

# The “Oeder” Gui

Hong Kong / International Antiques Fair / May 28<sup>th</sup> –31<sup>st</sup>, 2016







## The “Oeder” *Gui*

Early or middle Western Zhou dynasty,  
circa 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

International Antiques Fair / Hong Kong / May 28<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016  
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International  
Antiques Fair  
國際古玩展

## Foreword

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I feel greatly privileged and singularly fortunate to be able to present to the art loving public this very important Chinese ritual bronze vessel *gui* which dates from the beginning of the Western Zhou dynasty (circa 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) and which was formerly in two well-known collections : the Oeder Collection and the Meiyintang Collection.

This exceptionally rare and beautiful masterpiece of the “Bronze Age” of China was, in antiquity, part of an original set which included two other similar, known *gui*, one of which is now in the Guimet Museum (Paris) and the other in the Rietberg Museum (Zurich).

In 1984, the present bronze *gui* was sold at auction in London, where I was the underbidder. After pursuing this magnificent, elusive masterpiece for 32 years, I am now happy to be able to say that it is mine.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have helped me in the different stages in the preparation and production of this catalogue: Vincent Girier Dufournier, who has so skillfully photographed this exceptional object; René Bouchara, who has produced this catalogue; Ed O’Neill for his great help in the translation of the catalogue into English, and finally Clémence Artur, my assistant, who has supervised the whole process from beginning to end and has made it possible for me to present this superb catalogue.

**Christian Deydier**

## Ritual bronze food vessel *gui*

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**Early or middle Western Zhou dynasty, circa 10<sup>th</sup> century BC.**

西周早中期乳丁紋青銅簋

**Height: 15.2 cm, Diameter: 21.8 cm, Diameter including handles: 27.5 cm**

A ritual bronze vessel *gui* (簋), principally used to hold cooked rice, millet or sorghum. The body of the vessel, which is cast in the shape of a circular bowl, is supported on a high ring foot and has two large semi-circular lateral handles at its sides.

The decoration on the vessel's bowl-shaped body is divided into two sections, a top narrow band embellished on each of the vessel's sides with a deeply cast taotie mask (饕餮) flanked on each side by three deeply cast crested dragons (夔) separated by revolving flame motifs (*jiongwen* 同紋) and a second much wider lower section decorated with geometric patterns filled in their centres with boss motifs (乳丁紋). The vessel's raised foot is decorated with a narrow band of silk-worm motifs (蠶紋) converging on a vertical flange at the band's front centre.

The two handles, each issuing from a perfectly cast animal head, are decorated with long scroll patterns and end in a hooked flange.

Bronze with a light water green patina.

### **Inscription:**

- A three-character inscription cast inside the vessel reads: "Father Xin (of clan) X"  
《父辛X》

### **Provenance:**

- Dr Weismann Collection, Berlin, in the 1930s.
- Oeder Collection, Priemern, Altmark, Germany.
- E.V. Thaw Collection, New York, USA.
- Sotheby's, London, 19 June 1984.
- Eskenazi Ltd, London, U.K.
- Meyintang Collection, Rapperswil, Switzerland.

### **Exhibited:**

- Sotheby's, London, 19 June 1984, catalogue no. 12.
- Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars – 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 67.





