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Half-title page: Fu Shan (1607–1684/5), *Poem in Cursive Script*. Ming–Qing. Hanging scroll. Shanghai Museum

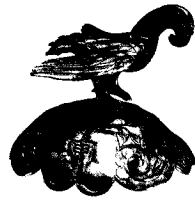
Frontispiece: Attributed to Han Gan, *Night-shining White*. Tang, 8th century CE. Handscroll. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Title page: Kneeling bowman. Qin, c. 210 BCE. Earthenware. Museum of Qin Figures and Horses, Lintong



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3 THE LATE BRONZE AGE: EASTERN ZHOU

PROTOHISTORIC CULTURES created in the North and Northwest macroregions became the foundation for historic cultures of the Eastern Zhou period (770–256 BCE). This period takes its name from a watershed event: the displacement of the royal Zhou capital from west (the Wei River valley, modern Shaanxi) to east (Luoyang, modern Henan). The removal of the capital resulted in the temporary loss of the Zhou heartland to a non-Zhou people, the Quan Rong, who had lived on the borders and whose depredations had become increasingly bold and costly. By shifting his center of rule to the ancient secondary capital of Luoyang, the Zhou king Ping Wang and his advisors hoped to create a more secure realm. In fact, this shift also signaled the rise of powerful regional lords who eventually took the privileges and even the title of “king” (*wang*) for themselves. They practiced *de facto* sovereignty over their domains while maintaining a semblance of their obligations to the Zhou Son of Heaven. Later historians have subdivided Eastern Zhou into two periods: the “Spring and Autumn” period (roughly 770–450 BCE) and the “Warring States” period (roughly 450–221 BCE). Both terms derive from texts. The so-called *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chun qiu*), traditionally attributed to Confucius, records events at the court of Lu. The *Intrigues (or Strategems) of the Warring States* (*Zhan guo ce*), on the other hand, is a collection of anecdotes emphasizing the persuasive arguments of court advisors during that era of great turmoil.

The royal Zhou domain never exceeded a thin strip of land bordering the capital. The domains of the great regional powers, however, grew steadily at the expense of weaker states. As these regional powers became stronger economically and politically, they spread the ancient culture of the Zhou over an ever wider territory. Modeling their states on the royal Zhou court and their rituals on the royal Zhou rites, they came to dominate much of the North, Northwest, Middle Yangzi, and Lower Yangzi macroregions by the fifth century BCE. This expanded area became the crucible in which a common culture was alloyed. Gradually the strong states forged the apparatus that would be necessary for imperial unification under the Qin during the third century BCE (see chapter 4).

STATE AND SOCIETY

The lords who ruled the territories of eighth-century BCE China were members of a hereditary aristocracy, the scions of branches of the royal Zhou lineage. Their birthright to rule was unchallenged, even if their separate ambitions frequently led to diplomatic and military maneuvers against one another. Serving these lords were high-ranking ministers (*qing* and *daifu*), also hereditary elites. At a lower level were men of warrior (*shi*) status. Over the course of the period, the rise of ministers and warriors changed the social and political structure of Zhou society. Noble

**3-1 Standing warrior
(support from chime)**
Eastern Zhou (state of Chu),
c. 433 BCE. Bronze, height
37¾" (96 cm). Tomb of
Marquis Yi, Suizhou, Hubei.
Hubei Museum, Wuhan

Writing Tools and Scripts

The earliest extensive evidence for brush writing dates from the Warring States period, as do the oldest writing implements. Oracle-bone graphs and a few specimens of actual writing on shell and stone indicate that pliant brushes were already used in Shang times. Hair brush tips affixed to wooden or bamboo tubes are known from several late Zhou burials. The brushes recovered archaeologically do not differ in principle from writing brushes used continuously until modern times. The flexible tip can carry a considerable load of fluid ink or pigment and is sufficiently pliable to form strokes of any shape or thickness. Cakes of carbon black ink are also known, along with knives and other tools in a scribe's writing kit. Specimens of Warring States writing run the gamut from laboriously rendered graphs with elaborate flourishes to rapidly brushed, unembellished forms.

Specimens of brush writing on stone, wood, bamboo, and silk survive in some numbers. Many burials in the Middle Yangzi macroregion hold bundles of bamboo slips, originally tied together as rolls. While their silk ties often have not survived, notches cut into the slips clearly indicate their position. These rolls have texts written on the smooth yellow inner surface of the bamboo, which was cut and trimmed with knives. Slips range in size from 4 to 32 inches (10–80 cm). Although writings on strips are not punctuated, they are often formatted as blocks of text with top and bottom margins or indentations to divide text. Many bamboo rolls are inventories of the goods interred at the time of burial, but other known texts include prognostications, legal documents, and almanacs.

Regional script variants flourished, as did stylized scripts for special purposes.

The "Six Scripts" mentioned by some ancient texts correspond to the writing of the major powers of the Warring States period (Yan, Qi, Chu, and the three states created by the dissolution of Jin—Han, Wei, and Zhao). The modern Chinese scholar Li Xueqin believes that there were two major traditions, the eastern "Six Scripts" and a western tradition exemplified by the writing of Qin. The best example of writing in the area of Qin are the famous "Stone Drums" (FIG. 3-2), ten cylindrical granite boulders discovered during Tang times. The texts cut into these stones, akin to poetry found in the *Book of Songs*, are the oldest extant examples of the long-lived tradition of stone inscriptions. Their dating is much debated, with suggestions

ranging from the Spring and Autumn to the Warring States period. The best preserved portions of the Stone Drums show characters in seal script, written with lines of even thickness and rounded endings. Individual graphs are generally symmetrical and balanced as much as structure allows. Open spaces separate adjacent graphs so that there is no overlapping top to bottom or side to side. The general shape of these graphs recalls earlier, Western Zhou bronze script (see FIG. 2-6 above).

The inscriptions cast into the sixth-century tripods found at Xiasi (Xichuan, Henan) are fine examples of an ornamented "bird" script associated with the state of Chu (FIG. 3-3). Here calligraphers rendered individual characters in thin, elongated lines with small flourishes that echo each other from graph to graph and from column to column. Thickened waists and junctures contrast with wispy tails. The shaping of certain strokes, with a little imagination, evokes the silhouette of long-legged or long-necked birds. The inscription on the Xiasi *ding* was styled quite consciously for visual effect, the grace and delicacy of the characters distinguishing them from more utilitarian writing and the seal script of Qin.



3-2 Rubbing from "Stone Drum"

Eastern Zhou (state of Qin), 7th–6th century BCE. The Palace Museum, Beijing

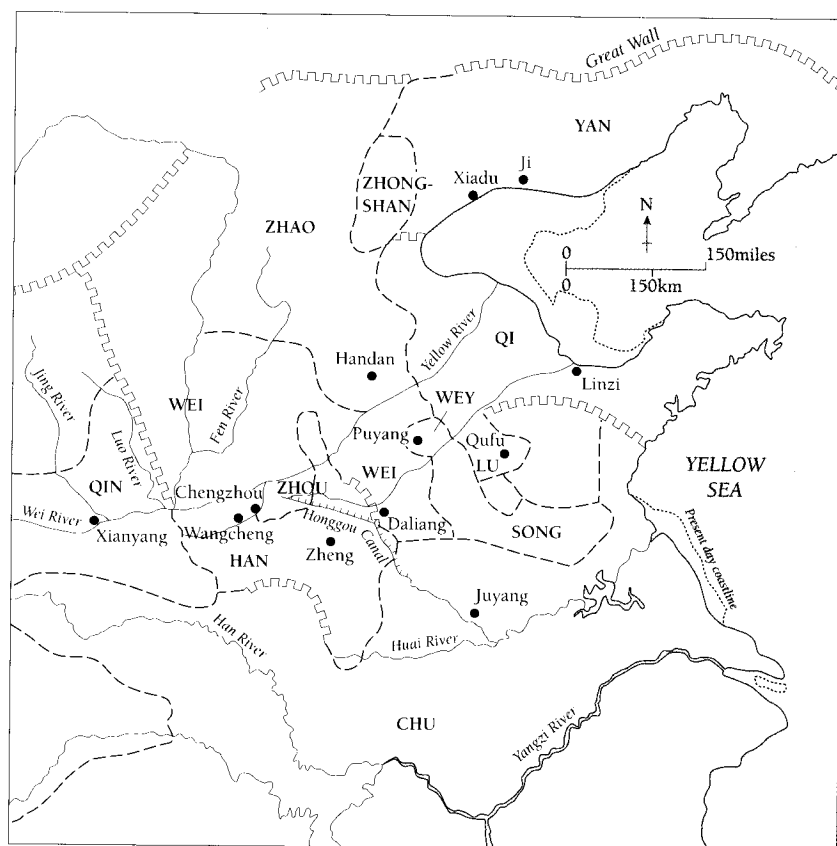
3-3 Rubbing of inscription on *ding* vessel

Eastern Zhou (state of Chu), c. 550 BCE. Tomb 2, Xiasi, Xichuan, Henan. Henan Cultural Relics Institute, Zhengzhou



houses of local lords were deposed by assertive minister families, and in parallel fashion warriors also gained power. This process continued unabated into the Warring States period. The social transition in progress was observed, critiqued, and often opposed by the thinkers of the age, and many of their writings focus on remedies to this instability. The putative links between the Son of Heaven and the nobility may have become more form than substance, but newly powerful segments of this society nonetheless promoted the practices and material manifestations of ritualized social interaction. The shift in social prestige and political power to second- and third-tier elites enhanced their economic base, with a consequent increase in all manner of elite craft production.

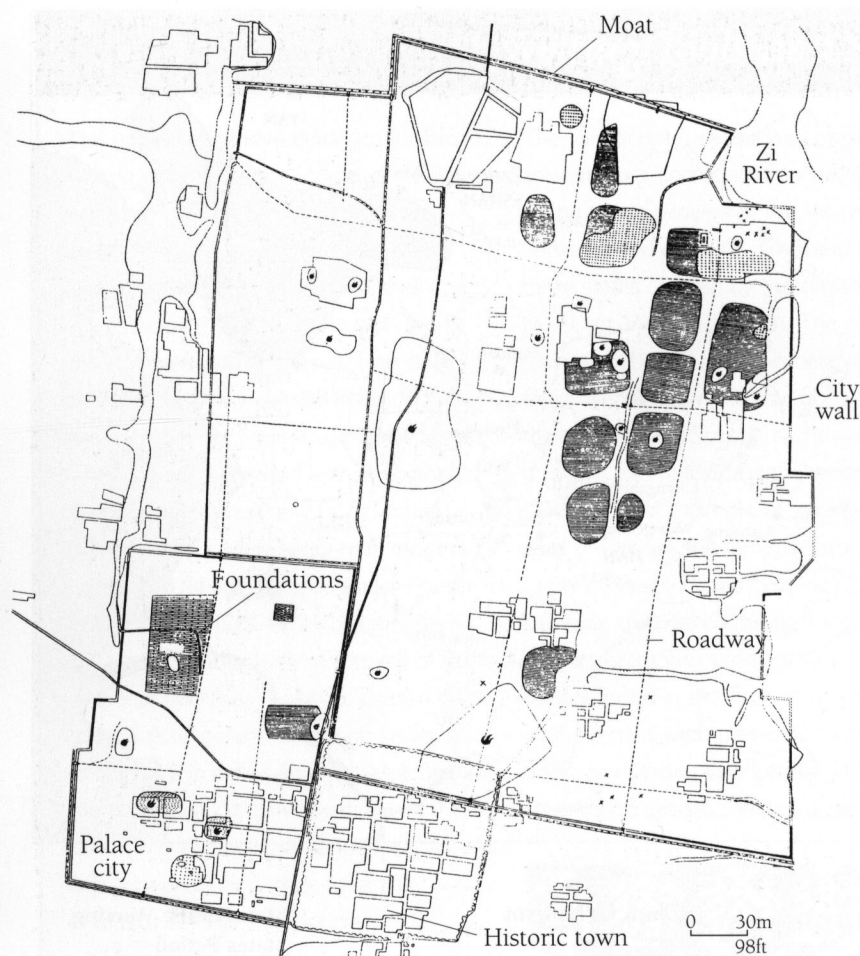
The elite comprised at most a very small percentage of the society as a whole. Some estimates of the population of the seven strong states during the third century BCE are as high as 50 to 60 million. Less than one per cent could qualify as "elite," something in the order of half a million persons of all ages and both genders. To be a member of this segment of society meant that one was born to a noble lineage: either the Zhou house and its cadet branches, or other ancient lineages which owed their high status to the early Zhou kings. As society changed, however, more and more members of the elite were actually offspring of ministers and warriors who had improved their status amid the flux of the time. Again, admission was through birth, a legacy of the deeds and blood of one's ancestors. To be of elite status also meant residence in a city, large or small, as described below, and hence a life-style with the daily routines and pleasures that being removed from the countryside and the demands of farming allowed. Elite status conferred a range of material benefits, from dress and household furnishings to diet and entertainment, which were simultaneously status markers and so were carefully regulated. To be elite also entailed social and ritual obligations: for males, within the family as a head of household and within the state as a warrior, court officer, or attendant to a lord. The elite also commanded the tools of writing, and their works provide much of the literary legacy of antiquity.



