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The Future of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues

Heritage Reconstruction
in Theory and Practice

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Foreword: UNESCO's Response to the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage

The destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan in Afghanistan by the Taliban in March 2001 sent shockwaves around the world. It represented a painful loss not only for the people of Afghanistan, but for all of humanity. It reminded us that we all have a role to play in safeguarding these places for the future. Protecting the world's cultural heritage is at the heart of UNESCO's mandate. For 75 years, UNESCO has provided support to its Member States in safeguarding their cultural heritage – as a means to promote peace and protect human rights.

Afghanistan joined UNESCO in 1948. Since then, it has ratified a number of UNESCO conventions in the field of culture, including the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.¹ In 2003, UNESCO inscribed the “Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley” on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Over the past two decades, UNESCO and the Government of Afghanistan – with the generous support of several countries and international organisations – have worked closely together to help protect this unique property. From the preventive stabilisation of the Buddha niches to mine clearance activities; from archaeological excavations to mural painting conservation; from developing planning tools to capacity-building; and from establishing state-of-the-art infrastructure to the promotion of World Heritage as a tool for sustainable development, many projects were jointly implemented and are still ongoing.

Over the past few years, in face of great adversity, the Government of Afghanistan has made considerable efforts to protect its cultural heritage and in particular the Bamiyan Valley World Heritage property. In 2018, it approved an Action Plan concerning the future treatment of the Buddha niches and the overall management of Bamiyan, where it identifies the detailed actions to be taken to reach a desired state of conservation for the property, with the goal of its future removal from the List of

¹For a complete list of UNESCO Culture Conventions to which Afghanistan adhered, please see <https://en.unesco.org/countries/afghanistan>.

World Heritage in Danger.² This Plan recommended further investigation and a detailed assessment of the heritage conservation ethics associated to the reconstruction of cultural heritage. It was prepared by a Working Committee, which was established following an International Meeting “Authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value of the Bamiyan Property” organized in Tokyo.

Over the past 20 years, UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee have been reviewing established paradigms regarding the possible reconstruction of cultural heritage, especially in face of acts of deliberate destruction. Post-conflict reconstruction is currently undergoing an important transition. The destruction of cultural property does not just represent a loss for humanity; it also deprives local populations of their identity and dignity. The criteria for the reconstruction of cultural heritage sites, affected as a result of iconoclasm and deliberate acts of vandalism or conflicts, should be discussed within the context of more holistic strategies for the protection of human rights and the promotion of peace, and result in direct impacts on policy. The Warsaw Recommendation on recovery and reconstruction of cultural heritage notably constitutes a comprehensive first set of principles concerning reconstruction processes undertaken as a result of armed conflicts or natural disasters.

In this context, the relevance of this publication and its choice of subject become self-evident. As Afghanistan faces multiple and pressing development challenges, the need to hear different views on heritage conservation and the technical and ethical issues surrounding the proposed reconstruction of one or part of the Bamiyan Buddha statues, is paramount. Its potential benefits in terms of attracting tourism and development should be weighed with the possible impact on the property's integrity, authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value, while also recognizing the financial realities of such an undertaking.

As a laboratory of ideas, UNESCO welcomes this debate. We believe that cultural heritage can play a positive role in fostering a community's understanding of its history and identity. The Bamiyan Valley World Heritage property, in particular, is a particularly relevant example of the importance of having such discussions on the importance of human rights, mutual respect among peoples, and the diversity and equal dignity of the world's cultures.

UNESCO hopes that this publication represents a compelling contribution to our understanding of the role of culture for peace-building and sustainable development, in conflict or post-conflict regions and particularly in Afghanistan. We remain committed to continue providing support and working closely with government authorities and communities in the protection of the country's rich and unique cultural heritage.

Assistant Director-General for Culture
UNESCO

Ernesto Ottone Ramírez

²Decision 31 COM 7A.21, by the World Heritage Committee, Vilnius, Lithuania, 2006 <https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/1287>.

Preface: The Position of the Afghan Government on the Potential Reconstruction of the Eastern Buddha Statue

The destruction of the giant Bamiyan Buddha statues has been condemned around the world. In the years that followed, it was viewed primarily as an example of extreme intolerance. And it accomplished nothing except to bring blame on the destroyers. The world community expressed horror at the statues' annihilation, and humanity mourns the loss of one of its most precious treasures. The history of Afghanistan has been tumultuous, but the cultural disasters, particularly the destruction of the giant Buddha Statues of Bamiyan, represent some of its most tragic episodes.

The giant Buddha statues of the Bamiyan Valley were not only priceless cultural heritage of Afghanistan, they were also amongst some of the largest examples of representations of the Buddha in the world. Unfortunately, Afghanistan and the world were to be deprived of the statues, which represented a moment of sadness.

Since 2002, the Government of Afghanistan and UNESCO, with the generous support of Japan and other donor agencies, have been working together to protect the values of the Bamiyan World Heritage property, by addressing security risks, ensuring the structural stability of the remains of the two giant Buddha niches, conserving the archaeological remains and mural paintings, and implementing a Cultural Master Plan.

Despite such efforts, the possible reconstruction of one or the two Buddha statues has been the target of multiple discussions, both within Afghan society and world experts. The Bamiyan Buddha statues represented ancient historical heritage, and their possible reconstruction is perceived as the right thing to do but at the same time it also poses significant questions and challenges.

By reconstructing one or both of the Buddha statues, there is an expectation that Bamiyan would once again be visited by many more national and international tourists; the reconstruction would support the creation of jobs for the community; and it would help restoring some of the pride in Afghan culture. There are many other advantages, including those that relate to the positive role that such a reconstruction could play in fostering the nations' own understanding of the importance of restoring cultural heritage. It should be noted that there are many videos and photos that could be used to support such a project.

But those who are not in favour of the restoration of the Bamiyan giant statues do not perceive their reconstruction as one of Afghanistan's main cultural heritage priorities. According to them, there are serious obstacles to this endeavor that should not be ignored, including universal agreements, scientific and methodological principles, and existing financial constraints.

If the goal is an actual reconstruction of the statues, this seems to be a project likely to face many problems. One of the main challenges is that following the destruction of the statues, less than 50 per cent of the original materials are available. While it would be possible to obtain similar raw material from the Bamiyan cliffs into which the original Buddha statues were carved, this would represent only part of what needs to be done. Hiring an adequate number of experts, including archaeologists, historians, ethnographers and conservators, among many others, will pose additional scientific and financial problems. But above all, the possible reconstruction of the Buddha statues may jeopardize the existing Outstanding Universal Value of the Bamiyan property, as the introduction of new materials may challenge the existing authenticity of the site.

One of the main objectives of the protection of cultural heritage is to preserve traces of different phases in a nation's history. The Bamiyan Buddha statues testified to their time, and their loss is a 'dolorous event'. But although the citizens of Bamiyan and many other people in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the world favour the idea of restoring the statues, we cannot overlook the obstacles: the financial resources to conduct the enterprise, the human resources to manage the work and the site, and scientific and ethical principles around the physical reconstruction of built heritage.

The protection of the Bamiyan World Heritage property, its adequate management and eventual removal of the List of World Heritage in Danger, is a priority to the Government of Afghanistan. In that sense, additional technical and financial international assistance is much required. The physical reconstruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues requires a wider debate and the promotion of a positive public discussion and an inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, to raise awareness of the potential benefits and challenges of such an action and how it might contribute to the broader goals of community rapprochement, peace-building and economic development in Afghanistan.

Deputy-Minister of Culture, Ministry of
Information and Culture
Kabul, Afghanistan

Mohammad Rasoul Bawary

Acknowledgement

UNESCO wishes to express its sincere gratitude for the ongoing technical and financial support provided by the Government and the People of Japan, in addressing the pressing requirements to better safeguard, manage and promote the Bamiyan World Heritage property.

UNESCO would like to take this opportunity to renew its sincere appreciation to the Government of Afghanistan for its effort in protecting the Bamiyan World Heritage property, especially in the face of great adversity. The Ministry of Information and Culture (and its Historical Monuments Department, Institute of Archaeology, and National Museum), the Ministry of Urban Development and Land, and both the Governor and the Mayor of Bamiyan, in particular, have always played a decisive and supportive role.

We also acknowledge the commitment of all the professionals who for nearly two decades, often under challenging conditions, conducted work in Bamiyan and provided an invaluable contribution to the safeguarding of this unique World Heritage property.

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following people, who, together with the chief in editor, reviewed manuscripts for this volume; Dr Douglas C. Comer, President of Cultural Site Research and Management Foundation, President of United States National Committee for ICOMOS, Vice-President of ICOMOS Advisory Council; Dr. Joy Sather-Wagstaff, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, North Dakota State University; Dr. Martha Demas, Project Manager, the Getty Conservation Institute; Dr. Nuno Vasco Oliveira, Consultant, UNESCO Office in Afghanistan; and Ms. Nao Hayashi, Programme Specialist, Asia and Pacific unit, World Heritage Centre, UNESCO.

UNESCO remains committed in working closely and collaborating with the Government of Afghanistan. The generous financial support provided by the Government of Japan through five consecutive projects, from 2002 until today, have made this publication possible. A new financial contribution through the newly signed project, ‘Sustainable Management of the Bamiyan World Heritage property – Preparing the removal of Bamiyan from the List of World Heritage in Danger’, will allow this important work to continue until 2023.

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Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley

The Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley¹ represent the artistic and religious developments, which from the 1st to the 13th centuries characterised ancient Bactria, integrating various cultural influences into the Gandharan school of Buddhist art. The numerous Buddhist monastic ensembles and sanctuaries, as well as fortified structures from the Islamic period, testify to the interchange of Indian, Hellenistic, Roman, Sasanian and Islamic influences. The site is also testimony to recurring reactions to iconic art, the most recent being the internationally condemned deliberate destruction of the two standing Buddha statues in March 2001. The site was inscribed on the World Heritage List for the following criteria:

- *Criterion (i)*: The Buddha statues and the cave art in Bamiyan Valley are an outstanding representation of the Gandharan school in Buddhist art in the Central Asian region.
- *Criterion (ii)*: The artistic and architectural remains of Bamiyan Valley, an important Buddhist centre on the Silk Road, are an exceptional testimony to the interchange of Indian, Hellenistic, Roman and Sasanian influences as the basis for the development of a particular artistic expression in the Gandharan school. To this can be added the Islamic influence in a later period.
- *Criterion (iii)*: The Bamiyan Valley bears an exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition in the Central Asian region, which has disappeared.
- *Criterion (iv)*: The Bamiyan Valley is an outstanding example of a cultural landscape which illustrates a significant period in Buddhism.
- *Criterion (vi)*: The Bamiyan Valley is the most monumental expression of the western Buddhism. It was an important centre of pilgrimage over many centuries. Due to their symbolic values, the monuments have suffered at different times of their existence, including the deliberate destruction in 2001, which shook the whole world.

¹ Excerpts from the World Heritage Centre website: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/208>

Integrity

The heritage resources in the Bamiyan Valley have suffered from various disasters and some parts are in a fragile state. A major loss to the integrity of the site was the destruction of the large Buddha statues in 2001. However, a significant proportion of all the attributes that express the Outstanding Universal Value of the site, such as Buddhist and Islamic architectural forms and their setting in the Bamiyan landscape, remain intact at all 8 sites within the boundaries, including the vast Buddhist monastery in the Bamiyan Cliffs which contained the two colossal sculptures of the Buddha.

Authenticity

The cultural landscape and archaeological remains of the Bamiyan Valley continue to testify to the different cultural phases of its history. Seen as a cultural landscape, the Bamiyan Valley, with its artistic and architectural remains, the traditional land use and the simple mud brick constructions continues to express its Outstanding Universal Value in terms of form and materials, location and setting, but may be vulnerable in the face of development and requires careful conservation and management.

Protection and Management Requirements

The monuments and archaeological remains of the Bamiyan Valley are public property, owned by the State of Afghanistan. However, large parts of the buffer zone are in private ownership. Many documents defining the ownership were destroyed during the decades of conflict and civil unrest, and are now being re-established. The *State Law on the Protection of Historical and Cultural Properties* (Ministry of Justice, May 21st 2004) is in force and provides the basis for financial and technical resources.

The management of the serial property is under the authority of the Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC) and its relevant departments (Institute of Archaeology and the Department for the Preservation of Historical Monuments), as well as the Governor of Bamiyan Province. The Ministry of Information and Culture has a provincial local office representative in Bamiyan. There are 8 guards specifically protecting the site against vandalism and looting, with additional resources provided by the Ministry of Interior in the form of a dedicated police contingent for the protection of cultural property (Police unit 012).

At present, the management system is provisional with help from the international community for the appropriate administrative, scientific and technical resources. Since 2003, UNESCO has been leading a five-phase safe-guarding plan for the property. Its focus has been to consolidate the Buddha niches, to safeguard the artefacts that survived the destruction of the Buddha statues and to render the site safe, notably by pursuing the complex de-mining operations at the site. A Management Plan for the property is under preparation with the objective to prepare and implement a programme for the protection, conservation and presentation of the Bamiyan Valley, to undertake exploration and excavation of the archaeological remains, and to prepare and implement a programme for sustainable cultural tourism in the Valley. The Governor of the Province is responsible for the implementation of a regional development plan, which includes rehabilitation of housing, provision of health and educational services, and development of infrastructure and agriculture.

Part I
Introduction

The Future of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues – Evolving Conservation Ethics and Principles concerning Intentionally Destroyed Cultural Heritage



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The property (...) symbolises the strong hope of the Afghan and Bamiyan people that peace will be constructed in the minds of the citizens of this ravaged country, to enable the Afghan people to restore their lives and cultural heritage.

(Excerpt of the nomination dossier from the Government of Afghanistan's submission to the World Heritage Centre for the inscription of the Bamiyan site on the World Heritage List. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/208/documents/> p. 5)

Abstract Given the emerging dispute about the complexly intertwined issues of heritage reconstruction, conservation ethics and principles for intentionally destroyed cultural heritage has recently become one of the major topics for discussion within heritage studies; there is currently a move to refine theory and practice of heritage reconstruction, in light of intellectual and social developments, which recognize the importance of human rights and interlinkages between evolving disciplines of academia and policy. Whilst studying the case of the demolished Bamiyan Buddha statues and niches with the condition that most surface of the original fragments of the Buddha statues were lost, this volume attempts to provide a reference point for conservation practitioners and policy makers around the world as they consider how to respond to ongoing acts of destruction of cultural heritage properties. To reach this aim, this chapter first introduces how the issue of reconstruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues arose and addressed. It then clarifies a

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scientific debate of the evolving thinking on heritage reconstruction issues pertaining to ‘authenticity’ and an impact to the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage system, with the practical realities of implementing such decisions in a post-conflict setting.

Keywords Bamiyan · Buddha statues · World Heritage · Authenticity · Heritage reconstruction · Deliberate destruction · Iconoclasm · Peace building · Human rights

1 Introduction: Debate on Heritage Reconstruction

Acts such as iconoclasm and biblioclasm have a long history in the world, whether committed during wartime, revolutions or times of repression, but the early twenty-first century has seen a new wave of deliberate destruction often publicly broadcast by the perpetrators. Recent prominent examples include the destruction of 16 tombs in Timbuktu, Mali, and damage to several World Heritage Sites in Syria, including the ancient classical city of Palmyra and the Grand Mosque in Aleppo. The international community has responded to these acts of violence and destruction with vigour. Setting a new precedent, the event of Timbuktu led to the first trial case for war crimes at the International Criminal Court in Hague in 2017 (United Nations 2017). Yet punitive measures are often inadequate to prevent attacks on cultural heritage, and historical sites will continue to fall victim to acts of destruction.

Reconstruction of cultural heritage due to acts of deliberate destruction has been recently addressed, not merely from the point of a material conservation philosophy but within the context of holistic strategies for the protection of human rights and promotion of peace building; The destruction of cultural properties is not just a loss for humanity, but it also deprives local populations of their identity, beliefs, history, integrity, memories and dignity (United Nations 2016). In contrast to earlier guidance that aimed to discourage reconstruction of historic places, recent World Heritage Committee decisions have explored new guidance on reconstruction of cultural properties that have been intentionally destroyed and obliterated.

In 2005, the World Heritage Committee made a review towards supporting reconstructions when it considered the Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was destroyed after the breakup of former Yugoslavia (UNESCO 2005). Despite the fact that much new material was used, the ICOMOS report (ICOMOS 2005) clarified that the reconstructed bridge maintained an intrinsic sense of ‘truthfulness’, even though in strictly physical terms, a considerable portion consists of new material. The motivation for this change in position is the World Heritage Committee’s desire to help recover lost identities for the concerned community and to take a stance against acts of aggression, ‘underlining the unlimited efforts of human solidarity for peace and powerful co-operation in the face of overwhelming catastrophes’ (UNESCO 2005, 141).

Reconstruction of cultural properties is judiciously outlined in the Operational Guidelines of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention), which (UNESCO 2018b, 27) states ‘... reconstruction of archaeological remains or historic buildings or districts is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances. Reconstruction is acceptable only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture’. Given the current move towards heritage reconstruction in post-war/post-conflict contexts, more detailed guidance is required with a view to reflecting the multi-faceted challenges that heritage reconstruction brings, in its social and economic contexts, as a process that should be considered within the framework of the values, ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ (OUV) of the World Heritage properties (UNESCO 2018a).

Further exploration of reconstruction should be made with a high degree of consultation with impacted communities who have particular connections with heritage and suffered from its loss, in order to understand the meaning of heritage for them, incorporate the multiplicity of interpretations of heritage and determine whether or not they wish to rebuild, reconstruct and re-establish such heritage properties. And if there is community consensus for reconstruction, a number of additional inquiries arise, such as “How it will be done?”; “Who will decide?”; and “What it should be done for?”. Moreover when it comes to the inscribed World Heritage properties, how can reconstructed heritage using new materials be considered to retain authenticity? Reconstruction of cultural heritage requires not only in-depth discussion in a multidisciplinary approach by experts and academia but also a long-term vision for the preservation and interpretation of such reconstructed heritage, which duly requires the involvement of community who are suffered from damaged and/or lost heritage.

Given the emerging dispute about the complexly intertwined issues of heritage reconstruction, conservation ethics and principles for intentionally destroyed cultural heritage has recently become one of the major topics for discussion within heritage studies, resulting in numerous publications and dedicated academic journals; there is currently a move to refine theory and practice of heritage reconstruction, in light of intellectual and social developments, which recognize the importance of human rights and interlinkages between evolving disciplines of academia and policy. Hence, the preparation of a clear heritage reconstruction principles, comprehensive conservation strategies and guidelines is required to respond to an ongoing debate and community’s request. Whilst studying the case of the demolished Bamiyan Buddha statues and niches with the condition that most surface of the original fragments of the Buddha statues were lost (ICOMOS 2014), this publication attempts to provide a reference point for conservation practitioners and policy makers around the world as they consider how to respond to ongoing acts of destruction of cultural heritage properties.

2 Protecting the Bamiyan World Heritage Site

In March 2001, two Buddha statues located in the Bamiyan Valley, believed to date back, respectively, to the mid-sixth and the early seventh century AD, were destroyed (Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan 2003). This destruction led to the mobilization of the international community to strongly condemn this act and initiated the adaptation of the 2003 Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage.¹

The unique Buddhist monuments, along with multiple monumental sites in the Bamiyan Valley from different Islamic and pre-Islamic periods, attest to the successive interactions between societies living in this region by those who passed through along the Silk Roads. The OUV of these historical monuments and cultural landscapes was recognized by the World Heritage Committee in 2003, the year in which the site was inscribed on the World Heritage List as a case of emergency nomination. At that time, the Bamiyan Valley was simultaneously placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger due to ongoing challenges to conservation status of the nominated cultural properties and overall management of the site.

At its 31st session in New Zealand in 2007, the World Heritage Committee (UNESCO 2007) defined a series of corrective measures to achieve a 'Desired State of Conservation', which would enable the removal of Bamiyan from this Danger List. These included:

1. Acceptable levels of site security
2. Addressing issues concerning structural stability of the two standing Giant Buddha niches
3. An adequate state of conservation of archaeological remains and mural paintings
4. Completing and implementing an effective Management and Cultural Master Plan.

Over the past decades, UNESCO and the Government of Afghanistan have worked in partnership to undertake a series of actions to protect the various values in Bamiyan with generous contributions from the Governments of Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea and Switzerland, as well as the World Bank through the Afghan Government. In the case of a financial support from the Government of Japan, UNESCO received more than USD ten million to ensure the preservation of the values of cultural properties in Bamiyan. The Phases I to IV project from 2003 to 2015 focused on emergency interventions to conserve and rehabilitate the fragile archaeological and geological context of the site, a massive task of stabilizing the Buddha niches and preventing their collapse, archaeological survey, mural painting conservation and heritage zoning management planning for the preservation and promotion of various World Heritage properties in Bamiyan. Commencing from 2015, Phase V of the project focused on the defined specific benchmarks to lay the foundations to remove the site from the List of Heritage in Danger in the near future.

¹<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000133874>

Within the following Japan-funded project beginning from 2020, the primary actions are identified to meet the above-mentioned set benchmarks.

3 Revitalization of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues

Since their destruction by the Taliban in March 2001, the former Buddha statues in Bamiyan have been the focus of concerted conservation efforts to stabilize the niches and surrounding cliffs. After the completion of the works of stabilization and conservation at the Eastern Buddha niche rear face and surrounding staircases in 2011, a technical scaffolding rig for the imminent commencement of similar works in the Western Buddha niche was added in 2013 (UNESCO 2013). During the preservation initiative of the damaged Buddha niches, the international community, including UNESCO, has been continuously lobbied by the Afghan Government for advice and guidance regarding the concept of wholly or partially reconstructing both or either of the Buddha statues.

The ninth Bamiyan Working Group Meeting at UNESCO Headquarters in March 2011 (UNESCO 2011) recommended that the larger Western Buddha niche be consolidated and left empty as a testimony to the tragic act of destruction and that a feasibility study be undertaken to determine whether or not a partial reassembling of fragments of the Eastern Buddha statue could be a future option in the coming years.

In August 2013 limited restoration and conservation works began at the floor level inside of the Eastern Buddha niche as an additional element of a project of ICOMOS Germany to install a protective roof and sustaining pillars (UNESCO 2013). However the project was temporarily put on hold in September 2013 after ICOMOS Germany installed foot-shaped structures within the Eastern niche itself. Following the recommendation at the twelfth Bamiyan Expert Working Group Meeting from 10 to 11 December 2013 in Orvieto, Italy, a mission of two ICOMOS International experts was sent to Bamiyan from 26 May to 2 June 2014, in order to evaluate the appropriateness of the intervention made by ICOMOS Germany at the site. The ICOMOS International Advisory Mission report (ICOMOS 2014, 28) recommends that:

a well-researched study is commissioned on the feasibility and options for the reconstruction of the Eastern Buddha as a basis for a well-informed debate on this issue, involving all the many stakeholders at local, national and international levels.

In order to meet the Afghan Government's request and the recommendation of the 2014 ICOMOS International mission, UNESCO organized a technical meeting at the World Heritage Centre in Paris, July 2014. During this meeting, participants of UNESCO, Afghan officials and concerned international experts (UNESCO 2014) agreed to explore a scientific study by convening an international technical meeting on the issues and practicalities associated with Buddha statue reconstruction.

At the 12th Bamiyan Expert Working Group in 2013, the former Acting Minister of Information and Culture, H.E. Mr. Nabi Farahi (UNESCO 2013), requested at least partial reconstruction of one of the Buddha statues. At the 13th Bamiyan Working Group Meeting in Munich in December 2016, the Governor of Bamiyan (UNESCO 2016a) reiterated the Government's and local community's desire to reconstruct at least one of the Buddha statues. Because the consolidation work on the Eastern Buddha niche has been completed in 2011, it was once again agreed during the meeting in Munich in 2016 that an international technical meeting would be convened in the following year, in order to discuss the future treatment of the Eastern Buddha niche (UNESCO 2016a). The 40th World Heritage Committee in 2016 (UNESCO 2016b) also acknowledged the Afghan authorities' wish to partially reconstruct at least one of the Buddha niches.

Responding to the request of the Government of Afghanistan and the decisions of the World Heritage Committee at its 40th session concerning the deliberate destruction and reconstruction of cultural heritage in areas of conflict, in particular the Buddha statues in Bamiyan, UNESCO, together with the Government of Afghanistan and the Tokyo University of the Arts, with a financial support of the Government of Japan, organized an international technical meeting, entitled 'The Future of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues: Technical Considerations and Potential Effects on Authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value' in Tokyo, Japan from 27 to 30 September 2017. The aim of the meeting was to foster an exchange of research, experience and observations in order to clarify heritage conservation theory and practice of reconstruction of cultural properties and to examine a number of technical proposals presented by international experts in their fields, concerning the potential reconstruction of one or more of the Buddha statues at the Bamiyan World Heritage Property. Such a study will contribute to a better understanding of past approaches and current practice in order to provide guidance to meet the needs of the twenty-first century.

The secondary reason for holding the technical meeting was to discuss the positive role that the reconstruction of heritage can play in fostering nations' understanding of their history and identity, recognition of human rights, mutual respect among peoples and of the diversity and equal dignity of the world's cultures. It was of central significance to the technical meeting that the concerned government representatives, technical experts and donors recognize the importance of the role culture to contribute in the peacebuilding and development process specifically in conflict or post-conflict regions.

Prior to the organization of this meeting, the Government of Afghanistan and UNESCO invited applicants to submit proposals for either physical revitalization of the Eastern Buddha statue or its non-physical revitalization in the niche, in order to present the Government with a balanced range of options reflecting the diverse spectrum of opinions about revitalization.² Several proposals were submitted and

²Physical revitalization implies rebuilding the Eastern Buddha statue, whereas non-physical revitalization implies measures to interpret the Eastern Buddha statue without any physical form of statue reconstruction.

reviewed by the designated Scientific Committee members, prior to the meeting. Once the proposals met the conditions and criteria of the proposal application guidelines, four proposals were presented at the Tokyo meeting. In this regard, the Tokyo meeting in 2017 came at an important milestone which set concrete foundations for the Government of Afghanistan to decide how to proceed with the reconstruction (or not) of the Bamiyan Buddha statues.

Yet there is still an emerging issue of the impact to the OUV concerning heritage reconstruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues. Considering that the Eastern Buddha niche, without a standing Buddha statue, was inscribed in the World Heritage List in 2003 as part of the ‘Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley’, it was deemed a challenge to reconstruct it because any physical reconstruction of the Buddha statues shall give an impact to the originally inscribed status of the empty niche. Therefore the discussion should focus on not only a technical question of statue reconstruction but also conservation ethics and retention of authenticity as a World Heritage Site, which requires to comply with a range of policies set out by the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention.

4 Varying a Concept of Heritage Authenticity

There has been an emerging debate among international conservators and restorers as to the ethics and nature of heritage reconstruction, but the prevailing opinion amongst those who are in favour of restoring one of the statues at Bamiyan is an approach that utilizes the available original material for a partial restoration of the statues. This idea is in accordance with the discourse of conservation ethics and authenticity that has prevailed in the twentieth century. As seen in the Venice Charter, and any other international charters and treaties, reconstruction of heritage using non-original materials was not allowed because heritage authenticity was considered as a critical foundation of inheritance of a historic value of heritage. The Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS 1964) states that:

The process of restoration is a highly specialized operation. Its aim is to preserve and reveal the aesthetic and historic value of the monument and is based on respect for original material and authentic documents. It must stop at the point where conjecture begins, and in this case moreover any extra work which is indispensable must be distinct from the architectural composition and must bear a contemporary stamp. The restoration in any case must be preceded and followed by an archaeological and historical study of the monument... All reconstruction work should however be ruled out “a priori”. Only *anastylosis*, that is to say, the reassembling of existing but dismembered parts can be permitted. The material used for integration should always be recognizable and its use should be the least that will ensure the conservation of a monument and the reinstatement of its form.

The ICOMOS Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage (ICOMOS 1990) also clarifies that:

Reconstructions serve two important functions: experimental research and interpretation. They should, however, be carried out with great caution, so as to avoid disturbing any surviving archaeological evidence, and they should take account of evidence from all sources in order to achieve authenticity. Where possible and appropriate, reconstructions should not be built immediately on the archaeological remains, and should be identifiable as such.

From the twenty-first century, the concept of cultural heritage and heritage authenticity has shifted away from a focus on monumental and physical heritage and now encompasses notions of living heritage, traditional knowledge, language, cultural diversity and performing arts (Daly 2012; Lloyd 2012; and etc.). Hence the principles of heritage underlying the Venice Charter and others have come under review. For instance, intangible culture has become one of the major topics for discussion within heritage studies. This builds on critiques of the material-centric view of heritage over heritage discourse and practice. Taylor (2004) argues that heritage in Asian contexts, for instance, differs from the European theoretical and practical understanding of heritage. Lloyd (2012) also stresses that heritage in Asian contexts often differs from the commonly perceived heritage forms of historic monuments and 'high culture'. Taylor (2004, p. 423) asserts that 'Asian cultures have a spiritual view of what is culturally valuable from the past; the past lives on in memory of people, of events and of places through time rather than concentrating on the material fabric which can change or be replaced'.

These ideas and concept of heritage are well introduced in the 1994 Nara Document on Authenticity, the 1998 China Principles, the 2002 Shanghai Charter, the 2004 Yamato Declaration, the 2005 Hoi An Protocols, the 2005 Xi'an Declaration and the 2007 Seoul Declaration. The Nara Document (ICOMOS 1994) first articulated an evolving approach and a distinctively Asian perspective on authenticity, recognizing that the ways and means of preserving the authenticity of cultural heritage are themselves culturally dependent. Paragraph 11 of the Nara Document (ICOMOS 1994, 3) states that 'All judgments about values attributed to cultural properties as well as the credibility of related information sources may differ from culture to culture, and even within the same culture'. It is thus not possible to base judgements of values and authenticity within fixed criteria. There are other declarations and charters articulating an evolving approach and a distinctively way of achieving authenticity in Asia, recognizing that the ways and means of preserving the authenticity of cultural heritage are culturally dependent:

The value of a heritage site derives from ... the site illustrates the material production, life-style, thought, customs and traditions or social practices of a particular historical period. – Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China (ICOMOS 2002, 71)
 ... affirming the significance of creativity, adaptability and the distinctiveness of peoples, places and communities as the framework in which the voices, values, traditions, languages, oral history, folk life and so on are recognized and promoted in all ... heritage practices. ... – Shanghai Charter (ICOM 2002, 1)

The Hoi An Protocols declared in 2001, revised periodically and published in 2009, provides another example:

The immaterial dimension of authenticity (e.g. artistic expression, values, spirit, emotional impact, religious context, historical associations... and creative process) and sources of information about them are particularly important in regard to maintaining authenticity of

cultural heritage in Asia. – Hoi An Protocols for Best Conservation Practice in Asia (UNESCO Bangkok 2009, 12)

These Protocols clarify that an ‘Asian’ understanding of heritage concept and value includes, ‘for example, a continuous craft tradition handed down generation by generation, an unbroken oral tradition, a ritual of which the practice is in the hands of hereditary specialists’ (Engelhardt 2012, 312). The Protocols state that ‘Authentic cultural assets are passed through time and communities by un-interrupted transmission, evolving but retaining the essential qualities that make them authentic’ (UNESCO Bangkok 2009, 13). Whilst this concept of heritage and its authenticity have been acknowledged globally, these are also included into the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention in 2005, recognizing the ways and means to preserve cultural heritage and different understandings of heritage that existed outside Europe.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, UNESCO has commenced reviewing the issues regarding maintaining authenticity of cultural heritage, especially in face of acts of deliberate destruction. Heritage authenticity and reconstruction are currently under an important transition because revitalization of heritage due to iconoclasm and deliberate acts of vandalism or conflicts should not be discussed only within the context of material conservation and restoration but also requires more holistic strategies for the protection of human rights and the promotion of peace. With the introduction of this new approach, the Warsaw Recommendation on Recovery and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage in 2018 proposed a comprehensive set of principles to heritage reconstruction as a result of armed conflicts or natural disasters. The Recommendation (UNESCO 2018c, 2–3) states that:

the overall goal is the recovery of the society. This aims at the consolidation of peace and security and at restoring or improving the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets, systems and activities of an affected community or society, aligning with the principles of sustainable development and “build back better”. An essential part of this process is the recovery of the places’ heritage, which may include reconstruction. The term “reconstruction”, in the World Heritage context, is understood as a technical process for the restitution of destroyed or severely damaged physical assets and infrastructure following an armed conflict or a disaster. It is important to stress, in this regard, that such reconstruction of physical assets must give due consideration to their associated intangible practices, beliefs and traditional knowledge which are essential for sustaining cultural values among local communities.

What should be achieved from heritage reconstruction? It should address not merely a physical restoration of damaged heritage but the recovery of the society needs. Whilst respecting heritage conservation principles, the recovery and reconstruction of World Heritage properties following armed conflict or disasters caused by natural hazards need to address ‘the legitimate aspiration of concerned communities to overcome the trauma of conflicts, war and disasters by reconstructing as soon as possible their cities and villages – and particularly their affected cultural heritage – as a means to reaffirm their identity, restore their dignity and lay the conditions for a sustainable social and economic recovery’ (UNESCO 2018c, 2). The Warsaw Recommendation (UNESCO 2018c, 2) also underlines that ‘the recovery

of the cultural heritage lost or damaged as a result of armed conflict offers unique opportunities, notably within the context of stabilization processes, to foster mutual recognition, promote dialogue and lay the ground for reconciliation among all components of society, particularly in areas characterized by a strong cultural diversity and/or hosting important numbers of refugees and/or internally displaced people, which will lead to new approaches to recovery and reconstruction in the future’.

5 Intention of the Publication: Debate on the Reconstruction of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues

There is currently a dearth of literature pertaining specifically to the ethics of heritage reconstruction in Afghanistan, with particular reference to the Buddha statues in Bamiyan. Introducing ideas of academics and heritage restoration experts concerning issues pertaining to ‘authenticity’, and an impact to the OUV at the site in light of potential reconstruction works at World Heritage Sites, this publication aims to provide a reference for heritage conservation practitioners and policy makers around the world as they consider how to respond to ongoing acts of destruction of cultural monuments.

After this introductory chapter, the publication explains in Part II an overall review of the emergency interventions at the Bamiyan World Heritage Property implemented from 2003 to 2020. Mounir Bouchenaki first introduces the significant historical account of the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues. Bert Praxenthaler and Matthias Beckh outline the challenges and achievements of the preservation works of the Buddha niches and fragments. Yoko Taniguchi explains the conservation status and restoration efforts of the Bamiyan’s Buddhist wall paintings and introduces historical findings of the adopted painting method. Michael Jansen and Georgios Toubekis clarify the nature and objectives of the Bamiyan Cultural Master Plan to protect the values of OUV of the cultural landscapes in the Bamiyan Valley.

Part III introduces academic research and experience of heritage conservation and practice of reconstruction of deliberately destroyed cultural properties. Mechtild Rössler introduces recent decisions of the World Heritage Committee concerning the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage. Maamoun Abdulkarim explains the case of destruction and rehabilitation efforts of demolished Palmyra. Lassana Cisse clarifies ways of reconstruction of the destroyed mausoleums in Timbuktu, Mali, by introducing the reconstruction strategy in a community participatory approach. Michael Turner also argues how the destroyed Bamiyan Buddha statues should be treated, referring to the case study of reconstruction of Jewish synagogues after World War II.

Part IV attempts to clarify heritage conservation theory and practice of reconstruction of cultural properties. Cornelius Holtorf outlines that reconstructions and reinvented heritage can have a powerful role in society; therefore, the appropriate stakeholders should play an important role to decide for the benefit of specific future

generations by identifying appropriate management strategy. Marie Louise Stig Sørensen discusses the classic heritage tensions and challenges that are linked to the proposed reconstruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues. Through the case of the creation of the Ground Zero Memorial in New York following the attack of the World Trade Center buildings in New York City, Helaine Silverman explores how to fill the absence of the lost countries' icons from the points of the technical, social, emotional, national, local and economic interests.

Part V explores how to address the damaged Buddha statues and identify ways for their future treatment. Jukka Ilmari Jokilehto argues that a priority should be given to the urgent completion of consolidation and the continuation of safeguarding of the remains whilst strongly recommending not to propose any reconstruction or *anastylosis* in the niches because the present remains are the most efficient memorial to the 2001 destruction. Deborah Klimburg-Salter explores a new perspective of the evolution of Bamiyan colossal sculptures that assists in understanding the discrepancy between the Islamic sources, including the Afghan oral traditions, and the western sources. And from this interpretation, she concludes that the empty niches offer greater interpretive flexibility and potential to contribute to the peacebuilding process. Junko Okahashi attempts to identify the 'exceptional' and acceptable conditions to reconstruct the Bamiyan Buddha statues. James Janowski argues the meaning and the absence of the value in the emptiness of the Bamiyan niches and clarifies the relation between deliberately induced emptiness and inauthenticity on one hand and physical reconstruction and the reestablishment of authenticity on the other.

Part VI introduces technical intervention methods and proposals from Italy, Japan and Germany concerning the reconstruction of Bamiyan Buddha statues, in particular issues pertaining to 'authenticity' and an impact to the OUV at the site in light of potential reconstruction works at the Bamiyan World Heritage Site.

As an output of the Tokyo meeting in 2017, unanimously adopted conclusions by the meeting participants are introduced in the annex. And the Afghan authorities' decisions to the submitted technical concepts presented by international experts during the Tokyo meeting in 2017 are also introduced in the annex. After the Tokyo meeting, the Afghan authorities had organized a series of national Technical Working Committee meetings in 2018 that the Afghan Ministry of Information and Culture initiated throughout the year. The decisions of the national Technical Working Committee meetings include an action plan with a timeframe based on findings of opportunities and challenges concerning all four proposals presented at the Tokyo meeting.

The publication is intended to contribute to the available literature on heritage conservation ethics post-conflict and provide an important historical record of the possible reconstruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues for future. This publication is also intended to create a well-documented precedent for potential decisions taken elsewhere in the world for cultural properties similarly impacted by acts of violence and destruction. Scientifically providing an account of different perspectives on heritage reconstruction ethics, the publication aims to offer a plethora of ideas and approaches concerning the deliberately damaged cultural heritage.

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Part II
An Overall Review of the Emergency
Interventions at the Bamiyan World
Heritage Property Implemented
from 2003 to 2017

Safeguarding the Buddha Statues in Bamiyan and the Sustainable Protection of Afghan Cultural Heritage



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Abstract Sadly, the cultural heritage of Afghanistan has suffered cruelly from the conflicts and disasters. But the most dramatic destruction was the one decided by the chief of the Taliban regime, Mullah Omar, on 26 February 2001 for the destruction of the two giant Buddha statues in the carved during the fifth century AD in the Bamiyan Valley. Under the authority and support of the UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura, a series of actions were undertaken to mobilize political and religious personalities of the Islamic States that could influence the Taliban. The Taliban announced their decision 1 week to 10 days before *Aïd el Adha*, one of the most important Islamic festivals, commemorating the Abraham Sacrifice, fixed on March 8, 2001. UNESCO Director-General was able to speak by telephone with President of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, who immediately accepted to facilitate a mission of Egyptian religious personalities led by Sheikh Al-Azhar to Kandahar in order to persuade the Taliban over their concerns for errors in interpreting Islamic law. To respond to the numerous questions that UNESCO received after the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan, a conference of experts in Islamic law was organized in Qatar, end of December 2001, at the occasion of regular meeting of the Ministers of Culture of the Islamic World, which proclaimed the “Doha Declaration on Islam and Cultural Heritage”.

Keywords Afghanistan · Buddhas · Bamiyan · Taliban · UNESCO · Islam · Doha Declaration

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1 A Treasure of Histories

Many cultural treasures are scattered across the country, such as the Kanishka/Zoroastrian site of Surkh Kotal; the ninth-century Nine Domes of the Mosque Haji Piyada; the twelfth-century Minaret of Jam; the walled city of heart; the site of Mes Aynak, an immense historical site home to thousands of representations of the Buddha, located south of Kabul; and the famous Baburs Gardens, in Kabul, which were recently rehabilitated through a programme financed and coordinated by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, to name but a few.

Among these rich cultural heritage sites and historic relics, it is important to mention the monumental Buddhas sculpted in the cliffs of Bamiyan during the end of the fifth or early sixth century A.D, according to most recent dating by C14, reported by Carlotta Gall (2006). The Buddhas of Bamiyan were two monumental statues of standing Buddhas carved into the side of a cliff in the Bamiyan Valley of central Afghanistan, representing the classic blended style of Indo-Greek art (UNESCO 2012). These two prominent statues were giants measuring 55 and 37 meters high, respectively, and representing the largest examples in the world of representations of standing Buddhas carved in stone.

Sadly, the cultural heritage of Afghanistan has suffered tremendously from the conflicts and disasters that have afflicted the country for more than a quarter of century. This ongoing war and civil unrest has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands, and it has displaced populations and provoked significant cultural disasters. The irreplaceable collections of the Kabul Museum, as well as numerous historical and archaeological sites, have been the victim of large-scale pillage and vandalism. Throughout history, destruction and loss of cultural heritage have been “collateral” effects of armed conflicts. Extensive looting and forced transfers of cultural objects have accompanied almost every war since ancient times. In modern times, aerial bombardments during World War II and the more than one hundred armed conflicts that have plagued the world since 1945 have contributed to the destruction and disappearance of much cultural heritage of great importance for countries of origin and for humanity as a whole (Francioni and Lenzerini 2003). One of the most destructive decisions was made by the chief of the Taliban regime, Mullah Omar, on February 26, 2001.

2 The Buddhas in Crisis

UNESCO received the news through a telephone call from the Ambassador of Greece to Pakistan, who was on mission to Afghanistan, in order to meet with members of the Taliban government. In 2001, I was the Assistant Director-General for Culture at UNESCO and was accompanying the former UNESCO Director-General Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura on an official visit to Algeria, when I received a call from my colleague, Mrs. Lyndel Prott, Director of the Division of Cultural Heritage and

expert in international law. The Assistant Director-General of Culture had been previously involved in similar situations of cultural heritage destruction, such as the destruction of the Mostar Bridge in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

She informed me of the message from the Greek Ambassador to Pakistan, warning UNESCO about the imminent destruction of the Buddhas following an order by the Taliban leader, which I immediately relayed to the Director-General. During the return flight from Algiers to Paris, Mr. Matsuura asked me to deal with this issue and to urgently propose a strategy of response. It was not the first time that the Afghan Taliban authorities had issued such menaces. The threat had been already raised in 1998, and UNESCO, through its preceding Director-General, Federico Mayor, had called for respect of this ancient heritage. At that time, a Taliban commander had already caused damage to the head of the smaller Buddha and placed explosives at the base of the niches housing both Buddhas. It seemed as though time was against us.

During the same period, Paul Bucherer-Dietschi, a Swiss architect, had started laying the foundations for the “Afghanistan Museum”, also known as “Bibliotheca Afghanica”. He had done so at his own expense, creating a “cultural sanctuary” in a small town named Bubendorf, near Basel (Switzerland), in order to protect Afghan artefacts being illegally traded through international illicit trafficking networks. In 1998, he negotiated an agreement between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. Through the intervention of the Swiss delegation to UNESCO and the approval of the Swiss Parliament, this safe haven was finally recognized by UNESCO, albeit reluctantly because UNESCO was not willing to encourage trafficking of cultural objects while having the responsibility to promote the 1970 Convention concerning the illicit traffic of cultural properties.

In July 1999, Mullah Omar issued a decree for the protection of the Buddhas. According to a journalist from *The Guardian*, Mullah Omar noted that “there are no more Buddhas in Afghanistan and that statues could be an example of a potential major source of income for the nation, from international visitors” (Harding 2001). However, in December 1997, the World Heritage Committee, the governing body of the 1972 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, had adopted a resolution at its Naples meeting expressing concern over reports about threats by the Taliban regime with regard to the Buddhist statues of Bamiyan. The resolution, adopted unanimously following a proposal by Italy, stressed that “the cultural and natural heritage of Afghanistan, particularly the Buddhist statues in Bamiyan [...] for its inestimable value, [has to be considered] not only as part of the heritage of Afghanistan but as part of the heritage of humankind” (UNESCO 1997, p. 34). Later, in July 2001, Mullah Omar changed his mind and took a different decision, aiming at the demolition of the Buddha statues.

Upon his return to Paris, on February 28, 2001, UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura termed the new decision to destroy the Afghanistan statues a “true cultural disaster” and demanded that Afghan Government instantly halted the destruction of this invaluable heritage. Warikoo (2002, p. 9) argues that “To blindly destroy the statues will not alter history, only deprive the future Afghanistan of one of its riches. I ask that all those concerned, and the highest leader of the Afghans themselves, to immediately take all measures for the protection of this unique

cultural heritage. The loss of any Afghan statues, and particularly the Buddhas of Bamiyan, would be a loss for all humanity”. He also (2002) added that “the authors of such an irredeemable act would bear a heavy historic responsibility to the Afghan people” and concluded that “it is not in this kind of action that they will gain credibility in public opinion or in the international community”.

On March 1, 2001, the Director-General organized a number of meetings with the Permanent Delegates to UNESCO, particularly those from the Asian countries where Buddhist communities were shocked and saddened by the news emerging from Afghanistan, as well as those from Islamic countries. Representatives from India, Japan and Sri Lanka were approaching the Afghanistan leader and his government, trying to change the order. The Permanent Delegations at UNESCO also urged the Director-General to take immediate action. These meetings took place under added tension since the Taliban had chosen to announce their decision 1 week before Aïd-el-Kébir (also called Aïd el Adha), one of the most important Islamic religious festivals commemorating the Abraham Sacrifice. This meant that most Islamic nations were occupied with the religious holiday and that the pilgrimage to Mecca, in Saudi Arabia, had already begun. Such timing with respect to the religious calendar would continue to create difficulties in contacts between the UNESCO Secretariat and a number of authorities in the Islamic world.

Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura then formed a crisis unit at his cabinet level, gathering Mrs. Françoise Rivière, Chief of Cabinet; Mr. Ahmed Sayyad, Assistant Director-General for External Relations; Mr. Francesco Bandarin, Director of the World Heritage Centre; and myself, Assistant Director-General for Culture. The Director-General appointed me as the coordinator of actions to respond to the order for the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues. On that same day, March 1, I contacted the former French Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Pierre Lafrance, who knew Afghanistan well and was a scholar on Central Asia and who was also fluent in the diverse languages of Afghanistan. He immediately accepted the proposal by the Director-General to act as his Special Envoy to Afghanistan. In less than 24 h, thanks to the support of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France and the Minister of the Interior of Pakistan, Mr. Lafrance arrived in Kandahar, where most of the members of the Taliban government were gathered.

On March 2, 2001, at the opening of the International Colloquium on Central Asian Heritage, which coincidentally took place at UNESCO Headquarters, Mr. Matsuura declared “I have chosen a person who is well known and respected in the region, with great knowledge of issues in the Middle East and Central Asia” (Bouchenaki 2015, p. 234). During this colloquium, the Director-General was able to provide an update on the initiatives that had already been taken to “reverse the absurd direction that the Kabul authorities have initiated”.

Within the Secretariat for the UNESCO Culture Sector, I formed a working group composed of Ms. Paola Leoncini-Bartoli, Chief of the Executive Office for the Assistant Director-General for Culture, and Mr. Christian Manhart, Programme Specialist, who assisted me in contacts with the various Permanent Delegations and major non-governmental organizations specialized in safeguarding cultural heritage, in particular ICOMOS, ICOM, and the Society for Preservation Protection of Afghan’s Cultural Heritage (SPACH). I would like to stress that this was a true race

against time, to respond as effectively as possible to the decision of destroying the Bamiyan Buddhas before the Aid el Adha, which would take place on March 8, 2001.

It is now well-known that the Taliban themselves confirmed that, pursuant to an edict by their supreme leader Mullah Mohammed Omar, on February 26, 2001, destruction operation had actually been started. The text of the edict (The Guardian 2001) clearly expresses the beliefs and intentions pursued by the Taliban and does not need further comment:

Based on the verdict of the clergymen and the decision of the supreme court of the Islamic emirate all the statues around Afghanistan must be destroyed. Because God is one God and these statues are there to be worshipped and that is wrong. They should be destroyed so that they are not worshipped now or in the future.

During a meeting with the media, on March 6, 2001, I listed the activities that for several decades had received support from UNESCO to safeguard Afghan heritage and discussed the possibility of creating a special assistance fund for the Afghan historic monuments and sites, as well as the National Museum, in Kabul. I insisted on the fact that the Taliban decision had encountered unanimous condemnation in all parts of the world, including both within nations with a notable Buddhist community and Islamic nations, and that the latter had indicated that there was no serious religious argument that could serve as a basis for such an iconoclastic gesture.

With the authority and support of the UNESCO Director-General, a series of actions were carried out in view of rapidly mobilizing political and religious personalities that could influence the Taliban regime. In that sense, the Arab Group at UNESCO issued a release calling for “international mobilization for concrete actions to end this unprecedented gesture, which concerns invaluable treasures of universal value”.

It should be noted that Ambassador Pierre Lafrance had telephoned from Kandahar to inform that, despite his meeting with the Minister of Culture and the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Taliban government, the decision to destroy the Buddha statues was related to religious interpretations and that he could not intervene any further. However, he continued his travels as Special Envoy of the UNESCO Director-General and went to Saudi Arabia, a country which might have some influence with the Taliban, and then returned to Paris to report on his mission. It should be noted that a message of congratulations from Mr. Jacques Chirac, then President of the French Republic, was sent to UNESCO praising the decision in sending Ambassador Pierre Lafrance as Special Envoy to Afghanistan.

With the support of the Arab and Muslim Ambassadors to UNESCO (particularly Iran, Morocco, Qatar and Syria), I succeeded in discussing the facts with important Islamic religious authorities, who went on to express a different view to that expressed by the Afghan Taliban. I would like to express my own sincere thanks for the important role played by the Ambassadors of those countries, who worked devotedly alongside UNESCO in these efforts.

H.E. Ms. Aziza Bennani, Ambassador of Morocco to UNESCO, facilitated my contacts with the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Dr. Abdelouahed Belkeziz. H.E. Mr. Ahmad Jalali, Ambassador of Iran to UNESCO, as an expert of philosophy and Islamic thought, provided me with important bibliographic references, in particular a text of a scholar of the eleventh century, Al-Biruni,

who visited Bamiyan. H.E. Mr. Ali Zainal, Ambassador of Qatar to UNESCO, facilitated the contacts with Qatari authorities by arranging a special flight to Afghanistan. H.E. the late Mr. Amine Esber, Ambassador of Syria to UNESCO, provided me with invaluable assistance in organizing the meeting of experts in Islamic law that was held in Doha, Qatar, in December 2001. Thanks to his invaluable support, I was able to contact Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi in Doha, considered one of the most respected living religious scholars of the Arab world, and to persuade him to travel to Afghanistan. Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi (2001, p.15) stated: "The statues made by the elders who came before Islam are part of a historic patrimony. When the Muslims penetrated Afghanistan, in the first century of Hijra, these statues were already there, and they were not destroyed. I advised our brothers of the Taliban movement to reconsider their decision in light of the danger of its negative impact".

For his part, Sabri Abdel Raouf, Chief of the Division of Islamic Studies at Al-Azhar University (Cairo), stated that "statues intended for worship can be forbidden as contrary to Islam but statues that are not worshipped are not forbidden". Through the intervention of Dr. Mufid Shihab, then Minister of Higher Education of Egypt and President of the Egyptian National Commission for UNESCO, to whom as a friend I implored to help finding a solution for this crisis, the UNESCO Director-General was able to speak with President Hosni Mubarak. He immediately accepted to facilitate a mission of a delegation of Egyptian religious authorities to Kandahar, on March 8, 2001, to persuade the Taliban authorities concerning errors in the interpretation of Islamic Law. I was present when "Sheikh Al-Azhar", the Rector of the oldest Islamic University in Cairo, was proposed as one of the envoys to Afghanistan. I wish to quote President Hosni Mubarak, who at the time stressed: "Mr. Director-General, not only Sheikh Al-Azhar, but also Mufti Masr will go to Afghanistan, to change the mind of the Taliban!" (personal communication between the President of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, and the UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura on March 8, 2001).

With further invaluable assistance of the Ambassador of Qatar, a religious delegation of 15 personalities was formed and travelled to Afghanistan. It was headed by Dr. Nasr Farid Wassel, Mufti of Egypt, and included the Deputy Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, Ibrahim Bakr; Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, of Doha; Sheikh Mohamed al Raoui, Ulema (scholar) of the Al Azhar University; the well-known Islamic writer Fahmi al-Howaidi; and other specialists in the Sharia (Islamic Law). This delegation, which travelled to Afghanistan in an aircraft provided by H.E. the Emir of Qatar, Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, met with the Taliban Minister of Religious Affairs and the Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs. It was, however, unable to meet Mullah Omar and to convince Afghan religious authorities to abandon plans to demolish the Bamiyan statues. From March 9 to 11, 2001, the world watched as the two Bamiyan Buddhas were destroyed, during the final stages of the Islamic festival of Aïd el Adha.

In my efforts to reach the Head of the Taliban Regime and in hoping to reversing his order, I had been given the name of an Egyptian colleague, who worked for the World Health Organization and was among the very few people to have personally met Mullah Omar. After contacting him and explaining the gravity of the situation, he kindly agreed to write a letter in Arabic to Mullah Omar and to ensure the letter would

reach him. In his message, he attempted to convince the Taliban leader that such decisions against the cultural heritage of his own country could not be justified by Islam.

I had also established contact with Mrs. Attiya Inayatullah, former Chairperson of the UNESCO Executive Board and then Minister of Social Affairs of Pakistan, with whom I raised the possibility of a direct intervention by President Pervez Musharraf with Mullah Omar. Unfortunately, President Musharraf was not in Islamabad at that time but on pilgrimage to Mecca. Mrs. Inayatullah informed me that she had also been to Kandahar with the Minister of Interior of Pakistan, in a last attempt to convince the Taliban, but that even such desperate mission failed.

In conflict and post-conflict situations, heritage is the object of contradictory tensions between “sanctions” and “reconciliation”. On October 17, 2003, a UNESCO Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage was adopted following the destruction of the two Bamiyan Buddha statues. This Declaration, which is not a binding document but rather a “soft law”, reinforced two pre-existing international conventions and two protocols that establish judicial requirements for the protection of cultural heritage. The main purpose of the draft Declaration is threefold: (a) to uphold existing obligations of States under international agreements for the protection of cultural heritage in force; (b) to prevent and prohibit the intentional destruction of cultural heritage and, when linked, natural heritage, in time of peace and in the event of armed conflict; and (c) to encourage States to become party to instruments protecting cultural heritage if they have not already done so (UNESCO 2003).

3 The Doha Conference

The experience gained by UNESCO through events in Cambodia, Southeast Europe, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Middle East and Timor-Leste are an indicative hope that a programme can be put in place for the preservation of cultural heritage, with corresponding objectives of reconstruction, on one hand, and dialogue and reconciliation on the other. UNESCO has always considered that archaeological sites, in addition to old manuscripts, in the past are unique witnesses to civilizations. They are frequently associated with ideas or beliefs that have marked the history of humanity since time immemorial.

To respond to the numerous queries that UNESCO received following the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas, and to put an end to false interpretations of Islamic law concerning cultural heritage and prevent such idolatry acts in the future, a conference of specialists in Islamic law was organized in Doha (Qatar), from December 29 to 31, 2001, on the occasion of the regular meeting of the Ministers of Culture of the Islamic World.

We started the preparations for this Conference on March 15, immediately after the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues. Contacts were made with the most renowned specialists (Ulama) in Islamic law (Sharia) from different religious schools (Sunna and Shia). Specialists from Morocco, in the western Islamic World, up to Kazakhstan, in its Eastern part, were invited. The main agenda of the

conference was Islam and Cultural Heritage, and several studies were presented by different scholars.

The Doha Conference of “Ulama” on “Islam and Cultural Heritage” was chaired by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, and put together by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC); the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO); the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO); and UNESCO. It was inaugurated by the Heads of three international and regional organizations: Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, Mr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri and Mr. Mongi Bousnina. It should be noted that the conference was attended by 27 professors and experts in Islamic Law, from 25 different countries. A delegation from Afghanistan led by Professor Sibghatullah Mujaddidi, former President of Afghanistan, also participated.

After 2 days of intense discussions, this meeting of Ulema gave rise to the “Declaration of Doha”, later widely disseminated in Islamic countries. The ulamâ in attendance discussed the various aspects of the subject of the Symposium and in particular the recent destruction of the Buddha in the Bamiyan Valley. They emphasized that the tolerant nature of the Islamic religion requires respect for the human heritage in general, whatever its sources, forms or manifestations. In their deliberations, they highlighted the fact that Muslims have preserved the human heritage in all its diversity, taking care not to harm it in any way. This is attested by the fact that the Islamic world boasts the greater part of the human heritage, most of which goes back to pre-Islamic periods; had it not been preserved by the Muslims, most of those eight heritage sites would have been lost. The ulamâ noted that the situation has remained thus throughout the 14 centuries of the history of Islam. The ulamâ participating in the Symposium affirmed that the “position of Islam with regard to the preservation of the human cultural heritage derives from its appreciation of innate human values and from respect for people’s beliefs”. They explained that “the position of Islam regarding the preservation of the cultural heritage is a firm position of principle which expresses the very essence of the Islamic religion” (UNESCO 2001).

4 Cultural Heritage and Post-conflict Reconstruction

At the request of the UNESCO Director-General, two prominent professors of international law, Prof. Francesco Francioni and Federico Lenzerini, were tasked with preparing a preliminary study on the legal consequences, under international law, of the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage such as that of the great Buddhas of Bamiyan. In their conclusions (Francioni and Lenzerini 2003, p. 650), they stressed the fact that “as the area of fundamental human rights, first, and the area of environmental protection, later, States may no longer invoke their sovereignty and domestic jurisdiction in order to justify acts of deliberate destruction of cultural heritage of great importance for humanity as a whole”.

Our analysis has also tried to demonstrate that when such destruction is associated with the intent to discriminate or annihilate another religion and its forms of cultural expression, then the act amounts to a crime of persecution. In contemporary

international law, the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage of great importance such as the Buddhas of Bamiyan does not only constitute an intolerable offence against the cultural heritage of humanity; when carried out with a discriminatory intent, it also amounts to an attack on the very identity of the targeted people and religion and thus on the dignity and fundamental rights of its members.

Our analysis suggests a more promising trend towards ensuring individual accountability for international crimes. I would like to underline that cultural heritage is increasingly perceived as a priority during post-conflict reconstruction. As referred to by former UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura (Matsuura 2002), “the biggest challenge that UNESCO is facing is to make the public authorities, the private sector, and civil society as a whole realize that cultural heritage is not only an instrument for peace and reconciliation, but also a factor of development”. This message dates back to 2002, on the occasion of the Year of the United Nations for Cultural Heritage. Almost 20 years later, such statement remains a critical point of reference.

Increasingly, conflicts target symbols of culture in order to destroy the identity of a people. Such form of destruction can often lead the international community to react. In the wake of the destruction of cultural heritage during World War II, the international community responded with the 1954 Hague Convention, followed by two additional protocols. Since then, the nature of warfare has changed, with conflict becoming less a matter of external belligerents and more one of internal conflicts and civil unrest. During such internal conflicts, warring parties often target cultural heritage. The Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention (1999) was written to address the changing nature of conflicts, and the international community must continue to identify proper mechanisms to respond to the growing demand for the preservation of heritage damaged as a result of such conflicts.

A remaining question in Afghanistan and among interested scholars who work or worked in Afghanistan is the future of the Buddhas in the Bamiyan Valley. As we have seen, despite the efforts of the international community and, in particular, the representatives of Islamic countries, the Taliban regime voluntarily destroyed the Bamiyan Valley Buddha statues.

5 International Seminar in Kabul

In May 2002, following the fall of the Taliban regime and the coming to power of a new government, UNESCO organized an international seminar in Kabul to assist the launching and coordination of rehabilitation and restoration efforts by the Afghan authorities in charge of the safeguarding the country’s cultural heritage, which had been damaged by several years of war. This event, which brought together 107 specialists in Afghan culture and heritage as well as representatives from different scientific institutions and donor countries, was opened by H.E. President Hamid Karzai and chaired by Dr. Makhdoom Raheen, Minister of Information and Culture of Afghanistan. Participants gave presentation on the state of conservation of the Afghan cultural heritage and discussed programmes and coordination for the most

urgent priorities defined. The seminar resulted in more than seven million US dollars pledged for priority projects, allocated through bilateral agreements and UNESCO Funds-in-Trust projects.

One of the questions raised during a session chaired by President Hamid Karzai concerned the desire, as he stated, expressed by certain Afghans to “reconstruct” “the Buddha statues with the support of foreign contributions” (UNESCO 2002. P. 8). In response to this concern, expressed publicly for the first time to the group of experts gathered in Kabul, the position of UNESCO representatives, supported by ICOMOS, was “the concept of reconstruction was not a priority when humanitarian aid for the Afghan people was urgently needed today” (UNESCO 2002. P. 8). The argument put forward considered, on one hand, that such reconstruction could never be completely authenticity, neither on form nor on materials; on the other hand, experts stressed that the Buddha statues had suffered the ravages of time and that it was virtually impossible to recover such original, historical vision except through the latest photographs and photogrammetry. Furthermore, any reconstruction would necessarily imply the use of reinforced concrete and heavy steel support, and that would ultimately result in a replica totally unrelated to the original.

6 Bamiyan Expert Working Group

In 2002, the Bamiyan Expert Working Group was established, and the Government of Afghanistan entrusted UNESCO with the mandate of coordinating all cultural projects in Bamiyan. This Expert Working Group has as its main goal to coordinate the activities carried out in Bamiyan under the various UNESCO projects, as well as any bilateral activities funded by international donors. It also advises the Government of Afghanistan on the implementation of decisions adopted by the World Heritage Committee for the World Heritage property of Bamiyan in the areas of conservation and management.

The 13th Bamiyan Expert Working Group Meeting, held in Tokyo, Japan, in 2017, was of particular importance as there was an interval period of 3 years since the last meeting had taken place, in Orvieto, Italy, in December 2013. The Tokyo meeting initially assessed the progress made on the state of conservation of the property and then set forward prioritized activities for the immediate future in the form of recommendations. These recommendations (UNESCO 2017) included the urgent conservation of the Western Buddha niche, where conservation works had resumed in the second semester of 2016, as well as the need for a revision of the Cultural Master Plan, originally developed in 2004, in view of ever-increasing development pressures. The meeting also served as a platform for preliminary discussions between the Government of Afghanistan, international experts and donor countries on the feasibility of reconstructing at least one of the Buddha statues, which has now been officially requested by the Government of Afghanistan on behalf of the people of Afghanistan.

7 Conclusion

The decision to reconstruct at least one of the Bamiyan Buddha statues remains open to discussion. Different views have been conveyed to the World Heritage Committee, and a final recommendation – to reconstruct or not to – is yet to be made. Besides reconstructing one of the Buddha statues, discussed alternatives included to build a replica and place it in a different location in the valley, away from the presently empty niche, or to display the construct through 3D images, on a screen with pictures of the Buddhas before their destruction.

Much discussion has taken place in Afghanistan and all over the world about the future of this great site, revolving around the question of whether the two giant Buddha statues should be reconstructed. The participants at the First International Seminar on the Rehabilitation of Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage clearly recognized that the first emergency priority is to stabilize the cliff face with its niches and caves (UNESCO 2002). Noting that the decision whether to engage in the reconstruction of the Buddhas statues is a matter to be settled by the Government and people of Afghanistan, it was agreed that reconstruction is not a priority as long as humanitarian aid for the Afghan people is urgently needed (UNESCO 2002). Furthermore, the participants emphasized that the authenticity, integrity and historical importance of this great site need to be memorialized in an appropriate way and that the reconstruction of the statues needs further discussion and careful consideration (UNESCO 2002).

It is my personal belief, which since the awful destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues I share with architect Andrea Bruno, that the niches should be preserved as a monument to the crime of their destruction. It is a kind of victory for the monument and a defeat for those who tried to obliterate its memory with dynamite. The Bamiyan World Heritage property should thus be protected as a legacy to future generations and against any further damages.

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Safeguarding and Preservation Activities at the Giant Buddhas and Other Monuments in the Bamiyan Valley 2004–2017



Bert Praxenthaler and Matthias Beckh

Abstract The paper describes the joint missions of UNESCO and ICOMOS in Bamiyan, starting with the first investigations and initial safeguarding works at the particularly endangered Eastern Buddha niche in 2003. The problems of salvaging fragments of giant sculptures within a dangerous mix of conglomerate rock pieces, debris, and unexploded devices and the challenges of conservation works in a war-torn country are delineated. The making of the Buddhas is explained on the basis of the latest research on stone materials and loam components. Based on that, the conservation methods for sculpted conglomerate rock and the remaining parts of the loam rendering are described. Furthermore, the complex challenges of assembling a special scaffold structure within the tall niches are explicated. A variety of discussions on the reconstruction or restoration methods by international experts were slowing down the conservation process after 2013. The current state as of 2019 is a stabilized niche with the in situ remains of the Eastern Buddha statue and an installed

This article is an extended and updated version of a paper that was published following the international conference “Preserving the Cultural Heritage of Afghanistan,” held at the Afghanistan Centre at Kabul University, in 2014 (Gil J. Stein e. a., (ed.) *Preserving the Cultural Heritage of Afghanistan*, Chicago (2017)). The following 3 years at the Western Buddha site have seen further activities on site, and developments regarding the cultural and political impact have also been noted. Matthias Beckh contributed to the chapter “Western Buddha Niche: Design and Construction of the Scaffold Structure.”

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scaffold structure at the Western Buddha, waiting for the upcoming task to stabilize the instable rock surface of the niche. The paper concludes with the importance of building up local conservation capabilities and finding a consensus on future conservation missions.

Keywords Afghanistan · Bamiyan · Buddha · Conservation · Restoration · Sculpture · Rock · Stabilization · Scaffold

1 Introduction

After the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan by the Taliban forces, in March 2001, and their expulsion from the region, the first international seminar on the restoration and preservation of Afghanistan's cultural heritage was held in 2002, organized by UNESCO and the Ministry of Information and Culture of Afghanistan. From July 2002, within the framework of UNESCO and as an assistance to the Afghan authorities, joint missions of UNESCO and ICOMOS were deployed to Bamiyan under the direction of Michael Petzet, then ICOMOS President (Manhart 2009a, pp. 38). The first assessments conducted on site clearly showed that immediate action was needed in order to preserve the niches and the remaining fragments of the Buddha statues (Petzet 2009a, p. 45). The international "Expert Working Group on the Preservation of the Bamiyan Site" held its first meeting in November 2002, in Munich, and has since published an annual catalogue of recommendations (Petzet 2009b, p. 54). The Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley was put on the World Heritage List in July 2003, as well as on the List of World Heritage in Danger (Blänsdorf et al. 2009a, p. 17).

Following the first investigations and surveys, initial safeguarding works started in fall 2003 at the particularly endangered Eastern Buddha niche (Margottini 2009, pp. 175). The salvage work of the Buddha fragments could only be started in 2004, after a steel grid was installed to protect against rock fall. After the removal of fragments at both niches, restoration and safeguarding works have been carried out at the Eastern Buddha since fall 2008. The scaffold at the Western Buddha has been (in 2019) almost completed, as a preparatory measure for the stabilization of the niche.

In addition to the mission to safeguard the Buddhas, the deteriorated domed tombs of Khwaja Sabz Posh, at the entrance of the Fouladi Valley, were also restored under UNESCO's auspices (Praxenthaler 2015, pp. 250–253). A seminar on sculptures was held at an historical location that same year, with 12 participants from Bamiyan who had been employed on the revival of traditional craftsmanship methods. This seminar, a side project of DOCUMENTA(13) held in Kassel, Germany, functioned as a symbol of the revival of the art of statuary (Graham-Harrison 2012). Following the surveys of Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule Aachen University (RWTH Aachen) and the cartography by the Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan (DAFA), conservation work started at the ruins of the Shahr-e Gholghola fortified city, which had been destroyed by Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century CE.

2 The Giant Buddhas of Bamiyan: The Recovery of Fragments and the Consolidation of the Niches

The two giant Buddha sculptures of Bamiyan are usually referred to as the Eastern and the Western Buddha. The Eastern Buddha has a height of 38 m and is slightly smaller and older than its counterpart. The Western Buddha is 56 m high and approximately 50 years younger than the Eastern one. Both figures were once part of a large Buddhist complex with about 700 rooms carved into the rock cliff. These rooms may have functioned as sanctuaries, cells for monks, guest houses for pilgrims, or storage rooms. The interior of these cave chambers was plastered with mud and frequently decorated with paintings or ornamental plastering (Blänsdorf et al. 2009a, p. 18).

2.1 *The Making of the Buddhas*

In order to fully comprehend the restoration work carried out at the Buddhas, it is necessary to review how they were built. Radiocarbon dates suggest that the making of the Eastern Buddha falls into the second half of the sixth century CE and that of the Western Buddha dates to the beginning of the seventh century CE (Blänsdorf et al. 2009d, p. 231–236). It is within this time frame that the Buddhas were sculpted out of the northern cliff conglomerate. This conglomerate is a typical sedimentary rock with horizontal layers of varying width, ranging from very fine grained silt to coarse-grained deposits. The most problematic aspect of those sediments is the lack of a natural binder, such as lime. The binding effect was provided by the pressure of the rock masses and embedded salt (sodium chloride). For that reason, the sediments erode very easily and are extremely sensitive to water. A piece of rock from one of the Buddha statues placed in a bucket of water will dissolve within minutes (Zou and Unold 2009, pp. 52).

The two statues endured the centuries fairly well, as they were relatively well protected inside the two niches. The mud plaster, with which these two relatively roughly carved sculptures were covered, provided additional protection. The plaster of both figures consisted of a body of clay material over which a fine layer of clay was applied. Straw-tempered mud plaster is still today the most commonly used plastering material for mudbrick buildings. The coating of the Buddhas, however, is special insofar as it did not contain straw but animal hair. To ensure that the plaster adhered to the conglomerate, Buddhist craftsmen chiseled 6–8-cm-wide round holes into the rock at the Eastern Buddha, into which a suitable stone was inserted with a fistful of mud to function as a dowel substitute. About half a century later, a different method was employed at the Western Buddha. Here, a point chisel was used to punch 4-cm-large and 7-cm-deep holes into which wooden pegs were inserted. The pegs were placed in rows along the garment folds and were connected with each other by means of a special rope material (Pfeffer et al. 2009, p. 217). The pegs were

made predominantly from poplar, which is fairly prevalent in the region even today. Rowan and oak were used rarely (Blänsdorf et al. 2009c, p. 215). The method employed indicates that most of the garment folds of the Western Buddha were, in fact, modeled. Vincent Eyre, a British officer who served in Afghanistan, made the same observation in the mid-nineteenth century when he was held captive in Bamiyan. Eyre's description was later confirmed in greater detail by Captain Maitland (Blänsdorf et al. 2009b, pp. 201). On preserved color photographs, the Buddhas appear as ochre-colored. The research carried out by the Technical University of Munich on some hundred samples of the ca.10.000 finds of plaster fragments shows that the rendering of the Buddhas had been painted in a tempera technique, mainly in red and blue (Blänsdorf 2016, pp. 31–33), using organic binders like casein from sheep or goat milk and eggs (Lluveras-Tenorio, A. et al. 2016, pp. 43).

2.2 *The Salvage of the Fragments*

Prior to launching the salvage work, storage deposits had to be built at both Buddha sites in order to be able to store the fragments properly and to protect them from humidity. Approximately 1400 cubic meters of rubble, rock fragments, and chunks of plaster of the Western Buddha needed to be stored in dry conditions (Photo 1). The unstable composition of the conglomerate needed to be taken into consideration when carrying out the salvage work.



Photo 1 Western Buddha, June 2004, at the start of the mission. (© Matthias Beckh)



Photo 2 Western Buddha, June 2004: salvaging fragments by the Afghan team. (© Bert Praxenthaler)

The salvage work was primarily carried out by laborers from Bamiyan using shovels and wheelbarrows (Photo 2). Wheel loaders and heavy-duty cranes were used as well, in particular to move the heavier fragments of up to 30 tons to the storage deposit. (Photo 3) An essential part of the salvage operation was the work done by the demining experts. The work sites needed to be checked on a daily basis as the rubble contained large amounts of shell splinters, other debris from explosions, and especially unexploded parts of anti-tank mines, aircraft bombs, etc. Initially, the Taliban used self-propelled guns to fire at the Buddha, yet only with limited success. Later, they piled up and detonated large amounts of explosives underneath the Buddha in order to execute their plan to destroy the statues. As a consequence, the rubble contained many exploded and unexploded parts (Praxenthaler 2009a, pp. 66).

In both niches, debris deposits were sorted according to sand, gravel, and fragments without any recognizable worked surfaces. All the pieces with recognizable worked surfaces were stored in the storage deposit, recorded on a registration form, and photographed. The large amounts of small fragments, such as chunks of plastering, wooden pecks, and ropes, which had once belonged to the plastering and surface molding, were recorded in the same fashion and temporarily stored in storage facilities of the local cultural bureau (Praxenthaler 2009b pp. 77–80). To date, restorer Edmund Melzl, who passed away in 2015, recorded approximately 10,000 fragments of the plaster coating of the figures (Blänsdorf et al. 2009b pp. 201).

While the bulk of rock fragments could be salvaged between 2004 and 2010, there are several larger rock boulders from both statues, with a weight of up to 60 to



Photo 3 Western Buddha, July 2009: from top of the niche: the giant feet of the Buddha are excavated. (© Bert Praxenthaler)

80 tons, which so far could not be lifted with the cranes available in Bamiyan. Those large fragments are still lying in front of the excavated feet of the Western Buddha and have been supplied with on-site weather protection.

2.3 Eastern Buddha: Stabilization of the Rear Wall and Securing the In Situ Mud Plaster

Parts of the Eastern Buddha remained intact after the detonation: parts of the right shoulder, some remains of the garment folds, and some mud plaster were still in situ, although dangerously prone to detach. The main goal was to preserve as many fragments as possible in their original location. As a scaffold could not be mounted at the time, the initial emergency safeguarding work on the clay plaster was conducted in 2004 in alpine style (Photo 4). The original mud plaster fragments that were still hanging from the wall were reached by rappelling. Rubble that had accumulated behind the somewhat detached mud plaster pieces was removed. The pieces were temporarily and reversibly secured with a punctually applied adhesion consisting of a mixture of mud, lime, and gypsum. The scaffolding could only be erected after the niche was mostly cleared, in 2008. Several of our staff members from Bamiyan, who since 2004 had gained considerable skills in the course of the clearing work of the niches, were able to expand their skill set in the field of restoration as builders, securing the still in situ mud plaster pieces.



Photo 4 Eastern Buddha, July 2004: Emergency safeguarding of original fragments of clay plaster at the rear face of the Eastern Buddha. (© Bert Praxenthaler)

The goal was to have most of the work carried out by the local workforce. Hence, advanced professional training in the methods and theories of restoration was an important element of the process. Based on the experience with mudbrick building and mud plaster, a mortar was developed for the consolidation of the edging, which might turn out to be suitable for the long-term stabilization of the mud plaster (Praxenthaler 2009c, pp. 137). As the core of the workforce remained essentially the same from year to year, a continuous training process was possible. Each year, the Bamiyan colleagues received a certificate describing their specific skills, which they could use to reapply the following year.

In 2008, by means of consolidating the first section of the back wall, the formerly destroyed walls of the sanctuaries behind the feet of the Eastern Buddha and a pillar in the right part of the niche could be rebuilt. Due to the destruction of the side and front walls of the temple rooms caused by the detonation, the entire block of the back wall was lacking support from below (Fecker 2009, pp. 145). The walls were rebuilt with quarry stones, in a similar fashion to the restoration conducted in the 1970s.



Photo 5 Eastern Buddha, October 2009: stabilising the rear face of the Eastern Buddha by Afghan team Wahab, Mujtabah Mirzai, Baba Qurban and Isa. (© Bert Praxenthaler)

The stabilization of the back wall began in 2009, after a detailed damage assessment carried out by Fecker and Margottini. Although in a very fragile state, parts of the right shoulder, folds of the garment, and fragments of the head were still in situ. The outline of part of the left garment was also preserved. The right shoulder, in particular, is still almost completely preserved; however, the original pieces tear off easily, and at the head section, the stone fragments have separated from the back wall and shifted a couple centimeters downward. In order to preserve the silhouette of the figure (at least partly), the goal was to secure as many pieces in situ as possible. To be able to even begin with the consolidation measures, the unstable pieces needed to be secured with preliminary measures like installing steel cables and heavy-duty nylon tension belts (Photo 5).

After that, the gradual infilling of the cracks with adhesive mortar could be pursued. Using this method, the stability of the loose stone fragments could be increased day by day. After the completion of this infilling process, the needling and armature boring was done. The borings were also used to fill with mortar the gaps that could not be reached from the front. After this injection process, the long anchors could be inserted (Praxenthaler 2014, pp. 265; Photo 6). A total of 44 stainless steel anchors were needed and spread over a total area of 200 m². The principle to preserve the remaining, albeit limited, original substance of the monument could be realized at this point.

A bonding, consisting of a mixture of Ledan-brand fresco mortar (from Italy, used particularly for frescos) and various types of mud from Bamiyan, was

Photo 6 Eastern Buddha, July 2010: drilling the bore holes for grouting and setting anchors by Afghan team Khan Ali and Eshaq. (© Bert Praxenthaler)



developed and tested. The consolidation of the original mud plaster was accomplished not only by means of dorsal bonding with the edging but also with needling, consisting of thin bolts of stainless steel and glass fiber.

In the course of this work, the loop path up to the head of the Buddha was also improved and protected by handrails and parapet walls. Key to the successful execution of the work was the productive teamwork between our longtime Bamiyan staff and international experts. Archeology students from Bamiyan, who were able to participate in the project as interns, and the local representatives of the Ministry of Information and Culture also contributed to the success of the mission.

The ICOMOS Advisory Mission to the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley (26–31 May 2014) assumed that the above works serve their purpose and that the rear wall of the Eastern Buddha could be considered stable and not prone to major collapse or rock fall (Zhan 2014, pp. 231).

