中國文化研究所學報　第6卷第2期　1973年12月

Records of Discoveries of Bronze Vessels in Literary Sources

—and Some Pertinent Remarks on Aspects of Chinese Historiography*

NOEL BARNARD

Numerous references to bronze vessels and records of their discovery may be found in the traditional literature of purported pre-Han compilation, in the Dynastic Histories, and amongst miscellaneous writings.[1] The origin of the earliest of these transmitted sources, in the form now current, dates back to the early reigns of the Western Han period, but only a few fragments of actual Han "manuscript" – in the shape of the Hsi-p'ing 熹平 engraved Stone Classics, *circa* 175 A.D. – have survived (Ma Heng 馬衡, *Han shih-ching chi-ts'un* 漢石經集存, Peking, 1957).[2] Occasionally there is a chance find such as that of Mo-chü-tzu, Wu-wei 武威磨咀子, Kansu, Tomb No.6 containing Western Han brush-written wooden tablets with sections of the *Yi-li* 儀禮, one of the "Three Books of Ceremonies" (*Wu-wei Han-chien*, Peking, 1965). Unfortunately

---

* In its original form the present survey was prepared during 1962-3, along with several other introductory chapters, for a publication venture that has since fallen by the wayside. Although it was first written more for general background reading such as non-sinological readers of a bronze catalogue might find useful, I believe the subject will be found of some interest by the specialist reader. In revising the survey thus for scholarly presentation I have not, however, attempted to modify all aspects of the original style and presentation. Retention of dates of compilation of the individual Histories, liberal use of characters, numerical definitions of the sexagesimal cyclical character combinations, etc. are features worth preserving particularly for the convenience of those who like myself are not endowed with good memory. I am most grateful to Miss Winifred Mumford for the fine draftsmanship of the drawings in Figures 5, 7, 10, 13, 15 and 16, and to Mr. Erwin Feeken for the drawings in Figures 2 and 9, and for several of the components in Figures 13 and 16. In the preparation of the remaining Figures I am especially indebted to Mr. Robert Cooper and other staff members of the Visual Aids Unit, A.N.U., for photographic preparation. My thanks to Mr. Chang Kwang-yue 張光裕, my present assistant, for his preparation of the Chinese summary of this paper.

1 In the preliminary stages of data assembly, I consulted the convenient listings of relevant passages in Wei Chü-hsien 衞聚賢, *Chung-kuo k'ao-ku-hsüeh shih* 中國考古學史, Chu Chien-hsin 朱劍心, *Chin-shih-hsüeh* 金石學, Jung Keng 容庚, *Shang-Chou yi-ch'i t'ung-k'ao* 商周彝器通考, etc. Later, with the assistance of Mr. Satō Tamotsu 左藤保 (Research Assistant in our Department at the time) further passages were found in the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* 古今圖書集成, *Liu Sung-shu*, Fu-jui-chih 劉宋書, 符瑞志, *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei* 册府元龜, and other such sources. In each case the cited passages in these works were each checked against such editions of the original books as are available in our libraries here. Numerous discrepancies were noted and are recorded either in the text of this survey or in the Appendix – I am especially indebted to Mr. Satō for his painstaking attention to this section of the project. In the Appendix is presented a selection in the original text of just over a hundred of the passages cited in the present study. Passages omitted are mainly those in the early part of the study which for the most part have already appeared in translation. The selection is concerned specifically with discovery notices and thus supplements the listings in the preceding sources. It is probably complete.

2 Attention should also be drawn to the recently published work of Ch'ü Wan-li 屈萬里, *Han shih-ching Chou-yi ts'an-tzu chi-cheng* 漢石經周易殘字集證 (and a further volume on the *Shang-shu* 尚書 with similar title), 1961, 1963, wherein reconstructions of the entire stele are presented in multi-colour printing thus illustrating at a glance the positioning of the extant fragments and the proportion of original text lost.

archaeological discoveries of this kind have so far been extremely rare. Generally speaking, the bulk of "original manuscript" extant ranges only from T'ang to Sung. It is important that we keep this situation in mind when we consult the traditional literature. Although appreciable proportions of such highly venerated works as the *Shu-ching* 書經, the *Shih-ching* 詩經, the *Ch'un-ch'iu Tso-chuan* 春秋左傳, and various other transmitted writings existed in some form or other before the infamous "burning of the books" which followed the unification of the States under Ch'in, the recensions which issued forth in Han times cannot be accepted as wholly reliable versions. Concurrent Confucian concepts and contemporaneous ideas relating to a past already many centuries removed from the Han present contributed largely to the reconstitutions effected upon the basis of sporadic discoveries of pre-Han manuscript which came to light in a fragmentary and confused state and in a script that had been obsolete for more than a generation. To sift aside pre-Han fact from Han fancy in the resultant morass is the unenviable task of the historian. Happily the fruits of archaeological discovery now available allow some degree of progress along new avenues of research, and most important is the situation wherein we have direct access to certain of the actual materials of antiquity described at some length in the traditional literature.

Bronze vessels and many facts related to them are now much better understood thanks to the wealth of evidence unearthed over the last four decades or so. Elsewhere I have discussed in some detail the unreliability of several early Chinese accounts of the manufacture of bronze vessels in respect of technical considerations (*Bronze Casting and Bronze Alloys in Ancient China,* pp.7-12), but this is not especially significant for it is clear that the writers concerned knew little about practical aspects of casting, indeed, one would not normally expect to find the subject adequately dealt with by purely literary men. While a lack of specific knowledge may be excusable in a technical sphere, it can hardly be condoned when it comes to what were essentially subjects of more general knowledge. A remarkable level of ignorance concerning various other aspects of the bronze vessels is demonstrated by the inaccuracies in accounts scattered amongst the *Tso-chuan,* the *Chan-kuo ts'e* 戰國策, the *Kuo-yii* 國語, and other such sources. Upon due investigation these accounts are sometimes found to possess a distinctly Han flavour. Yet one cannot always maintain that the origin of the misconceptions is Han although several quite decisive instances may be observed. On the other hand, it would need be considered very surprising, indeed, that fifth to third century writers should show themselves to have been so sadly misinformed on contemporaneous matters – in particular the nature of the inscription content.

1. Literary Records of Inscription Content

From Han times there are recorded, in whole or in part, transcriptions of the inscriptions that appeared on some of the vessels and other bronze artifacts whose discoveries are reported in the Dynastic Histories and elsewhere. Appropriate observations regarding such recorded inscriptions will be offered later as each occasion arises. Here, however, we shall review briefly a number of much earlier recorded inscription texts which the purported pre-Han writers inform us were incorporated in bronze vessels. It has been opined on many an occasion that Han writers, being closer to the Shang, Western Chou, Ch'un-ch'iu, and Chan-kuo periods, must accordingly have been better informed on numerous points of detail. By the same process of reasoning records made prior to the Han period should be even more reliable – it will be instructive to put this matter to the test.[3]

3 The reasoning here may perhaps be taken a step further again: writers of the Ch'un-ch'iu and Chan-kuo periods seeking to formulate Shang or Western Chou style inscriptions to be incorporated in their writings, might

One of the earliest "datable" inscription texts recorded in traditional sources is that attributed to the Shang sovereign, Ch'eng-t'ang 成湯, which appears in the *Ta-hsüeh* 大學; it was engraved on the P'an-basin of T'ang:

[1] If you can one day renovate yourself, do so from day to day. Yea, let there be daily renovation. (Legge, I, p.361)[4]

Kuo Mo-jo 郭沫若, in one of his earlier publications (*Chin-wen ts'ung-k'ao* 金文叢攷, pp.81-3) compared the nine characters of the *Ta-hsüeh* P'an-basin text with the set of three inscribed Ko-dagger-axes reproduced here in Figure 1. Upon the basis of these inscriptions he reconstructed the archaic form of the record as shown and further suggested that the upper sections of the characters were probably in a somewhat mutilated state and accordingly would have been erroneously transcribed by the compiler of the *Ta-hsüeh*. This is quite a fascinating theory and an excellent example of the astute working of Kuo's active mind. A few years ago, however, Tung Tso-pin 董作賓 demonstrated quite conclusively that the three inscribed Ko-dagger axes are forgeries (*Bulletin of the College of Arts*, National Taiwan University, No.1, pp.1-7).

Although Kuo's theory regarding the P'an-basin inscription suffers somewhat as a consequence, it does, nevertheless, bring to our attention a possible reason for the inappropriate nature of the above traditional record as that of an inscription text; namely, the compiler may have been at fault in his transcription. However, a mistake of this sort might be attributed only to a Han or later writer; it would seem rather unlikely to have occurred if a text such as Kuo's reconstruction had, in fact, been consulted prior to Ch'in and Han times. It would appear, nevertheless, perfectly evident that the complete passage in the *Ta-hsüeh* is merely designed to effect a play on the word 新 *hsin* "new" and accordingly the inscription text, as in the following examples, must have been invented simply to suit the purpose of the writer.

In the *Tso-chuan* three alleged inscription texts are recorded:

[2] Li Chih 禮至 had the words engraved on a vessel: "I grasped Kuo-tzu 國子 in my arms and killed him. No one dared to stop me." (Hsi 25; Legge, V, p.195)

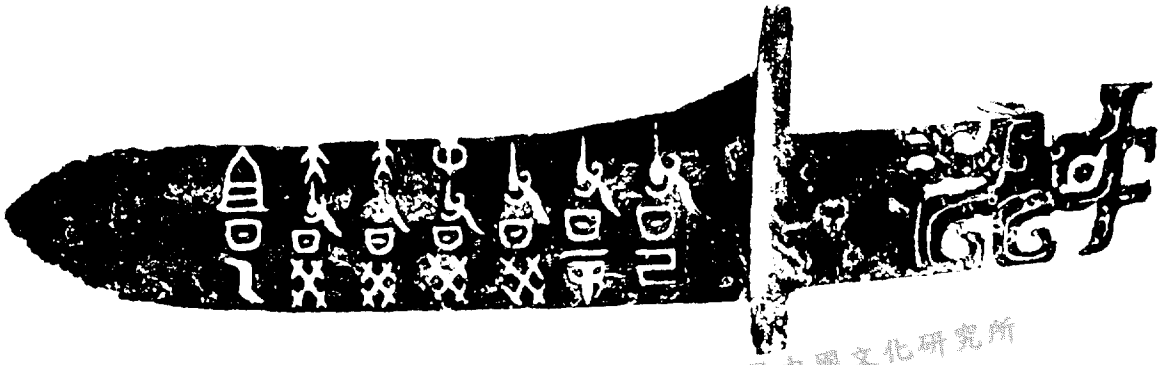
[3] The inscription on the Ting-cauldron of Ch'an 鼏鼎 says: "You may get up early in the morning and become greatly distinguished, but in future generations your descendants will still become idle." (Chao, 3; Legge, V, p.589)

[4] After him there was Cheng K'ao-fu 正考父 who gave his aid to the Dukes Tai 戴, Wu 武, and Hsüan 宣. He rose to the third degree of office and with every step his humility increased. Hence the inscription on the Ting-cauldron in his ancestral temple said: "When he got the first appoint-

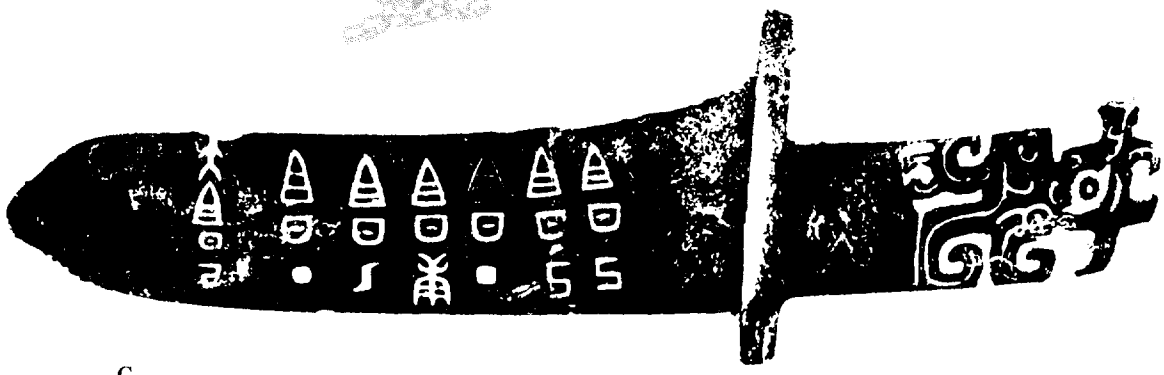
well have based their compositions on the style and content of contemporary inscriptions. Thus where such "deception" might be attempted it should be recognisable. It may be deemed highly unlikely, perhaps, that they would construct and incorporate in their writings an inscription text which their colleagues would know to be inappropriate. It is, accordingly, my assumption that pre-Han writers in their presentation of an inscription text (which they allege to derive from a ritual bronze vessel) should either have based it upon a real inscription – if of Shang or Western Chou date – or a near-contemporary one if concerned with personages and events much closer to their times. Where the alleged inscription text fails to match such archaeological examples the source will necessarily be one of questionable validity.

4 Numbers in square brackets alongside each translated passage refer to the original Chinese texts a considerable number of which appear in the Appendix. The latter are indicated by an asterisk alongside the reference number. See Bibliography for details of simplified reference procedure and editions employed – entries such as "Legge, I", *"KBTK"*, etc. are also placed in alphabetic sequence. Translations by other authorities are used where known and available to me; acknowledgement is indicated simply as above with full bibliographical details in the Bibliography. Where the Chinese source only is presented, the translation is my own.

A



B



C

D

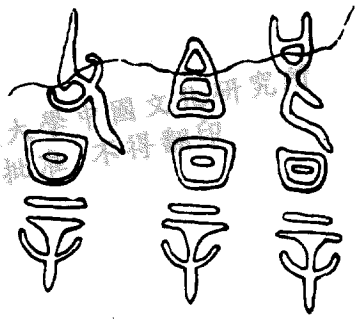
Transcriptions:

A. 大兄日乙 兄日戊 兄日壬 兄日癸 兄日癸 兄日丙

B. 祖日乙 大父日癸 大父日癸 中父日癸 父日癸 父日辛 父日己

C. 大祖日己 祖日丁 祖日乙 祖日庚 祖日丁 祖日己 祖日己

D. 祖丁 祖己 祖乙



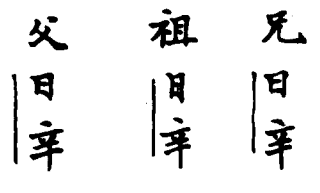


FIGURE 1 Left: The three inscribed Ko-dagger-axes said to have been excavated at Pao-ting 保定 and first known in the collection of Lo Chen-yü. Modern character transcriptions appear with each. Above: A further inscribed *ko*-dagger-axe of comparable style but uncertain provenance. Right: Kuo Mo-jo's reconstruction of the inscription in the P'an-basin of T'ang – where the line of break is shown, the character remnants could, he suggests, be read in line with the present text of the *Ta-hsüeh*.

ment, he walked with his head bowed down. When he got the second, with his shoulders bent; when he got the third, with his whole body bent. In this way he hurried along the walls, saying to himself: 'Thus no one will presume to despise me. I will have congee in this boiler; I will have gruel in this boiler, – to satisfy my hunger.' " Such was his humility. (Chao, 7, Legge, V, p.619)[5]

In the *Kuo-yü* there is recorded the contents of one inscription text:

[5] During the last days of Shang there was an inscription made which stated: "Deficient in virtue and unfulfilling in their obligations they could not gain greatness but only draw upon themselves anxieties; deficient in emolument and unsatisfied in their ambitions, they could not fatten (their purses) but only incur melancholy." (*Kuo-yü*, Chin-yü, 7.3b)

Mo-tzu 墨子 refers to an aspect of the inscription content and, in effect, quotes the wording concerned:

[6] Princes have attacked their neighbouring states killing their people and seizing their oxen, horses, grain, and goods and thereupon have written these facts on bamboo tablets and silken (scrolls) and have engraved them in bronze and stone; in making inscriptions in Chung-bells and Ting-cauldrons they have transmitted these records to posterity of later ages stating: "None possesses so much as I." (*Mo-tzu*, Lu-wen *KBTK*, XIV, 13.5)

The *Li-chi* 禮記 records the longest of the inscription texts in the traditional literature; it reads:

[7] In the sixth month, on the day *ting-hai* 丁亥 [24], the Duke went to the Grand Temple, and said, "My young uncle, your ancestor Chuang Shu 莊叔 assisted Duke Ch'eng 成公, who ordered him to follow him in his difficulties on the north of the Han 漢, and afterwards to come to him in his palace of imprisonment in the honoured capital of Chou 宗周; and all these hurried journeyings he endured without wearying of them. From him came the helper of Duke Hsien 獻公, who charged your later ancestor. Your deceased father Wen Shu 文叔 cherished and stimulated in himself the old desires and aims, roused and led on the admirable officers, and showed his own great personal interest in the State of Wei 衛. His labours for our ducal house never wearied early or late so that the people all testified how good he was." The Duke further said, "My young uncle, I give you [this Ting-cauldron with its] inscription. Carry on and out the services of your father." K'uei bowed with his head to the ground, and said, "in response to the distinction you have conferred upon me I will take your great and important charge, and I will put it on the Yi-vessels 彝 and Ting-cauldrons of my winter sacrifice." (*KBTK*, XVII, 25.12-13; Legge, 2.252)

Of the above recorded inscriptions items [2] to [6] may be dismissed without detailed discussion on the content, the vocabulary, etc. as it is quite obvious upon comparison with the whole corpus of inscription texts reproduced since Sung times to the present that the above are merely imaginative literary embellishments. They are of a character possible in Han but surely not earlier. The *Li-chi* example, however, requires some comment in view of Kuo Mo-jo's study (*op. cit.*, pp.84-7; also *YCHP*, vol.9). He remarks to the effect that this recorded inscription is for the most part identical with ancient vessel texts now available – that it was based upon an original inscription is not to be doubted. But, he continues, the characters have suffered alteration at the hands of later generations of scribes and thus we now find the character 假 *chia* written for ancient 各 : 佫 *ko* "go to" [but the archaic sound reconstructions are respectively: kå and klăk *GSR* 33, 766], 稽首 written instead of 頡首, etc. For the bulk of his discussion, however, Kuo is concerned with the character 辟 *pi* "brilliant" in the last sentence and seeks to equate it with 辟 *yi* "my" which sometimes occurs in Eastern Chou style inscriptions.

5 Ssu-ma Ch'ien repeats this passage, together with a fair part of the *Tso-chuan* text before and after it in his *K'ung-tzu shih-chia* 孔子世家 (*Shih-chi hui-chu k'ao-cheng*, 47:11-13). Some interesting variations in text may be noted.

The rather awkward reference to the "honoured capital of Chou" which had been destroyed long before the time of the investee's forebear is glossed over far too naively, while the presentation of a vessel already bearing its inscription (予女銘) is re-interpreted by means of the useful *chia-chieh* 假借 method which allows almost any desired meaning to be asserted. Even should crucial points of doubt of this kind be disregarded, the fact that a few phrases and characters found often in bronze inscriptions occur also in a recorded text of this kind is hardly to be taken as a matter of especial significance. Greater numbers of identical terms will be found in many sections of the *Shu-ching,* the *Shih-ching* and the *Tso-chuan,* even in passages of about the same length as the above. If we study the text from the point of view of its discrepancies, however, it becomes indeed apparent that the compiler knew only a little of the content and style of ancient inscription texts.

Certain features of the ancient feudal ceremonies were, nevertheless, sometimes fairly accurately recorded by the writers of the traditional literature. Some passages stand comparison with the archaeological literature, but it is generally in respect of selected details only that an acceptable identity may be propounded:

[8] Anciently the intelligent rulers conferred rank on the virtuous, and emoluments on the meritorious; and the rule was that this should take place in the Grand Temple, to show that they did not dare to do it on their own private motion. Therefore, on the day of sacrifice, after the first presenting of the cup to the representative, the ruler descended and stood on the south of the steps on the east, with his face to the south, while those who were to receive their appointments stood facing the north. The recorder was on the right of the ruler, holding the tablets on which the appointment was written. He read these and each man bowed twice, with his head to the ground, received the writing, returned home and presented it in his own ancestral temple – such was the way in which rank and reward were given (*Li-chi,* Chi-t'ung, *KBTK,* XVII, 25.8-9; Legge, 2.247)

Here, the compiler was aware that the seigneur faced the south during the investiture ceremony while the investee faced the north; the recorder may possibly have been on the seigneur's right but inscription evidence speaks only of the investee's patron "entering on the right (or, to assist)". The latter was invariably a person of high rank, thus the inscriptions do not normally mention the recorder until the reading of the seigneur's decree takes place. A somewhat more reliable account of the ceremony is to be noted in the following passage from the *Tso-chuan:*

[9] On *ting-wei* 丁未 [44], the Marquis of Chin presented the spoils and prisoners of Ch'u to the King, – 100 chariots with their horses all in mail, and 1,000 foot-soldiers.[6] The earl of Cheng 鄭伯 acted as assistant to the King in treating the Marquis with the ceremonies with which King P'ing 平王 had treated his ancestor. On *chi-yu* 己酉 [46], the King feasted him with sweet spirits, and conferred on him various gifts. He also commissioned the Yin-shih 尹氏 officer and his own brother Hu 王子虎 with the Nei-shih 內史 officer, Shu Hsing-fu 叔興父, to convey the written appointment 册命 of the Marquis of Chin to be the Chief of the Princes 侯伯. He awarded him the robes to be worn in the carriage adorned with metal and those proper for a chariot of war, one red bow and a hundred red arrows, a black bow and a thousand arrows, a jar of spirits made from the black millet flavoured with herbs, and three hundred life-guards. The words of the appointment were: "The King says to his Uncle, reverently discharge the King's commands, so as to give tranquillity to the States in every quarter, and drive away all who are ill-affected to the King." Thrice the Marquis declined his honours; but at last accepting them he said: "I, Ch'ung-erh 重耳, venture twice to do obeisance, with my head bowed to the earth, – and so do I receive and will maintain the great, distinguished, excellent charge of the Son of Heaven." With this he received the tablet and went out. (Hsi, 28; Legge, V, p.211)

6 The phrase 駟介 *ssu-chieh* "a team of four horses all clad in mail" is used also in the *Shih-ching* (Ode 79) while *chieh* in the sense of "scale armour", "mail", etc. is not infrequently found in other such sources. If, however, the commentaries are correct in this interpretation – and there seems to be no reason to question them

It is interesting to observe that in this particular year of reign of Duke Hsi of Lu (632 B.C.) are recorded the events related to the "difficulties" of Duke Ch'eng of Wei in passage [7] above. Thus the two accounts of ceremonial procedures might be expected to parallel one another more closely than they actually do. Although this *Tso-chuan* account provides a comparatively accurate record of the feudal investiture ceremony as attested by numerous early Western Chou bronze inscriptions, it is not entirely certain that it was based upon such inscriptions. Containing as it does phrases and terms which frequently appear in the *Shu-ching* and the *Shih-ching* the probable sources may not be far to seek particularly when we may consider the incorrectly rendered bows-and-arrows formulae which should, it would be expected, be proportional as in ins. *118.1* (see my study, *MS* Vol. XVII, p.22, note 11).[7] Furthermore, it may be observed that several of the ceremonial details are characteristic of Early and Middle Western Chou style inscriptions and practically unknown in Eastern Chou – this is certainly the case so far as properly attested and acceptably attested inscriptions are concerned. Accordingly, we may speculate as to whether the *Tso-chuan* compiler possibly consulted Western Chou inscription texts, not appreciating their early date, or did he simply select relevant data from the *Shu*, the *Shih* and other such sources available to him and wrote up the account on the basis of these? In either case, the chances of the compiler being a Han period rather than a pre-Han period writer would appear to be high. In other sections of the *Tso-chuan* there is further information relating to the inscribing of bronzes:

[10] Chi Wu-tzu 季武子 had a bell, toned to the second note of the chromatic scale, cast from the weapons he had acquired in Ch'i 齊 and had the services performed by Lu 魯 engraved upon it. Tsang Wu-chung 臧武仲 said to him: "This is contrary to rule. What should be engraved on such articles is – for the Son of Heaven, his admirable virtue; for the Prince of a State, a record of his services estimated according to the season in which they have been performed; for a great officer, his deeds worthy of being mentioned.[8] And such deeds are the lowest degree (of merit so com-

– a disturbing situation arises in terms of the antiquity of scale armour and particularly in respect of its use in the protective covering of horses. Not only is there a conspicuous lack of metal lames or scales from excavations of pre-Han sites in association with human remains let alone with horses but also an extensive investigation into the nature of the chariot itself shows only too well that it could never have been used as a military vehicle. The low carriage box railings never reached knee height thus neither driver nor passenger could maintain a standing position while the vehicle was moving! And even if the horses were protected by scale armour those in the chariot had no effective means of protection or of retaliation because of their seated position (whether tailor fashion or *seiza*). In Han times, however, higher railings, better seating facilities, various forms of canopies, and improvements in the shaft and yoke made possible the use of chariots in hunting and in warfare – particularly in association with cavalry. To what extent scale armour was used is not clear from archaeological remains (*cf.* Figure 2). Attention should, of course, be drawn in this connection to the sole find reported to date of "leather lames" in a Chan-kuo period Ch'ang-sha tomb (No. 15: *KKHP*, 1957. 1:96, PI. II, 7) which may have functioned as armour. Several wooden figures bearing painted representation of a similar form of leather (?) lames are illustrated in Hayashi Minao's 林已奈夫 recently published *Chūgoku Yin-Shu jidai no buki* 中國殷周時代の武器 (p.410) and several other possible identifications of armour are discussed therein. However, the bulk of the pre-Han data is derived from a small number of unprovenanced artifacts whose dating is by no means securely established. One point, nevertheless, is possibly significant – the items Hayashi cites in his Figs. 476-480 seem all to be of Ch'u origin.

7 Some revision of the system of reference numbers I have applied to the inscriptions has been found necessary – fortunately amongst my published papers those requiring revision are very few. Ins. *118.1* was originally given the reference number 121.3 – the nature of this miscount will be demonstrated in the introductory notes to ins. *118.1* in Barnard and Matsumaru, *Archaeological Documents of Ancient China*, Vol. I.

8 The translation would appear to be a little at fault from this point, it should read along the following lines: "But the deeds [i.e. the invading of another State] mentioned in the present [inscription] are of the lowest degree; the services recorded are merely the getting of help from others; in speaking of the time [of the expedition] it . . . . ." The Chinese text for the corrected section reads: 今稱伐，則下等也。計功，則借人也……

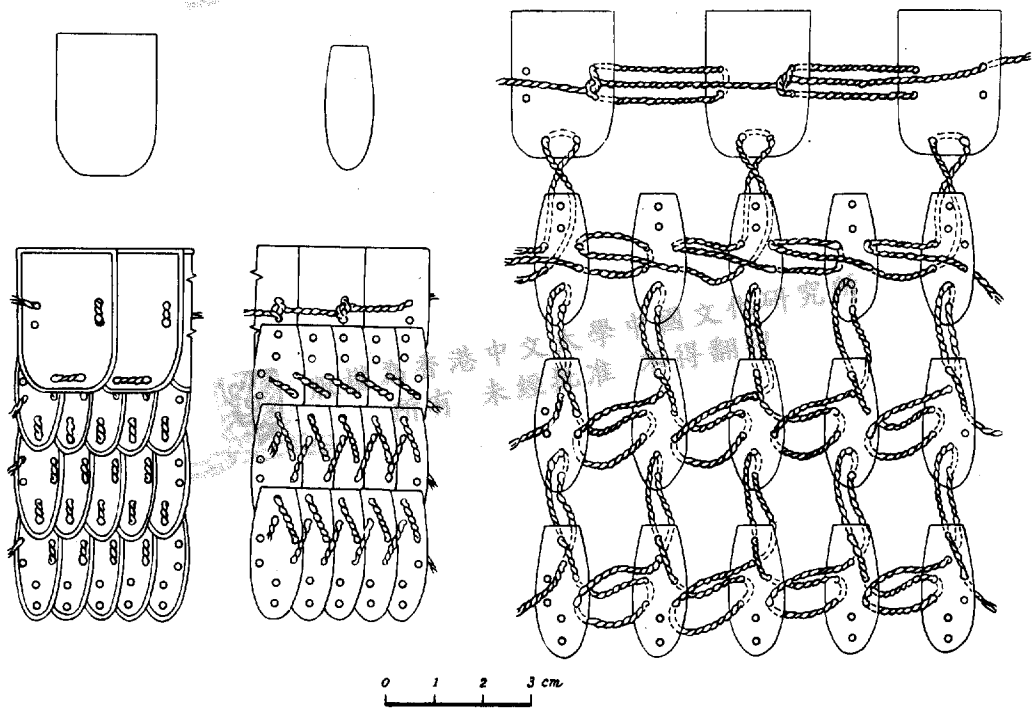


FIGURE 2 Examples of scale armour of Western Han date excavated at Lo-yang (*K'ao-ku hsüeh-pao,* 1963.2: 35) with threading method reconstructed. Lames, or scales, of similar shape and perforation have also been found in Han remains in Inner Mongolia (*Wen-wu,* 1961.9:22). In each case they are made of iron. This form of protective armour does not seem to have been used before Han times.

memorated). If we speak of the time (of this expedition) it very much interfered (with the husbandry of) the people; what was there worthy of it being engraved? Moreover, when a Great State attacks a small one, and takes the spoils to make an article, the regular furniture (of the Ancestral Temple), it engraves upon it its successful achievements to show them to posterity, at once to manifest its own bright virtue, and to hold up to condemnation the offences of the other. But how should anything be made [i.e. how can such matters be inscribed?] of our getting the help of others to save ourselves from death? A small State, we were fortunate against a Great one; but to display our spoils in this manner, so as to excite its rage, is the way to ruin." (Hsiang, 19; Legge, V, p.483)

Although the moralizing aim of the writer may be considered commendable, he has succeeded only in distorting historical facts which now can be properly re-assessed with reference to the same type of inscribed vessels regarding which he himself was supposed to have had considerable knowledge. There are, indeed, several inscriptions which record the successes (功) of States against other States; the content of these texts is, however, precisely what the *Tso-chuan* compiler would class as "the lowest degree" and would consider to be "unworthy of being engraved". The grading of inscription content according to rank and season, of course, is no less imaginative than

the pious opinion that the inscriptions were designed to promote the moral well-being of posterity. In the *Li-chi* an almost identical view is to be noted:

[11] The Ting-cauldrons at the sacrifices had inscriptions on them. The maker of an inscription named himself and took occasion to praise and set forth the excellent qualities of his ancestors, and clearly exhibit them to future generations. Those ancestors must have had good qualities and also bad. But the idea of an inscription is to make mention of the good qualities and not of the bad:- such is the heart of a filial descendant; and it is only the man of ability and virtue who can attain to it.

The inscriber discourses about and panegyrizes the virtues and goodness of his ancestors, their merits and zeal, their services and toils, the congratulations and rewards given to them, their fame recognized by all under Heaven; and in the discussion of these things on his spiritual vessels, he makes himself famous; and thus he sacrifices to his ancestors. In the celebration of his ancestors he exalts his filial piety. Thus he himself appears after them is natural. And in the clear showing of all this to future generations, he is giving instruction.

By the one panegyric of an inscription benefit accrues to the ancestors, to their descendants and to others after them. Hence when a superior man looks at an inscription, while he admires those whom it praises, he also admires him who made it. That maker had intelligence to see the excellences of his ancestors, virtue to associate himself with them, and wisdom to take advantage of his position; – he may be pronounced a man of ability and virtue. Such worth without boasting may be pronounced courteous respect. (*Li-chi*, Chi-t'ung, *KBTK*, XVII, 25.11-12; Legge, 2.251-2)

Throughout all passages in the traditional literature dealing with inscribed ritual vessels, the compilers invariably imply, and often actually describe, the inscriptions as having been *incised* into the metal surface after the artifacts were cast. In some cases where the vessels were the spoil of battle, appropriate inscriptions might certainly have been cut-in to commemorate the event – of this there are several attested instances.[9] Where, however, the inscribed vessel was specially made and the inscription then stated to have been "incised", the writer was, in all probability, speaking in terms of the practice current when he wrote – In Han times cast-in inscriptions were less commonly made, incised inscriptions were the rule.[10] In the *Tso-chuan* the record of the casting of iron Ting-cauldrons in which a penal code was incised (Chao 29; Legge, V, p.732) provides a similar example of the expression of details of an ancient event in terms of techniques currently used in the author's time. The casting of iron implements (but not vessels) was certainly in practice at the time of the penal code story (513 B.C.) and theoretically inscriptions could have been cast-in in iron vessels at a later date, but the *engraving* of even a short inscription in the metal would have been practically impossible. In any case, there is not the slightest archaeological indication of cast-in iron texts. There was only the occasional practice followed by foundry officers who incorporated the one or two characters denoting their ranks in cast-iron moulds. As to the casting of Ting-cauldrons and containers in general in cast-iron earlier than mid Chan-kuo times, there is practically no support from archaeological reports published since the 1920's.[11]

9 Most of these are cited or discussed in a survey of inscriptions pertaining to the State of Ch'u which is at present in preparation. The famous Shou-hsien inscribed series (from Chu-chia-chi 朱家集) unearthed between 1932-3, are for the most part incised and, in all probability, the inscriptions were added many years after the event in commemoration of which the vessels were originally cast. In Chan-kuo times incised inscriptions seem to have been restricted to haphazard records of this kind. Inscriptions of the calibre of the Marquis of Ts'ai series, on the other hand, were invariably cast-in – it is this type of inscription that our traditional text compilers have vaguely and imperfectly in mind so far as the inscription content is concerned.

10 Han incised inscriptions mainly record the capacity of the parent vessels, the year and place of manufacture, and other such mundane data. The décor, too, is often incised.

11 For verification of statements of this kind see the "Table of Sites and Remains" in Barnard and Satō: *Metallurgical Remains of Ancient China*, Nichiōsha Co., Ltd. 日應社, Tokyo, 1974. In this survey are listed all

The more we consider data of this sort – the solid evidence of archaeology as against the literary records – the more evident it becomes that the writers in their assessments of various features pertaining to bronze vessels and their inscriptions, knew very little, indeed, about the subject. A lack of technical knowledge might be deemed excusable in certain instances but it cannot explain away more than a minor part of other misconceptions that issued from their hands. We may only conclude that these early compilers lacked access either to original inscribed vessels or to authoritative accounts of the contents of inscriptions. Information was certainly available at the time traditionally ascribed to the compilation of the passages quoted (i.e. Ch'un-ch'iu to Chan-kuo). The point of particular moment to the historian is, however, the fact that where the writers apparently lacked knowledge of such specific details they did not hesitate to provide information drawn freely from their fertile imaginations. In doing so, however, they incorporated in their accounts features peculiarly characteristic of what would appear to have been the actual period in which they wrote.

The inscriptions and other archaeological materials provide thus a useful means to determine some aspects of the machinations of the Han Confucian literati upon the fragmentary remains of the "classics" which managed to escape the full force of the Ch'in proscriptions. As the inscribed bronzes of Shang, Chou, and Chan-kuo which we can now consult were interred long before either the Ch'in imperialists, or the Han Confucianists, could lay hands on them they possess an historical value of considerable importance. An interesting aspect of this may be noted in respect of the reactions of Han period scholars when confronted with an inscribed bronze of typical Western Chou context. The vessel was uncovered sometime between 74-49 B.C.:

[12*] At this time a Ting-cauldron was obtained from Mei-yang 美陽 and presented to the Emperor; the Officers debated before the Throne and there were many who regarded it as suitable to be placed on view in the Ancestral Temple as was done in the case of the Yüan-ting 元鼎 reign-period find. Chang Ch'ang 張敞 was fond of the study of ancient characters and taking into account the inscription incised in the Ting-cauldron headed the deliberations stating: "... Now this Ting-cauldron was uncovered east of Chi and inside it has an inscription incised which reads: 'The King commanded Shih-ch'en 尸臣 to govern the towns of Tz'u-hsun 此旬. (I) award you a Lüan-bird standard, an embroidered robe, and a carved Ko-dagger-axe. Shih-ch'en made obeisance with his hands, bowed low his head to the ground and said: (I) presume to respond and extol the Son of Heaven's great and illustrious grace and command.' Your Servant, foolish and insufficiently versed thought he be in the interpretation of ancient writing, humbly ventures to speak forth in commentary upon it: This Ting-cauldron is probably a gift bestowed on a high officer of Chou; the high officer's descendants engraved a record of his outstanding merit in the vessel and lodged it in their Temple .... this vessel is small and moreover has an inscription which is not suitable to be placed on view in the Ancestral Temple". (*Han-shu*, Chiao-szu-chih, 25.7-8)

In a long assessment of the significance of the vessel and its inscription Chang Ch'ang further refers to the splendour and important historical associations of an earlier discovered but uninscribed Ting-cauldron, the Yüan-ting vessel, which was "8 feet 1 inch in diameter, 3 feet 6 inches high and entirely different from the general run of Ting-cauldrons" (see passages [30], [31], and [32] below). It was not, however, simply the lack of impressive stature of the Mei-yang vessel which prompted him to advise against its placement in the Imperial Ancestral Temple – the inscription was the deciding factor. If the text of the inscription had been similar to those quoted

---

reliably reported archaeological sites yielding metal artifacts (datable from earliest times to the close of Eastern Han) which have been reported since the Hsin-cheng 新鄭 finds of 1923. Every metal artifact recovered from these controlled finds is recorded in our "Table of Sites and Remains"; distribution maps illustrate chronological patterns of particular significance.

