

ABSTRACTS

Session 1 – Ethnography

Alberto Cacopardo – The Nuristani of Gobor (Chitral) and the Ethnohistory of the Kati in Bashgal.

Of the three Kati settlements in the territory of Chitral, the one known as Gobor in the upper Lutkho valley is by far the least documented, though it is the oldest, predating by various decades the two well-known villages in the upper reaches of Bumburet and Rumbur, created by refugees at the time of Abdur Rahman's invasion of Kafiristan. Composed by the four small villages of Gobor Bagh, Dinsk, Shesidin and Dagheli, Gobor is entirely located above the altitude of 3000 meters, and counted just short of a hundred houses in 2006, at the time of the field work on which this paper is based.

Oral traditions recorded there provide important elements not only about the history of that settlement, but also, in combination and comparison with other narratives recorded elsewhere by Western and local researchers, about the original Kati immigration into Bashgal from Western Nuristan and the subsequent vicissitudes, conflicts and political developments within that powerful and prestigious community.

Max Klimburg – Austrian-Afghan Society, Vienna

The past tripartite polytheistic cultures in Kafiristan (in present Nuristan) with that of Parun in the centre.

In contrast to the long held idea of the existence of a single dominant culture in what was once Kafiristan in NE-Afghanistan, Islamized by force at the end of the 19th century and then named Nuristan, one is confronted with three markedly different cultures – also with respect to their languages - which formed a kind of balanced equilibrium. The dominant culture with regard to the size of population and wealth was that of the Kati and Kam speaking Kafirs residing in the Bashgal valley near the border to British India, now Pakistan, best exemplified by the large village of Kamdesh (where G.S. Robertson, author of *The Kafirs of the Hindu-Kush*, London 1896, had resided in 1890-91), and in the NW of Kafiristan/Nuristan. It was a powerful culture with a rather hierarchically structured society and a strong dependence on an ancestor-cult manifest in large wooden figures. The closely interrelated cultures of the Waigal and Ashkun Kafirs, located in the south and southwest, gloried in their militancy and results of Kafir-style head-hunting (see Klimburg's 2-vol. study of 1999). Enclaved in between, the culture of the Parun Kafirs, called in Academia Prusun Kafirs - the overriding research topic of Klimburg since the 2000s - prided itself upon its claims to ritual purity and its special links to the diverse Kafir deities, in particular to the supreme deity, Mara (corresponding to Imra/Yamrai elsewhere in Kafiristan), thereby providing a kind of protective religious umbrella for all Kafirs. Stories about these deities are so deeply engraved upon the Parunis' minds that they are still being recounted, with many of them recorded by Georg Buddruss and Lennart Edelberg in the 1950s and 1960s, and by Max Klimburg in the 1970s and as late as into the early 2000s.

Taj Khan Kalasha – Panteion University Athens, Dept of Social Anthropology

Living and leaving tradition: New perspective on Kalasha religious conversion and resistance

The survival of the Kalasha as distinct ethnic, religious and culture group in 21st century Pakistan offers a new perspective on how the Indigenous Kalasha culture has managed to hold on to its non-Islamic roots, and evolved to co-exist in monotheistic cultural field and the world at large without complete dissolution or mergence into the national religion and culture of Pakistan.

This talk gives a preliminary view of recent ethnographic fieldwork in the Kalasha Valleys that

illustrates which areas of Kalasha religion and culture are negotiable or non-negotiable on individual and collective levels.

This provides perspective into the dynamics and complex processes that are involved in reclaiming the past and maintaining the Kalasha cultural identity.

Karl Wutt – Independent researcher, Vienna

Symbols in Pashai culture - 'Kafiristan' versus 'Gandhara'.

This study of Pashai architecture, based on field research in side valleys of Alingar, and Kunar river (Nur-lam, Darra-e nur, Wama-gal, Darra-e mazar), is focussed particularly on a certain type of buildings, called 'loara', with wooden planks, called 'chetrawo-bitek' = ornamented plank. Some of their carvings are similar to those in southern Nuristan, especially Wama and Ashkun. Others (female figures of highly abstract form, but there are 'realistic' exceptions) are only connected with 'loara'. In Darra-i Nur, villages lower down the valley show a different style, but even there (December 2004) a single 'loara' was brought to light by a neighbouring demolished house, well protected from wind and weather for a long time.

Homayun Sidky – Miami University of Ohio

Problems in Conceptualizing the Pre-Islamic Oracular Tradition in Hunza (Karakorum Region, N. Pakistan)

Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century travelers to Hunza (Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan) described oracles called *bitan* (*betan*). These individuals inhaled the smoke of juniper branches, entered into ecstatic states, drank goat's blood, and prognosticated by conversing with supernatural beings called *pari*. Ethnographers have also reported comparable practitioners variously referred to in the sources as *dainyal*, *dehar*, and other monikers in the Gilgit and Chitral regions. These resemblances suggest that the *bitan*'s ritual repertoire may have been part of a more widespread pre-Islamic tradition in the Hindukush and Karakorum regions (i.e., *Peristan*), elements of which persisted in the once secluded valleys of Gilgit, Chitral, and Hunza but superseded elsewhere by Islam. Unfortunately, ethnographic sources have generally approached these data in terms of Eliade's problematic model of shamanism based on Siberian materials, although the fit is tortuous and imperfect. This viewpoint, it is argued, has diverted scholarly attention from a potentially more fruitful comparative analysis of these materials as representing a distinct indigenous oracular tradition centered in the Hindu Kush and Karakorum region.

Augusto S. Cacopardo – University of Florence

The Kalasha of Chitral and the Brok-pa of Dah/Hanu. A Cultural Comparison.

