

VISIT TO SOME MONUMENTS IN HERAT PROVINCE

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The following text is a brief description of the historical sites I visited in Herat Province. This province, located in the northwest corner of Afghanistan, along the borders of Iran and Turkmenistan, is part of the historical region of Khorassan, that was under Iranian influence for most of its history. It has been a rich province since the days of Cyrus the Great (2,500 years ago) and has played an important part in world history until the 16th century, when sea-trade started replacing the Silk Road, of which the city of Herat was one of the main nodes. The city and its surrounding region are therefore particularly rich in historic monuments.

I would like to thank Brigitte Neubacher for her enthusiastic support and for providing the means of transport to visit some of these places. Thanks also to Gul Agha Karimi.

Places visited	Dates	Photographs
Chisht-e Sharif	06/08 & 01/10	fig. 1 - 4
Caravanserail near Chisht-e Sharif	08/08	
Kohsan, tomb of Tuman Agha	28/07	fig. 5 - 7
Ghoriyan, Masjid-e Jami	28/07	fig. 8
Ziyaratgah, Masjid-e Jami	05/10	fig. 9 - 11
Ziyaratgah, shrine of Mollah-e Kalon	05/10	fig. 12 - 13
Ziyaratgah, Chehelsutun mosque	05/10	fig. 14 - 15
Ziyaratgah, other buildings	05/10	fig. 16 - 18
Gazargah, shrine of Abdullah Ansari	03/08	fig. 19 - 21
Herat, shrine of Abul Walid	04/08	
Herat, Pul-i Malan (bridge)	05/10	fig. 22 - 26
Herat, old town, the Citadel	05/08 & 03/10	fig. 27 - 31
Herat, old town, Abdullah Mesri quarter	July	fig. 32 - 33
Herat, old town, Momanda quarter	August	fig. 34 - 40
Herat, old town, Qutbe Chaq quarter	October	fig. 41 - 44

Context

I traveled to Herat twice, once in July/August, the second time in the beginning of October. Both times the main reason for my visit was to organize and monitor SPACH projects in the Musallah complex of Herat and at the minaret of Jam. In my free moments I endeavored to visit some of the more important historical sites in and around Herat. Since I had no proper means of transportation, except when I rented a Jeep to go to Jam, and could not take more time than that available in the lulls of activity on our projects, these visits were both limited in scope and in profundity.

Fortunately, though, the monuments in and around Herat are among the most well-surveyed of Afghanistan, and I could limit my "surveys" to comparing the present condition of what I saw with what should be there. I relied heavily on the following documents, more or less in the given order:

- "Islamic Architecture in Herat" by Rafi Samizay; published by the Ministry of Information and Culture of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan in 1981
- "Herat, the Islamic City; a Study in Urban Conservation" by Dr. Abdul Wasay Najimi; published by Curzon Press Ltd., London in 1988
- "Timurid Architecture in Khorassan" by Bernard O'Kane; Mazda Publishers, Teheran, publication date unknown (somewhere in the 1980s)
- "Herat: a pictorial guide" by Nancy Hatch Wolfe (later Dupree); published by the Afghan Tourist Organization, 1966
- "Restoration of Monuments in Herat: Strengthening Government's Capability for the Preservation of Historical Monuments" by Andrea Bruno, Roberto Pagliero, Dirk van Eenhoge and Franco Franchini; published by the UNESCO, 1981

Chisht-e Sharif : Ghorid Monument

The two remaining Ghorid buildings at Chisht-e Sharif, on the road from Herat to Chaghcharan, are in a precarious state (*fig. 1*). The dome of the leaner building to the northeast has collapsed in recent years, leaving no trace of the remarkable Kufic inscription with floral arabesques between its shafts that Nancy Dupree mentions in her guidebook (1977, p. 265). The southern arch of this building, of which the inside is beautifully decorated with geometrical brick patterns, is cracked in the middle (*fig. 2*). The northern wall has completely disappeared along with the dome. Deprived of the stabilizing effect of one of its walls and its dome, the whole building leans precariously to the West, and it seems it soon will fall. Only the fragments of the brickwork inscriptions on either side of its southern portal are in the same condition as in the 1970s.

The squatter, southwestern building does not seem to have deteriorated in the past twenty years, although it also shows cracks running up its walls and its dome. The "brambly" stucco inscriptions that run up the sides of the four interior arches and, in a continuous line around the whole square chamber, along the bases of these arches, are still intact. The hole in the southwestern bottom corner of the dome does not seem to have grown. Only the southern façade of the building, with its many bands and panels of floral, geometrical and calligraphic brickwork, has been disfigured by a grossly made cement frame, which is like those that are to hold a panel with the name of the benefactor or donating agency (*fig. 3*). One wonders whose name it was supposed to advertise. No other changes are noticeable in this façade, certainly the most elaborate of the whole site.

An urgent intervention is required in order to save this unique site. The first thing to do would be to carefully copy the brickwork patterns in order to be able to reproduce them (*in situ* or as a reconstruction in a museum) should one of the monuments collapse soon. Simultaneously a buttressing wall should be built on the west side of the smaller monument. A careful study of both buildings must assess the main threats to both structures and result in a project proposal. It is not too late to conserve and slightly restore both structures. An entire restoration is out of the question since the original layout, architecture and decoration of the two buildings is unknown. It would seem they were once at opposing corners of a rectangular courtyard, but since no other monuments of that kind and period survive, that is but a guess. Excavations at Jam or at other Ghorid sites might provide examples in the future.

Five minutes distant towards the northeast, a new shrine stands over the tomb of Maulana Sultan Maudud Chishti, founder of the Chishtiya Sufi brotherhood, whose spread throughout the Indian subcontinent (where it is still important today) was contemporaneous with that of the Ghorid empire. The saint died in 1132 AD, and his tomb here, at the gates of the Ghorid heartland, would have been an important site. In later years, up to the Timurid times, Chisht-e Sharif remained an illustrious city.

The new shrine, built 50 to 60 years ago, is much smaller than the Ghorid buildings but rather nicely, to modern standards, decorated with tiles (*fig. 4*). The local Taleban authorities asked SPACH to repair part of the eastern minaret's brickwork. That would be a minor operation (most of the work would be bringing, putting up and dismantling scaffolding) that could be done on the side of an intervention on the Ghorid monument. Before the war many pilgrims would come from Pakistan, India and other parts of the Muslim world to visit this shrine.

