

KING SOLOMON'S TRADE WITH INDIA

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to discuss the expedition of King Solomon and King Hiram of Tyre who went to Ophir and brought back gold, monkeys, and other commodities, based on the Biblical narrative (1 Kings 9:26-28 [=2 Chro. 8:17-18], 1 Kings 10:11-12, 22 [=2 Chro. 9:10-11, 21]). Scholarly opinion is divided as to whether this narrative is historical fact or fiction, and even modern commentators consider it an enigma.

It will be shown that in Antiquity, Ophir was identified with Souphir (near Mumbai) in India, and modern scholars have demonstrated that some of the words in the biblical text derived from the Tamili language (i.e., monkey and peacock). The land of Havilah, mentioned in the story of the Garden of Eden, is in present day India and Pakistan (near the Indus Valley), a land that was well-known as an exporter of gold in Antiquity. The biblical genealogy of Havilah will be discussed.

In the Negev, there are remains of a fortress from the 10th century BCE that is identified with Tamar, built by King Solomon (1 Kings 9:18). It is argued that this fortress was built in the hinterland of Etsyon-Gbr, to support the aforementioned expedition's security, especially since so much gold was involved.

BACKGROUND

This is the story of a joint venture that took place almost 3000 years ago between Judeans and Phoenicians. The Judeans ruled the southern part of the Land of Israel at the point where the land meets the Red Sea, while the Phoenicians ruled the sea and excelled in seamanship. Together they reached India. Some do not give credit to this account or say that it is merely a myth,¹ while skeptics prefer to claim that the story is an enigma.² However, in the coming paper it will be shown that the Biblical narrative has no flaw and basically reflects the historical adventures and trade between Judea and India in the 10th c. BCE.

To understand the way in which trade was conducted between such remote countries, one must read the Biblical narrative, and view maps of the world. Let us begin with historical data found only in scripture. According to the Bible, King David was the founder of the Israelite monarchy in the 10th c. BCE; thus, we will discuss the achievements of his son, King Solomon, who, according to modern scholarship, reigned in Judea and Israel c. 967-927 BCE.

Several chapters in the Bible are dedicated to King Solomon (1 Kings 1-11). They tell of his wisdom, his deeds and misdeeds, his role as builder of the Temple at Jerusalem, and more. The Biblical narrator relates much about King Solomon's political connections. King Solomon developed diplomatic (and marriage) relationships with all his neighbors: Phoenicia in the North, Egypt in the South-west, Arabia in the South, among others. The Queen of Sheba from Arabia (modern Yemen) paid him a visit, with legends suggesting their relationship went further than mere acquaintanceship. King Solomon took advantage of the copper mines in Khirbet en-Naḥas in Trans-Jordan, (in Edomea), after his father David had defeated the Edomeans and 'killed every male in Edomea' (1 Kings 11:16-17). King Solomon built his own palace, and the Temple in Jerusalem. He also fortified his kingdom by building Megiddo, Gezer, and Hazor, among other fortifications, and thus established himself as

¹ J. Ramm, 'Biblical History and the Americas: The Legend of Solomon's Ophir, 1492-1591', P. Bernardini and N. Fiering (eds.), *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450 to 1800*, New York – Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001, pp. 27-46. This idea penetrated Jewish recognition in the early 19th century. See: I. Robinson, 'Kabbala and Science in Sefer Ha-Berit: A Modernization Strategy for Orthodox Jews', *Modern Judaism*, 9/3 (1989), pp. 275-288.

² V. Christides, 'L'enigme d'Ophir', *Revue Biblique*, 77 (1970), pp. 240-247.

the greatest builder in ancient Judea. In addition, it is known that he had many women some of whom include; the daughter of Pharaoh, and Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Zidonian, and Hittite women. Therefore, we can establish that he was a very wealthy king, with viable ties with the whole region. All these stories describe an enthusiastic king at the beginning of his monarchy, and there is no doubt that he is regarded as the most successful among the Judean kings. The Biblical narrator makes it clear that there ceased to be a king, like King Solomon.

However, hereafter, the discussion will focus on the most unprecedented deed of King Solomon; the expedition to Ophir. This expedition resulted in the reaping of gold and silver, precious stones, ivory, sandal-wood, and exotic animals, such as apes and peacocks. The question we ask concerns the exact location of Ophir. How did he get there? What did he give in exchange for these goods, and how did he manage to do so? All of these issues and others will be discussed in the coming paper.³

We must first consider the Biblical account. On the one hand, the narrator wants his reader to know the details, making an effort to supply data in order to back up the historicity of his story. However, from the modern reader's perspective, the Biblical narrator does not consolidate his records, instead dispersing his data into separate verses throughout his hyper-narrative on the greatness of King Solomon, so that the full story concerning Ophir is clouded in obscurity. For this reason, there are historians who can illuminate the historical and geographical data, revealing that Israel had been doing business with India three millennia ago.

