

say, already of the Han period. Here the tiger is biting the hind leg of the soliped, and the tuft at the end of the tail can be seen above the lower jaw. The lines on mane and belly lead us to believe that the victim is a boar, although the head seems rather to be that of a ruminant. We see it in profile, crowned with the twisted horn of the ram, as well as with the lyre-shaped horns of the antelope which are turned full-face. Between these last two horns we find a paw, and there is another above. The dotted and spiral lines on the larger body are arbitrarily placed, but they do not cover the entire surface as in the two preceding pieces. According to our system of classification, this example is of the VI-VII centuries.

Towards the end of the T'ang period, this type assumes fantastic forms (Plate XXIV no. 6). There the animal resembles a wolf with too short paws, its victim a contorted antelope. As emphasis on the joints of the larger animal, the artist has used three carefully drawn vulture-heads. This group is surrounded by a double weaving of animal-forms of which those in front of the large head cannot be recognised, due perhaps to the destruction of some portions by age. Immediately over the back of the animal we find two interlaced serpents each ending in a full-face bear's head. A ribbon starts above the tail of the wolf and forms the upper part of the frame. It is composed of an ibex-head and a vulture-head. The corner is formed by the ibex repeated three times along the upper horizontal edge. In front of each horn is a bird-head, of the type called on Minussinsk daggers "Griffon-heads". This heterogeneous combination, and the baroque transformation of the motives, is beyond anything found in the Steppe circle.

Our region also adds a wealth of new themes to those of the Steppes in its use of the bird motive (Plate XXIV no. 7). This plaque is openwork, a technical process which when used in this way is reminiscent of Minussinsk. In a frame made up of small squares placed one after the other, there is a lower section like a rectangular band, perforated at either end, that would seem to have been intended for an inscription. Two birds of prey, characterised by beaks and claws, squat at either side of a fish that lies along the top of the band. A claw descends from the beak of each bird towards the back of the fish. The space between the two profiled bird-heads is filled by another, full-face. The drawing, especially that of plumage and scales, is all schematic, but enough of the Jenissei type for this piece to form part of the group that is of about 500 A.D.

At Minussinsk the B-shaped plaque may be exchanged for one formed like a horse-shoe. In the separate development at the Chinese frontier we find the same phenomenon of about the year 1000 (Plate XXV no. 1). The frame is composed of the old leaf motive, but the animal ornamentation is difficult to recognise. At the larger end is a horned dragon curled so that its tail touches its head. The body has only hind legs. Under this fabulous animal is a serpent.