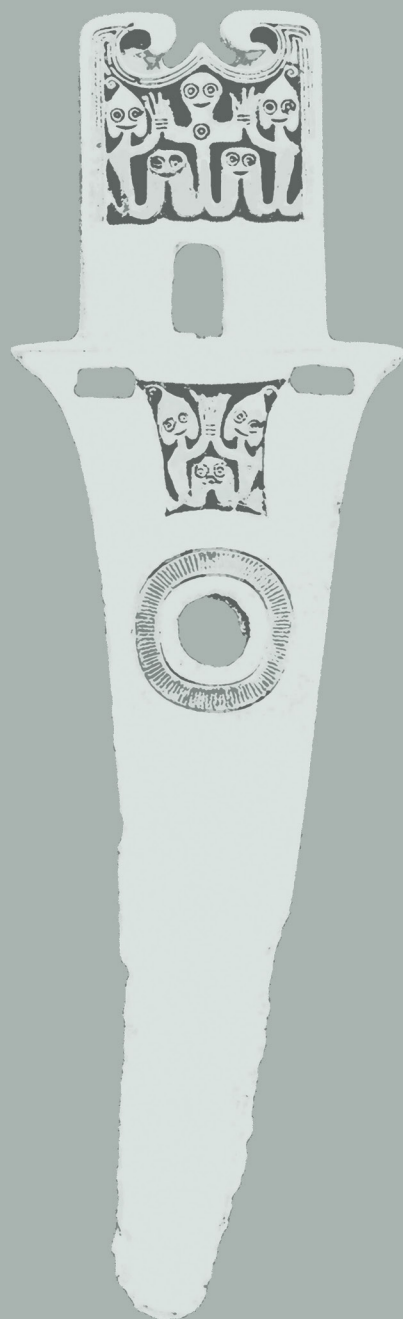


ART OF THE BRONZE AGE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA



MARTIN DOUSTAR



ART OF THE BRONZE AGE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

An exhibition held during **ASIAN ART IN BRUSSELS 2014**, June 4-8.

61 rue des Minimes
1000 BRUXELLES

MARTIN DOUSTAR

ANCIENT & TRIBAL ART

(+33) 6.87.29.30.74
DOUSTAR79@AOL.COM
WWW.MARTINDOUSTAR.COM



First, I felt in love with the patina, smooth and bright turquoise...

*It was a mysterious and appealing object in the gallery window
of an antique dealer.*

*I had the taste for Oceania, but it was something else, though not
quite extraneous... It carried both the refinement of Asia and the
spirit of a headhunter's weapon.*

*Later, I learnt that the people who made it were not so far apart
the seafarers who conquered the South Seas Islands...*

That was a Dong Son dagger.

FROM THE RED RIVER TO THE SOUTH SEAS



For many connoisseurs of ancient Asian art, the Dong Son culture echoes like the pinnacle of the Bronze Age in Southeast Asia.

Discovered in 1924 in the eponymous village of Dong Son, on the shores of the Ma River, the excavations conducted by Louis Pajot were about to reveal the relics of a 2500 years-old civilization.

The wealth of craft and the important funeral material uncovered will be compiled five years later in a major publication by the russian-born orientalist Victor Goloubew.

The explorations of *L'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* will continue till the end of the Second World War, but it is mainly thanks to their Vietnamese colleagues, from 1954, that our knowledge about the Dong Son culture has extended.

Until recently, the term *Dongson-kultur* invented by the Austrian anthropologist Robert von Heine-Geldern was commonly used to refer to all the archaeological sites dating from the Bronze Age in mainland Southeast Asia.

In the light, though, of excavations undertaken in neighbouring countries, in particular on the site of Ban Chiang in Thailand, but also in Cambodia and in the Chinese province of Yunnan, it appears that bronze casting has developed simultaneously in various locations, and these peoples have moved, exchanged goods and knowledge, and have mutually influenced themselves.

Furthermore, there has been a continuity over the centuries.

The ancient beliefs and iconography were reshaped, but somehow transmitted to the succeeding social structures.

The art of the different tribal societies within the Indonesian peninsula is, for instance, a great testimony of this archaic heritage. If one looks at sculptures of the Dayak or Nias Island this connection becomes an evidence.



1. A Dong Son bronze dagger
Northern Vietnam, 300-200 BC

2. A Dayak headhunter,
in ceremonial dress. Ca. 1910
Photograph by Charles Hose



This Austronesian continuity through the ages was also accompanied by an expansion towards the seas, through commercial routes and the exploration of new territories.

One of the most notable example of this aspect is probably the findings of Dongsonian bronze artefacts around the Lake Sentani, on the Northwest coast of Papua New Guinea. The date of these early contacts remains unclear, but these uncovered bronze objects, spearheads, axes, and glass ornaments, were highly regarded and treasured by the local Melanesian people.

In the Papuan tradition, an ancestral myth even speaks of a long boat coming from the north and commanded by a prominent character wearing a high feather headdress...



1. A painted tapa from Lake Sentani, Irian Jaya, Indonesia, circa 1920.
Courtesy of ArtDigitalStudio/Sotheby's



2. A bronze dagger from Dian culture
Yunnan, Southeast China, 300-200 BC

To conclude this brief introduction to the Bronze Age in Southeast Asia, we have to note that some local art styles clearly developed during that period. In this catalogue, we have tried to rely on these cultural styles to relocate the objects in a broader geographical and historical perspective.

In the absence of a detailed provenance, we referred to the typology and the iconography of the object, in comparison with similar artefacts found in a proper archaeological context.

Nevertheless, our knowledge about these cultures is still very limited and it remains difficult to determine definitely the exact origin of each objects.

There is much yet to discover and that is why the archaeology of Southeast Asia is one of the most exciting area of exploration for scholars, and collectors.

Martin Doustar

CATALOGUE



1. AN IMPORTANT DAGGER, *GE*

Dian Kingdom, Yunnan, Southeast China, 300-200 BC
Bronze, Height : 24, 3cm

Provenance: A. Eskenasy collection, Paris

This magnificent dagger comes from a group of similar bronzes found north of the Dian Lake, near Kunming.

Its exceptional patina and clarity on both sides of the blade make it an outstanding example.

See Barbier-Mueller, *Rêves de Collections*, page 63, or the Royal Ontario Museum of Toronto for comparable daggers.

There have been several theories about the tadpole-like figures depicted on the handle. Scholars like Charles Higham or Anna-Karina Hermkens refer to them as a headhunting motif.

But it could also simply illustrate a fishing scene. The Dian Lake was the main dietary source for the people living on its shores, and some of the endemic fish species swimming in its waters, like the Kunming catfish (*siluro mento*) or the snake head which can grow to a meter length and can be prised out by hand, show strong similarities with these stylized figures. One could also link the motif to a more aquatic variation of the western asiatic “ Master of the animals ” figure...Connecting with theories about a possible influence of the Eurasian and Scythian tribes on Dian culture.



2. AN IMPORTANT BRONZE BUCKLE

Dian Kingdom, Yunnan, Southeast China, 300-200 BC
Bronze, Height : 14,5 cm

Provenance: Paola d'Alatri and Howard Wei, Bruxelles

See Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, *La civilisation du Royaume de Dian à l'époque Han, d'après le matériel exhumé à Shizhai Shan*, 1974, page 211, who mention two circular bronze ornaments with the same characteristics.

This particularly large example is decorated with two bands of continuous spirals and a central knob incised with concentric circles. There is a small hook on the back of the piece with some remains of the textile to which the buckle was attached.

