

Endeavors to Legitimize Colonial Legacy: In Context of Alexander's Exploits ...

Endeavors to Legitimize Colonial Legacy: In Context of Alexander's Exploits in Present day Khyber Pukhtunkhwa

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Received on: 07-05-2022

Accepted on: 09-06-2022

Abstract

Being located on the crossroads and heir to Gandhara Civilization, the present province of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (Pakistan) has a rich cultural history. By the dent of its location, the historic land of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa has been the scene of contacts among different peoples whether they were the invaders, the traders or the holy pilgrims. This historic interaction contributed much to the evolution of culture and civilization of the region. Being hostage to her geography, the land of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa especially its territory known to Colonial scholars as the Yusufzai country, remained arena of war for numerous invaders including Alexander of Macedonia who fought major battles on the historic land of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa against the native folks. So, none of the Orientalists/Colonial scholars right from M. Court to Aurel Stein, never lost any opportunity to identify the disputed site, connected with Alexander's triumph over the natives. Nevertheless, they desperately failed to acknowledge the indigenous folks' contributions to science and philosophy such as the Sanskrit Grammarian, Pânini and the ancient treatise of Indian Mathematics, known as Bakhshali Manuscript. Following critical discourse analysis, an attempt has been made to draw a link between the glorification of Alexander of Macedonia while paying no heed to the historic sites and luminaries of ancient Khyber Pukhtunkhwa in the Colonial scholarship whether by choice or default as a grand imperial design of the British Colonial Government of India.

Keywords: Gandhara Civilization; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; Bakhshali Manuscript; Pânini & Ancient Treatise

Study Background

The development of a culture may be understood in its contextual frame, which is associated

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to leaders in any form, whose imprints leads the inhabitants of that culture to sustain, alter, or add to their culture. Historically, Pakhtuns culture is imprinted by different invaders, pilgrims, visitors, rulers, historians, and intellectuals from different perspectives. Furthermore, in this regard politico-historical context of archaeological explorations in India is an important and empirical source for explaining and understanding this phenomenon in deep.

Politico-historical context of archaeological explorations in India

According to the Indian archaeological explorations cultural subjugation is more powerful tool in the hands of colonialists as compared to traditional weapons. In the "Foreword" to Bernard S. Cohn's popular work "*Colonialism and its Form of Knowledge*", Nicholas B. Dirk has drawn a link between colonial cultural hegemony and knowledge production. Dirk writes: "Colonial power was not just the result of the power of superior arms, military organization, political power, or economic wealth—as important as these things were. Colonialism was made possible, and then sustained and strengthened, as much by cultural technologies of rule as it was by the more obvious and brutal modes of conquest that first established power on foreign shores" (Dirks 1996: ix). In the second half of 18th century, the British East India Company (henceforth EIC) emerged as a major power in Bengal and gradually grew into sovereign authority in India by bringing more regions under their sway. However, throughout their rule, EIC was haunted by legitimacy concerns. In this backdrop, researches in Indian ancient history, archaeology, culture, geography, politics, economics, ethnography and religions were initiated by EIC's officials. Resultantly, the Imperial Government of India, under Lord Canning, decided to establish Archaeological Department of India in 1861 by appointing Alexander Cunningham as Archaeological Surveyor (1861-1865). In the backdrop of Asiatic Society of Bengal (1784)¹, the well-known "*Minute...dated 22 January 1862*" nay going back to Cunningham Memoranda of 1848 and 1861. So, the protracted exertion of the Asiatic Society of Bengal's seminal scholars (Sir William Jones, Charles Wilkins, Henry Colebrook, Francis Gladwin, William Chambers, Colin Mackenzie, Francis [Hamilton] Buchanan and Horace Hayman Wilson), resulted in the realization of an organization which led to the conception of Indian Archaeology. In this milieu, the Colonial officials erected the colossal structure of the Archaeological Survey of India (henceforth ASI) which unlocked the flood gates of research in Indian antiquity; focusing on history of India's art, architecture, epigraphy, ethnography, geography, numismatics, and topography (Cunningham 1871: i-iii, xli; Markham 1878: 238, 263; Imam 1963: 199; Ramaswami 1979: 4; Chakrabarti 1982: 328, 1988: 6; Kumar 1992: 16-17; Chatterjee 2002: 502; Murray 2007: 235; Cohn 1996: 9, 231; Prakash 2013: 138). Efforts to document Indian antiquity through historical and archaeological researches by the Colonial Government of India (henceforth Colonial Government) were loaded with legitimacy concerns as Lord Canning's following emphasis shows;

It will not be to our credit as an enlightened ruling power if we continue to allow such fields of investigations as the remains of the old Buddhist capital in Behar, the vast ruins of Kanuoj, the plains of Delhi, studded with ruins more thickly than even the Campagna of Rome, and many others, to remain without more examination than they have hitherto received. There are European Governments which, if they had held our rule in India, would not have allowed

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this to be said (quoted in Cunningham 1871: ii).

