

## Message from the Chairman

Throughout 2000 SPACH continued its efforts to preserve Afghanistan's unique cultural heritage by carrying out work on projects initiated in 1999 and earlier, namely:

**JAM MINARET:** construction of a gabion wall along Hari River to protect the base of the Minaret;

**KABUL MUSEUM:** completion of the inventory begun in 1996;

**TILE WORKSHOP IN HERAT:** provision of financial assistance;

**MUSALLAH COMPLEX IN HERAT:** construction of walls around the Gawhar Shad and Sultan Baiqara compound, with the assistance of HAFO; Planting of more than 4,000 trees with the help of AREA;

**MAUSOLEUM OF ABDUR\_RAZZAQ IN GHAZNI:** completion of minor restoration work.

There was a tragic setback early in the year 2001 when the Taliban reversed an earlier supreme leader Mullah Omar and destroyed the two Bamiyan Buddhas, despite the outcries of the international community worldwide.

Destruction was also reported from Ghazni and in the Kabul Museum where unique pieces of art have vanished.

These events obliged SPACH to suspend its presence in Afghanistan for the time being. But we continue to be present with awareness raising, information and documentation and hope that soon we will be able to restart our work in Afghanistan.

With the help of UNESCO we believe that we will be able to fulfill our tasks and protect the unique cultural heritage of Afghanistan as much as possible, for the Afghanistan and world at large.



**Dimitrios M. Loundras**

Ambassador of Greece and SPACH Chairman

## ABOUT SPACH

The Society for the Preservation of Afghanistan Cultural and Heritage (SPACH) was established in 1994 in Islamabad, Pakistan, by a group of concerned individuals, in response to a growing awareness of the vulnerability of Afghanistan cultural heritage. Through its newsletter, lectures and media interviews, SPACH aims to disseminate information about the state of collections, historical monuments and archaeological sites in Afghanistan and to increase its international membership. Through advocacy within Afghanistan, SPACH pursues its efforts to limit destruction of this significant part of the historic importance and has been assisting the Ministry of Information and Cultural in establishing an inventory of objects still in the possession of the National Museum in Kabul. SPACH is registered in Paris as international NOG (Decret 1557, Journal Officiel n. 21).

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## Import of the Cultural Destruction in Afghanistan

Nancy Hatch Dupree

The widespread destruction of cultural properties in Afghanistan represents the worst – most senseless, iconoclastic – campaign

the modern world has yet to witness. The damage is irreparable. The sense of loss is incomparable.

Entering the valley of Bamiyan was an overwhelming experience. The magnitude, the dynamism, of the creative genius that conceived of this maze of grottoes on two colossal standing Buddhas was humbling and few failed to be affected by their emotional impact. The calm serenity of the central figures spoke of peace, tolerance and charity for all. So great was their inspiration that they served as the model for a complex of equal magnificence far to the east at Dunhuang, in western China where the two branches of the famous Silk Route converged. In between, throughout Central Asia, their influence was manifest.

Nor must it be forgotten that human Buddha image first appeared in Gandhara, as the ancient lands of Afghanistan and Pakistan were called. This innovation came from King Kanishka whose patronage was extended to Buddhism, Hinduism and Zoroastrianism in the second century A.D. All co-existed with tolerance and in peace. The artists who adorned the Buddhist complexes, moreover, harmoniously fused the styles of east and west to produce works of consummate beauty.

Superb examples of Gandhara art formed a large part of the collections at the National Museum in Kabul. Many exquisite pieces were lost when looters sold them to dealers outside Afghanistan. Many of those that remained have now been purposefully demolished.

Also included in the museum's collections were thousands of luxury trade items. Throughout the early centuries A.D. Afghanistan stood confidently at the centre of a strategic interconnecting zone between Rome, Egypt, Central Asia, China and India. Now much of the evidence for the enriching exchanges of peoples, ideas, and art, as well as the glory of the wealth and power that emanated from this land is gone, leaving the Afghans with little to look back on with pride.

Many of the trade items – gold, silver, glassware, bronzes and ivories – had no parallels elsewhere, even in their countries of origin. Their loss impoverishes the art world and depletes scholarly research on the history of mankind and its various cultures.

Most significantly, the destruction strikes directly at the core of the Afghan heritage period. The museum pieces, almost without exception, were scientifically excavated from Afghan soil. As such they represented an uncontestable part of the heritage. In addition, the collections provided an amazingly complete record of 100,000 years of Afghan history, from the prehistoric to the ethnographic present. When all of this is destroyed, what is the substance of Afghanistan, many Afghans now ask.

By their action the proponents of the destruction deny Afghanistan's glorious past. By confining Afghan heritage solely to Islam, they deprive Afghans of their pride of place in history. They rob them of their sense of uniqueness. They take away the very essence of their identity.

Afghans at home and around the world heard the news of the wholesale destruction with shocked disbelief. There was an explosion of anger within the hearts of many. Over the past years the Afghan people have endured with fortitude the traumas of war, drought, displacement, a collapsed economy, inept governments, and a disrupted society. Now they say the very meaning of their sacrifices has been taken from them. They feel their Afghanness has been betrayed and are enraged by these attempts to impose foreign, non-Afghan ideologies upon them. Using the name of Islam for the insensitive wiping out of the heritage is viewed as unacceptably shameful as it negates other treasured Afghan values that are also part of the culture. Even staunch supporters are now thoroughly disillusioned by this pursuit of narrow political goals by a few determined to eradicate a separate Afghan identity. The Afghans feels diminished by these acts.

(Adapted from an article written for May edition of Sources, UNESCO's news and feature monthly.)



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© Amir Shah (AFP) March 2001

## The Recent History of the Kabul Museum

Carla Grissmann, Kabul (June 2000)

The history of the Kabul Museum itself is relatively short. In 1919 an assortment of manuscripts, regalia, weaponry, miniatures and art collected by the royal family was assembled and housed in the small Bagh-i-Bala, Abdurahman Khan's Moon Palace, on a hillside overlooking Kabul. A few years later Amanullah Khan moved the collection to the Royal Palace in the center of city and in 1931 the collection was finally moved into the present building in Darulaman, which had previously served as the Municipality.

