



# ArchivesSpace

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## Oracle Bones collection15618192

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

C. V. Starr East Asian Library

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URL: <https://library.columbia.edu/locations/eastasian.html>

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Oracle Bones, circa 1300-1050 B.C. ....	6

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	C. V. Starr East Asian Library
<b>Source:</b>	Columbia University
<b>Title:</b>	Oracle Bones collection
<b>ID:</b>	15618192
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1300-1050 B.C.
<b>Physical Description:</b>	14 boxes 128 items
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	Chinese .
<b>Abstract:</b>	The Oracle Bones collection comprises 128 authentic, forged, and unconfirmed pieces of ox scapula and tortoise shells, also known as oracle bones (jiagu, 甲骨), that were used as a form of divination in ancient China during the late Shang dynasty, dating from circa 1300-1050 BCE.

### Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Oracle Bones collection; C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

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The collection contains 128 oracle bones donated to the C.V. Starr East Asian Library. The donors include: Ernest Ketcham Smith and Grace Orral Goodrich (spouse of Ernest Ketcham Smith, sister of Luther Carrington Goodrich); James H. Ingram; Cyrus H. Peake; Frank H. Chalfant and Roswell S. Britton; William W. Rockwell; Jeanette Monroe Bassett and Ellis Monroe (children of Paul Monroe of Teachers College); William Hung 洪業.

Most of the oracle bones came from the Chalfant-Britton Collection were later identified to be forgeries. Some genuine inscribed bones mainly came through the Ernest Ketcham Smith collection in the 1930s, which originally included a total of approximately 62 pieces with two broken pieces matched and combined, reducing it to 61 pieces. Unfortunately, the collection

has been organized numerous times, it is not always possible to determine when each oracle bone entered the collection and their provenance.

For additional information regarding the collection, please see:

Baughman, Roland (editor). Our Growing Collections. Columbia Library Columns 1(2): 22–26.

Goodrich, L. Carrington. Chinese oracle bones. Columbia Library Columns, 8(3), May 1959: 11-14.

Tong, Te-Kong. The Tortoise Shell Which Set Off a Mighty Chain Reaction. Columbia Library Columns, 16(1967): 11-18.

美国所藏甲骨录/周鸿翔编著. Oracle bone collections in the United States / by Hung-hsiang Chou, 1976

Smith, Adam. Chapter 7: The Ernest K. Smith Collection of Shang Divination Inscriptions at Columbia University and the Evidence for Scribal Training at Anyang. In Rutz M, Kersel MM. Archaeologies of Text : Archaeology, Technology, and Ethics. Oxbow Books; 2014.

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## Scope and Contents

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The Oracle Bones collection consists of 128 pieces of authentic, forged, and unconfirmed oracle bones. Also included are digitized images of the 3 pieces of oracle bones from RBML Smith Chinese Rare 39.

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## Arrangement

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The collection is arranged in 1 series.

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

C. V. Starr East Asian Library

300 Kent Hall

1140 Amsterdam Ave

M.C. 3901

New York, NY 10027

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[starr@library.columbia.edu](mailto:starr@library.columbia.edu)

URL: <https://library.columbia.edu/locations/eastasian.html>

### Conditions Governing Access

Use of digitized images is recommended for this collection: [大学数字图书馆国际合作计划 CADAL Project](#). 甲骨数字化 Digitized Oracle Bone Collections: <http://115.236.46.131:10085/special/oraclebones/index-c.html>

Please contact [starr-spec@library.columbia.edu](mailto:starr-spec@library.columbia.edu) for more information.

The physical collection is currently unavailable to request due to the renovation of the C.V. Starr Library.

### Processing Information

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to determine when each oracle bone entered the collection, which has been reorganized numerous times. Some items from the collection were surveyed by Hung-hsiang Chou 周鸿翔 in 1970s, Qi Wenxin 齐文心 in 1997, and Elizabeth Childs-Johnson 江伊莉 in 2001.

In 2015, the collection was digitized in collaboration with the Chinese Academic Digital Associative Library (CADAL) at Zhejiang University Library, using reflective transformation imaging (RTI), which captures the surface color and shape of the bone and allows users to "re-light" the bone from any direction, creating an interactive reproduction of each fragment. In preparation for the digitization, the inventory of oracle bones at C.V. Starr East Asian Librarian was created by Ria Koopmans-Debruijn. The project was completed in 2017 and the digital collection is now accessible via [大学数字图书馆国际合作计划 CADAL Project](#). 甲骨数字化 Digitized Oracle Bone Collections.

