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The Other Kalasha

A Survey of Kalashamun-Speaking People in Southern Chitral

Part III: Jinjeret Kuh and the Problem of Kalasha Origins

by ALBERTO & AUGUSTO CACOPARDO

SECTION I

Research in Jinjeret Kuh. Language and conversion

Jinjeret Kuh is a small side valley in lower Chitral (Fig. 1). Its mountain stream joins the west bank of the Kunar river near the village of Jinjeret (see map in Fig. 2). It is inhabited by a Kalasha ⁽¹⁾ community who has gradually embraced Islam in the early decades of this century.

Ethnographical research in this valley is part of a general survey — carried out in the summer of 1989 and 1990 — of the converted Kalasha population of Southern Chitral whose results have already been partially published (Alb. Cacopardo 1991, and in press; Aug. Cacopardo 1991, and in press) ⁽²⁾. Field work in Jinjeret Kuh was

(*) This article is the fruit of joint research work. However, section I is written by Augusto Cacopardo, section II by Alberto Cacopardo, and section III jointly by the two authors. We express special thanks to Peter Parkes and Karl Wutt who kindly put at our disposal ethnographic material collected in Jinjeret Kuh.

⁽¹⁾ The Kalasha are settled in the southern part of Chitral district, in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. They speak an Indo-Aryan language of the Dardic group (cf. Grierson 1919; Morgenstierne 1932: 51-53; 1965; 1973; Bashir 1988). A section of this ethnic group — living in the three valleys of Birir, Bumburet and Rumbur — has kept alive to this day a pre-islamic culture that has attracted the attention of anthropologists. For their stubborn refusal to embrace Islam they have been called Kafirs (Arabic for 'infidel') by their Muslim neighbours. As the term carries a derogatory connotation, it shall not be used in this article.

⁽²⁾ The first part of our report concerns what we have called the Eastern area of Kalasha culture, which includes the long converted settlements of the Shishi Kuh and of the main valley; the second one is dedicated to the Urtsun valley, who converted, like Jinjeret Kuh, in the first half of this century. In detail, the stated objectives of our research have been to inquire about: a) the present diffusion of the Kalasha language, its passive and active knowledge, and its use by people of different age; b) the attitude towards the pre-islamic culture of the past; c) the genealogical memory of the people and the survival of the Kalasha system of patrilineal exogamous lineages; d) the surviving memory about the pre-

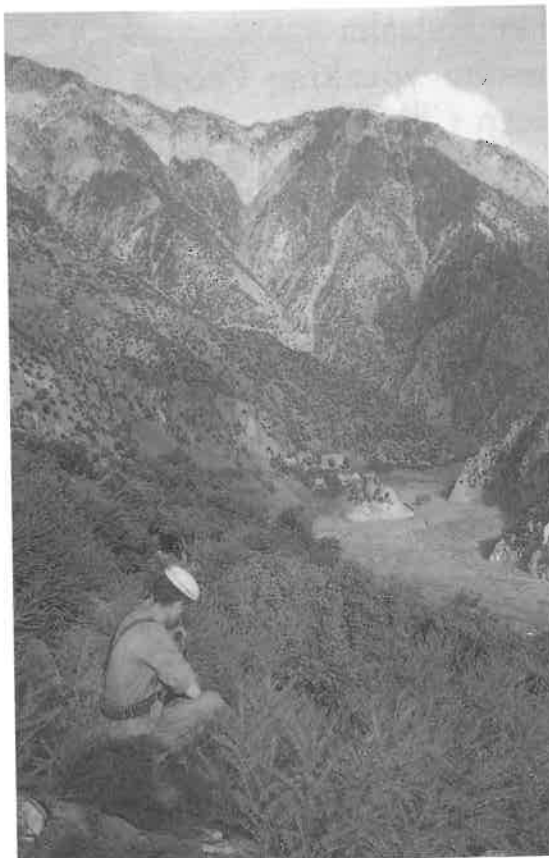


Fig. 1 - A view of the lower part of Jinjeret Kuh.

conducted by the authors in the course of two short visits: its main objectives were to assess the present knowledge of the Kalasha language and to search for the traces of the recent pre-islamic past.

The valley is almost ignored (cf. Schomberg 1938: 206; Biddulph 1986: 64) in the early literature on the area and no report about it has yet been published. It was visited in 1976 by the Austrian Karl Wutt and, more recently (1989), by the British Peter Parkes. Like our own, their visits were very short.

Morgenstierne (1932: 51) reports that in 1929 the Kalasha of Jinjeret Kuh were still at least partially unconverted, but unfortunately he didn't visit the valley nor

islamic past, especially concerning mythological knowledge and ritual behaviour; e) the location of relevant sites, such as the male deities' open air sanctuaries (*d'ewa dur*), the village temples (*j'eštak han* or *rikb'ini*), the cemeteries (*mandauj'au*), and the women confinement houses (*baš'ali*); f) time and circumstances of conversion to Islam.

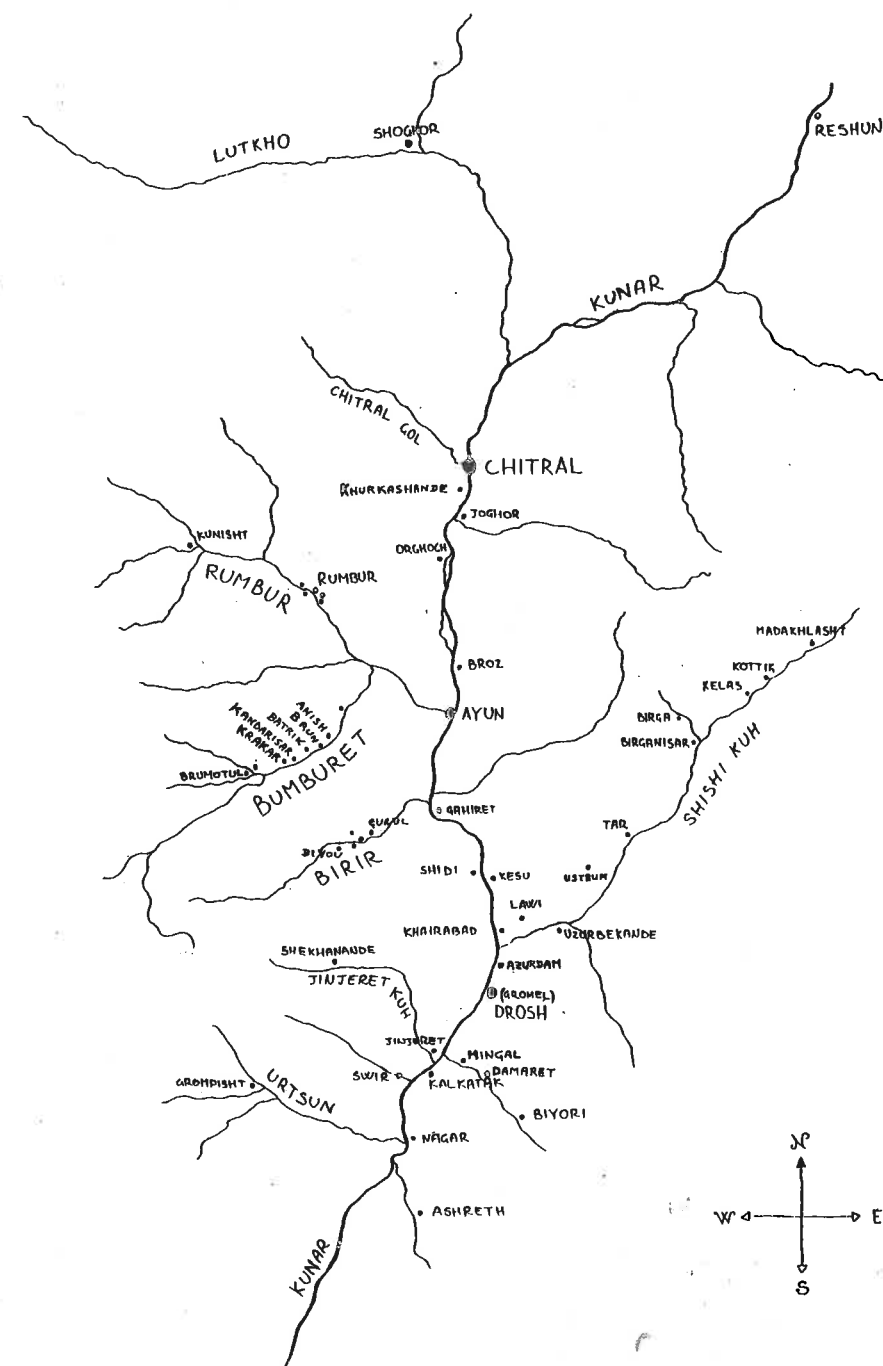


Fig. 2 - Sketch map of Chitral.

did he work with any informants from that community (Morgenstierne 1965: 186). Therefore he only briefly mentions it to hypothetically include the dialect spoken there in his Southern group of the Kalasha language together with the ones of Urtsun, Kalkatak, Suwir and Lawi (Morgenstierne 1965: 188). Elena Bashir — author of the most comprehensive work yet written on the Kalasha language — however, does not seem to agree when she writes (1988: 33) '[...] Northern Kalasha is spoken in Birir, Bumburet, and Rumbur [...]. According to local sources some speakers can also probably be found in the Jinjiret Valley, south of the three valleys mentioned'.

In our previous reports ⁽³⁾, we suggested some adjustments in Morgenstierne's classification of Kalasha dialects; here it will be enough to recall that the language of Jinjeret Kuh — according to our informants, and for what we could judge without being trained linguists — is very close, if not identical, to the one spoken in Birir and is therefore to be included in the Northern group of Kalashamun.

Our main informant — an elder aged presumably about 65 by the name of Halim Ullah (Fig. 3) — asserted with conviction that in Jinjeret Kuh the purest (*pagiz'a*) form of Kalashamun is spoken. And he even emphatically added, at a certain point, that some of his kinsmen had gone to London where they founded a kingdom and therefore the language of his valley was spoken there as well (Robertson 1974: 160 heard a similar story among the Katirs of Bashgal). We recorded with some amusement the whole statement wondering whether the first part of it, at least, would have been confirmed in the other valleys.

As for the number of speakers, all the people we came in contact with appeared to have active and passive knowledge of the language; asked about the general extent of its use in the community informants answered that, although everybody knows it, Khowar is now prevalently used. They added that not all children speak Kalashamun, but the majority of them does. This indicates that the Kalasha language is, at least to some extent, still spoken in the homes ⁽⁴⁾ and that only now it is in the process of being abandoned.

It is therefore rather surprising to find in Captain Gurdon's Military Report on Chitral that, at the turn of the century, the Kalasha language was spoken in Jinjeret Kuh only by three families (quoted in Morgenstierne 1965: 187). This figure probably refers to the village of Jinjeret at the mouth of the valley, whose population is at least

⁽³⁾ See Alb. Cacopardo 1991, for a somewhat different classification of Kalasha dialects, namely an Eastern one spoken in the Shishi Kuh and main valley settlements, a Southern one spoken only in Urtsun, and a Northern one found — with some variations — in Rumbur, Bumburet, Birir and Jinjeret Kuh.

⁽⁴⁾ Parkes doesn't quite agree with us on this point. In a letter to the authors (9 Oct. 1991) he writes: '[...] the Kalasha spoken by most Jinjeret people under the age of 45 years appeared to me (and to my Kalasha companions, including Saidan Shah from Birir) as a very impoverished dialect: i.e. a creolized "calque" of Kalasha words modelled on Khowar expressions. So I suspect that the language is "alive" only as a restricted "code" (vis a vis monolingual Khowar speaking neighbours) for the majority of people now living in Jinjeret'.

