AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF NURISTAN (KAFIRISTAN) AND THE KALASH KAFIRS OF CHITRAL

PART ONE

BY

SCHUYLER JONES

With a Map by Lennart Edelberg

København 1966
Kommissionær: Munksgaard
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Introduction

In preparing the bibliography of which this is the first part, the intention has been to include virtually all references of any consequence to the subject. If this seems extravagant, it may be remarked that to exclude a reference for any reason is to pre-judge the interests and needs of those for whom this work is intended.
It should be emphasized that the references contained in part one are not necessarily the most important sources of information on the subject. The contents of part one has to a considerable extent been determined by the resources of Edinburgh libraries. The decision to divide the entire work (at present containing over 700 sources) into parts, each consisting of 300 references, was itself entirely arbitrary.

In presenting this bibliography it was not thought advantageous to trace all the various editions and translations of a given work, though where known these have not been ignored. To have included these systematically would have greatly extended the time and expense without adding significantly to the value of the work.

The research worker who goes into the problem thoroughly will find that, taken together, there is a good deal of repetition in the data provided by various writers. Earlier authors in particular frequently quote each other, sometimes with and often without giving credit; a few of the articles listed here consist almost entirely of paragraphs lifted straight from different authors and rearranged to suit the compiler. If it is considered that this repetition would best have been avoided by judicious weeding and requires some justification in order to be included here, we can only point out the obvious fact that what is available to one student is not necessarily available to another. To exclude, for example, CLAUDE FIELD'S *With the Afghans* (no. 92) because it provides nothing more than a re-telling of FAZL HUQ and NURULLA'S *Afghan Missionaries in Kafiristan* (no. 88) is to assume that both works are equally available to all.

The annotations frequently take the form of a quote from the work in question. This method may be criticised on the ground that it destroys the objectivity which was our guiding principle, since any quote lifted out of context can, by its very isolation, distort the writer's meaning. But we have chosen to quote rather than to comment where the reference to our subject is short enough to be quoted in its entirety or where the writer's comments serve to throw light on the misconceptions and prejudices characteristic of his time and place (see, for example, no. 281). Occasionally these comments reveal the tone and content of the material more accurately than any remarks by a student of the literature and serve the double purpose of enabling the bibliographer to avoid
value judgements. Those quotes which fall into a third category were chosen with the intention of emphasizing some point central to the writer’s theme.

It can be argued that many works listed here do not advance our knowledge of the Kafirs, and to this charge one readily agrees, but it should not be forgotten that they may contribute to our knowledge of neighbouring peoples connected with the Kafirs by important cultural and historical ties. G. J. Alder’s book (no. 23), for example, does not make any direct contribution to our knowledge of Kafiristan, but it is included here because any student of the region and the period should be familiar with the book as a whole.

In this bibliography primary sources are marked with an asterisk immediately preceding the author’s name, thus:


By ‘primary source’ is meant that the author actually visited Kafiristan/Nuristan or the Kalash Kafir valleys of Chitral, as the case may be, and writes about the area he visited. A few writers, though they had some first hand knowledge of the Kalash Kafirs, wrote mainly about the peoples of Kafiristan/Nuristan. Thus the names of Davidson, Biddulph, Durand and Gurdon – to mention some – are not marked by an asterisk.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the only works systematically excluded from part one of this bibliography are the Secret and Political reports of the British Government. It is planned that the majority of these will be included in part two.

S. J.
Kabul
Feb. 1966
I. General Reference Works


A useful work for any student of the region. There is a special section on Kafiristan but not all items in the bibliography containing material on Kafiristan are listed there, and a few of the entries under that heading contain no reference to our subject.


The article on Afghanistan (pp. 179–190), a subdivision of the general section devoted to India, is a thorough survey based on the main 19th cen. authorities. As such, it provides a valuable introductory background to our subject. On p. 182 the population of "Chitral, Nimcha, Lughmani" is given as 150,000; the "Kafar" population is listed as 100,000. Several references are made to 'Siah Posh', 'Kafir' and 'Kafiristan', for which, see index. The article on 'Central Asia' (pp. 173–178) is also relevant.


A sub-section of the article on the North-West Frontier is devoted to Kafiristan (pp. 202–203) and provides a concentrated source of general 'pre-Robertson' information.

Over 150 Russian articles and books, many of which contain material on Kafiristan/Nuristan, are listed.


A brief geographical, historical and ethnographical description with notes on the languages and a bibliography. Kafiristan "was undoubtedly part of the Kushan kingdom in the early part of the Christian era and has been identified with the mountain country of Kapisa. The name Kator applied to the country and its ruling tribe by Taimur (Timur) is identical with the title of the rulers of the neighbouring country of Čitral, and is no doubt the same as Katir, the name of the principal tribe at the present day. It is most probably derived from the title Kidara used by the later Kushans. It has been thought by Wood and Yule that the wine-drinking tribes whom Marco Polo met near Casem (i.e. Kishm in the Kokča Valley) are identical with the Kafirs, who may have at that time extended into the northern valleys of the Hindu Kush, but the first definite mention of them is in the Emperor Timur’s memoirs”.


Nearly the entire issue is devoted to Afghanistan. The bibliography lists some 142 books and articles either written in German or translated into German. Several of these are concerned with Kafiristan/Nuristan. These are listed separately in the present bibliography, although not all of them are included in part one.

7. GRIERSON, SIR GEORGE ABRAHAM. *Languages*. (Chapter six of volume I of The Imperial Gazetteer of India). Oxford, 1907.
Chapter six (pp. 349–401) of this volume constitutes a survey of the languages of the 'Indian Empire', including material on the languages of Kafiristan.


The first new article on the subject to appear in The Encyclopaedia Britannica since Robertson's of 1910. The Danish geographer was given so little space (about 500 words) that the reader is advised to consult the Eleventh Edition, Cambridge, 1910–1911. (See no. 16).


"The tract called Kafiristan, due north of the Jalalabad district and extending to the snows of the Hindu Kush, is supposed to be inhabited by a fair, interesting, and somewhat mysterious people, who are called Siah Posh Kafirs (black-clothed unbelievers) who may be one of the earliest offshoots of the Aryan race, or perhaps part of the original stock itself, and who are said to have remained for ages in or near their original home. Few Europeans have seen any of this curious race . . . it is reported that they have some distinctly European customs, as sitting on chairs and using tables, and are affirmed to build their houses of wood, of several stories in height, and that they are much embellished with carving . . . It is possible that some of the Greco-Bactrians, when driven from the cities in the valley of the Kabul River, may have sought refuge in this almost inaccessible region, and have been absorbed by the old population."


A critical survey of accounts given by Elphinstone, Burnes, Masson, Raverty and Lumsden. This is followed by extracts from McNair's second report (1883).

For a short, general description of the country and the people based on information supplied by Lockhart, Robertson and Grierson, see pp. 269–271.


On pp. 136–139 a short geographical and cultural description is given of the Hindu Kush region and its inhabitants, including Kafiristan.


"The rest of the population of Afghanistan comprises Safis; Kashmiris; settlers from Hindustan; Laghmanis, Arabs, Saiyids, Parachas; and last, for they have only recently come under the acknowledged sovereignty of the Amir, the Kafirs. The tract of country inhabited by these, known as Kafiristan, is situated due north of Jalalabad, extending to the snows of the Hindu Kush. Their total number probably does not exceed 60,000. They have recently adopted Islam with little demur, their previous religion having been a somewhat low form of idolatry, with an admixture of ancestor cult and some traces of fireworship." (pp. 47–48).


This mimeographed bibliography contains 2249 entries. The sources are arranged according to region (Indus Plains, Sub-Himalayan, etc.), religion (Hindus, Muslims, etc.), and branch of study (History, Archaeology, etc.). There is a subject index and an author index. The section containing material on Kafiristan is ‘Northwest Mountain’, pp. 66–70.


See index for the following references:

"The Kaspioi, who, according to Herodotus (III, 93, also VII, 67, 86) constituted together with the Sakai the fifteenth division
of [Darius'] empire . . . must have been an easterly people, and they are perhaps to be located in the wild tract of Kafiristan . . . .”

“The copper coins of Apollodotus bear types ‘Apollo: Tripod’ in evident allusion to the King’s name . . . these were restruck by Eucratides with his own types in the Kingdom of Kapica (Kafiristan) . . . .”

“When Huien Tsiang visited Kapica in 630 A.D. it was a powerful kingdom, which, according to his description as interpreted by Cunningham, ‘must have included the whole of Kafiristan, as well as the two large valleys of Ghorband and Panjshir’ and on it at that time were dependent the neighbouring kingdoms of Lampaka (Laghman), Nagara (probably Jalalabad) and Gandhara.”


A detailed article based primarily on the author’s personal experience, but including several historical references. This article is the standard reference on the subject.


Half the article is devoted to a general description of the region and the people. The other half is concerned with Kafir religion—a summary of the information given in The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush. (See no. 223).


This volume contains a lengthy section on ‘Central Asia’ and another on ‘Afghanistan’. On page 405 is the following entry: “Mirza Sher Ahmad Jalalabadi wrote the Fath-namah i Kafiristan, a poem on the conquest of Kafiristan by the Afghans in 1896.” For a reference to an English translation of this see no. 190. On pp. 405–406 Storey gives a biographical sketch of Abd al-Rahman Khan, conqueror of Kafiristan.

The second edition of this selective bibliography lists 1,230 books and articles. The omissions are explained in the preface. The various works are listed alphabetically according to author within each of several categories; Geography, History, Social Organization, etc.

II. Nuristan (Kafiristan)


A manuscript, written in Hindi, by the son of a Katir chief who fled the Bashgul Valley in 1896 and subsequently settled in Chitral. The manuscript, purchased from the author by Morgenstierne in 1929 and translated into English, comprises a history of the Katir and an account of their customs and religion (pp. 1–83) and an autobiography (pp. 85–139). The manuscript is in the Instituttet For Sammenlignende Kultur-Forskning, Oslo. (See nos. 194 & 195).


The Amir discusses the Durand Agreement of 1893 and follows this with his reasons for invading Kafiristan, his preparations for the invasion and the manner in which his plans were carried out. He states (vol. I, p. 291) that he has “written a separate book” about the Kafir religion. This work has not been traced.


Included is a discussion of the exploration of Afghanistan with special reference to the Kunar Valley and the work of Holdich, Tanner and Biddulph.

The strategic position of Kafiristan, with respect to British plans for the north-west frontier of India, the need to explore the passes of the Hindu Kush, and to determine Russian intentions in Central Asia is examined. A sketch of the Lockhart Expedition of 1885–86 is given. The entire background of British interest in Kafiristan is discussed as part of a larger picture – the need to establish a north-west frontier satisfactory to the security of India.


A detailed description, with illustrations, of the Kafir harp obtained in Nuristan by Lennart Edelberg in 1948. Other types of harps, known from early art, are also discussed. It is suggested that the Kafir harp is a connecting link between the musical bow and the bow harp. It is further suggested that the Kafir harp may be a forerunner of the Sumerian harp. “Perhaps the existence of this very old type of harp among the mountains of Hindukush is also a further indication of a prehistoric Sumerian migration from east to west, and it may contribute to the solving of the old problem, apparently insoluble, of the sudden appearance of the horizontal arched harp in the Gandhara sculpture, which is highly influenced by Bactrian art. . .”


Essentially the same as no. 24.


The author used Remusat’s translation of the *Foe Koue Ki*, revised and edited by Klaproth and Landresse, in one of the early at-
tempts to link the 7th century narrative with the known geography of Asia. He regards the Kafirs as 'semi-Hindus'. "That the remnant of the ancient population, probably Hindus, asserted not to be Moslem in the present day, now exist in the Siyuh Posh Kafirs, – that in the days of Akbar constant invasions of these parts were carried on; that Baber boasts of his forays on the lands of these semi-Hindus; while in the days of Timoor and previously it was considered a work of religious merit to exterminate these Kafirs–then as now, almost unknown." (See no. 68).

A brief note concerning the Durand Agreement of November 12, 1893. The seven clauses of the agreement are given. By these terms, the Amir Abdur Rahman obtained a free hand in Kafiristan.

More than a review of a single work, this article contains numerous comparative references to previous works on the areas in question. As for the Kafirs: "The remarks which [Burnes] makes on the Siah-posh Kafirs, or black-coated unbelievers, who inhabit the valleys of the high mountains, which divide the basins of the Kabul and Badakshan rivers, are, in like manner, infelicitous as well as scanty. He tells us that he can add nothing to the intelligence respecting them collected by Mr. Elphinstone. Yet, imbibing the prejudices of his Mahommedan informants, he calls them savages... 'The Kafirs,' says our Author, 'live in a most barbarous manner, eating bears and monkeys;' – a kind of food which does not appear to us to afford any incontrovertible implication of barbarism..." (See no. 52).

This article is more comprehensive than its title suggests. In addition to reviewing the book it offers a summary of the history of Central Asian exploration, with frequent reference to previously published works, particularly the MSS of 'Georg Ludvig von ...'. The entire argument is traced, including the 'Chinese Itinerary translated by Klaproth in 1824 and the 'Confidential Report of a Russian Agent'. The conclusion is that "the three manuscripts under consideration, with their accompanying illustrations had been all severally forged by Klaproth – possibly from a mere love of mystification, but more probably from mercenary motives...". (See no. 154, 219, 220, 267, 268 and 278). Alexander Gardner is also discussed.


A reasonably thorough review and informal discussion of seven books, articles and reports relating to Central Asia, including Wood's *Oxus* (no. 276), Hellwald's 'Russians in Central Asia' (no. 118) and two of Raverty's articles in the J.A.S.B. (for one of them, see no. 216). The reviewer ranges far beyond the immediate problem to discuss classical historians and early explorers. Useful discussions of 'Dardistan', 'Bolor' and the Kafirs. The article is accompanied by a map.


September 8th "... Mr. McNair, an officer of the Indian Survey Department, has succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the Punjab outposts and in making his way in the disguise of a Mohammedan across the north-west frontier to Chitral, by way of the Swat Valley and Dir... We should imagine that the only thing Mr. McNair would have to fear would be the wrath of the Indian Foreign Department on learning that the enterprising traveller had set their rather grandmotherly regulations at defiance."
September 15th. "Further intelligence respecting Mr. McNair's journey to Kafiristan has been supplied by the Pioneer. He appears to have been treated with hospitality and friendliness by the Khan of Dir, and, though opposed by the Mullahs of Swat, was passed onwards to Chitral with honours and attendants. Using that point as a base of operations, Mr. McNair was enabled to pass into Kafiristan and reach the Dora Pass over the Hindu Kush, known to us from the journey of the native explorer usually called the 'Havildar'. From this pass he contemplated proceeding into Badakhshan and making a detour to explore the little known region round Farajghan; but the moment happened to be unfavourable, and he was told that, on the whole, he had better keep to the southern side of the watershed. So he returned to Chitral. . ."


"Kabul, July 5th. Mr. L. Edelberg, a member of the Danish National Museum, who is now in Afghanistan for the third time, intends to study the patterns of dwellings and other distinctive features of life in Nouristan. Mr. Lenart [sic] Edelberg came to Afghanistan for the first time 17 years ago to collect data about plant-life in Nouristan and other parts of Afghanistan. His findings were subsequently published. Mr. Edelberg visited Afghanistan again 9 years ago with another Danish scholar, Mr. Klaus Ferdinand, and studied Nouristan, life and folklore in Hazarjat and the life of nomadic tribes; the results of these researches were also published. Mr. Edelberg, now in Afghanistan for the third time, wants to travel to Kunar Valley and from there to Kamdesh via Wama and Nickin Gul [sic] and then return to Jalalabad via the lower Lundison valley. On this trip he intends to study the building style, the camps of shepherds, bridges and other structures in Nouristan which are important from the viewpoint of anthropology."

"Kabul, July 5th. Professor Morgenstierne, the prominent Norwegian philologist, who had come to Kabul in May to carry out research in Kati and Pashaye languages, left by air for Norway on Friday. He studied 3 out of the 4 languages spoken in Nouristan and will publish his findings in this regard; he had also prepared a dictionary of Pashaye language. He considers Afghanistan to be an inexhaustible mine of philology and most of his books have been devoted to research about languages spoken in Afghanistan. During his stay in Afghanistan, Prof. Morgenstierne was the guest of the College of Letters of Kabul University."


The opening pages of Arrian's Book Five are considered by some to describe Alexander's meeting with the Kafirs in the city of Nysa, founded by Dionysus. See, for example, no. 122.


In October 1504 A.D. Babur "gained possession of Kabul and Ghazni, with the country and provinces dependent on them, without battle or contest." (p. 136). This announcement is followed by a geographical description of what is now eastern Afghanistan, together with an enumeration of the tribes of the area. He writes of Kafiristan in some detail, with special attention to the various wines: "The wine of Dereh-Nur is famous over all the Lamghanat. It is of two kinds, which they term areh-tashi (the stone-saw) and suhan-tashi (the stone-file). The stone-saw is of yellowish colour; the stone-file, of a fine red. The stone-saw, however, is the better wine of the two, though neither of them equals their reputation." See also no. 44.

The index at the end of volume II and the footnotes supplied by Lucas King made this edition a particularly useful one for the student. The material relating to 'Kaferistan' is easily found. Note, however, vol. II, p. 142.


A brief technical note based on Morgenstierne's work.


Chapter ten of this volume includes a summary of the work done by early European explorers in Afghanistan, including Kaferistan. Useful bibliography at the end of each chapter and at the end of the book.


Vol. I, pp. 54–68, Kia-Pi-Shi (Kapisa). In extensive footnotes to this chapter the translator attempts to reconcile this 7th century account with 19th century geography and information supplied by classical Greek geographers. Vol. I, pp. 90–97, Lan-po (Lamghan) and N-Kie-Lo-Ho (Nagarahara). For references to Kaferistan see translator's footnotes in addition to text.


