

and is more perfect than any animal representation we have seen so far at the northern frontier. When we compare the artistic treatment of the knife and dagger handles on Plate XXXVI with the detail (Plate XLII no. 3), we are following the path of art in the circle of the Steppes. The shaft-end in the Loo collection is one of only a very few examples of the beginning, and at the same time one of the most perfect from the point of view of art. Such natural and unimpaired freshness is only possible in the Han period, probably only in the beginning of that period. This combination of artistic forms is less akin to the Steppes than to China, and it is to this country that we owe its careful and perfect figuration. The only barbarian influence is in the rendering of the horns.

A purely horizontal object as that of Plate XLII no. 4 is easier to explain. Identical objects of the Han period have been found in China. Moreover, shaft-ends have often been confused with pole-tops, as for example the wild ass of the Sauphar collection now in the Louvre. It is impossible to imagine this animal sitting on its hind-quarters, and it was certainly never meant to be so ridiculously placed (4). The artist has given the shaft-end of Plate XLII no. 4 the form of a wild sheep (argali), an ewe since it has no horns. But it has hair on the breast, however, like the male sheep. Even more than on Plate VII no. 4 the hanging tongue gives the impression that this is either a dying animal or one already dead. As with the hedgehog of Plate VII no. 1 where certain parts of the shaft seem to be in relief, here the whole body is so from the shoulders forward. But this unarticulated body arranged in a straight line considerable differs from the animal-heads of an early period that are well drawn and modeled by a sure hand. Above all, the legs and hooves of this piece lack careful treatment. A date near 1000 agrees with this somewhat primitive type.

2) Openwork disks.

Richly perforated disks belong to a group of Chinese objects, the purpose of which is unknown. They must not be confused with the pendants derived from eastern Europe. They bear the elaborate ornamentation called by common consent, the art of the Ch'in style. But while there are no dated documents of this art, this designation remains entirely hypothetical, although it may agree very well with the Chinese stylistic development. An attempt has been made to place this art in the valley of the Huai (5) without, however, sufficient foundation for such a geographic classification.

We have encountered several times during the course of our study so-called Ch'in stylistic elements even in objects which by our analysis should be dated much later. The openwork disk from the Loo collection (Plate XLIII no. 1) at first easily appears to belong to the Ch'in group. A braid, typical of the well known Li Yu receptacles (6), decorates the edge. Similar dragons, covered with dotted and striped ornaments, are found with identical details on the buttons of bells that probably really belonged to the Ch'in period (7). But the metal with