



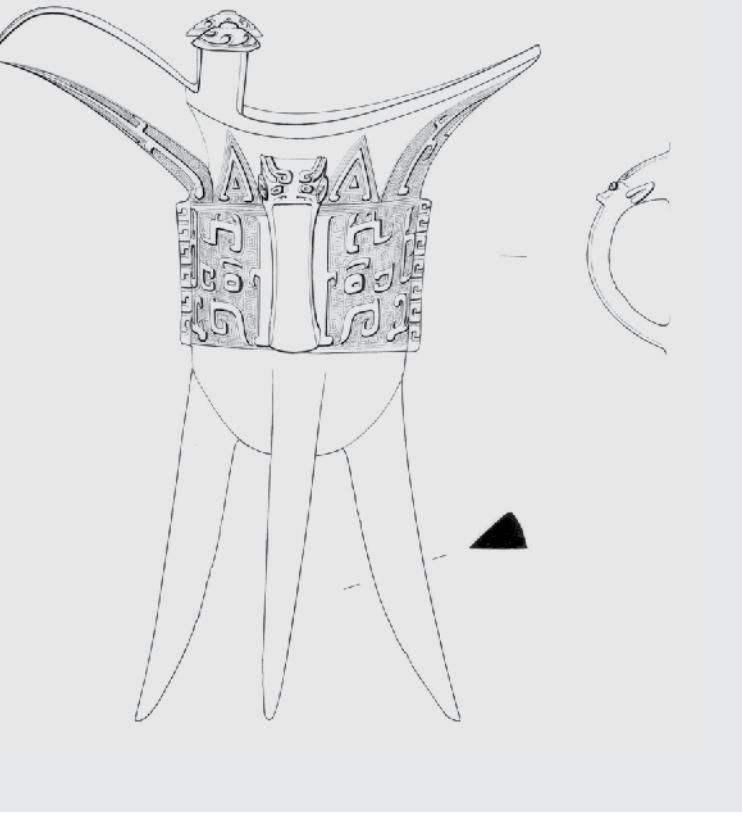
爵 Jue

Cat. 8
Period II of Late Shang Dynasty , H. 21 cm
Inscription: (a lineage emblem)

Supported by three, long blade-shaped legs, the body of this *jue* emerges from an undecorated round bottom. From the underside of the spout and tail to the lower end of the handle, the primary register, this *jue* is decorated with two *taotie* faces in low relief against a *leiweng* background (fig. 1). Various parts of the *taotie* masks are separated by *leiweng*. Above the primary register are sawtooth triangles, large ones under the spout and tail respectively are decorated with smaller triangles or *leiweng* (thunder) patterns (fig. 2). The upper end of the C-shaped handle is adorned with a bovine head in high relief. The handle and one flange serve as the axes of the two *taotie*, while two more flanges separate the *taotie*. Though decorated with a high-relief bovine head, the handle defaces the *taotie* flanking it, so for use in ritual occasions, the *taotie* on the opposite side should face the viewer.¹ Straddling the spout, the posts are flat on the outer face but rounded on the inner side. The conical caps of the posts are incised with

whorls with small cylindrical finials. The bottom and the three legs are plain. Through the central lines of the biggest triangles under the spout and tail mold marks can be seen. The surface is grey, mottled with green encrustation.

One lineage emblem was inscribed under the handle, on the plain surface of the outside wall in the place reserved for that purpose (fig. 3). This emblem consists of a lower *tian* 田 (field) element and an upper diamond-shaped element. This emblem has



been seen on a *ding* and a *jue* in the Palace Museum at Beijing (App., Cat. 8, 1: 2 and 3).² The meaning of this emblem has not yet been deciphered, as none of the available examples are from formally excavated sites.

In proportion, the MacLean Collection *jue* is very similar to *jue* M5: 667 at Xiaotun 小屯 and *jue* M539: 33 at Dasikong 大司空,³ representative examples of Period II of Late Shang (App., Cat. 8, 2:1, 2). The wide spout and disintegrated *taotie* mask also support the above comparison. The spouts of Period III examples are relatively narrower, and the disintegrated *taotie* of Period III are spread wider.⁴

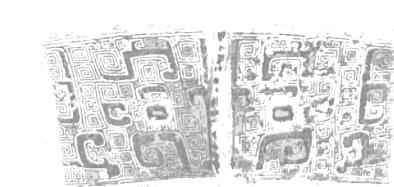


fig. 1

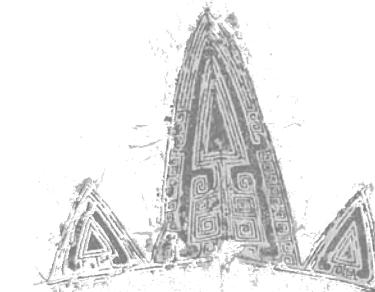


fig. 2

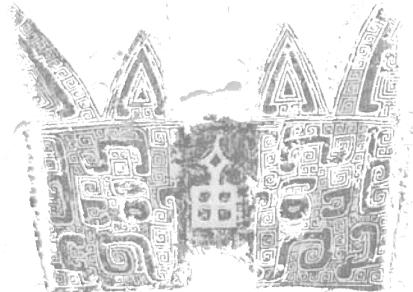


fig. 3

1 Yue Hongbin 2006: 257.

2 Yin Zhou jinwen jicheng 3.1138 and 13.7701.

3 Kaogu 92.6: 511, fig.3, middle. Yinxu qingtongqi: 372.

4 Based on Tang Jigen's comments on this piece.