An important number of buckle ornaments were recovered from Dian burials, worn on the belt or the chest, they served as protective amulets.

This object will be illustrated in a forthcoming publication about the Bronze Age of Southeast Asia, in preparation by Karim Grusenmeyer.



3. A SPEARHEAD

Dian Kingdom, Yunnan, Southeast China, 200-100 BC
Bronze, Height : 26,5 cm

Provenance: Galerie David Dechamps, Royan
Sotheby's Paris, 18 Dec. 2009, lot 257

Similar spearheads can be seen in the Kunming City Museum, Yunnan. This shape derives from earlier spears of the Shang and Zhou dynasties, but the central decorative band consisting of simple spirals and concentric triangles is characteristic of the Dian culture. The steely green surface of the bronze is exceptionally smooth and attractive.



4. A SMALL BELL

Dian Kingdom or Western Han, Southern China, 200-100 BC
Bronze, Height : 7,8 cm

Provenance: A. Eskenasy collection, Paris

The shape of this bell is inspired by standards of the previous Chinese dynasties, but its pattern of complex spirals and concentric triangles is more characteristic of the Dian culture.



5. AN EXCEPTIONAL ELEPHANT BELL

Ban Chiang culture, late period, Thailand, 300 BC-AD 200
Bronze, Height : 24,5 cm

Provenance: Dr. Kurt Sandmair collection, München

This elephant bell of great proportions certainly stands out as a superlative example. It has a very elegant shape and a nice smooth patina with a rise of cuprite on the whole surface. But its most remarkable feature comes from the rope-like patterns on top of the piece, which form a frog head on each side of the bell.

Several bronze bells with miniature elephants are known, notably a very similar example on display in gallery 244 of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

It has been suggested that these large bells once adorned elephants.





6. A RARE DAGGER

Peri-dongsonian culture, Vietnam or Cambodia, 500-100 BC
Bronze, Height : 25,7 cm

The double-headed handle is a very rare iconography, possibly unique.





7. A VERY RARE KNEELING LAMP BEARER

Dong Son culture, Northern Vietnam, 300-100 BC
Bronze, height : 14 cm

Provenance: A. Eskenasy collection, Paris.

This kneeling bronze figure depicting a pregnant woman is one of the very few Dong Son lamps to have been recovered.

Another highly important lamp found in 1934 during the excavations conducted by Olov Janse at Lach Truong burial, near the village of Dong Son, is now in the Historical Museum of Hanoi (see below).

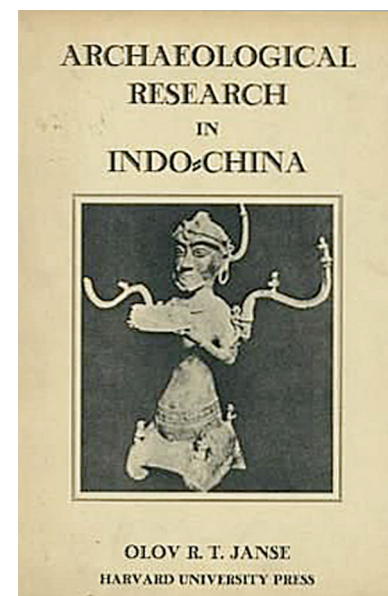
A less sophisticated lamp in the shape of a seated warrior is on view at the Musée Guimet in Paris. There is also a zoomorphic lamp from the same period in the George Ortiz collection.

We know that oil lamps have always played an important role in the culture of Vietnam, not only for daily life, but also for religious purpose and rituals.

See Olov Janse, *Rapport préliminaire d'une mission archéologique Indochine auprès de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, I*, Revue des Arts Asiatiques 1935, t. IX :4 p.144-153.

For a chinese type of figural lamp bearer sold for a record price, see Christie's New York, 21-22 March 2013, lot 1137.

This object will be illustrated in a forthcoming publication about the Bronze Age of Southeast Asia, in preparation by Karim Grusenmeyer.









8. A LARGE AND IMPORTANT SEATED FIGURE

Bronze Age culture, Cambodia, 500-200 BC

Bronze, height : 15 cm

Provenance: Karim Grusenmeyer, Bruxelles.

We know a number of bronze weights in the shape of a seated figure on a chair, see cat. n°12, but this is a remarkably large and spectacular example.

Conservation:

This object has been treated against bronze-illness by Mr. Louis-Pierre Baert, head restorer of the Cinquantenaire Museum in Bruxelles.

This object will be illustrated in a forthcoming publication about the Bronze Age of Southeast Asia, in preparation by Karim Grusenmeyer.







9. A RARE AND IMPORTANT FIGURE

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 500-200 BC
Bronze, height : 8,4 cm

Provenance: Davide Manfredi, Paris.

Figures are quite rare in the corpus of the Southeast Asian artefacts.
This fragmented yet large example was purportedly found in the area of Mukdahan, Northeast of Thailand.
It has an oval-shaped head, a rope-like belt, armbands and spiral ornaments typical of the material culture of Ban Chiang.
There is an attachment ring on the back of the head.

This object will be illustrated in a forthcoming publication about the Bronze Age of Southeast Asia, in preparation by Karim Grusenmeyer.





10. A MINIATURE FIGURE PENDANT

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 500-300 BC
Bronze, height: 4,1 cm

Provenance : Davide Manfredi, Paris.

See Ana & Antonio Casanovas, *Gems, monumental miniatures*, n°35, for a similar figure.



11. .A RARE TWIN FIGURE PENDANT

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 300-200 BC
Bronze, height: 4,1 cm

Provenance : A. Eskenasy collection, Paris.

This is a very rare depiction of twins, or a couple, holding their genitals.

12. AN EXCEPTIONAL SEATED FIGURE

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 500-300 BC
Bronze, height : 9,5 cm

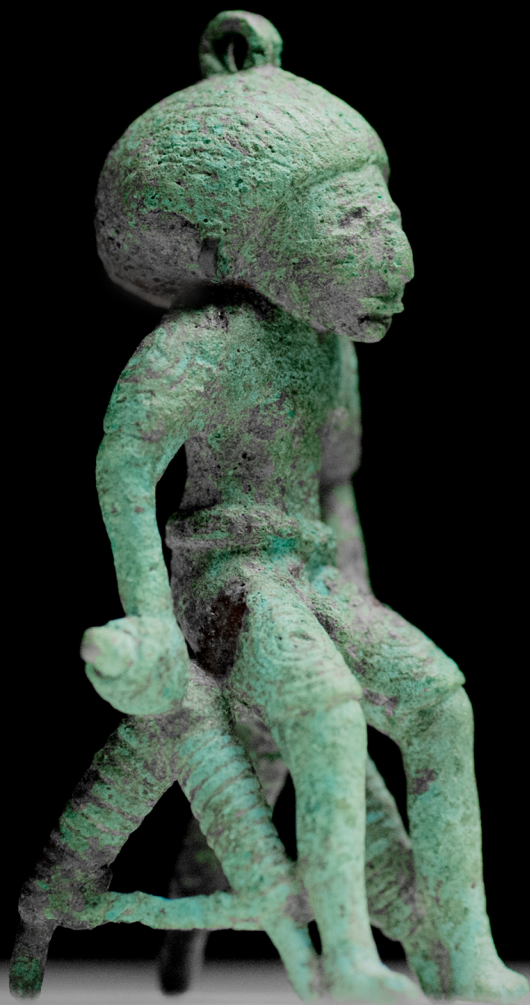
Provenance: Dr Kurt Sandmair collection, München
Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin

Until recently, this magnificent bronze was on loan to the Museum für Asiatische Kunst of Berlin, on view in the Kurt Sandmair Raum it was one of the highlights of the Southeast Asian Department.

