

Jewish Exiles

From Antiquity

The Influence Upon Our
Ancestral Journey
and
Jewish Pluralism

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Foreword

This publication was created specifically for intellectual, didactic and genealogical purposes only. It is intended to be distributed to family members and close friends. There are no commercial objectives.

Introduction

Since antiquity, the Near East has been a persistent battleground of violence among rival tribes, competing kingdoms, dynasties, empires and nation states. Those eras were interspersed by significant human cultural and religious advancement, invention and genius. I consider the invention of mathematics and the creation of an alphabet to be among the most significant events in the evolution of modern humans. The ability of humans to communicate by a written language has been considered the most vital expedient contributing to both democracy and the successful progress of evolving human civil rights.

Armed by the data provided through research into our family genomic journey, anthropological discoveries, geo-political documentation and our family history, we are now able to calculate with a very high degree of certainty the journey of our ancestors.

The dispersion of Jewish communities was considerable since antiquity. The relocation under both voluntary and forced circumstances resulted in the wide differences in their respective cultures, which included their unique foods and koshering practices, 38 varieties of spoken Yiddish dialects, clothing, and various degrees of cultural assimilation. The term, Jewish Pluralism, has been applied to the diverse cultural

practices of the exiled Jewish communities among the several Diasporas.

I wish to outline some key factors provided by the updated knowledge of our historical family. Let us consider some of those key factors:

- ◆ Our Caucasian origin
- ◆ Our early Semitic history
- ◆ When we became Hebrew
- ◆ Our Hebrew tribal identity
- ◆ Who were the “Jews”
- ◆ The evolution of early Near Eastern and Mesopotamian dynasties and kingdoms
- ◆ The military campaigns for access and attempted control over the Land of Israel and Egypt

In addition, let us consider the historical consequences of the exiles of the Hebrew communities who lived in the Near East.

- ◆ Assyrian conquest of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 721 BCE
- ◆ The conquest of the Babylonians over the Assyrians
- ◆ The “March to Babylon” accompanied by the destruction of the First Hebrew Temple in Jerusalem, 586 BCE
- ◆ Cyrus I, king of Persia, permitted Israelites to return to their homeland; he provided funds for the reconstruction of the 2nd Temple in Jerusalem
- ◆ Israelite Diaspora during the reign of Alexander the Great
- ◆ Roman conquest of the Near East, North Africa, and the Mediterranean regions
- ◆ The birth of Mohamed and the consequences of the Islamic revolution
- ◆ Diaspora of Hebrew Ashkenazim to Italy and Europe
- ◆ Sephardim evicted from Spain and Portugal

Finally, let us outline the establishment of some of the ancient historical, but disparate, Jewish communities in Africa, Middle East, Near East, Central Asia and Asia. Following the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal, there were several migrations of Sephardi to the Ottoman Empire and Western Europe. Many Jews who converted to Catholicism kept their Jewish identities secret; they were known as conversos.

Migrations of conversos can be traced to Africa, Europe, Central Asia, Asia, the Caribbean region and North America.

- ◆ Arabia
- ◆ Yemen
- ◆ Egypt
- ◆ North Africa
- ◆ Sinai
- ◆ Syria
- ◆ Iraq
- ◆ Persia
- ◆ Anatolia
- ◆ Caucasus and Bukhara
- ◆ Crimean Krymchaks
- ◆ Greek Colonies and the Black Sea region
- ◆ Khazar Empire
- ◆ Kievan Rus
- ◆ Karaites
- ◆ Samaritans
- ◆ India
- ◆ China
- ◆ Ashkenazim, Sephardim, and Mizrahim
- ◆ Ottoman Empire
- ◆ Caribbean
- ◆ North America

Chapter 1

Caucasian Origins

The Caucasus and Central Asia



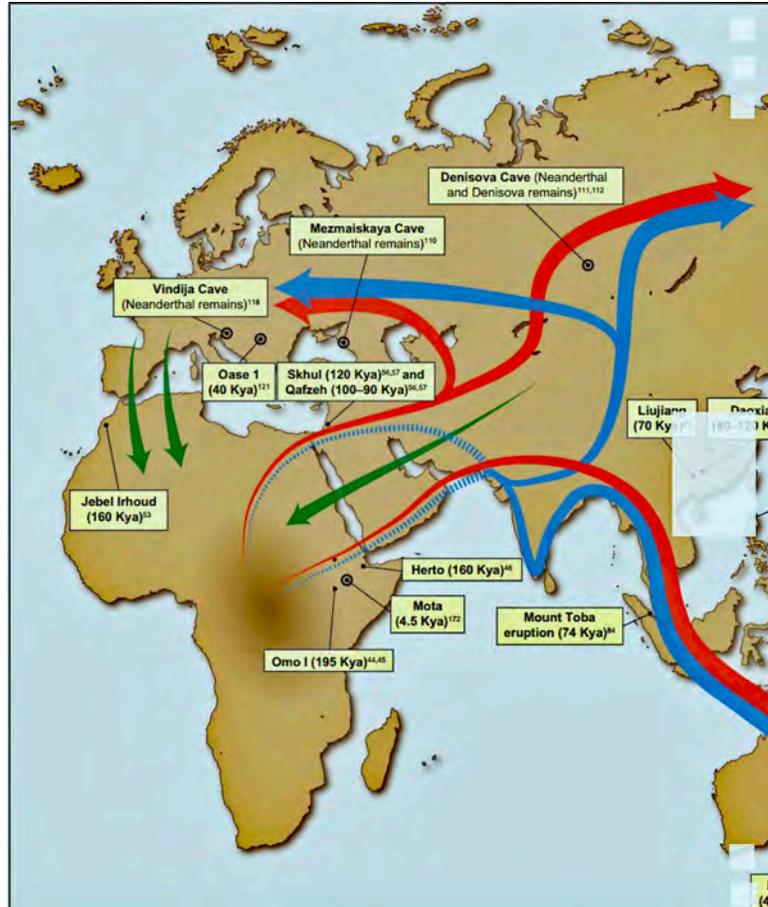
Map of Central Asia and The Caucasus

Modern humans, *Homo sapiens*, originated in Africa between 500,000 – 300,000 ybp. This has been documented by DNA mutations and by archeological excavations of human remains in Morocco. Human migration out of Africa has been documented by archeological explorations in Israeli seashore caves near Haifa. The estimated age of the remains was about 200,000 years before the present (ybp). This timeline of human early migration is 100,000 years earlier than previously known.

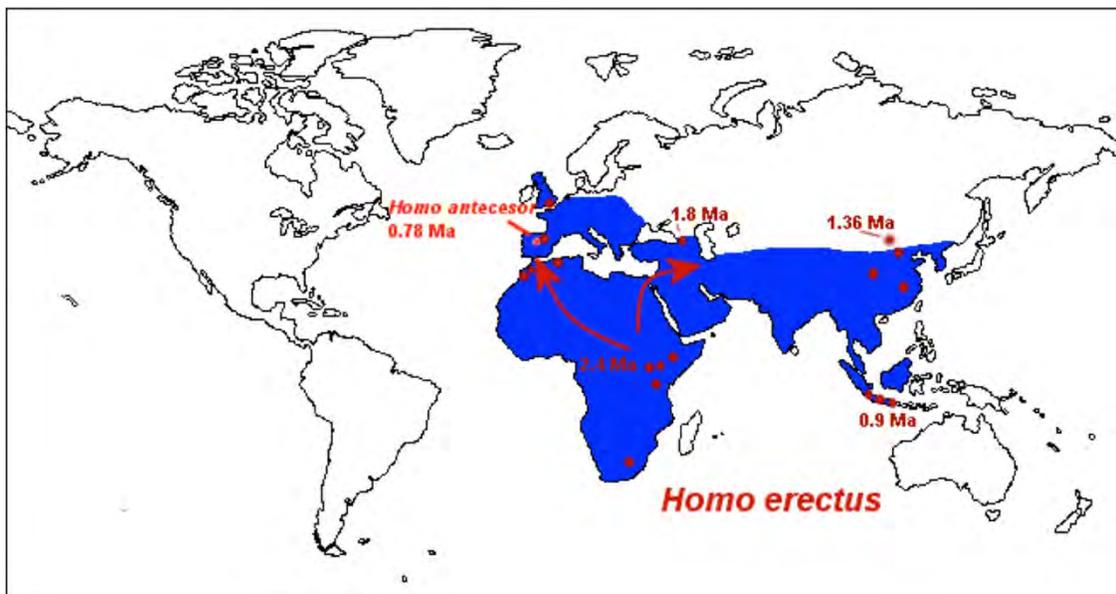
Although the first human migrations involved very small numbers of persons, there were subsequent migrations out of Africa that formed the basis of the modern human global presence. Still, the bands of humans were quite small. They migrated in 2 waves. The first bands departed from Africa and entered the Middle East about 200,000 ybp, but some of the bands continued to migrate to Central Asia about 100,000 to 80,000 ybp. About 90% of all living humans are descendants of those people. Other of the earliest humans, who walked out of Africa migrated eastward to Southern Asia, India, Southeast Asia, Indonesia and Australia. About 10% of modern humans are descendants of this latter group.

Prior to the appearance of modern humans, there were a number of pre-modern humans known as the hominids or hominins. They were tool makers and survived as hunter-gatherers. We have learned about the hominins from fossil records. The most well-known genre were: Homo habilis, first tool makers; Homo erectus and Homo Neanderthalensis. Homo habilis appeared in Africa about 2 million ybp; he had a very small brain size and probably ate foods that were not very tough. Homo erectus also appeared in Africa about 1.8 million years ago; he was larger with a brain capacity of about 600 cc. H. erectus evolved in Africa and walked out of Africa about 1.5 million ybp. Fossil records have been found in the Middle East, Western Europe, and Central Asia; he walked very long distances.

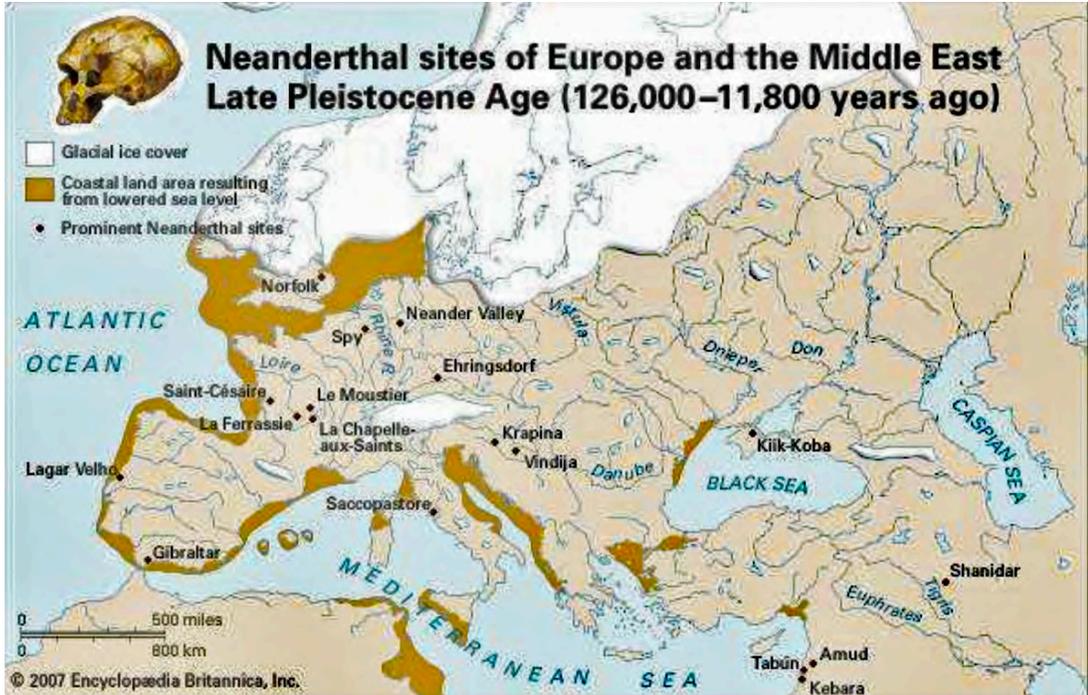
One of the most fascinating ancient histories involved Homo neanderthalensis. Neanderthals did **NOT** appear in Africa; there are no fossil records of Neanderthal on the African continent. There also is great controversy about Neanderthal's genomic evolution. The current hypothesis centers around the presumption that Neanderthal is in fact another version of modern human. Other researchers believe Homo denisova, first discovered in Georgia, may be Neanderthal's ancestor, rather than Homo erectus. Most recently, modern humans have been found to carry some Neanderthal DNA - varying between 2 -4 %. The fossil remains of the last Neanderthals appeared in Southern Spain about 30,000 ybp.