Lord Lytton termed the conservation of national antiquities as “essentially imperial” obligation of the Central Government of India in his famous ‘Minutes’ issued in 1878² and it is also on his credit to ‘curb treasure-hunters’ activities’ by passing ‘the Treasure Trove Act’ in 1878 (Marshall 1916: 30; Mersey 1949: 93; Roy 1953: 15; Brown 1905/1995: 233; Dani 1983: 183; Hooek 2010: 347). However, it was the close working relationship between the office of the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, and John Marshall, Director General ASI, which resulted in the landmark legislation of Ancient Monuments and Preservation Act VII of 1904 (Khan 2015: 4-5, 106, 108). This important piece of legislation together with the Colonial Government’s recognition of the Yusufzai State of Swat in 1926, pave the way for Stein’s lifelong ambition to study the arena of Alexander campaigns in ancient Uḍḍiyana. Detailed explorations in Gandhara and Uḍḍiyana reinforce Stein’s belief to locate Aornos at Pir-Sar (Stein 1927b: 526; Mirsky 1997: 46-47).

The discovery of ancient Gandhara owes its origin to western scholars’ obsession with Alexander’s campaigns especially tracing his route in India in the backdrop of imperial designs of the British. In addition to this curiosity, the Britons quest for linking their ancestry of Anglo-Saxon to the Greeks in antiquity invigorated large scale explorations in ancient Gandhara (Abhijeet 2015: 439). Against this milieu, the European scholarship in general and the British in particular, developed an approach to India having no history before Alexander’s advent on Oriental scene. Based on Greek accounts, Alexander’s expeditions and subsequent victories against the natives have been fixed by colonial scholarship, as vintage point in studying Indian archaeology, history, geography and topography.

Archaeological and geographical investigations in Gandhara and Uḍḍiyana, need to be studied against the backdrop of Ranjit Singh deployment of French military officers in his army, the extension of British rule to the Punjab (1849), the Yusufzai State of Swat’s foundation (1915) followed by the Colonial Government’s recognition (1926), Italy participation in the World War II, partition of India into two dominions – India and Pakistan (1947) (Christensen 1901/1981: 25; Nevill 1912: 14; Rome 2005: 25; 2008: 135; 2009: 3, 2011: 54; Khan 2015: 6, 69, 72, 255-256, 266). These developments generously contributed to archaeological explorations in Gandhara and Uḍḍiyāna especially the last two political events heralded commencement of Italian Archaeological Mission (henceforth IAM) new explorations in Swat valley since 1955. Being engaged in archaeological, ethno-historical and topographical explorations in Gandhara and Uddiyana since 19th century till date, scholars succeeded to identify and locate several sites including Aornos of the classical accounts (Raverty 1862: 253, 2001: 237; Deane 1896: 655-656; Stein 1929/2003: 68, 1930: 1, 58; Tucci 1958: 279, 1940: 1, 1997/2013; Olivieri 1996).

1. General Claude Auguste Court:

General Claude Auguste Court, an antiquarian, geographer, fellow of the Royal Geographical Society of England, and French officer in Ranjit Singh’s Army, compiled a detailed report after visiting the Yusufzai country (Grey and Garrett 1929: 148, 151). Like other Colonial scholars, Court was too obsessed with Alexander’s Oriental expeditions to visit and mention sites affiliated with Alexander’s battles in Gandhara. Court mistakenly took Momands with Assakinians by erroneously calling Guoreous with river Kunar, even opines that river Kabul

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is known as Guoreous in this region. To Court, Bazira must be searched in Bajaur [Court's Bijore] because Alexander crossed Guoreous into Bajaur. By fixing Bazira in modern Bajaur, Court opines that Aornos [Court's Aornus] the stronghold of Asakenians refuge, must be searched in these mountains especially in Hazarnao [Court's *Azarneh*] (Court 1836b: 474, 479). To Court, the unidentified place of Bazira and one of the capitals of Gandhara were contiguous and hence he says: "From Peucelaotis Alexander returned on his steps, directing his march towards the north-west, in order to investigate Aornus. After the capture of this rock, he made a second expedition into the country of the Assaceni, between Bazira and Peucelaotis" (Court 1836a: 393). On the authority of Arrian, Court thinks that 'Akora Khatak/Akoray [Court's *Akhoreh*] is Ora and the present inhabitants are the descendants of Assaceni' (Court 1836a: 395, 1836b: 482). However, Court changed his identification on the authority of Arrian, Strabo, Curtius who identified Aornos near Bazira, and on the bank of river Indus. By agreeing with Curtius, to identify Aornos with Raja Hody's castle having the only access from the river which was located opposite Attock on the bank of river Indus. He is talking about ruins of habitation; heights and even says that Alexander sacrifices are extant on the site (Court 1839: 310-311).

