

“A Journey of Exploration in Kohistan”

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Zarafshan Mountains in Kohistan

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Between the basin of the Syr Darya River and that of the Amu Darya River exists a considerable depression. This depression contains the course of the Zarafshan River, whose upper part in the old days was called Kohistan.

The upper valley of the Zarafshan is encased by tall mountains; it is almost inaccessible, and the authority of the emirs of Bukhara has never been recognized in an absolute way by the rough mountain people of this country. Kohistan comprises the region lying between the Turkestan Range and the Hissar Mountains, that is to say, the upper course of the Zarafshan and the basin of the Fan Darya River, whose sources lie beyond Lake Iskander and its tributary, the Iagnob River. The valleys of the Fan and Iagnob are separated from Zarafshan Valley by the Zarafshan mountain chain. This country has been inhabited from the most ancient times by the Galchas, also known as the mountain Tajiks. Of Iranian stock the Galchas are subdivided into six tribes:

1. The *Moghiyons*, inhabiting the area from Panjakent to Moghiyon.
2. The *Kshtuts*, residing in the valley of the same name.
3. The *Falghars*, living along the right bank of the Zarafshan River from Panjakent to just beyond Urmetan.
4. The *Matchas*, from Warsiminoor up to the sources of the Zarafshan.
5. The *Fans*, occupying the Fan Darya Valley and the area around Lake Iskander.
6. The *Iagnobs*, living in the valley of the same name (tributary of the Fan Darya).

The Galchas are tall in height and are of average weight. Their skin is white, and though often bronzed by the sun, the covered parts are white; it is either very hairy or a little hairy, but never smooth. Their hair is black, chestnut brown (mainly among the Fans), sometimes reddish colored and often blond; it is sleek, wavy and curly. The beard is full, brown, reddish brown or blond (in a village near Panjakent there are two brothers with hair as white as linen). Their eyes, never turned up in the corners, are brown, frequently blue as well. The nose of the Galchas is very well-shaped; it is long, slightly curved and slender. Their lips are nearly always thin and straight; their teeth are small and often worn down, on

account of abuse sustained from eating dried fruit. The forehead is high and recedes somewhat, with the brow ridges being quite pronounced; the transverse depression separating the nose from the glabella is deep, while the eyebrows are curved and sufficient. The mouth of the Galchas is small, the chin and the whole face are oval-shaped, with the ears being small or average-sized and flat (only rarely do they stick out). Their body is muscular, vigorous, and exceedingly well-built; their hands and feet are much larger than those of the plains-dwelling Tajiks and much larger still than those of the Kirghiz and Tatars. The appendages are fine-looking, with the calf muscle being sinewy and the legs straight and well made. Their figure is generally slender; the trunk is solid and the neck strong. The Galchas are very robust, excellent walkers, sufficiently good horsemen, and able to endure fatigue. With regard to the maladies experienced by these people, ophthalmias frequently occur, while some Galchas suffer from kidney or bladder stones; there are villages in which nearly all the inhabitants are afflicted by rheumatism of the joints, which I attribute to a mixture of curdled milk and a kind of root that they regularly consume.

Here then is the breakdown of the measurements that I took on 58 individuals in Kohistan:

Hair. – 31 sleek, 25 wavy, 2 curly.

Beard. – 39 full, 13 sparse, 4 nonexistent, 2 almost nonexistent.

Skin. – 39 a little hairy, 15 very hairy, 3 smooth, 1 nearly smooth.

Lips. – 31 thin, 24 medium-sized, 3 thick.

Teeth. – 30 average-sized, 28 small.

Teeth. – 30 good condition, 16 worn out, 17 diseased.

Incisors. – 56 vertical, 1 a little oblique.

Shape and size of the nose. – 37 curved, 23 long, 19 medium length, 7 short, 11 large, 8 straight, 15 pleasingly slender.

Skin (bare parts). – 28 bronzed by the sun, 15 white, 15 deep yellowish.

Hair. – 32 black, 12 chestnut brown, 9 blond, 5 gray (2 of whom were formerly blond).

Beard. – 23 blond, 12 black, 12 chestnut brown, 6 gray.

Eyes. – 29 brown, 12 dark-colored, 10 blue, 6 green, 1 gray.

The Galchas are still in possession of certain usages which call to mind those of the Zoroastrians. Never does any Galcha ever blow out a lamp, for these mountain people regard the breath of man as impure—that is to say, it must not impart itself on the flame, the purest thing in existence. They are considerably more honest and frank, and above all less servile and obsequious, than the Tajiks of Samarkand. Each village is administered by an *Aksakal* (or headman), and many localities are under the jurisdiction of a *Kazi*. The main towns are: Soudjana, located a few kilometers from Panjakent, possessing some small spinning-mills; Urmetan, built alongside the ruins of an ancient Bukharan fort; Warsiminoir, at the confluence of the Fan Darya and the Zarafshan; Dastioburden and Paldorak, in the Zarafshan Valley, and Sarvada, in that of the Fan. The population of the Iagnob Valley is particularly interesting, because it inhabits a virtually inaccessible region and it speaks a language that is not understood by the neighboring peoples.

