

## **One of Greece's Ancient Missing Link Found: An inquiry into ethnic identity, ideology and historical revisionism among contemporary Pashtuns, by Amanullah Ghilzai, Journalist.**

Amanullah Ghilzai, the author of the account that follows, is a Pashtun journalist, who has contributed to several BBC reports, news and papers. He lately made a 2000 km travel, from Quetta the capital of Baluchistan to the edge of the NW Territories in the Kalash valley. Mr Ghilzai's research is part of a genuine "academic point of view" in which he, as a Pashtun, tries to recover part of a cultural oral heritage, linking several Pashtun and Dardo-Kafir tribes to a Greek and Bactrian ancestry, following traditional genealogies.

Recent archaeological findings show that under the Great Kushana king, Bactrians who had adopted a Greek alphabet for their own language were still using the Greek language for trade and legislation. Numismatic evidence provides clear indications of the use of Greek in trade in Central Asia and Iran. All these findings raise the question of group ideology among the Afghan and Pashtun people that has engaged the attention of several persons in the last few years. How did the Pashtun identity originate? What were its transformations in the course of history since the Hellenistic times? What factors influenced it through time and change? As far as we know only a few original studies in western languages have been made in this field.

Mr. Amanullah Ghilzai argues that the Pashtun identity in the pre-islamic era resulted from blending Bactrian and Greek elements. The Punjab (the Πενταποταμία or Pancanada) and the adjacent regions of modern Afghanistan were known as the Yavana or Yonas (i.e. Ἴωνες) realm, In this respect is interesting to quote the late professor Seranat Paranavitana who wrote that:

*An important «source for the history of the Greeks in India is the Rajavamsa-pustaka (the book of the Sri Lankan Royal Dynasties) written by Maha-Buddharaksita [...] (who) went to India and gradually drifted as far as the Pancanada country (Punjab), where, at that time (towards the end of the third century), there were still people of Greek speech and culture. In order to preach the Buddhist doctrine to them, Maha-Buddharaksita acquired a sound knowledge of the Greek language and literature».* (Seranat Paranavitana (1971), *The Greeks and the Mauryas*, Colombo, Lake House Investment Ltd, Sri Lanka.)

Like most revisionists of historical ideologies, Ghilzai has many original and interesting things to say based on what tribal societies believe. But, as with many new interpretations, the question that needs to be posed is whether the ideologies propounded could be sustained on the basis of the evidence available. Mr. A. Ghilzai's documentary provides some dramatic clues of past Greek influence in archaeological findings that have not been studied or are still insufficiently published, in surviving customs, dresses and objects of everyday use. But he further pushes his enquiry into popular etymologies linking Pashtun expressions to Greek linguistic influences. He also points to some common traits that exist between the tribal law Pashtunwali and similar medieval tribal laws in Balkan areas where the Macedonian had ruled and with which the Royal Macedonian clans had established kinship ties. – *Prof. Nicolas Vernicos*

### **GREECE IN CENTRAL ASIA by Amanullah Ghilzai**

Many Afghans and ethnic Pashtuns of Pakistan owe a lot to Alexander the Great who gave them a civilization, which lasted for about one thousand years in different phases. It's been more than 23 centuries, now, since the Greek conquest of (Bactria) the ancient Afghanistan but the foot prints of the ancient Greeks can still be seen among the ethnic Afghans or Pashtuns. One such example is the oral traditions of many Pashtun tribes that claim Yonas or Yavana ancestry, the strong presence of the Greek mythology and hundreds of Greek words still existing in modern Pashto, which is one of the main languages of Afghanistan and in the west and north-west Pakistan.

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The creation of the ethnic Afghan people or Pashtuns seems to be the result of Alexander's conquest. The several centuries Greek rule of Bactria (ancient Afghanistan), which followed his death, changed this Iranian territory so much that it hardly retained its initial pure Iranian identity any more. Many of the modern ethnic Afghans (Pashtuns), are no doubt, descendants of the ancient Greeks colonists. This can be proved to a large extent by the presence of archaeological remains, by remnants of the Greek mythology and by a large number of Greek words and sentences still present in the modern Pashto, which scientifically certifies the fact that their ancestors could be the main or the only inhabitants of Bactria, where the ancient Greeks mixed with the local population.