The story begins as follows:

And King Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to King Solomon (1 Kings 9:26-28).⁴

The Biblical narrator writes a short interval dedicated to the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Jerusalem, and he adds (in the story of the Queen):

And the navy also of Hiram, that brought in from Ophir great plenty of sandal-wood and precious stones (1 Kings 10:11).

The narrator continues to describe the wealth of King Solomon, all the gold, his throne, and so on, and then he relates as follows:

For the king had at the sea a navy of Tarshish with the navy of Hiram; once every three years came the navy of Tarshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks (1 Kings 10:22).⁵

Before we discuss the texts, we must pay close attention to their structure, their content and then only later, will the minute data be analyzed. Thus in the first instance, it is assumed that this "trilogy" is based on one narrative, as can be deduced by the threefold 'Hiram' in the text, which was split by the scribe to accentuate the Queen of Sheba's visit.

Second, the narrator attempted to write as accurately as possible. He didn't say "a lot of gold", but rather mentions the exact sum of talents (though a later scribe in Chronicles copied the number mistakenly).⁶ The narrator made no generalizations or exaggerations. He chose to stay away from relating any adventurous tales that one may expect from an expedition account to a distant land, and

³ For former studies, compare: J. Braslavsky, *Hayadata Et Haaretz*, IV, Tel-Aviv: Haqibutz Hameuhad, 1952, pp. 404-444 (Hebrew).

⁴ All translations are taken from: *The Holy Scriptures*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955.

⁵ These texts have their parallels in: 2 Chro. 8:17-18, 2 Chro. 9:10-11, 21.

⁶ J. Barton Payne, 'The Validity of the Numbers in Chronicles', *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 136 (1979), pp. 109-128; 206-220.

thus we may conclude that the narrator was trained to stick to facts, unlike many other Biblical narrators. It appears that the narrator tried to convince his reader that he did not write fiction.

It seems that in these texts, the narrator realized this was a unique case of a joint venture between Judeans (King Solomon), and Hiram, the king of the Phoenicians.⁷ Before we sail southwards and eastwards with the Phoenicians, it must be recalled that their fame in seamanship is well attested to in the Mediterranean (though from somewhat later centuries). King Solomon had a new route to Israel, from the south, and he realized he could not take advantage of it without the skill of the Phoenicians. In the Bible there are additional stories about the relationship between King Solomon and Hiram. The cooperation of these two kings is well demonstrated in the text. As Solomon is considered to be the wisest man on earth according to the Bible, so he must have been aware of his lack of experience in marine affairs; and for this, he had a friend: Hiram.

This synopsis provides sufficient background, but before our navy (just 10-15 ships and even less) sails from Ezion-Geber to Ophir, we must relate the details of their location and the history of the commentaries concerning this story.

A. FROM EZION-GEBER TO OPHIR

The Bible characterizes Ezion-Geber as follows: 'which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom'. Being aware of other interpretations in the Bible, especially of local places (e.g. 2 Chro. 20:2), one is not sure whether these words are authentic, going back to the 10th c., or if they are a later scribe's addendum. At any event, we are dealing with a port on the Red Sea, that is certain.

In the modern scholarly world, a debate exists about the location of Ezion-Geber as being in Tell el-Kheleifah, near Aqaba (600 meter from the shore), as identified by Nelson Glueck. However, most modern scholars reject this identification.⁸ One should recall that over the ages, sea-shores tend to change, and this is more so when one takes into consideration the fact that the whole area of the Red Sea, northwards and southwards, suffers from tectonic movements. Adding to that, the possibility of a Tsunami, leads to the conclusion that one cannot tell exactly where this one-time port was originally built. It could even be a few kilometers north of today's Aqaba, buried under a sea of sands.

Now that we know where the port had most likely been located, it is important to discuss ship building. As already mentioned, the Phoenicians were known for their seamanship, and it should be kept in mind that, unlike a modern sailor's skills, seamanship not only meant navigating well and bringing all safely home. It began with carpentry and shipbuilding, where Phoenicians were famous for their shipbuilding abilities. Cedars from Lebanon were imported to Jerusalem in order for Solomon to build the temple, which required both big trees, as well as good carpentry. So, the collaboration between the Judeans and the Phoenicians began when they met each other, either in Jerusalem or in Jaffa, at which point they travelled in a caravan to Ezion-geber. Arriving at the sea-shore, the Phoenicians built their ships according to their traditional techniques; while the Judeans provided guard logistical support.

