



## Recent Finds of Western-Related Glassware, Textiles, and Metalwork in Central Asia and China

E L L E N   J O H N S T O N   L A I N G

China is often viewed as the center of ceramic production from which ceramic bowls, jars, and other objects reached foreign lands in a one-way stream. Now there is evidence of the reverse: imports of foreign ceramic wares into China. Tenth-century Persian pottery vases have been discovered at Fuzhou in Fujian Province (in a tomb dated A.D. 930) and at undated sites at Yangzhou in Jiangsu Province, both in southeast China. Brought to Western attention in an article by Feng Xianming in 1986,<sup>1</sup> these and related ceramic finds are discussed in detail in Chuimei Ho's article in this volume.

Presented below are notes on other finds in Central Asia and China of Western or Western-influenced glassware, metalwork, and textiles. These notes are just that, and should not be construed as definitive. Indeed, it is hoped they will stimulate other scholars to accord these new finds a more thorough scrutiny.

### Glass

Finds of Western glass in early China are well documented.<sup>2</sup> The small number of Sasanian glass bowls discovered in China (as well as in Korea and Japan) typically are ornamented with rows of large round or hexagonal depressions. A new addition to this inventory is a light green glass bowl (7.5 cm h.) recently recovered from a fifth-century grave near Datong in Shanxi Province (fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> A dense arrangement of vertical ovals in four horizontal rows has been ground

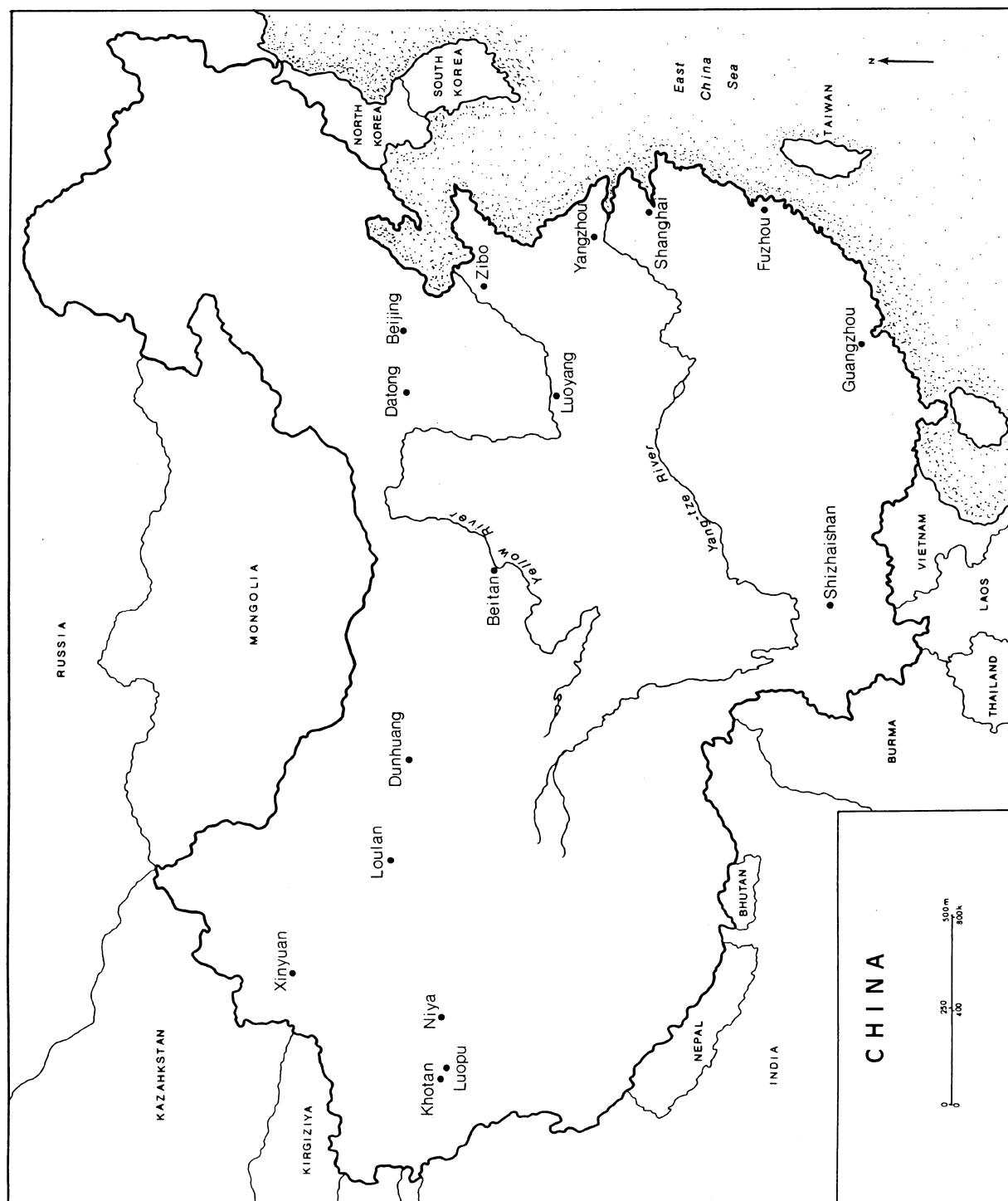
into the exterior, a surface treatment somewhat different from that on other Sasanian glass bowls retrieved thus far from Far Eastern sites.

### Textiles

Chinese woven textiles of the Eastern Han period (A.D. 25–220) are characterized by continuous overall repeat patterns of lozenges or connected curvilinear cloud motifs in which are imbedded such motifs as characters expressing auspicious wishes, highly stylized birds, animals, and (rarely) human figures.<sup>4</sup> These traits contrast with Western preferences for more realistic pictorial images and the use of rectilinear compartments.

Noteworthy discoveries of Western textiles in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region during the last four decades include a piece of cotton fabric with Classical themes; two wool tapestry weavings also with Classical figures; fragments of a flat-woven textile with motifs of a cut grapevine with leaf, tendril, and grapes; and another with animals, grapevines, and a figure holding a necklace; as well as fragments of woolen fabrics decorated with floral bands and a complete knotted pile rug.

In 1959 a wooden coffin containing a double burial and furnishings was discovered at Niya, in the desert north of Minfeng. Among the furnishings were personal toiletries, bowls and other containers of wood, a bow and arrows, and clothing cut in Chinese fashion from Chinese textiles.



Map showing sites mentioned in the text. Source: *The Times Atlas of China* (1973). Map prepared by Mary Pedley.



Fig. 1. Sasanian glass bowl. Tomb near Datong, Shanxi Province, 5th century A.D. After *Wenwu* (1992.8), color plate 1, fig. 1.

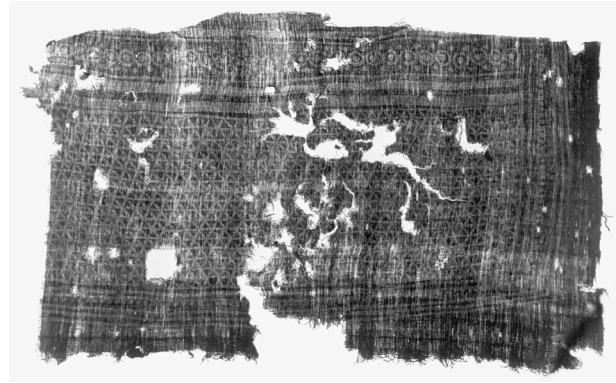


Fig. 2. Blue and white printed cotton fragment. Niya, Min-feng, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, 2d century A.D. After *Chūka Jimmin Kyōwakoku tsurukurōdo bunbutsu ten/The Exhibition of Ancient Art Treasures of the People's Republic of China: Archaeological Finds of the Han to Tang Dynasty Unearthed at Sites along the Silk Road* (Tokyo, 1979), fig. 93.

This burial, considered to be second century A.D. in date, also yielded fragments of two wax-resist dyed cotton pieces.