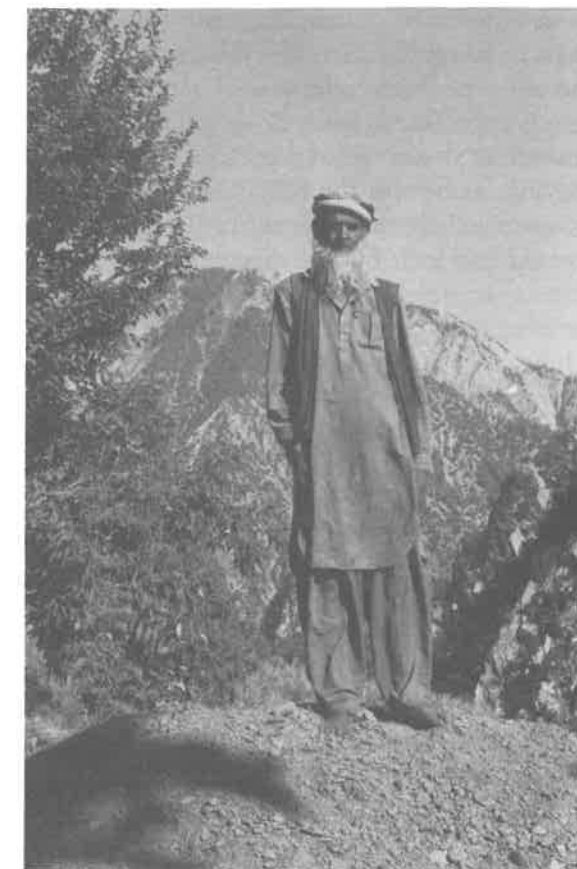


Fig. 3 - Our main informant Halim Ullah.

partially of Kalasha stock but converted much earlier. In Gurdon's report, the valley must have been confused with the village of the same name.

With conversion, however, the use of Khowar has increased because, as was the case in the other converted communities, acceptance of Islam has brought the people of Jinjeret Kuh to adopt Chitrali culture and language, in an effort to erase all traces of their heathen past. Such a widespread feeling of shame made obviously our inquiry quite difficult, to the point that during our first visit the only important data we could collect — after much diplomatic work — were the genealogies of the population of the valley: no one seemed to have any memory of pre-islamic times and we were even told that all the people now living were born after the total conversion of the valley.

During our second visit we found out, however, that this was not the case. Our main informant, an elder aged presumably about 65 by the name of Halim Ullah (Fig. 3), inadvertently admitted that his family was still non-Muslim at the time of his birth and that he went through the first stage of the Kalasha initiation procedure

before his father decided to convert. At that time — probably the mid-Thirties — as far as he could remember, there were still about ten or fifteen families who followed the old pre-islamic religion.

Conversion apparently took place peacefully and gradually. The last man to die unconverted was called Mukadar. The story of his death celebration is somewhat moving: as he was the only man left who had refused to betray the religion of his ancestors, there was nobody in Jinjeret Kuh to celebrate his departure according to the old custom. But the people from the neighbouring Birir valley arrived, and to this day in Jinjeret Kuh the funeral procession is remembered as it entered the valley carrying the drums and firing guns in Mukadar's honour. According to some reports, a funerary effigy reserved for great men (*ghand'au*) was carved for him then, and left in Jinjeret Kuh to honour his memory.

This event took place reportedly not long before the advent of Pakistan, possibly in the Forties. The generation that converted is the one of the fathers of present day elders; several of them, therefore, must have been born in pre-islamic times, although only Halim Ullah was ready to answer our questions about them.

The long interviews we had with him yielded fortunately a good amount of material that, although rather fragmentary, we deem interesting enough to present in this article. But it must be kept in mind that it comes mostly from only one source, even if we did contact other informants: the school master Shekh-ul-Islam gave us the genealogies of the main group of lineages, and the local representative Habib Ullah gave us some general information. The data thus acquired are supplemented by those collected in the course of our survey of the significant places of the valley, that we now come to describe.

Population, Settlements, Pre-Islamic Sites

Jinjeret Kuh has the typical structure of the Hindu Kush side valleys, already noted by Biddulph (1986: 1). Wide at the top where the villages are, it becomes very narrow at its mouth. Its rugged stream empties its waters into the Kunar river after rolling through some impressive gorges closed by perpendicular walls of rock blocking the sun-rays, in some places, even in the hottest time of the day.

In such an environment it is no wonder that the jeep road, completed in 1980, was interrupted some years later by a landslide. Repair works were still in process at the time of our second visit, but some adventurous drivers were already able to reach the main village, although with much difficulty.

Proceeding up-stream after the gorges, the hamlet of Tawaret is soon reached. It is now inhabited by a few Pashtun families from Dir, but in former times it was Kalasha land. The story goes that one day the Mehtar's ^(?) officials came there to

^(?) Mehtar is a title of Turkish origin, given to the rulers of Chitral State. The Kalasha were forced to pay them heavy tributes in kind and services. The princely State of Chitral was absorbed into Pakistan after 1947.

collect the goods due as taxes. In one family, the wife didn't have anything to give and the husband was away with the goats; their daughter was then taken away to be sold as a slave. When the man got back, he did not hesitate: he went in pursue of the Mehtar's men, killed several of them and brought back his daughter. But to escape the Mehtar's revenge he had to leave the valley and he sought refuge over the border in the Bashgal valley. Thus the place was abandoned.

Past Tawaret, two small side valleys — Onjeshta Kui and Gromkuiak Kui — merge from the left of the stream into the main one, which is not called Jinjeret by the Kalasha who usually refer to it simply as Kui (valley) (cf. Loude & Lièvre 1990: 114), just like many villages are simply referred to as Grom; the toponym Jinjeret is only used in Kalashamum for the village at the mouth of the valley.

Further up, near the main village, a branch called Aruet (or Awaret) Kui leads to Birir, that can be reached in two hours and a half, climbing over — we were told — a fairly accessible pass. The main branch, instead, leads finally over another pass to Majam, a summer pasture used by the Kam people of the lower Bashgal valley, in the Afghan region of Nuristan.

In Jinjeret Kuh only one village actually deserves this name. It is called Shekhanande (village of the converts) in Khowar, and Grom in Kalashamun. The other settlements are just groups of scattered hamlets. Habib Ullah, the elected representative in the local council, in 1989 gave us the following figures concerning the distribution of the population:

Grom	120 houses
Aruet Kui	30 houses
Chutikdesh	18 hoses

He mentioned actually another settlement by the name of Dam, that we later visited. It is very close to Grom, so the houses of the two are probably counted together. A total of 168 houses that could shelter a population of 700-800 people. Two other villages existed in the past, but have apparently been abandoned long ago. The ruins of one, Kotvisht, can still be seen on a spur of the ridge closing the valley from the south. The other was reportedly in one of the side valleys, but we didn't visit its site.

Grom is unique among Kalasha villages because of five ancient tower-houses (*koṭ*) of which two are still standing, and in good condition (Fig. 4). These, with a third one that has only one storey left, are disposed in the form of an L delimiting a circular space shaded by ancient trees. A mosque closes the clearing from the south, while the base of a fourth tower, only used for storage, closes it from the north-west. The fifth tower is at a short distance down-valley, and it has only one floor left.

Apparently, the upper stories of the ruined ones have only recently collapsed, since a man about thirty years old claimed to have seen them all intact in his childhood. The best preserved ones, are both complete with three stories, but the one behind



Fig. 4 - The village of Grom with its two well-preserved tower-houses (*koṭ*).

them is said to have had four. This last *koṭ* that, as mentioned above, had only the bottom floor left in 1990, was partially standing in 1976 when Karl Wutt visited Jinjeret Kuh (Fig. 5).

The two intact towers are impressive buildings of stones and beams (Figs. 6-7). We visited only one of them said to have been built by the ancestor Katai (Figs. 8-9). The other one was built, as we shall see later, either by the ancestor Mara or possibly by the founding father of the community, Bangush.

Katai's *koṭ* seemed to be lived in. The middle floor can be reached directly from outside, climbing up a very long ladder made out of a notched tree trunk, that can try the nerves of the unexperienced visitor. A single room occupies each floor. We didn't have a chance to inspect the bottom one, but it is likely used for storage. The middle floor is for sleeping: no windows, charpoys along the walls, a hearth delimited on three sides by stone slabs at the center of a square space marked by four wooden pillars; the ceiling is about two meters high. A square trap door placed in a corner — the only outlet for smoke — leads from this room to the last floor occupied by a veranda that opens towards the east-southeast; it is covered by a flat roof and is closed by a wall on the north side and on part of the west one; in summer, at least, meals are cooked here on a hearth located in a corner (Fig. 10). Through a second trap door, the top of the roof can be reached. It is covered, like in normal Kalasha houses, by a thick layer of beaten earth.



Fig. 5 - Grom: the *koṭ* on the left has lost its upper floor, while the one on the right is complete. The picture shows the back of the two towers. One of them was built by the apical ancestor Bangush and the other, more recently, by Mara. Possibly, Bangush's *koṭ* is the partially ruined one on the left, since it appears to be older and since it is close to the remains of the storage-tower built by Bangush's son Balmush (the small building at the extreme left of the picture). Katai's *koṭ* can be discerned through the foliage between the other two (photo by K. Wutt, 1976). The incomplete *koṭ* on the left had lost another floor by the time of our visit, while the mosque, in 1976, hadn't seemingly yet been built in the place where we saw it in 1989 (cf. Fig. 13).

Wutt visited the interior of both towers in 1976 (Fig. 11). In one of them (most likely the one we didn't enter) he saw an emblem of Jeshtak — the Kalasha goddess that presides over the domestic sphere and kinship relations — in which the two horse heads protruding from the small wooden plank had been severed (Fig. 12) ⁽⁶⁾. In Birir such emblems are found in every house. It is quite surprising that a cult object directly connected to the pre-islamic religion had been kept in its place.

We shall come back later to the history of these towers, now it will be enough to say that the whole population — obviously much less numerous then — of Jinjeret Kuh lived in them in a distant past. In those times, constant fear of enemy raids made life extremely difficult for the Kalasha. Ordinary houses appeared only later, in more

⁽⁶⁾ Personal communication.



Fig. 6 - Grom: one of the two intact tower-houses, built either by Mara or by Bangush.

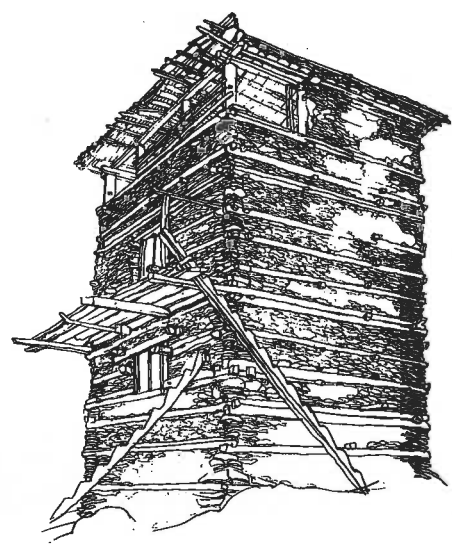


Fig. 7 - Grom: the *koṭ* appearing in Fig. 6, in a sketch by K. Wutt.

peaceful times. The first one, built by the ancestor Tarok, is still standing at a short distance from the towers (Fig. 9). Of the old Kalasha houses, however, only a couple are left today. New houses have been built to satisfy the needs of the new Muslim way of life.

The circular space enclosed by the mosque and the towers, that functions as the village square, in pre-islamic times was used as dancing ground. It was called Godam Punduri Bronz. A recently built house now occupies part of it. The place where the mosque has been erected, is the site of the old village temple, the *rih'ini* (Fig. 13). Formerly the temple stood in a different place that we could not locate. The older structure is remembered as particularly beautiful, and rich of carvings. We were told that it was destroyed and burned by the Pashtun chief Umra Khan of Jandul, i.e. around the end of the last century (cf. Robertson 1899).

The temple was reportedly used as in Birir: the community gathered there for rites of passage, that followed the pattern well known in the unconverted valleys, and during some of the rituals of the winter solstice festival of Chaumos. Death celebrations were held there in winter, while in summer the corpse was exposed on a bed in a specific place outdoors where the funeral feast was offered, panegirics were recited and dancing



Fig. 8 - Grom: the tower-house built by Katai.