FIGURE 3 An attempt to reconstruct the archaic form of the Mei-yang inscription recorded in the *Han-shu*. Alongside is the text as it appears in currently available editions of the *Han-shu*. The reconstructed "rubbing" comprises characters selected from various inscriptions which have been mounted in sequence. It will be appreciated of course, that the text in lines 1, 2, 6, and 7 is sheer conjecture but some such context would probably have been present in the Mei-yang inscription – or the source consulted by the *Han-shu* compiler for the writing of this passage. I have purposely followed the *Han-shu* "transcription" as closely as possible so as to demonstrate the obvious discrepancies amongst the various gift-terms – to see the text thus in pseudo rubbing form shows immediately the faulty nature of the *Han-shu* rendering. This circumstance does not, however, necessarily imply that the Mei-yang inscription may have been of doubtful authenticity. Rather, we should suggest that the fault lies with the *Han-shu* compiler, or the compilers of the sources he consulted.

earlier, there would probably have been no hesitation in the matter. At the time, the sort of inscription which would have suited the occasion would necessarily have been something which would hardly have been incorporated in ritual bronze vessels made earlier than the Han period. The large Yüan-ting vessel was uninscribed, but came to light in a locality near to the ancient Chou capital – this made it perfectly appropriate to place it in the Imperial Ancestral Temple. However, if we may accept the dimensions recorded in the above passage and the style of décor which is described later, it would seem almost certain that the Yüan-ting vessel was of a type which would be datable no earlier than middle or late Chan-kuo. The inscription in the Mei-yang vessel, on the other hand, is clearly Western Chou in style! Add to all this the possibility – also to be considered in detail later – that the Yüan-ting vessel was in any case a forgery and the dependability of Han period assessments in this field will be apparent.

The transcription of the Mei-yang vessel text given in the *Han-shu* is incomplete – no date is recorded and the "descendants phraseology" is omitted. Chang Ch'ang, in stating that "the high officer's descendants engraved a record of his outstanding merit in the vessel and lodged it in their Temple", would seem to indicate, nevertheless, that the "descendants phraseology" was originally present. However, his transcription of the text actually recorded is not entirely correct in places. The name-title of the investee is certainly erroneously rendered because the character 臣 *ch'en* (archaic form) never appears in the sense of a "high officer" and never as a title placed at the end of a proper name. Probably Chang was confronted with the archaic graph : 小臣 "Hsiao-ch'en Officer" which frequently occurs in the inscriptions – if this was so, then the character transcribed as 官 *kuan* "govern" following it would necessarily have been a proper name. The accuracy attending the transcription of the graph rendered as 此 *tz'u*, which I have translated as part of a place-name, is also open to doubt. The two benefices listed appear in many inscriptions, but in the "extol phraseology" the character 曰 *yüeh* "said" seems somewhat unusual in this location and may simply be an interpolation of Chang's.[12] One must recollect, of course, that the *Han-shu* was compiled between 58-76 A.D., more than a century after this episode, thus the whole story – including the inscription transcription – may have altered in details in its passage through three generations. But it is also possible that the entire passage amounts to little more than one of those numerous anecdotes used by Chinese historians to illustrate points under discussion – the factual material forming the skeleton and the anecdotes (whose origin is usually vague) filling out the flesh. As such the account might well stem from the *Han-shu* author. But whatever the case there is little reason to question the possible authenticity of the Mei-yang inscription.

In the Ch'ien-Han period there is record of only two (or possibly three?) vessels having been discovered – the above vessel from Mei-yang and the uninscribed Yüan-ting vessel already mentioned. Because of the associations of the latter vessel with the mythical "Nine Ting-cauldrons" it is convenient at this stage to devote some attention to the background of this mythical set of cauldrons which has something to offer that is both interesting and informative.

---

12 It will, of course, be immediately evident to the student of inscriptions that curious omissions and inversions of the gift-terms exist here, e.g. "lüan-bird standard" reads *ch'i-lüan* instead of *lüan-ch'i*, "carved Ko-dagger-axe" lacks the character *ko* at the head of the normal three character phrase; possibly my suggested identification of the 黼黻 *fu-fu* term with the inscription phrase 帶屯 *chih-t'un* may be open to question. However, if valid there remains the interesting omission of the two characters 玄衣 *hsüan-yi* "Black robes" which normally precedes the phrase *chih-t'un* in the inscriptions. For a comprehensive and convenient listing of gifts awarded throughout the inscriptions, see Wong Yin-wai 黃然偉, *Yin-Chou t'ung-ch'i shang-tz'u ming-wen yen-chiu* 殷周銅器賞錫銘文研究 (1972 – doctoral thesis, A.N.U., at present unpublished).

2. The Nine Ting-cauldrons and the Discoveries of Ch'ien-Han Date

China's first bronze founder was no less a worthy than Huang-ti 黃帝 the "Yellow Emperor" who, we are told in the *Shih-chi* 史記 [13] "made three precious Ting-cauldrons representing Heaven, Earth, and Mankind" (Takigawa's edition, IV, 28.62). This same lengendary Emperor is credited with the invention of the musical scale and a series of bronze bells that toned with it [14] "Anciently Huang-ti upon the basis of the modulation of sounds created the Five Tones to govern the pitches of the Five Bells" (*Kuan-tzu* 管子, Wu-hsing pien, *KBTK*, XXI, 14.18). Another authority informs us, however, that Huang-ti [15] "commanded Ling Lun 伶倫 and Jung Chiang 榮將 to cast the Twelve Bells in order to harmonize the Five Tones" (*Lü-shih Ch'un-ch'iu* 呂氏春秋, Ku-yüeh pien, 1:5.9a).[13] A 4th century A.D. writer, Wang Chia 王嘉, elaborated upon this theme in a rather extravagant way:

[16] The Emperor (Huang-ti) cast vessels from "spirit metal" each with inscriptions which were transmitted down the centuries to be examined by the numerous ministers of later times. The inscriptions were written entirely in characters of high antiquity but the greater proportion of the texts became obliterated and lost. Every article made and all edifices constructed had recorded on them their dates of manufacture. (*Shih-yi-chi, Han-Wei ts'ung-shu,* vol.32, 1.4a)

The custom of incising dated inscriptions on bronze vessels wherein was also recorded their measurements and capacity commenced in Han times; so, too, the dating of tomb bricks.

Yü 禹, the great-grandson of Huang-ti, not content with his stupendous efforts in controlling the flood-waters of the Yellow River and establishing thus the imperishable virtue that was ever to be associated with his name, caused to be cast the famous Nine Ting-cauldrons 九鼎 which in the ensuing centuries were to function as a sort of dynastic barometer.

[17] The Viscount of Ch'u 楚 asked him (Wang-sun Man 王孫滿) about the size and weight of the Ting-cauldrons. Man replied: "The strength of the kingdom depends on the sovereign's virtue and not on the Ting-cauldrons. Anciently when Hsia 夏 was distinguished for its virtue, the distant regions sent pictures of the remarkable objects in them. The Nine Pastors 九牧 sent in the metal of their Provinces and the Ting-cauldrons were cast, with representations on them of those objects. All the objects were represented, and instructions were given of the preparations to be made in reference to them, so that the people might know the sprites and evil things. Thus the people when they went among the rivers, marshes, hills, and forests, did not meet with the injurious things, and the hill-sprites, monstrous things, and water-sprites, did not meet with them to do them injury. Hereby a harmony was secured between the high and the low, and all enjoyed the blessing of Heaven. When the virtue of Chieh 桀 of Hsia was all-obscured, the Ting-cauldrons were transferred to Shang, for 600 years. Chou 紂 of Shang proved cruel and oppressive, and they were transferred to Chou 周. When the virtue is commendable and brilliant, the Ting-cauldrons, though they were small, would be heavy; when it gives place to its reverse, to darkness and disorder, though they were large, they would be light. Heaven blesses intelligent virtue; – on that its favour rests. King Ch'eng 成王 fixed the Ting-cauldrons in Chia-ju 郟鄏, and divined that the dynasty should extend through 30 reigns, over 700 years. Though the virtue of Chou is decayed, the decree of Heaven is not yet changed. The weight of the Ting-cauldrons may not yet be inquired about." (*Tso-chuan,* Hsüan 3: Legge, V, p.293)

13 Although the bell appears to be a Chinese invention it is at present perfectly evident that it does not have the degree of antiquity ascribed to it by the above cited sources; in Shang times the Ling-jingle 鈴 is commonly found and occasionally Yao-bells 鐃 in sets of three graded sizes. Generally towards the latter half of Western Chou the "true" Chinese Chung-bell 鐘 makes its appearance. In late Ch'un-ch'iu and Chan-kuo Chung-bells in sets of 13 of graded sizes and tone frequently have come to light (see *Metallurgical Remains of Ancient China* for full details and distribution patterns). Musicological assessments of the traditional text data with reference to the actual numbers of bells in sets excavated from various Eastern Chou sites is yet to be systematically undertaken.

Yü's son and successor, Hou K'ai 后開 , was likewise an enthusiastic promoter of the manufacture of bronze vessels. Mo-tzu 墨子 tells us that he [18a] "despatched Fei Lien 蜚廉 to quarry metal in the hills and streams, then moulds were constructed and casting of the metal was undertaken at K'un-wu 昆吾 ." (Keng-chu, *KBTK*, XIV, 11.31). He appears to be the last of the Hsia sovereigns to whom any reference is made in the traditional literature in connection with the casting of bronze but, with an inconsistency typical of the ancient writings, Mo-tzu records him as the creator of the Nine Ting-cauldrons! The account continues to describe the Ting-cauldrons as being [18b] "square in shape, with three legs; they would boil without firing, set themselves correctly without lifting, and move themselves without being shifted". Han period scholars sought to interpret the "three legs" as representing the Three Virtues 三德 , thus demonstrating that the texts they used did, indeed, have the figure "three" recorded. With their preoccupation with philosophical rather than practical matters, they were not particularly concerned that a square vessel would naturally require *four* legs! Later scholars such as Wang Nien-sun 王念孫 and Wang Yin-chih 王引之 took the trouble to consider archaeological evidence published in one of the Sung Catalogues, the *Po-ku-t'u* 博古圖 , and sought to clarify the obvious discrepancy in a logical way. The Japanese commentator in the *KBTK* edition shrewdly observes that archaic 亖 "four" could easily have been mistaken for 三 "three" when the original text was transcribed in Han times.[14] Mo-tzu's account of the passage of the Ting-cauldrons through the dynasties, which is guised in the form of a divination oracle, finishes thus:

[18c] When the Nine Ting-cauldrons are completed they will pass through the Three Kingdoms 三國 : the Hou clan of Hsia will lose them, the people of Yin 殷 (i.e. Shang) will receive them; when the people of Yin lose them they will come into the possession of the people of Chou. The passage of the vessels through Hsia, Yin, and Chou will take place at intervals of several centuries. (*KBTK*, XIV, 11.32-4)

With the advent of Shang some 15 monarchs were to reign one after another before the traditional texts record any further reference to bronze vessels or to their manufacture. The Emperor T'ien Yi 天乙 , or as he is more generally known, Ch'eng T'ang 成湯 , apparently employed a three-legged ritual vessel in a rain-making ceremony: [19] "In his twenty-fourth year there was a great drought; the King sacrificed in a mulberry grove – it rained." (*Current Bamboo Annals* 今本竹書紀年 , 5.46). This event is also recorded in the *Shuo-yüan* 說苑 and with mention of a Ting-cauldron; several other sources such as *Hsün-tzu* 荀子 , *Huai-nan-tzu* 淮南子 , *Lü-shih Ch'un-ch'iu*, etc. also present varying versions. In his reconstructed *Shang-Yin ti-wang pen-chi* 商殷帝王本紀 "The Imperial Records of the Shang-Yin Dynasty", Chou Hung-hsiang 周鴻翔 has the following account compiled upon the basis of the above and other relevant sources:

[20] From the time of T'ang's attack on Chieh there was a great drought lasting several years; the Lo 洛 area was devastated – the sands simmered and rocks crumbled with the heat. In the twenty-fourth year of his reign he despatched a man with a three-legged Ting-cauldron to make sacrifices to the hills and streams . . . . (p.57)

Ssu-ma Ch'ien in his Annals of Shang (Yin pen-chi, I, 3.6) tells us of an officer of the Emperor T'ien Yi carrying a Ting-cauldron, while in the *Grand Preface of the Shu* is record of a pheasant

14 If the Nine Ting-cauldrons were actually square in shape (i.e. Fang-Ting 方鼎) they could not, upon the basis of our present knowledge of the archaeological scene, be ascribed to a period earlier than Late Shang – or, at the earliest, Middle Shang. It is accordingly useful to consider the possibility here that if Mo-tzu's text is in error less emphasis should be given to the number of legs and further thought should be given to the vessel shape – possibly "square" is in error for "round"?

alighting upon the lug of a Ting-cauldron during a sacrifice made to T'ien Yi by the Emperor Wu Ting 武丁 (known also as Kao Tsung 高宗):

[21] Wu Ting was sacrificing to T'ang, when a pheasant flew upon the handle of a Ting-cauldron and crowed. Wu Ting asked Tsu Chi 且己 what it meant, who replied: "The pheasant is a wild bird, and ought not to mount the Ting-cauldron. His doing so now shows that it wants to be employed. Shall we not have people from the distant regions coming to the court?" On this Wu Ting examined himself, and reflected upon the ways of the Former Kings; and in three years envoys with twisted hair, who needed an interpreter, came to court from six kingdoms. Confucius said, "I have observed how speedily virtue is rewarded in what is related of Wu Ting and the day of his supplementary sacrifice". (Legge, III, p.265)

The passages quoted thus far serve to indicate the nature and extent of imaginative elaboration most effectively because of the high antiquity of the periods in which the accounts are placed. Huang-ti reigned 2697-2596 B.C., Yü 2205-2198, and Hou K'ai 2197-89 according to the orthodox chronology and general tradition – from the point of view of the archaeologist these rulers were well and truly in Yang-shao times. Metal was then unknown in China. T'ien Yi founded the Shang dynasty and reigned from 1766-54 B.C., thus somewhat before the Early Shang cultures of Cheng-chou, Hui-hsien, Yen-shih, etc. – we would surely have to regard him as a Lung-shan or Ch'i-chia period figure. It is possible that he might have seen a few copper artifacts in the shape of castings of small implements and ornaments – certainly some of his successors reigning a century or two later in Late Lung-shan (Ch'i-chia) cultural times would have known the beginnings of metallurgy but even here, say *circa* 1600 B.C., nothing so complex as a Chia- or Chüeh-wine-cup let alone a Ting-cauldron would have been manufactured.[15] T'ien Yi and his successors are nearly all attested in the oracle bones but the lengths of reigns ascribed to each are to be found only in sources compiled about a thousand years after the fall of dynasty.

Wu Ting (1324-1266 B.C.) reigned when the bronze culture at Anyang was attaining its highest level. Possibly about this time the Shang founders may have first experimented with the casting of square-shaped vessels. We may accordingly remark that the above passage from the *Grand Preface of the Shu,* compiled probably in Han times, is reliable only in so far as it speaks of a bird alighting upon one of the lugs of a Ting-cauldron – both birds and Ting-cauldrons would have been available in Wu Ting's time.

---

15 In some recent writings it has become the practice to date the probable discovery of metallurgy in China in the vicinity of 2000 B.C. Ho Ping-ti in his forthcoming survey, *The Cradle of the East: An Inquiry into the Indigenous Origins of Techniques and Ideas of Neolithic and Early Historic China, 5000-1000 B.C.* (advance copy of Chapter Five) speaks in terms of an upper chronological boundary of the Ch'i-chia culture "somewhere about 2000 B.C., possibly slightly earlier" in relation to the Wu-wei copper artifacts. I am also inclined to take the same view now. One of the major stumbling blocks in arriving at more precise estimates, however, is the complete lack of carbon-14 dates in China. Recent findings amongst various ceramic cultures bordering China result in radiocarbon dates as far back as 10-12,000 years B.P. It is the influence of a rapidly growing fund of such data that allows working hypotheses now for a much earlier appearance of metallurgy in China (see *Early Chinese Art and its Possible Influence in the Pacific Basin,* my Introduction, p.XL).* The parallelling of traditional datings with archaeological cultural strata as offered above is presented mainly as a matter of interest – even if we should be able to claim an earlier date for the beginnings of metallurgy in China, these parallels will still be valid in principle.

Just as the present paper was going to press, the first group of radiocarbon dates from several Chinese archaeological sites has been published in *K'ao-ku* 1972. 1:52-6; 5:56-8. A detailed appraisal of their significance appears in my recently published survey *The First Radiocarbon Dates from China (Monographs on Far Eastern History,* No.8); see also *Metallurgical Remains of Ancient China,* Fig. 17.

* Attention is drawn to my statement in the Bibliography of the present paper, p.527, as Editor regarding the highly unethical conduct of the parties concerned in respect of the publication of this work.

To continue the story of the Nine Ting-cauldrons we arrive now at their passage from Shang to Chou: [22] "When Wu Wang 武王 vanquished Shang, he removed the Nine Ting-cauldrons to the City of Lo 洛". (*Tso-chuan,* Huan 2; Legge, V, p.40). As the commentators have observed, there is a definite inconsistency here – the City of Lo did not exist during Wu Wang's lifetime and it was not established until shortly after his death by Chou Kung 周公 who was then acting as Regent during the minority of Ch'eng Wang. Most other references to the matter agree in that the removal was effected in Ch'eng Wang's time. Ssu-ma Ch'ien, for instance, writes of the building of the City of Lo and the lodging of the cauldrons therein by the Duke of Chou shortly after he handed over the Kingdom to Ch'eng Wang (Chou pen-chi, I, 4.39 [23]). Notwithstanding this obvious textual error in the *Tso-chuan* one commentator, who observes quite correctly that in the writings of the ancients there are many cases of such highly general statements, goes on to condone the situation in the following manner – the removal of the cauldrons was effected as a result of the conquest of Shang; the defeat of the latter was the work of Wu Wang; as one cannot say that "Ch'eng Wang vanquished the Shang" in association with "the removal of the cauldrons to the City of Lo", the association had to be made with Wu Wang (*KBTK,* X, 2.17 [24]!

When the decline of Chou set in in full earnest evidence of the fact was manifested by the Cauldrons which vibrated thunderously in the twenty-third year of the reign of King Wei Lieh 威烈王 because of the division of Chin 晉 into the States of Han 韓, Wei 魏 and Chao 趙 (Chou pen-chi, I, 4.79 [25]). In the last days of Chou, already itself divided into two, Tung Chou 東周 and Hsi Chou 西周, the rapidly growing power, Ch'in 秦, was eyeing the Nine Ting-cauldrons enviously. The story of their falling into Ch'in's hands is recorded in some detail in the *Chan-kuo ts'e:*

[26] Ch'in had raised an army and was threatening Chou and demanded possession of the Nine Ting-cauldrons; the Lord of Chou 周君 was distressed about this and brought the matter to the attention of Yen Shuai 顏率. Yen Shuai said: "Great King, do not grieve; Your Servant will make overtures to the east and request assistance from Ch'i 齊."

Upon arriving in Ch'i, Yen Shuai said to the King of Ch'i: "Ch'in is devoid of principles, she is about to raise an army and is threatening Chou and demanding possession of the Nine Ting-cauldrons. The Lord of Chou and his Ministers are closeted planning amongst themselves. Rather than to give them to Ch'in; it would be better to render the vessels to you, a Major State, although to maintain our possession of them when this endangers our State promotes its good name. Capture of the Nine Ting-cauldrons by Ch'in would, however, be of immense profit to that State. I trust, Great King, that you will deal with this problem." The King of Ch'i, exceedingly pleased, despatched an army of 50,000 men under (T'ien) Ch'en-Ssu (田) 臣思 of Ch'en to relieve Chou and the army of Ch'in retired.

Ch'i thereupon began to demand the Nine Ting-cauldrons; the Lord of Chou was again distressed about them. Yen Shuai said: "Great King do not grieve; Your Servant will make overtures to the east to release you from anxiety."

Upon arriving in Ch'i, Yen Shuai said to the King of Ch'i: "Chou is dependent upon the integrity of you, a Major State – rulers and their ministers, fathers and sons, must look after the interests of each other; we are willing to offer the Nine Ting-cauldrons to you but are uncertain as to what route should be followed to ensure their safe arrival in Ch'i."

The King of Ch'i said: "I shall ask permission of Liang 梁 to take the Vessels through her territory." Yen Shuai said: "That is impossible, the Lord and ministers of Liang desire to possess the Nine Ting-cauldrons and for a long time have been plotting to this end below Hui-t'ai 卑臺 and above Shao-hai 少海. Once the Vessels enter the territory of Liang there is no assurance that they will come out."

The King of Ch'i said: "I shall ask permission of Ch'u 楚 to take the Vessels through her territory." Yen Shuai replied: "That is impossible, the Lord and ministers of Ch'u desire to possess the Nine Ting-cauldrons and for a long time have been plotting to this end in She-t'ing 葉庭. Should the Vessels enter Ch'u there is no assurance that they will come out."

The King said: "What route, then, should be followed to ensure their safe arrival in Ch'i?" Yen Shuai said: "Our humble city has, indeed, been privately worried about this matter on your behalf, Great King. These Vessels are not like ordinary vinegar-jars or sauce-containers which can be carried clutched to the body or gripped in the hands; they cannot proceed like birds going to roost or crows flying, hares gambolling or horses ambling, and thus of their own accord reach Ch'i. Anciently when Chou invaded Yin and took possession of the Nine Ting-cauldrons, fully 90,000 men were needed to haul one of the Vessels; nine times nine – 810,000 men for the whole task. Armed knights, foot-soldiers, machines and equipment – all such as these had to be supplied. Granted that you, Great King, had the man-power, by what route can they be brought out? Your Servant has, himself, felt misgivings on your behalf, Great King."

The King of Ch'i said: "For all your several journeys here it seems as if you have had no intention of giving up the Vessels." Yen Shuai said: "I would not presume to cheat you, a Major State; but please quickly decide upon a route by which they can safely be brought in and my humble city will await your commands to remove the Vessels to Ch'i."

Thereupon the King of Ch'i ceased his attempts to procure them. (*Chan-kuo ts'e,* Tung-chou, *KBTK,* XIX, 2.1-3)

Diplomatic manoeuvres of this kind, however, were insufficient for the continued possession of the Cauldrons by the remnants of Chou; in the fifty-first year of the reign of King Chao Hsiang 昭襄 of Ch'in (256 B.C.), the Lord of Western Chou took action against Ch'in in concert with other States, but the venture failed and the Lord of Western Chou surrendered himself abjectly to Ch'in offering the 36 cities of his domain together with their 30,000 inhabitants – the gift was naturally accepted. This same year, it is interesting to note, was that in which Liu Chi 劉季, the future Emperor Kao-tsu 高祖 of the Han dynasty, was born – his birth approximating thus almost precisely with the extinction of the Chou dynasty. In the following year the people of Chou fled to the East; the Imperial Treasures and the Nine Ting-cauldrons came into the hands of Ch'in (Ch'in pen-chi, I, 5.79 [27]). A commentator on this passage of the *Shih-chi* observes that while Ch'in was obviously wanting the Vessels as a symbol of her coming ascendancy over the Empire and for the building of a dynasty she did, in fact, receive only eight of the Vessels; one, a further commentator observes, fell into the river Hsi 泗. Later in the Ch'in pen-chi, is an account of Shih Huang Ti's 始皇帝 attempt to recover the lost Vessel just after having despatched some thousands of young men and women over the seas in search of the immortals (僊人):

[28] Shih Huang Ti returned and passing by Pang-ch'eng 彭城 purified himself, offered prayers and sacrifices. Wishing to retrieve the Ting-cauldron of Chou from the waters of the Hsi he sent a thousand men plunging into the river in search of it but it was not recovered. (II, 6.40)

In another section of the *Shih-chi* Ssu-ma Ch'ien does not seem to be too sure about the fate of the Vessels:

[29] .... 120 years thereafter Ch'in vanquished Chou. The Nine Ting-cauldrons of Chou came into the hands of Ch'in. Another version relates: "When the T'ai-ch'iu Altar 太丘社 of the State of Sung was destroyed (336 B.C.) the Ting-cauldrons were submerged in the River Hsi below Pang-ch'eng." (IV, 28.18)

A long commentary follows the *Shih-chi* text here wherein Takigawa attempts to assess the truth of the matter. As his argument is concerned also with passages shortly to be quoted we shall leave aside the problem attending these inconsistencies for the moment. It is, nevertheless, sufficiently evident that the story of the Cauldrons was one which appealed much to the early Han writers. The theme was quite popularly employed, too, in engraved tomb bricks. There are several examples illustrating Shih Huang Ti's attempt to raise the Ting-cauldron of Chou from the River Hsi (Figure 4) but as will be noted later there is some doubt that this was indeed one of the Nine Ting-

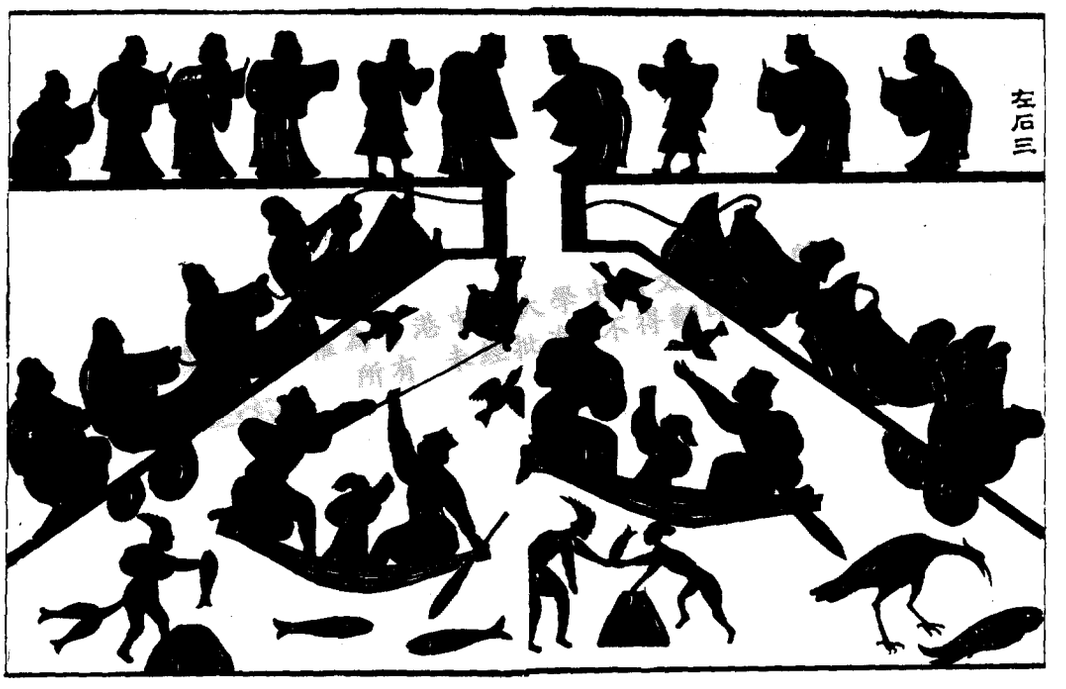


FIGURE 4 A block-print version of the engraved slab from the Wu family tomb depicting Shih Huang Ti's attempts to raise the Ting-cauldrons of Chou from the River Hsi. (After *Chin-shih-so*, 4 [pages unnumbered].)

cauldrons. It may be observed that the vessel-type drawn in these Han illustrations is, not surprisingly, characteristic of late Eastern Chou and Han.

If we turn our attention now to Ssu-ma Ch'ien's account of the discovery of a Ting-cauldron which took place in his lifetime (145-86 B.C.) and about a decade prior to his being commissioned to compile the *Shih-chi* (104 B.C.), we may observe in this long passage dealing with events of only a few years before, the compiler's method of building up the flesh of the story upon a skeleton of fact. As is customary in the ancient writings, the greatest amount of elaboration is effected in philosophical and didactic speeches wherein the Confucian propagandistic aspect of Chinese historiography finds its often unbridled expression. In straightforward descriptive accounts a feeling of some confidence in the integrity of the historian is often inspired, but immediately the historical characters open their mouths we find ourselves confronted by the Han Confucian clique, and contact with the past becomes distorted or lost.

[30] In the summer of this year (113 B.C.), in the sixth month, the sorceress, Chin 錦 of Fen-yin 汾陰, was conducting sacrifices at Shuai 睢 in Wei 魏 on behalf of the common people when she observed that part of the ground on the side of the embankment of the (altar to) Sovereign Earth 后土 formed a hook-shape; upon excavation they obtained a Ting-cauldron which differed greatly from the general run of Ting-cauldrons. It was decorated with rope-pattern designs and was uninscribed; astonished at the discovery she spoke of it to the magistrate who reported the matter to Sheng 勝, Governor of Ho-tung 河東. Sheng informed the Son of Heaven who despatched an official to enquire into the witch's finding of the vessel. There being no question of treachery or deceit the sacrifices were continued in accordance with the rites and the Son of Heaven went to receive the vessel accompanying it as far as Kan-ch'üan 甘泉 where he offered it to Heaven.

When he reached Chung-shan 中山 the sky was clear and calm with a yellow cloud in the shape of a lid; a deer passed by and the Emperor shot it himself offering it in sacrifice. When they arrived at Ch'ang-an 長安 the Dukes of the Palace, the High Officers, and the Great Officers 公卿大夫 deliberated together and unanimously requested that honour be paid to the valuable Ting-cauldron.

The Son of Heaven said: "Recently the Huang Ho has flooded and often the harvests have not been successful thus have I sacrificed during this tour before the altars of Sovereign Earth entreating on behalf of the people fruition of the crops. But the present harvest is not yet reported as abundant. Why then has this Ting-cauldron come to light?"

The Officers replied in concert: "It is known that in antiquity when the Eminent Emperor 泰帝 [Fu Hsi 伏犧?] flourished there was one divine Ting-cauldron – 'one' (signified) 'Unity': Heaven, Earth, and the Myriad Beings 萬物 were interwoven. Huang-ti made the Three Precious Ting-cauldrons representing Heaven, Earth and Humanity; Yü accumulated metals from the Nine Pastors 九牧 and cast the Nine Ting-cauldrons with which offerings were cooked in sacrifice to Shang-ti 上帝, the Spirits 鬼, and the Gods 神. Thus whenever a Sage comes on the scene the Ting-cauldrons appear. They were transmitted to Hsia and then to Shang. When the virtue of Chou declined and the Altars of Sung 宋, the descendants of Shang, were lost the Ting-cauldrons fell into the waters where they were covered and lost to sight. In an ode it is stated:

In his silken robes, clean and bright,
With his cap on his head, looking so respectful,
From the hall he goes to the foot of the stairs,
And from the sheep to the oxen.
He inspects the tripods, large 鼎 and small 鼏.
The good spirits are mild;
There is no noise, no insolence:-
An auspice, all this, of great longevity.

(Legge, IV, p.605)

Now that the Ting-cauldron has reached Kan-ch'üan it gives forth a lustrous light with scintillating colours of the dragon's scales – this portends bestowal of unlimited favour. While at Chung-shan a cloud of yellow and white descended in the shape of a lid; a beast – also a portent – appeared and was despatched with a great bow 路弓 and a discharge of four arrows 乘矢; these were placed together at the foot of the altar, a report made and blessings requested and a grand sacrifice conducted. Only he who has received the Mandate and is Emperor knows in his mind the purpose of all this and can harmonize it with virtue. The Ting-cauldron should be placed on view in the Imperial Ancestral Temple and stored in the Imperial Hall, thus to accord with this brilliant favour."

An Imperial Rescript was made in approval. (Feng-shen shu, *PL*, 28.17b-18b; *cf.* also the earlier version of this story as it appears in the *Shih-chi* [IV. 28, 61-63] – the two versions are practically identical)

In the Han-shu 漢書 (compiled 58-76 A.D.) the discovery is referred to several times:

[31*] Yüan-ting 元鼎 reign-period, the first year (116 B.C.), in the summer, the fifth month, an amnesty was granted throughout the empire and there was to be universal drinking for five days. A Ting-cauldron was obtained at the Fen 汾 River. (*Han-shu*, Wu-ti-chi, 6.15b)

[32*] Yüan-ting reign-period, the fourth year (113 B.C.) .... in the sixth month, a precious Ting-cauldron was obtained at the side of the Sacrificial Hall to Sovereign Earth; in the autumn, a horse was born in the Wu-wa River 渥洼 and the songs "The Precious Ting-cauldron" and the "Heavenly Horse" were composed. (*Ibid.* 6.17a)

The first entry is considered by some commentators to be either an error or, more likely, an adjustment of fact arranged to suit the reign-period title *Yüan-ting* "Large Ting-cauldron" – the reasoning being that the title would have surely been based upon such a discovery. If, however, a manipulation of this kind had indeed been effected, we might well wonder that the compiler would

have been so naive as to maintain both entries only a couple of pages apart. In all probability, the 116 B.C. record is correct in that a different cauldron came to light while the later find in 113 B.C., which caused quite a stir at the time, was instrumental in a decision being made to name the reign-period title with the appropriate term Yüan-ting.

That two vessels might have been found in the same general area could hardly be considered unusual. What is remarkable, however, is that the cauldron discovered by the sorceress was in practically the same place where a crafty courtier, Hsin-yüan P'ing 新垣平 , had informed the Emperor Hsiao-wen 孝文 37 years before that he had seen the "precious emanation of metal". It was here, he affirmed, that the (Nine) Ting-cauldrons of Chou lost in the River Hsi had finally lodged. The Emperor, apparently no less credulous than the present occupant of the Throne, built a temple on the spot hoping to raise the sacred Cauldrons by means of prayers. Hsin-yüan's deceits were shortly after discovered, he plotted rebellion, and was executed (IV, 28.44 [33]). Takigawa quotes here a Japanese commentary wherein it is suggested that this vessel was a forgery perpetrated by Hsin-yüan (he had already conveniently found an inscribed jade cup with the inscription "Prolonged life to the Lord of Men" which is likewise taken to be a fake, IV, 28.61 [34]). The opinion that the vessel was planted seems quite reasonable. The commentator goes on to say that he had buried it and was waiting for it to gain an aged appearance; after sacrifices had been made he intended to bring it to light, but he was executed and the vessel remained hidden until the sorceress's discovery.

Some description of the Fen-yin vessel is recorded. In the above passage it is stated that "it differed greatly from the general run of Ting-cauldrons, was decorated with rope-patterns and was uninscribed". In the *Han-shu* its unique appearance is again observed and measurements given: [35] "The Ting-cauldron was 8 feet 1 inch in diameter and 3 feet 6 inches in height" (Chiao-ssu-chih 郊祀記 , 25.8a). That it gave forth "a lustrous light with scintillating colour of the dragon's scales" may possibly indicate a practically uncorroded metal surface. The general description suggests immediately an Eastern Chou or Han style vessel of rather squat proportions (see Figure 5), but the intriguing problem lies in the unfamiliar appearance it held in the eyes of the Han writers. Although the description is too briefly worded to allow a reliable assessment to be made, it would seem, nevertheless, that the variant features are, indeed, noted – the rope-pattern designs and the lack of an inscription. Ting-cauldrons most familiar to the writers would naturally be those currently manufactured. These were often inscribed with a legend recording the year of make and the capacity of the vessel, but very seldom were they decorated. If the Ting-cauldron was a genuine Chan-kuo period artifact, it would certainly thus have caused a stir upon stylistic grounds *in the absence of* comparable examples of earlier bronze vessels. If we were to assume, however, that Han writers knew something of the styles and décor in bronze vessels prevailing prior to the Ch'in unification – more than a century before the discovery of this vessel – their reaction can be accounted for only in terms of *(a)* the cauldron differed from available Chan-kuo Ting-cauldrons and also *(b)* it had little in common with those manufactured around the time of the find. In present day measurements: diam.: 186.6cm, height (including lugs?): 82.9cm – the low, elongated form as reconstructed in Figure 5 contrasts considerably with the several other large vessels accompanying it and drawn to the same scale. Possibly this aspect of the vessel, more than its other features, gave rise to the general consternation amongst those who observed it. In such circumstances the possibility of it being a fraudulent artifact fabricated by Hsin-yüan P'ing, or even by some other person may be seriously entertained. Whatever way we view the situation, however, it is apparent that very little, indeed, was known about the subject. If the Fen-yin vessel was actually a forgery, the faker would have had minimal difficulty in palming off his creation –

provided it was unusual and ancient in appearance, it would be almost unhesitatingly accepted. It may be observed that Han period people were no less gullible and no less easily duped in this respect than were many of their descendants over the ensuing 2000 years.

