

Archaic Bronze Vessels from Private Collections

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Foreword

Encouraged and gratified by the exceptional success of my first-time participation in the Hong Kong International Art and Antiques Fair last year, I have decided to come to participate a second time.

As I did last year, I am exhibiting this year some exceptional archaic Chinese bronze vessels coming from major international private collections, mostly European, among them collections such as those of Baron Ullens, Wahl - Rostagni, Dr A.F. Philips and the British Rail Pension Fund. Some of the objects are already well known, having been recorded in important publications and included in major Chinese art exhibitions held in such venues as the Dallas Museum of Art and the San Antonio Museum of Art.

Three particularly exceptional objects deserve special note:

- An exceptional bronze vessel *fangding* from the Anyang period of the Shang dynasty (13th - 12th centuries B.C.). (Cat. no. 5),
- A superb bronze vessel *gui* on a square base from the very beginning of the Western Zhou dynasty (10th – 11th centuries B.C.), with its very rare inscription recording a Lady's having the bronze cast in honor of her husband. (Cat. no. 14),
- An unusual Warring States period (4th century B.C.) bronze vessel *hu* with a bird's head-shaped cover. (Cat. no. 17).

I hope this second exhibition 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 Dynasty

Tang Dynasty

581 - 617

Five Dynasties

618 - 907

Jin Dynasty

907 - 960

Liao Dynasty

1 115 - 1 234

Song Dynasty

916 - 1 125

Northern Song
Southern Song

960 - 1 279
960 - 1 127

1 127 - 1279

1. Archaic bronze wine vessel *jue*

Shang dynasty, Erligang period, 16th - 14th centuries B.C.

Height: 17,8 cm

Rare archaic wine vessel *jue*, supported on three thinly cast, pointed, triangular legs. The vessel's oval-shaped body is flat-bottomed and drawn in at its centre, which is cast with a single band of decoration featuring a central primitive *taotie* mask whose two ends wrap themselves around the sides of the vessel to encounter each other at the back of the vessel across a wide semi-circular handle that reaches from above them to the vessel's protruding waist. A single upright mushroom-like tendon rises on a pyramid-shaped arch at the section of the vessel's top from which its long spout begins to emerge.

The *jue* is covered with a grey, black and dark green patina.



2. Archaic bronze wine vessel *jue*

Shang dynasty, 12th century B.C.

Height: 19 cm

Archaic bronze wine vessel supported by three outwardly descending legs. The vessel's deep U-shaped body is cast in low relief at the centre of one of its sides with a large *taotie* mask on a *leiwen* background divided into two sections by a horizontal notched flange and crowned with three triangular protrusions decorated with a stylized cicada motif.

The other side of the vessel bears the same design with a semi-circular handle surmounted by a bovine head in high relief emerging from it.

The vessel's long pouring spout and opposite horn-like pointed side are cast on their undersides with long blade-like designs decorated with stylized cicada motifs.

Two upright finials covered with whorl caps grace the top of the vessel just above the area where the spout emerges from the vessel's body.

The vessel has a pleasant green patina.





Inscription:

- A single pictogram is cast beneath the handle.

Provenance:

- Private French collection,
- Christian Deydier / Oriental Bronzes Ltd, 1987.
- L. Depagne Collection, Nice – London, before 1987.

Exhibition:

- Christian Deydier / Oriental Bronzes Ltd, *Opening Exhibition*, London December 1987.

Published:

- Christian Deydier / Oriental Bronzes Ltd, *Opening Exhibition*, London December 1987, catalogue no. 3, p. 16 – 17.

Similar examples:

- A similar *jue* is published by Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Chinois*, Fribourg 1980, p. 220 no. 32.
- A very similar *jue* vessel, found in 1953 in Anyang, tomb YPM4, piece number 53YPM4:6, is illustrated in *Henan Chutu Shang Zhou Qingtongqi (The Unearthed Bronzes of the Shang – Zhou Dynasties in Henan Province)*, Beijing 1981, p. 243, plate 310.

