

head of a lion (Plate XXIX no. 5) is a reminder of the fact that bands of hunters often reached Persia. As this piece is inspired by a Persian model and exceptionally reproduced at the northern frontier, the adoption of this foreign motive places it in the II millennium. By the same method of deduction Tallgren has classified a poorer casting of the same model and calls it "modern" (19).

e) Geometrically designed ornaments.

In an enumeration of decorations to be found on belt-plaques, the geometric design cannot be omitted. It is already discovered at Minussinsk and probably comes from a simplification of openwork plaques ornamented with serpents (20). There also appears in this region a double ladder type, originally with a bird-head (21), but in the Jenissei as well as in China, this animal form is sometimes omitted. Here (Plate XXIX no. 6) the only organic form is the leaf designed frame. The sections that joined the central bar to the frame are broken. Andersson considers that possibly leaves of this type may be animal rudiments, such as hooves or ears (22). This theory is refuted, however, by the consecutive order of Minussinsk pieces. This example from the north of China may be dated at the beginning of the second half of the I millennium. That this type developed with the Mongols into a complicated geometric decoration is proved by Plate XXIX no. 7. Except for the indistinct design of the frame, the leaf motive has lost its original meaning and has formed a rosette, no longer in any way connected with natural forms. In our search for a probable date we found unexpected aid from the extreme west of the Steppe circle. Fettich has published belt-plaques with the same design of the period of the "occupation of land" by the Hungarians, that is to say the IX century (23). This piece from the Chinese frontier may therefore be dated with great certainty in the IX-X century.

2) Buckles to end a chain.

The openwork objects collected under this heading are with reservations added to this chapter because of their general shape always furnished with either hook or loop. Their use is supported by examples published by Andersson (24). The objects have been proved at the Chinese frontier, but not yet among the Sarmatians. In our region this object is actually found connected with a chain, but at the same time its use as a belt-fastener still remains possible. The chain is always attached so that the forward bending hook hangs from the bottom. It is possible that there were two buckles made to fit each end of the chain. In fact there are isolated pieces that could have been used in such a way. Even when only the buckles have been preserved, as is the case for all the examples on Plate XXX, the decoration on these pieces proves that they were meant to hang vertically.

The oldest piece in this group (Plate XXX no. 1) is closely connected with Minussinsk art. There too we find a decoration grouped around a convex central