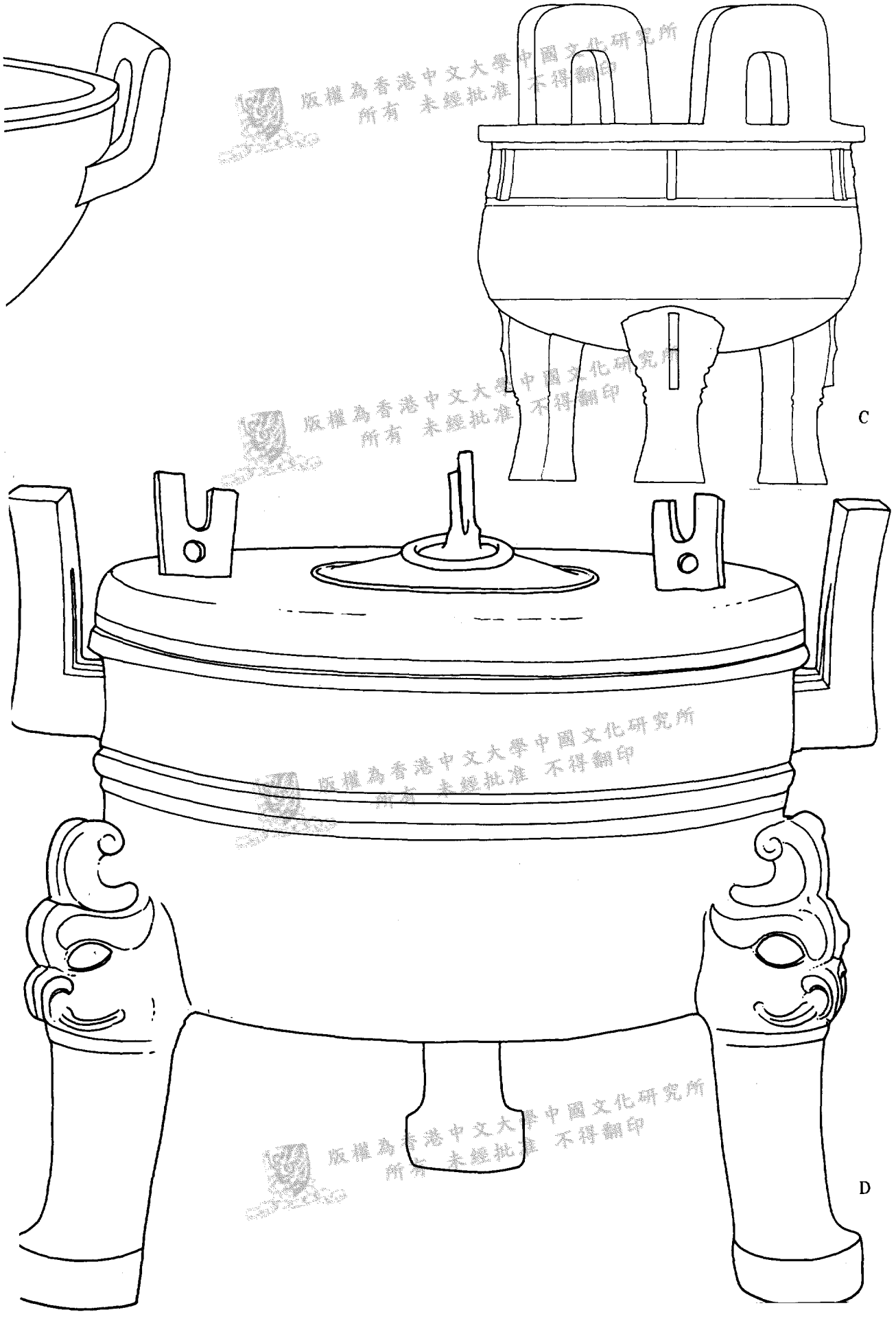
In this connection, we should place on record here the following account of Wu-ch'iu Shou-wang 吾丘壽王 in the biographical section of the *Han-shu*. Shou-wang is stated there to have been the only Minister who expressed the opinion that the Fen-yin Ting-cauldron was not of Chou origin:

[36] When it came about that a valuable Ting-cauldron was obtained from Fen-yin, the Emperor Wu admired it, placed it on display in the Imperial Ancestral Temple and had it lodged later in the Kan-ch'üan Palace. All the Ministers sent up their congratulations, stating: "Your Majesty has indeed a Ting-cauldron of the Chou Dynasty". Shou-wang alone expressed the opinion: "This is not a Chou period Ting-cauldron". The Emperor came to hear of it, summoned him, and questioned him, saying: "Recently we came into the possession of a Chou period Ting-cauldron. The Ministers are all of the opinion that it is of this period. You, Shou-wang, alone consider it is not. Upon what grounds have you arrived at this conclusion? If you have a reasonable explanation, well and good; if not you die". Shou-wang replied: "How should Your Servant presume to advance groundless opinions? Your Servant is aware that the virtue of Chou originated from Hou-chi 后稷, grew to maturity in Kung-liu 公劉, gained stature with T'ai-wang 太王, was perfected by the Kings Wen 文 and Wu 武 and was made illustrious by the Duke of Chou 周公. The virtuous favour on high is bright and throughout the Empire seeps its springs – nowhere does it fail to reach. Above, Heaven sends down its retribution. The Ting-cauldron has appeared because of Chou thus is it termed 'the Ting-cauldron of Chou'. Now, since the time of Kao-tsu 高祖 [founder of the dynasty] Han has succeeded Chou and the brilliant virtue has become illustriously manifested, kindness displayed, and tender mercy bestowed. Everywhere there is harmony and unity. Right up into the reign of Your Majesty a great and extensive ancestral heritage has thus resulted. Merit and virtue have increasingly flourished, the good omens from Heaven have arrived and rare portents have appeared. Anciently, Ch'in Shih Huang Ti attempted to raise the Ting-cauldron at Peng-ch'eng but was not able to recover it. Heaven favours the virtuous and then the valuable Ting-cauldron appears of its own accord. This is on account of Heaven's approval of Han – the Ting-cauldron is the treasure of Han, not the treasure of Chou." The Emperor said: "Fine!" And all the Ministers shouted in praise: "Bravo! [*wan-sui*]". On this day Shou-wang was awarded ten *chin* of yellow gold. Later he became involved in an affair and was punished. (*Ch'ien Han-shu*, Wu-ch'iu Shou-wang chuan, 64A, 15b-16a)

This is, of course, not a case of questioning the authenticity or the date of the vessel but merely a cunning though somewhat risky strategem to curry favour. When reviewed critically, however, the account provides further illustration of the type of "padding" which the Chinese historian applies so often in his writing. A story of this kind would, in all probability, have been almost entirely fabricated by the writer.

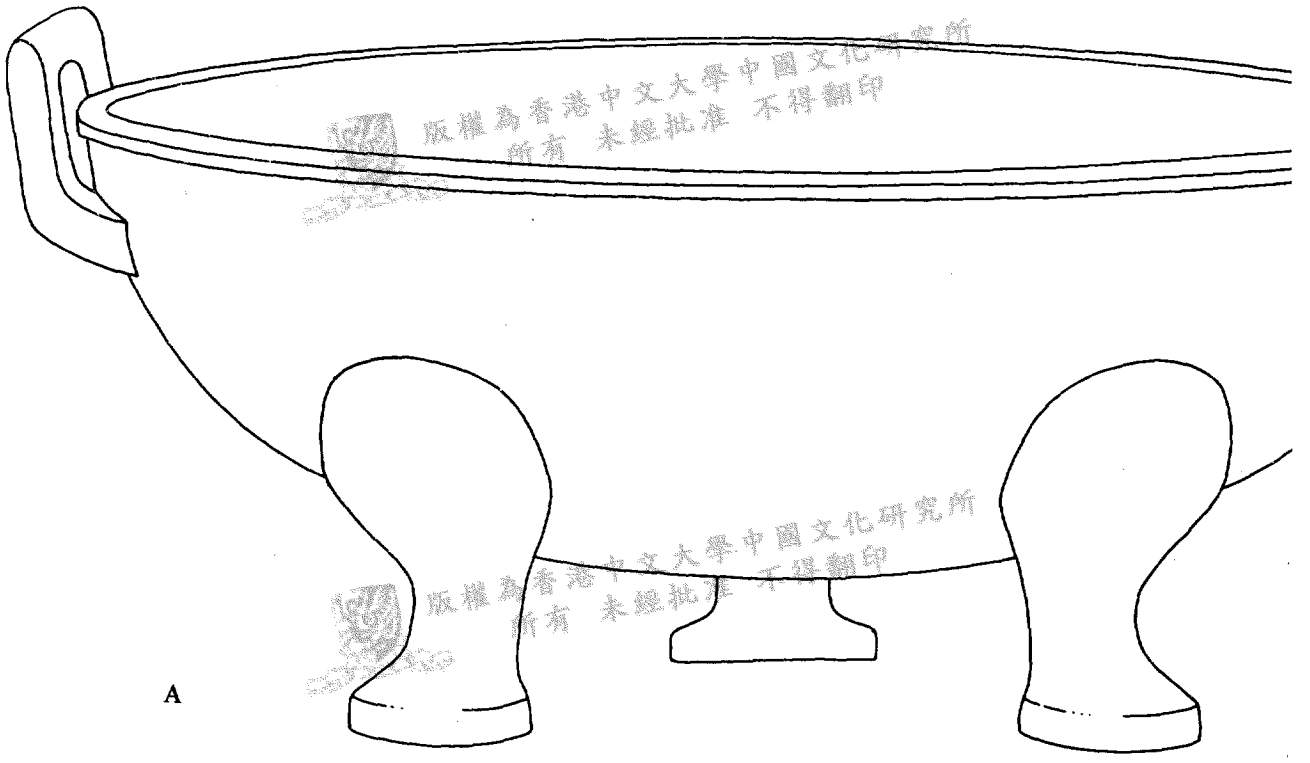
Wang Ch'ung 王充 (A.D. 27-97?) brings a short breath of fresh air into this otherwise normal scene of fantasy and condemns the fiction of supernatural qualities attributed to the Ting-cauldrons of Chou. He accepts their earlier existence, but attempts to view their history in a critical manner quite unusual for so early a time. After a series of observations upon the conflicting stories surrounding the Nine Ting-cauldrons he comments:

[37] Probably at this time, at the collapse of Chou, the troops of General Chui 掇 of Ch'in saw the Cauldrons and stole them and some miscreants melted down the vessels in order to make other articles. When Shih Huang Ti enquired for them they could not be found. Thereafter on account of it being said that they possessed divine qualities the story of their submergence in the River Hsi was given birth to upon no tangible basis. (*Lun-heng*, Ju-tseng pien, II, 8.8a)

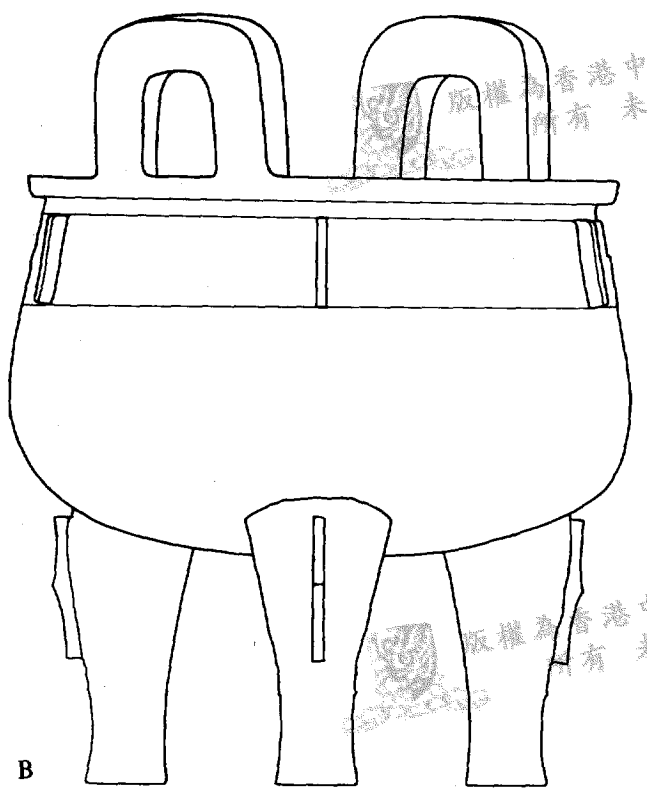


C

D



A



B

FIGURE 5 A reconstruction of the Fen-yin Ting-cauldron based upon the measurements as recorded in the *Han-shu*; line drawings of several well known bronze vessels of comparable size are placed alongside. The scale throughout is identical. A: the Fen-yin vessel. B: the Ta Yü Ting 大盂鼎. C: the Ta K'o Ting 大克鼎. D: the largest of the Shou-hsien, Chu-chia-chi 朱家集 bronzes.

With the relevant passages dealt with, Takigawa's long note (IV, 6.18-19 [38]) on the lack of accord amongst several of the accounts relating the end of the Nine Ting-cauldrons may now be studied. He cites the commentary of Yü Yüeh 俞樾 (1821-1906) which has an argument along the following lines: Ch'in's capture of the Nine Ting-cauldrons is written in the Chou Annals of the *Shih-chi;* the entry of the Nine Ting-cauldrons into Ch'in's hands is recorded in the Ch'in Annals. Ssu-ma Ch'ien's intention here is quite clear. Now, in his twenty-sixth year of reign, Shih Huang Ti had people dive into the Hsi River in an attempt to raise the Ting-cauldrons of Chou – Ssu-ma Ch'ien speaks here only of "Ting-cauldrons" and does not use the number "Nine". Thus the reference is not to the Nine Ting-cauldrons of Yü which were already in the possession of Ch'in. These were destroyed during the burning of the Ch'in Capital, Hsien-yang 咸陽 in 206 B.C. – the fires raging for three months – and thus were not seen in later times. The *Shih-chi* records the entry of the Nine Ting-cauldrons into Ch'in's hands but notes also, the other account of their submergence into the River Hsi when the T'ai-ch'iu Altar of Sung was destroyed – this is merely a foolish theory of Hsin-yüan P'ing's clique. These Ting-cauldrons of Chou were lodged all along in the Chou Capital (Lo-yi 雒邑) – upon what basis could they be claimed to have sunk into the River Hsi? Then, too, what has the destruction of the Altar of Sung to do with the outcome of the Chou Ting-cauldrons? The T'ai-ch'iu Altar of Sung was destroyed in the thirty-third year of reign of Hsien Wang of Chou (336 B.C.) but 20 years later when Chang Yi 張儀, in the service of Ch'in [*cf.* I, 5.59] was attacking Han 韓, mention is again made of the Nine Ting-cauldrons [*cf.* VII, 70.34] – how could this be if they were already lost in Hsien Wang's thirty-third year?

Yü Yüeh continues to point out the incompatibility of this evidence in respect of the several opinions that the Pang-ch'eng Ting-cauldrons sought by Shih Huang Ti and the Fen-yin find in Han times had some connection with the Nine Ting-cauldrons of Chou. Takigawa then refers to the commentaries of Shen Ch'in-han 沈欽韓 (1775-1832) and Wang Hsien-ch'ien 王先謙 (1842-1918) wherein the thesis that the Nine Ting-cauldrons were destroyed by the Chou rulers themselves is suggested. He comments that Shen and Wang's theories seem to suit the facts of the case.

In effect, Takigawa accepts their destruction close to the end of the Chou dynasty and although he does not mention the *Lun-heng* 論衡 assessment, his view would no doubt be sympathetic to the possibility that General Chui's troops stole the vessels and re-melted them. If the Nine Ting-cauldrons actually existed – a moot point it may be granted – we must conclude that they disappeared sometime towards the end of the Chan-kuo period and probably no earlier than the close of the third century B.C. The complete lack of reference to the Cauldrons in works such as the *Shu-ching* and *Shih-ching* may indicate, however, that the whole story was an invention of late Chan-kuo or Ch'in times and in all probability was created to satisfy Shih Huang Ti's taste for magical and unattainable phenomena.

3. Hou-Han Period Discoveries (25-220 A.D.) and a Note on the Significance of Portents

The earliest notice of a find in this period is recorded in the Imperial Annals of the *Hou Han-shu* 後漢書:

[39*] Yung-p'ing 永平 reign-period, the sixth year (63 A.D.), in the second month, a precious Ting-cauldron was found in Wang-lo-shan 王雒山 and presented to the Throne by the Governor of Lu-chiang 廬江太守. In summer, the fourth month, on the day *chia-tzu* 甲子 [1], an imperial edict was issued which stated: "In antiquity Yü accumulated metal from the Nine Pastors and cast Ting-cauldrons representing the special features (of the Nine Provinces) so that the people

might know the sprites and evil things and not meet with wicked influences – when they did contact such evil, however, virtue would flourish. The Ting-cauldrons passed from Shang to Chou and when the virtue of Chou decayed they were submerged and lost. The descent of good omens coincides with virtuousness but at present the government in its guidance of the people is manifoldly unjust – why has it come to this? The *Yi-(ching)* states: 'Ting-cauldrons represent the "Three Dukes" '. Can it (really) be that the appointments of the highest officers 公卿 are well founded? The Master of Ceremony 太常 will lodge the Ting-cauldron in the Temple on the day of sacrifices in readiness for its use. . . ." *(Hou Han-shu,* Ming-ti-chi, 2.10b)

The content of the edict is not greatly different from the similar legendary material incorporated in the long *Shih-chi* passage [30] presented in the preceding section. In fact, a much better correspondence is to be noted upon comparing the section: "In antiquity Yü . . . . were submerged and lost." with the long *Tso-chuan* passage [17] cited earlier. There would appear to be little question that the reference to the Nine Ting-cauldrons was based directly upon such sources. In the Imperial Edicts as cited in the Histories it is quite common to find these time-worn historico-literary references which, not infrequently, tend to form the bulk of the content. Material of this kind was, no doubt, customarily incorporated in edicts at the time of composition. This should not, however, preclude consideration being given to the possibility that similar content may have been added later during the process of compilation of the Histories in instances where the only records of particular edicts then available may have consisted of brief or fragmentary notices. In the present case there is an interval of more than three centuries between the event and its insertion in the Imperial Annals of the *Hou Han-shu* (compiled by Fan Yeh 范曄, 398-445 A.D. – about two centuries after the close of the dynastic period).[16] One may justifiably wonder how many official documents would have been preserved in their entirety, let alone in their original form, over so long a period.

In assessing the situation of such passages in the *Hou Han-shu* in this manner, however, it is most important to recollect that a succession of historical compilations preceded the work before it reached its ultimate form. The earliest extant is the incompletely transmitted *Tung-kuan Han-chi* 東觀漢紀 whose compilation commenced early in the Hou Han period with sections written by Pan Ku (see H. Bielenstein: "The Restoration of the Han Dynasty", *BMFEA,* vol.26, 1954, p.9ff for a detailed text history). In this work the Imperial Annals incorporating the above notice were compiled shortly after 120 A.D. – nearly 60 years later than the event. Record of the Wang-lo-shan discovery as presented in the *Tung-kuan Han-chi* differs appreciably both in scope of content and in certain details from the *Hou Han-shu:*

[40*] In the sixth year, the Governor of Lu-chiang presented to the Throne a precious Ting-cauldron which had come to light in Wang-lo-shan. It was lodged in the Imperial Ancestral Temple and an imperial edict was issued, stating: "The *Yi (-ching* states:) 'The legs of the Ting-cauldron represent the 'Three Dukes' ". How can it *not* be that the appointments of the highest officers are well founded! The Master of Ceremony will set up the Ting-cauldron in the Temple on the day of sacrifices in readiness for its use." *(Hu-pei hsien-cheng yi-shu,* XXIX, 2.4a)

In the later compilation the character order is changed from 廬江太守獻寶鼎，出王雒山 (*Tung-kuan Han-chi*) to: 王雒山出寶鼎，廬江太守獻之 (*Hou Han-shu*) while the date of the edict

16 Upon first mention of each of the Histories – or where otherwise more appropriate – I have incorporated in my text such basic information as the date of compilation, the name and dates of the person chiefly responsible for the work, etc. In quite a few cases identical events and personages with whom the cited passages are associated appear in two or more of the histories and other sources. It is convenient to have the relevant data immediately available during the course of the discussion. I have simply followed Han Yu-shan's *Elements of Chinese Historiography* (pp.194-5).

in the earlier version is not defined beyond the year of reign. The same entry is to be found in *Liu Sung-shu* 劉宋書 (compiled 492-93 A.D. under the direction of Shen Yüeh 沈約, 441-513 A.D.) where the character order of the *Tung-kuan Han-chi* is maintained but with the addition of "third month" which conflicts with the *Hou Han-shu's* "second month" (*ch.* 29.42a [41*]). Only the notice of the discovery is quoted. The *Hou Han-shu* thus presents a detailed date for the edict together with the addition of a passage comprising 55 characters including a section copied almost verbatim from the *Tso-chuan.* The sentence: "It was lodged in the Imperial Ancestral Temple" was omitted. It repeats the section: "The *Yi-ching* states: . . . . in readiness for its use", with the character 曰 "to state" added, the characters 足 "feet" and 非 "negative particle" deleted, and the "interrogative particle" 乎 replaced by 邪, a particle expressive of doubt. Then there finally follows a sentence (which I have not incorporated above in the *Hou Han-shu* translated passage) recording the award of 50 bales of silk to the Three Ducal Ministers and 2,000 piculs of grain to the Nine Ministers 九卿. Only the *Hou Han-shu* has record of this matter.

Details of this kind would appear to illustrate aspects of editing in the *Hou Han-shu* version involving elaborations composed upon the basis of materials drawn from the traditional literature. The compiler has apparently sought thus to clarify the terse *Tung-kuan Han-chi* entry. If, however, all these additional points of information were originally available to the *Tung-kuan Han-chi* compiler we may be reasonably justified in asserting that at least the details of dates and of awards would have been entered, too. In all probability the entry in the *Liu Sung-shu* was copied directly from a contemporaneous copy of the *Tung-kuan Han-chi* while the addition of "third month" to the entry may have been the result of careless consultation of the *Hou Han-shu* – the simple error in the numeral may, of course, have developed in one or other of these two sources at a much later time.

Omissions and inconsistencies in dates are matters difficult to explain or to resolve without access to more sources than those available for the present entry. However, the remaining additional material in the *Hou Han-shu* account seems quite evidently to be editorial elaboration and its association with the discovery of the Ting-cauldron to be essentially the invention of the compiler. In this later account the omission of the negative particle 非 would appear to have been purposeful. Without it the sentence concerned fits in more appropriately with the general context of the newly incorporated passage – particularly in terms of the last sentence. The reference therein to the present government as being wayward in its duties to the people and that things should have come to this state does not lead easily to the *Tung-kuan Han-chi* remark: "How can it *not* be that the appointments of the highest officers are well founded!" Such a sentence implies quite forcibly that the appointments were, indeed, well founded and established upon proper principles – a circumstance which necessarily contradicts the situation of the government. As such it is, nevertheless, a statement perfectly in accord with the notice of a discovery of so favourably omened an object as a Ting-cauldron. By dropping the negative particle, however, a marked sense of doubt results. It would appear thus that something has gone astray in the course of the *Hou Han-shu* compiler's revision of this text, or perhaps during the course of transmission of the text. This point is noted merely as a matter of interest – possibly more extensive investigation may clarify the matter but that is not the purpose of the discussion here.

The frequent insertion of notices of phenomenal happenings is a characteristic feature of Chinese historical compilation, and a technique the full significance of which has yet to be thoroughly explored. As we are essentially investigating a particular type of "portent" – the appearance of ancient bronze artifacts – it is necessary to consider historiographical aspects of other such entries at some length. Discoveries of bronze vessels were regarded as good omens and

naturally enough it may be assumed that reports of most such auspicious finds would have been recorded and preserved in the archives. Unfortunately, however, there are no means of determining how many reports on matters of such significance were sent to the Capital and, of course, when it comes to the compilation of any particular Dynastic History it is likewise impossible to assess the number of archival entries that were still extant and, of these, the number that may have been made available to the compilers, and, most important, how did the compilers deal with such data in the course of their writing of the Histories? The situation in respect of ominous portents is likewise difficult to deal with with any degree of precision – except in the case of solar eclipses. In order to work with portents' records in general, it is essential that we digress briefly and take into consideration some aspects of problems attending the entries of solar eclipses against which we have the valuable control of computed solar eclipses.

Th. von Oppolzer's monumental *Canon der Finsternisse* published in Vienna in 1887 contains calculations of all eclipses from 1208 B.C. to 2161 A.D. This is the basic source of control. In addition H.H. Dubs has examined the solar eclipses visible in China in the Ch'ien Han period as against those recorded (*History of the Former Han Dynasty*, Vols.I to III). Dubs' investigations are most valuable and have been consulted in detail in the writing of the following pages wherein the results of my own investigations covering the Ch'ien Han data are presented briefly.[17]

During the 230 years of the Ch'ien Han period there occurred 559 solar eclipses visible from various parts of the Earth. Amongst these 98 have been demonstrated to have been visible in China. Of these 98 computed eclipses, 44 are accurately recorded in the *Han-shu* and the *Shih-chi* – in some cases slight textual changes have been found applicable. A further number, however, requires far too great a degree of "correction" to permit acceptance of the character changes which Dubs has proposed, and accordingly the entries concerned are placed, in Table 1 opposite, in the column of "improbable eclipses". This column contains thus 17 recorded eclipses which cannot be matched acceptably with the 54 "omitted" eclipses known by computation to have been visible in China. I have chosen to use the term "improbable eclipses" rather than "inaccurately recorded eclipses" – the latter implies that the entries concerned were originally based upon actual eclipses or archival records thereof but in the course of transmission the wording of the text has become corrupted. The former term seems to me to suit the circumstances better.[18] The point of particular interest now lies in the occurrence of *(a)* accurately recorded eclipses, *(b)* improbable eclipses, and *(c)* visible eclipses omitted from record.

It will be observed in the Table that three distinct groups or levels of reliability appear.

17 It is my intention to publish later the entire set of data which at present comprises a fairly comprehensive listing of all recorded eclipses in the Histories with the original passages reproduced in full context and the relevant astronomical entries from Oppolzer accompanying each. This project is aimed to test the thesis offered here that the eclipses should not be regarded as data derived entirely from archival records. An appreciable proportion of the entries seem to be the results of backward calculations and sometimes sheer guesswork. If this thesis can be sustained then it will fall in line with the conclusions advanced towards the end of the present survey, namely, in respect of pre-Han bronze ritual vessels there is similarly a measure of control, and similarly the manner in which the Chinese historian approached his data may be assessed.

18 It is obvious that the concept of "improbable eclipse" entries requires further discussion, and with relevant examples cited, but space is not sufficient here. However, attention may be drawn to such instances as 七年正月辛酉 being revised to 三年九月辛丑 (Dubs I, 188) so as to fit Opp. 2414; similarly the last two eclipses recorded in Wen Ti's reign (Dubs I, 286); etc., etc. Such manipulations to the text succeed in forcing it to fit the eclipse dates calculated by Oppolzer but there still remains the question as to what were the dates actually and originally written in by the *Han-shu* compiler! A major objection to the procedure is, of course, the fact that the series of eclipses listed in the *Han-shu* does not form a complete listing of eclipses visible in China. And there are other considerations, too.

TABLE 1 Eclipses in the Ch'ien-Han Period

(Arranged in groups of visible eclipses, those accurately recorded, improbable eclipses, and omitted eclipses.)

	No. of Visible Eclipses	*No. Accurately Recorded*	*No. Improbable Eclipses*	*Omitted Eclipses*	*Total Recorded*	*Length of Reign*
1. Kao Tsu 高祖 206-195 B.C.	6	2	1	4	3	12 years
2. Hui Ti 惠帝 195-188 B.C.	5	1	1	4	2	7 years
3. Kao Hao 高后 188-180 B.C.	2	1 [1*]	1	1	2	8 years
4. Wen Ti 文帝 180-157 B.C.	10	2 [2*]	3 + [1*]	8	5	23 years
5. Ching Ti 景帝 157-141 B.C.	10	5 [4*]	4 [1*] + [1*]	5	10	16 years
6. Wu Ti 武帝 141-87 B.C.	20	9	4	11	13	54 years
TOTAL	53	20 [7*]	16 [3*]	33	35	120 years
7. Chao Ti 昭帝 87-74 B.C.	4	2	–	2	2	13 years
8. Hsüan Ti 宣帝 74-49 B.C.	13	3	–	10	3	25 years
9. Yüan Ti 元帝 49-33 B.C.	7	2	1	5	3	16 years
TOTAL	24	7	1	17	8	54 years
10. Ch'eng Ti 成帝 33-7 B.C.	10	10	–	–	10	26 years
11. Ai Ti 哀帝 7 B.C.-1 A.D.	2	2	–	–	2	6 years
12. P'ing Ti 平帝 1-5 A.D.	3	2	–	1	2	5 years
13. Ju Tzu Ying 孺子嬰 6-8 A.D.	1	1	–	–	1	3 years
14. Wang Mang 王莽 9-23 A.D.	5	2	–	3	2	14 years
TOTAL	21	17	0	4	17	56 years
GRAND TOTAL	98	44	17	54	60	230 years

Eclipses recorded in the *Shih-chi* are indicated by bracketed figures with asterisks. *Shih-chi* eclipses *not* found in the *Han-shu* are preceded by a + sign.

Records of eclipses between the years 33 B.C. and 23 A.D. (56 years) are not only consistently accurate, but also they are practically complete. Such was the condition of the sources concerned 35 years or so after the close of the dynasty when Pan Ku 班固 (32-92 A.D.) commenced his part of the compilation of the *Han-shu.* At this time the earliest documents in the group were approaching a century in age. Those of the preceding half century (54 years: 87-33 B.C.) were likewise accurate in dating details, but many eclipses (17 out of 24) were either not observed or not recorded. In the earliest of these three groups (206-87 B.C. – nearly 120 years in extent) improbable eclipses are to be noted as a particular, though not surprising, feature. Of the 53 computed eclipses, 20 are correctly recorded; of the 33 omitted a certain degree of parallel may be sought amongst the 16 improbable eclipse dates, but as will be fully demonstrated in a later paper few, if any, of the textual manipulations attempted can be accepted with confidence. The increasing degree of reliability and the clear-cut tendency towards completeness of record of eclipse data in the *Han-shu* is unlikely to be merely a matter of coincidence. It may actually reflect upon the degrees of reliability attending other records when viewed from similar chronological aspects. As eclipses can be computed we may surely wonder if the pattern in Table 1 may not, indeed, require an explanation in terms of backward calculation (with frequent mathematical errors) or mere guesswork.

When compiling the History of the Former Han Dynasty Pan Ku made considerable use of the *Shih-chi.* Eclipses recorded by Ssu-ma Ch'ien were accordingly incorporated in the *Han-shu.* Ssu-ma Ch'ien noted altogether ten eclipses amongst the reigns of the Empress Lü (Kao Hou), Wen Ti, and Ching Ti, but none for the first two Emperors, Kao Tsu and Hui Ti. No entries were made for the last of the Han rulers dealt with in the *Shih-chi* – the Emperor Wu. However, seven of Ssu-ma Ch'ien's eclipse dates are accurate and so, too, are their counterparts in the *Han-shu;* it is interesting to observe that one improbable *Shih-chi* eclipse is copied exactly by Pan Ku, but the remaining two do not appear in the *Han-shu.* Over and above these, Pan Ku lists four accurate eclipses and nine improbable eclipses. The details are presented in Table 2 (the *Shih-chi* entries have also been indicated briefly by bracketed figures in Table 1). It would seem in the face of the data thus arranged that one or more sources other than the *Shih-chi* provided the additional entries, but it would also appear evident that these sources were highly corrupted by the time they came into Pan Ku's hands – 70% of improbable eclipses amongst the hypothetical sources as contrasted with Ssu-ma Ch'ien's 70% of accurate entries!

In making these observations it is necessary, however, to keep in mind the possibility that the *Shih-chi* in Pan Ku's time was more complete than the present version, and thus some of the accurate eclipses in the first two reigns may originally have appeared there. That no record of eclipses is to be found in the Annals of Wu Ti is, in all probability, due to the harsh punishment suffered by Ssu-ma Ch'ien for his outspoken criticism of Wu Ti's policy. With eclipses occurring nearly every second year, he knew better than to risk further anatomical losses by indiscreetly recording astronomical data of such ill-omen. Absence of eclipse notices in the biography of his reigning Emperor – whatever the reason for the omission – would allow the assumption that some other source containing record of the eclipses in Wu Ti's reign was consulted by Pan Ku – this hypothetical source may have preserved entries only up to the end of Wu Ti's reign. Thereafter, there is an abrupt cessation of improbable eclipses, followed three reigns later by an increasingly marked tendency towards complete recording. Probably two unrelated sets of data are thus to be inferred from the Tables, while the *Shih-chi* was a third and the major source of eclipse record for the first 120 years covered by the *Han-shu.*

A rather curious form of interpretation of the eclipse and other portents' data in the *Han-shu*

TABLE 2 Eclipses in the *Shih-chi* and in the *Han-shu*.

	Eclipse	*Shih-chi Entry*		*Han-shu Copy from Shih-chi*	*Han-shu Copy from Other Sources*	
	Kao Tsu 高祖					
3.*	Opp. 2387**	nil.		-	3:10 - 甲戌 .205(20/12)†	Correct
4.	-	nil.		-	3:11 - 癸卯 .204(18/1)	No Eclipse
6.	Opp. 2402	nil.		-	9:6 - 乙未 .198(7/8)	Correct
	Hui Ti 惠帝					
12.	-	nil.		-	7:1 - 辛丑 .188(21/2)	No Eclipse
13.	Opp. 2425	nil.		-	7:5 - 丁卯 .188(17/7)	Correct
	Kao Hou 高后					
14.	-	nil.		-	2:6 - 丙戌 .186(26/7)	No Eclipse*
16.	Opp. 2441	7:1 - 己丑	[9.18]*	7:1 - 己丑 .181(4/3)	-	Correct
	Wen Ti 文帝					
17.	Opp. 2447	2:11 - nil.	[10.19]	2:11 - 癸卯 .178(2/1)	-	Correct
18.	-	2:12 - 15th day	[10.19]	nil.	nil.	No Eclipse*
19.	Opp. 2449	3:10 - 丁酉	[10.24]	3:10 - 丁酉 .178(22/12)	-	Correct
20.	-	nil.		-	3:11 - 丁卯 .177(20/1)	No Eclipse*
30.	-	nil.		-	4:4 - 丙寅 .160(9/6)	No Eclipse*
31.	-	nil.		-	7:1 - 辛未 .157(9/2)	No Eclipse*
	Ching Ti 景帝					
33.	Opp. 2506	nil.		-	3:2 - 辛子 .154(4/4)	Correct*
34.	-	nil.		-	4:10 - 戊戌 .153( )	No Eclipse*
37.	Opp. 2515	7:12 - nil.	[11.8]	7:11 - 庚寅 .150(22/1)	-	Correct
38.	-	nil		-	1:12 - 甲寅 .149(10/12)	No Eclipse*
40.	-	2:9 - 甲戌	[11.10]	2:9 - 甲戌 .148(22/10)	-	No Eclipse*
41.	Opp. 2523	3:9 - 戊戌	[11.10]	3:9 - 戊戌 .147(10/11)	-	Correct
42.	-	nil.		-	4:10 - 戊午 .146( )	No Eclipse*
44.	Opp. 2530	6:7 - 辛亥	[11.13]	6:7 - 辛亥 .144(8/9)	-	Correct
45.	Opp. 2532	1:7 - 乙巳	[11.14]	1:7 - 乙巳 .143(28/8)	-	Correct
46.	-	3:10 - nil.		nil.	nil.	No Eclipse*

* The numbers 3, 4, 6, etc. accord with the 116 entries in my forthcoming survey covering Han period eclipses.
** Opp. numbers are those of individual eclipses computed in Oppolzer's *Canon der Finsternisse.*
† 3:10 - 甲戌 = 3rd year (of *nien-hao*), 10th month, cyclical day; 205(20/12) = 206 B.C., 20th December.
Numbers in square brackets refer to Takigawa Kametarō's edition of the *Shih-chi.*

NOTES WITH REFERENCE TO LAST COLUMN:

1. Eclipse notices 3 to 13 are not recorded in *Shih-chi;* the *Han-shu* has taken these from another source.
2. Eclipse notices 14 to 46: "No Eclipse*" and "Correct*" indicate entries taken from a source (or sources) other than the *Shih-chi* – none of these notices are recorded in the *Shih-chi.* Three of the *Shih-chi* notices comprise "improbable" eclipses (No Eclipse*); one only of these – no.40 – has been copied by the *Han-shu.* No.18 coincides with a lunar eclipse [Opp.1580:178(16/1)] while No.46 refers to eclipses of both the sun and the moon. There was no eclipse of either in the Chinese 10th month of this year.
3. Of the 10 *Shih-chi* entries, 7 are correct; of the non-*Shih-chi* notices 4 are correct and 9 are "improbable" eclipses.

was proposed some years ago by H. Bielenstein in a short study, "The Portents in the Ts'ien [Ch'ien] Han-shu" (*BMFEA*, vol.22). He regards the discrepancies amongst the notices of eclipses, when contrasted with those that actually occurred, as being the results of deliberate manipulations effected concurrently by officials and ministers throughout the Ch'ien Han period – his study, it may be noted, deals only with the reigns up to Ch'eng-ti (87 B.C.). By recording or concealing reports of eclipses the officials were able, he asserts, to indicate respectively blame or praise of the Imperial government. Other portents, too, were similarly allowed to be formally recorded, or were concealed, according to current actions of the Emperors – in other words, the portents generally may be regarded as a sort of barometer of imperial popularity. The argument is expounded by statistics of the eclipses recorded by reigns as a function of those which should have been recorded. Portents of ill-omen other than eclipses – floods, earthquakes, meteors, locusts, avalanches, etc.– 228 items altogether – are averaged by years for each reign and the two sets of data are plotted as graphs. These appear to accord quite well and, on the face of it, his thesis would seem to be substantiable. However, the eclipse data was not critically investigated and in some instances rather carelessly or empirically selected – particularly in respect of the limit between "observable" and "not observable" among nonrecorded eclipses.[19]

As to the now generally conceded unreliability of portent records for use in the more obvious aspects of quantitative research – studies on seasonal distributions, cycles of floods, pests, frequency of earthquakes, etc. – the results of Bielenstein's research is certainly in accord, but the reason is not, as he seems to suppose, that concurrent selection and discarding of facts was done. The simplest and most obvious explanation is that the records were lost, or the data discarded during compilation. If it were the result of continued and purposeful manipulations, then those concerned would not only need to have been able *to view the reign as a whole right from the moment the ruler ascended the throne,* but also *a common policy would need to have been adhered to by generation after generation of officials and ministers.* This is a situation far beyond the bounds of plausibility.[20] But in later times, when the history of the preceding dynasty was in the course of compilation, the historian was in a particularly good position to select and adjust his materials as he thought fit. By scattering notices of portents throughout his text, he had a useful means of creating the required atmosphere which his factual accounts would not fully achieve on their own. W. Eberhard has expressed a view along these lines (see Bielenstein, p.133) which Bielenstein strongly contests: ". . . . Pan Ku is *not* a forger. He did *not* insert portents in his history

19 The method of selection is described: "The limit between 'observable' and 'not observable' among these non-recorded eclipses I have put at the eclipse with the lowest magnitude which actually *was* recorded" (p.131, note 1). One's immediate reaction to this is simply: Where? The eclipse of 38 B.C. (14th Jan.), for instance, had a magnitude of 0.02 at Ch'ang-an, while at 40° North of the Capital (approx. at the lat. of Peking) it would have reached as much as 0.15. There are several other such examples which Dubs has conveniently worked out. However, there is a more serious objection: Dubs does not give magnitude figures at all for quite a few of both the recorded and the omitted eclipses – presumably these have been arbitrarily accepted or discarded upon other bases? These and other crucial points are elaborated upon in detail in my forthcoming survey of eclipse records.

