions continually throughout the afterlife. The guards would watch over the soul of the deceased, while the chef prepared meals, utilizing the meats of the livestock, and the musicians performed songs to nourish the spirit throughout eternity. The smile that graces the face of this chef is typical of the happy entertainers from the Sichuan Province. He holds a cleaver in his left hand, ready to hack through the meat and bones of the nearby livestock. A reflection of the wealth and sophistication of ancient China, this sculpture intrigues us with its vast historical and cultural insights. Furthermore, this work is a gorgeous symbol of the philosophical and religious belief of the Han, -(H.649)

Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Dog



PF.5122 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 13" (33.0cm) high x 13.75" (34.9cm) wide

This terracotta dog is stylistically portrayed with ornate body trappings and distinctive features. Positioned in an attentive stance with straddled legs, the dog is equipped in a strap body harness that moves in several directions from the tail across the back to the head, around the girth of the chest and shoulders, and under the muzzle. The body is thick and long, the legs short, and the head, crest, and fore chest area massive. The dog's head and face are modeled to a feline semblance--wide, indistinctive ears, high bridge, and short muzzle with small exposed nostrils. Stylistic folds above the eye and brow line indicate that the breed could be Shar Pei.

During the Han Dynasty, clay models of dogs were often placed in the burial site of the deceased. They were arranged inside the doorway or courtyard of large houses and were placed singly, often harnessed, clearly intended to serve as watchdogs. The dog was admired for its fidelity, and the coming of the dog to one's house was considered a good omen ensuring future prosperity. Court breeders vied against each other to woo members of the imperial court, and later associations of palace dogs with the Buddhist Lion were often made by ruling families to enhance legitimacy. Elaborate burials with hundreds of interred figurines, ceramic vessels, and bronzes was a custom practiced by high status groups, based on the need to propitiate the spirit of the deceased and the belief that part of the soul continued its existence in a world similar to the mortal world. The ancients' desire to recreate a life-like dwelling provides invaluable insight into contemporary Han life. - (PF.5122)



H.838 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 8.25" (21.0cm) high Collection: Chinese Medium: Bronze Location: United States Today, when we think of mirrors, we think of a thin layer of reflective metal, usually a combination of tin and mercury, covered in a layer of protective glass. However, the modern mirror was an innovation of 16th Century Italian craftsmen. Before that, since ancient time, mirrors of highly polished bronze were used. Bronze mirrors themselves were introduced into China during the 6th Century B.C. They were used not only as functional articles but as sacred objects filled with their own powers. The custom of placing mirrors in a tomb originated around the 4th Century B.C. The Chinese believed that mirrors had the ability not only to reflect, but also to radiate light, and thus illuminate the tomb for eternity. Often multiple mirrors were entombed, not alongside the other funerary objects, but close to the body of the deceased.

This silver plated mirror reflects the ancient Chinese perception of the universe. During the Han Dynasty, the Chinese believed that the earth was a square underneath a domed sky. Thus, as viewed on this mirror, the square shape surrounding the large central boss represents the earth while the wide outer rim, filled with an undulating cloud-like pattern, represents the heavens. The "T"-shaped forms that extend outwards from the four sides of the square are pillars that hold up the sky while the "L"-shaped patterns along the inside of the outer rim are devices that bring the heaven and earth together. Several stylized animals are depicted roaming the area between the square and the rim. These animals, most importantly among them: the blue dragon, the white tiger, the red phoenix, and the black wu (a cross between a tortoise and a snake), represent star constellation in the four corners of the universe. It is likely that the pointed bumps symbolize the actual stars. The extensive symbolism behind the iconography of this mirror reveals the significant powers these talismanic devices where believed to possess. This mirror is not just a functional tool in which we can see ourselves, but a heavenly instrument with which one may view the entire universe and beyond into the spiritual realm. - (H.838)



H.840 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 4.125" (10.5cm) high Collection: Chinese Medium: Bronze Location: United States Today, when we think of mirrors, we think of a thin layer of reflective metal, usually a combination of tin and mercury, covered in a layer of protective glass. However, the modern mirror was an innovation of 16th Century Italian craftsmen. Before that, since ancient time, mirrors of highly polished bronze were used. Bronze mirrors themselves were introduced into China during the 6th Century B.C. They were used not only as functional articles but as sacred objects filled with their own powers. The custom of placing mirrors in a tomb originated around the 4th Century B.C. The Chinese believed that mirrors had the ability not only to reflect, but also to radiate light, and thus illuminate the tomb for eternity. Often multiple mirrors were entombed, not alongside the other funerary objects, but close to the body of the deceased.

During the Han Dynasty, the iconography of the decorations that adorn the backsides of mirrors was inextricably linked to their philosophical beliefs and perception of the universe. For instance, on this example, echoes of this symbolism are visible. The outer flat rim symbolizes the heavens while the four stylized dragon heads may represent the four cardinal directions and the quadrants of the universe. A hole has been drilled into the large central boss. A chord would have been wound through here to serve as a handle. We can imagine a gorgeous young princess holding this mirror in her hands almost two thousand years ago. She would have gazed into the finely polished surface and saw her own image reflected. While her own beauty would have surely pleased her, perhaps her was even more admiring of the stunning decorative motif that embellishes the back. - (H.840)



H.843 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 4" (10.2cm) high Collection: Chinese Medium: Bronze Location: United States Today, when we think of mirrors, we think of a thin layer of reflective metal, usually a combination of tin and mercury, covered in a layer of protective glass. However, the modern mirror was an innovation of 16th Century Italian craftsmen. Before that, since ancient time, mirrors of highly polished bronze were used. Bronze mirrors themselves were introduced into China during the 6th Century B.C. They were used not only as functional articles but as sacred objects filled with their own powers. The custom of placing mirrors in a tomb originated around the 4th Century B.C. The Chinese believed that mirrors had the ability not only to reflect, but also to radiate light, and thus illuminate the tomb for eternity. Often multiple mirrors were entombed, not alongside the other funerary objects, but close to the body of the deceased.

During the Han Dynasty, the iconography of the decorations that adorn the backsides of mirrors was inextricably linked to their philosophical beliefs and perception of the universe. For instance, on this example, echoes of this symbolism are visible. The outer flat rim symbolizes the heavens while the four smaller bosses amongst the highly stylized birds resting on branches represent the four cardinal directions and the quadrants of the universe. A hole has been drilled into the large central boss. A chord would have been wound through here to serve as a handle. We can imagine a gorgeous young princess holding this mirror in her hands almost two thousand years ago. She would have gazed into the finely polished surface and saw her own image reflected. While her own beauty would have surely pleased her, perhaps her was even more admiring of the stunning decorative motif that embellishes the back. - (H.843)



H.847 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 4" (10.2cm) high Collection: Chinese Medium: Bronze Location: United States Today, when we think of mirrors, we think of a thin layer of reflective metal, usually a combination of tin and mercury, covered in a layer of protective glass. However, the modern mirror was an innovation of 16th Century Italian craftsmen. Before that, since ancient time, mirrors of highly polished bronze were used. Bronze mirrors themselves were introduced into China during the 6th Century B.C. They were used not only as functional articles but as sacred objects filled with their own powers. The custom of placing mirrors in a tomb originated around the 4th Century B.C. The Chinese believed that mirrors had the ability not only to reflect, but also to radiate light, and thus illuminate the tomb for eternity. Often multiple mirrors were entombed, not alongside the other funerary objects, but close to the body of the deceased.