Beginning in the early 1920 with the first excavation of the Delegation Archeologique Française en Afghanistan (DAFA), the spectacular treasures of Afghanistan came to light. More and more archaeological missions began work in Afghanistan, including the British Institute of Afghan Studies, the Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, the Scientific Mission of Kyoto University, the Smithsonian Institution, Heidelberg University, the Indian Institute of Archaeology. Many archaeologists say today that only the surface has been scratched.

Collections spanned fifty millennia, from the Middle Paleolithic, Neolithic, Achaemenid, Bactrian, Indo-Greek, Great Kushan, Kushano-Sasnian and Hephthalite, the Hindu Shahi through to the Islamic and present time. The Kabul Museum has known pilferage from the storerooms and even from the display cases since it was first established in 1919. Yet nothing equals the devastation it has suffered during the last few years, which has left the Museum partially destroyed, bereft of its identity, its collections looted and dispersed throughout the world and its staff scattered. A brief chronological outline of recent events is given here.

### 1979

Soon after the Saur Revolution, by order of the Ministry of Defense of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, the contents of the Kabul Museum were shifted in 1979 from Darulaman to the large, and by then deserted house of Mohammed Naim, Sardar Daoud's Brother, near the French Embassy in Wazir Akbar Khan. The museum building in Darulaman was turned into an annex to the Ministry of Defense in Darulaman Palace as the whole area became a military zone.



*Shotorak Schist, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Century A.D*



*Grave Effigy, Nuristan 19<sup>th</sup> Century*

The staff was given the order to move the contents of the museum within three days; it took three weeks. The entire Museum was literally packed up and carted away, except for what remained in the vast underground stores which were sealed off. In Sardar Naim's house, objects were piled up to the ceiling in the empty rooms, in the hallways, the basement, the garages; the courtyard and the gardens were strewn with broken showcases, shelves, twisted coin cases, wooden boxes, pedestals, office furniture, scruffy bits of carpeting.

The staff moved into the servants' quarters, the library into one of the garages.

### 1980

The contents of the museum were moved back to Darulaman in October 1980. The building itself was in better condition that it had ever been; the room and halls had been painted, proper toilets had been installed, the collections were reinstalled in their original rooms. Scholars still working in Kabul at that time found all the exhibits to be intact and more resplendent than ever, with several new exhibits of the Delbarjin wall paintings, objects from Ai Khanum, and a Hindu Shahi white marble Surya uncovered by

some Soviet soldiers in Khair Khana.

### 1989

While Afghanistan was being systematically destroyed during the early years of the Jihad, Kabul remained relatively intact. However, in the fall of 1989 because of increasing fears about the safety of the exhibits as the Kabul Museum was so vulnerable on the front line, the museum was officially closed by the Najibullah government and again the order was given to pack up

the contents of the museum. To minimize the risk of concentrating the objects in one place, the collections were deposited at deposited at three different locations in Kabul: the Central Bank Treasury in the Arg (the Presidential Palace), the Ministry of Information and Culture, and the depots of the Kabul Museum itself.

All the gold and silver coins and gold objects from Tepe Fullol were stored at the Presidential Palace, along with the spectacular Tilla Tepe gold hoard. It is assumed that they are still in place.

### 1992-1995

These tragic years saw the devastation of Kabul, as well as the Museum in Darulaman, exposed as it was on the front line. Looting began in 1993, when the area was isolated by the fighting and the museum staff were unable to reach Darulaman for months at a time. Every time the area changed hands there was further looting. In May 1993 the museum building was shelled, the roof and top floor destroyed and left open to the elements. In early 1994 UNCHS (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements) weatherproofed the top floor, installed steel doors on all the lower storerooms, and bricked up windows. More than 3,000 objects were painstakingly rescued from the rubble. Yet looting continues.



*Silver coins from the Kunduz Hoard, 1<sup>st</sup> B.C.*



*Hadda, 2<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D*



*Ghaznavid bronze, 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.*

In 1994 through the efforts of Nancy Dupree and Sotirios Mousouris, the UN Special Representative to Afghanistan, the Society for the Preservation of Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage (SPACH) was founded in Islamabad. Beginning in 1995 a liaison officer has been going to Kabul every summer to facilitate the inventory process funded by a Dutch grant to SPACH for that purpose.

### Summer 1996

Because of the lack of security at Darulaman, the Ministry of Information and Culture of President Rabbani's government was anxious to safeguard what remained at the Kabul Museum. Objects were again packed up and the Kabul Hotel in the center of Kabul city was chosen in early 1996 to temporarily house the remaining objects of Kabul Museum, as well as the 71 museum staff members.

The storerooms had been pilfered yet again since the staff had cleaned them in July 1995 in preparation for the inventory, and the floors were littered anew with shards and objects flung randomly in all directions. The museum staff worked heroically for almost six months on this first and most difficult phase of inventory taking.

Work in the basement storerooms was carried out by the light of kerosene lamps, as the generator donated by UNHCS had been stolen by the museum security guards a few weeks earlier. The rooms were without air, thick with dust, dimly lit, and crowded with people trying to manoeuvre around each other. Two chowkidars cooked lunch for the staff on a fire built directly on floor of the main hall, the flames licking up the soot-blackened walls. Morale was low, many of the staff developed allergies to the dust and worked with their heads swathed in cloth; salaries, largely unpaid, ranged from \$6 a month for the top cadre post of Director of Museums of Afghanistan to \$2 a month for chowkidars.

There were several periods during the summer of 1996 when the staff was unable to go to Darulaman Because of shelling and rocket fire. In early July the ancient bus that took them out to the museum every morning was fired on from the crest of the hills beyond Darulaman. The Lashkari Bazar mosque on the ground floor received a direct hit on 18 August, which tore a 3-foot hole in the roof, with the shattered wooden beams lying at all angles on the mosque floor, yet miraculously with no real damage to the extremely fragile plaster mihrab or wall panels, except for another coating of thick grey dust.