The designs of one of these cotton fragments are believed to have been printed (fig. 2). This fragment (81 × 48 cm) has a wide field covered with rows of triangles in dark blue bordered by six beige lines, one of which consists of small dots. Next to the triangle field, but separated from it by several lines, is a narrow strip with a design in beige against a blue ground consisting of large dots each within a circle; there are smaller dots between the larger ones. Division of the surface into a large central field surrounded by rectilinear panels is common in Western textile design, as are the designs themselves.

The second fragment (86 × 45 cm) has motifs in white (actually a neutral beige tone) against a blue ground created by wax-resist dying (fig. 3).<sup>5</sup> It is similar to the fragment just discussed in that it also has a large central field surrounded by smaller rectangular compartments. At the bottom is a border consisting of a tooth design between lines. The remainder of the fragment has four panels, only one of which is complete. Above the decorative border a horizontal panel contains what appears to be an undulating fish or dragon, with birds in the interstices spewed from the mouth of an unidentified creature. At right an-

gles to this panel is an incomplete rectangular compartment filled with a checker motif. To the left, a square compartment contains a half-length nude female holding a cornucopia. She has round eyes, a large nose, and full lips. Her earrings and necklace are a matched set of large beads. Her hair is in puffs, and there is a halo behind her head, and perhaps also a mandorla. The main field of this textile apparently had a large-scale scene; unfortunately, only a human foot, a lion's tail, and a lion's paw remain of the representation. This fragment has been reproduced frequently, but no one has commented on the fact that the use of figural images in textiles for this period is non-Chinese or on the fact that these motifs have Classical origins.<sup>6</sup> Specific identification of these three decorative motifs is uncertain. When the textile was first reported in 1960, the nude female figure was hesitantly identified as a Bodhisattva, one of the deities of Buddhism; no mention was made of the other motifs.<sup>7</sup> By the mid-1980s, Buddhist interpretations had been assigned to all three pictorial motifs. The nude woman was unequivocally declared to be a Bodhisattva; the combination of human foot, lion's paw, and tail was viewed as the remains of a representation of the Buddha because the royal lion was appropriated by the Buddha; and the serpentine creature with birds issuing from the mouth

of what was now identified as possibly a tiger was seen as the depiction of a Jataka tale (stories of the rebirths of the Buddha).<sup>8</sup>

It is true that a woman holding a cornucopia is among the sculptures of the second century in the primarily Buddhist Gandharan region of Northwest India, where she is sometimes identified as Hariti (representing fertility) or simply as one of a pair of "tutelary gods" (fig. 4). Also from Northwest India are coins with Kanishka III represented on the obverse and, on the reverse, the goddess Ardoxsho. Full of figure and with a halo behind her curly-haired head, she is seated on a high-backed chair. She holds a cornucopia in her left hand and a wreath in her right.<sup>9</sup> Although the exact identity of this deity is uncertain, she has connections with abundance, especially in "a political, dynastic and national sense."<sup>10</sup> But in the Buddhist tradition, no known Bodhisattva holds a cornucopia. Representations of lions in conjunction with the Buddha are normally limited to small ornaments on the base of the Buddha's throne. The human foot along with the lion's paw and tail seen on this textile simply do not conjure up a Buddhist icon. Regardless of the interpretations assigned to the figures on the textile, shades of Fortuna and Hercules or Samson lie behind them.

Interestingly, the cornucopia appears again three hundred years later in China, this time above a female figure with a bird's body engraved on the lid of a stone sarcophagus found in the tomb of Li He (fig. 5).<sup>11</sup> This burial, dated A.D. 582, is located in the Chinese heartland, Luoyang, in Henan Province. The decoration of Li He's sarcophagus included many non-Chinese motifs. Two foreigners, represented with large round eyes and high-bridged noses and wearing high boots, are engraved as guardian figures, and around the borders of the sarcophagus are pearl medallions enclosing boar heads and human faces related to Sasanian traditions. The female figure with bird body is identified as the Chinese culture-heroine, Nügua,<sup>12</sup> but she and her male counterpart, Fuxi, normally have serpent bodies. Their attributes, indicative of the cultural benefits they introduced, include the compass and T-square; they may hold the orbs of the moon and sun, and in some contexts are astral deities. I know of no other instance where a cornucopia is associated with Nügua.

Small strips of a wool weaving with reversible designs in yellow on a dark ground (or vice versa, dark designs on a yellow ground), were also found in 1959 at an unnamed location in Niya (Minfeng; fig. 6). The original pattern is impossible to reconstruct on the basis of the fragments (length of longest fragment: 22 cm). All that can be discerned are vines, leaves, and grape clusters; the head of an animal; and segments of a clothed human figure, including one in profile holding a garland necklace or wreath with ribbon ties. Such motifs are distinctly non-Chinese, but instead recall those seen in Sasanian art, such as the silverware of the fifth century A.D.

Further to the west, two digs in 1984 at necropoli located at Saiyiwake, near Shanpula in Luopu County east of Hetian (Khotan), opened fifty-two tomb areas dating from the Warring States era (403–221 B.C.) through the Eastern Han dynasty (A.D. 25–220). The second-century A.D. cemetery number 1, which contained 133 individuals, was especially rich in unusual textiles. Five textiles from this tomb and one from tomb area number 2 reflect Western artistic legacies.

A cotton fabric (41 × 12 cm) from cemetery number 1 at Saiyiwake has wax-resist dyed patterns of waves, lines, concentric circles, and dots; rows of dots; and six-petaled rosettes (fig. 7). Waves, circles, and especially the rosettes, absent from the Chinese decorative lexicon, are commonly seen in the arts derived from Classical sources.

One of the corpses in tomb number 1 wore a pair of extraordinary woolen tapestry leggings. One legging measured 52 × 45 cm; it had a design of a human face. The other legging (56 × 46 cm) had a centaur in a circle of rosettes. The face (fig. 8), with its blue eyes averted, its heavy jowl, and full lips, is Roman in origin. The highlights on the chin, the lips, and the nose and the shadowing along the jaw, the nose, and the eyes are Roman in spirit. As noted by Wu Zhen, this tapestry joins another figural weaving discovered at Loulan by Sir Aurel Stein in 1914 and sometimes identified as Hermes (fig. 9).<sup>13</sup>

The second legging from tomb number 1 has a centaur on a blue ground (fig. 10). The horse's body is red, and the human torso and arms are rendered in "flesh" tones. His windblown, light-colored cape (made of an animal skin?) displays dark shadows, and a ribbon streams from his



dark hair. He plays a long pipe. A circle of alternating pink and yellow rosettes surrounds the centaur, and to the right are four pinions, all that remain of a wing. Wu Zhen suggests that this is either Chiron, the centaur famous for his musical and medicinal skills, or Cyllarus.<sup>14</sup> While the rosettes are familiar decorative motifs in the Hellenistic world, the centaur as seen here apparently is not.<sup>15</sup>

Bits and scraps of knotted rugs were found by Sir Mark Aurel Stein at Loulan,<sup>16</sup> and more recently by excavators in the Niya region. Most of these are so fragmentary or tattered that their designs cannot be adequately deciphered. Thus, the small knotted rug (76 × 74 cm) recovered from tomb number 1 at Saiyiwake is a major find. It had been placed over the saddle of a horse buried in this tomb and was discovered nearly intact, complete with corner tassels (fig. 11). The central black field is covered with a diamond grid in red containing leaf-like forms, also in red, with perhaps some yellow. The central field is bordered with four narrow red, yellow, buff, and black lines. The wide outer border has a design in bright blue-green, each panel containing a tree in buff and yellow against a red and black ground. The outer edge has diagonal stripes of alternating red, black, buff, and yellow. The tassels are red. Believed to date from the second century A.D., it is the earliest extant example of a type of carpet design generally associated with later Central Asian cultures.<sup>17</sup>

