

Afghanologies!

(vaguely till the Hindu Shahi; vaguely from Indian point of view)

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ABSTRACT

What is Afghani literature? Who wrote it? Where are these writings now?

With the emergence of perhaps these seemingly exogenous, situational or situated questions, *prata prashnas* (*prata* as we say 'situated' in Pashto; *prashanas* as we say 'questions' in Sanskrit), in the very beginning, concerns of this paper are limited. What is Afghani Literature is not speculative or *prata* ontological *prashanas* itself but it will help us reconstruct the remains of the reminder. This reminder, as a return gift of history, will give us glimpses into the questionable out of these questions: what the world thought and had come to know of Afghani Literature in particular. The history of texts in Afghanistan, Islamic and pre-Islamic, has always been complicated.¹ and ² But in the immediate contemporary times, post and pre-Osama bin Laden (1957-2011), more stress, of research (perhaps in scientific and active scholarly slumber) has been on war, types of war and its implications, theories on rebuilding in Afghanistan as also on the paranoid theories of conspiracy.³ Amid this terrific activity of highly-cited war researches or the sleep running, no doubt some are still doing great researches on humanities in Afghanistan (and still much research is yet to be done on peripheries like of animals and plants or on the so called Ecohumanism). Very few researches of this sort do co-exist peacefully in the academia.⁴ Afghani literacy exists in the coins, commercial records, court documents, religions, orality and so on. This paper seeks to find the *logies*, of *taalim* ('study' in Dari) for the masses of Afghanistan down the lanes of history through these *literacies* with an Indian perspective, vaguely and particularly.

Keywords: -logies, *Sikas, taalim. Avestan Script, Akkadian, Afghanologies.*

1. Malleson, GB. Trans. *Tārīkh-i-Afghānistān*. Peshawar: Behari Lal, 1930.

2. Ferrero, Guglielmo. *The Principles of Power: The Great Political Crises of History*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1942.

3. In this category of works by writers and thinkers are Aron's *Raymond and his Peace and War: A Theory of International Relations* (1966); Abou Zahab and his "L'origine sociale des Tālebān", *Les Nouvelles d'Afghanistan*" (1996) especially from page 24-6; Anwar-ul-Haq Ahady's "The Decline of the Pashtuns in Afghanistan" specifically pages from 621-34; Akbar S Ahmed's *Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity: The Search for Saladin* (1997); Steve Coll's *Ghost Wars : The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (2004); Jeremy Black's *Why Wars Happen* (1998); Borovik Artyom's *The Hidden War: A Russian Journalist's Account of the Soviet War in Afghanistan* (1990) ; Michael W. Doyle's *Ways of War and Peace* (1997) ; Antonio Giustozzi's *War, Politics and Society in Afghanistan 1978–1992* (2000); Paul Rogers' *A War on Terror : Afghanistan and After - London* (2004); Atal Subdoh's *At a Crossroads in Afghanistan : Should the United States Be Engaged in Nation Building ?* (2003) and this list will ever remain incomplete due to overflow of traffic on war themes.

4. See, for example Shivan Mahendrarajah's "Two original decrees by Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqarā in the National Archives in Kabul" (pp. 161-178) in which he analyses rare documents and the hand written copies or (sgl. *sawād*) of Timurid dynasty in which he made available for reading Sulṭān-Ḥusayn Bayqarā (r. 873– 911/1469 – 1506), the last Timurid monarch at Heart, and his two decrees.

Then let us go back to the first question number one again. But in order to further unfold the layers of the first question one must ask another one: Who were the bearers of Afghani literature, of the *-logies*, of *taalim* ('study' in Dari) for the masses, and what sort of literature was produced in Afghanistan? We can as of now prominently trace literatures of/by: *kasids* (messengers) who were one important chain in transmission (as we say in communicative theories), *hakims* (traditional doctors), businesspersons, commercial records, court and religious documents, Afghan Genizah, of and by rulers and so on. What happened to it/them? The *kasids* (messengers) in Afghanistan used to receive texts to be transmitted further, for their "fidelity (*wafa*)" they were rewarded and also harshly punished for *bewafai* (infidelity) sometimes.⁵ Bellew's *kasids* were snatched off their clothes and letters torn apart and thrown into the dust of indefinite

absence. *Hakims* with their “bulky manuscript volume” cured their patients and these medical manuscripts were eaten up by the bacteria of ignorance.⁶

5. See, for example, when Bellew stated: “His [the *Kasid* or postman, messenger] solemn denials were of no use ; he was seized, deprived of his clothes and wallet, in which were secreted our despatches and letters, and his hands were tied with cords. In this way he was led **off** to a village, where our letters were opened, examined, and torn up. The foreign writing proved him to be our servant, and he was threatened with death... . but as we [the English Officers] could adduce nothing certain in proof of his guilt, he was allowed the benefit of the doubt, and was merely discharged from the service” (Bellew 362-363).

