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## Dari Versions of the Articles

Cover: Qal'a-e Ikhtyaruddin with Herat National Museum (2007)

Interior Cover: Qal'a-e Ikhtyaruddin (2007)

Layout: Astrid Lange and Anke Thomas

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## Preface

Ute Franke



While the Afghan-German Archaeological Mission to Herat carried out its field mission in 2005, we were informed by our colleagues from the Department of Monuments and Sites that at the end of 2004 the National Museum and Archive of Herat had reopened (Plate 1). Deeply impressed by the extent and importance of the collection that presently is unique in Afghanistan, we asked the permission of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Information and Culture in Herat to prepare a brief documentation of the collection and take photographs.

During two days, we compiled a list of the objects on display in 52 showcases and arranged on tables and boards in the open. 150 of the c. 1000 objects were selected and recorded by the author and photographed by A. Lange (Plate 2). While it was possible to remove the archaeological objects from their display cases, the cabinets holding the manuscripts could not be opened. Therefore, they had to be photographed through the glass, resulting in many reflexions and distortions. For this reason, the manuscripts kept in the archive are not represented in this booklet according to their importance.

Without doubt, the collection requires and deserves to be fully catalogued to serve as a basis for further, more detailed scientific studies. Fortunately enough, in 2007 the Ministry of Information and Culture sent a team from the National Museum in Kabul and the Institute of Archaeology to prepare the compilation of an inventory in Dari.

The aim of the brief documentation carried out in 2005 while we conducted the archaeological survey in Herat Province and two excavations in Herat City was not to anticipate such a study, but rather to foster it in future through bringing to the attention of a wider scientific and popular audience that Herat houses the most significant public collection of Islamic art in Afghanistan (Plate 9). In this way, the National Museum of Herat supplements the

1 View of the exhibition hall (2005)

2 Documentation of objects (2005)





3a, b Pedestalled »Bamiyan-bowl«, quartz body, blue and manganese underglaze decoration, 13<sup>th</sup> century

4 Jug, pottery, black painted decoration, partly red slipped, 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century

National Museum in Kabul which presents an important collection of pre-Islamic and ethnographic objects, but owns few pieces of Islamic art. Unlike the museum in Kabul, Herat Museum has not received any international funding. One of the perspectives for printing this brochure was thus to support raising funds that are required for the compilation of an object inventory and for the badly needed restoration of objects and manuscripts.

Such an endeavour, however, has to go hand in hand with improving the conditions under which the objects are kept and displayed, with regard to climatic and lighting conditions, dust and pest control, with the installation of a small conservation laboratory, and the training of staff (Plate 7).

These needs have become more urgent with the shift of the Museum and Archive into Qal'a-e Ikhtyaruddin in late 2005. Although the citadel as one of the most outstanding ancient buildings in Herat is an appropriate ambiente, the two buildings within its premises that were designed as museums in the 70s by the UNESCO-Mission suffer from humidity and the lack of ventilation. We hope to be able to secure these funds before further damage is inflicted upon the artefacts.

The objects kept in the National Museum Herat are testimony to the long history of the region. Following an introduction to the history of the Museum itself (chapter 1), a general introduction (chapter 2) and a summary of the historic role of Herat (chapter 3), the remaining chapters are devoted to the collection, beginning with prehistory in chapter 4. Chapters 5 to 7 deal with various aspects of Islamic minor arts and crafts, namely metal, pottery, and glass. Together with a portrayal of the art of the book (chapter 8), these contributions highlight the importance of the Herati workshops. They likewise illustrate the impact of political patronage upon the city, a benefaction that put its stamp on the forma urbis through fortifications, architecture, gardens and irrigation systems, and which created an educational, intellectual and artistic centre as a vivid manifestation of this power. Finally, in chapter 9, the most recent archaeological research conducted in the province and city of Herat is briefly presented. Publication of results of this work, especially of objects from controlled excava-

tions and surface surveys in the region and of further material in the Museum, will facilitate more detailed approaches in future research directed at assessing the contribution of this region to Islamic art, on the one hand, and outline the particular »footprints« of its artistic production on the other. It is hoped that ultimately these efforts will aid in highlighting the role of Herat as a regional centre.

For reasons beyond control it took much longer than originally anticipated to prepare this brochure and I wish to express my sincerest gratitude to all persons and institutions involved in one way or the other for their patience and support, namely:

In Herat, the past and present governors, Ismail Khan and S.H. Anwari, the representatives of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Information and Culture, who re-established the Museum: W.S. Bahra and Mr. Zarwari as then and present directors, Y. Khushbeen as Director of the National Museum, B. Baha Timuri as Director of the Archive (Plate 8), their staff, Shaikh Abdul Ghafur, Ghulam Mohammad, and Shweib-e Radjai, and particularly A. Ayomuddin, Director of the Department of Monuments and Sites in Herat.

In Germany, the authors who contributed papers that made this brochure a piece of scholarly research: Prof.



5 Clay vessels with intricate geometric and figurative designs, from illegal excavations, 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century

6 Ceramic bottle with turquoise glaze, 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century



Dr. C.-P. Haase, Director of the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin (SMB-SPK), as well as his associates Dr. J. Kröger and Dr. A. von Gladiß, and Dr. M. Müller-Wiener from the Institute of Oriental and Asian Studies, Department for the History of Islamic Art at the University of Bonn. E. Schalk, who translated and checked the English texts and presented her time and efforts as a donation to this brochure; R. Rajaei, assisted by E. Bograt, who mastered the difficult task to translate the texts into Farsi and her careful rendering of the termini technici; N. Saber for editing the Dari version; E. Niewöhner for reading the Farsi texts; K. Schmidtner for revising the manuscripts and checking the transcriptions; Th. Urban for preparing the maps, and A. Lange and A. Thomas for designing the layout and taking care of printing this booklet.

Special thanks are due to J. Leslie and A. Boostani from Aga Khan Trust for Culture and their team for their support and friendship, a collaboration that we can hope-

7 Architectural decoration pieces and inscribed headstones in the Museum



7



8

8 Y. Khushbeen, Director of the National Museum Herat (left), and B. Timuri, Director of the National Archives Herat (right)

fully continue for the benefit of the Herat National Museum in future.

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#### Technical Remarks

The transcription of place and personal names is kept at a low level to ease reading for the general public. Usually, it follows generally accepted standards for the transliteration of these termini in English.

In order to optimize the page layout, a strictly ascending order of plate numbers was abandoned in favor of the size of the illustrations.