

SECTION V.—THE DATE OF THE RAWAK REMAINS; THE JUMBE-KUM SITE

Early type
of Rawak
sculptures.

The remains of the Rawak Vihāra described in the preceding pages enable us better than any other ruins as yet explored in this region to realize what the plan and decorative aspect must have been of large Buddhist shrines in ancient Khotan. The affinity which the Rawak reliefs show in style and most details of execution with the Graeco-Buddhist sculptures of Gandhāra is far closer than that we have had occasion to observe in the plastic remains brought to light elsewhere. These considerations make it all the more important to determine the period, if only within approximate limits, to which the ruined Vihāra belongs. The fact of the Rawak sculptures approaching their Gandhāra models much nearer than those of Dandān-Uiliq or Endere, and the total absence among them of any of those images with multiple limbs, &c., which characterize the later Pantheon of Northern Mahāyāna Buddhism, may at once be accepted as a proof that they are older. But beyond this it would scarcely be safe to draw any further chronological conclusion from the evidence of the artistic remains themselves, seeing how scanty our data are for the chronology of Graeco-Buddhist sculpture in Gandhāra itself, and how little we know as yet of the historical development of its offshoot transplanted to Eastern Turkestan.

Uniform
period of
stucco
sculptures.

It is difficult to say whether the chronological task before us would have been facilitated if the Rawak sculptures had been worked in stone or some other more lasting material instead of friable stucco. In that case we might have been able, perhaps, to trace with more ease successive stages in the local development of this art. But, on the other hand, we could not have assumed as safely as we can in the case of the plaster reliefs that the whole of this wealth of sculptural work must belong to approximately the same period. Large statues in friable clay could not have lasted for many decades, and whatever repairs or restorations became necessary may reasonably be assumed to have been effected in accordance with the style prevailing at the time. Thus a certain uniformity in the sculptural decoration was likely to be maintained even if individual images or groups were put up at different periods.

Numismatic
evidence of
date.

No epigraphical finds of any kind were made in the course of my excavations, nor has any discovery of manuscript materials ever been reported from this site. The moisture due to the vicinity of subsoil water, which, as we have seen, had caused the wooden framework of the statues, &c., to rot away completely, was not likely to have spared any manuscripts or similar votive deposits, whether of wood, leather, paper, or textile fabric. It was hence particularly fortunate that I was able to secure *in situ* numismatic evidence of distinct chronological interest. I have already mentioned how, in clearing the pedestals of the statues R. xi, xxviii, lxiv, the side-wall of the gate, and the mouldings at the foot of the Stūpa base, we came again and again upon Chinese copper coins bearing the legend *wu-chu*.

Coin finds
on small
Stūpa base.

But still more conclusive evidence of the same kind was revealed when the base of what I take to have been a small Stūpa, discovered near the inner south corner of the quadrangle (see Plate XL), came to be systematically cleared on April 17. On a platform 8 ft. square and 1 ft. high there rose a mass of brickwork thickly overlaid with plaster, measuring 6 ft. square and about 3 ft. high in its extant condition. The top was completely broken, and a little trench dug through from north to south showed that 'treasure-seekers', probably at an early period, had been at work here. The top of the platform, as well as the lower portions of the sides of the base proper, had been revetted with timber, probably of Terek wood, which