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Vikings Left Little Genetic Trace in Ireland

The Scale and Nature of Viking Settlement in Ireland from Y-chromosome Admixture Analysis

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You may want to consider returning your Viking Certificate. According to a new study of Y chromosome lineages among Irish males with surnames seeming to indicate Norse ancestry, the Vikings did not leave as much of an imprint on the Irish population as many people would like to think. After all, they only stayed for a couple of centuries in most cases before going back to Norway. That's not much time to leave a sizable genetic legacy, even if you are a Viking.

Abstract. The Vikings (or Norse) played a prominent role in Irish history, but despite this, their genetic legacy in Ireland, which may provide insights into the nature and scale of their immigration, is largely unexplored. Irish surnames, some of which are thought to have Norse roots, are paternally inherited in a similar manner to Y-chromosomes. The correspondence of Scandinavian patrilineal ancestry in a cohort of Irish men bearing surnames of putative Norse origin was examined using both slow mutating unique event polymorphisms and relatively rapidly

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changing short tandem repeat Y-chromosome markers. Irish and Scandinavian admixture proportions were explored for both systems using six different admixture estimators, allowing a parallel investigation of the impact of method and marker type in Y-chromosome admixture analysis. Admixture proportion estimates in the putative Norse surname group were highly consistent and detected little trace of Scandinavian ancestry. In addition, there is scant evidence of Scandinavian Y-chromosome introgression in a general Irish population sample. Although conclusions are largely dependent on the accurate identification of Norse surnames, the findings are consistent with a relatively small number of Norse settlers (and descendants) migrating to Ireland during the Viking period (ca. A.D. 800-1200) suggesting that Norse colonial settlements might have been largely composed of indigenous Irish. This observation adds to previous genetic studies that point to a flexible Viking settlement approach across North Atlantic Europe.

September 6, 2006

Myths of British History

Prospect, October 2006

Everything you know about British and Irish ancestry is wrong, according to geneticist Stephen Oppenheimer. Our English ancestors were Basques, not Celts. The Celts were not wiped out by the Anglo-Saxons. In fact, neither had much impact on the genetic stock of these islands. And a form of English, not Celtic, was spoken in most places before the Roman invasion. Phylogenetic studies have overturned many of the commonly held beliefs about British history.

October 31, 2006

China Revamps Surname System

China has decided to open the door to a million new surname combinations to better distinguish individuals in its society. Previously, it has always been said there were only a hundred surnames to choose from, with Li heading the list. The news was mentioned in the current

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issue of *Nature* (vol. 448, no. 7153) with an article titled "The 'Hundred Surnames' of China Run into Thousands," by Dafeng Hui (p. 553). Below is a previous news announcement on the changes:

New Naming Rules in Mainland China

Wen Hua Du

The Epoch Times

Jun 29, 2007

China is proposing a new naming regulation that would require newborn children to adopt either or both parents' surnames as their surname. The plans are currently being discussed at a grass-roots level. To date, there has been no official regulation on naming.

According to the *Yangzi Evening News*, there are 1,601 surnames in China. If the policy goes into effect, approximately 1,280,000 new surnames will be created. This will reduce the amount of duplicate names and help to more clearly identify children's blood relationships.

The regulation states that new names must contain between two to six characters and must not damage the country's dignity, infringe on local folk customs, or have a negative impact on society. The names must use the simplified version of Chinese characters if they exist, and must not use eliminated variant characters, self-created characters, foreign names, or pinyin or Arabic numerals.

To prevent frequent name changes, the regulation would permit citizens 18 years and over to change their name (both surname and given name) only once. Those that change their names with fake certifications would be fined 800 yuan (approximately \$105).

Chinese Naming Customs

Research shows that the Chinese naming convention stems from a matriarchal society where people formed clans around mothers. To differentiate clans, they used the mother's surname as the clan title. These surnames commonly contained the character component (radical) that stood for "woman."

In addition to this, the following factors are believed to have influenced the creation and use of Chinese surnames:

1. A forefather's home state or kingdom, such as the states of Zhao, Song, Qin, and Wu.
2. A forefather's title, such as the ancient official titles 'Sima' and 'Situ'.
3. A forefather's rank of nobility, such as 'Wang' and 'Hou'.
4. A forefather's given name.
5. An occupation, such as a pottery maker using the word for 'pottery' as a surname.
6. A place name or physical description of the location's scenery such as Dongguo, Ximen, Chi, and Liu.
7. Worship of animals like horses, cows, sheep, and dragons. Elements from these characters were mixed into surnames.