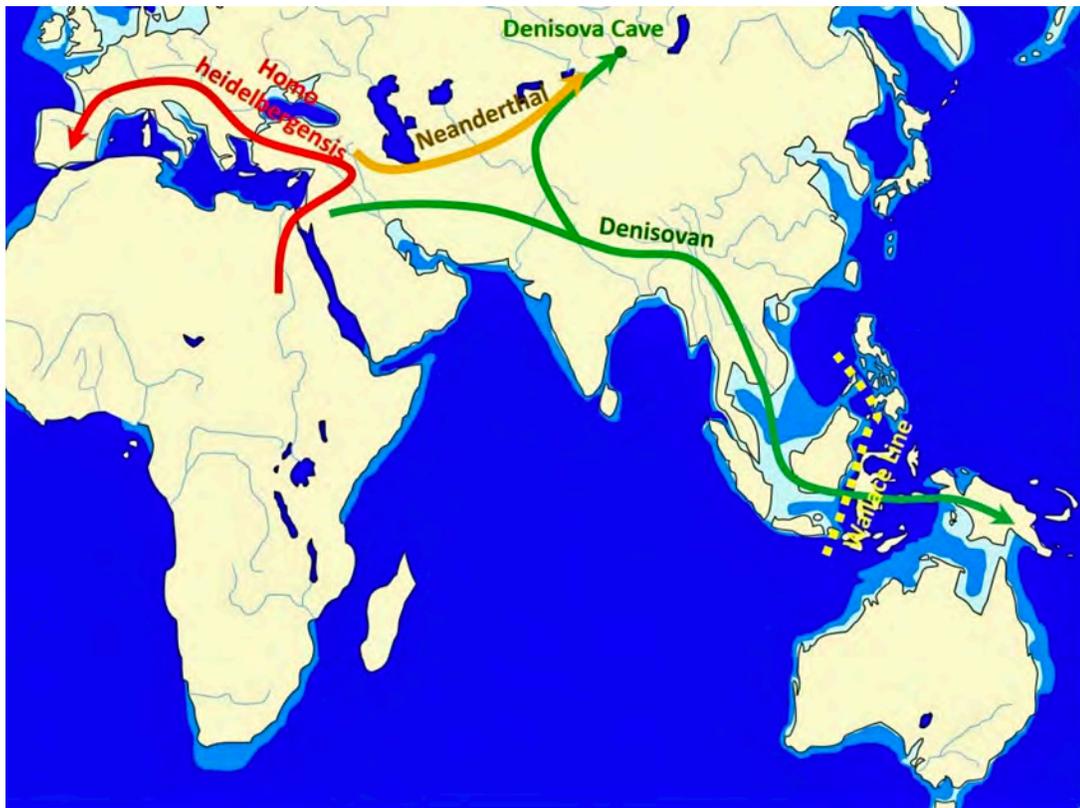
Map Early Human Migrations



Map of Homo erectus Migrations



Map of Homo neanderthalensis Sites



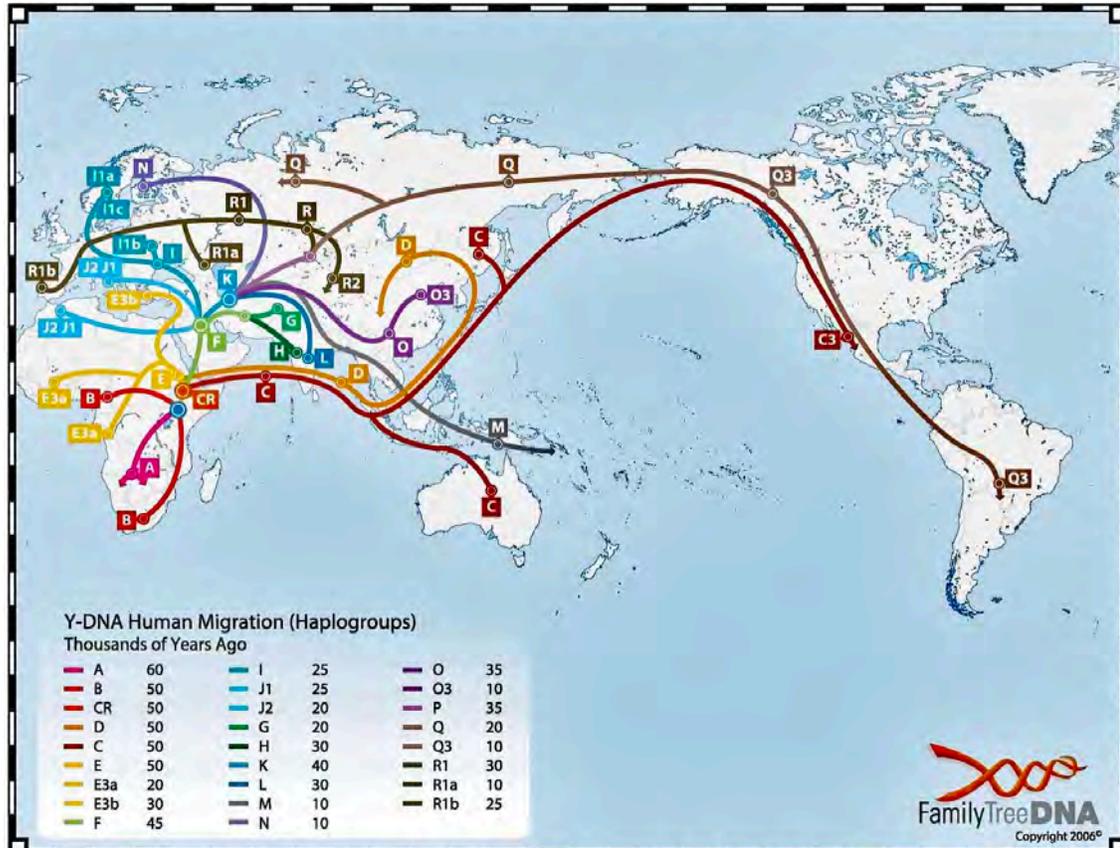
Map Migrations of Homo denisova

About 60,000 ybp modern humans migrated to Central Asia. It is from this prime group that the subsequent genomic types of humans have been identified. Dispersions of the prime groups migrated in all directions. For the purposes of this manuscript, however, we shall concentrate only upon those groups that moved to the Caucasus.



German Map of the Caucasus Region

There are no historical records about the human journey during those ancient periods. We must rely upon archeological evidence and the scientific proofs revealed in our DNA, our human genome. Nine distinct male genotypes have been found among the modern Caucasian regions. They represent distinct male genomic populations known as haplogroups: E1b1b, G, I, J1, J2, G, L, R and T. Our direct ancestors have been identified by the expression of Y-DNA Haplogroups E1b1b, J1 and J2.



Distribution of Y-DNA Haplogroups

The principle discovery of Y-DNA Haplogroups J1 and J2 in this grouping appeared in the Caucasus about 30,000 ybp. Our paternal Cherkinsky ancestors expressed type J2. The males from the family of our grandmother, Anna Halperin (Galperin) are haplogroup J1. My maternal grandfather, Solomon, expressed the genomic haplogroup E1b1b. They all journeyed to Anatolia about 8,000 ybp and subsequently to the Levant about 3,000 ybp. They have been genetically identified as Ashkenazim when they moved to Europe. My mother, Rebeca Solomon nee Goldenberg, expressed her female genomic ancestry as mtDNA¹ H1. The mtDNA, H haplogroups appeared in Europe from the Central Asia. Those ladies were part of the Cro-Magnon culture that first appeared in Europe about 45,000 ybp.

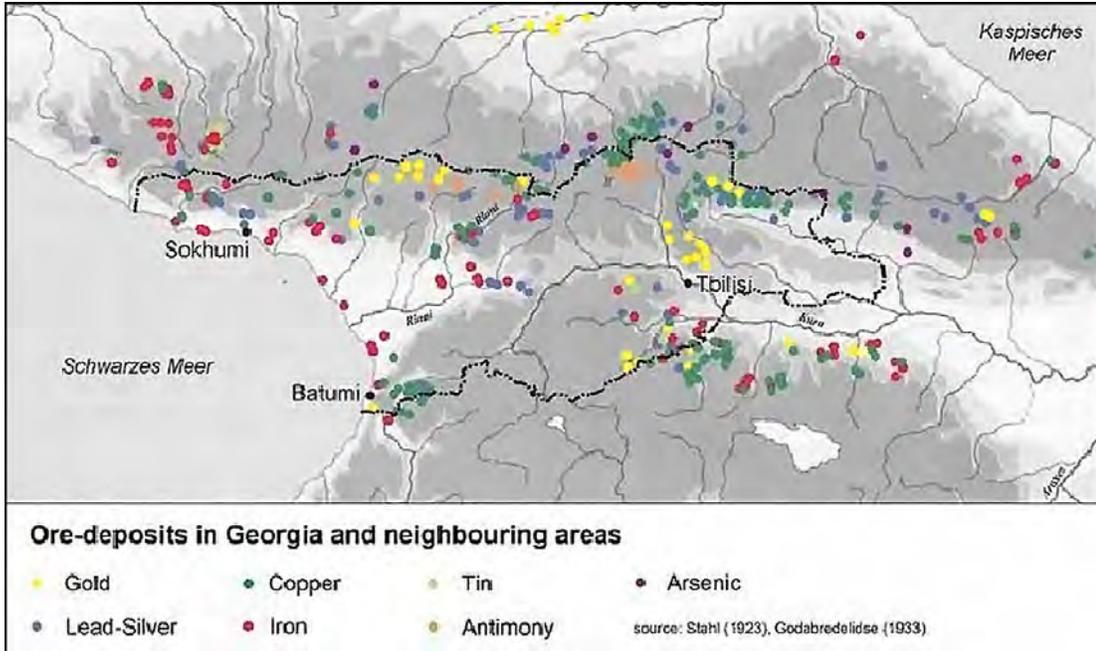
¹ mtDNA is the abbreviation for mitochondrial DNA.



Map Eurasian Steppes

Human migration from Central Asia to the Caucasus during ancient times from 50,000 – 30,000 ybp required navigation through or around the great mountain barriers that extended from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and Asia. North of the mountain barriers were the nomadic tribes, who used sturdy and swift horses as their means of transportation; they also spoke dialects of Indo-European languages. South of the mountain barrier in the Caucasus, were other Indo-European speakers, such as the Armenians and Georgians, but they were isolated by the mountains from their immediate neighbors in the Steppes.

Our ancestors express DNA discovered among inhabitants from the Caucasus, who lived about 30,000 ybp. However, further Y-DNA analyses of sub-groups have demonstrated mutations that are placed in Georgia, and specifically in the Kura Araxes valley as recently as 8,000 BCE. This region is a rich, fertile landscape that possessed abundant fowl and animals to sustain a large population. Scientific excavations of the dwellings, agriculture and pottery has produced evidence of their subsequent migrations to Anatolia, Persia, Antioch and Israel.