See pp. 54–58 for an account of the pilgrim's journey from Bamiyan to Nagarahara along the borders of Kaferistan.

An attempt to identify the peoples of what is now Afghanistan in the writings of classical Greek historians. For example: "The eleventh satrapy comprised the Kaspioi, the Pausikoi, the Panti-mathoi, and the Daritai... The Pausikai I have recognized as the Pasi or Pasiki of the Rajataringini, the modern Pashai of Lughman and Ghorband, and in the 'Inquiry' have included the Bash or Bashgali of Kafiristan with them, though these last probably derive from a different source; from a later invasion of the northern Nomads, and speaking a different language, though probably of the same stock as the Pasi originally... The Daritai are the Darada of the Sanskrit, the modern Daru of Dardistan."


"...to the north of Kabul are the Kohistani people or 'people of the hill country'. They are composed of the ancient Persians and the ancient Indians. The former as far eastward as the Alishang River; the other onwards thence into Kashmir. The former speak Persian and are all subjects of the Kabul government. The other speak a variety of different dialects, which are unintelligible to their neighbours in adjoining glens, even though, with one or two exceptions, they are all of cognate stock with the Sanscrit. These ancient Indians are divided into numerous small communities or tribes, having little intercourse with the world around them, and eternally at war with each other. They are collectively styled Kohistani, but are distinguished as Kafir or 'Infidel', Musalman or 'Muhammadan', and Nimcha or 'half-and-half', - that is to say, a new convert or the offspring of a Musalman by a Kafir woman."


Contains the famed Emperor's account of Kafiristan. See also no. 36 and 37.


Chapter 10 is devoted to the Siah Posh Kafirs. The author collected his information from Kafirs in Chitral in 1878. He provides political information, notes on Kafir religion, material culture, etc. "There can be little doubt," he writes, "that they are a number of Aryan tribes who, from the force of circumstances, are living now in the same primitive state that they probably enjoyed long before the commencement of the Christian era."


In volume I the author expresses his intention of exploring Kafiristan. In volume II, 200-odd pages later, he provides three pencil sketches of Kafirs. Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan, did not grant his party permission to travel either in Afghanistan or Kafiristan and the author, who spent a month and a half in Chitral, apparently did not visit the Kalash Kafirs.


A brief note intending to define the terms 'Red Kafirs' and 'Black Kafirs' and to distinguish between the two by reference to the Durand Line and to "the filth in which the Black Kafirs live, and of the fair hair and complexion of the Red Kafirs.''


A summary of information abstracted from Holdich, Raverty, Elphinstone and Wood, together with a résumé of the political events which led up to Britain's interest in Kafiristan and the
need to examine the passes of the Hindu Kush with an eye on Russian expansion in Central Asia. The article concludes with extracts from Robertson.


See page 193: "... in the spring of 1398, he [Timur] set out on his Indian campaign, instigated thereto, as asserted in the Zafarnama, by his desire to promote Islam and crush idolatry, and by the accounts which reached him of the toleration shown by the Muslim rulers towards their Hindu subjects and neighbours. After some preliminary operations against the Afghans (or Awghans) of the Suleyman Kuh and the Siyah-Push ('Black-robed') heathen of Kafirstan, he crossed the Indus on Muharram 12, 801 (Sept. 24, 1398) and proceeded to carry fire and sword into India."


A discussion of Kafir religion and mythology and an analysis of a mythological text recorded by the author in Prasun in 1956. The discussion also draws upon data collected by Robertson and Morgenstierne. In conclusion the author writes: "Es wäre vermessen zu glauben, dass zur Lösung jener schwierigsten Probleme der Veda-Exegese die ärmlichen und trümmenhaften kafirischen Zeugnisse irgendetwas beitragen könnten. Aber es scheint dennoch nicht ausgeschlossen, dass in ihnen ein ferner Nachhall aus alt-arischen Tagen dem aufmerksamen Ohr gerade noch vernehmbar wird."


"Marco Polo is the first author who mentions the existence of such a people, and informs us that the Meer of Badakhshan laid
claim to a Grecian origin. The Emperor Baber corroborates the testimony, and the historian of his grandson Akbar, the renowned Abul Fazl, points to the country of the Siahposh Kafirs, north of Peshawar, as the seat of these soi-distant Macedonians. Mr. Elphinstone has, I think, successfully refuted this supposition, for the *Kafirs* are a savage and mountainous tribe, without a tradition on the subject. The great elevation of their country appears to me satisfactorily to account for all their physical peculiarities, nor can I look upon these people as any other than the aborigines of the plain, who fled to their present elevated abode in the wars that followed the introduction of Mahomedanism."

52. BURNES, Lt. ALEXANDER. *Travels into Bokhara, Containing the Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus from the Sea to Lahore... and an Account of a Journey from India to Cabool, Tartary, and Persia... in the Years 1831, 32 and 33.* Three volumes. London, 1835. French edition, Paris, 1835.

Burnes considers the Kafirs "to be aborigines of Afghanistan and in no wise connected with the reputed descendants of Alexander The Great..." (vol. II). In vol. III he has more to say about "the Siahposh Kafirs, or black-vested Infidels, so called by their Mahommedan neighbours, from their wearing black goatskin dresses." He writes that "the Kaffirs appear to be a most barbarous people, eaters of bears and monkies [sic] who fight with arrows, and scalp their enemies... the people are much addicted to wine. Gold is found in its native state among their mountains, and formed by them into vessels and ornaments... I believe it will be found that this people are none other than the aborigines of the plains, who fled to their present abode on the conversion of the low countries to the religion of Mahommed..."

53. BURNES, Sir ALEXANDER. *Cabool, A Personal Narrative of a journey to, and residence in that City in the Years 1836, 7, and 8.* London, 1842. 398 p. 12 engravings.

The author interviews Kafirs in Kabul and also obtains information from people "both Hindu and Mahomedan, who had visited the habitations of the Kaffirs". He states that the Kafirs "consider
themselves descended of one Korushye, and their Mahomedan neighbours either corrupt the word, or assign them a lineage from Koreish, one of the noblest of the tribes of Arabia, to the language of which country they further state that of the Kaffirs to be allied’. Burnes supplies a drawing of a Siah-posh Kaffir and gives general geographical, agricultural, political and linguistic information – all of it brief and second-hand. Appendix IV, p. 381 contains some 124 English nouns with their ‘Kaffir’ equivalents and fourteen short sentences in English and ‘Kaffir’. Specimens of ‘Pushye’ are also given.


Based on information gathered from Hindus and Muslims and ‘several Kaffirs’ encountered in Kabul, Burnes’ article is concerned with the geography of the area and the customs of the people. On pp. 332–333 Kafir words and phrases with their English equivalents are given.


This pamphlet is an expanded version of a speech made by the M. P. The substance of it is “that unless Her Majesty’s Government are prepared to occupy Ghuznee and Cabul, it is not desirable to entangle Her Majesty’s army in the very mountainous country between the Upper Punjaub and those places which are entirely without lateral communications and inhabited by independent tribes never conquered. . .” As for the Kafirs: “The Kohistanees, or Highlanders of the hill country north of Cabul, are old Persians . . . further east, Badakshan and Wakhan, and it may be said the whole of the north face of the Indian Caucasus till we reach Tibet, are inhabited by this old Persian race. Affinities of language seem to show that the interesting race of Kaffirs, or unbelievers, of the high ranges – that is, the aboriginal race never converted to Mahommedanism – are also of this ancient Persian stock. . .”

The author travelled extensively in Central Asia, including Chitral. At the close of this article he remarks: “J’ai essayé dans les lignes qui précèdent d’esquisser en traits généraux l’ethnologie du peuple Siahpouche, d’après ce que j’ai pu en voir moi-même et d’après les données des autres voyageurs. Mais nous sommes loin de connaître à fond les Kafirs, et il faut le courage et le dévouement d’un hardi explorateur instruit, pénétrant dans le cœur du pays, pour compléter nos connaissances.” The article is accompanied by a map (p. 239, vol. 17).


The author draws on Arrian and Strabo to supplement his own knowledge of the north-west frontier of India and the archaeological findings of Aurel Stein to trace, among other things, Alexander’s movements between the Kabul plateau and the Indus. “The rivers [Alexander] crossed were the Choes, Euaspla and Guraeus, in that order. Between the Euaspla and the Guraeus was a mountain divide. This can only have been the Kunar-Panjkora watershed where the Durand Line now runs, and the Choes would then be the Alishang and the Euaspla the Kunar.”


This article was inspired by Dr. L. Hamilton’s letter to the Times (see no. 114). General Chamberlain’s article is an attack on British policy with regard to Kafiristan. He writes: “It must, I am afraid, be admitted that Kafiristan was the purchase-money for value supposed to be received. By its surrender the Ameer was able to recover in the eyes of his subjects, and more specially in the eyes of the priesthood, some of the disgrace involved by the surrender of tribesmen who had so earnestly pleaded not to
be made over to the English. He would accomplish that which all previous Sovereigns had failed to do; and he would become, and would go down in history as, a great champion of the Faith. It also required no great military instruct on the part of the Ameer to realize the strategic value of Kafiristan, both as regards defence and attack. . . .” When Abdur Rahman invaded Kafiristan “the resistance was carried on by brave, undisciplined men, fighting in defence of all that is most cherished by the human race; only armed with bows and arrows, knives and some few firearms. The invaders opposed the Kafirs with the most murderous weapons of destruction that England can produce. . . the losses sustained and the sufferings endured by men, women, and children during the conflict and during their deportation to the neighbourhood of Jullalabad and elsewhere can never become known. . . . Had not the [British] Government purposely withheld to the last moment the publication of the Durand Treaty of 1893, and the supplementary agreement of 1895, much might have been done to mitigate the sufferings of the unoffending Kafirs; but there still remains time for the carrying out of some redress; if only the nation will realize its responsibility, and through its representatives in Parliament insist upon justice being done.”


In the main, the author describes Afghanistan by references to the writings of Greek historians and Buddhist pilgrims. Scant mention of Kafiristan, but a useful general background of early sources on the area.


Included in this work is a summary account of Kafir social and political organization, as well as descriptions of the geographical and cultural setting of Kafiristan, based on Robertson’s data. Photographs of Kalash Kafirs by Prof. Halfdan Siiger of Aarhus University accompany the section on Kafiristan.

An attempt to trace the route followed by Alexander through what is now eastern Afghanistan. The classical geographers and Maj. Rennel provide the basis for the discussion which includes several references to Kafiristan, particularly the geography of that region.


The author, a graduate of St. Cyr, was an officer in the service of Ranjit Singh, Maharajah of Lahore. He sent men from Peshawar to the west and north-west to collect information about routes, passes and rivers – not for military purposes – but solely to throw light on the geography sketched by classical writers in their accounts of Alexander's campaigns in Bactria. From the reports of his informants the author compiled this article, including a map of the region between Kabul and Attock. There are numerous references to Kafiristan.


Chapter 17 is devoted to Afghanistan. The information concerning Nuristan is on p. 566: “Badakhshan is the name of a province and also the general term for northeastern Afghanistan, dominated by the main range of the Hindu Kush. The region includes the area known as Nuristan; in other cases the term Badakhshan is limited to the district north of the Hindu Kush, while Nuristan is applied to the south slopes... In the north, many of the people are Tajiks. Elsewhere, they were formerly known as Kaffirs, because they were once infidels; since their conversion to Islam in 1896, however, they have been termed Nuristani, namely, 'those who have seen the light'. The Nuristani number some 60,000, and although their origin is uncertain, they may be among the oldest tribes in Afghanistan.”

The author attempts to define the area in question by rejecting 'Kafiristan' and 'Nuristan' and adopting the term 'Kohistan of the Eastern Province', i.e., "the mountain complex bounded on the east by the Indo-Afghan frontier, in the south by the Kunar, Kabul and Laghman Rivers, in the west by the Kabul Province, the boundary of which follows the Alishang River, and in the north by Kataghan and Badakhshan Province, the boundary of which follows the line of high peaks of the Hindu Kush." The article is accompanied by a useful sketch map and contains a discussion of the physical geography, history and 'theory of origin' of the Kafirs. His notes are based on Raverty, McNair, MacGregor, Robertson and Voigt.


On p. 240 there is a somewhat embroidered retelling of Benedict de Goes' meeting with the 'hermit' who tells about Kafiristan. For other reports of this famous encounter, see no. 180, 208, 211 and 280.


See pp. 299–302 for a summary of information about the Kafirs, derived chiefly from Robertson. Throughout the book references are made to the Kafir religion, to weapons, languages, dances, aversion to hard work and washing, games, and agricultural techniques – all obtained from *The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush*. (See no. 223).


"To the north of the Peshawar valley lies a region as yet imperfectly explored. It is a paradise to the ethnologist, the one part of the borderland where important discoveries will certainly be made
when the fierce tribes which now occupy it have been reduced to order. It contains extensive Buddhist remains which will throw lights on the early history of that faith. Of the Kafirs ... among whom some survivals of Greek culture have been recognised, we possess, in spite of the researches of Dr. Leitner and Sir George Scott Robertson, only imperfect knowledge." This is followed by a quote from Oliver. (See no. 202).


The author reviews the Chinese Buddhist's travels with a view of reaffirming the authenticity of his journals. This was inspired by Major Anderson's conclusion (See no. 26) that the work in question was a recent fabrication. Capt. Cunningham takes considerable pains to point out the Major's errors.


The place names and distances given by Hwan Thsang have been abstracted from his journals and equated with place names and distances on 19th century maps. The first half of the article is concerned with routes in what is now Afghanistan, including the borderlands of Kafiristan.


The first chapter is entitled 'Kaofu, or Afghanistan' and contains sub-sections on 'Kapisene', 'Lamgham' and the Kafiristan area in general. The author traces the routes of Sung-Yun (ca. 502 A.D.)
and Hwen Thsang (629 A.D.). "According to the Chinese pilgrim [Hwen Thsang] Kiapishe or Kapisene was 4000 li, or about 666 miles in circuit. If this measurement be even approximately correct, the district must have included the whole of Kafiristan. . . ."

In regard to eastern Afghanistan the author also cites Pliny and Ptolemy. Throughout he attempts to reconcile these early accounts with what was known of the geography of those areas at the time he wrote (1860's).


A biographical sketch of the man and his accomplishments, with the emphasis on the Kafirs and Kafiristan. Useful footnotes.


The Russo-Turkish war of 1877 threatened to involve England. "... in 1876 Skobeleff, then military Governor of Ferghana, sent to Kaufmann, the Governor-General at Tashkent, an elaborate plan for the Russian invasion of India . . ." A part of the political intrigue involved Russian reconnaissance in Badakshan and on the borders of Kafiristan. Avenues of invasion into India are thoroughly examined and the background of the political situation of the period discussed in detail.


An account of exploration in the Pamirs by the author. Included are numerous references to earlier accounts of travel and exploration in the area. He believes that "Bolor, or Bilaur was the name applied throughout the middle ages to the elongated belt of mountain country south of the main range of the Hindu Kush, including the valleys of Kafiristan, Upper Chitral, Yasin, Gilgit and Hunza Nagar. . . ."

A more thorough study than its title suggests, this contains information on the grammar and provides a vocabulary and sentences in the language now known as Kati. Appendix I, pp. 165–184, comprises a useful bibliography of works relating to Kafiristan. Appendix IV, pp. 189–192, is a bibliography of works relating to 'the Bolor country'.


Following scattered references to the physical characteristics of the Kafirs, leadership among them and lack of intra-tribal feuds, the author sketches the events leading up to the demarcation of the Durand Line and Abdur Rahman's subsequent invasion of Kafiristan. "Although the Government of India stated . . . that the Amir's action was not a direct result of the Durand Agreement, yet many authorities, whose opinions carried great weight, held that British policy was in no small measure responsible for the sacrifice of these rude savages to the Amir."


A general summary of early 19th century information on Kafiristan as supplied by Charles Masson (James Lewis), Elphinstone, Wolfe, Burnes, etc., to which are added speculations regarding the possible success of missionary enterprise in the area.


In the last decade of the 19th century the author travelled extensively on the eastern borders of Afghanistan, visiting Kafir settlements in Chitral. Some details relating to Robertson's first
visit to Kafiristan are given and the political aspect of his travels is made explicit. In his diary, Durand wrote: "What will be the end [of British dealings with Kafiristan] is curious to speculate on. The Amir is evidently anxious to conquer the country; the Mehtar has brought a certain part of it under his sway; the Pathans across the mountains in Bajour all want to wipe the Kafirs out. The end will probably be gradual annexation, incorporation in the neighbouring states, and Mahomedanism. It seems now that they are too divided amongst themselves to become a people, and with a well-armed girdle being drawn tighter and tighter round them, conquest can but be a matter of years." Later, when writing this book, Durand remarks: "Personally I did not expect the dénouement to come so soon as it did, but I cannot say I was sorry when it did come. The only real cause of sorrow, when the Amir conquered the country, lay in the unscientific character of his methods, which destroyed the possibility of fully studying the Kafirs before their conversion to Mahomedanism . . . The Kafir was a savage, pure and simple . . . they were a murderous set of brutes . . ."


See Chapter 8, Life of a Soldier of the Olden Time, for an account of the career of Alexander Gardner. In 1826 or 1827, according to this account, Gardner "went into the Kaffiristan passes west of Chitral and south of the Dora Kothal Pass [sic] and thence along and down the course of the Khamab or Kaffiristan river. He was accompanied by a priest, and was well treated, and only found it again difficult to escape from the hospitality. He went down the Kama River till it joined the Hoorum and from thence to Jellalabad . . .". For more about Alexander Gardner see nos. 89, 99, 100, 103 and 110.

The introduction sketches the background of the Third Danish Central Asian Expedition. Material relating to Nuristan follows and is grouped under various headings:

Historisk-Etnografiske Problemer I; Indoiranerne og Zarathustra; et relief, der muligvis stammer fra Perserrigets storhedstid.


