
First Europeans in Ancient Pakistan and their impact on its society

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Introduction

Having consolidated his rule first in Iran and then recaptured the former subject nations extending from Asia Minor to Indus region, Egypt and in the Central Asia Darius I decided to establish Iranian sway over, particularly, Eastern Mediterranean. At that time (from the last quarter of Sixth Century BCE onward) Eastern Mediterranean, or Greek world had politically been divided into a number of city states, however, Athens and Sparta, were, among them, the leading states and playing dominant role in the waters of the Eastern Mediterranean and contending with each other to win over the political domination in the region. Out of this political strife, rivalries and jealousies of the Greek world the Iranians' "king of kings" thrice attempted to capture Athens but, unfortunately, due to various reasons, failed in getting a foot hold on Greek soil. Nonetheless, Persian wars severely shook Greek world to its roots economically as well as politically and left lasting effects which could not be mended in the posterity. Consequently, a feeling of enmity and hatred resulted between Greeks and Asia. As it is evidently seen in the circumstances which ultimately invoked Greeks to march on Iranian (Asia) to take revenge of all those massacres, devastations and calamities which were brought on them. These unsuccessful campaigns

across the Mediterranean exposed the inherent weaknesses of the Iranian navy and emboldened the Greeks to challenge the authority of “King of Kings” on his own land. The second half of 4th century BCE witnessed the emergence of anti-Iranian movements as it took its initiation, instead of the very land of Greek world, in Macedonia—a state that was not physically included in the Green Sea. Macedonia led as the champion in this movement instead Greek in taking revenge from the Asians of their casualties. Philip, the King of Macedonia was stabbed to death in 334 BCE and was succeeded by his son named Alexander who was hardly twenty year old when he ascended on the Macedonian throne. First, in a short span of time Alexander subjugated the neighboring Greek city states and consolidated his position at home. Obviously, it was an uphill task to measure with “King of Kings”. But, young champion of the ‘Greek Cause’ had doubtlessly determined to vacate Greek soil and take revenge from Iranians. For this purpose Alexander gathered an army, consisting of Macedonians and Greeks, of 30,000 infantry and 500 cavalry. In March 334 BC he set out to fight with “King of Kings”. In successive battles Alexander inflicted crushing defeat on Iranians, first in Asia Minor and then in Syria. These repeated failures in the battle fields, infact, had exposed military might and weaknesses of Iranian authority, therefore, Alexander, fearlessly, marched on towards Mesopotamia to fight a decisive battle at the historic battle field of Arbela, where the last Achaemenian “King of Kings” Darius III was utterly defeated by Europeans in 330 BCE. Darius III, although, fled to Ecbatan¹ for the sake of his life but was treacherously captured by his own satrap Bessus who afterward killed him. With this Achaemenian empire ended and their capital city namely Persepolis (=correctly Ashtakhr) was put to flames by the ruthless invader and turned it into the heap of ashes which, infact, possessed the cultural traditions of the four great civilizations namely Egyptian, Mesopotamia, Indus and Greek. Having taken necessary measures of administration conquered territories Alexander advanced forward and reached the area now known Kandahar (southern Afghanistan) where he

founded a new city known to the Greeks as “*Alexandria-among-the-Arachosians*”. This new city in Afghanistan was originally a part of the chain of cities being laid down marking the course of Macedonian conquests. It seems that thousands of local inhabitants were forced to settle side by side with Macedonian and Greek in this city².

The foundation of another city after his own name like previous ones, Alexander laid down it in the Kabul Valley, namely *Alexandria-under-the-Caucasus*³. This city in fact marked the place which formed the meeting point of three roads coming across the Hindu Kush mountains⁴. Now, the village of Charikar is regarded as the ancient *Alexandria-under-the-Caucasus*⁵. Alexander did not leave any corner or pocket unclean earlier included in the political realm of Achaemenians. With this view in mind he crossed Hindu Kush and captured whole of Bactria and Sogdiana (Central Asia) and appointed his own governors there and then came back after crossing Hindu Kush in ten days in the early spring of 327 BCE. Thus, the rear of Alexander was now safe and he had assured his communication line with his powerbase in Macedonia and Greece. At Nicaea—a new city founded by Alexander—is now generally identified with Jallalabad in Afghanistan⁶. At Jallalabad Greek army was divided into two sections to proceed on Indian Campaign in 327/326 BCE by Alexander. By that time the Achaemenian Satrapy of Indus Zone was still unconquered by Macedonians, however, it seems certain that the administration of the defunct Persian empire in the Indus Valley with all probabilities would have practically become disfunctioning.

Conquest of Indus Region: Political situation of the Indian Satrapy after the Achaemenians disintegration

After the disintegration of Achaemenian empire the Indus Satrapy was no longer united as an administrative entity. Rather it presented a picture of disunited house and the mutual rivalries and jealousies of its people would have re-emerged, and consequently

the country had parceled out into a number of states. This internal political division of the Indus region, no doubt, greatly helped Alexander in trampling its people. From the extreme north to the Indus Delta in the south whole valley or the Indus Basin was inhabited by a heterogeneous group of people which remained often at war with each other due to their tribal enmities. To the extreme north of the Indus region, consisting of mainly Bajaur, Swat and Buner territories, we are told by Greek sources that these valleys were inhabited by a number of independent tribes namely Aspasians, Guraeans and AssaKenian etc.

However, on the south of these valleys across the Mahaban and Malakand mountains was a small state of the Astakenoi (Present Peshawar Valley) of which King Astes (Ashtakaraja) ruled it from his capital Peuceloatis (Pushkalavati), modern Charsada. While across the Indus towards east was Sagar Doab—the territories between the Indus and Jhelum. This was the country of Raja Ambhi with capital at Taxila (= ancient Takshasila). Towards further east beyond the Salt Range between the Jhelum and the Chenab (= ancient Vitasta/ Chandrabagha) was lying Chaj Doab which was ruled by Porus (=correctly Paurava). While the territories of Rachna Doab lying between the Chenab and the Ravi (= ancient Iravati) was controlled by the nephew of Porus of same name.