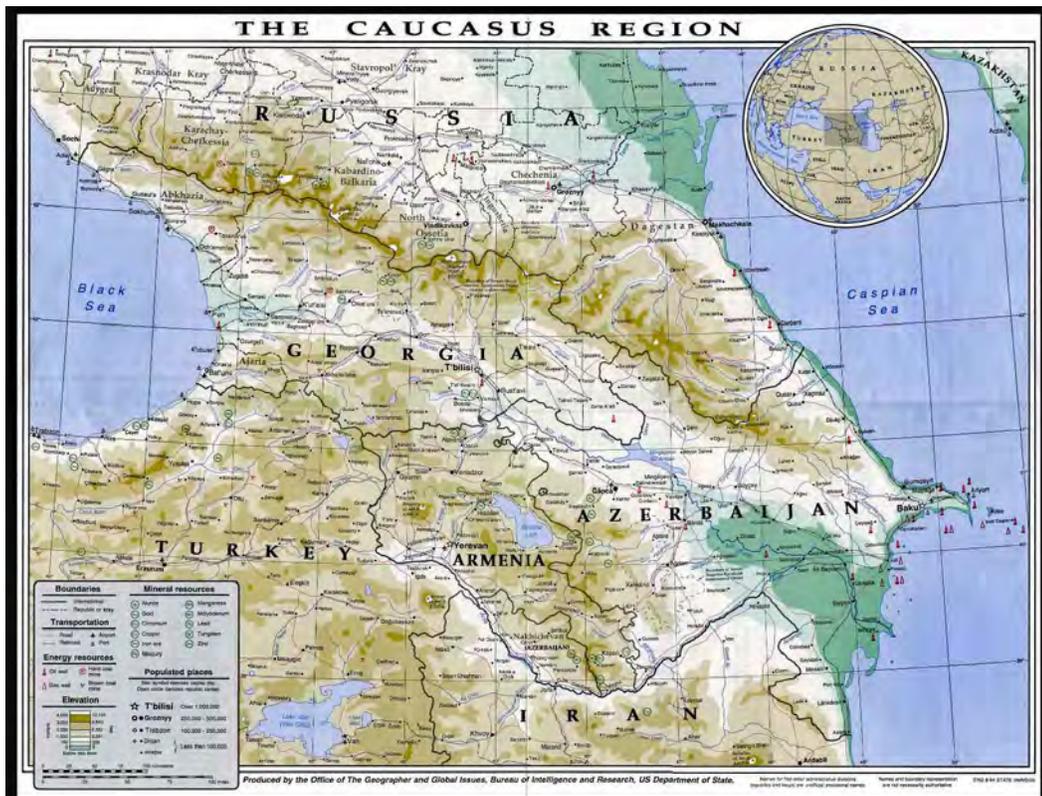


Map of Ancient Mining Projects, Kura Araxes Valley

Georgian Settlements



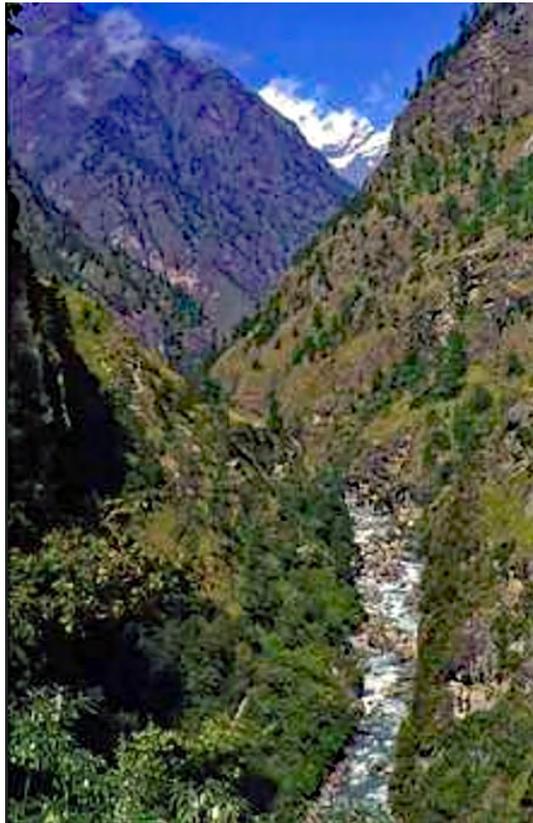
Aerial Map Kura Araxes Valley, Georgia



Geo-Political Map of the Caucasus Region



Map Of Regions Our Genomic Ancestors Occupied



Georgian Landscape



Georgian Landscape



Map Kura Araxes Valley, River Basin and Caucasus Ranges

Pluralistic Jewish Culture of the Caucasus



19th Century Dress



Probable Wedding Scene



Modern Orthodox Wedding Scene
Groom Wears Payes and Fur Streimel



Jewish Couple With Asiatic Features



Synagogue Sabbath Service



Shabbat At Georgian Home



Wedding Guests



Bridal Dance Ceremony

Chapter 2

Early Semitic History

The origin of Semitic languages began in Africa several millennia ago. Linguists have identified the early speakers of Semitic languages as “Afro-Asiatic.” Those tongues migrated with the nomadic populations to the Middle East and Mesopotamia. About 5,500 BCE, the Akkadians not only spoke a Proto-Semitic language, but they scribed characters and language upon stones. Therefore, the characters and vocabulary are known. Further changes and alteration of the language produced Proto-Aramaic.

One of the most important lessons learned from research of our ancestry is related to the subject of early Semitic history. As will be described in detail in the subsequent chapter about the migration of the Kura Araxes culture of Georgia, our ancestors moved to Anatolia, located now in Eastern Turkey. We can trace the further migration of the culture to Antioch and finally to the settlement of Bet Yerah located at the Southwestern border of the Sea of Galilee.

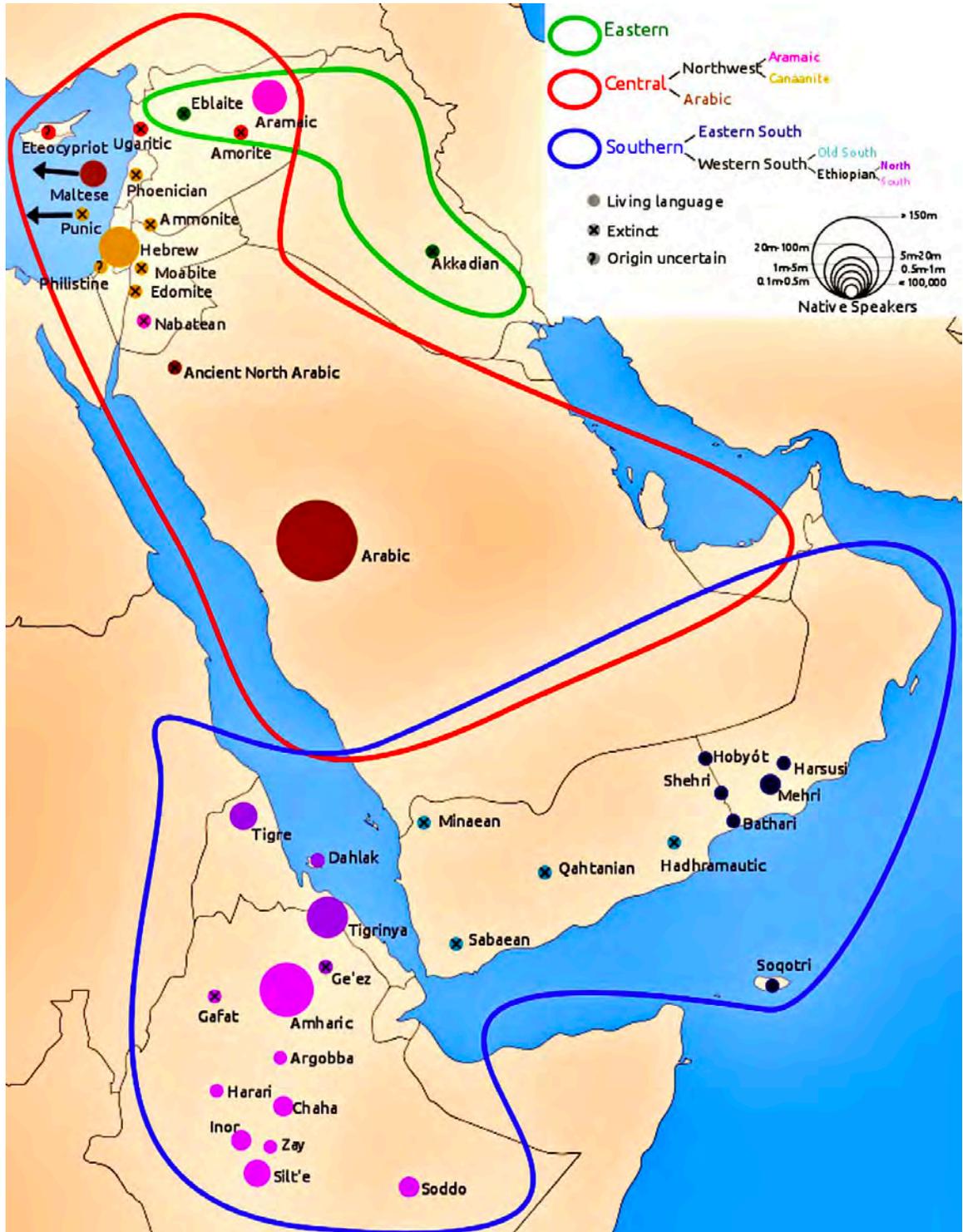
Our ancestors became Semites during the era from 8,000 to 5,000 ybp by their relocation to Anatolia at the time of the rise of the Akkadian empire. Our ancestors adapted to the new culture of the Akkadians, changed languages to Proto-Semitic and changed cultural practices. Eventually Proto-Semitic became the language of Mesopotamia. It spread to nearly the entire Near East, including the region of the Arabian Peninsula. Proto-Semitic later evolved to become the ancient Proto-Aramaic language, which led to the final evolution of Aramaic, Hebrew and Arabic. These Semitic languages and dialects were and are spoken by Jews, Arabs, the ancient Phoenicians, Chaldeans and Kurds, who are all classified as “Semites.”

The birth of Abraham, Patriarch of Jews, Christians and Muslims, is estimated to be about 2,800 BCE, which is 4,800 ybp. He was born in Ur, Mesopotamia, now located in Southern Iraq. Our ancestral Semitic association was prior to the birth of Abraham. Furthermore,

the Hebrew or Jewish spiritual culture identity occurred after the Mosaic exodus from Egypt, which brought those traditions to Canaan. It is estimated to have taken place about 1,280 BCE or 3,280 ybp.



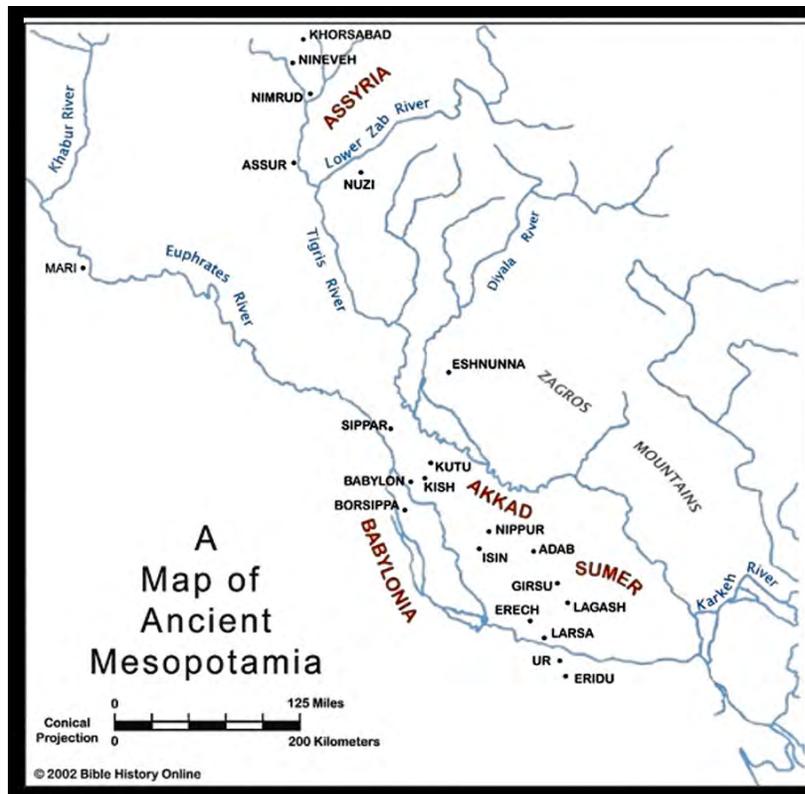
Map of Distribution of Afro-Asiatic Languages In Africa



Map of Evolution of Middle Eastern Semitic Languages
Proto-Aramaic and Old Hebrew, as well as Old Arabic



Map of Akkadian Empire
 Suzerainty: Mesopotamia, Anatolia and Caucasus Regions



Map Ancient Mesopotamia

Chapter 3

Georgian Kura Araxes Culture

Anthropological data supports the evidence discovered from our family genomic research. It provided for more detailed historical information about the era. Combining data from researching history, archeology, and anthropology added measurably to the genomic evidence about the journey of our ancestors.

The map illustrated below shows the wide distribution of Kura Araxes cultural traditions in the Caucasus, Anatolia, Northwestern Persia and the Levant.

