A close-up photograph of an ancient Chinese bronze artifact, likely a ritual vessel. The surface is covered in intricate relief carvings, including a prominent taotie mask with large eyes and a wide mouth. The bronze has a dark, patinated appearance with some greenish corrosion. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures and details of the carvings against a dark background.

ARCHAIC CHINESE BRONZES FROM
SHANG AND ZHOU DYNASTIES

Christian DEYDIER

Oriental Bronzes Ltd.

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Detail of figure 7
Illustrated on front cover and on page 25
ARCHAIC BRONZE VESSEL ZUN 商銅尊
Shang Dynasty, 13th—11th century BC.
Height: 27.5 cm.

Christian DEYDIER
Oriental Bronzes Ltd.

**ARCHAIC CHINESE BRONZES FROM
SHANG AND ZHOU DYNASTIES**

June 12 — June 30, 1989

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FOREWORD

The field of archaic Chinese bronzes is an area of Chinese archaeology which has fascinated me since my student day's in Paris and later in Taiwan. I consider myself privileged indeed to be able to present an exhibition of archaic Chinese bronzes, a unique occasion for the public. These bronzes are now so exceedingly rare that it is almost impossible to assemble a number sufficient for a private exhibition. The last exhibition presenting seven archaic bronze vessels was organized by a colleague of mine nine years ago.

Since the publication of my book *Les Bronzes Chinois (Chinese Bronzes)* Fribourg 1980, many changes have occurred in this specialized field:

— New discoveries in China:

Since writing *Les Bronzes Chinois* in 1977, the Chinese archaeologists have made the following important excavations:

* in Hebei province, at Pingshan, during the period 1974-1978, about sixty tombs including five Royal tombs were found, all dating from late Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods.

The most interesting discovery was tomb no 1, attributed to King Cuo (IV century BC). The content is of an extraordinary richness, in particular, the bronze vessels as well as the famous interesting gold and silver inlaid bronze animals: the tiger eating a peacock and the great, winged monsters with huge claws. Extraordinarily realistic, these animals have a lively movement.

* in Hubei province, between 1978-1984 archaeologists found more than a hundred tombs from the middle and late Warring States Periods. At Leigudun, Suixian, more than ten thousand pieces were unearthed from tomb no 1. Inscriptions attributed this tomb to Marquis Yi of Zeng State, Zeng Hou Yi, a vassal of the Chu States and buried in 433 BC.

The find of approximately 125 musical instruments of eight varieties was the first of its kind in Chinese history of music. Among those excavated was a unique set of sixty-four bells, cast for the Marquis's by order of the King of Chu. In tomb no 2, (apparently that of the Marquis' wife) a set of thirty-six bells was found. These bronzes are not only all in an excellent state of conservation, the casting is of an exceptional quality, with superb and powerful decoration.

* The most important discovery probably, since those of Fuhao (a queen of the Shang Dynasty), and the Emperor Qinshi Huangdi, was made in the excavations between July and September 1986 at Sanxingdui, Guanhan, Sichuan Province. It promises to be as spectacular as the army of life-size terra-cotta figures in the Yellow Emperor's tomb. These are the first finds from the Shu Culture in the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, and must open a new page in the history of Chinese bronzes and sculptures. The incredible bronze sculptures unearthed in this area may be classified under two categories: bronzes in the form of mythical creatures, animals or plants, and human figures. The latter group can be further divided as follows:

1. small size bronze human masks and small human figures.
2. large size bronze masks — one of which is 64.5 cm in height and 138.5 cm in width.

3. bronze human heads, shown with enormous eyes, strong nose, broad ears and a neck. More than forty of these human heads which have been excavated are between 28 and 46 cm. in height.
4. a bronze sculpture of life size, is of a figure of some 170 cm in height on a pedestal of about 90 cm in height.

— **New publications:**

There have been some very important studies on ancient bronzes published since 1980 and an impressive quantity of archaeological reports and art books published by Chinese scholars. The most important works were created by Professor M. Hayashi of the Kyoto University with his voluminous *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984; and by Dr Jessica Rawson (Keeper of the Department of Oriental Antiquities at The British Museum) in her book *Chinese Bronzes Art and Ritual*, London 1987, and in her forthcoming publication of the Sackler Collection; as well as Professor R. W. Bagley's *Shang Ritual Bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler Collections*, Washington 1987.

— **New museums:**

The interest in Chinese archaic bronzes was reinforced by the opening of two new museums in America: The Sackler Foundation in Washington, and the new wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. These openings brought to the public's notice two important collections of archaic bronzes, hitherto for years inaccessible.

— **Changes in the art market and new dealers:**

The art market in archaic bronzes has also changed completely in the last few years. The five bronze vessels of E.T. Chow Collection (sold by Sotheby's London in June 1980), and the twenty odd pieces from the Oeder Collection (also sold by Sotheby's London in June 1984), and in December 1988 Christie's sale in New York of the water-buffalo from the early Shang Dynasty for nearly US\$3,000,000 — a world record for a Chinese piece — all demonstrate the strong competition resultant of a new interest in Chinese archaic bronzes eclipsed it seemed for a while by the active Chinese porcelain market.

