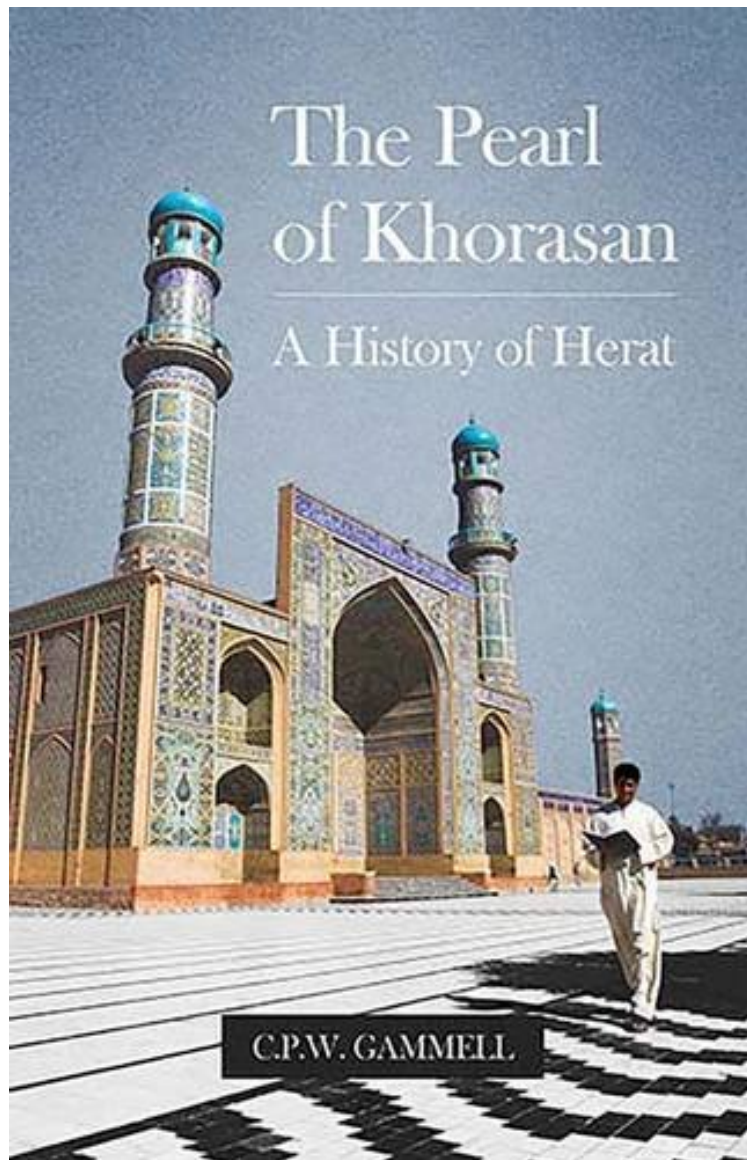


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The Pearl of Khorasan: A History of Herat

C. P. W. Gammell

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C. P. W. Gammell : The Pearl of Khorasan: A History of Herat before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Pearl of Khorasan: A History of Herat:

The city of Herat in western Afghanistan long sat at the edge of empires and served as a hub for trade and a conduit for

armies. Yet it has been much more than simply a staging post or plaything of political ambition. It has been an imperial capital, a city of extraordinary wealth, and has played host to a cultural renaissance to rival that of Florence. The Pearl of Khorasan tells the history of this storied oasis city, from the invasions of Chingiz Khan in 1221 to the present day. An epilogue assesses the challenges Herat faces in the wake of Afghanistan's recent turmoil. Throughout Herat's cycles of conquest and habitation, several patterns emerge: the primacy of geography; the city's strong identification with the fertility of the banks of the Hari River; and its reputation as a place of theological excellence, tolerance and cultural refinement. From the luminescent genius of the Timurid century to the destruction and cultural vandalism associated with the Taliban's rule of Afghanistan and the post-9/11 conflict, Herat has hosted empires and experienced the cupidity and lust for power of foreign agents. Using Persian, Pashto and British sources, the author paints a vivid picture of a city in which he has lived, presenting a personal vision of its tumultuous history.

"Gammell masterfully succeeds in cutting through the complexities of the dynasties that have ruled the city . . . Gammell's book, which masterfully weaves together the complex threads of Herat's history, culture and politics, is a beguiling and authoritative work and a valuable addition to the modern literature on Afghanistan." - Literary "Charlie Gammell has written a pearl of book. His summary of Herat's splendid past is delightful reading. His adroit handling of the intricate political posturing of recent years is his unique contribution. His perfect knowledge of Dari plus four years residence among the people involved guarantees a vivid and spellbinding text." -- Nancy Dupree, Director of the Afghanistan Centre, Kabul University "This presents an impressive piece of scholarship, and will be useful to scholars of the region."-- CHOICE "Charlie Gammell's fine book about Afghanistan's most romantic city will enlighten and stimulate anyone who is interested in Central Asia and the rise and fall of cities. Accessible, scholarly and judicious, The Pearl of Khorasan is a triumph." -- Christopher de Bellaigue, author of the Islamic Enlightenment: The Struggle between Faith and Reason, 1798 to Modern Times About the Author C. P. W. Gammell is an historian of Afghanistan and Iran who has written widely on Herat's history and its place in Afghanistan. Educated at Oxford and Cambridge, he has worked in Afghanistan and Iran since 2009, interpreting Farsi and Pashto for the ICRC, advising UNESCO on cultural and historical projects, and researching the history of Herat.