

Below the latter, in the narrow section, we find one more animal, but this time undefinable. It is impossible to date this piece, nor a related fragment from the Loo collection (Pl. XXV no. 2), before the beginning of the Sung period. This second piece has a frame of two dragon-heads that surround a ring under which is the full-faced head of a lynx. This well defined animal could not be recognised under this schematic form, were it not found in a similar composition, but with more naturalistic details, at Minussinsk (10).

d) Animals alone and in pairs.

The reproduction on belt-plaques of several animals of the same species, or of one animal alone, is somewhat scarce in the Sarmatian region. On the other hand such designs are numerous in the Jenissei valley. There are few uses and ornaments where the affinity between Minussinsk and north China is as apparent as on belt-plaques decorated with animals alone or in pairs. If we continue to follow our system of chronological grouping by which we place strongly modeled pieces at a relatively early date, Plate XXV no. 3 is then of about 500. Its contour is the same as that of Plate XXV nos. 1 & 2, and, as in those examples, the different bodies are difficult to distinguish. It is, however, easy to recognise two dragon-heads at the centre, seen from above, that are biting the interlaced legs of some other animals.

At Minussinsk there are numerous plaques that have the hook on the rounded end, as have all the examples on Plate XXV with which we have dealt so far. The opposite end is again straight with two corners. In the Jenissei, as in our region, the central motive is that of a buffalo-head (Plate XXV no. 4) surrounded by short legs. Under the head, at both sides, are the characteristic folds of flesh ornamented by perforations. Once more we turn to about 500. This type is also found in South Russia in the region of the Selenga river (12). Plate XXV no. 5 is one of many extraordinary inventions from the north of China. Two centre disks are garlanded with animal-heads in groups of two. They are a combination of bird-heads with ram-horns. Such an unnatural design certainly brings us into the beginning of the II millennium.

Because of its excellent modeling we place the plaque of Plate XXV no. 6 near the Han period (III-IV centuries A.D.). The edge, decorated with double lines frames two browsing horses. Only one peculiarity of Sarmatian art can be found here, the stylization of the hooves with the grooved comma-shape design. A replica of one half of this motive (Plate XXV no. 7) proves that naturalistically modeled forms may survive, although they may have lost their plastic clearness, their anatomical accuracy, and even their technical perfection. The very faulty casting of this piece brings us certainly past the year 1000.

The combined forms of two outward-turned ibex (Plate XXVI no. 1) must be of the same date as the pair of horses of Plate XXV no. 6, but such a composition is not found at Minussinsk. The smooth and backward-arched horns are of