Today, the completely stabilized niche of the Eastern Buddha displays on its rear side the shape of the former statue, with its conserved original remains. Additional finds of clay plaster and stone fragments are presented in the lower caves in the sense of a site interpretation center (Petzet 2016 p. 258). The site was officially opened to visitors in 2012.

2.4 *Eastern Buddha 2013*

Other tasks, including the construction of the platform and pillars at the lower seam of the garment of the Buddha for the stabilization of the lower overhanging edge of the back wall, serving also as a protection to visitors, were executed by architect Sekandar Ozod-Seradj in consultation with Prof. Emmerling, TUM, and engineering geologist Prof. Fecker. It was not possible to complete those projects until today. Further demands during the annual Bamiyan Working Meeting in Orvieto from 10 to 11 December 2013, to discuss the conservation plan of the lower gallery and the supporting pillars, led to the mission being postponed until now (Petzet 2016 pp. 258) (Photo 7). An ICOMOS mission in May 2014 suggested to remove carefully the feet-like pillar constructions (Zhan 2014, p. 243). As the local population regarded the construction of these pillars to be the beginning of the restoration of the Eastern Buddha, the removal was not yet executable.



Photo 7 Eastern Buddha, September 2009: reconstruction of cave walls and a pillar at the lower gallery by Erwin Emmerlin, Edwin Fecker and Sekandar Seradj. (© Bert Praxenthaler)

2.5 July–October 2013: Western Buddha, Safeguarding the Upper Access to the Niche

The original access to the top area of the Western Buddha by a system of stairways similar to the situation at the Eastern Buddha is no longer possible. Such ancient access remained only partially, as most of the stairways had been eroded in the course of the last centuries. Today, the only access to the top area of the niche is made through a pathway that comes from the western slope, alongside a system of water channels,¹ entering the niche by a tunnel. The damage caused by the water channels resulted in the degradation of the top entrance of the tunnel. A large boulder – the “dangerous rock” – has been washed out and was in danger of falling off the cliff from a height of about 65 m. On top of that rock, there is a water collecting platform for the channels (Photo 8).²

In order to pre-stabilize that critical dangerous rock, steel ropes and heavy load belts were set. After cracks and fissures were grouted, boreholes for long anchors could be drilled with diamond core heads.³ This rather exposed location, with a height of 65 m above the ground, required a hanging scaffold construction outside the cliff with security nets. The anchors provide a cross-stabilization of the rock boulder. After the stabilization of the rock, the cause of the damage – the leaking water channels – had to be repaired. The one adjacent to the tunnel has been reconstructed by a combination of an anchored reinforced concrete foundations and stone masonry work. On top of the cliff, the damaged water collector could be repaired. In the course of that work, all adjacent water channels were also cleaned and repaired (Photo 9). The work was accompanied by a demining action⁴ (Praxenthaler 2016, pp. 271). In addition to this project at the Western Buddha niche, the collected stone fragments have been regrouped in the newly built third storage building. The debris, which had been removed, was deposited at the left hand side of the niche.

2.6 November 2014: Safeguarding and Restoration of Clay Renderings of Sanctuaries at the Western Buddha

Due to the blasts in 2001, the sanctuaries around the niche of the Western Buddha were damaged, especially the clay rendering and stucco ornaments inside the caves. After years of cleaning the niche and the adjacent rooms, it was possible to proceed

¹ These water channels have been constructed in the course of the Afghan-Indian conservation mission in 1970 to prevent erosion of the front side of the cliff.

² The stabilization measures have been advised and accompanied by Prof. Claudio Margottini.

³ Three long anchors (V2A, diam- = 22 mm, l = 400 cm) had been set.

⁴ On top of the Western Buddha inside the circumambulatory EODs had been found, although three times the area had been declared cleared. The demining team removed four wired mortar shells, which most likely had been deposited at the Taliban times to cause damage for the niche of the Buddha.



Photo 8 Western Buddha, October 2013: Safeguarding the upper access to the top of the Buddha (marked in white, top left). (© Bert Praxenthaler)



Photo 9 Western Buddha, October 2013: Repair of the water channels. (© Bert Praxenthaler)

with the conservation of the clay stucco, which was hanging from the walls in a precarious state.

2.7 Western Buddha Niche: Design and Construction of the Scaffold Structure

The conservation works at the Western Buddha niche had started in 2004. In general, the approach for the safeguarding of the Western niche followed the blueprint of the conservation works at the Eastern niche. However, due to the substantial difference in scale, the course of action proved to be much more challenging in this case. From 2004 onward, the debris within the Western Buddha niche was carefully scrutinized as mines and explosives were buried in the rubble. The stone fragments and pulverized materials were examined meticulously and sorted over the next years. All valuable materials were stored in newly erected storage shelters. The first two sheds were built in 2004 and a third one in 2009.

After the long and painstaking process of removing the debris, the niche of the Western Buddha was finally cleared and emptied in 2012. The envisioned consolidation works of the fractured rock surface of the Western Buddha niche required safe and commensurate access to the shattered rear wall. Similar to the rock conservation works previously undertaken in the smaller Eastern niche, the situation



Western Buddha niche with scaffold structure. Situation in October 2015. (© Matthias Beckh)

demanded a large-scale scaffold structure. The planning of the scaffold structure, which started in 2013, posed the next challenge to the project. Due to the significantly larger height and volume of the niche, the design of the scaffold structure proved to be quite demanding. The basis of the scaffold members was the high-quality steel pipes that the Messerschmitt Foundation had bequeathed to the project. However, due to the sheer height and immense volume of the niche, more than twice the amount of scaffold material of the Eastern niche was required. During a site inspection in June/July, an inventory of the existing scaffold materials was compiled, and a scaffold mock-up was erected in order to obtain a better understanding of the adaptivity to uneven terrain and craggy bearing conditions.

Based on the structural assessment of the niche and the scaffold materials at hand, different scaffold options were investigated. Alternative options comprised a base structure over the full width of the niche with one-sided towers as well as a hanging platform. During a meeting in August 2013, in Munich, several options were discussed. Finally, it was decided to adopt a scheme that would in general follow the Eastern Buddha scaffold system, yet with a denser grid of vertical members to account for the greater height of the niche. The selected scaffold system was designed in August and September 2013, based on a 3D scan of the niche that was kindly provided by Sekandar Seradj. For the sake of simplicity, a column grid of $2\text{ m} \times 2\text{ m}$ was selected. In order to facilitate the arrangement of diagonal members for bracing, the floor levels were set at intervals of 2 m as well. The resulting spatial module of 2 m had already proven advantageous during the design of the Eastern Buddha scaffold. Due to the increased height, three additional rows of columns were inserted perpendicular to the rear wall to lower the axial loads in the verticals, thereby altering the grid in this area to $2\text{ m} \times 1\text{ m}$. The scaffold was attached to the adjacent rock surface of the side walls of the niche at various levels, in order to gain more horizontal stability.⁵

The additional pipes and couplings of Iranian origin were purchased at the local market, in Kabul.⁶ The assembly of the scaffold structure started in late September 2013, under the guidance of Sekandar Seradj. Soon afterward, however, the

⁵The scaffold itself is fastened to the anchors with steel cables. In addition, compression struts are connected horizontally to the side walls to clamp the structure tightly into the niche. At the base level, the members are resting on concrete foundation pads ($50\text{ cm} \times 50\text{ cm}$). A PE foil is installed at the bottom of the foundation to avoid any harm to the archeologically important stratum. Furthermore, the PE foil is separated from the ground with a 3–4-mm-thick geotextile. Brackets bridge the distance between the column line next to the rear wall and the rock surface. Brackets with a cantilever length of less than 1 m do not require additional support. Between 1 m and the maximum of 2 m , an additional diagonal strut has to be added. For the structural analysis, a 3D FEM program was used. Load and design criteria followed in general the provisions of the applicable Eurocode standards. As service load, a characteristic live load of 2.0 KN/m^2 applied evenly over one floor level of the structure was chosen. The application of wind loads and imperfections follow the regulations required by European building codes.

⁶Samples of the Iranian *Iranbast* couplings were taken to Munich and studied in the material testing laboratory of the Technische Universität München. The tests unveiled a very brittle breaking behavior of the couplings with sudden failure. The breaking behavior and the metallurgical analysis indicated the usage of cast iron, a material hardly used and unfit for the use in scaffold connections. The results mandated that the *Iranbast* clamps could not be used for the connections of the main load bearing members of the scaffold structure.

assembly works were halted due to the controversial discussion about the undergoing consolidation works at the Eastern Buddha niche. The work finally resumed in 2015. In 2016, all missing scaffold members were installed and the inferior Iranian couplings replaced by high-quality items (Beckh 2016, pp. 293).

After securing the loose fragments in the summer of 2017, the scaffold structure now needs to be extended to the shoulder zone in order to facilitate proper access to all areas of the niche. For this purpose, the scaffold needs to bridge from the existing structure to the consolidated rock surface of the shoulder. Provisional foundations need to be casted to ensure sound support conditions for the added structural system. These foundation pads need also to be tied into the rock with steel anchors. Once the upper part of the scaffold is tightly anchored to the rock surface, it can be extended into the head area of the former Buddha. Furthermore, a construction hoist needs to be purchased and installed to lift heavier equipment to the upper stories of the scaffold (e.g., GEDA or equivalent) [GEDA is a company constructing this type of lifts; see <https://www.geda.de/>].

2.8 December 2016: Geotechnical Survey and Damage and Risk Assessment of the Rear Wall of the Western Buddha Niche

On a partially completed scaffold up to 40 m high and with a steel mesh on the rear wall, in November–December 2016, a geotechnical survey was performed by engineering geologist Mathias Effler, with support from students of the University of Bamiyan. The results of this survey outline the necessary consolidation and stabilization works required at the rear wall of the Western Buddha niche.

The survey also clearly pointed out the need for immediate conservation measures, as parts of the rock materials inside the niche are detached from the mountain, only resting in an unstable way. The shoulder area of the former statue is covered with large quantities of debris, which has to be removed. This debris was the source of steady stone fall in recent years.

2.9 September 2017: Preparatory Operations at the Rear Wall of the Western Buddha Niche

In order to complete the scaffold and to enable the start of the stabilization measures, the fragile shoulder and head zone had to be prepared. In September 2017, two professional climbers performed these temporary safeguarding measures as one of the first and most urgent priorities.⁷ Local working staff was employed to build provisional bridges with scaffold materials and timber to enable the removal of debris and loose material, particularly at the edges of the former shoulders of the

⁷Engineering geologist Mathias Effler and professional climbers Stephan Hardt and Klaus Vogt participated in the mission.

Buddha. Cleaning up these areas is absolutely essential before installing the required foundations, to extend the scaffold to the shoulder area. The left shoulder and main parts of the right shoulder could be cleaned completely thanks to the dedication of the hardworking and diligent local team. The fragile detached rocks could be temporarily stabilized by steel ropes attached to newly installed anchors on either side of the former head of the Buddha (Photos 10, 11).



Photo 10 Western Buddha niche, September 2017: Prestabilisation measures on Western Buddha rear face, former head area (BRR-team Klaus Vogt und Stephan Hardt). (© Bert Praxenthaler)



Photo 11 Western Buddha niche, September 2017: Prestabilisation measures on Western Buddha rear face, former head area (BRR-team Klaus Vogt und Haji Hossein). (© Bert Praxenthaler)

3 Conclusion and Outlook

The niches of both Giant Buddhas are now emptied from stone fragments and debris. The rear wall, the vault, and the in situ remains of the Eastern Buddha statue are stabilized, and the site is now accessible to visitors. Other tasks still to be achieved include stabilizing the rear wall and remains at the Western Buddha and stabilizing the Eastern Buddha rear wall, which can serve as a role model for the Western Giant Buddha. The collected rock fragments of both the Buddhas could also be stabilized and installed back at their original location, on the rear walls of the niches. As this is done, the temporary storage buildings in front of the niches could be dismantled.

The main positive outcome of all these missions since 2004 is the blending of the long-term experience of our Bamiyan staff with international standards and concepts on restoration and cultural heritage preservation. The combination of a long-term and stable core of local staff, the involvement of students of the Bamiyan University, and the support of the Bamiyan cultural office allowed the staff members as well as the project management to gain a high level of expertise. This allowed for developing a reliable and well-functioning framework within which the restoration tasks at Bamiyan could be carried out. As a result, many of the abovementioned projects could be carried out in a relatively short time frame and with an exceedingly high quality of craftsmanship.

Furthermore, the intense engagement of the staff members of Bamiyan with their own cultural heritage, in addition to their training over several years, led to an increased appreciation for historical and cultural values among local groups (Wyndham 2016). By integrating cultural events such as performances of traditional music and poetry readings in the restoration process, the missions were able to considerably expand their public outreach, including to representatives of the Afghan government. Ethnic and religious tensions, which were prevalent at first, lessened over time. One could go even as far as to say that working jointly on heritage projects fostered a sense of a common identity, independent of specific religious and ethnic backgrounds.

The high appreciation of Salsal and Shamama, as the people of Bamiyan used to call their Buddha statues, and the wish to have their Buddha statues back could be clearly recognized during the summer of 2015. Bamiyan had been declared the cultural capital of the SAARC states association, and the image of the Buddha became the official symbol of the festivities. A visual “reconstruction” of the Buddhas was projected for 2 days. As the Afghan government and civil society movements in Bamiyan are expressing clearly their wish for a restoration of the statues, the discussions among international experts about the future authenticity of the site continue (Wyndham 2018). So it is to hope that international experts, local cultural expertise, and civil society will soon find a common platform to develop a suitable conservation plan for the Giant Buddhas, which will pay respect to history, the authenticity of the site and the demands of the people of Afghanistan.

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Cultural Identity and the Revival of Values After the Demolishment of Bamiyan's Buddhist Wall Paintings



Yoko Taniguchi

Abstract Although Bamiyan wall paintings were mostly physically destroyed during the internal conflict, as well as two Giant Buddhas, the remained pieces still hold extensive academic information and values on constituent materials, technologies of creation, original colours, and chronological data with ^{14}C . In the process of conservation project led by UNESCO and NRICPT, Japan, scientific analyses on wall paintings have revealed that Bamiyan's wall paintings incorporate various organic materials such as multiple painting layers such as a proteinous sizing above earthen renders, white ground, optically designed colouring order, and then a glaze. Interestingly, we found drying oils, lead soap, and natural resins from particular group of wall paintings, which appeared in the mid-seventh century. Bamiyan is not dead; it continues to live as a city with innumerable markings of how it once flourished. At present, there are no practicing Buddhists and no spaces for the practice of Buddhism remaining in the Bamiyan site. However, the Bamiyan site is full of new findings as above. We believe that new knowledge from the original works has acted as an important key for enhancing the interest of local residents in their heritage and for forging a unity of their own.

Keywords Wall paintings · Drying oil · Conservation · ^{14}C · Sizing

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1 Demolishment of the Bamiyan Site

In March 2001 the wall paintings that had rested over the two Giant Buddhas turned to sand. Several blasts targeting the Buddhas effectively destroyed the wall paintings. Apart from blasts delivered by the Taliban, other acts, including looting and wilful destruction, were commonplace at that time. Over 80% of all wall paintings that had remained prior to these events were demolished (Cave N(a) (Fig. 1). Looting has also been clearly visible in many caves. For example, cutting marks around the Thousand Buddhas are apparent to the eye in Cave K₃. One of several displaced cultural properties that had been found on a black market and protected by UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Prof. Ikuo Hirayama in Tokyo for safekeeping perfectly fit the looted area (Fig. 2). Professional looters from Pakistan had repeatedly visited Bamiyan over the course of the conflicts and cut numerous objects from cave walls for illicit sale in overseas art markets, including in the UK and Japan. It is surprising that looters successfully gained access to Cave K₃, located 20 m high and hardly reachable without proper scaffoldings.

To counter this state of affairs, Prof. Ikuo Hirayama designated these displaced cultural properties as ‘cultural property refugees’ and advocated that they should be temporarily protected in Japan as ‘refugees’ until Afghanistan attains enough political stability to allow for their return. ‘Japan Committee for the Protection of Displaced Cultural Properties’ was established in order to oversee this project. The activities of the Japan Committee for the Protection of Displaced Cultural Properties are sponsored by UNESCO under a contract with the UNESCO headquarters. The official documentation of ‘Policies Regarding the Protection and Maintenance of

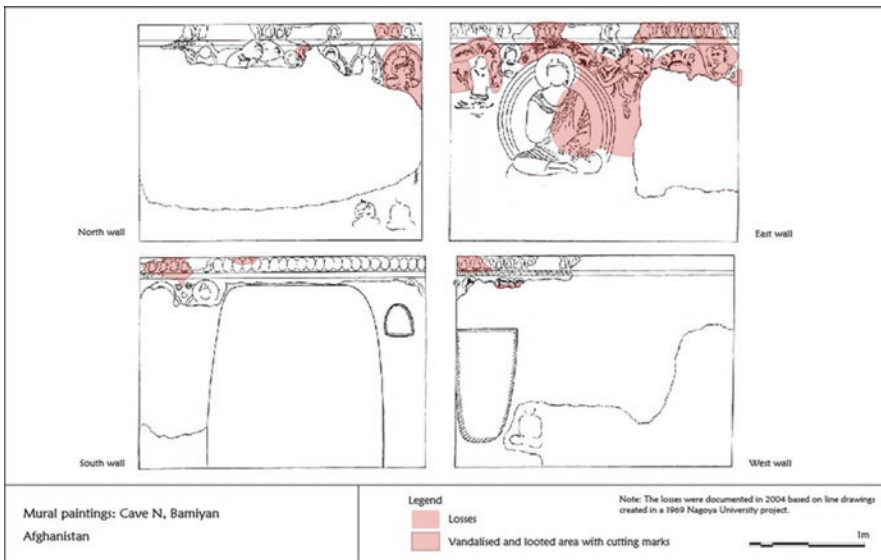


Fig. 1 Mapping of the condition of Cave N(a). Over 80% of wall paintings present before the conflict were lost. (© Y. Taniguchi, courtesy of the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo (NRICPT))



Fig. 2 Professor Kosaku Maeda places a photocopy of a displaced wall painting fragment in the looted area at Cave K₃. (© Y. Taniguchi, courtesy of NRICPT)

the Displaced Cultural Properties' has been in place since October 1, 2001, and an 'International Cultural Properties Protection Committee' has been established to facilitate their enforcement.

The reception of displaced cultural properties (i.e. cultural property refugees) to ensure their protection began on October 1, 2001. However, following the ratification of the 'Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (UNESCO Act in 1970)' by Japan in October 2003 and the establishment of Afghanistan's tentative government by President Karzai in December 2004, the project was deemed to have adequately served its purpose. Therefore, in the time since, no further properties have been received.

Over 200 displaced cultural properties including wall paintings from Caves E, K₃, and Foladi have been returned to Afghanistan by the Committee: 99 in June 2005 and 102 in 2016.

2 Wall Paintings Before Destruction

First, let us review the Bamiyan Buddhist wall paintings. The Bamiyan site is located in the highlands of Hindu Kush at 2500 m. Its main cliffs include the west cliff, which holds the Foladi Caves, and the east cliff, which holds the Kakrak Caves. In total, there are about 750 caves. The main cliff is made of conglomerate and once held two Giant Buddhas (namely, the West Giant Buddha, 55 m in height, and the East Giant Buddha, 38 m in height). Approximately 50 of the caves were decorated with wall paintings and sculptures influenced by Gupta art and the Sassanid tradition. Decorated caves tended to be small and round, rectangular, or octagonal in shape. These spaces were likely used as ancestral halls.

Bamiyan's wall paintings included motifs such as Buddhas, bodhisattvas, donors, monks, Mitra, the sun god, the moon god, Fengshens, griffins, pigs, dogs, hamsa, and various plants including the lotus. The styles of painting vary from cave to cave and feature Greco-Roman, Sassanid, Indian, and East Turkestan characteristics. The complexity of such painting styles has been studied broadly across the field of Buddhist art and history (Rowland 1938; 樋口 編 1983–1984; 前田 1999; 2007; 宮治 2002; Klimburg-Salter 2003).

The caves were not in perfect condition, even before the wall paintings were targeted for destruction. Owing to the nature of the thick and heavy mud plaster that underlay them, numerous paintings had fallen or were detached from the surface (Fig. 3). Also, due to the use of caves as dwelling spaces by non-Buddhists for many years, the eyes and the hands of Buddha figures had been vandalised (Fig. 4).

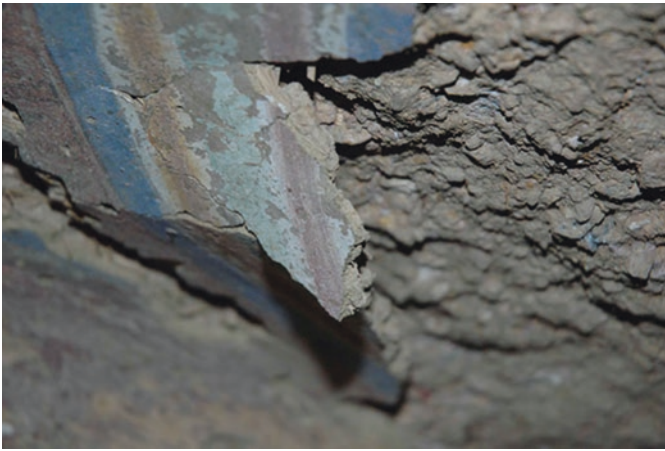


Fig. 3 A fallen wall painting at Cave I, detached due to lack of cohesion. (© Y. Taniguchi, courtesy of NRICPT)



Fig. 4 The eyes and hands of Buddha figures were vandalised at Cave N(a). (© Y. Taniguchi, courtesy of NRICPT)

Bamiyan's wall paintings have suffered considerably because of physical and chemical deterioration. However, conditions surrounding the progression of that damage over centuries have not yet been made clear. Vandalism and looting by people also seem to have contributed greatly to their appalling condition today.

Due to the physical and chemical fragility of the stone itself, the Bamiyan site has deteriorated extensively within Afghanistan's severe natural climatic conditions. The damage caused by human hands has only furthered its drastic destruction. From the twentieth century on, the Bamiyan site has been surveyed by several organisations and researchers: however, not much has been done in terms of conservation. Limited restoration and conservation efforts were conducted by a French mission, later followed by an Indo-Afghan mission, as detailed below. Major conservation work tended to focus on the Giant Buddhas as well as surrounding wall paintings and Buddhist caves, including those of Cave groups A, C, and D. However, works found in Cave groups K₃ and I, as well as other areas, that were extremely difficult to access have been neglected in view of conservation.

The first conservation efforts in Afghanistan were executed by *Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan (DAFA)* over the course of a 30-year archaeological survey project. The French mission also took on a 'first-aid' restoration of some wall paintings by applying lime-gypsum mortar around the edges of paintings and in paint losses. An enormous 'brick-faced masonry buttress' was also constructed to the west of the East Giant Buddha to support the crumbling wall of the Buddhist niche.

From 1969 to 1976, and Indo-Afghan mission, led by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and supported by UNESCO, carried out a number of restoration interventions mainly for the two Giant Buddhas, the niche area contained by the Buddhas and the surrounding wall paintings (Warikoo 2002). The mission was taken up under the supervision of R. Sengupta from ASI. Apart from some cleaning and consolidation work done on the wall paintings between the two Buddhas near the niche, they pursued a number of remedial measures, including trimming and treating the buttress wall to match the profile of the rock surface, filling in large cracks in the cliffs with cement concrete, constructing a drainage system on the stone overhang of the niche between the two Buddhas to discharge snow water so as to reduce natural wear and tear, and restoring the staircases.

Major conservation interventions and materials used by the Indo-Afghan mission for the wall paintings include (1) chemical treatment composed of diluted ammoniac solution or organic solvents for black soot deposits on the wall paintings and ornate stucco figures; (2) consolidation using strong polyvinyl acetate in Cave D (1972–1973); and (3) surface cleaning using brushes and consolidation using diluted polyvinyl acetate in toluene, alcohol, and ethylene dichloride executed in two Buddha caves, a stucco painting near the Big Buddha, and the ceiling of Cave 53-V. Blackened soot deposits were also repeatedly treated for removal with 1–2% ammoniac detergent in water and then consolidated with 4–5% of Perspex (methyl methacrylate) in toluene (1977–1978). Throughout the project, white infillings added by French restorers were removed and replaced with coloured mortar to match surrounding areas.

3 Looting of Wall Paintings

During times of internal conflict, some caves were targeted for damage. A typical example is seen at the Cave A lower salle, where multiple footprints are visible on the darkened wall painting surface. Whitish footprints were stamped using dust. Shoes were intentionally thrown towards the dome ceiling (Fig. 5).

Many areas of wall paintings were cut and removed from their *in situ* site. About 80% of wall paintings known to have been present before the conflict were gone in some caves. The Thousand Buddhas from Cave E(e) were individually cut and removed from the site and sold in overseas art market (Figs. 6 and 7). The paintings were already darkened due to extensive use of the cave for habitation, and the figures had not been clearly visible. That may have helped prevent destruction of the figures until trained looters invaded Bamiyan.

In the case of Foladi 4, a structural problem caused wall painting to detach and fall from the laternendeck ceiling. However, intentional looting has caused further damage to the few remaining wall paintings at Foladi (Fig. 8) visible in severe cutting marks. The Thousand Buddha of Foladi 4 is rather small, and due to the nature of its constituent materials, detached pieces are crumbling. The pieces from Foladi 4 are rather small in size.

A sleeping Buddha once depicted on the north wall of the terrace of Cave C(a) was recently cut and lost (Fig. 9). The paintings were unfinished originally, with only the first layer of red ochre and charcoal black paint. Although the paintings

Fig. 5 Dusted ceiling of Cave A-lowersalle by throwing sanded shoes. (© Y. Taniguchi, courtesy of NRICPT)



Fig. 6 The Thousand Buddhas from Cave E(e) were individually cut and removed from the site. (© Y. Taniguchi, courtesy of NRICPT)



Fig. 7 Protected fragments from Cave E(e) found at a market in Tokyo. (© T. Kijima courtesy of the Tokyo University of the Arts)



Fig. 8 Intentional looting has resulted in further damage to the few remaining wall paintings at Foladi Cave 4, as seen in severe cutting marks here. (© Y. Taniguchi, courtesy of NRICPT)



Fig. 9 The sleeping Buddha once depicted on the north wall of terrace of Cave C(a) has been removed and lost. (© Y. Taniguchi, courtesy of NRICPT)

were unfinished, one part was removed to capture the unique figure of the sleeping Buddha in Bamiyan. It is believed that this theft was committed by a professional looter aware of the value of Buddhist art. Graffiti is also present at Cave C(a). A lack of interest in protection had accelerated such problems at the site.

At N(a), most of the eyes and hands of the Thousand Buddhas were already damaged. However, these areas were later filled with plaster, leading us to conclude that this damage was done in an earlier period. Recent vandalism is made quite clear through reference to documents by Nagoya University from the 1970s. Flesh chisel marks are very distinguishable in many areas.

Even today, looting continues in Bamiyan, such as in Kakrak Valley where freshly cut areas are readily visible. Site guards must be employed to effectively control the area, and, to achieve this, initiatives by the central and local governments are indispensable.

4 Scientific Analyses for Conservation of Wall Paintings

In order to execute conservation intervention at Cave N(a) and other sites, detailed dating of each cave and the constituent materials of each wall painting was essential. Previously fragments of Bamiyan wall paintings were scientifically analysed by Rowland (Rowland 1938) and Gettens (Gettens 1938). The exact dating of wall paintings and the two Giant Buddhas was executed by the Division for Chronological Research from Nagoya University using chaff tempers in renders, wooden pieces, and ropes (Nakamura 2006).

^{14}C data obtained through readings of wall paintings and the two Giant Buddhas with an OxCal v.4.1.1. (Bronk Ramsey 2009) are as follows (Figs. 10, 11, 12 and 13). The Two Giant Buddhas showed about 100 years of differentiation. The wall painting in the East Giant Buddha niche can be dated to between the fifth and early sixth centuries AD. ^{14}C dating revealed that use of the Bamiyan cliff gradually increased between the early fifth century AD and the end of the ninth century AD (Nakamura 2006).

Before any interventions, figures in the laternendeck ceiling of Cave N(a), a mid-seventh-century cave, were difficult to see due to soot-like deposits on the surface. However, after several cleaning trials, animal figures against a red background merged with an arabesque pattern became visible (Fig. 14). Some golden varnish has also been identified on the animal bodies.

Careful observation reveals that a thick metallic leaf appeared on the beam with an arabesque pattern in black and a background red in colour. Animal and arabesque motifs were left unfilled but with golden varnish. The corner of the beam shows the unevenness of the metallic leaf.

5 Multilayered Structures in Animal Motifs at Cave N(a)

Samples (collected from fallen fragment, BMM184, and from wild pig, BMM186) were observed under a stereomicroscope. The metallic leaf included fine scaling as well as golden and reflective colour. Then, normal light and UV excited fluorescence in the cross-sections of the same samples. (For sample preparation and methods of analyses, see [谷口他 2006].) These results showed a golden varnish over 20 μm thick on the metallic leaf (Fig. 15). The metallic leaf was applied to the white ground with mordant, which shows a strong whitish fluorescence under UV. Under normal light, this mordant appears as a yellowish translucent colour. An organic layer which shows whitish fluorescence and bluish intense fluorescence was visible

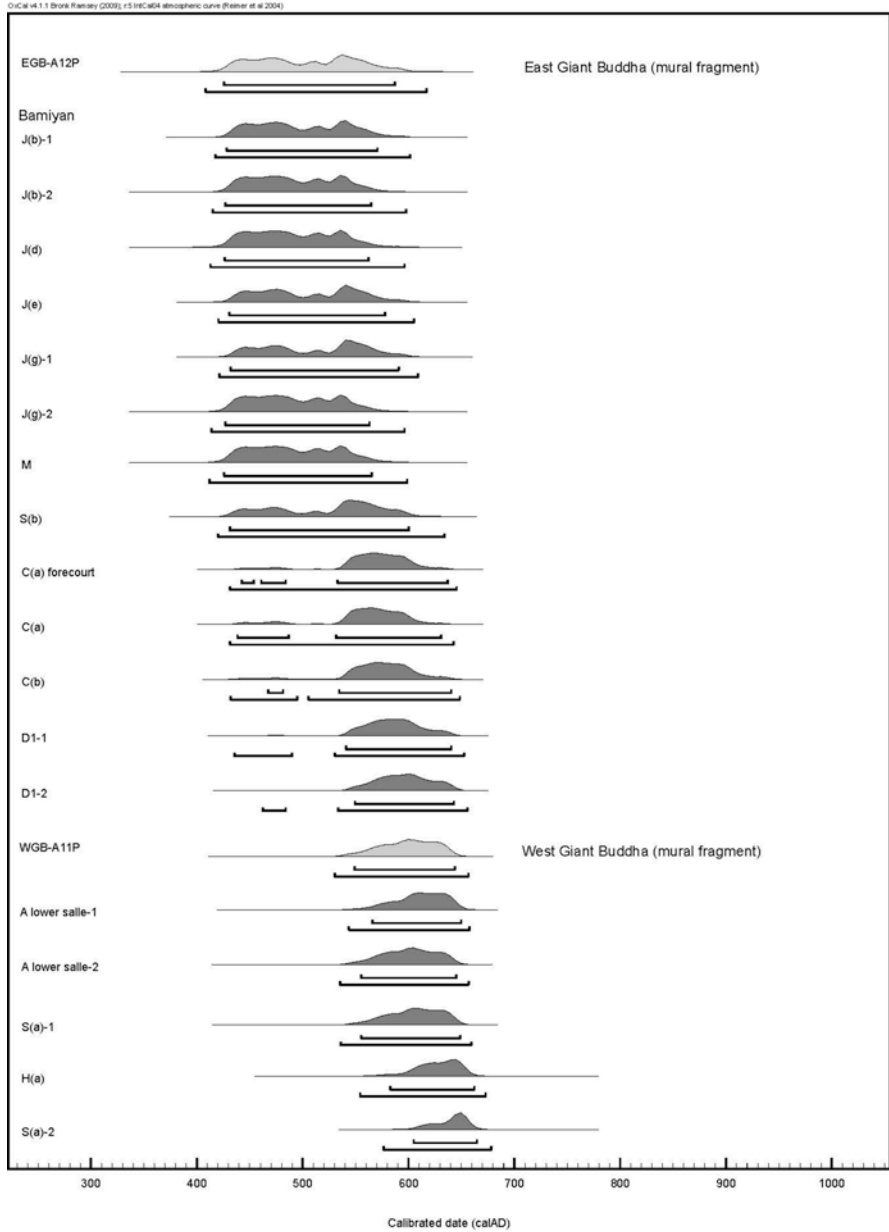


Fig. 10 Calibrated age ranges estimated from ¹⁴C ages obtained using samples of wall paintings in caves at the Great Cliff. (© Y. Taniguchi)

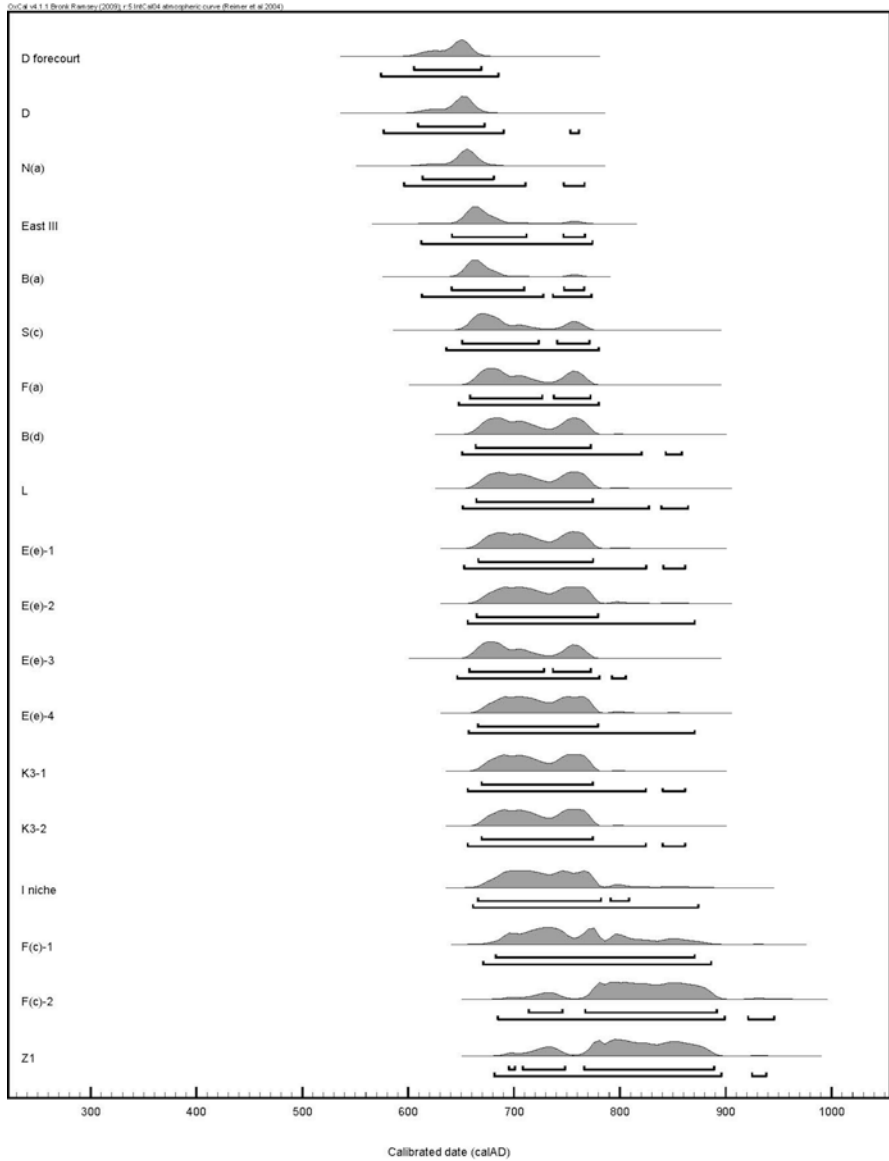


Fig. 11 Calibrated age ranges estimated from ¹⁴C ages obtained using samples of wall paintings in caves at the Great Cliff. (© Y. Taniguchi)

between the white ground and the renders. The white ground also shows a whitish fluorescence under UV radiation (Figs. 16 and 17).

Cross-sections were analysed with Scanning Electron Microscopy with Energy Dispersive Spectroscopy (SEM-EDS). All samples were carbon coated and analysed using the FP method. The white ground showed high Pb, while the metallic

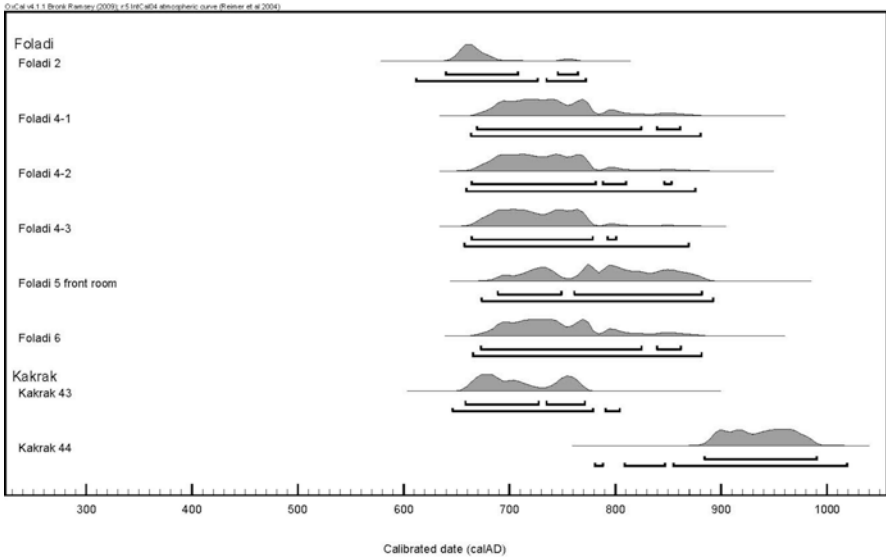


Fig. 12 Calibrated age ranges estimated from ¹⁴C ages obtained using samples of wall paintings in caves at Foladi and Kakrak. (© Y. Taniguchi)

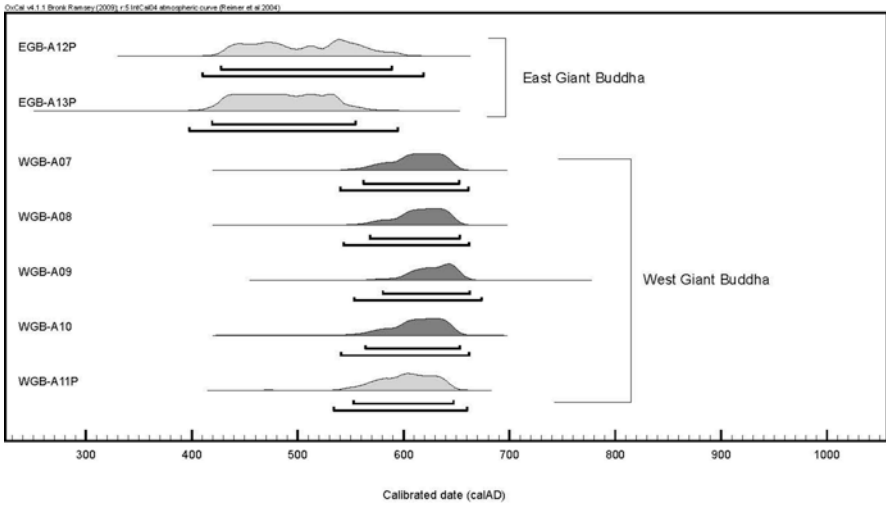


Fig. 13 Calibrated age ranges estimated from ¹⁴C ages obtained using samples of the Giant Buddhas. (© Y. Taniguchi)

leaf showed high tin and lead readings. Thus, the leaf was composed from tin with minor amounts of lead. Most exterior of yellowish translucent materials show a thin Ca layer (Fig. 18).

A sample from the wild pig pattern (BMM178) was converted into thin sections with microtome thickness of 5–50 μm. It was then interposed between diamond



Fig. 14 Animal figures against a red background that merge with an arabesque pattern. (© Y. Taniguchi, courtesy of NRICPT)

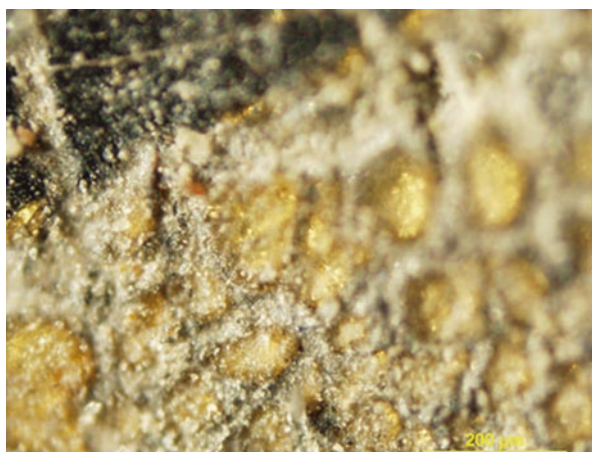


Fig. 15 Minutely fragmented golden varnish over a 20- μm -thick metallic leaf. (© Y. Taniguchi, courtesy of NRICPT)

cells with layer structure visible. Both samples were used to transmit point analyses and elemental mappings.

Analyses were done at ID21 of the ESRF Synchrotron Facility. μFTIR was done with Thermo Nicolet Continuum Nexus IR spectroscopy. This beam line can provide very high luminescence and S/N in a small area under 15 μm . Mapping was executed 32 times using a $\phi 10\mu\text{m}$ beam in a 10 μm step size of 16 spectra within the 4000–800 cm^{-1} range. The mirror speed was 1.8988 cm^{-1}/S , resolution was 8 cm^{-1} , and Happ-Genzel apodisation was applied. OMNIC software of Nicolet was used for analyses. Other details are described elsewhere (Cotte et.al 2008, 2009, 2010; Taniguchi 2012a, 2012b, 2017).

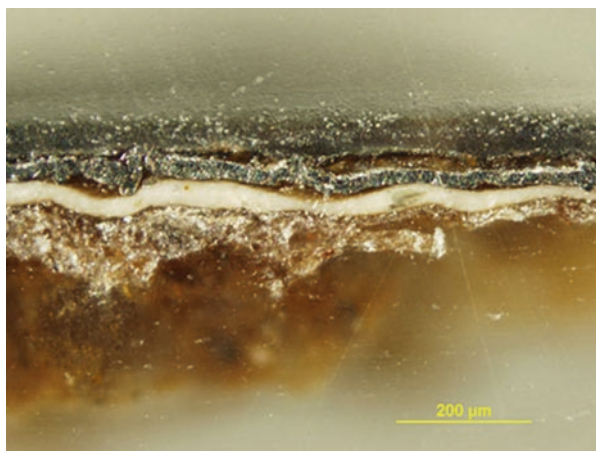


Fig. 16 Thick metallic leaf and white ground; a yellowish glaze is visible over the metal leaf. Photomicrograph: Y. Taniguchi

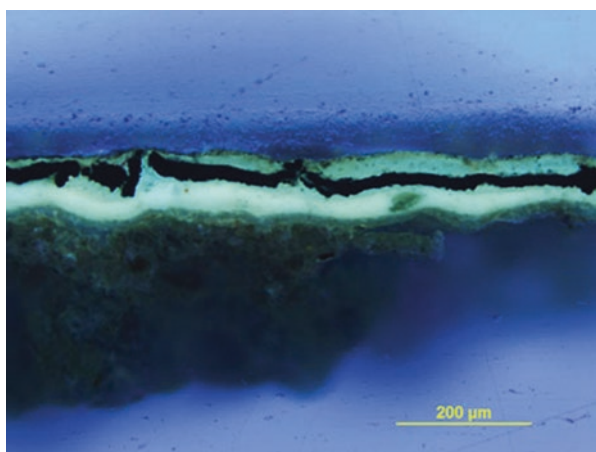


Fig. 17 White ground shows whitish fluorescence under UV radiation. Photomicrograph: Y. Taniguchi

Areas mapped included mordant, white ground, and lower organic layers. Mordant (A) shows intense $\nu(\text{C-H})$ [a] and $\nu(\text{C=O})$ [b], $\delta(\text{C-H})$, $\nu(\text{C-O})$ [c], thereby indicating the presence of an oil-based material. Because the mordant constitutes a thick layer, it was originally a drying oil that hardened due to oxidation. The yellowish translucent layer under the white ground shows a similar spectrum to (A). Therefore, it could be also drying oil.

The white ground (B) shows intense absorption of $\nu(\text{O-H})$ at 3535 cm^{-1} [d]. It is common to the hydroxide salt of lead. There is also an absorption of carbonate at 1400 cm^{-1} [e]. An intense absorption at 1520 cm^{-1} is also visible [f], which is a typical $\nu\text{AS}(\text{C=O})$ to

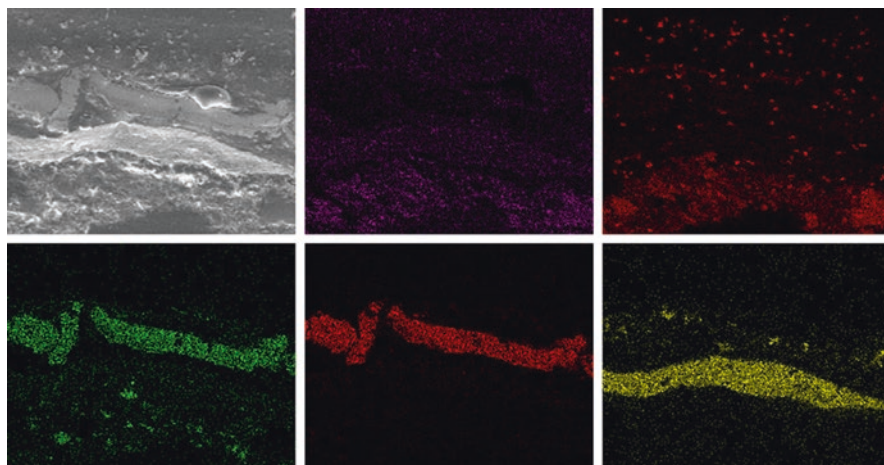


Fig. 18 Elemental mapping by SEM-EDS (BMM186). (© Y. Taniguchi)

lead soap and carboxyl. This white ground also absorbs lead white [$\nu(\text{O-H})$], thereby indicating hydrocerussite (PbCO_3) \cdot $\text{Pb}(\text{OH})_2$ as a hydroxide with a lead soap.

Lead soaps can be created by heating lead white and oil, and then mixing them with water, which suspends the paste in white (Cotte et al. 2006). However, it is not clear whether the white ground was created intentionally using lead white, drying oil, and water, or whether it was the result of natural saponification. Review of further examples in Central Asia is essential in order to determine this.

With regard to the yellowish translucent organic material applied to the surface of the tin leaf, it is still unknown if any yellow organic dyestuff was added to the natural resin or not(C). The surface shows absorption at 1320 cm^{-1} which indicates calcium oxalate, matching elemental analyses of this area (Fig. 19).

6 Conclusions

This analysis has revealed that Bamiyan's wall paintings incorporate various organic materials such as drying oils, lead soap, and natural resin. A sizing layer was applied to the surface of earthen render, then a layer of drying oil, and white ground mixed with lead soap. It is not clear if the lead soap was created by chance or by purposely mixing and heating lead white, drying oil, and water. Drying oil was used as mordant which adhered the thick tin leaf onto the earthen render. Black lines were used to depict animal and scroll patterns, and the background was filled with deep red vermillion. The tin leaf was given gold effect through the use of a yellowish resinous varnish. It is not clear if these sophisticated paint techniques were widely used across Central Asia.

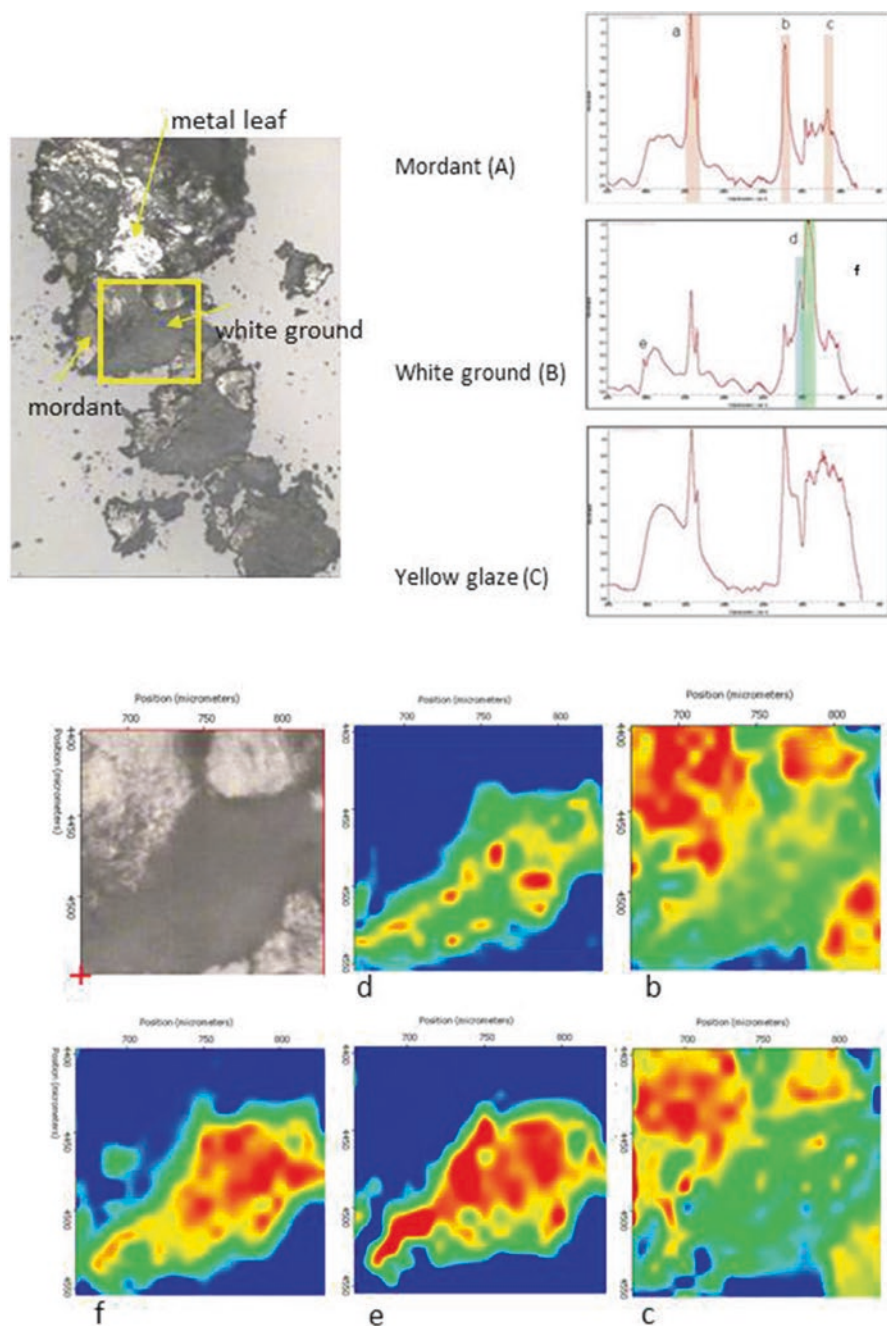


Fig. 19 SR- μ FTIR of a golden varnish area of the wild pig figure (BMM178). (© Y. Taniguchi)

In Europe's Middle Ages, tin leaves were often coloured with *auripetrum* (yellow or reddish varnish coloured with saffron or lac) to imitate gold leaf (Laurie 1910). The link between this medieval European practice and the technology found in ancient Bamiyan is of keen interest. It is still unclear how this technique was introduced to Bamiyan.

Owing to extensive damage at the Bamiyan site, many of the Buddha statues and wall paintings have been lost; however, even after destruction, extensive information on constituent materials, technologies of creation, original colours, and chronological data with ^{14}C has been unveiled. The present just may be the most well-studied period of the site since Bamiyan was created.

102 pieces of displaced cultural property from Bamiyan were returned to Afghanistan in 2016. Numerous wall painting fragments were included in the collection and will hopefully be returned to the original location, or at least to the local museum that will be established one day. The returned objects were mounted in a manner that allowed for their safe detachment to facilitate their return to their original location.

In Cave N(a), reconstruction of the original wall paintings was attempted by Yuki Watanuki from Tokyo University of the Arts using original materials and techniques (Figs. 20 and 21). Watanuki applied a golden varnish over the tin leaf and animal motifs and used vivid red, green, and blue colours like the ones that once decorated the wall paintings. Her work revives the mid-seventh century's Buddhist art to modern times. It helps us imagine the prosperity of the Bamiyan Valley when these works were created.



Fig. 20 Reconstruction of the original oil wall painting by Yuki Watanuki (Cave N(a)). (© Y. Watanuki)



Fig. 21 Details of reconstruction, arabesque pattern, and animal motifs. (© Y. Watanuki)

Bamiyan is not dead; it continues to live as a city with innumerable markings of how it once flourished. At present, there are no practicing Buddhists and no spaces for the practice of Buddhism remaining in the Bamiyan site. However, the Bamiyan site is full of new findings. Information of high academic value continues to emerge from dry adobe plasters that will tell us stories from a Buddhist era. The approach taken with regard to the Bamiyan wall paintings and Buddha statues during our current conservation project has given the world a variety of results offering testimony to the remarkable manufacturing technologies of the time. Genuine archaeological remnants speak on their own. There is no need for any reconstruction of the Great Buddhas, for doing so offers only superficial appearances without any scientific significance or substance. We believe that new knowledge from the original works has acted as an important key for enhancing the interest of local residents in their heritage and for forging a unity of their own.

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The Cultural Master Plan of Bamiyan: The Sustainability Dilemma of Protection and Progress



Michael Jansen and Georgios Toubekis

Abstract Beyond the Buddha Cliff, the World Heritage property of Bamiyan consists of several archaeological areas embedded into an extraordinary cultural landscape not adequately defined at the time of the nomination. Therefore, the Cultural Master Plan was envisioned as guidance for the development of a rural environment under cultural preservation objectives. The plan introduces a zoning scheme defining land use regulations for the protection of cultural areas and proposing designated areas for urban development. Lack of adequate legal protection, too rigid enforcement of land use restrictions on the local level, and the aspirations of the people for a rapid change of their living conditions resulted in increasing uncertainties on the validity of the plan. It is argued that a monitoring steering group composed of international and national experts, and local stakeholders, are helpful to counterbalance uncoordinated international aid assistance and inefficient governmental supervision that resulted in development strategies overemphasizing urbanization approaches in conflict with the rural character of the valley. The authors propose to reconsider urbanization within the Bamiyan Valley and to reconcile the objectives of urban and rural development inspired by a sustainable development vision as proclaimed with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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1 Introduction

Since their creation, the Buddha figures of Bamiyan always have been an object of fascination for people of many different faiths who experienced in this landscape a deep sense of *purity of peace* regardless from which part of the world they arrived in this remote valley in the mountains of the Hindu-Kush. Though repeatedly intentionally damaged in the course of time the total destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha figures in March 2001 will stand forever in the history of Afghanistan as an era of violent rule of religious extremism fueled with barbaric actions and atrocities, of which the country was freed of more than 15 years ago.

The Government of Afghanistan has proclaimed on several occasions its commitment to contribute to the ideals set out in the World Heritage Convention of 1972 and especially to conceive its cultural policy as an incubator for an authentic *Culture of Peace* to overcome the effects of decades of war and military conflict within the country.

The debate on the future of the historical monuments in Bamiyan connects directly to the notion of peace as a specific condition that Bamiyan has retained despite unstable and hostile circumstances all over the country in recent years. The future of the site where once the most abundant depictions of Buddha stood is therefore inseparable from the future of the valley as a whole. The debate on the possibility of the reconstruction of the Buddha figures, therefore, is one aspect of a broader view of preservation that encompasses the entire cultural landscape of the valley, of which the niches and the fragments of the destroyed Buddha figures are a significant part. The efforts of preserving the authentic spirit of the place need to be embedded in the theme of broader landscape protection and evolving the entire Bamiyan Valley into a livable place for the generations to come (Fig. 1).

The Cultural Master Plan has been envisioned as guidance on how to consider preservation objectives within a broader range of development aspects. This vision includes infrastructure and economic and social development aspects, and it is assumed by the authors that the World Heritage property has the inherent potential to efficiently contribute to these overall development objectives and to provide collective benefit for the entire society of Bamiyan and Afghanistan as a whole. This approach calls for a conservation and management strategy that aligns with an overall broader development policy, and that does not compromise, but in contrast, support the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property in line with the recent UNESCO Policy for the integration of sustainable development perspectives into the processes of the World Heritage Convention.

It is the plea toward the international community to support the Government of Afghanistan in its endeavor of promoting the values of Bamiyan for tourism and



Fig. 1 Cultural landscape of the Bamiyan Valley with the main cliff in the background and the modern bazaar along the river in 2004. (© G.Toubekis)

other cultural purposes, which as a result will foster peace and security, probably the highest value for this war-torn country.

Following the introductory remarks, the second section explains the evolution of the Cultural Master Plan. In the third section, the zoning concept of the Cultural Master Plan is described in detail, and the following fourth section will point out the conflict lines that arise from aspiration of development and the efforts for the preservation of the cultural landscape. The fifth section will conclude with a proposal of how to harmonize planning activities in the Bamiyan Valley inspired by a sustainable development vision for the future of the Bamiyan province as a whole as proclaimed with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2 The Evolution of the Cultural Master Plan (CMP) also Named “Protective Zoning Plan”

Shortly after a UNESCO international seminar held in Kabul in May 2002 as a forerunner of the International Coordination Committee (ICC) in July 2002, a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS mission visited Bamiyan headed by Prof. Michael Petzet, in

those days World President ICOMOS.¹ As a result of this mission and upon invitation by ICOMOS Germany and funded by the German Government in November 2002, a workshop took place in Munich with high Afghan Government representatives, members of the UNESCO World Heritage Center (Paris), and international experts involved in the safeguarding process of Bamiyan (Bamiyan Expert Working Group – BEWG). During this workshop, first steps for the consolidation and preservation of the Buddha niches and wall paintings were discussed. Furthermore, the uncertainty on the extent of the underground archaeological remains was a topic of concern to the representatives of the Afghan Government. It was, therefore, recommended to conduct further archaeological surveys and mappings to understand the extent of the archaeological zone through precise topographic maps indicating the cultural area to be protected (ICOMOS 2002) also in light of pressure from population growth and expected future infrastructure projects in a valley hardly developed so far.²

The draft nomination text of Bamiyan for the inscription in the World Heritage List had been supported 2 weeks before the nomination in Durban by the ICC in June 2003 on its first (and only) plenary session in Paris. This text still contained a profound definition on the cultural landscape, reading:

Bamiyan Valley is a landscape³ that has evolved through geological formation and human intervention, and the process of the evolution in form and component features is still visible today. Even today, the landscape is continuously used, and it retains an active social role in local communities. (ICC 2003)

This definition was confirmed in the ICOMOS evaluation of the World Heritage nomination (ICOMOS 2003). However, it was not entirely integrated into the summary of cultural values of the final nomination text.

Under the registration number 208rev,⁴ the *Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley* was inscribed on the List of World

¹In addition, the mission consisted of representatives of the Afghan Government, Mr. Ahad Abassi and Mr. Ferozi of the UNESCO, representatives Christian Manhart and Sarah Finke, and ICOMOS members, Prof. Jansen, RWTH Aachen University – Aachen Center for Documentation and Conservation (ACDC, Dipl.-Ing. Mario Santana Quintero, M.Sc. of Conservation, (ACDC), Dr. Jörg Fassbinder, geophysicist, Bavarian State Conservation Office, Dr.-Ing. Zou Yazou, Geoenvironmental Engineer, University of the German Armed Forces, Munich, observer Mr. Paul Bucherer Dietschi, Switzerland (see Government of Afghanistan World Heritage nomination dossier 20 May 2003, appendix E).

²See also Government of Afghanistan World Heritage nomination dossier 20 May 2003, appendix F.

³This followed the definition of an “**organically evolved landscape**” according the Cultural Landscape category (ii) as defined in the Annex 3 of the Operational Guidelines to the World Heritage Convention (Fowler 2003, Mitchell et al. 2009). For more information on the UNESCO view on Cultural Landscapes, see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/culturallandscape/>

⁴The monuments of the Bamiyan Valley were recommended for inscription on the World Heritage List already in 1983 “on the condition that the authorities define a large perimeter of protection which would include the cliffs and the valley, and provide a map indicating the delimitation of this zone” (SC/83/CONF.009/2, p.2), but the World Heritage Committee had deferred the inscription since the conditions were not met at the time of the meeting (SC/83/CONF.009/8, p.11). The nomination of 2003 with the reference to the Cultural Landscape is thus a revision of this initial nomination intended to fulfil the conditions as stated in 1983.

Heritage at the 27th session of the World Heritage Committee in Durban (July 2003). The site was simultaneously inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger due to the severe delicate state of conservation of the archaeological remains (especially the stability of the Buddha niches) and the lack of a management system to ensure the integrity of the archaeological remains and the cultural landscape on the long term. While eight archaeological sub-sites were defined within their property and buffer zones, the *Cultural Landscape* as part of the revised nomination in 2003 had neither been defined in quality nor in quantity (see Table 1).

Table 1 World Heritage property Bamiyan as of 2003 – a serial nomination of eight separated archaeological sub-areas each mentioned with their buffer zone but omitting to indicate the parts of the cultural landscape in which they are situated

ID	Name and location	Coordinates	Property (ha)	Buffer zone (ha)
208-001	Bamiyan Cliff including niches of the 38 meter Buddha, seated Buddhas, 55 meter Buddha and surrounding caves	N 34° 50' 49.00"	105	222.25
		E 67° 49' 30.90"		
208-002	Kakrak Valley caves including the niche of the standing Buddha	N 34° 48' 59.60"	15	33
		E 67° 51' 4.90"		
208-003	Qoul-I Akram Caves in the Fuladi Valley	N 34° 49' 25.30"	6	40.5
		E 67° 47' 53.70"		
208-004	Kalai Ghamai Caves in the Fuladi Valley	N 34° 49' 13.60"	5.5	
		E 67° 47' 14.50"		
208-005	Shahr-i-Zuhak	N 34° 49' 34.40"	18	13
		E 66° 53' 24.50"		
208-006	Qallay Kaphari A	N 34° 48' 39.50"	0.06	17
		E 66° 50' 36.70"		
208-007	Qallay Kaphari B	N 34° 48' 46.40"	0.06	
		E 66° 51' 0.10"		
208-008	Shahr-i-Ghulghulah	N 34° 49' 57.60"	9.3	13.2
		E 67° 50' 20.80"		
	Total areas		159	339

With the UNESCO project for the Safeguarding of the Bamiyan Site funded by the Government of Japan soon, a framework was established and is still active for implementing emergency and long-term preservation measures at the site (UNESCO 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012). On its second meeting in 2003 again in Munich, the Bamiyan Experts Working Group (BEWG) recommended that a comprehensive management plan should be prepared by the National Research Institute of Cultural Properties Tokyo (NRICPT). The concept for the management plan was later in 2004 further developed into a regulated zoning system to be adopted for the control of land use and building construction in and around Bamiyan site (JCICC 2004). For putting this idea into reality, close contact with the Governor of Bamiyan and the Ministry of Urban Development could be established.⁵ This cooperation turned out to be extremely fruitful for the development of the *Cultural Master Plan* (CMP) which was headed and coordinated by RWTH Aachen University, in cooperation with ICOMOS Germany and NRICPT and under the supervision of the Ministry of Information and Culture and the Ministry of Urban Development. In setting up the CMP, not only the cultural property within the defined cultural zone of the valley but also the future residential, urban development, and planning of the valley were included.

The stated vision was to ensure the protection of cultural heritage resources in the face of rapidly increasing infrastructure development and to accommodate the tourism potential and housing needs of the local population. Therefore UNESCO had entrusted RWTH Aachen University to provide technical assistance to the Government of Afghanistan for the development of a master plan. The finalized zoning proposal was presented in December 2005 to the Afghan government and was officially approved in March 2006 by the Ministry of Urban Development. The approval of the master plan has enabled so far the completion of the abovementioned comprehensive site management plan, defining the roles of the relevant authorities for the management and monitoring of the property (UNESCO (2006) – 30COM 7A 23).

The first need was to obtain a mapping at scale 1:5000 – 1:150.000 to understand the broader landscape context and acquire detailed high-resolution documentation of the eight sub-sites and their buffers, as the precise delineation of their boundaries has a direct influence on private property, mostly owned by farmers. As national survey maps at sufficient scale and precision were not available, RWTH Aachen University decided to buy satellite images which guaranteed the latest topography and land details. An area of 45 square kilometers was mapped for the creation of the Cultural Master Plan. In the plan, several national and international experts⁶ researched, recorded, and evaluated the proposal in an interdisciplinary approach (Jansen and Toubekis 2013).

⁵Governor of Bamiyan in these days was HE Ms. Habiba Sarabi, the Ministry of Urban Development in those days was headed by HE Minister Pashtun and the Deputy Ministry Djalalzada. The Ministry was renamed later to Ministry of Urban Development Affairs.

⁶The results include the mapping of the vernacular architecture (Lohmann 2005) and a geomorphological analysis of the valley (Reinecke 2005), and are summarized in the Cultural Master Plan Reports as data collection on all relevant findings (see Jansen and Toubekis 2013).

The Cultural Master Plan study is based on the analysis of geomorphological landscape features and of anthropogenic interventions into the landscape of the Bamian Valley. The research indicates flooding hazard zones based on catchment analysis and interpretation of land surface features, and it includes a quantitative and qualitative mapping of the main water channels of the central Bamian Valley. This water channel-based agriculture together with the historic remains and traditional settlement structures mark the extent of the cultural landscape of the Bamian Valley. The Cultural Master Plan includes a precise mapping of these channels and traditional settlement structures. It includes as well an assessment of traditional building techniques and typology of structures and has identified 44 individual historic structures of outstanding cultural significance within the cultural landscape. The CMP consists of a data collection and analysis of these important cultural features of the valley and furthermore a comprehensive set of topographic maps (last updated in 2010). The findings of the CMP study are summarized in a report and have been conceptualized in a zoning proposal indicating favorable land use for protection and management of the cultural landscape through the national and local planning authorities.

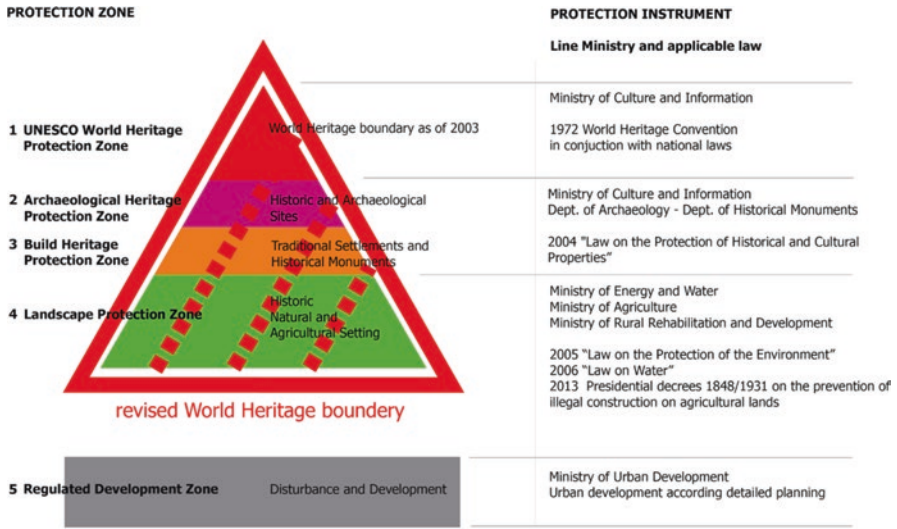
3 The Zoning Concept of the Cultural Master Plan

As one of the research results, five zonings were defined. The zoning concept of the Cultural Master Plan (CMP) is symbolized by a pyramidal scheme marking the CMP zones 1–4 for the cultural landscape. CMP Zone 5 is not containing elements of CMP zones 1–4 and is demarked separately indicating particular development areas (see Table 2 and Fig. 2).

CMP Zone 1 (World Heritage Protection Zone) represents the eight sub-areas of the World Heritage property (see Table 1) along with their buffers as defined in the 2003 nomination dossier under the jurisdiction of the World Heritage Convention of 1972 and administered by the Ministry of Information and Culture. Zone 1 covers a territory of approx. Five square kilometers including private property.

Table 2 Zoning overview of the cultural master plan

CMP zone	Name of zone	Area in km ²
Zone 1	World heritage protection zone	5
Zone 2	Archaeological heritage protection zone	6
Zone 3	Build heritage protection zone	5
Zone 4	Landscape protection zone	23
Zone 5	Regulated development zone	6
	Total	45



sustainable development under the guidance of the Bamiyan Cultural Landscape Coordination Committee (BCLCC)

Fig. 2 Overview scheme of the protective zoning proposal of the Cultural Master Plan (CMP) with updated law instruments as of 2016

CMP Zone 2 (Sub-surface Archaeological Heritage Protection Zone) defines the areas that have been identified to be of highest underground archaeological importance⁷ and covers in total around 6 square kilometers.

CMP Zone 3 (Built Heritage Protection Zone) defines the areas above ground with historically important traditional settlement structures and significant historic buildings. The National Heritage Protection zone is highly fragmented and covers presently in total five square kilometers. Zone 2 and Zone 3 fall under the jurisdiction of the 2004 Law on the Protection of Historical and Cultural Properties and is administered by the Ministry of Information and Culture.

CMP Zone 4 (Landscape Protection Zone) defines the areas of the traditional irrigation systems and rivers, the woodlands along the channels, traditional agricultural cultivation, and the overall natural setting including the pasture ranges of nearby mountains.⁸ Zone 4 covers a total area of around 23 square kilometers out

⁷The archaeological underground remains (Zone 2) may vary from 0.5 m to more than 4 m below present surface mostly due to alluvial activities and some parts spread under privately owned land. More studies are needed to better understand the underground setting of the archaeological remains. Adequate individual land use regulations for this zone may be worked out without compromising the value of the underground archaeological settings.

⁸It comprises the largest territory within the range of the Cultural Master Plan (Central Bamiyan Valley, Entrance of Foladi, and Kakrak Valley). The field survey revealed that the terraces and slopes above the irrigated plain have a very fragile surface that is exposed to high risk of erosion. It was proposed to establish pasture regulations to protect the sparse vegetation cover and to induce afforestation with shrubs to consolidate the surface of the soils on the long term.

of which 6 square kilometers are prone to high risk of flooding. It falls under the jurisdiction of the Environmental Law, the Law of Agriculture, and the Water Law. The agricultural areas are also under the protection of the Special Presidential Decree 2013 (1848/1931)⁹ which prohibits the illegal conversion of these lands for other uses.

CMP Zone 5 (Regulated Development Zone) defines the areas which have been identified as development areas as CMP Zone 1–4 phenomena are not to be found here. CMP Zone 5 includes among others the proposed expansion areas (Dasht-e Isa Khan plain). CMP Zone 5 is administered by the Ministry of Urban Development. Out of the 45 square kilometers mapped, Zone 5 (regulated development zone) represents approximately 6 square kilometers directly available for urban development and new building activities.

In summary, the CMP zones 1–4 comprise the extent of the cultural landscape of the Bamiyan Valley including all the elements that can be considered the essential cultural values. The definition of these zones followed natural and human-made topographic features (meadows, river, canals, fields, terraces) allowing thus accurate identification on the ground, an essential prerequisite for future management decisions (Fig. 3).

As a result of the enacted *CMP Zone 5*, the *Regulated Development Zone* offered the way of regulating major urban planning activities which had already begun in all identified zones (e.g., on the airfield plateau *Dasht-e-Isa Khan* where the Minister of Urban Development laid in 2005 the foundation stone for *New Town Bamiyan* and today the fast-developing administration complex is expanding).

Part of the strategy for *CMP Zone 5* comprised the transfer of the airfield from Bamiyan to the Shebartu plain, some 30 km west of Bamiyan relieving the center of the Bamiyan Valley from air traffic stress and making the land of the current airfield

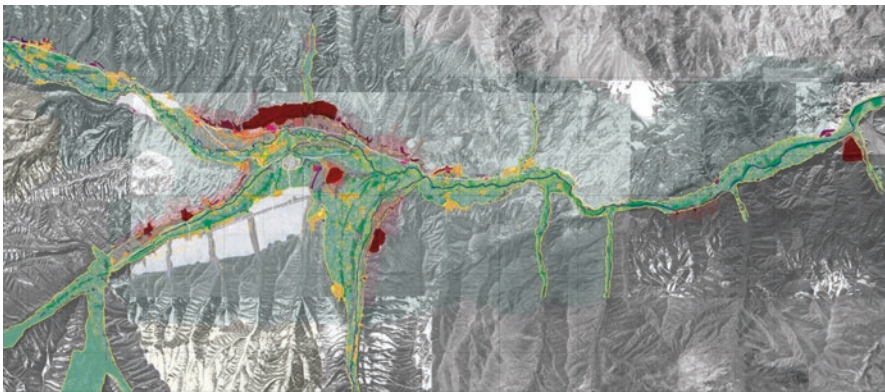


Fig. 3 Overview cultural master plan Bamiyan – colors indicate the different protection zones

⁹ Given the Presidential degrees 1848 and 1931 (2013) about prevention of illegal constructions of residential houses on green areas, agricultural land, orchards, vineyards, and forests, officials in the center and provinces are instructed to apply the decree signed by Hamid Karzai.

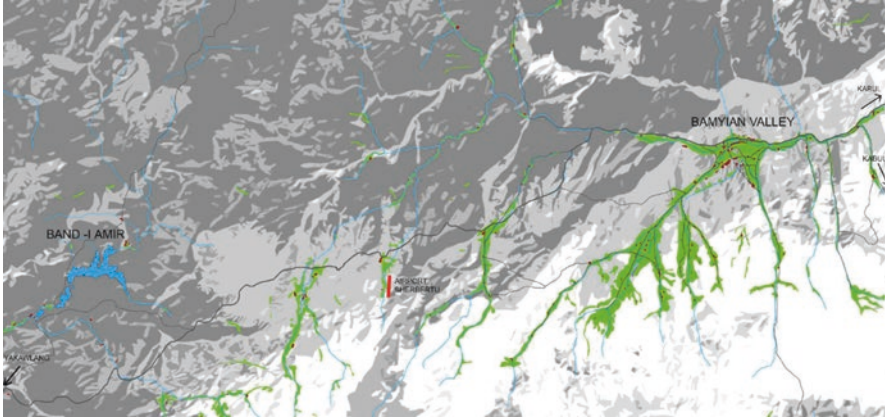


Fig. 4 Overview of the Bamiyan basin – the Shebartu airfield lies in between the central Bamiyan Valley and the Band-e Amir lakes

usable for further settlement development. On the other hand, a relocation of the airport toward the west would place such a significant infrastructure more toward the center of the province directly in between the major tourist attraction of the Bamiyan province, the Band-e Amir lakes, and the central Bamiyan Valley. Such a move would create a development stimulus for the entire Central Highland region from which many small and remote villages would profit (see Fig. 4). This part of the CMP has not yet been implemented.

With the approval of the Cultural Master Plan (CMP) in March 2006 by the Ministry of Urban Development, a useful tool had been developed to protect the cultural property of the Bamiyan Valley and to control the land use. In the same year, the Governor of Bamiyan established the *Bamiyan Cultural Landscape Coordination Committee* (BCLCC) as an inter-ministerial body to implement the *protective zoning proposal* of the Cultural Master Plan (CMP). Since then, this committee, under the chair of the Governor of Bamiyan, has been the primary agent to decide based on the CMP in critical cases upon complaints by the people.

Here the CMP functions as guiding principle and as a “overruling tool” also for all other cultural preservation activities, including the consolidation of the Buddha niches, the scientific excavations, the stabilization of plasters of the many caves around the Buddha niches and in the Foladi and Kakrak valleys and especially the activities of the Japanese team on emergency conservation of the many precious secco paintings.

4 The Conflicts: Cultural Master Plan, World Heritage Property, Buffer Zones, and the Urban Development

Since the inception of the CMP, the increasing development dynamics in the Bamiyan Valley are challenging the effective implementation of a heritage management system for the World Heritage property. Consequently, Bamiyan is still listed as a World Heritage in Danger and the lack of adequate management a constant matter of concern to the World Heritage Committee. Therefore it can be said at best that the management system at present is provisional, supported through expertise from the international community to overcome the lack of appropriate administrative, scientific, and technical resources.

The management challenges have been reviewed continuously within the context of the Bamiyan Experts Working Group to which the authors have been members since its first meeting. These challenges are reflected in the various recommendations issued since (e.g., UNESCO 2006, 2011, 2013) and can be summarized as follows:

- Increase of population through repatriation of refugees from neighboring countries and arrival of more internally displaced peoples (IDPs) from within Afghanistan due to the increase of violence across the nation
- Uncertainty on the extent of the archaeological zones and especially the unidentified underground remains
- Very rigid enforcement of land use restrictions especially on agricultural lands through local authorities
- Inconsistencies in the world heritage nomination declaring Bamiyan as a cultural landscape but marking only a small portion of the landscape as belonging to the world heritage property

Out of this analysis, it has to be emphasized that the term “cultural landscape” in Bamiyan can be referenced with two connotations:

1. The *Cultural Landscape* declared as part of the UNESCO nomination 2003 defined as CMP Zone 1 and consisting of:
 - (a) The eight sub-properties themselves
 - (b) The areas of the eight attached buffer zones comprising approximately 5 km² in total (see Table 1)
2. The Cultural *Landscape* of Bamiyan as identified in the Cultural Masterplan and defined by the CMP¹⁰ zones 1–4 of approximately 39 km² in total (see Table 2)

As can be seen, the World Heritage property and its buffer zone (CMP Zone 1) represent only 12–13% of the total Cultural Landscape of the Bamiyan Valley (CMP zones 1–4). The CMP zones 2–4 represent substantial parts of the cultural landscape in the central Bamiyan Valley and are not included in the UNESCO nomination of

¹⁰CMP Zone 5 is excluded as of no cultural significance.

the World Heritage property. The Operational Guidelines to the World Heritage Convention request¹¹ that the sample of cultural landscape selected “must be substantial enough to adequately represent the totality of the cultural landscape that it illustrates.” Therefore, to comply with the regulations, a (partial) integration of CMP zones 2–4 into the World Heritage property should be seriously considered, but such an approach is not feasible to date since it would require a new nomination procedure.