During the Han Dynasty, the iconography of the decorations that adorn the back sides of mirrors was inextricably linked to their philosophical beliefs and perception of the universe. For instance, on this example, echoes of this symbolism are visible. The outer flat rim symbolizes the heavens while the four smaller bosses amongst the swimming fish represent the four cardinal directions and the quadrants of the universe. A hole has been drilled into the large central boss. A chord would have been wound through here to serve as a handle. We can imagine a gorgeous young princess holding this mirror in her hands almost two thousand years ago. She would have gazed into the finely polished surface and saw her own image reflected. While her own beauty would have surely pleased her, perhaps her was even more admiring of the stunning decorative motif that embellishes the back. - (H.847)



H.918 Origin: China Circa: 265 AD to 316 AD Dimensions: 8.5" (21.6cm) high Collection: Chinese Medium: Terracotta Location: United States Striding forward on powerful haunches, this mythological beast is a composite of several different animals. He bears the hoofed legs and muscular body of a bull with a distinctively equestrian head. Bosses rise from his body, following his spinal chord, and culminate in two pointed horns that protrude from the top of his neck. His arched tail, held up over his back, appears to be more canine that bovine or equestrian.

The menacing expressions are obviously meant to serve an apotropaic purpose, perhaps reflecting the northerners's greater awareness of the dark world of spirits.

Such a composite animal first emerged during the Western Jin period (265-316) and later evolved in the phantasmagorical human headed tomb guardians known as earth-spirits (Chin: du sheng), so popular during the Tang dynasty in northern and central China. Instead, in the south tomb guardians quickly disappeared after the Eastern Jin period (317- 420). An abrupt change of practice that probably reflected different cultural approaches. In fact, northern people -being more mindful of spirits and demons- were always more inclined to protect the dead from undesirable encounters and went into a lot of effort in creating wonderful sculptures of tomb guardians; southerners instead simply chose to continue to transmit the age-old practice of providing for the daily life of the deceased in the afterlife.

Clearly, this is a fierce, untamed beast. With its head lowered, he appears to charge forward like a pull, thrusting his horns forward into whatever obstacle might block his path. Remnants of the original polychrome pigment are visible in his red ear, although most of the work is covered in a layer of encrusted dirt. Rarely do such delicate details survive the ravages of time and the stresses of excavation. A similar example was unearthed from a Western Jin tomb in Henan province at Yanshi.

This magnificent sculpture is an insightful glimpse into the fantastic mythology of ancient China.

For a in-depth description of horned tomb guardians see: Fong Mary H., "Tomb Guardians Figurines: Their Evolution and Iconography" in Kuwayama ed, Ancient Mortuary Traditions of China: Papers on Chinese Ceramic Funerary Sculptures, Los angeles, 1991: 84-115. - (H.918)

Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Dog with Green-Glazed Highlights



H.996 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 24.875" (63.2cm) high Collection: Chinese Medium: Terracotta Location: United States This terracotta dog, with rare green-glazed highlights, is a splendid example of mingqi, literally translated as: "items for the next world." During the Hand Dynasty, the ancient Chinese believed that the afterlife was an extension of our earthly existence. Thus high-ranking members of the social hierarchy were buried in splendid tombs replete with replicas of their daily lives rendered in all media. It is not uncommon to find ornate dinner sets with elegantly painted utensils, wine vessels, and food storage containers. Sculpted effigies of warriors and guardians provided protection as musicians and entertainers provided company. Likewise, herds of domesticated animals were interred alongside the deceased to serve as food sources in the afterlife. Although it is possible that this dog was entombed to be eaten in the next world, the collar and harness he wears suggests otherwise.

More likely, this dog was a beloved companion who served his owner well both on earth and beyond. His ears stand upwards, as if attentively guarding his master throughout eternity. The heavy folds of skin around the eyes and the curly tail, as well as the general size and stature, suggest that this dog may be an ancestor of the modern Chinese Shar Pei breed. Green-glazed highlights that have developed a "frosted" patina over the centuries decorate one of the dog's sides, as if the sculptor was glazing another work when a few drips fell onto the dog. Although similar works were meant to serve as food for the afterlife, the love and attention dedicated to the creation of this stunning work of art suggests that this dog is much more than food. Instead, this beloved pet stands faithfully by his master's side throughout eternity. - (H.996)

Western Han Terracotta Sculpture of an

Attendant



H.1017 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 9 AD Dimensions: 24" (61.0cm) high Collection: Chinese Medium: Terracotta Location: United States

A type of work known as mingqi, literally translated as, "items for the next world," this sculpture was specifically commissioned by the family of the deceased to be buried alongside their departed relative, both as a symbol of their wealth and familial piety. However, only elite members of the social hierarchy could afford to be honored with such elaborate burials. During the Han era, the ancient Chinese believed that the afterlife was an extension of our earthly existences. Thus the tombs of nobles and highranking officials were filled with sculpted renditions of their earthly entourage. Musicians, chefs, attendants, and guardians were placed alongside pots, vessels, cooking utensil, and herds of livestock. All these mingqi were expected to perform their functions continually throughout the afterlife. The guards would watch over the soul of the deceased, while the chef prepared meals, utilizing the meats of the livestock, and the musicians performed songs to nourish the spirit throughout eternity. While mounted warriors would be interred inside the tombs of military generals, this tall attendant probably accompanied a high-ranking member of Han bureaucracy. The attendant is tall and composed, wearing a long tunic that covers his columnar body. The spherical head juxtaposed to the straight body is a hallmark of the Western Han style. A reflection of the wealth and sophistication of ancient China, this sculpture intrigues us with its vast historical and cultural insights. Furthermore, this work is a gorgeous symbol of the philosophical and religious belief of the Han. - (H.1017)

Western Han Painted Terracotta Sculpture of an

Attendant



H.1019 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 9 AD Dimensions: 21.25" (54.0cm) high Collection: Chinese Medium: Painted Terracotta Location: United States While mounted warriors would be interred inside the tombs of military generals, this tall, gently undulating attendant probably accompanied a high-ranking member of Han bureaucracy. Much of the original polychrome remains intact, including his white robe highlighted with a red floral pattern. His detailed facial features have been painted in black, allowing the artist to individualize each molded effigy to match its real life counterpart. A hole in his hand suggest that he once presented his master with a gift or some such offering likely made of wood that has long since deteriorated over the centuries. A reflection of the wealth and sophistication of ancient China, this sculpture intrigues us with its vast historical and cultural insights. Furthermore, this work is a gorgeous symbol of the philosophical and religious belief of the Han. - (H.1019)