6. Bellew, HW. *Journal of a Political Mission to Afghanistan in 1857*. London: Smith, Elder and Co, 1862.

This is what happened to them and the worthy literature of orders and cures in *baastan* (history as we say in Dari) of Afghanistan. In the meantime, I tried to find the source of the first printing press in Afghanistan but could just know that the first printing of *sikas* (coins as we say in Dari) was successfully done in the year 1935, that too with the help of the Russians. But printing is printing! Can this kind of search or research dislocate the initial question of the first use of paper for writing and consequently first printed or non-printed book, the first book on propaganda or legal texts, printed in Afghanistan, or this one: the first Afghani who got his book published in printed form (not excluding locale of some other nation)?⁴ Here again we are talking of history of the *-logies*, of *taalim*, “the history of writing by Afghanis,” the ability of the common man to read and write, in their languages and “others” in theirs (where we find ‘others’ more often).

In these indefinite multicursal ways of confusions there is no one way entry into the exposition of Afghani literature as some like to found its base on the written literature available or unavailable in present times as in archives, in libraries, in any other places. On the other hand, there are people who look for its literature in oral tradition. But when we talk of the oral tradition and the languages through which it is transmitted we must not forget the closeness of Asiatic language families with the Arabic (or for that matter the English too). Brahmi, Persian and to some extent English registers are found to be corresponding to each other. Like we have in Sanskrit the word ‘*bhrātar*’ which corresponds to English ‘brother, Old Slavic ‘*bratŭ*,’ Irish ‘*brathair*’ and Persian ‘*bhai*.’

Even racially, the north Indians have been very close relatives to Afghanistan. As per the reports of UNESCO we can still find racial traits of the Afghan in the Kashmir state of India.⁷ In 1954 the cave of Kara Kamar excavated by Carlton Coon was the first Stone Age site to be excavated in Afghanistan and for many it is one of the earliest in Afghanistan.^{8, 9 and 10}

This Aurignacian industry and its presence in Punjab region is a valid reason for the Indian scholars to do more research on this area.

This paragraph attempts to trace the written history of Afghanistan to the Magdalenian culture of 15,000-9,000 BC. This Paleolithic period of Afghanistan comprised of hunters and gatherers. As the stone hammers, axes and all are of interest to anthropologists in the same way the cave paintings and murals on the man made tunnels/caves of Magdalenian culture are really of the utmost philosophical and literary importance to us. The early paintings and the literature they present, which are inscribed on the culminating space of caves by earlier artists of this era, of Hindu Kush, have not been much yet explored.

7. Safi, Zamir, MH et al. "Eastern Kushans, Kidarites in Gandhara and Kashmir, and Later Hephthalites." UNESCO. Accessed 17 Jul 2019.

article/vol_III%20silk%20road_eastern%20kushans%2C%20kidarites%20in%20gandhara%20and%20kashmir%2C%20and%20later%20hephthalites.pdf

8. Coon, C.S. *The Seven Caves: Archaeological Explorations in the Middle East*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957.

9. Davis R.S., "Kara Kamar in Northern Afghanistan: Aurignacian, Aurignacoid or just plain Upper Paleolithic?" In *Arkheologiya I Paleoekologiya Evrazii*, eds. A.P. Derevianko and T.I. Nokhrina. Novosibirsk: Rossijskaya Akademiya Nauk, Sibirskoe Otdenie, Institut Arkheologii i Etnografii, 2004, 211–17.

10. Runion, Meredith L. *The History of Afghanistan*. Westport, Conn : Greenwood Press, 2007.

There is, for sure, literature and philosophy in it! For literacy is in creation! As further add on to this chain of events we have Mundigak excavations (which is now in Kandahar) (See Fig 1).