On this background, the title of the World Heritage nomination “Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley” can be misleading, since the cultural landscape (Reference 1) under the protection of the Convention is covering only a small fraction of the total cultural landscape (Reference 2) of the Bamiyan Valley.

The CMP as planning instrument had been officialized by a decree of the Ministry of Urban Development in 2006. However, the legal protection of the cultural landscape according to the regulations of the National Law is still awaited.

As expressed by the Governor of Bamiyan and the representatives of the BCLCC on several occasions¹² the Cultural Master Plan and its detailed digital documentation proved to be a helpful planning tool. It helped in solving cases of conflict by zooming into high-resolution aerial imagery showing individual land properties in detail. However, a central problem identified by the local authorities is the matter of compensation to the farmers for restrictions imposed on agricultural land use in areas with identified underground archaeological remains and on the use of land for the construction of buildings in areas not designated for development.

With the increase of pressures resulting from the population growth also caused by the repatriation of refugees, the control over the protected cultural landscape land as identified in the CMP has become more and more difficult. As one action, the UNESCO jointly with the Government of Afghanistan increased awareness campaigns to explain the present and future importance of the World Heritage property for the people of Bamiyan at all levels of educational institutions but also in different villages involved. To better disseminate information, in 2013 a brochure in English and Farsi was produced by the UNESCO/RWTH which was distributed widely among stakeholder and institutions. Later two more workshops were held in 2016 and 2017 with the Bamiyan University, as well as consultations with local communities in villages affected by protection regulations on their lands. A significant difficulty identified is to explain the importance of an *Archaeological Protection*

¹¹ Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2017) Annex 3 p. 81.

¹² The previous Governor of Bamiyan Ms. Habiba Sarabi established management coordination conferences with national and international experts in June 2012 to publicly discuss development matters from urban planning and cultural preservation point of view (see Toubekis and Jansen 2013:22–30). The current Governor of Bamiyan Mr. Mohammad Tahir Zaheer has continued this practice of holding high-level ministerial management coordination meetings in Bamiyan (Toubekis and Jansen 2017). In their statements, they repeatedly highlighted the importance of the Cultural Master Plan for the political decision-making processes in the Bamiyan Valley.

Zone (Zone 2) since the underground structures as the matter of protection are not visible and therefore not readily comprehensible to the population and local authorities alike.

A critical issue put forward by village representatives is the procedure for compensation of land use restrictions on private lands that, which due to lack of funding, has not yet been financially regulated and legally formalized thus creating a significant cause of conflict and dissatisfaction.

Already in 2012, the 36th World Heritage Committee in St. Petersburg reminded that the archaeological mapping in the CMP should be more emphasized in order *to avoid damage to potentially embedded archaeological remains*. Their comment to establish and to *“enforce building codes and regulations on development in the buffer zones of the property and other areas protected under the Afghan Law”* (36 COM 7A.26) was an essential suggestion. On a practical level, this consequently calls for the revitalization of (partly destroyed) building in the traditional settlements (CMP Zone 3) but also applies for new buildings in the regulated development zone (CMP Zone 5). The height of the buildings, their outlook, form of roofing, and coloring are expected to be fitting into the traditional context.

For adequate protection of the nominated property, the regulatory framework of the CMP still requires complementary regulations such as appropriate height regulations for buildings in the central Bamiyan Valley across essential views to ensure the undisturbed visibility on the eight sub-properties and especially on the Buddha niches on the long term.

As a result of the urban growth dynamics in the central Bamiyan Valley, in 2012 the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing ordered an Afghan consultancy firm (Sayed Zia Hussaini) to prepare a master plan for the urban development of the Bamiyan valley. At the occasion of the 12th Bamiyan Expert Working Group meeting 2012 in Aachen (Germany), however, the result of this study named *“Strategic Plan Bamiyan”* was presented as a graphical map only without any further in-depth development studies and analyses. Many new urban development zones marked in this plan were overlaying protected zones of the CMP and thus in contradiction to the initial preservation ideas. Moreover, road infrastructure proposals in this plan were not aligned with the existing street networks. Neither RWTH Aachen University nor UNESCO was involved in the finalization of this plan, although the plan header gives reference to RWTH Aachen University and the authors of the original Cultural Master Plan. The procedure that led to the creation of this *“Strategic Plan Bamiyan”* also raises the question of how far the overall development strategy for the Bamiyan Valley is conceptualized and finally decided. Since this plan proposed additional vast areas for urban development situated within the cultural landscape and in parts contradicting the Cultural Master Plan without providing sound scientific data for doing, it aggravated the pressure on cultural heritage in the valley leading to increased confusion among stakeholders in Bamiyan.

Lack of coordination between donor-funded development projects and governmental oversight is a general problem all over Afghanistan. Infrastructure projects are often planned and decided centrally with little or no involvement of the local government authorities. There is a measurable dissatisfaction growing among the

local authorities and the local population how the central government authorities handle major infrastructure projects concerning preservation efforts. On the other side, there exists a planning uncertainty at government level due to loss of crucial experienced staff to the private sector and general weak communication and collaboration attitude among different ministries at an operational level. The Cultural Master Plan as protective zoning plan was conceptualized to support infrastructure development at an early planning stage requesting the adjustment of project plans according to preservation needs within the different protection zone. The “*Strategic Plan Bamiyan*” conceived by some to support the management efforts for the preservation and development of Bamiyan, in contrast, raised new problems without solving existing ones.¹³ Therefore the implementation of this plan was halted by the new Minister of Urban Development in 2017¹⁴ in favor of further scientifically based socioeconomic studies that shall result in a new urban development plan with the aim to properly balance the interests of landscape preservation and development needs.

A significant fact to consider is that the economic basis of the Bamiyan Valley is still in its majority of rural character. The so-called Bamiyan town or city mainly consists of urban services such as trade, commerce, and production lined up along the *Bazaar Street* next to the Bamiyan River. Located right in the middle of the plains opposite to the main Buddha cliff, it represents the commercial center of the valley surrounded by the cultural landscape (CMP Zone 4). During the initial CMP survey in 2005, the number of shops there counted almost 900, while these numbers have reached more than 2000 after 10 years according to a statement of the local authorities.

A local initiative by the current Governor of Bamiyan and the BCLCC indicates high sensitivity toward the issues of uncontrolled business expansions in the CMP Zone 2 and CMP Zone 4. Instead, they have offered to relocate production activities in areas outside the cultural landscape. Here there is the need to update the topographical information of the CMP in an active monitor cycle to reflect these current changes in the built environment.

Due to the development dynamics in the valley in recent years, several other new urban clusters are developing rapidly in the designated Regulated Urban Development Zones as identified with the Cultural Master Plan (CMP Zone 5). These development areas are mostly located on the hill slopes of barren land and not interfering with the cultural landscape such as the areas near the airfield in the south (Dasht-e Isakhan). They can be found close to the new hospital in the west (Mullah

¹³These critics were also formulated in the World Heritage Committee meeting in 2016 in Istanbul (40 COM 7A.26 Nr 3) Notes *with satisfaction* that the Management Plan has been officially adopted and integrated into the Bamiyan City Master Plan, a tool which aims to control development pressures, but *regrets* that no updated report has been submitted on how these mechanisms work, especially in view of the strong development pressures observed recently;

¹⁴Personal communication of the Minister of Urban Development HE Sadat Mansoor Naderi at the occasion of a workshop in Kabul in October 2017 together with UNESCO on the planning of Bamiyan in the future (Toubekis and Jansen 2017).

Ghulam), and the new town settlements of Haidarabad and Seydabad toward the Kakrak Valley in the southeast close to the newly established university campus. The general problem of these developments is that they are of an urban character in sharp contrast to the overall rural context of the valley. Besides the issue of limited lands for such urban extensions, these new areas require additional secondary infrastructures such as networks of roads, electricity, water supply, and sanitation/canalization of wastewaters. The architectural styles favored by the new town inhabitants do appear in sharp contrast to traditional building types in the Bamiyan Valley. Also, these new urban areas also have a different social structure since its inhabitants are no more farmers but have to rely on the slowly emerging non-rural economy to make their living.

Within the recent initiative of the *Cities for All* Programme supported by UN-Habitat, a Bamiyan City administrative boundary was defined consisting of four separate administrative sub-districts governed by the mayor and the municipality council. This initiative is part of overall urban reforms in Afghanistan, for providing better municipal services to the people (GoIRA 2014, 2015, 2016).

The marked territory of this “new” (UN-Habitat) city of Bamiyan (see Fig. 5) predominantly covers cultural landscape areas identified by the CMP zones 2–4. The colors indicate the average “urban density” expressed as build-up area divided by a number of dwelling units. Therefore the traditional rural settlement clusters do not appear in this map due to their low-density profile well situated for the cultural landscape in contrast with the newly established urban development areas. The plan

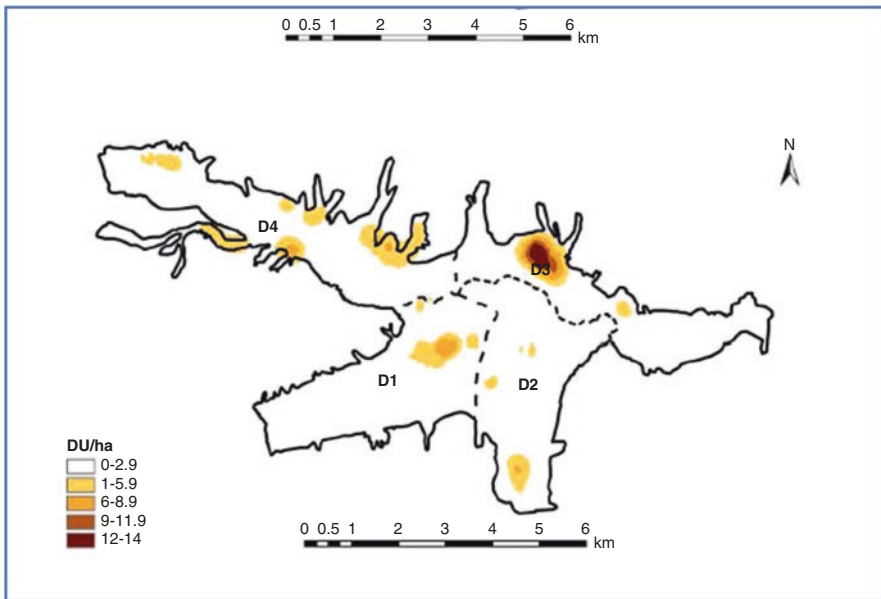


Fig. 5 The four administrative units of the city of Bamiyan with the identification of growing settlement clusters (Source: GoIRA (2015), State of Afghan Cities report 2015, Vol. 2, p.12)

with its four districts points toward a decentralized urban model with different densely populated formal and functional clusters. District D1 already hosts the government, district D2 is marked by the university, while district D3 is primarily residential, and in district D4, a modern hospital has been built. Centralization of all these urban forms and functions would result in a devastating effect on the cultural landscape, whereas a future decentralized urban development model would coincide with the vision of the CMP. It is the challenge for the future to pursue a decentralized urban development in the Bamiyan Valley that both provide appropriate services to the people and also respect the general rural population profile. The President's proclamation 1848/1931 of 2013 to prevent illegal conversion of agricultural land for construction purpose by law is a clear sign toward keeping the economic, agrarian basis for the majority of the population.

In the long term, the development dynamics will demand more land for construction and settlement, and it goes without saying that this cannot be dealt within the limits of the small Bamiyan Valley represented in large parts by the territory of the CMP. This will result in a broader view of a "Greater" Bamiyan region, and there is the need to guide this development toward other suitable expansion areas such as the plains of Shebartu about 30 km west beyond the Bamiyan Valley. It is close to the second tourist attraction of Bamiyan, the Band-e-Amir lakes, and a suitable alternative for settlements with almost unlimited expansion territory. It was already proposed during the set-up phase of the CMP as a replacement alternative for the current airfield in Bamiyan combined with hotels and tourist infrastructure to develop the tourist potential more centrally in the province. This calls for a strategy that has both landscape preservation as well as balancing of development needs and challenges in mind.

5 The Cultural Masterplan Between Conservation and Progress: The Dilemma of Sustainability

The Cultural Master Plan enacted in 2006 has allowed the government to regulate the development in the valley encompassing regulations for landscape as well as cultural heritage preservation. Furthermore, the conception of broader landscape protection has been adopted by the new "Environment Law" of Afghanistan. The inclusion of *Cultural Landscape* protection into the Cultural and Antiquities Law is still awaited based on the positive experiences in Bamiyan with the Cultural Master Plan. Landscape protection has been successfully implemented at the Band-e Amir lakes (First National Park of Afghanistan in 2012) and for the mountainous regions above 3300 m of the Koh-e Baba Mountain range (Shah Foladi Protected Area in 2015). These nominations underline the high landscape value of this part of the Bamiyan basin and indicate the potential toward an environmentally and culturally sensitive tourism in the Bamiyan province.¹⁵

¹⁵ For more details see GoIRA 2014.

However, it is of the highest importance to clarify the direction of the future development of the Bamiyan Valley to build a sound strategy to achieve clear development objectives. The Cultural Master Plan can be a helpful mechanism here since it has defined already preservation objectives for the World Heritage site which have to be aligned with broader development objectives on the level of the entire Bamiyan province.

The lack of clear planning policy on a national level in the past has led to a plethora of approaches on the regional and local level in practice as a result from “ad hoc” decision-making to solve development needs. It is, therefore, essential in the future to advocate for a precise definition of development objectives and planning tools within the national planning system, with awareness on their proper naming and meaning in the different languages used.

A strategic approach, therefore, would have to encompass initiatives in three major domains:

1. **Sustainable development:** Definition of a vision for the Bamiyan province by the Afghan Government as a legally binding manifestation directed to the authorities and the civil society sector following the ideas set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN Agenda 2030.
2. **Hierarchy of planning tools:** Definition of plans that are coherently aligned according to the different scales of planning (Regional Development Plan, Cultural Master Plan, Urban Development Plan) respecting the vision under 1.
3. **The human needs** have to be well respected with priority to the vision under 1.

5.1 The Development Vision (Legal Manifestation of the Development Objectives for the Valley)

The nomination of the *Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley* on the World Heritage List and all other legal edicts and laws, clearly expresses the determination of the Afghan Government to protect the historical and cultural setting of the central Bamiyan valley in its historic and present form. The government has continued these efforts over time despite the difficult overall general conflict situation in the country as expressed on many occasions at national and international workshops during the last years. This indicates an understanding of a general strategy for the future development of the Bamiyan Valley. This strategy shall include parameters for planning in the valley which should be based on:

- (a) Keeping the primarily rural character within the CMP territory
- (b) Further development of tourism opportunities in the region for the benefit of the local population

However, a coherent and comprehensive vision document for the Bamiyan province has yet not been elaborated. Such a vision document shall include a collection of the various plan documents among others the Cultural Master Plan (CMP), the relevant

legal protective provisions (Environment Law, Culture Law) including the according edicts of the Presidential office and most notably a statement that the vision is endorsed on local, provincial, and national level by the most crucial stakeholders. Such a vision document would be a useful instrument also to streamline international aid assistance more efficiently. A legal manifestation is necessary to implement this vision, calling for an officialized declaration through the Afghan Government emphasizing the public benefits of cultural landscape protection such as introduced with the CMP with all consequences for the valley.

5.2 *Hierarchy of the Planning Tools*

The Cultural Master Plan (CMP) has been sanctioned in 2006 as a legal tool having such broader development vision in mind and was designed to be far-reaching to allow for more detailed plans on an operational level to follow later. With the scientifically proved and recorded qualities and with the legal regulations/protections, the five zonings of the CMP enable the government to control actions and to develop further integrated planning tools. An ideal planning hierarchy as conceptualized during the creation phase of the CMP is shown in Fig. 6.

The provincial development policy based on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is defined in the *Regional Development Plan*¹⁶ (Hierarchy 1). The *Regional Development Plan* covers all development aspects such as health service, education, economic growth, agricultural industry, and job creation.

The plan also coordinates infrastructure programs for roads and settlements; therefore *after* proper analysis, it has to identify area-wise the loci for the new regional *decentralized clusters* (city settlements) hosting all activities for sizeable modern expansion integrating the protected area of the CMP (Hierarchy 2) into the overall provincial development policy. In the case of the center of Bamiyan, new clusters should be located outside of the Cultural Landscape in the central Bamiyan Valley close to the plains of Shebartu further to the west. It should also host the new airport, to be translocated from its present location which is blocking the Bamiyan town development area.

The stated vision of the Bamiyan Cultural Master Plan (CMP) is the preservation of the Cultural Landscape of the Bamiyan Valley in respecting rural livelihood and promoting a Culture of Peace through cultural and ecological sensitive tourism. This vision is the guiding principle for the following planning levels.

Regarding the further clustering of settlements inside the CMP territory, the new *Urban Master Plan* (Hierarchy 3) for the new city of Bamiyan consequently should

¹⁶The Regional Development Plan is a needs assessment document prepared by the Ministry of Urban Development Affairs (MUDA) for the purpose of budgetary allocations within the Presidential Office, especially needed for the coordination of larger infrastructure investments planned or foreseen by different ministries (personal communication with the director of planning of MUDA).

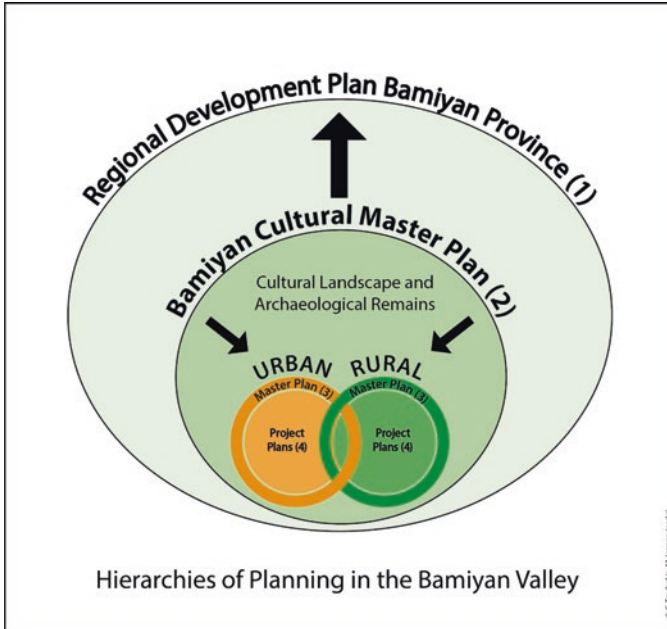


Fig. 6 The Cultural Master Plan as an intermediate level informing broader development goals and addressing local development and preservation needs (Graphic by the authors)

have to respect the regulations set out in the CMP (Hierarchy 2). The same would also account for an urgently needed *Rural Master Plan* (Hierarchy 3), which is not yet on the agenda, to allow for systematically improving the livelihood conditions of the rural population within the central Bamiyan Valley. Therefore individual large- and small-scale projects in the central Bamiyan Valley have to be carefully planned (Hierarchy 4) with special provision according to the individual urban areas or rural areas into which they are situated. These special provisions have to be identified within the required environmental and heritage impact assessments that are mandatory for projects within the World Heritage context.

Within these planning tools, the requested *Building Regulations* would deal with the appearance of constructions in CMP Zone 1, repair, rebuilding, and alteration of buildings in CMP Zone 3 and CMP Zone 4, as well as the newly erected buildings in CMP Zone 5. However, any inevitable change (land use, functions) of CMP zones 2, 3, and 4 should have to be worked out together with the CMP experts, the ministries involved and the Governor’s office and, of course, with the representatives of the people of Bamiyan. For significant changes ahead of the action, feasibility studies should be conceptualized and shared with international experts and presented to the World Heritage Committee before final approval and implementation. Such a management system, if established for the Bamiyan Valley, would also help allow for the removal from the list of World Heritage List in Danger, as such provisions would ensure the proper preservation of the World Heritage property and the cultural landscape as a whole for the long term.

5.3 *The Human Needs*

One of the primary aims of action for the Afghan Government and the international aid assistance still is the support of the local population of the valley, which is mostly dependent on a rural economy. Addressing immediate local needs of the day for the local people and their future requires a fine-grained bottom-up community-based consultation process, while the planning strategies pursued so far on behalf of the government and to some extent from the international organizations is, in general, a top-down approach. The constraints resulting out of the World Heritage nomination and the Cultural Master Plan for some parts of the local population create restrictions on use and rights primarily related to private land property. This results in limited support and understanding for the preservation of the cultural values as defined in the World Heritage nomination and the CMP. It is most probably the highest challenge in the implementation efforts for a functioning management system for the site to achieve a broad understanding among all involved stakeholder, on the benefits of cultural landscape preservation both for the individual as well as the Bamiyan society as a whole. A direct benefit from the tourism, for example, will result from infrastructure development and job creation in tourism-related services, whereas the benefits from landscape protection are not that apparent. This accounts primarily for the “invisible” underground archaeological remains, hidden in mostly beneath private farmland, which cover almost 6 km² of the valley. The possible threats resulting from the increase of tourism activities for agricultural resources and infrastructure has to be further studied to avoid adverse impact on the authenticity of the cultural landscape.

Therefore the Afghan Government together with the UNESCO has started a public awareness campaign in 2016 and 2017 through community-oriented workshops to inform about the cultural values of the valley that can be linked with tourism activities as an additional economic viable option for the local economy in the future. The expert recommendation toward the national authorities expressed that awareness campaigns should be further intensified, and public participation in the further planning processes should become more obligatory in the future. One idea that has already emerged out of these public discussions is the creation of an *Archaeological Park* in the Bamiyan Valley, integrating living religious areas (domestic shrines), archaeological remains, and open farmland part to create a better linkage between landscape and cultural heritage preservation. This idea would also better demonstrate the interdependency of the tangible and intangible values of the cultural landscape of the Bamiyan Valley but would require a government-led investment program for the required infrastructure.

6 Conclusion

With the nomination of the *Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley* to the UNESCO World Heritage List, a vital signal had been set against the barbarous iconoclasm and general hate against human depiction as expressed in the ideology of the Taliban but also as an encouragement toward tradition and culture of the Afghan people and especially of the people of the Bamiyan Valley. It was from the beginning envisioned as a signal of peace directed toward the people of Bamiyan but also to the world, to overcome the shock after the destruction of the Buddha figures.

During the years it has repeatedly been reported that these figures have retained their significance to the local population as part of the vernacular tradition of the valley, representing mythical legends rather than their original religious meaning as Buddhist icons, reiterating the wish by the people of Bamiyan to fill at least one of the niches again with a figure.¹⁷ These voices are an indication toward a healing process overcoming traumatic events, and it is currently internationally intensively discussed how cultural heritage can have an active role in this process (ICOMOS 2017a). The recommendation of the international community toward the Afghan authorities so far has been that the Western Buddha niche would be consolidated and left empty as a testimony to the tragic act of destruction and to investigate whether or not a partial reassembling of fragments of the Eastern Buddha could be an option for the Eastern Buddha niche.¹⁸ Whatever actions will be undertaken in future, it will result in a new monument in the true sense of the word *monere* (Latin) – *to remember*, commemorating the event of destruction of the legacy from previous times as well as an enduring and memorable example for the wish of the Bamiyan people longing for a peaceful future after the misery of war. It was entirely understandable for the Afghan Government that the local population demands the rebuilding of the Bamiyan Buddha figures in the now empty niches. Dealing with authenticity as a historical process, the connotations of meaning for the figures have changed since the Buddhist monks left the valley. For the local tradition with its own “authenticity,” the two figures were locally known as “*Salsal*” and “*Shamana*,” part of a love story. The demand for rebuilding the figures, therefore, should also be understood on that local background.

With the establishment of the BEWG, a highly effective instrument has been set up which up to today advises through UNESCO the Afghan Government. One of the essential outputs was the development of the Cultural Master Plan (CMP). Not only with the attractiveness of the World Heritage but also with its (present)

¹⁷The local names refer to the Big Buddha as *Shamama* and the Small Buddha as *Salsal* – as protagonists of a romantic love story; see also *Afghanistan's surviving treasures* The Guardian (4 March 2011) and *Disputes damage hopes of rebuilding Afghanistan's Bamiyan Buddhas* The Guardian (10 January 2011).

¹⁸See also the decision of the World Heritage Committee 36 COM 7A.26 and the recommendations of the 11th Bamiyan Expert Working Group Meeting held at Aachen University, Aachen, Germany (10–11 December 2012).

peaceful situation and stability the Bamiyan Valley is a central focus of investment. Added the increasing population pressure, the agricultural land in the valley is in high demand for uses also other than farming. First cases of ground speculation demonstrate the danger of overlaying the local rural system soon by speculative “urban” systems. As demonstrated above, this dilemma only can be solved in a clear identification of a vision to keep the “rural” through the CMP and to invest in the further development of cultural tourism primarily. Since the establishment of the Cultural Master Plan in 2006 development has been accelerated, it is necessary to update the present “status quo” of the plan about the changed reality of the landscape. However, the central vision of the Cultural Master Plan remains as before, to improve the livelihood conditions of the people of Bamiyan through a careful cultural and ecological sensitive tourism approach in a preserved cultural landscape.

For the future development of Bamiyan, it is essential to define thus both a *Rural Development Plan* and an *Urban Development Plan* that are guided both by the leading concept of the Cultural Master Plan. The Rural Development Plan shall concentrate on the improvement of the living conditions of the population in the traditional settlements by focusing on existing needs there (access to drinking water, electricity, sanitation and waste management, access roads, storage for agricultural products). The Urban Development Plan shall concentrate to determine viable functions within the existing, emerging clusters and seeking to establish linkages between them directing the urban development into a spatial network of decentralized clusters each with its specific functional characteristics.

The vision of the Cultural Master Plan is guided by the cultural values of the valley calling for a balanced and careful development that does not consume the available land resources but maintains the landscape as it functions today. For being successful to preserve the cultural landscape for the future, it is fundamentally necessary to concentrate on the communities living in the cultural landscape, by involving them into the debate on the future of the valley since their actions and daily work determines the shaping processes of the landscape.

The Cultural Master Plan, therefore, calls for synergies with all local departments and national as well international agencies to identify projects in support of this vision and propose alternative location outside of the cultural landscape for development needs that are required but in conflict with the landscape preservation objectives.

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Part III
Deliberate Destruction of Heritage and Its
Recovery

World Heritage and Reconstruction: An Overview and Lessons Learnt for the *Bamiyan Valley*



Mechtild Rössler

Abstract UNESCO was established after the World War II at a time of major reconstruction efforts. In the overall context of growing conflicts and intentional destruction in the twenty-first century, new debates and actions by the international community on “reconstruction” of cultural heritage in different contexts emerged. The paper reviews international doctrine and debates by the intergovernmental World Heritage Committee of the 1972 World Heritage Convention following the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan (Afghanistan). The intentional destruction of this important heritage site led also to actions by the international community and to the development of new legal instruments. The paper further retraces the history of the inscription of the site, which was at the time of the destruction not included on UNESCO’s World Heritage List. In 2003 the World Heritage Committee inscribed the valley on both the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger as a World Heritage cultural landscape: the “Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley.” Finally, new and emerging debates around rehabilitation and reconstruction are highlighted.

Keywords World Heritage site · World Heritage Convention · Intentional destruction · Reconstruction · Warsaw Recommendation

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1 Introduction

The origins of UNESCO go back to the International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (CICI), Geneva, in the 1920s, and its International Institute on Intellectual Cooperation in Paris, but the need for a specialized UN agency emerged from the ashes of World War II. A United Nations Conference for the establishment of an educational and cultural organization was convened in London in November 1945, which founded the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Constitution of UNESCO, signed on 16 November 1945, came into force on 4 November 1946. The Constitution clearly defines the purpose of the Organization “*to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture...*”

The emergence of UNESCO is also a direct response to the huge destruction of cultural heritage during World War II and the reconstruction efforts and rebuilding of democratic societies afterwards. In the twenty-first century, we saw the evolution of a new role of culture in security and peace discussions with unprecedented international actions, following the intentional destruction of heritage by armed groups in a number of conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Mali, and others. For the first time in history, Resolution 2347 of the United Nations Security Council, of 24 March 2017, covers exclusively culture and deals with the threats to cultural heritage. This was preceded by the International Criminal Court’s first conviction, in September 2016, of a war crime involving the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage.

In this overall context of growing conflicts and intentional destruction, new debates and actions by the international community on “reconstruction” of cultural heritage in different contexts emerged.

1.1 The Destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan and the Inscription of the Bamiyan Valley on UNESCO’s World Heritage List

The intentional destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in 2001 was clearly a turning point and resulted not only in a worldwide outcry. At the same time, it confirmed the importance of cultural heritage at both the local and the global level. It also resulted in joint actions by the international community, including the development of new legal instruments: The *UNESCO Declaration Concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage*, adopted on 17 October 2003, is a clear illustration of this development. This declaration uses for the first time the term “intentional destruction,”¹ which became later even more relevant with the determined destructions by Daesh in Syria and Iraq of a number of World Heritage sites.

¹ von Schorlemmer 2016, p.46.

While the Bamiyan Buddhas were at the time not included on UNESCO's World Heritage List, they were already included in the national Tentative List of Afghanistan. The site had been nominated in 1982 and evaluated by ICOMOS in 1983, but ICOMOS recommended "*That the proposed cultural property be inscribed on the World Heritage List after the definition of a sufficiently broad zone of protection.*"² Subsequently, the site was nominated not as a monument or an archaeological area but as the "Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley," in the category of cultural landscapes. This was done in direct response to the destruction, with the help of the international community and the technical assistance by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. The ICOMOS evaluation of 2003–20 years after the first one also recommended "*that the property be inscribed on the World Heritage in Danger List considering that it is threatened by the imminent danger of further deterioration, and considering that major operations are necessary for its conservation.*"³ The World Heritage Committee inscribed the site on both the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger and added: "*Further urges the international community and various organizations active in the field of heritage protection in the Bamiyan Valley to continue its co-operation and assistance to the Afghan authorities to enhance the conservation and protection of the property.*"⁴

Now, the key question was what to do in this situation? Not just the Buddhas of Bamiyan were inscribed on the World Heritage List, but the whole valley:

The cultural landscape and archaeological remains of the Bamiyan Valley represent the artistic and religious developments which from the 1st to the 13th centuries characterized ancient Bakhtria, integrating various cultural influences into the Gandhara school of Buddhist art. The area contains numerous Buddhist monastic ensembles and sanctuaries, as well as fortified edifices from the Islamic period. The site is also testimony to the tragic destruction by the Taliban of the two standing Buddha statues, which shook the world in March 2001.⁵

The site became not only a World Heritage Cultural Landscape but also a "site of memory" due to the intentional destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas, which is another aspect, which will need to be taken into account in any recovery processes.

2 Decision-Making on Reconstruction by the World Heritage Statutory Bodies

The request for reconstruction often comes immediately after (intentional) destruction. Cameron states: "*The question remains: to construct or not to reconstruct. Heritage conservation professionals have traditionally been opposed*

²ICOMOS Evaluation, June 1983, see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/208/documents/>

³ICOMOS Evaluation, June 2003, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/208/documents/>

⁴Decision 27 COM 8C.43, available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/628>

⁵Brief Description, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/208>

*to reconstruction because this approach can falsify history and create fictional places that never existed in that form. This opposition began in the nineteenth century and gathered momentum following the oft-repeated guidance from French art historian and archaeologist Adolphe Napoléon Didron that “for ancient monuments, it is better to consolidate than repair, better to repair than to restore, better to restore than to reconstruct.”*⁶

Taking the complexity of the questions of destruction and reconstruction into account, this paper focuses specifically on the notion of reconstruction and reconstruction actions in the framework of the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the practice by the World Heritage Committee in its decision-making.

Since the first sessions of the World Heritage Committee, the discussions on reconstruction have played an important role. The first major debate was in relation to one of the first nominations ever presented to the Committee, the Historic Centre of Warsaw (Poland), totally destroyed during World War II and reconstructed as a symbol of recreation of identity in the fight against National Socialism. At the time, major conceptual debates on the topic emerged as documented by Cameron and Rössler (2013a, b). Based on the experience and discussions related to the inscription of Warsaw, discussions on authenticity issues related to reconstruction led to a paragraph in the Operational Guidelines (UNESCO 2019), which remains until today. Paragraph 86, states: *“In relation to authenticity, the reconstruction of archaeological remains or historic buildings or districts is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances. Reconstruction is acceptable only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture.”*⁷

In parallel, a body of doctrinal texts evolved including by ICOMOS, such as:

- International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (The Venice Charter), 1964
- Declaration of Dresden on the “Reconstruction of Monuments Destroyed by War”, 1982
- Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas (The Washington Charter), 1987
- Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage, 1990
- The Nara Document on Authenticity, 1994
- ICOMOS Charter – Principles for the Analysis, Conservation and Structural Restoration of Architectural Heritage, 2003
- The Valletta Principles for the Safeguarding and Management of Historic Cities, Towns and Urban Areas, 2011
- Riga Charter on authenticity and historical reconstruction in relationship to cultural heritage, 2000

⁶Cameron 2017, p. 57.

⁷Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention <https://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>, paragraph 86

In some cases, these debates and resulting texts progressed in direct relation and discussions with the World Heritage Committee, such as the Nara Document on Authenticity (1994), which was added to the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. For others, they emerged by national entities such as ICOMOS Committees and in relation to broader debates, such as the Declaration of Dresden on the “Reconstruction of Monuments Destroyed by War” (1982).

3 Assessment of Conservation Decisions on “Reconstruction”

Since 1990, when more systematic monitoring emerged within the World Heritage statutory and decision-making bodies, more than 300 reports presented to the Committee related to the term “reconstruction,” which demonstrates that this issue was high on the agenda. However, one can distinguish three different phases and approaches:

- A few discussions took place in the initial phase, when putting into practice the World Heritage Convention.
- A considerable increase was noted after the systematic presentation of state of conservation reports (starting in the 1990s).
- Systematic and intentional destruction of cultural heritage in recent years, which made “Deliberate destruction of heritage” a distinct and specific threat identified in the database of the reports on World Heritage sites.

Although deliberate or intentional destruction is not in the first ranks of threats, it may quickly rise in the years to come. The question of reconstruction becomes critical in the recovery phase, especially for cities and urban ensembles, and in relation to explicit demands by local communities.

If one analyzes the situation of the properties concerned, a number of topics emerge: direct terrorist attacks, damage during conflicts, natural or human-made disasters, and reconstruction policies for cities and sites.

A high number of direct attacks have been carried out against World Heritage sites, namely, in Syria, Iraq, and Mali. Deliberations and decisions by the Committee concerning Timbuktu (Mali) increased since the attacks in 2012, especially due to the fact that the reconstruction was seen as a positive measure by the State Party, local authorities and communities, as well as the international community. The Committee viewed a comprehensive process of reconstruction embedded in an overall action plan, such as the UNESCO-Mali Action Plan, as a positive development. It also requested specifically for a rehabilitation and reconstruction strategy for damaged cultural heritage of North Mali, including the rehabilitation of the World Heritage site of the Tomb of Askia. The June 2015 UNESCO publication “*La Sauvegarde des Biens du Patrimoine Mondial. Un Enjeu Majeur Pour le Mali*” provides further details concerning the complexity of the overall project of the safeguarding, reconstruction and rehabilitation, and restoration and revitalization of

Mali's World Heritage. It also seems that the Committee is more in favor of "reconstruction" when an overall strategy and action plan has been devised, which guides specific actions at individual properties.

In the case of Iraq, a more cautioned approach was taken in the decision-making, such as for Ashur (Qal'at Sherqat), awaiting an improvement of the security situation to allow for rapid assessment of the state of conservation of the sites prior to any further action on the ground. This now fundamentally changed since the International Conference for Reconstruction of Iraq (Kuwait, 12–14 February 2018). The event mobilized nearly USD 30 billion of additional international support bringing together UN bodies, donors, and the international community, united to address the recovery of the country. One of the outcomes is UNESCO's initiative "Revive the spirit of Mosul" to recover and reconstruct the city.

Reconstruction was often interpreted as a positive action requiring global support, which must be considered together with theoretical, methodological, and practical recommendations and guidance developed by the World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, and ICCROM. In some cases, the Committee urged the State Party to refrain from any rapid interventions, such as in the General Decision on the World Heritage properties in the Syrian Arab Republic (39 COM 7A.36). "*Further urges the State Party to safeguard damaged properties through minimal first aid interventions, to prevent theft, further collapse and natural degradation, and refrain from undertaking conservation and reconstruction work until the situation allows, for the development of comprehensive conservation strategies and actions that respond to international standards in full consultation with the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies.*"⁸

The Committee made it clear in nearly all instances that it would not approve plans for rapid reconstruction but only such actions based on thorough conservation strategies, which adhere to international standards and doctrines, as well as overall action plans and strategies. In the meantime, and until such strategies are developed, minimal first-aid interventions are recommended.

The Committee also reviewed the situations following natural disasters. For example, in Kathmandu Valley (Nepal), the "reconstruction issues" did not start with the recent earthquake but long beforehand, as outlined in 2012: "*Further requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre detailed information, including independently prepared heritage impact assessments, for proposed developments for the revised new road, the airport extension or any other major scheme of development, conservation or reconstruction, in particular for the Bhaidegah Temple in accordance with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, for review by the Advisory Bodies.*"⁹

After the devastating earthquake that affected the Kathmandu Valley, reconstruction was not mentioned specifically, even though the recovery phase was already in full swing. "*Takes note of the information provided by the State Party, the World*

⁸ Decision 39 COM 7A.36, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/39COM>

⁹ Decision 36 COM 7B.66.

*Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies concerning the actions undertaken in response to the devastating earthquake and acknowledges the efforts made by the Department of Archaeology of Nepal to ensure the safeguarding of the property in spite of the difficulties being experienced....*¹⁰

One of the questions that the Committee has to address is the approach to take considering the type of site, such as historic cities, archaeological sites, or earthen architecture. In fact, the question emerges – is there a different approach or policy related to “reconstruction” when dealing with different categories or types of sites? In addition, are there diverse approaches in different regions of the world? This addresses an issue especially important for monuments and cities in Eastern Europe, a topic that was already covered by the Riga Charter (2000). The experts drafting the Riga Charter were well aware of attempts to not only reconstruct buildings but to “reconstruct” certain periods of history and national identity.

The most radical approach was taken by the Committee, when considering the Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery in Georgia. It led to the delisting or removal of a part of the property (Bagrati Cathedral), in 2017, which was reconstructed against experts’ advice, ICOMOS, ICCROM, and World Heritage Centre missions, and a number of Committee deliberations and decisions.

4 New Approaches to Reconstruction and Recovery

With the increasing number of decisions directly referring to reconstruction issues, the World Heritage Committee also looked into this question in general terms and requested more in-depth reflections in its decisions, in 2016 (40 COM 7) and in 2017 (41 COM 7). A global conference on “*The challenges of World Heritage recovery. International conference on reconstruction*” was therefore organized from 6 to 8 May 2018, in Warsaw, Poland. The purpose of this meeting was to review previous discussions and conclusions on recovery and reconstruction at UNESCO World Heritage properties. The event also attempted to develop the most appropriate and universal guidelines that would enable addressing properties of outstanding universal value and the consequences of destruction.

The conference proposed an integrative approach to recovery, highlighting both challenges and opportunities and reviewing theoretical approaches and methodologies. In many case studies, the processes of recovery were analyzed, and experts took stock of past experiences, including from Warsaw (Poland), Dubrovnik (Croatia), Timbuktu (Mali), Kathmandu (Nepal), or Haiti, also looking into questions of history and memory as well as communities and cultural rights. Considering the situations of Mosul (Iraq) or Aleppo (Syria), the challenges of urban heritage recovery were among the most urgent, and these were addressed by UNESCO and other agencies including UN Habitat and the World Bank.

¹⁰<https://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/119/>

The outcome of the meeting “*Warsaw Recommendation on Recovery and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage*”¹¹ was subsequently presented to the World Heritage Committee at its 42nd session (Bahrain 2018) as a critical tool for all stakeholders in the recovery and reconstruction of their cultural heritage. The meeting proposed a non-exhaustive set of principles including terminology, values, conservation doctrine, communities, allowing time for reflection, resilience, capacities and sustainability, memory and reconciliation, documentation, governance, planning, and education. It also addressed recommendations to the World Heritage Committee, the World Heritage Centre and its Advisory Bodies, States Parties, and other bodies including the UN.

The World Heritage Committee welcomed the results of the International Conference on Reconstruction “*The Challenges of World Heritage Recovery*” and the Warsaw Recommendation, which provided clear principles on reconstruction and recovery and requested the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to broadly disseminate it among States Parties, World Heritage stakeholders, and partner organizations. It also encouraged the ongoing cooperation with the World Bank and with United Nations agencies in addressing the challenges of World Heritage recovery and reconstruction.¹² The case studies presented at the Warsaw Conference and the deliberations were subsequently published by the Polish Heritage Board.¹³

5 Lessons Learnt for the Bamiyan Valley Case?

Among the most discussed cases by the international community are evidently the cultural landscape and archaeological remains of the Bamiyan Valley, in Afghanistan. This case is different from the Mostar Bridge, which was reconstructed and later inscribed as the Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina) by the World Heritage Committee, using only criterion (vi) for its associated values and none of the remaining criteria for its architectural value. As the Bamiyan Valley was inscribed after the destruction, any reconstruction poses specific issues.

The World Heritage Committee followed closely on all works at the site and Decision 39 COM 7A.39, from 2015, is quite straightforward in terms of reconstruction: “*Takes note of the need to consider future reconstruction policies for the Buddha niches, and reiterates its request to the State Party, when considering options for the treatment of the Buddha niches, to ensure that proposals are based on feasibility studies which include: an agreed overall approach to conservation*

¹¹ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1826>

¹² See Decision 42 COM 7, paragraphs 25–28, see <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7112/>

¹³ The challenges of World Heritage Recovery, International Conference on Reconstruction: the Challenges of World Heritage Recovery, Warsaw, 2018, by M. Marcinkowska and K. Zalaszińska (Eds.), National Heritage Board of Poland, Warsaw 2019.

*and presentation of the property, an appropriate conservation philosophy based on the OUV of the property, [...].*¹⁴

The intentional destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas was not the first and may not be the last in the history of attacks against the heritage of humanity as a whole. It was an announced destruction against the diversity of cultures and against shared heritage, to which the world and the international community as a whole had to react. This was explicitly recognized in the UNESCO Declaration Concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage, adopted on 17 October 2003 at UNESCO's General Conference, and its Preamble states:

Recalling the tragic destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan that affected the international community as a whole,

Expressing serious concern about the growing number of acts of intentional destruction of cultural heritage,

Referring to Article I(2)(c) of the Constitution of UNESCO that entrusts UNESCO with the task of maintaining, increasing and diffusing knowledge by "assuring the conservation and protection of the world's inheritance of books, works of art and monuments of history and science, and recommending to the nations concerned the necessary international conventions",

Recalling the principles of all UNESCO's conventions (...).¹⁵

The Declaration then proclaimed, "*The international community recognizes the importance of the protection of cultural heritage and reaffirms its commitment to fight against its intentional destruction in any form so that such cultural heritage may be transmitted to the succeeding generations.*"¹⁶

It needs to be considered together with all six UNESCO Cultural Conventions and the most recent UN Security Council Resolutions on cultural heritage.

The Bamiyan Buddhas Symposium (Tokyo, 2017) provided an excellent opportunity to review all available possibilities and options. The meeting considered a wide range of different conservation and treatment proposals for the recovery of the site, ranging from no reconstruction at all (while conserving all remaining elements in the niches) to technical solutions including anastylosis, using all the original elements to the greatest degree possible, or totally rebuilding the Buddhas at another location.

As there are intense ongoing debates globally, further reflections may be needed. This was also recognized by the World Heritage Committee at its session in 2018, when it welcomed:

...the organization of the International Symposium "The Future of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues: Technical Considerations and Potential Effects on Authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value" (OUV), held in Tokyo in September 2017 as part of the UNESCO/Japan FiT project, acknowledges the Symposium's recommendations, which notably invite the State Party and international partners to deepen the reflection on the possible reconstruction

¹⁴Decision 39 COM 7A.39.

¹⁵UNESCO Declaration Concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage, adopted on 17 October 2003, Preamble, http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=17718&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

¹⁶See Footnote 15 above.

of the Bamiyan Buddha statues; and further requests the State Party to conduct extensive consultation with local communities, civil society, as well as spiritual leaders and other stakeholders and to submit any selected proposals or options for review by the Advisory Bodies before any irreversible decision is made;¹⁷

6 Conclusions

The current intense debate on reconstruction and recovery is closely related to intentional destruction of heritage. Rapid “reconstruction” is often requested in these instances by local communities, diverse stakeholders, and national authorities. Nevertheless, we have to avoid fast decision-making and encourage in-depth reflection on the best methodology, approaches, and practices in post-conflict recovery plans.

Countries with devastating conflicts require strong support to build reconciliation and peace. Cultural heritage has suffered collateral damage and has been the target of deliberate and dramatic destruction. It is our shared responsibility to do everything in our power to mitigate the risks of the destruction of cultural heritage, prevent its looting, and keep alive its traditions and practices. When recovery time comes, cultural heritage often becomes a strong symbol and a tool for the rebuilding of communities, helping them to actively break the cycle of violence and restore peaceful living. Culture, understood in the broadest sense of the term, is essential for building peace, dialogue, and sustainable development.

Symbolic acts such as the rebuilding of the Old Mostar Bridge (Bosnia and Herzegovina), as well as the reconstruction of the Old Town of Warsaw (Poland), and the inscription of these two properties on the World Heritage List contributed in a way to reconciliation and helped communities to come to terms with collective trauma. Initiatives to safeguard, protect, and rebuild Mali’s cultural heritage are a more recent example of the potential of culture to deal with the collective sufferings in conflict situations.

In the midst of conflicts, we know that plans for rehabilitation and reconstruction are on the horizon. We cannot get there unprepared: we need a joint-vision, based on theoretical and practical guidance, methodologies, and operational frameworks. Rebuilding plans are likely to start quickly, and paradoxically, reconstruction can have advert effects on cultural heritage. It requires in-depth research, multidisciplinary cooperation, and integrated planning involving many different actors, stakeholders, and communities.

The unprecedented rate of destruction since World War II, and especially intentional destruction, has raised specific questions that need to be addressed in a broader framework. At UNESCO, post-conflict reconstruction by building knowledge through damage assessment and documentation, and by identifying key-needs and priorities with related expertise, is given priority. Since 2014, we have started collecting information on Syrian cultural heritage and organized a specific meeting

¹⁷Decision: 42 COM 7A.1 <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7174>

on reconstruction of Aleppo, in 2015. Our longstanding partner ICOMOS organized several Workshops on Post-trauma Reconstruction, in 2016; ICCROM and Louvre Lens, in 2017; and the 2016 Montreal University Roundtable assisted us in addressing fundamental issues and fostered our discussions and understanding. The 2018 Warsaw Conference brought together diverse views and actors and drew up principles, which can be considered by all concerned.

There are still some open questions, which we need to further address in the future:

Is the existing paragraph 86 of the current Operational Guidelines (2019) adequate; is this paragraph satisfactory for today's situation of destruction at an unprecedented global scale? Should the concepts of authenticity and integrity be reviewed, while envisaging changes to the Operational Guidelines?

Shall we revisit existing doctrinal texts, including the "Riga Charter on Authenticity and Historical Reconstruction in Relationship to Cultural Heritage: Riga, Latvia, October 2000" and their relevance today; and do we need to prepare updates or consider new charters on post-conflict reconstruction?

The unprecedented intentional destruction requires also special attention to public debates, including those among experts, authorities, the interested public, as well as communities living in and around World Heritage sites on reconstruction, rehabilitation, rebuilding, restoration and resilience, and other conservation approaches in the context of broader recovery programs. We have to provide the basis for informed discussions, awareness-raising, and decision-making with all available options.

We need to continue debates and ensure further guidance to the World Heritage Committee, to address pressure from governments for rapid rebuilding and reconstruction and establish joint approaches among the advisory bodies and UNESCO on methods, methodologies, and frameworks to assist governments.

Finally, we also need to have broad joint approaches and frameworks among different organizations working on the ground, whether within the UN system (UNDP, UN Mine Action, UN Habitat, UNESCO) and other international organizations and beyond (Aga Khan Foundation, GIZ, KFW, Getty), especially in the treatment of destroyed historic cities. People are coming rapidly into these areas to reclaim their heritage and livelihoods.

We all need to join forces to address the huge challenges of today's heritage destruction and conservation approaches for tomorrow's past and future heritage.

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Palmyra: From War and Destruction to Rehabilitation



Maamoun Abdulkarim

Abstract Palmyra is one of the most important cities on the World Heritage List; the city is distinguished by its ancient history, its vast site, and its archaeological buildings dating back mainly to the Roman era. It was famous for being the city of caravans and the important point of contact between East and West. It played an important political, economic, and cultural role during its history. This city is occupied by ISIS in 2015 and 2016, where they destroyed many important buildings such as temples, tower tombs, the Arc de Triomphe, part of the front of the theater, the destruction of dozens of statues in the National Museum, etc. In this research, we talk about the importance of this city, the damages that were caused to it, what are the procedures of rescue and documentation work, and our vision to providing a coherent framework and action plan to preserve the archaeological site, starting with repairs, protection, and restoration and ending with rehabilitation by setting short-, medium-, and long-term plans. Our plans of rehabilitating the ancient city of Palmyra will be based on international scientific standards approved by international organizations, such as the UNESCO, ICOMOS, and ICCROM.

Keywords Palmyra · History · Archaeology · Destruction · Rescue · Rehabilitation

1 Introduction

During the first three centuries AD, Palmyra, the Pearl of the Desert, experienced an economic and political boom, reflected in its architectural, urban, and artistic development. It was also manifested in the city's classical grid-plan, with its colonnaded

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Fig. 1 Palmyra general view

streets and porticos giving the city a special charm. Several notable religious structures were built, such as the Temple of Bel, the Temple of Baalshamin, the Temple of Nabu, the Temple of al-Lāt, and others. In addition, the city was marked with its unique and well-designed funerary architecture. Public buildings in Palmyra included the Roman Theater, the Agora, the Baths, and the Camp of Diocletian, to name but a few (Fig. 1).

Palmyrene sculpture was distinguished by its splendor and the richness of its decorative and artistic elements, which painted a clear picture of the Palmyrene people. That was embodied in their clothing and jewelry as well as the Greco-Roman and Parthian influences. The Palmyrene art, sculpture in particular, however, retained its local identity and evolved into an artistic trend according to researchers and scholars who have worked at the site for years.

Palmyra, under Queen Zenobia, grew in importance in the third-century AD and played a strategic role in the relations between the Roman Empire and the Parthian and later Sasanian Empire. It defied Rome and declared its independence from the Roman Empire. Palmyra was also a key caravan stop linking the East with the West and represented a fusion of western and eastern arts.

ISIS' occupation of the city of Palmyra in May 2015 led to a real tragedy that struck a great civilization. Deliberate destruction and looting of cultural heritage occurred on a large scale during their control of the city.

The fall of Palmyra, a World Heritage Site, has had a dangerous impact on the Syrian archeological heritage. After the terrorist group known as ISIS entered the city and occupied it, the fate of this historic city, which has a special place in world heritage, drifted toward the unknown. This is a real tragedy for a civilization that

deserves to be protected in every way possible, particularly for the fact that it contributed important cultural achievements in several fields to humanity. It also embodied, for centuries, a link between the East and West, becoming one of the main cities that hosted caravans during the Roman era and gaining fame for its breadth, diversity, and the multiplicity of its buildings that included temples, theaters, etc.

The situation in the spring of 2015 was characterized by an escalation of events in many areas in Syria. Armed groups gained control over Idlib and Bosra in late March, 2015, and the fate of hidden museum collections became unknown, especially after the expulsion of the staff of Idlib's Department of Antiquities. Thus, the DGAM communicated with the local community in order to protect the antiquities in Idlib, and it succeeded in keeping the staff working in the city of Bosra in order to keep the ancient city neutral and safe from vandalism and looting. The DGAM also transported the remainder of the artifacts in other museums in Deir ez-Zor, and 30,000 artifacts were finally transported to a safe place after documenting and packing them. It did the same with other museums such as those in Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Daraa, etc. Concerning the Museum of Palmyra, we worked determinedly to transport the artifacts from the museum to Damascus after the bitter experience we had had in Idlib, not knowing that the city would be occupied by ISIS in about a month and a half. Hence, from the beginning of the month of April, warehouses were opened and the artifacts taken out and packaged in boxes in preparation for their transport to Damascus in order to preserve them. This was an important step to take, especially for the fact that the Museum of Palmyra was deemed one of the most important museums in Syria for the massive amounts of statues, dating back to the Roman era, it housed.

The DGAM had managed before the fall of Palmyra to save more than 400 statues and hundreds of artifacts that had been moved to safe locations, as hundreds of artifacts and statues were packed in storage boxes and taken to Damascus. However, the sudden arrival of ISIS terrorists in Palmyra made it impossible to evacuate large statues as well as a few severely damaged heads of statues fixed on the walls of the museum halls.

The terrorist organization had destroyed tens of artifacts that were displayed on the ground floor using hard tools such as hammers. The shrapnel was dispersed all over the museum among shattered glass and broken furniture. Fortunately, the ruined statues are not completely destroyed. The Lion of al-Lāt, dating back to the first century AD, was smashed.

The museum building was badly damaged, too, due to clashes; the ceiling, doors, and windows crashed in many places; and pieces of stone were scattered everywhere mixed with pieces of broken statues. It is worth noting that the militants converted the museum into a court and jail, where they interrogated archaeologist Khaled al-Asaad and others (Fig. 2).

They also destroyed a number of archaeological buildings, including the temples of Bel (Fig. 3) and Baalshamin (Fig. 4), the Monumental Arch, and some tower tombs (Fig. 5). They carried out clandestine excavations at the archaeological site and committed murders, such as the brutal murder of Khaled al-Asaad.



Fig. 2 Museum Palmyra, © ICONEM



Fig. 3 Palmyra – Temple of Bel – © ICONEM

We remember well how people worldwide were moved and how they reacted passionately toward these events, which was evident in the hundreds of news items spread in global media platforms, which had a significant role in triggering people's emotions all over the world. For the first time since the onset of the crisis in 2011, we felt that we were no longer alone in defending an important part of the world



Fig. 4 Temple Baalshamin



Fig. 5 Palmyra Triumph Arch 16 March 2017

culture heritage in Syria. For several years before the fall of the city of Palmyra, we, researchers and employees in the country, had undergone bitter experience defending the Syrian heritage, since we, due to the Syrian crisis, had been abandoned by many except for international organizations such as the UNESCO, ICOMOS, and ICCROM in Italy and Sharjah, the Interpol, the World Monuments Fund (WMF) in

New York and its branch in London, the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage in Bahrain, cultural associations such as the Associazione Priorita Cultura in Rome, European universities and international archeological institutes, and others. Throughout the years of the crisis, we have been visited by only few researchers, but the tragedy of Palmyra was a new occasion to push many people to embark with us on a search for new horizons of cooperation to ensure the success of the projects of the Syrian DGAM and save what could be saved of the Syrian heritage.

World press has indeed played a pivotal and positive role in most countries to inform the international community of the truth of the cultural massacres being committed against the Syrian heritage by antiquities gangs and ideological extremism. Hundreds of journalists increasingly visited Syria during 2015 and 2016, and we have always reminded everyone not to abandon us in this cultural battle we lead to protect the Syrian heritage for all Syrians irrespective of any ideological differences among them. Also, we have always encouraged everyone to defend this heritage, which has made all Syrians unite forces to defend their identity and shared memories. This stems from our conviction that the Syrian crisis will end 1 day and peace will prevail all throughout Syria, fixing what has been destroyed during the crisis, but every loss against our heritage will be irrevocable because it touches the history of this nation and its culture.

2 The Liberation of the City and Measures Taken by the DGAM

Palmyra remained under ISIS' control for 10 months which were full of destruction and under the threat of new tragedies until it was freed on 27 March 2016, ending a page of the black history the city experienced.

The Syrian government managed to reclaim the city, and in early April 2016, we were able to enter the site and examine the museum. When we entered the place, the museum looked in a miserable state. It had suffered major damage in its constructional structure, especially on the second floor and in the halls of the museum on the first floor, and the wreckage of artifacts and statues was all over the place.

The rescue work plan, carried out over a span of 60 days by the national team in cooperation with Polish experts from the University of Warsaw, relied on many actions taken, such as cleaning work; emergency rescue procedures for the building, museum holdings, and debris in all the halls of the museum; and sifting the debris to collect as many broken pieces of artifacts that were destroyed or damaged as possible, in addition to carrying out an inventory and rapid documentation of the museum pieces. The terrorist organization had destroyed around 200 archeological artifacts that were displayed on the ground floor using hard tools such as hammers. The shrapnel was dispersed all over the museum among shattered glass and broken furniture. Fortunately, the ruined statues are not completely destroyed. The Lion of al-Lāt, dating back to the first century AD, was smashed; however, the pieces are still in their place, along with the pieces of the head of the Greek goddess Athena.

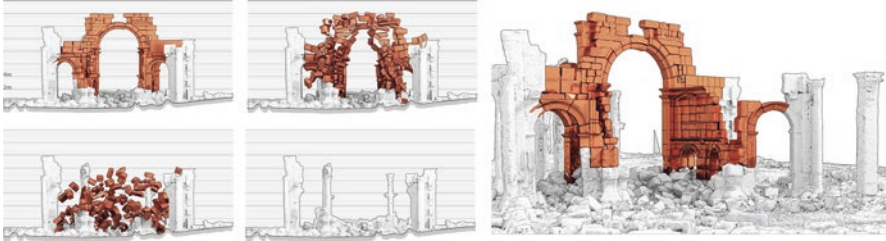


Fig. 6 Palmyra Triumph Arch Reconstitution – © ICONEM

As for the lower floor of the museum, the statues were dispersed in all its halls. In the meantime, a supportive team of engineers and technicians, made up of 90 members coming from Damascus and Homs, identified and assessed the risks (threats that affected the museum and its collections) within the halls and storage area. Also, an emergency intervention was carried out within the museum building by closing the damaged areas and locking the doors. The living conditions of the work team there were harsh, with no electricity or food as a result of the lack of infrastructure and basic services within the city of Palmyra, in addition to the lack of local residents most of whom were forced to flee.

To identify the amount of damage and document it, and to record the state of the site, the team used a 3D documentation process in collaboration with ICONEM (a French architectural firm based in Paris and run by Mr. Yves Ubelmann). This mission aimed at documenting the state of the archeological site and the museum immediately after liberating the city to provide accurate documents for experts and scientists that assist in the process of rehabilitation before any intervention or cleaning of the site (Fig. 6).

Fortunately, we made a decision to transport more than 400 statues and hundreds of artifacts that had been moved to safe locations, as hundreds of artifacts and statues were packed in storage boxes and taken to Damascus. However, the sudden arrival of ISIS terrorists to Palmyra made it impossible to evacuate large statues as well as a few severely damaged heads of statues fixed on the walls of the museum halls. This is intended to take place under the supervision of Syrian and foreign experts, particularly those who have worked at the site for decades. In addition, the restoration of the damaged statues will be funded by UNESCO. At the end of our work, after the first liberation of the city, the museum was completely emptied, and everything was transferred to Damascus and Homs.

3 The Second Fall of Palmyra on 11 December 2016

ISIS militant groups reoccupied the city of Palmyra on 11 December 2016, forcing us to experience another shock as we are sure they are going to destroy other buildings and structures in the same way they destroyed significant monuments when they took the city for the first time. This time, they demolished a tetrapylon and the

façade of the Roman theatre. We have also started to witness some of their criminal and destructive acts in the ancient city, which lives critical moments and a bleak nightmare, while awaiting its second liberation, which, we hope, will be soon.

Thus, within the framework of a culture war independent from any political nature, we aspire to see some international action aimed at rescuing the city from a potential calamity. This is owing to the fact that liberating Palmyra means rescuing one of the key constituents of world civilization from destruction and damage. Besides, we are positive that international and foreign policies change; nevertheless, heritage remains as a unifying factor and a collective identity for all Syrians, as well as a reconciliation project and a world legacy shared by all.

4 The Second Liberation of Palmyra on 2 March 2017

On March 2, the city was liberated again and we were able to enter the site. ISIS destroyed the stage backdrop of the second-century theater which suffered sustained damage along with the tetrapylon, a cube-shaped ancient Roman monument that sits in the middle of the colonnade road that leads to the theater, only 4 of the 16 columns of the tetrapylon remain standing.

5 Vision

The national strategy for protecting and rehabilitating the archaeological site of Palmyra is looking forward to preserving the archaeological heritage as a source of valuable and comprehensive environmental, economic, social, and political renewal. This will contribute to improving the quality of life and the environment in the local community.

The main objectives of this plan are the following: (a) identifying, protecting, and rehabilitating the monumental archaeological heritage which was damaged by the perpetrations of the terrorist organization ISIS; (b) promoting restoration projects and the strategy of maintenance and rehabilitation; (c) implementing all the necessary measures to protect the archaeological site in the best conditions possible and in accordance with the principles and methods of the restoration of exceptional values; (d) ensuring the participation of the local community in the stages of the plan; (e) providing decision-makers and the public opinion with the requirements of the project in order to have a wide range of participation of stakeholders and international organizations through financial and technical contributions; and (f) in addition providing a coherent framework and action plan to preserve the archaeological site, starting with repairs, protection, and restoration and ending with rehabilitation by setting short-, medium-, and long-term plans. Our plans of rehabilitating the ancient city of Palmyra, a World Heritage Site since 1980, will be based on

international scientific standards approved by international organizations, such as the UNESCO, ICOMOS, and ICCROM.

Finally, we, the staff of the DGAM, comprised of almost 2500 employees including architects, engineers, and archaeologists, are determined to defend this world heritage notwithstanding the war and its life-threatening atrocities. We have also set aside our political differences and remained united all over Syria, whether in the government-held areas or nongovernment-controlled ones. This is because we have opted to stand against the division of our heritage and stressed that Syria has a unique heritage that brings all Syrians together with no exception. Our efforts were successful as we managed to transport more than 90% of the holdings of the museums to safe locations in Damascus. As for the artifacts preserved in some of the other museums, including Idlib and Bosra, they are still safe thanks to the local community and its elite as well as our employees, who still report for duty. We hope that these efforts shall eventually be crowned with victory for all Syrians and the international community.

Hence, we believe that as our specialist and experienced colleagues and friends stand by us in such dire circumstances, obstacles impeding our rescue mission of this human heritage shall fade away.

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Role of the Traditional Masonry Corporation in the Process of Reconstruction of the Destroyed Mausolees in Timbuktu, Mali



Lassana Cissé

Abstract The military coup of March 22, 2012, and the yearlong occupation of the northern regions of Mali were followed by the destruction of cultural heritage properties, among them several mausoleums in Timbuktu. As a result, rebuilding damaged cultural heritage properties was one of the many challenges Mali had to face after the liberation of the occupied zones.

Rehabilitation of these properties, particularly the four World Heritage Sites of Mali (Old City of Djenné, Timbuktu, Bandiagara Cliffs, Tomb of Askia), was given government priority. Timbuktu and the Tomb of Askia in Gao had been severely damaged by the armed conflict, and the two sites were placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in July 2012 at the 36th Session of the World Heritage Committee held in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Most of the mausoleums, which represent important components of the cultural heritage of Timbuktu, were destroyed. As local cultural practices and rituals were prohibited during the occupation, collective maintenance work of monuments and related buildings by community members could not be done. Ancient manuscripts were burned or taken away, but fortunately most of them were secured and sent to the capital city Bamako until the situation improves in Timbuktu.

Under these circumstances, the Malian Government submitted a request to UNESCO who, in turn, called for the assistance of the international community. Several initiatives were taken, including *A Day of Support for Mali's heritage*,

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launched in February 18, 2013 in Paris, which brought together international experts. The meeting led to the approval of “Action Plan for the Rehabilitation of Cultural Heritage and Safeguarding of Ancient Manuscripts in Mali.” Funding and technical assistance for the implementation of the Action Plan were provided by Swiss Cooperation, France, Germany, EU, MINUSMA, Bahrain, Croatia, Andorra, AWHF, ICOMOS, ICOM, ICCROM, CRAterre, USAID, Ford Foundation, Hill Museum (USA), Mauritius and the Republic of South Africa.

Implementation of the first phase of the Action Plan required that the local communities be involved in the process, particularly the masons traditionally organized under the professional corporation of masons, the *guild of masons*. They built the monumental and architectural heritage of the city, and they ensure the maintenance of the monumental buildings, made of local materials, within the city.

The reconstruction strategy of the destroyed mausoleums was designed to favor a participatory approach in order to empower traditional masons and the local workforce from the beginning to the end of the entire process, from March 2013 to September 2015. They worked closely with the national and international architects in charge of the technical supervision of the work. Professional exchanges that took place during the reconstruction of mausoleums allowed visiting architects to better perceive local construction practices and to become familiar with the technical mastery and know-how of the local masons.

Both the technical knowledge and the ritual practices related to traditional masonry were highlighted during the process of reconstruction.

Keywords Heritage · Timbuktu · Mali · Mausoleum · Rebuilding · Recovery · Traditional mason

1 Introduction

In April 2012, the Tuareg separatists groups of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and their Islamic allies (AQMI¹, Ançardine, and MUJAO²) seized the northern regions of Mali and established an Islam obedient to Wahhabism characterized by the rejection of the tolerant Islam practiced everywhere in the northern Mali and more particularly in Timbuktu. Salafist barbarism took a heavy toll on the Islamic cultural heritage of Timbuktu, which includes mosques, mausoleums, and ancient Sufi manuscripts. The mosques were vandalized, the mausoleums and the El Farouk Monument bulldozed, and old manuscripts burned or taken away.

¹ Al Qaïda Islamic Maghreb.

² Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa.

At the liberation of these regions in March 2013, a vast reconstruction movement was undertaken by the Malian authorities and the international community led by UNESCO. In the reconstruction program, the rehabilitation of the heritage was especially important because of the damage caused during the occupation which lasted a year.

One of the principles adopted by UNESCO and the Malian Ministry of Culture was to undertake a reconstruction of the mausoleums in traditional ways, respecting the original specificities of the different sites. It also aimed at observing international conservation standards and principles, in line with the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

The sites of Timbuktu are architectural and earthen buildings that embody the ancestral know-how of the traditional masons. This know-how thus provided for the maintenance of the mausoleums and mosques and embellished the landscape of the medina mainly built in earth and alhor stone.

However, long before the Islamist occupation, the earthen architecture had been marred by the use of cement, concrete, and scrap metal, as well as by wall inscriptions and other advertising signs that reflected the mass culture, globalization, and new economic values induced by the consumer society. The traditional masons sometimes used cement because of economic constraints.

When the reconstruction of the mausoleums and other World Heritage properties began, the role of the traditional mason was reinstated. This was an opportunity to revitalize and revalorize traditional knowledge and practice to the benefit of the conservation process and the sustainable management of cultural heritage resources in general and those of World Heritage in particular.

The expertise of the traditional masons includes the mastery of the techniques of construction in both earth and alhor³ stone and the development of plans. The traditional mason must know the proper methods for cutting alhor stone as a building material and how to find proper sort of earth for the type of building to be restored. The mason must also know how to select and install beams of *rôniers*⁴ and the plant mats for roofs.

More than a simple builder, the traditional mason is a man rooted in his social milieu and his belief systems. These are often metaphysical, based mainly on ancestral ritual practices. The mason is considered to be endowed with supernatural powers that allow him to heal diseases, ward off bad luck, and destroy invisible enemies. All these ancient practices were banned by the Islamist occupation that considers them contrary to orthodox Wahhabi, even satanic. As we can see, the traditional mason's know-how is also a way of life which, even if it is material, is based on an intangible foundation.

³ Limestone used for local building material at Timbuktu.

⁴ Local palm tree used as wood for constructions.

This study therefore aims to identify the knowledge and skills inherent in the traditional masonry method and to show how it is or should be used in the reconstruction, restoration, and maintenance process of heritage buildings, with a view to sustainable conservation essentially ensured by the local communities holding these values.

2 Brief Overview of Timbuktu's History and Traditional Masonry Corporations

Timbuktu is a city steeped in history and mystery. By traditional account, the creation of Timbuktu dates back to the twelfth century. Originally, it was only a small transit center created around a well, hence its name *Tim Bouctou* which literally means in Kel Tamasheq “the well of *Bouctou*,” an old woman Tamasheq to which is attributed the construction of the well. This small camp welcomed the caravans (Azalai) after the long crossing of the desert underwent a spectacular development because of its strategic position in contact with the Sahara and the Niger River.

A reliable relay point between the Maghreb and Sudan, many desired the control of Timbuktu. It was annexed by the Mansa (Kings) of the Empire of Mali who played an important role in furthering its cultural influence. Following his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324–1325, Kankou Moussa (one of the greatest emperors of Mali) built the first mosque, that of Djingareyber. In the fifteenth century, the city was annexed by the Songhay Empire and became one of the most important centers of Islamic culture with many universities including the famous mosque – University of Sankore which welcomed more than 25,000 students from both Sudan (Jenne, Agadès, Walata) only from the Mediterranean world (Fez, Marrakech, Cairo).

After the Moroccan invasion in 1591, Timbuktu became the capital of the Arma state of Pacha Djouder, created by descendants of the Moroccan conquerors.

Timbuktu is a city located between the Sahara Desert and the Niger River; a geographical location that makes it the meeting point and refuge of sedentary traders or craftsmen and nomadic transhumant pastoralists. The landscape was sparsely covered by huts and other round structures that provided protection from the dust and the burning sun of the desert.

The small hamlet of huts that was established here was a place of passage for rich traders and artisans from the south, including those from Jenne, who traded with the Maghreb. These rich merchants, only passing through, wanted to build comfortable places to live while they were there and brought masons from Jenne where the earthen architecture was already established. They constructed in the present district of *Badjindé* the first buildings in earth. The mud house became associated with wealth, a sign of belonging to the local aristocracy made up of the *Maiga* and *Wangara* families who still populate this district that is the epicenter of Timbuktu.

Although a Muslim city, animism was the traditional religion and was practiced there particularly by craftsmen and those coming from localities bordering the Niger River. In this system of belief, any form of manual labor and especially the work of the earth is regarded as sacred and remains linked to immaterial metaphysical practices. Those who work the earth are supposed to have supernatural powers as evidenced by their skill that gives them the ability to rise higher than everyone to build a wall, or sink into the bowels of the earth to make the foundations. The mason is therefore considered a supernatural man who builds the houses but also ward off bad luck, someone able to come into contact with beneficent spirits to drive out the evil ones.

Under the influence of masons from Jenne, the architecture of the small hamlet changed gradually but significantly. The social structure changed also with the emergence of a new class of craftsmen who impelled the local economy. The fame of the city grew. It attracted those voracious for wealth. Emperor Kankou Moussa⁵ on his pilgrimage to Mecca seized the city and on his return built the famous Djingareyber Mosque in 1325. He did this with the help of an Andalusian architect Abu Ishaq Es-Saheli or Es Seqli, who reorganized the corporation of masons and introduced them to new architectural techniques including arcades, warheads, hinges, and wall inscriptions; houses that had previously been on one level now had at least one floor.

The search for sources of better clay led to the discovery of the alhor stone, a porous and corrosive material but which will be used to consolidate the walls. A masonry guild led by the Koba Hou family established around the mosque and still provides daily maintenance and annual renovation.

A few decades later, a woman from Walata – now in Mauritania – sponsored the construction of Sankore Mosque by the local masonry corporation. The Sankore Mosque eventually came under the control of the Askia dynasty. It had become a university that was the center of most of the intellectual and cultural power of the city. Several disciplines were taught there, and the opinions of the scholars at the university had the force of law. To advance the development of earthen architecture, the masons, involved in the construction and maintenance of this mosque from the Hamane Hou family, kept some leadership on all matters related to earthen architecture.

Thus two powerful mason corporations were born with Koba Hou in Djingareyber and Hamane Hou in Sankore. The two wings of the guilds are autonomous, but Hamane Hou alone has the power and the authority to speak on behalf of all the masons. The corporation is governed by guiding principles and a code of ethics passed down by oral tradition that are rigorously respected.

⁵Mandingo king, one of successors of Sunjata Kéita, founder of the Mali Empire in thirteenth century.



3 The Origin of the Traditional Masonry or How to Become Mason

Today the masons' corporation is open to all those who are interested in the profession but formerly, and as for all traditional vocations, knowledge and practices were transmitted exclusively from father to son. Still today, however, any young person from a family of masons should learn the profession at an early age. The classic curriculum is that every morning the young person of 10–12 years should prepare the tools of his master – who is not necessarily his father – and go to the site to observe, make commissions, and transport the banco (the mixture of clay and rice straw traditionally used in making bricks and on the façade of houses), bricks and alhor stone.

At the age of 15, he is allowed to ride a donkey outside the city to find good quarries of alhor and land, to enter the quarries and extract the best stone, and then to transport it back by camel. He is then introduced to the work of kneading clay into banco and carving alhor stone. This is done without being remunerated; his pay

always goes to his master who, on holidays, can make him a *boubou* (a garment) or pay his medical expenses in case of illness.

After completing his Koranic studies, usually between the ages of 20 and 25, he is introduced to the secret sciences of the corporation, sciences that consist essentially of esoteric words that when uttered ensure safety on the building sites, ward off bad luck, eliminate possible enemies, and heal wounds and scorpion and snake bites. He is then entitled to “climb on a wall and climb a wall.”

4 The Basic Elements of the Process of Employing Traditional Masons in the Reconstruction of Timbuktu’s Mausoleums

The involvement of the Timbuktu traditional masonry guilds in the process of rebuilding the mausoleums was a challenge in light of the World Heritage status of the property, which include the famous 3 mosques and the 16 mausoleums registered since 1988.

The first basic principle was that the involvement and empowerment of the masons in the process was essential because these masons belonged to families and guilds that developed a culture that dates back to the original structures in Timbuktu and other localities of the Niger River Valley. These masons, whose ancestral knowledge and know-how is transmitted from generation to generation, were to be the core of construction efforts for all the mausoleums destroyed in 2012 in Timbuktu.

Secondly, the strong participation of masons presented an incredible opportunity to boost and promote the local economy hard hit by both the crisis of lost tourism and the insecurity resulting from the armed conflict.

The last principle supporting the use of traditional masons in the project was the desire to perpetuate ancestral building practices that had been subject to the effects of what were feared to be irreversible mutations due to several endogenous and exogenous factors.

5 Role of the Traditional Masons’ Guilds in the Process of Reconstruction of the Destructed Mausolees in Timbuktu

The reconstruction of the mausoleums was an opportunity to update the traditional masonry know-how and practices. From the beginning of the project, it was decided to do everything possible to maintain these traditional practices.

First, the expertise and leadership of the masons' guilds were respected. The two corporate heads were immediately made supervisors of all the work. Each mausoleum manager designated his family mason for the reconstruction work. They recruited the workers of their choice and, with the architects, ordered the necessary materials for the work. A beverage consisting of a cream of millet was served on all sites. Local materials, earth, alhor stone, and earth from the land of Bourem with traditional ingredients and adjuvants including baobab powder, shea butter, and rock salt, are exclusively used in the construction...

Rituals for launching and closing work were also planned. Two important events attended the process of reconstruction of mausoleums in Timbuktu. These were the prayer ceremony followed by the burial of the seven cereals in the foundation of the first two mausoleums (Baba Idje and Al Fulani) adjoining the mosque of Djingareyber and the sacralization ceremony held inside the same mosque.

The traditional masonry method is based on intangible culture, practices that provide the foundation for the techniques and methods of construction in Timbuktu. The immaterial is also essential to the creation of the masons' corporations as well in Jenne as in Timbuktu. Initiation ceremonies, rites of passage, and beliefs related to the supernatural are managed within a social class (sometimes endogamous) that retains a monopoly on the art of building and preserving habitat and other forms of life buildings built within the city.

In the ancestral belief of Timbuktu, the mausoleums and tombs of scholars who have figured greatly in the history of the city form a protective whole for the city and protect it from all misfortune. The 14 main saints (one of whom, Sidi Yahia, has the special status of main saint of the city) represent the cultural diversity of Timbuktu and thus testify to the openness of this city to those from abroad and its ability to establish favorable conditions for the "living together" of several complementary communities.

Moving forward, the safeguarding plan must necessarily rely on intangible heritage elements as part of a very long-term strategy for the restoration of mausoleums and other buildings in the region. This is important because the work of restoration has always been organized on the basis of cultural references drawn from intangible cultural expressions. It is therefore a question of better structuring certain cultural events and the traditional cultural context in which construction is done. This cultural endogeny will promote the sustainable protection and management of ancient sites and monuments in Timbuktu and other cities.



6 The Ritual and Intangible Manifestations of Traditional Masonry

In Timbuktu, each socio-professional community has a dance of its own. For the masons, it is the *Dimba*, which is exclusively reserved for their guild. It is done in all the celebratory social events directly involving a mason (festive gatherings of masons, during collective work on the mosques of Sankore or Djingareyber, marriages, circumcisions). It can also be done for the reception of a distinguished guest such as one holding a notable administrative or political position. The *Dimba* was born in the mosque of Djingareyber, and it is often the guild of this district that summons the dancers. *Cola* nuts are sent to convene the dancers.

This festive ceremony is usually held during the official opening of the building, once the construction work has been completed. On occasion, the keys of the house are officially and symbolically handed to the owner.

7 Stages of Intangible Practices in the Construction Process at Timbuktu

Traditional masonry as practiced by the masons of Timbuktu is a process that takes several steps, from the foundation of a house through the roof to the finishing works which consist of the coatings and the fixing of the furniture on the openings. These

stages are marked by ceremonies and significant ritual practices, some of which are esoteric and others that are more secular such as dances and ceremonies of sacralization.

In general, daily prayers punctuate the stages of masonry. They are based on the wishes of the mason and the objectives he sets to carry out the work without major incident.