This new research of mine, may help in solving the mystery, surrounding the identity of Bactrians as historians, to this date, could not give a definite answer as which of the ethnic groups in the modern times could truly be called descendants of the Bactrians.

The Greeks had introduced their civilization in Bactria and it was very natural that what they had brought with them in terms of culture, social organization, language and faith had to leave its traces among the local inhabitants of Bactria. Furthermore, it is known that Greeks, starting from Alexander the Great himself, married with local women and that several colonies were settled in the cities they have founded in Afghanistan. I have spent some time to discover the cultural and linguistic remains of the ancient Greeks among the local people of the region. Through my research work, I have been able so far to find several traces of the ancient Greeks among the ethnic Pashtuns, only. I know several languages of this region, including, Pashto, which is my first tongue. I can hardly find any strong clues among any other ethnic groups of this region to suggest that that particular group or groups can be descendants of the Bactrians or Bactrian-Greeks. With this research, I have reached to a conclusion that no other ethnic groups but the ancestors of the modern Pashtuns were the Bactrians, the inhabitants of the ancient Afghanistan.

Actually several Pashtuns claim a Greek-Yona ancestry, it is therefore said that *«the Afghan tribes Thynoi and Bithynoi are the Tanis and the Bitanis, Taoni of Jats; the Karoi are Karo, Ionoι are Yunus (Yavana meaning Ἰωνες) they became a tribal union which formed the basis of the Pashtun ethnogenesis»* (quoted from the [www.punjabi.net/talk/](http://www.punjabi.net/talk/))

Here in this article, I would mostly deal with the remaining footprints of the ancient Greeks among the ethnic Afghans, or Pashtuns. I have good knowledge of the Persian language (Farsi) as well but I could not find any traces of the Greek mythology and or strong presence of the ancient Greek words in it. My research work on the topic is at its very initial stages and I want to share with others what I have found out so far.

With the finding of many new documents, written in the ancient Bactrian language and their translation by Professor Sims-Williams of the School of Oriental and African Studies of London, the world has learned for the first time the extent of sophistication of the Bactrian civilization. My research work may put some new light on the past of the Pashto language and the identity of Bactrians. This research is not limited to the Greek mythology and existence of the large numbers of Greek words in Pashto language but I am revealing several other customs of the ancient Greeks, though dead, now, in the mainland Greece, still exist among many or some Pashtuns.

One such example is of the survival of one of the important war dances of the ancient Greeks, Athena, which with the name [Athen], is still performed throughout the Pashtun regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. The dance appears to be a variety of the ancient «Πυρρίχιος» with movement that could induce ecstatic states that have been banned in Byzantium. Many Pashtuns still have a place similar to the brotherhood barracks of the Spartan Greeks which they call «HOJRAH». As the Spartan boy after reaching the age of adolescence would spend more of his time in his brotherhood barracks, the Pashtun boys in many rural parts of the main-land Pashtun province of Pakistan, the

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Frontier, after reaching to a similar age, would have to spend much of his time in the «Hojrah» to be disciplined and learn the Pashtun customs, values and manly habits.

The ancient Pashtuns, whom, I will also call Greco-Afghans, seem to have taken customs from the ancient Greeks of several parts of the mainland ancient Greece. One such example is the trial by jury of the Athenians. The system of Trial by jury has changed much in many parts of the world, but in some Pashtun tribal belts they are held in a much similar way as were arranged during the Hellenistic times more than two thousands years ago.

My research work may also lead to a conclusion that Pashto is the only Iranian language which from now on could rightly be called a language with a Greco-Iranian background.

Going back to the Greek mythology in Pashto, I have traced so far seven ancient Greek gods and goddesses. Some of the names of these gods and goddesses have slightly changed for the obvious reasons of the passage of a very long time and the phonetic differences that separate Eastern Iranian from Greek language. Even the name for the All Mighty God, in Pashto seems to have originated from the Greek universal God Zeus which in Pashto is Seshtan. With a very slight difference in sound it can be spelled as Zeustan (Ζευσ-τάυ).