Western Han Painted Terracotta Sculpture of a

Dancer



H.1018 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 9 AD Dimensions: 17.75" (45.1cm) high Collection: Chinese Medium: Painted Terracotta Location: United States

Western Han Painted Terracotta Sculpture of a Dancer



H.1020 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 9 AD Dimensions: 17.875" (45.4cm) high Collection: Chinese Medium: Painted Terracotta Location: United States While mounted warriors would be interred inside the tombs of military generals, this tall, gently undulating attendant probably accompanied a high-ranking member of Han bureaucracy. Considering the undulating profile of this attendant, it is likely that she represents a dancer who would entertain the court with her rhythmic swaying. Perhaps musicians once accompanied her and played a gentle tune. Much of the original polychrome remains intact, including his white robe highlighted with a pattern of red dots. Her detailed facial features have been painted in black, including her long hair wrapped in a bun, allowing the artist to individualize each molded effigy to match its real life counterpart. A reflection of the wealth and sophistication of ancient China, this sculpture intrigues us with its vast historical and cultural insights. Furthermore, this work is a gorgeous symbol of the philosophical and religious belief of the Han. - (H. 1018) - (H.1020)

Eastern Han Frosted Green-Glazed Terracotta Sculpture of an Ox



H.1006 Origin: China Circa: 23 AD to 220 AD Dimensions: 5.25" (13.3cm) high Collection: Chinese Medium: Glazed Terracotta Location: UAE During the Han Dynasty, sculptural effigies of animals were often interred in the tombs of elite members of the social hierarchy. Created in all media, these sculptures accompanied the spirit of the deceased into the afterlife. This glazed sculpture of an ox is exceptional for two reasons. While similar examples exist, many were found harnessed to wagons and carts and were meant to function as beasts of burden. However, this sculpture was discovered buried as part of a herd, contained inside a pen with other domesticated animals, suggesting that this animal served as food. Besides it function, this sculpture is also remarkable for its gorgeous green glaze that has acquired a beautiful, soft iridescent patina over the ages. Commonly referred to as "silver frost," this iridescence is the result of wet and dry periods in a tomb whereby the clay dissolves the lead glaze and redeposits it on the surface, where it hardens. A testament of age, this patina is also admired by collectors for its charming aesthetic qualities, similar in effect to mother of pearl. During the Han era, the Chinese believed that the afterlife was a continuation of our earthly existence. Thus, logically, as we require food to nourish our bodies on earth, so too will we require food to nourish our souls in the afterlife. Created to serve as food for the afterlife, this work is more than a mere sculpture; it is a gorgeous memorial to the religious and philosophical beliefs of the Han Dynasty. This cow effigy has served its eternal purpose well. Today, it continues to nourish our souls with its beauty and grace. - (H.1006)

Eastern Han Frosted Green-Glazed Terracotta Sculpture of a Pig



H.1007 Origin: China Circa: 23 AD to 220 AD Dimensions: 3.125" (7.9cm) high Collection: Chinese Medium: Glazed Terracotta Location: UAE Sculptures of pigs are frequently buried alongside noble members of society during the Han Dynasty. Sculpted in all media, the pig was a symbol of wealth as well as a staple of the menu for the afterlife. As was the custom, sculpted effigies of animals were interred as food sources in the next world. While some animals were meant to labor in the next world, others, such as this boar, were clearly meant for consumption. The Han viewed the afterlife as an extension of our earthly lives. Thus, the things that we enjoyed in this world were continual enjoyed in the next. Likewise, as humans require food to nourish and sustain us while on earth, sculpted animals were buried to provide energy in the afterlife. This sculpture of a standing pig is covered in a gorgeous green glaze that has acquired a beautiful, soft iridescent patina over the ages. Commonly referred to as "silver frost," this iridescence is the result of wet and dry periods in a tomb whereby the clay dissolves the lead glaze and redeposits it on the surface, where it hardens. A testament of age, this patina is also admired by collectors for its charming aesthetic qualities, similar in effect to mother of pearl. Originally, this pig was created to provide sustenance in the next world. However, today, it nourishes our eyes with its tremendous beauty and fills our minds with its tremendous cultural and historical value. - (H.1007)

Eastern Han Frosted Green-Glazed Terracotta
Sculpture of a Dog



H.1008 Origin: China Circa: 23 AD to 220 AD Dimensions: 7.75" (19.7cm) high Collection: Chinese Medium: Glazed Terracotta Location: United States This green-glazed terracotta dog is a splendid example of mingqi, literally translated as: "items for the next world." During the Han Dynasty, the Chinese believed that the afterlife was an extension of our earthly existence. Thus high- ranking members of the social hierarchy were buried in splendid tombs replete with replicas of their daily lives rendered in all media. It is not uncommon to find ornate dinner sets with elegantly painted utensils, wine vessels, and food storage containers. Sculpted replicas of warriors and guardians provided protection while musicians and entertainers provided company. Likewise, herds of domesticated animals were interred alongside the deceased to serve as food sources in the afterlife. Although it is possible that this dog was entombed for consumption in the next world, the studded collar and harness he wears, as well as his rather emaciated appearance with protruding ribcage, suggests otherwise. More likely, this dog was a beloved companion who served his owner well both on earth and beyond. His ears stand upwards in attention, as if carefully guarding his master throughout eternity. The gorgeous green glaze that has acquired a beautiful, soft iridescent patina over the ages. Commonly referred to as "silver frost," this iridescence is the result of wet and dry periods in a tomb whereby the clay dissolves the lead glaze and redeposits it on the surface, where it hardens. A testament of age, this patina is also admired by collectors for its charming aesthetic qualities, similar in effect to mother of pearl. Although similar works were meant to serve as food for the afterlife, the love and attention dedicated to the creation of this stunning work of art suggests that this dog is much more than food. Instead, this beloved pet stands faithfully by his master's side throughout eternity. - (H.1008)

Eastern Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Smiling Dancer



H.650 Origin: Sichuan Province, China Circa: 23 AD to 220 AD Dimensions: 31" (78.7cm) high Collection: Chinese Medium: Terracotta Location: United States A type of work known as mingqi, literally translated as, "items for the next world," this sculpture was specifically commissioned by the family of the deceased to be buried alongside their departed relative, both as a symbol of their wealth and familial piety. However, only elite members of the social hierarchy could afford to be honored with such elaborate burials. During the Han era, the ancient Chinese believed that the afterlife was an extension of our earthly existences. Thus, the tombs of nobles and high-ranking officials were filled with sculpted renditions of their earthly entourage. Musicians, chefs, attendants, and guardians were placed alongside pots, vessels, cooking utensil, and herds of livestock. All these mingqi were expected to perform their functions continually throughout the afterlife.

