

Chinese Bronzes  
from the Meiyintang Collection

Volume 2

中國銅器

Christian Deydier

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戴克成

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## Contents

9	Foreword
11	Chronology
13	Map
14	Studies of archaic Chinese bronze ritual vessels
24	Casting techniques
28	Fake bronzes
36	Shapes

### Catalogue

57	I - Xia / Erlitou culture
73	II - Early Shang / Erligang period
103	III - Late Shang / Yinxu period
151	IV - Western Zhou dynasty
187	V - Early Eastern Zhou / Spring and Autumn period
203	VI - Late Eastern Zhou / Warring States period
217	VII - Han dynasty

220	Bibliography
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## Foreword

Since the publication of Volume 1 of *Chinese Bronzes in the Meiyintang Collection*, the collection has expanded and fifty more ritual bronzes have been added to those which have already been published.

Many of the new acquisitions take us back to the very origins of bronze- vessel casting in China or, in other words, to the Erlitou cultural period (19<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.) in the Xia dynasty and the Erligang period (16<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.) at the beginning of the Shang dynasty.

As a result of the collector's recently renewed concentration on these early periods, the Meiyintang Collection has been able to acquire several exceptional bronzes of the Erlitou period, such as the extremely rare *jiao* listed as no. 160 (p. 68) and has also, as a result, now become the most complete collection in private hands of bronze ritual vessels of the Erligang period.

The archaic bronze vessels in the Meiyintang Collection, probably the most important private collection of its type in terms of the quality, the rarity and the impeccable provenances of its objects, are a concrete testament to and a visual reminder of the primary importance in Chinese culture of the ancestral cult.

The daily and seasonal rituals in which ancestral worship is enshrined have continued among the Chinese for millennia in spite of the vicissitudes of life and the social and political upheavals that have marked China in the past five thousand or so years and these rituals, though in a modified form, are still part of the daily lives of the Chinese people today, wherever they are living, be it China proper or overseas, in Southeast Asia, America, Africa or wherever.

In ancient China, the cult of ancestral worship prescribed certain very elaborate rituals for which bronze vessels were needed, either to hold and make ritual libations of fermented beverages or to hold the cooked grains and other food presented as offerings to the spirits of the ancestors. All of the various types of vessels used in such rituals can be found in the Meiyintang Collection of bronzes.

Still today, every Chinese home, every merchant's shop and every restaurant, workshop or even newspaper kiosk, no matter how small, has its altar dedicated to the ancestors, on which are arranged offerings and sticks of incense and at which are celebrated, though admittedly in a simplified form, rituals of filial piety that trace their origins far back into Chinese cultural history to the days of the Xia, Shang and Zhou.

I have had the unique privilege not only of working on the compilation of two volumes of *Chinese Bronzes from the Meiyintang Collection*, but also of participating very actively in the formation of this collection by carrying out research on its objects, and, should I say, tracking down exceptional objects to further enrich the collection.

I should like, in these few short lines and thus inadequately, to express here my gratitude to Dr. Stephen Zuellig for the total confidence that he has placed in me for almost twenty years by entrusting me with the implementation of this extraordinary project. I shall never forget the sublime compliment which he recently paid me by calling me his 'ami cher', his 'dear friend', dear in the two senses of the word, both beloved and expensive.

These two volumes would not have been able to see the light of day without the invaluable and timely assistance of Ms. Raphaële Hervé de Sigalony, and Messrs Vincent Girier Dufournier, Ed. O'Neill and René Bouchara.

Christian Deydier



# Chronology

Xia dynasty 夏

- Erlitou culture 二里頭文化 19<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.

Shang dynasty 商

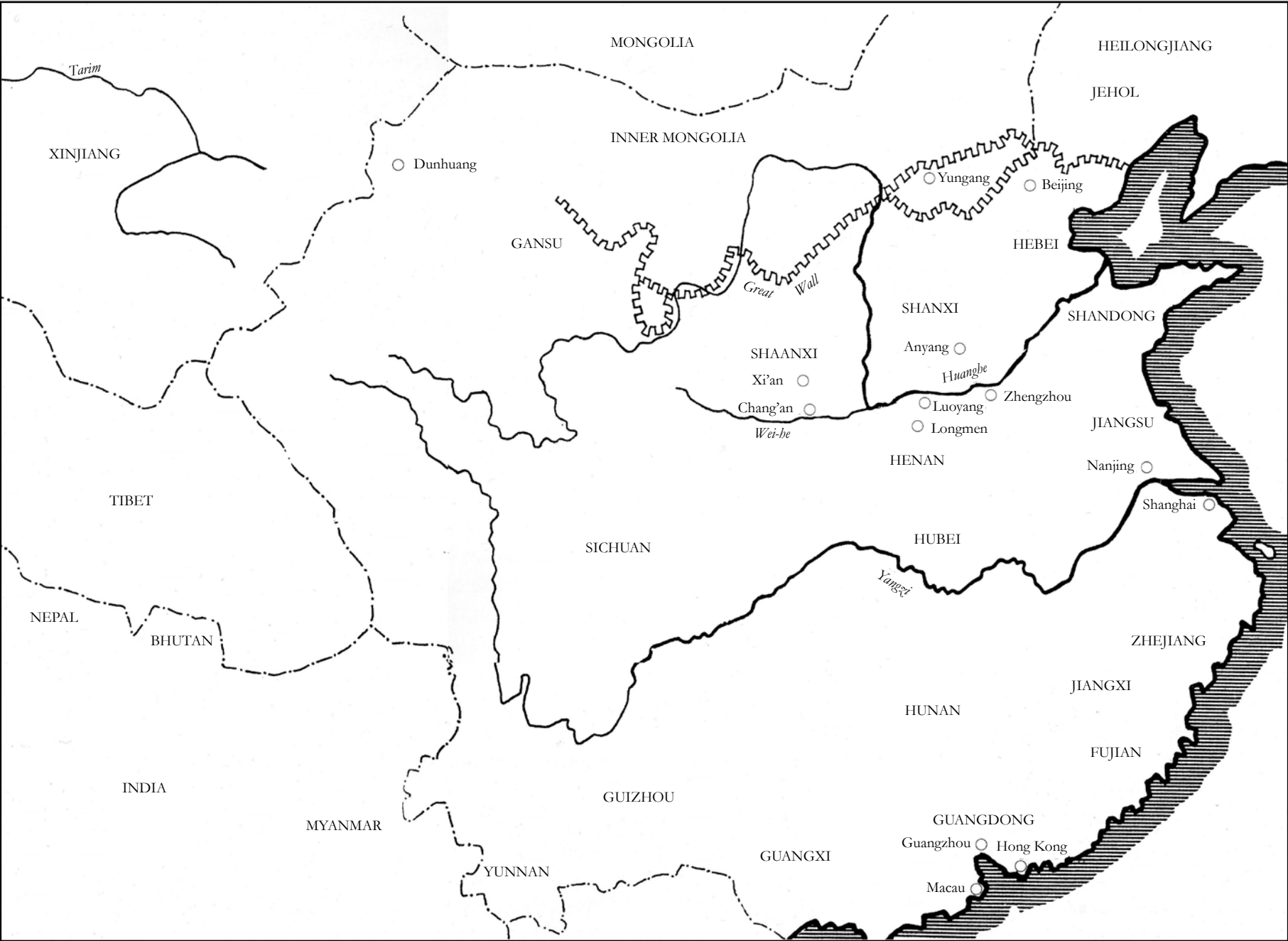
- Erligang period 二里岡 16<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.
- Yinxu period 殷墟 14<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.

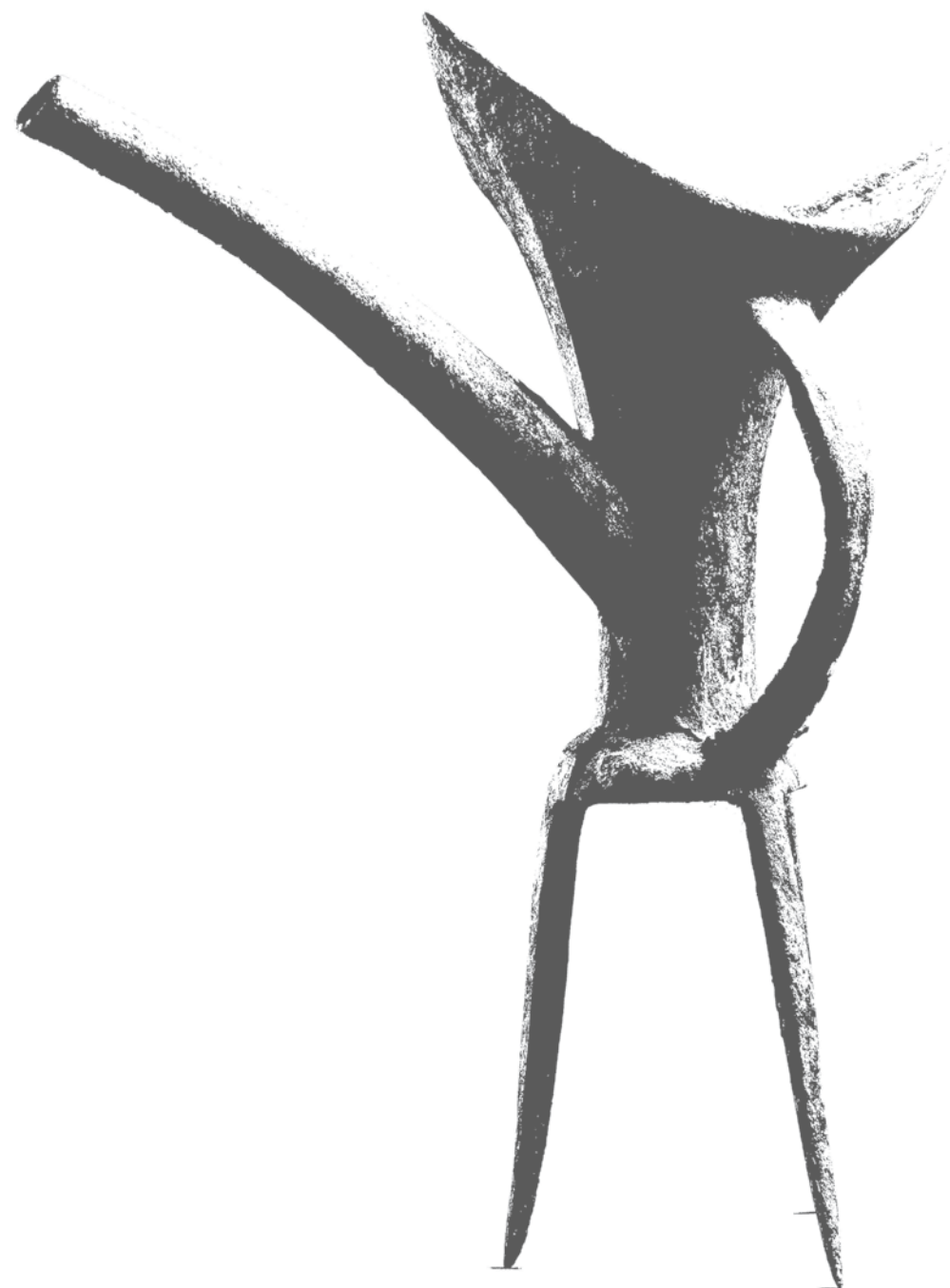
Zhou dynasty 周

- Western Zhou dynasty 西周 11<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.
- Eastern Zhou dynasty 東周
  - Spring and Autumn period 春秋 8<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.
  - Warring States period 戰國 5<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC.

Western Han dynasty 西漢 206 BC. – 9 AD.

Map of China





## Studies of archaic Chinese bronze ritual vessels

From as early as the Han dynasty, Chinese classical books and official historical annals comment on the great interest shown by Chinese intellectuals in the study of ancient ritual bronze vessels from the Shang and Zhou dynasties. This keen interest was, most probably, aroused by the unintentional unearthing at the time of a number of archaic bronze vessels by floods, earthquakes and mudslides, as well as during the construction of new tombs, temples or other buildings or the digging of wells. These discoveries were regarded as so important that they were recorded and discussed in the *Hanshu* (漢書) (Official Han Annals). The first documented discovery of an ancient ritual bronze vessel was that of a large ding in 116 BC., an event considered so important and auspicious that the Emperor of the time, Wu Di (武帝) (140 – 87 BC.) changed his reign name to Yuanding (元鼎) or “Original Ding” between the years 116 and 111 BC. The rightness of his decision and his belief that heaven continued to favour him were deemed confirmed when in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Yuanding (112 BC.), yet another large ding was unearthed by a landslide in Fenyang County, Hedong Prefecture, an event which was also considered important enough to be recorded in the *Hanshu*.

During the following centuries, certain events, many natural, continued to bring to light a number of archaic ritual bronze vessels and such discoveries were always considered auspicious and signs of heaven’s favour towards the ruling house.

During the Tang and the Song dynasties such discoveries became even more common, which was probably at least partially due to the many public works projects being undertaken around China at that time, as the country prospered economically and imperial power increased. Another possible reason was that during the Tang, many of the sites chosen for new tombs were located in areas where ancient cemeteries had previously been made and these were often inadvertently disturbed and their contents brought to light.

During the late Qing dynasty, the building of the railway lines also led to the accidental unearthing of quite a number of tombs and caches containing ancient bronze vessels. But perhaps the most important discovery from the point of view of ancient bronze vessels, their inscriptions, etc. was made during the reign of Guangxu in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when a massive mudslide led to the discovery of the Shang royal tombs, in Xiaotun near present-day Anyang in Henan Province. This was followed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by fifteen scientific excavations organized by the Academia Sinica from 1928 until 1938, when all archaeological work on the sites was interrupted by the Japanese invasion.

Related Literature

In ancient texts from as early as the Zhou dynasty, such as the *Zhouli* (周禮) and the *Liqi* (禮記), we can find references to ritual bronze vessels and detailed descriptions of their uses.

During the Han dynasty, the *Shuowen Jiezi* (說文解字) and the *Erya* (爾雅) both included numerous references to bronze ritual vessels.

- The *Erya* (爾雅), which is China’s earliest-known dictionary cum encyclopedia and was most probably compiled in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. from the end of the Qin dynasty to the beginning of the Western Han, is divided into three sections, one on synonyms, another on words grouped together by the closeness of their meanings and a third on terms grouped together by theme and contains a plethora of references to ancient ritual bronze vessels.
- The *Shuowen Jiezi* (說文解字), a dictionary cum encyclopedia written by Xu Shen (許慎) (died 146 AD.) in the Han dynasty, features descriptions of shapes and types of ritual vessels and explanations of their uses. This extremely important book, with its wealth of valuable information, is even today considered to be the foundation upon which all subsequent studies of ancient Chinese bronze vessels is based.

During the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD., the poet, statesman and historian Shen Yue (沈約) ( 441 – 513 AD.) in the *Furui Zhi* (符瑞誌) (*The Book of Auspicious Omens*), included later in the *Songshu* (宋書) (*Annals of the Kingdom of Song (420 – 479 AD.) / Song Kingdom of the post-Han, pre-Tang period*) mentioned fifteen discoveries, in which a total of forty-one ancient bronze ritual vessels were unearthed.

However, it was during the post-Tang period Song dynasty (960 – 1279 AD.) that Chinese antiquarians carried out the first scientific studies of ancient Chinese bronzes. After initially making a complete inventory of all the ancient bronze vessels discovered up to that time, several scholars compiled treatises which included drawings and descriptions of each known vessel and its inscription, if there was one, together with an attempt to classify the vessels and interpret the inscriptions.

Among the thirty or so surviving books written during the Song dynasty on the subject of ancient bronze ritual vessels and their inscriptions, the most important are:

- the *Xian Qin Guji Tu* (先秦古器圖), which is probably the first book to publish drawings of ancient ritual vessels. It was written by the Song academician Liu Chang (劉敞) (1019 – 1068) who lived near the site of the ancient capital of the Western Zhou.
- The *Jigulu Bawei* (集古錄跋尾), edited and published by Ouyang Xiu (歐陽修) (1007 – 1072) is regarded by scholars as the first specialized study of the inscriptions cast on nineteen inscribed ritual bronze vessels known at that time. The book contains information about the place of discovery of each bronze, its shape and size and a transcription of its inscription. Ouyang Xiu’s book was greatly influenced by the work of Liu Chang (劉敞).
- The *Kaogu Tu* (考古圖) written by Lü Dalin (呂大林) in 1092 is probably the oldest and most important compilation produced during the Song period. It includes a description and a drawing of two hundred and ten bronze vessels and objects, as well as thirteen jade objects, dating from the Shang dynasty up to the Han dynasty, and all included in either the Imperial Collections or in ten private collections of the period. Of the two hundred and ten bronzes treated in the book, one hundred and forty-eight were considered to date from the Shang and Zhou dynasties and Lü arranged them according to their shape. Lü’s extremely important work was the pioneer in its field and the book upon which all further works and studies of ancient Chinese bronze vessels, their morphology, etc. are based.
- The *Bogu Tu* (博古圖) was written by Wang Fu (王黼) on Emperor Huizong’s (徽宗) (1101 -1125) instructions. This compilation, probably the most famous, was done between 1107-1110, and then revised and expanded between 1107 – 1110. In this extremely important work, Wang Fu not only records eight hundred and thirty-nine bronzes arranged according to their shape, but he also lists, describes and includes drawings and the inscriptions of all inscribed bronze vessels which were then in the Imperial and private collections. After doing careful research on the names of these vessels based on the study of all the classical texts, Wang also standardized the terminology for most of the bronze vessel shapes and their decorative motifs. Unfortunately, some of the pieces published by Wang Fu are today considered later copies of earlier bronzes.





In spite of some shortcomings, it is generally agreed that the Song antiquarians carried out very meticulous research and produced well-written, factual studies, which was apparently not always the case in later periods, especially during the Ming dynasty. Apart from a few mistakes, sometimes extremely slight, the Song antiquarians' method of classifying bronzes and the classifications and terminology which they standardized and/or established constitute the basis of our modern classifications and terminology. For example, the Song antiquarians found in the ancient texts and then systematized names like *ding*, *li*, *jue*, *jia*, *pan*, etc. for ritual vessels, and terms like *leiwen* and *taotie* mask to refer respectively to a motif composed of alternating spirals and circles, and the animal mask motif, all of which terms are still used by scholars today.

During the Ming dynasty, on the other hand, antiquarians and scholars seem to have been less attracted by the study of ancient bronze vessels, and when they did set their hand to the study of this subject, their work was much less rigorous and accurate than that of the Song dynasty antiquarians. Some scholars think this lack of interest and attention to details was the consequence of the paucity of material to study firsthand, as a result of the government-sanctioned melting down of many ancient bronze vessels which was carried out to provide raw material for the manufacture of weapons and coins during the Ming dynasty.

During the Qing dynasty and especially during the reign of the Emperor Qianlong (1736 – 96) the interest in ancient ritual bronzes was rekindled, creating a new impetus for the study of ancient bronzes and their inscriptions. It was also a time when many important private collections were formed and numerous specialised books and catalogues were published, including the following:

- The *Xiqing Gujian* (西清古鑒), a very important catalogue in 40 volumes listing, among other antiquities, 1,529 bronze vessels from the Shang to Tang dynasties in the Imperial Collections, was compiled in 1751 in the Office of the Hanlin Academy by Liang Shizheng ( 梁詩正) and other scholars on Emperor Qianlong's instructions. Unfortunately, half or more of those pieces are today considered to be later reproductions, many of them produced in the Song dynasty.
- In 1779, three books: the *Ningshou Jiangu* (寧壽鑒古), the *Xiqing Xujian Jiabian* (西清續鑒甲篇) and the *Xiqing Xujian Yibian* (西清續鑒乙篇), were published. They included all the new pieces which had been added to the Imperial Collections since 1752, which, together with those already amassed, reached a total of 4,115 bronzes.

Amongst the collectors of the Qing dynasty, who collected, researched and published with scientific rigour, the most famous were:

- Qian Daxin (錢大昕) (1728 – 1804), a polymath who was one of the most prominent historians and linguists of the time and who served as a commissioner of education and examinations in Guangdong province during the Qing dynasty. Qian had a special interest in phonetics, etymology and epigraphy. An expert in ancient inscriptions, he collected and owned more than two thousand rubbings of inscriptions on bronze and stone. He wrote many books, one of which, the *Jinshi Wenzhi Mulu* (金石文字目錄) is a kind of dictionary of bronze and stone inscriptions, which is still consulted to this day.
- Zhu Yun (朱筠) (1729 - 1780), who considered himself to be the first bronze inscription specialist and worked closely with Ruan Yuan (阮元).
- Qian Dian (錢坫) (1741 – 1806), the nephew of the Qing polymath and expert in ancient inscriptions, Qian Daxin (錢大昕) (1728 – 1804) and an eminent Qing dynasty scholar of the *Shuowen* (說文), a great calligraphist in his own right and an avid collector of ancient bronze vessels. His collection of 49 bronzes was published in 1796 under the title *Shiliu Changle Tang Guqi Kuanshi Kao* (十六長樂堂古器款識考) in which he included drawings and measurements of each of the 49 vessels together with transcriptions of inscriptions.
- Wu Dongfa (吳東發) (1747 – 1803), who is well-known today for his paintings and calligraphy, but also as a great specialist in textology, especially on stone and bronze. He wrote the *Shang Zhou Wenzhi Shiyi* (商周文字拾遺) (*Compendium of Surviving Shang and Zhou Writing*).
- Kong Guangsen (孔廣森) (1752 – 1786)
- Ruan Yuan (阮元) (1764 – 1849), was the most famous scholar of the Qing dynasty. In his book the *Jiguzhai Zhongding Yiqi Kuanshi* (積古齋鐘鼎彝器款識), with its preface dated 1804, he recorded and studied five hundred and fifty inscriptions, with translations and notes, some contributed by other contemporary scholars like Wu Dongfa, Zhu Yun, etc.
- Xu Tongbo (徐同柏) (1775 – 1854), a great Qing dynasty scholar and collector of bronzes. His collection included many archaic vessels, but because of the chaotic conditions created by the outbreak of the Opium War in 1840 and

then the Taiping Rebellion, a book on the collection was published only in 1906, long after his death, under the name *Conggutang Kuanshixue* (從古堂款識學).

- Wu Shifen (吳式芬) (1796 – 1856), who prepared a compilation of one thousand, three hundred and thirty-four inscriptions entitled the *Jungu Lu Jinwen* (攔古錄金文), which was not published until 1895, after his death, also because of the chaotic conditions caused by the Opium War and Taiping Rebellion.
- Fang Junyi (方濬益) (died 1899), who wrote a book entitled *Zhuiyi Zhai Yiqi Kuanshi Kaoshi* (綴遺齋彝器款識考釋) in which one thousand, three hundred and eighty-two inscriptions were recorded, but the book was not published until 1935.
- Chen Jieqi (陳介祺) (1813 – 1884), probably the greatest bronze vessel collector of the Qing dynasty, who personally owned about 130 to 140 vessels. He wrote a catalogue entitled *Fuzhai Jijinlu* (簠齋集金錄) which included one hundred and eighty-eight inscriptions, but which was published only in 1918.
- Wu Dacheng (吳大澂) (1835 – 1902). One thousand and forty-eight inscriptions from Shang and Zhou dynasties are recorded in his *Kezhai Jigulu* (愙齋集古錄) which was published only in 1916.
- Duan Fang (端方) (1861 – 1911), whose book, the *Taozhai Jijinlu* (陶齋吉金錄), published in 1908, was the first in China in which rubbings of ancient bronze inscriptions were published using the then new technique of ‘gravura reproduction’.

**Modern studies**

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century an extraordinary discovery deeply influenced and changed the course of all studies of ancient bronze inscriptions. In the late 1890s, what were called in ignorance “dragon bones” made their appearance in a number of shops selling traditional Chinese herbal medicine, where they were pounded into powder and made into medicine. Many of these ‘dragon bones’ bore very unusual and, at the time, largely ignored inscriptions etched in the earliest form of Chinese writing. This writing was later termed *Jia gu wen*’ (甲骨文) ‘tortoise and bone writing’ in Chinese, since all these inscriptions were written either on tortoise shells or on animal bones, and ‘oracle bone

writing’ in English, since the contents of the inscriptions dealt almost exclusively with questions asked of oracles and their answers concerning the possible auspiciousness or inauspiciousness of certain planned activities of the ruling classes of the time.

In 1899 the ‘dragon bones’ for sale in the medicine shops drew the attention of Wang Yirong (王懿榮) (1840 – 1900) a famous antiquarian and paleographer, who recognized that the markings on the ‘dragon bones’ were, in fact, inscriptions. He and other scholars, including Liu E (劉鶚) and Sun Yirang (孫詒讓) immediately understood that there was a relationship between these ‘oracle bone’ inscriptions and the inscriptions on Shang and Zhou dynasty bronze ritual vessels.

Some years later in the decade between 1928 and 1938, after the overthrow of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China, the Archaeological Department of the National Research Institute of History and Philology of the Academia Sinica decided to organize 15 scientific excavation expeditions under the direction of its first director professor Li Ji to the Anyang area of Henan province, the reported origin of these ‘dragon bones’ and the site of the ancient city of Yin, the last capital of the Shang dynasty.

Spurred on both by the impact of the discovery of what are now termed ‘oracle bones’ and by further important discoveries made by the Academia Sinica expeditions in Henan province, a number of Chinese and foreign scholars of the last century continued to make great contributions to the study of ancient bronze vessels and their inscriptions. Several of the most prominent of these were:

- Luo Zhenyu (羅振玉) (1868 – 1940), who was one of the first to take up the study of the newly discovered ‘oracle bone inscriptions’ (甲骨文). He subsequently published three collections of oracle-bone inscriptions, the *Yinxu Shuqi Qianbian* (殷墟書契前編), the *Yinxu Shuqi Jinghua* (殷墟書契菁華) and the *Yinxu Shuqi Houbian* (殷墟書契後編). Luo also carried out extensive studies on bronze vessel inscriptions. The most important publication which resulted from his research is his, *Sandai Jijin Wencun* (三代吉金文存) (Collection of Surviving Bronze Inscriptions from Three Reigns) published in 1937, in which he recorded 4,831 inscriptions, the largest collection of its kind recorded even up to the present. This book remains to this day a primary reference for all specialists.
- Wang Guowei (王國維) (1877 – 1927), who became intensely interested in bronze inscriptions after a trip to Japan with his mentor, Luo Zhenyu.

Wang was the first to attempt to use material from bronze inscriptions to throw fresh light on the history of the Shang and Zhou dynasties. With information which he personally gathered from bronze inscriptions, Wang made important contributions to the study of the early history of the Shang and Zhou dynasties, one of which was his success in showing that the origins of the Shang dynasty date 1,000 years earlier than had been believed by scholars before the publication of his research. Wang also did much to further scholars’ understanding of Western Zhou history, geography, ritual, etc. and especially the Western Zhou calendrical system, which made possible a more accurate dating of ancient royal reigns, bronze inscriptions, etc.

- Guo Moruo (郭沫若) (1892 – 1978), who studied archeology and, while adopting a Marxist view of class structure in ancient Chinese society, made use of material on ancient bronzes to argue that Western Zhou society was slave-based. In spite of this bias, Guo did extensive research on oracle bone inscriptions, bronze vessel inscriptions, etc. and was the first to carry out a systematic historical analysis and synthesis of the names of persons, the style of writing, the shape and decoration, etc. on ancient bronze vessels, which also made it possible to assign a certain chronology to the vessels studied. An extremely prolific writer, Guo published many books in his lifetime.
- Chen Mengjia (陳夢家) (1911 – 1966), who, following in the footsteps of Guo Moruo, advanced further in developing a sound methodology, based on certain criteria, for grouping bronze vessels into related sets, including the many bronzes which were archaeologically excavated between the end of WWII and the early 1950s. Chen not only placed the modern research of ancient bronzes on a sound basis, but also especially contributed through his research to a better understanding of Western Zhou society, government, geography and territorial expansion during that dynasty. One of the earliest victims of the Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976), Chen Mengjia took his own life in early September, 1966, tragically cutting short a life in which he had made an extraordinary contribution to the study of ancient Chinese bronzes and their inscriptions.
- Rong Geng (容庚) (1894 – 1983), who was interested in the study of ancient Chinese characters from childhood, and at an early age became a student of the eminent paleologist Luo Zhenyu (羅振玉). After graduating from Peking University in 1926, Rong taught at a number of universities in China. His masterwork, *Jinwen Bian* (金文編) published in 1925 has been regarded for many years as the authoritative work on ancient bronze inscriptions, but perhaps Rong’s most important contribution to the field of bronze inscription studies was his *Shang Zhou Qingtongqi Yiqi Tongkao* (商周青銅器彝器通考) in two volumes, one of text and one of illustrations.