The conjectures must be viewed in the backdrop of Court's explorations in Gandhara following the footsteps of Alexander in pursuit of imperial designs in that land. So, it was natural for any explorer like Court to mention only those sites mentioned in Alexander's historians' accounts, being vital from military perspective. Speaking in military parlance, Court recounts Akbar's defeat in the region as; "It is in these districts that BIRBEL, the Vizier of AKBER, perished with a whole army" (Court 1836b: 479-480). Court did mention Akbar minister Birbal, however, no mention of Pânini; a renowned native linguist.

All sites mentioned in Court's report had either political or imperial connection such as Aornos, and Bazira, conquered by Alexander (Court 1836: 387-395). Being a military officer, Court was judging Gandhara in military terms as; "Pesháwar musters 40,000 horse, a thousand-foot soldiers, and twelve pieces of cannon" (Court 1836: 476). Court's itinerary's geological, geographical, and archaeological, especially its dominant military importance in the backdrop of first Afghan War has been outlined by Grey and Garret as under:

"fortunately Court, who was a shrewd, educated, and observant man, realized that such information....concerning the geological, geographical, archaeological, and military details of these little-known countries might be of general interest, and perhaps of particular profit, to himself". As this document contained much of military value and must have been consulted during the Afghan and Frontier troubles of 1838-42, it must have been kept in the original French as a confidential document....(Grey and Garrett 1929: 149).

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the Orientalists with disguised identities as fakir, intruding into different regions of Gandhara³, were in grave violations of diplomatic and research ethics. Ironically, Court labeled the natives as barbarians who were apprehensive of the activities of the Orientalists who masquerading themselves as fakir to serve the imperial designs of the West.

2. James Abbott

Like other colonial researchers Abbott elaborated the Mahaban Mountains [Abbott's Moha Bunn] on the authority of Professor Wilson in North of attock. Abbott contemplates that

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Affacini who were living in the region at the time of Alexander's invasion are none other than the present Yusufzai tribe, who are owning the fountains, grazing land, cultivation land, trees and Mahaban Mountain which is a great refuge for the outlaws today as had been used in the 4th century BCE. His conjecture is an open challenge to other Orientalists because they dispossess the present Pukhtun inhabitants of the past culture and civilization developed on their land and instead credit non-Pukhtun stock for it⁴ (Abbott 1848: 627; 1854: 337-338). Nonetheless, the interplay between politics and colonial scholarship is apparent in Abbott's identification of Bazira (Barikot) with the ancient capital of Swat established by Raja Virahat while the region was estimated in military terms to be capable of producing 80,000 fighting men (Abbott 1854: 334). Abbott confuses Ora with Hund [Abbott's Oond/Hoond] by describing its ancient fort, however, he fails to mention Sâlaterra, the birthplace of Sanskrit Grammarian, Pânini, in his research. In Abbott's accounts, it is noteworthy that Abisares has been brought to Hund across the Indus but did not mention Sâlaterra, Pânini's birthplace in Hund Fort's vicinity. Strangely enough, frequent references have been made to kings such as Abesares, Nadir Shah and others in Abbott's accounts but a total eclipse on the native scholarship (Abbott 1848: 627, 1854: 337-338, 342). Politically motivated nature of colonial scholarship is evident from Abbott's wish to have complete information of Swat valley for future expansion of the Colonial Government as under:

The construction of a map of Sohaut is a matter of much importance. Sooner or later the Sol~nuties rill compel us to punish them. Every possible means should therefore be applied to add to our knowledge of the features of that rich and extensive valley, and imperfect as is the sketch map now offered, it will yet I trust serve as a foundation for more satisfactory charts, and if so, the toil it has cost me, will be well rewarded (Abbott 1855: 357).

In nutshell, Abbott's conclusions were exposed to biasness because of his lack of trust on the natives about Mahabunn and being the colonial officer who followed the same lines of colonial researchers in this regard. He concluded that native's information cannot be accepted as no European were associated with the modern days rises of these scholarships.

3. H.W. Bellew

Bellew as an official doctor associated with Bengal Medical Services since 1856 who was posted in Mardan and Peshawar. His curiosity of understanding the Gandhara's archaeological position, compiled a report "*A General Report on the Yusufzais*" (Bellew 1864; Errington 1987: 110; Khan 2018: 103) with the aim to fix the mythical/legendary site of Aornos. He explained the last victory of Alexander in these words,

"His last triumph over the enemy in this region, and before crossing the Indus, was at the celebrated rock Aornos, located, according to popular traditions, on a spur of the Mahaban mountain, in the immediate vicinity of Amb, and on the right bank of the Indus" (Bellew 1864: 56).