The guards would watch over the soul of the deceased, while the chef prepared meals, utilizing the meats of the livestock, and the musicians performed songs to nourish the spirit throughout eternity. The smile that graces the face of this wonderful dancer is typical of the happy entertainers from the Sichuan Province. He wears an elaborate pleated robe and a fantastic headdress featuring three flowers. The elegant posture of his legs, seemingly hovering over a stool or pot, reflects the movement and action of the dance. A reflection of the wealth and sophistication of ancient China, this sculpture intrigues us with its vast historical and cultural insights. Furthermore, this work is a gorgeous symbol of the philosophical and religious belief of the Han. The eternal warmth and joy embodied by this ancient dancer brings a smile to our own faces. - (H. 650)

Painted Terracotta Sculpture of a Mythological Beast



X.0351 Origin: China Circa: 265 AD to 316 AD Dimensions: 8" (20.3cm) high x 10.50" (26.7cm) wide Collection: Chinese Medium: Terracotta Location: Great Britain The sturdy composite horse-like figure with three red-painted spikes and four flattened grey roundels allined on the spinal cord, the tail curved upwards to form a loop attached on the back. The head slightly bent downwards, his equine traits carefully incised and partly in relief.

The menacing expression was in theory meant to serve an apotropaic purpose, perhaps reflecting the northerners's greater awareness of the dark world of spirits. Yet in this small figurine the fearful expression is absent, instead reflecting perhaps the craftsman's indulgence in a little creative liberty. The sweetness of this animal might betray a southern origin, where tomb guardians dating to the Western Jin onward developed a much more human connotation, when compared with their northern prototypes.

Such a composite animal first emerged during the Western Jin period (265-316) and later evolved in the phantasmagorical human-headed tomb guardians known as earth-spirits (Chin: du sheng), so popular during the Tang dynasty in northern and central China. Instead, in the south, tomb guardians quickly disappeared after the Eastern Jin period (317-420): an abrupt change of practice that probably reflected different cultural approaches. In fact, northern people -being more mindful of spirits and demons- were always more inclined to protect the dead from undesirable encounters and went into a lot of effort in creating wonderful sculptures of tomb guardians; southerners instead simply chose to continue to transmit the age-old practice of providing for the daily life of the deceased in the afterlife.

Clearly, this is a mythological beast. With its head lowered, he appears to charge forward like a pull, thrusting his horns forward into whatever obstacle might block his path. Remnants of the original polychrome pigment are visible throughout the work, including the white slip that covers the majority of the beast's body. Rarely do such delicate details survive the ravages of time and the stresses of excavation. A similar example, though lacking the paint details, was unearthed in Yanshi, Henan province in a tomb dated to the western Jin period.

This magnificent sculpture is an insightful glimpse into the fantastic mythology of ancient China.

For a in-depth description of horned tomb guardians see: Fong Mary H., "Tomb Guardians Figurines: Their Evolution and Iconography" in Kuwayama ed, Ancient Mortuary Traditions of China: Papers on Chinese Ceramic Funerary Sculptures, Los angeles, 1991: 84-115. - (X.0351)

Terracotta Sculpture of a Farmer



X.0414 Origin: Sichuan Province, China Circa: 23 AD to 220 AD Dimensions: 43" (109.2cm) high Collection: Chinese Medium: Terracotta Location: Great Britain Even as Chinese influence spread across Southeastern Asia into new lands, the Eastern Han Dynasty was actually unable to recreate the glories of the Western Period. In fact, this period can be characterized by a bitter power struggle amongst a group of five consortial clans. Eventually, the power of the Han would completely erode, ending with its dissolution and the beginning of the period known as the "Three Kingdoms."

It was during this period that the art of the state of Shu in the province of modern Sichuan thrived. Here, as in other parts of China in the same period, a great effort was laid in the preparation of afterlife accomodations. Tombs were lavishly furnished with all sort of mundane and less mundane commodities, most of them made in painted earthenware and reproducing a vivid mirror image of everyday life.

A type of work known as mingqi, literally translated as, "items for the next world," moulded ceramics such as this one were specifically commissioned by the family of the deceased to be buried alongside their departed relative, both as a symbol of their wealth and familial piety. However, only elite members of the social hierarchy could afford to be honored with such elaborate burials. During the Han era and the dissolution period of the Three Kingdoms, the Chinese believed that the afterlife was an extension of our earthly existence and that our spiritual soul would linger indeterminately in the tomb. Thus the tombs of nobles and high-ranking officials were filled with sculpted renditions of their earthly entourage. Musicians, chefs, attendants, and guardians were placed alongside pots, vessels, cooking utensil, and herds of livestock. All these mingqi were expected to perform their functions continually throughout the afterlife. The guards would watch over the soul of the deceased, while the chef prepared meals, utilizing the meats of the livestock, and the musicians performed songs to nourish the spirit throughout eternity.

The smile that graces the face of this standing attendant is typical of the happy entertainers from the Sichuan Province. He carries a crescent-shaped sickle in his left hand, held against his chest. Long stringed sandals, a high beret and a small pouch would indicate the farming origin of this man, his presence in the tomb indicating the importance of agriculture in the economy of ancient Sichuan. The detachable head is also characteristic of such works, whose body was usually moulded separately from the head and then joint together.

A reflection of the wealth and sophistication of ancient China, this sculpture intrigues us with its vast historical and cultural insights. His detailed depiction provides us with an intimate image of everyday life during the dissolution period of the Three Kingdoms in the Shu state. - (X.0414)

Painted Pottery Vessel in the Shape of an Elephant



LA.529 Origin: China Circa: 220 BC to 206 AD Dimensions: 6" (15.2cm) high Collection: Chinese Art Location: Great Britain Painted pottery vessel in the shape of a walking elephant, his trunk slightly curved upwards, his ears bent backwards, the small tusks projecting forward, his open-wide eyes incised. His knees emphasized with corrugated incised lines, the surface painted with swirling clouds in red and white against a black background. From the upper central opening on his back, where a saddle must have been envisaged, three cordoned trappings radiate to surround the belly, the hindquarters and the neck.

This is an image of a domesticated elephant used for parading. During the Han Dynasty, geographic boundaries of the Han state stretched to include much of Central Asia, through the Silk Road and South-East Asia, encountering different cultures and, of course, exotic animals never seen before. Indeed in the case of elephants it is thought that during the Han period, they were quite common in Yunnan in southwestern China. Yet the knowledge of this much revered and useful animal must have been transmitted further north where various pictorial renditions are available, from the most realist to the least credible.

One also has to remember that during the reign of Han Wudi, parading of exotic animals was quite a common sight in Xi'an, and elephants were probably shown as tributes to the emperor from distant provinces, evoking much clamour on the streets.

The presence of such an animal in a burial environment would perfectly fit into the contemporary interest (possibly obsession) in exoticism typical of the Western Han period. The abstract rendition of its skin, also, which was inspired by contemporary embroidery and textile patterns is in tune with the fashion of the time. - (LA.529)

Set of Painted Pottery Stick Soldiers



LA.530 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 24 AD Dimensions: 12" (30.5cm) high Collection: Chinese Art Additional Information: Individually priced Location: Great Britain Figurines such as these, half-naked, represented a new form for the period and only a small proportion of Han human figures. Nudity was associated in China with uncivilised peoples, hence very seldom seen in orthodox, official artefacts. Indeed these figurines were not intended to be seen thus. Originally after being modelled and sculpted they were fired, painted and finally dressed. The textiles and wooden arms added to the figures decayed after being buried for centuries in the tombs of the Han noblemen. An amazing discovery of 600 figures accompanied by 4000 artefacts, was made in the tomb of the Emperor Liu Qi (r.156-141 BC) in Xianyang, Shaanxi. These figures were intended to continue providing the Emperor with the same services as those he enjoyed in his lifetime.

