

Turkmen Status within Iranian Ethnic Identity (Cultural, Geographical, Political)

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ABSTRACT

The world is a place containing various racial and lingual groups. Iran is not an exception, because it can be called a multi-national or multi-racial community. Iran is of great interest to a wide range of scientific disciplines because of the rich ethnic and cultural diversity of population living there, and the extreme complexity of the historical and genetic issues in the region. However, studies related to the ethnogenesis of indigenous peoples and their ancient genetic contacts are not conclusive. Turkmen the largest ethno-linguistic minority in Iran are one of such peoples. Iranian Turkmen are a Turkic people the Branch of Turkmen people living mainly in Northern and Northeastern of Iran Famous to Turkmen Sahra 'Includes Golestan, RazaviKhorasan and North Khorasan. Turkmens were one of the divided nation after 1885, as a result of the British, Iranian and Pashtun resistance in The Great Game, expansion of the Russian Empire to the south ended. Fate of Turkmens across borders evolved differently. Industrialization, urbanization and more intensive modernization in Soviet Turkmenistan led to: unite disparate nomadic tribes settled in a single ethnic group with pronounced cultural and linguistic attributes.

Keywords: Turkmen people, Turkmen Sahra, language, Genetic evidence, Racial characteristics.

INTRODUCTION

Asia continent as the largest and the most populous continent and the cradle of a developed civilization has different peoples with various races and with their special physical characteristics. On the other hand, it is the origin of different races, including yellow Mogul, Siberia, northern and Mogul, central Mogul, Indonesia, Mediterranean, Transoxania Kyrgyz, Turkman, Tatar, Anatolian Turk. Although there have been intercourse among these ethnical groups, but all of them have their own special characteristics on the view of color, the form of skull and face. The Iranian Plateau as a special geographical place in Asia continent has had different nations with various races. The Iranian Plateau as a special geographical place in Asia continent has had different nations with various races. The Iranian plateau has 2/600/000 km² area about 55/000 Parasangs. It is a special geographical unit of Asia continent and Iran with 1/648/195km² area, located in the south west of Asia and the Middle East. In fact, Iran covers %63 or two third of this place and the rest is for other countries. Natural, climatic, and geographical conditions of Iran have caused that this country will be accounted among the primitive living places and social centers of ancient human being (Darvish zadeh, 2002). The Turkmen are a Turkic people located primarily in the Central Asian states of Turkmenistan, Afghanistan. northeastern Iran, Syria, Iraq and North Caucasus. They speak the Turkmen' language, which is classified as a part of the Western Oghuz branch of the Turkic languages family together with Turkish, Azerbaijani, Qashqai, Gagauz and Salar. Originally, all Turkic tribes that were not part of the Turkic dynastic mytholdgical system foreexample, Uigurs, Karluks, Kalaches and a number of other tribes were designated Turkmens. Only later did this word come to refer to a specific ethnonym. The etymology of the term derives from Turk plus the Sogdian affix of similarity -myn, -men, and means resembling a Turk or co-Turk. A' prominent Turkic scholar, Mahmud Kashgari, also mentions the etymology Turk manand. The language and ethnicity of the Turkmen were much influenced by their migration to the west. Kashgari calls the Karluks Turkmen as well, but the first time the etymology' Ifurkmen was used was by Makdisi in the second half of the 10th-century AD. Like Kashgari, he wrote that the Karluks and Oghuz Turks were called Turkmen. Some modern scholars have proposed that the element -man/-men acts as an intensifier, and have translated the word as pure Turk or most Turk-like of the Turks (Saidiyan, 1991). Historically, all of the Western or Oghuz Turks have been called. Turkmen or Turkoman however, today the terms are usually restricted to two Turkic groups: the Turkmen people of Turkmenistan and adjacent parts of Central Asia, and the Turkomans of Iraq and Syria. During the Ottoman period these nomads were known by the names of Turkmen and Yoruk or Yuruk Turkic Nomad, other phonetic variations include lirk, Iyierk, Hiirk, Hirkan, Hircanae, Hyrkan, Hyrcanae, the last four known from the Greek annals. These names were generally used to describe their nomadic way of life, rather than their ethnic origin. However, these terms were often used interchangeably by foreigners. At the same time, various other exoethnonym words were used for these nomads, such as Konar-goyer, Goyebe, Goyer-yoruk, Goyerler, and Goyer-evliler. The most common one among these was Konar-goyer - nomadic Turcoman Turks. All of these words are found in Ottoman archival documents and

