

DOWNLOAD PDF PROBLEM OF MEANING IN EARLY CHINESE RITUAL BRONZES

Chapter 1 : Taotie - Wikipedia

The Problem of Meaning in Early Chinese Ritual Bronzes. Edited by Whitfield Roderick. [London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, School of Oriental and African Studies (Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia, No. 15), pp. £

The Zhou dynasty (c. 1050–256 BCE) The ritual bronzes of the early Western Zhou (Xizhou) continued the late Anyang tradition; many were made by the same craftsmen and by their descendants. Even in the predynastic Zhou period, however, new creatures had appeared on the bronzes, notably a flamboyant long-tailed bird that may have had totemic meaning for the Zhou rulers, and flanges had begun to be large and spiky. By the end of the 9th century, moreover, certain Shang shapes such as the jue, gu, and gong were no longer being made, and the taotie and other Shang zoomorphs had been broken up and then dissolved into volutes or undulating meander patterns encircling the entire vessel, scales, and fluting, with little apparent symbolic intent. From the outset of Zhou rule, vessels increasingly came to serve as vehicles for inscriptions that were cast to record events and report them to ancestral spirits. By late Zhou times a long inscription might have well over characters. Vessel shapes, meanwhile, had become aggressive or heavy and sagging, and the quality of the casting was seldom as high as in the late Shang. These changes, completed by the 8th century BCE, mark the middle Zhou phase of bronze design. The bronzes of the Eastern Zhou (Dongzhou) period, after 771 BCE, show signs of a gradual renaissance in the craft and much regional variation, which appears ever more complex as more Eastern Zhou sites are unearthed. Often adorned with boldly modeled handles in the form of animal heads, 8th- and 7th-century bronzes are crude and vigorous in shape. Typical vessels of this phase have been found in a cemetery of the small feudal state of Guo in Henan province. Vessels from Xinzheng in Henan (8th–6th century BCE) reveal a further change to more elegant forms, often decorated with an all-over pattern of tightly interlaced serpents; the vessel may be set about with tigers and dragons modeled in the round and topped with a flaring, petaled lid. The aesthetic tendency toward elaboration was given further stimulus by the introduction of the lost-wax method of production by the late 7th century BCE, leading quickly to zealous experiments in openwork design that are impressive technically though often heavy in appearance and gaudy in effect. The style of bronzes found at Liyu in Shanxi c. Thereafter, until the end of the dynasty, the bronze style became increasingly refined: Bronzes decorated in this manner have been found chiefly in the Huai River valley. Courtesy of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts Bronze bells are another form from this period. Perhaps the oldest class is a small clappered bell called ling, but the best known is certainly the zhong, a suspended, clapperless bell. Zhong were cast in sets of eight or more to form a musical scale, and they were probably played in the company of string and wind instruments. The section is a flattened ellipse, and on each side of the body appear 18 blunt spikes, or basses, arranged in three double rows of three. These often show marks of filing, and it has been suggested that they were devices whereby the bell could be tuned to the requisite pitch by removing small quantities of the metal. The oldest specimen recovered in a closed excavation is one from Pudu Cun, dating from the 9th century BCE. A fine example is an orchestral set of 64 bells, probably produced in Chu and unearthed in from a royal tomb of the Zeng state, at Leigudun near Sui Xian in Hubei province. The bells were mounted on wooden racks supported by bronze human figurines. They are graded in size from about 20 to 60 cm [8 to 60 inches] in height and tone covering five octaves, and each is capable of producing two unrelated tones according to where it is struck. Gold-inlaid inscriptions on each bell present valuable information regarding early musical terms and performance, while a 65th bell is dedicated by inscription from the king of Chu to Marquis Yi of Zeng (Zenghou Yi), the deceased, and bears a date equivalent to 480 BCE. In vessels from the rich finds at Jincun near Luoyang, all excrescences are shorn away; the shapes have a classic purity and restraint, and the decoration consists of geometric patterns of diagonal bands and volutes. The taste of the new leisured class is shown in objects that were not merely useful but finely fashioned and beautiful in themselves: Monster masks attaching ring handles are reminiscent of the Shang taotie, the first sign of a

