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 | Ancient Art Podcast, [info@ancientartpodcast.org](mailto:info@ancientartpodcast.org)

Don't miss "Binging with Bacchus" or "How to Be an Ass in Athens" — August 3, 5pm, Bog U (E24)

**Neolithic China**

7000-6600 BC, Jiahu,  
 Henan province

1. Early Neolithic jars from Jiahu, c. 6000-5500 BC, Henan Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology.
2. Dogfish Head Brewery's Chateau Jiahu ancient ale collaboration with Dr. Patrick McGovern, University of Pennsylvania.
3. Neolithic tomb #344 at Jiahu.



1.



2.



3.

**Shang and Zhou dynasties**

c. 1700-c. 1050 B.C.  
 c. 1050-221 B.C.

4. Beaker for wine (*Gu*), Shang dynasty, Art Institute of Chicago.
5. Tripod Wine Vessel (*Jia*), Shang dynasty, 12th/11th c. BC, Art Institute of Chicago.
6. Tortoise plastron with divination inscription, c. 1200 BC, National Museum of China.



## Tang dynasty (618-906)

7. Central Asian wine peddler, China, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco.
8. Two Curly-Haired Youths, China, first half of 8th century, Art Institute of Chicago.
9. Bodhisattva, ancient region of Gandhara, Kushan period, 2nd/3rd century, Art Institute of Chicago.



10. Tang dynasty sancai-glazed Horses, 11. Dragon-handled amphora, and 12. Dragon-headed rhyton cup with stylized leaves and dots, first half of 8th century, Art Institute of Chicago.



13. The Hejiacun Rhyton in the shape of a gazelle's head, carnelian, Gandhara, 6th-8th century, Shaanxi History Museum.



14. Gathering at the Orchid Pavilion, 1000 by Noguchi Shohin, Art Institute of Chicago.



## BRONZE AGE VESSELS - PRODUCTION AND ARTISTRY

- Analogs of Neolithic ceramic prototypes; evolved, embellished, perfected
- Piece mold process — (lost wax method not introduced until 6th C BC)
- Bronze vessels - half wine, half food.
- *Taotie*, apotropaic?

## RITUAL USE

- Funerary feasts. Sacrifice to clan ancestors and gods. Highly formalized, included music and dance.
- Feast served as much for living as for dead — cultural mechanism for food & rank distribution.
  - Toasts offered according to social rank (highest to lowest) and age (eldest to youngest)
- Day of funeral determined through divination.
- "Shi" descendent imbued with spirit of deceased and partook of offerings.
- Shi had to drink 9 gu beakers of millet or rice wine. Altered states - hallucinations - intoxication.  
8th C BC "Shi" ode:
  - / The rituals are completed;
  - / The bells and drums have sounded
  - / The pious descendant [shi] goes to his place,
  - / the officiating invoker makes his announcement:
  - / "The spirits are all drunk";
  - / the august representative of the dead then rises,
  - / the drums and bells escort away the representative
  - / The divine protectors [the spirits] then return [leave the temple].

## ALCOHOL & DRINKING IN BRONZE AGE

- Wine or beer? — millet, rice
- Shang residue analysis – additives included tree resin, chrysanthemum, peach, plum, and jujube (Chinese date), sweet clover, jasmine, hemp, & *Artemisia* herb (relative of wormwood)
- Late Shang oracle bones (1250-1045) mention wine, meat, millet as sacrifice; reveal 3 types of alcohol:
  - *chang* (an herbal wine)
  - *li* (probably a sweet, low-alcoholic rice or millet beverage)
  - *jiu* (a fully fermented, dry, filtered rice or millet beverage or "wine," with an alcoholic content of probably 10-15% by weight)
- Grain malted or more likely masticated. Also used fungus/mold to ferment rice and millet (like saké).
- Contemporary communal drinking through straws in Chinese villages today