The territories from present Jhang (the confluence of the Chenab and Jhelum rivers—a place now known as Tremun (or Three faces) to Panjnad (near Uchh Sharif) are mainly traversed by the Chenab river after receiving the waters of Jhelum. However, on the way to Panjnad it is also joined by the Ravi near Multan, and the Satlej is also merging into Chenab above Panjnad near Bahawalpur. This vast stretch of land at the time of Alexander's invasion was inhabited by a number of Tribal republicans or free tribes namely Sibai, Malloi or Mallawas, Oxydarkai (or Kshudrakas), Abastanes, Xathri and Ossadii⁷. From Panjnad to the apex of the Indus delta the whole lower Indus plains were

politically divided into a number of states or republicans often at war with each other mainly because of their mutual tribal or political rivalries and jealousies and interests, which was a main cause of their weakness. These detrimental political circumstances would have certainly helped Alexander in determining his resolve to crush the Indus region along with his armies. On the other hand burning with mutual jealousies as well as fears and being insecured by some neighboring rajas, the rulers of some weaker states contacted Alexander and assured him to assist and help him in his military expedition of the Indus region. Among such rajas were included the names of Sisigupta, Sanjeya and Ambhi.

Ambhi had infact already contacted Alexander when he was still operating in Bokhara and offered his help and allegiance⁸. The offer of his allegiance is even corroborated from his presents which Ambhi sent to Alexander to appease. He dispatched a rich present comprising of 65 elephants, great many sheep of extraordinary size, 3000 bulls of a valuable breed⁹. This political move of Ambhi shows his insecurity and fear of being pressed under the rising military power of his neighboring raja Porus (=Paurava). By sending invitation to Alexander Ambhi seems to have intended and determined to set a blow and nipping the menace of Porus in the bud. He, infact, forgot all principles of fair play and only remembered that everything was allowed in love and war. He even compromised his national pride and opened the door of the Indus region to a foreign invader. Thus, he earned his name as a first traitor of this land. Sisikottos (=Sasigupta) was another raja or chief who had already joined Alexander while latter was still in Bactria regarding his military campaign. Matter of fact is that two years before joining Alexander's camp Sasigupta had fought on Iranian side in Bactria against Alexander. Probably, he was a ruler of little hill state on the slopes of the Hindu Kush¹⁰. We also learnt about a certain Sanjeya who fled from Astes and offered his allegiance to Alexander who appointed him incharge of the city. Thus, a traitor received his reward after selling his loyalty to Alexander.

Military Operations in the Indus Region

At Nicaea (=Present Jallalabad in Afghanistan) Alexander finally chalked out his strategy for military operation in the Indus zone. His rear was now secured as he had planted a chain of cities after his own name from Mediterranean to Afghanistan and Bactria, and thus he had linked up communications with his power-base in Macedonia and Greek.

In view of the geographical setup of northwestern parts of the Indus region (or in accordance with topographical location) Alexander decided to move on a two-pronged invasion of the Peshawar Valley so that to secure his rear from stabbing him in the back. In accordance with this strategy, Alexander divided his army into two main columns: one division he put under the command of Hephaestion and Perdikkas, and dispatched them most probably through Khyber Pass to capture the Peshawar Valley¹¹. This section of Alexander's army was guided by the raja of Taxila named Ambhi who had already pledged his sovereignty to Alexander. Accompanying Ambhi both generals with a sizeable army emerged upon the plains of the Peshawar. The Peshawar plains at that time (Gandhara) formed a small state with its capital city named Pushkalavati (Greek Peukelaotis). The king of Pushkalavati or Astakenoi, as the Plains of Peshawar was known by later name to the classical writer, was Astes¹². Apparently, Astes seems to be a Greek form of the name Astakaraja whose people were known as Ashtakas. The city of Pushkalavati has reasonably been identified with the archaeological mounds of Bala Hissar and Shaikhan Dheri. Now, they are lying on the banks of rivers Kabul and Swat in the vicinity of modern Charsada¹³. The Chinese Pilgrim Xuan Zang records the name of Pushkalavati as Po-she-kie-lo-fa-ti¹⁴. Interestingly, the ancient tradition of this name still survives as the area around Charsada is presently known as Hashtanagar i.e. "eight cities". Regarding this modern name or word A Cunningham's suggestion¹⁵ is worth mentioning who says "that the modern name of Hashtnagar may be only a slight

alteration of the old name of Hashtinagar or city of Hashti, which might have been applied to the capital of Astes, Prince of Peukelaotis." However, in a recent article professor Abdur Rahman has given a very interesting interpretation and explanation regarding the origin of the word or name/term Ashtnagar—an ancient name of Charsada (Pushkalavati-meaning Lotus city or city of Lotus). Rahman¹⁶ explains thus "Greek historians tell us that Astes (correctly Ashtha) was the brave and fearless ruler of Pushkalavati, the lotus city near the present Charsada, at the time of Alexander's invasion of this city in 326 B.C.E (Majumdar 1960: 6-7). This name has survived in the form "Hashtnagar" (i.e city of Ashthas). Ashtha was apparently the name of a cognate tribe closely linked with the Ambas. The name Hashtha, in the form Hast or Ashtpal (also written as Asatpal) occurs in Muslim sources (Rahman 1979: 111-13). Asth or Ashtpal was the name of the father of Jayapala (Firishta 1974: 90), the last great Odi Shahi or Hindi Shahi ruler who valiantly opposed first Sabuktigin, the ruler of Ghazna and then his son Mahmud towards the end of 10th and advent of the 11th century C.E. The Tarikh-i-Sistan also mentions an Asth/ Asat, who seems to have played some role in the political affairs of Kabul previous to the rise of Jayapala (see Rehman 1979: 131-32). In brief, it appears that Ambas and Ashtas or Ashthas were two great sections of the same tribe mentioned in the Aitreya Brahmana as Ambashthas"

Astes refused to surrender his city to the foreign invaders and consequently Pushkalavati was besieged by the generals of Alexander. However, he stood the siege for thirty days and bravely died in defending his country. Thus, during the march of 325 BCE Alexander advanced towards the Indus where the city of Ates named Peukelaotis was delivered up to him by his generals Hephaestion and Perdikas. With this the whole valley of present Peshawar (=correctly Purushpur) from Khyber to the Indus fell into the hands of Macedonians and Greeks. After the occupation of Peshawar Valley it was put, administratively under a certain

Sangaeus (=Sanjaya) who had sometime before fled from Astes and joined hand against Astes with raja Ambhi, the King of Taxila. Thus, the traitor received a reward in return for his loyalty to Alexander.