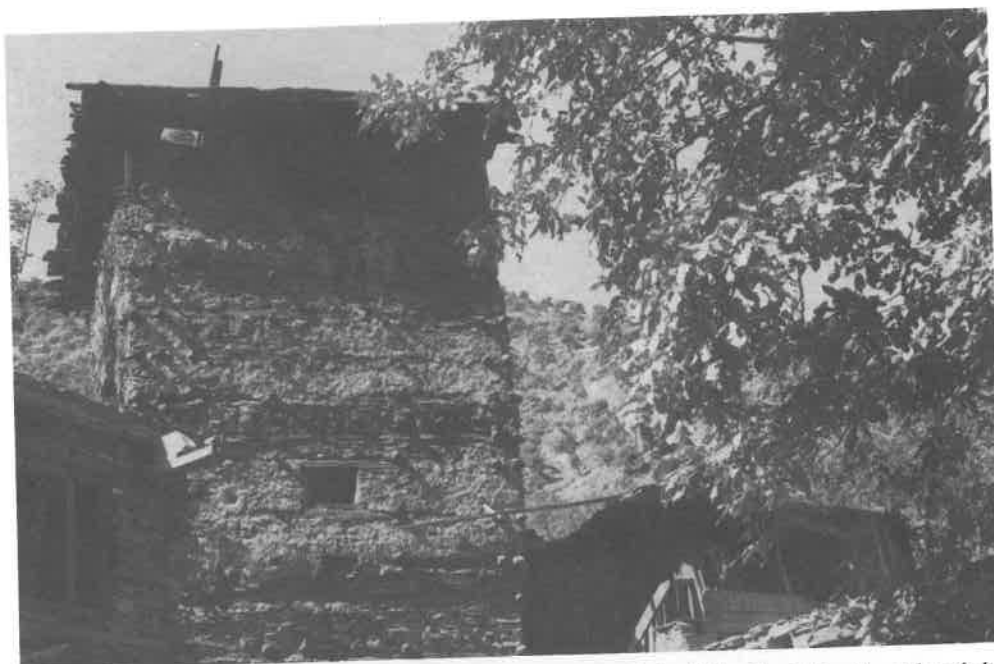


Fig. 9 - Grom: Katai's *kot* with the first house of Jinjeret Kuh, built by Tarok (to the right of the picture).



Fig. 10 - The upper veranda of one of the tower-houses.

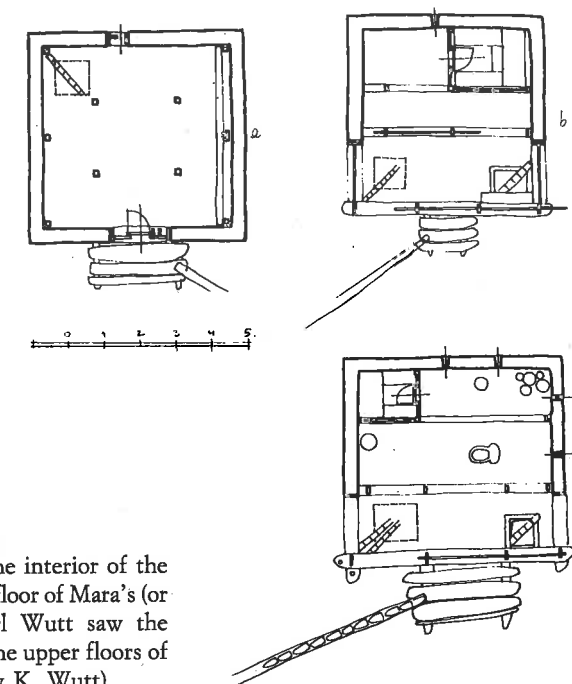


Fig. 11 - Sketch-plans of the interior of the tower-houses: a) the middle floor of Mara's (or Bangush's) *kot* where Karl Wutt saw the Jeshtak emblem; b) and c) the upper floors of the two intact *kot* (by K. Wutt).



Fig. 12 - The middle floor of Mara's (or Bangush's) *kot*: the remains of the severed horse heads of the Jeshtak emblem can be seen at the top of the pillar set against the wall (photo by K. Wutt, 1976).

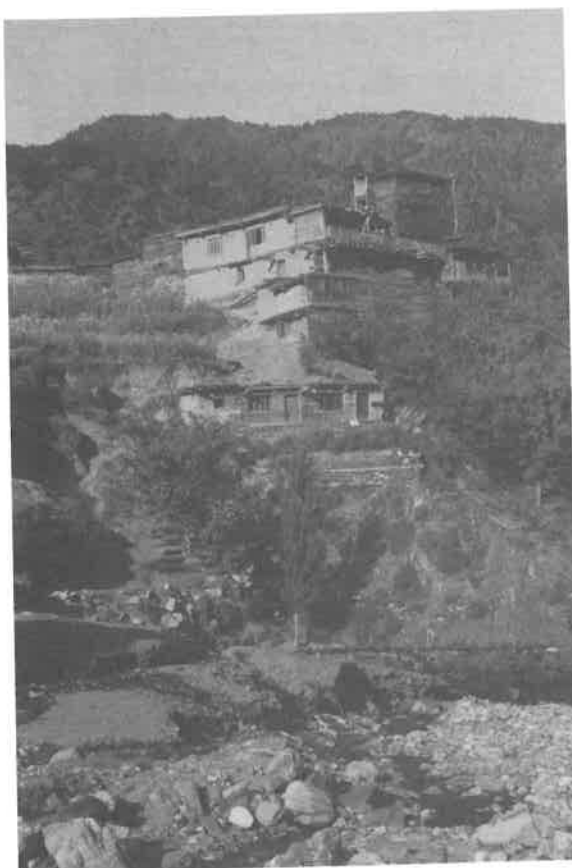


Fig. 13 - A view of Grom from the riverbed: the mosque is clearly visible with the muezzin's tower, occupying the space where the *rikh'ini* once stood. One of the two intact *koṭ* can be seen on the right. The incomplete *koṭ* photographed by Wutt in 1976 (Fig. 5, left) is the stone building just to the left of the plastered wall. By 1990 it had lost another floor. Next to it, is the building obtained from the surviving first floor of Balmush's storage tower. The site of the *baš'ali* is in the surroundings of the place where the photograph was taken from.

took place (7). As is the case in the unconverted valleys, for the death of a woman drums were not played and dancing was not allowed.

Of birth and marriage rituals, our informant remembered only some fragments of the procedures, that seem to correspond to the ones followed in the non-Muslim valleys (cf. Borriello 1974: 133-37; Loude 1980: 72-75; Parkes 1983: 526-33). Like in all Kalasha communities, women, deemed impure, retired for child-birth and monthly periods in the segregation house called *baš'ali* that was located below the village of Grom, by the river bed, where a water-mill now stands. According to some informants, a second one existed, but we were never shown its site.

For the Kalasha the *baš'ali* is, with the cemetery (*maṇḍauj'au*), the most impure of all places (Graziosi 1961; Borriello 1974: 130-32; Loude & Lièvre 1990: 124-26). The dichotomy pure/impure ('*onješta/pr'agbata*) is reflected in the cultural organization

(7) For an account of a death celebration among the Kalasha, see Loude & Lièvre 1984: 149-61.



Fig. 14 - An old coffin (*babg'a*) at the site of the pre-islamic cemetery.

of space, which is structured around the high/low polarity. Thus *baš'ali* and *maṇḍauj'au* are usually located *below* the villages or down valley from them, while the shrines of the male gods are built in high places *above* the villages, or further up-stream (8).

Consistently, the pre-islamic cemetery (*maṇḍauj'au*) of Jinjeret Kuh, although placed fairly high on the mountain slope, is located downstream from Grom on the opposite side of the river in a place called Zozorik. In accordance with Kalasha custom, the corpses were deposited in wooden coffins (*babag'a*) that were left unburied upon the earth. When we got there, we found, to our surprise, four well preserved coffins without their lids, and the remains of a few others (Fig. 14). Two more had been used to close the access to a neighbouring field; one of them contained some human bones.

The remains of the cemetery were piled up in a rocky area unsuitable for cultivation and were partially covered with stones (Fig. 15). We were told that the *maṇḍauj'au* extended in the past to a sloping field that we could see below us. Once the whole population turned Muslim, fears of impurity must have been discarded and the coffins removed to use the land for agriculture. To get them out of the way, we can imagine,

(8) For a discussion of the dual nature of Kalasha society with its many implications, see: Alb. Cacopardo 1985; Parkes 1987; Alb. & Aug. Cacopardo 1989. Its reflections on the cultural organization of the environment are exhaustively presented in Loude & Lièvre 1990: 39-139.



Fig. 15 - Remains of the pre-Islamic cemetery.

the remains of the ancestors were thus piled up among the rocks where we found them, together with the stones dug out of the new field.

Below the cemetery, not far from the river bed, the funerary effigies (cf. Loude 1982) were kept. These wooden statues (*ghand'au*) are carved only for men who offer a prescribed series of feasts connected to a system of rank that has been well studied in Rumbur and Bumburet (Alb. Cacopardo 1974: 126-61; Alb. & Aug. Cacopardo 1977; Darling 1979; Parkes 1983: 483-503; Loude & Lièvre 1984: 113-79). Our main informant Halim Ullah remembered six *ghand'au* by the cemetery, and three of them were mounted. We didn't see any traces of them, but when Karl Wutt visited the valley in 1976, there was still one left. It was not near the cemetery. The statue had been beheaded and then thrown across a ditch to be used as a bridge! (Fig. 16) ⁽⁹⁾. The way in which cemetery and *ghand'au* had been disposed of, shows the contempt of the newly converted for the traces of the old religion.

Similarly, very little was left of the shrines of the pre-Islamic gods. We got discordant information concerning their number: finally we were shown two sites. Consistently with Kalasha organization of space, they were both located higher than the villages, among the trees of the *bonj* (*quercus balut*) forest that lays above the limits of cultivable land.

⁽⁹⁾ Personal communication.



Fig. 16 - Beheaded funerary effigy (*ghand'au*) thrown across a ditch (photo by K. Wutt, 1976). On close inspection, the dagger hanging from the effigy's belt can clearly be seen.

One is just by the village of Grom, along the mountain slope. The former presence of a shrine is revealed only by the basis of the front wall of the little stone construction held to be the god's abode (Fig. 17). The people that showed us the place on our first visit, seemed to ignore altogether the name of the divinity worshipped there, and Halim Ullah contradicted himself several times on this point. It is possible that it was the shrine of Deu, which could stand for Mahandeu, a well known god, worshipped in all Kalasha valleys ⁽¹⁰⁾.

The other holy place we visited, is on a mountain spur separating the main valley from its branch called Aruet Kui. It stands in a quite impressive position, commanding a wide view over the whole country downstream. The shrine stood in a natural cave that could be reached, not without difficulty, from the sloping top of the ridge (Fig. 18). The two wooden horse heads could once be seen from the path below, protruding from the front wall of the shrine which closed the opening of the cave, overhanging a steep cliff. This shrine, therefore, unlike the other one, departs

⁽¹⁰⁾ For a systematic description of the Kalasha pantheon cf. Aug. Cacopardo 1974: 32-70; Jettmar 1975: 339-71; Loude 1980: 43-60. A brief list of Kalasha gods can be found also in Siiger 1956: 20-21; Wazir Ali Shah 1974: 71; Hussam-ul-Mulk 1974a.



Fig. 17 - Remains of the stone base of a shrine probably dedicated to the god Mahandeo (photo by K. Wutt, 1976).

from the open air model of all the other male divinity shrines known in Kalasha culture, and is, to our knowledge, the only example of a sanctuary within a cave.

This sacred cave is the place where oaths were taken. According to Halim Ullah, who led us there, those were the remains of the shrine of the god Varin. Since in Birir oaths are taken at the local shrine of this same divinity (Schomberg 1938: 198), which is located moreover in a similar impervious position where two valleys join, there are good chances that his memory is correct. It may be worth noting that Halim Ullah used the present tense in referring to the presence of the god in that place and warned us not to enter the cave, showing an attitude of somewhat fearful reverence similar to the one that still surrounds the homonymous shrine in Birir.

