

we have three, impressed on the tablets N. xv. 155 and 163 (see top of Plate LXXII). The two seals borne by the latter both show male heads which may be portraits. Of the two seals which were impressed on N. xv. 155 (see also Plate XCIV) only one has survived. It shows the head and bust of a female turned to the left proper and holding in her raised right hand what may be a flower or an elliptical mirror. An elaborate headdress with flowing bands is indicated. The bust rests on a kind of base which cuts across the lowest portion of the elliptical border formed by a toothed moulding.

Oriental
seals in
clay.

For the remainder of the clay seals reproduced in Plate LXXII it is possible to assume local origin, the designs being distinctly Oriental. On tablet N. xv. 38, shown full size, we see a rudely-modelled male head with moustache, mane-like hair, and prominent cheek-bones. Of the two seals impressed on N. xxiii. 1, the one to the right proper, about $\frac{3}{4}$ in. high, is a male head turned to right showing a distant resemblance to the head of the Śaka king Maues, as represented on his coins. The other seal is a bird rising with wings extended. Tablet N. xv. 167 shows in characteristic juxtaposition two well-preserved square seals, of which the one to the left proper consists of four Chinese lapidary characters divided by cross-lines. I have not been able to obtain an interpretation of them. In the other we see the head of a female turned to the left and holding a flower. The elongated ear and the general treatment suggest Khotan work. The coarsely-modelled male head seen on the pendent clay seal of N. xv. 71, which has already been referred to, resembles that of N. xv. 38. The unopened small rectangular tablet, N. xv. 196²⁰, shown here with its whole obverse, bears a seal of geometrical design not unlike some of the metal seals from various Khotan sites which Plate L reproduces. In the small square seal of tablet N. xv. 334 (shown full size in Plate XCV) we have what are manifestly Kharoṣṭhī characters arranged in a circle. The traces, however, are not sufficiently distinct to admit of any satisfactory reading.

Detached
clay seals.

The two detached clay seals, N. xv. 133. a, b, which Plate LXXII reproduces, present technical interest apart from their devices. The seal of N. xv. 133. a, showing an eagle with outstretched wings and talons, is impressed on red clay contained in a wooden case, which undoubtedly, as shown by the string grooves and the remaining portions of string, was intended to be attached to a document or some consignment. The exactly corresponding seal-case, N. xv. 74 (Plate CV), which was found empty, shows that the string was passed through a hole at the bottom. Another empty seal-case, but of octagonal prism shape, N. xv. 002, is described in the list. A good illustration of the practical use to which such seal-cases might have been put was afforded to me by the fact that the bags in which Mr. Macartney's Kāshgar office used to forward my mails, had their string fastening always sealed down in a wooden case closely resembling these ancient specimens²¹. The second detached seal, N. xv. 133. b, shows a relatively well-designed gryphon in low relief within a circle. This seal was not provided with a wooden case for protection, and its good preservation is probably a result of the very fine and dense clay used, which, perhaps, was mixed with a wax or mucilage. Fragments of woollen string are still embedded in it, indicating that it, too, must have been used somewhat after the fashion of the far rougher clay seal, N. xv. 003 (seen in Plate CV), which shows no seal mark except a circular depression but preserves a portion of its original string fastening. Here the clay seems to have been strengthened by an admixture of fibre or hair, as noticed in the case of N. xv. 166.

²⁰ For a view of the reverse see Plate XCIV.

²¹ As far as I know the Kāshgar contrivance was Mr. Macartney's own invention, due to the necessity of providing a safe receptacle for seals which would otherwise

be sure to be obliterated in the course of a long rough transit. I have since come across somewhat similar seal-cases on Indian mail routes.