The Hidden Story in the Word Afghan

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Abstract:

Tracing the origin of the exonym “Afghan” to Ancient Bactria and the Bactrian language. Challenging, the common held belief that the word has roots in Sanskrit. Providing an etymological source for the name. Showing historical evidence of the mention of the exonym to the 400s Common Era.

Keywords: Afghan, Afghans, Pashtun, Bactria

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1. بنيهار - جايسث پاداتشائی اور مسلمانی نماید وزن سیار دارد از مسلمانان اور افغانان - Hudud-al-Alam, page 72
1. "The country of Sindh lies to the west of Kanoj. In marching from our country to Sindh we start from the country of Nîmrôz, i.e. the country of Sijistân, whilst marching to Hind or India proper we start from the side of Kâbul. This, however, is not the only possible road. You may march into India from all sides, supposing that you can remove the obstacles in the way. In the mountains which form the frontier of India towards the west there are tribes of the Hindus, or of people near akin to them — rebellious savage races — which extend as far as the farthestmost frontiers of the Hindu race." - Biruni, pages at 198 to 199;

2. “In the western frontier mountains of India there live various tribes of the Afghans, and extend up to the neighbourhood of the Sindh Valley.” - Biruni, pages at 208

3. a = a, β = v / b, γ = ġ / g, ν = n, o = silent

4. Sims Willilams I at pages 90 to 91, 122 to 123 and 144 to 145

5. Bactrian Grammar, pages 32 to 41
Δα λικι-θρόμος ζήτημα. Πάσου χαίρετου μελημάτων της Αρχαίας Ελλάδας
και Κεντρικής Λιβύης. 

1 Χρόνιον Εργασίας, Εκδόσεις Ελληνικής Δημοσιογραφίας, Αθήνα
2 Sims IV, pages 51 to 53 and page 70
3 Sims I, page 91
Line 9: [ανο] αβαγανο ασπο οαστημ ταδομ τιδο ταμαχο σαχ[οανο]
Line 10: [αβο ρ][βιγο ρ]βιγο αβηγανο μακινο να αλδο το χοης[ο σ][νάδο]
Line 11: [ταδο γ]αλο ωσο ριμο ροτσο οτομο φορτιο οαδο γαμ.
Line 12: [αγο κρηδο οτομο ιασπο οδο γαλο ναφρημιο τακρεδ[ο]
Line 13: ραφαγο ροβιγο χοβο ασπο χοζινναδο ταδο

ددي زیا:۱
لومرى غوندلله: بریلگ و/و تانان ته ستنی محش ویم له کیردیر خینه چی د/ورمو ویار ده
دویم غوندلله: چی د روب کچاد ده زبا نشور هم خوین هم که ژا د چوی دجو و گورم
دريم غوندلله او بله دا چی نواز زما نوکر ما توینه کری ده
خلوره غوندلله: وایی ویل/و تانان اسپی ووری دی او اوس ببی او د هفزونکان
پینخم غوندلله: اسپی ساتی یه..."که درینتسا وی نوینه دیه نیکه
شیرمه غوندلله: تاسود افغان او (أباغانو) تبور ما نه دا سی ووی
اتمه غوندلله: چی د روب سری اسپی ووری دی به غلانباتی؛ او هاغه خوک چی اسپو سره
بردگو وو
اووم غوندلله: خبرنه شول اوتا توبکار نه و د روب سریوته نه کری ود
نههم غوندلله: چی افغانی (أباغانو) اسپی بوری خوکه ستادو دید وینه دلایه ما
لسمه غوندلله: د روب سری بی گونا و نیپو اوس تایته که ستاین دیه وی
یولسمه غوندلله: پکار دی چی تاغلة او اسپی و لتوی او ماهیپی را و استوی او که
دیولسمه غوندلله: تاسوتو وخیه او تپیپی ما له اسپی او اغلبة وینه سوی که چی
dیارلسمه غوندلله: د روب سری تا نا اسپی غواری بیبا....
پوهاند چیونگ: چی آریایی زبی خیری. د دی ویب ونین هم ورندی کوی. د چیونگ له مخی
د بخی "ایاکه نهروتی دی دا تک د لري بیا ور. آخوا" مانناری بل تک
طغان: د گهان نهروت د چی د وارل مانا لری لکه کله واله هوباد وال وغیره ۲ مانا نی دا
نه کوز هوباد کنیی اوسپری. دا هم
شود چی افغان هدغ وگری دی چی کوم بخل یا

