

Further Explorations – Herat City Survey

The Old City Survey

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The survey within Herat's Old City and along its outer edge was designed to collect additional evidence for ancient occupations and locate potential future excavation areas suitable for the study of its origins. It is important to note that we could not conduct a systematic survey due to time constraints and also to the fact that we could not access certain areas that possibly still contained landmines in August 2005. Moreover, the modern city of Herat is densely settled and new constructions were underway in many locations at the time of the survey, which made our work even more difficult. Nonetheless, we managed to investigate the major roads that surround and traverse the Old City and roads that connect it to Kuhandaz, and we were able to give a more specific attention



Fig. 769 Herat, construction zone, spot 27 (photo: B. Mutin).



Fig. 770 Herat, trash area with architecture, spot 12B (photo: B. Mutin)



Fig. 771 Herat, construction zone, near spots 25 and 26 (photo: B. Mutin)

to areas located along the western limit of the Old City. In total, in addition to the linear survey along the major roads and selected secondary streets (marked in red on the title image), 28 places were more precisely examined. The survey was conducted by foot during three days. We assumed that

◀ Aerial view of Herat; localisation of inspected streets and areas (B. Mutin, Th. Urban)



Fig. 772 Herat, trash area with architecture, spot 24B (photo: B. Mutin)



Fig. 773 Herat, sloping gravel layers seen in a section at the northeastern edge of Kuhandaz (photo: B. Mutin)



Fig. 774 Herat, earthen massif, possibly remains of the fortification (?), east of Kuhandaz, spot 28 (photo: B. Mutin)



Fig. 775 Herat, remains of the perimeter wall in the northeastern portion of the Old City, spot 29 (photo: B. Mutin)



Fig. 776 Herat, ruined architecture near spot 23 (photo: B. Mutin)



Fig. 777 Herat, ruined architecture near spots 25 and 26 (photo: B. Mutin)



Fig. 778 Herat, black-under-turquoise glaze painted sherd, spot 21 (length: 10 cm max; photo: B. Mutin)



Fig. 779 Herat, ruined architecture, spot 14 (photo: B. Mutin)



Fig. 780 Herat, yellow-glazed jug found during construction work, spot 18 (photo: B. Mutin)

construction areas, large trash pits, and ditches were more prone to reveal elements of Herat's ancient occupations and stratigraphy so we focused our research on these types of areas (Figs. 769–773).

Our survey eventually failed to localize vestiges older than the Islamic period but provided us with the following results and information. First, the survey of construction zones near Kuhandaz enabled us to observe a deep section on its northeastern edge, that contains remains of the glacis, studied at the site (Fig. 773). Observations further east, approximately 150 m east of the cemetery, roughly along the ancient fortified outline hypothesised by F. Grenet¹, led us to locate an earthen massif (Fig. 774, and no. 28 on title image) which might be a remain of this outline. Second, also not far from Kuhandaz, we noticed a c. 6 m deep section characterised by a thick, yellow sandy deposit at its bottom. We had seen this type of deposit in Kuhandaz in Trench II. Third, remains of the fortifications in the Old City are extremely scarce. Limited portions of it are present only in its southwestern and northeastern quarters (Fig. 775). Fourth, in relation to this topic, we recorded many medieval buildings in state of total abandonment and buried below meters of soil (Figs. 776; 777; 779)². This gives us an indication as to how deep older occupations, if any, may rest. This also made us realize how precarious Herat's heritage is and how at risk of total disappearance it is if nothing is implemented to protect it. Lastly, we collected a handful of ceramic sherds. These consist of plain buff wares and glazed ceramics including plain green glazed fragments, a yellow-light brown glazed jar (Fig. 780), and a sherd with black-paint under a turquoise glaze (Fig. 778), probably dating to the 15th/16th century, resp. thereafter.

¹ Grenet 1996, Fig. 8a.

² No. 9 is probably a cistern.

Herat Old City – Bazaar-e Malek and Houz-e Chahar Su

Ute Franke

Bazaar-e Malek (Site no. 30)

The German-Afghan Archaeological Mission working in Herat was notified by the Aga Trust of Culture – Commission for the Preservation of the Old City about the large building site Maulawi Jalil Ullah/Maulawi Sa'ade, located in Shuru Chahar Shambe, Bazaar-e Malek. In collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Culture, National Institute of Archaeology, and the Department for Historic Monuments, Herat, a brief visit was paid to the site on September 16th, 2006. It was not possible to enter the building ground.

