

Archaeology in Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Placing New Results in Context.

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Abstract

The valley of Chitral is located in the Hindu Kush mountain range, in the very north west of Pakistan. It is generally characterised as a very remote area, and archaeological work here to date has been sporadic and largely unsystematic. However, a recent joint Pakistani-British project has carried out two seasons of archaeological survey in order to begin to build up an outline chronology and understanding of the prehistory and history of Chitral, and the role it has played in some of the key cultural developments of northern South Asia, such as the impact of the Achaemenid Empire at its borders, the spread of Buddhism, and the form of early Islam. This paper presents the results of this new work, and places it within a wider regional context of social, political, and ideological events.

Keywords

Chitral; northern Pakistan; transect survey; chronology; cultural contact

Introduction

The district of Chitral lies in the far north-west of Pakistan, in what is now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (formerly the North West Frontier Province). Archaeological

and historical understandings of this area are very limited, and even today, myth tends to play an equal role with fact in providing the basis for a narrative of historical events and past human activity here. In 2009 a joint project began between Hazara University, Pakistan, Abdul Wali Khan University, Pakistan, and the University of Leicester, UK, funded by the British Council INSPIRE programme, intended to systematically investigate the archaeology of Chitral. The main aim of this project was to identify archaeological sites representative of a range of periods, types, and functions in order to begin to construct a relative chronology and understand the broad character of human settlement and activity in this remote mountain valley. This was achieved through transect survey, with survey locations placed in different areas of the district in terms of elevation, modern settlement, topography and ground cover. A further aim of the project was to begin to explore local attitudes to heritage and archaeology, and think about the roles local people might want to play in the development and preservation of cultural resources and the results of our heritage survey will be presented and discussed elsewhere.

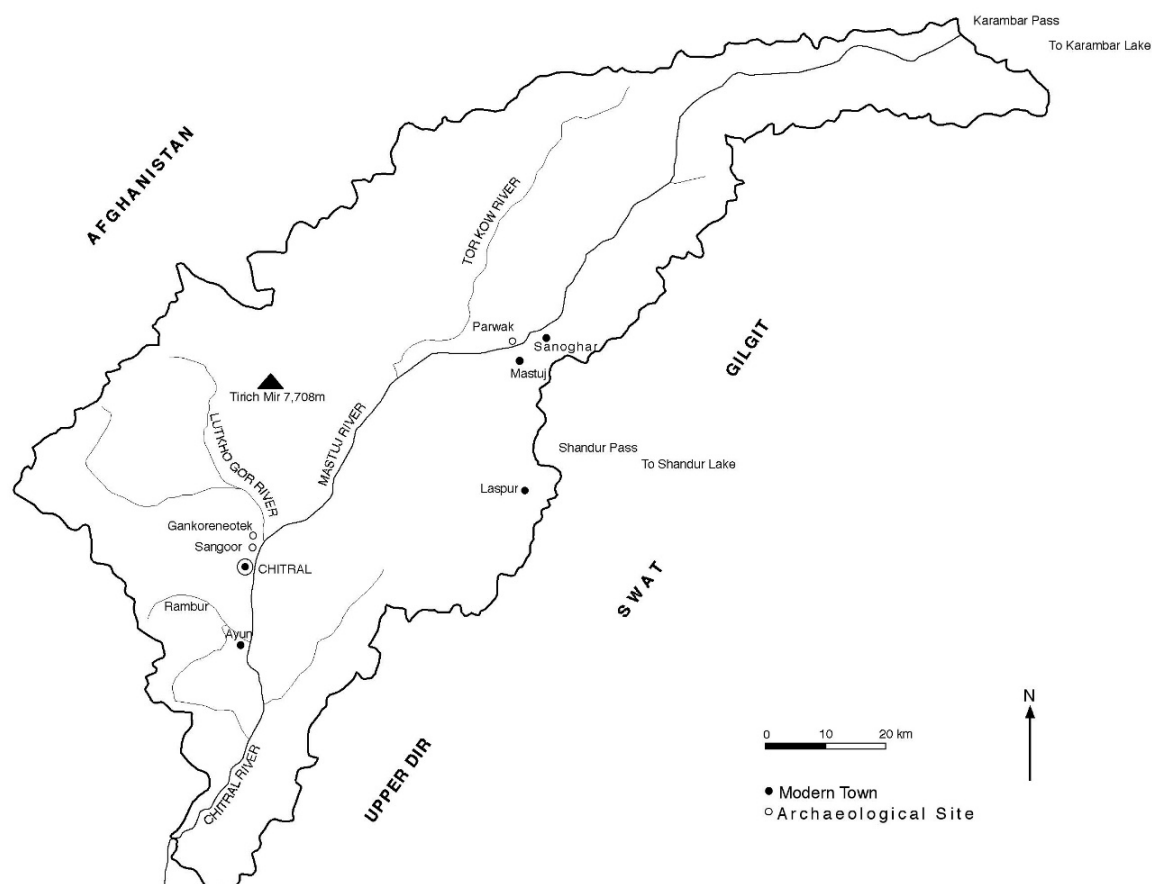


Figure 1. Chitral location map (Map by M. Zahir).

The aims of this paper are to present the results of the first two field seasons of this project (2009-10, 2010-11) and to place them within a wider understanding of Chitral archaeology and history. We believe that this is important because the results of the field survey provide our first systematically derived view of past settlement and human activity in this area. We also would like our project to offer encouragement to archaeologists within and outside Pakistan whose fieldwork has been curtailed by security issues over the last few years. Although Chitral has always been regarded as a very peaceful and safe place for foreign travellers and archaeologists alike, the recent security issues affecting much of Pakistan forced us to re-think both our training and our field strategies. We believe that the resulting compromises have gone a long way to achieving our original project aims: training in new survey methodologies and

equipment has been carried out, and data has been collected which is expanding our knowledge of Chitral in the past.

Geographical setting

Many parts of Pakistan are described as remote and challenging in terms of the natural environment, and Chitral is certainly one such areas. Chitral is located in the very north-west of the modern nation state of Pakistan, with the Afghan provinces of Badakhshan to the west, and the Wakhan corridor to the north, Gilgit-Baltistan province (formerly the Northern Areas) to the east, and the valleys of Swat and Dir to the south and south east. Situated in the foothills of the Hindu Kush, Chitral is defined by mountains and rivers; it is very close to the junction of the Hindu Kush and Pamir ranges, and the highest peak in the region is Tirich Mir at 7,620m (Dichter 1967: 26; Haserodt 1996: 3). Figure 1 shows the main towns, rivers and passes of Chitral. Chitral's mountainous nature has given rise to great physical extremes: there are over 40 peaks of 6,000m or more, alongside river valleys which plunge 900m below the level of the main settlements through steep ravines (Dichter 1967: 42; Haserodt 1996: 4; Israr-ud-Din 1996: 19) (see Fig 2).

There are four main passes linking Chitral with Afghanistan and the rest of Pakistan. In the far north, the Baroghil pass (3,810m) connects Chitral with the Wakhan Corridor and the Pamir or roof of the world' plateau beyond. In this area where Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan meet, there is "a characteristic type of terrain known as 'Pamir' which means an upland grazing ground ... but because it occurs at unusually high elevations, offers only the scantiest forage to the area's local nomadic people, the Wakhi. Not only does this region lack a suitable vegetation cover, but except for some protected valley locations it is devoid of trees as well" (Dichter 1967: 27). The Shandur or Hindu Raj range forms the natural barrier between Chitral and Gilgit to the east, and the two areas are linked by the Shandur pass at 3,374m. The Dorah Pass (4,300m) provides the main access between Chitral and Badakhshan, and when other passes are closed in winter, it is sometimes possible to travel to the south via the Dorah Pass and through Afghanistan (Dichter 1967: 28). The Lowari pass (3,118m) links lower Chitral with upper Dir, and is one of the main access routes between Chitral

and the rest of Pakistan, particularly the city of Peshawar and beyond, although it is closed due to heavy snowfall between October and June. The Government of Pakistan has been involved in the construction of a tunnel under the Lowari Pass to link Chitral with the rest of the province since the late 1960s (Dichter 1967: 47), and although not officially complete or open, the tunnel is used during winter.



Figure 2 Chitral valley (Photograph: R. Young).

Rivers are very influential in terms of modern settlement and agriculture in Chitral and the main river system changes name according to location. It is the Yarkhun (or Yarkand) in the north, becoming the Mastuj as it flows south; it is the Chitral as it reaches the main valley and Chitral town, and when it enters Afghanistan it becomes the Kunar. The Chitral River plain below Mastuj is between 1.6-4km wide, though frequently much narrower, and although the significant cultivable areas around the river lowlands comprise some 160km, they are not found in a single unbroken stretch but are segmented by defiles and narrows (Dichter 1967: 29; Israr-ud-Din 1996). A key feature

of cultivation in Chitral is the fan-shaped areas of soil deposited by rivers and streams running from the mountains down to the main river. These fans are largely the result of frequent mud and rock slides, and modern settlement and agriculture is linked closely to them, although flooding, erosion and mudslides often place the villages and farm lands in great danger (Dichter 1967: 29; Haserodt 1996: 5; Israr-ud-Din 1996: 19).