The book *One Hundred Surnames*, written during the Song Dynasty, includes about 500 surnames, of which 60 are compound surnames. According to statistics, there were about 5,000 surnames in ancient documents. Now, there are about 200 common surnames.

Ancient people's names were more complex than modern people's. Besides surnames and given names, additional words were used to identify one's position in the family hierarchy. People sharing the same hierarchy were required to have one identical word in their names.

People who were cultured or had social status had additional names such as 'Zi' (a courtesy name traditionally given to Chinese males at the age of 20, marking their coming of age), and 'Hao' (a self-selected courtesy name, usually referred to as the pseudonym).

For example, the Song Dynasty author Su Shi's surname was 'Su' and his given name was 'Shi'. In addition to this, he had 'Zizhan' as his 'Zi' name, and 'Dongpo Jushi' as his 'Hao' name. The Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai lived in Shichuan's Qinglian County. He thus often used an additional name 'Qinglian Jushi' (as his Hao name) to signify: "Person who lives in Qinglian."

Traditionally, many people also believed that names foretold one's future. Extensive research went into choosing a name based on date of birth and the corresponding eight characters of the Chinese horoscope.

August 1, 2007

Population Geneticists, Forensic Scientists Construct Genetic Map of Europe

A review by Nicholas Wade in the Science section of *The New York Times*, August 13, 2008, summarizes the recent work by Dr. Manfred Kayser and others published in *Current Biology* revealing the genetic relationship between 23 populations in Europe.

With few exceptions, the DNA landscape with its clusters and clines and genetic distances follows the political and linguistic boundaries of European countries. Finns were found to be very different from everybody else, and the Italian population was shown to be extremely stable over the ages. Who would ever want to leave Italy anyway once they arrived?

August 13, 2008

Elizabeth Rex

Like Egyptian Queen Hatshepsut, who wore the royal beard in portraits, Queen Elizabeth I was careful to refer to herself as a "prince," not "princess," and sign her name *Elizabeth R.* (the *R* standing for Rex, "king"). We recently watched, courtesy of Roku, all six episodes of the 1970-71 BBC mini-series "Elizabeth R.," starring the definitive Glenda Jackson. Elizabeth I, as one professor argues, posthumously founded the movie industry, beginning with a performance by Sarah Bernhardt.

We suggest she is also a key figure in understanding the crypto-Jewish strain in English royalty and aristocratic genealogies.

Consider, for instance:

- Elizabeth is not—or was not—a common Anglo-Saxon name. It is the Greek translation of the Hebrew name Elisheva, meaning "God's promise," "oath of God," or "I am God's daughter." Many Elizabeths in England and Scotland owe their naming directly or indirectly to St. Elizabeth of Hungary. Queen Margaret, the daughter of Edmund the Exile and granddaughter of Edmund Ironsides, initiated a flood of return Scotsmen to the British Isles in the 11th century. Cognates are Eliza, Elzina (Arabic) and

many others.

- Elizabeth called Sir Francis Walsingham, her chief foreign policy adviser, "little Moor." He probably had Sephardic Jewish antecedents, accounting for his knowledge of Spanish and secret spy network.
- Elizabeth was a Boleyn (also spelling Bullen, Bullent, Bulleyn, Bullin, Bullon, Bollen, Boulin, Boullen, Bullan, Bullant, Bulein, Bolen, Bollyng, Bolling, etc.). Authoritative surname sources derive this name from Boulogne, a Norman town, or a Middle English word meaning "excessive drinking." It may also have come from Bologna in Italy.
- The Tudors, who were Welsh, joined with the Stewarts, who were Scottish. Both families have many Jewish connections and attributes.

Elizabeth's counselors and favorites included: Francis Drake (whose Y chromosome line matches Ashkenazi Jews), John Hawkins (Sephardic surname), John Dee (professor of Hebrew and Cabala), John Frobisher (Forbes, Scottish Jewish), Admiral Sir Charles Howard, Walter Raleigh, Francis Bacon and others of their ilk. These mapmakers, privateers and promoters are discussed in Chapter 1 of the book *Jews and Muslims in British Colonial America*.

November 28, 2010

When Ireland Was Jewish

The royal mound cemetery at Taillten, modern Telltown, in County Meath, houses the burials of numerous kings and nobles from early Ireland. These begin with Ollamh Fodhla, whose death occurred in 1277 B.C.E., and run to just before Conchobar Mac Ness, who died in A.D. 33 according to the *Annals of Tighearnach*, written in Old Irish and Latin in the early Middle Ages.

