



ĠÖRBAND

ĠÖRBAND (ĠURBAND), a major valley of Kōhe-stān/Kuhestān and a sub-province (*woloswāli*) of Parvān province in the southern foothills of the Hindu Kush massif, located approximately 50 miles north of Kabul. The term Ġōrband probably derives from Ġōr/Ġur (q.v.), the name of the mountainous region northwest of Ġōrband, and the Persian word *band* (barrier, dam), i.e., the mountainous barrier to Ġur (see *Bābor-nāma*, tr. Beveridge, p. 214). This picturesque valley contains some dazzling vistas near the subsidiary valleys and villages of Bāġ-e Awġān, Dara-e Ašāwa, Deh Rangar, Čārdeh, Dara-e Ju-ye Doġtar, Dara-ye Sayyedān, and Siāhgerd. The sub-province is about 935 square miles and stretches for approximately 60 miles from the village of Tutom-dara (about 8 miles north of Čārikār, q.v), seat of the Parvān provincial government at its eastern entrance, to the base of Šibar pass in the west. The elevation of the valley varies from about 5,500 feet in much of the eastern part to over 8,400 feet at the foot of the Šibar pass. Ġōrband is bordered in the south, from the Šibar pass to Čārdeh, by a narrow branch of Kuh-e Bābā range and from there, east to Tutom-dara, by Paġmān mountains. The valley is drained by the Ġōrband river which, after joining the Panjšir about 8 miles southeast of Tutom-dara, flows into the Kabul river east of Tang-e Ġāru gorge.

The 1970s census of Afghanistan estimated the population of Ġōrband at 21,500 living in about 43 villages with 21 villages having 500 or more inhabitants (*Gazetteer of Afghanistan VI*, p. 220). The majority of the inhabitants of Ġōrband are Sunni Tajiks. A number of villagers claim to be of Sayyed descent. Several villages in the eastern parts of the valley are home to



Šinwāri Pashtuns/Paxtuns. The Shi'ite (Shaikh 'Ali) Hazāras are numerically dominant in western Ġörband.

Prior to the tunneling of Sālang pass through the Hindu Kush range and the construction of an all-weather road for motorized traffic there in the 1960s, the main road from Kabul to northern Afghanistan passed through the Ġörband valley. This gravel road was upgraded in the 1930s to accommodate trucks, but it was never paved. Until early 20th century Tutom-dara, in eastern Ġör-band, was one of the locations where duty on trade goods to and from northern Afghanistan was collected.

Ġörband produces large quantities of almonds, apples, apricots, grapes, mulberries, peaches, pears, pomegranates, quinces, and walnuts. Surpluses of grapes and apricots are dried and exported to areas within and outside Afghanistan. Some varieties of fresh grapes are preserved in small wooden and clay containers for export and for local consumption during the off-season. Mulberries, fresh (*tut*) and dried (*talkān*), are an important part of the diet of the people of Kōhestān. A few villages produce surplus dairy products. The village of Ašāwa is famous for a variety of dried cheese called *panir-e Ašāwa*. A number of popular dishes in the country are said to have originally come from Ġörband: *šola-ye ġorbandi*, a dish in which well-cooked thick rice and mung beans (*šola*) are served with lamb and vegetable stew; *šurvā-ye ġorbandi*, a soup made of lamb and vegetables. Its *šurvā-ye čāynaki* (teapot soup), a soup of lamb and vegetables prepared in teapots and served to travelers in major rest stops, is reputed to be one of the best of its kind in Afghanistan.

There are reports of extensive mineral resources in Ġöbrand. Until early 1880s lead was mined near the village of Faranjā, about 6 miles west of Čārdeh. British surveyors in the 19th century reported significant deposits of iron, zinc, sulfur, and coal (*Gazetteer of Afghanistan* VI, p. 168). The presence of these and other resources have been confirmed by recent surveys (Shroder).

Čārikār is the largest town and market place in the province of Parvān. In Ġörband, as throughout much of Afghanistan, besides the town and city markets, there are periodic (usually weekly) markets in some villages located near the main roads (e.g., Čārdeh and Tutom-dara in Ġörband) that help integrate local economies. In addition to relations generated by trade in fruits and the transit activity along the main road, the local economy is engaged by regular contacts with Pashtun pastoral nomads who seasonally visit pastures



throughout the valley. The nomads bring in pulses and ghee, both important supplements to the local cereal-based diet and trinkets. Over time some of these nomads have settled in the valley.

There are numerous pre-Islamic archeological sites throughout Ġōrband. The ruins of an early medieval Buddhist monastery complex near the village of Fondoqestān (q.v.), about 23 miles east of Tutom-dara, were excavated by Joseph Hackin in the 1930s. Excavation of the site, which is dated to the late 6th or early 7th centuries C.E., produced a large number of sculptures and a hoard of Arab-Sasanian coins. Fondoqestān is located equidistant between the large pre-Islamic sites of Bagrām/Begrām (q.v.), the site of ancient Kāpisa in the east, and Bāmiān (q.v.) in the west.

Ġōrband has been prominent in the modern history of Afghanistan. During the first Anglo-Afghan war (1838-42, see [ANGLO-AFGHAN WARS i.](#)) a contingent of British army was defeated by local forces at Tutom-dara (*Gazetteer of Afghanistan* VI, pp. 794-95). During this war the British contemplated the termination of duties on trade goods that were being collected at this village. In 1929 a number of armed confrontations took place in western Ġōrband between the Sunnite militia sent from Kabul by Ḥabīb-Allāh Kalakāni, known as Bačča-ye Saqqā (q.v.), and the local Shi'ite Hazāra forces supporting the dethroned Amir Amān-Allāh Khan (q.v.). After the collapse of the central government in 1992, the valley has been the site of several battles between the Ṭālebān forces and the various opposition groups.

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