## BRONZE AGE SOCIETY

- Why make beer/wine? — analgesic, disinfectant, mind-altering, nutritional value enhance, preservation enhanced. Central role across culture, religion, state.
- Bronze alloy (copper and tin) with up to 20% lead impurity. As Shang kings dined, may have been slowly poisoning selves. Speculatively explains why later Shang kings went crazy or killed selves.
- Zhou texts claim last Shang king named Zhou (spelled differently in Chinese) notorious drunkard and tyrant. "Forest of meat" and "lake of wine", his orgies and assassinations led to loss of Mandate of Heaven (right to rule; Zhou concept).
- Zhou in contrast culture of sobriety and moderation. Meat and millet vessels types favored over wine.

- Introductions of complex ritual practice perhaps to reduce alcohol consumption:  
*Li Chi (The Book of Rites)* (Han Dynasty, based on writings from Warring States Period):  
*"In one sequence of toasting, the host and guest bow to each other a hundred times, so that [one can] drink the whole day and not become inebriated. This was designed by the former kings to prevent wine[-induced] disasters. Thus it is that [the purpose of] drinking and eating is to make merry, [the purpose of] music is to symbolize virtue, and the rite [itself] is to prevent excess."*
- Feasts often held after hunts and archery contests.

## TANG DYNASTY (618-907)

### SILK ROAD

- Term "Silk Road" coined late 19th C by Ferdinand Von Richthofen
- **From East:** spices (clove, nutmeg, ginger), silk, plums, peaches, oranges, porcelain, bronzes, gunpowder, paper, millet/rice beer.
- **From West:** grapes & wine, vessels of gold and silver, nuts, intangible concepts like religion (Buddhism from India, Manichaeism & Zoroastrianism from Iran). [What about clothing, textiles, and fashion? Probably both ways.]
- **Taklamakan Desert**, aka "Desert of Death", one of largest bodies of sand on Earth. Possibly from Turkic expression "unreturnable" ; more likely 'takli' from Uyghur for "vineyard."
- **Grape Valley of the Flaming Mountains** — Fergana valley, ancient Persian province Sogdiana. Prominent Silk Road trading hub, crossroads
- Tang copy vessel types of **Sasanian Persian** (phoenix ewers), **Central Asia, Parthia, Gandhara**.
- Roman historian **Strabo** *Geography*: place where huge quantities of wine produced from huge clusters of grapes. Wine so sublime, doesn't need resin.
- 2nd C BC, Han Dyn. — **General Zhang Qian** emissary of Chinese emperor to W. fringes of empire. He describes lush oasis of Fergana Valley where vast quantities of wine produced.
- Zhang Qian took cuttings of domestic Eurasian grapevine back to Xian, planted and yielded first Chinese grape wine.
- Tang westward expansion – c. 640's subjugation Gaochang/Turfan and tribute.
- Fergana grapes, wine, dance, dress, music, sports (polo, falconry) popular cultural export to Chinese Tang court. **Fergana horse**, Horses of Heaven, Blood-sweating horses, highly prized by Tang court.
- Prestige of Central Asian wine — Han/Tang encyclopedia "Po wu chih": *"The Western regions possess a grape wine which is not spoiled by the accumulation of years. A popular tradition among them states that it is drinkable up to ten years, but if you drink it then, you will be drunk for the fullness of a month, and only then be relieved of it."*
- Exoticism of frontier wine. — 9th C emperor Mu Tsung said: *"When I drink this, I am instantly conscious of harmony suffusing my four limbs—it is the true 'Princeling of Grand Tranquility!'"*
- Resentment of Chinese soldiers expressed in poetry of Li Qi: "Every year we bury our war dead in the sharp grass, / But all we guard are grape vines on their way to China."
- Grain beer still popular. Yeast cakes (with fungus *Aspergillus oryzae*). Variety of colors from mold added to mash – green, red, blue-green. Rise of popularity of *Choujiu*, glutinous rice wine, aka saké.
- Adjuncts pepper, pomegranate flowers, ginger, saffron, honey. Palm wine.