In terms of linear distances, Chitral is relatively close to the source of two major rivers; the Indus and the Oxus, both of which have been very important in the emergence of complex, urban societies in the past. In terms of terrain, these rivers are much less accessible, with the Indus rising in the Himalayas to the east, and the Oxus in the Pamirs to the north. It has been argued that it was rivers rather than mountains that formed major boundaries in the past, and that it was the Indus, particularly where it joined the Kabul River at Attock, that formed the main barrier between central and south Asia, rather than the major mountain ranges (Dichter 1967: 104). In order to explore this idea of mountains as barriers or links, and the contact and connections between different regions in this very mountainous area further, part of our final field season will be spent surveying the main passes in and out of Chitral.

From both a physical and cultural point of view, Dichter believes that Chitral is more akin to Central Asia along with Gilgit, Badakhshan, and Wakhan, but included it in his geographical study of the North West Frontier “based on the conviction that both historically and ethnically the state has had far closer ties with the lowlands to the south (including a definite affiliation to ‘Pathanism’), in spite of its close proximity to the Central Asian highlands” (1967: 40) and also because administratively, it has been part of North West Frontier for some time. This analysis is interesting because it signals Chitral’s somewhat liminal status and position: it is very much part of the mountains of the Hindu Kush and beyond northwards, yet at the same time it has strong ties with regions to the south and east. In terms of geography, Chitral can be seen as an isolated, almost self-contained unit, yet it is also located very close to some of the major communication and trade axes of this area, and is linked by important passes to neighbouring areas. We believe that archaeology can make an important contribution to understanding Chitral’s position in South and Central Asia – although today it is one of

the most isolated areas in Pakistan, it is important to avoid an essentialising stance which automatically projects this into the past.

With a total population of c. 350,000 (in 2003), Chitral is home to two main ethnic groups: the Kho and the Kalasha (Haserodt 1996: 6; Marsden 2005: 14). The majority Kho speak Khowar (an Indo-European language), and practice both Sunni (c.70%) and Shi'a Ismaili (c.30%) Islam. The Kho are described as very culturally (and linguistically) different to Pukhtuns living in the rest of the Frontier regions and Afghanistan (Marsden 2005: 14), although an increasing number of Pukhtuns are settling in Chitral. The Kalasha are distinguished largely on the basis of religion, being the largest non-Muslim group in the Hindu Kush, and speak Kalasha (also an Indo-European language). Today there are around 3,000 Kalasha settled in three valleys (Rumbur, Birir and Bumburet) to the south of Chitral town (Capacardo 1996: 249). Formerly, a much larger group of 'Kafirs' or non-believers were spread throughout Badakhshan and Nuristan as well as northwestern Pakistan (Biddulph 1995 [1880]: 127; Capacardo 1996: 247-8). The Kalasha have a distinctive ideology and material culture which has been studied at length by anthropologists and ethnographers (e.g. Lievre 1996; Parkes 1996, 1987; Young et al. 2000), but it is not our intention to focus on the Kalasha in this paper. We will consider them specifically in terms of archaeological and heritage issues in our planned monograph, but we want to use this paper to explore Chitral as an entity which happens to include Kalasha, as well as other ethnic and religious populations. In addition to Kho and Kalasha there are small numbers of semi-nomadic Muslim Gujar herders and in the far north of the region are semi-nomadic Wakhi speakers who keep yaks and cows (Marsden 2005: 13-15).

Historical and archaeological context of Chitral

Absolute historical and archaeological knowledge of Chitral is very limited, especially when compared to regions to the south such as Swat and the Valley of Peshawar, where there have been relatively extensive archaeological explorations (e.g. Coningham and Ali 2007; Stacul 1987; Wheeler 1962), and much is known through the analysis of historical and protohistorical accounts (e.g. Caroe 1958; Legge 1965; Stein 1929; Xuanzang 1996;

Young 2009a), as well as other sources such as art historical analysis (e.g. Filigenzi 2005; Marshall 1960; Swati 1997; Zwalf 1996). In this section we offer a brief summary of key events and material known from areas surrounding Chitral in order to indicate the sorts of cultural developments that were likely to have had an impact on Chitral itself. This is followed by a summary of the findings of various archaeological field work that has been carried out in Chitral, most of which has occurred since the late 1990s.

The Harappan or Indus Civilisation spread over a great area, and its influence reached as far as north-eastern Afghanistan to the plain south of the Oxus where the site of Shortugai is located (Allchin and Allchin 1982: 169). Shortugai was thought to be linked to exploitation of lapis lazuli from nearby Badakhshan, and possibly copper resources as well, and the site has been interpreted as a trade outpost or trade colony beyond the frontiers of the Indus Civilisation itself (Allchin and Allchin 1982: 186-7; Kenoyer 1998: 96). Stacul (1978: 150) observed similarities between pottery styles and decorations from Indus material and material from contemporary sites in Swat, indicating the presence of Indus material culture and influence in areas around Chitral itself.

The next great empire to make its presence felt in this region was that of the Achaemenids, which had provinces or satrapies extending from Syria in the west to the Indus in the east. While the existence of eastern provinces such as Bactria and Gandhara are well attested in both inscriptions and art historical sources, their absolute boundaries are not known (Magee et al. 2005: 713-4). Chitral may well have been located just outside the boundaries of each province, and thus outside the formal area of the Achaemenid Empire, but nevertheless its close proximity to both provinces strongly suggests that it would have been aware of the Empire and almost certainly subject to Achaemenid influence. This raises interesting archaeological questions, as there is little knowledge or understanding of this influence in the east through material culture, and there are many questions about the nature of imperialism, control, hegemony and colonisation that could be explored through focused archaeological research in the northwest of Pakistan (Magee et al. 2005). Given Chitral's location right on the very

edges of the empire it could provide an exceedingly interesting opportunity to learn about the impact of the empire outside its borders.

Alexander the Great has provided a great deal of scope for historical-geographical work by European scholars such as Major-General Sir Alexander Cunningham (the first Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India) (1871), Sir Aurel Stein (1929), and Sir Mortimer Wheeler (1962). Local legends and accounts have been used to support academic work, and have also derived support in turn from academic studies (see Trail 1996 for further discussion of this). While Alexander the Great undoubtedly conquered great swathes of central and south Asia, including areas north of the Oxus and east of the Indus, the need to directly link sites and events to the (secondhand) accounts of the exploits and movements of the Macedonian army has unhelpfully dominated a great deal of early antiquarian and archaeological work in this region at the expense of indigenous issues. Postcolonial theories and approaches certainly need to be brought to bear – not simply to oppose or negate the dominance of Alexandrian explanations, but to offer different understandings of indigenous developments and make it possible to offer multiple (equally valid) readings of the past (e.g. Liebmann 2008; Young 2003).

Olivieri offers a reading of Curtius and Arrian that has Alexander and his troops following the Kunar (ancient Choes) river into Chitral, and then travelling over the Lowari Pass and through Dir to reach Swat (1996: 59). According to M'Crindle's analysis of Arrian, Alexander spent twelve months getting to the Indus from the time he separated from Hephaistion and Perdikkas (who used the more southerly route of the Kabul River and laid siege to the city of Peukealotis or Charsadda in the Vale of Peshawar). In order to be able to enter Chitral via the Kunar and then cross the Lowari Pass to reach Dir, Alexander would have needed to time this segment of his expedition very carefully, particularly as he also spent a full month resting his troops once they had reached the right bank of the Indus. M'Crindle cites Holdith's analysis of Alexander's route, who said that "The recognised road to India from Central Asia was that which passed through the plains of Kabul, by the Kabul River, into Laghman or Lamghan, and thence by the open Dasht-i-Gumbaz into the lower Kunar. From the Kunar valley this road, even to the time of Baber's invasion of India (early in the sixteenth century),

crossed the comparatively low intervening range into Bajour; thence to the valley of the Panj-Kora and Swat, and out into India by the same passes with which we have now (after nearly 400 years) found it convenient to enter the same district” (1893: xxx). This interpretation suggests that Alexander may not have travelled as far north as Chitral at this time, and the confusion over his route in this particular area has long been recognised by scholars (M’Crindle 1893: 61).

Both the Kalasha and Kho groups have at times claimed some ancestry from Alexander and his army (see also our heritage survey results to be published shortly), and how much this owes to external speculation and how much is the result of oral histories passed down over the course of 2000 years is difficult to determine (Elphinstone 1972 [1815]: 387; M’Crindle 1893: xxxii; Trail 1996). However, we do know from both archaeological and historical records that Alexander established numerous towns and cities across the former Achaemenid Empire, and in these new cities such as Begram (Alexandria of the Caucasus), and Alexandria Nicaea (believed to be near the Jhelum River) installed many Greek colonists (Errington and Curtis 2007: 34-5; Herrmann 2009: 798; M’Crindle 1893: 58). It is therefore highly likely that there were many alliances between the new settlers and local people right across this whole region, and that many people in what is now Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and even north western India may owe some portion of their DNA to these Greek military colonists.