Two fragments of tunics with decorative stripes were found at Saiyiwake and at Loulan. One from cemetery 1 at Saiyiwake is a red wool measuring 45 × 37 cm with a narrow woven ornamental strip consisting of repeats of a delicate, small-scale design of two flowering plants rendered in red and yellow against a blue ground (fig. 12). To either side of this central band the colors move in gradations from a light green (?) to light pink to darker red to blue or black (this sequence is somewhat hypothetical, since the original colors may have faded or otherwise changed over the centuries; in addition, the color reproduction of this fragment may not be accurate). The outermost edging of the band has a leaf scroll in a light color against the dark blue or black ground. The second tunic strip was found in 1980 in tomb number 2 at a site seven miles east of the walls of Loulan (fig. 13). In this ex-

ample (59 × 57 cm), the motifs of the band are less delicate than those from tomb number 1 at Shanpula. The central section has palmettes enclosed in ovals formed of yellow and green lines. Between the ovals are floral and leaf forms in yellow, purple, blue, and green. The border is a running, mirror-image wave pattern of a type common in third-century Western Asiatic fabrics found, for example, at Dura-Europos and Palmyra. To each side is a border of black merging into magenta, then a narrow black stripe, and, finally, a wider yellow stripe. (Again, these are tentative color identifications, since a color reproduction of the whole fragment and a detail of it in the same publication differ substantially.) The mid-calf length tunic with clavi over the shoulder and sometimes also at the cuff and hem is a West Asian garment. Since the Chinese did not wear tunics with ornamental stripes, these two fragments found near Khotan and Loulan suggest that either imported textiles were incorporated into a Chinese garment or other use, or that tunic-wearing people lived in or passed through these areas.

A small fragment (11.5 × 6.8 cm) of a two-sided brocade with motifs of a cut branch of grapevine with leaf, tendril, and grape cluster in green on a yellow ground was found in tomb number 2 at Saiyiwake (fig. 14). It may also be an imported textile.<sup>18</sup>

## Metalwork

A gilt-silver bowl (4.5 cm h.) ornamented with acanthus leaf clusters and four roundels containing profile heads (fig. 15-a, b) was discovered along with the Sasanian glass bowl mentioned above in a sixth-century tomb near Datong in Shanxi Province. This is the second vessel with this type of decoration unearthed in China. The first (apparently of bronze), part of a hoard excavated from the ruins of buildings in the suburbs of Datong believed to date from the middle or second half of the fifth century, has been discussed by Jessica Rawson (fig. 16-a, b). She notes that "it has been suggested that Roman glass bowls were the prototype for silver and bronze bowls, decorated with portrait medallions alternating with a plant motif, made in the Sasanian empire and northern India. The bowl from

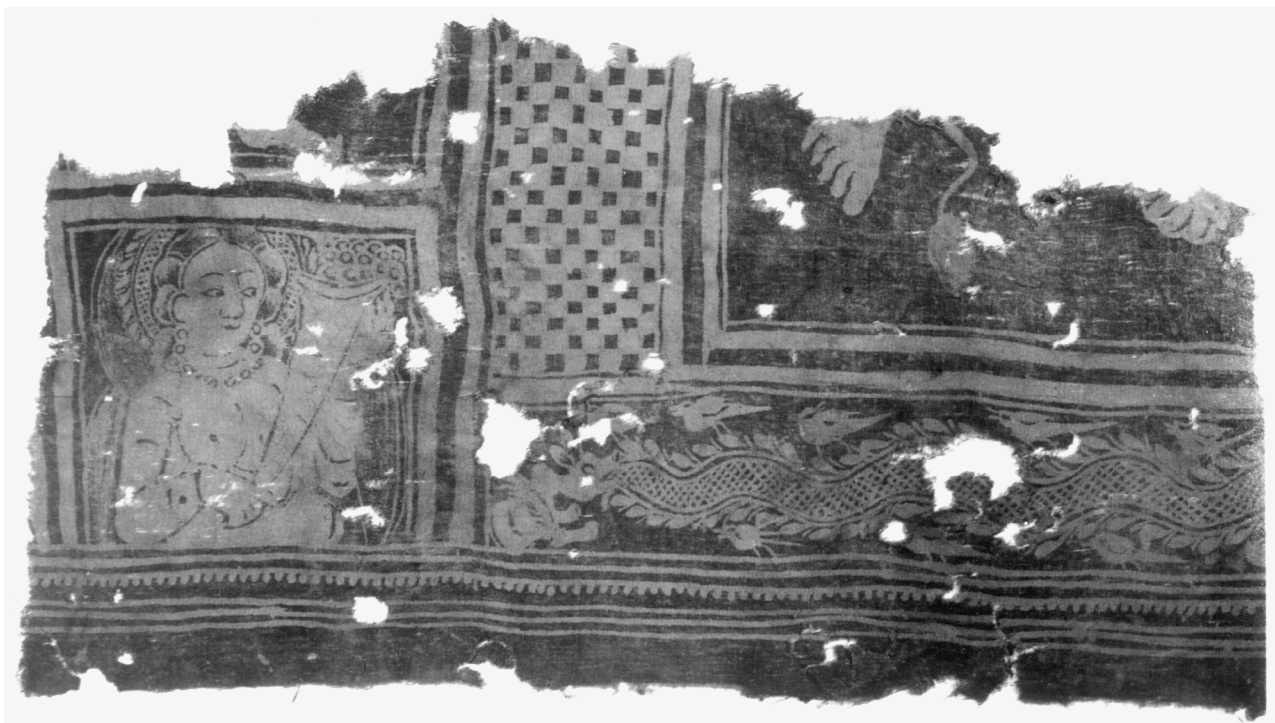


Fig. 3. Blue and white wax-resist dyed cotton with motifs of a nude woman holding a cornucopia, a serpent (?) with birds issuing from a creature's mouth, a lion's paw and tail, and a human foot. Grave at Niya, Minfeng, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, 2d century A.D. After *Zhongguo meishu quanji*, 6, *Gongyi meishu bian*, 1, *Yinran zhixiu*, pl. 103.



Fig. 4. A tutelary couple. Takht-i-Bahi, North-west India, now in the British Museum. After Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, fig. 78.

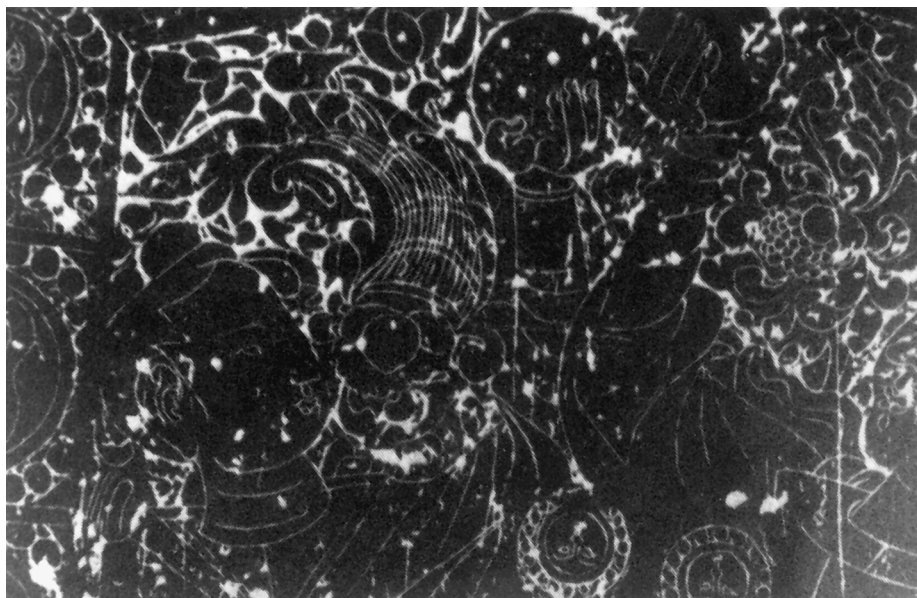


Fig. 5. Nūgua and cornucopia, detail of rubbing of lid of stone sarcophagus of Li He near Luoyang, Henan Province, dated A.D. 582. After Karetsky, "Engraved Designs," fig. 13.

