

Research on the application of amber modeling and matching art in contemporary amber design in Han Dynasty

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Abstract. By studying the characteristics of amber art in Han Dynasty, this paper focuses on the matching features of Shengxing ornament, animal sculpture and necklace in Han Dynasty amber art. Secondly, it collects the main styles of contemporary amber design, analyzes the contemporary amber aesthetics, and finds out the similarities between Han Dynasty amber art and contemporary amber art, and finally designs a set of programs that can adapt to the modern amber market. Summed up the Han Dynasty amber art in the application of modern amber design rules, so that the Han Dynasty amber art can be in contemporary amber design vitality. This paper will be analyzed at the following levels: the first chapter analyzes the current amber design market; the second chapter analyzes the social background and artistic characteristics of Han Dynasty amber art; the third chapter analyzes the feasibility and fusion point of Han Dynasty amber art in contemporary amber design on the basis of studying the characteristics of Han Dynasty amber art and contemporary amber design.

Keywords: Han Dynasty amber plastic arts; Amber modeling spirit connotation; contemporary amber style; Law.

1. Overview of current amber design market

1.1 Neglect to design a single form

Compared with other regions in the world, modern amber processing in China appeared later, and sporadic amber processing brands and enterprises began to appear in the late 1990s. At the beginning, these amber processing brands simply and roughly processed and polished amber, mainly inlaying silver ornaments, but did not carry out in-depth design, which is even less connected with Chinese traditional elements. Although the prices of white jade, jade and other jewelry increased significantly in 2008, amber has the opportunity to further enter the vision of jewelry enterprises and the public. At the same time, some jewelers have brought the carving design of traditional jades such as jadeite to amber production, but most of the carvings have chosen the traditional jade carving method for direct reproduction. Because the hardness of amber is far lower than that of jades such as jadeite, the manufacturing process is very difficult, so that the price of complex amber carvings is high, resulting in insufficient market response. Similarly, due to the translucent nature of amber, it is difficult for well carved amber to clearly feel its craft. All these reasons lead to amber following the traditional carving but not getting good market feedback.

The domestic amber market and jade market are general, there are few large brands, and most of them focus on family workshops, which makes it impossible for many family workshop brands to carry out more complex processes. At the same time, amber merchants also take the opportunity to publicize that the amber that needs to be carved is to remove impurities. As a result, there is no popular good design in China's Amber market, and amber with simple geometric shapes occupies a large number of markets.

1.2 Pay attention to simple production of materials

In the famous diamond 4C grading standard, it is clearly put forward that there is also a cutting standard in addition to the three standards of the diamond itself, which indicates that for gemstones, in addition to the quality of the most basic materials, we also need to pay attention to the carving of materials, especially the "material construction", such as the cutting surface of the diamond, the carving of jade, etc. Amber also requires a unique process. For example, the process of "Yin carving"

(as shown in Figure 1) was initially used in crystals with high transparency. However, there is also a variety of amber with good transparency, "Jingshui Jinpo", so Yin carving is a more suitable process for amber. However, in addition to the water purification golden bell, many amber are translucent, so the Yin carving is no longer suitable. At the same time, because many amber have gorgeous patterns, many amber are suitable for smooth surface production. However, the smooth surface process can not only produce simple geometric shapes, such as "egg surface" for inlaying, round beads and drum beads for cultural beads, It should also be possible to make some smooth three-dimensional carvings, such as "Tang eight ridges" (as shown in Figure 2), "Tang lion", etc.

For a gem, part of its value also comes from the size and weight of the gem, that is to say, suppose two gemstones of the same quality and type, one of which has a higher gram price than the other due to its large weight and volume. At the same time, the price of many jewelry will be determined by its size, so for amber, this market rule will make amber practitioners more inclined to choose the theme on the basis of ensuring the maximum amber. For example, objects with irregular shapes often appear in the amber market, which are simply peeled and polished, and even the skin is not polished, As a result, there are many potholes in the finished amber products, which shows that the amber is poorly made and lacks the sense of delicacy of jewelry products.