This new interest was further demonstrated by the opening in New York of J.J. Lally's gallery. He showed at his second exhibition in May-June 1988 an extremely rare *guang* vessel — probably one of the five finest archaic bronzes to have appeared on the market during the last thirty five years.

Apart from these new discoveries and publications and a new interest in Chinese archaic bronzes, there is now a difference in the attitude of the public, well analysed by Souren Melikian in his article "The H.P. Factor, What it takes to multiply price threefold" — *Art and Auction*, February 1989 — and by Geraldine Norman in her recent articles: "Glissement spéculatif à New York et à Londres" — *Connaissance des Arts*, Paris February 1989 — and in the London News paper, *The Independent*.

All these vastly important developments have now enabled me at last to realize one of my dreams; to organize an exhibition on this specialized field, "Archaic Chinese Bronzes from Shang and Zhou Dynasties", which will be a selection of especially fine, prestigious archaic bronzes, of which a number are from major collections such as: E.T. Chow, Huan Jun, C.T. Loo, R.E. Luff, S. Nakamura, Dr. A.F. Philips, Baron F. Rollin, John Sparks Ltd. and J.T. Tai.

Some of these, admired and coveted by both collectors and dealers alike are recorded in important publications or have been included in major Chinese art exhibitions:

- Huan Jun, Beijing 1937
- C.T. Loo, Detroit 1939
- C.T. Loo, New York 1939
- C.T. Loo, New York 1941-42
- Pomona College, Claremont, California 1947
- Kyoto Imperial Museum, Japan
- Neiraku Bijutsukan, Nara, Japan 1969.

For the present exhibition, I have sought to choose not only beautiful and powerfully cast vessels, but also rare or unusual shapes such as: *you*, *fangyi*, *jia*, *zun*, *fou* and *lei*. The choice of the period was also deliberate: Shang and Zhou Dynasties (from XIV to III century BC) including those produced during the Spring and Autumn Period (VII — V century BC) and Warring States Period (V-III century BC). The exhibits will disprove a general attitude, ie. that great and important bronze vessels were cast only during the Shang Dynasty. Most collectors would agree that this specific period is regarded as the "apogee of the Chinese bronze art" — in particular, the second part — the Anyang Period — (Anyang from the name of the last capital of the Shang Dynasty, where both the Royal tombs and more recently the tomb of Queen Fuhao were found, the latter with its fine collection of archaic bronze vessels). This high regard is in truth correct as in the latter part of the period, bronze entered into more common usage and the quality of the casting lowered, while the religious significance and the powerfulness of the great pieces disappeared. Bronze itself as a result of foreign influence, was abandoned by the nobility and in the following Warring States Period, lacquer vessels together with inlaid bronze replaced the earlier purely bronze vessels. Sometimes, as seen with examples shown in this exhibition, a person of high rank (probably a Marquis, Prince or King of a small state) ordered some important bronze vessels. Recent discoveries have given some fascinating examples of this later period, such as those from the tomb of the Marquis of Cai, and the tomb of the Marquis Yi of Zeng, all significant examples of the high production of this late period of the bronze age.

In exhibiting these sixteen archaic Chinese bronzes, in their chronological order, I have endeavoured to present each period in the evolution of bronze art in ancient China, with the exception of the Xia Dynasty (the Erlitou Culture) and the early Shang (the Zhengzhou Period or so called Erligang Culture). High quality bronzes from such very early periods are almost impossible to find.

However, the first exhibit — a *fangding* or square *ding* — is particularly interesting for its date of 14th century BC (early Anyang Period) and for its decoration, reminiscent of the earlier period, the "Erligang Culture".

The Anyang Period is extremely well represented by seven exhibits: *hu*, *you*, *fangyi*, *jia*, *ding*, *zun* and *yu*. All are of high quality, each with their own specific interest whether of casting, decoration, shape or patina. The bronze *zun* (no 7) is however, to my mind, the most characteristic and spectacular example of the Anyang Period. It bears one of the most rare designs in the corpus of Chinese bronzes: the central decor of a large *taotie* mask depicting a human face with eyes, eyebrows, and ears combined with a bird whose large lateral wings flank a protuberant beak, and great claw feet. The casting of this bronze is superb, advantage being taken of its shape to contrast both

incised and high relief motifs, so creating a highly important piece. Only one other vessel, but smaller, has the same decor.

Also very well represented in this exhibition is the Zhou Dynasty. The bronze *you* (no 10) of the Western Zhou Period from the E.T. Chow Collection, is well known and totally different from the rare Shang *you* (no 3). The fine casting and good patina of the Chow piece are given a powerful presence by its heavily hooked flanges, while the beautifully cast rams' heads with their curled horns at each end of the handle are a forecast of the strong influence of the "art animalier" of the period to follow.