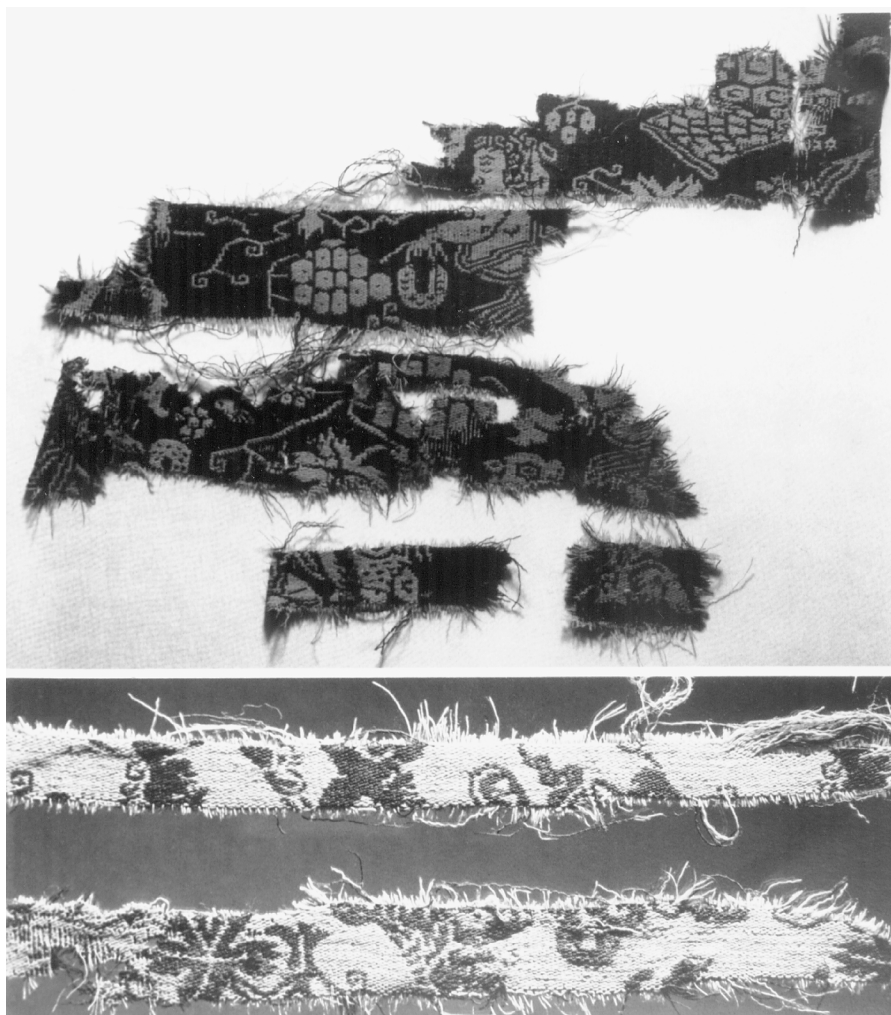


Fig. 6. Wool textile fragments with woven two-sided pattern of figures, animals, and grapevines, from Niya, Minfeng, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, 2d century A.D. After *Zhongguo meishu quanji*, 6, *Gongyi meishu bian*, 1, *Yinran zhixiu*, pl. 98.

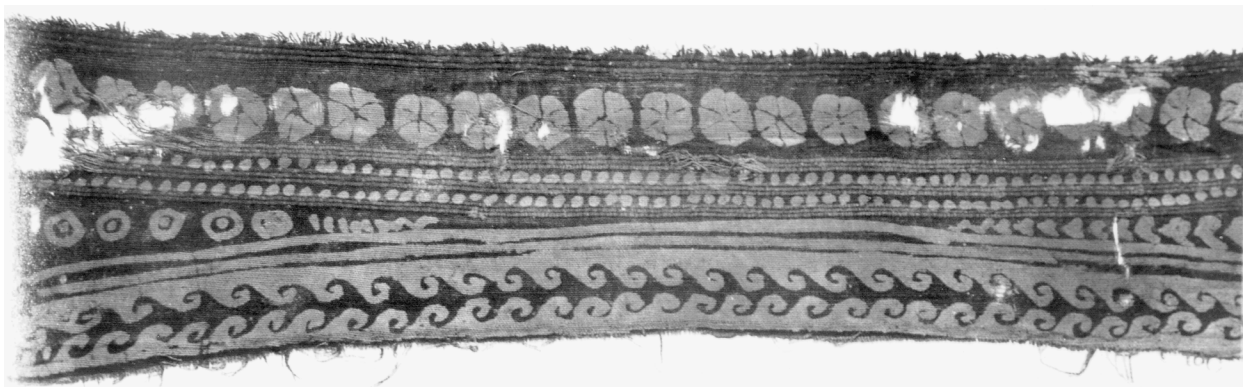


Fig. 7. Cotton textile with wax-resist design of wave and rosette patterns, from cemetery area 1 at Saiyiwake, Shanpula, Loupu County, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, 2d century A.D. After *Zhongguo meishu quanji*, 6, *Gongyi meishu bian*, 1, *Yinran zhixiu*, pl. 102.

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Fig. 8. Wool tapestry legging with head, from cemetery area 1 at Saiyiwake, Shanpula, Loupu County, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, 2d century A.D. After *China Reconstructs* (1989.9), p. 51.

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Fig. 9. Tapestry with head of Hermes, from Loulan, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, 3d century A.D. Stein Collection, National Museum, New Delhi. After B. Rowland, *The Art of Central Asia* (New York, 1974), p. 44.

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Fig. 10. Wool tapestry legging with figure of a centaur, from cemetery area 1 at Saiyiwake, Shanpula, Loupu County, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, 2d century A.D. After *Zhongguo meishu quanji*, 6, *Gongyi meishu bian*, 1, *Yinran zhixiu*, pl. 96.

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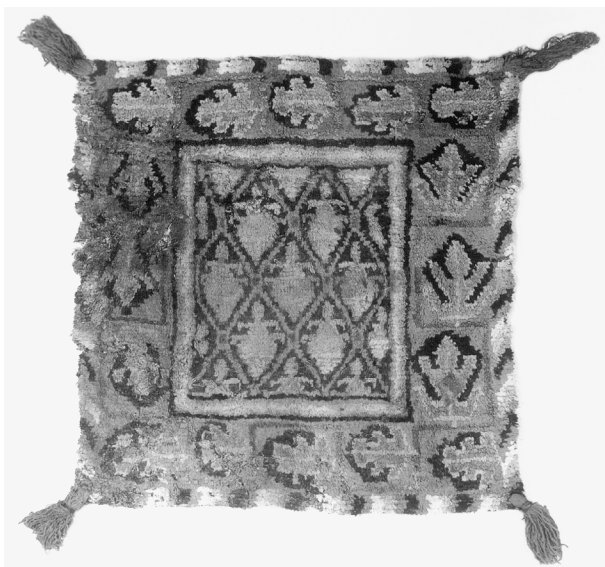


Fig. 11. Knotted wool carpet used as saddle rug, from cemetery area 1 at Saiyiwake, Shanpula, Loupu County, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, 2d century A.D. After *Quanguo chutu wenwu zhenpin xuan*/A Selection of the Treasure of Archaeological Finds of the People's Republic of China 1976–1985 (Beijing, 1987), pl. 336.