Historisk-Etnografiske Problemer III; Den post-Buddhistiske tid. Nogle bemærkninger om gravformernes betydning for Afghani-
stans etnografi. Jurten (kher'ga) i Afghanistan. Hezaræer-problem-
et og Chahar Aimak. Er der mongolske folk i Afghanistan?

The article concludes with a section on De Afghanske Græsteppe-
Egne og deres Betydning for Etnografien, and one on Pathaner. With the article are 19 photographs, 2 maps, 2 sketches.

80. *Edelberg, Lennart. Fra Kafirhytte til Ildtempel. Næs-
gaards-Bogen, Falster (Denmark) 1956. pp. 25–44.

A personal account of some of the author’s experiences in Nuristan as a member of Haslund-Christensen’s Third Danish Central Asian Expedition (1947–1949) and the Haslund-Christensen Memorial Expedition of 1953–54.


A description of archaeological remains in the neighbourhood of Chigha-Sarai in the Kunar Valley, with references to observations of earlier explorers. The tentative conclusion of the author and his predecessors is that these are Buddhist remains. It is suggested that certain Kafir art forms have been influenced by Buddhist culture which flourished in this area more than 1000 years ago. The article is accompanied by 2 sketch maps, 14 photographs and 1 drawing. In connection with this article, see no. 179.

The entire issue (pp. 257–288 of the volume for 1958) is a memorial to the Danish explorer, Henning Haslund-Christensen, who died in Kabul in 1948. The article provides a comprehensive résumé of Danish scientific work in Asia. Five colour pictures and 4 black and white pictures of Nuristan are included, together with an account of field work in that area by Danish scholars.


"The position in the Pantheon of Imra, the supreme god of the Kafirs of the Hindukush, can be determined more exactly than before by a comparison of Paruni myths collected by Edelberg with the material published by Robinson [sic] about 60 years ago. Imra’s main temple at Kushteki which was almost entirely destroyed during the Islamisation of the actual ‘Nuristan’ in the end of the nineties, has been reconstructed by architect Schaefer on the basis of a description by Robertson and of photographic material, measurements of the site and information brought home by the German Hindukush and the Danish Central Asian Expeditions. A number of details, both architectural and ornamental of the building together with certain features of the stories about Imra, the Creator, lead to the conclusion that he was also the godhead of the course of the year. The temple was apparently dedicated to him in this capacity. The function of the building must have been to serve as a sun observatory in which the first beam of the rising sun on the winter solstice was to hit a statue of the god inside of the temple and, thus, to indicate the beginning of the New Year. May the old etymology of Imra as Yamaraja and, thereby, his linguistic relationship with the Iranian Yima, Djamshed be accepted or not – the connection of that personage with the course of the year, with a statue of his own, and with
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a building is attested in sources independent from one another, but partly unintelligible so far, on which, now, light may fall from the ruins in that remote valley of the Hindu-kush.” (p. 515).


A thorough study of all wooden anthropomorphic sculptures from Kafiristan (i.e., excluding the Kalash Kafir figures from Chitral) known to exist today, together with photographs of 14 which are missing. A description, measurements and comments of each are provided and the whereabouts of each, where known, is given. Of the 18 pieces known today, 2 are in the Musée Guimet, Paris; 2 are in the Musée de l’Homme (Paris); and the remainder are to be seen in the Kabul Museum. Since this article was published a ‘new’ figure has been found in Nuristan and is now in the Kabul Museum. The article is illustrated by 1 map, 1 sketch plan, 2 drawings and 46 photographs.


See pp. 103–104: “Khust, or Khost, is a district on the northern slopes of the Hindu Kush, between south and south-east of Kunduz, and lies very near the hill tracts known in our times as Kafiristan, or the country of the Siaposh and other Kafirs. Sir Henry Yule quotes several authorities who show that among the Kafir tribes which inhabited this region, between the 13th and the present centuries, was one called Katur, or Kitaw. Baber, in his Memoirs, also speaks of a division of Kafiristan, to the north-east of Kabul, called Kattor; while Col. J. Biddulph tells us that the family name of the rulers of Chitral is Kature, and he adds that ‘the name of Kator seems to have been applied to the country in early times, before the present Kature family was founded’. The name Shah Katur occurs more than once in the line of Chitral
rulers. Thus the Katur of the text would point to Kafiristan and probably also to Chitral, for it is quite possible that, though divided now, the two states may have been one in the 15th century. According to Ritter the Kafirs were a people much feared by the Musulmans of Badakhshan at the beginning of the 15th century and used to exact tribute from them. There is nothing improbable, therefore, in the story of the Kafirs raiding into the neighbouring district of Khust and killing the Musulman governor."


Vol. II, Note A, Appendix, p. 403: The Hindu Kings of Kabul. This contains a discussion of the term 'Katormans' or 'Kators'. "We are informed that it was the name of one of the tribes of Kafiristan, and that the ruler of Chitral to this day bears the title of Shah Kator . . . the country of Kator is also spoken of by Sadik Isfahani as being the country of the Siyah-Poshes, or black-vested, on the borders of Kabul. These Kators boast still of their Grecian lineage, and their claim to this honour is by no means, as many have supposed, of modern origin, attributable to our own enquiries after the descendants of the followers of the Macedonian conqueror." " . . . the coincidence of the name of Ki-ti-lo with Kitor or Kator . . . here we seem to have the origin of the name Kitor, the establishing of a prince of that name between Kabul and the Hindu Kush, on the very site of the modern Kafiristan, or land of Siyah-Poshes and the country of Kitor . . . ." In vol. III on pp. 400–408 is an account of the Emperor Timur's expedition into Kafiristan in the spring of 800 A.H. (1408 A.D.) "to chastise the infidel Kators." Another version of this from the Zafar-Nama is given on pp. 480–482 of the same volume. The last two articles in vol. III have recently been published under the title Malfuzat-i Timuri or Tuzak-i Timuri: The Autobiography of Timur by the publisher Susil Gupta (India) Ltd. Calcutta, 1952.

87. Elphinstone, Mountstuart. An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul and its Dependencies in Persia, Tartary and India,

Appendix C of this classic work is an account of ‘Caufiristaun’ based on the report of one ‘Moollah Nujeeb’ – a man sent by Elphinstone to Kafiristan in 1809 armed with nothing more than a ‘long list of queries’. The ‘Moollah’ apparently went as far as Kamdesh in the Bashgul Valley and collected a considerable range of information subsequently proven to be, in the main, surprisingly accurate. The whole report was translated by a Mr. Irvine and only a portion of the MS published by Elphinstone. The whereabouts of the entire MS is not known. For more than 80 years this fragment constituted virtually all that was known of Kafiristan.


This paper was compiled by the Rev. R. Clark of Peshawar from the Pashtu diary of two converts to Christianity who visited western Kafiristan (the Ashkun District) in 1864. Some information regarding the social and political aspects of Kafir culture is given, notably data on feast-giving. This article was reprinted in the Church Missionary Intelligencer, vol. III, new series, London, 1878. pp. 724–733. See also no. 91, 92 and 93.

89. FAZY, ROBERT. L’Exploration du Kafiristan par les Européens. Asiatische Studien, vol. 1, Nr. 2, Bern, 1953. pp. 1–25. Biographical sketches of various explorers who travelled in the Kafiristan region and published accounts of their experiences: Benedict de Goes, Gardner, Elphinstone, Masson, Wood, Bid-dulph, McNair, Lockhart, Robertson, etc. The footnotes form a useful bibliography. There are some curious omissions: Vavilov and Bukinich, for example.

90. FELBO, JØRGEN. I det fjerne Nuristan. Berlingske Tidende, Søndag den 27. December, København, 1964. Sec. III, p. 11. An article concerning Lennart Edelberg’s 1964 journey to Nuristan and his proposal that a Danish Asiatic Institute be founded
in Kabul where Danish scientists could work in cooperation with Afghan scientists in various fields. Seven photographs accompany the article.

91. Field, Claude. 


See Chapter XXI, Robert Clark in the Panjab. On p. 250 there is mention of the Kafirs and Kafiristan in connection with the two Afghan missionaries who entered western Kafiristan. A more complete account of their experiences is that given in no. 88.


In chapter IX, pp. 133–149, there is an account of Fazl Haq and Nurulla’s journey to Kafiristan. This account is based on the information provided by source no. 88.


Chapter IX, To Soldater af Guiderkorpsen, pp. 123–140, is a retelling of the 1864 journey of Fazl Haq and Nurulla from Peshawar to western Kafiristan. See no. 88.


Seven Kafir effigies from the Kabul Museum are shown (photos no. 71–77). The relevant text is as follows: “Holzgötzen aus Kafiristan (dem heutigen Nuristan). Die Kafirs (Ungläubige) sind Ostarier. Ihre Herkunft ist nicht genau bekannt, doch nimmt man an, dass es sich um die Nachkommen der im Lande sesshaft gewordenen griechischen Legionäre Alexanders handelt. Sie wohnen in den fast unbekannten Tälern im Nordosten des Landes, am Südhang des Hindu Kush. Erst gegen das Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts wurde dieser Stamm islamisiert, und seitdem heisst die
Provinz Nuristan, das ‘Land des Lichtes’.” The English edition, with the author listed as Joseph Kessel, appeared under the title Afghanistan.

95. Fraser, James B. *An Historical and Descriptive Account of Persia from the Earliest Ages to the Present Time with a Detailed View of its Resources, Government, Population, Natural History and the Character of its Inhabitants, particularly of the Wandering Tribes; including a Description of Afghanistan and Beloochistan.* Edinburgh, 1834. 472 p. map, 13 engravings.

The section on Afghanistan contains the following remarks on Kafiristan: “The loftier mountains are, however, inhabited by the Caufirs or Infidels, a singular race of Savages, who, though they believe in one God, worship idols and supplicate the deified souls of great men; are remarkable for the beauty of their persons; but who, from wearing black clothes, have been called Siapooshes or Sable-clad.”


This work includes a brief general summary of historical sources on the Kafirs and a discussion of the Durand Line which so decisively influenced their lives.


A general article by the former British Minister to Afghanistan. He writes that the Kafirs are a “curious remnant of some old race which has been gradually driven up into the hills north of Jalalabad . . . they have been called Dravidians, but it seems more probable that they are of Aryan stock and belonged to the first migrations into southern Asia in prehistoric times . . . They are said to be rather childish, decadent people, but are fine fighters. . .”

Purportedly the experiences of an English youth who was found after his parents were slain "upon a field of carnage in the valley of Tezeen when the British force was fighting its way through the snow-bound passes of Afghanistan," and who was subsequently raised by an Afghan chief at his home in "Islampoor, in Konnar, which was about eight days' journey from Caubul". According to the narrative this youth later wandered over much of Central Asia, including 'Caffristan'. "Kashcar lies on the borders of Caffristan, and is one of the farthest places acknowledging the Mahommedan religion. The Kafirs who inhabit the mountains of Caffristan are all Buddhists; they speak the Chutroree language . . . .", etc, etc. The reader will no doubt quickly form his own opinion of this work, which is one of the most curious of all the literature relating to our subject.

99. *Gardner, Alexander. Soldier and Traveller: The Memoirs of Alexander Gardner, Colonel of Artillery in the Service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Edited by Major Hugh Pearse. Edinburgh and London, 1898. 359 p. portrait, illus, maps. There are several references to Kafiristan. Presumably there would have been much more except for the fact that "the full diary of this [second] visit to Kafiristan and of Gardner's journey from Pamir was lent to Sir Alexander Burnes, and was destroyed when that unfortunate officer was murdered at Kabul and his house pillaged. All that remains by way of record of this most interesting passage in Gardner's adventurous life are some disconnected notes and allusions. Some of the notes are written on the margin of various printed pages concerning Kafiristan. Among the allusions are two references to the fact related by the Kafirs to Gardner – that two Europeans had lived in their country about the year 1770 and had, according to one story, died in captivity, and, according to the other, been murdered by the Kafirs, under the supposition that they were evil spirits. These unfortunate Europeans were probably Roman Catholic Missionaries." (p. 159). For other material relating to the Kafirs, see Chapters III, VI, VIII, IX. Gardner’s adventures were apparently a source of inspiration for Rudyard Kipling's story The Man Who Would Be King. (See no. 155). Gardner is supposed to have travelled in Kafiristan on more than one occasion between 1825 and 1830,
but the truth of his experiences has been sharply attacked by Grey and Garrett (See no. 103). Other comments on Gardner are to be found in no. 78, 89 and 110.


The doubt which has been cast on Gardner’s accounts of travels in Kafiristan is not dispelled by reading these selections from his journals. Gurdon, however, writes that “sufficient has been recorded to prove beyond doubt that Gardner actually did visit Kafiristan more than once.” (See no. 110). Others felt the same; Durand, Temple, etc.


About 1905 the author, who had been Robertson’s successor in Gilgit and subsequently political agent in Chitral, visited some Kafirs – apparently the Kalash Kafirs, though he gives no details. “The reason behind my visit was neither political nor military. It was merely to ascertain what, if any, traces could be found locally between Alexander’s armies or their descendants and the present mountaineers who had resisted Muhammadan invasions and who claimed Greek descent. And whether any connection was to be found there with the early Buddhist civilizations of Swat.” The author neglects to mention what pass he crossed, what valley he entered or what village he visited, but does describe the funeral of “a noted local chief”.


“To the editor of The Times:
Sir, It may not be inopportune on the eve of the meeting of Parliament to point out that there is a course of action for the
security of our hold on northern Afghanistan, the Cabul Valley and the Khyber which has apparently hitherto been either neglected or not thought of. It is simply to form an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the people of the country, misnamed by the Afghans Kafiristan, bordering on and commanding the whole of the Cabul Valley and the Khyber, at a distance of barely 50 miles – a race of brave warriors, numbering nearly a million, calling themselves Kami or Kamdeshi, descendants of the Greek colonies left by Alexander the Great at Candahar (Iskandarhar – i. e., the city of Alexander) and at Cabul (Kampol the city of the Kami), who love us and call us their European brethren, and have repeatedly sent piteous appeals to us for our help and alliance against their hated Afghan foes, who find a religious delight in murdering them as infidels or profit in kidnapping and selling them for slaves, they being white like Europeans. In spite, however, of the persecutions of a thousand years and of Timour and Baber, they have held on to their ancient religion – the Pagan Greek, and are still powerful enough to keep their Afghan enemies at bay within, as I have said, barely 50 miles of Cabul itself, and less by far of Jellalabad. It is plain that if we were to succor and arm such a people we should have a force of many thousands of brave allies, skilled mountain warriors, ranged along the rear of the valleys inhabited by our most troublesome and inveterate foes – the tribes of the Cabul Valley and Khyber, and ready at any time to swoop down on them and aid us in clearing the passes and holding the country. On other grounds it would be a worthy policy – nay, a duty – on the part of such a nation as England and such men as Salisbury and Beaconsfield to succour and raise up again an ancient nation whose history, language and customs, and the numerous antiquities of Greek art still to be found among them would be a marvellous revelation to the world, from which they hitherto been shut out by the iron circle of their Mahomedan foes, with whom they refuse all commerce or intercourse. The country itself teems with mineral wealth and has ruby mines of great value; the vine is indigenous, and it has the most magnificent forests of European trees. It was the cradle of Aryan race, Japeti genus, and was probably the birthplace of the Indian Bacchus, who is worshipped still under the name of Baggheesh. However in all this I am merely quoting from the
works of Elphinstone, Wood &c, to whom I may refer your readers for further information about this wonderful and almost unknown people offering such a rich and virgin soil to the savant, the missionary and the trader. I am, Sir, your obedient servant, R. Gordon (Maj.)."


The authors, with access to Government records, have compiled information on more than 100 soldiers of fortune who contributed in one way or another to the history of the area and the period. Chapter 10 is devoted to James Lewis, alias Charles Masson, the English soldier who, among other things, collected data on the Kafirs in the 1830's, (See no. 186 and 230). Chapter 13 is concerned with the controversial Alexander Gardner who claimed to have travelled in Kafiristan on more than one occasion some 60 years before Sir William Lockhart's expedition, which is usually credited with being the first European penetration of that region. Grey and Garrett write: "The truth is that Gardiner [sic] took his incidents, adventures and travels from the oral narratives of contemporary adventurers in Ranjit Singh's army, and from books of the period with which, as he survived for over thirty years after the publication of most, he must have been perfectly familiar, and has supplemented these by drawing on his imagination. . . . We are of the opinion that he was an Irishman, born in the town of Clongoose, and an ordinary deserter from the British service. . . ." This is followed by a dozen pages devoted to the destruction of the 'Gardner myth'. See also no. 78, 89, 99, 110 and 278.


An enumeration and geographical positioning of, among others, the languages of Kafiristan as known up to 1900, by the Director of the Linguistic Survey of India.

Grierson concludes that the languages of Laghman, Kafiristan, the Indus Kohistan, Chitral, Gilgit and Kashmir — which he groups together under the name of Modern Paisaci — “form a third, independent, branch of the great Aryan family, and that they are neither Eranian nor Indian, but something between both. They seem to have left the parent stem after the Indo-Aryan languages but before all the typical Eranian characteristics, which we meet in the Avesta, had become developed.”


“The Kambojas were a north-western tribe, always mentioned in Sanskrit literature in connexion with Yavanas, Sakas, and the like.” This is followed by a short technical note based on data provided by Muir’s ‘Sanskrit Texts’ and the conclusion: “... the Kambojas, a barbarous tribe of north-western India, either spoke Sanskrit with an infusion of Eranian words, to which they gave Indian inflexions, or else spoke a language partly Indo-Aryan and partly Eranian.” See no. 255 for a reference linking the Kambojas with the Kafirs.


