

for the reproduction of motifs carried westwards by the export trade of Chinese figured silks could well have offered than the local tapestry weaver's needle.

Thus we are finally led to consider the question whether figured fabrics from China affected also the textile designs of countries farther west than the Tārīm basin. Once the Central-Asian route had been opened and secured towards the close of the second century B.C., the flourishing silk trade must have carried these in abundance across to Irān and thence to the Mediterranean regions. Professor J. Strzygowski was the first to raise this important question in a very stimulating paper. Basing himself mainly on comparisons of style, supported by certain historical notices, he had answered it in the affirmative as regards Irān and the Hellenized Near East.<sup>26</sup> This would not be the place to examine the arguments upon which an art historian distinguished by such breadth of vision based his theory, even if I had access in my Kashmir camp to all the materials bearing on the problem. Nor do our Lou-lan finds of Chinese figured silks, as exported in Han times, supply archaeological evidence sufficient to decide it. I must therefore restrict myself to a few observations on points which, I think, deserve to be kept in view.

Silk trade carries textile designs westwards.

In the first place it should be remembered that among the abundant classical data referring to the silk brought from the distant Seres we have Pliny's important testimony to the fact that Chinese silk fabrics, not merely the raw material of spun silk, were carried to Syria to be there unravelled and re-woven.<sup>27</sup> That silk fabrics reached the Mediterranean even before our era can be concluded from Ovid's reference in his *Amores* published B.C. 14 to 'vela colorati qualia Seres habent'.<sup>28</sup> Even in Byzantine times silk fabrics from China were to be found in the Near East and were brought into the Eastern Roman Empire, as shown by a notice of Leo Diaconus.<sup>29</sup> But it is difficult not to attach weight to Mr. Dalton's argument that the absence of designs which can be identified as Chinese upon early surviving silks in the West 'is against the supposition of any important Chinese influence'.<sup>30</sup> This view is taken also by Professor von Falke, who, when referring in the second edition of his great work to our Lou-lan stuffs, expresses the belief that the style of Chinese figured silks, such as those of L.C. 07. a; iii. 011 (Pl. XXXIV), reproduced by him from Mr. Andrews' drawings, could not make an impression in the West as long as classical art feeling survived.<sup>31</sup>

Classical mention of imported Chinese silks.

Professor Strzygowski had laid special stress on the probability that the preference which the designers of early Byzantine and 'Coptic' fabrics show for the lattice diaper made up of lozenges, a motif also found decoratively used in Hellenistic sculpture, would be found traceable to the influence of Chinese figured silks.<sup>32</sup> The grave-pits of L.C. have actually furnished those examples of early Chinese silks with this lozenge 'all-over' pattern for which Professor Strzygowski was looking. Yet no definite conclusion appears to me at present possible on this point either, since Professor von Falke shows that the frequent use of the lozenge scheme of design on Western textiles is attested by representations in Greek vase paintings as early as the sixth to the fourth century B.C.<sup>33</sup>

Lattice diaper in textile designs.

<sup>26</sup> See J. Strzygowski, *Seidenstoffe aus Aegypten im Kaiser Friedrich-Museum*, with the pregnant sub-title 'Wechselwirkungen zwischen China, Persien und Syrien in spätantiker Zeit', in *Jahrbuch der K. Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, xxiv (1903), pp. 147 sqq. Cf. particularly pp. 173 sqq.

<sup>27</sup> See Pliny, *Historia naturalis*, vi. 54; xi. 76; cf. also Hirth, *China and the Roman Orient*, p. 258. The same process is alluded to in poetic fashion by Lucan in his *Pharsalia*, x. 141-3; see Coedès, *Textes relatifs à l'Extrême Orient*, p. 18 (where the translation of *filo* by 'lin' requires modification as the reference to a 'textile of the Seres', i. e. silk, is quite certain).

<sup>28</sup> *Amores*, i. xiv. 6. The reading *colorata* accepted by von Falke, *Seidenweberei*<sup>2</sup>, p. 2, is impossible on metrical grounds.

<sup>29</sup> I take this reference from Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology*, p. 584.

<sup>30</sup> See *loc. cit.*, p. 584.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. von Falke, *Seidenweberei*<sup>2</sup>, p. 14.

<sup>32</sup> See Strzygowski, in *Jahrbuch der K. Preuss. Kunstsammlungen*, xxiv, pp. 174 sqq. For the lozenge-diaper ornamentation of columns, see now also Strzygowski-Berchem, *Amida*, Fig. 78.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. von Falke, *Seidenweberei*<sup>2</sup>, p. 1, with Figs. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8.