

self-evident. Among these differences we should particularly observe that here the handle is smooth and that the blade has a medial rib also familiar to us in the Jenissei valley (9). The eye, which at Minussinsk is perforated, has here become a cup, and the loop is obliquely placed. The arrangement of the masses has been entirely changed. With the flattened muzzle and hanging jowls we are getting away from the original conception to an extent that would be impossible in the country of its origin. We can no longer determine whether the animal is an elk, an antelope, or a ram. Already when dealing with pole-tops, we have attempted to establish a stylistic order for animal representations beginning with the naturalistic, to end with the conventional form. This order may also be followed with the animal-heads of dagger-handles, as well as with the daggers themselves. This leads us to a date near the end of the I millennium. One fact, however, remains puzzling, and that is how an art, limited as to period in Siberia, replaced by new forms in the Han period, could be preserved and secreted, to reappear more than 500 years later at the northern frontier of China. It is impossible to doubt the encompassing dates, but where are the intermediaries? Perhaps still in the earth between the Jenissei and the Ordos.

One fact should be remembered, and that is that these weapons were never meant to be used practically, and it is the artistic ornamentation that leads us to believe that they served for ceremonial purposes alone. These objects were used in schamanistic rites. The world of sorcery has always facilitated the transmission of ancient customs, and therefore of ancient forms (10).

b) Knives with thorns, crowned with animal-heads in the round.

That the dagger with thorns has been changed into a curved knife has been pointed out by Grjasnoff (11). There is again no intermediary between the Minussinsk dagger of about the year 500 B.C. and the north of China knife of the end of the I millennium. Let us first examine the knife of Plate XXXVI no. 3 which should be dated about 500. The long handle is undecorated except for a ribbon that holds the loop. It is crowned with a plastic mule-head the nostrils of which are perforated and ringed, while the eyes are merely pierced.

This kinship with Minussinsk is disappearing in about 1000 (Plate XXXVI no. 4). Here the handle is decorated with a long centre perforation and by ridged lines which go down each side and form a herring-bone design upon a low and framed background. There is nothing to separate the handle from the stag-head form at the top. The loop under the neck grows wider at the lower jaw and corresponds, so to speak, with the curve of the smooth antlers. The nostrils and the perforations of the eyes have been reduced to little cups which perhaps once held turquoise. These hybrid forms, weak and unnatural, seem to indicate the same date as that of the iron dagger, about 1000. This object very clearly shows the trend of art in our region at this period.

With Plate XXXVI no. 5 we are nearing the last phase, the beginning of the