Zhou Urbanism

States of the Warring States Period

Over the six centuries of the Eastern Zhou period, the number of states declined dramatically, from more than one hundred initially to a small group of seven strong states by the third century BCE. During this period many cities were built over much of North China in a three-level hierarchy. At the pinnacle of each state was its capital, *guo du*, the seat of its lord and locus of his ancestral temples. These seats became the major urban centers of their day, and a few, like Linzi of Qi, had a sizable population. (Its population is estimated to have been about 280,000.) State capitals featured royal palaces within their own small walled city, as well as extensive markets and workshops. At an intermediate level were the seats of lesser nobles who served the lord of each state. Their settlements, *du yi*, also had lineage temples. At the lowest level were rural settlements, *yi*, with clustered houses and some small-scale market activity and craft production. The archaeology of this period has been focused on the several dozen best-preserved state capitals, and traces

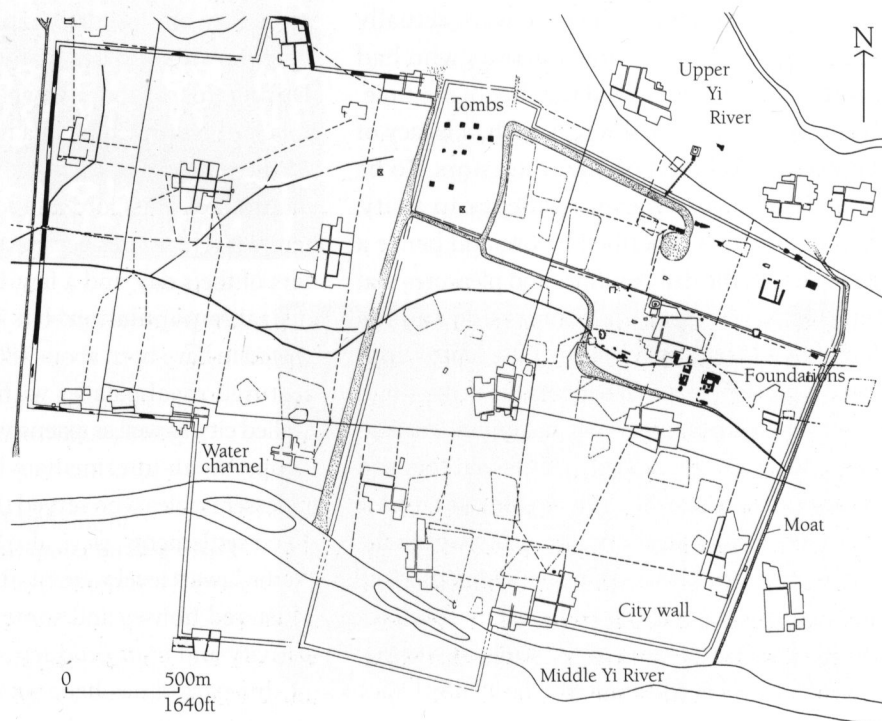


3-4 Plan of Linzi of Qi

of intermediate and lower level settlements have rarely been identified.

Most Eastern Zhou cities were situated on flat terrain with good water resources such as a nearby river that could fill the moats and provide reliable drinking water. Walls were often aligned in relation to magnetic north to create more or less regular four-sided figures. Many cities were expanded over time by adding additional walled tracts. Entry was controlled by gates in the walls, and these in turn determined the path of major arteries across cities. Within the walled area were residential and workshop zones, although the population also clustered outside. The lord's palace was generally segregated from the rest of the city by its own walls. Large, raised terraces of hard, pounded earth used for palace structures often survive. By the Warring States period, large cities were well-fortified citadels, able to contain and protect their residents and resources against a siege.

The capital of the state of Qi, at Linzi in modern-day Shandong, lies on the west bank of the Zi River (FIG. 3-4). It was established in the mid-ninth century and occupied for more than six hundred years until Qi surrendered to Qin in 221 BCE. The main walls of the city describe an irregular rectangle with long dimensions running



3-5 Plan of Lower Capital of Yan

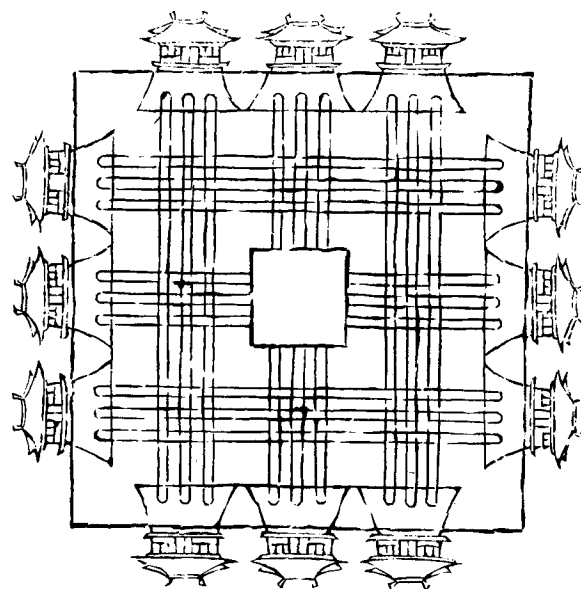
The "Royal City" Plan

This extract from the *Artificer's Record* (*Kao gong ji*) gives the canonical description of a "royal city" (*wang cheng*). Its insistence on spatial order and numerical symbolism is consistent with a date in the late Zhou or early Han, and most contemporary scholars assign the text to that period. Some scholars link the text more specifically with the state of Qi (modern Shandong).

The artisans demarcated the [ruler's] capital as a square with sides of nine *li*, each side having three gates. Within the capital were nine meridional [north-south] avenues and nine latitudinal [east-west] avenues, each avenue being nine chariot-tracks in width. The ancestral temple was sited to the left [of the ruler's central position], while the altar of soil was sited to the right. The [ruler's] court faced south, while the market was sited [to its] rear. Both market and court are plots one hundred double-paces square.

Visualizing this terse text has challenged scholars for many generations (FIG. 3-6). If the ruler's palace is sited at the center of

3-6 "Royal City" (*wang cheng*) plan after *San li tu*, 1676

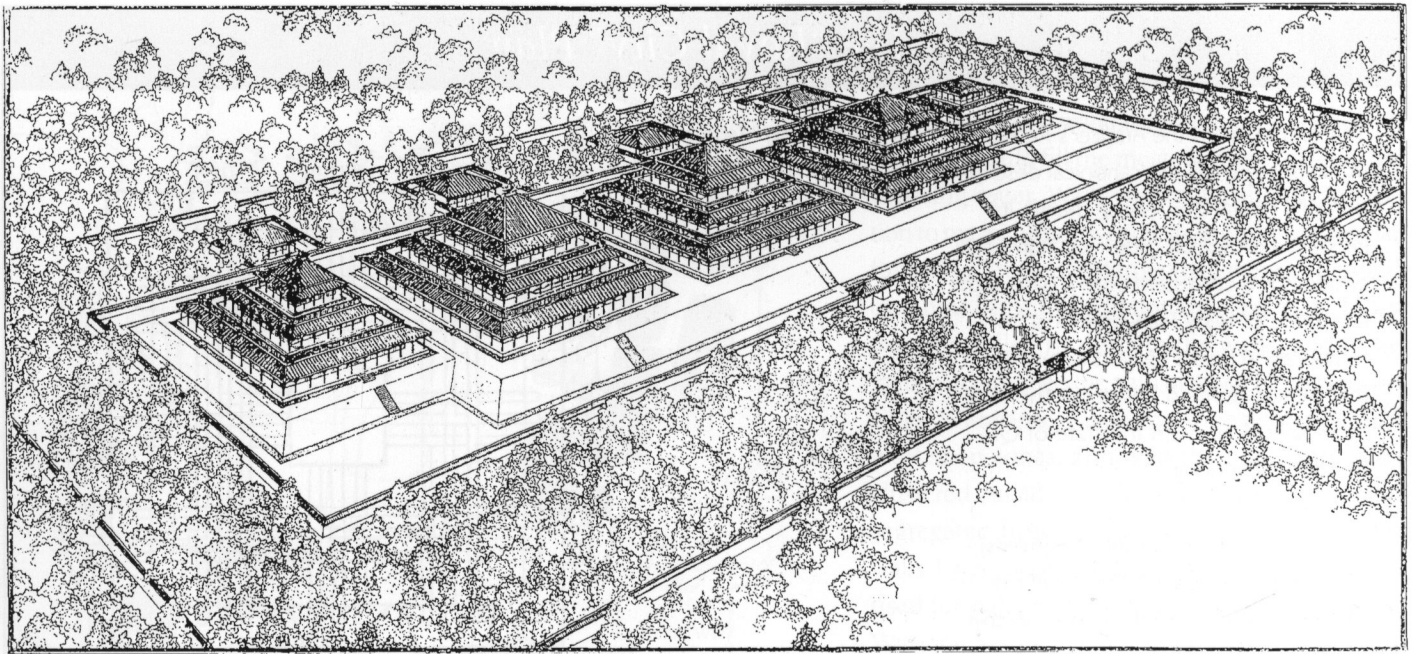


the nine-*li* square walled area, some crossing avenues will necessarily be blocked. Moreover, the city grid and its wards will be much affected by how the three gates allotted to each side are placed along the walls. Many commentators have assumed that each gate accommodated three portals, so that each avenue actually consisted of three roadways. Thus the nine avenues of the text are generally converted to three groups of three in diagrams. Several much later

imperial cities took at least some of the prescriptions of this "royal city plan" to heart, for example the Sui-Tang capital Chang'an (see FIG. 6-2 below). The Yuan capital of Dadu, precursor of Beijing, also utilized an approximately square shape with three gates to east, south, and west, and two at the north. Its palace city was centrally located, but pulled forward, with temple and altars that also mimicked the "royal city" plan.

north-south parallel to the river. The palace, on higher ground to the southwest, had a smaller, separate wall, roughly square in plan. The walls were massive, with base dimensions ranging from 65 to 130 feet (20-40 m). The circumference of these joined walls exceeded 13 miles (21 km). The entire city was ringed by moats as much as 80-100 feet wide by 10 feet deep (25-30 m by 3 m), filled by water from the river. About a dozen gates gave access, and a network of major thoroughfares crossed the city. Water was also channeled into the city to supply the residents and connect the moats and river.

In the case of the Lower Capital of the state of Yan (in modern Yi County, Hebei), the city was located between two rivers on a plain (FIG. 3-5). The earlier (eastern) city had an irregular shape nearly 2.5 miles (4 km) square, defined by walls as much as 130 feet (40 m) wide at the base. This area was subdivided by an east-west wall that demarcated a palace precinct in the north. Clustered palace platforms dominated this area, while a royal tomb precinct occupied the north-west corner. The Wuyangtai, largest of the palace foundations, was 455 by 360 feet (140 by 110 m) at the base and rose through two levels to a height



3-8 Door escutcheon with knocker

Eastern Zhou (state of Yan),
3rd century BCE. Bronze,
height 24½" (62 cm). Lower
Capital, Yi County, Hebei.
Hebei Cultural Relics
Institute, Shijiazhuang

3-7 "Burial district" of Zhongshan kings

Eastern Zhou, c. 310 BCE. Rendering by Yang Hongxun

In making this restoration, the architectural historian Yang Hongxun has chosen to show the site heavily forested within the walls surrounding the raised terrace. Moreover, the stairs necessary to ascend to the upper offering halls atop each earthen core are assumed to be within the galleries that encircle each core, and hence not visible in this bird's-eye view.



of 36 feet (11 m). A second walled city was built at a later date to enclose an almost equal area to the west. Thus the Lower Capital enclosed extensive tracts for residential and workshop use. Large water channels within the eastern city and parallel to the wall dividing the east and west cities were connected to the moats and both rivers.