From the Spring and Autumn Period (Chunqiu), I have the rare opportunity to exhibit a unique set of three pieces: a *fou* (no 13) with its ladle (no 14) and a *lei* (no 15). Powerful casting and the close similarity between this set and the vessels excavated in 1984 in tomb no 5 at Caojiagang, Dangyang County, Hubei Province, suggest that they were destined for a King or member of the nobility. Their quality is further enhanced by a rare and wonderful light azurite blue patina.

To complete the evolution of ancient Chinese bronzes from Shang and Zhou Dynasties in this exhibition of the now rare pieces is a fine example from the Warring States Period. I have chosen a *bianhu* (no 16) or pilgrim bottle, decorated with curled feather patterns in rectangles separated by bands of copper inlay as characteristic of those found in the tombs of the nobility of the period.

Christian Deydier

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My special thanks to Dr Jessica Rawson (Keeper of the Department of Oriental Antiquities at the British Museum) for her advice concerning the dating of various bronzes, Professor R. Whitfield (Head of the Percival David Foundation) for giving so generously of his time to make all the rubbings of the inscriptions, Patricia, Countess Jellicoe for so patiently correcting the countless errors in my written English.

Of the many others who have helped me in different ways in preparation of this exhibition, I would like particularly to thank the following for their invaluable assistance: Prudence Cuming, Bon and Cy Dale, Simone and Alan Hartman, Anna Plowden, Martin Bale, Gerald Godfrey and Man-yee Tang.

I would like to express my gratitude to Elizabeth Knight and every one from *Oriental Antiquities* for the production of this catalogue; and Mr. Routhier (Studio Lourmel, Paris) who has spent several days photographing each object.

To end, I am most grateful to my assistant Henri Sarlin, for helping me to write, research and organize the present exhibition.

Christian Deydier

Chronology of early Chinese Dynasties and Periods

Xia Dynasty	XXI — XVI centuries BC
Shang Dynasty	XVI — XI centuries BC
Early Period	XVI — XIV centuries BC
Anyang Period	XIV — XI centuries BC
Zhou Dynasty	XI — 256 BC
Western Zhou Dynasty	XI — 770 BC
Eastern Zhou Dynasty	770 — 256 BC
Spring & Autumn Period	722 — 481 BC
Warring States Period	453 — 221 BC

Catalogue

**ARCHAIC CHINESE BRONZES FROM
SHANG AND ZHOU DYNASTIES**

1

ARCHAIC BRONZE VESSEL FANGDING 商銅方鼎

Middle Shang Dynasty, 14th — 13th century BC.

Height (with handle): 22.7 cm.

Width : 19 cm.

Archaic bronze ritual food vessel with a body of rectangular section with deep sides rising to a narrow, flat everted rim, and set with double upright loop handles. The sides are cast with plain rectangular panels enclosed on three sides by rows of hemispherical bosses, below a frieze of eight *taotie* masks, composed of confronted horned and beaked dragons, centred on each vertical flange and each corner flange. The four columnar legs are decorated around the top with incised *taotie* masks above a band of pendant cicada blades. The vessel has an olive-green patina.

Inscription:

— An inscription of four pictograms is inside the vessel, near the rim: “Tien Min Fu Yi (Father Yi)”.



天
民
父
乙

Provenance:

— Baron F. Rollin Collection, New York.

Published:

— Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Chinois*, Fribourg 1980, plate 2.

Similar example:

— City Art Museum of St Louis, illustrated by Kidder J.E., *Early Chinese Bronzes in the City Art Museum of St Louis*, St Louis 1956, plate XIII.

The design of this vessel is a reminiscence of design found in the early Shang Dynasty, and typical from the Erligang Culture.



2

ARCHAIC BRONZE VESSEL HU 商銅壺

Shang Dynasty, Anyang Period, 13th — 12th century BC.
Height: 32 cm.

Archaic bronze food vessel with a pear-shaped body of oval section, lug, handles and supported by a high conical hollow foot. The body is decorated on each side with two large *taotie* masks set one above the other and separated with a plain band of frieze of "monocular" design with long arms formed by double stripes ending in hooks, which point upward at the left end, downward at the right end. Each *taotie* mask, with protuberant round eyes, cast in intaglio on a back ground of *leiwen*, are composed of confronted *kui* dragons centred on a vertical flange. The shoulders set with small handles, decorated with incised horned bovine-heads. The high conical hollow foot is decorated with a "monocular" pattern. The vessel has an olive-green patina with malachite incrustations.

Inscription:

— An inscription of five pictograms is inside the vessel, near the rim. It translates: "Made for Father Ding, this precious sacrifice vessel".



作父丁
寶之彝

Similar examples:

- A. Sackler Collection, published by Loehr M., *Ritual Vessels of Bronze Age China*, New York 1968, no 17 p. 50-51.
- Idemitsu Museum of Arts, Tokyo; illustrated in *15th Anniversary Catalogue*, Tokyo 1981, p. 243 no 1063.