For what concerns the other shrines of the valley, data are quite uncertain. A very holy place apparently existed in Pingau ga, upstream from Grom: it was held to be so pure that only virgin boys were allowed to approach it ⁽¹¹⁾. Other holy places were to be found in the side valleys downstream from Grom: Gorasen Kui (just upstream from the gorges), Gromkuia Kui, and Onjeshta Kui. About the first one, our informant

⁽¹¹⁾ In Kalasha religious thought the ideal of purity at the human level is best embodied by initiated virgin boys (*'onješta s'uda*), who are not yet in contact with the polluting feminine sphere. The pure/impure (*'onješta/pr'aghata*) polarity is symmetrical to the male/female one. For Kalasha dualism see note 8.



Fig. 18 - The cave that hosted the shrine of the god Varin.

only remembered that a ritual was held there when the *k'anda* tree was in bloom (March) as part of a festival called Basun-nat (Spring dance): the men gathered at the shrine and five he-goats were sacrificed there; three days of dancing followed.

When we asked Halim Ullah for details about the Gromkuia kui shrine, the old man said that a wooden statue representing the god Varin stood there, and that he had seen it with his own eyes. We immediately got quite excited and asked him for a full description of it. It was a mounted figure representing a bearded man with teeth made of little stones and eyes made of flint. The human figure wore a robe of honour reaching down to its ankles, and over one of its shoulders hung a bow while the arrows were bound at the waist; in a wooden sheath a long dagger was fitted. Halim Ullah specified that this was a real iron weapon called *nyir'an*. The human figure was all painted in red and the horse in white. The red colour — our informant explained — was obtained from gold, found seaving the sand of the Kunar river. After we recorded with care everything he said — wondering if we had come across the first anthropomorphic representation of a god, among the Kalasha — Halim

Ullah finally declared, to our disappointment, that the statue was actually a *ghand'au* — carved for a man by the name of Shang — and many details of his description indeed confirmed it.

Nevertheless, if we are to trust our informant's memory, this would be the first instance known of a fully painted *ghand'au*. Equally unusual is the site where it apparently stood: funerary effigies are normally found by the cemeteries or in some cases near the villages, like in Urtsun (Robertson 1974: 4); never at a god's shrine.

Another holy place existed in Onjeshta Kui. The name of this last valley can be translated as 'pure' or 'holy', so there is little doubt that it hosted a divine presence, possibly that of the god Praba, whose shrine — like Varin's — is found also in Birir, but not in Rumbur and Bumburet.

We inquired also with Halim Ullah about the cycle of seasonal festivals. His memories were rather vague, but the general pattern appeared to be that of Birir: drums were played during Chaumos and there was no dancing for Uchao⁽¹²⁾. As far as Chaumos is concerned Halim Ullah mentioned that initiations (*gošn'ik*) took place then, and he also recalled the night of the torches (*čh'anja rat*) and the making of bread in the shape of small animals during the night of *Kutamr'u*. Of the other festivals, apart from Basun-nat, he recalled the Prun, which is still celebrated in Birir after the grape harvest and Joshi, the great spring celebration⁽¹³⁾.

He mentioned, however, a ritual held in spring before the goats left the goat-sheds near the villages to start the slow migration that would bring them, in full summer, to the high pastures just below the rocky peaks encircling the valley: in a place called Shing, a kid was killed and completely burned on a fire as an offering to the *s'uci*, the mountain spirits⁽¹⁴⁾, whose realm the herds were about to enter. This is a very sacred rite — still celebrated on various occasions in the unconverted valleys (Loude & Lièvre 1990: 309) — called '*onjš-mar'at*', that is performed by virgin boys ('*onjšta s'uda*'). Only after this sacrifice, were the goat-herds allowed to leave the valley bottom. The *s'uci* had to be ingratiated.

⁽¹²⁾ We cannot expand here on these festivals that are fully described elsewhere (for Chaumos see: Wutt 1983; Loude & Lièvre 1984; Aug. Cacopardo 1985; Alb. & Aug. Cacopardo 1989. For Uchao see Loude & Lièvre 1988). We shall only recall that in Rumbur and Bumburet there is a prohibition to play the ceremonial drums for Chaumos, explained with the fear that Balimain, the visiting god absent in Birir, might be chased away by their noise. As for the late summer festival of Uchao, while it is celebrated with three days of dancing in the two northern valleys, it entails only rituals and chants in Birir. This is most likely due to the fact that the Prun festival — which is peculiar to that valley and entails much dancing — follows only a few weeks later.

⁽¹³⁾ For Prun see: Palwal 1974; Loude & Lièvre 1984: 76-78; 1987: 206-17; 1991: 16-37; Lines 1988: 224-32. For Joshi see: Schomberg 1938: 53-67; Morgenstierne 1947; Siiger 1956: 24-26; 1974: 87-92; Loude 1980: 79-80; Loude & Lièvre 1990: 53-58.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Belief in mountain spirits, prevalently referred to as *phari'an* is widespread all over the Hindu Kush chain: cf. Biddulph 1986 (1st ed. 1880): 94; Schomberg 1938: 235-40; Hussam-ul-Mulk 1974b: 96-100; Tucci 1977: 69; Loude & Lièvre 1990: 47-82.

These mountain spirits, in Jinjeret Kuh, have left a tangible sign of their presence in a high place called Basgrundishut, where many petroglyphs are found representing markhors, goats, sheep and men⁽¹⁵⁾. Rock carvings of the same kind exist in all the Kalasha valleys, and they are believed to be the work of supernatural beings (Snoy 1974).

The Kalasha believe that shamans (*deh'ar*) can directly communicate with the *s'uci* and the gods⁽¹⁶⁾. When asked about the *deh'ar* of Jinjeret Kuh our informant mentioned only a man named Punjapao who was said to have had the power of transforming women into sheep. Punjapao is well remembered in the oral tradition of the unconverted valleys and he was thought to be a man who 'mixed with the *s'uci*' (Loude & Lièvre 1990: 290, 405), but he was not a *deh'ar*.

Therefore we have no data about the shamans of Jinjeret Kuh and their reported feats. Loude & Lièvre, in their most interesting and comprehensive work on Kalasha shamanism, mention only once a *deh'ar* from Jinjeret (Kuh?) by the name of Sherdast (1990: 249), but his home valley seems actually uncertain (cf. *ibid.*: 544).

The brief sketch we have just traced of the pre-islamic culture of Jinjeret Kuh, although fragmentary and incomplete, is enough to highlight a close affinity with Birir. Culturally, Jinjeret Kuh was in fact a twin of Birir, like Rumbur is of Bumburet. In our previous reports on the converted Kalasha, we noted that, in the past, a southern cultural complex — still referred to in prayers and songs (cf. Loude & Lièvre 1990: 114), and surviving today only in Birir — was probably the main stem from which the slightly different culture of the two northern valleys branched out.

Since field work has mainly been carried out in Rumbur, this southern complex is still little studied and usually deemed to be peripheral. Our research in lower Chitral indicates, instead, that it is probably more archaic than the northern one, and that it possibly occupied a central position in the former pre-islamic Kalasha world. There are also some indications that the cultural pattern prevailing east of the Kunar was closer to this southern complex than to the Rumbur/Bumburet one (Alb. Cacopardo 1991: 308).

The main distinctive elements of this Birir pattern are: a different function of the village temple⁽¹⁷⁾; the absence of Balimain, the god that visits Rumbur and

⁽¹⁵⁾ Similar rock carvings are quite common in Northern Pakistan. Jettmar suggests that they might have been made 'from the earliest times up to the twentieth century' (1982: 1, 31).

⁽¹⁶⁾ For shamanism among the Kalasha see Siiger 1963 and especially Loude & Lièvre 1990. This last work, based on substantial data, examines in depth the role and functions of the Kalasha *deh'ar* in the general context of Hindu Kush shamanism.

⁽¹⁷⁾ More data is needed for an exhaustive comparison between the *rikh'ini* of Birir and the *ĵ'eštak han* of Bumburet and Rumbur. The more visible difference is that in Birir the emblems of the goddess Jeshtak are kept in the homes and not in the *rikh'ini*, while in the other two valleys an emblem per lineage (and not per family) is kept in the *ĵ'eštak han*. For a discussion of the *ĵ'eštak han* institution, based on data from Rumbur, see Parkes in Jones & Parkes 1984.

Bumburet during the winter festival of Chaumos; the Prun festival, now celebrated only in Birir. All these elements are found in Jinjeret Kuh.

Birir, Jinjeret Kuh and Urtsun, in fact, were closely connected not only from the point of view of culture (in spite of the Kam influences in Urtsun), but also from that of social relations. The three communities formed a wider social unit through intense intermarriage and common participation in seasonal festivals and feasts of merit. In our previous report (Aug. Cacopardo 1991: 312) we have termed such a social group 'festival unit' or 'inter-valley community'. Bumburet and Rumbur formed another such unit; and probably a third one, or more, existed formerly in the Shishi Kuh and main valley Kalasha settlements.

To better understand the web of social relations within and around the Jinjeret Kuh community, and to shed some light on its past, we shall now examine the kinship system and the oral traditions about the history of its people.

SECTION II

Kinship and Oral Traditions in Jinjeret Kuh

The kinship system in Jinjeret Kuh was of course the same as in the rest of the Kalasha area. Patrilineal lineages were defined on the basis of a rule that prescribed exogamy to all descendants of a common ancestor in the male line until the seventh generation. Whenever two descendants of a common ancestor in the male line got married in the eighth (or a further) generation, a new lineage was created with an appropriate rite.

The peculiarity of Jinjeret Kuh is, however, that the great majority of the inhabitants actually belonged to a single lineage, called Balmushdari, i.e. the descendants of Balmush or Barmush (we also heard Bangmush). The inhabitants were therefore compelled by the exogamic rule to marry mostly outside the valley.

This was a situation similar to the one that possibly existed in Urtsun (Aug. Cacopardo, in press), and certainly in Rumbur until the generation of Mahaddin, son of Dremes, i.e. six generations above the living elders (see the genealogies of Rumbur, reported, with only very slight differences, in Alb. Cacopardo 1974: 12, and in Parkes 1983: 382, 407), when the first marriage within the valley occurred.

It would seem quite logical to imagine that, just like the community of Rumbur is really an offspring of Bumburet, Jinjeret Kuh is nothing but a similar offspring of Birir, only a more recent one. This, however, is not quite corroborated by the oral traditions we have collected.

Though we believe to have been quite lucky to be able to collect some information about the remembered past of Jinjeret, considering the serious problems we have mentioned earlier about inquiries into the pre-Muslim era, we must remind the reader that the reconstruction we shall present derives mostly from the words of our main

informant Halim Ullah, and is therefore, as any single-source information, not particularly reliable. Not only is it quite difficult to distinguish fact from myth, as in any oral tradition of this sort, it is also hard to establish to what extent Halim Ullah's recollections correctly reflect notions and ideas that were, at least in the past, shared by the society as such, i.e. by the knowledgeable elders who were the depositories of its collective memory.

It is, however, a tale that deserves to be told, since it sheds some light on a dark and grievous period in Kalasha history: a time of thin population and of bitter struggles with immediate neighbours in which women and children were killed, by arrow, or by spear, or by axe, a time when entire families were exterminated, or compelled to flee on foot high in the mountains, dwelling in caves, pursued years and years by the enemies. A time when the social contract between the tribes was not quite established, and in which man was wolf to man.

To start from the beginning, Halim Ullah, like all our informants in Jinjeret Kuh, was a supporter of the well known theory of the Quraish origin (Alb. Cacopardo 1991: 286; Robertson 1974: 158; Dupree 1974: XVIII), which was common also in Nuristan and in Urtsun (Aug. Cacopardo 1991: 335). According to this story, the Kalasha are descendants of a strand of Quraish people who came from Arabia at the time of the Prophet, in order to escape conversion to Islam. This theory, of course, cannot be supported by any linguistic or other evidence, and it is symptomatic that, although Robertson does report it from pre-islamic Nuristan, as far as the Kalasha are concerned, it is now heard only among the islamized people, while the unconverted people of the Kalashgum are not fond of it.

