

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

The Iberians

No more dramatic illustration exists of the blindness which infects the minds of godless Near East scholarship than that of the Eberi/Ibri name. For nearly a century they speculated on the relationship between the Apiru/Habiru/Haberi and the Hebrew/Eberi/Ibri. Finally, in a concluding remark, Moshe Greenberg summed up the situation by stating:

Further historical combinations between the two groups appears to be highly doubtful; they may serve now, as they have served in the past, only to obscure the distinctive features of each. Further attempts to relate them appear fruitless and confusing; each should be studied independently of the other on their separate merits^{HAB}.

Attempts to relate them are fruitless and confusing only because godless scholarship will not pay heed to the evidence.

1. Although the presence of red skins, and a prominence of red/purple color within the evidence, including the color red for Adam and the Edomites, of Tola and Pua, of the Phoenix bird myth and the eponymous ancestor of the Phoenicians, is part of the traditions of Semitic people, the significance of that information has never been fully explored or understood. The “red skin” is transformed to “dark skin” and equated to the Bedouin skin colors of modern times. Attitudes about the evolution of human kind from animals prohibits acceptance of the ancient traditions which say the gods once lived on earth and became the forefathers of mankind.

2. Although many Near East scholars are Jews they became so entrapped by their racial glory they could not give credit to the evidence of the Ibri attested in the old records. “Wandering Aramaens” did not have meaning except as some amusing folk tradition. Thus it was not possible that the wandering *Habiru/Iberi* scattered across the Near East regions had any relationship to those wandering *Ibri* who later settled in Canaan.

3. Those same Jewish scholars were trapped in other ways. They could not examine the roots of their language to perceive the vast treasures it contains. They became so entranced by the notions that the Hebrews were just another people among a morass of people in the Near East, without special selection, or special language, they were unaware of the unique information they possessed in their language.

4. Illusions about social evolution prevented modern minds from accepting that a process was at work in ancient times to preserve the unique information contained

within the roots of language, and in attitudes those people had about special racial selection.

5. Jewish pride prohibited them from accepting that their northern brothers would be sifted among the nations for biological uplift. Therefore, evidence for such sifting must be rejected out of hand. The *Ibri/Iberi/Iberian* connections could not be real.

6. Historical combinations that Greenberg feared were rejected because of these attitudes. As an expert in linguistics, intimately familiar with Hebrew and other Near East languages, he had other insights at his fingertips — but did not see. He reviewed several proposals for the origins of the *Apir* and *Ibri* names, suggesting that *Apir* is a verbal-adjective from an hypothetical Egyptian root **apr*, while *Ibri* is a gentilic from the substantive base *eber*, from a Semitic root **abr*.

By **gentilic** he meant **not Hebrew**. He proposed not-existent hypothetical roots to explain evidence which sat at his fingertips. All he need have done was open his Hebrew Lexicon and look at the verb roots. But he could not do so.

Scholarship invented word roots as a substitute for something that existed without the need for invention. There was no need to invoke non-existent hypotheticals. The *Ibri* name derives directly, without qualification, or without “gentilic” formation, from a basic Hebrew root. That root is *abar*.

The Hebrew root *abar* means **to pass** or **to cross over**. It is a basic word which finds numerous applications in Hebrew and is well illustrated in the Old Testament.

Brown, Driver, and Briggs list nearly five pages of usage for this word and its derivatives in the Bible^{BDB}.

1. To pass or cross over, as a river, or a sea.
2. To cross over a boundary.
3. To cross over an intervening space.
4. To march over, as in bodies of captives.
5. To overflow, as in a flood.
6. To pass over, as waves over one's head.
7. Passing over, as time passes by.
8. Pass over upon, as coming or lighting upon.
9. Overstep or transgress, as in passing over the conditions of a covenant or command.
10. Pass over, as in overlooking or forgiving.
11. Pass beyond.
12. Pass through, traverse.
13. To overwhelm, as an army.
14. To pass over to the side or cause of anyone.

Other senses are derived by use with other words: *abar babrit* means **to enter into a covenant**; *abar w'shab* means **to pass on and return**; and so on.

From this root directly come such words as *Ibri*, *Iber*, *Ibru* and *Eber*. *Eber* is a derived noun which takes on such meanings as **a ford**, **a place to pass a river**, or **a mountain pass**. In I Sam 26:13 David went over to the other side; *Y'abor David ha-eber . . . = Went over David to the (other) side . . .* In Deut 30:13 the noun is again

found along with the verb: *Lo me-eber layam* = **beyond (the other side of) the sea**; and *Me ya-abar lanu el-eber hayam* = **Who shall pass over for us (to the other side of) the sea?** Many other examples could be cited.