Chisht-e Sharif : the caravanserai

A few kilometers downstream from the town of Chisht stands a caravanserai, in the middle of the fields. In fact the interior courtyards of the building are now also used as wheat fields, a rational reutilization in times of drought. It is probably the biggest of its kind in Afghanistan (Nancy Dupree, 1977. p 265), although many similar ones still stand in Iran. The outer walls are intact. There are two or three bays of domed rooms all around the outer walls: altogether at least hundred, if not double that amount. In the middle, splitting the courtyard into two, stand what probably used to be stables or storerooms for larger objects. All the walls and most of the arches connecting them are still there, but practically all the domes have collapsed. The entrance, in the east wall, is a double square portal connected by a high pointed vault. It is

higher and more massive than the rest of the walls. This entrance is still intact, together with the two rooms that open up to either side of the passage.

Although the building, entirely made of mud brick and *pakhsa*, requires no urgent intervention, its eventual restoration could turn it into a useful place, like a cattle market or a tourist attraction.

Kohsan: Tomb of Tuman Agha (also called Tomb of Gawhar Shad)

This monument, located in the village of Kohsan, not far from the Iranian border, just north of the road from Herat to Mashad and a mile away from the right bank of the Hari Rud river, is now commonly referred to as the mausoleum of Gawhar Shad, just like the mausoleum in Herat. Bernard O'Kane however convincingly argues that it is the mausoleum of Tuman Agha, the first wife of Tamerlane, by pointing out that until the late nineteenth century it was known as such. Later it was known as the tomb of "an important Timurid Queen" and it was then automatically ascribed to Gawhar Shad, the more famous consort of Shah Rukh.

The three-roomed monument, suggests O'Kane, probably formed the northeast corner of a madrassah similar to the one to which Gawhar Shad mausoleum in Herat used to belong. There are many other architectural similarities between the two monuments.

Rafi Samizay (1981) describes the general condition of the monument as poor, with cracks in the dome and many tiles on the dome missing. At the time of his survey the mosque was used as a storage and he warns that "such negligence of the upkeep of the building and its restoration if continued will, in the not too distant future, result in the total collapse of this fine monument". Photographs published in his study and in the quoted UNESCO report of 1981 indeed show the poor condition of the building, notably its southern façade and the interior of the mausoleum's main room, under the dome.

The building was entirely restored in 1995-96 by a team led by the well-known Afghan architect Najimi. The project was funded by the Danish Official Aid Agency DANIDA (*fig. 5*). In the process of the restoration all remaining tiling has disappeared, with the exception of the partial inscription in the main iwan on the southern side. The exceptional Suls and Kufic inscriptions on the drum of the dome have completely vanished. The shape of the dome has been altered : before it was pointed and there was a slight bulge just above the drum; now it is entirely round (*fig. 6*). None of the decorative architectural elements of the dome, notably honeycombed niches providing the transition between the drum and the external dome, were reproduced. The southern façade in front of the mausoleum has been pulled forward by a deep iwan, probably according to the original plan of the building. For some reason the arch which provided the main access to the mausoleum from this iwan was not entirely reopened, it now houses two windows instead. The geometrical patterns of tiles on the west and north facades of the mausoleum have all but disappeared.

Inside the main chamber (octagonal, with a recess on each of its sides) an effort was made to preserve the complicated stucco work, fine paintings of floral and vegetal motifs, and the Suls inscriptions. Enough of it remains, both on the sides and on the internal dome, to imagine what it must have been like originally (*fig. 7*). The lower part of the walls, which was probably covered with tiles or marble slabs originally (none remain in the photographs of the 1970s, but this was common in similar Timurid buildings), has been entirely plastered over. The brick floor has been remade. There was no trace of the grave in its center which Samizay mentions (in the ground plans of the UNESCO report two parallel tombstones are drawn).

The two other rooms of the building, a square chamber in the middle with two tombstones on a slightly raised square platform, and a rectangular mosque to its west, have been entirely restored. No mention is made of any noteworthy decorative elements in them in previous studies. Curiously, the barrel vault above the mosque's northern section is well off axis, by at least 50 cm over a total width of about 3.5 meters.

One may strongly object to Najimi's restoration of this monument. In previous pictures the dome, though it may be cracked, does not seem to require the entire reconstruction it suffered. There was no reason to change its shape (at present, quite ungainly, just as the dome over Gawhar Shad's mausoleum, which Najimi also "remade"). One wonders what happened to the tiles of the dome and the façade. This "restoration" (more aptly, "reconstruction") project is all the more surprising considering that the monument has no social or civil function, its mosque space does not seem to be used presently.

Ghoriyan: Masjid-e Jami

The Friday mosque of Ghoriyan is the third largest remaining Timurid mosque in the province of Herat, after those of Herat and Ziyaratgah. In 1982 Samizay wrote : "the overall structural condition of the mosque is in a very poor shape. Cracks that are results of earthquake and water leakage are visible all over the building. Due to their large scales, cracks on the main iwan and the main dome are much more critical and unless reinforced they will soon collapse. The overall damage to the mosque is extensive and thorough repairs will be difficult and costly. In some cases it would mean completely tearing down parts of the building and rebuilding them."

When we visited the building in July 2000 it had just undergone an almost complete restoration and was not yet in use. Neighbors affirmed that it had been restored by the local community, but, seen the amount of work involved, one suspects some source of outside funding. As in the case of the Friday mosque of Ziyaratgah, it is not the work of the Department of Historical Monuments, nor of some NGO or western donor, who always advertise their funding by a highly visible plaque, often unaesthetically lodged in the façade. In any case the architects seem to have done a good job, although they allowed themselves to make some modifications to the original plan. The major change is the disappearance of the two small "towers" above the main iwan (*fig. 8*). Photographs from the 1970s show these to be square extensions of the sides of the iwan, unlike the little round minaret-like towers perched above the main iwan at Gazergah or Ziyaratgah.

Only the eastern side of the central courtyard, which originally housed the main entrance to the mosque, has not been restored, being occupied by what seem to be storage rooms in a poor condition. The entrance had been shifted to the southern façade sometime earlier this century. One may surmise that plans exist to finish the restoration, but no signs of work (scaffolding) indicated it – maybe the funds have dried up?

In earlier studies there is no mention of tiling or any other decorative elements, though these certainly existed in the original building. The building is actually completely bare, consisting only of bricks, cement, and the usual mud plaster covering the roof and domes. The main dome is single-layered, and is built on the square base by means of vaulted recesses, as was common in Timurid architecture.