(a) *The ritual ceremony of seven cereals for the realization of the foundations of the walls*

In the ritual practices of masonry in Timbuktu, at the start of any significant construction site, the masons bury grain products. The number of these products must be odd. Among the most popular cereals are sorghum, rice, wheat, beans, cotton, millet, and maize.

According to the traditions collected from some old masons in Timbuktu, the number seven is most often mentioned. But in reality, it varies according to the abundance or shortage of certain cereals (periods of good or bad harvests). The figure can greatly exceed seven but remains odd. This is to signify the unshakeable links between the economic power of agricultural production and the resources necessary to the construction process. This can also determine the dimensions of the building to be built. A monumental building can receive more than seven agricultural products, while a small building can receive less (five or three).



(b) *Ceremonies of sacralization for some buildings to mark the end of the construction site*

In Timbuktu, the end of great masonry projects is marked by a ceremony of sacralization that is summarized by a collective prayer of the Holy Quran. The ceremony usually takes place on site and includes several religious leaders and members of the masons' guilds. It is often an opportunity for a feast organized by the

owner or managers of the building when it is public (mosque, mausoleum or house of lineage, etc.). Prayers are said by scholars of the city who master the *surates* of the Quran.

Some ceremonies marking the end of construction work may be a family celebration or a festive meeting when the mason with authority over the work at the site is satisfied with the quality of the work done or when the site has provided him with substantial income. This is an expression of solidarity and sharing within the guild.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that ceremonies of sacralization are not obligatory; they depend upon the goodwill or initiative of the owner or managers of the buildings constructed.

(c) *Other immaterial practices related to traditional masonry: totemic practices related to traditional masonry*

In the masons' guilds of Jenne and Timbuktu, and in some other circles of traditional masonry, totemism is quite developed. Ancient beliefs include, for example, that any animal or living being that knows how to climb must be the object of protection on the part of the mason. For example, it is strictly forbidden for a traditional mason to kill a lizard, or a *margouillat*⁶. These reptiles are considered "masons" because they rarely fall from the heights of a built wall. In this spirit and according to this perception, the lizard and the *margouillat* are supposed to protect the mason when he is on the scaffold.

A traditional mason must not crush an ant when it is climbing. Traditionally, masons have scrupulous respect for the preservation of certain elements of the natural environment.

8 Conclusion

Traditional masons played a leading role in the process of rebuilding and rehabilitating mausoleums in Timbuktu. Their guilds, which date to the original development and dissemination of technical and cultural construction practices throughout the Niger River Valley centuries ago, have been able to ensure strong community participation in the reconstruction of the 16 mausoleums destroyed in 2012.

The efforts of these masons have been recognized both locally and nationally. UNESCO honored them with a medal at the 40th session of the World Heritage Committee held in June 2015 in Bonn, Germany.

Without the participation of the Timbuktu masonry guilds in the reconstruction program of the destroyed mausoleums, the successful restoration of them would be hard to imagine.

The Timbuktu masons, contributing to the reconstruction of the mausoleums, have above all strengthened the professional capacities of young masons while ensuring the transmission of ancestral knowledge and know-how in the field of the sustainable conservation of the thousand-year-old architectural heritage.

⁶Local lizard

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Jewish Attitudes to the Reconstruction of Synagogues in post World War II Europe



Michael Turner

Abstract Kristallnacht, 1938, was a defining moment, changing the course of history. Can the Jewish heritage destroyed before and during World War II be reconstructed? This paper will link eschatological thought and the relevant Mishnaic texts, in particular the value of holiness and its attributes both in time and place. Can a synagogue be de-sanctified? Is the value in the material or the use?

Reviewing these tragic events, the possible criteria for reconstructing the architectural components of Jewish life should be considered, through the evidence of history, the record of events, values of the past, and the new realities of the future. Another significant concern is not so much in understanding the changing and diverse values of a community but the approaches toward the interpretations of these values. In this debate, where existential or historical models play a major role, Judaism tends toward the former, recalling events over time and the allegory in the facts.

What remained in Europe were the ruins, the memory of places and events, and the resilience of the human spirit. However, there are compounded memories and multiple voices, ever changing, challenging the identities of real and virtual communities. How do we evaluate the facts and the extended contexts over time that demand renegotiation of their meaning and interpretation?

On current projections, the Jews may become an insignificant number in European society over the course of the twenty-first century. Can these buildings, as reconstructed, live without the spirit of the people; can new people inhabit the reconstructions, or is the ruin the true manifestation of the course of history? The divergent case studies of the three ShUM cities, Speyer, Worms, and Mainz, in Germany provide a glimpse into the debate and an appraisal of the moment in time.

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There are common attitudes facing recovery and reconstructions for uprooted communities after tragedies that leave scars on history. The case studies of Jewish heritage reconstruction and the considerations of impermanence provide another perspective to the restorations of the Bamiyan Buddhas and together a chilling evidence to the consequences of racism.

Keywords Jewish heritage · Memory · Synagogues · Reconstruction · ShUM cities · Values · Sanctity · Attributes

1 Background

The two world wars of the twentieth century left Europe shattered and millions killed. Kristallnacht – or the Night of Broken Glass – on November 9, 1938, from Vienna to Worms, was a pogrom that represented the crescendo of centuries of anti-Semitism when Jewish homes, hospitals, and schools were razed, with over 1000 synagogues burned and more than 7000 Jewish businesses either destroyed or damaged, subsequently deteriorating into the systematic murdering of Jews and the destruction of Jewish heritage. As Martin Gilbert stated at the time (Gilbert 2006), no other event in the history of German Jews between 1933 and 1945 was so widely reported as it was happening. Despite sending shockwaves across the world, these events did not alter the course of history or prevented the Holocaust that would soon come (Figs. 1, 2 and 3).



Fig. 1 Baden-Baden Synagogue on Kristallnacht, 10 November 1938. (© Public Domain)



Fig. 2 Burning of the Boemestrasse Synagogue, Frankfurt on Kristallnacht, 10 November 1938. (© Public Domain)



Fig. 3 Eastern Buddha niche, Empty eastern niche after the Buddha was destroyed by dynamite over several weeks, starting on 2 March 2001. (© UNESCO/Masanori Nagaoka)

The tragic events of the delegitimization of cultural and religious heritage have been accompanied by the violent destruction of symbolic images. This is the heading to the photographs 1-3

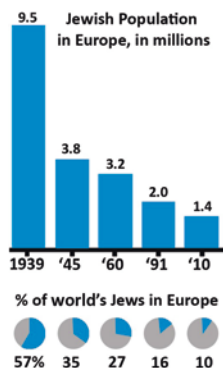


TABLE 2. JEWISH POPULATION ESTIMATES, BY MAJOR REGIONS - 1170-1995

Year	Number (Thousands)					Percent	
	Total	West Europe	East Europe, Balkans	Asia, Africa	America, Oceania	Europe as % of Total	East Europe as % of Europe
1170	1200	103	47	1050	-	12.5	31.3
1300	1200	385	65	750	-	37.5	14.4
1490	1300	510	90	700	-	46.2	15.0
1700	1100	146	573	377	4	65.4	79.7
1825	3281	458	2272	540	11	83.2	83.2
1880	7663	1044	5727	630	262	88.4	84.6
1939	16500	1350	8150	1600	5400	57.6	85.8
1948	11500	1035	2665	2000	5800	32.2	72.0
1995	13059	1037	704	4735	6583	13.3	40.4

a. Including Palestine and Israel
Sources: adapted from de Tudela (ca.1170), Baron 1971, DellaPergona (1992, 1997)

Source: 2010 estimates from the Pew Research Center’s Global Religious Landscape Report. (Lipka 2015) All other years’ estimates are based on the research by Prof Sergio DellaPergola of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. (DellaPergola 2001)

The “Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor” was passed on September 15, 1935, in Nuremberg.¹ Philosopher Hannah Arendt pointed out that this was a significant judicial event of the Holocaust, and she demonstrated that to violate human rights, Nazi Germany first deprived human beings of their citizenship. Arendt underlined that in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, citizens’ rights actually preceded human rights, as the latter needed the protection of a state to actually be respected. The destruction of the physical heritage was a prelude to the obliteration of all human dignity and a denial of polity, which Arendt suggested finally expelled man from humanity (Arendt 1973).

Between November 20, 1945, and October 1, 1946, the subsequent trials were symbolically conducted by the Western Allies at the Nuremberg Palace of Justice, generating seminal documents and laying the foundations for the declaration on human rights, crimes against humanity, and the concept of genocide (Sands 2016).

After World War II, Europe had lost two-thirds of its Jewish population and almost all its Jewish cultural heritage. The extreme scale of the disaster became apparent in the following years as the remnants of the decimated European Jewry wandered between displaced persons camps and later global migrations, including

¹The two milestone Nuremberg Laws passed in 1935 were the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour, forbidding marriages and extramarital intercourse between Jews and Germans and the employment of German females under 45 in Jewish households, and the Reich Citizenship Law, determining that the eligibility for Reich citizenship was only for those of German or related blood (US Holocaust Memorial Museum 2018). The English translation is available at <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007903>

to the newly established State of Israel from 1948 onward. According to the *American Jewish Year Book* (Shapiro and Sapir 1950), the Jewish population of Europe was about 9.5 million in 1933, and by 1950 it had been depleted to near 3.5 million. Seven decades after the Holocaust, the number of Jews in Europe continues to decline.

Based on this perspective, Bernard Wasserstein outlines the impact on Jews on post-war reconstruction, including social and community structures, the Soviet occupation, the collapse of communism, and how this has shaped the history of European Jewry in the second half of the twentieth century (Wasserstein 1996).

Nothing remained the same. This was a definitive episode, changing the course of history. There was an urgent need to pick up the pieces, both human and physical, and reappraise the situation, and this has led to a number of significant questions.

A major factor for understanding the recovery of heritage is a deeper appreciation for the values that have been lost. What exactly was lost? The intangible human respect and moral values – the synagogues, cemeteries and ritual baths where history bears witness to knowledge and practices – and the tangible, both moveable and immovable, in the books, artifacts, and places so essential for linking to the intangible traditions and ceremonies. What remained? The physical ruins, the memory of places and events, and especially the resilience of the human spirit.

It was the horrifying reality of World War II that generated the preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO declaring that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.” The purpose of the Organization has been “to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms ...”

This highlights the significance of cultural diversity, to recognize “the other,” to spread tolerance, and to reaffirm our universal responsibilities because, as the British philosopher John Stuart Mill declared: “bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing.”²

2 Jewish Texts

The fundamental Jewish concepts take their sources from the Written and Oral Laws, with the Bible³ considered as the basic text of the Written Law. The words of God, being written by Moses as the *Tora* on Mount Sinai, came with an oral exegesis, handed down over generations and finally inscribed as the *Mishna* and the

²Littell's Living Age, 16 March 1867 [Inaugural Address at University of St. Andrews: 1 February 1867], Page 664, Number 1189, Fourth Series, Littell and Gay, Boston.

³The texts quoted from the Bible are based on the English King James Version.

Tosefta, compiled from pre-200 CE memories. Subsequently, the two *Talmudim* (the Jerusalem *Talmud*, c. 450 CE and the Babylonian *Talmud*, c. 600 CE) completed the expounding and the development of this body of knowledge known as the Oral Law.

The *Midrash* refers to a method of reading details into, or out of, a biblical text. Midrashic teachings, in the form of legal, homiletical, or narrative writing, were often configured as a running commentary on the Written and Oral Laws accumulated over the first millennium. They usually resolved issues of interpretation using rabbinic principles of hermeneutics and philology to align them with the religious and ethical values of religious teachers.

The second millennium CE opened with the evolution of the *Kabala*, together with the *Aggada*, the non-legalistic rabbinic literature, and the *Halacha*, the Jewish religious laws. In parallel with the eighteenth-century philosophers, European Jewish thought oscillated between the existentialism of Hassidism and the mainstream of the *Musar*, while a more secular strand developed in the form of the enlightenment of the *Haskala*. Each of these schools of thought produced extensive texts and tomes. The evolution of these texts and their sociopolitical contexts provide the spawning ground for the diverging attitudes to the reconstruction of cultural heritage through the ages.

3 Some Jewish Values and Tradition

Jewish values are embedded in the *Tora*. It was in the twelfth century CE that Maimonides encapsulated the thirteen principles of faith, becoming generally accepted over the centuries as the tenets of orthodox Jewry and providing an intellectual and spiritual base for debate. However, values evolve through the generations due to historical and geographic perspectives and through the accumulation of knowledge, events, and culture. We are left with a moving target and dynamic transformations when times change; people are born, migrate, and die. Places change their significances, and objects are built, adapted, modified, or destroyed, the remaining architecture being the evidence of the past. Indeed, the Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS 2013) highlights this dilemma, noting that:

Values and beliefs (standards) are those which have significance for a cultural group or an individual, often including, but not being limited to spiritual, political, religious and moral beliefs. (Australia ICOMOS 2013, p. 20) Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups and values are continually renegotiated.

If values are continually changing, how can we reconcile this with those universal values set in stone? Does this legitimize a new lease of life for cultural heritage? Three Jewish concepts are identified together with their implication on recovery and reconstructions – attitudes toward continuity, sanctity, and memory.

3.1 Continuity

The continuity of life is embodied in the belief that the resurrection is one of Maimonides’ thirteen principles of faith. The transformations of communities in new geo-cultural contexts have been a guiding link in the many Jewish dispersals over the millennia. In the recovery process of communities, the revitalization and the resurrection of old images are an essential element of acceptance and acquiescence.

Epistemological scenarios focus on the resurrection while relating to idyllic Edenic golden ages. Is Eden a place or time? The *Tora* notes that “The Lord God planted a garden eastward [as of old] in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed” – *Genesis 2:8*.



Location maps of the earthly paradise, and of the country inhabited by the patriarchs, were laid out by designers such as M. Pierre Daniel Huet and artist Pierre Mortier, for the better understanding of sacred history, especially around the seventeenth century. (© Public Domain)

Later Biblical texts highlight the old times but continue the ambiguity between place and time, being concurrently – time, as we know it, or its idyllic counterpart. In lamenting the destruction of the first Temple, Jeremiah calls out: “Restore us to You, O Lord, that we may be restored! Renew our days as of old” *Lamentations 5:21*. This is contrasted in the wisdoms of Solomon, “Say not thou, What is the

cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this” *Ecclesiastes 7:10*.

This essence of continuity has been an indispensable Jewish element for its survival through persecutions that together with the belief in the afterlife generated hope in the rebuilding of its communal institutions, both physical and functional.

3.2 Sanctity

The sacred is not a monolithic concept but is rather understood through three spheres of sanctity: time, people, and place. These interconnected spheres become the basis for the considerations of the hierarchy between the holy and profane and the interpretations of those cultural elements that symbolize the values of different communities of people in diverging places through the epochs of time.

– The sanctity of time

The first citation of sanctity in the Tora is on the completion of the creation of the world and the sanctification of the seventh day:

³ And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. (1 Moses, Genesis 2)

Abraham Joshua Heschel underscores that the Bible gives importance to history rather than geography (Heschel 1983). The agricultural festivals linked to the seasons celebrated the life of nature. However, with the dispersals and migrations of the Jewish people, the transformation of these festivals into the commemoration of events was a significant change. Holiness in time was now firmly attached to a sacred event and constituted a tradition merging people and place, celebrated weekly. There was little room for the physical trappings. Subsequently, the unique historical events became spiritually more important than the cycles of nature. Heschel then focused on the Sabbath as the great cathedral of time and the Holy of Holies, termed the Sabbath of Sabbaths, as a shrine that neither the Romans nor the Nazi regime “were able to burn; a shrine that even apostasy cannot easily obliterate: the Day of Atonement” (Heschel 1983, p. 8).

– The sanctity of people

People are sanctified through their good deeds, and these are manifested in their journeys and pilgrimages; the traditions and ceremonies, events and occasions. It is in the preparation for the receiving of the Decalogue that we find the second sphere of sanctification in the *Tora*:

¹⁰ And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, ¹¹ And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai. ¹² And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about (2 Moses, Exodus, 19)

Yet again, the focus is on the intangible and the marking of time being the third day and the creation of a physical boundary, a *temenos*.

– The sanctity of place

The third sequential sanctification is place. Time was hallowed by God; space, the Tabernacle, was consecrated by Moses (Heschel 1983, p. 10). Place is a cultural construct consecrated by the intangible – the ceremonies and traditions – whereby people sanctify place.

²⁴ ... in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. 2
Moses/Exodus 20

Judaism is restrictive in its identification of holy places, and the concept of ‘seizing the horns of the altar’, where place sanctifies people, was not considered positively.

The prevention of the deification of place is inherent in the text that God had “... buried him [Moses] in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day” *Deuteronomy 34:6*. One can but imagine the hullabaloo around the resting place of Moses if this was commemorated.

Sanctity of place was attributed to places of worship, with the pinnacle of the hierarchy being the Holy of Holies, in the Temple at Jerusalem. However, with Jewish migrations, it became necessary to address the issues of change and the de-sanctification of place. Can one de-sanctify a synagogue? Is the value in the material or the use? The synagogue took on spiritual significance after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE so that the *Mishna* elucidates the sale of a synagogue:

If the townspeople sell the village square [an area that retains some holiness as people use the square to pray during fasts] they must use the proceeds to purchase a synagogue. If they sell a [village] synagogue they purchase with the proceeds an ark [a city synagogue may not be sold since it was built with the intention that travellers would use it; hence it belongs to the general public]. If they sell an ark they purchase with the proceeds Torah covers. If they sell Torah covers they purchase with the proceeds scrolls of Scripture. If they sell scrolls of Scripture they purchase with the proceeds a Torah scroll [the concept being that the proceeds of a sale may only be used to purchase something with a higher degree of holiness]. (Machon Yisrael Trust 2012) ... *Mishna, Megillah 3:a*⁴

While there are other minutiae, the basic concept is that the proceeds of a sale may only be used to purchase something with a higher degree of holiness. The range of holiness goes from the immovable to the moveable, from the city square via the synagogue and ark to the *Tora* scroll and the knowledge that one keeps – the quintessence being that one should always elevate his or her sanctity. Community property is not sold to an individual since this lowers the degree of holiness. Nevertheless, a central city synagogue may not be sold because it was also built with the purpose of being used by travelers, thus putting it in the public realm.

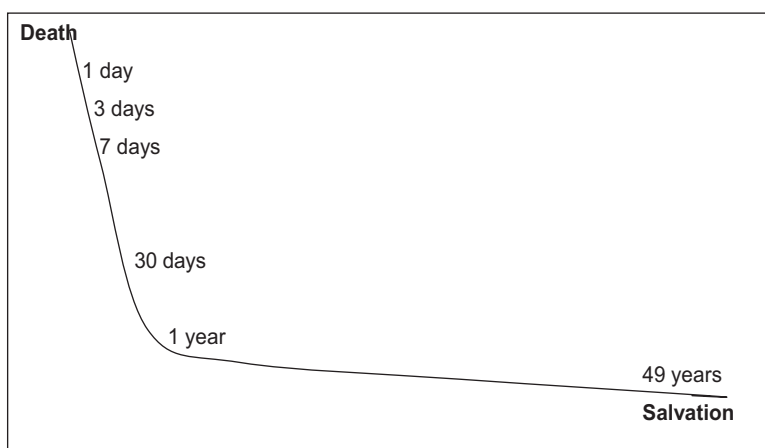
Referencing these values in the material or the use is a guiding principle for the debate on the reconstructions of the cultural heritage, the transference of the holy, and the understanding of impermanence.

⁴This English text from the New Integrated Translation and Commentary is reproduced with permission of the publisher.

3.3 Memory

Jewish identity has been shaped by collective memory throughout the ages, representing a synthesis of history and peoplehood. Halbwachs introduced the notion of collective memory as transmitted through the institutions of the group (Halbwachs 1992). For the Jewish people, collective memory flows through events, ritual, and recital. Building on the *Midrash*, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of Chabad, a branch of Hasidic Judaism at the turn of the eighteenth century, codified six such events from the *Tora* into his Six Remembrances, one being the Sabbath. The two *Tora* Decalogue texts refer to the sanctity of the Sabbath, in Exodus “remember the Sabbath” while in Deuteronomy “observe the Sabbath.” Midrashic explanation reconciles this disparity with the merging of the two words and by justifying that sanctification is simultaneously achieved through memory and observance.

Memory can also be recalled through the associations of the physical attributes of the events. The memory of WWII is tied up in the understanding of the memory of loss – remembering the loss through contemplating the ruins or the empathy of the suffering in the concentration camps. Does time heal? Let us take a possible Judaic approach, the 49-year cycle in Judaism as a release of the soul, when the personal memory transposes itself into the collective memory – it is the representation of the generation change and a time for “release” from the bonds of memory. Being an important function, the memory of the events needs time and place to understand their perspective, moving from the individual to the collective memory.



From the personal to the collective memory

From the personal to the collective memory – Jewish ceremonials to the memory of the dead and mourning between the first and the forty-ninth year. The first day wake, before burial, 3 days of crying; the 7, *Shiva*, and 30, *Shloshim*, days of mourning; the year of the *Kaddish*, with the subsequent *Yahrzeit* and annual reciting of the *Kaddish*; and finally, according to some Hassidic sources, a ceremony on the completion of seven cycles of seven; after this time with a new generation, the individual memory of this person is lost or may continue in the collective memory of the descendants – drawing by the author

4 Interpretations

What values may be reinstated and how can they be interpreted? Values based on the past that no longer exist; the tragic events of the present; or the new realities of the future? The lessons of the events create new and changing values, often conflicting and requiring compromise and negotiations.

It all comes down to interpretation. Such interpretations have evolved over the centuries and were tempered by time and geo-political considerations. While there might be an agreement as to the values and the articles of faith, the bones of contention are in the elucidation of these texts. Here, existential or historical models play a major role, together with intra-religious tensions: Hassidic Judaism leaning towards the former and nationalistic Judaism toward the latter. The intangible and the beliefs, in the form of traditions and ceremonies, have currently been subordinated to the fundamentals of historical reality.

The study of language through structural linguistics was developed by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye on the basis of the lectures of Ferdinand de Saussure between 1906 and 1911. This analogy to heritage can be understood through the debate on synchronic and diachronic linguistics, adapted from two different and complementary viewpoints, whereby the synchronic approach considers a language at a moment in time without taking its history into account. By contrast, the diachronic approach considers the development and evolution of a language through history (De Saussure 1959), the functional continuity of the diachronic in contrast to the synchronic adaptive re-use for the needs of the present.

Reintegrating the traces of Jewish Heritage in the diachronic urban fabric might benefit from the 2011 UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL), which “defines the historic urban landscape as the urban area understood as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of ‘historic centre’ or ‘ensemble’ to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting” (UNESCO 2011).

In the *Tora*, at the end of the *Book of Deuteronomy*, there is a description of the last days of the desert generation and consoling the leaders. The *Midrash* expresses the adage: “God had said to Moses, that is the way of the world, each generation and its interpreters, each generation and its supporters and each generation and its leaders” *Midrash Tanhuma*.⁵ This represents a more synchronic approach whereby reconstruction is pushed aside, and contemporary ideas become acceptable.

⁵Midrash Tanhuma, a comprehensive name for three collections of Agada, being the non-legalistic exegetical texts of the *Tora* including homiletical narratives and stories.

5 Reconstructions

In this synchronic mode, once the synagogue has been sold or destroyed, its reconstruction may be an issue *ab origine*. There is little need to reconstruct the architecture, and there is little meaning in the urban context without the Jewish life. Cyrus II, king of Persia, issued the Directive to the Jews to rebuild the Temple and allow the return of the exiles to Jerusalem in 538 BCE. The *Book of Ezra* recalls the dedication of the rebuilding of the Temple in 516 BCE and the diverging opinions as to its reconstruction:

¹²But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:

¹³So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off. (*Ezra 3: 12-13*)

Where Jewish life no longer exists, there can be no spirit of place. With dwindling numbers of Jews, even if the physical fabric remained, it is unlikely that the current historic uses are relevant. In 1944, Hannah Arendt was appointed as the director of research for the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction (Arendt 1950). She visited Germany and submitted reports on the state of conservation of Jewish heritage (which provide an insight to her writings, some 30 years later), noting that “[t]he cultural treasures of the past, believed to be dead, are being made to speak, in the course of which it turns out that they propose things altogether different than what had been thought” (Arendt 1978, p. 294).

5.1 Marking the Events

The reconstruction may also relate to marking the events of destruction, recording the loss, or celebrating the cultural heritage of the past and its renewal.

Was the destruction and massacre itself an event of Outstanding Universal Value? In considering the events of World War II vis-à-vis the World Heritage criteria (UNESCO 2016), we might suggest in evaluating the vestiges of the Jewish cultural heritage that:

- the site becomes an “exceptional testimony to a *cultural tradition* or to a civilization which ... *has disappeared*” (iii)
- It represents “an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement... which is representative of cultures or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become *vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change*” (v)
- It is “directly or tangibly associated with *eventsof outstanding universal significance*” (vi)

But which values are reflected in the event? The first group of values represents the historic events of Holocaust, crimes against humanity, genocide, and

anti-Semitism, while the second group relates to the lessons learned including tolerance, democracy and human rights, war and peace, and silence. The attributes of these, often contentious, values are diverse, and their manifestations may stand in contrast with other values of Jewish heritage.

5.2 The Continuity and Impermanence of Jewish Cultural Heritage

The specific physical Judaic attributes that are site-specific might include evidence of the architecture: the synagogues and the *shtieblech*/prayer houses, the *Mikveh*/ritual bath, the Houses of Learning/*Bet Midrash*, and *Talmud Torah*. The urban attributes may consist of the ritual enclosures/*eruv*,⁶ the courtyards, the Jewish districts/ghettos, and their relationships to the city, the cemetery, and other public spaces, including the place for the announcements of “lost and found.”

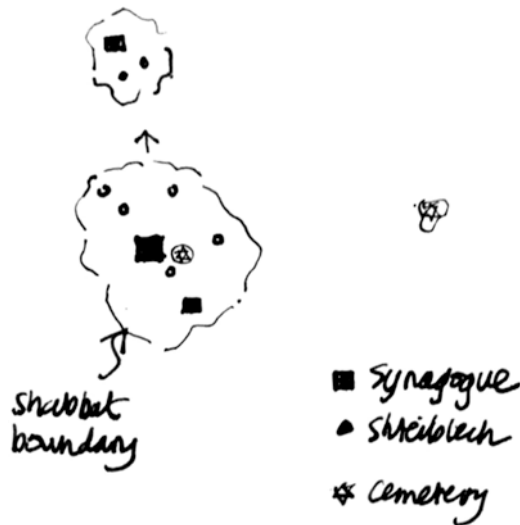


Figure: The individual elements of Jewish life as the synagogue, the shtieblech,⁷ and the cemetery are contextualized including the urban references and Sabbath boundaries. Over time, new Jewish communities are established with their burial places consecrated outside the city limits. Source: author

⁶An urban area enclosed by a wire boundary that symbolically extends and integrates the private domain of Jewish households into public areas, permitting activities within it that are normally forbidden in public on the Sabbath.

⁷Shtieblech is Yiddish for a small house and refers to rooms of prayer and study, often improvised and usually in the Hassidic tradition.

The World Heritage Convention is a site-based convention not associated with moveable objects⁸ (UNESCO 2016). The residual tangible assets, the remnants of history, have been deemed by Francis Bacon in his 1605 definitions of history as the “shipwrecks of time” (Bacon 1877), thereby becoming the pivot point for discussion. What can we recognize from these “shipwrecks,” which values do they represent, and for whom can we understand the narrative of the past? Furthermore, the existing attributes of each of the values will determine the format of the conservation policies and, more so in these circumstances, through a process that might be called “reverse evaluation.” This entails recognizing the physical attributes that have survived and then identifying the values that can possibly be recalled and associated with these attributes.

These shipwrecks of time, the ghosts of the past in the tangible remnants of the synagogues, mikvaot, and cemeteries, represent the inanimate scars of history and are now being evaluated and differentiated from the intangible, embodied in the sites of conscience and sites of memory.⁹

6 The Case Study of ShUM

The case study of the ShUM cities in Germany, including Speyer, Worms, and Mainz (Preissler 2012), provides a glimpse into the debate and an appraisal of this moment in time. Each of these three cities represents a diverging methodological approach – the archaeological ruins of Speyer, the reconstruction at Worms, and the renewal of Mainz.

In her *Jewish Spaces, German Obligation, World Heritage?* (Urban 2016), Susanne Urban wrote that for decades there was a deracinated wholeness of Jewish space and landscape around the synagogues and *mikvaot*, primarily presented as a historical and ethnographic space, administered by cities, tourism offices, archives, and other professional institutions. She argues that “we cannot help but recognize that Jewish history in Germany is founded on a thousand-year-old-tradition. That is all well and good. But the narratives fashioned for tourists and other visitors often reflect a skewed perception of history. ShUM is distant. The descriptions of the Crusades from the eleventh century or the pogroms in the fourteenth century seem far away in space and time; their horrors are overshadowed by the Shoah” (Urban 2016).

⁸Paragraph 48 of The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention

Movable Heritage 48. Nominations of immovable heritage which are likely to become movable will not be considered.

⁹The World Heritage Committee at its 42 session was presented with a report on Sites of Memory as Guidance and Capacity Building for the Recognition of Associative Values Using World Heritage Criterion (vi), Final Report, January 2018 (by Prof. Christina Cameron and Judith Herrmann, University of Montreal, Canada), and Interpretation of Sites of Memory prepared by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (Washington, USA), led by Jean Louis Luxen with the support of Christopher Young, together with a working group. Final Report 31 January 2018.

There are some critical issues that need to be faced in the ShUM nomination. How are these cities understood for Judaism and Jews worldwide – and what do they mean to non-Jews? Urban notes that there is a self-referential “Vergangenheitsbewältigung,” or “coming to terms with the past,” without much contact or connection to the living Jewish present. The cities connect Jewish with European and global history, illustrating the interconnections between cultures and beliefs. The history of these cities over a millennium may signify coexistence and interaction, together and side-by-side, with periods of flourishing and decline, expulsion, and murder.

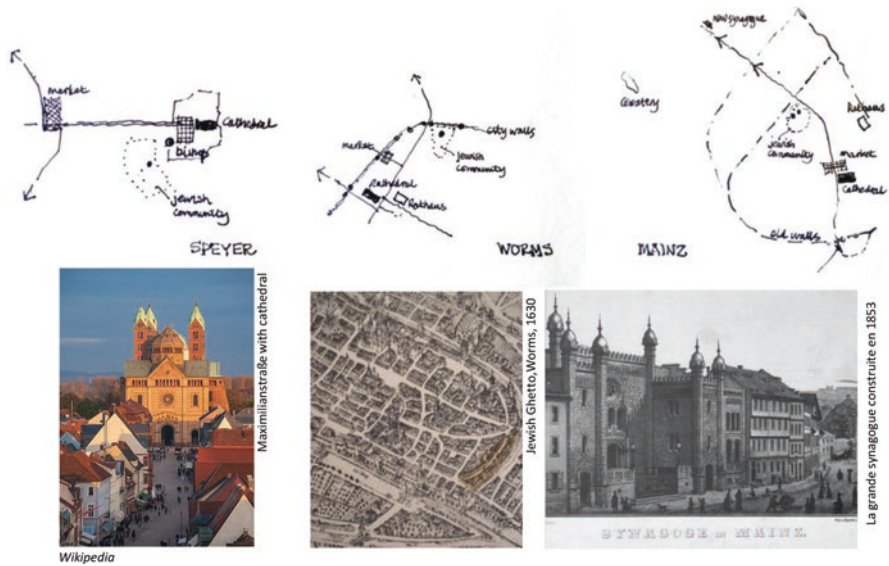


Figure: The urban context of the historic Jewish Quarters in Speyer, Worms, and Mainz and their relationships to civil and religious foci. The Jewish Quarters in Speyer and Mainz are under the patronage of the Church and local Bishops, while in Worms the Jewish Quarter developed in peripheral areas by the city walls. (© Roman Eisele / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY-SA 4.0) (© Public Domain - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Worms_1630_P7160060.JPG) (© Public Domain - [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grande_synagogue_de_Mayence_\(1912-1938\)#/media/Fichier:Hauptsynagogue_in_Mainz_-_1853.jpg](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grande_synagogue_de_Mayence_(1912-1938)#/media/Fichier:Hauptsynagogue_in_Mainz_-_1853.jpg))

6.1 Speyer: Archaeological Ruin

In the context of Walter Benjamin’s philosophy of history, the ruin provides an emblem, not only of the melancholic world view presented in the Baroque tragic drama but of the allegory as a critical tool for historical materialism (Benjamin 2009). Benjamin’s concept of the ruin, especially as sketched in his book *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, is valuable because it delves beyond the aesthetic of the ruin as an object, reading it as a process, a means of stripping away symbolism – a means of approaching historical truth through reduction, at the expense of romantic aesthetics:



Speyer – archaeological ruin in the Judenhof

In the ruin, history has physically merged into the setting. And in this guise, history does not assume the form of the process of an eternal life so much as that of irresistible decay. Allegory, therefore declares itself to be beyond beauty. Allegories are, in the realm of thoughts, what ruins are in the real of things. (Benjamin 2009, pp. 177–178)

The legacy of Speyer is represented in the architectural ruin and its urban context in the shadow of the Cathedral and by the Bishop’s Residence.

6.2 Worms: Reconstruction

The reconstruction of the Worms’ synagogue using much of the original material was the initiative of the former director of the city archives and museum in Worms, Dr. Friedrich Illert, with the support of Isidor Kiefer, the director of the prewar Jewish museum. This action must also be recognized as Reconstruction for Reconciliation. The synagogue, open as a museum, continues to be a functioning synagogue used intermittently by the small Jewish community (Roemer 2010). While the attributes of the chronological value of the ShUM World Heritage nomination are in the medieval foundations, the value of “continuity” highlights the possible attributes of the changing uses and design over the period of life of the community. In both cases, the reconstruction narrative seems logical.

It should be noted, however, that most of the survivors outside Germany were of the opinion that the reconstruction would represent an antithesis to the situation as the event should be recognized because nothing was the same again after the Shoah (Urban 2017). This brings us to the Nara Document (UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM 1994) and the dissonant responsibilities of the communities, those that created the heritage in the past and those managing this heritage in the present.



Worms – reconstruction of the Alte Synagogue

6.3 *Mainz: Renewal*

The long and turbulent history of the Jewish community in Mainz is indeed a microcosm of European Jewry, oscillating between acceptance and rejection, from the end of the ninth century till World War II. Although it was not a large community, it played an important role with the authority of the religious leaders acknowledged in Europe, through the assemblies that were held in Mainz in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The massacres as a result of the Crusades, the Black Plague, the seventeenth-century French occupation, and, finally, the Nazi regime, regularly decimated the community. In the intervening years, however, the Mainz Jewish community flourished together with its local rulers, and it is this continuity that is celebrated. Some 80% of Mainz was bombed and destroyed in WWII, and little remains but the commemorative Jewish cemetery and the hope that comes with the new deconstructivist synagogue.



Mainz – renewal by architect Manuel Herz

7 Discussion: Parallels and Conclusions

There is no single Jewish formula for reconstruction. The values may be eternal but the interpretations are varied and vibrant. However, I believe that the more existential approach and the focus away from the tangible to the intangible should hold sway. The effects of two millennia of Diaspora have highlighted the need to be responsive and reactive to developing circumstances and outright anti-Semitism. Judaism leaves room for the “other,” real and virtual, past, present, and future, with an approach that values the *minimum necessary and the maximum possible* to ensure that all narratives are being heard. Farmers were instructed in the *Tora* to leave unharvested corners for the poor and needy together with portions of leftover sheaves in the field.

The Nara Document (UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM 1994) focuses on cultural diversity and heritage diversity, linking two major communities and within which there are a multitude of subgroups, especially in the world of global virtual reality:

8. It is important to underline a fundamental principle of UNESCO, to the effect that the cultural heritage of each is the cultural heritage of all. Responsibility for cultural heritage and the management of it belongs, *in the first place, to the cultural community that has generated it, and subsequently to that which cares for it.* ...Balancing their own requirements with those of other cultural communities is, for each community, highly desirable, provided achieving this balance does not undermine their fundamental cultural values. (UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM 1994, p. 1)

Who might be considered “the cultural community that generated [this heritage], and subsequently to that which cares for it”? The descendants of the last residents or perhaps a virtual community of those empathizing with the past may also claim a stake in the debate. Cultural communities, both real and virtual, may similarly play a vital role in generating new narratives and objectively recognize the lessons learned or the need for cultural diversity, tolerance, and the recognition of the “other.” In ever-changing communities and cities, many of the traditional activities no longer exist and all the more so in Jewish Europe or the Buddhist Bamiyan Valley.

These reconstructions for an uprooted community are paralleled with the cultural landscape of the Bamiyan Buddahs. The original communities and their descendants are no longer present. These are spaces from the past that have no use in the present, except as a possible narrative for the future and as a word of warning to ourselves and the world as to the dangers of racism. The values remaining are in their inanimate architectural and physical attributes and the meanings of their destruction. While celebrating continuity, both Judaism and Buddhism embrace degrees of impermanence often generating ambivalent attitudes to reconstruction.

Facing the dislocated communities reduces the vestiges of the past and the ruins with their scars of history as evidence of the place; John Ruskin in the *Lamp of Memory* addressed these very issues in preferring “the rudest work that tells a story or records a fact,” as opposed to “the richest without meaning”; more has been gleaned out of desolated Nineveh than ever will be out of re-built Milan (Ruskin 1889, p. 196).

As to the reconstructions of Jewish synagogues, we are left with a new physical object, while the complexities of the reconstructions of the Bamiyan Buddhas are compounded with the rock-cut works of centuries. Ruskin would determine in both cases that:

... ; it is impossible, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture. that spirit which is given only by the hand and eye of the workman, can never be recalled. Another spirit may be given by another time, and it is then a new building; but the spirit of the dead workman cannot be summoned up, and commanded to direct other hands, and other thoughts. (Ruskin 1889, p. 194)

Perhaps a more spiritual meaning is needed; therefore, the dilemma is not whether to reconstruct or not, or any variants, but to remember or to forget, to celebrate, or to mourn, in retribution or forgiveness.

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Part IV
Heritage Reconstruction in Theory

Destruction and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage as Future-Making



Cornelius Holtorf

Abstract We need to manage the tangible cultural heritage with the best outcomes for the future as possible. But how people prefer to relate and give value and meaning to the past can be highly variable and is hard to predict. Before any specific reconstructions of the Buddha statues are commissioned, we should consider several alternative futures for the past: will there be new audiences for heritage among the growing populations of Asia? Will digital and interactive ways of presentation reduce the significance of genuine artefacts? Will the preference for dark and painful heritage grow and perhaps increasingly demand stories about the Taliban rather than about Buddhism? Or will heritage tourism come to an end altogether? In deciding on the appropriate management strategy towards the destroyed Bamiyan Buddha statues, the main question should be what follows from what the assembled stakeholders want the heritage in Bamiyan to do for the benefit of specific future generations. The fact that many current stakeholders appear to be passionate about the Buddha statues means that there is a lot of momentum that will facilitate the necessary and time-consuming work required.

Keywords Conservation theory · Guédelon castle · Heritage futures · Heritage theory · Heritage values · Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church Berlin · Reconstruction · Uses of heritage · World Heritage Convention

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1 Introduction: The Benefits of Cultural Heritage for Future Societies

Cultural heritage managers are often charged to preserve and thus save the cultural heritage for the benefit of future generations. According to the dominant preservation paradigm and its associated conservation ethics, the heritage sector has the duty to conserve the most valuable parts of the existing cultural heritage because it is seen as an inherently valuable asset that is non-renewable, cannot be replaced and must, therefore, be preserved for the benefit of future generations (Wylie 2005; Spennemann 2007). The UNESCO World Heritage Convention (UNESCO 1972) speaks of “the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage”, yet it does not specify what time is meant by ‘future’, what we can know about the needs of ‘future generations’ and how these needs can be met through the heritage we transmit so that our own conservation actions might be appreciated at that time and our shared ‘duty’ would thus be motivated today. In practice, the current logic of conservation and heritage management often assumes an extension of the present into the future: we preserve what is valuable to us today (Högberg et al. 2017; Holtorf and Högberg forthcoming).

However, the values and uses of cultural heritage are not inherent and timeless but change over time in relation to consumers and recipients in varying social and cultural contexts (Cameron 2010). Conservation in the present must aim at creating or enhancing future benefits of cultural heritage for multiple but particular audiences, while avoiding possible risks. What we, therefore, first and foremost need in any joint project aimed at revitalizing cultural heritage is a shared vision for the future. Future benefits may consist of lessons to be gained from remembering specific events or processes, a reinforcement of social coherence, a promotion of shared values such as those linked to human rights, or improved opportunities for relevant communities to make a living (Holtorf and Fairclough 2013). At the same time, heritage management needs to be mindful of possible risks such as the diversion of resources from other worthy goals or the inadvertent propagation of extreme ideologies, social exclusion, perceived cultural or political appropriation or even armed conflict invoking the cultural heritage (Meskell 1998; Sørensen and Viejo-Rose 2015). The approach taken in this chapter thus amounts to taking a functional view of cultural heritage: most important is what heritage, its management and interpretation actually *do*, both in and to society (Loulanski 2006; Holtorf 2013; Ross et al. 2017).

A functional view of heritage focuses on the values and meanings of cultural heritage and the stories told about it – in present or future societies. Cultural heritage is not defined in terms of its material fabric and thus assumed to be static, stable, and non-renewable but in terms of its appreciation and effects in society, thus continuously changing and being transformed and adapted to new circumstances (de la Torre 2013). I argue, therefore, that in determining specific management strategies for any one (tangible) heritage object, we must not be guided by doctrinal,

universal principles governing treatments of fabric but by the likely risks and benefits of specific outcomes of our actions in specific futures. It is these risks and benefits that need to be drawn up and weighed diligently before deciding any course of action.

2 Beyond the Preservation Paradigm

Heritage critic David Lowenthal (1996: 24) observed more than two decades ago that “[w]e value our heritage most when it seems at risk; threats of loss spur owners to stewardship”. Indeed, in the cultural heritage sector, there has long been a preference for avoiding losses over acquiring gains, even when they might be of the same value (Holtorf 2015). The Bamiyan Buddha statues are an extreme case in point. They were inscribed in the World Heritage List in 2003, i.e. two years *after* they had been blown up by the Taliban, in an effort to conserve what effectively had been lost already (UNESCO 2003; Harrison 2013: 182–191).

We assembled at the end of September 2017 in Tokyo to discuss strategies for conservation and principles for the revitalization and reconstruction of cultural heritage that has fallen victim to acts of unlawful destruction and deliberate violence. We were focusing especially on the Bamiyan Buddha statues acknowledging, among other things, “the positive role that the revitalization of heritage can play in fostering nations’ understanding of their history and identity, recognition of human rights, mutual respect among peoples and of the diversity and equal dignity of the world’s cultures” (UNESCO 2017). The adopted Conclusions of the 2017 meeting (see this volume, p. 351) acknowledge the need to address reconstruction of cultural heritage in such circumstances “through holistic strategies for the protection and advancement of human rights, promotion of peace building and sustainable development.” Such benefits are very important to consider. It is right that a focus on the merits of preservation and reconstruction alone, in the spirit of the preservation paradigm, will be too narrow. Unfortunately, the various manifestations of how present societies relate to the past have a tendency to become subsumed into the heritage preservation context. A decade ago, the English heritage manager Graham Fairclough (2009: 158) found drastic words to describe this trend:

The obsession with physical conservation became so embedded in twentieth century mentalities that it is no longer easy to separate an attempt to understand the past and its meaning from agonising about which bits of it to protect and keep. It is almost as if one is not allowed to be interested in the past without wanting to keep or restore . . . the remains of the past, which seem to exist only to be preserved. The wide range of how the past is used by society has been reduced to the literal act of preserving its fabric.

Bigger issues are at stake and have to be considered. As the Tokyo meeting recognized, cultural heritage concerns issues to do with human rights, diversity and



Fig. 1 The Old Town of Frankfurt being recreated through historicizing architecture, soon allowing inhabitants and visitors to relate to the area's past as it will be evoked by the buildings

peace, among others. We are easily losing sight of the rich variety of ways in which people and communities relate to the past beyond conservation, preservation, protection, restoration, and reconstruction of tangible fabric. Examples of meaningful practices that can evoke the past are story-telling (various media and genres), traditions, beliefs, art and architecture, guided tours, role-play and living history, gaming, humour and comedy, and last but not least even political arguments.

To give one brief example, in recent years, there has been a growing desire in urban environments for creating the appearance of a historical building or entire town quarter through historicizing architecture (Fig. 1). The point is not whether or not such designs evoking the past, or indeed other contemporary regenerations of the past, are historically accurate or in line with familiar doctrines of conservation, but, again, what they *do*, both in and to society. For one, they make the past accessible to contemporary audiences and enhance a sense of place; for the other, they correspond with the preferences of sizeable sections of the area's inhabitants and visitors alike, although there are others who have different preferences (Holtorf 2013). The extent to which any such evocations of the past are perceived as authentic depends on the extent to which they are trusted to evoke the past in the present. Even for the future we can confidentially assume that there will be a range of trusted modes of evoking the past, many of which may not immediately draw on the tangible fabric we will have transmitted to them but on some of the many other ways in which the past may be regenerated. Even destroyed sites can powerfully evoke the past so that less heritage may mean more memory (Holtorf 2006, 2015).

With these two points being made about the need to consider benefits and risks of our actions for specific futures and about the range of ways in which people and communities relate to the past beyond a concern for preservation and accurate reconstruction, I will move on to discuss two contrasting case-studies exemplifying different aims, strategies and outcomes of evoking the past in the present through cultural heritage, in the first case starting out with a badly destroyed building and in the second case with nearly nothing at all.

2.1 The Value of Ruined Heritage (Berlin, Germany)

Ruined buildings and damaged heritage can be a very powerful force in society. Not all destroyed heritage needs to be restored to retain its values and meanings. Indeed, values and meanings may emerge from ruins, too. A good example is the late nineteenth century Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in Berlin, Germany. This centrally located church was destroyed by bombs during World War II. After the war, its remains were saved from complete clearance, and since 1961 they have been incorporated into a new church built on the same location (Kappel 2011; Waldera 2015).

Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church is the name the church had from the beginning. It had been commissioned by the German Emperor (Kaiser) Wilhelm II (1859–1941) to honour the memory of his grandfather Wilhelm I (1797–1888) in the fast expanding German capital city. The church was dedicated in 1895, even though the inside was not completed until some years later. After the abdication of the Emperor and the end of the German Empire in 1918, the church became during the Weimar Republic a local landmark of this flourishing area in Berlin, surrounded by cafés, cinemas and shops along the Kurfürstendamm and not far from the railway station Zoologischer Garten (Fig. 2).

Heavily destroyed during an air raid on the night of 23 November 1943, after the war a discussion started about the respective merits of complete removal, restoration and new construction of the church at the same site or elsewhere. In 1954/1955 some parts of the badly destroyed building were cleared away but the Western tower remained as a ruin. Soon afterwards an architectural competition was carried out, which was eventually won by Egon Eiermann (1904–1970) who wanted to build an entirely new church on the old location. At this point, the local population started a campaign to retain the ruin of the tower due to its character as a landmark of the Kurfürstendamm and West-Berlin and as a memorial for the violent destructions the city had suffered during the war. Due to popular demand the plans were changed, and Eiermann designed a number of new buildings around the damaged tower. The new church was opened on 17 December 1961, only a few months after the construction of the Berlin Wall along the border between East- and West-Berlin and 18 years after the bombing.

Ever since, the ruined tower has been reminding Berliners and their visitors of the outcome of World War II and the value of peace. But it also retained its character as a landmark and became an iconic symbol for the free West-Berlin during the



Fig. 2 View of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, Berlin, in 1939. Bundesarchiv, B 145 Bild-P014310 / CC-BY-SA 3.0. (Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_B_145_Bild-P014310,_Berlin,_Kaiser-Wilhelm_Gedächtniskirche.jpg)

Cold War. With the old City Centre either destroyed or now on the territory of East-Berlin, the characteristic silhouette of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church effectively marked the heart of West-Berlin for the local population and visitors alike.

The ruined tower of the church complemented other forms of remembering a troublesome twentieth-century past, such as commemorative rituals (including those held every Friday inside the church), oral history, memorials, historical museums, and archaeological sites. Over several decades, this partly destroyed cultural heritage site contributed significantly and positively to future-making in Western Germany, in ways that would probably have been impossible had the original church survived intact, been fully restored, or reconstructed elsewhere. The Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church retained its appeal even after the unification of Berlin in 1990 and the subsequent intense building activities and creation of landmark architecture elsewhere in the city that had become the entire Germany's capital again (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3 View of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in central Berlin today

Arguably, the preserved remains of the ruined church tower have been far more widely appreciated than the complete church in its Neo-Romanesque style ever was.

2.2 The Value of Reinvented Heritage (Guédelon, France)

Entirely reconstructed and reimagined cultural heritage can have significant benefits in society, too. As products of the imagination, contemporary recreations may not easily attract World Heritage designation but that is not my point. What matters most to me, and what I think should matter most to us all, is what UNESCO's heritage initiatives can do to maintain, revitalize and develop significant cultural heritage in present and future societies rather than vice versa.

In Guédelon, since 1998 a Medieval castle is being built from scratch on a reimagined thirteenth century construction site located in an abandoned quarry in remote woodland of central France, a good two-hours drive south of Paris (Fig. 4). The emerging castle is the result of an application of thirteenth century building techniques to a new design inspired by several already existing Medieval castles (Martin and Renucci 2011: 28–9).

This unique 25 year-long project, to be completed in 2023, is run as a private company employing 40 full-time staff plus a further 25 seasonal staff, mostly



Fig. 4 A thirteenth century castle in the making at Guédelon, central France

financed by the 300,000 visitors per year, including 80,000 school children, who pay for entrance tickets, gifts, and food. Most employees are qualified craftspeople, including blacksmiths, quarrymen, stone hewers, masons, woodcutters, carpenters, tilers, carters, and rope makers (Fig. 5). Many had previously been unemployed and found a future for themselves on this Medieval construction site (Minard and Folcher 2003: 13).

Behind the project stands Michel Guyot who had long been dreaming about rebuilding a Medieval fortress by bringing its construction site to life: “The project’s goal would not be to finish the castle itself, but to explore over 25 years the daily life of a medieval construction site” (Martin and Renucci 2011: 17). By the same token, the aim of the craftspeople is not to complete a castle from nothing, or to create a realistic interpretation of what society and individuals’ lives were really like in the thirteenth century, but to be working today as Medieval builders. They are assured though that however Medieval the construction site may be, contemporary health and safety regulations do apply.

This heritage project is valuable and meaningful for the lessons to be learned about building practices without modern tools. The challenges involved catch the interest not only of visiting school classes and tourists but also of the participating



Fig. 5 Medieval craftspeople at work at Guédelon, central France

craftspersons themselves and of associated historians, archaeologists and architects that advise the project through a Scientific Committee. In the words of Guyot, the site generates for him and for “everyone, from the tourist to the researcher,” a sense of “complete happiness in which reality and fiction blend back together” (Minard and Folcher 2003: 11).

The very process of building a Medieval castle in Guédelon is a way of future-making in contemporary rural France (Fig. 6). The castle illustrates that although cultural heritage can have a strong tangible dimension, its main value may be related to intangible aspects, in this case ancient building practices and the very construction process that attract many visitors and engage skilled local specialists. The authenticity of this emerging, fictitious castle lies in the credibility of its building techniques and performed workmanship. As the short film displayed on site explains for the visitors of Guédelon:

It is a collective, educational, and scientific venture. A journey back in time, rediscovering our heritage and heritage skills. Guedelón is a 20th ct. medieval adventure. And when the castle is finished, in 10, 15, 20 years, new structures will spring up, for a future return to the past.



Fig. 6 Future-making by rebuilding a Medieval castle. A time-line of the contemporary past on display at Guédelon, central France

3 Discussion: Where Next in the Bamiyan Valley?

As my examples and case-studies (among many possible others) illustrate, contemporary manifestations of how people prefer to relate and give value and meaning to the past can be highly variable. The preservation of tangible cultural heritage covers only a small section of the multiple ways in which the past is evoked and gains

significance in contemporary societies. That particular section is, however, of special importance because it is part of the planning process, governed by public policy, managed by civil servants, supported by relevant legislation and to some extent publically funded. We need to make sure that we manage the tangible cultural heritage with the best outcomes for the future as possible.

Preservation, and indeed reconstruction, are not self-evident unless we can identify the future beneficiaries of our work and confidently describe how exactly they will benefit from it, while preventing harm to others. Therefore, in deciding on the appropriate management strategy towards the destroyed Bamiyan Buddha statues, the main question should not be whether or not reconstruction is allowed as a matter of conservation doctrine but what follows from what the assembled stakeholders want the heritage in Bamiyan to do for the benefit of specific future generations. The fact that many current stakeholders appear to be passionate about the Buddha statues means that there is a lot of momentum that can help carrying out the necessary and time-consuming work that will be required.

The World Heritage Convention and its Operational Guidelines do not specify, or require the development of any specific visions for the future of the enlisted sites. But, in my opinion, when the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (UNESCO 1972) in Article 4 refers to a “duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission to future generations of the cultural and natural heritage”, there is an implied requirement for those managing world heritage sites to build capacity that allows specifying what is meant by “future generations” and how the heritage transmitted will benefit those generations that will actually live in that future.

In considering the future of any heritage site, we are well advised to consider thoroughly the potential of various other modes of relating to the past besides preservation and reconstruction. I discussed two very different case-studies that can each provide lessons for the range of options in the case at hand, the Bamiyan Buddha statues.

The West Berliners built part of their collective identity and post-War pride on the ruined monument of the badly destroyed Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church. They did not prefer a regenerative reconstruction of the church, and they did not long for an opportunity to undo the damage inflicted by the bombs and thus to create a symbolic victory over those that bombed their city (or those that caused that bombing to happen in the first place). By the same token, the blown-up Buddha statues could have a positive impact on the future development of the Bamiyan Valley even when they remain absent from their former positions. As recent research about tourist interest attracted by sites that have lost their materiality indicates (Ross et al. 2017), the very absence of the monuments in the Bamiyan Valley, if interpreted and presented in the right way, could become (or indeed remain) a widely recognized and somehow even appealing symbol for an entire landscape, its people and their development over time. Perhaps the empty niches could be secured and made available for carefully chosen new uses of the site, possibly including

appropriate commemorative rituals or cultural performances such as historical story-telling? Arguably, the Bamiyan Buddha statues have never been more iconic around the world than in their current metamorphic state, i.e. with their niches being empty.

In Guédelon, a Medieval construction site has been created from scratch in order to engage people in ancient building techniques and attract broad public interest in the thirteenth century past. Here, through historically informed practice the past is resurrected and comes to life, creating jobs in present society irrespective of the lack of ‘original’ tangible cultural heritage at the site. In the Bamiyan Valley, a process of inventively recreating the past could have a positive impact on future development too. Maybe locals and visitors alike could participate in a gradual physical reincarnation of one or more huge Buddha statues lying flat in the valley (if not upright in another part of the cliff)? Maybe the remaining fragments, rubble and dust of the statues could be put to new, creative uses. Or, as Jones et al. (2018) recently have shown is possible, maybe joint practices of creative design and production could result in digital visualizations that inspire audiences to re-investigate relations between people, places and sites in the Bamiyan Valley, while experiencing new forms of authenticity? In other words, there may be more options than those linked to the physical resurrection or rebirth of one or both of the original Buddha statues. Even in the World Heritage context it must be permitted to ask whether there are circumstances when anticipated gains can compensate for suffered losses (Holtorf 2015).

I would like to stress at this point that my argument must not be read as an unequivocal argument against reconstruction. In the light of the fact that there appear to be considerable doubts, at least for the time being, about the technical and financial feasibility of any full-scale reconstruction, and not even speaking of the threat of a new destruction once the reconstruction is complete, I am merely emphasizing that there are additional avenues to consider.

Whether or not the reasoning by which the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley was inscribed on the World Heritage List under five (!) criteria of the Convention can be maintained unchanged in each eventuality and under all circumstances remains to be seen. In the context of this publication assembled by UNESCO it should be permissible to suggest that maybe the question of the inscription of the site under the World Heritage Convention is not the only, or even the most important question at stake. I note though that in fulfilment of Criterion (iii) of the Convention, the Bamiyan Valley is said to bear “exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition in the Central Asian region, *which has disappeared*” (UNESCO 2003, my emphasis). Ironically, it seems that, if anything, the present state strengthens the value here. By the same token, a reconstruction might actually diminish the association of the site, as mentioned regarding Criterion (vi), with repeated damaging “at different times of their existence, including deliberate destruction in 2001, which shook the whole world” (UNESCO 2003).

4 Conclusions: Managing Cultural Heritage as Future-Making

A good start for further deliberations among the relevant stakeholders and decision-makers about an overall Conservation Approach for the Bamiyan Buddha statues may be to evaluate carefully not only feasibilities but also, and especially, likely benefits and outcomes as well as risks of a range of possible interventions aimed at improving future society. It is very appropriate that the adopted Conclusions of the 2017 meeting (see this volume, p. 352) recognize clearly (in paragraph 7) the need to draft and consult on a long-term strategy for what to accomplish with the cultural heritage in the area. This need for long-term planning will have to be realized in conjunction with the requirement expressed in relation to the UNESCO Cultural Master Plan to outline a new “vision and mission for Bamiyan Valley” while assuring that “[c]areful overall planning must balance the interests of the different stakeholders, villagers and rural people, citizens and business people, and investors and land developers, but also the Provincial administration, the Government and, of course, international assistance organizations” (Jansen 2014: 18). Such ambitions are far from easy to achieve. As the chapters by Helaine Silverman and Marie-Louise Stig Sørensen (this volume) illustrate, much more social science research will be needed concerning the complexities of collective memory, heterogeneous communities, and the best strategy concerning contested local heritage in the Bamiyan Valley.

Already in 2011, an International Forum held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the violent destruction of the Buddha statues intended to contribute to progress in Afghanistan, as indicated in the title of the meeting, “Towards Cultural Rapprochement and Tolerance”. The 2017 Conclusions mention the need to acknowledge “the identity, history, integrity, memories and dignity of local populations” as well as the expectation that “any activity should aim to provide socio-economic benefits for local communities” (paragraph 10). Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the Conclusions commit all those involved in reconstruction to consider “the protection and advancement of human rights, promotion of peace building and sustainable development.” UNESCO (2017) also recognizes the significance that “the concerned government representatives, technical experts and donors recognize the importance of the role culture can play in the peace-building and development process specifically in conflict or post-conflict regions” and the potential in the Bamiyan Valley specifically “to effect a fundamental contribution to peace and state-building initiatives through the promotion of a positive cross-cultural discussion, interaction, understanding and respect for cultural heterogeneity and human rights.” This applies even in relation to tourism development that is hoped to contribute to future economic growth within a world region that despite progress is currently still unsafe. All these high aspirations and any realistic ways of implementing them to benefit specific future generations will be important topics to consider in much more detail at all appropriate levels (Holtorf and Högberg forthcoming).

The philosopher James Janowski (2013: 69) remarked that the “decision-makers are obliged to think through (...) what the site might mean, and what the site *ought* to mean, in the future. And while this is definitely a hard question, they need to ask: just what should Bamiyan mean over the next millennium—or in, say, *another* 1,400 years?” Contrary to what Janowski suggested in his paper, I would like to stress, however, that reconstruction of one or more of the Buddha statues is not a necessary part of the answer to that question. The heritage of the Bamiyan Valley and its multiple values will keep changing, requiring flexible strategies of management and creativity in designing or enhancing timely manifestations of heritage.

Before any specific reconstructions of the Buddha statues are commissioned, we should consider alternative futures for the past (Cameron 2010: 211–5): will there be new audiences for heritage among the growing populations of Asia? Will digital and interactive ways of presentation reduce the significance of genuine artefacts? Will the preference for dark and painful heritage grow and perhaps increasingly demand stories about the Taliban rather than about Buddhism? Or will heritage tourism come to an end altogether? Drawing on a statement of Mahatma Gandhi, Marta de la Torre (2013: 162) came to the following conclusion that may even be applied to Bamiyan:

if ‘a nation’s heritage resides in the hearts and the soul of its people’, then heritage will change as people’s values change, and changes both in people and in heritage are inevitable. And the way heritage is conserved will have to change too.

5 Summary Recommendations

1. Think about the future, not (just) the past: what do you expect the Buddha statues *to do* in and to future societies which will invariably differ from present societies? What are the benefits and risks of particular actions in the present for specific future generations?
2. Do not forget the many ways beyond reconstruction, taking both tangible and intangible expressions, in which the past can be valuable and meaningful for people. Even lost sites and ruined heritage like the destroyed Buddha statues can contribute to future-making.
3. Consider that creatively re-imagined heritage can successfully manifest and enhance heritage values. A range of processes and practices through which the Buddha statues may be re-invented and come to life in the present can contribute to future-making, too.

Acknowledgments The question of the permissibility and the qualities and impact of reconstructions of tangible cultural heritage has long been at the heart of the theory of cultural heritage and its management. I wish to acknowledge the extensive literature on this topic, singling out Winfried Nerdinger’s impressive catalogue (published in German in 2010) which provides an excellent

recent account of the issues at stake and many relevant case-studies. During the Tokyo workshop, I was very inspired by Michael Turner to think deeper about the distinctions in Jewish thought between resurrection and reincarnation on the one hand and metamorphism and regeneration on the other hand; I have not yet done full justice to these subtleties in my thinking concerning destruction and reconstruction of cultural heritage as future-making. I also acknowledge intellectual stimulation gained from discussions within our AHRC-funded “Heritage Futures” research programme (www.heritage-futures.org).

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The Roles of the Locals - and the Possible Reconstruction of the Destroyed Buddha Statues in the Bamiyan Valley, Afghanistan



Marie Louise Stig Sørensen

Abstract This chapter discusses the classic heritage tensions and challenges that are linked to the proposed reconstruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues. Arguing that the most fundamental question is not how but *why* they should be reconstructed, the reasoning formulated around three core aspects are considered. The first is about authenticity. Classical examples of how reconstructions articulate with authenticity are outlined as a background to the recently softening up of the concept and to argue that understanding authenticity as a malleable and discursive quality could provide inspirational for the reconstruction of the Buddha statues. The second concern relates to political and socio-economic aspects arguing that the reconstruction efforts are essentially political as the destruction and reconstruction are conceptually interconnected with the latter lending support for competing national/regional historiographies. This calls for foresight and carefulness in decision making. As regards the third aspect, the role of the local residents, the chapter points to the tendency of systematic neglect of local residents in terms of meaningful engagement, and some of the ways this manifests itself. It also argues that it is not enough that all agree that this is regretful, we need to work on methods aiming at more meaningful and sustainable involvement.

Keywords Authenticity · Local residents · Politics · Socio-economic · Tourism · Heritage

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Discussions about the possible reconstruction of the destroyed Buddha statues¹ in the Bamiyan Valley, Afghanistan, reveal several classic challenges and tensions within contemporary heritage philosophies and policies, including the considerable challenges associated with meaningful involvement of local residents.² The seminal question as regards their reconstruction is, therefore, not how but *why*. Yes, there are technical challenges due to the character of the local stone, the honeycomb of caves affecting the nearby surfaces of the rock, and the totality of the destruction;³ but these are relatively mechanical challenges that may be overcome if deemed so important that the right resources are made available. Much more complex and conflictual is the question of why it should be done. In the following I look at the reasoning that arises around the case from three points of views: the authenticity argument, political and socio-economic aspects, and, finally, the local residents, with the latter concern underwriting all the aspects brought out. Of course, these aspects are interrelated, but focussing on them separately nonetheless helps to reveal some of the fundamental challenges that the case raises and draws attention to their varied foundations ranging from issues of philosophy to matters of methodology. They also point to the tendency of systematic neglect, or at the most superficial incorporation, of the local residents, and the substantial challenges we face in terms of developing methods that will aid much more meaningful and sustainable involvement of local residents.

1 The Challenge of Authenticity

In terms of the future fate of the destroyed statues, authenticity is probably the one aspect where differences between official bodies, especially UNESCO, and various local residents are the clearest. In this, the possible reconstruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues raises a concern that has railed UNESCO's criteria for World Heritage nomination from its very beginning, but which also, of course, affects heritage nomination and care at other levels. We commonly identify the Venice Charter of 1964 as the point of consolidation (and internationalisation) of earlier views. This charter insists on the clear difference between the original and the copy, and the need to mark and maintain that difference in all restoration work. It also assumes that the values reside in the original alone. According to the philosophy behind that

¹Although most of the discussions of reconstruction have focussed on just one of the two statues, the so-called "eastern Buddha", I generally refer to them in the plural as so far they have been conceptualised as a pair.

²Various terms, with various connotations, may be used to refer to local inhabitants, such as communities or merely locals; I shall throughout use the term local residents as it embraces everyone locally irrespective of their relationship to the place as they may all, but in various ways, be affected by the heritage work.

³For further discussion of these aspects see, for example, 'Report on the ICOMOS Commission' (2014).

charter, the restoration of the Bamiyan Buddha statues can only result in a fake, a lie. There is not an original to be patched up, but an entirely new statue may be built, even if fragments from the original are included (so-called *anastylosis*). It is, however, also well known that this interpretation of authenticity in various ways has been 'softened up'. Firstly, the concept of intangible heritage, introduced in 2003, was meant to move attention from the sole focus on the material and monumental to skills and crafts and living traditions. This was not meant to undermine the importance of authenticity, but it clearly made it somewhat more malleable and discursive—in principle, one person's authentic version may be considered as good as another's. It has also led to some confusion and considerable debate about what then is authenticity (for further discussion see, for example, Jokilehto 2006; Silverman 2015). The further social implications, such as local views about what 'authenticity' is about, have not, however, been equally intensively pursued. Secondly, there have also been cases where the reconstructed heritage, or reconstructing the heritage, even where total reconstruction was involved, was seen to be of such significance that its status as heritage is not compromised despite the degree of reconstruction or even recreation. There are several such cases, but the examples of the reconstructed historic centre of Warsaw and the rebuilding of the Mostar Bridge (Stara Most), Bosnia, are particularly revealing of some of the changes that have taken place over the last 50 years, and they may hint at lessons to learn.

Modern wars in their dispersed impacts lead to considerable destruction that is not limited to battlefields but includes private housing, civic buildings, infrastructures, and cityscapes. This was clearly the case during World War Two, and in many regions, a mixture of organised and spontaneous reconstruction took place after the war. Such reconstructions commonly aimed at the rebuilding of homes and townscapes, and to recover the familiar rather than engage in innovations. For many towns,⁴ this kind of reconstruction was largely a citizens-response or implemented at a low level of governmentality, such as local councils. Through this, the mainline principle of authenticity that was used by contemporary heritage management regimes came face to face with a different kind of reconstruction ethos in which it was the immediate heritage ('the word we have just lost') that was of concern rather than more detached notions of architectural styles and the integrity of the materials used. The reconstruction of the historic centre of Warsaw, Poland, which was extensively destroyed during World War Two, is often referred to as an example of this development. The UNESCO World Heritage List web page summarises the case as:

During the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944, more than 85% of Warsaw's historic centre was destroyed by Nazi troops. After the war, a five-year reconstruction campaign by *its citizens* resulted in today's meticulous restoration of the Old Town, with its churches, palaces and market-place. It is *an outstanding example of a near-total reconstruction* of a span of history covering the 13th to the 20th century.⁵ (my emphasis).

⁴In some cases, towns were selected for reconstruction by political elites to illustrate their new political ideology. Dacia Viejo Rose has investigated this phenomenon in terms of the reconstruction after the Spanish Civil war and Franco's adoption of towns like Gernika (2015).

⁵<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/30>, consulted 16/09/2017.

What is of interest to the present case is the involvement of the citizens, namely the owners and the people for whom this mattered, but also that this point is becoming somewhat mythologized, and in the UNESCO description this appears as more of a spontaneous response than it actually was. A number of recent investigations into the reconstruction of Warsaw point to the central role of the National People's Council of Poland (representing Soviet-controlled communist government) and show how the whole process was centrally controlled (e.g. Kuznicki 2013). This, moreover, is not the only challenge to the notion of citizens as the rebuilders. In practice, reconstructions have often been more of political affairs than we tend to acknowledge. Lacking authenticity in the traditional sense, the granting of World Heritage Site status to the Historic City centre of Warsaw did, therefore, cause substantial debate and was not a straightforward decision (for details about the WHS nomination see Cameron 2008). Looking at the statement above it is striking that, in a slightly twisted manner, it is the very reconstruction that becomes the reasons for WHS accreditation; so it is not the historic qualities of the city that makes it unique, it is the human capacity to rebuild that is emphasized.

The case of the reconstruction of the Mostar Bridge is different in a number of ways. Firstly, its destruction was a deliberate act by the Croat military against the Bosniaks in 1993, and it is thus an explicit example of targeted heritage destruction within a context of civil war. It, moreover, was done with full awareness of the media coverage. It added the drama and impact of a media-event to the format of heritage destruction and through that created an involved public far beyond the immediate site and its local residents. Its reconstruction (2001–2004), moreover, did not involve the citizens but was largely conducted by international bodies. The entry in Wikipedia makes the scale of this international involvement clear:

After the end of the war, plans were raised to reconstruct the bridge. *The World Bank, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the World Monuments Fund* formed a coalition to oversee the reconstruction ... Additional funding was provided by *Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey, Croatia and the Council of Europe Development Bank*, as well as *the Bosnian government*. In October 1998, UNESCO established an international committee of experts to oversee the design and reconstruction work.⁶ (my emphasis).

In addition, when it came to deciding how to plan the actual reconstruction, notions of architectural authenticity became important, and it was decided that the rebuilt bridge should be as similar as possible to the 'original'. In practice, this meant that the same technology and materials as the original should be used, and this, in turn, meant that rather than using local craftspeople, a Turkish company was appointed and with it 'Ottoman construction techniques'. In this case, in the conflicted situation arising from civil war, the reconstruction was not primarily used as an opportunity to create practical, and thus arguably 'real', connections between the communities, rather it was a symbolic expression of reconciliation that the funders sought. As a result, the reconstruction process was to some extent ethicised as it was

⁶https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stari_Most, consulted 12/09/2017.

done in a manner that could be interpreted as having taken side in the local conflict. Nonetheless, the reconstruction is internationally celebrated as an example of symbolic bridge building and reconciliation, as becomes obvious from the front page statement on the UNESCO WHS webpage for Mostar:

... The Old Bridge was recently rebuilt and many of the edifices in the Old Town have been restored or rebuilt with the contribution of an *international scientific committee* established by UNESCO. The Old Bridge area, with its pre-Ottoman, eastern Ottoman, Mediterranean and western European architectural features, is an outstanding example of a multicultural urban settlement. The reconstructed Old Bridge and Old City of Mostar is a *symbol of reconciliation, international co-operation and of the coexistence of diverse cultural, ethnic and religious communities*.⁷ (my emphasis).

There are, however, some discrepancies between this description and the reality on the ground. For instance, when in April 2010 we interviewed⁸ some of the local people who had been involved with the reconstruction, they said that the whole town came to celebrate when the new bridge opened in 2004. When asked if they really meant the whole town, they qualified that, of course, it had only been people from their side who had participated. It has even been suggested that the rebuilt bridge became a symbol of the absence of peace and the possibility of further hostility in Bosnia (e.g. Greer 2010). In this case, it can be argued that the significance given to authenticity—which could only be in terms of crafts and materials—meant that the reconstruction did not aid reconciliation to the extent it might have, had it been done differently.

Several points arise from the two cases that may be helpful for reflecting on the decisions about the Bamiyan Buddha statues. Firstly, the concept of authenticity has become sufficiently flexible that different kinds of total reconstructions can be done without undermining the significance of a monument, although it will affect it, and authenticity and meaning may shift to very different dimensions of the monument. This should make it possible to open up for more in-depth and sustained involvement of local residents who in turn may play an interesting role in redefining authenticity as something beyond crafts and materials. Secondly, such cases warn about the motivations of international bodies, who, however well intended, may bring external agendas to the reconstruction project. Maybe scrutiny of our agendas should become of greater concern than staying loyal to the Venice Charter's version of authenticity?

As regards the Bamiyan statues, it is clear that it is not possible to recapture the original monuments, and therefore this cannot be the aim of the reconstruction; but what then are the reasons for reconstructing them now? In a recent volume of the online journal *Unesco courier*, Christina Cameron discussed the trend of changing attitudes to reconstruction; she stated, "Global destruction of cultural heritage, now occurring at an unprecedented scale, brings into focus the question of whether or not to reconstruct significant places as a means of *recovering their meaning*"

⁷<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/946> consulted 16/09/2017.

⁸Fieldtrip as part of the CRIC project http://cordis.europa.eu/result/rcn/55191_en.html

(Cameron 2017, no page, my emphasis).⁹ Cameron's discussion is timely including her call for further international guidance, but the expectation that a clear connection between a place and its meaning can be recovered through reconstruction is worth reflecting on. Just like the concept of authenticity, the idea of monuments having meaning is also complex and in some ways questionable. Firstly, monuments do not have just one meaning, they have layers of meanings accrued over time and by different interlocutors (for examples see Sørensen and Viejo Rose 2015). So if we hold that reconstruction should be about meaning, then we need to consider which meanings about the Bamiyan Buddha statues are the reasons for their reconstruction—is it the meanings in the sixth century CE around the time they were constructed, in the 1970s when they were restored, or is it about what they mean now during the post-2001 redevelopment period—and how do we establish such 'meaning'? Secondly, it is unclear how a reconstruction can ever 'recover' meaning, whereas clearly, it may create it.

At the same time, these concerns about authenticity are often strange and irrelevant to local residents as for them it is the recovering of a material presence or the act of political resistance that matter, rather than a monument's exact shape or original material. That this is the case among the residents in Bamiyan Valley is suggested by some of the statements that can be found within various online sources, such as "I have spoken to people who would like to see it go up in concrete."¹⁰ Such realities challenge us to wonder whether the current 'softening up' of the authenticity ideology originally propelled by the Venice Charter is actually sufficient, if we want to genuinely respond to local residents' needs, or at least desire their involvement. We need to be wary of discussions about authenticity, especially when they are used to formulate decisions. At least we must learn to see authenticity as just one dimension of a complex reality, rather than the core arbitrator.

2 Political and Socio-Economic Aspects of Reconstruction

There are many political dimensions within the call for the reconstruction of the Buddha statues. The most significant is about how Afghanistan, or regions or groups within the country, wants to formulate its past, or in other words the nationalisation of its antiquities (Green 2017: 47), and which of competing historiographies is to be supported.

The targeted destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues is often emphasised as a new kind of iconoclasm, which takes place in front of the world media and which deliberately uses these to communicate its intent. Michael Falser argues that the destruction of the Bamiyan statues was "... the first, large scale live-act of performative iconoclasm against the physical and mental image of heritage in the age of

⁹<http://en.unesco.org/courier/july-september-2017/reconstruction-changing-attitudes>, consulted 15.09.2017.

¹⁰L. Morgan quoted by S. Hegarty (2012) for BBC World Service.

the internet” (2011: 157). Whereas such deliberate targeted destruction of heritage sites is not novel, it is important to realise that we still do not comprehend the range of motivations behind such acts very well, and we appear particularly unsure about whether the involvement of the media represents something new and different.

Within this ontological insecurity, I suggest that we need to accept that reconstruction will not, indeed cannot, ever just be about the monument and its meaning. It will always also be about the destruction and it will, whether intended or not, appear as a response or answer to it as the two acts are conceptually and politically interconnected. We must ask whether by reconstructing the statues we are reinstating them as a target. Are we replaying a media event, participated in the scripted course of retaliation and counter-events, playing into the hand of the iconoclasts as their acts gain even greater recognition through ours? Such concerns make a strong case for critical scrutiny of the motivations behind the call for reconstruction. Different reasons are clearly expressed at local, regional, national and international levels, and even by individuals, and analysis of the background to these and their possible repercussions need to be included in any decision-making. Moreover, in such complex situations, it is important to realise that neither top-down nor bottom-up approaches are sufficient and that *more fuzzy approaches need to be explored*.

The emerging emphasis on the use of culture for sustainable development is similarly political within the Afghan context. Various proposals under the slogan ‘Concept of Culture for Development’ have been forwarded with the aim of fuelling sustainable development in the Bamiyan Valley. An example is the creation of a Bamiyan Museum for Peace. Within such projects, there is a tendency for the local to be appropriated for wider agendas, and local development plans become extensions of Afghan national policies more generally. Within this context, the significance of the statues becomes their ability to contribute to a political program of development. The statements and reasons provided in support of their reconstruction reveal how these arguments are nested within larger-scale political strategies, such as:

The development goal, in line with the UNDAF (United Nations Assistance Development Framework) and the ANDS (Afghan National Development Strategy), is to promote peace and sustainable development (sustainable livelihoods) for the people of Bamiyan with an appropriate use of the natural and cultural environment and for Afghanistan as a whole by reviving a rich history of intercultural exchanges and fostering cultural diversity.¹¹

It is, however, difficult to assess whether sustainable development actually takes place and what may characterise it. This is not an issue distinct to the Bamiyan case, and there are ongoing, widespread discussions about the criteria and means of such developments in many parts of the world. It is, however, clear that due to their iconic status the statues will be prone to appropriation for various uses by different kinds of stakeholders, and their reconstruction will easily become interwoven with apparently unrelated concerns and objectives. An unavoidable link between the

¹¹ Safeguarding of the Bamiyan Site, Phase IV <http://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/717/> consulted 15.09.2017.

destruction/reconstruction and the ambitions for sustainable development has already emerged, placing both as significant political ‘players’ in future planning. In turn, this will impact local residents, as their landscape is subjected to change and experimentation in a manner that will influence how they will be able to act within, use, and relate to it, and how they will recognise it as their own.

This focus on reconstruction, as part of development policy, is used by some sectors as a strong reason for the reconstruction of the statues; they argue that this will benefit the local economy through tourism. There is, of course, a tourism potential linked to the place, but overall tourism will be more depending on security and general travel conditions within the country than whether there are statues to be seen. Moreover, it should be considered whether in their absence the Buddha statues have as much attraction as if they were reconstructed.

