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The Tribe of Naphtali

Jacob's Blessing - Genesis 49:21

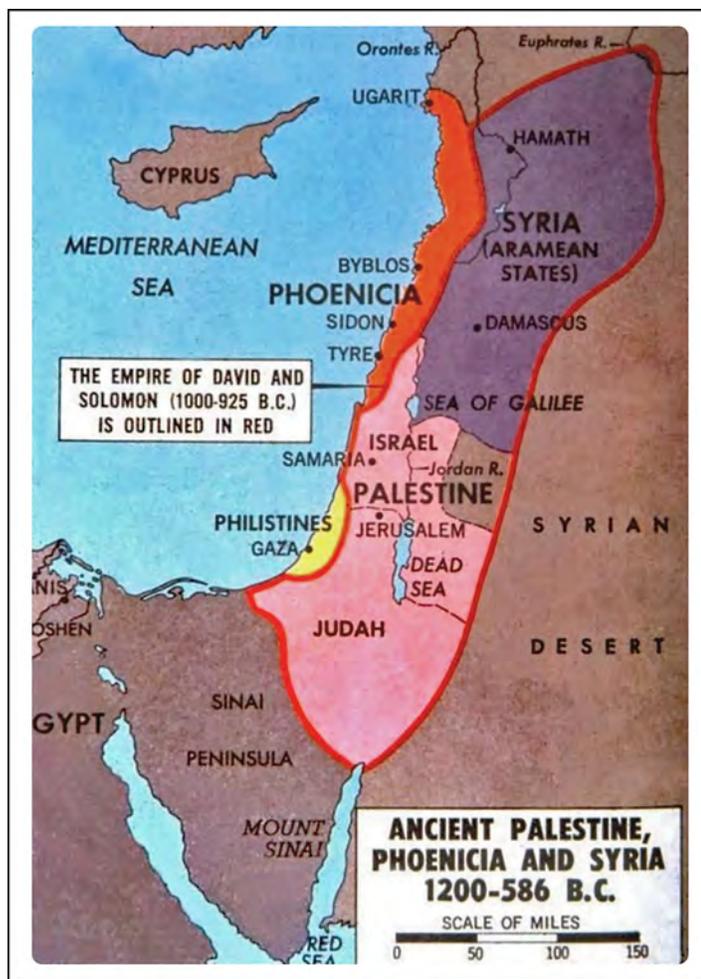
"Naphtali is a hind let loose, he gives beautiful words."

Moses Blessing - Deut. 33:23

"...'O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full of the blessing of the Lord, take possession of the sea and the south.' "

THE LAND ALLOTMENT

Of the 12 tribes of Israel, none received land more beautiful than this tribe. Their land has been called the "Garden of Palestine". Their inheritance fell in the region of Galilee. Centered on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, this tribe possessed the most fertile and productive region in all of Canaan.





Shepherds and farmers alike found the soil and vegetation of this area extremely fertile, and able to support large flocks and herds. The whole of the land is fed by hidden springs emanating from Mount Herman. This area is well watered by multiple sources; principally the Jordan River, the springs of Mt. Herman, and the Sea of Galilee.

Mount Herman is just 39 miles northeast of where the Jordan River runs into the Sea of Galilee. In antiquity, the mountains of Galilee bore the name the Mountains of Naphtali.

Joshua 19:32-39. *"The sixth lot fell to the sons of Naphtali; to the sons of Naphtali according to their families. And their border was from Heleph, from the oak in Zaananim and Adami-nekeb and Jabneel, as far as Lakkum; and it ended at the Jordan. Then the border turned westward to Anath-tabor, and proceeded from there to*

Hukkok; and it reached to Zebulun on the south and touched Asher on the west, and to Judah at the Jordan toward the east."

The first three verses identify the tribal borders, starting in the southern portion of the tribal allotment. As can be seen on the map, Heleph has not been positively identified. The tribe's border ran from Heleph, thought to have existed to the north of Mt. Tabor, east towards the *"oak in Zaananim"*.

The connection to Judah is seen in this verse. Hezron was the son of Perez, found in I Chr. 2:5. Perez was the son bore to Judah and Tamar, found in Genesis 38. Hezron, thus, was of the tribe of Judah. Hezron is said to have taken the daughter of Machir, the same Makir from the passage in Numbers, as his wife.

The region around Kedesh was known as Galil. Later, this name was given to the whole of the northern region, and became known as Galilee. The other two cities the sons of Gershon inherited were Hammoth-dor and Kartan. Their territory extended about 800 square miles. This tribe, thus, was double the size of Issachar, and the largest of the Northern Tribes. It was the southern portion surrounding the Sea of Galilee that earned the nickname, "The Garden of Palestine".

This area would also be home to the ministry of Jesus Christ. Many of His parables were taught on the banks of the Sea of Galilee. Many of His miracles also took place within these borders.

Interestingly, no border is given in the north. A natural barrier would have been the Litanni River, which emptied into the Mediterranean Sea. The Litanni River effectively separated the kingdom of Tyre from the Northern tribes. However, www.christiananswers.net states the northern boundary extended into the Beqa Valley of Lebanon. The Bible does not state where the northern boundary is, thus, any speculation is just such.

NAPHTALI TRIBAL ENCAMPMENT As Moses and the Israelites set out on their trek through the wilderness, God gave them strict and detailed instructions as to how they were to pitch camp, break camp, and the marching order as they sojourned to the Promised Land. No detail was left unattended to.

The tribe found themselves encamped on the north side of the Tabernacle, under the leadership of their older brother Dan. Their assignment is found in Numbers 2:29.

Then comes the tribe of Naphtali, and the leader of the sons of Naphtali; Ahira the son of Enan, and his army, even their numbered men, 53,400."

They encamped next to the tribe of Asher. These two tribes fell under the leadership of the tribe of Dan. Together, these three tribes secured the rear of Israel as they marched. The rear guard was, perhaps, the most critical position. These three tribes were responsible for ensuring the tribes of Israel were not surprise attacked from the rear. As they marched, the tribes would have been vulnerable to attack. The fiercest of warriors, and toughest of warriors, were primarily placed in the rear guard, in order to prevent a devastating rear attack.

NAPHTALI

Naphtali was the sixth son of Jacob, born to him by Rachel's handmaiden Bilhah. He was the biological younger brother of Dan. As the first four sons born to Jacob came from Leah, it seems likely these two were much closer to each other than they were to their other half-brothers. This, of course, is not stated in Scripture, and is pure speculation.

"And Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. So Rachel said, 'With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and I have indeed prevailed. And she named him Naphtali."

The name, thus, means, "to obtain by wrestling". The Hebrew word is derived from a root, *pathal*, which means *to twist, cunning, crooked, show yourself astute, wrestled*. It is important to remember Jacob loved Rachel first, as she was the one he originally intended to marry. However, Laban deceived Jacob, and gave him Leah instead. As women wore veils over their face during the wedding ceremony, and into the night, Jacob was unaware of Leah's identity until the next morning.

Scripture is silent as to the whereabouts of Rachel, but it would seem natural she was not in favor of the plot. However, it is important to keep in mind Scripture makes no such reference to Rachel's feelings throughout this episode. In any respect, the situation had the makings of a potential disaster. It must be kept in mind that Scripture does not

divulge any details concerning Rachel and Leah's relationship outside of this verse. However, this verse makes it clear things were not good between the two sisters. Thus, Rachel is depicted as undergoing an intense struggle with jealousy, anger, resentment; a product of her lack of children and Leah's fertility, and perhaps a lingering feeling of injustice over Leah marrying Jacob. Rachel, it would seem, took her pain and feelings of frustration to God. Perhaps she pleaded for a child, and pleaded to God for justice.

Whatever her *"mighty wrestlings"* were, the birth of Naphtali was the answer to her prayers. Perhaps, Rachel had blamed God, initially, and struggled to come to grips with the reality of the situation. It would seem at some point, she overcame these feelings, and rather than struggle against God, perhaps she struggled with God, leaning on Him for strength. God rewarded Rachel with Naphtali, and she commemorated her struggle with his name.

Naphtali is absent throughout the Biblical narrative. No events involving him are given. However, there are clues as to his character, and the type of person he was. Perhaps the biggest clue into the nature of Naphtali can be found in Jacob's Blessing. He was not named specifically in the narrative concerning Joseph. However, his silence is evidence he went along with the plot to initially kill Joseph. The only son of Jacob that stood up to the original plan to kill Joseph was Reuben. He convinced the brothers to sell Joseph, rather than murder him.

This is the case with Naphtali. His righteousness and godliness was mirrored by his tribe. Moses declares they were fully blessed by the Lord. God does not find favor with those who do not strive after Him. *Thus, it is quite evident there was something special about this tribe. This trait was a product of the heart, character, and nature of the son Naphtali.*

THE TRIBE OF NAPHTALI IN SCRIPTURE Numbers 1:42-43 lists the men of Naphtali twenty years old or more, *"whoever was able to go out to war"*. This is the first census taken by Moses upon leaving Egypt. The opening verses of Numbers 1 relates how, in the second year of their wandering, the Lord spoke to Moses ordering him to take a count of the fighting men of Israel. *"Of the sons of Naphtali, their genealogical registration by their families, by their father's households, according to the number of*

names, from twenty years old and upward, whoever was able to go out to war, their numbered men, of the tribe of Naphtali, were 53,400."

This was the sixth largest number of fighting men amongst the 12 tribes of Israel. However, the tribe lost men in the desert wandering. It was after the first census that the Almighty relayed His instructions to Moses concerning the encampment of Israel in the wilderness. This particular tribe, as stated above, was assigned to the camp of Dan, along with the tribe of Asher. These three tribes were to protect the rear of the advancing camp.

Numbers 26 is the second census taken by Moses. This census was taken as the Israelites prepared for the conquest of Canaan. This passage lists the families of each son of Jacob as well. *"The sons of Naphtali according to their families; of Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites; of Guni, the family of the Gunites; of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites; of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites. These are the families of Naphtali according to their families; and those who were numbered of them were 45,400."*

The tribe had lost 8,000 men throughout their sojourn in the wilderness. After the second census, they had slipped to the eighth largest tribe of the tribes of Israel. No reason is given in Scripture as to why they lost so many men. However, it would not be illogical to make the assumption their position as the rear guard may have had something to do with this.

As the Israelites advanced into Canaan, it quickly becomes evident the tribe is known for their fierceness in battle. They were a tribe of warriors, swift and efficient in battle, like a *"hind let loose"*, to quote the words of Jacob's Blessing.

Though their land was extremely fertile and productive, and able to support large herds, it's location in the north of Canaan opened it up to outside threats and influences. This was a tribe surrounded by a circle of nations.

Immediately to the north lies Syria. To the northwest were the Phoenicians, centered in Tyre and Sidon. Immediately to the north and northeast lay Aram-Damascus, always a threat to ancient Israel. To the east, east of the Jordan, was Bashan, former kingdom of the giant Rephaim king Og. The tribal allotment lay at the northern doorway into Canaan. This fact, coupled with its proximity to Mesopotamia, made it vulnerable to armies on the attack. Indeed, the men of Naphtali were heavily involved in the Northern

campaign of Joshua's Conquest. Judges 1:33 provides Scripture's first reference of Naphtali in a time of war.

"Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-Shemesh, or the inhabitants of Beth-anath, but lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; and the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath became forced labor for them."

Even though these men failed to completely drive out the Canaanites, they subjected them to forced labor. Thus, they maintained autonomy in their land while living amongst the Canaanites. It was clear they exerted a degree of control over the majority of their inheritance, although it was not outright. Scripture makes it clear the Israelites failed to conquer the fortress cities of Jokneam, Megiddo, Tanakh, Beth-Shan, amongst others (Joshua 17). Though the Northern Tribes appeared to maintain a certain degree of authority in the north of Canaan, it was not unchallenged. They were often engaged in conflict with the Canaanite forces of northern Palestine, as well as with forces from nations east of the Jordan River.

THE WATERS OF MEROM

The first major engagement the tribe participated in was likely the Battle at the Waters of Merom, described in Joshua 11. This was the major engagement of the Northern Campaign. Scripture does not list specifically the tribes of Israel involved in this conflict.

However, it is highly likely that at least the tribes of Asher, Naphtali, Issachar, and Manasseh were involved. The primary reason for this assumption, rests in the fact that these tribes inherited the land involved in this battle. Scripture indicates that each tribe was involved in the disputes, which would later encompass its territory.

The Battle at the Waters of Merom was a major engagement. Jabin, the king of Hazor, was the head of the Canaanite alliance. Jabin is also mentioned as the king of Hazor in the battle with Deborah and Barak, which would have happened significantly later. A reasonable explanation can be found in the titles of Abemilech, Pharaoh, Caesar, and other such titles for kings. It is likely that Jabin was the title given to the main leader of the Canaanite city-states.

The fact Jabin is said to be king of Hazor strengthens the argument in favor of Jabin as a kingly title. Hazor has been recognized as the chief of the Canaanite kingdoms in the time before Joshua. It was the largest, and one of the most important Canaanite city-states. Documents unearthed at Mari, and dating to 1850 B.C., make mention of Hazor being a major commercial center.

Hazor was heavily involved in the ancient tin trade, vital for making bronze. The city rested just nine miles north of the Sea of Galilee. It sat on the spot where the International Trade Route crossed the Jordan, making it a very important and strategic city.

Egyptian documents also make mention of Hazor, starting around 2000 B.C. Hazor reached its zenith in the time of the Amarna Letters , around 1300 B.C. These texts make mention of Hazor's king Abdi-tirshi. This is another indication of Hazor's prominence in Canaan. Canaanite rulers seldom used the word "king" to describe themselves.

Interestingly, archaeology has shown that the Upper and Lower cities of Hazor were destroyed in a violent conflagration shortly before 1200 B.C. Many Biblical scholars take this to represent the destruction imposed on Hazor by Joshua. Indeed, this evidence corroborates the Bible's description of the Battle at the Waters of Merom.

King Jabin had summoned Jobab, king of Madon, along with the king of Shimron, and the king of Achshaph. Along with these, the Bible tells that the Canaanite *"on the east and on the west"* answered Jabin's rallying call. Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites, and Hivites all joined forces against the invading Israelite army. Joshua 11 relates the coalition encamped at the waters of Merom, in the north of Canaan.

Despite the overwhelming odds, God reassured Joshua that He would deliver the enemy. In verse 4, the Israelites were said to have come *"upon them suddenly by the waters of Merom, and attacked them."* Once again the words of Jacob come to mind in regards to Naphtali.

"Naphtali is a hind let loose..." Perhaps the tribe led the swift and sudden charge against the combined Canaanite forces, though Scripture does not give much detail concerning the attack. After pursuing some of the Canaanites to the Valley of Mizpeh, Joshua

turned around and led the Israelites back to Hazor, where they burned the city to the ground. The Bible also states, in verse 10, that *"Hazor was formerly the head of all these kingdoms."*

Thus, the Bible is backed up by two points in this narrative thanks to archaeology. The first point, that Hazor sat at the head of the Canaanite city-states, has been well documented by multiple sources from various nations. The second point rests in the archaeological evidence of the violent conflagration that brought an end to Hazor. This is clearly stated in Joshua 11:11.

"And he burned Hazor with fire." This victory opened the door for the tribes of the north. The land in question fell to the tribe of Naphtali, perhaps another clue as to their primary involvement in the struggle. Joshua 13 begins the division of the conquered land to the tribes of Naphtali, Zebulun, Issachar, and Asher.

DEBORAH & BARAK - JUDGES 4-5

Naphtali is involved in another major battle found in Judges 4. The Israelites became oppressed by Jabin, king of Hazor. As stated above, Jabin was probably a name given to the king of Hazor. Scripture tells us his commander was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-hagoyim. Scripture records Jabin *"oppressed the sons of Israel severely for twenty years"*.

This oppression came about because *"the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord"*. This battle takes place in the same general area as the Battle at the Waters of Merom. The oppressing forces of king Jabin are said to have had nine hundred iron chariots in Judges 4:3.

God then called on a man of the tribe of Naphtali to deliver the Israelites. At this time, Deborah was judging the Israelites from her spot *"under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel"*. Her command from God was given to Barak in Judges 4:6. *"Now she sent and summoned Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh-naphtali, and said to him, 'Behold, the Lord, the God of Israel, has commanded, Go and march to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun."*

In this instance, the tribe of Naphtali is specifically mentioned as one of two tribes primarily involved in this conflict. In verse 7 God assured Barak He would draw out Sisera and his army, and deliver them to the Israelites. The battle would take place near the Kishon River, in the Jezreel Valley.

This was the location of many battles throughout the ages. Megiddo was a Canaanite stronghold, and a very strategic city, as it controlled the Jezreel Valley, and access into the heartland of Canaan. It is in this exact spot that John envisioned the battle of Armageddon taking place in Revelation. Barak, the commander of the Israelite forces, was hesitant to engage the Canaanite forces without Deborah's presence. Barak stated he would not go without Deborah accompanying him to the battlefield. Deborah responded to Barak's request in verse 9. *"And she said, 'I will surely go with you ; nevertheless, the honor shall not be yours on the journey that you are about to take, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hands of a woman.' Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh."*

Despite Barak's hesitancy to follow God's command alone, and the diminished glory he would receive as a result, the New Testament book of Hebrews lists Barak as a hero of faith. Hebrews 11 lists a number of Old Testament personalities exemplified because of their faith. The passage concerning Barak can be found in 11:32-34.

"And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies."

The battle was not an evenly matched affair on paper. The Canaanite forces under Sisera comprised of 900 iron chariots, as well as other military units. The Israelites possessed no such chariots. The plain provided the ideal geography for waging war with chariots. The Israelite foot soldiers would be no match in the open plain for the iron, horse driven chariots.

This thought was surely in the back of every Israelite warriors mind. Nevertheless, Barak and Deborah proceeded as God had instructed, for they had seen God's deliverance

despite overwhelming odds against them. Verse ten states that Barak called together the men of Naphtali and Zebulun, the nucleus of the invading Israelite forces.

However, the Song of Deborah, which commemorated the Battle at Hazor, listed contingencies from other tribes as well which participated. Warriors from the tribes of Issachar, Ephraim, and Benjamin, as well as men from Makir, joined in the fray. Interestingly, the Song of Deborah is critical of a few tribes, which chose not to participate. Deborah was critical of the tribes of Reuben, the tribes from Gilead, and the tribe of Dan.

These tribes violated Moses' order to help with the Northern Conquest. This order of Moses' can be found in Numbers 32:20, when Moses is addressing the elders of the Transjordanian Tribes, which sought land east of the Jordan, in the former kingdoms of Og and Sihon. *"Then Moses said to them, 'If you will do this - if you will arm yourselves before the Lord for battle, and if all of you will go armed over the Jordan before the Lord until he has driven his enemies out before him - then when the land is subdued before the Lord, you may return and be free from your obligation to the Lord and to Israel. And this land will be your possession before the Lord.'"*

The men of Naphtali and Zebulun, as well as the other soldiers, under the command of Barak and Deborah, gathered at Mount Tabor for the impending battle. In order to meet this provocation, Sisera moved his forces out from Harosheth-hagoyim, and gathered together at Megiddo, the Canaanite stronghold in the region.



The Holman Bible Atlas states the Canaanite forces under Sisera gathered near the Wadi Kishon, below Mt. Tabor. The Canaanite chariots would be most effective here. However, the Kishon River was swollen due to recent rains. This rendered the Canaanite chariots useless. Thus, in verse 14 Deborah gave Barak the command to attack. *"And Deborah said to Barak, 'Arise! For this is the day in which the Lord has given Sisera into your hands; behold, the Lord has gone out before you.' So Barak went down from Mt. Tabor with ten thousand men following him."*

Thus began the battle, with the men of this tribe along with men from Zebulun composing the majority of the forces. The recent rains neutralized the Canaanite chariot division, and they were routed by the Israelites. Barak and his men drove the Canaanites *"as far as Harosheth-hagoyim"*. The Song of Deborah gives further insight into the details of the battle in Judges 5:21. *"The torrent of Kishon swept them away, the ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon. O my soul, march on with strength."*

This verse seems to imply the Kishon had flooded, as stated above, and the chariots were washed away, rendered useless in the muddy terrain. It would seem God had planned this battle in conjunction with rain! What an amazing picture of God using His creation to accomplish His purposes. Scripture relates Sisera fled on foot, apparently losing or abandoning his chariot, probably the latter due to their inability to navigate the

swampy plain. He fled to a nearby residence owned by a man named Heber, the Kenite, and his wife Jael.

Scripture relates these people had separated themselves from the Kenites, and settled near the oak in Zaananim. Verse 17 states there was peace between Jabin, king of Hazor, and the house of Heber the Kenite. Though Scripture does not divulge any details into what sort of peace existed, the implication seems to be Heber had abandoned his Israelite brethren, perhaps choosing to side with the foreign king of Hazor.

His wife, however, displayed tremendous courage, and was obviously not at peace with king Jabin and Sisera. Jael deceived Sisera into hiding out in her tent. She brought Sisera warm milk to drink, and told him to rest, for she would thwart any pursuers. Sisera obviously felt he could trust Heber's wife.

Scripture is silent as to Heber's whereabouts. Thus, as Sisera was sleeping, Jael took a tent peg and drove it through his skull. Her actions are recorded in Judges 4:21.

"But Jael, Heber's wife, took a tent peg and seized a hammer in her hand, and went secretly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went through into the ground, for he was sound asleep and exhausted. So he died."

This was a great victory for the men of Naphtali, and all of Israel. Naphtali's bravery is recorded in Judges 5:18.

"Zebulun was a people who despised their lives even to death, and Naphtali also, on the high places of the field."

This is a particularly illuminating passage into the nature of these men. They despised their lives, meaning they would fight to the death for Israel and God. Not only this, but they fought on the high places of the battlefield. The high places would have been where the fighting was most intense.

Whereas some may shrink from the heat of the battle, this tribe sought out the heat of the battle. They engaged in the fiercest and most intense battles raging. They sought out the high places of the field, knowing the battle would be most fierce there. The men of Naphtali, thus, earned their reputation as fierce and courageous warriors.

However, this would not be the only conflict Naphtali would engage in.

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GIDEON & THE MIDIANITES - JUDGES 6 & 7

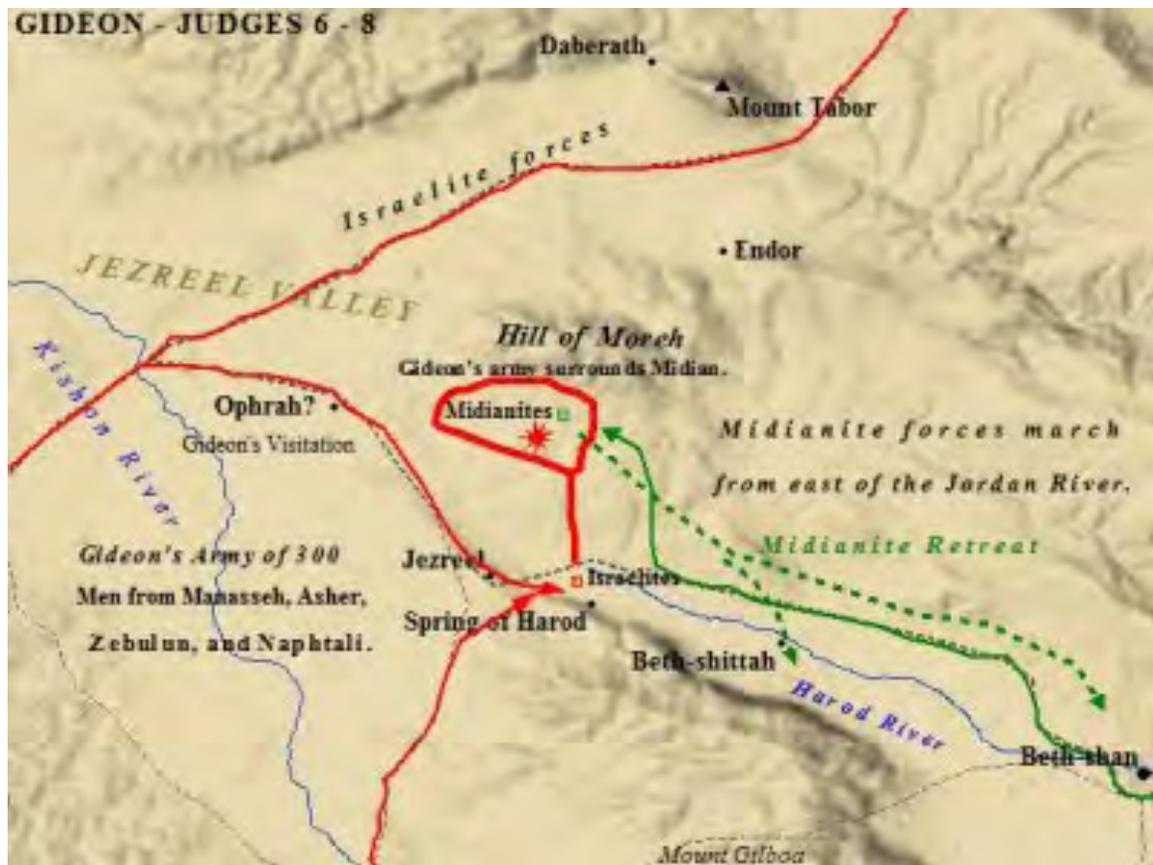
Immediately following this triumph in Scripture is the oppression by the Midianites, found in Judges 6. The sons of Israel did evil, again, in the sight of the Lord. For seven years, consequently, the Midianites, along with the Amalekites and the *"sons of the East"*, inflicted Israel.

This becomes a common theme throughout the Old Testament. The Israelites would stray from God, He would deliver them into the hands of foreign oppressors, the Israelites would cry to God, repent, and God would send a man to deliver them.