3. Archaic bronze ritual vessel *gu*

Shang Dynasty, Anyang Period, 13th – 12th centuries B.C.

Height: 32.1 cm

Archaic bronze wine vessel, with a tall trumpet-shaped neck decorated in high relief with four slender cicada blades ornated with stylized *taotie* masks on a *leiwen* background emerging from a horizontal band of stylized silk-worms with angular heads and hooked tails, all on a *leiwen* background. The vessel's central section is decorated with two *taotie* masks on a *leiwen* background, divided down their centres and on their sides by shallow notched flanges. The splayed foot, with similar *taotie* masks and flanges, below a band of *kui* dragons, is supported by a plain shallow cylindrical foot.

The vessel has a light greyish green patina.





Provenance:

- Property of a Lady.
- L.D. Collection, Nice – London.
- Sotheby's London, December 10, 1968, lot no. 32.
- Rt. Hon. Vicomte Furness Collection, 1968-1977.
- Sotheby's London, December 13, 1977, lot no. 204.
- British Rail Pension Fund Collection, London, 1977–1989.
- Sotheby's London, December 12, 1989, lot no. 3.
- Private Collection, UK, 1989 – 1995.
- Christian Deydier / Oriental Bronzes, London 1995 and Paris 1996.
- L. Depagne Collection, London 1996.
- Christian Deydier / Oriental Bronzes Ltd, London - Paris 2001.

Exhibition:

- Dallas Museum of Art, USA, 1985 – 1988.
- Christian Deydier / Oriental Bronzes, *Le Banquet des Dieux, Ritual Bronzes of Ancient China*, London 1995, catalogue no. 7.
- Christian Deydier / Oriental Bronzes, *Le Banquet des Dieux, Bronzes rituels de la Chine ancienne*, Paris 1996, catalogue no. 7.
- Christian Deydier / Oriental Bronzes Ltd, *Rituels pour l'éternité*, Paris – London 2001, catalogue no. 7.

Published:

- Sotheby's London, December 10, 1968, catalogue no. 32.
- Sotheby's London, December 13, 1977, catalogue no. 204.
- Sotheby's London, December 12, 1989, catalogue no. 3.
- Christian Deydier / Oriental Bronzes, *Le Banquet des Dieux, Ritual Bronzes of Ancient China*, London 1995, catalogue no. 7, p. 22.
- Christian Deydier / Oriental Bronzes, *Le Banquet des Dieux, Bronzes rituels de la Chine ancienne*, Paris 1996, catalogue no. 7, p. 22.
- Christian Deydier / Oriental Bronzes Ltd, *Rituels pour l'éternité*, Paris – London 2001, catalogue no. 7.

Similar examples:

- A similar *gu* from a private collection is illustrated in Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Archaiques Chinois, Archaic Chinese Bronzes – I – Xia & Shang*, Paris 1995, p. 102 color plate.
- A similar example from the Musée Guimet, Paris, is published in Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Archaiques Chinois, Archaic Chinese Bronzes – I – Xia & Shang*, Paris 1995, p. 226 no. 1.

4. Archaic bronze wine or water vessel *hu*

Late Shang dynasty, 13th – 12th centuries B.C.

Height: 34.5 cm

Archaic bronze wine or water vessel *hu*. The vessel's pear-shaped oval body with two small lug handles near its top is supported on a high conical foot ornated with an incised band of C-shaped spirals.

Both sides of the vessel's body are cast with a very unusual motif which must be seen upside down to be clearly read. A very large stylized animal mask with jaws displaying rows of pointed teeth is crowned by two extremely large U-shaped horns which end in protruding spirals in high relief. Between the horns is cast an unusually large naturalistically modelled cicada. The horns and cicada motifs are all on a fine *leiwen* background.

The bronze has a green and reddish patina.

Provenance:

- Private Japanese collection.
- Private European collection.

Similar examples:

- A *hu* vessel with a very similar decoration now in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, is published by Lefebvre d'Argencé R.Y., *Bronze Vessels of Ancient China in The Avery Brundage collection*, San Francisco 1977, p. 44 plate XIV.