Ziyaratgah : Masjid-e Jami

This is the second biggest Timurid mosque in the region of Herat, built, as the Friday mosque in Ghoriyan, in the reign of Sultan Hussain Baiqara (*fig. 9*). Although it was already in quite a good condition at the time of Samizay's survey, it is now completely restored. In some cases, the new bricks used, of a different dimension than the original Timurid bricks, have distorted the proportions (on the backside of the minarets, for example). Also, cement has been used instead of the original limestone mortar. On close inspection, there are some instances of sloppy restoration work, and cracks have already begun to appear, above the iwan on the southern side of the courtyard, for example; but the general impression is that the original plan and building methods have been respected, and the mosque has maintained its harmonious proportions and elegant, intricate brickwork (*fig. 10*).

The principal modification to the original plan again concerns the minaret-like towers (called *Guldasta*, "bouquets") above the main iwan. The existing ones apparently collapsed in an earthquake in 1995 or 1997, and were replaced by shorter towers which, curiously, are pigeon-towers inside (*fig. 11*). When I visited the mosque the pigeons were not using them, and the caretaker complained about this strange innovation, arguing that they were less strong than normal towers and might collapse in the next earthquake.

As in the case of the Masjid-e Jami in Ghoriyan, it is unclear who performed the restoration. It was completed in the mid-nineties, according to the caretaker of the mosque. The summer and winter mosques and the madrassah lodged in the southern wing of the eastern façade are all functioning.

The few decorative elements that remained in the 1970s, i.e. the Suls inscription above the entrance portal and the remnants of tiling around the mihrab, are still extant, with the exception of the thin band of tiles around each of the "minarets". The tiles are quite unique,

being hexagonal and bichrome, with a tint of blue on a white background that reminds one of Delft tiles. Not many remain, but they could be reproduced.

Ziyaratgah : Shrine of Mollah-e Kalon

On the southern edge of the small town of Ziyaratgah stand the ruins of what was once quite a big shrine (*fig. 12*), built in the time of Sultan Hussain Baiqara for a holy man (Shamsuddin Ziyaratgahi) who died in 1376.

The ground plan of the building is not uncommon, with a square central room once covered by a double dome structure, surrounded on each corner by square double-storied structures that connect at ground level to the four iwans, standing on each side of the central room. At present most of the walls are still visible, except those of the structure on the southeast side of the shrine. Outside, in a small enclosure towards the northeast, is the enormous grave of "mullah-e kalon" (the big mullah), surrounded by other, smaller graves.

Some interesting decorative elements remain : the brickwork is intricate and fine; on the few remaining walls above two meters one can discern faded traces of stucco work not unlike that at Kohsan (honeycomb niches providing the transition between square and round structures); and especially, an glazed tile inscription in Suls characters on the northern iwan (*fig. 13*), the one that provides access to the central chamber.

Not much remains of this monument, which is visibly beyond repair. If no conservation work is carried out soon, it might totally collapse in a future earthquake. The western iwan is about to detach itself from the building.

Ziyaratgah : Chehelsutun mosque

This mosque, which according to Nancy Dupree is pre-Mongol, has completely collapsed over the past twenty years. Of the 40 columns (Chehel sutun) not more than seven or eight remain, supporting the four southeastern-most arches of what was once the summer mosque (*fig. 14*). The winter mosque behind it has turned into a pile of rubble. Most of the rubble of the summer mosque has been cleared, maybe to reuse the remaining bricks.

Of the beautifully decorated Timurid mihrab only fragments remain, with just one tantalizing piece of the delicate floral patterns of the kind decorating the Friday mosque of Herat remaining, above right (*fig. 15*). In the rubble one can find pieces of the Suls inscription, and I suggested to the ex-caretaker who accompanied me to gather all the pieces in view of a future re-assembly.

Restoration of this mosque is out of the question.

Ziyaratgah: other places

The madrassah standing next to the cistern in the centre of Ziyaratgah (*fig. 16*) has not received any attention in the study of Rafi Samizay. It is however a beautiful piece of village architecture, just as the covered cistern that is part of the same complex. The cistern still seems in good condition (*fig. 17*), although it could do with a fresh layer of mud-straw plaster on its roof. The madrassah is in a poorer condition. Some recent repairs have been made to its roof, but its western facade is bulging forward, and, if not stabilized, might in time collapse. Some of the rooms around the courtyard are also in a state of disrepair. The courtyard, with the pool in the middle, is quite beautiful, and the painted mihrab is finely executed (*Fig 18*). With 5,000 \$ this madrassah and the adjacent cistern could be restored.

Also in the center of Ziyaratgah stands a mosque known as the Masjed-e Gumbad, the "Mosque of the Dome". The stucco-work inside has been recently restored, but the special thing about this mosque is its curious dome. It is a double mud-brick dome with a structure I could not work out, although part of the outer dome having collapsed, it was possible to get a cross-sectional view of it. Between the two domes a wooden structure stands of which I could not understand the purpose. I would suggest an architect once has a close look at it to determine whether it really is special. The imam of the mosque requested SPACH's collaboration to repair the dome, but of course I was very non-committal.

Finally, as its name indicates, the town of Ziyaratgah - "the place of shrines" - is home to many other shrines and old buildings, including beautiful pigeon-towers. I only briefly visited some others. In other countries the whole town would be declared a historical monument.

Gazergah : the shrine of Ansari

Of all the monuments in the region of Herat, Ansari's shrine is one of the most visited among Afghans and foreigners alike. A Sufi brotherhood that follows Ansari's teachings has a strong implantation in Herat and takes care of the building, that undoubtedly has some powerful patrons. Therefore the general condition of the building is quite satisfactory.

I did not have the detailed study Golombek made of this monument, and therefore my superficial survey refers to the descriptions made by Nancy Dupree and Rafi Samizay. I could not verify allegations made by Annette Ettig, for example, about tiling which had disappeared on the lower half of the building.

At the entrance to the building the marble statue of a dog on the tomb of Zainuddin, the architect of this Timurid shrine, has been removed by Taleban who could probably not appreciate its symbolism. It is not known where it is now.

