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## **Iranian People and the Race of People Settled in the Iranian Plateau**

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#### **Abstract**

*A long standing and still unchallenged belief of historians is that the people of Europe, Iran and India, with the exception of Hungarians and the Finns, have their ancestry in common. Based on historical evidence and supports from archaeology, historians propose the existence of a pre-historic tribal confederation, called theoretically Indo-Europeans, who eventually spread out from their original homeland to cover the mass of land in western Eurasia. Their language, costumes and cultural characteristics survived in one way or another to the historical time and it is based on comparative studies of various Indo-European languages and cultures that the idea of a common ancestry first came to existence. The Persians are descendants of the Aryan (Indo-Iranian) tribes that began migrating from Central Asia into what is now Iran in the second millennium BC. The Persian language and other Iranian tongues emerged as these Aryan tribes split up into two major groups the Persians and the Medes and intermarried with peoples indigenous to the Iranian plateau such as the Elamites.*

**Key Words:** *Indo-Europeans, Indo-Iranians, Iranian peoples, The Iranian languages, Art, Culture.*

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**Introduction:** Around 3000 BCE, the ancestors of Iranians first immigrated from their Central Asian homeland - where they lived with their Indian kin as one people to the Iranian Plateau. There they came into contact with the already established civilisations such as the Kassites or the Elamites, the latter having over 2000 years of political presence in the plateau. Probably mostly through integration and taking advantage of the weakness of these civilisations because of their constant warfare with the empires of Mesopotamia the Aryans came to dominate the society although at the same time adopting much of the existing culture and social norms. The integration of Aryans with the locals and the settlement of the tribes all around the plateau gave rise to the first Iranian civilisations. Throughout its long history, people of Iran have intermarried with Greeks, Arabs, Mongols, Turks and other tribes. Today most of the populations have similar characteristics and obvious differences are rare. The worthy exceptions are the members of the semi-nomadic Turkman tribes who show clear Turko-Mongolian anatomies. For more information about the history of Iran,

please see the history page. In the following discussion of Iranian peoples, the term Iranian may be understood in two ways. It is first of all a linguistic classification, intended to designate any society which inherited or adopted and transmitted an Iranian language. The set of Iranian-speaking peoples is thus considered a kind of unity in spite of their distinct lineage identities plus all the factors which may have further differentiated any one group's sense of self. These include;

1. Divergent specializations in economic organization, environmental adaptation, and other aspects of material culture, emergent differences in oral traditions and folkways.
2. Hand in hand with the preceding: different conditioning by already established populations encountered in the area of settlement or absorbed in the course of migrations.
3. Further conditioning by the later introduction of non-Iranian-speaking populations. These factors, fostering some degree of diversity within a region's society, may have worked toward distinctions in dialect, social organization, law, religion and other aspects of culture. The management of marked regional diversity, in the absence of an established political infrastructure would have been especially challenging to the earliest efforts at a real hegemony by the Medes and the Persians. Secondly and inevitably, Iranian also acquires the broader sense of a people resident on the Iranian plateau, since the ethnicity of various peoples who are only briefly mentioned in historical sources often is not definitely known. In qualification of the first point, difference in language is not viewed as necessarily a barrier to community cohesion and communications [7].

**History of Iran:** Iran a mountainous, arid, ethnically diverse country of southwestern Asia. Much of Iran consists of a central desert plateau, which is ringed on all sides by lofty mountain ranges that afford access to the interior through high passes. Most of the population lives on the edges of this forbidding, waterless waste. The capital is Tehrān, a sprawling, jumbled metropolis at the southern foot of the Elburz Mountains. Famed for its handsome architecture and verdant gardens, the city fell somewhat into disrepair in the decades following the Iranian Revolution of 1979, though efforts were later mounted to preserve historic buildings and expand the city's network of parks. As with Tehrān cities such as Eşfahān and Shīrāz combine modern buildings with important landmarks from the past and serve as major centres of education, culture and commerce. The heart of the storied Persian empire of antiquity, Iran has long played an important role in the region as an imperial power and later because of its strategic position and abundant natural resources especially petroleum as a factor in colonial and superpower rivalries. The country's roots as a distinctive culture and society date to the Achaemenian period, which began in 550 BC. From that time the region that is now Iran traditionally known as Persia has been influenced by waves of indigenous and foreign conquerors and immigrants, including the Hellenistic Seleucids and native Parthians and Sāsānids. Persia's conquest by the Muslim Arabs in the 7th century AD was to leave the most lasting influence, however, as Iranian culture was all

