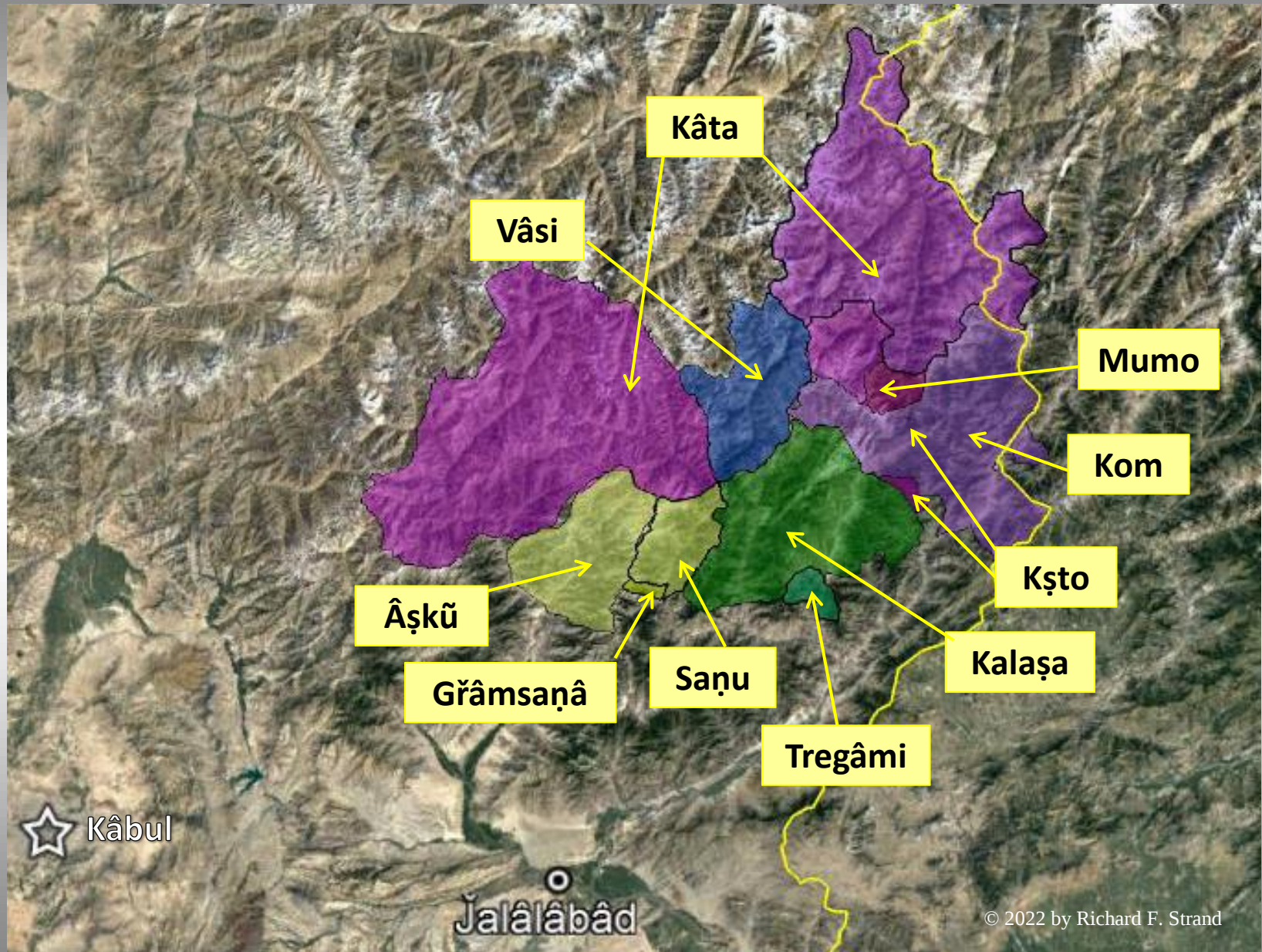


Kambojas and Sakas in the Holly-Oak Mountains: On the Origins of the Nûristânîs

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Nûristânîs



Nûristânîs Descend from Steppe-Âriâs

From their names we can trace most Nûristânî peoples back to ancient Ârya equestrian nomads from the steppes of eastern Central Asia:

- The Kom (and probably other Kâmk'ata-vari speakers) go back at least 3,500 years to the *Kamboḡas*;
- Most of the remaining Nûristânî peoples go back at least 2,200 years to the *Sakas*.

Kambojas

The Kambojas are among the earliest known tribes of the Âriâs, attested from the time of the *Rg Veda* (c. 1500 BC), the *Mahâbhârata* (c. 1000 BC), and other ancient monuments down to the 12th Century AD. They were warrior-caste horsemen who ranged and ruled across Asia from Armenia to Kampuchea, which bears their name. Their home region extended from Kâpisâ and Kâbul to the eastern Panjâb and to the north of the Hindu Kush range, and communities of them still live in India today. “Kamboja” is the Indo-Aryan gunated form of ***Kambuĵa-***, also seen in the Old Persian name ***Kambûĵya-*** (<***Kambûĵiya-***>) ‘Cambyes’.

They were close allies of the main branch of the ***Kûru*** tribe (the ***Kauravas***) in the Mahâbhârata war, and evidently remained so after the losing Kauravas apparently migrated from ***Kûru Kṣetra*** in north India to Irân, where their descendants apparently founded the Persian Empire generations later. The names of successive father-son rulers of Persia enshrine their forebearers: Kûruš I (Cyrus, 625–580 BC), Kambûĵya I (Cambyes, 580–559 BC), Kûruš II (Cyrus “The Great.” 559–530 BC), Kambûĵya II (Cambyes, 530–522 BC).