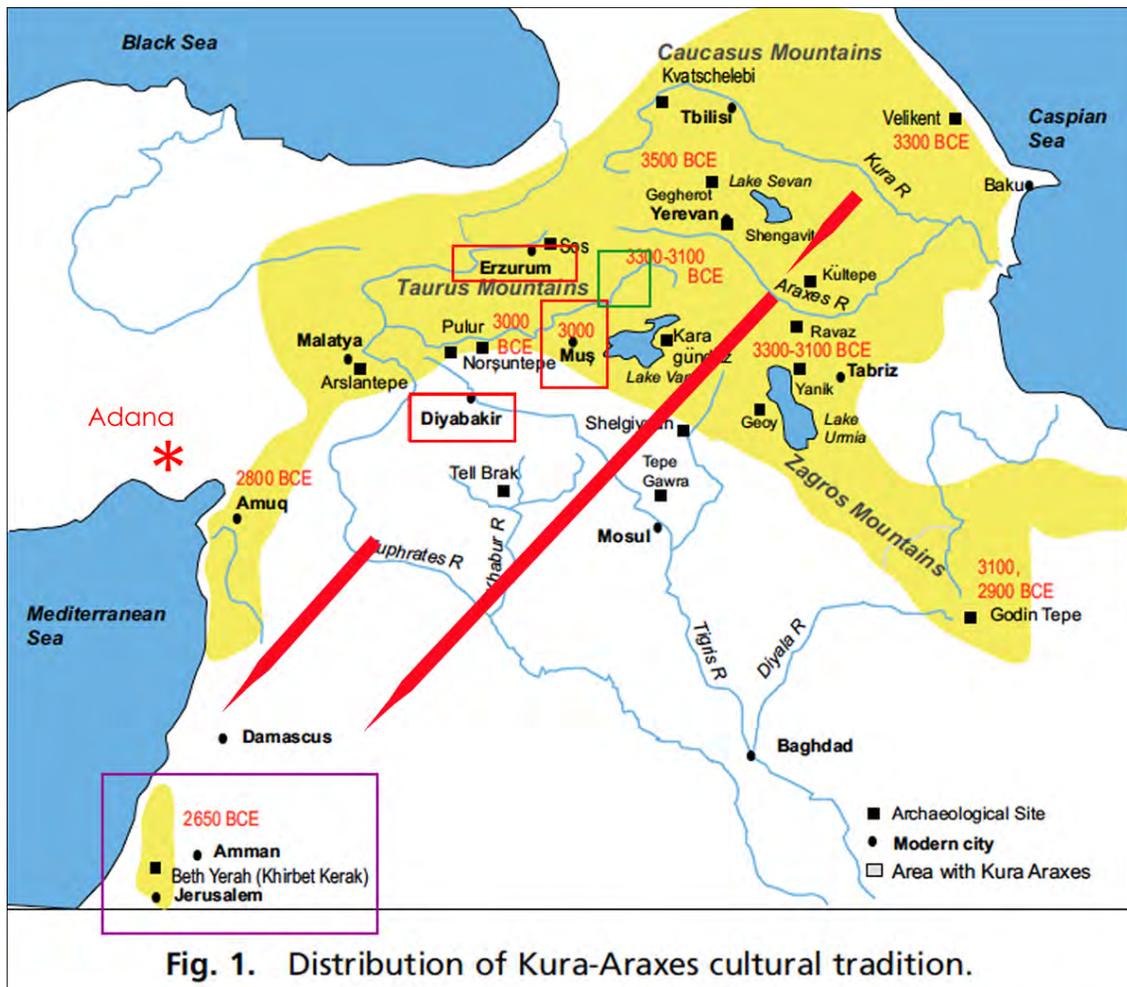


Fig. 1. Distribution of Kura-Araxes cultural tradition.

The Zagros mountains were a significant barrier to ancient migrations. Perhaps that geographic feature better explains why the Kura Araxes culture migrated to the north of the Zagros to Northwest Persia and as well along the Mediterranean coastline to Antioch and subsequently through the Syrian river distribution system to the Levant.



Map Zagros Mountains, Barrier To Migrations

Excavations of Kura Araxes Settlements

Over 40 Neolithic era settlements of the Kura Araxes valley have been excavated by Professor Andres Ricci.² I had the privilege of meeting him at a UCLA, Department of Archeology public lecture. He provided a copy of his thesis about the findings from his excavations. His principle findings were:

- The inhabitants of the Neolithic Kura Araxes settlements were semi-nomadic and did not continually inhabit the facilities that they constructed.

² University of Berlin.

- Apparently, they repeatedly returned to their habitats, perhaps indicating factors, such as, droughts, need for more abundant hunting, etc.
- They built mud brick structures taller than a single story.
- They irrigated crops by water filled canals
- Flat reed floats were used.
- Signature pottery was discovered making possible tracing their migrations.





The Neolithic Settlement of Arukhlo – Georgian German Project



Fig. 2
Kamiltepe. Topographic map (data mapping M. Ullrich, U. Boettcher, A. Kwast, photo M. Tonch; map and montage A. Kwast)

Kamiltepe Plot Map



Fig. 84
Aruchlo. Circular wall X,
with building complex
III (AR07L029293) in
the background (photo
S. Hansen)



Fig. 85
Aruchlo. Circular wall X
(AR10B053024;
photo S. Hansen)

Mud Brick Foundations



Fig. 86
Aruchlo. Section through circular wall IX (right) with "checked" bricks (AR10B053041; photo S. Hansen)



Fig. 87
Aruchlo. View of circular wall XI from the east (photo S. Hansen)



Fig. 88
Aruchlo. Circular wall XI with repairs and a large container (photo S. Hansen)



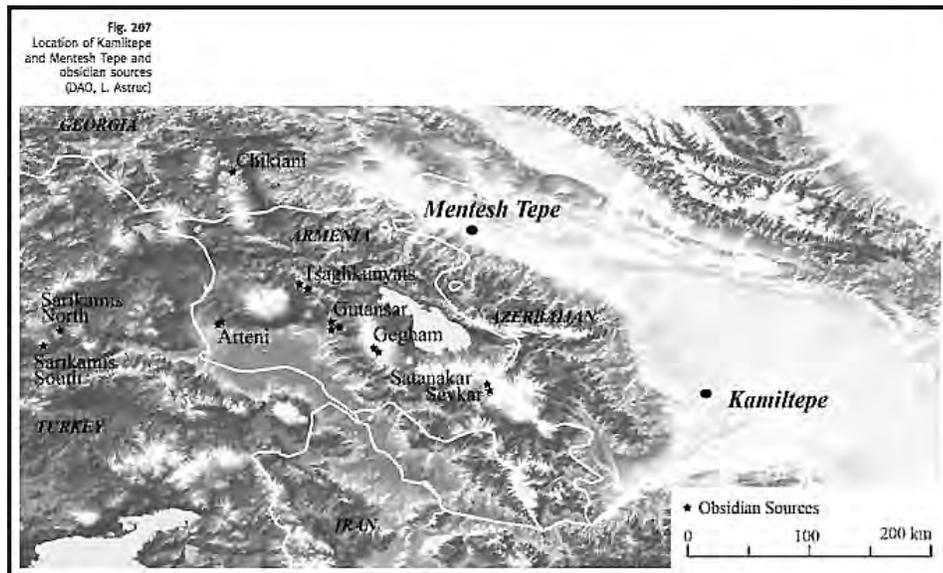
Fig. 89
Aruchlo. Collapsed mudbrick wall (photo S. Hansen)

Well-constructed Buildings

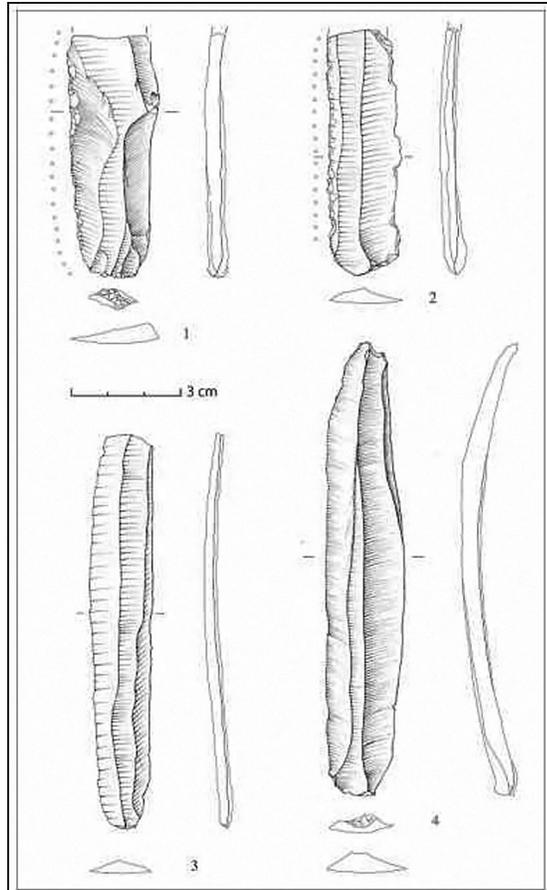




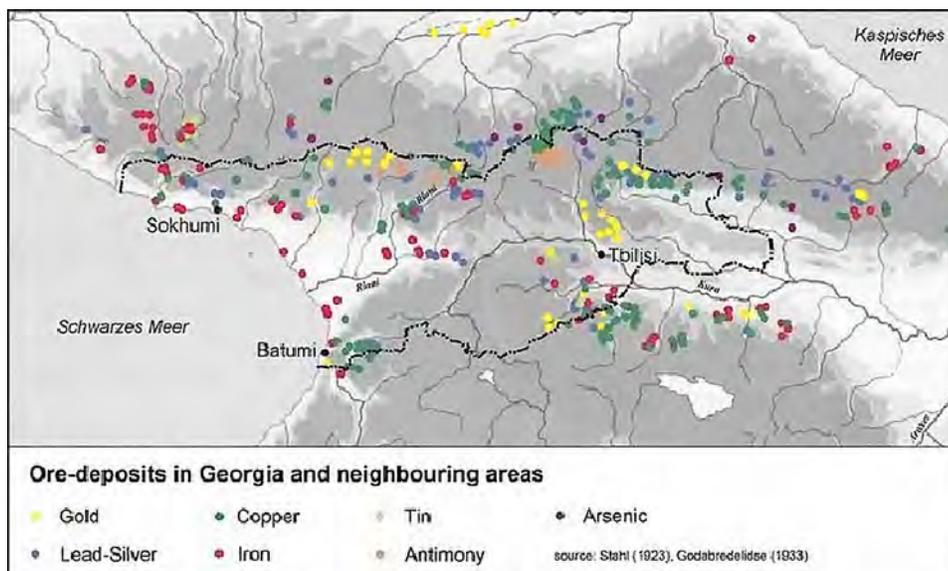
Anthropomorphic Reliefs



Georgian & Azerbaijan Obsidian Deposits



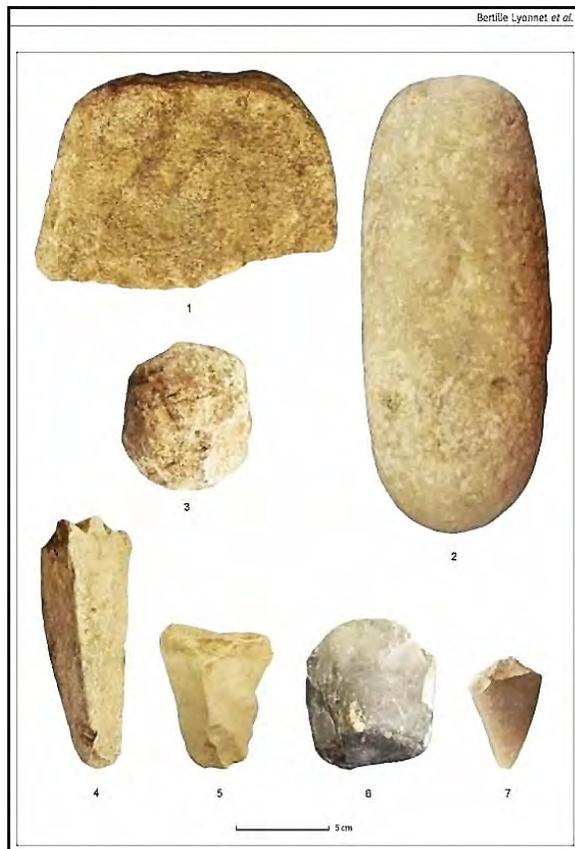
Obsidian Tools



Map Kura-Araxes Mining Sites



Kamiltepe – Carnelian Beads



Stone Tools



DBM, TH. RABSILBER).

Utilitarian Pottery Samples Discovered in the Excavations



Pottery Technology and Utility

From the 190-page manuscript of the excavation research project and Professor Ricci's lecture I better appreciated the material nature of the culture of our Georgian ancestors, 6,000 BCE (8,000 ybp). The settlements demonstrated the expansion of those communities and the migrations of clans to the Middle East. The evidence of their advancing technology and culture is shown by the excavated artifacts. They built residences of substantial height, canals and cultivated their fields, as well as used obsidian and stone tools, and produced pottery and jewelry.

