



EST. 1968



**552. Guandi**

China, Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), early 17th century  
Height: 21,8 cm

A finely modelled blanc-de-chine figure of Guandi, wearing a cloth cap tied on top of his head with two trailing ribbons. The frowning face has slanting eyes and an incised moustache and short side burns. He wears a scholars



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gown over armour, held in place by a belt around his chest; the toes of his boots are just visible. His hands are clasped to one side, concealed beneath long flowing sleeves. The porcelain in a creamy white with a rich glossy glaze. The relatively small size of the figure, suggests it was produced for personal devotion. The hollow body is incised around the inner rim with several irregular Chinese characters: 大明年造 (made in the Ming dynasty).

Guandi is as one of the Five Tiger Generals, who performed legendary military deeds. He was greatly venerated and proclaimed as the God of War in 1594. Guandi becomes a potent symbol of justice, honesty and integrity and one of China's most popular divinities. He is also the deity of all money making activities, because as peace bringer he ensures economic prosperity. In this scholarly attire, he was venerated as the patron god of the literati.

Comparable figures are in the British Museum (nr.1938.0524.27) and the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (nr. C.544-1910) and The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

**Provenance:**

Private Collection, United Kingdom