It is interesting to note that the sense of crossing over, as in human copulation, is brought out in the Pi'el form, which means **to impregnate**. This form is directly the source of *Iber* without alteration whatsoever. The *Habiru/Iberi* were the ones who carried a larger proportion of Adamic seed. They were destined to impregnate many people with the remnant of his genes.

From the above list we can enjoy considerable speculation on the literal significance of the Eber/Ibri/Iberi names. Given that the Habiru/Iberi were not isolated to any one geographical area, that they seemed to be in a constant state of movement, (witness Abraham, Joseph, the Exodus, and the breakup of the kingdom), and that they served in so many different social roles, could we consider them as those who were merely passing by? Were they the vehicle for crossing over from one era to the next? Or were they to impregnate the western nations?

The Jewish scholars who translated the Greek Septuagint version of the Old Testament in the third century BC were not ignorant of the root origin of the Ibri name. They did not take the Ibri name directly into Greek, as Ibri. Rather they saw through it to the root and used the Greek phrase *toe perati* as a literal substitute for Ibri. *Perati* comes from the Greek root *peran* = **across, beyond, over, on the other side**. This is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Ibri, one who passes or crosses over. In the Septuagint Abraham is the one who **Passed By**; in Hebrew he is the one who **Crossed Over**. Modern scholars puzzled over this choice by the Septuagint translators, failing to recognize the Hebrew root and its Greek equivalent. With trivial examination they could have answered the puzzle quickly — but their scholarly blindness prevented them from doing so.

Even the name Abraham derives from this root. Although the Hebrew text shows the name beginning with the *aleph* “A” the Arabs remember it with the *ayin* “I”: Ibrahim or Ibraihem. It comes from the Eber noun in the plural — *Ebareem*; the third person masculine plural is *Ibraihem*: **They Who Pass**. Abraham was given this name because he was the one who carried the burden of passing or crossing over from one era to the other. On the other hand, from the Pi'el form, Abraham was the one who would impregnate the nations.

It seems incredible that he would not have known the literal significance of his new name, when his celestial visitor told him to forget Abram and become Abraham.

Other forms derive from this root; I shall later examine them in more detail. I mention one here before going on to the main subject of this chapter. *Ober* is the first person present tense of *abar*: **I pass over**, or **I cross over**. It is remembered to this day in German *ober* and, with a slight sound shift, in English *over*.

We come now to one of the most important names in the history of western man. It is found as the third person singular of the Pi'el past form of *abar*. It is *Iber*. This name became synonymous for a wide distribution of people from the Caucasus Mountains just east of the Black Sea, to the Iberian peninsula, to the Emerald Isle of Erie Land.

Iber in Hebrew literally means **He did impregnate**. The Adamic/Abrahamic seed was planted and it sifted throughout Europe.

In Chapter 29 I offered evidence from Alashar and Boghazkoi in Anatolia to show that *Habiru/Haberi* people were located as close as one hundred miles from the Black Sea. If one draws a straight line along the Tigris River from the Persia Gulf through Anatolia one passes through the heart of the ancient Hittite kingdom in Asia Minor dating between the 17th and 15th centuries BC. We do not have evidence to say the Haberi actually lived on the shore of the Black Sea (Pontus Euxinus), nor how far in a northeast direction toward the Caucasus Mountains they may have moved. Since they are known some 500 miles from Mari on the Euphrates River it seems plausible that they could have been another hundred miles farther north to reach Pontus Euxinus. It also seems plausible, with their wide geographical distribution, that groups of them could have migrated still farther in a northeasterly direction toward the Caucasus mountains.

Thus, if we find *Iberi* located at the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains in 100 BC we cannot definitely decide if they came from the more ancient *Haberi* of the 15th century BC, or if they derived from the *Ibri* tribes who were resettled in the cities of the Medes in 700 BC.

What is important for this study is the fact that later history shows a unique group of people resident in a region bordering on and just south of the Caucasus, what is now Georgia. The residents of that region were known to the ancients as *Iberi*.

Sure knowledge of *Iberi* east of the Black Sea comes from the campaigns of the great Roman general Pompey. He was commissioned to stop the activities of Mithridates, king of the lands around the Black Sea. Mithridates had subjugated the people on the north shore of Anatolia and was extending his control into the regions of Cappadocia and Bithynia in Asia Minor. The latter two were allies of Rome and his adventures incurred Roman opposition. After the death of Sulla in 78 BC Mithridates levied an army to expel the Romans from Asia. He was defeated by Lucullus and forced to seek refuge in Armenia where Tigranes, the king of Armenia, gave him safety and aid. From there Mithridates raised another great army and defeated the Romans in 67 BC. He rapidly recovered his lost territory when the soldiers of Lucullus went into mutiny. Lucullus was recalled and replaced by Pompey who, a year later, completely routed the army of Mithridates near the Euphrates. Pompey then continued his advance into Armenia, where Tigranes capitulated. Pompey continued his advance to within three days' march of the Caspian Sea, including the territory of the *Iberi* and the Albani^{HAG}.

