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Chinese Bronze Mirrors of the Second Century B. C.

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### Portrait of Margareta de Vos, by Anthony Van Dyck

A SMALL portrait of Margareta de Vos, by Anthony Van Dyck, which has been added to the Museum Collections through the Maria Antoinette Evans Fund, affords an interesting contrast to the large portrait of Isabella, Lady De la Warr, by the same artist, acquired by the Museum last year. The new acquisition is an early work, dating about 1620, when Van Dyck was but twenty-one, and under the direct influence of Rubens. It may have been a study for the finished portraits of Margareta de Vos, one in the Frick Collection with its companion portrait of Frans Snyders, her husband, and another of husband and wife together in the Grand Ducal Gallery in Cassel. It certainly possesses all the spontaneity and charm of a first creation.

Unlike the familiar court portraits of Van Dyck, where the elaborate costumes of the sitters and their excellent rendering add much to the fascination of the pictures, in this small portrait the interest is concentrated on the face of the sitter. Margareta inclines her head to the left and slightly down; her dark hair is drawn straight back from her high forehead into a small white cap, and she wears a ruff which is only blocked in. The artist has used a simple palette of rich deep tones, but he has placed his colors so skilfully that the effect is that

of a glowing and highly-keyed painting. By the exquisite coloring of the face against the dark ground, the refinement of the features, and the expression of the eyes and mouth, Van Dyck has presented to us a seventeenth century Flemish lady whose charm of personality is very evident to those who see her to-day. The sympathetic rendering which he gives to his subject is perhaps explained by Margareta's history.

At the time this portrait was painted she was intimately connected with the leading group of painters in Antwerp. Sister to Paul and Cornelius de Vos, the latter a portrait painter closely associated with the young Van Dyck, she had become in 1611 the wife of Frans Snyders, the animal painter and intimate friend of Van Dyck. Her acquaintance with the young artist, therefore, must have been of long standing.

This portrait study, which is in a remarkably good state of preservation, was for many years in the collection of the Vernon family in England, being mentioned in Smith's *Catalogue Raisonné*, published in 1831, as in the possession of the Hon. G. J. Vernon. It was sold by that family in 1928, and in April of the present year came to the Museum, where it now hangs in Gallery 13 of the Evans Wing.

### Chinese Bronze Mirrors of the Second Century B. C.

IN China, notwithstanding the fact that the making of vessels and implements of various kinds in bronze originated in remote antiquity, the use of this metal for mirrors, as far as present knowledge goes, may date only from the fourth century B. C. This contention is based upon meager and ambiguous references to bronze mirrors found in ancient Chinese literature as well as upon the few actual specimens discovered not long since. Examples of bronze mirrors assigned to the third century B. C. may also be seen occasionally. But to the early part of the Western Han Dynasty, that is, the second century B. C., belongs the credit of producing mirrors in bronze, highly developed both in ornamentation and in the art of casting, which introduced to the subsequent centuries the basic suggestion for the decorative scheme of mirrors. Herewith are illustrated and described three mirrors of this period, recently acquired by the Museum.

Fig. 1. The decoration consists of concentric bands of various widths. In the principal field, in flat relief, are three winged dragons ornamentalized almost beyond recognition. The long, slender bodies are transformed into scroll-tendrils and the appendages into leaf-like patterns. Each animal has a head with a prominent horn and a gaping mouth and two legs ending in clawed feet. The eyes are inlaid with whitish stone or glass. The three dragons are connected by means of winding ribbons arranged in rhombic shapes. The ground

of this wide zone and that of the band immediately encircling the disc in the center, on which is built up a fluted loop (or knob), is filled with a geometric design consisting of spirals each enclosed within a lozenge drawn in delicate lines. The remaining bands and rings in relief are plain, excepting the narrow one near the center which suggests a rope. The secondary borders are made up of oblique lines. The two smooth, wide bands are slightly concave, the outer one being abruptly raised toward the extreme edge, producing a thick effect in a comparatively thin mirror. The metal, which is glossy white bronze, is covered with green patina. The diameter of the mirror is 238 mm. and the thickness at the extreme edge is 8 mm.

Several mirrors similar to the one just described are known, but, because of its fine state of preservation and its clearness of design (despite the coating of patina), and especially because of the presence of the inlays, the Museum example is exceedingly important.