carry only the meaning of nomad. The modern Turkmen people descend, at least in part, from the Oghuz Turks of Transoxiana, the western portion of Turkestan, a region that largely corresponds to much of Central Asia as far east as Xinjiang. Oghuz tribes had moved westward from the Altay mountains in the 7th-century CE, through the Siberian steppes, and settled in this region. They also penetrated as far west as the Volga basin and the Balkans. These early Turkmen are believed to have mixed with native Sogdian peoples and lived as pastoral nomads until the Russian conquest or the 19th-century (Saidiyani, 2004).

Turkmen in Turkmenistan

Signs of advanced settlements have been found throughout Turkmenistan including the Djeitun settlement where neolithic buildings have been excavated and dated to the 7th millennium BCE. By 2000 BCE, various Ancient Iranian peoples began to settle throughout the region as indicated by the finds at the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex. Notable early tribes included the nomadic Massagatae and Scythians. The Achaemenid Empire annexed the area by the 4th century BCE and then lost control of the region following the invasion of Alexander the Great, whose Hellenistic influence had an impact upon the area and some remnants have survived in the form of a planned city which was discovered following excavations at Antiocheia Merv. The Pami invaded the region as the Parthian Empire was established until it too fractured as a result of tribal invasions stemming from the north. Ephthalites, Huns, and GoktLirks came in a long parade of invasions. Finally, the Sassanid Empire based in Persia ruled the area prior to the coming of the Muslim Arabs during the Umayyad Caliphate by 716 CE (Rashidvash, 2012). The majority of the inhabitants were converted to Islam as the region grew in prominence. Next came the Oghuz Turks, who imparted their language upon the local population. A tribe of the Oghuz, the Seljuks, established a Turko-Iranian culture that culminated in the Khwarezmid Empire by the 12th century. Mongol hordes led by Genghis Khan conquered the area between 1219 to 1221 and devastated many of the cities which led to a rapid decline of the remaining Iranian urban population. The Turkmen largely survived the Mongol period due to their semi-nomadic life, style and became traders along the Caspian, which led to contacts with Eastern Europe. Following the decline of the Mongols, Tamerlane conquered the area and his Timurid Empire would rule, until it too fractured, as the Safavids, Uzbeks, and Khanate of Khiva all contested the area. The expanding Russian Empire took notice of Turkmenistan's extensive cotton industry, during the reign of Peter the Great, and invaded the area. Following the decisive Battle of Geok Tepe in January 1881, Turkmenistan became a part of the Russian Empire. After the Russian Revolution, Soviet control was established by 1921 as Turkmenistan was transformed from a medieval Islamic region to a largely secularized republic within a totalitarian state. By 1991, with the fall of the Soviet Union, Turkmenistan achieved independence as well, but remained dominated by a one-party system of government led by the authoritarian regime of President Saparmurat Niyazov until his death in December 2006. Turkmenistan has approximately 5,100,000 citizens, and its population is growing about 1.6% annually. The largest ethnic group is the Turkmen, comprising 61 % of the population. Minority groups include Uzbeks (16%), Iranians (14%), Russians (4%) and smaller populations of Kazakhs, Tatars, etc. As of 2005, the fertility rate was 3.41 children per woman. Infant mortality stood at about 53.5 per 1,000 live births. The official language of Turkmenistan is Turkmen, a Turkic language. Turkmen is closely related to Uzbek, Crimean Tatar, and other Turkic languages (Diakonoff, 1990). Other languages spoken in Turkmenistan include Russian (12%), Uzbek (9%) and Dari (Persian) The majority of Turkmenistan's people are Muslim, primarily Sunni. Muslims make up about 89% of the population. Eastern (Russian) Orthodox account for an additional 9%, with the remaining 2% unaffiliated (Rashidvash, 2012). The Turkmen were mainly a nomadic people for most of their history and most of them were not settled in cities and towns until the advent of the Soviet system of government, which severely restricted freedom of movement and collectivized nomadic herdsmen by the 1930s. Many preSoviet cultural traits have survived in Turkmen society however and have recently undergone a kind of revival. Turkmen lifestyle was heavily invested in horsemanship and as a prominent horse culture. Turkmen horse-breeding was an ages old tradition. In spite of changes prompted by the Soviet period, a tribe in southern Turkmenistan has remained very well known for their horses, the Akhal-Teke desert horse - and the horse breeding tradition has returned to its previous prominence in recent years. Other customs include the consultation of tribal elders, whose advice is often eagerly sought and respected. Many Turkmen still live in extended families where various generations can be found under the same roof, especially in rural areas. The music of the nomadic and rural Turkmen people reflect rich oral traditions, where epics such as Koroglu are usually sung by itinerant bards. These itinerant singers are called bakshy and sing either a cappella or with instruments such as the two-stringed lute called dutar.