Such figures and models and other miniature or non-functional objects are collectively known as 'mingqi' (spirit articles) and have been traditionally interpreted as substitutes for the animals and human victims sacrificed during the funeral, as well as surrogates for objects of value placed in the tomb. Yet recent archaeological evidence have highlighted that these objects might have instead constituted an integral part of the strategy to recreate the earthly dwelling of the deceased. The replication of the living world and its constituents within the tomb might have been induced by various ideological factors, including a new religious trend emphasising the separation of the dead from the living and other material manifestations of different philosophical ideas, but also possibly by the effort to reproduce a self-sustaining version of the world- a fictive and efficacious comprehensive replica, made up of both real sacrificed humans and animals (the 'presented') and elements such as the terracotta army (the 'represented').

In ancient China, burials constituted the preferred platform for social aggrandizement and strongly signified the power and status of their builders and occupants; soldiers, concubines or animals, or precious articles in the tomb constituted a symbol of power and reflected the wealth of its occupant. By the Qin period and throughout the Han period, the ability to have them reproduced – hence possessing the aesthetics, cognitive, technological and economic resources to reproduce the world- became a more efficient way of asserting power and status.

References: Yang Shaoneng ed. The Golden Age of Chinese Archaeology, 1999, and Kesner, L."Real and Substitute in the Early Chinese Mortuary Context, Mysteries of Ancient China, 1996. As a principal burial component reserved for the members of the ruling class, such models have been found around the Han capital of Xi'an, in Shaanxi province: see the archaeological reports published in Kaogu 1984.10: 887-94, and Kaogu yu Wenwu 1990.4: 45, 53. - (LA.530)

Set of Painted Pottery Soldiers



LA.531 Origin: China Circa: 220 BC to 206 AD Dimensions: 18.5" (47.0cm) high Collection: Chinese Art Location: Great Britain Individual figurines representing infantrymen in charging position, both hands clasped as to hold a weapon, with their right arms lifted as to carry a spear no longer there, and their left hands along the side; the long tunics pigmented in different colours, the upper torsos with a short red apron, a concised armoured vest and a white v-shaped collar. The angular faces with individual traits briefly drawn.

No need was felt to replicate the specific individuals who composed the original army (if available) -only their functions, since their personalities were fully subsumed by their roles within the military group. Nonetheless, particularising the individual soldiers enabled the artisans to differentiate within groups, and indicate that our set is indeed composed by infantrymen. The group would have belonged to a larger terracotta army meant for interment and by stylistic comparison can be safely attributed to the late Western Han period. They would have all been created in moulds and individually painted, while their weapons would have been carved out of perishable wood.

The first instance of massive deployment of tomb figures in early China, is represented by Qin Shihuangdi's terracotta army (c. 210 BC). Yet the use of figurines and models in the mortuary context developed during the middle and late Eastern Zhou periods, particularly in the state of Qin. Small anthropomorphic clay figurines have been unearthed from several pre-dynastic Qin tombs; pottery models of granaries have also been found in 6th century BC Qin graves. A separate tradition of wooden tomb figures developed during the end of the Eastern Zhou period (5th-4th c. BC) in another area with distinct cultural traits – the state of Chu.

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The replication of the living world and its constituents within the tomb might have been induced by various ideological factors, including a new religious trend emphasising the separation of the dead from the living and other material manifestations of different philosophical ideas, but also possibly by the effort to reproduce a self-sustaining version of the world- a fictive and efficacious comprehensive replica, made up of both real sacrificed humans and animals (the 'presented') and elements such as the terracotta army (the 're-presented'). Chinese tombs and burials signified the power and status of their builders and occupants; soldiers, concubines or animals, or to put precious articles in the tomb constituted a sign of power.

As clearly reflected by our powerful soldiers, by the Qin period and throughout the Han period, the ability to have them depicted -possessing the aesthetics, cognitive, technological and economic resources to reproduce the world- became a more efficient way of asserting power and status.

References: Yang Shaoneng ed. The Golden Age of Chinese Archaeology, 1999, and Kesner, L.''Real and Substitute in the Early Chinese Mortuary Context, Mysteries of Ancient China, 1996. - (LA.531)

Han Dynasty Terracotta Figurine



SP.569 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 3" (7.6cm) high Collection: Chinese Art Medium: Terracotta Location: United States

Terracotta Mule



DK.073 Origin: China Circa: 600 AD to 900 AD Dimensions: 5.5" (14.0cm) high x 7" (17.8cm) depth Collection: Chinese Medium: Terracotta Condition: Fine Location: United States

Han Kneeling Figure



DC.2001 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 9" (22.9cm) high x 6.25" (15.9cm) wide Collection: Chinese Art Style: Han Dynasty Medium: Terracotta Condition: Very Fine Location: United States

As did the Egyptians, noblemen from the Han Dynasty would inter with their bodies mingqi, or "spirit articles" that were believed to hold the essential energy of the depicted person, animal, or object. This attendant, so jovial in his expression seems so above his station in dress, manner, and execution that he must've served one of the highest elite among Chinese society. If not for his servant's cap and subservient posture, we might mistake this humble groom for the nobleman he waited upon. His full cheeks, stout neck, and the blissful curve of his smile all suggest a life full of food, wine, and song. The epicure is garbed in a sumptuous robe that curves around the smooth of his belly and the rounded nubs of his knees. His left hand, now emptymight've clasped a parasol or fan with which to keep is Lord cool, or a flag or banner representing the bloodline of the nobleman. We see, in this attendant the true respect and intimacy afforded between social classes within Chinese society. He is no cold and faceless servant; but a real person who enjoyed the chance to smile and joke with the upper crust. While we in the modern world may not expect him to shade us or offer us material comfort, the presence- the arresting and utterly irresistible friendliness of our attendant offers us a much more permanent and integral comfort. Too often art finds itself lost in canon and flattery- portraying kings and warriors in such a way as will ensure that the ego of the subject, and head of the sculptor, remains intact. The artist, perhaps because he was portraying someone it was not appropriate to idealize or deify, captured the intimacy, vibrancy, and intensity of an actual man. Locked in this bit of clay, a smile, a laugh, and a friendly, humble gesture has survived in all of its detail and movement for over a thousand years. - (DC.2001)

Han Dynasty Green-Glazed Pottery Chimera Money Tree Stand



DL.997 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 18" (45.7cm) high x 14.5" (36.8cm) wide Collection: Chinese Medium: Terracotta Condition: Extra Fine Location: UAE This exceptionally rare green-glazed money tree stand was excavated in the Henan Province. It is very unusual to find representations of a chimera and small figures on such pieces. According to Chinese tradition, the chimera was associated with peace and prosperity and is often found in tombs as a means to glorify the deceased and guard against evil spirits. This mythical creature is depicted with horns, the head of a dragon, the body of a lion and the wings of a bird. The face has been expertly modelled, with its tongue visible in its wide open mouth. Despite this, there is nothing sinister about this legendary creature; its expression is friendly and endearing. Recent studies suggest that sources for the chimera can be found in Mesopotamian art. The image first appears in China on bronze vessels from the 5th and 6th centuries B.C. By the Han period it was represented in a whole variety of media, including gold, silver, stone and jade.

