



## Injil

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The district of Injil<sup>1</sup>, administered by its homonymous principal town, borders on Kushk in the north, Karukh in the east, Guzara in the south, and Zendejan in the west (Figs. 1; 61). Injil is rather small in terms of space. It covers only 1,573 km<sup>2</sup> or 2.8 % of the province, but has the highest density rate with 172 people/km<sup>2</sup>, a figure reflecting the impact of the rapidly growing and spatially expanding urban and economic centre of Herat, which it encloses completely. In 2008, the district had 325 villages and a population of 256,458 (census 2012/13), with 55 % Tajik, 40 % Pashtun, 4 % Hazara and 1 % Turkmen.<sup>2</sup> In 2019/20 the population has grown to 271,717.<sup>3</sup>

The area extends from the foot of the Paropamisus Range to the western extension of the Band-e Badghisat and the alluvial gravel fans to the Hari Rud floodplain (Figs. 14; 877; 878). The districts lined up along the Hari Rud belong to the same dry climate and Irano-Turanic vegetation zones, their ecological setting differs substantially from that of Kushk and Gulran, located north of the mountains. In the south, natural conditions range from up to 1800-metre-high mountains to gravel plains, barren steppes and the Hari Rud Oasis. A dry continental climate persists, with temperatures up to 40° C in summer and freezing nights in winter.

Soil covers are thin in northern Injil, where gravel prevails and the vegetation consists mostly of shrubs and bushes, tamarisks and juniper. Soil types belong predominantly to mountain typical serozems, mountain light serozems and light serozems, with a vegetation



Fig. 876 Gazorgah Village, from south



Fig. 877 The western Hari Rud Oasis, near Mahmudabad (In 15)

of wormwood (*artemisia*) and wormwood-tragacanth. The floodplain, in contrast, has substantial accumulations of fertile fluvial sediments and is intensively cultivated, with fragments of natural willow-poplar-oleander shrubs (Figs. 878). The latter covers a 4-kilometre wide strip south of Herat and spans 10 km from west to east. The eroded, non-irrigated land with gravel in the north is used as pasture.<sup>4</sup> Population patterns are reflective of the environmental potentials: Whereas the steppe and gravel fans beyond the Band-e Badghisat are sparsely inhabited, with only a limited number of

<sup>1</sup> Also spelled Enjil.

<sup>2</sup> AIMS 2005b, 4. Central Statistics Organization, retrieved 15 January 2016. UNHCR Sub-Office, District Profile 2002. UNHCR lists 170,000 inhabitants for 1990, plus c. 103,200 refugees from Iran; cp. UNHCR District Profile (Injil) 26/08/2002. In 2005, Injil had the highest number of 31,041 repatriated refugees in the province after Herat city (AIMS 2005a).

<sup>3</sup> NISA 1398/2019–20.

<sup>4</sup> Breckle 2007a. - Freitag 1971a. - Freitag 1971b. - Freitag 1974.



Fig. 878 Irrigated fields with remains of the natural vegetation, east of Herat, near Masjed-e Taryak (In 3)



Fig. 879 Enwalled gardens and fields near Taryak



Fig. 880 Typical small rural village, with domed mud-built houses; at the border to the gravel plain, north of Ghalwar village (near In 4)

scattered small settlements, the river oasis is a densely populated zone.

Yet, life and economy depend on the availability of water. The annual mean precipitation is only between 150 and 250 mm/year, insufficient for dry farming.<sup>5</sup> Closer to the mountains, in the east, the river bed has cut into the sediments and is too deep for a direct irrigation (Fig. 885). Therefore, all 17,825 hectares of arable land require irrigation with pumps.<sup>6</sup> The water supply for people, livestock and crops is based on a complex irrigation network. Water is collected from perennial rivers, aquifers and groundwater resources, tapped with wells (15 %) and then distributed through a vast canal network (50 %).<sup>7</sup> Major old canals north of Herat are the Juy-e Soltani, mentioned 872–73|1467–68, the Juy-e Now (637|1239) and the Juy-e Injil (reopened 638|1241; Allen 1983, nos. 35; 29; 18). On their course to the city, these canals water the gardens and fields of Injil. In historical sources, the area was 'like a garden, well cultivated and profusely irrigated by numerous canals and divided into many districts. Populous villages lay one after the other, for a day's march and more, along the Sijistan road.'<sup>8</sup> Qanats are present, e.g. in the Gazurgah area, but play a minor role (10 %) and are mostly abandoned.

