

M.V. Both were built structures, in a very ruinous condition; their exact form in elevation could not be determined, but enough remained to show that they were square on external plan and that they each contained a circular cella enclosing a stūpa with circular base, the space between stūpa and cella walls providing a circumambulatory passage. It was from these cella walls that some of the examples were recovered. In the case of M.V, there was another passage or corridor running round the outer, square walls, also painted and probably enclosed by protecting walls outside these again, which, however, had completely disappeared. The excellent preservation of many of the fragments is due to their protection, after falling, by the masses of debris that choked the corridor, and in which they were embedded. This accumulation of fallen plaster and masonry also protected portions of the dados, two or three feet high, which occupied the lower part of the walls, and remained in position. Above the dados the walls had been originally painted with subjects from Buddhist legends, but most of this had fallen.

Apart from their artistic and technical interest the Mīrān paintings have a special archaeological value. From evidence afforded by certain Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions recovered from the debris the probable date of the shrines is about the third or fourth century A.D. While we are familiar with the Buddhist sculptures of Gandhāra from the numberless fragments in many public museums and private collections, the only examples of the same art expressed in painting, at present known, are these from Mīrān. The subject-matter of the pictures, seen and photographed *in situ* by Sir Aurel Stein, has been described by him in *Serindia* and need not be repeated here. A few points noted during the present writer's intimate association with, and close study of, them may be mentioned. The motive of the festooned garland carried on the shoulders of *amorini* is constantly used in Gandhāra sculpture, as are also the winged angel busts placed in the upper hollows of the festoon; but in the dado of M. V it is rendered in a far more interesting way than in any of the sculptured versions. Here the characterization of the alternate male and female heads is very striking, and among the *amorini* there is a definite and successful attempt to express individuality. The homely touch of the foot-weary boy is delightful, and his appearance on the Kaniṣka casket, now in the Peshawar Museum, and again in a sculptured fragment of a step 'riser' from Gandhāra, in the British Museum, is significant. See Figs. I and 2, p. 13.

In Sir Aurel Stein's description of the fine painting illustrating the *Vessantara*