but completely subsumed under that of its conquerors. An Iranian cultural renaissance in the late 8th century led to a reawakening of Persian literary culture, though the Persian language was now highly Arabized and in Arabic script, and native Persian Islamic dynasties began to appear with the rise of the Sāmānids in the early 9th century. The region fell under the sway of successive waves of Persian, Turkish and Mongol conquerors until the rise of the Şafavids who introduced Ithnā Asharī Shīism as the official creed, in the early 16th century. Over the following centuries with the state-fostered rise of a Persian-based Shīite clergy a synthesis was formed between Persian culture and Shīite Islam that marked each indelibly with the tincture of the other. With the fall of the Şafavids in 1736, rule passed into the hands of several short-lived dynasties leading to the rise of the Qājār line in 1796. Qājār rule was marked by the growing influence of the European powers in Iran's internal affairs with its attendant economic and political difficulties and by the growing power of the Shīite clergy in social and political issues[5]. The country's difficulties led to the ascension in 1925 of the Pahlavi line whose ill-planned efforts to modernize Iran led to widespread dissatisfaction and the dynasty's subsequent overthrow in the revolution of 1979. This revolution brought a regime to power that uniquely combined elements of a parliamentary democracy with an Islamic theocracy run by the country's clergy. The world's sole Shīite state, Iran found itself almost immediately embroiled in a long-term war with neighbouring Iraq that left it economically and socially drained and the Islamic republic's alleged support for international terrorism left the country ostracized from the global community. Reformist elements rose within the government during the last decade of the 20th century opposed both to the ongoing rule of the clergy and to Iran's continued political and economic isolation from the international community. Many observers have noted that since pre-Islamic time's Iranian culture has been imbued with a powerful sense of dualism which is likely grounded in the Zoroastrian notion of a perpetual struggle between good and evil. This attitude persisted in different forms in succeeding centuries, with the culture's preoccupation with justice and injustice and with an ongoing tension between religion and science. The 12th-century poet Omar Khayyam himself a noted mathematician captured this dualism in one of his robāiyāt quatrains in which he expresses his own ambivalence [9].

**Indo-Europeans and Indo-Iranians:** A considerable amount of criticism has been bestowed upon the idea of Indo-European ancestry. It has been called a racist idea, it has been challenged by those who felt left-out of it and it has been linked to colonialism and the idea of European superiority. Probably the worst use of this theory has been the Nazi ideology of a pure Aryan race. Nevertheless, our purpose here is purely historical and for the sake of the narrative we assume that the idea of a common Indo-European ancestry, first and foremost in linguistic and mythological terms rather than biological, is valid and at least supportable. One of the most serious problems for all adherents to the common ancestry theory is the location of the original homeland of Indo-Europeans. Nineteenth century historians proposed an Eastern European homeland lately revitalised by new archaeology others saw Northern Europe more plausible and in the Twentieth century, steppes of Southern Russia have won the most favour. Archaeology in the steppes shows the

