



Cliff with Western Buddha niche

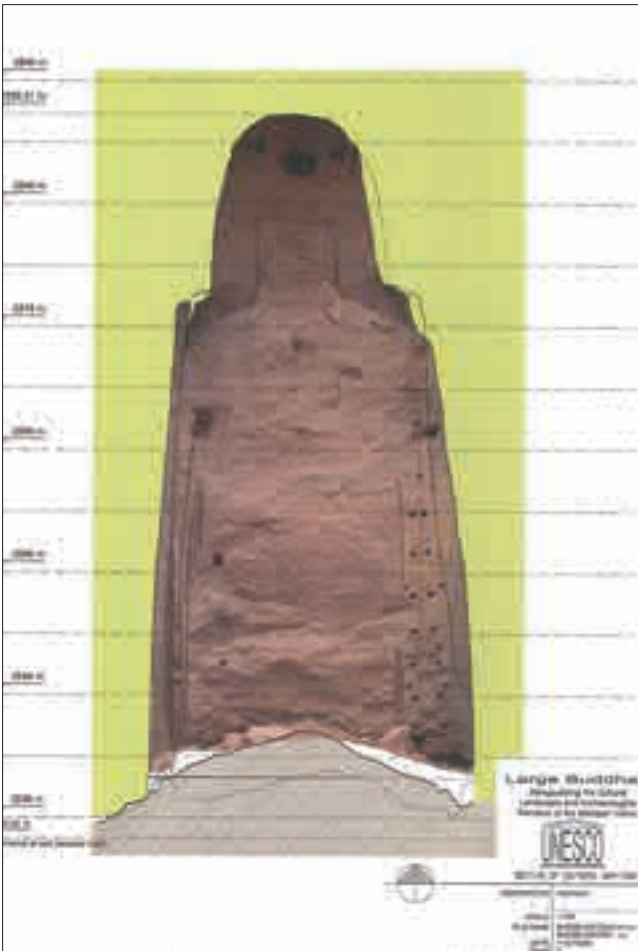
2003

Thanks to funds for safeguarding cultural goods in Afghanistan provided by the German Foreign Office in 2003 ICOMOS was able to continue the work begun in 2002. A decisive factor for this successful work was the cooperation with UNESCO, which in agreement with the Afghan Ministry of Information and Culture (the most important contact persons being the heads of the departments of historic monuments and archaeology, Abdul Ahad Abbasi and Abdul Wasey Feroozi) coordinated the measures to save monuments and sites. However, the main focus of the ICOMOS activities in 2003 was no longer Kabul, where in 2002 and in cooperation with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) the restoration of the Babur Park and the historic quarter Ashekan wa Arefan were looked after. Instead, ICOMOS concentrated on the cultural landscape of the Bamiyan Valley, newly inscribed on the World Heritage List in Danger (see p. 17).

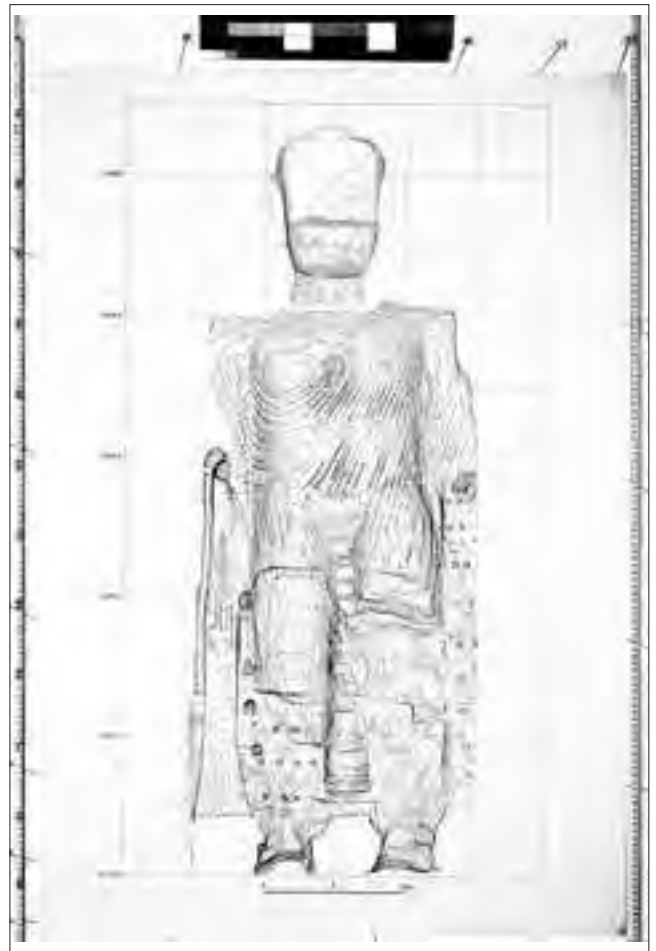
As Marcus Schadl, the contractor of ICOMOS for the tasks in Kabul, was taken over by the AKTC at the beginning of that year and additional funds for continuing this work were handled by the German Embassy, the work of ICOMOS