In the centuries following Alexander the Great the Bactrian Greeks extended their territory over the Hindu Kush and up to the Indus (Sidky 2000: 117). At the same time, Chandragupta Maurya was gathering force and extending the Mauryan Empire, and by c. 303 B.C. ruled over the whole northern area of India, which in the west extended to include the area known as Gandhara – the name for the geographical region being derived from the former Achaemenid satrapy (see Young 2009b for a discussion of the significance of the name ‘Gandhara’) (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 95). There were of course battles for land and control between these two major powers, such as the clash between Chandragupta Maurya and Seleucus I in c. 306 B.C. (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993: 92-3). Chitral is not explicitly mentioned in such accounts, and it appears from the

geographical descriptions of both the Mauryan Empire and the Bactrian Greek Empire, to lie just outside their boundaries. At its height, the Mauryan Empire stretched from Gandhara in the west (including the cities of Taxila and Pushkalavati, or Charsadda) across the Gangetic basin to the Bay of Bengal in the East, and down into peninsular India in the south (Allchin 1995: 208). The Bactrian Greeks occupied areas such as Aria, Arachosia and Paropamisadae which abutted the northwestern limits of the Mauryan Empire (Narain 2003: 16-17), thus controlling the area of modern north eastern Afghanistan, and down through the Khyber Pass area and across to the Indus. However, Chitral would have been on the border of both the Mauryan and the Bactrian Greek sphere of control, and this makes it an especially interesting area in which to carry out more focused study in future. Exploring the material culture of a region right on the edge of such competing major political entities could provide fascinating information about such issues as identity, ethnicity, ideology and control in border zones.

In the Mauryan period and later, the form and development of Buddhism in Gandhara to the south of Chitral, is relatively well understood through archaeology, art history, protohistory and some historical material (Filigenzi 2005; Marshall 1960; Stacul 1987; Xuanzang 1996; Zwalf 1996). While the modern definition of Gandhara in the Buddhist period is as inexact as it was during the Achaemenid period, it is approximately the region surrounding Peshawar and the Kabul River (see e.g. Young 2009a). The Khyber Pass is also known to have been of great importance, not only as key artery for trade, communication and movement of people, but also as “the starting point for the Buddhist missions to the east along the so-called Silk Road” (Dietz 2007: 49). During the last centuries B.C. and the first centuries A.D. the influence of Gandharan Buddhism covered an area from Bamiyan in western Afghanistan, across the Indus to Taxila, and up to Gilgit in the northeast (Dietz 2007: 50). Under both the Mauryans and the Kushans Buddhism flourished, and indeed Gandhara has been viewed as the central point from which Buddhism spread out to Central and Eastern Asia. This is supported by the presence of Kharosthi inscriptions north of the Hindu Kush in Bactria, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, as Kharosthi the missionary language of Buddhism in this region (Dietz 2007: 51-2). The widespread archaeological evidence for Buddhism takes the form of inscriptions, monasteries and temples, and elements of portable material culture,

although there are still many questions about the dating, development and collapse of Buddhist sites across the whole of Gandhara and beyond. While Chitral is virtually circled by areas with a great deal of evidence for Buddhist activity over many centuries, little is known about it within the valley beyond observations by Biddulph (1995 [1880]) and Stein (1921, 1933) of a possible stupa and rock carvings discussed further below. Some further rock carvings have been located within the recent survey, but these need considerably more analysis and work in order to begin to assign preliminary dates, function and so forth. Stein expended considerable effort analysing the links between the T'ang dynasty of China and Chitral (1921: 28-9). Drawing on the work of Chauvane on the T'ang annals, Stein suggested that Kao Hsien-chich conquered the Tibetans in A.D 747, then occupied Gilgit and Yasin, and as a consequence, maintained very close contact with the area now known as Chitral. Whilst this is supported by historical texts and also by local legends noted by Stein, there is very little in the way of material culture to elucidate this period of contact and influence by Chinese powers, as discussed further below.

Islam approached Chitral from both the southwest and the southeast. In A.D. 642 historical accounts of the battle between Sassanids and Arabs at Nehawand in Iran signal the beginning of the spread of Islam into Persia, Afghanistan and Central Asia (Ahsanullah 1986: 124). The Umayyad Caliphs gradually extended power across Central Asia, and this central Islamic force was also accompanied by smaller, independent powers, including the Ghaznavids, a dynasty founded in Ghazni in what is now central Afghanistan in A.D. 962. Islam was brought directly to Sindh in the early 8th century (Kennedy 2008: 296), although it had also been slowly introduced into India from the 7th century onwards by Arab traders and to “the efforts of these merchant-missionaries is to be ascribed the formation of the earliest community of Indian Mussalmans” (Habibullah 1961: 1). Thus in terms of Afghanistan and the North West Frontier, we know that by the time of the Ghaznavid Empire of 10th-12th centuries the regions to the west and south of Chitral would have been nominally Muslim. Up until the 18th century the Mughal Empire extended across what is now Pakistan to Peshawar and Kabul, and Marsden (2005: 13) says that although Chitral was never fully part of the Mughal Empire, the value placed on high culture, status, politeness, etiquette, and so

forth by the people of Chitral owes much to the Central Asian Mughal-Timurid influence.

From the early medieval period different sources provide information about dynastic names and the names of some individual leaders, mainly from activities going on around Chitral. Some of these sources conflict and at times even contradict each other, but many are also supported by folk tales and legends of the region (Holzwarth 1996: 120-1). Islam is understood to have spread through the Hindu Kush and Hindu Raj region in the 16th century, and is thought to have probably been Shi'a initially, changing to Sunni under the influence of the Uzbek khanate of Balkh (Holzwarth 1996: 123-4). However, the degree to which ordinary people adopted and followed their ruler's ideology is not known, and it is only with the advent of the Kator dynasty (r.1580s – 1960s) that greater depth is achieved in the historical narrative (Holzwarth 1996: 123). More is known of Chitral's later historic rulers, although this remains fragmentary and has often been gleaned from indirect sources. For example, Lindholm writes about the Painda Khel lineage of Dir who became powerful in the 17th century; this is attributed in part to a desire to challenge, defeat and take wealth from Chitral (1996: 111). Chitral was an independent kingdom with a hereditary monarchy until 1895, when it became part of the Malakand Agency along with Dir and Swat. In practice, this meant that the rulers paid lip-service to British India, but Chitral was not part of the administered territory of the North West Frontier (Schofield 2000: 125).

The various accounts by European military officers and government officials such as Elphinstone (1972 [1815]), Biddulph (1995 [1880]), Younghusband and Younghusband (2006 [1895]), and Younghusband (1897), give some information about contemporary political and social structures of the recent past which are useful in terms of understanding the history (and to some degree the material culture) of the last 200-300 years or so. While Elphinstone wrote extensively on the people, places and geography of the northwest, neither he nor any of his party travelled beyond Peshawar, and much of his work is drawn from the accounts of others – 'reliable natives' and comparisons with other maps and travellers' accounts (1972 [1815]: xxxviii). That the mountainous regions beyond Swat and Dir were poorly known is indicated by Elphinstone's

somewhat shaky geography with regard Chitral, which he described as part of a bigger country known as Kaushkaur: “We found that the nearest Kaushkaur was an extensive, but mountainous and ill-inhabited country, lying to the west (sic) of Budukhshaun, from which it was divided by Beloot Taugh; having Little Tibet on the east, the Pamere on the north, and the ridge of Hindoo Coosh (which separates it from the Eusofzyes) on the south” (1972 [1815]: 389).

Kaushkaur was both high and cold, and the inhabitants lived chiefly in tents, although a few towns were known. These people apparently belonged to a nation called Cobi whose origins were not known, but there was some suggestion of a resemblance of the name to an extensive tract in Chinese Tartary. These people were Muslims, and Kaushkaur was ruled under different petty despotisms, believed to be four in number: “That to the west is called Chitraul, and has been sometimes invaded from Budukhshaun, though defended by Beloot Taugh and the river of Kaushkaur. Towards the Eusofzyes is Droosh, which was taken by the Afghans of Punjcora. Another of these principalities is Mastooch; but the whole is little known, especially towards the north and east. Mr Macartney mentions a road from Punjcora along the borders of Kaushkaur, running up the valley of the river of that name, and practicable for camels. This diminishes the wonder of Kaussim Khaun’s passage of the perpetual snow on Hindoo Coosh, which has been mentioned in the account of the Eusofzyes” (Elphinstone 1972 [1815]: 389). Such observations are interesting, as they indicate that in the early 19th century the Chitral valley was fragmented in terms of political and social control, with Chitral, Drosh, Mastuj, and possibly even another (unnamed) area being ruled separately.