Inside the courtyard, the finely decorated marble pillar that Shah Rukh erected in front of Ansari's tomb has been encased in glass. The wooden pavilion built over Ansari's tomb is still intact, as are the marble panels along its base (*fig. 19*). We were surprised to find that the white marble railings above them, and some other white marble tombstones, had been repainted in black (*fig. 20*). We could not find any explanation other than the current Taleban fashion for black. As a curious detail, the trunk of the tree standing in front of the tomb, in which people would drive nails to remind God or the Saint representing him of their wishes, has been covered in plaster to preserve it.

The Haft Qalam tombstone is still safely preserved. It also is in a glass casing, in a room on the northern edge of the courtyard that is normally locked. A new metal door and frame protect it safely.

The platform in the southwestern part of the courtyard which holds the graves of members of Shah Rukh's family is in a poor condition (*fig. 21*). The mud-straw plaster layer that covers it has disintegrated, and the infiltration of water and expansion of ice have pushed the marble walls surrounding the platform outwards. It is but a matter of time before the walls will collapse and the platform becomes an earthen mound. Restoring it (with a SPACH donation through the Department of Historical Monuments) would be a small job which would create a lot of goodwill among Herati citizens and patrons of art.

Outside Ansari's tomb stand several other monuments. The Zarnigar, with its famed painted ceiling of gold arabesques on lapis lazuli blue, could not be visited. Apparently its dome is in a poor shape. The Zamzam cistern and the adjacent half-underground winter mosque seem to be in good condition. We did visit the Namakdan, which was transformed into a guesthouse earlier this century by members of Ansari's brotherhood. Now, the caretaker told us, it is used in the same function by the Taleban, who have however done no effort to upkeep it; it is quite rundown inside. But the building is still in good condition. Finally, the big park that extends to the West of the shrine is in poor shape. One might think it's because it used to be famed as a lovers park; but actually, Taleban make no effort to maintain public parks anywhere in the country. A few kilometers westward we tried to visit the Takht-i Safar, once a beautiful park overlooking the city. It had been converted into a Taleban military post, so we could not get in. But it was obvious that the park was overgrown with weeds and hadn't been irrigated in a long time, turning into a wasteland similar to that surrounding Gawhar Shad Mausoleum, in what was once Behzad's park.

Herat : shrine of Abul Walid

The complex built around the shrine of Abul Walid consists of the shrine itself, a mosque to its north, remains of a guesthouse to its west, a long courtyard to its south, with at the far end of the courtyard, near the entrance, a cistern. The original shrine was made in the Kart period (13th-14th centuries), but was substantially modified by Alisher Nawoi in the Timurid times. Only the main iwan was still mainly a Kart structure. The courtyard, guesthouse, mosque and

cistern were also added in that period. In the 1920s the shrine was completely restored, and the dome was decorated with paintings by the famous masters Mirza Skandar and Abdullah. Later, in the 1950s, the original mosque was torn down and replaced by a modern building.

Today, that 1950s mosque and the Timurid cistern are the only buildings of the complex that remain intact. It seems the 1920s restoration was not up to standard, for the painted dome over Abul Walid's tomb has collapsed, and the iwans in the facade are in a ruinous condition, about to collapse. The smaller domed rooms on either side of the main chamber have turned into heaps of rubble. The original guesthouse has disappeared a long time ago. Rafi Samizay reckons he could discern its traces (rooms around a courtyard) but now it would seem nothing remains at all.

The Department of Historical Monuments of Herat has started on a restoration project, but the elevated costs have apparently raised concerns among the Taleban authorities, who would prefer new mosques to be built with that money. Therefore the project had been halted.

Herat : Pul-i Malan

This is a long bridge over the Hari Rud river, south of the Old Town of Herat. Legend has it was built by Bibi Nur, whose shrine stands close to the Iraq gate in Herat, but when she lived is unclear. According to Nancy Dupree, it must have been "at least a thousand years ago".

It has 22 spans with vaulted arches and two watchtowers on either side (*fig. 22*). A more recent addition on the southern side of the river is a crudely built military check-post.

The bridge was damaged by bombing in the recent war, and entirely rebuilt with assistance of DACAAR (a Danish humanitarian agency) a couple of years ago. Quite a lot of trucks and other vehicles use it, although the main bridge across the Hari Rud is that of Pul-i Pushtun a couple of miles eastward.

The restored bridge looks fine from a distance, and certainly retains its original shape. At closer inspection, however, one finds several indices of bad engineering or sloppy execution. For example, inside the arches the cement joints between the bricks have not been pointed : this reduces the longevity of cement-work, making it prone to infiltration, which in the case of a bridge is a serious matter. We could not expect the restorers to make the mortar of lime and eggshells, as the legend has it (Bibi Nur and her sister Bibi Hur would have spent years collecting enough eggshells). But at least they could have pointed the cement.

The whole bridge is built on a cement base that shows wide cracks and erosion only a couple of years after its inception. Its foundations do not go deep enough, and most of the water (in the low season) goes under the cement foundations rather than over it (*fig. 23*), thus gravely threatening the whole structure. The use of cement in waterways is generally ineffective, except if it's of the highest grade, because all lower qualities are slightly porous and absorb water. In the cold winters of Afghanistan that creates cracks in the cement, which swiftly disintegrates. Besides being ineffective – and difficult to remove – cement is highly unaesthetic. But it is too late to do anything about it, except if one would be willing to dismantle the whole bridge, remove the cement, and rebuild it on better foundations. Probably it will not take long before the cement foundations crumble under one of the pillars, and two or more spans collapse (I'd give it ten years).

Moreover, the access to the bridge on the northern side has not been consolidated. The river banks have been hastily covered with a cement wall on both sides of the ramp leading on to the bridge, but here again, cement shows its limitations. On the downstream side of the bridge, northern bank, where a pool has formed which drivers use to wash their vehicles, this cement wall has cracked from top to bottom (*fig. 24*), and it is only a matter of time before it will fall, exposing the earth behind it (and the access to the bridge) to rapid erosion. Once again, the fault seems to lie with insufficiently deep foundations undermined by water. Gabion walls with foundations 1.5 meters below the water level would have been better.

The earthen ramp leading up to the bridge has partially disintegrated, and only part of the concrete slab of the bridge ramp connects to the road (*fig. 25*). Any driver caught unaware could wreck his car coming off the bridge as he drives into a hole. This erosion seems linked to the crack in the cement riverbed.