coexistence of many tribes during the proposed time of the start of Indo-European migrations (ca. 3000 BCE). These cultures show varied anatomies, and strengthen the idea that a common biological ancestry might not have been the case. Since no written evidence is available from this era, our only points of reference are their pottery, tool use, and burial habits, based on which they have been called the Kurgan people from Russian word for grave. Their graves were built in a mound shape, and the body was buried in chambers, along with personal belongings and animals such as horses in case of more prosperous members of the society. It is generally accepted now that Indo-Europeans as a historical reality were most likely a collection of tribes spread from Central Asia to Eastern Europe and they all migrated in different time periods due to climactic and demographic reasons. An eastern branch of these tribes, theoretically called proto-Indo-Iranians, lived probably in Central Asia and belonged to a branch of Kurgan people called the Andronovo Culture by archaeologists [2]. These people, who called themselves Aryans Indo-Iranian for noble, wellborn, migrated towards south into present day Afghanistan and Eastern Iran sometimes around 2000 BCE. There, they seem to have been split into two branches the eastern one called Indo-Aryans by historians and the other one proto-Iranians. Based on their later literature, we might assume an inter-tribal war or ideological disagreement might have initiated the split. In any case, their languages, or what has been preserved of their oldest forms (Vedic Sanskrit and Avestan respectively) show remarkable similarities in linguistic and mythical tradition terms. These people were supposedly nomadic; they had domesticated horses, probably as early as their time in Central Asia and had a complex pantheon of gods and natural forces. It has been suggested that prior to the first phase of their migration, Indo-Iranians have had a communal social system, but by the time of their split, they had formed into a patriarchal class system society. These changes, along with their complex belief system, lead some to believe that the proto-Indo-Iranian society was not as simplistic and nomadic based as currently assumed. Furthermore, archaeological evidence such as excavations in the Bactro-Margian Archaeological Complex (BMAC) point out to a very early formation of settlements and commercial centres in Central Asia. Artifacts from BMAC show pottery very similar to the ones found in Mohenjodaro/Harrapan culture of Indus Valley and Uruk culture of Sumer. Although the BMAC excavations show more influence from Dravidians of Indus Valley than Indo-Iranians, they also show an early contact of proto-Indo-Iranians with civilisation and thus a much earlier formation of class society and complexity believed up to now. Also, the discovery of some pottery with what seems to be an early form of writing might challenge the accepted theories of the development of civilisations and cultural formation. In any case, the branching of proto-Indo-Iranians to Indo-Aryans and proto-Iranians happened at the dawn of history ca. 2000-1800 BC. Indo-Aryans apparently moved to the Indus Valley region, with which they might have been familiar by their contacts with BMAC traders. There they faced the challenge of an established civilisation. The traditional story would tell us that the superior military power of Indo-Aryans especially their use of horses left no chance for the local Dravidians who were conquered massacred absorbed into the Aryans society as untouchables or driven to the south of the Indian peninsula. However, new

studies whose scope is out of the capacity of the present paper, suggest that the conquest of the Harrapan culture and the establishment of an Indo-Aryan lead society did not happen as easily and took more time and included a higher degree of influence from the Dravidians on conquering Aryans. We have less evidence of such sudden conflict in the Iranian case. Proto-Iranians seem to have been split into branches early in their history forming the nomadic Saka/Scythian tribes and the settled populations that inhabited the Iranian plateau and eventually came to be known under the massive and inaccurate names of Parthians, Persians and Medians. How early this split happened and how the Iranians came to overpower the established civilisations of the Mitanni, the Kassites and civilisations of eastern Iran, is not known. Only their final pressure in replacing the prosperous civilisation of Elam has survived into history. For earlier events we only have scattered reports from the Assyrian and Babylonian chronicles and rarely in Elamite reports. The idea of a simple split of proto-Iranians from Indo-Aryans and especially their origin in Central Asia poses some problems. In dates supposedly prior to their migration we have evidence of their existence in Western Iran. Terms relating to horse breeding that are from an obvious Indo-Iranian source exist in Mitanni, Kassite and even Babylonian documents. We know that horses were taken by Kassites to Babylon, and they most likely learned of horse taming from proto-Iranians who lived to their east and north. Also, the names of Indo-Aryan deities like Indra and the Nassaties exist among the names of Mitanni deities in a treaty with the Hittites, while these deities don't exist among the Iranian pantheon [12]. Also, some Mitanni names have obvious Indo-Iranian and even purely Iranian overtones, while an Egyptian pharaoh married a girl from east of Sumer ca. 2200 BCE who has an Iranian name. As we can see the route and time of Indo-Iranian migrations is not certain and provable, and some even deny any migration in a sensible term and instead propose the gradual push of Indo-Iranians from the northern Caspian regions via both Caucasus and Central Asia in a much earlier (e.g. 3000 BCE) date. Nevertheless, by 1200 BCE, we have a remarkable and undeniable Iranian presence in the plateau, and their overwhelming military force seems to have gradually overpowered the local people and formed early kingdoms which posed threats to the established civilisations of Assyria, Babylonia, and Elam. These petty kingdoms seem to have established confederacies of all the tribes, Aryan and non-Aryan and spread their early influence in the areas east of Elam. The earliest of these confederacies to form a coherent kingdom of which we have historical evidence was the kingdom of the Medes. We shall see the development of this kingdom in further chapters.