The paper proposes a cultural comparison between the Kalasha of Chitral and the Brok-pa of Dah and Hanu in Ladakh, as the only living examples of the ancient cultural complex of Peristan. Parallelisms and divergences are equally highlighted. Rather than on the pantheons and mythologies, only briefly considered, the comparison focuses on the ritual sphere and on the set of prohibitions based on the pure/impure polarity, seen as the fundamental core of the system. The analysis briefly invests also the social sphere and the marriage rules, which in Dah and Hanu appear to be strongly influenced by the broader Ladakhi context. Finally, the paper scrutinizes and reviews the comparison attempted by Vohra (1989) between the Kalasha Chaumos and the Brok-pa Bononah festival.

Session 2 – History

Michele Bernardini – Università di Napoli L'Orientale, Naples
Timur and the *Siyāhpūshān* (1398-1399).

The paper will be devoted to the analysis of Timur's passage across Kafiristan (present day Afghanistan), during the year 801h./1398. The examination of several sources shows various discrepancies about the description of the s.c. *Siyāhpūshān* ("wearers of black" = the Kafirs). If some sources neglect mentioning this population making only few allusions to them, other chronicles, in particular the *Zafarnāme* of Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī and the *Zubdat at-tavārīx* of Ḥāfīz-i Abrū, offer an extensive mass of data which certainly represents an interesting object of study.

After an introduction dedicated to the frame of Timur's *jihād* in the s.c. *Sarḥadd-e Hendūstān*, ("The Indian frontier") the paper will analyse the perception of the area in Ilkhanid and Timurid sources and then will try to describe a general topography of Kafiristan during the XIV and XV centuries. Ilkhanid and Timurid sources need a great effort of disambiguation in this sense, and the paper will also discuss the method used for transcription and description of geographical terms by the Persian historians. A second part will trace the sequence of the events during the passage of Timur across Kafiristan. In this section not only the great difficulties encountered by the Timurid army will be described, but also the complex relations with local populations as for ex. the s.c. Avghānī/Varakzay.

A third part of the paper will be devoted to the Kafir population and its description, underlying the data on language, ethnical features, religious aspects, as they are described by Persian and Indian sources.

Wolfgang Holzwarth – Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle
A World Apart? Periods of isolation and reintegration in Eastern Hindukush and Karakorum history (1000-1800).

The history of the Eastern Hindukush and Karakorum region during the second millennium CE in pre-colonial times has remained so far particularly obscure due to scarcity of written sources. During the eight centuries discussed in this study, the various areas of the region experienced periods of pronounced isolation from the surrounding centres of the great civilizations of Asia as well as periods of reintegration in the networks of the lowland cultures. This paper discusses some of these vicissitudes on the basis of little-known primary sources.

Hidayat ur-Rahman – Independent Researcher, Chitral
Shah Khairullah: Relations and Policy towards the Kafirs of the Hindu Kush.

The purpose of this research paper is to draw conclusions by examining Shah Khairullah's relations and policies with non-Muslim tribes in Bashgal (present Nuristan) and Chitral regions. Shah Khairullah was the ruler of Chitral and Yasin in the late 18th century AD. He is considered to be the most powerful ruler of the Hindu Kush region.

Shah Khairullah belonged to the Khushwaqte branch of the Chitral royal lineage and was the son of Shah Asmatullah and brother of Shah Khushamat, both earlier rulers of Mastuj. Upon his accession, Shah Khairullah started ruling a small area of his kingdom around Mastuj, but soon became the master of Chitral, Yasin and some parts of Gilgit.

In his time, various groups of Kafirs lived in Chitral and around the Eastern Hindu Kush. Not only were there Kafir settlements in Lower Chitral, but also in some areas of Upper Chitral and Gilgit. And of course, the entire population of present-day Nuristan was also composed of Kafirs. In those

days, the non-Muslim population of these areas lived side by side with the Muslim population. Although Khairullah was an extremist Ismaili Muslim, there were some chiefs of Kafiristan in his court. One of them was named Dimu.

Eventually Shah Khairullah was killed during a campaign against the Kafirs of Bashgal in 1790 A.D. After his assassination, his two sons were also killed in Birir (Kafiristan of Chitral). In this paper, we will look at all the relations of this ruler with the Kafirs of the Hindu Kush. We will investigate who supported him and who opposed him amongst the Kafirs; what was his method of punishment and retribution of these people; and why he failed in Kafiristan.

Stefano Pellò – University of Venice Ca' Foscari
Mapping the Persian Poetic Territories of Kafiristan

In this paper I will explore how Kafiristan has been textualised in the Persian poetic tradition and, at the same time, I will look at how Persian literary conventions have shaped and interacted with pre-modern and early modern knowledge about the region, in both the local and the trans-regional world of letters. In particular, I will deal with a few locally produced texts - such as the Persian ethnography by Haji Allahdad, the *Shahnama-yi Chitral* and some poetic collections - looking at them as precious sources in literary archaeology - to be decodified - as well as connected cultural practices in dialogue with a wider net of representations and interpretations.

Nile Green & Nushin Arbabzadah – University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)
“Between Afghan ‘Idology’ and Kafir ‘Autoethnography’: A Report on Pre-Conquest Kafiristan from an Afghan Newspaper” 15.06.22

This paper discusses a Persian account of Kafiristan published in Afghanistan’s first newspaper in 1874. The text purports to be the first-hand testimony of Wān, a recent convert to Islam, who describes the sacred sites of his homeland to a literate Muslim resident of Badakhshan. The account comes from the least documented region of former Kafiristan, not only in being on the Afghan rather than the British Indian side of the Durand Line, but also in possibly being from one of the least-known regions of Afghan Kafiristan. Wān’s testimony may not only be an extremely rare “autoethnographic” account of Kafir religious sites, but in being also a work of Afghan “idology,” the text lends insight into how the religion of the *kāfir* (infidel) was understood by Afghan state officials in the decades before the conquests and forced conversions of 1895–96.