Finding aid created from inventory by Yingwen Huang, 2021.

## Conditions Governing Use

Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. The C.V. Starr East Asian Library maintains ownership of the physical material only. Copyright remains with the creator and his/her heirs. The responsibility to secure copyright permission rests with the patron.

## Accruals

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. Contact [starr@library.columbia.edu](mailto:starr@library.columbia.edu) for more information.

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## Related Materials

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### Related Materials

Chalfant-Britton collection; C. V. Starr East Asian Library, Columbia University Library.

David Eugene Smith Chinese Rare 39; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- oracle bones
- oracle bone script
- Oracle bones -- China
- Chinese language -- Writing -- Jia gu style
- Oracle bones -- China -- Anyang Xian
- Columbia University

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## Collection Inventory

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### Oracle Bones, circa 1300-1050 B.C.

Conditions Governing Access:

**Conditions Governing Access**

Use of digitized images is recommended for this collection: [大学数字图书馆国际合作计划 CADAL Project. 甲骨数字化 Digitized Oracle Bone Collections: http://115.236.46.131:10085/special/oraclebones/index-c.html](#)

Please contact [starr-spec@library.columbia.edu](mailto:starr-spec@library.columbia.edu) for more information.

Title/Description	Instances
Item 001	
<b>Scope and Contents</b>	
Chou:1) USB 414 / 2) USB 415. Bone.	
Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection	
Item 002	
<b>Scope and Contents</b>	
Chou:3) USB 416. Bone.	
Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection	
Item 003	
<b>Scope and Contents</b>	
Chou:4) USB 417. Bone.	
Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection	
Item 004	
<b>Scope and Contents</b>	
Chou:5) USB 418. Bone.	
Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection	
Item 005	
<b>Scope and Contents</b>	
Chou:6) USB 419. Bone.	
Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection	
Item 006	
<b>Scope and Contents</b>	
Chou:7) USS 420. Shell.	
Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection	
Item 007	

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:8) USS 421. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 008

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:9) USS 422. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 009

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:10) USS 423. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 010

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:11) USS 424. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 011

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:25) USS 438. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 012

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:12) USB 425. Bone.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 013

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:13) USS 426. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 014

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:14) USS 427. Shell.



Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 015

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:15) USB 428. Bone.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 016

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:16) USS 429. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 017

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:17) USB 430. Bone.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 018

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:18) USS 431. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 019

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:19) USS 432. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 020

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:20) USB 433. Bone.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 021

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:21) USS 434. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

Item 022

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:22) USS 435. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 023

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:23) USS 436. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 024

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:24) USS 437. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 025

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:26) USS 439. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 026

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:27) USS 440. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 027

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:28) USS 441. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 028

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:29) USB 442. Bone.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 029

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:30) USS 443. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 030

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:31) USS 444. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 031

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:32) USS 445. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 032

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:33) USB 446. Bone.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 033

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:34) USS 447. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 034

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:35) USB 448. Bone.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 035

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:36) USS 449. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 036

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:37) USS 450. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 037

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:38) USS 451. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 038

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:39) USB 452. Bone.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 039

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:40) USS 454. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 040

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:41) USS 455. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 041

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:42) USB 453. Bone.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 042

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:43) USB 456. Bone.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 043

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:44) USB 457. Bone.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

Item 044

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:45) USS 458. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 045

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:46) USB 459. Bone.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 046

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:47) USS 460. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 047

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:48) USS 461. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 048

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:49) USS 462. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 049

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:50) USS 463. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 050

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:51) USS 464. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 051

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:52) USS 465. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 052

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:53) USS 466. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 053

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:54) USS 467. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 054

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:55) USS 468. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 055

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:56) USS 469. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 056

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:57) USS 470. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 057

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:58) USS 471. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

---

Item 058

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:59) USS 472. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 059

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:60) USS 473. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 060

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:61) USS 474. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 061

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:62) USS 475. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 062

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:63) USS 476. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 063

**Scope and Contents**

Chou:64) USS 477. Shell.

Genuine. E.K. Smith Collection

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Item 064

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious. Hubbard Collection

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Item 065

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious. Hubbard Collection

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Item 066

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious. Hubbard Collection

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Item 067

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious. Hubbard Collection

---

Item 068

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious. Hubbard Collection

---

Item 069 verso

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious. Hubbard Collection

---

Item 069 recto

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious. Hubbard Collection

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Item 070

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious. Hubbard Collection

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Item 071

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious. Hubbard Collection

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Item 072

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious. Hubbard Collection

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Item 073

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious. Hubbard Collection

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Item 074

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious (E. Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01) Hubbard  
Collection? Chip loose.

