



The scaffold provided by the Messerschmitt Foundation

2009

According to the plans of the ICOMOS project for 2009, once again supported by the German Foreign Office with 150.000 euros, the aim is to finally complete the salvage of all fragments at the Western Buddha site. Until now this had not been possible without a big crane to move fragments of up to 60 tons. In addition, our provisional shelters need to be extended as they are already very cramped. This extension is necessary as the fragments may have to be stored for a longer period. The intended improved storage of the fragments of the Western Buddha will also serve to document all objects more precisely and to present and explain them better to visitors. Moreover, the stock of plaster and stucco fragments recovered from the lower zone of the Western Buddha niche in 2008 needs to be integrated into the already inventoried stock of fragments.

For a start, at the Eastern Buddha site the plan is to more or less complete the stabilisation of the back wall.

Once the upper part of the scaffold made available by the Messerschmitt Foundation has been completed, i.e. at the height of the shoulder and head of the giant statue, the back wall of the niche can finally be completely stabilised. Part of these measures is to secure an end-to-end crack behind the back wall by using grouted anchors and to fix several stone slabs threatening to fall down. These measures also include a more precise geological examination of those parts of the back wall that so far have not been accessible and of the roughly 400 fragments which may be suitable for a future anastylosis. Also a conservation method and detailed planning will be necessary, according to which the significant fragments, a number much smaller than at the Western Buddha, can be integrated into the overall, already in its present state clearly recognisable silhouette of the severely destroyed giant statue.

The following conservation concept for the back wall of the Eastern Buddha was developed by Prof. Emmerling in cooperation with Prof. Fecker and restorer Bert Praxenthaler and is based upon the experiences of 2008.

M. Pz.

Eastern Buddha niche, discussion about the safeguarding technology for the back wall

