

## PLATE I

### PAINTED FRAGMENTS FROM MĪRĀN, SHRINE III

A SHORT description of this shrine is given in the Introduction,<sup>1</sup> and here it is necessary to discuss only the painted decoration upon the evidence of the fragments recovered from the ruin.

From his observations recorded by Sir Aurel Stein on the spot at the time of the discovery, he considered that there had been two definite bands or registers of pictorial painting, one above the other, and below these a painted dado. The paintings had become detached from the ruined walls, and from time to time portions had slid down to the floor of the circular cella, coming to rest in the progressively accumulating debris. Those fragments which lay nearest to the foot of the wall would probably have been the earliest to fall and, therefore, from the highest positions, and successive falls would be lying over these. The uppermost layer on the floor would, on this assumption, be the latest to fall and would be from the lower register immediately above the dado. The dado itself, in so far as it had survived, had not become detached and had had a measure of protection from the fallen fragments piling up against it. It is quite impossible to reconstruct the subjects of the paintings from the fragments recovered or, with certainty, the whole scheme of the decoration; but Sir Aurel Stein considered that the portion marked M. III. 003 formed part of the subject in the lower register; and I am inclined to think that the legs, M. III. 004, plate II, belong to the figure whose arm and flower-laden hand appears on the right of M. III. 003. Although they are here reproduced to very different scales, from their actual size they could have belonged to the same person. Reconstruction being obviously impossible, the fragments can be considered only individually. The difference in scale in reproduction therefore matters little, and has been generally prompted by the desire to demonstrate technical qualities or for convenience in compiling the plates.

#### M. III. 002

A male figure, perhaps that of Gautama Buddha, although without halo, is seated on a dark, rosette-studded *masnad*, turned slightly towards the right, with his feet firmly planted on a footstool. He addresses an assembly, and his general pose, the action of the right hand, and the emphatic posture of the left express confident

<sup>1</sup> See p. xx.