In addition to being easy to make, domestic amber is rarely designed with other gemstones. Most amber products are mainly made of amber, and there are few other gemstones. The only matching place is on the string of cultural beads, which may be matched with other gems. Most of these matching gems are mainly turquoise, southern red and other cultural items, and almost no matching with other gems.



Fig. 1 yindiao honey wax (Figure source network)



Fig. 2 tangbaling honey wax (Figure source network)

1.3 Summary

Since the emergence of modern amber technology in China in the 1990s, the main product form of the amber market has not changed in essence. It is still dominated by simple geometric shapes. The emergence of carved pieces such as jade has not changed the amber design. At the same time, the matching of amber is relatively simple, and it is still dominated by matching with other cultural and entertainment accessories, But did not achieve the collocation in jewelry design in a narrow sense.

2. An overview of amber art in Han Dynasty

2.1 Background Of Amber Art In Han Dynasty

The Han Dynasty was the second feudal society in Chinese history. It was in the rising stage of the development of feudal society. During this period, the centralization of power was further promoted. In terms of political ideology, Dong Zhongshu proposed to "oust a hundred schools of thought and respect Confucianism alone". At the same time, it was also influenced by Huang Lao and religious beliefs, especially the yin-yang theory, "eclosion to heaven" and "Western Queen Mother" were widely spread among the people. In terms of nationality, the Han Dynasty can be said to have truly realized the unification of "multi-ethnic", and the ideas and aesthetics of multiple ethnic groups were blended. In particular, it achieved great success in fighting against the Huns. The entire social

economy began to flourish, and the national economic strength and the people's economic strength were significantly improved.

Although the people's economic strength was improved during this period, amber was still scarce, mostly limited to the use of the royal family and the nobility. During this period, amber entered China mainly through two ways: first, the raw materials of Royal amber products were mainly paid tribute from small vassal countries; second, it flowed from the west through sporadic trade. In particular, the number of amber products gradually increased after the opening of the silk road. Although the total amount is scarce, compared with the Warring States period, the number and types of amber have been greatly improved. Most of the amber is divided into two categories: jewelry and seals. The main types of ornaments were mostly irregular circular and geometric shapes. At the same time, due to the "Queen Mother of the west" and the desire to ward off evil spirits, there was a trend of animal shapes and "victory" shapes in this period, especially the "victory" shape ornaments and the "lying beast" shape in animal shapes. In particular, the "lying beast" shape was not only found in amber ornaments, It also plays a very important role in the amber seal.

2.2 Characteristics Of Amber Plastic Art In Han Dynasty

2.2.1 analysis of amber plastic art of "Sheng shape decoration"

"Sheng shape decoration" amber is a pearl in the amber art of the Han Dynasty, which is a kind of amber art with the characteristics of the Han Dynasty. "Sheng" was originally the headdress of the Chinese and Western Queen Mother in myths and legends. By the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, "Sheng" was gradually materialized from myths. Among them, the "Sheng" Amber appeared in the Han Dynasty as a whole is like a "Gong" shape or two separate "Gong" shapes. The overall shape in the left view presents the "Five" characters in seal script (as shown in figures 3 and 4).



Fig. 3 "Sheng" shaped amber decoration in Han Dynasty (source: Xu Xiaodong's ancient Chinese amber art)



Fig. 4 small seal character "Five"

The emergence of "Sheng Xing ornament" is closely related to the worship of the queen mother of the West in the Han Dynasty. There are many debates about the queen mother of the west at present. Among them, the more unified view is that the reason why people in the Han Dynasty worship the queen mother of the West is related to their worship of the immortal body and medicine of the queen mother of the West, Sima Xiangru said in his ode to the LORD: "I am the queen mother of the West today. I will live forever. If I do not die, I will not be happy to help the world." The picture quotes the legend in Huainan Zi that Hou Yi invited the elixir of immortality to the queen mother of the west, and Chang'e stole it and ascended to heaven. It seems that the so-called immortality medicine can not only make people immortal, but also make them immortal. The story of Han Wu also contains the legend that Emperor Wu of Han Dynasty failed to ask the queen mother of the West for the medicine of immortality. There is a lot of discussion about the fact that the belief of the queen mother of the west developed into a mass religious movement sweeping the country at the end of the Western Han Dynasty. According to the book of emperor AI Ji in the Han Dynasty, "in the spring of the fourth year of Jianping, there was a severe drought. The people in the eastern part of the Shantung pass the

