

GALERIE GOLCONDA

ARCHÉOLOGIE MUSÉALE
FOSSILES – BIJOUX RARES ET ANCIENS
CABINET DE CURIOSITÉS DES GRANDES CIVILISATIONS

CERTIFICATE

RARE PAIR OF CHIMERAS HAN DYNASTY (206 BC - AD 220)

MATERIAL AND TECHNIQUE: exceptional pair of chimeras in greyish beige terra cotta covered with a white slip and showing traces of red and blue paint. The moulded statues are hollow in the centre. Each monster has a dragon's head and a feline body. The volumes are accentuated and stylized, with decorations typical of the period. The roaring maw presents protuberances, the eyes are wide, the ears pointed, the griffin paws have three digits, the hindquarters are wide and the small tail is directed towards the ground. The body is decorated with circular mouldings on the legs and linear ones on the back. Crosshatching can be seen on the neck and beneath the eyes and a square opening is at the base of the neck. The ensemble is very rare and of tremendous aesthetic quality.

Excellent state of preservation. Possible ancient restoration work. Very fine condition.

ORIGIN: The feline characteristics with the addition of horns or wings put these animals in the register of wondrous creatures generally represented in pairs. Under the eastern Han, they served as guardians in the tombs of high dignitaries. Then they completely disappeared for two centuries due to the sumptuary laws enacted during the Three Kingdoms period (220-280) and under the Jin dynasty (265-316). This type of chimera would reappear in the 5th century in a more monumental form and reserved for the imperial family. The appearance of these statues still remains today an enigma but should be considered in relation to older iconographic and symbolic legacies.

DIMENSIONS: Height: 25.5 cm (9.8") – Length: 43.5 cm (16.9") - Width: 23.8 cm (9")

THERMOLUMINESCENCE TESTS by the QED laboratory confirm the dating. Tests n° QED1546/FC-0101 et 02.

MUSEOGRAPHY: a similar piece is presented at the Art Institute of Chicago, N° 1997.337.

EXPORT LICENCE: supplied with a Passeport culturel issued by the French Ministry of Culture numb. 200333

Police book registration N°: 1692A.B