

as the west bank of the Indus. The number of Ghaljis in Afghanistan presently amounts to twice that of the Durrani. They inhabit an area that lies roughly between Kabul in the north and Qandahar in the south, and between the mountains of Central Afghanistan to the west and the Afghanistan/Pakistan borders to the east. Their spread to the west, into the mountains, is of relatively recent date, and around 1800 Ghazni was still a town inhabited and surrounded by Tajiks and Hazaras, as, in fact, it for the greater part still is.³⁷ As in the case of the Durrani, the Ghaljis thus also represent an east to west drive of the Pashtuns.

The Ghalji confederacy includes a number of tribes. Traditionally they are divided into the Turan (to the south) and Burhan (to the north).³⁸ The Turan include the Nasir, Kharoti, Hotaki and Tokhi Ghaljis. The Tokhis live to the south of Muqqur, some 100 km southwest of Ghazni. The famous fortress of Qal'at-i Ghilzay, 138 km north of Qandahar, lies in the centre of their lands and is consequently also known as Qal'at-i Tokhi. To the east of the Tokhis live the Hotaki Ghaljis. They formed the driving force behind the Afghan conquest of Iran in the early eighteenth century, as will be discussed later in this book. The Kharotis live even further to the east, along the banks of the upper Gumal river, close to the Pakistan border. The Nasir Ghaljis are mostly *Kuchis* who used to travel down into the Indus valley for the winter.³⁹ This stopped in the early 1960s when the border with Pakistan was closed.

The Burhan include the Sulayman Khel, 'Ali Khel and the Tarakkis. The latter live around Muqqur, southwest of Ghazni. The Powindahs, who used to travel between India and Afghanistan before the borders were closed around 1960, were mostly Sulayman Khel. An important sub-group of the Sulayman Khel are the Ahmadzay, who live between Gardiz and Jalalabad. They are generally wealthy people who before the war were closely linked to the Durrani rulers of the country.

To the east of the Ghaljis, along the borders with Pakistan, live a number of Pashtun groups that belong to the Karlan branch. They include the Khugianis, who live south of Jalalabad; the Jajis, further to the south;⁴⁰ and a number of groups that live in the district of Paktya (along the Pakistan border). These are the Muqbils, Mangals, Jadrans, Tanis, Khostwals and Waziris. All of these groups are closely related to their kinsmen from east of the Durand line, in present-day Pakistan.

37 Elphinstone 1815:433.

38 Compare Elphinstone 1815:437.

39 Elphinstone 1815:457-61.

40 For the Jajis, see Janata 1987.

Relatively recent is the expansion of Pashtuns to the north of the country. These migrations mostly date to the 1880s and later when Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan forced many Pashtun groups hostile to his rule to settle in North Afghanistan.⁴¹ By 1979 they formed a sizeable part of the population, especially in the northwest and in the Baghlan-Qunduz area north of the Salang Pass. They are generally called 'Qandaharis', after the name of the main urban centre in South Afghanistan.

The Turkic Ethnic Groups

The largest among the Turkic ethnic groups in North Afghanistan are the Özbeks.⁴² They can easily be recognized. The women wear trousers, long-sleeved dresses and a headscarf, and often these garments are made out of brightly coloured *ikat*.⁴³ The men wear long, striped and buttonless *ikat* coats with long sleeves, held in place by sashes or belts, which they combine with high leather boots. On their head they have a small turban. They are relative newcomers in this part of the world, having settled here from the late fifteenth century onwards. In Afghanistan they nowadays count some 1.6 million people (2000 estimate).⁴⁴ They are ethnically, linguistically and culturally closely related to the Özbeks in neighbouring Uzbekistan and adjacent lands. As in the case of the Pashtuns and many other ethnic groups in Afghanistan, the Özbeks are grouped into tribes and clans, including the Qataghan from the Qunduz area, but this structure does not play as important a role as with the Pashtuns.⁴⁵

The Özbeks are Sunni Muslims. Their name is derived, so it is claimed, from that of Özbek Khan, who in the early fourteenth century was one of the leaders of the Golden Horde of the Mongols in Russia and West Central Asia. In the fifteenth century the Özbeks occupied much of the land between the (Lower) Volga and the Aral Sea. They soon moved south, towards the Iranian Plateau. They occupied the famous cities of Samarqand and Bukhara and moved further south, only to be stopped from conquering Iran by the rising

41 Compare Glatzer 1977.

42 For a bibliography of the Özbeks in Afghanistan, see Orywal 1986:24–5. See especially Naby 1984.

43 *Ikat* is a term from Indonesia that describes a process whereby a pattern is resist-dyed on the warp, weft, or both, before weaving (Burnham 1980:72).

44 CIA Factbook.

45 Compare the name of the pre-1964 province of Qataghan along the Qunduz river.

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power of the Safawids under Shah Isma'il (battle near Marw, AD 1510). However, the Özbeks remained in control of Samarqand, Bukhara, Khiva and much of northern Afghanistan. Other Özbeks arrived in the north of Afghanistan from the late nineteenth century onwards and especially after the Russian Revolution. These are known as the *muhâjerin* (refugees) and as such they are distinguished from the autochthonous Özbeks.