Military campaign against Andaea, Arigaeum, Aspasiens, AssaKenians, Bazira, Ora and Rock of Aornus

In contrast of the plains of Peshawar Valley Alexander had to force his way along with his other division of his army, through the rugged hilly regions of the Kunar, Panjkora and Swat river valleys where he encountered much opposition from the free people of these areas. We learn from the classical historians that almost every city, big or small, namely Andaea, Arigaeum, Aspasiens, AssaKenians, Bazira, Ora and Rock of Aornus offered a stubborn resistance to Alexander in defending their land. Infact, unlike the raja of Taxila, the freedom lovers of these hilly areas preferred to lay their lives instead of surrendering before invader. During his military campaign Alexander was first checked by the people of the Kunar Valley, however, the name of their city is nowhere recorded by classical writers. The city was well fortified with a double defensive wall and the zealous and brave residents seem to have offered a fierce battle in front of the city wall in which Alexander himself and two of his principal generals were severely injured. Thus, infuriated being injured by their chief commander, the Greek and Macedonian soldiers started fierce assaults and ultimately succeeded in forcing their way in at dawn the following day. However, the defenders did not lose their hearts and stood firm to ground for a while. Now, the invaders were in an advantageous position strategically, as they started to fix the scaling against inner fortification wall. As a result, found themselves helpless and weak the defenders lost heart and rushed through the city gates towards the mountains. This was infact followed by mass killing of the defenders, as some of them were butcherly put to sword while others were taken prisoner and the city razed to ground. Thus the revenge of the injury of Alexander was taken¹⁷. The echo of this foreign calamity befell on the people

of the Kunar Valley must have been heard by free tribes of neighboring regions of which they were going to be experienced sooner or later. Consequently, the citizens of Andaea probably another city of same name surrendered their city to the invader without fighting.

Having taken proper administrative measures of vanquished cities of Kunar Valley, Alexander advanced along with his army to another river valley named Euaspla. The route Alexander adopted is not clear from the descriptions of the classical historians however he seems to have crossed the mountains to the east through the Nawa Pass into Present Bajaur (present Pakistan). The residents of this area are mentioned as Aspasians whose chief lived in a city. The Greek name Aspasioi (from Iranian Aspa seems to be equivalent to the Sanskrit Asvayana. The Aspanians had learnt about Alexander's military campaign therefore before his arrival at the city, the citizens set their city to fire and had managed to get away into the nearby mountain. One of the Alexander's general named Ptolemy, however, succeeded to spot the peak occupied by the Aspasian chief. With the company of his shield bearing guards Ptolemy stormed the hill and after severe fight which nearly cost his life overpowered Aspasian's commander and put him to sword¹⁸.

After subduing Aspasian city Alexander descended to another city called Arigaeum the inhabitants of which had set their city to flames before the arrival of the invader. Infact, Arigaeum was another city of the Aspasians which was also burnt down by inhabitants before escaping to the hills. A reconnoitering body of the Macedonian troops under Ptolemy at last located the people of the locality who had taken refuge at some safe place and joined their forces into one body. Then Alexander organized his army into three sections and advanced to the hills occupied by the Aspasians. Under burning zeal and encouraged by their numerical strength the Ospasian preferred to give battle in the open field. Although they rushed upon the invaders but Alexander's tested

soldiers proved matchless and consequently the Aspasian fighters were driven away by the combined army of Macedonian and Greek. It followed an indiscriminate slaughtering of Aspasians as they were cut down like carrots and turnip by the invaders. Moreover, countless prisoners regardless of age and sex as well as their possession including oxen, sheep and goats fell into the hands of the conquerors. However, it was just beginning and the way ahead of invader was still abound of barriers, hurdles and obstacles which Alexander had to clear to traverse on¹⁹.

An uphill task was ahead of Alexander, as still more severe and stubborn was the resistance offered by Assakenians (correctly AsvaKayana). The inhabitants of Swat and Buner were called as Assakenians or Assakenoi by classical writer. The Messaga, the capital of the Assakenians (correctly Masakavati) has exaggeratedly been described as a city strong in its natural location. Although it's exact location is not known but perhaps seems to have situated at the site of Gumbatuna near Ziyarat in the Talash Valley. Now Alexander marched against the country of Assakenians and crossed the Guraeus (=Panjkora) as his destination was Massaga—the largest of the cities in that area. The inhabitants of the city had prepared themselves to face the inevitable war and apparently invincible foe. For the purpose of defence the Assakenians entered into a military alliance with King of Abhisara, probably the ruler of Jumun/Kashmir. In these circumstances the invaders pitched their camps near Messaga, but this time Alexander was not facing hunting peasant communities scattered in the upper reaches of the Indus Valley (ancient Pakistan). Perhaps having observed the strategic advantage, in connection with the location of the defenders, Alexander cleverly manoeuvred to draw the Assakenian force in the open field and feigned retreat. Thus, using war tactics Alexander succeeded in drawing defenders within reach that followed a hand to hand fight in which Assakenians troops gave way and fled to the city leaving 200 dead behind. The Assakenians, now besieged themselves within the defensive walls, and Alexander applied his battering engines and made a breach in

the wall but failed to make any further progress. Alexander tried his best in bridging over the defensive walls into city but his all attempts proved in vain and abortive. After three or four days, unfortunately, the King of Messaga was struck and killed by a missile hurled from a battering engine. The loss of the king or leader disheartened the courageous Assakenians and they opened negotiation with Alexander. Now the defenders were led by their queen named Cleophes. After concluding a peace treaty Alexander did not honour his words, as Arrian says the city was left undefended, a massacre followed and the Assakenians were cut to pieces, the mother and a daughter of the dead king were taken prisoners. This seems to be an eye-wash and does not absolve the great soldier of this cold-blooded massacre²⁰s.

