

## CHAPTER VIII

### OBJECTS FROM THE EAST OF RUSSIA

What Chinese texts tell us of the western sections of the Eurasiatic Steppes cannot be connected with any definite geographic region. But quite the reverse is true of certain objects from the northern Chinese frontier. There, we can certainly find examples that may be traced back to special civilizations like those which developed during the course of the I millennium on the upper Volga and around its affluents, the Oka and the Kama, as well as on the slopes of the Ural. Up to now, the influence of these regions has only been recognised in the west and in the north, in Finno-Germanic art especially, but never in the east.

#### a) Chains and chain-holders.

The use of metal ribbons composed of flexible and alined sections is so ancient and so general, that it is impossible to chose any one region of the Steppes as the place of its invention. In braided ribbon form, it was known to the Sarmatians (1), who employed it in various ways. Let us only refer to the well known Novocherkassk treasure, where we find it holding small bottles, receptacles, and handles for an unknown purpose (2).

As far as we know today, the northern Chinese frontier chains were made up of alternate links, that is to say, of rings separated by rectangular pieces (Plate XXXI no. 1). Only the latter bear a small geometric design. The distinctive feature of our region is the addition of a chain-holder in plaque form which seems intended for the beginning rather than for the end of the chain. Pelliot has already published a double chain with two plaques (3). The chain-holder may at the same time form a belt-hook (4). It is also found composed of two completely separate pieces (5). As an end piece we sometimes find a round hook of the type of which we spoke in Chapter VII (6).

The combination of chain-holder and chain, but of a somewhat different type from the Chinese, is found in eastern Russia. It seems that in that region the plaque is rarely combined with an entire chain, but more often, with separate sections of a chain (7). Long links without rings are found west of the Ural (8). The development of the chain and its holder may be followed in the west in