

# Tribe and Community among the Ghilzai Pashtun

## Preliminary Notes on Ethnographic Distribution and Variation in Eastern Afghanistan

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This is a preliminary report on some basic ethnographic features of tribal distribution, settlement patterns, and community organization in the Ghilzai Pashtun region of eastern Afghanistan<sup>1</sup>. I am prompted to publish these selective and incomplete descriptions by the relative dearth of such primary information on this area in sources readily accessible to interested scholars<sup>2</sup>.

The best single source on the Pashtun remains ELPHINSTONE's *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul*, first published in 1815. His detailed reports on the tribal territories and grasp of the processes underlying variation in local societies are all the more remarkable for having been collected on the side during an initiatory diplomatic mission. This is a useful theme to pursue, for apparent social diversity has seemingly increased along with the population

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<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to P. and M. CENTLIVRES for generously discussing my work and the suggestion to publish a preliminary report.