Pronounced "CON ah war," Conchobar is the first of the name Connor or O'Connor in Irish annals. His mother was Queen Ness, and his nephew Cuchulain, the famous hero of the Ulster cycle of stories. "Our oldest and most trustworthy authorities state that Taillten ceased to be used as a cemetery on the death of Conchobhor," wrote Irish antiquarian (the term used before "archeologist") William F. Wakeman in *The Handbook of*

Irish Antiquities in 1891, drawing on field reports dating back to 1848 (London: Studio, 1995).

What made Conchobar's burial unusual was that, unlike the previous kings of Ulster entombed at Taillten, he "wished that he should be carried to a place between Sleat and the sea, with his face to the east, on account of the Faith which he had embraced" (p. 94).

It seems obvious that Conchobar converted from pagan druidism to a new religion, one that emphasized burial facing east. The new religion could not have been Christianity, although Irish myths claim, anachronistically, that Conchobar died upon being told by druids that Jesus had just been killed "by the Jews." Christianity was not widespread until the fourth century of the Common Era. Jews, like Christians, are buried facing east. According to Celtic tradition, Conchobar was one of the two men who believed in God in Ireland before the coming of the Faith, Morann being the other man. Such a statement can only mean that Conchobar and his adviser Morann were monotheists or Jews.

In Conchobar's day, Judaism attracted millions of converts. Eventually, between one-tenth and one-quarter of the inhabitants within the limit of the Roman Empire professed Judaism. Often it was a syncretistic form combined with other rites and beliefs.

The story of a king converting to Judaism with many of his subjects and descendants following him is a phenomenon documented from more than one historical time point associated with mass conversions. The Hellenized Hasmonean dynasty established under Judas Maccabeus ruled the Kingdom of Israel for over a hundred years, spreading Jewish religion to many others in the Middle East. Bulan was a Khazar king who led the conversion of the Khazars to Judaism. The Babylonian prince Machir, also known as Todros, Theodore, Theodorich, Dietrich, William and by other names, converted most of the inhabitants of the kingdom of Narbonne/Septimania in southern France.

It is likely the Irish high king Conchobar inspired many of his people to accept Judaism. The introduction and early spread of Christianity in Ireland could have been facilitated by the pre-existence of Jewish institutions in the country.

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King Ollamh Fodhla's Throne at Taillten, covered with tiffinagh (North African) inscriptions. Conwell, On the Cemetery of Taillten (1879).

November 21, 2010

Should the DNA Marketplace Be Regulated?

In a paper to be delivered at the American Marketing Association's meeting in Washington in June, Elizabeth C. Hirschman estimates that the number of people who have purchased a DNA test now exceeds 1.5 million. Her work suggests that the value of the market (excluding paternity testing) in 2011 will reach nearly \$150 million in sales.

That seems like too big an industry to escape government oversight, and it's true that several scientists have targeted the direct-to-the-consumer DNA testing business for criticism, particularly personal genomics companies like 23andMe.

Before another academic grant gets written to send out another industry questionnaire, however, marketing professionals and public-policy analysts ought to have a look at Hirschman's new case study, destined, we think, to become a classic.

"Altruistic Economics and Consumer Cooperatives in the DNA Marketplace" sketches a vibrant picture of DNA test takers busy following up on their results in social-networking sites like DNA Communities and even joining in the design process for product improvements by the leaders in the industry. No unhappy campers there!

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Rather than mount yet another policy-making roundtable, would-be regulators should just order some of the DNA tests available from today's leading companies and judge for themselves how accurate or valuable or harmful they are. That makes a lot more sense than writing another food review for a restaurant they do not intend to patronize, or for a cuisine that is not to their taste.

The AMA's Marketing and Public Policy Conference is the premier national and international event for marketing academics, public-policy makers, and marketing practitioners interested in social and public policy.

Another point made by the paper is that "The industry has completed the introduction, early growth stages and consolidation phase of its life cycle. ... It is a mature field facing few new technology thresholds, and it is still very much confined to the United States, Canada and England."

All that having been said, it may be too late to regulate the industry. It seems to be doing fine all by itself. Like the pharmaceutical and computer industries, the DNA marketplace is an American phenomenon we should all just basically let thrive and be proud of.