Fig 1. “Mother goddess figurines, right, from Mundigak, left, from Deh Morasi Ghundai, 3rd Millennium B.C. (h. 5cm)” (image courtesy of *Web. Archive*)

Thereafter, please forgive me for taking the second long jump into the Medes Empire (700-550). The Medes and the early ancestors of the Pashtun tribe which originated near present-day Kandahar are believed to have adopted the followings of Zoroaster during this period. These ancestors were primarily pagan but are believed to have adopted Buddhist and Zoroastrian traditions because of other cultural influences. ¹² Zoroaster also commonly known as Zarathustra was an Iranian prophet and preacher from the Brown Age who worked in Afghanistan Zoroastrianism which remained a prominent belief in Afghanistan. Zoroastrianism almost got eliminated in AD 652. Zoroaster's birth and early life are little documented. The only known text of his times is *Gathas* which contain 17 Avestan hymns. These were composed by Zoroaster and addressed to Ahura Mazda--- the only God of Zoroastrianism. Many scholars believe that the first mention of Afghanistan is given in *Avesta*.¹³ Scripts such as Pahlavi, Avastan were there and were strongly present in many texts. Most of Avestan scripts are supposedly gone missing. After mind-boggling short comparative research on the scripts of Indus Valley Civilization and Avestan done by the present author in the following paragraph makes us understand the importance of those lost scripts.



Fig 2. The inscription on the unicorn seal of Indus Valley Civilization (image courtesy of *Harappa.com*)

These inscriptions (Fig 2) in many ways shed light on the relation of Afghanistan with the Indus Valley Civilization as it is surprising to know that the Mundigak, Shortugai of Afghanistan show active trade practices of Indus Valley Civilization as if they were trading colonies of that civilization. On the other hand, no one or very few have pointed out that these scripts of Indus Valley are very familiar with that of the Avestan scripts which were the key scripts used by Zoroastrian religion (although it came quite late in the timeline of History).⁵

11. Web Achieve. Accessed 30 Mar 2019. <https://books.google.co.in/books?id=aZk9XzqCFGUC&printsec=frontcover&dq=history+of+afghanistan&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi66si myfzhAhUJo48KHU6IDjwQ6AEIKjAA#v=onepage&q=history%20of%20afghanistan&f=false>



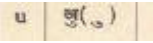






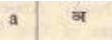



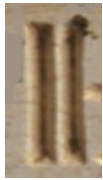




12. Runion, Meredith L. *The History of Afghanistan*. Westport, Conn : Greenwood Press, 2007.

13. Fraser, Tytler. W. *Afghanistan*. London: M. Gillett, 1967.

14. Harappa. Accessed 03 Jun 2019. <https://www.harappa.com/indus/25.html>.



As I have further analyzed it to the point of great surprise that these alphabets in many ways resemble the script of Indus Valley Civilization which obviously requires further thorough research (Fig 3):

Ser No.	Letters of Indus Script	Letters of Avestan Script	Transcription of (c)
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
1.			
2.			
3.		 or 	 or 
4.		Diacritic on Circumflex 	Here the diacritic commonly stands for d.
5.			
6.			In Avastan stem is used to denote numbers. As

			here this sign may represent the eleventh part of the number.
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Fig. A comparative check of Avestan and Indus script by the present author. Please see the Avestan script. ¹⁵

What a wealth of literature! At this juncture, let us have a glimpse at the literature and languages of Afghanistan in and around 500 BCE?, when the area was under the Achaemenid Empire (the first Persian Empire, [559–330 BCE?]) of Iranian dynasty is said to give literary base to the

Persian literature. For the royal inscriptions are largely written in Old Persian, Elamite and Akkadian. However, not much survived the present times. This era saw the reigns of Darius I; the campaign or Scythian expedition; acceptance of lordship by various kings like Macedon, Megabazus; the revolt of Ionian; the reign of Xerxes, forward movement towards Greece; Artaxerxes II and Artaxerxes II (405-338?) and the wars of siblings, Spartan's forward movement into western Asia Minor (396-394?), the Macedonian invasion, entry of religious affairs into the kingdom (*A'Ha*) and so on. But this is history (without capital 'H'). Hence, I have abstained myself from the controversies of putting dates in front of their names. Where I have put dates, I have also not forgotten to put signs of interrogation---the sign which truly represents the questionable itself. Let us now examine the Literature. With the mixture of Lycian, Greek and Aramaic languages the society had largely become bilingual.

