

EARLY
CHINESE
CERAMICS

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‘THE FIRST PIECE OF EARLY CHINESE
TERRACOTTA THAT I HANDLED WAS A
DANCING TANG HORSE’

FLORIS VAN DER VEN



PASSION FOR EARLY CHINESE CERAMICS

The first piece of early Chinese terracotta that I handled was a dancing Tang horse. It was 1988 and I had just started to work at Vanderven with my aunt and uncle, who mainly dealt in Chinese porcelain from the Ming and Qing periods. At the time, early ceramics were gradually becoming more fashionable and commonplace in Europe and the United States. We were struck by the beauty and history of these early objects, and decide to develop the business to include early ceramics. It has now become an integral part of our collection, just as important as the porcelain.

Travelling to China and visiting the imperial tombs in Xian for the first time was a revelation. It made me realise how developed Chinese culture was, producing the most extraordinary and wonderful artefacts over thousands of years. From the Han dynasty onwards Chinese society was highly sophisticated and cultured, reflected in the burial objects of that time. The Han and Tang periods are my particular favourites. The Han dynasty for its timelessness and slightly primitive objects. The Tang because of the influx of foreign influences into China via the Silk Route and the idea that China went through a spectacular renaissance whilst Europe was in not even in the middle ages!

Early Chinese ceramics have been collected in Europe and America since the late 19th century. In 1901 Mr. Jacob Schiff donated funds to the American Museum of Natural History for research and acquisition in China. This task was entrusted to Dr. Berthold Laufer, who spend nearly three years (1901-1904) in China. The first peak of collecting early ceramics, was in the 1930's with great collections of Sir Percival David and George Eumorfopoulos (London), Walters and Rockefeller (USA). The two world wars, followed by the Chinese cultural revolution, brought the decline in the taste for early Chinese ceramics, which wasn't re-established until the mid 1980's. With the discovery of the terracotta army and China becoming more accessible again, the popularity of early ceramics increased once again. This is confirmed by the quality and variety of objects you see on display at international art fairs, major international museums, and specialist exhibitions related to early ceramics around the world. More recently, we have also seen a huge increase in the number of publications on Chinese art and the development and sharing of knowledge by the Chinese people themselves.

With this catalogue we would like to pass our passion for the beauty and charm of early Chinese ceramics and are sure that you will enjoy the objects as much as we do.

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A UNIVERSE FOR THE AFTERLIFE: CHINESE CERAMICS FROM NEOLITHIC TO SONG

BENEDETTA MOTTINO

Pottery objects in form of vessels, human figures, animals and architectural models, were incorporated in Chinese burials - within a complex of furnishing - aimed at sustaining the deceased in their post-mortem existence. This underscored their belief, that the dead could positively affect the life of the living, if provided with continuous care. The tomb objects functioned as analogues to their real life counterparts and were thought to bring about the needed benign effects. This way, the deceased ascended to and connected with heaven, where they could bestow favours and blessings sought by their living offspring. Spanning the period between the Neolithic and the Northern Song, the objects included in the present catalogue emphasise the important role of ceramic objects in documenting the developments in Chinese social practices and intellectual interests through the evolution of shapes and decoration.

POTTERY OBJECTS WERE
INCORPORATED IN CHINESE
BURIALS, AIMED AT SUSTAINING
THE DECEASED IN THEIR POST-
MORTEM EXISTENCE

During the Neolithic period (c. 10,000-2,000 BC), simple, low-fired earthenware vessels for food and drink, such as bowls, plates, cauldrons, stoves, pans, goblets and ewers, constituted the type of furnishing unearthed from pit burials. Fired in dug up kilns, these vessels were initially formed by stacking coils of clay into the desired shape and then smoothing the surfaces with paddles and scrapers. They were often painted with simple geometric and anthropomorphic motifs and thus appeared to reflect a rather restricted scope of the afterlife that focused only on the physical sustainment of the deceased.

In the Shang (c. 1600-1100 BC) and Zhou (c. 1100-256 BC) dynasties, vessels of greyish or black burnished earthenware - or high fired stoneware - coated with yellowish and green glaze, occurred in a small number and were mainly in imitation of bronze shapes. More usual were elaborate sets of bronze ritual vessels, which constituted the focus of the burials. They were interred together with a vast array of musical instruments, weapons, jewels, jade, lacquers and silks. Displaying status and performing rituals for the deceased ancestor, must have been thought to be a paramount necessity to the afterlife and reflected contemporary social trends. Both oracle bone inscriptions dating to the Shang dynasty and manuals on Zhou rituals, in fact, emphasise the importance of performing elaborate sacrificial performances as means to please the Heavenly forces, honour upright men and maintain order within society.

As time progressed, ideas concerning the afterlife developed towards making the burial closer to the content of life. Presumably, the living's increased



concern with an underworld bureaucracy that checked the possessions of the deceased, affected the evolution of the burial to a multi-chambered complex. These structures presented a miniature universe modelled after the occupant's understood qualities and beliefs. Within this new scheme, an earthly realm, the inhabitable context, was created on the lower register of the burial. Here, presumably, the deceased received the offerings by their living offspring so could ascend the heaven, which appears on the upper register of the tomb walls and ceiling.

Within this context, pottery appeared to gain an increasingly important role. Indeed, the mausoleum constructed for the First Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, in Shaanxi, may be considered the earliest precursor of these new burial trends. Despite the partial excavation of the burial site, to this date, the description provided of it by the Han historian, Sima Qian (c. 145-86 BC), refers to an underground palace filled with constellations in the heavens and the rivers of the world. In the few burial pits excavated so

far, the terracotta figures were the dominant type of furnishing; mainly in the form of approximately seven thousand, realistically rendered, life-size warriors, as well as carts, horses and officers, figures would seem to reflect the military nature of their owner, who had conquered vast territories and formed an empire.

In the Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AD), a variety of pottery figures made the burial chambers into a courtly estate, within its own cosmos represented by mythical Animals of the Four Directions and star maps. Here, figures of attendants, soldiers, musicians, domestic animals, furniture, vessels, models of granaries, wells and ponds, were carefully positioned in the various chambers. In conjunction with wall frescoes, they emulate the function of actual aboveground quarters such as kitchens, courtyards, ceremonial halls and private quarters. Often, the vessels and other daily utensils were decorated with celestial beings and clouds, presumably suggestive of the immortal lands where

IN THE HAN DYNASTY, A VARIETY OF POTTERY FIGURES MADE THE BURIAL CHAMBERS INTO A COURTLY ESTATE

the deceased hoped to ascend. Cold painted with the varying tones of red, pink, white, yellow and violet - or entirely coated with lead glazes - the pottery objects and figures of the Han period were fired in brick-built chambers.

The Six Dynasties (220-589 AD), appeared to have continued the burial trends of the Han period. However, the size of their burials as well as the quantity and quality of the furnishing decreased considerably. This was probably the result of the political disunion, due to the establishment of short lived Northern kingdoms by Central Asian invaders. Pottery figures occurring in large number in Northern burials, were mainly military in character. Finely modelled and painted grey earthenware, they represented footed and mounted soldiers and officials. They presumably reflected the identity of their foreign occupants and complemented the wall frescoes depicting officials and military figures parading towards the tomb occupants. It is possible that Buddhism - which the new foreign rulers were great patrons of - may have influenced the deceased's views towards the afterlife. The slenderness of the figures, in combination with the painted programs on their tomb walls, show close similarities with the bas-relief depictions of parades flanking the Buddha that decorated the Northern Wei and Northern Qi Buddhist caves.

In burials dating to the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD), glazed or unglazed pottery figurines and extravagantly shaped vessels were employed, in conjunction with personal ornaments of gold, silver, and other precious materials, which reflected the prosperity of the empire. At that time, the Tang capital city Chang'an (present-day Xian) was the

largest city on earth. This metropolis was linked by the Silk Route - which ran across the deserts of Central Asia - to most parts of the known world. Many pottery shapes were freely drawn from Western Asian and Middle Eastern examples including amphora, bird-headed ewers, rhyton cups. Exotic and new foreign decorative motifs included hunting scenes, floral medallions, garlands, swags, vines and Buddhist symbols. Figurines were produced in great quantities, despite various governmental attempts made to limit their number and size. Gracious figures of servants, courtiers and actors, female dancers, ladies engaging in leisurely pursuits and musicians, complemented the colourful wall frescoes. They presented a lavish courtly complex depicting frivolous moments of daily life, such as sport activities and other leisurely pursuits. They were often made in series from moulds, the baked earthenware was either glazed or covered with slip and painted, occasionally both. While the 7th Century figures are slender and high-waisted, those of the 8th Century are increasingly round-faced and full-bodied - reflecting a change in courtly fashion. The many international travellers and traders coming to Tang China is reflected in the representation of foreigners in the figures of this time: Central Asian grooms and Semitic merchants, and frightening tomb guardians (influenced by the Buddhist Heavenly guardians), often display the foreign caricatured features and jutting noses. In the late 7th and the 8th Century, Northern Chinese potters, working primarily at kilns at Tongchuan near Chang'an and at Gongxian in Henan province, developed the "three-colours" (sancai) glazing method. Objects were slipped and covered with a low-fired lead glaze tinted with copper or ferrous oxide in green, yellow, brown, and sometimes blue; the bright colours were allowed to mix or run naturally over the robust contour of these vessels creating appealing visual effects.