These figures were used as weights for small scales, see cat. n°13. Their heavy curly hair and short stature refer possibly to the Negrito people known in several regions of the Southeast Asian subcontinent.

For a comparable figure see Ana & Antonio Casanovas, *Gems, Monumental Miniatures*, 2009, n°34.





13. AN EXCEPTIONAL BRONZE SCALE

Peri-dongsonian culture, Cambodia or Thailand, 200-100 BC

Bronze, lenght of the bar : 21 cm

buffalo height : 5,5cm

tray diameter : 11cm

Provenance: Michael Woerner, Bangkok

Karim Grusenmeyer, Bruxelles

Among the group of rare bronze scales found in the Southeast Asian Subcontinent, this is probably the finest example.

The balance comprises a buffalo used as a weight, a hanging bar, and an anthropomorphic tray with some textile remnants on its underside.

The buffalo is decorated with connected circles on each side of the body and a bell around the neck. The very fine openwork tray consists of a sophisticated pattern of four stylized human figures. The bar is decorated with a rope-like suspension loop and saw tooth pattern at both ends.

The textile remains were dated with Carbone 14 test :

-167 BC - 21 AD (97%)

- 94 BC - 37 BC and 7BC - 3BC (49.6%

Rafter NZA 28064, June 19th 2007.

This object will be illustrated in a forthcoming publication about the Bronze Age of Southeast Asia, in preparation by Karim Grusenmeyer.



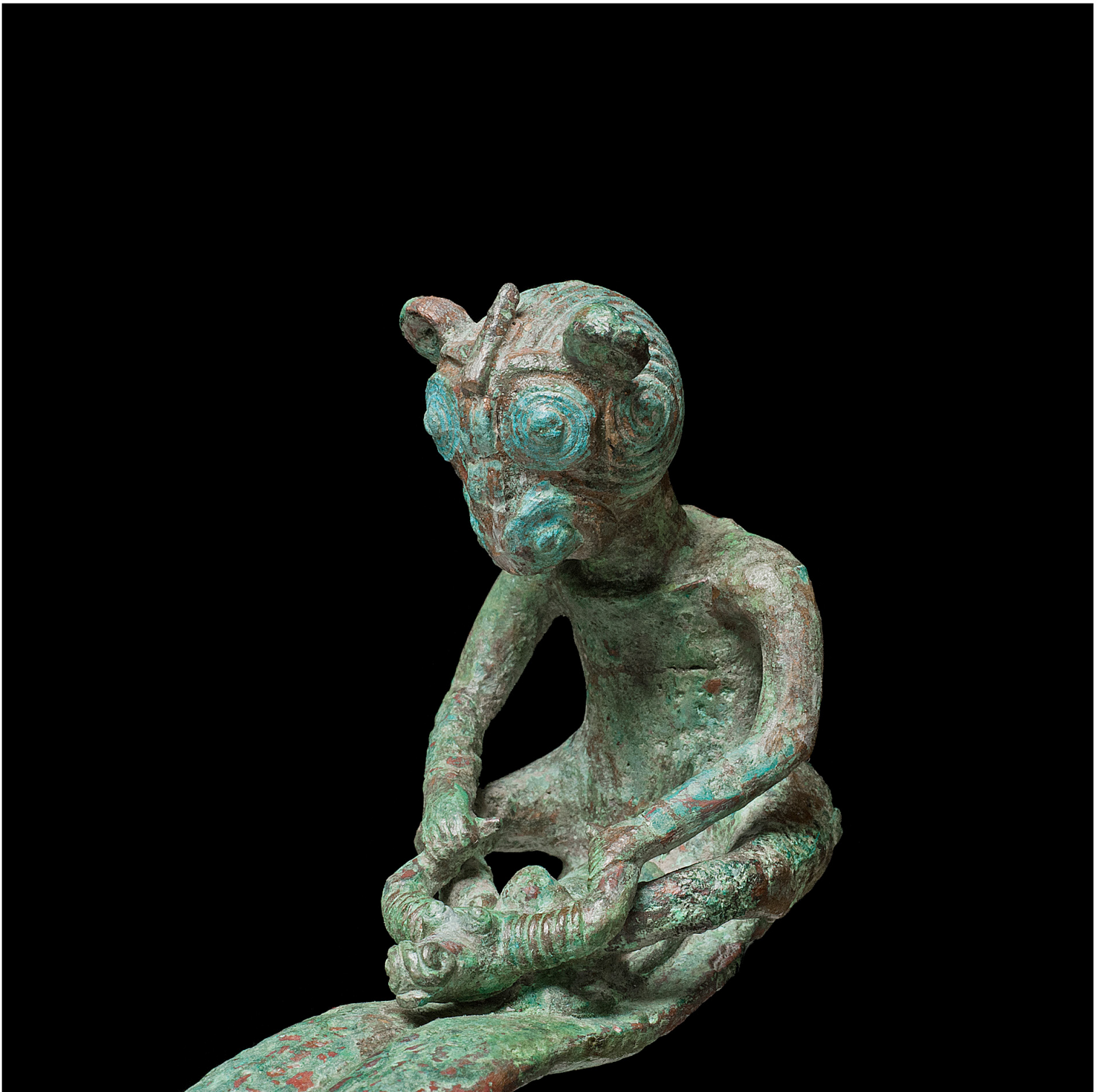


14. AN IMPORTANT DIPPER

Peri-dongsonian culture, Thailand or Cambodia, 500-200 BC
Bronze, length: 22,5 cm

Provenance: Dr. Kurt Sandmair collection, München

The iconography of this dipper, an ape-like figure ridding a small buffalo, is unique and quite exceptional.



15. A BRONZE DIPPER

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 300-100 BC
Bronze, height : 24 cm

Provenance: Dr. Kurt Sandmair collection, München.

This dipper has a refined geometric pattern and a very elegant shape which ends with a buffalo head on top of the handle.

This object will be illustrated in a forthcoming publication about the Bronze Age of Southeast Asia, in preparation by Karim Grusenmeyer.



16. A SPECTACULAR BRACELET

Peri-dongsonian culture, Thailand or Cambodia, 500-200 BC
Bronze, length (horns) : 17 cm

These bracelets with buffalo horns usually come with much shorter attributes.
As could be expected with such an impressive and fragile object, the horns were broken in four pieces and restored.





17. A SMALL BRACELET WITH BUFFALO HEAD

Peri-dongsonian culture, Cambodia, 300-200 BC
Bronze, length : 10 cm

A less spectacular example in the Musée Barbier-Mueller of Geneva, is illustrated in *Art ancien du Vietnam, Collections Baur*, Geneva, 2008. N°23.



© 2011 THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



18. A BRONZE RING TOPPED BY A RAM

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand or Cambodia, 300-200 BC
Bronze, length : 5,2 cm

19. AN IMPORTANT ARMBAND

Ban Chiang, Thailand, 200-100 BC
Bronze, length : 16,8 cm

Provenance : Dr. Kurt Sandmair collection, München

A few large armbands surmounted by elephants are known in private collections, this one is topped by a ram with an exquisite patina, and it is in pristine condition.







20. A RITUAL DAGGER

Dong Son culture, Thanh Hoa province, Northern Vietnam, 300-200 BC
Bronze, length : 21,9 cm

Provenance : Karim Grusenmeyer, Bruxelles.

