



## ACĖKZĪ

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**ACĖKZĪ**, **ACAKZĪ**, or **AĈĖKZĪ**, **AĈAKZĪ**, a tribal grouping of Paštūn clans in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The AcĖkzĪ form part of the ZĪrak branch of the DorrānĪ (or AbdālĪ) and thus belong to the so-called western Paštūn (who are distinguished from the ĠilzĪ, encompassing the eastern Paštūn). Their language is MaġrebĪ/Qandahāri Pashto. Their eponymous ancestor is supposed to be a certain AcĖk, son of ZĪrak, son of Abdāl, son of TarĪn, son of ǰaršbūn, whence AcĖk, + -zĪ (plural of the Pashto suffix -zay, “descendant of”) and the singular form AcĖkzay. In the 18th century they were already established straddling the present Afghan-Pakistani frontier not far from SpĪn Bōldak between Qandahār and Kōyṭa (Quetta). Indeed, Aḡmad Shah DorrānĪ used to pass the hottest weeks of the summer on the Tōba heights (dĕ AcĖkzō Tōba) among the AcĖkzĪ, whom he appreciated for their courage and their roughness equally (Caroe, *Pathans*, p. 261).

Toward the end of the 19th century, according to J. W. Murray (*Dictionary*, p. 201), the AcĖkzĪ numbered 4,725 fighting men in the region of the “Khwaja Amran Range, Quetta-Pishin.” Bellew (*Inquiry*, p. 164) also placed them in the valley of “Kadani” (Kadanay) and on the northern slopes of the mountainous chain of “Khojak Amran” (ǰvāja/ǰōja Amrān) as far as the Tōba plateau. They were pastoral nomads, finding summer pasturage as far away as the Herat region, in Ġōr, and in Bādġīs. Bellew specifies that they had 5,000 tents and comprised two branches: the “Bahàdur” and the “Gajan,” divided into numerous subclans. Caroe, on his map, “Tribal Locations of the Pathans” (*Pathans*, between pp. 486 and 487), localized them in the same area as Bellew,



which is still correct for the Acəkzī in Pakistan.

About 100,000 Acəkzī live in Afghanistan at present, established primarily between Qandahār and Spīn Bōldak, in Zamīndāvar north of Gerešk, and in Kōhdāman north of Kabul. Some of them are still nomadic husbandmen, others are sedentary farmers, and still others have settled in the large cities, where they practice various professions or occupy official posts (see C. M. Kieffer, *Afghanica, I. Langues et ethnies d’Afghanistan*, in press).

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