

The idea of placing one animal above another (Pl. IX no. 4) must be considered an invention of our region as nothing similar has been found at Minussinsk nor among the Scythians and Sarmatians.

These animals when they are without antlers may be roe or hinds. The figure with back-turned head (Pl. IX no. 5) is known from a Minussinsk dagger (25). Strong stylization is shown in the separate head of a roe (Pl. IX no. 6). The under side is covered with round protuberances, probably weak imitations of the palmettes that appeared behind the heads of birds at the close of Scythian art (26). A square plaque without openwork (Pl. IX no. 7) has again no parallel in the west. It shows, in high relief, a standing roe. The barbarians at the Chinese frontier not only imitated the west, but, as we see here, towards 1000 A.D. they invented variations.

b) The antelope and the ibex.

We mentioned in our chapter on pole-tops the very definite characteristics of the Saiga antelope. This animal is discovered in our region on a tiny applique (Pl. IX no. 8). The perfection of its execution should justify its being placed at the beginning of the second half of the I millennium.

Backward-turned and curled horns characterise the ibex. We find it on Scythian gold appliques. The refinement of the small piece (Pl. IX no. 9) makes it comparable with the preceding antelope, and therefore deserves the same date. In spite of its heavy body, but because of its good modeling, the ibex (Pl. IX no. 10) in low relief belongs to the T'ang period.

The separate head of this animal (Pl. IX no. 11), seems more stylized and should therefore be placed in the fourth group, about 1000 A.D. The same remark applies to the heraldic double-heads under superficially suggested leaves (Pl. IX no. 12) which, although they appear broken, are not.

The final phase of this art is represented in Plate IX, no. 13. Just what species of soliped this depicts cannot be determined, as the horns are merely undulating ribbons. The stylized elements have so completely submerged the naturalistic, and the casting is also so faulty, that a date later than 1000 must be given.

Three attractive appliques form a group apart (Pl. IX nos. 14-16). The simplest piece (Pl. IX no. 14) is that of a browsing ibex, whose hooves have a comma-shaped ornamentation. The body is well proportioned and but slightly modeled. Plate IX no. 15 is a heraldic doubling unusual in the Steppes, composed of the fore-quarters of two animals. With the third piece we find once more the Sarmatian animal combat. A wild beast, probably a bear, attacks a browsing ibex from behind. The horns are not curled but have the same comma-shaped ornamentation to which we have already referred. These three appliques prove once more that towards the end of the period, that is after 1000 A.D., side by side with poor and even geometric renderings, there were others relatively