By the late 19th century much more was known (from a European perspective) about the region. This was partly due to Russian and British expansionist policies, which saw Chitral as a potentially pivotal geographical location (Curzon 1889: 297). However, the presence of the Pamirs presented a formidable physical barrier which did reduce the threat of invasion of the subcontinent from the northwest, although as Curzon noted, the Russian General Abramoff had shown that the high passes in the Pamirs were accessible to artillery (Curzon 1889: 329; Younghusband 1897). In 1892 Chitral was a bigger and more important state than Hunza, with a population estimated at about 80,000 people.

There are also eye-witness accounts of rulers, such as Amun-ul-Malk, who ruled for many years before dying in 1892 and leaving the succession in disarray, and this, combined with Russian activity in Chitral in 1891 led to the British arranging for the Mehtar (ruler of the princely state) to accept the joint sovereignty of Britain and Kashmir in 1895 (Younghusband 1897: 349). These observations of foreigners included ethnographic, social and political information, for example, Younghusband wrote about the next Mehtar of Chitral, Nizam-ul-Mulk, (r.1892-1895) who apparently ruled as a total despot, owning all people, animals and land, and doing what he liked with all people and things within his domain (Younghusband 1897: 362-3). In practice, Younghusband found that the Mehtar ruled over a number of chiefs, and Chitral was formerly made up of a number of chieftainships, and in turn, these chiefs had powers over specific areas and people, which agrees with Elphinstone's understanding of political control in this area described nearly 100 years earlier (1897: 366).

When Colonel McMahon visited Chitral at end of the 19th century he was greeted by dancing, music, shooting, polo, and groups of kafirs, both men and women (Schofield 2003: 126). In light of some of the results from our heritage survey (to be published shortly) where similar things are noted by local people as important heritage and tourist attractions, this is extremely interesting, as it suggests a strong continuity in terms of presented cultural resources and how visitors perceive the cultural resources of Chitral. McMahon talked of Chitral as a relatively orderly district, with no issues of blood-feuds as found among the Pathans to the south. However, in Yasin country, east of Chitral, the selling of young people as slaves to Turkestan in Central Asia was reported and Biddulph noted the capture of Chitrali women as slaves for sale or as gifts in the 1870s (Biddulph 1995 [1880]: 67; Schofield 2003: 126). Other 19th and 20th century trade included the import of ponies from Badakhshan, as there was a great demand for sturdy central Asian animals for polo. According to John Dent, the British agent in 1945: "At frequent intervals, when the Durah pass leading from Badakhshan was open, trains of ponies, ten or twelve at a time, would make the journey. But before they were sold to the Chitralis for their sport, a valuable cargo would be unloaded: opium" (Schofield 2003: 126). The opium would then be shipped down to Nowshera in bags marked antimony, which was a rare metal mined in Chitral; mining the antimony itself was not profitable,

but when mixed with opium and sold on, this became a lucrative trade (Schofield 2003: 126-7). Chitral remained a semi-autonomous minor state until it was fully incorporated into Pakistan in 1969 (Marsden 2005).

Archaeology of Chitral

In one of the first observations of an archaeological site from any period Biddulph noted “the remains of a large one [chogten or stupa] also exist in the Chitral Valley, on a conspicuous point near the road not far from the valley of Koosht, and still spoken of as ‘the idol’. Closer research would no doubt discover many others” (1995 [1880]: 109). Stein’s accounts of his travels in Central Asia in the early 20th century provide us with the earliest description of archaeological sites and buildings from a range of periods (1921, 1933). During his progression through the Chitral Valley he noted various historic period forts and ruins of forts, pre-Islamic houses, an historic period Persian rock inscription, the site of old fort with old tombs, red pottery and reports of bronze arrowheads, and possibly the remains of a monastery (1921: 34-39, 45-46; 1933: 42). With regard many of the historic ruined forts he observed that “It was curious to note how often local tradition connected the latter remains with dimly remembered periods of Chinese overlordship. The tenacity of such local tradition in a secluded mountain region is significant in view of that temporary extension of imperial Chinese power across the Pamirs and even south of the Hindukush under the T’ang dynasty” (1933: 42). Stein based his conviction that Chitral was closely linked to the T’ang dynasty primarily on the analysis of historical texts as noted above, and material culture to support this has been sparse. However, two coins that have been identified by Dr Mark Blackburn, Keeper of Coins and medals at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, as Chinese in origin, struck in the year 758-759 A.D. and issued by the T’ang Emperor Su Zong, were recovered during the recent excavation of a grave in Chitral and are currently subject to further analysis prior to full publication (Blackburn pers. comm.).

Stein also recorded in some detail two rock carvings depicting stupas and Brahmi inscriptions that he believed were unmistakably Buddhist. One of these was located at Pakhtoridini and comprised a boulder with a carved stupa which Stein claimed was very

similar in terms of architectural style to those of Eastern Turkestan (1921: 37-8). Below this stupa were eleven carved Brahmi characters in Sanskrit, which Stein translated as “This is an offering to the divinities from Raja Jivarman” (1921: 39). The second rock Stein recorded was located in Charrun in Mastuj, and was also engraved with a stupa and with a Brahmi inscription on either side of it (1921: 40). On the basis of stylistic similarities of both the stupa and the script, and the content of the inscription, Stein believed they concerned the same person: “It is *a priori* probable that these pious rock-carvings were produced by order of a prince actually ruling in the valley or in a territory closely adjoining. His Indian name and title are therefore interesting evidence of the influence exercised in this region about the fifth century A.D. by Buddhist culture, with its accompanying Indian environment” (1921: 39). In order to learn more about the nature of Buddhism in Chitral at different periods, identifying a range of sites with secure dating evidence would help to place these earlier observations in context.

With regard to prehistory in Chitral, in the late 1990s a joint French-Pakistani team carried out survey in the upper Yarkhun valley, close to the Baroghil pass linking Chitral with the Wakhan corridor. The focus of this research project was the links between Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic cultures in the northern slopes of the Hindu Kush and Pamirs, and those to the south (Gaillard et al. 2002: 27). Six sites comprising lithic finds and some associated rock shelters were tentatively assigned to between 8000 and 3000 B.P., and all were at heights between 3000-4000m (Gaillard et al. 2002: 25). Analysis of the tools suggested some technological similarities to the very high altitude Markansu material in the Pamirs interpreted as Mesolithic and Neolithic. Similarities with Palaeolithic Soanian industries from the Siwaliks and with material from the aceramic Neolithic in Kashmir to the east were also noted (Gaillard et al. 2002: 31). This work clearly demonstrates early human activity in this region at very high altitudes along the route of one of the main passes to the north and Central Asia. The similarities noted between the Yarkhun tools and those of regions to the east and north also challenge models of what the authors call the ‘cultural isolation’ of people occupying mountain valleys (Gaillard et al. 2002: 25). Given the very early dates for the sites recorded in this project, it could be suggested that cultural contact across mountains

has been a feature of this region throughout the Holocene (Gaillard et al. 2002; Dambricourt Malasse and Gaillard 2011).

Focused archaeological exploration on the protohistoric period began with a visit by Professor Giorgio Stacul, University of Trieste, one of the leaders of the Italian archaeological team that has worked extensively in Swat since the late 1950s. In 1964, Dr Carlo Alberto Pinelli (a mountaineer) had been mountain climbing in the Hindu Kush and noted what he thought might be an ancient cemetery in Bakamak, 7km south of Chitral town. He observed stone slabs coming out of a clay face, and found copper pins which he collected for Stacul. These structures and artefacts were sufficiently similar to those being studied in Swat for Stacul to visit Chitral himself in the summer of 1967 and carry out further survey and exploration (Stacul 1969: 92). In the course of this work Stacul visited graves at both Bakamak and Noghormuri that had been noted by Pinelli, excavating those at Noghormuri, and also locating similar cist graves with artefacts at the Bala Hisar (or High Fort) above Noghormuri and further south near the village of Broz (1969: 93-5). In addition to the graves made of stone slabs, and the skeletons themselves, Stacul also noted an iron arrowhead, etched cornelian (sic) beads, and pottery vessels, many of which were similar in shape and decoration to those already recovered in Swat and Dir graves, and even Taxila (1969). All of this led Stacul to suggest that these graves in Chitral represented a later phase of the protohistoric cemetery culture of the North-West (Stacul 1969: 99). It is also testimony to Stacul's great knowledge of archaeology in this region and his understanding of cultural developments that he also pointed out that the structural types of cist-form graves, made of stone slabs, while similar to those of the protohistoric burials in Swat and Dir, were also found in Islamic, historic period graves (1969: 97, footnote 11). He distinguished between later historic and protohistoric graves on the basis of burial style and grave goods, but the recent radiocarbon dates obtained from a series of graves in Chitral (Ali et al. 2008) support Stacul's perceptive early comments.