However, like Abbott, the narration about the Alexander's victory, Bellew was also biased on portraying the native people ill-disciplined and non-courageous as compared to Alexander's discipline and fearless leadership. Furthermore, Bellew also concluded that native people never recorded or preserve their own traditions and history, and these were Europeans who recorded it.

It is imperative to differentiate between colonial scholarship and colonial designs, because

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through their colonial scholarship Bellew justify the subjugation of the natives by the European powers right from Alexander campaigns till the British adventure in the 18th century as reflected in Bellew's description of Ambela campaign (1863) against the Bunerwal where he drew a link between the Colonial Government's expeditions against the natives and Alexander's historians' Aornos. Keeping in view the legitimacy concern, Bellew tried his level best to show that British forces campaigns against the natives were justified with a historical legacy going as back as Greek invasion of the region. This historical fact has been summarized as under:

He arrived at last at Embolima (modern Ambela in the Chamla canton of Boner), a City seated not far from the rock Aornos (modern *Malka*, near the summit of Mahaban mountain; the stronghold, in recent years, of the Wahabi fanatics of Hindustan at the destruction of which, at the close of the Ambela campaign of 1863-4, I was present with the "Queen's Own Corps of Guides," to whom this duty had been assigned), defended by Indians, and leaving KRATERUS there with part of the army to collect stores of corn and all other necessaries for a long continuance in the place with the rest marched towards the Rock (Bellew 1891: 68-69).

4. Alexander Cunningham:

Scholarship in Indian numismatics, epigraphy, architectural and historical geography is associated to Alexander Cunningham who started his career as military engineer in the Bengal Army. In that capacity, Cunningham visited different parts of India including Gandhara in 1848 for the first time. Cunningham advocated the case of systematic archaeological investigation of Indian ancient past by submitting a Memorandum "*Proposed Archaeological Investigation*" in 1861, to Lord Canning. Cunningham's commitment and vision for the explorations of Indian past conferred on him the Director-Generalship of ASI (1861-1865 and 1871-1885). If the establishment of the Asiatic Society of Bengal entitled Sir William Jones (1746-94) to be named as "founder of Indology", in the same vein, Cunningham's efforts right from 1848 to 1861, which finally culminated into the establishment of ASI and the institutionalization of Indian Archaeology, sanctions Cunningham to be crowned as "Father of Indian Archaeology" (Singhal 1922: 205-207; Roy 1953: 17; Jha 1977/2009: 18; Inden 1986: 416, 2000: 44).

During his exhaustive archaeological explorations, Cunningham remained busy right from 1861 till 1885. In this time frame, Cunningham crisscrossed the Yusufzai country for documenting different features of all key ancient sites against their historical, and archaeological context. Cunningham's findings were published in the encyclopedic reports of ASI under the generic title of "*Archaeological Survey of India Reports*" (Cunningham 1871, 1875, 1885; Roy 1953: 13-14; Chakrabarti 1982: 332). Furthermore, as a prolific writer, making XuanZang Indian Pliny and using data of the *Archaeological Survey of India Four Reports During the Years 1862-63-64-65*, Volume I & II, Cunningham published a reference book "*Ancient Geography of India*" wherein he embarked on wearisome task to unravel the riddle of ancient Indian ethnography, geography, history, and topography in Buddhist era. In this well-known work, Cunningham had endeavored to associate ancient sites and their nomenclatures mentioned in Indian, Greek and Chinese accounts, all over India encompassing Gandhara. In these panoramic studies, Cunningham made comprehensive

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descriptions of the Yusufzai country, nevertheless, he failed to elaborate in a proper discussion those sites/personalities connected with the Indian glorious past in terms of scholarship in different fields of science.

Sites attached to natives' achievements (Bakhshali, Sâlatura) have either been ignored or just mentioned in a single line/paragraph as compared to lengthy accounts of sites associated with European adventures. Aornos, linked to Alexander's victory against Assakenoi, indulged Cunningham in a lengthy discussion throughout his reports⁵. Paradoxically, the well-known ancient town of Sâlatura (Warukey/Chota Lahore), located near Hund, has totally been unsung, although, XuanZang⁶ has mentioned it as the birthplace of Sanskrit Grammarian and the father of Linguistics, Pânini. Strangely enough, Sâlatura has been described by Cunningham as the "birthplace of well-known Sanskrit grammarian Pânini" in a single paragraph having six sentences only and nothing more (Cunningham 1871: 95).

In terms of natives' contribution to human knowledge of mathematics, Bakhshalay⁷ is another remarkable ancient town/site. Based on Cunningham's archaeological and antiquarian investigations of the region, lengthy and detailed deliberations have been made regarding the antiquity, ethnography, geography, and topography of the Yusufzai country (British India). Even sites such as Ranigat, located beyond British frontiers in the far-flung tribal region of Buner, have been described, nevertheless, Bakhshalay has skipped Cunningham's attention. Ironically, the central town of Bakhshalay did attract attention to be mentioned but only by its name without any detail, nay a single line description, whereas sites adjoining Bakhshalay such as Shahbaz-garha, Jamal-garhai, Sawal-dher, Sahri-Bahlol and Takht-bahi, adjoining Bakhshalay, have been given much attention (Cunningham 1875: 1-64). Cunningham has mentioned his visit to Bakhshali site along with other sites in 1871 ASIAR⁸ but he did not consider it worthy for investigation in the same vein as he had ignored the Harappan seals shown to him.