Grierson’s reply to Sten Konow (see no. 160) in which he says: “My one great regret in regard to Dr. Konow’s article is that he has confined himself to Bashgali, and has not discussed the other languages of the same group. If he had done so, I am convinced that he would have largely modified some of his statements, and perhaps would not have been so definite in classing Bashgali as Eranian.” Dr. Grierson concludes by stating his belief “that the ancestors of these tribes of the North-West Frontier once spoke a language akin to the Paisaci of the Indian grammarians.”

"Torwali is one of a number of languages generally grouped together under the name of ‘Kohistani’, as being spoken in the Panjokora, Swat, and Indus Kohistans lying to the north of Peshawar and Hazara districts of British India... Torwali... is in entire agreement with the other Kohistani languages and... like them, it also shows traces of a relationship with the Kafir languages... Indeed, if the account given in the second folktale [pp. 117–124] is to be accepted, the Torwal country itself was once inhabited by Kafirs that were conquered by Torwals coming from Badakhshan. Such a legend must, however, be treated with reserve, for the word ‘Kafir’ is very loosely employed in Dardistan, and may well mean anyone who is not a Moslem, instead of referring to the group of tribes in western Dardistan known by that name."


A general description of the geography and vegetation of Eastern Afghanistan, with reference to the forests of Kafiristan: "... forest trees occur on the Kafir mountains within a few miles of Olipore; of these the two most striking are the horse chestnut, and a beautiful abies or spruce fir, apparently allied to the Morinda or Khutrow of the Himalayas. These are only known to me from specimens purchased from the Kafirs."


The author, who was assistant political agent in Chitral during Abdur Rahman’s invasion of Kafiristan, summarizes the accomplishments of Gardner, McNair and Robertson in Kafiristan.

111. Hackin, J. The Mythology of the Kafirs. [In] Asiatic Mythology, a Detailed Description and Explanation of the Mytho-
logies of all the Great Nations of Asia by [various authors].

Hackin’s article is found on pp. 57–60. Considering the length of
time the author spent in Afghanistan and the year in which he
composed the article, his brief effort is surprisingly full of errors.
In the main he is accurate only when quoting Elphinstone or
Robertson. The chief value of the article lies in Hackin’s mention
of General Court’s unpublished MS on the Kafirs, and in the
illustrations, especially the colour-plate p. 58 (original lost?).

112. HADDON, A. C. The Races of Man and Their Distribution.

P. 86: “The Indo-Afghanus group is dolichocephalic, leptorhine,
and of medium to tall stature; their probable area of characteri-
sation was between the Hindu Kush and the Sulaiman mountains,
whence they spread into North India and possibly eastwards
also. The chief members of this group are the Afghan Balti,
Kashmiri, Kafir, Dardi, Rajput, Panjabi, Sikh, etc.”

P. 104: “The population of the Pamirs is mainly the Pamiri.
The Pathan or Kafir has a distinct Indo-Afghan strain and the
Chitr.ali have a closer relationship with an Indo-Afghan people
(though a rather specialized one) than the other Pamir tribes.
The closely-allied Dardi differ from the Kafir to a greater degree
than do the Chitrali; they are very different from the Kirghiz.”

113. HAMILTON, ANGUS. Afghanistan. London, 1906. 562 p. maps,
illus.

The Siah-posh Kafirs are classed as part of the ‘Galcha branch’
of the Aryans. Brief references to Kafiristan are made in con-
nection with the problem of demarcating India’s frontier with
Afghanistan. Mention is made of Abdur Rahman’s invasion of
Kafiristan: “…a brief campaign which, after forty days of
actual warfare, terminated in the spring of 1896”. Appendix IV
gives the official correspondence relating to the Durand Line
which determined the fate of Kafiristan.

114. HAMILTON, Dr. LILLIAS. The Ameer and Kafiristan. The
In this letter to the Editor, Dr. Hamilton, who spent some time in Kabul as a doctor to the court of Abdur Rahman, gives an account of the Amir’s dealings with the Kafirs as described by the Amir. Abdur Rahman thus appears in a benevolent light quite foreign to other accounts of the period. Reference is made to Timur’s rock inscription in western Kafiristan. An account of the invasion of Kafiristan is provided, together with lengthy quotes from the Amir setting forth his reasons, strategy and results. Dr. Hamilton took with her to England the Amir’s autobiographical MSS which were translated and published in 1900. (See no. 21).


The author meets “four inquirers from Kafiristan” in Peshawar and reports that they “show every desire to hear the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.” This is followed by a description of Kafiristan and its inhabitants drawn almost entirely from Raverty’s Notes on Kafiristan (see no. 216). When these Kafirs left Peshawar they took with them “two converted Afghans . . . to preach the Gospel in that part of Central Asia.”


“To the Editor of the Times:
Sir, When living in Peshawar it was my good fortune to meet on several occasions with natives from Kafiristan, some of whom were in the ‘Guides’, the best native corps in India. They were not Christians and they stated that their own mountain tribes, to which they were about to return, knew nothing of Christianity, though they expressed themselves as willing to be instructed in its truths. They told me that they were idolaters, one of their three gods being named Oddrakpanow, of whom they have stone images. Capt. Edward Palliser is, however, right in intimating that, in the event of war, they would gladly join England against the Mahomedan Afghans with whom they are at perpetual enmity. It will be a happy incident of the contretemps at the mouth of the Khyber Pass if it should lead to Afghanistan
being thrown open to Europeans; for then there would be some hope, not only of Christianizing and civilizing the brave, though half-savage, Afghans, but also those interesting tribes living in countries on its frontier, like Kafiristan, from which we are now shut out. Further information respecting these Siahposh or black-clad Kafirs may be found in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, no. 4, 1859 in the 'Notes on Kafiristan' by Capt. H. G. Raverty; and the 'Church Missionary Intelligence' for 1865. An engraving taken from a photograph of two Kafirs in their native costume, and who were with me in Peshawar, will be found in the Church Missionary Gleaner for 1865. The photograph I had taken on the spot. Faithfully Yours, William Handcock.”

The author briefly describes several societies which have been destroyed or greatly altered within the last 100 years. He refers to Kafiristan, giving a brief account of Robertson’s work there. A photograph of a Kalash Kafir wooden effigy accompanies the article.


A short general description of the Kafirs and Kafiristan, based largely on Raverty (no. 216) and Handcock (no. 115), is found on pp. 84–85 and 102–103.


A short geographical description of the mountains and valleys bordering Kafiristan, together with similar information regarding neighbouring areas.
A short geographical description of the area north of the point where the Kabul and Kunar rivers meet. The villages visited and the crops seen are listed. As for the villages: “Jedes Dorf hat etwa 120 terrassenförmig übereinander gebaute Häuser, die durch enge, dunkle Gänge miteinander in Verbindung stehen, und auf eingekerbten Baumstümpfen erklommen werden. Als Bau- material der schmucklosen, nur an den hölzernen Türen mit Ornamenten verzierten Wohnungen dienen roh zugehanene kristalline Bruchsteine, die, ohne Mörtel zwischen rohes Holzfachwerk geschichtet, mit ihrer dunkelgrauen Farbe den viereckigen Bauten ein düsteres Aussehen verleihen... Ich schätze die Bevölkerungszahl der Där-i-Nur-Landschaft auf 10,000 Seelen.”

“On May 28th, 1935, the expedition left Kabul in a heavily packed lorry with an equipment of about 45 hundredweights. It went from there to Jalalabad and from there by the Kunar river upwards to the village of Chigan-Serai. There it unloaded and on June 2nd the expedition went with about 40 laden mules and an escort of four expedition servants, 16 Afghan soldiers, 3 officers, their servants, and 15 mule keepers, to the Peetsch valley upwards towards central Nuristan. There ended the horse caravan. Starting from Chigan-Serai the expedition was continued for 2½ months in an almost uninterrupted march across Nuristan...” Following this is a brief, general account of the expedition’s experiences. There are four photographs with the article.
A thorough geographical and historical treatment of the subject forms a background for the author’s theme: that the Kasirs are “the modern representatives of that very ancient western race the Nysaeans — so ancient that the historians of Alexander refer to their origin as mythical.” As for Kasir wine: “I have had the opportunity of tasting the best brand of this classical liquor and I agree with Baber — it is not of a high class. It reminded me of a badly corked Chablis, which it much resembled in appearance.” There are frequent references to Mohgul and classical authors.


The main references to Kafiristan — and they are numerous — are to be found in Chapter 10, The Durand Boundary; Chapter 11, Kunar Valley; and Chapter 12, Kafiristan. The author, an officer of the Indian Survey Department, spent many years on the North West Frontier of India.


This is a history of the exploration of Afghanistan from ancient times down to the end of the 19th century. The subject of Kafiristan is prominent throughout much of the text and a good deal of information is provided. The author modestly neglects to mention that he entered Kafiristan when a member of the Afghan Boundary Commission.


Chapter III, The Geography of the Frontier: Afghanistan, includes several references to the geography of the Hindu Kush and digresses to discuss possible connections between the present inhabitants of Kafiristan and Alexander’s invasion as well as “yet more ancient people of Pelasgic origin who, as Nyceans, claimed Alexander’s protection during his advance through Swat.”
In March, 1398 A.D. Timur’s army, 90,000 strong, crossed the Amu-Darya (Oxus) and camped at Andarab at the foot of the Hindu Kush. “Here Timur left the army . . . and went with a task force through the Khawak Pass into the mountains of Kafiristan to seek out infidels and robbers in their strongholds. The heights were so forbidding that even the great Alexander had failed, according to tradition, to conquer the wild tribes that inhabited them. These Kafir tribes, fire-worshippers, had acquired legendary features – they were said to be huge as giants, speaking an unknown language, clad in black, with hearts as dark as their clothes; others were said to go quite naked.” These opening remarks on the subject are followed by a short account of Timur’s foray into western Kafiristan.

The section on ‘Nouristan’, a concise geographical survey, is found on pp. 107–110. A map of the area is given on p. 109.

Towards Dardistan on the edge of the Pathan country are found what is left, after constant harrying by the Afghans, of the Red and the Black Kafirs. These tribes were, till recently at any rate, headhunters, speaking a very early form of the Sanskrit language, using carved wooden vessels more suggestive of Scandinavia than of India, and tripods described as Grecian in type. One account describes them as burying their dead erect in the snow, as extracting the heart and liver, burning them on an altar and sometimes eating the ashes out of piety. They erect carved wooden memorial figures of their dead and used to be given much to dancing with great activity, though now most of them have been more or less compulsorily converted to Islam. In view of their language and their physical type with lightish hair and eyes, tall stature and long heads, it seems not unlikely
that the Red Kafirs at any rate may represent something like the original stock of the Indo-European invaders of India in the second millennium B.C." On p. 208 there are pen and ink sketches of three Kafir effigies made by Gen. R. G. Woodthorpe in the Bashgul Valley in 1885. See index for other references.


A thorough and scholarly review of Col. Davidson’s book (see no. 74), together with a discussion of the Kafirs and Kafir languages which draws on data provided by Robertson, Bellew, Leitner, Holdich, etc.


The writer argues that the ‘Khaturs’ mentioned by Jahangir cannot be the same as the Kator tribe mentioned by Elliot (See no. 86) and Biddulph (see no. 45). He places the Khaturs or Khattars mentioned by the Moghul Emperor “in the northern part of the present Attock district.”


The material on which this account is based was collected by the author when he accompanied the Elphinston mission to Kabul in 1808. This report comprises a detailed geographic and economic survey of a very large area, some parts of which are still imperfectly known. The main references to Kafiristan are contained in vol. 9, pt. 1, pp. 33–65, particularly the sections on Lughman, pp. 54–55; Koonur, p. 55; and Kafirs, pp. 56–57, where agriculture and animal husbandry is discussed.
A general discussion of slavery in Kabul under the reign of the Amir Sher Ali, with the emphasis on Kafirs and Kafiristan. The author accompanied G. W. Leitner to England toward the end of the 19th century. Footnotes to the article are supplied by the translator (G. W. Leitner?). Sample: "... the nucleus of the Kafirs is more truly ancient Greek than that of modern Hellas, and if the Philhellenes deserved the support of every man of culture in their attempts to free the Greeks from the Turkish yoke, the Kafirs also should not be allowed to perish by an educated world..."

The author remarks that "the Kafirs of the Hindu-kush used to enjoy the reputation of being the classical lost opportunity for anthropological research" and goes on to point out that our attention might best be directed to those neighbouring peoples on the east, culturally related to the Kafirs, who still preserve many of their traditional beliefs and practices. These neighbouring peoples, who speak Dardic languages, are discussed and an outline of the work that has been done among them is given.

The discovery of Bronze Axes in a site in Darel leads the author to discuss similar finds all of which have been made "in the north-western part of the subcontinent". The author concludes that they originated in the west, rather than in India. "In modern Karakorum the axe is still a highly venerated instrument used in religious ceremonies by the pagan Kalash Kafirs." He suggests that the 'nearest relatives' of the Dards "are not other Indian peoples, but the mountainfolk of Western Asia".

The term 'Dardistan' is used to describe the meeting place of the Hindu Kush, Himalaya and Karakoram which is inhabited by Indo-Aryan peoples. The Kafirs or Nuristanis are 'neighbours of the Dardic population' speaking Dardic languages. There is a useful general survey of work published on this region.


A British missionary from Rawalpindi, dressed as a Pathan, crosses the border into Afghanistan and proceeds to Jalalabad with the intention of entering Kafiristan, but is turned back and escorted from Jalalabad to the frontier of India. Little about the Kafirs, much about preaching the Gospel.


Six photographs, four of them from previously unvisited valleys of western Nuristan, are accompanied by a brief text compiled by 'E.S.' from the photographer's field notes. The village pictured on pp. 250–251 is Malil; the house on p. 253 is in Machwa.


An analysis of Kafir political organization based largely on the literature, but also drawing on unpublished data collected by Morgenstierne, Edelberg and Ferdinand.

Pp. 40–55, *Royaume de Kia-pi-che (Kapica)*, concerns the general area of Kafiristan as described in Sanskrit manuscripts collected by the Chinese pilgrim on his travels.


The Chinese Buddhist pilgrim passed through what is now Afghanistan in the 7th century A.D. From Bamiyan he crossed the Hindu Kush and journeyed to Kapica (Kafiristan). A description of Kapica and its Buddhist inhabitants is given on pp. 71–75 and 391–393. Laghman is described on pp. 75–76 and 412–413. Nangrahar is described on pp. 76–79 and 422–423.


A short piece based on letters received from the major in the field. From Jalalabad he crossed the Kabul river and entered the southern fringes of Kafiristan. See no. 252 and 253.


“Major Tanner, of the Indian Survey, who accompanied Sir Samuel Browne’s column in the recent Afghanistan campaign, has undertaken, since the conclusion of the war, an exploratory journey of adventurous and perilous character into the mountain home of the Sia-posh Kafirs, north of Jellalabad . . .” This short account is apparently based on the note given above as no. 141.


A Russian scientific expedition under the leadership of Col. Matveyeff entered northern Afghanistan in 1878 “with the intention of examining the passes leading into Kafiristan . . . the
authorities made some difficulty about granting permission for the expedition to proceed into Badakshan, on the ground of the late period of the year . . . the party learned that the passes into Kafiristan, which are barely practicable for horses even in summer, were then wholly blocked by snow . . .”


An account of the Royal Geographical Society meeting at which Col. Tanner’s paper on “Kafiristan and the Siah-Posh Kafirs of the Hindu Kush” was read. This is apparently the same paper listed in this bibliography as no. 253.


A translation of the article which appeared in the Church Missionary Intelligencer, vol. 8, London, 1883, pp. 418–426. McNair’s visit is briefly described in a footnote.


“A frontier correspondent of the Civil and Military Gazette of Calcutta describes the courtship among the remote tribes of Kafiristan as follows: A Kafir, having fixed his affections upon some female, acquaints his parents with his intentions. They apply to the girl’s parents, and if the latter do not consent to the union a fight is inevitable. If the parties agree, the next proceeding is to appoint two expert female negotiators, who obtain access by strategem to the house with the object of broaching the subject to the young lady. They carefully avoid any sudden or abrupt mention of the awful subject of their mission, but launch out in praises of the man who seeks her hand. They speak of his possessions, his courage, and accomplishments. The girl, pretending to be affronted even at these remote hints, grows refractory and runs away, tearing the ringlets of her hair as she retires. The female ambassadors, having got the consent of the parents,
drag her from her concealment and carry her by force to the house of her destined husband, and there leave her. She is compelled to remain here for several days, silent and dejected, refusing food, till at last, if kind entreaties do not prevail, she is made to submit by blows to the union. The Kafir who has the reputation of having committed a number of murders of Mahomedans enjoys exceptional privileges. He is respected by all the neighbourhood, and experiences little or no difficulty in procuring a wife. The Kafir woman is doomed to a life of toil and drudgery, and the husband can discard her whenever he feels so disposed.'


An appeal addressed "to various learned and philanthropic societies and to representative scholars for signature or other expression of sympathy or support with reference to the destruction of Aryan and pre-Aryan landmarks in the countries of the Hindu Kush. 'The Brethren of Europeans' supposed by some to be descendants of a Macedonian colony planted by Alexander the Great are threatened . . . with enslavement or extermination unless the voice of educated Europe is lifted against it. Even in the more settled parts of Dardistan has science already suffered by the wars and annexations that have lately taken place in that region." See no. 153.


A lengthy review and summary of *The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush*, with reference to other explorers of the general area. Speculation regarding the origin of the Kafirs and their religion and mention of the Amir's invasion are also given. (See no. 224).


This bound typescript, presented to the Royal Geographical Society Library, London, by Capt. D. R. Crone, consists of 88 foolscap pages plus photo copies of 5 maps.

Part 2: Report on Kafiristan by W. W. McNair (1883).

Part 3: Route No. 25: Jalalabad to Farajghan.
Route No. 26: Jalalabad to Kashkar via Kunar.
Route No. 27: Jalalabad to Kashkar.
Route No. 28: Jalalabad to Yarkand through Chitral, Badakhshan & Pamer Khurd.