The Greek Goddess Athena, perhaps was the most revered goddess of the ancient Pashtuns or Greco-Afghans. This is clearly depicted on the Greek Bactrian coins where the Macedonian Athena was also linked to the local goddess of war and water. Because of the reverence, most Pashtuns still attach to the war dance Athen. The dance «Athen» (άθεν), is linked to patriotism exactly as was considered by the ancient Greeks. Pashtuns, who are Muslims, generally, don't look at dances in a very positive light, but «Athen» is the only exception which they revere and it is generally not called a dance perhaps because of the relevance of «Athen» to their lives much before Islam. The origin of «Athen» was not known until the new research of mine.

The Taliban in Afghanistan banned □Athen□ as un-Islamic, which turned out to be one of the main factors of their un-popularity among their own ethnic group, the Pashtun. This was for the first time in the history of Afghanistan that □Athen□ had been banned, which was the national dance of that country for centuries. After the overthrow of the Taliban, □Athen□, once again is the national dance of Afghanistan, where it is performed during most celebrations. □Athen□ is also the national dance of the ethnic Pashtuns in Pakistan, where it is a symbol of an important para-military force, made up of mostly Pashtun soldiers.

For me it is difficult at this stage to find out as to which other of the ancient gods or goddesses was the second most important among the ancient Pashtuns or Greco-Afghans but it looks like that the goddess of marriage Hera (H-ήρα) had a special place. The word for wedding procession in most Pashtun parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan, is Hora (H-όρα), with only a slight difference of the sound Hera.

It is for sure that wedding ceremonies of the ancient Pashtuns could have been much different from the ones performed now after the Islamic period. In the southern Pashtun regions of Pakistan, notably, in Quetta, and on other side of the border in Afghanistan, the marriage ceremony would not be considered complete without a sheep slaughtered (*a ritual σφάγειο*) at the door step of the bridegroom's house, the moment, the new bride steps in. This ceremony might have some links with the Hera, who was the goddess of sacrifice as well. Similar slaughtering ceremony exists among some other ethnic groups of the region as well, the custom, is perhaps taken from the Pashtuns.

God, Hades (H-άδης), could be next in line as far as the importance is concerned. The word for graveyard in Pashto is Hadirah (H αδίρ-αχ). The term Hadirah, very obviously derives from the

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ancient Greek God of the dead and the underworld, Hades. Interestingly, Hadrirah, is linked to numerous myths about an immortal monster called Mordozmai in Pashto. I have traced this monster to Minotaur in the Greek mythology and to other half human-half animal figures one can see in Greco-Bactrian sculpture in the Peshawar museum.

The stories attached to this monster in Pashto might have changed with time but similarities can still be found. One such similarity is a story of this monster showing itself half beast half man, at wild places or in a Hadrirah (*graveyard*) in the night. Few other monsters of the Greek mythology like Hydra, a dragon, also exist in Pashto. The word for dragon in Pashto is Hazhdahar, which seems to have originated from Hydra.

One of the immortal characters from the Greek mythology Euryale seems to have changed to the word Raevi in Pashto. Stories attached to Euryale or Raevi in Pashto have not changed much in more than two thousands years. One should not be surprised to hear a story about Raevi (Euryale) by a Pashtun from Afghanistan or by some body from a remote Pashtun village in Pakistan. Euryale, in the ancient Greek mythology, was an immortal creature, a woman, who had hands of brass and snakes at the head. She was far-wanderer and interestingly, some Pashtuns still believe that this character exists.

Apart from Mardozmai (Minotaur) and Hazhdahar (Hydra,) several other phrases from the Greek mythology are still expressed in Pashto the way, perhaps were uttered during the time of the ancient Greece. In the ancient Greek mythology, the god Hades, was linked to a pit in hell called Tartaros. Tartaros (Τάρταρος), with a slight corruption, Tartarin (Ταρταρ-ιν), is still existing in Pashto, meaning one of the worst sections of hell. Like the ancient Greeks, Pashtuns, still use the expression of sending some body to Tartarin or Tartaras as a one of the favourite phrases to curse some body.