However, there is a small problem here: the surrounding area of the Red Sea seashore, some 200 kilometers and more northwards (and in all other directions as well), there are no trees that are fit to be used as raw material for ships. There may be a scattered few, but building a navy, needs more trees than one can expect to find in this area. This obstacle by itself, without mentioning the water-supply problem, is enough to arouse skepticism concerning this venture. However, two different answers to this problem can be offered. 1) In 1170, Salah-a-Din sent dismantled ships from Egypt to Eilat. The ships were transferred by camels and then rebuilt in the Red Sea. A few years later, in 1182, the crusaders sent five dismantled ships from Karak in Trans-Jordan to Eilat.⁹ It seems that the author of 2

⁷ The word 'Tarshish' was translated in the Septuagint into Καρχηδών. That is to say, the ships were built according to the style of the people who dwell in Carthage, that is, Phoenicians.

⁸ G. D. Pratico, 'Nelson Glueck's 1938-1940 Excavations at Tell el-Kheleifah: A Reappraisal', *BASOR*, 259 (1985), pp. 1-32.

⁹ J. Prawer, *A History of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, I-II, Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1963, I, pp. 349, 501 (Hebrew).

Chro. (8:18) “edited” his text and stated thus: ‘And Hiram sent him by the hands of his servants’ ships’, etc., which shows he understood that the ships were shipped from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. 2) Today, the whole area is free of trees because it suffered a major bout of deforestation for two reasons. The first reason, was that of over-grazing, since Moab in Trans-Jordan was known for its huge flocks of sheep and goats (Numbers 32:1; 2 Kings 3:4). The second, perhaps even more crucial reason is the use of trees as fuel in the copper mines of Timna, north of Eilat. Moreover, the copper mines in Trans-Jordan, show hundreds of years of activity with several tens of tons of dross that reflect endless numbers of trees that were consumed in the process. In other words, one cannot judge the area of Eilat according to its modern appearance, but must be aware of the nature of this region in the past. In Trans-Jordan, there are few places (except in some nature reserves), where one is able to see numerous large trees of the *Pistacia atlantica* kind, thus we assume that the Phoenicians took advantage of the flora of the area during their time.

Now that we have clarified who were in the joint venture, the location of Ezion-geber, and how the ships were built in this remote area, we can ascend the ships and set the sails southwards and eastwards to Ophir. Though at present, most modern historians do not know where Ophir is, in Antiquity, this was not the case. Already in the Septuagint the name Ophir is “translated” as Sophara or Sophera, and Josephus knew of ‘Sopheira, now called the Golden Land of India’.¹⁰ Sophir is the Coptic name for India, and Jerome, in c. 400 CE, thought that ‘Sophir is a mountain of the east reaching to India’.¹¹ All I can add is that the place appears in the Periplus (from the 1st century CE) as Souppara, north of Bombay (19°21’N, 72°48’ E).¹²

We will return to the Biblical Ophir, but first, we shall examine the products purchased at Ophir.

B. GOODS FROM OPHIR

It was the quantity of gold brought in from Ophir that most impressed the Biblical narrator. Already in the second millennium BCE, a place named Dilmun sent gold, silver, copper, precious stones, ivory products, and pearls to Ur in Mesopotamia. Though the location of Dilmun is still uncertain, it is most likely located in the Indus valley,¹³ and if it is true then the reputation of India as a gold exporter is well attested and ancient.¹⁴ In the sixth century BCE, India was considered the richest land in the Persian Empire; it gave 360 talents of gold to Persia.¹⁵ There is ample archeological evidence in India testifying to hundreds of mines that yielded gold, silver, copper, iron, lead, and more, already from the 4th millennium BCE.¹⁶ After Egypt came under Roman rule in 30 BCE, India exported gold, as well as precious stones, to Rome.¹⁷ It seems that this evidence is sufficient enough in order to verify the claims put forward in the Biblical narrative.

Both the precious stones and the Algum or Almug trees that are probably sandal-wood from India, known in Tamil as *valgu* or *valgum*, will be discussed further on. Needless to say, ivory originates from India, from the elephants that are not only present in the wild, but as working domesticated animals. Monkeys were brought from Ophir; in Biblical Hebrew they are known as *koph(im)* (“im” is

¹⁰ Josephus, *Antiquities*, I, vi,4; VIII, vi, 4 (=8.164).

¹¹ Allen H. Godbey, *The Lost Tribes, A Myth*, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1930 (rep. 1974), pp. 326-333.

¹² K. Casson, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989, p. 214.