Paul Bucherer-Dietschi – Foundation “Bibliotheca Afghana”, Bubendorf, Switzerland
A recently discovered manuscript of a day-to-day journal of Munji Syed Shah’s 3rd missionary visit to Bashgal in 1888-89.

The first journey of Munji Syed Shah to Kafiristan took place from May to November 1882. It is described by Rev. T.P. Hughes in his article in *The Church Missionary Intelligencer and Record*, 1883, pp. 418-425.

On his second journey in 1883 Syed Shah most probably accompanied William Watts McNair to the Kafir Valleys near Chitral.

His third expedition to Kafiristan started five years later, in 1888. This journey is only mentioned in the British confidential documents published by Schuyler Jones (1969): *A bibliography of Nuristan*, Part 2, p. 32.

Up to now, this was all what was known about this third journey of Syed Shah to Kafiristan.

The present manuscript describes in its first part the journey to and from Kafiristan via Chitral, Gilgit,

and Kashmir and the sojourn in the Bashgal Valley in a day-to-day journal. The second part provides some observations and remarks on the Kafir culture.

Syed Shah left Peshawar on the 9th August, 1888, he reached Kamdesh on the 10th November 1888, left Kamdesh on the 5th May 1889 and returned to Peshawar on the 2nd August 1889.

A further visit to Kafiristan by Syed Shah, together with George Scott Robertson, followed from September 22, 1890 to October 24, 1891. This visit is described and illustrated in Robertson's book *The Kafirs of the Hindu-Kush*.

The present manuscript was offered to the Foundation Bibliotheca Afghanica and, after consultation with two well-known experts on Kafiristan/Nuristan, Max Klimburg and Alberto Cacopardo, it was bought by the Foundation in October 2019. Thanks to the help and support by Brigadier Bill Woodburn, a long-time expert on Chitral, the first part of the manuscript could be transcribed, and the route taken by Syed Shah could be fully identified. The transcript and interpretation of the second part is still a "work in progress". It is a pleasure to present the existence of this manuscript for the very first time to the public on the occasion of the "Roots of Peristan" Conference.

Irmtraud Stellrecht – Professor Emeritus Eberhard Karls University, Tübingen.
Remembering Pre-colonial Feasts of Merit in Hunza.

Feasts of merit are a constitutive element of "Kafir" or "Nuristani" and thus non-Islamic culture. They have been intensively researched and are correspondingly well documented. Were there also feasts of merit to the east of this area - in Chitral, Gilgit and Kohistan – at least in pre-colonial times? A few references in the older literature make this likely. It was from such accounts that I sought to enter the subject of feasts of merit during my fieldwork in Hunza in the 1980s.

My interlocutors were able to list buildings that had been erected in the past and were inaugurated with lavish festivities. They were even able to show me some of these buildings, including mosques. Their visible and tangible materiality stimulated the memory: Names of builders were mentioned, as well as the amount of food they had provided for the inauguration feast – the number of lumps of butter, the animals slaughtered, the natural goods distributed, etc. Songs of praise in honor of the feast giver were also remembered, as well as specially composed melodies to which he was then allowed to dance. The minimum amount for the inauguration feast was fixed, depending on the material used and labour spent. Accumulating wealth for a feast was a lengthy process full of privations.

In summary, my discussions resulted in a kind of "bricolage" of large and small, coherent and contradictory fragments, from which a rough outline of feasts of merit in pre-colonial Hunza can be drawn.

Session 3 – Comparative analysis

Claus Peter Zoller – University of Oslo

The geographical extent of ‘Peristan’ and its correlation with the theory of outer and inner languages

‘Peristan’ is defined by Alberto and Augusto Cacopardo as a culturally quite coherent area extending through the high mountains from northwestern Afghanistan throughout the northern regions of Pakistan to the southwestern border of Tibet. Characterized by many features differing from mainstream Hinduism, its existence is usually explained as preservation of linguistic and cultural archaisms. I will present a series of arguments which not only corroborate the thesis but demonstrate that in antiquity ‘Peristan’ must have covered a much larger geographical area than today. In addition, I will argue that the carriers of ‘Peristan’ culture and language arrived in North India before the Vedic Aryans and therefore underwent a stronger encounter with the native languages and cultures of prehistoric North India than the Vedic Aryans. In fact, these theses are connected by me with the linguistic theory of outer and inner languages, which differs from the standard model according to which the Indo-Iranian branch of Indo-European comprises the two major branches of Indo-Aryan and Iranian plus the minor branch of Nuristani (which comprises just a handful of small languages). Moreover, according to the standard model, the order of language immigrations was first Indic, then Nuristani, then Iranian. However, based on the theory of outer and inner languages, which claims not a single but a series of Aryan immigrations, I will argue that the first immigration wave comprised speakers of non-Vedic Old Indo-Aryan dialects together with speakers of Old Iranian dialects. The speakers of Vedic Sanskrit were latecomers. Upon their arrival, the speakers of Old Iranian and non-Vedic Aryan came into close contact with speakers of the language of the Indus Valley Civilization and with speakers of Austro-Asiatic languages. In prehistoric northern South Asia, Austro-Asiatic languages were spoken over large areas. This new perspective will be underpinned by a series of compelling linguistic arguments.