Our knowledge of these *Iberi* depends on Theophanes, a companion and intimate friend of Pompey. Although Theophanes' writings are not preserved they were quoted extensively by Strabo, circa 10 AD^{GOS}. According to Theophanes the *Iberi* were highly civilized, with towns and markets. They had some pretense to architecture with tile roofs on their buildings. They had four classes of society: the nobility, the priests, the soldiers and farmers, and slaves employed in menial tasks. Their domestic organization was patriarchal, with the property of each family possessed in common and administered by the eldest member. We have no information

on their physical attributes, religion, or other details of their culture. Neither do we know their origins, their history, or their antiquity.

The middle of the first century BC is well down into historical times. The question is the possible connection of the Caucasian *Iberi* to the Near East *Haberi* and the Hebrew *Ibri*. A thousand years passed since last mention of the *Haberi* in Near East documents. About 400 years passed since mention of the *Ibri* in Jeremiah. Were these Caucasian *Iberi* descended from either the older *Haberi* or the resettled *Ibri*?

Our query is complicated further by the presence of *Iberi* in the Iberian peninsula, modern Spain and Portugal. Historical record of the Iberian *Iberi* exist as far back as the sixth century BC.

The solution to our query is confused by the ancient historians. According to Strabo, 1.3.21:

... The migration of western Iberians (was) to the region beyond the Pontus and Colchis.

The Pontus is the Black Sea. Colchis was a region bordering on the Black Sea just south of the Caucasus mountains. It was separated from Armenia by the Araxes, according to Apollodorus, or by the river Cyrus and the Moskhican mountains, according to Strabo. The *Iberi* lived immediately adjacent to the Colchis. Herodotus^{HER} thought the residents were of Egyptian origin. (Note the traditions of these Iberi once living in Egypt.) The Caucasus Iberian people in classical times were celebrated for frugality and industry. According to Strabo the country abounded in all kinds of fruits and material for shipbuilding. Linen and wool of fine quality and in great quantities were produced.

If we interpret Strabo's remark correctly he believed that elements of the western Iberi, those living in Spanish Iberia, migrated to the Iberian regions of the Caucasus. However, according to a 17th century English writer named Purchas in a work entitled *Pilgrimage*, published in 1614: "The Iberians:

...saith Montanus, dwelt neare to Meotis; certaine Colonies of them inhabited Spaine and called it Hiberia^{OED}."

Meotis was the ancient name for the Sea of Azov. If Montanus was correct, some of the eastern Iberi lived north of the Pontus Euxinus (Black Sea) and migrated to Spain. This would imply that the *Iberi* were spread over a large geographical area around the northern and eastern shores of the Black Sea. They were not limited to the small territory described by Theophanes. As we shall see, this is the identical territory of the Kimmerians of historic fame.

Montanus was a Christian heretic who lived in the 2nd century AD. He was a converted pagan priest who proclaimed himself to be the Comforter promised by Jesus. His influence spread after his death; Tertullian was counted among his disciples but the sect was soon stamped out. His native land of Phrygia was the home of the ancient Hittites and the location of elements of the *Haberi*. It bordered on

Armenia, Colchis and *Iberia*. The residents of Phrygia should have known something of the traditions of the people surrounding their land.

The first known historical mention of the *Iberians* was that of Hecataeus, born 540 BC. Although his writings are not preserved other Greek and Roman historians quote him.

According to Hecataeus the *Iberians* occupied Spanish *Iberia*^{HOAG}.

Herodotus, circa 485 to 425 BC, mentions the *Iberians* twice. In Book II. 163 he states that the Phocaea were the first Greeks to make their fellow Greeks acquainted with the Adriatic, with Tyrrhenia, with *Iberia*, and with the city of Tartessus. Tartessus was an ancient site situated near the modern Cadiz beyond the straits of Gibraltar. For Herodotus *Iberia* was the Mediterranean side of Spain. In Book VII. 165 he lists an army raised among various people by Terillus and under the command of Hamilcar, son of Hanno, king of the Carthaginians. The members of the army included men from Phoenicia, Libya, Iberia, Liguria, Helisycia, Sardinia and Corsica^{HER}. From these references it appears that the *Iberians* of Spain were already well settled in their country, and could raise appreciable numbers of fighting men, in the mid-fifth century BC. Hanno is roughly contemporaneous with Herodotus.