In terms of foreign visitors, the so-called ‘dark tourism’, which cater to a section of travellers who search for places of conflict and contestation, may be attracted by the absent Buddha statues, even mainstream tourists may be equally appealed to by the empty niche as by any kind of modern replacement. Absence and atmosphere have become distinct tropes within contemporary search for novel visitor experiences, as illustrated by the importance the faint traces of the Berlin wall have gained for visitors to that city. The reconstruction may thus make less of a difference to the local economy, than we tend to think. The destruction of the Buddha statues is already repeatedly referred to within promotional materials for the Bamiyan Valley, as a tourist attraction. For example, the website Gov.UK, when presenting the activities of ‘The Afghan Rural Enterprise Development program’ (which showcased products in Bamiyan), referred to the location as: “Famous for its ancient Buddhas which were tragically destroyed in 2001 and the Band-e-Amir National Park with its turquoise blue lakes.”¹² The attention to Bamiyan is so distinct that it became the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation’s cultural capital for 2015, with its fame apparently largely due to the statues’ destruction, as seen in the following excerpts: “Bamiyan, the Afghan town which shot into prominence when the Taliban blew up two ancient statues of the Buddha in 2001, has been selected to be the SAARC cultural capital for a year beginning April 2016–17” (Joshua 2014, no page), and “Bamiyan’s suitability as a cultural capital might seem obvious. It is the site of the two massive Buddha statues ... which were destroyed by the Taleban in 2001; although smashed ... the site is still breath-taking and archeologically significant” (Suroush 2015, no page).

The economic potentials and the use of the reconstructed Buddha as a marketing device is, however, an area where local residents are entirely dependent on outsider advice and comprehensive market analyses, with the latter currently looking wholly speculative. In addition, different local residents might find they have different interests, and they may come to realise that tourism will not be a direct benefit for them all, but that it will force changes in their habitual relationship with the place.

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/afghan-products-exhibition-in-cultural-capital-bamiyan> consulted 17.09.2017.

3 Local Residents

There are numerous examples showing how essential it is to involve local residents in the reconstruction of deliberately destroyed heritage in order for reconstruction to be beneficial. We see this emphasis especially clearly in developing nations and through international projects. It is, for example, stressed in UNESCO's operational guidelines, which calls for projects that will give heritage a function for communities,¹³ and it is clearly part of UNESCO's strategic objectives. The challenge is, therefore, not to convince anyone about the importance of involving local residents. Rather it seems that the challenge is methodological in terms of developing means that can help us to understand and involve the local residents more effectively and more meaningfully.

There are several typical problems, with some easier to resolve than others. Firstly, the character of people's attachment to and involvement with the heritage in their environment varies considerably. On the one extreme, we have so-called 'living heritage', where people have an active ongoing meaningful, and often emotional, relationship with parts of their heritage in a manner that is not managed or fabricated by some kind of management agency; in these cases, heritage has a dynamic presence and is affective. On the other extreme, we have dead heritage to which no one has an active emotional or cultural engagement, but which may be made meaningful through heritagisation and through interpretations, such heritage may be related to in a number of ways including objectified as history knowledge or explored through invented traditions or tourism. These wide differences are of significance because the success of any attempt at involving local residents is deeply dependent on what kind of heritage relations we engage with and whether there are pre-existing affective and/or symbolic relationships.

Secondly, we commonly refer to local residents as if they are a homogenous group. This is never the case. 'Local resident' is always constituted by people of different age and gender with different educational levels and economic abilities, as well as capacities, and they are tied together through family relations and other solidarities and dependencies, such as due to their ethnicity or occupation. Within heritage management projects, this diversity is often represented by just one or a few people, and we too often do not pay further attention to how the diversity within the

¹³The UNESCO operational guidelines state that: "World Heritage properties may support a variety of ongoing and proposed uses that are ecologically and culturally sustainable and which may contribute to the quality of life of communities concerned. The State Party and its partners must ensure that such sustainable use or any other change does not impact adversely on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property". (Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (WHC,16/01–26 October 2016, Section IIF, paragraph 119). Section VI of the guidelines further states the objectives to be to: a) to enhance capacity-building and research; b) to raise the general public's awareness, understanding and appreciation of the need to preserve cultural and natural heritage; c) to enhance the function of World Heritage in the life of the community; and d) to increase the participation of local and national populations in the protection and presentation of heritage. (Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention) (WHC,16/01 - 26 October 2016, Section VIA, paragraph 211). Consulted 21.10.2017.

local is present within this representation. The result is commonly a tokenism of local involvement. In many cases, subsequent interviews have revealed that most of the local people do not recognise that they were consulted or do not trust their views were being listened to (e.g. Brumann and Berliner 2016). This is a particularly complex matter when the socio-political and cultural traditions of the various partners differ widely. So, for instance, if the local residents in the Bamiyan valley are traditionally represented by council leaders, with what right can we ask to hear the women's voices or that of other ethnic minorities within the region? But, if we do not listen to the views of the poor, the young, the women, and the others, how can we think that the local perspective is being fully considered, and how can we subsequently expect such groups to not just respect but also care for the restored monument(s)? Local residents are never a homogenous block, and we must develop methods of inclusivity that recognise diversity.

Thirdly, there is often a wide gap between local ways of valorising and recognising heritage remains and how international experts and heritage managers evaluate them, or even how they see, or recognise, the same remains. In my own fieldwork in the WHS of Cidade Velha, Cape Verde, interviews with local residents revealed a disconnect between their oral appreciation of their past and their ability to recognise the upstanding remains as an expression of that past (Evans et al. 2011). Such differences become exaggerated through language use, not only unfamiliar terms and jargons but frequently also through the use of alienating language syntax. The result is often a lack of mutual comprehension or a 'lost in translation' gap. If there is not a mutual agreement about the subject of discussion, then agreed solutions and forward planning have a weak foundation. This means that the taken for granted cultural capital underwriting the rhetoric of international institutions and experts too often leaves the ones without the necessary language on the outside.

These challenges are well known, and ways of building-up shared understandings and better dialogues are being tested and experimented with. Yet, a certain awkwardness is still obvious in many of these attempts. There is, for instance, a tendency for programs to be, or appear, patronising of local understandings. Despite a focus on dialogue, top-down approaches still dominate. As regards the Bamiyan Valley, attention towards local residents has been stressed in the various UNESCO and Afghan government meetings and protocols, and there are clear expressions of a desire to make local residents beneficiaries of the reconstruction project and to involve them in some capacity. But the various texts nonetheless tend to present local residents in a manner that lacks nuances, and which tend to render them passive recipients of the benefits. Many of the projects seem to ignore existing awareness and divergent attitudes towards the heritage, and they rather aim at promoting cultural understanding and community awareness, as if neither pre-existed. So, although praiseworthy in their intentions, local voices are too often absent from such texts and enterprises. There is little sense of value granted to those who have lived in the valley, and with the Buddha statues, from before and during the conflict; there is no sense that the Buddha statues belong with them (notice the difference between with them and to them). There is a worrying taste of an attitude in which the local residents need to be educated about the historical significance of these

statues. Such an attitude is not in line with contemporary thinking within heritage policy and philosophy, but moving beyond this attitude cannot merely be done by deciding to talk more with local residents; we need better methodologies.

To advance the concern with local involvement, one necessary step is more robust reflections on the aims of local involvement; is it to reach an agreed meaning, to establish a range of supported and celebrated relationships with the heritage, or to channel existing practices and thoughts, or something else? It is not always entirely clear that we know what our aims are beyond 'involvement' and dialogue. As already stated, this is not due to lack of intentions, but rather because this is an extremely complex area. As regards the Bamiyan statues, there are people living in the caves, people farming the areas at the foot of the cliffs, people working in the small village, people further afield, and entrepreneurs who are trying to develop local resources for new markets, including tourism. There are many different scales and kinds of peoples. How will we recognise their diversity and decide who should be stakeholders? Practical and legal matters tend to provide the answers: people who own land have rights and community heads and spiritual leaders are given voices. In contrast, people living in the caves fluctuate between being seen as 'living cultural tradition' and illegal squatters. Ethnicity raises another challenge. The Hazaras, who constitute the largest ethnic group in the Bamiyan valley, have been suppressed since the foundation of modern Afghanistan and were especially persecuted by the Taliban (Chioyenda 2017). In numerous recent accounts of local traditional attachments to the statues, they are now the group who are singled out as having appropriated the Buddha statues into a local semi-religious traditional narrative (*ibid.*). But in this process, very little is made of how other ethnic groups within Bamiyan Valley might have related to the statues, and how the claim of attachment becomes part of a wider claim on identity and rights of belonging (for some of this complexity see Chioyenda 2017).

It is clear that such entangled complex issues around the involvement of local residents cannot be easily solved; but it is important to realise that we need much more extensive anthropological and sociological research, including qualitative analysis and studies of various modes of interaction with the heritage – for example, what factors influence notions of attachment. We also need to appreciate, both theoretically and practically, how such attachments may be changeable and constructed in responses to the developing situation within the local landscape. So, the challenge is not simple. We need to develop methods for more transparent and effective understandings of the local (age, gender, minorities, social-economic standing, capacities, etc.), including whether they have different, even contradictory, needs and interests as regards the local heritage. We need to find out what local residents conceptualise as heritage, rather than simply assuming what it is or wanting to teach it to them. To reach such entangled co-creation of heritage futures we also need better methods for the creation of local participation—participation that is truly co-owned by the local residents and which empowers them, for example by using different traditional collectives as a basis for cooperative action.

The case of the destroyed Buddha statues in the Bamiyan Valley raises classical heritage challenges while also revealing how these may gain a distinct local spin.

Thinking through the wide-ranging historical examples of reconstruction after violent deliberate destruction, it seems that we have not yet found the right mode of reaction. This should suggest caution about how we formulate responses – what are our reasons for the reconstruction? In terms of actual practice, a substantial challenge arises from the pull between authenticity and what people care about. This asks us to think about how we may simultaneously be guided by the Venice Charter and yet not be dictated by it. And how do we accommodate other wider concerns within society which often see heritage as a means of something else – be that political or economic? The wider heritage field is currently at a point of self-scrutiny and reflection; many of the issues brought up in this paper fall within central concerns about meanings and involvements. Solutions and inspirations are being sought through debates, amendments of conventions, and increased investment in case studies. It is, however, easy to underestimate the sense of need and urgency that various local groups in Afghan feel and express, as well as the force of their emotional and political desire for reaction. In some ways, the core challenge here, therefore, becomes how to balance short- and long-term desires and outcomes against each other. How important it is to set right the damage to heritage in its local setting and to help the various groups within Afghanistan, and the Bamiyan valley specifically, to reach solutions that are right for them rather than maintain international standards and follow global policies?

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Learning from Ground Zero: The Presence of Absence at Two Sites of Destruction



Helaine Silverman

Abstract The destroyed Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan and the destroyed World Trade Center in New York City prompted almost immediate discussion and controversy over whether to reconstruct these structures and thereby fill the void on their respective landscapes. Despite the difference in their contexts, the two sites of destruction implicate a number of similar issues, including: respect for or mitigation of the void; pre and post destruction narratives about the sites; the concept of loss; inscription and erasure of memory on a lived, monumental landscape; the concept of heritage applied to the site; perceptions of value; the politics and ethics of decision-making concerning the impacted terrain; assertions, contestations, and goals of stakeholderhood; the aesthetics of reconstruction; the symbolism of reconstruction; the emotional and affective dimensions of reconstruction; economic development after destruction and its intended beneficiaries; what is considered recovery and by whom; the future that reconstruction is anticipated to generate; and formal interpretive scripts about the destruction and the physical form these scripts take. This paper considers the difficulty of achieving a built solution for these voids, focusing on the people living close to the sites who were most directly affected by the destruction.

Keywords Ground Zero · Stakeholders · Memory · Discourse · Dissonance · Contested heritage · Bamiyan

In March 2001 the Taliban dynamited the ancient, towering Buddhas carved into a cliff face in the Bamiyan Valley, Afghanistan. Six months later, Al Qaeda terrorists destroyed the skyline-dominating twin towers of the World Trade Center (WTC) in

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New York City, USA. Both landmarks were emblematic of their landscape – one rural, the other urban. The former, a testament to a world once linked by a vast overland network of commerce and communication. The other, a cognate testament to an even vaster network. Both attacks had global significance: a religiously driven, symbolic attack in remote Bamiyan that challenged one kind of world order (the “international community,” for instance as exemplified by UNESCO) and a political attack on the American financial capital that struck at the world order it represented (Osama Bin Laden, quoted in Bamber 2001). In both places the attacks caused a physical void to appear on the landscape.

Despite the difference in their contexts, the two sites of destruction implicate a number of similar issues, including: respect for or mitigation of the void; pre and post destruction narratives about the sites; the concept of loss; inscription and erasure of memory on a lived, monumental landscape; the concept of heritage applied to the site; perceptions of value; the politics and ethics of decision-making concerning the impacted terrain; assertions, contestations, and goals of stakeholderhood; the aesthetics of reconstruction; the symbolism of reconstruction; the emotional and affective dimensions of reconstruction; economic development after destruction and its intended beneficiaries; what is considered recovery and by whom; the future that reconstruction is anticipated to generate; and formal interpretive scripts about the destruction and the physical form these scripts take. Bamiyan implicates other dimensions as well: authenticity, technology, cultural diplomacy, local social development, and war. Nevertheless, the many issues shared make New York City a worthwhile comparison for this volume about monument reconstruction in Bamiyan. In both cases there has been a tremendously complicated process concerning a built solution for the void that implicates geographically and emotionally proximal communities. In this chapter I focus on the people living close to the sites and most directly affected by the destruction wrought.

1 Contesting Stakeholders

9/11 was not just a human disaster, it was an infrastructural and financial disaster: for its technical owner, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey; for Larry Silverstein, who had just obtained a 99-year lease to the WTC; and for the businesses that operated in the twin towers and nearby. In addition, 9/11 also implicated “those who possessed a different kind of claim on the site [and] they all viewed Ground Zero¹ differently” (Sontag 2006). Two primary discourses thus came into conflict: redevelopment/rebuilding versus commemoration/remembrance. As Lynne Sagalyn put it, the WTC was “a contested site crowded with competing claims” (2016: 338).

¹The area of impact immediately became known of Ground Zero, implicitly recalling the Trinity Test Site, Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The financial sector saw an opportunity to rebuild, redevelop and make huge profits from this property. This sector had tremendous power, know-how and the monetary and legal resources to exert their will (see Sorkin 2003; Goldberger 2005; Nobel 2005; Greenspan 2013; Sagalyn 2016). Only a month after the disaster *The New York Times* architecture critic Herbert Muschamp (2001a) had observed that “a wide cross-section of New York has been toiling to produce a plan for the redevelopment of the financial district.”

On the other side and still reeling from their personal losses, as quickly the families of victims and survivors organized their own advocacy groups. We can think of the families as the local community that is a standard concern in contemporary principles of cultural heritage management.² And, as is well documented in the heritage literature, communities and site managers often come into conflict. The Families Advisory Council,³ in particular, became a major voice speaking at and against power.

Decisions about what to do with the central area where the twin towers had stood were not exclusively top-down nor made completely behind closed doors, notwithstanding the real power-wielders. Family concerns were listened to by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation⁴ and, *to a degree*, taken into account.⁵ A key requirement of the family groups was “to recognize the victims, to keep the footprints unencumbered, and provide access to the bedrock at Ground Zero” (Young 2006: 224). With the interests of the financial and infrastructural sectors allied against them, it is notable that the injured families were successful in preventing new commercial buildings from occupying the space where the towers had stood – the 70-foot deep voids (the footprints) in which the fragmented or vaporized remains

²For instance, Article 8 of Nara Document on Authenticity (1994) states “Responsibility for cultural heritage and the management of it belongs, in the first place, to the cultural community that has generated it, and subsequently to that which cares for it”; Article 12 of the Burra Charter (1999) encourages “participation of people for whom the place has special associations and meanings...”; Paragraph 12 of the Operational Guidelines for Implementation of the World Heritage Convention encourages states parties “to ensure the participation of a wide variety of stakeholders, including site managers, local and regional governments, local communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other interested parties....”; and Paragraph 80 of the *Operational Directives* (2016) for implementation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention (2003) states that participation of communities should be facilitated. The *Journal of Community Archaeology and Heritage* (established in 2014), arises out of this position and reflects the shift in heritage management from a technical and top-down practice to a bottom-up and co-creative approach (see, e.g., Harrington 1993; Watkins et al. 1995; McDavid 2002; Shackel and Chambers 2004; Little and Shackel 2007, 2014; Smith and Waterton 2009; Matthews 2011; Albert et al. 2012; Bollwerk and Connolly 2015).

³It was composed of “families of the victims, local residents and business people, and other groups affected by the attacks” (Young 2006:219).

⁴The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation was established in October 2001 to plan and coordinate redevelopment; many agencies were involved.

⁵Financial compensation for the families was egregiously low and the process was inhumanely conducted. A heart-wrenching letter from one family member on display in the museum indicates the pain suffered in the coldly administered bureaucratic process of compensation and the absurdly low amount of monetary value put on this father’s life.

of their loved ones lay. The families' success was due to what we might call community participatory action, notwithstanding its own internal disagreements (see, especially, Sagalyn 2016).

Importantly, the Families Advisory Council drafted the initial memorial mission statement and family members were part of the revision committee for that statement (Blais and Rasic 2011: 121). In addition, the memorial design jury received input by mail from over twenty victims' family organizations (Blais and Rasic 2011: 122). Thus, although the families were represented by only one member on the 13-person jury (see Young 2006: 221), they had had significant voice in shaping the requirements for the memorial competition. And once the eight finalists were chosen, the families again had the opportunity to comment (as did the public at a later showing) and the jury worked with the finalists to improve their designs (Blais and Rasic 2011: 129). Upon selection of Michael Arad's *Reflecting Absence*, the families were able to give more input through the Coalition of 9/11 Families and their ideas were largely accepted (Blais and Rasic 2011: 143). To a significant degree, then, the families got the memorial they wanted.

No solution to the extraordinarily complex situation of the 16 acres in lower Manhattan could have pleased everyone. But given the notoriously antagonistic relationship between New York City and New York State, and that developers and the principle of eminent domain had almost always been able to bulldoze (literally) citizen opposition, and that historic preservationists had lost many, many buildings,⁶ remarkably, over a tortuous 10 years, the 8-acre core that had been occupied by the twin towers was preserved, memorialized (in 2011: see Blais and Rasic 2011) and interpreted (in 2014: see Greenwald 2016) in what was, *realistically*, I believe, a best-case scenario for the families, notwithstanding the criticism by some scholars (see, e.g. Low 2004; Rosenthal 2004) whose ideological and/or urban neighborhood expectations were unlikely to be fulfilled "where the rubber hits the road," as we say in America.

2 Memory, Discourse and Dissonance at Ground Zero

Ken Dornstein (1998) has written, "In the aftermath of death memory can become bound up with place, sites of loss can be sanctified, obliterated or physically marked." Adding an epilogue to their book as it went to press mere days after 9/11, Robert Nelson and Margaret Olin insightfully observed that instantaneously the WTC had "changed from a *milieu de mémoire* to a *lieu de mémoire*" (2003: 306). Indeed, the number of dead at the WTC and the horrible circumstances of their

⁶Historic preservationists made themselves heard as a discrete group, arguing for inscription of the site on the National Register of Historic Places. Also advocating were The New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Lower Manhattan Emergency Preservation Fund, the World Trade Center Survivors' Network, National Trust for Historic Preservation, and other groups. In a press release dated October 15, 2009 the National Trust for Historic Preservation noted the involvement of more than seventy consulting parties.

death led rapidly to a public discourse about the site as sacred ground, a cemetery in effect (see, e.g. Murphy 2001). Marita Sturken perceptively suggested (2007: 205) that the footprints were imagined as giving the vanished dead a home where they could be visited, becoming, essentially, a burial ground without bodies (Aronson 2016). The tombstone nature of the memorial with its thousands of inscribed names serves as a place of personal mourning as well as being a place of public remembrance and commemoration (see Editorial 2001).

Although controversial when built and unloved before the attack, Michael J. Lewis (2001) observed that “In their absence the World Trade Center towers are more a monument than ever.” He went on suggest that “The physical void they leave is itself a poignant memorial.” The site of destruction, however, could not be left with a raw void. Rather, Michael Arad’s memorial pools fill that space (but see Dunlap 2005), recalling the lives that once existed there and intending that emotional solace be physically embodied by the memorial.

Meaning, however, is another matter. Muschamp (2001b) presciently wrote days after the attack, “It will be months and years before the cultural meaning of the World Trade Center catastrophe comes into approximate focus.” Nelson and Olin (2003: 306) correctly speculated that the future memorial would “further mold and focus social memory of the tragedy, in ways that [many] will debate.” Writing yet 5 years later, James Young expressed the same opinion: “these events are not memory yet, but still unfolding before our eyes... Before we could remember the events of 9/11 we first had to know what they meant... Even now, 5 years later, we still don’t really know what they meant entirely, which makes it difficult to fix in stone a particular memory” (2006: 214). Ground Zero was thus a made-to-order site of dissonance.⁷

Multiple discourses by residents of lower Manhattan swirled in the months after the attack, as Setha Low (2004) and Joy Sather-Wagstaff (2011a) learned in their ethnographic fieldwork. Sather-Wagstaff, in particular, observed more complex social, emotional, performative, narrative, and political responses at the WTC than “negative” (Meskell 2002) – or in her critique – “dark” – would suggest. Yes, the

⁷Setha Low (2004) is correct that 9/11 generated a dominant, mass-mediated discourse and representation. “REBUILD. From the Ashes, The World Trade Center Rises Again” presents the widely shared dominant narrative of the site (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzpyheliUcE>; Accessed June 7, 2017). On site there has been little room for alternative views, whether of an urban or political nature. Dissonance is most obvious in the museum (see Aronson 2016; Gardner and Henry 2002; Greenwald 2010, 2016; Paliewicz 2017). Although some controversies are indicated, they are minimized in comparison to the scale of the dominant narratives of bravery, individual life and the triumph of human dignity, remembrance, commemoration, facticity, patriotism and resilience. The museum had to be profound, moving, inspirational, a witness to tragedy and an affirmation of freedom. The museum is more conceptually unstable than the memorial per se. Time has been a critical variable in the process of interpretation at Ground Zero as David Uzzell (2015) indicates with his clever phrase “the time of place.” No museum exhibit is permanent, notwithstanding the phrase “permanent exhibition.” 9/11 is on-going. Unlike Appomattox Court House, Armistice Day and VE Day marking definitive, victorious ends to wars, history with regard to Islamic jihadism has not concluded and the meaning and significance of 9/11 will continue to evolve. Eventually the museum will need to reinstall, amend, or add to the historical portion of the current script.

devastated area was a “hole in the city’s heart” (Sontag 2006), but heritage had not and has not yet inhered there (although it may in the future).

The WTC is not a cultural heritage site *sensu strictu* in the official discourse of the country, in the vernacular discourse of New Yorkers, in the official discourse of the National September 11 Memorial and Museum, or in the discourse of municipal agencies or the tourism industry – not immediately following the attack and not since then. Indeed, looking at December 7, 1941 at Pearl Harbor as the closest comparison, it is interesting to note that even three-quarters of a century later the term “heritage” is not used there, neither in vernacular or official discourse. Rather, the WTC is a new historic site within historic lower Manhattan. It is a site where an event of global magnitude happened and history continues to be made there. Thus, we are dealing with a category of “commemorative historical sites” (Sather-Wagstaff 2011a: 195), “public memory places” (Blair et al. 2010) and “places of pain” (Logan and Reeves 2009) whose dissonance (*sensu* Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996) pushes us to think about, reanalyze and debate the past while living and acting in the present and moving forward.

3 Bamiyan: Why and for Whom to Reconstruct

Lewis (2001), cited above, also recognized that the twin towers had “occupied a far greater position in the physical and psychological landscape of New York than anyone realized.” I am influenced by Lewis as I think about Bamiyan, a place I have never visited. Although we know that the Buddhas in their carved stone niches were not the cherished ancestors of the Hazara people now living around them,⁸ certainly they were a familiar and defining feature of the landscape and, if pre-Taliban ethnography will bear this out, they were an element of place identity for that population. An American Rotarian who visited Bamiyan just before the destruction told me that local men described the Buddhas to him as “marvellous” but outside their Islamic tradition (personal communication, September 15, 2017). Matthew Power (2005) has accurately described the Hazara as presiding over a valley of ghosts – an expanding, militant Islam having forced Buddhists out of the region by the tenth century. Thus, although the Buddhas remained, “meaning faded with the years” (Power 2005: 71). But public discussion/efforts today about reconstruction of the Buddhas seeks to fix a meaning. If we return to Young’s (2006) comment about the

⁸Dr. Masanori Nagaoka (personal communication, December 11, 2017) informs me that “It is not only the Hazara people who have resided in the Bamiyan Valley but Tajik people.... It was, in fact, mostly Tajik people who had lived there and were forced out by the Taliban. And it was Hazara who came back to Bamiyan city and took over Tajik lands. Unfortunately, most of the private and public land ownership information for Bamiyan, such as land use and land ownership documentation collected in the 1970s and 1980s was burned and/or lost during the more than three decades of armed conflict in Bamiyan.” My argument about ethnic/cultural disconnect between the ancient Buddhist population and recent non-Buddhist population of Bamiyan is unaffected by the recent ethnic composition of Bamiyan: Hazara or Tajik.

unresolved meaning of the 9/11 attack toward efforts at memorialization in New York, we can appreciate how very complicated the debate over what to do with the empty Bamiyan niches is in this unresolved, *not* post-conflict situation.

And whereas the affected 9/11 families clamored for commemoration but did not want the towers rebuilt, the question I have about Bamiyan is: do the Hazara want the Buddhas back and why, or is it the “international community” that wants to reconstruct the Buddhas because their destruction is an affront to the ideology and legitimacy of the global cultural order? Indeed, is this cultural heritage *heritage* for the Hazara?

It is important to understand that the 2003 World Heritage inscription does not include the giant Buddhas, which already had been blown up, but rather encompasses their niches in addition to seven other sites spread throughout the Bamiyan Valley. Moreover, the “cultural landscape and archaeological remains” in the listing title of the property are those of the long-gone Buddhist occupation making the disconnect with the centuries-old Muslim population ironic if not dissonant and highlighting the utilitarian nature of particular local as well as national calls for reconstruction.

Basically, the Afghan position at the Tokyo meeting seemed to express a desire to utilize a reconstructed Buddha(s) for tourism – an external motive – and as a visible rejection of the Taliban – an internal motive. Just as there were proposals to rebuild the twin towers on site at Ground Zero as an act of resistance to Al Qaeda, so, too, I would venture that local interest in the Buddhas – to the degree that this exists – is a reclamation of the landscape that the Taliban once occupied and on which they terribly mistreated locals (Zabriskie 2010). Indeed, “restoration is seen as a symbolic action pertaining to the identity of the nation and the valley” (ICOMOS Report 2014:13).

However, I question the ICOMOS Report’s statement that “At both national and local level there is great enthusiasm for and strong expectations of the reconstruction of the two Giant Buddha statues” (2014: 13). The small local and national elite may be enthusiastic but do ordinary, impoverished inhabitants really care?⁹ By way of comparison, in a recent (April 4, 2017) EuropeNow interview, Dacia Viejo-Rose, a noted scholar of heritage and conflict, observed, “The first loss that many Syrian refugees refer to when asked what they most miss of their culture and heritage, what they most mourn ... is not the arch at Palmyra that comes to mind but rather the traditional regular social gatherings amongst neighbours, friends, and family.” Similarly, Michael Herzfeld cautions that “the remains of the past lie among living people for whom their significance may be far removed from that of academic research” (2012: 44) and that “Even the most imposing structures or historically significant sites that we most easily classify as monuments do not always mean the same thing to everyone” (ibid: 52). This must be the case for Bamiyan.

⁹The participants in the Tokyo meeting strongly recommended in the Recommendation resulting from this meeting that extensive consultation be conducted by the local and national governments in Afghanistan with the local communities of the Bamiyan Valley, with civil society, and with spiritual leaders so as to ensure that all stakeholder interests are taken into consideration.

Power argues forcefully that there is a local utilitarian motivation for reconstruction: “the prospect of rebuilt sculptures attracting even a fraction of the town’s former tourist bounty is extremely tempting” (2005: 73). But it is unrealistic to think that there will be tourism to Afghanistan. This is a country of terrorism and civil war,¹⁰ an unending, destabilizing American military intervention, government corruption, an illiteracy rate of 48% for men and 80% for women, mass poverty, an abusive, misogynist, patriarchal tribal society. I do not believe that the general Afghan population and, specifically, the local population are concerned with the Buddhas in the same way as the international community. And to offer the local people the promise or even possibility of tourism-generated economic development and stability around restored Buddhas is to ignore the miserable on-the-ground situation in Afghanistan.

I suspect that the Hazara have latched/will latch onto the Buddha reconstruction project as a vehicle for international attention, international development aid, and as a tool for positioning themselves better in the nation that has marginalized and abused them for generations (see, e.g., Hosseini 2003). I would not be surprised for a discourse of heritage (“our Buddhas”) to emerge in Hazarajat, but it would not be “authentic”, so to speak. It would be strategic, entrepreneurial, contrived. I am reminded of the day in January 2011 that I spent in the Pom Mahakan slum in the royal precinct of Bangkok where a community leader quoted Michael Herzfeld’s defense of their occupancy to me, stating that they, the residents, were part of the intangible heritage of the district (see Herzfeld 2016). Similarly, several decades ago I heard highland squatters on the barren coastal hillsides south of Lima defend their tenancy based on a fictitious ancestral link with Pachacamac, the great archaeological site they border. An anonymous reviewer aptly read this paragraph as an example of “practical/tactical heritage.”

I am interested, therefore, in which Hazara want reconstruction (see Kalman 2017: 544–545). Probably not the Hazara who are living in some of the Buddhist caves and are identified as a problem in the ICOMOS 2014 Report (compare to eviction of Petra’s Bedouin). Probably, yes, those Hazara who are in a position to take advantage of international investment and tourism (whenever that may be). Escallon (2017) provides a relevant example of better situated members of a poor Afro-Colombian community who are able to exploit a UNESCO intangible cultural heritage designation and simultaneously how the designation has aggravated intra-community tension. The ICOMOS Report refers to a Civil Society – “a group of representatives from the local community” (2014: 25) – that was consulted, among other stakeholders. I would venture that, similarly to Escallon’s case, these are the Hazara who are best positioned to gain the most from participation with UNESCO. Certainly, the “*National Geographic*”-dressed Hazara woman “representing” that Civil Society at the Tokyo meeting was not representative of the female population of Hazara civil society nor of the majority of Afghan civil society.

¹⁰The last news from Kabul before I submitted this chapter was: “Twin Mosque Attacks Kill Scores in One of Afghanistan’s Deadliest Weeks”, reported by Jawad Sukhanyar and Mujib Mashal, *The New York Times*, October 20, 2017.

I would hope that the noble ideals of reconstruction¹¹ *and* its funding would include massive infrastructural and educational investment, capability training beyond heritage tourism for economic development, and gender behavioral intervention in a human rights framework to improve everyone's opportunity for a better life in Hazarajat. As Larry Coben, Executive Director of Sustainable Preservation Initiative, incisively says, "people cannot eat their history" (<https://sustainablepreservationinitiative.wordpress.com/tag/lawrence-s-coben/>). A dramatic, scenic ruinscape (Silverman 2016) occupied by photogenic, impoverished people (Denker 1985; Lutz and Collins 1993) should not be acceptable to the international community. The 2012 "Recommendation" arising from the 10th Expert Working Group Meeting on Bamiyan emphasized "the central importance of a cultural development approach in Bamiyan that incorporates and demonstrates the contribution of culture to sustainable livelihoods, education and the promotion of peace in Afghanistan." The unstated premises are that tourism is an economic motor and Western liberalism is a mindset that can be inserted and widely accepted in the region.

The 10th Expert Working Group Meeting also discussed "infrastructure and development plans of the Afghan Government for Bamiyan in the short and long term." This can happen without tourism and must be envisioned so as to initiate social and economic improvement in the valley. UNESCO's use of the word "safeguarding" for Bamiyan does not refer to protection of the valley's inhabitants from violence but, rather, stabilization of the niches, preservation of the fragments of the statues, protection of the mural paintings, removal of land mines throughout the World Heritage Site, and so forth. The destroyed Buddhas are a separate issue — for whether a restored or consolidated World Heritage Site will promote peace, tolerance, cultural diversity and a host of other stated ideals is debateable. What is obvious is that the people of Bamiyan will benefit greatly from comprehensive, well conceived development assistance – assuming it can be delivered in the current situation.

4 Taking Bamiyan Out of the Past

There is general agreement in the many "Recommendation" following the yearly UNESCO expert meetings about Bamiyan (held since 2002, the 13th was in 2016) that the larger, western niche should be consolidated and left empty as testimony to the destruction by the Taliban. At issue is the eastern niche of the smaller Buddha. The 2011 UNESCO document, "Ten years on – remembering the tragic destruction of the giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan (Afghanistan)", is explicit that "UNESCO

¹¹The ideals of the reconstruction are best expressed in the mission statement of the associated cultural center: "encompassing the multi-layered heritage of Afghanistan's long history... build community around culture ... national unity to promote heritage safeguarding, cross-cultural awareness, and cultural identity thereby contributing to the broader aims of reconciliation, peace-building and economic development in Afghanistan" (Taylor-Foster 2015).

does not favour rebuilding the Buddha statues.” But the Afghan delegation at the 2017 Tokyo meeting emphatically called for, minimally, reconstruction of the eastern Buddha. The “Conclusions” negotiated at the end of the 2017 Tokyo meeting couch UNESCO’s position in language that does not deny the request of the Afghans but puts conditions on approval for reconstruction that are unlikely to be met.

The Tokyo meeting was organized at the request of the Afghan government (expressed at the 40th World Heritage Committee meeting in Istanbul). UNESCO is not dictating to the Afghans what to do with the Buddhas and officially UNESCO does not have an opinion about reconstruction. Of course, the Afghans could decide to proceed on their own with rebuilding or creating a replica smaller Buddha – if this is within their technical ability. Such an act could provoke blowback from the larger international community concerned with strict reconstruction protocols. It is interesting to contemplate this counter-factual scenario and it is not without precedent. In 2011 Thailand almost denounced the World Heritage Convention over the World Heritage Committee’s bias toward Cambodia concerning a contested World Heritage Site on the border of the two countries (Silverman 2011). And Oman and Germany each saw a World Heritage Site delisted by the World Heritage Committee when they did not comply with its demands.

Reconstruction (see discussion in Kalman 2017: 544–545) of the eastern Buddha would incorporate no more than 48% of the original fabric and does not include the face (presentation of ICOMOS Germany, Lehrstuhl für Restaurierung Kunsttechnologie und Konservierungswissenschaft Technische Universität München, September 27, 2017; also see ICOMOS 2014 Report). Aside from the issues of authenticity and integrity, I think that in this case reconstruction is *passé*. If we look to a better future in Hazarjat, I think we need a twenty-first century solution. Rather than consigning the Hazara to the landscape of ghosts by replacing the Buddhas, the destruction should be seen as an opportunity to move forward (see Holtorf 2006, 2015) with an expedient heritage integrated into a comprehensive regional development plan. This would open the way for the creation of new heritage rather than perpetuation of a landscape of mourning.

My preference is for a digital hologram (see Toubekis et al. 2010) – something akin to the “Tribute in Light” that projected two shafts of light upward in lower Manhattan (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkWNVG_n2vs). Kalman (2017: 545) indicates that a laser light is already, temporarily, projecting three-dimensional holograms into the niches. A digital projection into the niches could present the Buddhas as they were just prior to their destruction alternating, perhaps, with a projection of their possible original appearance: Buddhas “gilded and decorated with lapis or perhaps ocher... arms were wooden armatures covered over with stucco and painted... the great alcoves in which they stood were painted with frescoes of the heavens... The colossi could have been adorned with sheets of reflective mica” (Power 2005: 71). “The Buddhas once had an intensely colorful appearance” (Erwin Emmerling quoted by Becker 2011). This would be thrilling for tourists (in some unimaginable future – and surely more appealing than seeing fakes), visible for the Hazara (if they wish this in the first place), far less expensive to create, easy to replace if/when the Taliban return, and less international standards-challenging.

Also, this projection proposal lies well within the range of *son et lumière* shows at various World Heritage Sites.

Importantly, it would remember the void and the cause of absence: the Taliban's iconoclasm would be incorporated into the history of Bamiyan – *presence in absence* – rather than reconstructed over. Indeed, the winning proposal for the new cultural center in Bamiyan is called *Descriptive Memory: The Eternal Presence of Absence*. In one rendering architects Recabarren, Martínez and Morero dramatically taper a wall window to iterate and frame the void in the opposite cliff face (see: http://www.domusweb.it/content/domusweb/en/news/2015/03/19/bamiyan_cultural_centre_.html/). I am reminded of Bernard Tschumi's brilliant design of the New Acropolis Museum, which similarly looks out to the absent Parthenon marbles, making them present.

5 Conclusion

Joy Sather-Wagstaff has observed, “In the aftermath of a disaster, calls for the replacement, replication and reproduction of that which has been lost represent a yearning for a return to normal. Yet a full return to any pre-disaster ‘normal’ is impossible as the physical and emotional rupture of tragedy transforms everything and everybody. ... There is no unadulterated replacement, only *re/placement*” (2011b:5, italics in original). Re/placement has happened in New York. While the rebuilt area makes reference to the former site through the memorial, the overall 16 acres (the memorial and museum covering 8 acres plus the new buildings in the immediately surrounding area; Nobel 2005) are a palimpsest with stratified meanings – a place that enables the production of new memories, new senses of place and new identities.

Just a few years after 9/11, Setha Low (2004: 333) learned from her interviews with New Yorkers residing closest to Ground Zero that they did not want the memorialization of the site to put them in the position of living in a graveyard. That has not happened. Ground Zero is returning to being the WTC. Alongside memorial-focused tourism there is a vibrant domestic life and economy in the neighborhood. The physical transformation of Ground Zero has moved society and memory forward while keeping the past unavoidably within sight.

The memorial will always attest to the sacred quality of the site, hallowed by virtue of the human lives lost there, but mourning will eventually cease as the direct connection to victims (whether real or prosthetic) is broken by time. The surface level of this place of tragedy and trauma will become normalized in the same way that the grounds of the Oklahoma City National Memorial are again part of that city's urban fabric. Indeed, seen from ground level, the void at Ground Zero is emplaced in a pleasant tree-lined plaza that is public space in a densely built city. It permits both contemplation and enjoyment. Thus, in its realized form, and unanticipated by Low, the built memorial plaza actually has come very close to her own stated desire: “a complex space with gardens of reflection and recovery, buildings

with memorials... as well as places to work and play, and open plazas for people to come together to discuss and disagree in a public environment ... a place to live again as well as to mourn and remember” (2004: 338). Following Young’s distinction (2005), memory will become *civic memory* as *personal memory* recedes.

What will not change is the architectural configuration of the subterranean museum, which brilliantly incorporates and respects the site of destruction. The architecture of the museum contains the memorial’s pools and has preserved sections of the towers’ bedrock foundations, continuing Michael Arad’s theme of reflecting absence and fulfilling one of the most passionately held demands of the families: “from infinity to bedrock.” Museum and architecture are physically inseparable here: the *in situ* physical evidence of destruction has been made part of the interpretive script.

So, too, the winning architectural design for the cultural center in Bamiyan has made absence present. The voids can be a far more eloquent statement about the need for cultural tolerance, the importance of Hazarajat in the history of Afghanistan, and the global relevance of the (missing) Buddhas than an offense-mitigating reconstruction of the Buddhas.

I can envision Bamiyan and other sites of destruction – World Heritage Sites such as Palmyra, Aleppo, and Crac de Chevaliers and Tentative List sites such as Babylon and Nineveh – being linked in a serial inscription called “sites of cultural destruction.” Rather than indulging in useless, enraged lamentations over loss and putting these places on UNESCO’s List of World Heritage in Danger or some other such list (see Meskell 2002: 557), which accomplishes nothing on the ground, creation of this new serial inscription could serve as testimonial opposition to the scourge of violent cultural intolerance, with the ruins stabilized and interpreted in site museums (exceptional memorial architecture *cum* interpretive centers – each one well adapted to its particular cultural and geographical context) and being a fulcrum for heavy international agency and national government investment in the present of local people, not their past. In this sense, I am following Holtorf (2006, 2015) who argues that loss of a physical monument may be a natural part of the history of the environment, part of the continuous history of change, and may generate new identities and new heritage – although I do not see the obliteration of buildings/monuments/sites in as positive a light as he does.

Local people may have formerly liked that which had deteriorated naturally over time, enjoyed looking at it, enjoyed visiting it, enjoyed intangible and tangible benefits from it. While reconstruction of a monument can be achieved technically, the more significant problem confronting outside specialists and local residents at a site of new physical destruction is to negotiate the stratified, consensual and conflicting meanings of that landscape. As architect Carol Burns (1991) has observed, every building site has historical contingency, intruding its past onto the proposed site of new construction. There is no such thing as a “cleared site.” This is true in New York City and it is true in Bamiyan. The tremendously complicated process of enacting a built solution at Ground Zero can be a valuable lesson for Bamiyan and for new voids that will, unfortunately, come into existence in the future.

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Part V
Future Treatment of the Bamiyan Buddha
Statues

Reflections on the Case of Bamiyan



Jukka Ilmari Jokilehto

Abstract Inscribed in the World Heritage List in 2003, the Bamiyan cultural landscape has been subject to conservation management efforts, including the proposal to reconstruct at least one of the Buddha figures after the 2001 destruction. This paper examines some of the fundamental concepts of conservation and restoration of cultural heritage referred to in international recommendations. These include the question of reconstruction in reference to the notions of integrity and authenticity as they would apply in the case of Bamiyan cultural landscape and its archaeological remains. In fact, the conservation of cultural heritage is fundamentally a cultural problem. In the case of Bamiyan, the present-day culture has changed from the historical Buddhist era, when the Buddha figures had a distinct role in society. Any reconstruction of the figures originally carved from the rock would thus be 'inauthentic'. Instead, it is necessary to focus on the presentation and interpretation of the splendid historical features, recognised for their outstanding universal value within the wider cultural and natural landscape, also considering the needs and requirements of the present-day society.

Keywords Bamiyan Buddhas · Conservation · Restoration · Reconstruction · Integrity · Authenticity · Anastylaxis · Cultural landscape · World Heritage

1 World Heritage Inscription of Bamiyan

At its seventh session in 1983, the Bureau of the World Heritage Committee (UNESCO 1983) recommended the inscription of 35 properties. As part of this group, the Monuments of the Bamiyan Valley was recommended for inscription on the basis of criteria (ii) (iv), 'on the condition that the authorities define a large

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perimeter of protection which would include the cliffs and the valley, and provide a map indicating the delimitation of this zone.’ (SC/83/CONF.009/2) Unfortunately, the requested information was not received in time, and the nomination was deferred by the World Heritage Committee. In 1997, the Taliban declared that they would destroy the Bamiyan Buddhas with dynamite, which actually took place in March 2001. In October 2003, UNESCO General Conference adopted the Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 2003a), declaring that a State that ‘intentionally destroys or intentionally fails to take appropriate measures to prohibit, prevent, stop, and punish any intentional destruction of cultural heritage of great importance for humanity, whether or not it is inscribed on a list maintained by UNESCO or another international organization, bears the responsibility for such destruction, to the extent provided for by international law.’ (article VI).

In 2003, the Afghan authorities, with the assistance of UNESCO, nominated the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley for urgent inscription on the World Heritage List and on the List of World Heritage in Danger. This proposal was accepted by the World Heritage Committee, and the property was inscribed on the basis of criteria: (i) (ii) (iii) (iv) and (vi), as ‘a testimony of an important interchange of human values, over a span of time and within an important cultural area of the world, which contributed to the development in monumental artistic creativity and cultural exchange.’ (UNESCO 2003b) The justification recognised the Gandharan School in Buddhist art, the intercultural influences with the Mediterranean art, the Buddhist cultural tradition of Central Asian region, as well as the importance of the Bamiyan Valley as an ‘outstanding example of a cultural landscape which illustrates a significant period in Buddhism.’ Furthermore, criterion (vi) stressed the importance of Bamiyan Valley for pilgrimage over several centuries and the shock of destruction in 2001.

Due to the international concern to have the property urgently inscribed, the 1983 recommendation was again not taken into account, and the nomination was limited to the cliffs with Buddhist caves and other archaeological sites, instead of including the entire valley. It can be noted that the Valley is already mentioned in ancient travel accounts by Chinese monks, from early fifth century to seventh and eighth centuries. The monk Xuanchang, who visited Bamiyan during Tang dynasty, tells that the Valley was then well inhabited by towns and dozens of monasteries. In late sixteenth century CE, the gazetteer of the Akbar empire mentions the existence of around 12,000 grottoes forming part of an ensemble of Buddhist monasteries, chapels and sanctuaries along the foothills of the valley. Even though the nominated area was limited, the notion of cultural landscape is present in the title of the nomination, and it is also recognised in criterion (iv), which refers to the: ‘cultural landscape that illustrates a significant period in Buddhism.’ In fact, not only the cliffs are important in this valley; the entire historical-cultural territory must be taken into account when discussing the management of conservation and development.

2 Cultural Landscape and Cultural Territory

In 1972, the World Heritage Convention became the first major international legal instrument to address the conservation of cultural as well as natural heritage as indicated in articles 1 and 2 of the convention. In the first years, cultural and natural heritage were generally considered separately. In the 1980s, however, there already started debate about the harmonious marriage of culture and nature. This became actual in 1987, when the UK nominated the Lake District National Park for inscription as a mixed cultural/natural site. At the time, it was deferred subject to clarification of the application of criteria.¹ While ICOMOS agreed with the inscription, IUCN could not decide on the justification of natural criteria. As a result of further discussion, the notion of ‘mixed cultural/natural sites’ was considered an important issue to be clarified, particularly when the combination of cultural and natural attributes offered something exceptional and of universal interest, while the cultural or natural criteria separately could not justify World Heritage inscription.²

In 1992, the discussions resulted in the adoption by the World Heritage Committee of the notion of ‘cultural landscape’ as a new type of property qualifying for nomination. A working group was established for the revision of criteria, integrated into the Operational Guidelines in 1994. Consequently, as indicated in the Operational Guidelines: ‘Cultural landscapes represent the “combined works of nature and of man” designated in Article 1 of the Convention. They are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal.’ (p. 13) Cultural landscapes differ from ‘mixed sites’ and would normally be evaluated by ICOMOS jointly or in consultation with IUCN. Over the years, it has become increasingly clear that nature and culture must necessarily be managed together.

A key notion that has emerged from the debates over the past two decades is the recognition of the social, cultural, economic and environmental context, as also noted in the 2005 ICOMOS Xi’an Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting. In 2011, UNESCO adopted the Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscapes (UNESCO 2011b), which indicates that management can only be successful if it is based on the whole territory that protected areas are part of. In 2012, as a result of a United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, ‘Rio + 20’ in Rio de Janeiro (UN 2012), the Heads of State and Government adopted a declaration on this issue: ‘The Future We Want’, where the strategic importance of sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems was fully recognised for the conservation, regeneration and restoration and resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges. The notion of ‘future we want’ was also taken as the main

¹The English Landscape District was finally inscribed in the World Heritage List under criteria (ii)(v)(vi), in 2017.

²UNESCO/WHC: ‘Note on rural landscapes and the World Heritage Convention’, 12 November 1987, SC-87/CONF.005/INF4.

theme in *The Kyoto Vision* at the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention. Buddhism has always given importance to nature and living with nature, and this is also stressed by Pope Francis in his *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si'* (2015). The Pope notes that Saint Francis of Assisi had already been 'an example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically.'³ He continues, discussing the importance of guaranteeing integrity of healthy ecosystems, as a basis for healthy and balanced life on earth. From these examples also emerges the importance of again verifying what should be intended by the notions of integrity and authenticity, in verifying the conditions of cultural as well as natural heritage.

3 Conservation and Management in Bamiyan

The World Heritage property of the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley consists of eight protected components, including the Bamiyan Cliff with the two large niches that contained the gigantic Buddha figures. In reality, even though mentioned in the title, the cultural landscape of Bamiyan Valley is not included in the nominated areas, which only consist of the archaeological remains. The nomination does recognise the Valley as being 'of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance' and moreover that 'the extraordinary natural setting composed of rugged mountains and cliffs, has experienced very few modern alterations in the past centuries'. In the justification of the OUV, criterion (i) is referred to the Gandharan Buddhist school – even though the major monuments are no more there. Therefore, the testimony of the Buddhist era consists of a seated Buddha figure and hundreds of caves with Buddhist paintings. The Valley also includes other ancient remains, such as the forts of *Shahr-i Ghulghulah* and *Shahr-i Zuhak*, not to speak of the archaeological potential of the entire region. The heritage value of the Bamiyan Valley should indeed be recognised in the combination of the characteristics that form the cultural landscape as a whole, rather than in an individual feature. However, like in the case of 'Bam and its Cultural Landscape', inscribed after the major earthquake in 2003, the serial World Heritage nomination of Bamiyan can be understood as a symbolic representation of the larger cultural-natural territory.

In his *Theory of Restoration* (1963), Cesare Brandi, director of the Italian State Institute for Restoration, focuses on 'works art'. Today these could be re-defined 'cultural expressions' as in the 2005 UNESCO Convention.⁴ For Brandi, 'Restoration consists of the methodological moment in which the work of art is recognized in its physical being and in its dual aesthetic and historical nature, in view of its

³The Holy See, 24 May 2015: *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si' of the Holy Father Francis on Care for Our Common Home*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana (p. 4).

⁴UNESCO, *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, 2005

transmission to the future.⁵ Consequently, according to the definition, the first and most fundamental part of ‘restoration’ is the recognition of the property concerned. It can be a work of art, and it can be a cultural expression. In the case of cultural landscape, recognition implies the knowledge of its qualities and characteristics, based on a systematic research and analysis of the historic territory, its ecosystems and natural features, as well as its human functions and relations over time, i.e. its functional, historical and visual integrity. Even though the World Heritage nomination, especially in reference to criteria (iii) and (iv), is focused on the Buddhist period, the planning and conservation of the cultural landscape necessarily imply identifying *all* the elements that together form the historical stratigraphy and morphology of the human and natural habitat as it exists in the present. The question, indeed, is not only to keep something from the past; it is also necessary to care for the needs of the community today and plan for the culturally and environmentally sustainable development of this historic territory into the future.

The methodology for the planning and management of historic urban and rural territories has gradually taken shape from the second half of the twentieth century. In October 1975, the Council of Europe adopted the European Charter of the Architectural Heritage, which introduced the notion of Integrated Conservation. The integrated conservation planning of historic areas was given to refer to the processes of culturally and environmentally sustainable development in historic areas, integrating conservation with the planning and management instruments, and it was specified that ‘Integrated conservation depends on legal, administrative, financial and technical support, and the informed involvement of the heritage community as a whole.’

In practice, this normally means that there should be two integrated levels of action: territorial and architectural. On the territorial (urban and rural) level, the scope is to define the morphology and functional typology of the built and natural territory, i.e. how the traditional built areas have developed in response to the evolving requirements of the community. This includes a study of the condition and characteristics of cultivated areas, transport and communication systems as well as infrastructures. It also implies making a similar study of the natural and environmental features and ecosystems. On the level of the individual components of the territory, the question is to verify the state of conservation of the built complexes and open areas and verify the appropriate treatment to be integrated into the planning norms and guidelines. The management and implementation of the proposed guidelines would be the responsibility of a Management Commission, consisting of representatives of relevant public and private stakeholders. The Management Plan is required as a tool for the Management Commission and consists of the verification of the priorities and responsibilities for the implementation of the Integrated Conservation Master Plan.

⁵ Cesare Brandi 2005, *Theory of Restoration*, ICR, Nardini Editore, Florence. Original Italian: ‘Il restauro costituisce il momento metodologico del riconoscimento dell’opera d’arte, nella sua consistenza fisica e nella sua duplice polarità estetica e storica, in vista della sua trasmissione al futuro.’ (*Teoria del Restauro*, Rome, 1963, p.34)

In 2011, the World Heritage Committee adopted a statement concerning the Bamiyan Valley, encouraging feasibility studies, including ‘an overall approach to conservation and presentation of the property, and an appropriate conservation philosophy based on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, as well as technical and financial possibilities for the implementation of the project proposals’ (UNESCO 2011a). Indeed, the requested Management Plan and a Cultural Master Plan have since been provided. Nevertheless, still in 2017, the Committee has expressed concern that the plans have not been implemented. At the same time, site security was not ensured, nor the long-term stability of the Giant Buddha niches and other archaeological remains, as recommended already in 2011. In the Tokyo conference in September 2017, there was discussion about the possible revision of the 2007 Cultural Master Plan (inventory), prepared by a German team, as well as the preparation of a Territorial Master Plan for the development of the Valley, which is currently being developed by an Italian team. These two plans should ideally be integrated into a balanced and efficient planning instrument, considering the entire territory as ‘a coherent whole whose balance and specific nature depend on the fusion of the parts of which it is composed, and which include human activities as much as the buildings, the spatial organization and the surroundings.’⁶ The implementation of this planning instrument should be the responsibility of a Management Commission based on a periodically updated Management Plan as noted above.

4 Discussion on the Buddha Niches

The Ninth Expert Working Group Meeting (Paris, 3–4 March, UNESCO 2011) recommended that a total reconstruction of either of the Buddha sculptures cannot be considered at the present time. Furthermore, it was recommended that ‘the larger western niche be consolidated and left empty as a testimony to the tragic act of destruction and that a *feasibility study* be undertaken to determine whether or not a *partial reassembling of fragments* of the Eastern Buddha could be as future option in the coming years’. The 2017 Tokyo meeting was a platform for the evaluation of the feasibility of alternative solutions. There were indeed several different ideas that were presented, extending from leaving both niches empty to suggesting different types of new creations to be built in the Eastern Buddha Niche.

At a minimum level, in 2011, Andrea Bruno had already proposed a long-term conservation and interpretation policy for the Western Buddha Niche. This would include an underground interpretation and observation space in front of the Buddha Niche. From here, one could see the Niche and have scale models illustrating the lost Buddha Figure. In a certain way, the UNESCO competition for a cultural

⁶UNESCO 1976, *Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas*, article 3

centre, currently in construction in the centre of the Valley, could be seen as a comparable solution. In the 2017 Tokyo meeting, the Japanese team proposed not to build anything in the Niche but to develop a museum complex on the opposite side of the Valley, which could also include a replica of the Eastern Buddha, but in a small scale. In principle, this option can be respected. It is noteworthy that the Japanese team, who are Buddhist, decided not to fill the Niche with a new figure.

There were basically three alternatives proposed for the Eastern Niche, involving new construction. One proposal consisted of using the original fragments of the destroyed Buddha Figure and identifying their original position on the basis of geological data. The fragments could then be placed on a steel structure imbedded in the back of the Niche. The second option was the construction of a new statue in mud brick, using local workforce. This statue would then have internal structure that would also fix it to the rock. The third option consisted of creating a full-scale 3D replica using Italian or Afghan marble. The replica would be mechanically carved as a thin layer (ca. 10 cm) on the basis of original photographs. It would be built in small elements and fixed in a steel structure anchored to the rock. The statue could be unbuilt if required. It is necessary to recall that Afghanistan is seismic hazard region. Consequently, any tall and heavy construction would be vulnerable. Considering that the Niche is ca. 38 m tall (corresponding to a building of 12 stories), a heavy mud-brick statue would become much too heavy. The same could be said about the idea of placing original fragile rock fragments into the niche. In this regard the marble replica would probably be easier, considering that it would be less heavy and probably less vulnerable as was indicated in technical calculations during the Tokyo conference.

Restoration concerns the recognition of the heritage value of artistic and/or historic objects (monuments) *that exist*. The 1964 Venice Charter (UNESCO) states that: ‘The process of restoration is a highly specialised operation. Its aim is to preserve and reveal the aesthetic and historic value of the monument and is based on respect for original material and authentic documents. It must stop at the point where conjecture begins, ...’ (article 9) Strictly speaking, the construction of a new statue would not be ‘restoration’. It could be a recreation or simply a new construction. Of course, the original Buddha figure was not constructed but carved from the fragile rock. Therefore, can we really speak of ‘reconstruction’ even if some remaining fragments are placed back to the niche?

Or can it be ‘anastylosis’? Article 15 of the Venice Charter does mention the possibility of anastylosis, which is defined as: ‘the re-assembling of existing but dismembered parts’. It is noted that the surface of the original Buddha Figures was in clay, and, in the 2001 explosion, all the surface was lost. The fragments that now have been collected are basically fragments of rock without form. Consequently, any attempt to restore the appearance of the Buddha is not possible only using those fragments. Even though these fragments actually have been part of the Buddha figure, they have not given the image. In fact, in his *Teoria del restauro*, Cesare Brandi distinguishes between image and matter, which are the two aspects of a work of art. The matter, which can consist of any type of material or structure, is the bearer of the manifested image, but it is the image that is the result of human creativity. While the physical

means are necessary for the manifestation of the image, when the image is lost, we only have the matter without image.⁷ In the case of the destroyed Buddha Figures, the rock fragments do not even have historicity; they have never been touched by human hand (if not after destruction). Putting these formless fragments back to the Niche cannot be called anastylosis, because they are just material without form.

In human history, there have been several types of habitat. In early times, these included natural or rock-cut caves or dwellings built or constructed in a variety of materials, such as clay, stone or timber. Often, these forms of habitat could be combined, as is the case in Matera (Italy). In the World Heritage List, there are several Buddhist cave sites, including the Mogao caves in Western China. Here, as in many other places, the large Buddha caves were not necessarily open. Often, even large caves were closed with a wall. Consequently, one would enter a sacred place and appreciate the revelation of divine image. Traditionally sacredness means that a place is reserved. In the main Ise Shrine, only the priests can enter the sanctuary. In the case of Bamiyan Cliff, it is known that about 2 m of the rock surface has been lost over the centuries. Consequently, we cannot verify whether originally the caves were open or closed. It is indeed impossible to re-establish the original situation as there is not enough evidence. We understand that some members of the present-day community of Bamiyan have expressed the wish to re-create a Buddha image. We do appreciate such wish, and it will be necessary to do everything possible to valorise the significance of the Buddhist period within the overall historical, cultural and environmental context, as we have insisted above.

Today, recreating an image would mean introducing a new element in a site that has already been recognised for its OUV in reference to the archaeological remains of the Buddhist period and the cultural landscape. Parts of the remains consist of the numerous caves with Buddhist paintings and fragments of sculptures. In fact, the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties (NRICP) in Tokyo has undertaken and ensured some successful mural painting conservation. The two gigantic Niches that now remain open are very much part of this heritage. In fact, even though the original Buddha Figures have been destroyed, there are still fragmentary remains of the original form in the rock. Thus, the remaining rock surface carries authentic testimony to the sacred image that once was there. The Niche itself is an original cultural expression that needs to be respected and consolidated, as recognised in the World Heritage justification. These qualities could risk being partly hidden or undermined if some new element is placed there. In any case, even if a new statue, such as the proposed marble replica, were to be introduced into the Niche, it would necessarily need to be evaluated and assessed by the World Heritage Committee. It would be a new construction in an archaeological site, to be justified under the World Heritage criteria, and its impact assessed within the cultural landscape context of the Bamiyan Valley.

⁷ See Chapter 2 ('La materia dell'opera d'arte') in: C. Brandi 1963, *Teoria del Restauro*, Rome, pp. 37–40; English edition: *Theory of Restoration*, Rome (2005).

5 A Word to Conclude

As is noted in the justification of the World Heritage nomination, the cultural landscape and archaeological remains of the Bamiyan Valley represent the artistic and religious developments, which from the first to the thirteenth centuries characterised ancient Bactria, integrating various cultural influences into the Gandharan School of Buddhist art. It is known that the area has contained numerous Buddhist monastic ensembles and sanctuaries, within the fantastic natural setting of the mountain valleys. The territory also includes historic sites that document the Islamic period. Today, the community is conscious of their heritage but also requires planning and updating of services and infrastructures. As a priority, the current initiatives for the development of a comprehensive urban master plan based on knowledge of heritage resources and the potential of the territory must be integrated into a balanced territorial conservation master plan. The present management plan should necessarily be revised on the basis of this general master plan, and not be limited to archaeological areas alone. It is also essential to integrate these plans with the recognition and safeguarding of the natural environment and existing ecosystems that are part of the integrity and authenticity of the historicised territory.

There already exist a number of initiatives for safeguarding the cultural heritage, such as consolidating the cliffs and conserving the remains of Buddhist paintings and sculptures. The new cultural centre in the focal point of the Valley, currently under construction, will give an important opportunity to create a systematic capacity building programme at the community level. All these initiatives need to be integrated into a strategy of fund raising and financial programming. Regarding the gigantic Buddha niches, which are an integral part of the historical significance of the Bamiyan Valley, priority should be given to the urgent completion of consolidation and the continuation of safeguarding of the remains. It is not advisable to propose any reconstruction or anastylosis in the ancient niches. The present remains are the most efficient memorial to the 2001 destruction, and they are the most authentic and prestigious monument for the history of the Bamiyan Valley and its community. It is necessary also to care for the remains of the traditional building stock, which still exists in various parts of the territory. These buildings should be surveyed and eventually rehabilitated in an appropriate type of social or cultural use.

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Entangled Narrative Biographies of the Colossal Sculptures of Bāmiyān: Heroes of the Mythic History of the Conversion to Islam



Deborah Klimburg-Salter

Abstract The entangled biographies of the Bamiyan Colossi, introduced in this article, point to a strategy for revitalization of the monumental niches that would support sustainable economic development and peace building. Today the empty niches invite visitors to complete the space according to their own imagination. A mixed media strategy of interpretive programs could narrate the evolution of the Colossi's identity through their changing biographies. Created in the late sixth–early seventh centuries, the Colossi were worshipped as Buddha images. Gradually adherents of the new religion, Islam, increased. By the tenth century the Buddhist community migrated from Bamiyan, taking with them the precious copper-alloy face masks and arm coverings. The resultant strange, awe-inspiring appearance of the Colossi encouraged the changing interpretations from idol (*but*) to “wonder” (*‘Ajā’ib*). By the eighteenth century the Colossi were integrated into the mythic history of the Islamization of Bamiyan. These legends were recorded in the early twentieth century: “although the whole world knows that the two colossi represent Buddhas, the inhabitants of Bamiyan are not of our opinion” (Hackin R, Kohzad AA, *Légendes et coutumes afghanes*. Presses universitaires de France, Paris, 1953). Rather, the miraculous deeds of Hazrat-i Ali, the 4th Caliph, provides the framing device that unites the extraordinary natural and sculpted formations of Bamiyan including the colossal images Salsal and Shamama.

Keywords Afghanistan · Art history · Heritage preservation · Conversion to Islam · Colossal Bamiyan Buddhas · Salsal and Shamama

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1 Introduction

After 14 Expert Working Group Meetings for the Safeguarding of the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological remains of the Bāmiyān Valley World Heritage Property, Afghanistan and the painstaking definition of goals and procedures, one of the most difficult problems remains unsolved: what is the most effective way to revitalize the great rock façade that contained hundreds of rock-cut decorated shrines and, most visibly, the colossal niches – each of which once contained a colossal image. Many of the issues that converge on the process and solutions for this problem are discussed in the contributions to this book. This article is the story of the entangled biographies of the colossal sculptures.

The purpose of the present paper is to contribute to this dialogue a neglected narrative interpretation of the colossal images and the sacred landscape in which they are embedded (Fig. 1). An examination of the literary, art historical, and archaeological sources for the history of the Colossal Buddhas demonstrates that their appearance and meaning changed dramatically after they ceased to be worshipped and the Buddhist communities had migrated from the Bamiyan Valley. Once they were no longer regarded as Buddha images the Colossi were reinterpreted, and as we shall see, took on new identities. Following several transformations, the Colossi were integrated into the mythic history of the Islamization of Bamiyan. Although the first literary reference to the “highly local” biography of the Colossi (Inaba 2019: 93) is found in a western literary source as early as the end of the eighteenth



Fig. 1 Great cliff at Bāmiyān

century, this interpretation of the Colossi never found acceptance outside the Afghan community. In the final section of this article I propose that the entangled biographies point to a strategy for the treatment of the monumental niches that would support both sustainable economic development and the peace building process.

The guidelines and goals of the Cultural Heritage Preservation Process discussed here are succinctly expressed in the following UNESCO documents: *Draft Concept Note* (2016) and the Recommendations of the 14th Expert Working Group Meetings (2017a, b).

The goals and rationale for the meeting have been eloquently summarized in the *Draft Concept Note*. Particularly relevant for this paper is the commitment to the important role that "... culture can play in [the] peace-building and development process specifically in conflict or post-conflict regions" (p. 5) It has been recognized that an important aspect of the peace-building process in post-conflict environments is the revitalization of identity, thus the importance of the section on "Community Empowerment and Development in the Bamiyan Valley" (*Recommendations*: Section 1, p.2).

2 Guidelines and Goals for the Heritage Process

Particularly relevant here is that portion of the *Recommendations* which proposes that the future treatment of the colossal niches should be considered in relationship to the broad spectrum of the cultural history of the Bamiyan Valley. Towards this end UNESCO working groups have consulted both professionals in a wide range of disciplines as well as civil society representatives, and a consensus was reached which, greatly simplified, can be summarized:

The **guidelines for the protection of the material and immaterial heritage** of the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bāmiyān Valley World Heritage Property.

Changes, additions, or activities within the protected area should be consistent with:

1. the cultural history of the valley,
2. international conservation standards and guidelines

3 The Goal of the Preservation Process

1. to support sustainable economic development including tourism.
2. to contribute to the peace-building process

A successful solution for the archaeological zone would respect the long evolving history of the World Heritage Site and implicitly represent the interests of all stakeholders. Bamiyan is important to international and national

stakeholders – beginning with the local stakeholders who are the people of the Bamiyan Valley and Bamiyan province. But first – it is necessary to understand how the modern narrative biography of the Colossi resulted both from their changing appearance and historical contexts.

The most contentious aspect of the question of the future treatment of the great façade focuses on the question – should at least one of the Buddhas be reconstructed?

Over the last 14 years the possible answers to this question have grown more sophisticated and differentiated. Despite subtle variations there are still essentially two major positions. One is that there should be a physical presence that would memorialize the colossal Buddhas.

The opposing position believes that the Buddhas are best memorialized without a physical presence. Thus, the empty niches are considered the most powerful statement memorializing the Colossi *and* their violent destruction. As shall be discussed in the concluding section, the empty niches have a multi-layered symbolic value. The empty niches offer greater interpretive flexibility and thus the greater potential to contribute to the peace building process. The proponents of this position also base their argument on the difficulty in reconstructing even one of the Buddhas according to international conservation guidelines.

An additional point of dispute is the relative economic advantages for the local residents related to each solution. This paper supports the position that the absence of a physical presence in the great niches has a greater interpretive flexibility and therefore the greater potential to contribute to the peace building process.

The following outline of the history and reception of the Colossi includes the evidence for the appearance and methods of construction of the Great Buddhas as a basis for evaluating which of the solutions are most likely to accord with both the guidelines and goals of heritage preservation as listed above.

4 Memorializing the Bamiyan Colossi

In line with the decision to support community empowerment, Ms. Shukria Neda, representing the civil society in Bāmiyān, was invited to address the 14th Expert Working Group meeting. She gave an impassioned plea for the rebuilding of the two colossal images which she called ‘Salsal’ and ‘Shahmama.’ Briefly summarized, the west and largest colossal image (55-m tall) is considered to be Salsal, a legendary warrior from the distant past who was converted to Islam by Hazrat-i Ali, and the 38-m colossal image his wife Shahmama.

This was the first time that the indigenous names for the Colossi were formally entered into the record of a UNESCO Working Group Meeting. In the previous 13 working group meetings the Colossi were identified only as Buddha images. In fact, the Taliban claimed that because they were Buddhist idols, they were an affront to their Islamic faith and must be destroyed. But the residents of the Valley did not identify the Colossi as Buddha images and they resisted their destruction. According

to the local perspective, the Taliban did not destroy foreign Buddhist idols but rather *Bamiyan's history and sacred landscape*. As expressed by the Civil Society representative, there was and is a completely different narrative interpretation for the Colossi.

These two perspectives are not in conflict but are instead variant narrative histories of the same colossal images at different phases of their existence. According to the prominent Afghan historian A.A. Khuzad (spelled Khozad in western language publications), there is an evolving narrative history of the Colossi where the pre-Islamic Buddhist culture that created the colossal Buddhas and the other sacred Buddhist monuments are considered to be part of Afghanistan's glorious ancient history (Greene 2018). I will briefly present the evidence for each of the two major biographical traditions. Thanks to the authoritative survey of the Persian and Arabic sources by Inaba (2019) it is now possible to trace the evolution of the reception of the images from their creation to their destruction. The following is an attempt to summarize a more inclusive history of the Bamiyan Colossi and their reception through the centuries than is currently available in western literature. This in turn should help us to understand the positions of the different stakeholders all of whom, it is hoped, would be acknowledged when the Colossi are memorialized.

5 Documentary Evidence for the Appearance of the Colossal Sculptures

The rapid expansion of the monumental Buddhist pilgrimage site began in the second half of the sixth century when the transnational "silk routes" were rerouted over the Hindu Kush mountains, replacing the earlier routes over the Pamir mountains via Gandhara to India (Kuwayama 2002; Klimburg-Salter 2010b; Klimburg-Salter 2019 and bibliography). The most recent C14 analysis suggests dates for the construction of the surviving two colossal images that are also confirmed by comparative art historical analysis. The C14 tests of organic fragments from the Śākyamuni Buddha suggests a date for the so-called "East Buddha" of 544–595 CE (Blänsdorf et al. 2009: 235) (Fig. 2). A judicious interpretation of the evidence would be the late sixth century, although sometimes called the East Buddha, Śākyamuni was originally the center of a Buddha Triad (Fig. 3). The larger "West Buddha," the Dīpaṃkara Buddha, is believed to have been constructed between 591 and 644 CE (Blänsdorf et al. 2009:235) Combining the latter evidence with the fact that the Great Buddhas were largely completed (although apparently not the paintings in the Buddhas' niches – Fig. 4) by the time of Xuanzang's visit, allows me to suggest, with caution, a date in the first quarter of the seventh century. As a result of both the silk routes commerce and the extensive mineral deposits throughout eastern Afghanistan, Bamiyan experienced a period of great affluence which is reflected in the later Buddhist sites of Afghanistan until the tenth century. The high level of aesthetic, artistic, and technical achievement in the Bamiyan province resulted in

Fig. 2 Bāmiyān, 38 m niche, Śākyamuni Buddha. (© Deborah Klimburg-Salter / B. Rowland Archive, 1936)

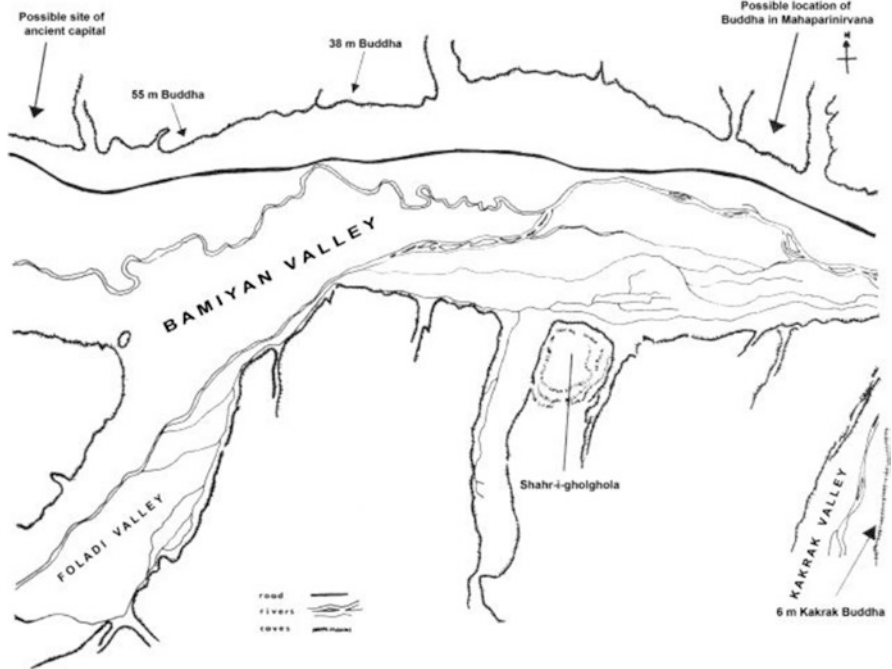


Fig. 3 Bāmiyān valley. (After D. Klimburg-Salter 1989, Map 2)



Fig. 4 Bāmiyān. Soffit above the head of 55 m Buddha. (© D.Klimburg-Salter, WHAV)

the magnificent paintings decorating the monumental niches and rock cut chapels that were marveled at by Islamic visitors (see below) (Taniguchi 2007; Taniguchi and Hidemi 2008). Successive Muslim raids on the Kingdom of Bamiyan took as booty important treasures, which included valuable metal icons. The exact date of the demise of Buddhism in Bamiyan is unknown.¹ The archaeological indications are that towards the end of the first millennium CE, the Buddhist monastic communities migrated from the Hindu Kush, the people of the Valley gradually adopted the new religion, Islam (Klimburg-Salter 2019; Klimburg-Salter 2008).

We have no reliable visual documentation of the two standing Colossi prior to the photographs taken in the early twentieth century. Hayden 1910 appears to be the oldest. Numerous drawings, of varying documentary value, survive from the nineteenth century. There are only two eyewitness accounts of the Buddhas during the Buddhist period (Klimburg-Salter 1989:12 & 23)). The most extensive report is from the Chinese monk Xuanzang (Hiuen Tsiang) based on his visit in ca. 630's shortly after the sculptures were completed. This report is our only historical witness for their appearance and methods of construction (Beale 1969r:50–53). I will briefly describe the three colossal Buddhas in the order that Xuanzang performed the ritual circumambulation and meditated upon the spiritual life of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni (Fig. 1). Xuanzang tells us that the three colossal Buddhas (Fig. 3), were in part sculpted out of the rock but also.

with parts of the body separately cast [in copper alloy], (and then) assembled together (Deeg unpublished translation).

¹Inaba speculates that Islamization occurred during the Ghaznavid period (Inaba 2019). I thank Christine Guth, and Judith Lerner for their thoughtful comments and criticism. And Masanori Nagaoka for his helpful suggestions.

Fig. 5 Bāmiyān, 55 m niche, Dīpaṃkara Buddha. (© Deborah Klimburg-Salter / B. Rowland Archive, 1936)



The Buddhist monk began the pilgrimage circuit by worshipping at the great western Buddha — i.e., the 55-m-high colossus, which I propose to identify with Dīpaṃkara, the Buddha of the Past (Fig. 5) (see Klimburg-Salter 2019 for complete documentation).

swaying with golden color, (and) shining with (its) bejeweled decoration (Deeg unpublished translation).

According to Xuanzang’s description, it is possible to infer that at least the Dīpaṃkara Buddha had a crown and wore jewels. It is very rare for Buddhas to wear jewels. In the rare instance that a Buddha wears jewels then he also wears a crown (Klimburg-Salter 2010a). Sengupta (1989), Tarzi (1977) and Klimburg-Salter (1989) were able to examine the Buddhas with the help of the scaffolding (constructed by the Archaeological Survey of India conservation team) and came independently to the same conclusion. The faces of the Buddhas were actually metal masks to which a crown and earrings were attached, perhaps also a necklace, this is discussed in detail in the next section:

An indication of how the 55-m Buddha might have looked can be seen in Fig. 9 which shows a Nepalese processional image of Dīpaṃkara wearing a copper alloy mask to which a crown and jewels were attached.

Next Xuanzang identified the Buddha Śākyamuni (Fig. 2) whose image originally was the center of the colossal Buddha Triad. And, finally, he described the

third *parinirvāṇa* Buddha, (Śākyamuni's release from future rebirth). According to Xuanzang, this Buddha, probably at the end of the rock façade (for the detailed interpretation of the narrative program of the great façade Klimburg-Salter 2019; Klimburg-Salter 1989) (Fig. 3). This was where the king convened the Great Assembly at which he donated all his possessions, including himself, to the Buddhist *sangha* (community) in order to ensure the safety of the kingdom and for the benefit of all living beings (Klimburg-Salter 1989, 2019). The *parinirvāṇa* Buddha is never mentioned again. A reasonable hypothesis is that this Buddha image which was lying horizontally is buried under the collapsed part of the cliff still visible at the eastern end of the façade. The Bāmiyān Valley is located in a seismically active zone, and the collapse of the façade could have occurred as the result of two large earthquakes within a 30 year period. A massive earthquake was recorded in June of 819 and a second in 849 (Ambraseys and Bilham 2003). This could explain why none of the literary sources after this date mention the *parinirvāṇa* Buddha (Fig. 3).²

6 Methods and Materials: Transformation and Dissolution

A study of the materials and methods of construction for all three Buddhas has demonstrated that what appeared to western observers as evidence of iconoclasm were actually changes in the fabric of the images resulting from two factors, human intervention, particularly in the tenth century, (the voluntary non-destructive removal of the copper-alloy masks and arm coverings), and the interaction between the material substance and the severe climatic and geologic conditions (Klimburg-Salter 2020 includes bibliography; conservation research reports in Petzet 2009).

Therefore, I will only discuss here the two aspects of the changes in the appearance of the Colossi which are particularly important for this discussion. That is the evidence for the metal masks and arm plates and their voluntary removal; and the missing parts of the lower body (left side) of the Dīpaṃkara Buddha. These are key points in understanding the transformation of the Colossal Buddhas into mythic folk heroes.

Both of the two standing Colossi, and probably also the third lying Buddha, were built upon a core image chiseled out of the conglomerate rock façade. A composite clay body was then applied to the rock core and the subsidiary wooden and rope armature were affixed; final details such as the robes were finished by several layers of gypsum plaster, which was then painted. According to notices in Islamic texts and the archaeological evidence the 55 m. Dīpaṃkara Buddha's robes were painted red and the Śākyamuni Buddha's robe grey-white.

²These two severe earthquakes also would have caused some damage to the two standing Buddhas and this could well account for the signs of ancient repair and repainting on the Buddhas' robes (Blänsdorf and Melzl 2009: 211 ff.).