Marcello De Martino – Società Italiana di Storia delle Religioni

The Kāfirs of Georges Dumézil. *À la recherche de la trifonctionnalité perdue.*

Nel 1954 Georges Dumézil stava preparando un viaggio in “Kāfiristan” (Nūristān) con Georg Morgenstierne perché, secondo l’iranista norvegese, i Kāfiri avrebbero mantenuto delle tracce della tradizione religiosa indoeuropea. Lo storico delle religioni francese, distolto dal suo interesse per l’Ubykh, andò invece in Turchia e non attuò alcun *field study* in Nūristān; tuttavia, egli scrisse alcuni articoli per comprovare l’antichità delle loro credenze religiose che avrebbero mostrato dei tipici tratti indoeuropei, come il trifunzionalismo: ma è davvero così? Una ricerca storiografica pone la questione sotto una nuova prospettiva.

In 1954 Georges Dumézil was preparing a trip to “Kāfiristan” (Nūristān) with Georg Morgenstierne because, according to the Norwegian iranologist, the Kāfiris would have kept traces of the Indo-European religious tradition. The French historian of religions, distracted from his interest in Ubykh, a Northwest Caucasian language, instead went to Turkey and did not carry out any field studies in Nūristān; however, he wrote some papers to prove the antiquity of their religious beliefs that would have shown typical Indo-European traits, such as trifunctionalism: but is this really so? A historiographical research puts the question under a new perspective.

Bernard Sergent – Société de mythologie française. Paris
Tuer un dragon au solstice d'hiver

Plusieurs peuples de langue indo-européenne, mais aussi les Chinois, racontent le mythe du meurtre d'un dragon à l'époque du solstice d'hiver, ou du changement d'année, dans des cas où précisément ce changement d'année est proche du solstice. On expose le dossier, et on envisage les hypothèses pour expliquer le phénomène.

Jadwiga Pstrusińska – University of Warsaw

Multidisciplinary Remarks on some Hindukush-Karakorum Ethnonyms in Eurasiatic Perspective and a Comparative Analysis of One Case Study.

The main aim of my paper is to look at one of the ethnonyms in the discussed region through the multidisciplinary lenses, using both a “microscope” and a “lunette”. We can consider the possible sameness of the analysed designation from the pre-Islamic Hindukush-Karakorum area, with some lexems, having similar forms and function, in other parts of Eurasia, namely in Europe. Results of linguistics and population genetics research are among the most important dimensions to the discussion.

Sergey A. Yatsenko & Sviatoslav I. Kaverin – Russian State University for the Humanities & Paleoethnology Research Center in Moscow

Traditional costume of the Eastern Hindukush area: Some problems of its origin and modification against the background of ancient and modern cultures.

In the traditional costume of Nuristani peoples, as well as some of the Kalasha, there is evidence of continuity with their ancient northern neighbors. Here they wear analogues of the pan-Iranian long robe of the Achaemenian period (kandys) and a caftan without sleeves (which sometimes has a right lapel as in pre-Arab Tokharistan). The wearing of a longer lower tunic below a shirt by men is documented for Kushans, as are some forms of the men's and women's flattened caps and berets. Decor at the shoulders in the form of two large rhombuses is known among European Scythians, as well as the cloth worn around the hips by adult women. The hem with a series of triangular cutouts on the edge was used by Sogdians. The details of women's headdresses of the Pazyryk Culture and, more recently, of lowland Tajiks imitated the horns of a mountain goat. The symbolic ribbons crossing the torso had been attested among the Kushans and Indo-Scythians in antiquity, and they are seen later among the lowland Tajiks. The men's symbolic leather belt with a rhombuses pattern also has analogies among the Kushans. The multi-colored striped gaiters worn about the shins were specific to the Sogdians.

The complete version of the report will provide information on the costume of the highlanders and other peoples of the region broadly and will be accompanied by numerous illustrations.

David N. Nelson – Independent researcher, Paris

The Kalasha *Caumos* dough figurines and the dough figurines in the Vedic *śrautic* rite *Varuṇapraghāsa*: a common origin or a borrowing?

One of the more interesting customs of the Kalasha *Caumos* celebration is the *kuṭramu*, which is the custom of making animals from dough. This particular custom has been described in detail by a number of researchers over the years. Interestingly, one of the rites in the *Varuṇapraghāsa*, a Vedic *śrautic* ritual, involves making a ram and ewe dough figurine out of barley. The *Varuṇapraghāsa* is

one of the three 4-monthly rituals that are collectively referred to as the *caturmāsyaṇi*. A closer investigation of aspects of the overall *Varuṇapraghāsa* can be shown to cast more light on the Kalasha custom. The connection between these two customary practices also begs the question: is this simply a coincidence, or does this indicate some remote connection in terms of ritual/celebratory practices? If the latter, what is then the nature of this relationship? Is this a common tradition from some quite remote period, or the borrowing from one tradition, most likely the Kalasha, from the other, i.e. the early *śrautic* tradition (c. 800 BC-500 BC), or perhaps an even later borrowing? To further complicate the picture, Azar's description of Kafir customs and practices also refers tantalizingly to the making of twig figurines during the Giche celebration, also during the winter solstice, thus making for a third tradition involved in making animal figurines during the time of the winter solstice. This talk will discuss a variety of issues involved in these ritual celebrations and their relationship to each other.

Session 4 – Linguistics

Elena Bashir – University of Chicago
Copular Use in Khowar and Kalasha

This paper explores questions around the appearance and non-appearance of overt copulas in present-tense sentences in Khowar and Kalasha. The discussion is limited to copulas as main verbs; their use as auxiliaries in complex tense-aspect forms is not treated. The following types of predications are explored:

- equational sentences of the form $x = y$, where x and y are definite nominals, e.g. ‘This is my brother.’
- sentences of the form x is a y , where x may be definite or indefinite, and y is an indefinite nominal, e.g. ‘My brother is a good man.’
- sentences with individual-level adjectival predicates, e.g. ‘My brother is very wise.’
- sentences with stage-level adjectival predicates, e.g. ‘My brother is sick today.’
- sentences which assert the existence of something, e.g. ‘In our village there are ten households.’
- locative predicates, which specify the location of something, e.g. ‘My brother is at home.’