Thanks to these water resources, Injil is the second largest producer of vegetables and fruit after Karukh (41.88 %), with a 9.62 % share of the province's production, despite its small portion of land (3 %).<sup>9</sup> Agriculture is hence the major source of income, amounting to more than 52 % (2008). The main crops are wheat and, surprisingly, rice, also vegetables such as tomatoes, onions and eggplants, and fruits, especially grapes, plums and melons (Figs. 882; 883; 888). Historically, Injil was also known for its figs.<sup>10</sup> Alfalfa, clover, cotton and sesame are minor crops.<sup>11</sup>

5 AIMS 2005a maps, available also in Allchin et. al. 2019, Fig. 1.5 (see Knitter Fig. 13a, b).

6 All statistical data after USAID 2008.

7 UNHCR District Profile (Injil) 26/08/2002; Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development 2010–11.

8 Le Strange 1905, 409.

9 USAID Herat Province Agricultural Profile 2008; updated 2010/11.

10 Le Strange 1905, 409.

11 UNHCR District Profile (Injil) 26/08/2002.

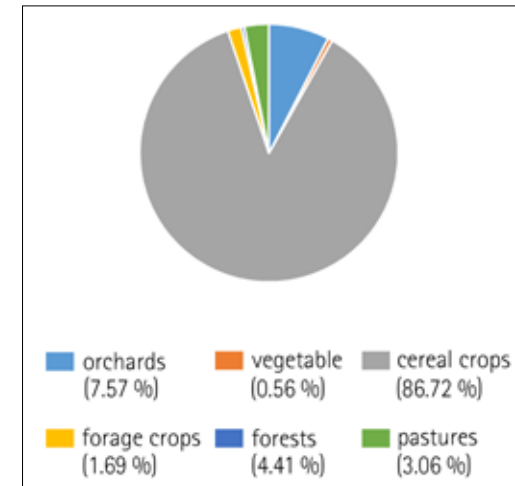


Fig. 881 Landuse

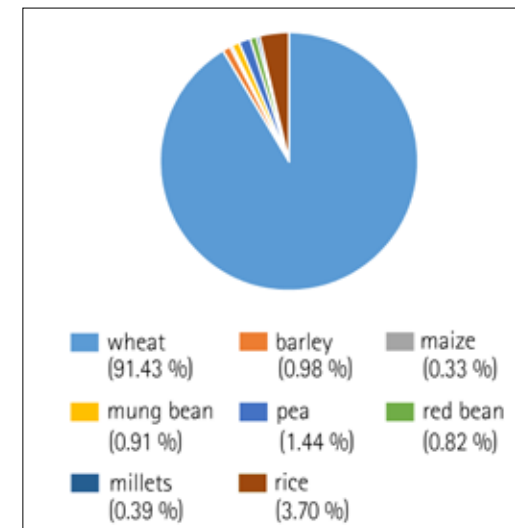


Fig. 882 Crop production

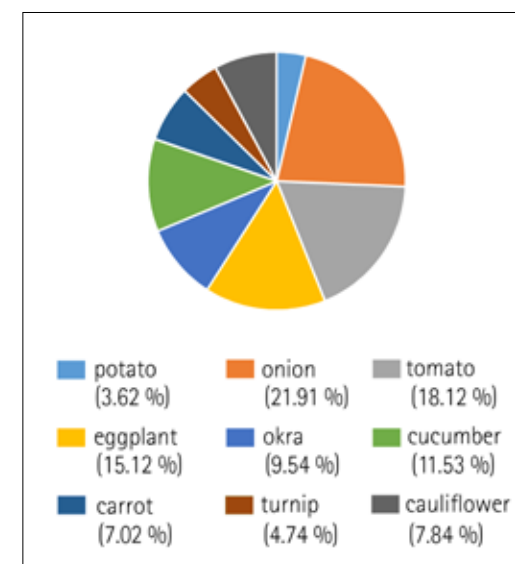


Fig. 883 Vegetable production



Fig. 884 View towards Mazar Sayyed Mokhtar, at the foot of Koh-e Ziyarat (In 22)



Fig. 885 View across the Hari Rud to Qal'e-ye Baghni (In 28)

Animal husbandry is less important than in other districts, due to the relatively small size of the district and the lack of pastures. Hence, the number of sheep/goat and camel is rather low, while cattle, kept for meat, milk and work, are proportionally more frequent (Fig. 889), but just below average in comparison with other districts.

