

4. MINIATURE DRUM

Thieu Duong district, Thanh Hoa Province, 5th century B.C.–1st century A.D.
Bronze, H: 11 cm × D: 12.7 cm
National Museum of Vietnamese History, Ha Noi, LSb 21121

Large, elaborately decorated ritual drums were produced in Southeast Asia and southern China from the fifth century B.C. to modern times. The widespread distribution of these drums may reflect trade or migration, though the decoration on many of the drums from insular Southeast Asia suggests local production. In addition to being employed as instruments and signaling devices, the drums were used for ritual and funerary purposes. Common motifs on these drums include a central star and three-dimensional frogs on the top and abstract motifs, figures with feathered headdresses, and boats in concentric bands on both the top and sides of the vessel.

Miniature drums that mimic the shape and décor of the large ritual drums have only been found in Viet Nam, in large numbers in burials. This example has four handles and four small frogs on the top. The overall shape is that of the earliest Heger I drum (a typology developed in the early twentieth century; see preceding

entry), with the flat top over a rounded shoulder and flared base. The decoration, though simplified, also follows that of a larger drum, with a twenty-two-pointed star on the center of the top surrounded by concentric rings of alternating herringbone pattern. Both the shoulder and the body of the drum also are adorned with a herringbone pattern, on the shoulder horizontally, and the body both horizontally and in vertical stripes that divide the body into sections, while the more elaborate figural motifs are not included.