20 Consider, for instance, the total of 228 portents from Kao Tsu to Ch'eng Ti. This averages barely more than one item per year! To imagine that five or six generations of officials and analists were able to apportion these events correctly in the Imperial Archives so as to fit the scheme that they could not possibly foretell – even to the extent of allowing or disallowing record of calamities at the very beginnings of reigns *before the ultimate nature of the Emperors and their policies had sufficiently crystallized* – is just a little too far-fetched. Then one must consider the machinery involved – a form of government wherein the Ministers, officialdom, the various and changing cliques in the Palace, and the annalists cooperated so successfully (with or without knowledge of the future) as to achieve official recordings of reports of portents forming a distinctive pattern and with so few items involved, would be something unique in the history of mankind.

for purpose of his own. The portents were *memorialized* to the Emperors. Even a cursory reading of the Ts'ien [Ch'ien]-Han-shu makes this evident. We find the Emperors in their edicts again and again announce that portents had occurred and that they themselves were thus to blame .... If, therefore Pan Ku inserted portents into his history in order to express his personal criticism he must also have forged the edicts ...." (pp.133-34).

Such admirable faith in the integrity of the ancient Chinese Historians is not, unfortunately, warranted or justifiable. In the first place, the original edicts cannot be consulted to investigate the nature and scope of "forgery" or, what may be more to the point, the extent of adjustments or additions to the text effected by the compiler. But comparison of the *Han-shu* and *Shih-chi* shows only too well that Pan Ku made many changes and additions in his adaptions of Ssu-ma Ch'ien's records. The latter, for his part, did not hesitate to implement changes on earlier documents when incorporating them in the *Shih-chi.* It is a strange phenomenon that a number of Western sinologists should tend to regard the writing of history in China as an activity quite unlike that in other cultural spheres, and the Chinese Historian should be regarded in awe – a paragon of virtue who might gaily embellish his writings with stereotyped phraseology as a means of creating the atmosphere he considers appropriately relevant to an event or personage *but* who would *never* tamper with fundamental data or fact.[21]

The edict of the year 63 A.D. above – the first of our Hou Han period notices of the discoveries of ancient bronze vessels – illustrates perfectly well the aim of the writer. Fan Yeh 范曄 (398-445 A.D.) wanted to explain here at somewhat greater length and in the grand manner of Ssu-ma Ch'ien, the full significance that such a discovery must have had. Thus with the *Shih-chi* passage relating to the Fen-yin find at hand and the relevant *Tso-chuan* passage in mind he re-wrote the *Tung-kuan Han-chi* version expanding it along the lines he felt most suitable for the occasion. That aspects of the original meaning had to be adjusted was a matter of lesser account, he simply considered it to be his duty to present the story in terms suitable for the "reading public" of his time. He was not alone in tampering with the original wording in earlier texts and he himself seems later to have been treated in much the same way as will be noted in the next quoted passage. Literary activities of this kind cannot be classified as "forgery" – they are not even to be regarded as dishonest. One should not judge the ethics of ancient writers by modern standards but rather accept the fact that they had particular standards and techniques which were perfectly acceptable in their day.

[42*] During the reign of the Han Emperor Chang 章帝, Chien-ch'u 建初 reign-period, the seventh year (82 A.D.), the tenth month, the Emperor (車駕) made a tour of inspection to the west proceeding as far as Huai-li 槐里, Yu-fu-feng 右扶風, Chin-shang 禁上 and Mei-yang 美陽. A bronze vessel was obtained from Ch'i-shan 岐山, it was like a wine Tsun-goblet 尊. The Emperor ordered it to be employed en route, mornings and evenings, in heating wine for the officials. (*Liu Sung-shu,* Fu-jui-chih, 29,42a; *cf. Hou Han-shu,* Chang-ti-chi, 3.11a [43*])

The Fu-jui-chih section of the *Liu Sung-shu* is a particularly useful source with its list of references

21 Iconoclastic statements of this kind I offer in the first instance simply as an historian – I am not convinced that China alone has succeeded in producing historians of such high calibre in objectivity. Few historians in other fields of ancient and medieval history would accept such premises. Secondly, I strongly suspect that a major pitfall into which the student of a particular text, or group of texts, will stray is the lack of realisation that he is essentially dealing with a *secondary* work transmitted over a long period of time. Accordingly, any assessment as to what may constitute *primary* documentation within the compass of the work in question, must be based upon outside information of a contemporary and preferably archaeological type. Obviously no one is in a position to produce an original imperial edict of Han date to prove or disprove points discussed above.

to earlier works containing records of this kind. Here, however, it varies somewhat from the *Hou Han-shu* account, which does not describe the vessel as being put to such use. Instead, the Emperor is made to hold forth on the *ill-omened* nature of the event which was also accompanied by the capture of a white deer: "Above, there lacks an enlightened Son of Heaven and below there is a dearth of worthy governors. The people's setting virtue at naught has led to mutual resentment throughout the districts – whose coming does this vessel presage?" (*op. cit.*, 3.11a). The last characters: 曷爲來哉 are doubtless inspired by the *Kung-yang Commentary* 公羊傳 which tells of Confucius's utterance in similar circumstances: "Confucius embraced the unicorn 麟 and tearfully said: 'Who is coming! Who is coming!' " (孰爲來哉！孰爲來哉！). This touching little anecdote, itself of dubious origin, is clearly indicative of the fabricated nature of the Emperor's words. Although Chang Ti may have known the classics and their commentaries in appreciable detail, and quoted extensively from them in his speech, the chances of his utterances being preserved – assuming they were originally written down by a scribe – through three centuries is rather unlikely. The speech is exactly the sort of thing the Confucian-trained historian would assume ought to have been expressed on such an occasion. It is perhaps a significant point, too, that the compiler of the *Liu Sung-shu*, writing only 50 years after the *Hou Han-shu* was completed, should have recorded (or created?) an entirely different story to go with the same event.

There is one other entry in the *Hou Han-shu:*

> [44*] Yung-yüan 永元 reign-period, the first year (89 A.D.) . . . . Tou Hsien 竇憲 (during his expedition against the Hsiung-nu 匈奴 obtained) . . . . an ancient Ting-cauldron abandoned by the Southern Shen-yü-chief 單于 which had a capacity of 5 *tou* 斗 ; on its side was an inscription which read: "Chung-shan-fu's Ting-cauldron, may for a myriad years sons and grandsons forever preserve (value?) and employ it." Hsien presented it to the Emperor. (Tou Hsien chuan, 53.8b)

In the Imperial Ch'ien-lung 乾隆 edition consulted the character *pao* 寶 "precious" is written as 保 *pao* "preserve". In the Po-na 百衲 edition it is "precious" – being the earlier and possibly the more reliable version, this should be accepted. It is a point of some importance for inscriptions of Western Chou usually use the character "precious", while "preserve" is characteristically Eastern Chou. As the recorded inscription is so brief and the name-title of the vessel-maker obviously an error in transcription, a clue of this sort would assist in dating it. However, the text rings very true although it is not complete – possibly only one character has been omitted: "made" which should follow the vessel-maker's name. The third character in the title-name formula was originally 父 *fu* and certainly not 甫 *fu;* this is an example of a scribal error originating in the phonetic identity of the two characters. It is interesting to observe in the Chinese text the doubling of the characters 子 *tzu* "son" and 孫 *sun* "grandson": 子子孫孫 "descendants". In the original inscription this doubling would have been indicated by the repetition sign: 子＝孫＝ (see Figure 6). In the description it is noted that the inscription was on the (interior) "side" of the vessel (其傍銘曰) which form of expression suggests the location normally used in Western Chou style Ting-cauldrons. The capacity in present day measurements would be approximately 9.90 litres. Without some indication of linear measurements it is difficult to ascertain the size of this vessel. A further problem is the general lack of relevant data amongst archaeological reports and catalogues – only rarely is the capacity of a vessel measured. In Figure 7, a selection of vessels from available examples with capacity measurements is presented for purposes of comparison. It is evident that the Chung-shan-fu Ting-cauldron was of appreciable size.[22]

22 Early measure conversions throughout this survey are based on the convenient chart in the Kadokawa *Kanwa chū jiten* 角川：漢和中辭典, pp.1310-11. This is, of course, a simplification – there are various complexities which I have not attempted to investigate for the present paper.

In the *Liu Sung-shu* the same discovery is listed amongst the "Records of Auspicious Influences" *(Fu-jui-chih)* and would seem obviously to have been taken directly from the earlier record although considerably abbreviated:

[45*] Yung-yüan reign-period, the first year, Tou Hsien made a punitive expedition against the Hsiung-nu and in the northern part of the desert at Chiu-ch'üan 酒泉 obtained the Chung-shan-fu Ting-cauldron which had a capacity of 5 *tou.* (29.42b)

Here the *Liu Sung-shu* compiler, Shen Yüeh 沈約 (441-513 A.D.) has followed the *Hou Han-shu* text with reasonable accuracy. In the previously cited *Liu Sung-shu* passage [42*], however, it

FIGURE 6 An attempt to reconstruct the archaic form of the Chung-shan-fu Ting-cauldron text. On the right is the transcription which appears in current editions of the *Hou Han-shu.*

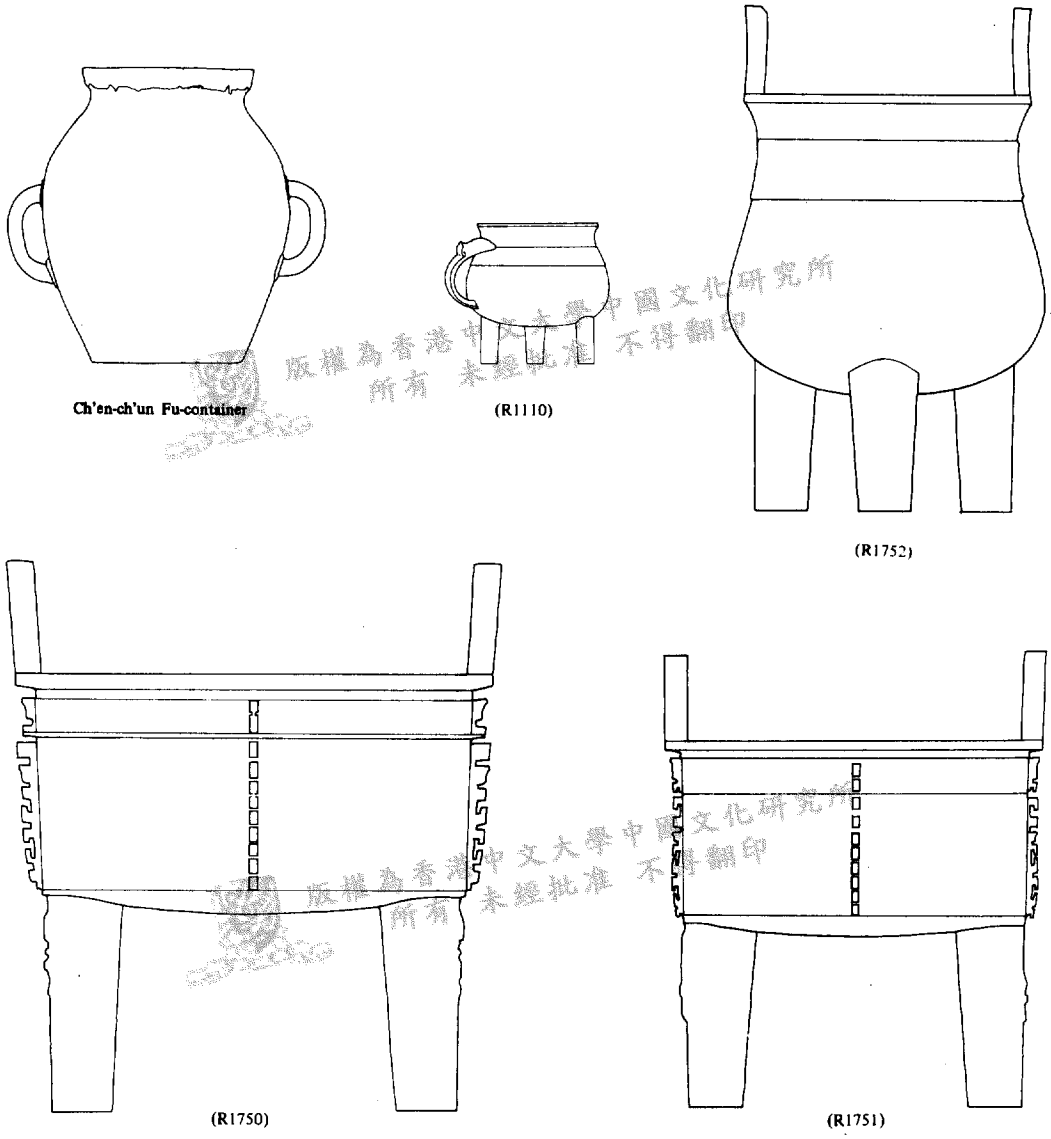


FIGURE 7 Line-drawings all to the same scale of a selection of bronze vessels of known capacity measurements with which the Chung-shan-fu Ting-cauldron may be compared. Unfortunately no indication is recorded as to what general type of Ting-cauldron it was and the available examples of vessels with capacity measurements are very limited. Those presented here will serve also to indicate size/weight scale with reference to later passages recording the weight of the vessels. The Hsiao-t'un 小屯 vessels have the following data:-

R1110: 2.86 lt, 3.15 kg; R1750: 62.58 lt, 110.40 kg; R1751: 35.03 lt, 60.40 kg;
R1752: 39.60 lt, 33.5 kg; The Ch'en-ch'un Fu-container 陳純釜 : 20.58 lt, 3.15 kg.

would appear that Shen Yüeh disagreed – quite rightly – with Fan Yeh's interpretation of the significance of the Tsun-vase discovery and accordingly created a more appropriate story. Bronze vessels from the ancient dynasties were possibly objects of awe, but surely not of ill-omen. The Emperor should not have had cause for anxiety on the account of the vessel – far better then would it be to adjust the record in conformity with this view.[23]

About the same period covered by the two preceding passages (*circa* 100 A.D.) when compiling the *Shuo-wen chieh-tzu* 說文解字, Hsü Shen 許愼 wrote in his preface [46] of the frequent finds of bronze vessels "in the hills and streams" in various parts of the country containing inscriptions in the ancient script (*ku-wen* 古文) of the preceding dynasties. The style of the characters, he observed, accorded with those in which the manuscripts found in the walls of Confucius's house were written. It is somewhat a problem, however, to decide how this note of Hsü's is to be interpreted in the face of the paucity of recorded finds in Han period sources. As to the similarity of the bronze script with that of the manuscripts purported to have come from Confucius's house, there is no direct way of checking the truth of the matter. The story of the finds of ancient documents in Confucius's house is, no doubt, to be interpreted in a very general sense – it being merely representative of occasional Han time discoveries of pre-Ch'in manuscripts. Whether Confucius's house was so sturdy a structure that it could have survived the passage of four centuries is a point of some relevance, too. However, the bulk of such early documents which may have come to light would not only have been in the fragmentary condition so often described in the various accounts, but also the majority of them would have been written in Chan-kuo script wherein the influence of Ch'in's Small Seal characters would not yet have had any marked effect. Amongst recently excavated inscribed materials of Chan-kuo date, however, we find numerous characters of common contemporaneous use which seem to have been unknown to Hsü Shen – if original documents containing these characters actually came into Hsü's hands, the fact would be evident in the *Shuo-wen* and other relevant sources of Han period date.[24]

4. Discoveries Recorded in the San-kuo, Western and Eastern Chin Periods (220-420 A.D.)

Four entries appear in the *San-kuo-chih* 三國志 (compiled 285-97 A.D. by Ch'en Shou 陳壽, 233-97 A.D.) which covers the period 220-80 A.D. One further find supposed to have occurred in this period is described in a T'ang period source.

[47*] During the reign of Sun Ch'üan 孫權 (Ta-ti 大帝) of Wu 吳, Ch'ih-wu 赤烏 reign-period, the twelfth year (249 A.D.), in the sixth month, on the day *wu-hsü* 戊戌 [35], a precious Ting-cauldron was recovered from Lin-p'ing Lake 臨平湖 and another in Ling Hsien, Tung-pu 東部 鄱縣. (*Liu Sung-shu*, Fu-jui-chih, 29.42b; *cf. San-kuo-chih*, Wu-chih, 2.31b [48*]

23 Instances of discrepancies of this scope may, no doubt, reflect upon the reliability of the record somewhere along the line. It would seem reasonable to claim that the original account of the Tsun-vase discovery in the archives consulted by Fan Yeh should *not* have varied appreciably from the original account followed by Shen Yüeh – if both derive from official archives. Should the situation be interpreted in terms of conflicting primary records then clearly the possibility of other (and undetectable) instances must be kept continually in mind when working through the Histories. That Shen Yüeh simply altered the account for reasons best known to himself is the more realistic hypothesis to my mind.

24 A detailed and extensively illustrated survey of pre-Han characters which I have almost ready for publication deals with this matter at some length; it will be published under the title: "Some Observations on the Nature and the Structure of Pre-Han Characters".

This account was derived from the *Wu-lu* 吳錄 , a lost work quoted copiously in the commentary on the *San-kuo-chih*, but it does not mention the second find in Ling Hsien. Possibly the *Sung-shu's* additional notice here may have been based upon an available record?

[49*] During the reign of Ching Ti 景帝 of Wu, Yung-an 永安 reign-period, the third year (260 A.D.), in the third month, a red crow was [said to have been] seen at Hsi-ling 西陵 , in this year a large Ting-cauldron was obtained in the prefecture of Chien-te 建德 . (*Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei,* 201, p.2417; *cf. Liu Sung-shu,* Fu-jui-chih, 29.14b with the additional character 言 [50*])

From another lost book, the *Wu-li* 吳歷 , the discovery is quoted in the *San-kuo-chih* commentary (Wu-chih, 3.8b [51*]). Wang Ch'in-jo 王欽若 and the other editors of the Sung period encyclopaedia, the *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei* 册府元龜 , have actually combined the text proper of the *San-kuo-chih* (the date and notice of the red crow) with the *Wu-li* passage cited in the commentary [52*]. Characteristically, no indication of the rearrangement appears – this awkward aspect of Chinese historical writing may on occasions provide bases for misinterpretation, especially when the original sources have disappeared and no check is possible.

So far, our survey has been concerned with "accredited" sources, but on occasions we shall note entries in other literature which does not always receive full sanction in Chinese scholarship. The *Yu-yang tsa-tsu* 酉陽雜俎 compiled by Tuan Ch'eng-shih 段成式 (died, 863 A.D.) in the T'ang period is one such item – it is filled with all sorts of fanciful anecdotes amongst which the following appears:

[53*] Hu Tsung 胡綜 was a collector and during the time of Sun Ch'üan (of Wu, 220-65 A.D.) dug up a bronze Hsia-coffer 匣 , 2 feet 7 inches [65.12cm] in length with a lid made of glass; there was also a white jade sceptre (如意) with the gripping area carved all over with dragons, tigers, and locusts. No one knew the purpose of these and someone was sent to ask Tsung. Tsung said: "Anciently Shih-huang-ti of Ch'in regarded Mt. Chin-ling 金陵 as having an Imperial aspect. To pacify the hills and mounds he hurriedly buried precious objects everywhere to give them a Princely aspect. This would seem to be the explanation." (11.4b; *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng,* chuan 251, vol.800.51a)

Comment is unnecessary, but the general atmosphere of the story is one which may be noted on occasions in passages from more reputable sources.[25]

[54*] During the reign of Sun Hao 孫皓 (Mo-ti 末帝) of Wu, Pao-ting 寶鼎 reign-period, the first year (266 A.D.), in the eighth month, the local officials said that a large Ting-cauldron had been found whereupon the reign-period title was changed and a general amnesty proclaimed. (*San-kuo-chih,* Wu-chih, 3.15b; *cf. Liu Sung-shu,* Fu-jui-chih, 29.42b [55*])

In the *Liu Sung-shu* the sentence 所在言得大鼎 reads: 在所言得大鼎 which version seems most likely to be a scribal error. The term 所在 is probably to be regarded as an abbreviation of 所在官員 "the officials of that locality". Whether this report may have been based on fact or was simply a report based upon hearsay by the officials (i.e. the implications of the graph 言) cannot be judged. However, it was seized upon as a suitable event for determining the reign-title. A few lines prior to this passage may be noted the special use of the character Ting in the phrase 三國鼎立 "... the establishment of the Three Kingdoms (each independent as the three legs of a) Ting-cauldron" – a rather expressive metaphor in reference to the country divided as it was into three political entities. The *Liu Sung-shu* entry omits record of the reign-title change.

25 In citing these fanciful stories I do so partly on the assumption that actual discoveries of the bronze artifacts gave rise to the stories concerned. The story-teller is regarded thus to be on much the same level as the Historian when it comes to embellishing factual data except that the former gives freer rein to his imagination.

[56*] T'ien-ts'e 天册 "Heavenly Tally" reign-period, the first year (275 A.D.); the Wu district 吳郡 reported that a silver tally had been dug up; it was one foot in length [24.12cm] and three inches wide [7.23cm] and engraved with characters recording the date. Thereupon a general amnesty was proclaimed and the reign-period title was changed. (*San-kuo-chih*, Wu-chih, 3.19b)

At this time it seems to have been somewhat fashionable in the State of Wu to alter the reign-period titles upon receiving notices of archaeological finds. In the following year (276 A.D.) it was reported that Lin-p'ing Lake, which had been clogged with grass and weeds since the close of the Han period, had cleared itself. Old grey-beards reminded each other of a saying to the effect that while the Lake was clogged the Empire would be in confusion, and when it was clear peace would reign. On the shores of the Lake a small greenish-white stone was found with characters 皇帝 *huang-ti* "August Emperor" engraved on it. Accordingly, the reign-title was changed to 天璽 *T'ien-hsi* "Heavenly Seal" [57]. Amazingly enough, Wu was extinguished four years later and the Empire was briefly united under the rule of Chin 晉.[26]

In the Western Chin 西晉 period (280-316 A.D.) there occurred the famous find of bamboo tablets in the second year of the T'ai k'ang 太康 reign-period (281 A.D.). Amongst the several accounts in the *Chin-shu* 晉書, that in the biography of Shu Hsi 束晳 [58] mentions the presence of "a bronze sword, 2 feet 5 inches in length" [60.3cm] in the tomb.[27] About this same time (according to tradition) was compiled the *Hsi-ching tsa-chi* 西京雜記, a collection of stories supposedly of Han date. Although it cannot be regarded as a particularly reliable source, it is not without interest to recall here the account therein of the Prince of Kuang-ch'uan 廣川, Ch'ü-chi 去疾. This rather lawless person gathered together many irresponsible young fellows and engaged in questionable adventures during the course of which they dug up all the grave-mounds in the State and obtained more than a hundred rare objects. Ten graves are described in some detail, all stated to be of rulers and nobles of Eastern Chou, Chan-kuo, and Han times; in several graves the corpses were found in a fresh and life-like state while many of the stone structures and contents are described as very new in appearance (6.1a ff. [59]). Probably the bulk of the record is mere fancy, but it may be reliable in its illustration of the prevalence of such illicit activities which might well be paralleled with the looting of the above-mentioned tomb.[28] The majority of the passages quoted hereafter, it will be observed, speak only of accidental finds and one is left with the distinct impression that rifling of ancient tombs decreased as more stable dynasties were established.

---

26 It would be a worthwhile venture, commencing from the *Tso-chuan*, to conduct an investigation into the "consistently successful prophesy" theme that is employed so frequently by the Chinese Historian. From the comparatively numerous examples which have come to light during the present survey one gains the impression that extensive study of this historico-literary device may well result in a valuable understanding of the Historians' methods of compilation which in turn may lead to an appreciation of further devices.

27 The several notices of the find are translated and discussed in my paper "Some Further Thoughts on the Chronology of Western Chou" which will be published later this year.

28 Since this section was written, the exciting discovery in Man-ch'eng 滿城, Hopei, in 1968 of the tomb of Liu Sheng 劉勝, Prince Ching of Chung-shan 中山靖王 who died *circa* 113 B.C. has been well publicised. It offers interesting confirmation of the validity of the *Hsi-ching tsa-chi* description of similar jade-clothed corpses. Possibly, too, the details attending the looting of the tombs may be a little more reliable than I have implied above, for instance, the Ma-wang-tui 馬王堆 tomb excavated in recent weeks at Ch'ang-sha with the corpse in a well-preserved state (see first published colour reproductions in *Asahi Shimbun*, 9.8.1972, p.1) may be representative of those described in the passages referred to above in the *Hsi-ching tsa-chi*? However, the authorship of the *Hsi-ching tsa-chi* and the Han period attribution of the work in its entirety has been questioned (see Chang Hsin-cheng 張心澂, *Wei-shu t'ung-k'ao* 僞書通考, pp.653-59). More reliable accounts of "gold-threaded jade-clothing" have been conveniently assembled together by Shih Wei 史爲 (*KK* 1972.2:48-50).

[60*] During the reign of the Emperor Min of Chin 晉愍帝 , Chien-hsing 建興 reign-period, the second year (314 A.D.) in the twelfth month, a peasant named Ch'en Lung 陳龍 of the prefecture of Wu-chin, Chin-ling 晉陵武進 found in his rice-fields five bronze To-bells 鐸 . (*Liu Sung-shu*, Fu-jui-chih, 29.42b)

An earlier section of the Fu-jui-chih (27.27a [61*]) refers to the same find, but places it in the fourth year (316 A.D.) and has the additional note: "both the handles and the mouths (i.e. lower body area) of the bells were decorated with dragons and tigers". The description of decorated handles in particular would appear to suggest Eastern Chou style bells. In this same year (316 A.D.) another find is reported following a record of fowls, sparrows, and geese portentously flying around the place:

[62*] In the village of Hui-chi 會稽 Yen Hsien 剡縣 , (a peasant named) Ch'en Ch'ing 陳清 also obtained from a well a plain Chung-bell, length 7.2 inches and diameter 4 inches [17.36 x 9.64cm]. Although the object was small it was very finely constructed. On it were 18 characters in ancient script, four of them which could be recognized read: "Hui-chi hui ming 會稽徽命 ." (*Ibid.*, 27.27b)

The *Chin-shu* 晉書 was compiled *circa* 644 A.D. by Fang Hsüan-ling 房玄齡 (578-648 A.D.) – well over 200 years after the end of the Chin dynasty (265-419 A.D.). Thus the preceding *Liu Sung-shu* accounts were available to Fang who used them in his writing of the lieh-chuan 列傳 of Kuo P'u 郭璞 , a scholar of renown and an accomplished interpreter of portents concerning the future. He was requested to conduct a divination when the King of Chin (later the Emperor Yüan of Eastern Chin) was about to repress a rebellion at Chien-yeh 建鄴:

[63*] P'u said: "In the north-east district, in a prefecture of the name Wu 武 there will be found To-bells which will be a sign manifesting the 'receiving of the mandate'; in the south-west district, in a prefecture of the name Yang 陽 water will gush forth from the wells". Sometime after this a peasant of the prefecture of Wu-chin 武進縣 , Chin-ling 晉陵 , obtained in the rice-fields five To-bells and in the prefecture of Li-yang 歷陽 water gushed forth from the wells for a whole day without stopping. When the Emperor (Yüan) was King of Chin he commissioned P'u to divine the future. P'u said: "Chung-bells will come to light in the village of Hui-chi thereby illustrating accomplishment. On them will be an engraved inscription. They will be found in the mud of a well in a peasant's property. This is what is accounted in the *Oracle* as: 'The Former Kings used music in the praise of virtue, and full orchestra in offerings to Shang-ti 上帝 .' [*KBTK*, XVI, 5.6]." When the Emperor (Yüan) came to the throne, in the first years of the T'ai-hsing 太興 reign-period (*circa* 318-21 A.D.) a peasant of the village of Hui-chi in Yen Hsien 剡縣 did, indeed, obtain from a well a Chung-bell 7.2 inches in length and 4.5 inches in diameter [17.36 x 9.84cm]. On it was an inscription in ancient characters of unusual calligraphy comprising 18 characters which read: "Hui-chi yüeh ming .... 會稽嶽命 ...." No one at the time was able to interpret the other graphs. (Kuo P'u chuan, 72.3a-b)

In a commentary on the *Shih-ming* 釋名 (a lexicon compiled in the Hou Han period) appears reference to this same discovery. It is precisely dated as having occurred in the "first year" of the T'ai-hsing 太興 reign-period (318 A.D.), but the measurements of the bell are given as: length 3 inches, diameter 4 inches [7.23 x 9.64cm] . The *Shih-ming* passage is to be found quoted also in commentaries in various editions of the *Erh-ya* 爾雅 (e.g. Ssu-pu pei-yao 四部備要 ed.: Shih-yüeh 釋樂 , *chung*. 3.3b [64*]). In Juan Yüan's 阮元 "Thirteen Classics" based upon Sung editions (*Sung-pen Shih-san ching* 宋本十三經 [65*]) the passage is again quoted. However, in these two cases the shorter measurements are recorded. In the Po-na 百衲 edition of the *Chin-shu* the longer measurements, as in the Imperial Ch'ien-lung edition, appear. Thus in available Sung period printings (or their reproductions) the inconsistency is present, and as these are the earliest

extant versions little can be done upon direct study of the texts to resolve which of the two recorded figures is the reliable one. A length (or height) of 3 inches, it may be observed, is very much out of proportion to a diameter of 4 inches, as numerous bells testify, thus the 7.2 inches would, no doubt, be the more valid record (see Figure 8). The stated size of the inscription, too, would support this view.[29] The further disparity of both date and measurement will have been observed in the *Liu Sung-shu* passage [62*] cited earlier.

At the best, we may interpret the above extract, together with several related matters written in the same strain located before and after it (which I have omitted) as simply an elaborate way to record the point that Kuo P'u was known to have been a successful soothsayer. In this instance we have available the three accounts listed in the *Liu Sung-shu,* compiled 150 years before. The two incorporated in vol.27 (pp.27a-b) of the Fu-jui-chih are arbitrarily adapted to fit the Kuo P'u story. It would seem that the compilers simply decided to associate the two entries with Kuo P'u and readjust them into the "consistently-successful-prophecy" theme – he, being a diviner of note, would surely have been able to foresee such discoveries of portentous significance. As the portents must herald important events and the Hui-chi find as listed in the *Liu Sung-shu* does not indicate any specific happening, it would be quite reasonable to advance the date three years or so from the Chien-hsing reign-period to the T'ai-hsing reign-period. It would, furthermore, add to the general effect by embellishing the preceding manipulations with accounts of other phenomenal happenings of a kind which might occur concurrently only on such important occasions.

Of the 18 characters in the inscription only four could be deciphered. These four characters, interestingly, commence with the place-name Hui-chi – no other than the locality where the vessels were unearthed! It may be noted that the third character differs in the two sources cited. Notwithstanding the inappropriate nature of the inscription content, however, the "consistently-successful-prophecy" method of historical composition indicates sufficiently enough the dubious value of the compilation as a whole.

[66*] During the reign of Ch'eng-ti, Hsien-k'ang 咸康 reign-period, in the fifth year (339 A.D.); the peasants of Nan-ch'ang 南昌, Yü-chang 豫章, obtained four bronze Chung-bells while digging; the Governor, Ch'u P'ou 褚裒 presented them to the Emperor. (*Liu Sung-shu,* Fu-jui-chih, 29.43a)

[67*] During the reign of Mu-ti 穆帝, Yung-ho 永和 reign-period, the first year (345 A.D.), in the second month, the peasants of Ch'un-ku 春穀 obtained a Chin-sheng hair ornament 金勝, five inches in length and shaped like a Chih-sheng hair ornament. In the following year Shu 蜀 was subdued. (*Yü-hai,* 196.7a)

[68*] During the reign of Mu-ti, Sheng-p'ing 升平 reign-period, the fifth year (361 A.D.), the second month, on the day *yi-wei* 乙未 [32], a bronze Chung-bell was obtained as a result of a horse trampling through the soil surface in Nan-yi-men 南掖門. (*Liu Sung-shu,* Fu-jui-chih, 29.43a)

[69*] During the Ch'ien-Ch'in 前秦 period when Fu Chien 苻堅 (the Emperor Hsüan-chao 宣昭帝堅) reigned, the Chien-yüan 建元 reign-period, in the fifth year (369 A.D.), a wood-cutter of Ch'ang-an saw a gold Ting-cauldron south of the city-wall (于城南 : *cf.* [70*] below) and hurried to inform (the Emperor) Chien. Chien sent someone to bring it into the city but by then it had changed into a bronze Ting-cauldron. (*Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng,* chuan 204, vol.697.58b)

Upon checking this extract in the *Yi-yüan* 異苑 – a Sung period compilation by Liu Ching-shu 劉敬叔 similar to the *Yu-yang tsa-tsu* described above – from which it is cited in the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* 古今圖書集成, it will be noted that the date is given as "during the Chien-yü reign-period" and not as the "fifth year"; there are other small variations, too:

29 As bells are oval in shape the diameter would normally be expressed in terms of the greater or the lesser diameter – both measurements normally appearing in catalogues of bronze vessels. I take the measurements here and in other passages to be the greater diameter in each case.

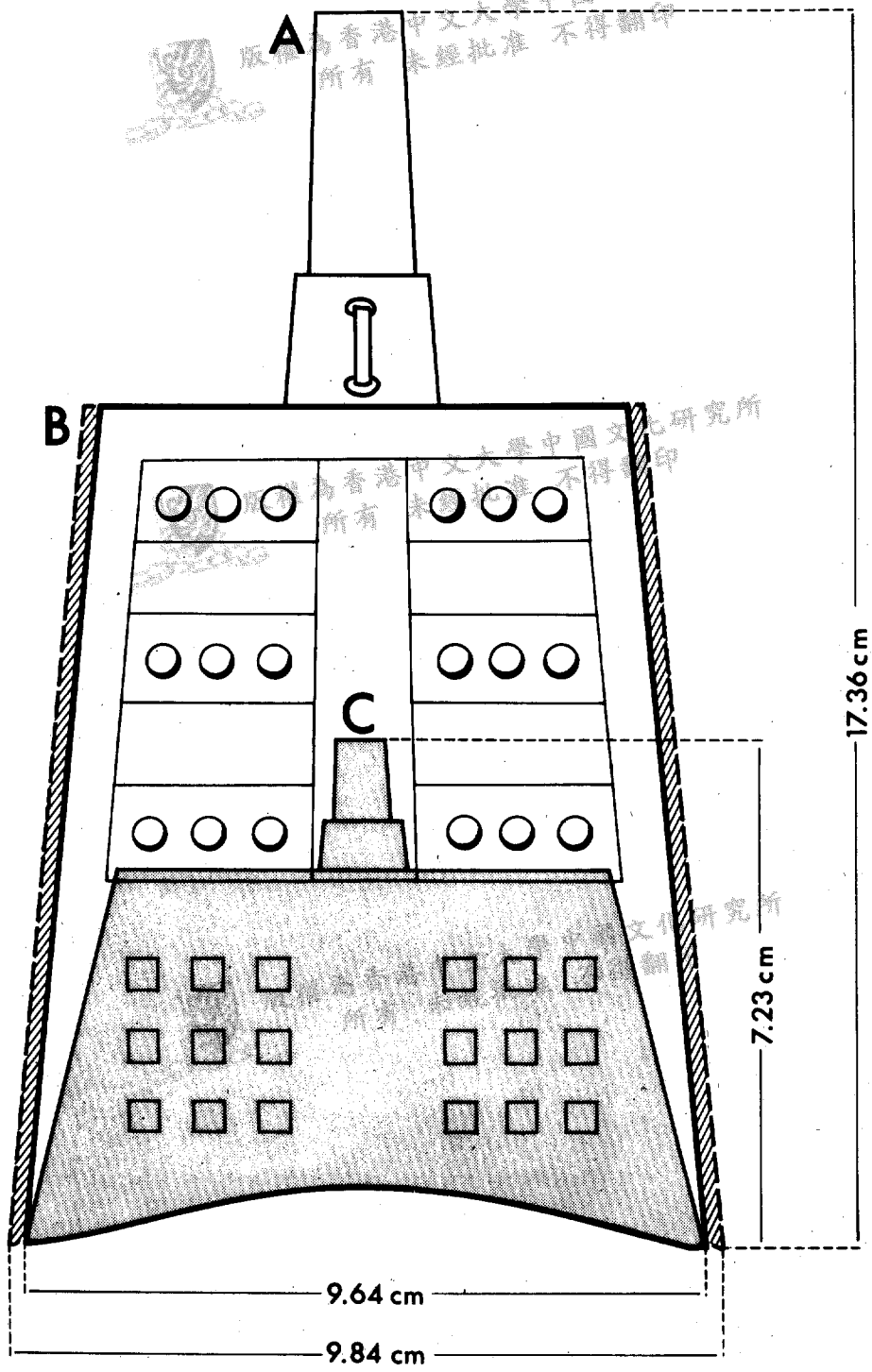


FIGURE 8 A reconstruction of the Hui-chi Chung-bell; three variant measurements are recorded (see passages [62*], [63*] and [64*]). These are respectively, A: 17.36 x 9.64cm, B: 17.36 x 9.84cm, and C: 7.23 x 9.64cm – the two lesser size variations are indicated by broken lines. There are various possibilities as to the location of the 18 characters' inscription – being a plain (undecorated) bell, it would seem reasonable to suggest the placement as given in the reconstruction. Drawn to natural size.

[70*] When Fu Chien reigned, during the Chien-yü reign-period, a woodcutter of Ch'ang-an saw inside the city-wall (於城內) a gold Ting-cauldron and hurried to inform Chien. Chien sent someone to fetch it. It had changed into a bronze Ting-cauldron. Upon entering (the Palace?) gates it changed again and became a large To-bell. (*Yi-yüan*, 2.3a)

As there are various editions of the *Yi-yüan* and only one available to me (*Chin-tai mi-shu* 津逮秘書), I must assume the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* quoted from a slightly different version of this work but did not cite it fully. There is no record of the discovery in the *Chin-shu* or in the *Liu Sung-shu* list. In view of this object's propensity for transforming itself and its ultimate assumption of the form of a To-bell, it will be counted as a bell in the list of finds tabulated at the conclusion of this survey. It may be observed, too, that it is not the only occasion on which the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* compilers appear to have tampered with the passages quoted – by deleting reference to the final transformation of the object into a To-bell their problem of classification of the entry was easily solved.

