

Diversity of Lineages in Ghizer, Northern Areas, Pakistan

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Abstract

The population of Ghizer consists of numerous lineages and the people are quite conscious of their unique origins as seen in the numerous qoums existing here. Many ancestors migrated from Yaghistan at different points in history. Though the historical influence of Chitral on the culture and language of the people of Ghizer is not deniable, the relevance of migrations in and out of Yaghistan has played a tremendous role in the present-day cultural and political complexity of the region as well.

1. Introduction

This is a preliminary report of anthropological research which I conducted among the Khowar speakers of Ghizer intermittently between September 1993 and September 1995. Initially, my research was concerned with the Gujurs in Chashi Gol, one of the adjacent valleys in Ghizer. However, due to a shift of emphasis early on in my work, I spent a significant amount of time in villages where Khowar was spoken. I had visited Tharulti, the largest Gujur village in Chashi Gol, in 1984 and it was there that I met the descendants of a man from Tangir Valley. The man had fled that region over 60 years earlier after killing three people there. The population of Tharuliti had risen to 250 in that time, and the people, I noted, had preserved their nomadic way of life and language. I was particularly interested in the settlement processes at work within the population and visited the village several times, spending a total of six months there (Nejima 1990).

Gradually, I came to appreciate the fact that the Gujurs were dependent on "Qashqari" (the term which the Gujurs apply to the Khowar-speaking people) in many aspects of their lives, and I consequently expanded my research to cover the Qashqari, or Kho, as they are usually referred to in anthropological literature. This I did in order to grasp the overall structure of society around the Ghizer River. In 1993, I shifted my focus to Pingal and the surrounding villages.

Ghizer consists of the upper part of a long valley that runs from the Shandur Pass on the Chitral border to the junction of the Gilgit River with the

Ishkoman River (Schomberg 1935: 41). As far as modern administration is concerned, Ghizer also refers to one of five districts in the Northern Areas, including two subdivisions of Punial/Ishkoman and Gupis/Yasin. Beginning in the seventeenth century, the region was ruled by the Khushwaqt dynasty, which was related to the Kator dynasty of Chitral. The dynasty was founded in Yasin, and also ruled Ghizer as well as Ishkoman, Kuh, and Mastuj until the British installed governors in the above-mentioned regions (Frembgen 1985: 205).

Linguistically speaking Ghizer is a transitional zone. Shina, one of the major languages of the Northern Areas, loses ground to Khowar upon entering Ghizer from the direction of Punial. In Gupis, the center of the region, Khowar is spoken as much as Shina, and beyond Dahimal it replaces Shina completely. Khowar is spoken predominantly in Chitral District of the N.W.F.P., so that one can recognize the Khowar belt from Chitral to Ghizer, crossing the Shandur Pass. Given the historical background, it is quite reasonable to assume that the Khowar-speaking population in Ghizer penetrated the region eastward from Chitral (Biddulph 1880: 58; Staley 1982: 141).

2. *Qoums* in Ghizer

Therefore, when I started research among the Khowar speakers, I had a vague idea that the people were of a single ethnic group, and in the initial stage of fieldwork, I never questioned the validity of that assumption. Besides speaking Khowar, the villagers had developed a unique custom of working collectively in areas concerning agriculture and animal husbandry. It contrasted sharply with many activities of the Gujurs which were conducted at a household level. However, as the research progressed and I began to speak Khowar, the situation turned out to be more complex than it had first appeared. First of all, the people did not call themselves Kho. In fact, very few people knew the term. And of those who did, without exception, they had learnt it from books. Nor did they recognize Khowar speakers as a single entity. Qashqari, as well as Chitrali, is applied only to the people and language beyond the Shandur Pass. They said that Qashqari or Chitrali *zaban* (language) was slightly different from their own Khowar. When I asked about etymology of the word Khowar, very few people could provide me with an answer. Those who did provide me with an answer mentioned

Kho as the name of regions such as Torkho and Mulkho. They regarded these places to be where the language originated.

When I further asked about their ancestors and origins individually, I began hearing described to me the level of identity known as *qoum*. Introduced from Arabic into the local languages, the term *qoum* is widely used by Muslims of many societies and can be applied to a nation or to locally-based descent groups, with many levels in between. Furthermore, *qoum* can mean a group defined by religion, or signify a political nation (Sökefeld 1995). In the context of Ghizer, *qoum* generally indicates only one level: patrilineal lineage. A *qoum* in Ghizer is quite small in size and limited in distribution. Visiting major villages I was always able to learn of more *qoums*, until I was able to compile a list of more than 60 *qoums* from the region, a list which is far from complete. Here I would like to describe some of them.

