

Covered Jar

China, Tang Dynasty (618-906)

Pottery with three-color glaze; h. 14 in.

Gift of Mrs. Anna Rice Cooke, 1931 (3009)

Some particularly distinguished types of ceramic burial objects were produced by Tang potters in *sancai* ware. *Sancai* is created with lead glazes in three colors: green, brown and yellow. Occasionally a brilliant cobalt was also used. Sometimes a white slip was applied to the body before the glazes were added. Colors were applied by dripping, spotting, brushing or wax resist. This covered jar of buff earthenware is decorated with vertical bands of flowers and dots in green, yellow and blue. The piece is considered to be one of the best extant examples of its kind.



Tomb Sculpture of Mythical Guardian Animal (7321.1) h. 35 3/16 in.

Tomb Sculpture of Guardian Figure with a Human Face (7322.1) h. 35 1/4 in.

China, Tang Dynasty, late 7th-early 8th century
Earthenware with *sancai* glaze
Gift of John Young, 1993

Among the most prevalent—and no doubt the most essential—tomb images are guardian figures. Cosmological concepts and Daoist beliefs in the Han and subsequent dynasties led to the appearance of images of fantastic creatures from the spirit world. The practice of placing such figures in the tomb to frighten away demons dates from the Northern Dynasties and includes the apotropaic *qitou*, a half-human/half-animal being. Originally a mask worn in a New Year devil-clearing ceremony, it is depicted with a large head and ears and a twisted horn. An even more ferocious being is the *zhenmu shou*, with long horns, bulging eyes, bared teeth, and spiky wings and mane. These types of figures with two armored warriors often formed a group of four, and were placed in each corner of a burial chamber. The latter were apparently influenced by the warrior guardian sculptures that protected Buddhist temples.

