

Inter-  
relation of  
Persian and  
Chinese  
styles.

An interesting problem of interrelation of styles is presented by the design of Ch. 00230, of which Plates CVI, CXII show some of the numerous fragments, and Plate CXVIII the reconstructed pattern. In the large repeating 'spot' an elaborate bird and flower pattern, originally of the naturalistic type, appears to have been hardened into the rigidity of a geometric carpet-like design. The 'stepped' outlines observed throughout, both in the large 'spots' and the smaller rosettes, also highly conventionalized, which fill the interspaces, are certainly non-Chinese and recall the previously discussed group. In Ch. 00369 we have the fragment of another fabric showing exactly the same peculiarities in the character of design and treatment. Mr. Andrews has expressed the belief that in both pieces originally Chinese designs have undergone transformation, almost beyond recognition, at the hands of craftsmen working under the influence of Persian textile style, and this view appeals to me strongly. There is nothing to guide us, beyond what has already been stated, as to the region where this adaptation of a design of Chinese origin is likely to have taken place. But it is worthy of note that the vivid colouring of these pieces, with its strong contrasts of dark blue and white, bright yellow and green, is quite distinct both from the harmonious colour-schemes which characterize almost all Chinese fabrics in the collection, and from the generally dull tones prevailing in our 'Sassanian' group.

Printed silks  
with designs  
from 'Sas-  
sanian'  
models.

Clear evidence of that 'artistic penetration', but in the opposite direction, is presented by an interesting small group of printed silks with designs undoubtedly derived from Persian models, but modified through Chinese workmanship. The most characteristic among these designs is found on Ch. 00291-2 (Plate CXIII), pieces belonging to different banners but printed from the same well-cut block. Plate CXVI. A gives the complete design as far as it can be restored. Its chief feature is a large circular medallion of the characteristic 'Sassanian' type, enclosing in its lower half a pair of confronting deer with one foreleg lifted and stylized trees between them. The character of the design filling the upper half of the medallion unfortunately cannot be determined. But that it too contained a pair of animals appears highly probable both from the analogy of similar 'Sassanian' designs executed in the West<sup>14</sup> and from that of the printed silk Ch. 00357, also reproduced in Plate CXVI. A. The repeating medallions are decorated on their border with elliptical discs, also common in 'Sassanian' designs, and adjoin in vertical as well as horizontal rows. The square ornament which breaks the disc decoration of the border at the cardinal points finds its counterpart in the Ito silk from Horiuji.<sup>15</sup> The lozenge-shaped masses of foliage which fill the spandrels between the medallions are plainly of Chinese style, though less naturalistic in treatment than the corresponding foliage in the interspaces of Ch. 00304 (Plate CXIV). Distinctly Chinese, too, is the transformation of the palmette base below the animals' feet, which the 'Sassanian' prototype must have shown, into a cloud scroll. Nor is it possible to mistake the Chinese touch in the free movement and life-like drawing of the deer which appear with similar shape and attitude in a figured silk of the Shōsōin.<sup>16</sup> Even in the stiffly conventionalized form which the 'Hōm' tree between them retains, the influence of Chinese style is observable.

Printed  
design of  
pairs of con-  
fronting  
ponies.

There can be no possible doubt that the design of the block was made by Chinese hands in imitation of a 'Sassanian' pattern, but the inferior quality of the silk used does not lend support to the assumption that the fabric might have been specially intended for export westwards. The printing may well have been done in the Tun-huang region from a locally prepared block. This, at any rate, seems the most likely explanation in the case of the curious printed silk Ch. 00357

found in the shrine of Endere, shows also stepped outlines, but is too small to permit of a determination of the design; see *Ancient Khotan*, ii. Pl. LXXVII.

<sup>14</sup> See, e.g., Chartraire, *Les tissus anciens du trésor de la cathédrale de Sens*, p. 37, Fig. 42.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. above, p. 907, note 2, for references.

<sup>16</sup> See below, Descriptive List, p. 986; for a painted design of the same Collection, see also Fenollosa, *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, i. plate opposite p. 110.