

TWO EARLY
CHINESE BRONZE WEAPONS
WITH
METEORITIC IRON BLADES

RUTHERFORD J. GETTENS
ROY S. CLARKE, JR.
W. T. CHASE



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FOREWORD

The presence of iron blades in these two early Chou bronze weapons intrigued the late Archibald Gibson Wenley from the time he began to study them while working on the first catalogue of Freer Chinese bronzes that came out in 1946. In 1950 he asked the late Dr. William F. Foshag of the Department of Geology, Smithsonian Institution, to examine them from the scientific point of view; and the results of that investigation gave further stimulus to the founding of the Freer Technical Laboratory which was then in the planning stage and which was to open the following year under the direction of Rutherford John Gettens.

In spite of the calls for help that flooded the new laboratory from every side, Mr. Gettens returned to these two weapons from time to time; and during the ten years when the study of the ceremonial vessels was in progress much additional related information came to light. Roy S. Clarke, Jr. of the Division of Meteorites, Smithsonian Institution, and W. T. Chase, Assistant Curator of our laboratory and now Mr. Gettens's successor as its director, made important contributions at every stage of the work; and in recognition of this the book is published as the collaborative work of the three authors.

We are pleased at long last to publish this small volume, and it is only fair to point out that its size is in no way related to the immense amount of work that went into it. It should shed new light on the knowledge of metal technology in ancient China and also on other phases of the cultural history of that country some 3,000 years ago.

Freer Gallery of Art
Washington, D. C.
October, 1970

JOHN ALEXANDER POPE
Director