In burials dating to the Liao dynasty (925-1125 AD), founded in North China by the semi-nomadic Qidan tribes of Northeast Asia, the use of pottery was



mainly restricted to food and drink vessels. In their form and decoration, these objects reflect the same hybrid nature of the society, as the burials within which they were interred. Multi-chambered complexes recalling courtly environments, appearing to continue Han Chinese customs, were in fact constructed for the high-ranking members of this society. These structures, were adapted to foreign practices concerning the treatment of the bodies, which were either cremated or encased within a metal wire netting and adorned with precious jewels, crowns, boots and belts. In a similar way, cups, bowls, plates, spittoons, boxes, bottles and jars, based on typically Han Chinese prototypes. These were interred in together with typically Qidan-inspired shapes such as pilgrim flasks and long, tapering jars for storing fermented milk, and nomad-inspired objects such as horse fittings and leather goods. Made of high-fired stoneware or low-fired earthenware, these vessels were coated with either milky or celadon glazes, or lead, monochrome, glazes or in the sancai palette. Surely, these decorative solutions aimed at replicating Tang dynasty techniques, despite excavations showed that they were mainly manufactured by Liao kilns in present day Balinzuoqi and Chifeng, in Inner Mongolia, and in Beijing.



THE VARIETY OF OBJECTS AND FIGURES EMPHASISES THE VERSATILITY OF CLAY

By the time of the Song dynasty (960-1279 AD), the tomb layout was greatly reduced in size and the trend towards placing objects within it had nearly disappeared. Instead, the focus shifted on the elaborate and detailed brick relief replicas of building facades that served as framework to scenes of domestic interiors, bird and flowers compositions, theatrical, musical and folk performances and characters of religious and moral content, such as filial stories and immortal figures. Significant of popular derivation, the universe presented in these burials aimed at elevating the rank of the deceased in the afterlife through the presentation of an architectural compound that recalled the features of a temple. This way, the deceased received the worship by their offspring as if they were deities, so they could transform into deities and thus connect to Heaven, and able to assist their living offspring.

The variety of objects and figures emphasises the versatility of clay. The forms were adapted by each era, becoming unique representations of the afterlife as conceived by each of the different societies. Forming an analogical relation with daily forms, clay expressed the preoccupations of the people who created it and thus provides a precious source illuminating on social and ideological aspects which literary evidence often failed to record.

Dr. Benedetta Mottino

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从新石器时代至宋代中国陶烧看华人对于来世的宇宙观
莫蓓娜 (牛津大学考古学博士)

器皿、人像图画、动物或是建筑的陶烧模型常伴随著华人的墓葬文化，因为透过这种方式，子孙可以祈望亡者往生後升天，继续以另一种方式存在。这份目录力求涵盖自新石器时代至北宋年间随著社会变迁，陶烧品在样式上的主要变化及其意义。

从新石器时代(10,000-2,000 BC)的墓葬就已经发现简单形式的陶製锅碗瓢盆，这显示当时人们已经在献祭时会费心备置这些器皿，荣耀亡者於天国。随著时间递嬗，人们对于陪葬用献祭物品的看法也会顺应著时代改变，以求更体现他们对于生活的了解与生命的看法。透过这些器物，我们能了解不同时代人们对于死後世界的信仰看法。

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秦始皇地的陵墓构置，是这种体现当时人们对往生後世界看法的殡葬文化代表。从汉朝(206 BC-220 AD)开始，墓室里开始出现大量的侍从、士兵、乐师、牲畜、傢俱、器皿形状的陶烧，以及粮仓、水井、池塘之类的陶器模型，除了企图体现其亡者能有宫廷式生活的豪华气派外，还更添饰以星辰、四圣兽的象徵，将整个墓室呈现为一个小宇宙。

六朝(220-589 AD)开始，原来的陶烧陪葬品仍有士兵、官员和侍从，但已经可以见到当时开始普及的佛教元素慢慢参杂其中。而唐朝(618-907 AD)时候的墓葬，可见繁複多样的侍从、乐师以及其他国度人民形状的陶烧，彰显了唐帝国的繁荣与强盛。

辽代(925-1125 AD)的陶烧则以饮食器具为主，许多器皿更是契丹民族特有的形式。到了宋代(960-1279 AD)，陶烧陪葬器物不复使用，但墓室的墙壁却开始出现大量的陶烧原件，构筑出的富丽堂皇的仿木造建筑结构。当时的人们似乎企图利用这种方法，直接将祈望体现於墓室里的建筑装饰，认为直接把墓室佈置成想像中天堂里的生活居所，就能达到让先人升天的目的。

可见华人墓葬里的陶烧形象会随著时代而改变，独特的反映出不同时期社会文化对于来世的想像。



1. NEOLITHIC JAR

The large jar rises from a narrow and flat base, becoming gradually wider reaching its greatest girth slightly below the middle, where two loop handles are attached. The jar is a buff-orange colour, with the upper part of the body painted with dynamic designs of black and purple zoomorphic figures bearing four limbs with rudimentary fingers or paws.

This type of jar - probably employed to store grain - has been excavated from both burials and dwelling sites, therefore appearing to have served both a functional and a ritual purpose. Its ubiquity in the area with other storing and serving vessels, suggests that agriculture may have been an important foundation for this early society. The meaning of the primitive designs on the jar remains unexplained, though previous scholarship attempted to interpret it as abstract, natural creatures, or even shamans transforming during rituals to ward off evil. It has also been referred to as a frog motif.

The distribution across a large area (spreading east of Qinghai and west of Gansu of Machang) of these types of vessels, are clear indicators of interregional relations and homogeneous society. The excavated area around these pots indicate there were diversified burials for men and women. The former furnished with tools such as axes, adzes and chisels, the latter with items such as spinning wheels. This suggests a settled and advanced society characterised by a division in social roles.

Comparable examples can be found in the Metropolitan Museum (New York), Avery Brundage Collection (San Francisco), Meiyintang Collection, Rietberg Museum (Zurich) and the British Museum (London).



Literature:

- Krahl 1994, p. 30-31
- Krahl 2006, pl. 1042
- Lefebvre d'Argencé 1967, pl. III
- Li 1996, p. 60
- Montreal 1986, pl.3

Neolithic Jar

China, Gansu or Qinghai Province

Neolithic Period, Majiayao Culture Machang Phase (2350-2050 BC)

Height: 36 cm

TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

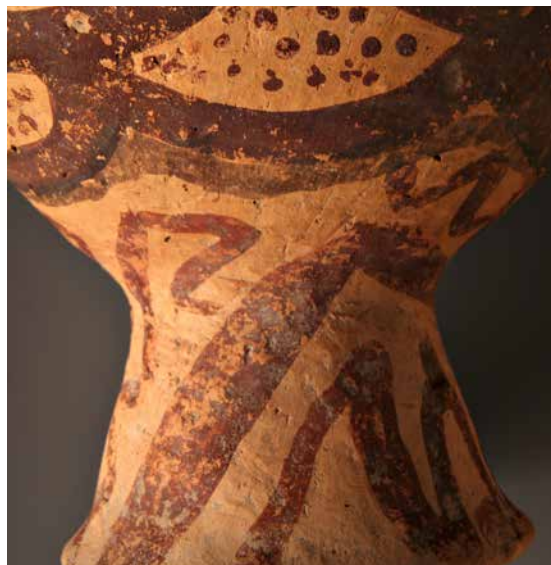
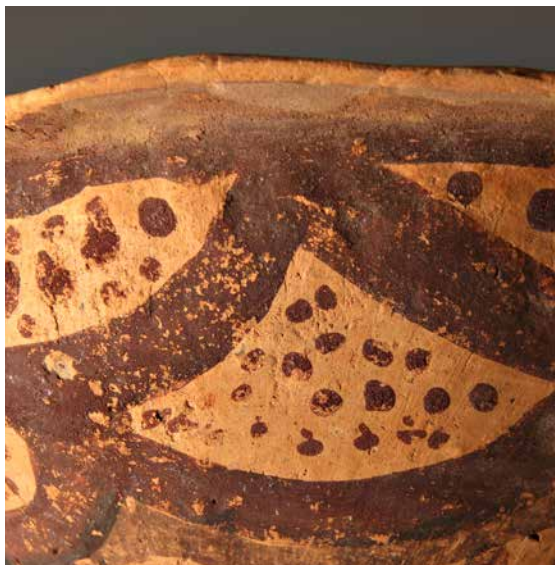
新石器时代 马家窑文化彩陶双耳罐

高：36 厘米





2. STEM BOWL



This rare example of a Neolithic bowl, with slightly flaring sides and a broad, splayed foot, is painted with bi-chrome red and black. The concentric triangular patterns and undulating lines alternating with dotted sequences. In design, this vessel shares close similarities with the forms and motifs excavated from the Yuanyangchi cemetery located in Jinchang district in the Eastern Hexi, Gansu. It is therefore possible that the bowl may have been a product of that area.

