

Novelties in Antiquarian Revivals : the Case of the Chinese Bronzes

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Abstract

The paper takes the revival of ancient bronzes in later periods as its principal topic. Three forms of revival are proposed: recreation, involving the reproduction of the original forms and decoration and the reinstatement of the original functions of the vessels to offer food and wine to the ancestors; antiquarianism, which concerns the collection and cataloguing of vessels; and archaism, whereby ancient forms and decoration were used on vessels whose purposes were quite different from those of the originals. In particular, archaistic vessels were first developed as incense burners and flower vases and later as decorative items.

The paper first presents a case study, describing the copies or recreations found in eighth to seventh century B.C. tombs of the Chin and Kuo states. Here these small vessels appear to set out in a physical, tangible way the generations or pedigree of the families. Indeed, as this instance and that of the revivals of Sung Hui-tsung demonstrate, all recreations have such purposes. Beyond the claims of pedigree come claims of legitimacy. The article concludes that the recreations and their objectives of establishing a pedigree provide the foundation for other later enterprises to collect and copy the bronzes in other less august contexts.

Keywords: Bronzes, Chin, Kuo, Sung Hui-tsung

In China, no objects were more often replicated, imitated or evoked than the ritual bronze vessels of the Shang (c. 1500-c. 1050 B.C.) and Chou periods (c. 1050-221 B.C.). Indeed, these revered bronzes have played something of the role that stone architecture has in the West.¹ That is to say, when the ancient ritual vessels of the Shang and the Chou were recovered from the ground by chance, they were taken as exemplars of a period that should be copied by the peoples of the present. As a result, they were employed as models for incense burners in palaces and temples and for decorative vases in many contexts. These later pieces parallel the Classical-style buildings in the West, whose builders took their models from antique structures surviving at many sites in the Mediterranean world. The parallels with Western stone architecture indicate some similarities of approach, but also the very different and specific choices made in these two quite separate regions.

There were various reasons why ancient bronzes recovered from the ground were collected and sometimes copied. These processes of rediscovery and emulation were the subject of the conference to which this paper is a contribution and of the exhibition that the conference celebrated, *Through the Prism of the Past*.² When we consider retrieval of the bronzes at times later than the period of manufacture and initial use, and the various forms of replication and reproduction, we are in effect faced by various forms of reception. For the purposes of this discussion, I shall group the reception of ancient bronzes and their replication under three headings: recreation, antiquarianism and archaism.

The makers of the works that we can allocate to these three categories took over the formal and aesthetic qualities of ancient bronzes and set them in new contexts. When the patrons and craftsmen appropriated forms and decorative styles, they seem to have intended their later vessels to make particular impacts on an audience. However, the effects desired, and the audiences to which these effects were directed, differed, depending on whether the makers and patrons were concerned with exact reproduction or with a more generalised evocation of the past. Of course, the audiences for the bronzes and their reception changed during the long history of the use of ritual bronze forms.

1 In Europe, and other areas of the world that have shared European culture, the changing styles of architecture that go under such names as Romanesque, Gothic or neo-Classical are all examples of such revivals.

2 National Palace Museum, *Through the Prism of the Past, Antiquarian Trends in Chinese Art of the 16th to 18th Century* (Taipei : National Palace Museum, 2003).

One very important approach to the ancient bronzes was to seek them out as accurate and dependable models for use in rituals of a later period. As part of this enterprise, distinctive aspects of past bronze forms, decoration and functions were often carefully copied. These copies, usually, had a purpose over and above that of careful reproduction -- assertion of a pedigree. If a family or ruler could order exact copies, this very process indicated that they had access to the originals and were, therefore, of a particular standing. In such endeavours, the original roles of the bronzes as offering vessels for food and wine were recognised, if not always accurately replicated. An assertion of particular standing or even of pedigree through artefacts, that is by a visible and tangible link with the past, was generally for some further end -- to impress an audience with information about a family or a state. That supposed audience was often the dead or the spirits. The owners of these exact copies often sought by this means legitimacy -- a readily understandable objective.³ I shall call such exact copies **recreations**. In periods from the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220), food and wine offerings to ancestors were made in vessels of quite different shapes and materials. Therefore, when a true revival was attempted, as in the Sung (960-1279) and the Ch'ing periods (1644-1911), this involved not just a reproduction of the original vessel shapes and decoration, but also an understanding and reinstatement of the original functions. For the purposes of this paper, I shall deem one condition of what I call a recreation, a recognition by the patron of the original roles of the ancient bronzes as offering vessels for food and wine. Very few such recreations were ever achieved.

A second approach was to collect and treasure ancient bronzes. As the supply of ancient bronzes was small, and they were anyway little understood, copies and forgeries were made to fill the demand. Such collecting was part of a wider concern with the past that manifested itself, also, in analysis of texts, such as the *Li chi* 禮記, that purported to describe Chou artefacts. This interest in ancient pieces resulted in catalogues of ancient bronzes and in illustrated versions of the ritual texts, in the *San li t'u* 三禮圖, or in catalogues and in encyclopaedias, such as the *San ts'ai t'u hui* 三才圖會. I shall call this approach **antiquarianism**. Antiquarianism is particularly relevant to the discussions in the exhibition catalogue, *Through the Prism of the Past*.

3 When ancient objects or copies are used or displayed, they form part of a stage setting in which people enact the mundane or ceremonial aspects of their lives. Such settings become, therefore, part of the stories and even histories that all people create for themselves. For a discussion of views and uses of the past, see David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1985), especially chapter 5.

A third approach was to adapt and adopt the features of ancient bronzes in a range of very different artefacts, such as incense burners and flower vases. These functions were completely divorced from those of the ancient vessels. Many different materials were deployed, ceramics, enamels and jade, all far removed from the original bronze. Indeed, a whole new decorative style, loosely based upon bronze forms and ornament of the ancient period, was created. This approach, which I shall term **archaism**, produced the novelties of the conference topic.

The discussion which follows has three parts. In **Section I**, I shall consider an example of recreation in the ancient period itself in order to point to the importance of this practice. **Section II** will draw some brief general conclusions from this example. And **Section III** will, in the light of the case study of the ancient bronzes, survey later pieces in terms of the three categories of **recreation, antiquarianism and archaism**.

I Ancient Recreations

Two questions are implicit in what has been said so far. First of all, we have to ask: why were the bronze ritual vessels of the Shang and the Chou so popular as models for later pieces? That is, why were they chosen at all? Secondly, to what extent were the bronzes recreated in function as well as shape, and to what extent were they simply mined as sources for decorative forms and ornament for later utensils that had quite different functions -- the difference between recreation and archaism here proposed?

This section will approach such questions by starting with a specific case. Tombs of the eighth and seventh century B.C., now to be examined, offer us an early illustration of the use of earlier bronzes in a later context.⁴ This provides a model to which to refer in later discussion.

The burial ground of the rulers of the Chin 晉 state in the ninth to seventh centuries BC lies at T'ien-ma Ch'ü-ts'un 天馬曲村, near Hou-ma 侯馬 in Shansi Province. Across the Yellow River at San-men-hsia 三門峽, in Honan Province, is the cemetery of the rulers of the Kuo 虢 state. Both sites have revealed complex tombs of a sequence of generations of nobles and their consorts. Excavations of some of these Chin and Kuo tombs have brought to light reproductions of ancient bronzes. And I shall argue that these are attempts at recreation.

4 Various vessel shapes and decorative styles in the Shang also suggest that a return to early 'styles' was attractive in the first phases of bronze manufacture. These revivals of the Erh-li-kang 二里崗 styles are sometimes known as triple bands.

The reproductions are small and roughly made; in the archaeological reports, they are somewhat dismissively classed as *ming ch'i* 明器, that is, as small inferior vessels made explicitly for burial. This categorisation has rarely been questioned. What is especially remarkable is that the reproductions described as *ming ch'i* are of vessels older than the burials concerned, while the tombs also contained full-scale, contemporary vessels, which would have been used in rituals in life.⁵

Tomb M 93 at Ch'ü-ts'un can be taken as a paradigm.⁶ The tomb was found intact and may have belonged to Marquis Wen of Chin, dating to the early Spring and Autumn period -- that is to the late eighth century or very early seventh century.⁷ As with many other tombs in the cemetery, the tomb owner had a series of jade plaques across his face, and he was buried with many ancient pieces, including a *ke* 戈 blade. But while the jades are exceptional in quality, and many of them are ancient, which suggests that their owners had collected and treasured items made long before their own times, it is the bronzes that are especially relevant here.

The tomb held a mixture of full-sized, contemporary pieces and a number of much smaller ones, the so-called *ming ch'i*. The following vessels are all full size and were probably for actual use: five *ting* 鼎, six *kui* 簋, two *hu* 壺, a *pan* 盤, an *i* 匱, and a *yen* 甔. The replicas were in the form of a *fang i* 方彝, *tsun* 尊, *yu* 卣, *chih* 觚 and *chüeh* 爵, as well *ting*, *kui* and *pan* (fig. 1). The last three are not especially interesting in form, but the first four are remarkable in being clear recreations of ancient vessel types. Long before the Marquis was buried, these vessel categories had gone out of use with the ritual reforms of the early to mid-ninth century.

The roles of these replicas can be better assessed in the light of this reform, which took place around 870 B.C.. At this date, the principal vessel types employed in the Shang and early Chou declined in numbers and seem to have been generally abandoned. Most *kui* types without lids, a wide variety of *ting*, sets of cylindrical *tsun* and *yu* with handles, and above all *ku* 觚 and *chüeh*, *fang i* and *kung* 觥 ceased to be made or used. The vessel categories in widespread use

5 I make the assumption in the discussion that follows that the sets of ritual vessels used in life were, when buried with their high ranking owners, for use in offerings that continued in the afterlife. In other words, the dead in the afterlife continued to provide banquets to their ancestors.