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deliberate archaism that would from time to time throughout history give a special flavour to Chinese decorative art. Bronze objects consist chiefly of animal-headed daggers and knives; cheekpieces, jingles, and other harness fittings; ornaments; and plaques of pierced relief work generally depicting with somewhat barbarous vigour an animal combat, a theme remote from the experience of the settled farming communities of northern China. Bronze mirrors were used in ancient China not only for toiletry but also as funerary objects, in accordance with the belief that a mirror was itself a source of light and could illuminate the eternal darkness of the tomb. A mirror also was thought of as a symbolic aid to self-knowledge. Ancient Chinese mirrors were generally bronze disks polished on the face and decorated on the back, with a central loop handle or pierced boss to hold a tassel. The early ones were small and worn at the girdle; later they became larger and were often set on a stand. A bronze disk found in a tomb at Anyang may have been a mirror. There is less doubt about the small disks from an 8th-century-bce tomb at Shangcunling in Henan province, believed to be the earliest mirrors yet found in China. Mirrors, however, were not widely used until the 4th and 3rd centuries bce. These mirrors are often thin, and the execution is refined and elegant. Mirrors from Henan Luoyang city are closer in style to the inlaid bronzes. The decoration, often dragons and intricately interwoven zoomorphs whose tails turn into volutes, stands out boldly against a fine geometric background that suggests a textile pattern. The Qin 221–206 bce and Han dynasties 206 bce–220 ce. Already by late Zhou times, the more expensive medium of lacquer was often used in place of bronze. Nevertheless, some bronze vessels were still made for sacrificial rites, and other bronze objects, such as lamps and incense burners, also were made for household use. Sacred vapours emanating from materials burned within were released through perforations in the lid hidden behind the mountain peaks. Cosmic waters were depicted lapping at the base of the hills, conveying the sense of an island, and the whole was set on a narrow stem that thrust the mountain upward as if it were an axis of the universe. Such censers might have been used in ceremonial exorcisms, in funerary rites associated with the ascent of the soul, or in other varieties of Daoist religious practice. The most elaborate, particularly popular during the Xin dynasty 9–25 ce, bears the so-called TLV pattern. The TLV pattern is so called because it resembles those roman letters. These angular shapes, ranged around the main band of decoration between a central square zone and the outer border band, are believed to be linked to a cosmological, chesslike game called liubo; the decoration also may include creatures symbolic of the four directions, immortals, and other mythical beings popular in Daoist folklore. Often the mirrors carry inscriptions, varying from a simple expression of good luck to a long dedication giving the name of the maker and referring to the Shangfang, the imperial office in charge of imperial workshops. In the Eastern Han the Daoist elements dominated mirror design, which often includes the legendary Queen Mother of the West, Xiwangmu, and her royal eastern counterpart, Dongwanggong. The coming of Buddhism at the end of the Han dynasty caused a decline in the use of cosmological mirrors. Mirror making, however, was revived in the Tang dynasty 618–907 ce.

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Chapter 2 : Chinese ritual bronzes - Wikipedia

Following in the wake of the endless Chinese archaeological excavations of recent decades, many scholars from Asia and the West have sought to interpret the meaning of early ritual vessels in a broader context and from a wider range of perspectives.

Show image caption A bronze Chinese vessel used to make ritual offerings to ancestors. This example is decorated with large tusked animal heads swallowing birds. Sacrifices to ancestors ensured the survival and success of those who performed them. Respect for ancestors has been a central part of Chinese life for thousands of years. This vessel was made through sophisticated bronze working techniques that were not employed in the Middle East or Europe until much later. What is the legacy of the Zhou dynasty in China? An inscription inside the vessel describes an attack by the Zhou king on the dynasty they overthrew - the Shang. Most important is the mandate of heaven - the notion that heaven blesses the authority of a just ruler. An incompetent ruler could be displaced by the people with the favour of the gods. This would become a central aspect of Chinese politics. The Chinese Zhou dynasty often referred to its predecessor, the Shang, as alcoholics Chinese bronze vessels These bronzes that we call ritual vessels were used for a long time - from around BC down to at least BC. All ritual vessels were made to give food and wine to the dead. The first dynasties of China, the Shang and the Zhou, made large numbers of fine bronze containers for food, for alcohol, for water, and used these in a big ceremony, sometimes once a week, maybe once every 10 days. The belief is that if food, wine or alcohol is properly prepared, it will be received by the dead and nourish them and those dead, the ancestors, will look after their descendants in return for this nourishment. The bronze vessels which we see today were almost all buried in tombs or in hoards. They were prized possessions for use in life. They were not made primarily for burial, but when a major figure of the elite died, it was believed that he would carry on offering ceremonies of food and wine to his ancestors in the afterlife, indeed, entertain them at banquets. They were also buried in large hoards when the state faced great danger. A member of the royal family might own up to The most famous bronze vessels are those dating from the early Shang dynasty down to the early Zhou dynasty " or years. These are made in very exquisite shapes, often rather spiky, with very fine decoration that we today can hardly replicate. They are all cast, that is, they are made by using mould sections and pouring hot metal into them and then removing the clay moulds. And it is astonishing how detailed the decoration is. Sometime around BC, the Zhou dynasty which was then in power, came into some considerable difficulty, political, perhaps dynastic. And all of a sudden, we see in the bronzes that they make, that some big religious change has taken place. Gone are the very fine spiky shapes with the detailed decoration, instead the bronzes are much larger. They have very smooth outlines and wave patterns, or rather, abstract patterns on them which are not at all as delicate as the earlier ones. We have more repetitive food vessels, and many fewer vessels for alcohol. That means the choreography has changed. So when change of this sort in ritual has taken place, we have to infer that some rule, some decision was made at the court of the Zhou dynasty to make this change, and then they ordered a completely new set of vessels to be used all over the very large state that they ruled. Read more These bronzes that we call ritual vessels were used for a long time - from around BC down to at least BC.