Similar bowls of this kind been excavated in local burials together with small serving jars and cups. Noticeably, the larger painted vases and urns, such as those in the Gansu and Qinghai, do not occur in this area. However ornaments and implements in form of knives, awls and needles, primarily made of bone, have been excavated in greater numbers. This could indicate that in the eastern Hexi Corridor, agriculture may not have been the primary form of economic subsistence among the local communities.

They could have had very different social, political and economic traditions to those in other areas of Neolithic settlement.

Literature

- Hung 2011
- Krahl 1994
- Krahl 2006, pl. 1029

Stem Bowl

China, Hexi Corridor
Neolithic period, Majiayao culture, Machang phase (2350-2050 BC)
Height: 12 cm - Diameter: 17 cm

新石器时代 仰韶文化杯
高：12 厘米





3. TRIPOD JAR



This low fired dark grey pottery jar, burnished to a glossy sheen, is a rare example dating to the Warring States period. Its globular form, has three horizontal bands around the upper half of the body and is raised on three cabriole legs. It has a shallow cover surmounted by a small loop handle.

The overall shape and decoration suggest that the jar may have been made from a bronze prototype of which no similar example has yet been found. Bronze vessel types had, from as early as the Shang period, been replicated in ceramics. As Chinese burials changed in structure and content to encompass more of life than any previous periods, so did the range of objects available for the afterlife. Ceramic was cheap and useful to make a wide variety of vessels, figures and model buildings. Only the elite could afford the more expensive of bronze vessels, and ceramics formed a good alternative, and was therefore used much more liberally.

The feet of the vessel are decorated, with the image of what appears to be a stylized bear. The same face, identified as that of a bear, can be seen in a set of four bronze weights dated to the Western Han exhibited by Eskenazi in 2000. It is therefore possible that this jar was produced towards the end of the Warring States period. As stated in the entry on the *lian* vessel in this catalogue, bears were associated with courage and strength. As a decorative motif, bears were thought of having originated in Han China. Later, in the Western Han period (206 BC - 9 AD), bears were associated with beliefs concerning immortality and frequently incorporated in depictions on the immortal islands appearing on vessels and in burials. The fact that the bear appears on this jar would seem to suggest a reconsideration on the origin of the bear

iconography and the beliefs associated with it. This jar, therefore, would appear to be an important visual document supplying lost information on religious beliefs such as they were held by the Warring States society.

Comparable vessel bearing bear motifs to the feet can be found in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (nr.EA1956.3100). A Han bronze *lian* with stylized bear decoration from J.T. Tai & Co Collection was sold by Christies in 2009. Similar grey pottery vessels from the Warring States period, after bronze examples can be found in the Avery Brundage Collection (San Francisco).

Literature

- Eskenazi 2000, p. 56-59
- Krahl 2006, pl. 1102
- Lefebvre d'Argencé 1967, pl. VII
- Rawson 1996, p.188-190

Tripod Jar

Warring States Period (475 - 221 BC)

Height: 39 cm - Diameter: 39 cm

TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

战国陶罐

高：39 厘米

直径：39 厘米









4. COCOON



The distinctively plump, ovoid form of this jar, of grey earthenware engraved with scratched lines, often occurs on vessels dating to the Warring States and the Western Han dynasty. Similar jars dating to the Han dynasty were decorated with drifting cloud-scroll motifs flanking diamond-shaped lozenges, evocative of the celestial realms of a Taoist immortal paradise. What is unusual about this vessel is its large size and that it does not have a footring.

Presumably the shape - evocative of a silkworm's cocoon - testifies to the importance of the silk industry. This had become a principal economic source in China from as early as the third millennium BC. Oracle bones dating to the Shang dynasties frequently depict silkworms and mulberry leaves. The *Spring and Autumn Annals*, refer to a 'dress of fine co-hemp' worn in summer by the kings. By the Warring States, silk weaving had greatly developed and textile workshop had expanded into various components for sections of manufacture. Silk, was produced in increasingly great quantities, as demand by the royal court increased. It was also traded to finance the prolonged warfare of the period. The *Qin Min Yao Shu* (Arts of the

People's Welfare) dating to the Warring States, mentions the careful selection of mulberry leaves to produce the best cloth. Textiles were excavated in great number in Warring States tombs in Hubei, showing great accuracy of embroidered patterns and the use of great quality of dyes. During the Han Dynasty, silk acquired a high status and became a valuable commodity. It was used to pay taxes as well as civil servants and was bestowed as a reward for outstanding services.

Just as in life, it is possible that in the burial the cocoon, as a symbol of wealth, may have provided the means for the physical sustainment of the deceased in their continued existence.

Comparable examples have been excavated from burials in Henan province and the Han Yangling Mausoleum, Shaanxi Province. Cocoons can be found in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York) and the Meiyintang Collection (Hong Kong).

Literature

Li 1996, p. 66-67

Langford 2009

Liu 2010

Cocoon

Western Han (206 BC - 25 AD)

Height: 53 cm - Width: 64 cm

TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

战国陶茧形壶

高：53 厘米

长：64 厘米



5. STICKMEN

Nude figures, such as these, would have originally been dressed in actual garments and interred in great number in imperial burials. They formed a household retinue for the deceased including attendants and soldiers. Similar figures were first discovered at the site of the mausoleum of Emperor Jing (r.157-141 BC) in the Han Yanglin Mausoleum Complex (Shaanxi) and later in excavated workshops. These finds revealed that the faces of these figures were individually moulded, the bodies painted in orange to simulate the skin colour and the hair and facial expressions with black pigment. In addition, their arms were made of wood, which decayed over time. It is possible that the practice of clothing nude figures may have been inherited from a southern practice in Chu state during the Eastern Zhou.

The large number of terracotta figures in Han royal burials appears to have marked a gradual decline in the practice of sacrificing human victims to the ancestors in China. A large number of slaves, were interred with the deceased in imperial tombs dating to the Shang and Zhou dynasties. Beginning from the Warring States period, figures made of wood, or other raw materials, gradually began to replace the sacrificial victims in the burials. Replacement was not just restricted to humans and animals, but also to various articles and wares. Recording the making of articles and wares for use in the tombs, the History of the Han dynasty clearly indicates that manufacture of figurines and other funeral objects, *mingqi*, 明器, had become a specialist trade.

Literature

Bonneux 2006, p. 72-74

Chang 1980

Taipei 2009, p. 84-102

Shanxi Sheng kaogu syanjiu suo 2001



Stickmen

Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD)

Height: 59.5 cm

西汉 灰陶加彩裸俑 (三件)

高: 59.5 厘米



6. OX

Standing four square, the ox (*niu*) would have been probably buried as part of a herd, contained inside a pen with other domesticated animals, suggesting that it may have been served as food. Oxen were very important animals in agriculture and thus critical to the farmer's success. They also played an important role for working the land, and thus became associated with fertility, spring and agriculture.

Confucius (551–479 BC) describes in the 'Book of Rites' (*lijì*) how the emperor should till furrows with an ox and plow as a spring ritual:

"On the first auspicious day of this month, the Son of Heaven conducts the rites and entertains God for a bumper harvest. He brings the plough personally, placing it between the guard and the driver, and commands the three dukes and nine princes to assist him in tilling the field. In this ceremony, the Son of Heaven ploughs three furrows, the three dukes plough five furrows, and the princes plough nine furrows. When the ritual is completed they return. The Son of Heaven invites the three dukes, nine princes, and all the high officials to a celebration banquet in the Da Qin Hall. This is called 'The feast of labor'."

In Chinese thought, the ox was also one of the Six Domestic Animals, referred to as *liuchu*. These also included the dog, pig, goat, horse and fowl. Appearing in literature dating from at least the Eastern Zhou periods, the welfare of the *liuchu*, 六畜, was interpreted as a reflection of a well ordered cosmos. Ensuring social order characterised the quality of an upright man in ancient China. Judging from the occurrence of the ox in Han burials, it was presumably an equally highly valued requirement for the afterlife of the tomb occupant. Comparable examples of dogs have been found in the Han dynasty royal mausoleum of Emperor Jing Di (r.157–141BC) as well as other burials in Shanxi,



Gansu, Henan and Hebei. some of these examples are part of the Ming City Wall Museum in Beijing and the Meiyingtang Collection, Hong Kong.

Literature

- Bonneux 2004, p.178–181
- Bonneux 2006, pl. 13
- Krahl 1994, p.74
- Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens 1982, p. 76
- Taipei 2009, p. 58 & 59

Ox

Western Han (206 BC – 25 AD)
Height: 38 cm - Length: 73 cm
TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

西汉陶牛像
高：38 厘米
长：73 厘米



7. STANDING HOUNDS

Standing four square, with ever alert ears, as if standing ready for their master's every command, these dogs are exceptionally realistic. They may have been deemed to serve a protective function with regards to the deceased and their post-mortem possessions.

Literary evidence relating to periods preceding the Han, such as the inscriptions on Shang dynasty oracle bones, refer to the *ning* 宁. This was a sacrifice involving the dismembering of a dog to placate the four winds or honour the four directions. The *Book of Odes*, *Shi Jing*, 诗经 originating from between the Shang (c.1600-1046 BC) and the Early Zhou period (c.1050-256 BC), describes a *nan*, 难, sacrifice involving the killing of a dog to drive away pestilence. Finally, according to the *ba*, 鞞, sacrifice, mentioned in the *Ceremonial Rites of the Zhou* dynasty, *Zhou Li*, 周礼, compiled in the Warring States period (475-221 BC), a dog was crushed under the wheels of the Emperor's chariot to ward off evil. It is possible that similar practices and beliefs, in which dogs were used to ward off evil, may have also been held by the later Han society. This may be reflected in the wary expression of these dogs.