Another dagger with very similar iconography and patina is in the Musée Barbier-Mueller, Geneva. Inv. 2505-56.
See *Le profane et le divin, Arts de l'Antiquité*, Fleurons du Musée Barbier-Mueller, 2008, page 464.

The bronze daggers with anthropomorphic handle are with the rain drums the most emblematic objects of the Dong Son culture.
Weapons of prestige, they have been found in the tombs of the distinguished elite at various locations along the Red River up to the Chinese province of Yunnan, and in the Ca valley.
The figures depicted on the handles are aristocrats or warriors, more rarely women. Though it seems that female figures were more common in the southern provinces, along the Ma river, Hieu and Ca rivers, region where matriarchy was still important.

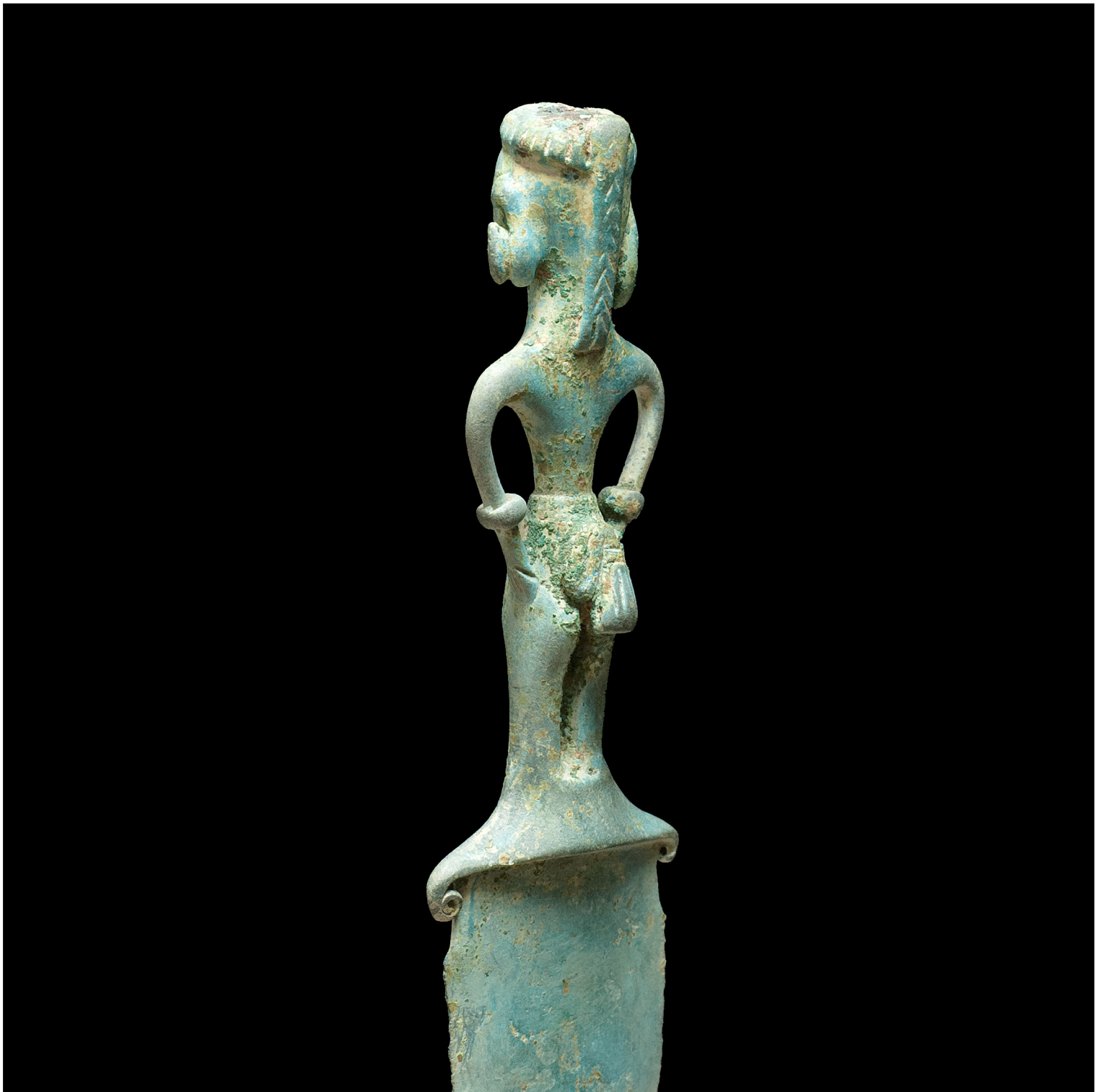


21. A SMALL RITUAL DAGGER

Dong Son culture, Northern Vietnam, 300-200 BC
Bronze, length : 18,6 cm

Provenance : Private collection, Paris.

This beautiful dagger has a smooth azurite patina and a particularity, the figure wears two different forms of earrings.

