

# Assessing of Geographical History the Buddhas of Bamiyan in Afghanistan

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*Afghanistan became State Party to the World Heritage Convention in 1979. Since then, Afghanistan submitted 9 nominations to UNESCO's World Heritage Committee for inscription on the World Heritage List. In June 2002, the deferred and reformulated nomination dossier of the Archaeological Remains and Minaret of Jam was re-examined by the World Heritage Committee and inscribed on the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger, representing the first cultural heritage property located in Afghanistan to obtain international recognition under the 1972 UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*

*In the valley of Bamiyan, Afghanistan, approximately 1700 years ago, two large standing Buddha statues were carved out of the sedimentary rock of the region. They were 53 and 38 m high and the larger one figured as the tallest representation of a standing Buddha in the world. In March 2001 the Taleban government militia demolished the colossal statues. After the destruction a group from ETH Zurich completed the computer reconstruction of the Great Buddha, which can serve as the basis for a physical reconstruction. This paper reports the results of the image-based 3D reconstruction of the statue, performed on three different data-sets in parallel and using different photogrammetric techniques and algorithms.*

*The statues were dynamited and destroyed in March 2001 by the Taliban, on orders from leader Mullah Mohammed Omar, after the Taliban government declared that they were idols. An envoy visiting the United States in the following weeks said that they were destroyed in protest of international aid exclusively reserved for statue maintenance while Afghanistan was experiencing famine, while the Afghan Taliban Foreign Minister claimed that the destruction was merely about carrying out Islamic religious iconoclasm. International opinion strongly condemned the destruction of the Buddhas.*

## Methodology of the Study

The papers in your hand are a research on the subject of Assessing of Geographical History the Buddhas of Bamiyan in Afghanistan, which was done by to scholars. In this research, we have use interview and questionnaire for better distinction. We hope to precede this research in an effective and logical way and be in the service of my society. The purpose of this article is identifying about the geography and historical situation of Bamiyan, Buddha's sculpture and determining the amount destruction in Bamiyan, Buddhas sculpture. In addition, 175 participants participated in this research and answered the questions from governmental and non-governmental from Bamiyan and others province has been done. There are some main and sub questions in the following that answered in conclusion.

## Research Questions

- 1- How much the Buddhas of Bamiyan Taliban has destroyed?
- 2- How much Buddhas of Bamiyan UNESCO has reconstructed?
- 3- How much is the effect Buddhas of Bamiyan in tourism of Bamiyan ?
- 4- How much the Government of Afghanistan has been effort to preservation of historical statues?
- 5- How much is the attraction of Buddhas of Bamiyan in tourism development?

**Keywords—** *Bamiyan, History, geography, Buddhas, Sculptures,*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The region of Bamiyan, approximately 200 km north-west of Kabul, Afghanistan, was one of the major Buddhist centres from the 2nd century ad up to the time when Islam entered the area in the 8th century. For centuries, Bamiyan lay at the heart of the famous Silk Road, offering rest to caravans carrying goods across the area between China and Western empires. Strategically situated in a central location for travellers from north to south and east to west, the village of Bamiyan was a common meeting place for many ancient cultures.

Prior to their recent destruction, the 6th-7th century, rock-cut Buddha sculptures in the Bamiyan Valley of central Afghanistan were considered the largest in the world. Known collectively as the Bamiyan Buddhas, the two monumental sculptures have amazed both Buddhist and non-Buddhist visitors for more than a thousand years. Like many of the world's great ancient monuments, little is known about who commissioned the Bamiyan Buddhas or the sculptors who carved them. However, their very existence points to the importance of the Buddhist faith and the Bamiyan Valley during this period.

In the Bamiyan valley (Fig. 1), at an altitude of 2500 m, three big statues of Buddha and a great number of caves were carved out from the sedimentary rock of the region (Figs. 2 and 3). There were two big standing Buddha statues, which stood about 900 m apart, while in the centre there was a smaller image of a seated Buddha (Fig. 5).

Bamyan lies on the Silk Road, which runs through the Hindu Kush mountain region, in the Bamyan Valley. The Silk Road has been historically a caravan route linking the markets of China with those of the Western world. It was the site of

several Buddhist monasteries, and a thriving center for religion, philosophy, and art. Monks at the monasteries lived as hermits in small caves carved into the side of the Bamiyan cliffs. Most of these monks embellished their caves with religious statuary and elaborate brightly colored frescoes. It was a Buddhist religious site from the 2nd century up to the time of the Islamic invasion in the later half of the 7th century. Until it was completely conquered by the Muslim Saffarids in the 9th century, Bamiyan shared the culture of Gandhara. (Janssen, Sarah. 2018).

### **Geographical description Buddhas of Bamiyan**

Surrounded by the extensions of the Hindu Kush, Bamiyan Valley is situated in a large tectonic basin, approximately 50 km long and 15 km wide, at an altitude of 2,500 m in the central highlands of Afghanistan. The continental mountainous climate results in moderate summers and long harsh winters. The Kuhe San-e Chaspân mountains (4,400 m) in the north, while the Koh-e Baba mountain range in the south and east are natural barriers of this valley. The Bamiyan Valley opens to the Fuladi Valley in the west and to Kakrak Valley in the south east.

