

The Frank Arts Collection

Hong Kong / Art Asia Fair / October 2nd—7th, 2011







The Frank Arts Collection of Ancient Chinese Bronzes

Fine Art Asia / Hong Kong October 2nd—7th, 2011
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 FINE ART ASIA
2011

Foreword

With the recent increase in the number of very important and passionate collectors of Chinese antiquities coming from mainland China, I feel it is now especially meaningful to exhibit in China, so I have decided to take part in the Hong Kong International Art and Antiques Fair this year for the first time.

For this first exhibition I am privileged to offer an exceptional Belgium private collection. During the past 20 years Mr. Frank Arts has gathered with passion some exceptional treasures, among them, pieces coming from major international collections such as those of C.T. Loo, J.T. Tai, and Dr F. Vannotti. Some of the objects are already well known having been recorded in important publications and included in major Chinese art exhibitions held in the Fleming Museum and the Rietberg Museum.

Three particularly exceptional objects deserve special note:

- The exceptional bronze vessel jia from the Anyang period of the Shang dynasty (13th – 12th century BC). (Cat. n° 4),
- The superb Qin Gong gui with its very rare inscription, and originally owned by either Qin Zhuang Gong or Qin Xiang Gong, the Duke Xiang of Qin , both important historical personages. (Cat. n° 17),
- The unusual bronze phoenix-shaped incense burner from the Han dynasty. (Cat. n° 23).

I hope this exhibition of The Frank Arts Collection of Ancient Chinese Bronzes will contribute to the ever-growing interest in Chinese Art.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have helped me in the various stages in the production of this exhibition and this catalogue. I should first of all like to thank Ms. Raphaele de Sigalony, my assistant, Mr. René Bouchara for the production of this catalogue and for organizing the presentation of the objects as well as designing and setting up my booth in the Hong Kong International Art and Antiques Fair and Mr. Ed O'Neill for translating the manuscript into English. I should also like to express my gratitude to Mr. Vincent Girier Dufournier for devoting several days to the photographing of the objects.

Christian Deydier

Chronology

Neolithic Period

Yangshao Culture (north central China)
 Hongshan Culture (northeastern China)
 Liangzhu Culture (southeastern China)
 Longshan Culture (eastern China)

circa 7 000 - circa 2 000 B.C.

circa 5 000 - circa 3 000 B.C.
 circa 3 600 - circa 2 000 B.C.
 circa 3 600 - circa 2 000 B.C.
 circa 3 000 - circa 1 700 B.C.

Xia Dynasty

Erlitou Culture

circa 2 100 - circa 1 600 B.C.

circa 2 100 - circa 1 600 B.C.

Shang Dynasty

Zhengzhou / Erligang phase
 Anyang phase

circa 1 600 - circa 1 111 av. B.C.

circa 1 600 - 1 400 av. B.C.
 1 400 - 1 111 av. B.C.

Zhou Dynasty

Western Zhou
 Eastern Zhou
 Spring and Autumn Period
 Warring States Period

1 111 - 265 B.C.

1 111 - 770 B.C.
 770 - 256 B.C.
 722 - 481 B.C.
 453 - 221 B.C.

Qin Dynasty

221 - 206 B.C.

Han Dynasty

Western Han
 Xin Dynasty (Wang Mang usurpation)
 Eastern Han

206 B.C. - 220 A.D.

206 B.C. -9
 9 - 22
 25 - 220

Six Dynasties

Three Kingdoms
 Western Jin
 Southern Dynasties
 Eastern Jin
 Liu Song
 Southern Qi
 Lian
 Chen
 Northern Dynasties
 Sixteen Kingdoms
 Northern Wei
 Eastern Wei
 Western Wei
 Northern Qi
 Northern Zhou

220 - 581

220 - 280
 265 - 316
 317 - 420
 420 - 479
 479 - 502
 502 - 557
 557 - 589
 304 - 439
 386 - 535
 534 - 550
 535 - 557
 550 - 577
 557 - 581

Sui Dynsaty

Tang Dynsaty

Five Dynsaties

Jin Dynsaty

Liao Dynsaty

Song Dynsaty

Northern Song
 Southern Song

581 - 617

618 - 907

907 - 960

1 115 - 1 234

916 - 1 125

960 - 1 279

960 - 1 127

1 127 - 1279





Introduction

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Franck Art

1. Archaic bronze wine vessel *gu*

Shang dynasty, 13th – 12th century BC
Height: 30.3 cm

An archaic bronze wine vessel *gu*, with a high trumpet-shaped neck decorated in high relief with four slender pointed stylized cicada wing-shaped blades embellished with crisply-cast *leiwen* pattern, emerging from a horizontal band of silk-worms with angular heads and hooked tails on a *leiwen* background. The central section decorated with two *taotie* masks on a *leiwen* background, is divided by shallow notched flanges. The splayed foot, with similar *taotie* masks and flanges topped by a band of *kui* dragons, is supported by a plain shallow cylindrical foot. The vessel has a black patina.

Provenance:

- acquired from C.T. Loo, Paris, in September 1947.
- Dr Franco Vannotti Collection, Lugano.
- Eskenazi Ltd, London 1989.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Exhibited:

- Rietberg Museum, Zurich, 1975 – 1976.
- Eskenazi Ltd, The collection of ritual bronze vessels, weapons, gilt bronzes, mirrors and ceramics formed by Dr Franco Vannotti, London 13 June – 7 July 1989, catalogue No. 2.