Going back to ancient Greek gods and goddesses, I have spotted a few more gods and goddesses in the Pashto language. One such god, next in line, is Pan (Παν), who was the protector of shepherds and their flocks. The word for a shepherd in Pashto is ShPane, which seems to derive from Pan. As in the ancient Greece, Shpane, a shepherd, was linked to playing pipe. The word for pipe in Pashto is shpalkai, which takes its roots from the word *Shpane*.

The goddess of the clouds and rainbow, Iris, could be next in line. The word for cloud in Pashto is Oris or which sometimes can be pronounced as Iris. The Goddess Iris, also represented rainbow. Some ancient Pashtun myths describe rainbow as a barrier, if crossed would change the gender of a male into female and of a female into male.

Clouds were the sign of winters to be followed by spring. The Greek Goddess for spring was Persephone (Περσεφόνη). The Pashto word for spring is Peserley (~Πεσερλέυ), an oblivious corruption of the Goddess Persephone. Persephone, was closely associated with the Goddess of Crops, Demeter. It seems that to please Goddess Demeter, the ancient Pashtuns or Bactrians named the ground for separation of corn from stalk, as Demeter, which in the modern Pashto seems to have changed to Dermend, a term still used for the ground where wheat is separated from stalk.

It is important to note that Greek mythology, like in the modern mainland Greece, has no religious relevance at all among the Pashtuns but without the Greek mythology and Greek words and phrases, communication in Pashto would become extremely difficult or even impossible at times. At this stage of my research about the language link between the modern Pashto and ancient Greek languages, I have found a profound influence of the former on the latter. Pashto language seems to have taken a lot from the ancient Greek in terms of vocabulary, sentence structure and the soundings. I have found the following links between the two languages: Firstly, there is a category of words in Pashto coming from the ancient Greek, where the new Greek words have completely replaced the earlier

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words. In this case, there normally is no substitute for the ancient Greek words or words taking their roots from that language. I have found the link between the two languages quite interesting. Following is an example for this:

English>	Greek>	Pashto>
Little	[ο]λίγο	Lega
Woman	Γυναίκα	Jenekai
Uncle	Θείος	Thro
Aunt	Θεία	Thror
Grand mother	Yayah	Anyah
Rice	[ο]ριζα	Rizi
Sweet	γλυκό	khog
Egg	αυγό (ωό)	Agai
Head	Κάρα	Kakarra
Sobbing	Λόξιγκας	Solgai

The second category is of the words that have come from the ancient Greek but there are substitute words, still existing in Pashto while generally the Greek words are used more frequently by most Pashto-speakers:

ENGLISH	GREEK	PASHTO	PASHTO	SUBSTITUTE
Down	κάτω	Katha	Laandi	
To go	δρόμος	Droma	Tlal	
Apple	μήλο	Mena	Seb	
Slow	σιγά	Soka	Row	

The third category is of the words where complete sentences of the ancient Greek have replaced the sentences of the ancient Pashto or co-existing with the substitute sentences. One such example is as follows:

**ENGLISH:** -What are you doing?

**GREEK:** -τι κάνεις

**PASHTO:** -Sta Kandi (old way of saying)

**ENGLISH:** -In the right order

**GREEK:** -εν τάξει

**PASHTO:** -Am Dagasi

The fourth category is of the transfer of some unique sounds from the ancient Greek to Pashto and Giving this Iranian language a completely new look:

Before this new research work, many linguists were wondering about the three sounds in Pashto language, which could not be found in any other languages of the region. Now, I have reached to a conclusion that these sounds may have entered into Pashto with the arrival of the ancient Greeks to this region. One of these phonetic is the sound «χι» (xi) of Greek that exists in some middle regions of the Pashtun country, particularly, among members of the Ghilzai tribe. XI is a mixed sound of SH (like in she) and KH (as in khaki). This sound was specially chosen and put in the national Pashto accent of broadcasting in Kabul, Afghanistan. This phonetic sound is non-existent in other languages in the close proximity of the Pashtuns.

