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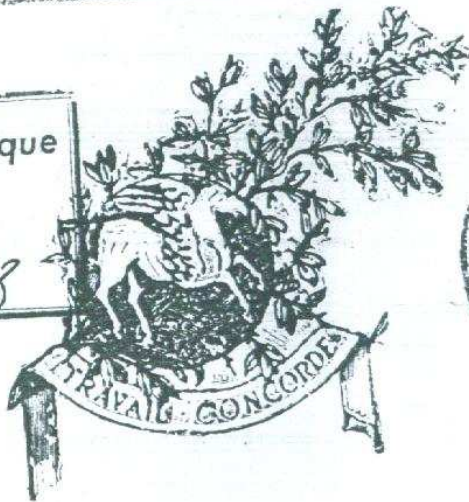
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1908

## Populations of Byzacène

### Concerning the Etymology of the Name of Thyna

Revue Tunisienne, 1908

Our colleague Mr. J. Bureau, of Sfax, occupies himself with passion on the question of Thyna. The report published in this number of the *Revue Tunisienne* and the conference that he conducted at the Institute of Carthage are testimony of this activity.

In an article by the same author published in the *Dépêche Tunisienne* of April 5, we read the following sentence: "Mr. Merlin is persuaded that Thyna is truly a Roman city, but he believes perhaps that the Roman city was built on the ruins of a Punic city. The name of Thenae would be an indication of this origin, *th* being found in a quantity of Punic names. Nevertheless, until now, nothing has been found which can confirm the idea put forward by Mr. Merlin and which has already been made by a scientist member of the Institute of Carthage, Mr. Noel."

No one pays more homage than me to the scientific value of our two colleagues. Nevertheless, I would make a point of warning them against a disease which prevails on many archaeologists in North Africa. One could call it *Phoenicio-mania*. In this case, I believe that they suffered this complaint. Let me explain on what my understanding is based.

If *th* is in Punic names, this letter is also in the dialects of Europe. A European term *dhâna*, which is found in Sanskrit and in Zend, means "the place where one is established". This term is found in the Greek εὖ-θηνα-ος "who is in good situation". Fick brings this term closer to the Sanskrit *dhanu* (1) which means to say "light

(1) FICK : *Indho. germ. Wörterbuch*, p. 98.

movement of ground", and "sand bank" and also the Greek θῆνα, gén. : θήνας. acc. : θήνας having the same meaning.

Here is a first point. Up to now, it is not proven that Thyna or Thaenae comes rather from European than from Phoenician. This impression could change if it is considered that the nearby city, today Sfax, bore the name of Taparura. Ptolémée wrote Ταρρούρα.

However, step carefully. The Greek explains this word, τὰ φρούρα means fortifications. It is unnecessary to look for the Phoenician.

But that is not all. Hérodote (IV, 194) names Gyzantes as a Libyan confederation living in a territory close to the island of Cyraunis. All the commentators have identified Cyraunis as the island of Kerkenna. Gyzantes thus lived the territory which from their name was called later Byzacène. In primitive European language, the ox said *gu*, from where Sanskrit *gauss* and the Greek βούς. The significance of the first part of the name of Gyzantes is explained by this. The second is a participle present of the verb ζῶ to live on, to nourish itself. Gyzantes or Byzantes was a people eating

beef. This characteristic is confirmed by the tour of Scylax. It is said there, indeed: "Their country is excellent and fertile. The cattle there are a big size and many." (Périple, Lotophages, 110, *Geog. Graeci* min., p.89.)

Let us recall that there were also Byzantines towards the Bosphorus, in Europe.

Homonyms, one will say; that does not prove that the area is not Phoenician. Only, same Scylax de Caryande also wrote this sentence: ξανθοί καὶ καλλιστοί on the same Byzantines. They were, he says, "fair and of very high size". Here are characters little like Phoenicians. The ancients allotted them to the Gauls. They also resemble those of people of the north of Europe, including the north and east of France. The quotation of Scylax is precise. Anthropology makes it possible to affirm today that these populations have changed little since then, in spite of the centuries and many invasions of dark skinned people.

The Tunisian natives can be counted among the human groupings most thoroughly studied. Mr. Dr. Collignon measured a great number of them; I worked in the same way and supplemented many gaps left on his ethnographic charts; finally, Mr. Chantre, an honorable member of our company, dealing more especially with the anthropology of Tripolitania and Algeria, agreed to complete our work by going on location to collect many documents that we were short of on certain Tunisian tribes.

