

See also: Mosque of Ali and Al Husayn Mosque

The Al-Abbas Shrine (Arabic: حَرَم أَبِي الْفَضْلِ الْعَبَّاس, romanized: Ḥaram ‘Abī al-Faḍl al-‘Abbās) is the mausoleum of Abbas ibn Ali and a mosque, located near the Imam Husayn Mosque in Karbala, Iraq. Abbas was son of Ali ibn Abi Talib and the half-brother of Imam Hasan and Imam Husayn. He was Husayn's flag-bearer in the Battle of Karbala and chief of his caravans. The shrine is especially revered by the Shia who visit it every year, in the month of Muharram rather than various other times of the year.

Environmental effects over the years have caused the Euphrates river to change course.[1] Nearly 1,400 years after the Battle of Karbala, the river flows across the grave of Abbas and encircles it.[1] It is said that the Euphrates has come to ‘Abbās now.

In recent years[when?] the shrine has undergone a series of enhancements and additions, such as the re-gilding of the dome, and more recently covering the former courtyard with a roof to accommodate pilgrims better. Each year the shrine is visited by millions of pilgrims coming from all over the world.[2]

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History and design[edit]

Emperors and kings of various dynasties have offered valuable gifts and gems to the shrine of Al-Abbas ibn Ali. In 1622 Abbas Shah Safavi ordered the decoration of the grave's dome. He built a window around the grave and organized the precinct.[3]

The majority of the modern design was done by Persian and Central Asian architects. The central teardrop shaped dome is an ornately decorated structure, with an internal and external dome. The internal dome visible from the inside is ornately decorate with fine mirror work. Two tall minarets stand on the domes sides, they were gilded in gold in the renovation works of 2007. The tomb is covered with pure gold and surrounded by a trellis of silver, along with Iranian carpets rolled out on the floors.[4]

Renovation[edit]

Beginning in 2012, the Al Abbas mosque has undergone extensive renovations intended to improve the ability of the shrine to accommodate the millions of pilgrims who visit each year. The renovations include rebuilding the wall surrounding the shrine and turning it into a multi-story building housing museums, offices, and additional prayer halls.[5] As well, the dome and minaret have been re-gilded, and the shrine's courtyard has been covered with a roof.[2]

In 2014, construction began on a basement intended to further accommodate pilgrims. The basement is to be located under the perimeter of the main courtyard and involves systematically closing off parts of the courtyard and then excavating the current court yard. The project is also set to deal with foundational issues of the shrine and reinforce the structure whose foundation has water gaps in it; as part of the Euphrates runs around the grave of Abbas.[6] Once this work is completed, pilgrims will have access for the first time

ever to the sardab of Abbas and it will be the closest point to the actual grave. In March 2016 a new Zarih for the grave of Abbas was completed. It is the first Zarih to be fully built in Iraq by Iraqi hands, and was duly inaugurated on the 13th of Rajab the birth of Imam Ali, which coincides with April 21, 2016.

[Timeline\[edit\]](#)

Year Event

AH CE

61 680 October 10: Al-Abbas ibn Ali was buried at this location.

1032 1622 Abbas Shah Safavi decorated the dome of the shrine, built glass encasings around the grave, arranged the porticoes and the yard, constructed the lobby of the first gate of the sanctuary, and sent precious carpets from Iran.[3][7]

1115 1703 Nadir Shah sent gifts to the shrine and had it further decorated.[7]

1117 1705 The vizier of Nadir Shah visited the shrine, reconstructed the porticoes, remade the encasings around the grave, and added a chandelier.[7]

1216 1801 Wahhabis attacked Karbalā, damaged the shrine, and robbed all precious decorative items.[7]

1232 1817 Fat'h 'Alī Shāh Qājār reconstructed the dome of the shrine, gifted new chandeliers and lustrous pieces of decoration to the holy shrines, and had other constructions carried out.[7]

1355 1936 The custodian of the shrine, Sayyid Murtadhā, rebuilt the silver gate in the golden hallway leading towards the room of the tomb.[7]

1411 1991 March: A violent uprising against the regime of Saddam Hussein occurred in the city, following the Persian Gulf War.

1415 1994 Repairs to the shrine from the damage done in 1991 were finally completed.[8]

1425 2004 March 2: At least 6 explosions[9] occurred during the 'Āshūrā' commemorations, killing 85 people and wounding 230.[10][11]

1426 2006 January 5: Suicide bombers among the crowd between the two shrines killed at least 60 people and injured more than 100.[12][13]

1428 2007 April 28: A suicide car bomber killed at least 58 people and wounded 170 others as people were heading towards evening prayers.[14][15]

1429 2008 September 11: A bomb was detonated 500m from the shrine which killed one civilian, wounded 3 others, and damaged buildings in the area.[16]

1434 2012 Construction of a roof covering the former courtyard of the shrine began, this comes amidst many efforts by the administration of the Al-Abbas Shrine to accommodate pilgrims better and renovate the shrines.[2]

1436 2014 In late October 2014, the shrine saw the commencement of one of its largest projects ever. The construction of a basement intended to further accommodate pilgrims. the basement is to be located under the perimeter of the main courtyard.[6]

1438 2016 In April 2016, the Zarih, which stands over the grave of Abbas was replaced, the old Zarih had been installed in 1964 under the commission of Sayyed Mohsen Al-Hakim, the new Zarih is the first to be completely built in Iraq and by Iraqi craftsmen[17]

[See also\[edit\]](#)

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