The 55 m. Buddha has been documented in a series of photographs taken over the course of the twentieth century. Because of its enormous scale, the final outer construction consisted of composite clay horizontal slabs with finishing layers of plaster. Each slab was quite heavy. The gaps left when the entire horizontal section pulled away suggested to some observers that the image had been deliberately shot at (Klimburg-Salter 2020 for a complete description of the methods of construction) (Fig. 5). The armature for the Buddhas' forearms were made of thick wooden beams to which metal sheets were attached; indeed, the holes for the thick wooden armature for the forearms are clearly visible (Fig. 5) (for a detailed discussion see Klimburg-Salter 2020). The right hand of the 55-m Buddha was clearly raised as in the sculptures of Dipamkara from Shotorak (Klimburg-Salter 1995) and Mes Aynak (Klimburg-Salter 2018: Fig. 17).

The monumental masks are the only possible explanation for the identical and unusual cuts on the faces. Such precise and identical modifications to the stone faces could not both have resulted from "mutilation" (as described in Moorcroft and Trebeck). Tarzi's sketches (Fig. 6a, b), and my photograph (Fig. 6c) clearly show that both Buddhas' faces have an identical vertical slit with a shelf and a small trough behind the slit where a metal mask on a wooden armature would have been anchored (Fig. 4). Underneath, and around what would have been their ears, are holes that show that the mask was also anchored next to the ears (Fig. 7). There are holes under the sculptures' ears that might also have anchored earrings that were attached to the crown. Blänsdorf and Melzl (2009: 213) misquote Sengupta and

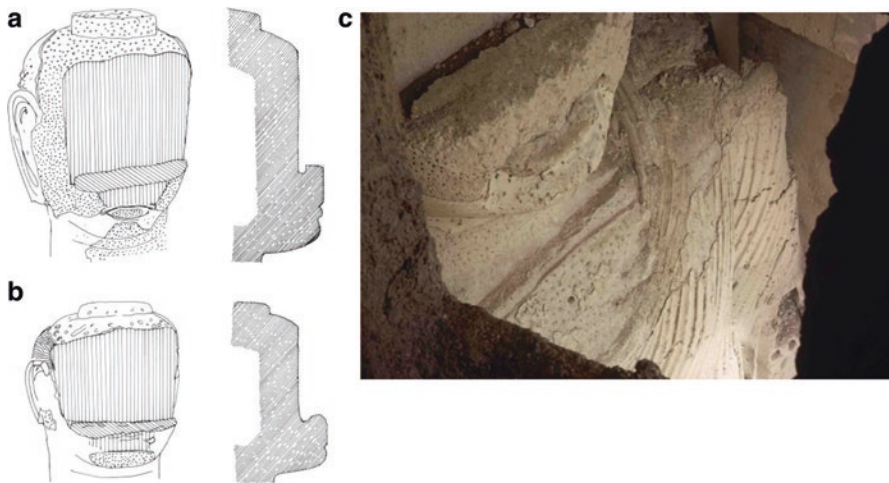


Fig. 6 (a, b) Bāmiyān. Sketch of Buddhas faces (now identified (a) 55 m Buddha (b) 38 m Buddha), ledge intended to anchor the masks. (After Z. Tarzi 1977, Fig. 18). (c) Bāmiyān. Chin of 55 m Buddha. Note charred wood fragments and debris in crevice above ledge meant to anchor the mask. (© D. Klimburg-Salter, WHAV)

Fig. 7 Bāmiyān, 38 m niche. Detail ear of Śākyamuni Buddha. (© Deborah Klimburg-Salter / B. Rowland Archive, 1936)



Tarzi thus reversing their conclusions (see also Klimburg-Salter 2020 for further details).³

On both sculptures all the incisions have clean edges, the identical vertical cut in the rock above the chin where the face would have been (Fig. 6a, b) as well as the holes around the ears (Fig. 7), show no signs of violence. Thus we see that, the gaps or holes in the sculptures that nineteenth century British travelers interpreted as the result of Muslim mutilation of the face and hands are in fact the remains and indications for the structural supports that originally carried the metal parts described by Xuanzang, and that these metal parts were subsequently voluntarily removed as the monastics retreated from the Bamiyan Valley (Fig. 8).

Further evidence supporting the proposal for the monumental metal masks and arm plates is also the literary evidence for skillful metalworking in the region such as the life-size Buddha described by Xuanzang in Kapiśa (Beale 1969r:54–55). Such monumental metal working is logical given the vast mineral deposits in central Afghanistan, particularly the enormous copper mine at Mes Aynak.

7 The De-Consecration of the Colossal Buddha

Only scant indications exist that the Buddha sculptures were significantly changed after the initial period of their creation (Klimburg-Salter 2020). The first major alteration to their appearance occurred when they were taken out of active worship. We do not know exactly when, but we can assume from the C14 evidence for the chronology of the paintings in Bamiyan (active into the ninth century) and the

³ Crowned and bejeweled Buddhas are a distinguishing feature in the wall paintings of the art of the Hindu Kush and adjacent areas Klimburg-Salter 1989, 2019). For instance one surviving example of a crowned Buddha identified as Śākyamuni from the Shahi period is certainly contemporaneous with the art of Bamiyan. (Klimburg-Salter 2010a).

Fig. 8 Bāmiyān, 38 m Buddha. (© D. Klimburg-Salter, WHAV)



Fig. 9 Copper alloy monumental mask, sitting on fabric torso, so that when a man carries the Dīpaṃkara mask in procession, Dīpaṃkara Buddha towers over everyone and everything else. Bhaktapur, Nepal. (© A. Galdi, 2012, WHAV)



adjacent valleys of Kakrak and Foladi where active work on the wall paintings continued in the tenth century (Nakamura 2006) that the monks who were responsible for the monumental pilgrimage site in Bāmiyān left the Valley at some point in the tenth century. Extrapolating from the C14 dates for the mural paintings, Buddhist artistic activity continued in Bamiyan until the ninth century, while the latest paintings in the caves in the adjacent valleys of Kakrak and Foladi date into the tenth century (Nakamura 2006: 117–129; Klimburg-Salter 2008).

Archaeological and literary evidence indicate that the conversion of the population to Islam was a gradual process (Paiman and Alram 2010:38; Klimburg-Salter 2008). Religious self-identification was fluid during this period, and for this reason one can only speak of an Islamic historical period in this region from the beginning of the 2nd millennium, that is from 1000 CE (Klimburg-Salter 2008, 2019). One important archaeological indication for the final phase of occupation by the Buddhist community comes from the Buddhist chapels in Kakrak (Fig. 3). The magnificent painted cupola and drum, divided between the Musée Guimet (Paris) and the Kabul National Museum, were preserved apparently because before leaving, probably also ca. tenth century, (Klimburg-Salter 2019:199) the monks covered the paintings with a kind of mud plaster that protected the surface and its brilliant colors until their discovery by French archaeologists in the first half of the twentieth century (Hackin and Carl 1933:39–46). Thus, I tentatively conclude that, in a similar manner, the monks who were associated with the chapels in Bāmiyān had enough time to prepare an orderly retreat. This evidently involved removing the metal parts including the masks of the Buddhas and taking them away. The lavish collection of metal sculptures in the Potala in Lhasa—some of very large size and many coming from the northwest of the subcontinent—testifies to the ability of contemporary Buddhists to transport large, heavy and valuable metal objects over long distances (Klimburg-Salter 2010a, b, 2015).

When Buddhism ceased to be practiced in the Valley, and the colossal images were no longer worshiped, the images were de facto de-consecrated by removing their faces, that is the metal masks, and the metal plates covering their arms. Thus, from both a Buddhist and an Islamic point of view they were no longer “living” idols. And indeed, no Islamic source refers to the Colossi as Buddhist idols, they are simply called idols and one author writing about 1270’s confesses that “Nothing is known about the character of the shrine nor of the idols”. (Inaba 2019:82 and footnote 33). There is also no evidence in the Islamic sources, that the Colossi were the object of iconoclastic attacks prior to the twenty-first century.⁴

The removal of the metal face mask and arm coverings created the strange, even awe-inspiring appearance that characterized the Colossi from the late tenth century until their demise at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In addition, as they were no longer in worship they were no longer from an Islamic perspective, an

⁴I thank Minoru Inaba for discussing the sources and their interpretation, see Inaba 2019, as well as discussing the central thesis of this article. He summarized his view in an email August 2019, “As a whole, the basic tone of my paper is that the explosion of the Buddhas in 2001 was the first massive intentional destruction of the monuments in Bamiyan, as far as we see from the sources.”

anathema. These two points help in part to explain the rapid evolution from idol (*but*) to “wonder” (*‘Ajā’ib*). Once the Colossi were categorized as *‘Ajā’ib* the statues could be introduced into trans-historical narratives and eventually integrated into the cycle of stories associated with Hazrat-i Ali. Thus at least from the late eighteenth century, Salsal and Shamama had become part of the mythic history of the Islamization of the Bamiyan Region.

This is a critical new perspective that assists us in understanding the most important discrepancy between the Islamic sources, including the Afghan oral traditions, and the western sources.

8 Entangled Narratives: Islamic Sources

By the end of the first millennium CE, when the Colossi were no longer “living” idols, the identity of the Colossi as Buddhas faded from the collective memory. A Persian geography ca. 982 identifies the Colossi only by their colors (Minorsky 1970:109), they were called the red (*surkh*) idol (*but*) and white/grey (*khing*) idol (*but*).⁵

Islamic sources continue to identify the two Colossi by these names but in the late twelfth century one source noted that no one knew who worshipped them or to what cult the idols belonged (Inaba 2019:83 footnote. 33). In the sources dating to the late 12th and early 13th centuries the Colossi were usually described within their marvelously painted niches. Thus, the total enormous configuration was described as fabulous in appearance (Inaba 2019:79–82). As a result of the assumption of their miraculous origin the Colossi came to be classified as “wonders” (Arabic *‘Ajā’ib*) (Inaba 2019:85) demonstrating the “marvelous and uncanny design of God’s creation” (Inaba 2019:93 and references in footnote 56). As Inaba explains, once the marvelous monumental painted Bāmiyān Colossi and their niches came to be classified “as a ‘wonder’ not as an historical fact” (Inaba 2019:92) they were not considered in conflict with Islam. Within this context, fanciful stories developed which have caused considerable confusion regarding the appearance of the Colossi, most particularly the enigmatic problem of the missing faces. Adding to the magic of the Colossi, as also reported almost 1000 years ago, was how their appearance changed according to where one stood, the time of day and the season (Inaba 2019:79). If one stood at the foot of the larger colossal statue, its mate was not visible. Looking up from this position, what one saw first were the brilliant paintings in the heavenly niche enclosing the image (Fig. 4). And then one realized there was no face, but a sheer rock surface. The bizarre shape naturally gave rise to all sorts of fantasies.

⁵ Indeed traces of red were still observable on the robes of the Dīpaṃkara Buddha in the late twentieth century and examination of the fragments have confirmed that originally the 55 m. West Buddha had red robes and the 38 m. Śākyamuni Buddha had grey-white painted robes (Blänsdorf et al. 2009).

Because of their great size and the significant distance between the two colossi, about 500 m, one could only see the two Buddhas at the same time when one stood on a promontory at the opposite side of the Valley (Fig. 1). Because of the depth of their richly painted niches, which were meant to protect them from the severe climate, their faces were usually hidden in shadow, as one sees here in the 1936 photographs (Figs. 2 and 8). In fact as we see (Figs. 4 and 6a, b) only the bottom part of the face remained. As the sun crossed through the sky the shadows changed and gave rise to various poetic impressions – “These idols weep when the sun goes down and smile when the sun rises.” (Inaba 2019:79 footnotes 21 and 22 for references).

During the period under discussion, Bamiyan was one of the capital cities of the Ghoriid empire, following its destruction by the Mongols in the early thirteenth century however, the city never regained the prominence it had until that time. Subsequently Bamiyan is mentioned less frequently in the literature.

From the Moghul period the outlines of a distinctive cultural identity appears that included a narrative mythic framework to explain the miraculous images. It is also from this period that Bamiyan and the surrounding area is first identified as a tourist destination. The Moghul emperor Babur (r. 1494–1531) famously passed through Bamiyan several times, although he never mentioned the great Colossi. His brother, Jahāngīr Mīrzā delayed joining Bābur’s party because he wanted to visit Bāmiyān for sightseeing “(Inaba p 11 and ftn 55 for citations).

By the seventeenth century, a Moghul text, the *Ain-i-Akbari*, describes three colossal images: the largest is identified as male, the next in size as female and the smallest of the three sculptures was identified as their child (Inaba 2019).⁶ This is the first indication that the Colossi had begun to be integrated into a localized biography.

9 Entangled Narratives: Western Literary Sources

The earliest western language reference to Bamiyan known to me dates from 1758 (Wilford 1758) and contains a linguistic corruption of the names Salsal and Shahmama. The reports of the English travelers who actually visited the Bamiyan Valley begin in the early nineteenth century. They are more or less detailed, but they are essentially consistent in what they report. A careful reading of the nineteenth century descriptions reveals disjointed fragments of the local legends scattered in all their reports. The salient parts of the tradition that survive in a coherent way in the Afghan oral and written sources – are the names Salsal and Shahmama (recorded by the western travelers with slight variations in spelling) whose narrative is part of the cycle of legends reporting the miraculous feats of Hazrat-i Ali. To take only a few

⁶It is not clear which of the remaining Buddhas is considered to be the child, it could be either the largest of the three seated Buddhas in the external niches, in the Bamiyan Valley perhaps “H” (Klimburg-Salter 1989) or the very large standing Buddha in the nearby Kakrak Valley.

examples, Alexander Burnes, notes the fact that the “male and female” Colossi were named Salsal and Shahmama respectively (1834:164–188). He also reports “that local traditions “mix up” the histories of the Colossi with [Hazrat-i] Ali, the fourth Caliph (Burnes 1834:182). Thus, Burnes is the first to demonstrate that the local population did not consider the Colossi to be Buddhist idols, however he does notice certain affinities to Buddhist images without coming to a definitive conclusion. Despite the fact that the English sources reported that the Colossi had local names (Moorcroft and Trebeck 1842:388) and that some placed the Colossi in a narrative context, all the English visitors preferred to interpret the Colossi within their respective frames of reference. A predisposition not unique to English travelers, Mohan Lal, a Kashmiri Munshi (Mohan Lal 1846) interpreted the Colossi within the contexts of his Hindu religious tradition. Moorcroft’s experience at other pre-Islamic sites indicated to him that the “mutilated” bodies and particularly the incomplete condition of the faces suggested Muslim iconoclasm. “. both figures have been mutilated. The faces and forearms are broken off and a thigh of the larger [figure] was broken. (Moorcroft and Trebeck 1842:389). And this logic has continued up to the most recent publications (Flood 2002).⁷ In retrospect, it was in the early nineteenth century that the divergence between Western and Afghan sources began.

To summarize: There were three critical moments in the reception of the Colossi in Islamic literature: From the tenth century when the images were no longer worshiped and following the removal of their metal face masks and metal arm covers, they no longer had the physical appearance of the Buddha – thus they were no longer “living” idols. Then, in the late twelfth century they began to be identified as *Ajā’ib* “miraculous” creations and thus transcendental figures no longer bound by historical fact (Inaba 2019:87ff.). By the late eighteenth/nineteenth century the extraordinary natural and sculpted formations of Bamiyan were explained within a framing devise of the miraculous deeds of Hazrat-i Ali and the mythic history of the introduction of Islam in the Bamiyan region. These legends have long been an essential part of the repertoire of the bardic singers of Afghanistan (Klimburg 1966:163).⁸ The evidence of these legends in Bamiyan can be traced back at least to the late eighteenth century but they appear to have been transmitted in written form to a wider, mainly Afghan, audience only since the early twentieth century (Khozad).

10 Entangled Narratives: Salsal and Shahmama

In the early twentieth century the narratives surrounding the Colossi are radically transformed again. As a result of the French-Afghan archaeological exploration in Bamiyan, the Buddhist origins of the Colossi were re-discovered (MDAFA Vs. II,

⁷ Occasionally a specific person is suggested as responsible for shooting canon at the idols. I was never able to locate a single primary source to confirm these assertions.

⁸ It should be remembered that the most important pilgrimage site in Afghanistan is the supposed tomb of Hazrat-i Ali, the 4th Caliph, which has given the town its name Mazar-I Sharif (noble shrine)

III; Hackin & Hackin 1934; Green 2018; Godard trans. Khuzad 1315/1936). The DAFA publications expanded the understanding of the cultural-historical context in which the Colossal Buddhas were created. Shortly thereafter (from 1937) the popular oral traditions recounting the Islamic appropriation of the Colossi and other pilgrimage sites were published in Dari and French. The scholarly narrative did not negate the local mythological narrative for the Colossi but integrated these stories into the narrative history of Afghanistan. Ria Hackin and Ahmad Ali Khozad recorded the most widespread legends about the Colossi, which they published in a book of Afghan folktales (Hackin and Khozad 1953). These legends transform the Bamiyan region into a sacred landscape at the center of which stand the Colossal images Salsal & Shahmama (Hackin and Khozad 1953: 3–21). The recitation begins – “although the whole world knows that the two colossi represent Buddhas the inhabitants of Bamiyan are not of our opinion” (p.20). The most popular legend identifies the largest Buddha as the ancient warrior Salsal and the smaller is his wife Shahmama. At the time that Islam was introduced to Bamiyan Salsal, the most valiant warrior of the ancient kings who defended the territory against the Muslim armies tyrannized the population. The latter then sought help from the Prophet Mohammed. Despite the Prophet’s detailed instruction to Hazrat-i Ali he could not subdue Salsal who was protected by magic armor bequeathed to him by the prophet David. Returning to Mecca Ali sought council, following the Prophet Mohammed’s instructions, Hazrat-i Ali was able to conquer the great warrior. Having witnessed the wisdom and power of Hazrat-i Ali, Salsal and Shahmama and their followers accepted The True Religion, converted to Islam and from that time onward protected the people of Bamiyan.⁹ Astonishingly, although references to the indigenous identity of the Colossi appear continuously in the English language literature from the 18th century only selective parts of this narrative have been integrated into the western perception of the Colossi and the culture of the Bamiyan Valley. Thus, the self-referential conclusions regarding iconoclastic attitudes reported by the early western sources continue to be transmitted in the western literature. Even the most popular English language guidebook recounts the stories of miracles performed by Hazrat-i Ali in the Bamiyan region – at the Band-i Amir Lakes and Valley of the Dragon – as published by Khozad (Dupree 1971:113–130) but do not mention at all

⁹It is not possible to speculate here about the cultural context in which the legends of Salsal and Shahmama first arose, perhaps in the eighteenth century. There is no evidence relating the origin of these legends to any of the ethnic groups that lived in the region. Centlivres gives a good short summary of the troubled history of the Shia Hazara in Bamiyan throughout the last century (Centlivres 2001:99–102). During the civil war, in the late twentieth century, an Hazara political movement emerged, one strand of their discourse was the identification of the Colossi with the Hazara people (Centlivres 2001:102; Hussein 2012). But, Centlivres describes the Buddhist monuments in the late twentieth century, as devoid of religious meaning (in the Islamic world) their only remaining functions as “humble and prosaic” (2001:101). Certainly, the political tensions and goals are of great importance, but it is incomplete to ignore the religious dynamics that continue to flow through the site and the Valley. The Colossi have lost their Buddhist function but the land and the monuments have been appropriated through the local legends and religious practices, including at the pilgrimage places and the Ziyarat,

the related stories about Salsal and Shahmama from the same Hazrat-i Ali legend cycle (Hackin and Khozad: 3–21). Instead the guidebook presents only the Buddhist narrative which is in fact the shortest part of the biography of the Colossi. And it is this history which has served as the basis for some of the proposed solutions for the empty niches.

Confronted with the monumental remains of the pre-Islamic past, it was natural that the people of Bamiyan would take special pride in their Islamic identity and through a slowly expanding mythic history attribute the bounty of the land and the truly extraordinary (indeed one could say miraculous) natural features of the landscape to the intercession of Hazrat-i Ali at the dawn of the Islamic presence in Bamiyan.¹⁰ Sacred spaces continue to evoke a sense of reverence across millennia independent of cultural definitions. For example, throughout Italy churches are built over Roman, pre-Christian, sacred places, and in Afghanistan Ziyarat (mausolea) are built on or next to pre-Islamic shrines. The fragmentary Colossi without faces and hands had no visual characteristics identifying them as Buddhas, they were not “living” idols, and could thus be reinterpreted within the context of the mythic history of the conversion of Bamiyan to Islam. Through Khozad’s important positions and publication activities he influenced several generations of the Afghan educated elite (Green 2018; Khuzad (1334/1955). Khozad’s goal was to produce a normative cultural history of Afghanistan in which the Buddhist phase was just one chapter in a long and glorious historical narrative.¹¹ Perhaps the most interesting example of this slightly different prism on the history of Afghanistan is Kohzad’s translation (Godard trans. Khuzad 1315/1956; Green 2018) of Godard’s influential archaeological publication MDAFA II (Godard et al. 1928).

It was in fact the Taliban, at the beginning of the 3rd millennium who brought the Bāmiyān Colossi once again onto the world stage insisting that they were Buddha idols, although it is more than a 1000 years since they were “living” Buddhas and the focus of Buddhist pilgrimage and worship.

11 The Goals of Heritage Preservation

Conversations with Shukria Neda revealed that the destruction of Salsal and Shahmama symbolized for the residents of the Bāmiyān Valley not only an attack on their identity but more broadly the trauma of the suffering and destruction during

¹⁰For insistence it is recounted that Hazrat-I Ali created the magnificent 5 lakes called Band-I Amir which then provided 5 water channels to irrigate the Bamiyan Valley.

¹¹Unfortunately, there was very little archaeological exploration of the Islamic period, although diverse Islamic monuments dating from the Ghorid period onward, dotted the landscape. Thus also the heterogeneous culture of Bamiyan province remained obscure. See for instance the recently published Judeo-Persian documents believed to have been found in the Bamiyan region (Haim 2019) Thus even experienced anthropologists are unaware of the rich and varied religious life of the Bamiyan Valley and its historical roots.

the civil war, and most particularly during the Taliban regime. Her belief appeared to be that if the colossal sculptures were to be reinstated, then tourism and, hence, prosperity would return to the Valley.

In fact, the loss of tourism is only one of the economic disasters that beset the valley during the long civil war. The broad and fertile Bāmiyān Valley normally provided excellent conditions for agriculture, including pasturage for animal husbandry. But during the Taliban regime, there had also been an extreme drought. This economic disaster was accompanied by massive human rights violations against the Shia Hazara population. Thus, there was not only massive material and human loss but also an assault on the distinctive cultural identity of a majority of the residents of the Valley.¹²

12 Heritage Preservation

As stated at the beginning of this discussion, my hypothesis is that the best way to identify “holistic strategies for the protection of human rights and promotion of peacebuilding” (p.4). was to understand the changes in the appearance and meaning of the Colossi from their creation to the present time. From the literary and archaeological sources, we learned that both the physical appearance of the Colossi and their cultural contexts have changed over the centuries, and thus the reception, interpretation and importance of the Colossi have changed too. There were three major moments in the narrative biography of the Colossi, their initial creation, ca. late sixth early seventh centuries as Colossal Buddhas: the deliberate removal of the precious metal adornments – the copper alloy face/masks and arm covering ca. tenth century; and from at least the eighteenth century, their evolution into Salsal and Shahmama, mythic heroes in the cycle of miraculous stories associated with Hazrat-i Ali.

“Reconstruction of cultural heritage due to acts of deliberate destruction must be addressed not merely from the point of a material conservation philosophy but within the context of holistic strategies for the protection of human rights and promotion of peacebuilding” (p.4). “It is of central significance [that all stakeholders]... recognize the importance of the role culture can play in the peacebuilding and development process specifically in conflict or post-conflict regions (p.5). (UNESCO Kabul 2016).

In light of this better understanding of the entangled biographies of the Colossi, I suggest that we must rephrase the question posed at the beginning, and ask rather,

¹²In fact, there is no reliable census of the population. During the last century there had been significant shifts of the different ethnic groups throughout the province. The Hazara are considered to be the majority in the Bamiyan Valley, the suggested numbers vary widely. But within the different Valleys of the province are also Tajik, Kizilbash and Pushtu who also at various times impacted the history of the region. Among the latter are also the nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples who possess seasonal grazing rights.

is it possible to create a single physical colossal image in one of the niches? And if so, which narrative biography should be memorialized? The original Buddha narrative that has long disappeared, only to be resurrected by the Taliban, or the legendary Heroes Salsal and Shahmama, who, according to local tradition, had been converted to “The True Faith” at the dawn of the Islamic period in Bāmiyān.

And what criteria could be used for the materiality of this physical presence. There is no documentation for the original Buddha figures and thus according to all international criteria it is impossible to recreate the original Buddhas. There is reliable documentation for the Colossi at the end of the twentieth century, when they were, materially speaking, the sum total of their history. There is adequate documentation both for their appearance and the materials used to rebuild one of those images. But is it feasible to rebuild one of the fragmentary Colossi as they were prior to their violent destruction?

And perhaps even more importantly is a physical presence the appropriate solution?

The colossal Buddha images sheltered in their brilliantly painted niches were seen as symbols of peace by the distant ancestors of the people of the Bāmiyān Valley who laboriously carved the monumental sculptures out of the living rock. Today, the empty niches bear witness to the futility of war and the suffering of the Afghan people, including the residents of Bāmiyān, at the beginning of the third millennium CE. Once again, the great Colossi have been transformed in the imaginations of those who experience them — now, through their absence.

In my, opinion, a far more powerful symbol would be the absence of any specific image. There are those who support the notion of leaving the niches empty as a memorial to the futility of war. This is not a new idea. Both Ground Zero in New York and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial are eloquent expressions of massive loss and destruction. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial is made of several different components, but the image that seems to be the most powerful for many who visit the site is the burned-out shell of a large building.

The evocative power of ruins is well known. The absence of an image allows each visitor to complete the space according to his/her own imagination. Then, through a mixed media strategy of interpretive programs, the evolution of the meaning of the two Colossi through the narrative of their history could be recreated. Didactic mechanisms that would allow the long history of Bamiyan to be told, should be integral to the solution for the great niches and the archaeological zone. The story of the voluntary removal of the copper alloy face masks and arm coverings and thus the de-consecration of the Buddhas resulted in the awe-inspiring appearance of the Colossi. The evolution of the reception of the Colossi within the conceptual framework of a Muslim society from *‘Ajā’ib* (Arabic) “wonders of God’s creation” to principal actors in the legendary history of the conversion of the Bamiyan region to Islam would allow the interests of all the stakeholders –Afghan (both national and regional) and international - to be represented.

At Bāmiyān there should be opportunities for *all* the cultural voices to be heard. The glorious past of the Bāmiyān Valley — both Buddhist and Muslim, is an inspiring story of how artifacts can take on a plurality of meanings so that, seen

retrospectively, one can envision the non-violent overlaying of cultures. Thus Bamiyan, can once again be understood as symbol of peace.

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Could the Giant Buddha Statues of Bamiyan Be Considered as a Case of “Exceptional Circumstances” for Reconstruction?



Junko Okahashi

Abstract According to the World Heritage *Operational Guidelines*, reconstruction of cultural heritage is only justifiable in “exceptional circumstances”. In an attempt to understand the destroyed Giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan as such, this paper revisits discussions on reconstruction by reviewing relevant international doctrines. It argues that this case meets the definition of “exceptional cases” in the *Riga Charter*, where reconstruction of artefacts recovers significance of a place, in response to tragic sense of loss caused through man-made disasters. However, the issue of authenticity is yet to be discussed. How does the notion of authenticity apply to destructed heritage? This connects to the question of who wishes to remember what and how and what is the value of reconstruction itself for the concerned community. Clarification on the process of consensus building is key to justification of reconstruction. As stated in the *Warsaw Recommendation*, reconstruction should enable people to connect to their heritage, identity and history. If the Bamiyan statues resurrect in the future, it would be for restitution of historic memory. Significance of reconstruction lies in the rehabilitation of social livelihood and self-esteem among the directly affected. When reconstruction brings such situation, it may be accepted as a means of future management.

Keywords Reconstruction · Authenticity · Exceptional circumstances · International doctrines · Historic memory · Spirit of place · Identity · Restitution · Significance

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1 Introduction

The present paper argues what should be the conditions for a place or an element of cultural heritage to be considered as an “exceptional” case, so as its reconstruction could be acceptable.

When discussion is held around reconstruction of cultural heritage, it is to be noted that the common understanding of the language is not established. Even among the scientific community in the field of cultural heritage, definition of reconstruction varies from the very monumental, strictly differentiating reconstruction and restoration to social, urban and environmental. The intended scale of the intervention also differs from a partial addition of an existing structure to entire rebuilding of a lost built environment.

This paper, in general, offers a necessary descriptive review of literature, notably the principle international platform-setting texts, which have shaped the doctrine and attitude towards reconstruction of cultural heritage on the international level. In order to argue a possible shift in the paradigm, as it were, to place cultural heritage as future-making tool, seeing future as equally important as past and present in the life and spirit of a place, no principle could be put forward without respecting the accumulation of continued discussion on the justified or non-justified acts of reconstruction.

The arguments shall be the following. Firstly, are the Giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan considerable to be of exceptional circumstances for reconstruction? In the language of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (hereafter *Operational Guidelines*, 2019 version), the reconstruction of archaeological remains or historic buildings is said to be justifiable only in “exceptional circumstances”. In an attempt to understand the destroyed Giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan in part as a case of “exceptional circumstances”, the statement in the *Riga Charter on Authenticity and Historic Reconstruction in Relationship with Cultural Heritage* (2000, hereafter the *Riga Charter*) must be addressed, that “exceptional circumstances” are where reconstruction is indispensable for the “survival” of a place, where it can recover the place’s cultural significance.

Secondly, if they are indeed of “exceptional circumstances”, do we then have the conditions ready, i.e. complete documentation, processes and linkages with continued living spirit, etc., so as to evaluate that they would be “authentic” even after reconstruction? This point is to be reconsidered.

Thirdly, how and to what extent does the notion of authenticity itself apply in the case of destructed heritage, if we think about reconstruction in “exceptional circumstances” to be “for the future”?

Overall, the purpose of reconstruction must be revisited. In the *Warsaw Recommendation on Recovery and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage* (2018, hereafter *Warsaw Recommendation*), there is an attempt to understand the term “reconstruction” in the World Heritage context as “a technical process for the restitution of destroyed or severely damaged physical assets and infrastructure following

an armed conflict or a disaster” and that “it is important to stress, in this regard, that such reconstruction of physical assets must give due consideration to their associated intangible practices, beliefs and traditional knowledge which are essential for sustaining cultural values among local communities”. In compliance with this understanding, should the Giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan be reconstructed, the significance would be sought in the restitution of historic memory and identity. This paper argues that the Bamiyan case could meet the definition for “exceptional cases” in the *Riga Charter*, because the reconstruction of artefacts might recover the cultural significance of a place, in response to tragic sense of loss caused through disasters of human origin. However, in this case, we would come to rethink the issue of authenticity and unavoidable elements of conjecture, where there might be the need to interpret the newly installed elements as an honest expression of the present towards the future. This is directly connected to the question of who wishes to remember what and how, who are the stakeholders and what is the value of reconstruction for the “concerned community”.

2 “Exceptional Circumstances” According to the International Doctrinal Texts

In the world today, facing frequent issues of devastation of cultural heritage, at what times and situations could reconstruction be an appropriate method of conservation, in order to optimize presentation and enhancement of cultural heritage, allowing the contemporary society to live with it? The current concerns of the present author attempts to better interpret the following article of the *Operational Guidelines*. Article 86 of the *Operational Guidelines* reads as following:

In relation to authenticity, the reconstruction of archaeological remains or historic buildings or districts is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances. Reconstruction is acceptable only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture.

In the *Riga Charter* (2000), “exceptional circumstances” are described as the following:

Circumstances where reconstruction is necessary for the survival of the place; where a ‘place’ is incomplete through damage or alteration; where it recovers the cultural significance of a ‘place’; or in response to tragic loss through disasters where of natural or human origin.

According to this definition, reconstruction could possibly be justified as appropriate when incompleteness, which may hinder survival of a place, is widely felt after destruction and where the act of reconstruction would recover the place’s cultural significance. Furthermore, it is to be noted that, even being defined to be under the above-mentioned exceptional circumstances, the Charter clarifies fundamental conditions of reconstruction that:

- appropriate survey and historical documentation is available (including iconographic, archival or material evidence);
- existing significant historic fabric will not be damaged: and,
- (...) the need for reconstruction has been established through full and open consultations among national and local authorities and the community concerned.

Needless to say, the approach towards reconstruction seen in the text of the *Riga Charter*, in relation to authenticity, is aligned within paragraphs 79 to 86 of the *Operational Guidelines*. The provisions in the *Riga Charter* are also based on thorough studies of the *Venice Charter* as well as other ICOMOS doctrinal texts, namely, the *Burra Charter* (1979), the *Florence Charter* (1981), the *Declaration of Dresden* (1982), the *Lausanne Charter* (1990), and the *Nara Document* (1994). The *Riga Charter* hence reorganized and summarized, in a clear language, the development of thoughts against various political and social backgrounds, until 2000, on the notion of reconstruction of cultural heritage. Therefore it could be noted that covering the conditions set out in the *Riga Charter* would be able to respect the accumulation of preceding conventional texts.

3 Background on the Bamiyan Buddha Statues

Destruction of the two standing Giant Buddha statues in Bamiyan, in 2001, was far from what the local community wished for. The local people of Bamiyan lived with the statues for over a millennium, as if the standing giant statues were their friends or extended family, just as members of their community. The statues had their eyes carved off from the faces at some point in history, but in principle, the local community, long time mainly Shiites, had little issue of idolatry about the Buddha statues. They were not objects of worship any more, but were instead regarded as part of their community. The sense of loss and incompleteness without the Giant Buddha statues, for the viewpoint of the local community, affects the so-called integrity or “wholeness” of the World Heritage property of the Bamiyan Valley.

When living cultural heritage sites that exert important function on the social and economic livelihood of the concerned community are destroyed intentionally in armed conflicts or as a result of natural disasters, one may strongly support that these are “exceptional circumstances” to become candidates for reconstruction. However, when we consider what a living heritage means, clear images exist for places of religious and spiritual significance, cultural landscapes involving on-going human activities as well as dynamic environment subject to the historic urban landscape approach. In the case of the Giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan, their contemporary role may not be strong enough to be proved as living heritage; however, purpose of memory and identity restitution becomes a stronger justification for the recovery of cultural significance.

On the other hand, would the daily lives of the local community be safe and secure with any newly reconstructed figure, of which the strong symbolism became target of destruction? What decision could be acceptable for the largest number of

stakeholders? Where can the financial means be procured, and could any international donor follow the will of the national and local stakeholders? The set of realistic issues are continuously at stake, to be centred on the clarity of decision-making process, “by whom” and “for whom” the decision can be made. In the meantime, the theory of cultural heritage reconstruction is in need of an international review of principles.

It is to be noted here that the rebuilding purpose would not be the same as when the Giant Buddha statues were first built in the sixth century AD, when religious and spiritual values were carved into the stone figures. The statues were then of religious significance and for worshipping purposes of the Buddhist monastic community which had been formulated at this crossroad of civilizations. Hence the international community should admit that any debated reconstruction of the colossal statues at Bamiyan is not about continuation of living intangible cultural practices, but much rather a choice to restitute historic memory and identity. The present author considers that authenticity may be sought in the new statue itself, while it is rather difficult to justify the continuity of spirit and context from the time of creation of the destructed original statues. Attempts to make use of the physically secured stone fragments of the statues may well be in respect of the *Venice Charter*. However, the *Venice Charter* is not necessarily relevant to all types of cultural heritage. It may indeed be an appropriate option to reuse the conserved stone pieces; nevertheless, strict *anastylosis* leaving patches of lacuna with recognizable modern material may not be applicable to this type of cultural heritage, originally built as figures of worship, thus in an esthetically harmonious physical form.

Who is the testimony of whom? There is the local community of Bamiyan and dedicated researchers who have eyewitnessed the before and after of the destruction of the Giant Buddha statues. However, the destructed statues, who stood there for 1.5 millennia, were also themselves testimonies of various movements from east to west and from west to east: Military invaders and destroyers passed through, from old days till very recent; pilgrims and monks travelled between China and India passing in front of the Buddha statues in search of precious sutras; lacquerware, spice, ivory and all kinds of other goods were delivered from caravanserais to caravanserais, under the eyes of the Buddha statues. The non-existence of the statues themselves means the symbolic loss of the testimony of richness in the history of interchange in Bamiyan. Thus without the statues, the place may continue to be felt as “incomplete”.

What is to be remembered, in what form? The answer to this question becomes key to accept or not the Giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan as an exceptional case for reconstruction. Does Afghanistan want to remember the tragic event of destruction of the Buddha statues? Or else, does its citizens prefer to remember the millennium-long friendship and relationship with the Buddha statues? The choice to reconstruct or not would largely depend on the will of the present day’s stakeholders and on “what” they wish to remember and transmit to future generations. Currently, the two empty niches exert a tremendously large message to the world. However, this delivered message would be appropriate only when the chosen memory is about the loss, the destruction.

4 Discussion on Authenticity and Reconstruction from International Doctrinal Texts

Presuming that the Giant Buddha of Bamiyan statues are indeed of “exceptional circumstances” for reconstruction, there are yet issues of having or not the complete documentation for such reconstruction, to be dealt as truthful and honest or not, the question of “authenticity”, which should be reconsidered. Here, this paper shall go through a necessary descriptive review of some important international texts. No updated principle could be put forward without respecting the accumulation of texts reflecting the past discussions, in the field of cultural heritage conservation, on the acts of reconstruction.

In the *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites* (1964, hereafter the *Venice Charter*), its Article 9 reads as follows:

The process of restoration is a highly specialized operation. Its aim is to preserve and reveal the aesthetic and historic value of the monument and is based on respect for original material and authentic documents. It must stop at the point where conjecture begins, and in this case moreover any extra work which is indispensable must be distinct from the architectural composition and must bear a contemporary stamp. The restoration in any case must be preceded and followed by an archaeological and historical study of the monument.

In Articles 12 and 13, it instructs the principles on replacement of missing parts and additions:

Replacements of missing parts must integrate harmoniously with the whole, but at the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historic evidence. Additions cannot be allowed except in so far as they do not detract from the interesting parts of the building, its traditional setting, the balance of its composition and its relation with its surroundings.

The Venice Charter respects honesty in conservation decisions and attempts to ensure material integrity of the built heritage. Then, we see in Article 15 the exceptional admittance of “reconstruction”:

(...) All reconstruction work should however be ruled out “a priori”. Only anastylosis, that is to say, the reassembling of existing but dismembered parts can be permitted. The material used for integration should always be recognizable and its use should be the least that will ensure the conservation of a monument and the reinstatement of its form.

The condition of reconstruction here is to use the practice of *anastylosis*. This also demonstrates the respect for honesty in conservation decisions, towards the material integrity of the built heritage. However, this Article 15 is where the Charter talks about archaeological excavations. There is little assumption of a situation where reconstruction of built environment may be needed for anything that continues to be used and lived in. This is clearly restrictive to certain category of heritage, using some limited variety of material. Reconstruction has been seen as paradox to what heritage conservation means, especially when the theory has focus on the “preservation” aspect.

Then, when we read the *Nara Document on Authenticity* (1994, hereafter the *Nara Document*), which has now become a widely consulted reference upon consideration of authenticity, we realize that it does not, in fact, clearly define what authenticity itself means. However, it certainly gives guidance on the relative way of seeking authenticity and gives high consideration to the existing “diversity” in the world, towards the notion of authenticity, as well as on the categories of cultural heritage. It successfully expanded the grounds or “aspects of sources of information” on which evaluation of authenticity could be made. Reconstruction may be justified in line with some of those grounds. Article 13 of the *Nara Document* states as follows:

Depending on the nature of the cultural heritage, its cultural context, and its evolution through time, authenticity judgments may be linked to the worth of a great variety of sources of information. Aspects of the sources may include form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors. (...)

The achievement of the *Nara Document* was that it could allow diverse cultures of the world, not only Japan, to be able to put forward the values of their important cultural heritage as authentic. The authenticity statement in the *Nara Document* became the basis of paragraphs 79–86 of the *Operational Guidelines* since its 2005 revised version and became influential in the World Heritage Outstanding Universal Value identification worldwide. However, the challenge within the international debates was then that the notion on authenticity, having become more relative and diversity-oriented since the *Nara Document*, no longer held the threshold of standardized judgement. Also, despite the applause and respect given to the achievement of the *Nara Document*, the notion and placement of reconstruction was not articulated in the text. The *Nara Document* is silent about the linkage of the two notions of authenticity and reconstruction, although it might have otherwise become the opportunity to guide some development in reconsidering the significance of reconstruction within the international standards. It was not yet high time in 1994 to come to that point. Relative expansion of the notion of authenticity was enough as a big step forward at that stage, in order to pave way for diversity and universality in the international doctrine.

Then in the *Riga Charter* (2000), historic reconstruction of cultural heritage is clearly defined as “evocation, interpretation, restoration or replication of a previous form”. In the same text, conservation is defined as “all efforts designed to understand cultural heritage, know its history and meaning, ensure its material safeguard, and as required, its presentation, restoration and enhancement”.

When we review the content of the *Riga Charter*, within its conciseness, it shows the result of a revisited debate on reconstruction. The *Riga Charter* was signed in 2000 following concerns on reconstruction and authenticity issues in some former Soviet countries, which had regained independence after the dissolution of the Cold War. This Charter became an alert, from the doctrinal point of view for the conservation of cultural heritage to the use of reinvented monuments as symbolic narratives for national identity building and restructuring of national history. One may

argue why not, since the common motivation of concerned communities towards reconstruction tends to be the restitution of historic and cultural identity. However, the Charter reminds the public that any reconstruction is the least necessary for the conservation and presentation of a cultural heritage site.

In the *Riga Charter*, unlike the *Nara Document*, the notion of authenticity and reconstruction are related within the single text. On authenticity, it defines that:

Authenticity is a measure of the degree to which the attributes of cultural heritage (including form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other factors) credibly and accurately bear witness to their significance.

One of the principal authors of the *Riga Charter*, who also led the work of the *Nara Document*, made sure that the Charter enhanced the approach of the *Nara Document*, even before it entered into the text of the *Operational Guidelines* in 2005.

Here, we should be reminded of honesty that can be proved in replications. Cesare Brandi, in his *Theory of Restoration* (1977), mentions that falsity does not lie within the object but within the judgement. A fake becomes a fake when it is recognized as such, and falsity is not an inherent property of the object. He underlines the importance of distinguishing between imitations (or replicas) and falsifications and that the differentiation is not based on specific differences in production methods but on the underlying intent. The former is the “production of an object that resembles or reproduces another object, either in the technique or in the style of a given historical period or a given artist, with no purpose other than to document or enjoy the object”.¹ The latter is “production of an object as above, but with a specific intent to mislead others as to its period, its material nature or its creator”.² According to his theory, entire or partial reconstruction or destructed built environment could be perhaps seen as “imitation”. Imitation is not falsification, so it is still honest. In this case, couldn’t reconstruction be accepted, if it is achieved without concealing that it is indeed a reconstruction? This may lead to another level of debate that cultural heritage could still be significant without being entirely authentic from all aspects.

However, against the argument of honesty in replications, the *Riga Charter* states that:

Replication of cultural heritage is in general a misrepresentation of evidence of the past, and that each architectural work should reflect the time of its own creation, in the belief that sympathetic new buildings can maintain the environmental context.

Then, isn’t there a way to approve authenticity within the reconstruction act itself, if it meets the affirmative judgement on authenticity within the grounds given in the *Nara Document*, therefore also in the *Riga Charter* and the *Operational Guidelines*? Reconsideration on the linkage of authenticity and reconstruction is highly at stake, since there is no mention in any doctrinal texts on the specific way to evaluate

¹ Brandi, C. (1977). *Teoria del Restauro*, English Edition: Brandi, C. (2005). *Theory of Restoration*. translated by Rockwell, C. edited by Istituto Centrale per il Restauro. Nardini Editore. Firenze. P.87

² *ibidem*

authenticity in reconstructed cultural heritage. Perhaps discussions based on the “authenticity vs. conjecture” mindset are not relevant enough to the quite unique issues arising from reconstruction in “exceptional cases”. When reconstruction of cultural heritage brings meaning for identity-rebuilding towards the future, as long as there is no falsification between what used to be there and what is new, honesty may be identified within the new, significant as it is, ensuring value continuity from what used to be there, thus contextual integrity, bridging the old and the new.

5 Comparative Discussion on Reconstruction in “Exceptional Circumstances”, Memory and Future Building

As seen in the above texts, for certain, discussions on reconstruction and authenticity have been repeated. However, in our times, we are to reopen the debate, in order to identify how to consider reconstruction of destroyed or damaged cultural heritage, due to the fact that pressing international expectations towards a persuasive scientific viewpoint of cultural heritage specialists become non-negligible. What appears in the forementioned doctrinal texts as “exceptional circumstances”, where reconstruction of cultural heritage might be supported, happens frequently in today’s world. Armed conflict is destroying emblematic historic monuments and places of living heritage, devastating the identity and esteem of the local community and a larger public far beyond; when we see it, universal concerns and empathy are raised on the future of the place.

In this context, the present author emphasizes the conditions of intentional destruction through armed conflict as key to the argument of this paper, specifically in connection to the role of reconstruction as “future-making” as well as the forementioned need of revisiting the notions of authenticity and new elements.

A successful case of reconstruction in the recent years was at the monuments in Timbuktu (Mali), which could be read in the international news articles as well as in the press communication by UNESCO. The mausoleums of saints in Timbuktu, built since the thirteenth century, have long been places of pilgrimage for the people in the region. 16 of them are inscribed on the World Heritage List, but 14 were destroyed in 2012, under attack by armed groups, representing a tragic loss for local communities. Based on detailed documentation and material laid by skilled local craftsmen and work by the living community for the living community, this case merited an international applause, at the 39th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2015, far from being criticized because of “reconstruction”. Mausoleums in Timbuktu being places of worship by the continuously living community and justification of authenticity are clearly sought in reference to some of the “aspects of information sources” mentioned in the *Nara Document*.

Older cases can also be named, such as the reconstructed old city of Warsaw (Poland), although the context and scale of the reconstruction varies from the case

of Timbuktu. Those cases may become sources of reflective comparison for the ongoing international discussions on Bamiyan, concerning reconstruction of the Giant Buddha statues. The international community relates the issue to even more recent emblematic victims of armed conflict, such as places of cultural significance in Syria, Iraq or Yemen. When those cultural heritage sites exert important function on the social and economic livelihood of the concerned community, there is no question about the need of a large-scale intervention, which may be called reconstruction, in order to secure “survival” of the place.

The prominent past example of cultural heritage reconstruction is the case of the old town of Warsaw. Warsaw dates back to the Gothic period and underwent numerous transformations over the centuries, extensively rebuilt during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During World War II, especially during and after the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, Warsaw was bombed by the Nazi, which reduced 85–90% of the city’s historic centre to rubble. The decision on its post-war reconstruction was global in its scale, with a push of international politics by the Soviet Union. However, there was certainly a strong living reason by the survived local population to re-establish its housing environment, which they had already been initiating by themselves. After the Warsaw Uprising, the population of Warsaw was reduced from over 1 million to only a few thousand people living in its ruins. Then, post-war period had its pressing needs to reaccommodate a recovering population.

Meticulous collecting and reuse of the remnants of the historic Warsaw ended up, after many years, in recreating the entire historic fabric of an old city. This method became the basis of a principle, which was then applied to reconstructing the historic districts of Gdańsk, Wrocław, and further on became influential to other European cities in recovering their urban heritage. This was one of the reasons why the reconstructed Historic Centre of Warsaw was listed on the World Heritage List in 1980.

When we study the World Heritage nomination dossier of the entirely reconstructed Historic Centre of Warsaw, it can be understood that the Polish authorities did not intend to declare the authenticity in the destructed layers of history, but declared contemporary sources of genuineness that existed within the resurrected old town, by and large in the style of the eighteenth century, which was the exertion of the work of 1949–1963³ reconstruction itself. It was set forth as an unprecedented example of reconstruction on an urban scale. The reconstruction work from scratch was implemented by prominent and ardent Polish architects, urban planners and conservators, based on the compiled pre-war drawings and photographs,⁴ as well as iconographic sources and documents from throughout the history of the city, including its cityscapes by the eighteenth-century Venetian painter Bernardo Bellotto. The

³ Government of the People’s Republic of Poland. (1978). *World Heritage nomination dossier of the Historic Centre of Warsaw*. p. 4.

⁴ The Archive of the Warsaw Reconstruction Office, including documentation on both the post-war damage and the reconstruction project, was enlisted in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2011.

following extract from the 2018 *Warsaw Recommendation* can be read as if it were directly inspired by the efforts in those years:

Building resilience is essential to address destruction and disasters. In reconstructing heritage following an armed conflict or a disaster, it is critical to reduce existing structural and social vulnerabilities, including by building back better, and to improve quality of life, while retaining cultural values as much as possible.

The Baroque city centre of Dresden was reduced to ruins in February 1945, by the carpet bombing raids of World War II. Soon after the war, some of Dresden’s historic buildings were to be reconstructed, such as the Zwinger Palace and Semper Opera House, with support of the Soviet Union as was the case of Warsaw. However, a prominent destructed landmark church of the old city of Dresden, the Frauenkirche, was left for half a century in a form of scorched ruins, partly as a memorial against war and partly due to the strict prohibition against activities for religious faith during the communist regime. Built in the middle of the eighteenth century as a Lutheran church, the Frauenkirche with its magnificent posture had been a loved and respected monument for the citizens of Dresden. The people compiled and conserved the rubbles preciously and took record, which eventually became useful when, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and reunification of Germany, a civil movement developed in order to reconstruct the Frauenkirche. The project realistically started in 1994, where new information technology was introduced, in order to simulate the falling path of each remaining fragment of stone, so that their original positions could be calculated and identified like a puzzle. The project was affected by flooding of the Elbe River in 2002, but the work continued to be diligently implemented by the German people with no delay. The reconstructed Frauenkirche, using as much of the original remnants as possible, finally reappeared with its dome in the skyline of Dresden in 2004. 60 years after destruction, it was reconsecrated in October 2005 with festive services, which became an emotional moment for the people.

In the case of the Old Bridge at Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina), a historic town that developed under the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it was destructed between 1992 and 1995 by acts of war in the Balkans. Since 1998, the Old Bridge underwent a reconstruction project under the auspices of UNESCO and the World Bank and was opened to the public in the summer of 2004, after 4 years of work. The Old Bridge Area of the Old City of Mostar was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2005, and in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property, the Bosnian authorities underline that “the reconstruction of the Old Bridge was based on thorough and detailed, multi-facetted analysis, relying on high quality documentation. The authenticity of form, use of authentic materials and techniques are fully recognizable while the reconstruction has not been hidden at all”.

An interesting document on authenticity of the reconstructed bridge of Mostar is the ICOMOS Evaluation on the World Heritage nomination of this site:

On the basis of the test of authenticity, as defined in paragraph 24.b.i of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, there must be

considerable reservations about the authenticity of Mostar (...). The Old Bridge has been rebuilt as a copy, using mainly new material, though with the integration of some of the historic material especially on the surface. The proportion of reconstructed buildings is very high, and much new material has also been used. (...) However the new (2005) Operational Guidelines gives a more detailed approach on this field, offering a series of “qualities” for testing authenticity. In this light, the result of a test of authenticity is rather more positive.

It compares the question of authenticity in light of the variant principles in the old (until 2002) and new (from 2005) versions of the *Operational Guidelines*, where the approach to authenticity justification broadens after discussions in the *Nara Document*. ICOMOS, against the former, expresses “considerable reservations” and, against the latter, becomes “rather more positive”.

ICOMOS also stated in the same evaluation document that “it must be stressed that this reconstruction of fabric should be seen as being in the background compared with restoration of the intangible dimensions of this property, which are certainly the main issue concerning the Outstanding Universal Value of this site”. The intangible dimension given by the Bosnian authorities as justification of World Heritage criteria (vi) was the discourse on the bridge as symbol of reconciliation and strengthening of coexistence of communities from diverse cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds.

In Japan, in Okinawa, we can see today a prominent example of a reconstructed cultural heritage, namely, the Shuri Castle. First built in the fourteenth century by the Ryukyu Dynasty, it was a living castle until late nineteenth century and was listed as a national treasure before World War II. However, entirely devastated to the ground by heavy naval gunfire during World War II in 1945, the tangible memory of this castle, together with an entire historic urban landscape of Shuri and most other parts of the city of Naha, was eradicated from earth.

A major part of the large-scale reconstruction work of the Shuri Castle complex took place in the early 1990s, following an extensive research and planning period in the 1980s. The reconstruction work of the complex still continues today. However, at first, during the post-war period of Okinawa, occupied by the USA, it had seemed like a hopeless dream to reconstruct the forementioned castle of the Ryukyu Kingdom, particularly while the former castle site was used as a campus of a new university. Then, Okinawa was reverted to Japan in 1972 after 27 years. The university campus was to relocate elsewhere for its own reasons. The idea of reconstructing the castle was then first conceived within the resilient minds of the local civil society, who lived through the war-torn period of Okinawa. They voiced their will through determined actions towards recovery of Okinawa’s cultural significance and for the survival of identity within the future generations. After a number of unsuccessful attempts, eventually, political support and interests matched their initiative, towards commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the reversion of Okinawa to Japan in 1992.

Certainly, the research phase started from further excavation before any rebuilding and documentation including compilation of photographs and drawings in particular from earlier restorations. However, at first, no archives could be found on the interior of the castle in the eighteenth century, when it still served dynamically as

the royal court, to which the project aimed at restituting the architecture of the main state hall of the castle. Historians and engineers of the reconstruction team then found two further important archival documents on the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century restoration works of the castle. This allowed them to move forward, to take 3 whole years of drawing and designing based on documentation, colour analysis and structural experiments. Unlike stone, the original wooden material of the castle buildings, apart from some parts of the coral stone ramparts, was reduced to ashes in 1945 and had not remained. Even the identification of material, to be precise on the type of wood, was only possible thanks to the details in discovered archives.

In 2000, the land surface and scarce remains of the foundations of the original Shuri Castle became part of a serial World Heritage property of “Gusuku sites and related properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu”. Precisely speaking, the reconstructed monuments and ramparts are not included in the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage nomination. However, in the eyes of the present day’s community, it is the vividly reconstructed castle which illustrates the recovered memory of Okinawa. The reconstructed castle complex has become the symbol of the identity of the lost Kingdom of Ryukyu and evokes the beauty of the urban landscape of Shuri, which existed until 1945. Reconstruction of the Shuri Castle could take place at the right momentum, when the local elders, survived after the war, could link their memories of the original castle to its new form.

Having hence observed some of the prominent previous cases in discussing destruction, reconstruction, memory and future building, these cases cover a number of common facts and issues:

- A powerful decision-making is undertaken, with coherent responsibility to reconstruct.
- In order to support realistic implementation, including financial resources, political (and international) backup is present, in a way or another.
- Appropriate documentation is available and survey is undertaken.
- Doctrinal contestation can come before, during or after the reconstruction work, but coherent and collective intention overrides hesitation.
- In most cases, the needs and interests of the local people become the nucleus of the work, for the place to continue towards the future, in other words, to survive.
- The tangibly reconstructed heritage, after loss through intentional destruction, has become a sharing platform of common memory, symbolic of recovery and restitution of identity.

Those mentioned cases seem to have been unquestionably of “exceptional circumstances”, as it were, for reconstruction.

Here, when we think about reconstruction in “exceptional circumstances” to be “for the future” (and present) as a form of “future-making”, we cannot deny consideration on conjecture, minor or major it may be, which would in many cases become unavoidable to some extent. We also need to review what conjecture means. This also concerns the issue of “who wishes to remember what and how” and the importance of memory to a sense of place. In our days when accurate documentation of cultural heritage is possible thanks to technology and dedicated expertise,

nevertheless, we cannot expect documentation to be perfect upon reconstructing a vast area of monuments from scratch. During armed conflict, in heavily bombed places such as the cases studied above, where countless lives of civilians are ruthlessly lost, local documentation could also be severely damaged or lost. We could also be reminded that photographic documentation until half a century ago were not as complete as today, and some reconstruction details such as the exact colour of roof tiles, non-distinguishable in monochrome photographs, would perhaps need to rely on the memory of survived elders whose opinions could vary.

Strong criticism against conjecture became the basis of cautiousness towards reconstruction of cultural heritage, since the nineteenth century in countries such as the UK or France. We may look into the large-scale restoration works of the French architect and engineer Eugène Viollet-le-Duc in those years. The works he undertook in Pierrefonds or Carcassonne, even Notre-Dame de Paris, included what we today call reconstruction based on conjecture. This is a longstanding point of criticism. However, Viollet-le-Duc did study the vast amount of documentation upon designing his restoration works, which made him struggle and hesitate between various layers of forms that the monuments may have taken in the course of history. He eventually and decisively chose to put on additions to the monuments, in view of bearing their future forms, for those monuments to live in the hearts of the future nation. In the field of cultural heritage conservation, there is no doubt that retention of authenticity is at the highest respect of any work. However, in the hearts of the future community, a “new form” may also be accepted. In order to persuade the large global public, the principles of cultural heritage conservation would need to justify and better advocate the cautious approach towards reconstruction and the denial of what is considered as conjecture. The present author seeks meaning and significance of intended memory-building processes. Some monuments, literally speaking of the Latin word *monere*, to remind, were intended as cultural heritage from the beginning, while other cultural heritage became heritage, targets of conservation, venerated by later people who attributed value to certain vestiges from the past. Future-making or even “history-making”: since it is a continuous process which we are involved at present, shouldn’t the restitution of a memory from the past, when symbolically lost, be constructively considered as memory “for” the future societies?

6 Conclusion

There are stronger attachments and significance to tangible heritage when we use it, live with it, and are moreover being associated in building it. If there could be a revival or transmission of the spirit of building a Buddha statue, through elaborate works of reconstruction, within the ownership of whoever lives with it, there must be a meaning. However, if we are too much concentrated on the visual aspects, with less consideration on the motivation and spirit of “by whom” and “for whom”, for example, a strong identity recovery of the local and national community, there may

be little point in physical reconstruction of a statue. It will be a mere replica, if made without crystallization of spontaneous power, including intention, emotion and participation, of the people associated with the place.

Any reconstruction of cultural heritage needs initiative and motivation of the local community, with open consultations with the local and national authorities, involving a large financial support. Clarification of the process of consensus building and decision-making is key to justification of reconstruction. As in the *Warsaw Recommendation*, “recovery and reconstruction should enable people to connect to their heritage, identity and history. (...) it is important to identify cultural rights and their holders (...) and to ensure their prior and informed consent to key decision”.

If the Giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan are to be reconstructed in the future, it would be for the restitution of historic memory and identity. In the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property of the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley, concerning integrity of the site, the Afghan authorities mentions that “a major loss to the integrity of the site was the destruction of the large Buddha statues in 2001”. This official statement illustrates the incompleteness of the cultural heritage property, indeed as in the *Riga Charter*, where a place is incomplete through damage or alteration. From what this paper observed and argued, Bamiyan is a place that seems rightly justifiable as of “exceptional circumstances”. However, we must still continue to question and clarify “who wishes to remember what and how” and who are the main stakeholders to take responsibility in the decision-making on the future of the heritage place. At the same time, when it comes to “for whom”, it is about thinking what is the value for the “concerned community” in terms of reconstructing their memory in a tangible form for the future. The answer to these question becomes crucial to resurrect or not the Giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan as an exceptional case for reconstruction and on the choice of the reconstruction method. Here, if there is too much focus on authenticity in terms of “how it used to be in the past”, when it is unrealistic due to lack of documentation, loss of original material or clear memory, the unique motivation of reconstruction, in “exceptional circumstances” for the recovery of the present, may be weakened. History-making new elements shall be part of heritage, bridging the past and future.

Including the case of Bamiyan, if a cluster of “exceptional circumstances” and conformed reconstruction processes could be demonstrated in our contemporary world, it would become beneficial as best practice references and feed into up-to-date principles, for present day’s decomposed societies to be supported internationally. They must move on to rebuild and revitalize their livelihood and pride, through reconstruction of cultural heritage as their living environment at large.

The present author, in consideration of the exceptional acceptance of reconstructions, intends to emphasize the following arguments for the making of future. Significance of reconstruction is not only about rebuilding the monument in the materialistic sense but also to revitalize the living environment of the local community in their familiar context. This is to foresee the rehabilitation of social livelihood and restitution of self-esteem among the directly concerned community. On condition that reconstruction of an architectural or monumental space could materialize

such envisaged situations, it should be acceptable as an appropriate conservation method and as a forward-looking future society management.

In order to strengthen this argument, the paper concludes its position in the assertive support towards identification of “exceptional circumstances” for reconstruction and that any action should need to grasp the appropriate momentum, before the place may lose hope of motivated communities towards regaining the sense of place of their cherished homelands.

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Emptiness and Authenticity at Bamiyan



James Janowski

“The Buddha was here to contemplate or to be contemplated?”

—Peter Levi (Margottini 2014, p. 41)

Abstract In 2001, the Taliban desecrated Bamiyan’s Buddhas, colossal 1500-year-old sculptures that had long been the centerpiece of Afghanistan’s cultural heritage, leaving behind hollow niches and staggering voids. Reflecting on some terms used to discuss heritage objects, I note that meaning and value seem invariably to be conflated. Using Bamiyan as my example, I argue this is a mistake, for meaning and value, coalescing in an *achievement* like the Buddhas, come apart in cases of massive desecration, or *despoliation*. Seeking to comprehend the nature of deliberately induced emptiness, I urge that while meaning has remained intact and, oddly, even perhaps increased in the willfully produced vacuity at Bamiyan, value, rightly understood, has been utterly extinguished, and is altogether absent. I then discuss what should happen at Bamiyan. I argue for reconstituting the Buddhas, and show that doing so would contribute to ends with both intrinsic and extrinsic merit. After deflecting two objections, I defend anastylosis and register skepticism about reconstruction founded in digital technologies. I suggest that integral restoration alone stands to issue in resurgent value and *re-achieved achievement*. In closing, I note that my thinking generalizes and has real import in an age scarred by the desecration of iconic heritage.

Keywords Meaning · Value · Authenticity · Conservation · Restoration · Reconstruction · Digital · UNESCO · Outstanding Universal Value

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1 Introduction¹

Spectacularly situated in the Hindu Kush, way up in the mountain highlands in what is now Afghanistan, Bamiyan was a bustling religious and commercial center, and a mixing pot of a place where cosmopolitan influences and a confluence of ideas came to be modeled in two colossal sculptures of the Buddha. A blend of Indian, Hellenistic, Roman, and Sasanian art inspiring awe for 1500 years, the sculptures stood serenely in their niches and calmly oversaw the amazing history that transpired in the Bamiyan Valley. Once resplendent—at their unveiling they wore dazzling, brightly-colored outfits and were richly adorned in jewels—earthquakes, freeze-thaw cycles, and the simple, quiet ravages of time had taken a toll. Still, the Buddhas were for all that survivors—right up until their desecration by the Taliban in March 2001, when an intensive two week barrage, undertaken with artillery shells and dynamite, reduced tall and proud sculptures to rubble.

While the core of its physicality is gone, Bamiyan nonetheless remains part of the world's art historical heritage. Indeed, ironically, it seems more attention has been paid to the sculptures and the site post-desecration: The Buddhas' prominence and fame, arguably even their significance and import, has perhaps *increased* since the Taliban's deed. And thus the deliberate targeting—the immediate spark for which was the West's loud and public insistence on the sculptures' "world heritage" value at an unfortunate geo-political flash point—paved the way for a "reinvention" of Bamiyan.²

My aim is twofold. First, to understand the result of this reinvention—hollow niches and a staggering void. Using the Buddhas as my example, I seek to comprehend the being of massively desecrated artifacts; the status of iconic objects and sites that suffer wholesale destruction; and the nature of both despoliation and the emptiness it leaves behind. Second, I seek to make a case for what should happen at Bamiyan—and, in doing so, start to both clarify and refine central concepts in heritage conservation theory and begin to develop some thoughts (my focus is Bamiyan but my thinking generalizes) that pertain to what, sadly, seems increasingly frequent: The willful destruction of iconic material culture.

¹The first two parts of this essay are modified versions of the first two sections in Janowski 2020. While the essays have very different aims, these two sections are essential to both.

²In 1999, the Taliban said it regarded the statues with "serious respect." It went on: "The Taliban government states that Bamiyan shall not be destroyed but protected." (Falser 2011, p. 159) By February 2001, arguably in response to yet further deepened Western sanctions, they did an about-face. I discuss this in Janowski 2015.

2 Bamiyan *Then*, Bamiyan *Now*: Understanding Meaning and Value

I begin by exploring two terms we commonly use to talk about artworks and cultural heritage—‘*meaning*’ and ‘*value*’. These ideas seem innocuous and uncontroversial. We deploy them casually and unconsciously, much like we breathe clean and unfiltered air unwittingly, without taking notice of what is happening. In discussions about heritage ‘*meaning*’ and ‘*value*’ seem invariably to be conjoined and any possible distinction between them is unthinkingly elided. In fact we seem to *conflate* these ideas, simply assuming they do the same conceptual work. Thus we naturally say “X has meaning and value;” collapsing the concepts as if they were identical. In contrast, “X is meaningful but value-less” or “X has value but no meaning;” is *not* something we are disposed to say; both phrases ring decidedly odd. So it is as if ‘*meaning*’ and ‘*value*’ were one word—‘*meaningvalue*’—with no conceptual space between its blended conjuncts.³ My view is that this unreflective conflation, this running together and blurring of two into one, is a mistake, as careful thinking about Bamiyan will show.

While I cannot fully unpack this here, I believe that Bamiyan’s Buddhas—this is true of select, especially powerful and iconic artworks and pieces of cultural heritage (I intend these terms and ‘heritage objects’ interchangeably)—were an *achievement*. Think Michelangelo’s *Pietà*. Think Eifel Tower. Think Pyramids. Think Palmyra Arch or Aleppo’s Grand Mosque. Or consider the subject of this volume, Bamiyan’s Buddhas. These sculptures—the younger one, at 55 m, was taller than the Statue of Liberty and the largest standing Buddha in the world—were a remarkable feat. Estimates are that it took many decades to transform sheer cliff faces into towering icons. The sculptures testified to the wandering, peripatetic transmission of Buddhism from place to place along the Silk Roads. They were grand and they were awe-inspiring. Witness this observation from Yakut al Hamawi, author of a “geographical dictionary” based on ten years of travel, early in the thirteenth century, throughout the Middle East and Afghanistan: “...two huge idols cut into the rock and reaching from the bottom to the top of the mountain. One is called the red idol and the other one the white idol. You cannot find anything comparable to these two statues in the whole world.” (Petzet 2009a, pp. 237–38) Thus the Buddhas were physical exemplars of important ideas and historical-cultural movements as well as tangible markers of creativity, design, intentionality, purposefulness. They manifest ingenuity, craft, effort, will. Indeed, whatever else is true, the Buddhas plainly answered to all these criteria.⁴ Put simply, the Buddhas’ creators labored long and mightily—evidencing this, the innermost of three layers of clay covering the hand-hewn sculptures’ substrate has revealed 1500-year-old fingermarks—and brought something powerful and worthy into the world. The sculptures were *repositories of value* and *sources of meaning*, and thus were in my sense an *achievement*.⁵

³It gets worse. It’s really ‘*meaningvalue*’*significance*’*importance*’*merit*’*worth*’.

⁴Something like these criteria underlie UNESCO’s “Outstanding Universal Value” (OUV). See *OG* 2016, II.D. My analysis, as we’ll see, well captures the “universal” in OUV.

⁵As the italics suggest, I intend ‘achievement’ as a technical term. I believe that the terminological and theoretical innovations I advance in the essay are crucially important. In my view, this sort of

Enter March 2001. Caught up in ideological conflict, the Buddhas fell victim to political-cum-military struggle and competing worldviews. Two weeks of painstaking “effort” reduced them to rubble. That said, in desecrating the sculptures the Taliban did not obliterate meaning. In fact as I noted earlier and have argued elsewhere (Janowski 2015), Bamiyan might well garner more attention and, oddly, be more meaning-filled now than it was pre-desecration. Of course this is not the place to sift through the multiple meanings at play in the remains. Here it suffices to say that the site has both remnants of its “old” meanings—these are jumbled, obscure, “illegible”—and doubtless a host of new ones too. Indeed, surely there will be other—novel and perhaps distinctive—ways of interpreting the fragmentation and emptiness. But whatever these are they are swallowed up and overpowered by a colossal new meaning which—*KABOOM!*—strikes us *immediately*, and *loudly and clearly*. Apprised of what occurred in 2001, we are confused, shaken, knocked off-kilter. We try but fail to comprehend the desecration. Reason cannot get its arms around the result, and indeed Bamiyan now prompts—think Edmund Burke—the experience of the sublime.⁶ We are left dumbstruck and thunderstruck, astonished and numbed, groping for understanding that will not, because it cannot, be forthcoming.

And there is, I think, an explanation for this: In desecrating the Buddhas, the Taliban spoiled—*despoiled*—an achievement. *Despoliation*? Examine the word. *Deliberate* spoiling. Despoliation, I submit, is the deliberate targeting and spoiling of value; despoliation takes aim at “good” and, alas, vanquishes the same.⁷ Thus the Taliban did something seriously untoward, even horrific. The Taliban sundered the former coalescence of meaning and value, breaking the link and partnership between them. It deliberately spoiled Bamiyan, thereby *extinguishing* value. This is metaphysically misbegotten. It is metaphysically inverted. Indeed, the *willful erasure of value*—think “the sublime”—is incomprehensible, and existentially befuddling. The deliberate violation of value is weighty, making us languid, droopy, disconsolate.⁸ Despoliation is cognitively toxic and cannot be understood rationally.

Thus it turns out that in order to understand Bamiyan *now* we need also to understand Bamiyan *then*. Thinking about Bamiyan *then* shows that meaning and value are typically and rightly conjoined, and that all is well. Bamiyan *then* was an achievement, meaning-filled and value-laden. Thinking about Bamiyan *now* shows how meaning and value can atypically and wrongly come apart. Bamiyan *now* is meaning-filled and value-less. Indeed, March 2001 saw the deliberate scuttling of a “long and happy marriage.” It saw the despoliation of value and the generation of axiological emptiness.⁹

creative thinking and invention is essential if we are to make progress in heritage conservation theory and, indeed, heritage conservation practice.

⁶This idea stretches across the millennia from Longinus to Lyotard and includes thinkers as disparate as Burke, Kant, and Jameson. Burke’s classic discussion (1990) captures my intent.

⁷‘Despoliation’ too is a technical term.

⁸See Janowski 2015, where I discuss the “axiological gravity” that despoliation prompts.

⁹Of course value, in my sense, might obtain elsewhere in the Bamiyan Valley. I focus on the holowness in the niches.

My strategy in this essay—consciously decoupling and carefully parsing words that have merged—is, I believe, theoretically innovative and therefore doubtless theoretically controversial. Space is limited here, and I both discuss these ideas more fully (even discuss the idea that Bamiyan is characterized by what I call “anti-value”) and deepen the analysis in a related essay.¹⁰ For now, however, I take this—the idea that meaning and value can be separated and that in extreme circumstances value can be *obliterated*—as established and turn to discuss what ought to happen at Bamiyan and why.

3 Re-achieving Achievement at Bamiyan

A cluster of terms form the vocabulary through which we traditionally work to understand material culture. Heritage theorists share a common currency: They trade in the language of value, meaning, significance, authenticity, originality, integrity, etc. While I am convinced that the definitions of and linkage between these terms—and, indeed, the linkage between them and my *achievement* and *despoliation*—need careful study, it seems clear (common sense suggests this and I stipulate it here) that despoliation, destroying achievement and value, severely compromises, maybe destroys, authenticity. Bamiyan is now characterized by radical fragmentation, disorder, and emptiness. Bearing little relation to their former selves—mournful stumps and sheltered stones are far removed from once-towering icons—Bamiyan’s Buddhas have been rendered *inauthentic* and the site is not (another term requiring clarification!) “genuine.” By contrast, it seems undeniably true that all was well, more or less, in February 2001. Most would suggest that, pre-despoliation, value and authenticity were intact, or at least largely so, even though the sculptures were not “whole and entire,” and even though integrity, understood as a matter of matter, had been compromised. Indeed, some would affirm that the loss of physical substance had *contributed to* authenticity. (Authenticity—here in a nutshell, I believe, is the difference between it and originality—is an historically-informed property which accrues or accretes. And, depending on the artifact, this gradual gain can be a function of material displacement. Oddly, perhaps somewhat paradoxically, this gain is sometimes a function of loss. My thinking here is related to Alois Reigl’s “age value”—the dilapidation of a monument which, he urges, has deep affective resonance. By 2001, plainly, age value had mostly replaced Reigl’s “historical value”—captured, cognitively, in the pristine original—at Bamiyan).¹¹ The question, then, is whether, post-despoliation, value and authenticity

¹⁰ See Janowski 2020, where I say more about both the nature of value and its antonym, anti-value.

¹¹ See Reigl 1982. Reigl’s thinking is suggestive, but in my view he has the ontology wrongly flipped and he mistakenly bows to a certain kind of relativism or historicism. Reigl’s “value” is my “meaning,” and my account of the metaphysics and epistemology of heritage objects does much more than his to explain the import of conservation, restoration, and preservation. More about this momentarily.

can be recreated or reestablished.¹² Can the site once again harbor “real” value and, as it were, authentic authenticity?

Obviously this is a very difficult—why else has it gone unanswered for nearly 20 years?—but hugely important question. What happens at Bamiyan stands to affect many people, from many different groups and disparate constituencies, and indeed future generations of the same. If it occurs, reinvention needs to be carried out with the utmost care careful thought can muster. Any intervention must seek to balance a plethora of considerations and speak to the interests of stakeholders from the past, present, and future. This is a tall order. And the idea that I myself, here, can possibly address, much less sort through, all the relevant issues—in effect uttering the last word about value and authenticity at Bamiyan—is fanciful and quixotic. That said, I do aim to contribute to the discussion—having some influence, however small, on any decision regarding intervention at the site would be gratifying—and so now enter and try to make sense of the rubble pile.

I begin my case for Bamiyan’s future by amplifying my thoughts from Section 2. It is in the nature of things, happily, that human beings *strive*—this is what we *do* in creating artworks and cultural heritage—and that, in the product of their strivings, which I have dubbed *achievements*, value (which, once created, is constant, unchanging, and universal) and meaning (even if this is, as it will be over time, shifting, contested, and disputed) coalesce.¹³ Thus human behavior naturally catalyzes a sort of “magical” material harmonic convergence. Achievements—understood, again, as the product of creativity, intention, purpose, and determination, as well as

¹²For now, I use “recreate,” “reestablish,” “reclaim,” or “reconstitute” as placeholders that are agnostic as between restoration and reconstruction. The all-important difference between the latter two terms will be my concern later.

¹³Obviously I am using ‘value’ in an unconventional manner. In my view, the value in an achievement, once the latter is completed or realized, *obtains*. It *is*. The value is *there* and, barring cataclysm, it continues to exist—it *remains there*—irrespective of its appreciation or “attribution.” Rightly understood, value—its being—is not a function of perceivers’ awareness, perception, beliefs, or “value commitments.” It—the value per se—is ontologically prior to the meanings we assign it. In short, value is metaphysical; meaning is epistemological. This gestures toward my difference with Reigl—and near as I can tell all others who discuss these issues. Thus, e.g., UNESCO’s *OG* 2016, echoing Reigl, alludes to the “attribution” of value in I.I.E, 79, 81. My account, grounding value in the artifact rather than the historically-conditioned perception of the same, does more to illustrate the nature of heritage objects than does Reigl’s—and, seemingly, the *OG*.

While I discuss this in Janowski 2020 and aim to explain it yet more fully elsewhere, here I simply note that my account, in its unconventionality, fills a gap in our thinking and in the cultural heritage literature. In an interesting paper on the history of the concept of OUV, Christina Cameron suggests that “While the Committee seeks greater clarity and guidance—almost a set of rules—for determining which properties have OUV, such clarity will likely remain elusive. This discussion will probably continue for the foreseeable future because determination of OUV is not a robotic black-and-white exercise but is rather a judgment made at a specific time by individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds.” (Cameron 2009, p. 135) I submit that my thinking about value, capturing both its constancy and universality, might be a helpful step toward the clarity and guidance the WHC seeks. Indeed, in the best case my account and analysis, which invites us to think hard but not robotically, might be the beginning of a way out of the impasse.

both repositories of value and sources of meaning—are gifts, across time, from our forebearers, and through us, to future generations. They are symbols. They are material markers of ideas. They are tangible means of communicating history. Forging a connection to the past and those who made and protected it, achievements are rich sources of identity for human beings and their communities. Indeed, iconic pieces of material culture are integral to meaning in the lives of individuals and societies. They are things we find marvelous, things that have us in thrall, and things that inspire pride. Understood rightly—neutrally, and irrespective of our own particular commitments, ideals, self-understandings, and “values”—they facilitate our recognition of others, prompting respect for them and their efforts, whether as creators or stewards.¹⁴ Given their import, one might even urge human beings have a *right* to their iconic achievements.¹⁵ And thus the loss of such an artifact and its attendant value is a profound loss—metaphysically, epistemologically, and morally. It erases history, ravages the present, and compromises the future.