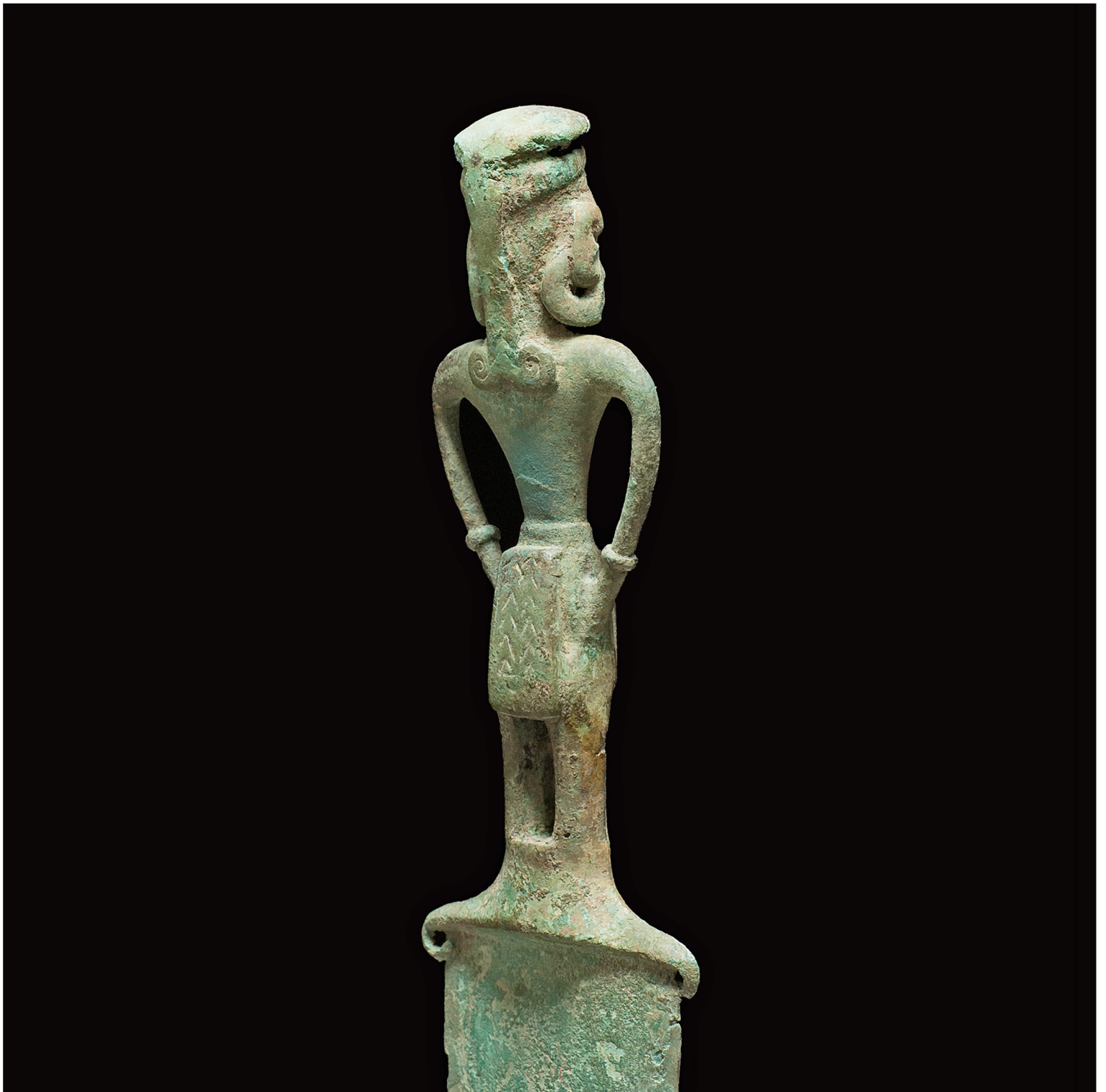




22. AN IMPORTANT DAGGER

Dong Son culture, Northern Vietnam, 300-200 BC
Bronze, length : 25 cm

Provenance : Private collection, Hanoi
Joaquin Pecci, Bruxelles





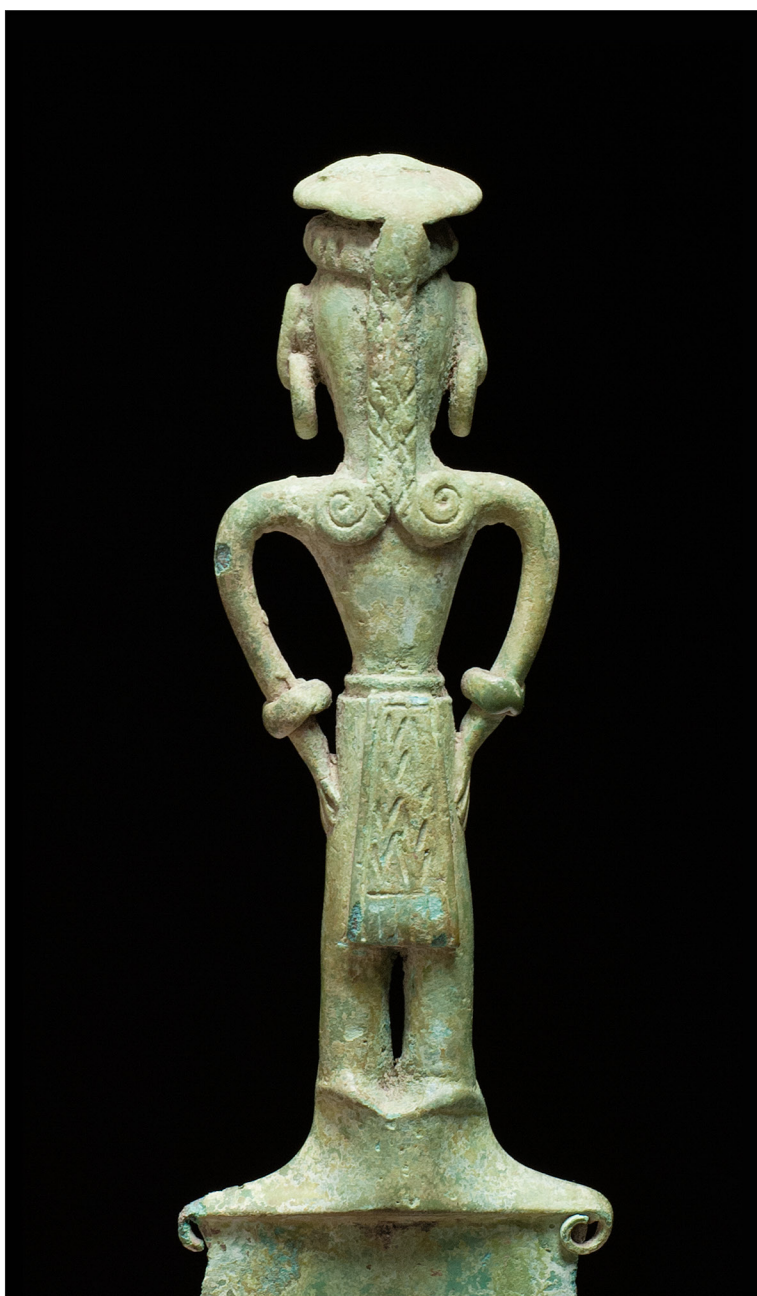
23. AN EXCEPTIONAL DAGGER

Dong Son culture, Northern Vietnam, 300-200 BC
Bronze, length : 23,9 cm

Provenance : A. Eskenasy collection, Paris.

With its impressive handle, magnificent patina, and pristine condition, this dagger is an outstanding example within the corpus of the Dong Son daggers.







24. AN IMPORTANT HALBERD, *CAULIEM*

Dong Son culture or Han Viet period, Vietnam, 200 BC - AD 100
Bronze, length : 57 cm

Provenance: Private collection, Paris

This halberd has exceptional proportions and a superbly ornamented handle.

A similar example is in the Historical Museum, Hanoi.





25. A BRONZE AXE

Dong Son culture, Vietnam, 400 - 200 BC
Bronze, length : 12,3 cm

Provenance : Daniel Lebeurrier, Paris.

A similar axe depicting human figures wearing high feather head-dresses is in the Barbier-Mueller collection, illustrated in *Le profane et le divin: Arts de l'Antiquité*, Musée Barbier-Mueller, Geneva, 2008. Page 456.



26. A PEDIFORM AXE WITH SUPERB PATINA

Dong Son culture, Vietnam, 400-200 BC
Bronze, length : 13,5 cm

Provenance : Pieter Comperol, Bangkok.

A similar pediform axe decorated with human figures on a boat and a group of deers is in the Barbier-Mueller collection, illustrated in *Le profane et le divin: Arts de l'Antiquité*, Musée Barbier-Mueller, Geneva, 2008. Page 225 fig.11.



27. A PEDIFORM AXE

Dong Son culture, Vietnam, 400-200 BC
Bronze, length : 15,1 cm

Provenance : Daniel Lebeurrier, Paris.

A large number of pediform axes were found in Northern Vietnam, most of them are decorated with simplified human figures and zoomorphic forms. This particular axe shows a rare seated figure (similar to the paddling figures depicted on drums and pectoral plaques) chasing a dragon-like bird.

The feathers of the bird of paradise were highly praised by the Dong Son elites, who traveled over the seas to collect them.



28. A SUPERB AND RARE BELL WITH BIRD

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 400-200 BC
Bronze, height: 10,8 cm

Provenance: Dr. Kurt Sandmair collection, München

This object will be illustrated in a forthcoming publication about the Bronze Age of Southeast Asia, in preparation by Karim Grusenmeyer.







29. A BRONZE BELL

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 400 - 200 BC
Bronze, height : 9 cm

This beautiful bell has a very nice patina and a subtle spiral motif which loop around the top hook.



30. A MINIATURE ELEPHANT

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 400-200 BC
Bronze, length: 6,4 cm

Provenance: A. Eskenasy collection, Paris

This object will be illustrated in a forthcoming publication about the Bronze Age of Southeast Asia, in preparation by Karim Grusenmeyer.