We have court interpreters, usurpers and Persian Satraps like Tissaphernes (445 BC – 395 BC?) who was finally decapitated. His brother was also a court interpreter. Tissaphernes managed to survive. The story of his decapitation is more horrible than of his brother's survival: Tissaphernes was handed over two letters by King Cyrus. In one he was directed to wage war with Sparta but the other was supposed to be handed over to Ariaevus in which he was asked to help in killing the messenger---Tissaphernes, the translator.¹⁶ This age witnessed plenty of Assyrian court documents; revenue records, and Achaemenid Elamite documents written in Elamite script; Akkadian, Demotic and Aramaic epistles; Babylonian documents and historical records; astronomical texts; literary texts and Demotic record of the history.^{17 to 23}

Below is the figure given from Matthew W Stolper and his authoritative study of such documents titled "Achaemenid Elamite Administrative Tablets, 3 Fragments from Old Kandahar, Afghanistan." He very succinctly quotes and decodes difficult parts of speech/other aspects of texts, like *šutur daka* and *ŠA-ma*, of "Achaemenid Elamite Tablets of Persepolis"²⁴

15. Web Achieve. Accessed 7 Mar 2019. <https://web.archive.org/web/20120218073852/http://www.afghanan.net/afghanistan/prehistory.htm>

16. Dandamev, M. "The Domain-Lands of Achaemenes in Babylonia." *AF*/1 (1974): 123-27.

17. Stolper, Matthew W. 2013. *Persepolis Fortification Archive (PFA) Project*. Gil J. Stein (ed.), The Oriental Institute 2012-2013 Annual Report. Chicago: 105-112.

18. Stein, Gil J. 2013. *Oriental Institute-National Museum of Afghanistan Partnership and Cultural Heritage Protection Work*. In Gil J. Stein (ed.), *The Oriental Institute 2012-2013 Annual Report*. Chicago: 89-97.
19. Henkelman, Wouter F. M. *The Other Gods Who Are: Studies in Elamite-Iranian Acculturation based on the Persepolis Fortification Texts*. Leiden : Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2008.
20. Kuhrt, Amélie. *The Persian Empire. A corpus of sources from the Achaemenid Period*. London and New York: Routledge , 2007.
21. Scheil, Vincent. *Mélanges épigraphiques (Mémoires de la Mission Archéologique de Perse)*. Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1939.
22. Briant, Pierre. " L'Asie centrale et les royaumes proche-orientaux du premier millénaire (c. VIIIe -IVe siècles avant notre ère." Paris: Editions Research on Civilizations (1984): 57-68.
23. Vogelsang, Willem. *The Rise and Organization of the Achaemenid Empire, the Eastern Iranian Evidence*. Leiden: New York and Köln, 1992.
24. Helms, Svend W. *Excavations at Old Kandahar in Afghanistan 1976-1978, Conducted on behalf of the Society for South Asian Studies (Society for Afghan Studies): Stratigraphy, Pottery and Other Finds*. Oxford: BAR International Series 686 = Society for South Asian Studies Monograph 2, 1997.



Fig. A Fragment of Rectangular Tablet taken from Old Kandahar SF 1399 = NMA 12.0-1.24 (image courtesy *National Museum of Afghanistan*).²⁵

These tablets primarily show vertical lines imprinted on them. These vertical lines also in many ways perhaps show the straightforward, commanding notes of the one responsible for publishing these cuneiform imprints. Then we also have a list of authors who were active during this period.

One of such was Ctesias. Bigwood provides a remarkable view of Ctesias' *Indica* in his "Ctesias' 'Indica' and Photius." Ctesias the Cnidian was a Greek physician and historian from Caria of Achaemenid Empire. He wrote *Indica* (*Ἰνδικά*) which is written in Ionic dialect as also the history of Assyria and Persia titled *Persica* (*Περσικά*). His imaginative perfume of hyperbolic accounts of India in *Indica* and references to medicines made out of the horn of unicorn are not much acceptable to a rational being. Despite his being a confidant of the queen, his intellectual worth shown in voluminous historiography and with his elephant-sized-fancy he has frequently been criticized for lying in these books with huge omission. He did not write anything about the contemporary Neo-Babylonian Empire.^{26 and 27} His books are mostly translated into English but in fragments. If we have Kedorlaomer Texts today then we also have Akkadian texts which represent fragmentary verse account of Nabonidus (known as the first archeologist and also the last king of Babylon who ruled from 556-539). Akkadian texts have been translated by Landsberger and Bauer. Whereas, the comments are given by S Smith, BHT.²⁸ His tongue shaped tablets were published by JN Strassmaier in his *Hebraica* 9(1892/3) 4-5.