All this, then, is *prima facie* justification for recreating desecrated icons. Indeed, it seems the proper response to despoliation, where feasible, is the reconstitution of these achievements. We are strongly and natively inclined, even existentially compelled, to respond to a Taliban-esque violation by reintroducing the products of our strivings. Witness Warsaw’s historic center, Dresden’s Frauenkirche, or Mostar’s Old Bridge. There is plainly a human nature-based desire to stare down a willful violation with redoubled effort and focused commitment to reclaim value, meaning, and identity. And thus in general we honor our predecessors’ laboring and accomplishments (and fulfill a backward-, sideward-, and forward-looking fiduciary duty)

¹⁴This explains the value in, say, the Pyramids. They will mean different things across time, and just *what* they mean will depend on attitudes, tastes, and the sort of human understandings that are shifting and notoriously fickle. Whatever we think about the slavery involved in their creation—imagine there was world-wide unanimity, down to a person, about its moral horror—we ought to preserve the Pyramids because they house value, value which antedates our beliefs and meaning-imputation about (“the value of?”) the same. Again, the being of the value is prior to the being of the meaning. (Michael Petzet perhaps hints at my account in describing the interior of a famous French cathedral: “And to this day the *genius loci* of such a monument speaks to everyone, not only to the believer, but even to the tourist who, during his ‘pilgrimage’ as visitor, feels the breath of history and the spirit of craftsmen and artists who created this work.” Petzet 2009b, p. 67)

Thus, understanding achievements rightly has us *acknowledging* others even if we are unsympathetic with what motivated their striving and enabled the creation of their achievements. Understood as they should be, achievements impose a kind of (potentially begrudging) liberal cosmopolitan respect. Think Bamiyan itself. For 1500 years Muslims (mostly) honored the Buddhas. Presumably they did not “admire,” “fancy,” or “agree with” Buddhism (they were *Muslim* after all!); but they plainly respected the sculptures and, implicitly or by extension, those who built and protected them. (Admiration and respect are subtly different.) I suspect this explains the about-face described in Note 2. Both sides agreed there was *value* in the niches; what they contested was the *meaning(s)* (the “value”) of this value. Tragically, this contestation led to despoliation.

¹⁵ ‘Right’ is philosophically vexed. For now I simply note this: Some heritage theorists and charters have urged, plausibly, that violating an icon violates a right.

by seeking to undo damage, overcome loss, and promote healing and recovery by answering to this powerful need to reestablish lost achievements.¹⁶

And why should it be any different with the Buddhas? Assuming recreation is possible, why not pursue it vigorously?¹⁷ Indeed, the preconditions are in place. Significant original material remains. Innumerable people have displayed remarkable dedication, working incredibly hard at considerable risk, to ready the site for intervention. And doubtless because it recognizes the potential value in and possible meaning-making capacity of renewed niches, the Afghan government has formally requested a reclamation project. Further, and finally, many governments and international institutions are supportive. With all this in mind, I believe a strong case can be made for reconstituting the Buddhas. Such an undertaking would promote a multitude of worthy purposes, contributing to ends with both intrinsic and extrinsic merit.¹⁸ Moreover, reclaiming Bamiyan would replace a lugubrious presence with material evidence of our indomitability and resilience. Recreation serves our better angels and is testament to the human spirit. Should we be vanquished? Capitulate? Settle? *Or should we aspire?*

There are, of course, objections to consider. I will discuss two. First, one might argue that this herculean effort is unmotivated, even inappropriate, because the Taliban's "modification" of Bamiyan—recall Mikhail Bakunin's "the urge to destroy is a creative urge"—has generated a new iconic artifact. One could even urge that the empty niches constitute a new artwork-cum-heritage object and thus there would be loss in the loss of the loss if the sculptures are resurrected. (See Janowski 2015.) Perhaps a comment by Andrea Bruno can be so understood. Bruno says: "The void is the true sculpture. It stands disembodied witness to the will, thoughts and spiritual tensions of men long gone. The immanent presence of the niche, even without its sculpture, represents a victory for the monument and a defeat for those who tried to obliterate its memory with dynamite." (Cocks 2012)

Simply put, I disagree. I find this position glib and facile. It is misguided to think the Taliban's act creative (as Bakunin might) and call this a "victory for the monument" (as Bruno did). The act annihilated value; the remains, spread over two continents, are a material cacophony; the site is forlorn, hollowed-out. As is, Bamiyan is not an achievement in my sense; as is, the site (contra Bakunin) does not manifest the relevant creativity and purposefulness; as is, it prompts more melancholy than awe. Thus I believe Bruno's comment is wrongheaded and the idea that the niches

¹⁶There will be mitigating circumstances and no immediate link between "violation" and (rightful) "recreation." Argument is necessary to establish this link, and deciding whether this is possible and appropriate in any particular case will require nuanced judgment. We must always guard against Disneylandification, and do due diligence to facilitate "authentic experience." While John Ruskin might be scandalized, a "hands-off the heritage" policy is simplistic. Ruskin famously said: "Restoration is a lie." But if Ruskin had somehow envisioned—or, worse, witnessed—the recent resurgence of iconoclasm he would have seen that *despoliation* is the (real) lie, and far more tragic than restoration.

¹⁷Empirical issues—economic, political, technical, etc.—are not my expertise. I will suppose all these have been decided in the affirmative. Happily, the evidence seems positive.

¹⁸I discuss these in all my publications on Bamiyan. See especially Janowski 2011a, b.

somehow remain an artwork is altogether wanting. (Afghanistan's reclamation request suggests that it agrees. Currently, Bamiyan is an "anti-heritage" object.)¹⁹

A second objection goes in the other direction, urging that (implicitly acknowledging my point regarding the present absence of value?) Bamiyan is a lost cause. The objector says: Face facts. Recreation is unwarranted because the damage is done and recovery is impossible. One might even urge that attempting to reclaim the niches will do *additional* damage by compromising any residual authenticity or integrity at the site. (Like physicians, we are enjoined first and foremost to do no harm; thus we should refrain from heroic efforts that are empty, even deleterious.)

I begin my response by seconding the damage assessment. I agree that Bamiyan was colossally defiled and the result, as I have said, is incomprehensible. Thus one might indeed be tempted to conclude all is lost and, perhaps in keeping with the spirit of Buddhism, say "let the Buddhas go." But this would be hasty. Experience shows—again, think Warsaw, Dresden, Mostar—that value can be recharged and resolve can work miracles. And, at Bamiyan, the raw materials for a miracle are in place, waiting on a go-ahead. Stabilization efforts are halting further loss; puzzle pieces, partially analyzed and sorted, await re-integration. Moreover, crucially, the will to resurrect obtains—in spades. Many, from constituencies inside and outside Afghanistan, are intent on reclaiming the sculpture(s). And when we carefully consider the quasi-compulsion to respond affirmatively to the destruction of value, I think we should err on the side of those who actually suffered the existential violation. All of us have been harmed; the Buddhas, being an achievement, were indeed *the world's* heritage. But Afghans generally and Bamiyaners in particular warrant special consideration. These people—"locals"—seek fervently to recover from the loss that despoliation generated. Their needs deserve to be met. For them, for those who regularly confront the emptiness, recreation is a kind of reparation—and their interests should count more in the decision-making calculus than a purported loss of authenticity to future generations.²⁰ Indeed, in this case a "principled" (obdurate?)

¹⁹Exactly what Bruno intends is debatable. But truth and authenticity, as in "the void is the true sculpture," are sometimes treated as synonymous. Bruno evidently believes the monument is somehow still there—still authentic?—and he's plainly against intervention. I am not persuaded that the monument has emerged victorious. Nor am I persuaded that there is sufficient material left to manifest "the will, thoughts and spiritual tensions of men long gone." Contra Bruno, it seems to me that the Buddhas' *bodies* are necessary to manifest these things. As-is the niches evidence and forcefully portray *the Taliban's* will.

Cornelius Holtorf's work is relevant here. In a session of "The Future of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues: Technical Considerations & Potential Effects on Authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value," a three day meeting in Tokyo in late September 2017—and indeed in both one-on-one conversation and an email exchange (9/30/17) during that same time span—Holtorf suggested, provocatively, that it might be appropriate to think of the Taliban as stakeholders as Afghanistan struggles to make a decision about the emptied-out niches. While my own thinking is somewhat at odds with Holtorf's, and while we might come to different conclusions about the future of Bamiyan, his work in heritage theory is very interesting and deeply suggestive. See e.g. Holtorf 2015 and Holtorf 2006.

²⁰One could also ask: How much "say" should present-day Buddhists have regarding what happens at Bamiyan? This is a good question. But note that "locals"—Islamic people—had effectively

commitment to a Venice Charter-style understanding of authenticity—a singular focus on original material and correlative concern to forestall “historical deception”—is myopic. It misses (or underemphasizes) the fact that (currently-existing) people matter. It misses the fact that, since authenticity accretes, recreated sculptures, even if harboring non-original material, will eventually be understood as genuine. (Curiously, it *also* misses the fact that the sculptures standing in 2001 had been restored previously. Thus foot-dragging on “purist” grounds has been without rationale. The Buddhas had had non-original material for a time but were nonetheless not “inauthentic.” See, e.g., Margottini 2014, pp. 181–185.) In sum, then, recreation might violate a reading of authenticity focusing narrowly on material integrity; but in my view we should intervene on the basis of a reading which also recognizes the import of human rights, community-building, etc.²¹

These objections and responses only scratch the surface of an extremely challenging dilemma. Thinking about Bamiyan prompts hard questions and more objections could be raised. Space constraints, however, have me bracketing difficult issues and racing toward a baldly stated conclusion: Bamiyan should reclaim its niche(s).²² Value is, well, important; it *matters*; and remaking it does too. Indeed, making things whole—things that had harbored value in themselves and things that meant things to people—and thereby making people and their communities whole, is a natural, and metaphysically and morally worthy, response to unfathomable violation. The “making whole” in recreation honors the past, recharges the present, and inspires hope for the future. Thus I believe that we—where ‘we’ has a wide referent—should, the sooner the better, embrace a reclamation project at (and for) Bamiyan.

That said (here is a caveat), I also believe that the rightfulness of intervention trades on the *type* of reclamation project—reconstruction or restoration—undertaken.²³ Thus imagine “new Buddhas” are reconstructed using the most sophisticated digital technologies available. Imagine Buddhas finely designed and exactly implemented; picture them taken back to their condition at some (arbitrarily chosen?) previous Time-T1; picture them conjured up in a computer and then extruded from a printer. These artifacts surely would be a remarkable achievement. But just as surely they would not be the *sort of* achievement I have discussed. A pixel is not a trowel; digital cameras are not chisels; keyboards and software

“adopted” the sculptures. Muslims had been largely gracious caretakers of the Buddhas for a millennium. Thus I believe their interests should be weighted more heavily than the interests of those who, citing the tenets of their religion, say “let the Buddhas go.” (Adoptive, not biological, parents deserve the credit for stewardship. Birthing a child is different from caring for one.)

²¹ See Janowski 2011b for a discussion of the various goods promoted by the reintegration of Dresden’s Frauenkirche.

²² Here, for now, I am non-committal as between reclaiming one or two niches. But note that if the *aim* of conservation is “perpetuation of maximal meanings into the future,” (Janowski 2013, pp. 68–69) we should perhaps intervene in one niche and leave the other empty.

²³ I shift now to highlight the all-important (if also not hard-and-fast) distinction between these two terms.

applications are not scaffolding; and 3-D printers are not human hands. Digitally generated “sculptures” would lack the crucial material-historical link to their creators. Physical reconstruction based primarily on contemporary technologies will not reanimate what innumerable human beings labored for decades to accomplish. Buddhas birthed in a computer would not recreate a heritage object in my metaphysically and morally powerful sense. (Non-physical reconstruction—lasers? holograms?—also fails. Indeed, in ignoring the materiality [and related material processes] essential to authenticity, non-physical reconstruction *magnifies* the inauthenticity, highlighting the absence of value and attendant loss. Since original material is available it should be used.)²⁴

To bolster this point let’s return to those fingermarks in the clay. *Reflect. Think. Picture them.* (See photo on next page.) Fossilized fingermarks are tangible relics of human will; they are historical traces of purposeful effort; they materially represent the striving toward a bona fide achievement.²⁵ I do not see how physical reconstruction based fundamentally on pixels and DPI, even if the result perfectly mimics some prior state—imagine “Bamiyan Buddhas” rolling out of a printer; dial up any old (your favorite!) particular version, whether from 2001 or (why not?) out-of-the-box new; make (why not?) multiple copies (maybe at 100-year time-slices?) and put them in museums the world over²⁶—would capture the fingermarks’ significance and result in an achievement in my sense. (3-D printed “sculptures” are in principle *ahistorical*; they neither involve nor honor *toil*; and the *process* whereby something comes to be matters. All the worse, again, for non-physical reconstruction.)²⁷ By

²⁴Perhaps I am either hopelessly unimaginative or historically blinkered. Perhaps one day we will no longer (be able to?) distinguish between physical and non-physical. Perhaps these worlds will merge (as perhaps they are doing, incrementally and imperceptibly, now). But unless and until this reconceived ontology becomes deep second nature and a concern for “the physical” becomes merely quaint, I feel compelled to defend an “old-fashioned” view.

See Zalewski 2016 for a sense of some of the issues. The article depicts Adam Lowe’s digital fabrication work. Although Lowe asks the right questions, I am not convinced he gives the right answers. (I am similarly dubious about Michael Wreen’s conclusions in a more purely philosophical treatment of these issues. See Wreen 1985.) While I certainly have not thought these thoughts all the way through—I fully acknowledge that I am not an expert on these burgeoning technologies—recalcitrant intuitions mean something, and they should be heeded.

²⁵Ironically, on-site post-desecration reclamation work uncovered these fingermarks. See Petzet 2009a, p. 139.

²⁶This scrambles the ontology of the Bamiyan Buddhas in a way that “simple restoration” does not.

²⁷Both strategies, I believe, issue in “imposters” and employing either would be worse than leaving the niches empty. And my point applies generally—not just to Bamiyan, but to *any* desecrated site so reconstructed. Indeed, even if digital modelling satisfies, even marvelously satisfies, the “no conjecture” stricture in *OG* II.E, 86—does it?—the *means by which* an icon is reclaimed is crucial. Sagoff 1978 and Wreen 1985 raise these issues. So also does Zalewski 2016.

One might urge that digitally reconstructed (or even non-physical) “sculptures” would serve purposes *other than* authenticity. While we might imagine circumstances and considerations that could perhaps *override* considerations of authenticity—I take it that this, or something like it, is Erich Matthes’s position; see, e.g., Matthes 2017—in my view these would have to be hugely and powerfully compelling in order to justify this overriding and the complete reimagining and wholesale reinvention of Bamiyan that would result.

contrast, integral restoration or anastylosis—which in this case has human beings adding freshly-made *fingerprints* to their 1500-year-old counterpart *fingermarks*—*does* stand to reconstitute an achievement.²⁸ (Dresden’s Frauenkirche and Mostar’s Old Bridge are models—hand-produced *physical* models—of largely successful restoration projects.) Anastylosis won’t be problem-free (using solely original material would be preferable) but in my view it (and only it) promises to rightfully recreate Bamiyan’s Buddhas. Restored sculptures will differ from those standing tall and proud in 2001, but they are the most appropriate response under the circumstances. And so if and when conservators do re-integrate the Buddhas—something that will require creativity, ingenuity, exertion, drive, grit and indeed all the other laudable mental states and character traits that issued in the sculptures originally—they will be shaking hands and merging wills across the millennia with their long gone but worthy and esteemed predecessors. Restored Buddhas will be a powerful achievement—maybe the *re-achievement* of a formerly powerful achievement?—and achieving them will be a powerfully fitting response, metaphysically and morally, to the horror in despoliation.



Close-up of Fingermarks, Original Clay Body, Eastern Buddha.
(© Bert Praxenthaler, 2008)

²⁸Carolyn Korsmeyer’s work smartly foregrounds the import and significance of touch. See, e.g., Korsmeyer 2019. (See also a number of essays that led up to this book.) I am altogether sympathetic to Korsmeyer’s suggestive thinking. I believe, as I think Korsmeyer does too, that fingers leave a special signature that is absent, necessarily, in the products of digital fabrication.

4 Postscript

I noted earlier that the meaning of and links between heritage conservation theory's traditional terms—and between them and my *achievement* and *despoliation*—need exacting analysis.²⁹ This careful conceptual work is crucial—both to foster understanding of Bamiyan's present and future, as I have tried to do here, and because, lamentably, it turns out that the March 2001 event was “the first large scale live-act of performative iconoclasm ... in the age of the internet.” (Falser 2011, p. 157) Sadly, increasingly, iconic heritage, caught in the cross-fire, is deliberately and publically targeted. Sadly, increasingly, Bamiyan-style emptiness reverberates—and echoes. Sadly, increasingly, lessons learned in thinking carefully about the Buddhas have place in other places.

Iconoclasm despoils. Despoliation extinguishes value, leaving a void and inauthenticity in its wake. We can, I believe, be certain that Bamiyan now is *inauthentic* without knowing exactly how, over time, we would come to receive and understand a re-achieved Bamiyan. And while the link between *re-achieved achievements* and authenticity too requires more investigation, an idea—even I daresay a “truth”?—implicit in much recent heritage conservation theory might usefully be made explicit here: Authenticity, being “poly-aspectival” and multi-perspectival, is not all-or-nothing; authenticity is not a toggle switch concept and hence not “on-off” like a light bulb. Instead, authenticity—like, say, “bald” or “warm”—is inherently vague and ineliminably a matter of degree. And consistent with the (fuzzy) logic of the concept, the world heritage community has rightly converged on the position—think Nara Document and many recent Charters—that authenticity is about much more than an artifact's material being (even if, as I have argued, it is also partly about that). Thus where authenticity is understood expansively, as it should be, restoration work, if thoughtfully pursued, will issue in results that are authentic, or certainly incomparably more authentic, than the inauthentic emptiness presently afflicting the despoiled site. A reclaimed Bamiyan will be well understood as a *re-achieved achievement*, and re-achieved achievements, rightly and proudly exemplifying reclaimed and resurgent value, are authentic achievements.

In 2002 Peter Levi, reflecting on his travels through Afghanistan and indeed to the Hindu Kush and the village of Bamiyan 33 years earlier, asked a suggestive question: “The Buddha was here to contemplate or to be contemplated?” (Margottini 2014, p. 41) Neither can happen now; both could happen again. May it be so.

²⁹The issues and questions in this essay run deep and I have not exhausted them. I intend to make further progress in this arena and I welcome thoughtful interlocutors.

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Part VI
Technical Intervention Proposals for the
Reconstruction of Bamiyan Buddha Statue

The Renaissance of Bamiyan (Afghanistan) and Some Proposals for the Revitalisation of the Bamiyan Valley



Claudio Margottini, Andrea Bruno, Nicola Casagli, Giacomo Massari, Heinz Rüther, Filippo Tincolini, and Veronica Tofani

Abstract The present proposal have been developed by taking into consideration the need of an integrated and sustainable development of the whole Country as well as of the local Bamiyan community. In this view, the revitalization of Bamiyan valley must be integrated in a wider perspective, defined “downstream approach”, that has been starting from the southern branch of the Silk Road, including Jam, Band-i-Amir, Bamiyan and Shar-i-Zohak. The present proposal(s) are then a first step in cultural development of the country, where the Silk Road is the ideal and physical backbone of such model. The proposal is composed by an overall/modular approach with fixed elements (mitigation of soil erosion in Shahr-e-Zohak, rehabilitation of the many minor sites in Kakrak, reconstruction of the bazaar in front of the Great Western Buddha, revitalization of Shahr-e Gholghola, removal of fragments of the Statues still in front to the niche, little museums in front to each niche) and four alternative solutions for the valorization of niches. The latter varying from empty niches to temporary reconstruction with local marble/stone realized with anthropomorphic robots.

Keywords Bamiyan · Iconoclasm · Buddha statues · Valley and niches · Modular approach · Valorization

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1 An Overall Approach to Conservation and Presentation of the Property

1.1 Foreword: Cutting the Root of Culture

The iconoclasm (literally icon-breaking), widely practiced in all the countries of the world during its history, had already been hardly suffered by the Buddhas of Bamiyan, who at the end of the nineteenth century had been damaged by the artillery of the Afghan army with the use of the guns of the time, which, though not much powerful, they succeeded in harming the legs of the Great Buddha.

Unlike the first destruction of 1920 that had not caused any emotion, not being highlighted by the press of the time, the second terminal devastation, which occurred in 2000, has been widely exalted and politically exploited by mass media throughout the world.

The Taliban were not the first Muslims to destroy monuments of the Buddhist religion that have disappeared under the impulse of Islam. Islam forbids any form of idolatry. For this reason, the generals of the Afghan army felt authorised to launch the artillery on the niches dug in the cliff, containing the idols to be demolished.

At the end of the year 2000, a dramatic anticipation of the future iconoclastic destruction (which will be repeated outside of Afghanistan with the destruction of the Twin Towers of New York) has completed the final and total cancellation of the deprecated Buddhist idol placed inside the niches that had been dug in the mountain to protect them.

Terrorism has lashed out not only against monuments but also against individuals. Commander Massoud, absolute symbol of Afghanistan's freedom from Soviet occupation, was vilely killed at the hands of a suicide bomber who blew himself up with him in the same mountains of his Afghanistan.

Several hypotheses of intervention were described in detail in the recent International Symposium on the Future of the Buddha statues held in Tokyo and earlier during the 2013 Orvieto (Italy) Workshop.

Many hypotheses of reconstruction, revitalisation of the site, virtual reconstruction and high-resolution projection were developed since 2001 and even implemented in the case of a projection in 2015. The reason for such projects was mainly laying in the idea to give back an identity to a population that had been deprived of his historical and cultural identity. Some of these projects are reported in Fig. 1.

In recent years, iconoclasm has been deliberately designed to make the expanding of these terrorist armies spectacular, due to the global audience, but also to annihilate the local populations. In fact, devastations tend to cut the roots of peoples with their history and their traditions, making them orphans of their culture and, therefore, easy prey of fundamentalism.

It is undoubted that the cancellation of a common history weakens the sense of belonging of a people to its territory. That's exactly what happened in Afghanistan where, for over 1500 years, about 800 of which after the presence of Islam in the country, the Hazara jealously guarded the Buddhas of Bamiyan, considering them a



Fig. 1 Proposals on the web for virtual reconstruction and high-resolution projection. (© Claudio Margottini)

common heritage of their history. In fact, they refused to destroy the statues in 2001, and external people had to intervene, blasting the heritage.

One of Andrea Bruno's proposals, immediately following the destruction by the Taliban, was the creation of a large two-dimensional fibreglass panel, size 1 to 1, placed in the niche of the missing Buddha, to reproduce photographically its image in real size. This project aimed to cancel as soon as possible the shocking emotion that the destruction had produced throughout the world and especially among the Bamiyan population, who considered those Buddhas an essential part of the natural landscape of the Valley. This was a temporary solution but nevertheless a sort of revenge on the Taliban fury and a chance for the Bamiyan population to see the effigies of the two Buddha statues again at their usual place in the panorama of the cliff. These statues suddenly disappeared within the niches that today are dominated by their absence. This solution, therefore, according to Andrea Bruno, was the only short-term possibility of "recreating" the missing heritage.

After the destruction of giant Buddha statues, the scientific community started to investigate how to give back, to Afghanistan and to the Azar local community, a masterpiece of their history and tradition, clearly being aware that only 12% of original surface can be recovered and only 11% of original volume was not decomposed into debris and dust (Toubekis et al. 2017).

The exceptional beauty of the Buddhas obtained by carving an entire rocky wall of a mountain and, later on, literally reduced to dust due to the precise order of Mullah Omar can hardly be recreated. Nowadays, any possibility of reassembling the original pieces (anastylosis) is excluded, showing how irreversible this iconoclastic work has been.

Since then, no clear ideas on how to revitalise the entire area and cliff have been proposed in a convincing manner. The delay in making the decision to restore the area at the foot of the Western Buddha, and the lack of a proper management on the remaining fragments, has also provoked highly undesirable effects due to the negative image that these debris give to the cultural landscapes. All this served only to magnify the impact of destruction since 2001.

After the destruction (Margottini 2004), the restoration must inevitably represent the continuation of life (Margottini 2014). There are today many approaches, and the huge technological progress made it possible to reconstruct every work of art created by the human hand, making it absolutely indistinguishable from the original. The recent reproduction of Michelangelo's Pietà with robotic instruments is particularly significant (www.torart.com).

However, in Afghanistan, today, there are certainly more urgent priorities and some interventions to be done on the territory and other monuments of the Valley. One of the interventions accomplished by Japan in the area, for example, has been the restoration of all the wall paintings that have been definitively “musealised” and are available today for tourists. The intervention has been significant from a scientific, historical and artistic point of view.

The Valley of Bamiyan and its inhabitants are and will remain a primary goal of the cultural policy of UNESCO and of those working in the cultural field. For this reason, what has been said in this article has to be considered as just the beginning of a long series of considerations which started long time ago, which is never interrupted and which will continue indefinitely through history.

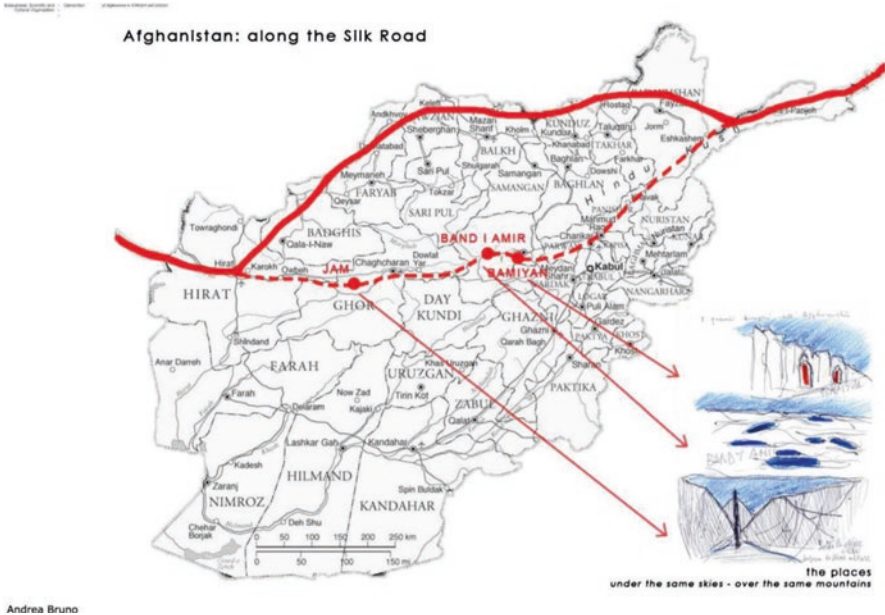
1.2 An Overall Approach to the Valley and Niches

The present proposal has been developed taking into consideration the need of an integrated and sustainable development of the whole country as well as of the local Bamiyan community. In this view, the revitalisation of Bamiyan Valley must be integrated in a wider perspective, later on defined “downstream approach”, that has been starting from the southern branch of the Silk Road, including Jam, Band-e-Amir, Bamiyan and Shahr-e-Zohak. The present proposal(s) is then a first step of a country cultural development, where the Silk Road is the ideal and physical backbone of such model (Fig. 2).

The same holistic approach has been used for the Bamiyan Valley. In fact, the present concept-project defines a series of subprojects, in the Valley, that are common to the various proposals for the physical revitalisation of the niches. Such subprojects have been reorganised starting from the experience of Andrea Bruno in the last 55 years and more recently of Claudio Margottini (Fig. 3) (Margottini 2007, 2009a, b, 2014, 2015a, b; Crippa et al. 2013).

They include:

1. Reconstruction of the bazaar that, before the war, was standing in front of the Great Western Buddha (Fig. 4). The major difficulty in this subproject regards the management of land properties.
2. Realisation of a museum in front of both niches (Fig. 5).
3. Revitalisation of Shahr-e Gholghola (Fig. 6). Three of the existing caves can become a point of social aggregation.
4. The realisation of an underground museum in front of the Western Great Buddha (Fig. 7). This museum can be realised by simply covering part of the existing excavation. An open hole in the roof will allow the view of the niche. Inside the museum, a reconstruction of the Buddha statue will allow visitors to understand the magnificence of the lost heritage.



Andrea Bruno

Fig. 2 A “downstream approach” for the revitalisation of Bamiyan Valley starting from the redevelopment of Silk Road. (© Andrea Bruno)



Fig. 3 Geographical distribution of the subprojects that are ancillary to the revitalisation of Eastern Buddha niche. (© Claudio Margottini)

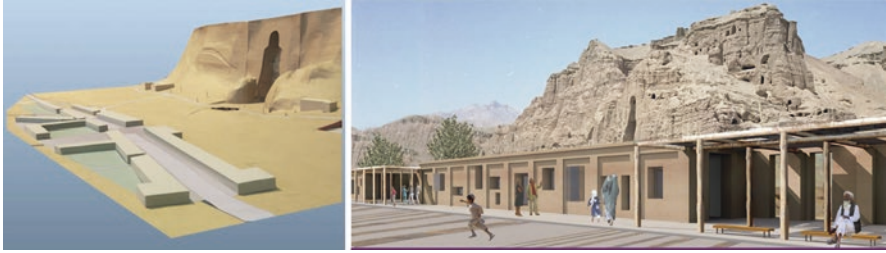


Fig. 4 Reconstruction of the bazaar in front to the Great Western Buddha. (Project Andrea Bruno) (© Andrea Bruno)

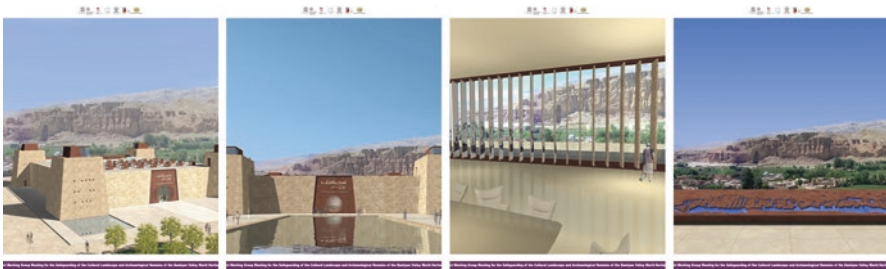


Fig. 5 The large museum in front of both niches, on the other side of the valley. (Project Andrea Bruno) (© Andrea Bruno)



Fig. 6 Revitalisation of Shahr-e Gholghola. (Project Andrea Bruno) (© Andrea Bruno)

5. Mitigation of soil erosion in Shahr-e-Zohak and recovering of existing “red fortress” (Fig. 8). The remains of the Shahr-e Zohak fortress are located on a steep hill at the confluence of Kalu and Bamiyan rivers, about 15 km east of the city of Bamiyan (Central Afghanistan). The site is thought to have been built during the Buddhist period (sixth–seventh century A.D.), even if the fortification is dated to the Islamic period. Its position provided both excellent natural defences and control over the valleys as important communication routes. The site is affected by heavy soil erosion that has been damaging also the structures. A conservation project was presented in 2013 (Margottini et al. 2015).

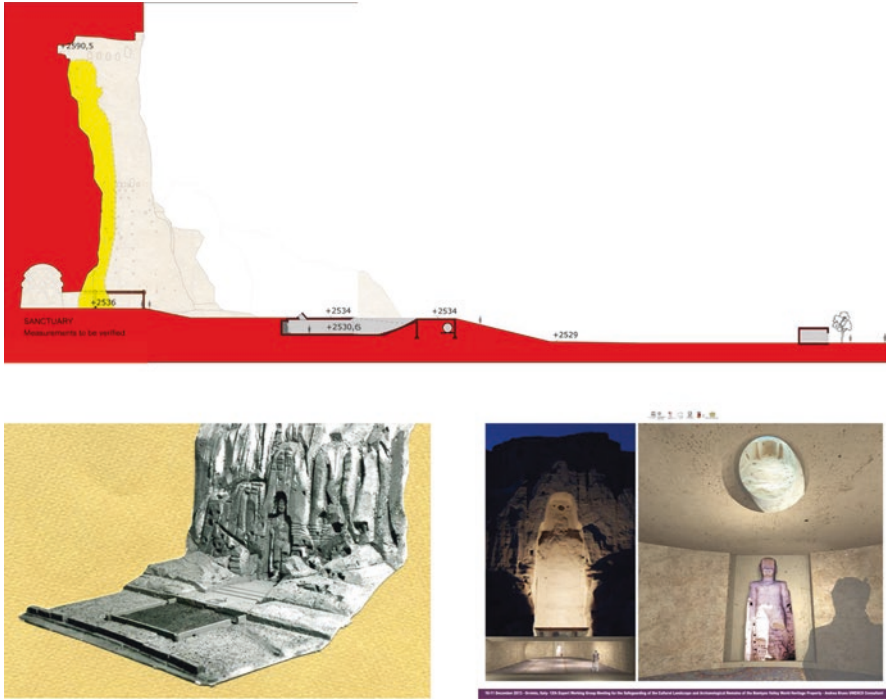


Fig. 7 The realisation of an underground museum in front to the Western Great Buddha. (Project Andrea Bruno) (© Andrea Bruno)

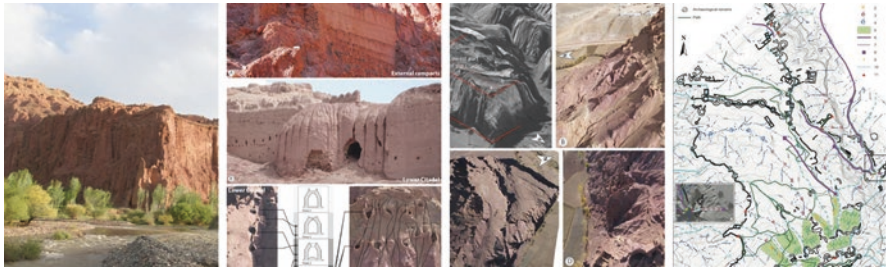


Fig. 8 Mitigation of soil erosion in Shahr-e-Zohak and recovering of existing “red fortress”. (Project Claudio Margottini) (Margottini et al. 2015) (© Claudio Margottini)

6. A rehabilitation proposal of the many minor sites, such as in Kakrak, can be considered (Fig. 9). In this site, it might be possible to realise a copy of existing statue, using the same technology presented in the following proposal nos. 3 and 4.



Fig. 9 Rehabilitation of the many minor sites, such as in Kakrak, with a 3D reconstruction of the statue and a possible rock reconstruction. (© Claudio Margottini)

The final step of our proposal will be the revitalisation of the Buddha niches, in this case the Eastern Buddha niche as requested by UNESCO. The revitalisation should consider either physical revitalisation or non-physical revitalisation inside the niche, in order to provide the Government of Afghanistan with a balanced range of options, reflecting the diverse spectrum of opinions about revitalisation. Physical revitalisation implies rebuilding the Eastern Buddha statue. Non-physical revitalisation implies, instead, taking measures to interpret the Eastern Buddha statue without any physical form during statue reconstruction.

The inspiring principle is that the heritage in Bamiyan should highly contribute to (local) sustainable development, in a “downstream” perspective, from national (the Silk Road) to local level (Bamiyan Valley), as it has been described before. In this view, any solution we might propose for the revitalisation of the Bamiyan Cultural Landscape has to impact on the economic, social, cultural and environmental domains.

The general approach to the cliff is reported in the Fig. 10. Each niche has its own underground museum, focusing on the specific target, while a comprehensive view of the cliff, including a laser scanning and drone survey, will be displayed in the general museum, in front of both niches.

In more detail, the following action must be implemented before any intervention on the niche, according to the authors.

1. Removal of fragments. After 15 years from the blasting, fragments are still on the ground, and, along with some stores, they are currently degrading the overall landscape. The fragments should be collected and stored in a proper space, accessible for scientists, archaeologists and, hopefully, future restorers.
2. Surveying through laser scanning and drone. To be used for 3D augmented reality, in the Bamiyan museums and elsewhere.
3. Realisation of an underground museum in front of the Western Buddha niche.

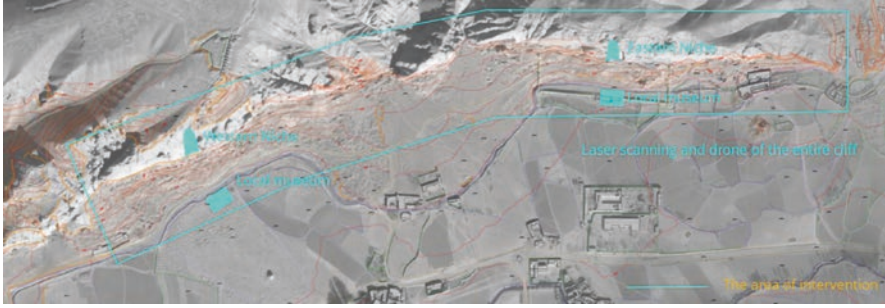


Fig. 10 The general approach to the cliff considering the clear-out of the fragments and delocalisation of the store, the geomatic survey of the cliff and the local underground museum in front to each niche. (© Claudio Margottini)

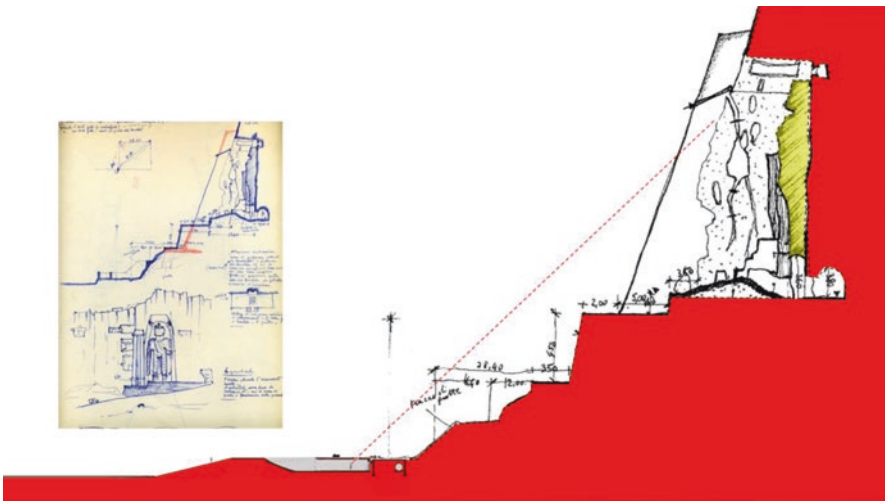


Fig. 11 The proposal for the underground museum in front of the Eastern Buddha niche. A preliminary hypothesis from Andrea Bruno in 1962 is also reported. (© Andrea Bruno)

4. Realisation of an underground museum in front of the East Buddha niche (Figs. 11 and 12). Such structure will be similar to the one of the Western niche. As for the Western niche, an open hole in the roof will allow the view of the niche. Inside the museum, a reconstruction of the Buddha statue will allow visitors to understand the magnificence of the lost heritage.



Fig. 12 The underground museum in front of the Eastern Buddha niche. (© Andrea Bruno)

2 Into the Eastern Buddha Niche

2.1 *An Appropriate Conservation Philosophy Based on the Outstanding Universal Value of the Property*

The Eastern Buddha niche is part of the “Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley” which was included in the World Heritage List in 2003. Many criteria were used (i, ii, iii, iv and vi), describing the relevance of Gandaharan art in this region, the interchange of diverse religious and cultural traditions, the cultural tradition, the cultural landscape but also the direct and tangible association with a tragic, violent and deliberate destruction of irreplaceable cultural heritage in the twenty-first century A.D. As a consequence, the destruction is part of the OUV, and any physical revitalisation has to bear this in mind. This point was well established since 2003, during the nomination process, since it was very clear that most of original rock was pulverised (89% according to Toubekis et al. 2017), due to its low consistency, the vertical variability of rock mechanical parameters and the energy of blasting in a close environment that the niche is. Visibly, a large percentage of such remaining fragments comes from the interior of the statue, and, unfortunately, there is no record of the exterior surface of the statue. It must be also noticed that the remaining fragments, especially in the Eastern Buddha niche, were further weakened by the explosion, and it is not clear how they can be managed or utilised. As a conclusion no use of existing fragments is possible from a technical point of view but also in respect to the OUV represented by criterion (vi). A similar concept can be supported by the Charter of Venice and the possibility to have an

anastylosis only when the original blocks are still in site and the regrouping is feasible.

Having the above physical constraints in mind, according to our view, any possible approach to the rehabilitation of the site has also to consider the following aspects:

- (1) The chosen proposal does not have to place Bamiyan as a new target for terrorist attacks; to achieve this result, any solution has to be easily replicable, at low cost, thus discouraging the idea of an irreplaceable impact of terrorism action.
- (2) The new parts should be easily distinguishable from the original cultural landscape.
- (3) The landscape should not be altered.
- (4) The proposed design should enhance the site at worldwide level, demonstrating the capacity of human beings to transform a tragedy into a jewel of art.
- (5) The proposal must be fully reversible and not modify permanently the site; in this condition, no modification of integrity and authenticity is obtained and then maintaining the OUV of the original criterions. A question is still under discussion: What is the reference integrity and authenticity in Bamiyan? The present situation after the explosion or the original?
- (6) The proposal must be temporary, giving the chance and the time to study, in the future, possible alternative solution in the revitalisation of the entire site.
- (7) The proposal should not diminish the relevance OUV represented by criterion (vi) approved in the World Heritage Committee on 5 July 2003.
- (8) Any physical intervention should be identifiable with respect to original archaeological surfaces.
- (9) The adopted solution should promote the sustainable development of the Valley.
- (10) The proposed intervention should not be out-of-date in short time, with respect to adopted technologies.

But also, the Charter of Venice should not be disregarded. Main relevant articles in conservation and restoration mention the following: making use of them for some socially useful purpose; preserving a setting which is not out of scale; where traditional techniques prove inadequate, the consolidation of a monument can be achieved by the use of any modern technique for conservation and construction, the efficacy of which has been shown by scientific data and proved by experience; the valid contributions of all periods to the building of a monument must be respected; and replacements of missing parts must integrate harmoniously with the whole, but at the same time must be distinguishable from the original.

Finally, another important element is the wish of local community, the real owners and defenders of the Bamiyan Heritages in the last 1,500 years. The many discussions held on site since 2002 clearly stated the importance of the statues on the history and tradition of local population. The idea to give them the statue back is surely a relevant point, also for the national government. Undoubtedly, the

revitalisation of the site will represent an effective action against worldwide terrorism, whose interest is to cut the root of local populations from their culture and history.

As a matter of fact, considering the request of UNESCO to develop either a physical or non-physical revitalisation of the Eastern niche, working on the proposal, we came to the conclusion that more than one solution can be proposed, all of them satisfying most of the above constraints. It is opinion of the authors that there is also a third approach, which is the realisation of a temporary and removable structure, based on 3D augmented reality, which is in between the physical and non-physical. Some ideas were then developed, starting from the most radical one till some proposals that are mediating between the need of not disregarding the real history of the site and also giving back the memory of the magnificence of the statues and cultural landscape.

The following are the conclusion of our work that can be identified in four different proposals.

2.2 Proposal no. 1

A school of thought is clearly related to the idea that any destroyed heritage, if it is not possible to reassemble the original pieces, e.g. anastylosis, cannot be avoided. This is clearly stated in Art. 15 of the Venice Convention that states: "... All reconstruction work should however be ruled out "a priori". Only anastylosis, that is to say, the reassembling of existing but dismembered parts can be permitted. The material used for integration should always be recognizable and its use should be the least that will ensure the conservation of a monument and the reinstatement of its form...".

As a consequence, after having cleared out the bottom from debris and constructed the proposed underground museum, no other action should be implemented in the niche. They should be left as they are, as an emblem of human irrationality, to future memory (Fig. 13).

Clearly the back wall must be completely restored, to avoid the fall down of any single piece of stone. Unfortunately, this is not completely possible, and a protective net is surely required.

2.3 Proposal no. 2

A simple and removable panel, with the image of Buddha statues before the destruction, was already proposed by Andrea Bruno after the destruction, a 2D fibreglass panel, covering the back wall but giving the impression of previous situation, and



Fig. 13 Proposal no. 1: empty niches. (© Claudio Margottini)

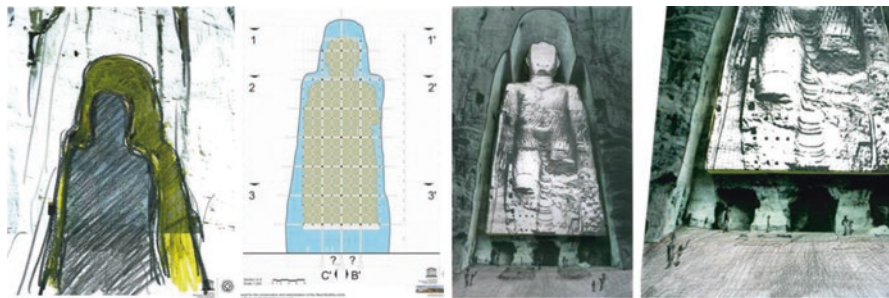


Fig. 14 Proposal no. 2: a 2D fibreglass panel on a supporting scaffolding. (© Andrea Bruno)

very light and cheap, just requiring a scaffolding to build up. The panel is likely covered by sand, possibly the same Bamiyan sand. The design can be obtained from the many photos from Andrea Bruno's archive, and a low impact of the installation is easily achieved.

Figure 14 is reporting the idea, the supporting scaffolding, the design of the panel and a detail of it.

2.4 *Proposal no. 3*

Our project intends to be a tribute to the Buddhist builders of the sanctuaries of the Bamiyan Valley, builders who were able to carve a very poor rock creating gigantic niches and images of a dimension which would guarantee the eternity of the work even if made from fragile stone.

While it was decided not to reconstruct the Great Buddha niche to maintain a lasting memory of the tragic event, it is proposed to partially reconstruct the small Buddha.

But the revitalisation/reconstruction has to be realised in a way which protects Bamiyan against the threat of future terrorist attack, and it must be easily distinguishable from the original cultural landscape. Finally, the reconstruction has to be fully reversible, and it may not modify the site permanently, thus emphasising the relevance of the OUV while adhering to criterion (vi), an approach, in any case, in line with the authenticity and integrity of the Bamiyan Cultural Landscape, as stated from the World Heritage Committee on 5 July 2003, which is also considering the war damage in Bamiyan's OUV.

In view of the above, it was decided that the Carrara white marble, which allowed Michelangelo's genius to create works which have become part of the world's human heritage, would convey to Afghanistan transferring a message of optimism, in the spirit of peace through the realisation of a new art creations of high spiritual and artistic value.

The identity of the project will be a very light marble shell, with a thickness of about 10–15 cm, reproducing the original statue, giving the appearance of massive rock.

It will of course not be Michelangelo's hand to shape Carrara marble. This task will be entrusted by the last generation of robots, guided by expert hands of "craftsmen" who have already proven their outstanding craftsmanship on prototype elements, such as the Palmyra's Arch, symbol of "G7 of Culture in Florence, 2017." The marble shell will be created with state-of-the-art computer controlled machines and the world's largest anthropomorphic robotic arms that remove or carve material in our quarry marble in Carrara, properly modelled according to the most advanced geomatic 3D modelling methods, based on hundreds of historical photos and modern laser scanning.

The Buddha's expressive eyes will find, in this noble material, a new light that will again dominate the axis of the world that crosses the Bamiyan Valley as a symbol of a cultural continuity that has come to our day through the millennia.

This revival look will be a red line, linking the valley of Buddhas in Afghanistan with Carrara marble quarries in Italy.

The different steps of the project can be defined as follows:

- (1) A 3D digital model of the Eastern Buddha statue has never been produced. Only Gruen and Hanush (2008) were able to partially reconstruct the Eastern Buddha surface by means of two old amateur images, taken before the destruction, newly made images of the now empty niche (acquired for the 3D modelling of

the niche) and a given contour map, produced from the metric images of a past photogrammetric campaign of the University of Kyoto. Gruen et al. (2002) and (2004) applied, for the Western Buddha statue, a methodology similar to the one proposed in this project. In the present project, based mainly on new photogrammetric techniques, the use of historical photos coming from Andrea Bruno's archive, also integrated with other information to be collected worldwide (e.g. Switzerland, India, Japan), may offer a reliable background of information. Such data must be compared with a high-quality laser scanning survey, to be implemented on site, necessary to calibrate the old images. The selected images to be used for the 3D computer model are those taken from late 1960 until the destruction. The accuracy of a photogrammetric reconstruction of the statue depends to a large extent on the quality of the sourced images. In principle, photogrammetry can provide surface accuracies in the order of centimetres. If good-quality images, as stipulated in Chapter "[Safeguarding and Preservation Activities at the Giant Buddhas and Other Monuments in the Bamiyan Valley 2004–2017](#)", can be found, then the accuracy of the final model can be expected to be of this magnitude. However, accuracy will decrease with decreasing quality of the photography found and used.

- (2) The 3D computer model will be used as input for giant CNC machines, already employed to reproduce the Palmyra's Arch in Syria when TORART presented a reproduction of a 1:3 scale of the triumphal arch, a symbol of the destruction carried out by ISIS, as part of the the Million Image Database project sponsored by the Institute for Digital Archaeology (IDA) in collaboration with UNESCO, the University of Oxford, the Museum of the Future in Dubai and the Government of the United Arab Emirates. The arch, displayed in significant spaces all over the world, is the "ambassador" of a new approach to archaeology, in which digital technologies used to carve marble and applied on an architectural scale reveal themselves to be an indispensable aid for restoring and integrating damaged and lost monuments. The sculpture of the new small Buddha will be very light; having a thickness of only 10 cm will totally weigh around 200 tons split in 120 pieces of approximately 1.600 kg each; for making it there will be a double curved carving that will allow to remove most of the material and keeping the necessary strength that is needed for stability criteria; all the parts will be easy to mount, remove and replace. TORART, through the most cutting-edge technologies, is able to translate any image into its three-dimensional shape with no limits for what concerns material or dimension and can be reshaped to make it completely customised, and it will be used to build, through machines, a true and authentic clone. Digitalisation of an element is essential to classify, restore or reproduce an artwork, by creating digital replicas of original pieces through a non-invasive way. The maximum precision and accuracy in respect of the real or virtual model, together with the ease to replicate an object, is obtained by using anthropomorphic robots that allow us, in different steps, to create also large works saving time compared to traditional techniques.
- (3) Why marble? There are many reasons behind this choice: the need to fill a missing part of the landscape with an impressive "presence" and the precious marble,

not any more sculptured by the hands of Michelangelo but from a high-tech robot, managed by Carrara artisans and artists who will excavate the rock from the same quarry as Michelangelo. This is representing the highest level of perfectionism that present technology may reach. There are also other elements which support the choice of marble. They include the need of differentiating original rock from modern replacement; the wish to insert the most precious in the most precious site of Afghanistan; and the importance of remembering the tradition of ancient Afghans (Fig. 15), very often wearing white coat to protect from them winter and then being similar to the white Buddha (see Photo).

In conclusion, with this proposal we put the most precious stone in the world, the Carrara marble, where once the most precious statue of Afghanistan was standing. The result will be an artwork of exceptional beauty, not altering the integrity and authenticity of the site, due to its reversibility, but creating a unique worldwide jewel, from Pietà by Michelangelo to Bamiyan Cultural Landscape, the same material symbolising the immortality of art, against any terrorism or destruction.

It is our opinion that, with this artwork, Bamiyan will become one of the largest attractions in the world, contributing to the security of the country and to an enduring peace.



Fig. 15 Ancient Afghan dressing a white coat. (© Andrea Bruno)

2.4.1 A 3D Visualisation of the Revitalised Buddha Statue (Figs. 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20)



Fig. 16 The reconstructed 3D surface of Eastern Giant Buddha and the hypothesis of a shell in Carrara marble. (© Filippo Tincolini)



Fig. 17 The reconstructed 3D surface of Eastern Giant Buddha in the Bamiyan landscape. (© Claudio Margottini)

Fig. 18 Detail of the 3D proposed reconstruction and cliff; frontal view.
(© Filippo Ticolini)



Fig. 19 Detail of the 3D proposed reconstruction and cliff; lateral view.
(© Filippo Ticolini)



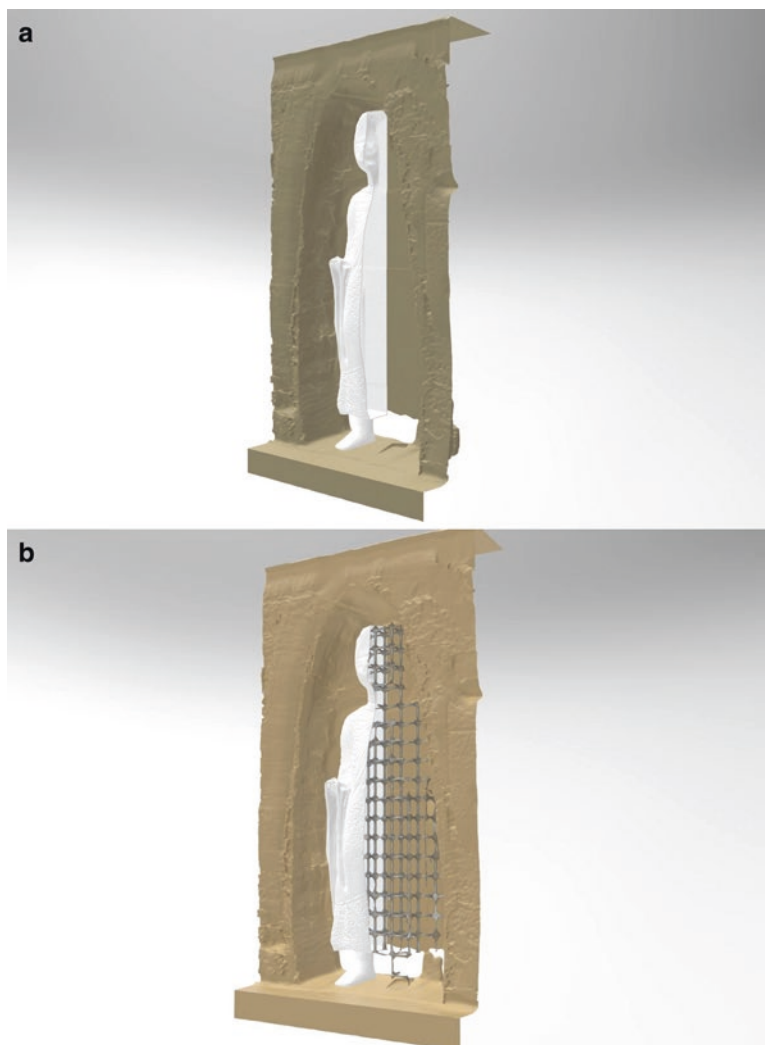


Fig. 20 Details of the 3D proposed reconstruction. (© Filippo Tincolini)

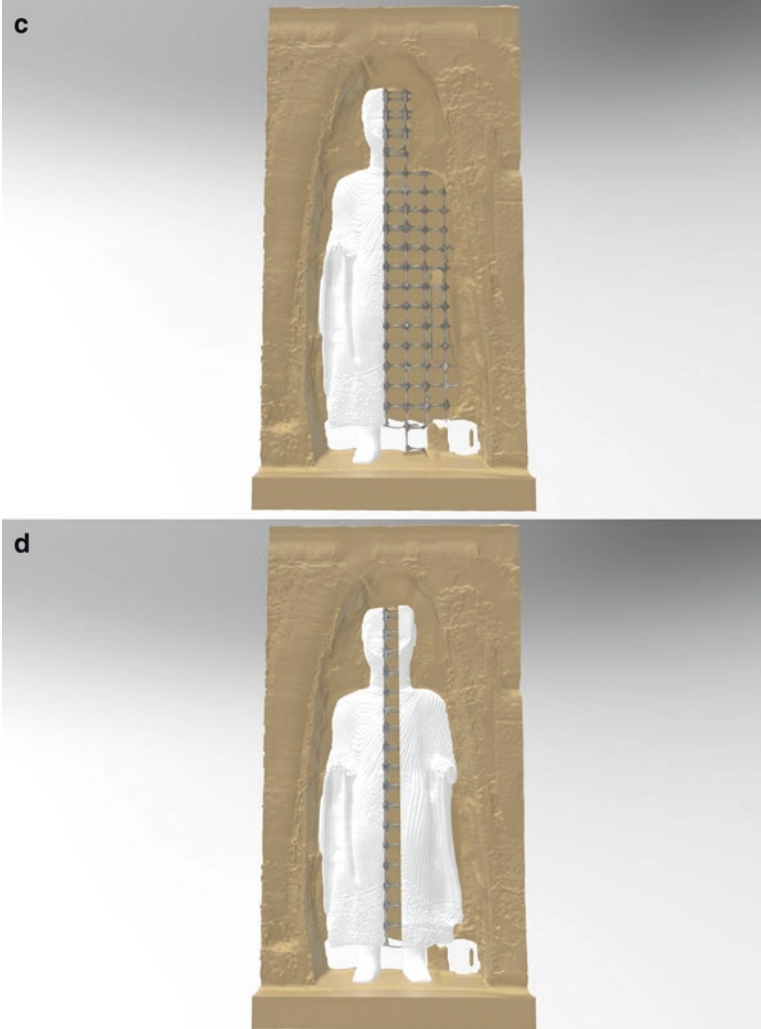


Fig. 20 (continued)

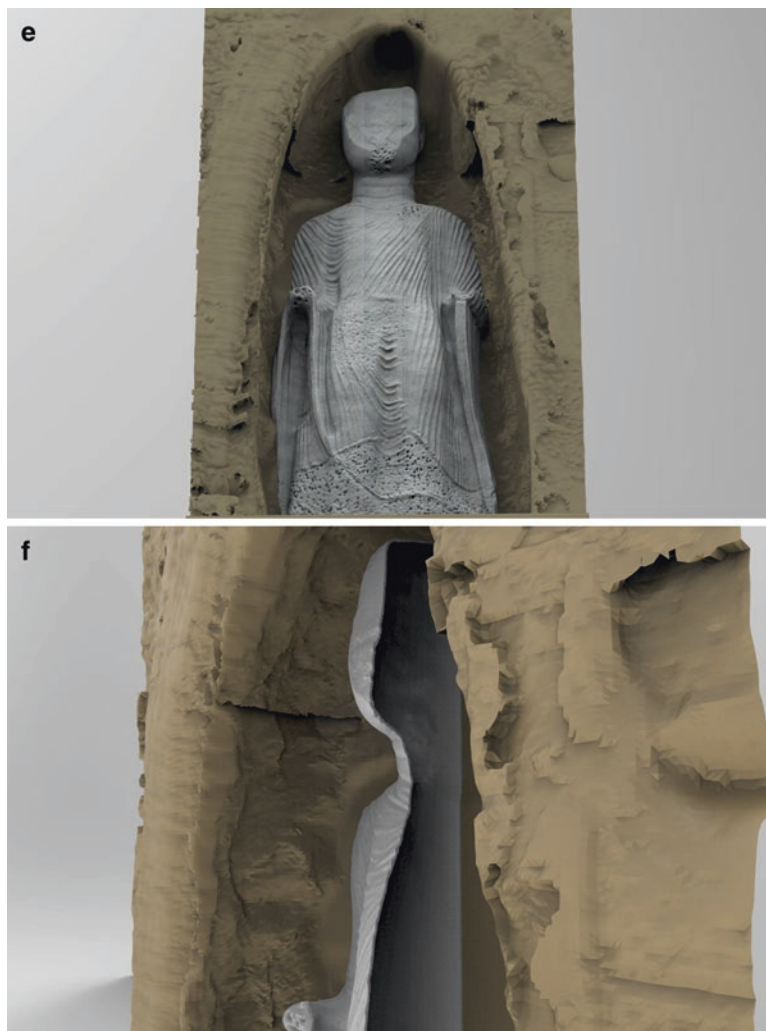


Fig. 20 (continued)

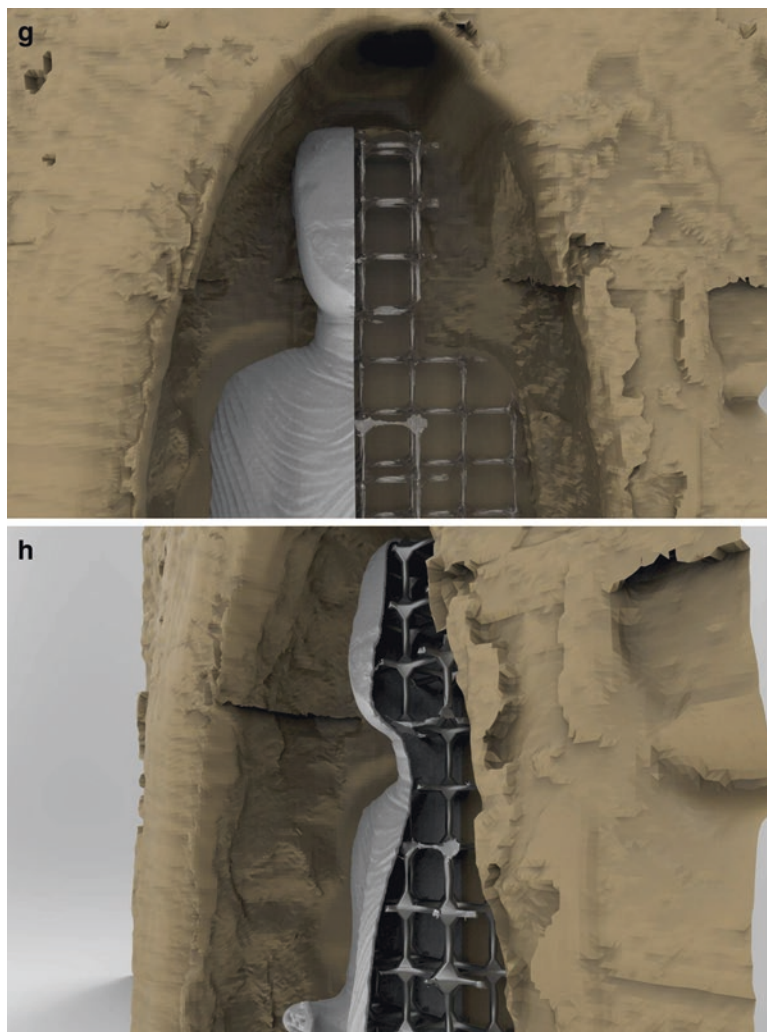


Fig. 20 (continued)



Fig. 21 Flow chart of proposal no. 3. (© Claudio Margottini)

2.4.2 Technical Details Regarding Material, Construction, Statics, Stability Against Earthquake and Other Environmental Constraints

The present proposal is composed by five main tasks:

1. State-of-the-art and underground characterisation
2. The collection of historical photos (mostly coming from Andrea Bruno’s archive)
3. Creation of a 3D computer model
4. Reconstruction of surface shell by sculpturing the famous Carrara marble with anthropomorphic robotic arms
5. Placing on site of the sculptured marble surface, supported by a proper metal structure (Fig. 21)

Following is a description of the different task/phases.

2.4.2.1 State-of-the-Art, Underground Characterisation, Bearing Capacity and Seismic Input

A project like the revitalisation of Eastern Buddha is requiring a detailed reconstruction of the underground conditions. In the past (Margottini C. 2014) major attention was posed to rock cliff properties. In this case it is necessary to investigate the underground rock mechanic properties as well as the possible presence of surrounding cavities.

Geophysical prospections will be conducted by means of georadar with different frequency antennas, and electric and seismic tomography. According to the above

values results, a proper geognostic survey will be conducted with two boreholes. A number of boreholes will be as limited as possible, according to the information coming from geophysical prospections. Collected material will be analysed in geomechanical laboratory to identify the relevant geotechnical properties necessary for the correct choice and dimensioning of the foundation.

The reconstructed statue is apparently a massive block of marble but, due to the modern techniques of computer numerical control, is possible to obtain a surface shell with only a 10 cm thickness. This is making the final results extremely light, with respect to a full-size block of any kind of material.

In any case, considering 10 cm uniform thickness for the surface shell and over material for the anchoring points, according to the already realised 3d model, the preliminary estimation is bringing to an estimated value of about 100 m³, from which a total weight of 280 tons.

In these conditions the footing of the statue will be an important issue.

According to the above values and considering the uniaxial compressive strength of rock that is, without considering the inner differentiation, siltstone and conglomerate, at lower about 6 MPa, with friction angle ranging between 28 and 42° and density around 2,2 tonne/m³, we can obtain, for soft rock, a bearing capacity of about 1,2 MPa, with Bowles (1977). According to this, the total weight of 280 tons can be supported by few m². Being conservative it is possible to say that the bearing capacity can be assumed as 0,2–0,3 MPa (about 20–25% of nominal calculation) and then requiring about 9,5–14 m² of contact between the structure and the surface.

This is just a preliminary estimation to be confirmed with geophysical prospecting for the integrity of rock and laboratory test for rigorous shear strength parameters.

In any case, according to this value, it is possible to say that 9,5–14 m² would be enough to sustain all the load of the proposed structure. Such contact surface between the statue and the soil can be obtained by removing the new feet constructed on 2013 and using the area external to the feet, to realise a concrete strip transferring the load of the new statue to the underground. According to the laboratory data, all solution will be investigated, also including the possible underpinning.

With this solution, the required bearing capacity is obtained and the inner part of the feet is preserved, in terms of integrity, since it is still part of the original archaeological remains.

In order to have a structure satisfying the safety conditions under seismic load, an earthquake risk analysis will be conducted. This will be developed with two different approaches: probabilistic and deterministic.

Probabilistic approach is based on the identification of surrounding seismic sources, attenuation path to the site, local ground response and, finally, the expected response spectra and/or peak ground acceleration for different return periods. In this case, the limit value of maximum credible earthquake will be considered (500 years return period).

The deterministic approach is based on the reconstruction of the possible waveforms (ground motion), generated at the site, by the maximum expected earthquake. After having defined the maximum expected earthquake, for instance, the earthquake of 9 June 1956, M 7.4 (Margottini C. 2014), the seismogenetic conditions of

the source will be characterised (e.g. normal fault, hypocentral depth, etc.) and then the distance from the site and materials and finally the site conditions. The latter will be characterised in terms of shear velocity and geotechnical condition. Some of these information are already available from previous petro-geophysical investigations but the homogeneity of the depth must be further investigated (see. Margottini 2014).

From a seismological point of view, the ancient city of Bamiyan is located on the Herat fault, a 1200-km-long, east-west suture through Central Afghanistan that trends northward into the Hindu Kush mountains north of Kabul at its eastern end. The Bamiyan region is located in the transition zone between the intense seismic activity that characterises the Indo-Asian plate boundary in eastern Afghanistan and the largely inactive central part of Afghanistan. Ambraseys and Bilham (2014) describe 52 earthquakes that occurred in the period A.D. 734–2002; data for some centuries are unavailable, and only after the mid-nineteenth century does the earthquake record become more complete. Historically, the western Herat fault has remained largely inactive; however, a significant earthquake occurred near Bamiyan in 1956. The causal fault that slipped in this $M = 7.4$ earthquake is not known although it appears to have occurred in the region bounded by the Herat fault and the Andarabad fault, 80 km to the north of Bamiyan.

Vibratory ground motion can be estimated by Iwasaki (2004) where the peak acceleration of the maximum historical earthquake of 1956 is considered about 0,1 g. Comparison was made also with potential damage (Margottini et al. 1992) and other hazards (Berardi et al. 1991) (Fig. 22).

2.4.2.2 Collection of Historical Photos

The ideal photography for photogrammetric applications should ideally have the following properties:

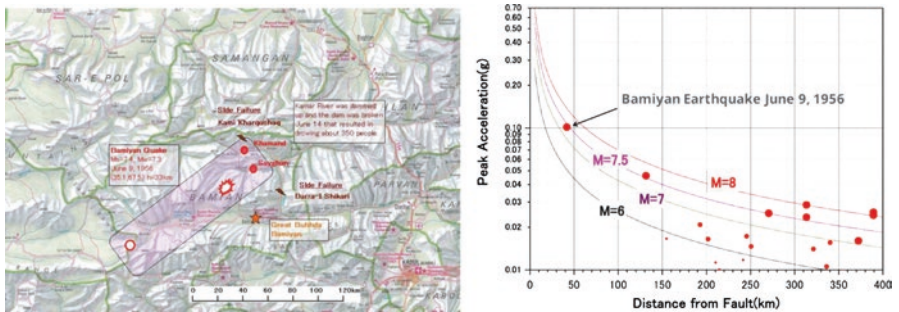


Fig. 22 Seismic zone in the Bamiyan region and a model of attenuation law. (Iwasaki 2004)

1. The photography should have been acquired with a metric, i.e. a mechanically stable and calibrated, camera designed for photogrammetric processing.
2. All photos should be taken with the same camera, set to the same focal length.
3. The images taken should be the original digital or analogue images; they should not be modified digitally.
4. Analogue images should be scanned at a high resolution with a pixel size of better than 15 micron using a scanner with minimal distortion.
5. The images should be complete, i.e. the format should not have been changed reduced or modified in any way. This condition is the most crucial one, and any change to the original image format will render the photography unusable for photogrammetric processing, unless the largely forgotten mathematical model of DLT (direct linear transformation) is applied. However, the application of DLT does not guarantee a solution if the available photography differs too much from the ideal requirements listed here.
6. Photos fulfilling the requirement of an unchanged format can only be used reliably if the original format/border of the image is visible on the photo or if there is some other guarantee that the border of the photo does indeed represent the original full format.
7. Multiple photos covering all parts of the statue taken from different, geometrically well-distributed positions and angles must be available. The more images that can be found, the higher to chance of success.

	Criteria for the photography	Relevance for the creation of the 3D model	Likely availability of photography which satisfies this criterion
i	Metric camera	Ideal but not necessary	Highly unlikely
ii	Same camera and focal setting for all photos	Ideal but not necessary	Highly unlikely
iii	Unmodified image	Highly desirable	Possible
iv	Images scanned at high resolution	Desirable	Unlikely
v	Complete format	Highly desirable	Possible
vi	Visibility of the image frame/border on the image	Highly desirable	Possible

The probability to find images which satisfy the above requirements is considerably higher for images sourced from museums, libraries and universities than for those collected from individuals via the Internet.

It is proposed that a number of leading libraries and universities in the USA and Europe are visited to search for appropriate images. Provisionally proposed are Harvard, the New York Public Library, the Smithsonian Libraries and possibly one of the libraries of San Francisco. In Europe, the libraries of the British Museum as well as libraries in Frankfurt, Berlin, London, Paris and Rome should be considered.

In the present project, existing photography can be sourced from:



Fig. 23 Available historical photos. (© Andrea Bruno)

- i. Scientific collections in private archives (e.g. Andrea Bruno), libraries, universities and museums
- ii. Internet search
- iii. Invitations, through social media and/or other avenues, to travellers to submit photos taken of the Bamiyan Buddha statues prior to their destruction in 2001 (Fig. 23)

2.4.2.3 Proposal of Method for the Creation of a 3D Computer Model of the Smaller of the Two Giant Buddha Statues

The following proposal assumes that the most desirable, and possibly the only acceptable, physical reconstruction of the smaller of the two giant Buddha statues will have to be based on an accurate and authentic virtual reconstruction of the original statue. The approach to the creation of a 3D model of the Buddha by a combination of a photogrammetric analysis of historical images combined with laser scanning of the empty niche is proposed by the Principal Investigator of the Zamani research group at the University of Cape Town (www.zamaniproject.org).

The Zamani group considers itself qualified to carry out such a virtual reconstruction based on experience gained in the documentation of over 200 monuments and rock shelters in more than 60 sites in Africa and the Middle East. The



Fig. 24 Details of the reconstructed 3D model, obtained with few images and without making recourse to the large amount of available photos. (© Claudio Margottini)

documentation work was carried out with or for institutions such as UNESCO, the WMF, the Getty Conservation Institute, the German Archaeological Institute as well as numerous international heritage experts and academics. Among the more important heritage sites documented by the group were Lalibela, Petra, Kilwa/Songo Mnara, the Castles of Ghana and the Meroe Pyramids.

Detail on the use of historical photos has been given in the previous paragraph. Nevertheless, a preliminary model has been already reconstructed, obtaining the 3D computer model used in this preliminary proposal. Final work will allow the realisation of a more accurate 3D model (Fig. 24).

Figure digital model of Eastern Buddha statue and niche from available historical photos.

As the monument does no longer exist, laser scanning is obviously not an option, and one has to revert to photogrammetry instead, where laser scanning can be employed to provide auxiliary data.

Structure from Motion (SfM) would appear to be the most suitable photogrammetric method for a situation where little or no information is available about the nature of the photography.

First attempts by the Zamani group to employ SfM with a set of old photographs of the statue proved unsuccessful. However, the photos were probably modified and no longer had their original format (incorrect principal point) which makes them unsuitable for SfM processing. It is hoped that the search for “historical” images will result in a set of photos more suitable for the application of SfM.

It is also proposed that a brief field camping be carried out by two members of the Zamani team to acquire images of the rock face immediately adjacent to and inside the now empty niche. These new photos can then be combined with “historical” ones to support the SfM process.

The second objective of the field campaign would be the provision of control points next to the empty niche by laser scanning and total station surveying.

The laser scan model of the empty niche would also create a virtual reality environment combining the present niche with the replica of the statue.

While SfM, if successful, would be the preferred method because of its ease of data processing, it is advisable to allow for a second method to be employed if SfM

fails or in combination with SfM. Direct linear transformation (DLT) comes to mind here as it is a method which does not require estimates for the orientation parameters of the cameras used nor does it require knowledge of the camera's principal point or fiducial marks. This would overcome the problems associated with the uncertainties regarding the properties of the available "historical" images. The shortcoming of the DLT method is that it does not result in point cloud data and only individual point positions can be determined by this method. The results of a DLT solution are typically very accurate and could be used in support of SfM or as a basis for a manual design.

It should be noted that none of the proposed methods will provide information on the shape of the back of the statue. This is because the space behind the statue appears too narrow to allow acquisition of photos suitable for SfM processing.

There can be no doubt that the proposed creation of an accurate virtual 3D model from "historical" photography is complex and beyond the normal application of photogrammetry. The quality of the results can therefore not be predicted, and success can subsequently not be guaranteed. The substantial experience of the Zamani team in the application of state-of-the-art technology to the documentation of heritage monuments should, while not guaranteeing good-quality results, have a good chance of producing an acceptable outcome.

2.4.2.4 Reconstruction of Surface Shell by Sculpturing the Famous Carrara Marble with Anthropomorphic Robotic Arms

TORART, a partner of this project, through the most cutting-edge technologies, is able to translate any image into its three-dimensional shape with no limits for what concerns material or dimension. The phase during which the shape is measured permits to keep the proportion of the object in a scientific way; once it is digital, it can be reshaped to make it completely customised, and it will be used to build, through machines, a true and authentic clone. Digitalisation of an element is essential to classify, restore or reproduce an artwork, by creating digital replicas of original pieces through a non-invasive way.

The adopted technology is not a 3D printer but a series of anthropomorphic robotic arms that are computer numerical controlled machines that removes or carves material arms. This equipment is likely the largest in the world and then the only one suitable to produce a sculpture with the dimension and the quality necessary to revitalise the Bamiyan site.

The robots used by the company originate from the very same experience of *TORART* and they are developed by *ROBOTMILL*, another companies of the same group, which takes care of designing, in addition to research and development.

This approach, after the reconstruction of Palmyra's Arch, will be applied to the Bamiyan Buddha, by using a novel material, the Carrara marble, suitable to enrich the site but also presenting a new approach to the site, avoiding the result of a fake archaeological place.

2.5 Placing on Site of the Sculptured Marble Surface, Supported by a Proper Metal Structure

The external shell of the statue will be realised in Carrara and transferred by ship to the nearest port.

The inner part is composed by a special frame of stainless steel arms designed and constructed to support the special marble shell. The structure will be fixed to the rock by anchoring the frame, also contributing to the overall seismic stability.

Foundations will be designed after the geophysical and geological investigation. Thus, it is possible to say that the entire load of the structure will be transferred through the feet, which support a slab that is sustaining the entire structure. The bearing capacity, according to preliminary estimation, is ensured by 14 m² of concrete foundation around the original feet, after having removed the construction of 2013.

Finally, the metal structure will be fixed to the back wall, to be more resistant to horizontal seismic action, by means of passive anchors. This is the same technique used to stabilise the niche in 2003–2007.

2.6 Proposal no. 4

The previous proposal no. 3 is revolutionary for the concept, even if completely removable, but also for the materials such as the Carrara marble. This solution could generate some criticism since the Carrara marble is not a local stone and the shining colour could be too decontextualised. To solve the above-described criticisms, an alternate solution has been considered, focusing on the selection of a different material. This could be local stone, a local marble, having the same colours of the Bamiyan cliff.

In this proposal the statue will be sculptured in Afghanistan, with anthropomorphic robots exported from Italy. At the end of the work, such robots could be donated to the local Afghan community, to maintain an ideal link between two quarry communities in Italy and Afghanistan (Fig. 25).

3 Conclusion

The present proposal is composed by an overall/modular approach with fixed elements (removal of fragments, little museums in front to each niche, geomatic survey of all cliffs) and four alternative solutions for the valorisation of niches.

The main proposals (Alternatives 3 and 4) are based on new advancement of science and technology applied to mining industries.



Fig. 25 Proposal no. 4: reconstruction of the shell of Eastern Buddha statue, by using a local Afghan marble. (© Claudio Margottini)

The present proposal is generated from a high-resolution digital model obtained by recovering, scanning and elaborating of pictures of the statue taken in the same period and with the same camera. This is a new achievement of geomatic science, already demonstrated with the Palmyra's Arch, symbol of G7 for Culture of Florence (Italy) in 2017.

The proposal will also support the marble industry in Afghanistan.

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Physical Revitalization of the Eastern Buddha Statue in Bamiyan Using Reinforced Adobe Material



Georgios Toubekis, Michael Jansen, and Matthias Jarke

Abstract The magnitude of destruction on cultural heritage worldwide creates unprecedented challenges for its rehabilitation since conservation activities must be integrated into the context of larger rehabilitation efforts. It is argued that an authentic remodelling of the Eastern 38 m Buddha establishing the previous spatial configuration of the figure has to integrate the original fragments, combining scientific analysis of the figure's original physical remains with the careful interpretation of the existing documented sources. The authors propose a phased approach using a composite material matrix based on silt-clay close to the original cliff conglomerate embedding also the original fragments. The presented community-based rebuilding intervention executed by local artisans and artists conceptualizes on the evolution of the figurative meaning of the monument over time with the overall objective to use traditional building techniques to retain tangible and intangible values that maintain

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the authenticity and the specific significance and spirit of this place. The result has the potential to contribute to a necessary reconciliation process. It may serve as an exemplary case in World Heritage context able to bridge different cultural approaches to heritage among regional, national, and international bodies and stakeholders while respecting diverse values, meanings and the Buddha figure's original physical remains alike.

