

PHILIP STITES



CO495-474/1100

CHINESE ARCHAISTIC

HARDSTONE BI

of pierced circular section form with relief carved "swirl" pattern; now displaying archeological patination

Possibly Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E. to 226 C.E.)

Overall diameter: 7"

These early objects testify to early stages of development of cosmological concepts that remained important in Chinese culture during the Warring States and Han periods: the notion of a covering sky (Gaitian) that revolves around a central axis, the cycle of the Ten Suns, and the use of an early form of the carpenter's square. These objects were handled by shamans who were the religious leaders of Liangzhu society and the transmitters of cosmological knowledge.