Apart from agriculture, industrial plants, facilities and large government complexes, such as a customs compound, are expanding, particularly into the arid zones north of Herat and its outskirts near the Hari Rud.

Since pre-Islamic times this area has been an important crossroads of trade, diplomacy and politics. Today, the new expressway linking Herat with Iran, via Islam Qal'e, is the major route of communication, while the roads to Torghundi and Turkmenistan, following the old Silk Road to Merv, and to Bukhara to Samarqand or generally Choresmia, were in a bad condition until at least 2009. The ancient former route ran somewhat east of the new highway, via Parwana (In 33) and Kush Rebat (In 16), as described by Ferrier (1857, 188–191). The two routes leading west towards Zendejan and Ghuriyan meet 22.5 km west of Herat at the Hashemi bridge. The northern one comes



Fig. 886 View towards the Kaftar Khan Range, western Hari Rud Oasis



Fig. 887 Farmer near Taryak village (near In 3)

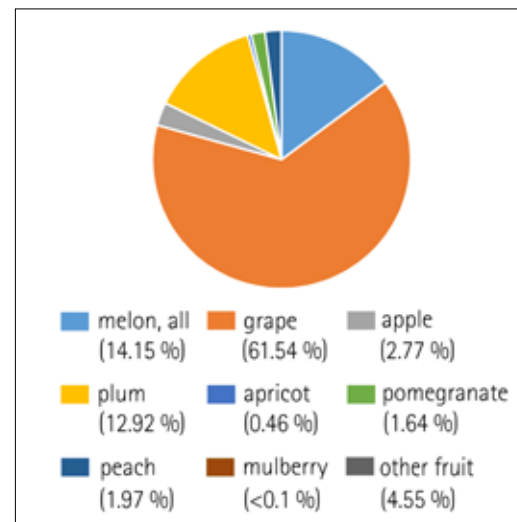


Fig. 888 Fruit production

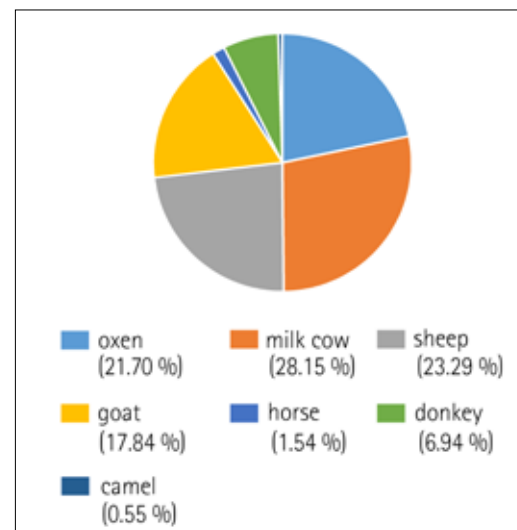


Fig. 889 Livestock

from the 'Eraq Gate' (Bab-e Mashhad), passing by the Ghalwar Mosque (In 4) and the Abu'l Walid Shrine in Azadan (In 21). The southern one starts at the Firuzabad Gate (Bab-e Kandahar) and turns west, leaving the old Kandahar-Kabul route beyond the Hari Rud and Pol-e Malan, already in Guzara. The present Kandahar-Kabul highway, being gradually newly tarmacked, is another primary road: It is strategically essential since it controls all traffic over the Hari Rud and, hence, the city's approach to the airport, which is already located in the Guzara district.<sup>12</sup> All other roads, including those to Badghis in the northeast, and to Jam and Bamiyan in the east, are in a bad condition or are still secondary and minor roads or rather tracks. In 2011, Injil had 15 km of gravel and 300 km of unpaved tracks, yet 95 % of the existing roads are classified as 'cars all season'.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See Guzara. This road, the airport, the bridge and the city were attacked, blocked and partly under the control of insurgent commanders three times between 2004 and 2011. AIMS MAP 'Western Region: Impact of Landmines' 2003: 45 villages impacted.

