From Western Asian Glass Beakers to Chinese Silk Robes:
telling evidence retrieved from burials along the Southern rim of the Taklamakan desert

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Prestige is …

• Positive admiration of a recipient/receiving group towards an emitter/emitting group (German Ansehen)

• Attributed on account of immaterial traits

• Attributed on account of material possessions (prestige good = physical manifestation of immaterial/material traits)

• Used actively or effective passively

• Attributed only by recipient(s)

• Effective in social groups, not whole society
Possible ways to identify prestige goods

- Exclusivity through...
  a) costs
  b) exotic nature or provenance
  c) subject to social restriction (status symbol)

- Special position within archaeological context
Niya, Tomb 95MN1M8
Glass cups from tombs at Yingpan (95BYYM9:1, left) and Zhagunlukel (96QZIM49:4, right)
Excerpt Rhapsody on a Glass Bowl (Liuli wan fu 瑠璃椀賦) by Pan Ni († between 306 and 312)

览方贡之彼珍。 Examining those rarities amid the regional tributary offerings,
瑋兹椀之獨奇。 One prizes the uniqueness of this bowl.
濟流沙之絕險。 It would have to cross the remote perils of the shifting sands
越葱嶺之峻危。 And traverse the precipitous dangers of the Pamirs.
其由來也阻遠。... The way it came was obstructed and distant...
灼爚旁燭。 Its clarity and sparkle are on par with a candle flame,
表裏相形。 Its outer and inner surfaces conform to [one] shape.
凝霜不足方其潔。 Congealed frost is inadequate to match its purity,
澄水不能喩其清。 Limpid water is unable to convey its clarity.
剛過金石。 Its hardness is beyond that of gold and stone,
勁勵瓊玉。 Its strength challenges the most excellent jade.

Lacquer boxes retrieved from tombs at Niya (95MN1M3, left) and Yingpan (99BYYM66, right)
Weaving structures (Chinese and Western Asian)

• Tabby \textit{(juan 絹)}

• Monochrome patterned, damask-like weaves \textit{(qi 綺)}

• Polychrom patterned \textit{warp}-faced compound tabby weaves \textit{(jin 錦)}

• Polychrom patterned \textit{weft}-faced compound tabby weaves / Taqueté \textit{(‘jin 錦’)}
Polychrome patterned *warp*-faced compound tabby weave (*jin* 錦 silk) from Tomb 95MN1M3 at Niya.

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Chinese character **le** 樂 (*happy*, *happiness*, *pleased*, *joy*).

Chinese character **chang** 長 (*long*).
Polychrome *warp*-faced compound tabby weaves
Polychrome patterned *weft*-faced compound tabby weaves (*Taqueté*) from tombs at Zhagunluke (98QZIM131, left) and Yingpan (99BYYYM8, right)
Warp-faced compound tabby weave (Yingpan – 95BYYM20, left) and imitation in weft-faced compound compound weave (Yingpan – 99BYYM8, right)
Thank you very much for your attention!