Turkmen in Iran (Turkmen Sahra)

Turkmen Sahra that means Plain of Turkmen, is a region in the northeast of Iran near the Caspian Sea, bordering Turkmenistan, the majority of whose inhabitants are ethnic Turkmen. The biggest city is Gorgan which is dominated by Persian inhabitants though in recent years there has been immigration of Turkmen and Zabuli from southern Iran. Other cities of Turkmen Sahra are Gonbad called Kummet in Turkmen, Aqqala (Akqala), Kalaleh (Kelala) and Gomishan (Kumushdepe), meaning the silvery hill in Turkmen, and Bandar Torkaman (Bender Turkmen), generally just called Bandar. Bandar Torkaman should not be confused with Bandar. Gaz which is also a city in Turkmen Sahra but inhabited by Persians. There were according to Ethnologue over 2 million Turkmen in Turkmen Sahra in 1997, according to the opposition of Iran of Turkmen origin there are 3 million Turkmen, but these figures are disputed. Society Turkmen today in Turkmen Sahra live fairly modern lifestyles although the effects of religion and the Muslim way of life are visible. The economy is based on industry even if agriculture still plays a great role in some Turkmen's life, like in other places of Iran. The professions among Turkmen shows the pattern of a modern economy even if there are still some shortcomings due to lack of funding from the central authorities. The economic potential of Turkmen Sahra is big since a vast amount of oil was discovered early in the 1930. But since there was a deal with the Soviet Union that there would be no oil extraction from Turkmen Sahra there is not an oil industry at the moment (Fakuhi, 2006). History Turkmen came first to the region at the time of their forefathers, the Seljuk Turks, though early nomad empires has existed since the early age of massagets or even earlier. According to the avesta of frasiyab the legendary king of turan hailed from turkmen Sahra. Before the era of Reza Khan later Reza Shah, there was a landmass from khiva in north to Bandar gaz in south were Turkmen inhabited the area was called Turkmenistan. Due to the great game and famous resistance of Turkmen to great powers as czar Russia and England Turkmen lost their independence and their country was split in two lands. After the Gokdepe battle over one million Turkmen fled through Iran over to Afghanistan were their descents still live today. During the revolution of 1979 a group of Turkmen took power over the region and hailed autonomy until 1982 when the second war of gonbad the Turkmen lost against Khomeini's troops. The first war of gonbad the Turkmen showed their ancient guerilla tactics which has been used through history all the way back since the Mongol invasion. Turkmen used guerilla tactics in first gonbad war to defeat Khomeini's troops in the region, due to political reasons they started a second war and the Turkmen lost simple because of the lack of same equipment as the regular army. Turkmen are considered by outsiders who visited their area to be generous, kind-hearted though even having the trait of being hot-headed (Darvishzadeh, 2002). Ethnography Iranian Turkmen have long time represented a group of semi-nomadic tribes who retained a more traditional way. In Iran lived next Turkmen tribes - Yomut, Golden, Igdyr, Saryk and Salyr. Accurate data on the number of Turkmen in Iran are not available. Estimated to live in Iran, from 1.5 to 3. million, Turkmen. Since the late 70's population estimates are difficult because of the growing assimilation of the Turkmen. After the Islamic Revolution of 1979 increased cultural and linguistic pressure on non-Iranian nationality of the country, as their autonomy began to demand the Arabs and Armenians, causing discontent Persians. In a theocratic Shiite Iran, Sunni Turkmen long time to feel uncomfortable. After the sovereignty of Turkmenistan in the early 90's there was some activation of Iranian Turkmen. In the regions where live Turkmen there signage and programs in the Turkmen language, heard the requirements for the creation of cultural and linguistic autonomy. By the end of the 90s they all came to naught (Minorsky, 1953).

