

Though among the mass of manuscript remains there were no datable documents, I could not feel in doubt as to the age of the ruin. All pictorial and relievo remains pointed clearly to the period when the shrines of the Dandan-oilik site were abandoned, *i.e.* the close of the eighth century A.D. The discovery of some Tibetan lines on the Chinese Brahmi rolls previously mentioned agreed with this conclusion; but definite chronological evidence was to come from the remains of the ruin which I next proceeded to excavate on September 27th. This was a temple marked by a low débris heap some fifty yards to the south-west. Here the cella proved smaller, twenty-seven feet square, with a single quadrangular enclosure; but the destruction of the walls had not been quite so thorough, and finds of artistic interest were relatively more numerous.

Small painted panels, as well as excellently modelled small relievos in hard plaster (Fig. 76), turned up near the north wall containing the entrance. The relievos had undoubtedly formed part of decorative halos around life-size stucco images; but of the latter, modelled in much more friable plaster, only sadly broken fragments such as hands and parts of heads, survived. Of technical interest were finds of moulds in 'plaster of Paris,' which had served for casting small relievos of figures and floral ornaments such as formed part of the wall decoration in these shrines, as well as for portions of the larger stucco images. Some fine wood carvings, in relievo and in the round, also turned up, besides little clay models of Stupas in plenty.

Among manuscript finds I was fortunate to recover here large pieces, including several complete leaves, of a Sanskrit Buddhist text written on birch-bark and probably, on palaeographical evidence, to be attributed to the fourth or fifth century A.D. The brittle birch-bark sheets became wonderfully fresh in appearance when I gave them a good bath, such as they needed after the scorching they had manifestly undergone and their twelve hundred years of burial in arid sand. I could greet them as friends from Kashmir, which the material clearly indicated as their place of origin. Some of the paper manuscripts found here showed traces of having been exposed to great heat,