3

ARCHAIC BRONZE VESSEL YOU 商銅卣

Shang Dynasty, 14th — 12th century BC.

Height with the handle: 29.5 cm.

Height without handle: 28 cm.

This archaic bronze wine vessel and cover has an oval section and a full rounded shape. The body is cast on each side with a large *taotie* mask with large and slightly protuberant eyes flanking the notched flange, horns of C-shape, and clawed foot. The whole decoration in uniform relief is incised on a background of *leiwen*. The shoulder of the vessel is ornate with a continuous frieze of *kui* dragons confronted in the centre of each side on a small *taotie* mask or animal head in high relief and divided at either end by a ring attached to a corresponding loop on the swing handle. The handle is decorated with a simple dragon pattern with small *taotie* masks in high relief at either end. The cover is cast with a frieze of dragons interrupted by flanges encircling the slightly concave side. The domed top is decorated with two *taotie* masks on a *leiwen* background. The knob is formed by four simplified cicadas. The high conical hollow foot is decorated with notched flanges, and a continuous frieze of *kui* dragons confronted in the centre of each side. The vessel has a smooth light green patina.

No inscription.

Provenance:

— Huan Jun, Beijing.

— Dr. A.F. Phillips Collection.

— J.T. Tai Collection, New York.

Exhibited:

— Beijing 1937: Huan Jun, *Yezhong pianyuan erji*, Beijing 1937, volume I no 17.

Published:

— Huan Jun, *Yezhong pianyuan erji*, Beijing 1937, volume I no 17.

According to Professor Hayashi's book, *In Shu jidai seidoki no kenkyu (In Shu seidoki soran ichi)* — *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes* — Tokyo 1984 — only three other *you* of the Shang Dynasty, cast with large incised *taotie* masks, seem to be recorded.



4

ARCHAIC BRONZE VESSEL FANGYI 商銅方彝

Shang Dynasty, 14th — 12th century BC.

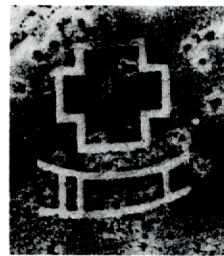
Height: 19.5 cm.

Width: 10.2 cm.

Archaic bronze covered vessel *fangyi* with a body of rectangular section and slender upright form tapering slightly towards the hollow foot. The body cast in high relief. Each side, is decorated with a large *taotie* mask, between bands of confronted *kui* dragons encircling the rim, and beaked *kui* dragons round the foot. The whole design is on a background of *leiwen*. The domed cover of triangular section with slightly concave sides, cast with inverted *taotie* mask on front and reverse sides, and with owl-shaped masks on the shorter sides. The cover is set with a small knob of matching triangular shape decorated with incised miniature *taotie* masks. The vessel has a nice green patina.

Inscription:

— An inscription of two pictograms is inside the vessel: Clan name.



亞
舟

Provenance:

— John Sparks Ltd, London 1954.

— R.E. Luff Collection.

— Bluett and Sons Ltd.

Exhibited:

— John Sparks Ltd, April 1954, catalogue no 4.

Published:

— John Sparks Ltd, *A Small Exhibition of Fine Early Chinese Bronzes*, acquired by a private collector over a number of years while resident in the East, London, Thursday, 1st April Wednesday, 14th April 1954, Catalogue no 4.

— Watson W., *Ancient Chinese Bronzes*, London 1962, plate no 17.

Inscription recorded:

— Watson W., *Ancient Chinese Bronzes*, London 1962, p. 78, fig. 5 no 9.

Similar examples:

— The Avery Brundage Collection, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, no B60B997, published by d'Argencé R.Y.L., *Bronze Vessels of Ancient China in the Avery Brundage Collection*, 1977, p. 50 plate XVII.

— another one is illustrated by Hayashi M., *In Shu jidai seidoki no kenkyu (In Shu seidoki soran ichi) — Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes* — Tokyo 1984, Volume 1, part: plates, p. 270 no 13; and by Huan Jun, *Yezhong pianyu erji*, Beijing 1937, volume I no 12.



5

ARCHAIC BRONZE VESSEL *DING* 商銅鼎

Shang Dynasty, 13th — 11th century BC.

Height: 21 cm.

Diameter: 17 cm.

Archaic bronze food vessel supported on three cylindrical legs. The round bowl shaped body is cast in two main bands, the upper one a frieze of *kui* dragons, the lower and larger one is decorated with three large *taotie* masks. The *taotie* are composed of two confronted dragons with C-shaped horns and protruding eyes. The whole design is on a background of *leiwen*. The everted rim is set with two upright loop handles. The vessel has a nice light green patina.

Inscription:

— An unreadable inscription of one or two pictograms inside the vessel: Clan name or “Father X”.



Provenance:

— J.T. Tai Collection, New York.



6

ARCHAIC BRONZE VESSEL JIA 商銅罍

Shang Dynasty, 14th — 12th century BC.