Dogs were also greatly prized for their hunting abilities, as watchdogs and family companions. Chow dogs were also reared for food, throughout Southern China. In the later Han period dogs started appearing in greater frequency in tombs, this could be due to the fact that in this period the landed gentry lived on large estates which required more security.

It is possible that dogs may have also been associated with high rank and status during the Han dynasty, as there are elegant jade carvings in form of hounds dating from this period. Similar dogs also feature on the walls of high ranking tombs of the Tang dynasty.



Comparable examples of dogs have been found in the royal mausoleum of Emperor Jing Di (r.157-141 BC), in the Han Yangling tombs and are currently in the collection of the Shaanxi History Museum, Xian, Shaanxi (China).

Literature

- Bonneux 2004, p. 202-205
- Bonneux 2006, pl. 96
- Jacobson 2013, p. 72
- Rawson 2001
- Shanxi Sheng kaogu yanjiu suo, 2001
- Welch 2008, p. 118 & 119.
- Wolfram 1988
- Yang et al. 2005

Standing Hounds

Western Han (206 BC – 25 AD)
Height: 22 cm - Length: 33 cm
TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

西汉陶狗像 (一对)
高: 22 厘米
长: 33 厘米



8. LIAN

Generally with a lid, the *lian* 奩, was originally a wine vessel imitating a bronze prototype found in burials dating to the Warring States and Han dynasties. It rests on three small feet, each moulded as a crouching bear.

In the Han dynasty, these vessels were normally placed on a footed tray, holding a ladle, and frequently appeared in depictions of banqueting scenes in Han burials. Judging from the nature of its decorative motifs, it is possible that the vessel may have been involved in rituals aimed at protecting the deceased against evil in their journey to the afterlife. In the text of *Spring and Autumn Rituals*, the taotie masks were thought to harm hostile tribes and protect their owner. The bear, probably because of its bravery and strength, may have also fulfilled a similar protective function as the taotie and thus maximised the possibilities for a peaceful after-life for the tomb occupant.

Comparable examples of *lian* can be found in the Harvard Museum (USA), the Guimet Museum (Paris), and the Los Angeles County Museum (Los Angeles).

Literature

- Cologne 2008, pl. 20
- Jacobson 2013, p. 109
- Krahl 2006, pl. 1135
- Lau 1991, pl. 97
- Rawson 1996, p. 172-173
- Watson 1995, p. 89-95



Lian

Western Han (206 BC - 25 AD)

Height: 26,5 cm - Diameter: 36,5 cm

TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

汉陶奩

高：26.5 厘米

直径：36.5 厘米





9. PAINTED HORSE



Modelled with its ears pricked, its mouth open to reveal its teeth and its eyes open, this horse is painted in black, white and red pigments, showing the detail of the saddle cloth. Originally, the horse would have carried a soldier, part of a large military retinue of footed and mounted cavalry men that have frequently been excavated in Han tombs constructed in Shaanxi province for high ranking officials. These figures were smaller than life-size and would have been incorporated within a larger context of tomb furnishing. This could include pottery figures of attendants, musicians, animals, ritual and daily use vessels, incense burners, lamps and braziers. The choice of objects would seem to suggest that defence by means of performing military actions may have not been deemed a crucial necessity in the afterlife of the Han.

The Han horses and soldiers, cannot be compared with the impressive terracotta army found in the tomb of the great Qin Emperor, Shi Huang. Presumably, the life-size figures of his tomb army

may have reflected the Emperor's great preoccupation with defending himself against the armies of the Six States that he had massacred in life before unifying China.

In later Han burials, jade appears to have been more prized than pottery to defend the body against the physical decay and the possible aggressions by corrupting demons. The smaller size of the horses and warriors in the later Han burials, may have reflected a change in the hierarchical scale of concerns that preoccupied the tomb occupant. Hence, the miniature army of the Han may have just been intended to serve as personal possession indicating the high social status the deceased was hoped to carry post-mortem.

Similar soldiers have been excavated in the Han dynasty tomb of General Zhou Bo (d. 169 BC) and his son in present day Xianyang, Shaanxi.

Literature

- Bonneux 2006, pl. 99
- Krahl 2006, pl. 1144 & 1145
- Lau 1991, pl. 37
- Michaelson 1999, 44 & 45
- Rawson 2002

Painted Horse

Han Dynasty (206 BC - 220 AD)

Height: 57,5 cm - Length: 54 cm

TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

西汉加彩马像

高：57.5 厘米





10. KNEELING MUSICIAN

Kneeling with her robes draped in folds around the body, her long, black hair, gathered in a chignon, this grey earthenware female may have plucked a wood zither *qin* 琴 - a long string instrument - which may have decayed. Figures such as this one were representative of Han court taste, and depict specific type of individual by means of attributes such as dress, hairstyle and posture. Although, their basic role was to support the deceased in the afterlife, these earthenware attendants did not portray individual people.

Wooden zither have been found, as part of a small wind and string ensemble, in tomb coffin chambers from the Warring States period (5th-3rd Century BC). Because of their close proximity to the coffin, they may have been intended for the private use of the tomb occupant. Much grander orchestras, composed of 65 bronze bells, 32 stone chimes and a massive bronze drum, were placed in the central chamber of the burial complex, a space that may have functioned as a ceremonial courtyard for ritual activities. Burial chambers mimicked that of an aboveground residence, where the burial chamber suggested private quarter and other spaces serving as armouries and servants quarters. This tradition is continued in the Han period on a smaller scale than in the preceding eras. Ancient texts from this time stipulate that certain forms of music were perceived to be government institutions, and the aristocracy kept orchestras for exclusive use in court ceremonies and rites.

Judging from the occurrence of instruments, music appeared a fundamental necessity for the afterlife of the high ranking burials in Eastern Zhou and Han. Instruments mostly occurred in conjunction with ritual vessels. Music in ancient China often appears

to have accompanied the performance of rituals, carried out to restore social and political order. This was an external manifestation of one's the inner, aimed to touch the deepest chords of the soul, thus perfecting moral and spiritual power. It is therefore possible that in the burials, the performance of music was aimed at prompting a compassionate response from Heaven, ensuring a peaceful afterlife.

Comparable figures are included in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (36.12.11) and The Meiyintang Collection.

Literature

Asselbergs 1992, pl. 15
Furniss 2008
Jacobson 2013, p. 41
Krahl 2006, pl. 1143
So 2000

Kneeling Musician

Western Han Dynasty, 1st Century BC
Height: 35 cm - Width: 31 cm
TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

西汉 彩绘陶抚琴女俑
高：35 厘米
长：31 厘米





11. WINE FLASKS



Resting on a flared, rectangular foot, each side of these wine flasks has a moulded heart-shaped panel. These flasks may have been fitted with ring handles to both shoulders. They appear to have been modelled after the Eastern Zhou bronze flasks (*bian hu* 扁壶), which in turn were probably following leather prototypes.

By the Han Dynasty, the greater occurrence of drink vessels in burials, suggests that wine may have played an important role in the presumed after-life of the deceased. An inscription on a wine vessel in a Han tomb (Macheng, Hebei), expressing the wishes for a prosperous and long life, seem to reinforce such an assumption.

It is possible that Daoism - which gained greatly in popularity during the Han dynasty - and its preoccupation with the immortality of the soul, may have affected the increased importance of wine in the performance of ancestral rituals.

Historical evidence records the many offerings of wine to gods, as a gesture of hospitality and supplication, in Daoist rituals from as early as 141 BC. These were performed by the first organised Daoist schools, the Celestial Masters.

For comparable bronze examples dating to the Han dynasty, see the flask in the Suide County Museum (TD31), Shaanxi province, China. A pottery example was sold in the Breece collection by Christie's in 2004.

Literature

Montreal 1986, pl. 30

Tyrrell 2003, p. 183-184

Sullivan 1977

Wine Flasks

Western Han (206 BC - 25 AD)

Height: 34 & 36 cm

TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

汉陶扁壶 (一对)

高: 34, 36 厘米



12. COURT ATTENDANT

Standing with clasped hands, clothed in a delicate, flaring robe, with her hair concealed under what appears to be a hood or a scarf, this female figure is a very unusual. A small number of similar figures were excavated from Han burials in present-day Xian of which an example is exhibited in the Shaanxi History Museum.

The gentle contours of the lady, suggest that she may have been individually potted. Her shape contrasts with the usual more heavily potted figures, typical of the Han dynasty. Figures of attendants, in conjunction with soldiers, animals, agricultural machinery, carts, tools, weights, and measures, were interred in Han burials with the intent of providing the deceased with a home and their household items. Most probably, the increasing demand for such figures in the Han dynasty resulted from the decline in the trend of burying actual humans and animals, which was practiced by the preceding Shang and Zhou dynasties.