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- Kümmel O., *Jörg Trübner zum Gedächtnis, Ergebnisse seiner letzten chinesischen Reisen*, Berlin 1930, pl. 4.
- Karlgren B., *Yin and Zhou Chinese Bronzes*, BMFEA Vol. 8, Stockholm 1936, pl. XIII no. A. 304.
- Karlgren B., *New Studies on Chinese Bronzes*, BMFEA Vol.9, Stockholm 1937, pl. XL no. 381.
- Hentze C., *Bronzegerät, Kultbauten, Religion im ältesten China der Shang – zeit*, Antwerp 1951, pl. IV, no. 16.
- Lion – Goldschmidt D. et Moreau – Gobard J.C., *Arts de la Chine, Bronze, Jade, Sculpture, Céramiques*, Fribourg 1966, pl. 26.
- Sotheby's, London, 19 June 1984, lot 12.
- Liu Yu, *Jin Chu Yin Zhou Jinwen Jilu*, 2002, no. 397. 劉雨 《近出殷周金文集錄》 2002 年版 397 號。
- Liu Yu & Wang Tao, *Liu San Oumei Yin Zhou You Ming Qingtongqi Jilu (A selection of Early Chinese bronzes with inscriptions from Sotheby's & Christie's sales)*, Shanghai 2007, no. 82. 劉雨 & 汪濤 《流散歐美 殷周有銘青銅器集錄》 上海 2007 年版 82 號。
- Wang Tao, *Chinese Bronzes from the Meiyintang Collection*, London 2009, p. 203, no. 98.
- Wu Zhenfeng, *Shang Zhou Qingtongqi Mingwen Ji Tuxiang Jicheng*, Shanghai 2012, Vol. 8, p. 137, no. 03826. 吳鎮烽 《商周青銅器銘文暨圖像集成》 上海 2012 年版, 第 8 冊, 第 137 頁 03826 號。
- Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 110, no. 67.
- Deydier Ch., *Chinese Bronzes from the Meiyintang Collection, Volume 1 Annexe*, Hong Kong 2015, n° 98, p. 158 -159.
- Deydier Ch., *Understanding Ancient Chinese Bronzes, Their Importance in Chinese Culture, Their Shapes, Functions and Motifs*, Paris 2015, photo p. 43.

**Note:**

- Two identical *gui*, with the same design and same inscription, and probably from the same original set, are now in the Guimet Museum (Paris) and in the Rietberg Museum (Zurich), respectively.









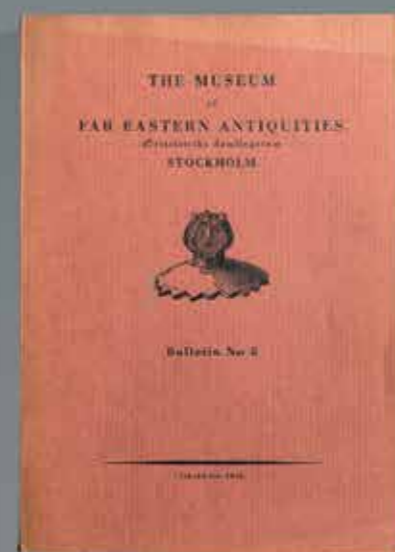
# Publications



**Kümmel O.**

*Jörg Trübner zum Gedächtnis,  
Ergebnisse seiner letzten chineischen  
Reisen*

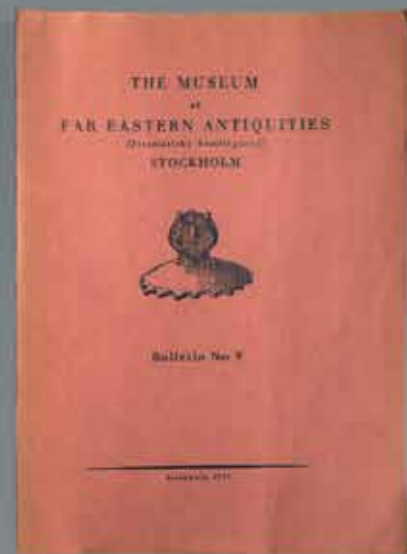
Berlin 1930, pl. 4.



**Karlgren B.**

*Yin and Zhou Chinese Bronzes*

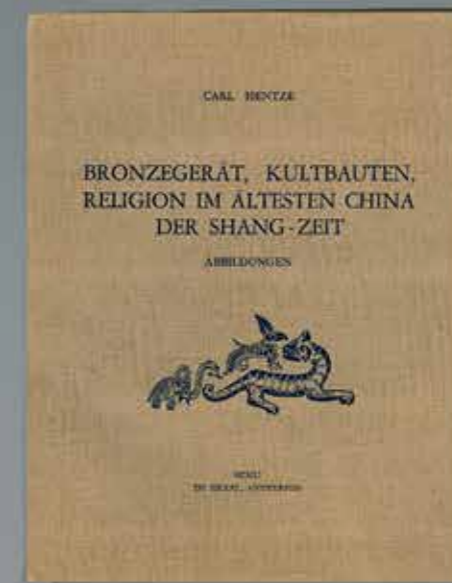
BMFEA Vol.8, Stockholm 1936,  
pl. XIII no. A. 304.



