

Minussinsk. The indistinct horns of the animal characterises it as a ram, as do the stylised buttons on the body. The handle has geometric ribbons on each side, a square meander on the side reproduced, a triangular meander on the other. The date should correspond to that of the preceding piece.

We reach the II millennium, however, with Plate XXXVIII no. 3. The crouching animal at the top is extremely weak in form, the handle and blade are scarcely separated.

The handle, entirely altered into an animal form, identical on both sides, seems to be a peculiarity of the northern frontier (Plates XXXVIII nos. 4 & 5). In each case the unrecognisable head makes it impossible to determine the species of the animal. Only the II millennium would appear possible for such rudimentary forms.

The knife crowned with a bird-head (Plate XXXVIII no. 6) is unaccentuated along its entire length. Its decoration is comprehensible, but this fact does not justify an earlier date. Once more the hole is cleverly formed by the beak.

In Plate XXXVIII no. 7 the hole is vertically pierced and not horizontally as is usual. It passes through a half-button. The handle is covered with a threadline pattern in relief which forms different animal shapes on each side. One can easily distinguish the jaws of a wild animal. Once more the primitiveness of the rendering implies a date towards the beginning of the II millennium.

Because of the small size of the two knives we have just described, they may have been used as burial gifts, fairly usual at Minussinsk. This was certainly the purpose of the knife of Plate XXXVIII no. 8, moreover this piece is only decorated on one side and not pierced at the top. The means by which it could be hung seems rather to be at the lower end of the handle, ornamented with two zig-zag ribbons. The uncertain casting proves this example to be of the last period.

e) Daggers with decorated handles.

We owe to Tallgren the detailed description of Minussinsk daggers (17). He mentions their original form, probably derived from the Near East, their diffusion over all the civilizations of the ancient world and the agreement of different forms in Siberia not connected with any evolution. Although they are related to Scythian daggers, those from the Jenissei comprise many special forms extremely rich in variations. Teplouchoff places this type among those belonging to the end of the Kurgan periods which correspond to that of the end of the Han (Plate III, line IV, 3, no. 104), while Tallgren once again emphasises the possibility of a late creation. It is scarcely necessary to mention that we too are of the latter opinion. Because of the long survival of all types one beside the other, the date depends upon the artistic execution. We still pay no attention to the inconvenience of considering the objects from this point of view.

Plate XXXIX no. 1 has probably no model in the northwest. The guard is