

iconoclastic zeal and atmospheric influences, plentiful spoil rewarded our systematic clearing.

The deep débris layers filling the interior of the larger shrines yielded a great quantity of fine relievo sculpture in stucco, much of it fragmentary and small in size, yet of great artistic merit. In all cases of good preservation the stucco (*recte*, mud plaster) was quite hard, a result evidently due to the effective firing which these pieces had undergone when the shrines were burnt down. In the same shrines some larger relievo figures, as seen in Fig. 269, had escaped more or less from the effect of the conflagration through their position low down in sheltered corners. But these had owing to damp become so soft and rotten that any attempt to remove them would have caused complete collapse. So I learned to feel grateful for the catastrophe which had helped to preserve the rest for us.

The remarkable abundance of delicately carved heads, busts, or torsos, as seen in Figs. 270, 271, which came to light from the débris of certain cellas—I gathered them by the hundreds—was due to the fact that the decoration there had largely consisted of relievo friezes running round the walls at some height. The rows of holes for the wooden supports of these friezes could still be discerned in places, as seen at the top of Fig. 269. The burning of the timber and other inflammable materials within the shrines had quickly calcined these friable relievos where they stood; and by the time the projecting stucco masses fell away, the débris on the floor had accumulated sufficiently to mitigate the fall and protect the fragments. To attempt any reconstruction of the scenes which might have been represented in those friezes would be hazardous at the present stage. But the pieces reproduced in Figs. 270, 271 from the spoil of one or two of the cellas, will give some idea of the striking variety of types and the strongly marked classical influence displayed in their style.

Some of the heads, indeed, are as classical in modelling and expression as any to be found among the Graeco-Buddhist sculptures of Gandhara (Figs. 270, 272). Thus, the bearded heads are unmistakably derived from the