

Thanghas endangered archeological site

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Upon reports that an archeological site with rock carvings was in danger due to a nearby marble mount being mined. The Heritage conservation Project team Dr. Zakir and Mr. Ehsan planned a visit to the site for documentation of whatever available carvings.

Thaghas is the sub-divisional headquarter of Mashabrum sub-division District Gangchhe Baltistan located at an altitude of 8740 ft and at a distance of 29 km from District headquarter Khaplu.



Just below the sign board, there is an exposed surface of marble mount over an area of about 300 (length) x200 (height) ft sheer slope. This rock patch (part of mount) of white marble with a tainted grey surface is known as Skin Chat Barqbu (the rock cliff or mount with ibex

drawing). Unfortunately, this very rock itself was the carving site being mined and blasted for marble.



According to the locals the face of the mount was full of carvings around 100+. The middle/center part is being blasted. We could find four sites on the left and right with carvings of Stupa, ibex, hunting scenes with dog, human figures in dancing and hunting postures. There were 65 big boulders of more than 20 tons lying down cut from the mother rock. The team collected high quality photos and clips of the site, remaining symbols on standing rock face and on fallen boulders. We could find two carvings on the faces of fallen boulders.



This site is a typical example of the endangered situation of rock carvings and other archeological sites. The team interviewed the owner of the site who is an old illiterate man. The whole site with adjacent fields were given on rent/lease of Rs 2.5 lac per year. However, after initial blasting, the big boulders were unable to be transported via a steel bridge and hence it is halted till construction of concrete bridge to the factory. About three years passed, the owner has got only one year rent. There are several other archeological sites in this village including a chamber where the holy corps of a Sufi saint was placed for forty days before his burial.

As reported and counted by the Intern Ehsan, there are a total of 60 symbols on standing rock and 2 on fallen boulders. These are Ibex figures, four stupa figures, human figures, hunting scenes, dancing scenes, dog chasing and stopping ibex.

Following are the photos of different scenes:



Ibex hunting and human dancing scene



Ibex and human figures on the partially broken part



View of the front face of the rock



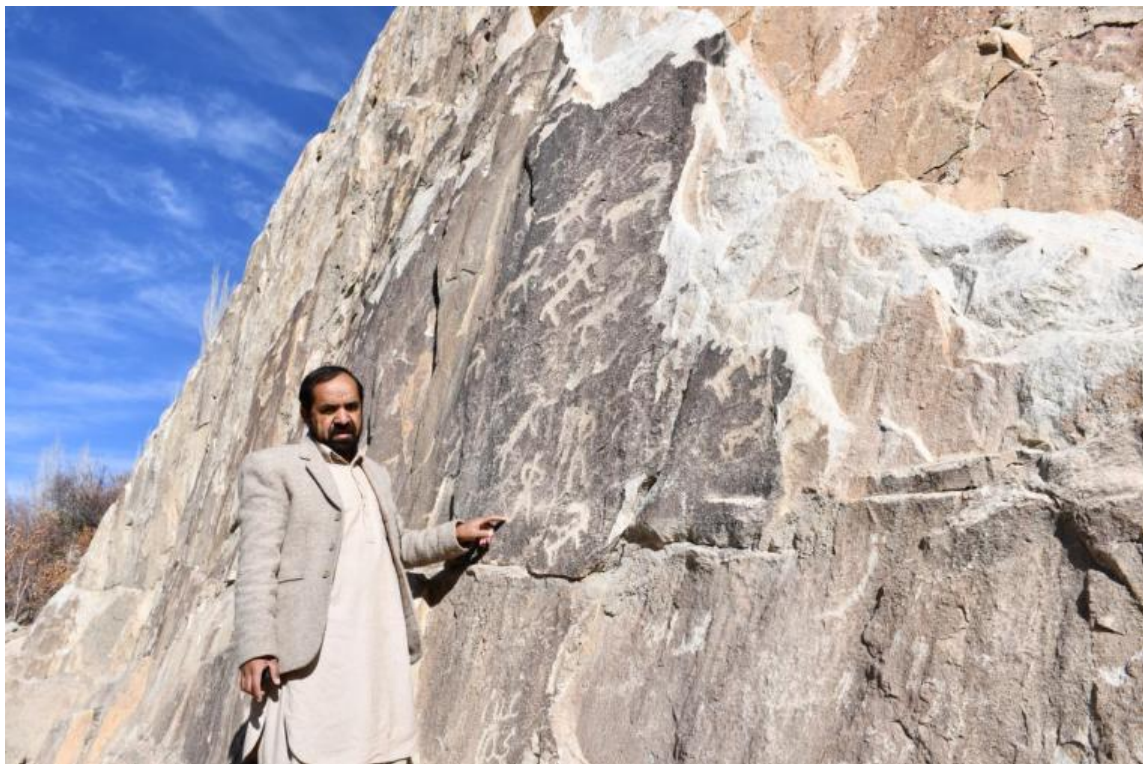
Stupa figures



Hunting man and ibex



Ehsan noting the figures



Dr. Zakir pointing the dancing human figure