God's faithfulness is exhibited time and time again. He simply seeks men that will follow Him, trust Him, and exhibit faith in His might. The Israelites had fallen away from God, thus He sent the Midianites and Amalekites to oppress His people. The nature of their oppression is given in Judges 6:3-4. *"For it was when Israel had sown, that the Midianites would come up with the Amalekites and the sons of the east and go against them. So they would camp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel as well as no sheep, ox, or donkey."*

The Midianites would wait until the fields were ready for harvest, and then descend upon them, destroying the food supplies of Israel. These invaders also killed the domesticated animals necessary for agriculture and meat. In this respect, the Midianites were destroying the very fabric of Israelite civilization. They were striking at the heart of Israel's ability to support itself.

God instructed Gideon to tear down the altar of Baal, and cut down the Asherah, which stood beside it. Gideon, taking ten of his servants, did this during the night (Jdg. 6:27). The following morning, the men of the city became enraged at the sight of their toppled altar. Scripture then records in verse 3 that the invading army *"crossed over and camped in the valley of Jezreel."*



It is evident the tribe played a hugely significant role in the conquest of the north of Canaan. Naphtali also played a key role during the era of the Judges. The Battle at the Waters of Merom, and the Battle of Hazor with Barak, are two of the most important Israelite victories in the Old Testament. The tribe of Naphtali was a key component in both.

The tribe of Naphtali played an important role in the narrative concerning king David. I Chronicles 12 depicts David's coronation. All of his supporters gathered at Hebron. The three largest contingents in this passage are from the tribes of Zebulun (50,000), Asher (40,000), and Naphtali.

Naphtali is unique in this particular passage in the description of their contribution to David. Not only did they provide 37,000 troops for king David, but Scripture also records they brought 1,000 captains as well. This further illuminates the warrior-nature of Naphtali. They were fierce warriors, led by extremely capable and valiant captains.

I Chronicles 27 lists the administration of David's government. The Chief Officer for the tribe of Naphtali was Jeremoth, the son of Azriel.

Not only did Naphtali figure in during the reign of David, but also they held a unique position during the reign of Solomon. I Kings 7 mentions a special man of the tribe of Naphtali. Solomon, in his quest to build God's Temple, sought the assistance of his friendly allies the Phoenicians.

Two chapters earlier Scripture records how Solomon and king Hiram of Tyre befriended each other. Indeed, the Israelites and Phoenicians enjoyed friendly relations during the reign of David, and this would continue under David's son Solomon.

As a result of Solomon and Hiram joining forces, the Phoenicians supplied the Israelites with much needed labor and resources. King Solomon's naval fleet was supplied by the Phoenicians.

EXILE OF NAPHTALI

When the United Monarchy split into two kingdoms, Naphtali was a part of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Naphtali became known as a border territory, along with Asher and Dan. These tribes existed on the fringes of Israelite society in the north. They were a crossroads for the nations. *These tribes became a cosmopolitan mix of people and religion. Ancient roads and trade routes dissected the land. Traveling caravans from Mesopotamia and beyond traversed this region.*

Their location in the northern extremity somewhat isolated them from the other tribes of Israel. As a result, the heartland of the Northern Kingdom was in Manasseh and Ephraim. Naphtali was extremely vulnerable to foreign threat and influence. To the immediate north was Syria. The Phoenicians were to the immediate northwest, in Tyre and Sidon. The kingdom of Aram-Damascus was to the immediate northeast of Naphtali. The tribe was located close to northwest Mesopotamia, thus exposed to the foreign armies of the east, often with conquest in mind. They were subject to foreign influences and religions, exposed and vulnerable from the north, southeast, and the east. With the crumbling of the United Monarchy upon the death of Solomon, these northern border territories found themselves in an even more precarious situation.

Not only did they face foreign intrusion from the north and east, but also now they faced the possibility of civil war from the south by the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Just such an occurrence takes place in I Kings 15. At this stage of the Divided Monarchy, Baasha was ruling the Northern Kingdom of Israel, while Asa was ruling the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Baasha had ascended to the northern throne, according to Michael Grant, in 906 B.C. Asa had ascended to the southern throne two years earlier, in 908 B.C.

Scripture states that there was war between these two kings in I Kings 15:16. *"Now there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days."* Baasha did *"evil in the sight of the Lord"* during his twenty-four year reign. In an attempt to thwart Asa, Baasha *"went up against Judah and fortified Ramah"*. Asa immediately sensed the danger in this endeavor by his northern counterpart. Asa then is recorded as having taken all the silver and the gold in the Lord's treasury and used it as a bribe to Ben-hadad I, king of Aram. Ben-hadad was headquartered in Damascus. Asa entreats Ben-hadad to wage war against Israel, in an effort to retaliate for Baasha's fortification of Ramah. Ben-hadad agreed.

In verse 20, Ben-hadad is said to have conquered the cities of Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-maacah, all of Chinneroth, as well as *"all the land of Naphtali"*. This would be a foreshadowing of events to come. Between the years 745 - 727 B.C., Tiglath-pileser III was king of Assyria. The Assyrian war machine was unstoppable. Between the years 734-732 B.C. the Assyrian king conducted numerous campaigns into Palestine. These campaigns severely weakened not only Naphtali, but also all of the kingdom of Israel.

II Kings 15:29 sheds light on the fate of the Northern Kingdom. *"In the time of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon, Abel Beth Maacah, Janoah, Kedesh and Hazor. He took Gilead and Galilee, including all the land of Naphtali, and deported the people to Assyria."* Thus, in 732 B.C., the Northern Kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians. The people were deported to Halah, Habor, Hara, the river of Gozan (I Chr. 5:26), and the cities of the Medes (II Kgs. 18:11). Consequently, the Northern Tribes of Israel are today known as the Lost Tribes of Israel.

CONCLUSION

The tribe of Naphtali figures in prominently to the history of Israel. This tribe followed in the footsteps of its founder, the sixth son of Jacob, Naphtali. As he was a godly man, so was his tribe. However, they eventually fell into apostasy, as did the other tribes of the Northern Kingdom.

Naphtali left an imprint on the Old Testament through their exploits on the battlefield. They were praised by Deborah in the Song of Deborah. They provided one of the major workers on the Temple. Naphtali produced officials in both the courts of David and Solomon. Despite their later falling away from God, the tribe of Naphtali was blessed by God.

They are one of nine tribes of Israel, which appear in all lists of the 12 tribes of Israel. They are mentioned in the only New Testament list of the tribes, found in Revelation 7. In the final days of God's judgment, the tribe of Naphtali will produce 12,000 people sealed on the forehead as servants of God.

Genomic History of the Romanian Solomon's

While a very large proportion of Ashkenazim are identified by the E1b1b1 Y-DNA haplotype, so do many other ethnic groups of Arabic, Anatolian, and Middle Eastern populations. *The sub-clade E1b1b1b appeared about 20,000 years before the birth of the Patriarch Abraham (1,800 BCE).* At that time, there were no Hebrew tribes, nor Canaanites nor Semitic languages when the haplogroup first appearance. Christians and Muslim populations may exhibit the E1b1b1 haplotype, which by itself does not signify Jewish ancestry. Therefore, Jesus and his disciples also may have inherited the E1b1b1 haplotype Y-DNA.

Solomon males of Pungești and Negrești, Moldavia, Romania, have the Y-DNA haplogroup E1b1b1. They descend from the earliest individuals out of Africa 80,000 years ago. Male descendants of Bercu Jidovul (Bercu the Jew, from Pungesti, Moldavia), also known as Bercu sin Zeilic, was our first ancestor who emigrated from Poland to Romania. Our maternal patriarch inherited the Y-DNA E1b1b1b. Since 25,000 years ago, all have the E1b1b1 genome.

However, of great personal interest to Marlene and Robert Sherins is the discovery of the E1b1b1, Y-DNA, of Marlene's father, Vern Mager. He was of German-Lutheran extraction and his ancestors can be traced to 1642 in Gräfenhausen, Germany, south of Frankfort-Darmstadt. Vern Mager's Y-DNA was determined after Vern's death by sampling a cousin, who turned out to be E1b1b1.

Marlene Mager Sherins was tested. Her mtDNA was H-15. That haplogroup is quite rare among females. There may be a regional association of H-15 in Southern Europe, but no specific indigenous population has been found to localize the ancestral women. The most common sub-clades of H haplogroup are H-1 to H-3. H-4 to H-15 are uncommon and very little factual data is available.

Let us return to the Solomons of Romania. Our maternal ancestry was the Goldenberg family. My mother was *Betty (Rebeca) Solomon*. Betty's mother was Feige Sophie Goldenberg, daughter of *Samuel Goldenberg and Ruchel Taylor* (from Iasi, Moldavia,

Romania). I discovered that the origin of Samuel Goldenberg was Brody, Galicia, Poland. Samuel and his brother, Nathan, arrived in Iasi in 1825. They originated in Poland.

My mother's (*Goldenberg/Taylor*) mtDNA was examined by using Robert Sherins's oral swab tissue searching for both the Y-DNA and the mtDNA. His mtDNA was determined to be "*H-1*" haplogroup. This haplotype shows that the Goldenberg/Taylor genome originated in Central Asia and migrated to Europe. Those H1 females did not come from Jewish tribes in Palestine. *My mother's haplotype can be traced to her most recent common ancestor, who was a Cro-Magnon woman living in southwestern Europe (Basque France/Spain/Portugal) about 13,000 years ago. Sometime within the past 2,000 years ago, a marital union occurred between a (probably) Jewish trader in Europe and a local Cro-Magnon gal with H-1 mtDNA.*

The following chart shows the genomic evolution of our maternal lineage. Please note that the first "Eve" out of Africa would have been "L3" haplotype. Whereas the earlier migration to the Arabian Peninsula was classified as "M" haplogroup, the second wave of humans who migrated to Central Asia has been classified as "N" haplogroup. Both were descents of the African L3 "Eve."

The next mutation of mtDNA was the "R" haplogroup, which occurred during the inhabitation of Central Asia, probably in the region west of the Caspian Sea. Most recent dating of "R" has been calculated with high confidence around 52,000 years ago. About 90% of all living women can trace their genomic lineage to the "R" matriarch. *By about 30,000 years ago, a descendant of "R" appeared in Western Asia and Southeastern Europe, the "HV" haplogroup.* Those individuals populated Anatolia, Russia, Georgia and the Caucasus. Further migration occurred westward to Europe. Those inhabitants are known as Cro-Magnon. The earliest humans in Europe have been dated to about 40,000 years ago based upon archeological fossil dating. So there appears to be both genomic and archeological confirmations of the dates.

HV haplogroup evolved into more than 20 haplogroup sub-types; H1 and H3 sub-clades are the most common. H haplogroup was the descendant of the matriarch HV and appeared in Europe about 25,000 years ago. The sub-clade "H1" appeared in Southwestern Europe 13,000 years ago. Climatologists believe that the migration to Western and Southwestern Europe was the result of the last ice-age maximum, which

resulted in the retreating of the ice mass to the pole and opening of the grasslands in Southern Europe. Cro-Magnons were still hunter-gatherers and they followed their food resources to survive.

Göbekli Tepe in Anatolia

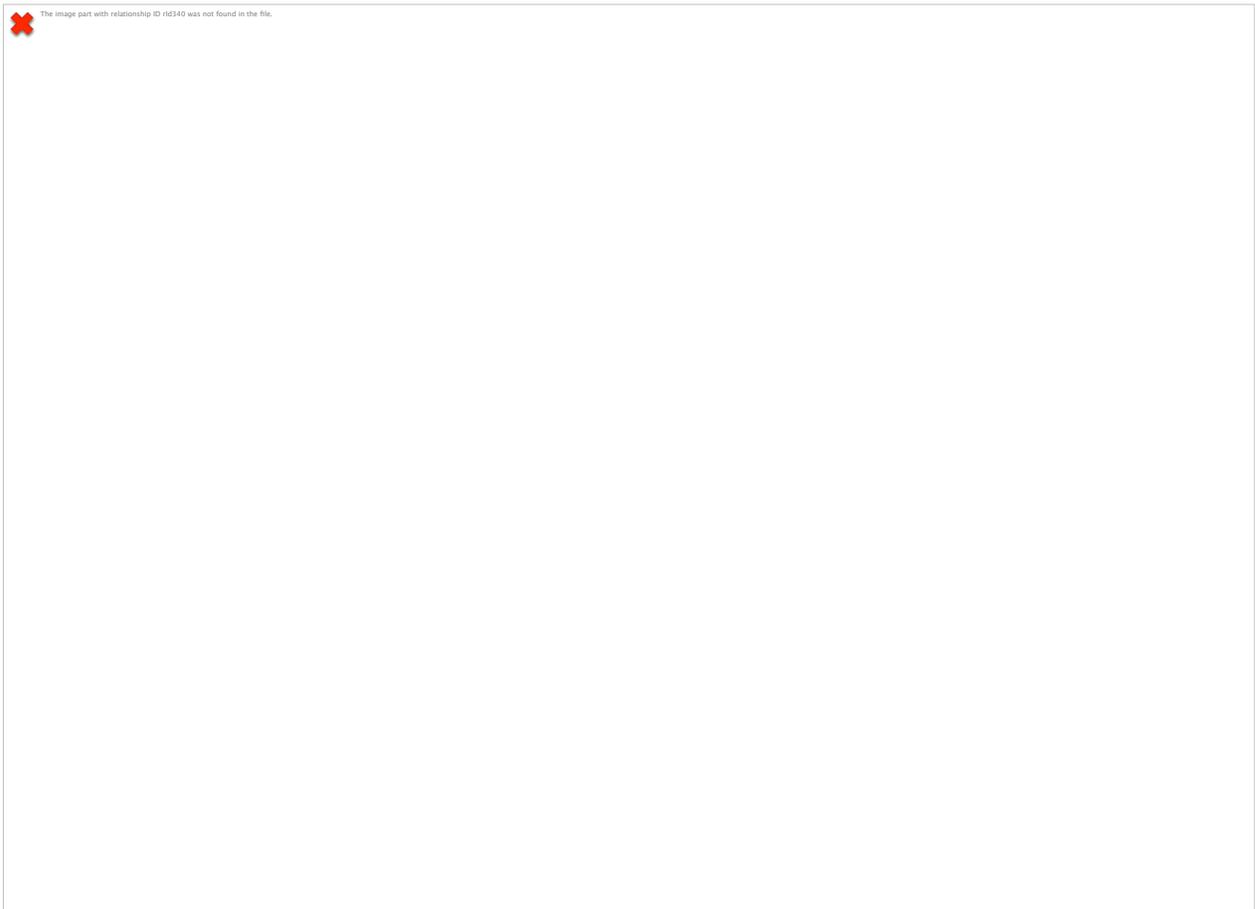


Map of the Fertile Crescent of Mesopotamia

As a side comment, stone temples at Göbekli Tepe in Southern Turkey near the Syrian border were discovered that were built about 13,000 years ago, by a population that must have settled in communities to support the massive stone construction – a period of time estimated to be more than one hundred years. The building of the temples coincides with the place and time of the origin of the subclades J2 and J2a. Our patriarchal genomic ancestor was “J2a” haplogroup, which appeared about 10,000 years ago.

Haplogroup J1 and J2a appeared more than 10-millenia before the appearance of the Hebrew Patriarch Abraham and the Jewish tribes of Israel. The Fertile Crescent region represents a population of humans who first settled and adopted agricultural means and animal husbandry to sustain them. Settlements replaced the hunter-gatherer cultures. The migration of the agricultural communities and culture to Southern Europe and the Mediterranean communities is associated with the distribution of the “J” haplogroup genome. Therefore, it is no surprise that individuals expressing J2a have been found among disparate cultures:

- Aegean
- Anatolia
- North Caucasus
- Arabs of Iraq, Arabia, Lebanon, Jordan Omanis, etc.
- Iranian
- Georgian
- Chechen



Map Distribution of J2 Haplogroup (Y-DNA)

Two graphic charts are displayed below that represent the “Evolutionary Tree” of the Y-DNA and the mtDNA haplogroups:

Israelite Diaspora

From the evidence derived from science and physical anthropology, we have reached a roadblock regarding further information about the migration of our ancestors. Between the time of the appearance of J2a haplogroup, 10,000 years ago, until the discovery of our family documents of the late 18th century, there is a void of information and records. If we assume that there were about 3-generations per hundred years, there would have been 30-generations per thousand years. Therefore, we must infer that within the past 10-millenia, there were 300-generations of ancestors who migrated from the region of the Fertile Crescent (Cherkinsky), There were 450-generations since our Goldenberg maternal ancestors appeared in Romania. Our Solomon patriarch appeared in Romania about 1760. There were 750-generations from the origin of E1b1b1 in the Middle East to their appearance in Poland.

Not only do we not know the exact migration routes during pre-historic/archaic times, but also we have no knowledge about our Jewish roots since the founding of the 12-Hebrew Tribes in the kingdom of Israel. In genomic terms, the relatively recent appearance of Moses about 1280 BCE, represents a time of only 96-100 generations to date. Within the approximately 3,280 years since the time of Moses' exodus from Egypt, there has been a nearly continuous migration of Jewish communities in the world. Such a pattern of migration, some forced and some voluntary, has complicated the particulars regarding discovery of the facts about individual family histories. Searching for documents about our ancestors prior to the 18th century is quite problematic. In lieu of finding specific documents, we must research the cultural and the geopolitical history and acknowledge cultural details by their languages, foods and customs as exhibited by the Mizrahim, Sephardim and Ashkenazim.

Destruction of Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel

Since there is no evidence that either the Cherkinsky clan or the Solomons of Romania were converts to Judaism, we will accept with confidence that both Cherkinsky and Solomon patriarchs had been members of one of the twelve Hebrew tribes in Israel. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin were part of the Southern Kingdom of Israel, whose capital was Jerusalem. The other 10 tribes belonged to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. They subscribed to different traditions, and made their capital in Samaria.

Cherkinsky Y-DNA has been determined to be of the J2a haplogroup that evolved in the region of the Fertile Crescent about 10,000 years ago. As will be shown in the illustrations and discussions, the interactions and conflicts among the major empires of Mesopotamia occurred in the exact regions of our genomic journey. Thus, we must allocate much attention to the geopolitical and cultural details of this part of our anthropological history.



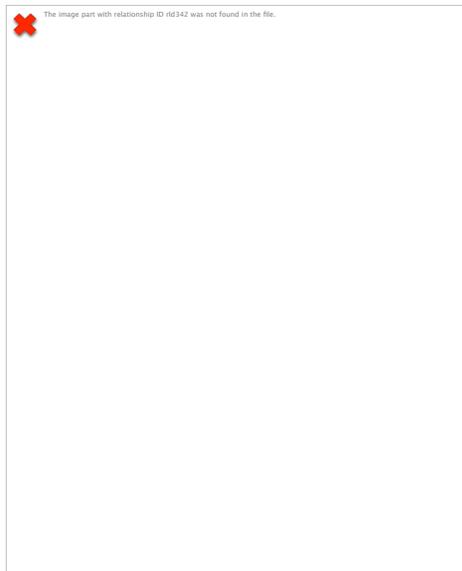
Map of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel, Circa 8th Century BCE

First Diaspora - Assyrian Conquest

I wish to briefly summarize the complex era of the first Diaspora of the Jewish communities of Biblical Israel, circa 8th century BCE.

The oldest recorded kingdom in the Middle East was in Egypt approximately 5,000 years ago. Its first king was Menes (Narmer) of Lower Egypt, who ruled about 3150 years BCE. That archaic dynasty ruled at least 500 years before the construction of the first pyramid, the Step-Pyramid, built by the Pharaoh Djoser (2691 - 2625 BCE).

Since then, every ancient kingdom of the region has sought the riches and political authority of Egypt. The most famous battle of the Hittites and Egyptians occurred in the region of Lebanon-Syria and was known as the “Battle of Kadesh.” Each party, Pharaoh Ramses II and Hittite General, Muwatalli II, declared victory, although it is thought that the Hittites actually won the battle. However, history failed to show that the Hittites held the region afterwards.



Relief of Pharaoh Ramses II at the Battle of Kadesh

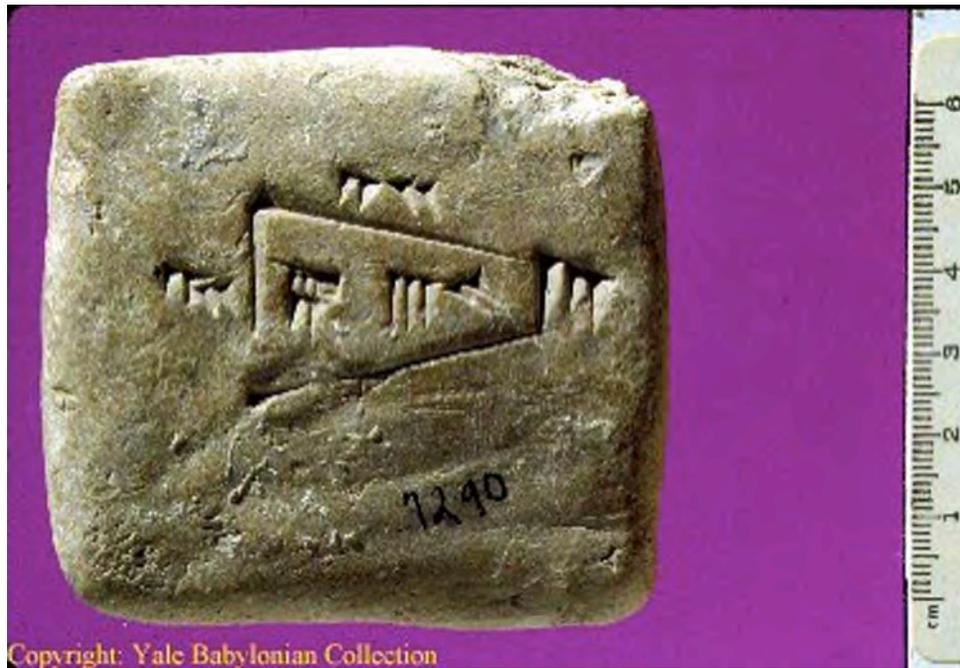
The earliest Hittites were located in Hattusa, which is located in North-Central Anatolia and was established about 1,800 years BCE. The map shown below

The Assyrians demonstrated advanced intellectual expertise in a number of scholarly pursuits: architecture, engineering, agriculture, economics, civil service, mathematics, medicine, literature, military technology, law, astronomy and libraries. In mathematics, the Assyrians demonstrated knowledge of geometry hundreds of years before the publication of the Pythagorean theorem of triangles: “In any right-angled triangle, the area of the square whose side is the hypotenuse (the side opposite the right angle) is equal to the sum of the areas of the squares whose sides are the two legs (the two sides that meet at a right angle).”

Pythagorean Equation: $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$

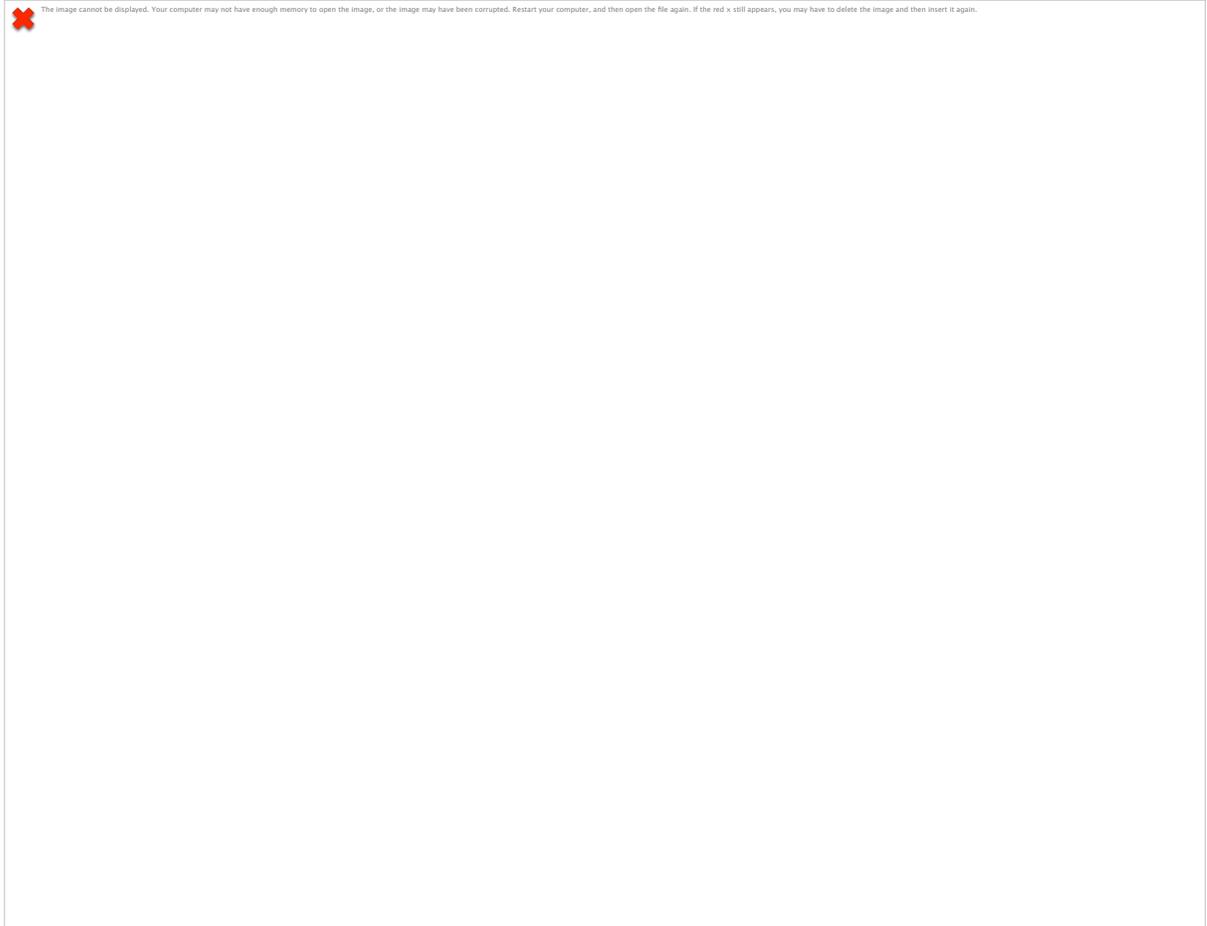


Assyrian Mathematical Stone Tablets



During that era of the first three millennia BCE, there were constant conflicts among the many tribes and kingdoms of the region, which are beyond the scope of this publication. I intend only to outline the simplest facts of the historic timeline. Beginning about 740 BCE, Assyrian forces captured the territories and capital Samaria of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and exiled the Hebrews to Assyria. The Assyrians failed to capture the Southern Kingdom of Israel, which contained the remaining tribes of Benjamin and Judah. Jerusalem was their capital, which was the aim of the Assyrian invasion. This is the history behind the story of the “Lost 10-Tribes of Israel.”

