

where in the Near East during the period (third-seventh century) conveniently designated as Sasanian.

Such 'Sasanian' figured silks were particularly used as face-covers of the dead. Among them I may specially mention one showing a finely designed boar's head, highly stylized, within the typical Sasanian pearl border (Fig. 124). It is a very powerful piece of work and looks curiously modern. That Western designs at that time distinctly influenced Chinese taste is clearly demonstrated by other figured silks in which characteristic 'Sasanian' motifs are used in pieces of unmistakably Chinese manufacture. They may possibly have been produced for export.

A strange illustration of this contact between the East and the West was furnished also by gold coins imitated from Byzantine issues which we found placed after the fashion of the classical obolus in the mouth of the dead, while Persian silver coins minted by Sasanian kings of the sixth century covered their eyes. But a find of true artistic value which may be mentioned here in conclusion, was Chinese. It consisted of remains of a beautiful silk painting divided into several panels and when intact forming a scroll. It had evidently been deposited as a cherished possession of the dead, to be broken later into pieces by a plunderer's hand. It showed exquisitely painted scenes of ladies variously engaged in a garden. As an authentic specimen of secular painting of the T'ang period, when Chinese art was at its highest, this picture even in its fragmentary state claims great value.

Our plentiful 'archaeological proceeds' from Turfan had to be packed with great labour before I could start my big convoy of antiques, making up fifty camel loads, under