The Kom are Modern Kambojas

- The Kom are called *Kamôzî* or (formerly) *Kamôjî*, the modern word for “Kamboja” in Pashto and Persian.
- They call themselves *Kom* after the name of their putative progenitor.
- More probably, the name *Kom* derives from *Kâma*, the place from where they came, rather than from **Kamb'u*, the probable true name of the Kambojas’ progenitor. Most ethnonyms in Nûristân arise from a group’s reputed place of origin.
- The Koms’ oral history likely recounts their retreat as deposed rulers from Helmand, Kâbul, Kâpisâ, Kâma, and Kâmnile as the Ghaznavî Turks overran their territory. But beyond that, today's Kom are unaware that they ranked among the greatest Ârya tribes of an epic age 2,500 years earlier than the appearance of the Turks.

The Kâta

- The Kâta are the most numerous of the Nûristânî peoples.
- Led by their mythical ancestral brothers Vřok and Břok, they escaped the lowland chaos and settled around the confluence of the Ktivi (Kântiwâ) and Pârûn Valleys, where they established the communities of Ktivi, Mum, Kust, and Bun.
- From there they spread east into the Lanḍay Sin Valley and west into the upper Laghmân basin. The Eastern Kâta-vari dialect retains archaisms lost in the Western Kâta-vari dialects (*e.g.*, nasalized vowels, pres. part. in **-ta-** vs. Western **-na-**).
- We do not know their origin beyond Ktivi, except that it was “downriver” (*niñ*).

The Mumo, Kšto, Binio, and Jaši

Regarding Ktivi as the Nûristânîs' central place (*markaz*), local historian Nur Muhammad Khan of Urtsun has stated:

- “The Mumos are Kâta also. By Ktivi there's a place named Mum; having come there from that place named Mum, they're Mumos. They're Kâtas also.”
- “The Kšto are Kâtas, too.”
- “The Jâšis came from Kâtor. Up and in there from Chaghan Sarai. They came from Kâtar and Gâmbir [in the Tregâm Valley]. The Kâtar people are Jâšis. They came away and came to Pitigal. In Pitigal they shot four arrows up. One arrow landed here [Urtsun]; one arrow landed at Suwir; one arrow landed at Veruk; one arrow is at Pitigal. They're Nûristânîs, who originally came from Ktivi to Kâtor.”
- “The Binio were exiles from Bun.”

Furthermore, there were two mythical brothers, Satruk and Katruk, who came from Ktivi. Satruk was the ancestor of the Satra (Gawar) people, while Katruk's descendants settled in the Landay Sin Valley.

Kâm·k'atamumkšt'a Vari

- The Kom and Kâta speak dialects of the same language, but they do not acknowledge a common origin; and local oral histories claim the Kom arrived in central Nuristân later than the other inhabitants. It is difficult to reconcile their common language with their disparate origins.
- The Kâta perhaps convened in the Ktivi Valley while the Kom were still located at Kâmnile (Danduna) in Kunaṛ. The later migration of the Kom to Kâmgal near Ktivi would account for their being considered outsiders by the earlier settlers.
- It is possible that the Kom were ruling-class Kamboṣas who retained memories of their former greatness, while the Kâta and others from Ktivi were “commoners” who lost track of their Kamboṣan roots.
- Or possibly, the Kom adopted the Kâta language, of unclear Steppe-Ârya origin, after they settled next to them in central Nuristân.
- Less likely is the possibility that the more numerous Kâta adopted the Koms' Kamboṣa language.
- Although no native name for the entire language exists, ***Kâm·k'atamumkšt'a vari*** ‘Kom, Kata, Mumo, Ksto Language’, or ***Kâm·k'ata vari*** for short, have been proposed by the Kom linguist Qâzi Ghulâmmullâh.

Sakas

- The ethnonyms *Saňu*, *Gřâmsaňâ*, *Âşkuňu*, *Prâsun*, *Pašaî*, and *Vâi* may have all evolved from forms containing *Saka*, which is the name of the horse-riding nomads that succeeded the Kambojas and their North-Ârya cohorts in the steppes of eastern Central Asia.
- “Saka” is the Irânian form of a name that derives from the Proto-Indo-European root *kâk-* ‘power’, which became Proto-Aryan *čaka-*, Indo-Aryan *śaka-*, North-Aryan *ćaka-*, and Old Irânian *saka-*.
- The latter form evolved through **sag-î-* (as in Parthian *sgyst’n* ‘Sakastân’) into later *sai*, *sei*, or *sî(-stân)*, with loss of intervocalic **-g-* < **-k-*. The modern names are mostly based on Late Middle Irânian forms, rather than ones directly inherited from North Aryan.

Cognate Ethnonyms Possibly Containing “Saka”

Language					
Aryan	Indo-Aryan	Steppe-Aryan	Old or Middle Irânian	Common Nûristânî	Other
* <i>čak-ânâm</i> ‘of the Sakas’	* <i>šakânâm</i>	* <i>čakânâm</i>	<i>sakânâm</i>	* <i>čânu</i>	Â-S.s <i>sañu</i> ; Kal. <i>šo~</i> < IA
			* <i>p(a)ra-sakâna</i>	* <i>prâsun</i>	K.km <i>prâs'ü~</i> ; autonym <i>vâs'i</i>
				(via Pašaî)	Â-S.s <i>prâ~u</i>
			* <i>p(a)ra-sakân-î</i>	(via Pašaî)	Kal. <i>p'â~i</i>
* <i>čaka-(ka-)</i> ‘Saka’	* <i>šaka-</i>	* <i>čaka-</i>	* <i>par(a)-šaka-î</i>	* <i>pâšâi</i>	autonym <i>paša'î</i>
			* <i>vâ-saka-î</i>	* <i>vâsi</i>	V. <i>vâs'i</i> (autonym)
				(via Pašaî)	Kal., Â-S., K. <i>vâi</i>
* <i>arš-an</i> ‘Studly’ < PIE <i>hr̥s-en</i> ‘male’		* <i>arša-ka-</i>	* <i>aršakânâm</i>	* <i>âškunu</i>	Middle Persian <i>aškân</i> ‘Arsacid’
			* <i>kâl(a)-arša-ka-</i>	* <i>kalaša</i>	