After the fall of Massaga several fortified towns would have been captured by Alexander lay on his way down to Ora and Bazira. Regarding the route from Bajaur across Panjkora which Alexander followed in the course of his march, must have led him through Talash into the wide open Adinzai Valley which stretches down to the river Swat and its strategically important crossing near Chakdara. The main cities of the Swat valley were Ora and Bazira which were identified by Aural Stein with present towns of Odigram and Barikot²¹, respectively. These two cities representing political-cum-administrative centers of the Swat valley, thus, seem to have been focus of Alexander's operational strategy. It was perhaps expected that having heard about the fate of Messaga, the rulers of these cities would automatically surrender. However, to the contrary of the invaders expectations, the people of Bazira and Ora trusted to the strength of position instead of opening the gates of the cities. They had made their minds not to surrender, and put stubborn resistance to Alexander and his army. Thus, smelling the determination of the inhabitants, Koenus was dispatched to Bazira, whereas Attalus, Alketas, and Demetrius were sent against Ora to invest the town until Alexander's arrival. Charged with the spirit of patriotism the defenders of Ora went a step further and made a bold sortie

against the troops of Alketas who pushed them back into the city's defensive wall.

Meanwhile, Alexander had set out for Bazira (present Barikot) but, on the way after receiving intelligence perhaps about initial skirmishes between Macedonians and inhabitants of Ora, he changes his plans and marched to Ora. In accordance with changed move Alexander instructed Kionos to fortify a strong position in front of Bazira and also installed a garrison at a place to be sufficient to keep the inhabitants from undisturbed access to their land. Alexander then moved toward Ora with the rest of his army. The Kionos withdrew himself from the scene and moved towards Ora with rest of his troops. Thus, departure of Kionos encouraged the people of Bazira thinking light of the remaining Macedonians they came out from their fortified town to the plain and attacked the invaders. This underestimated strategic move of the people of Bazira suffered heavy losses, as more than five hundred of them were fell on the ground and about 70 were made captives. The remaining fortified themselves into the town and were warned not to access to their fields. Although location of Ora rendered it a dominant position as well as natural defense but all this proved an easy matter for an experienced soldier like Alexander who succeeded in breaching through defensive measures of the inhabitants and he forcefully made his way in his very first assault. As the people of Ora could not understand the strategy of the Macedonians and Greek forces, consequently, they finally fell into their hands as an easy prey²². The defeat of the inhabitants of Ora infact demoralized the people of Bazira (Barikot). As a result, they abandoned the town, and thus invaders planted their governors and established administrative machinery. Having subdued the leading towns of the Swat valley namely Bazira (Barikot) and Ora (Udigram) the invader along with his army marched to another town named Nysa. This city was probably situated on the lower spurs of Koh-i-Mor. Acuphis is mentioned as the president of the free city of Nysa. The inhabitants did not offer any resistance to the invader, and, as a

result Alexander showed a conciliatory attitude to them. A story was told to Alexander that the city of Nysa was founded by Dionysus while he was on Indian campaign; the Naysians were the descendants of those Greek soldiers who had become unfit for military service due to injuries and wounds they received during battles. The city was left by Alexander being delighted to know that it was founded by a mythical Greek hero Dionysus during his Indian campaign. Now, before proceeding to Pushkalavati, Alexander restored the fortification walls of Messaga, Ora and Bazira so that conquered area could be administratively put under effective control. At Ashtaka—the capital of Astes, Pushkalavati was handed over to Alexander by his generals Hephaestion and Perdicas whom he had earlier deputed to invade it. Alexander formed another satrapy (quite separate from Paropamisadae) comprising of recently conquered hilly areas as well as ancient Gandhara (=present Peshawar). In other words this new constituted satrapy included the areas west of the river Indus, bordered on the North West by the satrapy of Paropamisadae ruled from Alexandria-under-the Caucasus. Nicanor was appointed as governor of this new province whereas a Macedonian garrison was also placed in the Ashtaka capital under an officer named Philip. Having taken necessary administrative measures Alexander accompanied by two native chiefs called Kophaeus and Assagetes (Asvajita) moved out of Pushkalavati and subdued a number of big and small towns lying between the Pushkalavati and the Indus. The uphill task of the entire military campaign to the west of the river Indus was still waiting for to test Alexander's military ingeniousness. It was the reduction of the Rock of Aornus somewhere situated in the vicinity of the city of Embolima. The glib description of the classical writers regarding the episode of the Rock of Aornus renders more confusion instead, to provide a guiding lead which may bring more clarity. It appears from the description of classical writers that Alexander moved towards the Rock of Aornus from Pushkalavati, and subdued various towns on the way and reached Embolima which was situated in the neighborhood of Hund. The classical writer's city or town of

Embolima is identified with Hund by Alexander Cunningham²³. However, one of the tehsil headquarters of KPK district of Buner named Embolima shows close name resemblance with Embolima which was situated in the neighborhood of the Rock of Aornus. The physical magnitude of the Rock of Aornus, which made it impregnable, does not conform to the geography of the area where it might have supposedly situated. In other words it seems impossible to fit description of Aornus to any rocky height in the area. As Arrian, one of the classical writers describes that the circuit of the rock is said to be about 200 stades (i.e. about 23 miles) and its height where it is lowest, eleven stades (i.e. about a mile and a quarter)²⁴. Alexander's campaign for reduction of the Rock of Aornus is depicted in such a glibtic as well as rhetoric way that it surpassed the exploits of legendary Greek hero Heracles, the son of Zeus who is said to have even found it impregnable. However, Alexander's resolved determination, war techniques as well strategy proved matchless.