Datong seems to imitate such Western Asian or northern Indian examples.”<sup>19</sup>

A large, elaborately decorated gilt-silver platter (fig. 17-a, b), weighing 3,180 grams and measuring 31 cm in diameter and 4.4 cm in height, was found in 1988 during the construction of a peasant house in Beitán Township, Jingyuan County, in Gansu Province.<sup>20</sup> The decoration consists of three bands surrounding a central figure. From the outside these are: (1) a broad border of intertwined grapevines with birds; (2) a narrow beaded border; (3) a band containing twelve human heads alternating with various animals and birds. In the center of the platter is a man wearing a toga and holding a long staff who is seated on a lion. On the inside of the foot is an incised inscription. The report notes that the find site is located on a segment of the official post road from the Yellow River to the West used from the Han through the Tang periods. It is also noted that Byzantine coins have been found further east in Gansu Province on this same post road at Guyuan. Gansu Provincial Museum personnel believed that the platter

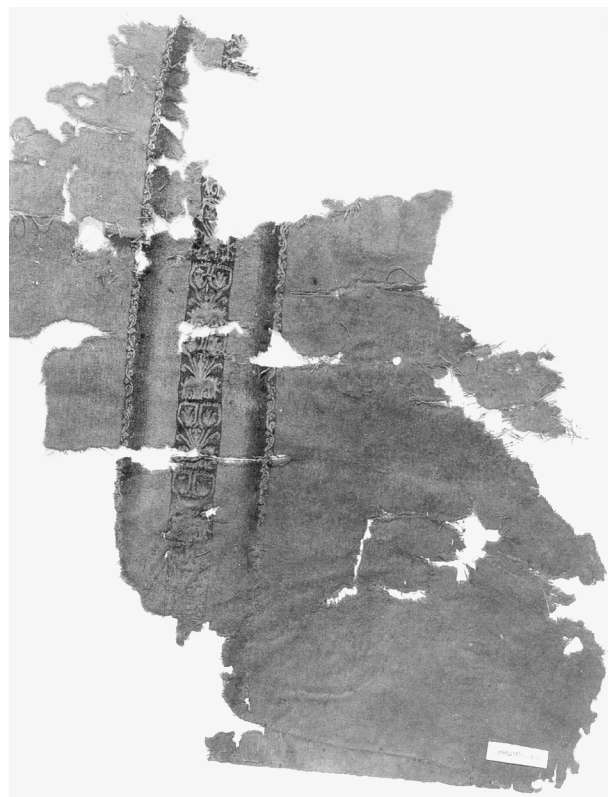


Fig. 12. Fragment of wool tunic with stripe, from cemetery area 1 at Saiyiwake, Shanpula, Loupu County, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, 2d century A.D. After *Quanguo chutu wenwu zhenpin xuan*, pl. 331.

was early Byzantine. In a study of this platter, Mie Ishiwata concluded that the decoration was a Dionysiac theme because of the vine scroll, the human heads, and the god on a lion.<sup>21</sup> Ishiwata points out that these resemble ornaments on Roman sarcophagi and mosaics made in North Africa and West Asia. According to Ishiwata, the inscription is written in a cursive Greek script of Bactria of the third-fourth century A.D. Ishiwata feels the platter was produced in Roman North Africa or West Asia from the second to third century and then exported to Bactria, where it was inscribed sometime in the third-fourth century, and brought to Gansu in the fourth-fifth century.

A small (40 cm h.) bronze figure of a kneeling warrior, perhaps an archer, wearing a tunic and a crested helmet with a broad brim of Hellenistic



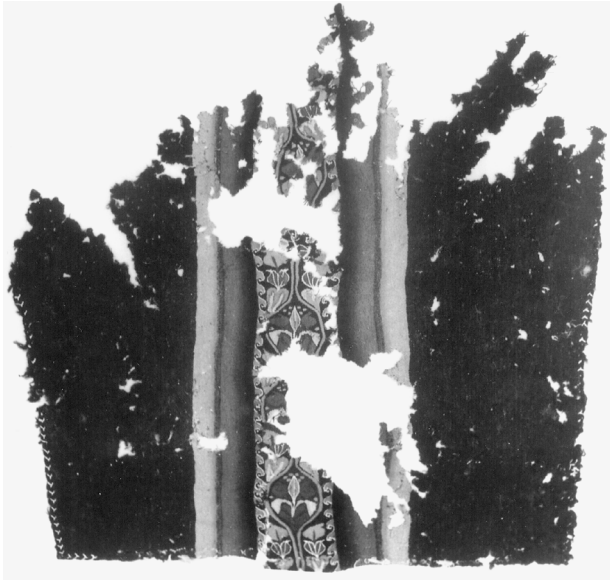


Fig. 13. Fragment of wool tunic with stripe, from tomb located east of Loulan, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, 2d century A.D. After *Zhongguo meishu quanji*, 6, *Gongyi meishu bian*, 1, *Yinran zhixiu*, pl. 95.

derivation was found in 1983 in a kurgan (believed to date from the fourth century B.C.) in Xinyuan County in the Yili Kazak Autonomous District. Two bronze bracelets, one with griffin finials, the other with animal finials, were also found in this kurgan.<sup>22</sup> The ornaments clearly are descended from Achaemenian bracelets such as the fifth-century B.C. gold armband with griffin finials now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.<sup>23</sup>

Four small, lidded boxes with interlocking lobes from three second-century B.C. Chinese graves are enigmas. Two were found in tombs number 11 (dimensions unknown; fig. 18-a, b) and 12 (12.5 cm h.; fig. 19) at Shizhaishan in Yunnan Province in southwest China. The two bronze boxes differ only slightly in proportion and in the ornamental three-dimensional creatures on the lid: the vessel from tomb number 11 has three seated ducks, that from tomb 12 has three reclining leopards. Shizhaishan was apparently a major cemetery for the Dian kingdom under the Early Han. One of the finds at Shizhaishan was a small gold seal of a king of the Dian believed to have been presented to him by

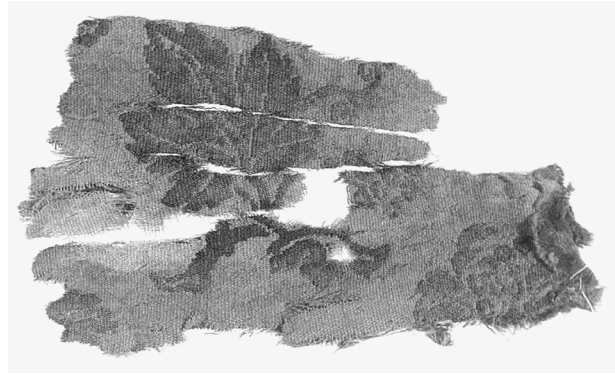


Fig. 14. Fragment of a two-sided brocade with a grapevine motif, from cemetery area 2 at Saiyiwake, Shanpula, Loupu County, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, 2d century A.D. After *Quanguo chutu wenwu zhenpin xuan*, pl. 329.

the Han ruler after the Dian submission to Han in 109 B.C. The twenty-two tombs excavated at Shizhaishan yielded a wide range of goods, including spectacular bronze cowrie shell containers with sculptured figural panoramas on the top and weapons decorated with motifs related to southeast Asian cultures, along with bronze plaques depicting animal combats akin to northern steppe traditions. In the excitement generated by these unusual finds, the uniqueness of the small boxes was overlooked. In the site report of 1959, their physical appearance was described without interpretative comment,<sup>24</sup> and even as late as 1983 in the catalogue accompanying an exhibition of bronzes from this site in the West they are considered to be "a central Chinese type,"<sup>25</sup> which might be true for the shape but not for the decorative treatment of the bowl and the lid.

Between 1978 and 1980 five funerary pits belonging to a king of the petty state of Qi of the Western Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 8) were excavated to make way for a railway station expansion. This site is located in Zibo City in Shandong Province in the northeast of China. The pits, believed to date from the second century B.C., contained more than 12,100 objects of ritual, military, and daily use made of bronze, pottery, iron, lacquer, lead, bone, and clay, many with costly and lavish ornamentation befitting a



Fig. 15-a. Gilt-silver bowl with acanthus leaf clusters and profile heads, from tomb near Datong, Shanxi Province, 5th century A.D. After *Wenwu* (1992.8), color plate 1, fig. 2.