Religion travels faster than army. Perhaps that is why this empire spread Zoroastrianism up to China. The Bisotun inscription established at Mount Behistun in Iran by Darius the Great (550-486) has now been made a place of cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2006. This contains 414 line inscriptions of the extinct Elmaite text of Persian cuneiform writing. Sir Robert Shirley (1581-1628) a great traveler and scholar not only modified the Persian Safavid army but also brought these texts to the attention of scholars. These ruins of dynasty make us go back to the page where the English poet P B Shelly wrote his poem "Ozymandias."

25. National Museum of Afghanistan. Accessed 7 April 2019. <http://www.nationalmuseum.af/>

26. Anderson G. "Some Sources of Lucian, Icaromenippus 25 f." *Philologus* 124 (1980) :159-161.

27. Briant, P. *From Cyrus to Alexander: a History of the Persian Empire*. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002.

28. British Museum. Accessed 07 April 2019. https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=327273&partId=1.

The Indo-Greek or Yavanas settled in north-west India and must be of greater interest to Indian scholars like me. These settlements were made by Alexander and his Seleucid successors.

In this era we had many kings, and obviously their huge wealth of literature on *sikas* and other documents, who ruled the Bactriana and the regions covering from Afghanistan to India. Some of these Greco-Bactrian kings were: in the Kabul valley and the north of Hindu Kush we had Philoxenus Anicetus (unrelated to any dynasty); Lysias who ruled Paropamisadae of Afghanistan (not to be confused with Lysias, the Greek logographer); the Great King Euratides II, Archebius Dikaios Nikephoros (who wore a beautiful hat with a magnificent tail which could be seen in his tetradrachms); Antiacidas who has been mentioned as *Maharaj* by Heliodorus in the Besnagar and Hathigumpha inscriptions²⁹; Amyntas Nikator (he is known for his bilingual *sikas* and equally his different portraits on his coins); Hermaeus Soter (his bare-headed portraits are commonly embossed on coins); Strato I of the Gharni region (he is the only Indo-Greek king having beard now dully embossed on his *sikas*, there we could also notice joint portraits of Strato I and his mother); Zoilus I Dikaios (it is surprising to know that some his coins have the Pali titles like *Dhramikasa* or the "one who follows the Dharma"); in the Western Gandhara we had Diomedes (not to be confused with Diomedes, commander of the Trojan War); Amyntas, Hermaeus (both have been already discussed earlier) and Artemidoros Aniketos (who preferred to use bulls in his coins, which is an important feature of Indian coins); Apollodotus I Soter of the Swat valley (in his early attic bilingual drachm we can again see animals such as elephants, bulls and so on); Antimachus II (the one who considered to publish his image on coins with horse than full scale portraits); Zoilus I (already discussed elsewhere); Strato I of Taxila region; Telephus and Hermaeus; Strato I of Jammu-Sialkot (now in India); Apollodotus, Zoilus II (already discussed elsewhere); King Ashoka of India (can also be added to this list) and so on.

It is believed that the wealth of Indo-Greek *sikas* was minted widely at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris.³⁰ We have bilingual (round, square and triangular copper *sikas* of Demetrius) and to some extent trilingual *sikas* are also traced. The last addition in the list above is tempting for an Indian scholar and for this we shall have to always remain indebted to researches of our intellectual ancestors of the world who found Aramaic inscription of Ashoka in Laghman which in the very beginning certified the fact that he had ruled this region or the Kabul valley as well.³¹ There are Taxila *sikas* telling the legends of Negama, Pamcanekame and Hirasame. These Indo-Greek *sikas* had marks of elephants and bulls on them. Some of the prominently known *sikas* are the

square copper *sikas* of Heliocles II; *sikas* found at Taxila belonging to Menander and so on. We have books like Apollodorus of Artemita *The Parthica*; Kalidas' Sanskrit play *Malavikagnimitra* (5th Century) specifically the Act V retelling the aggression of Yavana (Indo-Greeks) invaders, murder of the last king of the Mauryan dynasty and retreat of Yavana invaders; *Gargi Samhita* and *Yuga Purana* which clearly tells about this period and so on.