Xian and Luoyang were, at the time of the Han, the two major centres of production for burial figures. The archaeological discoveries conducted in the past decades, have revealed a diversity of regional sculptural styles during the Western Han, presumably, a consequence of the political subdivision continued from the Warring States. We may recall the female figures excavated from Han tombs in Sichuan province, much bulkier in appearance and adorned with jewels and flowers in their heads. Undoubtedly, this figure contributes to the study of the diversified women roles in Han China.

A similar figure is in the Meiyintang Collection and the Shaanxi Provincial Museum. An example was exhibited at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1987.



Literature

- Berger 1994, nr. 26, p. 47
Bonneux 2006, pl. 101
Caroselli 1987, p. 108
Krahl 1999, nr. 100, p. 168
Krahl 2006, pl. 1142
Liu 1991, p. 113
Lu 1992, p. 67
Sugimura 1966, pl. 4

Court Attendant

Western Han (206 BC – 25 AD)
Height: 32 cm
TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

西汉 灰陶加彩立女俑
高：32 厘米





13. MYTHICAL TREE

This rare green glazed ceramic model of a tree, sits in a round basin with sides pierced with geometric shapes. On the wide rim two figures are perched. The tree has numerous branches sprouting from a trunk in which a monkey and a bird sit. At the bottom of the basin, which probably represents a pond, sits a duck and a large dragonesque reptile resting peering over the edge of the basin.

Miniature trees, bearing various forms, frequently occurred in Han dynasty burials. Trees have always been connected with Daoist beliefs on immortality and the existence of imaginary lands, where immortals dwelt with trees bestowing immortality fruit. Trees such as this one brought the tomb occupant closer to the immortal world.

It is possible that the legend of the immortal archer Hou Yi and the Fusang tree *Fusangmu*, popular in China from as early as the Zhou period, may have influenced the iconography of this tree. The bird perched on the branches of the tree may then represent the one sunbird left by Hou Yi to shine in the sky, after having shot nine birds saving the world from drought.

Another myth records that the Fusang tree rose from the 'yellow springs' (*huang quan*), which run beneath the earth, with turtles, dragons and fish inhabiting its magical waters. It was believed that these cosmic trees represented the centre of the world uniting heaven, earth and the 'yellow springs'. The animals inhabiting these trees, could access heavenly realms and the birds may represent a path to eternity for the deceased.

The dragon here can be compared to that of a Southern tree, from the early Zhou period, excavated

from a sacrificial pit in Sanxingdui. It is possible that this tree may also have originated from Southern China, or that there existed some connection between the Eastern Han and their Zhou predecessors in Sichuan. Whatever the answer, it is clear that this tree provides valuable material illuminating on important socio-ideological elements which surviving literature failed to record.

Comparable trees have been excavated from Han tombs in Henan and are illustrated in the J.J. Lally catalogue in 2000. A similar example dating to the Zhou dynasty and featuring the dragon at the base of the tree can be viewed in the Sanxingdui Museum, Guanghan (Sichuan).

Literature

- Jacobson 2013, p. 95
- Lally 2000
- Rawson 1996, p. 97-99
- Shangraw 1993, pl. 32

Mythical Tree

China, Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD)

Height: 31cm - Diameter: 41cm

TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

後漢代綠釉陶扶桑

高：31 厘米

直徑：41 厘米







14. HILL CENSER

The green glazed vessel mimics an archaic ritual bronze vessel, *lian* 盃, which would have been used for warming wine. The rings clasped by taotie masks, carved to the sides, and the three bear-shaped feet, are all features found in the bronze counterpart. The imagery and the shape of the lid, however, are closely related to bronze mountain-shaped incense burners - *boshanlu* 博山爐 - that were also popular during the Han dynasty.

The mountains on these censers and hill jars, probably represented an immortal land where the deceased hoped to ascend after death. Mountains were highly regarded in China, particularly in relation with providing the abodes for the immortals and the closest connection with heaven, for their high peaks, formation of cavities, and ability to produce water, the life-giving element. It is possible that the combination of mountains, suggested on the lid by wave-like clouds weaving through the trees, and the wild creatures, occurring on the vessel body, may have aimed at presenting the mythical land of Penglai, invoked by Daoists and described in the “Classic of Mountains and Seas” (*Shanhaijing* 山海经) between the Warring States and Han periods.

Literature

- Erickson 1992, p.13
Jacobson 2013, p.108
Jenkins 2005, p.34-35
Lau 1991, pl. 89-91, 122-123
Lefebvre d'Argencé 1967, pl. X
Prodan 1960, pl.14
Watson 1995
Wenley 1948



Hill Censer

Eastern Han Dynasty (25 - 220)

Height: 23 cm - Diameter: 20,5 cm

汉绿釉陶奩

高：23 厘米

直径：20.5 厘米



15. GLAZED STOVE



This horseshoe-shaped miniature cooking stove, has a square opening in the front. This represents the fire chamber where the fuel was burned to heat the bowls and pans, which are placed on top. It is possible that the stove may have originated from Shanxi province, as similar examples have been excavated from Han burial sites in the area. Stoves were found in conjunction with images of wells, carriage sheds, pens for cattle, stables for horses and pigsties. There were also workers picking mulberry leaves, ploughing crop fields and hoeing vegetable patches. Living within a rural estate must have been an essential requirement for the afterlife of the deceased. Just as in life, where an increasing number of wealthy landowners established vast estates, when agriculture became a primary economic asset in Han China. The two cranes which decorate both sides of the stove front, can be associated with the spiritual realm. As birds with a long life span, cranes were linked with wisdom and immortality. Following the rise of Daoism in the Han dynasty, immortals were thought to ascend heaven atop a crane or a cloud. The cranes

shown on this stove could, therefore, be symbolic of the immortal land where the tomb occupant was hoped to travel to, aided by the care and worship received by their living offspring.

Literature

Bartholomew 2006, p. 178
Bischof 2007, pl. 102-107
Guo 2010
Rawson 2001
Taipei 2009, p. 154

Glazed Stove

China, Han Dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD)
Height: 19,5 cm - Length: 22 cm

汉褐釉陶炉灶
高：19.5 厘米
长：22 厘米



16. CIVIL OFFICIAL

This figure is made of grey earthenware and is decorated with bright pigments. It has an elongated body and wears a full jacket with sleeves falling into scalloped folds, voluminous trousers and a wedge shaped hat. His shallow, almost two-dimensional form, and gentle smile are closely inspired by the contemporary stylistic conventions seen in Buddhist icons.

The burial figures of the Northern Wei period, shared the same slender forms, almond shaped eyes and gentle facial expression as the figures decorating the Buddhist caves of Yungang, in northern Shanxi and cave 117 Maijishan, Tianshui, Gansu Province. The period of the Northern Wei dynasty was crucial to the development of Buddhist art in China. During this period Chinese artists began to experiment and produced new styles unique to the region. By the sixth century, approximately thirty thousand monasteries had been constructed in North China. The present figure would seem to suggest, that the presentation of a model universe within the Chinese burials could be easily adapted to accommodate the different foreign elements as they penetrated into China at different times.

Comparable examples can be viewed in the figure part of the Schloss Collection (New York), Morse Collection (New York) and the Guimet Museum (Paris).

Literature

- Bower 2002, pl. 6
- Fong 1991
- Jacobson 2013, p. 128
- Rastelli 2008, pl.17
- Rawson, 2000
- Thorpe & Bower 1982, pl. 24



Civil Official

Northern Wei Dynasty (ca. 386 - 534 AD)

Height: 33 cm

TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

北魏彩绘陶男俑

高：33 厘米





17. DANCING HORSE

Of pale buff earthenware, shown with right foreleg raised, this naturalistically modelled horse has its head turned to the left. The saddle is covered with a cloth gathered on the sides atop the mud guard and tassels decorate the steed's chest and rump.

It is possible that this horse may have represented one of the foreign dancing horses that performed for Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712-756 AD) on the occasion of his birthday, to wish him long life. According to Zhang Yue (667-731AD) - a leading court official - these heavenly horses came from west of the sea and danced with bent knees and holding cups in their mouths "...nimble prancing, they keep in step with the music ..." This horse was probably originally interred in a Tang dynasty high ranking burial. It was believed to bestow immortality on the occupant, just as it may have done to Xuanzong.

In 1972, similarly postured horses were excavated from the Tang tombs of Zhang Shigui, an attendant of emperor Taizong (r. 629-649 AD). Comparable examples can also be found in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Acc. No: 67.62.2), the British Museum, London and Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (LI1301.409)

Literature

Caroselli E. 1987, pl. 55.
Ebrey 1993, p. 123-4
Harrist & Bower 1997, nr.8
Jacobson 2013, p. 224
Kentucky 2000, pl. 144
Thorpe & Bower 1982, nr. 58



Dancing Horse

China, Tang dynasty (618 - 906)

Height: 50 cm - Length: 58 cm

TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

唐 陶彩绘马

高：50 厘米

长：58 厘米





18. COURT LADIES

These elegant ladies undoubtedly were probably of high rank at the Tang court, which is indicated by their full-bodied figure, considered fashionable at the time. They exemplify the increasingly sedentary and luxurious lifestyle of the Tang elite. Their hair is styled extravagantly: the right lady, with hair divided into two sections, twisted and fastened to the sides; the left, with a bun to the top. One of the figures even has red blush on her cheeks. They wear loose, flowing, gauzy dresses, with the hem reaching the floor, revealing the tips of their shoes.