Among western scholars, two merit special mention:

- Léon Wieger (Georges Frédéric Léon Wieger 1856 – 1933) Born in Strasbourg Alsace-Lorraine in 1856, Wieger was a medical doctor and Jesuit priest who spent most of his adult life in China. He wrote a number of books on Chinese language, Chinese folklore, Buddhism, Daoism, etc. and a well-received book on Chinese characters entitled ‘Caractères chinois’ which was later published in English as ‘Chinese characters: Their Origin, Etymology, History, Classification and Signification’.
- Bernhard Karlgren (1889 – 1978) was a Swedish sinologist and linguist who pioneered the study of Chinese historical phonology using modern comparative methods and who for many years was the director of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities in Stockholm, Sweden. In his attempts to classify ancient bronze vessels according to the style of the calligraphy in which their inscriptions are written and their décor, Karlgren made a great contribution to the study of ancient Chinese bronzes.

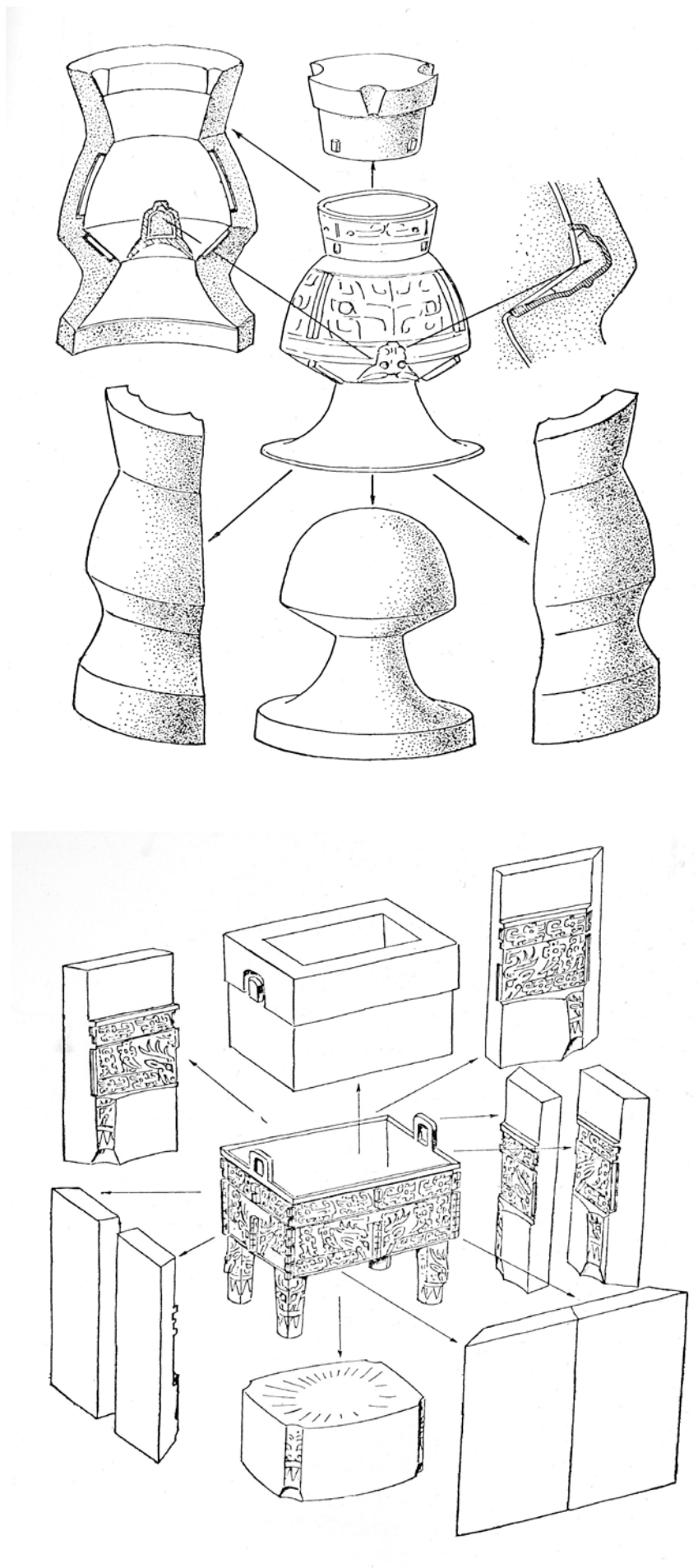
In Japan, two modern-day scholars have made an especially meaningful contribution to the study of ancient Chinese bronze vessels and their inscriptions:

- Umehara Sueji (梅原未治) (1893 – 1983). Deeply knowledgeable in the archaeology of Japan and Korea as well as that of China, and specializing in the study of ancient bronzes, Professor Umehara taught in the department of archaeology of Kyoto University from 1933 to 1956. His studies and numerous publications on the bronze vessels of the Shang and Zhou, the bronze mirrors of the Warring States, the Han and post-Han periods, as well as his studies on Han dynasty lacquerware are remarkable for the wealth of information and important detail contained therein, much of it gathered on the spot by Professor Umehara during his visits to China in the 1920s and 30s.
- Shirakawa Shizuka (白川靜) (1910 – 2006) was one of the best known and most respected modern-day Japanese scholars, who dedicated most of his long life to the study of Chinese characters and inscriptions on ancient bronzes as well as on their relevance to the social history of ancient China, etc. In his *‘Kimbun Tsushaku’* (金文通釋) (Bronze Inscriptions Explained) and *‘Kimbun Seikai’* (金文世界) (The World of Bronze Inscriptions), Professor Shirakawa discusses the development of the study of bronze inscriptions, the latest archaeological discoveries, advances in the study of bronze inscriptions, and almost everything known concerning ancient Chinese bronze inscriptions.

In addition to his work on Chinese bronze inscriptions, Chinese history, writing, etc., Professor Shirakawa also authored scores of publications

in Japanese on the origin, history, meaning, etc. of the Kanji (Chinese characters) used in the Japanese language and on the impact of Chinese characters on the Japanese language, society, etc.

A good number of present-day specialists both within China and overseas continue to make valuable contributions to the study of ancient Chinese bronzes from the point of view of epigraphy, history, religion, morphology, metallurgy, etc. Among these, Sarah Allan, R.W. Bagley, Noel Barnard, T.W. Chase, Maud Girard-Geslan, Hayashi Minao, Li Xueqin, Ma Chengyuan, Jessica Rawson and Leon Vandermeersch deserve special mention.



## Casting Techniques

Scientific archeological excavations undertaken between 1928 and 1938 at the site of the ancient Shang royal cemetery in present-day Anyang in Henan province and later at sites at Zhengzhou, Erligang and Panlongcheng, all three of which date to the end of the Xia dynasty (21<sup>st</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.), revealed the existence of fragments of grey terracotta molds used during the casting of bronze vessels.

These discoveries proved beyond a doubt that in the beginning of bronze production in ancient china, bronzes were produced by multi-mold casting, and not by the lost wax process, as specialists had previously believed.

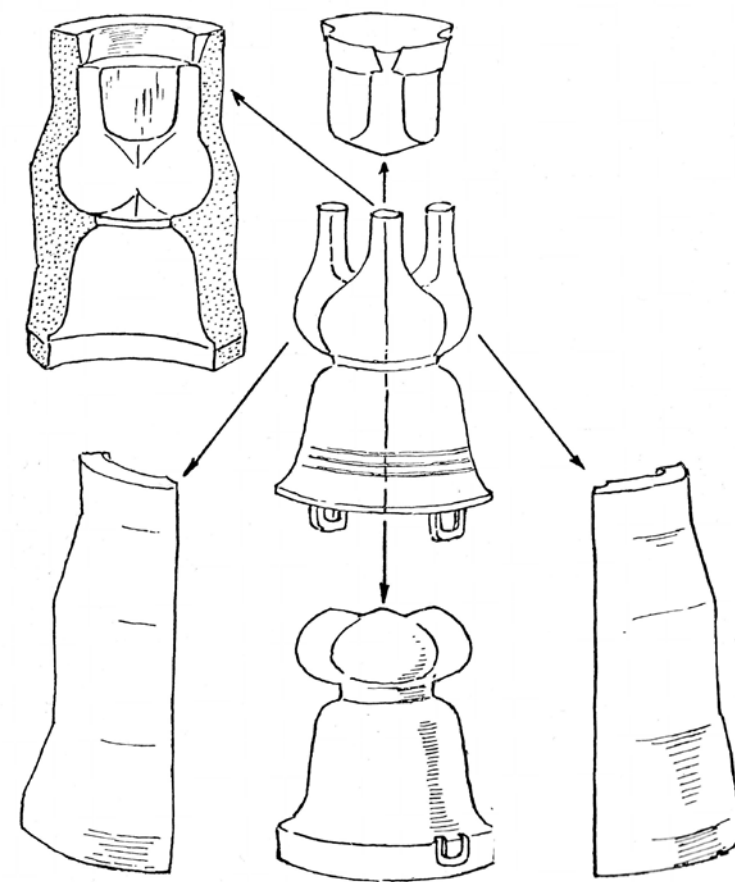
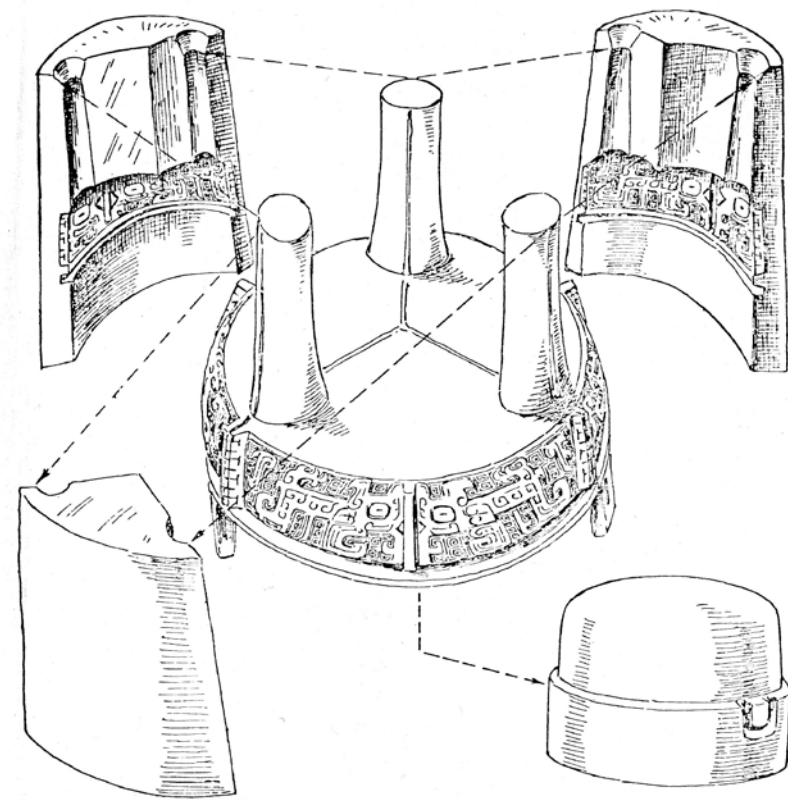
### Multi-mould casting

The fragments of molds found at the above-mentioned sites enabled the archeologists of the Academia Sinica led by Prof. Li Ji to establish with precision the different steps taken by the artisans of the Shang and Zhou dynasties in the production of a bronze vessel:

1. First a matrix of the desired vessel was made in terracotta. The terracotta matrix was an exact copy of the final product, bearing the same degree of fineness and beauty of decoration desired for the bronze vessel.
2. The matrix was then completely covered over with fine thin layers of clay to a thickness of 15 mm, which would eventually serve as the negative.
3. After baking, the negative was cut off in pieces, which would then become the parts of the mold.
4. These parts were then assembled and set in a tub or tray of sand.
5. Then a plain inner core was made and surrounded by the pieces of the mold, which were placed in such a way as to leave an empty space of from 5 to 15 mm between the core and the assembled pieces of the mold surrounding it.
6. Finally, hot liquid bronze was poured into the space between the core and the assembled mold.

After cooling off, the bronze vessel, which was usually cast upside-down, was removed from the mold.

On many bronze vessels mold marks or seams can be detected on a close inspection of the piece, but on pieces of the highest quality, such marks are barely perceptible, since they are often located at the junctions where the vertical lines of the vessel join.



### Lost wax casting

This technique was first utilized in China around the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. It consisted of:

1. Making a wax model on a brick-clay core of the same size as the desired bronze vessel.
2. The decoration was then either carved by hand or stamp printed with the aid of a matrix, which was usually the case for the repetitive motifs of the Warring States period.
3. Once the decoration was completed, the wax object was bathed, once, with a small layer of liquid clay containing a resistant substance, then with several small layers of regular clay which thus formed a covering around the vessel.
4. On contact, the liquid bronze poured into the space between the core and the outer covering caused the wax to melt and escape through special openings left in the outer covering by the craftsman and simultaneously filled the space left between the matrix and the outer clay covering and took the form of the desired object.
5. After the metal cooled off, the mold around the bronze vessel was broken off, freeing the bronze vessel, which was retouched and manually finished wherever necessary.

# Fake bronzes

As always in the world of art, as soon as a category of objects becomes popular and monetarily valuable, fakes, some often very well-made, appear on the market.

In the world of Chinese bronze ritual vessels, the history of fake-making and fakes starts in the Song dynasty (960 – 1279 AD.).

At the request of the Emperor and Literati of the period, who were attracted by contempory studies on archaic bronzes, the artisans of the Song produced numerous reproductions of ancient ritual bronzes. These were of two types: copies modeled closely in detail on actual ancient Shang and Zhou period bronzes and then other copies, which, while following the general shape of ancient bronzes, deliberately added then-fashionable design motifs or other innovations to suit Song dynasty taste. Copies of this second type which were stylistically influenced by the art of the Song, are often embellished with gold and / or silver inlay.

The Song copies of both categories are usually heavier, their metal dark, their finish rougher, and their decorative motifs more blurred than is the case in genuine Shang and Zhou archaic bronzes. Their patina, which is usually stuck onto the vessel, is often composed of a base of turquoise powder and touches of red and blue rust. The inscriptions, when there are any, are fairly faithful copies of real inscriptions, but they are less deeply cast into the metal than the originals.

During the Yuan dynasty, progress was made in the art of copying. Certain artisans of Henan, Shandong and Shanxi provinces become renowned for the quality of their work. A number of their reproduced pieces were so good that they were inadvertently included in the Qing Imperial Collections formed by the Qing Emperors and are today conserved in the Imperial Palace Museum in Beijing. In spite of the improvements made in the Yuan dynasty, these copies are, nevertheless, of poor quality when compared to the genuine masterpieces of the Shang and Zhou. Their forms look clumsy, the decorative motifs are less sharply cast and their patina is of mediocre quality. Quite often purely Yuan period characteristics appear in the vessels’ decor, tell-tale signs of their being reproductions and not genuine Shang or Zhou period bronzes.

Fakes produced in the Ming dynasty are most usually very artificially archaic in style and immediately betray their inauthenticity by the baroque quality of their decoration, which is often enhanced with gold and/or silver incrustations. These pieces are beautifully cast and of a high quality, but the majority of their decorative motifs are complete fabrications, unlike anything that existed during the Shang or Zhou dynasties. They are not the type of object conceived with the purpose of fooling the uninitiated, but are, rather, artistic creations inspired by ancient objects. This may explain the popularity of certain artisans of the period, including Hu Wenming (胡文明), and Zhang Mingqi (張鳴歧), and Shi Sou (石叟), whose creations have always been greatly appreciated and researched, even up to the present day.

During the Qing dynasty and especially during the reign of Emperor Qianlong, the reproductions are more refined and also more numerous. The style of the decor is archaic, but clearly modified. The use of incrustation, whether of gold, silver or semi-precious stones, is very popular.

It is really after the commencement of the Republican Period after 1911 that the age of fakes meant to deceive buyers, be they collectors, antiquarians, or even specialists and university scholars, begins in earnest. The golden age of such fake-making was between 1920 and 1938. At that time, reproductions become almost perfect, many with false inscriptions.

These fakes are often produced from molds made from genuine archaic bronzes but their decoration is often less sharp and blurred and weak, especially the background *leiwen* motifs in which the spirals are less deep and sharp than they should be and are even missing in places. The weight of these fakes is different from that of antique pieces of corresponding design, either too heavy or much too light. Even the alloy of the metal is different and very often the surface of these vessels is covered with many minute air-bubble holes, particularly so in areas covered by *leiwen* patterns and these bubble holes are easily detected with the use of a simple magnifying glass. The surface of the vessel, often of a very dark black, is covered in places with a fake patina whose artificiality is very easy to detect.

One point that deserves special note is that the molds produced from ancient vessels contain all the faults of the original vessel such as worn-down decor, cracks, surface damage, etc. as well as faults in the patination of the original vessel such as incrustation that dulls the sharpness of, or completely obliterates certain sections of the vessel's design, etc. Moreover, the fake patina used to cover the new vessel is usually uniform in thickness, colour and texture all over, a phenomenon that does not happen in a genuine patina.

The most difficult-to-detect fakes of the 1920s and 30s are those that were made with metal obtained by melting down genuine broken vessels or parts of broken vessels of the Shang and Zhou dynasties. Many such vessels, made with the correct metal alloy, were buried during the Chinese Civil War of the late 1940s and have recently been reappearing on the market via Hong Kong and Macao. These masterpieces were made between 1920 and 1938 by the most skilled of fake-makers in co-operation with antique dealers and other experts in Shanghai, Beijing, Xian, Suzhou, Huaixian, and even Japan, especially in Osaka.

All such first class copies of the 1920s and 30s are exact reproductions in form, design, decor, etc. of the archaic bronzes of the Shang and Zhou dynasties and are categorized by specialists according to their areas of origin:

- Bronze copies produced in Suzhou, Jiangsu province. Several eminent bronze casters, including Zhou Meigu, Liu Junqing and Jin Runsheng,

specialized principally in the reproduction of archaic bronzes unearthed in the area of present-day Anyang, in Henan province, the site of the ancient Shang capital of Yin. Their workmanship surpassed that of reproductions made at Beijing.

- Bronzes produced in Huaixian, Shaanxi province. This region became a centre of bronze reproduction-making almost 400 years ago, when local artisans began specializing in the production of bronze mirrors, basing their copies on the pieces illustrated in the Qing antiquarians' manual, the *Xiqing Gujian* (西清古鑒). Produced from wax molds, these mirrors contain a number of faults in decor and their fake patina, produced through the use of chloric acid, cannot deceive a specialist's eye.

- Bronzes produced in Xian, Shaanxi province. After being given a light, fine patina, the bronze reproductions of this area were buried for from ten to twenty years to age them. Another specialty of this area was the adding of false inscriptions onto authentic uninscribed archaic bronzes.

- Bronzes reproduced in Beijing. The art of reproducing ancient bronzes was most developed in the city of Beijing and copies were made there of the most well-known bronzes of the Shang and Zhou dynasties. At one time, the most eminent reproducer of archaic bronzes in Beijing and the biggest supplier of antique dealers in the city, Gu Dongzhang, mentored a dozen apprentices, of whom seven eventually became renowned in their own right as masters of fake-making. One of Gu's former apprentices, Wang Desha, produced a series of superb *zhi* vessels, most probably copied from an original. Perfectly cast and embodying all the details of the original vessel's decoration, each *zhi* in the group has a two-character inscription. Almost completely perfect, these vessels have only two major defects: the decoration, though perfectly copied, is a bit too stiff. Secondly, the vessel's patina has a lacquer base. Both of these faults are typical of the fakes produced in Beijing at the time, which were usually copied exactly from genuine archaic bronzes and then patinated with a material made from a mixture of alcohol and lacquer.

- Bronzes reproduced in Shanghai. A good number of fakes were produced in Shanghai from molds made from authentic archaic bronzes. The copier Liu Junqing, famous for the exceptional quality of his reproductions, made among other things, a *gong* and a *you* which were sold in 1937 together with two other pieces for a total of US\$50,000, a veritable fortune at the time, eventually resulting in the bankruptcy of the antique dealer who had purchased them without realizing that they were reproductions.



In the past ten years, a great quantity of fakes have flooded the market. Coming mostly from Taiwan and mainland China, they are often of the highest quality, some reaching such a level of technical perfection that they completely fool many collectors and professionals. Genuine specialists are, fortunately, still able to detect them since they are often too heavy, their artificial patina can be detached from their surfaces rather easily, their inscriptions may not match paleologically the authentic writing of the period from which the object is supposed to date and/or may not be cast deeply enough, and especially because no corrosion can be detected actually coming from inside the object's metal, since the patina, such as there is, has merely been applied artificially to the vessel's surface. No matter how skillful the copier, a true specialist will be able to see through the hoax, since for him or her the copy always lacks life, the vital energy that only a genuine antiquity possesses and the ability to sense this is essential for anyone making an appraisal.

### Techniques Used in Producing Fakes

Despite all the skills which those producing reproductions possess, a person with a sharp eye and a knowledge of the techniques used by reproduction-makers can distinguish between fakes and the genuine article.

Reproduction-makers employ a number of methods to produce pieces that are meant to dupe unsuspecting buyers. Among these are:

- reconstructing an incomplete authentic vessel by recasting its missing pieces.
- Constructing a vessel by using pieces from several authentic incomplete archaic vessels. In such cases, authentic pieces from different historical periods are sometimes joined together.
- Changing the form of an authentic vessel into the form of another, rarer and more valuable vessel, by perhaps soldering legs onto a cover to produce a separate vessel, adding handles to a handleless *yu* to make it into a *gui*, etc., etc.
- Adding decoration to an authentic undecorated, plain vessel; in most such cases, the newly added decoration is incised into the surface of the vessel. Such decoration often appears stiffer than that on vessels originally bearing decoration and mistakes are often made by the forgers in matching the style of the decoration with the period to which the originally undecorated archaic vessel belongs. Moreover, in such cases, the patina inside the incision marks of the newly applied decoration is either artificial or completely absent. Inscriptions, if added, are also usually badly formed and the style of the calligraphy may be inaccurate.

- Adding to the decoration of an already partially decorated piece. The added decoration is rather stiff and sometimes it is possible to see chiselling marks. As with wholly redecorated pieces, the patina inside the incisions of the added decoration is either artificial or completely absent.

- Soldering or otherwise attaching a new decoration onto an authentic piece.

- Casting a new piece from a mold made from an authentic piece. Usually the resulting vessel is slightly smaller than the original and numerous casting faults are visible on its surface. The patina is artificial.

- Creating a reproduction based on photos found in publications picturing original pieces. Most often mistakes in shape, design, decor, etc. will be made in reproducing areas of the original vessel that are not visible in the photo that is being used.

As mentioned above, a careful inspection of the patination of a vessel can play an essential, determining role in the detection of a reproduction. Authentic patina is the product of a chemical reaction that takes place over a long period of time inside the metal of the vessel when the vessel comes into contact with diverse mineral salts present in the soil in which the vessel has been buried and these chemical reactions give the surface of the bronze a certain appearance which can be granular, smooth or covered with miniscule crystals and a colour, which can be maroon (cuprite or monoxide), green (basic carbonate of copper), commonly called malachite, or blue (carbonate of copper), called azurite.

The artificial patinas applied to bronze reproductions are produced using the following materials and techniques:

### Acids

- The earliest method used, and the most widely-used and easy, is soaking the bronze object in chlorohydric acid. A second related technique consists of soaking the vessel in a mixture of acid, lime, salt and colours. The object is subsequently buried to a depth of about a meter for a period of from three to four years. That allows a chemical reaction to take place, which creates a patina which is, in many ways, very similar to that on an authentic archaic bronze vessel. A third method is the use of a mixture of sulfuric acid and ammonia. After keeping the emerged vessel in a very humid place for from three to five days, the vessel will be covered by a green patina, which is difficult to remove. The famous fake-maker Wang Deshan made extensive use of this method at the beginning of the last century.

### Lacquer

- Certain other types of artificial patina are produced by applying to the

bronze a mixture of lacquer and colours, to which alcohol is sometimes added.

Artificial pigments

- Artificial pigments, scrapped off a genuine archaic bronze vessel and sometimes attached to the vessel with wax, give a reproduction a rather mediocre imitation of ancient corrosion.

Paint

- The surface of the vessel is covered with paint imitating the colours of an ancient patina.

Addition of authentic patina

- Particles of ancient patina are lifted from damaged or broken authentic archaic bronzes and then attached to fake bronzes. Sometimes these particles of authentic patina are pounded into powder and mixed with small fragments of bronze and powdered turquoise. The resulting paste is then applied to a modern vessel, which is often then covered with a coating of wax.


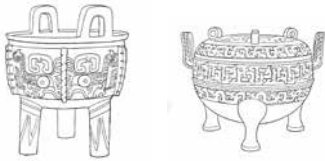

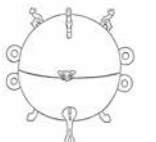





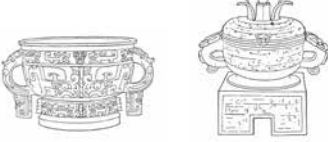





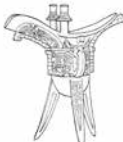
















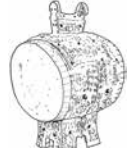
Whatever the method employed by the artisans, all of these artificial patinas can be detected by an experienced person. Most of these artificial patinas are unable to resist a quick test carried out with a piece of cotton soaked in alcohol, acetone, or any other nitrogenous product. Also, a person with a sharp eye and armed with a magnifying glass can detect the hand of the forger in such patina. It is important to note, however, that the presence of artificial patina on a vessel does not absolutely prove that the vessel in question is an outright fake. Many authentic archaic vessels have been heavily restored and have been repatinated, which was an especially common practice at the beginning of the twentieth century.

**Inscriptions**

As is the case with the patina on a vessel, an inscription, when there is one, can provide us with some useful clues as to the vessel's authenticity or possible inauthenticity. At the beginning of the twentieth century, makers of bronze reproductions took a keen interest in inscriptions because at the time the selling prices of inscribed archaic bronzes and inscribed oracle bones increased according to the number of characters contained in their inscriptions. Thus in order to increase the selling price of an object, inscriptions were added, even to originally uninscribed archaic bronzes, either by copying characters from books or copying complete inscriptions from other vessels, or by completely inventing fictitious inscriptions. As mentioned above, the adding of such inscriptions was the speciality of artisans in Xian between 1920 and 1938.

In many cases these false, added inscriptions are recognizable by:

- Errors in the style of the characters or the type of text used, i.e. using a calligraphic or literary style that differed from that used at the time that the archaic bronze vessel was produced.
- Incoherence of the added text as a result of its being riddled with grammatical or orthographic errors. This was often caused by faults in the text copied or casting faults on the bronzes from which the inscriptions were copied.
- Misplaced or missing characters
- Poor placing or overlength of the inscription out of greed for the increasing profit that longer inscriptions brought.

 Bu 甗		 Ding 鼎		 Dou 豆	
 Dui 敦	 Fangding 方鼎	 Fangyi 方彝	 Fu 簠	 Fangyi 方彝	
 Gu 觚	 Gui 簋			 He 盃	
 Hu 壺			 Jia 斚	 Jian 鑒	
 Jiao 角	 Jue 爵	 Lei 罍		 Li 鬲	
 Liding 鬲鼎	 Lian 奩 / Zun 樽	 Pan 盤		 Shao 勺, dou 斗, bi 匕	
 Xu 盥	 Yan 甌	 Yi 匜	 You 卣	 Yu 盂	 Zhi 觶
 Zun 尊		 Ling 鈴	 Nao 鐃	 Bo 罍 / Zhong 鐘	 Drums - Gu 鼓

# Shapes

## *Bu* (old pronunciation *pou*) 甗



This bronze jug or pitcher which has a globular body with a cramped neck and is supported by a ring foot, sometimes also has some lateral flanges at its sides and a dome-like cover.

This vessel is mentioned very early on in Chinese historical records, at least as early as the *Zhan Guo Ce* (戰國策) (Warring States Annals).

There is some controversy regarding the exact use for which the *bu* was employed, with many claiming it was used to hold fermented beverages, while others, citing the *Zhan Guo Ce*, etc. say it was used to hold various sauces, and still others claiming the *bu* was used to hold water. According to the *Han Shu* (漢書) (History of Han), the *Bu* was used to hold foodstuffs such as minced meat and grains.



First coming into use during the Shang dynasty at the end of the Erligang period, the *bu* becomes rounder by the beginning of the Yinxu period and gradually disappears by the end of that period.