Height: 33 cm.

Archaic bronze wine vessel supported on three legs of triangular section, with vertical ridge on the outer face and with slits on the inner faces. The body is cast with an incised frieze of three *taotie* masks on a background of *leiwen*. Each *taotie* mask, with round eyes in high relief, is composed of trucked kui dragons confronted and divided by small flanges. The frieze is surmounted by seventeen triangular blades decorated with scroll patterns. The rim is set with two tall waisted finials decorated with triangular blades. The handle is ornate by an animal head with hooked horns, cast in high relief. The vessel has a nice green patina.

No inscription.

Provenance:

— C.T. Loo, Paris.

— Dr. A.F. Phillips Collection.

Published:

— Umehara S., *Obei shucho Shina Kodo seika, Selected Relics of Ancient Chinese Bronzes from Collections in Europe and America*, Kyoto 1933, Yamanaka and Co, Volume 1 no 70.

— Elisseeff S., *Les Motifs des Bronzes Chinois, Revue des Arts Asiatiques*, Paris 1934, tome VII, plate LXVI.

— Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Chinois*, Fribourg 1980, colour plate 18, page 37.

— Hayashi M., *In Shu jidai seidoki no kenkyu (In Shu seidoki soran ichi) — Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes* — Tokyo 1984, Volume 1 part 2, page 200 no 92.

Similar example:

— A somewhat similar *jia* in the National Gallery of Victoria is illustrated by Barnard N., *Archaic Chinese Bronzes in Australian and New Zealand Collections*, Victoria 1975, p. 54, plate 5.



7

ARCHAIC BRONZE VESSEL ZUN 商銅尊

Shang Dynasty, 13th — 11th century BC.

Height: 27.5 cm.

Archaic bronze wine vessel *zun*, built up in three sections. The high foot is hollow and has the shape of a truncated cone. It supports a body with sharply angled shoulder, surmounted by a flaring neck with trumpet-shaped mouth. The magnificent decoration, either in high relief or incised, is in complete accord with the different parts of the vessel. The foot is decorated in intaglio with a narrow band of scroll patterns above a large frieze of birds-dragons on a *leiwen* background and divided by segmented flanges. The shoulder zone, is decorated with incised birds-dragons on a *leiwen* background, confronted on segmented flanges, and separated by stylized and powerful ox-heads, cast in high relief.

The body, divided in three section by segmented flanges, is cast in high relief with three large "half-human" — "half-bird" (phoenix ?) *taotie* masks, on a *leiwen* background. Each mask is shown with round protuberant eyes, thick eyebrows, small ears in C-shape, strongly protuberant beak, the paws with well defined claws, large spread-out lateral wings. The waisted neck has a decor of three rows, the lower one depicting a frieze of birds-dragons, the middle one, a continuous scroll, and the upper frieze of cicada inserted in triangular leaf-shaped motifs, all decor in intaglio and on a *leiwen* background. The vessel has a nice light green patina.

Inscription:

— An inscription of two pictograms is inside the vessel. It translates: "Ding (of the Clan) X".



Provenance:

- Yamanaka & Co, Osaka.
- Neiraku Bijutsukan, Nara.
- S. Nakamura Collection, Kobe.





(Detail of figure 7)

Exhibited:

- Kyoto Imperial Museum, Kyoto.
- Neiraku Bijutsukan, Nara 1969.

Published:

- Umehara, S., *Nihon Shucho Shina Kodo seika, Selected Relics of Ancient Chinese Bronzes from Collections in Japan*, Osaka, Yamanaka and Co, 1960, Volume 2, plate CXXIX.
- Neiraku Museum, *Neiraku Museum Catalogue*, Nara 1969, p. 27 no 4.
- Hayashi M., *In Shu jidai seidoki no kenkyu (In Shu seidoki soran ichi) — Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes* — Tokyo 1984, Volume 1 part 2, page 217 no 26.

Similar example:

- a slightly smaller bronze vessel *zun*, with a similar decor, is recorded and reproduced by Karlgren B., *Marginalia on some Bronzes*, Albums II, B.M.F.E.A. no 32, Stockholm 1960, plate 50a; and by Huan Jun, *Yezhong pianyu erji*, Beijing 1937, plate 10b.

8

ARCHAIC BRONZE VESSEL YU 商銅簋

Late Shang Dynasty, 12th — 11th century BC.

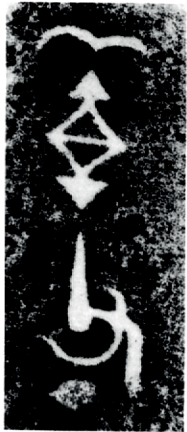
Height: 18 cm.

Width: 26.5 cm.