It is intriguing to note that being in the heartland of Yusufzai country, why and how, the historic town of Bakhshalay missed Cunningham's attention, who was such a dedicated explorer and archeologist having visionary sight by focusing on each ancient site, irrespective of having prominent traces or otherwise. Further, Cunningham visited Rani-gat in the tribal territory of Khudu Khel beyond the British frontier, paradoxically, complete silence over the site of Bakhshali which is great negligence on the part of Cunningham having unmatched fame in Indian archaeology (Cunningham 1871: 86-111; 1885: 55). While in Cunningham's important memorandum, the well-known town of Bakhshalay (Cunningham's Bakshala) has been described in one and half lines instead of just naming it vis-à-vis Charsada, Jamal-garhai, Karamar, Tahkal, Ranigat and Panjpir sites (Cunningham 1885: iii, 93).

It is pertinent to mention that Cunningham was too obsessed with the investigations of historic religious sites yielding objet d'art to appreciate the pre-history of India which hanged on till 1880s for Bruce Foote and his colleagues. Cunningham depended on text based research for deconstructing Indian past and never came out of his historical framework for studying Indian history. It was his obsession with the text driven investigations in Indian history and archaeology which kept him even hostage to envisage a prehistoric civilization developed in India, although, he visited Harappa thrice during his long career as official of the Survey. The antiquity of India having a civilization as old as Mesopotamia and Egypt had to wait until 1924 when Sir John Marshall announced that his colleagues under his leadership

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have discovered the Bronze Age civilization, having strong association with the Mesopotamian civilization, now known to the academia as Indus civilization (Roy 1953: 18; Malik 1968/1987: 20; Lal 2005: 51; Trautmann and Sinopoli, 2006:199; Avari 2007: 41; Wright 2010: 6; Srivastava n.d: 5, 8-10).

5. Vincent Arthur Smith

Vincent Arthur Smith has been famous for his prolific writings on earlier ancient history of India. *The Early History of Ancient India* 1904 is one of his most celebrated works on the history of India. Following the footsteps of other colonial scholars, like Abbott and Bellew, Smith also idealized Alexander advent on Indian scene as the hallmark of its history (Jha 1977/2009: 20). The same inferiority/superiority complex is very much present in Smith history of India. He also dedicated proper space to Alexander campaigns in India including Aornos. In his study, Alexander has been shown as having Hēraklēs as his progenitor; even he had taken pain to show that Alexander was so prowess in warfare to be triumphant in targets which proved impregnable for Hēraklēs. He glorified Alexander so much as to bring him at par with gods as: "The desire of Alexander to capture this position, believed to be impregnable, was based upon military exigencies, and fired by a legend that the demi-god, Hēraklēs, whom he claimed as an ancestor, had been baffled by the defences" (Smith 1914: 56). Smith veneration of Alexander is unbelievable as he writes:

The mountain, according to Diodorus, was washed on the southern face by the Indus, the greatest of Indian rivers, which at this point was very deep, and enclosed by rugged and precipitous rocks, forbidding approach from that side. On the other sides, as at Massaga, ravines, cliffs, and swamps presented obstacles sufficient to daunt the bravest assailant (Smith 1914: 56).

In the same vein, Smith opines that Aornos was not an easy prey for Alexander, but it was his strong will and the indigenous population readiness to share the much-needed information for menial bounties, helped Greeks and says: "Alexander spent two days in careful personal reconnaissance of the position with the aid of a small force, chiefly consisting of light-armed troops. Assisted by local guides, whose services were secured by liberal reward" (Smith 1914: 58).

It is strange to think that indigenous population give tough time to Macedonian forces by thwarting their assault; however, it was the strong will of Alexander that prevailed at the end. On the one hand, it is said that the indigenous people were strong enough to thwart Alexander's ambush in a site which was sojourn for the fleeing people who had been accompanied by women and children, on the other hand, the same cowardice people were so barren of loyalty and attachment to their soil that they vacated their garrisons. These accounts show that the whole episode in this part of the world is mythical. The mythical nature of the Aornos episode is apparent in Smith's narration as under:

The task before the assailants was an arduous one, for the crowning mass of rock did not, like most eminences, slope gradually to the summit, but rose abruptly in the form of a steep cone....Alexander resolved to use this material to form a pathway. He himself threw the first trunk into the ravine, and his act was greeted with a loud cheer signifying the keenness of the troops, who could not shrink from any labour, however severe, to which their king was the first to put his hand (Smith 1914: 58).