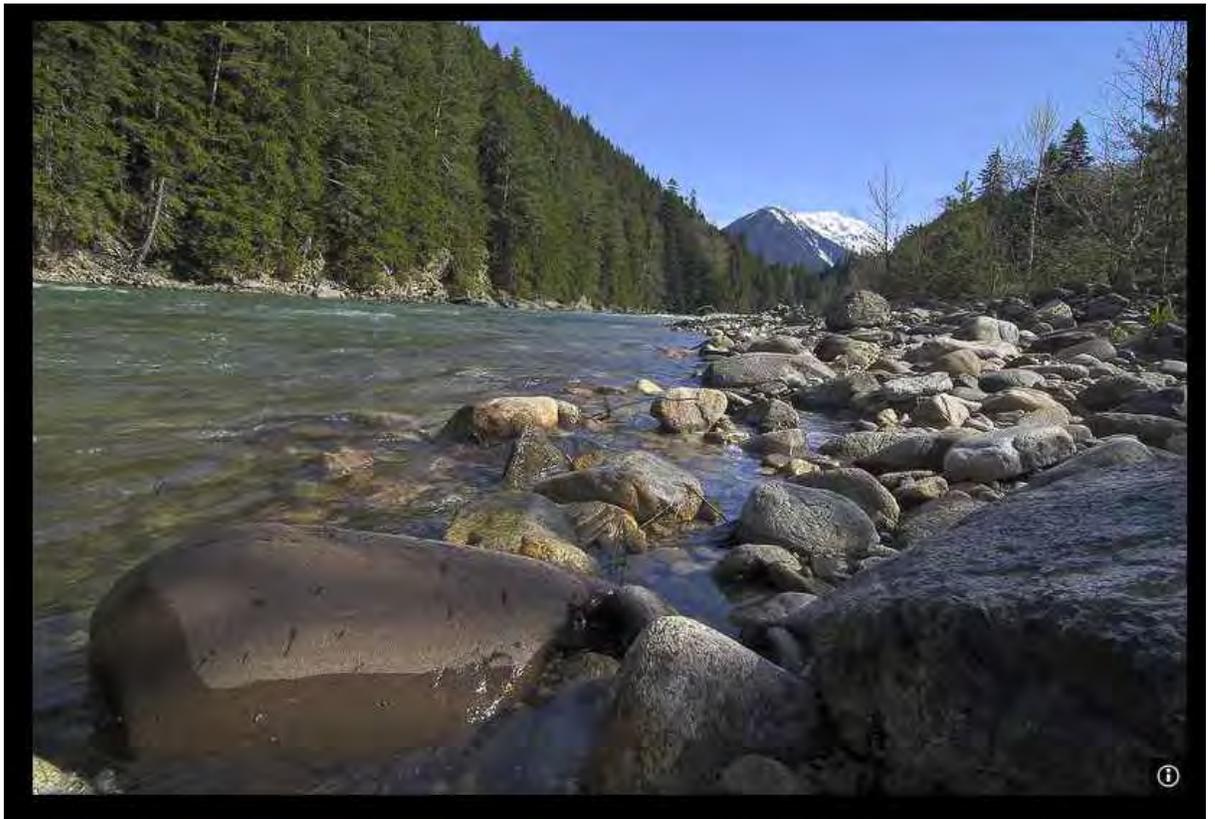
Professor Ricci discussed the geologic conditions of the region as flat and dry. However, the nearly 1000-mile expanse between the fresh water resources of the Caspian and Black Seas, as well as the abundant fresh water from the Kura and Araxes rivers, provided amply for their human requirements, their cultivated agriculture and animal husbandry. Geological and archeological evidence supports the repopulation migrations every few years. It is presumed that weather and agricultural conditions obligated the recurrent migrations and returns of the clans.

The Caucasus region supported a huge population explosion, as well as a technical explosion during the Neolithic era. Technologies flourished as attested to by the findings of the pottery, jewelry and trading that developed. Early populations were far more mobile than previously recognized. By the 4th millennium BCE, major empires gained rights to the region: the Hittites, Mitanni, Akkadians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians and the Egyptians.

Gallery of the Kura Araxes Valley



Georgia, Caucasus



①



View of a Village settlement in the Caucasus

Chapter 4

Era of the Göbekli tepe Culture

In 1994, an archeological discovery in Eastern Anatolia uncovered a very extensive site of a religious temple. It was so significant that it refuted prevailing theories about the timing of human settlement. When the publication about this phenomenal discovery became available this year, I was stirred by the thought that one of those ancient Neolithic people may have been an ancestral relative.

The June 2011 issue of the National Geographic magazine contains the cover story entitled, “*The Birth of Religion.*” A huge T-shaped carved 16-ton stone column displayed a sculpted relief of an animal protruding from the pillar; a wall made of smaller block-stones extended between each column. The date of the construction was estimated to be 11,600 years ago! The oldest materials at the site were dated 13,000 years ago. Evidence supported the fact that Göbekli tepe was built in several stages.



Exposed Massive Stone T-shaped Pillars³

³ <http://www.gobeklitepe.info/>

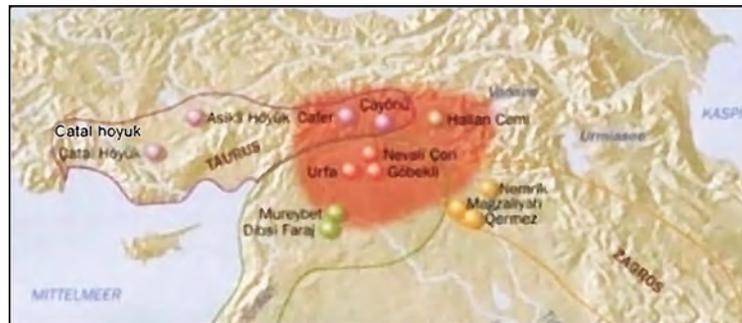
The construction of Göbekli tepe was the proof that humans were capable of producing stone pillars weighing up to 16 tons, sculpting magnificent large stone animal figures, and drafting architecture designs of a presumed ceremonial center. The feat was accomplished more than 2,000 years before the previously acknowledged date of first human settlement. I have some disagreement with the statement made that the structure represented the “Origin of Religion.” Surely such scientific dating of the well-crafted designs and the organization of the erected pillars was a scientific breakthrough. However, it would seem to me that the human engineers, craftsmen and workers, who built Göbekli tepe, did not learn their craft on the job. They had to have brought those great skills from elsewhere.

Publications from archeological excavations in Europe have shown elaborately designed figurative artwork of both animals and humans, as well as of musical instruments, i.e. the Cro-Magnon flute discovered in Hohle Fels, Germany, dated about 40,000 years ago. An unexplained issue relates to the meaning of the ancient artwork. Was this an example of early spiritual representations of human fecundity and dependence upon the animals for their hides and meat to sustain human life tens of thousands of years ago? Did such spiritual concepts begin earlier in Central Asia when humans first arrived at the Caspian Sea about 60,000-50,000 years ago from Africa and the Levant? Or, did spirituality begin even earlier as stated in the Bible, since the origin of humans in Africa? Göbekli tepe was built some 6,000 years prior to the construction of both Egyptian Sphinx and the massive stone structures that were arranged at Stonehenge, England. More recent evidence of ancient cultures is too detailed for this publication, but I was fascinated by my reading about the excavations of burial sites in Central Asia

and Asia, which have revealed some glimpses into ancient cultures 2,500 years ago.

Birth of Western Civilization

The map illustration shown below has a highlighted area (orange) of towns in Anatolia where the best evidence of early human settlements has been excavated. Among the most important towns are: Göbekli Tepe (13,000 years), Nevali Çori (9,250 years), Çayönü (9,200 years), Şanlı Urfa (9,000-6,000 years) and Harran (5,000 years). Ancient Assyrian texts 5,000 years ago mentioned “Beth Eden,” the House of Eden, which was reported to be located west of Assyria. There is mention of the children of Biblical Eden in the town of Thelassar (Tel Assar), which is now located in Northern Syria. Many researchers believe that this region was the Biblical location known as the *Garden of Eden*.



<http://www.turkeyforholidays.com/>



Göbekli Tepe

In 1994, a Kurdish shepherd in Eastern Anatolia noticed an oddly shaped rock protruding from the fields where his sheep grazed. He dusted off the surface and noted a huge oblong stone that appeared to have been carved. He contacted local archeological authorities, who in-turn contacted the German Archeological Institute associated with the Turkish Ministry of Culture in Ankara. Dr. Klaus Schmidt traveled to the region to make a first-hand inspection. The findings were highly significant. Eventually, Dr. Schmidt's team succeeded in uncovering one of the most important ancient Neolithic sites known in Western Civilization. Careful analysis revealed layers of human stone carvings, some of which were dated to 13,000 years ago. Some of the stones weighed almost 16 tons and there were a wide

variety of skillfully carved animal sculptures. The ancient reliefs were dated well before the pottery, iron and bronze ages.⁴

The site seemed to be a carefully crafted ceremonial structure that consisted of huge T-shaped pillars that apparently supported a heavy roof. The roofing material did not remain, so the material, wood or thatch, was not preserved. There was evidence that the multiple inner circular walls had been constructed at different times. There was no evidence of habitation, so the site appeared to be ceremonial, possibly a religious Temple. In the wider region, some settlements have been found, but none in the immediate area. The archeological team concluded that such an advanced technology utilizing immense stonework would have required a massive work force. There had to have been a settlement sufficient to support their needs.

It now is believed that the earlier hunters-gathers must have had significant spiritual beliefs *prior* to human settlement. The discoveries at Göbekli tepe represent the earliest structure providing for human spiritual worship. It would appear that settlements occurred because of the need to build a Temple, not as an afterthought from an already settled population.

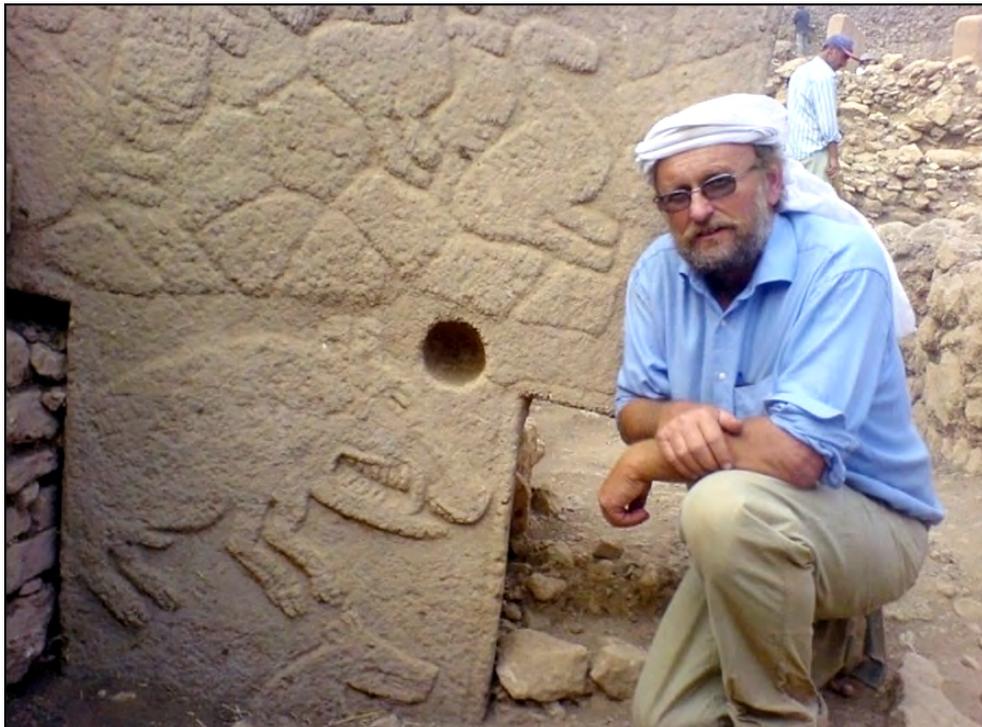
⁴ <http://www.turkishforum.com>



T-shaped limestone monoliths

Concentric Circular Walls Within the Temple

<http://www.turkeyforholidays.com/>



Dr. Schmidt Inspecting Sculpture of a Domesticated Pig

<http://www.turkishforum.com>

Chapter 5

Antioch

Artifacts discovered in the settlements of the Kura Araxes region are key to the knowledge about our prehistoric ancestral migrations. Tracing the locations of those artifacts has shown that the Kura Araxes culture was later transplanted to Antioch, Persia and the Levant. Antioch was part of ancient Syria at that time. Today, Antioch is part of the Southeastern tip of the Turkish Mediterranean coastline.