The Bamiyan River runs from the slopes of the Koh-e-Baba mountains into Bamiyan Valley via the Shibar Pass in the east, permitting an extensive network of irrigation canals and cultivated terraces to make up the valley landscape. The vegetation is composed of poplar trees and orchards of apricot and apple trees. The principle crops are potatoes, wheat, maize and kitchen vegetables. The local fauna includes sheep, goats and cattle and wild animals such as wolves and foxes. Along the Bamiyan River, the traditional houses are built of mud and some burned brick, which blend harmoniously into the landscape. In the Kakrak Valley, the settlements are located high above the river level and composed of mud brick structures and cave dwellings. The modern town of Bamiyan developed in front of the cliffs where the 55 meter tall Buddha was located. The Bamiyan City is the administrative centre of the Province of Bamiyan. Bamiyan Cliff including niches of the 38 meter Buddha, seated Buddhas, 55 meter Buddha and surrounding caves.

A series of caves and niches carved into the cliff walls and adorned with mural paintings are found in Bamiyan Valley. In the late 16th century A.D., the *Ain-e-Akbari*<sup>1</sup>, the detailed gazetteer of the Akbar empire mentioned the existence of around 12,000 grottoes forming an ensemble of Buddhist monasteries, chapels and sanctuaries along the foothills of the valley. On the northern side of the Bamiyan Valley, two colossal niches remind the visitor of the monumental statues of the 55 meter standing Buddha and the 38 meter standing Buddha which were destroyed with dynamite in March 2001. These large sculptures were carved into the southern face of the cliff between the 4th and the 6th century A.D.. In addition to the two standing Buddhas, three seated Buddhas were sculpted within this cliff face between the large standing Buddhas, which were in fragile state of conservation by the dawn of the 21st century A.D., and completely destroyed by the Taliban regime in March 2001.

These principle niches with sculpted Buddhas, were surrounded by numerous caves and grottoes along the cliff-face the Bamiyan Valley, often decorated with outstanding examples of mural paintings or rock-carved decorations.

During the UNESCO - ICOMOS – Afghan mission to Bamiyan in July 2002, a non destructive geophysical survey of an area of one hectare in front of the 53 meter Buddha niche was undertaken. This survey resulted with the identification of built structures as well as the former existence of a road, entry gate and of a protection wall along the cliff. It is believed that underground archaeological remains of a Buddhist monastery may be found in the area between the two large niches where the 53 meter and 38 meter Buddhas were located. However, after two decades of civil unrest in Afghanistan, on-site scientific research including archaeological soundings remains limited. A significant area within the Bamiyan Valley remains mined with Anti Personnel Mines (APM) and full-scale archaeological research will be possible only after demining is completed.

The following paragraphs provide brief descriptions of the principle Buddhist heritage areas located along the Bamiyan cliff<sup>4</sup>, presented from east to west.

The Buddhas were built under the control of the Kushan dynasty, which ruled between the late 1st century and early 3rd century ad over a kingdom incorporating Northern India, certain regions of Central Asia and areas corresponding to present-day Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Emperor Kanishka ordered the construction of the statues and some descendants of Greek artists, who went to Afghanistan with Alexander the Great, started the construction that lasted probably until the 3rd or 4th century ad. The Kushan dynasty produced the distinctive Gandhara art. Gandhara developed an artistic style blending Greco-Roman influences and Indian Buddhism (Musée National des Arts Asiatiques-Guimet, 2004).

These objects of religious sculpture, including the Buddhas of Bamiyan, belong to the Indian Mathura school. J. Hackin even argues that:

Nothing could be more natural than that the artists of Mathura were inspired by the statues at Bamiyan justly famous at that time throughout the Buddhist world (Hackin, 1928: page 109).

The larger statue of Bamiyan was 53 m high while the smaller one measured 38 m, The Great Buddha should represent Vairocana, the “Light Shining throughout

<sup>1</sup> *Ain-e-Akbari*, Calcutta, Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1939-49



Figure 1: The empty Buddha caves as observed by Ikonos (courtesy of Space Imaging, Inc.). Left: Great Buddha. Right: Small Buddha.



Figure 2 : The Great Buddha (left and centre) and the smaller statue (right).

The Universe'' Buddha, while the small one should represent Shakyamuni (AIIS, 2004; IRAO, 2004). They were cut from the sandstone cliffs and were covered with a mud and straw mixture to model fine details such as the expression of the face, the hands and the folds of the robe. An account of the building technique of the colossal statue is given in Knobloch (2002: page 93):

The Bamiyan Buddha was created by cutting a high-relief figure into the face of the soft conglomerate cliff. It is possible that the niche was carved out first, using scaffolding slotted into holes cut into the cliff, before the ambulatory galleries were carved; the scaffolding later being replaced by a series of permanent wooden ladders, landings and facades. The torso was roughly shaped and detailing of the folds of the gown was built out by cutting lines of shallow holes for wooden pegs on which were hung ropes coated with thick stucco.

The lower parts of the arms were constructed on wooden armatures while it is generally assumed that the upper parts of the faces were made as wooden masks. The two giants were painted in gold and other colours and they were decorated with dazzling ornaments. They are considered the first series of colossal cult images in Buddhist art and may even be among the first representations of Buddha himself in human form, replacing the older symbolic portrayals of the Indian bas-reliefs. The niches of the statues, as well as most of the caves of the cliff, were also decorated with colourful frescos.

First written reports about the Buddha statues come from the Chinese travellers Fah-Sien (around ad 400) and Hsuan-Tsang (ad 630). Especially, Hsuan-Tsang describes in great detail the site where 5000 monks were active in monasteries and caves, carved into the large rock face, containing also two standing Buddhas. He also reports of the Great Buddha being painted in vivid colours and having a wooden face mask painted in gold.

