

reason to believe that the reproduction of Persian and other Near-Eastern designs in Chinese textiles can be traced for centuries later.<sup>4</sup>

Persian  
fabrics  
brought to  
China.

While it is thus certain that specimens of decorative textile art as then produced in Persia and the adjoining regions must have already reached China in early T'ang times, many interesting questions remain open as to the territories from, and the routes by, which these Western figured fabrics were introduced; the extent to which they influenced Chinese taste; the conditions which led to the reproduction of their designs, apparently for export, etc. Though these questions cannot be taken up here for discussion in general, it is clear that for the sake of their elucidation hereafter our specimens deserve careful scrutiny.

Motifs in  
'Sassanian'  
textiles.

Pairs of confronting beasts or birds form one of the most popular and persistent motifs in textiles of 'Sassanian' style, whether produced in Persia or outside it, while the framing of this motif and of other principal designs in medallions, round or oval and repeated over the whole surface of the fabric, is the regular and most characteristic feature of the Persian style of textile decoration.<sup>5</sup> We find this significant motif and the still more typical arrangement in medallions uniformly reproduced in a group of our figured silks, and as in each case indications of Chinese style and workmanship are totally absent, it seems to me impossible to doubt the Western origin of these fabrics.

'Sassanian'  
figured silk  
on manu-  
script-roll  
cover.

The most interesting among them is, perhaps, the excellently woven figured silk used for the border and bands of the manuscript-roll cover, Ch. xlvi. 001 (Plate CVI, CXI), and showing the design reproduced in the drawing of Plate CXVI. The design consists of large round medallions slightly compressed at the sides, each containing a pair of confronting winged lions on a palmette base, with smaller lozenge-shaped panels that are intended for conventional rosettes filling the interspaces. Medallions of nearly identical design, with the same highly stylized pair of lions strident, are found on two fine silk fabrics, of apparently identical texture and colouring, that are preserved in Europe. One of these is in the South Kensington Museum, while the other forms the 'suaire' of St. Colombe and St. Loup belonging to the treasure of Sens Cathedral.<sup>6</sup> The rosette in the interspaces is there replaced by pairs of hounds facing each other across a tree—the whole forming again a familiar 'Sassanian' motif. Among details of the medallion design common to all three fabrics, attention may be called only to the extreme rigidity of the animal pair, the border formed of a double ray of petals or leaves, and the stepped outlines throughout. All these are characteristic features of treatment peculiar to a group of Persian figured silks which Professor von Falke in his *Kunstgeschichte der Seidenweberei* distinguishes as of common origin and attributes to Khorāsān or the Oxus region.<sup>7</sup>

'Sassanian'  
designs in  
other fabrics  
of Western  
origin.

We meet again with the same rigid treatment of the animal pair and the stepped outlines in the designs of the silk banner tops Ch. 009 (Plates CXI, CXV) and Ch. 00359 (Plate CXV). The pattern of the former is completed by Ch. 00359. a, and shows elliptical medallions with a pair of

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Dalton, *Byzantine Art and Archaeology*, pp. 591, note 2; 592 sq., with references to Lessing, *Gewebesammlung des K. Kunstgewerbemuseums*, Berlin.

<sup>5</sup> Cf., e.g., Migeon, *Les arts du tissu*, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> For the Sens 'suaire', cf. Chartraire, *Les tissus anciens du trésor de la cathédrale de Sens*, pp. 24 sqq., Fig. 20. Chanoine Chartraire produces evidence making it highly probable that the division of the 'suaire' into two halves dates from A.D. 853. Regarding the specimen at South Kensington, see below, Descriptive List, under xlvi. 001.

M. Chartraire, p. 26, in his very instructive publication

has duly recognized the very close relation between the Sens 'suaire' and our Ch'ien-fo-tung fabric, of which other pieces are found similarly used on a manuscript-roll cover brought away by M. Pelliot and now at the Louvre.

<sup>7</sup> I take the references to this important publication from a general note of Miss Lorimer, not having access at present to the original. The group is illustrated there by Figs. 140-5. Prof. von Falke is inclined to date these fabrics from about the eighth to ninth centuries, but not earlier than A.D. 750.