CHINESE

Sancai-Glazed Horse with Cut-Fur Blanket

glazed pottery

29 1/2 x 33 x 12 in.

Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD)

2486

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, California

Under the Tang China experienced a period of great cultural flowering, remarkable for its achievements across all areas of the arts and sciences. The tolerance of the Tang Imperial Court to outside influence and the free movement along the East- West trade route known as the Silk Road saw major urban centres become thriving cosmopolitan cities, with the Chinese capital, Chang'an (modern Xian) expanding to reach a population of over one million.

In keeping with centuries of tradition, funerary rites remained very important. A separate government department existed with responsibility for overseeing the manufacture of funerary wares. Officially there were limits on the number of grave goods and restrictions on the size of the objects which could accompany the deceased, according to rank – the highest ranked officials were meant to have a maximum of 90 figurines, no more than 30cm tall while members of the Imperial family were allowed several hundred up to about one meter tall. However, these rules were frequently broken. The deceased's relatives believed they could improve their ancestor's status in the afterlife by providing mingqi in excess of necessity, thereby ensuring their own good fortune. Tang Dynasty figurative ceramics share particular characteristics. The forms are animated and life-like, the subject matter covers all aspects of social and ritual life and the scale of the figures was reasonably small with the exception of some magnificent larger works commissioned for the tombs of the elite. Figures of courtiers and entertainers, polo players and the exotic travelers who now regularly arrived in the Chinese cities with their great pack camels became common place, illustrating the cosmopolitan nature of the times. The variety of forms tells us that craftsmen had scope for individual innovation and were not controlled by rules regarding particular styles. Now the funerary wares spoke not only of power and military strength, but also of the sophistication and intellectual achievements of the deceased.

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THERMOLUMINESCENCE ANALYSIS REPORT

The object was presumed to be:
A large sancai-glazed pottery horse (Tang dynasty, 618-906AD) ref PH 026/303

The following samples were taken in powder form on: 15 March 2002
By: Phyllis Hsia of Oxford Authentication South East Asia

Sample A: Under the head
Sample B: The left buttock

Using standard methods and techniques it was estimated that the date of last firing was: Between 900 and 1500 years ago

Note: Both samples yielded a similar result

CONSISTENT with the suggested period of manufacture

Date: 3 April 2002 **Signed**

Doreen Stoneham for Oxford Authentication Ltd.

NOTES:

(i) The result is given in good faith; however Oxford Authentication takes no responsibility for financial loss incurred through an erroneous result being given.
(ii) The result only refers to the part from which the samples were obtained. If the object has suffered restoration the component parts may be of differing antiquity.
(iii) The analysis refers to the date of last firing. This may be different from the date of manufacture if the object has been refired.
(iv) In making this report, it is assumed that the sample(s) have not been exposed to ionising radiation.
(v) If an object has been re-modelled, the date of the clay will be that of the original firing and not the date of re-modelling.
(vi) Conditions of business may be obtained from Oxford Authentication Ltd.

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