The people of the Rock of Aornus did not surrender and decided to resist the invaders. They were probably encouraged by the location as well as the physical setup of the Rock which had apparently made it impregnable. Thus, to reduce the Rock of Aornus Alexander commanded his generals named Kraterus, Ptolemy etc, to proceed to the spot with their battalions to besiege the site of Aornus. He also ordered to build a raised platform of the stone boulders which could be used as launching pad for his catapult machines. Then, the Macedonians started to operate their catapult machines and this work continued for three to four days without any intermission. This showering of stones on the city by these catapult machines caused a breach into the defensive wall and consequently residents started to lost their hearts and sued for peace²⁵. Finally, the term and condition of the treaty concluded between Alexander and the inhabitants of the Rock of Aornus are not specified. But, obviously, it seems certain that the people of the Rock would have agreed to vacate their residence if Alexander had assured or promised them to leave

them unmolestedly. However, what calamity befell on the citizens when they started evacuating the Rock seems to be a big black spot on the career of a great soldier like Alexander. As the great soldier went back on his own word and pounced upon the retreating masses. Consequently, a large number were killed, while others lost their lives in jumping down the steep sides of the Rock. After occupying this site Alexander restored damaged parts of the defensive wall and planted a garrison with Siccottus or Sasikottos (=Sasigupta) as their commander²⁶, and then he proceeded to another city named Dytra (or Detra).

This oversized tract of arable land on the top of a hill measuring 4000 by 2500 feet was only accessible by a difficult path cut by the hand of a man. It was Ptolemy who is told to have dug a deep trench in stone around it and constructed a wooden ramp as high as the peak itself. Such exaggerative information supplied by the classical writers appears to have only been meant to magnify Alexander's exploits, as they are totally out of tune with evidence of geography of the area. It is impossible to believe that such an important and valuable site would have totally disappeared. However, Stein has identified the Buddhist establishment of Rani Ghat with the Rock of Aornus²⁷ its defenders fled towards mountains and gathered at place known to classical writers as Dytra (Detra)²⁸. They were led by the brother of the Assakenian chief killed in Messaga. Alexander followed them however before he arrived at the city of Dytra or Detra they had evacuated it. Alexander captured the city and sent a reconnoitering team after fleeing defenders of Aornus. Meantime they fled to Abhisares for refuge. Then Alexander returned and finally reached Hund where a boat bridge had already been built by Haphaestion for crossing the Indus.

Alexander's march through Panjab

Finally, the columns of Alexander's army separated at Nicaea in 327 BCE following two separate routes in pursuit of subduing on the one hand the inhabitants of the river valleys of Kunar,

Panjkora and Swat and on the other Peshawar Valley (ancient Gandhara) and reassembled in 326 BCE on the western bank of the Indus at Hund.

It took around one year of joint forces of Macedonian and Greeks in invading the big and small towns of Gandhara (Pehswar Valley) Kunar, Panjkora and Swat Valley. A boat bridge had been constructed by Hephaestion before the arrival of Alexander. Then, Alexander granted some leisure time to his tired troops and also offered customary sacrifices to the Greek gods. The religious ceremony was followed by different game contests including gymnastics and horse racing competitions. Meanwhile, Alexander received an emissary of Raja Ambhi of Taxila accompanied by rich gifts comprising of "200 talents of silver, 3000 oxen, above 1000 sheep and thirty elephants". Similarly, a heavy contingent of cavalry consisting of 700 horsemen was sent to the invader which escorted Alexander when he marched towards Taxila. Besides this, to ensure his submission and support Ambhi also dispatched an embassy while Alexander was still encamped at Hund. Having crossed to the other side of the Indus Alexander again offered sacrifices and proceeded to Taxila. Regarding Taxila the classical writers unanimously hold this opinion that it was the largest city located between Indus and Hydaspes (Jhelum)²⁹. What followed then, in all respect, was unbecoming as well as shameful to a patriot. This was, in all probabilities, first event of its kind that the residents of Taxila ever seen in their long history and perhaps never experienced hereafter. As, on the approach of Alexander the Raja of Taxila came out of the city with all humility to welcome his guests. Most probably, the overriding worry of raja Ambhi was to suppress the rising power of raja Porus (Paurava) in his immediate neighborhood on eastern borders. Thus the traitor King compromised Indian heroic traditions as well as against the will of his people bowed before foreign aggressor intending to pay off the old scores with Porus whatsoever the price. Such warm reception as well as hospitality offered by raja of Taxila obviously, gratified Alexander who not only reinstated Ambhi but also added

some more territory to his dominion. This generosity and kindness was equally responded by the traitor King who ensuring his loyalty, placed the services of a contingent consisting about 5000 soldiers at the disposal of Alexander. This example set by the traitor King was followed by other rajas including Abhisares (probably raja of Kashmir) and other neighboring princes, such as Doxares etc. These rajas and princes submitted their loyalty to the invader astutely thinking that war, battle or resistance to such an invisible and powerful foe would be of no avail. Alexander spent three month at Taxila and prepared for a new contest with a foe who had anxiously been waiting across the river Jhelum in the plains of the Panjab. However, during their stay at Taxila the Greek experienced something new and odd practices or spactacles which they had never seen earlier. One of the Greek officers named Onesicratus observed a group of naked ascetics involved in "endurance practice" in the blazing sun. To his surprise these 'Sadus or brahmanas' commanded great respect and reverence among his people and were indifferent to the Kings and conquerors alike. It was certainly in vain to push or force to come because they would deny to royal command or order. Alexander, therefore, dispatched Onesicratus, who was himself a philosopher and was related to the Greek school of Diogenes, to one of the renowned ascetics with a request to visit him. When one of the brahmanas was requested to see Alexander the former rather rudely inquired thus "For what purpose has Alexander come all the way hither". On the persuasion of Ambhi, the raja of Taxila, finally, one of the brahmanas consented to visit Alexander. His name is recorded as Kalanos after the word "Kale" he used in greetings. However, the actual name of the sage was Sphines who during his visit to Alexander explained symbolically the real picture of Alexander's empire. For this purpose "he threw down on the ground dried and shriveled hide and planted his foot on the edge of it. But when it was trodden in one place it stood everywhere else. He then walked all around it and showed that something took place wherever he trod, until at length he stopped into the middle, and by doing so made it all lie flat. This symbol