The second alphabet is the sound (τζι) JZ in Greek which is a mix of the sound J (like jangle in English) and z (like zoo in English). The third Greek alphabet which seems to have entered into Pashto language from the ancient Greek is the sound (στ) ST which is a mix of S (like school in English) and T. The word for drop in Pashto is STASTKAI (σταστικάϊ). This Pashto word bears this Greek phoneme two times.

### **THE CODE OF PAKHTUNWALI OR PASHTUNWALI**

Any definition of the ethnic Pashtuns without mentioning their Honor code, the Pakhtunwali or Pashtunwali, will be incomplete. The code of Pakhtunwali dates back to the pre-Islamic times, including the Greek period, which in my opinion is one of the most important parts of the Pashtun history. I didn't have to work too hard to find striking similarities between the code of Pakhtunwali and the code of Honor of the ancient Greeks, particularly that of the Spartans. All Pashtuns are required to follow these pre-Islamic principles, a sizable section of which seems to have come from the beliefs and customs of the ancient Greeks. The link between the code of Pakhtunwali also Pashtunwali and the customs of the ancient Greeks is of course not surprising after the discovery of the Greek mythology and hundreds of Greeks words in Pashto.

Pakhtunwali centres round four main tenets, namely, Nang (Honor), Nomos, (law and traditions), Melmastia (hospitality) and Badal (revenge). The code requires from all Pashtuns to honor their word or promise, never to harm the weak ones, be hospitable and to protect the asylum-seekers, no matter on what price. The code gives almost no role to women outside their house.

### **NANG**

Every Pashtun is required by Pakhtunwali to protect his honor and the collective honor of the Pashtun people by all means. Pashtuns, in the Past many centuries have fought many wars to protect their independence which for them was the only way to safeguard their collective Nang (Honor) and Nomos (traditions). It seems that the code of Pakhtunwali has given a warlike society to Pashtuns or ethnic Afghans. The code also forbids Pashtun soldiers to runaway in the battle field. Here the general principle was to die in the battle field rather than to runaway. In the old times, for a Pashtun soldier to show that he has never turned his back in the battle field, sometimes, must show that he has taken wounds on the chest only.

Comparing these principles with the ones of the ancient Greeks, we find striking similarities between the two. The war-like society of the Pashtuns, which centres round the code of Pakhtunwali, has much in common with the ancient Greeks. There are similar mythical stories running among both the Pashtuns and the ancient Greeks about their past wars. One such common story is that of a mother who in the ancient times before sending her sons for a battle, would ask them, she would only like to see them coming victorious with their shields or on their shields. During the last many centuries no body, even the Taliban in Afghanistan, dared to reject the code of Pakhtunwali, as un-Islamic.

**NOMOS** To protect ' Nomos ' is one of the main tenets of Pakhtunwali. Nomos is an ancient Greek word, meaning, law and which in further details could mean law and cultural traditions. Like Pashtuns, the ancient Greeks, always attached a lot of importance to Nomos. Nomos, which is now pronounced more as Namos in Pashto, is an important phrase in the language. Like the ancient Greeks who paid more importance to their Nomos rather than their leaders, Pashtuns traditionally have obeyed the code of Pakhtunwali, their law, more than their leaders.

### **MELMASTIA (HOSPITALITY)**

The third similarity between the rules of Pakhtunwali and those of the ancient Greeks is the concept of hospitality. One distinct feature of the Pashtun society is, its culture of hospitality, which is one of the main tenets of the code of Pakhtunwali. A proverb in India, says, a Pashtun can never be a

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Pashtun if he doesn't have a generous kitchen. There is a tradition among Pashtuns never to send a beggar empty handed from the door. In ancient Greece, one never knew when the beggar knocking at the door might be a god, disguised or else watching from above, passing judgement. Because of this belief hospitality toward strangers and travellers was a popular element in the ancient Greek society. The fourth striking similarity is not to harm the weak ones or if anyone who would do it, would lose his face. One of the civic rules in the ancient Greek society was not to harm the weak ones or if someone would do it, would have to face the same sequences as in the traditional Pashtun society.