The first damage came about with the arrival of Islam in the 8th century. Reportedly, Genghis Khan destroyed the town of Bamiyan in 1221, but did not do any harm to the monks and the Buddhas. Major destruction through the firing of cannon balls at the statues is reported under the Moguls Shah Aurangzeb and Nadir Shah in the 17th and 18th centuries, respectively.

The 19th century saw an influx of amateur archaeologists, who more specifically were medical doctors, military personnel, government agents and the occasional traveller. Alexander Burnes, who visited Bamiyan in 1832, is considered the modern discoverer of the Buddhas, although he was not the first eyewitness of modern times. Fig. 4 shows a drawing by Burnes in which the Buddhas have a fantastic appearance and only little resemblance with reality.





Figure 3: Alexander Burnes' drawing of the Buddhas of Bamiyan.

In 1833 the military deserter, secret service agent and treasure hunter James Lewis (who called himself “Charles Masson”) visited the site. It is said that he left the following graffito (which however could not be found by the present authors): ‘If any fool this high samooch explore know Charles Masson has been here before.’ (Knobloch, E., 2002.)

It took another century until the first serious excavations and investigations were conducted. For the French agency DAFA (Delegation Arche´ologique Franc,aise en Afghanistan) renowned experts like A. Godard, J. Carl and J. and R. Hackin worked between 1920 and 1930 in Bamiyan. R. Hackin published the first guidebook on Bamiyan in 1934. He noticed inexperienced craftsmanship on the Small Buddha as well as some cumbersome and primitive features. Since the Great Buddha is more sensibly proportioned, it was assumed that it was built after the Small Buddha. But there is no clear evidence for this.

Robert Byron, the English travel writer who visited Bamiyan in 1933/34 obviously disliked the Buddhas very much. He wrote in his *The Road to Oxiana*:

The colours of this extraordinary valley with its cliff of rhubarb red, its indigo peaks roofed in glittering snow and its new-sprung corn of harsh electric green, shone doubly brilliant in the clear mountain air ... And there suddenly, like an enormous wasps' nest, hung the myriad caves of the Buddhist monks, clustered about the two giant Buddhas. (Byron, 1981)

Violent events since 1979 have damaged both society and infrastructure in Afghanistan and have greatly reduced the number of visitors to Bamiyan. The long period of conflict culminated in an edict by the Taliban government to destroy non-Islamic images in the country. Despite major international efforts, notably by ICOMOS (2001) and UNESCO, to persuade the government to leave such works of world cultural heritage unharmed, or to accept the building of walls which would leave them merely hidden, the Bamiyan statues were demolished by Taliban forces in March 2001 (Figs. 4 and 5).

The quality of the Buddha statues can no longer be argued about, because they are gone. But the valley of Bamiyan and its surroundings, which we visited on a photogrammetric field campaign in August 2003, is one of the most beautiful sites and spectacular views of this world. (Musée National des Arts Asiatiques-Guimet, 2004).

After the destruction, an intensive discussion started at an international level concerning the need for a physical reconstruction of the statues. The matter is not yet resolved, although many recent signs point towards a reconstruction (UNESCO, 2004) (Fig. 6).

ETH Zürich has volunteered to perform the computer reconstruction, which can serve as a basis for the physical reconstruction. In fact, using a computer model, a statue at 1/10 of the original size will first be built and displayed in the Afghanistan Museum in Bubendorf, Switzerland. But the most recent developments actually call for the placement of this model into the National Museum of Kabul, Afghanistan. (Buehrer, T., Zhang)



Figure 4 : A panorama of the cliff of Bamiyan valley after the destruction with three images showing the Buddha statues prior to demolition.



Figure 5: Left: The explosion of the big statue (courtesy of CNN). Centre: The empty cave after the destruction. Right: The stones of the big statue recovered and protected with UNESCO bags.

## History

Bamiyan lies on the Silk Road, which runs through the Hindu Kush mountain region, in the Bamiyan Valley. The Silk Road has been historically a caravan route linking the markets of China with those of the Western world. It was the site of several Buddhist monasteries, and a thriving center for religion, philosophy, and art. Monks at the monasteries lived as hermits in small caves carved into the side of the Bamiyan cliffs. Most of these monks embellished their caves with religious statuary and elaborate, brightly colored frescoes. It was a Buddhist religious site from the 2nd century up to the time of the Islamic invasion in the later half of the 7th century. Until it was completely conquered by the Muslim Saffarids in the 9th century, Bamiyan shared the culture of Gandhara.