Published:

- Brinker H., *Bronzen aus dem alten China*, Rietberg Museum, Zurich 1975, No. 41.
- Eskenazi Ltd, The collection of ritual bronze vessels, weapons, gilt bronzes, mirrors and ceramics formed by Dr Franco Vannotti, London 13 June – 7 July 1989, catalogue 2.



2. Archaic bronze wine vessel *jue*

Shang dynasty, 13th – 12th century BC
Height: 20.3 cm

An archaic bronze wine vessel *jue* supported by three triangular outwardly extending legs. The U-shaped body is cast with two wonderful *taotie* masks on a *leiwen* background, interspersed with three shallow notched flanges. A bovine head surmounts the vessel's loop handle. The vessel's long pouring spout and opposite beak-like protrusion are decorated with stylized cicada-shaped blades on their undersides. The vessel's two upright tenons are topped with "mushroom" shaped caps.

The vessel has a nice light green patina.

Inscription:

- Some pictograms are cast beneath the vessel's handle.

Provenance:

- Sotheby's New York, May 8, 1981 lot n° 24.
- R. Chang, Hong Kong, 1981.
- Sotheby's New York, December 3rd 1986, lot n° 21.
- G. Croès, Belgium 1987.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Exhibited:

- Fleming Museum of Art and Anthropology, Burlington, Vermont, USA, 1958 – 1979.

Published:

- Van Heusden W., *Ancient Chinese Bronzes*, Tokyo 1953, plate V, p. 84.



3. Archaic bronze food vessel *ding*

Shang dynasty, 13th – 12th century BC.
Height: 19.7 cm.
Width: 15.7 cm.

Archaic bronze food vessel *ding* supported on three columnar legs. The round bowl-shaped body is decorated with three large *taotie* masks on a *leiwen* background. Each mask is formed of a pair of confronting large-eyed *kui* dragons shown in profile meeting at a central vertical flange and is separated from its neighbor on each of its sides by a vertical flange. The narrow rim of the vessel is topped with two upright semi-circular handles.

The vessel has a green and red patina.

Provenance:

- Dr Ernesto Deutsch, Buenos Aires, Argentina, bought from Mayuyama & Cie, 1958.
- Laurentin Guilloux Buffetaud Tailleur, Paris, France, October 7, 1987, lot n° 53
- G. Croës, Brussels, Belgium, 1988.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Exhibited:

- Exhibition de Art Oriental, Buenos Aires, 1958, catalogue n° 23a.

Published :

- Catalogue : Exhibition de Art Oriental, Buenos Aires, 1958, catalogue n° 23a.



4. Archaic bronze wine vessel *jia*

Shang dynasty, 13th – 12th century BC
Height: 33.5 cm.

Archaic bronze wine vessel *jia* supported on three triangular pointed 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 one is decorated with large *taotie* masks composed of large confronting *kui* dragons on a *leiwen* background divided by small flanges, while the section above that is decorated with a band of smaller stylized *kui* dragons on a *leiwen* background, one pair facing another across a narrow vertical flange. The top section of the body is decorated with triangular blade or leaf tip-like motifs embellished with scrollwork. 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- green patina.



Inscription:

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

Provenance:

- Private collection, California, USA before 1978.
- Sotheby's New York, November 4th, 1978, lot n° 317.
- Sotheby's London, June 10th 1986, lot n° 49.
- Alan & Simone Hartman Collection, New York, USA.
- Oriental Bronzes Ltd, Christian Deydier, London 19...
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.



5. Archaic bronze wine or water vessel *hu*

Late Shang dynasty, 13th – 12th century BC
Height: 32 cm.

Archaic bronze wine or water vessel with a pear-shaped oval body with small, lug handles near its top 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, with protuberant round eyes cast in intaglio on a background of *leiwen*, is composed of confronting *kui* stylized dragons centered on a vertical flange. The small handles near the vessel's top are decorated with incised horned bovine-heads and the high conical hollow foot is decorated with a "monocular" pattern.

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

Inscription:

- A five-pictogram inscription inside the vessel near the rim translates: "Made for Father Ding, this precious sacrificial vessel".

Provenance:

- Oriental Bronzes Ltd, Christian Deydier, London 1989.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Exhibited:

- Oriental Bronzes Ltd, Christian Deydier, Archaic Chinese Bronzes from the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, London June 1989, catalogue No. 2.

Published:

- Oriental Bronzes Ltd, Christian Deydier, Archaic Chinese Bronzes from the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, London June 1989, catalogue No. 2.

Similar examples:

- A similar hu, from the A. Sackler Collection, Washington, is published by Loehr M., *Ritual Vessels of Bronze Age China*, New York 1968, No. 17, p. 50 – 51.
- Another one, from the Idemitsu Museum of Arts, Tokyo, is illustrated in the museum's *15th Anniversary Catalogue*, Tokyo 1981, p. 243, No. 1063.



6. Archaic bronze food vessel *ding*

Late Shang dynasty, 12th – 11th century BC
Height: 23.9 cm.