Other Turkic groups include the Türkmen (or Turcoman), who nowadays live for the greater part in the northwest of the country, close to the modern republic of Turkmenistan.⁴⁶ The traditional clothing of the Türkmen consists of a shirt, baggy trousers and a long, buttonless coat that overlaps at the front and is kept in place with a sash or belt. Their headgear consists of a turban or the famous shaggy hat. Women's clothing includes a red, silk dress and trousers, over which they wear, inside the house, a short-sleeved coat. Outside of the house the women wear long-sleeved coats of various types. The most characteristic and famous part of women's clothing is the headgear, which could be up to half a metre in height. Nowadays most Türkmen women wear headscarves. A conspicuous feature of traditional Türkmen dress is the quantity of silver jewellery worn by the women. Brides used to wear between five to seven kilos of silver!

The Türkmen apparently originate from among the Ghuzz or Oghuz Turkic tribes that in the late first millennium AD moved from Central Asia towards the Iranian Plateau, although their exact lineage remains unknown. What is known is that their direct ancestors used to live along the eastern littoral of the Caspian Sea and moved east towards the banks of the Amu Darya and towards the Marw oasis from the sixteenth century onwards. Their language belongs to the so-called West Turkic languages, which also include modern Turkish, and is different from the East Turkic languages spoken by the other Turkic groups of Central Asia.

The Türkmen in Afghanistan mainly belong to the tribes of the Ersari and Tekke, but also other Türkmen tribes are represented. For the greater part descendants of refugees from the north and northwest after the Russian Revolution, they are particularly known for their carpet weaving and for their Karakul (Persian lamb) skins. Their number is some half million (1995 estimate).⁴⁷ Like the Özbeks they are Sunni Muslims.

46 For a bibliography of the Türkmen in Afghanistan, see Orywal 1986:28. For the Türkmen in general, see Kalter 1984.

47 Ethnologue Data Base.

The Tajiks

There are a large number of people in Afghanistan who speak a dialect of Iranian Persian (*Fârsi*), generally called *Dari*.⁴⁸ Among these are the Tajiks (*Tâjik*), who live mainly in the large cities and in the northeast of the country. They represent one of the oldest strata of the Afghan population. In earlier days, the name Tajik was used by (Özbek) nomads to indicate the local population (mostly *Fârsi* speaking) of the lands they had conquered in South Central Asia and northern Afghanistan.⁴⁹ Since then it has become restricted to the Sunnite, sedentary and Persian-speaking people of Afghanistan and neighbouring lands (as for instance in Tajikistan). In recent years, however, the name of Tajik is more and more being used to indicate all non-Pashtun, Persian-speaking peoples of Afghanistan, comparable to the Pashtun custom to call all Persian speakers *Fârsiwân*. However, the Persian speakers in the west of the country usually carry other ethnic names (see below), and the Farsiwan 'proper' are Shi'ites who live in the west of the country, in and near Herat.⁵⁰ The 'real' Tajiks of Afghanistan mainly live in the northeast of the country, although it should be realized that they prefer to be known by their place of origin (Panjshiri, Badakhshani) and regard the word Tajik as derogatory.

The Mountain Tajiks and the Isma'ilis

The Tajiks are often linked, although without much reason, to the so-called Mountain Tajiks (also called the Pamiris or Ghalchas), who live in the extreme northeast of the country and beyond, and include the Wakhanis and others.⁵¹ They form rather secluded communities who speak a set of Northeast Iranian languages.⁵² Apart from their

48 *Fârsi* (the word is the Arabized form of *Pârsi*) is derived from the spoken form of Middle Persian, generally called *Pârsi-yi dari*. The origin of the word *dari* is still unclear. Generally it is thought to be related to the word for the royal court, Persian *dari*. *Dari* is the lingua franca of Afghanistan.

49 Compare Orywal 1986:22. Originally, the name *tâzi* was used by the Iranians to indicate the (Islamic) Arabs. Later the Turkic-speaking groups used the term to denote all Muslims (Arabian and Iranian). However, see also C. E. Bosworth's contribution 'Tâdjik' in *Enc. Isl.*

50 Orywal 1986:49-50.

51 Orywal 1986:46-9.

52 Languages spoken in the northeast of Afghanistan include Wakhi, spoken in the Wakhan corridor; Shughni (Shughnani; spoken in Shughnan); Roshani (north of Shughnan); Ishkashimi (in and around Ishkashim); Sanglechi (along the Sanglech);

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language, they are also characterized by their faith, since they are predominantly Isma'ilis. These constitute a branch of the Shi'a (the so-called *Ismâ'iliyya* branch), which is different from the main section of the Shi'a (the so-called *Imâmiyya*), which is prevalent in modern Iran.