The area comprises a large pit, which has reached a depth of c. 3 m in the overall space, and c. 3.5 m in some smaller foundation ditches (Fig. 781). The sections reveal traces of large burnt brick structures from just below the surface to almost 2 m below (Fig. 782). The walls are from different building phases and further brick structures are visible in the deeper ditches. The western and northern sections show brick debris and blocks of compact clay.

The pottery was collected by the labourers, mostly from the open area. A monochrome green-glazed earthenware rim comes from one of the lower ditches (Fig. 784a). The black-under-turquoise sherd with a radial decoration might well date to the 15th century ('Timurid panel ware', Fig. 784b), as well as the black-painted sherd with a yellowish clear glaze (Fig. 784f). The pottery is remarkable since although coming from a moderate depth it attests the presence of ancient deposits and thus the site's potential. It is one of the few sites inspected by the mission after 2005 in the Old City, which yielded substantial archaeological deposits. Excavations were not possible and a chance to gather more information on the mediaeval city was lost.

Houz-e Chahar Su (Site no. 31, AKTC Refurbishment Project)

In 2009, AKTC handed over a couple of sherds collected in the Chahar Su area during their restoration of the cistern built by Shah Abbas I (Figs. 783; 785).³ The precise find spot is unknown, but the pottery is included here, since it contains 14th- to 16th-century sherds and illustrates the importance of this central area.

Apart from two black-painted under turquoise-glaze sherds with curly floral patterns and one blue-and-white sherd (Fig. 785f. g. j), all sherds are quartz-based. Figs. 785f and 785g are more boldly drawn and similar to a sherd from Trench 1a (Fig. 48g). The assemblage includes a singular grey-coloured ground sherd, painted in- and outside in black-and-white under a clear glaze with a curly, lobed medallion (Fig. 785a)⁴, and blue- and/or black-underglaze sherds, one painted in reserve (Fig. 785b), probably 14th to 16th century. One light green-glazed celadon sherd is shown in Fig. 785d. The other examples are later in date. One fragment with a deep black paint has a creamy shining glaze, similar to the mother-of-pearl hues also attested in the citadel, and a chromium-black band on the back (Fig. 785h). A small cup with a brownish band on the rim and a closed shape with 'spoked-wheel'-pattern have comparisons from Trench 1b (Fig. 785l. m). A moulded sherd of good



Fig. 781 Building pit, with foundation ditch



Fig. 782 Section with burnt-brick architecture



Fig. 783 Chahar Su cistern, during conservation (courtesy Archnet)

quality shows a plain roundel in a grid pattern (Fig. 785n). Most remarkable is the fragment of a reddish earthenware tile with white glaze. It shows the upper parts of two letters reserved in white with red outlines on a blue ground (Fig. 785o). Two curved turquoise elements with black outlines run across, but are painted over by

the red borders. The clear glaze is decayed and shady, but, although smaller the fragment is similar to the wall decoration uncovered by the Unesco and our team near the Timurid Tower and

the gateway (Fig. 785p. q). The quality is similar, but the letters are narrower. The tile was collected with the other sherds, but it remains open whether it was used there in a primary or secondary position. The tinge of the back indicates a slight overfiring (Fig. 785o).