In the Tang, it was common trend to beautify the women faces with extensive make-up. Rouged cheeks and lips, bold and thick eyebrows, and gaudy ornaments between her eyebrows and at her temples were in vogue at the time. A great number of styles for eyebrows appear to have been popular, ranging from willow-leaf to extremely broad and thick style. Blush, in particular, was applied to the cheeks, reaching the eyelids and ears, to resemble the hue set on from drinking wine, which was thought of adding further grace to women.

One of the figures bears traces of coloured pigments on the robe revealing flower designs. This may have represented the extravagant floral and foliate scrolls and floral medallions actually employed on Tang silk textiles. The flowers appearing on this lady's garment are similar to those on a fragment of a Tang dynasty silk in the British Museum (MAS856).

The right figure holds a bird, probably a parakeet or another exotic small bird. This suggests an interest in bird collecting, one of the many activities enjoyed by Tang society. Aristocratic gardens were stocked with exotic birds appreciated for their beauty and songs, and tropical birds from Indonesia and other parts of



Southeast Asia were sent as gifts to the Tang court. The grand gardens of the Tang emperors in Chang'an, for example, were filled with streams, lakes and bridges, wild animals, hounds, pens of exotic creatures and birds.

Comparable examples are found in many collections such as the Museum of Fine Art in Boston, Asian Art Museum (San Francisco), Tsui Museum of Art and the Meiyintang Collection.

Literature

- Benn 2002, p. 95-96
Holdsworth 1999, p.10
Hong Kong 1993, pl. 105
Jacobson 2013, p. 181
Krahl 2006, pl.1220 & 1222
Schafer 1963, p. 92-104

Court Ladies

China, Tang dynasty (700-800 AD)
Height: 38.5 & 44 cm
TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

唐 陶加彩宫仕女俑 (二件)
高: 38.5, 44 厘米





19. SADDLED HORSE

This large horse, with unusual red pigments, stands on a rectangular base. Its long striding legs, pricked ears, wavy forelock and flowing saddle cloth, all suggest a horse in motion. In the Tang period, pottery models of horses were produced in large quantities, but the size and amount allowed in burials were regulated by law. Each part of the horse was individually moulded and then assembled with slip. The facial features were individually modelled by hand, giving each piece its own character. The whole would be covered in a white slip and cold painted in coloured pigments. The frequency and exceptional sculptural quality of the pottery horses found in Tang burials, testifies to the importance attributed to the animal by contemporary society. At this time, pottery figures of horses were in great demand and during this period their modelling became increasingly natural and realistic.

Han general and horse expert Ma Yuan (14 BC - 49 AD) understood their importance to Chinese society and said: "Horses are the foundation of military power, the great resources of the state but, should this falter, the state will fall". Horses were considered the reward for military invasions as well as the foundation of imperial solidity. Thoroughbred horses were traded with neighbouring Arab nations for silk from as early as the Han dynasty, gradually replacing the more sturdy steppe ponies indigenous to parts of China.

A sign of status and wealth, only the nobility and the imperial household were allowed to ride horses. In 636, Emperor Taizong (r. 599-649 AD) ordered stone images of his six favourite chargers, chosen from military victories that brought him to power. These stone reliefs were to destined for his Empress, as well as his own necropolis near Chang'an. He even named and composed a laudatory poem for each of these horses.

Horses were also employed in recreational activities involving dancing, polo and hunting - common themes also seen in wall frescoes and paintings. Even the women of the Tang court were known to hunt and play polo. Galloping horses involved in the game of polo graced the tomb walls of Prince Zhang Guai (654-684) and a military parades including horses were depicted on the tomb walls of Princess Yongtai (684-701) and Yide (682-701) in Xian (Shaanxi Province).

A similar horse to the present one was excavated in 1971 from the tomb of Prince Yide (Qian county, Shaanxi province). It was included in the exhibition, *The Quest for Eternity, Chinese Ceramic Sculptures from the People's Republic of China* (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1987).

Literature

Caroselli 1997, pl. 66, p. 133
Cologne 2008, pl.12 - 14
Harrist & Bower 1997
Jacobson 2013, p. 232
Kentucky 2000 p.46

Saddled Horse

Tang Dynasty, 8th century
Height: 88 cm - Length: 83 cm
TL-Tested Oxford, UK.

唐 陶彩绘马
高：88 厘米
长：83 厘米









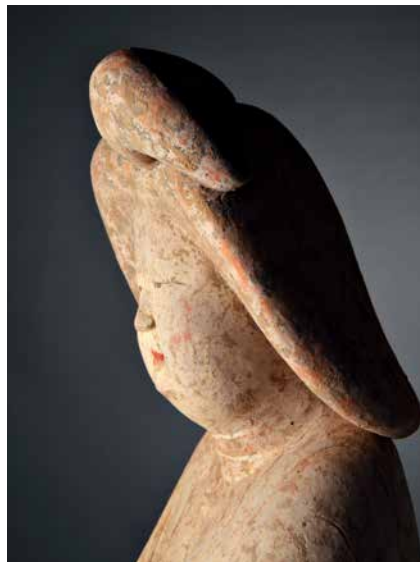
20. COURT GENTLEMAN & LADY



Naturalistically rendered, the elegant lady wears a loose gown with long sleeves that hide her clasped hands; Her elaborate coiffure, with hair piled up toward the left side, presumably reflected the fashion of the time. The traces of the colourful pigments, still visible on the robe, may have depicted the typical, tie-dye, or brocade patterns, of Tang luxury silk garments.

The man stands with his weight slightly forward, his head turned slightly to the right, his hair is gathered into a bun and hidden under a turban on top of the head. He wears a long, soft wide sleeved, belted tunic and pointy shoes.

The plumpness of the figures, often found in pottery figures and tomb frescoes dating from the 8th century, may have been the result of a great impact played by the full-figured concubines of Emperor Xuanzong (r. 713-756). It may be more probable, that the sedentary lifestyle and the greater availability



and variety of food delicacies, imported from the neighboring countries, determined an increase in weight among members of the society. “There is nothing that cannot be eaten”, an eight century general declared, clearly suggesting a great interest in food at the time. Golden peaches from Samarkand graced the tables of the emperors and his favourites;

Court Gentleman & Lady

Tang dynasty, 8th century

Height: 77,5 & 78 cm

TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

唐 陶加彩宮仕俑 (二件)

高: 77.5, 78 厘米





pistachios, imported from Persia, started to be grown in the Southeast by the 9th century. The best pine seed and ginseng roots originated from Korea and mangoes were imported from Southeast Asia. The emperor hosted great feasts for the members of his household, involving several meal supervisors and cooks managing the delicacies sent to the court as tribute. A record mentions that in 644, 768 and 826 the court feasted thousands of officers and women of the palace and members of the imperial family.

Comparable figures are found in the collection of leading museums around the world, such as the British Museum (London), the Ashmolean Museum (Oxford), the Metropolitan Museum (New York) and the Victoria and Albert Museum (London).

Literature

- Benn 2004, p. 119-144
- Bower 2002, pl. 34 & 35
- Holdsworth 1999
- Hong Kong 1993, pl. 108 & 109
- Mater 2011, p. 66-71





21. CAMELS WITH FOREIGN RIDERS

With the neck turned and the head rearing back with mouth open in a bray, the animals appear to be walking. Carrying their riders between the humps, they are covered with orange and red pigments and are rendered with extraordinary realism. Bactrian Camels were not indigenous to China, but imported from Turkestan and Mongolia. They were the essential means of transportation for merchants wishing to transact affairs between China and the oasis cities of Central Asia, Samarkand, Syria and Persia. Enduring hot and cold temperatures, camels could travel across the forbidding deserts and the high mountain ranges that extend west from China into Central Asia over the Silk Road trading routes. They could carry 160-450 kg of load and travel up to 50 km in a day. Depending on how hard they worked, they could go for 4-9 days without water and slightly longer without food. Camels were therefore considered a very important and valuable asset, and were a sign of great wealth.

The camels, known as the ships of the dessert, often had foreign grooms to accompany them on their journey and are frequently depicted with them. Here the grooms are wearing long-sleeved tunics (*hufu*) - a typical form of dress of the nomads to the north west of China - and sturdy black boots. Their fists are clenched in the act of controlling the reins. The frequent occurrence of non-Chinese elements in the Tang burials, reflected the great emphasis attributed to foreign cultures as important components of the life of contemporary society.

The trade in China during the Tang Dynasty was truly phenomenal. They exported silks, bamboo and lacquer ware and imported perfumes, horses and jewels. Chang'an was the capital of this thriving Empire.



Camels with Foreign Riders

Tang Dynasty (618-906 AD)

Height: 98,5 cm - Width: 33 cm - Length: 75 cm

TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

唐陶加彩骆驼骑俑 (一对)

高: 98.5 厘米

长: 75 厘米

宽: 33 厘米









There were two great markets in the city—the Eastern Market and the Western Market— filled with shops and places to eat and drink tea, a favoured activity of the Tang court. The recent excavation of thirty-seven separate tax receipts, recording around 600 payments made in a year at a tax office outside Turfan (Xinjiang), testifies to the fast moving pace of trading activities along the Silk Road.