in Kabul concentrated on occasional consultations. The group of stone restorers working in Bamiyan was able to give advice on how to conserve the stone of the She Jehan Mosque and the Babur Grave (consequences of failed restoration measures of past decades, completion of marble elements, etc). For these two objects in the Babur Park the AKTC was given a grant of 25,000 euros.

The start of the work of ICOMOS in the Bamiyan Valley was delayed due to the insecure situation in Afghanistan. Faced with the war in Iraq UNESCO cancelled a conference of the International Coordination Committee for the Safeguarding of Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage, planned to be held in Kabul in May. This first meeting then took place from 16–18 June in Paris. At this meeting the undersigned presented the conservation concept of ICOMOS for the Buddha statues developed since 2002 (see pp. 46–51) and a proposal by Professor Fritz Wenzel for stabilising the threatened rock parts. The stabilisation of the rocks was then started in September/October by the Italian company RODIO, which – following the concept of Professor Claudio Margottini – focussed at first on the most fragile rock section on the upper east side of the Small Buddha niche (see report by Margottini, pp. 175 ff.). These stabilisation measures of UNESCO on the rocks funded by the Japan Fund in Trust were a precondition for the safeguarding of



Western Buddha, measurements of the back wall (A. Fahim, M. Santana)



Western Buddha, photogrammetric measurement of the Western Buddha (R. Kostka 1974)

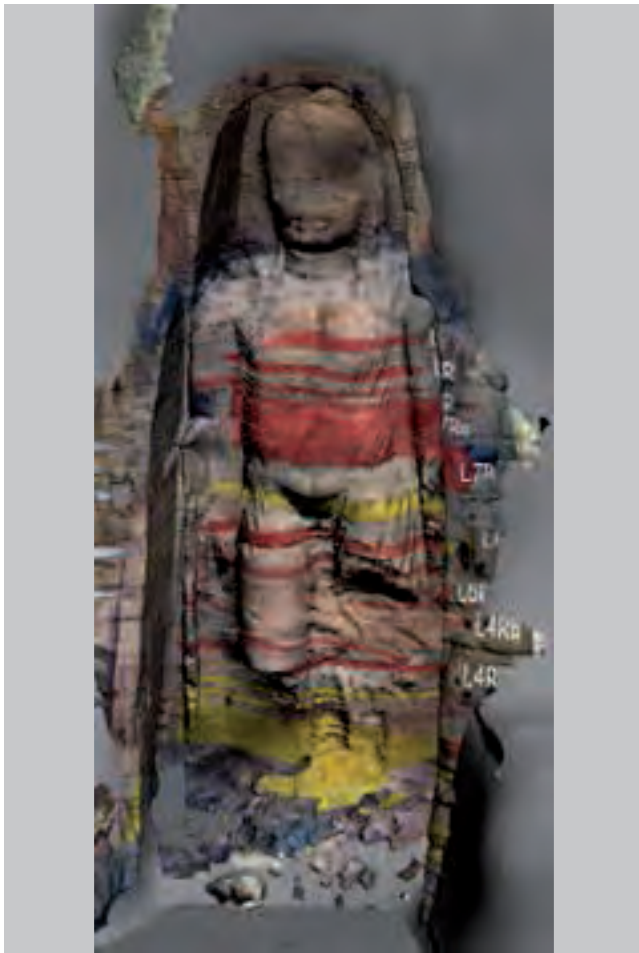
the Buddha fragments and all other conservation measures recommended by ICOMOS and its specialists in saving the existing historic fabric. Within the framework of the UNESCO/ICOMOS mission to Bamiyan (10–17 September 2003), in which Prof. Michael Jansen and the undersigned took part, the works of RODIO were harmonised with conservation aspects, such as protecting the remains of the Buddha statues on the back walls of the niches (especially the plaster remains of the Eastern Buddha).