But, 200 years later, the Babylonians again rose to power and defeated the Assyrians. The Babylonians invaded the Southern Kingdom of Israel in 582 BCE and succeeded in capturing Jerusalem. The Hebrew Temple was destroyed in the process and the “elites” of Jerusalem’s nobility, military and commerce were taken in exile to Babylon. It has been estimated the only 11,000 individuals were taken in exile. The remainder of the Hebrew tribes either stayed in place or emigrated elsewhere during the next centuries as will be discussed later in this manuscript. The details of the capture are entailed in the story of the “March to Babylon.”

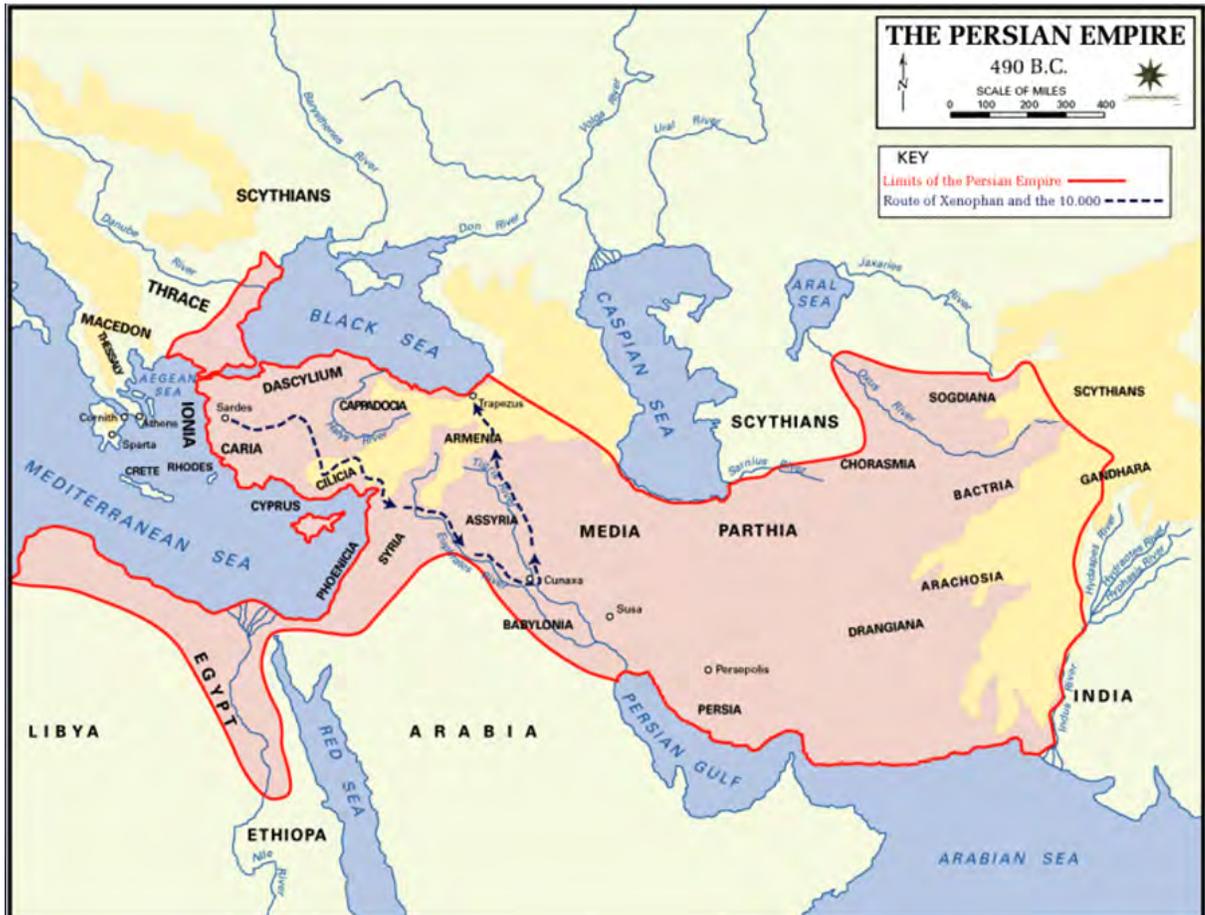


Map of Babylonian Empire, Circa 582 BCE

Within 50 years, Cyrus “The Great,” king of Persia, invaded and defeated the Babylonians. Such was the “to and fro” history of the battles and conquests among the kingdoms of Mesopotamia. The map shown below demonstrates the largest size of the Persian Empire, which extended to the Indus River to the East and to Anatolia, Cyprus and Greece to the West. Persia encompassed parts of Georgia, Armenia, Scythia and the Southern portion of the Caspian Sea in the North, as well as Syria, Israel, Egypt and coastal Libya in the South.

Cyrus I permitted relative freedom of religious practices, which included both the Zoroastrians and the Jews. The king approved funds for the Hebrews to return to Israel and to rebuild their Temple in Jerusalem (“Second Temple”). It has been estimated that only 10% of the Jewish population exiled in Persia actually returned to Israel.

The Second Temple continued in use until 70 CE, when Roman forces destroyed the structure. The “Wailing Wall,” notable in the old part of Jerusalem today, is the only remaining part of the Second Temple.



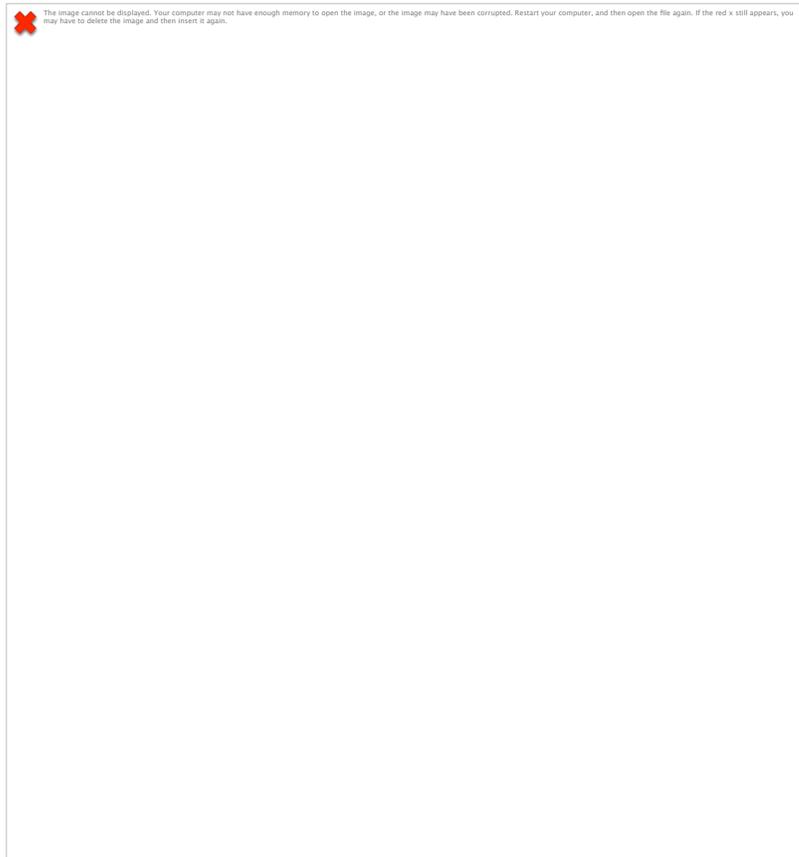
Map of the Persian Empire, Circa 5th Century CE

In summary, the Diaspora of Hebrews from both the Northern Kingdom (740 BCE) and the Southern Kingdom including Jerusalem (582 BCE) took thousands of Hebrews from all 12 Tribes. Within 50 years (538 BCE), the region was conquered by Cyrus The Great (Cyrus I) and the Jews became Persian subjects. This group of Jews has been called the “Mizrahim” or “Eastern Jews.”

By far the largest proportion of Jews from the 12 Tribes were NOT taken in exile. Instead, most of them, but not all of them, remained in their native lands. Some Jews

sought refuge in Egypt and Yemen and later on migrated westward in North Africa; other Jews sailed their primitive boats to India where they established Jewish communities known as the Bene Israel. Their presence in Cochin, India, as a minority has been estimated to be about 2,500 years ago. However, there were additional Jewish exiles that arrived after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.

Other Jewish communities were established later on in Calcutta and Mumbai (Bombay). Those arrivals in India are not to be confused with Jews who arrived about 2500 years ago. They were Jews from Bagdad, Iraq; Iran; Afghanistan and other Arabic countries. Jews from England of Portuguese decent arrived in the 17th century and established themselves as corral merchants in Madras. The Bene Ephraim arrived in 1981.



Alexander The Great in Anatolia

In the 4th century BCE, the region was conflicted. Persian forces invaded Greece and assassinated king Phillip of Macedonia (336 BCE). His son, Alexander of Macedonia inherited the throne and a huge army of experienced fighters. Alexander's aim was to avenge his father's death and overthrow Persia.

With great daring, Alexander followed the Persian army to Anatolia and met the surprised military forces of Darius III on the Plain of Issus in Southern Turkey. Darius was defeated in 333 BCE and the conquered Persian Empire was immediately subjugated to the Greeks.

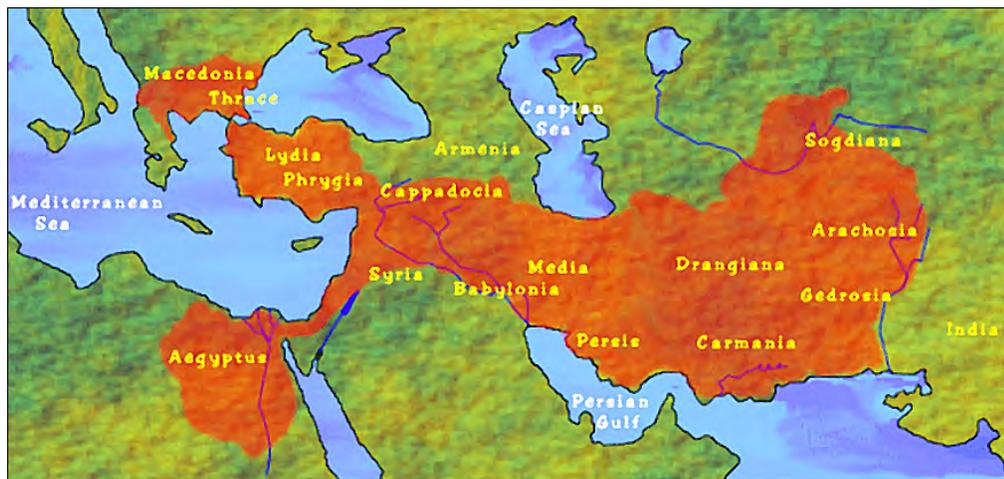


Aerial Map of the Bay of Iskenderun, Turkey
Battle Maneuvers of Alexander the Great, 333 BCE

The expanded territories under Alexander extended to India, Egypt, Dagestan, Chechnya, Armenia and Scythia. The importance of Alexander's conquests directly relates to our family history because Jewish merchants and traders migrated to the

farthest borders of the Greek Empire, which included Greece and the Greek Colonies around the Black Sea.

Jewish traders moved to the new territories of Greece, Northern Turkey along the Black Sea, the Greek colonies of Scythia along the Black Sea and Crimea. Since the exile of Jews to Assyria, Babylon and Persia, Jewish merchants and traders previously had opportunities to migrate to the distant borders within the those Empires. From the 5th century BCE, Jewish traders travelled to Greece. It was quite dangerous and unknown to them, so most Jews did NOT bring wives. Many married local women, converted them to Judaism and raised families within the new territories. Jewish communities also were established in Central Asia, in the mountains surrounding the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea, as well as Crimea and southern Russia, where at the time the Scythians ruled. Russia did not become a nation until the 10th century CE – over 1000 years later. Jewish traders were successful promoting ventures further inland at first with the Scythians as well as the Greeks. The Greek economy increasingly depended upon the agriculture of Crimea and the fishing resources of the Black Sea to feed its growing population and military forces. By the time Russia was established under Viking leaders in the 10th century, Jewish businessmen were promoting trade as far north as Kiev.



Map of Greek Empire Under Alexander

Jewish Traders Migrated to Borders of the Greek Empire

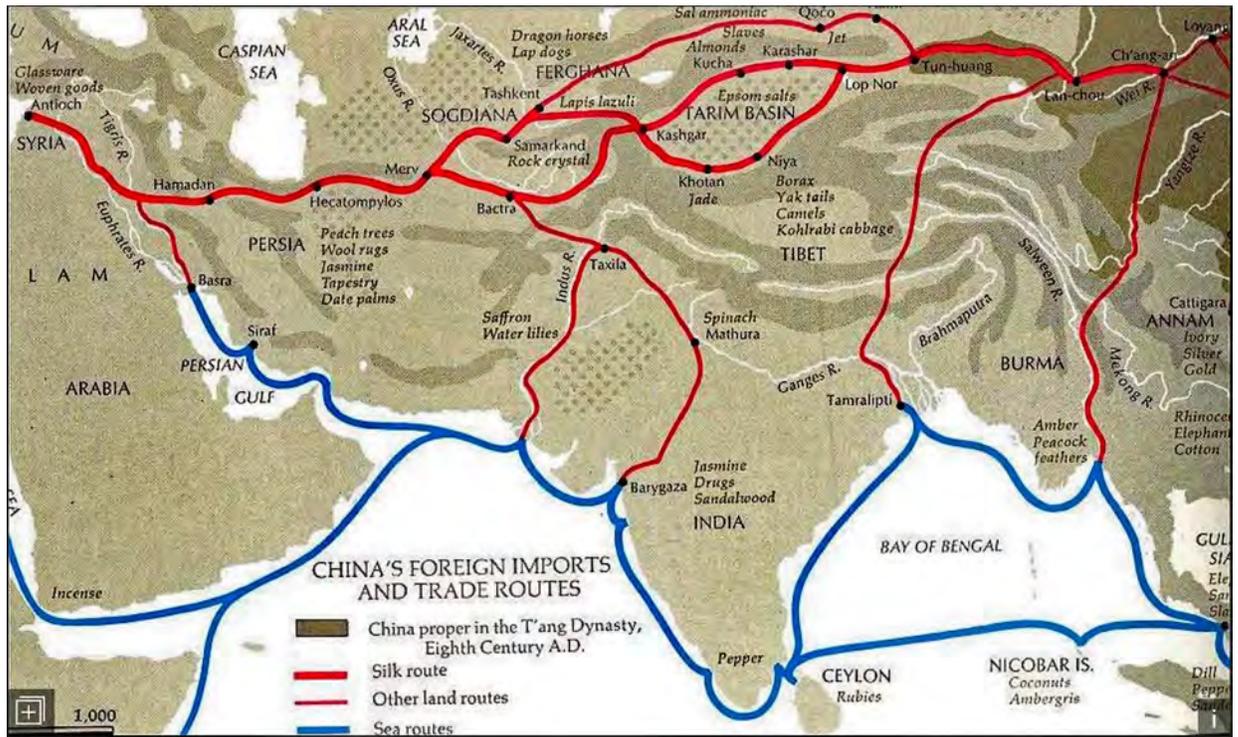


River Transport was key during ancient times.

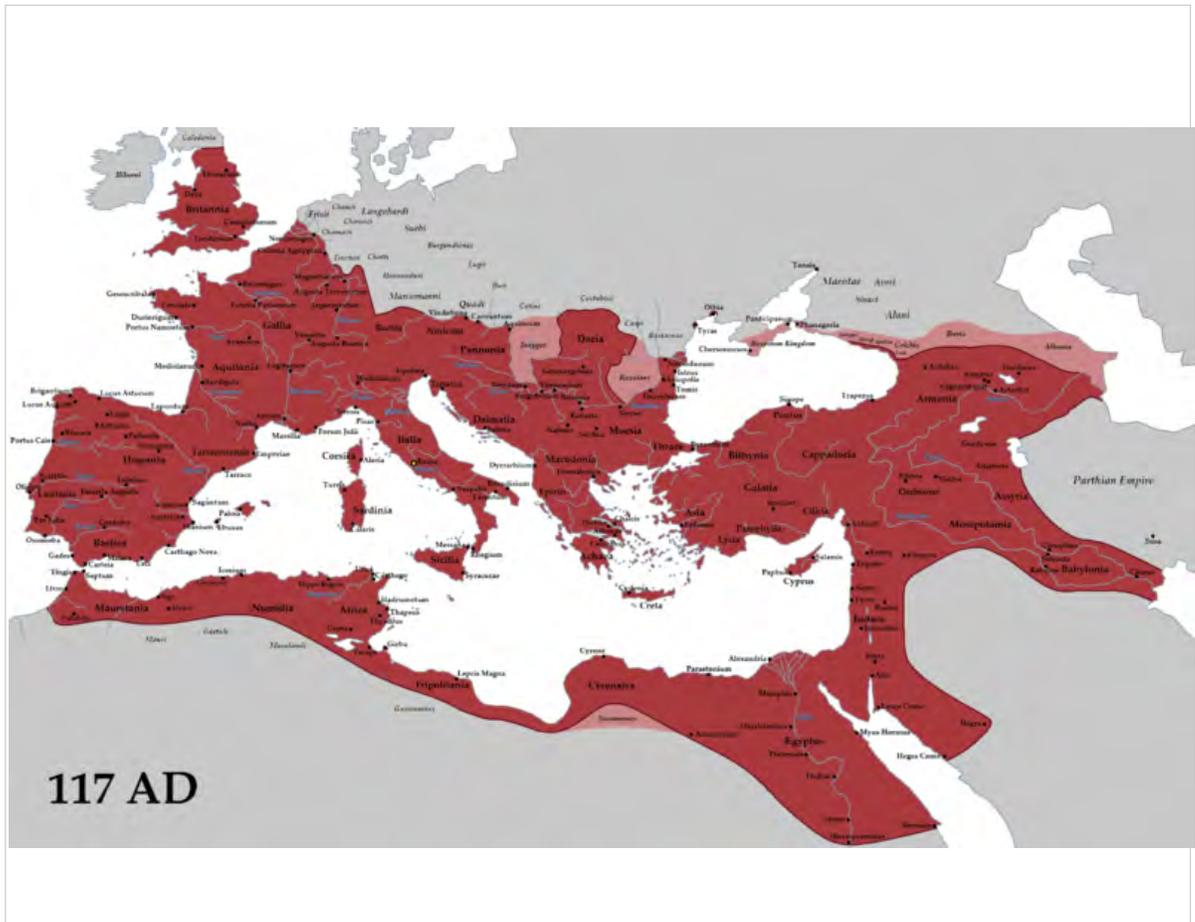
Note the Dniester, Bug, Dnieper and Don Rivers emptying into the Black Sea



Map of the Rhanianite Trade Routes and the Silk Roads



Map of the Several Silk Roads and Maritime Routes



Map of Roman Empire

Much historical attention has been focused on the Jewish revolts against the Romans and destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. After the final revolt, the Bar Kokhbar Revolt in the 2nd century CE, Jews were banned from Jerusalem. Less attention is paid to the continuation of the Diaspora during the Roman Era. For the purposes of tracing our family history, it is the migration of Jews within the Roman Empire that has the most relevance to the genesis of our ancestral origins.

Jews migrated to the farthest borders of the Roman Empire. They continued mostly as traders, but they also established many new Jewish communities. Unfortunately, we have no records about our family origins from that era. We must therefore look to the Roman period of Jewish cultures as a guide to estimating where our ancestors settled. It is highly unlikely that our family roots were in North Africa, including Egypt

and Yemen. Equally unlikely were our origins in India, China, Central Asia, Armenia or Georgia or other remote mountains regions, i.e. Kurdistan, Dagestan or Chechnya.

There are 4 potential locations where our family could have originated. Without specific records, we must assume that any of them could have been the possible candidate of origin. Starting with the Diaspora to Assyria and Babylon, then to Persia, the Mizrahi communities survived. There were early Jewish migrations to Spain during that time. Jewish traders travelled to the borders of the Greek Empire, particularly after the conquests of the Middle East and Central Asia by Alexander. There were Jewish settlers in the region of the Black Sea colonies, whose descendants moved into the lands of the Scythians, which later became Russia. A large Jewish settlement in Kiev lasted until the Jews were evicted from Russia in the 14th century. As well, Jewish migrations to the Southern Mediterranean region continued before, during and after the Jewish revolts against the Romans in Judea. Although there were Jewish migrations to China, Egypt and Yemen, and later on along North Africa, I wish to concentrate on the history of Jewish migrations to the areas of the Southern Mediterranean and Iberian Peninsula.

The Sephardic traditions of the Iberian region lasted until the 15th century when Jews who resisted Christian conversion were evicted. During the same time, there were Jewish communities established in Italy, the Balkan countries and Romania. Because Romania is so important in our Solomon-Goldenberg family history, I wish to add a few more details about Moldavia's Jewish history. In the earliest Roman era, Romania was known as "Dacia." Jewish communities were established from the 1st - 4th centuries CE. In addition, during the 14th century, the Jewish community of Galati (home of our uncle Jack Solomon) bestowed great honor upon the Jews for their efforts to revive the economy of the region. There are few details about the successes of those Jewish businesses and trading, but the trades with Europe had a direct benefit upon the economy of the non-Jewish population of Galati. We also know from the Pinkas haKehillot¹⁰ records of Iasi, Moldavia, that Polish traders and

¹⁰ Historical records archived at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, were written by survivors of the Holocaust that documented the Jewish community history of more than 23,000 towns of Europe.

merchants maintain an active commercial interchange with Romania since the 15th century. Particularly sales of grains and animal products were sent to Romania for local consumption or transshipment to the Mediterranean region via Romanian ports.

*From the Pinkas haKehillot, Iasi:*¹¹

“The Beginning of Jewish Settlement and Development: According to tradition, the first Jewish settlers arrived in Iasi during the second half of the 15th century. The first person to register the history of Romanian Jewry was Iakov Psantir, whose records that he found two early tombstones from the years 1467 and 1549. Contradicting the historian, Dr. M. A. HaLevi, claimed in a monograph that the oldest tombstone in the city was from 1648, but he acknowledged the fact that there were older cemeteries that were ruined with the passage of time.

When Iasi became the capital of Moldavia (1565), Jewish settlement started to develop rapidly. Strong commercial and political ties developed between Jewish merchants and bankers from Kushta and the Moldavian capital. In 1551, the Jew “Emanuel” was nominated by the Turkish sultan to be the ruler of Moldavia, however it is not clear whether he actually ruled. Several historians identify him with Aron Voda, who ruled in 1591-1595. In 1594, this ruler rebelled against the Turks, conducted a massacre against them, and killed 19 Jews from Iasi...”

From the Pinkas haKehillot, Iasi:

Romanian Jews traded with Poland since the 16th century. “In the Responsa literature of Polish scholars from the end of the 16th century, the Jewish settlement in Iasi as a stopover place for Polish merchants on their way to Bessarabia and the port at Galati. Several Moldavian princes used Jewish doctors, who also served political roles. The trade in wine and hard spirits at

¹¹ *Edited by Robert S. Sherins, MD (Pacific Palisades, California); Translated from the original Hebrew by Ziva Yavin, PhD (Tel Aviv, Israel), and Rabbi Jack H. Boom, PhD (Fairfield, Connecticut).*

that time was almost solely in Jewish hands. Yoseph Shlomo Rofeh Dilmadigo, who visited Iasi in 1619-1920, found a large Jewish community headed by an important rabbi, the cabalist Rabbi Shlomo Ben Aroio."

"In the second half of the 18th century, many Jews from Galicia and Bukovina settled in Iasi. The Jews lived in a suburb called the "kikeville", which stretched along the eastern valley of the main hill where the city was built. Many Jews lived in the German quarter. The rich ones lived in the main street and the poor in the quarter called "Tirgul Kokoloy". In 1799, the merchants' main street was destroyed in a fire and the Jews were forced to find other places to live. In 1782, the ruler, Alexandru Mavrocordat the First (1782-1785), expelled the Jews from the neighboring villages and they settled in Iasi.

The Jews of Iasi were exporters of wine to Poland and Wallachia. Towards the end of the 18th century, the Jews forged strong commercial ties with the city Brody and many of Brody's Jews settled in Iasi and even established their own synagogue. Trade in grain, honey, cattle, wool and cheese was entirely in the hands of Jews. At the onset of the 19th century, Jews occupied a central role in all branches of trade. In 1843, the city's center was occupied mainly by Jewish merchants (compared to only 15 Christian merchants) and people started to complain about "Jews spreading to all the streets and neighborhoods." In the middle of the 19th century, Jews began to serve as bankers and moneychangers, professions that were beforehand in the hands of the Turks and the Greeks alone. Jews also took an important part in heavy industry."

Genetic analyses of the *mitochondrial DNA of female Ashkenazim* in Europe revealed startling results that 4 women from Italy during the Middle Ages were responsible for the founding of unique genetic nucleotide sequences:

A 2006 study by Behar et al.,^[50] based on high-resolution analysis of Haplogroup K(mtDNA), suggested that about 40% of the current Ashkenazi

population is descended matrilineal from just four women, or "founder lineages", that were "likely from a Hebrew/Levantine mtDNA pool" originating in the Middle East in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE. Moreover, a maternal line "sister" was found among the Jews of Portugal, North Africa, France, and Italy. They wrote:

Both the extent and location of the maternal ancestral deme, from which the Ashkenazi Jewry arose, remain obscure. Here, using complete sequences of the maternally inherited mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), we show that close to one-half of Ashkenazi Jews, estimated at 8,000,000 people, can be traced back to only four women carrying distinct mtDNA that are virtually absent in other populations, with the important exception of low frequencies among non-Ashkenazi Jews. We conclude that four founding mtDNA, likely of Near Eastern ancestry, underwent major expansion(s) in Europe within the past millennium."