## *Ding* 鼎



The *ding* is the most important vessel in Chinese tradition and history. Since the origin of Chinese civilization, the *ding* has been considered the symbol par excellence of the legitimacy of supreme royal power, and the ability to produce or obtain a *ding*, and to continue to possess a *ding* was considered a concrete sign of heaven-bestowed legitimacy and continuing heavenly protection and favour. Confirmation of this can be found in the classical books and especially the *Zhouli* (周禮) (*Book of Zhou Rites*, written during the Zhou dynasty) and the *Zuozhuan* (左傳) (*Annals of the Spring and Autumn period* – *Annals of the State of Chu* – written in the 5<sup>th</sup> century bc. by Zuo

Qiuming 左丘明). During the Zhou dynasty, *ding* vessels are always placed in uneven numbers in a tomb, with a set of nine *ding* reserved to the king.

As a food container and cooking vessel, the *ding* constitutes the most important category of vessels in the corpus of ritual bronzes. It is composed of a round, bowl-shaped body surmounted by two large handles and supported on three cylindrical legs. Over the centuries its morphology changes, each modification being typical of its specific period.

Extremely common in pottery during the Neolithic period, the *ding* is first cast in bronze at the end of the Xia (夏) dynasty (during the Erlitou culture period). The earliest *ding* is composed of a flat- bottomed bowl with thin walls, topped by two vertical handles and supported by three triangular and hollow legs.



At the beginning of the Shang dynasty, during the Erligang period, *ding* are very thinly cast and have a deep, rounded body, two small vertical handles, and either hollow cylindrical legs or, extremely rarely, flattened legs.

During the Yinxu period, the vessel's body grows more rounded to become a complete round bowl shape, its vertical handles become thicker, and its legs become cylindrical and full-bodied. In exceptional cases, the *ding*'s legs are flat in the shape of simple blades or shaped like stylized dragons or birds, or, extremely rarely, like tigers. The animals on such legs are always shown in profile.



During the Zhou dynasty, the *ding* is the most popular bronze vessel and becomes more massive and less deep; its vertical handles are now fixed on the sides of its body and not on the rim as in earlier periods. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, *ding* sometimes have covers decorated with small animals or birds in the round, handles fixed on the walls of the body, and sometimes curved legs looking like stylized animals.

*Dou* 豆

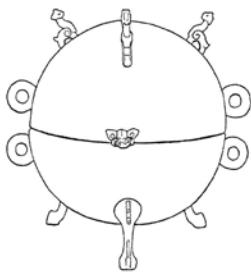


This hemispherical cup supported by a high flared foot, was used to hold and display food offerings during ritual banquets. The vessel's cover, when turned upside-down, serves as a second food receptacle with its own legs.

Known in pottery since the Longshan culture (龍山文化) (3 - 2,000 BC.) in the Neolithic Period and discovered in white pottery at the Yinxu period Shang dynasty archeological sites in modern-day Anyang, the *dou* seems to have first appeared in bronze only around the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC.

This bronze vessel was most popular during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods of the Eastern Zhou dynasty.

*Dui* 敦



This round vessel which is surmounted by a cover or top section of the same shape and often the same size, and which was most probably used both to hold and to serve food, has at various times been called either a *gui*, *dui* or *zhan*.

Although the *dui* is already described in the *Erya* (爾雅) ('Literary Exposition', a compilation of commentaries on

the classics, the meanings of words, etc. produced by scholars between the Qin and the early Western Han dynasties) as 'entirely spherical', it was the antiquarians of the Song dynasty who began using the term *dui* exclusively to refer to such spherical vessels.

First appearing towards the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC., this type of vessel disappears towards the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.

*Fangding* 方鼎



This important and quite common cooking vessel is, as its name indicates, a variation of the *ding*. This rectangular vessel with two vertical handles fixed on the rim is supported by four legs, usually cylindrical, but, in some rare cases, blade-shaped.

Known in pottery as early as the Erliu culture period, the *fangding* appears cast in bronze for the first time at the beginning of the Shang dynasty during the Erligang period. Its casting is already extremely sophisticated with thin walls and hollow cylindrical legs and hollow vertical handles. Sometimes the *fangding* of the period can be of an extremely large size, like the two *fangding* excavated in 1974 in Zhengzhou city, Henan province, one of which is 1 meter high, 61 cm wide and 62.5 cm long and weighs 86.4 kg, while the second is 87 cm high, 61 cm wide and weighs 62.25 kg.

During the Yinxu period small morphological changes appear in the *fangding*; its legs and handles are no longer hollow, but are now full-bodied. The vessel is more heavily cast with thicker walls and more powerful legs. Sometimes *fangding* may be of a huge size. The largest Shang *fangding* known, excavated from one of the sites at modern-day Anyang is the *Si Mu Wu* (司母戊) *fangding*, dating from the reign of the Shang King Wen Ding (商王文丁). It has a height of 133 cm and weighs 875 kg and was cast as a memorial to king Wen Ding's mother. The most spectacular *fangding* in design is the *He Da* (禾大) *fangding* found in 1959 at Ningxiang, Hunan province. This very unique vessel, from the late Shang dynasty, and of quite medium size, being 38.5 cm high and 29.8 cm long, is decorated on each of its four sides with a large human mask, the rarest motif in the corpus of Shang bronze designs.

The shape of the *fangding* undergoes no major changes during the Western Zhou dynasty, but sometimes flanges appear on the vessel's body and legs; at other times the legs are thinner and higher. The major changes are in the vessel's decoration which follows the typical motifs used in this later period. *Fangding* disappear during the Western Zhou dynasty.

### *Fangyi* 方彝



The *fangyi* is, as its Chinese name indicates, a square or rectangular vessel, similar to a small house with its four walls and a roof-like cover of four sloping sides.

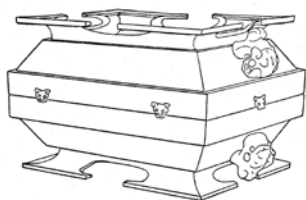
The Chinese character ‘*yi*’ 彝, which is frequently found in inscriptions, is the general term used in ancient Chinese for ritual or sacrificial vessels. The term ‘*fangyi*’ or square *yi* first appears in the Song dynasty work *Kaogu tu* (考古圖) a record of ancient bronzes and other antiquities in the Imperial and private collections with illustrations and inscriptions, compiled by the scholar Lü Dalin (呂大林) in 1092 AD.

Although nowadays the *fangyi* is generally classed among vessels used for fermented beverages, we cannot be certain as to its actual use in antiquity. Chinese antiquarians of the Song, Ming and Qing dynasties believed the *fangyi* was used to hold food. In recent times, eminent archeologists and scholars such as Chen Mengjia (陳夢家) and Bernhard Kalgren hold to the same view, but others such as Rong Geng (容庚), Ma Chengyuan (馬承源) and Minao Hayashi (林巳奈夫) regard the *fangyi* as a vessel for fermented beverages.

The *fangyi* form, known in pottery since the Neolithic period, also appears in white marble during the Shang dynasty. The first *fangyi* in bronze seems to appear at the beginning of the Yinxu period of the Shang dynasty or perhaps during the transitional phase between the end of the Erligang period and the beginning of the Yinxu period.

The *fangyi* disappears at the beginning of the Western Zhou dynasty after having undergone some morphological changes such as the addition of flanges, or protruding design parts, or even lateral handles in the shapes of elephant trunks, making the later-period vessels look quite Baroque.

### *Fu* 簠



The term *fu* was employed very early on in classical texts to refer to a vessel used to hold offerings of millet during rituals. This oblong vessel of rectangular form with upwardly sloping sides in its bottom section, is supported by a flared foot and topped by a cover with downwardly sloping sides of the same shape and size as its body and can be used as a second receptacle when placed upside-down.

The *fu* appears during the end of the Western Zhou period, more precisely at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC. and becomes very popular during the Spring and Autumn period.

### *Gong* 觥

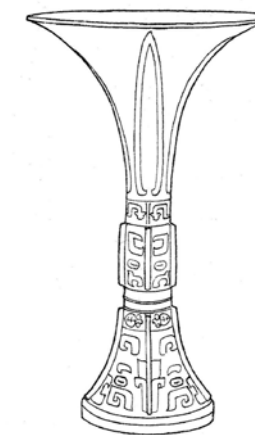


The *gong*, sometimes pronounced *guang*, is a large vessel for fermented beverages, with a lower section in the shape of a sauceboat supported by a ring foot and an upper section consisting of a long cover in the shape of the back and head of an animal.

First appearing during the Yinxu period of the Shang dynasty, the *gong* continues to be used until the middle of the Western Zhou dynasty, at which time the vessel’s ring foot is sometimes replaced by four small feet.

The shape of this bronze is sometimes said to have been adapted from earlier vessels for fermented beverages mentioned in ancient classical texts as having been made from the horns of buffaloes. This theory seems to have been confirmed by the discovery in 1959 at Shilou Taohuazhuang in Shanxi province of a bronze buffalo-horn-shaped *gong* with its narrower front section ending in the head of a horned dragon.

### *Gu* 觚



The *gu* is one of the most common bronze goblets used for fermented-beverage libations. Its chalice-shaped body is flared in its upper part and at its base. Slightly protruding at the middle, it is sometimes flanked by four flanges, or cast with a décor in open work, or, extremely rarely, the whole vessel may be of a square shape.

The term *gu*, which is not mentioned in early bronze inscriptions, appears in the *Shuowen* (說文解字) written during the Western Han dynasty and other early encyclopedic dictionaries and the term was confirmed in usage by the Song scholar Lü Dalin (呂大林) in 1092 in his book the *Kaogu tu* (考古圖).

Very common in ceramic during the Neolithic period and the Erlitou culture period, the *gu* vessel appears in bronze at the beginning of the Shang dynasty during the Erligang period. At that time the *gu* is small in size but roughly cast with thin walls. Its chalice shape is like an uninterrupted vertical line from its foot to its rim. It is usually decorated with a frieze of primitive *taotie* masks, or, much more rarely, its foot is decorated with geometric motifs in openwork.

During the Yinxu period, the *gu* becomes, with the *jue*, the most popular vessel, and is the basic set of vessels found in Shang tombs. The late Shang *gu* is taller, slimmer and more elegant, and can be entirely covered with decor.

This shape disappears around the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC, during the early Western Zhou period.

### Gui 簋



Often termed a *duan* in bronze inscriptions, the *gui* was principally used to hold cooked rice, millet and sorghum. The vessel is composed of a circular, bowl-like body supported on a ring foot and may have two, three or, more rarely, four large semi-circular lateral handles. The same-shaped vessel, but without such handles is called a *yu*.

Rare during the Erligang period of the early Shang dynasty, the *gui* of that time has a bowl-shaped body with a thin lip, a ring foot and two lateral handles. A wonderful example of an early Erligang *gui*, perhaps the earliest so far discovered, was excavated in 1974 from tomb M1 at Lijiazui, Panlongcheng, Hebei province.



Still quite rare at the beginning of the Yinxu period of the Shang dynasty, the *gui* begins to become much more popular at the end of the Shang dynasty and throughout the beginning of the early Western Zhou, and becomes one of the most important bronze vessels used in rituals.

Towards the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century BC., the *gui* begins sometimes to have a cover and its original ring foot is replaced by three small legs or a large, high cubical stand, sometimes larger than the vessel itself.

### He 盃



The exact use of this ewer or kettle-like vessel in ancient times is difficult to determine. Every scholar agrees that this type of vessel was designed to pour liquid but the question is which kind, water or fermented beverages, or a mixture of both? According the *Shuowen Jiezi*, (說文解字) the ‘Analytical Dictionary of Characters’, one of China’s earliest dictionaries, compiled by the lexicologist Xu Shen (許慎) during the Han dynasty, the *he* was used to mix sauces. Wang Guowei (王國維) and Professor Li Xueqin (李學勤) class the *he* in the category of vessels used to mix water and fermented beverages. Maud Girard-Geslan indicates that this vessel was used for fermented beverages during the Shang dynasty but its function changed during the Zhou dynasty, when it was used to hold and pour water during ritual ablutions.

Known in pottery as early as the Dawenkou (大汶口) (4,300 – 2,500 BC.) and Longshan (龍山) (3,000 – 2,000 BC.) cultures in the Neolithic period, the first *he* cast in bronze appears during the Erlitou culture period. The only vessel of this type actually known from that period was found in tomb 1 in section II of the Erlitou site, and is dated from Erlitou period IV. It strongly resembles the pottery vessels of similar shape of the same period, i.e., it has a tri-partite body in the shape of a bulbous *li*, a cylindrical spout, a semi-circular handle and a wide round opening at its top.

At the beginning of the Shang dynasty, during the Erligang period, the *he* is very thinly cast and its body is supported by three hollow legs like the *li*, and it has a small opening in its upper part, and a small semi-circular handle. This primitive vessel is often considered as a hybrid type and is sometimes referred as a *lihe*.

During the Yinxu period, the vessel’s body grows rounder, the three legs and pouring spout become cylindrical, but the handle remains semi-circular, and a cover appears that is attached to the handle with a chain. Some rare examples are square in shape, in which case they are supported by four cylindrical legs. By the end of the Shang dynasty, the *he* undergoes morphological changes and its body becomes globular.



With the Zhou dynasty the morphological changes become more pronounced. The *he*’s body can be either round, or flat, or oblong, or, most rarely, it can assume the shape of a hybrid animal. During the Spring and Autumn period, the vessel is sometimes circular with flat front and back sections and is supported on four small, stylized-animal-shaped legs.

This ewer-type vessel disappears by the end of the Warring States period or the beginning of the Han dynasty.

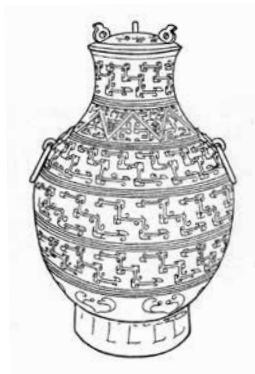
### Hu 壺



Under the classification *hu* can be found large vase and jar-shaped vessels of various forms which, despite their morphological differences, share a certain number of characteristics: a bulbous body which narrows around its shoulders, a long neck and a ring foot. Sometimes the *hu* has a cover, lateral handles or suspended handles and a chain.

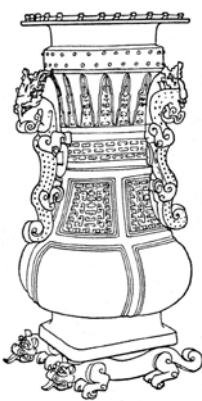
Though the general term for such vessels is *hu*, inscriptions variously call such vessels *hu*, *ping*, *fu*, *fang* and *chung*.





The precise function of the *hu* is also problematic. The *Yili* (Book of Rites) mentions that the *hu* was used to hold alcoholic beverages, but certain inscriptions and other classical texts classify the *hu* among vessels used for holding water. The general opinion among scholars nowadays is that the *hu* was used to hold either alcoholic beverages or water, depending on what the situation called for.

Several scholars, including Mr Ma Chengyuan, believe that the *hu* first appeared in bronze as early as the Erligang period of the early Shang dynasty, but no such early example has as yet been unearthed by archeologists. During the Yinxu period of the Shang dynasty, most *hu* take a form which resembles the lower, rounded part of a pear that gradually becomes a bit narrower as it rises to its narrower and much shorter neck. A pair of cylindrical lug handles appear near the top, one on each side of the neck and the usually coverless vessel stands on a high ring foot. If there is a cover, it is usually dome-shaped.



Sometimes, the body of the usually coverless *hu* becomes more oval in shape and some, called *fanghu*, are even square.

Gradually the shape of the body changes, and by the end of the Shang, the pear-shaped lower section narrows half way up towards the top of the vessel and the *hu*'s neck becomes much longer and the later *hu* usually has a high cover, often with a wide, high, thick-lipped open-topped knob on its top.



From the Warring States period onwards, the *bianhu*, a flattened-egg-shaped vessel on a low rectangular foot and topped by a short, rather narrow cylindrical neck with a slightly protruding lip and a low cover with a small ring handle on it, becomes very popular in addition to the rounder version of the *hu*. (See Wang Tao, *Chinese Bronzes from the Meiyintang Collection*, p. 112-113 no. 49.)

The *hu* is very popular during all of the Han dynasty, by which time its body, pear-shaped or square, with a long neck and cover, is cast in a simpler fashion, and with thinner walls. The Han *hu* is usually without decoration, except for a pair of *taotie* masks in light relief to which moveable handles are attached.

## Jia 𩚑



This vessel used for warming fermented beverages is very similar to the *jue* but differs from it in its larger size and its lack of a pouring spout. Its body, which can be round or cylindrical, with a flat bottom or a round one, has two vertical protuberances surmounted by knobs. Its semi-circular lateral handle can sometimes be decorated with a wonderful animal head cast in the round. The term *jia* is mentioned for the first time in the *Liji* (禮記 Book of Rites of the Zhou), where a commentary by Zheng Xuan (鄭玄) says that the *jia* was used by the King for making fermented beverage libations during rituals, while the *jue* was used for the same purpose by those of the rank of Marquis. A pictogram carved on an oracle bone from the Shang dynasty strongly resembles the shape of this vessel.

*Jia* vessels appear as early as the end of the Xia dynasty. Some were excavated from stratum III and IV in the Erlitou area. These primitive examples have a flat bottom, a body narrowing at the middle, a semi-circular lateral handle, two vertical protuberances surmounted by knobs, and three triangular legs, which can sometimes be hollow, similar to those on a vessel *li*.

At the beginning of the Shang dynasty, during the Erligang period, the shape of the *jia* changes slightly, but generally the body consists of two sections: a lower section with outwardly expanding, rounded sides and an upper section with a narrow waist that flares outwards as it rises to its rim. The conical legs are hollow and extend outwards as they descend.

During the Yinxu period, the apogee of Shang bronze vessel production, the shape of the *jia*'s body hardly changes, and it remains round, tall and convex, or sometimes square. The legs are triangular and sometimes hollow and open on their inner sides. Size can also vary greatly, with the largest reaching over 80 cm in height.

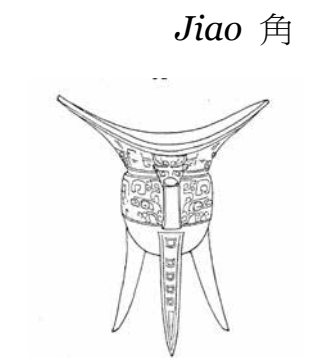
Toward the end of the Shang dynasty and the beginning of the Zhou dynasty, the body of the *jia* becomes dumpier and sometimes looks like the body of a *li*, composed of three clustered round swells supported by three small cylindrical legs that narrow into points as they descend. The vessel's semi-circular, lateral handle becomes thicker and is often surmounted by a bovine head cast in the round.

The *jia* disappears around the middle of the Zhou dynasty.



*Jian* 監

The *jian* is a huge, deep-basin-shaped vessel, with either a ring foot or a flat bottom, and resembles a very large and very deep pan. The *jian*, which was the largest bronze vessel in size in ancient China, appears exclusively in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods.



*Jiao* 角

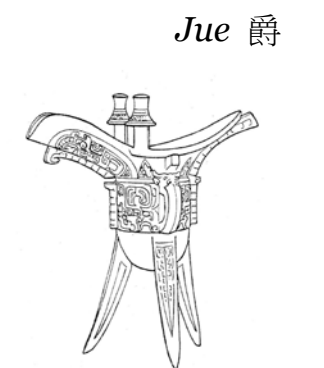
This wine vessel, which very closely resembles the *jue* in shape, has major differences; it has no pouring spout and no vertical protuberances surmounted by knobs, but it has two upwardly pointing, outwardly extending, horn-like sides. (This shape seems to be quite rare as Professor Hayashi records only 25 such vessels.)

Known in pottery during the Neolithic period, the *jiao* appears in bronze during the Erlitou culture period, but in a hybrid *jiao-he* form. This *jiao*'s oval body with its pointed prolongations, has a very long pouring spout, identical to that of a *he* (盃) vessel, positioned towards the middle of its body.

For the Erligang period, only one such piece is recorded by Hayashi M., (*In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I – plates, p. 189 no. 1. The vessel, with a very thin inner wall, has an oval body and a flat bottom and is supported by three extremely thin triangular legs.

During the Yinxu period, the *jiao* develops like the *jue*: its body, initially oval in form, becomes rounder, and its bottom, which was flat during the Erlitou culture period and the Erligang period, becomes round.

The *jiao* becomes very popular in the transitional period between the late Shang dynasty and the early Western Zhou dynasty, when sometimes it has a cover.



*Jue* 爵

The tripod *jue*, used to hold and to warm up fermented beverages for libations during ritual ceremonies, was the first bronze vessel to appear in Ancient China. Its name and use was already recorded in China's earliest written histories and dictionaries and the vessel was illustrated and described in the *Kaogu tu* (考古圖) written by Lü Dalin (呂大猷) in 1092, probably the oldest study on ancient Chinese bronze vessels.

Known in pottery from as early as the beginnings of Chinese culture, the first *jue* cast in bronze appears during the Erlitou (二里頭文化) culture's phase III, which dates to the end of the Xia (夏) dynasty (19<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.).

This wine cup, supported by three triangular legs, has a long pouring spout on one side of its rim, a shorter pointed rim on the other side, two vertical protuberances surmounted by knobs just over the area where the long spout extends from the vessel's body and a semi-circular handle cast on one of its sides. The morphology of the *jue*'s body changes slightly in subsequent periods.

In its primitive form, during the Erlitou period, the *jue* is usually small in size and has a very simple shape. Its body is thinly cast and oval with a flat bottom, a semi-circular handle and three short triangular legs. *Jue* of this period are usually without decoration, but sometimes they have just a frieze of small bosses on their bodies. Another characteristic of these most early pieces is the absence of knobs, with only small projections located at the pouring-spout's originating point, a harbinger of their future development. Some extremely rare examples, dating from the Erlitou culture, are of a very large size (see *jue* no. 2). In this case they are cast with three very long triangular legs, a very narrow and long pouring spout, a flat bottom, a semi-circular handle, and two vertical protuberances surmounted by small and simple knobs.

At the beginning of the Shang dynasty, during the Erligang (二里岡時期) period (16<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.) the morphology of the *jue* remains simple. The vessel is cast with a flat bottom, a narrow pouring spout, and three triangular legs. Some rare examples are either tetrapod (one example from the L. Jacob Collection is now in the Guimet Museum, Paris. See pages 51-53 of *Maud Girard-Geslan, Bronzes Archaiques De Chine.*) or have only a single central knob on a triangular protuberance just over the section of the spout where it extends from the vessel's body. Usually the vessel is decorated with a small frieze cast with a primitive *taotie* mask.

During the Yinxu period (殷墟時期) (second part of the Shang dynasty, 13<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC., a period often called the Anyang period, after its location in modern-day Anyang, Henan province) the *jue* becomes extremely popular and is always used together with a *gu* vessel, creating a basic set used in Shang rituals. The *jue*'s shape changes slightly, its body becomes rounder, its bottom is either rounded or curved, rarely flat, its pouring spout is dumpy and shorter and its size may vary considerably with some *jue* extremely tall, while others are of square shape, and still others have a cover.

The *jue* vessel disappears after the beginning of the Western Zhou dynasty, as libations with fermented beverages become less common.

### Lei 罍



The term *lei* is used to refer to a group of vessels that can be either round or square and supported either by a ring foot or a flat base, and which all share similar characteristics including a constricted, short neck, an ovoid-shaped body, a shoulder wider in diameter than the rest of the body and, sometimes, a dome-like cover.

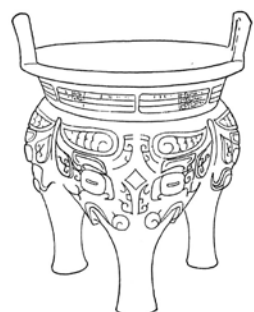
According to classical texts, the *lei* was used to hold either fermented beverages or water. Some experts believe that the *lei* first appeared in bronze during the Erligang period of the

Shang dynasty, but they seem to be confusing the vessel with the earliest form of the similar-looking *zun*, which is also shaped like a large vase with a ring foot and has a concave shoulder as well as a constricted, short neck.

This early, vase-shaped vessel, if we consider it to be a *lei*, undergoes important changes in its form during the Yinxu period: its shoulders become convex, two small handles appear at the level of the vessel's shoulders and a third appears at the base of the body just above the foot. It is also during this period that large square *lei*, '*fanglei*', begin to appear.

Very popular at the end of the Shang dynasty and the beginning of the Western Zhou, this shape disappears from the Chinese bronze repertoire towards the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

### Li 鬲



This tripod vessel named a *li* is composed of three clustered bulbous swells and was used to cook meat and cereals. Its shape is conducive to quick heating, as the vessel's design makes it possible for the fire to reach the largest possible surface of the vessel in a relatively short amount of time.

The *li* is known in pottery in the Neolithic period, but it is not too common at that time. Its pottery form becomes more popular during the Shang and Zhou dynasties. It first appears in bronze in the early Shang dynasty, at the beginning of the Erligang period. It is a very simple vessel, thinly cast, with a body composed of three hollow clustered swells, supported on three small hollow legs, and with two vertical handles fixed to the rim. By the end of the Erligang period, the casting becomes much thicker.

During the Yinxu period and the early Western Zhou dynasty, a neck appears in the upper part of the vessel's body, the three bulbous swells become more

shallow and less elongated and the legs can be full-bodied and cone-shaped, making the whole piece look larger and more powerful. Four-legged *li* or square *li* are extremely rare; one as yet unpublished example is conserved in the Guimet Museum, Paris.

By the middle of the Western Zhou dynasty, the morphology of the *li* changes only slightly, with the vessel becoming much smaller, and its handles being either fixed to the sides of the vessel or disappearing completely. The three lobes become less visible and are supported by three short thin legs, either cylindrical or cabriole-shaped, and the lip or the rim can be sharply flared or everted and flat.

This shape disappears at the beginning of the Spring and Autumn period.

### Liding 鬲鼎



This controversial name was used for the first time by Professor B. Kalgren and is based on the translation of a bronze inscription which means, according to different scholars, either "a *li* and a *ding*" or "a *liding*".

This hybrid vessel, whose shape is a mixture of a *li* and a *ding*, appears at the end of the Shang dynasty. At this period, the vessel's body, cast with deep grooves separating the vessel's three bulbous swells, is supported by three cone-shaped, pointed, fully rounded legs.

During the transitional period, from the late Shang dynasty to the early Western Zhou dynasty, the vessel's bulbous swells become less obvious and less delineated.

During the Western Zhou the separation grooves virtually disappear, with only lines separating the body into three sections.

### Lian 奩 / Zun 樽



The *lian* or, more correctly *zun*, is a vessel of cylindrical shape, supported by three small feet, sometimes in the form of animals, and topped by a cover.

Called a *lian* in the catalogues of collections written by antiquarians from the Song dynasty to the Qing dynasty, this vessel was originally considered to be a receptacle for cosmetics. However, the unearthing by archeologists in 1962 at Youyu Dachuan Village in Shanxi province of one such



vessel with an inscription recording the real name by which the vessel was known in antiquity and its precise use, has now made it possible for us to correct former inaccuracies and to state with certainty that this type of vessel is a *zun* (樽), and that it was used to warm alcoholic beverages.

### *Pan* 盤



The name of this vessel, which was used for ritual ablutions during ceremonies, appears in a great number of bronze inscriptions and in a number of classical texts, including the *Yili* (儀禮) (Book of Rites) in which the vessel's use is clearly explained.

The *pan* is a large, round basin of some depth, supported by a ring foot. Very rare during the Erligang period in the early Shang dynasty, *pan* become more numerous towards the end of the Shang dynasty and the beginning of the Zhou.



From the beginning of the Western Zhou, the *pan* undergoes a slight morphological change, with the appearance of lateral handles fixed to the rim of the vessel. Later, three feet, sometimes in the form of humans or animals, support the basin. The *pan* disappears from the repertoire of Chinese bronze vessels towards the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.

### *Shao* 勺, *dou* 斗, *bi* 匕



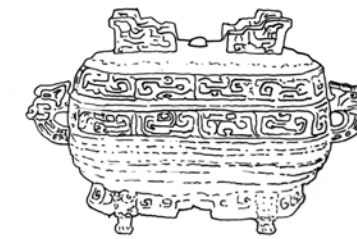
Called either a *shao*, *dou* or *bi*, this ladle was used to ladle out liquids and sometimes food from vessels. Generally this type of ladle resembles a tobacco pipe consisting of a long handle at the end of which is attached a small cup-like receptacle, the exception being the *bi*, which looks more like a spoon. Very popular during the Shang dynasty, these

ladles are often found together with vessels such as *jia*, *jue*, *gong*, *zun*, *you*, *yu* and *jian*.

Such ladles undergo some important changes during the Warring States period when a ring foot is attached to the cup-like part of the ladle to support it.

Of all the three types of ladles used to ladle out liquids or food, only the *bi* has a rather flat receptacle on the end of its handle, similar to the end of a shallow European spoon, but more flat. This type of ladle was common during both the Western and Eastern Zhou dynasties.