was intended to show Alexander that he should control his empire from its centre, and not wander away to its distant extremities³⁰.

During his stay at Taxila as a royal guest of the raja Ambhi Alexander remained busy in receiving emissaries from neighbouring rajas as well as reorganizing his forces and preparations to measure sword with one of the most stubborn foes ever faced in the Indus region. Although, Alexander was warmly welcomed by his host at Taxila but response of the people of Taxila was quite astonishing as they disliked as well as disapproved his stay, so much so that they openly expressed their hatred regarding the foreign occupation which was suppressed with Iron hands, However, after offering customary sacrifices to their gods and goddesses and holding gymnastics and horse race context Alexander moved towards Hydaspes (Jhelum) where, on the other side of the river the brave and proud ruler of the Chaj Doab (between Jhelum and Chenab) was restlessly waiting for the fight. Regarding the crossing of the Jhelum Arrian remarks that he (Alexander) decided "to steal a passage". As, Alexander found difficult to cross the Jhelum in the face of his enemy so he made his army move up and down the river concealing his intentions. At a night of severe storm accompanied by rain and thunder, at last, the Jhelum was affected which abated the vigilance of Porus, at a point 17 miles upstream from the original camp. Thus, about 1,100 men and a cavalry detachment were enabled to cross the river unobserved by a bridge of boats which was kept hidden behind a wooded island. When Porus learnt this news of crossing the river Jhelum by a part of Macedonian force he responded it and sent his son at the head of 2,000 men and 120 chariots to check the march of his adversary. This response proved too weak to obstruct the advancement of Macedonian, as the young prince was routed and killed along with his troops. Now a decisive collision between adversaries was inevitable as Porus in person moved and opposed Alexander. Porus army was consisted of 50,000 foot, 3000 horse more than one 1,000 chariots and 130 elephants. He thus arranged his army that major reliance was fixed

in the centre by forming a wall of elephants and the back of his front line was protected by foot soldiers. The flanks were thrown with cavalry and in front of the horsemen were chariots, each of which was drawn by four horses carrying six men, of whom two were shield bearers, two archers posted on each side of the chariot, and the other two charioteers as well as men-at-arms, for when the fighting was at close quarters "they dropped the reins and hurled dart after dart against the enemy"³¹. Having entrenched their positions in the field a fierce battle ensued between the allied forces of Alexander and the son of the soil, as former initiated the battle with a furious charge of 1,000 mounted archers from Central Asia and ended in making a breach in the enemy lines. That, the attack of the Macedonians was so forceful, sudden, calculated and fierce that the army of Porus could not withstand and was fallen into a mess. Coupled with this the fresh army under Kraterus had crossed the river with which the foreign invaders uprooted the army of Porus. Thousand of Porus' men including his two sons and all great generals fell in the battle. In spite of this deterioration and depressing situation in the battle still there stood a giant like figure of more than six feet in height in the ground. He was King Porus who had received more than nine wounds. When he was ultimately captured and brought to Alexander he was still not "shaken or broken and abashed in spirit". What followed the meeting between Porus and Alexander are dialogues not only historical but magnificent as well. History lacked to find such a daring and brave man who even after defeat did not lost his kingly spirit and replied the invader "Treat me O Alexander! As befits a King"³². Certainly, the most stubborn as well as powerful enemy in the whole of Indus valley fell in the battle along the eastern banks of the Jhelum. However, the chivalrous demeanour of Porus made a deep impression on Alexander's mind, who reinstated him in his Kingdom. However, certain reasons seem to have contributed to the defeat of Porus which may be evaluated. For instance, the inclement weather was probably one of the major causes of Porus' defeat, as the main strength of his army lay in the chariots, which, due to torrential rains became in effective

to a large extent as the rain water turned the whole battle field into slippery ground as well as caused muddy sloughs which obstructed the tactical movements of the chariots. Same perhaps happened with the archers who became incapacitated as they had to place one end of their heavy bows on the ground for discharging arrows. Even the elephants, arranged by Porus as defensive wall, got frightened when the Macedonian started to cut their feet and trunks with axes choppers and thus they caused in spreading havoc in their own ranks. Above all Porus' army was merely consisted of unwieldy horde which measured swords with the Macedonian army which became more effective due to their ever increasing regiments from vanquished people such as Syrians, Iranians and Central Asians etc. The actual reasons and causes behind his defeat are not precisely known to us, however, the chivalrous demeanour of Porus left deep impression on Alexander's mind, as a result of which he reinstated him in his Kingdom or state, by adding further territories towards the eastern domain including fifteen tribes with their 5,000 sizable cities, towns and villages. Thus Alexander won over the loyalties of his erstwhile formidable foe and infact, like a true statesman, acted perfectly in consonance with the dictates of diplomacy. To commemorate his victory Alexander founded two towns or cities at the site of battle after the name of his charger Boukephala but, the remains of these both cities have not so far been discovered by Archaeological activities. Porus was not the last barrier to be removed in the Panjab as Alexander and his heterogeneous army still had to fight against the confederacies of free or independent people inhabiting between the Chenab, Ravi and Satluj rivers. When, he crossed the river Acesines (Asikni, Chenaj) into the country of Porus II, a nephew of Porus senior, former fled for shelter to the nation of Gangaridae (i.e, to the territories of a people known as Nanda King). Besides this, he also subdued the territory of a people known to the Greeks as Glausai or Glauganikai (= Gaucukayanakas) and captured 37 towns each of which had a population between 5,000 and 10,000. With this the Kingdom of Porus swelled as the whole region between the