Editor (RSS): Please note that our Solomon/Goldenberg ancestral females have the H-1b2a mtDNA haplogroup (most recent maternal ancestor). Therefore, our ancestral matriarch was Cro-Magnon (haplogroup origin was 25,000 years ago). She married a Jewish paternal ancestor and converted to Judaism within the past 2,000 years. Solomon and Goldenberg males migrated to Moldavia from Galicia, Poland, in the 18th century. Neither gender was descendant from the Italian founders.

Rhadanites

The Rhadanites were a group of Jewish traders, who excelled as merchants and who developed multi-linguistic skills, probably emerged from Persia in the 8th century CE. They expanded trading routes as far as China, Central Asia, India, Spain, North Africa and Europe. It was known that the wife of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad convinced him to grant business and trading licenses to Jewish merchants. Her name was *Khadija bint Khuwaylid*, a successful businesswoman in her own tradition, who became Muhammad's first wife. The Jewish licensees were bestowed a very generous and honorable position in the Islamic culture as a result of Khadija's status.

Major trading routes were established and expanded by the newly credentialed Jewish merchants. Perhaps the most important attributes of this class of Jewish traders were their direct knowledge of the many different cultures and their multi-lingual skills needed in their widespread commerce. Particularly after the Crusades of the 11th and 12th centuries, trading through the silk routes was closed to Christian merchants. However, the Jews were granted access to the silk routes and thereby acted as commercial agents for the Sultans and Islamic merchants. In 1178, Polish coins were struck utilizing Hebrew characters to identify the currency as "Jewish" and also to permit transit of goods and currencies in commercial exchanges in Mediterranean territories and in Asia.

The monarchies of Europe refused to admit the ambassadors of Islamic nations to their European Courts. Instead, Jewish traders were sent to Europe representing the Sultanates. The multi-linguistic Jews had distinct advantages over the Sultans, whose knowledge of European affairs and their languages were limited. In fact, many times the influence of the Jews became indispensable to the Islamic nations. There is a fascinating connection between a marital link of the Cherkinsky and Triffon families in Israel to the "Sultan's Jews," as they were called. Two marital unions occurred to females from the Abulafia family.



The Khazars managed to keep the Muslims out of the region and in so doing controlled the western portion of the silk routes to Europe. By defeating Arab forces, Europe was better able to retain its Christian traditions. However, after the invasion by the Vikings of the Kievan Rus, the Khazarian culture disappeared. What exactly happened to the Khazars is debated. Perhaps they either were killed or they were absorbed into the varied local cultures. The most appealing theory relates to their assimilation in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. With regard to DNA analyses, there appears to be no connection with the Middle Eastern haplogroups of the Y-DNA (J2 AND E1b1b1). The origins of the Khazars are Asian and Siberian, so the Y-DNA and mtDNA haplogroups are mostly derived from the “M” - “R” and R1a and R1b haplogroups. They are predominantly C-M217 haplogroup in Central Asia and Mongolia. These are definitely not the DNA haplogroups associated with Jewish ancestry. Modern Lithuanian DNA Haplotypes are predominantly N and R1a, but minority representation includes types G, J and E1b1b1.



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Map of Khazarian Kingdom, 7th Century CE

Kievan Rus



Map of Kievan Rus, Circa 10th Century

The devastation of Eastern Europe resulting from the Mongol invasion during the 13th century changed the cultures of the nations and instituted noteworthy political changes. With the death of Genghis Kahn in 1227, the Mongol forces withdrew to

Asia. However, the Tatar tribes, who had joined the Khan invasion of Europe, remained. Even in modern times, ethnic Tatars can be identified in Russia, Ukraine, and Crimea. The language and names of towns are Tataric as shown in the adjacent map. In the 13th century, Crimean territory abutted Pereyaslav, where Halperin ancestors lived, as well as in nearby Chernigov, where our Cherkinsky ancestors lived. The proximity of the Khazars, Tatars and Rus to our ancestral towns provoked a lot of interest in my reading about their histories.

Map Tatar Invasion, Circa 13th Century

In summary, of the many possibilities about our ancestral migration to Eastern Europe, the genetic haplotypes of the Khazarians do NOT appear to be included among our ancestors. However, I am fascinated by the map of the Kievan Rus when overlapped by the map of the Khazarian Empire. Both maps included within their borders the region of Kiev, Pereyaslav and Chernigov, areas of great importance to our Cherkinsky and Halperin (Galperin) ancestry. The Khazars, Tatars and the Rus influenced those areas profoundly. There were commercial and cultural interactions. Khazarian artifacts have been found in Chernigov, but that finding does not indicate that Khazars actually lived there or married with Chernigov inhabitants. The strongest evidence of our own ancestry, places our Cherkinsky and Halperin relatives in Eastern Poland about the 17th century. It is unknown where they lived during the Middle Ages or from the time of origin of the Kievan Rus in the 10th century to the 17th century when they appeared in Poland. The pathway of our family traditions is guesswork at best. But, the mysterious ventures of their Diaspora captured my emotional attention in researching and writing this historical document.

More recent investigations about ancestry of the European Ashkenazim, indicate a higher incidence of conversion of the Sephardim to the Ashkenazi traditions than previously assumed. Because there are no documents about our ancestors before the 18th century in Poland, we can only assume that our traditions were those of the Ashkenazim. This question about our ancestral Jewish traditions and culture will remain an enigma. There are no ethnic genetic traits to identify any race, religious or ethnic characteristics.

In the general Diaspora, our ancestors more than likely migrated from either the Greek or Roman regions, married and continued their migrations to Eastern Poland about the 17th century. We know that by the 15th to 19th centuries, 80% of all Jews lived in the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania. There were many routes to Poland. Without direct evidence, we learn about all of them.

Spanish Jewry

Biblical references date trading with Spain to the time of King Solomon, circa 10th century BCE. Trading was carried out using ships; perhaps they were Phoenician ships of the same era or Greek vessels. But, the most substantial evidence places Jewish traders in Spain at the time of the Roman Era. Roman control over Spain began after the fall of Carthage in the 3rd century BCE. Especially after the expulsion of Jews from Judea after the Great Revolt in 70 CE (and also previously from Rome 139 BCE), Jewish presence in Spain is well documented by artifacts dated to the 1st-3rd centuries CE.

The Visigoths (Western Goths) conquered Spain and converted to Catholicism in the 6th century CE. There were significant attempts to Baptize children of mixed Jewish-Christian marriages, which were strictly forbidden. Early in Spanish history, circumcisions and celebration of the Sabbath were forbidden, as well.

Following the invasion of Spain in the 8th century by the Moors, Jewish communities expanded with influx of Jews from Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. Sephardic traditions comingled with Arabic and Babylonian cultures. Christians sought Jewish intellectual resources and scholarship. By the 11th century, Christians began to retake control over Spain. They treated the “Dhimmis” (non-believers) harshly, expelling them from Morocco and Spain. Jews fled to more moderate Muslim lands, i.e. Maimonides.

I want to call attention to the *Abulafia* family of Spain, circa 11th century. They owned successful commercial interests and land before the re-conquest of Spain. Abulafia

were rabbis, scholarly Kabbalists and mystics, as well as wealthy merchants in Spain. Their dynasty can be traced to the 11th century. The Great Synagogue of Toledo was the private chapel of Samuel Halevy Abulafia. To understand the fortunes of Samuel Halevy Abulafia, who was capable of providing financial loans to King Pedro of Spain, and built his large estate in Toledo, complete with private synagogue (El Transito, 1357), I wondered where was the source of his great wealth. Samuel Halevy Abulafia was a wealthy financier about 1320. He rectified the mismanaged Royal treasury of King Pedro. In so doing, he obtained great influence in the Spanish Court. However, the king later perceived a conspiracy and had Don Halevy imprisoned and tortured. Samuel Halevy Abulafia died in prison in 1360, despite his great wealth and prior service to King Pedro.

The Abulafias produced were a well-known dynasty of descendants, who lived in Spain, Italy. Their ancestry can be traced to North Africa about the 9th century. Two marriages of Abulafia women to Triffon men in Palestine relate distantly to our Cherkinsky ancestors from Palestine, the descendants of the marriage of Chaya Ita Cherkinsky and Yizhak Triffon. This will be further discussed later in the manuscript chapter about the Cherkinsky family history.

Expulsion from Iberia, circa 1100 to 1600.

There are wide variations of estimates as to the actual number of Sephardim who were exiled from Spain in 1492. However, the map illustrated above indicates a number of pathways that the Sephardim took in their journeys to safety. These included journeys to North Africa, the Ottoman Empire, and Netherlands. One of the largest migrations was to the Ottoman Empire under Pasha Bayezid II. The Ottoman Sultan considered the eviction of educated and skilled Jews from Portugal and Spain to be very foolish and not well thought out. He offered the Sephardim freedom to enter any territory within the Ottoman Empire. Sephardic culture flourished in Turkey; Jews were protected.

In Europe, Jews had been expelled from England, Germany and France and other countries from the 13th to 16th centuries. However many evicted Sephardim were

accepted back in England, as well as in Italy and Holland. During the Renaissance, Jews began to establish new communities in Eastern Europe, and particularly in Eastern Poland. Jews brought new skills, literacy and education and the concept of monetary currencies with them. England and Holland were the first nations to utilize monetary currencies to enhance their commerce adding a new concept of establishing “value” to properties and products. In feudal Poland, monetary concepts were foreign to the serfs. Soon, serfs began to get the idea that their labor and products could earn them silver or other metal currencies from the Jewish peddlers. Previously, serfs traded work and products for debt owed to the estate landowners or nobility. None of it, however, was based upon the concept of established worth. As an example, death of a Jew was valued less than that of a slaughtered animal. Jews could not own land, but were given rights of propination - matters dealing with grains, alcohol production and inn keeping. Landowners bartered their needs with those of the serfs, whose payments were made by providing a percentage of the produce or labor repairing the estates.

A key event occurred in 1264, when Polish King Boleslav granted a charter to invite Jews to Poland. Our Romanian and Russian ancestors surely were impacted by the historic event. Additionally, the charter granted rights and privileges for the Jews that included:

- With regard to monetary and property issues, a Christian may not testify alone against a Jew.
- If the Christian injures a Jew, the accused will be fined and the fine paid to the royal treasury.
- If a Christian desecrates a Jewish cemetery in any way, the Christian will be punished as demanded by the law.
- Christians may not attack a Jew and are forbidden to accuse Jews of using the blood of humans for their ceremonies.
- Jews are permitted to buy freely just as Christians. If Jews are hampered in this freedom, they will be fined.

The Polish freedoms for Jews brought many new immigrants to Poland. Many were directed to settle in the Eastern part of Poland, where populations would serve to

defer incursions by Tatars and Ottomans. However, the Jews were required to live in communities separate from Christians and at fixed distances from the nearest churches.

In 1569, the Treaty of Lublin was agreed upon formally uniting Poland with Lithuania. The Polish term, “Rzeczpospolita” meant “Commonwealth” of Poland-Lithuania. Its broad geography made it the largest nation-state in Europe extending from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea and nearly to the Caspian Sea. It was an immense State and contained 80% of the worlds Jewry within its borders.



Map of Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania

In the 16th century, Polish King Sigismund III Vasa (House of Sweden) decreed that all Jewish communities would be thereafter administered by an autonomous organization known as the *Kahal*. Within the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania,

arrangements were made to create a system of self-administration granting authority for the rabbinic officials to elect a supreme leader, and all matters of the Jewish community including the administrative (taxation, business licenses, inheritance, etc.), judicial, religious and charitable governance that would be decided. The negative results of such a powerful administration was to corrupt the process whereby all matters from cradle to grave were included, without exception. Corruption involved exclusion of secular education (other than Judaic); exclusion of girls from schools forcing mothers to become their teachers; selection of young males who would serve in the Polish military; and ex-communication as the severest penalty for “breaking the rules of the Kahal.” It was liberal and authoritarian at the same time. One supreme officer served over the Kahals and reported directly to the Monarch. Initially there were four “Councils” known as the Council of the Four Lands. Later on, The Council of the Land of Lithuania was added, making the Council of Five Lands.



Map of the Council of Four Lands, "Kehals"

The capitals of the Kahals were located in Poznań, Kraków, Lwów and Ostrog. Delegates were selected to attend their mutual congresses together with their rabbis. Conferences were created about twice annually and their decisions were taken to

the Polish Diet (Parliament) and King. In time, the authority of the Kahals was more and more limited. By 1764, the Polish Diet discontinued the Kahal system.

Partitions of the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania

Within a decade of the dissolution of the Kahal system, Poland was dismembered by the occupations of Russia, Prussia and Austria in 1772. The Partitions of Poland were extended further in 1793 and 1795, thereby eliminating the polity and existence of the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania. Some aspects of their former Polish geography were re-instated after World War I. However, the Russians gained control over Poland at the end of World War II - until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Of great importance in the understanding of our maternal ancestry, Galicia, the southern region of Poland, was occupied by the Hapsburg' Austro-Hungarian Empire after 1772. Our Goldenberg and Rothenberg ancestors have been documented in Brody, Galicia, since about the 1790s. It is of particular interest that among the Romanian documents, our ancestors were classified as "under the protection of Russia" despite the fact that they had been Poles in Galicia. The evidence of their Polish roots will be discussed in a later chapter of this manuscript.

On the paternal side of our family, our Cherkinsky and Halperin/Halpern grandparents have been documented in Konotop and Koseletz, Russia (Ukraine). That region of the Russian Empire was previously part of the Eastern Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania. After 1772, it was within Russian Occupied Poland.

The Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania was totally dismembered after the third Partition in 1795. The following maps attest to the occupations by Austria, Prussia and Russia and the border changes that ensued.



Map of the Greatest Extent of the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania



Commonwealth Partition 1st



Konotop became part of Russian Occupied Poland
 Brody, Galicia, became part of Austrian Occupied Poland

The Grand Duchy of Lithuania was subsumed by Poland. Vinius/Wilno, Lithuania, was relocated in Poland; Riga, Latvia, and Minsk, Belarus, became part of Russia. The nations of Poland and Lithuania have been dismembered by Austria, Prussia and Russia. Poland and Lithuania did not exist politically or on maps until after the end of World War I (1917).

Map Pale of Settlement, 1791

Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia (Sophie Friederike Auguste von Anhalt-Zerbst) was Prussian born and was betrothed to Grand Duke Peter, grandson of Peter the Great (1745). Tsar Peter III was overthrown and Catherine became Empress of Russia in 1762. She tried to modernize Russia and continued to expand Russia's borders. In 1768, she declared war with the Ottomans. With cooperation of Austria and Prussia, Russia occupied Eastern Poland and thereby extended Russia's borders into Central Europe (1772, 1793, 1795).

As a result of the Russian occupation of Eastern Poland, Russia inherited the largest Jewish population in the world. This event produced a remarkable change of Russian policies, since the Jews had been evicted from Russia during the 14th century. Since the 14th century, only under special circumstances were Jews permitted to reside within Russia's borders. Temporary permits to travel in Russia was granted to Jews for the sole purpose of supplying the trade fairs with the Western goods not available locally. Jews were not otherwise welcome.

With extreme pressure applied to the Empress Catherine from Russian merchants, a royal decree (Ukase) was written placing a border around the towns and villages that included the previously Polish Jewish communities. Thereafter, there would be no further commercial competition with the nervous Russian merchants. We know of this geographic polity as the "*Pale of Settlement*." It has been estimated that in the occupation of Eastern Poland, the Russians inherited about 2.5 million Jews.

Since then, the history of the Jewish communities of the Pale included restricted travel by its Jewish subjects. Russia was feudal and ruled by wealthy landowners. Serfs still were victimized, as were the Jews. The "internal" migration of Jews within the "Pale" is particularly relevant to our family history, as will be further detailed in a later chapter of this manuscript. Our Cherkinsky and Halperin ancestors lived within the "Pale" unlike our Romanian ancestors. However, the Romanians did not escape the Russian dominance of the 18th to 20th centuries.



Jewish Populations Within the Pale of Settlement



Russia and the Ottoman Empire engaged in many wars since the 16th century. These conflicts are of particular interest to our family history because of the Russian victories over Romania, a by-product of the Ottoman conflicts. Romania had a unique history of being ruled by 2 other administrations simultaneously: Turkey and Russia. There were 13 separate wars between Turkey and Russia:

- 1568-1570
- 1571-1574
- 1676-1681
- 1686-1700
- 1735-1739
- 1768-1774
- 1787-1792
- 1806-1812
- 1828-1829
- 1853-1856 (Crimean War with Britain and France)
- 1877-1878
- 1914-1918 (World War I)

In the conflict of 1806-1812, Eastern Moldavia was ceded to Russia. Although Bessarabia was culturally Romanian, it has remained part of Russia until the Paris Peace Treaty that ended World War II, when Bessarabia was made part of the Soviet Union (Moldovan SSR). After the fall of the USSR in 1991, the Republic of Moldova became independent of Russia and Ukraine. While none of our Solomon/Goldenberg ancestors came from Bessarabia, one cousin, Beryle Solomon – daughter of Rudolph and Isabel Solomon – married Paul Buchman in Tampa, Florida. It was Paul’s ancestors who immigrated from Leovo, Bessarabia. Leovo is located immediately east of the Prut River, which is the boundary between Bessarabia and Moldavia, Romania.

In Summary

In Part I of this manuscript, I have emphasized the role of evolution, tracing our ancestral genomic DNA, and the Diaspora as a means of reviewing our particular ancestral history. Without this information, our knowledge about our prior ancestral history would be non-existent.

I firmly believe that we can “wrap” our documented knowledge with relevant information about our cultural history, geography, and with facts derived from the genomic analysis of our Y-DNA and mtDNA. These facts clarify the understanding of our ancestors. Our genomic haplotypes identify us by the mutations within our chromosomes and can be very

helpful in deducing our human journey since the arrival of the first modern humans in Africa (and beyond to the appearance of the hominids).

We Are Caucasians

Part 2

Analysis of Prehistoric, Biblical and Modern Times
Enhanced Through Anthropology, Geographic, Genomic and Historic
Sciences

Preface

This manuscript was sub-entitled: *“An Illustrated Retrospective Research Manuscript Utilizing Archeological, Biblical, Biologic, Cartographic, Cultural, Genomic, Historic, and Linguistic Resources,”* for the specific purpose of bringing to the reader’s attention the necessity of using many research categories and disciplines that would unite the complex prehistoric information. In so doing, I have outlined a journey of modern humans from prehistoric times when hominids have been discovered who were bipedal and walked upright. They evolved in Africa at least 7,000,000 years ago.

With the scientific evidence from genetic research of the human genome, it is now possible to trace the evolution of the modern and prehistoric human species. Examination of the changes or mutations of the nucleotides, which join the 2 chains of DNA in each chromosome, made it possible to discover and link our human ancestors by genetic types, locations and to calculate the probable time of the appearance of those individuals. Clustering the DNA haplogroup types by comparing the geographic locations throughout the world of indigenous populations with the DNA evidence, created the opportunity to locate the ancestral journeys of modern humans.

I have taken this opportunity to merge the evidence discovered from genomic research with the data learned from other scientific specialties to further explain our family history. Cross-connecting data from the various scientific disciplines has made it possible for this author to predict our probably and unique ancestral journey to the present time. Only the most recent history has been obtained from preserved archival documents. The overwhelming majority of our ancestral journey has been pre-historical. Without documents, the tale must be estimated based upon the best scientific evidence available. Surely new facts will emerge in time and the story will require updating. At this time, however, the story is both fascinating and compelling to the writer.

Genomic evidence has confirmed that our ancestors passed through the Levant on their way to arriving at the Western Caspian region 100,000 to 80,000 years BCE. About 70,000 to 60,000 years later, our J2a-M10 genomic ancestors migrated from the Caucasus to the Levant. They appeared in the Levant about 4,000 to 3000 years BCE and later became members of one of the 12 Hebrew tribes. At the end of the 18th century in Russia, after centuries of anti-Semitism and economic difficulties, some of our ancestors and their relatives through marriage sought relief through Zionism and made their exodus to Israel. “Three times is a charm”, so the saying goes and here we descendants now are to be found in America, Europe and Israel.

As described in a previous chapter of this manuscript, our Cherkinsky family migrated out of Africa about 100,000 to 80,000 years ago. Their genomic journey has been researched. With confidence, we can determine that our ancient ancestors migrated to the Western Caspian region about 80,000 to 60,000 years ago. Approximately 30,000 years ago, our ancestors Y-DNA haplogroup, “J” appeared for the first time in the Western Caspian area. About 15,000 years ago, descendants of the “J” ancestral male, produced offspring with the subclade genetic markers classified as “J2a.” Most recently, that genome was reclassified, “J2a-M410.” This subclade group lived predominantly in the Caucasus.

Our M410 ancestors inhabited the Caucasus, and specifically Georgia and North Ossetia starting about 8,000 years ago. That era has been pinpointed as the early *Neolithic agricultural revolution*. The region is part of the “Fertile Crescent” – a region spanning the approximate borders of Anatolia and its neighbors, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and the Caucasus.

As described elsewhere in this manuscript, our ancestors later migrated to the Levant. Utilizing archeological, cultural, geographic, genomic, historic and linguistic methods, I was able to locate when and where our ancestors next journeyed. They appeared in the Levant. This migration can be estimated with reasonable accuracy. Ancestors carrying the Y-DNA haplogroup “J” produced offspring with many subdivisions, whose migration pathways can be traced in the Middle East. In fact,

they produced hundreds of mutational changes that have been categorized by their genomic analyses. They produced mutations that are found in Arabs, Armenians, Canaanites, Georgians, Hebrews, Kurds and Turks, among others.

In our particular case, the genomic evidence demonstrated that our autosomal chromosomes are definitely found among those Hebrews who formed the 12-Tribes of Israel. We do not know yet from which tribe our ancestors may have originated. The timing occurred after the formation of the Land of Canaan and subsequently the Hebrew tribes, as written in the Bible's Book of Kings. Tribes have been described in the Land of Israel after the Exodus from Egypt led by Moses, (circa 1,280 BCE).

Our Cherkinsky autosomal genome further demonstrated that about 20% of the genes also are found among the Arab Bedouins. The presence of both ethnic groups suggests that the origin of our autosomal genome most likely arose before those religious-ethnic groups formed. Therefore, we can assume that the ancestors carrying J2a-M410 arrived or appeared in the Levant during the time of the Canaanites. This could have appeared before the time of appearance of the Patriarch, Abraham (circa 1850 BCE). Abraham was born in the town of *Şanlı Urfa*, in close proximity to the town of *Harran* that has been so well described during Abraham's journeys that were written in the Bible. Perhaps our ancestors appeared in the Levant about 3,000-4,000 years BCE.

Linguistic information has been extremely helpful in determining the further migratory directions of our J2a-M410 ancestors. Let us examine the language origins in the Middle East. The earliest of those languages has been classified as a "Proto-Semitic" language. Derivatives of the Proto-Semitic languages have evolved and dialects and derivative languages emerged in a variety of geographic areas in the Middle East. As an excellent example, one of my cousins, who descended from my grandmother's family, instead of from my grandfather's lineage as I did, carries the Y-DNA haplogroup subclade, "J1." We have a common ancestor, "J" whose group appeared in the Western Caspian region approximately 30,000 years ago.

The “J1” subclade group also appeared in the Caucasus a few thousand years before “J2a”. Our genomic pathways are close, but NOT exact.

Genomic data show that the region of Bagdad and Babylon has a majority of “J1” carrying males in their population. That region was a center in the development of the “Archaic-Semitic” language. Aramaic language appeared in this region. However, the descendants of that region migrated to the desserts of Arabia and settled mostly in the southerly region of the peninsula, Yemen and Oman. The inhabitants of Yemen and Oman speak a minor dialect of Arabic not spoken elsewhere.

On the other hand, the Northwest region of Syria and Lebanon is associated with the appearance of the Archaic or Proto-Semitic language. Hebrew appeared in that location as an alternative to Aramaic. Therefore, Hebrew is not a derivative language of Aramaic, but rather a derivative of the archaic, Proto-Semitic language. It is in this vicinity of the Northwest that J2a subclade is most apparent. Modern Hebrew evolved there, as well as the modern Arabic. Both of those languages have continued to be spoken in modern times. We can estimate that our ancestors settled in the Northwest Levant, prior to the appearance of the Hebrew tribes approximately 4,000 to 3,000 years BCE.

Archeology Encounters Anthropology and Genomics

In mid-May 2015, I received notification of a fascinating lecture to be given by Professor Andrea Ricci, German Archaeological Institute – Eurasia Dept. The announcement was a routine invitation to join the staff lecture at the *UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archeology*, which was a public event for the benefit for interested students and neighbors.

EUREKA !!! I immediately recognized the implications of merging data from the excavation of the Georgian/Azerbaijan Neolithic sites with the genomic information that I had previously gathered. Both databases confirmed overlapping facts that concentrated on information obtained from 8,000 years ago. I was overwhelmed with the curiosity that I would learn much more about the culture of my genomic ancestors. The good luck was almost too much to absorb...

In fact, by combining the information learned from linguistics and historical sources, I was able to advance the date of my most recent prehistoric ancestors to a time period of approximately 4,000 to 3,000 years BCE. To date there are no data as to which of the 12 Hebrew tribes my ancestors from Canaan might have been born. That information will require exhumation of graves to procure DNA samples, while reassuring the religious authorities that the graves will be repopulated appropriately. Such genomic details would advance my knowledge of my ancestors to about 1000 years BCE. Let us hope that these tasks will come to pass and be fruitful.

Kura Araxes Culture in the Caucasus

From: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA

and

Archaeological Institute of America Present:

Dr. Andrea Ricci German Archaeological Institute – Eurasia Dept.