Amidst all this wreckage and rubble, it was encouraging to see most of the remaining objects had the old Kabul Museum registration numbers and were intact. The majority of objects were, in fact, fragments, but had always been fragments. The marble herm from Ai Khanum was found headless, but the head was later uncovered in another store and the figure is now complete. The ivory throne back from Begram had been demolished to remove the 13 small carved panels; splinters of the frame were found strewn over the floor. Countless fragments of smashed Greek plaster emblems were swept up from the Begram storeroom. Not a single intact object from the Begram collection was found. Of the schist figure of a worshipping child from Paitava, only the left hand remained as a small solitary fragment. The painted clay sated Bodhisattva from Tepe Maranjan was intact. The Islamic bronzes and lusterware from Ghazni had been mainly destroyed by fire. The 15 carved wooden figures and grave effigies from Nuristan were undamaged. A considerable number of wooden Nuristani pieces from the ethnographic collection remained, although many of the sculptured columns and lintels, chairs, and door panels had been cut up for firewood over the last three years. All the manuscripts and miniature paintings had been transferred earlier to the National Archives and were presumed safe.

Two weeks before the arrival of the Taliban, over 500 crates, trunks and boxes, containing 3,311 objects were shifted from the Kabul Museum to the Kabul Hotel. Left intact in the central hall of the Museum were the headless standing figure of Kanishka and the Kushan noble, the black marble basin from Kandahar, the Surkh Kotal inscription affixed by iron hooks to the wall and the Surkh Kotal fire altar, as well as the 11<sup>th</sup> century Islamic calligraphic frieze, and the 12<sup>th</sup> century reconstructed mosque and mihrab, both from Lashkari Bazar in the side hall.

Outside in the no-man's-land behind the Museum, there also remained one rusting carcass of a locomotive from king Amanullah's railway, the second one having already been down for scrap metal. None of the collection of the king's cars remained. During the last anxious days awaiting the approach of the Taliban, the second generator donated by SPACH was stolen.

**Summer 1997**

The Kabul Hotel premises were locked on 28 September 1996 by the Taliban Government and no museum staff was allowed to go to Darulaman. Underlining the great difference in the security situation from previous years, there was not a single guard at the Kabul Hotel and only one at Darulaman, who was only too glad to see any random visitor to the museum. When the SPACH liaison first went up the back wooden stairway of the Hotel to see how things appeared there, her footprints were the only ones in the thick layer of dust covering the stairs. No work was done at the Museum that summer.

**Summer 1998**

SPACH made contact with new Taliban Deputy Ministry of Cultural Affairs, who was cordial and pragmatic. Preparatory work for the inventory began in mid-July. The Ministry also planned to begin restoration of the ground floor of the Museum (using a \$14,000 grant from UNESCO from 1996), and to move all the trunks and boxes stored at Kabul Hotel to the Ministry of Information and Culture, as the Kabul Hotel was being taken over for use as a Taliban guest house.

Three weeks were spent sifting through the rubble which again littered the storeroom floors, sweeping out the debris and sorting out objects by sites. Work on the inventory began on August 10, with registration of 25 baked clay fragments from Shortorghai.

Because of the American bombing of Afghanistan on August 20, work stopped and all remaining expatriates were evacuated from Kabul.

**Summer 1999**

Inventory work began again in early May, with the continuing grant from the Dutch government. Work was delayed because the Museum staff had more or less dispersed during the last two years, coming only to sign the register at the Ministry of Information and Culture and going about their desperate attempts to find odd jobs in the bazaars of Kabul.

As the storerooms were carefully sorted out, a large number of unexpected and disparate objects appeared. It was believed, for example, that not single object remained from the Begram collection, yet more than 350 fragments were uncovered in an abandoned corner of another storeroom. In another far corner of the prehistoric room they came across objects from Gul Darra (the first time anything from this site appeared at the Museum). More objects came to light in the Confiscated storeroom, in the toilets in the Hadda basement store. The photographic room, badly damaged and burned, had yet to be sorted out. Still intact, the large Ceramics storeroom in the basement of the right wing, containing tens of thousands of pottery shards from all regions of Afghanistan was swept clean and left as it was. The wooden drawers all still had their original identification labels.

By the end of September it became clear that they would not finish the inventory before the cold of winter closed the Museum again. Over 1,100 artifacts had been measured, registered and packed during the summer of 1999.

As for the Museum building itself, Ministry of Information and Culture began preliminary reconstruction work, starting with the former ethnographic room, perpendicular to the back of the museum. Work was also done on the facade to fill in and plaster over all the bullet and shrapnel damage.

**2000**

This report is being written in Kabul, where the inventory work is again in process. Museum staff had worked through the fall of 1999 and spring, with over 1,000 additional objects registered. There is every expectation that all the remaining objects will be resisted and packed, and that the Kabul Museum can then look towards the subsequent phase of rehabilitation, which would include reestablishing its museology department and its restoration/ conservation laboratory.

Through the advocacy efforts of the Ministry of Information and Culture and the recent decrees issued by Mullah Omar against illegal excavation and smuggling of artifacts out of Afghanistan, the Deputy Ministry of Culture feels that awareness of the meaning and the significance of their cultural heritage is growing among Afghans, and that local authorities are their responsibilities seriously.

**Editor's note:**

This article was written before the event of March 2001. The optimistic forecast no longer applies.

## More on Kabul Museum

Carla Grissmann (October 2000)

### Inventory

Our work on the inventory during 2000 involved a final cleaning up of remaining scattered objects. Including ceramics piled in a corner of the former director's office, the contents of some wooden cases from the Italian delegation in Ghazni, and several lots of recently confiscated artifacts. As in previous years, most objects were fragmentary. The museum staff worked resolutely and loyally as they always have.

Still remaining in the museum are the large objects in the central hall (King Kanishka, the Kushan nobleman, the Surkh Kotal inscription, and the black marble basin from Kandahar, among others) and in various storerooms, some huge storage jars and other disparate objects (the most imprint, the Tele Maranjan Bodhisattva). The vast ceramics storeroom, with shards from all regions of Afghanistan, collected by J.C. Gardin of DAFA in the 1950s, has been left intact and in situ. The basement stores are presently stored on the ground floor rooms are empty and painted, with the internal electric system rewired. All other objects are presently stored on the ground floor of the Ministry of Information and Culture, in an extensive hall area, protected by partitions and iron grills. Plans for reconstruction exist and rebuilding is continuing.