Archaic bronze food vessel *ding* supported by three wide flat legs, each cast in the form of a leaping *kui* dragon shown in profile, with a large protuberant eye and an upwardly curving tail. The upper section of the vessel's deep bowl-like body is decorated with three *taotie* masks, each formed by a pair of highly stylized confronting dragons meeting at a central vertical flange. The narrow rim of the vessel is set with two upright semi-circular handles.

The vessel has a green patina.

Inscription:

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

Provenance:

- J.J. Lally & Co., New York, 1999.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Exhibited:

- J.J. Lally & Co., *Ancient China, Jades, Bronzes & Ceramics*, New York, 1999, catalogue n° 28.

Published:

- J.J. Lally & Co., *Ancient China, Jades, Bronzes & Ceramics*, New York, 1999, catalogue n° 28.

Similar examples:

- A similar vessel is illustrated by Bagley R.W., *Shang Ritual Bronzes in the Arthur Sackler Collection*, Washington 1987, p. 449, fig. 80:4.
- Another vessel from the Guimet Museum, Paris, France, is published by Girard-Geslan M., *Bronzes Archaïques de la Chine*, Paris 1995, p. 14 – 15.



7. Archaic bronze food vessel *yu*

Late Shang dynasty, 12th – 11th century BC.

Height: 18 cm.

Width: 26.5 cm.

Archaic bronze food vessel shaped like a *gui*, but without handles, and called a *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 of the vessel is decorated with wide enclosed triangle or double-triangle patterns, each filled with rows of vertically lined *leiwen* with a protruding eye-like lozenge in the centre. These are surmounted by a band of high relief *kui* dragons on a *leiwen* background grouped by pair each pair confronting the other over a protruding *taotie* mask, and separated from the pair following it by a vertical flange. The vessel's foot is decorated with a wide frieze of *kui* dragons with their heads turned sharply back towards their plumed tails; cast in high relief on a *leiwen* background, they are separated from each other by vertical flanges. The vessel has a dark green patina.

Inscription:

- An inscription consisting of three pictograms is cast inside the vessel. It translates: "Father Ding of X clan".

Provenance:

- Katherine Sea Hancock Collection, USA.
- Alan & Simone Hartman Collection, New York, USA.
- Oriental Bronzes Ltd – Christian Deydier, London 1989
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Exhibited:

- - Oriental Bronzes Ltd, Christian Deydier, Archaic Chinese Bronzes from the *Shang and Zhou Dynasties*, London June 1989, catalogue n° 8.

Published:

- Oriental Bronzes Ltd, Christian Deydier, Archaic Chinese Bronzes from the *Shang and Zhou Dynasties*, London June 1989, catalogue n° 8.

Note:

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

Similar examples:

- A similar *yu* is illustrated by Chen Mengjia, *Yin Zhou Qintongqi Fenlei* (A Corpus of Chinese Bronzes in American Collections), Tokyo 1977, n° A 147.
- Other *yu* are published 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 2, pages 137 – 143.
- Another one from the A. Sackler Collection, Washington, is published by Bagley R.W., *Shang Ritual Bronzes in the Arthur Sackler Collection*, Washington 1987, p. 504 – 507, n° 98.



8. Archaic bronze wine vessel *zun*

Late Shang dynasty – Early Zhou dynasty, 11th century BC
Height: 31 cm.

Large ritual bronze wine vessel *zun*, supported on a splayed foot. The vessel's central section is cast in relief with large *taotie* masks centered on a thin flange and divided from each other by further flanges. The powerful *taotie* masks are composed of C-shaped horns, protruding eyes, small triangular ears, and hooked talons, all on a *leiwen* background. The vessel's foot is decorated in high relief with four smaller *taotie* masks on a background of *leiwen*. Each of these masks has collapsed S-shaped horns, protruding eyes and triangular ears centered on a long, flat snout. The vessel has a green-black patina.

Inscription:

- A three-pictogram inscription inside the vessel translates: "Wen (clan name) Father Mao".

Provenance:

- J.T. Tai collection New York, before 1989.
- Oriental Bronzes Ltd – Christian Deydier, London 1989

Exhibited:

- Oriental Bronzes Ltd, Christian Deydier, Archaic Chinese Bronzes from the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, London June 1989, catalogue n° 9.

Published:

- Oriental Bronzes Ltd, Christian Deydier, Archaic Chinese Bronzes from the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, London June 1989, catalogue n° 9.



9. Archaic bronze food vessel *gui*

**Early Western Zhou dynasty,
11th century BC.
Height: 18.8 cm.
Width: 34.2 cm**

Archaic bronze food vessel *gui*. The body in the form of a bowl with two large handles is supported by a high flaring foot ring. The vessel's narrow neck is cast with two pairs of kui dragons facing each other over a small *taotie* mask in high relief, all on a *leiwen* background. Each side of the vessel's body is decorated with a high relief *taotie* mask on a *leiwen* background with large bulging eyes and with its nose formed by a hooked flange.

Each of the vessel's thick round loop handles which spring from bovine heads is decorated with a stylized bird and ends in the bird's head.

The high flaring foot ring is decorated with four *kui* dragons, shown in profile, on a *leiwen* background, each separated from its neighbor by a vertical flange.

The vessel has an olive green patina.

Inscription:

- A three-pictogram inscription inside the vessel translates: "Father Yi of X (clan name)".

Provenance:

- G. Croes, Belgium 1998.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Exhibited:

- International Asian Art Fair, New York, March 27 – April 1, 1998.