At any rate, in Halim Ullah's story, when the Kalasha came from Arabistan, they passed by Kabul and came into Chitral from the south, first settling in Arandu, Narei (Narisat) and Nangar (Nagar). The only 'ancestor' remembered from this time was named Satra, a name that does not recur, to our knowledge, in any of the oral traditions recorded in the Kalashgum. From Nangar, they then extended, in Halim Ullah's words, to Damel, Suwir, Badugal, Kalkatak, Gromel, Azurdam, in the lower Kunar, then to Lawi, and into the Shishi Kuh to Shishi, Birga, Birganisar, Ustrum, Kottik and Gri; up the main valley to Khairabad, Shidi, Gahiret, Ayun, Binisar, Broz, Chimulkon, Joghori, Orgoch, Khurkashande, Chitral, plus of course the Kalashgum. In early times Nangar must have been a centre of the culture, if it is told that ten to twenty-thousand people assembled there to dance in a flat called Ponini lasht (Kal.: *Natik'en lhasht*, meaning 'dancing flat').

But the first ancestor that Halim connected directly to the line of Jinjeret Kuh was none other than the famous king Chiu of Chitral (Schomberg 1938: 166; Parkes 1983: 16; Loude & Lièvre 1990: 169). In this story, Chiu marks the end of the golden age of the Kalasha, when they were lords of themselves all over southern Chitral, an age of which, here like in the Kalashgum, little is remembered. It is as if the end of that age marked the beginnings of remembered history, a time to which most of the founding fathers of the present communities are ascribed. This time of beginning

is a time of great misfortune, due to the loosing conflict with the Rais conqueror (Biddulph 1986: 150; Siiger 1956: 33), which probably extended over many decades between the first half of the 14th century and the early 16th century (Parkes 1983: 17, fn. 21; Wazir Ali Shah 1974: 70; Karim Beg, in press) ⁽¹⁸⁾. At that time, Khurkash, a son of Chiu, lived in the village of Khurkashande (just south of Chitral town, on the right bank of the Kunar) which he himself had founded. At this time the people already celebrated Chaumos, Joshi and Prun, and they knew the practice of the Biramor. Though they did not yet have grapes, they made wine from cherries: and they rode on horses, and fought in iron armour. It may be worth noting that we have expressly inquired whether they had horse drawn charriots, to which Halim replied they didn't.

Now in Halim Ullah's story, the mythical Rais king, who came to Chitral as a Muslim, is said to have been a wazir of the empire of China (see on this point Schomberg 1938: 263 and Jettmar 1977: 434), who fought against Chiu and killed him, as well as his son Khurkash. But Khurkash had a son named Bedana, who fled the main valley with his own son Jangashingar and took refuge in Bumburet, in the village of Krakar. At this time Bedana was in his maturity and his son a young man. After living seven years in Krakar under the constant threat of the Rais' forces, they were attacked and driven again to the mountains, till they crossed into Birir and settled in a cave in the gorge of Shang Kui above the village of Gazguru. Here he defended himself and his family for three years, until he was finally attacked by the Rais and killed with his son Jangashingar.

Jangashingar, of course, had also a son called Bangush, who again fled after his father's death: this is the founding father of Jinjeret Kuh, who came to the place where the village of Grom (Shekhanande) now stands, and built himself a tower (*kot*).

This part of the story, though remembered with considerable detail, is still partly clouded in myth. Twice we have a father-son couple who are slain in fight by the Rais enemy, with a grandson who escapes, first to lead a life of homeless hardships, then to settle and found the community of Jinjeret Kuh.

It may well be that this story is a reflection of events that actually took place in the time of the Rais dynasty, when it is likely that many Kalasha were driven away from the main valley to the side valleys of Chitral: the same is told of Bula Singh, (Wazir Ali Shah 1974: 70; Parkes 1983: 16-17; Loude 1990: 162) who, according to oral tradition in the Kalashgum, escaped to the village of Brun in Bumburet, where one lineage bears his name to this day.

What is not possible, however, is that the genealogy connecting Bangush to his living descendants is complete (Fig. 19), since he appears only in the seventh generation above our informants: which would put him somewhere in the 18th century, well into

⁽¹⁸⁾ Only when this article was already in press, we have received a copy of the important paper by Wolfgang Holzwarth (in press) which radically questions the common historiography of Chitral as well as the very existence of the Rais dynasty.

the age of the Kator, the historical rulers of Chitral. If we accept that Bangush did live in the time of the Rais, then we must presume that there is a break in the genealogy.

Going back to the time of Bangush, it is not clear who were the previous inhabitants of Jinjeret Kuh, when he came there. Halim Ullah contradicted himself on this point, first stating that he found other Kalasha living there, then that it was uninhabited. Another informant, on the other hand, stated that the previous inhabitants were the ancestors of two small lineages still existing in Jinjeret Kuh, the Shumutudari and the Damuridari or Bashtukdari, who are not descendants of Bedana and Bangush. In Halim Ullah's version, however, these two lineages are the descendants of Kam people who came from Bashgal respectively at the time of Tarok and of Balmush, in both cases to take refuge after a murder. According to him, the Balmushdari did not intermarry with these people, but this information does not seem quite reliable.

It may be noted here that Halim Ullah agreed with our informants in the Kalashgum in stating that the Balalik (Alb. Cacopardo 1974: XXXIX-XL; Loude 1990: 171-73), who are said to have been the inhabitants of Rumbur before the time of Adabog, did not exist in Jinjeret Kuh or Birir. We shall return to these mysterious people in the concluding section of this report, here we shall only note that, according to Halim Ullah, the Balalik were non-Kalasha people descending from one Balunzik, who came from the area of Gilgit to Bumburet long after the Kalasha were there, and there adopted the Kalasha language and customs.

We also inquired about the presence of the Bhaira, the stock of artisan-servants once present in Bumburet and Birir (Parkes 1983: 27, 204; Alb. Cacopardo 1974: 19), who may be somehow related to the Nuristani Bari, which, according to Robertson, were believed to be the aboriginals of Nuristan (Robertson 1974: 82, 99-103; Edelberg & Jones 1979: 102; Edelberg 1984: XI-XIII). Schomberg (1938: 195) reports a tradition stating that the Bhaira were the aboriginal inhabitants of Birir before the Kalasha arrived there. In Jinjeret Kuh there were four or five families of these people, who were called Bara. They were artisans, who worked wood, built houses, constructed tools such as the plow, carried wood and cooked bread for the feasts, for the benefit of all members of the community. They were considered impure, did not intermarry with the Kalasha and were not admitted to the shrines of the gods. The main reason for their impurity was in the fact that they intermarried with close relatives, a violation of the rule of reciprocity which is not tolerated in the Kalasha system. Halim Ullah also agreed with other informants in the Kalashgum that if ever a Kalasha married in violation of the exogamic rule, he himself would become a Bara, which implied marginalization even in every day conversation and exclusion from most of the rites.

But Halim Ullah had his own story about the origin of the Bara. According to him the ancestors of the Bara were 'wild people' (*jangal'i ad'em*) who lived in Shishi Kuh. It is interesting to report his description of these people, since it is clearly a remembrance of primordial hunter-gatherers whom the Kalasha may well have met some time during their past history. In fact, it is not impossible that nomadic bands of hunter-gatherers may have survived in remote parts of Chitral until the first part

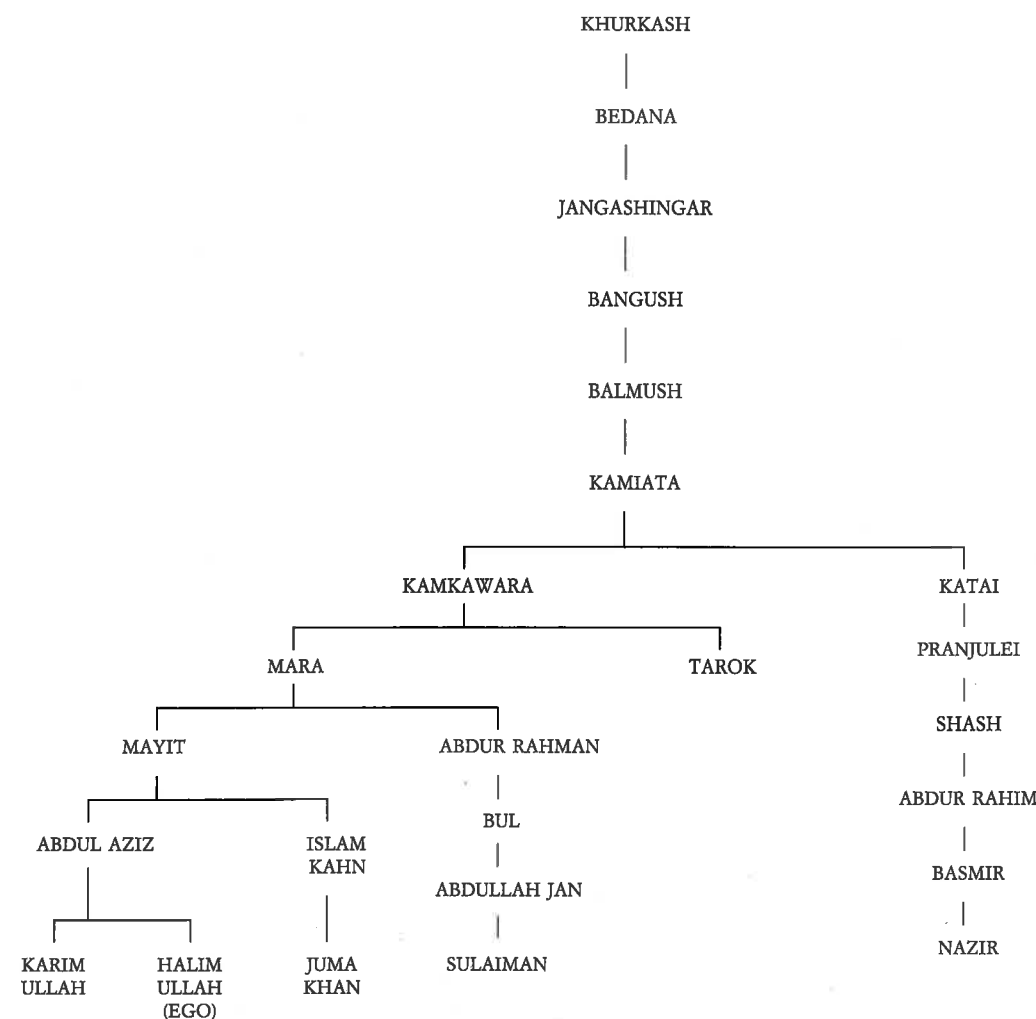


Fig. 19 - Genealogy of the Jinjeret Kuh community according to Halim Ullah. For the descendants of Tarok, and for a more detailed account of those of Katai, see the genealogy given by Sheikh-ul-Islam (Fig. 20).

of the 2nd millennium A.D., when population was probably much thinner than now. A trace of their existence may be in Marco Polo's brief remarks about the country of Belor, where he says: 'E quando l'uomo va oltre 3 giornate, e' conviene che l'uomo cavalca bene 40 giornate per montagne e per coste, tra creco e levante, e per valle, passando molti fiumi e molti luoghi deserti. E per tutto questo luogo non si truova abitazione ne' albergagione, ma conviene che si porti la vivanda. Questa contrada si chiama Belor. La gente dimora ne le montagne molto alte: adorano idoli e sono salvatica gente, e vivono de le bestie che pigliano. Loro vestire è di pelli di bestie,

e sono uomini malvagi' (Polo 1982: 32) ⁽¹⁹⁾. There is a possibility that this passage reflects a confusion between the ancient Kafirs ('the people dwell on very high mountains' and they 'adore idols') and these hunter-gatherers (they 'live of the animals they capture' and they are 'salvatica gente', literal translation of *jangal'i ad'em*).