<sup>13</sup> UNHCR District Profile (Injil) 26/08/2002.

While the immediate proximity to Herat has economic and logistic benefits, a major negative impact is the density of mined areas, which is the highest of all districts in Herat Province, particularly in the southern outskirts.<sup>14</sup> This had an impact on the survey by restricting movements. Other problems encountered were limited visibility and accessibility in the densely inhabited or cultivated zones. Hence, the number of recorded sites is by no means comprehensive, certainly, many further historical monuments from the 11<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup> century must be present in these immediate and historically important environs of Herat in the oasis belt and beyond.

<sup>14</sup> Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MIS), Islamabad, November 2001, see also note 12.

Overall 33 sites and monuments have been recorded, of which 29 were visited. In 32 was taken over from Ball/Gardin (1982) and not re-visited, In 30, In 31 and In 33 were documented from satellite images. Most of them are located in the river oasis west and east of Herat, often on one of the old routes.

Most frequent are historical monuments, in particular mosques and shrines (In 2–In 4; In 6; In 26; In 7; In 8; In 10; In 17; In 20–In 22; In 25) as well as cisterns (In 5; In 9; In 19; In 21; In 24). The historical gardens have mostly vanished or have been substantially reshaped (In 5; In 17; In 18). All gardens and three monuments (In 4; In 17; In 21) are historically attested and dated to the Timurid period or before. Dating the cisterns is difficult, they are mostly assigned to the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century and later.

Fortified complexes (*rebat*) with large yards and rooms along the inner perimeter walls are classified as *caravanserays*, but they often might also have served as fortresses during later times (In 1; In 12; In 27; In 28 and In 16; In 30 with a bridge). All places visited during the survey had pottery scatters, although mostly small and often not diagnostic collections. Near one of the *caravanserays* (In 27) a larger sample of 10<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup>-century and later potsherds was found; however, the sherds do not necessarily date the building. Another *caravanseray* is dated by historical evidence to the Timurid period (In 16, Fig. 891). In 27 is one of the oldest sites and the only place with Slip-painted pottery of the 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century and later types.

The number of settlement sites (In 11; In 13; In 14; In 15; In 23; In 25) is relatively low and the surface finds are often indistinct. None is a substantial mound. Based on the pottery. In 15 may also be pre-Islamic.

How small this figure is becomes clear when compared with the number of monuments recorded in historical texts, compiled by T. Allen (1981; 1983). He provides a catalogue of 678 sites, of which 264 are dated from the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century to the demise of the Timurid empire in 1507. Allen makes clear that even this number is far from reflecting reality since the historical sources focus on imperial and courtly buildings, while other sponsors mostly remain obscure (see Introduction, Tabs. 1; 2). Much of this development took place in the suburbs and northerly environs



Fig. 890 Camels grazing near Koh-e Kaftar Khan



Fig. 891 View of Kush Rebat (In 16), then assigned to Amir Habibullah Khan by Scheibe (photo: A. Scheibe, 1935)

of Herat, which today are Injil; for no other district a comparable amount of historical information is available, apart from Herat city. Already in the 1970s, however, it proved to be difficult to locate sites and even monuments, especially in the periphery of the city, probably due to lost memories of names and immense changes in the urban landscape. Although the purpose of the present survey was not to re-map Allen's catalogue, the low number of identifications with extant historical monuments in Injil is surprising, not considering e.g. quarters and gardens for the reasons mentioned above. Only canals are rather easily identified, with nine mentioned for the 13<sup>th</sup> century by Mostawfi (Le Strange 1905, 407).