This early work by Stacul focusing on protohistoric cemeteries has largely set the agenda for the following decades. In 1999 a preliminary survey of the middle Chitral valley and Rumbur valley was carried out, specifically aimed at building on Stacul's earlier work (Ali et al. 2002: 649). In this survey, 18 sites were identified and recorded; of these 15 sites were cist burials, and were assigned to the protohistoric period and part of what Dani had named the Gandharan Grave Culture (Ali et al 2002; Dani 1968; Young 2009a). A survey and series of cemetery excavations by the Department of Archaeology, Hazara University, and the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Peshawar, took place in the early 2000s under the auspices of Professor Ihsan Ali, in line with his personal research interests in the Gandharan Grave Culture (Ali et al. 2005; Ali and Zahir 2005). The number of cemeteries identified and the number of graves estimated within these cemeteries indicated that cist burials were intensive and widespread. Excavations uncovered a range of grave goods, including beads (identified by the excavators as carnelian), iron arrowheads, and pottery vessels in what were interpreted as typical Gandharan Grave Culture types (Ali and Zahir 2005). Chitral was considered to have been an important extension of this later prehistoric cultural phenomenon, and thus closely linked to Swat, Dir, the Vale of Peshawar and the Taxila valley.

All of this work provided a great deal of information about grave structures, burial types, grave goods and so forth, but did not really address more fundamental issues such as social structures, ideologies, contact, development, or continuities and discontinuities evident in the archaeological record. In order to begin to do this, it was recognised that some form of chronology was required, and to this end, a series of small targeted excavations were conducted in 2007 in order to obtain samples for radiocarbon dating estimates (Ali et al. 2008). Excavations specifically to obtain samples for dating had been planned for the cemetery at Noghormuri near Parwak, which had already been the subject of some investigation as noted above; however a major land slide destroyed the village of Sanoghar and thus road access to the site. In order to obtain suitable samples we identified the alternative site of Gankoreneotek and excavated two graves there. Grave construction, burials in the form of cremations and grave goods of pots, beads, and an iron spear head had similarities with grave material from sites in Swat and

Dir, such as Loebanr I, Katelai I (Stacul 1966) and Timargarha (Dani 1968). Samples of human bone from the excavations at Gankoreneotek were collected, alongside human bone samples from earlier excavations at the nearby site of Sangoor and also the Parwak cemetery. A total of seven samples human bone were submitted to the University of Waikato Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory, New Zealand, and these comprised six samples of inhumed bone from Sangoor and Parwak and a sample of cremated bone from Gankoreneotek.

The calibrations of the results, relating the radiocarbon measurements directly to calendar dates, are given in Table 1 and Figure 3, and have been calculated using the calibration curve of Reimer et al. (2009) and the computer program OxCal (v4) (Online manual). The calibrated ranges in Table. 1 have been calculated according to the maximum intercept method (Stuiver and Reimer 1986), while those in Figure 3 are derived from the probability method (Stuiver and Reimer 1993). All date ranges are presented in the form accepted by Mook (1986), with the end points rounded outwards to 10 years. These dates range from 790-420 cal BC (WK-22036; 2494 +/- 30 BP) at Gankoreneotek through to cal AD 780-990 (WK-22758; 1148 +/- 36 BP: WK-22759; 1157 +/- 37: WK-22760 +/- 37 BP) at Parwak, and interpreting graves and grave goods as part of the same 'culture' extending over 2000 years is challenging. Tucci (1977) and colleagues referred to the graves in Swat as proto-historic or pre-Buddhist due to certain stratigraphic relationships, and dating evidence from Swat, Dir and other places such as the Vale of Peshawar where similar 'Gandharan Grave Culture' sites have been found, suggest that this burial style was confined to the end of the second and the first centuries B.C. (Dani 1968; Silvi Antonini 1963).

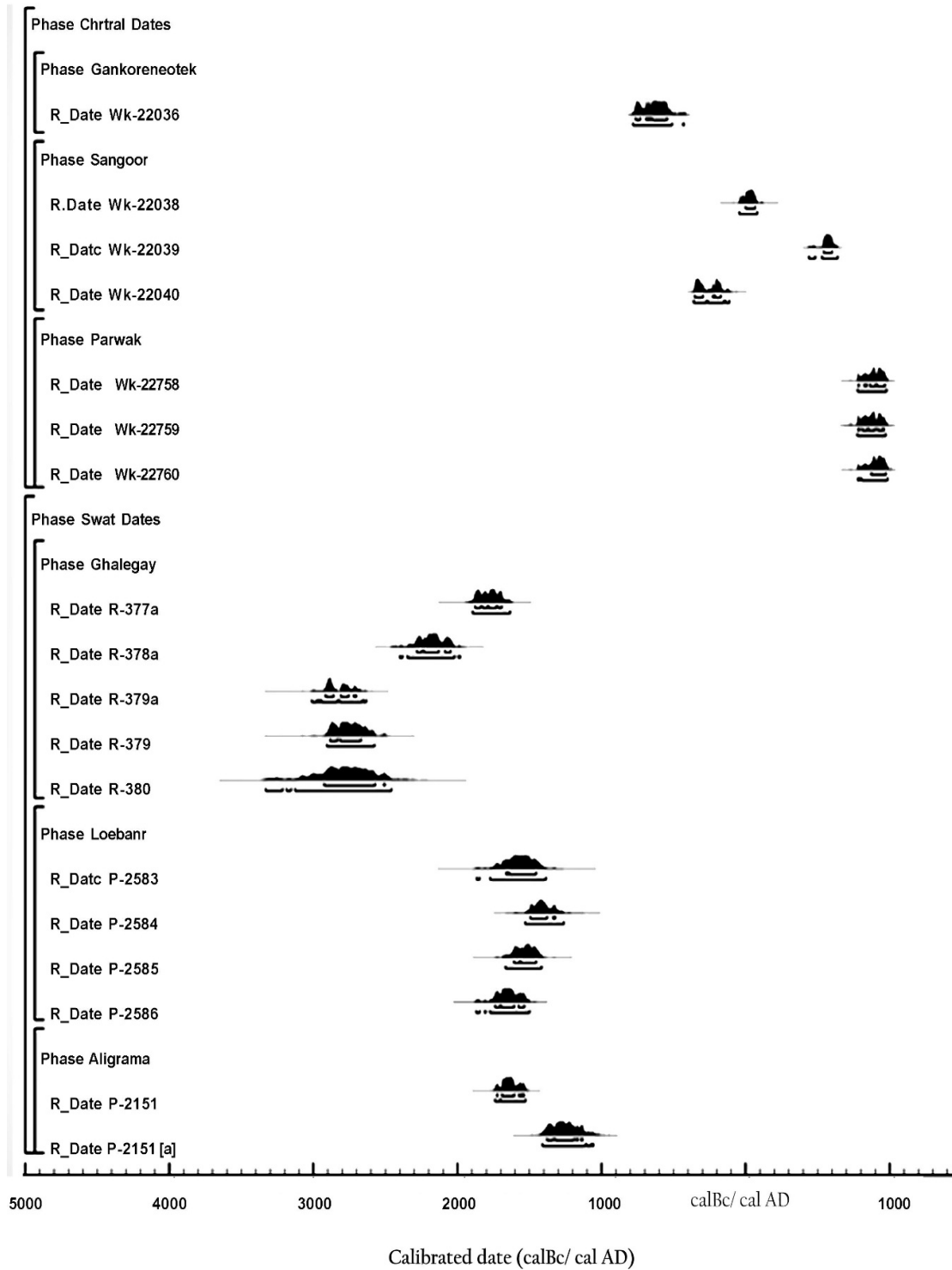


Figure 3 Radiocarbon date probability distributions from radiocarbon ages presented in Table 1 from Chitral and Swat.