### INTOXICATION, CREATIVITY, LIBERTY

- Alcohol inspired tradition of poetry and painting in praise of drinking. Intoxication could bring one into contact with more profound aspect of being.
- Collapse of Han and fall of Confucianism led to withdrawal of intellectual literati
- "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove" gathering of intellectuals to discuss metaphysics, play music, write poetry, and drink. Turning point in social liberty.

- Deliberately indulge in excessive drinking as form of socio-political protest during Han Dynasty in order to be dismissed from obligations of chaotic political life, undesirable and uncontrollable political intrigues.
- One of 7 sages, Ruan Xiu, went from wineshop to wineshop with wine pot strung on a pole. Relaxed eccentricity. Ignored social rank. Narrative repeatedly exploited as emblem of political protest.
- Excessive drinking (more buzzed than drunk) as an attack on moderation urged by Confucianism.
- Li Bo (aka Li Po, Li Bai), China's greatest poet, mid 8th C. Notorious drinker. Most famous of a group nicknamed the "Eight Immortals with the Wine Cup."
  - Courtier wrote of him: *"I have as my guest probably the greatest poet that ever lived. I have not dared to recommend him to your Majesty because of his one flaw ... he drinks, often too much."*
  - "Waking from Drunkenness on a Spring Day" —
 

*"Life in the World is but a big dream;  
I will not spoil it by any labour or care."  
So saying, I was drunk all the day,  
Lying helpless at the porch in front of my door.  
When I woke up, I blinked at the garden-lawn;  
A lonely bird was singing amid the flowers.  
I asked myself, had the day been wet or fine?  
The Spring wind was telling the mango-bird.  
Moved by its song I soon began to sigh,  
And as wine was there I filled my own cup.  
Wildly singing I waited for the moon to rise;  
When my song was over, all my senses had gone.*
  - Despite his flaws, fell under imperial patronage.
  - Drowned drunk in a river trying to embrace moon's reflection. Nice poem related. *"Among the flowers, a winepot. / I pour alone, friendless. / So, raising my cup, I turn to the moon / And face my shadow, making us three."*
- Dunhuang Bureau of Etiquette issued series of sample letters (dated Oct 13, 856), includes: "Communications of a complimentary nature between fellow officials" & "Letters of greetings on various occasions" & "A LETTER OF APOLOGY FOR GETTING DRUNK":
  - *"Yesterday, having drunk too much, I was so intoxicated as to pass all bounds; but none of the rude and coarse language used was uttered in a conscious state. The next morning, after hearing others speak on the subject, realized what had happened, whereupon was overwhelmed with confusion and ready to sink into the earth with shame. It was due to a vessel of small capacity being filled for the nonce too full. I humbly trust that you in your wise benevolence will not condemn me for my transgression. Soon I will come to apologize in person, but meanwhile beg to send this written communication for your kind inspection. Leaving much unsaid, I am yours respectfully."*
- DEBATE BETWEEN WINE AND TEA:
  - TEA: *"Chief of the hundred plants, Flower of the myriad trees, Esteemed for its buds that are picked, Prized for its shoots that are culled, lauded as a famous shrub – Its name is called Tea! Brought as tribute to the land of the princes, Introduced into the home of the monarchs, Once presented as a novelty, its fame has spread over the wide world." ...*
  - WINE: *"Give men wine with their meat, and never shall they have an evil thought. Where wine is, there will also be benevolence and righteousness, propriety and wisdom, clearly it deserves the highest honor, for what other beverage can compare with it?"*
  - Debate ends when Water enters, pointing out that they both depend on him and so their debate is futile.