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Chapter 3 : Chinese bronzes - The Zhou dynasty (c. 1046 - 256 BCE) | calendrierdelascience.com

*The Problem of Meaning in Early Chinese Ritual Bronzes (Colloquies on Art & Architecture) [Roderick Whitfield] on calendrierdelascience.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers.*

Technical features In every culture, bronze was the first alloyed metal to be used for every kind of article necessary for daily life like ploughshares, yokes, kettles, knives, bracelets, earrings, chariot axles and so on. The melting point of unalloyed copper is a bit lower than that of bronze but it is not able to sustain hard requirements. Only alloying it with at least 5 percent of tin, the metal has the needed durability. In China the oldest bronze findings are years old. Culture In the west of the Eurasian continent, bronze items were in most cases used for agriculture and warfare. In China, the greatest part of discovered and preserved bronze items was not forged to ploughs or swords but cast to sacrificial vessels. Even a great part of weapons had a sacrificial meaning like daggers and axes that symbolized the heavenly power of the ruler. The strong religious sense of bronze objects brought up a great number of vessel types and shapes which became so typically that they should be copied as archaic style receptacles with other materials like wood, jade, ivory or even gold until the 20th century. The different types were used for three purposes: Some vessels with their long feet made it possible to cook the food inside, making a fire of charcoal under the vessel. Some types were standing in a charcoal basin, especially wine containers. The ritual books of old China minutely describe who was allowed to use what kinds of sacrificial vessels and how much. All belong to one hoard and are inscribed with the insignium. *Zijicheng chubanshe*, nos. The cultural significance of the bronze vessels is also evident through the abundance of Chinese characters used for these types. From Shaanxi Kaogu Yanjiusuo From the Western Zhou time on, bronze vessels bear inscriptions of enfeoffment, memorials or instructions. Although one can often read the ding is three legged, there are many examples of four legged vessels, especially in old times. Human faces are only very seldom seen on bronze vessels. The earliest ding vessels arise during the Erligang culture, deriving from stone age pottery. The character is a picture of the vessel. Ding - here a round belly three legged example from early Zhou times height cm. This is the standard shape of ding, which is still seen today in many temples as a container for incense burning. The long inscriptions inside these vessels are often reports of an enfeoffment. Ding - richly ornamented with inlaid gold and silver from late Warring States times height: Refining the culture, the Zhou dynasty became more keen to small and fine handicraft instead of the former huge shapes. Something new is the beak that makes the vessel look like a tea pot. Ding - this specimen with the added heating oven from Western Zhou times is very precious. It has not only four legs instead of three but it shows the figure of a crippled slave who guards the door. It is therefore a witness of the "slave-holder society" at that time. Typical for this vessel type is the seamless, smooth transition from the legs into the body that makes the li optically more slim than the ding type. There are mixed forms called li-ding or ding-li, written with special characters that have died out since long. From the Spring and Autumn period on, the li type vessels become flatter than the earlier ones. The character is a picture of the vessel and is generally used as character for "offering vessel". The yan was a kind of metal steamer. The food was put in the zeng, the water in the li was heated by a fire between the three legs. The water vapor rose through holes or a grid in the bottom of the upper pot. There exist objects with one long stove-like li and three pots upon. From Western Zhou on, we also find square yan vessels. The character indicates that the vessel had a ceramic origin. The character indicates that this vessel had a part of bamboo. On the inner side of this piece, a text about the southern conquest is engraved. The left example is one of the few still existing pieces height 36 cm. The character indicates that in old times this vessel had a bamboo part, but especially for this vessel type exist many different characters. It is said to be a combination of ding and gui. The two parts are entirely symmetrical. The later examples the one on the left dates from Warring States times of the dou have a cover that is almost symmetrical to the lower part, and the is much shorter handle than in old times. From Spring and Autumn time on we also find square dou types. It was intended to contain food or water. It had the main