Between 1996 and 2000, a total of 6,520 objects were inventoried, in Dari and English - the aggregate total, however, is much higher as hundreds of similar prehistoric objects such as arrow heads, flints, pebbles, were registered under single numbers - from the following sites: Hadda - 1,078, Tepe Maranjan - 2, Fondukistan - 77, Bamyán - 74, Kama Dakka - 18, Tepe Khazan - 11, Shotorak - 241, Ai Khanoum - 145, Kunduz - 10, Nangarhar Museum - 607, Balkh / Kandahar Museum - 118, Ethnographic - 446, Nuristan - 57, Dilbarjine Tepe - 114, Surkh Kotal - 184, Lashkari Bazaar - 380, Begram - 357, Shar-e-Zahak - 2, Emshi Tepe - 32, Tilla Tepe - 8, Dashli Tepe - 8, Ghazni - 184, Kapisa - 87, Shoturghai - 25, Mundigak - 309, Gul Darra - 8, Aq Kupruk - 35, Horse Cave - 133, Snake Cave - 142, Hazar Sum 104, Soviet-Afghan

Expedition - 121, Chaqalaq Tepe - 23, Durman Tepe-15, Sharan (confiscated) - 184, Various prehistoric sites - 7, Unknown sites - 100, Miscellaneous - 118, Confiscated - 689, And other miscellaneous.

The museum inventory is more or less complete; however, we are no closer to being able to make a final evaluation of what is missing. The 20 metal trunks on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Ministry and the uncounted trunks at the Treasury are still sealed and out of sight. The hope is still there that they contain some of the treasures that we know.



**Editor's Note:** Many museum objects were destroyed following the blasting of Bamiyan Buddhas.

### **Confiscated objects**

Through the efforts of the Taliban authorities to stop the smuggling of artifacts out of Afghanistan, many hundreds of objects have been seized. This raises a problem. The museum has inventoried some of the major confiscated hauls. A Mountain of burlap bags with ordinary pottery sized from a shop on Chicken Street and over 100 new, crude wooden implements are lying in the basement ready to be inventory. None of these objects is from the Museum, most of them are new, and only a handful of historical and iconographic interest. Before the war, these objects would routinely have been given the museum stamp and allowed to be exported to handicraft shops abroad. At the moment, the museum has neither the means, nor the space to register and store thousands of objects of little interest and which will never have a place in the museum displays of collections. Discussions are to be held on how to handle this problem.

### **Brief re-opening of Kabul Museum in August 2000**

In July 2000, Deputy Ministry of Information and Culture, Mawlawi Hotaki, made plans to put a small number of objects on display and organize a public event to coincide with the presentation of the inscription brought from Pul-I-Khumri and to celebrate jeshyn, Afghan Independence Day, August 17.

It must be said that the museum looked wonderful. All bullet/rocket/shell damage to façade had been filled in, smoothed over and painted. There were 24 objects on display in the entrance and hallway, half of them permanently in place, including the superb clay Bodhisattva from Tepe Maranjan. The former library was turned into an exhibition room, with eight tables of ethnographic artifacts, mainly from Nuristan, and confiscated objects from the Islamic period. The tables were covered in jute, with the objects strikingly arranged, all with labels in Dari and English. The electric system had been restored on the ground floor, and the lighting was synchronized by rushing the generator from one bathroom to the next to plug into the next batch of light bulbs, as the guests advanced.

Before the ribbon was cut there were speeches and an academic paper on Rabatak inscription.

Quite a number of people visited the museum after the 17<sup>th</sup>, but by August 23, everything was packed up again, and the Rabatak inscription was taken to the Ministry of Information and Culture store room.

### **Illegal excavations**

These illegal diggings are an integral part of the disastrous plight of Afghanistan's cultural heritage. Sites are attacked and devastated by bulldozers, tractors, pickaxes and the strata are destroyed forever. There does not seem to be any systematic approach or central clearing house for gathering or disseminating information. From a recently discovered site near Charasiab (compared by Mr. Rasouli from the Institute of Archaeology to small Surkh Kotal with stairs, temple, and stupa) they recovered a schist frieze of a Yakshi with unusual diaphanous drapery to her ankles and three stucco Buddha heads. The site had been meticulously demined in a straight path up to base; tunnels had been dug vertically and horizontally through the stupa in the search for a reliquary, all "very professionally done". Two brothers were arrested, confessing they had already sold numerous pieces from that site. Similar things are going on all over Afghanistan.

## A Visit to Lahore Ehsanullah Mamundzai (February 2001)

A delegation from the Kabul Museum headed by Director Mr. Ahmadyar and Deputy Director, Mr. Masoudi, as well as the writer, visited Lahore in February 2001 to discuss with Mr. Safdar Khan, senior Chemist, Central Archaeological Laboratory, Lahore Fort, his recommendations for the setting up of a Conservation/Restoration Laboratory in Kabul Museum. At the Lahore Fort the delegation was welcomed by the officials of the Lahore fort, including Mr. Safdar Khan. A very production exchange of views on the possibilities for future collaboration took place on the occasion. These included:



*From L to R: Mr. M.Afzal Khan, Mr. Ahmad Yar, Mr. Q.A. Qasim, Mr. Masoudy, Mr. M. A. Malik and Mr. Ehsanullah Mamundzai*

1. Referring to his assessment mission to Kabul Museum in June last year. Mr. Saddar Khan reiterated that conservation works on the Lashkari Bazar Mosque in Kabul Museum was urgent and should be carried out as soon as possible. As the proposed work is of a highly technical nature, he recommended that it be supervised by a specialist. He hinted to the possibility that SPACH could avail of Pakistan's expertise for this project. He estimated the project would cost about US\$ 2,000.
2. The SPACH project restore the Shrine of Khawja Parsa in Balkh was also discussed with Mr. Maqsood Malik. It was concluded that SPACH need to approach the Government of Pakistan to obtain authorization for Mr. Malik to undertake an assessment mission to the site and come up with recommendation for the execution of the cost about US\$ 2,000.
3. Mr. Safdar Khan reaffirmed that the remaining objects of Kabul Museum were in urgent need of conservation. Necessary chemicals might be obtained from ICCROM, while Japan could be approached to supply tools and equipment. He stressed however that both ICCROM and Japan needed to be assured that Kabul Museum had (1) qualified staff with knowledge and capacity to use the chemicals and tools (2) suitable work space (3) furniture (4) electricity and water.
4. Mr. Khan proposed training some of the Kabul Museum staff, preferably at the Lahore Fort on artifact and stone conservation, for a period of two months under his supervision. Afterwards these trainees might obtain further training though ICCROM. Only after such training, could requests be made to ICCROM for chemicals and to Japan for tools and equipment.
5. Mr. Qasim said that workshops on artifact and stone conservation were regularly held in their institute at Lahore Fort, attended by professionals from different countries. He offered of invite staff from Kabul Museum, provided SPACH prepared the ground with the concerned authorities of Pakistan. He added that Pakistan had experts in the field of excavation, surveying, conservation, restoration, preservation, tile making, inventory and Islamic architecture and that SPACH might consider using such expertise.