Another similarity, the code of Pakhtunwali has with the customs of the ancient Greeks, is the role of a woman in society. Like the women of ancient Greece, except for Sparta, Pashtun women in past centuries had very limited role outside their house. When we look at the history of Afghanistan and ethnic Pashtuns, we can hardly find any examples until the first quarter of the 20th century when a woman played any significant role outside her home. Queen Suraya, wife of the ex-king Amanullah Khan, was the first Afghan woman who played a sort of role, similar to other queens of the time in the 1920s. This bold step by the queen supported by her husband, was resented by many Pashtun tribesmen and finally the king had to abdicate for being too liberal. Later on, the kings of Afghanistan, particularly, Zahir Shah, succeeded to a large extent to change the centuries old Pashtun traditions by inducting women ministers in his cabinet and giving jobs to women in several other government departments.

Going back to the main topic, the role of women in the traditional Pashtun society, is distinct when compared with other ethnic groups of the region. This role is almost exactly the same as was in most of the ancient Greece. In the tribal Pashtun society, women are considered as important mothers of citizens and for the passing on of legitimacy. In the traditional Pashtun society, women are protected and sheltered, kept away from the peeping eyes of other men. This was exactly the case in the ancient Athens, and several other parts of ancient Greece where most women had almost no role outside the house. It is important to note that these days, many Pashtun women enjoy more independent life in the urban centres. The role of some modern Pashtun women these days is not much different from the one in any other modern societies.

Another important custom of the ancient Greeks which is still existing in the Pashtun tribal society is the restriction on widows to remarry outside the family of her deceased husband. Under this custom, when husband dies his widow is not allowed to remarry anyone else except for some body within the family members of her deceased spouse. This new husband can even be uncle or nephew of her deceased spouse. The custom was called EPICLEROS in the ancient Greece. This custom is still practised by some Pashtuns, particularly in the tribal belts.

Adultery has always been considered as one of the worst crimes a Pashtun woman can commit. A

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woman who would commit this crime is called Matisa, in Pashto. Word Matisa, very obviously seems to have originated from the ancient Greek Moicheia, meaning adultery.

## DOCUMENTARY

To show some elements of the Greek-Yavana cultural heritage on film as well, I am working on a documentary in Athens, titled "Journey inside the ancient Greece of Asia" from film material collected recently in Pakistan. The documentary is based on my research work and on some historical facts on the Hellenistic period of Afghanistan and in mostly Pashtun parts of Pakistan. One of the purposes of this documentary is to raise awareness to protecting the ruins of one of the ancient Greek cities (ACCRA) south of Peshawar and of other historical sites connected with the ancient Greeks of Asia, known in the history as the Bactrian-Greek and Gandara civilisations.

In this documentary, besides, giving new information about the Bactrian-Greeks and their affects on the ethnic Pashtuns and the whole region, also aim at campaigning for the protection of Kalash culture in the Kalash valley. Kalash people are said to be direct descendants of the ancient Greeks and still follow their pre-islamic pagan religion. The documentary is based on a road journey of about two thousands kilometers in the west and northwest Pakistan, in areas bordering Afghanistan, which once were part of Greco-Bactrian kingdoms.

The travelogue, starts from the city of Chaman in northern Baluchistan which once was roughly the middle part of the famous Bactrian-Greek province, called Arachosia (Αραχωσία). Kandahar, was the capital of Arachosia. In Chaman, I introduce the topic of the documentary and show some faces from the city, still bearing some physical resemblance with the Greeks. From here we arrive at the city of Quetta, the actual capital of Baluchistan, with about two million population. Quetta valley was one of the population centers of the Bactrian Greeks. Right in the city center stands a mound, believed to have been a Greek fort about two thousands years back during the Bactrian period.