[71*] In the Eastern Chin period, Yi-hsi 義熙 reign-period (405-18 A.D.), during the first years, the Emperor commenced to quell the elements of confusion in Chin and set himself up as leader. Huo Shan 霍山 in Lu-chiang 廬江 continually rang with the sound of bells. Twelve (= 12th year: 416 A.D.), the Emperor was about to invade Kuan-lo 關洛. A landslide occurred on Huo Shan. Six Chung-bells appeared. They were of unusual manufacture and contained an inscription in ancient script of 160 characters. (*Liu Sung-shu*, Fu-jui-chih, 27.28b)

[72*] In the Eastern Chin period, Yi-hsi reign-period, the twelfth year (416 A.D.), there was a landslide on Huo Shan, Lu-chiang; six Chung-bells were obtained and presented to the Emperor. (*Nan-shih*, Sung, Wu-ti-chi, 1.16a)

If the record of the number of characters (on each [?] bell) is dependable, it must take pride of place as the longest inscription text recorded amongst the notices in this survey. The additional embellishments in the *Liu Sung-shu* account do not, however, seem to augur well for the reliability even of this detail. It may be little more than a literary flourish to emphasize the portentous nature of the find. In this particular section of the Fu-jui-chih the compiler seems to have let his creative capacity run somewhat more freely than in the later sections from which the majority of our *Liu Sung-shu* passages are cited. Interestingly, the version in the *Nan-shih* (compiled between 630-50 A.D. by Li Yen-shou 李延壽, 612?-78? A.D.), nearly 150 years later, presents a remarkably attenuated account of the find – it would seem that the more fanciful aspects of the *Liu Sung-shu* entry failed to appeal to the compiler, especially perhaps on account of its incorporation in the imperial annals. However, note the following two passages:

[73*] In the middle reaches of the Han River 漢水 at Ch'eng-ku Hsien 城固縣, there was an unexpected sound of thunder along the water edge and suddenly the river bank collapsed. Twelve bronze Chung-bells were obtained. (*Liu Sung-shu*, Fu-jui-chih, 27.29a)

[74*] Yi-hsi reign-period, the fourteenth year (418 A.D.) .... in the middle reaches of the Han River at Ch'eng-ku Hsien an unusual sound like thunder came from the river bank which suddenly collapsed. Twelve bronze Chung-bells appeared from beneath the soil. (*Nan-shih*, Sung, Wu-ti-chi, 1.21a)

In the *Liu Sung-shu* account the record of portent continues with details of the discovery of "lucky grain" 嘉禾, which details appear also in the *Nan-shih*.

[75*] Yüan-hsi 元熙 reign-period, the second year (420 A.D.) .... the river banks at Ching-ling Hsien 竟陵縣 opened of their own accord and ten or so ancient bronze ritual vessels appeared. The Emperor (Wu of Sung) presented them (to the Emperor of Chin). The Emperor of Chin declined to accept them whereupon the auspicious objects were returned and stored in the Chief Minister's office 相府 (*Nan-shih*, Sung, Wu-ti-chi, 1.22a)

The Fu-jui-chih does not report this discovery – a circumstance that may have some significance in regard to the reliability of the *Nan-shih* record.

5. Discoveries Recorded in the Period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-580 A.D.)

[76*] During the reign of the Emperor Wen 文帝 of the Liu Sung 劉宋 period (420-79 A.D.), Yüan-chia 元嘉 reign-period, the thirteenth year (436 A.D.), the fourth month on the day *hsin-ch'ou* 辛丑 [38], the bank of a river near Chang-shan 章山 in the prefecture of Wu-ch'ang 武昌 opened of its own accord and revealed a "spirit" Ting-cauldron 神鼎 ; the Governor of Chiang-chou 江州 , the Prince of Nan-ch'iao 南譙 , Yi-hsüan 義宣 , presented it to the Emperor. (*Liu Sung-shu,* Fu-jui-chih, 29.43a)[30]

The term 神 *shen* "spirit", "divine", "supernatural" applied here to the vessel indicates the aroma of mystery with which the fortuitously revealed articles were regarded. Other instances will be observed in later quoted passages, but although the matter is not always expressed, the fact that the items are so often recorded as being ultimately presented to the Emperors is, in itself, an indication of the divine qualities attributed to the ancient vessels.

[77a*] Chang Yung 張永 had been clearing Yüan-wu Lake 元武湖 and cutting into an ancient mound obtained a bronze Tou-ladle 斗 with a handle. The Emperor Wen of Sung (宋文帝 : 424-52 A.D.) asked his courtiers about it. Ho Ch'eng-t'ien 何承天 said: "This is a Tou-ladle of the Hsin House 新室 (i.e. Wang Mang 王莽 , 9-23 A.D.). When the Three Ducal Ministers (i.e. Chen Han 甄邯 , Wang Hsün 王尋 and Wang Yi 王邑) respectively died, each was granted Tou-ladles – one for outside the burial mound and one for burial inside the mound. Of the Three Ducal Ministers only Chen Han who was Ta-ssu-t'u 大司徒 'Grand Minister of the People' lived left of the Chiang 江 (i.e. to the east of the Yangtze River)." Shortly afterwards the mound was opened up and inside was an inscribed stone tablet which confirmed the matter. (*Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng,* chuan 196, vol.796.16a; *cf. Nan-shih,* Ho Ch'eng-t'ien chuan, 33.25b [77b*])

The earlier version in the *Nan-shih* has been translated by H.H. Dubs, *History of the Former Han Dynasty* (vol.3, p.373). In the slightly condensed form in which it appears in a late Sung period compilation, the *Shan-t'ang k'ao-so* 山堂考索 by Chang Ju-yü 章如愚 , as quoted in the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng,* the account differs in respect of a number of variations in characters and phrases. The story, however, is preserved more or less accurately. Amongst the character variations attention might be drawn to a rather unusual error in the quoted passage; the character 甄 in the name, Chen Han, is rendered as 鄤 which graph does not seem to be listed in any dictionary. The *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* printer, no doubt, misread the manuscript form which would have had the graph written as 郭 . In the *Nan-shih* passage the name is repeated twice and this graph is written respectively as 甄 and as 郭 – both forms are interchangeable; the latter might easily give rise to the creation of the character 鄤.

Dubs has drawn attention to the discrepancies abounding in the *Nan-shih* passage: Chen Han's official post was "Grand Minister of War", *ta-ssu-ma,* and not "Grand Minister of the People", *ta-ssu-t'u*; both Chen Han and his son were dead before Wang Mang instituted the Tou-ladle measures, while the burial ground of the Chen family was situated in Honan. We may observe,

30 I am not certain what significance attends situations such as the present one where the record in question does not appear in the relevant *pen-chi* or *lieh-chuan.* During the compilation of the passages, all obviously relevant sections of the Histories were checked for such duplication of records. If no duplication was found, notice of the matter has generally not been made – only where duplication occurs, and particularly where textual variation exists, has appropriate comment been offered.

accordingly, that the passage presents a particularly clear-cut instance of the historian's technique of creating speeches and conversations for the historical characters. Most important is the build-up of an atmosphere wherein the compiler's conception of the personage can be expressed in full accord with the requirements of Confucian dogma. Speeches, as we have several times observed, provide an ideal means of expanding a narrative which, if composed only of verifiable fact, would be necessarily meagre in content, not particularly edifying, and quite lacking in interest.

[78*] Yüan-chia reign-period, the twenty-first year (444 A.D.), in the twelfth month, an ancient Ting-cauldron was obtained from the bank of a river in Hsin-yang 新陽 ; it contained 42 characters in Seal 篆 script. The governor of Yung-chou 雍州 , Hsiao Ssu-hua 蕭思話 , presented it to the Emperor. (*Liu Sung-shu*, Fu-jui-chih, 29.43a)

The term "Seal script" (篆 *chuan*) is usually defined as that instituted by Li Ssu and is the form preserved in the *Shuo-wen*; the Large Seal (大篆 *ta-chuan*) was the script of Western Chou – also known as "ancient characters" (古文 *ku-wen*) and as 籀 *chou* script. To distinguish Seal script (in the sense of Li Ssu's characters) from the earlier type, the term "Small Seal" is often used. Thus both "Seal" and "Small Seal" should be understood as the character form used in Ch'in times which soon developed into the Li 隸 script of the Han period.[31] In several of the passages cited in the present survey confused use of the term "Seal" is to be observed. Sometimes as in the above extract it is used as though it meant "Large Seal", while on other occasions it refers to Han script where the calligraphy should strictly be called Li or "clerical script". Discrepancies of this kind may sometimes be clarified with reference to the recorded descriptions of the vessels and the nature of their inscriptions. In the present instance, the length of the text precludes Ch'in or Han manufacture – the inscribed Ting-cauldron would have been of Western or Eastern Chou origin.

[79*] Yüan-chia reign-period, the twenty-second year (445 A.D.), a bronze Chung-bell was found in Yü-chang 豫章 in the prefecture of Yü-ning 豫寧 ; the Governor of Chiang-chou 江州 , Chao 紹 , the Prince of Kuang-ling 廣陵 , presented it to the Emperor. (*Ibid.*, 29.43b)

[80*] During the reign of the Emperor Hsiao Wu 孝武帝 , Hsiao-chien 孝建 reign-period, the third year (456 A.D.), the fourth month, on the day *ting-hai* 丁亥 [12], the peasants of Yi-huang Hsien 宜黃縣 , Lin-ch'uan 臨川 found seven bronze Chung-bells in the rice-fields; the Historiographer of the Interior 內史 , Fu Hui 傅徽 , presented them to the Emperor. (*Ibid.*, 29.43b)

[81*] Hsiao-chien reign-period, the third year (456 A.D.), the fourth month, on the day *chia-ch'en* 甲辰 [4], six ancient Chung-bells were found in Yen-ling 延陵 , Chin-ling 晉陵 ; the Governor of Hsü-chou 徐州 , Tan 誕 , the Prince of Ching-ling 竟陵 , presented them to the Emperor. (*Ibid.*, 29.43b)

[82*] Ta-ming 大明 reign-period, sixth year (463 A.D.), a four-sided bronze Lu-ku-drum 路鼓 with a single pedestal was obtained from P'u-ch'i 蒲圻 , Chiang-hsia 江夏 ; the Governor of Ying-chou 郢州 , Tzu-sui 子綏 , the Prince of An-lu 安陸 , presented it to the Emperor. (*Ibid.*, 29.43b)

The Lu-ku-drum described here would possibly have comprised a pair of drums fastened in horizontal position to a pedestal, or more probably it was simply a single drum as shown in Figure 9.

31 It may well be significant that controlled excavations conducted since the early 1920's have not succeeded in revealing a characteristic Ch'in script of pre-221 B.C. date and only one or two examples of the well known "weights-and-measures" inscription text have come to light – these dating in the Empire period. By far the greatest volume of Small Seal (*Shuo-wen* style) graphs derive from Han period (and later) inscribed vessels, utensils, weapons, seals, mirrors, etc. In "normal" writing (e.g. the Chü-yen 居延 and Wu-wei brush-written tablets, the Hsi-p'ing Stone Classics, tomb tiles and funerary stele, etc.), however, it is almost entirely the Li script that is employed. It is my impression that the Small Seal was of restricted use and possibly functioned merely as an ornamental form of writing.

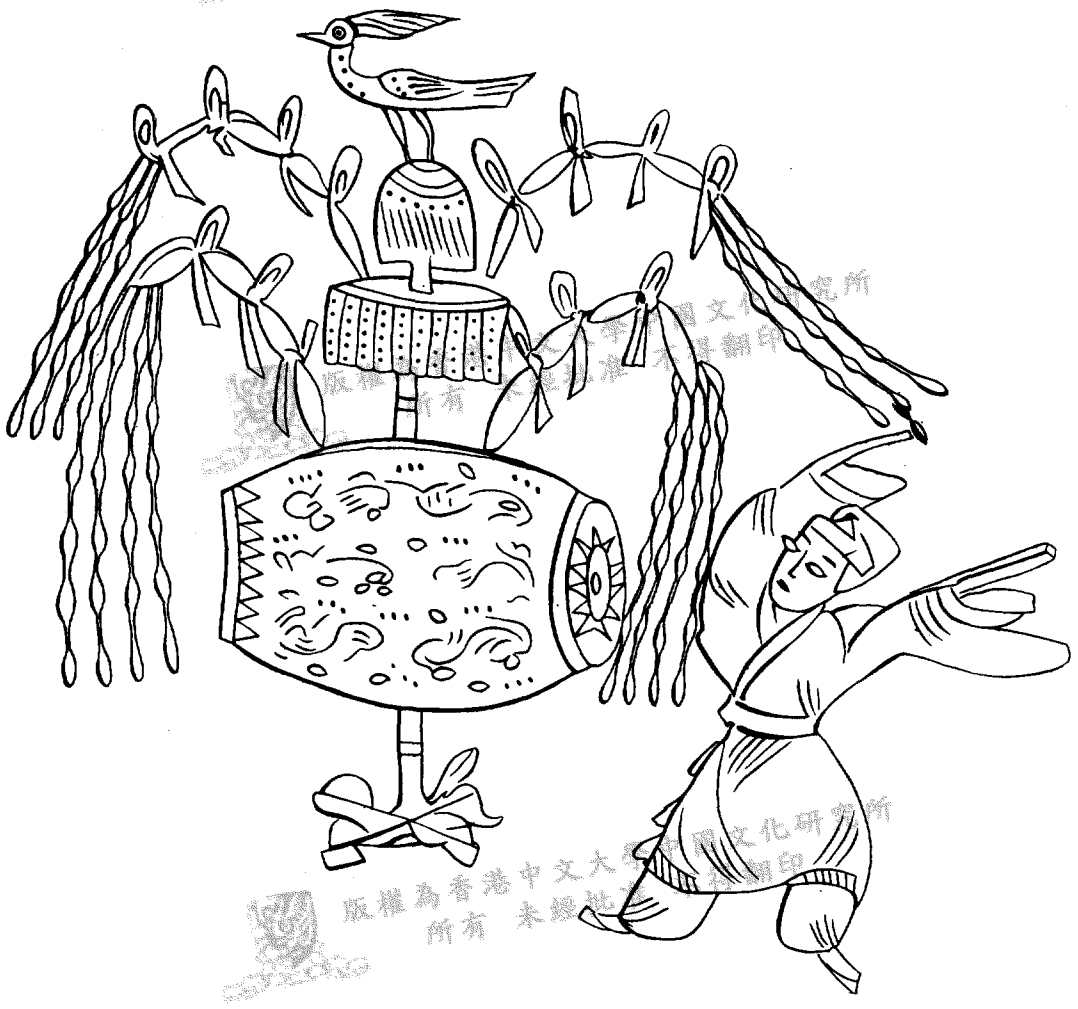


FIGURE 9 Lu-ku-drum on pedestal – after *Yi-nan ku-hua-hsiang-shih mu fa-chüeh pao-kao* 沂南古畫像石墓發掘報告, (Shanghai, 1956, Pls.34, 88). Although the text of passage [82*] speaks of a drum with four sides, or surfaces, it would be most unlikely that this could mean four skin-covered sides for beating. In principle of construction, an instrument similar to that illustrated here might be claimed.

It was an instrument popular amongst troupes of entertainers and often appears in Han tomb-tile engravings. One gains the impression from this account – particularly because the pedestal is mentioned – that the ravages of time had had little opportunity to affect the wooden (and leather?) sections of the instrument. It is simply stated that the Lu-ku-drum "was obtained" and there is no definite suggestion of it being the result of excavation. In all probability it was an heirloom accompanied by suitable testimony, or a story, of its antiquity.

[83*] During the reign of the Emperor Ming 明帝 of Sung, T'ai-shih 泰始 reign-period, the fourth year (468 A.D.), the second month, on the day *ping-shen* 丙申 [33], an ancient Chung-bell was obtained from Wang-ts'ai 望蔡, Yü-chang 豫章; it was 1 foot 7 inches high and 2 feet 8 inches in circumference. The Governor, Chang Pien 張辯, presented it to the Emperor. (*Ibid.*, 29.43b)

Converted to present day measurements the bell would be 41cm in height and 67.53cm in circumference – the latter is an unusual method of expressing the measurement of the oval shape. If the bell was actually round in shape it would then seem reasonable to measure the circumference. However, Chung-bells are never round (Figure 10).

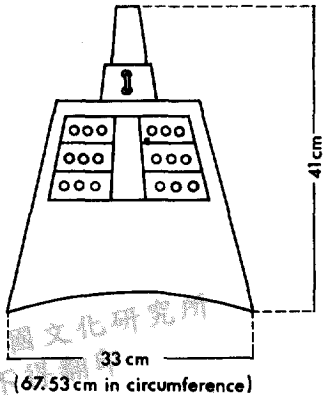


FIGURE 10 A reconstruction of the Wang-tsai Chung-bell described in passage [83*] at scale of 1/10 thus according with Figures 5, 7, 15 and 16.

[84*] T'ai-shih 泰始 reign-period, the fifth year (469 A. D.), the fifth month, on the day *jen-hsü* 壬戌 [59], a bronze Ting-cauldron was obtained from Nan-ch'ang 南昌, Yü-chang; its capacity was 1 *hu* 7 *tou*. The Governor of Chiang-chou 江州, Wang Ching-wen 王景文, presented it to the Emperor. (*Ibid.*, 29.44a)

The cubic content of this Ting-cauldron would be in the vicinity of 34.4 litres – that of the smaller (R1752) of the two large Anyang vessels in Figure 7 is 39.6 litres. It stands 67.6cm in height and the body somewhat pear-shaped; if the Nan-ch'ang vessel were the usual round Ting-cauldron, it would probably have been about 60cm in height – possibly comparable with the Hsiao K'o Ting in Figure 5.

[85*] During the reign-period T'ai-shih (466-71 A.D.); Shih-tzu 世祖 (the Emperor Ming 明帝) obtained a coin in Ch'ing-ch'i-che 青溪宅, it had a design comprising the Pole Star, the Seven Planets, a pair of tallies and also a figure of a man wearing a sword. While he was stationed at P'en-ch'eng 盆城 he also obtained a large cash with an inscription which read: "Peace for a Century 太平百歲." (*Nan-Ch'i-shu*, Hsiang-jui-chih, 18.15a)

It is to be doubted that the first of these two "coins" was actually a coin – possibly it was a plaque of some sort or even a mirror? As to the second, I have not been able to find amongst the various compendiums of ancient coins any prior to this period that bear this inscription.[32]

[86*] T'ai-shih reign-period, the seventh year (471 A.D.), the sixth month, on the day *chia-yin* 甲寅 [51]; a bronze Ting-cauldron was obtained from the district of Yi-yang 義陽. It had a capacity of 1 *hu* [20.23 litres]. Both the vessel and its lid had intaglio décor. The Governor of Yü-chou 豫州, Tuan Fo-jung 段仏榮, presented it to the Emperor. (*Liu Sung-shu*, Fu-jui-chih, 29.44a)

The fact that this Ting-cauldron had a lid and both lid and vessel were decorated, allows it to be dated as an Eastern Chou vessel with a reasonable degree of confidence (see Figure 13). Its cubic content suggests a vessel about half the size of R1752 in Figure 7 – allowance must of course be made for the characteristic shape and proportions of covered Ting-cauldrons of this period.

[87*] During the reign of the Emperor Shun 順帝, Sheng-ming 昇明 reign-period, the second year (478 A.D.), in the ninth month; a bronze Chung-bell 2 feet 1 inch [50.65cm] in length was obtained from a mountain stream in Wan-sui Shan 萬歲山, Chien-ning 建寧, the Governor of Yü-chou, Liu Huai-chen 劉懷珍, presented it to the Emperor. (*Ibid.*, 29.44a)

32 Coins bearing the inscription 太平百錢, however, are mentioned in the *Sui-shu* Shih-huo-chih and dated early in the Liang period (Wu Ti, 502-49 A.D.) – as these may have been known to the *Nan-ch'i-shu* compiler, it is possible that the above "large cash" inscription might have received its inspiration from them (see Figure 11), it will be noted that the Liang cash are quite small (see, Ting Fu-pao 丁福保, *Ku-ch'ien ta-tz'u-tien* 古錢大辭典, 2.210; 3.138 [text]).

[88*] Sheng-ming reign-period, the second year (478 A.D.), in the ninth month, a peasant of the village of Chien-ch'ang 建昌, Chien-ning Hsien while searching for medicinal herbs on Wan-sui Shan, heard suddenly in a mountain stream a strange thundering sound and obtained a bronze Chung-bell, 2 feet 1 inch [50.65cm] in length, on its side were ancient characters. (*Nan-Ch'i-shu,* Hsiang-jui-chih, 18.13a)

The *Nan-Ch'i-shu* 南齊書 which covers the period 479-501 A.D. was compiled by Hsiao Tzu-hsien 蕭子顯 (489-537 A.D.); the above discovery coincides closely to the compilation dates of the *Liu Sung-shu* (492-93 A.D.) and is not much more than a generation prior to the time Hsiao probably commenced his work on the *Nan-Ch'i-shu.* As the entries in the two Histories are to be found only in the lists of auspicious events, it may be considered curious that the supplementary

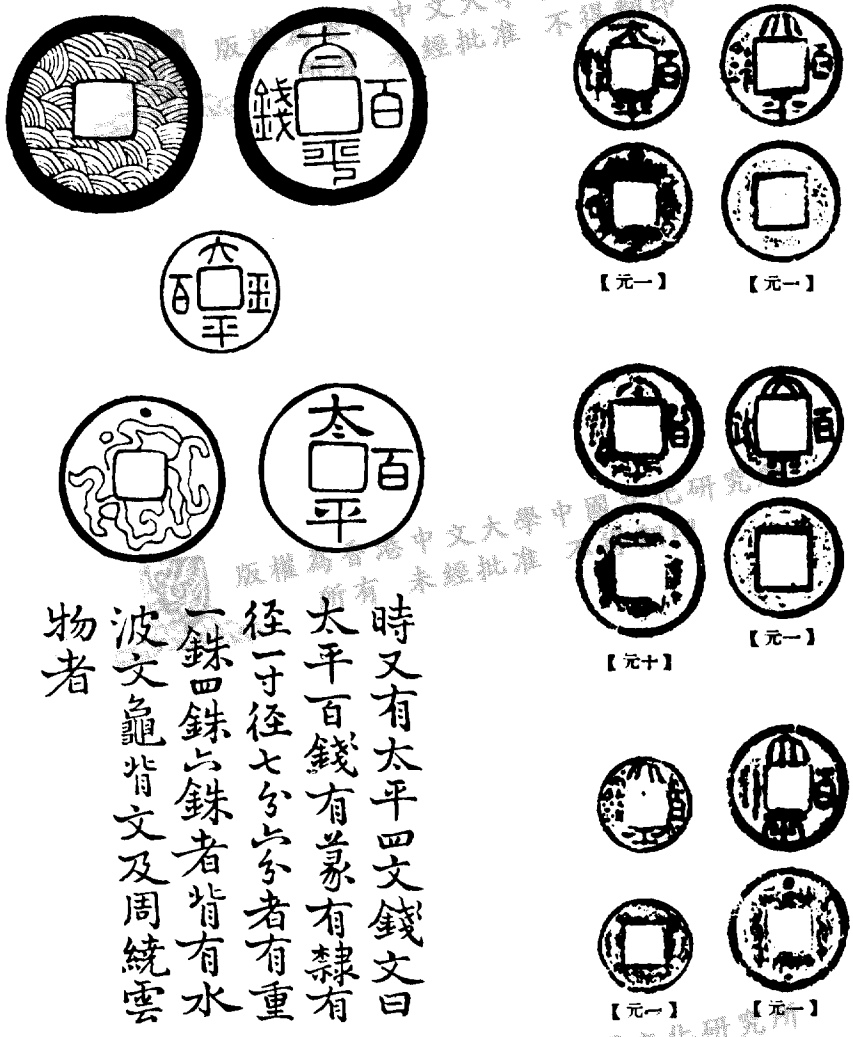


FIGURE 11 Coins of early Liang date (*circa* 500 B.C.) containing the characters 太平百錢. (After *Chin-shih-so* and *Ku-ch'ien ta-tz'u-tien* 2.210.)

details provided in the later compilation should have been omitted in the earlier while the matter of Liu Huai-chen's presentation of the vessel is disregarded in the later History.

[89*] During the reign of Kao-tsung of Wei 魏高宗 , T'ai-ho 太和 reign-period, the second year (478 A.D.), in the ninth month, a Ting-cauldron came out of the Ch'ih River 滍水 in Lo-chou 洛州 and was sent to the Capital. The Emperor (experienced) boundless (sensations of) taste, thus it was a "spirit" Ting-cauldron that had come to light. (*Wei-shu,* Ling-cheng-chih, B.34b)

[90*] Sheng-ming reign-period, the third year (479 A.D.), peasants of the village of Tso-li 左里 found in Kung-t'ing Lake 宮亭湖 two Chi-halberds 戟 in leather sheaths 韄 . On their sides were inscriptions in ancient characters beyond understanding. (*Nan-Ch'i-shu,* Hsiang-jui-chih, 18.15a)

The locale of this find was in the area of ancient Ch'u and not far from the domain of Wu and Yüeh, thus we may assume that the ancient graphs "beyond understanding" were of the ornate script popular amongst these three States in the Chan-kuo period, which script is by no means readily interpreted even today. That of Wu and Yüeh, appropriately termed "bird-script" (Figure 12) of offers considerable difficulty in defining the characters submerged in the embellishments comprising the greater part of each graph.

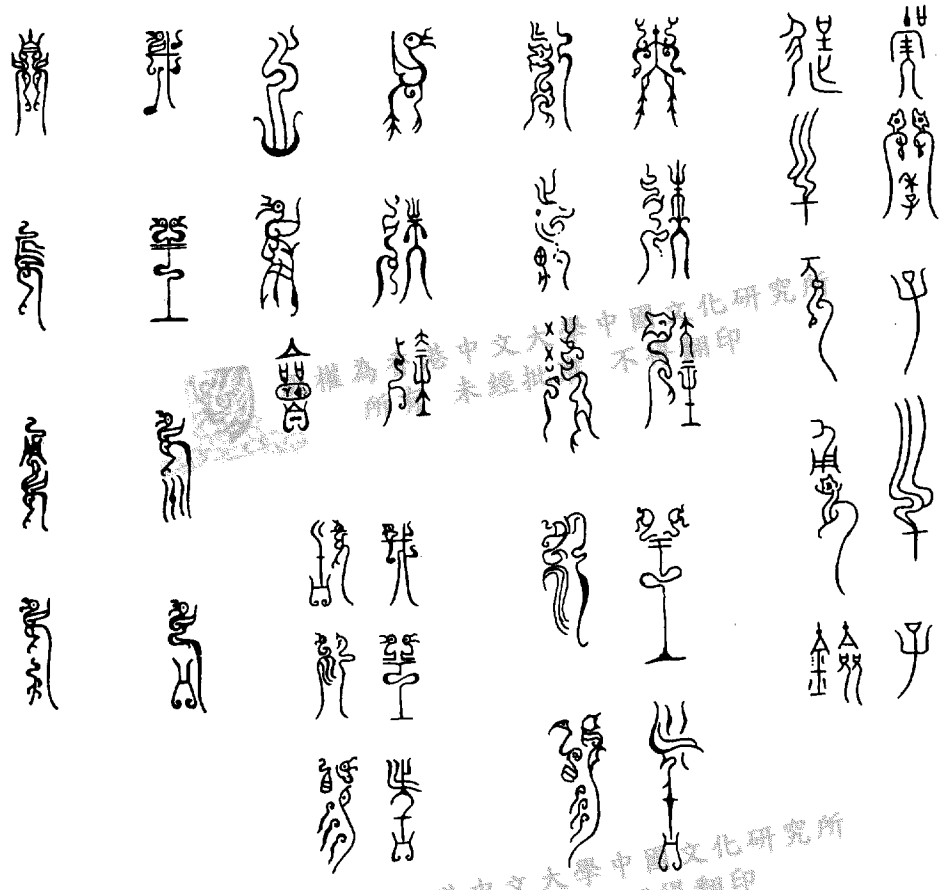


FIGURE 12 Examples of the ornate "bird" script of Wu, Yüeh, and Ch'u.

[91*] Chien-yüan 建元 reign-period, the first year (479 A.D.), the tenth month. In the district of Hao-ling 浩陵 there had been for some time a cloudy vapour in a gorge where a peasant, T'ien Chien 田健, of the village of Tan 蜑 lived. There were sounds reverberating penetratingly as a dragon's roar. Investigations were made but for a year or more nothing was found. On the 27th day of the 4th month the gorge was unexpectedly lit up by two beams of light for a distance of several *li*; upon going to the brighter of the two he obtained an ancient Chung-bell and also another vessel known as a 淳于 *ch'un-yü*. The people of Tan regarded the articles as supernatural objects and offered sacrifices to them. (*Ibid.*, 18.13a)

The vessel type called *ch'un-yü* is actually a form of bell (Figure 13) which seems to make its appearance in China not much earlier than Western Han. Between the years 434-522 A.D. a large number of jade objects, mainly seals, were also found and in the records the inscriptions they contained are noted. In the majority of cases they made their presence known by means of vapours, lights, and sounds.

[92*] In the Nan Ch'i period, Yung-ming 永明 reign-period, the second year (484 A.D.), an ancient Ting-cauldron was obtained near Tan-shui 丹水. (*Yü-hai*, 88.99a)

[93*] During the reign of Wu-ti 武帝, Yung-ming reign-period, the third year (485 A.D.), a fisherman of Nan-kao-liang 南高涼, Yüeh-chou 越州, while netting fish in the sea obtained a bronze animal. It had an inscription which read: "Made this valuable Ting-cauldron, Ch'i Ch'en 齊臣, for a myriad years sons and grandsons forever value it." (*Nan-Ch'i-shu*, Hsiang-jui-chih, 18.16b)

A Kuang-pourer 觥 or a Hsi-Tsun-vase 犧尊 is immediately suggested by the term 銅獸 *t'ung-shou* "bronze animal" (Figure 13) but even these would conflict with the inscription context. Whatever the possible vessel type implied by *t'ung-shou*, it would not have employed the term "Ting-cauldron". Although the record is thus obviously at fault, the inscription text is unmistakably based upon that of an actual bronze text. It is either incomplete (i.e. only the last line or two of a longer text) or the characters have become disarranged. If it read: "Ch'i Ch'en made this valuable Ting-cauldron; sons and grandsons forever value it" the text would conform perfectly with that of numerous inscription examples (Figure 14). The character 承 *ch'eng* "inherit" is written in error for 永 *yung* "forever". This mistake is duplicated in the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* (chuan 204, vol.796.59a) and the entry is inserted in the section on Ting-cauldrons without regard to the inconsistency attending the description of the vessel.

[94*] Yung-ming reign-period, the fourth year (486 A.D.), the fourth month. In the hills of Tung-ch'ang Hsien 東昌縣 there had been for some years continual bursts of unusual thundering. On the 15th. day of the second month a cliff collapsed and a peasant, Fang Yüan-t'ai 方元泰, went to investigate. Under the débris he found an ancient Chung-bell. (*Ibid.*, 18.13b)

[95*] Yung-ming reign-period, the fifth year (487 A.D.), in the third month; a "spirit" Chung-bell 神鐘 was obtained in Ch'ang-kang-shan 長崗山, Yü-ning Hsien 豫寧縣. (*Ibid.*, 18.13b)

[96*] Yung-ming reign-period, the seventh year (489 A.D.), the Governor of Ch'i-hsing 齊興, Liu Yüan-pao 劉元寶 was supervising the walling of the district capital and in the moat were found 1,000,000 cash of a very large size. He presented them to the Palace as auspicious materials; Shih-tzu 世祖 (the Emperor Wu of Ch'i 齊武帝) distributed the cash amongst his ministers, the amounts varying according to their official ranks. (*Ibid.*, 18.15a)

[97*] Yung-ming reign-period, the ninth year (491 A.D.), in the eleventh month; an ancient Chung-bell was obtained in newly ploughed land at a depth of one foot 4 inches [33.76cm] in the fields of Kuang-han Hsien 廣漢縣, Ning-shu 寧蜀. It was 3 feet 8 inches [91.65cm] high and 4 feet 7 inches [111.36cm] in circumference, the suspending shank rose 1 foot 2 inches [28.94cm], thus the total height was 5 feet [120.59cm]. There were four groups of nine bosses each ..... (*Ibid.*, 18.13b)

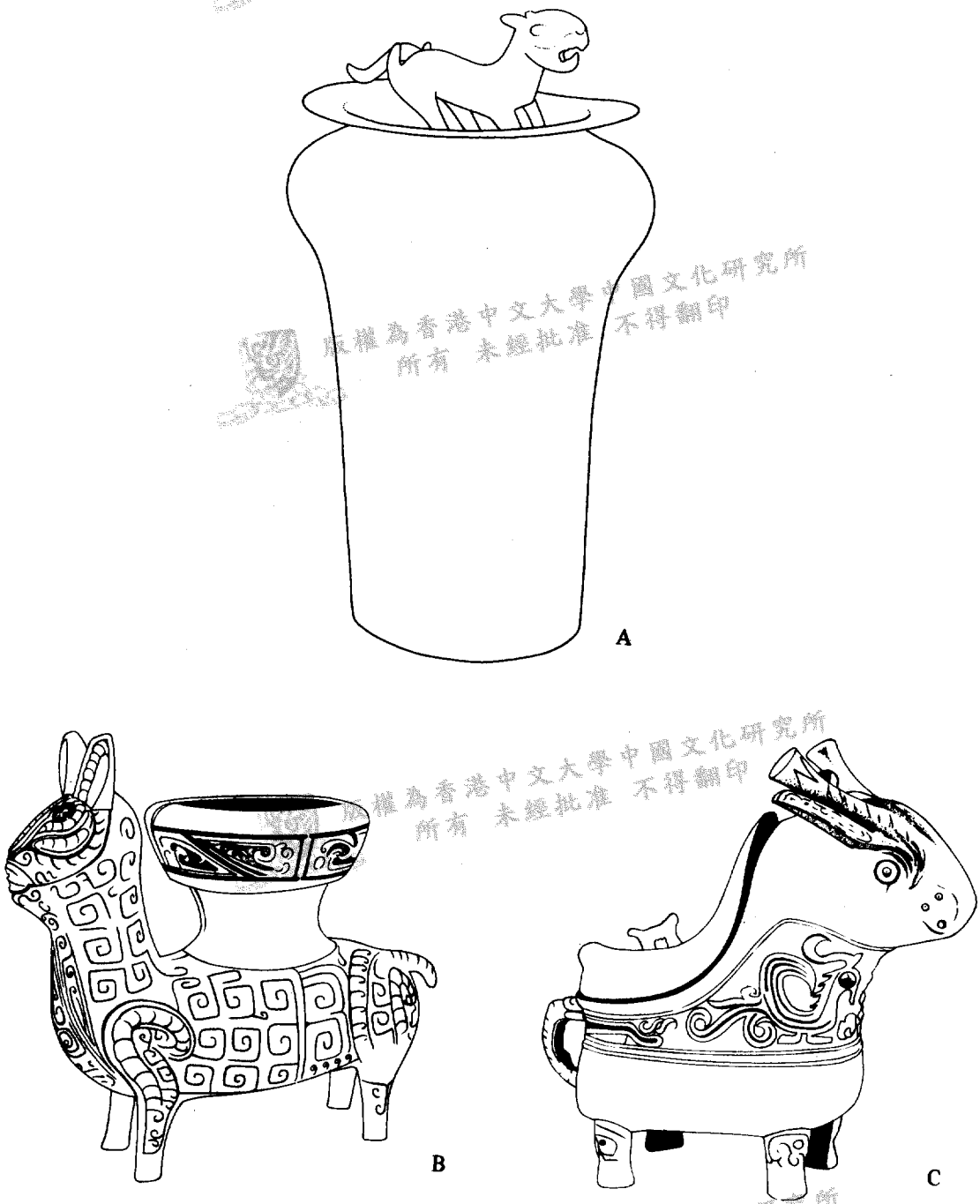


FIGURE 13 The term *ch'un-yü* referred to in passage [91] is usually applied to vessels of the above type (A); the "bronze animal" recorded in passage [93] would probably have been a Hsi-Tsun-vase or Kuang-pourer such as those illustrated here (B and C).

FIGURE 14 Reconstruction of the archaic form of the Nan-kao-liang inscription. Adjustments made to the text may be observed upon comparison with the modern character transcription as recorded in current editions of the Histories.

The description and details of measurement are remarkably comprehensive as compared to those cited up to now. Upon the basis of this data the reconstruction attempted in Figure 15 is offered; it is immediately evident, however, that the dimensions recorded above are somewhere in error. As demonstrated in Figure 15 it is probably a case of "circumference" appearing instead of "diameter" —or, possibly it is the measurement of the circumference which is not correctly recorded?