2. Sketch map of Kafiristan by Robertson (8 miles to the inch), 1891.
3. Map of north-eastern Afghanistan by Robertson (24 miles to the inch), 1891.
4. Sketch map of the Munjan Valley by Davidson (5 miles to the inch), 1897.
5. Sketch map of Kafiristan by Bruce (8 miles to the inch), 1901.


A review of Martin Voigt's monograph on Kafiristan. Voigt spent 8 weeks in the east and central regions in 1928. According to the reviewer, Voigt concludes that the Kafirs “are not an Indo-Aryan but a European-Aryan fragment of the Indo-Germanic race which was probably driven to its present inaccessible home by the Huns early in the Christian era.”


An extract from a letter written by Maj. Tanner to Gen. Walker, Surveyor-General of India, regarding the inhabitants of southern Kafiristan and their language. See also no. 252.

An article, 1¼ columns in length, inspired by reports that "there has been some serious fighting in Kafiristan, where the Ameer's troops have captured 25 forts at an admitted loss of 1,500 killed and wounded..." The article is devoted largely to a general account of Kafir society with quotes from Robertson and Wood. There are references to "the absurd and baseless theory of their having a Greek origin, or any connexion whatever with Alexander The Great". Kafir religion is described as "a mass of idolatrous superstition". The conclusion is that "the Kafirs have no claim on our sympathy unless we conceive it to be our mission to support a community of robbers and women of easy virtue simply because they have paler faces than their neighbours, and have called themselves the brothers of the Feringhee".


The substance of this is given in The Times, Saturday, December 21st, 1895. See no. 147. The author was probably Dr. G. W. Leitner.


Khanikof attempts to meet Rawlinson's criticisms and defends the German MS. Strangford argues that Rawlinson is correct and uses known data about Kafiristan to make some of his points. For further details regarding this curious debate, see no. 29, 219, 220, 267, 268 and 278.

Included in this collection of short stories is *The Man Who Would Be King* — a piece of fiction that gets underway after a dozen pages of preliminaries with the following: “They call it Kafiristan. By my reckoning its the top right-hand corner of Afghanistan, not more than three hundred miles from Peshawar. They have two-and-thirty heathen idols there, and we’ll be the thirty-third and fourth. It’s a mountainous country, and the women of those parts are very beautiful.” The inspiration for this interesting story was apparently provided by the rumoured exploits of Col. Alexander Gardner. See no. 78, 89, 99, 110 and 278.


“...Andere Indo-Germanen scheinen vom Himalaia nach Norden und Nord-westen gewandert zu sein, und dort als Gothen und unter anderen Namen gehauset zu haben. Von ihnen stammen vielleicht die sogenannten Siahpushi (Schwarzröcke) und *Kafir* (Ungläubige) in Hindu Kosh-Gebirge ab, die Europäische Gestalt und Gesichtszüge haben, von deren Sprache wir aber leider nichts wissen.” In the mid-19th century Klaproth was accused of having swindled both the British and Russian governments by selling them false MSS relating to the geography of Central Asia. See no. 29, 154, 219, 220, 267, 268 and 278.


A general discussion of the part played by the art of woodcarving in the art, architecture and religion of the Kafirs. Mention is made of both wooden and stone statues having existed in Kafiristan prior to 1895, though no trace of any stone figures has yet been found. The article is accompanied by six illustrations showing examples of Kafir carvings.


“...L’Empereur Akbar sa trouvait donc en 990 de l’Hégire à Djalalabad. Notre manuscrit, qui en seize recits, nous decrit les
batailles entre les Musulmans et les Infidèles de la vallée de Laghman, fixe la date des événements à l’année 992. Hakim Mirza, qui s’adonnait à l’alcool, mourut des suites de ces excès, deux ans plus tard, soit en 994. Notre manuscrit lui attribue l’initiative des expéditions militaires dans les vallées de Laghman. Le commandant en chef de l’expédition s’appelait Darwich Mohammad Khan Ghazi et Qaddi Mohammad Salem, l’auteur du manuscrit, faisait lui même partie de l’expédition, comme aumônier de l’armée et fut ainsi un témoin bien placé pour observer les événements.” This information is preceded by background material of an historical nature and followed by a sketch of the major events recounted in the MS. Three illustrations of Kafir wood carvings accompany the text.


Parts one and two are included in vol. 8 of Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab Biologiske Skrifter. Part three is included in vol. 9. Part four is included in vol. 10 and part 5 in vol. 13. Each volume contains a description and illustrations of plants collected in Nuristan by Lennart Edelberg.


This analysis is based exclusively on Col. John Davidson’s work (see no. 74) and is prefaced by a discussion of Grierson’s publications on Kafir languages. Sten Konow concludes “that Dr. Grierson was right in separating Bashgali, and consequently the whole group, from Indo-Aryan, but I think that Bashgali is
essentially an Iranian dialect and cannot, consequently, be derived from a third branch of the Aryan family intermediate between Indian and Iranian.” See also no. 107.


In 1891 the author travelled extensively in the western Himalayas. His narrative is salted with political observations. From Gilgit to Rawal Pindi he travels with George Scott Robertson and several Kafirs.


P. 164: “A tributary of the Kafir Nihan rises near Faizabad and for a time the road follows its course, to twist and turn later in steep zigzags up the steep mountain sides to Kafir Nihan. This town lies in a wide and lofty mountain basin on the river of the same name... Kafir Nihan forms as it were an island in the Muslim sea of Bukhara, for it is – as indeed its name implies – inhabited by Unbelievers who immigrated some hundred years ago from Kafiristan in Afghan territory. Legend tells that the Kafirs are the last remnants of a once extensive Christian community in Central Asia. Thanks to their adaptability and un-fanatical behaviour they were for the most part tolerated by the Muslims except for an occasional massacre. Unlike the Jews they were permitted to purchase land and to enjoy the same rights as Muslims. Kafir Nihan is a clean, well-cared-for place with extensive vineyards.” There is a picture of an ‘Afghan Kafir’, see plate 57.


In Jalalabad the author met ‘the great Mufti’ who had ‘lately travelled into the country of the Siah Posh, or... Kafirs’.” From
him some information regarding religion, material culture, marriage, confinement of women, funeral ceremonies, modes of livelihood, social control and warfare were obtained and are given here.


For the same information given in item 163, see pp. 311–317.


The German professor raises ten questions regarding various parts of Afghanistan, as worthy of research. One concerns Pliny’s *Copissa* and its relation to Kapisa; another asks “Is the dialect of the Kohistanis of Kabulistan a peculiar one, or related to the Lawghans, or that of the inhabitants of Kaferstan?”


The first parts are devoted to a technical discussion of translating numismatic inscriptions; the later parts with relating what is known of the history of early dynasties to what was known (in the first third of the 19th century) of the geography of those areas, particularly what is now eastern Afghanistan. The area occupied by Kafiristan is discussed both geographically and historically. The whole is a painstaking account of the classical geography and history of the region between Kabul and Peshawar, supplemented by an examination of the journals of the Chinese Buddhist pilgrims.

168. Leech, Maj. R. (trans.) Account of the Panjkor Valley, And of Lower and Upper Kashkar, by Rajah Khan of Cabool. The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, vol. 14, pt. 2, new series. Calcutta, 1845. pp. 812–817. In a footnote Leech, commenting on Rajah Khan, the author of this piece, writes: “This man, also under my instructions, visited most of the Turkistan states and gained a quantity of information regarding the Siahposh Cafers. His notes are in my possession.” Rajah Khan writes: “Ten thousand Kamoz Cafers, who are situated to the north of Katar and Kampar, pay tribute to Shah Kator; they are very obedient subjects, and, unlike other Kohistanees, they do not rob.”

169. Leech, Maj. R. (ed. and trans.) Account of Parts of the Cabool and Peshawar Territories, and of Samah, Sudoom, Bunher, Swah, Deer and Bajour, Visited by Mulla Aleem-ulla of Peshawar in the latter part of the Year 1837. The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Vol. 14, pt. 2, new series, Calcutta, 1845. pp. 660–701. This is a catalogue of tribes, routes, villages, with number of houses, amount of cultivation, strength of fighting force, number of cattle, etc. The remark is made that “Bajour of old depends on Peshawar, from which it is north-west. It has to the north the Cafers (Siyah-Posh) with whom constant war is waged”.

items of material culture from Kafiristan. "... look at the figure armed with the bow and arrow, and you will have an idea of the power of resistance possessed by these mountaineers in defending themselves for centuries against their Muhammadian foes, who surround them on every side. Yet this artistic oil lamp, carved in a hard black stone, is their manufacture; and the intervention of this country may yet preserve from destruction a probably Iranian, if not Aryan, people whom some have supposed to be descended from the Macedonian army of Alexander the Great..." As for Dardistan, "In the widest sense the country of Dardistan embraces the whole of the unknown territories between Kabul, Badakhshan and Kashmir, including Kafiristan; in its narrowest sense, it would only include Chilas on the east and Ghilgit on the west of the Indus, Yasin and Chitral, and would exclude, at any rate linguistically, the people of Nagyr and, ethnologically also the confronting people of Hunza, who both speak the Khajuna, a language like no other we have any knowledge of..."


See pp. 133–146 for "Dialogues, &c, in Khajuna, compared with Kalasha (the language of a menial tribe of Kafirs subject to Chitral) and with Arnyia (the language of Chitral)."

172. Leitner, Dr. G.W. Dardistan in 1895; I, The Future of Chitral and Neighbouring Countries; II, New Dangers and Fresh Wrongs; III, Supplement with a map of the Pamirs. Woking, 1895.

Part I and II originally appeared as articles in vol. 10, second series, of The Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review and Oriental and Colonial Record, Woking, 1895, pp. 28–48 and 288–311. Leitner was a lawyer who dabbled in little-known languages and cultures, not to mention international politics, and wrote about everything at great length. Sample: "Let England and the educated world ring with the news that 'the brethren of the European',
the remnants of a prehistoric culture – and that, too, the prototype of our own – the tribes that for a thousand years have so bravely resisted Muhammadan slave-raids, our dear and loyal friends since the days of Sale at Jelalabad till the recent ‘demarcation’ of the Afghan boundary under the Durand Treaty alienated its Bashgali Section, have been handed over by Christian, missionary, and ‘righteous’ England to inevitable extermination by the surrounding Afghans or Pathans . . .” Much of what Leitner has to say about Kafiristan is an oblique attack on Dr. George Scott Robertson, whom he refers to as “this ambitious medico”. Leitner’s general conclusion is that all of Britain’s colonial difficulties would be solved if only British officials at all levels were well-versed in oriental languages.


The political and moral consequences of the Durand Agreement are considered in some detail. The author is of the opinion that “Mr. (now Sir) H. M. Durand should be called upon to explain how he came to make over an innocent race, that had ever trusted to our protection, to their hereditary enemies without stipulating for mercy being shown to them and without dire notice being given to them to seek a refuge in our territory”. The article concludes with excerpts from the Russian press on the issue and with ‘questions asked in Parliament’ regarding the invasion of Kafiristan.


Inspired by the publication of Robertson’s book (no. 223), this letter is a sarcastic attack on explorers who do not know the languages of the regions they explore. He writes: “A sympathetic demeanour and a good knowledge of the language are the sine qua non condition for gaining the confidence of ‘the natives’ and, with it, trustworthy information. Nor has a book on Kafiristan, written under any other conditions, any more value than would
be, e. g., possessed by a work on England and English Institutions written by a Chinese Mandarin only acquainted with pigeon-English." Leitner explicitly states that Robertson's exploration in Kafiristan was directly responsible for Abdur Rahman's decision to invade the area.


A letter from the lawyer-linguist inspired by Robertson's article (no. 225). Leitner summarizes writings on Kafiristan by various authors and links each contribution with his own, usually prior, discoveries.


An important article by a member of the German Hindu Kush Expedition of 1935. As the title indicates, this paper describes Kafir houses, music instruments, agricultural implements, tombs, effigies, etc. It is a detailed study containing useful footnote references and is accompanied by 26 illustrations and a map.


A member of the Alai-Pamir Expedition of 1928 and the German Hindu Kush Expedition of 1935 publishes here the results of intensive research into traditional systems of time-reckoning. In addition to other contributions, this volume contains an essay on Zeitrechnung bei den Kafiren (pp. 20–21); a description and analysis of the Kati calender (pp. 81–107); description and analysis of the Paruni calender (pp. 116–129); and a description and analysis of a south Nuristan agricultural calender (pp. 131–145).
"Im Hindukushgebiet war eine solche Anlage als Tempel des Weltschöpfergotts Imra bei den Kasiren in Funktion, bis das Land gegen Ende des vorigen Jahrhunderts erobert und islamisiert wurde. Aus Berichten eines englischen Reisenden, der es kurz vor der Zerstörung durch die Glaubenskämpfer gesehen hat, ist es möglich, das stattliche Bauwerk mit seinem reichen Schmuck an Holzschnitzereien zu rekonstruieren. Abbildung 3 zeigt die östlich orientierte Vorhalle des Tempels mit einer reich mit Figuren verzierten Ostwand des Heiligtums zur Linken. Der Schattenwurf der Säulen und auch eines Gnomons auf die Figuren diente wahrscheinlich der allgemeinen Auskunft für jedermann. Abbildung 4 bringt einen Längsschnitt durch das Gebäude mit der Vorhalle zur Rechten. Der Lichteinfall dürfte eine Göttersfigur im Innern getroffen und die nur den Priestern bekannte Feinorientierung vermittelt haben." The two pen and ink drawings mentioned in the text are architectural reconstructions made by Albert Schäfer (see no. 83).


A work based primarily on Lennart Edelberg’s article Fragments d’un stupa dans la vallée du Kunar en Afghanistan (no. 81). On evidence published by Edelberg and others the author concludes that ‘‘the fragments incorporated in the tombs near Chigha Sarai do not belong to a Buddhist stupa of the 1st–5th centuries. Consequently they cannot be used as an argument in favour of the idea of Buddhist influence in Kafiristan. Their decoration indicates the former existence at Chigha Sarai of a temple belonging to the middle phase of the medieval architecture of north-west India of about the 8th or 9th century’’. Drawings and photographs accompany the article.

An interesting history of Jesuit missions in India which contains a report that in the 1670’s “the Jesuits of Agra obtained permission to undertake a mission to Kafiristan and the task was entrusted to Father Gregorio Roiz, then at Agra. Of his experiences we have no information beyond what we can gather from a meagre paragraph quoted in the annual report sent to Rome in 1678. In this he tells us that the people are Gentios: that they worship a stone called Mahdeu: that they bury their dead: that they are for the greater part white and well built and that each settlement of Kafirs is independent of the rest. He then concludes: ‘owing to their great dullness and greater barbarity I did not find dispositions in them for receiving the faith, nor did I discover any indications that, as the Armenians had told us, they had been Christians at one time. All this obliged me to return to this college at Agra.’”


Contains material on Kafiristan including ‘the Greek legend’, the invasion by Abdur Rahman, and the conversion of the population to Islam.


The author states that Albert Herrlich (a member of the German Hindu Kush Expedition of 1935) informed her that “these fair-haired men [the inhabitants of Nuristan] still [in 1935] worshipped the god Imra and his spouse Nurmelli . . .” The rest of the remarks on Kafiristan have been largely taken from Robertson except such inaccuracies as “In Kafiristan, too, cocks are sacred animals . . .”


What starts out as a geographical discussion of the southern watershed of the Hindu Kush becomes a history of the explor-
ation of eastern Afghanistan with considerable emphasis on Kafiristan and the passes of the Hindu Kush. Frequent references to Mogul and classical historians and geographers.


“Our ignorance of Kafiristan is complete. We still know nothing whatever of that interesting country and its exploration is very desirable. Officers have been on its frontiers – Col. Tanner on the side of the Kunar River and my old friend Sir William Lockhart on the north and the late Mr. McNair from the side of Chitral, but the country itself from the passes of the Hindu Kush to the banks of the Kunar is unknown. Its exploration is one of the great geographical achievements that remain to be done in Asia. The results would be important both from a political, a geographical and possibly a commercial point of view, and there could be few nobler ambitions for a young aspirant than to be the first explorer of Kafiristan.”


From the point of view of Kafir studies, this is valuable chiefly for the comparative data it affords. In the Baltistan-Gilgit area the author notes that headmen are called ‘Justero’ and “throughout the country grapes are not picked by the people before they are ripe. A day is fixed for the vintage, when they are cut by the men and carried home by the women with great rejoicing; most honestly is this custom carried out, they do not object to a stranger eating, but will not touch them themselves, they also impose a fine of a kid on anyone found trespassing. The old Justero of Minnor’s little son was brought to me for treatment, and on asking him if he had eaten anything that morning . . . he acknowledged he had eaten some grapes! A roar of laughter was raised. . . the old man would have to pay a kid . . .”

The author mentions that Aman-i-Mulk of Chitral was, at the time of his visit in 1875, afraid of the Duranis who “had been
trying to take some small forts from him . . . These forts are situated on the south slopes of the Hindu-Kush, on the confines of the Bashgali or Kafir country, which shows that Kabul is trying to extend her rule beyond Badakhshan into Chitral by the Dorah Pass from Zebak." In Baltistan and Gilgit the author states that the people make wine: "of course this to an orthodox Sunni is a great sin, so they are called Rafizi, Moghli, and other terms equivalent to Kafir". Marsh describes local wine-making in some detail and his information about the Justero and the manner in which fines are levied is very similar to that in Kafiristan.