Through most of the Tang dynasty, the capital cities of Chang’an and Luoyang were cosmopolitan centres. Here men and women of different races and religions coexisted in relative freedom. The all embracing attitude adopted by Tang Dynasty Emperor Taizong, facilitated the cultural exchanges between the Han Chinese and the foreigners. Travellers included Songdians, Turks, Uighurs, Arabs, Mongols, Persians and Indians. Not only were goods exchanged between East and West, but also was religious tolerance towards the professed religions of the Muslims, Nestorians, Christians, Zoroastrians and Buddhists.

Comparable camels were included in Schloss’ 1969 exhibition, *Foreigners in Ancient Chinese Art* (New York) and in the 1987 exhibition, *The Quest for Eternity* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Literature

- Caroselli 1987, p. 65 & 62
- Cologne 2008, pl. 11 & 20
- Hansen 2005, p. 283-293
- Jacobson 2013, p. 239 & 240
- Knauer 1998, pl. 46a
- Mater 2011, p. 86-92
- Michaelson 1999, p.79-89
- Schloss 1969, nr. 1, 2, 5, 9
- Thorpe & Bower 1982, nr. 45





22. FOREIGN DANCER

Sturdily modelled in dark grey pottery, this figure has a wide face with high cheekbones, her hair gathered in double braids behind the ears. With her plump face and intricate hairdo, the figure appears foreign, possibly originating from the Eastern neighbouring regions of China.

Dressed in long, flowing trousers and a small blouse, she looks very similar to the court dancers depicted on the walls of high ranking, Tang dynasty burials. Holding a long scarf with both hands, she appears to perform the much celebrated whirling dance, whose overpowering enchantment often captivated many nobles and officials.

Because music enjoyed such a great popularity at the Tang court, a special section was set up to train both Chinese and foreign female entertainers including Koreans and Indians. Tributes in form of dancing and singing troupes were sometimes presented to the Chinese court from Persian and Central Asian countries. Songs and dances from the Western regions gradually blended within the Han Chinese culture during the Tang dynasty, forming an essential aspect of performances.

Comparable foreigners can be found in the Metropolitan Museum (New York); similarly dressed dancers decorate the tomb walls of Tang governors Li Zhen (d.656 AD) and Zhishi Fengjie (d.658 AD) in Shaanxi province.

Literature

Michaelson 1999, p. 84-85

Mahler 1959, p. 148.



Foreign Dancer

Tang Dynasty (618-906 AD)

Height: 34 cm

TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

唐 陶女舞俑

高：34 厘米





23. FOREIGN RIDER



Modelled as if in a striding motion - with tail cropped and bound - this realistically rendered horse carries a foreign male rider with clenched fists gazing unwaveringly ahead. The group embodies the great spirit of mobility and multi-culturalism that characterized the Tang dynasty. Strong horses were imported into China from the north-western neighbouring regions of Karashar and Kutha. They were essential for travel and the transportation of goods, especially as demand for commerce increased with the flourishing of the Silk Road.

Foreigners were essential for their supply of fine steeds. The foreign population of the Tang capital, Chang'an, was mostly male and included Persians, Turks, Uighurs, Sogdians, Xianbei, Tibetans, Chams, Khmers, Javanese, and Singhalese. Many foreigners were travelling traders and did not live in China; others lived there permanently. Most of them adopted Chinese manners and habits but were subject to their native laws if they committed a crime

against their own countrymen. Inter-marriage with Chinese women was allowed, but they could not take their wives back to their native countries.

Generally, Chinese and foreigners interacted peacefully throughout the Tang period until, in the ninth century, the Uighur traders started conflicts with Chinese. As a result, public resentment started to rise and laws were passed enforcing the foreigners to wear their own costume and prohibiting them from marrying Chinese women. Eventually, in 845, all private intercourse with foreigners and all foreign religions were banned.

Comparable horse and rider group can be found in the major museum collections around the world, such as, for example, in the Metropolitan Museum, New York (54.169), the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (CIRC.359-1925).

Literature

- Bower 2002, pl. 37
- Jacobson 2013, p. 215
- Mahler 1959, pl. XVIII
- Medley 1981, p. 54 pl. 44
- Prodan 1960, pl. XX1

Foreign Rider

Height: 40 cm - Length: 35 cm

TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

唐 陶加彩马骑俑

高：40.5 厘米

长：35 厘米





24. LARGE TOMB GUARDIAN



Garbed in full, multi-layered armour, decorated with floral designs in cold-painted pigments and gold leaf, the bulging eyed warrior wears a phoenix over his helmet. This mythological bird, consumes itself in fire and arises again from ashes, and therefore symbolizes rebirth. In an act of martial art - suggested by the posture of his arms and open hands - he subdues two anguished demons, symbolic of evil, pressing them against a rocky ledge.

Similar grimacing figures flanked the entrance of Tang Dynasty tombs, or burial chambers, of high ranking members of society. Their caricatured foreign traits, would seem to underscore a connection between the barbarian physiognomy and supernatural potency. This combination, can already be seen on guardians of burials dating from the Han Dynasty. By the Tang era, appearance also seems to have been influenced by the popularity of Buddhism. Guardians often display striking similarities

with the iconography of the Buddhist protective deities - Lokapala - that guarded the entrance gate to Buddhist halls and caves aboveground. It is possible that Buddhism influenced contemporary Chinese views on afterlife. However, it may also have just provided a convenient frightening likeness for the tomb guardians, fulfilling Tang society requirements.

Large Tomb Guardian

China, Tang Dynasty (618 - 907 AD)

Height: 180 cm

TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

唐陶加彩天王

高：180 厘米





The use of exaggerated barbarian features: large rolling eyes, frowning eyebrows, and grotesque noses, may have reflected a growing social awareness of the powers and abilities associated with barbarian people, as the Tang empire became increasingly cosmopolitan with a great influx of foreigners. In reinforcement to this assumption, contemporary writers frequently portray barbarian monks exorcising evil spirits, ending droughts, and curing illnesses. Some of these foreigners, were able to gain a high position within the Tang court, partly because of their claimed ability to protect the dynasty itself.

Similar tomb guardians were excavated from the tombs of Prince Zhanghuai (dated to 711 AD). A number can be found in museum collections, but none are as substantial as this example. Comparable figures are in Musée Guimet (Paris), The Avery Brundage Collection (San Francisco), Dallas Museum of Art (Texas) and Metropolitan Museum (New York). A similar figure in stone is in the Shanghai Museum collection. A very rare pair of gilt-bronze tomb guardians were found at Baoji (Shaanxi Province) and exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum (New York) in 2005.



Literature

- Abramson 2008
- Bower 2002, pl. 54 & 55
- Fong 1991
- Hong Kong 1993, p. 113
- Huo 2008, pl. 33 a & b.
- Lefebvre d'Argencé 1967, pl. XXI
- New York 2005, pl. 230 & 231
- Prodan 1960, pl. 97
- Rastelli 2008, pl. 65
- Valenstein 1989







25. SANCAI GROOM



The figure embodies one of the many non-Han Chinese of the Tang period - possibly a minority of Altaic Turks - who lived and travelled in China during this period. He is standing with his hands raised, as if holding the reins to lead a camel or a horse. He wears a belted outer jacket of Persian origin, glazed in amber colour, bearing narrow sleeves and green-glazed left lapel.

To create these colourful effects, tri-colour sancai, glazes, were applied to the fired earthenware body of the figure before the entire piece was fired a second time. During this subsequent firing the glazes melted and created a smooth, glass-like surface on the finished piece. The limited occurrence of the sancai glazed figures - including animals, humans, and vessels - in burials belonging to imperial family members and the elite, suggest that these items enjoyed great prestige at that time.

Foreign servants feature prominently in Tang burials, especially in the guise of grooms or camel trainers. They often took residency in China and worked as government emissaries, jewellery makers or shop owners. Due to the great presence of foreigners in China, the government allowed for some offices to be opened specifically to assist foreign visitors with translation and other needs.

Foreign grooms can be found in the Morse Collection (New York) and the Meiyintang Collection.

Literature

Li 1998, p. 156-157

Liu 1991, p. 183

Mahler 1959, pl. XVIII

Mater 2011, p.37-46

Michaelson 1999, 86-86

Thorp & Bower 1982, pl. 39

Sancai Groom

Tang Dynasty, late 7th-early 8th

Height: 59, 5 cm

TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

唐三彩牵马俑

高：59,5 厘米





26. PILGRIM FLASK

Featuring a strap hole and a lid, the form of this vessel is also known as cockscomb pot, *jiguanhu* 鸡冠壶, or horse-stirrup pot, *madenghu* 马镫壶. The shape originates from the leather satchel-like containers employed by early Qidan people to carry liquids such as water, milk and wine. This form appears to have originated in present-day Chifeng, Inner Mongolia, as early as the fourth century and has been excavated mainly from graves belonging to members of the Qidan aristocracy. The simulated holes for attachment of a carrying strap and the raised stitched-like decoration and rivets are typical features occurring on the earliest ceramic versions of this form. With time, a variant form of the bottle, featuring a loop-handles, and thus more appropriate for a settled life, evolved from the primitive form. This reflected the increased adoption of a sedentary life by the Qidan, following their contacts with their Han Chinese neighbours.

