

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

Andersson relates (1) that one day the Crown Prince of Sweden visited the well known Chinese scholar Lo Chen-Yu. The distinguished visitor bought an S-curved bronze implement (2) which bore on its handle a roe and four stags, evidently a schamanistic object of the type reproduced here on Plate XLIV no. 1. Questioned as to its date, the Chinese scholar answered, to the amazement of his guests : " Sung. "

I shall not be surprised to see my dates as such disputed as was that of Lo Chen-Yu. I am not sure that my reasons will be considered sufficient, but the Han designation, accepted without discussion until now, does not correspond in any way with the condition of the metal, with the diversity of stylistic forms, nor with the deterioration evident at the Chinese frontier.

Not only is there a southeastern survival of the Eurasiatic animal style, but a northwestern as well, among the ancient Germans. Strzygowski (3) has already said of the latter that their animal style was separated by nearly a millennium from that of the Scythians. It should be added that with the term Scythian he also includes Sarmatian art. That such survivals are possible cannot be disputed. Tallgren and Merhart speak continually of them in their books. Of course, all objects should not be placed after Han. There is too much evidence of Siberian influence in Han art. It would, moreover, be worth while to gather together everything that is connected with the north in this period. With roof-tiles surprising results have been obtained (4).

The fact that we pass the usual limit of many of the dates by a millennium or more takes none of the artistic and documentary value away from the objects. They rather gain by finding parallels from the west, since these parallels widen the foundations of primitive art on which developed civilizations are built, civilizations with which primitive art is blended at certain periods and in certain regions.

The primitive uses of schamanism bequeath very ancient conceptions to many ornaments, without their meaning, however, being clearly understood.