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purpose to offer meat during a sacrifice. Some types have two large legs, some four legs, and the plate is concavely bended. Many bi objects are very short-handled and have a sharp tip at the front. This vessel type has been very popular and was copied oftenly. It has been in use until the upcoming of bowls and cups during Song dynasty. The character originally means a kind of volume measure. This simplicity of the gu has been handed down for centuries. There are flat and round types. In most cases this type is not much decorated. On the left, two pieces from the Western Zhou resp. The character for hu is a picture of the vessel. The hu types are round, oval, square, long necked, drum bellied, or gourd shaped. To the right is a rubbing from a detail of the vessel. Today, the word bei means "bottle". The eight rings that can be seen at many bronze vessels are in most cases only for decoration. The jia has the typical two big button-like attachments that in some cases have animal shape. They are also attached to jue mugs, but smaller. This type was copied later as an archaically shaped vessel. After coming up in early Shang times this vessel developed forms with a wide belly. The zun was a standard type vessel and was copied until Qing times. The character is a picture of the vessel and is taken in verbal sense with the meaning of "to rever, to venerate, to honor". Zun - this type of zun from early Shang 30 cm tall has much room for ornaments with its wide corpus. Sometimes there are even quadrangular pieces. Zun - in late Shang times, the zun became a popular test object for bronze casters and artists. This piece with two sheep-shaped heads has still the large surface of the old types, but the legs are something new. Attention was drawn away from the ornaments to the whole shape of the vessel. The typical shapes of animals are elephants, rhinos, oxen, sheep, tigers, qilin unicorns, pigs, horses, and birds especially owls. Zun - the nameless casters of Zhou times made much experiments with old vessel types. From now on, the zun had a typically small opening with a cover. Zun - a vessel with the shape of a sacrificial animal. Seeing this wonderful ox from the Spring and Autumn period, one thinks of the victim ox that King Hui of Liang felt sorry for in the book of Mengzi. Zun - with simple beauty and lifelike, this rhinoceros from the Warring States period must have been in original in front of the artists. The climate years ago was much warmer than today, so that elephants and rhinos could make life at least south of the Yangtze. Zun - a perfection of Chinese bronze casting is this very richly ornamented zun, standing upon a dish. The dish was filled with hot water to heat the wine in the jar. Heating it, the melting wax came out, and the bronze could be casted in the hollow ductus. This so-called lost wax technic was also used in the Western part of the Eurasian continent, but to cast such filigee shapes can not be copied today. There exist tall or small, round, flat and bucket shaped types. Later types have even shapes of animals, especially birds and monsters. The whole shape looks like a house or a sarcophagus height 50 cm. The cover of this wine mug is stretched over the whole length of the vessel. Gong - here a piece from early Zhou times 20 cm tall. The gong has been one kind of large volume vessel that was not exclusively used for sacrificial purposes. It is said that a person who did offend against the etiquette had to drink to the health of his host until he was drunk. It served as a wine storing vessel. Lei - a quadrangular, tall vessel with rich ornaments and a cover from late Shang times. This precious piece is inlaid with turquoise stones that are arranged in the shape of a Taotie monster. The missing of ornaments draws the attention to the two handles and the rings at the neck of the covered vessel. In spite of its huge character 40 cm tall it is richly decorated with Taotie patterns and formed after the shape of Stone Age ceramics. This simple piece with the three teat-like feet is based upon Neolithic shapes.