Literary sources lack specific descriptions of individual buildings to complement the prescriptive account quoted above. Some pictorial art does survive, mainly designs on bronze vessels (see FIG. 3-24 below) that incorporate schematic elements of architecture. Our best source for the design of structures is a plate of bronze recovered from a royal Zhongshan tomb in Pingshan (Hebei). This object records the plan of the necropolis constructed in the

late fourth century BCE for the Zhongshan kings. Archaeologists and historians of architecture have been able to compare the specifications of this "Burial District Plan" with the actual dimensions at the site. The result is a tentative reconstruction of multilevel, earth-core structures characteristic of both palaces and burial complexes (FIG. 3-7). The Zhongshan site was laid out as a rectangular compound running east-west, surrounded by two walls. Within was a raised terrace with sloping sides that held five large halls, three at the center and a smaller one at each end. While palace compounds at cities such as Linzi and the Lower Capital did not have such regular plans and symmetry, the Zhongshan plan is informative for the design and appearance of the structures themselves. A square earthen mound surmounted each burial. Galleries (timber-frame colonnades carrying tile roofs) wrapped around the base of each mound and possibly at an intermediate level above. At the top of each mound was a free-standing structure of

timber-frame construction with proportions that harmonized with the lower galleries to create a regular pyramid. Access from lower to upper levels was achieved by either interior or exterior stairs. The use of regular bays and uniform tiled roofs at each level increased the imposing effect. Viewed as a whole, each temple appeared to be a three-story structure, when in fact only the top level created usable space. The multiple terraces of the earthen platforms preserved at sites like the Yan Lower Capital were amenable to such designs; literary references to the “viewing terraces” (*tai*) of the Warring States lords also correlate well with such structures.

Archaeologists have retrieved little of the actual fabric of such buildings. Roof tiles of fired gray clay are abundant, as are floor tiles, water drainage pipes, and related architectural pottery. More rarely, other fittings are recovered, such as a finely rendered door pull found at the Yan Lower Capital (FIG. 3-8), created from bronze decorated in the highly embellished interlace characteristic of the late Spring and Autumn and early Warring States periods. The escutcheon was originally affixed to a door, while the ring within the loop of the animal mask served as a pull or knocker. Since doors customarily had two panels, one must assume that a mate for this fitting is missing. In addition to the use of metal accessories, literary sources suggest that carved stone was employed, and lacquer painting and textile hangings would have decorated a court hall or a lord's private chambers.

Warfare: “the great affair of state”

The conduct of warfare during the first centuries of Eastern Zhou, as portrayed in such early literary sources as the *Zuo Commentary* (*Zuo zhuan*), had an almost chivalric character. Before battle rival lords addressed one another in florid speeches, and in the heat of combat warriors resisted the opportunity to kill an adversary at a disadvantage. The vanquished might even be feasted after defeat. Engagements were brief, often concluded after one day's combat. By the end of the Eastern Zhou period, armies could be extremely large, with tens of thousands of foot soldiers commanded by

officers in hundreds of war chariots, the result of a shift from small units dominated by nobles in chariots to infantry armies composed of peasant soldiers impressed into service by the state. This shift to infantry began around the sixth century; during the fourth century mounted archery—modeled on that of the horse-riding peoples on the northern frontier—also began to play a role. The need to maintain large armies was a serious strain on the economies of the smaller states. During the Warring States era, the strongest states boasted thousands or even tens of thousands of chariots as a way of quantifying their might. This was a remarkable investment in military hardware when one considers the four-horse teams, bronze fittings, and other gear required, as well as the complement of three armed warriors per chariot. Large infantry armies maneuvered for field position, besieged fortified cities, engaged in prolonged combat, and sometimes were slaughtered in horrendous postbattle orgies of killing. The armies of Qin, campaigning against their rivals in the third century, became notorious for large-scale slaughter, as when a Qin commander put four hundred thousand soldiers of Zhao to death after their defeat in 260 BCE. (Some scholars discount these large numbers as propaganda.)

The material culture of warfare changed to suit these practices. Many of the larger states built long walls during the Warring States period with the purpose of limiting the freedom of foot and chariot forces to cross a border or maneuver for advantage. Many royal burials of the period are flanked by pits in which large numbers of horses were put to death at the funeral and interred with chariots. Presumably many more chariots were retained, and new ones were outfitted regularly. Some warriors wore armor, but relatively little has survived. Striking examples are lacquered leather, lamellar (plate) body armor with helmets found in the tomb of Marquis Yi at Suizhou, and iron armor composed of small plates from the Lower Capital of Yan. Lacquered leather shields have been found; their value probably increased as swords and close combat became more common. A stand for the chime of bells from the Marquis Yi tomb provides a rendering of an armed warrior figure (FIG. 3-1). Cast as one piece with

the heavy base, this figure wears a long skirt and a close-fitting upper garment belted at the waist; a sword in its scabbard hangs at the left hip. Bronze helmets are also known, but, given the paucity of examples, it is by no means certain that many soldiers were actually protected in battle by such gear. This figure is also a rare instance of relatively large-scale human sculpture, a precursor of the "underground" army of the First Emperor of Qin.

The most common weapons were a variety of halberds and spears, designed for stabbing and hacking between warriors facing off. Pictorial designs on bronze vessels frequently show lines of warriors arrayed against one another. Again the tomb of Marquis Yi yielded extraordinary specimens, such as a halberd with three *ge* blades hafted one above the other, or pikes with spiked balls

at their ends. There were also bows and arrows, and the crossbow came into use at the end of the period. Swords intended for hand-to-hand combat are often a part of elite burials, and pictorial designs suggest they were used by infantry units as well as officers.

CRAFT PRODUCTION FOR THE ELITE

Neither the growth in cities nor the changes in warfare could have taken place without a strong economic base. The Eastern Zhou period is characterized by a shift from small-scale, self-sufficient local economies of elite fiefs and rural settlements to regional economies dependent in important ways on manufacturing and trade. Iron production began during this period, as did wide use of state-controlled metallic coinage. Both the larger and smaller states extended their control over the population by organizing the peasantry for warfare, on the one hand, and by exacting levies or taxes, on the other. Private land holdings also appeared at this time. Cities that had been established initially as fiefs and elite strongholds grew as marketing and manufacturing centers. These regional economies relied on the exploitation of available natural resources, large-scale manufacturing centered in cities, considerable specialized production, and interregional trade that moved products between the rival states. The state of Qi, for example, was known for lacquer, silk, hemp, linen, dyed fabrics, salt, sea food, even strange rocks. The southern state of Chu exported timber and animal products, as well as such ores as copper and gold. The states of Wu and Yue were noted for their swords.

Luxury Life-styles

Personal Attire

The attributes of elite status—dress, adornment, weapons, chariots, and the like—served to demarcate and make distinctions within stratified classes atop the great mass of the population. Texts of the time offer abundant evidence for these perquisites, and over time archaeology has brought

3-9 Man holding lamp

Eastern Zhou, c. 310 BCE.
Bronze with inlay, head silver with stone inlay; height 26" (66.4 cm). Tomb I, Pingshan, Hebei. Hebei Cultural Relics Institute, Shijiazhuang



many of these observations to life. Pictorial and sculptural art also represents some members of elite society, although non-elite persons are actually more common. The paradigmatic elite male came to be conceived as a “gentleman” (*junzi*), a superior man whose intellectual and moral character qualified him for elite status and hence entitled him to command others and profit by their labors. An emphasis on moral virtues flourishes from the time of Confucius (traditional dates, 551–479 BCE), but the idea is found in a variety of thinkers during subsequent centuries. A gentleman was schooled in the “six arts [skills]” (*liu yi*): social and ritual etiquette, music, archery, chariot driving, writing, and calculation. These six kinds of expertise encompass the norms of social life and ritual practice, the martial abilities required of a warrior, and the practical skills needed by a court officer.



had borders of distinct fabric and color. Lords and ladies clothed in these long robes could not very well perform physical labor, surely one of the messages conveyed. Their garments, moreover, were a ready-made field for the display of rich colors and lavish patterns, and thus for registering additional messages about status and wealth. Some of this attire is known from a small tomb at Mashan near Jiangling (Hubei), the capital region of Chu. This burial, attributed to a woman of the warrior, *shi*, class, has been dated to the middle of the Warring States period, the late fourth century BCE. The deceased was dressed and wrapped in a large assortment of silk garments, including long outer robes, light inner robes, skirts, leggings, shoes, and cap. In addition to the tailored garments, hampers also contained pieces of silk fabric with extraordinary embroidery (FIG. 3-10). Fine stitching delineates complex patterns of birds and animals interlaced with abstract forms. The detail shown is taken from a light-weight robe covered with an overall interlace pattern and a contrasting motif of tigers. Upon closer inspection, the interlace itself is found to contain dragons and birds, their body parts rendered by varied stitches. The paired tigers stand out through their strong color and pattern and are placed onto the matrix of interlace at intervals in alternating confronting and addorsed (back to back) profiles. The taste for complex patterns composed of the bodies and parts of both real and imaginary animals is common to most of the arts of this period, including bronzes, lacquer wares, and jades.

Such finery was complemented by accessories such as hardstone necklaces, jade pendants,

3-10 Detail of embroidered sleeve
Eastern Zhou (state of Chu),
4th–3rd century BCE. Silk,
length 44¾" (114 cm).
Mashan, Jiangling, Hubei.
Jingzhou Museum, Jingsha
City

Detailed renderings of costume are rare, but several small-scale sculptures give us an idea of the attire of the day. A lamp in the form of a standing male figure from one of the royal Zhongshan tombs is among the most complete renderings of dress and grooming (FIG. 3-9). Given the animals he tends, this figure can hardly be a high-ranking person, but he is nonetheless elegantly dressed. The figure stands on a large square base, shoes and skirt exposed by the split hem of a long, one-piece outer robe. This outer robe is worn folded across the chest from left to right and cinched at the waist by a belt with a hook. The sleeves are cut to hang with ample cuffs. The head, made from silver with black stones inlaid for eyes, shows the face as clean-shaven or plucked of any facial hair except a neat moustache. The man's long hair is pulled off the forehead and gathered at the back by a combination of hairpins and bows. A chin strap holds a small hat in place on top of the head.

This kind of attire was probably common among citified elites during the Warring States period, during which separate top (*yi*) and bottom (*shang*) garments were replaced by a single-piece outer robe (*shen yi*). There was considerable variety in the cut of these garments: robes could be straight or more ample, sleeves narrow or wide. Collars varied as well, and, like cuffs and lapels,

3-11 Garment hook

Eastern Zhou (state of Chu),
4th century BCE. Iron with
gold and silver inlay, length
18½" (46.2 cm). Wangshan
Tomb I, Jiangling, Hubei.
Hubei Museum, Wuhan



and metal hooks to fasten garments and belts. These hooks are ubiquitous in graves of the time and come in all shapes and sizes, from diminutive fasteners that probably secured lapels to much larger pieces for cinching a heavy belt. The use of leather belts increased during the Warring States period and is another debt of the peoples of the central plains to the "barbarians" on their margins. The example shown here is actually made of iron inlaid with gold and silver in another complex interlace of dragons and birds (FIG. 3-11). Weighing 1.5 pounds (0.7 kg) and fully 19 inches (48 cm) long, this hook would have crossed most

of the frontal girth of its wearer. Like the embroidery, it came from a tomb at Jiangling, in this instance that of a male of higher status. Bronze belt hooks were also frequently adorned with such stones as turquoise; some incorporate jade and gilt as well.

Lacquer

Lacquered furniture was as important as the more common cups, plates, and serving vessels used for food and drink. Several southern tombs contained large couches for sitting and sleeping as well as arm rests, low offering tables, and

Making Lacquer Wares

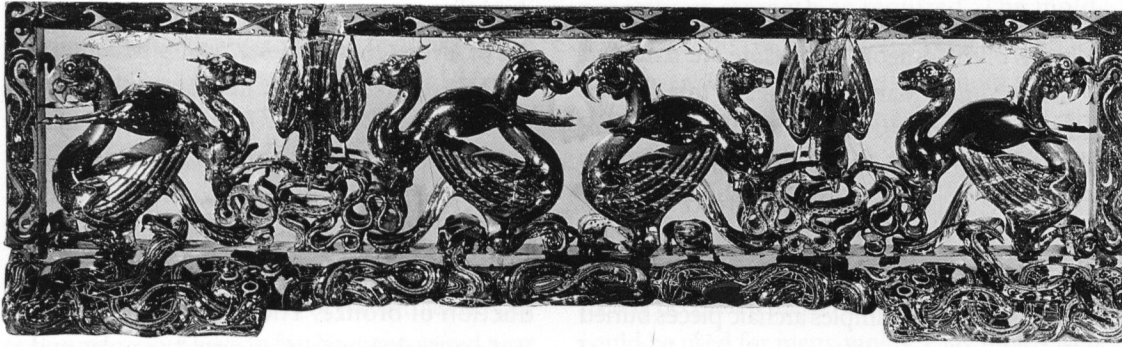
Lacquer wares flourished long before the Eastern Zhou, but this is the earliest period from which they survive in great quantities. The flowering of lacquerware production during the Eastern Zhou period was certainly real. However, preservation has depended on tomb chamber construction, especially techniques for sealing grave goods within chambers where they were protected from decay. In this respect, the tombs of the Middle Yangzi, modern Hubei and Hunan provinces, have been the best repositories of lacquer objects as well as other perishable goods such as silk.

