



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

Historic Cities Programme

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SHANASAZI MOSQUE

Work on the conservation of the historic Shanasazi mosque in the old city of Kabul is now nearing completion. The project was co-funded by the Government of Norway, who also enabled the rehabilitation of an adjoining bathhouse or *hammam*, work on the mosque began in spring 2009, when a detailed survey was undertaken. This revealed traces of an older structure, with distinctive carved timber posts along the south façade (see photo on right) and plaster niches internally, which had been concealed as part of recent attempts to modernize the mosque. During the course of repairs to the roof, 25 finely-carved timber elements, originally part of an elaborate ceiling, were discovered and have been safeguarded. In the mosque courtyard, several Mughal era marble column-bases unearthed on the site have also been incorporated into new stone paving. Work continues on upgrading of the ablution facilities and repairs to an adjoining summer mosque, to house educational and training activities for women.



TIMUR SHAH LECTURE SERIES



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On 13th January, Philippe Marquis of the Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan (DAFA), gave a public lecture on recent survey and excavations at the citadel in Balkh and the Achaemenid site at Cheshmeh Shafa, near Mazar-e Sharif. Among other subjects covered by recent lectures in the restored Timur Shah mausoleum were oral history in the old city of Kabul, and an overview of contemporary art in Afghanistan.

MUSICAL OUTREACH, KABUL

As part of the ongoing outreach of the Aga Khan Music Initiative for Central Asia (AKMICA), 25 students from the professional high school for the blind in Kabul worked with the Afghan musician Vaheed Kaacemy to rehearse a specially-composed song entitled 'My Eyes'.

This song, affirming the role of blind people in society, was recorded by the students and subsequently performed at the school, after which students were presented with copies of the CD, labelled in Braille. Efforts will continue to sustain the partnership between the school and AKMICA in 2010.



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HERAT

SAVING DARB AL MALIK

Despite repeated assurances that no further permits for new construction would be issued in the old city of Herat, demolition began in early January of traditional buildings within metres of the newly-restored western tower of the citadel of Qala Ikhtyaruddin, which dates to the Timurid era. A developer had obtained signatures from some members of the Old City Commission to replace traditional shops and homes with a large commercial building on this highly-sensitive site (see photo on right). In response to a direct appeal by AKTC to the Governor of Herat, the demolition of the adjoining historic Shash Nal mosque, as part of plans by the Ministry of Urban Development to widen roads in the historic fabric, has been halted.



MULLAH MUFTI RASOUL MOSQUE

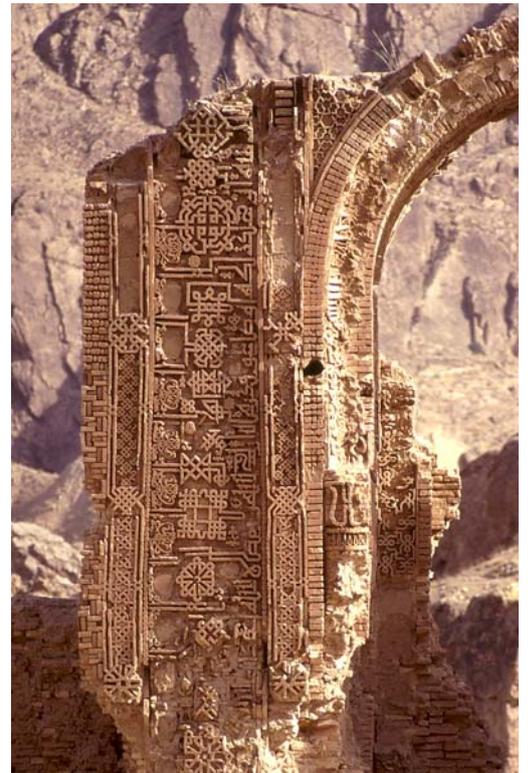
Conservation work is now complete on the Mullah Mufti Rasoul mosque in the Bar Durrani quarter of Herat. Initiated in early 2009, the conservation of this community mosque (in the foreground in the photo on the left) has entailed extensive repairs to the roofs, replacement of timber screens on the main elevation, reconstruction of the perimeter walling and paving in the courtyard. The mud-brick dome of the summer mosque to the south has been reconstructed, and the unusual painted plaster decoration around the *mihrab* also conserved.



DR. BERNT GLATZER, 1942-2009

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death on 8th December 2009 of Dr. Bernt Glatzer. A highly-respected researcher, Bernt began his field research in central Afghanistan in 1970, when he followed a group of Achakzai nomads from Uruzgan to Badghis. It was during this trip that he documented the architectural ruins of a 12th century madrasa of Shah-i-Mashad on the banks of the Murghab river. Bernt's willingness to share information, in the interests of understanding and scholarship, is borne out by the fact that most of this documentation is available online to download (<http://b-glatzer.de/ghurids.htm>). As Bernt himself said during a visit to the AKTC office in Kabul in 2008 'this material belongs to all humanity'.

(Right: detail of the façade showing a section of the epigraphic decoration).



For more information about AKTC's programme in Afghanistan, contact us at Qala Moeen Afzal Khan, Gozargah Street, District 3, Kabul or Qala Ikhtyaruddin, Herat. aktc.afg@akdn.org