Note:

- Bronze vessels cast with this very special decoration are extremely rare.







5. Archaic bronze vessel *fangding*

China, Shang dynasty, Anyang period, 13th century B.C.

Height : 22 cm

Length : 21 cm

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

Bronze with green and red patina.





Provenance:

- Liu collection, Taipei, Taiwan, acquired before 1949, probably in Shanghai.

Exhibition:

- XXIVth Biennale des Antiquaires, Grand Palais, Paris, 10 – 21 September, 2008. (piece not in the catalogue, but see photo of the piece being shown to Président Jacques Chirac at the fair).

Similar pieces:

- An identical *fangding*, probably the other one from a pair, was also shown at the XXIVth Biennale des Antiquaires de Paris, in September 2008 by Galerie Christian Deydier and was published by Galerie Christian Deydier, *XXIV^e Biennale des Antiquaires, Grand Palais, Paris 10 – 21 septembre 2008*, catalogue p. 4 – 7.

Notes:

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

6. Archaic bronze wine vessel *zun*

Shang Dynasty, Anyang Period, 13th century B.C.

Height: 30 cm

Diameter at top: 29 cm

An exceptional tri-sectioned bronze vessel meant to hold fermented beverages. The vessel is composed of an inverted semi-cone-like high foot gradually expanding outwards towards its base supporting a wider mid-section with sloping shoulders topped by an opening-out trumpet-like upper section. Intricate deeply-cast decorative patterns cover the whole vessel.

Each face of the foot of the *zun* is decorated with a pair of large stylized *kui* dragons on a background of deeply-cast *leiwen* geometrical patterns. The dragons, which are portrayed in profile, all have large bulbous protruding eyes and each pair of interfacing *kui* dragons joins at a thick, protruding vertical ridge to form a large *taotie* mask.

The vessel's body is divided into two parts, an upper and narrower outwardly-sloping shoulder section decorated with a band of three pairs of interfacing *kui* dragons in profile on a background of *leiwen* separated either by thick protruding vertical ridges or by stylized buffalo heads cast in high relief and a wider mid-section decorated with two different bands of patterns, a much wider inwardly-sloping main band decorated on each face, like the foot of the vessel, with a pair of large stylized bulging-eyed interfacing *kui* dragons on a background of deeply-cast *leiwen* geometrical patterns meeting at a thick, protruding vertical ridge to form a large *taotie* mask and an upper narrower band of very stylized dragons.

The opening-out trumpet-like upper section of the vessel is decorated in its lower section with a horizontal band of three pairs of deeply-cast interfacing *kui* dragons in profile on a background of *leiwen* geometrical patterns that is surmounted by wide rising leaf-like patterns decorated with deeply-incised stylized cicadas with borders of deeply-cast *leiwen* geometrical patterns that extend to the vessel's upper rim.





Provenance:

- A private Japanese collection
- The Wahl – Rostagny Collection, Rome, Italy.

Exhibited:

- Galerie Christian Deydier, *Treasures from Ancient China – III*, New York March 2011, Paris May 2011.

Published:

- Galerie Christian Deydier, *Treasures from Ancient China – III*, New York March 2011, Paris May 2011, catalogue p. 20 – 23.

Similar examples:

- The famous *zun* formerly in the H.E. Hoppenot Collection and illustrated by J. Rawson in *The Bella and P.P. Chiu Collection of Ancient Chinese Bronzes*, Hong Kong 1988 p. 37 resembles the present *zun* in its form and decoration, except that the upper trumpet-like section of the Hoppenot *zun* is completely undecorated.
- A similar *zun* excavated from the Tomb of Lady Hao (Fu Hao), Tomb no. 5 at Xiaotun in 1976 is illustrated by M. Hayashi in *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi) – Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Tokyo 1984, Volume I -Illustrations, p. 217 no. 31.
- A *zun*, kept in the Arthur H. Sackler Gallery in the Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. no. V 19, is illustrated by R. W. Bagley in *Shang Ritual Bronzes in the Arthur H. Sackler Collections*, Washington 1987, p. 264.
- A very similar *zun* is illustrated by Christian Deydier in *Exposition Inaugurale (Inaugural Exhibition)*, Galerie Christian Deydier, Paris 20 February to March 2008, catalogue, p. 8 to 11.