Lac is the sap of a tree native to southern and central China—a natural polymer. When it dries, the sap is lightweight and strong, and it renders anything it covers nearly impervious to decay.

Making lacquered objects starts with heating and purifying this sap. This is an unpleasant task because the fumes can be poisonous and may cause rashes on the skin. The fluid is then colored with carbon black, cinnabar red, or other pigments. Red designs on a black ground characterize most lacquer wares. Application requires a hair brush, like a writing brush, and a sure hand able to manipulate the obdurate, viscous medium. Lacquer is applied one coat at a time and then allowed to dry before sanding and application of a new coat. Most objects have many thin layers of lacquer built up on their surfaces.

Lacquer wares also require cores, and these generally fall into three types. Wooden cores carved from blocks were favored for heavy, durable objects

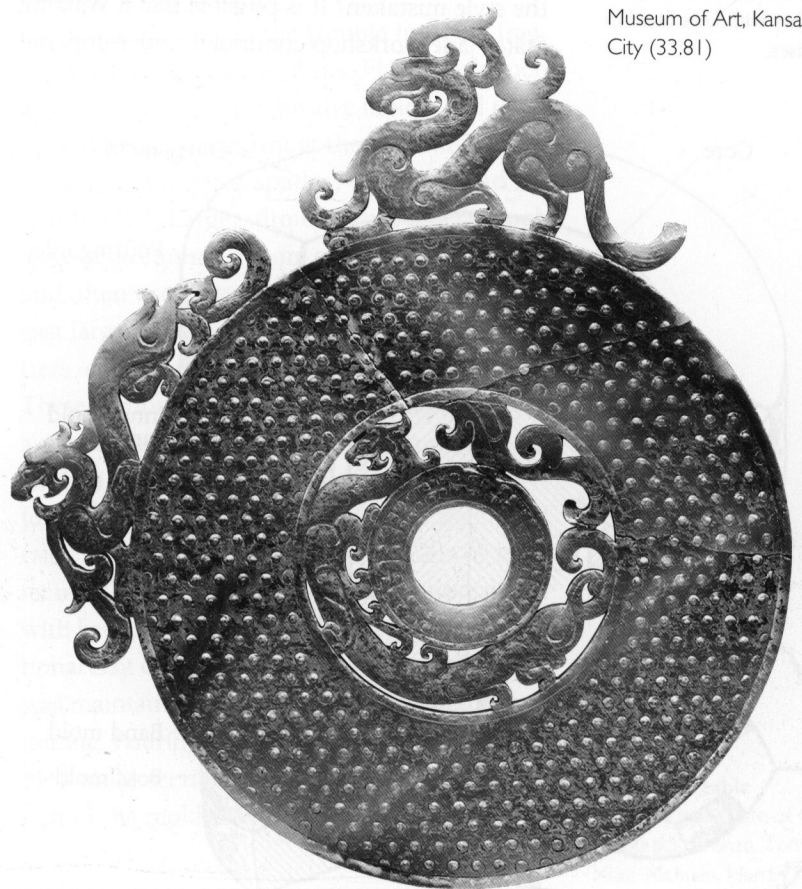
such as couches, arm rests, and tables. Wood could also be shaped with a cutting tool to achieve more regular forms and thinner dimensions. This kind of core was favored for such things as wine cups. A second type of core utilizes either wood or bamboo strips, bent into shape and joined with fasteners much like a bamboo steamer. Many circular boxes for cosmetics, mirrors, and other uses were made in this way. Finally, a "hollow-core" technique was devised in which coarse woven fabric, like hemp, was stiffened with lacquer. The intended shape was created by holding the fabric against a wooden or clay mold as the lacquer dried. Once the fabric was sufficiently stiff to hold its shape, the mold could be removed. This technique made extremely light objects possible.



miniature screens. The example of the latter shown here (FIG. 3-12) is a marvel of carving and painting from the large fourth-century tomb at Wangshan, near Jiangling (Hubei), that also yielded the iron belt hook discussed above. About 20 inches long by 6 inches high (52 by 15 cm), the frame and its myriad creatures are linked by mortise-and-tenon joinery. The composition consists of two identical units, each centered on a descending bird grasping plaited snakes in its beak. Confronting deer and addorsed birds flank this central element. Snakes and amphibians carved in relief inhabit the base and vertical supports of the frame, while abstract scrolls cover the top. The motifs are at the descriptive end of a spectrum of real animals and derivative decorative motifs pervasive in all Eastern Zhou media. Rendered here as three-dimensional forms, the motifs and their composition are comparable to the two-dimensional embroidery of tigers against dragon interlace on the robe from Mashan (see FIG. 3-10 above).

Jades

Yet another category of luxury goods produced for noble lords and ladies during this period is jade carving (see "Working Hardstones and Jade," page 33). The finest Eastern Zhou jades date to the Warring States period. These objects include nephrite from sources in Central Asia (modern Xinjiang). Only more mineralogical studies will determine if sources within China proper were exhausted by this time. The most important factor affecting the look of Warring States jades was probably the use of iron tools to guide the abrasive grinding powders combined with an improved power-train for drill points. The consequence was a style of crafting jade that emphasized



complex silhouettes and challenging relief. Representative of this style is a large disk, *bi*, with rampant dragons in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City (FIG. 3-13). The disk is said to come from looted tombs at Jincun near ancient Luoyang that are commonly thought to be royal Zhou burials. The thin slab of stone consists of a small ring held within a larger, wider disk by a twisting feline. Two dragons at top and at left perch on the outer margin of the disk, posed to suggest great potential energy. The disk is covered with a pattern of raised spirals in neat rows that

3-12 Miniature screen

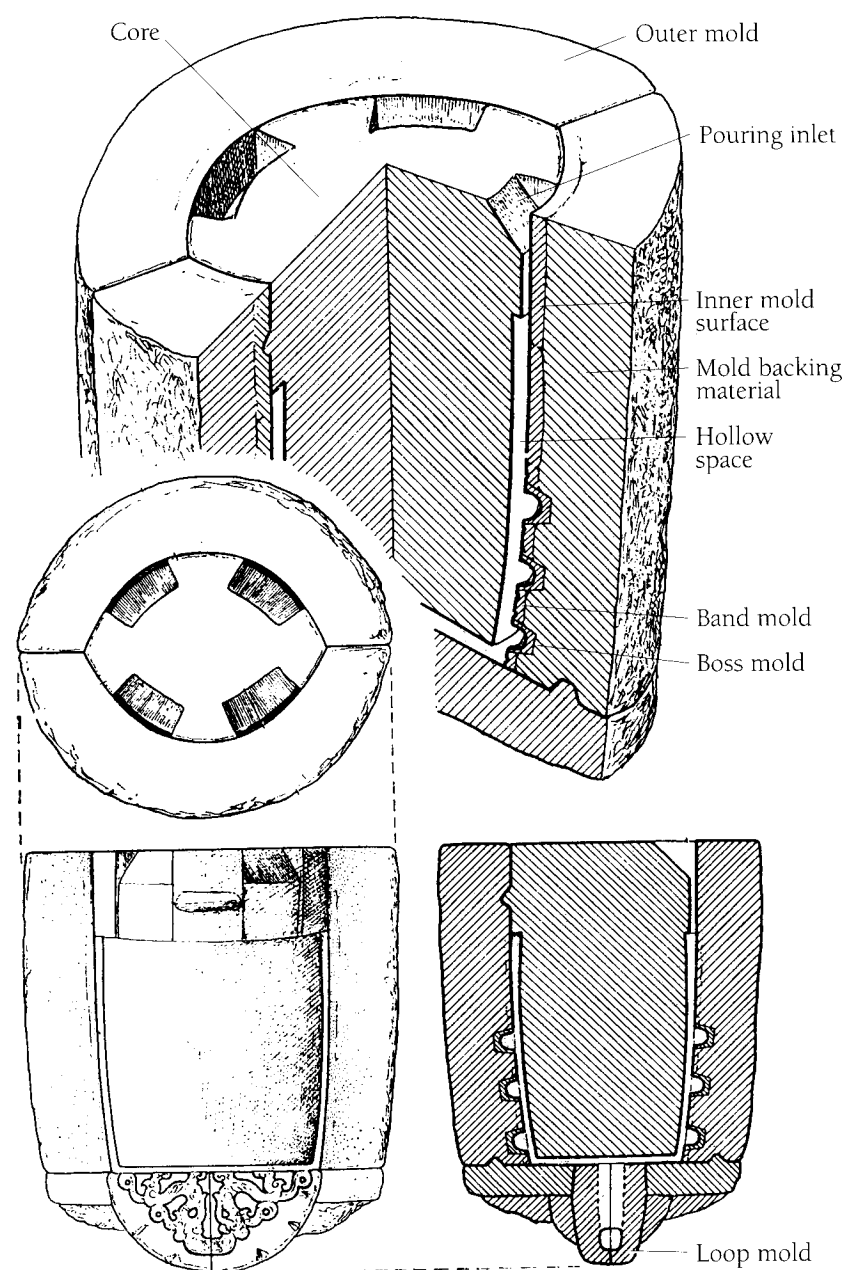
Eastern Zhou (state of Chu), 4th century BCE. Lacquered wood, length 20¼" (51.8 cm). Wangshan Tomb I, Jiangling, Hubei. Hubei Museum, Wuhan

3-13 Disk, *bi*

Eastern Zhou, 4th–3rd century BCE. Hardstone, diameter 8⅞" (22 cm). The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City (33.81)

3-14 Reconstructed casting assembly for bell

As shown here, a *bo* bell required outer molds for the suspension loop at bottom, and for its top, a pair for the sides, and a core to occupy the interior, all locked together with keys fitted to mortises.



necessitated grinding out much of the surface. Features of the dragons and feline are rendered by incised lines. Many examples of this style of jade working are associated with Jincun, as are a number of excavated objects from Former (or Western) Han contexts such as princely tombs at Mancheng (Hebei; see FIG. 4-1 below) and Canton or Guangzhou (Guangdong; see FIG. 4-15). Are the excavated examples archaic pieces buried in Han times, or is a Warring States dating of the style mistaken? It is possible that a Warring States jade workshop continued under imperial

patronage during the early Former Han. This is one of several continuities in craft production that will be examined further in chapter 4.

The Bronze Industry

The industry most essential to the support of the state, the elite, and their life-style was the production of bronze. The use of bronze vessels and musical chimes in ancestral temples and at court in banquets and other ceremonies was integral to an active process of legitimation. By continually demonstrating their right to rule, the nobles of the Eastern Zhou strengthened their control over society. Bronze weapons were the key to furthering the aims of the state when diplomacy failed. Other bronze objects, from chariot fittings to mirrors and garment hooks, formed part of displays of social status. Bronze was also the medium for coinage that promoted the integration of the various state economies. Not least, agricultural production was dependent on the use of bronze implements.