The author's real name is James Lewis. He was an Englishman who assumed the name Masson, together with an imagined American citizenship, to disguise the fact that he was a deserter from the Bengal Artillery. From 1826–41 he travelled widely in south and central Asia. His observations of political, economic, social and scientific matters were subsequently proved extremely accurate. In vol. I he devotes nearly all of Chapter 11 to a discussion of the Kafirs and Kafiristan, his information being gained from Kafirs and Muslims encountered outside the area. He examines various historical accounts relating to the Kafirs from Mogul and classical times. For more about 'Charles Masson' see no. 103, 124 and 230.


In preparing this work the author has "translated and annotated all the earliest and most authentic records which have been
preserved of the Macedonian invasion of India under Alexander The Great". On pp. xii–xiii he lists some 30 additional works which he 'found most useful'. There are several references to Kafiristan.


See Appendix 15, p. 178 for the following curious entry: "Kafiristan and Kashmir

1. Societas Missionariorum S. Joseph de Mill Hill... 15 priests.
2. Sœurs de Jesus-Marie... 13 sisters.
3. Institut of Our Lady's Presentation (Cork)... 16 sisters.
4. Institute des Francescaines Missionaires de Marie... 17 sisters.

Total... 61

The Simla area reports 2,461 indigenous Catholics. There are seven stations, thirteen out-stations, thirteen churches and chapels. The Kafiristan and Kashmir area reports 5,000 indigenous Christians. There are 42 stations and out-stations, with 17 churches and chapels ..."


A lengthy introduction by Lord Aberdare summarizes what he calls the 'historical geography' of Kafiristan. This is followed by McNair's paper on his journey to the eastern borders of Kafiristan. According to Sir Henry Yule, McNair was the first Englishman ever to visit the Swat Valley. The greater part of McNair's account is concerned with his journey to Chitral. The narrative then breaks off and, without giving any information regarding his movements in Kafiristan, he discusses the region in general terms.


A discussion of the Durand agreement and the confusion caused by faulty geography is followed by a translation of the Fateh
Nama-i-Kafiristan (see no. 18). If accurate, this is an important historical document. Frequent mention of place names enables one to follow the course of Abdur Rahman’s invasion of Kafiristan. In the Bashgul Valley we learn that the inhabitants of Kamdesh and Kushtus set fire to their homes and fled together, but the “inhabitants were put to the sword, or ruined, and their property and wealth were plundered by the King’s army. Many, both men and women were killed by the guns of the King’s army when flying from there. Those who fled in this way gathered at Munda Gul... Many of the infidels of Kantuzi also came to their assistance, and all those collected there numbered about 6,000... The fight continued for two hours, and during that time the gunners of the King sent volleys into the infidels as if raining fire on them...” There is also mention of the burning of temples and the breaking of stone idols.


In the 19th century officers of the Survey of India frequently employed trained ‘natives’ to explore the regions beyond the frontiers of India. These men travelled in disguise, took great risks and occasionally failed to return. This is the report of one who was successful. “Of the countries bordering on the Mirza’s route, various pieces of information were collected. Kafiristan seems to be in much the same state as at the beginning of the century, the people being still independent, and apparently not diminished in numbers, though their children are much sought after as slaves. The number taken away cannot therefore be very large... After five marches they reached the small village of Zebak, from whence there is a road to Chitral. This route is said to be dangerous on account of the inroads of Siyaposh Kafirs...”


“... from Dir to Chitral the road is infested by Kafirs, and it was consequently necessary to make some other arrangements,
in order to have a chance of a safe transit across this dangerous tract. Traders are in the habit of halting at Dir or Chitral until a large number collect, in order that they may all start together: sometimes as many as 200 start at the same time, but, in spite of this and other precautions, the travellers are frequently attacked by the Kafirs, and many are killed. Those of the travellers who fall are buried by the side of the road, mounds surmounted by a flag marking their graves. These are called the tombs of the martyrs. The sappers saw hundreds of these, anything but reassuring, memorials on the way between Dir and Chitral."


An introduction to the languages of Afghanistan is followed by technical data on Afghan Persian, Pashto, Shughni, Ormuri and Parachi. This is followed by an introduction to Kafiri and technical descriptions of Kati, Waigeli, Ashkun and Prasun. Twenty pages are subsequently devoted to a discussion of "The linguistic Position of Kafiri". Khowar and Pashai are also described and discussed.


This article consists largely of extracts from the MS written by Mohammed Abdullah in Hindi and translated into English by Morgenstierne. The sections relating to the political organization of the Katir are particularly useful when compared with Robertson's data on the Kam (no. 223). See also no. 20, 195 and 291.


An informal but detailed account of the noted linguist's meeting with Mohammed Abdullah in Chitral, together with a description of the unique MS on the Kafirs and Kafiristan written by him
round the turn of the century. Much data, derived from this MS, on the social and political organization of the Kafirs is given. Similar information is available in no. 194.


The author discusses Kafir genealogies collected by him from informants in Kabul and Chitral between 1924 and 1949, particularly one given him by an old Kafir religious leader in Brumotul (Chitral) in 1929, which goes back 54 generations.


The linguist and authority on Kafir languages provides translations of traditional Kati tales and songs obtained by him in the field in 1929. He refers to Kafir beliefs as “a most interesting type of Aryan religion”, and provides comparative data on various deities as cited by earlier writers.


A study (in Persian) by the director of the Kabul Museum who accompanied members of the ‘Danish Scientific Mission to Afghanistan 1953–54’ to Nuristan. The first chapter, Economic Resources, is divided into the following sections: Standard of Living; Income; Professions; Bee-keeping; Life of Shepherds and Animal Husbandry; Life of Coolies. Chapter II, Agricultural Life, consists of the following sections: Methods and Means of Agriculture; Methods of Irrigation; Mills; Study of Agricultural Life in Select Areas; Gardens and Fruit Gathering; Food. Chapter III, Local Industries and Crafts, contains the following sections: Carpentry; Steel, Iron, Copper and Brass; Tanning and Leathercraft; Ceramics; Stonecutting, Weaving; Dyeing. The fourth and final chapter is on Trade.

See pp. 236–239, Region of Central Asia Between The Russian Frontiers and British India, for a discussion of the ‘travels’ of Georg Ludvig von . . . . . ., together with new information from St. Petersburg (where the MS was found) communicated by de Khanikof, who reports that the maps accompanying the MS are convincing. A section of one map is reproduced between pp. 264–265. See no. 29, 154, 219, 220, 267, 268 and 278.


In the Spring of 1020 A.D. “it was reported to Sultan Mahmud that the people of ‘the pleasant valleys’ of the rivers Nur and Qirat [two rivers, according to this authority, in Kafiristan] worshipped the lion. He therefore resolved to conquer these valleys and introduce Islam among their people . . . the ruler of the Qirat Valley offered submission and embraced Islam with a large number of his followers . . . the people of the Nur valley . . . adopted a defiant attitude.” They were “reduced to obedience . . . the Sultan now appointed teachers to instruct the converts in the rudiments of Islam and returned to Ghazna.”


The text contains brief references to Kafiristan of a geographical nature. Plate No. 55 shows 7 Kafir effigies, some of which can no longer be traced. See no. 84.


In the last chapter, following an uncritical and somewhat breathless summary of the misconceptions then current regarding Kafiristan, the author (without mentioning Russia) warns of the danger of a military force crossing the Hindu Kush to Chitral, there to raise ‘mischief’ by extending its influence over Kabul or Kashmir. He also warns of Abdur Rahman’s plans for the conquest of Kafiristan and concludes: “. . . it would be well therefore in the first place to let it be clearly understood that these com-
munities are to be considered entirely outside the limit of Afghan influence; and in the next to take more active measures to ensure that British influence shall be established instead . . . the states are as a rule ready to welcome English officers, Kafiristan more especially so—a country whose tendencies and sympathy have more in common with the Aryan stock than any single community along our entire north-western border."


In Wakhan the author found ruins and numerous caves which had been previously inhabited. He is of the opinion that “. . . it is quite improbable that they were made by the Vakhans; they are most likely the work of the Siaposh, who now people the province of Kafiristan, south of the Dorah Pass in the Hindu Kush. The Siaposh, 'The Black skin clad'—being the Iranian word from Siah, 'black', and push or posh 'skin', as they are called by the people of the neighbourhood—ruled over Vakhan not so very long ago, as our researches proved, and their numerous relics of fortifications and fortified castles in the province are unmistakable, being built with much greater military ingenuity than those built by the rest of the population." (p. 91).

204. PALLISER, Capt. EDWARD. Kafiristan. The Times, Friday, September 27th. London, 1878.

"To the Editor of the Times:

Sir, When quartered with my regiment at Peshawur, opposite the Khyber Pass, I remember the inhabitants of Kafiristan being a subject of conversation. They were said to be a white race bordering on Afghanistan; savage Christians, living among grand mountain ranges; their women were beautiful, and the Afghans made frequent raids to carry off the girls for the harems of their chiefs. The Ameers of Kabul had, it was said, frequently tried to conqueror these brave people, who being Christians, are regarded as outcasts; but they still held their valleys, though badly armed, and every now and then sent messages to the
English for help. No doubt some of your readers can enlighten us on this now very interesting subject. It is just possible that Christian soldiers raised in these valleys may yet garrison Kabul and Candahar under English officers. Your obedient Servant, Edward Palliser, late Capt. 7th Hussars." (See no. 116).


An account inspired by the almost simultaneous appearance of Dr. Robertson's The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush and Abdur Rahman's invasion of Kafiristan. Among other things, reference is made to "the official record of the invasion, addressed by order of the Amir, to Muhammedans throughout the world". This may possibly refer to the source cited here as no. 190.


The medical missionary writes (p. 306–7): "It is a reproach, again, because on our North-West Frontier, only separated from Chitral by a range of mountains, is the interesting land known as Kafiristan. There is reason to believe that the inhabitants of this land, known as Kafirs, are the descendants of some of the Greeks whom Alexander of Macedon brought over in his train three hundred years before Christ. Two stories are current among the Kafirs regarding their origin, but both point to their arrival about the third century before Christ. One is that a number of Greeks, expelled from the lowlands by the advance of surrounding and more powerful tribes, took refuge in these mountain fastnesses; and the other is that they are the descendants of wounded soldiers left by Alexander The Great in the neighbouring region of Bajour . . . They welcomed some Christian missionaries who visited their valleys at different times in the last century, and there is every reason to believe that had the Christian Church accepted the task, the whole of that nation would have adopted the Christian religion . . ."

A discussion (with a map) of Alexander’s route up the Kunar or Chitral Valley and his probable course east and south to the Indus. The comments are based largely on Arrian and are inspired by McCrindle’s comment (see no. 187) that the geography of Kafiristan, Chitral and Swat is too little known to enable one to trace Alexander’s movements in these areas.


Included here is a brief reference to Kafiristan in connection with the Jesuit’s meeting a ‘certain hermit’ somewhere between Peshawar and Jalalabad. See no. 65, 180, 211 and 280.


The author describes the southward expansion of Russia into Central Asia, discusses Russian designs on India and examines the strategical considerations with special reference to Afghanistan and the Hindu Kush passes. "The history of past wars," he writes, "indicates... the strategical importance of Kafiristan."


Published 41 years before the first confirmed European penetration (Lockhart, 1885) of Kafiristan, this account, based on Elphinstone, Burnes and the comments of a Mr. Ritter and a Prof. Bopp of Berlin, claims to have been compiled "from the only accounts published", though Vigne, Masson and Mohan Lal had already published their findings when the third edition of Prichard’s *Researches* appeared. There is an interesting map at the beginning of the volume.

Benedict de Goes “departed from Lahor the sixth of January 1603. Everie yeere there is a carrauan of Merchants which pass out of these parts into the Kingdome of Cascar, about five hundred together, for their better defence against Robbers. With these adjoyning himselfe, in a moneths travell hee came to Athec in the same Province of Lahor. After passage of a river and some stay, hee came after two moneths to Passaur: thence travelling to a small Towne, they met with a certaine Heremite, who told them that thirtie dajes thence was the Citie Capherstam, in which no Saracen was permitted entrance, but Ethnikes may enter except in to their Temples. Hee tasted also of their wine, of which the countrie is fertile. They goe to their Temples in blacke.” See also no. 65, 180, 208, and 280.


The author in the course of his discussion refers to the Kambojas who “are said to dwell in the north-western frontier of India, their country is famous for its horses, and we have to look for them near the Hindu Kush; and the Yavanas, who are always [in ancient Sanskrit texts] spoken along with them, must be their neighbours, probably Bactrians . . . Wilson places the country of Kamboja in Afghanistan. He says, . . . there is an apparent trace of this name in the Canmujis of Kafiristan, who may have retreated to the mountains before the advance of the Turk tribes.’ This would give us the northern part of Afghanistan for the locale of Kamboja; and it is borne out by the tradition of some of the Kambojas who now dwell in India . . . nothing is known to Europeans of this remnant of the old race . . .” This is followed by a curious account of the ‘Kambohs’ written by one Babu Sambhuchandra Mukarji and privately communicated to the author.

The reference to Kafiristan is in connection with the "Kambojas or people of the Hindu Kush" and is identical with the information provided by the same author in no. 212.


P. 387: "In the rarity of polygamy and severe punishment of adultery among many hill tribes we can recognize a higher status of family life; testified also by the festivities on the birth of a child. That the position of the wife is not on this account high is clear from the descriptions of the warlike Siahposh. Here distinctions of caste seldom hindered the free choice of partners. Polygamy made its way among these people from Tibet." P. 397: "Situation and natural surroundings have preserved smaller groups of mountain peoples with their primitive characteristics pure and unalloyed. The Galchas are stronger, more courageous, more honest than the Tajiks... On the Kafirs, or Siahposh, and the Dards is bestowed the praise of being people, on the one hand neither fawning nor timid, on the other, more free from the impertinent self-conceit than most other orientals." P. 404: "The patriarchal government of the Galchas and the Siahposh, who only recognise village headmen, passes into despotism where, as in Chitral, it is possible to rely upon an Oriental monarchy... The chiefs of these little states were long the terror of subjects and neighbours by reason of their slave-hunting. Quite lately the number of slaves going yearly from Chitral to Badakshan has been estimated at 500; hardly a single family is said to have gone unbereaved. Moreover the democratic Siahposh and the Dard tribes of Chilas are merciless slave-hunters... On the south slope of the Hindoo Koosh dwell the Siahposh or Kafirs, men of medium height, well built, light in colour, with brown hair and eyes, unlike both Afghans and Cashmerees. Their language is Indian and recent; and perhaps under pressure from Mussulman peoples, forcing their way southward and eastward, they
first came into their present quarters in the ninth or tenth century..."


The author is concerned with the accounts of early Pushtu or Afghan historians. He notes that “Sir William Jones was of the opinion that the Afghans are the Paropamisadæ of the ancients... but the Seah-Posh Kafirs are in all probability the Paropamisadæ of the writers of antiquity..."


Raverty, a tireless translator of obscure historians and restless investigator of all matters pertaining to north-west India and Afghanistan, was particularly interested in Kafiristan. He critically examines Burnes’ account and then supplies his own, based on information gathered from persons who had visited the area. In an effort to obtain reliable information he sent his own observers across the frontier; one of these was absent for two years before submitting his report. Much of the account given here is geographical (place names, routes, etc), but Kafir customs are also recorded; marriage, funerals, slavery, social control, etc.

217. Raverty, Maj. H. G. *Notes on Afghanistan and part of Baluchistan, Geographical, Ethnographical and Historical, Extracted from the Writings of little known Afghan and Tajzík Historians, Geographers and Genealogists; the Histories of the Ghuris, the Turk Sovereigns of the Díhli Kingdom, the Mughal Sovereigns of The House of Timur, and Other Muhammadan Chronicles; and from Personal Observations*. London, 1888. 734 p.

The bulk of the data on Kafiristan – and there is a good deal of it not readily found elsewhere – is given on pp. 129–194. Un-
fortunately Raverty frequently fails to identify his sources. In addition, one is often at a loss to know whether he is quoting from a MS or speaking from his own knowledge. The volume is a major work by a dedicated man.

A lengthy article derived from a variety of sources (most of which are unidentified), ranging far into the history, languages and customs of the Kafirs. In general, Raverty seems to have obtained most of his data from Muslims who had travelled in or on the borders of Kafiristan and from the translation of Urdu and Pushtu MSS, of which he collected a large number during his years in India.

The work from which Veniukof’s abstracts were taken is entitled Travels Through Upper Asia From Kashgar, Tashbalyk, Bolor, Badakshan, Vokhan, Kokan, Turkestan to the Kirghis Steppe and back to Kashmir through Samarcand and Yarkend. Veniukof writes: “The author was a German, an agent of the East India company, despatched in the beginning of this, or at the latter part of the last century [i.e. 18th or 19th century] to purchase horses for the British army . . . the Christian name of this traveller – Georg Ludvig von – appears over the preface, but the surname has been erased . . .” Rawlinson writes: “If this manuscript were genuine, it was one of the most valuable contributions to our knowledge of Central Asia that had ever been given to the world; on the other hand if it were not genuine, it was one of the most successful forgeries that had ever been attempted in the history of literature . . .” Rawlinson “had studied it for weeks and for months, and had gone through the task of tracing step by step the route of the supposed German traveller [and] arrived at a definite opinion, and that opinion was that the ‘Travels’ were nothing more than an elaborate hoax.” See no. 29, 154, 220, 267, 268 and 278.

Further details of the ‘Klaproth imposture’ with references to Gardner and Belor. “With regard to the remarkably correct description of Kaferistan, which is given in the German Baron’s ‘Memoir’, and the citation of actual words from the Kafir language, I can only suppose that the author borrowed from Mollah Nejib’s ‘Memoir’ published in the appendix to Elphinstone’s ‘Cabul’, vol. 2, p. 373; but in that case the Russian MSS must be later by some years than the date which it bears of 1806, as Elphinstone’s first edition was published in 1814.” See no. 219 and further references given there.