2015 AIA-DAI Fellow at the Cotsen Institute (UCLA)

Lenart Auditorium, Fowler Building UCLA

Tuesday, May 26, 2015 at 7 pm

“Early settlement of the Southern Caucasus: recent discoveries of the German-Azerbaijani investigations in the Mil Plain (Southern Azerbaijan)”

The talk will address the latest results of the interdisciplinary project “Kura in Motion”, which has been investigating early sedentism along the Kura Valley since 2010. Focus will be on the landscape of survival of the Mil Plain of Southern Azerbaijan, where a series of late Neolithic (6th Mill. BCE) sites have been investigated with intensive survey and excavation.

Contact with Professor Ricci at UCLA was productive and enthralling. He promised help and would send me his publications, as well as continue to support my research project of the Neolithic sites in the Caucasus. Most importantly, he sent me his primary research publication, which was co-authored by dozens of specialists in the fields of History, Prehistoric and Classical Anthropology, Geography, Carbon dating, Chemistry, Metallurgy, Botany, Physics/Engineering, Art Conservation and Art History, among others.

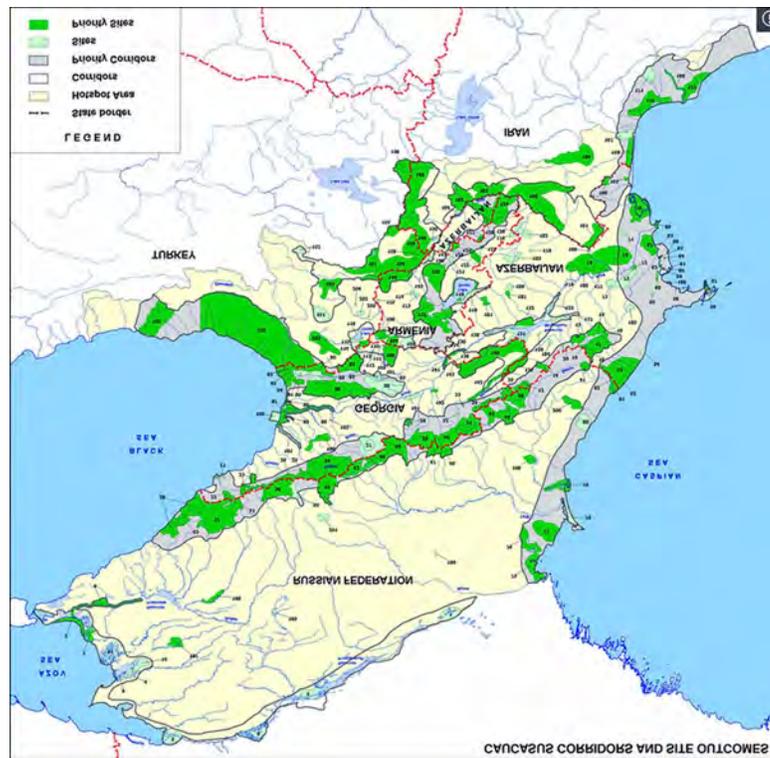
From Professor, Dr. Andrea Ricci:



Publication of the Research Team, Ancient Kura 2010-2011



Aerial Map Caucasus



Archeological Sites Georgia, Azerbaijan & Armenia



The Neolithic Settlement of Arukhlo – Georgian German Project



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)



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



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

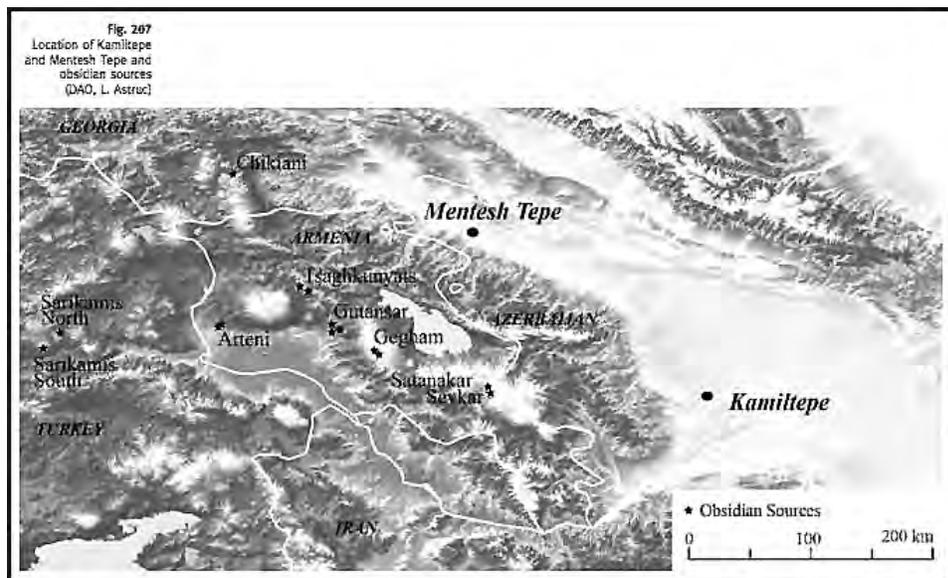


Fig. 88
Aruchlo. Circular wall XI with repairs and a large container (photo S. Hansen)

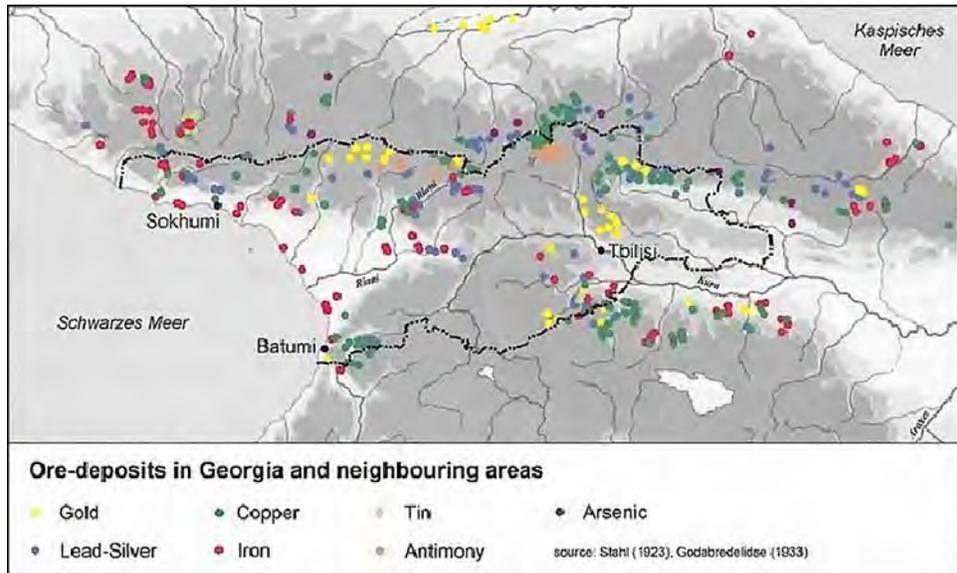


Fig. 89
Aruchlo. Collapsed mudbrick wall (photo S. Hansen)

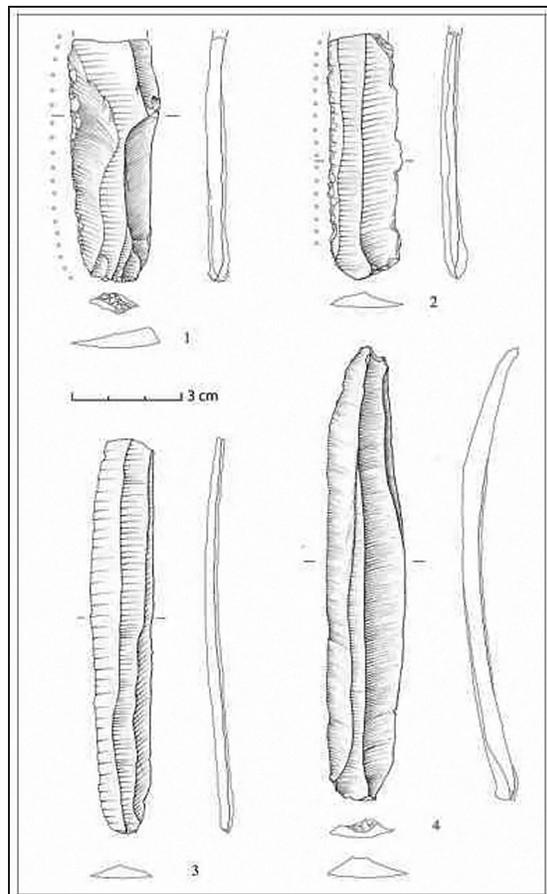




Map of Neolithic Excavation Sites – Georgia & Azerbaijan
Obsidian Deposits



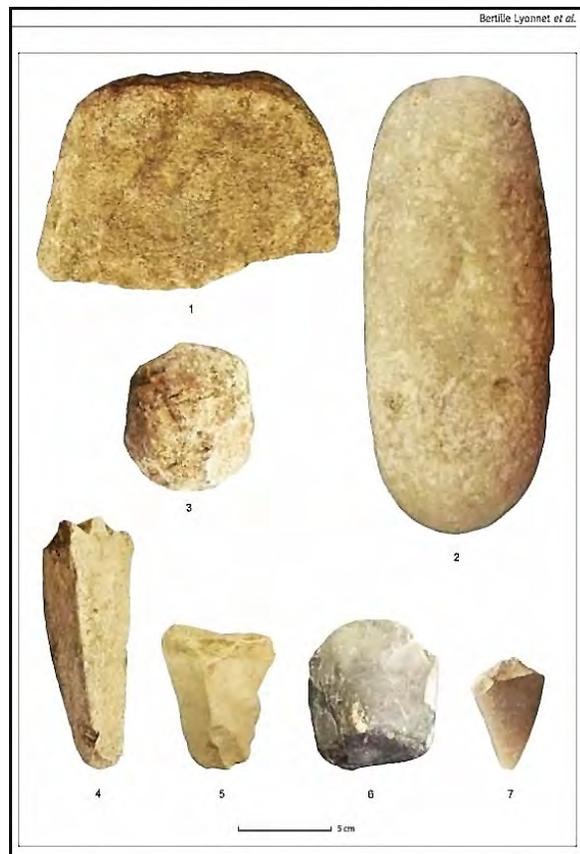
Map Kura-Araxes Mining Sites



Obsidian Tools



Kamiltepe – Carnelian Beads



Stone Tools



DBM, TH. RABSILBER).

Utilitarian Pottery Samples Discovered in the Excavations



Pottery Technology and Utility

As the millennia of the Neolithic era evolved, valuable ores were discovered and utilized. The above map shows the areas of the abundant and valuable ore-deposits.

From the 190-page manuscript of the excavation research project and Professor Ricci's lecture, I gleaned many new facts that I appreciated in trying to better understand the physical nature and the evolving culture of my Georgian ancestors, 6,000 BCE. The appearance of the early Neolithic human settlements has been pushed back in time. The settlements were immensely successful as determined by the explosive expansion of the communities and the huge migrations of clans that ensued to Europe, and the Middle East. The evidence of their advancing technical feats and cultures are shown by the excavated artifacts and analysis of the structures built as residences of substantial height, canals around the residences and cultivated fields, and the obsidian and stone tools, pottery shards, and jewelry.

Professor Ricci discussed the geologic conditions of the region as flat and dry. However, the nearly 1000 mile region between the fresh water resources of the Caspian and Black Seas, as well as the abundant fresh water river systems from the Kura and Araxes rivers, provided amply for their human requirements, their cultivated agriculture and animal husbandry needs. Geological and archeological evidence supports the facts of the population migrations every few years and their return to the same regions many times. It is presumed that weather and agricultural conditions forced the migrations and returns of the clans.

The Caucasus region supported a huge population explosion, as well as a huge technical explosion during the Neolithic era. The early Neolithic era occurred principally about 6,000 years BCE. There were many stages in the evolution of the cultures as the technology passed from the agricultural successes to the iron and bronze ages. Technologies flourished as attested to by the pottery, jewelry and trading that evolved. Early populations have been far more mobile than previously recognized. There were multiple clans of varying haplotypes, as attested to by the discovery of the genomic variability of the current resident populations. The clans

of varied genomic types founded successful settlements in the Caucasus. New migrations to Europe and the Middle East occurred presumably due to weather and nutritional needs. No major regional battles have been described in the area during that era. By the 4th millennium BCE, major empires evolved in the region, including the Hittites, Mittani, Akkadians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians and the Egyptians. By about 3500 BCE, written alphabets appeared, which was a critical evolution of languages that directly affected my own ability to follow the human journey of my ancestors. This will be discussed in greater detail in the manuscript.

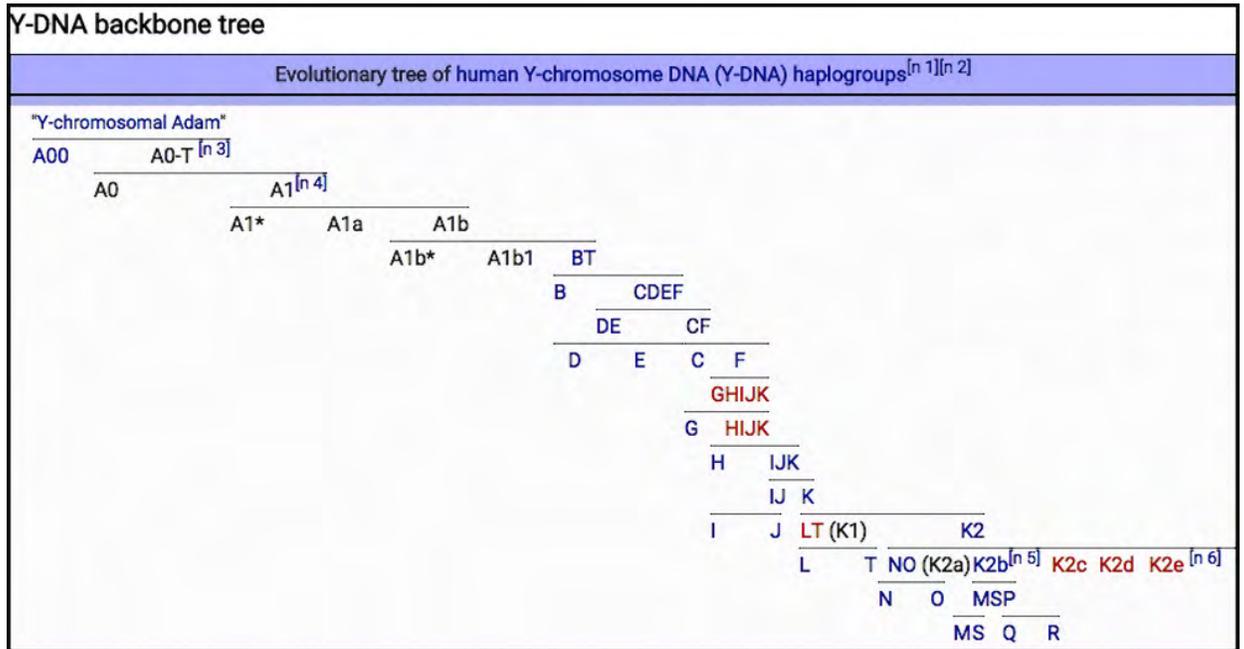
The significance of the further migrations relates to the populating of Europe and the Middle East. As well, both Europe and the Middle East received numerous and separate, but continuous immigrant migrations from other areas of Central Asia, Asia, and Africa. Populations brought a large variety of genetic types and new mutations. A general statement about the mixing of the genomes has been that it was the males who traveled, while the females were the local gals.

By comparing the data from many disciplines, i.e. archeology, genetics, linguistics, recorded history, Biblical accounts, and geography, it became possible to cross-link the facts to determine more recent stages of my ancestral journey to modern times.

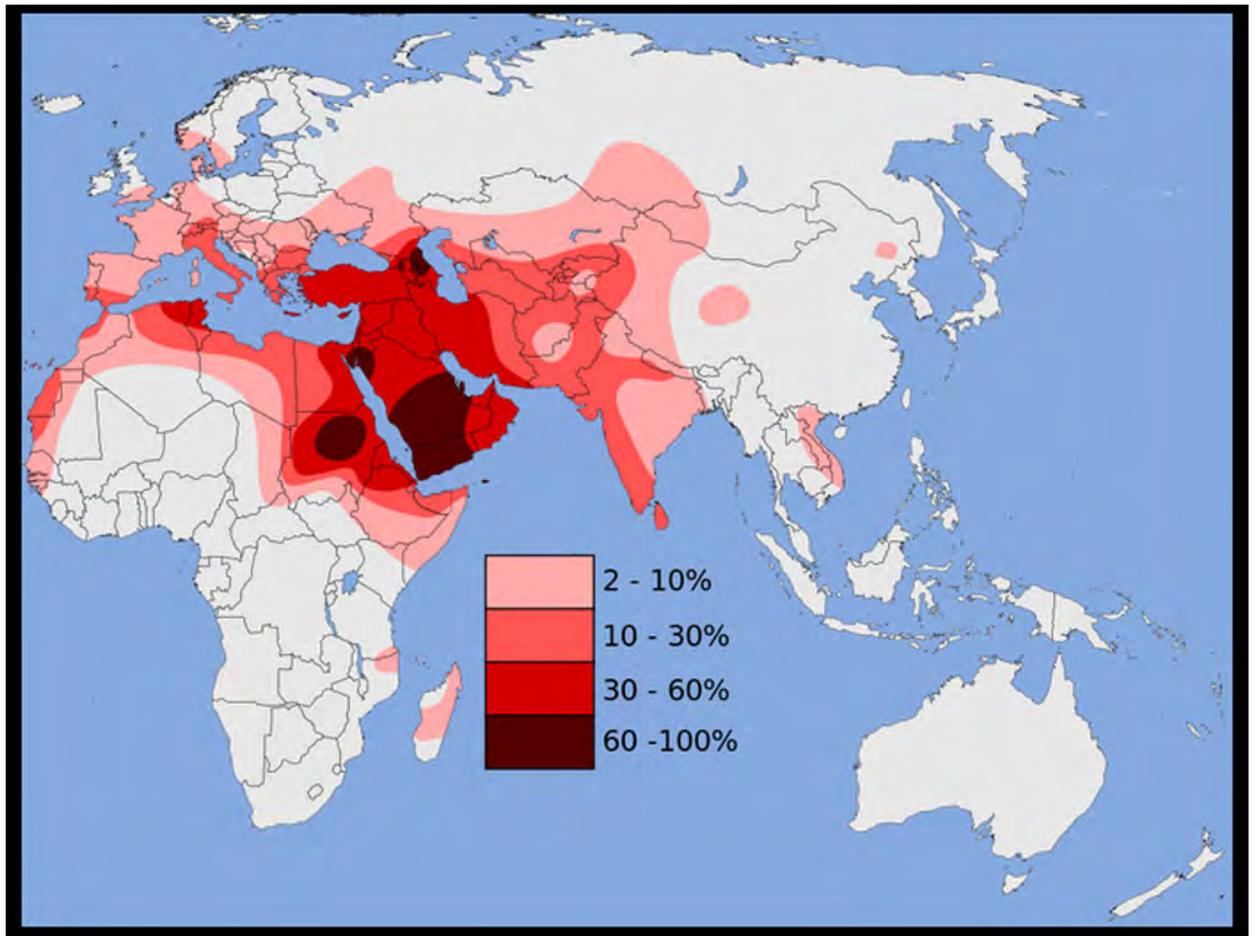
Due to findings of specific genetic mutations, the J2a haplogroup/subclade has been reclassified as J-M410. Current analyses of J-M410 located this subgroup mainly in the Caucasus and principally in Georgia and North Ossetia. The group appeared about 15,000 years ago. Several specific mutations are associated with this subclade that interestingly arose in the region of Georgia and North Ossetia.

Georgia and North Ossetia are located in the lush valley of the Kura and Araxes Rivers. The region lies conveniently between the two huge fresh water seas: the Black Sea in Anatolia and the Caspian Sea to the East. This is the region where ancient humans migrated about 100,000 – 80,000 years ago. Ninety percent of living humans descended from these ancient peoples. This region also was located in the northern part of the Fertile Crescent, where animal husbandry and the

agricultural revolution evolved. Animals were domesticated, which included: sheep, goats, cattle and pigs. Eichorn wheat was first domesticated in the region. When these ancient people migrated, they took their animal stock and plants with them.



Y-DNA Backbone Tree (ISOGG – International Society of Genetic Genealogy)



Map Graphic Distribution of J2-M410 Y-DNA

Gallery Kura Araxes Valley



Georgia, Caucasus







View of a Village settlement in the Caucasus



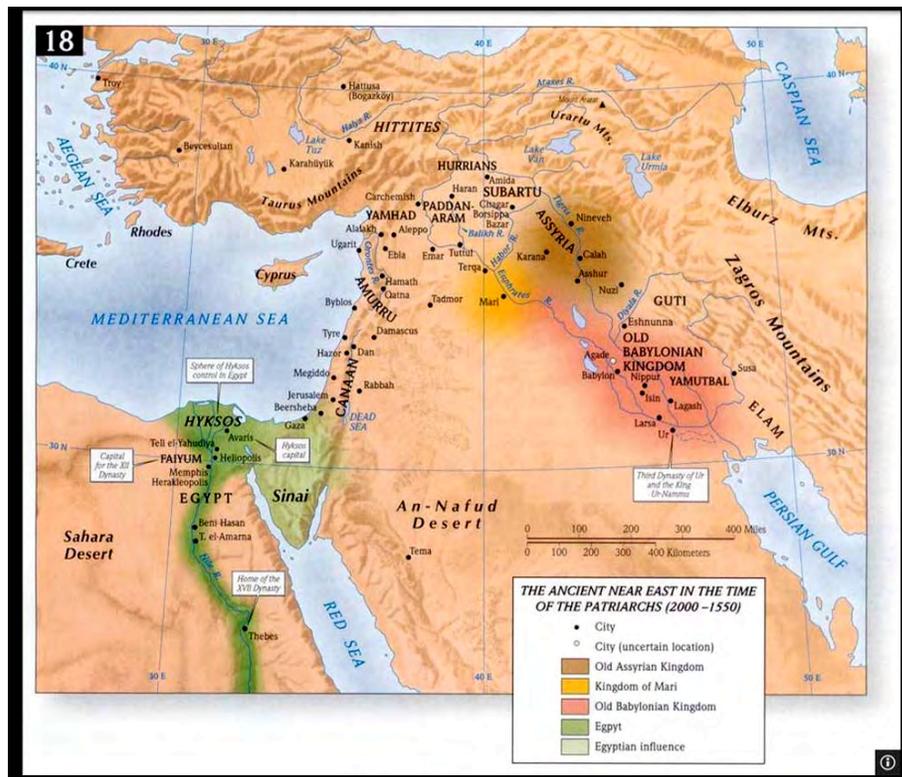
Lush Valleys, Mountains and Rivers of the Caucasus



Map of the Fertile Crescent of Mesopotamia
"Cradle of Civilization"