The Vâi

- Local accounts claim that the Vâi occupied some region of the lower Kunar and Dara-i Nur Valleys, with their *sâ~* (mountain pastureland) around today's Pašaî (Sum) community of Oigal (< **Vâigal*).
- According to their own traditions, the Vâi fled the Ghaznavid invasion of Kâma, following the Kunar up to Mâdeš and Samâlâm in the Šigal Valley and thence over the watershed to their main community of Vâigal.
- Accounts of the Gawâr people state that the Vâi expropriated the current site of Vâigal from the Gawâr, who migrated to the upper Kunar Valley.
- As the Vâi expanded, they established other communities in the upper Vâigal and further east. It must be noted that there are communities named “Waigal” well outside of Nûristân in the Paxtûn dominated Dir and Momand Districts of Pâkistân.
- The name *Vâi* has not been clearly traced to any ancient ethnonym; but as noted above, it could have evolved from **vâ-saka-î* via a Pašaî dialect, with regular loss of intervocalic *-s- and *-k-.

The Pašaî

- Remarkable are the names of three communities that are connected by a traditional cross-valley path: *Sai-gal* ‘Saka Valley’, *Âla Sai* ‘Over-Here Saka’, and *Pašai* (< **Par-Sai*) ‘Further Saka’ (see following map).
- Add to these the ethnonyms *Saňu* ‘Sakans’, **Pra-sun* ‘Further Sakans’, and *Vâ-si* > *Vâ-i* ‘Hither Sakas’, and it appears that the viewpoint of the pre-Nûristânî Sakas might have been around the confluence of the Ališang and Alingar Rivers in Laġmân, looking west.
- The Hither Sakas (*Vâi*) would have been to the east of the Laġmân-Kunar watershed.

Paşaîstân



The Pašaî (2)

- Some Further Sakas (*Prasun*) perhaps migrated from Kâpisâ eastward across the tributaries of the upper Ališang and Alingar valleys into the heartland of Nûristân at the confluence of the Kantiwâ and Pârûn Valleys, before settling further up the latter.
- The Kalaşa people in the past used to know the district of Pârûn as *pašâ deš*. This is a further clue that the Pašaî and the Prasun shared some connection.
- Indeed, the geonym *Pârûn* itself is derivable from a Pašaî form of **Para-Sakan*, with characteristic elision of the intervocalic sibilant and *k* and labialization of the nasalized *â* to give **Paraa:n* > **Parân* > *Pârûn*.

Sakas, Pašaî, Prasun, and Pârûn

- While the Further Sakas (Prasun) occupied their areas, the Hither Sakas (Vâi) reached Vâigal via the Kunar and its tributary Šigal Valley.
- They expelled the resident community of Indo-Âryan-speaking Gawars, who migrated to their present territory along the Upper Kunar.
- Further and Hither Sakas may have intermingled, with ‘Hither Saka’, in two dialectal forms, Vâsi and Vâi, ending up as the endonym for two separate linguistic groups.
- ‘Further Saka’, in its earlier Pašaî forms **Par-šaî* and **Par-ân* (borrowed as Kal-a. *P'â~i* and Â-S *př'âu~*) and in its KmKt. forms **Pa-šaî* and **Pra-sân*, ended up as endonyms for today’s Pašaî and exonyms for the Vâsi.

The Geonym **Čâm*

A few geonyms in the region appear to go back to an Âryan form **čâm*:

		Saňu	Kal-a.	Vâsi	Sanglečî	Kal-m.
Âryan	* <i>čâm</i>					
Nûristânî	* <i>čâm</i>		<i>Čâm Gal</i>			<i>Čiâm</i>
Irânian	* <i>sâm</i>	<i>Sâma</i> ‘Wâmâ’				
Indo-Âryan	* <i>šâm</i>		<i>Šemi</i> ‘Wâmâ’	<i>Šim Gal</i> ‘Chitral’	<i>Šâm-Čatrôđ</i> ‘Šâm and Chitral’	