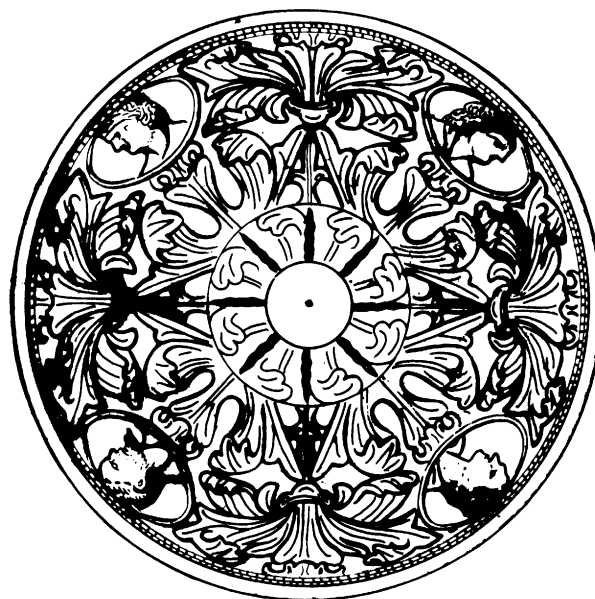


Fig. 15-b. Drawing of bowl in fig. 15-a. After *Wenwu* (1992.8), p. 9, fig. 24.



Fig. 16-a. Bronze bowl with acanthus leaf clusters and profile heads, from a hoard near Datong, Shanxi Province, 5th century A.D. After *Wenhua dageming qijian chutu wenwu* (Beijing, 1972), p. 152, fig. 17.



Fig. 16-b. Drawing of bowl in fig. 16-a. After *Wenwu* (1990.5), p. 5, fig. 17.





Fig. 17-a. Gilt-silver platter, found at Beitan, Jingyuan, Gansu Province. After Wenwu (1990.5), color plate.

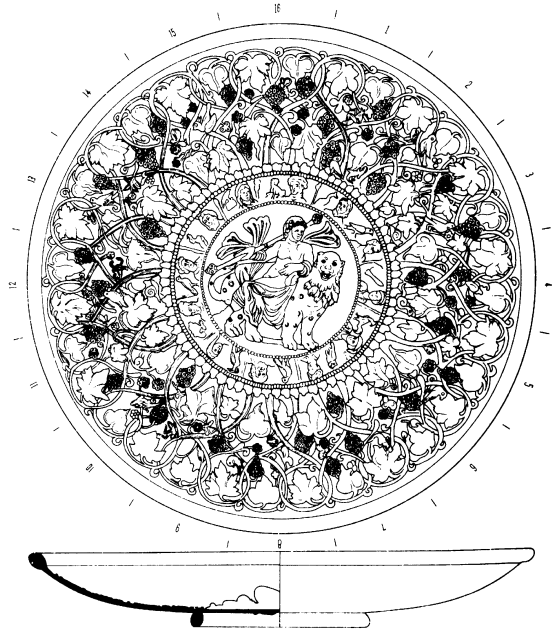


Fig. 17-b. Drawing of gilt-silver platter in fig. 17-a. After Wenwu (1990.5), p. 2, fig. 1.



Fig. 18-a. Bronze lobed lidded box, from tomb 11 at Shizhaishan, Yunnan Province, 2d century B.C. After *Chūka Jimmin Kyōwakoku shutsudo bumbutsu ten/Archaeological Treasures Excavated in the People's Republic of China* (Tokyo, 1973), p. 86.

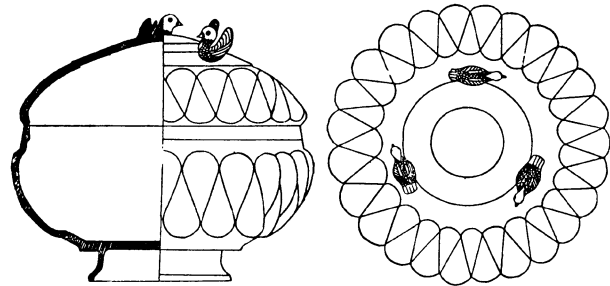


Fig. 18-b. Drawing of box in fig. 18-a. After Yunnan Provincial Museum, *Yunnan Jinning Shizhaishan gumuqun fajue baogao* (Beijing, 1959), vol. 1, p. 69, fig. 21.



Fig. 19. Bronze lobed lidded box, from tomb 12 at Shizhaishan, Yunnan Province, 2d century B.C. After Yunnan Provincial Museum, *Yunnan jinping Shizhaishan gumuqun fajue baogao*, vol. 2, pl. 43, fig. 5.

royal burial. A silver lidded lobed box (10.8 cm h.) with three reclining leopards on the lid was found in pit number 1, which contained ritual and household objects (fig. 20-a, b). The bowl and the lid are of silver; the foot and the ornamental reclining leopards on the lid of bronze. Two characters are inscribed on the interior: *mu* "tree" and *nan* "south." The box was not accorded special notice in the site report, which contains only a brief description of it.<sup>26</sup> But when an illustrated compendium of Han dynasty material culture was published, a line drawing of this box was included under the rubric "foreign" objects.<sup>27</sup> Writing about this box in 1985, Jessica Rawson observed that the "lobes around both the body and lid are reminiscent of the decoration of Achaemenid silver and must have been based upon a provincial Iranian model."<sup>28</sup>

In 1983 the Chinese excavated a tomb belonging to the second king of Nanyue, who died about 122 B.C.<sup>29</sup> The burial of the king, along with four of his ladies and several sacrificial victims, is located in the southern city of Guangzhou (Canton). The tomb contents were extra-



Fig. 20-a. Silver lobed lidded box, from pit number 1 at tomb of a king of Qi, Zibo City, Shandong Province, 2d century B.C. After *Quanguo chutu wenwu zhenpin xuan*, fig. 305.

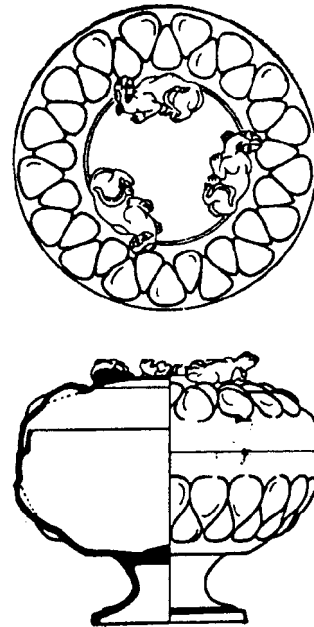


Fig. 20-b. Drawing of box in fig. 20-a. After *Kaogu xuebao* (1985.2), p. 258, fig. 29-5.

ordinarily rich. The corpse was encased in a jade shroud sewn together with silk thread and placed in a double coffin. The tomb furnishings were many and lavish: bronze banqueting vessels, sets of bronze bell musical instruments and of lithophones, iron armor, bronze mirrors, jade seals, a jade rhyton, whole elephant tusks, ornaments of jade, ivory, gold, silver, lacquer, and glass.<sup>30</sup>

The silver lidded box found in the tomb of the king of Nanyue (fig. 21-a, b) is in size (12.1 cm h.), shape, and proportion related to the box found in tomb 12 at Shizhaishan. Like the bowl from Shandong, the body is of silver, the foot of bronze. The three animals on the lid are missing, although there are three protrusions, added to the lid and spaced at the proper distance apart, as if to receive the sculptured animal figures. Each protrusion has a numeral (one, two, or three) engraved next to it. This vessel was also inscribed in several places. Although some

characters were obliterated when the foot and the knobs were added, enough remains to ascertain that it belonged to the queen and was among the furnishings of one of the detached palaces. The inscriptions also reveal the inventory number (141), the weight, and the capacity of this container.<sup>31</sup> When found, the silver box contained fragments of medicine. The authors of the site report note that the very thin gold wash on this vessel is unusual. They also observe that the design and the method of manufacture of the bowl are not Chinese; they speculate that the lidded bowl was imported via ship into China, where the foot and the three knobs were attached. (The Chinese did not work silver extensively until the Tang period, A.D. 618–906.) An Achaemenian prototype is proposed in the site report.<sup>32</sup>

The shape of these four boxes is basically that of a *dui* (sometimes called a *dun*) popular in



Fig. 21-a. Silver lobed lidded box, from the tomb of the king of Nanyue, Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, 2d century B.C. After *Xi Han Nanyue Wang mu*, vol. 2, pl. 122, fig. 1.

