

with in Graeco-Buddhist relievos, it appears highly probable that these figures of the Miran dado must be traced back to the young winged Eros of Greek mythology as their ultimate ancestor. But this descent lay, no doubt, through intermediate stages, influenced by Oriental conceptions. To put it quite plainly, the figures of the Miran dado curiously suggest an affinity to the angels of some Early Christian church. But it is well to remember that the idea of angels as winged celestial messengers was familiar to more than one religious system of Western Asia before the rise of Christianity.

Nowhere in the Hellenized Near East do we know at present of graphic representations of angels from a sufficiently early age to throw light on the question as to where and when the cupids of classical mythology underwent transformation into the type of winged figures seen on the Miran dado. But it is easy to explain how those angels came to figure in the decoration of a Buddhist shrine on the very confines of true China. The Graeco-Buddhist sculpture of Gandhara shows that figures copied from the winged Eros were actually used there to represent that class of celestial attendants which Buddhist mythology has borrowed from early Hindu lore and knows by the name of Gandharvas. If a visitor to the Miran shrine ever cared to enquire from its guardians about the significance of these winged beings so curiously reminiscent of figures he might have seen before in distant regions like Syria, Mesopotamia or Western Persia, the local guardians could readily have labelled them Gandharvas.

But we may well feel in doubt as to whether this iconographic explanation is really needed, for on excavating