7. Archaic bronze ritual food vessel *Ding*

China, Late Shang dynasty, 12th-11th centuries B.C.
Height: 16.6cm

Archaic bronze ritual food vessel *ding* supported by three wide flat legs, each cast in the form of an upwardly leaping *kui* dragon shown in profile, with a large protuberant eye and a long pointed 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 upper rim of the vessel is set with two upright thick semi-circular handles.

The vessel has a green patina.





Inscription:

- A single pictogram, a clan insignia pronounced as *Bing* and composed of two pictographs for heaven 'tian' standing side by side on a long line representing the earth, is cast inside the vessel.

Provenance:

- The Collection of Martin Fisher, German Consul in Shanghai, 1938.
- Sotheby's London, *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*, 14 May 2008, lot no. 524.

Published:

- Sotheby's London, *Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*, 14 May 2008, lot no. 524.

Similar examples:

- Girard-Geslan M., *Bronzes Archaiques de La Chine*, Musée Guimet, Paris, 1995, p. 14-15

Note:

- For information on the insignia of the *Bing* clan of the Shang dynasty, please refer to *gui* no. 26, 1927 in the Buckingham Collection, illustrated on page 38 of *Chinese Bronzes from the Buckingham Collection* by Charles Fabens Kelley and Ch'en Meng-Chia, The Art Institute of Chicago, 1946 and page 149, where Professor Chen comments on the *Bing* clan insignia.

8. Archaic bronze vessel *liding*

China, Late Shang dynasty, 11th century B.C.
Height: 21.4 cm

Bronze tripod vessel *liding*, used for cooking. The body is composed of three udder-shaped sections, each decorated with a large high relief *taotie* mask, with large bulbous eyeballs, protruding curled nostrils and magnificent long eyebrows curled downwards at their ends, all on a *leiwen* background. Pairs of stylized downwardly leaping *kui* dragons separate each *taotie* mask from its neighbour. Two semi-circular handles are set on the vessel's lip and three large cylindrical feet support its body.

Bronze with a pleasant light green patina.



△

△

75

Inscription:

- A three-character inscription inside the vessel reads: *Ancestor Wu's (Fifth's) Sacrificial Vessel.*

Provenance:

- Louis Depagne Collection, Nice-London
- Private collection, France

Similar exemples:

- Similar *Liding* are published in Hayashi Minao, *In Shu Jidai Seidoki No Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi)*, *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou Bronzes*, Japan, 1984, volume 1-plates, p. 55-56 nos. 57, 64, 66, 67 and 70.

9. Pair of archaic ritual bronze vessels *gu*

Early Western Zhou dynasty, 11th century B.C.

Height: 29.7 cm

Rare pair of archaic bronze wine vessels of *gu* shape with tall trumpet-like necks decorated with four slender cicada blades ornated with stylized *taotie* masks in low relief and emerging from a lower band of interfacing *kui* dragons, shown in profile, all on a *leiwen* background. The central section of each of the vessels is decorated with two low relief *taotie* masks on a *leiwen* background, divided down their centres and on their sides by shallow notched flanges. The vessels' splayed bases, with similar *taotie* masks and flanges topped by bands of interfacing *kui* dragons, are supported by plain shallow cylindrical feet.

The vessels have a light greyish green patina.

Inscription:

- A three-character inscription inside the foot of the vessels reads: *Father Yi of [clan name]*.

Provenance:

- J. W Collection, Koln, Germany, before 1983.
- Private collection, Paris, France since 1983.