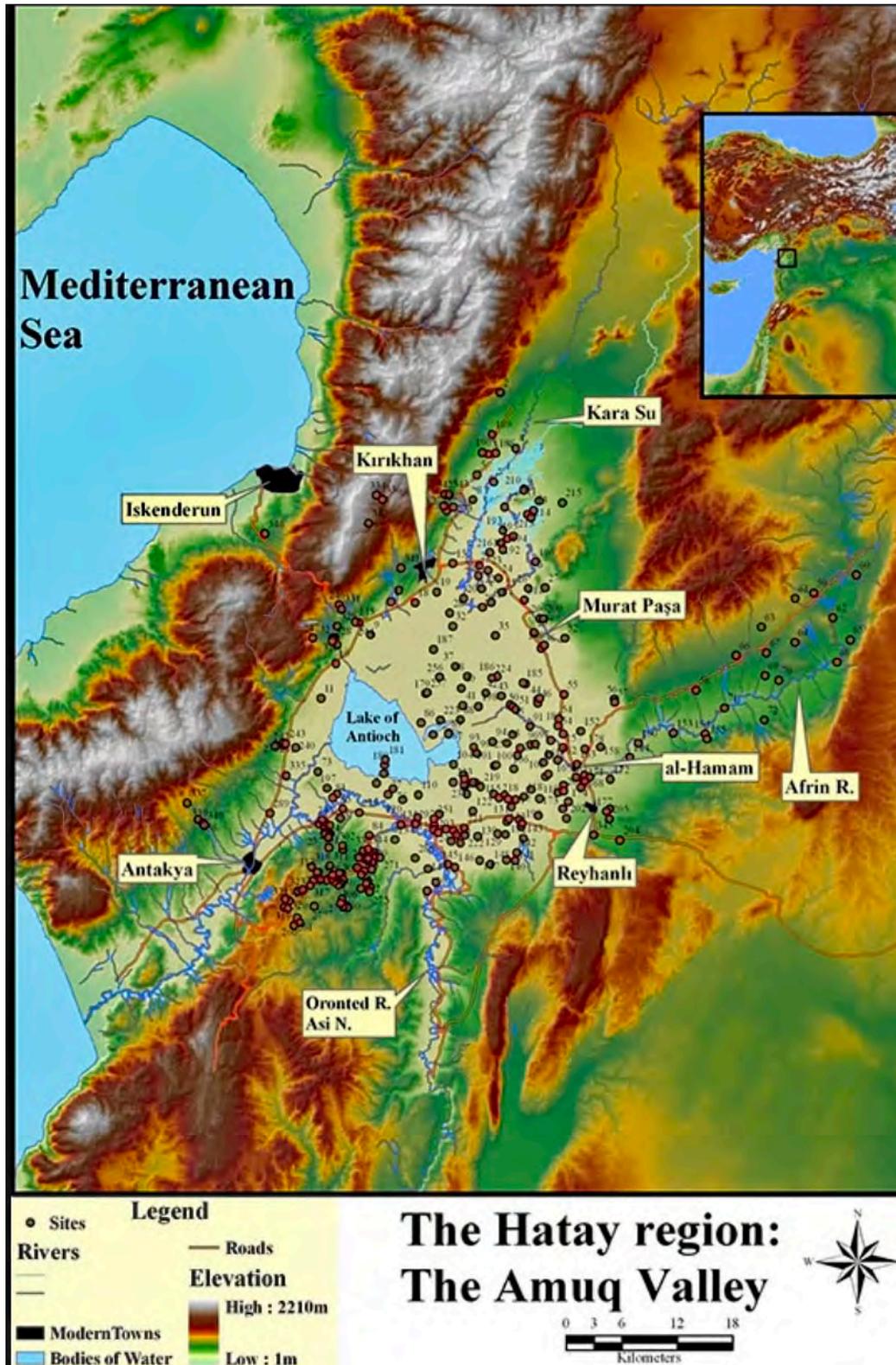
Settlements identified as “Kura Araxes culture have been located in the Antioch region known as the Amuq valley. This is the area of the watershed from the mountains east of the city of Antioch. The culmination of the streams and water runoff forms the Orontes River, which in ancient times was the chief waterway leading to the northeastern region of the Levant. It is logical to assume that our ancestors utilized the Orontes river for transport of their herds and households. The alternative was to walk the distance from Antioch to Northern Israel, which would have been quite hazardous and more limited regarding any available fresh water sources.

Conveniently, the Orontes river courses southward crossing through Lebanon to reach northern Israel. The Orontes river then turns westward to empty into the Mediterranean Sea.

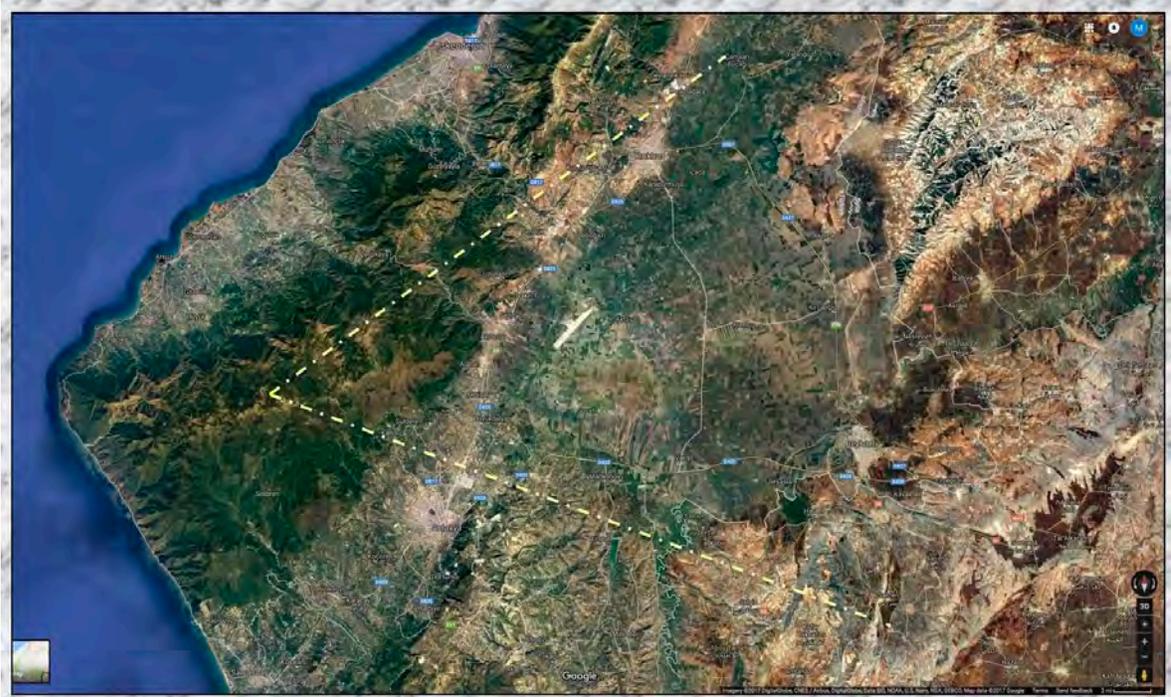
There seems little doubt that this important river system was a key geographic resource in the settlement of our ancestors at Bet Yerah located at the southwestern region of the Sea of Galilee. Evidence from the genomic mutation data, calculated archeological timelines and the dating of the Kura Araxes artifacts helped to determine the timing of arrival of our ancestors in that region. It is estimated that our ancestors arrived in Israel about 2,800 BCE.



Map Showing the Course of the Orontes River



Map of the Settlements in the Amuq Valley



Amuq Valley Watershed



Excavation of a Kura Araxes Tel



Turkey, Tell Atchana (ancient Alalakh) Courtyard & entry to Late Bronze Age Palace (Level IV) (Nigmepe's Palace) from SW. (28mm lens) 22 July 1995.

Ruins of a Kura Araxes Ancient Settlement

Chapter 6

Settlement of Bet Yerah

According to archeological findings from the excavations discovered at Tel Bet Yerah, Semitic speaking clans settled about 2,800 BCE. Genomic studies of our Y-DNA confirmed both the location of the population and the dating of the period. The inhabitants were Semitic speakers, probably Proto-Semitic dialects. Biblical Aramaic was spoken by the Arameans and appeared about 1,000 BCE. It spread from Northwestern Euphrates valley to the Northern Levant. The Aramaic alphabet was adopted by many dynasties in Mesopotamia, including the Neo-Assyrians and was adapted by speaker of Old Hebrew, Phoenician, Chaldean and Arabic. It was eventually spoken throughout the Near and Middle East by populations that are now part of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Palestine, Kuwait, and Arabia. Aramaic was the language of Jesus and was also the language of the Chapters of Daniel and Ezra in the Bible and one of the languages written in the Babylonian Talmud. Aramaic was spoken among the nomads and in the settlements of exiled Jews in ancient times as will be detailed later on in the manuscript.

Abraham, our spiritual Patriarch, was born in Ur, Mesopotamia, about 2,800 BCE. He espoused the belief in one Supreme God, and made his covenant with God by circumcising himself. He did not know of the Torah or Ten-Commandments. It was Moses, who led the Exodus from Egypt about 1,280 BCE, which occurred 1,500 years after Abraham.

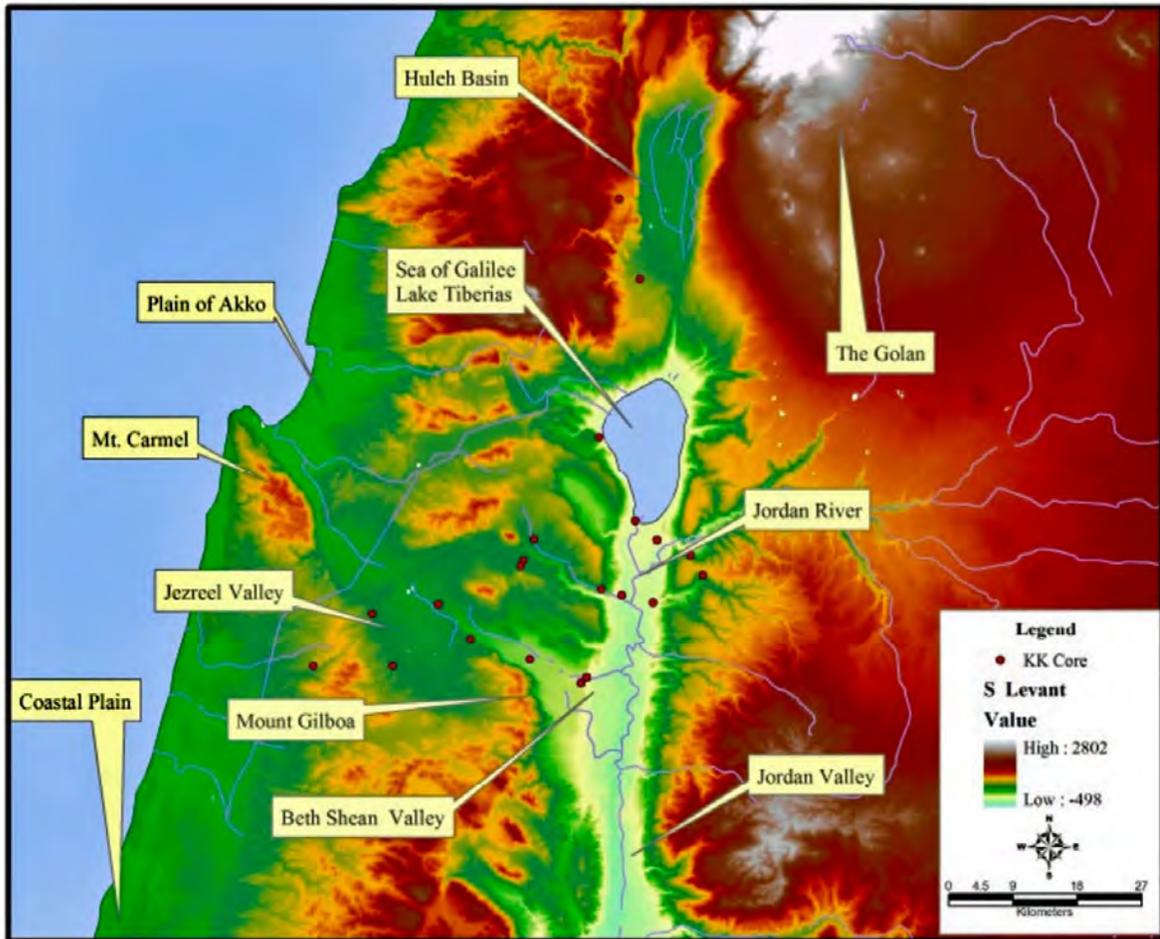


Fig. 32 Topographic map of Northern Palestine with distribution of sites producing Khirbet Kerak Ware. Topographic map derived from SRTM data.