**Arrival of the Iranians:** A general picture of the peoples of Iran at the beginning of the second millennium B.C.E. might be reconstructed, from cuneiform sources of Mesopotamia and from later relics, as follows: in the southern plains Khuzestan were the Elamites who extended to the east perhaps as far as Sistān and in the north possibly to the Alborz mountains. It would be more accurate to say that Elamite culture and influence reached so far as may be inferred from remains of material culture and traces of proto-Elamite writing. Obviously many dialects and forms of social life existed but the basic racial features of Caucasoids remained constant. Above Elam, the expanse of territory of the peoples north and west across and beyond the Zagros was labeled vaguely as Gutium by the states of

Mesopotamia from the third millenium on. In the north, the Caspians and other tribes or subtribes lived in the Alborz Mountains and on the southern shores of the Caspian seacoast in relative isolation and independencea condition which persisted in varying extent into the Islamic period. In the northwest of Iran in Azerbaijan and extending into Anatolia were probably the ancestors of historical peoples who would exert important influence on the arriving Iranians namely, the Manneans successors in the Zagros and Lake Urmia region, if not lineal descendants of the Hurrian people of the 3rd-2nd millenia and the Urartians the dominant people of the Caucasus in the early first millenium. The fortified town excavated at Hasanlu in Azerbaijan provides valuable glimpses of the economic and cultural interaction across these regions and with Assyria. The population of eastern Iran and Afghanistan about 2000 B.C.E. is virtually unknown so conjecture is rife. We may suppose that, similar to the Elamites in the southwest, here the people of the Indus valley civilization, possibly proto-Dravidians dominated the east, at least in culture and influence. North of the Hindu Kush range it is conceivable that ancestors of the Hunzakut the Burushaski speaking people of present day Hunza in Northern Areas, Pakistan, had a presence so far to the west [11]. Some scholars have suggested that, previous to the expansion of the Indo-European speakers a family of peoples extended from the Atlantic Ocean to India the relics of which were or are the Basques, Etruscans Rhaetians, some Caucasian peoples and the Hunzakut plus the Dravidian Brahuis of Baluchistan. This is an unproved theory and we can only say that it is most probable that the Indo-European speakers did not come upon empty areas in their expansion on the Iranian plateau but found earlier unrelated inhabitants. The role of these people in conveying new culture, both material and other to the arriving Indo-Europeans is a subject of much speculation. This holds true especially for those settled in the northeasternstaging ground for entry to the plateau i.e., the area termed the Bactriana-Margiana Archeological Complex. A long period of contact there between the settled agriculturists and the Indo-Iranians to the north may have been characterized by a symbiosis similar to that between Bactrians and Scythians in and after the Achaemenid period. The Indo-Europeans as their migration proceeded southward also must have benefited from the existence of routes linking Bactria with other trading points across Iran. The Semitic and Hamitic peoples of the Near East and Africa are not in the purview of our investigation, even though small numbers of Semites did move onto the plateau at various times. The expansion of the Indo-Europeans in the second millennium B.C.E. changed the face of Iran. The IE languages are usually divided into two major groups, the centum western and the satem eastern, from the Latin and Avestan words respectively for the number 100. The following is a speculative reconstruction but has a good chance of verisimilitude. It seems that the earliest migration of the Indo-Europeans from the reputed homeland in south Russia was by the centum group, some of whom in the early second millenium moved into Anatolia the Hittites, contributing to the complex mix of ethnic groups in Asia Minor others into western China the Tokharians. This movement may have injected Nordic racial elements into the existing populations. A few tribes of centum-speakers some perhaps subsumed under the label Gutians in cuneiform sources could have come onto the Iranian plateau, but we have no evidence, as we do for the next migration,

that of the Indo-Iranians or Aryans. The latter were the first satem-speaking Indo-Europeans who moved south from their supposed homeland in present-day Kazakhstan. In the second half of the second millennium B.C.E. in northern Mesopotamia, the kingdom of Mitanni had Indo-Iranian elements, who displayed elements specific to Indo-Aryan culture. They possibly were to be found only among the ruling class or as specialists in horse warfare. Perhaps their predecessors in western Iran and the Zagros from the 18th century B.C.E., the Kassites shared a common lineage with them. As for movements in the east the present-day Dardic speakers of northern Pakistan are claimed to be descendants of the Indo-Iranians who first moved into the subcontinent. Undoubtedly these early Indo-European speakers mixed with the local population and for the most part were absorbed into it. At the beginning of the first millennium B.C.E. numerous Iranian-speaking tribes, coming from the northeast expanded over the plateau giving their languages to the indigenous peoples rather than being absorbed. One of the factors which enabled the Iranians to prevail was their mastery of horseriding [8]. Although horses had been used previously to pull wagons or chariots it was probably the Scythian/Saka Iranians on the steppes of southern Russia who evolved their earlier practice of riding horses to control sheep or cattle into a military application as cavalry. This innovation enabled them to display a mobility surpassing that of other formations. By the time of the establishment of the Achaemenid Empire the spread of Iranian languages and dialects was proceeding apace.