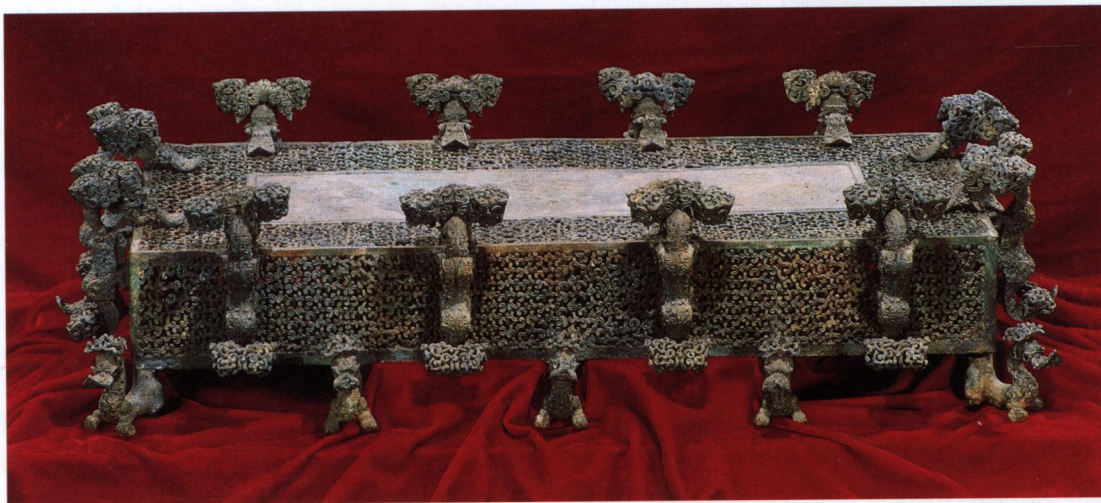
Direct evidence of mining comes from several sites in the Middle and Lower Yangzi macroregions. On the Yangzi River to the east of the great lake system lie extensive remains of a major mining and smelting site at Tonglu Shan (Daye, Hubei). The place-names suggest a long-standing connection with ore deposits and smelting. Tonglu Shan, for example, might be translated as "Verdigris Mountain," and local records attest native copper on the surface that "flowered after rain." Daye County might be rendered as "Great Smelter." This archaeological site lies within an active modern open-pit mining complex producing iron ore. Huge quantities of slag from ancient smelters at Tonglu Shan bearing traces of copper are rich in iron. Thus, ore bodies first exploited for their copper became valuable for their iron. At Tonglu Shan, the mining required open trenches, vertical shafts, and horizontal underground galleries. Digging followed the ore bodies from surface exposures into the earth, sometimes as much as 200 feet (60 m) below ground level. Early shafts were generally small, many less than a yard square. Over time, as the deposits were followed further and further

underground, shafts and galleries were enlarged, and winches were employed to haul ore to the top. Both the volume of ore extracted and its richness are impressive. The 400,000 metric tons of slag from copper smelting were the residue of an iron-rich ore with about 10 per cent copper. This alone suggests production of at least 40,000 tons of copper. Furnaces for smelting ore also operated at the site. Ingots of more than 90 per cent pure copper have in fact been recovered near the mine close to the Yangzi River. Shipment up river supported the foundries of Chu and its neighboring states.

The preeminent foundry site of the Eastern Zhou is near the capital of the state of Jin, a city called Xintian (Houma, Shanxi). This foundry flourished for about two centuries, from the early sixth to the early fourth century BCE. Two localities have yielded a staggering amount of evidence for ceramic molds (some fifty thousand fragments) used in the production of ritual vessels, tools, chariot fittings, belt hooks, and coinage. Locality II at Houma had many roughly made subterranean and semi-subterranean houses that served as workshops. The site was also littered with fragments of crucibles used for preparing alloy and blow pipes needed to heat the charge within the crucible. Molds utilized the common clay available at the site, but it was generally very fine and was mixed with a fine local sand. The kinds of clay used for mold sections, cores, and other purposes varied, especially in the amount of temper, in order to promote

porosity or strength as required. The mold-making process incorporated several techniques: models to which clay sheets for mold sections could be applied, modeling and carving, and ceramic molds to form the sections needed for casting. Molds had a fine-particle clay for their inner surfaces and a coarser clay as backing. Fine details required laborious hand work, but completely decorated master stamps or pattern blocks could be used for many molds. Clay molds were fired prior to casting.

The great bulk of the Houma finds are fragments of outer mold sections. Flat objects such as tools were cast from bivalve molds, and these were the most abundant at the site (three thousand fragments for spades, ten thousand for belt hooks). Larger, dimensional objects such as vessels required a more complex set of molds and often used precast elements. Metalworkers cast larger objects from sets of mold sections in tiers, each tier consisting of multiple sections. These sections could be produced rapidly using a master mold or similar replication process. In order to cast a bell, for example, as many as ninety-four mold sections and two cores were assembled (FIG. 3-14), but the number of models or master molds needed was far less. Sections were joined with keys and then plastered together with additional clay. Cores were fixed in place, and spacing was maintained by keys and similar methods of joining. Pouring cups were placed on the assembled mold sections prior to casting or made as part of the mold assembly.



3-15 Altar table

Eastern Zhou (state of Chu),
c. 550 BCE. Bronze. Tomb 2,
Xiasi, Xichuan, Henan.
Henan Cultural Relics
Institute, Zhengzhou

Archaeological artifacts from bronze foundries are rarely unique, but this altar table may truly warrant that distinction. Densely interlaced filaments of bronze were cast in blocks using the lost-wax method and then assembled by soldering to create the framing top margins and sides of this table. A dozen dragons climb the sides, tongues lolling on the table top.

Casting technology also changed during this period in ways that complemented the traditional section mold process (see “Piece-mold Bronze Casting,” page 67). Most objects were still cast in a single pour using an assembly of many sectional molds of the kinds found at the Houma foundry. To create appendages, precasting (casting on) was used; a small element—such as a knob, handle, or flange—was first cast separately, often in a bivalve mold. The component was then installed into the ceramic mold assembly for the vessel itself and locked onto that vessel when the pour took place. (Components were also soldered onto vessel bodies, but this was less common.) A second technique for achieving inlay effects also emerged, initially in southern foundries. Pure copper was cast as thin sheets in the shape of an inlay pattern. The element was then mounted in the outer mold so that, when the vessel was cast, the copper was locked into place. The effect achieved was comparable to a mechanical inlay of copper in sheets or wire, but the inlay could not fall out as one using a fixative might.

A third process now known from the middle and late Spring and Autumn period (late seventh–early sixth century), originating in southern foundries, is the “lost-wax” technique. Complex three-dimensional interlace appendages on a number of vessels found at the Xiasi site in southern Henan could only be created using this technique. Even more extensive utilization of lost wax is documented in the late fifth-century tomb of Marquis Yi at Suizhou. Strands of wax were shaped into the desired component, such as the many panels of twisting filaments used for the altar table found in Tomb 2 at Xiasi (FIG. 3-15). After these filaments were invested with a clay matrix, completely filling all of the interstices, the mold could be baked. The wax filaments themselves dissolved, and molten alloy was then poured into the cavities. Most lost-wax appendages were subsequently soldered on.

The powerful states of the Eastern Zhou period maintained their own foundries, but evidence remains scant, with the notable exception of Houma in the state of Jin. Both “commercial” transactions and ritualized gift-giving circulated vessels between states and across regions. Comparable vessels and

bells were being produced at the same time in several regions. The states of the central plains, including Jin, represent one such regional tradition. In fact, many vessels found at sites in Henan, Shanxi, and neighboring zones could well have emanated from Houma. Likewise many vessels recovered in the north (states of Yan, Zhongshan, and Zhao), east (states of Qi and Lu), south (Chu), and west (Qin) are distinctive. Any discussion of Eastern Zhou bronze casting therefore must distinguish regional traditions as well as assess broader developments.

Chinese archaeologists have studied excavated assemblages of bronze vessels dated by grave goods and inscriptions. This approach has created a framework that continually grows and can be revised as more material comes to light. Excavated assemblages that can be attributed to specific states and their lords are rooted in history and can help us track regional traditions. The repertoire of vessel types shows substantial changes over this period. There is no mistaking early Spring and Autumn assemblages and Warring States ones. Certain types endured, notably caldrons, *ding*, used for cooking and serving meat courses, wine containers, *hu*, and *pan* and *yi* water basins and ewers. Several sets of *ding*, varying in size and number, with or without lids, normally constituted the core of a ritual set. Other food-serving types changed considerably. The *gui* of late Western Zhou and early Eastern Zhou were complemented and then superseded over time by other types such as *dou*, *fu*, *dui*, and their variants. All were covered containers, and their proliferation suggests a greater emphasis on grain offerings. Both *fu* and *dui* comprise two identical parts, serving as top lid and bottom container respectively. Thus four *fu* vessels could actually be used to serve eight grain offerings. Wine containers were generally represented in pairs. *Hu* in particular were often monumental, and some were enhanced with elaborate appendages that make them the most striking vessels of a set. Other vessels used as wine containers include various *guan* and *fou*, lidded jars of rather simple form and decoration.

The Spring and Autumn Period

Vessels made during the early and middle Spring

and Autumn period (eighth through seventh centuries BCE) derive their shapes and decoration from late Western Zhou vessels. Early seventh-century vessels from tombs in Guangshan County (Henan), representing the small state of Huang, are unusually well preserved and serve here as a benchmark assemblage for this period. The Guangshan vessels comprised two sets, one for a lord, the other for his consort. Each set consisted of a core group of paired *ding*, *dou*, *hu*, *ling* (wine containers), *pan*, and *yi*. Each set was consistent in every way, including inscriptions. This consistency suggests the vessels were made at one time. At 12 inches (30 cm) high, a *hu* container from this assemblage was easily manipulated by using two hands, and the small, animal-shaped handles were useful as grips (FIG. 3-16). Some of the vessel surface is plain, but three registers of dense patterns cover the belly and shoulder. The pattern unit on the belly is derived from a dragon head and body of the kind developed during the late Western Zhou, here standardized and repeated. Excavators have recovered many hundreds of vessels with similar decoration from tombs throughout the central plains. Their simple silhouettes and dense surface decoration were a characteristic choice during this period.

Against this large grouping stand other, exceptional vessels, in which their large scale, complex appendages, fine detail in the decoration, and naturalistic elements all play a role. The rich tombs at Xiasi (Xichuan County, Henan) afford a selection of vessels made for, among others, a Chu prince. The tombs date to the middle and late Spring and Autumn period, spanning the sixth century. A pair of wine containers, *hu*, from Tomb I exemplify this approach (FIG. 3-17). Each vessel is almost 32 inches (80 cm) in height and quite heavy, weighing 56 pounds (25 kg), not a size that permits easy manipulation. The *hu* are rounded squares in cross section, with tall necks and bulging bellies. Horizontal and vertical relief bands that create panels on the belly and shoulder augment the surfaces and demarcate those zones from the neck above. The lower panels are left plain, but the shoulder panels, neck, and foot are all covered with small-scale relief patterns. Some of these are akin to patterns on the Guangshan vessel above



and again derive from late Western Zhou motifs. Additional features distinguish these vessels from most of their contemporaries: three-dimensional dragons as feet and handles, and elaborate lids with everted profiles and openwork. The effect of these appendages is to enhance the silhouette so that the shape is partially obscured. These vessels dominate their space as sculptural monuments in a way that the self-contained Guangshan *hu* vessels did not.

Other pairs of *hu* made for high-ranking lords share some of these same devices (banding and

3-16 Wine vessel, *hu*
Eastern Zhou (state of Huang), c. 650 BCE. Bronze, height 12½" (32 cm).
Baoxiangsi, Guangshan, Henan. Henan Cultural Relics Institute, Zhengzhou





3-17 Wine vessel, *hu*
Eastern Zhou (state of Chu),
c. 550 BCE. Bronze, height
31" (79 cm). Tomb 1, Xiasi,
Xichuan, Henan. Henan
Cultural Relics Institute,
Zhengzhou

3-18 Detail of bell, *bo*
Eastern Zhou (state of Jin),
5th century BCE. Tomb 251,
Jinshengcun, Taiyuan, Shanxi.
Shanxi Archaeology Institute,
Taiyuan

panels, dragon handles, openwork lids). *Hu* from the looted Xinzheng tomb (Henan) even add a naturalistically rendered crane to the lid. The design devised for these monumental *hu*, which might be termed an "order" of decoration following the usage suggested in chapter 2, is documented in assemblages of such states as Jin (Shangmacun, Jinshengcun), Zheng (Xinzheng), Chu (Xiasi), and Cai (Shou County). Large container vessels perhaps invite this kind of elaboration. A cooking tripod or food-serving vessel cannot grow too large before it becomes impossible to handle.

An assemblage of late Spring and Autumn vessels exhibits still other choices in design. Tomb 251 at Jinshengcun, near Taiyuan (Shanxi), has been attributed to a high minister of the state of Jin. The vessels are clearly products of the Houma foundry and have much in common with the better-known find at Liyu in northern Shanxi of the 1920s. Most of the vessels, such as the twenty-five *ding* and the musical bells, are decorated with a dragon interlace pattern that required fine detail in the preparation of the molds. Although dragon elements are discernible, the borders, striations, and scales on the ribbons and the many raised curls and spirals that grow from them together create a rich relief surface in which recognizable animal elements are downplayed. The dragon motif itself can be seen more clearly in the loops of bells and in a frontal mask motif (FIG. 3-18).