31. A TRIPOD VASE, *LIEM*

Giao Chi period, Northern Vietnam, 100 BC- AD 300
Bronze, diameter: 20 cm, height: 17 cm

Provenance: Christophe Hioco, Paris

Similar vases in the Musée Cernuschi, Paris, are illustrated in *Viet Nam, Collection vietnamienne du Musée Cernuschi*, Monique Crick, 2006, pages 61-62.







32. A SMALL SEATED FIGURE

Giao Chi period, Vietnam, 100 BC- AD 300
Bronze, height: 6 cm

The hanging ring on the back of the head and the larger ring at the bottom indicate the figure was most certainly used as a weight.



33. AN AXLE LYNCHPIN

Western Zhou, China, 1000-700 BC
Bronze, height: 5 cm

Provenance: A. Eskenasy collection, Paris

Rare harnessing element of a chariot in the shape of a seated shaman.
The legs and buttocks of the figure form an openwork of four connected rings.

34. A SUPERB BRONZE BANGLE

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 400-200 BC
Bronze, diameter: 10,2 cm

Provenance: Karim Grusenmeyer, Bruxelles



35. A SUPERB BRACELET

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 400-200 BC
Bronze, diameter: 8,4 cm, width: 10 cm

Provenance: A. Eskenasy collection, Paris



36. AN IMPORTANT ELEPHANT ARMLET

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 400-200 BC
Bronze, diameter: 10,5 cm, height: 6,3 cm

Provenance: Michael Woerner, Bangkok.

A few elephant armlets are known, sometimes in pair, but without a doubt this is the most attractive example.



37. A RARE AND IMPORTANT BANGLE

Bronze Age culture, Thailand or Cambodia, 500-200 BC
Bronze, diameter: 11,2 cm

Provenance: Karim Grusenmeyer collection, Ghent.

Although it has a simple grooved surface, this solid bronze armlet remains a fascinating object, with its perfect form and gorgeous pastel shaded patina.

This object will be illustrated in a forthcoming publication about the Bronze Age of Southeast Asia, in preparation by Karim Grusenmeyer.







38. AN IMPORTANT NECKLACE

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 400-200 BC
Bronze, overall width: 38,5 cm

Provenance: A. Eskenasy collection, Paris



39. A BRONZE NECKLACE

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 400-200 BC
Bronze, diameter: 16,4 cm

40. A RARE TREE OF LIFE FRAGMENT

Dong Son culture or Gao Chi period, Vietnam, 300 BC-AD 100
Bronze, height: 10,8 cm

The buds are ready to open and a bird seems to fly away from the end of this branch.. This delicate and unique bronze object embodies perfectly the refinement of the material culture from the Dong Son, and its technological mastering in the process of bronze casting.

This object will be illustrated in a forthcoming publication about the Bronze Age of Southeast Asia, in preparation by Karim Grusenmeyer.





41. A RARE POTTERY BOWL

Ban Chiang culture, Northern Thailand, 1000-500 BC
Earthenware with red paint, diameter : 16,2 cm

Provenance: Daniel Lebeurrier, Paris

Thousands of pottery vessels have been recovered from Ban Chiang sites, but this footed vase has an extremely rare iconography, four tigers appear in between the usual geometric patterns.

SHELL, STONE, AND GLASS

ORNAMENTS



42. A BEAUTIFUL SHELL BANGLE

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 1st millenium BC
Shell (*tridacna gigas*), diameter: 11,2 cm

Provenance: A. Eskenasy collection, Paris



43. A LARGE STONE BANGLE

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 1st millenium BC
Marble, diameter: 15,2 cm

44. A RARE SHELL ORNAMENT

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 1st millenium BC
Shell (tridacna gigas), diameter: 12,6 cm

Provenance: A. Eskenasy collection, Paris



Noulet, *L'Age de la pierre polie et du bronze au Cambodge, d'après les découvertes de M. J. Moura*, 1879, Plate V.



45. AN IMPORTANT SHELL BANGLE

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 1st millenium BC
Shell (*tridacna gigas*), diameter: 18,4 cm

Provenance: Dr. Kurt Sandmair collection, München

This shell bangle of exceptional proportions has a very elegant and well balanced shape.



Ban Non Wat, Northern Thailand, a member of an elite group buried with pottery vessels and shell ornaments.

Courtesy of Tom Gidwitz





46. A GLASS BRACELET

Late Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 300 BC-AD 100
Colored glass, diameter : 10,4 cm

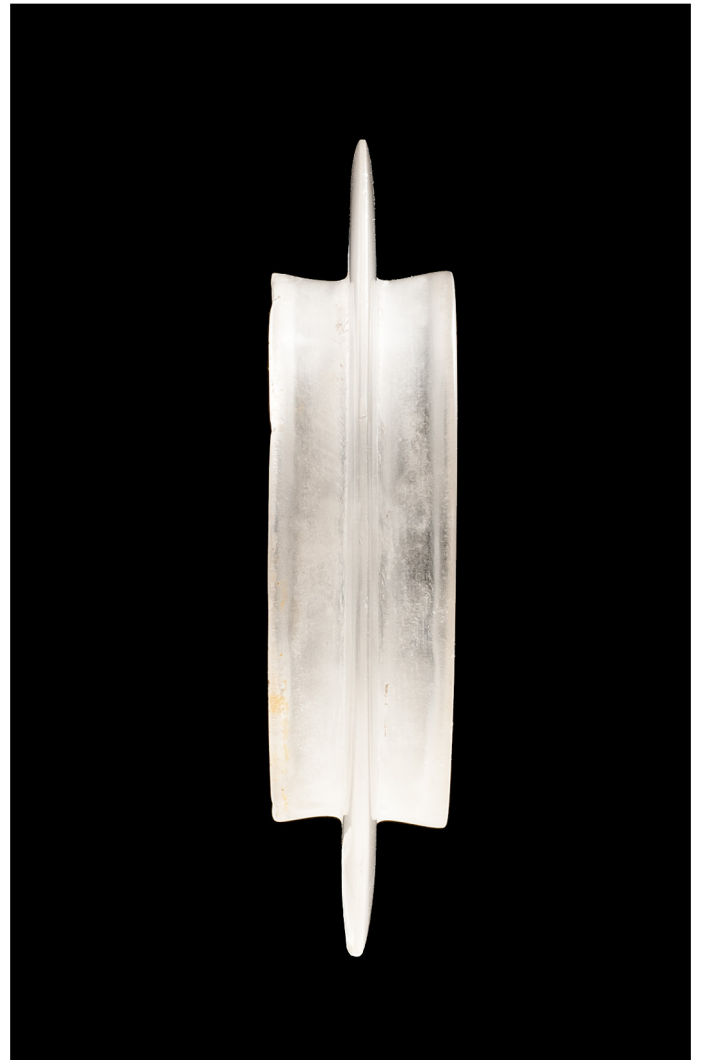
47. AN EXTREMELY RARE ROCK CRYSTAL BANGLE