On behalf of SPACH, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Qasim Ali Qasim, Mr. Mohammad Safdar Khan, Mr. Mohammad Afzal Khan and all other officials of the Lahore Fort for their warm welcome as well as their useful proposals and look forward their future cooperation at a later date when conditions and attitudes permit SPACH to continue its activities.

## Protection for Jam Minaret: A Gabion Wall along the Hari River

ENG. Sayed Jawed, HAFO (April 2001)

Jam Minaret, built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by Sultan Ghiasuddin during the Ghorid period, is located at the crossing point of the Hari and Jam rivers in the district of Shahrak, Ghor province. It rises to a height of 63 meter, and its foundation has a diameter of 8 meters. A double spiral staircase leading to the top can be entered through an opening about 2 meters above ground. The nearest village, Jam village, can be reached by foot in one hour. This unique minaret is no doubt one of the wonders of the world and one of the years, seasonal spring flooding eroded the distance between the foundation and the two riverbanks. When surveyed in August 2000, the distance was only 1 to 1.5 meters. Jam Minaret leans slightly towards the north (about 2 degrees towards the Hari River).



© Eng. Ehsan, Jan 2001

In February 2000, Eng. Akbari, a hydrologist, was commissioned by SPACH to build a wall of stones and wood reinforcement along Jam River. The work was successfully carried out by Mr. Gul Agha Karimi, of Payam-e-Ghor.

In August 2000, the area was visited by Mr. Robert Kluyver, SPACH representative, Eng. Jawed, Mr. Gul Agha Karimi, Mr. Abdul Ahad, architect from the Herat Monuments Department, and the Jam Minaret Committee (established by Gul Agha Ahad in 2000). The team concluded that a protective wall of gabion (steel wire baskets) and stone should be constructed at a distance of ten meters from the foundation of the minaret along the Hari River. Work started on 15 October 2000 and was completed on 22 January 2001, supervised by Helping Afghan farmers Organization (HAFO) and Payam-e-Ghor Rehabilitation Organization (PGRO) engineers, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Information and Culture, Kabul, and the local committee. World Food Programme (WFP) contributed 40 metric tones of wheat, which were distributed to skilled (12 kg per day) and unskilled (6 kg per day) laborers on a daily basis. Wheat was also given to 155 poor and female headed families in the area. HAFO purchased approximately 200 sq.m of gabion in the Jam area (possibly left by Prof. Andrea Bruno in the late 1970s), while all other gabion was imported from Iran and purchased in Herat.

A protective wall (45 meters long, 3 meters wide at the base, 1 meter wide at the top and 5 meters high) was constructed at a distance of 10 meter from the minaret upstream along the bank of the Hari River. An 11 meters long wall (with similar measurements as above) was also built along the bank of the Jam River, as an extension to the first wall built in 2000. Each was compacted between the gabion wall and the river bank to stop the water from penetrating the wall. Sand and gravel were placed on top of the wall, as well as around the minaret. Stones were removed from both riverbeds to lower the water level by 1.5 meters. Stones were placed in the Jam River some along 300 meters.

HAFO recommends the following additional activities:

To repair the wooden enforcement on the spiral staircases and to repair the foundation of the minaret, as some bricks are missing.

Of great concern is the fact that an NGO is planning to build a road close to Jam Minaret. This project should be reconsidered immediately. The road will endanger this unique heritage of Afghanistan as a result of vibration and increased traffic.

## The Rehabilitation of the Musallah Complex in Herat begins

Eng. Jawed, HAFO (April 2001)

The project's primary goal was to preserve and restore monuments and also to strengthen the capacity of the Herat monuments Department by implementing projects in close collaboration. Preparations started on August 7, 2000, while actual work began on August 12, 2000. The Governor and the Departments of Culture & Information and Planning supported the implementation of the project and assured full cooperation, including access to water for irrigation which was also approved by the Herat Municipality. HAFO employed one engineer, one supervisor and two guards (through the Monuments Department) for four months and appointed Mr. Shafi as project manager. All staff was present at the project site throughout the project implementation. The workers were hired from the IDP camps in Herat who had fled from Ghor and Badghis due to the ongoing drought. The Monuments Department contributed pipes for scaffolding for the repair of the minaret. WFP approved the SPACH/HAFO projects proposal and contributed a total of 100 MT of wheat.

### Garden around Mausoleum of Gawhar Shad:

The total area of about 6 hectares used to be surrounded by a 1,023 meter long wall which no longer existed, but was rebuilt and partially repaired by HAFO. The sketch and site plan of the Gawhar Shad was prepared by HAFO, assisted by the Municipality and the Monuments Department. The existing 6 meters deep well was rehabilitated. Excavation of 370 cubic meters was required for the foundation of the surrounding wall. The foundation with stone, lime and cement was constructed. The surrounding wall was partially of first bricks. The mud brick wall with the length of 649 meters and height 2.1 meters was built.

A number of important meetings were held in the garden of Gawhar Shad mausoleum by Eng. Sayed Jawed, Director HAFO, Mr. Rahimee, construction engineer, Mr. Abdul Waseh, Director, FEROGH, Mr. Hashim, Director, Municipality, Mr. Rashid, Engineer, PAMA representative, Mr. Haji Abdul Ahad, architect, Herat Monuments Department of Herat, and Mr. Shafi, engineer, HAFO. In these meetings all issues relating to the eastern wall, main gate minaret as well as other problems were discussed.