The Quetta mound (Fort) has an interesting story based on some oral traditions, saying that the mound is partly made of the Greek soil brought by the Greek soldiers during the time of Alexander and much before the Bactrian period. In Quetta I mention and show clips of the famous war dance [Athen], still alive from the Hellenistic times. From Quetta the journey takes the viewers to another historical site in the way. This site is situated very close to a city called Loralai. The site existed during the Bactrian-Greek period but due to lack of research on it nobody knows much about it. The antiquity thieves are looting this site, as they did in some other parts of Pakistan, for the last several years. Here we show a stone containing figure of Alexander the great. The owner of the stone who lived just meters away from the site, claimed that he had unearthed the stone from the site.

From Loralai we continue our journey towards the north, showing some interesting landscapes and towns and villages on the way and finally reach to the once Greek city of Accra. Accra is situated just outside the city of Bannu in the Frontier province. Here we meet an old man right on the spot who was busy in sifting through soil of the ruins of Accra doing some [private] excavations. He was looking for some artefacts to find and then to sell them in the black market of antiquities. This is his job and that of many others to find antiquities at the site of Accra and then sell them in the illegal black market of antiquities. We were told that for the last many years this site is being plundered and now only one 10th of the main mound of the ruined city of ACCRA has been left.

From here we reach to one of the most fascinating regions of the world. Members of the Afridi tribe, believed to be direct descendants of the ancient Greeks inhabit the semi-autonomous region of Dara-Adamkhel. It is interesting to quote the remark of C. M. Kieffer in the Encyclopaedia Iranica (<http://www.khyber.org/pashtotribes/a/afridi-2.shtml>) saying that: *"The belief in a Greek origin still current among the Afridi cannot be taken into consideration, for it results from a folkloric tradition to be found in a good part of the Dardo-Kafir domain. It was propagated, for example, by Abu'l-Fazl*

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*Allami, the private secretary of the emperor Akbar*". This is a clear indication of the existence of a persistent belief among Pashtun tribes corroborating the fact that several local historians describe them as direct descendants of the Greeks. These people are engaged in making guns with primitive ways for the last many centuries and they can make a copy of any gun from any parts of the world. We have filmed the entire process of making of at least one gun from scratch to completion.

From here the journey continues through beautiful valleys and we soon end up in Peshawar city, the capital of the latter Indo-Greek period, known in the history as the Gandhara civilization. Here we show several statues and other artifacts from the Hellenistic period of this valley. In Peshawar, I talk about the pre-Islamic code of Pakhtunwali, some parts of which I have traced to the ancient Greeks, particularly, the war-like Epirots and Spartans. From Peshawar, we drive to the Swat valley where we can still find houses with ancient Greek decoration. We film Hellenistic wooden pillars and other wooden table ware, still made in the way the ancient Greeks used to make more than two thousands years back. From Swat we continue our journey to the famous Kalash valley. Kalash people are well known to many in the world as descendants of the Greeks. The Kalash culture which survived through the last two thousands years is faced with the danger of extinction as some Muslim missionary groups are trying to convert them to Muslim religion. Here, besides, showing some of their customs and dances we highlight this issue and ask the Pakistani authorities to protect the Kalash culture from complete extinction.

The travel log ends in the Kalash valley. Any TV channels interested in the documentary can get in touch with me through my email. Amanullah Ghilzai

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## **ADDENDUM**

from [www.achemenet.com](http://www.achemenet.com)

### **Old populations**

The peoples inhabiting the historical regions of this "Indo-Iranian frontier" are known already in the list of the Achaemenid satrapies, as given by Herodotus (3, 89-94) and, before him, by Hecateus of Miletus. This one certainly knew the Indian population of Gandharai and the city of Kaspapyros (FGrHist, I, frg. 294-295). The easternmost satrapies were: VII, XVII and XX. VII satrapy comprised the people of Sattagyday, Gandarioi, Dadikai, Aparytai; XVII was constituted by Parikanioi and the Aethiopes of Asia, while XX satrapy was that of Indians "the most numerous people of all the men we know".

The information given by Herodotus finds a precise confirmation in the royal Achaemenid inscriptions (DB, DPe, DSe, DNa, DSaa, XPf), whereas the place-names of Thatagus, Gandhara and Hindus are found, as well as the names of the related peoples: one can exclude from this list that of Maka, by someone identified with the coastal Baluchi region of Makran (the last Lecocq 1997: 52), and which has been, on the contrary, more properly located in the Arabian peninsula than in the Indo-Iranian frontier (de Blois 1989).