Figure 6: Taller Buddha in 1963 and in 2008 after destruction

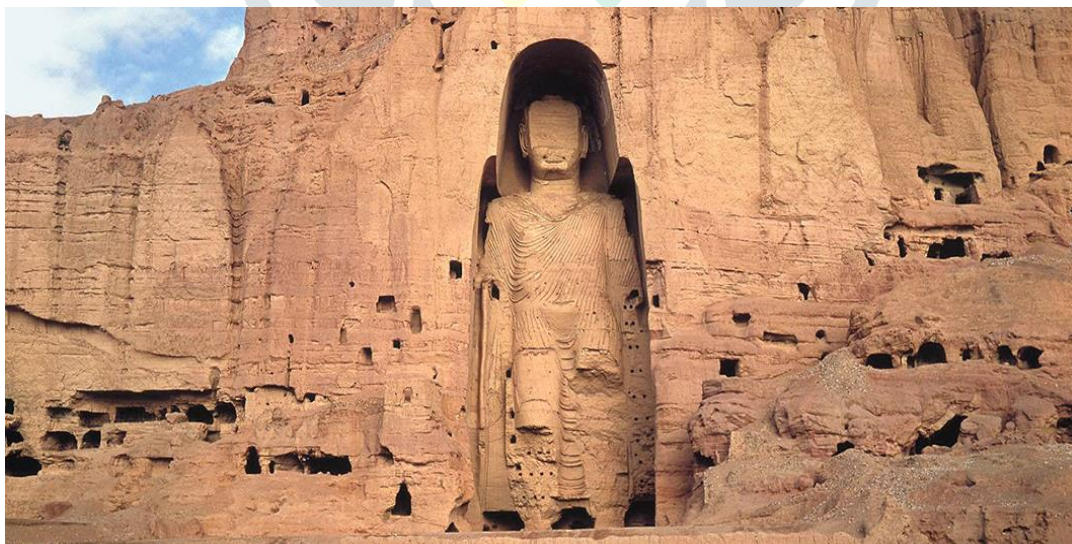


Figure 7: West Buddha surrounded by caves, c. 6th-7th c C.E., stone, stucco, paint, 175 feet high, Bamiyan, Afghanistan, destroyed 2001 (photo: © Afghanistan Embassy)



The two most prominent statues were the giant standing sculptures of Buddhas Vairocana and Sakyamuni, identified by the different mudras performed. The Buddha popularly called "Solsol" measured 53 meters tall, and "Shahmama" 35 meters—the niches in which the figures stood are 58 and 38 meters respectively from bottom to top.[3][8] Before being blown up in 2001 they were the largest examples of standing Buddha carvings in the world (the 8th century Leshan Giant Buddha is taller, but that statue is sitting). Since then the Statue of unity has been built in India, and at 182 m (597 ft) it is the tallest statue in the world, breaking the record earlier held by The Spring Temple Buddha 128 m (420 ft) in Fodushan Scenic Area, Lushan County, Henan, China. Plans for the construction of the Spring Temple Buddha were announced soon after the blowing up of the Bamiyan Buddhas and China condemned the systematic destruction of the Buddhist heritage of Afghanistan. ( Knobloch,E.,2002)



Figure 8: Scaffolding for reconstructing the Buddha of Bamiyan (photo: Tracy Hunter, CC BY 2.0)



Figure 9: Smaller Buddha in 1977

It is believed that the monumental Buddha sculptures were carved into the cliffs of Bamiyan between the 3rd to 6th centuries CE, while the cave complex in the east, including the 38 meter Buddha, was built in the 3rd or 4th centuries CE. The 55 meter Buddha is believed to date from the 5th and 6th centuries CE. Historic documentation refers to celebrations held every year attracting numerous pilgrims and that offers were made to the monumental statues. They were perhaps the most famous cultural landmarks of the region, and the site was listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site along with the surrounding cultural landscape and archaeological remains of the Bamiyan Valley. Their color faded through time.

Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang visited the site on 30 April 630 CE, and described Bamiyan in the *Da Tang Xiyu Ji* as a flourishing Buddhist center "with more than ten monasteries and more than a thousand monks". He also noted that both Buddha figures were "decorated with gold and fine jewels" (Wriggins, 1995). Intriguingly, Xuanzang mentions a third, even larger, reclining statue of the Buddha. A monumental seated Buddha, similar in style to those at Bamiyan, still exists in the Bingling Temple caves in China's Gansu province.

The destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas became a symbol of oppression and a rallying point for the freedom of religious expression. Despite the fact that most Afghans are now Muslim, they too had embraced their past and many were appalled by the destruction. (Zhang, Z., Zhang 2001).

### Attacks on the Buddha's statue 13th to the 20th century

In 1221, with the advent of Genghis Khan "a terrible disaster befell Bamiyan." Nevertheless, the statues were spared. Babur wrote in September 1528, that he ordered both be destroyed. Later, the Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb, tried to use heavy artillery to destroy the statues. Another attempt to destroy the Bamiyan statues was made by the 18th century Turkic king Nader Afshar, directing cannon fire at them.

The enormous statues, the male Salsal ("light shines through the universe") and the (smaller) female Shamama ("Queen Mother"), as they were called by the locals, did not fail to fire the imagination of Islamic writers in centuries past. The larger statue reappears as the malevolent giant Salsal in medieval Turkish tales.

Afghan king Abdur Rahman Khan destroyed its face during a military campaign against the Shia Hazara rebellion in the area. A Frenchman named Dureau had photographed it in 1847.

### 1998 to 2001, under the Taliban

During the ongoing Afghan Civil War, the area around the Buddhas was under the control of the Hizb-i-Wahdat militia, a part of the Northern Alliance which was fighting at the time against the Taliban, a conservative fundamentalist militia. Following the Taliban's capture of Mazar-i-Sharif in August 1998, Bamiyan valley was entirely surrounded by the Taliban. The town was captured by the Taliban on September 13. At the time, the Afghan population was described as "exhausted, starving".

Abdul Wahed, a Taliban commander operating around the area, announced his intention to blow up the Buddhas even before taking the valley. Wahed drilled holes in the Buddhas' heads for explosives. He was prevented from taking further action by the local governor and a direct order of the Supreme Leader, Mohammed Omar, although tires were later burned on the head of the great Buddha. In July 1999, Mullah Mohammed Omar issued a decree in favor of the preservation of the Bamiyan Buddha statues. Because Afghanistan's Buddhist population no longer exists, and the statues were no longer worshipped, he added: "The government considers the Bamiyan statues as an example of a potential major source of income for Afghanistan from international visitors. The Taliban states that Bamiyan shall not be destroyed but protected." In early 2000, local Taliban authorities asked for UN assistance to rebuild drainage ditches around tops of the alcoves where the Buddhas were set.