10. Archaic bronze vessel *gong* or *guang*

Early Western Zhou dynasty, 11th century B.C.
Length: 31 cm Height: 29.5 cm

Archaic bronze ritual wine vessel *gong*. The vessel's gravy-boat-shaped body, which is supported by a high oval foot, is graced with a semi-circular handle surmounted by a finely cast buffalo's head in high relief and topped by a long back-like lid that rises gradually to end in the upper part of a large buffalo's head with thick horns, protruding eyes and large, raised, pointed ears.

Bronze with green and reddish patina.

Provenance:

- Oriental Bronzes Ltd/ Christian Deydier, London, UK, 1993.
- Baron Guy Ullens de Schooten Collection.

Published:

- *Orientations Magazine*, Hong Kong, May 1993, back cover.

Similar example:

- A very similar *gong* now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, is 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 - volume plates, p. 376 no. 42.







11. Archaic ritual bronze vessel *you*

China, Early Western Zhou dynasty, 11th-10th centuries B.C.
Height: 35.5 cm including handle

Ritual vessel used for storing fermented beverages. The vessel's pear-shaped body stands on a circular raised foot and is topped by a domed cover, which, like the narrow horizontal band below the neck of the body between the vessel's looped handles, is decorated on each of its sides with a pair of long-tailed confronting phoenixes on a *leiwen* background separated from each other by a protruding horizontal floral motif.

The lower bulbous section of the vessel is cast in the form of a face-like pattern with two wide eye-like sections above two fat cheek-like sections, all separated from each other by plain protruding crisscrossing bands with a diamond-shaped, nose-like protrusion in their centre.

The vessel's arched handle is decorated on its rounded outer surface with four confronting long *kui* dragons on a *leiwen* background and ends on the vessel's sides in superbly cast horned animals' heads.

The bronze is covered all over with a pleasant light green and blue patina.



Inscription:

A seven-character inscription inside the vessel reads: *This precious sacrificial vessel was made for father Yi of X clan.*

Exhibited:

- Galerie Christian Deydier, *Treasures from Ancient China – II*, Paris, February 2010 and New York, March 2010.

Published:

- Galerie Christian Deydier, *Treasures from Ancient China – II*, Paris, February 2010 and New York, March 2010, catalogue p. 10 – 13.

Similar examples:

- A similar *you* vase is published in Rawson, Jessica, *Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M.Sackler Collections*, Volume II, Washington, 1990, p. 488-489, no. 67.
- Another similar vase was discovered in 1931 in Henan province and is published in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanji*, Volume 2, plate 31.
- Another similar example is published in Hayashi Minao, *In Shu Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Soran Ichi)*, *Conspectus of Yin and Zhou bronzes*, Japan, 1984, volume 1 - plates, p.269, no.113.



12. Archaic bronze vessel *gui*, on a square base

China, beginning of the Western Zhou dynasty, 11th-10th centuries B.C.

Height : 21 cm

Width : 26 cm

Archaic bronze vessel *gui* on a square base, used for cooking. Each side of the vessel's upper section is decorated with a band of two pairs of *kui* dragons on a *leiwen* background confronting each other across a central half-animal, half-*taotie* mask button-like protrusion.

The body of the vessel is decorated with finely cast lozenges and triangles, each centred on a deeply cast plain boss within squared spirals.

From the sides of the vessel's body emerge two loop handles cast on their tops with bovine heads and below with pendent tabs.

Bronze with green patina.





Inscription:

- The inside of the vase is inscribed with an eleven-character inscription: “*Lady Ji Peng from Shi cast this precious bronze vessel on wu day to honor her husband.*”

Provenance:

- Ioka Collection, Japan.

Exhibited:

- Galerie Christian Deydier, *Exposition Inaugurale*, Paris, February – March 2008.

Published:

- Galerie Christian Deydier, *Exposition Inaugurale*, Paris, February – March 2008, catalogue p. 12 – 15.