6 *Wen wu* 1995.7, pp. 4-39.

7 There is considerable debate about the chronological sequences of the tombs and their absolute dating. M93 and M63 are certainly relatively late in the sequence.

were hemispherical *ting*, lidded *kui* and tall *hu*, *pan* and *i* or *ho* 盃, with a number of less common types, such as *fu* 簠 and *hsü* 盭. Bells were also now popular and buried with ritual bronzes.⁸ A hoard from Fu-feng Chuang-pai 扶風莊白 in Shensi Province illustrates the change (figs 2, 3). The vessels in the hoard belonging to the earlier generations, shown in lines one, two and three of figure 2, represent the pre-revolution types. The Che *fang i* 折方彝, *kung* and *chia* 斚, are drawn in the top line. They are dated to the end of the early Western Chou. The Feng 豐 *yu* and *tsun* of the next generation appear in the second line, with a *chüeh*, and are of the early middle Western Chou. The Shih Chi'ang *pan* 史牆盤 and *chüeh* are in the third line and must be of the Mu Wang 穆王 or Kung Wang 恭王 reigns, based on evidence in the *pan* inscription. This inscription is critical to our understanding of the sequence of generations and was evidently a highly important family record in its own day.

The major group of vessels, making up the majority of the hoard, are the Hsing 𣪠 vessels (fig. 3). These belong to the period after the ritual change. They comprise a large set of *kui* (the *ting* seem to be missing), large *hu* and sets of bells. The *chüeh*, as with the Feng and Shih Ch'iang *chüeh*, are not very typical of their periods. They, and the uninscribed *ku* found with them (not illustrated), may be deliberate recreations of earlier vessel types. This hoard will be further discussed later in the paper.

The age of the Che *fang i* in the Chuang-pai hoard relative to the Hsing vessels parallels the antiquity represented by the replica *fang i* in tomb M93. In both cases, post-reform vessels were accompanied by pieces that referred back to earlier generations. In both cases, their shapes make this suggestion of antiquity evident. The Chin state pieces, with their two side extensions like snaking handles, are directly paralleled in an early Western Chou *tsun* in the National Place (fig. 4). All such bronzes belong to the pre-reform period and had, by the Marquis' time, gone out of use. The cylindrical *tsun* belonging to the Marquis of Chin is also very interesting. At first sight it looks rather roughly made. But it is an unusual combination of a circular upper section with a square lower section, and, as such, is also a specific revival, this time of another early Western Chou shape, as in a piece in the Shang-hai museum.⁹ The three other pieces mentioned,

8 For a general account of the ritual vessel reform see, Jessica Rawson, "Western Zhou Archaeology," in Michael Loewe and Edward L. Shaughnessy, eds. *The Cambridge History of Ancient China from the Origins of Civilization to 221 BC*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), chapter 6, pp.352-449.

9 *Chung-kuo mei shu fen lei chüan chi*, *Chung-kuo ch'ing t'ung ch'i chüan chi*, v. 5 (Hsi Chou 1), (Peking: Wen wu ch'u pan she, 1996), no. 155.

the *yu*, *chüeh* and *chih*, are also highly specific and recreate vessels of a date well before that of the tomb.

M93 is not alone in producing such examples. M63, a tomb of much the same date, contained a similar range, namely three *ting*, two *kui*, and two *hu*, all of the standard types and sizes.¹⁰ The tomb held miniature vessels in the form of a *fang i*, a *chih*, a *pan* and a *ho*. In addition, it had two very unusual pieces: a box on wheels and a tubular vessel, both supported by human figures.

The third example comes from the Kuo state, from the finds at the cemetery site at San-men-hsia. Here, once more, revivals occur in tomb M2006.¹¹ Full-sized vessels comprise three *ting*, one *yen*, four *li* 鬲, two *hsü*, one *fu*, two *hu*, one *pan*, one *ho*. The replicas are a *fang i*, and a *tsun*, both with S-shaped handles or here, rather, appendages, a *chüeh*, and a *chih* (fig. 5). This third tomb confirms that the ruling families of the eighth to seventh centuries in this area showed a consistent interest, not only in vessel types that had ceased to be current, but in pieces of a very specific period that we can today identify as models for these copies. In two of the three cases, a *fang i* is accompanied by a *chih*, a *chüeh* and *tsun*. The form of the *fang i* in two of the cases is a replica of the National Palace Museum type (fig. 4). What is especially remarkable is that these vessels with S-shaped appendages were rare forms. A further point to note is that such replicas of earlier pieces do not appear in early or middle Western Chou tombs at the Chin cemetery. The copies seem to be concentrated in tombs that date from after the fall of the capital in the west, at Ch'ang-an (present-day Hsi-an). At that moment the Chou elite also lost their ritual area to the west, at Fu-feng hsien. As the area was invaded, the fleeing elites buried large numbers of bronzes there, never to return. Among the hoards below ground was the large group found at present-day Chuang-pai, discussed above. Many nobles had, in this way, lost access to the majority of their families' early bronzes.

When we look at all three tombs together, several immediate questions arise. Why did this rather restricted range of pieces appear in replicas? And why were replicas used at all alongside otherwise full-sized vessels contemporary with the tomb? These contemporary vessels were not only stylistically different from the replicas, but had also had somewhat different functions in the rituals. It seems unlikely that the replicas were, in fact, used in the sense of holding food and wine, as they were of such a different size from the contemporary pieces and, where they had lids, these did not come off the bodies, (but it is not implied that

10 *Wen wu* 1994.8, pp. 4-33, 68.

11 *Wen wu* 1995.1, pp. 4-31.

they were for some entirely different function -- as in holding incense -- they were still in principle food and wine vessels). The answer seems to be that the replicas seem to have fulfilled the functions that the Che vessels seem to have taken in the Chuang-pai hoard. They stood for, or represented in the form of antique shapes, the generations who had owned such vessels in life. We might make a literary parallel and suggest that they were a metonym for an earlier generation in the same family.

It has, in the past, been only too easy to explain the use of replicas (*ming ch'i*) in one of two different ways. Philosophers of the Warring States period (4th-3rd century B.C.), notably Hsün-tsu 荀子, discussed the use of *ming ch'i* in terms of the needs of the dead being different from those of the living.¹² Twentieth-century writers have been more willing to suggest that the choice of *ming ch'i* was a sign of a move away from 'superstition' and towards some sort of progress, as say, the ancient Chinese, in the preparation of tombs, made a transition from real vessels and real people to *ming ch'i* and tomb figures.¹³ Now, in the light of numerous categories of evidence, both seem to have been misleading assumptions. The philosophers seem to have known about the replicas, but to have taken no account of the numerous tombs that contained actual items previously used in life. Thus, basing their arguments on the replicas alone, and ignoring the more general use of actual, daily-life utensils, Hsün-tsu and others were led to present only a partial description of burial practice. Similarly, later writers ignored the same phenomenon. Thus their accounts, too, do not give adequate explanation of the full range of tomb artefacts. But all great elite tombs contained actual objects used in life. For example, the immense mountain tombs of the Han period, Imperial Princes of the Liu 劉 family (206 B.C.-A.D. 220) contained fine and everyday bronze and lacquer vessels, often accompanied by models, and also occasionally, human servants accompanied by others made of stone or ceramic.¹⁴ The category of what has been termed *ming ch'i* looks increasingly complex.

It is likely that the contemporary bronzes in the Chin tombs were made by the casters at Hou-ma in Shan-hsi province. The *fang i*, *tsun* and *yu* in their original full-size forms, on the other hand, were vessel types typical of the Western Chou capital at Ch'ang-an 長安 and its foundries. It would appear that

12 Hsün-tsu Book 19, f. 7., see also John Knoblock, *Xunzi, a Translation and Study of the Complete Works*, 3 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 1990, 1994, v. 3, pp.67-68.

13 Discussed in Jessica Rawson, "The Power of Images: The Model Universe of the First Emperor and its Legacy", *Historical Research*, v. 75, no. 188 (May 2002), pp. 123-154.

14 *Man-ch'eng Han mu fa chüeh pao kao*, 2 vols. (Peking: Wen wu ch'u pan she, 1980).

the Hou-ma 侯馬 casters did not have the experience of making the elaborate forms of early and middle Western Chou bronzes.¹⁵ Yet, since the noble families of Chin and Kuo commissioned copies of such pieces, it is obvious that they were familiar with them, either because they owned actual examples that they did not wish to bury, or because their families had had such pieces in former generations, but had lost them. While many bronzes had been lost when the capital fell, and when the elite families had fled the Wei River area, the Marquises of Chin had lived in the T'ien-ma Ch'u-tsun area for many generations and had not just arrived there.¹⁶ Therefore, recent loss of the family heirlooms does not seem the obvious answer to the question: why did they bury these replicas? It seems likely that, if the Chin and Kuo nobles did own them, the ancient pieces were too precious to bury.