Generalizations about copula usage in both these languages are explored, including the apparent strength of these generalizations, based on published materials. Time permitting, copular use in some nearby or related languages will be touched on.

Almuth Degener & Irén Hegedüs – Johannes Gutenberg Universität, Mainz; University of Pecs.
Spatial morphemes in Nuristani: comparative considerations

The paper consists of a short presentation of Nuristani spatial morphemes, using examples from Kalasha-ala, Wamai, Kom-Kateweri and Wasiweri. It promises some new insights into the following subjects: house-related morphemes in Kalasha-ala, the Wasi greeting formula, the historical background of Nuristani spatial expressions, observations on the extent to which spatial expressions are inherited, and on their development in individual Nuristani languages. The paper owes much to Liljegren & Hegaard’s “Geomorphic coding in Palula and Kalasha”, published in *Acta Linguistica Hafniensia*, 2018, and is meant to extend the scope of their research by focussing on Nuristani languages.

Henrik Liljegren – University of Stockholm
“Peristan” through the lens of areal typology

An areal approach to linguistic typology has the potential of functioning as a peep-hole into history, provided it is carried out in a methodologically sound manner. In a recent study, involving language consultants from 59 ethnolinguistic communities in the Hindukush-Karakorum region, a variety of data was gathered during the time period 2015 to 2018, and subsequently annotated and coded for a large number of linguistic properties. While a comparison of the basic lexicon largely confirms established phylogenetic classification, many structural features tend to cluster geographically and often display convergence across phylogenetic boundaries. While the analysis does not lend support to a simplistic description of the Hindukush-Karakorum as single linguistic area or a Sprachbund, one of the more significant findings is the identification of a handful of distinct micro-areas within the larger region. These micro-areas, or convergence zones, map convincingly – but not perfectly – with the geo-cultural regions of “Peristan” suggested by Cacopardo & Cacopardo (2001) based on a

(mainly pre-Islamic) common cultural, social, political and religious identities. Nuristan, in today's northeastern Afghanistan, appears to have served as a particularly significant centre of linguistic (and cultural) diffusion in large parts of Western Hindukush-Karakorum.

Jakob Halfmann – University of Cologne
Nuristani Theonyms in the Light of Historical Phonology

It is often assumed that the pre-Islamic religion of Nuristan in the Afghan Hindu-Kush (called Kafiristan in pre-Islamic times) was little affected by outside influences over the centuries, due to the remote location of its practitioners (cf. Fussman 1977: 23). From this, the conclusion is drawn that it can be considered an archaic hold-out of a non-brahmanized form of the Proto-Indo-Iranian religion closely comparable to Vedic beliefs (cf. Fussman 1977: 24-27). In order to move beyond mere speculation in the reconstruction of historically unattested religious systems, the reconstructions should be tied to linguistic evidence. Fussman (1977: 30-31) considers the names of the gods of Kafiristan phonetically regular developments from Proto-Indo-Iranian, which would justify ascribing significant antiquity to the religious practices associated with them. A closer examination of the theonyms in accordance with the principles of regular sound change, however, reveals that they lack the most fundamental characteristics of Nuristani historical phonology and that they are quite clearly borrowings from Indo-Aryan languages. In this talk I intend to survey the phonological evidence in the attested theonyms and to refute the hypothesis of an ancient Hindu-Kush pantheon that was unaffected by outside influences and is directly reconstructible to the stage of Proto-Indo-Iranian.>>

Jan Heegård Petersen – University of Copenhagen
Boundaries in grammar, landscape, and culture: Kalasha.

This paper discusses the use of the so-called geomorphic strategy in the system of spatial coding in Kalasha. With 'geomorphic' we mean location in relation to the stream of the river and in relation to the inclination of the mountain side. Location in relation to the river is expressed by a set of three bound morphemes, *wē-* 'upstream', *prē-* 'downstream' and *payran* 'across-stream'. Location in relation to the inclination of the mountain side is expressed by two free morphemes, *buchum* 'uphill' and *ondru* 'downhill'. For location across a mountain ridge, i.e., out of sight, a location verb *bihotik* is used: *se bihotai parau* 'he went over the mountain' (3SG + 'cross over.PTC' + 'went.PST.3S').

These adverbs express semantics that emphasize location or motion along an up-down-across axis. Similar contrasts are found in the set of the deictic adverbs (*and-* 'here', *at-* 'there' vs. *anden-* 'across a barrier from here' and *atet-* 'across a barrier from there'). The verb *bihota-* has the connotations that someone or something is (far) away, or beyond reach, and thus not to be located with determinacy, in contrast to actually being reachable on the mountain slope, which implies determinable location. The semantics of determinacy is also expressed by derivations of the river adverbs, for example, *wēa* 'far (away) upstream' vs. *wēhak* 'a little upstream', and it is encompassed by a contrast expressed by the deictic adverbs, *aya* 'exactly here' vs. *andai* 'somewhere around here'. Semantic contrasts with respect to crossing vs not crossing and with respect to 'determinacy' are also found elsewhere in the lexicon and grammar of Kalasha.

The paper will give examples that support the relevance of these spatial semantic parameters, and introducing Enfield's (2002) theory of *ethnosyntax*, the paper will discuss to what extent these linguistic parameters have physical and cultural associations.

