

**THE BALOCH RACE. A
HISTORICAL AND
ETHNOLOGICAL SKETCH**

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The Baloch race. A historical and ethnological sketch by Mansel Longworth Dames

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THE BALOCH RACE

A HISTORICAL AND ETHNOLOGICAL SKETCH

THE name Baloch is used in two distinct ways by travellers and historians. In the first place, it is employed as including all the races inhabiting the geographical area shown on our maps under the name of Balochistan; and in the second place, as denoting one especial race, known to themselves and their neighbours as the Baloch. It is in the latter signification that I employ the word. I take it as applying to the Baloch race proper, not as comprising Brahois, Nūmrīs and other tribes of Indian origin, nor any other races which may be found within the limits of the Khān of Kilāt's territory, or the Province of British Balochistan. On the other hand, it does comprise the true Baloch tribes outside those limits, whether found in Persia on the west, or in Sindh and the Panjāb on the east. In the native use of the word, apart from modern political boundaries, Balochistan includes Persian Balochistan, the Khānāt of Kilāt, and the British Districts of Dera Ghāzī Khān (with the adjoining mountains), Jacobabad, and part of Shikārpur as far as the Indus. Applying the test of language, the true Baloches may be considered as those whose native language is (or was till recently) Balochi, and not Brahoi, Persian, Sindhi, Jaṭki, or Pashto.

The spelling and pronunciation of the name have varied considerably, but the Baloches themselves only use one pronunciation—Baloch, with the short *a* in the first syllable

and the *o* in the second. The tendency of Modern Persian to substitute *ā* for an older *o* everywhere has had its effect in Western Balochistan, where the pronunciation Balūch is, I believe, heard. The sound *o* is historically older, and is recognised in old Persian dictionaries.¹ Other tribal names, such as Koch, Hot, Dōdāi, are also frequently given wrongly as Kūch, Hūt, Dūdāi.

The pronunciation of the vowel in the first syllable as a short *i* is unknown among the people themselves, but common in India. The form Bilūch or Biluch (Belooch) may be conveniently retained for such fragments of the race as are detached from the main stock and found isolated in India, such as the criminal tribe of the North-West Provinces and the Eastern Panjāb, the camel-men of Lahore, or the Pashto-speaking Bilūch of Paniāla in Dera Isma'il Khan.

The adjectival form Balochī is properly applicable to the language only, and not the people, who know themselves only as Baloch, which occasionally takes a plural form, Balochān, but generally is used either for the individual, or collectively for the race. The form 'the Baluchis' or 'the Beloochees' frequently found is a mistake.

The Baloch race, in the present day, is divided into two main groups, which may be called :

1. The Sulaimānī Baloches ;
2. The Mekrānī Baloches.

These groups are separated from each other by a compact block of Brahoi tribes, which occupy the country around Kilāt. These Brahois are generally classed under two heads—as Jahlāwāns, or Lowlanders, and Sarāwāns, or Highlanders.² Although some Baloch tribes are occasion-

¹ See Vuller's 'Lexicon Persico-Latinum,' *s.v.* He quotes the Farhang-i-Shu'ūrī for the sound *o*.

² From the Balochī words *jahlī*, below, and *sarā*, above, and *wān*, a man, which corresponds with the Persian *bān* or *wān*, as found in *Fārsiwān*, *bāghbān*, *nigāhbān*, *pāsbān*, *darwān*, *fīlwān*, etc. The derivation of *Fārsiwān* from *Fārsī-zabān* is incorrect.

ally included, it may be said that, on the whole, the Jahlāwāns and Sarāwāns are Brahois, and make use of the Brahoi or Kirdgālī language, while both groups of Baloches, the Sulaimāni to the north-east, and the Mekrāni to the south-west and west, speak the Balochi language in distinct but mutually intelligible dialects.¹

The Baloches found throughout Sind and the Panjāb are an extension, by conquest and colonization, of the Sulaimāni Baloches, and are more or less assimilated by their Indian neighbours, while those of Sistān must be classed rather with the Mekrāni tribes.

The tribal organization in Mekrān and Sistān, with which I have no personal acquaintance, seems from all accounts to be much the same as that still prevailing among the tribes of the Sulaimān Mountains. Many of the same tribal names, such as Rind, Hot, Lashārī, Maghassī, Buledhī, are found in both tracts, but the notes which here follow apply primarily to the north-eastern or Sulaimāni tribes only.

The complete tribal organization is still retained by those tribes which inhabit the Sulaimān Mountains south of the thirty-first parallel of latitude to the plain of Kachī, and westwards to the Bolān Pass, the plain of Kachī itself (called on our maps Gandāva or Kach-Gandāva), and the territory stretching from the mountains and from Kachī towards the Indus, in some cases as far as the Indus itself, in others stopping short of it. The tribe is known by the name of *tuman*, and is presided over by a chief known as Tumandār. The post is hereditary, and is always held by a member of one family belonging to one clan of the tribe.²

¹ In the introduction to my 'Sketch of the Northern Balochī Language' (extra number *J. A. S. B.*, 1880) I described the two dialects as mutually 'almost unintelligible.' I am now of opinion that this was too strongly expressed, as I have myself, speaking the northern dialect, been able to understand, and make myself understood by, persons speaking the Mekrāni dialect.

² The clan to which the chief belongs is known as the *phāgh-logh*, or house of the turban, the tying on of the turban being the outward sign