Chenab and the Ravi was annexed to the country of Porus who was reinstated by Alexander to his former position after a severe battle. The leading independent tribes inhabiting beyond the Hydoati (Ravi) included Adaistai (Adhrishtes) who could not find themselves equal to strength of the invader and offered submission. However, it was the Kathaioi (=Kathas), who enjoyed the highest reputation for courage decided to offer stubborn resistance from their fortified town Sangala. With the help of Porus Alexander inflicted a crushing defeat on Kathaioi. A large number of Kathaioi were killed, others were captured and city was razed to the ground, and entire country was made over to Porus. Now Alexander marched to the Beas and the rajas of (Kings) these territories such as Ophytes (=Saubhuti) and Phegales (Bhagala) did not offer any resistance and surrendered before Macedonian army³³.

Alexander Departure

Alexander's march from the Jhelum to Beas ended unhappily and abruptly as well. As we are informed by classical writers that when the armies of Alexander reached Hyphasis (Beas) in about the end of July 326 BCE they refused to march any further³⁴. Even Alexander's stirring appeal and rhetoric provocation to his soldiers went in vain. In these circumstances, being compelled by his own people, at last, he decided to retreat. Modern historians have expressed a number of possible reasons in their scholarly discussions. However, according to Plutarch's the Macedonian forces, after the contest with Porus were considerably dispirited, and it was with reluctance that they had advanced as far as Hyphasis at Alexander's bidding. However, Alexander's passionate speech could not work in urging Macedonians and Greeks to move beyond the Hyphasis, and it was like putting the proverbial last straw on the camel's back. Besides this, what proved even more depressing for Alexander troops were the disheartening news, which they had heard all sorts of alarming rumours that beyond the Beas were deserts, unfordable and fierce rivers, and powerful nations with tremendous armies. Thus,

against his will and desire, Alexander had to be rolled back his march from the banks of the Beas, as he was not let to advance further by his own companions and troops. However, before retreating, in continuation of previous traditions, Alexander commanded for the construction of twelve altars in honour of the gods who had graced him so far with wonderful conquests as well as memorable achievements. Then, before sailing down the Jhelum with a fleet of hundred boats Alexander confirmed Porus in the government of the territory between the Beas and Jhelum, while Ambhi and Abhisara were continued to be Kings of the territories lying between the Indus and the Jhelum with Taxila as a headquarter, and Kashmir with the state of Arsaces (Ursa= Hazara) as an addition, respectively. When Alexander sailed down the Jhelum his fleet 1000 boats, including luggage—boats, horse- transports and war-galleys. Finally, from Jhelum (actually Buka Phala, a Greek town founded in the memory of Alexander's charger) the trumpet of departure sounded toward the close of October or in November, 326 BCE. Thus, with the signal of departure the armada sailed down the river Jhelum in a grand array. This huge Macedonian fleet was protected during sailing on both banks by troops under the command of Haphaestion and Kraterous, and another body of troops was put behind under Philip to protect the rear, which followed Alexander's army after three day. Instead of retreatment and departure from the Indus basin Macedonians had to fight with certain tribal confederacies and inhabitants of the large small towns lay on the way³⁵.

Thus, downwards journey was equally adventurous like the conquest of upper countries of the Indus zone (ancient Pakistan). At the confluence of the Chenab-Jhelum rivers Alexander had to disembark for trial of strength with the Siboi (=Sivis or Sibis) and the Agalassians (Arjunayanas). Carrying clubs as war weapons and dressed with skin of wild beasts the Siboi tribes battled with Macedonian, but were easily beaten down by the latter. However, Agalassians³⁶, bravely defended their capital and at first repulsed the invaders but soon they realized their desperate position and

instead of fleeing or escaping, they set their houses to fire and gallantly laid their lives in defending homeland according to the custom of Jauhar of the medieval Rajputs. This was not end of the war, yet he had to fight with one of the fiercest nations Alexander ever met in the course of his military expedition, floating further down the Chenab he had to make his way by launching a campaign against a certain confederacy of the tribes including Malloi (Mallavas=present Malli) and Oxychakai Kshudrakas. Though they have been at enmity with each other, however, realizing the gravity of the situation being threatened by a common enemy force they formed an alliance. Thus joint army swelled up to 90,000 foot, 10,000 horses and nine hundred chariots. Resisting to alien forces one of Mallava cities took up arms and laid down their lives in the defense of their city. Facing such a stubborn resistance and hostile reception Alexander's soldiers began to upbraid him in a language of sedition. However, Alexander's passionate appeal to let him "go home with honour" strengthened the deteriorating spirits of the Macedonian and Greek armies. As Alexander's troops swooped down upon the Malloi when they were working unarmed in their fields and butcherly slaughtered in a great number. This catastrophic massacre could not dispirit the Malloi as some of them shut themselves behind the city walls and put up a stubborn resistance. Now, alien forces stormed the city walls with intense attacks as Alexander himself was severely injured when he was scaling the defensive wall of the city. Even the rumour of Alexander's death became known in the camps of the Macedonian armies. The news spread like a wild fire and a gloomy situation prevailed everywhere, however, soon Macedonian recovered and took the city frantically which was followed by indiscriminate massacre as the whole population of the city was put to sword including old men, women and child. This wholesale slaughter had broken up the very strength of Oxydrakai and as a result they sued for negotiation and peace with the invaders³⁷. Still Alexander's departure from the Panjab (Indus Basin) was far from peace and tranquility as floating further downward he had to measure swords with comparatively small

tribal groups namely Abastanes (Ambashthas), Xathri (Kshatryas) and Ossati (Vasati; probably the name of this last tribe still survives by a village named "Basti Maluka" nearby the confluence of the Chenab and Beas-Sutlej rivers). These tribes did not let Alexander without fighting, however, on account of their weak military force they were overpowered and the invader continued his downward journey.