Amazing detail and craft were lavished on vessels with sleek silhouettes and low-slung, compact forms. The several sets of covered *ding*, for example, have smooth, rounded profiles with well-integrated lids and cabriole legs mounted onto the belly in such a way that the vessels hang between them. The streamlined silhouettes of these *ding* contrast with the prickly and varied contours of many southern vessels, such as examples from Xiasi. These Jin vessels also accommodated naturalistic animals such as recumbent bulls on their lids; there is even a bird-shaped wine container.

These three assemblages together span most of the Spring and Autumn period. Their vessels have much in common, including shapes and dragon and interlace patterns derived from late Western Zhou motifs. Many types, especially *fu*, *guan*, *pan*, and *yi*, are relatively constant over time and space. Little energy seems to have been invested in devising new versions or in elaborating these types. Even so, each region also produced some vessels that present distinctive appearances: for example, the *sheng ding* of the Xiasi tombs (discussed below) with their flat bases, constricted waists, flaring handles, and many appendages. Sorting these vessels by the patterns employed, or charting the development of interlace patterns, is not an adequate way of ordering them. Patterns are only one element in a more

complex product resulting from considerations of function, status, scale, shape, and the use of appendages and sculptural forms.

The Warring States Period

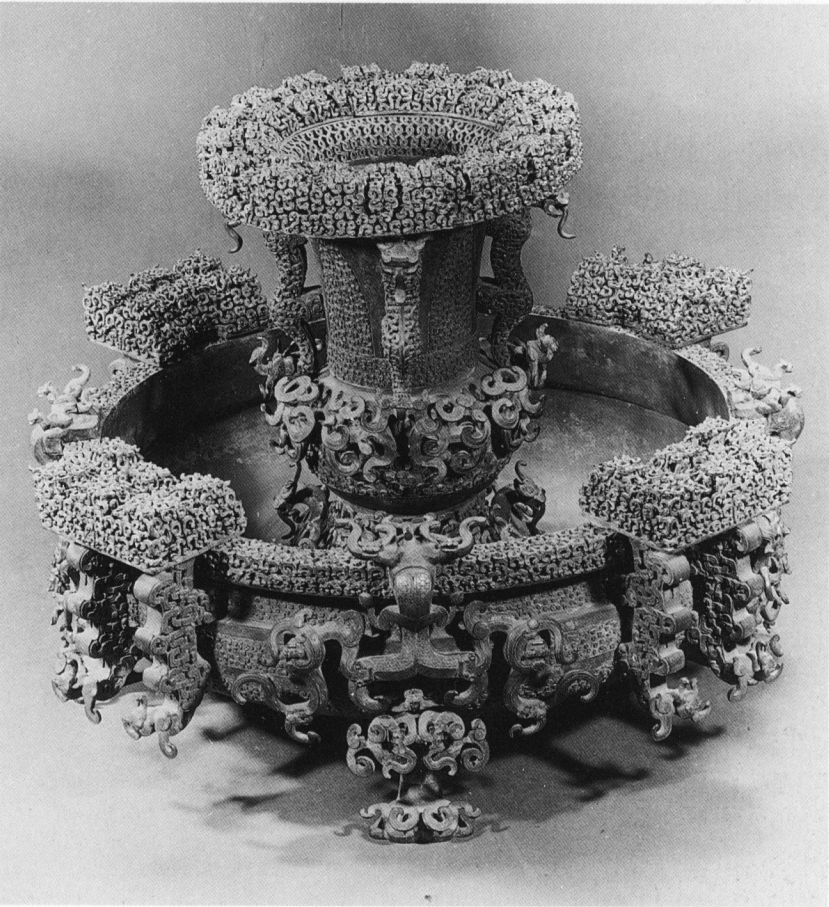
The options evident in rich assemblages of the late Spring and Autumn period were perpetuated during the early Warring States era. As it happens, there is now more evidence for casting in several regions surrounding the central plains, especially the north (states of Yan and Zhongshan), south (Chu and smaller states), and west (Qin), during this period than for the center. Among the options were fantastic applications of the lost-wax technique; more traditional relief-covered vessels; vessels with metallic and stone inlay; vessels with pictorial designs (see pages 112–114); or sober, unembellished vessels. Vessel types transcend these distinctions based on surface treatment. Thus a rounded *ding* with thick cabriole legs and a tight-fitting lid may be rendered with relief, with inlay, or with unadorned surfaces. By the

middle and late Warring States period, more vessels of sumptuous design were used away from the ritual altars than ever before. Foundries producing sets for such use may have been more prone to experiment and to seek visual effects. Patrons commissioning such equipment for their courts may have felt entitled to indulge a taste for stone or metal inlay or other attractive features.

The bronze vessels from the tomb at Suizhou (Hubei) constitute the largest assemblage of its kind ever recovered. The excavators calculate that almost ten tons of bronze were invested in the vessels, musical chime, weaponry, and other paraphernalia of the obscure Marquis Yi of Zeng. A high percentage of these objects have inscriptions naming him. Most of these objects must have been created in a Chu foundry, and an inscribed bell explicitly documents Marquis Yi's relationship to the king of Chu. Since the date of this inscription can be fixed at 433 BCE, this assemblage is confidently assigned to the late fifth century. In most respects the Suizhou vessels and their designs are based on norms evident in earlier assemblages as at Xiasi and Jinshengcun. Sets of *ding*, both the characteristic southern *sheng ding* variety and the covered variety associated with the central plains, are present in great number. However, the surface treatments include not only typical relief patterns but also an extensive use of stone inlay not common elsewhere. The many different sets of vessels required for food preparation and food service are each stylistically consistent, but wine vessels differed from them. Two large wine containers, *fou*, are the largest Eastern Zhou vessels ever recovered, weighing 650 and 720 pounds (292 and 327 kg) respectively. These containers and other wine vessels generally have relief decoration that exploits plastically rendered curls and spirals erupting from a dense dragon interlace ground.

A paired *zun* and *pan* originally crafted for another marquis are probably the most extravagant, complex, and technically challenging vessels within this formidable assemblage (FIG. 3-19). Each vessel was cast using piece molds, and each carries fields of relief decoration. Artisans then augmented each body with a variety of appendages that were first cast separately and then

3-19 Water basin, *pan* and wine vessel, *zun*
Eastern Zhou (state of Chu), early 5th century. Bronze; *pan* diameter 22 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (58 cm), *zun* height 11 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (30.1 cm). Tomb of Marquis Yi, Suizhou, Hubei. Hubei Museum, Wuhan



joined to the vessel. Altogether fifty-six components were assembled for the *zun*, while forty-four components were needed for the *pan*. These appendages were themselves made of several parts soldered together. The rim of the *zun* consists of sixteen units, each made using a lost-wax process. The *pan* vessel is crowned with equally complex units of lost-wax manufacture, soldered together to encircle the rim and to serve as grips. The writhing, three-dimensional interlace seen in these units is reminiscent of the panels on the unusual altar table from Tomb 2 at Xiasi (see FIG. 3-15 above), one of the earliest examples of the lost-wax process. The use of large appendages on a vessel, already a trend in the mid to late Spring and Autumn period, is taken several steps further in this pair.

Vessels from the royal Zhongshan tombs (Pingshan, Hebei) could not differ more from those made for Marquis Yi. The Zhongshan state was first established by a non-Zhou people, the Bai Di. By the late fifth century BCE their state was occupied by the prince of Wei (one of the three states formed after the partition of Jin) and for a time was a fief of Wei. Bai Di rulers reestablished control over Zhongshan by 378, and the state continued under their rule until its final demise at the hands of Zhao in 296. Given this political history, the Zhongshan kingdom became a laboratory of cultural interaction between Zhou and non-Zhou cultural practices. The contents of two royal tombs dating from the late fourth century illustrate this experimentation. The principal ritual vessels, such as the nine lidded *ding*, are compact



3-20 Flat hu vessel
Eastern Zhou, 5th–4th century BCE. Bronze with silver inlay, height 12¼" (31.1 cm). Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (15.103)



3-21 Wine vessel, *hu*
Eastern Zhou (state of
Zhongshan), c. 310 BCE.
Bronze, height 24¾" (63
cm). Tomb I, Pingshan,
Hebei. Hebei Cultural Relics
Institute, Shijiazhuang

and undecorated, although the largest tripod bears an incised inscription of 469 characters dated 314 BCE. This vessel also features cast iron legs. An inscribed *hu* vessel (FIG. 3-21) also has a sleek, unadorned body. Lively profile dragons attached to the four edges of this square-section vessel, on the other hand, recall the large dragon handles on several of the monumental *hu* discussed above. The bulk of the meat, grain, and wine vessels recovered from these tombs are similarly restrained in shape and lack surface decoration. Other vessels, how-

ever, display a markedly different taste. It is likely that the tomb inventory derives from several regions and foundries.

Other Zhongshan vessels utilized metal inlay to fill the otherwise smooth surfaces with intricate interlace designs of contrasting color. Silver, gold, copper, and stones such as turquoise all figure prominently in Warring States inlay objects. Renewed interest in inlay is evident already in the late Spring and Autumn period, as shown by the cast copper inlay on wine containers at Xiasi (Henan) or the gold inlay of *dou* vessels at Jinshengcun (Shanxi). It may be that foundries in the central plains were a major source of inlay vessels and other objects found in the Zhongshan tombs. (Compare the lamp of FIG. 3-9.) A fine example of inlay decoration from the period is a flattened *hu* vessel now in the Freer Gallery of Art (FIG. 3-20). Without the silver inlay, this container would be a simple round shape with flat walls mounted on a rectangular foot and surmounted by a cylindrical neck. The reddish-bronze color of the body contrasts with the silvery sheen of the inlay, created by hammering strips of silver into depressions cast in the surface. The decoration is generally symmetrical around

an axis at the center of each flat side. The wider bands and the thin lines that complement them create diagonally disposed patterns derived from bird and dragon motifs common in textiles (see FIG. 3-10 above) and lacquer wares (see FIG. 3-12). Here, however, all traces of head, claw, or wing have been erased. A square *hu* in the Zhongshan tomb exhibits similar decoration, although its diagonal motifs are more densely rendered.

RITUAL AND REPRESENTATION

"Ritual" (*li*) informed Zhou society. The concept of *li* embraced the solemn choreography essential for a state ceremony or sacrifice, dictated the chivalric norms regulating the conduct of warfare, and determined the etiquette when entertaining an emissary from a neighbor state. Not least, it defined the ordinary social interactions of individuals. Ritual determined the relations between the Son of Heaven and the lord, the living and the dead, and throughout the social fabric. Three compendia assembled much of this traditional ritual and etiquette.

The *Zhou li* (*Rituals of Zhou*) describes in considerable detail the organization of the early royal Zhou court and the duties that governed every rank and office. Most scholars now regard this text as a synthesis produced in the late Zhou period that expounds an idealized vision of Western Zhou. The sixth section of this text, missing in Han times, was replaced by the present *Artificer's Record* (see "The 'Royal City' Plan," page 93).

The *Yi li* (*Ceremonial and Ritual*) is an encyclopedia of ritual usage for the *shi* class, generally attributed to the late Zhou period as well. Early versions of this text are preserved among fragments of the so-called Han "Stone Classics" of 175 CE (see chapter 4, FIG. 4-3).

The *Li ji* (*Record of Ritual*), attributed to the disciples of Confucius, surveys a wide range of life-cycle events and rituals. It is a redaction of the Han period from disparate sources.

It is a cliché of modern social science that ritual reproduces culture and legitimates social and political structures. According to *li*, only ranking male members of the elite could preside at the

solemn rites before the ancestral altars or at the open-air altar of the local god. Their ability to assume this role set them apart. More specifically, their control over sacrifice, the ritualized feeding of the spirits, maintained the social order. During the upheavals of the Eastern Zhou these roles were claimed, in sequence, first by local lords, then by ministers, and finally by members of the lesser warrior, *shi*, class. Each of these social groups thus claimed both real and symbolic power. Each in turn patronized the artisans and industries charged with producing ritual equipment. *Li* was implicit in many features of elite material culture. In principle, if not always practice, its norms governed the size and attributes of cities and palaces, dress and regalia, chariots and banners, music and dance. Not least, ritual regulated burial, from the number of chambers and coffins to the words authorized to designate “death.”