The Taliban's intention to destroy the statues, declared on February 27, 2001, caused a wave of international horror and protest. According to UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura, a meeting of ambassadors from the 54 member states of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) was conducted. All OIC states—including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, three countries that officially recognised the Taliban government—joined the protest to spare the monuments. Saudi Arabia and the UAE later condemned the destruction as "savage". Although India never recognised the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, New Delhi offered to arrange for the transfer of all the artifacts in question to India, "where they would be kept safely and preserved for all mankind". These overtures were rejected by the Taliban. Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf sent Moinuddin Haider to Kabul to try to prevent the destruction, by arguing that it was un-Islamic and unprecedented. According to Taliban minister, Abdul Salam Zaeef, UNESCO sent the Taliban government 36 letters objecting to the proposed destruction. He asserted that the Chinese, Japanese, and Sri Lankan delegates were the most strident advocates for preserving the Buddhas. The Japanese in particular proposed a variety of different solutions to the issue, these included moving the statues to Japan, covering the statues from view, and the payment of money. The second edition of the Turkistan Islamic Party's magazine *Islamic Turkistan* contained an article on Buddhism, and described the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan despite attempts by the Japanese government of "infidels" to preserve the remains of the statues. The exiled Dalai Lama said he was "deeply concerned". (UNESCO, 2004)

In Rome, the former Afghan King, Mohammed Zahir Shah, denounced the declaration in a rare press statement, calling it "against the national and historic interests of the Afghan people." Zemaryalai Tarzi, who was Afghanistan's chief archeologist in the 1970s, called it an "unacceptable decision."

Abdul Salam Zaeef held that the destruction of the Buddhas was finally ordered by Abdul Wali, the Minister for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice.



Figure 10: Destruction of the site by the Taliban 2001



Figure 11: Site of the smaller statue in 2005

The statues were destroyed by dynamite over several weeks, starting on 2 March 2001. The destruction was carried out in stages. Initially, the statues were fired at for several days using anti-aircraft guns and artillery. This caused severe damage, but did not obliterate them. During the destruction, Taliban Information Minister Qudratullah Jamal lamented that, "This work of destruction is not as simple as people might think. You can't knock down the statues by shelling as both are carved into a cliff; they are firmly attached to the mountain". Later, the Taliban placed anti-tank mines at the bottom of the niches, so that when fragments of rock broke off from artillery fire, the statues would receive additional destruction from particles that set off the mines. In the end, the Taliban lowered men down the cliff face and placed explosives into holes in the Buddhas. After one of the explosions failed to obliterate the face of one of the Buddhas, a rocket was launched that left a hole in the remains of the stone head. ( VirtuoZo NT, 1999).

In an interview, Taliban supreme leader Mullah Omar provided an ostensible explanation for his order to destroy the statues:

I did not want to destroy the Bamiyan Buddha. In fact, some foreigners came to me and said they would like to conduct the repair work of the Bamiyan Buddha that had been slightly damaged due to rains. This shocked me. I thought, these callous people have no regard for thousands of living human beings—the Afghans who are dying of hunger, but they are so concerned about non-living objects like the Buddha. This was extremely deplorable. That is why I ordered its destruction. Had they come for humanitarian work, I would have never ordered the Buddha's destruction.

On 6 March 2001, The Times quoted Mullah Mohammed Omar as stating, "Muslims should be proud of smashing idols. It has given praise to Allah that we have destroyed them." During a 13 March interview for Japan's Mainichi Shimbun, Afghan Foreign Minister Wakil Ahmad Mutawakel stated that the destruction was anything but a retaliation against the international community for economic sanctions: "We are destroying the statues in accordance with Islamic law and it is purely a religious issue." A statement issued by the ministry of religious affairs of the Taliban regime justified the destruction as being in accordance with Islamic law.

On 18 March 2001, The New York Times reported that a Taliban envoy said the Islamic government made its decision in a rage after a foreign delegation offered money to preserve the ancient works. The report also added, however, that other reports "have said the religious leaders were debating the move for months, and ultimately decided that the statues were idolatrous and should be obliterated".

Then Taliban ambassador-at-large Sayed Rahmatullah Hashemi said that the destruction of the statues was carried out by the Head Council of Scholars after a Swedish monuments expert proposed to restore the statues' heads. Hashemi is reported as saying: "When the Afghan head council asked them to provide the money to feed the children instead of fixing the statues, they refused and said, 'No, the money is just for the statues, not for the children'. Herein, they made the decision to destroy the statues"; however, he did not comment on the claim that a foreign museum offered to "buy the Buddhist statues, the money from which could have been used to feed children". Rahmatullah Hashemi added "If we had wanted to destroy those statues, we could have done it three years ago," referring to the start of U.S. sanctions. "In our religion, if anything is harmless, we just leave it. If money is going to statues while children are dying of malnutrition next door, then that makes it harmful, and we destroy it."

The destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas despite protests from the international community has been described by Michael Falser, a heritage expert at the Center for Transcultural Studies in Germany, as an attack by the Taliban against the globalising concept of "cultural heritage". The director general of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Koichiro Matsuura called the destruction a "...crime against culture. It is abominable to witness the cold and calculated destruction of cultural properties which were the heritage of the Afghan people, and, indeed, of the whole of humanity., leader of the anti-Taliban resistance force, also condemned the destruction.