The mountains which encase the Zarafshan Valley are barren and steep; the valley itself, extremely fertile, is adorned with beautiful vegetation. On the left bank one comes upon juniper trees and bushes of all species. The ground is schistose or pebbly, and abounds in minerals. The pastures lying on the flanks of the mountains are excellent for livestock. In general, the climate is temperate; it is not as warm as Samarkand, and the tall mountains of Turkestan shield it from the cold north winds of winter. Transmitting messages in this country is exceedingly difficult. There are no practicable paths for horsemen or beasts of burden; often even pedestrians might find themselves at risk. Such paths, dangerous at times, extend: to the north, to Ura-Tyube; to the west, to Panjakent; to the south, into the Karategin and Hissar mountain ranges. Not surprisingly, commerce amounts to but a trickle. The inhabitants export dried fruit; in addition, with the aid of the Zarafshan they float timber down the river as far as Dachtikazi, and from there, employing donkeys, they drag the logs to Panjakent and even to Samarkand. One finds coal mines in Kohistan, as well as a type of root for tanning and another which emits an agreeable fragrance. The people here make white linen cloth that is sufficiently strong, and also a kind of sweet-tasting flour made with fruit from the mulberry tree. They are farmers and raise livestock. Their homes are built out of wood and stone, and their tents, which only serve them in the summertime when they accompany their flocks into the mountains, are made of felt. Cultivated fields are commonplace, and the orchards around the hamlets contain numerous fruit trees. All varieties of wheat and alfalfa

thrive here, and the many different fruits are quite savory. Within the smallest valleys one notices irrigation canals skirting the inclines of the mountains, which sometimes enable even the highest grounds to be fertile. Everywhere there are bridges of a rather primitive construction, but always they are solid and well laid out. All that I witnessed there substantiates the fact that these mountain people have been farmers and sedentary since the most remote times. I believe therefore that we are dealing with an autochthonous people who long ago were driven into the mountains by Turko-Mongol invaders.

Finally, I do not know how to conclude this brief description of my journey to Kohistan without acknowledging the services that the work on Central Asia of Monsieur Girard de Rialle rendered me. It is a valuable guide which I continuously followed for the better.

DISCUSSION

Monsieur ABEL HOVELACQUE. I must point out, Monsieur de Ujfalvy, that the fire cult presently in favor with the populations that you visited is in harmony with the traditions of the Iranian populations.

Doctor PAUL TOPINARD. I see that the agenda for today's meeting is full; so, I shall restrict myself to making an observation which comes to mind in view of the average cephalic index of the Galchas, as determined by Monsieur de Ujfalvy, being so high.

Undoubtedly, this index is not quite as high as it seems, the reason being that it had been taken on living subjects and therefore, according to Doctor Broca's research, it ought to be lowered by about 1½ units. Nonetheless, I have in my hands another series of measurements of Iranians that you took in Fergana, Monsieur de Ujfalvy, and consistently you obtained cephalic index measures of 84, 85, and 86. Hence, I believe one may from now on conclude that today's diverse representatives of the ancient Iranian race are ultrabrachycephalics. This then, fellow members, is one of the most important results of the mission fulfilled with such dedication to the profit of anthropology by our colleague. One could only conjecture it up to now; but, thanks to you, Monsieur de Ujfalvy, the inference has been proved—that those who we call Iranians (based on linguistics) are highly brachycephalic.

Now, messieurs, where else in the world can one find brachycephalism as accentuated, brachycephalics like these possessing no Mongoloid traits, but

rather having Caucasoid traits? In Europe and only in Europe. We have in France notably brachycephalics with a no less extraordinarily high average cephalic index. They belong to the Celtic race, whose division comprising the people of Auvergne was formerly believed to be the most accentuated with respect to brachycephalism (index of 84), but which currently, according to the presentation made here a while ago by Monsieur Hovelacque, appears to be the Savoyard division (index of 85). On the occasion of Monsieur Hovelacque's presentation, I noted that from the tip of the Armorican peninsula in Brittany down to the Savoy, in passing through Charente, Nièvre, Aveyron and Auvergne, there exists a compact strip-like zone whose cephalic index keeps on increasing. Moreover, I added that beyond the Alps, in all of Austria and farther still in Russia, one will encounter additional brachycephalics possessing high indices. I also said that, amongst the skulls kept in our Museum, the more neighboring Auvergne skull shares many affinities with the Serbo-Croat skull. Lastly, I wondered if the Celts of the West were none other than the Slavs of the East (whose indices, according to Monsieur Weisbach, range from 82 to 85).

Well, Monsieur de Ujfalvy, given the results of the measurements you took on the Aryan brachycephalics of the Pamirs, I shall proceed further and ask if these mountain people are not in reality but the third link of an uninterrupted chain which extends all the way from the Armorican peninsula into Central Asia. Obviously, there exist differences among these three types of brachycephalics, but they can be accounted for within certain limits by environmental influences and in great part by the impact of interbreeding with the indigenous populations of each region. To conclude, I must remind you that the bulk of the European brachycephalics, to which I have seen to make allusion, settled here in western Europe during the course of the Mesolithic Age after having made its initial appearance during the Paleolithic Age (as evidenced by the skulls of Truchere and Grenelle).