But it is also possible that, in the eighth century, a time of political difficulty and stress, the tomb owners were intent on recreating much earlier vessel types for reasons over and above the wish simply to replace valuable possessions. What did they achieve with such vessels in the eyes of the audience, the dead, the spirits and the living at the funeral rites? The answer simply may be that they demonstrated in visible and tangible form the pedigree (or claimed pedigree) of the family. A claim to such pedigree may also have been a form of assertion of power, directed at both the living and the dead. For people who could own such vessel types must have come from families with a long-established tradition, going back to the period well before the sack of the capital. The ritual changes in the mid-ninth century had made such antique shapes visually conspicuous alongside contemporary bronzes. Thus ancient shapes were very effective signals of an ancient lineage. As the few replicas or recreations included in these three tombs did not in any way constitute complete functioning sets for specific moments in the ritual, it was their shapes that must have been significant to achieve the desired ends.¹⁷

15 There is abundant evidence that the Hou-ma foundry made a wide range of middle Western Chou bronzes, but, from the evidence that we have, these do not seem to have included *fang i*, *fang tsun* or *kung*. The most complex vessels found in the Chin tombs of relatively early date are animal-shaped vessels, which seem to have been very popular.

16 Numerous hoards have been excavated in this region over a century and a half, see *Wen wu* 1979.10, pp. 44-48; *K'ao ku* 1982.4, pp. 398-401, 424; *K'ao ku yü wen wu* 1988.5-6, pp. 73-75.

17 For a discussion of the effect or agency of shape and decoration, see Jessica Rawson, "Late Shang Bronze Design: Meaning and Purpose," in Roderick Whitfield, ed., *The Problem of Meaning in Early Chinese Ritual Bronzes, Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia, no 15* (London : Percival David Foundation and the School of Oriental and African Studies, 1992), pp. 67-95. An important theoretical discussion of this issue is found in Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford : The Clarendon Press, 1998).

The earlier Chin tombs at T'ien-ma Ch'ü-ts'un do not readily help us to interpret the finds in tomb M93, but we can look to the hoard at Fu-feng Chuang-pai, containing the Shih Ch'iang *pan*, as a possible model.¹⁸ As mentioned, the *pan*'s inscription is an exceptionally important historical document. It sets out the vicissitudes of named members of the family, originally from the state of Wei 衛 in Honan, alongside the history of the Chou state up to the time of King Mu. The contents explicitly chronicles and comments upon the achievements of a sequence of generations.

The *pan* text and the Chuang-pai vessels belonging to the generations to which the inscription refers provide a remarkable parallel with the vessels in tomb M93 at Ch'ü-ts'un. The majority of bronzes in the Chuang-pai hoard, (the Hsing vessels) were the major part of the principal set for use by the family in the ninth century (the presently missing *ting* may have been taken east when the capital fell). In addition, the family had preserved the earlier *pan* with its impressive inscription. The family had also treasured examples, but not complete sets, of the bronzes belonging to the earlier generations recorded (fig. 2). Thus memory was sustained in text and with physical, visually compelling, examples. Presumably, these earlier vessels were not necessarily integrated into the actual ceremonial banquet with the Hsing vessels (fig. 3). But it is possible that they were displayed on a stand or altar and were to be noted both by living family members and by the dead.

That pedigree was important and could be signalled in bronzes is made clear by the Shih Ch'iang *pan* inscription itself and its linking of the generations, not only with the kings, but also with individuals who owned the bronzes listed above. In performing the rituals in life and, it seems, after death, words were not enough. The Chuang-pai hoard and the Chin and Kuo state tombs provide us with examples of the ways in which ancient pieces, surviving into later times or recreated in ancient shapes, were deployed. They seem to have provided a visible record of past members of the family, in which actual, physical vessels might parallel a verbal account. Although, in some cases the vessels were not part of the functioning set, they none the less belonged to the same category. They were treated, it seems, as equivalent, or as essential supplements, to the other

18 There are some debates about the actual dates of the vessels in the hoard. But these are not at present material. No-one doubts that the vessels with the names of Che, Feng, Shih Ch'iang and Hsing follow each other in historical sequence. The Hsing items are generally dated to the early to mid ninth century. Pei-ching ta hsüeh k'ao ku wen po hsüeh yüan, Pei-ching ta hsüeh ku tai wen ming yen chiu chung hsin, *Chi chin chu kuo shi, Chou yüan chu t'u Hsi Chou ch'ing tung ch'i ching tsui* (Peking: Wen wu ch'u pan she, 2002).

components of the functioning set and buried with them. For this reason I regard them as recreations.

II Some General Principles

This section will take stock of the evidence that this case study has given us about the ways in which the Chinese ritual bronze repertory came to be launched as one of the major sources for revivals and replicas in a wide range of contexts. Well before any later revivals, these early tombs demonstrate an explicit use of ancient bronze forms at a period several centuries after they were first current. The tombs illustrate two major features of traditions in which past artefacts are consciously revived: a detailed concern with the past, with a history -- whether reliable or embellished or fabricated -- and a determination to express that concern, not only in words, but in a physical presence, here the ritual bronze vessels. While the peoples of other cultures have not used eating vessels in bronze as their principal vehicles to incorporate aspects of the past in the present, the use of material exemplars, as well as textual evidence, to assert a lineage, be that lineage a genealogy of a family, or one of political power, or of a moral position, is evident in other self-conscious revivals or recreations.¹⁹

The fortuitous circumstance that stimulated the Shang and Chou to inscribe their bronzes with references to their families was one of the major reasons why bronzes became closely linked with an account of a past. By this means, the bronze vessels, themselves, were literally fused with the texts in them. This circumstance probably offers an answer to my first question at the beginning of the paper: why were the bronzes chosen at all? I now suggest that they were chosen because they seemed to give later generations a direct link, both through the inscriptions and through the tangible presence of the bronzes, with early august figures, thought indeed to include the Duke of Chou.

For later generations, transmitted texts also provided a relatively full and clear account of the periods of the Shang and Chou. Historical writings, such as the *Tso-chuan* 左傳 and Ssu-ma Ch'ien's 司馬遷 *Shih chi* 史記, were particularly relevant, as were the ritual texts, the *Chou li* 周禮, the *Li chi* and the *I li* 儀禮, although it now seems, that these three did not necessarily contain reliable information on ancient practice.

19 In the West, the vases of the Greeks have inspired a number of followers, most especially Adam in architectural contexts and Wedgwood in the production of ceramics. However, as a genre, the painted vases have never been a predominant element in the revivals of antique forms.

In addition to their direct links with recorded and august historical events, the bronzes had physical properties that were attractive and ensured their survival. First of all, the material was durable and endured above and below ground for hundreds of years. Secondly, because they were used for important, not to say essential, functions in ancient Chinese society, many bronzes were worked to a high quality that was expected to and, indeed, did command attention. The vessels were also linked by their inscriptions to one of the most important of all religious activities, reverence and respect for the ancestors. And this, in turn, was seen at the time and later as part of state activity.

The absence of inscriptions on the Chin and Kuo bronzes brings out another condition of retrieval and revival. That is, if visible physical links with a known past, through such items as the bronzes, are to be effective, distinctive forms must be used. These are particularly effective, if they are no longer in use in the period in which they are re-employed. The Che vessels, inevitably, had a strong impact among the much later Hsing vessels. The fine flanged outline and the detailed *shou mien* 獸面 faces are remarkable contrasts with the smooth profiles of the Hsing vessels and their repetitive line and wave bands. So too, the flanged and detailed *fang i* of tomb M93 at Ch'u-ts'un, and the less finished version in tomb M2006 at San-men-hsia, must have stood out alongside the rounded forms and repetitive patterns of the full-sized, eighth-century vessels. An important contributor to this effect was the ritual reform around 870 BC that gave rise to a conspicuous break in the types of vessels made and used. Thus later generations could, on present evidence, identify ancient forms and copy them.

This break in the ritual vessel typology was to be followed by another one in the third to second centuries BC, namely in the late Warring States and Han periods. At this time, most of the surviving ancient bronze forms were abandoned in favour of lacquer vessels, a topic pursued elsewhere.²⁰ Almost all the major bronze shapes went out of use. Everyday lacquer vessels (or bronze or ceramic copies of them), in the main, took their place (fig 6). This disjunction was essential to the impact of the revival of bronzes in later periods, most importantly in the Sung, under Emperor Hui-tsung 徽宗 (r. 1100-1125). For the people of Sung times, the ancient vessel types, when they were rediscovered, were, in consequence, striking and unfamiliar.

20 Jessica Rawson, "Ritual Vessel Changes in the Warring States, Qin and Han periods," *Papers from the Third International Conference on Sinology, History Section, Regional Culture, Religion, and Arts before the Seventh Century* (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 2002), pp. 1-57.

Once the use of a wide variety of ritual bronzes had been discontinued, their emergence from out of the earth seemed miraculous. And, in keeping with the Han approach to auspicious events, the chance rediscovery of an ancient bronze was usually treated as an auspicious sign; the recovery in 116 B.C., during the reign of the Emperor Wu-ti 武帝 (140-87 B.C.), of a large *ting*, was indeed so interpreted and was commemorated by a change in the year designation to Yüan ting 元鼎.²¹ The peoples of the post-Han period, including those of the Sung, the major re-creators of bronzes, also treated discoveries of bronzes as auspicious.²²

From these further points we find that the following three features of the ritual bronzes are relevant to their retrieval and recreation:

- a) *Physical features of durability and of high quality of workmanship.* These features ensured that many vessels survived and that, when recovered, their workmanship attracted attention. This survival was encouraged by ancient Chinese burial practices in interring the ritual bronzes with their owners and especially by the enforced disposal in 771 of large numbers in pits at the Chou-yüan 周原.
- b) *A conjunction between a widespread understanding of the past and references to that past in the bronzes themselves.* Long inscriptions in some bronzes incorporated the evidence for this understanding, and these were complemented by transmitted texts, which, among China's highly literate elite, were widely read.
- c) *Breaks in tradition, giving rise to typological, formal and stylistic discontinuities allowing the bronzes to be set alongside recorded history.* These changes in shape and decoration made it possible to match the vessels to a sequence of generations. As a result bronzes could be deployed to offer a visible pedigree.
- d) *Political and moral claims.* In the ancient period, and certainly in later times, this pedigree was used to support claims of legitimacy and virtue. Thus, the aesthetic qualities of ritual bronzes were linked with wider political and moral claims. It is evident from the present example and

21 For a discussion of this point and a general interest in the auspicious nature of such discoveries from the Han, see Lan-ying Tseng, "Myth, History and Memory : the Modern Cult of the Simuwu Bronze Vessel," in National Museum of History (ed), *Chinese Culture Centenary* (Taipei : National Museum of History, 1999), pp. 718-767.