¹³ Sir Mortimer Wheeler, *Civilizations of the Indus Valley and Beyond*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1966, pp. 64-66, 70, 51; W. Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*, Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1998, p. 328.

¹⁴ W. F. Leemans, *Foreign Trade in the Old Babylonian Period*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960, pp. 159-166.

¹⁵ Herodotos, *History*, III, 94.

¹⁶ Dilip K. Chakrabarti, ‘The Old Copper Mines of Eastern India’, Robert Maddin (ed.), *The Beginning of the Use of Metals and Alloys*, London: MIT Press, 1988, pp. 239-244; D. D. Kosambi, ‘The Beginning of the Iron Age in India’, *Journal of the Economics and Social History of the Orient*, 6 (1963), pp. 309-218.

¹⁷ Vimala Begley and Richard Daniel De Puma (eds.), *Rome and India: The Ancient Sea Trade*, Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991, pp. 12, 15, 116.

a plural suffix in Hebrew),¹⁸ or *kophi* in Sanskrit. *Tuki(m)* were also brought, called peacocks in Tamil.¹⁹ In all, we are to conclude that the products that came from Ophir were typical to India, with some even bearing Indian terminology.

C. WHAT ROUTE DID THEY TAKE?

The Biblical narrator knew not the exact route to India as it was probably beyond his interest. Moreover, it is clear that all the skippers in the navy were Phoenicians at this time, and they kept records for themselves. Skippers kept records such as the number of voyage days from one port to another (in Greek it is called: *περίπλους*), to ensure their way back, and Phoenicians became literate recording such information not later than the 10th century BCE. However, ordinary sailors, such as the Judeans, were not interested in such matters, and thus the Bible says nothing concerning this question.

Now, ancient mariners could travel along two different routes to India: 1) the direct way, from Yemen to the western shores of India, or 2) the long way, travelling along the Arabian peninsula's shores and then going south along the Indian shores, until one reaches Ophir. Though the Biblical narrator left us no explicit testimony concerning the exact route, it is important to understand this aspect of the voyage. However, the collated evidence shows that the narrator left behind two clues concerning the route the sailors took to India.

In the Ptolemaic period, that is, in the 4th-1st centuries BCE, the routes between Yemen and India were determined, according to the *Periplus*, with the aid of monsoon winds, and thus the ships went from Yemen (some along the coast through Kane, and some through the northern coast of Somalia) to the west coast of India.²⁰ Nobody really knows when this method was implemented but it is believed that before the Ptolemaic period, vessels did not take advantage of this route. Since we are discussing seafaring in the 10th century BCE, we must assume that the mariners didn't take advantage of the monsoons by using the direct way, and instead travelled along the coasts of Arabia, then cross the Persian Gulf and only then take the route south, along the coasts of India. One should not forget that the Phoenicians were "guests" in the southern seas and they had no experience in taking advantage of the monsoon. It is assumed therefore, that the technology of ship making and the navigation skills of the sea farers in the 10th century BCE, still remained underdeveloped for following the direct route from Yemen to (southern) India (about 1900 nautical miles) Thus, we assume that the Judean-Phoenician navy went to India along the coastal route, the aforementioned long way.

The Biblical narrator wrote that a round trip took three years, which allows us to deduce, that this route may have been taken for a particular reason. Some modern scholars interpret this time period as an exaggeration, considering the fact that the number three, is typological in the Bible.²¹ However, looking at the coastal route and taking into consideration the wind patterns, it becomes evident there was no exaggeration (except giving the period in a rounded off number). Our understanding of the period where travels to India were undertaken through a coastal route is derived from the direct route time period, and the monsoon. The direct route of a round trip between Yemen and India takes about 8 months, which means that the coastal route might have taken a much longer time. In the monsoon season, one is not able to sail along the shore, due to strong winds leaving vessels in danger of being pushed to the shore or to the open sea. For similar reasons the sea mariners did not regularly travel by night. As a matter of fact, the coastal route entailed a lot of extra time, though most of the time was "wasted" on land for reasons of safety. Thus the mariners had a lot of time to maintain their ships, to learn the country, and to prepare their way forward with local informants. In other words, it is assumed that the journey time of a round trip along the coastal route from Yemen to India took about a year and a half (the return was undoubtedly faster) while a round trip from Ezion-geber to Yemen, took a bit

¹⁸ In Modern Hebrew one says Chimpanzeem to denote the plural; adding either –em or –ot to form the plural noun, the plural of Gorilla is Gorillot. Both words derived from African languages (in different times and locations).

¹⁹ Godbey, *The Lost Tribes*, p. 330.