Comparable examples have been unearthed from high-ranking tombs in Liaoning and Inner Mongolia and can also be found in notable Chinese collections such as the Mengdiexuan, Xiwenguo Zhai and Jiurutang (Hong Kong). The Meiyintang Collection in the Rietberg Museum (Zurich) and the Avery Brudage Collection (San Francisco).

Literature

Eisenhofer-Halim 1996
Krahl 2006, pl. 1320 & 1321
Lefebvre d'Argencé 1967, pl. XXVII
Shanghai Museum 2001
So 2004



Pilgrim Flasks

China, Liao Dynasty (907-1125)

Height: 24 cm

辽棕釉皮囊壶

高：24 厘米





27. DOOR PANEL

Finely carved, with designs of pomegranates and children, this tile mimicked the lower panel of lattice door-leaves, that were frequently carved on the walls of Northern Song tombs. These types of panels were produced in wooden moulds, then individually finished by hand, fired and cold decorated with light pigments. They formed part of an elaborate decoration scheme – in relief – aimed at imitating the facade of a high ranking building. A small replica of a courtyard house, was presented to the tomb occupant and decorated with necessities that elevated their rank and comforted them in the afterlife. Flowers, children and animals, also underscored auspicious symbolism through their intrinsic qualities or homophonic traits in the Chinese language. They thus conveyed the wishes sought by the living as they hoped could be brought about by their deceased ancestors in their newly elevated status, equal to that of a deity.

On account of the multitude of their seeds, pomegranates, *shiliu* 石榴, in conjunction with children, reinforced the wishes for many sons. They frequently appeared in Song burials in addition to peonies, homophone with *fugui* 富贵 meaning happiness and high rank, and lotuses, homophone with *he* 和 meaning harmony. Conveying the living's requests for immediate needs, these images enable a parallel with popular religious practices, linking the devotees to the deity in popular culture. Historical sources record that, during the Northern Song period, the common folk increasingly turned to the gods for their requests of auspicious wishes relating to daily needs and decorated the temples with symbolic images underscoring these wishes. Furthermore, historical sources relating to the Northern Song, mention the proliferation of auspicious prints that were pasted on the walls of

people's houses, presumably in the belief that the blessings would be propitiated by the gods worshipped in the household.

Expressing wishes relating to male progeny, therefore, the present tile is a testament illuminating important cultural values as they were held in Northern Song China.

Carved panels such as the present one are very rarely found, even in Museum collections. A comparable panel from a different period, is included in the collection of the British Museum (London) and replicas of genuine panels dating to the Northern Song are exhibited in the Shanxi History Museum in Taiyuan (Shanxi province).

Literature

- Bai 1999, 57-72
 Bickford 2005, p. 349-371.
 Bickford 1997, p. 1-20
 Bickford 1999, p. 127-158
 Hansen 1995, p. 151-152.
 Johnston 1978
 Lust 1996, p. 1-22
 Mottino 2009, p. 95-102
 Vainker 1991, pl. 120
 Zhang 1983
 Zhengzhou shi wenwu kaogu yanjiu suo 2004

Door Panel

China, Northern Song Dynasty (960-1125)

Height: 29.5cm - Width: 26cm

TL-tested by Oxford, U.K.

北宋 石榴孩子画像砖

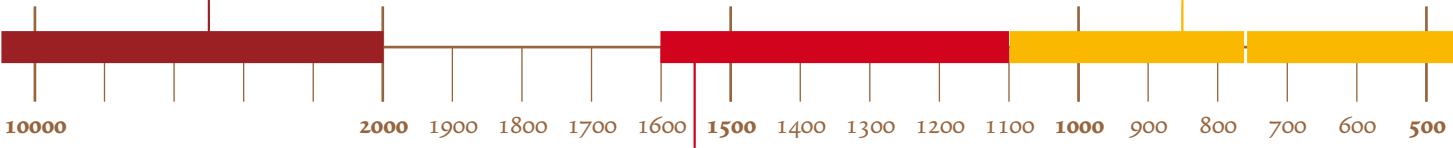
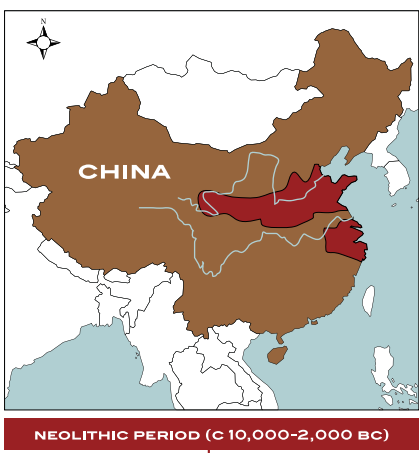
高：29.5 厘米

长：26 厘米



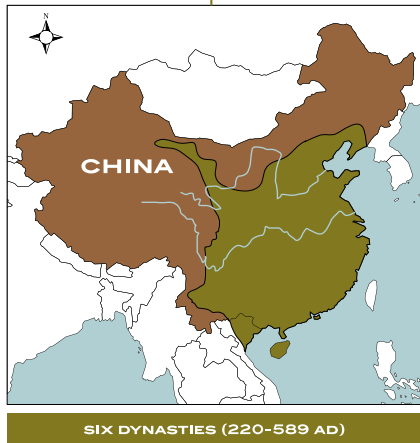
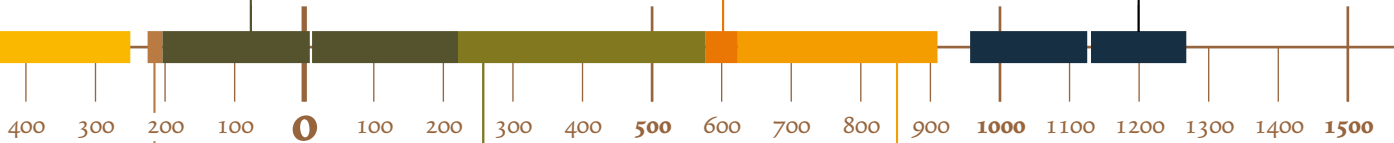
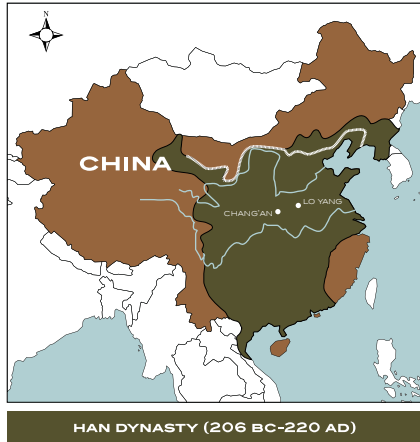


CHINESE DYNASTY TIMELINE



- NEOLITHIC PERIOD C. 10,000-2,000 BC
- XIA DYNASTY C. 2100-C. 1600 BC
- SHANG DYNASTY C. 1600-C. 1100 BC
- ZHOU DYNASTY C. 1100-256 BC
- WESTERN ZHOU
- EASTERN ZHOU
- SPRING AND AUTUMN
- WARRING STATES
- QIN DYNASTY 221-206 BC
- HAN DYNASTY 206 BC-220 AD
- WESTERN HAN
- XIN DYNASTY
- EASTERN HAN
- SIX DYNASTIES 220-589 AD
- WEI
- SHU
- WU
- WESTERN JIN
- EASTERN JIN
- SOUTHERN & NORTHERN DYNASTIES
- SUI DYNASTY 581-618 AD
- TANG DYNASTY 618-907 AD
- SECOND ZHOU
- LIAO DYNASTY 907-1125 AD
- SONG DYNASTY 960-1279 AD
- NORTHERN SONG
- SOUTHERN SONG







AUTHENTICATING

EARLY CHINESE POTTERY

Technically Chinese pottery can be dated with a Thermoluminescence sample test. When this ceramic sample is heated, it glows with a faint blue light, known as thermo luminescence or TL. During its lifetime pottery absorbs radiation from its environment and it is this which creates thermo luminescence. The older the pottery, the more radiation it has absorbed and the brighter the pottery sample glows. By measuring the TL, the amount of radiation has been absorbed, an approximate age of the pottery can be calculated.

Before 1997, we considered a TL-test to be an ultimate judge for dating an early pottery object, guaranteeing the age of the artefact. However, when Hong Kong became a special administrative region of China in 1997, the flow of goods from mainland China started to increase. The Chinese copy industry soon discovered the lucrative antique pottery market, resulting in a huge influx of high quality fakes fabricated from old material, which can override the TL-test.

Currently we consider the TL-test an excellent initial screening, a support in confirming the date of a piece. We combine this information with a trained eye and specialist expertise in this field. Together this leads to a solid authentication based on a balanced combination science and understanding. I consider the familiarity of the market in early ceramics before and after 1997 as particularly important in judging an item. This is augmented with many years of experience and continuously honing our knowledge by visiting international museums, exhibitions and private collections, in the West as well as Asia.

Our advice would therefore be to always seek a reliable, public dealer with long term international experience and knowledge.

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