

the gold applique from the excavations at Ogus on the Dniepr (39). This composition can only be explained as a multiplication of bird-heads, not as an animal combat, nor as a "coq de mer" (40). We are here able to trace back to the IV century B.C. the geometric transformation that took place at the Chinese frontier about 500 A.D. The smooth piece (Pl. XI no. 15), also of about 500, again represents a vulture, but the drawing of the plumage on a contemporary piece (Pl. XI no. 16) makes one rather think of an eagle or crow.

Birds seen full-face are no less richly varied than those in profile. Our examples are easily grouped one after the other. A tiny object (Pl. XI no. 17) uses the Minussinsk piercing of the eye, but is so geometric in design that it must be dated about 1000. The head, although simplified, is clearly that of a vulture. There is another vulture's head placed on an oval background (Pl. XI no. 18) which lacks perforations as well as clear proportions, and therefore also seems to be of about 1000. This background has been altered into a halo of feathers behind the eagle of Plate XI no. 19, of the same date. Plate XI no. 20 shows us once more an owl's head of which we spoke when dealing with Chou bronzes. The piercings are missing, but the surface is so well modeled that it would seem possible to choose a date for it near the end of the Han period. We find the same bird, here clearly feathered (Pl. XI no. 21), placed on a medallion, but so conventionally stylized that it belongs to the end of the I millennium. Even the transformation of the bird into some fabulous animal is not lacking after 1000 (Pl. XI no. 22). The large ears, spiral drawn as in the Altai, remind us of the griffon. Only the curled crest, a usual attribute, is missing here, but may have inspired the numerous notches of the edge.

f) Wild animals.

It is not always possible, even in Scythian art, to know just exactly what wild animal is represented. The best known piece of the first western period, the large gold plaque of Kelermes (41) has been called a tiger, a lioness and a panther. At the Chinese frontier there are forms derived directly from Kelermes without intermediary stations. Not only the general use, but also the details and the ornamental form, come from western art of the VII-VI centuries B.C. This strange phenomenon may be explained in several ways. Scythian smiths themselves may have migrated towards the east or perhaps only their work, bequeathed by one generation to another, may have permitted a renaissance of ancient forms in a neighbouring yet distant country. Let us call the Kelermes animal a tiger. The beast of Plate XII no. 1 closely resembles it. Instead of oblique cuts separating various parts of the body, we find here a strong modeling, also typical of gold Sarmatian pieces, emphasising the legs. There is a motive particularly Scythian in the animals of a parade-axe also from Kelermes (42). It is the formation by means of small round holes of the ears, the eyes, the nostrils, the paws, and the ends of the tails. These holes in the east were often inlaid with