## MONGOLIA

- Kumis, Turkish "kimiz", Kazakh "koumiss", Mongolian "airag" — horse mare's milk fermented up to 2.5% due to higher sugar content than other milk. C. and E. Asian likely drank only fermented because lack enzyme to digest lactose.
- Marco Polo: *"They drink mares milk, which they prepare in such a manner that it has the qualities and flavour of white wine. They term it in their language kemurs."*
- An Lushan (ally of Tang emperor Minghuang turned rebel) introduced koumiss (airag) to China ca. 754.
- Horse backbone of Mongolian culture. Transportation, trade, meat, milk/airag. Domestication of wild horses back at least 5,500 years (Parks 2009).
- Steppes not lush with cultivated grains. Nomadic, not agrarian society. Around world, fermented drink made from staple starch or sugar crop (grain, corn, grape, vegetable, agave).
- National beverage of Mongolia. Social/Ritual status. Hospitality. Host obliged to offer, guest obliged to drink whether sip or whole.
- Strain milk through cloth. Put in leather wine skin or wooden vessel (harbors organisms). Hung on left side of yurt, side associated with masculinity, horse pastoralization traditionally masculine activity in Mongolian society.
- Kept at entrance to yurt. As enter and exit, must punch or stir.
- Lactic acid bacteria and yeast ferments. Mare's milk higher sugar than other, ferments to higher alc. up to 2.5%
- Refreshing sparkling, CO<sub>2</sub>, champagny, slight tart tang, still milk. Rich source of nutrition, vitamins, and minerals.
- Fermentation removes or reduces lactose. Becomes lactic acid, ethanol, CO<sub>2</sub>. Many C & E Asians lactose intolerant. Conventional wisdom that drink only fermented milk.

## YUAN DYNASTY (1280-1368)

- conquest had little effect on drinking habits of Chinese
- innovation of underglaze cobalt blue and copper red
- resurgence of grape wine popularity
- Mongol popularity of koumiss [kumis, airag]. In sacrifice and everyday drink. Reputation as drunkards and alcoholics.

## JIAHU

- 2nd C CE text: *"The origin of wine began with the Ancient Kings. Some say it was (made by) I Ti, others say it was Tu K'ang. In fact, it began when discarded rice was fermented and it accumulated a rich fragrance after a long period of time in a trunk. It was because of this, rather than any secret method (the wine that was produced.)"*
- 11th century *Treatise on Wine* simply admits, *"as for who was the first one who invented wine, I can only say that it was a certain wise person."*
- By earliest of historic period in China, wine already inextricably woven into fabric of social and ritual life.
- Earliest use of grapes in fermented beverage anywhere in world – Neolithic China, 7000-6600 BC, Jiahu, Henan province
- Mix of grape and hawthorne berries, honey, rice, chrysanthemum flowers
- Exceptional, because Chinese began growing grapes only c. 100 BC.
- Used wild native grape
- Dogfish Head Chateau Jiahu – modern inspiration brewed by Dogfish Head in consultation with Dr. Pat McGovern, University of Pennsylvania.

## Chronology of China

NEOLITHIC PERIOD (c. 6000 - c. 1600 B.C.)

Xia dynasty (c. 2070-c. 1600 B.C.)

### EARLY DYNASTIES

Shang dynasty (c. 1700-c. 1050 B.C.)

Zhou dynasty (c. 1050-221 B.C.)

Western Zhou (c. 1050-771 B.C.)

Eastern Zhou (770-221 B.C.)

Spring and Autumn period (770-481 B.C.)

Warring States period (480-221 B.C.)

### IMPERIAL CHINA

Qin dynasty (221-206 B.C.)

Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220)

Western (Former) Han (206 B.C.-A.D. 9)

Xin interregnum (9-25)

Eastern (Later) Han (25-220)

“Six Dynasties” period (220-589)

Three Kingdoms (220-265)

Jin dynasty (265-420)

Northern and Southern dynasties (420-589)

Sui dynasty (581-618)

Tang dynasty (618-907)

Five dynasties (907-960)

Liao dynasty (907-1125)

Song dynasty (960-1279)

Northern Song dynasty (960-1127)

Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279)

Jin dynasty (1115-1234)

Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), under Mongols

Ming dynasty (1368-1644)

Qing dynasty (1644-1911), under Manchus

### MODERN CHINA

Republic of China (1911-present; on Taiwan since 1949)

People's Republic of China (1949-present)

# Dogfish Head Ancient Ales

(From: [shop.dogfish.com/ancientales](http://shop.dogfish.com/ancientales))

You might not know it, but medieval Germans nearly ruined beer forever.

In 1516, a purity law called the Reinheitsgebot mandated that beer be made with only water, hops and barley. (The role of yeast hadn't yet been discovered.) Thanks to that bit of brewing censorship and the bastardized recipes of modern brewing conglomerates, beer drinkers have been subjected to bland lager for a long, long time.

In 1995, Dogfish Head broke the shackles and started brewing extreme, exotic, extraordinary beers, and we've been thumbing our noses at the Reinheitsgebot ever since. We experimented with whatever ingredients we found in our brewpub pantry, things like chicory, licorice root, maple syrup, honey, pumpkin, raisins and brown sugar. People called us freaks, but we loved those full-flavored beers and so did our customers, so we stuck to our guns.

Turns out, we were the ones making traditional beers.

In 1999, Dogfish Head started working closely with [Dr. Patrick McGovern](#), one of the world's leading experts in ancient beverages. He helped us uncover the traditions of ancient brewers. Like us, those ancient brewers made the most of the ingredients they had on hand, and their beers were as colorful and creative as their cultures.

- The first beer we created with Dr. Pat was [Midas Touch](#). Somewhere between wine and mead, Midas Touch is based on molecular evidence found in a Turkish tomb believed to have belonged to King Midas. It's a sweet yet dry beer made with honey, white muscat grapes and saffron.
- Next up was [Chateau Jiahu](#), whose ingredient list was unearthed from a 9,000-year-old tomb in China. Made with hawthorn fruit, sake rice, barley and honey, Chateau Jiahu is based on the oldest known fermented beverage in history. (That's right: Beer is older than wine!)
- [Theobroma](#), a celebration of chocolate, was the next Dogfish Head collaboration with Dr. Pat. Based on the chemical analysis of 3,000-year-old pottery fragments found in Honduras, Theobroma is brewed with artisanal [Askinosie](#) cocoa, honey, chilies and annatto.
- For [Ta Henket](#), we used ingredients plucked from Egyptian hieroglyphics. We started with an ancient form of wheat and loaves of hearth-baked bread and added chamomile, doum palm fruit and Middle Eastern herbs. To ferment Ta Henket, we captured a native Egyptian yeast strain from the night air of Cairo.
- Our latest Ancient Ale, [Birra Etrusca Bronze](#), proves that beside the wine on every Italian's dinner table, there should also be a place for beer. The backbone of this 2,800-year-old recipe comes from two-row malted barley and an heirloom Italian wheat. Specialty ingredients include hazelnut flour, pomegranates, Italian chestnut honey, Delaware wildflower honey and clover honey. A handful of whole-flower hops are added, but the bulk of the bitterness comes from gentian root and the sarsaparilla-like Ethiopian myrrh resin.
- Besides our collaborations with Dr. Pat, Dogfish Head also has made an [African tej](#) with honey and tree roots, medieval gruits with grains of paradise and a [chicha](#) in the traditional South American style.
- We also brew [Sah'tea](#), based on a 9th century Finnish recipe that includes rye, juniper and black chai tea.

All these beers are part of the longer tradition of creative brewing Dogfish Head has focused on since the beginning, and for this reason, we just might be the most traditional modern brewery in the world.

## DRINKING ALONG THE SILK ROAD

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## CHINA AND THE SILK ROAD

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