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Early Chinese Artistic Traditions

Shang and Zhou Dynasties



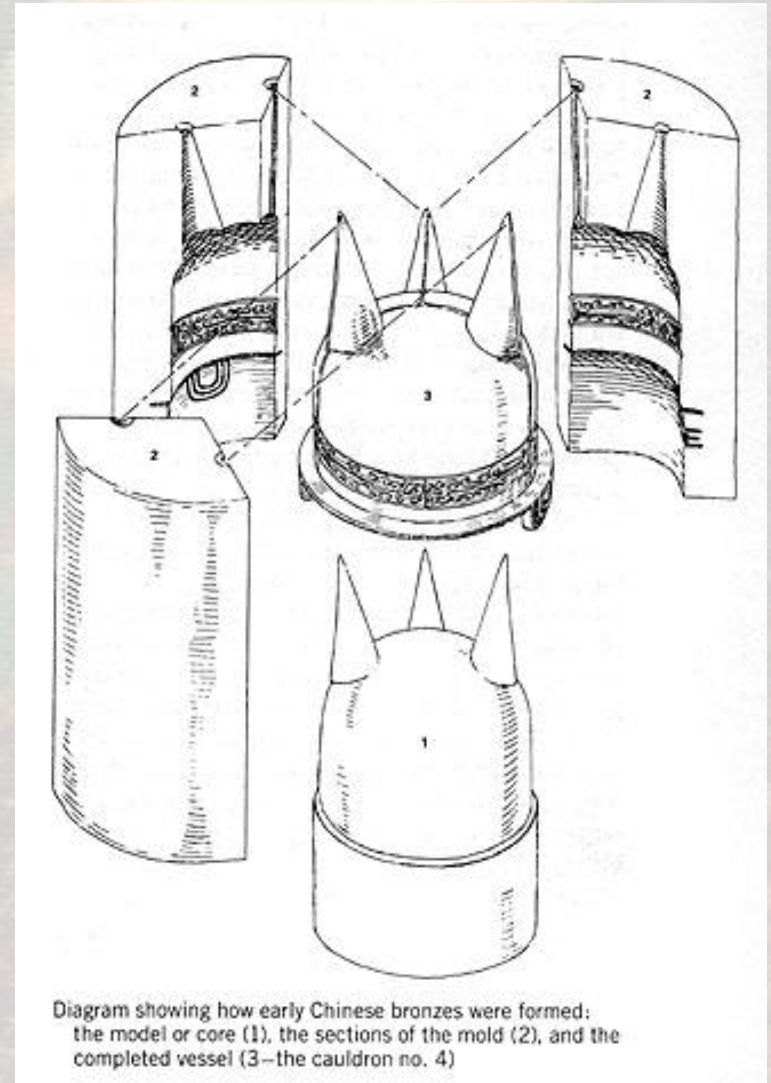
Critical Thinking Question

- Hypothesize how the bronze wine vessels (ca. 1046-771 B.C.E.) below were made. Explain the process you believe the ancient Chinese went through to make the vessels.



Piece Mold Casting

- Clay molds were made and molten bronze was poured into the mold.
- Once it dried the molds were removed and any appendages were added



Bronze Working Impacts

- Bronze age lasted from 1700 B.C.E. until 400 B.C.E.
 - Independent of Mesopotamia and India
- Shows an organized societal structure
 - Labor division and an artisan class
- Chinese tradition of presentation and displays of wealth/social status
 - Highly ornamented serving vessels

Shang China Artistic Tradition

- Artists worked in Jade and Bronze to make functional and ornamental works to adorn homes
 - Show a high level of sophistication and craftsmanship