Fig. 2. Upon a ground of diaper design are seen four birds in flat relief. These birds are so much formalized that it is difficult to recognize the heads. However, the presence of an eye upon that part of the bird just over the shoulder indicates that its head is turned backward. The long, neck-like form which stretches out from the breast is unidentifiable. The ground pattern is composed of varied lozenges, each containing spirals. This



1. Chinese Bronze Mirror

Ida Means Mason Fund

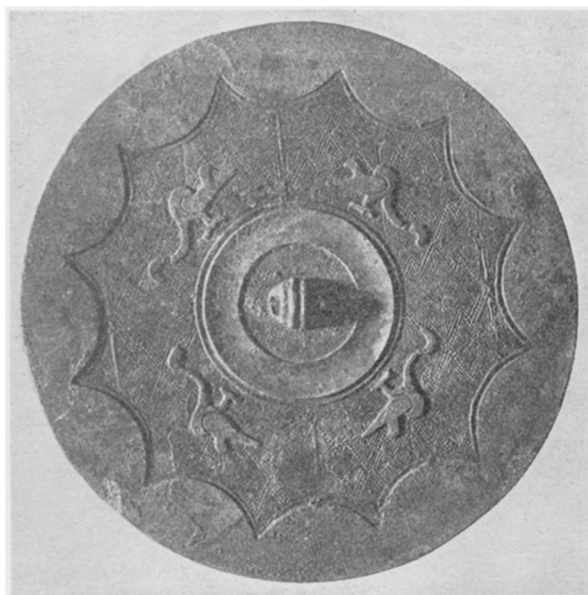
Second Century B. C.

geometric decoration was obviously produced by repeated stamping of a certain unit upon the mould. A plain, double-rimmed, concave ring surrounds the knob, and a flat, raised border consisting of twelve arcs encloses the design. The entire mirror is coated with green and blue patina upon which may be noted the impression of a fabric. Diameter, 102 mm.; thickness,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mm.

Fig. 3. Three stylized dragons in flat relief on a ground of geometric design form the decoration of this mirror. The body of each animal is twined and so shaped as to suggest a long-tailed bird standing on one leg, but the head is distinctly that of a dragon. The background is of finely detailed lozenge fret, one series of which is filled with tiny spirals arranged in triangles and the other with minute nodules. There are two plain, concave bands with supplementary borders, one near the loop of the cord and the other on the outer

edge. The metal is of white bronze spotted by green incrustation. Diameter, 157 mm; thickness, 3 mm.

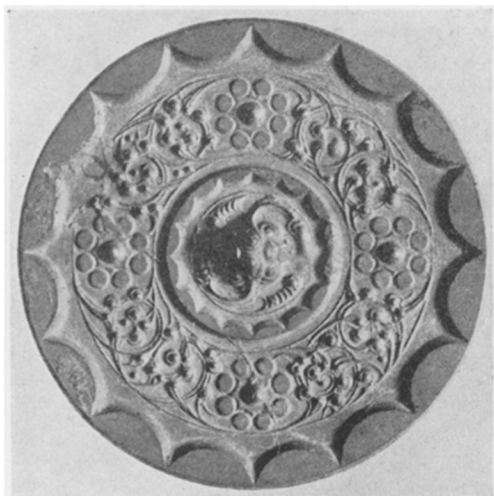
One of the chief characteristics of these mirrors is the presence as backgrounds of minute geometric patterns formed by spirals and lozenge motives. By some writers, mirrors of this type are said to be of Huai Valley origin and are assigned to about the third century B. C. from the fact that a number of mirrors of this variety have been excavated there and that the locality was a princely capital during that century. But conclusive evidence to prove that these mirrors are of such origin and date is lacking. On the other hand, spirals in various forms had been in use on bronze vessels long before that period. Moreover, there exist several specimens of bronze mirrors which by comparison in character of decoration and in technique, are coeval with bronze ritual vessels of the Ch'in period (255-205



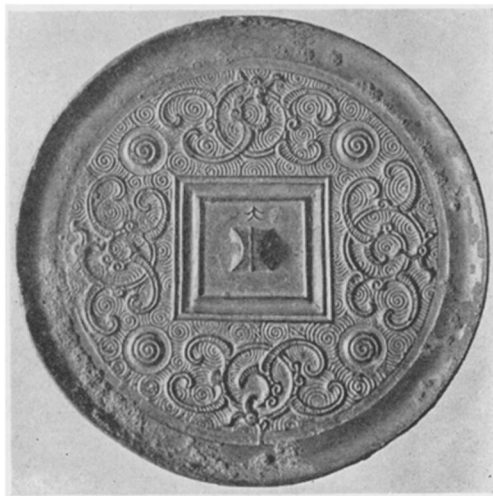
2. *Chinese Bronze Mirror* *Second Century B. C.*  
Frederick Brown Fund



3. *Chinese Bronze Mirror* *Second Century B. C.*  
Jacob Hirsch Hecht Fund



4. Chinese Bronze Mirror First Century B. C.  
Gift of Mrs. W. Scott Fitz



5. Chinese Bronze Mirror Second to First Century B. C.  
Special Fund

B. C.)<sup>1</sup> But these mirrors of the third century B. C. are quite unlike, in general appearance and in feeling, the type exemplified by the three mirrors in question. To say that these two distinct types are contemporary and that their variation is due to a difference in locality or in peoples seems to be without foundation. From such internal and external evidences as are available it would be safe to place our three interesting mirrors in the second century B. C. and to regard them as forerunners from which were evolved the far more conventionalized decorations of some of the well-known types of Han mirrors as shown in Figs. 4 and 5.