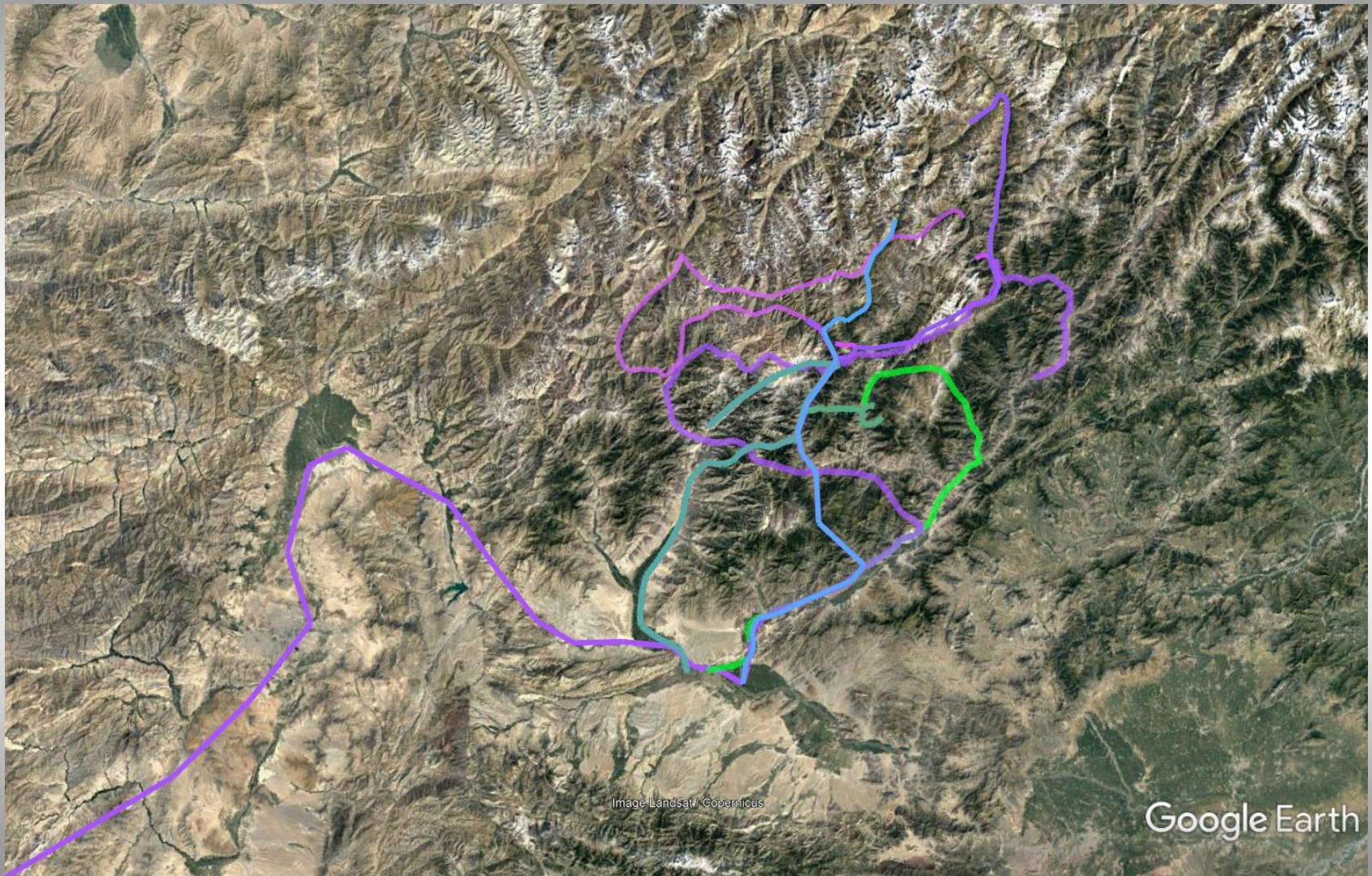
- These forms parallel the development of Ar. **čakânâm* to Kal-a. *šõ*, KmKt. *čâñ'u*, and Saňu-viri *saňu*.
- The initial portion of Ar. **čâ-m* could derive from earlier **čaka-*, with the remaining **-m* unclear (but cf. Kal-a *Kalaš-üm* ‘Kalaša-land’, Kal-m **čâtra-mâ* ‘Kâta’).
- Could Paxto *Wâmâ* derive from **wa-sâma* via Pašaî, where the intervocalic **s* would be lost, to *wa-âma* > *wâma*?

The Geonym **Čâm* (2)

- These names point to a group of Sakas that occupied various places named **Čâm* from present-day Wâmâ to perhaps *Čimi* to *Čâm Gal* to *Šâm* (Loṭ Kuh?), before the Khów under Mogol Turk hegemony eventually overran the territory down the Chitral-Kunar River as far as Chaghan Saray.
- In Sanglečî the compound *Šâm-Čatrâδ* implies that Šâm, being first in the compound, was likely closer to Sangleč, while Chitral would be farther away. Because the former territory of the Kal'asa included present-day Chitral up to Loṭ Kuh (according to them), Šâm would be, as Alberto Cacopardo has suggested, Loṭ Kuh.
- If such Sakas existed, did they occupy Wâmâ but then migrate to Loṭ Kuh when the Saṇu arrived, or were the territories in Nûristân occupied from Loṭ Kuh?

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Local Ethnonymic Model



Linguistic Evidence for Nûristânî Subgroups

Time to re-examine the phonological, grammatical, and lexical evidence for linguistic subgroups among the five Nûristânî languages.

- Previous research showed a division between “Northern” (Kâmkata and Vâsi) and “Southern” (Kalaşa-alâ, Tregâmî, and Sañu-Âşkuñu) groups.
- There is a clear phonological divide between Kâmkata on one side and the Southern group on the other (Strand forthcoming [2022]).
- But evolutionary phonological and grammatical evidence show no deep connection between Kâmkata and Vâsi. Their apparent closeness is due to extensive borrowing of Kâmkata words into Vâsi since they entered Nûristân.
- The Nûristânî languages have some three thousand years of separate linguistic evolution before the last thousand years that they have been interacting in Nûristân. Our reconstructed model of linguistic evolution for that early period must also conform with the genetic, ethnonymic, and historical evidence.

Phonology: Evolutionary Processes

Certain phonetic processes determined the evolution of the Nûristânî languages within the Âryan group:

- Progressive anterior tensing of the laryngeal-lingual complex, producing Anterior Voicing, Lingual Fronting, and Prognathizing;
- Development of the Tongue-End Continuant Consonants (**s*, **r*, and **n*);
- Accent Placement and Syncope;
- Anticipation of phonetic articulations within consonant groups and words.