Aerial Modern Map of the Caucasus

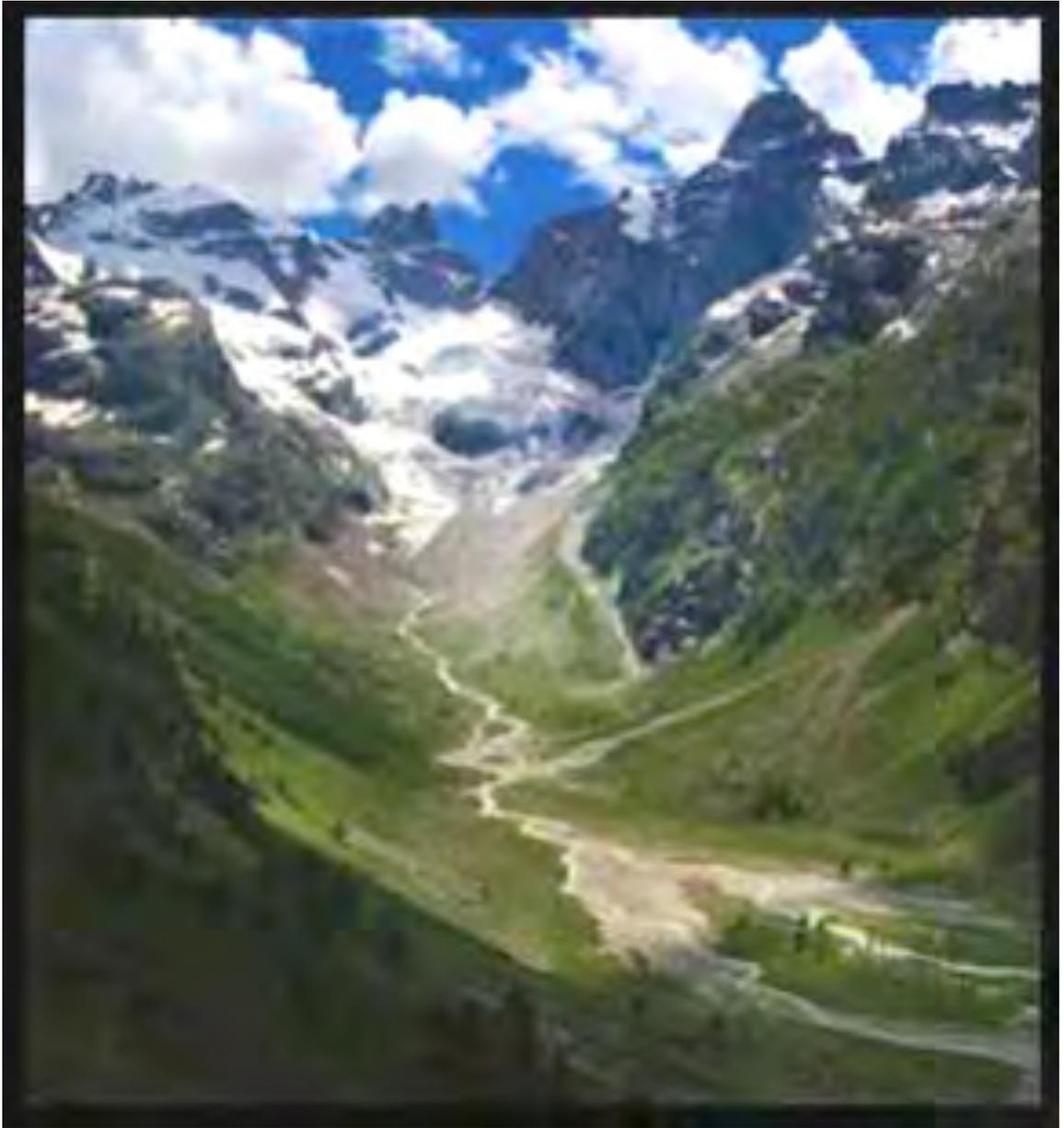


Map of Middle Eastern Empires, 3rd Millennium BCE



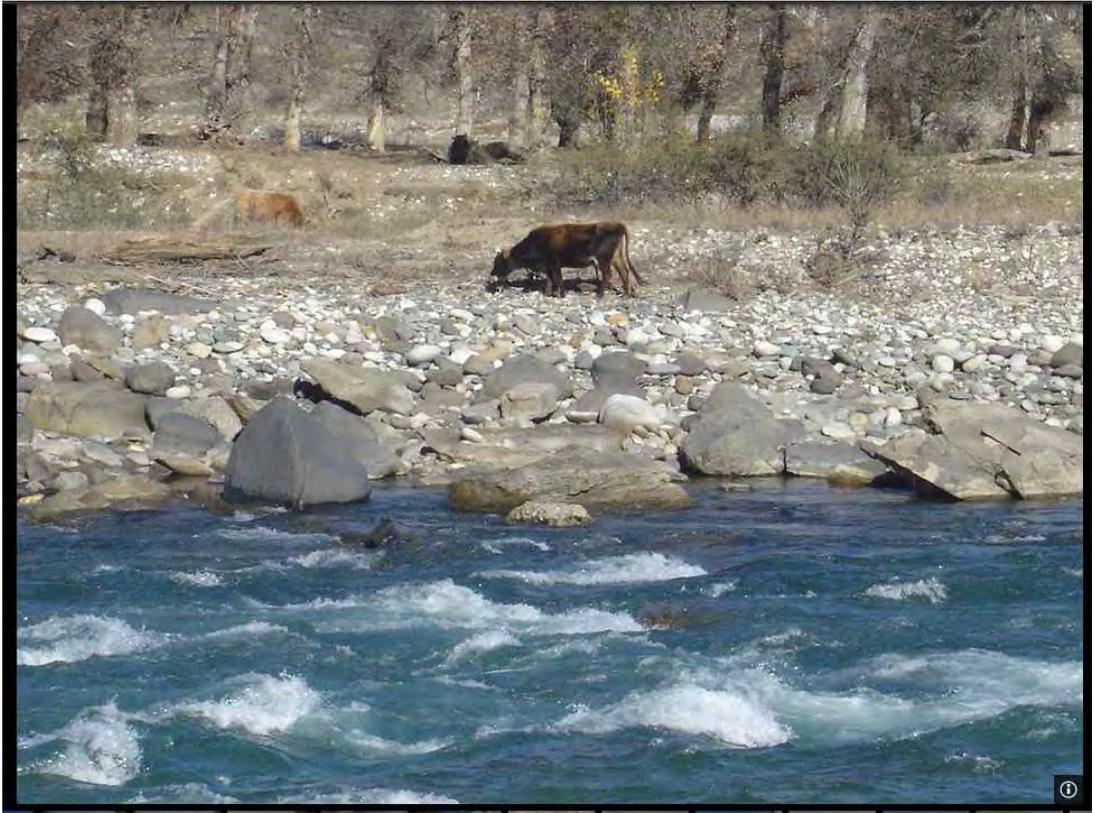
Aerial Map of the Greater and Lesser Caucasus Mountain Ranges and the Kura & Araxes Rivers Positioned between the Black Sea of Anatolia and the Western Shoreline of the Caspian Sea

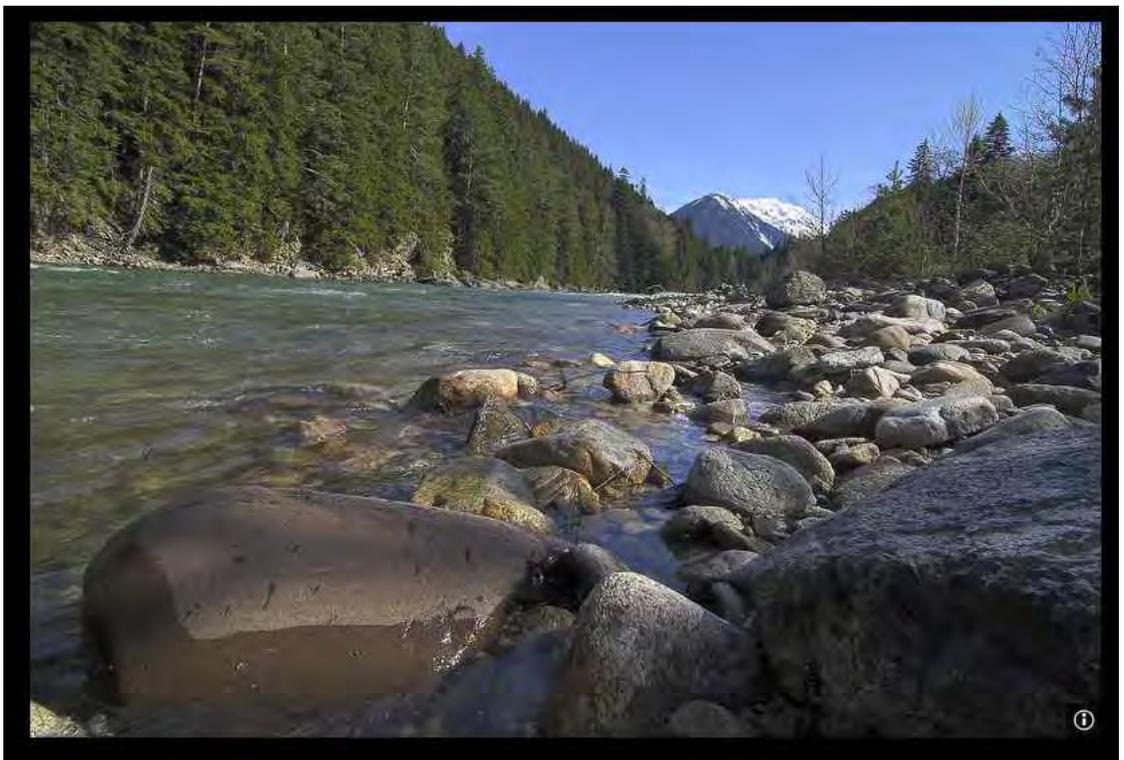
Georgian Landscapes













Map Extent of Persian Empire
 Proximate to Empires of Egypt, Greece, Scythia, Mesopotamia and Babylon

Origin of Semitic Languages

Determining the distribution of human populations materializes when genomic data are evaluated with additional data, such as linguistic evolution and expansions, cultural factors, such as foods, dress and behavioral customs, as well as geographic population analyses. Triangulation of the factors improves the certainty in the results of determining the origins of ethnic populations and their migration patterns.

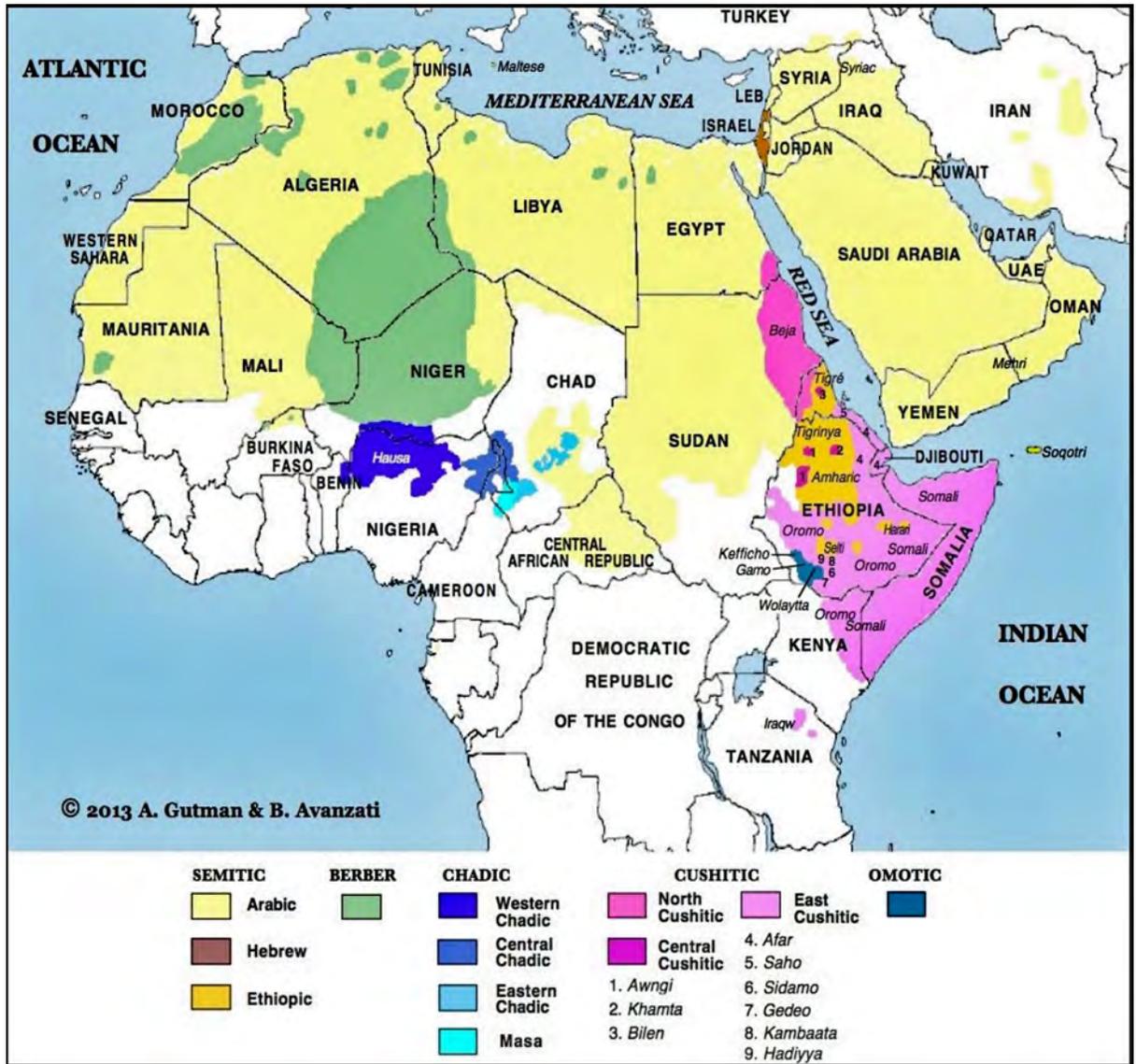
I was pleasantly surprised to find that the evolution of the Hebrew and Aramaic languages in the Middle East occurred in different locations and different times. Those locations in turn were associated with the different distributions of J1/M267 and J2/M410 populations.

Evidence of the earliest Proto-Semitic language appeared about 3,700 BCE in Northeastern Mesopotamia. It is one of the world's primary language groups that include: Berber, Chadic, Cushitic, Egyptian, Omotic and Semitic languages.

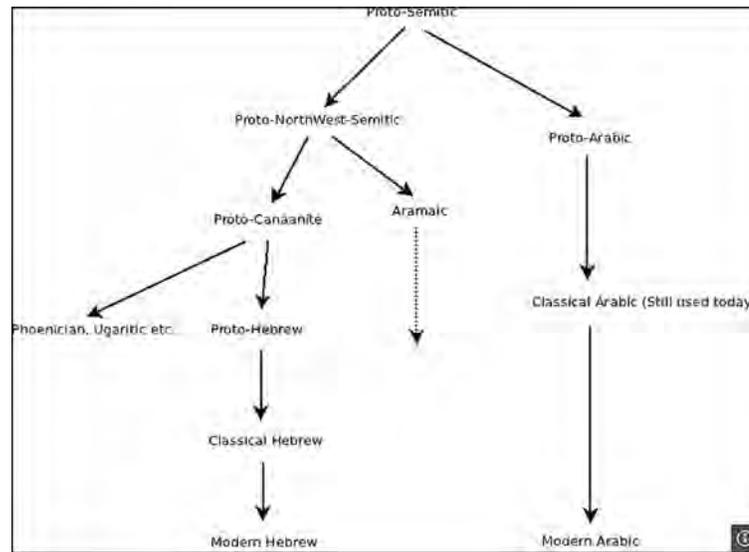
From Wikipedia/Wikiwand digital encyclopedia:

"Proto-Semitic is the hypothetical proto-language ancestral to historical Semitic languages of the Middle East. Locations, which have been proposed for its origination, include northern Mesopotamia, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Levant with a 2009 study proposing that it may have originated around

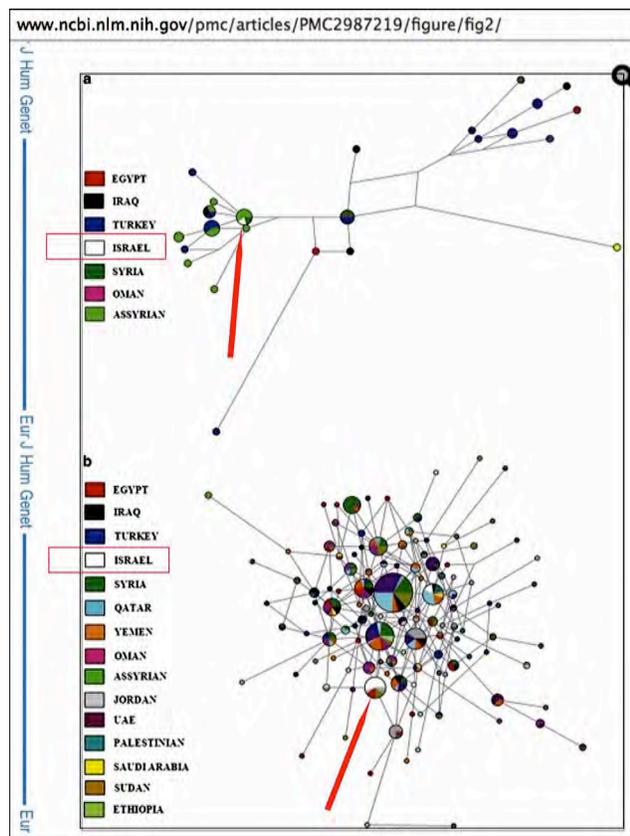
3750 BCE. The Semitic language family is considered a component of the larger Afro-Asiatic macro-family of languages."



Map of Origin Afro-Asiatic Language



“Graphic Display of the Evolution of Semitic Languages
In the Middle East”



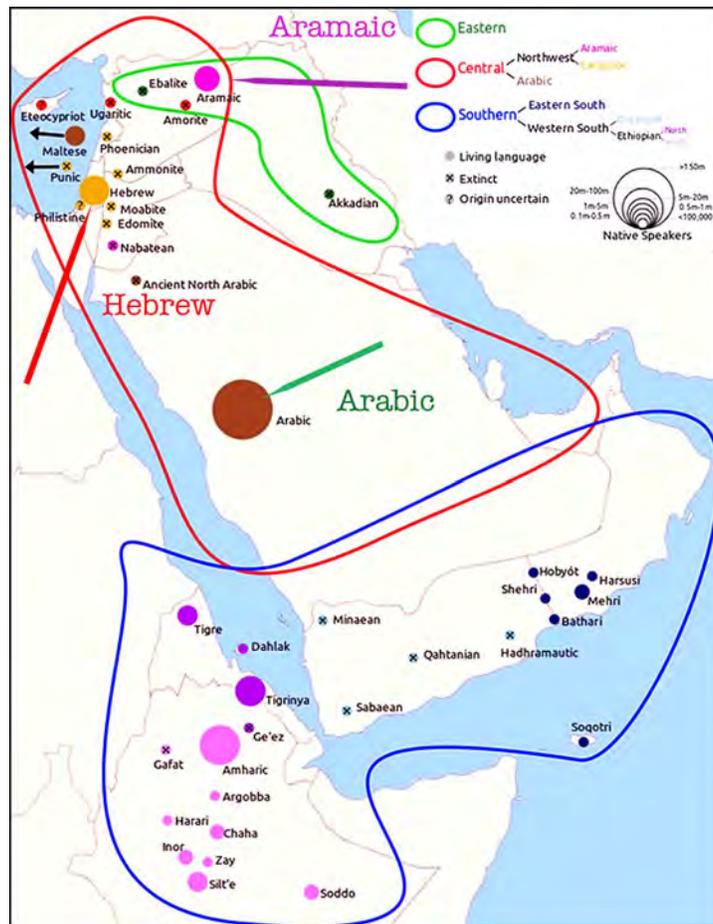
“Distribution of Afro-Asiatic Languages

Note that the Hebrew language, represented in White (red arrows) is a very small part of the whole language group”

“The Aramaic language, along with Chaldean (Babylonian) and the Proto-Semitic languages arose in Northeastern Mesopotamia. As well, the principle Arabic language evolved in this region. However, Arabic speaking populations of the region spoke a different dialect of Arabic as they migrated to the South Arabian Peninsula. They formed the desert populations of Yemen and Oman. Males carrying the J1-M267 genomic mutations were included in this group. They also spoke Aramaic. Later on, Jewish populations from this region became part of the 12 Hebrew tribes (Aramaic speakers later on adopted Hebrew).”

“The graphic map shown next shows colored marquees that designate 3 regions:

1. Green – demarcates the Northeastern region of the Levant and Arabian Peninsula where the Proto-Semitic language was spoken, as well as Chaldean and Aramaic.
2. Blue – demarcates the Southern Arabian Peninsula where Yemen and Oman are located. The Arabic dialect speakers from the Northeastern green area migrated to the far south of the peninsula, Yemen and Oman.
3. Red – demarcates the Northwestern region of former Mesopotamia, and current location of Syria and Lebanon, as well as the Levant and most of the main Arabian Peninsula. This is the region where Hebrew evolved. It is also the region where the most prominent Arabic language evolved and is spoken in modern times.”



“The Y-DNA Haplogroup Subclades, J2-M410It appears is one of the most populous genomic identifies of the Caucasus region. They migrated to several regions in the Middle East, but those who migrated to the region demarcated by the red boundary in the map, became the Canaanites and many of them became Hebrew speaking Jews. Those individuals became not only Hebrew speaking Jewish tribes, but also included future Canaanites, among them were the Arabs who spoke the main dialect of Arabic, Kurds and Phoenicians.”

Haplogroup J1 and J2a appeared more than 10-millenia before the appearance of the Hebrew Patriarch Abraham, Moses and the Exodus from Egypt, and the establishment of the 12 Jewish tribes of Israel about 1000 BCE. The Fertile Crescent region represented a population of humans who first settled and adopted agricultural means and animal husbandry to sustain them. Settlements replaced the hunter-gatherer cultures. The migration of the agricultural communities and culture

to Southern Europe and the Mediterranean communities is associated with the distribution of the “J” haplogroup genome. Therefore, it is no surprise that individuals expressing J2a have been found among disparate cultures:

- Aegean
- Anatolia
- North Caucasus
- Iranian
- Georgian
- Chechen
- Arabs of Iraq, Arabia, Lebanon, Jordan and Omanis.

Göbekli Tepe, Ancient Stone Temple in Anatolia

As a side comment, stone temples at Göbekli Tepe in Southern Turkey near the Syrian border were discovered that were built about 13,000 years ago, by a population that must have settled into communities large enough to support such a massive stone construction project – a period of time estimated to be more than one hundred years. The building of the temples coincided with the place and time of the origin of the subclades J2 and J2a. Our patriarchal genomic ancestor was “J2a-M410” haplogroup, which appeared about 10,000-8,000 years ago.

Researching Ancient Ancestors

In 1994, an archeological discovery in Eastern Anatolia uncovered a religious temple that was so significant that it invalidated the prevailing theories of the origin of human settlement. While making a return visit to Turkey (2005) to explore parts of Eastern Anatolia, personal friends of ours stumbled upon the archeological research site of Göbekli tepe and spoke with the on-site managing scientist. When the publication of this phenomenal discovery became available this year, I was stirred by the thought that one of those ancient Neolithic people may have been my paternal ancestral relative. Was it possible that this new conception of the beginning of human worship had a personal genomic relationship to me?

Last week the June 2011 issue of the National Geographic magazine arrived at our home. The cover story was boldly entitled, “*The Birth of Religion.*” A huge T-shaped carved stone column was displayed with a sculpted animal in relief 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! No other engineered building has ever been found at such an early date. The oldest materials at the site were dated to almost 13,000 years ago, but evidence supported the fact that Göbekli tepe was built in several stages.



Exposed Massive Stone T-shaped Pillars

<http://www.gobeklitepe.info/>

The essence of the discovery at Göbekli tepe was the physical proof that human engineers were capable of producing carved stone pillars weighing up to 16 tons, sculpting magnificent large stone animal figures, and drafting architecture designs of a ceremonial center, presumed to be a religious temple. This feat had been 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 to the job from somewhere else. Therefore, the

principles involved in organizing such a magnificent structure already had to be known to those builders.

Anthropological interest in the development of ancient human religious beliefs is limited due to the lack of refined evidence. However, my interest is related to the understanding of the more recent religious traditions in Western Civilization since the time of the Patriarch Abraham, 3,800 years ago. The three major faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam have been grouped by calling them the faiths of the Children of Abraham. I am fascinated by the findings at the Temple at Göbekli tepe, because it is currently the oldest known religious structure. Could the spiritual symbols found at Göbekli tepe be a forerunner of modern faiths? That question about religious origins coupled with my interest in the human genomic journey motivated me to compose this article. My military experiences in Turkey and the Middle East in the mid-1960s provided some first-hand views into the ancient world. This summary of my experiences, photographic images and further reading is an attempt to relate the exciting discoveries.

Publications from archeological excavations in Europe have shown elaborately designed figurative artwork of both animals and humans, as well as musical instruments, i.e. the Cro-Magnon flute discovered in Hohle Fels, Germany, dated about 40,000 years ago. An unexplained, but major 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 Asian, which have revealed some glimpses of the ancient cultures as far back as 2,500 years ago.



Venus of Hohle Fels, Germany
Cave of Hohle Fels, West of Ulm, Baden-Württemberg,
Swabia, Germany - 40,000 Years Ago
<http://www.donsmaps.com/hohlefelsvenus.html>



Stone Age Flute Made from Vulture Wing Bone, Hohle Fels, West of Ulm,
Baden- Württemberg, Germany - 40,000-35,000 Years Ago
<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/25/science/25flute.html>



Herd of Ancient Horses,
Hand painted on Cave
Walls, Grotte d'Chauvet
dans Ardeche, France -
32,000 Years Ago.

<http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/arcnat/chauvet/fr/>



Venus von Willendorf (Woman of Willendorf)
22,000 Years Ago
Village of Willendorf, Lower Austria near Krems

Fortunately, by the time of the recent publication about Göbekli tepe, I had researched my genetic ancestry. I learned that my paternal genomic lineage could be classified as a type that originated about 10,000 years ago in the region of the Fertile Crescent along the border of Turkey shared with Iraq and Syria. However, some additional information was essential for me to understand. Genomic (DNA) data demonstrated that the migration of Homo sapiens came out of Africa in two major waves. About 80,000 years ago, the first group migrated from Africa over the narrow isthmus to the

Southern Arabian Peninsula. A genetic mutation occurred in the population about 60,000 years, which can be identified as the “E” haplotype. People with the “E” haplotype then migrated along the South Asian coastal areas, Indonesian Islands and eventually reached Australia. This was a significant feat to travel part of the distance over ocean.

A second major wave of humans migrated out of Africa about 60,000 years ago and populated the region of the Levant and then migrated to the Caspian Sea. When Ice-Age conditions changed and the warmer weather of the valleys and fields opened for wildlife to migrate; human hunter-gatherers followed the game. About 40,000 years ago a population of humans moved into Europe. They are known as the Cro-Magnons. About 25,000 years ago, other clans migrated to Asia. About 10,000 years ago, humans migrated to the region of the Fertile Crescent along the border separating Turkey, Iraq and Syria. One of the most fascinating aspects about the discoveries at Göbekli tepe is the fact of the earlier appearance of the Neolithic age, which was backdated to 13,000 years ago. Human skills have been demonstrated at a much earlier time than previously thought.

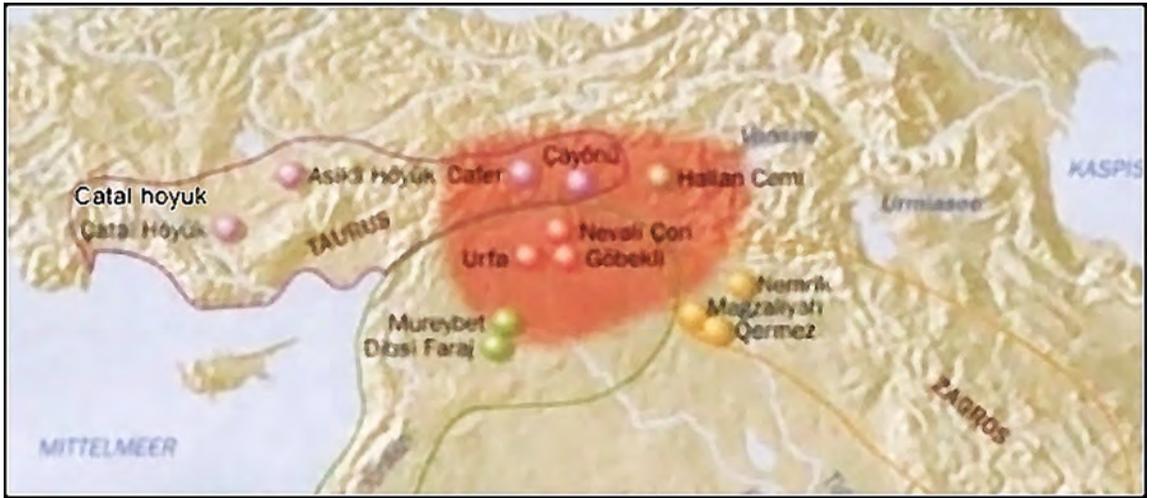
I became interested in the spread of cultures and spiritual beliefs during the course of human migration. The distances between some of the historically important civilizations of the region are located quite closely. It seemed logical that those proximate kingdoms must have had extensive sharing of technologies and cultural attitudes. I wish to highlight some relevant issues. Göbekli tepe is located along the southern Turkish border with Syria. More recently 5000 years ago, the region was populated by several advanced societies; among them were: the Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians and Arabs. There were vital resources available that were necessary for survival and later on for commerce. Wild game and plants were domesticated. According to UCLA Professor Jared Diamond (“Guns, Germs and Steel, The Fates of Human Societies,” W.W. Norton, 1998), it was most likely that human settlement would occur in the Fertile Crescent where the essential foods were plentiful.