The charm of this terracotta sculpture is increased by the four small figures seated on the chimera's back and on a ledge which runs around the stand. It is possible to identify at least two musicians amongst them, including a kneeling flute player on the far left. No area of this impressive work has been left unadorned; the stand itself is embellished with stylised leaves and flowers. The surface of the clay is enhanced by a gorgeous green glaze, a hallmark of pottery sculptures produced during the Han Dynasty. Over time this glaze has acquired a beautiful, soft iridescent patina. Commonly referred to as "silver frost," this iridescence is the result of wet and dry periods in a tomb whereby the clay dissolves the lead glaze and redeposits it on the surface, where it hardens. A testament of age, this patina is also admired by collectors for its charming aesthetic qualities, similar in effect to mother of pearl. This imaginative piece allows us to enter the world of fantasy and provides a unique window into the artistic culture of the Han period. (AM) - (DL.997)

Han Dynasty Painted Pottery Walking 'Sichuan' Dog



DL.2091 Origin: Sichuan Province Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 24.6" (62.5cm) high x 22" (55.9cm) wide Collection: Chinese Medium: Terracotta Condition: Extra Fine Location: UAE Although it is possible that this splendid terracotta dog was intended to represent a source of food for the deceased, it is more likely that it was a domesticated animal. His ears stand upwards, as if attentively guarding his master throughout eternity. The heavy folds of skin around the eyes and the curly tail, as well as the general size and stature, suggest that this dog may be an ancestor of the modern Chinese Shar Pei breed. - (DL. 2091)



TF.015 Origin: China Circa: 206 AD to 220 AD Dimensions: 10" (25.4cm) high x 16.2" (41.1cm) wide



TF.022 Origin: China Circa: 206 AD to 220 AD Dimensions: 16" (40.6cm) high x 18" (45.7cm) wide

Han Terracotta Boar



TF.026 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 10.50" (26.7cm) high x 18" (45.7cm) wide

This magnificent terracotta boar dates to the Han era, the golden age of ceramic funerary sculpture. The fashion for terracotta grave goods, also known as mingqi, was undoubtedly stimulated by the example of the first emperor of the Qin Dynasty whose terracotta army is now legendary. Terracotta replicas of attendants, entertainers and domesticated animals were among the items interred to ensure the material comfort of the deceased in the afterlife. This practice continued to flourish until the fall of the Tang dynasty in the early tenth century, after which it became more common to burn the items intended to accompany the deceased.

This example is full of character; the boar stands with his head lowered and his front legs slightly apart. The body is compact and the stance is defensive, as if anticipating an imminent attack. Incised lines indicate the joints and the thick bristles on the animal's back. The facial details are particularly impressive, especially the short protruding ears and the wide upturned snout. In many ancient cultures the boar was associated with strength, courage and fearless aggression. In China he also represented wealth and good fortune. Clearly well-nourished, this magnificent beast reflects the high status of its original owner. The time and skill that went into the manufacture of grave goods is extraordinary given the fact they were destined for obscurity in the ground. The impressive naturalism, especially in the depiction of animals, reflects Chinese religious beliefs. The more life-like the sculpture, the more likely it would perform its correct function in the afterworld. Our knowledge of the social and religious lives of Han has been vastly enriched by such finds which continue to impress us today. (AM) - (TF.026)



TF.028 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 11" (27.9cm) high x 10" (25.4cm) wide



TF.038 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 17.25" (43.8cm) high x 7.25" (18.4cm) wide

The Han dynasty lasted for over four hundred years and is often credited with the unification of China. Han emperors certainly developed the centralising initiatives of the Qin, whose short but effective regime brought an end to years of civil war and unrest. The production of ceramics also under went a revolution during the Han era. This was partly due to the regulation of burial practice. It was customary, at least amongst the nobility, to bury the dead with the necessary equipment for the afterlife. During the Han dynasty, particularly during times of economic distress, restrictions were placed on the burial of precious materials such as gold, silver and jade. Funerary furnishings (known in Chinese as 'mingqi') made of earthenware proliferated as a result. Some were painted in bright colours after firing in the kiln, others, such as this object, were covered in a fine lead-glaze. The two main colours were green (made from copper oxide) and ochre (from iron oxide), which anticipated the Sancai-glazed wares of the Tang Dynasty. Clay figurines of people, including attendants, chefs, musicians, dancers and soldiers were buried to care for their master/mistress in the afterlife. Animals also feature prominently, especially horses, dogs and bulls.

This glazed container is exceptionally rare and intriguing. The lid of the vessel is in the form of the shoulders and head of a man. The figure wears a close-fitting hat with an inverted 't' shape wedge affixed to the back. The hair and the small triangular beard have been indicated by rough incisions in the surface of the wet clay. The ears, nose and bulging eyes were added in relief. The figure's arms are evident on the lower half of the container, also moulded in relief. A long, flat rectangular objects protrudes from the figure's clasped hands. It is impossible to identify this with certainty, though it is probably some kind of ritual or votive object. Han pottery figurines are often depicted using the tools of their trade, such as chefs with a chopping board and knife or musicians with their instruments. Beneath the arms a second set of folds appear which may represent some kind of drapery. This sculpture reveals Han artistry at its finest, combining realism, such as the careful delineation of the fingers, with an attractive simplicity and abstraction. Despite minor restoration to the body of the vessel, the piece is in excellent condition and deserves to be the centrepiece of an ambitious collection of early Chinese pottery. (AM) - (TF.038)



DK.161 (LSO) Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Collection: Chinese Art Medium: Terracotta Condition: Very Fine Location: UAE This animated ceramic dog is a classic example of the Han sculptural tradition. Standing foursquare on slim legs, its blocky body is in fact carefully sculpted, with detailing of the muscles, tail, paws and even claws. However it is the head and face that particularly stand out. The proportions are deliberately exaggerated, with a thick neck giving way to a deceptively graceful profile to the lower jaw and top of the head. The mouth – with sharp teeth clearly displayed – is open, the head tilted back and the ears pricked up as far as their floppy form will permit. Its alert stance suggests that it is in a position of defence, perhaps guarding someone/something from the threat of harm. The piece is covered with a creamyivory coloured glaze, applied over a light fineware body.