According to Halim Ullah, at any rate, these people did not have fields or herds, they ate the sap of the *beu* (willow) tree and hunted markhors with stones, since they did not know the bow and arrow. He also stated that they did not wear hides, but made their garments of wild plants. This detail is probably due to the fact that the Kalasha goat herders were still often wearing hides in Halim Ullah's youth (Schomberg 1938: 39) and of course the underlying idea of the whole story is that these wild men were *not* like the Kalasha. Halim Ullah, however, was quite precise in indicating which plants they used for garments: one was the *s'araz* (*juniperus excelsa*), which is the sacred plant the Kalasha use in many of their rites and grows at high altitudes in the coniferous zone; another one was the *č'ižin*, a kind of pine (probably *pinus wallichiana*) which also has ritual significance for the Kalasha and is depicted in the drawings of the night of *Kuṭamr'u* during Chaumos (Snoy 1974: 84; Wutt 1976: 155, 168; Loude & Lièvre 1984: 229; Aug. Cacopardo 1985: 732; Alb. & Aug. Cacopardo 1989: 321-22); and finally there was the *bhong*, i.e. *cannabis indica*, the plant from which hashish is made, which grows wild all over Chitral: it may be worth noting that cannabis has also been widely used in the past as source of a strong textile fiber, and of the three it seems definitely the one most suitable for wearing.

The 'wild men' were not Dangarik, nor Gujur, nor Kho, nor of any of the groups now existing in Chitral: they spoke a 'bad language', which was not comprehensible, or perhaps did not know language at all. There was a strange admixture in the evaluation that Halim Ullah gave of these people: on the one hand, when he was first asked whether they were '*onješta*' (the word that describes the realm of purity in Kalasha culture), he said yes, they were very '*onješta*', because they belonged to the wilderness (*adr'ak*). Shortly after, however, he explained that the *jangal'i ad'em* 'did not know their sister', meaning that they married indifferently among very close relatives, as their descendants still did down to this century. When asked how this was compatible with their '*onješta*' quality, he immediately stated that they were not '*onješta*' at all.

Like many hunter-gatherers in contact with agricultural people, the Bara of Shishi Kuh, who lived in a place called Balpanch, had the disturbing habit of integrating their diet with walnuts and other fruits stolen from the Kalasha. So Bangush planned an expedition to capture them with two men from the valley of Birir, by the name

⁽¹⁹⁾ 'And after proceeding further for 3 days, then one must ride for all of 40 days through mountains and ridges, between north-east and east, and across valleys, passing many rivers and many desert lands. And throughout this country neither dwelling nor shelter can be found, and one must bring his food along with him. This country is called Belor. The people dwell on very high mountains: they adore idols and are wild people, and they live of the animals they capture. Their clothes are of animal skins, and they are bad people'. For the problems connected with the localization of Belor, or Bolor (the P'u-lu of the Chinese), see Jettmar 1977 and Tucci 1977.

of Khanjar and Konei. Unfortunately, we have not found trace of these two ancestors in the genealogies we collected in Birir, but according to Halim Ullah they lived, like Bangush, still at the time of the Rais.

So Bangush, Khanjar and Konei went to Shishi Kuh and spread a thick layer of walnuts on the ground in a flat area. Then they hid. Soon seven Bara, four men and three women, came down to gather their walnuts, but the Kalasha surrounded them and when they tried to flee, they slipped on the walnuts and were caught. So the captives were divided between the three, who took each a couple and presented the seventh man to the Mehtar. All the Bara of Jinjeret Kuh are descended from these captives, as well as those of Bumburet, since the inhabitants of that valley later obtained them from Birir. According to Halim Ullah, there were Bara also in Rumbur, but their descendants are now protected by an agreement not to disclose their origins. This of course has been always denied by all our informants in Rumbur. At any rate, it is well known that the Bara, or Bhaira, as they are called there, were once numerous in Birir and Bumburet, where they occupied the village of Kandarisar. They were all converted to Islam by the time of Schomberg's visit (1938: 195). Their origins, of course, remain clouded in mystery, but the possibility that they be the descendants of aboriginal hunter-gatherers should not, perhaps, be entirely discarded.

Neither the Bara nor the Balalik, at any rate, are said to have inhabited Jinjeret Kuh at the time of the arrival of Bangush. Though, as we have seen, the information we received on this subject was contradictory, it seems to us most likely that the valley was inhabited by other Kalasha, who may either have become extinct or may have descendants in the two small lineages, of the Shumutudari and Damuridari.

A possible trace of these previous inhabitants is in the ruins of the village of Kotvisht, which dominate the main valley of Jinjeret Kuh from a steep and hardly accessible position downstream from the village of Grom. The position reminds of other old abandoned Kalasha settlements like the one of Rawellik Kot in Rumbur or Grompisht in Urtsun, which belong to an age of continuous incursions that made defence the first priority, all to the detriment of comfort. Now Kotvisht is said to have belonged to one Basirach, whose relation with Bangush remains unclear. According to Halim Ullah, Basirach killed two men of the Rais prince, and therefore escaped to Badamuk in Nuristan to avoid revenge, bringing with him his son Punjaopao and his brother Dibik. After that the village was abandoned. However, it seems quite unlikely that the village should have been abandoned such a long time ago, since some ruins of buildings are still visible there even from the bottom of the valley, despite the very steep position. In fact, there almost seem to be more remains of Kotvisht than of Grompisht in Urtsun (Aug. Cacopardo 1991), which was abandoned only a few decades ago, and was seen standing by Robertson (1974: 4) and Morgenstierne (1932: 45).

Going back to Bangush, in Halim Ullah's story he is the founder of the village of Grom, where he built a tower which was to remain the only one used as a home in Grom until the time of Katai. This tower is said to be still standing at Godam Punduri Bronz, in the centre of the present village, though it is not clear which one

of the four existing *koṭ* it may be identified with (Figs. 5-7). At that time, all the people would spend the night locked together inside the tower, after withdrawing the long wooden ladder that led to the door on the first floor. The enemy to be feared, at this point, was rather the Nuristani marauders than the men of the Rais. In their frequent attacks, the Kam people of Bashgal would come in bands of often dozens of young bravos, who would raid the animals, plunder the stores and kill men and women alike with no mercy.

It was in one of these raids that Bangush was killed, when he was by then in his old age. More than fifty men came in from the Bashgal and in the conflict his son Balmush killed various men, till in the end Bangush was killed by spear and the enemies fled. So Balmush and his six brothers collected their father's body and brought it to the village, where they held for him the *ḡir'e* of the dead. People came from all the Kalashagum and from Urtsun and Shishi Kuh. The women did their *bašik'ek* (Loude & Lièvre 1984: 156) over the body of the dead and the people all danced and were fed.

Balmush is the first of the ancestors recalled by Halim Ullah who did not die by violence: he lived till his old age and died of illness. His six brothers, however, were all killed in battle and died without issue, except for Shang, whose line soon extinguished.

At the time of Balmush there was still a single *koṭ* used as a home, but Balmush himself built a second tower to be used as store-house and cellar. By then the Kalasha had learned to make wine with grapes, and they pressed it at the bottom floor of this three-storied building, collecting the must in a pit dug in the ground, like in Birir, where, however, the vats used in making wine are never located inside the villages. The upper stories of the tower served as storage for grain, nuts and cheeses, which were the same *č'aša*, *ku'inda*, *kil'är* as are still made today. The first floor of this tower, as mentioned, is still standing on Godam Punduri Bronz, at the north-western end of the square (Fig. 5).

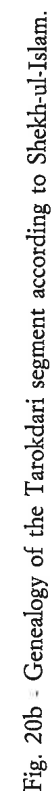
There was only one goat-house at that time (which was called Najan Gosht, and is now destroyed), but they had *kut'u* (Parkes 1983: 46), or summer huts, by the fields, where, however, they didn't dare to spend the night. The fields in those days were only in the right (southern) branch of the valley above Grom, in Pingauga, Duni, Chutikdesh and Lashtchetrawat. There was also, as mentioned, a *baš'ali* down by the riverside, where once five women were killed by the Kam, among them Mumberi, wife of Rabi, one of Balmush's brothers. Balmush is also remembered as founder of at least one *d'ewa dur*. At his death, he was honoured with the erection of an *istor'i ghaṇḍ'au*, a mounted funerary statue. Though Halim Ullah stated that Balmush also lived in the time of the Rais, it seems much more likely that he lived in the age of the Kator, some time around the eighteenth century.

Other *ghaṇḍ'au* were also erected for five of the six brothers of Balmush, i.e. Tazurek, Zika, Bacha, Rabi and of course Shang, who had the fabulous statue at the Varin Dur, which has earlier been described. Halim Ullah, as mentioned, claimed to have seen with his own eyes at least some of these *ghaṇḍ'au*.



Like his father Bangush, Balmush had only one wife, who came from Bumburet. This wife gave him a child by the name of Kamiata, who, in Halim Ullah's version, is the last common ancestor of all the Balmushdari, who inherited the original *koṭ* built by Bangush.

Kamiata is also credited with having held the famous *ek az'ar pai biram'or*, the *biram'or* of the four hundred goats, which very few Kalasha are said to have done:



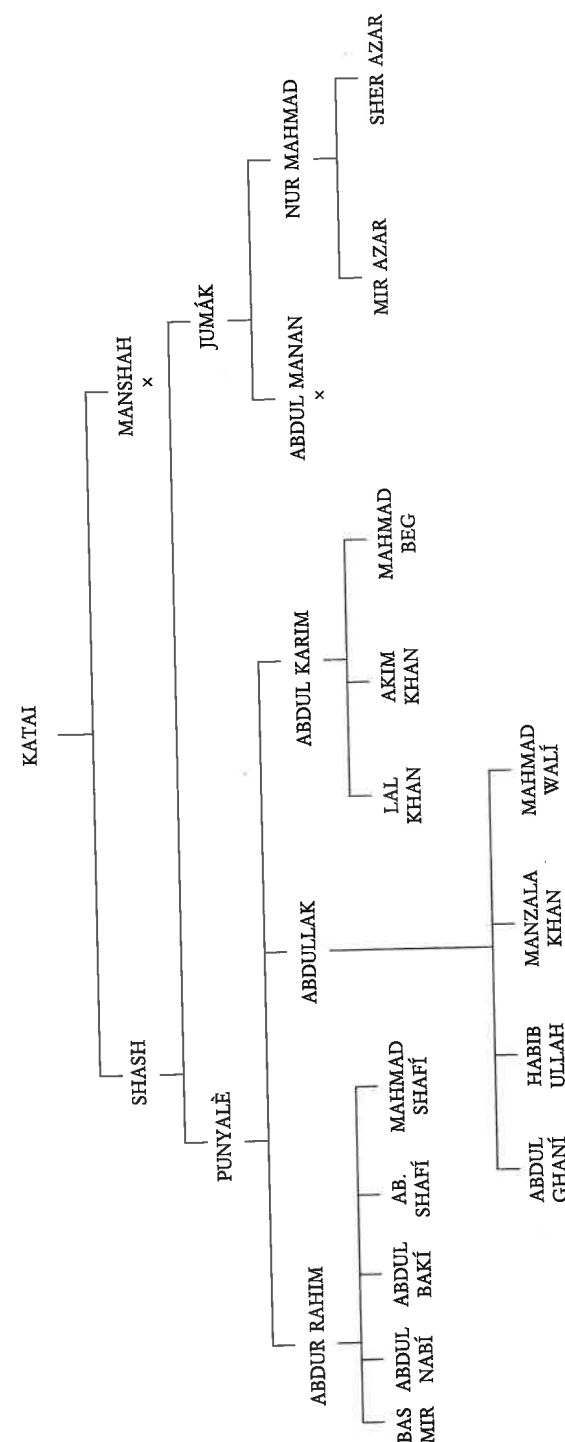


Fig. 20c - Genealogy of the Kataidari segment according to Shekh-ul-Islam.

this of course is another sign of his material wealth. It is therefore quite likely that, though our informant did not mention it, he too must have had a *ghand'au* built at his death.