March 8, 2011

Sailing to Byzantium

Claudio Ottoni et al., "Mitochondrial Analysis of a Byzantine Population Reveals the Differential Impact of Multiple Historical Events in South Anatolia," *European Journal of Human Genetics* 19 (2011) 571-76.

Abstract. The archaeological site of Sagalassos is in Southwest Turkey, in the western part of the Taurus mountain range. Human occupation of its territory is attested from the late 12th millennium B.P. up to the 13th century A.D. By analysing the mtDNA variation in 85 skeletons from Sagalassos dated to the 11th–13th century A.D., this study attempts to reconstruct the genetic signature potentially left in this region of Anatolia by the many civilizations, which succeeded one another over the centuries until the mid-Byzantine period (13th century). Authentic ancient DNA data were determined from the control region and some SNPs in the coding region of the mtDNA in 53 individuals. Comparative analyses with up to 157 modern populations allowed us to reconstruct the

origin of the mid-Byzantine people still dwelling in dispersed hamlets in Sagalassos, and to detect the maternal contribution of their potential ancestors. By integrating the genetic data with historical and archaeological information, we were able to attest in Sagalassos a significant maternal genetic signature of Balkan/Greek populations, as well as ancient Persians and populations from the Italian peninsula. Some contribution from the Levant has been also detected, whereas no contribution from Central Asian population could be ascertained.

A recent comparison of medieval mitochondrial DNA from a Byzantine cemetery with modern populations in Southwest Turkey shows what we have assumed in our population analyses house in our database atDNA. The integration of historical with archaeological information proves that the little South Anatolian town of Sagalassos has a clearly structured Balkan/Greek maternal population with some ancient Persians and Italians in the mix but no Central Asian (Turkic) contributions discernible.

The inference is that when the Turks conquered Anatolia and eventually took control of the Byzantine capital (modern-day Constantinople) they remained largely a ruling class with little penetration into the ancient settlements scattered through Turkey. Even though the general populace accepted their conquerors' religion, Islam, their bedrock DNA did not significantly alter, at least not in the female lines. The male lines may tell a different story.

April 21, 2011

Two Days Too Late

Nancy J. Cooper et al. v. The Choctaw Nation is one of the classic botched cases in the annals of the Dawes Commission, the Federal government's attempt to deal a death blow to tribal sovereignty at the close of the 19th century. I had heard rumors about my Cooper relatives and how they were kicked out of the Choctaw Nation. But I never knew the whole story until recently.

J.W. Howell mentions the case in a textbook studied today in law schools. John Cooper, our ancestor, was a Choctaw chief who owned a plantation near Linden, Tennessee. The family was seated at the dinner

table one evening when a vigilante mob broke in. They were told at gunpoint to leave, their possessions forfeit.

The men swam their horses across the Mississippi River at Memphis and left the women encamped under the willows on the other side while they went back to try to recover some of their cattle. John and Nancy's old mother, who was in her 80s, died before they returned, empty-handed. The party proceeded to Indian Territory.

In 1896, the family encouraged Nancy, blind, unmarried and no longer able to care for herself, to enroll with the Choctaw Nation. They and a large group of kinsmen won roll numbers. But they were all stricken from the rolls by an adverse decision of the Choctaw-Chickasaw citizenship court a couple of years later. More than a hundred of them joined in a class-action suit.

"We're still fighting it," says Pam Kahler of Vian, Oklahoma. "My husband and I talked to the BIA in Muskogee and found out about the old ruling. They told us the reason it was overturned was because the people named in the court ruling were not living in the Choctaw area when they were added to the Dawes rolls." They, in fact, were living in the Chickasaw area of Duncan, Comanche area, Stephens County.

Aunt Artie Meecie was told that the family was "too poor to be on the rolls."

In February and March 1907 matters came to a head. The attorney general of the United States declared the lower courts out of line and ordered that hundreds of Choctaw Coopers, Browns and others were, after all, entitled to enrollment.

The only trouble was that the attorney general's decision of March 4, 1907, did not reach the department until March 6, 1907, two days after the rolls were closed by operation of law. There was then no authority in the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, under the law, to enroll them.

Nancy Cooper was laid in a pauper's grave. Not only was the family too poor to be Indian, it was two days too late.

June 22, 2011

Sorbs Probably Not "the" Core Ashkenazi Jewish Population

It used to be thought that the Sorbs, a medieval East German Slavic population, formed the core of a group of Jews who ended up as the

dominant element of Ashkenaz, Eastern Jews in Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, Silesia and Russia. No longer.