The Han Dynasty was arguably the most important in Chinese history, and indeed many modern Chinese people refer to themselves as Han. It was a particularly dynamic time, its origins being found in the warring factions that caused the collapse of the Qin Dynasty in 206BC, upon which the once-unified Chinese nation was divided into 19 feudal states under the aegis of the insurgent leader Xiang Yu. The bitter fighting between these states resulted in the eventual victory of the first emperor of the Han Dynasty, Liu Bang, and the suicide of Xiang Yu in 202BC. The small principality (one of the 19) over which Liu Bang ruled was named Hanzhong, and lent a shortened version of its name to the eventual multi-state agglomeration that was to become China.

The Han Dynasty consolidated its power over the two subsequent centuries, and engineered massive agricultural reform that lent economic weight to social changes. This, in turn, led to trade expansion, with new trade routes (such as the Silk Road, and the route to Parthia) and a burgeoning middle class that brought new prosperity across the social system. Military expeditions expanded across Asia as far as Ukraine and the shores of the Caspian Sea, while China also kept up cautious diplomatic contact with the Roman Empire and the Kushans. Early Han rule was based around the Taoist model, and was comparatively at the mercy of powerful neighbours such as Xiongnu, nomadic tribes and petty internal squabbles. However, by the reign of Emperor Wu, the Han Dynasty had achieved its apogee and was able to assert itself over neighbouring areas. Wu also instituted Confucianism as the official modus operandi for the Chinese state, a major departure from the preceding Qin Dynasty where followers of Confucius were frequently buried alive.

This was a time of true enlightenment for China, which saw the laying of technological and artistic foundations for almost all that was to follow. Science and engineering saw major achievements, with the invention of steel, paper, mechanical gears, the rotary fan, the mechanical trip hammer, seismometers, the blast furnace, the winnowing machine, armillary spheres, the concept of the water cycle (in meteorology), the recognition of the cause of eclipses and thunder and much else besides: most of these were first recognised by Wang Chong, who has a reasonable claim to being the world's first Renaissance man.

Art also flourished, due in part to the flood of new ideas from across the continent, and also to the burgeoning middle classes who were eager to demonstrate their gentility and to patronise professional artists. Many written works – especially poetry and plays – date to this period, as well as paintings and cast bronze or ceramic sculptures. The tradition of interring mingqi (grave companions) with the deceased – which had always been present in Chinese society – reached new heights, as the nouveau-riche competed for prestigious afterlives. The sculptures of this period have a notable charm that is absent in other periods, with considerable less stylistic standardisation, with frequent recourse to expressionism. As a result, Han sculptures are among the most charming and effortlessly fluid of all Chinese artworks. This particular piece demonstrates the exuberance of this period's artistic heritage with great efficacy; it was probably intended to accompany his owner to the afterlife and to defend him there. However, it also stands as an outstanding piece of ancient art in its own right. - (DK.161 (LSO))

Han Dynasty Green Glazed Duck



SK.006 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 7.25" (18.4cm) high x 9.75" (24.8cm) wide Collection: Chinese Art Medium: Glazed Terracotta Location: UAE This green-glazed terracotta duck would have been interred in the tomb of a wealthy member of the social elite. Known as 'mingqi', these grave goods were extremely popular during the Han era. The nobility were buried with splendidly modeled replicas of all the people, animals and possessions they would require in the afterlife. These might range from wine vessels to miniature farms or elegant courtiers and musicians, intended to entertain their masters for eternity. Sculpted warriors or tomb guardians were also popular. This superbly crafted duck was probably included as a source of food. The modeling is extremely naturalistic and reflects the religious beliefs held during the Han era. The more realistic the grave goods, the more likely they would perform their functions effectively in the afterlife. The artist may well have worked from a real-life model.

The pale green glaze is a distinctive feature of Han era pottery which does not appear in later ages. Over time the surface has acquired a beautiful, soft iridescent patina. Commonly referred to as "silver frost," this iridescence is the result of wet and dry periods in a tomb whereby the clay dissolves the lead glaze and redeposits it on the surface, where it hardens. A testament of age, this patina is also admired by collectors for its charming aesthetic qualities, similar in effect to mother of pearl.

Historically the Han Dynasty was one of the most illustrious in China's past. It was divided into two distinct periods, the Western Han (c. 206 BC-9 AD) and the Eastern Han (23-220 AD). Trade flourished and the wealth and ideas that accompanied the opening of new trade routes led to the flourishing of the arts. Many written works – especially poetry and plays – date to this period, as well as paintings and cast bronze or ceramic sculptures. This piece is a wonderful example of the skill and creativity of Han artists and would make a charming addition to any serious collection of ancient art. (AM) - (SK.006)



SK.048 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Collection: Chinese Art Medium: Glazed Terracotta Location: UAE This green-glazed terracotta dog stands on guard with his head raised and mouth open. Terracotta grave goods, known as 'mingqi', were extremely popular among the social elite during the Han Dynasty. The nobility were buried with splendidly modeled replicas of all the people, animals and possessions they would require in the afterlife. These might range from wine vessels to miniature farms or elegant courtiers and musicians, intended to entertain their masters for eternity. Sculpted warriors or tomb guardians were also popular and the stance of this dog, suggests that its function was partly to guard the soul of its master. The collar and harness indicate that it was a domesticated animal, perhaps a beloved pet. The modeling is extremely naturalistic and reflects the religious beliefs held during the Han era. The more realistic the grave goods, the more likely they would perform their functions effectively in the afterlife. The artist may well have worked from a real-life model; the face, in particular, is incredibly expressive with its alert eyes and raised ears. The tail, which forms a coil along the dog's back, is also indicative of the animal's readiness to defend its owner against any potential threat.

The pale green glaze is a distinctive feature of Han era pottery which does not appear in later ages. Over time the surface has acquired a beautiful, soft iridescent patina. Commonly referred to as "silver frost," this iridescence is the result of wet and dry periods in a tomb whereby the clay dissolves the lead glaze and redeposits it on the surface, where it hardens. A testament of age, this patina is also admired by collectors for its charming aesthetic qualities, similar in effect to mother of pearl.

Historically the Han Dynasty was one of the most illustrious in China's past. It was divided into two distinct periods, the Western Han (c. 206 BC-9 AD) and the Eastern Han (23-220 AD). Trade flourished and the wealth and ideas that accompanied the opening of new trade routes led to the flourishing of the arts. Many written works – especially poetry and plays – date to this period, as well as paintings and cast bronze or ceramic sculptures. This piece is a wonderful example of the skill and creativity of Han artists and would make a charming addition to any serious collection of ancient art. (AM) - (SK.048)

Western Han Painted Terracotta Dancer/

Attendant



 RP.002
 0

 Origin: China
 1

 Circa: 206 BC to 9 AD
 1

 Dimensions:
 2

 28.75" (73.0cm) high x 10.75" (27.3cm) wide

Collection: Chinese Art Medium: Terracotta Location: UAE The Han era was one of the greatest artistic moments in Chinese history easily on par with the glories of Western contemporaries in Greece and Rome. Wealth poured into China from trade along the Silk Road and initiated a period of unprecedented luxury. Stunning bronze vessels were created and decorated with elegant inlaid gold and silver motifs. Jade carvings reached a new level of technical brilliance. Yet the artistic revival of the Han Dynasty is nowhere better represented than by the sculptures and vessels that were interred with deceased nobles. Called Mingqi, literally meaning "spirit articles," these works depicted a vast array of subjects from warriors and horses to ovens and livestock that were buried alongside the dead for use in the next life. Such actions reflect the Chinese belief that the afterlife is an extension of our earthy existence. Thus the material goods that we require to sustain and nurture our bodies in this life are just as necessary in the next life.