To appreciate any thing, even human populations, it is good to take a point of comparison. This point of comparison in anthropology must be sought among the least mixed races. The tribes of the accessible plains or of large valleys are likely to become mixed populations after all the waves of invaders, either warriors or peaceful. The mountains, on the contrary, offer a lower coefficient of interbreeding. Their locale generally does not allure the emigrants. They avoid heterogeneous elements except those that are introduced there by force, such as prisoners for example, or by the social needs: women and children of a mountain dweller having been to marry in the plain. These contributions occurring by small pockets affect the whole race only a little.

Byzacène extended, in the west, to the solid mass of the Aourès. The Aourès was the heart of Berber resistance, as much against the Byzantines as against the Arabs. Its low population of immigrants can give us the average north Berber type. We will use this recognized type as a basis to compare the indigenous populations which live between the Aourès and the sea.

However, since Shaw, the English traveller who traversed the Aourès in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the populations of this region drew attention by their fair hair, their clear eyes, their pinkish skin. These characteristics all indicate the Scandinavian race of Europe. In lengthy pages, published in 1878 in the *African Review*, Masqueray described these people which suggested to him residents of the North Sea rather than Africans.

Measurements were practised on these natives by various authors, including Mrs. Chellier, Mr. MacIver and Mr. Wilkin. Joining together these documents, I found that the average height of Chaouia of the Aourès is 1.70m. Their head is lengthened. The

ratio of width to length equals 100, the cephalic index is 77. Lastly, the nasal index, taken under the same conditions, is 68.

An English anthropologist, Mr. Beddoe, (1) measured a certain number of his compatriots (921) pertaining in majority to the great European Scandinavian race. He found a similar intermediate size of 1.70m to 1.71m, with cephalic index of 77. His measurements on the nasal index of 21 English and 20 Scots gave him an index of 67.50!

These two noted, considering only some most characteristic features, are extraordinarily striking. Generally, the Chaouia of the Aourès are attached anthropologically to the Scandinavian branch of the European race. Their skeleton and their shape of head are identical.

Between the Aourès and Sfax a section of population extends presenting the same European characteristics as the Chaouia in Aourès. These people cover the area of ancient Byzacène. When entering Tunisia from the west one initially meets the great confederation of Hamama. They are, undoubtedly, the descendant of old Hamamientes. However, these Hamama, that I especially studied, have an intermediate size 1.70m, a similar cephalic index of 77, and nasal index of 68. 45% of them have clear eyes (blue, clear green, hazel nut) and 19% a fair or chestnut moustache; in spite of much crossbreeding since Scylax, i.e. amounting to around 2,300 years, they did not lose all their characters of fairness. Their structure is that of large men.

The Metellits are to the east of the Hamama. Their intermediate size is of 1.70m, their cephalic index 77, their nasal index 67. They have same the statistics (squellete) as Chaouia, as the Hamama. Crossbreeding with brown has darkened their pores and their skin. Only 4% only have the auburn beard and 7% the lighter eyes.

The Souassi, more to the north, occupy the maritime territory of the fair Gyzantes. They have the same large size, 1.70m; the same shape of head, cephalic index 77; their nose is a little narrower than that of their ancestors, 65.45. This narrowness corresponds to intermarriage with Arab invaders. I must say that this tribe was studied by Mr. Chantre. It is according to its measurements that I speak.

The sedentaries close to the Souassi, less infiltrated than their wandering brothers, have preserved their European character better. For example, Chebba, coastal village, with a population with a size of 1.71m, a cephalic index of 78, a nasal index of 68 (Collignon).

The population of El-Djem, of whom Mr. Collignon studied some inhabitants, as I did also, presents similar characters: a size of 1.683m, a cephalic index of 75, a nasal index of 66. Moreover, this population is remarkably light. The blue eyes, clear, light yellow green, etc, are there in the proportion of 56%. The fair moustache or auburn is about 32%.

Let us add that Sfax has a population with a size of 1.66m, a cephalic index of 77, and a nasal index of 66.

This rapid outline is to demonstrate the precision of the descriptions of Scylax and Herodotus. The fair population mentioned by the first author has all the characters of the great European Scandinavian race. The anthropological measurements taken on the current descendants by various observers are quite convincing. They are divided into tribes carrying different names: but, nevertheless, one and the same population, very homogeneous, extends from the coast of old Byzantium to the solid mass of the Aourès.

Is it surprising, after these observations, that the former Africans spoke, as I have indicated in several articles, a European language that could be accounted for by Greek? Can one as think that a similar grouping would have given to its cities and tribes non-European names? Then, why seek Phoenician etymology for the name of Thaenae or Thyna?

Common sense, being based on facts, demonstrates that this name could be European. This truth appears to me to be amply shown.

Dr BERTHOLON