### *Xu* 盥



The *xu*, used to hold food and especially rice and other grains, is an oblong vessel of rectangular shape, with a cover of similar shape. Very close in form to a *fu* (匚), it differs by its round angles and a cover that is clearly smaller in size than the vessel's body, which when turned upside-down, can be used as a second receptacle on which to display the food contained in the vessel.

The character *xu* appears in inscriptions on a number of such vessels, but may have been considered a variant of a *gui* or a *xugui*, since certain *xu* vessels contain inscriptions wherein the vessel is thus named.

First appearing in the middle of the Western Zhou, the *xu* disappears at the beginning of the Spring and Autumn period.

### *Yan* 甗



The pronunciation of the Chinese character used to identify this vessel is usually *yan*, but some scholars pronounce it as *xian*. This vessel was used for steaming rice or other grains and is composed of two parts:

- its lower part, similar to a *li*-shaped tripod, contained the water,
- The upper part, called *zeng*, was used to hold rice or other kinds of grain food to be cooked by steaming. Between the vessel's two sections, a strainer-like metal plate called a *bi* is fixed.

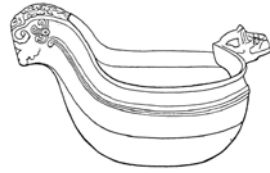
Found in pottery as early as the Neolithic period, the earliest known *yan* in bronze, dating from the Erligang period of the early Shang dynasty, was excavated at Panlongcheng, Hubei province. During the Shang dynasty, the *zeng* or upper part of the vessel is much larger than the lower *li*-like tripod-shaped lower section.

Towards the end of the Shang dynasty and the beginning of the Western Zhou dynasty, the upper part of the *yan* ends in a horizontal lip on which vertical handles are secured.

The *fangyan* or square *yan*, supported by four legs, also appears in this period, but is quite rare, with only a few examples being published by Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Sora Ichi) – Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, in Volume 1 part 2, on p. 79 no. 80 – 81, and p. 80 no. 83.

The *yan* was used up to the end of the Han dynasty. During this period, its legs disappear and the lower part of the vessel is cast in the shape of a bowl with a flat bottom.

## Yi 匜



The name *yi* is used to refer to a group of pouring vessels of various forms, with or without feet, with round or flat bodies, semi-circular or flat handles and large spouts, often in the form of animal heads or stylized animals.

According to the *Zuo Zhuan* (左傳) or *Commentary of Zuo*, which was composed before 389 BC. and is one of China's earliest works of narrative history, the *yi* was used for the ceremonial washing of hands during certain rituals. Some experts believe that the *yi* was used to pour water into the *pan* basin.

The *yi*, whose form was somewhat inspired by the body of the vessel *gong*, first appears at the end of the Western Zhou, around the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. and disappears towards the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC.

## You 卣



The *you*, a bronze jar-shaped vessel used to store and transport fermented beverages, consists of a bulging pot-like body, either ovoid or pear-shaped, supported by a ring foot and topped by a cover and an arch-shaped mobile handle which is usually attached to two small ring handles, one on each side of its body and these in turn are often decorated with animal heads.

The *you* first appears near the end of the Erligang period of the Shang dynasty, when it is sometimes mistakenly called a *hu* in inscriptions. Quite popular and commonly used from the middle of the Shang dynasty throughout the early part of the Western Zhou dynasty, the *you* disappears towards the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC.

An extremely rare variant of the pot-shaped *you*, is the cylindrical *you*, of which only eight examples have been so far recorded.

## Yu 盂



This vessel comes in two main types, a smaller, usually handleless vessel with long, straight sides that slope inwards as they descend. Hayashi calls this the 'small *yu*'. The second larger type of *yu* with its deep-bowl-like body, also with long, straight sides has two handles that jut straight out, one from each side of the vessel, before turning upwards towards the vessel's upper rim. Hayashi calls this type of *yu*, the 'large *yu*'.

(See Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu* (*In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi*), *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I, p. 24 – 25.)

Thus, the *yu*, whether 'small' or 'large', differs primarily from the *gui* by the straightness of its sides as opposed to the convex body of the *gui* and by the wideness of its mouth and the thickness of its rim which often extends outwards from the body of the vessel like an eave.

In the classical texts, the *yu* is described as a vessel used to hold water for 'ablutions' or 'washings'. But according to other texts, the *yu* was used to hold ice to keep foodstuffs fresh during the summer. Certain scholars consider the *yu* to be the predecessor of the large, deep-basin-like vessel *jian*.

Of a very large size during the Erligang period, the *yu* becomes more medium-sized during the second part of the Shang dynasty and the beginning of the Western Zhou. By the end of the Western Zhou, the *yu* sometimes attains to ten times the holding capacity of a *gui*. This type of vessel disappears from the repertoire of Chinese bronze vessels during the Spring and Autumn period.

## Zhi 觚



The *zhi* is a cup which was used for drinking fermented beverages. The name *zhi* appears very early in classical books. The *zhi* is cast with a bulging round body topped by a flared neck and is supported on a ring foot. Very often this vessel has a dome-like cover, with or without a knob in its centre.

Extremely popular by the end of the Shang dynasty, this vessel disappears around the middle of the Western Zhou dynasty.

## Zun 尊



Under the name *zun*, a character which early appears in inscriptions on ancient bronzes, we find three types of vessels used to hold fermented beverages:

1 - a wide-shouldered vessel with a large, wide body, a much narrower, high flaring neck and a high, outwardly sloping ring foot.

This form of *zun* is known in bronze from as early as the Erligang period of the early Shang. During the Yinxu period and until the disappearance of this particular shape of *zun* in the middle of the period, the *zun* is the most common of the large bronze vessels produced, more so than the *lei*.

The most beautiful and rarest wide-shouldered *zun* is the *fangzun*, the square version of the early *zun*. The most famous is a *fangzun* decorated on its four corners with almost full-front-bodied rams with their large, magnificently horned heads jutting out over the sides of the vessel. This masterpiece was excavated in 1938 at Ningxiang, Yueshanpu in Hunan province.



By the end of the Yinxu period, the wide-shouldered *zun* is replaced by the high, narrower, cylindrical *zun* with its wide flaring top and base.



2 - a high cylindrical vessel bulging at its centre and opening out as it rises to end in a trumpet-like mouth, similar to an enlarged version of a *gu*, but of larger, stockier proportions. Like the *gu*'s, this type of *zun*'s foot is also flared.

3 - a third type of *zun* in the form of an animal. Such animal-shaped vessels grouped under the heading '*zun*' are known cast in the form of elephants, buffaloes, rams, rhinoceroses, rabbits, pigs, mythological hybrid animals, etc. or birds. Considered to be southern in origin, such animal-shaped vessels appear in the repertoire of Chinese bronzes as early as the beginning of the Shang dynasty, during the Erligang period.

In general *zun* in the form of animals are spoken of as *niaoshouzun* (鳥獸尊) (bird-animal *zun*), *xizun* (犧尊) (ox *zun*), *xiangzun* (象尊) (elephant *zun*), etc. in Chinese to differentiate them from regular *zun*.

#### Bells (*Ling*, *Nao*, *Zheng*, *Bo*)

During the Shang dynasty when the earliest bells appear in bronze in China, bells usually come in groups of three, each of a different size.

During the Western Zhou, bells usually come in groups of 5, or 8, or 9 or even more, each of a different size. By the beginning of the Eastern Zhou, i.e. the Spring and Autumn period, bells are usually grouped into sets of nine or more, varying in size from very small to very large.

The largest set of bells so far excavated, consists of 64 bells found in the Warring States period tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng (曾侯乙墓) near present-day Wuhan in the province of Hubei.

Various types of bells:

#### *Ling* 鈴



Scientifically excavated from Strata II at the Erlitou site in Henan province, *ling* bells are actually the earliest-known bronze objects produced in China. These small, oval, cup-like bells with very thin sides, have a long, thin handle with rounded ends jutting out from one side, and sometimes a tongue inside, and were cast in two parts.

*Ling* bells become more numerous by the end of the Shang dynasty during the Yinxu period. Usually around 7 to 8 cm in height, they rarely come larger than 10 cm high.

Some specialists consider these small bells to be the ancestors of the larger *bo* bell of subsequent periods.

#### *Nao* 鐃



This medium to large-sized large bell composed of a large, elliptic, cup-like section that, unlike bells of later periods, is placed upwards towards the sky, rests on a long, thick, cylindrical, handle-like projection, which in fact serves as the bell's base. The sound emitted by this ritual instrument is produced by percussion.

Under the heading *nao*, specialists place two types of bells, similar in shape, but quite different in size:

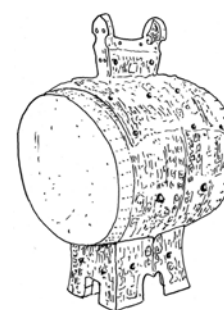
The *nao* 鐃, which according to the Shuowen Jiezi, written around the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC., is the name given to fairly small bells of between 7 and 21 cm in height, which were used during the Shang dynasty. Such *nao* have been excavated from Yinxu period tombs and are usually found in groups of three or four, or exceptionally, as in the case of the Fuhao (Lady Hao 婦好) Tomb excavation in present-day Anyang, Henan province, in a group of five. The *zheng* 鉦, often simply called *nao* or large *nao*, is shaped exactly like the smaller *nao*, but is of much larger size, sometimes reaching 90cm in height; usually very heavy, the *zheng* type of *nao* can weigh as much as 154 kg each and its walls can be as thick as 3 or 4 cm. Generally found alone and positioned with its opening towards the sky, the *zheng* was used during ritual sacrifices to the natural elements, such as the wind, the rain, the stars, etc. as well as to mountains and rivers. These large *zheng* bells were very popular from the end of the Shang dynasty throughout the early part of the Western Zhou and have been mainly excavated in more southerly provinces of China including Hunan, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangxi.

#### *Bo* 鐃 / *Zhong* 鐘



The *bo* and *zhong* are fairly thick-sided bells which, like western bells, are suspended facing downwards from their handles. For the *bo*, the handle is semi-circular, sometimes simple, but more often elaborately decorated with three-dimensional animal forms, while for the *zhong* the handle consists of a long, thick, tubular or multi-sided projection. *Bo* and *zhong* are usually found in sets of from four or five to fourteen, or sometimes as many as sixty-five, as in the set of bells excavated from the tomb of the Marquis Yi of Zeng (曾侯乙墓) in 1978.

#### Drums – *Gu* 鼓



A type of early bronze drum in the shape of a large barrel on a rectangular base supported by four legs was produced during the Shang dynasty and was most probably used during military campaigns. So far only two such drums have been excavated. One is conserved in the Sumitomo Collection in Kyoto, Japan and the other, which was excavated in 1977 in Chongyang Baini, Hubei province is now conserved in the Hubei Provincial Museum.

# 夏二里頭

I – XIA / ERLITOU CULTURE

158. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *jue***  
**Xia dynasty, Erlitou period, circa 19<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**

夏代二里頭文化期青銅爵

**Height: 14 cm, Length: 13 cm**

A bronze tripod cup used for warming fermented beverages. The wide, rounded lower body of the oval flat-bottomed vessel narrows in its centre before spreading outwards as it rises towards its top. The vessel is supported by three, short, outwardly extending triangular legs which taper off to end in pointed, almost sword-blade-like tips. One side of the vessel is decorated with two horizontal lines in light relief, while from the other side, also decorated with two horizontal lines in light relief, a wide semi-circular handle extends downwards from below the upper lip of the vessel to the centre of the vessel's wide, rounded lower body. Each end of the handle is cast in open-work and is broader than the central section of the handle. The vessel's long spout is embellished with a pair of upwardly protruding tendons just above the area where it extends from the oval-shaped body.

The vessel has a grey patina speckled with patches of maroon and blue.

**Provenance:**

- Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Exhibited:**

- Treasures from Ancient China - III, Asia Week / New York, Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris 2011, catalogue p. 12 - 15.

**Published:**

- Deydier Ch., *Treasures from Ancient China - III, Asia Week / New York*, Paris 2011, p. 12 - 15.

**Similar examples:**

- Several bronze *jue* of the Erlitou period of different sizes and forms are illustrated in Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Archaiques Chinois - Archaic Chinese Bronzes - I - Xia & Shang*, Paris 1995, p. 16 to 30 and in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanjì, Vol. 1 - Xia - Shang*, Beijing 1996, nos. 2 to 10.
- Two *jue* in the Meiyintang Collection are illustrated by Wang Tao in *Chinese Bronzes from the Meiyintang Collection*, London 2009, nos. 2 and 3.

**Notes:**

- Bronze vessels from this very early period are extremely rare. Few pieces were excavated from the Erlitou III strata period, a period which witnessed the birth of bronze production in China and which thus marks an important turning point in Chinese cultural history.
- The *jue* wine cup is one of the most ancient forms of Chinese ritual bronzes; it first appears in bronze in the Erlitou culture, which is, according to some scholars, the last period of the Xia dynasty.







159. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *jue***  
**Xia Dynasty, Erlitou period, circa 19<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
夏代二里頭文化期青銅爵  
**Height: 13.2 cm, Length: 14.2 cm**

A bronze tripod cup *jue* used for warming fermented beverages. The body of the oval, flat-bottomed vessel narrows in its centre before opening outwards as it rises towards its top. The vessel is supported by three short, outwardly-extending triangular legs which taper off to end in pointed, almost sword-blade-like tips. A semi-circular handle extends from just below the upper lip of the vessel to the centre of the vessel's oval lower body. The centre of the handle is cast with a small round motif in open work. A long spout without tendons extends from the front of the vessel's oval-shaped body.

The vessel has a light green patina.

**Provenance:**  
▪ Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Similar examples:**  
▪ Several bronze *jue* of the Erlitou period of different sizes and forms are illustrated in Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Archaiques Chinois - Archaic Chinese Bronzes - I - Xia & Shang*, Paris 1995, p. 16 to 30 and in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanjì, Vol. 1 - Xia - Shang*, Beijing 1996, nos. 2 to 10.  
▪ Two *jue* in the Meiyintang Collection are illustrated by Wang Tao in *Chinese Bronzes from the Meiyintang Collection*, London 2009, nos. 2 and 3.  
▪ Other *jue* from the Erlitou period, but with a quite different shape, all excavated from Erlitou in 1975, are illustrated in *Henan Chutu Shang Zhou Qingtongqi*, Vol. 1, Beijing 1981, p. 17, no. 1, p. 18, no. 2 and p. 19, no. 5.

**Note:**  
▪ This bronze's lack of tendons is typical of most of the small-sized *jue* vessels from the Erlitou period.





160. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *jiao***  
**Xia dynasty, Erlitou culture, circa 19<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**

夏代二里頭文化期青銅角

**Height: 18.5 cm**

An archaic bronze vessel *jiao* used for heating fermented beverages. The cup is supported by three triangular legs. The body of the vessel consists of an oval, flat-bottomed body whose sides gradually narrow at the vessel's centre and then extend outwards as they rise to form a pair of open, horn-like spouts. From the middle of the body's front section a much longer *he*-vessel-like cylindrical pouring spout emerges.

One side of the vessel is decorated with a narrow band of small circular patterns cast in high relief, while a long loop-handle, extending from just below the vessel's top rim to just above its wide sloping waist, emerges from the opposite side of the vessel.

The vessel has a nice dark green patina.

**Provenance:**

- Private Collection, Taipei, Taiwan.
- Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Exhibited:**

- Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 7.

**Published:**

- Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 24 - 25, no. 7.

**Similar examples:**

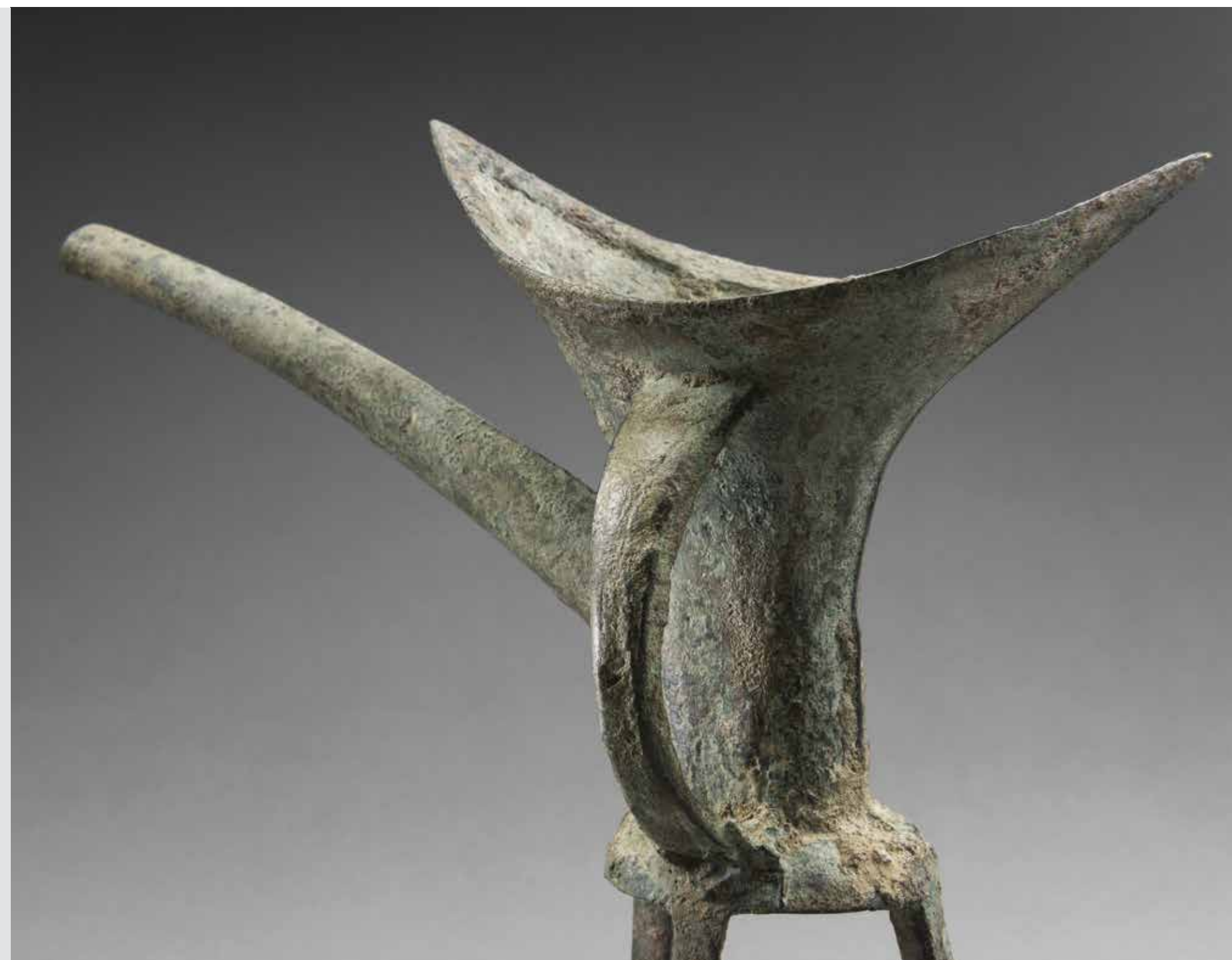
- A very similar hybrid *jiao*(角) - *he* (盃) vessel *jiao*, excavated in 1980 in Luoning, Shaanxi province, and now in the Museum of History of Shaanxi Province, is published in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanji, Vol. 1 - Xia - Shang*, Beijing, 1996, p. 11, no. 11.
- Another such hybrid *jiao*, from the Shanghai Museum, is illustrated by Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Archaïques Chinois - Archaic Chinese Bronzes - I - Xia & Shang*, Paris 1995, p. 34, and in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanji, Vol. 1 - Xia - Shang*, Beijing, 1996, p. 12 no. 12.











# 商二里岗

II – EARLY SHANG / ERLIGANG PERIOD

161. **Ritual bronze food vessel *li***  
**Shang dynasty, early Erligang period, circa 16<sup>th</sup> century BC.**  
商代二里岡早期青銅鬲  
**Height: 22.5 cm, Diameter: 16 cm**

An archaic bronze food vessel *li* with a tri-lobed bulbous body supported on three slender, cone-shaped tapering legs. The vessel's short neck opens outwards at its top to form a wide, hat-brim-like lip that encircles the vessel and is topped by a pair of arch-like handles. Each of the vessel's lobes is decorated with very simple lines in low relief.

Some prominent mold marks are visible on the vessel.

The vessel has a brownish green patina with areas of cuprite incrustations.



**Provenance:**

- Private Collection, Japan.
- Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Exhibited:**

- Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 13.

**Published:**

- Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 33, no. 13.

**Similar examples:**

- Some similar *li* vessels excavated in 1954 in Zhengzhou, Henan province, are illustrated in *Henan Chutu Shang Zhou Qingtongqi, Vol. 1*, Beijing 1981, p. 45, nos. 42 - 43 and p. 46, no. 44.
- Another *li*, excavated in 1974, in Tuling, Zhanghai Nanjie, Shanxi Province, is illustrated by Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Archaïques Chinois - Archaic Chinese Bronzes - I - Xia & Shang, Volume I*, Paris 1995, p. 51, nos. 2 - 3.





162. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *jue***  
**Shang Dynasty, Erligang period, circa 16<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
商代二里岡時期青銅爵  
**Height: 20.5 cm, Length: 17.8 cm**

A bronze tripod cup used for heating fermented beverages. A single mushroom-like tenon rises on a pyramid-shaped arch above the section of the vessel's upwardly rising spout where it begins to emerge from the vessel's oval, flat-bottomed body. The cup section of the vessel is supported on three outwardly extending, triangular legs which taper off at their bottoms to end in pointed, almost sword-blade-like tips. A semi-circular handle extends from one of the vessel's sides, both of which are decorated with three bands of design, a central wider band cast with primitive *taotie* masks and two much narrower bordered bands of small circular patterns, above and below the central band of design.

The vessel has a green and grey patina.

**Provenance:**  
▪ Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Exhibited:**  
▪ Treasures from Ancient China - III, Asia Week / New York, Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris 2011, catalogue p. 16 - 19

**Published:**  
▪ Deydier Ch., *Treasures from Ancient China - III, Asia Week / New York*, Paris 2011, p. 16 - 19.

**Similar examples:**  
▪ A *jue* with the same decoration, but with the more commonly found double tenons at its top, is conserved in the collection of the Guimet Museum in Paris and is illustrated by Girard-Geslan M., *Bronzes Archaiques de Chine*, Paris 1995, p. 51 to 53.  
▪ A *jue*, also with a single tenon and excavated in 1974 on the site of Panlongcheng, Lijiazui, Tomb Li MI is illustrated by Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Archaiques Chinois - Archaic Chinese Bronzes - I - Xia & Shang*, Paris 1995, plate no. 4.







163. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *jue***  
**Shang dynasty, Erligang period, circa 16<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
商代二里岡時期青銅爵  
**Height: 15.5 cm**

A bronze tripod cup used for heating slightly fermented beverages. The cup's oval body consists of three parts: a wider rounded lower section, a slightly narrower mid-section and an upper section that turns outwards as it rises towards the vessel's upper rim. The vessel's mid-section is decorated with a single primitive *taotie* mask with a pair of large, rounded, rectangular eyes flanked by scroll-like designs that extend round the back to end near the vessel's semi-circular handle. Two stem-like tenons rise from the sides of the vessel's long spout where it begins to emerge from the body of the vessel. The vessel's body is supported on three outwardly extending triangular legs which taper off at their bottoms to end in pointed, almost sword-blade-like tips.

The vessel has a dark green patina.



**Provenance:**

- Benhaïm Collection, Paris, France.
- Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Similar examples:**

- A similar tripod vessel from the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, is illustrated in Bagley R., *Shang Ritual Bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1987, p. 78, fig. 46.
- A few similar *jue* are published in *Henan Chutu Shang Zhou Qingtongqi*, Vol. 1, Beijing 1981, p. 24 no. 13, p. 42 no. 37 (but with two strips of decoration) and p. 58 no. 62.





164. **Ritual bronze food vessel *ding***  
**Shang dynasty, Erligang period, circa 16<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
商代二里岡時期青銅鼎  
**Height: 18 cm, Diameter: 18 cm**

An archaic bronze food vessel *ding* supported by three stubby, tapering conical legs. The upper part of the vessel's deep, bowl-shaped body is decorated with a narrow frieze of three primitive *taotie* masks and the vessel's wide, flat, protruding rim is set with two upright loop handles.

The vessel has a pleasant, light green patina.



**Provenance:**

- Private Collection, Japan.
- Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Exhibited:**

- Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 15.

**Published:**

- Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 35, no. 15.

**Similar examples:**

- Two similar bronze vessels *ding*, excavated from tomb 2, at Baijiazhuang (North - East of Zhengzhou) in 1954, are illustrated by Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Archaiques Chinois - Archaic Chinese Bronzes - I - Xia & Shang*, Paris 1995, p. 41 nos. 3 - 4, and in *Henan Chutu Shang Zhou Qingtongqi*, Vol. 1, Beijing 1981, p. 27 no. 20.
- A quite similar *ding*, also excavated at Baijiazhuang in 1955, from tomb C8M3, is published in *Henan Chutu Shang Zhou Qingtongqi*, Vol. 1, Beijing 1981, p. 32 no. 25.
- Another *ding*, excavated at Panlongcheng (tomb M2.2) in 1974, is published by Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Archaiques Chinois - Archaic Chinese Bronzes - I - Xia & Shang*, Paris 1995, p. 46, drawing no. 1.



165. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *zun***  
**Shang dynasty, Erligang period, circa 16<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
商代二里岡時期青銅尊  
**Height: 28.3 cm, Diameter: 21.4 cm**

This primitive bronze wine vessel *zun* with a large deep-bowl-like body and a shorter and narrower neck that gradually expands outwards as it reaches its rim, is supported by a high, flared ring foot. The vessel's neck and foot are decorated with simple lines in relief, while its concave shoulder is decorated at the base of the neck with a frieze of stylized *kui* dragons shown in profile. The upper part of the vessel's body is decorated with a single wide band of primitive *taotie* masks, sandwiched between two narrower bordered bands of small circular patterns.

The vessel has a green and maroon patina.

- Provenance:**
- Private Collection, Japan.
  - Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

- Exhibited:**
- Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 19.

- Published:**
- Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 40, no. 19.

- Similar example:**
- A similar *zun* from the Sackler Collection, but with a slightly different primitive *taotie*, is illustrated by Bagley R.W., *Shang Ritual Bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1987, p. 144 - 146, no. 1.

- Note:**
- Bagley calls this type of vessel a *lei*.





166. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *gu***  
**Shang dynasty, Erligang period, circa 16<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
商代二里岡時期青銅觚  
**Height: 17.8 cm**

An extremely rare wine vessel cast in the form of a stubby, tubular body with a trumpet-like upper section and a flared openwork base. The central and lower parts of the vessel's body are both decorated with a frieze of two *taotie* masks, each of which is composed of a pair of large-eyed *kui* dragons, shown in profile, confronting each other across a vertical flange. The wide area between these two bands of decoration is cast in openwork with geometric patterns.

The vessel has a nice green and grey patina.



- Provenance:**
- Christian Deydier / Oriental Bronzes Ltd., London, U.K.
  - President Jacques Chirac Collection, Paris, France.
  - Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.
- Similar example:**
- Very few *gu* vessels of this type and with openwork design are known.
  - A very similar *gu*, with openwork motif, also from the Erligang period and excavated at Panlongcheng, Hebei province, is published by Bagley R., *Shang Ritual Bronzes in the Arthur Sackler Collection*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1987, p. 232, fig. 30.1.



167. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *jia***  
**Shang dynasty, Erligang period, circa 16<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
商代二里岡時期青銅罍  
**Height: 34 cm**

A ritual bronze tripod vessel used for warming fermented beverages. The vessel's flat-bottomed body is composed of two parts: a slightly bulging belly, and a tall recessed neck that gradually opens outwards as it rises towards its rim. The belly is decorated with three large, deeply cast *taotie* masks with small, protruding, rectangular eyes. The bottom of the vessel's neck is decorated with a single register of three primitive *taotie* masks bordered above and below by two narrower bands of small circular patterns. Two high, mushroom-like tenons, each consisting of a square stem surmounted by an umbrella-like top decorated with geometrical patterns, emerge from the vessel's upper rim. From the side of the vessel, a very simple handle extends.