According to Halim Ullah, Kamiata married a lady from Birga in the Shishi Kuh (see Alb. Cacopardo 1991: 301-5).

His wife gave Kamiata two sons: Kamkawara, or Kamkarwa, was the eldest and Katai the youngest. After their father's death, the sons shared the original *koṭ* for some time, then Katai built the second *koṭ* on Godam Punduri Bronz. This fact is actually in contradiction with the present rules of Kalasha tradition, which require that the youngest son inherit the father's house, while the older ones must build new homes. There are only two possible explanations: either the rule had not yet been established in Jinjeret Kuh, or Halim Ullah was wrong. In any case the *koṭ* of Katai is the only one which was unanimously identified by several informants as the northernmost of the two that still stand intact on the square (Figs. 8-9). It is three stories high, and now belongs to Nazir, son of Bazmir, a direct descendant of Katai in the fifth generation: if our estimates are correct, its construction dates back to the early decades of the 19th century.

Kamkawara married a woman from Bumburet, while Katai got his wife from Urtun. They both had a *ghand'au* at their death, though only Kamkawara had made a biramor during his life. At this point, the genealogy of the Balmushdari branches off in two directions: the descendants of Katai would have been the first lineage to break away, had they not been converted to Islam before the seventh generation.

The two sons of Kamkawara are the heads of the other two main branches of the lineage, which are often called Tarokdari and Maradari. Mara was the eldest and, in accordance with the above mentioned rule, it was he who built the third *koṭ* on the square: this is either the one standing intact to the south of Katai's, or the other one across the square, of which only one floor still remains (Figs. 5, 13). Mara also created the fields in the valley of Aruet, where many of his descendants live today.

Mara married a girl from Biyou in Birir, who was daughter of one Phazil and sister of one Rakhan. Tarok had two wives, one from Suwir and one from Birir. It is worth noting that these are the first two reported marriages with women from Birir.

At this point, the village was still entirely made of *koṭ*. The home of Bangush, the storehouse of Balmush, and the more recent buildings of Katai and Mara towered above Godam Punduri Bronz, while a fifth *koṭ*, which seems to have belonged to the Dumuridari, was located not far down towards the river, where the first floor of the building is still standing. Of course, it is possible that other *koṭ* once existing have now disappeared, though we were not told about them. It is likely, at any rate, that the Shumutudari had at least another one.

With this cluster of impressive towers, the village of Grom must have looked quite different from any of the Kalasha villages that can be seen today, though it is likely that, in those days, it was not the only one in this condition: many *koṭ* are

said to have existed in the Kalashgum, though only sparse traces of them survive today (Wutt 1976: 139).

The first house of Jinjeret Kuh was built by Tarok for one of his four sons and it can still be seen close to the square below Katai's *koṭ* (Fig. 9). This is one of the only two houses of Kalasha style still existing in Jinjeret Kuh, since all the others have been restructured or rebuilt to suit the chitrali way of life. The urgent need to preserve these ancient buildings has already been stressed in the first part of this report. It is worth repeating here, since the complex of Godam Punduri Bronz in Jinjeret Kuh is an absolutely unique document of the past history of Chitral which is seriously and immediately threatened unless the authorities take action to prevent its destruction.

With the children of Tarok and Mara, we are in the generation of the grandfathers of the living elders. At this time the community seems to be thriving with increasing population and wealth. The fact that no more *koṭ* were built after Mara shows that conditions had become less perilous and the Nuristani incursions less dangerous. The number of *biram* 'or that were held is also a sign of wealth: Jok, Laalbeg and Shalibeg, all sons of Tarok, as well as Shash son of Katai and Pranjulei his grandson were all generous donors of this feast.

SECTION III

General Conclusions: the Problem of Kalasha Origins

With the above report on Jinjeret Kuh — that follows, as mentioned, the ones on the Eastern Area and Urtsun — all the data collected in our survey of the converted Kalasha communities of Southern Chitral are now presented. From this wider perspective, we feel some comments can be made about the controversial question of Kalasha origins and migrations. We certainly don't intend to solve here this complicated issue, but we think that, fitting together old and new data, a few points can be made clear.

The problem of the origins of the last pagans of the Hindu Kush has always raised the interest and curiosity of researchers and visitors, but the lack of written sources has never allowed any definite conclusion. Two hypothesis have however been formulated by scholars. One — supported by Morgenstierne's studies, and shared by Schomberg (1938: 209), Jettmar (1975: 325) and Parkes (1983: 12) — tends to connect the arrival of the Kalasha in the Chitral valley to the early waves of Indo-Aryan migrations, while the second one sees them as relatively recent newcomers in the area.

While the former hypothesis has never been much elaborated, the latter, first formulated by Siiger (1956: 32-35), has recently been developed at length by Loude & Lièvre (1984: 34-35; 1990: 155-73). We shall therefore take it as a point of departure for our considerations.

Siiger and Loude & Lièvre attempt to reconstruct the itinerary that finally led the Kalasha to Chitral, on the basis of oral tradition mainly from Rumbur. The well known story (Siiger 1956: 33; Loude & Lièvre 1990: 161-62) tells that a legendary chief by the name of Shalak Shah ⁽²⁰⁾ led his people from a mysterious country called Tsiyam to the Chitral valley, where the Kalasha were for a time their own lords. An established oral tradition from the Kalashgum further remembers the two Kalasha 'kings' Bulasing and Raja Wai, who, according to Loude & Lièvre and Siiger, are variously considered brothers or otherwise related and somewhat uncertainly connected by descent with Shalak Shah ⁽²¹⁾. The only other remembered Kalasha 'king' is Chiu, who however, is known only as builder of the famous bridge.

The written records of the history of Chitral (published as *Tarikh-e-Chitral* by Ghulam Murtaza in 1962 in an urdu translation based on a persian manuscript completed by his father Mirza Ghufuran in 1893) date at 1320 A.D. the defeat of Bulasing by Shah Nadir Rais, the Muslim founder of Chitral state (Karim Beg, in press), while they give 1531 A.D. as the approximate date of Raja Wai's death (Parkes 1983: 21). The accuracy of these dates allows some doubt, which shall not be dispelled until some light is shed on the unquoted sources of *Tarikh-e-Chitral*, possibly early persian manuscripts so far unidentified (Parkes 1983: 17) ⁽²²⁾. However, the agreement with all Kalasha traditions, which place their defeat at the hands of the Rais some fifteen generations ago, allows us to accept a loose dating of this conflict (which possibly extended over more than one generation) between the 14th and the 16th century A.D.

In the haze of this remote past, Siiger with some caution (1956: 34) and Loude & Lièvre somewhat more boldly, venture however to make some hypothesis to establish

⁽²⁰⁾ According to some reports Shalak Shah was one of Alexander the Great's generals (Parkes 1983: 11), but the legend of a Greek origin of the Kalasha has by now been altogether discarded by scholars. Descent from Alexander, on the other hand, is claimed by several ethnic groups of the Hindu Kush (Schomberg 1935: 106, 129-30, 145; Caroe 1973: 44-45) and, according to Caroe, since no trace of his famous campaign appears in the ancient eastern sources, such legends are to be ascribed to the body of western knowledge translated into Arabic at the time of the Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad. Furthermore, linguistic evidence is definitely against such an hypothesis for what concerns the Kalasha, despite unfounded statements common in popular literature such as: 'The Kafir language (Kalashwar) is a mixture of Greek, Persian and Sanskrit, which indicates that the Kafir community is a mixture of Indo-Aryan and Greek races' (Afzal Khan 1975: 68).

⁽²¹⁾ Our own genealogical inquiries with the two best informants in Rumbur (Khoshnawaz and Shah Juwan) afforded a clear connection between Raja Wai (from whose brother the Rajawaidari lineage of Batrik traces descent) and Adabog's father Banguta, the first colonizer of Rumbur, who are considered sons of two of three brothers: Krishnuk, Mirnuk, and Wornuk or Barnuk. Sahil was their father, according to Khoshnawaz, and that's as far up as his impressive genealogical knowledge went. Shah Juwan, on his part, declared to ignore the name of the father of the three brothers. Both informants, therefore, could not establish any connection between them and Shalak Shah. Separate genealogies remounting to Bulasing (ancestor of the Bulasingdari lineage of Brun), said to be brother of Chiu, have been recorded by us in Bumburet, again with no connection with Shalak Shah.

⁽²²⁾ This is exactly the kind of research undertaken by Holzwarth in the so far unpublished paper mentioned above (see fn. 18).

an approximate date for the supposed Kalasha migration into the Kunar valley: 'To date the arrival of the Kalasha in Chitral, we would need to know how many generations separate Bulasing and Raja Wai from their common ancestor, Shalak Shah' (Loude & Lièvre 1990: 162). With perhaps exceeding trust in the statements of Kazi Khoshnawaz (cf. fn. 21), who mentioned only four generations, they suggest that the Kalasha possibly appeared in Chitral at the beginning of the 15th century A.D. (on the basis of the date of Raja Wai's death) or, alternatively, at the end of the 13th century, on the basis of the earlier date of the defeat of Bulasing by the Rais. Similarly Siiger (1956: 34), relying on Kuwat Shah from Rumbur (who was presumably one of the sources of Khoshnawaz's knowledge), places the Kalasha 'invasion' of Chitral 'some time before the middle of the fifteenth century or a little earlier'.

On the basis of our field research, however, it seems quite clear that whereas the genealogical memories about Raja Wai and Bulasing are likely to have some historical foundation⁽²³⁾, Shalak Shah hovers above the founding fathers of the existing communities in a rather mythical age that does not have an established connection with the present society. The four generations given by Khoshnawaz, could just as soon have been some thirty or forty: their significance for the community is not the same as the succeeding ones. Furthermore, the story of Shalak Shah is not universally shared by the Kalasha: this is proved by the fact that of all our informants in Birir, Jinjeret Kuh, Urtsun and the whole Eastern Area, not one mentioned his name. So, if there is a kernel of truth in Shalak Shah's story, we may assume with Jettmar 'that the newcomers were only a (politically important) strain in the ethnic fabric of the Kalasha' (Jettmar 1975: 326; cf. also Siiger 1956: 34).

But the strongest objection against the hypothesis of the recent arrival of the Kalasha in Chitral derives directly from linguistic evidence. The language of the Kalasha is closely related to Khowar and, according to Morgenstierne 'probably the two languages belong to the first wave of Indo-Aryan immigrants from the south' (1932: 51). Khowar, he further remarks, is 'in many respects the most archaic of all modern Indian languages' (Morgenstierne 1974: 3). As Siiger himself notes, following a suggestion directly received from Morgenstierne, the common linguistic elements connecting Khowar and Kalashamun 'are deeply rooted in the linguistic structures of both languages, must be very old, and cannot be explained by mere cultural contacts dating back to the fifteenth and the sixteenth century' (1956: 34). We would therefore be forced to imagine the Kalasha and the Kho reaching Chitral together about five hundred years ago, which would be an extremely far-fetched hypothesis.

Always on the basis of the Rumbur tradition, Siiger and Loude & Lièvre also speculate about the route followed by Shalak Shah on his way to Chitral from the

⁽²³⁾ The genealogies remounting to founding fathers of present communities, such as Raja Wai, Bulasing or Adabog, are not mere curiosities, since they have great functional relevance not only as far as the exogamic rule is concerned (see above), but also with regard to disputes about the rights of property on land and real estate in general.

mythical country of Tsiyam. They assume that he followed with his people the Kunar river upstream along a path recalled in the list of place names of the famous *Luli* chant (Morgenstierne 1973: 57-65), sung for Joshi, the spring festival. Before that, it is said in Rumbur, the Kalasha stayed for a time in the Waigal valley, in present Afghan Nuristan. Some grounds to this tradition are given by the fact that the Waigali call themselves Kalasha; moreover, oral records of a migration to Chitral are reported from Waigal (Edelberg & Jones 1979: 17). During our research in the Urtsun valley, however, we learned of the existence of a lineage reportedly immigrated there from Waigal about six generations ago. As we already suggested (Aug. Cacopardo 1991: 343), the Waigali oral records could very well refer just to that lineage. The common name Kalasha (*Kal'asha* in both cases) is somewhat more puzzling, but linguistic investigations don't authorize any connection between the two groups (Morgenstierne 1974: 5 fn.). It could be that such a name was once applied to a wider group of which the present Waigali and the Kalasha alike could be only fragments. This group might have been something akin to the Sufed Posh, the white-clad Kafirs, that included the Prasuni and the Waigali, and to which the Kalasha of Chitral could have been connected, since the men's traditional dress was woven with white wool⁽²⁴⁾. Altogether, we may agree with Morgenstierne that 'it does not seem probable that the Kalasha ever came from Waigal' (1965: 189, fn.).