On the cement interior railing of the bridge, again on the same (northwestern) side, I noticed a crack from top to bottom; but I could not determine whether this indicated a structural fault of the bridge or just a local problem. My fear however is that the whole northern part of the bridge (the last three or four spans) is sagging, its foundations being

undermined. This problem is worse on the downstream side where the pool of water, which is fed by a current going under the foundations, freezes in the winter.

Finally, although the bridge retains its general good looks and harmonious proportions from the outside, it has been covered by concrete slabs, which are most ugly, and lined by cement on the inside (*fig. 26*). The concrete slabs have not been laid evenly, which is most surprising on the supposedly flat surface of a restored bridge. Vehicles jump from one slab to the next, putting additional and unnecessary pressure on the structure of the bridge.

This bridge is not only a historical monument, but also a public works, and in any other country the engineers responsible for the project would be summoned to explain themselves in court.

Herat : the Citadel (Qala-ye Ekhtiyaruddin)

The Citadel of Herat is probably the biggest monumental structure in Afghanistan today (*fig. 27*). The building itself covers nearly 2 ha, and towers over the old city of Herat, its fortifications rising more than 30 meters above the street level. One can see all parts of the town and its environs from its embattlements.

It is not clear whether the hill upon which its higher part stands is natural or artificial, but, given the absence of such features in the flat landscape around Herat, one may surmise the present fortress is built on an older structure.

According to legend Alexander the Great built the first fortress here, in the important town that Herat already was (then called Hairava, capital of the region of Ariana). Later it was destroyed and rebuilt many times, by the Ghaznevids, Seljuks, Ghorids, Khwarezmshahis, Mongols/Karts, and Timurids. The Kart ruler Fakhruddin built the outline of the fortress that bears the name of the contemporaneous governor of Herat, Ekhtiyaruddin Kart. Later it was destroyed by Tamerlane. But when Herat became the capital of the Timurid empire under Shah Rukh, his son, the fortress was entirely rebuilt using burnt bricks, the walls being covered with glazed tiles. Some remains of these tiles are to be seen on what is called the "Timurid tower". From the 16th to the 19th centuries the town was regularly fought over by the Uzbeks, Persians and Afghans, and often destroyed. Only in 1881 did the city definitively become part of Afghanistan.

The Citadel was abandoned and partially demolished in the 1950s, but in the 1970s extensive restoration works were started by the UNESCO, under the guidance of Dr. Andrea Bruno *ea*. The surrounding wall, its 18 towers and the lower part of the Citadel were entirely restored, and an archaeological and a military museum were opened in what once had been barracks, stables and storage facilities. Excavations started in the upper half of the citadel, but were soon interrupted by war. The UNESCO works also uncovered part of the slopes of the hill on which the citadel stands, discovering that these slopes were originally made of stone pavement, and finding interesting archaeological remains of previous fortifications. Finally, they covered the moats which had turned into swamps with the rubble cleared of the fortress, thus sanitizing the environment.

Since the Russian invasion the citadel has again been used for military purposes. Its lower part now houses a Taleban ammunition depot, which is a serious liability, not only for this historical monument, but also for the densely populated old city around it. The museums have been closed and their collections stacked away. The upper part is not being used.

The Department of Historical Monuments of Herat and all other Afghan professionals involved in the interrupted UNESCO project have been entertaining hopes of continuing the restoration. SPACH was offered an office space in the Citadel (*fig. 28*) and asked for funding. We decided in principle to help the Department of Historical Monuments by providing unskilled labor for the clearing of rubble, the rehabilitation of office space and reopening the main gate, to avoid going through the military part of the citadel. The idea was twofold: on one hand, to prepare the ground for a new phase of restoration work, and on the other, to reclaim part of the Citadel for civil use. The office space would be used for cultural activities and managed by the Department of Historical Monuments with possible input from SPACH or other foreign cultural organizations.

On my next visit to Herat, however, I studied the proposed works to reopen the main gate, and found they were quite unrealistic. According to the UNESCO's plans there used to be a tower (#VI) in which the main entrance was lodged, with a ramp leading up to it. Neither the

tower nor the ramp remain (*fig. 29*), and the corridor leading to this gate from the inside (now closed by a temporary brick wall) ends in a precipice at least 6 meters high. Even if the tower were not to be rebuilt, the sheer workload of building a ramp in keeping with the UNESCO restoration standards would be monumental, and could not be accomplished within the budgetary constraints of SPACH.

But the tower might have to be rebuilt eventually, for it used to buttress the walls around it. They now show serious cracks. The wall on the east side of the entrance has a wide crack that runs from top to bottom along its junction with tower #VII, and is soon to detach itself entirely and fall (*fig. 30*). Now that is not so important, because it supports nothing but itself and is a simple brick structure without decoration. But on the west side of the entrance, the wall that separates the corridor of the main gate with the lower citadel is similarly threatened. The guard building lying just under this wall, and from which a staircase leads up to the corridor, shows an alarming wide crack all along its ceiling, from north to south, indicating that the wall and part of the buildings adjacent to it might eventually fall towards the east. That would involve a major restoration effort. Before reopening the main gate this danger must be addressed.

I could not conduct a proper survey of the rest of the building, being surrounded by suspicious Taleban. The UNESCO restoration being recent and having been properly done, there was no reason to suspect other threats. It seems the building suffered no damage in the recent war, with the important exception of a rocket hit in the Timurid tower, destroying much of the tiling patiently reconstituted by the UNESCO team. I did visit the hammam in the upper part of the citadel, with its beautiful paintings (*fig. 31*) and curious layout, the round bathtub being installed in tower XIX, with a beautiful view over the north of the city. If some of these paintings are to be saved they must urgently be conserved.

Herat : the Old Town

The extensive old town of Herat is one of the most important surviving examples of traditional urbanism in the Islamic world. It is built on flat terrain, on a rigidly square plan cut into four quarters by the main thoroughfares which intersect in the centre at Chahr Suq ("Four Bazaars"). Its total surface is about 170 hectares. The most important feature is the Citadel, the only other big monument being the Friday Mosque. Little remains of the town walls that Shah Rukh rebuilt in the early 15th Century, but all access to the Old Town is still through the five traditional entry points, though no trace remains of the gates. Three of them are in the central section of the west (Darwaz-e Iraq), south (Darwaz-e Kandahar), and east (Darwaz-e Khoshk) walls; the two others, in the north wall, used to provide direct access to the Friday mosque and old administrative center (Darwaz-e Qutbe-Chaq) and to the Citadel (Darwaz-e Malik).