Archaic bronze food vessel of *gui* shape, but without handles, and sometimes called *yu* or *xiao xing yu*. The flanged vessel of elegant proportion, and cast in high relief, is composed of a round bowl with an everted rim, supported by a high conical hollow foot. The body is decorated with a wide geometric frieze of bosses, each centred on a flat band of lozenges filled in with squared *leiwen*, below a band of high relief *kui* dragons on a *leiwen* background; grouped by pair and confronted on the centre on *taotie* masks, and separated on the other side by segmented flanges. The foot is ornated by a large frieze of *kui* dragons, the head turned sharply back toward plumed tails; cast in high relief on a *leiwen* background, and separated by segmented flanges. The vessel has a dark green patina.

Inscription:

— An inscription of three pictograms is inside the vessel. It translates: "Father Ding of the Clan X".



軍
父
丁

Provenance:

— Katherine Sea Hancock Collection.

Similar example:

— Chen Mengjia, *Yinzhou Qintongxi Fenlei Tulu (A Corpus of Chinese Bronzes in American Collections)*, Tokyo 1977, no A 147.

— Hayashi M., *In Shu jidai seidoki no kenkyu (In Shu seidoki soran ichi) — Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes* — Tokyo 1984, Volume 1 part 2, page 137-143.

— A. Sackler Collection, illustrated by Bagley R.W., *Shang Ritual Bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler Collection*, Washington 1987, p. 504-507 no 98.

According to Professor Bagley, this shape may be a predynastic Zhou example of a vessel type popular in the Wei river valley.



9

ARCHAIC BRONZE VESSEL ZUN 商銅尊

Late Shang Dynasty / early Zhou Dynasty, 11th century BC.

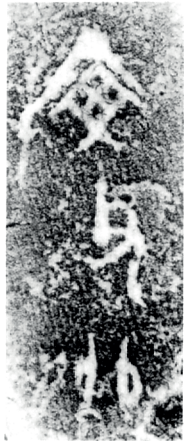
Height: 31 cm.

Diameter: 22.2 cm.

Large ritual bronze wine vessel *zun*, supported on a splayed foot. The central bulb is cast in relief with large dissolved *taotie* masks, centred on a thin flange, and divided from the other by a further flange. The powerful *taotie* mask entirely dissolved is composed with C-shaped horns, protruding eyes, small triangular ears, and hooked talons. The whole design is on a *leiwen* background. The foot is decorated in high relief with four dissolved *taotie* masks on a background of *leiwen*. Each mask has S-shaped horns, protruding eyes and triangular ears, centred on the snout. The vessel has a green-black patina.

Inscription:

— An inscription of three pictograms is inside the vessel. It translates: “Wen (clan name) Father Mao”.



文
父
卯

Provenance:

— J.T. Tai Collection, New York.



10

ARCHAIC BRONZE VESSEL YOU 西周銅卣

Western Zhou Dynasty, 11th — 10th century BC.

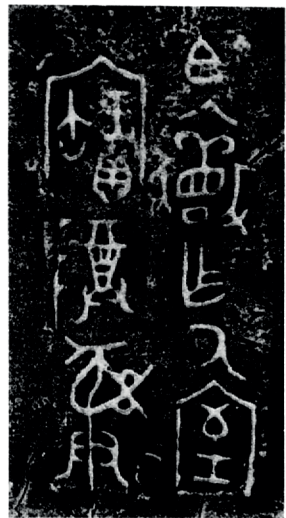
Height including handle: 28.3 cm.

Width: 15.3 cm.

Archaic bronze wine vessel and cover cast in oval section shape. The body is decorated on each side in graduated relief with a large *taotie* mask, with C-shaped horns, and protuberant eyes, centred on heavy hooked flanges repeated on the side. The shoulder of the vessel is ornate with a continuous frieze of *kui* dragons confronted in the centre of each side on a small animal mask in high relief, and divided at either end by a ring attached to the loop of the swing handle. The handle, decorated along its length with stylized linear dragons, ends with an extremely powerful and finely cast rams' heads with curled horns. The cover and the foot are cast with a frieze of dragons interrupted by hooked flanges. The domed top is decorated with *taotie* masks quartered by heavy hooked flanges matching those on the body. The knob is divided into four lobes each cast with a small cicada. The vessel is covered with a smooth olive-green patina.

Inscription:

— An inscription of eight pictograms inside the cover repeated on the base of the interior, can be translated: "Bo X (Count X) made for his ancestral Hall, (this) precious sacrificial vessel".



白禮乍厥室
寶罍之彝





(Detail of figure 10)

Provenance:

- Pan Zuyin, (1830 — 1890)
- C.T. Loo, New York, (no 87026)
- E.T. Chow Collection.

Exhibited:

- Pomona College, Claremont, California, November 1 — December 18 1947, Catalogue no 60.

Published:

- Pan Zuyin, *Pan Gu Lou yiqi kuan shi*, 1872, volume 2 no 27.
- Foster K.E., *A Handbook of Ancient Chinese Bronzes*, Claremont 1947, no 60.
- Chen Mengjia, *Yin Zhou Qing Tong Qi Fen Lei Tu Lu (A Corpus of Chinese Bronzes in American Collections)*, Tokyo 1977, volume II, p. 827 no 582 A & B.