29. D. C. Sircar. "Synoptical Texts of Minor Rock Edicts I and II of Asoka." *JAIH* XII (1978-79): 314.

30. G K, Jenkins. "Notes on Seleucid Coins." *NC6/11* (1951) :1-21.

31. Henning, WB. *BSOAS*(1949): 80 ff.

F Altheim, E Pulleyblank and W McGovern proclaim that Hephthalites, Xiongnu or Chinonitae have Turkic origin, of Altaic tribes. Even the commonly used title "Khan," in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India is of Hephthalite origin.³² They were the rulers of the Central Asia. Being non-state actors in the history of Afghanistan their ethnicity is often a matter of dispute and further research. That is why much anthropological researches have been done on their ethnicity which is actually centered on their inscriptions on various seals. There is a mention of these tribes in Chinese works such as *Xiyu Zhuan* by Wei Hu; *The State of Yutian*, *Yiyu Zhuan B* by Zhou Shu; *Xibei Zhurong Zhuan* by Liangshu and so on. Chinese scholars, in their various books, called them *I-ta*. For exploration of these there is much to read and research on the paintings of the western and southern walls of Room No. 1 at the Afrasiab site in the north of Samarkand. The language they spoke, the kind of lives they lived is still an enigma for us.

Then the Samanid Empire came into active existence (819-999). They ruled Afghanistan and Iran. The empire was created by Ismoil Somoni. Transoxania and Khurasan came under direct aegis of this empire but the capital of Samanids remained Bukhara. This period is also important in understanding the growth of Persian literature and language, especially Dari. We have great poets like Rudaki; Shahid Balkhi; Daqiqi and the well known poet known to the contemporary world--Ferdowsi of the *Shahnameh (The Book of Kings)* fame where he writes about Borzūya and his encounter with the Indian fable *Panchatantra* of Vishnu Sharma as also his attempt to translate it into Arabic.

We also have the works of Persian scholars such as al-Kharezmi and his *The Compendious Book on Calculation by Completion and Balancing*; al-Marvazi from Bagdad and his *The Book of Bodies and Distances*; Abu Mansur Ma'marī's translation of the Pahlavi *Xwadāy-nāmag*; the great architects like al-Fergani and Abu Ali Ibn Sina, Abdulmanhud Khujandi, Abu Raihan al-Biruna and so on. There are extraordinary earthenware of Islamic pottery having geographical

and descriptive markings in Arabic inscriptions which has high taxonomic value (see Fig 5). And then we have great architects who created works such as Samanid Mausoleum (now in Uzbekistan).

 <p>a) Monochrome lustred ceramic</p>	 <p>b) Epigraphic design on the manganese-purple where the base remains white or creamy .</p>	 <p>c) On the bright surface aesthetically appealing geographical designs</p>
 <p>d) Pottery having well balanced designs on it.</p>	 <p>e) Tri colored pottery.</p>	 <p>f) Pottery having white/pink base where there are wonderfully carved figures.</p>

Fig. The Ceramic Pottery of Samanid Empire excavated at Nishapur (image courtesy *Mirrazavi Iran Review*).³³

Other than this we have already noticed earlier that Afghanistan has seen great wealth of art as also gold and silver in *sikas*. We still find a lot of *sikas* from Saffarid Dynasty (861-1003) which was established by the successors of al-Saffar. It is believed that the meaning of Saffarid is

“coppersmith” which is based on Ya'qub bin Laith's (the first ruler of Saffarid Dynasty) profession. The Buddhist rulers got defeated. Saffarids destroyed Buddha idols. Saffarids were expert in accounting and financial controls.^{34 and 35}

32. Katariya, Adesh. Accessed 9 April 2019. *Ancient History of Central Asia: Yuezhi origin Royal Peoples: Kushana, Huna..*
https://books.google.com/books/about/Ancient_History_of_Central_Asia.html?id=ihFUDAAAQBAJ

33. *Mirrazavi Iran Review*. Accessed 19 Feb 2019. http://www.iranreview.org/content/Documents/Art_of_Pottery_in_Iran.htm.

