

THE PERSIAN ORIGIN OF THE KURDS AND THE TAJIKS.

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The July-to-December Number (Vol. XLI, 1911) of the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland contains a learned article from the pen of Dr. Felix V. Luschan, on "The Early Inhabitants of Western Asia." I had the pleasure of visiting Constantinople in November 1889 and of noticing with great interest the variety of races of the men that passed through its streets and more especially at the Golden Horn. So, I have read with great interest Dr. Luschan's article, especially its preliminary para, describing the variety of the races that one sees in Constantinople, which, from the beauty of its situation, I have ventured to call "The Queen of cities."¹ The object of this paper is to submit a few observations on the Persian origin of two of the races,—the Kurds and the Tajiks—referred to by Dr. Luschan.

THE KURDS

Of the twenty-one different races of which Dr. Luschan speaks, one is that of the Kurds. He thus speaks of the origin of these people: "The Kardouchoi and Gordyaeans of the old historians are most probably the direct ancestors of the modern Kurds, but we do not know when these tribes first set their foot upon the soil of their present home. The Assyrian annals and careful excavations on the upper Euphrates and Tigris will probably, at some future time, shed light upon this question."² Further on, Dr. Luschan says, that "the Kurds speak an Aryan language," and that their two main groups "are related to the modern Persian and are typically Aryan."³

¹ *Vide* my paper before the Cercle Littéraire of Bombay, entitled "La Visite d'un Parsi a la Ville de Constantinople."

² The *Journal* of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. XLI, 1911, pp. 228-229.

³ *Ibid.* p. 229.

Dr. Luschan then asks : " Can it be mere accident that a few miles north of the actual frontier of modern Kurdish language there is *Boghaz-Köi*, the old metropolis of the Hittite Empire, where Hugo Winckler in 1908 found tablets with two political treaties of King Subbiluliuma with Mattiuaza, son of Tušratta, King of Mitanni, and in both these treaties *Aryan* divinities, Mithra, Varuna, Indra and Našatya, are invoked, together with Hittite divinities, as witnesses and protectors ?

" And in the same inscriptions, which date from about 1380 B. C., the King of Mitanni and his people are called Harri, just as nine centuries later, in the Achæmenidian inscriptions, Xerxes and Darius call themselves *Har-ri-ya*, ' Aryans of Aryan stock.'

" *So the Kurds are the descendants of Aryan invaders and have maintained their type and their language for more than 3,300 years.*"¹

Now we have the authority of Firdousi, the epic poet of ancient Persia, to say, that the Kurds were an offshoot of the early Iranians of the Peshdâdian times, who formed one of the Western branches of the Aryan stock.

According to the legendary history as recorded by Firdousi, there reigned at one time, over ancient Persia, a foreigner named Zohâk.² He had over his shoulders two serpents who often tortured him. According to some, he had a particular kind of disease on the shoulders which was spoken of as serpents. The disease pained him much. Ahriman, in the garb of a physician advised him, that the disease or the serpents would cease tormenting him on the application of the brains of two persons every day. So, two of his subjects had to be killed every day to assuage his pain by the application of their brains. When

¹ *Ibid.*, p 230.

² There are several facts which lead to show that the Iranian Zohak was the same as the Babylonian Nimrod. *Vide* my paper on " The Legendary and Actual History of Freemasonry," in the K. R. Cama Masonic Jubilee Volume, pp. 183-88. *Vide* my " Masonic Papers," p. 82 *et seq.*

this state of affairs continued long, there was a great talk about it among the people. There were two great pious men in the city who seriously thought over the subject and sought to alleviate, in some way, the misery of the people for the death of two persons daily from amongst them. Their names were Armâil and Karmâil. They put on the garb of cooks, and went before the king, offering their services. The king engaged them as cooks. Every day, two persons were taken to them, to be killed by them and to have their brains dressed up and prepared for applications to the diseased shoulders of the tyrant-king. They killed only one person out of the two, and, instead of a second person, secretly killed a goat every day. They then mixed the brain of the goat with that of one of the man killed by them, and sent in the mixture for application to the diseased shoulders of the king. They thus set at liberty daily one of the two persons and asked him to conceal himself carefully. When about two hundred persons were thus saved, these kind-hearted persons, who acted as cooks, gave them a flock of sheep and goats and asked them to go away far into unknown tracts. According to Firdousi, the Kurds are the descendants of these fugitives from the tyrannical hands of Zohak. The *Kardouchoi* of the old historians may have possibly derived their name from the name of Firdousi's *Karmâil*, and the Gordyaeans from *Aramâil*, which name, when written in Pahlavi, may have been read for *Garmail* or *vice versâ*.

Maçoudi, in his account of the nomadic tribes of the Arabs, says of the Kurds, that authors do not agree as to the origin of the Kurds.¹ He gives several accounts about their origin. According to one account, the Kurds were descended from one or another of the sons of Nizar, son of Maad. According to another account, they descended from one Kurd, a great grandson of one Hawazin. They emigrated from the country after a quarrel with the Gassanides. A third account traces their descent from

¹ "On n'est pas d'accord sur leur origine" (Les Prairies D'Or, Chap. XLVI. Maçoudi, traduit par Barbier De Meynard et Pavet De Courteille, Vol. III, p. 249).

some maid servants of king Solomon at the time when he was deprived of his throne. 'On coming to power again, he expelled (*karrad*) those of his maid-servants who had proved faithless to him. The descendants of these women, expelled (*karrad*) from his country, were the Kurds. After giving these different versions about their origin, Ma'oudi also refers to the above version which we have described on the authority of Firdousi.

