

APPENDIX D

NOTES ON CERAMIC SPECIMENS

FROM CHINESE TURKESTĀN, KANSU, AND SĪSTĀN

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THE fragments of pottery found on the pre-T'ang sites are difficult to classify for several reasons. In the first place, many of them have suffered from sand-erosion, which has destroyed the surface and probably in some cases destroyed the glaze. Secondly, the pottery locally made in these remote districts is often extremely primitive in its technique. Much of it is made without a wheel and baked in an open fire, and the ornament, if any, is as rudimentary as the technique. This is conspicuously true of the fragments found on the Lal-tāgh site near Marāl-bāshi and at Toyuk, both reputed T'ang sites; but it applies equally to many of the pieces found on the earlier sites of Lou-lan and the Tun-huang Limes, which to all appearances might as well be prehistoric as of the Han period. The result is that, except for a few rare specimens on which the glaze has survived and a few others bearing familiar traits such as 'mat-marking', &c., the pottery itself is of uncertain evidential value until we come to the Sung and later types which are no longer of local make, but evidently imported from the more easterly provinces of China.

Tun-huang Limes. The early pottery found here varies from red through grey to black in colour according to the firing. Some of it is hand-made; some made on the wheel and well potted, with thread-marks on the base and spiral finish inside. The bases of vessels are flat, the mouths have out-turned lips, and in some cases the lower part of the sides is lightly faceted—a feature observed in early Chinese pottery found in the eastern provinces.

Where ornament is used it consists of simple impressions of 'matting' or textile, sometimes in bands of 'corduroy' pattern such as might have been made with string-matting. This is usually associated with the hand-made ware. Other ornament is incised with a multiple tool or comb, in bands of lines or festoon pattern. Similar patterning is also found on early pottery in the east of China.

One would say that most of the ware is of local make, but made by Chinese workmen. Its character accords with that of the pottery found elsewhere in China and reputed to be of Chou, Han, and Three-Kingdom periods.

The later glazed wares include specimens of blue and white porcelain, some of which may well be as late as the seventeenth century, and brown-glazed stoneware which may date back to the Sung dynasty. None of these pieces is likely to be older than the Sung dynasty.

Lop Desert. The fragments of sand-worn pottery from this area are of red ware (sometimes black on the surface) or coarse black ware, apparently all hand-made. The ornament consists of impressed circles, a rough incised herring-bone pattern, and notched bands in relief, all of which are common to the primitive pottery found in many parts of the world.