Turkic language, is the national language of Turkmenistan. It is spoken by 4 million people in Turkmenistan, and by an additional 700,000 in northwestern Afghanistan and 1,400,000 in northeastern Iran. Classification, related languages and dialects Turkmen is in the Turkic Language Family. It is a member of the southwestern Turkic sub-branch, more specifically the East Oghuz group. This group also includes Khorasani Turkic. Turkmen is closely related to Turkish and Azerbaijani, with which it is for the most part mutually intelligible. Written Turkmen today is based on the Teke (Tekke) dialect. The other dialects are Nohurly, Yomud, Anewli, Hasarly, Nerezim, G6klei, Salyr, Saryk, Arsary and (owdur. The Russian dialect is Trukhmen. The Teke dialect is sometimes (especially in Afghanistan) referred to as Chagatai, but like all Turkmen dialects it reflects only a limited influence from classical Chagatai. Officially, Turkmen currently is rendered in the TazeElipbiy, or new Alphabet, which is based on the Latin alphabet (Henning WB, 1954). However, the old Soviet Cyrillic alphabet is still in wide use. Many political parties in opposition to the authoritarian rule of President Niyazov continued to use the Cyrillic alphabet on websites and publications, most likely to distance themselves from the alphabet that Niyazov created. Before 1929, Turkmen was written in an Arabic alphabet. In 1929-1938 a Latin alphabet replaced it, and then the Cyrillic alphabet was used from 1938 to 1991. In 1991, the current Latin alphabet was introduced, although the transition to it has been rather slow. It originally contained some rather unusual letters, such as the pound, dollar, yen, and cent signs, but these were later replaced by more orthodox letter symbols

(Rashidvash, 2012).

Genetic evidence and Racial characteristics of Turkmen people

Genetic studies on mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) restriction polymorphism confirmed that Turkmen were characterized by the presence of local Iranian mtDNA lineages, similar to the Eastern Iranian populations, but high male Mongoloid genetic component observed in Turkmen and Eastern Iranian populations with the frequencies of about 20%. This most likely indicates an ancestral combination of Iranian groups and Mongol that the modern Turkmen have inherited and which appears to correspond to the historical record which indicates that various Iranian tribes existed in the region prior to the migration of Turkic tribes who are believed to have merged with the local population and imparted their language and created something of a hybrid Turko-Iranian culture. Turkmen skin is dark or light brownish yellow. Turkmen people have somewhat ellipsoid heads. It means that their skull, on the opposite of Aryans, is not round, but extended and smooth. The state of extension in skull is observed only among Turkmen, Turks and Moguls or those affected by ethnical intercourse with this people. Their heads are mostly strong and muscular for their body. Ellipsoid heads have changed the face, too. The face is small, smooth, round and to some extent pale. Their hair is straight, bristles, black and somewhat disheveled. The beard is yellow, separate and disorder. In Turkmen, the most part of the beard grow in the chin. Moreover most of them have faces without beard. It means that there is not any beard in the face of Turkmen at all and their foreheads are wide, medium, Backward, small and somewhat in rectangle shape. Their eyebrows are separate, extended, thin and long. Eyes are oval, thin, extended, and more like Moguls. Eyelashes are longer and the color of eyes is greenish or grayish blue and a little brown. The distance of eyebrow with eye horizontally and also the distance between the two eyes vertically is a little much. These characteristics of eyes and eyebrows are observed only among Turkmen, Turks and Moguls.

The cheeks are big, protuberant and wide. This bigness and much width are the most important features of Turkmen, Turks and Moguls, which are observable even on the face. The distance between two cheeks is small. Turkmen noses are small, smooth, extended and delicate. The tip of the nose is usual. Nose sides are to some extent big and clear. The width and the size of the nostrils are medium and small. Ears are big and lowly. Mouth is small and lips are delicate or medium. Chin is a little big or medium. Turkmen chins are bended forward. Their medium height is 167cm (average). Most Turkmen, Turks and Moguls have a big spot on their skin called Mogul spot in medicine.

