

a golden yellow ground. A very interesting geometrical design is exhibited by the woven bands of silk which hold together the bamboo slips forming the material of the manuscript-roll cover Ch. xx. 006 (Plate CVI). The cover is relatively well preserved and has its *pendant* in the Shōsōin Collection. The material and a Chinese seal character woven into the design place Chinese workmanship beyond all doubt.

When we turn to the group of monochrome figured silks or damasks, there is a distinct predominance of geometric designs, mostly of a simple type, to be noted. Only in a few damasks, such as Ch. 0086 (Plate CXVII) and xxviii. 007 (Plate CXXII), do we meet with elaborate floral and bird designs, and these, too, of a much stylized character.²⁰ Elsewhere such simple patterns as the concentric lozenges, chevrons, quatrefoils, scrolls, etc., illustrated in Plate CXXI, prevail.²¹ There can be little doubt that this preference for relatively plain diapers is due to reasons of technique, and this explanation obviously applies still more to the gauzes, which show none but simple geometric designs, as seen in Plate CXX.²² The appearance among these of Svastikas, crosses with angles filled in by squares, etc., set in lattice-work, might at first sight raise a suggestion of Western influence.²³ But the fact that the same motifs, like most of those used in the damasks, are to be found among the decorated silks of Han times which I recovered from the graves of Lou-lan places their early use in Chinese textile art beyond all doubt.

Geometric designs in monochrome fabrics.

SECTION III.—DESIGNS OF 'SASSANIAN' TYPE AND THEIR IMITATIONS

The case is wholly different with the designs, forming the previously mentioned second class, which either in composition and execution attach themselves so closely to the style of 'Sassanian' textiles as to make Western origin probable for the fabrics displaying them, or else in their composition show unmistakable signs of having been produced under the influence of that style, even though by Chinese hands. Few as our specimens of this class are, they may claim special importance for the history of Eastern textile art; for they may help to throw light on 'complex phenomena of artistic penetration' in which 'textiles of portable nature have been transmitting agents'¹—problems which in Central Asia and the Far East deserve quite as much attention as they have received further west.

Artistic penetration from the West.

That Persian designs of 'Sassanian' type were imitated on figured silk fabrics produced in China during the seventh or early eighth century is a well-known fact, proved beyond all doubt by the famous Ito textile from the treasure of the Horiuji temple of Nara, where it had been deposited in A.D. 756.² The composition and a number of characteristic details of the hunting scene represented in its round medallions are as unmistakably Persian as the execution of the whole design and the ornamental motifs of the foliage in the interspaces are Chinese.³ There is adequate

Persian design imitated in Horiuji textile.

²⁰ See also Ch. 00293. a, Pl. CXVIII, with its fine figure of a peacock; for simple 'spots' showing pairs of birds, etc., see Ch. 00339, 343 in Pl. CXXI.

²¹ For other floral or geometric designs in damasks, apart from those reproduced in Pl. CXXI, cf. Ch. 0065, 231-2 (Pl. CXII), 233-6, 238-50, 279, 280, 374, 429, 430, 440, 453-5; lv. 0028. 12-14.

Ch. 00351 (Pl. CXVII) is of interest, as its pattern with interlacing stems and closed palmettes shows resemblance to the design of the damasks T. xiv. v. 0011. a, b (Pl. CXVII) which date from T'ang times; cf. above, p. 687.

²² For other patterned gauzes, cf. Ch. 00324, 332, and the gauzes generally used for embroidered pieces.

²³ Thus Miss Lorimer in a general note had called

attention to such patterns being common amongst the fabrics of Akhmim and Antinoë and also those of Byzantine manufacture, with references to v. Falke, *Geschichte der Seidenweberei*, i. Figs. 32-4, 36, 83, etc.

¹ I borrow the pregnant expression used by M. Migeon as regards corresponding questions about the influence of Eastern decorative design upon the textile art of the Byzantine Empire; see *Les arts du tissu*, p. 6.

² Cf. Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology*, p. 591; for reproductions, see *Shōsōin Catalogue*, Pl. XCIV; Strzykowski, *Jahrbuch der K. Preuss. Kunstsammlungen*, xxiv. p. 169, Fig. 13; *Annales du Musée Guimet*, xxx. Pl. VI.

³ For these interspace motifs, cf. the decorative patterns discussed above, p. 906, and illustrated by Ch. 00181, Pl. CXVI. A.