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Chapter 4 : BBC - A History of the World - Object : Chinese Zhou ritual vessel

Problem of meaning in early Chinese ritual bronzes. London: Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Â© (OCOLC)

Spherical dish with a cover to protect its contents from dust and other contaminants. Round curved dish for food. May have no legs, or it may have three or four short legs. Covered pot with a single looping handle attached on opposite sides of the mouth of the vessel. Tall bowl with a long handle. A vase with two handles. Tall vase with a long slender neck opening up to a narrow mouth. Round mouthed, round bellied jar with no foot for holding water or wine. Now commonly used to hold ashes. Water container for an ink stone; often in the shape of an animal with a long thin dropper to control the amount of water dispensed. A bowl or ewer with a spout; May be elaborately shaped like an animal. May have up to four decorative handles around the edge; no brim. Small cup with no handles. Not represented in Xiqing gujian. Not represented in the Xiqing gujian. A small bell as might be hung from ribbons. This item is not represented in Xiqing gujian. A large bell, as might stand in a tower. Bronze decoration for the end of a spear or halberd handle; often with an animal motif. There are only three examples in Xiqing gujian. There are only two examples in the Xiqing gujian. A type of sword. A wine vessel and also a measuring container. Rectangular with two legs and a head. There are only three examples in the Xiqing gujian. Refers to two different objects: The modern meaning is a mirror. Farming implement shaped like a pickaxe, but used as a hoe. These are a nebulously classified group of bronze vessels and there are a number of forms: Usually solid bronze, moulded in the shape of a reclining or crouching animal three recorded in Xiqing gujian. A vessel with two ears and lid, serving as a food container may not appear in the "Imperial Collection".

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Chapter 5 : PDF The Problem of Meaning in Early Chinese Ritual Bronzes EBook - Video Dailymotion

Chinese Drama, Jing Kon 4 Ep ážřáž, áž€áž»áž, - Jing Kung 4, New Chinese movie ,New chinese movie Chinese Girls funny video - Chinese Girls playing - Chinese are brave.

The ability to manipulate metal ores to produce useful tools is one of the major steps in the development of human civilization. It is good reason why archaeologists stop using the term "Neolithic" and start referring to societies with metal as living in the "Bronze Age" or the "Iron Age. Iron ore is far more widely found and iron is far stronger than copper, but much greater heat is required to work it. In general, copper was made before bronze, and bronze was used before iron. The important point for present purposes is that in most parts of the world copper and bronze objects were expensive and more showy than useful, while later iron was strong enough and cheap enough to be used for agricultural and building tools and for weaponry in large enough quantities that huge and lethal armies could be equipped. Throughout the ancient world, the primary role of bronze objects was as symbols of elite status. In the hierarchical world of early dynastic China, nearly all bronze production served this purpose, and immense energy was exerted to make bronze objects magnificent. Magnificence, instead, was the order of the day, or more exactly the centuries. Most of these bronze objects were, in theory at least, intended for use in rituals, nearly always for the preparation or presentation of offerings of food, drink, flowers, or incense, nearly always directed to ancestors. In some cases, they became the rich furnishings of tombs where they were, of course, still involved with ancestor worship, but on the receiving end! Typically, bronzes were presented by one aristocrat to another, and many bear inscriptions on the inside to the effect that "this Whats-It vessel was presented by Lord So-And-So to Lord Such-And-Such. More often such inscriptions are on the floor of the vessel. But sometimes it is hard to square such identifications with other examples with the same name, which may or may not look the same. In other words, not all similarly named vessels look quite right. Given the huge period of time during which ritual bronzes were produced and used in China, it is not surprising that there was variation in any given named form, or that the forms often overlapped. But even accepting the variation, we seem to encounter a surprisingly large number of names for a surprisingly small number of functions. In many cases, the bronze forms were lineal descendants of earlier ceramic vessels of everyday use, and archaeologists have found plates, bowls, jugs, cups, and steamers from earlier periods that would have been the models. In both cases the top was probably not originally paired with the bottom linked to it in museums today, but you get the general idea. That is a time span of more than two and a half millennia, and if this page were about Chinese food, that would be a very big deal. For present purposes, the point is that the ritual vessels were not usually arbitrary. They had their origin in more normal kitchen equipment. But the bronze forms, once devised, tended to take on a life of their own. In fact, closely similar ceramic forms continued and still continue to be produced, both in utilitarian and in deliberately antiquarian variants. Indeed, although bronze forms had their origins in pottery, from the time bronze vessels began to be used, they were imitated in ceramic. Since bronze vessels were never intended as everyday table ware, artistic concerns were primary, and some of them were exaggerated beyond usability. In some cases excessive decoration would have rendered the vessels impractical for any but very occasional use. Although we know that most bronze vessels were intended for ritual use even if they may have been displayed more than used , we do not necessarily know what the rituals in question were, or why so many different kinds of vessels were involved. Some terms may have been highly specialized much the way modern clothing is , but some terms also seem to have been rather generic: Experts have usually classified the vessels by their shapes, allowing their decisions to be overruled whenever a particular vessel contained a name that identified it differently. Other experts have classified them by general function, for example as "food vessels," "wine vessels," and a catch-all of "other things. It was not made from fermented fruit, but from fermented grain, usually millet. And it was spiced or flavored in various ways. On this page it is called beer, although it was not a kind of beer that would appeal to modern taste. Actually, if there is a good-tasting millet beverage, I