[98*] Yung-ming reign-period, the tenth year (492 A.D.), a peasant, Wang She 王攝, of Ch'i-an Hsien 齊安縣 obtained 12,710 "four characters" large cash, all of identical manufacture. (*Ibid.*, 18.15a)

[99*] Liu Ch'üan 劉悛 (c.479-502 A.D.) built a school in the vicinity of the Regional Office 州治 and obtained ancient ritual vessels [during building operations]; there were two each of these: bronze Lei-vases 罍, bronze Tseng-boilers 甑, bronze Shan-Lei-Tsun-vases 山罍罇 and bronze Tou-pedestal-bowls 豆. He presented them to the Emperor. (*Nan-Ch'i-shu*, Liu Ch'üan chuan, 37.5a)

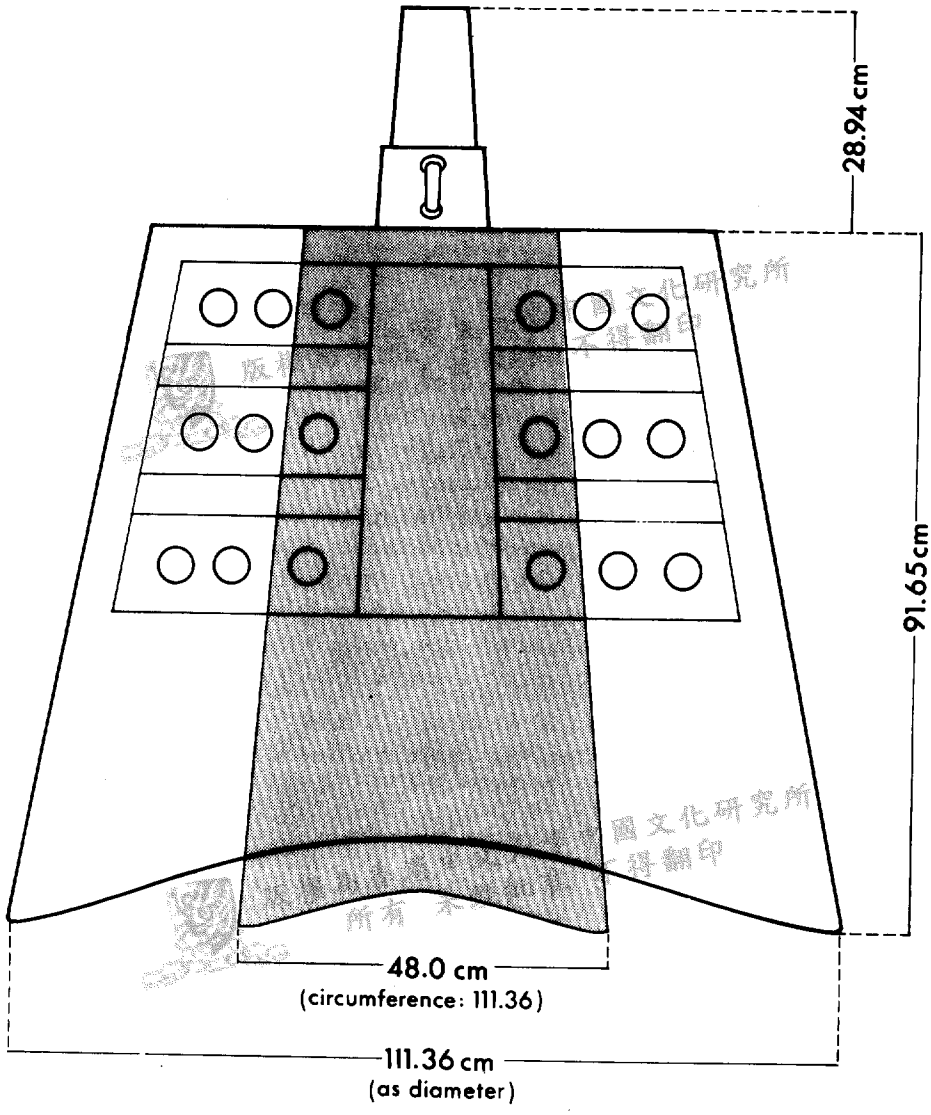


FIGURE 15 Reconstructions of the Kuang-han Hsien Chung-bell; the shaded version is drawn in accordance with the recorded measurements with the assessment of 48.0cm as the most appropriate for the length of the major axis of the oval-shaped "circumference" of the bell. This results in an excessively narrow object and quite obviously the measurement of the circumference as 111.36cm must be at fault. Either this recorded measurement is incorrect, or the term "circumference" is mistakenly written for "diameter". The unshaded reconstruction is presented in terms of "diameter" and the bell's proportion appears thus to be more or less acceptable. Scale is 1/10.

The presence of Tou-pedestal-bowls would suggest the vessels to be of Chan-kuo date. In quoting this passage the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* editors have omitted all vessels but the Tseng-boilers and the passage is located in the Tseng-boiler section (chuan 205, 797.3b [100*]), while in the *Yü-hai* (89.18b [101*]) the place-name 司州 Ssu-chou appears in place of the characters 州治下立 in the opening line of the passage above. The Tseng-boiler and Shan-Lei-Tsun-vase are altered respectively to "P'ing-vase" 瓶 and "Pin-shan bronze Lei-Tsun" (豳山銅𤰞尊).

[102*] Ching-ming 景明 reign-period, the fourth year (503 A.D.); an ancient bronze weight-measure 權 was obtained in Ping-chou 幷州, an edict was issued requiring it to be forwarded to Ch'ung (Kung-sun Ch'ung 公孫崇) to be employed as a standard measure in the manufacture of Chung-bells. (*Wei-shu*, Lü-li-chih, 107.2b)

There seems to have been a tremendous interest at this time in the manufacture of Chung-bells. In the *Wei-shu* 魏書 which covers the period 386-535 A.D. (compiled by Wei Shou 魏收, 506-72 A.D.), the Lü-li-chih 律曆志 is full of notes on the subject. Kung-sun Ch'ung is recorded as the author of a book on the subject, the *Chung-ch'ing chih-yi* 鐘磬志議, which was unfortunately lost some time after the T'ang period. It may possibly be significant that so many of these passages record the discovery of bells in view of the preoccupation of the literati, Ministers, and even the Emperors with the nature of the musical scale and the style and dimensions of bells to accord with it. In the circumstances, it would be expected that discoveries of bells would stand a better chance of record than other bronze artifacts; no one would suppose, however, that the articles listed throughout the passages quoted were the only items found simply because they have been recorded. The numbers and the nature of the finds, nevertheless, probably indicate fairly accurately that the majority of bronzes unearthed were the results of accident – such discoveries, on the whole, seem to have been extremely rare.

[104*] During the reign of Wu-ti 武帝 of Liang 梁, T'ien-chien 天監 reign-period, the sixth year (507 A.D.), Hsia-hou Hsiang 夏侯詳 was summoned to assume the rank of Grand Chamberlain and the honorary title of Kuang-lu-ta-fu of the Right .... (for the preceding see *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng*, chuan 238, 799.37b [103*]). Sometime before this the Prefectural City Military Commandant of Ching-fu 荊府城局參軍, Chi Shih-chan 吉士瞻, employed myriads of men to dig a fire-prevention reservoir for the armoury and obtained a gold Kou-belt-hook 金革帶鈎 with very finely incised dêcor. An inscription in Seal characters read: "Award you (this) gold Kou-belt-hook, may your rank be advanced." Shih-chan was son-in-law of Hsiang's elder brother, the wife (i.e. Hsiang's niece) secretly gave it to him. Hsiang joyfully wore it in his belt and valued it for years. (*Liang-shu*, Hsia-hou Hsiang chuan, 10.7a)

Unattested finds of inscribed Kou-belt-hooks of Han period date are numerous, but there is not amongst them the slightest indication of any inscription text approaching the form or content of the above. Many have been excavated under conditions of control over the last decade or so, but none with inscriptions containing a text of this nature. The inscription text is so strongly reminiscent of both the vocabulary and a sentence form typical of the *Shih-ching* that the origin of the compilation does not require much search. In particular, the sentence 既公且侯 which is difficult to translate, but upon comparison with the identical structures in the *Shih-ching*, 既庶且多 " .... manifold and numerous" (in reference to the sovereign's chariots), 既閑且馳 " .... are well-trained and fleet of foot" (in reference to the sovereign's horses) – the meaning of our enigmatic "dukes and marquises" would probably be concerned with the investee's rank. The order of seniority – marquis then duke – is reversed for purposes of rhyme (鈎 *kou:* 侯 *hou*). In describing the script as Seal characters (篆文) the writer seeks to imply an antiquity prior to Han, but this is contrary to the facts of the situation – only from the Han period have we any

reasonably acceptable evidence of Kou-belt-hooks being inscribed. His use of the term 金革 seems strange; it means "swords and armour" and is more often found figuratively used in the sense of "warfare". I have the distinct impression that the writer intended it to mean "gilded" or "gold-covered" – a feature that is common amongst Kou-belt-hooks.

In the *Liang-shu* which covers the period 502-56 A.D. (compiled 628-35 A.D. by Yao Ssu-lien 姚思廉, ?-637 A.D.) are two accounts of special interest, both dated about 530 A.D., concerning two ministers of the surname, Liu:

[105*] Liu Chih-lin 劉之遴 was fond of antiques and loved unusual objects. While in Ching-chou 荊州 he collected together many hundreds of kinds of ancient vessels. There was one vessel in his collection shaped like an Ou-bowl (甌) with a capacity of 1 *hu* [59.44 litres] and with gold inlaid characters. None of his contemporaries could understand them. He presented four types of ancient artifacts to the Eastern Palace. One comprised two engraved bronze tops of leather wine-flasks (鴟夷 *ch'ih-yi*), the two lugs of which had silver inlaid inscriptions which read: "Made in the second year of the Chien-p'ing 建平 reign-period (5 B.C.)". The second comprised two ancient Tsun-vases with gold and silver inlay; they were inscribed in Seal characters which read: "Made in the year Yung Ch'eng Hou of Ch'in went to [married into?] Ch'u". The third was a foreign washing-bowl (澡灌) which was inscribed: "Yüan-feng 元封 reign period, the second year (109 B.C.), tribute from the country of Ch'iu-tzu 龜茲". The fourth was a washing P'an-basin (澡盤) of ancient manufacture with the inscription: "Made in the Ch'u-p'ing 初平 reign-period, the second year (191 A.D.)". (*Liang-shu*, Liu Chih-lin chuan, 40.6b)

Liu Chih-lin was a scholar of considerable renown who was commissioned along with several others to examine the variant textual features of the current copies of the *Han-shu* with the original manuscript of Pan-ku 班固 which was reported to have come to light at this time. He also prepared a study of the *Ch'un-ch'iu Tso-chuan*. His knowledge of ancient characters must have been more or less sufficient to read the Han period calligraphy of the simple dated inscriptions cited above, but the text of gold inlaid characters in the large vessel mentioned first, which puzzled his colleagues, apparently was equally enigmatic to him – the lack of record of a transcription here would seem to indicate this. Nevertheless, the Seal Script text on the Tsun-vases is given in full. It is difficult to make much of the recorded transcription: 秦容成侯適楚之藏造 especially in regard to the title-name combination, Yung Ch'eng Hou, which is otherwise known only as a literary term for mirrors, and as this is found no earlier than T'ang it has no bearing on the present problem. Yung Ch'eng Hou "the Marquis Yung Ch'eng", may possibly be no other than the person Yung Ch'eng of the legendary Yellow Emperor's time, a scribal officer who is said to have invented the calendar. But neither Ch'in nor Ch'u existed at that time. Moreover, nowhere is there record of a Marquis Yung Ch'eng of Ch'in. If we accept the rendering as it stands, we would have no choice but to dismiss the Tsun-vase inscriptions as fakes or, what would be more likely, the inscription texts as a fabrication of the compiler of this biography. It is obvious from the inscription content – the reference to the States of Ch'in and Ch'u in particular – that the vessels would have to be dated prior to the unification of the States under Ch'in. Furthermore, the description of gold and silver inlay precludes a dating earlier than the sixth or fifth centuries B.C. Add to these points the fact that the characters are classified as Seal Script which, strictly speaking, implies at the latest a third century B.C. date, and the state of confusion in the compilation becomes only too evident.

Now, the Ou-bowl gold inlay inscription which puzzled his colleagues would likewise be datable no earlier than the sixth to fifth centuries B.C., and as the script could not be read, we may assume it was of an age prior to the Ch'in unification of the States and accordingly more or less contemporaneous with the Yung Ch'eng Hou inscribed Tsun-vases. One of the inscription texts was thus undecipherable, while the other was transcribed confidently into an impossible rendering!

A point of noteworthy interest in this passage is the record of private collection of bronze ritual vessels and other artifacts. Hitherto all such articles were presented to the Emperors, and this mainly on account of their supposed connection with the revered Hsia, Shang, and Chou dynasties. Antiques of this kind, being supernatural objects, too, could only be lodged appropriately in the Imperial Temples. It would appear, therefore, that Liu Chih-lin may take pride of place as the first recorded private collector of antique bronzes, but for several centuries after him no other seems to be recorded.

[106*] A man of Wei 魏 presented to the throne an ancient vessel with intaglio characters in it which no one was able to interpret. Liu Hsien 劉顯 considered the text and read it aloud without faltering; he (or they?) investigated and collated the year and month (of the inscription date) and there was not a character in error. Kao-tsu 高祖 (Emperor Wu 武帝 of Liang) was exceedingly pleased. (*Liang-shu*, Liu Hsien chuan, 40.4b)

Possibly we may accept this passage as a reliable account of an actual find and that the inscribed article was unearthed shortly before presentation. It is, nevertheless, sufficiently evident from other aspects that we are again confronted with a problem of literary style rather than of historical fact – Liu Hsien's biographer aims here to depict him as a scholar versed in the ancient script, and probably he had vague information of some kind upon which this part of the biography is based. As to the details, however, we must treat them with considerable reservation, for it is obvious that if Liu alone was able to decipher the inscription, no one else would have been capable of assessing the accuracy of his rendering over and above the straightforward business of reading the figures denoting the date.

6. Discoveries Recorded in the Sui and T'ang Periods (581-906 A.D.)

In the *Sui-shu* 隋書 which covers the period 581-617 A.D. (compiled 629-636 A.D. under the direction of Wei Cheng 魏徵, 580-643 A.D.) only one notice relating to the discovery of bronze(?) vessels appears:

[107*] K'ai-huang 開皇 reign-period, the eleventh year (591 A.D.), the first month, on the day *ting-yu* 丁酉 [34] – as many of the ancient vessels obtained after the subjugation of the State of Ch'en 陳 (in the 9th year) were found to have malicious magical properties, the whole lot were ordered to be destroyed. (*Sui-shu* Kao-tsu-chi, 2.7a)

As these are described as "ancient vessels", it is to be assumed that some of the objects were of bronze and may have been the result of accidental excavation. Destruction of bronze vessels is occasionally to be noted, but for the most part the purpose was to re-melt the metal for the manufacture of coins.

T'ang period sources such as the *Chiu T'ang-shu* 舊唐書 (compiled 940-45 A.D. under the direction of Liu Hsü 劉昫, 887-946 A.D.), the *Hsin T'ang-shu* 新唐書 (compiled 1043-1060 A.D. under the supervision of Ou-yang Hsiu 歐陽修, 1007-72 A.D. and Sung Ch'i 宋祁, 998-1061 A.D.) and the *T'ang Hui-yao* 唐會要 (compiled 10th cent. A.D.) from the basic repositories of information, but the Sung period encyclopaedia, the *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei* (compiled 1005-13 A.D.), contains references to an edition of the *Chiu T'ang-shu* earlier than those available now, and is thus a most useful supplementary source.

[108*] Chen-kuan 貞觀 reign-period, the twenty-second year (648 A.D.), the ninth month, an ancient Ting-cauldron was obtained in the Fu River 涪水 in Sui-chou 遂州. It had a capacity of 5 *tan* 石, 3 *tou* 斗 [about 315 litres] and an inscription in archaic characters engraved on its side. When they

started to take it away the wind arose and rain poured, it became oppressive and dark and there was a thundering sound like loud-pealing bells. (*Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei,* 24, p.257; *cf. Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng,* chuan 204, 796.59a [109*])

In T'ang times a *tou* was equivalent to 5.94 litres (10 *tou* = 1 *tan*) and at the time of the compilation of the *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei,* however, a *tou* was 9.48 litres. The earlier equivalent, which was probably intended in this passage, results in a vessel approximately the size of the Ssu-mu Wu 司母戊 Fang-Ting-cauldron (Figure 16). This gigantic casting in bronze is the largest extant bronze casting from the ancient world datable prior to 1000 B.C. Thus the Fu River vessel would take pride of place as the second largest upon the basis of the T'ang *tou* measure. However, if the

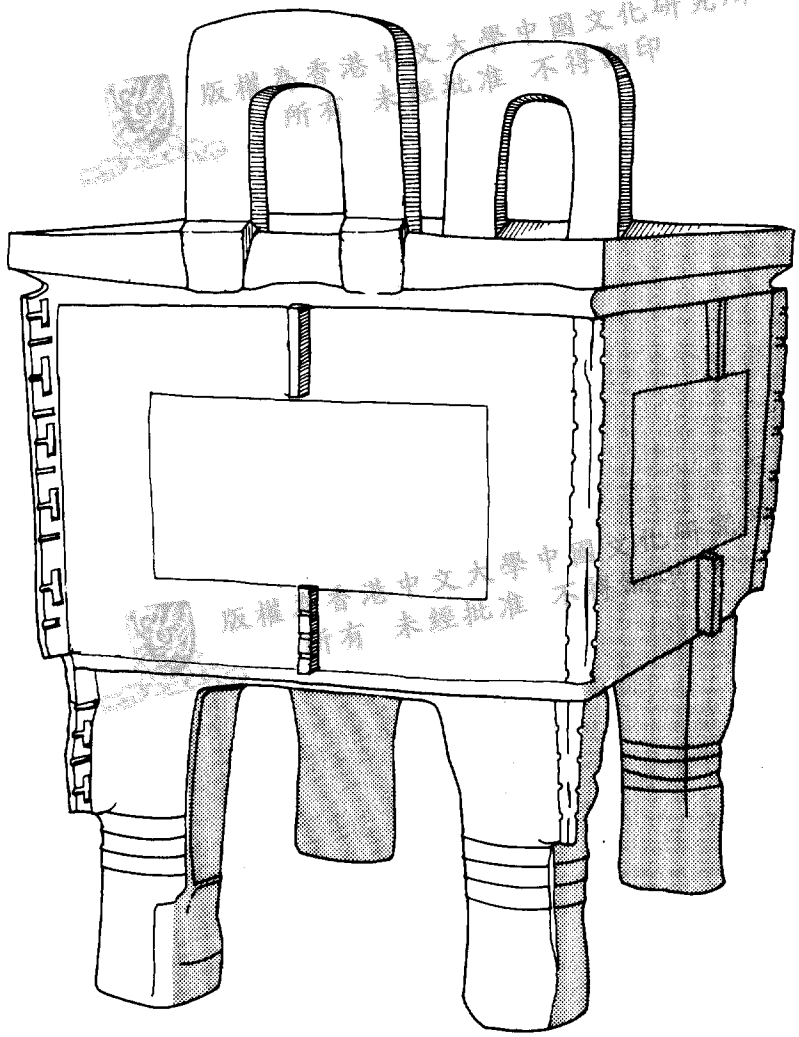


FIGURE 16 The Ssu-mu Wu Ting-cauldron which is the largest extant cast bronze artifact known from the ancient world datable prior to the first millenium B.C.; weight 875 kg. The inner measurements of the body are approximately: 0.960 x 0.660 x 0.520 metres thus resulting in capacity of 330 litres. The line-drawing above is made to the same scale as those in Figures 5, 7, 8, 10 and 15.

unit *tou* is calculated at the Sung period equivalent, the cubic content totalling 502 litres would certainly give the vessel first place. No mention of the discovery appears in either of the *T'ang-shu.* Slight variation in the quoted version in the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* might be noted. The original 取初, literally "take . commence", is altered to 初取時, "When (they) commenced to take". Quoted passages containing corrupted text are thus not always copied exactly as such – the erroneous sections are sometimes "corrected", while originally obscure text may be re-cast in conformity with the compilers' interpretations. In the present instance the adjustment is, no doubt, quite valid and acceptable.

[110*] When the Emperor Chung-tsung 中宗 of T'ang was deposed by T'ien Hou 天后 (i.e. the Empress Wu, and confined) to Fang-ling 房陵, a man crossed the river while collecting firewood and found an ancient mirror. He forwarded it to Chung-tsung who looking into the reflecting surface saw therein a man who spoke these words: "You will soon become Son of Heaven! You will soon become Son of Heaven!" Within ten days this was fulfilled and he occupied the Imperial Throne. (*Tu-yi-chih,* as quoted in the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng,* chuan 227, 798.48a)

Chung-tsung resumed the Throne in 705 A.D. after 21 years of the Empress Wu's rule, thus the mirror find would be datable in this year. The source is, of course, of questionable reliability notwithstanding its compilation in T'ang times. It is similar in content to the *Yu-yang tsa-tsu,* the *Yi-yüan*, and other such collectanea of fanciful stories.

[111*] K'ai-yüan 開元 reign-period, the ninth year (721 A.D.), in the third month, while excavating the ground of the T'ang Shrine 唐祠 in Hsü-ch'ang Hsien 許昌縣, a bronze Tsun-vase was obtained with décor comprising a pair of carp and Seal characters both in intaglio which read: "May it be suitable for my descendants". Joint request was made that it be presented to the Historiographers. This was acceded to. (*Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei,* 24, p.258; *cf. Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng,* chuan 186, 795.29b [112*])

In Han period inscriptions amongst various artifacts this text frequently appears and is usually written in Small Seal characters (see Figure 17). In the present example the term "Seal" is correctly applied. The Tsun-vase was of Han or later manufacture – the inscription is one employed often in succeeding dynastic periods and so, too, the double-carp décor. This passage appears also in the *Yü-hai* and in the final sentence the following variations occur: *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei* 竝請宣付史官, *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* 請宣付史官 and *Yü-hai* [113*] 請付史官. The two characters 竝 "all", "jointly" and 宣 in the compound term 宣付 "hand over" are omitted, but in each case the meaning is very much the same.

[114*] K'ai-yüan reign-period, the tenth year (722 A.D.), a precious Ting-cauldron was obtained (from Ho-chung-fu 河中府); the district name was changed to Pao-ting: "Precious Ting-cauldron". (*Hsin T'ang-shu,* Ti-li-chih, 39.2a)

[115*] K'ai-yüan reign-period, the eleventh year (723 A.D.), the Emperor Hsüan-tsung 玄宗 sacrificed at the Shrine of Sovereign Earth 后土. A precious Ting-cauldron was obtained and on account of this the district name was altered to Pao-ting. (*Chiu T'ang-shu,* Ti-li-chih, 39.2b)

[116*] K'ai-yüan reign-period, the eleventh year (723 A.D.), in the second month, sacrifices were made to Sovereign Earth on the mound at Fen-yang 汾陽 [*sic,* Fen-yin]. The T'ai-shih Officer 太史 sent up a memorial to the Throne (stating that) a lustrous light arose from the river and an auspicious vapour spiralled around the four borders of the altar through which the sun spread its rays. The Officers memorialized that during the process of repairing the altar two ancient bronze Ting-cauldrons were excavated. The larger had a capacity of 1 *tou* [5.94 litres] and both were green coloured (i.e. highly patinated). They obtained also ancient bricks [or, tiles?] 9 inches [27.99cm] in length with Seal characters on them which read: "A thousand autumns and ten thousand years" and "Prolonged happiness without end". (*Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei,* 24, p.258; *cf. Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng,* chuan 204, 796.59a [117*])

[118*] Before this (prior to the sacrifices made in the second month above) the Officers memorialized that during the process of repairing the altar two ancient bronze Ting-cauldrons were excavated. The larger had a capacity of 4 *sheng* 升 [2.37 litres] while the smaller was 1 *sheng* [0.59 litres]. Both were green coloured. There were also obtained ancient bricks [or, tiles?], 9 inches [27.99cm] in length, with Seal characters reading "A thousand autumns and ten thousand years" and "Prolonged happiness without end". . . . (*T'ang-hui-yao*, Commentary, 10, p.213)

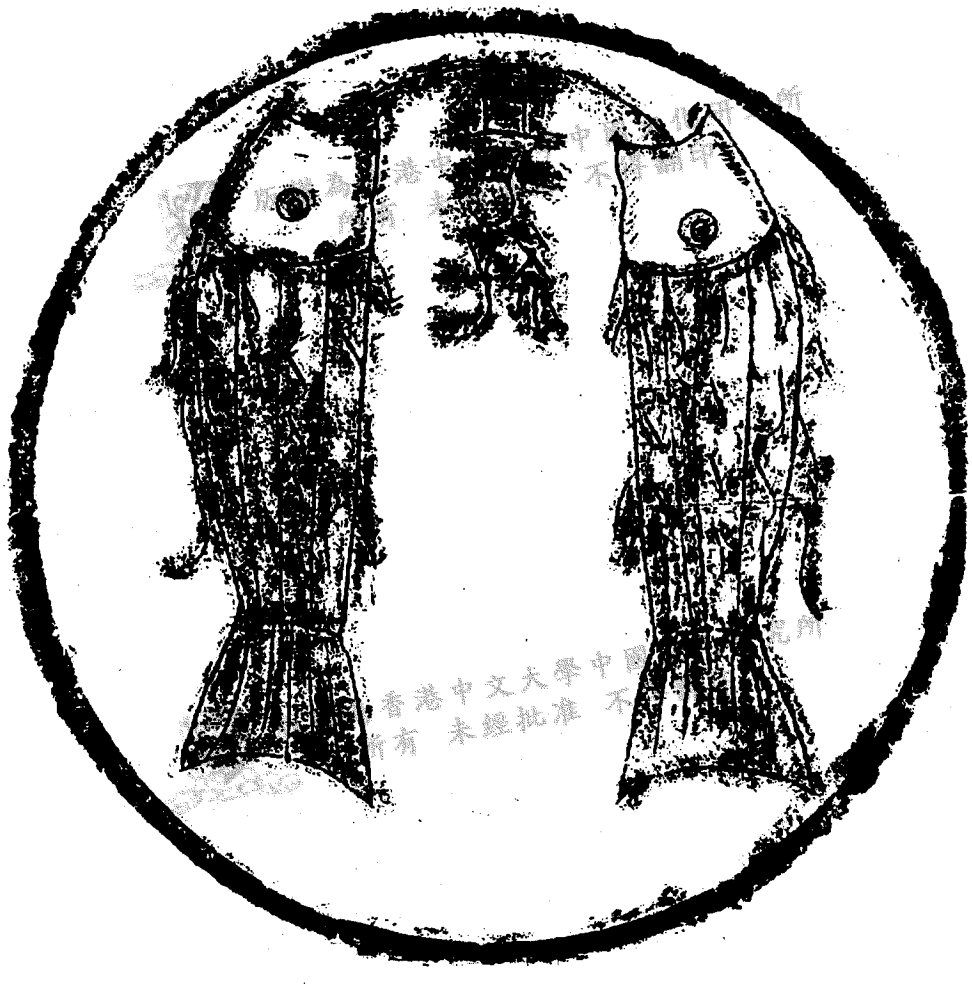


FIGURE 17 Example of the 宜子孫 inscription plus two carp found in Han period bronze vessels. (After *Hsiao-chiao* 12.59b)

These four passages refer to the same matter – the sacrifices conducted by Hsüan-tsung at the same site as that described in the *Shih-chi* and the *Han-shu* discussed earlier. As on the former occasion, nearly 800 years before, the propitious discovery of bronze vessels preceded the sacrifices. Attention may be drawn to the usual lack of accord in regard to details amongst the four sources. The variant *Hsin T'ang-shu* date may be the result of "misprint", but upon comparison with identical entries in the *Chiu T'ang-shu* dozens of similar disparities between the two sources

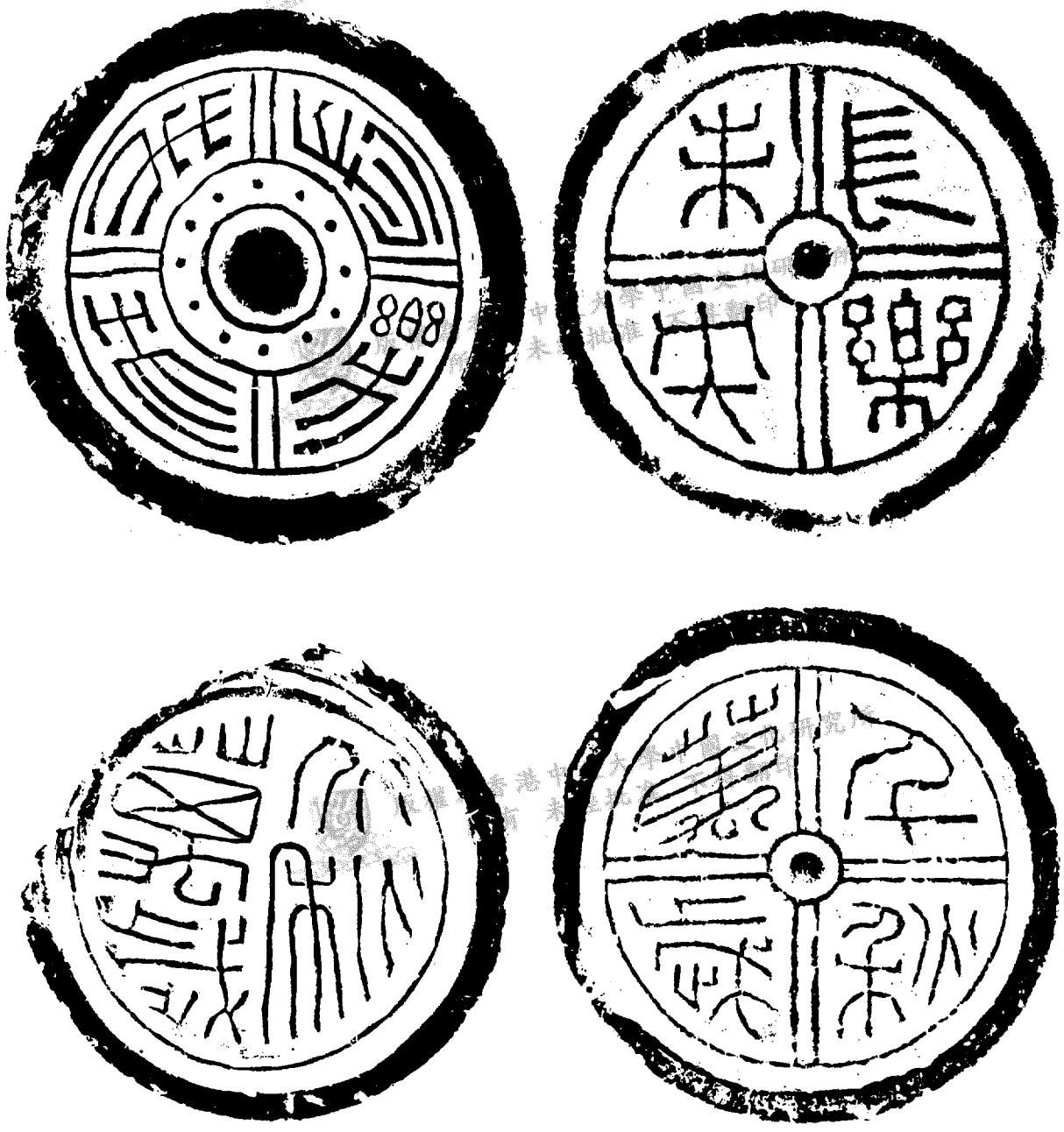


FIGURE 18 Above: Han period titles with the inscriptions 長樂未央 and 千秋萬歲 (after *Ch'in-Han ya-tang* 秦漢瓦當, Peking, 1965, Pls. 60, 61, 86 and 87).

may be found within a short period of examination. As to the number and the measurements of the Ting-cauldrons discovered, discrepancy of a marked kind is to be noted. As Chinese lacks a plural form, the original text, 獲寶鼎 "obtained precious Ting-cauldron", may be rendered either in singular or in plural according to context. In records of the type we are dealing with, however, enumerations in figures are almost invariably presented where listings of more than one item are intended, thus lack of a numeral or of other relevant description in the notice may be generally taken to indicate a single item. Accordingly, the first two passages above speak of one Ting-cauldron only, while the latter two both refer to two vessels and although presenting more detailed description, they lack agreement as to the size of the vessels. It may be noted in the *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei* passage that the place Fen-*yin* is erroneously written Fen-*yang*. The mistake is also carried over into the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* directly from the former source. That it should, indeed, be Fen-yin is quite unmistakable. The *T'ang hui-yao*, moreover, refers to Fen-yin in the text proper; the commentary, which is cited above, being of later date partly accounts for the variant data therein on vessel measurements and the additional description of the inscribed bricks. The latter are of Han or later date (see Figure 18).

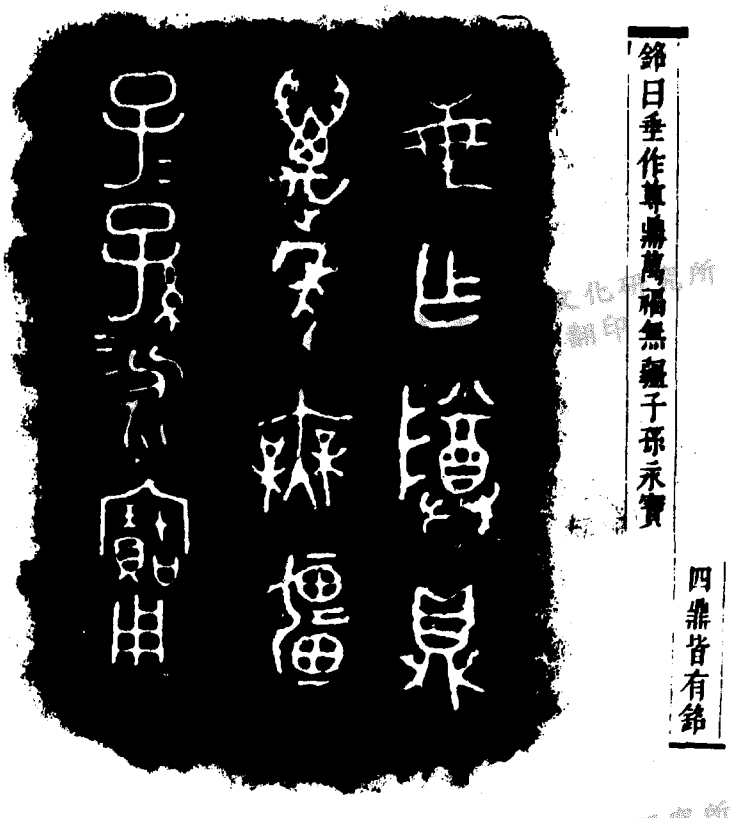


FIGURE 19 An attempt to reconstruct the archaic form of the Wan-nien inscription recorded in the *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei*. On the right is the text as it appears in current editions of this work.

[119*] K'ai-yüan reign-period, the thirteenth year (725 A.D.), the tenth month, on the day *jen-shen* 壬申 [9], a man of Wan-nien 萬年 named Wang Ch'ing 王慶 was building a wall and while digging obtained five precious Ting-cauldrons. They were presented to the Emperor. Four of them contained inscriptions which read: "Ch'ui 垂 made (this) honoured Ting-cauldron, a myriad blessings without end, sons and grandsons forever value and employ it." (*Yü-hai,* 88.19a; *cf. Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng,* chuan 204, 796.59a [120*])

In both the *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei* (24.259) where this passage is also quoted and in the *Yü-hai* the character 寶 *pao* "value" appears in the inscription text; in the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng,* however, it is 保 *pao* "preserve". The former is probably correct – if so, the inscription may be dated in the Western Chou period as the character 保 is characteristically of Eastern Chou usage in this context. The phrase "ten thousand blessings" is a mistaken rendering of "ten thousand years" 萬年 *wan-nien* which is also the place-name in the opening lines of this extract. There is little reason to doubt the possible authenticity of this inscription text (see Figure 19 for a reconstruction of the archaic script).

[121*] K'ai-yüan reign-period, the twenty-second year (734 A.D.) .... the fourth month .... on the day *ting-wei* 丁未 [44], a precious Ting-cauldron was obtained from the waters of the (Yang-tse) Chiang below Ting-huang Shan 鼎皇山 in Mei-chou 眉州. (*Chiu T'ang-shu,* Hsüan-tsung chi, 8.33b)

[122*] K'ai-yüan reign-period, the twenty-first year (733 A.D.), the sixth month, on the day *keng-tzu* 庚子 [37], a precious Ting-cauldron was presented to the Emperor from Mei-chou. It weighed 700 catties (417.77 kilograms) and lacked lugs and legs. It had an inscription of several Seal characters. At the time Tuan Huai-pen 段懷本 was Governor of Yü-chou 渝州, he memorialized: "When this Ting-cauldron reached the Tui-hsi courier-station 對溪驛 on the border of Ch'en-chou 陳州, clouds and mists darkened the area and a white rainbow struck the Ting-cauldron. Your servant fears it will become lost and cannot bear the anxiety and requests it be taken overland to the Capital when it reaches Ho-chou 合州." This was permitted. (*Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei,* 24, p.260; *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng,* chuan 204, 796.59a, has 封溪驛 otherwise identical)

The year, the month, and the day are in disagreement in the two passages here; the later of the two is that of the *discovery* while the earlier date is that of the *presentation* of the vessel to the Emperor! As in the majority of previous examples, it is the later compilation which succeeds in discovering additional detail. There being an interval of nearly 300 years between event and compilation in the case of the *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei* and only 150-200 years in the case of the *Chiu T'ang-shu,* the latter would be expected to be the more reliable where discrepancies of this kind exist. The vessel, if the later account of its weight is reliable, would have been remarkably large – it is more than twice the weight of the Ta K'o Ting illustrated earlier (Figure 5) and just under half that of the Ssu-mu Wu Ting (Figure 16). The *Chiu T'ang-shu* compiler does not, however, seem to be particularly impressed and, moreover, omits mention of clouds, thunder, etc. which would certainly have had to accompany the find of so huge an object.

[123*] T'ien-pao 天寶 reign-period, the first year (742 A.D.), the fifth month, an ancient iron Ting-cauldron was obtained at P'ing-liang 平涼. It was presented to the Emperor. (*Yü-hai,* 88.19a; *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng,* chuan 204, 796.59a, text identical)

Records of the discovery of iron artifacts occur from time to time in these sources, and have been omitted because of the emphasis of the survey on bronze. The present example is representative. It is incorporated here, however, to illustrate an interesting aspect of the danger of relying upon the secondary works discussed in the early pages of this survey – Chu Chien-hsin's quotation has the character 饞 *ch'an* "greedy" instead of 鐵 *t'ieh* "iron" (*op. cit.,* p.67). Until the above sources were consulted, I had assumed the vessel to be of bronze.