Apart from the Ansari shrine at Gazorgah in Injil (In 17; Allen 1981, no. 580), the well-documented shrines and monuments of Herat city proper are not included in this catalogue; the closeby gardens, today also in Injil, listed by him (nos. 642; 643/In 5; 657; 670/In 18) are no longer marked by historical remains. Only two surviving monuments could be correlated with his list; these are the Ghalwar Mosque in Houz-e Karbas (In 4, Allen 1981, no. 426) and the shrine of 'Abu'l Walid Ibn Ahmad in Azadan (In 21, Allen 1981, no. 573). Another building, which is not included in the catalogue since it collapsed in 1927 and has been overbuilt by a



Fig. 892 Archaeological mound at the western border of Injil (In 15)



Fig. 893 Southern iwan, Ansari Shrine, Gazorgah (In 17) (photo: Niedermayer/Dietz 1912)



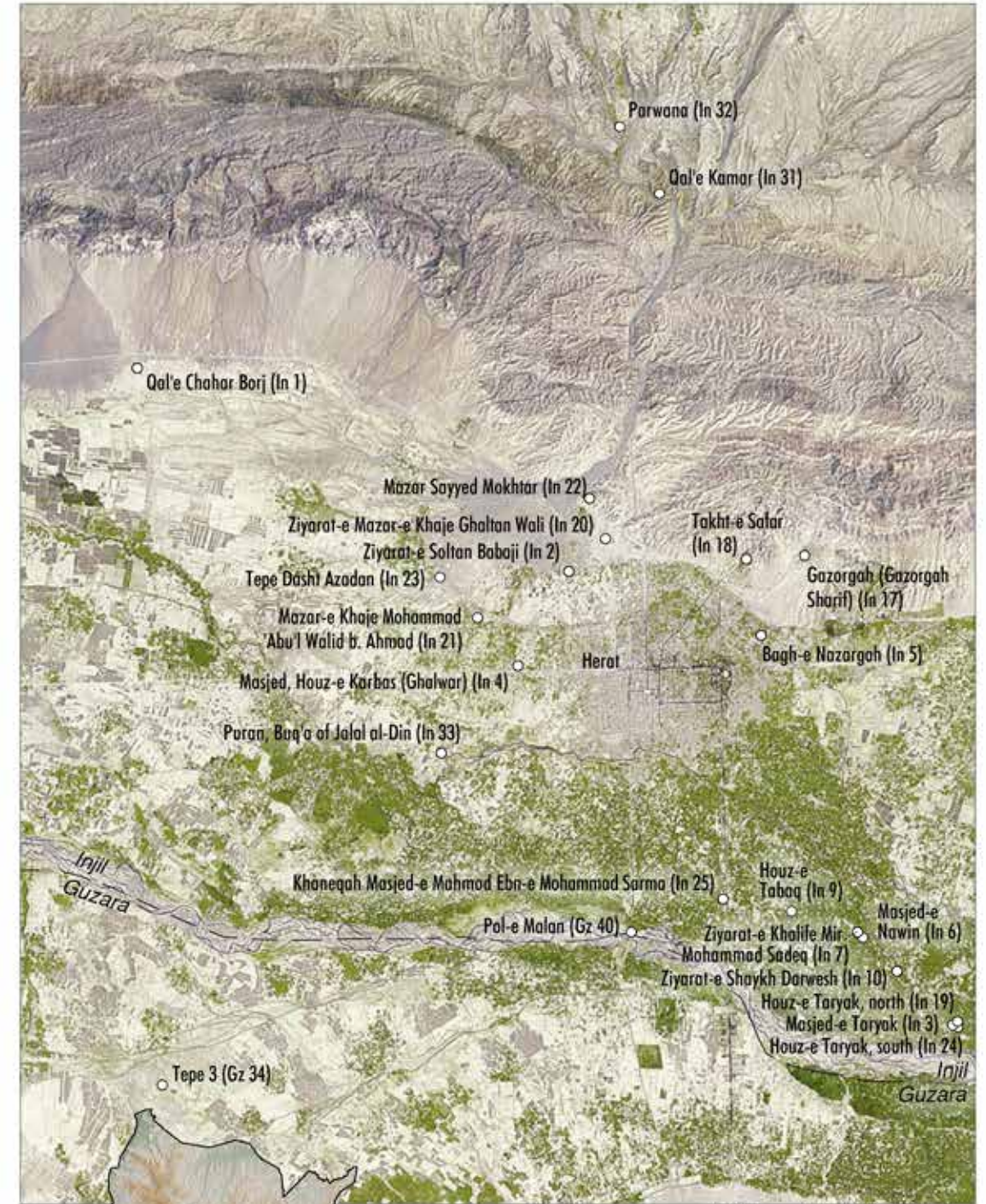
Fig. 894 Gonbad-e Chopan (photo: Niedermayer/Diez 1912)