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have yet to discover it. This makes sense when it tells the viewer that an internal inscription uses that word. It seems unhelpful otherwise. Bronze vessels were almost never left undecorated. Decorations include geometric designs and forms of animals, real or imaginary. Although some of these are realistic, many are highly abstracted and have stimulated much learned speculation proposing classifications and interpretations. The provisional conclusion at this time is that we have no idea what was going on. A small number of bronzes normally or often take the shapes of animals. But more often fierce beasts are used as all or part of the surface design. Often a body is stretched out in both directions from the head. There is no consensus on what, if anything, it means. For a good time, check the Wikipedia entry for this. Various other fierce animals may appear as well, especially as handles – usually tigers or dragons, but sometimes rhinos, turtles, or other creatures. Some scholars have opined that the animals were symbols of social groups – logos, if you like. However that did not stop them from losing such associations and being generalized for broader use. This page is the culmination of many years of frustration trying to make sense of missing, incomplete, or misleading museum labels. Here you will find pictures of some of the main kinds of Chinese bronze vessels that you can see in many museums, together with their Chinese names and short descriptions to help in identifying them. They are divided into groups by their assumed function. For many bronze types, I have not found satisfactory pictures, but I have left in the names in case they are useful to somebody. The simple line drawings are from dynastic Chinese woodblock sources. The photographs are from various museum collections. Details will be found at the end of the page. Simplified characters are in red. When they differ, traditional characters are given in blue. How to Study This Stuff. There is no way that an ordinary mortal will remember all these terms, especially given the vagueness with which they are applied. I recommend that you look over the page for the forms that are most interesting or that strike you as "typical" and limit yourself to three or four eight or ten if you already know Chinese. You can consider the rest of this material to be for "reference" and quit reading while you are ahead.

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Chapter 6 : Chinese metalwork reading list - Victoria and Albert Museum

The problem of meaning in Early Chinese ritual bronzes. (Colloquies on Art & Archaeology in Asia, no.) pp. London: Percival David Foundation, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, £

Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin with lower melting point and a higher degree of hardness than those of copper. When it is cast, bronze has the advantages of minimum air bubble production and maximum flow quality and can produce objects with razor-sharp edges or exquisite decoration, thus making it a suitable material for durable weapons, tools, and containers. China employed bronze objects as long as four thousand years ago in the period of the Lungshan culture and brought the use of bronze ceremonial vessels to a peak in the Shang and Chou dynasties. From the evidence of oracle bone inscriptions we know that not only did the people of the Shang dynasty offer sacrifices to a wide range of phenomena, but their ceremonies were varied and complex. The vessels used by the ruling house and nobility to offer food or wine in these sacrificial ceremonies were cast of bronze. Their types were extremely varied; many had their origin in everyday objects of pottery or wood. An ancient text records that the Chou followed the rituals of the Shang. Taking the Shang ceremonies as a base, the Duke of Chou established a canon of rituals and music and founded the orthodox hierarchy of social rank within the feudal clans. Together, these constituted the system of rites responsible for maintaining social order. In the performance of rituals, the types and numbers of vessels employed - whether food, wine, water, or musical vessels - were functions of the position or rank of the personage conducting the ceremony. Under the system of ceremonial procedures, bronze ritual objects were generally referred to as ritual vessels as a reflection of this. Bronze ritual vessels were often cast with extraordinary kinds of engraved decoration. Whether expressing the religious aspirations of the Shang people or reflecting aspects of the lives of the Chou people in the earthly realm, they are able to capture for us the spirit of the times that produced them. It was also customary to cast inscriptions in bronze ritual vessels to record some recognition of meritorious achievement, bestowal of imperial favor, appointment to office, settlement of a contract, proclamation of a new statute, taking of an oath, or other such occasion. Documents on bamboo strips or classics written on silk from the pre-Han period have been reduced to ashes by the ravages of time, and only the inscriptions on bronze vessels have come down to us as one kind of contemporaneous record of so ancient period of history. The Shang archaeological excavations at An-yang in Honan province testify to references by the ancient philosopher Hsun-tzu to the use of molds in the casting of bronze implements. These molds were made of pottery, and they supported the vessels inside and out with a precision that made possible the most beautiful achievements in bronze casting. The term up ottery casting, "as coined to emphasize the nature of the "piece-mold process" in ancient bronze casting. In western Asia, the Sumerians were already familiar with the "lost-wax process" or casting bronze vessels by the middle of the third millennium B. The bronze age in China may thus be said to have arrived comparatively late, but the piece-mold process borrowed from indigenous pottery production methods in the Neolithic period developed independently. The bronze vessels that have survived from the Shang and Chou dynasties were by no means handed down from generation to generation right down to the present. Rather, they emerged at one time or another from the ancient tombs or storage pits in which they had been buried. Sometimes topsoil would become eroded after a heavy rainstorm or washed away by the flow of a river, forcing the earth to give up its treasures, or perhaps ancient vessels might have turned up accidentally when peasants plowing a field or excavating a well uncovered an ancient tomb. Because a tomb is essentially a storage place for precious objects, there have been those who have excavated graves in search of treasure. In fact, ever since the early Western Chou dynasty there has never been a time when grave-robbing was unknown. Of all the items in the collection, none has the precise record of a scientific archaeological excavation. Concepts of connoisseurship among people of former times were different from those of today. Collectors often used to take the soiled and rusted curios they acquired out of the earth and grind them down or pick out the bits of green mottled oxidation and cover the outside with wax. Harmonizing