(The first two points will be considered here; the latter two are treated in Strand forthcoming [2022].)

Phonology: Lingual Fronting

Progressive fronting of the tongue over generations of speakers has produced an evolutionary development of Proto-Indo-European dorsal stop consonants, as seen in the PIE labialized dorso-velar **k^w* of **k^wetuor-* ‘four’, which was:

1. delabialized to plain dorso-velar **k* in Early Aryan **ketuor-*;
2. fronted to dorso-palatal **k̑* in Late Aryan **k̑atuar-*;
3. fronted to lamino-alveolar *č* in Kal-a., Treg. *čatâ*;
4. fronted by prognathizing to lamino- or apico-dental *ć* in S-Â. *ćâtâ*, Pšt. *ćalor*;
5. spirantized to *s* in E-Pšt. *salor*.

Phonology: *s-Laminalization

Early Âryan Anticipation of Laminalization to *s:

- *s > š after *i, *r, *k̂, and *k

In Indo-Âryan, furthermore:

- *s > š after *u; spreads to Irânian
- *š > ṣ

ṣ after u, as in most instances in Nûristânî, occurs in Indo-Âryan loanwords.

(This reformulation of the “*ruki*” Rule should be renamed the “*irk*” Rule to recall its irksomeness.)

Phonology: Evolution of Âryan **r*_o

In Early Âryan:

- **r*_o > *ur*, *u* in [labial] environments
- **r*_o > *ir*, *i* in [laminal] environments

In Steppe-Âryan:

- **r*_o > *ər*, *a* in other environments

In Indo-Âryan:

- **r*_o > *ir*, *i* in other environments

The Nûristânî languages mostly agree with Steppe-Âryan.

Phonology: Evolution of Âryan **r*

Language	r + Voiced Apical (d, n)	
Âryan	-rd-	-rn- > -rŋ- >
Kâmkata	-rd- > -r-	-r-
Kalaşa-alâ	-rdd ^h - > -r-; -rd- > -r- (> ř- > Ø / [lam]) ; -rd- > -d-; -rd ^h - > -ḍ-	-n; -ñ-
Vâsi	-rd- > -r-	-r- [?]
Saṇu-Âṣkuṇu	-rdd ^h - > -r-; -rd ^h - > -ḍ-	-r-
Tregâmi	-rd- > -d- [?]	?

Some scant evidence for Âryan *-rd-, *-rn- > *-r- in Nûristânî.

Language	Word-Initial Sounds							
Âryan	*r- >	*k̑r- > *čr > *ér >	*kr- >	*gr- >	*pr- >	*br- >	*tr- >	*dr- >
Kâmkata	ř-	ç	kř-	gř-	př-	bř-	tr-	dr-
Kalaşa-alâ	vř-	ç, dr, dr > r	kr-	gr-	pr-	br-	tr-	dr-
Vâsi	ṛ	ç, ç > č, ç > č > ĵ, ç > ṭ	k-	g-	p-	b- > w (> Ø)	ṭ, čš / [lam]	ḍ, ĵ / [lam]
Saṇu	ṛ-	é > s, str > istr	kř-	gř-	př-	bř-	tr-	dr-
Tregâmi	Ḷ-	ç	?	?	pr-	br-	tr-	dr-

In addition, all have *k̑r- > *čr- > *šr- > š from Indo-Âryan loans.

- Strengthening of *r- to vř-, ṛ-, Ḷ- in the Peč Valley was probably late.
- Vâsi stands out; otherwise little evidence for early subgroupings.

Phonology: Nasalization

Âryan	<i>-nd-</i>	<i>-nt-</i>	<i>-nk-</i>	<i>-ng-</i>
Vâsi	<i>-nd-</i> > <i>-ñd-</i> > <i>-d-</i>	<i>-nt-</i> > <i>-ñt-</i> > <i>-t-</i>	<i>-nk-</i> > <i>-ñk-</i> > <i>-k-</i>	<i>-ng-</i> > <i>-ñg-</i> > <i>-g-</i>
Kâmkata	<i>-nd-</i> > <i>-nn-</i> > <i>-n-</i>	<i>-nt-</i> > <i>-ñt-</i> > <i>-t-</i>	<i>-nk-</i> > <i>-ñk-</i> > <i>-k-</i>	<i>ng-</i> > <i>-ŋ-</i>
Kalaşa-alâ	<i>-nd-</i> > <i>-nn-</i> > <i>-n-</i>	<i>-nt-</i> > <i>-ñt-</i>	<i>-nk-</i> > <i>-ñk-</i>	<i>ng-</i> > <i>-ŋ-</i>
Saņu-Âṣkuṇu	<i>-nd-</i> > <i>-nn-</i> > <i>-n-</i>	<i>-nt-</i> > <i>-ñt-</i>	<i>-nk-</i> > <i>-ñk-</i>	<i>ng-</i> > <i>-ŋ-</i>
Tregâmi	<i>-nd-</i> > <i>-nn-</i> > <i>-n-</i>	<i>-nt-</i> > <i>-ñt-</i>	<i>-nk-</i> > <i>-ñk-</i>	<i>ng-</i> > <i>-ŋ-</i>

- Vâsi stands out as losing nasality before all stops, voiced and voiceless.
- KmKt. loses nasality before voiceless stops.
- The Kalaşa languages retain nasality before voiceless stops.
- Nasal consonants coalesce with following voiced stops in all but Vâsi.