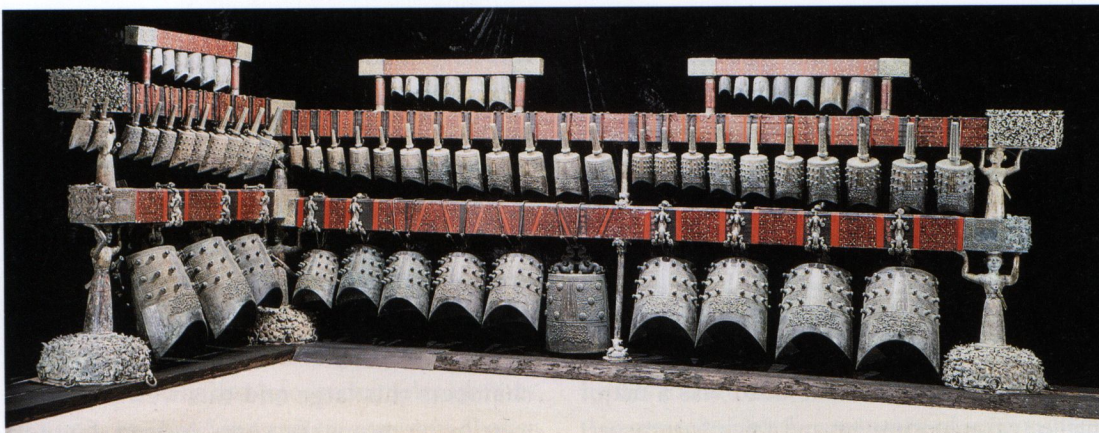
The ritual theater *par excellence* was the ancestral temple of a great lineage. The best-preserved example now known was constructed during the middle of the Spring and Autumn period (c. seventh–sixth centuries BCE). Located in the capital of the state of Qin, Yong, this site (in Fengxiang, Shaanxi) was explored systematically during the 1980s. The temple at Majiazhuang was enclosed by a thick pounded-earth wall that defined a compound about 290 feet from side to side by at least 230 feet deep (88 by 71 m). A central axis from south to north was marked by a gate house and the main hall. A large courtyard (about 112 by 98 ft; 35 by 30 m) occupied the center. Two halls of similar plan, both facing inward, flanked the courtyard. Aerial photographs show

the “footprint” of these three structures, especially their thick wall footings, traces of a stone splash slope surrounding each structure, and many sacrificial pits in the yard. This ritual precinct corresponds to the kind of temple setting described or assumed in the three ritual texts. Space is ordered, so the position of celebrants and participants may be carefully specified. The lord presided within the main hall, sometimes facing the yard and those gathered there. Ceremonies could be conducted in the yard (hence the sacrificial pits) within the front area of the hall, or within the enclosed building, out of sight. Ceremonies for lesser-ranking ancestors could be performed in the flanking halls.

Ritual vessels were essential equipment for the altar of a Zhou noble. The three ritual canons project a schematic system which correlated social rank and ritual sets. The most common system assumes the Son of Heaven required an ensemble of nine *ding* cauldrons complemented by eight grain vessels (initially *gui*, later *fu*). A local lord would employ seven *ding* and six *gui*, a high minister five *ding* and four *gui*, a lesser minister three and two, and a low-ranking *shi* merely a single *ding*. The numerology of this scheme starts with nine, later the symbolic imperial number, and matches decreasing odd and even numbers for the two basic foods within a ritual repast. The key vessel type, the *ding*, was dedicated to the preparation and service of meat offerings, a privilege reserved for the elite and symbolic of their life and death power. Inscriptions on cauldrons (see FIG. 3-3 above) specify several functional subtypes: *huo ding* for cooking, *sheng ding* sets

3-22 Chime of bells, *bianzhong*

Eastern Zhou (state of Chu), c. 433 BCE. Length 24½" (7.5 m), height 8'10" (2.7 m). Tomb of Marquis Yi, Suizhou, Hubei. Hubei Museum, Wuhan



“Suspended music,” the Zhou-period term for such chimebells, was a perquisite of noble rank, and in this instance also a gift bestowed by the King of Chu on his vassal, Marquis Yi of Zeng. The chime of 65 bells was recovered, intact and installed as seen here, in Marquis Yi’s tomb. Half a dozen musicians, standing and kneeling at both sides, were required for performance.

for presenting the different courses, and small *cha ding* for preparing condiments to flavor the roasted meats and fish. Precise equivalents of this scheme are not yet known for the Western Zhou period, owing to the lack of high-ranking tombs and complete assemblages, but for the Eastern Zhou many more intact assemblages are documented. Many Chinese writers believe that lords of lesser rank with larger numbers of *ding* than authorized manifest the decline and ultimate demise of ritual norms and stable social structure.

The Suizhou tomb of Marquis Yi (c. 433 BCE) and an earlier tomb at Xiasi (mid-sixth century) both held large chimes of bells (FIG. 3-22). Both chimes required several musicians to strike the large number of bells, sixty-five and twenty-six respectively. The Suizhou bells were suspended from a three-tier frame with a short arm meeting the main frame at a right angle at one end. The chime stand was in place and intact at the time of excavation. The Xiasi chime was not found on its frame, although metal cables used to suspend the bells were found attached to their shanks. Each chime consisted of several small sets of bells. Artisans tuned every bell in turn in the process of casting so that it produced a specific note in the musical scale. Moreover, because of their crimped elliptical cross sections, these bells actually produced two distinct musical notes depending on where they were struck. These two notes generally vary by a major or minor third. As in the pictorial scene seen in figure 3-24 below, stone chimes or lithophones complemented the bronze bell chimes, and many sets are known, some with racks for suspension. These chimes were only part of an Eastern Zhou orchestra. The Suizhou tomb was also outfitted with a variety of string instruments (ancestors of later lutes or zithers), wind instruments (pitch pipes and reeds), as well as drums. It may be that many of the women put to death at the time of the burial of Marquis Yi were musicians who performed for his pleasure (see below).

Funerary Ritual

Ritualized disposal of the dead was a major intellectual preoccupation and a significant aspect

of the economy during the Eastern Zhou. In addition to the ritual canons compiled during this period, other thinkers (Xunzi, Mozi, Zhuangzi) addressed these issues, and a few, like Mozi, questioned the wisdom of assigning so much wealth to this purpose. In spite of such criticisms, the lords and ladies of the period invested considerable assets in their preparations for eternity. Burial tracts became prominent features of larger cities. The mounded royal tombs of the lords of Qi were constructed on low hills overlooking Linzi from the south. The precinct for the tombs of the kings of Zhongshan dominated the landscape outside their capital (see FIG. 3-7 above). Extensive mounds are associated with the capital of Zhao at Handan (Hebei) and the capital of Chu near modern Jiangling (Hubei). The Qin necropolis at Fengxiang (Shaanxi) was some 8 square miles (21 sq. km) in area, with 18 clusters of tombs defined by ditches rather than mounds. To these remains of royal lords and ladies must be added thousands of other elite burials in cemeteries near every major urban center. Most of the objects illustrated in this chapter derive from burials.

Burial chambers were by this time elaborate underground structures. Some were designed to approximate the above-ground residences enjoyed in life. Chambers were installed in bedrock or surrounded with protective stone and an envelope of charcoal and sticky clay impervious to water. All tomb chambers seem to have been entered and their furnishings installed from above, with or without a convenient ramp. The chamber at Suizhou was 69 feet wide by 55 feet long (21 by 17 m), making it larger than any of the Shang royal tombs near Anyang. Its central room was large enough to accommodate the massive bell frame seen in figure 3-22 above and numerous ritual vessels with space to spare. The coffin chamber on the east side held both the double coffin of the marquis and those of eight women and a dog. Thirteen more coffins of other attendants (musicians?) were found in the west chamber. A veritable armory with 4500 weapons was installed in the smallest, north chamber. Burial chambers this large and this well preserved were by no means the norm. Instead, for most



3-23 Clay figurines

Eastern Zhou (state of Qi),
4th century BCE. Earthenware
with pigment, height 3" (7.6
cm). Zhangqiu, Shandong.
Shandong Institute of
Cultural Relics and
Archaeology, Jinan

of elite society, burials required an outer chamber holding a nested coffin or two and a few side compartments tightly packed with burial goods.

An increasing emphasis on a full complement of grave goods matching actual bronze altar vessels but made from inexpensive clay characterizes the Eastern Zhou period. Tombs at the Yan Lower Capital (Yi County, Hebei), at the Qi capital near Linzi (Shandong), at the Chu capital near Jiangling (Hubei), and at the Qin necropolis near Fengxiang (Shaanxi) are furnished with extensive sets of surrogate ceramic vessels. These are generally gray wares that mimic in their number, shape, and decoration the standard components of bronze vessel sets. Ritual texts refer to such vessels as "inauspicious" or "spirit" objects (*xiong qi*, *ming qi*). These objects actually predominate in the burials of the lower-ranking members of the elite. Another ancient custom was to bury attendants of a lord at his funeral ("following in death"). Although Confucius and others railed against it, this fate was common for male and female servants such as drivers, musicians, and personal attendants. Ceramic figurines seem to begin in burials by the late Spring and Autumn period. They first appear as grave furnishings for attendants. The best known examples are from Qi tombs in Shandong and Jin tombs in Shanxi

dated to the early or middle Warring States. In each instance, burials of attendants included small (3 inch; 8 cm) clay figurines (FIG. 3-23). Modeled from soft clay, low fired, and painted, these figurines enact the roles of dancers and musicians, and in some cases instruments are provided. Although there is growing evidence for these simple clay figurines in several regions, and many carved wooden figurines in the south, most tombs linked to high-ranking nobles do not contain such surrogates.

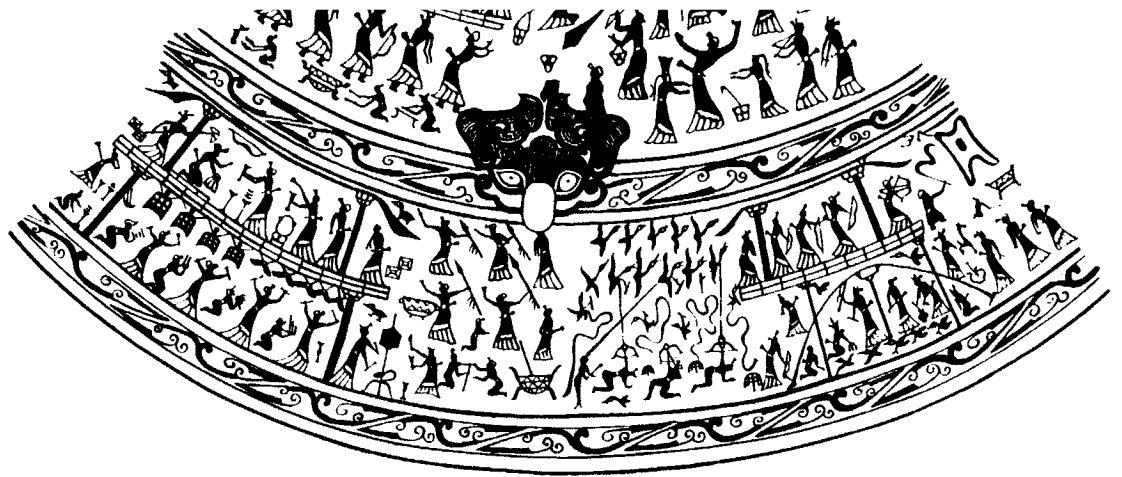
Representational Art

Our understanding of early Chinese art is based upon physical preservation. Perishable goods, from textiles to wall paintings, from bamboo documents to wood carvings, complemented the ceramics, jades, and bronze vessels. Thus the status of representational art remains unsettled. It is inaccurate to say that "representation" is unknown; more properly, representation was not essential to decoration on ritual bronzes and jades during the protohistoric period. Striking renderings of a face (for example, see FIGS. 1-24 and 2-25 above) belie any notion of inability. The scarcity of human figures and activities, on the other hand, demands that we consider the purposes of such subject

3-24 Detail of ritual

Redrawn from a pictorial bronze

This drawing reproduces designs cast into the surface of a *hu* vessel dated to the 4th century BCE. At left a ritual encounter takes place above a musical performance replete with bells, a stone chime, and a standing drum. At right are two scenes involving archery: bowmen aim their tethered arrows at birds in flight, while archers in long robes take aim at the target at far right.



matter. By the Eastern Zhou period, new purposes seem to be in play, and representational art becomes more common. Moreover, the range of media preserved also increases, now including perishable items such as lacquer wares that are rare from earlier periods.