According to an article published in *European Journal of Human Genetics* (2011) 19, 995-1001, "Genetic Variation in the Sorbs of Eastern Germany in the Context of Broader European Genetic Diversity," by Veeramah et al., the Sorb "population isolate" is not that isolated but was "less than that observed for the Sardinians and French Basque," true isolates. Sorbs are, in reality, part of the larger population of West Slavs, including Poles and Czechs, and scarcely distinguishable from them.

Histories of Judaism will have to revise their accounts of the genesis of Ashkenazim accordingly. The story of European Jews is more diversified and dynamic than most history or coffee-table type books allow.

For an example of a research article on Ashkenazi roots overemphasizing Sorbs, see Behar et al. "Multiple Origins of Ashkenazi Levites: Y Chromosome Evidence for Both Near Eastern and European Ancestries," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 73:768-779, 2003, who theorizes they were a leading constituent of Levites.

August 18, 2011

Why Italians Live So Long

The Genetic Component of Human Longevity: Analysis of the Survival Advantage of Parents and Siblings of Italian Nonagenarians

Alberto Montesanto, Valeria Latorre, Marco Giordano, Cinzia Martino, Filippo Domma and Giuseppe Passarino

European Journal of Human Genetics 19 (2011) 882-886;
doi:10.1038/ejhg.2011.40; published online 16 March 2011.

Abstract. Many epidemiological studies have shown that parents, siblings and offspring of long-lived subjects have a significant survival advantage when compared with the general population. However, how much of this reported advantage is due to common genetic factors or to a shared environment remains to be resolved. We reconstructed 202 families of nonagenarians from a population of southern Italy. To estimate the familiarity of human longevity, we compared survival data

of parents and siblings of long-lived subjects to that of appropriate Italian birth cohorts. Then, to estimate the genetic component of longevity while minimizing the variability due to environment factors, we compared the survival functions of nonagenarians' siblings with those of their spouses (intrafamily control group). We found that both parents and siblings of the probands had a significant survival advantage over their Italian birth cohort counterparts. On the other hand, although a substantial survival advantage was observed in male siblings of probands with respect to the male intrafamily control group, female siblings did not show a similar advantage. In addition, we observed that the presence of a male nonagenarian in a family significantly decreased the instant mortality rate throughout lifetime for all the siblings; in the case of a female nonagenarian such an advantage persisted only for her male siblings. The methodological approach used here allowed us to distinguish the effects of environmental and genetic factors on human longevity. Our results suggest that genetic factors in males have a higher impact than in females on attaining longevity.

We just returned from a long trip through Italy and were struck by Italians' apparent immunity to all the forces of aging that plague Americans and other members of the First World. "Italian men," said Paolo, our driver, "smoke, drink, womanize and curse all day and live to a hundred." Maybe the answers why are in this new report on Italian longevity.

August 5, 2011

Skeletons of the English Peoples

British Bones Push Back Date for "First Anatomically Modern Human" in Northwestern Europe: A Missing Link from Kent's Cavern in Devonshire

A prehistoric maxilla (upper jawbone) fragment was discovered in the cavern during a 1927 excavation by the Torquay Natural History Society, and named *Kents Cavern 4*. The specimen is on display at the Torquay Museum.

Although previous radiocarbon dating suggested the bone was about 35,000 years old, a new study in *Nature* redates it securely to 44.2-41.5

kyr. The article by Tom Higham et al., "The Earliest Evidence for Anatomically Modern Humans in Northwestern Europe," also claims that on the basis of dental comparisons it is "human" rather than "Neanderthal."

The Kent's Cavern fragment "therefore represents the oldest known anatomically modern human fossil in northwestern Europe, fills a key gap between the earliest dated Aurignacian remains and the earliest human skeletal remains, and demonstrates the wide and rapid dispersal of early modern humans across Europe more than 40 kyr ago."

A related article in the same issue of *Nature* is "Early Dispersal of Modern Humans in Europe and Implications for Neanderthal Behavior," by Stefano Benazzi et al. It attempts to place the so-called Cavallo fossil from southern Italy in a time frame of about 44,000 years ago, thus suggesting a "rapid dispersal of modern humans across the continent before the Aurignacian and the disappearance of Neanderthals."

Neither study considers that the evidence they are examining may be the result of hybridization between "humans" and "Neanderthals." As most geneticists, the authors have rigid categories and do not consider that our definitions of species and sub-species and transitions in technocomplexes and traits are in flux as new discoveries are made.