New results were achieved by the ICOMOS mission of a group of German stone restorers to Bamiyan from 23 October to 3 November 2003 (See the report *Überlegungen zum Umgang mit den Fragmenten der zerstörten Buddha-Statuen* by Ulrich Bauer-Bornemann, Edmund Melzl, Henrick Romstedt and Michael Scherbaum.). This mission

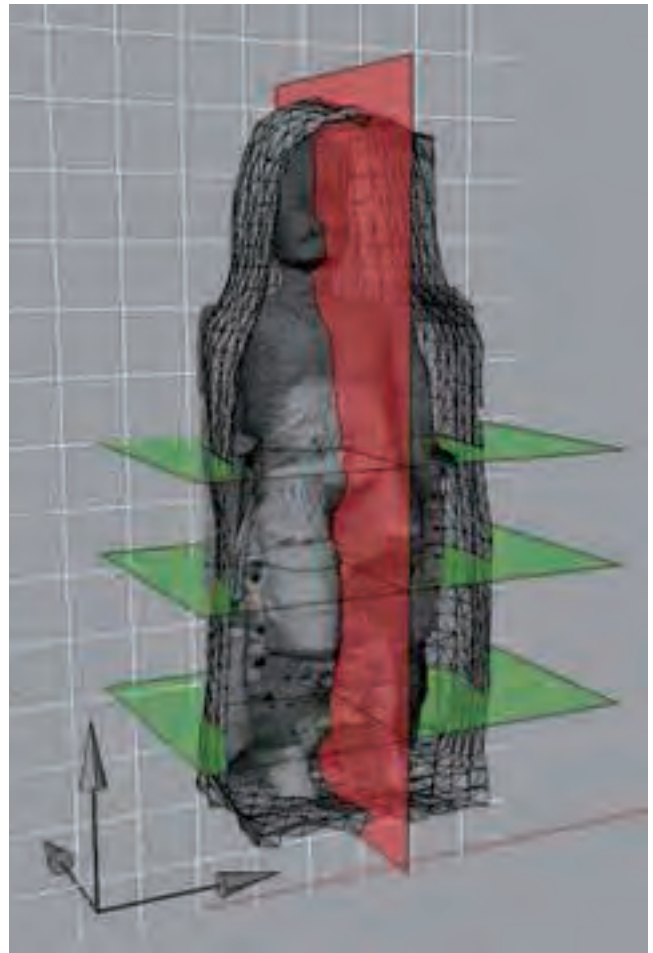
was carried out together with the geologist Dr Michael Urbat from the University of Cologne (see his report 2006, p. 89 f.). Thanks to his findings it will be possible to better identify the original position of the fragments.

For all these activities in the Bamiyan Valley it was helpful that in 2002 thanks to the funds from the German Foreign Office a group of mudbrick buildings, including a mosque, right next to the Great Buddha niche had already been renovated to serve as very useful 'headquarters' for the custodians and for storing findings and machines. In particular, it was also used to store the special scaffold provided to ICOMOS by the Messerschmitt Foundation and transported to Bamiyan with the help of the German armed forces.

Parallel to the preparatory work for saving the remains



Western Buddha, tentative geological reference profile (M. Urbat)