The earliest pictorial designs appear during the sixth and fifth centuries—the late Spring and Autumn and early Warring States periods. This material emanates from find spots spread over most of the central states from north to south, with many examples in the center itself. The evidence at hand does not support the notion that the representation of these subjects required an external stimulus. Pictorial designs are found on thin-walled copper vessels (usually water basins, *pan*, and ewers, *yi*) rendered in engraved lines, on various food and wine vessel types (*dou*, *hu*, *jian*) where copper was inlaid into cast depressions, and among various lacquerware hampers and boxes. The common denominator among the objects is use outside an altar or other ritual setting. All could have been employed in the palace for the daily ablutions, eating, and drinking of a noble. As such they were luxury goods and hence suitable for decoration of a kind not deemed appropriate in solemn rites. There was no inherent difference between a lacquerware box and a metal ewer as a vehicle to carry representational designs. Pictorial subject matter embraces many aspects of elite life, including several of the “six arts” mentioned above as the accomplishments of a gentleman. Scenes of warfare on land and water, hunting on foot and with chariots, fowling with arrows on

cords, archery contests, music making, and ritualized events account for most examples.

Several *hu* vessels, such as this example from Baihuatan near Chengdu (Sichuan), display a structure with two stories and overhanging eaves (FIG. 3-24) as if seen in elevation or cross section. Within the columns of the lower level kneeling musicians strike stone chimes and suspended bells. A kneeling figure (of high rank?) faces several standing ones in a scene above. An attendant holds a fan over the former. Stands or footed vessels are in evidence, and the standing figures hold goblets or the like in their hands. This scene could represent a guest ritual or perhaps a rite associated with the archery, hunting, and warfare depicted on other registers. In any event, the consumption of food and wine is suggested, as is the ritualized interaction of host or lord kneeling and guests or servitors standing within a palace.

The pictorial style of these and other scenes is remarkably consistent. Figures are depicted as simple silhouettes in profile. Usually two or three types of figures are juxtaposed—warriors, musicians, hunters, for example—each type with its own standard poses and attributes. Figures are generally confined to one scale, but exceptions exist side by side. Rarely is any single figure differentiated by scale, attributes, pose, or placement. Figures act and interact by their gestures and groupings: several face several others; a group of warriors in file move toward their opponents. Symmetry is often present but need not be exact. Figures share a common base line, and sometimes one is supplied; they may also be stacked in superimposed



3-25 "Man and dragon"

Eastern Zhou
(state of Chu),
4th–3rd century
BCE. Silk painting,
height 14¼" (37.5
cm). Zitanku,
Changsha, Hunan.
Hunan Museum,
Changsha

registers within a single field. Little setting is included, but much can be suggested by a few lines—a hill or a pond edge—or by a building in elevation. In spite of their miniaturization, there is no reason to suppose that larger surfaces would have been any different. Now lost wall paintings probably looked much the same.

While designs on copper and bronze vessels are best known, lacquer wares and silk were also important media for representational art. The tombs at Suizhou and Baoshan (Jiangling, Hubei) and Xinyang (Henan) contained lacquered objects with examples of figural scenes in the style described above. Two paintings on silk also survive from this period, both from Changsha (Hunan), a southern center of the Chu realm. The example illustrated (FIG. 3-25) is a rectangle of darkened silk about 15 by 11 inches (38 by 28 cm) sewn to a stave at the top. A male figure in a long robe stands at the center, in profile, facing the left. His robe is drawn in line only, with some attention to collar, cuff, and elbow folds; a sword in its scabbard hangs at his waist. Under the man is a large dragon, also facing left, with its body in a U-shape and a canopy above. The dragon's body was filled in with ink wash, as was the canopy. Presumably dragon and canopy together are a kind of vehicle, and the man is driving it (note the reins). To suggest motion, tassels hanging from the canopy and the man's chin strap are shown blown to the right by a strong breeze. A second painting on silk depicting a woman was recovered from another Chu grave near Changsha. These small silk paintings most probably were part of the funeral gear carried in procession from the home of the deceased to the grave. Thus they anticipate the most important early paintings on silk, the banners from Mawangdui, east of Changsha, dated to the Former Han (see FIG. 4-24).

A WIDER VIEW: PEOPLES OF THE NORTH AND SOUTHWEST

The powerful states that dominated the central plains during the Warring States period shared much of a common culture. The royal Zhou domain and its immediate neighbors—Han, Wei, and

Zhao—occupied the center, but states flanking them were by no means “provincial.” Qi to the east and Qin to the west were advanced societies whose economies were intimately linked with the center. Important thinkers of the day moved back and forth among these states and recognized them as basically similar in important institutions and practices, including their devotion to Zhou ritual. Customs might vary between regions—music, food, or script—but itinerant scholars and royal emissaries were reasonably at home in these different states. The term “Hua-Xia” was used to designate these states and their common culture.

With the great northern and southern states, however, the situation was more complex. Yan and Zhongshan to the north and Chu, Wu, and Yue to the south stood apart. In the eyes of their own people there were distinctions between their cultures and that of the central plains. Most scholars see this dichotomy as an artifact of a process of “sinification,” by which elites adopted Hua-Xia customs as they consolidated power over the local populace. For example, it is likely that Chinese script and northern dialect were used by only some of the population of a southern state such as Chu. Religious customs also differed, and such literary compilations as *The Songs of the South* (*Chuci*) testify to a mythology and to religious practices that may have no counterparts among the Hua-Xia cultures.

A variety of names were applied to tribal peoples who lived at the margins of the Warring States. Across the west and north the most common epithets were Rong, Di, and Hu. The state of Zhao, when it adopted horse-back archery, called the clothing necessary “barbarian clothing,” *hu fu*. It may be that *hu* specified horse riders, a culture trait that did not characterize the Rong and Di. The founders of the state of Zhongshan were themselves Bai Di, who, like the elite of Chu, seem to have consciously adopted the trappings of Hua-Xia culture. The people of Chu encountered local tribal peoples whom they lumped into the general category of *man* (“southern barbarian”). Such peoples wore different clothing, worshipped different gods, and produced different arts and crafts from the Hua-Xia. They were

non-literate, and their speech may have been ancestral to such modern language families as the Miao–Yao or Tai.

This overview suggests a three-part classification of peoples and cultures in the late Zhou period. Within the central plains were a group of states that considered themselves Hua–Xia, heirs of the “Three Dynasties,” an advanced civilization in many respects. Sharing much but not all of this Hua–Xia culture were powerful states on the north and south. These states had local populations who did not share the Hua–Xia culture of the elite. On their margins were yet other peoples known by a variety of terms as “barbarians.” The powerful states whose elites shared the Hua–Xia culture constituted the “central kingdoms,” *zhong guo*, a term that only in modern times became the standard word for “China.”

A nomadic life based on horse riding seems to have developed early in the first millennium BCE on the steppes west and north of modern-day China. The earliest incursions of such nomads into the central states date to the late Western Zhou, and indeed the move of the Zhou capital eastward was a consequence of these attacks. One truly nomadic people appeared in the northern territories of modern Hebei, Shanxi, and Shaanxi and the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region by the fourth century BCE. These were the Xiongnu, a horse-riding culture that later became a major threat to the Qin and Han empires. With origins further north, perhaps in modern-day Mongolia, the Xiongnu appear first in the histories of the northern states of Qin, Yan, and Zhao. From their graves in the Ordos region, a desert contained within the great loop of the Yellow River, it appears



3-26 Headdress

Eastern Zhou (Xiongnu Culture), 5th–3rd century BCE. Gold with turquoise, diameter 6½" (16.5 cm). Aluchaideng, Hangjin Banner, Inner Mongolia. Inner Mongolia Museum, Huhehaote

these people traded regularly with their neighbors and adopted the technology of the central states. The Xiongnu used both iron and bronze to create distinctive tools and weapons, as well as various metal plaques and ornaments.

One of the most impressive finds linked to the Xiongnu is a group of gold and silver objects recovered at Aluchaideng in Hangjin Banner of Inner Mongolia (southwest of Baotou), now a desert region. This find probably came from a Warring States era burial. The headgear we illustrate consists of two parts, both made from soft, hammered gold weighing altogether over 2.5 pounds (some 1200 g; FIG. 3-26). An eagle with its neck and head made from turquoise stands with spread wings on a gold skull cap. Both neck and tail feathers are flexible so they swayed when the cap was worn. The skull cap in turn is decorated with designs of recumbent wolves and sheep repeated four times. The second part of this head-dress is a circlet of gold about 6.5 inches (17 cm) in diameter. It has two bands on one side and a single band on the other, both rendered as twisted rope. These bands terminate in animal heads: tiger, ram, and horse. This is most probably a crown for a tribal leader, even a ranking chieftain of the Xiongnu. Working gold is associated with steppe

cultures across Eurasia and was characteristic of such western peoples as the Scythians. The animals represented, both wild and domesticated, are found in the art of many cultures of the first millennium BCE. Their most characteristic use is in "animal combats" in which predators attack prey. That does not seem to be what is shown here, although the eagle may be imagined as circling above prey. Cloth or leather once connected the cap and bands.

Southwest of the states of Chu, Ba, and Shu was another powerful kingdom, one that did not maintain relations with the central states. Known as Dian, and centered around the lake of that name, this culture flourished in the plateau of modern-day Yunnan from the Spring and Autumn period into the Han. The Dian may have been ancestral to Tai peoples of recent times. Indeed, many customs represented in their pictorial and sculptural art suggest similarities to the many "minority nationalities," *shaoshu minzu*, of the present-day People's Republic of China. The altar table (FIG. 3-27) comes from a cemetery site of the Warring States period on Mount Lijia (Jiangchuan, Yunnan). The long-horned bulls are characteristic of much early Dian art, as is the device of a predator, especially a tiger. The table



3-27 Table

Eastern Zhou (Dian Culture), 5th–3rd century BCE. Bronze, length 30" (76 cm). Mount Lijia, Jiangchuan, Yunnan. Yunnan Museum, Kunming

is 30 inches (76 cm) in length. The maker created a flat surface by cutting away the back of the larger bull, and created room for the smaller animal placed at right angles by removing the belly of the same bull. In spite of these practical abridgments, the animals are carefully observed and tellingly rendered. This high naturalism contrasts with the more stylized animal motifs typical of northern steppe peoples.

Both on the steppe margins and the Yunnan plateau of the southwest, sophisticated cultures developed among peoples distinct from the Hua–Xia peoples of the central states. Their histories are part of a survey of Chinese art and culture both because their homelands today fall within the modern boundaries of China and, more importantly, because their interactions with the central states contribute to later history. The expansion of the Hua–Xia peoples (called “Han” in modern times) over the map of China proper is a fundamental long-term trend in Chinese history. This expansion had an impact on all of the native peoples who confronted that advancing Han Chinese population, a story still being written today in the Autonomous Regions of the People’s Republic of China.

This chapter treats a shorter period than the prehistoric and protohistoric chapters above. In each successive period, the evidence increases geometrically. The Eastern Zhou period is a fully historic one, with literary sources that

overwhelm us with detail when compared to what is known from authentic Shang and Western Zhou inscriptions. Moreover, the number of sites, quantity of artifacts, range of media, and types of objects surpass the material record of preceding periods. The evidence represents more different people in more different places spread over a greater geographical terrain. Simple story lines are consequently that much more difficult to discern.

One important story was the fundamental transformation of Eastern Zhou society within the central states. The aristocratic nobility established by the Zhou founders was gradually supplanted by a new social order. In this new society, men of lesser rank usurped status and power with great regularity, but the legitimating roles of ritual and cult remained significant. The steady consolidation of the more than one hundred states of early Eastern Zhou into a handful was, in retrospect, preparation for another story, that of Qin unification. Until the late third century, however, that outcome could not have been foretold. Even as the small states were disappearing, regional economies grew increasingly productive and ever more integrated. A widespread, common culture was in the making. This common culture was the initial stage of the Chinese civilization that has survived into our own century. Later chapters will track the growth of that culture and chronicle some of its interactions with neighboring peoples both near and far.

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CHAPTER 2

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CHAPTER 3

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pertaining to chime-bells and musical culture.

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CHAPTER 4

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London, 1993) and S. Cahill, *Transcendence and Divine Passion: The Queen Mother of the West in Medieval China* (Stanford, 1993) are exemplary, readable studies. R.L. Thorp, "Mountain Tombs and Jade Burial Suits: Preparations for Eternity in the Western Han," in *Ancient Mortuary Traditions of China*, ed. G. Kuwayama (Los Angeles, 1991): 26–39, and H. Wu, "Art in a Ritual Context: Rethinking Mawangdui," *Early China* 17 (1992): 111–44, offer guided tours of major monuments of Former Han.

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CHAPTER 5

Source references

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