

In our Mīrān figures we find an additional element of variation introduced in a clever way. In almost all of them the steady gaze of the eyes to the right or left is counterbalanced by giving the lines of the figure a general inclination in the opposite direction. The impression of rapid movement thus created helps to add a distinctly vivacious character to the whole, which is noticeable in panels ii, v, viii, ix. But that the painter of this cycle of 'angels' possessed adequate artistic skill to give individuality to his figures, apart from the help which their varied arrangement provided, becomes abundantly clear if we examine the faces more closely. Thus, looking at Plate XL and comparing the two figures there presented, we cannot help being struck, in the head of ii, by the animated expression of the eyes and of the smiling mouth which is secured through the skilful application of high lights. Turning to the figure viii, we find there the same delicately rounded contours of the face, the large wide-opened eyes with their eager gaze, the hooked nose, etc. Yet a glance suffices to distinguish the peculiar firmness of the mouth marked by the straight line which divides the curving lips, and the more serious look which the moderately arched and well-separated eyebrows give to the face. The latter effect is strengthened by the length of the rippling black lock which descends in front of the right ear and reduces the fullness of the face. Turning to the figures of the panels reproduced in Plate XLI, we note similar individualistic treatment of the faces. Thus in i the carefully painted eyes bear a curious dreamy expression; in iii the long nose gives a distinctly Semitic appearance to the full and rather mature face. The boldly painted head of iv, with its small nose and mouth, conveys a far more youthful impression. In v the abstracted expression of the eyes is heightened by the flat contour given to the adjoining portion of the face. To ix a particular air of animation is imparted by the ingenuous frankness of the eyes and the strong inclination of the shoulders and the neck, as if in lively movement.

Individual-
istic treat-
ment of
faces.

It is impossible to mistake in these 'angel' figures of the dado a distinct aim at boldness of outline and general effect, particularly well suited to the subdued light in which they were placed. Just because the figures themselves, as we shall presently see, were inherited with so much else from a distant centre of Orientalized Hellenistic art, we ought to give due credit to the decorators of the Mīrān temple walls for the artistic feeling and skill with which they managed to adapt their much-practised designs to peculiar structural conditions. We have clear evidence of this in the fact that the whole pose of the winged busts in the dado is devised for the position they occupy on the wall of a narrow circular passage and only about three feet from the floor. Their heads, whatever the direction, to the right or left or straight in front, are just sufficiently uplifted for the gaze to catch the eyes of the worshipper as he passes in the circumambulation of the Stūpa. It is with the same purpose that the figures are given the air of rising towards him. We find this expressed by the inclination of the shoulders and the graceful upward curve of the wings, which, with their long feathers separated at the ends, distinctly suggest fluttering movement.

Poses
adapted to
position.

There still remain two questions of interest which claim our consideration: What is the iconographic origin and meaning of the 'angels' which here figure so strangely on the walls of a Buddhist shrine, and whence came the decorative scheme in which this painted dado exhibits them? The second question can be more readily examined in the light of other pictorial remains, and its solution may help to guide us towards a correct answer to the first. If we compare our dado with that which I found decorating the circular passage in the neighbouring rotunda M. v, it seems to me scarcely possible to doubt that its succession of lunettes occupied by busts reproduces, in a simplified form, the scheme presented in M. v by a continuous festoon which is carried on the shoulders of *putti* and in its descending semicircular loops contains busts of men and women, as seen in Figs. 134-40. This design of garland-carrying *amorini* is used in Gandhāra sculpture with extreme frequency for the decoration of rilievo friezes on the bases of Stūpas and elsewhere,

Origin of
decorative
scheme.