One man's Mede may be another man's Persian, and we note that the "fossil race" is not devoid of scientific jingoism pitting one country's news-making finds against another's. So far, England seems to be winning.

However, the British still have to live down Piltdown Man, a fraud of biblical proportions that fooled the world for almost half a century until the 1950s. The Piltdown hoax is, perhaps, the most-famous paleontological hoax ever. It has been prominent for two reasons: the attention paid to the issue of human evolution, and the length of time that elapsed from its discovery to its full exposure as a forgery combining the lower jawbone of an orangutan with the skull of a fully developed modern human.

The editors sum up the two new studies by writing, "The reanalysis of findings from two archaeological sites calls for a reassessment of when modern humans settled in Europe, and of Neanderthal cultural achievements." We wish that the paleontological community would think

more out of the box and reassess how, when and where "humans" and "Neanderthals" interbred.

November 23, 2011

When Wales Was Jewish

Short Answer: Pre-Roman Times

As is well-known, haplogroup E1b1b1 accounts for approximately 18 percent to 20 percent of Ashkenazi and 8.6 percent to 30 percent of Sephardic Y-chromosomes. This North African type appears to be one of the major founding lineages of the Jewish population.¹

In Britain, this quintessential Jewish type (together with J, another telltale sign of Middle Eastern roots) is absent or negligible in many towns and regions but reported in elevated frequencies in Wales (Llanidloes 7 percent, Llangefni 5 percent), the Midlands (Southwell, Nottinghamshire 12 percent, Uttoxeter 8 percent), Faversham in Kent (9 percent), Dorchester in the West Country with historic harbors (7 percent), Midhurst in West Sussex commanding ancient sea-ports (5 percent) and the Channel Islands, always an important crossroads of influences (5 percent).² Bryan Sykes' survey of paternal clans in England and Wales confirms significant traces of the E haplogroup that he dubs Eshu in southern England (4.9 percent) and Wales (3.1 percent).³ It reaches its highest point in Britain in Abergele, Wales (nearly 40 percent), an anomaly that has been attributed to Roman soldiers of Balkan origin but may have alternative and more complex explanations. See our blog post "Right Pew, Wrong Church," arguing that the footprint of E in Britain is attributable to North African influence, not the descendants of Roman legionnaires from the Balkans.

In 2011, Llangefni and Wrexham in North Wales became the focus of a call for local men to provide samples of their unusual DNA. A team of scientists led by Andy Grierson and Robert Johnston from the University

¹ A. Nebel et al, "The Y Chromosome Pool of Jews as Part of the Genetic Landscape of the Middle East", *American Journal of Human Genetics* 69.5(2001) 1095-1112.

² C. Capelli et al, "A Y Chromosome Census of the British Isles," *Current Biology* 13 (2003) 979-984.

³ Bryan Sykes, *Saxons, Vikings and Celts* (Norton: 2007) 206, 290.

of Sheffield hoped to link the migration of men from the Mediterranean to the copper mined at Parys Mountain on Anglesey and on the Great Orme promontory nearby. A preliminary analysis of 500 participants showed 30 percent of the men carried E1b1b, compared to 1 percent of men elsewhere in the United Kingdom.⁴

Significantly, Welsh tradition associates the Iron Age hilltop town on Conwy Mountain known as Castell Caer Seion with a settlement of ancient Jews. This site overlooks Conwy Bay on the north coast of Wales and lies on the ancient road between Prestatyn in Denbighshire and Bangor in Gwynedd opposite Anglesey. In the Black Book of Caermarthen, the Welsh national bard Taliesin casually remarks in the persona of the battling hero,

When I return from Caer Seon,
From contending with Jews,
I will come to the city of Lleu and Gwidion.⁵[v]

Lleu and Gwidion are the names of two other legendary figures; they are believed to be historical and to have lived in the early centuries of the Common Era or anterior to it.

It is hard to avoid the thought that the hilly area to the west of the town of Conwy, in North Wales was once inhabited by Jews.

April 2, 2012

Stephen Blevins commented on 03-Apr-2012

My DNA is E1b1b1, my most distant ancestor is William Blevins (Longhunter) from the area you mentioned. My autosomal DNA places my ancestors in the Orkney islands of Scotland. I'm convinced that a tribe of Jews migrated from Israel to north to Scandinavia or Denmark

⁴ "'Extraordinary' Genetic Make-up of North-east Wales Men," BBC News North East Wales, article retrieved Jan. 2012 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-north-east-wales-14173910>. On Dienekes' Anthropology Blog there is speculation about whether the main sub-clade involved is Balkan or North African E; posts and comments retrieved Jan. 2012 at <http://dienekes.blogspot.com/2011/07/eastern-mediterranean-marker-in.html>.