Phonology: Evolutionary Phases

- We may recognize eight phases in the evolution of the Nûristânî languages from Proto-Indo-European, as exemplified by the key phonological changes shown in the following slides.
- The approximate dates shown correlate with current genetic models (Narasimhan et al. 2019, Gneccchi-Rusccone et al. 2021, Heggarty et al. forthcoming).

Phonology: PIE Phase

(ca. 8500 – 7500 BP; ~ 1000 years)

Changes	Processes	Language
<i>h, ĥ</i> > <i>ə</i> : C_C	Laryngeal Vocalizing	PIE
C > {C[vls]][vcd][bvcd]} /_{C[vls]][vcd][bvcd]}	Voicing Anticipation: Uniform Voicing in Obstruent Clusters	PIE

Phonology: Âryan Phase (ca. 7500 – 6000 BP; ~ 1500 years)

Changes	Processes	Languages
$n_0, m_0 > \tilde{a} > a$	Denasalization	Aryan (also Greek)
$C > C^h / C^h_$	Posterior-Voice Dominance (Bartholomae's Law)	Aryan
$*k^i > *k^{\wedge}; *g^i > *g^{\wedge}; *g^{hi} > *g^h$	Dorsal Fronting 1	Aryan
$*o > *ô (= *o:) / _CV$	Labial Tensing (Brugmann's Law)	Aryan
$*k^{\wedge} > *č;$ $*kš > *kš > *čš > *č;$ $*k̂ > *č̂ > š̂t;$ $*g^{\wedge} > *j;$ $*gš > *kš > *čš > *č;$ $*ĝ > *k̂ > *č̂ > š̂t;$ $*g^{hi} > *j^{hi};$ $*gž^{hi} > *jž^{hi} > *j^{hi};$ $*ĝd^{hi} > *ĵd^{hi} > ž̂d^{hi};$	Dorsal Fronting 2: Laminalizing	Aryan
$*s > *š / \{ *i, *r, *k, *k, *k^w \} _;$ $*s > *ž / \{ *g, *g, *g^w \} _;$ $*s > *ž^{hi} / \{ *g^{hi}, *g^{hi}, *g^{fiw} \} _$	Anticipatorily Laminalized Sibilants ("ruki Rule", excluding <i>u</i>):	Aryan
$*k^w > *k; *g^w > *g; *g^{fiw} > *g^{hi}$	Scowling	Aryan
$*o(:) > a(:) (*a: = *â)$	Scowling	Aryan
$*r_0 > ur / [\text{labial}]$		Late Aryan
$*r_0 > ir / [\text{laminal}]$		Late Aryan

Phonology: Steppe-Âryan Phase (ca. 6000 – 4000 BP; ~ 2000 years)

Changes	Processes	Languages
$*h > \emptyset$; $*h > \emptyset$; $*g^h > *g$; $*j^h > *j$; $*d^h > *d$; $*\check{z}d^h > \check{z}d$; $*b^h > *b$	Posterior → Anterior Voicing	Nûristânî and Irânian
$*\check{c} > \acute{c}$ $*\check{j} > \acute{z}$	Prognathizing	Nûristânî and Irânian
$*k^i > *k^{\wedge} > \check{c}$ $*g^i > *g^{\wedge} > *j$	Lingual Fronting	Nûristânî and Irânian
$r_{\circ} > \partial r$ (“ $\partial r\partial$ ”)	$r_{\circ}$ -Diphthongization	Nûristânî and Irânian
$r_{\circ} > ar$ (“ $ar\partial$ ”)	$r_{\circ}$ -Diphthongization	Nûristânî and Irânian

Changes common to Nûristânî and Irânian

Phonology: Kambauja-Ćaka Phase (ca. 4000 – 2800 BP; ~ 1200 years)

Changes	Processes	Languages
*<i>h</i> > Ø, *<i>Ch</i> > <i>C</i>	Loss of *<i>h</i>	Nûristânî
*<i>r̥</i>ː > *<i>r̥</i>	Loss of length	Nûristânî
*<i>ə</i> > <i>a</i> *<i>ər</i> > <i>ar</i>	Opening of *<i>ə</i>	Nûristânî
*<i>r</i>{<i>d</i>, <i>n</i>} > <i>r</i>	Loss of voiced apicals after *<i>r</i>	Nûristânî

Within the Âryan group these changes appear to be unique to the Nûristânî languages.

Phonology: Indo-Âryan Phase (ca. 3800 – 500 BP; ~ 3300 years)

Varying IA influence among the Nûristânî languages.

- Massive borrowing of IA words, bringing in š, ʃ;
- **ə* > *i* (the default in IA, replacing Steppe-Ar. **ə* > *a*).

Borrowings into IA from Steppe-Âryan:

- words with *us*,
- Steppe-Aryan **'rća* > **'arća-* > Kal-a. **orć* (> *oć*) → Khow. *orć*, *ohć* 'bear'.

....

Phonology: Irânian-Saka Phase (ca. 2800 – 1000 BP; ~ 1800 years)

Changes	Processes	Languages
*ć- > ić- > iź- > iz- > z-	Epenthesis, Voicing, Stop-Laxing	(Nûristânî): Vâsi-vari
*ć- > s-	Stop-Laxing in Clusters	(Nûristânî): Sañu/Âşkuñu-veri
*s- > h-	Spirant-Laxing	(Irânian): All
*ć- > *tθ- *tθ- > θ-	Prognathizing; Stop-Laxing in Clusters	(SW Irânian): <i>Old Persian</i>
*ć- > s-	Stop-Laxing in Clusters	(Irânian): All but SW Irânian
-θ- > -h-	Spirant-Laxing 2	(SW Irânian): <i>Middle Persian</i>
*r _o > ar (“arə”)	*r _o -Diphthongization	(Irânian): All
*r _o > ar (“arə”)	*r _o -Diphthongization	(Irânian): All
*č- > ć- *j > ź	Prognathizing	(Nûristânî): Sañu/Âşkuñu-veri (Irânian): All Sakan

Differentiation of the Nûristânî languages occurred during this phase.