In order to better answer the question of the movement of the *Iberi* it is necessary to look at folk migrations and colonizing activities of various people during the first millennium BC. Regardless of which direction the Iberi moved they certainly used the waters of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

Unfortunately, if the *Iberi* came from the *Haberi* prior to the first millennium we could not depend upon classical Greek and Roman authors for information; they would not know. We would be forced to rely strictly upon archeology. While this is scientifically sound it does not reproduce living languages or cultural identifications beyond the remains of pottery, stone and bone. It cannot tell us if a people knew themselves as *Iberi* unless they left written evidence.

Unfortunately again we lack written evidence around the Black Sea and the Mediterranean prior to 1000 BC. We are forced to depend upon the classical historians. As we come down to the middle of the first millennium we discover stone monuments and inscriptions which permit further insight, but even these are so scattered and uncertain we cannot arrive at precise understanding.

From available evidence it seems reasonable to conclude that *Iberi* were on the move in the middle of the first millennium BC. They were part of a great folk migration and colonizing movement that had participation by the Puni, Greeks, Etruscans, and others. If the Iberi were on the move, and since we must depend upon archeological artifacts, their movements could easily be obscured among those other people.

The general flow of migration was from east to west. If the Spanish Iberi moved from west to east they would have done so counter to the movement of all other people. Although Strabo provided an invaluable record of ancient geography, and of people, a good portion of his work was borrowed from earlier sources; he also was not noted for his scholarly rigor. Since he relates the two *Iberi* people, and since Montanus does also, it would appear that the Spanish *Iberi* came from the Caucasian *Iberi*, or that both came from other *Iberi* origins. In any case the western *Iberi* settled along the eastern and southern shores of the Iberian peninsula. They quickly

penetrated to its heartland in heavy population, building many cities and towns. From pottery, buildings and artifacts archeology shows that an indigenous population could be called *Iberian* from before the eighth century. Although this culture can be identified distinctively from archeological remains it was not necessarily *Iberian*. The *Iberian* name may not have been used for those people until several centuries later as migrating *Iberi* mixed with the natives. The region may have retained its distinctive culture while becoming identified with immigrating *Iberi*. The *Iberi* may have imposed a powerful influence over the indigenous population, giving them the name while blending with their lifestyle.

Such proposition is well within reason. The Kelts who penetrated over the Pyrenees around the sixth century mixed with both the native population and the *Iberi* to create the famous *Keltiberi* tribes. They were valiant fighters greatly feared by the Romans, who called them “Spanish hearts of oak.”

Other evidence supports such proposition. We saw that the Carthaginian general Hamilcar raised troops from among the *Iberians*; this is indicative of the close relationship with the Puni people, presenting difficulty in separating cultural elements. Iberian pottery was found in Carthaginian cities, while Puni and Greek artifacts were found in Iberian urban centers. There was a heavy and general commercial traffic from one area to the other, as well as general movement of people.

The *Iberi* name was important; we should not underestimate its significance for the native populations. It was applied not only to people but also to geographical features and locales. The river that flows from the Cantabrian mountains in northern Spain to the eastern coast of Catalonia was called the *Iberus* by Strabo, 3.4.1. Elsewhere he calls it the *Iber*, 3.4.10. We would not say that the Spanish *Iberi* received their name from the river but rather that the *Iber* received its name from the people. Today it is called the *Ebro*. *Ebro* is merely a phonetic variation of *Iber*.

The Cantabrian mountains received their name from the *Cantabrian* tribe of the *Iberi* who occupied the northern sections of Spain along the Atlantic coast. The *Cantabri* were also trouble to the Romans. Heavy campaigns against them began around 150 BC but they were not subdued until the reigns of Agrippa and Augustus, at the time of Jesus. The *Cantabri* name is made up of two elements, *Cant* + *Iberi*. Other names show themselves related to the *Iberi*. *Evora* in the Evora district of Portugal was once called *Ebora*, an evident *Iber/Eber* name. Both the Aviero and the Beira regions of Portugal may be *Iberi* names. Other names, such as Miranda de Ebro and Villafranca del Bierzo, may reflect this ancient influence.

The *Iberi* trail does not end with the Iberian peninsula. It continues north to Ireland. The name Ireland comes from Old English *Iraland* from *Yra*-land. In turn *Yra* comes from an older Irish *Eri*. The Irish *Eriu*, with its inflected forms of *Eirinn* and *Erin*, comes from the Old Keltic *Iveriu*, with the accusative and ablative *Iverionum* and *Iverione*^{OED}.

