

end of the curve appears a modeled ibex-head, perforated at the under side. The horns serve as decoration for about half the length. As far as we know, the wide-plaque type is unknown at Minussinsk. In Siberia it is only found of a later date, as for instance the example from the Altai (73) which should be dated from the VIII century, and which therefore gives us important proof of the long duration of the belt-clasps in this region.

China of the Chou period did not know this object. The Far East must have received it through its association with the north. The reforms of King Wu Ling and of his successors, of which we spoke in Chapter IV, were the cause of several adoptions, military equipment as well as belt-clasps. The use of such clasps has not always been known. Pelliot in contradiction to other theories believes that they were placed horizontally to fasten the middle of the belt (74). There is convincing proof of this explanation supplied by a bronze sculpture in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto (Pl. XVIII no. 3). This statue may be dated Han at the latest. Ferguson has published it as Ch'in, which may be the case (75). The figure wears a clasp in such a way that the shovel-shaped larger end is at the right. A projection issuing from this large end enters the leather belt. The hook distinctly fits a loop at the left. Excavations in Korea have supplied examples of Chinese origin, but only approximately dated. However, neither their discovery nor their ornamentation can permit the dating of any of these objects earlier than the second half of the III century B.C.

In contrast to its rather infrequent use in the Steppes the belt-clasp is very common in China and in countries influenced by the Celestial Empire. A collection of types would fill a considerable volume, but up to now it has only been attempted in a modest way (76). The Chinese borrowed the use and the original form from the north, but they usually made of it something absolutely personal. At first they used all materials suitable to the purpose, jade, bone, gold, silver, bronze and iron, some inlaid, and others of combined materials. The actual implement becomes at times a ceremonial article of exaggerated size. As well as the practical purpose of such pieces there arises another use, that of the amulet or funerary object, as Pelliot has already mentioned (77). Etruscan art, an oriental phenomenon on European soil, was also familiar with immense fibulae never meant to be worn (78). In the hereafter they probably stood for an idea of validity. The Chinese first wore these clasps themselves, then later on made them for exportation. Barbarians, always eager to exchange and receive gifts, prized them especially. It is said of clasps decorated with good luck animals: "The western Hu like to wear them" (79). Perhaps foreign demands stimulated the invention of varied ornamental motives.

In spite of all the variety of shapes and decorations for clasps, the original form of a hook, bar, and larger end, always remains. If we compare this form with that of Minussinsk (Pl. XVIII nos. 1 & 2) we notice, as we have done