Phonology: Nûristân Phase (ca. 1000 – 100 BP; ~ 900 years)

Changes	Processes	Languages
<i>u</i> > 'u	Accent+ [fronting]	S-A
<i>u</i> > 'u > 'ü	Accent+ [fronting]	KmKt., Vâsi, Kal-a., Treg.
<i>au</i> > <i>o</i> > 'u	Accent+ [dorsal raising]	
<i>o</i> > 'u	Accent+ [dorsal raising]	
<i>a</i> > 'o	Accent+ [rounding]	Kal-a.,
<i>a</i> > 'o > 'u	Accent+ [rounding, dorsal raising]	KmKt., Vâsi
<i>â</i> = 'â : _i	(no change)	KmKt
<i>â</i> > 'o	Accent+ [rounding]	KmKt
<i>â</i> > 'o > 'u : [nasalized]	Accent+ [rounding, dorsal raising]	Kâta, Vâsi, Kal-a., Treg.
<i>r</i> > ř		KmKt., Treg.
<i>r</i> > ř > vř		Kal-a.
<i>r</i> > ʒ		S-A, Vâsi

Changes during this phase occurred too late to determine phylogenetic relationships.

Phonology: Afghân-Islâmic Phase (ca. 100 BP – Present; ~ 120 years)

- Massive borrowing of Arabic and Persian words.
- Borrowing of Persian and Arabic sounds: **â**, **h**, **ḥ**, **ʿ**, **ʔ**.
- Verbs formed with Loanword + **b**- ‘be’, **k**- ‘do’.

Phonology: Summary

Evolution of PIE k̑-	Sequence of Processes	Languages
k̑- > č- > ć-	[frn _{dor}] > [frn _{lam}] > [frn _{prog}]	Kâmkata, Tregâmi, Kalaşa-alâ
k̑- > č- > ć- > ž- > z-	[frn _{dor}] > [frn _{lam}] > [frn _{prog}] > [vcd] > [-stp]	Vâsi-vari
k̑- > č- > ć- > s-	[frn _{dor}] > [frn _{lam}] > [frn _{prog}] > [-stp]	Saňu/Âşkuňu-veri

Evolution of PIE k ^(w) i/e-	Sequence of Processes	Languages
k ^(w) i/e- > k̑- > č-	[frn _{dor}] > [frn _{lam}]	Kâmkata, Tregâmi, Kalaşa-alâ;
k ^(w) i/e- > k̑- > č- > ž-	[frn _{dor}] > [frn _{lam}] > [-stp]	Vâsi-vari
k ^(w) i/e- > k̑- > č- > ć-	[frn _{dor}] > [frn _{lam}] > [frn _{prog}]	Saňu/Âşkuňu-veri

Three groups emerge:

- Kâmkata, Kalaşa-alâ, Tregâmi
- Vâsi
- Saňu/Âşkuňu

Although the Kalaşa Languages show lexical and ethnic communality, speakers of Â-S have partaken of a later, Iranian-style deaffrication of IE “palatals” and fronting of retroflex consonants, as opposed to the speakers of the Vâigal and Tregâm valleys.

Grammar: Directional Location

The elements are:

D = direction (arm), P = Pointer/Path (hand/finger), T = Target (place).

The formula common to the core Nûristânî languages is:

D (+ P) + T (+ D (+ P)), as in:

KmKt: ${}_D \text{va-} {}_P \text{âñu-} {}_T \text{r-e} {}_D \text{ča}, {}_D \text{p-} {}_P \text{e-} {}_T \text{r-e}, {}_D \text{p-} {}_P \text{e-} {}_T \text{r-e} {}_D \text{p-} {}_P \text{âa}.$

Kal-a.n:

A-S:

Vâsi's formula is slightly different, with an optional prefix direction:

(D +) D + P + T (+ D (+ P))

${}_D \text{â-} {}_D \text{l-} {}_P \text{e-} {}_T \text{ra}$ 'away up aways there', ${}_D \text{o-} {}_D \text{s-} {}_P \text{'o-} {}_T \text{stâ} {}_D \text{s-} {}_P \text{â}$ 'innen (in der Blüte)'

Directional Location: Directions

The common set of directions includes:

- in-out $|\leftarrow - |\rightarrow$
- up-down $\uparrow - \downarrow$
- high-low $\approx\uparrow - \approx\downarrow$
- thither-hither $> - <$

Vâsi adds:

- left-right $\text{☺} \rightarrow - \text{☺} \leftarrow$

Directional Location: Pointers

In Vâsi:

Modifying pointers are required after directional morphemes.

Direction modifiers:

- ‘directly’ [default?] *-i-* —
- ‘and obliquely; and up’ *-â-* ↗
- ‘over; on top; toward the speaker/subject’ *-o-* ↻

Distance indicators:

- a bit *-ö-*, *-iö-* -
- all the way and down *-e-*, *-ie-* +

In the other Nûristânî languages:

Pointers are required with the directions ‘thither–hither’, and they may occur with ‘in’ and ‘high’ in some languages.

Required pointers with ‘thither–hither’ show a uniform set of pointers that modify the basic direction:

- ‘and up’ ↑,
- ‘and across’ →,
- ‘and down’ ↓,
- ‘and around/over’ ↻.