In the 1940s construction work was started on a new town, to the north and east of the old town. A masterplan that is still used now, with some modifications, was made in Kabul in 1963 to direct the expansion of the city. In these urbanization plans the old city was neglected. As a result it has suffered no major modernizing intervention, but has slowly withered away due to lack of maintenance, as residents would use their money to move somewhere else instead of restoring their dwellings in the dying heart of the city. The lack of facilities (electricity, running water, telephone, green areas, and place for cars) that appeared in the new town formed a disincentive to continue living in the old town. The administrative center moved from Chahr Bagh (in the Qutbe Chaq quarter) to the new town; the caravanserais were gradually disaffected, replaced by bus stops, parking lots and mechanical workshops on the outskirts of the city; and children started going to the schools in the new areas instead of the old madrassahs.

In the late 1970s Afghan architects and urban planners made a major survey of the old town and proposals for its rehabilitation. Their fascinating studies resulted in a series of publications, the main ones being Rafi Samizay's survey and Abdul Wasay Najimi's urbanization study and proposals (see introduction). Due to the outbreak of the war there has been no chance to implement them, however. The object of my own forays into the old town was to see how things had changed, both in terms of individual sites, and in respect to the general urban landscape.

The war and its effect on the economy have had two major consequences. On one hand, general neglect of individual buildings and of any planning considerations, as the central administration was either weak or totally absent. The Russians made hardly any attempt to change the urban fabric, concentrating their efforts on Kabul; the Taleban, likewise, do not make their presence as felt as in Kabul. They have closed down some schools, all cinemas and theatres, built more mosques, etc, but these are all limited local interventions that have no impact on the character of the city as a whole. There has been no active intervention in the sense of new plans or implementation of old ones.

But citizens and some of the Institutions have continued Herat's tradition of autonomy. The city still enjoys considerable revenue as a major trade center. Imports from Iran (often in transit from the UAE) and Turkmenistan (in transit from Russia, the Far East and Europe) are dispatched onwards to the rest of the country and Pakistan. Most of this business is in private hands (much of it is smuggling) and some Herati citizens are quite rich, as modern building trends prove. But the provincial government also manages to get its share from this bounty through customs tax. The Department of Historical Monuments of Herat traditionally, and still today, receives 1 or 2% from this tax. Moreover, since it is run conjointly with the Friday Mosque, it has access to part of the considerable income of the landholdings and urban property of the mosque. This income is enough to maintain the Friday Mosque and implement some urban renovation plans, but altogether the impact of any type of authorities which may intervene in the urban fabric remains minimal, and the growth of the city has been chaotic, even if it broadly follows the lines of the masterplan.

The second major consequence of the 20 years of war has been the revitalization of the old town. As Najimi points out, the old town is much more efficient in many ways than the new one, and the shrinking of the official economy, virtual disappearance of modern industry and return to subsistence modes, has naturally benefited the old town. One again sees livestock roaming around in its streets and courtyards, small shops that sell anything have regained the upper hand over the big, specialized shops of the new town, garbage and latrine waste is once again eagerly collected and recycled. Refugees returning from Iran and Pakistan have reoccupied the houses previously abandoned. And the conservative trends enforced by the Taleban have restored the vital community and educative functions of mosques, in the absence of modern venues like theatres, parks, cinemas and schools.

One of the advantages of the old town for its residents is that few outsiders care to penetrate its dense maze of streets. There are no shops or administrative buildings to go to, no landmarks to guide oneself by, except the minarets of the Friday mosque, and the streets wind in all directions and intersect unexpectedly. Had I not had Samizay's map to guide me, I would have been lost countless times. The Taleban rarely venture into the old town, they stay on the main thoroughfares and have invested the new town. Therefore life goes on much like before. I could photograph people freely, spoke to several women, and was invited into their houses, even when there were no male relatives present. The Heratis have the reputation of being more open, more cultured and less conservative than most of the other Afghans. In the old town they can keep this tolerant tradition alive.

The Old Town of Herat has therefore not changed much since it was surveyed by teams of young Afghans led by Samizay *ea*. They reported 267 sites of interest in the old town, excluding historical houses.

Quarter:	Qutbe Chaq	Abd. Mesri	Momanda	Bar Durrani	Total
Mosques¹	27	21	23	26	97
Shrines	18	15	4	13	50
Serais²	19	24	22	20	85
Cisterns	5	2	2	4	13
Baths	2	4	3	5	14
Madrassahs³	4	0	0	0	4
Synagogues	0	0	3	1	4
Total	75	66	57	69	267

¹ One finds a large number of Shia mosques, called Takia Khanas. These Shia mosques are mainly located in the quarters of Abdullah Mesri and Momanda

² Serais are commercial complexes; either caravanserais, or covered bazaars, or modern "shopping complexes".

³ The only madrassahs that specialize in religious education are located around the Friday mosque. But many local mosques function as madrassahs too.

I was not able to visit all of them, as that might take the better part of a month, and it was not my main reason for being in Herat. Eventually I managed to see about 75% of the sites in Abdullah Mesri, 50% of the sites in Momanda, and 25% of the sites in Qutbe Chaq.

Quarter of Abdullah Mesri

This is the area of town that probably has best kept its original character. It also seems the poorest. The shrine of Abdullah Mesri, after which it is named, is located on the old town walls in the southeastern corner of the old town. It is an unassuming little shrine with a nice garden in front of it. There doesn't seem to be a single building, among the 66 given, that is worth visiting from a tourist's or conservationist's point of view, except the Chahr Suq cistern (*fig. 32*). This is said to be the biggest in Herat, and is located just off the main intersection of the two thoroughfares. But many of the mosques and shrines have nice courtyards with interesting details that speak volumes about local culture, beliefs and ways of life. This quarter also has the most covered passageways, which provide relief from the hot Herati sun. There is not a single green space; the few open spaces are more like wastelands than like squares.

In the northwest area of this quarter are several "**Takia Khanas**", i.e. Shi'ite mosques. They seem fairly prosperous in general, and the biggest one, the Mirza Takia Khan mosque, has undergone a complete modernization, making it look very much like a modern Iranian mosque (*fig. 33*). Many of the emigrants to Iran find jobs in the construction sector, and it is not surprising that upon their return they apply the styles and techniques common across the border. The caretakers of the mosque said they were not undergoing any form of persecution by the Taleban, and stressed they were very much part of the community, their mosque also performing services to the Sunni neighbors (at Id for example). What might have been the prettiest Takia Khana, the Akhundzada mosque (a photo of it is reproduced in Samizay's book) was apparently in a state of disrepair, and I could not visit it.

