

This is particularly marked in the drawing and colouring of the eyes and in the total absence of the delicate shading of the flesh. The effect of light and shade and of harmonious tints is sacrificed to strongly marked outlines and bold colours. There is also less skilful drawing in the wings. From all this there results a want of vitality which makes it very difficult to believe that the hand working here painted the fine dado and frieze on the walls of the cella within, or gave its pictorial adornment to the interior of M. III.

First clearing of cella frescoes.

It was on clearing those parts of the wall of the circular passage within the cella which lay nearest to the entrance on either side that the fresco decoration of the interior I had hoped for first revealed itself. The masonry adjoining the entrance was broken down to a height of only four or five feet from the floor, and much of its painted plaster surface had perished. Yet by a piece of good fortune it was just there, almost as soon as I could lay bare continuous pieces of painting, that there emerged two short inscriptions painted in Kharoṣṭhī above figures which soon proved to be parts of an upper frieze. One was the line inscribed on the gateway which is seen in Figs. 134, 135, and this will be discussed below. The other consisted of a few characters written by the side of the riding figure which is seen in Fig. 141 and which was quite near the north side of the entrance. Though only one or two detached words could be deciphered at the time, there was no doubt that the language and script were the same as on the Niya and Lou-lan tablets. I could not have wished for better evidence to confirm the conclusion to which I had been already led by my previous finds, that these temples and wall paintings dated back to the period when the settlements at the Niya and Lou-lan Sites still flourished.

Festoon decoration of dado.

Yet even thus there was much cause for gratified surprise at the sight which the remains of the frescoed cella walls presented when at the end of two days' digging, in an icy gale and whirling dust-clouds, I could clean and closely examine the paintings. Through the operations of early 'treasure-seekers' to which I have previously referred a considerable segment of the circular wall had been levelled down to the floor on the west side. Whether this had once contained a second entrance or window could not be ascertained. But in any case, owing to this destruction, the frescoes were now found extending over two detached hemicycles or arcs, separated on the east by the entrance, five feet across, and on the west by a gap more than three times wider. In the northern arc the higher portion of the surface of the wall had, even where the masonry survived, for some reason suffered so badly that of an upper frieze once decorating it nothing could be made out but detached and half-effaced groups of small figures. In the frescoed dado below this it was easy, in spite of faded colours and plentiful cracks of the plaster, to recognize a remarkably graceful composition closely approaching Hellenistic models both in design and in details. The dominant classical influence revealed itself at once in the characteristic decorative feature of the whole composition. It was a broad undulating festoon of wreaths and flowers which youthful figures carried on their shoulders with the ease of true *putti*, while from the hollows of the festoon there rose in succession the heads and busts of men and girls, showing a striking variety of types. It was the motif so familiar in the festoon-decorated friezes of Gandhāra sculpture which I have discussed above, and the common classical source of inspiration was here obvious at a glance.

#### SECTION VI.—MURAL PAINTING OF A BUDDHIST LEGEND IN CELLA M. v

Frescoes on S. hemicycle.

For two reasons it is convenient to begin our description of the whole wall decoration of the cella M. v from the southern of the two hemicycles or arcs last referred to. In the first place, the surface of the circular wall surviving there, especially towards the south-east, being better preserved had, in addition to the dado, retained a considerable and very interesting portion of an upper main