22 Bronze vessels had been implicated in the range of auspicious omens at least from the time of Ch'in Shih Huang-ti. His recorded failure to retrieve the so-called nine vessels of the Chou was taken by later generations as indicating his failure to achieve the approval of Heaven.

from the ones that follow that attempts to employ the bronzes in the proper context of the ancestor offerings were essential to their contribution to assertions of pedigree and claims of legitimacy.

The answer to the second question raised at the beginning of section I thus seems to be that the reuse of bronzes within their proper context was essential to the effects that their new patrons desired. That is, recreation was a fundamental objective to support claims of pedigree or legitimacy.

It would be possible to apply these four criteria to the revival of stone building styles in the West. Here the tradition, as referred to at the start of the discussion, was founded upon stone architecture and its associated artefacts, especially stone and bronze sculptures that were parts of the architectural assemblages.

- a) *Physical features of durability and high quality workmanship* were characteristic of the stone buildings in Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean area from the Neolithic period. For as stone was deployed especially for religious and political buildings, they were made to a high quality, were usually maintained over long periods and, if buried, might be retrieved in later times. The success of the Roman Empire established stone buildings in many, otherwise less developed, areas of Europe, where their ruined presence, or rediscovery in Mediaeval times, and later, gave them an awesome status.
- b) *A conjunction between a widespread understanding of the past and references to that past on the stone structures* was achieved through the patronage of important religious and political figures and movements known from transmitted history. In addition, much ancient architecture, especially Roman buildings, was inscribed with the names of the Emperors of their periods or other patrons. Ancient buildings in the Mediterranean area thus gained associations with political achievement and with learning.
- c) *Breaks in tradition, giving rise to typological, formal and stylistic discontinuities* allowed the buildings to be set alongside recorded history. Such breaks occurred many times within the sequences of stone-building types in all regions of the Mediterranean World and Europe. The Gothic cathedrals, for example, seemed to mark discontinuity with earlier forms. This development had the effect of making a return to canonical Roman or even Greek architecture highly visible. Subsequently, the Gothic, too,

could be reused. Thus, such recreations referred to a pedigree set against a purportedly known history.

- d) *Political and moral claims*. These recreations could be and were used to make, not simply historical claims, but political and moral ones as well. Yet again, recreation was concerned with matters additional to the aesthetic.

Possibly the single most notable aspect of the return to past forms in all these cases is that they provided a tool in a literate society, in particular, which enabled people to exploit physical forms and decoration -- that is visible attributes of the past -- for quite different purposes, most especially in pursuit of personal, regional and political assertions of lineage and legitimacy.

III The Later History of Chinese Bronzes

Finally, the third section will look briefly at the later revivals of bronze forms in terms of the definitions given earlier in the paper.

1. **Recreation**, namely the imitation of ancient forms of bronzes with the purpose of reviving rituals and thereby providing the patron with an illustrious pedigree.
2. **Antiquarianism** based upon the tools of collecting, catalogues and encyclopaedias.
3. **Archaism** and the re-use of bronze shapes and decoration to make attractive and arresting artefacts.

1. Recreation

Several scholars, including Chang Lin-sheng 張臨生 and Ch'en Fang-mei 陳芳妹, working on bronzes of the National Palace Museum, have pursued the history of Sung revivals of ancient bronzes under the patronage of the Emperor Hui-tsung (r. 1100-1125).²³ In addition, Patricia Ebrey, as part of her wide-ranging study of the Emperor and his many cultural activities, has examined the textual evidence for Hui-tsung's bronze collection.²⁴

23 Chang Lin-sheng, "Kuo-li Ku-kung Po-wu-yüan shou-ts'ang yuan-liu shih-liu", *Ku-kung hsüeh-shu chi-k'an*, vol. 13.3 (1996), pp. 1-82; Ch'en Fang-mei, "Sung ku-ch'i-wu hsüeh-te hsing-ch'i yü Sung fang-ku t'ung-ch'i", *Kuo li Taiwan ta hsüeh mei shu shih yen chiu ch'i k'an*, v. 10 (March 2001), pp. 37-160; William Watson, "On Some Categories of Archaism in Chinese Bronze", *Ars Orientalis*, v. IX (1973), pp. 1-13.

24 Patricia Ebrey, "The Palace Library and the Collection of Cultural Relics at the Court of Song Huizong (r.1100-1125)", -- unpublished paper presented at Bonn, November 2003.

Collections of inscriptions and rubbings of inscriptions had a long history in China. It was natural to add ancient bronzes to such materials, as these too carried valuable written records. It is thought that it was the early private collections that stimulated Emperor Hui-tsung to place bronzes, especially, of course, inscribed ones, in his library. As such collections of bronzes developed during the twelfth century, the literati and court officials came to realise that the rites as practised in antiquity, and purportedly practised in subsequent centuries, differed from those of their own times. Indeed, as noted above, a relatively abrupt change of vessel types in the Ch'in-Han period had severed connections with the earlier rites, in which the numerous different types of bronzes had been employed.

Throughout the centuries following the Han, everyday utensils were employed for offerings.²⁵ As a result, the gap between the ancient bronze shapes and the offering vessels of later periods continued to grow. Only a little research was needed to demonstrate the differences. A further factor stimulating a return to the ancient bronze shapes was political. Constant military pressure on the Sung state led to a decline in confidence, with the consequence that the elite sought confirmation of its legitimacy through a return to a more accurate and ancient ritual practice.

In their search for authenticity, all educated men relied on the three Ritual Classics, the *Chou li*, the *Li chi* and the *I li*. An attempt had been made, at the instigation of the Emperor Shi-tsung 世宗 of the 10th century A.D. Chou kingdom, by Nie Tsung-i 聶從義 to reconstruct, in his *San li t'u*, the vessel types described in the ritual texts. The pieces illustrated were far removed from the originals, depending too heavily on the vessel names to provide hints for possible forms (fig. 7). Early in the Sung period, officials had made use of this work. But as they, the educated class or literati, began to collect actual excavated vessels, discrepancies emerged. And several scholars explicitly disagreed with Nie's work, among them the famous Ou-yang Hsiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072). The collections of bronzes seem to have been one of the stimuli for the Emperor Hui-tsung's commands to search out ancient vessels to use them as models for contemporary ceremonial pieces. Records of edicts confirm these objectives.²⁶

25 See for example a Liao period tomb at Hsüan-hua 宣化, *Wen wu* 1996.9, pp. 14-46, colour pl. 6:2.

26 Robert Harrist Jr., "The Artist as Antiquarian: Li Gonglin's Study of Early Chinese Art", *Artibus Asiae*, v. 55, no. 3-4 (1995), pp. 237-280.

Very few such recreations are known today. However, those that are, show a much more faithful rendering of ancient forms than either the woodblocks in Nie's work or the later altar vessels that incorporated references to ancient shapes. Several famous examples survive in the collections of the National Palace Museum and the Peking Ku-kung.²⁷ It has been assumed that these bronzes were actually for use in the rites, but this point is difficult to establish with certainty. Today only a few survive because the Sung, fleeing from the advancing Chin in the twelfth century, abandoned most of the bronzes, both ancient and recreations, to their foes, who carried them off north. Rather surprisingly the impetus to use accurate ancient forms was lost.

While much attention has, hitherto, been paid to the collecting and cataloguing of bronzes, and to Hui-tsung's proclaimed wish to reform the rites, less emphasis has been given to two other major aspects of this enterprise: Hui-tsung's interest in omens and his concern to recreate the rule of the Sage Kings, Yao 堯 and Shun 舜. Both of these have been examined by Peter Sturman and further explored by Maggie Bickford.²⁸ As Noel Barnard's compilation of accounts of bronzes discovered by chance in the period Han to T'ang (618-906) makes clear, such chance finds were almost always regarded as omens, generally as auspicious ones.²⁹ This role had fallen to the bronzes from the Han period when, as mentioned above, they had ceased to be so important in ritual life, and when omens, and the recording of omens, became of prime significance to state management. The discoveries of bronzes in Hui-tsung's reign, for example six bells which came to light in 1104 at Ying-t'ien-fu 應天府 near Shang-ch'iu 商邱 in Honan, were, as with many other phenomena, treated as evidence of Heaven's support for Hui-tsung's rule.³⁰ Further, the status of bronzes as auspicious signs also sanctioned their use as models for the future. This future use was not simply intended to achieve accuracy. But proper ritual vessels and bells would be a step

27 Wen C. Fong and James C. Y. Watt, *Possessing the Past, Treasures from the National Palace Museum* (New York : The Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Palace Museum, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1996), pls. 97, 98. See also Ch'en Fang-mei, "Tsai-hsien San-tai: Ts'ung Ku kung Sung tai fang ku t'ung ch'i shuo ch'i" in Lin Po-t'ing (ed.), *Ch'ien hsi nien Sung tai wen wu ta chan*, (Taipei : National Palace Museum, 2000), pp. 293-320.