Malcolm, in his History of Persia says of these people (the people of Carducia) that they had "remained unchanged in their appearance and character for more than twenty centuries."¹

THE TÂZIKS.

The next race in the list of Dr. Luschan, of whose origin I propose to say a few words, is that of the Taziks, who form one of the two ethnical groups of Persia. Dr. Luschan, while speaking of the Persians, in a separate section of his Article (Section R), says:—

"Notwithstanding some recent researches, our knowledge of the Anthropology of Persia is rather scanty..... There are two large ethnical groups in Persia, the Shüte, and settled *Tajik* and the Sunnite an essentially nomadic *Ihlat*.The *Ihlat*, being the energetic and vigorous element, are the real masters of the land and of the *Tajik*, the descendants of the old Persians and Medes. But long continued intermarriage has produced a great many mixed types..... The old type seems to be preserved in the *Parsi*, the descendants of Persians who emigrated to India after the battle of Nahau-band (Nehavand A.D. 640), of much purer form than among any true Persians..... We know nothing of the physical characteristics of the Achæmenides who called themselves Aryans of Aryan stock, and who brought an Aryan language to Persia; it is possible that they were fair and dolichocephalic, like the ancestors of the modern Kurds, but they were certainly few in number

¹ Malcolm's History of Persia (1829) Vol. I, p. 82 n. e.

and it would therefore, be astonishing if their physical characteristics should have persisted among a large section of the actual Persians." ¹

In this section, Dr. Luschan calls the Tajiks, "the descendants of the old Persians." There are some facts to support this statement.

According to Dr. Bellew,² the Tajik is also known as the Parisiwan. This very name then shows, that he is connected with the ancient Parsis or Persians. Dr. Bellew says: "They are the representatives of the ancient Persian inhabitants of the country, as the Afghans are of its ancient Indian inhabitants. It would appear that as the Afghans (whose true home and seat are in the Kandahar and Arghandâb valleys) mixed and intermarried with the Indian people whom they conquered, and gave their name to the mixed race, so the Arabs, who did the same with the Persian people whom they conquered, left their names as the national designation of their mixed posterity, that is the name by which they were called by the Persians.....The term Tajik, it is said, is derived from the ancient Persian name for the Arab. The ancient Persian writers distinguishing their hereditary enemies on the north and south respectively by the terms Turk and Tâz or Tâj. And hence it is that the term Tâz applied to the Arab only in Persia; and everything connected with him, or proceeding from him, was called by the Persians Tâzi or Tâzik, which are the same as Tâjî or Tâjik. In course of time, it seems these terms became restricted to designate things of Arab origin in Persia in contradistinction to the pure and native article. Thus an Arab settling in the country, and not intermarrying with its people, retained his proper national title through successive generations. But the Arab intermarrying with the people of the country lost his proper nationality, and, in the

¹ The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. XLI, pp. 233-34.

² "The Races of Afghanistan, being a Brief Account of the principal nations inhabiting that country", by Surgeon Major H. W. Bellew (1880), pp. 109-10.

succeeding generations, was called Tâjik by the Persians. An imported Arab horse or dog, etc., was not called Tâzi but Arabi. Their off-spring, however, from a Persian mare or bitch, received the name of Tâzî, and were no longer called Arabi."

We thus see, that according to Dr. Bellew also, the Tâziks were connected in some way with the Persians. They had some Arab blood in them. They were the descendants of Persianized or Zoroastrianized Arabs.

Dr. Bellew's statement, that "the term Tajik is derived from the ancient Persian name for the Arab," is supported by the Pahlavi Bundelesh.¹ According to the Irânian tradition noted in this book, Mashi and Mashiyâni formed the original primitive pair of mankind. They were, as it were, the Irânian Adam and Eve. They spoke untruth and brought misery upon themselves. Seven pairs were born of them. Out of those seven, fifteen more were born. Each of these fifteen became the progenitors of a tribe (*sardeh*) of men. Of these fifteen tribes, nine crossed the sea and went to six different continents. From one of the six that remained on the continent of Khaniras, a pair was born, of which the male was named Tâz and the female Tâzik. They went and lived in a forest, known as the "Forest of the Tâzikân."

Zohâk (or Dahâk), referred to in the above account of the origin of the Kurds, was the fourth in descent from the Tâz, the founder of the Tâziks (Arabs). So, he is spoken of by oriental writers, as Zohâk-i Tâzi, in the sense of "Zohâk, the Arab." According to the contents of Chitradâd, one of the lost twenty-one books (Nasks) of the Avesta, as given in the eighth book of the Dinkard,² Tâz was the progenitor of the Arabs and he was the brother of Hoshang, who was the progenitor of the Irânians³ or ancient Persians.

¹ Chap. XV, 28., S. B. E., Vol. V, p. 58. *Vide* my Bundelesh, p. 67.

² Book VIII, Chap. XIII, 8-9, ; S. B. E., Vol. XXXVII, p. 27. *Vide* also, Book VII, Chap. I, 34. S. B. E., Vol. XLVII, p. 12.

³ Bundelesh, Chap. XV, 28.

It appears from the Nirang, attached as an appendix to the Sraosh Yasht (Yaçna, Hâ 57) of the Parsees, that the Tâjiks formed a race, separate from the pure Persians of the older stock. Though they are spoken of as the Tâjiks who put on the sacred thread (Tajik-i Basta-kustian), *i. e.*, as Zoroastrians, they formed a race apart from the Irânians. They had some Arab blood or element among them.¹

¹ In modern Beluchistân, the descendents of the original Persians, are still known as the Tâjiks.
