

Western Zhou Ritual Bronzes From The Arthur M Sackler Collections Volumes Iia And Iib

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the vast collection of chinese bronzes formed by the late dr arthur m sackler ranges over the entire bronze age

volume i of ancient chinese bronzes the bronze ritual vessel the defining artifact of early chinese civilization is the subject of this monumental study of shang ritual bronzes in the arthur m sackler collections a comprehensive introduction the most thorough treatment of shang bronzes in any language lays the foundation for 104 catalogue entries many of which explore in greater detail specific problems in casting technology epigraphy vessel typology and provincial bronze styles color plates of all the sackler bronzes are supplemented by rubbings details and more than 500 comparative illustrations

the supreme art form of ancient china was the bronze ritual vessel kings and nobles offered food and drink to their ancestors in spectacular cast bronze containers which served to advertise the owner s wealth and power no less than his piety many of the bronzes eventually found their way into the tombs of their owners where they lay undisturbed for centuries or millennia until accidental discovery or the archaeologist s spade brought them once more to light the vast collection of chinese bronzes formed by the late dr arthur m sackler ranges over the entire bronze age the bronzes of the eastern zhou period 8th to 3rd century bc are the subject of this third and concluding volume of the comprehensive catalogue of the collection in a thorough and up to date introduction dr jenny so assistant curator of ancient chinese art at the arthur m sackler gallery smithsonian institution gives a detailed account of the history of eastern zhou bronzes particularly valuable is dr so s systematic use of the latest archaeological discoveries to trace regional and chronological developments and to study the political context in which bronzes were made and used an especially valuable supplement to the volume is a major study of bronze bells coauthored by an archaeologist and an acoustical physicist professor lothar von falkenhausen of ucla and professor thomas d rossing of northern illinois university the sackler collection includes twenty one bells which were employed in the same offering rituals as the bronze vessels ninety color plates provide full documentation of the sackler bronzes and over 560 black and white comparative illustrations help to set them in the context provided by archaeological research scholarly appendices report elemental composition data on the bronze alloys lead isotope ratios and thermoluminescence dating tests of clay core material

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detail specific problems in casting technology epigraphy vessel typology and provincial bronze styles color plates of all the sackler bronzes are supplemented by rubbings details and more than 500 comparative illustrations throughout the book the author has made systematic use of the astonishing archaeological discoveries of the last 15 years discoveries which include major finds of pre anyang bronzes and the unprecedented excavation in 1976 of an intact shang royal tomb no less revealing however are technical studies of chinese bronzes carried out in the west including studies of the bronzes catalogued here for dr bagley shows technical factors to have played a crucial role in the development of the shang artistic tradition by giving special attention to the formative stages of the shang bronze industry he is able to trace in precise detail the complex interaction of technique and design which led from modest beginnings at erlitou to the spectacular bronzes of the anyang period c 1300 1030 bc in the spirit of jean bony s remark that each moment has its right to be considered ultimate pre anyang bronzes are treated not as stepping stones to the more familiar bronzes of anyang times but as objects deserving attention in their own right nevertheless anyang bronzes become at once less familiar and more intelligible when viewed in a developmental perspective and the strict historical approach taken here calls into question current interpretations of their decoration ten years in the making this book will be of interest not only to students of chinese archaeology but also to historians of technology to art historians interested in the process of artistic invention and to archaeologists concerned with the comparative study of ancient civilizations

this survey covers a group of 28 inscribed bronze ritual vessels and bells it has been designed to demonstrate aspects of the current tendency in chin shih hsueh metal stone studies towards interdisciplinary approaches emphases have been placed upon technical and palaeographic issues barnard has long sought to explore the potential of up to date methods of research when applied in these fields he has demonstrated here in greater detail than was attempted in his earlier publications the urgent need for an appreciably stricter disciplinary approach to the archaeological data in the course of travel and research in europe mainland china taiwan and the usa over a period of a decade or so the occasional discovery of one or more new vessels to be added to the ever growing liang ch i series has meant a continual revision of the survey and from time to time valuable data deriving from radiography and general laboratory examination along with direct access to nearly all of the 28 bronzes has led towards a better appreciation of the various casting features which hitherto have been but poorly understood thus amongst other details relating to the ancient casting procedures improvements in the reconstructions of the mould assemblies in which the liang ch i vessels kuei ting li ting hsu and chung were cast have resulted book jacket title summary field provided by blackwell north america inc all rights reserved

yang also introduces the new discovery of a previously unidentified medium that is located in the gray zone between writing and decoration which he calls pictorial inscriptions further yang discusses the sources contexts and correlation among the three media book jacket

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