Published:

- Croes G., *From Ancient Kingdoms to Imperial China*, International Asian Art Fair, Seventh Regiment Armory, New York, March 27 – April 1, 1998, catalogue p. 34 – 35.





10. Archaic bronze food vessel *fangxian*

**Late Western Zhou dynasty,
Early Spring and Autumn period, 9th – 8th century BC
Height: 30 cm**

Archaic bronze food vessel *fangxian*. The undecorated lower section of the vessel is cast in the form of four joined legs with ham-like swelling thighs on 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 medium frieze is decorated with a band of continuous U-shaped waves with hooked scrolls and C- shaped motifs between and inside the waves.

The rim is set with two upright loop handles.

The vessel is divided inside by a pierced bronze plaque between its upper and lower sections..

The vessel has a green patina.

Provenance:

- Oriental Bronzes Ltd, Christian Deydier, London 19...
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Similar examples:

- Square *xian* are recorded by Hayashi M., *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Sora Ichi) – Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Volume 1 part 2, p. 79 n° 80 – 81, and p. 80 n° 83.



11. Bronze Tiger.

China, Zhou dynasty, 1050-221 BC
Length: 23.5 cm

Very rare bronze figure of a crouching tiger, cast in the round. The animal superbly modeled in a lively and aggressive posture with thick, muscular legs ending in powerfully formed claws, is decorated all over with incised spirals motifs. The tension visible in the feline's powerful legs, its tense upwardly curling tail, its alert, protruding eyes and its gaping tooth-filled mouth all combine to produce a masterful portrayal of a tiger about to leap on its prey. The bronze has a nice light green and reddish patina.

Provenance:

- Zen Gallery, Belgium, 1997.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.



12. Pair of bronze tiger weights

Zhou dynasty, 1050-221 BC

Length: 10 and 11 cm

Very rare pair of bronze weights cast in the round in the shape of recumbent tigers shown resting. One of the pair has its raised head turned slightly to the right, while the other has its turned slightly left. Both tigers have large eyes, flattened muzzles, large, flat paws and thin tails coiled up onto the wide upper sections of one of their hind legs. The base of each animal is flat. The two bronze tigers have a light green patina.

Provenance:

- Zen gallery, Belgium, 1996.
- Frank Arts Collection.



13. Archaic bronze wine or water vessel *lei*

Early Eastern Zhou dynasty, 770 – 256 BC

Height: 28 cm

Width: 30 cm

Archaic bronze wine or water vessel *lei*, cast in the shape of an ovoid jar with a flat base, a large shoulder and a contracted neck topped by a flaring ring. The body is decorated with two registers of S-shaped stylized dragons with two heads, one at each end of the animals. The two small handles fixed to the shoulder of the vessel are decorated with small *taotie* masks.

Provenance:

- G. Croës, Belgium, 1993
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Exhibited:

- European Fine Art Fair – Maastricht, March 12 – 21, 1993.

Published:

- G. Croës, European Fine Art Fair – Maastricht, March 12 – 21, 1993, catalogue p. 20 – 21.

Note:

- Ancient texts describe the *lei* as being used for both water and wine.

Similar examples:

- A similar *lei* are recorded by Hayashi M., *Shunju Sengoku Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu* (In *Shu Seidoki Sora San*), Tokyo 1989, pages 123 – 124.
- Another similar vessel from the Worcester Art Museum, USA, is illustrated by So J., *Eastern Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur Sackler Collection*, Volume III, Washington 1995, p. 208, fig. 31.1.





14. Set of eight archaic bronze bells *niuzhong*

Eastern Zhou dynasty, late Spring and Autumn period – early Warring States period, circa 6th century – 5th century B.C.

The tallest bell

Height: 28 / Length: 17 / Depth: 17 cm

The shortest bell

Height: 15 / Length: 9,5 / Depth: 6 cm

The eight bells, diminishing gradually in size, are identical in shape and design and together form a graduated chime. The body of each bell has an elliptical cross section and a slightly arched open mouth. The flat top of each bell is surmounted by an inverted U-shaped handle, used to suspend the bell.

Both faces of each bell are symmetrically decorated with six horizontal bands each containing three bosses cast in high relief and these bands are separated from each other by four horizontal friezes decorated with geometric patterns and divided into two groups of three bands by a central trapezoidal plain panel. The area extending from below the six bands of three bosses to just above each bell's arched mouth is decorated with geometric patterns.

The bells have a nice light green patina with red and blue incrustations.

Provenance:

- Oriental Bronzes Ltd – Christian Deydier, London 19
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.



15. Archaic bronze food vessel *xu*.

**Late Western Zhou dynasty, Early Spring and Autumn period,
9th – 8th century BC
Qin culture.
Length: 35 cm
Height: 18 cm**

Archaic bronze food vessel *xu* with an oblong body with rounded angles, supported by a splayed conical foot, itself supported by four short feet cast in the shape of birds. The vessel is fitted with a cover with four knobs cast in shape of *kui* dragons. When inverted, the cover may be used as a vessel with the four knobs serving as feet.

The lower border of the cover and the top section of the vessel's body are each decorated with a frieze of thick scrolls in the form of stylized dragons without heads. The lower part of the vessel's body, and the middle part of the cover are decorated with horizontal grooves.

Each of the very elaborate handles is cast in the form of an opened-mouthed dragon's head grasping a phoenix.