P. 35–36: “The Turko-Iranian type is in practically exclusive possession of Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province. Its leading characteristics are the following: The head is broad, the mean indices ranging from 80 in the Baloch of the Western Punjab to 85 in the Hazara of Afghanistan. I put aside as doubtful cases the Hunzas, Nagars, and Kafirs and the Pathans of the north-western Punjab. For the first three the data are scanty, and it is possible that further enquiry might lead to their inclusion in the Indo-Aryan type. In the case of the last the individual indices vary from 69 to 87, and although broad heads preponderate on the whole, there is a sufficient proportion of long heads to warrant the suspicion of some mixture of blood . . . The mean orbito-nasal index, which measures the relative flatness of the face, ranges with the Turko-Iranians from 111 in the Hazara to 118 in the Baloch, Brahui, and Dehwar. The highest individual index (131) occurs among the Pathans of the north-west Punjab, and the lowest (118) among the Kafirs. The type as a whole is conspicuously pro-opic . . .”

The English medical doctor and political agent who spent a year in Kafiristan (1890–91) gives a general account of the Kafirs and Kafiristan including geographical, social, political and religious data. A map accompanies the article.


The book on the subject. Dr. Robertson first visited the Bashgul Valley of eastern Kafiristan in October 1889. He returned to Kafiristan in September 1890 and remained there until October 1891. His book, reports and articles stand as models of pioneer fieldwork.


In this letter to the editor, Robertson, in criticizing a remark made by a reviewer of The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush, states that McNair did not [in 1883] reach any ‘Lutdeh villages’ as reported in his talk to the Geographical Society (see no. 189). According to Walledan Khan, who was McNair’s guide and a friend of Robertson’s, McNair “never crossed the border into true Kafiristan”. Robertson repeats that the Lockhart Mission of 1885–86 was the first occasion on which Europeans entered Kafiristan.


A geographical and cultural account of Kafiristan by one of the few writers on the subject to obtain his material in the field.


An account of life in Kafiristan related in the form of a story or biography of one Lutkam of Kamdesh. A good deal of information
on Kafir customs are woven into the tale. The engravings show items of material culture, including a Kafir effigy.


"We regret to announce the death of Sir George Scott Robertson, KCSI, the Liberal Member for Central Bradford whose name was a household word throughout the British Empire 21 years ago, when he was the hero of the siege of Chitral. Sir George, who was 64 years old, hailed from the Orkneys where he came of well known families on both sides. He was educated at Westminister Hospital Medical School, joining the Indian Medical Service in 1878 . . ."


A summary of the outstanding achievements of the doctor-soldier-explorer-anthropologist.


Vol. II (A–K) *Kafir*, pp. 420–435. A general description of the tribes, religion, political organization, myths, marriage, festivals, sports, etc. of the Kafirs. The compiler relied mainly on Robertson.


Good background material on the noted explorer and author. Ross ‘reveals’ that Masson’s real name was James Lewis and that he was an English deserter from the Bengal Artillery. Curiously, Ross has apparently not read Grey and Garrett (see no. 103) who provided the same information five years earlier.

“The early Chinese writers seem to have had a vague idea about the geographical position of Ki-pin but . . . it appears to have denoted ancient Kapisa country, the Kafiristan of the modern maps . . . Levi and Chavannes identified Ki-pin with Kashmir; the latter suggested that it meant Kashmir from the period of the Han and down to that of northern Wei, and was only in the Tang period identified with the country about the northern affluents of the Kabul River, the present Kafiristan.”


In six brief references the author cites Deutsche Im Hindukusch (no. 232) on points relating to various aspects of kinship and material culture, using these to contrast his own findings among the Mongols.


Vol. I, p. 111: "In every city, and even in many of the smaller towns of Central Asia, there are numbers of Hebrews and Hindoos, the former having been in the country for centuries, the latter coming temporarily from the neighbourhood of Shikarpur for the purposes of trade. There are to be seen at times in the towns people called Liuli, who are apparently the same as our gypsies. The women tell fortunes, cure the sick, and carry on a small traffic. The men trade in horses, and have almost a monopoly of leeches, which they collect from the ponds and streams. Connected with these are two other races apparently much the same—the Jiutchi, who are probably Kafirs from Kafiristan; and the Mozang, who are settled in some small villages."


The book as a whole is a general sketch of British relations (mostly warlike) with the peoples of the North-west frontier of India. Of the Kafirs, he has this to say: "... the Siahposh Kafirs, as they were called, were probably the remnants of a race similar to the Chitrals, Baltis, etc., who lived in a most primitive state, secluded in elevated glens approachable only up narrow rocky defiles, or over snow-clad mountains, and has escaped the attention of Islamic conquerors ... In 1879 ... Col. Tanner, of the Survey of India, made a bold attempt to penetrate into Kafiristan ... He dressed as a well-to-do Pathan, but was unable to speak Pushto ... the disguise was a failure ..."

The section entitled *The Non-Pathan Tribes of Kunar River* actually includes all of Nuristan. The information provided is based on inaccurate geography, dubious linguistics and outmoded orthography.


"The eastern border of Baloristan adjoins the country of Kashgar and Yarkand . . . its northern border adjoins Badakhshan, its western, Kabul and Lumghan (Lughman) and its southern border is the country of Kashmir. Balor, therefore, included the present districts of Kasiristan, Chitral, Yas-in, Gilgit, Hunza-Nagar, etc... There is a common tie between all the districts thus indicated, in that they constitute the habitation of the Dard race. According to Mirza Haidar’s definition, therefore (and he was in a good position to judge, having conquered the country), Balor answered to Dardistan."

238. SHAW, R. B. *On the Ghalchah Languages (Wakhi and Sarikoli)*. Calcutta, 1876. 140 p.

The author discusses the relation between the languages immediately north of the watershed of the Hindu Kush (Ghalchah) and those immediately south (Dardu). He also gives, for comparative purposes, some Kalasha words. This work also appeared in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, vol. 45, pt. 1, Calcutta, 1876, pp. 139–278. See also the J.A.S.B., vol. 46, pt. 1, Calcutta, 1877, pp. 97–126, for an article by the same author on "The Shighni (Ghalchah) Dialect".


These ‘stray Arians’, according to Shaw, "belong to the Dard race". They present "the interesting sight of a people of pure Arian race, isolated in the semi-barbarous stage, and who enjoy the rare distinction of being practically unaffected by the action of any of the great philosophising or methodising religions . . ."
In a footnote the author remarks that "the Siah-posh Kafirs (probably Dards) have also a custom of 'going once a year to the top of a mountain as a religious exercise and putting a stone on a cairn' (Leitner's Dardistan, Vol. I, pt. 3, p. 42)."


Reference is made to the fact that Lockhart's expedition to Kafiristan (1885) did not have the approval of the Amir. The story of the Durand Line is given. "According to the British, the Bashgul Valley formed part of Chitral State and was thus outside Afghan influence. The Amir... maintained that it was a part of Kafiristan, and he not only claimed the valley but the whole of Kafiristan."


"A fancied connexion with Dionysos and the sacred Mount Nysa of Greek legend gave special interest to the town and hill-state called Nysa... The chants and dances of the natives, the ancestors of the Kafirs of the present day, bore sufficient resemblance to the Bacchanalian rites of Hellas to justify the claims made by the Nysaeans, and to encourage [Alexander's] soldiers in their belief that, although far from home, they had at last found a people who shared their religion and might be regarded as kinsmen. Alexander humoured the convenient delusion..." See also no. 122.


"The short-lived Hun empire was broken up by the Western Turks, who in their turn succumbed to the Chinese. For a few years, from 661 to 665 [A.D.] China enjoyed unparalleled prestige. Kafiristan (Kapisa or Ki-pin) was a province of the empire, and
the ambassadors in attendance at the imperial court included envoys from the Suwat Valley and from all the countries extending from Persia to Korea."


This work, based primarily on available literature but including Prof. Friedrichs' diary and unpublished MSS by Buddruss and Jetmar, is divided into four parts: Kafiristan und seine Bewohner; Wirtschaftsformen der Kafiren; Die Formen geistiger Gestaltungen der Kafiren; and, Versuch einer kulturhistorischen Gliederung. There is a useful bibliography.


Pp. 74–75: "The three men [in the photograph] are of one family: two brothers on the right, and the man on the left their uncle. They belong to Kafiristan, a secluded part of Afghanistan. Kafiristan, or 'land of the unbelievers', was ceded to the Amir of Afghanistan after the British expedition of 1895. Its people were then forced to accept the faith of Islam, and the country was renamed by the Mohammedans Nuristan, 'The land of Light'. The man in the centre is the only man from Kafiristan who has ever become a Christian. He is that valuable combination—an educated Indian gentleman and a genuine Christian. He is a doctor as well; and though for thirty years it had been impossible for him to get in touch with his own people, when they required medical aid it was to the hospital at Peshawar, where he was the house surgeon, that they journeyed."


The information about Kafiristan is almost identical with that given by the author in no. 247. With this article is a group picture of 15 Kafirs in Chitral.

In speaking of the Chinese Buddhist pilgrims, the author remarks: “Sung Yun, the next pilgrim whose record has survived, in A.D. 519 also crossed the Pamirs to the Oxus. But his party wisely avoided the dreaded route by the Indus, ‘where irons chains served for bridges and suspended across the void formed a passage’, and reached Swat by the way of Kafiristan.”


“In its autochthonous population Chitral holds an important branch of that ‘Dard’ race which by its antiquity and ethnic and linguistic affinities may well claim special interest. Already in the days of the Achaemenaen Empire its seat in these mountains was known to Ktesias. But the mountain fastnesses of Chitral have again and again offered shelter also to broken remnants of tribes unable to hold their own elsewhere. Thus I was able to take exact anthropological measurements alike of Iranian-speaking hillmen from across the Hindukush and of wild-looking refugees from Kafiristan. They were the last heathen remnant of those Kafir tribes who in their mountain fastnesses had held out for centuries against Afghan conquest and forcible conversion to Islam.”


A general geographical description (with a map) of Afghanistan drawn up to provide background information for the Anglo-Afghan wars. Distances, routes, latitude and longitude, altitude of passes, rivers and their courses, mountain ranges, etc. are given. Several references to Kafiristan.
The article is primarily concerned with Pashto but, relying on Trumpp, the author refers to “insulated tribes in the Hindu Kush [speaking] dialects of distinct Indian rather than Iranian origin . . . the language of the Siah-push Kafirs of Kafiristan . . . is a genuine Indian dialect.”

P. 215: “No Amir had maintained his army entirely at the expense of his subjects, and there was danger that when there was no fighting and looting abroad, there would be civil war at home; by the boundary that was being negotiated [Oct. 1893] only Kafiristan would be left to be subdued by the Amir – and Kafiristan was a miserably poor country, although the conquest of a pagan land would gratify his fanatical subjects. It was therefore just and reasonable that the Amir should be given a generous subsidy, if only to lessen the need for imposing crushing taxation on his subjects, and to enable him to maintain a standing army, on which to base his power.”

In vol. I some information on “the Siah-push or ‘wearer’s of Black Clothes” is given with quotes from Holdich and references to Lockhart. The Kafir “social system is entirely tribal and their form of paganism was much mixed with animism.” In vol. II Sykes gives a short account of the Udny Agreement of 1893 and Holdich’s boundary Commission which penetrated the Derin Valley. Mention is made of the Durand Agreement and Abdur Rahman’s subsequent invasion of Kafiristan. Timur’s expedition into Kafiristan is also described.

The author reached the southern fringe of Kafiristan where he interviewed two ‘Chugunis’ from a ‘valley north-west of Pech’. He states that these people are of “a powerful clan [of] 6,000 fighting men . . . They are half Kafir themselves . . .”


An account of a visit to the ‘Dara Nur’ on the southern edge of Kafiristan. This is prefaced by a summary of various writings on Kafiristan prior to 1880. In addition to linguistic data, the author provides place names, information on vegetation and drainage, manners and customs, etc.


“Both flanks of the Hindu Kush were once full of hill chieftains who claimed descent from the man who left none to succeed him. On the Indian side they once ruled in Chitral, Gilgit, Nagir, Hunza and elsewhere, and we ourselves have seen a Mir of Hunza who was descended from Alexander and bore a British title; it is said that at one time they intermarried only with each other, and some families on both sides of the mountains seem to have acquired the Alexander-descent by marriage; the White Kafirs of Kafiristan became, and still are, Alexander’s Macedonians . . .”


Regarding the satrapy of the Paropamisadae, it “had once extended to the Indus, but in the second century B.C., as doubtless since Alexander’s time, it only reached from the Hindu Kush to the Kunar River, comprising the country which was to be one of the Greek strongholds for a century after the loss of Bactria itself – the valleys of the Panjshir and Ghorband rivers under the Hindu Kush, some part of Kafiristan, and also Laghman, Kabuilistan and the country about the Kabul (Kophen) river . . .”

“Asoka has recorded that he sent missionaries to Greeks on his
frontier, which, from their being coupled with the Kambojas of Kafiristan (Kapisene), means the Paropamisadae . . .”

“Kapisa was the outlet for Kafiristan, the land of the Kambojas, who were possibly a valuable support to the Greeks – indeed it has been thought probable that Kapisa and Kamboja are the same word . . .”

“Kapisa stood in Kapisene to the east of [the united Panjshir-Ghorband rivers]. There is no doubt about this, for Kapisene was Kafiristan or part of it . . . it has been suggested that Kapisa and Kamboja, the name of the people of Kafiristan, must be the same word.”

“Pliny (VI, 92) gives the name Kapisene, with Kapisa as its capital; it included the Panjshir Valley and Kafiristan, or part of it.”


In 1956 the author travelled up the Panjshir, crossed the Chamar Pass, and entered the western borders of Nuristan. After visiting Kulam he descended the Alingar river to Jalalabad. Seven photographs and one map are published with the article.


Chapter 21 of this work is concerned with Kafiristan. General introductory observations are followed by speculation about their origin, remarks on the strategic position of the area, and the route taken by Alexander. The latter part of the chapter is concerned with Greek and Buddhist art. The writer concludes: “If the Kasirs are the descendants of this ancient Buddhist race – and everything points to the conclusion that they are – it is difficult to understand how they can have so completely lost all traces of their Buddhism.”


The book as a whole is concerned with Russian and British interests in Central Asia and thus the focus is on the buffer state
of Afghanistan. The history of Russian and British relations with Afghanistan is sketched and the political geography of Afghanistan is outlined. Kafiristan is described (p. 113) as "one of the few remaining mysteries of Central Asia. It is a small self-contained block of probably under 7,000 square miles, lying west of Chitral and directly south of Badakhshan. The rivers Chitral or Kunar, Kabul and Panshir almost encircle Kafiristan . . . Its peoples are Kafirs, idolaters, what you will, but not Musalmans. They may number in all about 100,000, but are probably diminishing. Their southern tribes are by degrees accepting Islam for the sake of peace, and gradually adopting the habits of their Musalman neighbours. Kafiristan is peculiarly interesting, because its tribes are supposed to be the sole surviving remnants of primitive Aryans, and are in possession of the only small tract in the world forming, in the midst of Muhammadan countries, an enclave which has never either embraced Islam or been successfully invaded by the followers of the Prophet. Most of its inhabitants are believed to retain to this day the same faith and the same customs which they held in 324 B.C. when Alexander The Great's Macedonians skirted their fastnesses on the march to the invasion of India . . . The independence of the country is due to its inaccessibility. It lies like the Pamirs, apart from any great highway, and its natural strength forbids the wasting of resources in an attempt to conquer its sturdy inhabitants."


A thorough summary of European knowledge on the subject in the 1880's. The data is presented under the following headings: Geographische Uebersicht; Ethnographische Stellung der Kafirs; Geschichte; Topographie der Kafir Tribus; Sprache der Kafirs; Quellennachweis; Lebensweise und Gebräuche der Kafirs; Kleidung; Die Waffen; Die Häuser; Stände; Die Heirathsgebräuche; Todtengebräuche; Religion.
After remarks concerning the possible existence "of a Græco-Barbaric vernacular language" in Afghanistan, the author's thoughts "involuntarily wander to the mountains of Kafiristan, that mysterious country, the Opprobrium Geographiæ Anglicæ, with its peculiar inhabitants, the self-declared descendants of Alexander's soldiers, who speak, say all informants, a peculiar and unintelligible language. This race of men, be they what they may, have certainly taken refuge from the overflowing tide of immigration in inaccessible haunts, where to this hour they exist, rarely, if ever, quitting their own limits... It remains yet to be seen whether, safely removed from the highway of nations, the descendants of those who were for a time tinctured with the tastes of the most civilized people of antiquity, may not be found extant, still perhaps retaining traces of the European stock they came of..."

A general geographical survey of Afghanistan. Information on the vegetation, monsoon influence, landscape, population, history and religion of Kafiristan is also given. In regard to the conquest of Kafiristan and the conversion of the population to Islam, Trinkler writes: "1896 unternahm Emir Abd-al-Rahman einen Glaubensfeldzug gegen die Kafiren und soll sie zum Islam bekehrt haben. Nach allen vorliegenden Berichten scheinen diese Bekehrungsversuche aber nur teilweise erfolgreich gewesen zu sein, denn die Truppen des Emirs drangen nicht tief in Kafiristan ein, so dass sich heute zweifellos in den abgeschlossenen Gebirgsgegenden der alte Götterglaube noch erhalten hat."

Through The Heart of Afghanistan.
The author states that in 1923 the routes and passes of the Hindu Kush were still "infested by marauding tribesmen – especially Kafirs – who lie in wait for the weary traveller and rob him..." The general remarks concerning Kafiristan that follow draw upon the writings of Robertson, McNair and Holdich.


"That southern Afghanistan and the frontier regions continued to form part of Asoka's vast realm is clear from his rock-edicts in Shahbazgarhi (Peshawar District) and Mansehra (Hazara District) as also from the evidence of Yuan Chwang who refers to the existence of Asokan Stupas in Kafiristan (Kapisa) and Jalalabad."
Kaniska (one of the Kushan kings of India, circa 78–125 A.D.) led a successful expedition across the Pamirs "...and compelled a feudatory state of China to surrender hostages to him... arrangements were made for their stay in the She-lo-ka monastery in Kapisa (Kafiristan) ..."


