

sentations of attendant deities and saints. In numerous instances the walls were further decorated with elaborate plaques of stucco forming halos above and around the more important figures, as well as with small paintings in fresco. The whole of the rilievo work had originally been coloured, but the layers of paint had peeled off except where well protected in drapery folds, &c. Thus the greatest portions of the stucco images presented themselves in their terracotta ground colour.

I found from the first that the excavation of this wealth of statuary was attended with serious difficulty. Owing probably to the moisture rising from the neighbourhood of subsoil water, the strong wooden framework which once supported internally the masses of stucco and fastened them to beams let into the wall behind, had completely rotted away. The cavities left by the beams, which were evidently about 5 inches square, and fixed at a uniform height of 8 feet above the ground, can clearly be seen in the photographs, pp. 454, 461, 462, while the round holes visible in the arms of the colossal statues (see pp. 454, 456) indicate the position once occupied by portions of the internal framework.

Deprived of this support, the heavy stucco images threatened to collapse when the protecting sand was being removed. The Burans greatly added to this risk. They carried away the fine sand which had filled the interstices between the statues and the wall behind, and thus placed the friable masses of stucco in danger of sliding down through their own weight to immediate destruction. Experience soon showed me that these risks could be obviated only by extreme care in clearing the relievos and by covering up again their lowest portions as soon as they had been photographed. Even so damage could not altogether be prevented. In some instances it was necessary to secure the upper portions of statues still intact by means of ropes held by my men, even during the few minutes required to obtain photographs. Our procedure in these critical cases is illustrated by the view on p. 456. It shows some of the minor statues excavated on the inner side of the south-west wall being thus held, and also helps to mark the true size of