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Every effort was made to get the work done effectively in terms of technical details and cost effectiveness. A shallow canal (9,000 meters long, 50 cm wide and 50 cm deep) was dug for irrigation purposes. The volleyball ground and playground for the children was designed. Of the 9,020 planted trees, 2,850 are fruit trees. Banosh and mulberry trees were planted along the canals. Of the above trees, 500 were purchased by the Monuments department, 100 were donated by the NGO ANSARI, and the rest by Agency of Rehabilitation & Energy Conservation in Afghanistan (AREA).

Thanks to all those who contributed to the beginning of a new Ghawar Shad Garden!!! The right of supplying of adequate water for the irrigation of the area has been approved by the Governor. It has been suggested that a reservoir will be made for storing of water which will be used for irrigation in future. Beside, HAFO had requested APEA to dig a deep well for irrigation of these plants. AREA accepted the idea and finally dug a deep well measuring 70m depth in the premises of Gawhar Shad garden.

#### **Sultan Hussain Baiqara Madrassa:**

The madrassa is located to the north of Queen Gawhar Shad mausoleum and covers an area of 11,000 square meters. Four tall minarets stand at the four corners of the former madrassa. HAFO repaired the SE minaret (Minaret #4) and constructed a 782 meters long mud brick surrounding wall with the height of 2.1 meters to protect the site. The sketch and site plan was approved by the head of the Municipality and the monuments Department. The area was cleaned and mud wall of baked bricks, with a stone foundation, measuring 250 cubic meters was erected. Fired bricks were placed on top of the wall. One bridge made of stone and brick was constructed over the Shali Pateri canal and one over the Engeel canal.

#### **Repair of Minaret # 4:**

After erecting the scaffolding, a huge amount of pigeon droppings was removed from the inside of the minaret. Broken bricks had to be removed and the staircase were cleaned. When the engineers climbed up the minaret to assess the damage, they discovered not only a bomb (of Russian origin) but also numerous cracks and extensive damage to the spine of the Minaret. Brick and mortar samples were sent to a laboratory in Pakistan for their chemical composition. Cracks in the walls were filled with gypsum. More than four thousand fired round brick were used to repair the spine of the minaret. Furthermore, seventhly wooden beams were used to strengthen the minaret.



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## Suggestions & Recommendations for the Protection of Leaning Minaret of Gawhar Shad Madrassa

Eng. Sayed Jawed(April 2001)

A meeting called by Engineer Sayed Jawed was held at 10:00 AM on Friday, February 2, 2001 at Gawhar Shad Garden. Several scholars and experts participated and discussed different ways and means to guard and protect the leaning minaret.

All participants agreed that this Minaret is an important cultural asset must be protected.

The leaning minaret, which is on the south-eastern side of the Gawhar shad mausoleum, has been seriously damaged and tilted. Its repair is a question mark. Immediate actions must be taken to prevent another great loss of valuable historical heritage of Afghanistan similar to that of the Chakari minaret in Kabul.

The participants fully agreed on the following two points.

- To construct a supportive wall underneath the leaning part of the minaret,
- To make strong steel rings around the minaret at different points and connect them with a steel cable at the ground level. The participants were of the view that by doing so, the minaret could be saved for the time being.

Engineer Syed Jawed suggested that these recommendations be forwarded to UNESCO for further evaluation. UNESCO may also be approached for provision of necessary funds.

Other suggestions to be considered were:

1. Stopping traffic from using the road near the minaret.
2. Constructing a footpath and planting trees at a distance of 10 meters from the eastern wall of Gawhar Shad Garden.
3. PAMA be given all relevant details concerning the construction
4. of the footpath by the Department of Historical Monuments for further action.
5. A technical survey and study of the leaning minaret should be made to ascertain the deviation of the minaret.



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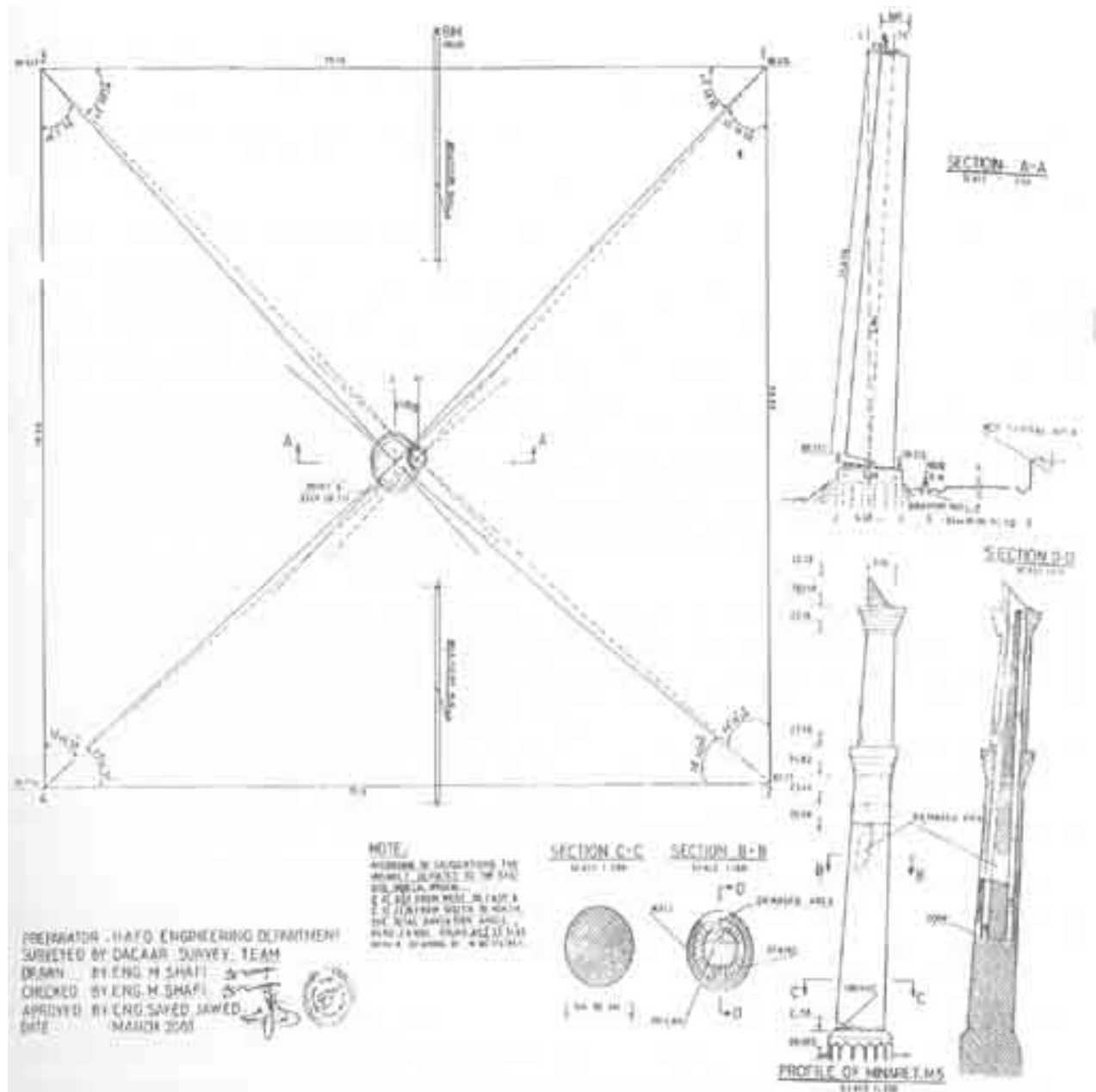
*Inclination/deterioration point of the minaret*

