

mentioned harness-ornaments, while the second, already weak in form, should be placed at the end of our art.

3) Weapons.

We have shown that northern Chinese frontier objects are derived from various regions of the Eurasiatic Steppes. As far as use and ornamentation are concerned, only weapons may all be connected with one locality alone. They always go back to Minussinsk art. There is but little information concerning the intercourse of these neighbours of China with their hinterland until the middle of the I millennium, and this intercourse is therefore not easy to explain. Probably in ancient times the upper valley of the Jenissei was a centre of exportation, which would be the reason for their playing so important a role as promoter of forms. Moreover, this region was so favoured by natural conditions, that it, more than any other, was fitted to be the home of art.

This branch of our study will have to be incomplete, due partly to lack of space. We shall first deal with hacking, cutting and stabbing weapons. Axes, mattocks and other weapons will be dealt with in another work.

a) Daggers with thorns.

M. P. Grjasnoff has pointed out that the dagger with thorns is the oldest type in the art of metals (7). It is characterised by the two projections at either side of the guard, by its long rugged handle crowned with an animal-head, usually that of a stag the antlers of which form arcs, and finally by the loop which serves as a means of attaching the weapon. Grjasnoff accepts the date of 1000 B.C., first established by Teplouchoff for daggers of a Jenissei origin (8), that is to say, of the Minussinsk bronze era, which Teplouchoff calls Kara-suk. Grjasnoff's example from Verkhne-udinsk belongs to this group. It should first be mentioned that the succession established by these two Russian authors for this type deserves complete confidence, but they are inclined to give too early a date. It seems advisable, as we have already pointed out in Chapter V, to make the Kurgan period continue until the middle of the I millennium A.D. and to admit the possibility of a slow degeneration in Siberia proper. Grjasnoff lays stress on the somewhat stylised character of the example of which he speaks. But another specimen from Tchita, crowned with a ram-head, deserves even more than this piece to represent the typical art of Kara-suk (Plate XXXVI no. 1) because of its style. It is characterised by a combination of naturalistic and stylised elements typical of the conventional art of the Steppes and from which degenerated, confused, and badly proportioned forms presumably descend.

The type of the two-edged dagger is probably older than the knives of which we shall speak later on. The Loo collection owns a replica of the dagger with thorns that comes from the north of China (Plate XXXVI no. 2). If we compare it with the Tchita weapon, which is certainly earlier than the beginning of our era, the resemblance as a whole, as well as the slight differences are