Directional Location: Targets

Kal-a.n: -i ‘there’ -am ‘-wards’ -ö ‘into’	KmKt.km: -ñ [indefinite location] -ra [definite location: adjective] -re (< ra-i) [definite location] Distance: -ru-k u [nearby location] -pik ‘far’ [distal location] -pâ-čuruk ‘end-most’ Extensive Direction, ‘-wards’: -ma [extended outward direction] -ma-k [extended outward-directed location]
A-S: -i [indefinite location] -i-le [definite location] -le [definite location] -u ‘-side’	
Vâsi: -nâ ‘from’ [ablative suffix, as directional target] Location: -râ [delineated location] (only with pointer vowel a, except tî- and vi-) -tr’â ‘[direction]-there’ -tr’â ‘from right there’ [emphatic specific place ?] -tr’â-nâ ‘from [direction]-there’ [with ablative suffix] -t’âsig ‘[direction]-ahead’; [direction]-forward	Vâsi: Position: -stâ ‘-one’ (only in so-stâ "inside") -štyâ [‘-standing’ ?] (only in â-b-ie-štyâ ‘below; eastern’) -k’ar-gâ ‘-located’ [delineated location, closer?] (only with pointer vowel a, except tî- and vi-» [??]) -k’âšti-gâ ‘-located; further down’ [only with ba- ‘down in’] (only with pointer vowel a, except tî- and vi- [??]) -ri-og ‘-turned; -facing; -side’ (= past participle of verb ri- ‘turn’) Distance: -t’e ‘there nearest’ [1st degree of distance] -l’i-g ‘up there a bit’ [2nd degree of distance] -l ‘up there away’ [3rd degree of distance] b’e-ŋe (< -pa-~ge) [4th degree of distance] -pe-fig (< -pa-fig) ‘down at the end’ [5th degree of distance] -tog-og ‘[direction]-reached’ [at the endpoint]

Little communality: **-i** [locative], **-r-** or **-l-** [pointer: there], **-m-** [pointer: -wards].

Directional Location: Summary

- The Vâsi directional system stands substantially apart from the other systems, which agree more closely among themselves.
- Little evidence for a special common “Northern Nûristânî” system.

Grammar: Possession

Vâsi:

Possessor-Genitive (-š) + Possessed (obsolete?)

Verb *lâ-* ‘have’

KmKt:

Possessor-Locative (*-i) + *sta* (< **santaka* ‘being’) + Possessed

Possessed + *vo* (< **va(n)taka* ‘haver’) + Possessor

Verbal Compound: *v'o asa-*, *bu-* “having be/is”

Kal-a:

Possessor-Oblique + *-ba* + Possessed

Possessed + *o-da* + Possessor

Verbal Compound: *oda o-*, *bü-* “having be/is”

Grammar: Verbal Systems

Âryan	Progressive Participle				Past Passive Participle	Agent Noun
	Active		Middle			
	<i>-an-ta-</i>	<i>-an-da-</i>	<i>-âna-</i>	<i>-m-âna-</i>	<i>-ita-</i>	<i>-âk</i>
KmKt.EKt	<i>-ta-</i>				<i>-i</i>	
KmKt.		<i>-na-</i>			<i>-i</i>	
Â-S.			<i>-ñ-</i>		<i>-ta-</i> [?]	
Vâsi				<i>-mâ</i>		<i>-og</i>

- The Progressive in Kal-a. has evolved separately.
- The verbal system of Vâsi is substantially different from the rest and contains echoes of the Saka systems that evolved north of the Hindu-Kush Range.

Linguistic Summary

- Phonology: Kâmkata and Vâsi do not show close affinity beyond Steppe-Aryan; S-Â underwent 2nd Prognathizing, like Irânian later.
- Grammar: major markers differ significantly in Vâsi vs. the others, which show further differences between KmKt., Kal-a., and S-Â.; significant differences in the verbal systems of Vâsi vs. KmKt. vs. Kal-a.
- Lexicon: Vâsi has ~30% from KmKt; more cognates among the Kalaşa languages (Kal-a., S-Â., Treg.) than among those and the others.

Linguistic Summary (2)

Taken as a whole, the linguistic evidence does not support a deep phylogenetic relation between Kâmkata-vari and Vâsi-vari. In most measures, Vâsi-vari stands out from the rest of the Nûristânî languages. Grammatically, KmKt. and Â-S. have retained ancient present-participle forms (Progressive Participles in **-n-** and **-ñ-**), while the Progressive in Kal-a. has evolved a separate periphrastic Progressive. But the grammatical system of Vâsi is in most cases different from the rest and is more reminiscent of the later Saka systems that evolved in Central Asia (Progressive Participle in **-m-** < ***-ma-na-**, Past Participle active [!] < ***-âk**, an Agent Noun).

Although the Kalaşa Languages show lexical and ethnic communality, Speakers of Â-S. have partaken of a later, Irânian-style deaffrication of IE “palatals” and fronting of retroflex consonants, as opposed to the speakers of the Vâigal and Tregâm valleys.

A New Phylogeny for the Nûristânî Languages

- Each Nûristânî language has evolved out of the Steppe-Âryan milieu during a period of almost a millennium from roughly 3800–2800 BP.
- There are a few changes common to the Nûristânî languages that developed during that period which set the Nûristânî languages apart from the other Âryan languages.
- KmKt and Kal-a largely retain the Steppe-Âryan stage of phonological evolution, while Vâsi and S-Â have carried out later changes beyond those of that period.

It seems more accurate to say that the Nûristânî languages constitute a “phase” rather than a “node” in the evolution of the ancient Steppe-Âryan dialects into today’s languages, without deep subgroupings.