I became fascinated by the scriptural accounts that Abraham's birthplace was near Göbekli tepe, Harran and Şanlı Urfa. My personal interest in this subject deepened when I learned that my Y-DNA chromosomal markers were shared by these regional populations, I wondered if one of those men who built Göbekli tepe could have been my ancestor 13,000 years ago.

Birth of Western Civilization

The copy of the map shown below has a highlighted area (orange) of towns where the best evidence of early human settlements has been unearthed. 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). Assyrian texts 5,000 years ago have been translated that 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 recognized to be potentially 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 artifacts were dated well before the pottery, iron and bronze ages.

<http://www.turkishforum.com>

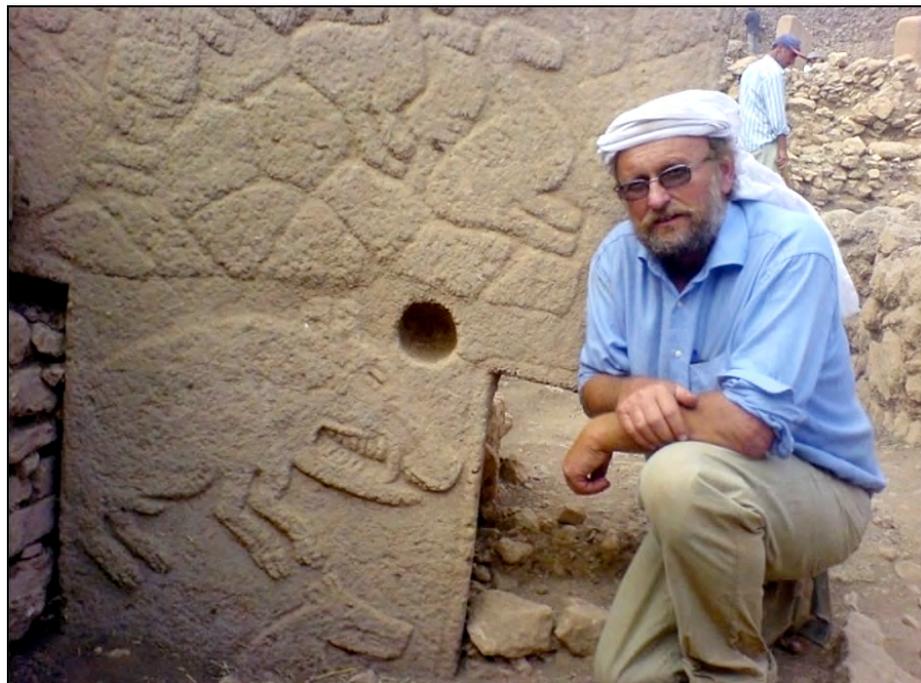
The exposed site seemed to be a carefully crafted ceremonial structure that consisted of huge T-shaped pillars that apparently supported a heavy roof. The roofing material did not remain, so the material, wood or thatch, was not preserved. There was evidence that the multiple inner circular walls had been constructed at different times. There was no evidence of habitation, so the site appeared to be ceremonial, 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 of immense stonework would have required a huge work force. There had to have been a settlement sufficient to support the needs for water, Dr. Klaus Schmidt Inspecting Exposed Pillars food and shelter for a very large population of architects, engineers and workers, required over decades.

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



Concentric Circular Walls Within the Temple

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



Dr. Schmidt Inspecting Sculpture of a Domesticated Pig

<http://www.turkishforum.com>

Israelite Diaspora

Between the time of the appearance of J2a haplogroup subclade, 10,000 years ago, until the discovery of our family documents of the late 18th century, there is a void of historical information and documented records. If we assume that there were about 3-generations per hundred years, there would have been 30-generations per thousand years. Within the past 10-millenia, there were about 300 ancestral generations, who migrated from the original region of the Fertile Crescent.

Not only do we not know the exact migration routes and timing of the Diaspora of our ancestors, but also we have no knowledge about our Jewish roots since the founding of the 12-Hebrew Tribes in the 2 kingdoms of Israel (Northern and Southern Kingdoms). In genomic terms, the relatively recent appearance of Moses about 1280 BCE, who led the Hebrews from Egypt to the Land of Canaan, represents an interval of time of about 100 generations to date. Within the approximately 3,280 years since the time of Moses' exodus from Egypt, there has been a nearly continuous migration of Jewish communities throughout the world. Such a pattern of migration (some forced and some voluntary) has complicated the facts about individual family histories. Searching for documents about our ancestors prior to the 18th century has been quite problematic. In lieu of finding specific documents, we must rely upon published accounts from cultural, linguistic and geopolitical history, as well as understanding the migration of the foods and customs as exhibited by the Mizrahim, Sephardim and Ashkenazim.

Destruction Northern and Southern Kingdoms

Since there is no evidence that either the Cherkinsky clan or the Solomons of Romania were converts to Judaism, we will accept with confidence that both Cherkinsky and Solomon male patriarchs had been members of one of the twelve Hebrew tribes in Israel. The tribes of

Judah and Benjamin were part of the Southern Kingdom of Israel, whose capital was Jerusalem. The other 10 tribes belonged to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, who subscribed to different traditions, and made their capital in Samaria.

The author's Y-DNA has been identified as the J2-M410 haplogroup that first appeared in the region of the Fertile Crescent about 10,000 years ago. As will be shown in the illustrations and discussions, the interactions and conflicts among the major empires of Mesopotamia evolved in the exact regions of our genomic journey. Thus, we must appreciate and pay careful attention to the geopolitical, linguistic and cultural details gleaned from these states.'



Map of the Assyrian Empire, Circa 740 BCE



Map of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel, Circa 8th Century BCE

First Diaspora - Assyrian Conquest

I wish to summarize the complex era that encompassed the first Diaspora of the Jewish communities of the Northern Kingdom of Biblical Israel, circa 8th century BCE.

From Wikipedia, Online Encyclopedia:

http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Assyrian_captivity

“The Assyrian captivity (or Assyrian exile) is the period in the history of Ancient Israel and Judah during which several thousand Israelites of ancient Samaria were resettled as captives by Assyria – 740-732 BCE. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Neo-Assyrian monarchs, Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul) and Shalmaneser V. The later Assyrian rulers Sargon II and his son and successor, Sennacherib, were responsible for finishing the twenty-year demise of Israel's northern ten-tribe kingdom, although they did not overtake the Southern Kingdom. Jerusalem, was besieged, but not taken. The tribes exiled by Assyria later became known as the Ten Lost Tribes.”

“...Assyrian Cuneiform

https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Assyrian_captivity&action=edit§ion=2

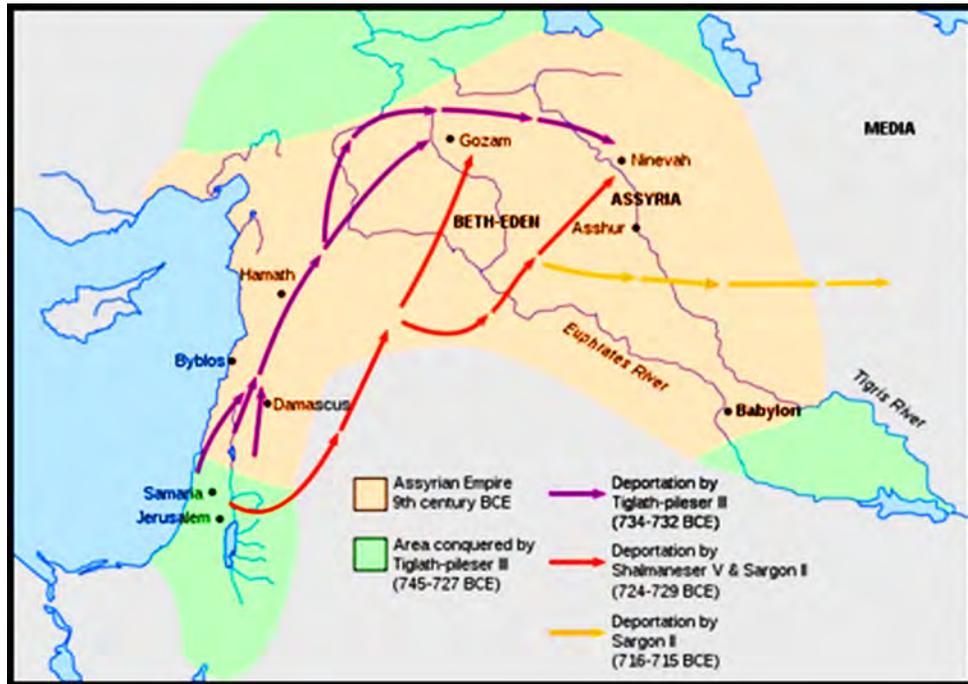
Assyrian cuneiform states that 27,290 captives were taken from Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, by the hand of Sargon II.

Sargon records his first campaign on the walls of the royal palace at Dur-Sharrukin (Khorsabad): In my first year of reign *** the people of Samaria *** to the number of 27,290 ... I carried away. Fifty chariots for my royal equipment I selected. The city I rebuilt. I made it greater than it was before. People of the lands I had conquered I settled therein. My official (Tartan) I placed over them as governor.

The description of the final defeat of the Northern Kingdom of Israel above appears to be a minor event in Sargon's legacy. Some historians attribute the ease of Israel's defeat to the previous two decades of invasions, defeats, and deportations.

Some estimates assume a captivity numbering in the hundreds of thousands, minus those who died in defense of the kingdom and minus

those who fled voluntarily before and during the invasions. However, it has also been suggested that the numbers deported by the Assyrians were rather limited and the bulk of the population remained in situ.^[5] There is also evidence that significant numbers fled south to the Kingdom of Judah.”



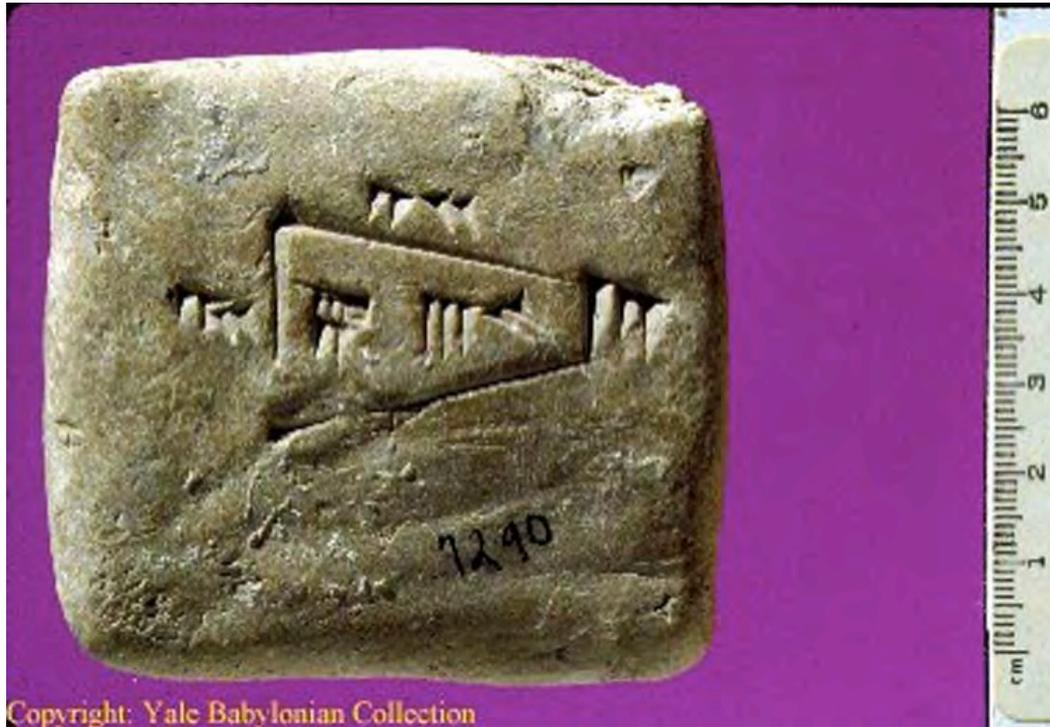
Graphic Map: Assyrian Exile of the Northern Kingdom of Israel
http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Assyrian_captivity

As shown in the map above, the Assyrian Empire encompassed the regions of the Tigris-Euphrates valleys, Beth-Eden (considered the location of the Biblical “Garden of Eden.”

The Assyrians demonstrated advanced intellectual expertise in a number of scholarly pursuits: architecture, engineering, agriculture, economics, civil service, mathematics, medicine, literature, military technology, law, astronomy and libraries. In mathematics, the Assyrians demonstrated knowledge of geometry hundreds of years before the publication of the Pythagorean theorem of triangles: “In any right-angled triangle, the area of the square whose side is the hypotenuse (the side opposite the right

angle) is equal to the sum of the areas of the squares whose sides are the two legs (the two sides that meet at a right angle).”

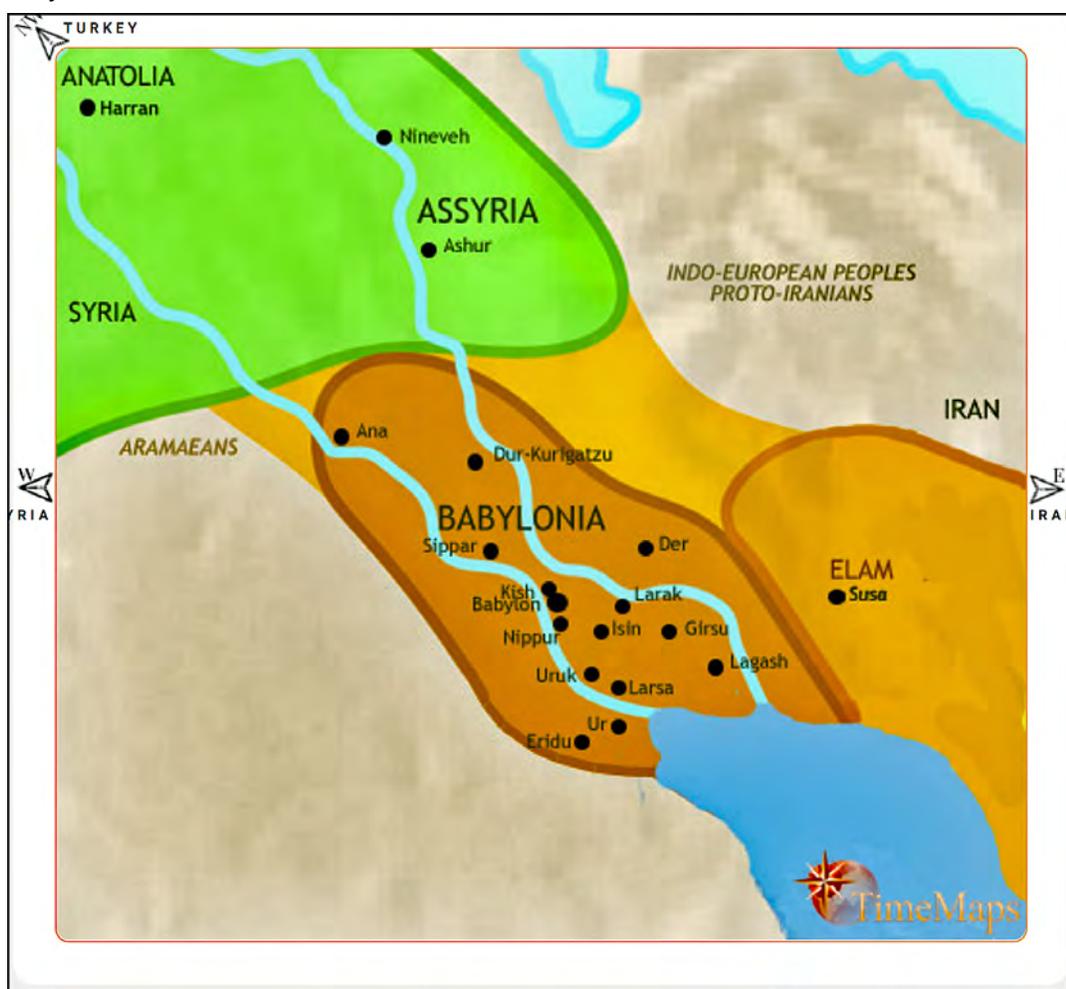
$$\text{Pythagorean Equation: } a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$



Assyrian Mathematical Stone Tablets

During that era of the first three millennia BCE, there were constant conflicts among the many tribes and kingdoms of the region, which are beyond the scope of this publication. I intend only to outline the simplest facts of the historic timeline. Beginning about 740 BCE, Assyrian forces captured the territories and capital Samaria of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and exiled the Hebrews to Assyria. The Assyrians failed to capture the Southern Kingdom of Israel, which contained the remaining tribes of Benjamin and Judah. Jerusalem was their capital, which was the primary aim of the Assyrian invasion to capture Jerusalem and subsequently to mobilize from there a campaign to capture Egypt. This is the history behind the story of the “Lost 10-Tribes of Israel.”

But, 200 years later, the Babylonians again rose to power and defeated the Assyrians. The Babylonians invaded the Southern Kingdom of Israel in 582 BCE and succeeded in capturing Jerusalem. The Hebrew Temple was destroyed in the process and the “elites” of Jerusalem’s nobility, military, law and commerce were taken in exile to Babylon. It has been estimated the only 11,000 individuals were taken in exile. The reminder of the Hebrew tribes either remained in place or emigrated. The details of the capture are entailed in the story of the about “The March to Babylon.”



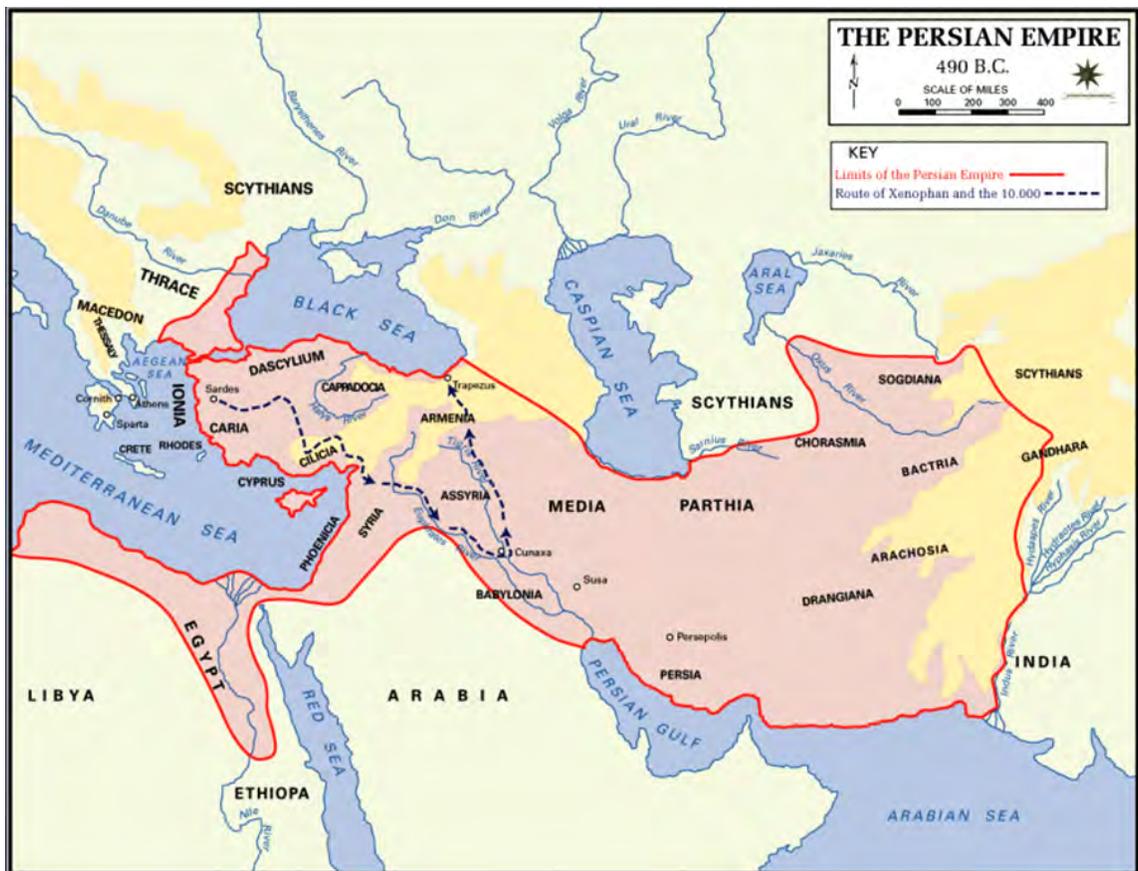
Map of Babylonian Empire, Circa 582 BCE

Within about 50 years, Cyrus “The Great,” king of Persia, invaded and defeated the Babylonians. The map shown below demonstrates the largest size of the Persian Empire, which extended to the Indus River in the East and

to Anatolia, Cyprus and Greece to the West. Persia encompassed parts of Georgia, Armenia, Scythia and the Southern portion of the Caspian Sea in the North, as well as Syria, Israel, Egypt and coastal Libya in the South.

Cyrus I permitted relative freedom of religious practices, which included both the Zoroastrians and the Hebrews. The king approved funds for the Hebrews to return to Israel and to rebuild their Temple in Jerusalem (“Second Temple”). It has been estimated that only 10% of the Jewish population exiled in Persia actually returned to Israel.

The Second Temple continued in use until 70 CE, when the structure was destroyed by Roman forces. The “Wailing Wall,” notable in the old part of Jerusalem today, is the only remaining part of the Second Temple.



Map of the Persian Empire, Circa 5th Century CE

The Diaspora of Hebrews from both the Northern Kingdom (740 BCE) and the Southern Kingdom including Jerusalem (582 BCE) displaced several thousands of Hebrews from the 12 Tribes. Within 50 years (538 BCE), the Babylonian Empire was conquered by Cyrus The Great (Cyrus I), king of Persia. Suddenly, the Babylonian Jews became Persian subjects. This group of Jews has been called the "*Mizrahim*" or "Eastern Jews."

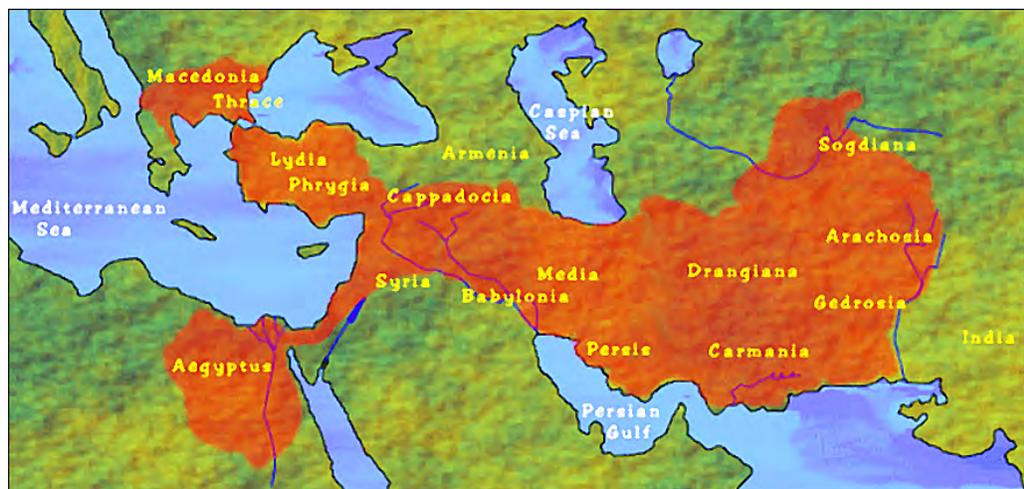
By far the largest proportion of Jews from the 12 Tribes were NOT taken into exile. Instead, most of them, but not all of them, remained in their native lands. Some Jews sought refuge in Egypt and Yemen. Later on some of them continued to migrate westward in North Africa; other Jews sailed their primitive boats to India where they established Jewish communities known as the Bene Israel. Their presence in Cochin, India, as a minority has been estimated to be about 2,500 years old. There were additional Jewish migrations that occurred after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. Other Jewish communities were established later on in Calcutta and Mumbai (Bombay).

The arrivals in Calcutta and Mumbai are not to be confused with earlier Jews who arrived about 2500 years ago. Much later, other Jews from Bagdad, Iraq; Iran; Afghanistan and other Arabic countries sought refuge in India. Jews from England of Portuguese decent arrived in the 17th century and established themselves as corral merchants in Madras. The Bene Ephraim arrived in 1981.