Western Queen Mother's plan to go through the prefectures and states, and enter the Shantung pass to the capital. The people gather in the ancestral hall. The Western queen mother may go to the house with a fire at night, beating drums and shouting in horror." The core of this belief is that "the mother tells the people that those who admire this book will not die. If you don't believe me, you should have white hair under the door hinge". Obviously, it is related to the desire to live forever and become immortal.

As mentioned above, the Han Dynasty, from the rulers down to the people, worshipped the immortal body. At the same time, in Chinese traditional history, many images were transformed by the people's pursuit of something and finally materialized. For example, bats, in an objective sense, have nothing to do with the blessing advocated by the Chinese people. However, due to their similarities in pronunciation, this creature was finally patterned and often appeared on various porcelain or other prices. Another example is the well-known pattern of the dragon. Chinese people often say that they are the descendants of the dragon. More and more evidence shows that the "four different" creatures like the dragon are more like early humans who combined several animals through their own imagination, and are not real. This image composed of various animals has become a symbol of power and wealth in China, At the same time, this does not prevent the Chinese nation from patterning or even materializing the dragon. Many dignitaries and dignitaries wear it on their bodies as accessories, clothing patterns or furniture decorations. Therefore, due to the unusual worship of the people of the Han Dynasty to the goddess of longevity, the people of the Han Dynasty or artists of the Han Dynasty may gradually materialize the symbolic "Sheng" headdress of the queen mother of the west, and then turn it into their own jewelry. Through this form, they emphasize their faith in the queen mother of the west, and have shown their inner desire for longevity, Especially for royalty and nobles, it is reasonable to combine the West Queen Mother, a symbol of immortality, with precious amber.

In addition to the "Sheng" shaped amber unearthed in the Han Dynasty, there are also many forms of "Sheng" shaped amber. "According to the material objects and image data found in Archaeology at present, the author divides the " Xi Wang Mu Shi Sheng "mentioned in this paper into four categories, and there is an obvious evolutionary relationship between them." [1] From this point of view, "Sheng", a form with a strong will of the Chinese people, as jewelry, not only has quite profound cultural connotation, but also has many styles that can be used for reference.

In addition to its rich cultural heritage, the "Sheng shaped ornament" Amber also has many characteristics in detail. In addition to the word "Gong", which is regarded as a modern simplified Chinese character, the central endpoints on both sides of the amber are also slightly raised (which can be semi-circular or concentric), The two protrusions are concentric with the outer circle (as shown in Figure 5). The style of the central protrusion not only reflects that the shape is changed from the West Queen Mother's headdress, but also can be used as a punching place to hide the punching points, and can effectively display and restore the original style of "Sheng". The shape of "Sheng form" also well confirms the aesthetic principle of symmetry, which consists of two completely symmetrical pot like shapes or two triangles and a circle (as shown in Figure 6).



Fig. 5 concentric circle "Sheng" (source: Xu Xiaodong's ancient Chinese amber art)



Fig. 6 centrosymmetric figure (original)

2.2.2 analysis on plastic art and spiritual connotation of "Crouching beast" Amber

Amber in the form of "Crouching beast" is the most representative image in the amber art of the Han Dynasty. The main reason for this image is the very popular custom of warding off evil spirits in the Han Dynasty.