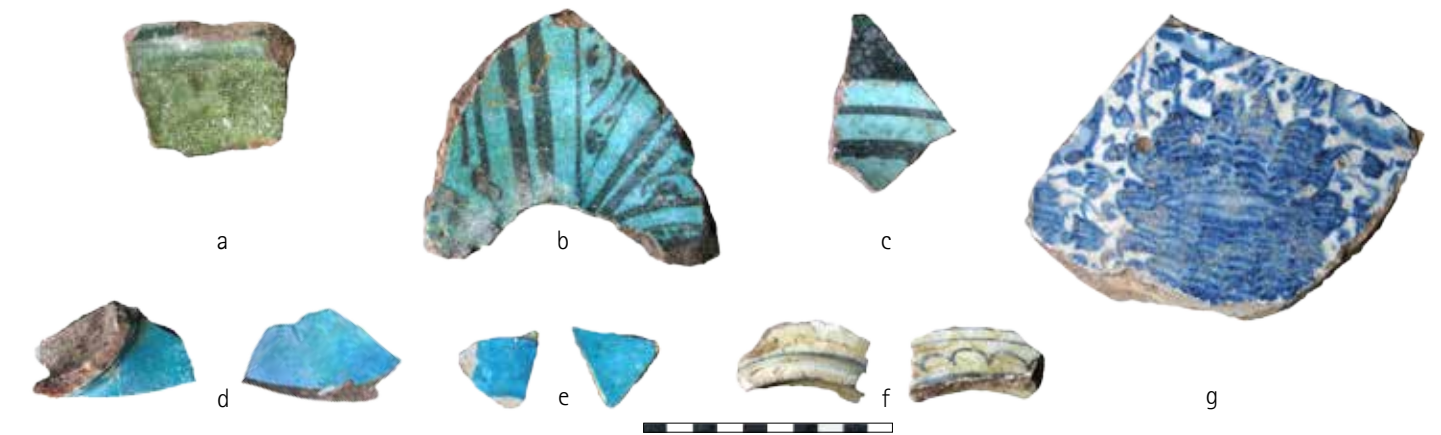


Fig. 784 Pottery from Bazaar-e Malek building site (b: Timurid panel ware), scale 1:3