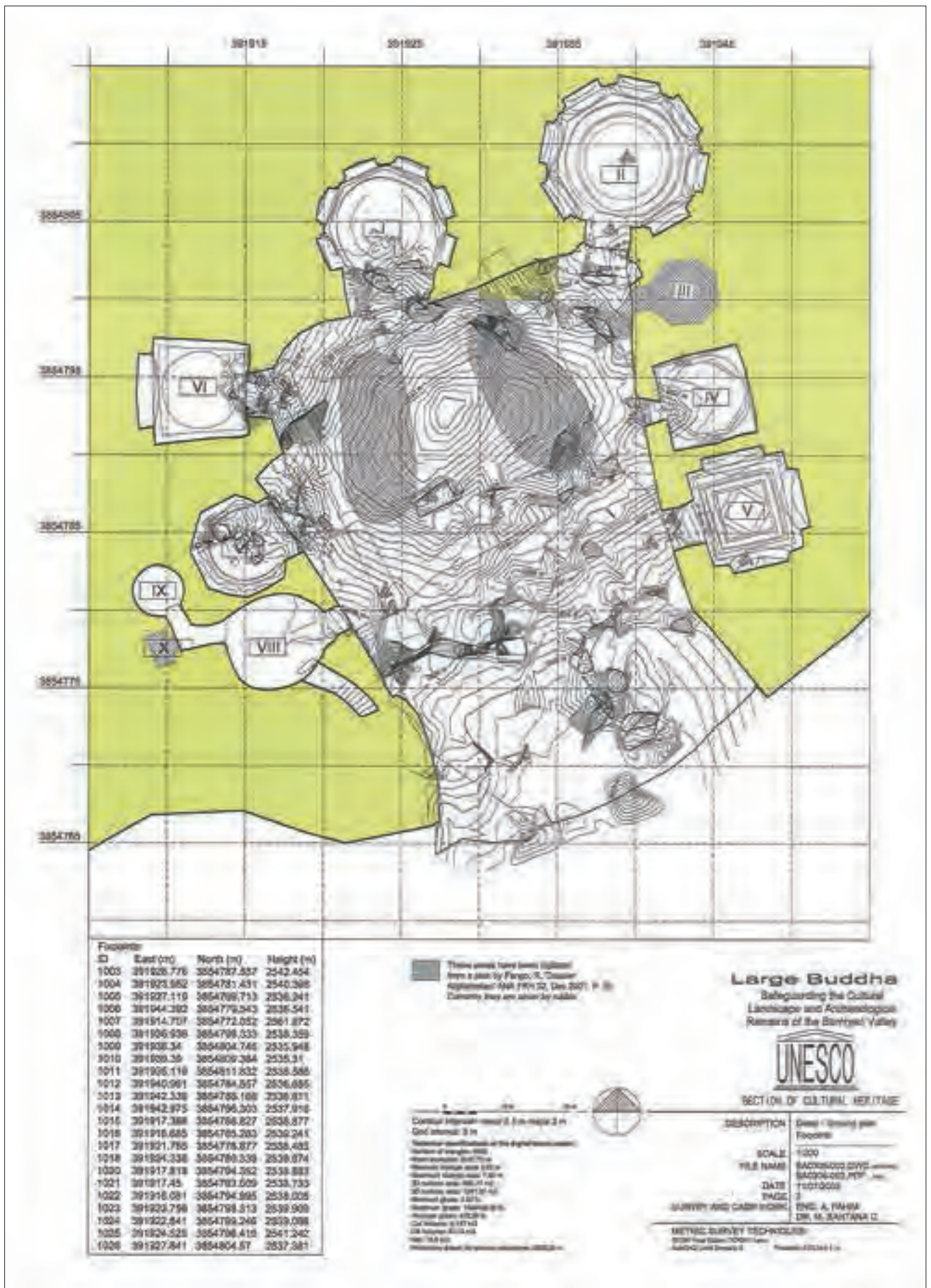
Western Buddha, tentative sections of the original structure

of the Buddha statues funds from the German Foreign Office enabled ICOMOS also to support the preservation of traditional earthen architecture in the Bamiyan Valley. In cooperation with the RWTH Aachen (see also pp. 61–63) the repair of historic mudbrick buildings was combined with investigations on the topology of earthen residential buildings and the traditional building techniques: Preserving the tradition of earthen architecture is particularly important for this quite unique cultural landscape inscribed in the World Heritage List, and ICOMOS's efforts to document and preserve the historic stock of mudbrick buildings add to the work of the Japanese colleagues within the framework of an overall inventory of the cultural heritage.

