

# **Note to introduce materials from David Brook's archive about Bakhtiari migration**

## **Professor Sue Wright**

David Brooks conducted fieldwork in Iran in November 1963, March-December 1964, March-May 1966 and May-August 1967. Twice he went with the Bakhtiari on their spring migration. This text is an account of the 28-day spring migration which David joined from 13 April to 7 May 1964.

The text is in four parts. First there is a list of the stopping places on the 1964 and 1966 migrations. The second section is David's typed overview of the migration. The third is David's edited version of his field notes until mid-way through Thursday 23 April. The fourth section is Sue Wright's transcription of David's handwritten field diary from 23 April to 7 May. Sue has slightly edited these texts and any illegible words are marked [?].

David describes the very beginning of the migration, how it was decided to get started by whom, and the factors that were taken into consideration to identify the exact departure date. He vividly depicts problems at the early stages of the migration like disorganisation, disagreements about the route of migration and the speed of travel. But as the migration progresses, David's tone turns to admiration about how the leaders co-ordinate between the different Tireh and Taifeh using the same route to get 100000 people and even more animals single file over tiny ledges and slippery passes in the mountains.

David and his wife Marianne were allowed to join the migration because the Plan Organisation commissioned Marianne to run a clinic and provide the migrating nomads with health care. David seems also to have been asked to write a report on the development of the nomads for the Plan Organisation, although that report seems not be in David's archive. Their 'gatekeeper' was Mary Gharagozlu, who was leading the government's efforts to develop better infrastructure and improve the economy of the Bakhtiari. Mary and her 'team', including David and Marianne, travelled in a group alongside the camp group (mal) of Jangi. Jangi was from the Bardin section of the Osiwand taifeh of the Haft Lang (see David's map of the tribal structure. Jangi's father had been the Kalantar of the Osiwand and had been murdered. Jangi's his father's brother Mashadi Barat, became Kalantar. He lived in or near Lali, the main town of the Osiwand in winter quarters, and he did not migrate. Jangi was not an experienced migrator, but he travelled at the head of the Osiwands, under the guidance of his mother and a specially chosen, very experienced nomad. Others in Jangi's mal were Jomeh and his relatives from a village near Lali, and others who wintered in tents north of

Lali. David's notebook contains a kinship diagram of the relations between the households, and another diagram showing the changed composition when he migrated with the same Mal in 1966.

There were four main routes for the Bakhtiari migration through the mountains – The Rah-i Munar, Rah-i Susan, Rah-i Disfart and Rah-i Pambekal or Panbekal. The Osiwand travelled on the Munar route. Dalir Barkhoda has compiled a list of the days' journeys and stopping places in the 1964 and 1966 migrations and has then plotted the route of the 1964 migration on a Google Map. This enables the reader to see the change in altitude – from winter quarters in Lali at 277 metres above sea level to the summer quarters in the Doab valley at 2000 metres above sea level. The winter quarters at Lali are warm in winter, but far too hot for the nomads' sheep and goats in summer, when grazing is also parched. They travel to the higher altitude just as the snow has melted and the valleys are lush and green. The summer pastures do not get too hot for the animals, but in the autumn they try to beat the arrival of deep winter snows by returning to the winter quarters. The altitude map also shows how on each migration, they have to cross several of the very high and parallel mountain ranges that make up the Zagros Mountains. Dalir has chosen a selection of David's photographs and short extracts from his field diary to illustrate some of the treacherous mountain passes they pass and the torrential rivers swollen by the snow melt. The most famous river crossing was the Bazuft and David also made a sound recording of this crossing. (Compare the width and strength of the Bazuft River in David's pictures in 1964 to the shrunken contemporary Bazuft River shown on Google Earth).

The Google Earth map of the migration only shows the approximately route. Anyone with more detailed knowledge of the location of Bakhtiari place names and routes through the mountains is welcome to send information to Sue Wright [suwr@dpu.dk](mailto:suwr@dpu.dk).