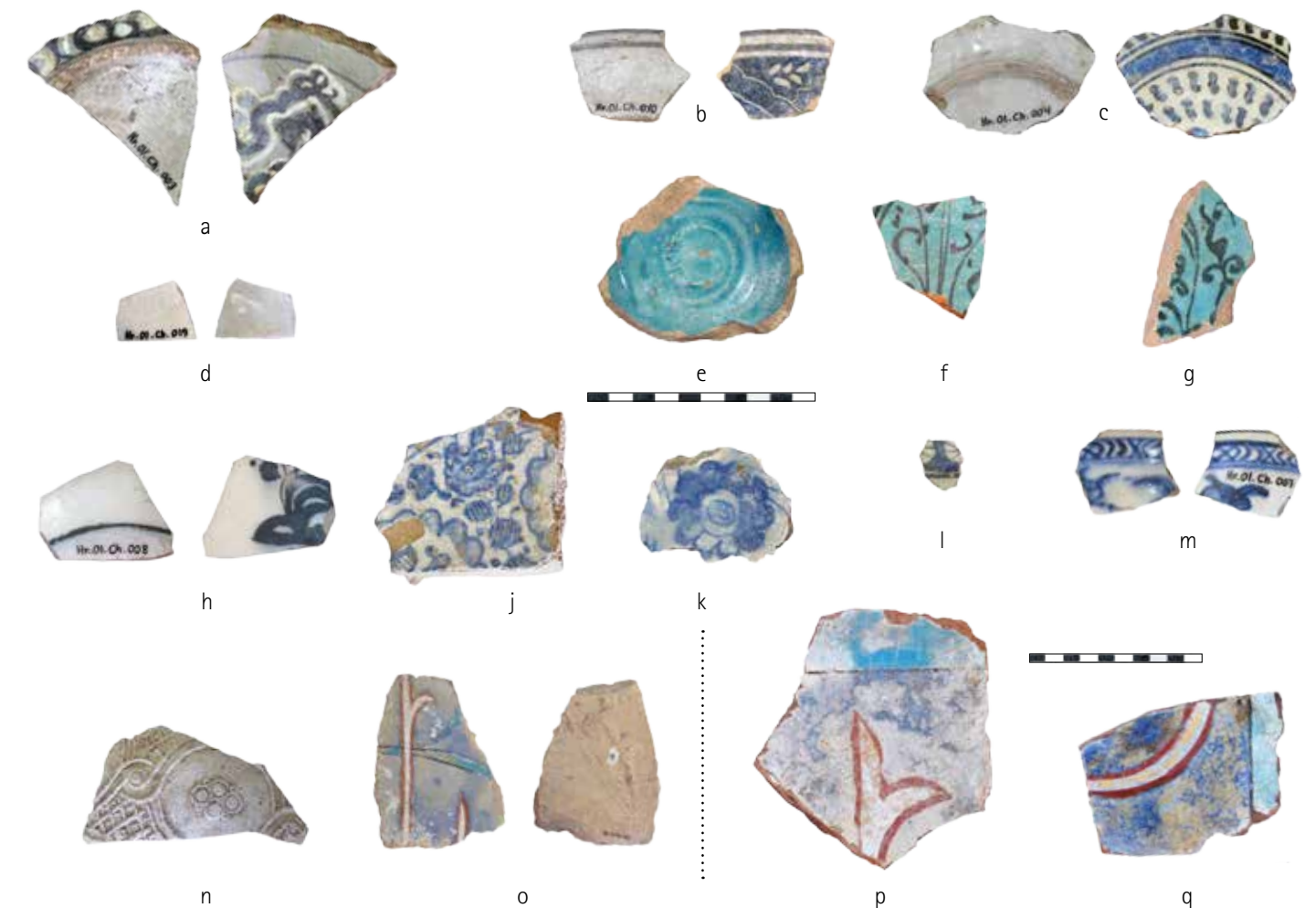


Fig. 785 Pottery and tiles from Chahar Su and Qala'-e Ekhtyaruddin, Trench 3 (p; q: Units 3097; 3048); scales 1:3 (a–o; Photos: A. M. Mohammady) and 1:4 (p; q.)

³ Najimi 1982. - Jodidio 2017, 210–217.

⁴ Cp. Haddon 2011, cat. 1.1, p. 68.

The Gazorgah Archaeological Zone

Ute Franke, Thomas Urban, Nader Rassuli, Ajmal Ayomuddin



Fig. 786 View across Area 2 and the asphalt road to the Ansari Shrine in Gazorgah

In 2006, the German-Afghan Archaeological Mission, working in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Culture, the National Institute of Archaeology and the Department of Historic Sites and Monuments in Herat, was asked by the Director of the latter institution, Mr. Ajmal Ayomuddin, to carry out a brief reconnaissance in a zone which had been declared as protected archaeological area by the Ministry of Information and Culture. The request was prompted by plans of an international agency to construct a hospital in the southern central part of that area. The site was visited on September 5th and 7th, 2006, a second inspection took place on May 4th, 2011. This area had also been surveyed in 1977 by W. Ball, published in 1981. At that time, the area was still rather free of buildings and cultivation.

Prospection Area and Finds

The prospection of 2006 covered an area of appr. 1 km² (Area 1). It is demarcated in the south by a road north of the Joi-e Now and a strip with new buildings, in the west by the asphalt road leading towards the religious complex of Gazorgah (Fig. 789) and in the east by hillocks and a mine field, which were not visited. Area 2 is located west of the road and beyond the limits of the archaeological zone, but was inspected in 2011 as well (Fig. 786).

Area 1 is marked in the east by several low, north-south running hillocks. On the westernmost one, scattered houses and traces of land-use are clearly visible on the low-lying ground in the west. The overall surface is littered with small stones and pebbles; sherds and brick fragments were only rarely noted. A large and still used graveyard extends far towards the north. In a bulldozer trench southwest of a small shrine tombs lined with stones, but no skeletal remains were exposed (Fig. 787). Present-day use, with buildings, ditches and dump areas, obscures the surface in the southern third of the area. In the southwest a UN camp and commercial buildings are located, towards the north extensive remains of large tent camps and several water wells (*qanat*)



Fig. 787 Earth grave with stone cover, Area 1



Fig. 788 Foundation ditch, with debris, Area 1

were noted. The section of a foundation ditch cut into one of the low mounds near the camp shows natural gravel and soil deposits (Fig. 788), with only a few intermingled cultural remains. Several small and shallow artificial mounds are visible, along the northern fringe of the area, marked by pottery clusters and brick fragments. The section of a bulldozer trench dug into a mound just next to the east-west running street, which marks the southern limit of the archaeological zone, also revealed only the natural gravel deposits of the plain and no cultural deposits.

The aerial image (Fig. 791) clearly shows the extension of the camps towards north and east, and the extended burial grounds in the east. The plots in between were used for agriculture. Modern dump areas for stones and industrial stone processing contribute to obscuring the surface.