The first recorded mention of Ireland was by the Greek explorer Pytheas in the 4th century BC, who traveled beyond the straights of Gibraltar and north along the English coast to Iceland. He called Ireland *I'erne*, as did the classical Greek writers after him. The Roman name used by Julius Caesar was *Hibernia*. Pomponius referred to it as *Iuvernica*.

The *-an* ending on proper names is an old Latin practice which is also found in many other Indo-European languages. English has African for Africa, American for America, Russian for Russia, and so on. Without the “n” *Hibernia* becomes *Hiberia* and this is the familiar *Iberi* name with an “H” added to the front, as in *Haberi*. The Old Keltic *Iveriu* with a “b-to-v” shift is *Iberiu* and this also is the familiar *Iberi* name. Some authors have claimed that the Hebrides Islands off the coast of Scotland also display the *Iberi* name but the origins are contested. The Egyptian geographer Ptolemais, circa 150 AD, gave the name as *Eboudai*, while Pliny, the Roman writer, circa 100 AD, gave it as *Haebudes*. Bunbury felt that Hebrides was a corrupt form of the latter^{HOAG}. On the other hand *Eboudai*/*Haebudes* may be corruptions of *Ibridai*/*Ibrides*.

Other evidence points to the origins of the Irish *Iveriu*. The *Lebor Gabala Erenn*, The Book of the Taking of Ireland, is a medieval work which attempts to describe the history of Ireland^{CH}. According to those accounts one of the later people to invade Ireland were the Sons of Mil. They first occupied a land called Scythia. They came to Ireland through Egypt, Crete, Sicily and Spain. They were called *Gaedhal* (Gael) because their remote ancestor, who lived with Moses, was *Gaodhal Glas*^{SIR}. According to the Irish folk tales, as a child *Gaedhal* was cured of a serpent bite by Moses who promised that no serpent would infest the land where his descendants lived. Thus the folklore explanation for the lack of serpents in Ireland. According to the traditions a grandson of *Gaodhal* named *Niul* married a Pharaoh's daughter named *Scota*. Her name then became the ancient name *Scotia* by which Ireland was known to many people. (This name was later transferred with the migration of Irish people to Albion — Scotland.) According to the folk tale, while in Egypt, *Niul* and his people grew rich and powerful. They resented the injustices of a later Pharaoh, were driven from Egypt, and after long and varied wanderings, reached Spain. After sojourning in that land for some generations a certain *Bregon*, one of their number, heard of *Inisfail*, the *Island of Destiny*. *Bregon* built a tower in Spain and from there his son *Ith* was able to see the magic land. *Ith* set sail for Ireland to investigate but the *Tuatha de Danann*, who were in control of the island, were suspicious of his motives and killed him. His kinsmen, the eight Sons of Mil, invaded Ireland to avenge his death. Most prominent of the eight were *Donn* the king, *Amairgen* the poet and judge, *Eremon* the leader of the expedition, and, most important to our study, *Eber*. With a large body of people they defeated the *Tuatha* and took control of Ireland. According to some older Irish scholars the Sons of Mil reached Spain in the fifth century BC^{SIR}.

The old Irish folk tales, including the *Lebor Gabala Erenn*, show many distorted folk traditions mixed with segments that must be based on actual events. The scribes who put these stories together in the eleventh and twelfth centuries had strong faith in their source materials, even though they did not fully understand them. We can see that *Donn* is part of the memory of Adam. *Eber* also is probably part of the memory of the ancestor of the *Iberi*, and strengthens our proposition that the Irish people have a strong admixture of *Iberi* blood. Perhaps there was an individual among the immigrating clans from Spain who was named *Eber*. We cannot say. But it is obvious that the folk traditions of Irish origins repeat the very route of the *Iberi*

migrations from Egypt, Caucasian and Moetic Asia, the Mediterranean, and Spain. That these traditions so closely follow the linguistic and historic evidence speaks for valid roots in the traditions, even though they come to us distorted.

According to the stories Eremon and Eber divided Ireland between them, with Eremon receiving the north and Eber the south. In the new era that is being inaugurated Eriu will be the “high ship” of the Sons of Mil. To them and to Lugaid, son of Ith, will be traced the lineage of all the tribes of Ireland.

This folk evidence from Ireland supports our estimates that the Iberi came from “Abraham the Ibrī” and not merely the Haberi. The time of those migrations would be in the seventh and sixth centuries BC, eventually reaching Ireland.