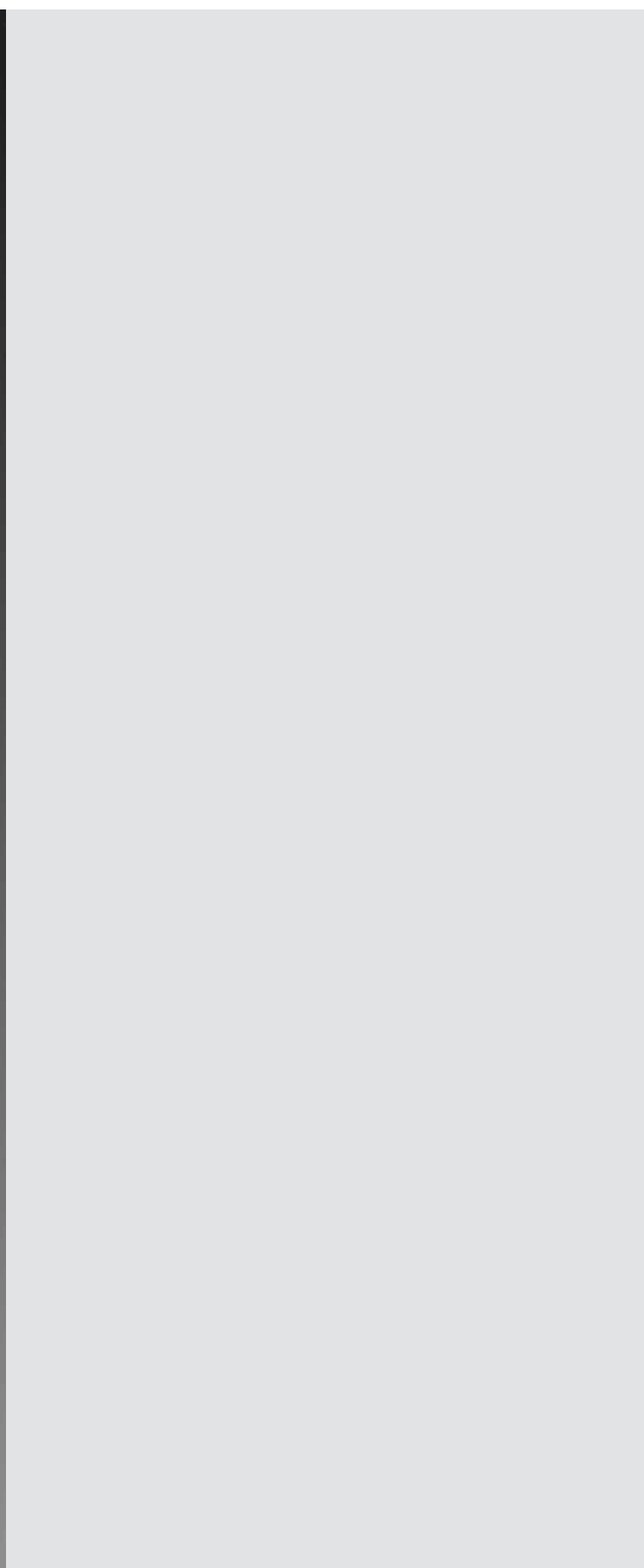
The vessel has a nice light-brown patina.

- Provenance:**
- Private European Collection.
  - Mahé - Michon Collection, Paris, France.
  - Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.
- Exhibited:**
- Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 11.
- Published:**
- Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 30 - 31, no. 11.

- Similar examples:**
- A similar *jia* from the Shanghai Museum is published in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanjì, Vol. 1 - Xia - Shang*, Beijing 1996, p. 94, no. 69.
  - Four very similar *jia* of similar design, now in the Shanghai Museum, are illustrated by Chen Peifen, *Xia Shang Zhou Qingtongqi Yanjiu, Xia Shang Bian*, Shanghai 2004, p. 75 - 83.
  - Another *jia*, excavated in 1973 at Erlitou, Zhengzhou, Henan Province, is illustrated in *Henan Chutu Shang Zhou Qingtongqi*, Vol. 1, Beijing 1981, no. 55.









168. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *you***  
**Shang dynasty, Erligang period, circa 16<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**

商代二里岡時期青銅卣

**Height: 24.8cm, Height including the handle: 33.5 cm**

A covered ritual bronze wine vessel *you*, cast with a large, broad body topped by a concave shoulder and a long neck, and supported on a high ring foot. The vessel's high, arch-like, moveable handle is cast in the form of a thick rope of intertwined strands and is fixed at the base of the vessel's neck to two half-ring handles.

The upper part of the vessel's neck is decorated with three lines in low relief, while the vessel's concave shoulder is decorated with a frieze of stylized *kui* dragons with protuberant rectangular eyes, shown in profile.

Each side of the vessel's body is decorated with a pair of confronting *kui* dragons with large, protuberant, rectangular eyes, shown in profile and merging into each other over a slightly protruding vertical flange to form a large *taotie* mask. This central band of decoration is bordered above and below by narrow bands of small circular patterns.

The bronze has an olive green patina.



**Provenance:**

- Private Collection, Japan.
- Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Exhibited:**

- Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 18.

**Published:**

- Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 39, no. 18.

**Similar examples:**

- A similar vessel is recorded in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichii)*, *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. 1 - Plates, p. 256, no. 1.
- A quite similar *you* vessel excavated in 1974 in Lijiazui, Panlongcheng, Hubei province is illustrated by Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Archaiques Chinois - Archaic Chinese Bronzes - I - Xia & Shang*, Paris 1995, p. 59, no. 2, and in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanji, Vol. 1 - Xia - Shang*, Beijing 1996, p. 136, no. 137.
- Another early *you* excavated in 1977, at Pinggu Xian, Beijing, is published in *Wenwu* 1977, Issue no. 11, p. 5, fig. 6:1, and in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanji, Vol. 1 - Xia - Shang*, Beijing 1996, p. 137, no. 138.

**Note:**

- Most scholars call this type of vessel a *you*, but Ma Chengyuan considers it to be a *hu*.





169. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *jiao***  
**Shang Dynasty, late Erligang period, circa 14<sup>th</sup> century BC.**

商代二里岡晚期青銅角

**Height: 20.2 cm, Width across the top front: 16.2 cm**

A double-spouted, flat-bottomed tripod cup used for heating fermented beverages. The cup is supported by three triangular, outwardly descending legs, each of whose outer surfaces is decorated with a descending bordered-blade-like motif encompassing a cicada-wing motif with a very stylized *taotie* mask above it. The body of the vessel consists of an oval, flat-bottomed body whose sides gradually extend outwards as they rise to form a pair of open, horn-like spouts. The wide half-oval front and back sections of the vessel's body come together on the sides of the vessel in narrow, ridge-like, horizontal decorated strips. The surface of each of these half-oval front and back sections is cast with a complex motif consisting of a powerful bulging-eyed *taotie* mask in its upper half and four rows of spirals and curls forming another more stylized and smaller *taotie* mask in its lower half. The front section of the vessel has down its centre a vertical ridge topped by a small *taotie* mask, while the back of the vessel has down its centre a semi-circular handle topped by a *taotie* mask with protruding eyes. All the incisions of the vessel's decoration are filled with a carbonated substance, perhaps traces of some sort of inlay.

The vessel has a light bluish-green patina.

**Provenance:**

- Private Collection, Tokyo, Japan.
- Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Exhibited:**

- XXV<sup>ème</sup> Biennale des Antiquaires / Grand Palais - Paris, Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris 2010, catalogue p. 10 - 17.

**Published:**

- Deydier Ch., XXV<sup>ème</sup> *Biennale des Antiquaires / Grand Palais - Paris*, Paris 2010, p. 10 - 17.

**Similar example:**

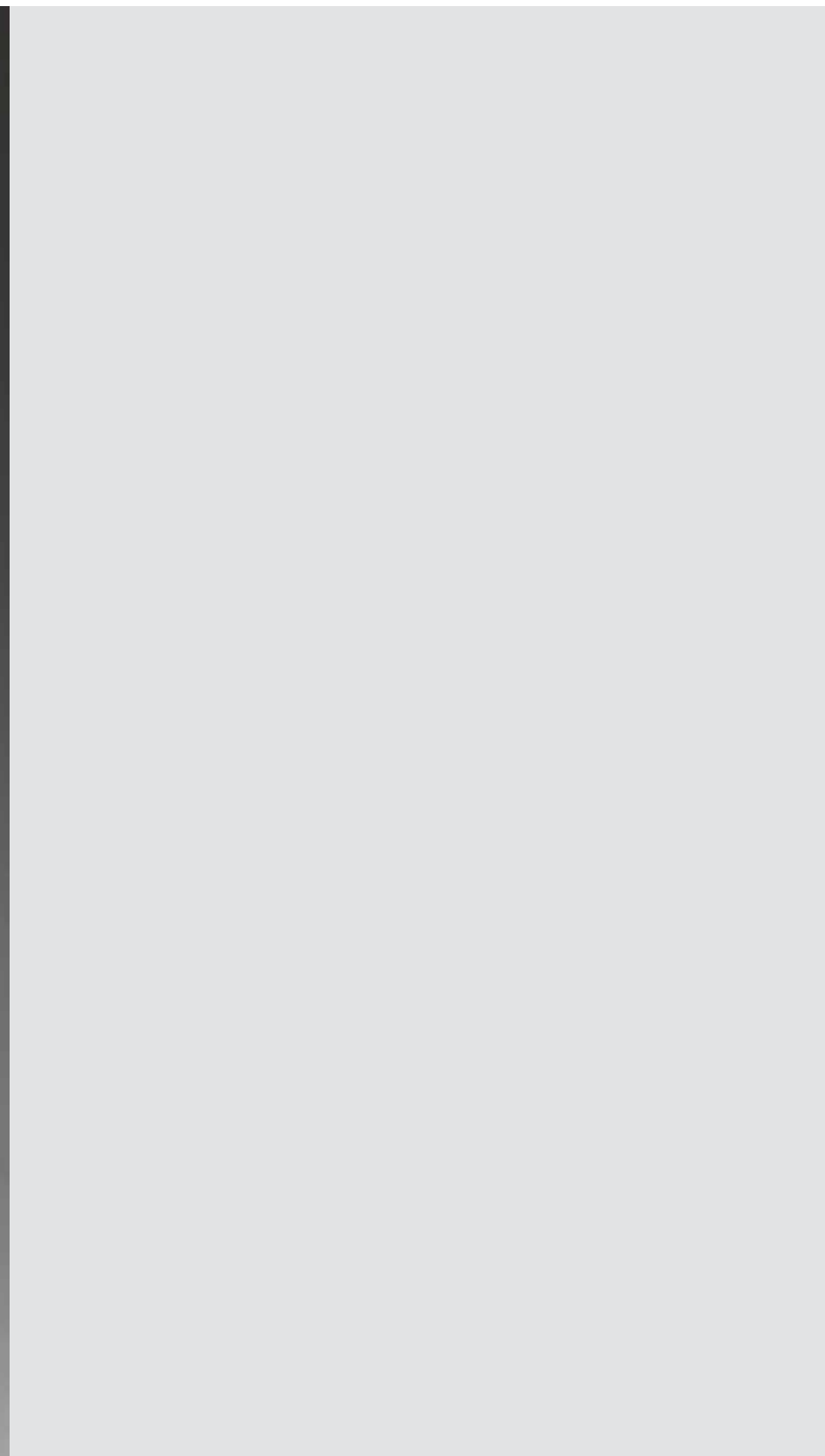
- A bronze *jia* vessel with a similar design, but with a rounded body, is conserved in the Idemitsu Museum (Japan) and is published in *Ancient Chinese Arts in the Idemitsu Museum*, Tokyo 1989, pl. 35.

**Notes:**

- This vessel's attribution to the pre-Yinxu period of the Shang dynasty is based on a comparative study of the form and structure of *jiao* and *jue* wine cups of the Xia period (Erlitou culture) and the beginning of the Shang (Erligang period). The central cup sections of all the *jiao* and *jue* of these early periods have flat bottoms and, most importantly, are oval-shaped and have pointed spouts, as is the case with the present example. In following periods, the bottoms and bodies of *jiao* and *jue* wine cups are almost always rounded.
- The decoration on the legs of the present vessel is very similar to the decoration on the legs of a *jiao* conserved in the Palace Museum in Beijing, which is illustrated as no. 4125 on p. 2323 - 2324 of Vol.VI of Yan Yiping, *Jinwen Zongji*, Taipei 1983. The same *jiao* is published as no. 23 on p. 192 in Vol. I of Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi)*, *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, where it is dated as early Zhou. The same piece was also published in *Kaogu Xuebao*, Issue no. 2, 1977, p. 34 where Mr. Yin Zhiyi describes it as a Shang period bronze made by the important Po Ku tribe, allies of the Shang.
- The incisions in the decoration on the bronze *jiao* in the Palace Museum, Beijing are filled with a red-black paste which accentuates the design. Tests carried out between 1967 and 1969 by R.J. Getteres of the Freer Gallery (Washington, D.C.) demonstrated that this paste or carbonated substance is made up of a mixture of quartz and cuprite. So far only a few bronze vessels with their designs highlighted in this way have been recorded. One of these is a bronze *li* at the Cernuschi Museum in Paris which was published by Elisseeff V., *Bronzes Archaiques Chinois au Musée Cernuschi, Archaic Chinese Bronzes*, Vol. 1 - Tome 1, Paris 1977, pl. 1.









170. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *jia***  
**Shang dynasty, late Erligang period - early Yinxu period, circa 14<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
商代二里岡晚期 — 殷墟早期青銅罍  
**Height: 17 cm**

A rare bronze wine vessel *jia*, supported on three pointed, stubby, triangular legs. The vessel's bulbous body is deeply cast with two bands of decoration, a wider lower band decorated with slightly protruding, revolving-wheel-like circles and spirals and a narrower upper band decorated with stylized mythical-bird-like patterns with large rectangular eyes.

Two high mushroom-like tenons, each consisting of a square stem surmounted by an umbrella-like top decorated with geometrical patterns, emerge from the vessel's upper rim. From the side of the vessel just below the upper rim, a simple undecorated handle topped by a stylized *taotie* mask in low relief extends sharply outwards, before turning inwards to end just below the vessel's lower band of decoration.

The vessel has a pleasant green patina.

- Provenance:**
- Private European Collection since 1950.
  - C.T. Loo, Paris, France, before 1950.
  - Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

- Exhibited:**
- Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 12.

- Published:**
- Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 32, no. 12.

- Similar examples:**
- Another *jia* quite similar in shape, excavated in 1974, in Lingpao, Henan province, is illustrated in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanjì*, Vol. 1 - Xia - Shang, Beijing 1996, p. 98 no. 99, and in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi)*, *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 194 no. 31.
  - Another vessel of the same shape, but with different decor and now in the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, is published by Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Archaïques Chinois - Archaic Chinese Bronzes - I - Xia & Shang*, Paris 1995. p. 237, and in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi)*, *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates p. 194 no. 30.







# 商 殷 墟

III – LATE SHANG / YINXU PERIOD

171. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *fangyi***  
**Shang dynasty, early Yinxu period, circa 13<sup>th</sup> century BC.**  
商代殷墟早期青銅方彝  
**Height: 19.2 cm**

An archaic, covered bronze wine container of rectangular shape, supported by a high foot with arched openings. The body of the vessel is decorated, just below its rim, with a wide band deeply cast with ornate, stylized *taotie* masks, bordered above and below by narrower bands of small circular patterns.

The vessel's foot is decorated with a frieze of outwardly facing *kui* dragons, shown in profile on a *leiwen* background, with each dragon confronting its neighbor over the adjoining corner of the vessel.

The vessel's large, sloping, roof-like cover is topped by a small similarly shaped knob on a short neck and is decorated all round on its lower edges with a high band of repeating C and T scrolls, bordered above and below by narrower bands of small circular patterns.

The vessel has a fine light green patina.



- Provenance:**
- Oeder Collection, Priemern, Altmark, Germany.
  - Sotheby's, London, 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1984.
  - Private Collection, Paris, France.
  - Eskenazi Ltd, London, U.K.

- Exhibited:**
- Ostasiatische Kunst und Chinoiserie, Koln, Germany, 1953.
  - Weltkunst aus Privatbesitz, Kunsthalle, Koln, Germany, 1968.
  - Sotheby's, London, 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1984, catalogue no. 13.
  - Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 81.

- Published:**
- Karlgren B., *New Studies on Chinese Bronzes*, BMFEA Vol. 9, Stockholm 1937, pl. LVI, no. 1277.
  - Hentze C., *Bronzegerät, Kulbauten, Religion im Ältesten China der Shang - Zeit*, Antwerp 1951, pl. XXXV, no. 21.
  - Sotheby's, London, 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1984, catalogue no. 13.
  - Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 134, no. 81.





172. **Archaic bronze wine vessel *jia***  
**Shang dynasty, Yinxu period, circa 13<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
商代殷墟時期青銅罍  
**Height: 33.5 cm**

An archaic bronze wine vessel *jia* supported on three pointed triangular legs, each of which is decorated on its outer sides with a stylized cicada-shaped motif. The vessel's round body is divided into three different friezes, the largest of which is decorated with *taotie* masks composed of large confronting *kui* dragons on a *leiwen* background divided by small flanges, while the frieze above that is decorated with a band of smaller stylized *kui* dragons on a *leiwen* background, the centre pair of which face each other across a narrow vertical flange. The top section of the vessel's body is decorated with triangular, stylized cicadas on a plain background.

Two high mushroom-like tenons, each consisting of a square stem surmounted by an umbrella-like top decorated with geometrical patterns, emerge from the vessel's upper rim. A very simple, undecorated handle extends from the back of the vessel's body.

The vessel has a nice light-green patina.



**Inscription:**

- A single pictogram, probably a clan mark, is cast inside the vessel.

**Provenance:**

- Private Collection, California, U.S.A. before 1978.
- Sotheby's, New York, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1978.
- Sotheby's, London, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1986.
- Alan & Simone Hartman Collection, New York, U.S.A.
- Oriental Bronzes Ltd, Christian Deydier, London, U.K.
- Frank Arts Collection, Antwerp, Belgium.
- Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Exhibited:**

- Sotheby's, New York, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1978, catalogue no. 317.
- Sotheby's, London, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1986, catalogue no. 49.
- The Frank Arts Collection / Fine Art Asia, Hong Kong, Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris 2011, catalogue no. 4.
- Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 31.

**Published:**

- Sotheby's, New York, November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1978, catalogue no. 317.
- Sotheby's, London, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1986, catalogue no. 49.
- Liu Yu, *Jin Chu Yin Zhou Jinwen Jilu*, 2002, no. 923. 劉雨《近出殷周金文集錄》2002年版 923號.
- Liu Yu & Wang Tao, *Liu San Oumei Yin Zhou You Ming Qingtongci Jilu (A selection of Early Chinese bronzes with inscriptions from Sotheby's & Christie's sales)*, Shanghai 2007, no. 315. 劉雨 & 汪濤《流散歐美殷周有銘青銅器集錄》上海 2007年版 315號.
- Deydier Ch., *The Frank Arts Collection / Fine Art Asia, Hong Kong*, Paris 2011, p.18 - 21, no. 4.
- Wu Zhenfeng, *Shang Zhou Qingtongqi Mingwen Ji Tuxiang Jicheng*, Shanghai 2012, Vol. 20, p. 33, no. 10911. 吳鎮烽《商周青銅器銘文暨圖像集成》上海 2012年版, 第20冊, 第33頁 10911號.
- Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 54, no. 32.

**Similar examples:**

- A very similar *jia* excavated in 1959 in Anyang, Henan province is illustrated in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanji, Vol. 3 - Shang 3*, Beijing 1997, p. 47, no. 47.
- Another *jia* excavated in Anyang in 1980, but with a handle decorated with a stylized animal's head in high relief, and surmounted by a cover, is published in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanji, Vol. 3 - Shang 3*, Beijing 1997, p. 49, no. 49.
- Another *jia*, but with a cover and now in the Avery Brundage Collection, the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, is illustrated by Lefebvre d'Argencé R.Y., *Bronze Vessels of Ancient China in The Avery Brundage Collection*, San Francisco 1977, p. 62 - 63, no. B60 B1019.









173. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *fangjia***  
**Shang dynasty, Yinxu period, circa 13<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**

商代殷墟時期青銅方罍

**Height: 36 cm, Breadth: 20.8 cm**

This exceptional ritual bronze vessel in the form of a rectangular *fangjia* was used to hold fermented beverages. Its rectangular body, with a slightly bulging lower section, rests on four thick, outwardly extending triangular legs which taper off at their bottoms to end in pointed, almost sword-blade-like tips. The outward surfaces of the legs are decorated with stylized animals on a background of deeply and crisply cast *leiwen* geometrical patterns.

The decoration on the body of the vessel is divided into three horizontal sections: the lower section, the biggest of the three, has a large *taotie* mask at its centre composed of two interfacing, conjoining stylized *kui* dragons on a background of deeply cast *leiwen* geometrical patterns. A narrower section just above that, is decorated with a pair of interfacing long-tailed phoenixes on the same background of deeply cast *leiwen* geometrical patterns that grace the lower section of the vessel, while the uppermost section is decorated with triangular, stylized cicadas on a plain background.

On the back side of the vessel, a semi-circular handle emerges from the mouth of an ox-like horned creature. The central sections of the vessel's left and right upper rims are both topped off by a mushroom-like tenon consisting of a square stem surmounted by a roof-like covering, the four sides of which are crisply cast with stylized cicada and geometrical motifs. A knob in the form of a pair of conjoined birds rises from the centre of the vessel's cover, which is decorated with two large *taotie* masks on a background of *leiwen* geometrical patterns.

The whole vessel is covered with a beautiful light green patina.



**Inscription:**

- The vessel's interior and the inside of its cover are both cast with an identical pictograph which reads: "Guang" 《光, meaning 'bright' or 'imperial favour' shown to a consort or minister》or "Kuang" 《貺, meaning 'bestow' or 'grant' as a gift from a superior to one lower in the hierarchy.》(See also bronzes Nos. 37, 53 and 75 in *Chinese Bronzes from the Meiyintang Collection*, Vol. I - Annexe.)

**Provenance:**

- Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Exhibited:**

- XXV<sup>ème</sup> Biennale des Antiquaires / Grand Palais - Paris, Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris 2010, catalogue p. 22 - 29.

**Published:**

- Deydier Ch., XXV<sup>ème</sup> Biennale des Antiquaires / Grand Palais - Paris, Paris 2010, p. 22 - 29.

**Similar examples:**

- A similar example can be seen at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, in the Avery Brundage Collection. The vessel is illustrated by Lefebvre d'Argencé R.Y., *Bronze Vessels of Ancient China in The Avery Brundage Collection*, The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1977, no. 23, pp. 62 - 63.
- A *fangjia* in the British Museum in London is published in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi)*, *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 198, no. 77.
- Two other *fangjia*, currently in the Minneapolis Institute of Art, are published in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi)*, *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 198, nos. 78 and 80.
- A *fangjia* in the Freer Gallery of Arts in Washington D.C is published in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi)*, *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 198, no. 79, and in Pope J. A., *The Freer Chinese Bronzes*, Washington, 1967, Vol. I, no. 22.
- A *fangjia* from the Nelson Atkins Museum in Kansas City is published in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi)*, *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 199, no. 81.
- Another *fangjia*, formerly in the Albright-Knox Museum, Buffalo, is now in the Compton Verney Museum in Great Britain.
- Another similar *fangjia* is illustrated by Eskenazi G., *A Selection of Early Chinese Bronzes*, New York, 2006, no. 1.
- The three final similar examples are published in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi)*, *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 198, nos. 53, 76 and 83.

**Notes:**

- Rectangular *fangjia* vessels such as this one are among the rarest shapes of all Shang bronzes.
- To date, only 11 examples have been recorded.









174. **Ritual bronze wine vessel owl-shaped *fangjia***  
**Shang dynasty, Yinxu period, circa 13<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
商代殷墟時期鸚形青銅方罍  
**Height: 24.5 cm, Length: 17 cm**

An extremely rare ritual bronze wine vessel *fangjia* in the shape of two owls joined back to back. The magnificent body of the vessel, cast in the form of a pair of conjoined full-bodied, well-plumed owls with large, well-formed, sharp, protruding beaks and large, alert, round eyes, is supported on four thick, triangular legs which taper off at their bottoms to end in pointed, almost sword-blade-like tips. From one side of the vessel, at the point where the owls converge, a semi-circular handle emerges from the mouth of an ox-like, horned creature. The top of the vessel bears a rectangular cover with rounded corners, surmounted by a small, arch-like, semi-circular handle. The cover is decorated on the sides above the owls' heads with the owls' eyebrows in low relief. From the space between each pair of owl's eyes rises a thick mushroom-like tenon, consisting of a square stem surmounted by a sloping roof-like cover, the four sides of which are decorated with crisply cast taotie masks.

The whole vessel is covered with a beautiful light green patina.

- Provenance:**
- Private Collection, Japan.
  - The Wang Collection, Taipei, Taiwan.
  - Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France

- Note:**
- To our knowledge, no other such double-owl *fangjia* has been so far recorded, making this piece a unique and exceptional Shang dynasty bronze.







175. **Ritual bronze wine vessel owl-shaped you**  
**Shang dynasty, Yinxu period, circa 13<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**

商代殷墟時期鸛形青銅卣

**Height: 14.8 cm**

Rare archaic bronze vessel cast in the shape of two owls joined back to back. The body of the vessel is in the shape of the birds’ bodies with well-shaped wings and four thick legs supporting the vessel. The cover, with a small mushroom-like knob in its centre, is cast in the form of the two owls’ heads, with bulging eyes, thick, curly eyebrows, and powerful beaks in high relief. The vessel’s moveable handle is modeled in the shape of a thick, twisted rope and is attached to rings cast onto the sides of the vessel just below the cover.

The vessel has a dark metallic patina covered with areas of green and blue.



**Inscription:**

- An identical inscription composed of a clan mark and two characters and cast both inside the vessel and its cover reads: “X Ancestor Xin” (X 且(祖)辛) .

**Provenance:**

- Private Collection, Japan.
- Kochukyo, Tokyo, Japan.
- Eskenazi, London, U.K.

**Exhibited:**

- Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 49.

**Published:**

- Umehara S., *Nihon Shucho Shina Kodo Seika, Selected Relics of Ancient Chinese Bronzes from Collections in Japan, Osaka, Yamanaka & Co.*, 1959, Volume 1, plate XL. 梅原末治《日本蒐儲支那古銅精華》日本山中商會, 大阪 1959 年版, 第1冊, 圖XL.
- Mizuno S., *In Shu Seidoki to Gyoku (Bronzes and Jades from Yin and Zhou Dynasties)*, Tokyo 1959, p. 30 and inscription fig 70f. 水野清一《殷周青銅器と玉》東京 1959 年版, 第30頁; 銘文: 圖70f.
- Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 82 - 83, no. 49.

**Similar examples:**

- Three similar vessels in the shape of two joined owls are illustrated in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 287, nos. 6 to 8.

**Notes:**

- Vessels in the shape of two owls shown back to back are quite rare. Hayashi M. in *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 287, records only ten vessels of this type.
- A cylindrical you with an identical three-part inscription is recorded by Wu Zhenfeng, *Shang Zhou Qingtongqi, Mingwen Ji Tuxiang Jicheng*, Shanghai 2012, vol. 23, p; 277, no. 12841.







176. **Ritual bronze wine or water vessel *hu***  
**Shang dynasty, Yinxu period, circa 13<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
商代殷墟時期青銅壺  
**Height: 30.8 cm**

Archaic bronze wine or water vessel *hu* with a chubby, pear-shaped oval body with small lug handles on each of its upper sides and supported on a high, conical, hollow foot. Both sides of the vessel's body are decorated with two large *taotie* masks set one above the other and separated by a narrow, undecorated band. Each *taotie* mask is cast with bulging round eyes, upwardly curling, sharply tipped ears, long, thick eyebrows, and a protruding pug nose with small round double-circle nostrils, all on a background of *leiwen*. The small lug handles near the vessel's top are decorated with incised *taotie* masks, while the vessel's high, conical, hollow foot is decorated with a “monocular” mythical-bird-like pattern.

The vessel has an olive-green patina with malachite incrustations.

**Provenance:**  
▪ Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Similar examples:**  
▪ A very similar *hu* with protuberant eyebrows now in the Brundage Collection, the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, is illustrated by Lefebvre d'Argencé R.Y., *Bronze Vessels of Ancient China in the Avery Brundage Collection*, San Francisco 1977, p. 44 - 45, no. B60 B973.  
▪ Another *hu*, in the British Museum, is illustrated in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanjì, Vol. 4 - Shang 4*, Beijing 1997, p. 143, no. 147.

**Notes:**  
▪ In Chinese, the term *hu* refers to vases or jars of a fairly large size that come in various shapes, which, despite their differences in shape, all share a certain number of characteristics, including a bulbous body that recedes near its neck, a fairly long neck and a round foot or a rectangular foot with rounded corners. Sometimes *hu* have covers and small lateral handles and rings, which is not the case in the earliest Shang *hu*, such as the present vessel.  
▪ The names that appear in the inscriptions on some such vessels differ according to shape, with such vessels sometimes being referred to either as *hu*, *ping*, *fu*, *fang* or *chung*. The most common type of *hu* from the Spring and Autumn period onwards was the *bianhu* or flattened-egg-shaped-like vessel with cover. (See Wang Tao, *Bronzes from the Meiyintang Collection*, p. 112-113, no. 49.)  
▪ The exact use of these vessels seems to have varied, with the *Yili* (Book of Rites) mentioning that they were used to hold alcoholic beverages, while certain inscriptions cast into such bronzes, as well as some classical texts, mention that they were used to hold water.  
▪ First appearing during the Yinxu period of the Shang dynasty, *hu* became very popular from the end of the Zhou dynasty, up to and throughout the Han dynasty.









177. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *zun***  
**Shang dynasty, Yinxu period, circa 13<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
商代殷墟時期青銅尊  
**Height: 28 cm**

An archaic ritual wine vessel *zun*. The vessel's short, portly body is topped by a receding, almost flat shoulder, surmounted by a fairly long, thick neck that gradually opens outwards as it rises towards its wide, eave-like rim. Each of the three friezes of decoration on the body of the vessel is decorated with a pair of confronting, stylized *kui* dragons of spider-like proportions, shown in profile, which merge at a wide, ridge-like vertical decorated strip to form a large *taotie* mask, on a *leiwen* background inlaid with a carbonated substance. The vessel's shoulder is decorated with three stylized, ram-like heads in the round, separated from each other by bands of stylized birds shown in profile. The vessel's short, flared foot is cast all round with a bordered band of C-scroll motifs.

The vessel has a nice light green patina with areas of malachite and cuprite incrustations.

- Provenance:**
- Reputed to have been found in Anyang, Henan province, in the early 1940s.
  - Hans Juergen von Lochow Collection, Germany.
  - Sotheby's, London, 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1976.
  - British Rail Pension Fund, London, U.K.
  - Sotheby's, London, 12<sup>th</sup> December, 1989.
  - Private Collection, Paris, France.
  - Eskenazi Ltd, London, U.K.

- Exhibited:**
- Sotheby's, London, 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1976, catalogue no. 2.
  - Dallas Museum of Art, 1985 - 1988.
  - Sotheby's, London, 12<sup>th</sup> December, 1989, catalogue no. 6.
  - Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 22.

- Published:**
- Lochow H.J. von, *Sammlung Lochow: Chinesische Bronzen*, Beijing 1944, Vol. II, pl. VIII a - c.
  - Sotheby's, London, 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1976, catalogue no. 2.
  - Bagley R.W., *Shang Ritual Bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1987, p. 127, fig. 185.
  - Sotheby's, London, 12<sup>th</sup> December, 1989, catalogue no. 6.
  - Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Archaiques Chinois, Archaic Chinese Bronzes - I - Xia & Shang*, Paris 1995, p. 73.
  - Li Xueqin & Ai Lan (Sarah Allan), *Ouzhou Suocang Zhongguo Qingtongqi Yizhu - Chinese Bronzes: A Selection From European Collections*, Beijing 1995, no. 35. 李學勤 & 艾蘭《歐洲所藏中國青銅器遺珠》北京1995年版, 35 號.
  - Eskenazi G., *A Dealer's Hand, The Chinese Art World Through The Eyes Of Giuseppe Eskenazi*, London 2012, p. 181, no. 15.
  - Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 43, no. 22.





178. Pair of ritual bronze food vessels *fangding*  
Shang dynasty, Yinxu period, circa 13<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.  
商代殷墟時期青銅方鼎  
Height: 22 cm, Length: 21 cm

A pair of extremely rare, square bronze vessels *fangding*, each supported by four stubby, cylindrical legs decorated with *taotie* masks. Each of the four sides of the vessels' square bodies is divided down its centre by a long, protruding, notched flange into two sections, each of which is decorated with one half of a *taotie* mask with a deeply cast horn ending in a sharp, outwardly curling tip and a bulging eye, a protruding half mouth and nose, etc., all on a *leiwen* background. When each of these halves is joined at the vessel's corner with its counterpart on the adjoining side of the vessel, the result is an almost three-dimensional *taotie* mask of exceptional beauty and sophistication, making the vessels which these *taotie* masks adorn, rare and tangible testaments to the expertise and ingenuity of the Chinese bronze craftsmen of the Shang period. Each side of the inwardly sloping upper section of the vessels is decorated at its centre with a small, protruding, tiger-like head flanked by stylized *kui* dragon motifs on a *leiwen* background. High, arch-like handles emerge from the upper rims of the vessels' sides to face each other across the vessels' open tops.

Bronze with green, maroon and grey patina.



- Provenance:**
- Liu collection, Taipei, Taiwan, acquired before 1949, probably in Shanghai.
  - Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.
- Exhibited:**
- The pair was exhibited in the XXIV<sup>ème</sup> Biennale des Antiquaires, Grand Palais, Paris, 10 - 21 September, 2008.
  - One was exhibited by Galerie Christian Deydier at the Art Asia Fair, Hong Kong, in October 2012, Archaic Bronze Vessels from Private Collections, catalogue no. 5.
  - Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 46.

- Published:**
- Deydier Ch., XXIV<sup>ème</sup> Biennale des Antiquaires, Grand Palais, Paris 10 - 21 September 2008, catalogue p. 4 - 7, (one from the pair).
  - Deydier Ch., Archaic Bronze Vessels from Private Collections, Art Asia Fair /Hong Kong, October 2012, catalogue no. 5 (the second of the pair).
  - Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Paris 2013, p. 76 - 77, no. 46.

- Notes:**
- The high-relief *taotie* masks on these vessels are extremely rare in Shang bronzes. Two *you* vases are known with similar decoration:
    - The first one, discovered in 1963 at Anyang, Xiaotun, tomb no. 331, is published in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanji*, Vol. 3 - *Shang*, Beijing, 1997, page 134, no. 133.
    - The second one, also discovered in Anyang, is published in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanji*, Vol.3 - *Shang*, Beijing, 1997, page 135, no. 134.
  - A *fanghu*, discovered in Anyang, tomb no. 5, in 1967 and published in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanji*, Vol. 3 - *Shang*, Beijing, 1997, page 96, no. 63 is also decorated with similar *taotie* masks.







179. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *gu***  
**Shang dynasty, Yinxu period, circa 13<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**

商代殷墟時期青銅觚  
**Height: 27.8 cm**

An archaic bronze wine vessel *gu*, with a trumpet-shaped body standing on a splayed conical foot. The lower part of the vessel's long neck is decorated with a wide, slightly protruding band of decoration featuring two sharply cast *taotie* masks with globulous eyes, each centred on a vertical flange on a *leiwen* background, while the conical upper section of the vessel's foot is decorated with two stylized birds, shown in profile, with rectangular bulging eyes, powerful beaks, and front legs ending in claws, all on a deeply cast *leiwen* background.

The vessel has a light green patina.



**Inscription:**

- A single pictogram, cast inside the foot of the vessel reads: “zi” 《子,meaning son》.

**Provenance:**

- Baron von Heeckeren Collection, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
- A. Vecht Collection, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
- Dominique Fourcade Collection, Paris, France.
- Eskenazi Ltd, London, U.K.

**Similar example:**

- A very similar *gu* in the British Museum is published in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 319, no. 37.





180. **Ritual bronze water vessel *pan***  
**Shang dynasty, Yinxu period, circa 13<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**

商代殷墟時期青銅盤

**Height: 11 cm, Diameter: 33.5 cm**

A magnificent bronze vessel *pan* used for ritual ablutions. The outer wall of this large, shallow, basin-like vessel is decorated with a wide band of crisply cast geometric motifs, as is the high ring foot which supports the vessel. A large, horn-headed, coiling dragon with alert, bulging eyes and an ornate scaled body fills the centre of the vessel's interior and is surrounded by smaller, stylized dragons on the vessel's inner rising walls.

Bronze with a rich green patina.



**Inscription:**

- Two pictograms, most probably clan marks, are inscribed inside of the vessel, one on each side of the central dragon's horns.

**Provenance:**

- Fritz Low - Beer Collection, New York, U.S.A.
- Frederick M. Mayer Collection, New York, U.S.A.
- A. & S. Hartmann Collection, New York, U.S.A.
- Bluett & Sons Ltd., London, U.K.
- Christian Deydier / Oriental Bronzes Ltd., London, U.K.
- Wahl - Rostagny Collection, Rome, Italy.
- Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Exhibited:**

- The Frederick M. Mayer Collection of Chinese Art, Christie, Manson & Woods Ltd, London 1974, no. 227.
- Oriental Art II, Bluett & Sons Ltd., London, 1991, catalogue no. 5
- Twentieth Anniversary, Christian Deydier/ Oriental Bronzes Ltd, London, 2000, catalogue no. 2.
- Treasures from Ancient China - III, Asia Week / New York, Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris 2011, catalogue p. 24 - 27.
- Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 45.

**Published:**

- Loehr M., *Ritual Vessels of Bronze Age China*, New York, Asia House, 1968, plate 28.
- Christie, Manson & Woods Ltd, *The Frederick M. Mayer Collection of Chinese Art*, London, 1974, lot no. 227.
- Chen Mengjia, *Yin Zhou Qingtongqi Fenlei Tulu. (A Corpus of Chinese Bronzes in American Collections)*, Tokyo 1977, Vol. One p. 152 no. A 816, Vol. Two p. 1142 - 1143 no. A 816.1 & A 816.2.; inscription in Vol. One, on p. 259 R. 479. 陳夢家《殷周青銅器分類圖錄》東京 1977年版, 上冊, 第152頁 A 816號; 下冊, 第1142 - 1134 頁, A 816.1 & A 816.2 號. 銘文: 上冊, 第259頁 R.479號
- Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Chinois*, Fribourg, 1980, p. 33 plate no. 13.
- Zhou Fagao, *Sandai Jijinwen Cun Bu*, Taipei 1980, no. 479. 周法高《三代吉金文存補》臺北 1980年版, 479號.
- Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. 1 - Plates, p. 359, no. 21. 林巳奈夫《殷周時代青銅器の研究: 殷周青銅器綜覽 (一) 圖版》東京, 1984年版, 第359頁, 21號.
- Bluett & Sons Ltd., *Oriental Art II*, London, 1991, catalogue no. 5.
- Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Archaiques Chinois - Archaic Chinese Bronzes - I - Xia & Shang*, Paris 1995, cover plate and detail p. 117 and plate p. 258.
- Deydier Ch. / Oriental Bronzes Ltd, *Twentieth anniversary*, London 2000.
- Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Institute of Archaeology, *Yin Zhou Jinwen Jicheng: Xiuding Zenghuben*, 2007, no. 10034. 中國社會科學院考古研究所《殷周金文集成: 修訂增補本》2007年版, 10034 號.
- Deydier Ch., *Treasures from Ancient China - III, Asia Week / New York*, Paris 2011, p. 24 - 27.
- Wu Zhenfeng, *Shang Zhou Qingtongqi Mingwen Ji Tuxiang Jicheng*, Shanghai 2012, Vol. 25, p. 327, no. 14312. 吳鎮烽《商周青銅器銘文暨圖像集成》上海 2012年版, 第25冊, 第327頁 14312號.
- Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 74 - 75, no. 45.

**Note:**

- According to the *Yi Li* 《儀禮 The Book of Rites》 and *Li Ji* 《禮記 The Ritual Records》, the *pan* was used for washing one's hands during ritual ceremonies.

**Similar example:**

- A similar *pan* with a large coiled serpent design, excavated from tomb no. 18 in Xiaotun, Anyang, Henan province, is illustrated in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanji, Vol. 3 - Shang 3*, Beijing 1997, p. 168 - 169, no. 169.









181. **Ritual bronze food vessel *fu***  
**Shang dynasty, Yinxu period, circa 13<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**

商代殷墟時期青銅簋  
**Height: 23.5 cm, Diameter: 31.4 cm**

A very rare cauldron, known as a *fu*, used for cooking food offerings for ancestral worship ceremonies. The vessel consists of a deep, round, flat-bottomed bowl with a thick, outwardly protruding lip and a pair of loop-like moveable handles ending in animal-head masks attached to its sides. The upper section of the vessel's deep-bowl-like body is beautifully cast on front and back with a high band of stylized silk worms surrounding a central *taotie* mask with a narrow lower border of *leiwen* from which extend long, triangular, leaf-like motifs filled with stylized cicadas on a *leiwen* background.

The vessel has a dark patina.



**Inscription:**

- A partial inscription of 10 characters is visible inside the body of the vessel. It reads: "X Marquis Xiang used (X) to make (this) precious ritual vessel; (may) sons and grandsons..." 《X 享伯用作寶尊彝子孫...》.

**Provenance:**

- Ioka Collection, Japan (reputed to have come from the Anyang area, Henan Province, China, around 1940).
- Purchased by Yamanaka in the 1940s.
- Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Exhibited:**

- Treasures from Ancient China, Asia Week /New York, Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris 2009, catalogue p. 6 - 9.

**Published:**

- Deydier Ch., *Treasures from Ancient China, Asia Week / New York*, Paris 2009, p. 6 - 9.

**Similar example:**

- The only other recorded cauldron of this type is published in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. 1 - Plates, p. 81, no. 1, and in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanji, Vol. 2 - Shang 2*, Beijing 1997, p. 82 - 83, nos. 80 - 81, and in *Zhongguo Wenwu Jingcai Daquan, Qingtongqi*, p. 22, no. 75.





182. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *bu***  
**Shang dynasty, Yinxu period, circa 13<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**

商代殷墟時期青銅甗

**Height: 17.6 cm, Diameter: 24.8 cm**

A globular-shaped archaic bronze wine vessel *bu* supported by a ring foot.

The vessel's body is entirely covered with lozenge motifs, each of which is filled with *leiwen* patterns and a bulbous eye-like protrusion. The vessel's sloping shoulder is decorated with a frieze of nine large-eyed *kui* dragons shown in profile on a *leiwein* background. The foot of the vessel is cast all round with a bordered frieze of spirals.

The bronze has a light green patina with areas of malachite incrustations.

**Provenance:**

- Gisèle Croës, Brussels, Belgium.

**Exhibited:**

- Ritual Food Vessels in Early China, Selected Objects, International Asian Art Fair - New York, Gisèle Croës, 1999, catalogue p. 50 - 51.

**Published:**

- Croës G., *Ritual Food Vessels in Early China, Selected Objects*, Brussels 1999, p. 50 - 51.

**Similar examples:**

- A similar *bu* now in the Guimet Museum, Paris, is published by Girard - Geslan M., *Bronzes Archaïques de Chine, Trésors du Musée Guimet*, Paris 1995, p. 124 - 127.
- A quite similar *bu*, excavated between 1928 and 1938, from royal tomb no. 1001, in the Shang royal cemetery of Xibeigang near the village of Houjiazhuang, Henan province, is illustrated by Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 311 no. 16.





183. **Ritual bronze vessel *hu* with a cover in the shape of a duck’s head**  
**Late Shang dynasty, Yinxu period, circa 13th - 11<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**

商代殷墟時期青銅壺

**Height with handle: 40 cm**

An exceptionally rare ritual *hu*-shaped vase. The vessel has a large, bulbous body supported by a wide, slightly rounded foot, a long neck, and an elaborate, omega-shaped handle terminating at each of its ends in high relief animal heads. A high, flanged band around the lower part of the vessel’s neck is decorated with two large-headed *taotie* masks with round, protruding eyes, on a crisply cast *leiwen* background.

The lid of the vessel is cast in the shape of a duck’s head, with its moveable hinged upper beak protruding over the vessel’s front edge to cover the lower half of the duck’s beak which emerges from the upper rim of the vessel’s body. A ring tab cast to the right side of the duck’s head on the cover and another cast on the inside of the vessel’s handle originally secured a now-missing chain link.

Bronze with green and red patina.

**Provenance:**

- Private European Collection.
- Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Exhibited:**

- Treasures from Ancient China - II, Asia Week / New York, Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris 2010, catalogue p. 6 - 9.

**Published:**

- Deydier Ch., *Treasures from Ancient China - II, Asia Week / New York*, Paris 2010, p. 6 - 9.

**Similar examples:**

- *Hu* vases decorated with covers in the shape of birds’ heads are extremely rare, the present example being the only known such piece dating to the Shang dynasty.
- A similar example, but from the Warring States period and now in the Nelson Atkins Museum, Kansas City, is illustrated in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 146, no. 2.
- Another example, from the Warring States period and formerly conserved in the Neiraku Museum, Kobe, is illustrated in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes, Tokyo 1984*, Vol I - Plates, p. 146, no. 1 and in Christie’s, New York, March 25<sup>th</sup> , 1998, no. 63.
- A third vase, also dating to the Warring States period and discovered in Shandong, is illustrated in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 146, no. 3, and in *Historical Relics Unearthed in New China*, Beijing Foreign Language Press, 1972, no. 75.
- A fourth example, also from the Warring States period, is now in the Sakamoto Collection, Japan, and is illustrated in Sotheby’s, London, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1989, no. 19.
- A fifth similarly dated example is illustrated in Sotheby’s, New York, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2006, no. 157.

**Note:**

- The only other known Shang bronze with a bird’s head is a *lei* vase illustrated in Christie’s, New York, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004, no. 146.













184. **Ritual bronze food vessel *gui***  
**Shang dynasty, late Yinxu period, circa 11<sup>th</sup> century BC.**

商代殷墟晚期青銅簋

**Height: 14.6 cm, Length across handles: 28 cm**

Ritual food vessel *gui*, supported by a high ring foot. The vessel's deep, sloping sides are decorated with two large *taotie* masks, each of which is centered on a plain, narrow flange, and cast with bulging rectangular eyes, scroll-like eyebrows and tails, and flanked by bird-feather-like motifs. The upper band of the vessel's body is decorated with animal masks and whorl roundels all in high relief and separated from each other by *kui* dragons shown in profile. The vessel's high foot is decorated with a frieze of primitive-style *taotie* masks. From each side of the bowl-shaped vessel, a semi-circular handle decorated with scrolls and surmounted by an animal mask emerges.

The vessel has a nice grey and light green patina.



**Inscription:**

- A single pictogram, cast in the interior, can be read “*lei*”, probably a clan's name.

**Provenance:**

- C.T. Loo, Paris, France.
- J.T. Tai & Co., New York.
- Walter Hochstadter Collection.
- Dr. Eric Vio Collection.
- Christie's, New York, 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 1983.
- Eskenazi Ltd, London, 1984.
- The Sze Yuan Tang Collection (Anthony Hardy Collection), Hong Kong.
- Christie's, New York, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2010.

**Exhibited:**

- Weltkunst Aus Privatbesitz, Cologne Museum of Art, 1968, catalogue no. C53.
- Christie's, New York, 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 1983, catalogue no. 44.
- Arts from the Scholar's Studio, Hong Kong, 1986, catalogue no. 171.
- Ancient Chinese and Ordos Bronzes, The Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong 1990, catalogue no. 25.
- The Glorious Traditions of Ancient Bronzes, Asian Civilizations Museum, Singapore 2000, catalogue no. 10.
- Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth, The Hong Kong Museum of Art, 2002 - 2005, Hong Kong 2004.
- The Sze Yuan Tang Archaic Bronzes from the Anthony Hardy Collection, Christie's, New York, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2010, catalogue no. 845.
- Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyingtang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 65.

**Published:**

- Luo Zhenyu, *Yin Wen Cun*, 1917, no. 1.14.6. 羅振玉《殷文存》1917年版 1.14.6號.
- Liu Tizhi, *Xiaojiao Jingge Jinwen Taben*, 1935, no. 7.3.5. 劉體智《小校經閣金文拓本》1935年版, 7.3.5號.
- Luo Zhenyu, *Sandai Jijinwen Cun*, 1937, no. 6.3.3. 羅振玉《三代吉金文存》1937年版, 6.3.3號.
- Karlgren B., *Marginalia on Some Bronze Albums*, BMFEA Vol. 31, Stockholm 1959, no. 326 & pl. 9b.
- Shirakawa S., *Kimbunshu*, 1964, Vol. 1, no. 30. 白川靜《金文集》1964年版, 第1冊 (殷周) 30號.
- Chen Mengjia, *Yin Zhou Qingtongqi Fenlei Tulu*, (*A Corpus of Chinese Bronzes in American Collections*), Tokyo 1977, Vol. Two, no. A 158 and rubbing Vol. One, p. 209, no. 236h. 陳夢家《殷周青銅器分類圖錄》東京 1977年版, 下冊, A158號, 拓本上冊, 第209頁236h號.
- Zhou Fagao, *Sandai Jijinwen Cun Zhulu Biao*, Taipei 1977, no. 1167. 周法高《三代吉金文存著錄表》臺北 1977年版, 1167號.
- Zhou Fagao, *Sandai Jijinwen Cun Bu*, Taipei 1980, no. 236. 周法高《三代吉金文存補》臺北 1980年版, 236號.
- Sun Zhichu, *Jinwen Zhulu Jianmu*, Beijing 1981, no. 1539. 孫稚雛《金文著錄簡目》北京 1981年版 1539號.
- Yan Yiping, *Jinwen Zongji*, Taipei 1983, Vol. 3, p. 932, no. 1696. 嚴一萍《金文總集》臺北 1983年版, 第3冊, 第932頁 1696號.
- Christie's, New York, 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 1983, catalogue no. 44.
- Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi)*, *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 139, no. 23. 林巳奈夫《殷周時代青銅器の研究: 殷周青銅器綜覽 (一) 圖版》東京 1984 年版, 圖139, 58號.
- Rawson J., *Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, Harvard University Press, 1990, Vol. IIB, p. 399, fig. 46.2.
- Rawson J. & Bunker E., *Ancient Chinese and Ordos Bronzes*, Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong, Hong Kong 1990, p. 110 - 111, no. 25.
- Li Xueqin, *The Glorious Traditions of Chinese Bronzes*, Singapore 2000, no. 10. 李學勤《中國青銅器萃賞》新加坡 2000年版 10號.
- Wang Xiantang, *Guo Shi Jinshi Zhigao*, 2004, no 1410.2. 王獻唐《國史金石志稿》2004年版, 1410.2號.
- The Hong Kong Museum of Art: *Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth, 2002 - 2005*, Hong Kong 2004.
- Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Institute of Archaeology, Yin Zhou Jinwen Jicheng: Xiuding Zengbuben, 2007, no. 02969. 中國社會科學院考古研究所《殷周金文集成: 修訂增補本》2007年版 02969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, p. 68. 劉雨 & 汪濤《流散歐美殷周有銘青銅器集錄》上海 2007年版 第68頁.
- Christie's, *The Sze Yuan Tang Archaic Bronzes from the Anthony Hardy Collection*, New York, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2010, lot no. 845.
- Wu Zhenfeng, *Shang Zhou Qingtongqi Mingwen Ji Tuxiang Jicheng*, Shanghai 2012, Vol. 7, p. 276 - 277, no. 03426 & no. 03427. 吳鎮烽《商周青銅器銘文暨圖像集成》上海 2012年版, 第24冊, 第276 - 277頁 03426 - 03427號.
- Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyingtang*, Paris 2013, p. 108, no. 65.





# 西周

IV - WESTERN ZHOU DYNASTY

185. A rare ritual bronze wine vessel *gong*  
Early Western Zhou dynasty, circa 11<sup>th</sup> century BC.

西周早期青銅觥

Height: 27.5 cm, Length: 27 cm

A rare archaic bronze vessel used during rituals for making libations with wine. The vessel's long, chubby, pourer-shaped body ends in an artfully cast animal's head with powerful nostrils, expressive, deeply set, round eyes, a rabbit-like nose, long, rabbit-like ears and a pair of thick tubular horns extending from the middle of the animal's brow to above the top of its thick neck. The upper part of the vessel's body is decorated on each of its sides with a fabulously plumed large bird, followed by an equally fabulously plumed smaller bird on a *leiwen* background. The vessel's cover is incised with stylized dragon motifs and surmounted in its centre with a handle in the form of a tiger with its head turned backwards towards its tail and crouching downwards as though ready to spring into action.

From the back of the body of the vessel extends a thick, rounded, semi-circular handle in the form of a finely cast tiger's head from whose mouth emerges the handle's lower half. The vessel is supported by four stubby legs cast in the form of animal paws, decorated in low relief with eye and spiral motifs.

Bronze with green and maroon patina.



**Inscription:**

- A three-character inscription inside the body of the vessel reads: “cast this precious vessel” 《作寶彝》.

**Provenance:**

- Private Collection, Taipei, Taiwan.
- Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Exhibited:**

- Ching Wan Society Millenium Exhibition, Chang Foundation, Taipei 2000, catalogue no. 115.
- Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 51.

**Published:**

- Chang Foundation, *Ching Wan Society Millennium Exhibition*, Taipei 2000, catalogue no. 115.
- Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 86 - 87, no. 51.

**Similar example:**

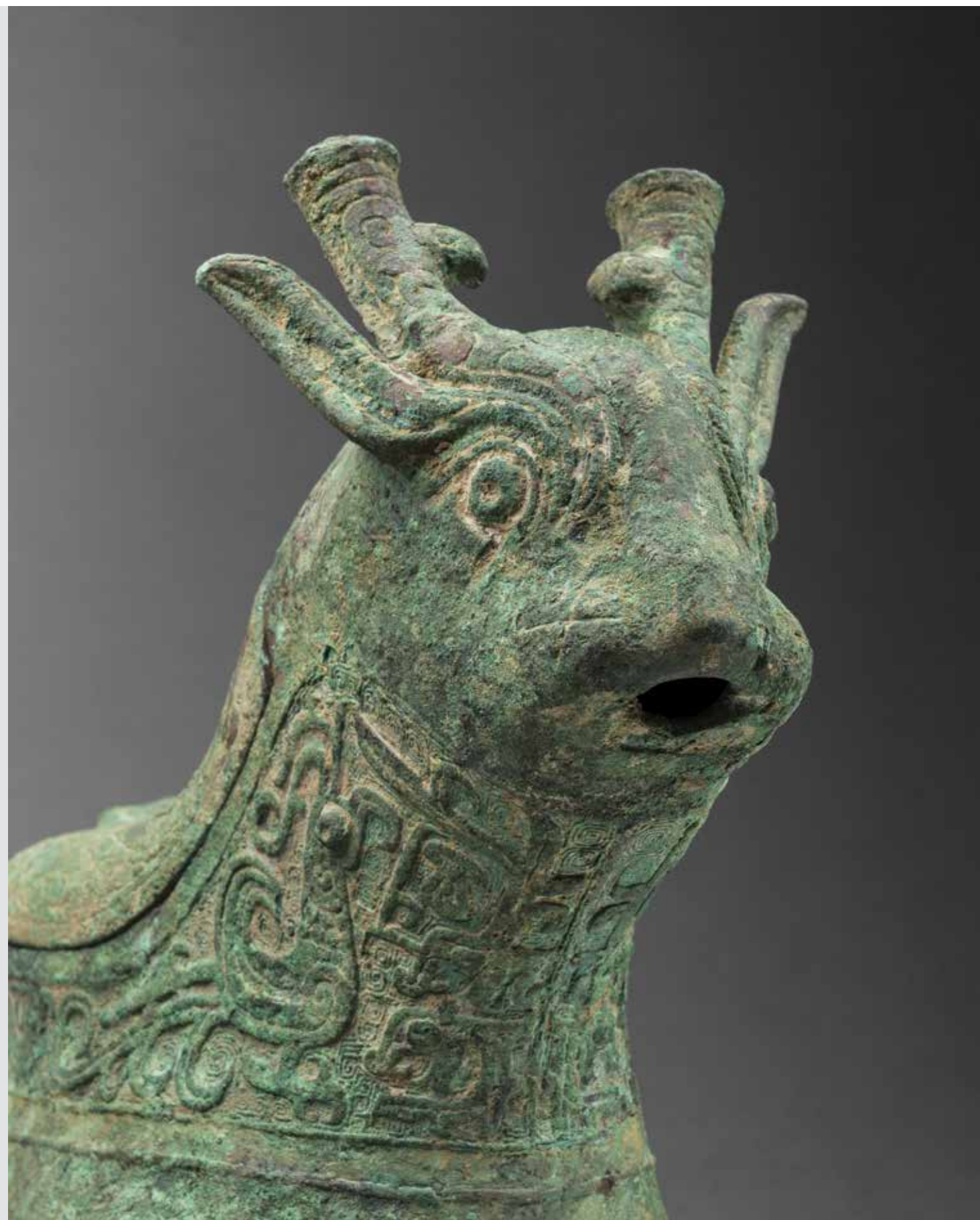
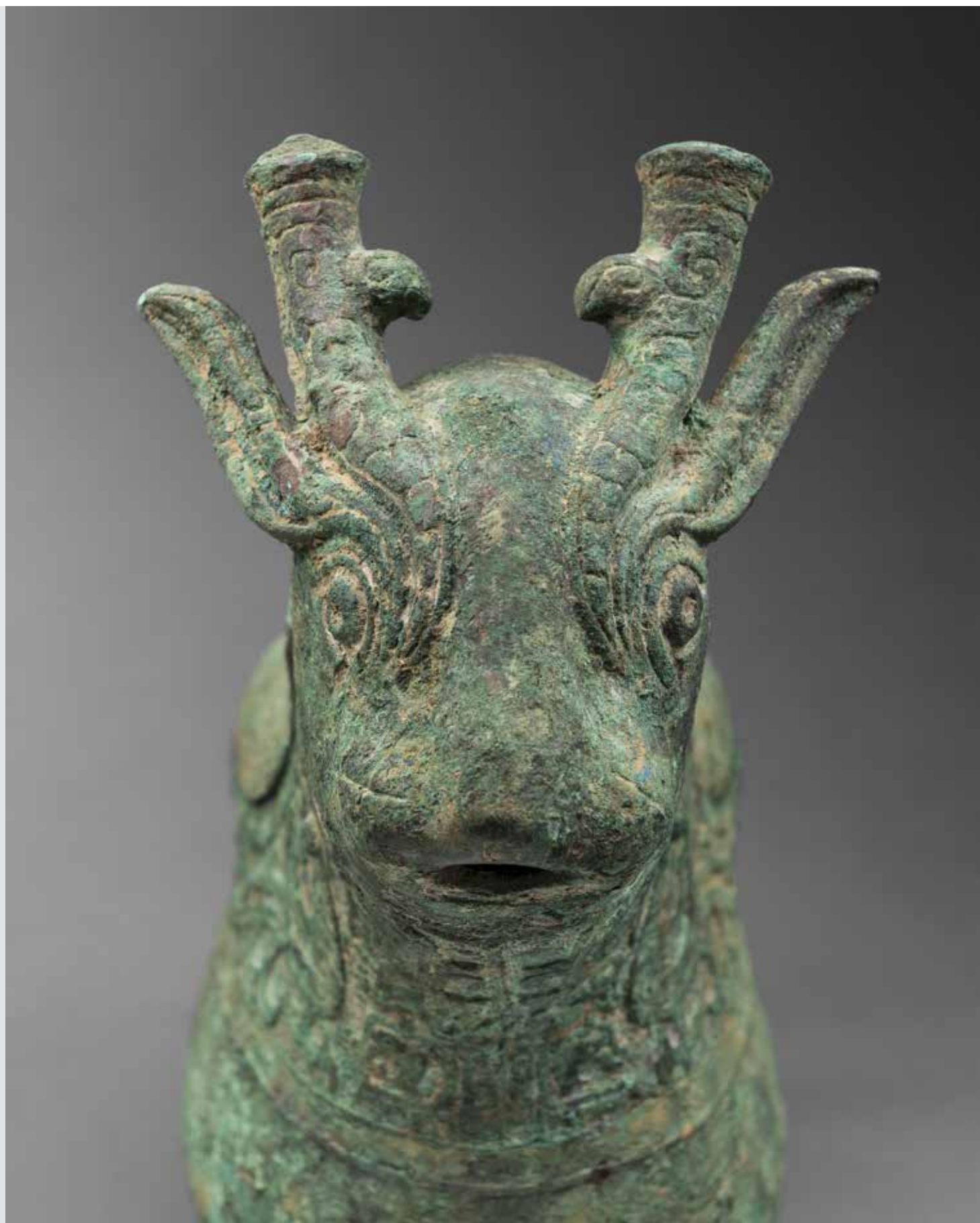
- Only one similar *gong* supported by four animal legs, and from the same period, is recorded. This piece, now in the Nanjing Museum, was excavated in 1954 in Yandunshan, Dantu district, Jiangsu province, and is illustrated by Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki non Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ich)*, *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 376 no. 47, and by Rawson J., *Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections, Volume II B*, Washington 1990, p. 707 fig. 118.7.