Richard F. Strand – Independent researcher, Sedona, Arizona
Kambojas and Sakas in the Holly-Oak Mountains: On the Origins of the Nûristânîs

Ethnonymic evidence (Strand 2022) shows that the current Nûristânî peoples are descendants of ancient Kambojas and Sakas, equestrian Steppe-Âriâs who entered the Indian subcontinent in waves as early as 1800 BC and repeatedly established rule over the local Indo-Âriâs, whom genetic studies show to have arrived in the region beginning some two millennia earlier (Narasimhan et al. 2019). The trajectories that took these onetime-hegemony to their current refuges in Nûristân are hypothesized, with additional ethnonymic and genetic evidence. The linguistic underpinnings of the phylogenetic model proposed by Morgenstierne (1974) for the Nûristânî languages are re-examined in the light of the ethnic evidence, resulting in the proposed elimination of the Northern Nûristânî linguistic subgroup, to be replaced by only Kâmkata-vari (“Modern Kambojan”), and with the inclusion of Vâsi-vari and the Southern Nûristânî (“Kalaşa”) languages in an “Early Saka” group.

Anton I. Kogan – Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow.
The linguistic evidence on the ethnic composition of pre-Tibetan Ladakh and Baltistan: A.H. Francke's 'Dardic' hypothesis revisited.

The Northwestern fringe of the Tibetan-speaking area, now forming a part of the Ladakh union territory of India and of Pakistani-controlled Northern Areas, was in the past an area of intensive ethnic and language contact. The consequence of this contact was the gradual assimilation of the local pre-Tibetan population by the Tibetans who appeared in the region in the 8th century A.D. More than a century ago the renowned German Tibetologist August Hermann Francke hypothesized that this pre-Tibetan population may have spoken a certain Dardic language. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the Tibetan dialects, spoken in the area, share a number of common typological features with Dardic languages as well as with Burushaski. In the present paper an attempt is made to identify and analyze possible traces of Dardic and Burushaski influence in the vocabulary of Northwestern Tibetan dialects. The results of the analysis suggest the existence of both a significant Indo-Iranian etymological stratum, and lexical items borrowed from an early form of Burushaski. Some of the detected loanwords are common for the whole area, while others characterize only Muslim dialects located in its northern part. Certain historical-phonological features of Indo-Iranian borrowings show that the donor language most probably belonged to the Dardic group, but could not have been the ancestor of Brokskat and Shina spoken adjacent to Ladakhi and Balti nowadays.

Session 5 – Antiquity

Ruth Young & Abdul Samad – University of Leicester & Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Peshawar
Pre-Islamic Archaeology and Heritage in Chitral.

Drawing on archaeological and heritage fieldwork carried out in Chitral in northern Pakistan between c. 2007-2017, we will discuss settlement and activity in this region which is generally thought of as remote and isolated from social, political and economic developments taking place in other parts of South Asia. We will consider models of peripheries and use our archaeological and heritage findings to assess the effectiveness of such models in relation to Chitral; we will think about the extent to which such developments impacted on daily life in this region.

Jason Neelis – Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.
From Khāsarājya to Dardistan – Steps towards a Regional Macrohistory in the First Millennium CE

Relatively sparse literary and epigraphic sources attest local rulers in the Upper Indus region of northern Pakistan. While the dynastic history and chronology of the Palola Śāhis who flourished in the Gilgit valley and adjoining areas until the early-mid eighth century has become more firmly established (von Hinüber 2004; Falk 2021), their links with the Khaśas and Daradas remain unclear. Both of these ancient ethnonyms are known and sometimes connected in South Asian and external literary traditions, but questions about their locations, languages, and cultural and religious affinities continue to stimulate ongoing debates. This paper aims to re-engage with these questions by focusing on *in situ* graffiti inscriptions written on rocks along the the Upper Indus River with references to a ‘Khaśa kingdom’ (Khāsarājya [Shatial 5:2-5]) and ‘Kings of the Daradas’ (Daradaraya [Alam Bridge 5,7], Daratsu Mahārāja [Thalpan Bridge MANP 7 192:1-2], Daran-mahārāja [Chilas Terrace, von Hinüber 1989 ANP I, no. 59 / 2004 ANP 5 no. 17], Darad-rājño [von Hinüber 2021 – inscribed seal]). Rather than attempting to directly tie the epigraphic and literary references to contemporary inhabitants or linguistic groups, the intention is to take another step towards revealing overlapping layers of the regional macrohistory of the northwestern borderlands between South Asia and Central Asia. The goal is to understand how and why these terms, which have long pedigrees and are still used today in rather befuddling ways, were used by writers of inscriptions at places along capillary routes belonging to an extensive network of pathways during the first millennium CE to refer to local rulers and neighbouring kingdoms. Re-opening old questions about political and cultural inter-relationships will provide new perspectives on a dynamic period of long-distance mobility.

John Mock – University of California in Santa Cruz
Tibetans in Gilgit and Wakhan – new data, new implications.

Several rock art and inscription sites in Afghanistan Wakhan display numerous Tibetan-language inscriptions and associated chorten figures.

The site locations correlate with Tang and Tibetan imperial records of 7th-9th century Tibetan-Chinese rivalry in the Pamir and Gilgit region. Attributes of the inscriptions and of the chorten architecture also support their historical assignment to the Tibetan Empire. Interestingly, several inscriptions bearing the clan name 'smer' point to a possible post-imperial occupation of the site by the west-Tibetan kingdom of Ladakh in the 11th century after the fall of Khotan to the Qarakhanids,

a scenario bolstered upon reexamination of previously published Tibetan inscriptions in the Gilgit region. If so, then the current scholarly assumption that by the end of the ninth century Tibetan influence no longer reached to Wakhan should be re-evaluated, with concomitant implications for the Gilgit region.

Jürgen Wasim Frembgen – University of Munich
Pre-Islamic Symbolism in the Material Culture of Nager and Hunza.