Jewish traders moved to the new territories of Greece, Northern Turkey along the Black Sea, the Greek colonies of Scythia along the Black Sea and Crimea. Since the time of the exile of Jews to Assyria, Babylon and Persia, Jewish merchants and traders had opportunities to migrate to the distant borders within each of those the Empires. From the 5th century BCE, Jewish traders travelled to Greece. It was quite dangerous and unknown to them, so most Jews did *NOT* bring wives. Many of the merchant traders married local women, created families that converted to Judaism within the new territories. Jewish communities also were established in Central Asia, in the mountains surrounding the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea, as well as Crimea and southern Russia, where at the time the Scythians ruled. Russia did not become a nation until the 10th century CE – over 1000 years later.

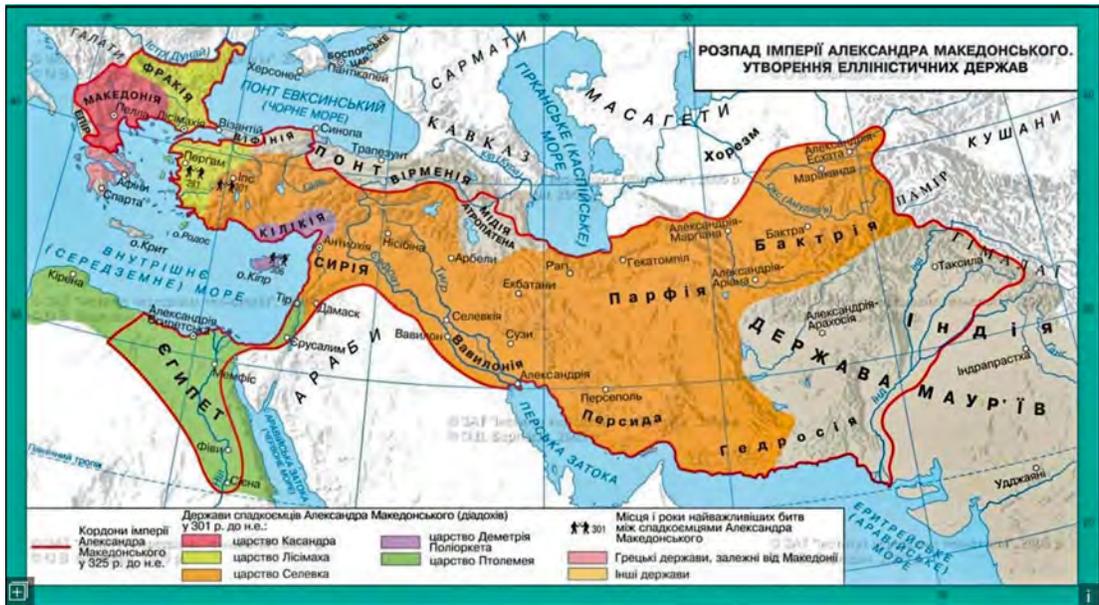
Jewish traders were successfully promoting ventures further inland in Europe. The Greek economy increasingly depended upon the agriculture of Crimea and the fishing resources of the Black Sea to feed its growing population and military forces.

By the time Russia was established under Viking leaders in the 10th century, Jewish businessmen were promoting trade as far north as Kiev.



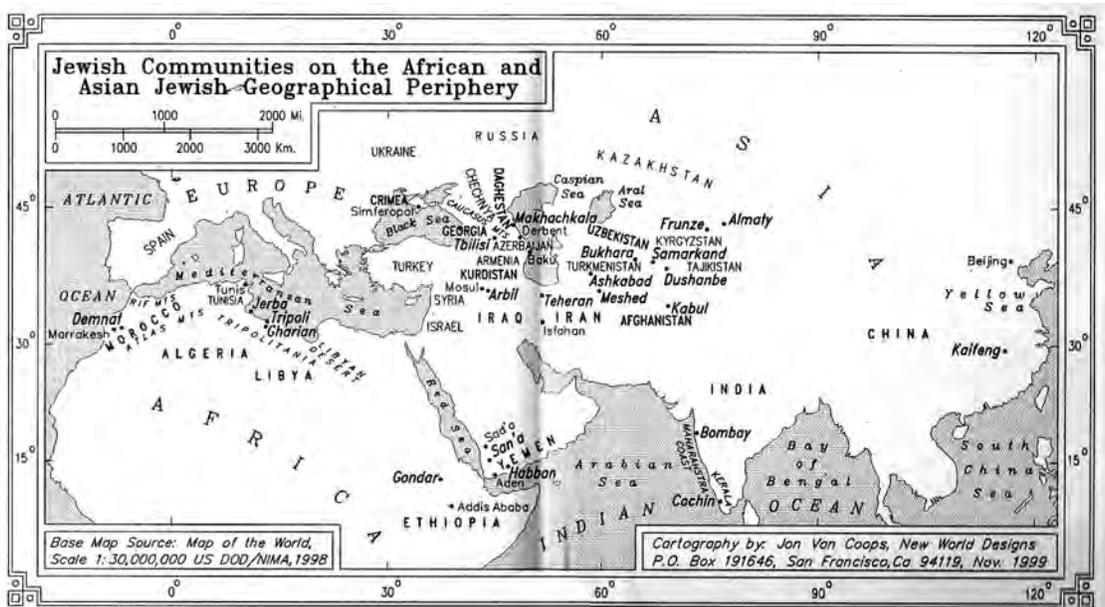
Map of Greek Empire Under Alexander

Jewish Traders Migrated to Borders of the Greek Empire



Map of Greek Empire Under Alexander The Great

The Greeks had a cooperative and successful relationship with the Scythians for many centuries. Jewish traders benefited.



Map Jewish Communities in Exotic Places

Much attention has been focused on the Jewish revolts against the Romans and destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. After the final revolt, the Bar Kokhbar Revolt in the 2nd century CE, Jews were banned from Jerusalem. For the purposes of tracing our family history, it is the migration of Jews within the Roman Empire that has the relevance to the research of our ancestral origins.

Jews migrated to the farthest borders of the Roman Empire. They continued mostly as traders, but they also established many new Jewish communities. We must research the history of the Jewish communities of the Roman Era as a guide to estimating where our ancestors might have settled. It has been estimated that most of European Jewry has in common 4 women/mothers in Italy, who are regarded as “Founders” of the Ashkenazim between the 3rd to 8th centuries, CE. Aided by genomic DNA research, it has been found that the Jews of Eastern Europe, which encompassed about 80% of the world’s Jewish population, collectively inhabited Eastern Europe after the 12th to 13th centuries. The Jewish population in the latter 18th century has been estimated to be about 2 ½ million. After the Partitions of the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania, 1772, 1792 and 1794, by Russia, Prussia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Jewish population of Poland-Lithuania became occupied by the Russian military forces. The “*Pale of Settlement*,” which placed borders around the newly acquired Jewish villages and towns, was authorized by Russian Empress, Katherine the Great.”

There are several potential locations where our family could have originated. Starting with the Diaspora to Assyria and Babylon, then to Persia, the Mizrahi communities survived. There were early Jewish migrations to Spain during that time. Jewish traders travelled to the borders of the Greek Empire, particularly after the conquests of the Middle East and Central Asia by Alexander. There were Jewish settlers in the region of the Black Sea colonies, whose descendants moved into the lands of the Scythians, which later became Russia. A large Jewish settlement in Kiev lasted until the Jews were evicted from Russia in the 14th century. As well, Jewish migrations to the Southern

Mediterranean region continued before, during and after the Jewish revolts against the Romans in Judea. Although there were Jewish migrations to China, Egypt and Yemen, and later on along North Africa, I wish to concentrate on the history of Jewish migrations to the areas of the Southern Mediterranean and Iberian Peninsula.

Sephardic traditions of the Iberian region lasted until the 15th century when Jews who resisted Christian conversion were murdered or evicted. During the same time, there were other Jewish communities established in Italy, the Balkan countries and Romania. Because Romania is so important in our

Solomon-Goldenberg family history, I wish to add a few more details about Moldavia's Jewish history. In the earliest Roman era, Romania was known as "Dacia." Jewish communities were established as early as the 1st - 4th centuries CE. In addition, during the 14th century, the Jewish community of Galati (home of our uncle Jack Solomon) bestowed great honor upon the Jews for their efforts to revive the declining economy of the region. There are few surviving details about the successes of those Jewish businesses and trading, but the trades with Europe had a direct benefit upon the economy of the non-Jewish population. We know from the Pinkas haKehillot¹² records of Iasi, Moldavia, that *Polish traders and merchants* maintain an active commercial interchange with merchants in Romania since the 15th century. Particularly, sales of grains and animal products were sent to Romania for local consumption or transshipment to the Mediterranean shipping companies via Romanian ports.

¹² **Encyclopedia of European Jewish Communities created from post-WWII testimonies. These volumes of historical records are archived at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem. The works were written by survivors of the Holocaust, which documented the Jewish community history of more than 23,000 towns of Europe.**



Map of Roman Empire

From the Pinkas haKehillot), Iasi:¹³ "The Beginning of Jewish Settlement and Development of Iasi:

According to tradition, the first Jewish settlers arrived in Iasi during the second half of the 15th century. The first person to register the history of Romanian Jewry was Iakov Psantir, who recorded that he found two early tombstones from the years 1467 and 1549. Contradicting the historian, Dr. M. A. HaLevi, claimed in a monograph that the oldest tombstone in the city was from 1648, but he acknowledged the fact that there were older cemeteries that were ruined with the passage of time and anti-Semitic acts of violence.

When Iasi became the capital of Moldavia (1565), Jewish settlement started to develop rapidly. Strong commercial and political ties developed between Jewish merchants and bankers from Kushta and the Moldavian capital. In 1551, the Jew "Emanuel" was nominated by the Turkish sultan to be the ruler of Moldavia, however it is not clear whether he actually ruled. Several historians identified him with Aron Voda, who ruled in 1591-1595. In 1594, this ruler rebelled against the Turks, conducted a massacre against them, and killed 19 Jews from Iasi...."

From the Pinkas haKehillot, Iasi:

"Romanian Jews traded with Poland since the 16th century. In the Responsa literature of Polish scholars from the end of the 16th century, the Jewish settlement in Iasi was a stopover place for Polish merchants on their way to Bessarabia and the port at Galati. Several Moldavian princes used Jewish doctors, who also served political roles. The trade in wine and hard spirits at that time was almost solely in Jewish hands. Yoseph Shlomo Rofeh Dilmadigo,

¹³ Edited by Robert S. Sherins, MD (Pacific Palisades, California); Translated from the original Hebrew by Ziva Yavin, PhD (Tel Aviv, Israel), and Rabbi Jack H. Boom, PhD (Fairfield, Connecticut).

who visited Iasi in 1619-1620, found a large Jewish community headed by an important rabbi, the cabalist Rabbi Shlomo Ben Aroio."

"In the second half of the 18th century, many Jews from Galicia and Bukovina settled in Iasi. The Jews lived in a suburb called the "kikeville", which stretched along the eastern valley of the main hill where the city was built. Many Jews lived in the German quarter. The rich ones lived in the main street and the poor in the quarter called "Tirgul Kokoloy". In 1799, the merchants' main street was destroyed in a fire and the Jews were forced to find other places to live. In 1782, the ruler, Alexandru Mavrocordat the First (1782-1785), expelled the Jews from the neighboring villages and they settled in Iasi.

The Jews of Iasi were exporters of wine to Poland and Wallachia. Towards the end of the 18th century, the Jews forged strong commercial ties with the city Brody and many of Brody's Jews settled in Iasi and even established their own synagogue. Trade in grain, honey, cattle, wool and cheese was entirely in the hands of Jews. At the onset of the 19th century, Jews occupied a central role in all branches of trade. In 1843, the city's center was occupied mainly by Jewish merchants (compared to only 15 Christian merchants) and people started to complain about "Jews spreading to all the streets and neighborhoods." In the middle of the 19th century, Jews began to serve as bankers and moneychangers, professions that were beforehand in the hands of the Turks and the Greeks alone. Jews also took an important part in heavy industry."

Genetic analyses of the *mitochondrial DNA of female Ashkenazim* in Europe revealed startling results that 4 women from Italy during the Middle Ages were responsible for the founding of unique genetic nucleotide sequences:

"A 2006 study by Behar et al.,[50] based on high-resolution analysis of Haplogroup K(mtDNA), suggested that about 40% of the current Ashkenazi population descended (matrilineal) from just four women, or "founder lineages", that were "likely from a Hebrew/Levantine mtDNA pool" originating in

the Middle East in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE. Moreover, a maternal line "sister" was found among the Jews of Portugal, North Africa, France, and Italy. They wrote:"

"Both the extent and location of the maternal ancestral, from which the Ashkenazi Jewry arose remain obscure. Here, using complete sequences of the maternally inherited mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA), we show that close to one-half of Ashkenazi Jews, estimated at 8,000,000 people, can be traced back to only four women carrying distinct mtDNAs that are virtually absent in other populations, with the important exception of low frequencies among non-Ashkenazi Jews. We conclude that four founding mtDNAs, likely of Near Eastern ancestry, underwent major expansion(s) in Europe within the past millennium."

Editor (RSS): Please note that our Solomon/Goldenberg ancestral females had the H-15 haplogroup mtDNA (most recent maternal ancestor). Therefore, our ancestral matriarch was Cro-Magnon (their mtDNA haplogroup origin was 25,000 years ago). She married a Jewish paternal ancestor and converted to Judaism within the past 2,000 years. Solomon and Goldenberg males migrated to Moldavia from Galicia, Poland, in the 18th century. Neither gender was descendant from the Italian founders.

Rhadanites



Map Silk Roads and Trade Routes

The Rhadanites were a group of Jewish traders, who excelled as merchants and who developed multi-linguistic skills. They probably emerged from Persia in the 8th century CE. They expanded trading routes as far as China, Central Asia, India, Spain, North Africa and Europe.

Major trading routes were established and expanded by credentialed Jewish merchants. Perhaps the most important attributes of this class of Jewish traders were their direct knowledge of the many different cultures and their multi-lingual skills needed in their geographically widespread commerce. Particularly after the Crusades of the 11th and 12th centuries, trading through the silk routes was closed to Christian merchants. However, the Jews were granted access to the silk routes and thereby acted as commercial agents for the Sultans and Islamic merchants. In 1178, Polish coins were struck utilizing Hebrew characters to identify the currency as “Jewish” and also to permit transit of goods and currencies in commercial exchanges in Mediterranean territories and in Asia.

From: Wikipeida.org:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radhanite>

“The Rhadanites (also Rhadanites, Arabic ar-Raḏaniyya; Hebrew sing. רדהני Radhani, pl. רדהנים Radhanim) were medieval Jewish merchants. Whether the term, which is used by only a limited number of primary sources, refers to a specific guild, or a clan, or is a generic term for Jewish merchants in the trans-Eurasian trade network is unclear. Jewish merchants were involved in trade between the Christian and Islamic worlds during the early Middle Ages (approx. 500–1000). Many trade routes previously established under the Roman Empire continued to function during that period largely through their efforts. Their trade network covered much of Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and parts of India and China.”

“Etymology: Several etymologies have been suggested for the word "Rhadanite". Many scholars, including Barbier de Meynard and Moshe Gil, believe it refers to a district in Mesopotamia called "the land of Radhan" in Arabic and Hebrew texts of the period.[1] Others maintain that their center was the city of Ray (Rhages) in northern Persia.[2] Cecil Roth and Claude Cahen, among others, make the same claim about the Rhône River valley in France, which is Rhodanus in Latin. The latter claim that the center of Rhadanite activity was probably in France as all of their trade routes began there.[3] Still others maintain that the name derives from the Persian terms rah "way, path" and dān "one who knows", meaning "one who knows the way".[4] English-language (or Western) sources added the suffix -ite to the term, as is done with ethnonyms or names derived from place names.”

“Activities: Rhadanites are documented by ibn Khordadbeh, the Director of Posts and Police (spymaster and postman) for the province of Jibal under the Abbasid Caliph al-Mu'tamid (ruled 869–885), when he wrote Kitab al-Masalik wal-Mamalik (Book of Roads and Kingdoms), probably around 870. Ibn

Khordadbeh described the Rhadanites as sophisticated and multilingual. He outlined four main trade routes utilized by the Rhadanites in their journeys; all four began in the Rhone Valley in southern France and terminated on the east coast of China. Rhadanites primarily carried commodities that combined small bulk and high demand, including spices, perfumes, jewelry, and silk. They are also described as transporting oils, incense, steel weapons, furs, and slaves.”

“End of the Rhadanite age: The fall of the Tang Dynasty of China in 908 and the destruction of the Khazar Khaganate some sixty years later (circa 968-969 AD) led to widespread chaos in Inner Eurasia, the Caucasus and China. Trade routes became unstable and unsafe, a situation exacerbated by Turkic invasions of Persia and the Middle East, and the Silk Road largely collapsed for centuries. This period saw the rise of the mercantile Italian city-states, especially Genoa, Venice, Pisa, and Amalfi, who viewed the Rhadanites as unwanted competitors.

The economy of Europe was profoundly affected by the disappearance of the Rhadanites. For example, documentary evidence indicates that many spices in regular use during the early Middle Ages completely disappeared from European tables in the 10th century. Jews had previously, in large parts of Western Europe, enjoyed a virtual monopoly on the spice trade.[17]

Some have speculated that a collection of 11th century Jewish scrolls discovered in a cave in Afghanistan’s Samangan province in 2011 may be a “leftover” of the Rhadanites, who had mostly disappeared by the 11th century.”

References to the Rhadanite merchants were written in many documents of the Middle Ages. However, there is little mention of them after the 12th century. There have been several theories about the disappearance of the Rhadanites. Perhaps several factors were responsible. Among the theories were the expansion and influence of the emerging Italian banks of Genoa and Venice, who thought the Rhadanites were competitors; the emergence of the Ottoman

Empire; and the Fall of the Khazarian Empire to the Kievan Rus in the 10th century. Jewish merchants apparently conducted most the spice trade between Europe and Asia. Trade collapsed with the fall of the Rhadanite traders. As India and China provided the Asian spices for Europe, European products were of no interest or use to the Asians. In fact, a declining economy in Europe resulted in the severe debasement of European bullion and other metallic currencies. Simply stated, the Europeans made up for inflation and economic depressions by thinning and clipping their coins, and adding tin and copper to make cheaper alloys for their bullion. Few nations wanted European currency. There was no “paper” currency, which would have required total faith in the national backing of paper currency by a policy backed by bullion. By the 15th century, monetary values in Europe were so bad, that the major nations of Europe launched expeditions to seek gold and silver bullion in the Far East. The era of the “Explorers” and “Conquistadores” ensued in the “New World” as a major effort to rebuild European bullion reserves. Europe had been nearly bankrupted economically.

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Postscript

By the end of the 20th century, genetic research became available to the public at more acceptable costs. Prof. Dr. Michael Hammer, University of Arizona, microbiology, became a leading proponent of using DNA analysis in determining one's genomic origin and evolution. Dr. Spencer Wells, Stanford University and the National Geographic Genomic Project, became a prominent advocate to support inexpensive worldwide public access to genomic research. Advertising efforts by the National Geographic Magazine, NOVA television programs that promoted Prof. Dr. Louis Gates, Harvard University, African Studies, and Spencer Wells launched many series of television programs, magazine articles and Internet based information to inform the public about access to genomic research, and news media brought to subject of studying the human genome to a global viewing population. The stage was set for global participation.

My interest in our family history began decades ago (1973). Participation in several genealogical societies followed logically. When genomic research was made available to the public, I immediately discovered my exceptional interest in pursuing the subject of genetic assessment to further my scientific research and understanding of tracing one's family evolution by additional means.

The science of analyzing one's DNA was originally encouraged by the United States government in order to create the model of the human genome. The funding of this research had global appeal. Based upon the "normal" human genome model, better methods of discovering disease-causing mutations/alterations of the human genome, specifically of the sequencing or order of nucleotides binding the double helix of the DNA strands. This led to better understanding of discovering repetitions of other nucleotide sequences. A biochemical calculus was created to estimate evolution of the genome historically. Field research of a huge number of global populations, by such researchers as Prof. Dr. Spencer Wells, produced population data upon which to base the calculus of geographic distribution.

Technical innovation and private investment resulted in the development of new instruments and computer software that efficiently measured the DNA data – and shortened the time to interpret the results of the scans and at increasingly more affordable prices.

I have learned an enormous amount of knowledge in the process of investing my own energy, capital and time for researching my genomic history:

1. Modern humans evolved on Earth much earlier than suspected. So far, there have been 5 African males whose Y-chromosomal DNA displayed an estimated age of 348,000 years. In 2016, scientific documents were published, which analyzed the skeletons of 18 individuals discovered in a Moroccan grave. Multi-testing and analysis revealed the bones to be about 300,000 years old.
2. Genealogic societies were established that gathered much new data for genomic research. In sum, the greater databases of information have permitted more accurate analyses and confirmed the evolutionary history, migration patterns and distribution of our ancestors identified by specific haplogroup and subclades (sub-groups).
3. We are originally all Africans. Migrations of the early populations were scant and few. However, 90% of the world's population on all continents can be traced the very early "Out of Africa" clans, who arrived in Western Asia about 80,000 years ago. The remain 10% of the current population can trace there origins to the few modern human clans that emerged from Northeast Africa, but migrated through the Arabian Peninsula to Southern Asia, Indonesia and eventually reached Australia about 60,000 years ago.

By combining data from our genomic analyses, and data from the disciplines of geography, anthropology, archeology, history and linguistics, I have been successful in determining in great detail, our family journey from the time of our origin in Africa 300,000 years ago.

1. Our earliest ancestors of the Sherins/Cherkinsky families have been traced to Western Asia and the region of the Caspian Sea about 80,000 – 65,000 years ago.
2. An exceptionable expansion of those clans next appeared in the region of the Caucasus about 30,000 years ago (Y-DNA “J” haplogroup).
3. Nomads lived in Georgia/North Ossetia by 15,000 years ago. The key DNA mutations have been classified as “J2”
4. Nomadic settlers appeared in the Kura Araxes Valley of Georgia during Neolithic times. They created early forms of agriculture, mostly grains, built canals to irrigate fields, used flat rafts on the waterways, and were semi-settled often leaving the settlements for a few years, but returning later on. This group evolved. They possessed mutations classified as J2a-M410.
5. The Kura Araxes populations were evidently successful. They expanded and migrated elsewhere as increasing living spaces were required. They created a unique pottery style, generally referred to as “Early Trans-Caucasus pottery wares.”
6. The ETC wares have been traced to Western Iran, Eastern Anatolia, Antioch, and Tel Bet Yerah – located along the Southwestern border of the Sea of Galilee in the Levant/Israel. The ETC culture arrived in Anatolia about 6,000 – 3,000 years ago. The expanded to Antioch about 2,800 years ago during the time of the Hittite Empire’s expansion southward to the Levant, Canaan and Egypt.
7. About 2,800 years ago, signs of the ETC culture first appeared in Antioch and Palestine. The Amuq Valley of Antioch has been well-excavated. Originally, the location was within Syria. It is now part of Turkey. The Orontes River formed from the rivers of the Amuq watershed. The Orontes flows to the region of the Beqa Valley of Lebanon and crosses the Northwest corner of the area of the Tribe of Naphtali, near to Tel Bet Yerah in the Jordan Valley (Sea of Galilee). This lush and arable land is considered to be the “Garden” of the Hebrew tribes.
8. Excavation of the Tel Bet Yerah site revealed very detailed Hebrew history. The site is located within the boundaries of the Hebrew Tribe of Naphtali.

9. Our latest Y-DNA indicates that our most recent mutations are entirely represented among the “Ashkenazim”, who first appeared in Europe about 750 C.E. That era coincided with the appearance and expansion of Islam in the 7th-8th centuries.
10. Current genomic research suggests that most European Ashkenazim appear to have evolved from just a few local Italian mothers, perhaps 6-10 ladies. Jews married and created families from local women. Jewish communities remained close with few outside marriages. Their descendants show little genetic infusion from other local populations.
11. Most early Ashkenazim appear to have migrated originally to France and Germany.
12. During the 13th century Jews were specifically invited to immigrate to Poland. By the 18th century about 80% of all Jews in the world lived in Eastern Poland. At that time, the region had merged politically into the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania. The Treaty of Lublin officially merged the nations in 1569.
13. Three Partitions of the Commonwealth occurred in 1772, 1792 and 1795. Jews who lived in the Commonwealth were absorbed into occupied lands of Russia (Eastern), Prussia (Western) and Austria (Southern-Galicia).

Subsequent genomic research of the Solomon family, my mother's Romania ancestors, were analyzed. Their male Y-DNA mutations have confirmed unexpected results.

1. Their Y-DNA is E1b1b1b-M34, which evolved in the Northeastern region of the Horn of Africa. Origins of the E haplogroup appeared about 35,000 years ago. Our family subgroup appeared much later, 18,000 years ago, also in NW Africa. However, by 12,000 many migrated to Morocco and then over to Iberia. Their genome has been detected in Italy, Sardinia, and Eastern Anatolia. Others migrated to the Middle East and Levant. They appeared in Anatolia at the same time as our paternal ancestors – about 3,000 BCE.

2. This was an unbelievable discovery of co-existence of both paternal and maternal male ancestors in Anatolia and particularly part of the Kura Araxes culture.
3. Expansion and migration brought both ancestors to Antioch and Bet Yerah by 2,800 BCE.
4. Their migrations as “Ashkenazim” to Europe appear to have been at the same time – 8th century. Both of the ancestors migrated to the Eastern Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania. Cherkinsky ancestors populated the region of Konotop, about 120 miles east of Kiev. Solomon ancestors ended up in Romania, but originated in Poland. Our more recent ancestors were from the Poland-Russia lands, but exact town origin information has not been found.

Thank you all for sharing the expedition of learning about our ancient ancestors. We do not know their names or appearances, yet we have learned so much about their lives and places in the ancient world of the past 300,000 years. Because of the preservation of written records during the past 2 centuries, we have preserved written records for over 2,000 individuals, who were among our recent relatives. With the added data from tracing genetic mutations particularly from our male Y-DNA, we have added an enormous knowledge about our family origins and migrations. As researcher and author, I offer grateful thanks for the opportunity to document and preserve this phenomenal legacy. I would be honored to know that you have shared and discussed our findings with your extended families.

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