**Western Iranic peoples:** During the 1st centuries of the first millennium BCE, the ancient Persians established themselves in the western portion of the Iranian plateau and appear to have interacted considerably with the Elamites and Babylonians, while the Medes also entered in contact with the Assyrians. Remnants of the Median language and Old Persian show their common Proto-Iranian roots, emphasized in Strabo and Herodotus' description of their languages as very similar to the languages spoken by the Bactrians and Soghdians in the east. Following the establishment of the Achaemenid Empire, the Persian language spread from Pars or Fars Province to various regions of the Empire, with the modern dialects of Iran, Afghanistan and Central-Asia known as Tajiki descending from Old Persian. Old Persian is attested in the Behistun Inscription (ca. 519 BCE), recording a proclamation by Darius the Great. In southwestern Iran, the Achaemenid kings usually wrote their inscriptions in trilingual form (Elamite, Babylonian and Old Persian) while elsewhere other languages were used. The administrative languages were Elamite in the early period, and later Imperial Aramaic. The early inhabitants of the Achaemenid Empire appear to have adopted the religion of Zoroastrianism. The Baloch who speak a west Iranian language relate an oral tradition regarding their migration from Aleppo, Syria around the year 1000 AD, whereas linguistic evidence links Balochi to Kurmanji, Soranî, Gorani and Zazaki [3].

**Eastern Iranic peoples:** While the Iranian tribes of the south are better known through their texts and modern counterparts, the tribes which remained largely in the vast Eurasian expanse are known through the references made to them by the ancient Greeks, Persians, Indo-Aryans as well as by archaeological finds. Many ancient Sanskrit texts make

references to tribes like Sakas, Paradas, Kambojas, Bahlikas, Uttaramadras, Madras, Lohas, Parama Kambojas, Rishikas, Tukharas or Tusharas etc. and locate them in the (Uttarapatha) (north-west) division, in Central Asia, around Hindukush range in northern Pakistan. The Greek chronicler, Herodotus (5th century BCE) makes references to a nomadic people, the Scythians; he describes as having dwelt in what is today southern Russia. It is believed that these Scythians were conquered by their eastern cousins, the Sarmatians, who are mentioned by Strabo as the dominant tribe which controlled the southern Russian steppe in the 1st millennium AD. These Sarmatians were also known to the Romans, who conquered the western tribes in the Balkans and sent Sarmatian conscripts, as part of Roman legions, as far west as Roman Britain. The Sarmatians of the east became the Alans, who also ventured far and wide, with a branch ending up in Western Europe and North Africa, as they accompanied the Germanic Vandals during their migrations [6].

**Iranian Ethnic Groups:** The only measure of ethnic diversity that appears in official statistics is identification by the language normally used at home: Iranian languages, including Persian, Luri (Lori), Kurdi (Kordi), Gilaki and Māzanda-rāni, and Baluchi (Baluči) and non-Iranian languages including Azeri Turkish, Arabic, and Turkmeni. The largest group of people in present-day Iran are Persians who speak dialects of the language called Fārsi in Persian, since it was primarily the tongue of the people of Fārs. A number of dialects exist in the province including Lāri spoken in Larestān, Baškerdi on the eastern border with Kermān and Baluchistan, where the inhabitants are settled in villages and other minor dialects. It is not the intention here to discuss dialects but it should be noted that along the coast in the past speakers of Swahili were reported, presumably migrants from Africa. Also the presence of Negritoes, as speakers of Baluchi dialects has been claimed on the eastern coast of Baluchistan. Again these may be descendants of slaves. Among the people of Fārs, as well as elsewhere, are Gypsies and they were mainly traveling musicians. In addition to their own language of Indian origin they speak Luri or Persian. Their number is unknown but small and many have left Iran since the revolution of 1979. The Lurs occupy areas of northern Fārs and the southern Zagros range, and the best known of them are the Baktiāris who, known as Lur-e Bozorg, live to the west of Isfahan and speak a Luri dialect. They are divided between the Čahar Lang in the north and the Haft Lang in the south, and they have included settled Persian speakers in the confederations they have formed over the years. Others of this linguistic group are called Mamasani and Kuhgiluya, while the other major dialect is spoken by the western Lurs in the mountains known as Lur-e Kučak. Other names are applied to sub-groups of the Lurs, such as the Boir Aḥmadi and Došmanziāri. It is difficult to know the number of Lurs, since many settled people in their territories do not consider themselves Lurs but an estimate of the total number of Lurs may be close to four million. In addition to the Lur confederations, the Turkic-speaking tribes of Fārs also were united in a confederation under the main band of nomads, the Qašqāis, beginning in the 18th century. Both Lurs and Turks for the most part have given up their nomadic life for a settled one. At present there may be about half a million Turkic speakers in southern Iran and their dialects are closely related to the Azeri Turkic language. The Kurds live north of the Lurs in the Zagros mountains, up to and over the frontiers with



Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan. They speak many dialects but these are divided between two major groups, Kormānji (northwestern) and Sorāni (southwestern). The Kurds mostly live in villages or towns, although a small number are still pastoralists but tribal allegiances are still strong among all Kurds. They are estimated at about five million but since many live in Tehran or other cities, it is difficult to know how many consider themselves as Kurds. Most Kurds are Sunnis but in the southern areas in Kermānshāh Province one finds Shiites and followers of sects such as Aḥl-e Ḥaqq and Yazidis. About half a million Kurds live in northern Khorasan, having been moved there by the Safavids. Many Kurds consider themselves descended from the ancient Medes and even use a calendar dating from 612 B.C. when the Assyrian capital of Nineveh was conquered by the Medes [4]. The Turkish speakers of Azerbaijan are mainly descended from the earlier Iranian speakers, several pockets of whom still exist in the region. A massive migration of Oghuz Turks in the 11th and 12th centuries gradually Turkified Azerbaijan as well as Anatolia. The Azeri Turks are Shiites and were founders of the Safavid dynasty. They are settled, although there are pastoralists in the Moḡān steppe called Ilsevan (formerly Šāhsevan) numbering perhaps 100,000 they as other tribes in Iran, were forced to adopt a settled life under Reza Shah. Other Turkic speakers Turkmen, Qajars, Afšārs, etc. are scattered in various regions of western Iran. The number of Turkic speakers in Iran today is estimated about 16 million. Most of the Azerbaijanis call themselves and are referred to as Turks but also insist on their Iranian identity, buttressed not only by the religious bond being mostly Shiite in contrast to the Sunni Turks of Anatolia but also by cultural, historical and economic factors. The long and complex history of Azari a major Iranian language and the original language of the region and its partial replacement with Azeri Turkish, the present-day language of Azerbaijan, is surveyed in detail and with a wealth of citations from historical sources elsewhere in the Encyclopaedia. Although the original Azari gradually lost its stature as the prevalent language by the end of the 14th century, the fact that the region had produced some of the finest Persian writers and poets of classical Persian, including Qaṭrān of Tabriz, Nezāmi of Ganja, Kāqāni of Širvān, Homām of Tabriz, Awḥadi of Marāḡa, Zayn-al-Ābedin of Širvān, Maḥmud of Šabestar, Šafi-al-Din of Urmia, Abd-al-Qāder of Marāḡa has induced literary historians to talk of The School of Azerbaijan (Rypka). The significant contribution of this school to the preservation of the memory of a fecund shared culture capable of producing unique masterpieces of narrative and panegyric poetry is a matter of common knowledge. The tradition continues to this day, producing such diversely significant poets as Iraj Mirzā, Šahriār, Radi Āḍarākši, and Esmāil Amirḳizi and the writer and dramatist Ġolām-Ḥosayn Sāedi. The geographic position of this fertile region has also contributed to the preservation of a common identity with the rest of the country [1]. The eventful modern history of Azerbaijan and its contribution to the progressive movements in modern Persian history, most notably the Constitutional Revolution and to the development of institutions such as the press, has shown how highly influential it has been in shaping the history of modern Iran and its national identity. A survey of the national biography of eminent Iranians would show a high percentage of people of Azerbaijani origin appearing in different spheres as ranking politicians, clerics,