28 Peter Sturman, "Cranes above Kaifeng: The Auspicious Image at the Court of Huizong", *Ars Orientalis*, v. XX (1990), pp. 33-68. Maggie Bickford, "Emperor Huizong and the Aesthetics of Agency," *Archives of Asian Art*, v. LIII (2002-2003), pp. 71-104.

29 Noel Barnard, "Records of Discoveries of Bronze Vessels in Literary Sources and Some Pertinent Remarks on Aspects of Chinese Historiography," *Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong*, v. VI, no. 2 (1973), pp. 455-547.

30 Ch'en Meng-chia, "Sung Ta-sheng pien-chung k'ao-shu", *Wen wu* 1964.2, pp. 51-53.

towards the creation of a Harmonious State, following those of the Sage Kings:

“I will make sacrifices at the suburban temples, make offerings to the ghosts and spirits, harmonise the ten thousand lands, and share with it all under Heaven. Will that not be beautiful?”³¹

Thus, in Hui-tsung's enterprise we see the features here described as a conscious recreation: careful attention to the forms of the ancient pieces, to their proper original purposes, with the expectation that this care would have a consequence in quite another arena, that of the management of the state with the approval of Heaven.

But, as we now know, this effort was doomed. On the other hand, the outcome of these careful recreations was a wider understanding of how the ancient vessels were shaped, even if their original uses were not immediately followed. And there were a few clear successors.³² It is possible that some Imperial tombs, as yet unexcavated, might yield some such pieces. The one excavated tomb, the tomb of the Wan-li Emperor (1573-1620), contained very creditable copies of the *chüeh* vessel in both gold and jade.³³ However, the *Ta Ming hui tien* 大明會典 illustrates the arrangement of vessels for different sacrifices and makes it clear that only the *chüeh* was made in the proper ancient form (fig. 8). The other pieces were simply dishes, often given the names of ancient vessel types. It seems that, at the Ming court at least, the ancient vessel types were not recreated for offerings.

A major change occurred under Ch'ing rule. In 1748, the Ch'ien-lung 乾隆 Emperor (1736-1795) ordered that the offering vessels should be made in ancient shapes. From that date, accurate copies of a restricted number of ancient pieces were now used at court. While the shapes and decoration were properly based on the Chou examples, a choice of porcelain for the offerings at the great state altars and of wood for the ancestors departed a long way from the originals (fig. 9).³⁴ Two factors probably combined to propel this change. Once more the collection of ancient bronzes urgently engaged the rulers, especially the Ch'ien-lung

31 Sturman, 1990, p. 43 quoting Li Yu *Sung-ch'ao shih-shih*, f.14, p. 222.

32 Among the excavations of Song and Yüan tombs, one, that of Sā-in-jā-dā-kū 賽因赤答忽 (buried 1365) at Lo-yang, contains a few fairly faithful pottery copies of bronzes that seem to be intended for offerings, and others have been found in Szech'uan, *Wen wu*, 1996.2, pp. 22-33; Hsu Ya-hwei, “*Hsüan ho po ku t'u 'ti chien chieh' liu ch'uan: i Yüan tai Sa-in-ch'i-ta-kü mu ch'u t'u ti t'ao ch'i yü Shao Hsi-chou hsien shih tien i t'u wei lieh*”, *Mei shu shih yen chiu chi k'an*, v. 14 (2003), pp. 1-26.

33 See also a Ming royal tomb at Chung-hsiang 鍾祥, Hu-peh, *Wen wu* 2003.5, pp. 4-23, fig. 7.

34 *Ch'ien-lung huang ti te wen hua ta ye*, (Taipei: National Place Museum, 2002), p. 172.

Emperor. This passion for collecting may have arisen out of the obligations on rulers, newly assimilated within the mainstream of Chinese political life, to secure legitimacy by possession of ancient artefacts. The second factor was, indeed, the need for the Manchu Ch'ing court to provide itself with a proper pedigree, represented to the living, the spirits and the dead in visible, tangible form.³⁵ Thus collecting and research provided the prototypes of good copies of ancient pieces to use as ritual vessels.³⁶

2. Antiquarianism

Antiquarianism, a concern with ancient artefacts, ostensibly to reveal information about the past through studies, has received more attention than the recreations described above and will not here be reviewed in great detail. The term implies collecting and recording of those collections. One reason for the attention to this enterprise is that, without it, neither the recreations of the Sung period nor the later archaisms discussed below would have been possible. For without actual objects, bronzes, jades and calligraphy, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for scholars to be specific about the features of ancient relics. In addition, without catalogues or other writings, information about them could not have been spread. Both artefacts and written accounts were necessary components of antiquarianism. Of themselves they, too, became tools to proclaim status and exert some forms of influence or even power within the court.

As mentioned above, collections of ancient vessels contributed to Emperor Hui-tsung's ambitions to recreate ancient bronzes and rituals in order to enjoy the values perceived to be embodied in antiquity and, thereby, to ensure well-ordered and moral rule. These collections were, however, only one of the triggers for Hui-tsung's endeavours, as we have seen. The literati, too, in searching out bronzes were as much influenced, as was Hui-tsung, himself, by questions of legitimacy and power. These issues were intensified by the pressures on the Sung state from peoples to the north. In the words of Pierre Ryckmans: [Sung]

35 Among the bronzes in the exhibition that copy ancient ones with reasonable accuracy are those allocated to the Kuo-tsu-chien. It seems tempting to suggest that these are likely to be Ch'ing in date as there is little evidence from the Ming that such accurate and functional copies were made. See *Through the Prism of the Past*, nos. II-06, II-07; Chang Lin-sheng, "Chen yen hsiang san ti Kuo-tsu-chien Chou fan shih ch'i," *Ku kung wen wu yueh k'an*, v. 7, no. 1 (April 1989), pp. 34-55.

36 Margaret Medley, "The 'Illustrated Regulations for the Ceremonial Paraphernalia of the Ch'ing Dynasty' in the Victoria and Albert Museum," *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, v. 31 (1957-1959), pp. 95-104.

“antiquarianism appears essentially as a search for spiritual shelter and moral comfort. Antiquarian pursuits were to provide Chinese intellectuals with much-needed reassurance at a time when they felt threatened in their cultural identity.”³⁷

Patricia Ebrey and others have examined in depth the cataloguing enterprises at Hui-tsung's court. And a recent exhibition, at the National Palace Museum, provided a glimpse of the work of the Ch'ing court of Ch'ien-lung. The principal features that these catalogues recorded were inscriptions and size; when illustrated, the catalogues captured form and decoration also. The two earliest illustrated catalogues were the *K'ao ku t'u* 考古圖 of the eleventh century by Lü Ta-lin and the twelfth-century catalogue of the bronzes at Hui-tsung's court, the *Hsüan ho po ku t'u lu* 宣和博古圖錄. The presently surviving earliest editions seem to belong to the Yüan period. Some of the illustrations are remarkably accurate and show vessels that can still be recognised today in collections around the world.

While many editions of these works appeared in the Ming period, they were not used as the basis for the design of accurate copies for offering vessels.³⁸ Indeed, the repetition of the inaccurate vessel types of the Sung editions of the *San li t'u* in the *San ts'ai t'u hui* suggests that accuracy was not of any pressing interest at the time for vessels for this function. Instead, some accurate copies were made in bronze, and occasionally jade, for collectors. It would seem that many were intended to deceive. Others were simply regarded as belonging to a specific genre and were probably recognised by some, at least, as being of a later date. But fakes were a worry, and the authors of a number of manuals discussed these along with the appropriate methods by which to acquire correct objects for an elegant life. The *Ko ku yao lun* 格古要論 (1388) and the Wen Chen-heng's 文震亨 (1585-1645) *Ch'ang wu chih* 長物志 are today among the best known, but there were many others.³⁹

The exhibition, *Through the Prism of the Past* contained many excellent examples of the copies made for collectors. Particular vessel shapes stand out as characteristic of such pieces. They were usually in elaborate shapes not typical

37 Pierre Ryckmans, *The Chinese Attitude Towards the Past*, The Forty-seventh George Ernest Morrison Lecture in Ethnology 1986 (Canberra: The Australian National University, 1986), p. 5.

38 See also Robert Poor, "Notes on the Sung Dynasty Archaeological Catalogs", *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America*, v. XVIII-XIX, pp. 33-44.

39 See especially Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things, Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

of the offering vessel repertory. Among these, bird-shaped vessels with small containers on their backs are clear examples (fig. 10), as are bronzes that deliberately copy the animal vessels originally made in the south during the period contemporary with Shang rule at Anyang.⁴⁰ Further, these, and many others, were inlaid to make them more obviously attractive. Probably, the majority of pieces with inlay were destined for collectors rather than for use in rituals. It was thought that inlay was typical of the Hsia dynasty, regarded as the founders of the long dynastic history of China. From these comments we can draw several conclusions. These copies were made as eye-catching pieces to attract attention and fill a niche in the market. They were made in a number of limited shapes, perhaps indicating that many collectors wished to own the same pieces as one another. Groups of ritual vessels, in the manner of the sets used in the ancient rituals, were not, it seems, made for collectors, and, perhaps, the majority of collectors and scholars did not recognise that originally the ancient pieces had been made in given numbers and types in any one period.