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Looking at the above narration wherein the courage and fighting spirit of Alexander's army has been shown at its peak while home sickness and discontent was absent in their campaign in this part of the world. Nevertheless, going a little further into India by defeating (?) Raja Porus whose kingdom was located between rivers Jhelum (Hydaspes) and Chenab, the same cheerful fighting men had suddenly been overtaken by homesickness, disobeying their King cum semi god. Greek forces refused to go further and fighting more while they had to face non martial races and nonviolent Buddhist followers as has been shown in the colonial accounts of Indian history (Smith 1914: 59-60).

6. Sir Marc Aurel Stein

Throughout his life as archaeologist and explorer, Stein had been haunted by the longing to document all those sites attached to Alexander's campaigns against the natives of Gandhara. His strong ambition to fix the exact location of the mythical fight and the subsequent victory of Alexander over the natives, has been described by Stein's biographers as "One of Stein's ambitions was to find the exact location of the "Rock of Aornos," the mountaintop fortress which the Macedonian had successfully invested" (Mirsky 1977: 65). As early as January 1898, Stein was accompanied with a military expedition against the Yusufzai tribe of Buner region. Stein conducted archaeological explorations in Buner but his longing for identifying Aornos brought him close to Mahaban Mountain. He expressed his adoration for Aornos as; "My interest in Mount Mahaban as the probable site of Aornos was considerably increased by the important information which Major DEANE had recently obtained through native sources regarding extensive remains of an ancient fort situated at a point of Mahaban known as *Sháhkót* (Stein 1898: 46).

It is noteworthy that Orientalists and colonial officials were vying for searching and locating the unidentified sites connected with Alexander's campaigns; hence it was also true for Stein to be proud being the first European, coming closer to Mount Mahaban, having the legendary arena of Aornos on its top. Stein desire let him visit to Rani-gat on the eve of 1891 Christmas, disagreeing with Cunningham's 1848 identification for Aornos (Mirsky 1977: 46-47). In his pursuit of Aornos, Stein's friendship with Harold Arthur Deane, the first Chief Commissioner of NWFP (now Khyber Pukhtunkhwa), enabled Stein to explore Mount Mahaban in 1904. Disagreeing with James Abbott's conjecture based on 1904 explorations in the region, Stein discarded searching Aornos in Mahaban (Stein 1930: 149-150; Macmunn 1931/1933: 49; Mirsky 1977: 73; Olivieri 2015: 58).

Stein was responsible for supervising education in the region; however, he was fully indulged in his colonial pursuit of explorations and less desired to give maximum time and full attention to educational system of the natives. Though as Inspector of Education in NWFP, his primary responsibilities were looking after education, however, this aspect of his duties has been overshadowed by his colonial pursuits of archaeology. This fact has been mentioned by Mirsky as "On his way to Peshawar, where the week's tour was to begin, he inspected a few schools. Educational work is always accompanied by the adjective "tiring," whereas his strenuous assault on mountains is "invigorating," "refreshing" (Mirsky 1977: 213).

To fulfill his lifelong yearning to locate Aornos, Stein once again submitted a proposal to John Marshall, Director General of ASI, for archaeological exploration in the northwestern tract of the Hazara region with a conjecture that Aornos is Pir-sar (Mirsky 1977: 419, 423). Buner

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and Swat region remained the arena of Stein extensive archaeological explorations right from the last decennium of the 19th century till the first half of the 20th century. These archaeological research and explorations have been published in the pages of prestigious journals as well as reports of ASI memoirs series. Keeping in view the importance of Aornos and its connection with the Alexander's exploits in this region, Stein dedicated a chapter "The search for Aornos" in *An Archaeological Tour in Upper Swat and Adjacent Hill Tracts* published as Memoirs of the ASI No. 42. The nostalgic memory of the European domination over the Orient represented by Aornos which engaged almost all colonial officials right from James Abbott to Stein, has been disclosed by P. M. Sykes. Like Cunningham, Stein also termed Aornos close to his heart which is obvious from Sykes' description as under:

A few years later Stein identified the fortress of Aornos in the Swat Valley. This, the site of a famous feat accomplished by Alexander the Great, had deeply interested the late Sir Thomas Holdich and many frontier officers, but at that period the area was strictly "out of bounds." I recollect Stein telling me that this discovery was the one that was nearest to his heart (Sykes 1944: 6).

Aornos was a justification tool in the hands of colonial officials and scholars to legitimize British rule in India. This fact has been mentioned by a Western scholar in these words: "The capture of Aornos was the last condition necessary to make possible, or at least to justify, the invasion of India east of the Indus" (Lorimer 1926: 259).