Map of Kura Araxes Culture Settlements
Palestine and Sea of Galilee – Tel Bet Yerah

Excavation and Research Analysis Of Tel Bet Yerah, Israel⁵

Tel Bet Yerah - First City of the Jordan Valley



Tel Bet Yerah (Khirbet el-Kerak) is the site of a large fortified Early Bronze Age town (25 ha present size, approx. 30 ha [=80 acres] original size) situated at the point where the Jordan River exits Lake Kinneret (Sea of Galilee). Described by Albright as "perhaps the most remarkable Bronze Age site in all Palestine", the site was occupied throughout the Early Bronze Age (3500-2300 BCE), and presents the most complete sequence of the



transition from village to city life in ancient Canaan. Built on a raised peninsula near an important crossroads and a



fertile valley, Tel Bet Yerah became a major regional centre, and its fortification systems, city gate, streets and houses reveal elements of advanced urban planning. The monumental Circles Building--the granary of Bet Yerah--is unique in the ancient world. Khirbet Kerak

Ware--a remarkable type of bichrome pottery--was first defined here and carries the name of the site.

After the decline of the Early Bronze Age town, limited parts of the site were occupied in the Middle Bronze Age and in the Persian, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic periods.

Although the name of the Early Bronze city is unknown, the name "Bet Yerah", first mentioned in the Talmud, could preserve an ancient tradition connecting the Canaanite site to a moon deity. In the Hellenistic period the city was called Philoteria, and somewhat later the name Zinbari (Arabic al-Sinnabra) was associated with the site. In recent generations the mound was known as "The Kerak", a name preserving the memory of the fortified town that once existed there, its ruins still visible. "The Kerak" figures prominently in the folklore of early Zionist communal settlement in Palestine, evoking memories of its natural beauty and inspiring scenery.

5

From:http://www.archaeology.tau.ac.il/arch_files/projects/betyerah/introduction.html

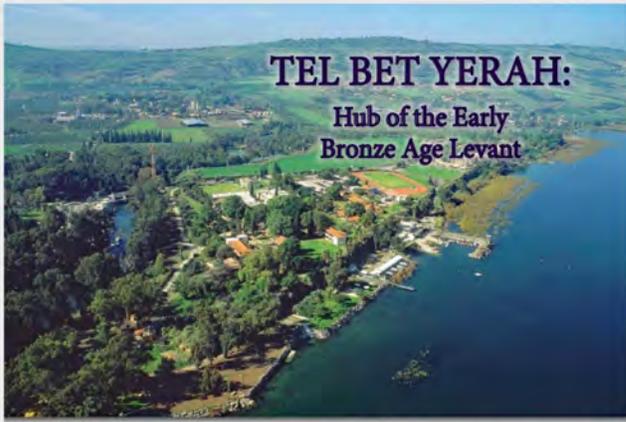
Gallery from the Israel Antiquities Authority⁶



Tel Bet Yerah

Southwest Region of the Sea of Galilee
Home of the Kura Araxes Culture in the Levant

⁶ From: <https://www.jstor.org/publisher/iaa>



Raphael Greenberg, Sarit Paz, David Wengrow, and Mark Iserlis



1. Aerial view of the 2007 excavation area, looking south.
Image 1 of 13





Excavation of Early Bronze III platters (c. 2800 BCE), on a house-floor.
Image 3 of 5



12. Area GB-T, mosaic floor of palace, excavated in 1950.
Image 12 of 13



13. Area GB-T, foundations in the southern part of the central palace structure; foundation trenches and evidence for earthquake damage in south wall (at right), looking south.
Image 13 of 13





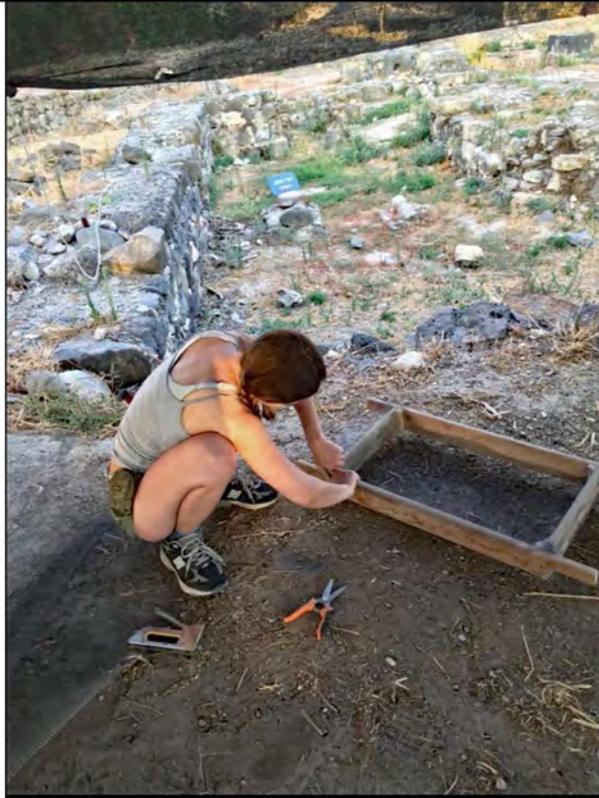
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Chapter 7

Jewish Settlements of Sinai, Arabia, Yemen and Africa

Sinai Peninsula

Jewish families began to exit Israel in larger groups after the final defeat of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 597 BCE. There was an exodus to India, Sinai, Yemen, the island of Elephantine in the Southern Nile, and North Africa.

The clans were mostly nomads, while some of them settled. These folks were not urban dwellers. They had few possessions and depended entirely upon local resources. Later on, some of the groups expanded and there were conflicts with other nomadic clans. A gallery of images is illustrated demonstrating ancient Jewish traditions that have been preserved among the nomads.

Most importantly, the nomadic clans have preserved ancient Jewish traditions for 2,500 years, which have provided a much richer understanding of those unique customs.

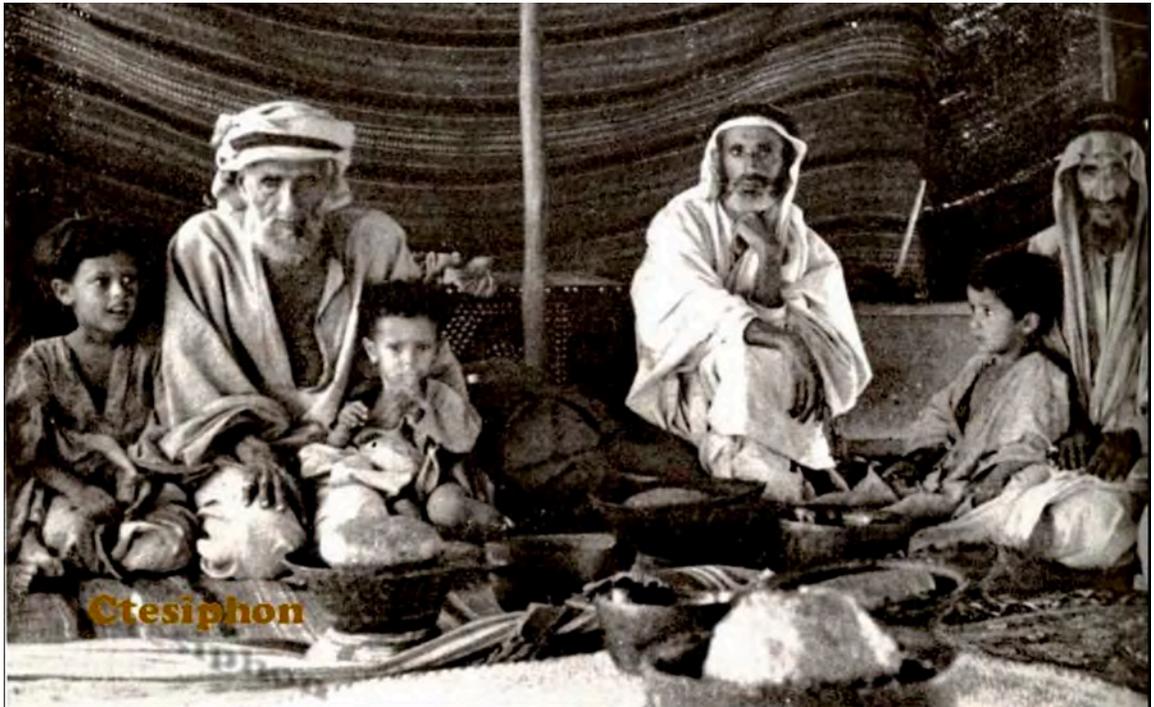


Map of Hiyaz (Hijaz), Arabia
 Region of Relocation of Many of the Jewish Settlers
 Jews Also Settled in Mecca and Medina



6





Nomadic Jewish Family



Seder



Teaching Moment



Mastery Of Hebrew or Aramaic Scholarship

Chapter 8

Samaritans

From Wikipedia: Author: Samaritans have a complex history and Jewish traditions, which are controversial. The Wikipedia on-line encyclopedia has the most succinct summary of their history. It is copied for convenience for our family genealogical précis. Most importantly, ***The tradition of Samaritan Judaism ranks only the Tanakh as a holy book and does not recognize the Talmud***

*“The Samaritan Pentateuch, also known as the Samaritan Torah (Hebrew: torah shomronit), is a text of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, written in the Samaritan alphabet and used as a scripture by the Samaritans. It constitutes their entire biblical canon. Some six thousand differences exist between the Samaritan and the Masoretic Text. Most are minor variations in the spelling of words or grammatical constructions, but others involve significant semantic changes, such as the uniquely Samaritan commandment to construct an altar on **Mount Gerizim**. Nearly two thousand of these textual variations agree with the Koine Greek Septuagint⁷ and some are shared with the Latin Vulgate. Throughout their history, Samaritans have made use of translations of the Samaritan Pentateuch into Aramaic, Greek and Arabic as well as liturgical and exegetical works based upon it. It first became known to the Western world in 1631, providing the first example of the Samaritan alphabet and sparking an intense theological debate regarding its relative age versus the Masoretic text. Some Pentateuchal manuscripts discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls have been identified as bearing a "pre-Samaritan" text type. Wide agreement now exists among textual critics that the Samaritan Pentateuch represents an authentic ancient textual tradition despite the presence of some unique variants introduced by the Samaritans.*

⁷ Written in Alexandria, Egypt, for the Greek Jewish families and synagogues.



Map of Mount Gerizim (Nablus, Palestine)

Samaritans believe that God authored their Pentateuch and gave Moses the first copy along with the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments. They believe that they preserve this divinely composed text uncorrupted to the present day. Samaritans commonly refer to their Pentateuch as ךְ קוֹשֵׁטָה ("The Truth"). Samaritans include only the Pentateuch in their biblical canon. They do not recognize divine authorship or inspiration in any other book in the Jewish Tanakh. A Samaritan Book of Joshua partly based upon the Tanakh's Book of Joshua exists, but Samaritans regard it as a noncanonical secular

historical chronicle. According to a view based on the biblical Book of Ezra (Ezra 4:11), the Samaritans are the people of Samaria who parted ways with the people of Judah (the Judahites) in the Persian period.

The Samaritan Pentateuch:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samaritan_Pentateuch 3/17

...Samaritans believe that it was not they, but the Jews, who separated from the authentic stream of Judaism, around the time of Eli, in the 11th century BCE. Jews have traditionally connected the origin of the Samaritans with the later events described in 2 Kings 17:24-41 (<http://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt09b17.htm#24>) claiming that the Samaritans are not related to the Israelites, but to those brought to Samaria by the Assyrians.”

Scholarly perspective:

“Modern scholarship connects the formation of the Samaritan community with events which followed the Babylonian Captivity. One view is that the Samaritans are the people of the Kingdom of Israel who separated from the Judaites (people of Judah). Another view is that the event happened somewhere around 432 BCE, when Manasseh, the son-in-law of Sanballat, went off to found a community in Samaria, as related in Nehemiah 13:28 and Josephus. Josephus himself, however, dates this event and the building of the temple at Shechem to the time of Alexander the Great. Others believe that the real schism between the peoples did not take place until Hasmonean times when the Gerizim temple was destroyed in 128 BCE by John Hyrcanus. The script of the Samaritan Pentateuch, its close connections at many points with the Septuagint, and its even closer agreements with the present Hebrew text, all suggest a date about 122 BCE. The adoption of the Pentateuch as the sacred text of the Samaritans before their final schism with the Palestinian Jewish community provides evidence that it was already widely accepted as a canonical authority in that region.”