The rulers of Nager and Hunza, both former centralized ‘segmentary states’ in the north-west Karakoram inhabited by Burusho and Shina-speaking ‘Dards’, promoted indigenous folk arts and crafts, for instance jewellery, embroidery, weaving and woodcarving. Since the abolition of these kingdoms in the early 1970s and the subsequent enormous socio-economic change, the previously rich material culture has been in rapid decay. The present paper investigates a number of symbolic motifs from ancient times, such as swastika, stupa, Ibex, snake, fish and birds of different shapes.

Anna Filigenzi & Cristiano Moscatelli – University of Naples L’Orientale & Center for Religious Studies, Ruhr University Bochum (Germany).
Non-Buddhist Customs of Buddhist People II: A Shifting Perspective on Wine, Goat Deities and Connected “Dardic” Themes in Gandharan Art

Seldom but consistently ancient Western and Indian sources mention the Dards – the *Dadikai*, *Dardae*, *Dardas* etc. – as a people vaguely located in the northern territories of modern-day Pakistan. Especially during the heyday of Buddhism in the 1st millennium CE, this area, which includes Swat, Chilas, and Gilgit-Baltistan, was part of a homogeneous cultural cluster spanning across the Hindu Kush, Karakorum and Himalayan regions, corresponding to the now so-called Peristan, or the “Land of the Peris”. Although this zone of cultural continuity is increasingly gaining recognition, our relevant knowledge is still vague and limited to periods and events emerging from the occasional collections of records, or from episodic convergence of recognised standards in material and visual culture. Our understanding of the area is therefore mainly circumscribed to cultural macro-phenomena, such as the spreading and rooting of Buddhism; conversely, the underlying local cultural reality, though crucial to historical dynamics, still remains largely ignored.

Nevertheless, Swat stands out as a nodal region from where we can start framing the still-little known cultural history of these areas within new interpretative frameworks. From an archaeological point of view, indeed, Swat is one of the best-known regions of the Indian subcontinent thanks to the extensive systematic investigations carried out since 1956 by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan (IAMP-ISMEO) in close collaboration with the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan.

Discoveries made in the last twenty years, allow research to move ahead on firmer ground, as well as to approach some open questions in more concrete terms, such as the relationships and interaction between urban society, Buddhist monasteries and non-urban groups. In this connection, a special place is held by a small stele excavated at the ancient city of Barikot (Bīr-koṭ-ghwaṇḍai, Middle Swat Valley), depicting a male deity holding the severed head of a goat, a sacrificial knife, and a beaker. Together with similar goddesses already known from specimens of unknown provenance, this deity bespeaks a local religious system – tentatively identified as “Dardic” – which concurred alongside with Buddhism in shaping the cultural landscape of the ancient North-West. Moreover, the strong association of these deities to animal sacrifice and, above all, to wine consumption calls for a reappraisal of still debated pieces of evidence, including the so-called “Dionysiac” or “Bacchic” scenes and related Gandharan themes, which were part of the decorative programs of the Buddhist monuments. The rich corpus of Gandharan archaeological data makes now clear that this “non-

Buddhist” visual repertoire cannot be considered as the borrowing of Western traditions and related imagery, but rather as a vivid picture of customs and practices stemming from the same underlying “Dardic” culture, which Buddhism had to recognize and possibly to intermingle with.

Luca Maria Olivieri – University of Venice Ca’ Foscari
Medieval and premodern Barikot: An archaeological "tale of two cities"

The talk will focus on the historical intertwining of two settlements, both named Barikot, one in Swat and the other in the Kumrat Valley.

Preliminary results of excavations of the late medieval and pre-modern phases of Barikot, Swat, conducted on the hill of the same name in 2019-2020, will be presented.

The settlement of Barikot, Swat, was abandoned in the 17th century, when the inhabitants migrated to the Kumrat Valley in Dir.

A second settlement was established there, again called Barikot, which was later reported by Harold Deane and S.H. Godfrey.

In 2020 and 2021, the archaeological team surveyed the area of Barikot, Kumrat, and gathered some additional valuable information.

Session 6 – Interdisciplinary

Jakob Halfmann – University of Cologne
Nuristani Theonyms in the Light of Historical Phonology

It is often assumed that the pre-Islamic religion of Nuristan in the Afghan Hindu-Kush (called Kafiristan in pre-Islamic times) was little affected by outside influences over the centuries, due to the remote location of its practitioners (cf. Fussman 1977: 23). From this, the conclusion is drawn that it can be considered an archaic hold-out of a non-brahmanized form of the Proto-Indo-Iranian religion closely comparable to Vedic beliefs (cf. Fussman 1977: 24-27). In order to move beyond mere speculation in the reconstruction of historically unattested religious systems, the reconstructions should be tied to linguistic evidence. Fussman (1977: 30-31) considers the names of the gods of Kafiristan phonetically regular developments from Proto-Indo-Iranian, which would justify ascribing significant antiquity to the religious practices associated with them. A closer examination of the theonyms in accordance with the principles of regular sound change, however, reveals that they lack the most fundamental characteristics of Nuristani historical phonology and that they are quite clearly borrowings from Indo-Aryan languages. In this talk I intend to survey the phonological evidence in the attested theonyms and to refute the hypothesis of an ancient Hindu-Kush pantheon that was unaffected by outside influences and is directly reconstructible to the stage of Proto-Indo-Iranian.>>

John Mock – University of California in Santa Cruz
On the title *Tham* of Hunza rulers.

This short presentation will examine the four possible sources for the title *Tham* of the Hunza *mirs*. Since the 19th century, scholars have discussed Chinese, Old Turkish, Sanskrit and Burusho, the Hunza language itself, as possible sources for the title. The presentation will review the various arguments in light of current knowledge of the history of Hunza and the Burushaski language, and offer initial findings for discussion.

