

fact that these specimens of patterned damasks and gauzes are quite as numerous in our collection as those of the more effective polychrome figured silks. But it is certainly noteworthy that among them we meet far less frequently with designs showing the influence of Western-Asiatic, i.e. Persian, textile art than among the specimens of the latter class. It is this contact with fabrics of the type usually designated as 'Sassanian' which gives, as we shall see, special antiquarian value and interest to many of these figured silks. But, even apart from this, they are bound to attract attention by their brilliant and yet harmonious colouring and the exquisite art of their execution in general. We probably owe the preservation of a relatively large number of specimens to the fact that these gay figured silks were in particular favour for use in the head-pieces of banners.¹⁹

Polychrome figured silks.

Chinese silk tapestry work is represented in the collection by only a small number of pieces, but these are all of exceptional fineness in technique and all hand-made with the needle. The value attached to such work is illustrated by the fact that twice we find small pieces of the identical fabric utilized in different head-pieces and manuscript-roll covers.²⁰ Gold is introduced into this tapestry work, just as in the case of certain embroideries, by means of paper covered with leaf-gold and then cut into very narrow strips, in accordance with a method which still prevails in the Far East.²¹

Silk tapestry work.

Of methods of decoration applied to finished textiles we find two plentifully illustrated among our fabrics. The embroideries, usually worked on a ground of silk gauze and in solid 'satin-stitch', show in most cases that perfection of careful workmanship which has survived in this class of Chinese needlework down to modern times.²² Their floral designs are always purely Chinese in character. The same is the case also with most of the printed silks, which, however, in point of technical execution do not approach the standard of the other decorated textiles, even where the patterns imprinted are artistically pleasing.²³ In a few of the printed silks the design shows plainly the influence exercised by models derived from Western Asia, while the execution is obviously local. In the next section we shall have occasion to make special reference to these printed silk pieces, in view of the light they may throw upon interesting questions connected with the reproduction of 'Sassanian' textile motifs in China.²⁴

Embroidery needlework.

Printed silks.

SECTION II.—CHINESE DESIGNS IN DECORATION OF TEXTILES

Neither the technique of our Ch'ien-fo-tung fabrics nor the methods employed for their ornamentation can claim such special archaeological interest as the designs appearing in their decoration and the styles of art to which these designs attach themselves. That silk-weaving in all its aspects had reached a high state of technical perfection in China thousands of years before

Antiquity of Chinese textile art.

etc., with Pl. CXVII, CXXI, CXXII. For silk gauzes with patterns, see, e.g., Ch. 00312-13, 00324, 00332, 00336, 00344, etc., with illustrations of design in Pl. CXX.

¹⁹ A list of figured silk remains may be given here for facility of reference in connexion with the notes on designs in the next section (00 preceding numbers omitted): Ch. 009, 26, 61.a-4, 76, 118, 165, 168, 169, 171-82, 227, 230, 278, 295-7, 302, 359, 361-3, 365-9, 375, 432, 487; i. 0011, 20; liv. 005, and many pieces in 00279; lv. 0028. For reproductions in colour, see Pl. CVI, CVII; in monotone, Pl. CVIII-CXII.

With the figured silks may also be classed those few polychrome fabrics which on account of a peculiarity of technique in their texture (see remarks on Ch. 00170) have been distinguished as 'true brocades' in the Descriptive List, viz. Ch. 0065, 170 (Pl. LV), 228, 229 (Pl. CVI), 364, 481; lv. 0028. 3.

²⁰ For complete pieces of a tapestry band, woven in a minute but interesting design, see the head-pieces Ch. 0058; lv. 0034 (Pl. CVI); for strips of tapestry in a somewhat larger scroll pattern, see Ch. 00166 and the manuscript-roll cover, xlvi. 001 (Pl. CVI). For smaller frs., cf. Ch. 00300-1 (Pl. CXII).

²¹ Cf. Ch. 0058.

²² For embroidered silks see Ch. 0075, 119, *259, *279-81, 332, *347, *348, 446, 448-50; *xxii. 0019; *xxvi. 002, *003, and *lv. 0028. 10, 11; Pl. CVI, CVII, CX, CXI illustrate the pieces marked with an asterisk.

²³ Printed silk pieces are described under Ch. 00291-2, 304-10, 357-8, 360, 371-2, 376, 483; i. 0022; xxii. 0036; xxiv. 009; lv. 0028 (15 and border), lxi. 005. For illustrations, see Pl. CVIII, CXIII, CXIV, CXVI. a, CXXII, CXXIII.

²⁴ See below, p. 910, with regard to Ch. 00291-2, 00357, reproduced in Pl. CXVI. A.