1 Sims I, page 90
2 Cheung, page 35
The origins and early history of the Afghan peoples are obscure, though they are mentioned intermittently in sources dating as far back as early as the sixth century as inhabiting the vicinity of the Kōh-i Sulaymān, one of the prominent mountain ranges – also including the Tōba, Kākar and Safid Kōh – on the north-western frontier of the Indian subcontinent, straddling what is today the Afghanistan–Pakistan border. Islamic-era sources written in Arabic and Persian roughly from the tenth to the fifteenth century mention the Afghans only sporadically but consistently locate them in the Kōh-i Sulaymān region. Among the earliest of these sources is the Ḥudūd al-ʿālam (Minorsky 1970, 91), completed in ca. 372/982, which notes that Afghans lived in a village atop a mountain named Saul, which Arlinghaus (1988, 133) suggests likely refers to the locale of Shawal in the Tochi Valley, which is in the northern limits of the Sulaymān Range. In his famous study of India, al-Bīrūnī (d. 440/1048) notes that a variety of Afghan tribes dwelled ‘in the western mountains’ (fi al-jibāl al-gharbiyya) of India up to the lands of Sind, which corresponds to the Sulaymān Mountains (al-Bīrūnī 1958, 167). Sayf al-Harawī (b. 681/1282), who completed the Tārīkh-nāma-i Harāt, a history of the Kart dynasty of Herat, in ca. 721/1321–22, described several exchanges between Kartid forces and Afghan fighters in and around the town of Mastung (in what is today Baluchistan) to the west of the Sulaymān Mountains, a region the author frequently calls Afghanistan (al-Harawī 1943, 199–201, 205–06, 209, 263–64, 267–70). Ibn Baṭṭuta (1853–59, 3:89–90), who apparently passed through Ghazna in 734/1334, noted that the Afghans lived in the mountains of that region, though he also explicitly referred to Kōh-i Sulaymān as ‘their mountain’ (jabaluhum). In his Zafar-nāma (1957, 1:272, 2:19), Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī (d. 858/1454) describes several altercations in India involving the Timurid forces and Afghans who descended ‘from the Sulaymān Mountains’ (az kōh-i sulaymān). In the Bābur-nāma (2002, 152, 156, 164, 167, 173, 273; see also Gankovsky 1971, 127n106; Gommans 1995, 11–12), the Mughal dynasty’s founder Bābur (d. 937/1530) describes Afghanistan as the mountainous territory between Kabul and districts like Kōhāt, Hangū, Bannū and Dūkī that lay west of the Indus. While Bābur does not mention the Kōh-i Sulaymān by name, the highlands he calls Afghanistan correspond roughly to the Sulaymān Range. Bābur’s characterization of this region as Afghanistan (literally ‘the lands of the Afghans’) is not surprising since, as the foregoing analysis shows, Kōh-i Sulaymān represents the earliest known Afghan homeland, and it seems to have remained a predominantly Afghan territory well into the sixteenth century.” – Nejatie, page 557
aśvaka
daśvāroha, āśvasāda, āśvavā?

References

1 aśvāroha, āśvasāda, āśvāvā
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2 (https://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/ashvaka accessed 5th October 2021)

3 “…āśubhaḥ sa eva colāvagānāsitiḥūṇacinānam” Verse 61 Chapter 11, Brihat Samhita. “giridurgapahlavaśvetahūṇacolāvagānāmarucīnāḥ…” Verse 37 Chapter 16, Brihat Samhita
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