In 1859 Rev. Trumpp, who resided in Peshawar, managed to interview three Kafirs from 'Wamasthan' for the purpose of obtaining information on their language. He provides an outline of grammar, together with short sentences, and concludes that "the Kafir tongue [is] a pure Prakrit dialect... separated from its sister dialects since the interruption of the Muhammadan power in the tenth century of our era..." In three appendices Kafir words collected by Burnes and Norris are compared with those collected by Trumpp.


Following a general geographical description (climate, vegetation, etc.) the author speculates on the origin of the Nuristani people...
and discusses their religion, providing information about each of the principal deities. The wooden effigies are discussed and there are notes regarding wine-drinking and sports.


This work (in Russian) includes an account of a ten-day journey from north to south across Nuristan in 1924. The Russian botanists descended the Pech Valley of central Nuristan to its confluence with the Kunar at Chagha Sarai. An English summary of the book is given on pp. 535–610. No English summary is contained in the 1959 re-issue, which appears as vol. I of the collected works of Vavilov, though this new edition does contain a full bibliography of all the author’s works.


"Whether the Belors and the Kaffir Siahpushis of Burnes are one and the same tribe, or distinct offshoots of the Indo-Persian race must remain a matter of conjecture, as no positive conclusion can be arrived at."


The main part of this discussion of Kafiristan and the ‘Belors’ consists of a lengthy extract from A Journey Through Upper Asia, etc. by ‘Georg Ludvig von ……’ – last name unknown. Much doubt has been cast on the genuineness of this work. See no. 29, 154, 219, 220, 267, and 278.

In 1836 the author saw Kafir ‘slaves’ in Kabul and Jalalabad. With the aid of one of these he compiled a vocabulary which he publishes in the appendix. “This almost unknown race say that they are Arabs, and are descended from the same tribe as Mahomed. I should think it much more likely that they are descended from the Greeks of the Bactrian Dynasty.” But he notes that their language “bears but little resemblance to Greek”. Some information is given regarding Kafir-Muslim relations, Kafir modes of livelihood, etc.


Those parts of the Memoire concerned with the Kafiristan area in general are to be found on pp. 293–308 (De Bamiyan au Passage du Sindh).


See p. 72, Kafiristan und Hindu Kusch, for a discussion of the various population estimates given by Russian, German and English writers. Sbornik (1868) gives 100,000; McNair (1883) gives 200,000; Wagner (1891) gives 120,000; Keane (1885) gives 150,000; Tomaschek (1882) gives 130,000. It may be added that Robertson’s estimate was 60,000. After the invasion of Kafiristan Abdur Rahman ordered a census taken and the figure arrived at was 24,000.

Introductory remarks are followed by sections on ‘physical features’ (geographical); ‘social life’; ‘Economic Life’; and ‘Industries’. Some information on language, education and ‘Laws and Customs’ are also given. There are six illustrations showing effigies, wooden bowls, weapons, etc.


This includes several references to the Kafirs. There is speculation that the Kafirs are among the oldest elements of the present inhabitants of Afghanistan. “Many of the Kafirs in the north-east part of the country are believed to have fled long ago to their present home from other parts of Afghanistan in order to escape conversion to Islam, although some modern Afghan scholars assert that they are descended from colonies left by Alexander.” The population estimate, following Robertson, is given as 60,000. The information on language is derived from Morgenstierne. There is a brief summary of general information based on Robertson’s findings.


“The Kaffer Seeah-Poosh are pagans. They are believed . . . by some to be the descendants of the army of Alexander The Great; their women are beautiful, and celebrated in Asia. Their dialect seems to be derived from the Sanscrit . . . They worship their ancestors. Their idols are of wood and stone, to whom sacrifices are offered by the hereditary priesthood: they also have magicians. They consider fish as unclean. Polygamy is practised among them. They are deadly foes to the Mohammedans. They are sociable, cheerful and passionate. Dancing, with musical instruments and drums, forms part of their amusements. Hospitality and vengeance of blood belong to their religious principles. The men wear a shirt, and over it a black goat’s skin, for which they
are called Seeah-poosh, 'black clothed'. The women wear only one shirt, and their heads are covered with silver ornaments. A red tiara distinguishes the maidens. They live on cattle, fruit (walnuts, apples, grapes and apricots) and good wine. Their domiciles are of wood, with subterranean chambers; utensils according to European fashion, as chairs, tables and bedding. They have daggers and firearms. A wealthy Seeah-poosh possesses 800 goats, 300 oxen and 8 slaves. Their number amounts to 90,000."


Vol. II, p. 37: "... upon the heights of those mountains the Kafir Seeahpoosh are wandering. They call themselves 'Seema' and are believed by some to be descendants of the army of Alexander The Great; but Wolff cannot help thinking that they are remnants of the tribes of Israel; for the Jews in Bokhara themselves, who do not call themselves Jews, but children of Israel, and who assert that they belong to the ten tribes, say that those Kafir Seeah-poosh are their brethren whose ancestors had entirely forgotten their law, and had fallen into idolatry - but into the ancient idolatry. They call God 'Imrah' and they worship the figure of a fish, called Dagon. They have in their mountains the ten commandments written upon stone; and their women observe the law of purification. They hate Muhammedans with a perfect hatred; but they love the Jews, and as often as they kill a Muhammedan, they put a feather in their head-dress. Hence the proverb, 'He has got a feather in his cap'. Their colour is perfectly white, like that of Europeans."


In Badakhshan the author meets a 'Siah-Posh or black-vested Kaffir' and reports that "he gave us an animated account of his countrymen, and pressed us to visit them when the passes opened. As an inducement to do so, he promised us plenty of honey and oceans of wine." (p. 186).
"The Mussulmans unwittingly give high praise to [the Kafirs] when they acknowledge, as they readily will, that one Kaffir slave is worth two of any other nation. They add that they resemble Europeans in being possessed of great intelligence, and... I conceive that they offer a fairer field for missionary exertion than is to be found anywhere else on the continent of Asia. They pride themselves on being, to use their own words, brothers of the Firingi... I take the inhabitants of Kaffiristan and the other mountain regions whose solitudes have scarcely yet been invaded, to be of the same race as the Tajik..." See chapters 17–19.


Paper no. 2 is entitled *Journey from Peshawar to Kashgar and Yarkand in East Turkestan or Little Bokhara, through Afghanistan, Balkh, Badakhshan, Wakhan, Pamir and Sarkol, Undertaken by Faiz Buksh in connection with the Mission of T. D. Forsyth, C.B., during 1870.* On p. 461 the following observation is made: "From Zaibak to Sanglich, Dozakh Darah, Shahr, Fort Munjan, Porak, Fort Kalar, the capital of Kafiristan. At the close of July 1870, Mir Mahmud Shah, the chief of Badakhshan, made a most successful attack on Fort Kalar, and brought a large number of Kafir captives to Badakhshan, whom I saw at Faizabad..."

The third paper in the group is devoted to a discussion of Bolor.


Col. Yule’s lengthy essay prefaces this edition of Wood’s ‘Oxus’. It is a thorough, meticulous study of the history and geography of the northern and eastern borderlands of Kafiristan. Kafiristan proper is not a subject of detailed discussion but most of what is said has a direct bearing on the subject. Useful footnotes.

Vol. I, p. 162 (footnote): “Wood thinks that the Tajik inhabitants of Badakhshan and the adjoining districts are substantially of the same race as the Kafir tribes of Hindu Kush. At the time of Polo’s visit it would seem that their conversion to Islam was imperfect. They were probably in that transition state which obtains in our own days for some of the Hill Mahomedans adjoining the Kafirs on the south side of the mountains the reproachful title of Nim-chah Musulman, or Half-and-Halifs. There they would seem to have retained sundry Kafir characteristics; among others that love of wine which is so strong among the Kafirs . . . The wine of Kapishi, the Greek Kapisa, immediately south of Hindu Kush, was famous as early as the time of the Hindu grammarian Panini, say three centuries B.C.”


Cathay and the Way Thither was issued in four volumes (1913–1916), the last of which contains the index. The main references to Kafiristan appear in vol. 4 where the 17th century journey of Benedict Goes from Lahore to the Great Wall via Kabul is recounted. The footnotes on Kafiristan are lengthy and informative.

III. The Kalash Kafirs of Chitral


The author travelled in the petty states of the Western Himalaya in the last decade of the 19th century. He considers that “the Kafir is an unreclaimed savage and will always remain so; his mind is far more primitive and, so to speak, away back than that of any Chitrali or Pathan . . . He is an ancient man, a man of a lost period, a relic. In his savagery one cannot compare him to the savage tribes on the eastern frontier of India . . . The Kafir is intensely ancient.” Further references to the Kalash Kafirs are sprinkled with such terms as ‘slave-like’; ‘low-type’; ‘beasts of burden’; ‘degraded type of head, or would it be better, possibly,
to say unevoluted?' Mention is made of the Lockhart expedition and Robertson's journeys. Opposite p. 256 is a photo of Kalash Kafir effigies and another of some houses in Bumboret.


The author spent some time in Chitral. Where his remarks on the Kafirs are taken from Robertson they are accurate. His own additions are of the following type: "The Kafirs are relics of worn-out people... savages, not semi-civilized people like the Chitralis... Their religion contained strange relics of Hinduism... They are quite ready to eat raw a Markhor when it is killed on a hillside... It is curious to see relics of Greek religious ceremony which they have grafted into their degenerate worship..." The author does make a contribution, however. Facing p. 120 he publishes two unique photographs of Kafirs taken by Col. Lockhart in the upper Bashgul Valley in 1885. Bruce neither credits the source nor comments on the photographs.


This contains references to the Kalash Kafirs, their language and their religion. The author incorrectly states that the Kalash Kafirs of Chitral have all been converted to Islam and that the population of Chitral is now [1913] 'purely Musalman'. The term Kator is also discussed.


The personal experiences of a British officer on tour in Swat, Dir, Chitral and Gilgit in 1923 – a tour he evidently did not enjoy. Brief description of Kalash Kafirs seen in Chitral.

General background information on the purpose of the Italian expedition and an outline of general information regarding the Kalash Kafirs. With photographs of effigies and wooden bowls.


The author is concerned with the physical anthropology and material culture of the Kalash Kafirs of Chitral. In 1960, in the absence of villagers, he entered the ritually segregated bashali of Brun in the Bumboret Valley and photographed the wooden anthropomorphic figure of Dezalik. The Kafir bashali are described. The author states that in 1955 there were ‘nearly 2,000 Kalash’, while in 1960 his census showed 1,391. Siiger (no. 297) mentions 5,000.


The author took a census in the valleys of Bumboret, Rumbur and Birir of Chitral where the Kalash Kafirs live. He found 1,391 Kafirs and 2,230 Muslims, but provides no information as to how his data was obtained. He is interested primarily in the physical and cultural anthropology of the Kafirs insofar as it can be used to reconstruct their history. He anticipates that his field work “will make it possible to solve many problems concerning the origin of Kafirs and the events which occurred in a very distant past, in the heart of the vast land reaching from Iran, and maybe still farther north, to the Indian peninsula.”


A short article on the art of the Kalash Kafirs by the Italian professor of Anthropology, Florence. Nine illustrations accompany the article.

A member of the Cambridge Chitrali Expedition of 1960 gives an account of the Kalash. Twelve photographs and a map illustrate the article. (See no. 295).


The Swiss traveller relates the experiences of a short visit to the Kalash Kafirs of Chitral. There are nine photographs of the Kalash and their art with the article.


A report on the author's second expedition (1929) to Asia. "The chief linguistic object of this second expedition, was to study the Iranian and 'Dardic' languages in and around the isolated hill-state of Chitral... One important object was to study the decaying paganism of the Kafir tribes in Chitral, the only existing remnants of ancient Aryan religion not affected by literary traditions... In one of the two tribes in question only a few grown up men were still pagans, and nobody but one old priest remembered much of the ancient traditions." The work is divided into six main parts: Balochistan; Peshawar and the North West Frontier Province; Peshawar to Chitral; Work in Chitral; Tours in Chitral; and, Languages of Chitral. The last section contains data on the Indo-Aryan and Kafir Group of Languages (Khobar, Kalasha, Palula, Dameli, Gavar Bati, Gujuri, Kati, Waigeli, and Prasun).


A preliminary linguistic analysis of a language spoken by 800–1000 people in lower Chitral.

An eye-witness account (1929) of the Joshi festival of the Kalash in the Rumbur Valley of Chitral. Description of the various ceremonies is accompanied by texts of prayers and songs.


Toward the end of his journey the author trekked down the ‘Ustui Gol’ and Rumbur, visiting ‘Red Kafir’ and ‘Black Kafir’ villages.


Eight English students in two Land Rovers drive from Cambridge to Chitral and back in the summer vacation of 1960. One of their objectives was “to record the hitherto little known music of Chitral”. Kalash Kafir music, singing and instruments are briefly described. Copies of tape recordings made “are being deposited with the British Institute of Recorded Sound”. A section on the Kalash (p. 8–12) and “Agriculture in Bumboret Valley, Chitral” (p. 12–14) are included. Among other things, information on Kalash ‘feasts of Merit’ are given. A more complete account of the expedition’s findings is to be published by Hodges Figgis Ltd.


Schomberg travelled extensively in Chitral in 1935 and provides a good deal of information about the Kalash Kafirs. His account, together with those of Morgenstierne, his predecessor in the field, and the more recent preliminary report of Halfdan Siiger (no. 297), constitutes our main sources of information about the Kalash Kafirs. Schomberg records what he saw and the facts relating to the Kalash are embedded in a travel narrative unburdened by theory or analysis.
The section on the Kalash Kafirs of Chitral (pp. 12–35) contains data grouped under the following headings: Material Culture; Social Life; The Ordinary Village; Some Particular Sanctuaries; Sacrificial Functions; The Dehar; Annual Festivals; Pantheon, Mythology, Legends; Some Fundamental Characteristics of the Kalash Culture; Some Cultural and Religious Elements; and, Historical Problems.

Prof. Siiger, as a member of the Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia, spent some months in 1948 among the Kalash Kafirs of Chitral. His account of the institution of the Dehar throws light on Robertson’s remarks concerning the Pshur of the Kam Kafirs and provides a more complete picture of the functions of these religious figures in the political system as a whole.

An account of the social and religious practices of the Kalash Kafirs by a member of the German Hindu Kush Expedition of 1955–56, with 13 photographs by the Swiss photographer Hans de Meiss-Tueffen.

A pamphlet designed to provide background information and explanatory text for a 20 minute (24 f.p.s.) 16 mm black and white film available on loan from the Encyclopaedia Cinematographica. The film was made among the Kalash Kafirs of Chitral during the German Hindu Kush Expedition of 1955/56.
Map of Nuristan

The basis of my work has been my own observations in the territory including bearings taken by means of compass and studies of stereoscopic air photographs (Scale 1:250,000 and 1:25,000), kindly put to my disposal in August 1964 by the Afghan Ministry of Mines and Industries.

I found most useful the air photographs from valleys with which I had become familiar when I visited them myself, viz. Parun-Kantiwo-Pech, Waigal, Netshingal, and Lower Bashgal. But also the photographs from the valleys of Upper Bashgal and Skorganul, which I have not visited personally, have been of the greatest importance to the preciseness of the map.

The three dotted lines crossing the Bashgal, Pech and Kushkau rivers denote that the areas of drainage beyond have been drawn on the basis of air photographs scale 1:250,000. An exception to this, however, are the small tributaries whose mouths have been marked by dotted lines; they have been drawn according to my own observations.

As far as Southern Waigal is concerned I have availed myself of sketches kindly put to my disposal by professor Georg Morgenstierne, who travelled up to Kegal in 1949. As to Western Nuristan I have found Schuyler Jones’ sketches from Titin and Malil most useful and have furthermore had to rely on material earlier published from the German expedition in 1935 (Deutsche im Hindukusch, Berlin 1937) and from Thesiger’s journey in 1956 (Thesiger, W., A Journey in Nuristan. The Geogr. Journ., London, 1957). See no. 232 and 256.

The source of place-names has mainly been my own collections, supplemented by and compared with names as found in Morgenstierne (Morgenstierne, G., The Waigali Language, Oslo 1954, the map p. 258 and the index of geographical names p. 320–323) and in Lentz (Deutsche im Hindukusch 1937). When individual villages and localities are to be named on a
map like this one of the following possibilities may be used: (1) the name used locally, (2) the name used by some Nuristani tribe for localities outside its own territory, e.g. it is common to use the Kam (Kamdeshe) names for villages in the Parun valley, (3) the Pashtu version, (4) the Persian version. In the Waigal area I have used local forms as few of these places, having only been visited by a very limited number of explorers, have been mentioned to any noticeable degree in the records – in other words: so far there is no other fixed, written tradition. In the other valleys I have been less consistent because in literature dealing with these there has already been created a tradition for using non-local names of various origin.

New settlements are continually made in Nuristan in connection with the construction of terraces for new fields. Islamabad as a name for the village that was built instead of Muldesh destroyed during the conquest in 1895/96 is an example of a name which is not easily adopted. At the original Muldesh (Muldeş I) there is now a small government office.

Future explorers will probably have to move the names of the mountain pastures a little about as gradually the exact position of these is stated.

Attention is drawn to the fact that there are no areas with perpetual snow in Nuristan although this is often asserted.

On most maps Kashmund is put down with an altitude approximately 1000 meters too low. Robertson (Robertson, Sir George S., The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush, London 1896) seems to be nearer to the truth when he argues 13,900 feet. The height argued by me was found by means of bearings taken from a place near Wama of which the altitude was known to me.

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