Inscription recorded:

- Luo Zhenyu, *Sandai Jijin Wencun*, 1937, volume 13.29.5-6 no R 329.
- Chen Mengjia, *Yin Zhou Qing Tong Qi Fen Lei Tu Lu (A Corpus of Chinese Bronzes in American Collections)*, Tokyo 1977, volume I, p. 222 no 329 A & B.

Similar example:

- Sackler Collection, illustrated by Delbanco D.H., *Art from Ritual, Ancient Chinese Bronze Vessels from the Arthur M. Sackler Collection*, 1983, no 42.

This piece and the one from the Sackler collection have the same inscription and come from the same set.

11

PAIR OF BIRD MASKS 西周銅鳥形面具一對

Western Zhou Dynasty, 11th — 10th century BC.

Height: 21.5 cm.

Width: 13.5 cm.

Large pair of bird masks, in two parts, depicting side view. Each mask is cast in the form of a curved bird, with pierced round eyes, a large and curved beak. The head is surmounted with a large pointed crest. The centre part is decorated with an open-work line. Bronze with nice green patina.

Provenance:

— C.T. Loo, New York.

— Rafi Y. Mottahedeh Collection, New York.

Exhibited:

— C.T. Loo, "An Exhibition of Chinese Bronzes", New York 1939, Catalogue no 58.

— C.T. Loo, "Exhibition of Chinese Arts", New York, November 1, 1941 to April 30, 1942, Catalogue no 131.

— China Institute in America, "Animals and Birds in Chinese Art", New York 1968, Catalogue no 12.

Published:

— C.T. Loo, *An Exhibition of Chinese Bronzes*, New York 1939, plate XI no 58.

— C.T. Loo, *Exhibition of Chinese Arts*, New York, November 1, 1941 to April 30, 1942, no 131.

— China Institute in America, *Animals and Birds in Chinese Art*, New York 1968, Catalogue no 12.

Pairs of masks of bird shape and of different designs (animal shapes, *taotie*, ...) were probably used during the Zhou Dynasty for attachment to the harness of a horse on either side of the head.



12

ARCHAIC BRONZE TIGER 東周春秋銅老子

Eastern Zhou Dynasty, Late Spring and Autumn Period, early 6th century BC.
Length: 27 cm.

Archaic bronze handle cast in intaglio in the shape of a tiger originally peering over the rim of a vessel with the head and the front paws. The head has erect striped ears and protruding eyes. The face has a central lozenge between the ears and a raised knotted band uniting the ears to the nozzle between stripes, the flattened nozzle outlined with stripes, otherwise undecorated as are the paws and a central band running from the top of the head along the spine to the equally plain rolled-up tip of the tail. The legs are decorated with lozenges, the body with curls.

Provenance:

— Emanuel Gran Collection.

Similar example:

— Handle in tiger shape (or dragon) of the archaic bronze water vessel *jian* from the Shanghai Museum, and illustrated in Shanghai Museum, *Zhongguo qingtongqi chenlie* (The Chinese Bronze Exhibition), Shanghai, no date, p. 26.



13 — 14 — 15

SET OF THREE ARCHAIC BRONZES 春秋銅器三件

Late Spring and Autumn Period, 6th—5th century BC.

This exceptional and unique set is composed of two archaic bronze vessels: a *fou* and a *lei* and of one archaic bronze ladle *shao*.

The quality of the casting is quite similar to the pieces excavated in October 1984 in tomb no 5, at Caojiagang, Dangyang County, Hubei Province. This tomb, datable from the late Spring and Autumn Period, represents the art of the Chu State. It is probably a Royal tomb as the title of a King appears on one bronze vessel.

The close similarity between our bronzes and the tomb no 5 vessels may suggest that this set was also made for a royal person.

The exceptional casting of these bronzes is enhanced by their rare light azurite blue patina.



13

ARCHAIC BRONZE VESSEL FOU 春秋銅缶

Late Spring and Autumn Period, 6th—5th century BC.

Height: 38.5 cm.

Width (including handles): 49 cm.

This large archaic bronze vessel with cover, a water container, has a retracted mouth, a bulging belly and a flat bottom.

The body is decorated by three juxtaposed feather-curl patterned bands in low relief, separated by rope-bands in fairly high relief. The central and largest frieze is divided in five smaller feather-curl patterned bands with eight circular discs cast in high relief. Each disc is decorated with four *taotie* masks, the upper and lower ones facing outwards and the two inner ones facing a central ring, on a background of feather-curls, all in high relief. The two loop handles are in the shape of a large dragon head, with curled horns and a long falling tongue rolled up at the end. The top of the dragon head is further decorated with two opposite *taotie* masks, cast in high relief. The large and heavy domed cover has an inverted rim of two plain bands separated by a larger one patterned with feather-curls. The dome of the lid has a large frieze with the same design separated by six circular discs cast in high relief with a larger curl pattern.