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Item 075



**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (E. Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01) Hubbard  
Collection?

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Item 076

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious? (E. Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01) Hubbard  
Collection?

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Item 077

**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (E. Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01) Hubbard  
Collection?

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Item 078

**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (E. Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01) Hubbard  
Collection?

---

Item 079

**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (E. Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01) Hubbard  
Collection?

---

Item 080

**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (E. Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01) Hubbard  
Collection? Chip loose.

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Item 081

**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (E. Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01) Hubbard  
Collection?

---

Item 082

**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (E. Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01) Hubbard  
Collection? Chip loose.

---

Item 083

**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (E. Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01) Hubbard  
Collection?

---

Item 084

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious

---

Item 085 verso

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious

---

Item 085 recto

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious

---

Item 086

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious

---

Item 087

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious

---

Item 088

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious

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Item 089

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious

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Item 090

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious

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Item 091

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious

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Item 092

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**Scope and Contents**

Spurious

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Item 093

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious

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Item 094

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious

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Item 095

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious? Chalfant-Britton Collection

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Item 096

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious? Chalfant-Britton Collection

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Item 097

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious? Chalfant-Britton Collection

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Item 098

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious? Chalfant-Britton Collection

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Item 099

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious? Chalfant-Britton Collection

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Item 100

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious? Chalfant-Britton Collection

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Item 101

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious? Chalfant-Britton Collection

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Item 102

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious? Chalfant-Britton Collection

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Item 103

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious (Qi Wenxin, 8/27/1997)

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Item 104

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious (Qi Wenxin, 8/27/1997)

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Item 105

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious (Qi Wenxin, 8/27/1997)

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Item 106

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious. Prof. Wm. Hung (William Hung 洪業) gift

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Item 107

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious (E. Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01)

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Item 108

**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (E. Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01) piece split in two

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Item 109

**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (E. Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01)

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Item 110

**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (E. Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01)

---

Item 111

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious? E.K. Smith Collection? Listed by Hung-hsiang Chou as USS 479. Shell.

Item 112

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious? E.K. Smith Collection? Listed by Hung-hsiang Chou as USS 478. Shell.

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Item 113

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious? E.K. Smith Collection? Listed by Hung-hsiang Chou as USS 480. Shell.

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Item 114

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious?

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Item 115

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious?

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Item 116

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious (Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01) Cyrus Peake Collection

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Item 117

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious (Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01) Cyrus Peake Collection

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Item 118

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious (Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01) Cyrus Peake Collection

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Item 119

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious (Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01) Cyrus Peake Collection

---

Item 120

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious (Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01)

Item 121

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious (Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01)

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Item 122

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious (Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01)

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Item 123

**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (Qi Wen Xin, 08/27/97) Spurious (Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01)

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Item 124

**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (Qi Wen Xin, 08/27/97) Spurious (Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01)

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Item 125

**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (Qi Wen Xin, 08/27/97) Spurious (Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01)

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Item 126

**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (Qi Wen Xin, 08/27/97) Spurious (Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01)

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Item 127

**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (Qi Wen Xin, 08/27/97) Spurious (Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01)

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Item 128

**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (Qi Wen Xin, 08/27/97) Spurious (Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, 4/10/01)

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David Eugene Smith Chinese Rare 39

**Scope and Contents**

The following items are part of the David Eugene Smith Chinese Rare 39 at the Rare Book and

Manuscript Library, located at the Butler Library 6th floor. Please contact rbml@columbia.edu for more information.

The front face of all three ox scapula are not real carved inscriptions. The center back of one (39b recto) has remains of gan-zhi day name. The latter date to PV of oracle bone. This dating is based on the form of character and style of writing. This inscription on the back is real. Notes by Qi Wenxin (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Department of History), 1997 August 25.

三对牛肩胛骨正面全是伪刻。中间一对反面(39b recto)有残干支表，为第五期刻碎。从字体，行款，来看应为真品。齐文心 (中国社会科学院) 1997年8月25日

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Smith Chinese 39a

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious (Qi Wenxin, 08/25/97)

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Smith Chinese 39b, verso

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious (Qi Wenxin, 08/25/97)

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Smith Chinese 39b, recto

**Scope and Contents**

Genuine (Qi Wenxin, 08/25/97)

---

Smith Chinese 39c

**Scope and Contents**

Spurious (Qi Wenxin, 08/25/97)

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