“GERIZIM, MOUNT⁶

Heb. גֵּרִיזִים, mountain in Erez Israel, S. of Shechem. After crossing the Jordan River, the children of Israel were commanded to build a stone altar on Mt. Ebal, to engrave upon it "all the words of this law"

1. <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/gerizim-mount>

(Deut. 27:4-8), and to "set the blessing upon Mt. Gerizim, and the curse upon Mt. Ebal" According to 8:30, this was Joshua's first act after the conquest of Ai. Har-Gerizzim (as written in the masoretic text; Har Gerizim, according to *Ben-Asher; usually Hargerizim in the traditional Samaritan text of the Pentateuch) is the present-day Jebel al-Ṭūr (shortened from the Samaritan name Tura Brikha). Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal rise above the city of Shechem (**Nablus**), in the south and north respectively; Gerizim is approximately 2,600 ft. (881 m.) high and Ebal approximately 2,800 ft. (940 m.). Between them lies the valley of Shechem. Both hills are of oolithic limestone, ten springs descending from their slopes to the fertile and well-watered valley.

Mt. Ebal has comparatively little vegetation and no water issuing along its southern side, because the slope of the tilted rock is northward; one exception is at the southeast end of Ebal, where a spring makes it possible for the village of Askar to exist. The slopes of Mt. Gerizim, on the other hand, are covered with trees to the very top of the ridge, and the slope of the rock causes the main springs to issue on the side of the valley facing the city of Shechem. The contrast in the amount of water on the two sides of the valley is very marked. A pilgrim's legend from the Middle Ages, which has often been reprinted, relates that Mt. Gerizim, the blessed mountain (Deut. 11:29), is pleasant and fertile, while Mt. Ebal, cursed by divine decree (ibid.), is desolate and barren.

The identification of the two mountains is made clear in the Bible (Deut. 11:29-30; cf. Gen. 12:6; Judg. 9:7), and this identification is maintained throughout the sources (Sot. 7:5; Jos., Ant., 4:305; 11:340) down to modern times. As a result of an obscure topographical identification in Deuteronomy 11:30 - "Are they not beyond the Jordan, behind the way of the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites that dwell in the Arabah, over against Gilgal, beside the terebinths of Moreh?" - and apparently in the wake of a dispute with the Samaritans, another tradition, ascribed to R. Eliezer, in the Talmud, which identifies the two mountains with two mounds which the children of Israel erected for themselves near Gilgal, and not with the two mountains near Shechem (TJ, Sot. 1:3, 21c; TB, Sot. b33b). This view was later adopted by the fathers of the Church (Eusebius, Onom. 64:1920).

On the Madaba Map, both traditions appear; next to Shechem is written Tur Gerizim, and next to Jericho Ebal-Gerizim. Apparently, the Bible

does not mean to imply that these two mountains are situated in the Arabah near Gilgal, but simply refers to the general direction in order to distinguish between this Arabah and the Arabah associated with the hill-country of the Amorites (Deut. 1:1; 4:49). Perhaps "behind the way of the going down of the sun" indicates the region west of the road which passes through the northern Arabah (from Jericho to Beth-Shean)."

Later, Mt. Gerizim is mentioned when the Samaritans erected their temple there about the time of Nehemiah (in the time of Alexander the Great, according to Jos., Ant., 11:310-11, but this is apparently a mistake; cf. Neh. 13:28, according to which a man of priestly stock was cast out by Nehemiah for intermarriage with the Samaritans). From then on, the Samaritans considered this temple to be their most holy spot, and their tradition ascribes nearly all of the biblical account of the patriarchs' deeds and the places associated with them (the land of Moriah, Beth-El, etc.) to Mt. Gerizim. There are 13 names for Mt. Gerizim, the "Kibla" of the Samaritans, the place toward which they turn in prayer. The fourth of the five articles in the declaration of their creed proclaims its holiness. *Markah dedicated a whole chapter in his Memar to the praise of this mountain (II, 10) in connection with Ex. 15. He enumerates it as one of the choicest things created by God and set apart as divine. The Samaritan text for Deuteronomy 27:4-5 reads: "And it shall be when ye are passed over the Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in Mt. Gerizim" (in place of Mt. Ebal in the masoretic text; cf. Sot. 33b). **It is of interest that they even add Mt. Gerizim at the end of the Ten Commandments in both Exodus 20:17 and Deuteronomy 5:21, considering it to be the chosen mountain** (Har ha-Mivḥar), even from the time of the creation of the world. (The Samaritans read baḥar, "has chosen," for the masoretic text yibḥar, "will choose," in Deut. 12:14.) The Samaritans gave it the title "mountain of blessing" or "blessed mount" (Tūrbarīk; Samaritan Book of Joshua, ch. 21; Gen. R. 32:10; Song. R. 4:4, no. 5; Tura Brikha; Deut. R. 3:6; Tura Kadisha) and they claimed that the mountain was not submerged at the time of the Flood (ibid.).

Mt. Gerizim became the main point of divergence between the Samaritans and the Jews. (Cf. the end of Kut.: "At what point can the Samaritans be accepted into Judaism? When they reject their belief in Mt. Gerizim.") In the time of Ptolemy I Soter (323-284 B.C.E.), there

was an argument over this point between the Samaritans and the Jews of Alexandria (Jos., Ant., 12:1ff.). When Antiochus IV Epiphanes decrees against the Jews, he converted the Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim into a pagan shrine in honor of Zeus Xenios or Hellenios (II Macc. 5:23; 6:1; Jos., Ant., 12:257ff.). This temple was destroyed in 129 B.C.E. by John Hyrcanus (Jos., Ant., 13:255ff.; cf. Meg. Ta'an. 333). However, it remained a holy site for the Samaritans, and all religious acts were performed "in the name of Mt. Gerizim" (TJ, Yev. 8:1, 9a). Due to the Samaritan belief in the ancient sanctity of the mountain, the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate massacred a large gathering of Samaritans who had assembled to look at vessels which Moses allegedly made for the Tabernacle and which one of the Samaritans claimed he would show them (these vessels had supposedly been concealed on Mt. Gerizim; Jos., Ant., 18:85).

*In the war against Rome (66–70), the Samaritans joined the rebellion and assembled on Mt. Gerizim to halt the Romans, in spite of the news they had received that the Jews of Galilee had been defeated. Vespasian sent Cerialis, commander of the fifth legion, against them and he besieged them with 3,000 infantry and 600 cavalry. The Roman troops massacred more than 11,000 of the Samaritans on the 27th of Sivan, 67 C.E. (Jos., Wars, 3:307ff.). After the war of Bar Kokhba (132–135) the emperor Hadrian erected a pagan shrine to Zeus Hypsistos (or to Serapis) on the top of Mt. Gerizim and placed the bronze gates from the Temple in Jerusalem there. From the time of Antoninus Pius onward, this sanctuary appears on the coins of Neapolis, the city which Titus had built on the site of the village of Ma'abarta, near ancient Shechem. In the time of the emperor *Julian, this sanctuary was destroyed and the Samaritans used the bronze gates as the door of the synagogue (haknishah) called Helkat ha-Sadeh, which their priest Akbon built in the city of Neapolis. Another synagogue was erected by Akbon's predecessor, Baba Rabbah, "near Mt. Gerizim, Beth-El," "below the mountain" (apparently the site of the present-day Rijl al 'Amūd), in the time of Theodosius I (379–395 C.E.).*

With the predominance of Christianity in the country, the religious status of the Samaritans suffered. Judging from John 4, Gerizim was also a sacred spot for the Christians. After a Samaritan uprising in the time of Zeno (474–491 C.E.), the Samaritans were expelled from the mountain and their synagogue was taken from them by command of the

emperor (484 C.E.). The Christians erected a Church of the Virgin Mary there and placed a stone from Calvary in it.

Following a Samaritan rebellion in the time of Justinian, the area around the church on Mt. Gerizim was encompassed by a fortified wall. In the time of the caliph al-Mansūr (754–755), the Christian church was destroyed, and under al-Ma'mūn (813–833) Justinian's wall was razed. Remains of buildings sacred to the Samaritans still on the mountain (Khirbat al-Lūza; al-Şakhra ("the rock"); the place of the 12 stones). There are also remains of the Church of the Virgin Mary and Justinian's wall. The remains of the church were excavated by a German expedition during 1927–28 and by the Department of Antiquities of the British Mandatory government in 1946. It is on Mt. Gerizim that the Samaritans still observe all their festivals and all public holy ceremonies, as the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, and prayers on all their feasts and holidays. The entire congregation dwells on its slopes from the tenth of Nisan until the day after the end of the Mazzot Festival. Today houses have been built to accommodate them instead of the tents of former years. The offering takes place not on the top of the mountain, the holiest spot where their temple once stood, but at a lower place to the west of it, possibly because the holy spot has been defiled by a Muslim cemetery."



Mount Gerizim



Samaritan Ceremony on Mount Gerizim



Samaritan Torah



Samaritan Religious Instruction





Samaritan Maidens





Samaritan Prayers



Samaritan Rabbi

Samaritanan Pesach Sacrifice and Feast







Chapter 9

Karaites

From Wikipedia:⁹

Author: Karaites have a complex and controversial history and Jewish traditions. The Wikipedia on-line encyclopedia has the most succinct summary of their history. It is copied for convenience for our family genealogical précis. Most importantly, ***the tradition of Karaite Judaism ranks only the Tanakh as a holy book and does not recognize the Talmud.***¹⁰

*“The Crimean Karaites or Krymkaraylar (Crimean Karaim: Qaray; Trakai, are an ethnic group **derived from Turkic-speaking adherents of Karaite Judaism in Central and Eastern Europe**, especially in the territory of the former Russian Empire.” “Karaim” is a Russian, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, and Polish name for the community.”*

Turkic-speaking Karaites in the Crimean Tatar language, Qaraylar, have lived in Crimea for centuries. Their origin is a matter of great controversy. Some regard them as descendants of Karaite Jews who settled in Crimea and adopted a form of the Kypchak. Others view them as descendants of Khazar or Cuman, Kipchak converts to Karaite Judaism. Today many Crimean Karaites deny ethnic Semitic origins and identify as descendants of the Khazars. Some specialists in Khazar history question the Khazar theory of Karaim origins, noting the following:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crimean_Karaites 2/12

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crimean_Karaites

¹⁰ Co. mmonly believed that the Tanakh (Torah) was given by GOD, whereas the Talmud was conceived by living humans and represents the analyses of the “Laws of Judaism.”

- *“The Karaim language belongs to the Kipchak linguistic group, and the Khazar language belongs to the Bulgar group; there is no close relationship between these two Turkic languages*
 - *According to Khazar Correspondence, Khazar Judaism was, most likely, Talmudic.*
 - ***The tradition of Karaite Judaism ranks only the Tanakh as a holy book and does not recognize the Talmud.***
 - *Khazars disappeared in the 11th century. But, the first written mention of the Crimean Karaites was in the 14th century*
 - *Anthropologic researches show similarity between Crimean Karaites of Lithuania and Egyptian Karaite Jews*
 - *In 19th century Crimea, Karaites began to distinguish themselves from other Jewish groups, sending envoys to the czars to plead for exemptions from harsh anti-Jewish legislation. These entreaties were successful, in large part due to*
 - *the czars’ wariness of the Talmud, and in 1863 Karaites were granted the same rights as their Christian and Tatar neighbors. Exempted from the Pale of Settlement, later they were considered non-Jews by Nazis. This left the community untouched by Holocaust, unlike other Turkic-speaking Jews, like the Krymchak Jews that were almost wiped out.*
 - *Modern Karaim resist being identified as Jews.”*
-

Author: Currently, modern Karaite Communities inhabit Israel, Crimea (Krymchaks), Egypt and North Africa, Europe (Poland, Russia), and the United States.



Presenting the Torah to the Karaite Congregation



Karaite Sabbath



Karaite Synagogue Service



Individual Prayers



Karaite Wedding Ceremony Celebrated Under the Tallith



Karaite Ceremonial Dance



Karaite Congregation



Karaite Prayers at the Wailing Wall, Remnant of the 2nd Temple;
Congregant Wearing Tefillin

Chapter 11

Gallery

Mountain Jews of the Caucasus



Costumes of the Mountain Clans





Sabbath Torah



Sabbath Refreshments



Traditional Matzoh



Shabbat Home Celebration



Gathering of Modern Mountain Jews

Yemeni Jews





Yemenite Jew in Modern Dress



Orthodox Yemenite Family
Men Wearing Payat, Women Covered