Samizay also describes some other buildings, giving ground plans. Of the **Haji Abdul Rashid mosque**, the summer mosque has collapsed, and the courtyard has been modified; the well is in a new location, all traces of greenery have disappeared. The **Chahr Suq cistern** is still in a good condition; like all other cisterns in Herat it is not used anymore to store water. Some rubbish has accumulated in it, but since it is off-limits to the public, it has not been reused as storage facilities. The **Hafezji baths** have been demolished and replaced by newer bathing facilities in an ugly cement-brick building, much to the pleasure of the residents.

The private houses Samizay describes have changed ownership, and I could not identify them by the names he gives. There seems to have been quite an upheaval in ownership patterns. The better-off families, which used to live in the more beautiful traditional houses, have mostly emigrated, and their houses have been invested by poorer people – often squatters. It is common to find one house built around a courtyard on two levels occupied by 5 to 10 different families, each living in one or two rooms, and sharing the kitchen and lavatory facilities. The houses are obviously not maintained, and the more precious woodwork and furniture is sold or burnt as firewood. Only in one instance did I find a higher-class house still inhabited by the original family (see next section, Momanda).

Quarter of Momanda

Momanda, like Abdullah Mesri, has preserved most of its original character. Likewise, it has no administrative buildings or shops in its residential area (all of them being located along the bazaar roads) and there are no green areas, but a couple of wastelands. Its most outstanding feature used to be its Jewish community. There used to be three synagogues. All the Jews have emigrated, down to the last one, and their synagogues have been destroyed or reconverted. This has affected the social fabric considerably, and Momanda now seems more rundown than other quarters.

Of the places described in detail in Samizay's book, the following were visited:

- **Naqashi mosque and cistern**. The mosque is in good condition, and has recently been repainted. An interesting marble inscription still adorns the courtyard mihrab. But the cistern is not in use anymore; a wall has been built on the street side and it has also been closed from the mosque side. There was still a lot of water in the cistern, but with a disheartening quantity of rubbish floating on top.

- **Ubaidullah Jan caravanserai** (*fig. 34*). This building is interesting insofar it is one of the only remaining caravanserais in the old city. The dome over the entrance is still in good shape,

as is the rest of the building. Shops have opened in the rooms of the serai, and a confectioner has set up shop in the northwestern corner. A building has been built in the middle of the courtyard, thus disrupting the overall feeling of the place. For the rest it seems in fine condition.

- **Yu Aw synagogue** (*fig. 35*). This building has been destroyed. Another synagogue nearby had been converted into a school. The third synagogue, **Mullah Ashur**, could not be located. Nobody had heard of it, and Samizay's map is not always accurate. Once again I found that almost all inhabitants of the area were recent migrants (that probably moved into the houses once occupied by Jews) who had no memory of the place. Most people didn't even understand who I was referring to (the Yahudian, Jews in Farsi). The old man living in the courtyard of the Yu Aw synagogue thought it had been a mosque, and denied it ever having been a Jewish place of worship. Indeed, all trappings of worship had disappeared, the building had obviously been ransacked, and its exterior disfigured by gunfire. Most of the beautiful decorative painting on the wall could still be seen (*fig. 36*), except where the plaster had fallen (under the main dome). Part of the building had collapsed (the north wing and part of the first floor) but the sanctuary behind the main worshipping hall was still intact.

The Jews will not come back, and there is no point in restoring the synagogue. But of all of the buildings I saw, this one had the finest decoration. Photographs of the Mullah Ashur mosque indicate it had equally fine, or even better, decoration.

- **Ahmadi house**. This house is lived in by the son of Amanullah Ahmadi, who performed major restoration works on it between 1983 and 1986. He was proud to show me around his house, which indeed has been redone in the traditional way. It seems the visit of Samizay's survey team in the early 1980s motivated him to perform this restoration. The main rooms, on the south side of the courtyard, are very spacious and have molded plaster features such as shell shaped appliques (*fig. 37*). The ceilings are of thin wooden beams and planks, and in some rooms are painted (*fig. 38*). A common feature are the cupboards built in niches specially made for that purpose, and filled with chinaware, wedding presents, family memorabilia (painted photographs), books and music. Under the main rooms are the kitchen and bread-oven (which provide floor-heating in the winter), fuel stocks etc. On the northern side of the courtyard are rooms which the family normally occupies in the winter, because they catch the sun. On the east and west sides are more rooms, used for storage purposes mainly. The door from the street leads into a small antechamber, where visitors are screened before allowing them into the courtyard where women are (although in my case no attempt was made to hide them), and from there onto the northeast corner of the courtyard. At that point a staircase leads up to a room where the visitors are normally received, and can even stay over. A bit further, another stair leads up to the flat roof, where two small rooms are built (*fig. 39*), also finely painted. From here another staircase leads down to new rooms Ahmadi had built for in-laws.

Such initiatives as that of Ahmadi should be supported by the municipality, typically with interest-free loans and architectural guidance.

I missed many of the other sites in this quarter. Unfortunately Samizay's book indicates the type of buildings and numbers them, but in the case of Momanda omits naming them, which makes identification difficult. I tried to find the baths he describes (Haji Mohammed Akbar Baths, or Hammam-e Yahudiha) which have an interesting water-provision system. The only baths I could find had turned into a heap of rubble; they were called **Hammam-e Padeh** by the neighbors (*fig. 40*).

Quarter of Qutbe Chaq

Qutbe Chaq ("The Fat Chief") is the quarter most severely affected by modernization. In the 1940s the quarter's surface was extended to the east and the north, beyond the ancient walls, and new, wide streets were built around the Friday mosque, whose garden was extended towards the east. The administrative buildings (the governor's palace, his residence, the surrounding stables and workshops, and the post office) were relocated, and a 30m wide street built from the western facade of the mosque towards Malik bazaar. These interventions cut the quarter into several smaller areas, thus disrupting its homogeneity. Some of the passages between the houses are wide enough for trucks to go through – there's such a road between the Pai Hesar square near the citadel and the Masjed-e Jami. The quarter may have

lost its character, but it has gained in commercial activity, for there are shops along all the new roads and passages open to vehicle traffic.

