



**Straw-glazed pottery figure of a cockerel, Tang (680-960)
POA**

Straw-glazed pottery figure of a cockerel, Tang (680-960), its wings and tail with incised feather detail

Dimensions:

Height: 11cm. (4 1/4in.)

Condition:

Minute chip to comb

Notes:

The ritual of sacrificing and burying humans and animals within tombs was abandoned during the Western Han dynasty (206 BC – 24 AD), and came to be replaced by the practice of burying ceramic replicas with the deceased, so that they would continue to be served and nourished in the afterlife. This afterlife was viewed as parallel and coexisting with the world of the living; those who entered it would require material provisions including food, clothing and utensils as well as servants and protectors. Funerary wares ('mingqi') were produced especially for burial, and as such were frequently glazed with lead – a toxic substance thus unsuitable for utensils intended for daily use by the living. The teachings of Confucius, popular in China from the Han Dynasty onwards, were central to such burial customs, as the key concept of filial piety required that people 'serve the dead as one serves the living, and serve the departed as one serves those who are present'. This cockerel mingqi would have been intended for such use in a tomb to provide nourishment and comfort for the po of the deceased - the corporeal soul which remained in the tomb while the spiritual soul (hun) left the body behind for the afterlife.

Material and Technique	Straw-glazed pottery
Origin	Chinese
Period	15th Century and Earlier
Condition	Very good
Dimensions	Height: 11cm. (4 1/4in.)