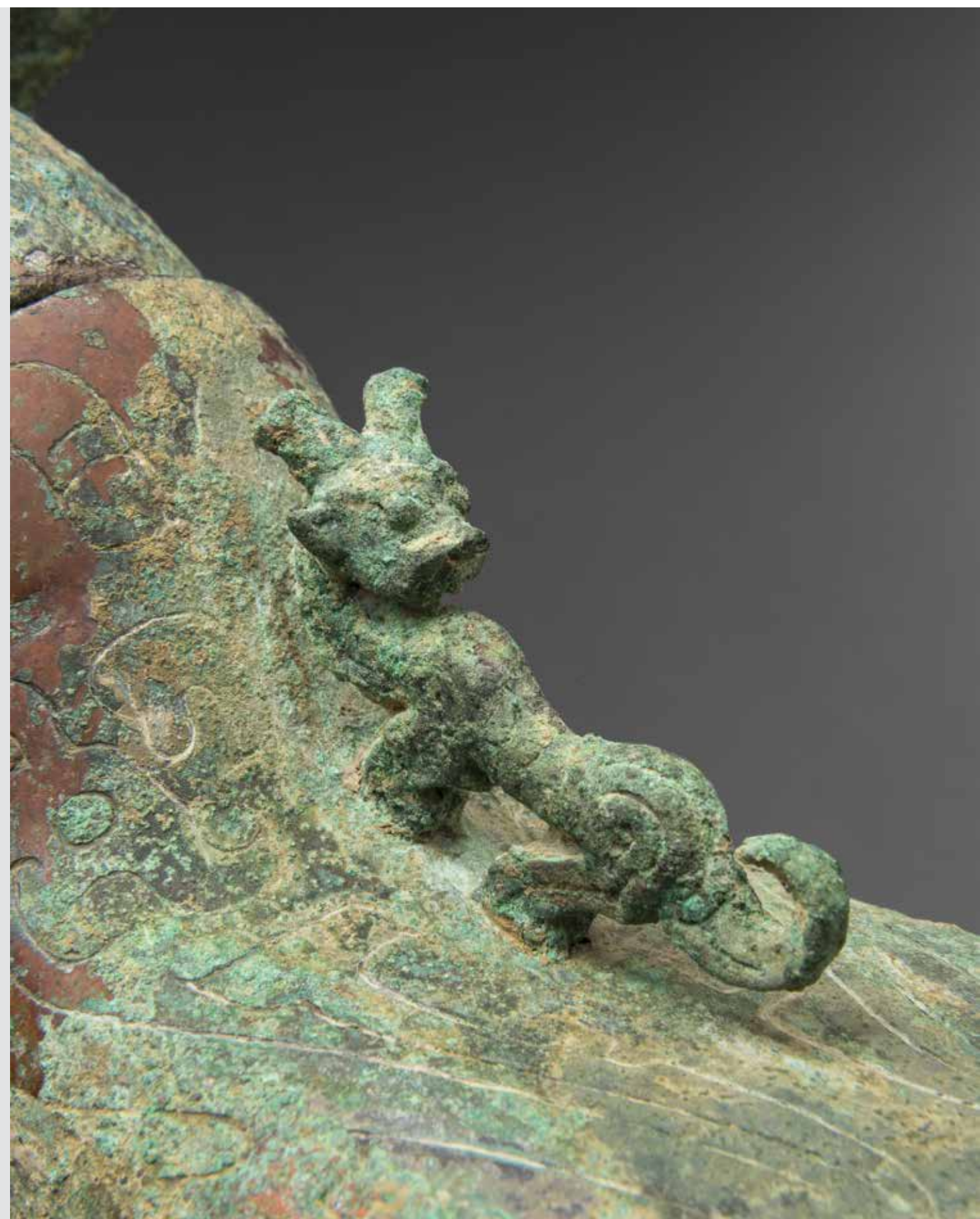














186. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *jue***  
**Early Western Zhou dynasty, circa 11<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
西周早期青銅爵  
**Height: 18.5 cm**

A bronze tripod cup used for heating fermented beverages. The deep straight-sided body of the cup has a half-egg-shaped bottom. A mushroom-like tenon rises on each side of the vessel's rim just above the area where its long spout begins to emerge from the vessel's oval body. The cup section of the vessel is supported on three outwardly extending triangular legs which taper off at their bottoms to end in pointed, almost sword-blade-like tips. The top of the semi-circular handle which extends from one of the vessel's sides is surmounted by a bovine head in high relief. The main, extremely unusual decoration cast around the body, consists of two pairs of confronting long-crested birds in low relief on a crisply cast *leiwen* background. The underside of the vessel's spout is decorated with a large pair of birds on a *leiwen* background.

The vessel has a nice light green patina.



- Inscription:**
- A two-character inscription, cast into the side of one tenon, reads: “Father Xin” 《父辛》.
- Provenance:**
- Private Japanese Collection, acquired before World War II.
  - Christie's, New York, 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2012.
  - Eskenazi Ltd., London, U.K.

- Exhibited:**
- Christie's, New York, 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2012, catalogue no. 1222.
  - Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 24.

- Published:**
- Christie's, New York, 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2012, catalogue no. 1222.
  - Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 47, no. 24.

- Similar examples:**
- One *jue* from a pair with a crested birds' design, now in the Palace Museum Collection, is illustrated in *Two Hundred Selected Masterpieces from the Palace Museum, Beijing*, Tokyo National Museum Tokyo, 2012, catalogue no. 49; and in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 187 no. 255.
  - The second *jue* from the pair is published in *Chuka Jinmin Kyowakoku Kodai Seidokiten (Exhibition of Archaic Bronzes from the People's Republic of China)* Tokyo 1976, pl. 39.

- Notes:**
- Crested bird motifs are extremely rare on *jue*, and unusual in general on bronze vessels. Such motifs begin to appear on some *gui*, *ding* and *you* by the middle of the Western Zhou in conjunction with the changes in the decoration of ritual bronze vessels that took place at that time.







187. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *you***  
**Early Western Zhou dynasty, circa 11<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
西周早期青銅卣  
**Height: 26.5 cm, Height including the handle: 31.5 cm, Diameter: 13 cm**

Very rare, cylindrically shaped ritual bronze vessel *you*. Each side of the vessel's high, round body is cast with a very large and powerful *taotie* mask with large, protruding, rectangular eyes, large C-shaped horns, small leaf-shaped ears, strong upper jaws, a long sharp nose with deeply incised nostrils and a long, sharply pointed chin, all in high relief. A small animal's head cast in high relief protrudes from the centre of the *taotie* mask's forehead between its massive C-shaped horns just over the top of the vertical flange that protrudes from the centre of the beast's long face. The vessel's domed cover, topped by a central knob rising outwards towards its rim, is cast with two shorter *taotie* masks with large, protruding, rectangular eyes, wide upper jaws and a broad, pug nose, all in high relief.

A long arch-shaped handle emerges from the two powerful animals' heads with long, pointed horns that are secured to half-ring handles attached to the sides of the vessel.

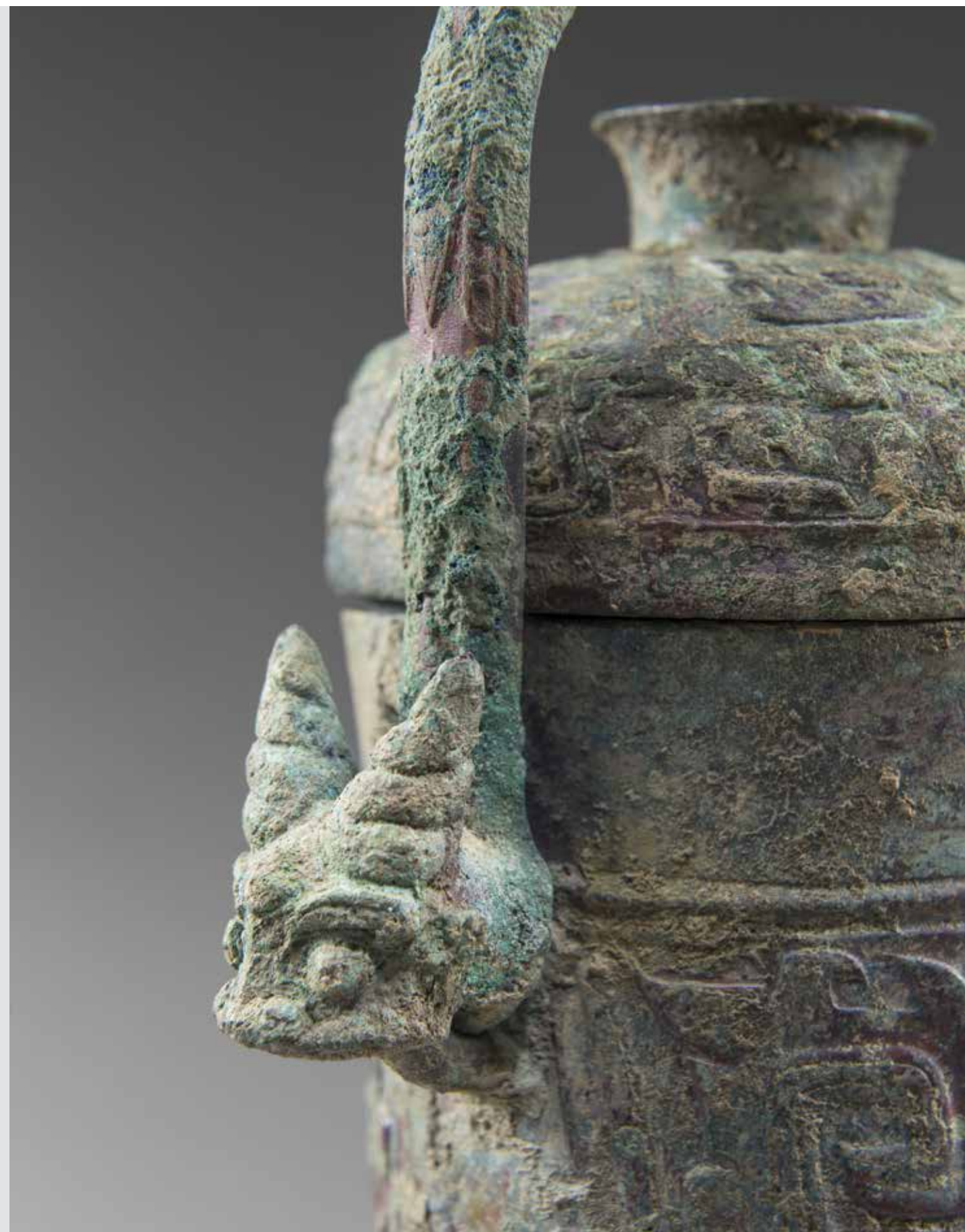
The vessel has a maroon patina with areas of green incrustations.

- Provenance :**
- Private Collection, Japan.
  - Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

- Similar examples:**
- *You* vessels of cylindrical shape are extremely rare; only seven pieces have been recorded to date:
  - A similar *you* excavated from tomb no. 13 in Baoji in 1980 is published in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanj*i, Vol.6 - *Xi Zhou*, Beijing 1997, no. 176.
  - Two other cylindrical *you*, excavated in Baicao, near Lingtai, Gansu Province, in 1967 and in 1972 respectively, are illustrated in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanj*i, Vol.6 - *Xi Zhou*, Beijing 1997, nos. 192 and 193.
  - Another cylindrical *you*, now in the Shanghai Museum, is published in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanj*i, Vol.6 - *Xi Zhou*, Beijing 1997, no. 190.
  - Another such piece, from the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, is illustrated by Pope J.A., *The Freer Chinese Bronzes*, Volume I, Washington, 1967, no. 53, p. 298 - 303.
  - Another cylindrical *you*, from the Idemitsu Museum, Japan, is published in *Ancient Chinese Arts in the Idemitsu Collection*, Tokyo 1989, no. 74.
  - The seventh cylindrical *you* so far recorded, from the Hakutsuru Fine Art Museum, Japan, is illustrated in *Hakutsuru Fine Art Museum*, Japan, catalogue no. 20.









188. **Bronze harness ornament**  
**Western Zhou dynasty, circa 10<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
西周時期青銅馬首飾  
**Height: 24.1 cm**

A rare bronze harness ornament cast as a mask in the form of a fierce beast, shown in profile with a curled horn, a pierced, bulbous eye beneath a concave eyebrow, a strong and powerful jaw, and a wide open mouth revealing jagged teeth. The eyebrow, lip and cheek are decorated with scrolls and circles. The reverse of this sheet of bronze is concave.

The bronze plaque has a dark grey patina with malachite and cuprite incrustations.

- Provenance:**
- Dr Arthur M. Sackler Collection, U.S.A.
  - Christie's, New York, November 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010.
  - Roger Keverne Ltd, London, U.K.
- Exhibited:**
- Christie's, New York, November 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010, catalogue no. 1010.
  - Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 99.
- Published:**
- Christie's, New York, November 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010, catalogue no. 1010.
  - Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 159, no. 99.
- Similar examples:**
- A pair of very similar plaques is published by Visser H.F.E., *Asiatic Art in Private Collections of Holland and Belgium*, Amsterdam & New York 1948, p. 158 - 159, pl. 39, no. 46.
  - Another similar pair is illustrated by Kelley C.F. and Ch'en Meng - chia, *Chinese Bronzes from the Buckingham Collection*, Chicago 1946, p.76 - 77, pl. XLII.
  - A pair with very widely extended jaws, now in the Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago, is published by Loo C.T., *Exhibition of Chinese Arts*, New York 1941, no.131.
  - A pair in the form of dragons is published by Wang Tao, *Chinese Bronzes from the Meiyintang Collection*, London 2009, p. 270 - 1, no.136.
  - Another dragon-shaped pair is published by Watson W., *Ancient Chinese Bronzes*, London 1962, pl. 82d.
- Note:**
- Such mask plaques were used to decorate the harnesses of chariot horses.





189. **Ritual bronze food vessel *li***  
**Early to Middle Western Zhou dynasty, circa 10<sup>th</sup> century BC.**  
西周早中期青銅鬲  
**Height: 15.8 cm**

An archaic bronze food vessel *li* with a body composed of three bulbous, elephant-head-like tapering legs which merge at their upper sides and are topped and conjoined by a low, flat neck that gradually extends outwards to end in a wide, overhanging upper rim that is surmounted on two of its sides by a wide, arched, portal-like handle. Each of the three sections of the vessel's body is decorated with a very simple motif composed of deeply cast, almond-shaped eyes surmounted simply, but attractively, by flappy C-shaped inwardly curling ears. A narrow, bordered frieze of three pairs of protruding, rectangular eye-shaped bosses, with each pair separated by a vertical flange, encircles the lower half of the vessel's neck.

Some prominent mold marks are visible on the vessel's stomach.

The vessel has a black and green patina with areas of cuprite incrustations.

- Provenance:**
- Armand Trampitsch Collection.
  - Sze Yuan Tang Collection, (Anthony Hardy Collection), Hong Kong.
  - Christie's, New York, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2010.
  - Roger Keverne, London, U.K.

- Exhibited:**
- Ancient Chinese and Ordos Bronzes, Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong 1990, catalogue no. 30.
  - The Glorious Traditions of Ancient Bronzes, Asian Civilizations Museum, Singapore 2000, catalogue no. 27.
  - Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth, Hong Kong Museum of Art, 2002 - 2005, Hong Kong 2004.
  - The Sze Yuan Tang Archaic Bronzes from the Anthony Hardy Collection, Christie's, New York, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2010, catalogue no. 839.
  - Summer Exhibition 2011, Roger Keverne, London, catalogue no. 4.
  - Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 58.

- Published:**
- Rawson J. & Bunker E., *Ancient Chinese and Ordos Bronzes*, Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong, Hong Kong 1990, p. 118 -119, no. 30.
  - Li Xueqin, *The Glorious Traditions of Chinese Bronzes*, Singapore 2000, no. 27. 李學勤《中國青銅器萃賞》新加坡 2000年版 27號.
  - Chen Wangheng, *Chinese Bronzes: Ferocious Beauty*, Hong Kong 2000, pl. iii, no. 18a. 陳望衡《寧厲之美: 中國青銅藝術》香港 2000年版, 圖iii, 18a號.
  - Christie's, *The Sze Yuan Tang Archaic Bronzes from the Anthony Hardy Collection*, New York, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2010, catalogue no. 839.
  - Keverne R., *Summer Exhibition 2011*, London 2011, no. 4.
  - The Hong Kong Museum of Art: *Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth, 2002 - 2005*, Hong Kong 2004.
  - Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 99, no. 58.

- Similar examples:**
- A similar *li* vessel excavated at Liulihe, Fangshan district, Beijing, is illustrated by Yao Pinlu and Wang Yusheng, *Album of Select Archaeological Findings: To the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of the Institute of Archaeology*, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing 1995, p. 198, no. 1.
  - Rawson J., *Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, Washington 1990, p. 316 - 319, no. 26.



190. Pair of ritual bronze food vessels *li*  
Middle or late Western Zhou dynasty, circa 10<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.  
西周中晚期青銅鬲 (一對)  
Height: 22.3 cm, Diameter: 19.7 cm

A very unusual pair of ritual food vessels *li*. The body of each vessel is composed of three, wide, elephant-face-like decorated lobes that become narrower like the trunks of elephants as they descend into the vessel's undecorated legs. At their tops, these three lobes merge into a wide horizontal band of large, overturned-C-like scroll motifs, surmounted by a plain short neck that extends outwards at its rim, upon which is set two high, arch-like handles.

The two vessels have a very nice light blue, green and grey patina.

**Provenance:**

- Private Collection, Hong Kong.
- Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Similar example:**

- A *li* with a very similar shape, but without decor, is illustrated by Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 65 no. 49.

**Note:**

- The morphology of these vessels is quite unusual, which tempts one to assign a provincial origin to these pieces.
- This provincial origin is confirmed as a similar decor appears on a Western Zhou Dynasty *he* vessel unearthed in Southern Anhui province, and illustrated in Anhui Daxue, Anhui sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, *Wannan Shang Zhou Qingtongqi*, 安徽大學 安徽省文物考古研究所編著 《皖南商周青銅器》, Beijing 2006, p. 86-87.







191. **Archaic bronze wine or water vessel *hu***  
**Western Zhou dynasty, circa 11<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
西周時期青銅壺  
**Height: 42.2 cm**

A bronze vessel with an elongated, pear-shaped body, which, according to ancient inscriptions and classical texts, was used for holding either fermented beverages or water. The body of the elegantly shaped vessel is supported on a wide splayed foot and has a lug handle on both its left and right upper sides. The vessel's dome-like cover is surmounted by a high, wide, tower-like hollow knob that turns outwards as it rises towards its thick rim.

The undecorated vessel has a light green patina with malachite and cuprite incrustations.

- Provenance:**
- Paulette Goddard Remarque Collection.
  - J.T. Tai Collection, New York, U.S.A.
  - Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

- Similar examples:**
- Similar vessels either undecorated or covered with very elaborate design are illustrated in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 301 - 305.
  - A similar *hu*, but with a small band of design on the neck and on the cover, from the Avery Brundage Collection of San Francisco, is published by Lefebvre d'Argencé R.Y., *Bronze Vessels of Ancient China in The Avery Brundage Collection*, the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco 1977, p. 95.
  - Another *hu*, but with an exceptionally fine decoration all over and now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, is published in Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi), Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. I - Plates, p. 301, no. 57.





192. **Archaic bronze wine or water vessel *hu***  
**Western Zhou dynasty, circa 11<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
西周時期青銅壺  
**Height: 36.8 cm**

A bronze vessel with a pear-shaped body, a long neck and a wide, splayed foot used for holding either fermented beverages or water. The greater part of the vessel's elegant body is cast with double-lined fish-scale-like motifs filled with ornate, multi-lined, fingerprint-like geometric patterns. The upper part of the vessel's neck is decorated on front and back with a wide band cast with a pair of small, chubby, elaborately plummed birds on a *leiwen* background confronting each other over a slightly protruding vertical flange. The band of design is flanked on each of its two sides by a lug handle.

The vessel has a dark green patina with malachite and cuprite encrustations.

**Provenance:**  
▪ Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Similar example:**  
▪ A very similar vessel with the same kind of decoration and now in the Shanghai Museum is illustrated by Chen Peifen, *Xia Shang Zhou Qingtongqi Yanjiu, Volume Xi Zhou Bian*, Shanghai 2004, p.358 - 359, no. 344.



193. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *zun***  
**Middle Western Zhou dynasty, circa 10<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
西周中期青銅尊  
**Height: 15.7 cm, Diameter: 17 cm**

A ritual bronze wine vessel *zun* with a wide, pear-shaped lower body surmounted by a tapering neck that gradually turns outwards at its top to form a wide, eave-like rim. The body is cast on its front and back with two large confronting birds shown in profile, with long, elaborate tails and crests on a *leiwen* background. The base of the vessel's neck is cast with a narrower frieze decorated with pairs of much smaller birds with long tails and crests, shown in profile, the central pairs of which face each other over finely cast animal masks in high relief. The upper neck of the vessel is decorated on its front and back with two large, sumptuously tailed birds, shown in profile, on a *leiwen* background.

The vessel has a nice black patina.

- Provenance:**
- Private Collection, Hong Kong.
  - Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

- Similar example:**
- A *zun* with very similar large bird motifs dating from the reign of King Mu (Middle Western Zhou dynasty), and coming from Zhuangbai Hoard 1 excavated at Fufeng, Shaanxi province, and now in the Baoji Zhouyuan Museum, is published by the National Palace Museum, *The Cultural Grandeur of the Western Zhou Dynasty*, Beijing 2012, p. 202 - 203, no. 101.









194. **Ritual bronze food vessel *fangyan***  
**Late Western Zhou dynasty or early Spring and Autumn period,**  
**circa 9<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
西周晚期 - 春秋早期青銅方甗  
**Height: 30 cm**

An archaic bronze food vessel *fangyan*. The undecorated lower section of the vessel is cast in the form of four joined legs with swelling ham-like thighs on much narrower, tubular lower sections. The rectangular-shaped upper part of the vessel is decorated with three friezes, the upper and lower of which are cast with the same pattern of stylized interlocking dragons, while the middle frieze is decorated with a band of continuous opening-U-shaped waves with hooked scrolls and C-shaped motifs between and inside the waves. The vessel's inwardly sloping eave-like rim is surmounted on each of the vessel's two shorter sides by a portal-shaped looped handle. The vessel is divided inside between its upper and lower sections by a pierced strainer-like bronze plaque.

The vessel has a green patina.



**Provenance:**

- Oriental Bronzes Ltd, Christian Deydier, London, U.K.
- Frank Arts Collection, Antwerp, Belgium.
- Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Exhibited:**

- The Frank Arts Collection / Hong Kong, Art Asia Fair, Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris 2011, catalogue no. 10.
- Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 64.

**Published:**

- Deydier Ch., *The Frank Arts Collection / Hong Kong, Art Asia Fair*, 2011, p. 34 - 35, no. 10.
- Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 107, no. 64.

**Similar examples:**

- Square *yan* are recorded by Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Sora Ichi)* - *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Vol. 1 – Plates, p. 79 nos. 80 - 81, and p. 80, no. 83.





# 東周春秋

V – EARLY EASTERN ZHOU / SPRING AND AUTUMN PERIOD

195. **Ritual bronze wine or water vessel *lei***  
**Eastern Zhou dynasty, Spring and Autumn period, circa 8<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
東周春秋時期青銅罍  
**Height: 28 cm, Width: 30 cm**

An archaic bronze wine or water vessel *lei*, cast in the shape of an ovoid jar with a flat base, a long rounded, sloping shoulder and a wide, contracted neck topped by an outwardly turning flat rim. The vessel's shoulder and inwardly sloping lower section are both decorated with a register of complex S-shaped stylized dragons with two heads, one at each of the animal's extremities. Two small handles fixed to the vessel's sloping shoulders are topped with small *taotie* masks.

The vessel has a dark green, black and maroon patina.



**Provenance:**

- G. Croës, Brussels Belgium, 1993.
- Frank Arts Collection, Antwerp, Belgium.
- Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

**Exhibited:**

- European Fine Art Fair - Maastricht, G. Croës, Brussels 1993, catalogue p. 20 - 21.
- The Frank Arts Collection / Fine Art Asia, Hong Kong, Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris 2011, catalogue no. 13.
- Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 74.

**Published:**

- Croës G., *European Fine Art Fair - Maastricht*, Brussels 1993, p. 20 - 21.
- Deydier Ch., *The Frank Arts Collection / Fine Art Asia, Hong Kong*, Paris 2011, p. 40 - 41, no. 13.
- Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 121, no. 74.

**Similar examples:**

- A similar *lei* is recorded by Hayashi M., *Shunju Sengoku Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran San)* Studies of Bronzes from the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods, Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes, Tokyo 1989, Vol. III, pages 123 - 124.
- A similar vessel from the Worcester Art Museum, U.S.A., is illustrated by So J., *Eastern Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, Volume III, Washington 1995, p. 208, fig. 31.1.
- Another quite similar vessel from the Guimet Museum is published by Girard- Geslan M., *Bronzes Archaiques de Chine*, Paris 1995, p. 156 - 157.

**Note:**

- Ancient texts describe the *lei* as being used for holding both water and wine.
- Sometimes, *lei* were also called *bu*.