gas station, is Gonbad-e Chopan (O’Kane 1987, 203 no. 20), located at the northern end of the *khiyaban*, northeast of Ziyarat-e Soltan Babaji (In 2) and just south of the Ziyarat-e Khaje Ghalton Wali (In 20). A photograph taken by Niedermayer/Dietz (Fig. 894) reveals the architectural and stylistic similarities to the Tuman Agha Mausoleum in Kohsan (Ko 2). It was a square domed building, probably with a crypt, but already then filled with rubble. No tombstones were visible, but some nicely carved ones were scattered nearby (Yate 1888, 37). According to O’Kane (1987, no. 20), Gonbad-e Chopan was probably part of a *medrese*, most likely the one sponsored by Amir ‘Aliqa Kukiltash, the tutor of Shah Rukh, who was buried there 844|1440–41, as mentioned by Khwandamir (Allen 1981, 119 no. 450).

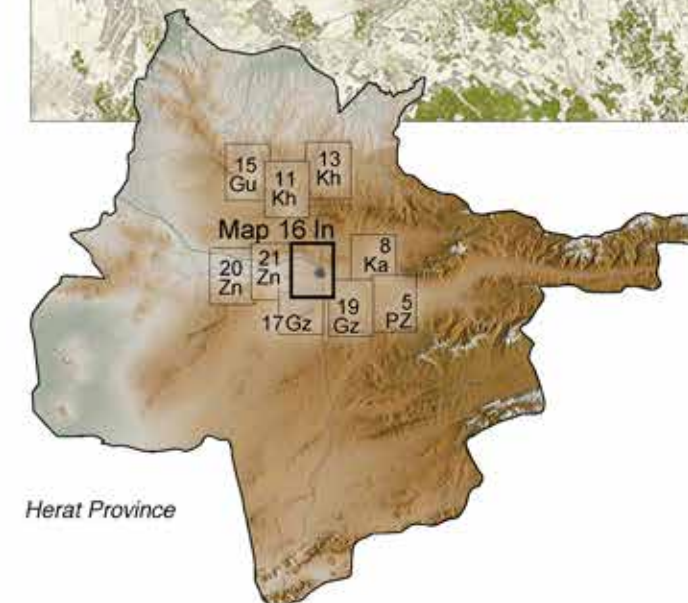
Along with the monuments in Ziyaratgah, discussed in the Guzara catalogue, these buildings illustrate royal engagement at the beginning and close to the end of Timurid power in the wider vicinity of Herat, on top of ongoing large-scale projects in the city and its immediate environs. O’Kane (1987, 273) shows that this commitment was not without financial problems, illustrated by the ‘Abu’l Walid Ibn Ahmad shrine in Azadan (In 21). For the earlier centuries, the picture is more obscure. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, a government house at Khurasanabad is mentioned, 1.6 km outside the town on the western road towards Fushanj; this corresponds to the vicinity of Ghalwar (In 4, Le Strange 1905, 408; 409). Interesting is the reference to a much-frequented fire temple (*Sirishk*) on the summit of one of the hills, located two leagues (11.2 km) north of Herat by Ibn Hawkal, and of a Christian church halfway between the temple and the city (Markward 1931, 11; 26). This places the church approximately at the southern and the temple at the northern side of the mountains, where In 32 is located. According to Mostawfi, the temple was later overbuilt by a strong castle, also known as ‘Shamiran’ or ‘Kal’ah Amkalchah’; it was destroyed by Timur after his conquest of Herat (Le Strange 1905, 408).

According to 19<sup>th</sup>-century reports (Ferrier 1857, 139), small *caravanseerays* and fortifications were present along the major routes at about every ‘second parasang’, i.e. a distance of c. 11 km, with five parasang

being a day’s march. Considering that the forts and towers were frequently rebuilt or newly constructed, as required for strategic reasons, and mostly in a simple way and without decoration, it is evident that the actual number must have been very high.



satellite image: Atlogis Geoinformatics



Map 16  
Injil (In)  
Guzara (Gz)  
Herat Province  
Survey 2004-2006