

following examples, may have been added at a later period (35). I do not understand his reasons, and am unable to accept his theory, since the object as well as the Si-hia letters bring us to the same date. Besides it is impossible to believe that the Si-hias excavated bronzes nearly 1000 years old, in order to place inscriptions open them.

A disk from the Loo collection (36) without an inscription, but meant for the same purpose, is an isolated example (Plate XLI, no. 3). Three animal motives are placed symmetrically on three sections of the rim, while we may presume that a fourth animal motive has been broken off. We can determine the top and bottom by the loop at the back. On each side we find pairs of animals placed so that one is directly behind the other. We are familiar with the circular motive on the paws which make them Merhart's "animal with the ringed paws" (37). Below the jaws of each lower animal is an antelope-head identical to that of Plate XIV no. 5. Above (and probably originally, below) we find a pair of bird-heads back to back. The eyes are rendered in the same way as those of the animals. As for the date, an earlier period than the beginning of the II millennium is impossible because of the summary treatment of the animal motives.

Their use as hanging disks is always proved for the other examples of this group, not by a loop at the back, but by the handle at the upper edge. The design of Plate XLI no. 4 has been much obliterated by the patina. It is, however, composed of arbitrary and confused spirals. A similar ornamental idea has been found on a sarcophagus in Mongolia dated of the VIII century (38). It would seem that the artist attempted to imitate the free drawing of the Chinese models of the T'ang period. Still closer to our disk are the fragments of a mirror in the Zaoussailov collection also ornamented with inorganic designs (39). Tallgren and Arne date these fragments about 1250. Their stylistic agreement with the Chinese frontier disk is significant and permits of a close connection concerning the date.

The smooth disk with a simple handle has already been found at Minussinsk (40). At the Chinese frontier it bears an inscription in Si-hia characters (Plate XLI no. 5). Another example with the same writing is shown on Plate XLI no. 6. The fact that the handle melts into the general contour makes the form more that of a gourd than of a circle with a separate handle. The edge is in relief. As for all examples which bear Si-hia inscriptions, the "terminus post quem" for this piece also, is furnished by the invention of this writing. The Chinese example therefore assumes particular importance since it serves to date a whole series of ornamental disks spread extensively all over the Steppes (41). The best example comes from western Eurasia in the region at the mouth of the Don (Plate XLI no. 7). Here, instead of an inscription, the disk bears an ornament in relief. It is a human figure, extremely primitive in form. It conforms very