There is good evidence of the fashionableness of a limited range of vessel types for collectors. Two paintings in the exhibition that record literati contemplating antiquities display very similar bronzes. In the painting, *Enjoying Antiquities* (fig. 11), a hanging scroll by Tu Chin 杜堇 (active c. 1465-c. 1509), now in the National Palace Museum, a large table is placed diagonally across the central field. On the table near the front are a rectangular *ting*, a *ho*, of which the servant lifts the lid, a Han type of incense burner, or *Po shan lu* 博山爐, and a *li*; with many others further back. Another painting in the exhibition, *Connoisseurship of Antiquities* (fig. 12), displays bronzes and other antiquities on a rug. Here again are the rectangular *ting*, *ho* and *li*. Both paintings also show two, upside-down, porcelain bowls and a *hu* vessel in porcelain with an unusual handle. It is possible that one of the two artists responsible for the paintings copied the work of the other or that they both worked from a standard model. Very similar bronzes occur in other paintings.

These examples suggest that the interests in the past sparked by the collections and catalogues were rather different from those that led to the recreations discussed. Display and contemplation were obviously important. The owners gained status through shared viewing and discussions with friends and official associates. Replication of the rites does not seem to be an issue here. Such collections, however, probably had as a by-product the development of what I have characterised as archaism.

40 *Through the Prism of the Past*, no. III-10, III-41.

3. Archaism, the Past as Decorative Detail.

While antiquarianism did not sustain a return to the use of ancient bronze vessel types in the principal rituals before the Ch'ing dynasty, these ventures sparked a whole new aesthetic movement, the rendering of functional pieces, such as incense burners and flower vases, (previously seen in quite other forms), in ancient bronze shapes. And out of this development came a more general use of bronze forms and ornament for decorative purposes.

This trend can be followed most clearly in the evolution of incense burners made at Yao-chou 耀州 in Shensi Province.⁴¹ The development illustrated at Yao-chou should be viewed in a Buddhist context. Sets of flower vases combined with incense burners placed on altars were necessary utensils for Buddhist practice.⁴² Such groups are well illustrated on altars depicted in the late T'ang and Five Dynasties paintings at Tun-huang 敦煌.⁴³ Comparable incense burners in silver have been found in the T'ang-period relic deposit at Fa-men-ssu 法門寺,⁴⁴ and a ceramic equivalent has come from the Sung relic deposit at Ting-chou 定州.⁴⁵ Similar pieces in green wares have been found in tombs near Hang-chou 杭州. Both the green and white pieces were clearly derived from a silver prototype and reproduce many features seen on the Fa-men-ssu incense burner. A simplified form consists of a basin with a large flat lip, the type popular at the Yao-chou kilns. The excavators at Yao-chou have shown that in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries this silver-derived form was replaced by one copied from a bronze *ting* (fig. 13). The rounded body and recessed neck follow (rather approximately) a middle Western Chou type. On the celadon, also, are moulded raised patterns, presumably intended to replicate relief ornament from bronzes.

We cannot today trace the models that the potters at Yao-chou followed, nor indeed those known to the bronze casters of late Sung, Chin and Yüan in their

41 *Sung tai Yao-chou yao chih* (Peking : Wen wu ch'u pan she, 1998); see also discussion in Jessica Rawson, "The Many Meanings of the Past in China", in Dieter Kuhn and Helga Stahl (eds.), *Die Gegenwart des Altertums, Formen und Funktionen des Altertumsbezugs in den Hochkulturen der Alten Welt* (Heidelberg : Edition Forum, 2001), pp. 397-421.

42 The relationship with the *Po shan lu* is too complex to examine here.

43 Roderick Whitfield and Anne Farrer, *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas, Chinese Art from the Silk Road* (London: British Museum Press, 1990), no. 16.

44 *Fa-men-ssu ti kung chen pao* (His-an : Shen-hsi jen min mei shu ch'u pan she, 1989).

45 Idemitsu Museum, *Treasures from the Underground Palaces, Excavated Treasures from Northern Song Pagodas, Dingzhou, Hebei Province, China* (Tokyo : Idemitsu Museum, 1997).

creation of a multitude of large and small flower vases and incense burners to use on altars. A few illustrations in the bronze catalogues indicate that these -- or manuals derived from them -- must have been one of the sources. If we take, for example, a bronze *hu* depicted in the Yüan edition of the *K'ao ku tu*, we see that the rounded Western Han form, which we today know well from many excavations, including that of the tomb of Liu Sheng 劉勝 -- buried at Manch'eng 滿城, Hopei Province, in 113 B.C., -- was narrowed and compressed. The woodblock print retained, however, the horizontal bands of the original (fig. 14). This much narrower form is typical of 13th and 14th century bronzes and ceramics (fig. 15).⁴⁶ It seems that, at some stage, woodblock prints must have been available in one workshop or another. In many cases, the elaborate bronze patterns have been misinterpreted and rendered as wave patterns or simply as repeated geometric motifs. In this form, they were deployed on bronzes, or blue and white Ching-te-chen 景德鎮 porcelains and even on Korean celadons.

Initially, the demand for these bronze-related shapes seems to have been intended for altar vessels. And the *ting*, *kui* and *tsun* forms continued to be used throughout the Ming and Ch'ing periods as incense burners, with *hu*, *ku* and *tsun* providing the accompanying flower vases. However, concurrently bronze-related forms attained a much more general use. They were, for example, placed in formal settings, as in the principal halls in the Ku-kung in Peking.

In addition, original bronzes and inventions based on ancient forms were used for more domestic display, as paintings from the Peking Ku-kung illustrate (fig. 16). These latter pieces, the inventions, were to be highly influential. For bronze forms were made in every type of ceramic, in bronze of course, in jade and in brilliantly coloured enamels.⁴⁷ But their functions were very far from the original offering vessels for food and wine. This is not the place to chart the vogue for ancient bronze vessel forms in a wide variety of materials over the following centuries. However, it is evident that the degree of attention to the detail of the originals followed the pattern we have already noted. The most carefully -- made pieces -- were products of the late Sung and Yüan and of the Ch'ing periods. At the same time, the ancient shapes were transformed into

46 For a discussion of a Sung-period bronze, see Rose Kerr, "Metalwork and Song Design: a Bronze Vase Inscribed in 1173", *Oriental Art*, N.S. vol. XXXII, no. 2 (1986), pp. 161-176; see also Rose Kerr, "The Evolution of Bronze Style in the Jin, Yuan and Early Ming Dynasties", *Oriental Art* N.S. vol. XXVIII, no. 2 (1982), pp. 146-158.

47 Rose Kerr, *Chinese Ceramics, Porcelain of the Qing Dynasty 1644-1911* (London : Victoria and Albert Museum, 1986), figs. 19, 44.

decorative pieces, with only distant references to the bronze originals. These were very popular in all later periods. Both detailed replicas and flamboyant inventions were displayed in rooms on decorative stands. In that role they provided elegant references to the past and, in consequence, assured the viewers, their owners or visitors, that the values of the past were appreciated and endorsed.

Conclusion

I have argued that four features of the bronzes gave rise to their re-discovery and re-use: physical characteristics of durability and high-quality workmanship; long inscriptions that could be linked to past generations and to recorded history; as the rites and ritual vessels had changed over time, the bronzes were in shapes that could be calibrated with known history; they could be exploited, therefore, to support claims of pedigree, legitimacy and virtue.

Subsequently bronzes were copied in many different forms for a variety of purposes. This paper has reviewed three different approaches to the past: **recreation** with the purpose of reviving both form and function and thereby asserting a pedigree; **antiquarianism**, as in collecting and all that implies in terms of scholarship and status; and **archaism**, as a decorative practice in which ancient forms and motifs were deployed in a variety of contexts, resulting in some extravagant novelties.

Much of the discussion has concentrated on the notion of recreation. The two principal examples described here are the claims to pedigree by the noble families of the Chin and Kuo states and the claims to moral standing in the rule of Sung Hui-tsung. In both cases, the visible features of the bronzes were recruited to enterprises far beyond that of the proper execution of the rites. Such recreation of the ritual bronzes was a highly significant political enterprise, both in antiquity, and in the Sung period. In consequence, the ancient ritual bronzes came to acquire an exceptional status, and it was this high status that also gave rise to the more general and more 'secular' forms of archaism mentioned at the end of my paper. With these we are all more familiar than with the replicas of the seventh century B.C. or of the twelfth century A.D.. But the inventions based on ancient forms, the novelties, come out of a much more serious concern that has been the principal preoccupation of this paper.

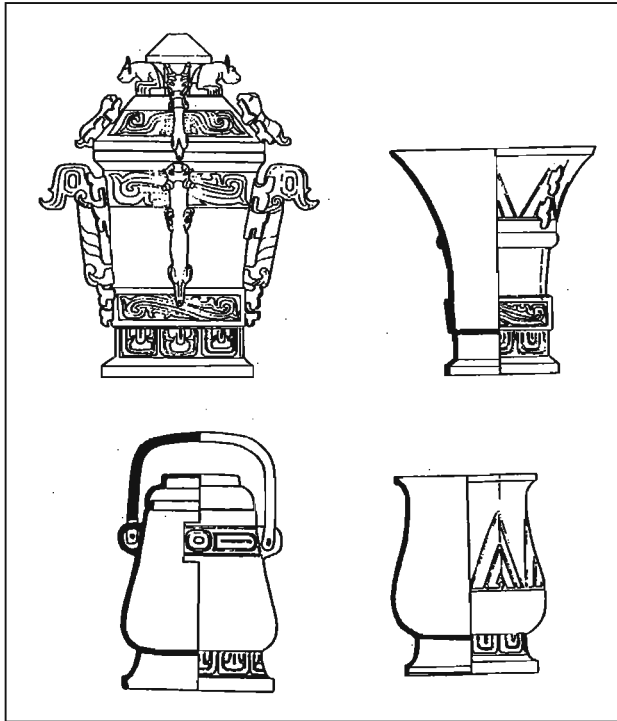


Fig. 1. Drawings of replicas of a *fang i*, a *tsun*, a *yu* and a *chih* from tomb M93 at T'ien-ma Ch'ü-ts'un, near Hou-ma in Shansi Province. 8th-7th century B.C.. After *Wen wu* 1995.7, pp. 4-39, fig. 43:7, 6, 4, 2.