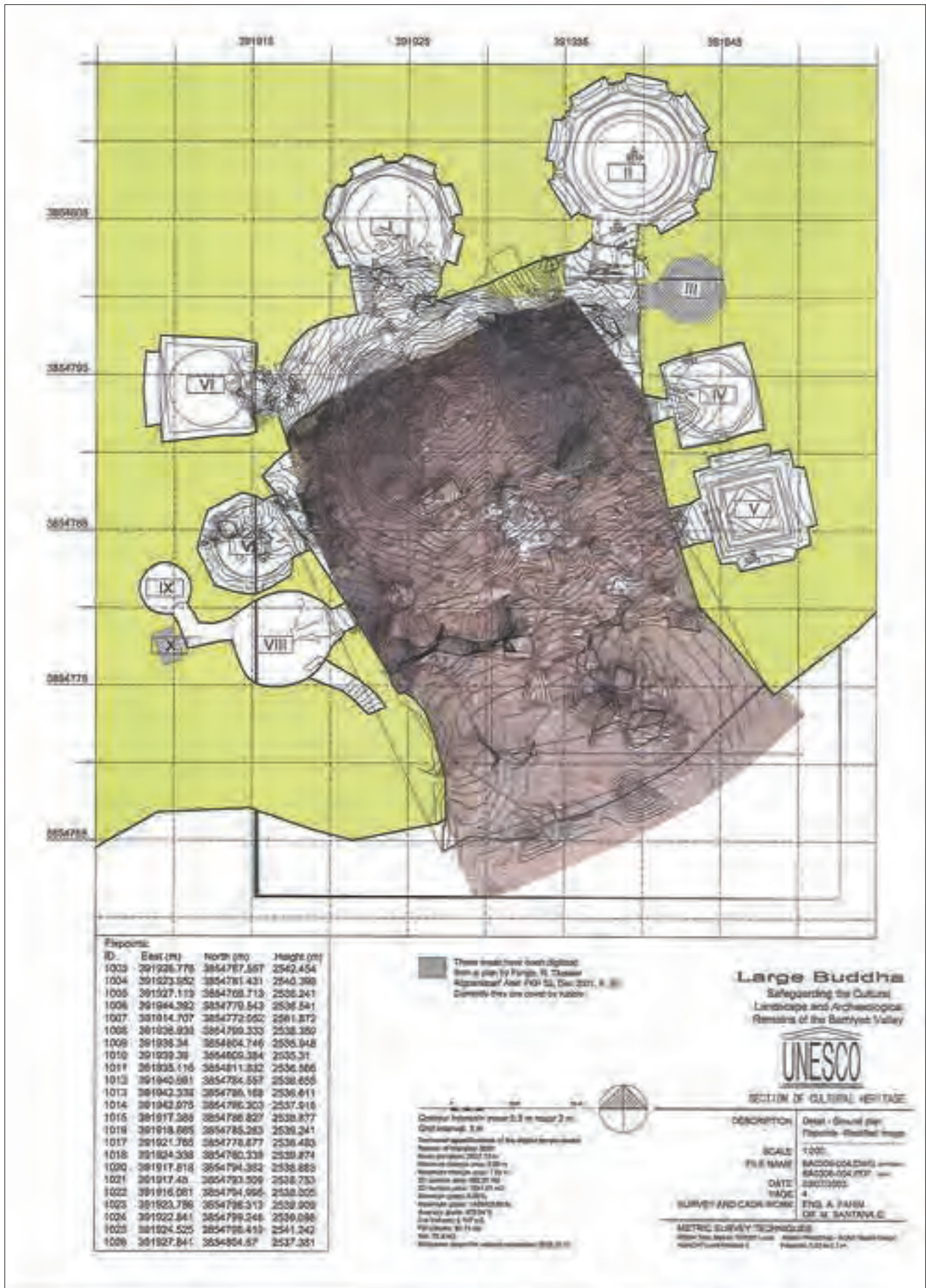
Finally, it needs to be pointed out that the data bank of all monuments and historic sites in Afghanistan made good

progress in 2003. This work begun by ICOMOS in cooperation with the RWTH Aachen provides the fundamentals for the protection and conservation of monuments in the whole country, and as a sort of monument list it could become an indispensable basis in the future for a new Afghan monument protection law. While in 2002 the available literature was added, it was now a question of evaluating the present condition. This is being done in cooperation with the Society for the Protection of Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage (SPACH) and, whenever possible, with local personnel to investigate the historic sites.

M. Pz.



Western Buddha niche, ground plan with fix points (A. Fahim, M. Santana)



Western Buddha niche, ground plan with fix points, rectified image (A. Fahim, M. Santana)