Keywords Word heritage · Authenticity · Reconstruction · Genius loci · Community · Values · Cultural heritage

1 Overall Approach to Conservation and Presentation of the Property

The magnitude of disasters and destruction, whether intentional or not, caused by natural disaster or armed conflicts on heritage sites all over the world creates unprecedented challenges for recovery and possible restoration measures. Conservation of cultural heritage in these circumstances must be seen in the context of larger rehabilitation efforts and thus has effects that reach beyond the heritage property itself, especially where communities are directly affected. Recovery from destruction involves here processes and long-term commitments on behalf of responsible authorities, and it is important to engage very early a dialogue process among the involved stakeholders. In landscape contexts, as is the case in Bamiyan, a fundamental requirement is the necessity to reach agreements with local communities and others, which by their decision and activities may have an impact on heritage, and to define a shared vision of the future and identify the means to achieve the envisaged goals (Mitchell et al. 2009). The World Heritage property in Bamiyan comprises eight different heritage areas, all of them with specific characteristics. Besides the main cliff with the empty niches, there are the vast archaeological remains of historic cities and fortresses and other historical cave settlements in the adjunct valleys of Kakrak and Foladi. In order to make the multidimensional values (archaeological, historical, cultural, aesthetic, and economic) better understandable, it is important to develop a communication and mediation strategy, that is able to bring different aspects together into a coherent narrative – also to find ways to bridge different cultural and language approaches to heritage among regional, national, and international bodies and stakeholders involved. Moreover, historic sites are invaluable sources for historical research, as authentic and tangible witnesses of the past that has survived through history. Any conservation strategy, therefore, has to ensure that original materials are well preserved in the long term – if possible in situ or close to their place from where they originate (Schmidt 1997). For Bamiyan, this includes the site of the empty niches, the rock fragments stored in provisional shelters, the original plaster fragments stored in locked storage rooms at the Cultural Hill, and the plaster and sculptured rock surface still in situ.

1.1 Options for the Presentation of the Niches of the Bamiyan Buddhas in the Future

A crucial controversy about the future presentation of the main Buddha cliff turned out to be the key debate, unsolved to date. The arguments are bouncing between two poles: either leaving the site as is, empty niches as a kind of memorial to the destruction, or attempting to rebuild part or all of a figure, a standpoint taken by the Afghan government and backed intensely by the local population – to have at least one figure revived from the ruins as an act of symbolic resurrection. Due to the still required intensive consolidation of the niche rear wall, this cannot be pursued for the Western Buddha for the foreseeable future. The situation at the Eastern Buddha niche is considered more promising by the promoters of the second line of thought.

During workshops in Bamiyan in October 2016 and last in April 2017, it was revealed from participating local villagers to the authors – that there exists a desire of getting re-enchanted with the area – which was once “guarded” by the Bamiyan Buddha figures as the local population sees it. In order to recover the distinctive and unique aspects of the site, we argue with the *Spirit of the Place (Genius Loci)* that a physical intervention is justified and covered by the International Principles of Conservation. We argue further that it is the appreciation of its own heritage and the strong ties between the local population with its heritage that is to be re-established by giving the population actively the possibility to contribute to construction activities. It is understood and taken note that such an intervention consequently adds a new attraction to Bamiyan that might be exploited by the tourism industry. It is important for the authors to stress here, Diversity of Cultures, understood as the richness of forms of expressions, are not mere commodities or consumer goods that can only be regarded as objects of commercialization. It is the distinctive nature of cultural goods and activities as vehicles of identity, values, and meaning – laying the foundation for a modern inclusive society. The overall challenge for Bamiyan is to embed all this into the current socioeconomic and general political context which is unfortunately in a very fragile situation. The fact that Bamiyan to date is one of the most stable and secure provinces in the country raises enormous challenges such as repatriation of internal and external refugees, allocation of appropriate land resources for development purposes, and provision of livelihood opportunities for a fast-growing population. Moreover in a country which in large parts is confronted with ongoing violence against civilians and military conflict, such reflections on conservation and presentation of a World Heritage property might appear inappropriate not to say unrealistic. Over the entrance to the Kabul museum, an inscription reads “A nation stays alive when its culture survives” to memorize the efforts over the long period of military conflict that the museum as institution managed to overcome. Acknowledging this, the authors of this study are convinced that efforts in the cultural resources of a nation contribute effectively to peacebuilding and achieving long-term development goals.

We, therefore, propose a conservation and presentation strategy based on the following three principal pillars:

- Preservation of original material with minimal alterations to substance to maintain original source character (Conservation)
- Embedding the presentation of the site into a narrative that presents the richness and significance of its values over time and the contemporary (Mediation)
- Include the presentation to the public of the area Buddha niches into the broader landscape protection framework of a future Archaeological Park Bamiyan (Management)

The ability to understand the value attributed to the heritage artifact depends on the degree to which information sources about this value may be understood as credible or truthful.¹ The case of Bamiyan Buddhas reveals once again the importance detailed documentation has in heritage conservation and management. Any future presentation strategy of the site where once the Giant Buddha figures stood has to respect the still existing physical remains as the empty niches of today. Since to the present day we know very little with certainty about the ancient history of the site, this accounts also for the visual appearance of the destroyed Buddha figures which are still a matter of scientific investigation.

1.2 Making Use of Contemporary AR and VR Technologies

Since Bamiyan will have the opportunity to house a large Cultural Center with museum facilities located on top of Culture Hill in the near future, the authors propose to install an interpretation and mediation section there that is able to explain the history of the Bamiyan site and of its research and documentation over time. The use of contemporary Virtual Reality technologies, which require regular technical maintenance and secured power supply is proposed. Here the full range of factual information on the previous appearance of the site based on the various scientific hypotheses on the possible color schemes of the Buddha figures (Blaensdorf et al. 2009) and the ancient mural paintings (Taniguchi 2013) can be displayed and technically maintained (Fig. 1).

From the balcony of the Cultural Center with distance to the site, where once the Buddha figures stood, the visitor will be enabled to visually overfly the valley of Bamiyan from the future gardens at Culture Hill and to translate this information into real experience once getting close to the site. It is legitimate to suggest that ubiquitous computing devices such as Smart Phones or Head Mounted Displays in the near future will allow for cost-effective Augmented Reality experience directly at the site, but we argue here that it requires a more direct physical experience to allow for a re-enchantment of the site by the people, especially those living there.

¹ See Article 80 of the *Operational Guidelines to the World Heritage Convention*, UNESCO 2016



Fig. 1 Examples of VR technologies to display potential appearance of the Bamiyan Buddha in previous times and before its destruction. (Buddha image courtesy of @zheelaj via Twitter (left) and computer vision image of niche and reconstructed figure by Georgios Toubekis (right), Head Mounted Display by Oculus)



Fig. 2 Presentation of the original rock fragments and sands of the Giant Buddha figure in front of the empty niche. (© Idea: Michael Jansen, Visualization: v-cube)

1.3 Preservation and Presentation of the Original Fragments of the Giant 55 m Buddha

Regarding the situation at the site where once the Western “Large” 55 m Buddha stood, we propose that the remaining and salvaged fragments shall be laid out in the shape of the original figure in direct vicinity to the niche for long-term storage and safekeeping. The fragments shall be covered by earth and covered with a light roof, allowing view contact with the empty niche. Out of the earth covering the “buried” original material, it is proposed to shape the proportions of the original figure to enable an experience on the size and mass of the original figure (Fig. 2).

2 Conservation Philosophy Based on OUV of the Property

The Venice Charter of 1964 considers reconstruction of monuments in the context of restoration establishing the essential elements of significance and the ethical basis for intervention (prevent loss while avoiding damage and deceit) – in light of

the impact of massive redevelopment of historic city centers after destructions of WW II. The *Nara Document of Authenticity* underlines that heritage resources can foster processes of appropriation and association within a community including concepts of identity and self-determination based on intensive caretaking of heritage assets (Larsen 1995). As stated in the new ICOMOS Guidance document,² reconstruction is therefore to be considered as part of an overall recovery process from the events of conflict as process itself that responds to particular situations of overall post-conflict strategy as enactor for sustainable development and community well-being – still in relation of the attributes that convey the OUV of the property.

2.1 OUV of Bamiyan Buddha Niches

Authenticity, as defined by the Operational Guidelines to the World Heritage Convention, is understood as the undisputed understanding on the credibility of the object's properties. Concepts of authenticity, on the other hand, differ among cultures and as such differ the notion of preserving "authentic" information sources expressed through a variety of attributes; original or genuine material substance (even incomplete), the complete coherence of the original shape, or preserving the locational setting. According heritage practice, in the context of World Heritage, reconstruction is accepted when supportive of the OUV, in cases where reconstructions on the basis of detailed evidence are seen to give meaning to the designated landscape or where intensive restoration and reconstruction is considered as a means of having an idealized image that could forge a national identity. Reconstruction has also been accepted in relation to sustaining the explicit or implicit attributes of OUV, not only in relation to fabric but also to processes, uses, and associations and in properties where the replacement of fabric responds to deterioration (ICOMOS 2017). With reference to the various recommendations of the Bamiyan Working Expert Group since 2002, partial reconstruction of the Giant Buddha figures has been always reiterated as appropriate conservation strategy once the required consolidation of the rock surface is completed. Any classic restoration activity therefore firstly has to check, if form, as well as function and physical fabric based on detailed evidence, are not harmed by future interventions and in case of World Heritage that all the measures are executed in such a way; the results must be reversible also in later generations to come. Decision-makers have to keep in mind that any conservation approach has to maintain the authenticity of the property and therefore to be cross-checked against the following tangible and intangible factors (Table 1).

²ICOMOS has published in 2017; its *ICOMOS Guidance on Post trauma recovery and reconstruction for World Heritage Cultural Properties* prepared in response to the request for guidance on reconstruction expressed in the World Heritage Committee decision (Decision 40 COM7) at its 40th session in Istanbul, Turkey.

Table 1 Factors that affect OUV of the site, adapted from (ICOMOS 2017)

Tangible factors	Intangible factors
Materials and substance	Location and setting
Form and design	Spirit and feeling – beliefs and rituals
Use and function	Techniques and traditions of maintenance

With respect to the non-material aspects from the perspective of the local population and the people of Afghanistan, the site where once the Giant Buddha figures stood mark the location of a specific *Spirit of the Place* that constitute the Authenticity of the World Heritage of Bamiyan.

Recognizing the intangible component of this specific historic place acknowledges the interaction of traditional beliefs and tales and the way of living of the local population. In order to maintain this and to avoid any harm, it is regarded essential to actively involve the local population in the entire process of any future intervention from the beginning and to share responsibilities in planning and execution. This will require that newly shaped figural parts are created and shaped by people from Bamiyan to truly familiarize with this project and thus maintain *authenticity of the existing and as well as newly created components* of the monument.

An approach of multidisciplinary national and international expertise together with active collaboration from the people of Bamiyan will provide a richer, more dynamic, and inclusive vision of the cultural heritage of Bamiyan. This will lively demonstrate that the spirit of place can vary in time and from one culture to another according to practices of memory and that a place can have several spirits and be shared by different groups fully in the deeper sense of the World Heritage convention.

2.2 *Assessment of the State of Conservation of the Eastern Buddha Niche*

The niche of the Eastern Buddha and its rear wall has been consolidated successfully within the UNESCO safeguarding program (Petzet 2009, Margottini 2014a, Emmerling and Petzet 2016). However, due to the character of the conglomerate rock material, it must be expected that superficial erosion will continue, and there is always the considerable danger that larger rock blocks detach from the upper cliff parts due to the natural erosion process that cannot be stopped. To address this, a protective canopy for visitors to the rearward caves in the eastern niche, preventing from fall of small stone pieces, was proposed by the restoration team of the Technical University of Munich and led to the construction of two reinforced concrete “pillars” exactly on the location where once the “feet” of the original 38 m Buddha stood. A supporting beam construction between the two “feet pillars” remained unfinished as well, and the concrete reinforcement steels are laying in the wooden casing (Fig. 6a). These “feet pillars,” their construction, and alleged function are described in detail in the ICOMOS evaluation report (ICOMOS 2016). The



Fig. 3 Situation at the niche of the Eastern “Small” 38 m Buddha as of December 2013, pillars made of reinforced concrete constructed by restoration team of Technical University of Munich. (© UNESCO)

construction of the “feet pillars” as attested by the ICOMOS evaluation mission imposes a great intervention as efficiency for the alleged purpose is heavily criticized and its unfinished character differs in form and appearance significantly from the carefully restored rear wall (Fig. 3).

When finished their appearance would be likely to follow the example of the previously reconstructed prismatic pillar on the eastern side of the rear wall. This prismatic pillar was created to add additional strength to the rear wall at the eastern corner (Fig. 4a-b).

This prismatic pillar deviates significantly from the historically documented pillar shape. Its form does not follow the dimensions and proportions of the previous form (possibly resulting from the extensive restoration campaign of ASI in the 1970s) and shall be build back in the context of any future activity at the site (Fig. 5).

At the bottom of the niche, there are several very large fragments that due to their very delicate state of conservation remained in the niche under individually constructed canopies. During a site visit in October 2016 and April 2017, it could be observed that a larger rock block had detached and fallen from atop the higher parts of the cliff right on the access path in front of the niche. In some vicinity to the 38 m Buddha niche, the rock fragments documented during the salvage operations in 2005–2007 are still being stored in the temporary shelter next to the entrance gate of the mud wall that encircles the area of the 38 m Buddha niche (Fig. 6).

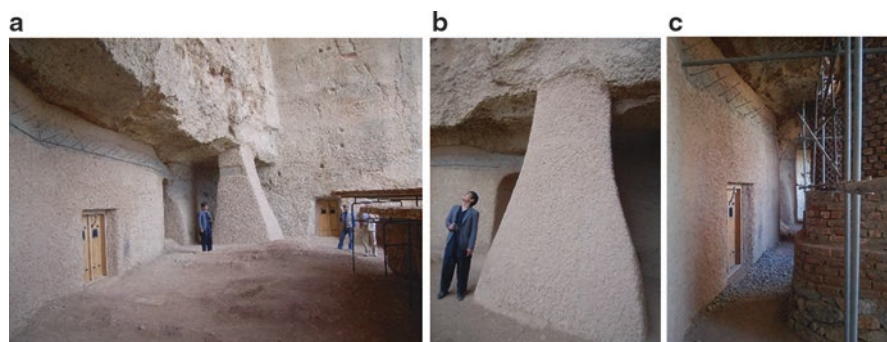


Fig. 4 (a–b) Bottom of the 38 m Buddha niche in 2012 after finalization of conservation works at the rear wall with prismatic shape of a reconstructed pillar (c) Situation after November 2013 with newly created reinforced concrete “pillar feet”. (© G. Toubekis)



Fig. 5 Situation at the bottom of the 38 m Buddha niche after completion of the India restoration work in 1974 (note the form of the original pillar to the right). (© Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

A total of 422 individual fragments (see Table 2) showing traces of original surface from the 38 m Buddha figure could be recovered during the safeguarding campaign, featuring different lithological compositions and varying dimensions of 30 cm up to 180 cm in diameter (Toubekis 2008). Altogether these fragments make around 65m² of recovered surface material,³ roughly 12% of the ca. 550m² total

³From the historical documentation (Higuchi 1984, pp. 99–100 Vol. 4), a 3D digital model of the 38 m Buddha could be generated (Toubekis et al. 2011) and serves as basis for the surface calculation.

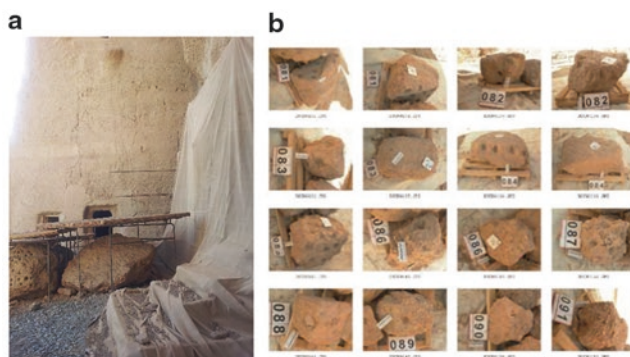


Fig. 6 (a–b) Situation at the bottom of the 38 m Buddha niche in April 2017 (a) very large fragments located in the niche covered by wood shelters (b) example of smaller stone fragments stored in some vicinity under protective shelters. (© G.Toubekis)

Table 2 Distribution of safeguarded fragments from the Eastern Buddha niche according to weight classes (approximation)

Weight class	<55 kg	<110 kg	<385 kg	<495 kg	0,5 t < 2 t	3 t < 8 t	10 t < 22 t	Total fragments
Pieces of fragments	137	100	116	17	39	8	5	422
%	32,4	23,7	27,5	4	9,2	1,9	1,2	100

envelope surface⁴ of the digitally reconstructed 3D model of the 38 m Buddha (Toubekis et al. 2017). The values for the total volume stay in the same range (~11%), much less of the assumed remains of 40–45% that was claimed so far (ICOMOS, 2016, p. 239).

According to the restorers, the recovered surface material at the site of the Western 53 m Buddha might reach higher rates, but here, precise figures are not yet determined. It must be clearly stated that at least for the site of the 38 m Buddha niche, the remaining original rock material altogether constitutes only a very small fraction of the previous total surface/volume of the destroyed figure. The absence of this vast amount of original material and the yet unsolved matter of its structural stability mark the challenges that any intervention at the site has to address in the future.

⁴Surface area calculations for the salvaged fragments originate from field notes of the collected fragments and from digital measurements of the niche (Jansen et al. 2008).

3 Concept for the Restoration and Reassembly of the Destroyed 38 m Buddha Figure

A sustainable approach to technical conservation on the field implies that the materials and the techniques used for the preservation of the site are, as far as possible, produced in the region and that local building traditions are integrated into the overall approach to conservation and restoration. Consequently, mostly traditional and/or local materials should be used for the restoration and conservation of the project. We intend to re-establish the contours and the main shape of the figure but refrain from a complete reconstruction of the shape as before the destruction of 2001 or a complete reconstruction of a previous (unknown) appearance. The principal aim is the restitution of the contours of the existing remains without additional stress onto the still existing original plaster material (Fig. 8).

Although the rear wall has been carefully restored and all visible cracks sealed, a superficial erosion is ongoing through loss of surface particles (except for the remaining mud plaster parts) as the conglomerate rock material is exposed to the environment. Here the figural remains can be described as kind of carved stone relief that show similar superficial decay characteristics known from weathering of earthen architecture – however significantly slowed down in time.

The overall conservation strategy, therefore, is proposed to add material in front of the rear wall to restore the outline and to make contours of the destroyed figures readable again and finally to ensure a resurfacing/plastering to protect it from superficial erosion.

While preserving the original outline of the figure where it still exists, it is proposed to do the rebuilding with traditional mud/adobe material to reconstruct the figural elements of legs and the main trunk of the body shape. The newly added material follows the concept of “sacrificial layers” known in the conservation of earthen architecture – where newly added elements should always be “weaker” and “less resistant” to the original ones.

Based on the identification and analysis of historic plaster material and the identification of suitable mud resources in the valley of Bamiyan, new improved mud mortars and mixtures are proposed for the form of the legs/body and surface plaster. Attention to material continuity and affinity is essential as well as technological and static compatibility between old and restored elements. Since the original static system consisted basically of the adherence of the Buddha’s figure rock material with the conglomerate mass of the cliff, a new static system is required for building up the proposed earth masses. For this reason, the rebuilding will concentrate on legs and the main trunk of the body shape, where forces can be directed vertically down into the bottom of the niche. We abstain from reconstructing overhanging figure parts in order to avoid cantilever moments resulting from far outreaching parts of the garment or forearms of the original figure. In order to achieve an acceptance of the local population to the overall result, we propose that the main figural elements of the shape of the Buddha (legs/trunk/shoulder) shall be erected



Fig. 7 (Left) Traditional “Qala” house in Afghanistan with octagonal tower, decorations carved into the soft wall during construction. (Right) Construction process of a traditional “pachsa” cob wall in line segments with finish of fine “kaghel” plaster. (© P. Smars/RWTHAcdc)

following the traditional wall erection method with rammed earth called locally “pachsa” using mud material available in the region (Fig. 7).

The active involvement of the local community into the reconstruction process is considered essential to achieve the alleged psychological “healing” effect. To erect and shape the reconstructed 38 m Buddha “From people from Bamiyan, for the people of Afghanistan and the rest of the World as a symbol of Peace” is considered the baseline narrative which shall constitute to the authenticity of the final result – building upon the historical, religious, and symbolic values so far.

4 Technical Details of the Revitalization Proposal

The area of the Bamiyan cliff is located in a semi-arid environment of the mountainous central highlands of Afghanistan with an extreme climate with very cold winters and hot and dry summers (mean 7.5°) with little mean annual precipitation of around 160 mm. The general geology of Bamiyan is described by (Lang 1968, 1972) as an intra-mountainous basin covered with debris from the surrounding mountain ranges. The central Afghanistan tectonic setting is extremely complex with extremely faulted mountain ranges and high seismic activity. The Bamiyan Valley is located within the Herat fault which is an extension of the overall Indian Ocean Owen transform fault system. The diverse mountain ranges of the Hindu Kush slowly slide along this mountain range leading repeatedly earthquakes of high magnitude as recorded evidence has shown (Bourrouilh-Le Jan et al. 2007). Geomorphological

and geophysical properties of the Bamiyan cliff have been described in various reports during the UNESCO/JFIT campaign.

An environmental assessment (Reinecke 2005) has been elaborated by the RWTH Aachen Center for Documentation and Conservation (RWTHAcde) during the elaboration of the Cultural Master Plan for the Bamiyan Valley, and the general environmental condition and morphological evolution of the central Bamiyan cliff are described by (Delmonaco and Margottini 2014).

The mineralogical and petrological graphical composition the cliff material has been investigated by (Fecker 2009; Margottini 2014b). The material from which once Giant Buddha figure where carved out of the cliff is composed out of sediments of varying grain size up to 20 cm interbedded with matrix-supported silt and sand and extremely vulnerable to the exposition of water. Various tests have determined technical parameters of the cliff parameters such as natural density of around $\rho = 2.00 - 2.28 \text{ g/cm}^3$ for the siltstone and the conglomerate matrix with individual solid components within the matrix reaching values up to $\rho = 2.62 \text{ g/cm}^3$. Uniaxial compressive strength is given with 2.99 MPa for the conglomerate and between 6.73 MPa and 6.91 MPa for the siltstone material.

Bamiyan is located in a region with high seismic activity with reported earthquakes of a magnitude of $M > 7$ in recent times (Ambraseys and Bilham 2014); therefore a ground acceleration of 1.6 to 2.4 m/s^2 due to earthquakes must be taken into consideration when considering large-scale constructions as the site of the Bamiyan Buddhas (Fecker 2009, p. 106).

About the original construction procedure, only some hypothesis exist (Tarzi 1977); however from the practical knowledge, it can be assumed that the plastering was directly done after carving the figure from the cliff with the help of some scaffold construction. The original 38 m figure was carved out of the original conglomerate stone in a kind of extended *relief* technique where the sculpted elements remained attached to the solid background cliff material and where afterward plastered with different grained mud plasters. Of this plaster, some portions still exist in situ (green color in damage assessment map in Fig. 9, red color indicate most delicate rock portions requiring intense rock-engineering treatment). The raw-carved cliff was then covered with a mud plaster on which the finer-grained finish plaster was added prior coloring the surface (see Fig. 10 concept sketch). During the restoration of the rear wall, high attention was given to stabilize these portions, and any future treatment has to respect the original fabric of this original material (Fig. 8).

Any proposal for reconstructing the shape of the original figure would require a structural basis for transferring the vertical loads into the ground. We suggest therefore to integrate the existing two pillars, the so-called “feet” at the bottom of the niche into the design proposal. Although their removal has been proposed by the ICOMOS expert mission to Bamiyan assessing their impact on the OUV, we argue that removal would produce intensive vibrations onto the cliff with unpredictable effects on the overall conglomerate material in the vicinity and the stability of the restoration or the rear wall. Keeping this pillar on the other hand also frames the options for an overall load capacity of the proposed supers-structure on top of it. The technical details of these pillars are briefly summarized in the (Emmerling and



Fig. 8 The rear wall of the Eastern Buddha niche as of 2006 with the remains of carvings and original plaster of the 38 m Buddha figure. (© I.Mayer/RWTHAcde)

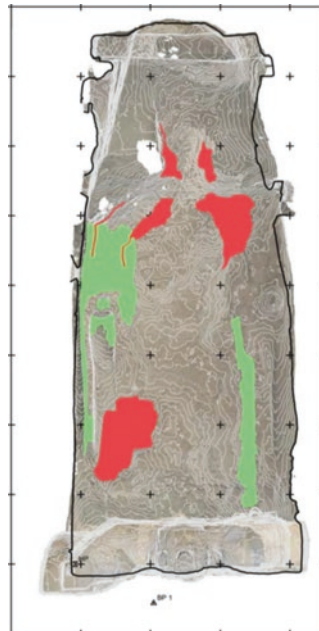


Fig. 9 Damage mapping of rear wall of niche of the Eastern Buddha prior restoration. (© I. Mayer/A.Thieme/G.Toubekis/RWTHAcde)

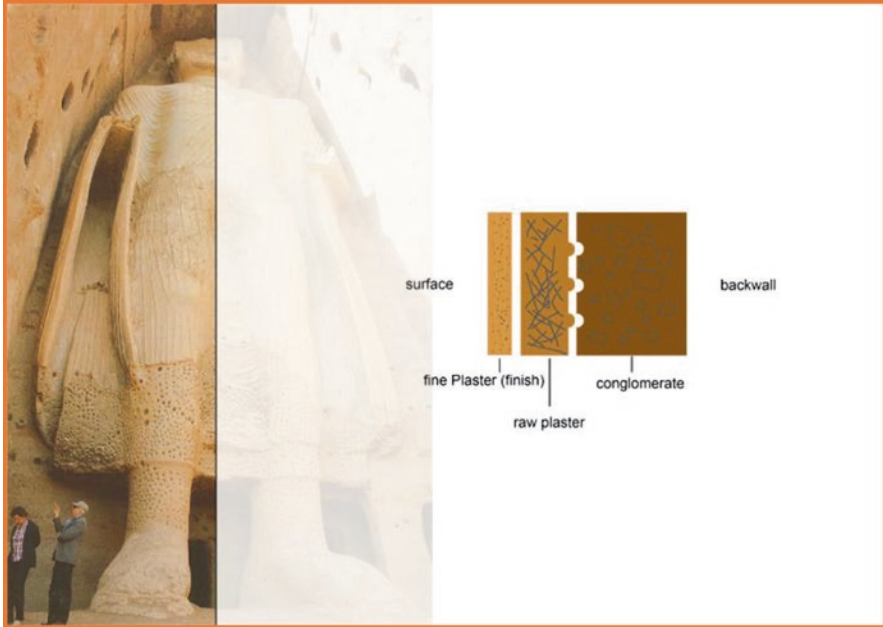


Fig. 10 Schematic structure of materials of the 38 m Buddha figure. (© M. Urbat/RWTHAacde)

Petzet 2016). They are positioned at the location which can be extracted from the documentation that has been elaborated by Kyoto University (Higuchi 1984, pp. 99–100 Vol. 4) and has been verified by the Munich team on the ground, tracing the contours of the rock surface. The ground below has been investigated for possible hollow spaces by simple core drillings down to a depth of around 6 m without cutting any void in the ground and is thus found suitable to accept the loads directed through the pillars. They are realized in reinforced concrete with a load-bearing capacity of 250 t each.⁵

The solution we propose will consist of a buildup mass of adobe/mud following the previous main figural shape of the 38 m figure. For this purpose, a horizontal support beam is proposed to be installed on top of the pillar constructions following the shape of the lower edge of the original figure. This beam is envisaged to collect all vertical loads and direct them into the ground through the existing pillars. These pillars would then be classed with cement enhanced mud to form the shape of feet (see Fig. 11). A similar material was used by the Indian restorers of ASI in the 1970s during the rehabilitation of caves structures. For the prismatic pillar at the eastern corner of the niche, it is proposed to build it back/cut it back to its previous dimensions, undoing the prismatic shape and reconstructing the vertical/cubic pillar

⁵Personal communication with Prof. Edwin Fecker, supervising engineer during construction on the site in 2013.



Fig. 11 Proposed newly built concrete slab in between newly built concrete pillars that are to be shaped in previous “feet” form. (© G. Toubekis/T. Frank)

construction, also in order to free some space for the traditional *pradakshina-pātha*, the circumambulation passage around the Buddha’s feet. The support beam will be designed from data of the digital shape model of the 38 m Buddha. It will be formed out of reinforced concrete of around 1 m thickness with a matrix of grains and sands originating from the Buddha cliff. The outline of this slab will follow the lower edge of the previous 38 m Buddha figure. It will directly connect with the rear wall of the Buddha niche and will be designed to carry the buildup mass of adobe material which is to follow in the next phase. The color of this beam is to be adjusted carefully to the tones of the cliff in the back, following the examples of the Indian restorers of ASI.

Further on we propose the usage of adobe material for building up the Buddha figure which is a material in daily use as a construction material in the region. The process of erection would follow the traditional wall construction procedure by applying line by line of the material of around 50–75 cm height. The precise outline of the figure shall be then carved out of this block mass by artist sculptors and stonemasons from Afghanistan, thus making it an authentic piece of artwork.

Mud has been used as raw and finish plaster on the figures in previous times, and it originates from the Cultural Landscape. Thus it can be considered an authentic material, with respect to the OUV of the property.

4.1 Repositioning of Fragments Based on Geological and Paleomagnetic Patterns

Since both Buddha figures had been originally hewn out of a conglomerate rock surface with a specific sedimentological structure, a paleo- and rock-magnetic methodology is suitable to aid in the relocation of fragments of the giant Buddha

4.2 Conceptual Sketch of the Reconstruction Process and Operational Implementation Issues

In 2017, the first author prepared a conceptual sketch for the reconstruction process of the 38 m Buddha Figure which is reproduced in Figs. 13-15. We propose to realize the reconstruction process in four phases – this would allow to clearly structure the process and adapt the time frame when considered appropriate. Following an initial intensive study phase for consolidation of the scientific basis, we propose a phasing of the project as follows:



Fig. 13 (Left) Original shape of the 38 m Buddha before destruction (Right) Situation in the niche as of 2017. (© G. Toubekis)



Fig. 14 (a) Phase One. (b) Phase Two. (c) Phase Three-Four. (© G. Toubekis)

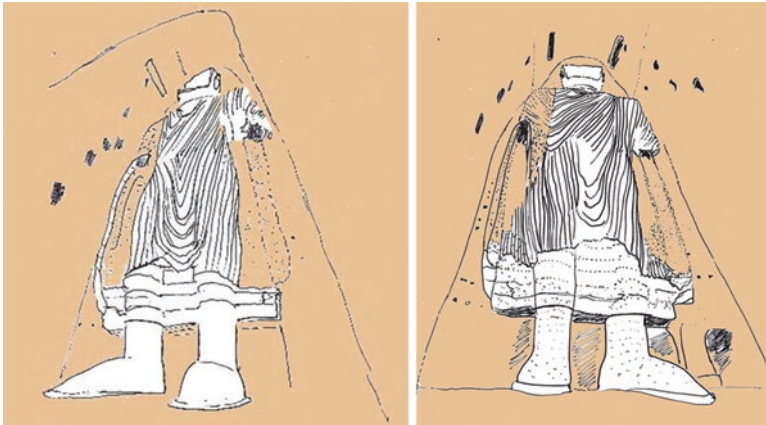


Fig. 15 Phase Five – proposed reconstructed shape of the 38 m Buddha. (© G. Toubekis)

Table 3 Activity plan and time frame of the project proposal

Activity plan	Time frame
Phase 0 – Clarifying assumptions and site conditions (field season + desk work)	Year one – 24 person months
Collection and compilation of all plan material from archives and mission	3 months
Exact documentation on site (laser scan measurements and plans production)	3 months
Logistics for finding and transporting suitable equipment for ground testing	6 months
Testing on site on ground bearing capacity	2 months
Scientific testing of quality of soils and optimizing clay composition in laboratory	8 months
Detailed reporting of the current situation	2 months
Phase 1	Year two – 12 months
Scaffolding planning, procurement, and installation on site (engineer)	8 months
Preparing site for construction activity (operational, logistics)	3 months
Construction of lower support beam (reinforced mud concrete)	4 months
Phase 2	Year three – 12 months
Preparing site for construction activity (operational, logistics)	3 months
Construction of figure support structure (reinforced concrete)	8 months
Phase 3	Year four – 12 months
Preparing site for construction activity (operational, logistics)	3 months
Construction of figural shape from bottom up (reinforced mud)	8 months
Construction of a head structure (reinforced mud/concrete)	
Phase 4	Year five – 12 months
Preparing site for construction activity (operational, logistics)	3 months
The beginning of surface plastering	4 months
Finalize surface plastering	4 months

5 Summary

The question of reconstruction of destroyed heritage places has a complex impact on post-conflict recovery processes within an affected country. The motivation to pursue a partial or complete reconstruction of at least one of the destroyed Buddha figures is very strongly felt in the Valley and put forward by a local community marginalized in history due to nationwide ethnic and religious differences. It can be interpreted as an incubator for a convalesced self-esteem or simply as a promoter for tourism into this region which to date has been spared from the hostile and violent conflict going on elsewhere in the country. The request of the Venice Charter to hand these places over to future generation “in the full richness of their authenticity” has long been associated with the physical materiality of the place until the Nara document has introduced a broader notion of authenticity to heritage practice worldwide. The case of Bamiyan appeals urgently that debate about reconstructing heritage places misses a key point when it is merely focused on the matter of material design and available resources – since it is the re-visioning and reconstruction of people’s identities that is essential in this process. Here the iconic character of the figures has transformed in multiple ways over time. Created as an original idol of worship in Buddhist times it was known to the eastern world as an admired *Wonder of Creation* in classic Arabic literature. Since then, the local perception of the figures has adopted and integrated the original statues as part of a mythical legend on Salsal, a prince of Bamiyan and Shamana, a princess from another kingdom, who turned into stone, rather than living apart (Inaba 2019). In their fragmentary condition before the destruction, the figures represented all this, and even in their current dilapidated form, the figure fragments express a memorial value of the destruction events the valley had experienced before. Apart from the variety of meanings in the different historical-cultural contexts, the figures and the now empty niches retained an idiosyncratic element, very much bound to the specific place. Therefore, a potential reconstruction project has to be aware of these connotations of the past while allowing for ample interpretations of a future narrative that is not yet told. It is for the sake of the success of the envisioned goal that re-building an important heritage symbol contributes to peace processes, reconciliation, and the rebuilding of society in the widest sense. Therefore digital simulations experienced in immersive VR environments bear the chance to avoid simplistic approaches or misinterpretation of scientific facts, resulting in counterproductive results. Considering the fact that the notion of authenticity is culturally mediated and that it involves complex networks of relationships between people, places, things, and concepts, it is assumed also that digital reconstructions and physical replicas can acquire authenticity depending on their modes of production and consumption, and the networks of institutional and individual relations from which they arise. Taking this into consideration, the rebuilding of figural elements by active involvement of people of Bamiyan using traditional techniques and materials seems to be the only natural course of action in order to preserve the figural remains and to maintain the authenticity and integrity of the monument. The authors are convinced that it is feasible to reproduce the new plaster surfaces as closely as possible to the historic remains by combining

traditional techniques and advances restoration science approaches. The continuous monitoring, observation, and evaluation of works, damage, and decay processes is regarded essential and will result in a long-year international assistance project for the long-term preservation of this important WH site.

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Technical Proposal for Revitalizing the Eastern Buddha Statue in Bamiyan



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Abstract Buddhist site of Bamiyan is one of the most important historical and ethnical heritage in Afghanistan. Two colossal Buddhas arranged in the east and the west of the cliff were the brilliant symbol of the Bamiyan valley and emitted the monumental meaning of the westward spread of Buddhism. They were exactly the human heritage with history and memory. Unfortunately they were destroyed in 2001 during the inner war. All the mural paintings of the niches of the colossal Buddhas were completely destroyed and disappeared, but fortunately the back walls of the statues of Buddhas were narrowly left. Since 2002, the collaborative and cooperative efforts to protect and restore the world cultural heritage of Bamiyan have been promoted by UNESCO, International Experts, the Government of Afghanistan and Bamiyan Province. And now, we confront the difficult problem of the reconstruction or revitalization of the Buddha statues. It goes without saying that the reconstruction/revitalization of the colossal Buddha would be an effective tourism resource for Bamiyan Province. The reconstruction of Buddha should be carried out only upon all national agreements of Afghanistan and would be based on bold ideas, implementing the innovative technologies to inspire.

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1 An Overall Approach to Conservation and Presentation of the Property

The hurdles in the reconstruction = restoration and the re-presentation of destroyed cultural heritages will never be overcome without implementing vigorous steps, as is the case with war, a never ceasing challenge in the history of mankind. Drastic steps must be taken and raze any prerequisites to counter this serious issue.

In Afghanistan, great progress has been made since 2002 to protect and restore the World Cultural Heritage of Bamiyan despite many obstacles. The collaborative and cooperative efforts by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), international experts, and the Government of Afghanistan and the Bamiyan Province are accounted for the achievements. We believe the Revitalization of the East Buddha would be an effective tourism resource for the Bamiyan Province where peace has been sustained even while fighting still persists elsewhere in the country. We propose to utilize the Revitalization to boost overall living standards and social activity, through region developing plans including the implementation of better infrastructure, rehabilitation of housing, economic revival, and educational activities.

Buddhism has been accepted in Japan since ancient times and has continued to develop to the present day. It is an integral element of Japan's culture (culturem), and as a consequence, many Buddhist cultural heritages that were lost in disasters or wars have been restored. The Great Buddha in the Todai-ji (The Great Eastern Temple) in Nara is a prime example. The Buddha Statue has been partially recast several times after damaged. Also, murals in Horyuji's Kondo hall, which are deeply related to the Bamiyan murals, are now in the process of reproduction by patented technology of Tokyo University of the Arts. These reproductions effectively raise more awareness of the cultural heritages. Our activities in Japan, however, are not fully applicable to the Bamiyan East Buddha in the sense that the Buddha statue will not be a deity in Afghanistan where Buddhism is not a major religion. A statue of Buddha would be an idol and not be a worship image for Islamic beliefs, and because of this reason, other statues including the West Buddha and the standing Buddha in the Kakrak Valley Caves were also deliberately destroyed. Respect and tolerance for other cultures take time to build as they need to be nurtured through the improvement of living standards, broad education, and cross-cultural exchange. An abrupt reconstruction of the East Buddha may potentially create friction and misunderstandings given the strong symbolic nature of Buddha. The imminent sizeable cost may also prove problematic, taking into consideration that some maintenance and repair work such as niche of West Buddha and some of the important caves still have yet to be completed.

From these perspective views, we propose the “Revitalization of the East Buddha” be a part of cultural heritage conservation and management project that embodies the broad function of a museum, taking constant profit and utilization into account as follows:

- The conservation and maintenance work on the caves situated at the south side of Hindu Kush mountains, including the two niches of the Great Buddhas, will continue under the agreement and supervision of the Bamiyan Expert Working Group Meetings.
- The Reconstruction of the East Buddha will be carried out only upon all national agreements of Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the focus will be on protecting and conserving the current condition of the site, rather than engaging in premature reproduction.
- The ongoing archaeological research around the area will confirm the location of the citadel site and the positioning of the surrounding Buddhist temple complex. After the research and excavation are completed, the Reconstruction of the Buddha should be included in the conservation plan to protect the entire World Cultural Heritage property.
- In order to fully utilize the Reconstruction of the Buddha, we need to explore the optimal way to publicize and display the statue so more people can appreciate the magnificent culture created in the Bamiyan region. In presenting the site as a “heritage with history and memory,” the supplementary use of audiovisuals with recordings of the historical journey can be considered, as well as a joint display with other artifacts. We would also need to determine whether a Buddha of the original size should be created or a reduced version is more appropriate. Such deliberations are crucial to override the cult value (Kultwert) of the statue and emphasize the exhibition value (Ausstellungswert), instead.
- The Reconstruction of the Buddha should be based on bold ideas, implementing the newest technologies to inspire. What is cultural heritage if it fails to energize and enrich the lives of the inhabitants? A monument of historical testament means nothing without arousing excitement.

On these bases, we propose the following.

2 Overall Approach on Safeguarding the Property

2.1 The Basic Principle on the Proposal of Revitalizing the East Buddha

It is a wide known fact that conservation and management for World Cultural Heritage “the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley” (hereafter referred to as The Property) have been carried out under the guidelines and supervisions of expert working groups including the Government of Afghanistan, local community representatives, international experts, UNESCO, and

other relevant organizations as participants. We strongly commend the continuation of the current process of safeguarding The Property and, at the same time, extend our respect to the essence of the World Heritage System as well as the activities of the respective relevant organizations.

2.2 Proposal to Revitalization the Bamiyan East Buddha

With the aim to promote tourism and regional development by physically revitalizing the East Buddha, we propose a building complex containing three establishments: a museum, a monument in the shape of the East Buddha and an accompanying facility, and storage for fragmented pieces of two great Buddhas.

2.2.1 A Museum Suitable for a World Cultural Heritage

We propose to build a museum, as its construction has been requested by the Afghan government and Bamiyan residents for some time. We will design as a unified facility with the monument in the shape of the East Buddha. It will serve to be an all-inclusive central base of The Property, to display, maintain, preserve, repair, and research. We hope this facility will convey the historical significance of Bamiyan and promote a deeper understanding of The Property to the whole world and Afghan people toward reconstruction and consequently contributing to its safeguarding on many levels. The museum facility will effectively be designed as a functional building while incorporating traditional architectural structure of the Bamiyan region.

2.2.2 A Monument in the Shape of East Buddha and an Adjoining Facility, Which New Monument Catering to Afghan People

We propose to build an entirely new facility inclusive of a monument in the shape of the East Buddha and an adjacent establishment which would be a reproduction of the niche (hereafter the two combined will be referred to as The New Monument) in an entirely new location within the Bamiyan Valley, that located outside area of buffer zone of The Property, at the same time on a cliff that is homogeneous with the surrounding landscape. The New Monument is a reduced version of the giant East Buddha and would be constructed within the natural landscape of the Cave Garden as part of the museum.

2.2.3 A Storage Facility to Safeguard the Remains of the Buddha

Both of the destructed giant Buddha statues were carved out of sedimentary rocks that formed the Bamiyan Valley. Much of the remains are currently stored in a temporary facility that was constructed through a German initiative. There are many

advocates for the fragments to be conserved as a reminder of the tragic events in the recent years. But sedimentary rocks are fragile and are vulnerable to rain and snow. In an endeavor to safeguard the remains in optimal condition, a facility where temperature and humidity can be controlled locally is imperative so they can be displayed and stored for the short to mid term. There should be a crane or a similar machine installed within the storage facility to help move heavier remains. The facility will display the remains of the Buddha and how they are carefully conserved and maintained, giving the visitors a glance of the tragic catastrophe that befell the colossal sculptures.

3 The Guidelines for Adequate Preservation Based on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV)

In this section, we present the guidelines for conservation and restoration in accordance with the heritage conservation principles and global best practice, citing references from certain charters and treaties.

3.1 The Proposed New Monument

3.1.1 Reason for the Construction

As aforementioned, we propose to rebuild the East Buddha as a new monument within the Bamiyan Valley, but not within the World Heritage Property. The reason for not reconstructing the Buddha in the original niche is as follows:

- ① The tragic destruction in 2001 itself is also considered invaluable to The Property as a World Cultural Heritage. As such, reconstructing the Buddha in the original spot would undermine the OUV for The Property.
- ② The Property represents a diverse cultural landscape reflecting the rise and fall of the Buddhist culture in the area, the advancement of power of Islam, as well as the more recent global situation of the present day. In this context, the 2001 destruction also constitutes OUV.
- ③ An archeological excavation and research of the original spot of the East Buddha have yet to be carried out. As such, reconstruction at the original location would be deemed as destroying archeological remains and a violation of the World Heritage Convention and other related charters.
- ④ As there have been no archaeological excavation research, subgrade strength and stability need to be assessed. It is unknown whether the ground can withstand such a heavy, grand structure as the giant East Buddha, without triggering possible landslides or causing irreparable damage to other parts of The Property.
- ⑤ ① and ② suggest archaeological assessment and geotechnical testing are prerequisites to reconstruct the Buddha in the original niche. In the short run, however, either would be difficult, considering the ongoing unstable situation in Afghanistan.

- ⑥ An overzealous attempt to reconstruct the East Buddha will not be welcomed in Afghanistan as it conflicts with the religious standard of the country. Furthermore, taking into consideration the current global situation, it is plausible that reconstruction of the Buddha statue will aggravate religious friction and prompt people with certain beliefs and ideology to intervene. Keeping in line with the World Heritage Convention that clearly notes World Heritage sites should “contribute to the maintenance of world peace,” we must make sure to eliminate all possibilities of the reconstruction causing any hostility.

Building the East Buddha in the original spot seems ideal in terms of catering to the people of Afghanistan. But technological limitations and unaddressed issues make this a difficult option at the present time. We would have to account for the possible worst-case scenario that such reconstruction may even damage the components of The Property. The Bamiyan Buddhas were already once deliberately destroyed by human hands. In the process of this revitalization, we must ensure such a destruction will not be repeated regardless of whether it may be deliberate or not.

In building a brand-new monument in an entirely new spot, our proposal is within the framework of the Operational Guidelines for the World Heritage Convention and, more importantly, meets the criteria for OUV including the assessment of authenticity and integrity. This is a reflection of our appreciation, acceptance, and respect for the Operational Guidelines. In effect, our proposal to build a new monument, a museum, and storage facility would contribute to the presentation, interpretation, and education of The Property.

3.1.2 The New Location and the Reasons for Its Selection

The new location for the new monument was selected according to the below conditions (see Fig. 3.):

- ① It is not within the area of The Property as World Cultural Heritage.
- ② The construction of the new monument at this spot will not interfere with the cultural landscape of The Property.
- ③ As it is on the cliff facing the original spot of the two Great Buddhas, it can be visually recognized by more residents.
- ④ It is a location that would not intrude in the daily lives of the nearby residents.
- ⑤ It is on a slope that bears no risk of contaminating existing rivers and furthermore, when necessary, can take protective measures on the natural spring at the foothill of the cliff. For this specific reason, the construction would be at the ridge of the slope and not at the base.

3.1.3 The Actual Process

- ① Construction work on the cliff surface: The local government will supervise the construction, while the Government of Afghanistan, UNESCO, and other relevant organizations will provide financial and technical support.

- ② Build the new monument: Create the reduced size East Buddha; recreate the niche and the surrounding caves (collectively referred to as “The New Monument”). Replicate the original site pre-2001, using scientific data obtained. In this process, Tokyo University of the Arts’ patented technology of cloning cultural properties will be a great contribution to recreate murals and the interiors of the caves.
- ③ Building the museum: We will build a museum complex adjacent to the New Monument. The building design will be homogeneous with the surrounding environment and will not interfere with the cultural landscape. It will be built using the newest technology combined with traditional workmanship. Inside will be cave murals, corridors, and stairs along the original cave walls as well as the Buddhist complex. With the aim to educate and promote the Bamiyan history and culture, much of the remaining fragments of the destroyed Buddha will be conserved and displayed.
- ④ Construction of the storage facility: A facility to preserve and maintain the remains of the Buddha statues will be built. It will be constructed in proximity to the original niches so visitors can compare the empty alcoves with the remaining fragments.

3.2 Implementation of a Program for Adequate Protection and Management

The Property is a World Cultural Heritage that was urgently listed following the 2001 destruction. It is also registered on the List of World Heritage in Danger. The Law on the Protection of Historical and Cultural Properties (Ministry of Justice May 21, 2004) determined by the Government of Afghanistan, The World Heritage Convention, and other relevant charters and technique in archaeology, geology, and cultural properties cultivated by relevant international organizations are all highly applicable to carry out the proposals in this section.

We propose that the new monument, museum, and storage space serve as the five pillars to secure adequate protection and management of The Property, namely, ① to ensure stability of the Buddha niches; ② to conserve fragments of the Buddha statues; ③ to preserve the caves; ④ to promote activity to acquire a cultural zone and corresponding economic revival; and ⑤ to create a sustainable tourist policy.

3.3 Promotion of the Interpretation and Education of the Property as World Cultural Heritage

There will be not only a new monument established at the new spot, but also a museum and storage space. These will serve to be the central base of The Property and be responsible for the display, management, conservation, repair, and research of the site.

We can expect the following activities in the established facilities:

- ① Exhibition of archaeological remains that were already discovered and that will be recovered in future excavations.
- ② Exhibition on the historical and cultural significance of Bamiyan.
- ③ Exhibitions should be simple and intuitive for visitors of all backgrounds to fully appreciate the experience.
- ④ Function as an office for archaeological excavations and research activities.
- ⑤ Function as an office to safeguard the overall property of the World Heritage.
- ⑥ Facilities such as conference rooms available on the premises to hold trainings and meetings.

The management of the museum complex should be discussed and established under internationally collaborative auspices. In terms of safeguarding The Property, cooperation and aid of the Ministry of Information and Culture, with its relevant sections (The Institute of Archaeology and the Department for Protection and Rehabilitation of Historical Monuments), are desirable as they have local offices. Provision of the necessary personnel, including security guards and police forces, that have already been involved in protecting the ruins is also indispensable.

3.4 Implementation of a Program for Cultural Tourism with Short-, Mid-, and Long-Term Visions

The objective of the program will be to promote The Property in the framework of World Cultural Heritage Tourism and to encourage regional development. The construction and management of the new monument, museum complex, and the storage facility would not only facilitate the protection and management of The Property but also be a tourism resource for the promotion of cultural tourism. In addition, we can anticipate the below developments:

Tangible developments:

- ① Transport infrastructure, such as roads and signs around the site, will be placed to accommodate visitors' safety and accessibility.
- ② Facilitate a quick formulation of Bamiyan's urban planning to keep its current distinctive landscape. The plan is inclusive of the traditional land use and the buildings made of mud bricks which serve to maintain the value of the Property as a cultural resource.

Intangible developments:

- ① Provision in educational services for the nearby residents as well as tourists
- ② Improvement in employment and vocational opportunities to secure personnel for research, conservation, and management of The Property.

3.5 Addressing the Wishes of Local Communities

The ultimate goal of the Buddha revitalization is to reflect the ideas and hopes of the local community. Most of the local people are farmers who have been farming in Bamiyan from long before the demolition of the Buddha. It is our understanding that they desire the reconstruction of the Buddha in anticipation of the potential income gain that The Property could generate as a tourism resource in the framework of World Cultural Heritage. In light of that assumption, we will clarify how our proposal can fulfill the anticipation of the local community and secure resources for regional development.

Firstly, the new monument and museum would generate new sources of tourism that go beyond the scope of simply rebuilding the East Buddha. This is highly effective as a short-term measure for cultural tourism. In addition, a museum exhibition would provide accurate historical and cultural information to the visitors, thereby strengthening the appreciation of protecting the heritage and spreading the understanding and awareness of the situation surrounding The Property. This would be a mid- to long-term contribution to cultural tourism.

Secondly, in keeping with the efforts to safeguard the World Cultural Heritage property inclusive of the destroyed Buddha, we endeavor to sustain and further enhance the mid- to long-term value of The Property as a cultural resource. To achieve this, we will naturally continue to operate the conservation and management plans formulated and supervised by the Government of Afghanistan, UNESCO, and its relevant organizations but will also make enhancements to facilitate visiting The Property (inclusive of the new infrastructure that will be constructed for the new monument), by building new corridors and steps and displaying signs with descriptions. Safeguarding efforts may initially be led by international assistance, but the task will eventually need to be taken over by the Government of Afghanistan and the local government to build the necessary foundation for a sustainable cultural tourism.

Thirdly, and finally, the new monument shall be located at the new location, which is visible to locals. Such revitalized image within the landscape of the Bamiyan Valley would recall the locals the original landscape of the valley.

We aspire for these three concepts to resonate with the people who affectionately long for the reconstruction of the East Buddha as well as those who count on regional development and a boost income. Our aim is to develop the local history and culture, strengthening identification which would advocate sustainable tourism in the short, mid, and long term.

4 Technical Overview on the Reproduction of the Eastern Buddha

4.1 *The Location of the Reproduction*

The two empty niches of the giant Buddha statues are carved into the Great Cliff soaring over 100 m. The statues, destroyed by the Taliban in 2001, were a part of the numerous caves of Buddhist monasteries, temples, and sanctuaries tucked away in these cliffs. These sites should be well protected and carefully preserved as cultural heritage for mankind. We build the monument in the shape of Eastern Buddha and the museum in another place without reconstructing the Bamiyan Buddha statues in this place (Fig. 1). There are three proposed sites (see Fig. 2), but this report outlines the design that is assumed to locate on the site ① which is adjacent to the Bamiyan Culture Center designed by an Argentinian team and adopted by UNESCO in 2015.

The Great Cliff lies in the Bamiyan Valley, running across about 1 km in width. On the opposite side of the valley, 40-m- to 50-m-high plateaus with a scarp of about 45° are located. These plateaus are planned to be the designated area for promoting and supporting artistic and cultural processes.

We plan to reproduce the Eastern Buddha and its niche, originally situated at the Great Cliff, at the tip of one of these plateaus. This new site would be a part of the museum which will conserve and display the remnants of the destroyed Buddha and other significant artifacts. The site is in the Cave Garden designed in Japan's proposal "Bamiyan Museum & Culture Center for People (Website <http://www.>)



Fig. 1 Frontal view of the monument: the entrance of the staircase that leads to the museum and the top of the plateau is on the left side of the monument. (© Shigeyuki Okazaki/Tokyo University of the Arts)



Fig. 2 Three possible sites for constructing the monument and the museum. (© google earth)

mukogawa-u.ac.jp/~bamiyan/index_2013.html,” presented at the 12th Bamiyan Expert Working Group Meeting in Orvieto, Italy, in December, 2013.

4.2 Proportion of the Reproduced Eastern Buddha

While a full-scale reproduction is ideal, it is quite difficult to find a cliff or plateau that accommodates a huge 38 meter statue and 41 meter niche in height. Only a cliff that stands almost perpendicular to the ground, such as the Great Cliff, would meet our needs. It is not feasible to build a 41meter niche into the slope on the south side of the Valley as it is about 40 meter height with an inclination angle of 45°. Alternatively, a stand-alone construction in front of the slope of the plateau should also be ruled out considering the compatibility with the surrounding landscape. The height of the Great Cliff that includes the Eastern Buddha corresponds to a modern high-rise building. If we reconstruct the Eastern Buddha statue in its original size, such a huge structure would be incompatible with the place that consists of small-scale villages, rivers, roads, and public squares in the area.

After much deliberations and scrutiny using computer graphics, models, and diagrams, we concluded to reproduce a 13-meter-height Buddha that is one-third of the original Eastern Buddha (Figs. 3, 4, 5 and 6).



Fig. 3 Composite photo of the proposed monument and the existing landscape. (© Shigeyuki Okazaki/ Tokyo University of the Arts)



Fig. 4 Frontal view of the monument from the bottom of the Bamiyan Valley. (© Shigeyuki Okazaki/ Tokyo University of the Arts)



Fig. 5 View of the monument from the tree-lined street on the Bamiyan Valley. (© Shigeyuki Okazaki/ Tokyo University of the Arts)



Fig. 6 View of the monument from the tree-lined street on the Bamiyan Valley. (© Shigeyuki Okazaki/ Tokyo University of the Arts)



Fig. 7 Bird's eye view of the proposed monument from the north: a one-third scale of the Eastern Buddha is constructed on the platform halfway up the hillside. The outdoor steps connect the foot of the plateau and the platform. (© Shigeyuki Okazaki/ Tokyo University of the Arts)

4.3 Direction of the Front Side of the Reproduced Eastern Buddha and the Axis Connecting the Monument and the Western Buddha Niche

We plan to reproduce the monument in the shape of Eastern Buddha on the platform halfway up the hillside. The outdoor steps connect the foot of the plateau and the platform (Fig. 7). Visitors ascend toward the monument along the slope. The stairs

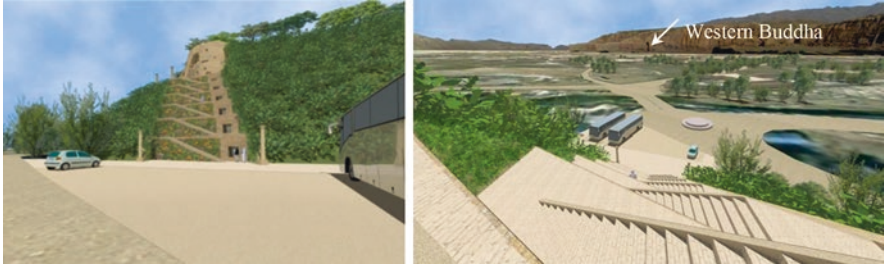


Fig. 8 The axis connecting the monument and the Western Buddha niche: the outdoor steps on the axis that lead to the platform (left). View of the outdoor steps, the Bamiyan Valley, and the Great Cliff from the platform: the Western Buddha is located on the axis of the steps (right). (© Shigeyuki Okazaki/ Tokyo University of the Arts)

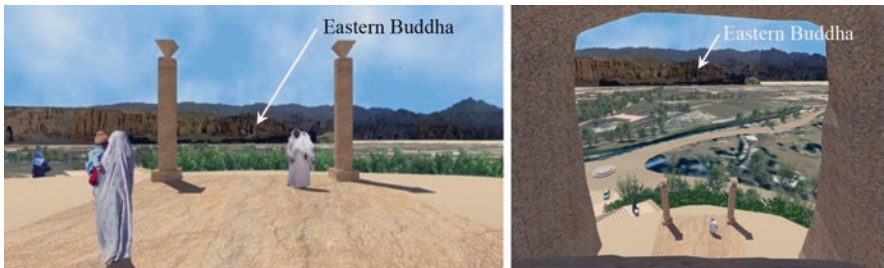


Fig. 9 The axis connecting the monument and the Eastern Buddha niche: the one-third scale Buddha faces the Eastern Buddha squarely (left). View of the Bamiyan Valley and the Great Cliff from the observatory on the top of the one-third scale Buddha (right). (© Shigeyuki Okazaki/ Tokyo University of the Arts)

will be situated on the axis line connecting the monument and the Western Buddha niche. In other words, when people go down the stairs, they will go down toward the Western Buddha niche (Fig. 8). On the other hand, the reproduced Eastern Buddha and its niche will face toward the empty niche of the Great Cliff in which the original Eastern Buddha was located (Fig. 9).

4.4 Channel and Springs on the Outdoor Steps

A channel will be built in the outdoor steps to water plants. Every flat space on the steps has a spring whose water provided through the channel. These channel and springs would help the slopes, and the green wall surfaces stay lush with greenery and flowers (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10 A spring on every flat space of the outdoor steps to water plants. (© Shigeyuki Okazaki/Tokyo University of the Arts)

4.5 Materials, Structure, and Construction of the Monument

It is extremely complicated to reproduce the statue inside the original niche using materials such as reinforced concrete. The original Buddhas and the niches were simultaneously carved into the natural cliff. To construct a new Buddha inside the original niche, however, would be equivalent to build a huge and heavy load structure in the empty space. The reconstructed Buddha seems like a cantilever, rising up from the ground surface. The new Buddha may also be supported by the rear side of the niche. However, handling of the vertical force and the horizontal force on the terrain in case of an earthquake should be addressed. In addition, if surrounding walls in the niche support the horizontal force, we would need to handle sustaining power of the walls against the horizontal force. In any case, we need to assess if the current state of the Cliff allows us to perform these treatments against the vertical force and the horizontal force. Furthermore, cost of the reinforcing treatments should also be considered.

As for the new Buddha to be reproduced, we propose to use lightweight materials, such as glass fiber reinforced concrete (GRC). The use of GRC includes spraying of concrete with grass fiber to a shaped 3D steel mesh. For this reason, we do not need to prepare a negative mold of the Buddha. These efforts paved the way to create extraordinary new designs by the material, including their more recent success of combining GRC with different materials such as glass and stones. The cost of the construction using GRC is shown in Fig.11.

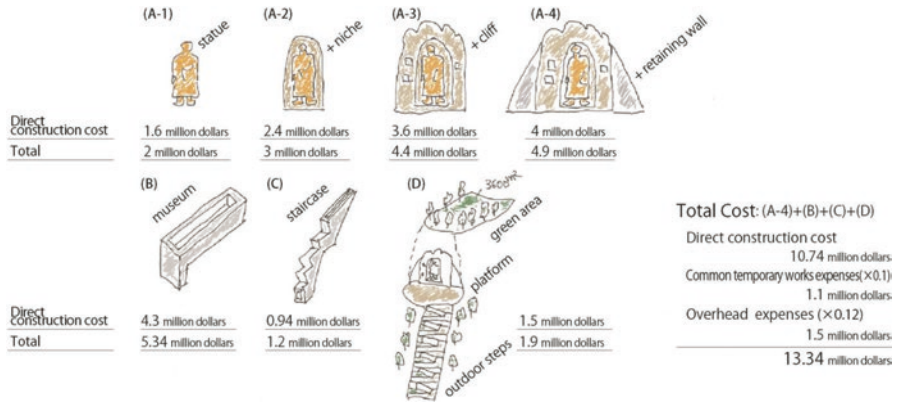


Fig. 11 Cost of the construction for each part. (© Shigeyuki Okazaki/ Tokyo University of the Arts)

4.6 Plan of the Monument and the Museum (Figs. 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16)



Fig. 12 Site plan: the monument (a one-third scale of the Eastern Buddha statue) faces the real Eastern Buddha squarely. The Western Buddha statue is located on the axis of the outdoor steps. The underground museum is constructed in the back of the monument. (© Shigeyuki Okazaki/ Tokyo University of the Arts)

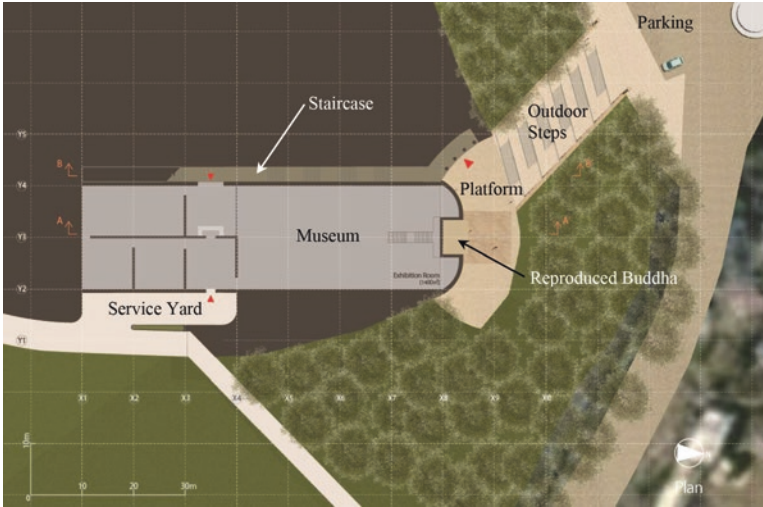


Fig. 13 Basement plan of the museum and the plan of the platform: the staircase connects the platform, the entrance of the museum, and the top of the plateau. (© Shigeyuki Okazaki/ Tokyo University of the Arts)

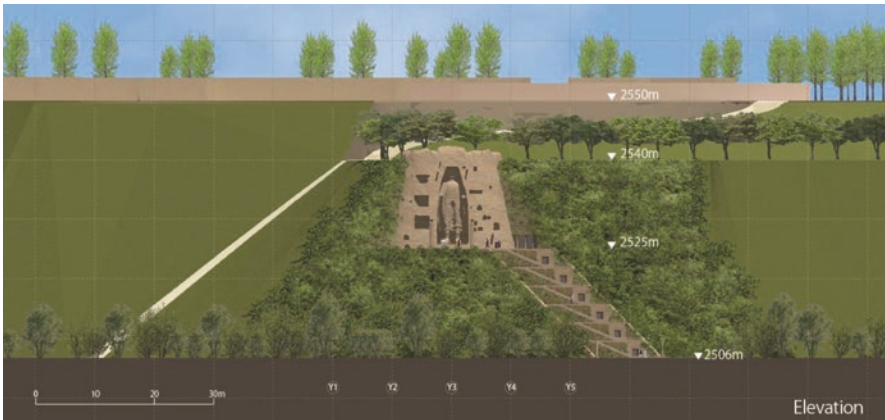


Fig. 14 Southeast elevation. (© Shigeyuki Okazaki/ Tokyo University of the Arts)

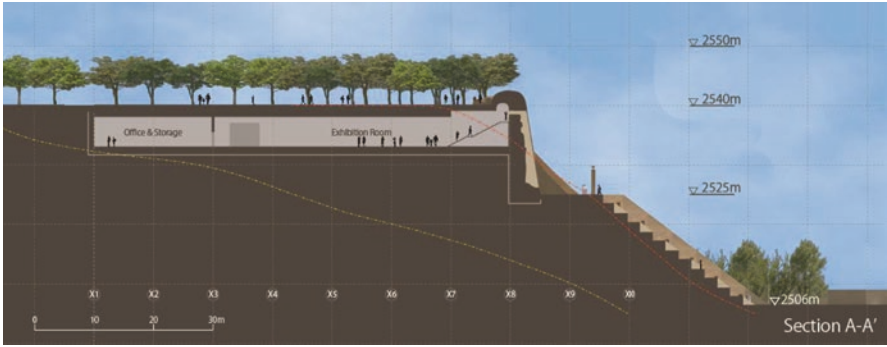


Fig. 15 Section of the museum: the yellow and red dotted line represents the existing ground level of the museum area and outdoor steps area, respectively. (© Shigeyuki Okazaki/ Tokyo University of the Arts)

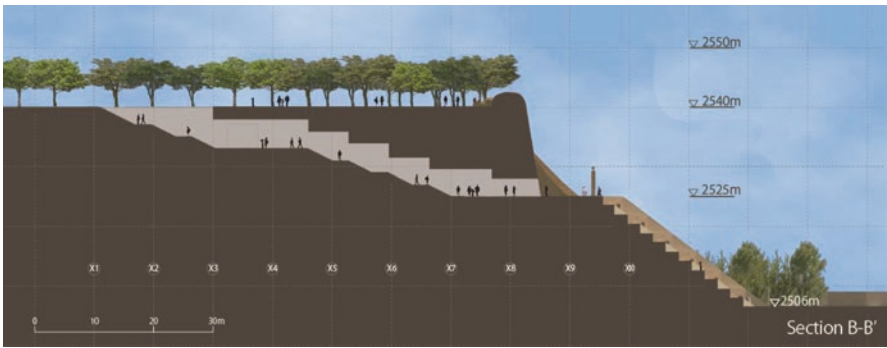


Fig. 16 Section of the staircase that connects the platform and the top of the plateau. (© Shigeyuki Okazaki/ Tokyo University of the Arts)

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Annexes

Conclusions on the Future of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues: Technical Considerations and Potential Effects on Authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value (Tokyo, 27–29 September 2017)

Preamble

In 2001, the Taliban destroyed two giant Buddha statues and associated archaeological features in Bamiyan, Afghanistan. Carved into a cliff face, the statues stood at 55 m and 38 m high, and represented the apotheosis of Gandharan and Buddhist art in Central and South Asia. Dating from the sixth to seventh centuries C.E., the statues were an iconic and integral part of the wider cultural landscape in the Bamiyan Valley.

Long after the decline of Buddhism in the region, the statues continued to be a source of national pride in Afghanistan. Their destruction in 2001 was a significant loss to the country and to humankind.

During the 40th session of the World Heritage Committee in Istanbul (Turkey) in 2016, the Government of Afghanistan requested that at least one of the Buddha statues be reconstructed. However, heritage practitioners and experts have highlighted the challenges of reconstructing the Buddha statues according to strict conservation ethics and other considerations. At the Committee's 41st session (Krakow, 2017), general decisions concerning reconstruction (41 COM 7) were also taken.

There is increasing awareness that the destruction of cultural properties is not only a loss for humanity; it also affects the identity, history, integrity, memories and dignity of local populations. Hence, reconstruction of cultural heritage in response to acts of deliberate destruction should be addressed not merely from the perspective of material conservation philosophy but more widely, through holistic strategies for the protection and advancement of human rights, promotion of peace building

and sustainable development. At the same time, reconstruction must contribute to the protection and understanding of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of destroyed sites or properties, and should not negatively impact it.

Based on the principles of these more recent perspectives, the present conclusions provide for new avenues to be explored for recovery, rehabilitation, reconstruction and revitalisation of cultural heritage properties destroyed by acts of violence.

The participants,¹ assembled in Tokyo, Japan, from 27 to 29 September 2017, for a scientific technical meeting entitled “The Future of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues: Technical Considerations and Potential Effects on Authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value”, initiated by the Government of Afghanistan, UNESCO, and Tokyo University of the Arts and organized with the financial assistance of the Government of Japan.

Recognizing the substantial body of extant charters, declarations, and recommendations on conservation ethics (see [Annex 1](#)), and evolving knowledge;

Considering the technical proposals that have been presented during the Tokyo Meeting:

Note That:

1. the unlawful and intentional destruction of cultural heritage (2003 Declaration) may deprive local communities and nation states of their sense of identity, pride, and the opportunity to learn about and transmit cultural heritage to current and future generations. Moreover, it deprives humanity of the diversity of artistic and cultural expression, which constitutes a shared global heritage;
2. the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley World Heritage property represents the combined works of people and nature. The Bamiyan landscape is a continually evolving environment, bound together by complex social practices, traditions and natural systems that have formed a distinctive character and influenced the relationship between the local communities and their environment. Therefore, the OUV of the site is more than its physical attributes;
3. the Bamiyan World Heritage property should be considered a place of collective identity and memory, particularly for the local communities; the archaeological remains cannot be separated from their natural and cultural landscape nor from local perspectives;
4. there are many ways in which the World Heritage property, including the Buddha niches and former statues, could be interpreted as illustrated by the technical proposals presented during the meeting.

¹ See list of participants.

Agree That:

5. in compliance with paragraph 86 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, “reconstruction of archaeological remains or historic buildings or districts is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances. Reconstruction is acceptable only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture”; therefore any reconstruction at the site in any form of the Buddha statues can only be justified on the basis of sound argumentation and insofar as it contributes to both the OUV of the site and the peace-building process in the country;
6. respecting all principles of the integrity and authenticity of the site, according to the definitions laid out in the Operational Guidelines in paragraphs 79–95 and recognizing the need for future treatments of the archaeological remains to be planned and implemented within the overall conservation strategy for the Cultural Landscape of the Bamiyan Valley, any consideration of recovery and reconstruction should be based on thorough multi-disciplinary research and scientific analysis, to ensure an understanding of the structural, material and other characteristics of the damaged heritage property. This includes the study of physical remains from the original structure, photographic evidence, and historical accounts;
7. further actions should be undertaken after consultation on a long-term strategy while stabilizing the niches to prevent further damage to the surviving features of the cultural property and the integrity of its historic and landscape context, bearing in mind also the current volatile situation in the area. In preparation of a long-term strategy to identify the role of and benefits for the local communities and the phasing of activities for the safeguarding of the properties, immediate actions may include: stabilizing the niches and cliff; integrating multi-national efforts; supporting the protection and presentation of the fragments; supporting archaeological excavations, conservation of historical architecture, education and awareness (e.g., site interpretation and museum activities);
8. capacity-building to raise awareness of local communities and other stakeholders, including youth, on the values of Bamiyan cultural landscape is essential, to enable them to participate fully in management, conservation, protection activities, and archaeological research.

Prior to Any Consideration of Future Treatment of the Bamiyan Buddha Niches, the Participants Recommend That:

9. extensive consultation be conducted by the local and national government with local communities, civil society, as well as spiritual leaders so as to ensure that all stakeholder interests are taken into consideration;
10. any activity should aim to provide socio-economic benefits for local communities;

11. taking into account the continuous development of research, the Afghan authorities consider submitting to the World Heritage Committee a boundary modification encompassing all the attributes of the OUV with a view to enhancing the protection of the archaeological remains and the cultural landscape of the Bamiyan Valley, and ensuring the safeguarding of the heritage resources of the area;
12. taking into account the needs of the local communities and the agreed Desired State of Conservation for the removal of the property from the List of World Heritage in Danger (DSOCR) adopted in 2007, any work carried out at the World Heritage property, including the niches of the Buddha statues, their surrounding corridors and caves, should be capable of being maintained sustainably;
13. the cultural master plan for the Bamiyan Valley should be revised;
14. risk management and sustainable tourism management should be included in an appropriate plan for the Bamiyan Valley;
15. the Afghan authorities submit any proposed projects (including technical intervention plans, timeframes, budget estimates) that describe the link between the approach and OUV (including authenticity and integrity, interpretation, and management) for review by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies before submission to the World Heritage Committee;
16. the international donors should be thanked for their efforts to safeguard the property, and continued investment for the implementation of these recommendations should be encouraged.

The participants welcomed the establishment of a working committee for reviewing proposals for the Bamiyan Buddha statues, and encourage the Afghan authorities to send the Terms of Reference (TOR) and list of proposed committee members to UNESCO.

Annex 1

UNESCO Conventions

- *The Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict* (1954) and its two (1954 and 1999) protocols
- *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* (1970)
- *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (1972)
- *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003)

UNESCO Recommendations

- *Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding of the Beauty and Character of Landscapes and Sites* (1962)

- *Recommendation concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas* (Nairobi 1976)
- *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape* (2011)
- *Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society* (2015)

Declarations/Charters/Policies

- *The International (Venice) Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites* (ICOMOS 1964)
- *The Nara Document on Authenticity* (ICOMOS 1994)
- *The Riga Charter on Authenticity and Historical Reconstruction in Relationship to Cultural Heritage* (ICCROM/UNESCO 2000)
- *UNESCO Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage* (UNESCO 2003)
- *The Xi'an Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas* (ICOMOS 2005)
- *The Hoi An Protocols for Best Conservation Practice in Asia* (UNESCO 2005)
- The 2015 World Heritage Sustainable Development policy
- *Abu Dhabi Declaration on Heritage at Risk in the context of Armed Conflicts* (Abu Dhabi 2016)
- *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* (the Burra Charter 2013)
- *Report on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights: Human Rights Questions, including Alternative Approaches for Improving the Effective Enjoyment of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (UN General Assembly 2016)
- *Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights* (UN General Assembly 2017); *ICOMOS Guidance on Post Trauma Recovery and Reconstruction for World Heritage Cultural Properties* (ICOMOS 2017)

Document WHC/17/41.COM/7 and Decision 41 COM 7 of the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee.

List of Participants

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- Mohammad Fahim Rahimi, Director of the National Museum of Afghanistan
- Mohammad Rasoul Bawary, Acting Minister of the Afghanistan Ministry of Information and Culture
- Noor Agha Noori, Director of the Institute of Archaeology
- Omar Sultan, Former Deputy Minister of Information and Culture, Afghanistan
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Action Plan Concerning the Future Treatment of the Buddha Niches and the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley, World Heritage Property

I. Objectives of the Action Plan²

This Action Plan, prepared by the Technical Working Committee, has the following objectives:

1. Deciding on the future treatment of the Bamiyan Buddha niches;
2. Safeguarding the *Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley* World Heritage property as a whole;
3. Removing the site from the World Heritage List in Danger.

II. Background

1. The Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2003 and simultaneously placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger.
2. At its 31st session in New Zealand, in 2007, the World Heritage Committee defined a series of benchmarks to achieve a “Desired State of Conservation”, which would enable the removal of Bamiyan from the List of World Heritage in Danger. These included:
 - (a) Acceptable levels of site security;
 - (b) Addressing issues concerning the structural stability of the two standing Giant Buddha niches;
 - (c) Achieving an adequate state of conservation of both the archaeological remains and surviving mural paintings;
 - (d) The finishing and implementation of an effective and workable Management and Cultural Master Plan.

² Once the Action Plan is finalized, the MoIC will send it to the President’s Office, for endorsement. Once it is approved and endorsed by the President, Government will submit it to the World Heritage Centre, who will share it with its Advisory Bodies for their review. The World Heritage Centre will finally send the result of the review back to the Afghan government and will also discuss it during the forthcoming World Heritage Committee meeting.

3. Since 2003, the Government of Afghanistan, in close collaboration with UNESCO and technical experts, and with financial support from the Governments of Japan, Italy, Germany and Swiss, have conducted a series of conservation works and implemented a series of technical measures to safeguard the Bamiyan World Heritage site.
4. In its latest decision (Decision: 41 COM 7A.54, from 2017), the World Heritage Committee decided to retain the Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley on the List of World Heritage in Danger (Annex 1).
5. Between September 27–29, 2017, an International Technical Meeting was organized in Tokyo to discuss technical considerations and potential effects on Authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value of the Bamiyan World Heritage property, if one or more of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues were to be treated or reconstructed. Four technical proposals were presented and discussed in this meeting (from Japan, Italy and Germany), which also recommended the establishment of the Technical Working Committee to review those proposals ([Annex 2](#)).

III. Decisions on the Committee

The main decisions of the Committee, include:

- (a) The Committee considers that all four proposals presented at the Tokyo meeting present opportunities and challenges, and thus recommends a study to investigate similar cases in World Heritage properties around the world;
- (b) In the spirit of national interest and international standards in terms of heritage reconstruction ethics, the Committee wishes to invite further proposals;
- (c) The Committee recommends further investigation on the potential effects on the Outstanding Universal Value of the Bamiyan World Heritage property, if one or more of the Bamiyan Buddha statues were to be reconstructed, and a detailed assessment of the heritage conservation ethics associated to the reconstruction of cultural heritage;
- (d) The Committee strongly suggests that a priority be given to remove Bamiyan from the World Heritage List in Danger, defined by the World Heritage Committee in 2007, and that a detailed Action Plan with a time frame be conducted.

		Three-months period (over a total of 36 months)												
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-18	19-21	22-24	25-27	28-30	31-33	34-36	
	Programs	Indicators	Means of verification											
WHC Benchmark 2: Achieving an adequate state of conservation of the archaeological remains and surviving mural paintings	Preservation of archeological remains within Bamiyan	Archaeological excavations and conservation at serial sites classified within Bamiyan	Archaeological and conservation reports, MoIC website											
		Archaeological field assessment within the wider Bamiyan Valley	Archaeological and conservation reports, MoIC website											
		Development and implementation of a Heritage Impact Assessment mechanism	Heritage/environment impact assessment											
		Development of a Bamiyan archaeological museum in the valley	An archaeological museum plan											