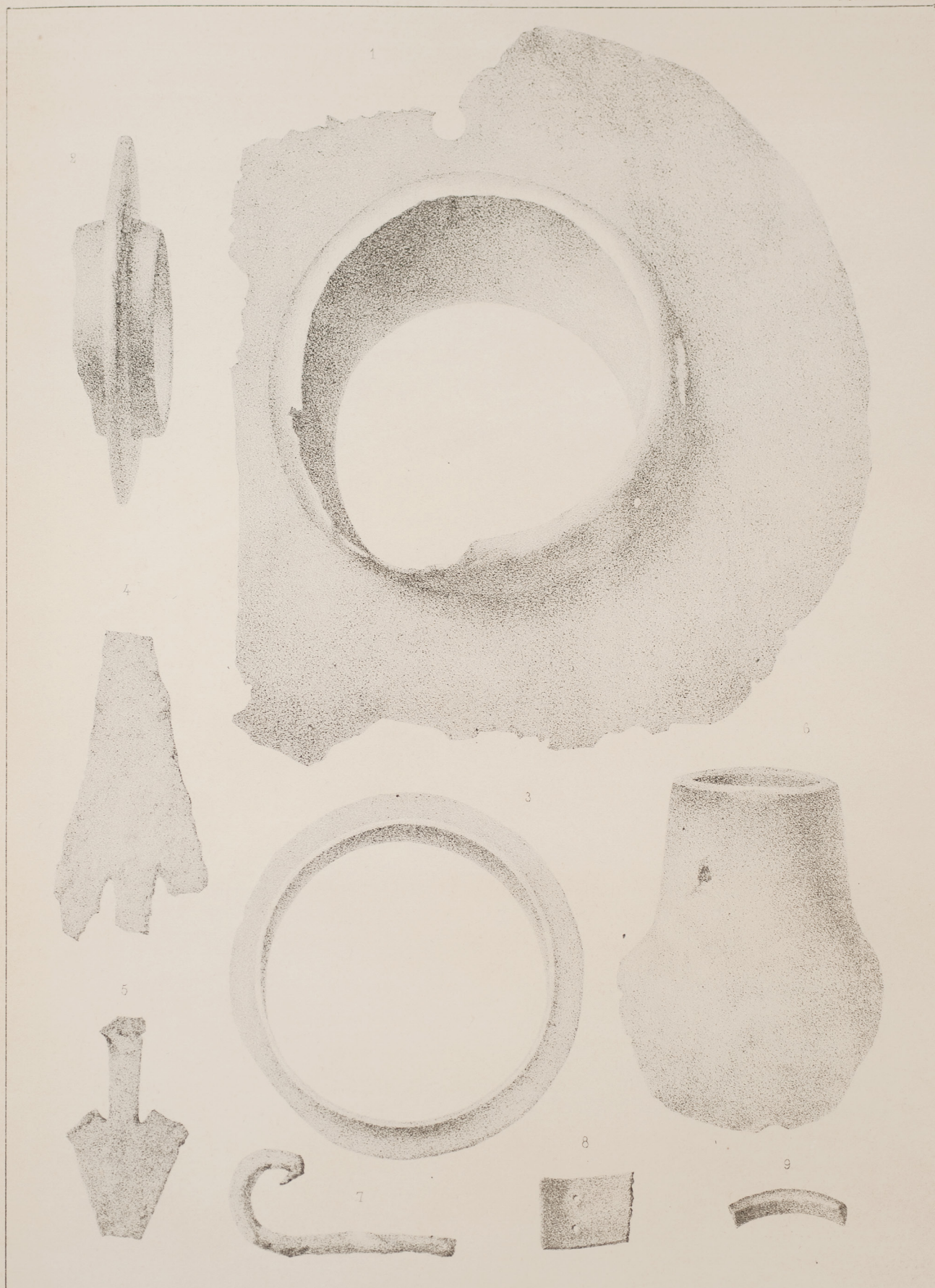
Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 500-100 BC
Rock crystal, diameter: 9,4 cm

Considered a high rank possession and a prestigious jewelry, rock crystal ornaments are exceedingly rare. Such large and skillfully sculpted bangle is even more scarce. Initially found as a pair, the other example is now in Karim Grusenmeyer collection.

The shape of this collared bangle is inherited from neolithic stone discs.

See verso, Plate VI from Noulet, *L'âge de la pierre polie et du bronze au Cambodge, d'après les découvertes de M.J. Moura*, 1879.









48. A RARE ROCK CRYSTAL BRACELET

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 500-100 BC
Rock crystal, diameter: 7 cm

The apparent simple form of this perfectly clear and smooth rock crystal bracelet reveals its complexity, an hexagonal shape, upon closer examination.



49. A SUPERB ROCK CRYSTAL RING

Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 500-100 BC
Rock crystal, diameter: 4,3 cm

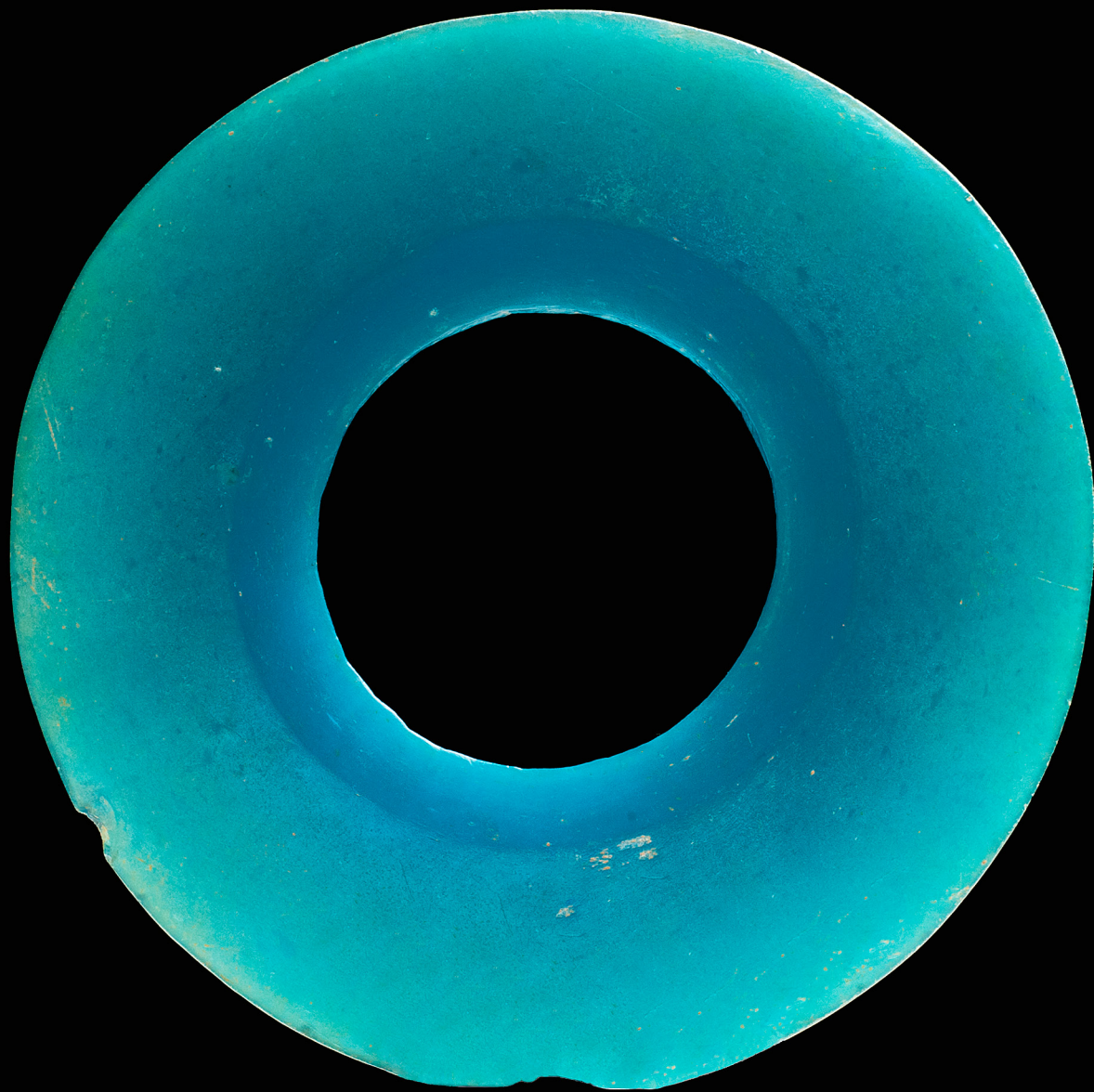
This rare gem-like ring has a smooth rounded surface and one flat side with concave rim.