In fact, the custom of exorcising evil spirits had been formed as early as the pre Qin period. The main reason was that people at that time believed that there were ghosts or souls in the world and that there were supernatural forces in the world. This is also what we often call feudal superstition. It existed for a long time before the Han Dynasty. For example, in the Yan Huang Chiyou period, people believed in using witchcraft to defeat the enemy and change their own or national destiny. Another example is the thought of "believing in ghosts and loving witches" believed by the state of Chu in the Warring States period. These ideas enabled the Han Dynasty, which inherited many customs and codes of the Qin Dynasty, to make considerable progress in the thought of exorcising evil spirits, witchcraft, demons, exorcising ghosts, such as folk ancestral temples and other customs in the Han Dynasty. In the Han Dynasty, many people believed that natural disasters (such as drought, flood, earthquake, etc.) and plagues were caused by the failure to believe in good ghosts and gods, and that evil things occurred because of the evil spirits' casting magic. Therefore, the people of the Han Dynasty would choose to sacrifice to ghosts and gods when they were engaged in marriage, funeral, giving birth to children, promotion, etc. People also often say that "when you touch a ghost, you will encounter a God, and you will avoid harming each other." [2]

As mentioned above, the ordinary people from the highest ruling level to the lowest level in the Han Dynasty believed in ghosts and gods and believed in exorcising evil spirits when carrying out all activities. Records of exorcising evil spirits and animals and exorcising evil spirits often appeared in the art works of the Han Dynasty, such as sculptures, brick portraits and stone portraits. Even there was a kind of divine animal named "exorcising evil spirits" in the Han Dynasty. At the same time, it is recorded in the synonym of customs that "a tiger is a Yang object, and is also the best of all animals. It can fight against sharp points and eat ghosts. Today, people have bad experiences when they die. They burn and cover the tiger skin to drink it, tie its claws, and can also avoid evil. This is also an experience." [3] Therefore, there were many accessories in the Han Dynasty that used various kinds of supernatural animals to ward off evil spirits. Among them, amber was also known as tiger spirit, and even there was a special manufacturing office for tiger spirit at that time. The tiger was also recognized by the public as a thing to ward off evil spirits and suppress evil spirits. Therefore, amber, as a thing to ward off evil spirits, came naturally.

"Lying" in modern Chinese means lying down, sleeping, etc. it has a unique explanation for animals, referring to the action of animals lying down. So "Crouching beast" Amber refers to the animal or divine beast in this state. In the Han Dynasty, in addition to crouching tiger, crouching lion, crouching chicken, crouching evil spirits, crouching frog, crouching turtle and crouching bird often appeared in the "Crouching beast" shape. The carving process mainly uses round carving, and the line carving technique is used in the treatment of local details. For example, the amber winged beast (as shown in Figure 7) unearthed in the Han Tombs in Tushan, Xuzhou City, Jiangsu province adopts the round carving technique on the main body of the recumbent winged beast, carving the whole through broad lines to carve out the general shape of the beast, At the same time, the main parts of the winged beast are made with wide Yin lines, such as five senses, limbs and wings. Then, local details are made in the overall general shape. At this time, two-dimensional small lines are used. These small lines are mainly used for body decoration and wing lines. Most of these lying animals are small in size, ranging from 1 cm to 4 cm. There may be two reasons for the rare occurrence of large objects. One is that it was difficult to mine or make amber at that time, so it was impossible to obtain large amber raw stones, so it was impossible to make large Amber lying animals. Second, at that time, these amber were all used to make jewelry accessories, which were often carried on the body. Therefore, this single local supply-demand relationship may also lead to amber lying animals without large size. Like other sculptures in the Han Dynasty, the essence of these reclining animal amber sculptures is mainly to carve their charm and grasp the keynote of "God is greater than type".

