

we find an outward-turned head, heraldically stylised, to which have been added antelope-horns to what is otherwise a ram's head. No part of any of the bodies is free of decoration. The artist has deliberately given up the representation of a scene, and has made it impossible by confusing details so that they form parts of different animals. When this tendency grows even more pronounced we have certainly passed into the T'ang period. Plate XXIII no. 4 shows us the acme of confused composition. Lines seem to move haphazardly in various directions and new decorations are formed seemingly by accident. In a plaited frame we find, aiming in a horizontal direction, two profiled heads of some uncertain type of soliped, that meet in about the middle of the plaque. The forelegs are at the centre and the same arrangement is repeated behind them. Four tigers move in the opposite direction, their heads and hind legs are arranged as in Plate XXIII no. 3. It is impossible to connect all the spiral and striped ribbons with animal-forms. Altogether the animal-combat has become a baroque motive which here certainly passes the T'ang period. It was later on adopted by the Steppe people who used this form of ornamentation in a new and personal way.

After 1000, at the close of barbarian art in the north of China, we come across unexpected animal combinations. The frog seen from above with the four legs touching the sides, is only otherwise found in the art of the Ural, that is to say in the Steppe circle, in a phase that comes already after the middle of the I millennium (9). At the Chinese frontier this type has the frame replaced by two giant lizard-forms that attack a frog (Plate XXIII no. 5). They are apparently a species of agama frequently found in the southern and eastern Steppes. The impression that we are looking down upon the scene is faithfully produced, and we cannot see their short legs. The spinal crest and the drawing of the skin seems well observed as is the head and shield-like nose. The forelegs of the frog are broken. This piece is shaped like many plaques and the drawing although primitive, is easily understood. It gives at the same time a natural and a stylised impression. Even in such late art it is easy to follow the different stages in artistic formation. As is shown by Plate XXIII no. 6, the artist has altered the dead frog and its aggressors into a decorative arrangement. Only two agamas bite their prey, the other two are placed at either side of the head. Had we not the preceding example from the Loo collection with which to help us find a zoological determination, we might consider the four encircling reptiles as snakes.

To the group of unframed animal-combat scenes, we must add another which might easily have served as an applique but not as a fastener (Plate XXIII no. 7). In this group we find two animals standing on a small bar. They might be of the same species if the attacking animal had not claws and the other hooves. We may presume that they are a tiger and a boar. The modeling suggests a date around 500.