**Karlgren B.**

*New Studies on Chinese Bronzes*

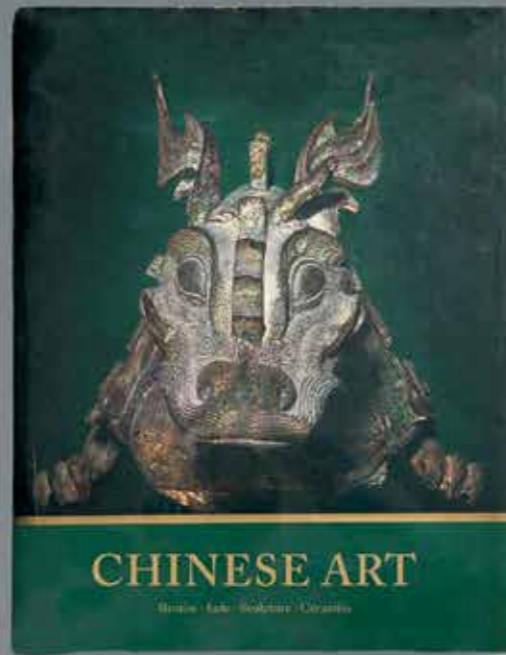
BMFEA Vol. 9, Stockholm 1937,  
pl. XL no. 381.



**Hentze C.**

*Bronzegerät, Kultbauten, Religion im  
ältesten China der Shang-zeit*

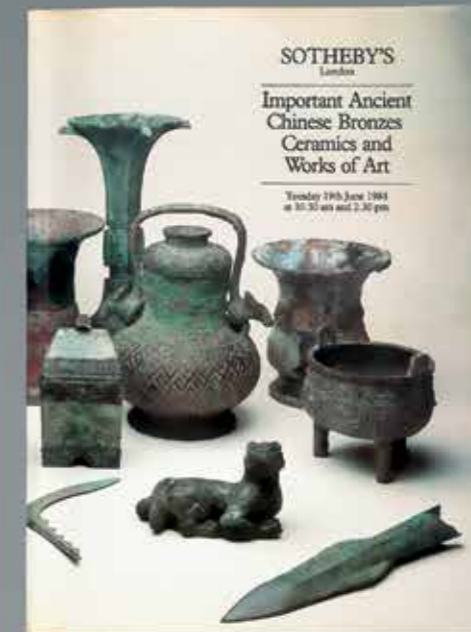
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Lion-Goldschmidt D.  
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*Arts de la Chine,  
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Liu Yu 劉雨

*Jin Chu Yin Zhou Jinwen Jilu*  
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2002, no. 397.  
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Liu Yu & Wang Tao 劉雨 & 汪濤

*Liu San Oumei Yin Zhou You Ming Qingtongqi Jilu*  
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from Sotheby's & Christie's sales)  
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Shanghai 2007, no. 82.  
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Wang Tao

*Chinese Bronzes from the Meiyintang  
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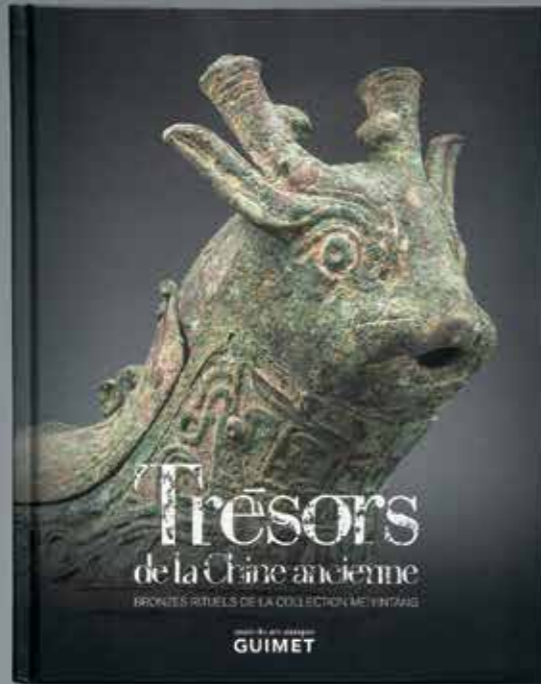
London 2009, p. 203, no. 98.