Especially in the Eastern Han Dynasty, the carving techniques were more casual and paid more attention to the control of their spirit and dynamics. For example, the amber crouching beast unearthed in Guijia courtyard, Zhaotong, Yunnan Province (as shown in Figure 8), whose main shape is a tiger living in a lying state, is mainly composed of two hemispheres of almost the same size. The whole is like a small "m" shape, which mainly shows the forelimbs and head, as well as the hind legs and hips. The hips shrink forward, the abdomen sinks, and the hind legs curl up next to the hips, The hip height is slightly higher than the head, giving people a state that seems to explode, as if they should rush up in the face of ghosts. Although the abdomen is almost taken in one stroke, it is precisely because of this exaggerated omission that the entire lying beast "lying" is vividly displayed. At the same time, compared with the stroke of the hind and front limbs, the whole amber focuses almost all the details on the depiction of the lying beast's face. The craftsman uses a few Yin lines to outline the eye of a lying tiger. Although there is no too much detail modification, the ferocity of the beast can still be clearly felt. Although the expression of the eyeball is vivid, the most distinctive feature of the face is the big mouth that bares teeth, which occupies almost half of the area of the face. In this part, the craftsman spent the most lines to clearly outline almost every sharp tooth of the crouching tiger, and each tooth is quite sharp. Let it be combined with those angry eyes and the momentum of the whole body, and a great momentum of Yang Qi overflows everywhere.

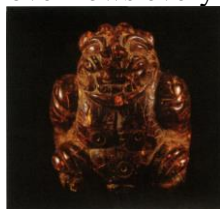


Fig. 7 amber winged beast (source: Xu Xiaodong, ancient Chinese amber art)



Fig. 8 amber crouching beast (source: Xu Xiaodong, ancient Chinese amber art)

"Crouching beast" amber in the Han Dynasty not only has a good moral of exorcising evil spirits, but also has a high artistic aesthetic value. The craftsmen of the Han Dynasty expressed the movement, charm and momentum of an animal very clearly through a few strokes. At the same time, these "Crouching beast" amber are not only used as a single pendant, but also often combined with seals (as shown in Figure 9), Many seals of the Han Dynasty have lost the image of lying animals, which again proves the status and significance of lying animals in the art of the Han Dynasty.



Fig.9 the seal of amber lying beast (source: Xu Xiaodong, ancient Chinese amber art)

2.2.3 collocation analysis

As mentioned above, amber was a precious thing in the Han Dynasty, so it is often worn with other precious gemstones and metals. When matching, it is not a single string, but follows certain aesthetic rules. For example, the Amber Crystal Necklace unearthed in Hengfu Road, Guangzhou (as shown in Figure 10) is made of 4-5 kinds of materials including amber, crystal, gold and agate. Although the whole necklace has been aged for a long time when it was unearthed and has a thick coating, it can still be seen that its color is bright yellow and golden red of amber, gray of agate and glittering of crystal, The golden yellow of gold and the color of the whole string are not only eye-catching bright

colors, but also thick gray and white. At the same time, there are transparent amber and crystal, translucent agate and completely opaque gold on the material. These three materials with different transparency and reflectance are matched and compared with each other, forming a unique retro flavor. At the same time, as for the matching of various parts on the necklace, the shapes of each part are different, including "Sheng" type, crouching tiger type, bird and chicken type, round, flat sheet, shuttle type, polyhedral type, etc. when these seemingly different materials are combined, there is an obvious aesthetic law in them, that is, harmony and balance, which divides the bead string into two. It can be found that there is a sense of balance on both sides of the bead string, but careful observation shows that there are slight differences in both materials and shapes on both sides, which largely reflects the modern law of formal beauty.



Fig. 10 Amber Crystal Necklace unearthed at Hengfu Road, Guangzhou (source: Xu Xiaodong's ancient Chinese amber art)

3. Conclusion

When the Han Dynasty amber modeling and matching art are used in the contemporary amber design, they should not simply copy it, but absorb its spiritual connotation and express its spiritual connotation with more modern design techniques and languages. For example, when the "Crouching Tiger" is used in the amber design, we can learn its modeling techniques. When carving, we should pay more attention to its appearance and momentum rather than too much attention to details. At the same time, the "Crouching beast" carving in the Han Dynasty mostly adopts the technique of round carving, but in contemporary amber design, it can be simplified and deformed and used in relief. Moreover, in amber design, we can not only stick to the reproduction of the existing shapes, but can apply it to some popular animals in the contemporary era by learning its modeling techniques. For example, the image of "Crouching Tiger" has a very prominent feature, that is, the round hips. We can apply this feature to other animals in the design.

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