Table 1. New radiocarbon results directly from buried human remains of the Gandharan Grave Culture-type in the Chitral Valley along with a selection of dates from Swat

<i>Lab ID</i>	<i>Sample ID</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Material</i>	$\delta^{13}C$ (‰)	<i>Radiocarbon Age (BP)</i>	<i>Calibrated Date (95% confidence)</i>
<i>Gankoreneotek, Chitral</i>						
Wk-22036	Grave 1	Cremation	Cremated human bone	- 21.7	2494 ±30	790–420 cal BC
<i>Sangoor, Chitral</i>						
WK-22038	G1	Inhumation	Human bone	- 18.6	1974 ±30	50 cal BC–cal AD 90
Wk-22039	G21	Inhumation	Human bone	- 19.9	1499 ±30	cal AD 460–640
Wk-22040	G22	Inhumation	Human bone	- 18.7	2167 ±30	360–110 cal BC
<i>Parwak, Chitral</i>						
Wk-22758	Grave 31, Burial 1	Inhumation	Human bone	- 16.8	1148 ±36	cal AD 770–990
Wk-22759	Grave 31, Burial 32	Inhumation	Human bone	- 16.9	1157 ±37	cal AD 770–990
Wk-22760	Grave 51	Inhumation	Human bone	- 16.5	1138 ±37	cal AD 770–990
<i>Ghalegay, Swat**</i>						
R-377α	Ghaligai 17	Stratum 17	Charcoal	- 25.9	3455 ±50	1900–1630 cal BC

R-378 α	Ghaligai 18	Stratum 18	Charcoal	- 25.7	3760 $\pm$ 55	2250–2020 cal BC
R-379 α	Ghaligai 21	Stratum 21	Charcoal	- 24.9	4245 $\pm$ 55	2930–2670 cal BC
R-379	Ghaligai 21	Stratum 21	Charcoal	- 25.3	4180 $\pm$ 70	2920–2500 cal BC
R-380	Ghaligai 23	Stratum 23	Charcoal	- 25.6	4200 $\pm$ 140	3320–2460 cal BC
<i>Loebanr, Swat**</i>						
P-2583	Sample 1	Pit 1, Layer 5	Charcoal	*	3280 $\pm$ 90	1760–1390 cal BC
P-2584	Sample 2	Pit 1, Layer 6	Charcoal	*	3140 $\pm$ 60	1530–1260 cal BC
P-2585	Sample 3	Pit 1, Layer 7	Charcoal	*	3250 $\pm$ 60	1690–1410 cal BC
P-2586	Sample 4	Pit 2, Layer 5	Charcoal	*	3360 $\pm$ 60	1870–1500 cal BC
<i>Aligrama, Swat**</i>						
P-2151	Layer 13	Associated with IVth period pottery	Carbon from hearth	*	3350 $\pm$ 40	1750–1520 cal BC
P- 2151[α]	Layer 13	Associated with IVth period pottery	Carbon from hearth	*	3010 $\pm$ 60	1420–1050 cal BC
* not reported and not noted as being an ‘assumed’ value; ** Alessio et al. 1969.						

The radiocarbon dates allow the possibility of new interpretations of cemeteries in Chitral, and perhaps we should begin this process by thinking about these cemeteries and

graves as discrete sites with potentially very different chronologies rather than part of a single, all-encompassing culture. One possible explanation for the presence of so many cemeteries over such a long chronological period without a corresponding number of associated settlement sites may be that they are linked to mobile pastoral groups. Such a model has parallels in Central Asia, where burial mounds or kurgans have dominated both the archaeological landscape and research agendas for many decades (Frumkin 1970; Norton 1905; Herrmann 2009: 766), and the role of mobile pastoralists in cultural developments alongside incipient urbanism, urbanism and increased social complexity has been explored in areas to the north and west of the Pamirs (Rapin 2007: 31) and to the south of Chitral (Young 2003; Young et al. 2008).

This summary of historical and archaeological sources shows that we know the general narrative of events going on around Chitral - such things as the main rulers, empires, dynasties, ideologies and the importance of trade through e.g. the Silk Route - but we do not know a great deal about Chitral's place and role in these developments at any given time. For example, we do not know whether Alexander the Great and members of the Greek army actually did march through Chitral, and if they did, what material evidence might remain; or whether any Greek colonists settled here, or visited or traded with Chitral. We do not know the timing or form of Buddhism in Chitral, although we have an increasingly clear understanding of Buddhism in areas to the south such as Swat (e.g. Callieri 2005), north along the Oxus (e.g. Huntington 1985; Swati 1997) and east such as Gilgit (e.g. Dani 1995; Jettmar et al. 1989). Were there any monasteries in Chitral, and if not, why might this be? We do not know the timing or the form of Islam, and looking for early sites would help us to understand ideological transitions in this region; for example whether Islam took over from Buddhism, and whether this involved destruction of Buddhist material culture, or whether it was subsumed in some way; or perhaps there was some other indigenous religious ideology that was replaced by Islam. Chitral is largely (if not entirely) absent from historical accounts until the British period, and then accounts are from a particularly European, military, and masculine viewpoint, so they offer a fairly specific understanding of Chitral and Chitrali people. Somewhat ironically, thanks to the archaeological work that has been carried out to date, we know rather more about the prehistoric periods in the form

of lithics and rock shelters (Gaillard et al. 2002; Dambricourt Malasse and Gaillard 2011) and early graves and grave goods (Ali et al. 2008; Ali and Zahir 2005) than we do about much of the subsequent protohistoric and historic periods.

In terms of southern Central Asia and northern South Asia, considerable archaeological work has provided evidence for human activity from the Palaeolithic onwards. This includes Palaeolithic sites such as Shakhty (Frumkin 1970: 61) and site 55 on the Potwar Plateau (Rendell and Denell 1987); Mesolithic sites such as Islamov in the Ferghana Valley (Herrmann 2009: 771); and Neolithic sites such as Ghaligai in Swat, and Osh-Khona in the eastern Pamirs (Frumkin 1970: 58; Stacul 1987). Following this there are Bronze Age sites in Swat such as Bir-kot-ghundai with possible links to the Indus Valley Civilisation (Stacul 1978: 50), and Shortugai to the west with both Indus and Central Asian material present in Bronze Age levels (Herrmann 2009: 773). The Iron Age is also known at sites in Swat such as Loebanr III and Aligrama (Stacul 1987), at Charsadda in the Vale of Peshawar (Coningham and Ali 2007), and in Bactria and Sogdiana. While urban centres were developing around oases of Central Asia in the later prehistoric and early historic periods, pastoral nomadic groups were present across the whole area, with their burial mounds or kurgans their most distinctive material culture (Herrmann 2009: 766). Archaeological and historical accounts demonstrate the importance of this region within the Achaemenid Empire and then to Alexander the Great, and these sources show that it was greatly impacted by successive rulers and dynasties, and also waves of cultural and religious activity, such as Buddhism and Islam. How far Chitral itself was conquered by invaders and subsumed into different socio-political structures and ideologies is not known, and it is only with information in the form of archaeological data that we can begin to explore Chitral's place within this palimpsest of cultural influence. Chitral, as a remote, self-contained region could be seen as an interesting example of how cultural and religious change permeates and penetrates.

Archaeological survey methodology

As noted above (Ali et al. 2002; Ali et al. 2005), limited archaeological surveys have previously been carried out in the main Chitral valley. These surveys were conducted as ‘village to village surveys’ whereby the survey team drove between villages and asked residents whether they knew about deserted buildings, old places, or places where antiquities had been discovered. Such surveys provided a useful starting point in what was essentially *terra incognita* in archaeological terms, as they exploited local knowledge and indicated the great archaeological potential of Chitral. An objective of this project was to introduce new (to northern Pakistan) methodologies for identifying and recording sites, and to that end we decided to make use of transect survey methodology, which one of us (Young) had been involved in to great effect in a project located in the Tehran Plain in Iran (see Coningham et al. 2004, 2006). By basing our survey primarily on random transects we aimed to obtain a sample of sites from different periods and of different types that would be representative of past human activity, rather than simply representative of the current knowledge of selected inhabitants of villages near roads. Although the project has encountered a number of practical difficulties in terms of training and execution, which is largely the result of the difficult security situation in Chitral, we have evolved strategies to circumvent these difficulties as far as possible, and we believe the results are very instructive and show that adopting new survey methodologies is both possible and productive. Our first season of survey (2009) can thus be seen very much as a trial of equipment, approach and understanding, and ultimately of success. It gave the field team confidence in the survey methodology and equipment, and this allowed further data collection in our second season (2010).

In 2009 the field team walked 24 transects, each 5 km in length on the left side of the Kunar River in the Ayun area. Two teams of 6 archaeologists worked in parallel 400 m apart, thus covering an area of 46km². In 2010 the field team walked 25 transects, each 5 km in length, extending to the west of the 2009 transect area; and then an additional 10 transects in the Darosh area, each transect being 5km in length. Definition of a site followed that established in the Tehran Plains project, being a pottery scatter with a density of five sherds or greater within a 1m² area, a single lithic find, structures,

and features (Coningham et al. 2004). In terms of chronological scope we aimed to record all sites encountered, from prehistoric period right through to the very recent past in the form of pastoral activity.