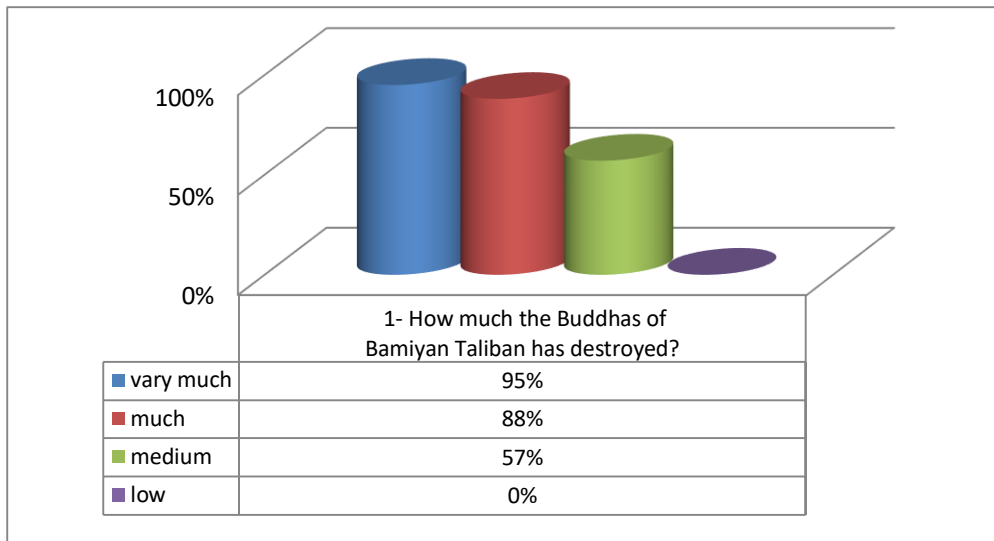


Table 1. According to Survey between 88- 95 % of participate people has been selected vary much and much agree that the Bamiyan Sculpture has been destroyed by Taliban.

Source: Authors' estimates based on data collected (2019).

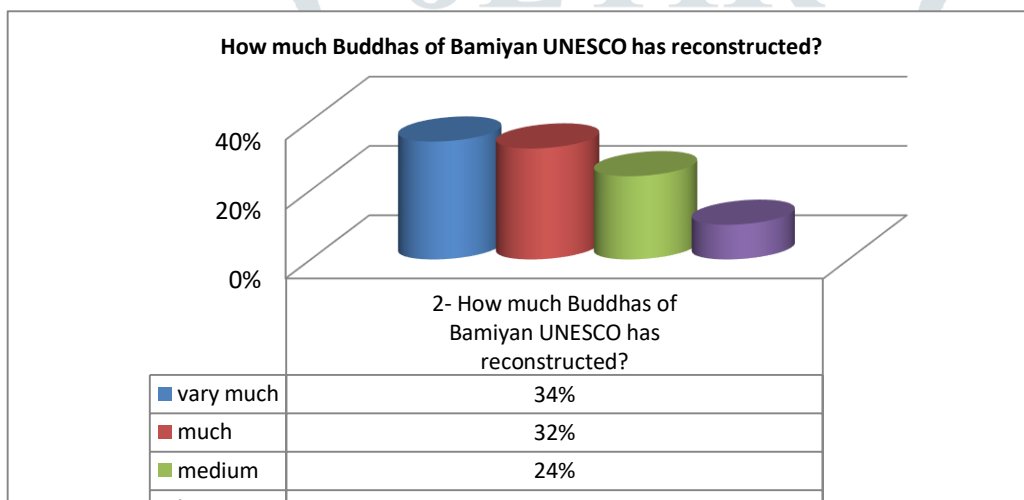


Table 2: shown the reconstructed By UNESCO after Taliban (after 2001)