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This has since been by DACCAR with the technical drawing prepared by HAFO.

**Participants:**

NAME	POSITION
1. ENG. SAYED JAWED	DIRECTOR HAFO
2. MAULVI ABDUL HAQ	HEAD OF HERAT MONUMENTS DEPARTMENT
3. HAJI ABDUL AHAD	ARCHITECT OF HERAT MONUMENTS DEPARTMENT
4. ENG. M. HASHIM	HEAD OF AFGHAN CONSTRUCTION UNIT, HERAT
5. ENG. ABD RASHID	DIRECTOR OF PAMA, HERAT
6. ENG. JAMI	PROFFSSIONAL ENGINEER
7. ENG. A. WASEH THEMORI	DIRECTOR OF FOROGH(Private Construction Company)
8. SYED ABD QADIR RAHIMI	ARCHITECT, UNHCR HERAT
9. ENG. MOH. SHAFI	REGIONAL MANAGER HAFO



# The Retrieval of the Rabatak Inscription

Robert Kluyver, (October 2000)

## Introduction

The inscription found at Rabatak, Baghlan Province, is an extremely valuable historical document. Engraved in the time of the great Kushan King Kanishka, it contains precious information about the geographical extent of the Kushan Empire, its history and the religions practiced at the time. Written in the Bactrian language but using the Greek alphabet, it also has great linguistic value. The 23-line inscription, measuring 98 x 60 cm, on a limestone slab 25 cm thick, complements the Surkh Kotal inscription, found nearby, of the same period and with a similar ceremonial function.

The Rabatak inscription was unearthed by fighters digging a trench in 1993. Sayyid Jaffar Nadiri, then the commander of the area, had the stone slab transferred to his home in Pul-i-Khumri. He requested a British aid worker, Tim Porter of the HALO Trust, to make a video of it, which was subsequently sent to London. Prof. Nicholas Sims-Williams, working at the British Museum, and one of the leading specialists of the Bactrian language in the world, translated most of it, but not having the original could not interpret some parts of the text. Dr. Jonathan Lee, a specialist in Afghan history, saw the inscription in 1997. But shortly afterwards heavy fighting took place in Baghlan. Sayyid Jaffar's residence in Pul-i-Khumri was sacked, and his army base in Kayhan destroyed. The inscription was temporarily lost.

## Search

In April 2000 Dr. Lee returned to Afghanistan for more historical research. One of his main objectives was to find the Rabatak inscription and make new and better recording of it. I accompanied him on his journey to Pul-i-Khumri. Enquiries in the provincial capital resulted in wide variety of stories. Some people said the inscription had been brought Kayhan in the early stages of the fighting and others that it remained hidden in Pul-i-Khumri. Some said it had been destroyed along with the substantial collection of Buddhist artifacts in Nadiri's possession. Others suggested that Nadiri's had taken it along, shipped it to Tashkent, or London, where it might have been sold. The quest seemed bound to become a wild goose chase. Eventually, a low-level clerk of the local Department of mines in Pul-i-Khumri told Dr. Lee that the Rabatak inscription might be in a depot of the local Department of mines in Pul-i-Khumri. After receiving the appropriate authorization, Dr. Lee went there and was relieved to ascertain that, although slightly damaged in transfers between Pul-i-Khumri and Kayhan the inscription was there and still in good condition. He took several rolls of film of the text. SPACH informed the local authorities it would try to arrange for the transfer of the inscription to Kabul, for safekeeping and eventual conservation work.

## Transfer

In the following months I prepared for the transfer of the inscription from Pul-i-Khumri to Kabul, where it would be kept at the Ministry of Information and Culture. It was also agreed that upon safe receipt, publicity would be given to this important retrieval, a turning point in the recent history of Kabul Museum. For years, this Museum had only suffered losses, through rocket damage and looting, and this would be major acquisition of the Museum.

In July I set out with Mawlawi Ahmadyar, Director of the Kabul Museum, Mr. Masudi, Deputy Director, and Mr. Zakir, an archaeologist attached to the Institute of Archaeology. What would normally have been a simple expedition—drive to Pul-i-Khumri, load the inscription, and drive back was complicated by the blocking of the Salang tunnel. We therefore decided to drive it to Mazar-i-Sharif and load it on an airplane.

After arduous negotiations with different authorities, a military cargo aircraft agreed in principle to take it, but fighting around Kabul airport delayed its departure, and the team had to wait for days at the airport, under the merciless Bactrian summer sun. Finally the heavy limestone slab was painstakingly lifted into the cargo plane and flown to Kabul, accompanied by the Museum staff.