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form, decoration, engraving, and inscriptions, Chinese bronzes surely epitomize the highest level of technological and artistic expression in ancient times. They furthermore can be spoken of in socio-political terms, for it was society and politics that, because of the role bronze ritual vessels played within them, were the impetus behind the development and evolution of bronze art. An exhibition of this sort covers a very long time span of bronze art, so an effort has been made especially to select those pieces representing clan or national significance, as well as those displaying rare and important inscriptions. They have been arranged according to period and category in the hope that this will allow the viewer to acquire more easily an overview of the bronze art of China.

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Chapter 7 : Early Chinese Bronzes

Appel Virtuel - Jean Claude Dus (Les Bronzes font du ski) Conclure demain soir!

The Columbia Encyclopedia, 6th ed. It the oldest art in the world and has its origins in remote antiquity. For the history of Chinese civilization, see China. Early Periods Neolithic cultures produced many artifacts such as painted pottery, bone tools and ornaments, and jade carvings of a sophisticated design. Later, at Ma-jia-yao in Gansu, brush-painted pottery became more sophisticated in the handling of the design. Knowledge of ancient Chinese art is limited largely to works in pottery, bronze, bone, and jade. Ritual Bronzes During the Shang dynasty c. Cast in molds, these sacrificial vessels display stylistic developments that began with early bronzes at Erh-li-tou and reached their apex at Anyang , the Shang capital city, where excavations in have yielded numerous ritual bronze vessels that indicate a highly advanced culture in the Shang dynasty in the 2d millennium. The art of bronze casting of this period is of such high quality that it suggests a long period of prior experimentation. The ritual bronzes represent the clearest extant record of stylistic development in the Shang, Chou , and Early Han dynasties. The adornment of the bronzes varies from the most meager incision to the most ornate plastic embellishment and from the most severely abstract to some naturalistic representations. The Later Han dynasty marks the end of the development of this art, although highly decorated bronze continued to be produced, often with masterly treatment of metal and stone inlays. Buddhist Art The advent of Buddhism 1st cent. AD introduced art of a different character. Works of sculpture, painting, and architecture of a more distinctly religious nature were created. With Buddhism, the representation of the Buddha and of the bodhisattvas and attendant figures became the great theme of sculpture. The forms of these figures came to China from India by way of central Asia, but in the 6th cent. AD the Chinese artists succeeded in developing a national style in sculpture. Figures, beautiful in proportion and graceful in gesture, show great precision and clarity in the rendering of form, with a predominance of linear rhythms. Gradually the restraint of the 7th cent. For about years Buddhist sculpture continued to flourish; then in the Ming dynasty sculpture ceased to develop in style. After this time miniature sculpture in jade, ivory, and glass, of exquisite craftsmanship but lacking vitality of inspiration, was produced in China and was also made in Japan. Chinese Painting since the Fifth Century Little painting remains from the early periods except for that on ceramics and lacquer and tiles, and tomb decorations in Manchuria and N Korea. It is only from the 5th cent. AD that a clear historical development can be traced. Near Dunhuang more than a hundred caves called the Caves of a Thousand Buddhas contain Buddhist wall paintings and scrolls dating mainly from the late 5th to the 8th cent. They show first, simple hieratic forms of Buddha and of the bodhisattvas and later, crowded scenes of paradise. The elegant decorative motifs and certain figural elements reveal a Western influence. A highly organized system of representing objects in space was evolved, quite different from Western post-Renaissance perspective. Rendering of natural effects of light and shade is almost wholly absent in this art, the greatest strength of which is its incomparable mastery of line and silhouette. Historical subjects and scenes of courtly life were popular, and the human figure was portrayed with a robustness and monumentality unequaled in Chinese painting. Animal subjects were also frequently represented. The 8th-century artist Han Kan is famous for his painting of horses. Lofty and craggy peaks were depicted, with streams, rocks, and trees carefully detailed in brilliant mineral pigments of green and blue. These paintings were usually executed as brush drawings with color washes. In the Sung dynasty " landscape painting reached its greatest expression. A vast yet orderly scheme of nature was conceived, reflecting contemporary Taoist and Confucian views. Sharply diminished in scale, the human figure did not intrude upon the magnitude of nature. The technique of ink monochrome was developed with great skill; with the utmost economy of pictorial means, suggestion of mood, misty atmosphere, depth, and distance were created. During the Sung dynasty the monumental detail began to emerge. A single bamboo shoot, flower, or bird provided the subject for a painting. Among those who excelled in flower painting was the Emperor Hui-tsung, who founded the imperial academy. With rapid

