

much of the designs in its elaborate decoration still surviving in the modern saddlery of the country. Equally well modelled from life were the numerous figures of camels. Other and larger stucco figures found in alcoves near the entrance of the tombs show composite monsters meant, like the *tu-kuei* figures of Chinese sculpture, to keep off evil spirits from the abode of the dead.

Among the articles of food deposited for the use of the dead the most interesting perhaps were collections of fancy pastry exhibiting a great variety of shapes (Fig. 126). Their state of conservation was remarkable, especially as their receptacles had evidently been disturbed by plundering hands. Considering the brittleness of this elaborate pastry it was no easy task to pack and transport it safely. Among the articles for personal use found with the dead there were ladies' toilet outfits which must have been actually in use.

The custom of wrapping around the bodies rag-like pieces of fabrics, mostly silk, has provided us here, just as at those oldest burial relics of the Lou-lan grave-pits, with a wealth of most interesting materials for the study of ancient textile art. Their value is greatly enhanced by the fact that in the Astana tombs all such finds can be dated with approximate accuracy. Among these textiles there abound figured silks, both polychrome and damasks. The variety of designs shown by them is great and helps in a very striking fashion to illustrate the position which Turfan and probably other oases of Chinese Turkistan occupied at that period as places of trade exchange between China and Western Asia. For by the side of figured silks with purely Chinese designs there were found here plenty of others showing features of decorative style peculiar to the silks produced in Iran and else-