- *Hakime Qoum*

Hakim was the local ruler second only to *raja*. He governed from the boundary with Dahimal to the Shandur Pass. A man named Suko came from Hudur, near Chilas. He married a widow in Phandar and obtained land there. Suko's grandson (or great-grandson) Rahmat was recruited by the famous ruler Gohar Aman of the Khushwaqt dynasty. Rahmat demonstrated his bravery in fighting and eventually became a chief vassal of Gohar Aman. Rahmat's great-grandson, Muhammad Yakut Shah, who was the last *hakim* of Ghizer, passed away at the very end of my field-work.

- *Khoja Qoum*

This *qoum* is a family of Ismaili *pir* and is respected in the local community. The grandfather of the present *pir* lived in Wakhan, and would visit Bombay every year to obtain religious instruction from Aga Khan. His father moved to Yarkand/eastern Turkistan and settled there. After 25 years in this region, however, the *pir* and his family were forced to flee from war in 1933. Pir Sahib, the present *pir*, told me: "I was a little child at that time. I remember the journey just like a dream. It took 40 days from Yarkand to Mastuj (then they shifted to Shamaran). It was a long way on the back of a donkey."

- *Ratase Qoum*
The ancestor of the Ratase was called Ataleg Murad. His treasure was allegedly hidden under the rocks in Chashi Gol. The members of the *qoum* say the treasure is protected by fairies.
- *Jikane Qoum*
The Jikane is one of a few *qoums* in Gologh Muli which came from upper Swat. Through Shunj Gol, it takes only two days on foot to reach upper Swat.
- *Walie Qoum*
The Walie seems to be the biggest *qoum* in Ghizer. The members claim to be of Kaka Khel origin (i.e., Pathan origin from Mardan).

The name of a *qoum* is usually taken from the ancestor who migrated into Ghizer. Otherwise the name shows place of origin, like Gilite, taken from Gilgit's former name Gilit. Or it refers to the office of principality, like *hakim*. It usually has the suffix of -e. As a rule, a *qoum* consists of the descendents of a common ancestor. However, it may include a non-agnate taken through marriage or through fictitious kinship. A common method for settling in a village in which one has no relations is to marry a daughter of parents who have no son. After marriage, the new husband is accepted as *jamar* (son-in-law) of the respective *qoum*. Gradually, his family grows. After several decades, the family might be regarded as another *qoum* with the name of *jamar*. They are also called *gadae*, which refers to those who have yet to form a *qoum*. There are countless *gadae* in the villages. Under the rule of *raja*, the members of a *qoum* once shared the social status and privileges which were acquired by the ancestors. Some of the privileges, which are mostly concerned with natural resource management, are valid to this day. Former servants of upper class families often name themselves these days after the master's *qoum*. The master's family accepts them as *chir brar* (milk brother in Khowar), but does not allow them to share any vested rights. People are quite conscious of their origins and know where their ancestors came from. In this relatively open country which is adjacent to Punial, Yasin, Chitral, and through mountain passes to Yaghistan, the ancestors came from every direction and settled here. It is not surprising, then, that their descendents formed numerous *qoums* and do not regard themselves as a single ethnic group.

List of Qoums in Ghizer

In the space of origin in the table below, I included the secondary migration as much as possible. For example, the Muke in Dahimal is originally from Darel. From there the ancestor migrated to Handarap. Later on some of his descendents migrated to Dahimal from Handarap.

Table 1:

Village	Name of <i>qoum</i>	Origin	Remarks
Dahimal (majority is Shina speakers)	Abaje	Gupis	descendants of fairy?
	Bude	Darel	
	Chade	Jindrot	
	Girkis	Gilgit	keeper of shrine
	Kunshure	Kunsher (Kohistan)	
	Maqsate	Jindrot-Kashmir	
	Muke	Handarap-Darel	
	Mue	Raushun-Tangir	
	Sherkane	Pingal-Chitral-Tangir or Gor	
	Walie	Gologh Muli-Mardan	
Pingal (main research locale)	Birge	Gor	first settled
	Hakime	Chashi-Phandar-Hudur	local ruler until 1972
	Khozale	Sai	first settled
	Ratase	Chashi-Arandu (Afghan Border)	
	Shale	Laspur	
	Sherkane	Chitral-Tangir or Gor	
	Shumule	Phandar-Wakhan or Chilas	
Shamaran (including Rawat)	Alame	Chashi-Darel	
	Bargue	Phandar-Tangir	
	Bohe	Chashi-Sazin	
	Chumare	Chashi-Gor	
	Dashmane	indigenous?	
	Dom	Bujaykot (Yasin)-Kashmir	musicians
	Doshe	Lasapur	
	Hole	Chashi-?	
	Khoja	Mastuj-Yarkand-Wakhan- Badakhshan	Ismaili <i>pir</i>
	Lade	Phandar-Darel	
	Muladale	Chashi-Darel	
	Pague	Tangir or Darel	
	Rayat	Chitral	carrier of <i>raja</i>
	Shekhnie	Laspur	

	Shobokeye Walie	Teru-Hudur Gologh Tori-Mardan	
Chashi	Alame Baehane Barakhe Bohe Cholote Chumare Dalie Hakime Hole Mahajane Muladale Ratase Shumule Suke Tine Walie	Darel Nager Gor Sazin Gologh Tori-Chilas Gor Dir Phandur-Hudur ? Phandar-Arandu Darel Arandu Wakhan or Chilas Phandar-Hudur indigenous? Gologh Muli-Mardan	split from Chumare Qoum split from Suke Qoum shares ancestors with Ratase Qoum shares ancestors with Mahajane Qoum
Phandar (main data from Doloman)	Bojoke Bodonge Dolane Gilite Khoje Lade Mahajane Munie Pute Rabakane Shamshere Shumule Suke Walie	Chitral Tangir Hudur? Gilgit Hudur? Darel Arandu Hudur? Hudur Hudur? Tangir Wakhan or Chilas Hudur Gologh Muli-Mardan	shares ancestors with Sarale Qoum
Gologh Muli	Bue Cholote Dobe Dolat Shoe Jikane Khone Lamane	Lutkho Chilas Teru-Chilas Upper Swat Upper Swat Upper Swat or Lutkho Harchin	

	Shukane Walie	Shukayot Mardan	first settled from Kaka khel, Pathan origin
Handarap	Baloshe	Darel	

	Butie Kozie Masafe Muke Shukae Tonge Walie Zale	Chilas Chitral Chitral Darel Shuyakot Darel Mardan ?	first settled local ruler in 19th century
Teru	Badure Butie Cholote Dobe Khone Mashole Shobokeye Yarake Walie	Harchin Handarap-Chilas Chilas Chilas Bashqar or Lutkho Chilas Hudur ? Mardan	

There are two side valleys (*gol*) which have permanent settlements. Gujurs speak Gujuri and Sayyed speak Shina as their mother tongues.

3. The Influx from Yaghistan

An unexpected outcome of my research was to learn of the enormous flow of people into the region from Yaghistan. While the influx from the Chitral side comprises 25 % of the total migrating population, more than half of the *qoums* trace their origins to Yaghistan. A high proportion of migration from this area can be explained by the social structure of Yaghistan itself. Jettmar provides the material for understanding this phenomenon.

Table 2:

Side valley	Name of <i>qoum</i>	Origin
Bathrez Gol	Gujur (khels) Busha Choko Kari Tarbiya Sayyed	Tangir Tangir-Alai Tangir Tangir Tangir or Darel
Chashi Gol	Gujur (khels) Kari Sham	Kandia Tangir-Duber?

Along the Indus River, as in neighbouring Indus-Kohistan, there existed independent communities eager to defend their liberty against foreign invaders but internally split by perpetual feuds. Their land was called Yaghestan, "Land of the Free," and famous for its anarchy.

(Jettmar 1980: 40)

Concerning the political organization of Yaghistan Jettmar remarks that

[e]very community is headed by a council called *jirga* which has to settle minor quarrels ... Important decisions are made by a big jirga in which the headmen of several villages or of valleys meet ... The whole system is highly inefficient and opens the door to all sorts of feuds between factions, so Barth calls it "acephalous."

(Jettmar 1980: 45f.)

The situation in the past was much worse:

In the constant wars between the valleys which, according to many tales, prevailed in Shinkari (e.g., between Darel and Gor, Gor and Chilas) for centuries, the population of the small and not too fertile valleys was ground between the mighty centers – Darel, Gor, and Chilas. The princes were killed or driven away, fields and villages destroyed.