The bronze has a green and silvered patina.

Provenance:

- acquired in 1998 in Hong Kong.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Notes:

- The character 'Xu' has been found cast on some bronze vessels of this particular shape (oblong body with rounded angles).
- The *xu* became extremely popular in the middle part of the Western Zhou dynasty, but seems to have disappeared sometime in the Early Spring and Autumn period.





16. Pair of archaic bronze wine vessels *hu*

**Late Western Zhou dynasty, Early Spring and Autumn period,
9th – 8th century BC
Qin culture.
Height: 34.7 cm**

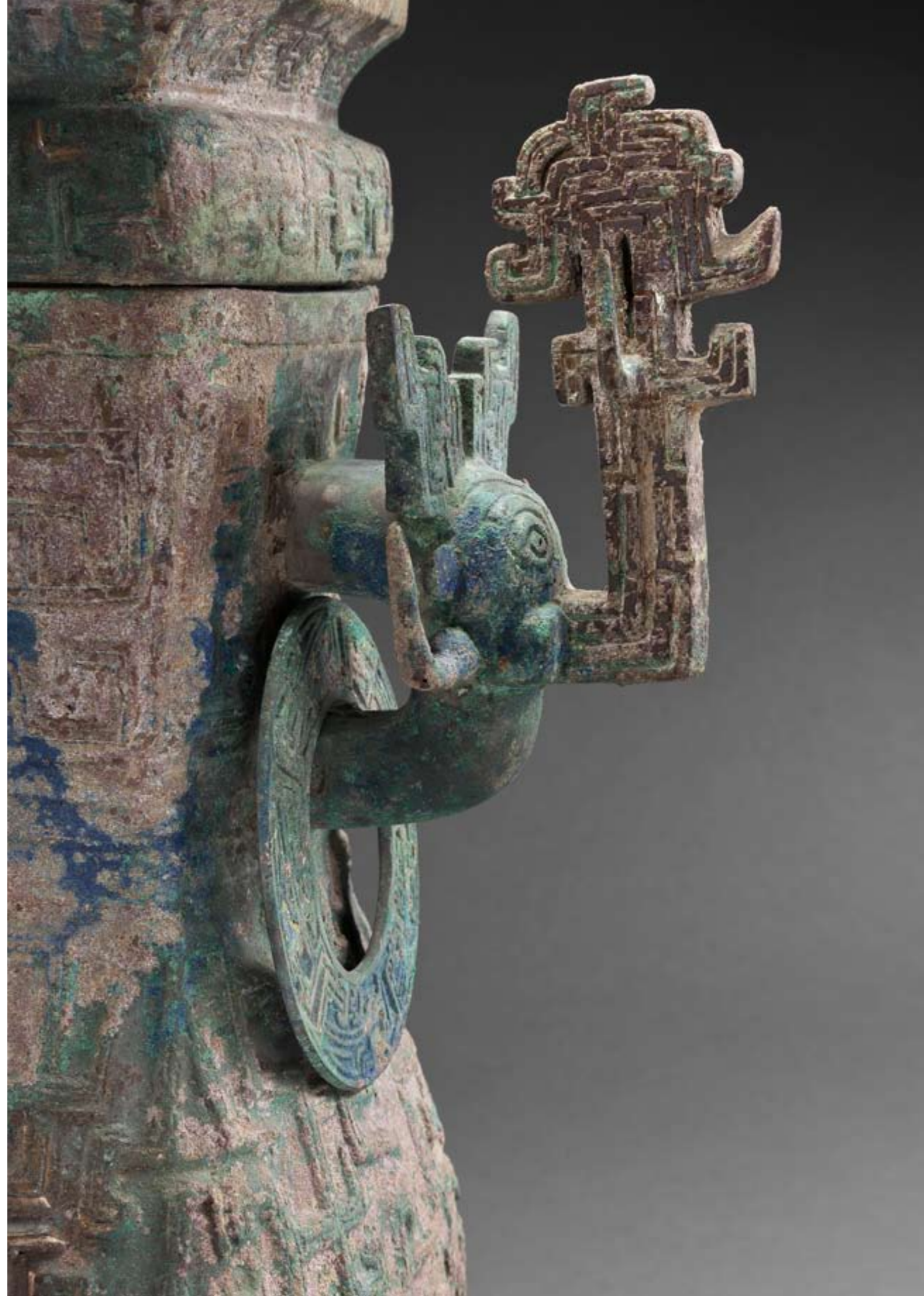
Pair of archaic bronze wine vessels *hu* of rectangular shape. Each has a rectangular cover and is supported on a rectangular flaring pedestal foot. The body is decorated with interlaced serpentine scrolls in high relief. The neck is flanked by two elaborate loop handles issuing from horned dragons' heads spouting stylized phoenixes with cascading plumes on each side of their heads. A large flat ring hangs from the bottom of each of the vessel's loop handles touching the vessel's bulbous lower body. The cover is cast with dragon scroll motifs. The two vessels have a green patina with areas of blue and red patina.

Provenance:

- Zen Gallery, Belgium, 1994.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Similar examples:

- Similar *hu* vessels, with more elaborate decors excavated in 1998 from tomb 98LDM2 in Yuandingshan, are illustrated in *Qin Xi Chui Ling Qu*, Beijing, Wenwu press, 2004, p 78 - 85 plates 18 – 21.