KOJIRO TOMITA.

### A Stucco Head from Central Asia

IN recent years discoveries of Buddhist paintings and sculptures, the latter typically in stucco, in Chinese Turkestan and Western China (Khotan, Kuca, Tun Huang, etc.) have added a new chapter to history<sup>2</sup>: revealing an art embodying Indian, Hellenistic, Iranian, and finally Chinese elements in varying proportions; not, like the Greco-Buddhist art of Gandhāra, an inorganic combination of incongruous elements, but expressing indigenous energies, astonishingly living qualities, and a true "style". Still more recently French excavations at Hadda in Afghanistan<sup>3</sup> have brought to light a large group of stucco heads more animated and expressive than any previously found. Finally, a most important and remarkable series of stucco heads, with a few complete figures, has been brought back by

M. André Malraux (exploring on behalf of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*) from the neighborhood of Tash-Kurgan in the Tarim Valley north of Kashmir.<sup>1</sup> These last types and those from Hadda are so closely related, formally and stylistically, that they must be regarded as contemporary, and as a product of the same conditions, if not indeed of artists of one and the same group. It is noteworthy that at Hadda the stuccos in relief and in the round are accompanied by some examples of figure work in stone in a debased Gandhāran style; it may be assumed that no stone was found at Tash-Kurgan.

As to the dating of the stuccos, one may agree with Barthoux in pointing out that the remains at Hadda must represent some of the edifices which were seen by Fa Hsien about A. D. 400, must have been wrecked during the Hūna invasions early in the sixth century, and were seen as ruins by Hsüan Tsang in the seventh. Further comparisons may be made with the closely related, though relatively provincial clay and stucco reliefs of Jauliān (Taxila), where the monuments themselves date only from the late Kuṣāna period (third century A. D.)<sup>2</sup>, and had been lately repaired and redecorated just before the time of their destruction by the armies of Mihiragula about A. D. 530.

In any case the stucco art is, as remarked by Barthoux and by Strzygowski, vastly superior to that of the Gandhāran productions in stone. The influence of the latter in India was purely formal,

<sup>1</sup>One such mirror is in the Museum collection and is illustrated on the cover of the Museum Bulletin for April 1908, accompanying the article "Chinese and Japanese Mirrors." Others are in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, the Hoyt Collection, New York, the Stoclet Collection, Brussels, the Shibata Collection, Tokyo, the Moriya Collection, Kyoto, etc.

<sup>2</sup>Stein, Sir M. A., *Sand-buried ruins of Khotan*, 1903, *Ancient Khotan*, 1907, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 1912, *Serindia*, 1912, *Innermost Asia*, 1928; von le Coq, A., *Chotscho*, 1913, *Die buddhistische Spätantike in Mittelasien*, 1922-1928, *Auf Hellas Spuren in Ostturkistan*, 1926; Grünwedel, A., *Alt-buddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan* . . . Kuca, Qarasahr in Turfan, 1912, *Alt-Kutscha*, 1912.

<sup>3</sup>Barthoux, J. J., *Les fouilles de Hadda*, 1930.

<sup>1</sup>Strzygowski, J., *The Afghan stuccos of the N. R. F. Collection*, [1931]. The title of this pamphlet is rather misleading as to the finding place. The photographs are exceedingly poor, and the Boston head (Figs. 30, 31) can hardly be recognized. Professor Strzygowski introduces many controversial propositions, in a very stimulating manner. Amongst errors may be pointed out, on p. 17, that the designation "negro type of Buddha" is meaningless—the type of Fig. 43 is plainly that of the Mathura Buddha of the mid-second century A. D., in which Hellenistic influences are recognizable in the drapery, while the feeling for volume, and the fullness of the features are simply those always characteristic of the early Indian school from its beginning to the close of the Gupta period; p. 18, Fig. 26, is not a Buddha, as the hair and headdress clearly show.

<sup>2</sup>Marshall, Sir J. H., *Guide to Taxila*, 1918, pp. 110-115, and *Excavations at Taxila: the stupas and monasteries at Jaulian*, Mem. A. S. I., No. 7, 1921.