See Monique Crick, *Viet Nam, collection vietnamienne du Musée Cernuschi*, 2006, n°23, for a comparable ring.

50. A SUPERB GLASS DISC

Ban Chiang, Thailand, 500-200 BC
Colored glass, diameter: 13,3 cm

Although extremely rare in such size and magnificent blue color, some sources mention other examples found in iron age sites of the Samon Valley (Burma) and also in burials from the later Pyu period.





51. A PAIR OF GLASS RINGS

Late Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 300 BC-AD 100
Colored glass, diameter : 5,5 cm and 5,1cm



52. A PAIR OF GLASS BRACELETS

Late Ban Chiang culture, Thailand, 300 BC-AD 100
Colored glass, diameter: 7,2 cm

53. A PAIR OF GLASS EARRINGS

Thailand, 200 BC- AD 500

Dark green glass, diameter: 4,5cm

54. A PAIR OF SMALL GLASS EARRINGS

Thailand, 200 BC- AD 500

Light green glass, diameter: 3,2 cm

This pair has a particularly nice color and texture.

55. A PAIR OF LARGE GLASS EARRINGS

Thailand, 200 BC- AD 500

Honey-colored glass, diameter: 6 cm

Glass earrings similar to the the group below were found in various sites within mainland Southeast Asia, dating from different cultures, indicating they were traded intensively all over the subcontinent.



And a little further north...

56. AN EXCEPTIONAL CEREMONIAL AXE, *FU*

Liangzhu culture, Neolithic Period, China, 4th to 3rd millenium BC
Stone, length : 15,2 cm

Provenance: Private collection, Hong Kong.

This stone axe has an almost entirely altered surface to creamy white, with beautiful shades of pink and minimal staining to the edges. It has been extensively polished and both faces are extremely smooth and soft to the touch. It also has the rare particularity to have been drilled twice. The joins inside the two holes indicates it was pierced from both sides, which is common to the Liangzhu workshops.

These fascinating stones were important objects for ritual use by the ruling elite.

A similar double hole axe is in the collection of the Zheijiang Provincial Museum.



57. A CEREMONIAL DISC, *Bi*

Liangzhu culture, Neolithic Period, China, circa 2500 BC
Stone, diameter : 13 cm

Provenance: Dr. Kurt Sandmair collection, München.

This stone disc has a partially altered surface and a beautiful creamy white and beige colour. The two faces are extensively polished and perfectly smooth. The central hole was probably pierced from both sides as there is a slight circular mark at the join, typical of Liangzhu period discs.

For a comparable example in the Hotung collection see Jessica Rawson, *Chinese Jade, From the Neolithic to the Qing*, page 132, and on the cover.



58. AN IMPORTANT HELMET

Ordos, Northern China, 700-500 BC
Bronze, height: 23,5 cm

Provenance: A. Eskenasy collection, Paris.

The presence of a horse in the round surmounting the top of this helmet indicates the wearer enjoyed a high rank. This type of helmet, cast by the lost-wax method, belongs to casting traditions from the Eurasian steppes.

An extremely similar horse helmet is in the Barakat collection, Los Angeles.

For a comparable study see Emma Bunker, *Nomadic Art of the Eastern Eurasian Steppes, The Eugene V. Thaw and Other New York Collections*, 2002, n° 46-47.





59. A RARE HORSE PHALERA

Ordos, Northwestern China, 300-200 BC
Gilded bronze, diameter : 11 cm

Provenance: Rupert Wace, London.

A large gilded bronze buckle of a rare type, ornamented by a ram head in its center, and an attachment hook on the back.



60. A SUPERB BELT PLAQUE

Ordos, Northern China, 300-100 BC
Gilded bronze, width: 9,1 cm

Provenance: Japanese private collection, Tokyo.

This belt buckle shows a typical animal-combat motif between a feline and a deer, but the quality of the openwork and the dynamic posture of the the confronted animals make it an extremely fine example.

Biblio.: *Nomadic Art of the Eastern Eurasian Steppes, The Eugene V. Thaw and Other New York Collections*, Emma Bunker, 2002.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baptiste, Pierre (collectif)

Art ancien du Vietnam: Bronzes et céramiques. Collections Baur, Musée des Arts d'Extrême-Orient, Genève, 2008.

Barbier-Mueller, Jean Paul

Rêves de Collections, Sept millénaires de sculptures inédites: Europe, Asie, Afrique. Musée Barbier-Mueller, 2003.

Arts de l'Antiquité, Le profane et le divin. Musée Barbier-Mueller, Editions Hazan, 2008

Bunker, Emma

Nomadic Art of the Eastern Eurasian Steppes: The Eugene V. Thaw collection and other New York Collections.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Yale University Press, 2003.

Casanovas, Ana & Antonio

Gems, monumental miniatures, catalogue d'exposition Parours des Mondes 2009.

Crick, Monique

Viet Nam, collection vietnamienne du Musée Cernuschi, Editions Findakly, 2006.

Goloubew, Victor

L'Age du bronze dans le Tonkin et le Nord-Annam. Bulletin de l'école française d'Extrême-Orient, XXIX, Hanoi, 1929.

Hermkens, Anna-Karina

The way of the objects, Analogical Inference and the Allocation of Meaning and Order in Lapita, Dong Son and Lake Sentani material culture. MA Thesis, Rijksuniversitat Leiden, August 1997.

Higham, Charles

The Bronze Age of Southeast Asia. Cambridge, University Press, 1996

Early Cultures of Mainland Southeast Asia, 2003

Janse, Olov

Un groupe de bronzes anciens propres à l'Extrême-Asie méridionale. Bulletin of the Far Eastern Antiquities vol.3, 1931.

Rapport préliminaire d'une mission archéologique Indochine auprès de l'école française d'Extrême-Orient. I. II. III
Revue des Arts Asiatiques, 1935, IX. 1936, X.

Archeological reseach in Indo-China, vol III, The Ancient Dwelling Site of Dong Son
Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, Bruges, 1958.

Noppe, Catherine et Hubert, Jean-François

Arts du Vietnam, la fleur du pêcheur et l'oiseau d'azur. Musée Royal de Mariemont, 2002.

Noulet, Jean-Baptiste

L'Age de la pierre polie et du bronze au Cambodge, d'après les découvertes de M.J. Moura

Archives du Musée d'Histoire Naturelle de Toulouse, 1879.

Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens

La civilisation du Royaume de Dian à l'époque Han, d'après le matériel exhumé à Shizhai shan

Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, Paris, 1974.

Rawson, Jessica

Chinese Jade, From the Neolithic to the Qing. The Trustees of the British Museum, 1995.

Tingley, Nancy

Arts of Ancient Viet Nam, From River Plain to Open Sea. Asia Society, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2009.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Karim Grusenmeyer
Acher Eskenasy
Hong Antiques
Kessarin Poon
Dr.Wolfgang Felten
Jacques Lebrat
Tom Gidwitz
Daniel Lebeurrier
Carlo Cristi

DESIGN & PHOTOGRAPHY

Martin Doustar

Printed by CASSOCHROME

May 2014



MARTIN DOUSTAR