Conclusion

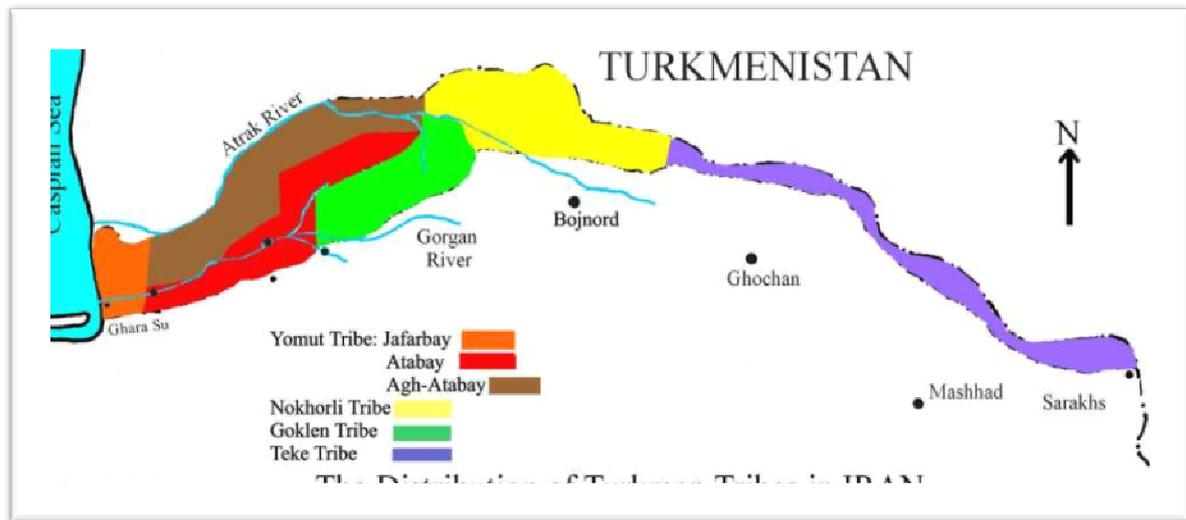
The Iranians display considerable genetic diversity consistent with patterns observed in populations of the Middle East overall, reinforcing the notion of Persia as a vital crossroad for human disseminations. The geographic area is remarkable for its high level of ethnic and linguistic diversity, comprising the major language families (Indo-European, Altaic, and AfroAsiatic) currently spoken by more than seventy ethnically different populations. This demonstrates the role Iran played in population dispersal across the latitudinal belt spanning from Western Anatolia to the Indus Valley. However, there have been gaps in high-resolution genetic analyses for this region to uncover population history at a fine scale, for example, for particular ethnic and linguistic groups. The most important of these groups with specific history, culture, customs, and language are the Azeri's, the Kurds, the Mazandaran and Guilan, the Baluchis, the Arabs, the Turkmen and the Lurs. There are also a number of ethnic minorities, but they have not been given much anthropological attention for a number of reasons, their small population and their extensive mixing with other Iranians being only two. The Turkmen are an ethnic minority who speak the Turkish language with the Eastern Oghoz accent. The same dialect is spoken in the Republic of Turkmenistan. They live in the Turkoman Sahra and in the GOT'gan plains, The area is a fertile plain near the Iranian border with the Republic of Turkmenistan. It extends from the Atrak river in the north, to the Caspian Sea in the west, Quchan mountains to the east and the Gorgan river to the south. Iranian Turkmen have been living in Iran since 550 AD, but they first began forming tribes from 750 AD onwards. They are the descendants of Central Asian Turks, who retained their ethnic identity during the Mongol invasion. Not all the nine Turkoman tribes live in Iran. Due to its geo-strategic location in the Middle East, the Iranian plateau has served as a key crossroad for human disseminations and played a critical role in the migratory waves between the populations of the Middle East and beyond. The most important long-term factor in this process was human adaptation to the Iranian, plateau and its geographical, topographical, and climatic conditions with the subsequent development of agriculture, pastoralism, and pastoral nomadism. The spread of these technological innovations, along with a series of major demographic and historical events, has resulted in a large diversity and dispersal of ethnic groups and languages.

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The Turkamen of Iran



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