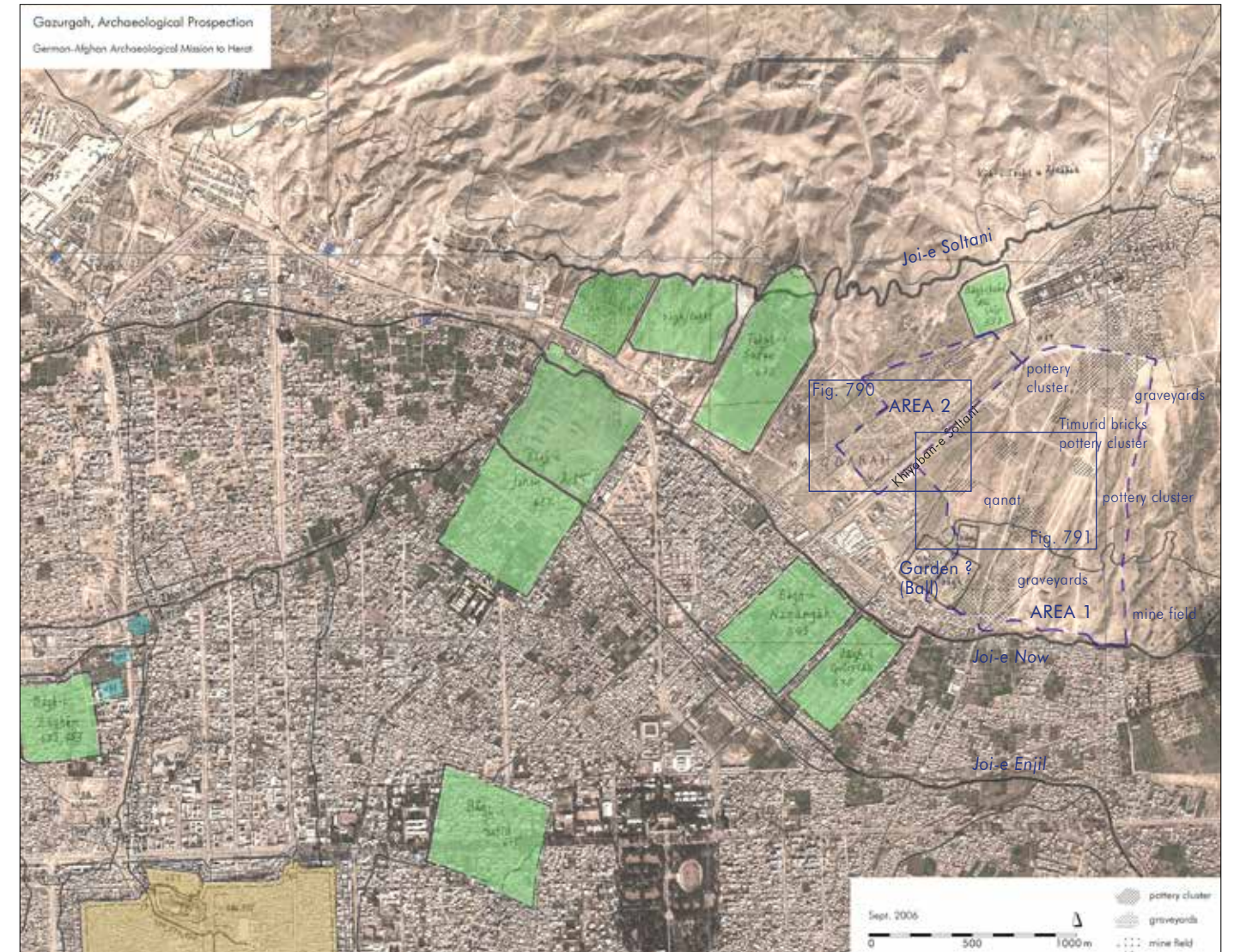


Fig. 789 Aerial view of the larger area, showing Areas 1 and 2, and the location of historic gardens (after Allen 1983, Map 2)



Fig. 790 Aerial view of Area 2, detail



Fig. 791 Aerial view of Area 1, detail