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brushstrokes and ink splashes, they created works of vigor and spontaneity. The human figure assumed greater importance, and landscape painting acquired a new vitality. The surface of the paintings, especially the style and variety of brushstrokes, became important. Still-life compositions came into greater prominence, especially bamboo painting. During this time, much painting was produced by the literati, gentlemen scholars who painted for their own enjoyment and self-improvement. Under some of the emperors of the Ming dynasty a revival of learning and of older artistic traditions was encouraged and connoisseurship was developed. We are indebted to the Ming art collectors for the preservation of many paintings that have survived into our times. Bird and flower pictures exhibited the superb decorative qualities so familiar to the West. However, there was little innovation in painting. Throughout the history of Chinese painting one characteristic has prevailed—the consummate handling of the brushstroke. Paintings were executed in a dry or wet-brush technique, with an incredible versatility ranging from swirling patterns to staccato dots. Calligraphy and the Minor Arts The mastery of brushwork was directly related to calligraphy, traditionally regarded by the Chinese as the highest art form. Masters of calligraphy such as Wang Hsi-chih c. Reliance on calligraphic techniques in later painting, however, produced a sterile art of overworked formulas in painting of the 19th cent. Elegant inscriptions and poems were often included within the painting, which took the form of a handscroll, hanging scroll, or an album leaf, made of silk or paper. The fine art of Chinese ceramics followed to some degree the development of painting, reaching its highest perfection in the Sung dynasty and its extreme technical elaboration and decorative style in the Ming. In enamel ware, lacquerware, jade, ivory, textiles, and many other of the so-called minor arts, the world owes an incalculable debt to China. Early 20th-century artists copied Western styles without real comprehension, and attempts to combine them with Chinese subject matter were largely unsuccessful. The influence of Chinese art upon other cultures has been profound. It has extended to the Muslim countries and, since the 14th cent. Art under Communism After the Communists came to power in the graphic arts useful to political propaganda were encouraged, and Western influence in the arts was strictly discouraged. Wang in New York, and Chao Wu-chi in France, have produced abstract works based on calligraphy that reveal some Western influence. Fong, *Beyond Representation*; M. Sullivan, *The Arts of China* 5th ed. Cite this article Pick a style below, and copy the text for your bibliography.

Chapter 8 : The Ritual Bronze Vessels of the shang and Chou Dynasties

The problem of meaning in early Chinese ritual bronzes: colloquies on art & archaeology in Asia, no. 15, held June ; [15th Percival David Foundation Colloquy on the Art and Archaeology of Asia] 1.

Chapter 9 : Ritual Bronze Vessels (calendrierdelascience.com)

Sets of ritual bronzes (in chinese: 商周青铜器) are the most impressive surviving objects from the Chinese Bronze Age. During the Shang dynasty, China became one of the most skilled bronze-working civilizations in the ancient world, as people heated, melted, and cast metal to making cooking utensils, tools, weapons, and other household items.