Archaeological survey results

Results of the first season:

Seventeen sites were identified and recorded in 2009 (see Table 2 and Fig 5), though as noted above, in this season getting students and staff used to handling new equipment and conceptualising new survey approaches were at least as important as actually locating and recording sites. Out of the total number of sites, three were found through transect survey and 13 through 'traditional' village to village survey (Ali et al. 2010). The three sites located through transect survey were two Later Historical wooden mosques and one possible Early Historic graveyard, where large terracotta jars were reported to have been dug up and removed by local people. While simply finding sites is often perceived as a key goal of survey, some of the sites found through traditional village to village survey were already known (see Ali et al. 2002) and overall, they added little to our understanding of Chitral archaeology. Far more interesting were the results of the transect survey, although far more challenging in terms of analysis and interpretation. These transects ran across higher slopes of hills and even mountains, and the very sparse number of sites indicates quite clearly that these areas were not utilised by humans in any extensive or significant way in any periods in the past (see Fig 4), although Epipalaeolithic sites have been recorded at altitudes of more than 4000m in the Markansu Valley in the Pamirs to the north, and lithic sites were located between 3-4,000m during the French-Pakistan survey in Yarkhun (Gaillard et al. 2002: 26). There are also examples of mountainous zones being used for ritual purposes, such as the Minoan mountain sanctuaries in Crete, frequently located in highly inaccessible and remote areas (Prent 2006). The 2009 survey found no evidence for the exploitation of mineral or other natural resources in these higher slopes, and no sign of local lithic industries or quarrying from any period. The absence of mineral resources (except

antimony) known within Chitral (Dichter 1967) has perhaps contributed to the relative lack of external concern with the valley.

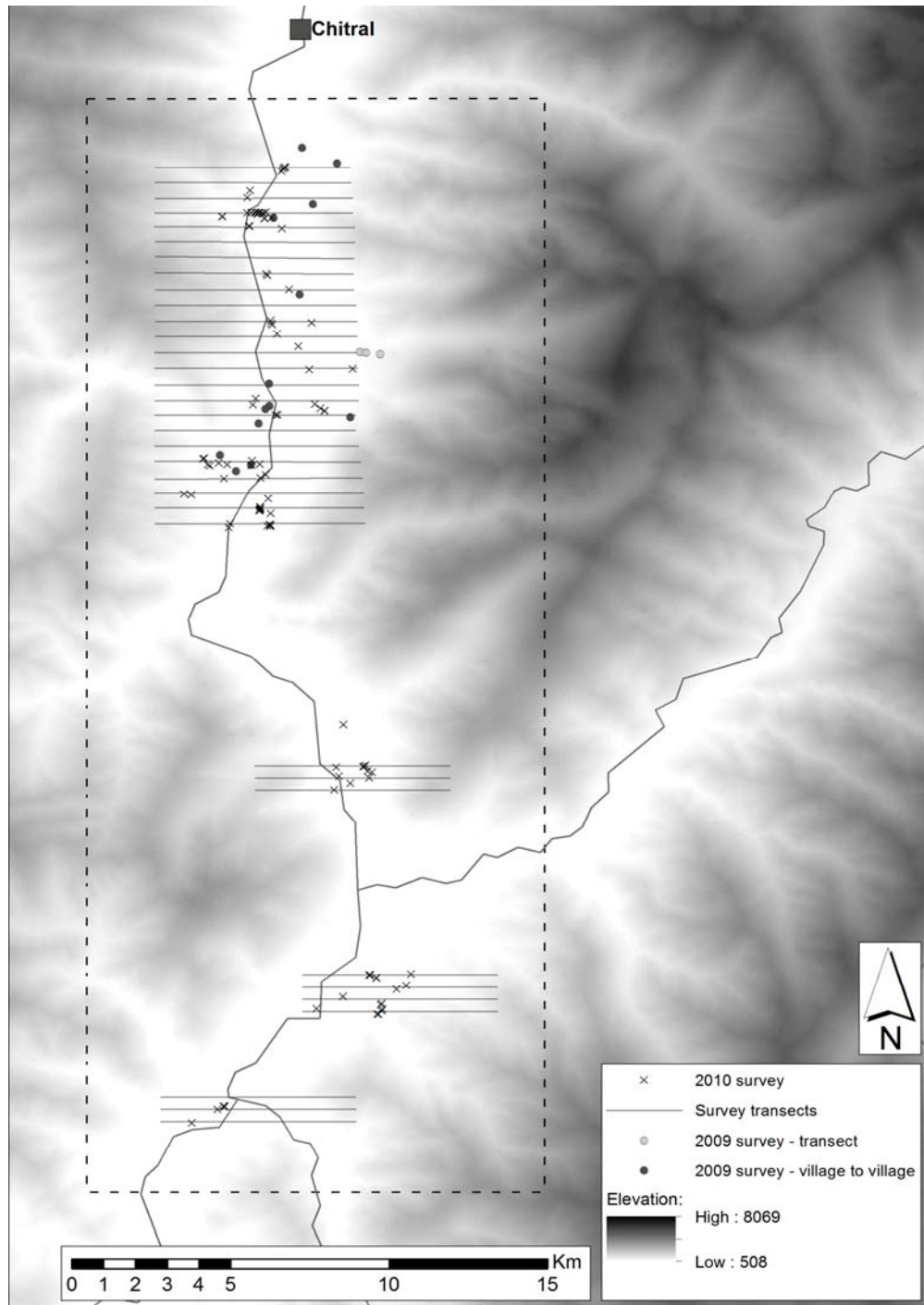


Figure 4 Map showing the location of the 2009 and 2010 survey sites (Map by C. Green).

Table 2. 2009 survey sites by period and type

<i>Period</i>	<i>Pot Scatter</i>	<i>Structures</i>	<i>Rock Carvings</i>	<i>Caves</i>	<i>Graves</i>
Prehistoric					
Prehist/EH					6
Prehist/Islamic					1
EH					
EH/LH					
LH		5			
LH/Islamic					
LH/Kalasha					
LH/British		3			
LH/Modern					
Unknown				1	
		8		1	7
NB: EH = Early Historic; LH = Later Historic					

No archaeologists have systematically explored these difficult, upper slopes of the main Chitral valley, although the work by the French-Pakistan team in the late 1990s in the Yarkhun Valley to the north identified six Palaeolithic sites (Gaillard et al. 2002: 25), as noted above. It is interesting that this project only found rock shelters and lithic sites, and no material culture from other periods or activities, while (so far) no early sites have been identified in the main Chitral valley. Despite the lack of previous survey in the upper slopes of the Chitral valley, models were developed (eg Ali et al 2002; Stacul 1969) on the basis of supposition and findings from the easily accessible lower slopes. This of course is one great problem in archaeology – the development of models about settlement in prehistory based on incomplete sampling strategies and frequently informed by essentialising ‘common sense’ analyses (Gamble 2001: 46-50; Johnson 2010). These extant models of past settlement in Chitral suggested that ancient cemeteries were located within the cultivable, easily accessed river plain, although often on the upper edges of this zone (Ali et al 2002; Stacul 1969). However, little attention has been paid to the question of the absence of associated settlement sites, nor indeed

other types of sites for this period, or other periods. We have challenged these omissions with our work in Chitral and we now have a good data set with which to begin to develop alternative models of past human settlement and new research agendas. Although working from a sample (as always in archaeology) we now have an empirical foundation on which to build our future analyses and interpretations.

Results of the second season:

A total of 88 sites were located and recorded in 2010: 71 from 35 transects; 16 as off-transect ‘chance’ finds; plus one further site which was re-located during the 2010 transect survey, but had been previously recorded in 2009 during the village survey (see Table 3 and Fig 4). These sites range from large stone structures to far more ephemeral pottery scatters and lithic finds. In terms of chronology, the sites represent prehistoric activity right through to very recent historical periods and modern pastoral activity, although around one third of the sites remain undated and await analysis of the pottery and other collected finds by artefact specialists in Hazara in order to assign further dates where possible. Table 3 indicates the preliminary classification of these sites according to chronological period and type of site or material.

Table 3. 2010 survey sites by period and type

<i>Period</i>	<i>Pot Scatter</i>	<i>Structures</i>	<i>Rock Carvings</i>	<i>Caves</i>	<i>Graves</i>
Prehistoric	1		1?	1?	
Prehist/EH					1
Prehist/Islamic					1
EH	16	2		2	
EH/LH		2			
LH	1	1	3		
LH/Islamic		6			1
LH/Kalasha			6		
LH/British		3	2		
LH/Modern				6	

Unknown	27	2		3	
	45	16	12	12	3
NB: EH = Early Historic; LH = Later Historic					

Where it has been possible to assign a chronological period to the sites, it can be seen that the majority have been attributed to the Later Historical period, and these are mostly in the form of structures, caves and rock carvings. What is surprising is the relative absence of Later Historic period pottery scatters, especially when compared with the number identified as Early Historic. This may be due to identification bias in the field, and may be altered once further analysis of collected sherds has taken place at Hazara University. The vast majority of the structures were built from stone, sometimes with mortar, but frequently of dry stone construction methods, and at least four of these buildings appeared to have a defensive purpose, perhaps as forts. More work is needed at individual sites to establish their function and date, but the presence of four forts within a relatively small area within the valley raises interesting questions about social and political organisation in the Early and Later Historic periods that could be explored through further survey and mapping of such sites, and targeted excavation.