34. W. Barthold, “Zur Geschichte der Saffāriden.” In *Orientalistische Studien zu Theodor Nöldeke gewidmet*, ed. C. Bezold. *Giessen* (1906): 171-91.

35. C.E. Bosworth, *Sistān under the Arabs, from the Islamic Conquest to the Rise of the Saffarids* .30-250/651-864: Rome, 1968.

Maybe that is why due to their business acumen the route of these *sikas* stretched far off than we can even think of. The *sikas* of Saffarid Dynasty travelled far off to European countries like Denmark and Sweden. We also have plenty of silver *sikas* from this dynasty which were discovered in Panjshir Valley (which is now in the north-central part of Afghanistan). "Coinage of the Second Saffraid Dynasty in Sistan" by John Walker is for sure an authoritative study of the *sikas* in which he himself observed and documented with great scientific skill.³⁶ Other than these dynamic dynasties, Hindu Shahi (879-1026?) is that dynasty of Afghanistan which is almost lost in history. Pandey's *The Shahis of Afghanistan and the Punjab* is a book worth reading on the reign of Hindu Shahi in Afghanistan. We can find references to this dynasty in the works of Al-Bīrūnī. It was he who wrote in his works that the last ruler of Kabul was Lagaturman and thereafter it was ruled by a Brahmin.

A lot of research on Bactriana has been done by E. Vesey Westmacott, George Scott Robertson, Yogendra Misra and so on. There is no doubt, authentic evidence of Kshatriya and Buddhist ruling over Kabul or Kapisa which can be traced in the works of Xuanzang. But on the other hand, we have very less evidence like we just have nine issues of Bull and Horeseman on silver *sikas* and only one of copper *sikas* which was minted by Spalapatideva. Hindu Shahiyapala did not find it suitable to issue *sikas* in his name or they are not available to us. But when we scroll the pages of Pandit Kalhan's *Rajatarangini* to find the record which states that Prabhakaradeva the powerful minister and *Koshadhyaksha* (Superintendent of Treasury) had usurped the town of Udabhandapura and established Shahi (*ajna atikrami* Shahi – a Shahi violator of order) upon Tormana, Lalliya's son:

His mother was now a widow, and living in luxury, asked Prabhakaradeva, a minister

(treasurer) to her embrace, and bestowed on her paramour wealth, rank, and three good districts. The treasurer robbed the queen of much wealth and built a town Bhandapura at Shahirajya. The reigning Shahi disobeyed his orders to build the town, on which he changed the name of the country to Kamalaka, and gave it to Tomarana the son of Laillya [this is a English translation of the original Sanskrit V 232-33].³⁷

Now this incomplete paragraph on Hindu Kush asks for a further halt. This will create some confusion in the reader. There are a lot of books on histories of Afghanistan. Most of them don't help us with clarity but put us in the void of confusion like the Greek geographer and historian Strabo in his book quotes Apollodorus and his *The Parthica*: "when kings had grown in power they also attacked India, but he reveals nothing further."³⁸ The research does not deal with the historical side of Afghanistan but more emphasis is on the literary aspects of these periods. This paper seeks to find literacy in history (as in coins, books and so on). This literacy has double bearing: the common masses (like the *kasids* [the messengers], the people who read figures on the coins and so on) and the kings. If there were one living common man from the histories of Afghanistan, from the histories of Indus Valley Civilization, the *-logies* of that one person supposedly would have the power to change the entire histories for sure. That is why again the aim of this paper is not to reread what has been written in or about these histories. The aim of this paper is to halt and give some time to revisit the questions asked in the very beginning of this paper. These questions surely attempt to show that history of Afghanistan can help us in reconstructing the literary history of Afghanistan and to some extent of India too. Even when this paper has been written there will always and already remain many unattributed cache of *sikas* and their monograms (of numismatics), sculptures and texts of various kinds to be read as a poem, a drama or fiction.

36. Numismatics. Accessed 23 April 2019. <http://numismatics.org/digitallibrary/ark:/53695/nnan145466>

37. Kalhan. *Rajatarangini*.tr. Jogesh Chunder Dutt. Thuerner and co: London, 1979.

38. Penelope. Accessed 06 Jun 2019. http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Strabo/15A1*.html