17. Qin Gong Gui

Archaic bronze food vessel *gui*.
Late Western Zhou dynasty,
Early Spring and Autumn period, 9th – 8th century BC
Qin culture.
Length: 34 cm
Height: 23.5 cm

Archaic bronze food vessel *gui*. The vessel's compressed globular body is cast at its top with a band of stylized dragons with protuberant eyes, upwardly curling tails and elephant trunk-like noses. Each is divided from the other by a small upside-down *taotie* mask in high relief. The rest of the body is covered with ribbed grooves. The cover is cast with a similar frieze with its *taotie* masks right side up topped by upwardly slopping horizontal grooves surmounted by a tall lipped ring. The conical hollow foot decorated with scale motifs, is supported by three feet in the shape of animal legs emerging from animal heads in high relief. Each of the vessel's massive loop handles is cast in the form of a dragon's head with a central crest-like horn, long ears, bulbous eyes, an upwardly curling snout and a long multi-layered tongue that emerges from its mouth to form the handle's lower section.



Inscription:

- A five-character inscription inside the vessels translates, “The Duke of Qin (had) made (this) precious *gui*”.

Provenance:

- Wang Jui Chin collection, Taipei and Hong Kong, 1993
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Notes:

- The Dukes of the State of Qin ruled the strongest feudal kingdom during the Zhou dynasty.
- During the last days of the Western Zhou dynasty, Duke Xiang of Qin (Qin Xiang Gong) saved the royal house of Zhou and ensured the dynasty’s survival as Eastern Zhou, with a new capital in Luoyang (Henan province). In recognition, he received the title of “Gong” Duke.
- At the end of the Warring States, and after the unification of all of China, the last Duke of Qin took the title of Qin Shi Huangdi and inaugurated the Qin dynasty, thus becoming China’s first ‘Huangdi’ or emperor.
- The present Qin Gong gui was owned by either Qin Zhuang Cong or Qin Xiang Gong, the Duke Xiang of Qin. (See an article by Professor Li Feng entitled ‘Lixian Chutu Qinguo Zaoqi Tongqi Ji Jisi Yizhi Lungang’ p. 55 – 67 of Issue 5 for 2011 of Wenwu Cultural Relics magazine.

Similar examples:

- Two bronze vessels *gui* from the same set (with the same design and same inscription), now in the Shanghai Museum, are illustrated by Chen Peifen, *Xia Shang Zhou Qingtongqi Yanjiu, Dong Zhou Bian, Volume Shang*, Shanghai, p. 41 – 43, n° 449



18. Archaic bronze pouring vessel *he*

Early Spring and Autumn period, 9th – 8th century BC
Probably Qin culture.
Height: 24 cm

Archaic bronze pouring vessel *he* with a depressed globular body with a circular cross section, supported by three feet, each cast in its upper section with a *taotie* mask centered on a thin flange.

The domed lid, decorated with a motif of interlocking stylized dragons, has a small loop knob and is connected to the vessel's handle by an undecorated chain.

The vessel's semi-circular handle ends, on each side, with a dragon head in low relief biting the upper edge of the vessel's body.

The vessel's spout is cast in the form of the upper front section of a chicken with its breast and ringed neck covered with small scales, a large open beak, two small globular eyes inlaid with turquoise beads, two very thick eyebrows, and two small pointed ears. The vessel has a nice green patina.

Provenance:

- Zen Gallery, Belgium 1992.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Notes:

- The function of the *he* has not yet been determined with certainty.
- The *Shuo Wen* (Analytical Dictionary of Characters, written in the Han dynasty) states: "the *he* is used to mix flavors".
- Professor Maud Girard indicates that the *he* was used as a wine vessel under the Shang, but that under the Western Zhou it was used to pour the water during ritual ablutions.
- For Professor Wang Tao "the traditional *he* ewer functioned as a vessel for mixing liquids or for warming wine over a fire".
- But it seems that by the Eastern Zhou, this vessel was mostly used as a water vessel, since in excavations from that period, the *he* vessel is often found together with a water basin *pan*.



19. Bronze short sword

Bronze short sword
Mid – Late Spring and Autumn period, 6th – 5th century BC
Probably Qin culture.
Length: 26 cm

Bronze short sword or dagger with a hollow handle cast on both sides in an openwork pattern of interlaced dragons. The guard is decorated with *panchi* designs which were originally inlaid with turquoise, glass, cabochon or turquoise beads. The weapon's tapering blade has a pronounced median rib on each of its sides. The dagger has a green patina.

Provenance:

- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Note:

- Short swords of this type, used by ancient China's northern ethnic groups, are discussed by Zheng Shaozong, A study of the Periodisation and Types of Bronze *Short Swords in Northern China*, WenWu 1984, No. 2.

Similar examples:

- A similar dagger from the A. Hardy Collection is illustrated by Li Xueqin, *The Glorious Traditions of Chinese Bronzes*, Singapore 2000, catalogue No. 40.
- similar dagger handles excavated in 1998 from tomb 98LDM2 in Yuandingshan, are illustrated in *Qin Xi Chui Ling Qu*, Beijing, Wenwu, 2004, p 106 plate 37 No. 1 – 3.