Monsieur CHARLES DE UJFALVY. I must point out, messieurs, that all the populations in the regions that I traversed are brachycephalics.

Doctor PAUL BROCA (The Secretary-General of the Anthropology Society of Paris). Also, the predominance of the blond color of the hair of these populations is a fact to note.

Monsieur ABEL HOVELACQUE. From what you have just told us, Monsieur de Ujfalvy, the Mongoloid populations are less brachycephalic than the non-Mongoloid populations. This assertion is well-founded. The Mongols are at most sub-brachycephalics.

Doctor PAUL TOPINARD. I have been appointed as the reporter for a committee charged with the task of examining all the measurements taken by Monsieur de Ujfalvy on the different races of Turkestan, and already I have been able to look over the data. Well, the numbers reveal that there are some dolichocephalics and sub-dolichocephalics. I recall among other things seeing indices below 69. Additionally, my attention has been drawn for a long time on the only three skulls of Kashgarians that, to my knowledge, we are in possession of in the West. These skulls from Kashgar comprise part of the collection of Monsieur Barnard Davis. Two have a cephalic index of 71 and 74. These therefore are irrecusable cases of dolichocephalism manifesting itself upon the borders of Pamir.

This shape of the head makes one involuntarily think of blonds with blue or lightly-colored eyes, and, in fact, such persons for a long time have been inhabiting the neighboring region of Kafiristan or, more accurately, Dardistan. Now, this leads us to the question that needs to be answered. It turns out that dolichocephalism in Europe is the usual accompaniment of blond hair, blue eyes, and tall height; except among the Finns in northern Russia and with some groups in the Mediterranean region, these three or four qualities make their appearance together. Here then is a thought one might logically express: between the blond dolichocephalics of Europe and the blond dolichocephalics of Turkestan, a relation will be found to exist. The following consideration supports this viewpoint. From the Caucasus to the banks of the Rhine a trail of burial mounds and other forms of sepulchers exist. In the Ukraine, Galicia, and Bohemia the tumuli date from the Bronze Age, while the others to the East belong to the Mesolithic Age, as if the race that constructed them had acquired bronze during its westward journey. In the Bohemian zone these burial mounds are scattered; they increase as one goes north towards the Vistula, then decrease again, and possess dates that are lost with those of history. Undoubtedly, a great number of them can be attributed in a way to the Swedes, Germans, and Franks. Now, each category of these tumuli contains either dolichocephalics exclusively or dolichocephalics mixed with brachycephalics, that is to say, with the population types that this dolichocephalic migration would have encountered on its passage. It is, accordingly, easy to give a name to these migrants: they are the Cimmerians of Hippocrates and Herodotus. Some of them deformed the head in various ways, of which three such examples can be seen in our Museum. This very custom penetrated into France, notably with the Arecomici and Tectosages (tribes of the Volcae) belonging to the grand confederation of the Belgae, a fact which furnishes, moreover, evidence of the relation of the dolichocephalic blonds of western Europe with the Cimmerians of the Caucasus and the Crimea.

But before the Caucasus, what were the lands occupied by the Cimmerians? Well, firstly I shall remind you that mountains are the habitual refuge of vanquished, on-the-run people; it is here that we anthropologists exercise the practice of searching for traces of earlier tribes. Did the Cimmerians therefore originally reach the Caucasus from the North or from the South? I do not know, but the isolated dolichocephalics and blonds that we find today in the Pamirs are thought to have come from the South. These scanty pieces of evidence, according to this hypothesis, represent cases of atavism of a very ancient race which would have lived in these parts, and which would have faded and been absorbed over time by a predominate brachycephalic element.

One knows that crossbreedings have the effect of dissociating physical qualities. Succeeding generations present the dolichocephaly, for example, of the early race among some of the descendants, blond hair or blue eyes in others, and tall height elsewhere. Certain qualities are more easily preserved, appear singly or in pairs, or on the contrary are neutralized by other contradictory qualities. Well, here is what I am arriving at, messieurs: these scattered cases of dolichocephaly in the midst of pronounced brachycephalics, without an intermediate cephalic index establishing a mutual connection, as well as the similarly dispersed cases of blond hair and blue eyes that we find in the Pamirs, will these not prove to be none other than the dissociated elements of an anterior race, completely blond and dolichocephalic, like the Cimmerians of the Caucasus or our northern European blonds?

The doctrine, messieurs, that I have enunciated just now concerning the kinship of the Iranian, Slavic, and Celtic brachycephalics seems to me almost a certainty; the idea that I have expressed about the relation existing between the blonds of Europe and those of Asia is only a hypothesis which the future will decide. It is also possible that the primordial center of the blonds lies somewhere else, and that the blonds that one finds in the Pamirs are only in the manner of, and are not related to, the blonds of the Atlas Mountains. Nevertheless, the question merits being posed.