⁵ William F. Skene, *The Four Ancient Books of Wales* (Edinburgh, 1868, republished 2007 by Forgotten Books) 206.

and may have been a part of the invasion by Vikings to Scotland before they were found in Wales as Poweys in the Northern Mountains. Blevins comes from Blethyn meaning little wolf or (Hero) look up Ap Blethyn of Gwynedd.

Blevins Descendant commented on 12-Apr-2012

I was always told the Blevins came from Wales, but in checking this story out I was unable to verify it, nor could I find any substantiation of the etymology from Bleddyn ("son of wolf"). There is not a single Blevins in the Welsh census records, although the name is found sparsely in Cheshire, Lancashire and other northern English counties. "Formby, Wales" is actually Formby in Merseyside in Lancashaire. The -dd- element in the Welsh name Bleddyn cannot be twisted into a -v-. So, go figure.

Paul commented on 28-Apr-2012

My mother is a descendant of Henry Cook I of Devon. His ascendants were among the first settlers of Massachusetts and Connecticut. A great-uncle, Lemuel Cook, was the oldest surviving Revolutionary War veteran when he died at 106 years of age. We recently had my mother's autosomal DNA analyzed and found strong population matches from the Balkans (Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Serbia, etc.)—which was very unexpected. There was also prominent representation from Spain and Portugal—not so unexpected. In my own 18 marker test, I had one Jewish III marker, though I can't say from whom. There is no known Judaism on either side. Sounds like your article might be describing the early Cooks. Interesting ...

Katarina Cadieux commented on 13-Dec-2013

Well, the language of the Welsh (Cymri) alone is very Hebraic. Here are some examples: Anudon (Welsh)/Aen Adon (Hebrew) (without God); Yni all sy-dda(Welsh)/Ani El Saddai (Hebrew) (I am almighty God); Llai iachu yngwyddd achau ni (Welsh)/Loa yichei neged acheinu (Hebrew) ("Let him not live before our brethren"); An annos (welsh)/ain ones (Hebrew) (None did compel). The amazing thing to me is how similar the words look and sound, the English is the meaning for both

Welsh and Hebrew, their meaning are the same. The Welsh are a very ancient people even their name for themselves in their language has Crimea roots that many Hebrew tribes migrated to.

Dafydd Gwilym W. Gates commented on 17-Feb-2014

Katarina Cadieux (13 Dec 2013) wrote some examples to show how Welsh had parallels in Hebrew. I'm a first language Welsh speaker and couldn't make sense of the Welsh examples, I'm afraid, it wasn't Welsh. So sorry, Dafydd

Where Do I Come From?

As soon as Euro DNA was released last month, I quickly studied my new list of European nationalities where I have significant ancestral lines according to DNA Consultants' new autosomal population analysis. I had come to know and accept, of course, the usual suspects, compiled from the 24 populations available from ENFSI (European Network of Forensic Science Institutes). But the new list represented 71 populations and far surpassed ENFSI or any other database in commercial use. It had, for instance, the first European comparisons for countries like Hungary, Lithuania, Malta and Iceland. So, how would my familiar matches—Scotland, Ireland, England, Belgium and the rest—shake out in the new oracle?

Some of the top matches—above British Isles or Northern European ancestry—were Central European. Here were the top 20:

Rank	European Population Matches
1	Slovakia—Saris (n=848)
2	Finland (n = 469)
3	Slovakia—Zemplin (n=558)
4	Netherlands (n = 231)
5	Slovakia—Spis (n=296)
6	Romanian - Transylvanian - Szekler (n = 257)
7	Romanian - Transylvanian - Csango (n = 220)
8	Scotland/Dundee (n = 228)
9	Switzerland (n = 200)

- 10 England/Wales (n = 437)
- 11 Ireland (n = 300)
- 12 Italy (n = 103)
- 13 Denmark (n = 156)
- 14 Romanian (n=243)
- 15 Swedish (n = 311)
- 16 Serbian - Serbia / Vojvodina / Montenegro (n = 100)
- 17 Icelandic (n=151)
- 18 Estonia (n = 150)
- 19 Romanian - Transylvania/Banat (n = 219)
- 20 Norwegian (n=1000)

Slovakia? Romania? To be sure, I had always had a fascination with both countries. But why were these matches so prominent? Admittedly, the results of an autosomal ancestry test are cumulative and combinatorial. While they *do* reflect all your ancestry, as no other test can, you are cautioned not to use the matches to try to pinpoint lines in your family genealogy. There is always a temptation to over-interpret.