20. Bronze animal shaped like a tapir

**Late Spring and Autumn or Early Warring States,
6th – 5th century BC.
Length: 18.5 cm**

Bronze quadruped in the shape of a tapir. The animal is cast with wide open eyes, a prominent muzzle and two upright round ears. Its body is entirely covered with very elaborate patterns, on its neck, a narrow band decorated with cowry-shell motifs and on its haunches and shoulders, an interlocking scrolls pattern. The bronze animal has a green patina.

Provenance:

- Zen Gallery, Belgium, 1991.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Note:

- It seems that tapirs once existed in the north – central region of ancient China.

Similar examples:

- A similar tapir from the Freer Gallery of Art, is illustrated by SO J., *Eastern Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collection*, New York 1995, p. 37 fig. 46.
- Another tapir from the Meiyintang Collection is published by Wang Tao, *Chinese Bronzes from the Meiyintang Collection*, London 2009, n° 150.





21. Archaic bronze wine vessel *bianhu*

Warring States Period, 475 – 221 BC
Height: 37 cm

Archaic bronze wine vessel *bianhu*. The body of oval shape has flat sides topped by, a low flaring cylindrical neck and supported on a rectangular pedestal foot.

The vessel is cast with large rectangular panels of tight abstract curl patterns, arranged in five registers and separated by bands of copper inlay. The sides of the vessel, of similar design, are ornated with two *taotie* masks in high relief with looped muzzles holding movable rings.

The neck is encircled by a row of inlaid copper triangles.

The convex cover decorated with abstract curl patterns, is surmounted with three stylized standing dragons.

The vessel has a nice green patina.

Provenance:

- G. Croës , Belgium, 1987.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Notes:

- The *bianhu* or pilgrim bottle is a beverage container.
- This shape was an innovation of the Eastern Zhou and apparently started around 400 BC and continued to be fashionable into the Han Dynasty. - The *bianhu* is one of the types of vessels characteristically found in tombs of the nobility during the Warring States period.

Similar examples:

- A *bianhu* unearthed from a Warring States tomb in 1975 at Shangcunling at Sanmenxia, Henan Province, is illustrated in *Wenwu* 1976, No. 3, plate 3 No. 1 and p. 53 drawing No. 3.
- Similar examples in the Shanghai Museum are illustrated in *Xia Shang Zhou qingtongqi yanjiu* Volume: *Dong Zhou bian, xia*, n° 618 à 620, p. 422 – 429.



22. Bronze and gold garment-hook (*daigou*)

Bronze and gold garment-hook (*daigou*)
Late Warring States period, 3rd century BC.
Length: 22 cm

Elegantly curved garment-hook, cast in three tapering facets which merge at the shaft to terminate in an animal's head hook. The garment-hook's surface is richly inlaid in gold with an elaborate design of two intertwined stylized dragons. The reverse is set with a stud for attachment.

Provenance:

- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Similar example:

- a similar *daigou* is illustrated by Lawton Thomas, *Chinese Art of the Warring States Period, Change and Continuity*, Washington 1982, Freer Gallery of Art, n° 45-46 p. 96-97.



23. Phoenix-shaped incense burner

Han dynasty, 206BC – 220 AD
Height of the bird: 23.5 cm

Extremely rare and unusual bronze phoenix-shaped incense burner cast with tiny phoenixes nestled among its outspread wings, its tail and chest. The large phoenix is standing on a circular base set on a cylindrical stem. Its strong legs end in clawed feet and its ovoid body is pierced with crescents and triangles. Large flat curving wings are set on the sides of the body and a long and flat tail feather emerges from the end of the bird's body. The top of its head is decorated with a high forked flame-like crest and it holds a fish in its beak. The bronze has a nice green patina.

Provenance:

- Sotheby's London, November 18th, 1988, lot No. 810.
- Zen Gallery, Belgium 1988.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Similar example:

- a very similar bird-shaped incense burner, excavated in 1989 at Jiaozuo city, Henan Province, is illustrated in the exhibition catalogue *Treasures from the Han*, The Empress Place, Singapore 1990, p. 103.



24. Archaic bronze vessel and cover, *Lian*

Han dynasty, 206 BC – 220 AD
Height: 32 cm

Archaic bronze vessel and cover *lian* cast with a deep cylindrical body supported by three feet in the form of walking tigers in profile. The body is decorated with two friezes containing different animals and hunting scenes, separated by three strap-work bands interspersed by two *taotie* masks in high relief with pendant ring handles.

The vessel's conic cover cast in low relief in the form of stepped hills or a mountain, is ornamented with low relief hunting scenes and surmounted by an open winged bird in the round.

The bronze vessel has a very light green patina.

Provenance:

- Zen Gallery, Belgium 1998.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.



25. Bronze wine vessel and cover, *Hu*

Western Han dynasty, 206 BC- 8 AD
Height: 45 cm

Elegant *hu* shaped vase with cover. The vessel's pear shaped body rises on a spreading pedestal foot. The upper part of the vessel's shoulder is decorated with a double fluted band interrupted by a pair of *taotie* masks with noses in the form of small loops to which large rings are attached. A large curved handle, with dragon head terminals, is secured by two chains attached to the *taoties*' nose loops. The cover is also decorated at its rim with two small loop handles.

Provenance:

- Jules Speelman Collection, London.
- G. Croës, Belgium 1984.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Published:

- Christian Deydier, *Les Bronzes Chinois*, Fribourg, Switzerland, 1980, p.229, n° 89.