## Exhibition

Back in Kabul, the Deputy Ministry for Information and Cultural, Mawlawi Hotaki, and the museum director decided to organize a small exhibition around the Rabatak inscription, showing confiscated items and some artifacts that had escaped the looting of the Kabul museum. The façade of the building had been repaired to conceal the extremely heavy damage suffered when it was in front-line territory, and an appropriate time to show the people of Kabul that there was still some cultural activity going on.

Carla Grissmann, who has been working together with the Museum staff since 1995 to complete the inventory of remaining objects, organized the exhibition on behalf of SPACH. It opened on 17 August, as part of the Jeshyn (Independence) celebration. Some of the expatriate community in Kabul, including journalists, came to the opening. The BBC gave full coverage to the event on television and radio. Several high-ranking Taliban, including the Ministers of Education and

Foreign Affairs, also attended. It was a moving moment for many of the Museum staff who had labored selflessly for years to keep the institution open, against all odds.

The Rabatak inscription, surrounded by black velvet and nicely lit, was the centerpiece of the exhibition and attracted much attention. Mr. Ferowski, director of the Institute of Archaeology, gave an interpretation of its meaning. Another valuable artifact exhibition was the clay Bodhisattva from Tepe Maranjan. Within days, however, all exhibition artifacts, including the Rabatak inscription, were returned to the safer premises of the Ministry of Information and Cultural. There they remain, under the responsibility of several tawildar (Key-Holders), awaiting a more definitive Kabul Museum opening.

### Translation of Rabatak Inscription

Nicholas Sims-Williams

[The king of kings], the great salvation, Kanishka the Kushan, the righteous, the just, the autocrat worthy of divine worship, who has obtained the kingship from Nana and from all the gods, who has inaugurated the year one as the gods pleased-he issued (?) a Greek edict (?) (and) then he put it into Aryan. In the year one the news (?) has been proclaimed unto India, unto the cities of the kshatriyas, that (as for) them-both. . ., and Saketa, and Kausambi, and Pataliputra, as far as Sri-Campa- whatever leaders and other \*authorities (they might have), he had submitted (them) to (his) will, and he had submitted all India to (his) will. Then King Kanishka ordered Shafar the karalrang to make at this [time] the sanctuary which is called B. . .ab, in the plain of the (royal) house, for these gods, (of) whom the. . . glorious (?) Umma leads the service (?) here, (namely:) the above-mentioned Nana and the above-mentioned Umma, Aurmuzd, the Gracious one, Sroshard, Narasa, (and) Mihr. (Over this list of gods are traces of writing in smaller letters, of which the final words are legible: ". . . and he is called Mahasena and he is called Visakha"). And he gave orders to make images of the same, (namely) of these gods who are written herein, and he gave orders to make (statues of) these kings: King Kujula Kadphises (his) great grandfather, and King Vima Taktu (his) grandfather, and King Vima Kadphises (his) father, and himself, King Kanishka. Then, as the king of kings, the scion of the race of the gods. . . had given orders to do, Shafar the karalrang made this sanctuary. [Then. . .] the karalrang, and Shafar the karalrang, and Nukunzuk the ashtwalg [performed] the (king's) command. (As for) these gods who are written here-may they [keep] the king of kings, Kanishka the Kushan, for ever healthy, fortunate, (and) victorious, and [may] the son of the gods [rule] all India from the year one to the year one thousand (?). . . the sanctuary was founded(?) in the year one; then in the third (?) year [it was] dedicated (?) . . . according to the king's command, many. . . were given, many attendants (?) were given, many. . . [were given] . . . the king gave an endowment (?) to the gods, and for these. . . [who were given] to the gods. . .

\*Copyright Nicholas Sims-Williams

Professor Sims-Williams writes that the reading and translation of the Rabatak Inscription are his alone, based on photographs taken by Dr. Jonathan Lee.

## Restoration of the Abd-ur-Razzaq Mausoleum in Ghazni

(UNESCO FUNDED PROJECT)

In the early 1960's IsMEO (Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente) began restoring the Mausoleum of Abd-ur-Razzaq, a fine example of 16<sup>th</sup> century Timurid architecture, with the intention to make it into a Museum of Islamic Art. The restoration was carried out under the direction of Architect Andrea Bruno and Mr. D'Amico, and the museum opened in 1966.



Small but excellent, it housed objects excavated by the IsMEO in Ghazni, from the palace of Mas'ud III, the House of Lustres (a magnificent and richly decorated villa dating back to the end of 11<sup>th</sup> century) and the gardens around Sultan Mahmud's mausoleum, among others. Ceramic tiles, glass, bronzes, a manuscript of Sana'i and marble carvings all illustrated the magnificence of this period of Islamic art in Afghanistan.

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The collection was brought to Kabul in the early 1980's, and it is hoped that at least part of it remains in sealed trunks in the Kabul Museum.

The Mausoleum suffered from rocket attacks, artillery fire and lack of maintenance. The straw-plaster covering its roof had not been replaced for years, leading to leakage which damaged the stucco work inside. Bricks had fallen out of the dome, leaving holes. The major damage however, was the collapse of the four portals. In November 2000, Mr. Ghulam Naqshband Rajabi, who had worked with IsMEO in Ghazni, was contracted by SPACH to carry out the out the restoration work.

The huge central dome, which was severely damaged by rocket attacks during the years of conflict, had a large hole of approximately 2.5 square meters. This was repaired, as well as the eastern arch, which was 40% destroyed. The old retaining wall close to the external curve of the arch was reconstructed. The Four Corners around the central dome had lost 80 cubic centimeters of their concrete format. All these damaged areas have been properly repaired. The surface of the entire roof was covered with a 3-cm thick straw-mud layer. The southern 'tower' of the mausoleum also had holes in various parts of its structure including the shaft. A two cubic meters hole was repaired. The water outlets on the roof had not been maintained for years and one of the main outlets was missing. Five white marble passages were replaced in the original locations. Remains of ruins and the destroyed walls and inner portion of the dome were cleaned, removed and replaced with materials matching the original structure. Over 100 square meters of the internal plaster which had peeled-off were skillfully repaired. Some 30 missing doors and windows of high quality white wood were re-installed in January this year.



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