[124*] T'ien-pao reign-period, the third year (744 A.D.), the Governor (of Shan Chün), Li Ch'i-wu 李齊物 , while clearing the San-men 三門 Gorge obtained from under the rocks a Chi-halberd 戟 which had a [very] large blade;[33] inscribed on it were the characters P'ing-lu 平陸 in Seal script. On account of the find the district name was changed to P'ing-lu Hsien. (*Chiu T'ang-shu*, 38, 1.40a)

The same notice is recorded in the *Hsin T'ang-shu* and the *T'ang hui-yao* as occurring two years earlier; these and other variations may be noted:

[125*] T'ien-pao reign-period, the first year the Governor, Li Ch'i-wu, clearing San-men Gorge to facilitate its use for water transport, found an ancient Jen-knife 刃 with Seal characters which read: "P'ing-lu". Because of this the district name was changed. (*Hsin T'ang-shu*, 38.4b)

Although the term Jen-knife is so offered in the translation, we should keep in mind the possibility that this interpretation simply results from the compilers' omission of the characters 戟大 (see previous passage) thus *jen* "blade" now has to be read as "knife"!

[126*] P'ing-lu Hsien was originally, in Sui times, Ho-pei Hsien 河北縣 . T'ien-pao 天寶 reign-period, the first year, the second month, on the 21st day, it was changed to P'ing-lu Hsien. Prior to this the Governor of Shan Chün 陝郡 , Li Ch'i-wu, while dredging San-men Gorge obtained an ancient spade (or, plough-share?) 鏵 of very large size. On it were the two characters "P'ing-lu"; later it was because of this that the district name was altered to P'ing-lu. (*T'ang hui-yao*, 70, p.1250)

The propensity of the inscribed artifact for changing its shape while maintaining the same inscription text is interesting and probably instructive. In a series of conflicting records of this kind we may perhaps seek to argue precedence to the earliest account, yet it is important to keep in mind the interval of two centuries between the alleged event and its incorporation in the *Chiu T'ang-shu*. Although it may be allowed that records (even of primary historical status) detailing the change of district-name and similar matters might still have been available to the compiler of the *Chiu T'ang-shu*, one may be excused for speculating upon the validity of the explanation offered. It is, of course, quite feasible that an inscribed artifact was discovered and this prompted the change of name. If the *Chiu T'ang-shu* description is reliable, the inscribed Chi-halberd would be datable no earlier than Han.

[127*] In the middle of the T'ien-pao reign-period (*circa* 749 A.D.) there was one named Ch'en Chung-kung 陳仲躬 whose family resided in Chin-ling 金陵 and was extremely wealthy. Chung-kung was fond of study and the writing of poetry. Sometime before reaching manhood he took several thousand gold-pieces and went to Ch'ing-hua-li 清化里 , Lo-yang 洛陽. He stayed for a while in a house where the well was very large and always there was someone who fell into it and drowned .... One day Chung-kung ordered a workman along and commanded a person he trusted to accompany the workman and enter the well. He charged them saying: "If you see anything at all unusual, grab it!" They proceeded to the bottom of the well but found nothing extraordinary except for an ancient bronze mirror. It was 7.7 inches [23.94cm] wide. Chung-kung had it washed clean and stored it in a casket, he lit incense in respectful offering to it .... On the back of this mirror were 28 characters in "tadpole" script (科斗書) which, transcribed into present-day characters, read: "In the second year of Hsin Kung of Chin 晉新公 , the seventh month of the seventh day, between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., Po Lung-t'an 白龍潭 completed the casting of this mirror before Shou-yang Shan, may it remain in existence for a thousand years." The characters

33 In citing this passage Wei Chü-hsien (*op. cit.*, p.44) has 六 *liu* "six" following Chi-halberd instead of 大 *ta* "large". Whether this is a printer's error, or intentional is not clear but it does bring to our attention the strange location of the adjective "large" in the above text. My translation is offered on the basis of a missing character 甚 ; *cf.* passage [126] below which has: 得古鏵甚大 . It is doubtful that a case could be made to read "six".

were executed in a circle round the back of the mirror, each character aligned with one of the Twenty-eight Constellations arranged in the form of a square, then to the left was the sun and to the right the moon. A tortoise, a dragon, a tiger, and a sparrow accorded with these positions. Around the four sides of the tassel-knob was the legend: "Seventh month mirror" (夷則之鏡). (*Po-yi-chih* as quoted by *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng,* chuan 228, 798.52b)

The *Po-yi-chih* 博異志 is a collection of fanciful tales similar to the *Yi-yüan. Yu-yang tsa-tsu,* etc. quoted earlier. It was compiled in the T'ang period by Cheng Huan-ku 鄭還古 . The detailed mirror description is reminiscent of a known example in some respects (see Figure 20), but the inscription is not even vaguely comparable. That the mirror illustrated here is of T'ang date is no doubt instructive. As far as I can discover, there is no record of a Hsin Kung of Chin or of the name Po Lung-t'an which in its context would seem to be a person's name.

[128*] In Su-chou 蘇州 where the Sung River 松江 enters Lake T'ai 太湖, during the middle of the Chen-yüan 貞元 reign-period (*circa* 795 A.D.) there were ten or so fishermen with small nets in several boats. They lowered their nets. One did not get any fish at all but found an object in his net which turned out to be a mirror. It was not particularly large. Annoyed at the lack of fish he threw it back into the water and moved his boat to another spot and dropped his net. Again he fished up the same mirror and considering the circumstances to be unusual took up the mirror and examined it. It was 7 to 8 inches [approx. 21-24cm] in diameter. When he looked into the reflecting surface he saw all his bones, sinews, and entrails. Filled with loathing the fisherman was completely stupefied and collapsed. The others were greatly alarmed and all those who took up the mirror and gazed at their reflections therein immediately collapsed vomiting all over the place. One who had not dared to take up the mirror and look into it threw it back into the water. For some time he attended to the fishermen who had collapsed and vomited. When they regained consciousness they returned home together convinced that the mirror had magical properties. The next day when they cast their nets the catch was many times greater than usual and all who had been ill-affected by the mirror became well after this. Upon asking an old man about it it was learnt that the object came to light from the lake once every several hundred years and someone always saw it but it was not known what spirit was connected with the mirror. (*Yüan-hua-chi,* as quoted by *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng,* chuan 227, 798.48a)

The *Yüan-hua-chi* 原化記 , compiled by Huang-fu-? 皇甫 □ (the last character is unknown) in T'ang times, is another collection of mystical tales whose historical value is classifiable in terms of contemporaneous atmosphere rather than factual content.

[129*] Chen-yüan reign-period, the fifteenth year (799 A.D.), a hill in Lan-shan Hsien 藍山縣 , Liu-chou 柳州 , collapsed and four bronze Chung-bells were obtained. (*T'ang-hui-yao,* 43, p.778)

[130*] Yüan-ho 元和 reign-period, the second year (807 A.D.), in the first month, it was decreed that the ancient Ting-cauldrons presented to the Throne from Hu-nan 湖南 were to be handed over to the Officers. Some time earlier a farmer, T'ang Lü-ch'ang 唐履昌 of Yung-chou 永州 , digging at the side of a pathway found an ancient Ting-cauldron, 112 catties in weight [66.77 kilograms]. Being unusual it was accordingly presented to the Throne. (*Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei,* 25, p.270)

Some indication of the vessel size may be assessed upon comparison with the Anyang "deer" Fang-Ting-cauldron (R1751) illustrated earlier (Figure 7). The Yung-chou vessel being 6 kilograms heavier would have been of appreciable size.

[131*] Li Yüan 李元 of Ho-tung 河東 lived in the village of Yen-shou near Ch'ang-an 長安延壽里 . In the early years of the Yüan-ho 元和 reign-period (806-20 A.D.) there was heard a sound like the harmonious tinkling of metal and stone at the western corner of his house and then came a burst of song in a clear shrill voice which continued for a long while without stopping. These sounds were heard for several nights and later when it came to the sixth day of autumn, the night rain caused the collapse of the northern wall of the reception hall. The next day they found a Fou-vase

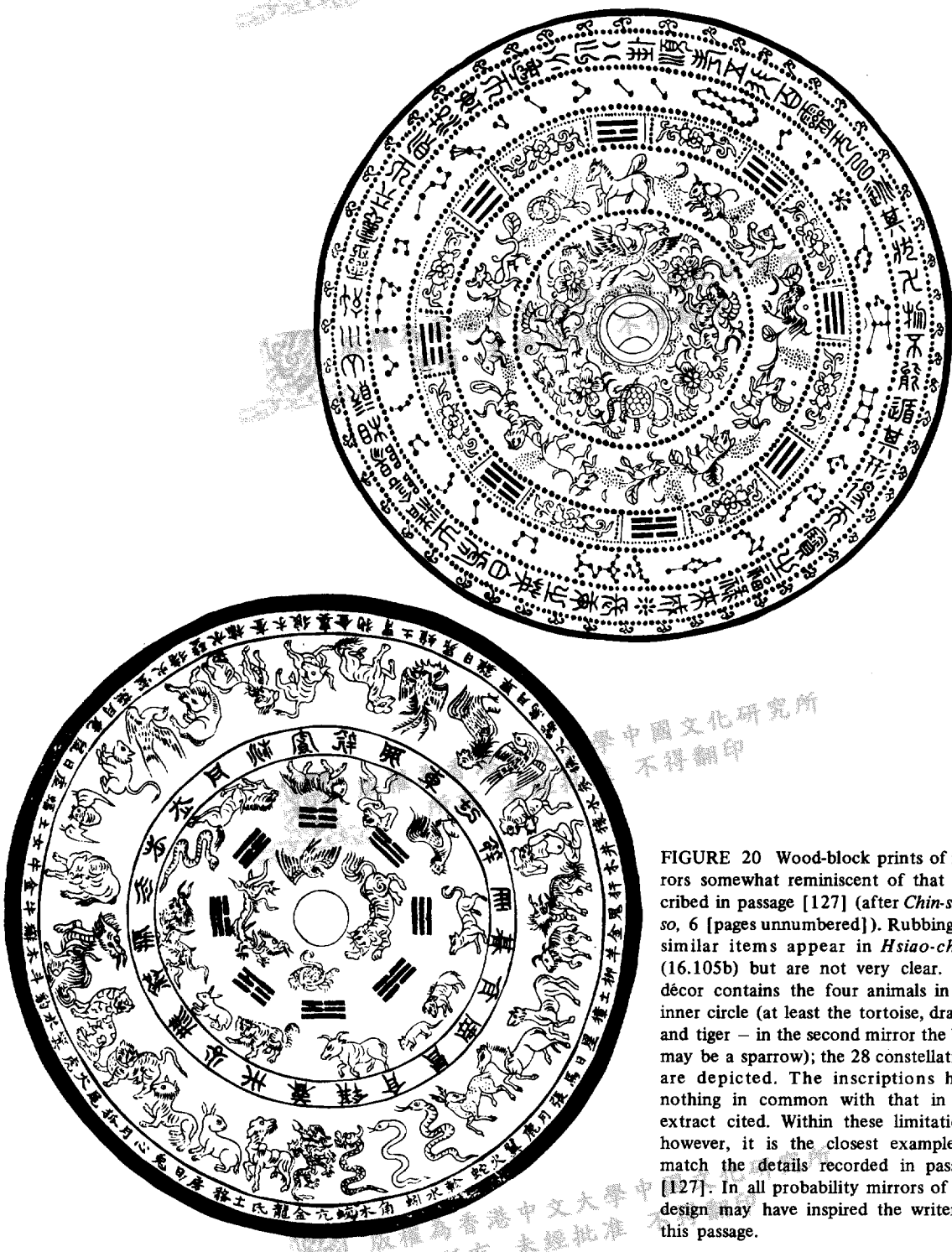


FIGURE 20 Wood-block prints of mirrors somewhat reminiscent of that described in passage [127] (after *Chin-shih-so*, 6 [pages unnumbered]). Rubbings of similar items appear in *Hsiao-chiao* (16.105b) but are not very clear. The décor contains the four animals in the inner circle (at least the tortoise, dragon and tiger – in the second mirror the bird may be a sparrow); the 28 constellations are depicted. The inscriptions have nothing in common with that in the extract cited. Within these limitations, however, it is the closest example to match the details recorded in passage [127]. In all probability mirrors of this design may have inspired the writer of this passage.

缶 just over a foot [31.1cm] in height and made of gold. The shape was unusual and ancient – probably the vessel was over a thousand years old. The poem reads: "Coloured blue as the leaves of the indigo plant and with a sound comparable to the tones of Ch'ing-chimes 磬, I will show myself to you on the seventh evening of the seventh month." (Commentary on the Chin-fou-mei-shih, *Chüan T'ang-shih*, chuan 867; *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng*, chuan 192, 795.60a [132*] – slight character variations)

[133*] At the close of the Yüan-ho reign-period (*circa* 820 A.D.) there grew in front of the court-yard of Hsia-hou Yi of Hai-ling 海陵夏侯乙 a lily with flowers several times larger than usual. Considering it strange they excavated beneath it and obtained a pile of thirteen glazed Hsia-coffers 匣 each containing a bronze mirror. The seventh of these was shiny and uncorroded and reflected the sunlight for a yard around it – the remainder were simply disks of bronze. (*Yu-yang tsa-tsu*, chuan 6.3b; *cf. Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng*, chuan 227, 298.48b [134*] – slight character variations)

Although a minor point, it is interesting to note that the *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* has the first two characters of the book title Yu-yang tsa-tsu disarranged to read as *Yang-yu!*

[135*] Ch'ang-ch'ing 長慶 reign-period, the second year (822 A.D.), in the ninth month, an ancient bronze vessel was obtained at Fu-fang 鄜坊 with an inscription in Seal characters. It was presented to the Emperor. (*Yü-hai* 89.23a; quoted from *T'ang hui-yao*)

[136*] During the Ch'ang-ch'ing reign-period (821-24 A.D.), the Duke of Wei 衞公 (i.e. Li Ching 李靖) was in Che-yu 浙右. There happened to be a fisherman casting his net into a deep part of the Ch'in-huai 秦淮 River. He suddenly noticed the weight was different from usual and while drawing in the net to the river bank he was amazed to find not even a single fish but only an ancient bronze mirror a little over a foot in diameter whose light shimmered amongst the ripples. The fisherman fearfully grabbed it and looked into the reflecting surface. He saw in full detail all his viscera, entrails and the blood pulsating through his arteries. Horrified at this supernatural manifestation he let the mirror fall from his trembling grasp. The fishermen discoursed together about the matter near their dwellings and consequently it came to the ear of the Duke who for a whole year attempted by numerous methods to have it recovered from the river bed but never again was the mirror found. (*Chih-yi-chi*, as quoted in *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng*, chuan 227, 798.48b)

The repetition here of the "X-ray mirror" theme may be compared with that in the *Yüan-hua-chi* account [128] above. The *Chih-yi-chi* 摭異記 compiled by Li Chün 李濬 is a further example of the several collections of fanciful stories of T'ang period origin. Although it is a matter of some debate whether anecdotes of this kind may be affirmed to indicate actual discoveries, I have, nevertheless, incorporated such notices in the Tables which follow shortly.

[137*] During the time of Liu Kung 劉龔 (917-42 A.D.), Lord of the Southern Han (917-71 A.D.) an ancient sword was unearthed on Lo-fou Mountain 羅浮山. It had an inscription in Seal characters which read: 丁與水同宮，王將耳口同，尹來居口上，山岫獲重重。 The interpretation given to this text is: The Emperor T'ai-tsu of Sung 宋太祖 (960-76 A.D.) was born in the year 丁亥 *ting-hai* (i.e. 24th year of the cycle: 927 A.D.), thus the inscription states: "When *ting* and 水 'water' (the element corresponding to the cyclical character 亥 *hai*) are in the same Palace . . . ." In the second group of five characters are the graphs 耳 "ear", 口 "mouth" and 王 "king" which in combination form the character 聖 "sage". The next group of five contains the graphs 尹 "ruler" and 口 "mouth" which together result in the character 君 "lord". In the last group of the graphs 重 "repeat" and the 山 "hills" form the character 出 "arise". The meaning is along the lines of: "In the *ting-hai* year a wise ruler will appear." (*Ch'üan T'ang-shih*, chuan 875)

In both the earlier quoted commentary in the *Ch'üan T'ang-shih* and in the present instance the data relating to the finds is for the most part merely imaginative invention of the writers or, possibly, it was manufactured already in some other sources available to them. In the case of the above extract the position can be assessed quote definitely. The text of the inscription is one

fabricated to permit the writer to embark upon a rather astute interpretation of an otherwise nonsensical assembly of characters. The form of the prophecy which requires individual characters to be drawn together to create significant meanings, is one employed in the well known *Shao-ping-ko* 燒餅歌, "Baked Dumpling Song" ascribed to the clairvoyant Liu Chi 劉基 of early Ming times. The technique may, of course, be traced back to Han times.

With this extract our collection of accounts of "archaeological finds" recorded from Han to T'ang times is completed. A few passages in my files have not been incorporated because the dates of the finds mentioned cannot be determined – omission of this material does not affect the general appraisals which follow.

7. Significant Aspects of the Recorded Discoveries

Originally it was my intention simply to list the preceding passages with minimal comments restricted to relevant details concerning the bronze artifacts. However, as we have observed, there have been found so many textual and historiographical features requiring critical appraisal that it has been practically impossible to avoid comment upon such aspects of the passages cited. It will, of course, be appreciated that the extracts assembled here comprise but a minute fraction of the original compilations and there are, moreover, many other sources of similar scope (lacking our required information) which are not referred to at all. The extracts cited cannot, therefore, be claimed to be fully or faithfully characteristic of the entire works from which they are taken, unless extensive research has been undertaken to test this possibility. It would certainly not be my aim to imply that such research has been attempted, nor would I seek to create an impression that any particular History comprises almost wholly unreliable writings just because the sample is at fault. Yet, it is rather unlikely, it may be granted, that so many questionable features should turn up as a mere matter of coincidence. If the investigation were concerned with some other subject recorded throughout the Histories and one open to re-assessment upon the bases of outside controls, a similar series of disconcerting characteristics may well be expected to appear.

Such would be the main observation that I would feel justified in offering – and, furthermore, it might not be entirely presumptious, I believe, to remark upon certain dangers that may attend the concentration of the bulk of a scholar's research upon a particular dynastic History to the exclusion of nearly all others. Too great a preoccupation with the content of a single History may tend to result in a decreasing degree of awareness of the Historians' methods and approaches *in general,* which lack of appreciation in turn must have its effect upon critical judgements. Accordingly the single History soon obtains a status of reliability and infallibility in the mind of the specialised investigator that transcends reality; those who otherwise ponder upon the problem and seek to understand the nature of Chinese historiography upon more extensive research soon begin to question the validity of the more limited approaches.[34]

34 In making this observation I have in mind two English language papers read at the AAS Meeting, New York, 1958 of which copies have come my way: Peter Olbricht "The Biography in China", and Hans H. Frankel "Objectivity and Bias in Medieval Chinese Historiography". The reading of these after due consideration of Clyde B. Sargent's "Subsidized History – Pan Ku and the Historical Records of the Former Han Dynasty" (*Far Eastern Quarterly,* Vol.III. 119-43) and the reply by H.H. Dubs "The Reliability of Chinese Histories" (*FEQ,* Vol.VI, No.1. 23-43) seems to demonstrate a distinct tendency towards the urgently needed critical approaches which must surely develop as a result of overall surveys of the Histories as in Frankel's paper, conducted with reference to outside sources as in Olbricht's paper. No doubt, the corpus of relevant studies has markedly increased since Charles S. Gardner's *Chinese Traditional Historiography* (1938) appeared.

Investigations into the nature of Chinese historiography offer thus interesting and often rewarding avenues of research, but it is a time-consuming activity and unless contemporary records of identical subject matter exist in alternative forms – with which the Historians' versions may be compared, conclusions advanced will often be fraught with uncertainties. In the present survey something of the potential awaiting the investigator in regard to materials and artifacts mentioned in the Histories and revealed in recent times by the archaeologist is illustrated. There is room and ample opportunity for further research along these lines.

Let us now examine briefly the list of discoveries presented in Table 3. From Han times to T'ang there is recorded, with varying degrees of reliability, a total of 146 bronze artifacts dis-

TABLE 3 Records of Discoveries of Bronze Vessels, Weapons, Mirrors, etc. from Han to T'ang Times.

Quoted Passage and Date	*Bronze Artifacts*	*Date of Manufacture*	*Inscription*	*Total Number of Items*
1. 116 B.C.	Ting-cauldron	?	nil.	1
2. 113 B.C.	Ting-cauldron	fake ?	nil.	1
3. 74-49 B.C.	Ting-cauldron	W. Chou	ins. (? characters)	1
Ch'ien Han: 3 vessels recorded [206 B.C. – 25 A.D.]				
4. 63 A.D.	Ting-cauldron	?	nil.	1
5. 58-75 A.D.	Ting-cauldron	E. Chou	ins. (4 characters)	1
6. 82 A.D.	Tsun-vase	?	nil.	1
7. 89 A.D.	Ting-cauldron	W. Chou	ins. (12 characters)	1
8. ?	Ting-cauldron	Han	nil.	1
Hou Han: 5 vessels recorded [25-220 A.D.]				
9. 249 A.D.	Ting-cauldron	?	nil.	2
10. 260 A.D.	Ting-cauldron	?	nil.	1
11. 220-65 A.D.	Hsia-coffer	Han	nil.	1
12. 266 A.D.	Ting-cauldron	?	nil.	1
13. 275 A.D.	Talley	Chan-kuo	ins. (? characters)	1
14. 281 A.D.	Sword	Chan-kuo	nil.	1
15. 314 A.D.	To-bells	E. Chou	nil.	5
16. 318 A.D.	Chung-bell	E. Chou	ins. (18 characters)	1
17. 339 A.D.	Chung-bells	E. Chou	nil.	4
18. 345 A.D.	Sheng-pin	?	nil.	1
19. 361 A.D.	Chung-bell	E. Chou	nil.	1
20. 369 A.D.	To-bell ?	?	nil.	1
21. 416 A.D.	Chung-bells	E. Chou	ins. (160 characters)	6
22. 418 A.D.	Chung-bells	E. Chou	nil.	12
23. 420 A.D.	?	?	nil.	10+
San-kuo, W. and E. Chin: 48+ vessels, etc. [220-420 A.D.]				
24. 436 A.D.	Ting-cauldron	?	nil.	1
25. 424-52 A.D.	Tou-ladle	Han	nil.	2
26. 444 A.D.	Ting-cauldron	Chou	ins. (42 characters)	1

27. 445 A.D.	Chung-bell	E. Chou	nil.	1
28. 456 A.D.	Chung-bells	E. Chou	nil.	7
29. 456 A.D.	Chung-bells	E. Chou	nil.	6
30. 463 A.D.	Ku-drum	Han	nil.	1
31. 468 A.D.	Chung-bell	E. Chou	nil.	1
32. 469 A.D.	Ting-cauldron	?	nil.	1
33. 466-71 A.D.	Coins	Han	ins. (4 characters)	2
34. 471 A.D.	Ting-cauldron	E. Chou	nil.	1
35. 478 A.D.	Chung-bell	E. Chou	ins. (? characters)	1
36. 478 A.D.	Ting-cauldron	?	nil.	1
37. 479 A.D.	Chih-halberds	E. Chou	ins. (? characters)	2
38. 479 A.D.	Chung-bell	E. Chou	nil.	1
39. 484 A.D.	Ting-cauldron	?	nil.	1
40. 485 A.D.	Ting-cauldron ?	W. Chou	ins. (11 characters)	1
41. 486 A.D.	Chung-bell	E. Chou	nil.	1
42. 487 A.D.	Chung-bell	E. Chou	nil.	1
43. 489 A.D.	Coins	Han	?	1,000,000
44. 491 A.D.	Chung-bell	E. Chou	nil.	1
45. 492 A.D.	Coins	Han	ins. (4 characters)	12,700
46. 479-502 A.D.	Chung-bells : 2, Hsien-steamers : 2, Tsun-vases : 2, Tou-bowls : 2, Lei-vases : 2.			10
47. 503 A.D.	Ch'üan-measure	Han	?	1
48. 507 A.D.	Kou-buckle	Han	ins. (8 characters)	1
49. c. 530 A.D.	Tsun-vases: 2	Chan-kuo	ins. (9 characters)	7
	Various : 5	Han	ins. (various)	
50. c. 530 A.D.	?	?	ins. (? characters)	1
Northern and Southern Dynasties: 52 vessels, etc. * [420-580 A.D.]				
51. 648 A.D.	Ting-cauldron	?	ins. (? characters)	1
52. 684-710 A.D.	Mirror	Han	nil.	1
53. 721 A.D.	Tsun-vase	Han	ins. (3 characters)	1
54. 723 A.D.	Ting-cauldrons	?	nil.	2
55. 725 A.D.	Ting-cauldrons	W. Chou	ins. (13 characters)	5
56. 733 A.D.	Ting-cauldron	Chou	ins. (? characters)	1
57. 734 A.D.	Ting-cauldron	?	nil.	1
58. 742 A.D.	Ting-cauldron	?	nil.	1
59. 744 A.D.	Chi-halberd (?)	?	ins. (2 characters)	1
60. 742-56 A.D.	Mirror	Han	ins. (29 characters)	1
61. 785-804 A.D.	Mirror	Han	nil.	1
62. 799 A.D.	Chung-bells	E. Chou	nil.	4
63. 807 A.D.	Ting-cauldron	Chou	nil.	1
64. 806-20 A.D.	Fou-vase	?	nil.	1
65. c. 820 A.D.	Mirrors	Han	nil.	13
66. 822 A.D.	?	Chou	ins. (? characters)	1
67. 821-24 A.D.	Mirror	Han	nil.	1
68. 917-42 A.D.	Sword	Han +	ins. (20 characters)	1
Sui and T'ang: 38 vessels, etc. [581-907 A.D.]				

covered over and above coins (1,012,702) and other antiques. This overall average of approximately 14 bronzes per century is extremely low, and together with the small variety of vessel-types defined, must lead us to the conclusion that the records are quite incomplete. As far as the Han

period is concerned, the mention of only eight bronzes – all but one are Ting-cauldrons – must surely be far below the number and variety of ancient bronze ritual vessels actually unearthed over the four centuries covered by the *Ch'ien Han-shu* and the *Hou Han-shu.* The paucity of record here and even in the later sources up to the close of the T'ang period (these separately average about 20 bronzes per century) results, no doubt, from various possible circumstances: the reports of many finds failed to reach the Capital, notices officially recorded went astray long before the compilation of the Dynastic Histories commenced, in the final compilation of the Histories only the more significant of whatever records were then available were entered, with the whole period before him the compiler selected only such entries as he deemed suitable for his purposes, etc.

Another factor which seems to have influenced the choice of entries is the general interest shown throughout particular periods (or by the respective compilers?) for particular vessel-types, e.g. during Han and San-kuo the accent is on Ting-cauldrons; through Western and Eastern Chin Chung-bells and To-bells comprise the largest group of entries; during the Northern and Southern Dynasties both Ting-cauldrons and Chung-bells are listed together with other items but Chung-bells form the largest group; in the T'ang period Ting-cauldrons again reign supreme but in the collectanea of fanciful stories compiled in T'ang times the emphasis is laid upon mirrors. These and related features may be noted in Table 3.

The problem now confronting us is to decide whether the "fashion" for one vessel-type to dominate the others was, indeed a contemporaneous matter, or simply another aspect of the manipulations of the compilers. Perhaps the situation in T'ang period sources provides part of the answer – that mirrors were excavated from time to time is clearly manifested in the supplementary sources notwithstanding their unreliable character. Lack of record in the T'ang Histories (or, for that matter, in those before) does not necessarily mean that discoveries of mirrors did not occur, nor does this negative evidence imply that records of such discoveries were not officially received or accepted for filing. On the contrary, further study of the Table will show that the lack of Ting-cauldron notices in the Western and Eastern Chin period, the lack of discoveries of bells from Ch'ien Han to San-kuo, etc. are phenomena of similar, if not equal significance. It would be most unlikely that consistent policies were maintained by officials and ministers throughout the respective periods so as to effect so artificial a situation.

During this period of a thousand years there were found 50 Chung-bells, 30 Ting-cauldrons, 6 Tsun-vases, 6 To-bells, 14 mirrors, half-a-dozen weapons and just over 30 miscellaneous items. Amongst the latter are 2 Hsien-steamers*, 2 Tou-bowls*, 2 Lei-vases*, a P'an-basin*, a Fou-vase, an Ou-bowl*, several small items and a dozen undefined artifacts. Those with asterisks are distributed amongst two finds – 479-502 A.D. and 530 A.D. – thus amongst the greater bulk of the discoveries the variety of vessel-types is limited to Chung-bells, To-bells, Ting-cauldrons, and Tsun-vases. There are no reports of Chia- or Chüeh-wine-cups, Ku-beakers, Kuei-tureens, Ho-kettles, Yu-wine-flasks, Hu-vases and other such vessel-types, discoveries of which have commonly been recorded over the last thousand years since Sung times. It is highly improbable that such vessel-types failed to appear and that no official notices entered the archives. Again we must assume lack of record in the Histories is due either to the manipulations of the compilers, or the incompleteness of archival notices available to them. That generations of archivists, for a thousand years, succeeded consistently in effecting this incompleteness is, of course, just a little too difficult to believe.

It has been possible to determine the dating of a large proportion of the artifacts with varying degrees of confidence (see Table 4). Interestingly, the greatest number of artifacts (71 items) appears to be of Eastern Chou manufacture, next comes Han period ware (32 items), then only a handful of Western Chou (8 items). Four items are vaguely classifiable as Chou and 32 are

TABLE 4 Chronological Distributions of Bronze Artifacts Reported from Han to T'ang Times.

A: Vessel-types, weapons, etc. as reported in each general period.

	Bronze Artifacts	*Ch'ien Han*	*Hou Han*	*San-kuo*	*W. & E. Chin*	*N. & S. Dynasties*	*Sui & T'ang*	*Total*
1.	Ting-cauldrons	3	4	4	-	7	12	30
2.	Tsun-vases	-	1	-	-	4	1	6
3.	Chung-bells	-	-	-	24	22	4	50
4.	Mirrors	-	-	-	-	-	17	17
5.	To-bells	-	-	-	6	-	-	6
6.	Swords	-	-	-	1	-	1	2
7.	Halberds	-	-	-	-	2	1	3
8.	Miscellaneous	-	-	2	11+	17	2	32+
9.	Coins	-	-	-	-	(1,012,702)	-	-
		3	5	6	42+	52	38	146+

B: Periods of manufacture, inscription associations, and quantity.

	Period of Manufacture	*No. of Finds*	*Finds with Inscriptions*	*No. of Artifacts*
1.	Undatable	20	3	32+
2.	Chou	4	3	4
3.	W. Chou	4	4	8
4.	E. Chou	20	5	67
5.	Chan-kuo	3	2	4
6.	Han	14	5	31
		65	22	146+ (35 with inscriptions)

C: Periods of manufacture in association with periods of discovery, and quantity.

	Period of Discovery	*Undatable Artifacts*	*Chou*	*Western Chou*	*Eastern Chou*	*Chan-kuo*	*Han*	*Total*
1.	Ch'ien Han	2	-	1	-	-	-	3
2.	Hou Han	2	-	1	1	-	1	5
3.	San-kuo	4	-	-	-	1	1	6
4.	W. & E. Chin	12+	-	-	29	1	-	42+
5.	N. & S. Dyn.	5	1	1	33	2	10	52
6.	Sui & T'ang	7	3	5	4	-	19	38
		32+	4	8	67	4	31	146+

undatable – possibly some Shang and Chou materials may have been present amongst these and a few items might be later than Han. If my dating, based upon inscriptions and general descriptions, is reasonably correct, the apportionment amongst Western Chou, Eastern Chou, and Han seems to be more or less as it should be. Han materials, perhaps, should amount to more but this may be due to the difficulty of differentiating between Chan-kuo period vessels and those of Han within the limitations of descriptions or clues given in the records. We may possibly consider this general situation as being somewhat significant although the basis of dating is not too secure in some cases. It would seem to indicate that an appreciable proportion of the discoveries recorded are reliable. This impression gains strength when we consider the fact that only a few attempts were made to assess the dates of the vessels and in practically every such instance the contemporary assessments have been shown to be incorrect. Quite a few of the descriptions illustrate clearly that the vessels belong to generally definable periods, and the vessels so described seem for the most part to have been authentic items. Questionable items may, nevertheless, be recognised as such from several of the descriptions.

In Table 4 may be studied the distribution of "datable" artifacts amongst the six general periods. Unfortunately, however, the proportion of "undatable" artifacts makes it almost impossible to attempt interpretations of any real value. Perhaps one might remark upon the tendency towards a more normal chronological range in the last two periods and note that in the first three periods paucity of record rather than a lack of clues to allow chronological assessments results in the uncertain range-patterns there.

It is important to note the number of inscribed artifacts. From the 68 recorded finds, there are 22 with inscribed bronzes (coins omitted). Altogether 35 items of the total of 146 artifacts are inscribed (approx. 25%). Several of the inscriptions are obviously spurious (or they are possibly the invention of the compilers) and others appear on mirrors, weapons, etc.; if omitted from the present total the proportion of inscribed bronze vessels (9%) accords closely with that of excavations conducted over the last few decades (11%). Record of the numbers of characters and of transcriptions of the inscriptions together with the low proportion of inscribed items are points which augur well the possible authenticity of the majority of the articles. This in turn would appear to indicate that the entries of inscribed bronzes may have been taken from actual records of the discoveries. If, however, there should be doubt as to the overall validity of certain of the records, the compilers concerned must clearly have had access to authentic inscribed vessels, or to sources containing reliable descriptions of the vessels together with rubbings of the inscriptions.

Bibliography

Anon.

1. *Chan-kuo-ts'e* 戰國策（漢文大系：*KBTK* XIX 富山房藏版, Tokyo, 1911.
2. *Ch'üan T'ang-shih* 全唐詩，上海同文書局景印康熙四十六年御定本，1887.
3. *Erh-shih-ssu shih* 二十四史，乾隆四年校本，殿版，1739.
4. *Kuo-yü* 國語（韋昭注），讀未見書齋（重刊宋明道二年本），1800.
5. *Li-chi* 禮記（漢文大系：*KBTK* XVII), 富山房藏版，Tokyo, 1911.
6. *Tung-kuan Han-chi* 東觀漢紀，湖北先正遺書，史部(Vols.29-30)，據武英殿聚珍版，沔陽盧氏慎始基齋景印本, 1923.

Barnard, Noel

7. *Bronze Casting and Bronze Alloys in Ancient China, Monumenta Serica Monograph,* Vol.XIV, The Australian National University and Monumenta Serica, Tokyo, 1961.

Barnard, Noel [Editor]
8. *Early Chinese Art and its Possible Influence in the Pacific Basin,* Intercultural Arts Press, New York, 1972. (3 volumes).*

Barnard, Noel & Satō Tamotsu
9. *Metallurgical Remains of Ancient China,* Nichiōsha Co., Ltd. 日應社 , Tokyo, 1974.

Barnard, Noel & Matsumaru Michio
10. *Archaeological Documents of Ancient China,* Volume 1 (in preparation).

Bielenstein, H.
11. "The Restoration of the Han Dynasty", *BMFEA,* Vol.26, 1954.

Ch'en Meng-chia 陳夢家
12. *Wu-wei Han-chien* 武威漢簡，考古學專刊乙種第十二號，甘肅省博物館中國科學院考古研究所，文物出版社， Peking, 1964.

Chiang T'ing-hsi 蔣廷錫, etc.
13. *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* 古今圖書集成，中華書局， 1934.

---

* Reference to item 8 above:

The co-authors (in sequence of papers as edited and authorised for publication):-
Chang Kwang-chih (Yale University: two papers, Nos.1 and 15), William Watson (University of London), Noel Barnard (Australian National University), Jean Mailey (Metropolitan Museum, N.Y.), Jao Tsung-yi (University of Singapore), Hayashi Minao (Kyoto University), Carl Jettmar (University of Heidelberg), William Samolin (Hartford University), Olov R.T. Janse (Professor Emeritus Ecole du Louvre, Paris), the late Carl Schuster (Woodstock, N.Y.), Emma C. Bunker (Denver Art Museum), Magdalene v. Dewall (University of Malaya), Chester S. Chard (University of Wisconsin), Ch'en Ch'i-lu (National Taiwan University), Per Sorensen (Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies, Copenhagen), Wilhelm G. Solheim II (University of Hawaii), Mino Badner (University of St. Thomas, Houston), Douglas Fraser (Columbia University), Jack Golson (Australian National University), Roger C. Green (B.P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu), Sidney M. Mead (University of Auckland), Bruce Palmer (Fiji Museum, Suva), Robert Bruce Inverarity (Philadelphia), the late Robert Heine-Geldern (University of Vienna), Paul Tolstoy (Queen's College, N.Y.), Clinton R. Edwards (University of Wisconsin).

Owing to the refusal of the publishing parties: The Trustees of Columbia University and their contracted publisher Intercultural Arts Press, New York, to deliver both page-proofs, and final proofs, for Editorial examination and to receive my due approval, prior to printing and publication, on behalf of the co-authors and in my capacity as Editor (and thus the person responsible for what would appear published in edited form under my name), the responsibility for: numerous unauthorised deletions of text; many additions to, or alterations of, the substance of text, tables, and illustrations in my Editorial Introduction, on the title-pages, and elsewhere – particularly the inexcusable act of desecration perpetrated upon the posthumous paper of our deceased colleague, Dr. Carl Schuster (who had personally corrected and approved the galleys only a week before his untimely death); the non-attendance to scores of corrections, to instructions on the correct positioning of figure captions and on figure reduction sizes; omissions of many cross-reference page numbers; the non-attendance to Editorial instructions to restore the aforementioned unauthorised changes of text, etc.; to restore the order of papers to that finalised by the Editor in his original *ms,* etc. etc.; lies with the initiating party of the above contract (No.31-6535600, Notary Public, State of New York, 28th March, 1968). Approaches made to The Trustees regarding the highly unethical conduct of their contracted publisher were ignored.