Similar examples:

- a similar *gui* excavated in 1982 in Shandong province is published in *Zhongguo Qingtongqi Quanji*, volume 2, p. 24, no. 78.
- a very similar *gui* vessel but without a base is conserved in the Shanghai Museum and illustrated by Chen Pei Fen, *Xia Shang Zhou Qingtongqi Yanjiu, Xia Shang Bian, Shanghai Bowuguan Cangpin*, plate no. 83, pages 174-175.



13. Archaic bronze ritual food vessel *fangding*

Western Zhou dynasty, 10th century B.C.

Height: 19 cm

Exceptional bronze ritual food vessel *fangding*, supported by four cylindrical legs, decorated on their upper parts with buffalo-head-like *taotie* masks in high relief. Each side of the body is decorated with a pair of large confronting phoenixes with long tails and long crests on a *leiwen* background and all four corners of the vessel are decorated with thick flanges.

Two semi-circular handles are set on opposite sides of the vessel's lip.

Bronze with green patina.

Provenance:

- The Wahl – Rostagny Collection, Rome, Italy.

Exhibited:

- Christian Deydier/ Oriental Bronzes Ltd, *Rituels pour l'Eternité*, Paris-London, 2001.

Published:

- Christian Deydier/ Oriental Bronzes Ltd, *Rituels pour l'Eternité*, Paris-London, 2001, no. 11.

Similar example:

- A *fangding* cast on each side with a single large bird with a long crest, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, is illustrated by Deydier Ch., *Les Bronzes Chinois*, Fribourg 1980, plate 54 p. 77.



14. Archaic bronze bell *zhong*

Eastern Zhou dynasty, 6th – 5th centuries B.C.

Height: 49 cm

Very fine archaic bronze bell *zhong*. The bottom edge of the oval-shaped bell rises up in the form of a semi-circular arch or inverted crescent moon and the bell's flat top is surmounted by a solid cylindrical handle from which the bell was suspended in ancient times. Down the centre of the upper section of each of the bell's sides runs a plain wide band which divides it into two panels, each decorated with three horizontal rows cast with three protruding knobs and interspersed by two plain horizontal bands.

The lower section of the bell is decorated with interlacing stylized dragons and serpents in low relief.

A pleasant green patina covers most of the bell.

Provenance :

- Allan Hartman Collection, New York.
- Private collection.

Notes:

- This type of bell was usually included in a set of 8 or 9 similarly decorated bells of different sizes and musical tones which were played during important sacrificial rites, ceremonies and banquets in the palaces of the emperor and feudal lords.
- Depending on where a bell was struck, each such *zhong* bell could emit two different sounds, the first sharper than the second, which when merged formed an interval of second, tierce or quarte. And a group of 8 bells of different sizes thus made it possible to produce three complete scales.



15. Archaic bronze bell *zhong*

Eastern Zhou dynasty, 5th century B.C.
Height : 29.3 cm

Very fine archaic bronze bell *zhong*. The upper section of each side of the vessel's oval-shaped body is divided down its centre into two sections by a plain wide vertical panel flanked on each side by three wide horizontal panels, each containing three bosses cast in high relief in the form of outwardly coiling dragons and separated from each other by two narrower horizontal bands of small, sharply cast interlaced stylized dragons framed above and below by plain raised lines.

The lower part of each side of the bell is decorated with a very elaborate *taotie* mask cast with intricate details in low relief and flanked by hooked and plumed stylized dragons.

The bell's flat top is cast all over with interlaced stylized dragon motifs. The bell's handle is elaborately cast in the form of a pair of confronting long curling-tailed tigers leaping inwards towards a centrally positioned downwardly coiling double-bodied snake with their necks intertwined with the center of one of the snake's bodies and their heads turned backwards towards their tails and biting their own lower backs.

The bronze bell has a nice green patina with brownish encrustations and areas of azurite.





Provenance:

- Dr. A.F. Philips Collection.
- Sotheby's London, March 30th, 1978.
- British Rail Pension Fund, UK.
- Sotheby's London, December 12th, 1989.
- Sotheby's London, December 7th, 1993.
- Private Japanese collection.