None of the sites recorded in either season of survey have been conclusively identified as Buddhist, although the masonry of some single wall segments may perhaps be rough diaper style. Again, this needs further exploration, preferably through detailed structural analysis and excavation. While some of the antiquarian work noted above mentions the presence of Buddhist sites in Chitral, the archaeological evidence remains slight. During fieldwork for another project in 2007 villagers directed some of the current project members to a stone near Reshun which has what appears to be a stupa and legend carved on it (see Fig 5). Near to a large pre-Islamic or early Islamic cemetery at Noghormuri and Parwak (see Ali et al. 2005) is a mound similar in shape to a small stupa, but in order to determine whether this is natural or cultural - and if the latter, what sort of structure it is - would require excavation.



Figure 5 Stone carved with stupa near Reshun (Photograph: P. Newson).

The rock carvings are very interesting, and of course very hard to classify chronologically. Some have Persian script, which places the script at least in the Later Historic period, but of course other elements may be earlier, and the Persian script segments could be any date in the last few centuries up to modern. Some of the carvings depict what appear to be animals (markhor?) and humans, and some more abstract signs; possibly even a swastika shape (see Fig 6). Clearly, a full and careful analysis of all elements of all of the different carvings plus any associated material culture is required, along with consideration of rock carvings from the Gilgit-Indus region (Dani 1995) and beyond.

Twelve cave sites were recorded during survey, and many of these had modern stone walls across the front of the cave, or dividing the interior along with other modern material culture. Observation and discussions between team members and local residents have provided some information about the use of caves in this area by both

herders and Afghan refugees. In order to learn more about occupation dates and activities linked to the caves, excavation and ethnographic work would be necessary. However, from regions around Chitral, many caves have been excavated with very interesting results, indicating the potential of focussed work on cave sites within the valley itself. The relationship between caves and mobile pastoral groups is an interesting area for further study, taking into account the presence of different pastoral groups in Chitral such as Gujurs and Wakhis, as well as the key role of pastoral nomads throughout prehistory in Central Asia.

Three cemeteries were located during the 2010 survey; one was identified as Islamic; one Prehistoric-Early Historic; one Prehistoric-Islamic. Understanding pre-Islamic cemeteries in Chitral, and indeed in the whole of northwest South Asia is emerging as a complex challenge, and the spread of dates obtained from a very small sample of graves (discussed above; Ali et al. 2008) strongly suggests that invoking ‘Gandharan Grave Culture’ as the explanation and link for graves of broadly similar construction across what is a very large area and across a very large chronological span needs serious reconsideration. The numbers of cist graves that have been located in Chitral (and beyond), both with and without grave goods, containing both inhumations and cremations over a long time span is extremely interesting. The relative absence of associated settlement sites is also extremely interesting, and also requires further exploration based around specific research questions, including the possible link between the cemeteries and mobile pastoral groups. The dynamic geomorphological processes clearly evident in the valley could have played a part in obscuring settlements located on the rapidly evolving alluvial fans; cemeteries may have survived if they were placed at the edge of these fans at the interface between fertile fields and the steep mountain slopes. The Italian archaeologists working in Swat noticed the placement of Buddhist structures over older cemeteries (Tucci 1977), and it would also be worth exploring connections between Islamic and older cemeteries in Chitral, which has also been noted in survey work in neighbouring Dir (Ali et al. 2009).

This is a preliminary presentation and discussion of the survey results and clearly more analysis of the material culture is required, and will be undertaken within Pakistan.

However, we can begin to make some very general comments about the results so far: the survey data indicate that these are largely single period sites, and that they cover sites from (later) prehistory through to modern pastoral activity. Perhaps most importantly we have results that have been obtained through the application of a clearly documented, systematic methodology that could be used as the basis of further analysis and exploration in Chitral.

Discussion

What the results of our two season of survey mean is that for the first time we are able to say that Chitral was a place that was used by humans over thousands of years, and we have the beginnings of an outline chronology that goes beyond Alexander the Great and the Mehtars of the Later Historic period. We can also say that Chitral was clearly not an entirely isolated area only very recently occupied by either sedentary or mobile groups. The identification of sites from prehistoric, protohistoric and historic periods shows that there is material culture in Chitral which can be used to explore numerous questions about cultural change, development and contact in this region. The very real geographical constraints to easy movement in and out of, and through Chitral have clearly prevented it from being at the forefront of prehistoric and historic events, but the very presence of these passes reinforces the concept that in this region movement is an essential part of life and culture.

Learning about ideological change and impact here through material culture could form a future research agenda requiring closely targeted data collection. For example, Biddulph (1995 [1880]: 108) pointed out that Zoroastrianism was believed to have originated in the Oxus Valley, and suggested that its influence may well have extended south to include Chitral and neighbouring valleys. Only by carrying out work that includes an understanding of specifically Zoroastrian structures and artefacts will we be able to learn more about this fascinating possibility. Very little is currently known about pre-Islamic ideologies in this area, and some of the specific issues that could be addressed include such things as exploring the character and development of Buddhism in Chitral. Our survey has recorded possible evidence for Buddhist activity in Chitral in

the form of rock carvings and very tentatively possible buildings, but to date there are apparently no stupas, no monasteries, and no other readily identified Buddhist material culture such as inscriptions. When this is contrasted with the surrounding regions of Swat, Dir, and Central Asia it seems surprisingly sparse (Dietz 2007; Filigenzi 2005; Herrmann 2009: 803; Knobloch 2001: 48-50; Rahman 1968-9; Swati 1997). Was Chitral a Buddhist backwater, or did Buddhist activity here take a different material form to that in surrounding areas? Are there significant Buddhist sites in Chitral that have not yet been located? It would also be interesting to focus on the introduction and character of early Islam in Chitral, including the aim of obtaining dating samples. Analysis of mosque architecture here and other forms of Islamic material culture could allow us to build an understanding of the way in which Islam developed here, at what was the very edge of the Islamic world for many centuries (Ahsunalluh 1986; Habibullah 1961; Marsden 2005). The seemingly ubiquitous graves could also be the subject of future work, with the aim of obtaining scientific dates in order to add to those from Gankoreneotek, Parwak and Sangoor (Ali et al. 2008). It would also be useful to move away from simply excavating graves in order to obtain more grave goods, and think about their place in the wider landscapes of Chitral and the Hindu Kush; perhaps as cemeteries for nomadic peoples as a starting point. The absence of associated settlement sites, such as those found in Swat and Dir (Stacul 1987), is a real cause for concern and needs to be appropriately explored through comparative studies of the material culture.

Issues of site visibility and taphonomy have no doubt had a major impact on site preservation and recognition. The frequent landslides, earthquakes, and flooding in Chitral will have had an immense effect on site location and survival, and this may explain such trends as the confident identification of very few prehistoric sites outside cave sites in our survey, and why stone buildings of relatively recent periods are well represented in the sample. This bias towards easily visible structures can be at least partially addressed by further training and experience of the survey team members, plus carrying out more survey and ensuring that a range of different topographies are covered in any future work. Archaeological sites may also be underneath modern settlements. If this is the case then it may be possible to identify earlier materials re-used in buildings or other contexts providing settlements are also included within survey and not simply by-

passed. However, depending on the nature and extent of modern settlement it may be impossible to test this suggestion.

Conclusions

We believe that the two seasons of archaeological (and heritage) fieldworks that have been carried out in Chitral as part of this project have been very valuable and have allowed us to begin to address the main project aims and objectives. The archaeological survey has identified and recorded sites from a range of periods from which we are beginning to construct an outline chronology. This is the first time that Chitral has been subject to systematic archaeological exploration, and the results show that this is an excellent platform on which to build future projects. Indeed, we hope that this is just the beginning for Chitral archaeology, and from a purely academic perspective the results of our survey raise the possibility for asking many more questions: for example, when did Islam first appear in Chitral, and how long did it take to become the dominant ideology? Is there evidence for residual belief alongside the new practice? What are the dates of the Buddhist material here, and what does this suggest? Why are there no viharas or stupas (so far) in Chitral? How does the form of Buddhism here compare with that to the south and the north? What are Chitrals links with external regions, and how do these change over time? Can we characterise Chitral as South Asian or Central Asian, or is it truly an admixture of all surrounding areas and cultural influences? What was the role (if any) of pastoral nomads and transhumants in the history of Chitral? Is there any link between pastoral nomadic groups and the extensive pre-Islamic cemeteries? Are they in any way comparable to the Kurgan cultures north of the Pamirs, or linked to the Gandharan Grave Culture?

In terms of our future work we have one final season of fieldwork in 2011 within the current project which will be used to explore the different passes linking Chitral with its neighbours, and we also aim to excavate selected sites in order to gain materials for dating. Longer term we want to place Chitral within a regional setting, and plan to produce a monograph that draws together recent work in Dir, Buner, Bajaur and Hazara by the project leaders. In turn, we would hope that this will provide a base for future

work in the region by new scholars, and we hope that both the planned monograph and future work will add to, revise, and even over-turn our initial ideas and suggestions.

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