

in these wall paintings than in any work of ancient pictorial art I had seen so far, whether north or south of the K'un-lun. Much in the vivacious look of the large fully opened eyes, in the expression of the small dimpled lips, etc., brought back to my mind the fine portrait heads of Greek girls and youths to be seen on painted panels from mummies of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods found in Egypt.

I was still wondering how to account for the distinctly classical style in the representation of these winged angels and their apparent loan from Christian iconography when the discovery in the passage of remnants of coloured silk streamers supplied definite evidence for the dating. They were obviously votive offerings, and the writing of the Kharoshthi inscriptions found on them resembled exactly that on the wooden and leather documents from the Niya site. The gift of the inscribed streamers, with the writing still remarkably fresh and black, could not have preceded the abandonment of the shrine by any great length of time. Hence it followed that Miran, like the site of Niya, must have been abandoned about or soon after the close of the third century A.D.

I cannot describe here other minor finds supporting this conclusion, but must refer briefly to remarkable fragments of frescoed plaster which were found leaning in closely packed layers against a portion of the wall still standing in the south-east corner of the passage. They had once decorated the higher wall faces and, sliding down on the debris already accumulated below, had escaped destruction, soon to be covered up and protected by sand. It was a very ticklish task safely to lift and recover these terribly brittle panes of