Wu Zhenfeng 吳鎮烽

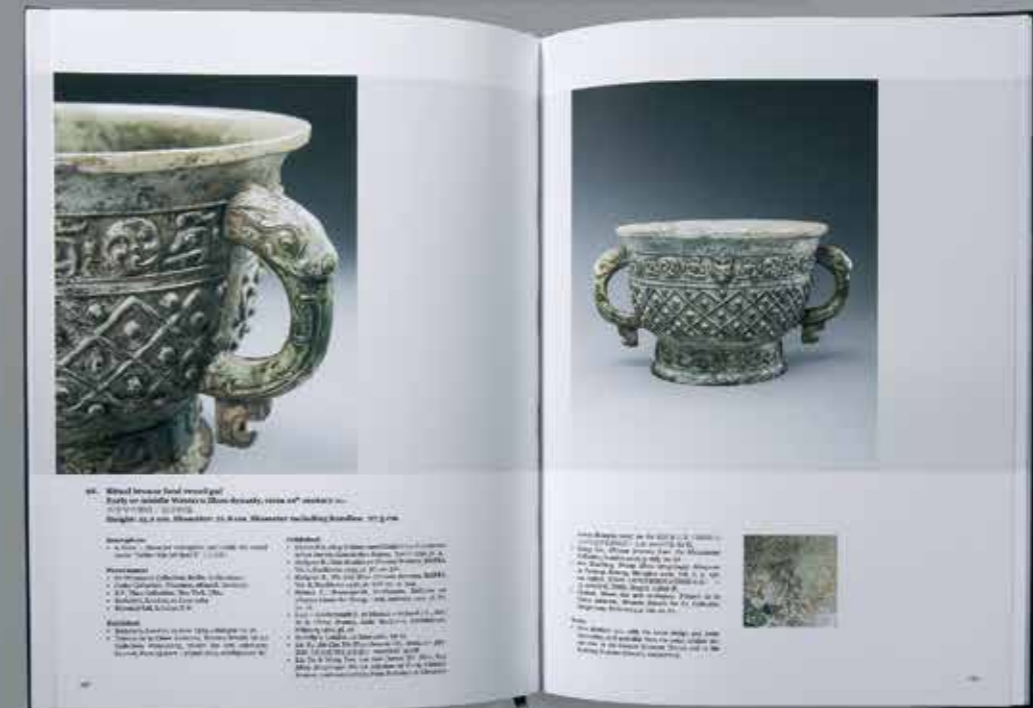
*Shang Zhou Qingtongqi Mingwen Ji  
Tuxiang Jicheng*  
《商周青銅器銘文暨圖像集成》

Shanghai 2012, Vol. 8, p. 137, no. 03826.  
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Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques,  
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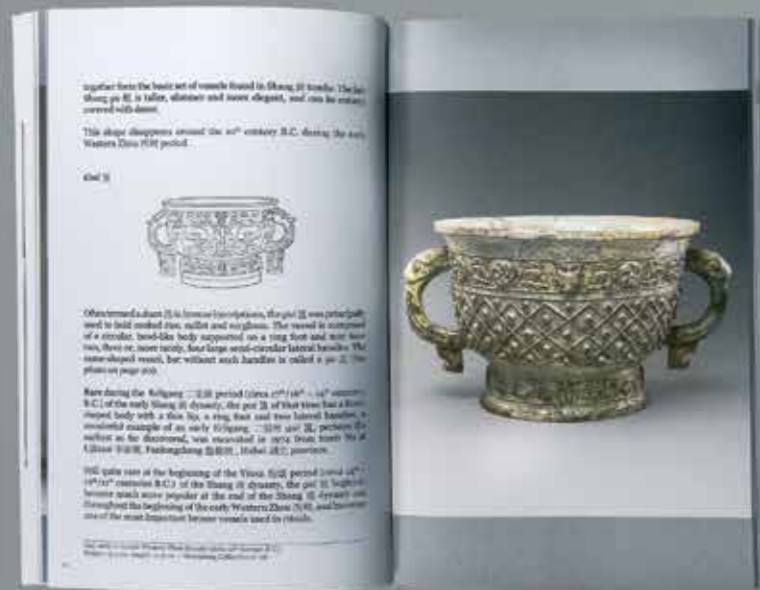
Paris 2013, p. 110, no. 67.



Deydier Ch.  
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Volume 1 Annexe, Hong Kong 2015,  
 n° 98, p. 158 -159.





**Deydier Ch.**

*Understanding Ancient Chinese Bronzes,*  
*Their Importance in Chinese Culture,*  
*Their Shapes, Functions and Motifs*

Paris 2015, photo p. 43.