Birgitte Glavind Sperber – UC Sydvest Syddanmark
The Sacred Goats of the Kalasha of the Hindukush

Traditionally, transhumance herding between the high summer pastures and the lower winter grazing grounds combined with agriculture in the lower parts of the valley is the traditional way of life in most of Peristan.

This is also the way of life among the Kalasha of Chitral. This paper deals with the peculiar importance of goats among the Kalasha as told and partly shot by my Kalasha assistants for my documentary “The Sacred Goats”. The paper deals with goats in social life and economy, and focuses especially on their important religious role.

In Kalasha religion the division between an Onjesta/Pure sphere and a Pragata/Impure one, is of fundamental importance. The opposition is gendered. Men belong to the Onjesta sphere and women to the Pragata sphere, in particular during menstruation and deliveries when they retire in the Bashali menstruation hut. As contact between the spheres and the sexes cannot be avoided, purification rites are frequent. The year cycle and the different rites done during the year are described as told by the Kalasha.

The presentation will include the trailer of the documentary (5 minutes) and a Power Point presentation with graphs and photos.

Wynne Maggi – Independent Researcher, Berthoud, Colorado
Washlim Gula Aya's Story- A Meaningful Life

All of us who have done field work know that shared life stories are the greatest gifts, breathing life and depth and wisdom into our assumptions about the cultures we study. In this short video story, Washlim Gula Aya tells me and her daughters-in-law and grandchildren her sometimes difficult and sometimes humorous life story as she moved from being a “naughty” Kalasha girl to a important, wise and loved Kalasha woman.

Tom W.F. Crowley – University of Cambridge

The Nymphs of the Hindu Kush: essentialist European heritages and imagined histories for the Kalasha

The state of the Kalasha as 'without history' has enabled others to co-opt what they imagine to be the Kalasha's past for their own heritage-making. The 'Nymphs of the Hindu Kush' was a Greek documentary produced in 2011 incorporating many of the themes which have become associated with the Kalasha, including the well-known story of supposed descent from the army of Alexander the Great. Whilst much of what is widely understood about the Kalasha's past has been tailored to meet the agendas of outsiders, some elements have also been incorporated by Kalasha individuals into their own identity discourses. This is a manifestation of a longstanding Kalasha 'tradition' of repurposing the ideas which outsiders have projected onto them for their own uses. The work of revealing the history of Peristan in all its complexity and mutability might, over time, have ripple effects on how the Kalasha are woven into the identity discourses of others. Equally, it will no doubt impact the Kalasha's understanding of themselves.

Robert C. Tegethoff & Sviatoslav I. Kaverin – Max Planck Institute, Jena & Paleoethnology Research Center in Moscow
Documenting Grangali: The chances of remote fieldwork

In this short presentation, we want to inform colleagues about ongoing efforts to document the Grangali language (Glottocode gran1245). Additionally, we intend to give some impulses on good scientific practice when working with speaker communities and to expound the benefits (and shortcomings) of fieldwork conducted online.

Grangali is an endangered language currently spoken in three villages in the Digal valley in the Eastern Hindukush area of Afghanistan. Grangali is threatened by the encroachment of Pashto: all speakers are thought to be bilingual and the number of children learning the language is steadily decreasing.

After G. Morgenstierne and W. Lentz had gathered some initial information in 1924 and 1935, respectively, G. Buddruss and A. L. Grünberg (Грюнберг) engaged in fieldwork independently of each other in the 1960s, with both subsequently publishing some excerpts of their efforts. Once each had been made aware of the other's work, they began work on a collaborative publication including the Boasian trilogy of grammar, texts, and glossary; voice recordings were also made. However, the project was aborted due to Grünberg's untimely death.

In 2020, G. Buddruss graciously passed his materials on to us and we have begun digitizing and editing. At the same time, we were able to get into contact with a speaker living in the village of Grangal itself who, moreover, was deeply interested in the language and in ensuring its future. Unprompted, our colleague provided not only word lists but also accompanying voice recordings to make up for uncertainties in orthography. Ongoing remote fieldwork is improving our knowledge of the language while giving speakers access to the materials collected by Grünberg and Buddruss.

Ilaria E. Scerrato – ISMEO, Rome

Heritage from Peristan: some observations about zoomorphic decorations in the graveyards in Swat Kohistan and Indus Kohistan.

On this occasion, some data relating to typologies of tomb decorations from Swat Kohistan and Indus Kohistan are presented. In particular, some wooden zoomorphic sculptures are presented which were photographed during the 1980s surveys conducted by Umberto Scerrato in Northwestern Pakistan. On the sidelines of the research on the wooden architecture of this area of Pakistan, a survey of the tomb types of Swat and the neighboring valleys was conducted. The number of photographs that was taken is considerable and the work of rearranging the material has only just begun. These are tomb types, defined in the context of the so-called “lesser tradition” - as opposed to the “greater tradition” - which offer interesting zoomorphic subjects widespread in some areas of Peristan. The sharing of these data will hopefully be useful to the scientific community in reconstructing the cultural complexity of Peristan.

John Mock – University of California in Santa Cruz

Onomastics of Shri Badat, the Cannibal King of Gilgit.

This short presentation revisits a topic which I previously wrote about (Mock 1998 "The Cannibal King of Gilgit") and revises the hypothesis of that earlier work in light of recent epigraphic and historical studies of the 7th-8th c. Palola Shahi dynasty of Gilgit. Together with the short presentation on the title *Tham*, the presentations provide an interesting perspective on the cultural history of the Gilgit-Hunza region.