The following line of text which appears under my name as Editor on the title-pages is sheer impertinence:

"in collaboration with Douglas Fraser"

It has been implemented *without the authority of the co-authors and the Editor.* Professor Fraser, a member of staff in the Department of Art History and Archaeology, Columbia University, has had no part whatsoever in my editing of the above book. The editing was done solely by myself in Canberra between November 1967 and October 1968. The fully edited *ms* ready for publication was despatched to New York on 25 October 1968; it was duly seen and approved by the Chairman of the Organising Committee Professor Emeritus L. Carrington Goodrich. The Committee, of which I was an active member, had earlier invited me while I was in New York to edit and prepare the *ms* for publication – this invitation was directed to me alone and did not extend to any other party.

Chou Hung-hsiang 周鴻翔
14. *Shang-Yin ti-wang pen-chi* 商殷帝王本紀，自印本, Hong Kong, 1958.

Chu Chien-hsin 朱劍心
15. *Chin-shih-hsüeh* 金石學，商務印書館, Shanghai, 1948.

Ch'ü Wan-li 屈萬里
16. *Han shih-ching Chou-yi ts'an-tzu chi-cheng* 漢石經周易殘字集証，中央研究院歷史語言研究所專刊之四十六, Taipei, 1957.

Dubs, H.H.
17. *The History of the Former Han Dynasty*, 3 vols., Waverly Press, Inc., 1938, 1944, 1955.
18. "The Reliability of Chinese Histories", *Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol.VI, No.1.

Feng Yün-p'eng & Feng Yün-yüan 馮雲鵬，馮雲鵷
19. *Chin-shih-so* 金石索，遂古齋, 1821.

Frankel, Hans H.
20. "Objectivity and Bias in Medieval Chinese History", Roneo copy, AAS Meeting, New York, 1958.

Gardner, Charles S.
21. *Chinese Traditional Historiography*, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1938.

Han Yu-shan 韓玉珊
22. *Elements of Chinese Historiography* 中國史學綱要, W.M. Hawley, California, 1955.

Hao Yi-hsing 郝懿行
23. *Erh-ya yi-shu* 爾雅義疏，四部備要，上海中華書局據家刻足本校刊, Shanghai, 1927-1935.

Ho Ping-ti 何炳棣
24. *The Cradle of the East: An Inquiry into the Indigenous Origins of Techniques and Ideas of Neolithic and Early Historic China, 5000-1000 B.C.* (*manuscript* copy).

Juan Yüan 阮　元
25. *Sung-pen Shih-san-ching chu-shu* 宋本十三經注疏（附校勘記），脈望仙館（石印本）, 1875.

Jung Keng 容　庚
26. *Shang-Chou yi-ch'i t'ung-k'ao* 商周彝器通考, 2 vols. Peking, 1941.

Kadokawa 角　川（貝塚茂樹等編）
27. *Kanwa chūjiten* 漢和中辭典，角川書店, Tokyo, 1959.

Karlgren, B.
28. "Grammata Serica", *BMFEA*, Vol.12, 1940.
29. "Grammata Serica Recensa", *BMFEA*, Vol.29, 1957.

Ko Hung 葛　洪
30. *Hsi-ching tsa-chi* 西京雜記，漢魏叢書 (Vol.32), 上海涵芬樓用萬曆本刊印, 1925.

Komai Kazuchika
31. *Han-tan* 邯鄲（戰國時代趙都城址の發掘），東亞考古學會, Tokyo, 1954.

Kuan Chung 管　仲
32. *Kuan-tzu* 管子（漢文大系：*KBTK* XXI), 富山房藏版, Tokyo, 1911.

Kuo Mo-jo 郭沫若
33. *Chin-wen ts'ung-k'ao* 金文叢考，文求堂, Tokyo, 1932.

Legge, James
34. *The Chinese Classics* 中國古典名著八種，文星, Taipei, 1966.

Liu Ch'ang 劉　敞
35. *Hsien-Ch'in ku-ch'i chi* 先秦古器記, A lost work, title quoted in the *Chou-shih* of Ti Ch'i-nien, see item 46.

Liu Ching-shu 劉敬叔
36. *Yi-yüan* 異苑，津逮祕書 (Vol.124), 毛晉輯，上海博古齋，1922.

Liu Hsi 劉　熙
37. *Shih-ming* 釋名，四部叢刊經部，景江南圖書館藏明翻刻宋書棚本，Shanghai, 1920-1922.

Liu T'i-chih 劉體智
38. *Hsiao-chiao ching-ko chin-wen t'o-pen* 小校經閣金文拓本，廬江劉氏景印本，1935.

Lü Pu-wei 呂不韋
39. *Lü-shih Ch'un-ch'iu* 呂氏春秋，四部備要，上海中華書局據涵芬樓藏明刊本，Shanghai, 1927-1935.

Ma Heng 馬　衡
40. *Han shih-ching chi-ts'un* 漢石經集存，中國科學院考古研究所（考古學專刊乙種第三號），Peking, 1957.

Mo-tzu 墨　子
41. *Mo-tzu* 墨子（漢文大系：*KBTK* XIV），富山房藏版，Tokyo, 1911.

Olbricht, Peter
42. "The Biography in China", Roneo copy, AAS Meeting, New York, 1958.

von Oppolzer, Theodor Ritter (Translated by Owen Gingerich)
43. *Canon of Eclipses (Canon der Finsternisse)*, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1961.

Sargent, Clyde B.
44. "Subsidized History – Pan Ku and the Historical Records of the Former Han Dynasty", *Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol.III.

Takigawa Kametarō 瀧川龜太郎
45. *Shih-chi hui-chu k'ao-cheng* 史記會注考証，藝文印書館，Taipei, (undated).

Ti Ch'i-nien 翟耆年
46. *Chou-shih* 籀史，叢書集成初編，藝術類，Vol.1513, 商務印書館，1935.

Ting Fu-pao 丁福保
47. *Ku-ch'ien ta-tz'u-tien* 古錢大辭典，世界書局，Taipei, 1962.

Tseng Chao-yüeh 曾昭燏 etc.
48. *Yi-nan ku-hua-hsiang-shih-mu fa-chüeh pao-kao* 沂南古畫像石墓發掘報告，文化部文物管理局，Shanghai, 1956.

Tu Kuang-t'ing 杜光庭
49. *Lu-yi-chi* 錄異記，津逮祕書 (Vol.139), 毛晉輯，上海博古齋，1922.

Tuan Ch'eng-shih 段成式
50. *Yu-yang tsa-tsu* 酉陽雜俎，津逮祕書 (Vols.111-113), 毛晉輯，上海博古齋，1922.

Tung Tso-pin 董作賓
51. "T'ang-p'an yü Shang san ko" 湯盤與商三戈，文史哲學報，1, 1950.

Umehara Sueji 梅原末治
52. *Shina kōkogaku ronkō* 支那考古學論攷，弘文堂書店，Tokyo, 1938.

Wang Chia 王　嘉
53. *Shih-yi-chi* 拾遺記，漢魏叢書 (Vol.32), 上海涵芬樓用萬曆刊本景印，1925.

Wang Ch'in-jo, etc. 王欽若等編
54. *Ts'e-fu-yüan-kuei* 册府元龜，中華書局，1960.

Wang Ch'ung 王　充
55. *Lun-heng* 論衡，四部備要，上海中華書局據涵芬樓藏明通津草堂刊本，Shanghai, 1927-1935.

Wang Fu, etc. 王黼等
56. *Po-ku-t'u-lu* 重修博古圖錄，泊如齋藏版，劉季然書錄，萬曆戊子，1524; also 1588 and 1753 editions.

Wang P'u 王 溥
57. T'ang-hui-yao 唐會要，中國學術名著，歷代會要第一期書 (Vols.5-7), 世界書局刊，1960.

Wang Shih-chen 王世貞
58. *Han-shu p'ing-lin* 漢書評林（凌稚隆輯校），明萬曆刻本.

Wang Ying-lin 王應麟
59. *Yü-hai* 玉海，浙江書局重鋟，光緒九年，1883.

Wei Chü-hsien 衛聚賢
60. *Chung-kuo k'ao-ku-hsüeh shih* 中國考古學史，商務印書館，Shanghai, 1936.

APPENDIX

12. 是時美陽得鼎，獻之。下有司議，多以爲宜薦見宗廟，如元鼎故事。張敞好古文字，按鼎銘勒而上議曰：……今鼎出於郊東，中有刻書曰：王命尸臣，官此栒邑，賜爾旂鸞、黼黻、琱戈。尸臣拜手稽首，曰：敢對揚天子，丕顯休命。臣愚不足以迹古文，竊以傳記言之，此鼎殆周之所以褒賜大臣，大臣子孫刻銘其先功，臧之於宮廟也。……今此鼎細小，又有款識，不宜薦見於宗廟。」

（漢書郊祀志下，25.7-8）

12(a)「漢書郊祀志：宣帝時，美陽得鼎，獻之。下有司議，多以爲宜薦宗廟，如元鼎時……」

（古今圖書卷204鼎部 796.58b）

31. 「漢書武帝本紀：元鼎元年夏五月五日，得鼎汾水上。四年夏六月，得寶鼎后土祠旁。秋，馬生渥洼水中。作寶鼎天馬之歌。」

（古今圖書卷204鼎部796）

31(a)「元鼎元年夏五月，赦天下，大酺五日。得鼎汾水上。」

（漢書評林武帝紀，6.15b）

32. 「漢書郊祀志：夏六月，汾陰巫錦爲民祠魏脽后土營旁，見地如鉤狀，掊視得鼎，鼎大異於衆鼎……」

（古今圖書卷204鼎部 796.58a）

32(a)「四年……六月，得寶鼎后土祠旁。秋，馬生渥洼水中。作寶鼎天馬之歌。」

（漢書評林武帝紀，6.16b-17a）

39. 「（永平六年）二月，王雒山出寶鼎，廬江太守獻之。夏四月甲子，詔曰：昔禹收九牧之金，鑄鼎以象物，使人知神姦，不逢惡氣。遭德則興，遷於商周。周德既衰，鼎乃淪亡。祥瑞之降，以應有德。方今政化多僻，何以致茲？易曰：鼎象

三公，豈公卿奉職得其理邪？太常其以祫祭之日，陳鼎於廟，以備器用。賜三公帛五十匹，九卿二千石半之。」

（後漢書卷二明帝紀 v.2,10b）

40. 「（永平）六年，廬江太守獻寶鼎，出王雒山，納于太廟。詔曰：易：鼎足象三公，豈非公卿奉職得理乎？太常其以祫祭之日，陳鼎於廟，以備器用。」

（東觀漢記卷二4a［湖北先正遺書 v.29］）

41. 「漢明帝永平六年三月，廬江太守獻寶鼎，出王雒山。（雒或作雄。）」

（宋書卷29符瑞志下42a）

42. 「漢章帝建初七年十月，車駕西巡至槐里右扶風禁上美陽，得銅器於岐山，似酒尊。詔在道晨夕以爲百官熱酒。」

（宋書卷29符瑞志下42a）

43. 「（漢章帝建初七年……冬十月）幸槐里岐山，得銅器，形似酒罇，獻之。又獲白鹿。帝曰：上無明天子，下無賢方伯，人之無良，相怨一方，斯器亦曷爲來哉？」（注：公羊傳曰：孔子抱麟而泣曰：孰爲來哉？孰爲來哉？）

（後漢書卷三章帝紀11a）

44. 「（永元元年……）南單于於漠北，遣憲古鼎，容五斗，其傍銘曰：仲山甫鼎，其萬年，子子孫孫，永保用。憲乃上之。」

（後漢書卷五十三竇憲傳17b）

45. 「漢和帝永元元年，竇憲征匈奴，於漠北酒泉得仲山甫鼎，容五斗。」

（宋書卷29符瑞志下42b）

47. 「吳孫權赤烏十二年六月戊戌，寶鼎出臨平湖，又出東部鄮縣。」

（宋書卷 29 符瑞志下42b）

48. 「（赤烏十二年注）吳錄曰，六月戊戌，寶鼎出臨平湖。」

（三國志吳志卷二孫權31b）

49. 「吳景帝永安三年三月，西陵赤烏見。是歲得大鼎于建德縣。」

（冊府元龜卷201,p.2417,閏位部，祥瑞一）

50. 宋書符瑞志v.29下14b：「西陵言赤烏見。」

51. 「永安三年注，吳歷曰：是歲得大鼎於建德縣。」

（三國志吳志卷二孫休傳8b）

52. 「冊府元龜：吳景帝永安三年三月，西陵赤烏見。是歲得大鼎於建德縣。」

（古今圖書卷 204 鼎部796.58b）

［cf.古今圖書卷251古玩部800.51a］

53. 「胡綜博物：孫權時握得銅匣，長二尺七寸，以琉璃爲蓋。又一白玉如意，所執處皆刻龍虎及蟬形，莫能識其由。使人問綜，綜曰：昔秦皇以金陵有天子氣平諸山阜，處處輒埋寶物以當王氣，此蓋是乎？」

（酉陽雜俎卷11.4b［津逮秘書v.112］）

54. 「寶鼎元年……八月，所在言得大鼎，於是改年大赦。」

（三國志吳志卷三孫皓15b）

55. 「吳孫皓寶鼎元年八月，在所言得大鼎。」

（宋書卷29符瑞志下42b）

56. 「天冊元年，吳郡言掘地得銀長一尺，廣三分，刻上有年月字，於是大赦改年。」

（三國志吳志卷三孫皓19b）

60. 「晉愍帝建興二年十二月，晉陵武進縣民陳龍，在田中得銅鐸五枚。」

（宋書卷29符瑞志下42b）

61. 「愍帝建興四年，晉陵武進人陳龍，在田中得銅鐸五枚，柄口皆有龍虎形。……」

（宋書卷 27 符瑞志上27a）

62. 「會稽剡縣陳淸又於井中得棧鐘，長七寸二分，口徑四寸，其器雖小，形制甚精，上有古文書十八字，其四字可識，云：會稽徵命。」

（宋書卷 27 符瑞志上 27b）

63. 「時元帝初鎭建鄴，導令璞筮之，遇咸之井，璞曰：東北郡縣有武名者，當出鐸以著受命之符，西南郡縣有陽名者，井當沸。其後晉陵武進縣人於田中得銅鐸五枚，歷陽縣中，井沸，經日乃止。及帝爲晉王，又使璞筮，遇豫之暌，璞曰：會稽當出鐘以告成功，上有勒銘，應在人家井泥中得之，繇辭所謂先王以作樂崇德，殷薦之上帝者也。及帝即位，太興初，會稽剡縣人果於井中得一鐘，長七寸二分，口徑四寸半，上有古文奇書十八字云：會稽嶽命餘字時人莫識之。璞曰：蓋王者之作，必有靈符，塞天人之心，與神物合契，然後可以言受命矣。觀五鐸啓號於晉陵，棧鍾告成於會稽，瑞不失類，出皆以方，豈不偉哉？若夫鐸發其響，鍾徵其象，器以數臻，事以實應，天人之際，不可不察。帝甚重之。」

（晉書卷72郭璞傳3a）

64. 「釋名引李巡云：棧，淺也。又引東晉太興元年，會稽剡縣人家井中得一鐘，長三寸，口徑四寸，上有銘。」（按晉書郭璞傳作鐘長七寸二分，口徑四寸半，上有古文奇書。璞曰棧鐘云云。）

（爾雅釋樂 3b［四部備要 v.3］）

65. 「李巡注：東晉太興元年，會稽剡縣人家井中得一鐘，長三寸口徑四寸，上有銘，古文云：棧，鐘之小者，既長三寸，自然淺也。」

（爾雅五釋樂［宋本十三經］）

66. 「晉成帝咸康五年，豫章南昌民掘地，得銅鍾四枚。太守褚裒以獻。」

（宋書卷29符瑞志下43a）

67. 「穆帝永和元年二月，春穀民得金勝一，長五寸，狀如織勝。明年平蜀。」

（玉海卷196祥瑞7a）

68. 「晉穆帝升平五年二月乙未，南掖門有馬足陷地，得銅鐘一枚。」

（宋書卷29符瑞志下43a）

69. 「異苑：前秦苻堅建元五年，長安樵人于城南見金鼎，走白堅。堅遣載取到城，化爲銅鼎。」

（古今圖書卷204鼎部796.58b）

70. 「苻堅建元年中，長安樵人於城內見金鼎，走白堅。堅遣載取到，化爲銅鼎，入門又變成大鐸。」

（異苑卷二 3a［津逮秘書 v.142］）

71. 「晉安帝義熙初，帝始康晉亂而興霸業焉，廬江霍山常有鐘聲十二。帝將征關洛，霍山崩，有六鐘出，制度精奇，上有古文書一百六十字。」

（宋書卷27符瑞志上28b）

72. 「（晉義熙十二年……）五月，廬江霍山崩，獲六鍾，獻之天子。」

（南史卷 1 宋武帝紀16a）

73. 「漢中城固縣水際，忽有雷聲，俄而岸崩，得銅鐘十二枚。」

（宋書卷27符瑞志上29a）

74. 「（晉義熙十四年……）漢中成固縣漢水崖際，有異聲如雷。俄頃岸崩，有銅鍾十二，出自潛壤。」

（南史卷 1 宋武帝紀21a）

75. 「（元熙二年……）竟陵郡江濱自開，出古銅禮器十餘枚。帝獻之，晉帝讓不受。於是歸諸瑞物，藏於相府。」

（南史卷 1 宋武帝紀22a）

76. 「宋文帝元嘉十三年四月辛丑，武昌縣章山水側自開，出神鼎，江州刺史南譙王義宣以獻。」

（宋書卷 29 符瑞志下43a）

77(a)「山堂考索：張永嘗開元武湖，適古冢，得一銅斗，有柄。文帝訪朝士，何承天曰：此新室斗也，於時三公亡，皆賜之，一在冢外，一在內。三公在江左者，惟

鄫邯爲大司徒。俄而啓冢，內有石銘，果然。」

（古今圖書卷196斗部796.16a）

77(b)「張永嘗開玄武湖，遇古冢，冢上得一銅斗，有柄，文帝以訪朝士，承天曰：此亡新威斗，王莽三公亡，皆賜之，一在冢外，一在冢內，時三台居江左者，唯甄邯爲大司徒，必邯之墓，俄而永又啓冢，內更得一斗，復有一石，銘大司徒鄫邯之墓。」

（南史卷33何承天傳25b）

78.「（宋）元嘉二十一年十二月，新陽獲古鼎於水側，有篆書四十二字，雍州刺史蕭思話以獻。」

（宋書卷29符瑞志下43a）

79.「（宋）元嘉二十二年，豫章豫寧縣出銅鐘，江州刺史廣陵王紹以獻。」

（宋書卷29符瑞志下43b）

80.「孝武帝孝建三年四月丁亥，臨川宜黃縣民田中得銅鐘七口，內史傅徽以獻。」

（宋書卷29符瑞志下43b）

81.「孝建三年四月甲辰，晉陵延陵得古鐘六口，徐州刺史竟陵王誕以獻。」

（宋書卷29符瑞志下43b）

82.「孝武帝大明七年六月，江夏蒲圻獲銅路鼓四面，獨足。郢州刺史安陸王子綏以獻。」

（宋書卷29符瑞志下43b）

83.「明帝泰始四年二月丙申，豫章望蔡獲古銅鐘，高一尺七寸，圍二尺八寸，大守張辯以獻。」

（宋書卷29符瑞志下43b）

84.「泰始五年五月壬戌，豫章南昌獲古銅鐘，容斛七斗，江州刺史王景文以獻。」

（宋書卷29符瑞志下44a）

85. 「泰始中，世祖於青溪宅得錢一枚，文有北斗七星雙節，又有人形帶劍。及治盆城又得一大錢，文曰『太平百歲』。」

（南齊書卷18祥瑞志15a）

86. 「泰始七年六月甲寅，義陽郡獲銅鼎，受一斛，幷蓋並隱起鏤。豫州刺史段仏榮以獻。」

（宋書卷29符瑞志下44a）

87. 「順帝昇明二年九月，建寧萬歲山澗中得銅鐘長二尺一寸，豫州刺史劉懷珍以獻。」

（宋書卷29符瑞志下44a）

88. 「昇明二年九月，建寧縣建昌村民採藥於萬歲山，忽聞澗中有異響，得銅鍾一枚，長二尺一寸，邊有古字。」

（南齊書卷18祥瑞志13a）

89. 「魏書靈徵志：高宗太和二年九月，鼎出於洛州濕水，送于京師。王者不極滋味，則神鼎出也。」

（古今圖書卷204鼎部796.58b）

（魏書卷112下靈徵志下34b與上文同）

90. 「昇明三年，左里村人於宮亭湖得戟戟二枚，傍有古字文，遠不可識。」

（南齊書卷18祥瑞志15a）

91. 「建元元年十月，浩陵郡蜑民田健所住巖間，常留雲氣，有聲響澈若龍吟。求之，積歲莫有見者。去四月二十七日，巖數里夜忽有雙光，至明往獲古鍾一枚。又有一器名淳于，蜑人以爲神物奉祠之。」

（南齊書卷18祥瑞志13a）

92. 「南齊永明二年，丹水上下得古鼎一枚。」

（玉海卷88器用19a）

93. 「南齊書祥瑞志：武帝永明三年，越州南高涼俚人海中網魚，獲銅獸一頭，銘曰：作寶鼎齊臣萬年子孫承寶。」

（古今圖書卷204鼎部796.59a）

（南齊書卷十八祥瑞志16b與上文同）

94. 「永明四年四月，東昌縣山，自比歲以來，恆發異響。去二月十五日，有一巖褫落，縣民方元泰往視，於巖下得古鍾一枚。」

（南齊書卷18祥瑞志13b）

95. 「（永明）五年三月，豫寧縣長崗山獲神鍾一枚。」

（南齊書卷18祥瑞志13b）

96. 「永明七年，齊興太守劉元寶治郡城，於塹中獲錢百萬，形極大。以獻臺爲瑞，世祖班賜朝臣以下各有差。」

（南齊書卷18祥瑞志15a）

97. 「（永明）九年十一月，寧蜀廣漢縣田所墾地，入尺四寸，獲古鐘一枚，形高三尺八寸，圍四尺七寸，縣柄長一尺二寸，合高五尺，四面各九孔。……」（又獲玉璽及玉印）

（南齊書卷18祥瑞志13b）

98. 「（永明）十年，齊安郡民王攝掘地，得四文大錢一萬二千七百十枚，品製如一。」

（南齊書卷18祥瑞志15a）

99. 「悛於州治下立學校，得古禮器銅罍銅甑山罍鐏銅豆鍾各二口，獻之。」

（南齊書卷37劉悛傳5a）

100. 「南齊書劉悛傳：悛於州治下立學校，得古禮器銅甑二口，獻之。」

（古今圖書卷205甑部797.03b）

101. 「悛於司州得古禮器銅罍瓶盥山銅罍尊銅豆鍾各二，獻之。」

（玉海89.18b）

102. 「景明四年，并州獲古銅權，詔付崇，以爲鍾律之準。」

（魏書卷107上律曆志上2b）

103. 「梁書夏侯詳傳：天監六年，徵詳爲侍中右光祿大夫。先是荆府城局參軍吉士瞻役萬人，浚仗庫防火池，得金革帶鉤，隱起雕鏤甚精巧，篆文曰：錫爾金鉤，既公且侯。士瞻詳兄女壻也，女竊以與詳。詳喜佩之，暮歲而貴矣。」

（古今圖書卷238鉤部799.37b）

104. 「（詳）病卒，時年七十四，上爲素服舉哀，贈右光祿，先是荆府城局參軍吉士瞻役萬人，浚仗庫防火池，得金革帶鉤，隱起雕鏤甚精巧，篆文曰：錫爾金鉤，既公且侯。士瞻詳兄女壻也，女竊以與詳。詳喜佩之，暮歲而貴矣。」

（梁書卷10夏侯詳傳7a）

105. 「之遴好古愛奇，在荆州聚古器數十百種。有一器似甌，可容一斛，上有金錯字，時人無能知者。又獻古器四種於東宮。其第一種鏤銅鴟夷榼二枚，兩耳有銀鏤銘云：建平二年造。其第二種銀鏤古尊二枚，有篆銘云：秦容成侯適楚之歲造。其第三種外國澡灌一口，銘云：元封二年龜茲國獻。其第四種古製澡盤一枚，銘云：初平二年造。」

（梁書卷40劉之遴傳6b）

106. 「時魏人獻古器，有隱起字，無能識者。顯案文讀之，無有滯礙，考校年月，一字不差，高祖甚嘉焉。」

（梁書卷40劉顯傳4b）

107. 「（開皇）十一年春正月丁酉，以平陳所得古器，多爲妖變，悉命毀之。」

（隋書卷2高祖紀下7a）

108. 「貞觀二十二年九月，……遂州涪水中獲古鼎，受五石三斗，旁有銘刻。取初風雨晦冥，響若洪鐘。」

（冊府元龜卷24 p.257帝王部，符瑞三）

109. 「冊府元龜：貞觀二十二年九月，遂州涪水中獲古鼎，受五石三斗，旁有銘刻。初取時風雨晦冥，響若洪鐘。」

（古今圖書集成卷204鼎部796.59a）

110. 「蜀異志：唐中宗爲天后廢於房陵，有人渡水拾薪，得一古鏡，進之。中宗照面其影，中有人語曰：即作天子，即作天子。未浹旬，踐居帝位。」

（古今圖書卷227鏡部798.48a）

111. 「開元九年三月，于許昌縣之唐祠，掘地得古銅鐏，上又隱起雙鯉篆書，文曰：宜子孫，竝請宣付史官從之。」

（冊府元龜卷24,p.258帝王部，符瑞三）

112. 「冊府元龜：開元九年三月，許昌縣之唐祠，掘地得古銅尊，上又隱起雙鯉篆書，文曰：宜子孫，請宣付史官從之。」

（古今圖書卷186尊彝795.29b）

113. 「開元九年三月，許昌縣之唐祠，掘地得古銅尊，上又隱起雙鯉篆書，文曰：宜子孫，請宣付史官從之。」

（玉海89.23a）

114. 「（河東道，河中府）寶鼎……開元十年，獲寶鼎，更名。」

（新唐書卷39地理志2a）

115. 「（河東道，河中府）寶鼎……開元十一年，玄宗祀后土，獲寶鼎，因改爲寶鼎。」

（舊唐書卷39地理志二2b）

116. 「開元十一年二月，祠后土於汾陽之睢土。太史奏榮光出河，休氣四塞，徘徊遶壇，日揚其光。有司奏脩壇掘地，獲古銅鼎二，其大者容一斗，色皆青。又獲古甎，長九寸，上有篆書千秋萬歲及長樂未央字。」

（冊府元龜卷24,p.258帝王部，符瑞三）

117. 「冊府元龜：開元十一年二月，祠后土於汾陽之睢土。太史奏榮光出河，休氣四塞，徘徊遶壇，日揚其光。有司奏修壇掘地，獲古銅鼎二，其大者容一斗，色皆青。」

（古今圖書集成卷204鼎部）

118. 「開元十一年……注：初有司奏脩壇掘地，獲古鼎二，其大者容四升，小者容一升，色皆青。又獲古甎，長九寸，有篆書「千秋萬歲」字，及「長樂未央」字。又有赤兎見於壇側。舊祠堂爲婦人素像，則天時移河西梁山神素像，就祠中配焉。至十一年，有司遷梁山神像于祠外之別室焉。詔以中書令張嘉貞爲壇場使，將作少監張景爲壇場副使，張說爲禮儀使。見文獻通考。」

（唐會要卷10上雜錄213）

119. 「開元十三年十月壬申，萬年人王慶築垣掘地，獲寶鼎五，獻之。四鼎皆有銘，銘曰：垂作尊鼎，萬福無疆，子孫永保用。」

（玉海 88.19a）

120. 「玉海：開元十三年十月壬申，萬年人王慶築垣掘地獲寶鼎五，獻之。四鼎皆有銘，銘曰：垂作尊鼎，萬福無疆，子孫永保用。」

（古今圖書集成卷204鼎部796.59a）

121. 「開元二十二年……四月……丁未，眉州鼎皇山下江水中得寶鼎。」

（舊唐書卷 8 玄宗紀 33b）

122(a) 「開元二十一年六月庚子，眉州獻寶鼎，重七百斤，無耳足，有篆文數字。時渝州刺史段懷本奏：此鼎到陳州界之對溪驛，雲霧暗合，有白虹逼鼎，臣恐淪失，不勝驚懼，請至合州取陸路至京。許之。」

（冊府元龜卷24,p.260帝王部，符瑞三）

122(b) 「冊府元龜：開元二十一年六月庚子，眉州獻寶鼎，重七百斤，無耳足，有篆文數字。時渝州刺史段懷本奏：『此鼎到陳州界之封溪驛，雲霧暗合，有白虹逼鼎。臣恐淪失，不勝驚懼，請至合州取陸路至京。』許之。」

（古今圖書集成卷204鼎部796.59a）

123. 「玉海：天寶元年五月，平涼獲古鐵鼎，獻之。」

（古今圖書集成卷204鼎部796.59a）

124. 「（河南道）天寶三載，太守李齊物開三門，石下得戟、大刃，有『平陸』篆字，因改爲平陸縣。」

（舊唐書卷38地理志1,40a）

125. 「平陸……天寶元年，太守李齊物開三門以利漕運，得古刃，有篆文曰：『平陸』，因更名。」

（新唐書卷38地理志4b）

126. 「平陸縣、本隋河北縣，天寶元年二月二十一日，改爲平陸縣。先是，陝郡太守李齊物，疏鑿三門，得古鐸甚大，其上有『平陸』二字，後因改爲平陸。」

（唐會要卷70州縣改置上1250）

127. 「博異志：唐天寶中，有陳仲躬，家居金陵，多金帛。仲躬好學修詞，未成，攜數千金，於洛陽清化里，假居一宅。其井甚大，常溺人，……仲躬當時即命匠，命一親信與匠同入井，囑曰：但見異物即收。至底無別物唯獲古銅鏡一枚，闊七寸七分。仲躬令洗淨貯匣內，焚香以奉之，……其鏡背有二十八字，皆科斗書，以今文推而寫之，曰：『維晉新公二年七月七日午時，於首陽山前，白龍潭，鑄成此鏡，千年在世』。於背上環書，一字管天文一宿，依方列之，則左有日，而右有月，龜龍虎雀並如其位。於鼻四旁，題云：夷則之鏡。」

（古今圖書卷228鏡部798.52b）

128. 「原化記：蘇州太湖入松江口，唐貞元中，有漁人載小網數船，共十餘人，下網取魚，一無所獲，網中得物，乃是鏡，而不甚大。漁者忿其無魚，棄鏡於水，移船下網，又得此鏡。漁人異之，遂取其鏡視之，纔七八寸，照形悉見其筋骨臟腑，瞭然可惡，其人悶絕而倒。衆人大驚，其取鏡鑒形者，即時皆倒，嘔吐狼藉。其餘一人不敢取照，即以鏡投之水中，良久扶持倒吐者。既醒，遂相與歸家，以爲妖怪。明日方理網罟，則所得魚多於常時數倍，其人先有疾者自此皆

愈。詢於故老，此鏡在江湖，每數百年一出，人亦常見，但不知何精靈之所附也。」

（古今圖書卷227鏡部798.48a）

129. 「貞元十五年正月，柳州藍山縣山墝，得古鍾四枚。」

（唐會要卷43山墝石隕778）

130(a) 「冊府元龜：元和二年正月，詔以湖南所獻古鼎付有司。初永州百姓唐履昌於路側掘得古鼎，重一百一十二斤，異之，故上獻。」

（古今圖書集成卷204鼎部796.59a）

130(b) 「元和二年正月，詔以湖南所獻古鼎付有司。初永州百姓唐履昌於路側掘得古鼎，重一百一十二斤，異之，故上獻。」

（冊府元龜卷25,p.270帝王部，符瑞四）

131. 「金缶魅詩注：河東李員，居長安延壽里，元和初，室西隅有聲若韻金石，俄有歌者，音清越，久不已，凡數夕聞焉。後至秋始六日，夜雨頹堂北垣。明日，得一缶，僅尺餘，制用金，形狀奇古，蓋千百年之器。色分藍葉青，聲比磬中鳴，七月初七夜，吾當示汝形。」

（全唐詩卷867怪）

132. 「全唐詩：河東李員居長安延壽里，元和初，室西隅有聲若韻金石，俄有歌者，音清越，久不已。凡數夕聞焉。後至秋始六日，夜雨隤室北垣。明日得一缶，僅尺餘，制用金，形狀奇古，蓋千百年之器。詩云：色分藍葉青，聲比磬中鳴，七月初七夜，吾當示汝形。」

（古今圖書卷192缶部795.60a）

133. 「元和末，海陵夏侯乙庭前生百合花，大於常數倍。異之，因發其下得甓匣十三重，各匣一鏡，第七者光不蝕，照日光環一丈，其餘規銅而已。」

（酉陽雜俎卷6.3b 津逮秘書v.111）

134. 「酉陽雜俎：元和末，海陵夏侯乙庭前生百合花，大於常數倍。異之，因發其下，得甕匣十三重，各匣一鏡，至第七者光不蝕，照日光環一丈，其餘規銅而已。」

（古今圖書卷227鏡部798.48b）

135. 「唐會要：長慶二年九月，鄜坊得古銅器一，有篆文表，獻之。」

（玉海卷89器用23a）

136. 「撫異記：衛公，長慶中，在浙右，會有漁人於秦淮垂機網下深處，忽覺力重異於常時。及斂就水次，卒不獲一鱗，但得古銅鏡，可尺餘，光浮於波際。漁人驚取照之，歷歷盡見五臟六腑，血縈脉動，竦駭神魂，因腕戰而墜。漁人偶話於舍旁，遂乃聞之於公，盡周歲萬計窮索水底，終不復得。」

（古今圖書卷227鏡部798.48b）

137. 「南漢羅浮古劍篆文：南漢主劉龔時，羅浮山掘得古劍，有篆文云：「丁與水同宮，王將耳口同，尹來居口上，山岫獲重重」。解者云：宋太祖以丁亥年降誕，是丁水同宮也。於文，耳口王爲聖，尹口爲君，重山爲出。蓋丁亥年而聖君出也。」

（全唐詩卷875讖記）

文獻資料所見青銅器的發現

兼論有關中國史料編纂者的眞貌

（中文摘要）

巴納

本文乃就目前所見有關最早期至唐末發現青銅器的記載，經蒐集後作一般性意義上的探究。前此衞聚賢、容庚、朱劍心等人亦曾作類此的整理，可是都不够完整，而且沒有認眞的注意到該等材料的眞實性。固然筆者深感前人篳路藍縷之功，但卻由於着眼點不同而對該等相同的史料有不同的看法。

本文的探討大別爲七項：

一、文獻上記載的銘文內容

文中所引左傳、國語、禮記等書的記載是大家耳熟能詳的，但以前的學者卻很少討論到，早期的編纂者，是否會因缺乏對原器銘文的認識而影響到當時撰寫史實的手法？筆者認爲漢以前的作者在引證銘文時，應該要採用與原器相符的形式和辭彙才對。

二、九鼎及有關前漢發現的銅器

從好幾種提到九鼎的記載裏所談及有關這些神話性的器物的故事，爲本文掀開了主要的序幕。在討論有關這些不可思議的器物的各種故事時，值得注意的是，在前人的引述中所見一些不大不小的瑕疵，都是由於著述者對前漢原器物的了解不透徹所致；在前漢當首次記述銅器的發現時，著述者似乎曾因不明該器物隸屬的年代而遭遇到困惑。但今從他們引述該器物的形制來看，仍不難確定不會早於戰國，或大概僅屬漢代而已——甚至近人有以爲其中一件是僞造的。

三、後漢時期銅器的發現，兼述「徵兆」的含義

在東觀漢紀、後漢書及劉宋書裏，對同一件銅器的發現，往往有不盡相同的記載，但大都特別賦與祥瑞的意義。這批「徵兆」的材料，使我們對日蝕（即凶兆）作了進一

步的研究，在此我們有一份可靠的日蝕時間的統計，作爲證明。表一和表二是史記和漢書所載日蝕記錄的扼要整理。當我們仔細的審視後，可發現其記錄的趨向，是時間愈接近著述者的時代，其資料則更形準確和完整。在某些西方學者所相信的理論中，認爲史官所指出皇室所受的天譴及頌揚，是根據日蝕或其他徵兆的顯示，而將這些徵兆作成記錄或存諸隱秘檔案之間的取捨，卻是以在位國君行事的優劣作爲標準。可是這種理論是不切合實際的，難道當時的史官眞的會如此作爲嗎？不過這種對皇室褒貶的準則卻往往爲歷史家編纂斷代史時所左右。研究這類發現銅器的記載——以祥瑞作對象，或者可用作支持我個人這種理論。

四、三國、兩晉時期銅器的發現

五、南北朝銅器的發現

六、隋、唐兩代發現銅器的記載

在前些章節所提出的材料和討論，大都是說明在史書及一些斷簡殘篇裏所反映出來的史料編纂的手法。因此儘可能地把史書上所記載有關彝器的形制和銘文，做了一些復原的工作，而對同一事物，在不同材料比較下所產生的差異加以探究，同時還要討論其所含意義對史料作法的關係。

七、記載銅器發現的意義

表三和表四是有關這方面材料的提要。很清楚的看出「鼎」盛行於漢及三國；至東西晉時「鐘」和「鐸」則凌駕於其他器物之上。南北朝時「鐘」仍佔優勢，但「鼎」已重見普遍。有唐一代，「鼎」重新抬頭，但在當時一般怪異故事，如酉陽雜俎、異苑、博異志等書中，卻特別强調銅鏡的發現。更有趣的是，這類的發現皆從未見於史書上的記載。

上述諸特點，似乎可以對研究史料編纂方法或作法等提供一些有興味的啓示。如果我們遍觀史籍的記載而分別單就某一個課題、項目或主題來研究，尤其是當我們在某一項裏得到深切的了解以後——特別如日蝕、銅器、彝銘等項，然後再去探究史學家是如何操縱這些材料，那麼未嘗不可開闢出一條有價值的研究途徑。

註：附錄中所列本文引用的原文，只限於從來未作英譯的部份。