

# GREEN-GLAZED POTTERY COFFIN.

Pottery coffins, according to Chinese traditions, go back into the time of a greater antiquity than sarcophagi, and were employed in ancient times (the Chou period) for the burial of the corpses of children who had died below the age of eleven, and for whom no mourning was worn. During the middle ages, pottery coffins were utilized also for adults, especially for Buddhist monks who strove for strict simplicity in funeral matters. The Emperor T'ai-tsu (951 A. D.) guided by motives of economy ordered in his will that his body should be interred in a coffin of baked clay. It was the established practice during all ages to make use of wooden coffins of heavy and durable timber, and this custom still obtains.

This specimen may serve as an object-lesson in reconstructing the large wooden coffins of the T'ang period which have not survived. It is apparently made, on a smaller scale, in imitation of a large wooden coffin of that time, with high upper end and slanting lid. The small dimensions indicate the use of this coffin for the interment of a child placed in an upright sitting posture. The green glaze is entirely decomposed on the surface of the four walls, while on the lid it is perfectly preserved and in many portions assumes a brilliant silver oxidation. The receptacle was shaped in a wooden mold.

Shensi Province.

T'ang Period (618-906).