With Hindus it is possible to recognise the middle and low Hindus valley with the exclusion of Gandhara (Bernard 1987: 186), even if the identification of Hindus with the Indians of the Mountains, quoted in the late achaemenid epoch texts (Briant 1982: 204) has been, also, proposed. With Gandhara one can certainly mean the whole course of Kabul river, up to the junction with the Hindus, and not only the Peshawar plain: in the Babylonian and Elamite versions of the inscription of Bisotun, in fact, instead of the place-name Gandhara, one can find that of Paruparaesanna, equivalent to Paropamisadae, with which the classical tradition means the region having as its centre the high valley of Kabul.

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Interesting is that the city of Kaspapyros/Kaspatyros (cf. Daffin 1983), which Hecateus collocates in Gandarik, was associated by Herodotus (III, 102 e IV, 44) to Paktyik, region contiguous to the northernmost of all other Indians: it is probable that these place-names coincide, and that the second derives from an Iranian ethnonym (Herzfeld 1947: 182), even if linguistically non identifiable, in spite of the apparent similarity with the present Pukhtun.

As far as the localization of Thatagus is concerning, correspondent to the Sattagydia of the Greeks, the opinions of the scholars have been, up to now, discordant (Lecocq 1997: 146-47): recent archaeological investigations in the city of **Akra**, near Bannu (Khan et al. 2000), would give the confirmation of the localization of this region in the piedmont area, between Gandhara to North and Arachosia to South, previously proposed (Fleming 1982; contra, Vogelsang 1990: 98, who proposed the region of Multan in southern Punjab). Dadikai seem to correspond to Darada, who in the puranic inscriptions of India are quoted together with Gandharians and Kashmirs (Tucci 1977: 11), while for the Aparytai the identification proposed with the ancestors of the present **Pashtun** tribe of the Afrids (Caroe 1958: 37) should still to be confirmed.

An Indian source of great importance, furthermore, gives a picture of the peoples inhabiting the Indo-Iranian frontier in the 3rd century B.C., so less than one century after the end of the Achaemenid domination: in V edict of the Maurya sovereign Asoka, one has, in fact, a list of peoples amongst which **Yona**, Kambojas and Gandhara, while in XIII edict is present the composed name of Yonakambojesu. Whether few doubts remain on the identity of Gandharians and of **Yona** (Greeks of Asia which the Greek version of the edict of the Maurya sovereign, found at Kandahar by the Italian Mission of Is.M.E.O., had been dedicated for), the Kambojas have variously been identified with peoples inhabiting the left side of Kabul river, or better with the peoples which the Aramaic version of Asoka edicts (Scerrato in Pugliese Carratelli and Garbini 1964: 14-15, with bibliography) had been written for: and the linguistic particularities of such a version suggest that they were an Iranian language speaking people (Garbini 1964: 59-61; Bailey 1971).

A paradigmatic example for the Indo-Iranian frontier is that of Arachosia, Harauvatis of the Achaemenid inscriptions, which, according to the representations of the costumes of their inhabitants on the relief of the Achaemenid tombs, seems to be related to other satrapies of eastern Iran, as Areia and Drangiana (Tourovets 2001: 225). Other cultural traits, nonetheless, relate Arachosia to India so much, that its inclusion in the Achaemenid Empire has been interpreted as an Indian penetration to west (Vogelsang 1985). Of particular interest is the appellation of White India used by Isidorus of Charax (par. 9), Greek geographer of the 1st century A.D., to describe it (Walser 1985: 154-55). The link of this region of the Iranian plateau to the Indian world is also confirmed, for the following epochs, by a large amount of archaeological evidences. In the Achaemenid inscriptions DSf and DSz from Susa, furthermore, Arachosia is indicated together with Ethiopia and Hindus, as a region famous for ivory, suggesting, thus, that it was a trade-exchange place for the Indian ivory (Vogelsang 1987: 186)".

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