196. **Ritual bronze wine vessel *lei***  
**Eastern Zhou dynasty, Spring and Autumn period, circa 8<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
東周春秋時期青銅壺  
**Width: 36.2 cm**

A wide, well-rounded, ritual wine vessel *lei*, with a flat narrow circular bottom, from which the vessel's lower body gradually expands outwards until it reaches the vessel's wide mid-section, which is topped by a rounded, sloping shoulder surmounted by a short, narrow neck that gradually opens outwards at its top to form a rounded, trumpet-like rim. At the top of the vessel's shoulder, two loop handles are cast in the shape of fabulous beasts with their heads turned backwards towards their raised backs. The vessel is decorated with three registers of interlinked S-shaped dragons, interspersed with bands of scroll-filled triangles and scale patterns.

The vessel has an olive-grey patina with areas of malachite incrustations.



- Provenance:**
- Sotheby's, London, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 1986.
  - Private English Collection, U.K.
  - Roger Keverne, London, U.K.
- Exhibited:**
- Sotheby's, London, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 1986, catalogue no. 43A.
  - Winter Exhibition 2012, Roger Keverne, London 2012, catalogue no.1.

- Published:**
- Sotheby's, London, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 1986, catalogue no. 43A.
  - Keverne R., *Winter Exhibition 2012*, London 2012, no. 1.

- Similar Examples:**
- A very similar *lei* in the Collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei, is illustrated in Ch'en Fangmei, *Catalogue of the Special Exhibition of Shang and Chou Dynasty Bronze Wine Vessels*, National Palace Museum, Taipei 1989, pp.186 - 7, plate 62.
  - A similar *lei*, excavated from a tomb at Yuhuangmiao, and now in the Collection of the Beijing Cultural Relics Institute, is illustrated by Wang Jinlu, *Beijing Relics*, Beijing 1990, p.33, no. 54.
  - Another similar vessel, excavated in 1980 in Huailai Ganzibao in Hebei province, and now in the Collection of the Zhangjiakou City Museum, Hebei province is published in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanji, Vol.15 - Beifang minzu*, Beijing 1996, p.131 no. 194.,
  - A *lei* with exactly the same decor is published by Hayashi M., *Shunju Sengoku Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran San) Studies of Bronzes from the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods, Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1989, Vol. III, p. 124, no. 12.





197. **Ritual bronze pouring vessel *yi***  
**Eastern Zhou dynasty, Spring and Autumn period, circa 8<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
東周春秋時期青銅匜  
**Height: 15.8 cm**

A pouring vessel *yi* with a shallow, rounded body, supported by three cabriole legs topped by dragon heads in the round. The upper section of the vessel's bulbous body extends outwards on one of its sides to form a wide spout in the shape of an animal's head with round, bulging eyes, short, erect, pointed ears and a wide open, fanged mouth. A handle in the shape of a dragon with a curling body, deeply set, alert eyes, small perked ears and an open mouth emerges from the back side of the vessel.

The vessel has a light green and grey patina.

- Provenance:**
- J.T. Tai Collection, New York, U.S.A..
  - Sotheby's, New York, 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 1977.
  - Sotheby's, New York, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2011.
  - Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

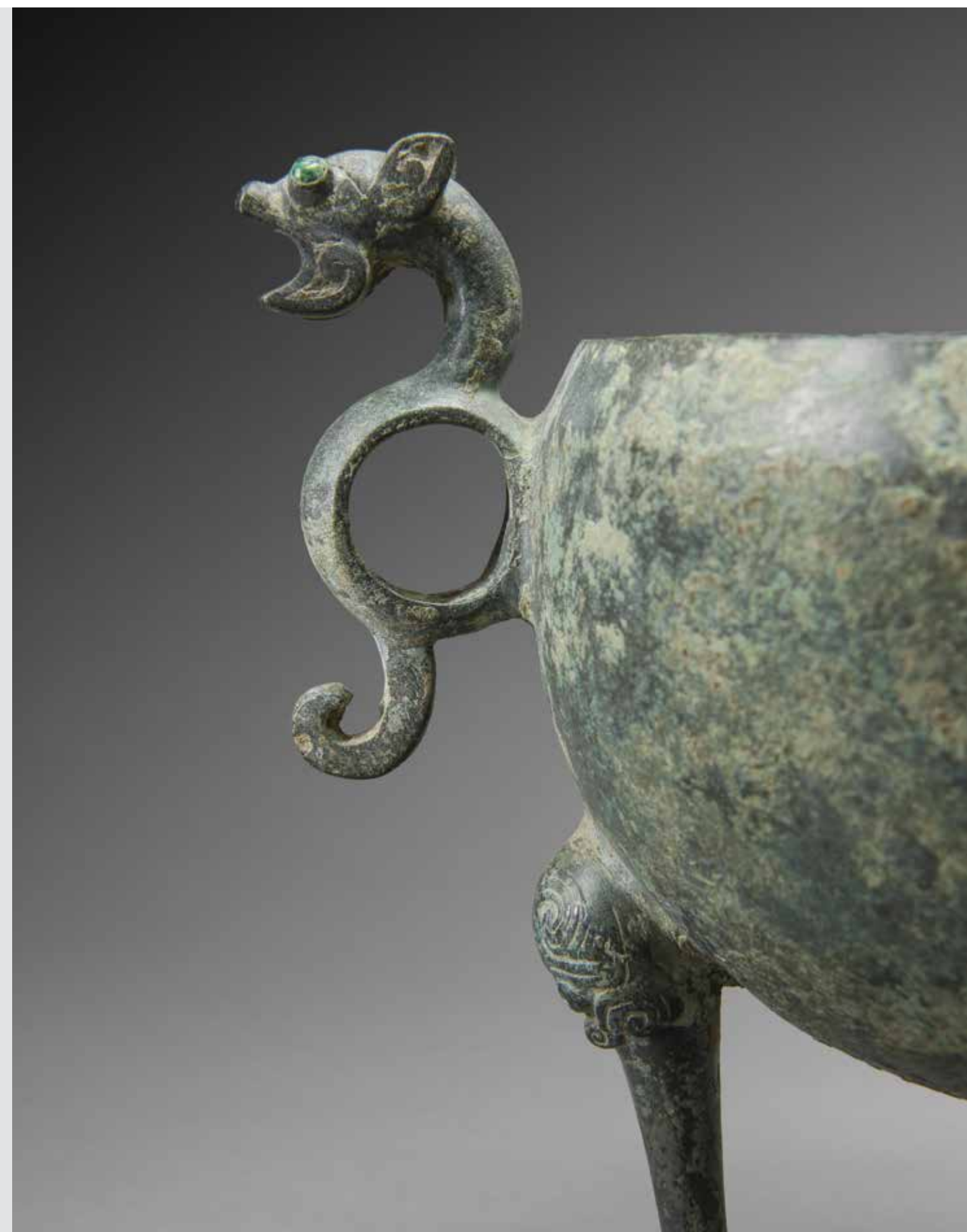
- Exhibited:**
- Sotheby's, New York, 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 1977, catalogue no. 327.
  - Sotheby's, New York, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2011, catalogue no. 188.
  - Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 77.

- Published:**
- Sotheby's, New York, 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 1977, catalogue no. 327.
  - Sotheby's, New York, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2011, catalogue no. 188.
  - Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 124 - 125, no. 77.

- Similar examples:**
- A similar *yi*, but with a different handle and a quite different animal-headed spout, now in the Brundage Collection, The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, is illustrated by Lefebvre d'Argencé R.Y. , *Bronze Vessels of Ancient China in the Avery Brundage Collection*, San Francisco 1977, p. 114 - 115, no. B60 B957; and by So J., *Eastern Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, Vol. III, Washington 1995, p. 347, fig. 69.4.
  - Another pouring vessel *yi* with the same type of dragon-shaped handle, but with its spout cast in the form of a bird's head, was excavated in Beichengzi, Tang Xian, Hebei province and is published in *Hebei Sheng Chutu Wenhui Xuanji*, Beijing 1980, no. 164; and by So J., *Eastern Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, Vol. III, Washington 1995, p. 347, fig. 69.5.









198. **Bronze loop-handled cup**  
**Eastern Zhou dynasty, Spring and Autumn period, circa 8<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.**  
東周春秋時期青銅杯  
**Length: 13 cm**

A deep, melon-shaped cup used for holding water or other beverages. A large loop handle is cast on one side of the vessel and two small lug handles, one of which is partly missing, are set on opposite sides of the vessel. The body of this round, flat-bottomed vessel, with its short neck and outwardly turning rim, is decorated on its shoulder with a horizontal band of scrollwork-like, stylized dragons, from which hang large, triangular, blade-like motifs decorated with confronting stylized dragons and geometrical motifs.

The vessel has a light green patina.

- Provenance:**
- The Ching Wah Lee Collection, Los Angeles, U.S.A.
  - Sotheby’s, Los Angeles, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1981.
  - Butterfield & Butterfield, San Francisco, 11<sup>th</sup> November, 1998.
  - Christie’s, New York, 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2012.
  - Eskenazi Ltd., London, U.K.

- Exhibited:**
- Sotheby’s, Los Angeles, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1981, catalogue no. 200.
  - Butterfield & Butterfield, San Francisco, 11<sup>th</sup> November, 1998, catalogue no. 1406.
  - Christie’s, New York, 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2012, catalogue no. 1222.
  - Eskenazi Ltd, London, U.K.
  - Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 80.

- Published:**
- Sotheby’s, Los Angeles, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1981, catalogue no. 200.
  - Butterfield & Butterfield, San Francisco, 11<sup>th</sup> November, 1998, catalogue no. 1406.
  - Christie’s, New York, 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2012, catalogue no. 1222.
  - Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 130 - 131, no. 80.

- Similar examples:**
- A very similar cup from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections is published by So J., *Eastern Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, Vol. III, Washington 1995, p. 294 - 295, no. 54.
  - Some similar cups are illustrated by Hayashi M., *Shunju Sengoku Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran San) Studies of Bronzes from the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods, Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1989, Vol. III, p. 80 - 81.





199. **Ritual bronze food vessel *ding* (*shengding*)**  
**Eastern Zhou dynasty, late Spring and Autumn period, circa 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.**  
東周春秋晚期青銅升鼎  
**Height: 53 cm, Diameter: 64.5 cm**

An exceptional archaic bronze food vessel ding supported by three stylized animal-shaped legs. The vessel’s flat-bottomed body is cast with four rows of U-shaped scale motifs, each of which is decorated with a motif of intertwining stylized dragons. From the outer upper sides of the vessel emerge six large dragons cast in the round with powerful ornate horns. From the vessel’s thick-lipped rim emerge two elaborate, portal-shaped, outwardly leaning handles decorated with intertwining stylized dragon patterns.

The upper part of each of the vessel’s legs is cast with intertwining dragon motifs forming a kind of *taotie* mask in low relief.

The vessel has an exceptionally attractive light blue patina.

- Provenance:**
- The Wang Collection, Taipei, Taiwan.
  - Christian Deydier/ Oriental Bronzes Ltd, London, U.K.
  - The Peter Kwok Collection (Dong Bozhai), Hong Kong.
  - Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

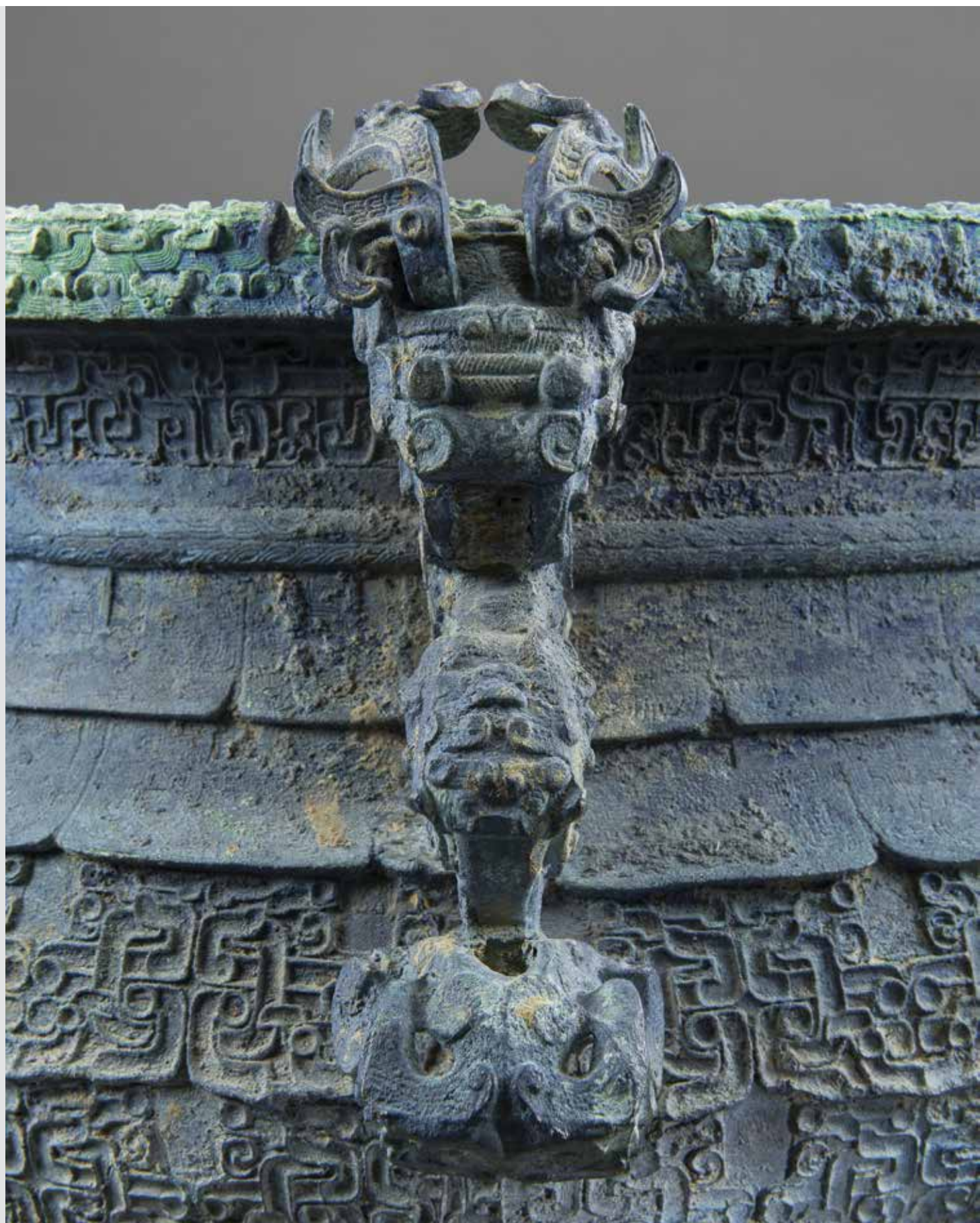
- Exhibited:**
- Biennale des Antiquaires, Paris 2002, Christian Deydier - Oriental Bronzes Ltd.
  - Chine de Bronze et d’Or, Collection Dong Bozhai, Musée du Président Jacques Chirac, Saran, 2011, catalogue no. 14.
  - Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 90.

- Published:**
- Béguin G., *Chine de Bronze et d’Or, Collection Dong Bozhai*, Musée du Président Jacques Chirac, Saran, 2011, p. 102 - 105, no. 14.
  - Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 148 - 149, no. 90.

- Notes:**
- This exceptional bronze vessel possesses all the characteristics of a major bronze cast at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. by the artisans of the Kingdom of Chu, the producer of the most sophisticated and high quality bronze vessels cast in China during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods.
  - The present vessel is, in its casting, its decoration and its quality, very similar to the pieces excavated in 1978, from tomb M2, near the Dan river, in Xichuan Xiasi, Henan province. Among the five hundred bronzes excavated from this tomb, a great number of which bear inscriptions mentioning Prince Wu, archeologists discovered a set of seven large bronze *ding* of a height of between 61 cm and 68 cm, and a diameter of between 58 and 66 cm. These *ding* vessels, known as the *Wang Zi Wu sheng ding* 《王子午升鼎》 or “*ding* vessels of Prince Wu” are extremely similar in their shape, casting and decoration, to the present *ding*. From what is known of the life of Prince Wu, the *dings* can be dated to between 575 and 550 BC.
  - In view of the above, it is certain that the present ding was owned by a very important member of the Chu aristocracy and was cast in the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC.









# 東周 戰國

VI – LATE EASTERN ZHOU / WARRING STATES PERIOD

200. **Ritual bronze pouring vessel *yi***  
**Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period, circa 5<sup>th</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC.**  
東周戰國時期青銅匜  
**Length: 24.2 cm**

A pouring vessel *yi* with a shallow, rounded, rectangular body supported by three short legs. The front section of the vessel ends in a spout in the form of the head of a wide-mouthed roaring beast with large protruding rectangular eyes, thick eyelashes, a wide pug nose and long, curled horns at the back of its head, all in high relief.

Bronze with a light green patina.

- Provenance:**
- J.T. Tai Collection, New York, U.S.A.
  - Sotheby's, New York, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2011.
  - Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris, France.

- Exhibited:**
- Sotheby's, New York, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2011, catalogue no. 187.
  - Bestiaire extraordinaire de la Chine ancienne, Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris 2011.

- Published:**
- Sotheby's, New York, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2011, catalogue no. 187.
  - Deydier Ch., *Bestiaire extraordinaire de la Chine ancienne*, Paris 2011.

- Similar example:**
- A very similar *yi* excavated in 1923 at Lijialou, Xinzheng, Henan, is illustrated by So J., *Eastern Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, Vol. III, Washington 1995, p. 346, fig. 69.1.

- Note:**
- According to some scholars, *yi* pouring vessels were used to pour water into the basin-like ritual vessel *pan*. According to the *Zuo Zhuan*, 《左傳》 or Commentary of Zuo, which was composed before 389 BC and is one of China's earliest works of narrative history, the *yi* was used to pour water to wash celebrants' hands during specific ceremonies.







201. A rare square double-tiered mirror  
Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States Period, circa 5<sup>th</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC.  
東周戰國時期青銅鏡  
Length: 17.7 cm

An unusual square bronze mirror cast in two separate layers, the superior layer, with a looped knob in its centre has an elaborate openwork décor consisting of four pairs of confronting scaly dragons, bordered by and centered on framed bands of intertwining scroll motifs.

The mirror has a nice black lacquer patina with small areas of malachite incrustation.

- Provenance:**
- Roger Keverne, London, U.K.
- Exhibited:**
- *Chinese Bronze Mirrors: Warring States Period to Tang Dynasty*, Roger Keverne, London October 2009, catalogue p.8 - 9, no 1.
- Published:**
- Keverne R., *Chinese Bronze Mirrors: Warring States Period to Tang Dynasty*, London October 2009, p.8 - 9, no. 1.
- Similar examples:**
- Such double-tiered mirrors are rare, but a similar example is illustrated in *Homage to Heaven, Homage to Earth: Chinese Treasures of the Royal Ontario Museum*, Toronto 1992, p.107, pl. 58.
  - The decorative plate only of another such mirror is published by Rawson J. & Bunker S., *Ancient Chinese and Ordos Bronzes*, Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong, Hong Kong 1990, p.228 - 229, no. 147,
  - Another similar mirror is published by Ward P.J. & Fidler R., *The Nelson Atkins Museum of Art: A Handbook of the Collection*, New York 1993, p.282 (top right).
  - Five other double-tiered mirrors are illustrated in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanjì, Vol.16 - Tongjing*, Beijing 1998, nos. 15 - 19, p.15 - 19, of which nos. 17 - 19 are square in shape.





**202. Bronze mirror**  
**Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period, circa 5<sup>th</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC.**  
東周戰國時期青銅鏡  
**Diameter: 8.6 cm**

A very small mirror of circular shape, cast in two parts. The bottom, larger layer of the mirror has a dished rim into which the mirror's smaller central section, decorated with four openwork interlinked dragons in high relief around a central boss, fits perfectly.

The mirror has a black patina.

**Provenance:**  
▪ Ben Janssens - Oriental Art, London, U.K.

**Similar examples:**  
▪ The closest published parallel is a much smaller mirror in the Collection of the Shanghai Museum, which is published by Chen Peifen, Ma Jinhong and others, *Ancient Bronze Mirrors from the Shanghai Museum*, Shanghai 2010, no.11, p. 92 - 93. The Shanghai Museum mirror is decorated with a very similar pattern of four interlinked dragons, but also has a border of interwoven spirals on its flat rim.  
▪ Another similar example is in the Carter Collection at the Cleveland Museum of Arts and is published by Chou Jushi, *Circles of Reflection: The Carter Collection of Chinese Bronze Mirrors*, Cleveland 2002, p. 26, no. 4. The Carter mirror has a similar design, but with the dragons biting the mirror's inner rim.



203. **Bronze zoomorphic finial**  
**Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period, circa 5<sup>th</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC.**  
東周戰國時期青銅杖首  
**Height: 7 cm**

A bronze tubular finial, the top of which is surmounted by a beast in the form of an unusual bird. The bird, which has a large, crested head, a prominent beak and wide, protruding, beady eyes is portrayed emerging from a finely cast, conical, spiral shell.

The bronze has a greyish green patina.



- Provenance:**
- Takeuchi Collection, Kyoto, 1988.
  - The Sze Yuan Tang Collection (Anthony Hardy Collection), Hong Kong.
  - Christie's, New York, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2010.

- Exhibited:**
- The Glorious Traditions of Chinese Bronzes, Singapore 2000, catalogue no. 72.
  - Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth, The Hong Kong Museum of Art, 2002 - 2006.
  - The Sze Yuan Tang Archaic Bronzes from the Anthony Hardy Collection, Christie's, New York, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2010, catalogue no. 868.
  - Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris 13 mars - 10 juin 2013, catalogue no. 96.

- Published:**
- Li Xueqin, *The Glorious Traditions of Chinese Bronzes*, Singapore 2000, no. 72. 李學勤《中國青銅器萃賞》新加坡 2000年版 72號.
  - The Hong Kong Museum of Art: *Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth, 2002 - 2005*, Hong Kong 2004.
  - Christie's, *The Sze Yuan Tang Archaic Bronzes from the Anthony Hardy Collection*, New York, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2010, catalogue no. 868.
  - Guimet, Musée des arts asiatiques, *Trésors de la Chine ancienne, Bronzes Rituels De La Collection Meiyintang*, Paris 2013, p. 157, no. 96.





204. **Gold and silver inlaid bronze phoenix-shaped finial**  
**Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period, circa 5<sup>th</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC.**  
東周戰國時期錯金銀鳳形杖首  
**Length: 16.5 cm**

Gold and silver inlaid bronze finial in the shape of a roosting phoenix. The bird is cast with a crested head held high, a long neck, an ovoid body, a long, flat tail, and two slender legs with their talons extended down either side of the finial's cylindrical socket. The piece is entirely decorated with very elaborate geometrical and plume-like motifs including interlaced scrolls, oblique double lines, stylized feathers with eye motifs, etc., all inlaid in either gold or silver.

Where not inlaid, the bronze is covered with a dark patina with malachite incrustations.



- Provenance:**
- J.J. Lally & Co., New York, U.S.A.
- Exhibited:**
- Special Exhibition: Ancient Chinese Bronzes, J.J. Lally & Co., New York 2011, catalogue no. 27.
- Published:**
- Lally J.J., *Ancient Chinese Bronzes*, New York 2011, no. 27.
- Similar example:**
- A quite similar gold and silver inlaid bronze phoenix finial is illustrated by Rawson J. & Bunker E., *Ancient Chinese and Ordos Bronzes*, Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong, Hong Kong 1990, p. 176 - 177, no. 81.



漢

VII - HAN DYNASTY



205. Gilt bronze mat weight  
Western Han dynasty, 206 BC. - 9 AD.  
西漢時期鎏金獸形鎮  
Height: 6 cm, Length: 10 cm

Gilt bronze mat weight cast in the shape of a mythical animal with its back made of a cowrie shell. The gilt bronze animal's powerfully built body is supported by four short legs. The beast's proportionally small head is finely cast with deeply set, glaring eyes, a powerful feline nose with sharply incised nostrils, long, large, pointed ears and a pair of long horns running along its back from the centre of the top of its head to almost half the length of its stocky body.

**Provenance:**  
▪ Gisèle Croës, Brussels, Belgium.

**Exhibited:**  
▪ Light for the After-Life, selected objects, exhibited at the International Asian Art Fair - New York, Gisèle Croës, 2000, catalogue p. 66 - 67.

**Published:**  
▪ Croës G., *Light for the After-Life, selected objects*, Brussels 2000, catalogue p. 66 - 67.

**Similar examples:**  
▪ Gilt bronze mat weights in the shape of other animals (deer, turtle, mythical animals) are illustrated by Wang M.C., Lai G.L, Streckx R., Wang E.Y., *A Bronze Menagerie: Mat Weights of Early China*, Boston 2007, p. 19 no. 2, p. 98 cat. 8, p. 99 fig b and p. 100 fig. c.

**Notes:**  
▪ Such mat weights may have accompanied their owners both during and after their lives.  
▪ Such weights were used to hold down the corners of a mat.  
▪ They seem to have been made in sets of four.



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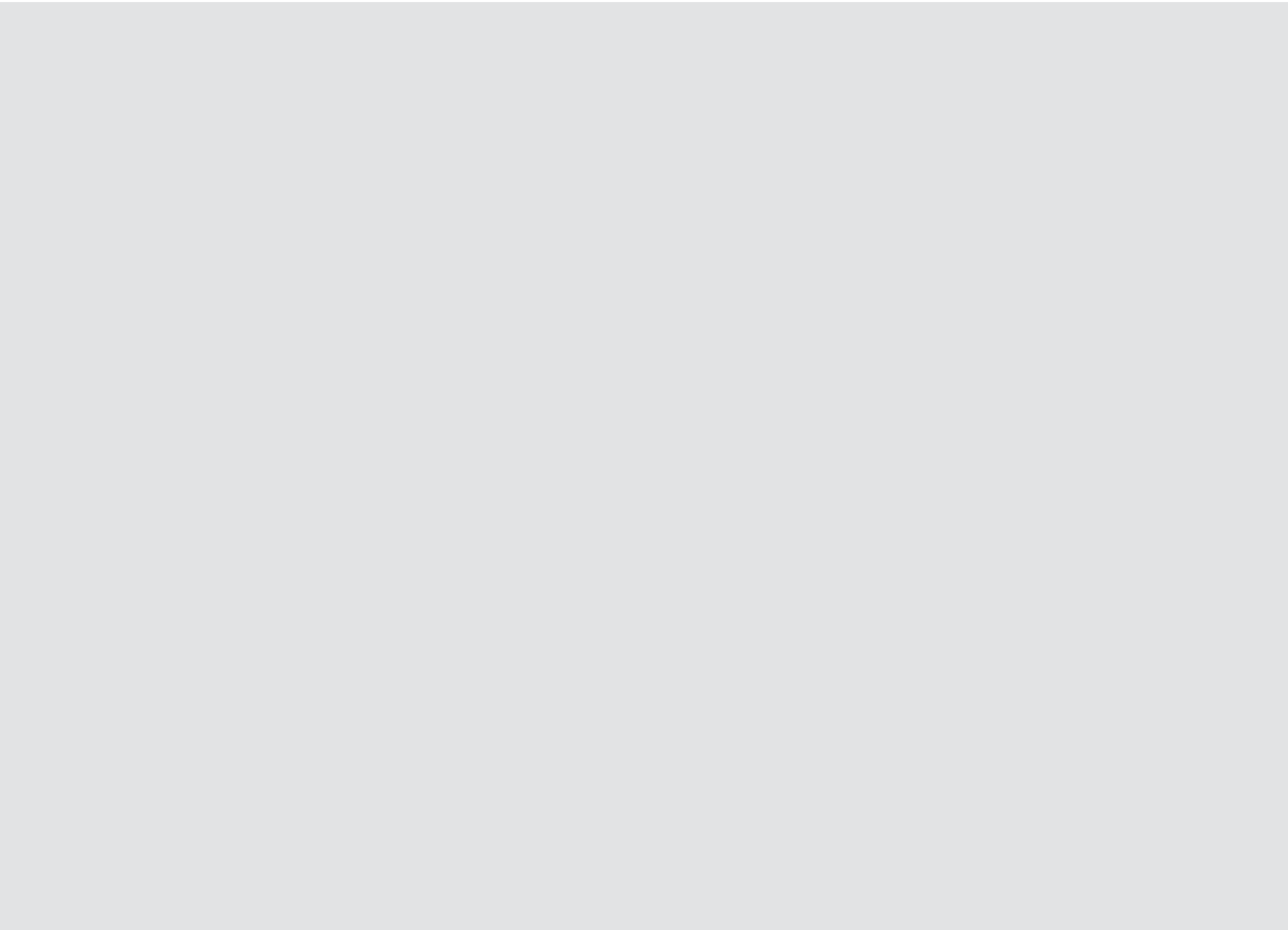
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