

PAN

AMSTERDAM

PAUL RUITENBEEK CHINESE ART



YELLOW-GLAZED STONEWARE FLASK

Tang dynasty (618-907)
20.4 cm high, 15.8 cm wide

The flask is of flattened oval form, supported on a wide, splayed foot, and surmounted by a short neck with lipped rim. The shoulders are set with two pierced, angular handles for suspension of a cord. One side is moulded with a large phoenix perched on a scrolling grape vine, the other side depicts two confronted phoenix, each side further decorated with a border of pearl roundels. The exterior is applied with a layer of white slip and an ochre-yellow glaze, pooling in the recessed areas. The foot and base are left free of glaze.

Although grapes may have been known in China from as early as the Han dynasty, it was not until the Tang dynasty that wine made from grapes was commonly consumed among the Chinese elite and grape motifs started to appear on vessels. The design of phoenix in combination with grapevines, however, is highly unusual, unlike the combination with lions, which is more frequently found, for example on Tang-dynasty bronze mirrors.

A very similar flask, with a slightly darker glaze, is illustrated in Regina Krahl, *Chinese Ceramics from the Meiyintang Collection*, Vol. Three (II), 2006, pl. 1369, where the author refers to a related flask recovered from a Xing kiln site in Hebei province, suggesting that they may have been produced there.