My European admixture results from AncestryByDNA had yielded a confirmatory result: 20 percent Southeast Europe. That struck me at the time as odd. Yet, Hungarian was now one of my top metapopulation results, too. (Remember, Hungarian data did not figure into ENFSI because Hungary is not in the European Union.)

The Scottish (my grandmother was a McDonald) made sense, as did all the other matches from what I knew through years of paper genealogy research. But I was unaware of any strong Central European lines.

Sizemore Research: Pitfalls of Genetic Genealogy

Then I recalled the Sizemores. My great-great-grandmother was a Sizemore, and they were multiply connected with my Coopers, my mother's maiden name. Could the Central European effect in my Euro result be from the Sizemores?

Much ink—or at least many keystrokes—has been expended on the Sizemore controversy. There are pitched battles on genealogy forums and edit wars in cyberspace. One armed camp has them down as Melungeons and admixed Cherokees with crypto-Jewish strains. Another

holds it as an article of faith that the Sizemores were a lily-white old Virginia British family and the surname comes from something like Sigismund (think Goetterdaemmerung). Y chromosome DNA shows ambiguous conclusions: You can visit the advertisement page sponsored by Family Tree DNA.

Alan Lerwick, a Salt Lake City genealogist, upset the apple cart some years ago by linking America's Sizemores to Michael Sismore, buried in the Flemish cemetery of the Collegiate Church of St. Katherine by the Tower in London in 1684. That was the same parish as my Coopers lived in. Then and now, it is the most Jewish section of London. Sizmore is not a British surname before the 16th century. It was clear to me long ago that neither my Sizemores nor my Coopers were Mama Bear, Papa Bear families. Spurred by my Euro DNA test results, I dug into my subscription at Ancestry.com and learned that Michael Sismore was recorded as being born as Michael Seasmer in Ashwell, an important village in north Hertfordshire, November 1, 1620. His parents were Edward Seasmer and Betterissa (a form of Beatrice). New information! Alert the list moderators and surname project guardians!

Seasmer is undoubtedly the same as Zizmer, an old Central European Jewish surname adduced in multiple families in Israel, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Austria, Russia, Moldavia and the United States. Edward and Michael are favored first-names in the U.S. branches. The Hebrew letters, which can be viewed on numerous burials in Israel, are (in reverse order, right to left) RMZZ. Cooper is a similar Jewish surname, common in Russia and Lithuania and Israel as well as the British Isles and the U.S. In fact, my father's surname, Yates, is a Hebrew anagram common in the same countries, meaning "Righteous Convert."

Hertfordshire was an important center for British Jewry, mentioned in the works of Hyamson, Jacobs and others. A good hypothesis to explain the transformation of Michael's name from Seasmer to Sismore and thence to Sizmore is this. His grandfather, a Zizmer, came to England in the time of Elizabeth, perhaps via the Low Lands, possibly as a soldier or cloth merchant. This could account for Michael Sizmore's burial in the Flemish cemetery of St Katharine's by the Tower, usually reserved for foreigners. It also explains the predilection in descendants for such names as Ephraim, Michael, Edward, William, John, Richard, James, George, Hiram, Isaac, Samuel, Solomon and Henry. And why girls were

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named Lillie, Lydia, Louisa, Naomi, Pharaba, Rebecca, Sarah and Vitula. The last name (also found in my wife's grandmother's name) was a Jewish amulet name. It meant "old woman" in Latin and was given to a child to augur a long life.

Zismer took the form of Cismar, Cismarik, Zhesmer, Zizmor, Ziesmer, Zausmer, Cismaru and Tzismaro—all amply attested in the records of European Jewry, including Jewish Gen's Holocaust Database, with the records of over 2 million victims and survivors of the Nazi genocide of World War II. I am proud of my Jewish heritage through my great-grandmother and through my halfblood Cherokee Indian mother Bessie Cooper Yates.

Thank you for indulging me in this genealogical excursus on a family mystery. Like a restaurant owner, I would be to blame if I didn't eat in my own establishment.

July 28, 2013