This sculpture was commissioned by the family of the deceased to be buried alongside their departed relative. It served both as a symbol of their wealth and familial piety. Only elite members of the social hierarchy could afford to be honoured with such elaborate burials. The tombs of nobles and high-ranking officials were filled with sculpted renditions of their earthly entourage. Musicians, chefs, attendants, and guardians were placed alongside pots, vessels, cooking utensils, and herds of livestock. Each one of these Mingqi were expected to perform their functions continually throughout the afterlife. The guards would watch over the soul of the deceased while the chef prepared meals utilizing the meats of the livestock and the musicians would perform songs to nourish the spirit throughout eternity.

While mounted warriors were interred inside the tombs of military generals, this tall gently undulating attendant most likely accompanied a high-ranking member of the Han bureaucracy. Much of the original polychrome remains intact, including the white robe with a painted red sash. The facial features are painted in black and the hair is tied back in a bun-like arrangement. The gently undulating posture raises the possibility that the standing figure represents a court dancer. It is a gorgeous symbol of the philosophical and religious beliefs of the Han, symbolising their fundamental beliefs in the beauty of this life and the next. - (RP.002)

Han Large Terracotta Sculpture of a Seated Dog



RP.062 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 32.25" (81.9cm) high x 21" (53.3cm) wide Collection: Chinese Medium: Terracotta Location: UAE

Han Painted Pottery Soldier



H.1029 Origin: China Circa: 220 BC to 206 AD Dimensions: 19.75" (50.2cm) high Collection: Chinese Art Medium: Terracotta Location: UAE

Han Painted Pottery Soldier



RP.001 Origin: China Circa: 220 BC to 206 BC Dimensions: 19.5" (49.5cm) high x 7" (17.8cm) wide Collection: Chinese Art Medium: Terracotta Location: UAE Originally part of a set, this individual figurine represents an infantryman in a charged position with both hands clasped as if to hold a weapon. The right hand is lifted to carry a spear that is no longer there while the left arm is clenched firmly along his side. The soldier wears a long tunic. On his upper torso he wears a short apron with an armored vest and a white v- shaped collar. Angular faces with individual traits are briefly drawn.

No need was felt to replicate the specific individuals who composed the original armyonly their functions since their personalities were fully subsumed by their roles within the military group. Even so, particularizing the individual soldiers enabled the artisans to differentiate within groups as well as indicate that our group is indeed composed of infantrymen. The group would have belonged to a larger terracotta army meant for burial and by stylistic comparison can be safely attributed to the late Western Han period. The piece would have been created in a mould and painted while the weapons would have been made of perishable wood.

Such figures and models and other miniature or non-functional objects are collectively known as mingqi ('spirit articles') and have been traditionally interpreted as substitutes for the animal and human victims sacrificed during a funeral, as well as surrogates for objects of value placed in the tomb. Chinese tombs and burials signified the power and status of their builders and occupants. Placing a soldier such as this in a tomb would be considered a way to assert one's political status. - (RP.001)

Han Terracotta Sculpture of a Dog



RP.149 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 220 AD Dimensions: 24" (61.0cm) high x 21.5" (54.6cm) wide Collection: Chinese Art Medium: Terracotta Location: UAE

Set of Four Western Han Dyna



NP.001 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 9 AD Dimensions: 14" (35.6cm) high Collection: Chinese Style: Western Han Medium: Terracotta Location: Great Britain

Western Han Painted Terracotta Sculpture of a

Dancer



RP.160 Origin: China Circa: 206 AD to 9 AD Dimensions: 18" (45.7cm) high x 5.25" (13.3cm) wide Collection: Chinese Art Style: Western Han Dynasty Medium: Painted Terracotta Location: UAE

Western Han Painted Terracotta Sculpture of a

Dancer



RP.162 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 9 AD Dimensions: 18" (45.7cm) high x 5.5" (14.0cm) wide Collection: Chinese Art Medium: Painted Terracotta Location: UAE The Han era was one of the greatest artistic moments in Chinese history easily on par with the glories of Western contemporaries in Greece and Rome. Wealth poured into China from trade along the Silk Road and initiated a period of unprecedented luxury. Stunning bronze vessels were created and decorated with elegant inlaid gold and silver motifs. Jade carvings reached a new level of technical brilliance. Yet the artistic revival of the Han Dynasty is nowhere better represented than by the sculptures and vessels that were interred with deceased nobles. Called Mingqi, literally meaning "spirit articles," these works depicted a vast array of subjects from warriors and horses to ovens and livestock that were buried alongside the dead for use in the next life. Such actions reflect the Chinese belief that the afterlife is an extension of our earthy existence. Thus the material goods that we require to sustain and nurture our bodies in this life are just as necessary in the next life.

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While mounted warriors were interred inside the tombs of military generals, this tall gently undulating attendant most likely accompanied a high-ranking member of the Han bureaucracy. Her hands are hidden within the full sleeves of her long robe which is tightly gathered around her legs before flaring widely to the sides. The various layered robes are visible at the neck and chest, molded in V-shaped necklines painted in red and white with a faint black border on the outermost robe. The facial features are delicately painted over white slip, the elongated eye area in black pigment and mouth in red while the nose is slightly molded in the middle and raised high above the ears.

Han Dynasty tomb figures are noted for their naturalistic style and graceful slender portrayals of human figures. They are not created as works of art; they were made to answer the needs of a particular belief about life after death and the spiritual world. The sculptor strove to capture the life and vitality of the subject rather than create a meticulous portrait as their work was commissioned by the ruling classes to accompany the body and soul of the deceased into the realm of the spiritual world.

The gently undulating posture raises the possibility that the standing figure represents a court dancer. It is a gorgeous symbol of the philosophical and religious beliefs of the Han, symbolizing their fundamental beliefs in the beauty of this life and the next. - (RP. 160) - (RP.162)

Set of Eleven Western Han Attendants



NP.006 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 9 AD Dimensions: 17.5" (44.5cm) high x 4" (10.2cm) wide Collection: Chinese Style: Western Han Medium: Terracotta Location: Great Britain

Western Han Terracotta Sculpture of an

Attendant



NP.007 Origin: China Circa: 206 BC to 9 AD Dimensions: 17.5" (44.5cm) high x 4" (10.2cm) wide Collection: Chinese Style: Western Han Dynasty Medium: Terracotta Location: Great Britain

THE BAKARAT GALLERY

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