Ornamentation

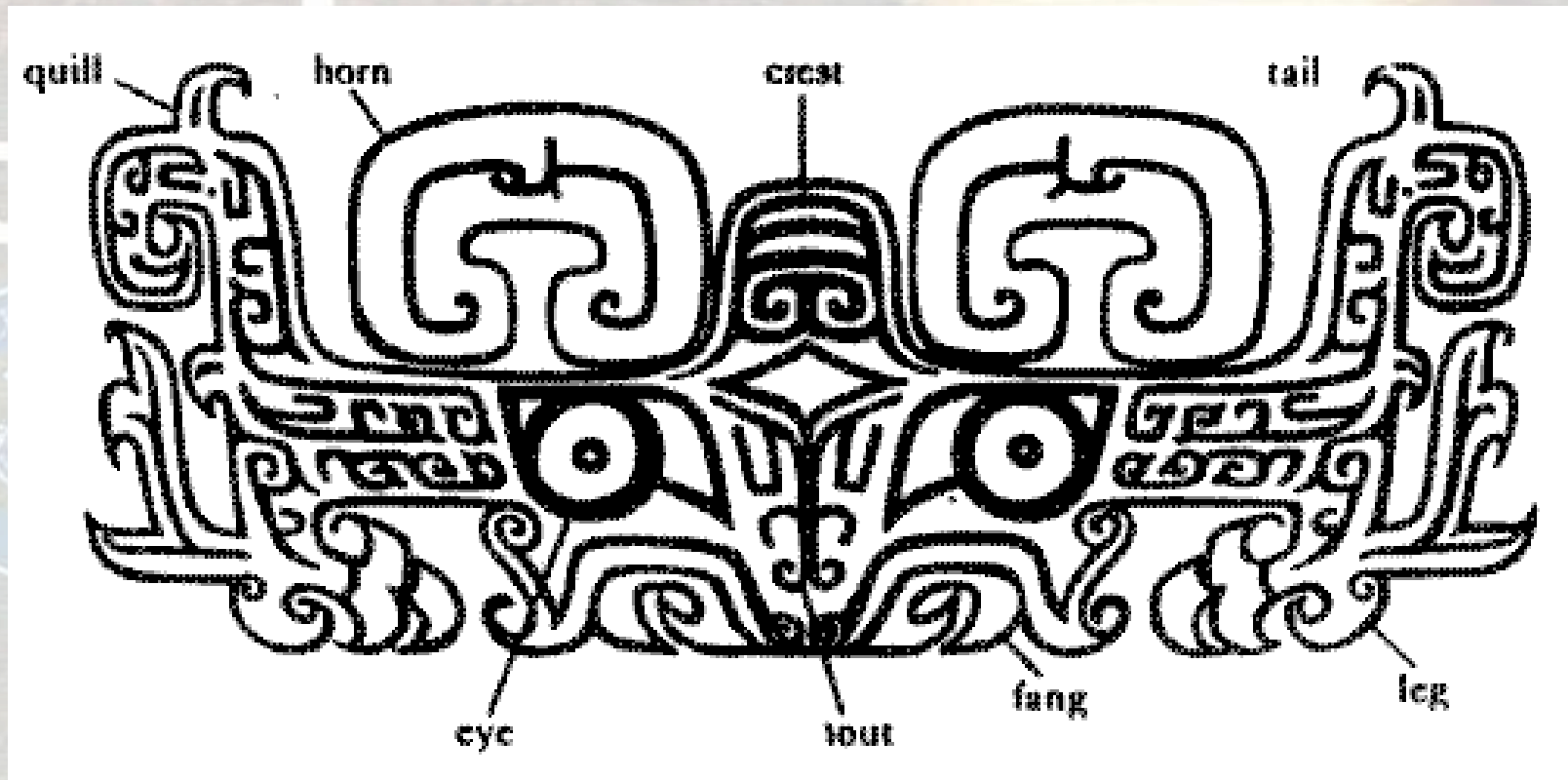


Diagram prepared by Edith Watts, The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Design by Sue Koch

A H Ornammentation

- Flowing and fluid design structure
 - Shapes flow into each other
 - Often depicting real and imaginary figures
- Abstract or Realistic



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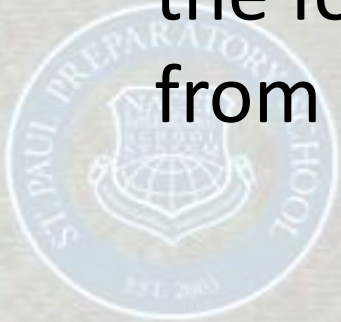
Jade Carving

- Required highly skilled carvers
 - Could not cut with steel, had to be sanded away using harder stones (quartz)
 - Led to very smooth surfaces
- Jade imported from Central Asia
 - Great value and possible magic properties



Artifact Grouping Activity

- Directions: Answer the questions on your Artifacts of Ancient China handout for each of the following artifacts. Use the information from your notes to help you.



Artifact 1: Spouted ritual wine vessel (*guang*)

Shang dynasty, early
Anyang period

(ca. 1300–1050 B.C.),

Possibly Anyang,
Henan Province, China

Medium: Bronze



Artifact 2: Altar Set

Shang dynasty–Western

Zhou dynasty 1046–

771 B.C.E., Shaaxi,

Provence

Medium: Bronze



A H Artifact 3: Buffalo

- Shang Dynasty ca. 1600–1050 B.C.E.,
Medium: Jade



History

Artifact 4: Nao (bell)

- Shang dynasty, ca. 1600–1046 B.C.E.,
Medium: Bronze



Artifact 5: Zun (vessel)

- Late Shang dynasty, ca. 1600–1050 B.C.E., 13th–11th century B.C. Probably from Anyang, Henan Province, China
- Medium: Earthenware



Artifact 6: Pendant in the form of a knotted dragon

- Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–256 B.C.E.,
Medium: Jade