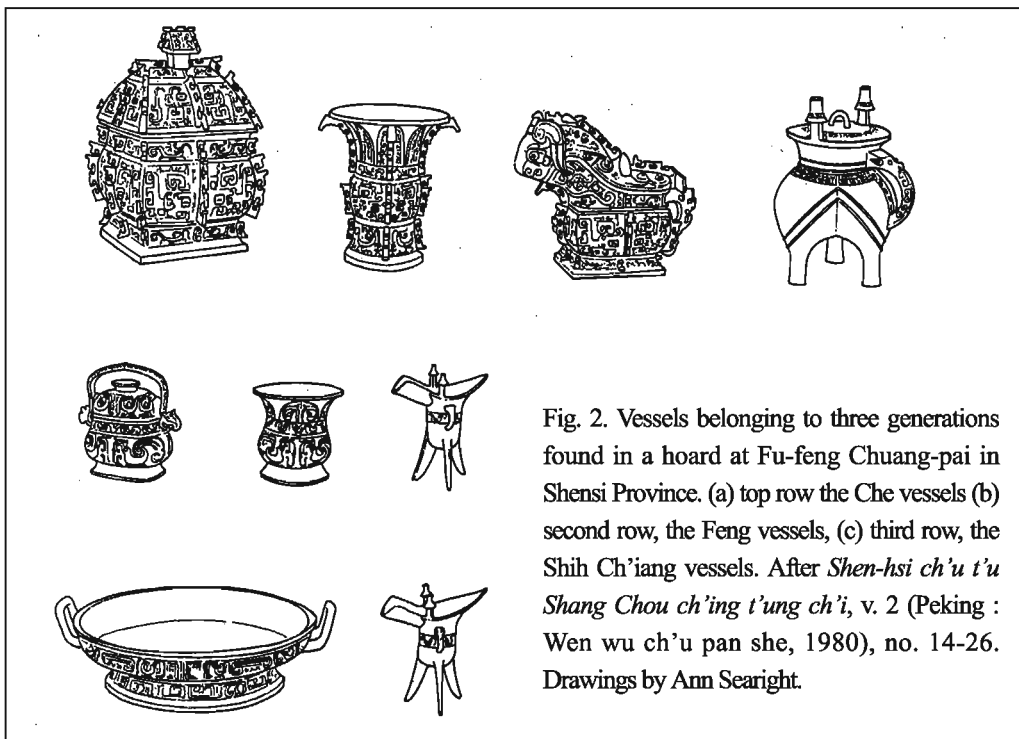


Fig. 2. Vessels belonging to three generations found in a hoard at Fu-feng Chuang-pai in Shensi Province. (a) top row the Che vessels (b) second row, the Feng vessels, (c) third row, the Shih Ch'iang vessels. After *Shen-hsi ch'u t'u Shang Chou ch'ing t'ung ch'i*, v. 2 (Peking : Wen wu ch'u pan she, 1980), no. 14-26. Drawings by Ann Searight.

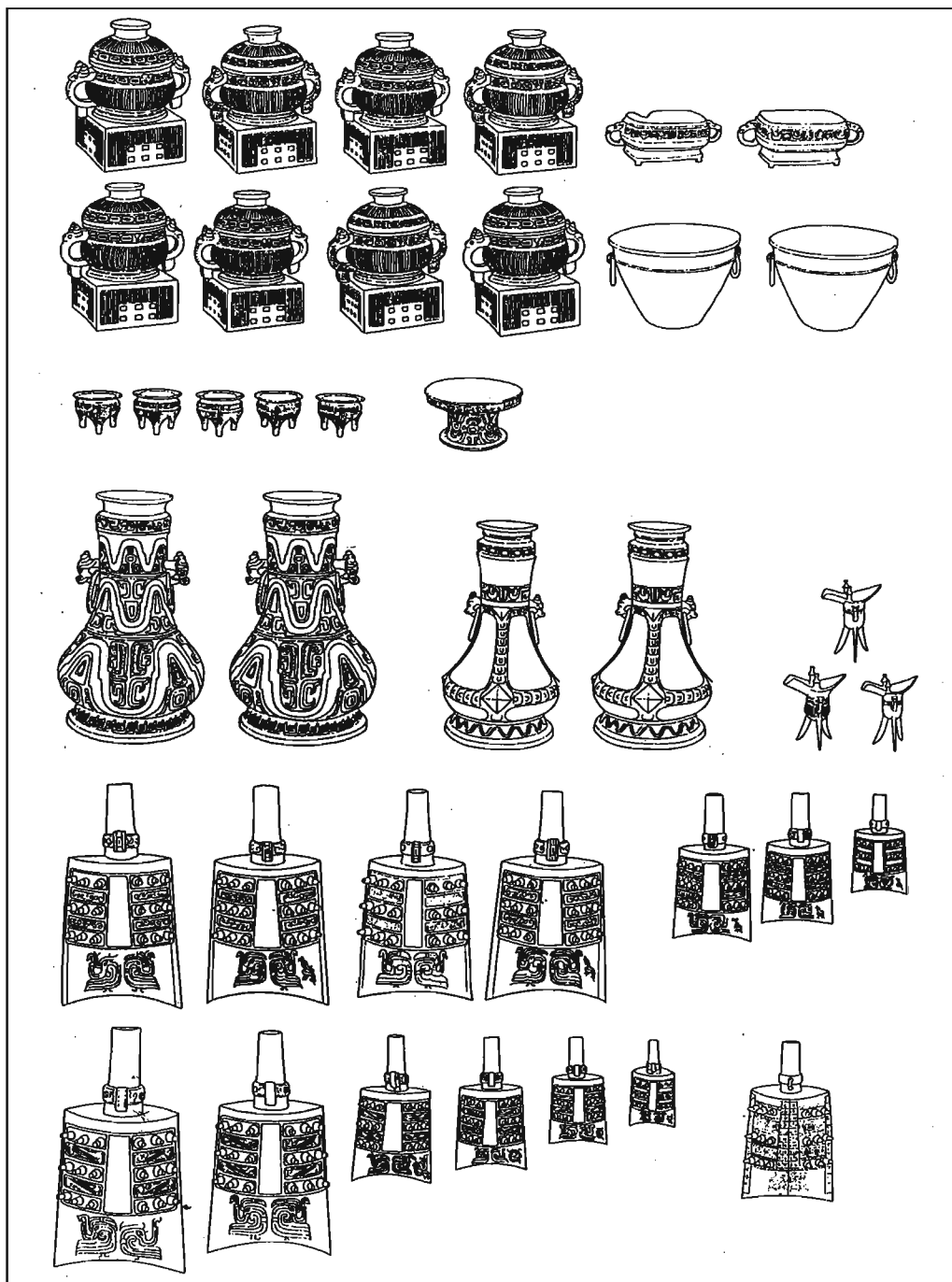


Fig. 3. Vessels from the hoard at Fu-feng Chuang-pai in Shensi Province belonging to Wei Po Hsing, the Hsing vessels. After *Shen-hsi ch'u t'u Shang Chou ch'ing t'ung ch'i*, v. 2 (Peking: Wen wu ch'u pan she, 1980), no. 14-26, 27-74. Drawings by Ann Searight.



Fig. 4. Ritual vessel *hu* with 8-shaped extensions on the sides, early Western Zhou period, 10th century B.C.. Height 22.6 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.

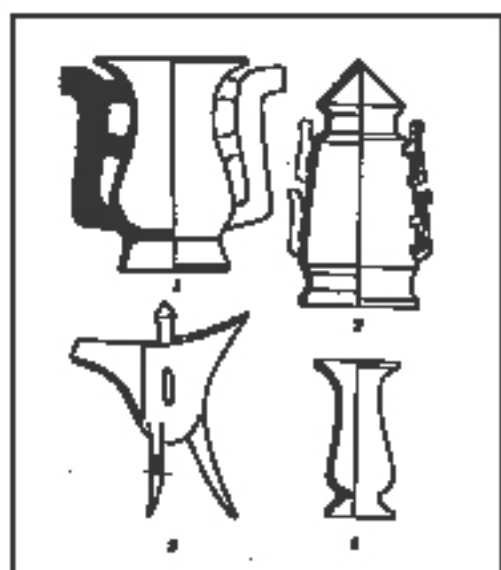


Fig. 5. Drawings of replicas of a *zun*, a *fang*, a *chi*, and a *chi* from tomb M2006 at San-men-hai. After Wu 1995.1, pp. 4-91, fig. 23.