(*ibid.*: 53-54).

I also would like to cite remarks concerning Tangir since it was one of the centers of Yaghistan and closely related to Yasin, of which Ghizer was a part. Moreover, many Gujurs who obviously came from further south (Rao 1988) moved into the side valleys of Ghizer via Tangir.

Since the time when Gauhar Aman was on the throne of Yasin the Tangiri people have acknowledged the ruler of that state as their suzerain.

(Schomberg 1935: 234)

Again in 1924, we find the Political Agent referring to the institution of a blockade against the Tangiris for having committed several raids in Ghizar.

(Hassnain 1978: 127)

In the following months one crosses either over the high alpine pastures of the small side valleys or one moves over the passes to the famous pasture lands of Chashi and Batres. These areas, already in the catchment area of the Gilgit River, were annexed, in fact, generations ago.

(Jettmar 1960: 124; translation by D. Kerns)

The relationship is persistent, though not always friendly. Today, the transhumance observed by Jettmar is still followed. During fieldwork in 1989, I counted about 80 summer huts (*dukuri* in Shina) in 11 camps scattered in the upper part of Chashi Gol. Once I saw some 200 men gathering for a game of polo and prayer soon after *Eid*. I estimated, then, that the population of Tangiris in Chashi Gol in summer might be 500. Men often come down to the villages around the Ghizer River. Because of this, they are well informed on local geography. Another tradition, that of raiding and kidnapping, as it were, occasionally happens. In the summer of 1993, for example, a party of bandits stole 450 animals in Chashi Gol.

4. Conclusion

In Ghizer, the historical influence of Chitral is not deniable. In this paper, however, I have tried to present another influence, that of Yaghistan, on the background and identity of the *qoums* in Ghizer. The population of Ghizer was quite small until the beginning of this century. According to the Census of 1911, it was only 4,112 (Hassnain 1978: 12). In the past, the immigrants must have been able to obtain good information on Ghizer through annual transhumance, as is the case today. Even refugees could find room to settle in the region, if they pledged allegiance to the king. The migrations by nature must have been very small in size. After settling in Ghizer, the refugees were then cut off from their homeland so that their descendents have forgotten the Shina language, which is spoken in Yaghistan, and have adopted Khowar as their mother tongue.

In summary, I would like to refer to a few articles which provide ideas on the topic for further discussion. It is a well-known fact that, in the north of Pakistan, there were two types of political organizations, the centralized and the acephalous. In our context, Ghizer is the former and Yaghistan the latter. We saw the migration and the assimilation of tribal populations into the principality of Ghizer. This situation somewhat resembles ethnic processes on the Pathan-Baluch boundary (Barth 1981). Here, the Pathans have been

assimilated into the Baluchis despite military superiority. Barth stresses the structural differences of the two forms of tribal organization to explain the processes. Pathan tribes, essentially acephalous, are governed by *jirgas* (lineage councils), arranged in a hierarchy of inclusiveness. On the other hand, Baluch tribes are socially stratified and have a centralized form, the structure of which is composed of channels of communication through echelons of leaders (ibid.: 93-94). When a Pathan's honour is lost through a dishonourable act or failure to extract revenge, he loses his capacity to defend his life and interest in the council. He must then either flee the country or seek the protection of another man. Seeking the protection of someone is, however, lowering oneself before all the tribesmen, and in most situations the unfortunate person chooses emigration (ibid.: 98). Among the Baluchis, such refugees are welcomed in their new status: The importance and influence of a Baluch leader is roughly commensurate with the number of his effective followers, and the decision to grant new followers protection and rights rests with him, and need not be debated and accepted by a council of his equals (ibid.: 100).

The same principle seems to be working in Yaghistan-Ghizer. The migration is always from the acephalous to the centralized, and not vice versa. Yet, huge migrations in aggregate terms must have had an effect on the organization of the principality. In another article, Barth mentions the traditional organization of Chitral State, and points out that the highly bureaucratic and centralized formal organization co-existed with, and actually operated through, a tribal and in part acephalous descent organization in the districts. Barth adds that the pattern is also found in the Yasin-Gilgit area (Barth 1956: 81-83). The social structure of Ghizer which is a result of a long process of integration and assimilation, must have been affected by the migration from Yaghistan.

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