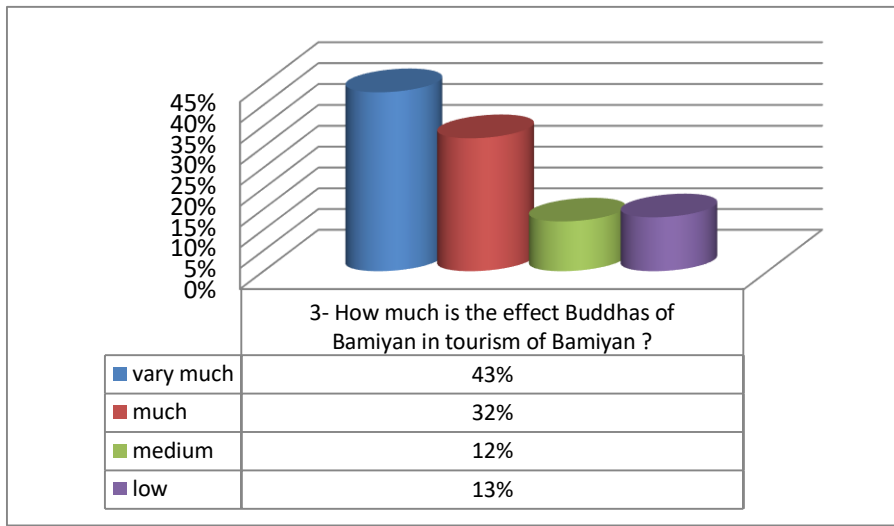


Table 3: shown the effect of Buddhas in the tourism development of Bamiyan

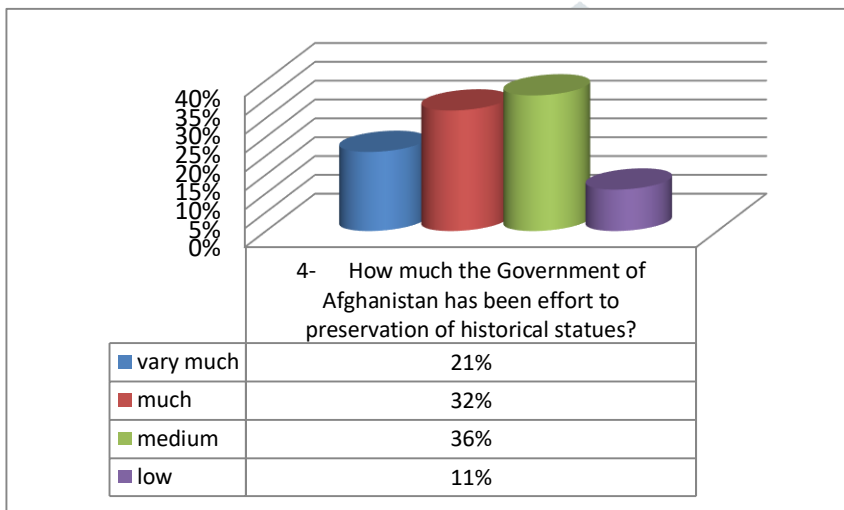


Table 4: shown the satisfaction of the people of Bamiyan regarding to effort of Government to Preservation of Historical Statues.

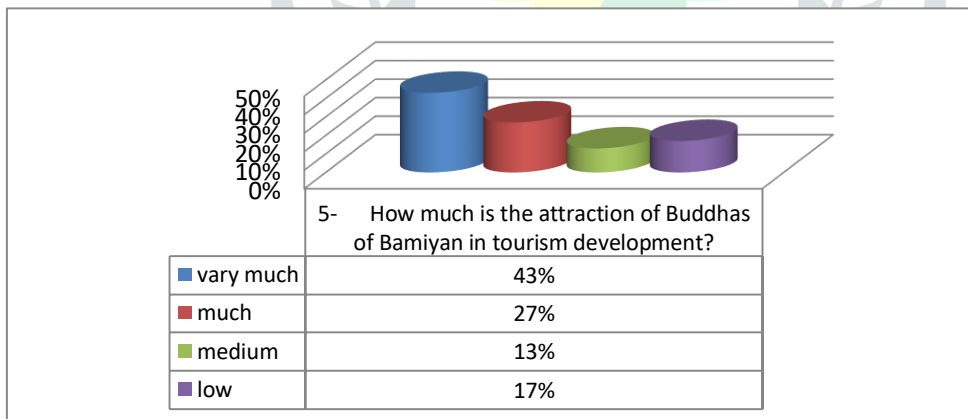


Table 5: shown the of Buddhas of Bamiyan in Tourism Development.

**Developments since 2002**

In May 2002, a mountainside sculpture of the Buddha was carved out of a mountain in Sri Lanka. It was designed to closely resemble one of the Buddhas of Bamiyan.

The Afghan government has commissioned Japanese artist Hiro Yamagata to recreate the Bamiyan Buddhas using fourteen laser systems to project the images of the Buddhas onto the cliff where they once stood. The laser systems will be solar and wind-powered. The project, which will cost an estimated \$9 million, is currently pending UNESCO approval. If approved, the project is estimated to be completed by June 2012.

In September 2005, Mawlawi Mohammed Islam Mohammadi, Taliban governor of Bamiyan province at the time of the destruction and widely seen as responsible for its occurrence, was elected to the Afghan Parliament. On 26 January 2007, he was assassinated in Kabul.

Swiss filmmaker Christian Frei made a 95-minute documentary titled *The Giant Buddhas* (released in March 2006) on the statues, the international reactions to their destruction, and an overview of the controversy. The movie makes the controversial claim (quoting a local Afghan) that the destruction was ordered by Osama Bin Laden and that initially, Mullah Omar and the Afghans in Bamiyan had opposed the destruction.

In the summer of 2006, Afghan officials were deciding on the timetable for the re-construction of the statues. As they wait for the Afghan government and international community to decide when to rebuild them, a \$1.3 million UNESCO-funded project is sorting out the chunks of clay and plaster — ranging from boulders weighing several tons to fragments the size of tennis balls — and sheltering them from the elements. (Laden ordered Bamiyan Buddha destruction, 2006)

## Recommendation

### Ministry of Information and Culture

1. Pay more attention to the restoration of Historical Heritages.
2. Scientific conferences should be held at national and international level to related the importance of cultural and Historical Heritages.
3. More investment in Afghanistan's ecotourism.
4. Cooperation in peace meetings on national security

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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## Conclusion

As the results of the research show, and the people of Bamiyan province commented on the findings, it is concluded that more than 98 percent of Bamiyan statues destroyed by the Taliban. And because of the lack of security in Afghanistan and Bamiyan province, international tourists have become much less. UNESCO has done a lot of work on Bamiyan antiquities restoration but not enough, from the other hand. Among the factors that tourists pay less attention to Bamiyan statues was lack of security.

