

exceptional in this case as it does not protrude. At each side it bears a pair of stags in relief, facing each other with heads turned outward, superficially rendered, but nevertheless comprehensible. The long handle widens imperceptibly at the top and is uncrowned. Its decoration is composed of five pairs of vulture-heads, looking down. All of these motives are very old in the Steppe circle. In this case their fairly good plastic quality may permit them still to belong to the middle of the I millennium.

About the same period fits the dagger of Plate XXXIX no. 2 crowned with an arc, double channelled and with a pronounced guard, which corresponds to numerous examples from Minussinsk (18). As in that region, the arc ends with two facing eagle-heads. At times these are replaced with simple antennae in nearly every region to which this type has spread. The guard formed of two eagle-heads, back to back, is rare.

At Minussinsk the guard is usually in the form of a heart or of a trapezium. These two forms are also found in our region (Plate XXXIX no. 4). In this example the separate handle has been cast in a darker alloy, and treated up to the bird-heads as one field, decorated at each side with geometric forms derived from the double spiral. The ornament only partly conforms to the outline. This dagger has already reached the end of the millennium. The drawing on the blade is exceptional. On each side it shows a long-tailed salamander.

Plate XXXIX no. 3 demonstrates with what ease Chinese elements may be connected with those from Eurasia (unfortunately only the back which lacks some of the ornamental motives has been reproduced). The guard with a geometric design at the centre and outward-turned bird-heads at each end carelessly cast, is derived from the Steppes. The handle which ends in an elliptical and open ring is formed of a phoenix-head with a small spiral at the end, and is entirely Chinese (19). Examples found in Korea belong to the III-V centuries. This Chinese formation is entirely fantastic, as much because of the head as for the connection with the arc. Our example has kept the original form, but has varied it in a way unknown until now. At the end of the handle is a ram-head which is connected with the arc by the horns. When we date this piece at the second half of the I millennium, we are influenced more by the decorations on the guard than by those of the handle which seem to belong to a higher art, and which therefore are a reminder of greater antiquity.

We have mentioned that Chinese elements also survive at the northern frontier. They are often found on a frequent Minussinsk type where there is a vertical perforation through the top and which probably held a pin. In this case the guard then becomes smaller in size (Plate XXXIX no. 5). This example has a monster-mask broken up with spirals which correspond to a style called in China, Ch'in. The confused interlacing of the design on the flat button at the top of the handle also corresponds very well with the Chinese group. But they