Exhibited:

- On loan to the San Antonio Museum of Art, USA, 1986 – 1988.

Published:

- Sotheby's, *Catalogue of a Collection of Fine Ancient Chinese Bronzes and Works of Art, The Property of the late Dr. A.F. Philips*, London March 30th 1978, lot no. 23.
- Sotheby's, *Important Early Chinese Ceramics, Archaic Bronzes, Sculpture, Silver and Lacquer from the Works of the Art Collection of the British Rail Pension Fund*, London December 12th, 1989, lot no. 12.
- Sotheby's, *Fine Chinese Ceramics, Bronzes and Works of Art*, London December 7th 1993, lot no. 19.

Similar pieces:

- Bells with very similar decoration but in different sizes, are illustrated in *Marco Polo Seventh Centenary Exhibition*, Venice 1954, catalogue no. 75; Weber G. W., *The Ornaments of Late Chou Bronzes*, New Jersey 1973, plate 66; *Exhibition of Chinese Ritual Bronzes*, Detroit Institute of Art, 1940, catalogue plate XXV no. 45; Lefebvre-d'Argencé R.Y., *Ancient Chinese Bronzes in the Avery Brundage Collection*, Berkeley 1966, plate XLVI B.

16. Archaic bronze bell *zhong*

Eastern Zhou dynasty, 5th century B.C.

Height : 68 cm

Very fine archaic bronze bell *zhong*. The upper section of each side of the vessel's oval-shaped body is divided down its centre into two sections by a plain wide vertical band flanked on each side by three wide horizontal panels, each containing three bosses cast in high relief in the form of outwardly coiling dragons and separated from each other by two narrower horizontal bands of small, sharply cast interlaced stylized dragons framed above and below by plain raised lines.

The lower part of each side of the bell is decorated with a very elaborate motif of interlaced and stylized dragons cast in low relief.

The bell's flat top is cast all over with interlaced stylized dragon motifs and its handle is elaborately cast in the form of a pair of confronting long curling-tailed tigers holding the bell's hook in their mouths.

The bronze bell has a nice reddish patina with areas of green encrustations.

Provenance:

- Galerie Jacques Barrère, Paris, 1992
- Horiuchi Collection, Japan, since 1993.

Exhibited :

- Galerie Jacques Barrère, Paris, 1992.



17. Archaic bronze bird-headed ritual wine vessel *hu*

Warring States period, 4th century B.C.

Height: 37.8 cm

Rare archaic bronze ritual wine vessel *hu* cast with its cover in the form of a bird's head. The vessel's plain pear-shaped body, with just a simple protruding rounded band around its waist and a small circular handle at its back, is supported by a low round foot.

Both sides of the bottom of the vessel's neck have an arm-like attachment rising from them and passing through wide rings on the vessel's cover to join in a handle at the cover's back that can be manipulated to open the top of the bird's beak and the rest of the vessel's lid.

The cover is cast in the shape of the stylized head of a bird of prey, with large eyes and a sharp downwardly curved moveable beak.

The vessel has a pleasant bluish and dark green patina on its body, and a light green patina on its handle and cover.





Similar example:

- A very similar bronze bird-headed *hu* now in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, is illustrated by Hayashi M., *Shunju Sengoku Jidai Seidoki no Kenkyu (In Shu Seidoki Sora San)*, Tokyo 1989, p 146 no. 2.

Notes:

- Bronze bird-headed vessels *hu* are extremely rare. Hayashi M. records only four examples of this type.
- The bodies of some of these are encircled by plain concave bands.

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 Biennale des Antiquaires, Paris
December	1992	An Exceptional Horse from the Han Dynasty, London
November	1994	L'Or des Qin, XVII ^e Biennale 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 Biennale 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 Biennale 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
October	2011	The Frank Arts Collection, Fine Art Asia Fair, Hong Kong
March	2012	Treasures from Ancient China, The Gerbe Collection—IV, New York
September	2012	XXVI ^e Biennale des Antiquaires, Paris