The only administrative building still standing here is the **city granary**, quite obvious in aerial photographs, as it covers a large area with its "nippled" domes (the nipples are open to the north and serve as fresh air intake. They are a regular feature of Herati architecture, and provide a cooling system during the hot summers, when the 120 days wind blows). I did not find out whether the granary is still used. Probably not, as the Soviets built a big one on the airport road.

The main feature of the quarter is obviously the **Friday Mosque** with its more than 300 domes and 12 minarets. It reportedly has room for all citizens of Herat. It is being continuously maintained, the old tiling gradually replaced by the new ones produced in the tile workshop located in its eastern part. Although some specialists object to the quality of the new tiles, admittedly rather poor, it is felicitous that this enormous building is being kept in prime condition. Two of its more interesting features are the Ghorid portal in its southeastern corner, and the tomb of Sultan Ghiasuddin, the Ghorid king who conquered India, which is generally kept off-limits to the public, behind the winter mosque on the north side. The chamber in which the tomb lies is elaborately decorated and of particularly harmonious proportions.

Of the other buildings Samizay describes in some detail I could only visit one, the **house of Haji Ghulam Mohammed**. Other private houses had been turned into squatter settlements or had collapsed. The house of Haji Ghulam Mohammed was now occupied by three brothers, of which one is a miniature painter. This was quite appropriate, as the main room of the house is completely decorated with fine floral paintings. But he had made no effort to restore them, and they were fading away and falling with parts of the plaster. Still the overall effect of the room was quite impressive (*fig. 41*). Furthermore, the house had fine examples of the typical woodwork (*fig. 42*) and molded, unglazed tile decoration (*fig. 43*) common all over the old town of Herat.

I only visited the buildings between the Friday Mosque and the Chahr Suq. Of the three cisterns, only one remains, **Pahlawan**. It has been converted into a funeral parlor for women (*fig. 44*) by building a wooden floor in it just above ground level, supported by pillars. The other two cisterns, **Barda** and **Chahr Bagh**, have been demolished – the latter by the Department of Historical Monuments, who exploits shops in the area. Other buildings visited were not particularly noteworthy. The **Pahlawan mosque**, now renamed Sadeqia, had been completely rebuilt and now looked like an airport terminal, and its square minaret like an air control tower. Some other buildings in the area have been similarly modified recently (for example the Sher Asadan shrine and the shrine and mosque of Khwaja Mohammed Haruj), while the **Sadeqia madrassah** had been rebuilt as a big three or four story cement-brick building, in total disharmony with its surroundings. It is quite obvious that this area of the city is subject to more speculation and changes than others, probably because of the vicinity of the Friday mosque and the relatively good access by road. Unfortunately the new buildings are made with cheap Iranian cement-based materials (and not even plastered over) and without any considerations for the historical surroundings.

Chahr Suq and the axial bazaars

As mentioned before, all commercial and light industrial activity takes place along the axial thoroughfares that join at the Chahr Suq ("*Four Bazaars*"). The bazaars are named after the gates they lead to (Bazaar-e Kandahar to the South, Bazaar-e Iraq to the East, Bazaar-e Malik to the North, and Bazaar-e Khoshk to the West) and each is divided into several segments that specialize in, for example, brassware, food, jewelry, leather, household items, etc. This pattern, described first at the end of last century and again by Najimi, still prevails. One finds many serais⁴ on either side of the bazaars (mainly along Bazaar-e Kandahar and around the Chahr Suq). Commercial activity is very intense along these axes, which are permanently congested. The roads are just big enough to let two vehicles pass each other, and are lined by water channels (*juys*), trees (Bazaar-e Malik) and narrow sidewalks.

The only traditional serai I saw was the **Haji Musa** covered bazaar. It seemed in a regular condition. Some preservation effort must be made to keep at least some specimens of these covered bazaars, with their high barrel-vaulted, arched or domed roofs. Most serais are being rebuilt according to modern standards, in 100% cement, on two or three layers around a big

⁴ Serai basically means group of rooms around a courtyard, and is used for private houses as well as for commercial complexes. But in Samizay's study and this one, the term only refers to the commercial serais.

central courtyard (*fig. 45*). In some cases, also, the traditional layout is kept (*fig. 46*), and only the shops themselves are modernized.

Recommendations for Herat

Efforts should be made to preserve the exceptional character of Herat. In the past it has been one of the most beautiful cities of the region, surrounded by gardens and palaces. It has also always been one of the main cultural centers of the Iranian-speaking world. But government intervention has not been directed at preserving and exploiting these characteristics over the past 70 years. Fortunately such intervention has had relatively little impact, overall. Still, in view of the present chaotic sprawl of the city, it is clear that Herat needs a new masterplan. Najimi points out that the existing one was drawn in Kabul in 1963 by people who did not have an intimate knowledge of the place, and the plans were inspired by foreign ideas. As said, the Old Town and Herat's historical past were completely ignored. The masterplan provided for a main road to be built through the minarets site, with transport facilities on both sides, whereas this axis, called the Khiaban, had always been a recreational area for Heratis. It led from the big shrines of Shahzada Abdullah and Shahzada Abul Qasim, via the park that used to exist around Gawhar Shad, the minarets site, the tomb of Sheikh Ahmad, the tomb of the poet Jami, and Gawcharan to Yar Mohammed Khan's tomb. Now this whole area, which used to be planted with trees, is an industrial zone interspersed with wasteland, and trucks have replaced strollers. This is but one of the shortcomings of the plan.

The new masterplan would ideally be made with input of specialists in Islamic urbanism and urban architecture, and should concentrate on the Old Town in general and the provision of modern amenities in particular. The provision of clean drinking water, ideally reusing the cisterns, should be a priority, and efficient drainage systems should also be studied. A major effort should be made to improve the streets and the refuse collection. For the time being this is no problem, as poverty motivates efficient recycling, but this will not remain the case in years to come. It would be also most appreciated if green areas were implanted in the open areas of the Old Town and on its fringes. Mosques and shrines are usually well maintained by the community, and not much needs to be done in this domain. But for the construction and restoration of houses and commercial complexes clear guidelines should be set, as well as facilities such as loans to stimulate correct restoration.

A city such as Herat should try to specialize in cultural services, because this is what its history, reputation and popular culture have prepared it for. As an example, one could consider reopening the Behzad Miniature painting school. But more generally, if peace is acquired in Afghanistan and the country once again reopens to the outside world, Herat has an enormous tourist potential. It would be wise to start preparing for that day right now.