

ANTH445-010 Technology of Cultural Materials: Metals  
Prof. C. Reedy  
Second Annotated Bibliography  
Subject: Chinese Bronzes

**“Ancient Chinese Ritual Bronzes: Meaning and Explanation.” *Logoi.com*. 2000.  
11 November 2002 <[http://www.logoi.com/notes/ancient\\_bronzes.html](http://www.logoi.com/notes/ancient_bronzes.html)>.**

This online article presents the controversy over the meaning, or lack thereof, of the ornamentation of Chinese bronzes. It points out the lack of historical written record about the subject. The author talks of the geometric feel of the design and ponders the question of whether or not these designs had any significance other than decorative, such as religious.

**Bussagl, Mario. *Chinese Bronzes*. Trans. Pamela Swinglehurst. London: The Hamlyn Publishing Group Limited, 1969.**

This book contains several great quality, crisp color photographs that help the reader see many surface details. The accompanying text, however, leaves something to be desired. It provides some basic information but lacks any real depth or insight.

**Karlgren, Bernhard and Jan Wirgin. *Chinese Bronzes: The Natanael Wessén Collection*. The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities Monograph Series, Vol. 1. Sweden: Strängnäs Tryckeri ab, 1969.**

This book does a fantastic job of helping a reader identify Chinese bronze forms. It provides simplified illustrations of both forms and ornamentation to establish a commonality between pieces. It also presents a large number of photographs of actual pieces so that one can recognize changes in stylistic expression as opposed to those in form.

**Laufer, Berthold. *Archaic Chinese Bronzes of the Shang, Chou and Han Periods: In the collection of Mr. Parish-Watson*. New York: Parish-Watson & Co., 1922.**

This work presents a ten-piece collection of one Mr. Parish-Watson. Its forward presents an argument for the artistry, not the artcraft, of the creators of these objects. It also contains a short description of the development of the Chinese Bronze and its casting methods. Accompanying notes provide insight into their use and period stylistic changes.

**Loehr, Max. *Ritual Vessels of Bronze Age China*. United States of America: Asia House Gallery Publications, 1968.**

The introduction of this book tries to help readers follow the development of surface design on Chinese bronzes, emphasizing the ornamentation-like feel and the changing techniques of production for surface design. The pieces presented in the catalogue come from many collections and are thus able to present a more complete picture of the development of their forms, especially during the Shang Period. The author relates most pieces to his stylistic origination scheme, presented in the introduction.

**Read, C. Hercules. "A Chinese Bronze with Scythian Affinities." *Man*. 20 (1920): 1-3.**

This article discusses a Chinese bronze from a personal collection that the author finds intriguing and different. He tries to decipher the meaning of the depicted animals and their significance from study of the normal motif-type decoration as well as two pieces similar to the one in question. He finds strong ties between the depictions of the animals on the vase in question and those of some Siberian bronze work.

**Rudolph, Richard C. "Dynastic Booty: An Altered Chinese Bronze." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*. 11.1/2 (1948): 174-180.**

This article discusses a Chinese bronze bell from the eastern Chou and the controversy surrounding the original inscription characters on one panel of the bell. The author uses historical text to deduce the most obvious name that would have been inscribed on the bell since scientific analysis of the actual piece has failed on several occasions. He concludes that the Chinese government so as not to violate the personal name of a former ruler changed the inscription.

**von Erdberg, Eleanor. *Ancient Chinese Bronzes: Terminology and Iconography*. Alte Schule, Siebenberg-Verlag, 1993.**

This book does a fantastic job of presenting, in text and illustration, Chinese bronze ornamentation and its development. It also calls attention to the typical form and location of individual symbols on a vessel form. There is a fairly good section in this book that follows the transition of some elements from the bronze vessels into later Buddhist statuary.

**Watson, William. *Ancient Chinese Bronzes*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1962.**

This book gives fairly good explanations of the forms of the bronze ritual vessels and their possible origins. The images in this book are unfortunately small and would really only do the text justice if they were larger and crisper. The ornamentation and vessel inscription chapters are well written, easy to understand and informative.

**Xueqin, L. *The Wonder of Chinese Bronzes*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1980.**

This work provides an overview of the origins of bronze working in China as well as the development of forms and styles of the bronze vessels. Being able to see the simplified illustrated forms next to each other helps one see the contrasts and similarities between forms and their functions, more readily. This book also provides some insight into the use of inscriptions on Chinese bronzes.