26. Bronze incense burner and cover *boshanlu*

Han dynasty, 206 BC – 220 AD
Height: 22 cm

Bronze incense burner and cover of the *boshanlu* type fixed to a large round bronze plate. The incense burner's body is cast in the form of a hemispherical bowl raised on a stem-like foot on a conical downwardly sloping base decorated with cloud patterns. The vessel's conical cover, in the shape of the mystical mountain peaks on which the Taoist immortals live, is cast in openwork and decorated with high relief cloud vapour motifs.

The bronze incense burner has a green patina.

Provenance:

- M. Goedhuis, London 1992.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Similar example:

- A similar bronze *boshanlu* incense burner from the Cernuschi Museum, Paris, France, is illustrated by Deydier Ch, *Les Bronzes Chinois, le guide du connaisseur*, Fribourg 1980, p. 122 n° 89.



27. Bronze horse and chariot

Han dynasty, 206 BC – 220 AD.
Length: 20 cm.

Miniature bronze horse and chariot. The standing horse with its large powerfully cast head, long well – defined mane, sturdy body and muscular legs is portrayed looking directly forward with its mouth wide – open and its ears pricked up as though fully and fearlessly absorbed in its task of pulling its master's battlewagon into the fray. The battlewagon has an openwork roof decorated on both of its sides with a large *taotie* mask.

Provenance:

- Eskenazi Ltd, London 1994.
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.



28. Archaic bronze *chimera* oil lamp or water dropper

Eastern Han dynasty, 25 – 220 AD
Length: 17 cm.

Bronze chimera cast in the form of a crouching fabulous winged beast. The animal is grasping an ear-cup in its jaws. The beast's head has a blunt snout, triangular ears and bushy eyebrows. Its body is cast with tufts of incised fur, some areas of which are stamped with spot-like motifs. Bronze with dark-green patina.

Provenance :

- J.J. Lally & Co, New York, 19....
- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.

Similar example:

- A similar water container in shape of animal, from the Avery Brundage Collection is illustrated by Lefebvre d'Argencé R.Y, *Avery Brundage Collection, The Ancient Chinese Bronzes*, San Francisco 1966, p. 105 plate XLVIII - B.



29. Bronze mirror

Beginning of the Tang dynasty, 7th century AD
Diameter: 15 cm

Beautiful round bronze mirror, its back cast with three bands of motifs. The mirror's central knob is encircled by six frolicking mythical animals cast in high relief and its middle band bears a long poem. The mirror's outer band is decorated with triangular motifs enclosing raised florettes. The mirror has a nice silvery finish with green incrustations.

The poem inscribed on the mirror translates:

*'Perfectly round precious mirror,
Glistening bright when raised on its stand,
In it can be glimpsed dancing phoenixes,
And flowers blossoming in the radiant sun,
Near a pond it becomes like the moon,
Looking into it, the face's beauty and charm appear.'*

Provenance:

- Frank Arts Collection, Belgium.



Previous Exhibitions

December	1985	Chinese Gold, Silver and Gilt Bronze up to the Tang Dynasty, London
June	1986	Ancient Chinese Bronze Vessels, Gilt Bronzes and Early Ceramics, London
December	1987	Opening Exhibition, London
June	1989	Archaic Chinese Bronzes from Shang to Zhou Dynasties, London
June	1990	Imperial Gold from Ancient China, London
June	1991	Imperial Gold from Ancient China, Part II, Grosvenor House, London
June	1991	The Art of the Warring States and Han Periods, London
September	1992	XVI ^e Biennales des Antiquaires, Paris
December	1992	An Exceptional Horse from the Han Dynasty, London
November	1994	L'Or des Qin, XVII ^e Biennales des Antiquaires, Paris
December	1995	Le Banquet des Dieux, Ritual Bronzes of Ancient China, London
January	1996	Le Banquet des Dieux, Bronzes Rituels de la Chine Ancienne, Paris
September	1996	XVIII ^e Biennales des Antiquaires, Paris
February	1997	Arts de la Chine et de l'Himalaya, XIV ^e s. av. J.-C.—XV ^e s. ap. J.-C., Paris
January	1998	L'immortalité de l'Âme chez les Han, Paris
March	1998	Timeless China, New York
October	1998	L'Art et la Matière, Paris
October	1999	Caravanes sur la Route de la Soie, Paris
September	2000	XX ^e Biennales des Antiquaires, Paris
October	2000	Twentieth Anniversary, Paris-London
October	2001	Rituels pour l'Éternité, Paris-London
September	2002	XXI ^e Biennale des Antiquaires, Paris
September	2004	L'or des Qidan, XXII ^e Biennale des Antiquaires, Paris
September	2006	XXIII ^e Biennale des Antiquaires, Paris
April-May	2007	L'Inde Sensuelle : Terres Cuites de l'époque Gupta, IV ^e —VI ^e siècles, Paris
February	2008	Exposition Inaugurale, Paris
September	2008	XXIV ^e Biennale des Antiquaires, Paris
March-April	2009	Treasures from Ancient China—I, New York-Paris
Feb.-March	2010	Treasures from Ancient China—II, New York-Paris
September	2010	XXV ^e Biennale des Antiquaires, Paris
March-April	2011	Treasures from Ancient China—III, New York-Paris
September	2011	Extraordinary Animals from Ancient China, Paris