Discussion:

Historical studies of the land and people of India owes its origin and need to be studied against the backdrop of revenue collection's right granted by the Mughal to EIC in the Bengal region, as D.N. Jha says: "The growing administrative responsibilities of the Company, especially after 1765 when the Mughal granted it the right to collect revenues and administer civil justice in Bengal, made it necessary for its officers to gain familiarity with the laws, habits, customs, and history of the Indian people. Many administrators therefore evinced keen interest in Indian literature and culture" (Jha 1977/2009: 17). A vivid picture of EIC knowledge production linked to its commercial ventures has been drawn by Cohn as under: The conquest of India was the conquest of knowledge. In these official sources we can trace the changes in forms of knowledge which the conquerors defined as useful for their own ends. The records of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reflects the Company's central concerns with trade and commerce...on whom the British were dependent for the information and knowledge to carry their commercial ventures (Cohn 1996: 16).

As early as 1784, Warren Hastings, the first Governor General of India, has realized the need of native knowledge accumulation for ruling the folks efficiently while informing Nathaniel Smith, Chairman, EIC's Board of Directors, he stressed the need for closer interaction between the natives and officials of EIC for removing the ruler and subject's stigma (Singhal 1922: 204; Cohn 1996: 26, 45). So, all efforts for promoting knowledge of history, culture and institutions in India were linked (directly or indirectly) with legitimacy concerns and Colonial Government wanted "to appear legitimate in the eyes of the Indians, the British thought they had to demonstrate respect and interest in those Indians and institutions that were the carrier of the traditions" (Cohn 1996: 46).

Paradoxically, the Orientalists valued the native wealth of knowledge on one hand while

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derided the Indian as barbarian on the other. Arrogant approach was a common feature of colonial officials as James Mackintosh's address to Bombay Literary Society when he flouted all etiquettes by terming the native as barbarian: "Mine the knowledge...all Europeans who visit remote countries...are detachments from the main body of the civilized men sent out to levy contributions and knowledge, as well as gain victories over barbarism" (Cohn 1996: 45-46).

Before Alexander's advent, India has been depicted in colonial scholarship as void of any recorded history; denoting that Indians as a nation had no taste for history and historiography. In this connection, Masson-Oursel remarks is interesting as he says: "India hardly has a history, and such written documents as we have for retracing the chief factors in that history do not even go back to the time of Alexander...expedition of Alexander appears to us as the chief event in the history of ancient India" (Masson-Oursel *et al* 1934: 17, 31).

It would be advisable to study the scholarship produced under the umbrella of Colonial Government in the context of Christensen's advice to the colonial officials. It is an undeniable fact that colonial scholars/administrators working under the Colonial Government did contribute to the study of culture, history, politics, and religion of local folks, nonetheless, it is an open secret that colonial scholarship is being blamed as abetting the imperial power in seeking justification for Western hegemony. Further, it was the need of the day to attain authentic and basic information of the local people and their society to govern and administer the people amicably. So, it was the exigencies of these most wanted information which converted the colonial officials into "the first archaeologists/ ethnographers/ geologists/ linguists/ sociologists to accumulate information about Indian populace" (Khan 2015: 250). Majority of the scholars and historians are of the view that *raison d'être* behind the colonial rulers' research projects was none other than but to gain political, economic, and administrative ends. Jessica Frazier studied the colonial scholarship in India against this milieu and opines that all research projects were aimed to bag maximum data for the subjugation of the Indian folk; "...the colonialist saw knowledge of Indian culture as a tool for more effective rule and administration of India itself" (Frazier 2011: 51). It was the need of the basic and authentic data of the country and the people, which brought Indology closer to the colonial Government of India since scholarship of Indian culture and society had greater applicative and natural motivations for the colonial scholars.

Studying against the backdrop of colonial scholarship used for British dominances, the colonial Government of India was not an exception and it will be apropos to cite H. L. Smith-Dorrien's opinion regarding a complete knowledge of the local people and geography as under:

I hold the view that no army should undertake a war without doing all in its power in peace time to become efficient up to the last button, and that one of the most important buttons is an accurate knowledge of the country and the people against whom a war may occur....the fair deduction then is that a very important *raison d'être* for the army in India is the possibility of having to suppress the recalcitrant tribes on the North-West Frontier. It is therefore most important that our soldier should study their habits, countries and armed forces (Smith-Dorrien 1912: XIX-XX).

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Conclusion

Being located on the crossroads and interacted with different civilizations of the world, the present-day province of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa is heir to a cherished civilization known to the world as Gandhara. This historic interaction resulted in the diversified culture of Gandhara especially the material culture of Gandhara and ancient Uḍḍiyāna which fascinated researchers across the globe. These researchers, both historians and archaeologists, endeavored to investigate the antiquity of the land in the context of its history and archaeology in the 19th and 20th centuries.