Alexander's fleet thus carrying sword and fire and forcing his way back continued to float and at the beginning of 325 BCE reached the confluence of the Punjab rivers with the Indus³⁸. This part of the country from the confluence of the Panjab rivers with the Indus to the Indus Delta Alexander's armies had to measure sword with the forces of certain rulers or rajas namely Musikanus (King of the Sogdi= Sogdri or Sudras) and Porticanus (King of the Oxykanus). However, an interesting political feature of this part of the country was that the Brahmans amazingly preferred to put resistance to the invader and opposed the prince who surrendered before Alexander. As a result, both Musikanus and Oxykanus along with the Brahmans were defeated and put to sword. Then Alexander marched toward Pattala, which was most probably situated at the apex of the Delta. Before Alexander's arrival the people of Pattala had deserted their city so it fell in the hands of Alexander without any resistance. This was, most probably the second city Alexander captured without fighting as its inhabitants deserted it, after Taxila of Ambhi in his entirely military campaign of the Indus Valley (correctly ancient Pakistan). It may be remarked that retreating journey of Alexander from the Jhelum to Pattala was not less adventurous and perilous than his military campaign from Nicaea to the Punjab as no nation on way let him to march without stubborn resistance. Most probably Alexander selected this route to retreat safely as he knew the hardships of the course by which he had come. Having subdued Pattala he divided his army into two sections, one was led by Alexander himself along the Southern coast of Gedrosia (Balochistan) and another was sent under the command of Nearchus by sea. Alexander,

however, adopted a dangerous and cheerful route for himself in which he had to pay heavily, as a small portion of his army could survive the hardships of this route. The main river in this part of Gedrosia was Hab, and as Alexander approached its inhabitants they deserted their homes, similarly, across this river other tribesmen Oritae also vacated their village. Finally, having taken necessary administrative measures and appointed Appolophanes as satrap of this country he reached Persian Gulf where he joined other section of his army and thus Macedonian and Greeks traversing through an inhospitable, waterless deserts and appalling region Alexander succeeded in reaching Babylon where soon afterwards he passed away at the age of 32.

Administration And after-math

Alexander divided the conquered territories of ancient Pakistan including Kabul into seven satrapies administratively, and each province was kept under the control of governor. Except two of these governors, all belonged to Macedonians and Greek stalk, the most trustworthy companions of Alexander. His administrative arrangements clearly suggest that Alexander planned to annex from the Kabul (Hindu kush) to the Indus Delta including Gedrosia (=Present Balochistan) to his vast empire. He had no intention to relinquish control of conquered territories. Among these satrapies the northern most comprising of mainly the Kabul valley and adjoining hills with its capital city named Alexandria under Caucasus, was entrusted to Qxyartes, father-in-law of Alexander. On the east of Jallalabad including hilly valleys to the north formed another satrapy which was placed under the control of Philip, the son of Machata, with Pushkalavati as provincial capital seat. In other words this was ancient Gandhara (=present Peshawar Valley), marked on the eastern side by the Indus. Across the Indus was the satrapy of Ambhi with Taxila as his capital seat, may be corresponded with whole of pothohar plateau or Sagar Doab, bounded by river Jhelum on the east. The country between the Jhelum and Chenab rivers was laying the old Kingdom of Porus (Paurava) which after his defeat was returned

to him by the invader, but raja's status now was no more than a satrap of Alexander. However, after submission to Alexander the boundaries of the satrapy of Porus expanded, particularly on the east as far as the Beas and Sutlej rivers. Moreover, the region around the confluence of the Punjab rivers from the present district of Jhang down to Mithankot, a point where all the rivers of the Punjab after forming a single stream below present Panjnad (Ucch Sharif), merge themselves into the mighty Indus. This satrapy may be corresponded with present South Punjab (Siraiky belt) was assigned to Phillips, while Sindh was placed under Pithon, the son of Agenor. The region to north of Taxila including Hazara and Kashmir formed another satrapy which was left in charge of its old raja named Abiasara.

The Macedonian military campaign in the Indus zone must have taken the lives of more than one million people within a short span of eighteen months. This number seems twice as much as the Afghan war casualties in fifteen years during their struggle against the Russian occupation. That shows that a whole sale or mass killing of the people of the ancient Pakistan was done by the invader which may be termed a havoc calamity and catastrophe that befell the unfortunate valley of the river Indus at Alexander's hands. What classical writers have depicted is a sad story of untold, miseries, rapine bloodshed, loot and destruction. In fact Macedonian carried sword and fire like a whirlwind turning and sweeping everything before it and left behind nothing but heaps of dead and crumbling cities. When Alexander died in June 323 BC ancient Pakistan was bleeding, crying as its plight was so complete which it never experienced in its subsequent history. It is frequently stated by classical writers that several cities were razed to ground and population indiscriminately was put to sword. Particularly what happened at a place where Alexander was wounded that children and elders were not spared, turning into bloodbath. Similarly, at another place we hear of a huge massacre in which countless people lost their lives and about 40,000 were taken prisoners. For instance at Massaga (Talash Valley) 7,000

mercenaries were treacherously slaughtered in a single night. Even untold havoc was played with the lives of retreating people of Rock of Aornus where the Macedonian forces cut the whole population into pieces while they were vacating their homes in accordance with the peace treaty. Infact the miseries of the inhabitants of the Indus zone were unparalleled as appalling is the story of their bloodshed. To avenge few drops of blood of Alexander the whole population of Malloi was wantonly killed and massacred. When Alexander left the Indus region it was literary bleeding from the Kunar and Khyber to the Indus Delta and Baluchistan.

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