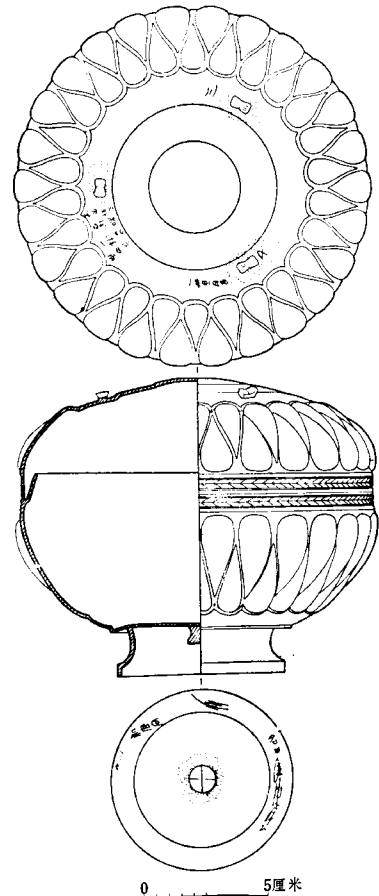


Fig. 21-b. Drawing of box in fig. 21-a. After *Xi Han Nanyue Wang mu*, vol. 1, p. 209, fig. 138.

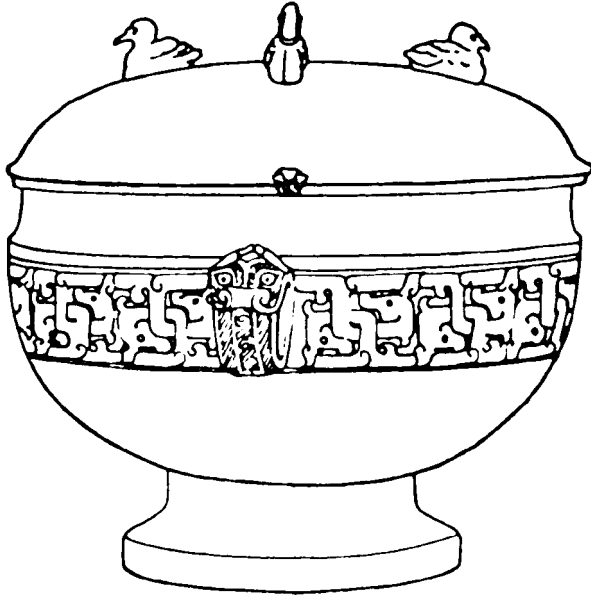


Fig. 22. Drawing of Chinese bronze vessel, 4th century B.C. After Mizuno Seiichi, *In Shū seidōki to tama* (Tokyo, 1959), fig. 4.



Fig. 23. Silver lobed phiale, 5th–4th century B.C. Private Collection, Teheran. After R. Ghirshman, *Perse: Proto-iraniens, Mèdes, Achéménides* (n.p., 1963), fig. 313.

China in the fourth century B.C. An example in the Freer Gallery of Art (fig. 22) is characterized by a flaring bowl raised on a ring foot; it has two ring handles and is slightly constricted at the rim; the low lid bears three miniature sculptured seated ducks.

The interlocking “teardrop” lobed surface treatment of the body and lid of the second-century B.C. boxes, however, has no precedent in Chinese bronze or ceramic traditions. In metalwork, the closest analogies are found among the Achaemenian phialae which were widespread throughout the ancient Near East.<sup>33</sup> Most of these, however, are low, shallow vessels without lids, and their teardrop-shaped lobes usually are elegantly elongated and of two different sizes (the dominant lobes tapering in one direction are long; those in between are shorter). The underlying structure is that of a dynamic radiation from a central boss. The lobes on the Chinese boxes are more nearly globular and are of equal size; the underlying structure, rather than radiating from a central point, is a continuous scrolling band moving around the center. The closest

parallel from the ancient Near East is a silver phiale now in a private collection in Teheran (fig. 23), where the lobes are distinctly full, are the same size, and form a band encircling the center. There obviously was an intermediary stage in the development of this form which culminated in the covered bowls that the Chinese adjusted to their own taste by adding the foot ring and especially the three animals on the lids.

These covered bronze and silver boxes with lobed surfaces must have been esteemed in second-century B.C. China. They were among the treasures deposited in two royal graves of the states of Qi and Nanyue, and the third find site (Shizhaishan in Yunnan) was also a rich one (and also possibly royal). Despite the fact that these boxes date from approximately the same era, the find sites are widely separated geographically. Yunnan, the site of Shizhaishan, is in southwest China; Shandong, where the Qi state was centered, is many thousands of miles away to the northeast; and Canton, where the tomb of the king of Nanyue was found, is along the southern

coast of China. The fact that the find sites are so far apart adds another dimension to the puzzle surrounding these small boxes, although it is possible that they were gifts to the local kings from the Han emperor in Chang'an.<sup>34</sup>

## Notes

Author's Note: After this paper had been submitted for publication, Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens' article "Pour une archéologie des échanges: Apportés étrangers en Chine—transmission, réception, assimilation" appeared in *AAs* 49 (1994), pp. 21–33. In it Mme. Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens raises important questions about foreign contributions to Chinese material culture and to Chinese art. She considers a range of examples from the second century A.D. to the twelfth century A.D., including four of the objects discussed in the present paper: the wax-resist textile with a nude woman holding a cornucopia, the gilt-silver, and two of the lidded boxes with interlocking lobes. The two studies are complementary.

1. Feng Xianming, "Persian and Korean Ceramics Unearthed in China," *Oriental Arts* 17.5 (1986), pp. 47–49.

2. The seminal study on glass in China is An Jiayao's "Early glass vessels in China," *Kaogu xuebao* (1984.4), pp. 413–47 (translated by M. Henderson as *Early Chinese Glassware*, The Oriental Ceramic Society Translations, no. 12 [n.p., ca. 1987]). Her study of Islamic glass found in northern Chinese sites appeared as "Dated Islamic Glass in China," *BAI* 5 (1991), pp. 123–37. Islamic glass in China is also the focus of Ma Wenkuan's "Liaomu Liaota chutude Yisilan boli Lian tan Liao yu Yisilan shijiede guanxi," *Kaogu* (1994.8), pp. 736–43. My review article covers glass in China, Japan, and Korea ("A Report on Western Asian Glassware in the Far East," *BAI* 5 [1991], pp. 109–21).

3. Reported in Shanxi Archaeology Institute and Datong Museum, "Datong nanjiao Bei Wei muqun fajue jianbao," *Wenwu* (1992.8), p. 10.

4. For representative examples, see Gao Hanyu, *Chinese Textile Designs*, trans. R. Scott and S. Whitfield (London, 1992), pls. 14–24 and 193–202.

5. It is unclear which of the several possible wax-resist methods was employed. Sometimes it is stated that this textile was printed; this would involve using carved blocks dipped in wax applied to the undyed cotton. Irregularities in such things as the width of the line suggest to me a freehand drawing with wax on the textile, which was then dyed.