The round grip is attached to the dome by an inverted, open-work frieze of four running dragons, supporting a ring decorated on the upper and outer sides with a pattern of feather-curls between flat bands.

The vessel has a light azurite blue patina.

No inscription.

Similar examples:

— a very similar bronze vessel *fou*, datable from the late Spring and Autumn Period, was excavated in tomb no 5 at Caojiagang, Dangyang County, Hubei Province. Only the decoration of the circular discs of the cover, and on the handles, is different. The piece is illustrated in *Kaogu Xuebao* 1988 no 4, p. 496 fig. 44 and plate 20/4.

— Bronze *fou* with ladle, from the tomb of the Marquis of Cai, published by Watson W., *Archaic Chinese Bronzes*, plate 59b.

The denomination of this particular shape is sometimes given as *fou*, or *bu* (Professor Mizuno), or *lei* (Professor Watson).





(Detail of figure 13)



(Detail of figure 13)



(Detail of figure 13)



(Detail of figure 13)

14

ARCHAIC BRONZE LADLE SHAO 春秋銅勺

Late Spring and Autumn Period, 6th—5th century BC.

Width: 14 cm.

Length including handle: 20 cm.

Archaic bronze ladle *shao*, composed of a large round bowl and a short handle. The bowl is decorated with two bands of *yuzhuangwen* pattern (feather-curly), separated by a rope band in high relief.

The handle, cast in high relief with a *taotie* mask, is attached to the bowl in two different points. The ladle has a light azurite blue patina.

No inscription.

Similar example:

— a very similar ladle was excavated in October 1980, tomb no 1, at Xiashi, Xichuan, Henan Province, and illustrated in *Kaogu*, 1981 no 2, plate 7, no 5 (M 1:73).



15

ARCHAIC BRONZE VESSEL *LEI* 春秋銅罍

Late Spring and Autumn Period, 6th—5th century BC.

Height: 41.5 cm.

Archaic bronze vessel *lei*, or wine container, with short neck, everted rim, wide shoulder, and tall pear-shaped body. The domed cover has four annular handles, each decorated with a rope-band pattern.

Four similar but larger annular handles, with the same design, are affixed to the shoulder of the vessel. The body is cast with a small low relief frieze in *yuzhuangwen* pattern (feather curls). The frieze is framed by rope-bands in fairly high relief.

The vessel has an exceptional light azurite blue patina.

No inscription.

Similar example:

— a quite similar piece was excavated in China and illustrated in *Wenwu*, 1981, no 11, p. 54 plate 11.

This unusual vessel shape, also called *hu*, reflects the change of style which announces the Warring States style.



16

ARCHAIC BRONZE VESSEL *BIANHU* WITH COPPER INLAY 戰國扁壺

Warring States Period, 5th — 3rd century BC.

Height: 31.2 cm.

Width: 31 cm.

Archaic bronze vessel *bianhu* or flat *hu*. The body of oval shape has flat sides, a low flaring cylindrical neck, and is supported by a rectangular foot.

The shoulders are decorated with *taotie* masks in high relief with loop muzzles holding movable ring.

Each face of the body is decorated with rectangular areas filled with a stamped pattern of feather-curls in small relief, and arranged like brick masonry and separated by a trellis of plain bands of bronze and inlaid copper. The neck is encircled by a row of inlaid copper triangles. The vessel has a green patina.

No inscription.

Similar example:

— *bianhu* unearthed in a Warring States tomb in 1975 at Shang-cunling at Sanmenxia, Honan Province, and illustrated in *Wenwu* 1976, no 3 plate 3 no 1 and p. 53 drawing no 3.

— Idemitsu Museum of Art, Tokyo, published in *15th Anniversary Catalogue*, Tokyo 1981 p. 249 no 1075.

— Kunstindustrimuseum, Copenhagen, illustrated in Loehr M., *Ritual Vessels of Bronze Age China*, New York 1968, p. 146-7 no 65.

— The Mount Trust, published by Watson W., *Ancient Chinese Bronzes*, London 1963, plate 67B.

— Lidow E. Collection, illustrated by Kuwayama G., *Ancient Ritual Bronzes of China*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1976, no 46.

The *bianhu* or pilgrim bottle is a beverage container known as a “canteen”.

The shape was an innovation of the Eastern Zhou and apparently was introduced around 400 BC and to have lasted into the Han Dynasty. It seems to be one of the types characteristically found in tombs of the nobility during the Warring States Period.



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- * December 1985 — Chinese Gold, Silver and Gilt Bronze up to the Tang Dynasty.
- * June 1986 — Ancient Chinese Bronze Vessels, Gilt Bronzes and Early Ceramics.
- * December 1987 — Opening Exhibition.

Detail of figure 13

Illustrated on back cover and on page 45

ARCHAIC BRONZE VESSEL FOU 春秋銅缶

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Height: 38.5 cm.

Width (including handles): 49cm.

