

freehand and elsewhere by stamps or stencils.<sup>14</sup> In two silks a spot pattern is produced by knot-dyeing, a technique still largely practised in north-western India and of which there is also an example in a fabric from the T'ang fort of Endere.<sup>15</sup>

But, as in the case of the textile relics from Ch'ien-fo-tung, the special archaeological and artistic interest of the Astāna silks lies far more in the designs they exhibit than in the techniques and methods of ornamentation employed. Among their designs two main classes can readily be distinguished. The first class comprises designs either characteristically Chinese in style and execution or composed of motifs which, if not exclusively Chinese, may yet be reasonably assumed to have originated and been applied in the early textile art of China independently of Western influences. To the other class belong the designs which share the essential features of style peculiar to the decorated silks produced in Īrān and the Near East during the period conveniently designated as 'Sasanian', or in which the treatment shows them to have been imitated by Chinese hands from 'Sasanian' examples.

Decorative designs, Chinese or 'Sasanian'.

I have had occasion, when dealing in *Serindia* with the decorated silks from the 'Thousand Buddhas' of Tun-huang, to emphasize the importance attaching to certain fabrics found among them of which the designs belong to this second class. They serve as witnesses of that artistic penetration of Iranian art into the Far East in which textiles of 'Sasanian' type were the transmitting agents, and of which the result is clearly reflected in the designs of some well-known silks preserved since the middle of the eighth century among the temple treasures of Japan.<sup>16</sup> Some of the 'Sasanian' figured silks from Ch'ien-fo-tung described in *Serindia* and certain others subsequently recovered by M. Pelliot from the same hoard<sup>17</sup> can be recognized with certainty as direct imports from Western Asia, while some are undoubtedly Chinese imitations of similar fabrics. To these the tombs of Astāna have now added specimens, both of original 'Sasanian' textiles and of fabrics produced under their influence, which are not only more numerous but also manifestly older. The *terminus ad quem* in the case of these Astāna specimens lies fully three centuries farther back than in that of the Ch'ien-fo-tung materials, and they may safely be assumed to be approximately contemporaneous with the fabrics the designs of which had served as models for the Chinese silks imitating 'Sasanian' style preserved at the temples of Nara.

Chinese silks imitating 'Sasanian' designs.

Turfān, notwithstanding the important Chinese element in its population so strikingly attested by the discoveries in the Astāna cemeteries, yet belongs to a portion of innermost Asia in which Iranian influences have strongly asserted themselves during a prolonged period. Hence we seem justified in first reviewing here those Astāna textiles which show purely 'Sasanian' designs and must therefore be considered as products of Western or Central Asia. Next we shall turn to those in which characteristic features of 'Sasanian' textile style have been copied and adapted by the hands of Chinese workers. In adopting this order we may note the significant circumstance that whereas distinctively Chinese designs vastly preponderate among the many silks of Ch'ien-fo-tung, and those of 'Sasanian' type are very few, the 'Sasanian' specimens at Astāna make up a considerable proportion of the total of figured silks and close upon one-half of those executed in colours.

'Sasanian' figured silks at Astāna.

In dealing with the designs of each class it will not be possible for me to attempt a systematic analysis of all details. I have before me at the time of writing neither adequate reproductions of the silks nor drawings of patterns, which are so necessary for the illustration and study of fabrics where these have for the most part been preserved only in small, and frequently much injured,

Limitation of analysis of designs.

<sup>14</sup> See ii. 1. 014-15; vi. 2. 04, 3. 03, 07; ix. 2. 012 (free-hand); Pl. XXXVI, LXXVIII, LXXXII.

<sup>15</sup> See vi. 1. 01-2; *Anc. Khotan*, i. pp. 430, 442; ii. Pl. LXXVI.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Serindia*, ii. pp. 907 sq. To the references there given in note 1 should be added von Falke, *Seidenweberei* (first ed.), i. pp. 87 sqq., Figs. 110-19.

<sup>17</sup> See *Serindia*, ii. p. 907, note 6.