6. For example, *Xinjiang chutu wenwu/Cultural Relics Unearthed in Sinkiang* (Beijing, 1975), pl. 35; *Zhongguo meishu quanji*, 6 *Gongyi meishu bian*, 1

*Yinran zhixiu* (Beijing, 1985), fig. 103; *Zhongguo meishu jianji*, *Huihua bian*, 1 (Beijing, 1986), pl. 85; Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, *The Han Dynasty*, trans. J. Seligman (New York, 1982), fig. 101; Nancy Zeng Berliner, *Chinese Folk Art: The Small Skills of Carving Insects* (Boston, 1986), fig. 182; Gao Hanyu, *Chinese Textile Designs*, pls. 25, 203.

7. Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region Museum, "Xinjiang Minfengxian Beidashamozhong guyizhimu zangqu Dong Han hezangmu qingli jianbao," *Wenwu* (1960.6), p. 11.

8. Jia Yingyi in *Zhongguo meishu quanji*, *Huihua bian*, 1 p. 45.

9. J. M. Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans* (Berkeley, 1967), pl. 12, coins, pls. 236–40. For the Panchika and Hariti sculpture see also E. Errington and J. Cribb, eds., *The Crossroads of Asia: Transformation in Image and Symbol* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 134–35; coins of Kanishka and later discussed on pp. 69, 70, 84, 146. Earlier examples of a woman holding a cornucopia include one on a silver cup from the Gandharan region, believed to be of first century B.C. date, and a bronze figure of a goddess holding a cornucopia from the Herat area of Afghanistan, perhaps first century A.D. For these two figures see *Crossroads of Asia*, pp. 91–94, and 108–9. For a stone carving of a goddess holding a cornucopia from Kashmir perhaps of early sixth century A.D. date, see H. Diserens, "La statue de Brâr (Kāśmīr) retrouvée," *AAs* 48 (1993), pp. 72–85. I am grateful to Prof. Susan Erickson for bringing the last two publications to my attention.

10. Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, p. 75. See also Rosenfield's comments on pp. 72–73 and 246–47.

11. P. E. Karetzky, "The Engraved Designs on the Late Sixth Century Sarcophagus of Li Ho," *ArtAs* 47 (1986), pp. 81–106. For the site report see "Shaanxi-sheng Sanyuanxian Shuangchengcun Sui Li He mu chingli jianbao," *Wenwu* (1966.1), pp. 27–42.

12. The Chinese identification of this figure is followed by both Karetzky, "Engraved Designs," and by K. Finsterbusch, *Zür Archäologie der Pei-Ch'i und Sui* (Wiesbaden, 1976), p. 20.

13. Wu Zhen, "Ancient Woolen Articles: The 'Greek Connection,'" *China Reconstructs* (1989.9), p. 50.

14. Wu Zhen, "Ancient Woolen Articles," p. 50.

15. A study of this design was made by Li Yinbing ("Luopuxian Shanpula gumudi chutu kemao ku tu'an maren kao," *Wenwu* [1990.11], pp. 72–74).

16. M. A. Stein, *Serindia* (London, 1921), vol. 1, pp. 433, 438; vol. 4, pl. 37. They are discussed by L. M. O'Neale ("Survey of the Woolen Textiles in the Sir Aurel Stein Collection," *American Anthropologist* 38 [1936], pp. 414–32).

17. Black and red designs were discovered painted on the floor of a passageway in the tomb of a young Avar princess buried in A.D. 550 near modern Cixiang in Hebei Province. These patterns, published only in line drawing, were said to resemble a rug. Tang Chi, "Dong Wei Ruru gongzhu mu bihua shitan," *Wenwu* (1984.4), p. 10; A. Dien, "A New Look at the Xianbei and their Impact on Chinese Culture," in *Ancient Mortuary Traditions of China: Papers on Chinese Ceramic Funerary Sculptures*, ed. G. Kuwayama, (Los Angeles, 1991), p. 51. The design evokes no known rug pattern.
18. For a study of later Western influence on Chinese textiles, see E. Lubo-Lesnitchenko, "Western Motifs in the Chinese Textiles of the Early Middle Ages," *National Palace Museum Bulletin* 28 (1993) 3/4, pp. 1–28.
19. J. Rawson, *The Ornament on Chinese Silver of the Tang Dynasty (AD 618–906)*, (London, 1982), p. 2. See P. Harper, *Silver Vessels of the Sasanian Period*, vol. 1 (New York, 1981), chap. 2 for both metal and glass examples of medallion bowls with human busts from the Near East.
20. Gansu Provincial Museum and Chu Shibin, "Gansu Jingyuan xinchu Tong Loma liujinyin ban luekao," *Wenwu* (1990.5), pp. 1–9.
21. Mie Ishiwata, "Iconography and date of a silver plate unearthed at Jingyuan in Gansu Province, China," *Bulletin of the Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo* 13 (1992), pp. 147–65 (in Japanese), English resume pp. 147–48. For the Bactrian inscription on the platter, see Nicholas Sims-Williams in this volume.
22. Wang Binghua, "Researches historiques préliminaires sur les Saka du Xinjiang ancien," trans. from the Chinese by C. Debaine-Francfort, *AA*s 42 (1987), pp. 35–36; C. Debaine-Francfort, "Archéologie du Xinjiang des origines aux Han," *Paléorient* 15.1 (1989), p. 189; the bronze warrior only, mentioned in H-P. Francfort, "Central Asia and Eastern Iran," in *CAH*, 2d ed., vol. 4, *Persia, Greece and the Western Mediterranean c. 525–479 B.C.*, ed. J. Boardman et. al., p. 185, and in E. R. Knauer, "Knemides in the East? Some Observations on the Impact of Greek Body Armor on 'Barbarian' Tribes," in *Nomodeiktes: Greek Studies in honor of Martin Ostwald*, ed. A. Rosen and J. Farrell (Ann Arbor, 1993), p. 146, n. 40. I am grateful to Prof. Bernard Goldman and Prof. Susan Erickson for some of these references.
23. Illustrated in *SPA*, pl. 113-A.
24. Yunnan Provincial Museum, *Yunnan Jinning Shizhaishan gumuqun fajue baogao* (Beijing, 1959), vol. 1, p. 69.
25. *The Chinese Bronzes of Yunnan*, foreword by J. Rawson, commentary by Huang Ti and Wang Dadao (London, 1983), p. 228.
26. Zibo City Museum, Shandong Province, "Xi Han Qi Wang mu sui zangwu keng," *Kaogu xuebao* (1985.2), pp. 258, 266.
27. Sun Ji, *Handai wuzhi wenhua ziliao tushuo* (Beijing, 1991), pl. 94.
28. J. Rawson, "Tombs or Hoards: The Survival of Chinese Silver of the Tang and Song Periods, Seventh to Thirteenth Centuries A.D.," in *Pots & Pans: A Colloquium on Precious Metals and Ceramics in the Muslim, Chinese and Graeco-Roman Worlds*, ed. M. Vickers, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art 3 (Oxford, 1986), p. 32. Similar comment by Rawson in her "Central Asian Silver and Its Influence on Chinese Ceramics," *BAI* 5 (1991), p. 140.
29. CPAM of Guangzhou, the Institute of Archaeology, CASS, and the Museum of Guangdong Province, *Xi Han Nanyue Wang mu/Nanyue King's Tomb of the Western Han*, 2 vols. (Beijing, 1991), English abstract, vol. 1, pp. 1–4. An account of the Nanyue kingdom is in B. Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian of China Translated from the "Shih Chi" of Ssu-ma Ch'ien* (New York, 1961), vol. 2, pp. 239–50. I am grateful to Prof. Robert Thorp for bringing this account to my attention.
30. For a short account of some of the treasures found in this tomb, see P. Swart, "The Tomb of the King of Nan Yue," *Orientalia* 21.6 (1990), pp. 56–66.
31. *Xi Han Nanyue Wang mu Nanyue*, vol. 1, pp. 312–13.
32. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 209–10.
33. For the most recent study of these phialae, see A. C. Gunter and P. Jett, *Ancient Iranian Metalwork in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the Freer Gallery of Art* (Washington D.C., 1992), pp. 64–68, 80–82.
34. Prof. Robert Thorp in personal conversation, June 28, 1994.