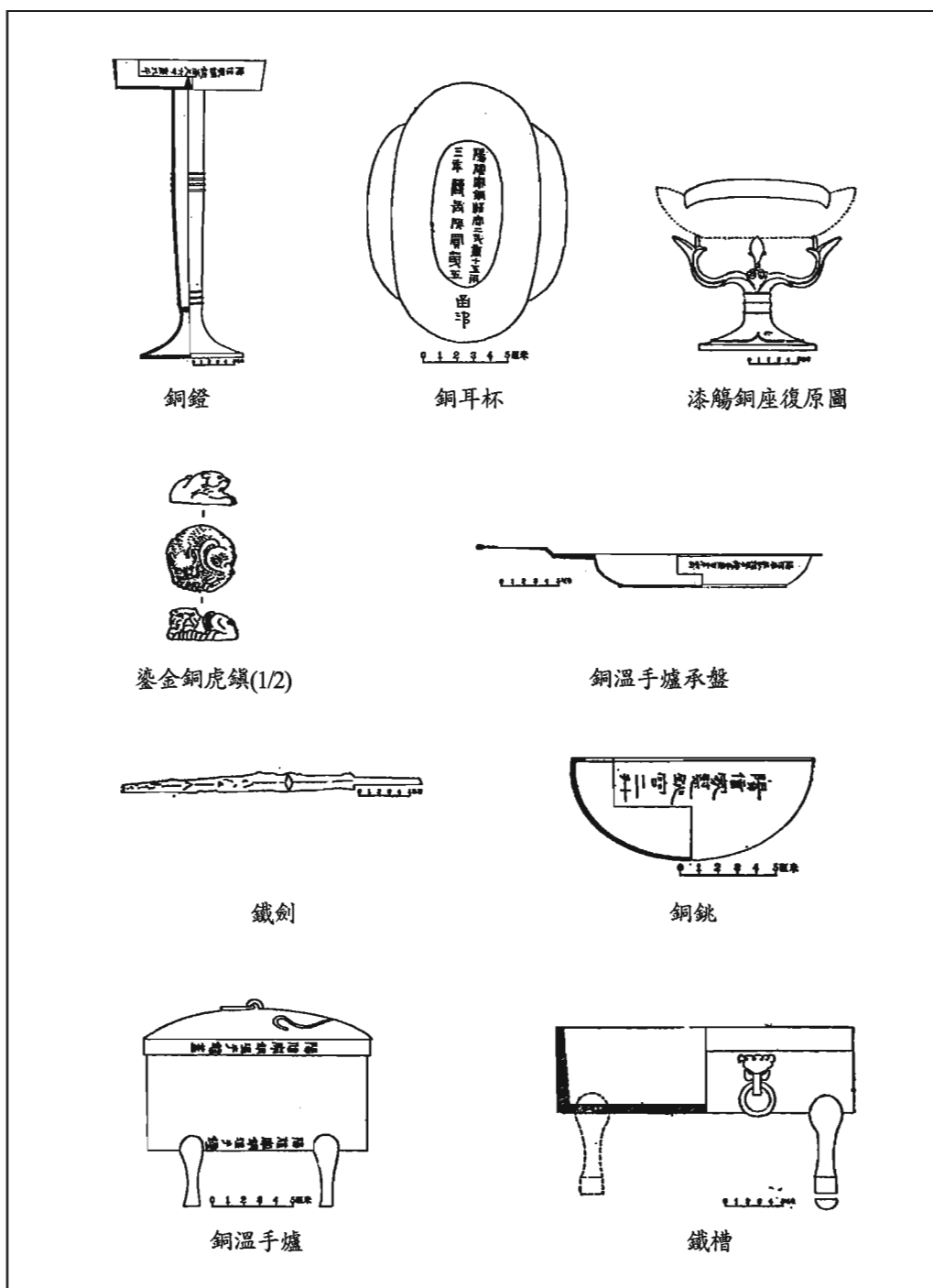


Fig. 6. Drawings of bronze vessels from a deposit adjacent to the Mao-ling, near Hsi-an, 2nd-1st century B.C.. After *Wen wu* 1982.9, pp. 1-17, figs. 49-57.



Fig. 7. Illustration from the *Sin S'i* is purporting to show a *lu*, where the identification relies on a pun on the word for turtle, shown on the lid.

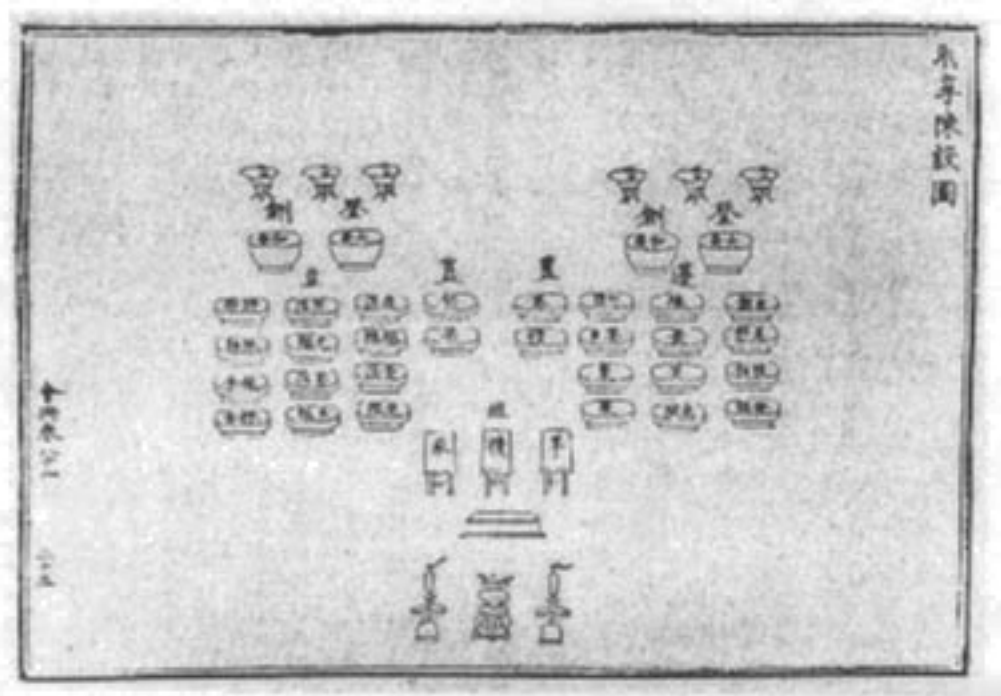


Fig. 8. Woodblock from the *Zi Ming Ant shu*, 1587 illustrating the arrangement of offering vessels, from a facsimile of 1963, p. 1351.



Fig. 9. Porcelain altar vessel in the form of a lotus. Western Chou period lotus, in the Ch'ing period described as a lot, made for use at one of the great altars. Ch'ien-lung period, 18th century. Height 23.7 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei.



Fig. 10. Bronze vessel in the shape of a bird with a *tsun* or *chih* shaped-*tsun* on its back, inlaid with silver and gold. Possibly Ming dynasty. The *tsun* is in a style different from that of the bird. Height 31.8 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei. (Through the *Prize of the Past* catalogue no. III-43).



Fig. 11. Detail from Du Jin (fl. ca. 1465-1505), *Enjoying Antiquities*. National Palace Museum, Taipei. — as in *Through the Prism of the Past*, see L44.



Fig. 12. Anonymous, *Carelessness of Antiquities*. Ming Dynasty. National Palace Museum, Taipei. — as in *Through the Prism of the Past*, see L46.




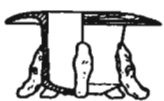


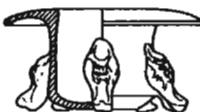




| 器名 時代 | 樽 | 五足爐 | 鼎爐 |
|----------|--|---|---|
| 五代 | | | |
| 宋代早期 | |  青B4型I式80NT38④, 4 |  青B6型I式90NT45④, 4 |
| 宋代中期 |  青B5型I式73④, 16 |  青B6型I式84VT34, 6 | |
| 宋代晚期 |  青A6型84I T10④, 8 |  青B6型I式80NT35④, 2 |  青B6型I式94VT34, 5 |
| 南宋 |  青A6型I式86I T14④Z11, 45 | |  青A1型I式91NT12④, 27 |
| | | |  青A1型I式91NT12④, 33 |
| | | |  青B1型91NT12④, 32 |

Fig. 13. Chart showing the changes to ceramic incense burners found at the Yao-chou kiln site in Shensi. After *Sung tai Yao-chou yao chih* (Peking: Wen wu ch'u pan she, 1998), fig. 298.

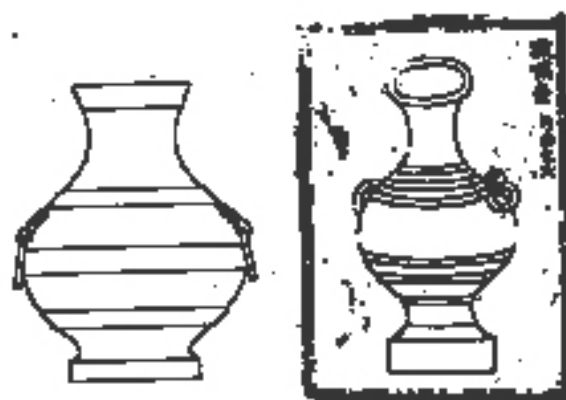


Fig. 14. Drawing of a bronze *hu* found in the tomb of Liu Sheng, King of Chang-shan, Late second century B.C. After *Miao-ch'eng Hsin wen fu chieh pao lun*, 2 v. (Peking : Wen wu chu pan she, 1980), v. 1, p. 50. Woodblock illustration from a Yüan-period edition of the *K'uo hsi*'s.



Fig. 15. Pair of altar vases modelled on *hu*, such as those reproduced in woodblock illustrations of collections of bronzes (see fig. 14). 14th-15th century A.D. Private Collection.



Fig. 16. Tapestry painting showing antique vessels at the rear of a room. From the *Yü-sh'ui Hsien* in the Peking Kun-lung. Late Ch'ing period. After *Ts'ü ch'ün ch'ung tung t'ien ch'iao ch'ao ch'ung sh'ü, nei yen ch'ung ts'ui t'ü shün* (Peking: Ts'ü ch'ün ch'ung ch'ü pan shu, 1995), pl. 177.