merchants and military commanders, including such outstanding scholars as Sayyed Ḥasan Taqizadeh, Aḥmad Kasrawi, Moḥammad-Ali Tarbiat, Reżāzādeh Šafaq and such prominent educators and social thinkers as Mirzā Ḥasan Rošdiya, Kāzemzādeh Irānšahr Taqī Arāni and Moḥammad Naḵjavāni among others. Also included is a large number of high ranking officials and statesmen, such as the influential prime ministers, Ebrāhim Ḥakimi, Maḥmud Jam Ali Soheyli, and Moḥammad Sāed. Confirmed and vocal Iranian nationalists, these scholars and statesmen had made significant contributions to the territorial integrity of Iran during the troubled periods of 1905-20 and 1941-46, when the country was in the midst of revolution, civil war, and foreign occupation. In Azerbaijan Armenians and Assyrians have been mentioned; the former lived in villages north of Salmās up to the border of the country, and the Assyrians in villages west of Lake Urmia. Both have left these regions and few remain, mainly in Tehran, Urmia, and other cities. Their place has been taken mostly by Kurds. On the Caspian Sea coast, in Gilān and Māzandarān and in the Alborz mountains, live descendents of Caspian peoples speaking Persian dialects with remnants from earlier tongues [10]. The Arabs of Khuzestan and the coast of the Persian Gulf are both urban and pastoralists or fishermen on the Gulf. Although, after the Arab invasion of Persia in the 7th century, many Arab tribes settled in different parts of Iran, it is the Arab tribes of Khuzestan (Kūzestān) that have retained their identity in language and culture to the present day. But here as in the case of Azerbaijan discussed earlier the ethno-linguistic characteristics of the region must be studied against the long and turbulent history of the province, with its own local language *kūzi*, which may have been of Elamite origin and which gradually disappeared in the early medieval period. The influx of Arab tribes from outside the province was also a long-term process. There was a great influx of Arab-speaking immigrants into the province from the 16th to the 19th century, including the migration of the Banu Kab and Banu Lam. It was also during the Safavid period that the term Arabestān began to be used to designate the province, until replaced again by Khuzestan during the reign of Reza Shah, who put an end to the separatist aspirations of Shaikh Kāzal, the head of the Kab tribe. There were also renewed attempts in vain by the Iraqi regime during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88) to generate Arab nationalism in the area but without any palpable success. Thus the mosaic of peoples living in Iran today reflects the central geographical situation of the country throughout history, frequently described as a crossroads of Eurasia. Although many languages and dialects are spoken in the country and different forms of social life, the dominant influence of the Persian language and culture has created a solidarity complex of great strength. This was revealed in the Iran-Iraq War when Arabs of Khuzestan did not join the invaders, and earlier when Azeris did not rally to their northern cousins after World War II, when Soviet forces occupied Azerbaijan. Likewise the Baluch, Turkmen, Armenians and Kurds, although with bonds to their kinsmen on the other side of borders, are conscious of the power and richness of Persian culture and willing to participate in it.

**Conclusion:** The world is a place containing various racial and lingual groups. So that as far as this issue is concerned there is no difference between developed and developing countries. As if, among all existing countries and islands in the world, about 160 countries

have an increasing situation regarding race and culture. Iran is not an exception, because it can be called a multi-national or multi-racial community. It is difficult for anthropologists and ethnologists to determine the race of people settled in the Iranian plateau. The reason is that it has been as an invasion field bilaterally from many years ago. On the other hand, it is as a bridge between the Far East, Middle East and Mesopotamia. Therefore, many different nations with various races have entered this plateau and placed under a unite ceiling of language. It seems that the present residents in this plateau are more related to people in the west and the northwest of Iran. As a result of anthropological studies and measurements in Iran, one basic branch called 'the white race' has been determined. It is the race of people in the Iranian plateau. The ancient Iranians (Homo Iranicus) are the genius brothers of original mankind (Homo sapiens) grown in the southwest of Asia physically and culturally, namely the cradle of direct ancestors of Aryans. The Iranians are among the oriental race called Indo-European who have immigrated to this plateau from Axus and Caucasian mountains in the late of the second thousand B.C. They were called Aryan in the history. It took 1000 years for Aryans to enter into this plateau in different small and large groups. Finally in the first millennium B.C., they were replaced and then made various sovereignties. The Iranian plateau started a new life with fresh Aryan tribes and made the ancient age of Iran which lasts 1000 years. This time is regarded as the golden period in the history of Iran.

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