

already in other circumstances, that China seems to have been influenced not from relatively near Siberia, but rather from the extreme west. Once more we must bear in mind the possibility of trade between the extreme points of the circle of the Steppes, which permitted Scythian articles to reach the Far East.

We have only one specimen here of a clasp bearing a purely Chinese decoration. We shall therefore not have to deal here with geometric designs often formed by inlay, nor with fantastic Chinese animals (dragon, hydra), even when they are connected with the clasps in the same way as are the stags from Alexandropol. In fact we find the wider end shaped like a horse or tiger with the bar issuing from the chest in examples from the famous excavations in northern Korea that can be dated with certainty as being of the first half of the Han period (80). At that time the inhabitants of this region were Tungus, whose productions were naturally more similar to those of the Steppes than to those of China. The rough way in which the bar and animal-body are connected would certainly be awkward work for Chinese artists. It is characteristic of the latter that they had already tried, probably in the Han dynasty, to overcome this harshness in the composition. On Plate XVIII no. 4 the legs of a bear have been arranged around the bar, and the hydra-head is so far away that it has become an independant motive and is not inconsistent with the wider part. Han art has often invented such balanced solutions. At the same time, however, Scythian combinations are not lacking, and therefore many of the animals represented by the Chinese, as well as those designed by Steppe people, seem to be joined to the bar without any organic connection.

The tiger of Plate XVIII no. 5 is one of the earliest examples, that is, it is of the Han period. The thick-set body formed by curved lines corresponds very well with Han tendencies, while at the same time we find older motives in the claws, the heart-shaped ear, and in the scale-like ribbon ornamentation of the body. A clasp, often reproduced (81), follows the transition to a rather naturalistic reproduction of the animal and with non-Chinese elements such as an emphasis on the shoulders and a regular drawing that has the appearance of being incised. This technique comes from the ingraved bones of the Altai (82) and is also a characteristic feature of the Steppes. The fact that we find bevelling in the Chinese technique of bronze casting, that is to say a usual technique for other materials, has been explained by Glück as a northern influence (83).

The tiger in the round (Pl. XVIII no. 6) is not an ordinary form of belt-clasp. It could never have been used for practical purposes since even on the predominant side there seems to be no means of joining it with the part to be hooked. It has however its place here, because of the non-Chinese method of connecting the two parts of the object. The hook is at the same time the tiger's tail. A bird-head is at the end of the hook which, however, does not necessarily lead us to state definitely that like the Steppe motive it forms the