

considerable periods under both the Later Han and the Tang dynasties China had maintained effective political control over the kingdom of Khotan. My excavations have confirmed these records, and from the finds of Chinese documents on wood or paper, Chinese coins, articles of manufacture, etc., it has become abundantly clear that Chinese civilisation no less than political ascendancy asserted there a powerful influence. Seeing how close for centuries were the relations between Khotan and the great empire eastwards in matters of administration, trade and industrial intercourse, we cannot feel surprised to find a connection in art also attested by manifest traces. It is China which in this direction appears the main borrower; for besides such distinct historical evidence as the notice about a scion of the royal house of Khotan, whom the Annals name as the founder of a new pictorial school in China in the seventh century A.D., there is much to suggest that the Indian element which so conspicuously pervades the whole Buddhist art of the Far East had to a very large extent found its way thither through Khotan. Yet a careful analysis of the composition and drawing in more than one of the frescoes and painted panels of Dandan-Uiliq will show that Chinese taste also had its influence on the later art of Khotan.

For us still greater interest must attach to the convincing evidence disclosed as to the question how far into Central Asia the classical art of the West had penetrated during the first centuries of our era. We see its triumphant advance to Khotan, half-way between Western Europe and Peking, strikingly demonstrated by the remarkable series of classical seals, impressed on clay and yet preserved in wonderful freshness, which still adhere to a number of the many ancient documents on wood discovered at the sand-buried site beyond Niya. As explained in Chapter XXV., where I have discussed and illustrated some of these important finds, we cannot make sure in each case where the well-modelled figures of Greek deities, such as Pallas Athene and Eros, or the classically treated portrait heads that appear in these seals, were actually engraved. But it is certain that the seals themselves were currently used by officials and others resident within the kingdom of Khotan, and that