All Shi'ites denounce the succession of 'Ali bin Abi Talib, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, by the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, Caliph Mu'awiya, in AD 661. Instead they regard 'Ali's sons Hasan and Husayn, and their descendants, as the true successors of Muhammad. When one of these descendants, Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq,⁵³ died in AD 765, he was succeeded by his son, Imam Musa al-Qazim. However, Ja'far had earlier appointed another son, called Isma'il, as his heir, but the latter died before his father. The group that did not accept the imamate of Musa al-Qazim, but instead regarded Isma'il, and in particular his son Muhammad as the true heirs, later developed into the Isma'ili branch of the Shi'ites. The others accepted Musa al-Qazim and his successors, until the eleventh imam, Hasan al-'Askari, who died in AD 874. He was reported to have had a son, the twelfth imam, who had withdrawn from the world and was believed to return when the proper time had come. This belief in the Hidden Imam is one of the hallmarks of the Imami, or Twelver Shi'ites. The Isma'ilis, to the contrary, and especially those living in Badakhshan, believe in an unbroken line of imams, continuing to the present time.

The Badakhshanis belong to a particular branch of the *Ismâ'iliyya*, namely that of the Nizaris (*Nizâriyya*).⁵⁴ They split off from the main branch in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries following a leadership dispute. The Nizaris became particularly known for their early leaders or imams, namely the Lords of Alamut, a mountain fortress west of modern Tehran. In the European west, the lord of Alamut was better known as the Old Man of the Mountain.⁵⁵ The imams of Alamut were, rightly or not, infamous for their policy of assassinating their opponents. When in AD 1256 Alamut was taken by the Mongol ruler, Hülegü, the Nizari imams consequently lost most of their power. At present the Nizari Isma'ilis are led by their

and Yidgha-Munjani (or Munji; spoken in the Munjan valley and in Chitral, Pakistan). Other languages belonging to this group are Yazgulami (in modern Tajikistan), and Wanchi (*idem*; now extinct). Across the border with China, another language (Sarikoli) used to be spoken until recent times.

⁵³ The sixth imam of the Imami Shi'ites, and the fifth imam of the Isma'ilis (who do not regard 'Ali as imam).

⁵⁴ For the Badakhshani Isma'ilis, see also Van den Berg 1997.

⁵⁵ Marco Polo (trans. Latham 1958:70-3) correspondingly refers to the Sheikh of the Mountain, called Alaodin.

Living Imam, Agha Khan IV (Shah Karim al-Husayni), who claims descent from the imams of Alamut.⁵⁶ His adherents regard him as the forty-ninth imam in an unbroken line from 'Ali and his son Hasan.⁵⁷

Isma'ili Shi'a was reputedly introduced to Badakhshan in the eleventh century by the poet and author Nasir-i Khusraw, who is still highly revered as *pir* (spiritual guide) among the Badakhshanis.⁵⁸ His tomb may be visited along the upper reaches of the Kokcha river at the site of Yamgan, southeast of Fayzabad, the capital of Badakhshan. Isma'ili Shi'a differs in many aspects from the *Imâmiyya*. Apart from the absence of a Hidden Imam and the presence of a Living Imam (in this case the Agha Khan), the Nizari Isma'ilis also regard 'Ali bin Abi Talib, Muhammad's son-in-law and cousin, almost as important as Muhammad himself. While Muhammad is the one who proclaimed the message of God, it was 'Ali, according to them, who interpreted the message. Furthermore, the Isma'ilis emphasize an esoteric interpretation of the divine message and they consequently have several stages of initiation. Outward appearance is not regarded as essential. This would explain the rather relaxed attitude of the Isma'ilis as regards the rules and regulations prevalent among the Sunnites and Imami Shi'ites.

The Nuristanis

Another major group in Afghanistan is that of the Nuristanis.⁵⁹ Because of their languages and their culture, all very different from that of their neighbours, they have been the subject of extensive studies. They live in the secluded mountains northeast of Kabul and south of the Hindu Kush watershed, between the Alingar river to the west and the Kunar river to the east. The district is called Nuristan ('Land of the Light'), but before its conquest by Amir 'Abd al-Rahman Khan in the winter of 1895/6 it was known (to outsiders)

56 He is the grandson of Agha Khan III (1877-1957), who reorganized the Nizari community. The title of *Aghâ Khân* (or *Âqâ Khân*) was given to his ancestor, Hasan 'Ali Shah Mahallati by the Qajar king, Fath 'Ali Shah (r. 1797-1834), who also gave him a daughter in marriage.

57 They regard him as the *Khodâ-yi zinda*, 'living god', and the *Imâm-i Zamân* or *Imâm-i hâziru'l-waqt*, the 'Imam of the (present) era'.

58 He originated from eastern Iran and in his career as missionary (*dâ'i*) acted on behalf of the (Isma'ili) Fatimid rulers of Egypt.

59 Literature on Nuristan is extensive. Compare Jettmar 1974; Klimburg and Janata 1990. Still very informative is Robertson 1896. See also Elphinstone 1815:617-28. For a bibliography and short survey, see Orywal 1986:51-4.

60 From Arabic *kâfir*, cognate of the Jesuit priest expelled from India, via Elphinstone 1815:617-28 (1940:308).

61 Burnes 1834, II:2.

62 Elphinstone 1815:617-28.

63 Ethnologue Data 1970.

64 Morgenstierne 1970.