In conclusion, we can assert that the vigour and autonomy of Hadda's art is sufficient to explain its influence, which can be followed from Kapiça to Chinese Central Asia, through Bactria and Bāmiyān (Vanleene 2012: 285). These links, however, remain very imprecise. It is undeniable that a better understanding of stucco Buddhist statuary, a significant part of the varied identity of Gandhāran culture, would allow the more complete comprehension of Gandhāran art. Thanks to crosscutting studies and scientific exchange, and through working groups, we have the possibility to discuss and develop ways that could be put in place to facilitate multi-disciplinary research, in order to clarify these questions. What means could be put in place in order to help and improve fundamental archaeological research? I believe that a first step should be the establishment of archaeological databases, which would provide support for the exa of artistic influences and iconographic themes, and facilitate access to scientific data for researchers and students.

The towns and monasteries in the Bamiyan Valley were destroyed and looted by the Mongols, remaining abandoned for a long period. Parts of the site have been occupied since the 19th century. From the 1970s, the site has suffered from liminary occupation and armed conflicts, and in March 2001, the large Buddha statues were destroyed with dynamite to the order of Mullah Omar.

The French archaeological mission (DAFA) carried out, the first archaeological studies in Bamiyan in the 1920s and 1930s. The French and Italian missions continued the explorations in the 1950s and 1960s. An Afghan team, under R. Sengupta from the Archaeological Survey of India, undertook the conservation and restoration of the large Buddha statues. A Japanese team from Kyoto University surveyed the mural paintings in the 1970s. In the past two years, there have been several missions by UNESCO and ICOMOS identifying the state of conservation of the site. (Buehrer, T., Zhang).

Few events have caused as much shock and condemnation within the international community in recent years as did the destruction of the great Buddhas of Bamiyan in 2001. Individual states, international organizations, such as the United Nations and UNESCO, religious authorities, including some of the most influential Islamic authorities, NGOs and people all over the world have called for international mobilization against such acts of barbarity and religious intolerance. Does this make such acts wrongful under international law? If so, what kind of legal response is possible in the current normative and institutional context? This article has aimed at providing a preliminary assessment of these questions in light of contemporary international practice. As to the first question, our conclusion is rather promising. As with fundamental human rights, first, and in 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. This 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, the act then amounts to a crime of persecution. In contemporary international law, the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage of great importance as the Buddhas of Bamiyan not only constitutes an intolerable offence against the cultural heritage of humanity, but, 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. As the ICTY recently confirmed such



discriminatory destruction manifests a nearly pure expression of the notion of ‘crimes against humanity’, for all of humanity is indeed injured’.

As to the second question, we have tried to identify possible sanctions at two different levels: that of the international responsibility of the Taliban regime as the *de facto* government of Afghanistan at the time of the planning and execution of the act of destruction, and that of the criminal liability of the individuals who participated in the decision and implementation of the plan to demolish the Buddhas. At the first level, we have identified several precedents in which sanctions were adopted by the United Nations and by UNESCO. However, given the almost complete isolation in which the Taliban government was in 2001, as a consequence of the UN sanctions, it is difficult to imagine what kind of effective measure could have been adopted to sanction the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan aside from those already in force against the Taliban under the 1999–2000 Security Council resolutions. At the second level, our analysis has shown a more promising trend toward ensuring individual accountability for international crimes. International humanitarian law, the statutes of the ICTY and of the International Criminal Court, as well as the specific provisions to be found in the most recent normative instruments concerning the protection of cultural property in armed conflicts, all converge toward the recognition of the principle that deliberate destruction of cultural heritage is a matter of concern, not only for the people who own that heritage, but for humanity as a whole. Perhaps, with the Taliban now removed from the government in Afghanistan, the international community, and particularly UNESCO, should undertake the task of formulating a restatement of this principle by drafting and adopting a solemn declaration on the obligation for all states to respect cultural heritage located in their territory, and representing the variety of spiritual and religious traditions of the world. This would be consistent with the recently adopted UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity;<sup>2</sup> constitute the first step toward a more comprehensive protection of cultural heritage in international law; and, certainly, give concrete meaning to the ideal of moral and intellectual solidarity toward which all member states should strive under the 1945 UNESCO Constitution. (AIIS, 2004).

#### Postscript

At its 27th Session, held in July 2003, the World Heritage Committee inscribed the remains of the Buddhas of Bamiyan and the valley in which they are located in the World Heritage List. Justification for the inscription was based on the value of this valley as a cultural landscape containing an outstanding representation of Buddhist art in Central Asia, providing an exceptional testimony to the interchange of different cultures, as well as a powerful symbolic expression of the vicissitudes suffered by the monuments, including their deliberate destruction in 2001. This confirms the conclusion sustained by the authors in this article that the Buddhas of Bamiyan represented an element of general interest to humanity in the safeguarding of cultural heritage.

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<sup>2</sup> See UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted on 2 November 2001, available at [www.unesco.org/bpi/eng/unescopress/2001/01\\_120e.shtml](http://www.unesco.org/bpi/eng/unescopress/2001/01_120e.shtml); in particular, Article 1 states that cultural diversity is 'embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the groups and societies making up humankind'. See also the 1966 UNESCO Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Co-operation, available at [http://firewall.unesco.org/culture/laws/cooperation/html\\_eng/page1.htm](http://firewall.unesco.org/culture/laws/cooperation/html_eng/page1.htm) (Article 1(3) reads as follows: '[i]n their rich variety and diversity, and in the reciprocal influences they exert on one another, all cultures form part of the common heritage belonging to all mankind').

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