On the other hand, the whole story of the migration from the original homeland of Tsiyam (*Ciy'am*) may be seen in a different light if we consider the hypothesis that the name of this country may be connected with toponyms like Sanglechi *Sām* (northern Chitral) or Prasun *Sim Gul* for Chitral proper (Morgenstierne 1932: 47), perhaps related, as Tucci (1977: 63, 80-81) suggests, to *Syāmarāja*, *Śyāma*, *Śyāmāka*, and most likely reflected in the Chinese *Shê-mi*, *Shang-mi* which Tucci, along with other scholars, tends to identify with northern Chitral (see also Jettmar 1977: 415-16, 423)⁽²⁵⁾. The hypothesis seems reasonable in view of the fact that the Kalasha phoneme *c* normally reflects an Indo-Aryan *ś* (Morgenstierne 1965: 198), thus making *Ciy'am* virtually identical with *Śyāma*. In this light, the 'migration' from Tsyam may simply reflect an expulsion of the Kalasha from (some part of) northern Chitral caused in very ancient times by an expansion of the neighbouring Kho people.

The idea that, after all, the Kalasha may always have been more or less where they are now is not in conflict with the results of our field work. In our investigations about the origins of the various Kalasha communities in the converted and unconverted valleys, we found actually a great variety of reports, while the Waigali connection popular in Rumbur was never mentioned at all, with the only exception of Urtsun, where, however, the main group of lineages claims as apical ancestor a member of the Kam

⁽²⁴⁾ Would it be too daring to suggest a connection between this wider 'Kalasha' group and the *Kaşa* or *Khaşa*, evoked by Tucci (1977: 82) in connection with *Ch'ieh-shih*?

⁽²⁵⁾ Only when this article was in press, have we realized, thanks to the author himself, that Parkes (1991: 78, fn.) had independently formulated the very same hypothesis.

tribe of Bashgal who married a Kalasha woman (Aug. Cacopardo 1991: 336). In Jinjeret Kuh, as we have just seen, the main group claims to have come from Khurkashande (Chitral) and two small lineages from Bashgal.

The population of Birir, unlike in Rumbur, does not descend from only one ancestor. An important section, the Sunachaidari, which comprises the *kam* of the Ghilasurdari, Baburadari, Awazedari and Aliksherdari of Gurul and Aspar, claims Bashgali descent (Majam). Three lineages from the upper village of Biyou, the Punjapaodari, the Jangudari and the Manjabekdari, on the other hand, have memory of a founding ancestor, Bangule, born miraculously from a girl of the Shishi Kuh valley.

The situation is even more complicated in Bumburet, where it is equally impossible to trace the whole population of the valley back to a common ancestor. Only some lineages, as we have seen, are related with the people of Rumbur, and may therefore be somehow connected with the epic of Shalak Shah, i.e. the Rachikoshdari and Bumburdari of Krakar, the Rajawaidari of Batrik, and possibly the Budadari of Kandarisar. Of the others, the ones of Anish village (the Ashpayindari and the Baramukdari) claim to be autoctonous and no memory is kept of any former residence. Then there is a lineage, the Turikdari of Darasguru, who is said to have arrived from Wirishikgum (Yasin), and another, the Bazikdari of Brun, that claims again Bashgali origin.

All these oral traditions, of course, are no less (or more) reliable than the one referring to Waigal heard in Rumbur. What happened is that, since research from Morgenstierne onwards was carried out mainly through informants from Rumbur, a tale of origin peculiar to that valley has been applied to the whole Kalasha population. This flaw appears for example in Loude & Lièvre's work where they discuss the role of Nanga *deh'ar* in the original migration of the Kalasha from Tsiyam (1991: 174). In their informant's account, it is the god Balimain who directs the great shaman to guide the people to Bumburet. And since this particular god is only worshipped by the people of Rumbur and Bumburet, it's easy to argue that such a tradition only concerns those two northern valleys. As we have already remarked, the results of our survey in Lower Chitral indeed seem to indicate that the southern cultural complex surviving in Birir can probably be considered the main stem from which the northern variety branched out. And it could very well be that the northern complex with its peculiar Balimain cult represents a specific reaction to the increasing pressure of Islam. A movement that did not involve the southern valleys of Birir, Jinjeret Kuh and Urtsun, nor, most likely, the Eastern Area.

If we really want to draw conclusions on the basis of oral tradition, the point is that when we consider all the data available, we find that there are tales of origins from the south, the east, the west and the north; and, as far as their own memory is concerned, we get the impression that the Kalasha could have come just about from any direction. This may actually indicate that the area occupied by the Kalasha in a more distant past was simply somewhat larger than the area classically ascribed to them, i.e. at least all southern Chitral: perhaps extending further south in the Kunar

to border with the Waigali tribe; perhaps extending west into parts or side valleys of Bashgal, before the Kam arrived there (Robertson 1974: 158-60; Morgenstierne 1932: 52); perhaps, in more remote days, extending into large parts of northern Chitral.

To sum up our argument, we think that for the reasons listed above, the hypothesis of a relatively recent arrival of the Kalasha in Chitral suggested by Siiger and Loude & Lièvre, must be ruled out. On the contrary, as remarked by Parkes about Dardic and Kafiri people in general, the results of linguistic investigations strongly indicate 'that they must have arrived in this area around the time of the earliest Aryan migrations into North Western India, i.e. from the end of the second millenium B.C.' (1983: 12). The most likely hypothesis, therefore, is that Khowar and Kalashamun developed from a common language in Chitral itself, in agreement with Schomberg's suggestion that the whole of Chitral was once inhabited by one people (1938: 209). This was also the conviction of some of our informants, although it is difficult to say whether they just referred to the fact that the Kho as well were once 'pagans'.

One last point is now left to investigate. Did the Kalasha find Chitral uninhabited or did they supplant or subjugate an autoctonous group? And, in this case, who were these people? Loude & Lièvre (1990: 109, 222-24, 293-94), following Jettmar (1961: 93), suggest that the Kalasha religious system is a synthesis of Indo-Aryan elements and local cultural forms. As we have seen, the oral tradition of the Kalashgum relates that the valleys were formerly inhabited by a mysterious people called Balalik (see also Morgenstierne 1932: 47). This is a very well established tradition and every Kalasha knows about them. According to one of our main informants (Shah Juwan of Rumbur) the Balalik were Kalasha as well, but others declared that they were of a different stock. Both Parkes (1983: 205) and Loude & Lièvre (1990: 172) identify them with the Dangarik whom they consider to be — agreeing on this point with Schomberg (1938: 195) — the indigenous and conquered population of Southern Chitral. While we cannot rule out the possibility that the Balalik were the indigenous non-Kalasha people of lower Chitral, it seems quite certain that they have nothing to do with the so-called Dangariks.

This term is applied to this day to a small group inhabiting the Asuret and Biyori valleys just below the Lowri pass (Biddulph 1986: 64), who speak an archaic form of Shina, called Palula (Morgenstierne 1932: 54), and claim to have come from the area of Chilas in the Indus Valley. Thanks to the courtesy of Inayatullah Faizi and Ahmad Sayid of Chitral, we have been able to learn the results of a very extensive genealogical inquiry carried out by these two Chitrali researchers, who have reconstructed the story of the original migration of these people from the area of Chilas (precisely the Darel valley) under the leadership of two brothers, Choke and Machoke (Ahmad Sayid 1987; Inayatullah Faizi 1989). The first is considered the ancestor of the people of Asuret, who call themselves Palulo, while the second settled in Northern Chitral, where his descendants now living in Laspur valley and in Kushum (Mulkho), have lost the language in favour of Khowar. The story of Choke and Machoke's migration after their quarrel with their elder brother Bote in Chilas has

been independently recorded in Laspur, in Asuret and in Darel, their original land, as well as in various other places, such as Sau near Asmar, a village where Palula is also spoken. Even Biddulph (1986: 16) heard it in Chilas. The events are said to have taken place some thirteen to fifteen generations ago, which are all remembered in detail by some living elders. It may therefore be dated some time around the middle of this millennium. From various details of the different legends of this cycle, it may be easily concluded that the immigrants had a pre-Muslim religion (obviously Shina) which had elements in common with that of the Kalasha.

Moreover, Ahmad Sayid has collected a detailed narrative which relates how, upon his arrival in Asuret at the time of the Rais, Choke and his people conspired with part of the local Kalasha population to overthrow a petty Kalasha ruler who had managed to impose on his people a primitive form of tribute (Ahmad Sayid 1987). A detailed treatment of this whole matter, which sheds some light on some important points of the Kalasha past, deserves a separate study, which we hope to carry out in the future. For the time being, at any rate, it is safe to conclude that, contrary to the above mentioned assumption, it was the 'Dangarik' who found the Kalasha in Chitral when they first arrived there.

One of the versions given in the Kalashgum about the fate of the Balalik tells that at one point they fled to Biyori and Kalkatak to escape slavery. Our own field work in this area seems to indicate that the people of the two lower villages of Biyori valley, Damaret⁽²⁶⁾ and Mingal, are indeed related with the Kalasha of Kalkatak, as descendants of two brothers, respectively called Tondi and Dhondi. Could it be that these people are actually the offspring of the Balalik, who would thus be identified as a particular Kalasha sub-tribe who have later adopted Palula under the influence of the Dangarik of upper Biyori village⁽²⁷⁾? This would perhaps explain the confusion between Balalik and Dangarik.

Loude & Lièvre (1990: 172) also connect the Balalik with the Bhaira. Parkes similarly specifies that 'there were several orders of Bhaira, including a separate caste of true slaves derived from the indigenous conquered populations of lower Chitral (the so-called Dangarik and Balalik)' (1983: 204-5). Since Bhaira become those who violate the exogamic rule, it is obvious that many of these outcasts cannot be descendants of the Balalik; but it is possible that the first Bhaira were actually subdued indigenous people. It seems wise, however, to keep them distinct from the Balalik, as the Kalasha usually do. This is also confirmed by the fact that in Rumbur we find the Balalik, but, in the common notion, not the Bhaira, whereas in Jinjeret Kuh and Urtsun, they had the Bara, but no trace of the Balalik.

⁽²⁶⁾ The ending in -et, according to Morgenstierne, is typical of Kalasha toponyms (1965: 190).

⁽²⁷⁾ Since to have Kalasha ascendants is considered highly disgraceful by the Muslim population of Chitral (cf. Alb. Cacopardo 1991: 279), we are aware of the responsibility we are assuming in suggesting that these communities might be of Kalasha stock. Yet, to be true to science, we feel we cannot omit to formulate an hypothesis that, on the basis of our data, seems to have some grounds. Still, it is only an hypothesis, and as such it is open to further investigation.

Summing up, speculations about the Balalik remain highly hypothetical. They may have been, as we have suggested, of Kalasha stock, but we cannot exclude the possibility that they were rather the remains of some autoctonous people inhabiting the Hindu Kush before the arrival of the Indo-Aryans. Furthermore, they may have been just another Indoeuropean group who populated some side valleys of Chitral in the Kalasha era of glory.

At any rate, the mere support of oral tradition is not enough to establish any sound conclusion about the pre-Kalasha population of Chitral. Only with the help of archaeological investigation, which has so far never been carried out in Chitral, will we be able to shed some light on this fascinating subject.

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