To maintain and govern a large Indian empire in the Orient, the colonial rulers were in dire need of basic data of the land and its folks, so political, economic, and religious urgency for the vital information persuaded the British officials to set off studies on the antiquity, language, history, ethnography, religion, geography, culture, and politics of the natives.

Keeping in view the above-mentioned scenario, the resultant scholarship may be termed as "Politically Motivated Scholarship", which gave birth to "India Centred Orientalism". As a grand Imperial design, efforts of the colonial officials were institutionalized in the shape of Asiatic Society of Bengal and ASI which gave birth to a new discipline known to the world as Indian archaeology.

In the similar vein, commencement of antiquarian and archaeological investigation in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa has not been developed in the void but was the outcome of the socio-political context of the region. Being a theater of the "Great Game", basic information regarding the land, its folks, culture, geography, topography, and socio-political history of the land was direly needed to the colonial rulers.

Being an important arena of Alexander's Oriental expeditions and adventurous battles, the ancient land of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa emerged as a land of curiosity to the European researchers especially for colonial scholarship, nonetheless, it posed puzzling questions for the colonial scholars to be solved and identified especially places names such as Bazira, Ora and Aornos.

Further, textual data of Sanskrit, Greek, and Chinese sources pointing to present-day Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (ancient Gandhara and Uḍḍiyāna) as region, led to the antiquarian and archaeological explorations under the "Colonial Scholarship".

In the backdrop of the grand political designs of the Colonial Government and Alexander's Oriental campaigns, the frequent reference in Sanskrit, Greek, and Chinese sources to the land of present-day Khyber Pukhtunkhwa and its historical perspective had been symbolically loaded with political and military implications by the dent of its strategic location for all European scholars especially for British administrators/archaeologists.

The interplay of archaeology and colonial rule in India is evident from the British recognition of the Yusufzai State of Swat in May 1926 with the tacit permission for Stein's archaeological explorations followed by Barger and Wright expedition in 1938. In the historiography of Indian Archaeology, scholars are of the opinion that Stein's explorations right from the beginning of the 20th century in Central Asia till his demise (1943) in Kabul at the vintage of the colonial rule in India, were part of the majestic imperial aims set off under Lord Curzon as Viceroy of India who was a strong protagonist of British imperialism.

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¹ In January 1784, the founders' choice of the nomenclature was Asiatick Society and its journal as *Asiatick Researches*; however, it was rechristened as Asiatic Society of Bengal later (Edgerton 1946: 231).

² When 'Treasures Trove Act' was passed in 1878 and onward, the Imperial Government of India took the responsibilities of the "Preservation and Restoration" of ancient remains which ultimately led to the creation of the post "Curator of the Ancient Monuments of India" by appointing Captain Henry Cole in 1881 as Curator for reporting on the matter of preservation and conservation, surveying the ancient buildings, documenting the condition of decline, and recommending to the Colonial Government on the "preservation and restoration of ancient monuments" all over India. It may rightly be termed the vintage point in the history of Indian ancient cultural heritage's maintenance when priority was given to *in situ* preservation (Marshall 1916: 30; Mersey 1949: 93; Brown 1905/1995: 233; Dani 1983: 183; Hooek 2010: 347).

³ Credit also goes to M. Court, who discovered the Asokan Rock Edicts near Shahbaz-garha for the first time and published his discovery in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* V (56) in August 1836 (Court 1836: 481; Salomon 1998: 213).

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⁴ In all Orientalists and British accounts, local population has been portrayed as barbaric and untrustworthy. In most cases, present local population has nothing to do with the land and its cultural heritage created in their region in the past (Abbot 1854: 341).

⁵ The site of Aornos has been described in 16 pages (95-111) out of 26 pages (86-111) (Cunningham 1871: 86-111) and again in 21 pages (58-78) out of 38 pages (47-84) while Hund located in the proximity of Sâlaterra, has a detailed description spreading over 6 pages (52-57), and only 11 pages have been dedicated to the remaining Yusufzai country (Cunningham 1871: 47-84).

⁶ In "Proposed Archaeological Investigations" 1848, Cunningham wrote that he will follow the footsteps of Chinese pilgrim and traveler, XuanZang on the line of Greek scholar Pliny (Cunningham 1848: 535-536).

⁷ The Indian mathematical treatise popularly known as "Bakhshali Manuscript" has accidentally been discovered from the ancient town of Bakhshali in 1881. The town is popularly known as Bakhshalay or Bashkhalay, so in this paper the popular nomenclature will be used for sites/towns save quoting original sources.

⁸ The principal groups of ruins are at Shâhbâz-garhi, Sâwal-dher, and Sahri Bahlol...Rânigat, Jamâl-garhi, Takht-i-Bahi, and Kharkai...Topi, Ohind, and Zeda in Utmanzai; at Tûrli, Bakshâli, and Gharyâli in Sûdam; and at Matta and Sanghao in Lûnkhor. I have visited most of these myself...(Cunningham 1871: 5).