²⁰ L. Casson, 'Ancient Naval Technology and the Route to India', in *Rome and India* (supra n. 17), pp. 8-11.

²¹ M. Bar-Ilan, *Biblical Numerology*, Rehovot: Association for Astrology and Numerology, 2005, Index (Hebrew).

more than a year, since the winds almost always blow southwards, which makes the way northwards very slow. Sailing northwards in the Red Sea required a triangle sail (traversing in zigzag). If this was not possible, the sailors had to row most of their way home. According to the analysis and the data we have, we are able to see that the overall travel time for a round trip from Ezion-geber to Ophir, took a period of three years, according the Biblical narrator.

Sailing alongside the coast meant that in the likelihood of a storm arising, the mariners would be able to find rescue on the shore and continue with their journey. However, to follow this route, one would encounter the problem of pirates. The areas of topic still swarm with pirates (and terrorists) today, and one can only imagine the situation millennia earlier.²² It is true that seamen have always been men of valor, but two pirate ships easily intercept one cargo ship, and the situation can be dangerous for the bravest men. How did the navy handle security?

The story of the expedition to Ophir is interwoven with another story: that of the Queen of Sheba. Readers will only chance upon this discovery had they read this section of the Bible carefully. Just after the narrator mentions travel to Ophir, he states that the Queen of Sheba heard the name of King Solomon and came to Jerusalem. Then, when the Queen has gone, the narrator resumes the subject of the gold Hiram's ships brought from Ophir, and it appears that there is a connection between the stories. Ethiopian legend states that Sheba is in Ethiopia, which leads some people to believe this is true, but Sheba is in fact a well-known place in Yemen, some 160 kilometers east of San'aa, the modern capital, and some 330 kilometers from the port of (modern) 'Aden. It is assumed that the visit of the Queen of Sheba is somehow connected to the voyage examined here. The Queen's story begins with (1 Kings 10:1): 'and when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon', etc., and it is assumed she heard of King Solomon either from seafarers, those who are mentioned before and after her story, or from caravan people who passed through the lands under the sovereignty of King Solomon.

The Queen's story ends as follows (1 Kings 10:13): 'and king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty'. There are legends that understand this verse as a euphemism: she asked the wisest man to give her a child. One cannot rule out this possibility. However, it is assumed that the desire concerning power and politics was mutual: both rulers asked the help of the other in order to safeguard their men in the other's territory. In other words, the Queen of Sheba desired King Solomon's protection for her men passing through his land (to Gaza and to Mesopotamia through Edomea), while King Solomon asked for the Queen's security and help for his navy. Since Sheba (which is not located on the coast) did not see Judea as its competitor, it is assumed that the queen gave her word to the king, in turn enabling business with distant countries, including Phoenicia.²³ Thus, everybody was happy except for the people of no-rule, the pirates.

We have now overcome first a natural and then a human obstacle, and now it is time to examine what the mariners took with them to India, since it is quite clear that they were not only mariners, but traders as well, as were all the Phoenicians. We must shed light on another unknown subject related to this expedition, and that is the nature of the goods that the mariners took with them.

D. WHAT DID THE EXPEDITION GIVE IN EXCHANGE?

The Biblical narrator wanted to stress the success of Solomon's men by explaining the wealth of the country as it is reflected in all of King Solomon's deeds. He described the unusual wood (and veneer) one might see in the glorious Temple. He also paid attention to exotic animals that might have been merchandise for the amusement of kings only. However, the narrator was not so much interested in

²² See: *Rome and India* (supra n. 17), Index in p. 226 (several references and bibliography); S. D. Goitein and M. A. Friedman, *India Book, I, Joseph Lebdi – Prominent India Trader*, Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2009, pp. 9, 20; idem, *India Book, II*, (Jerusalem 2011), Index; *India Book, III*, (Jerusalem 2010), Index (Hebrew).

²³ In later generations Sheba did business with Tyre. See: Ezekiel 27; I. M. Diakonoff, 'The Naval Power and Trade of Tyre', *Israel Exploration Journal*, 42 (1992), pp. 168-193.

what the expedition gave in exchange. Here, we will discuss what the Indians were given based on several assumptions. These assumptions are founded, first and foremost, on common sense, which dictates that gold was not given for free, or for the wine and oil, that were, no doubt, on the ships. Though oil and wine (as well as wheat, barley, raisins, figs, olives and dates) were exported to India, one cannot assume that food, however rare it was, could be exchanged for gold. The desire for gold yields for an exchange of material goods, rather than something that is eaten.

When analyzing products that might have been part of the exchange between the traders, one should not forget to take into consideration that the navy that had brought the cargo from Ophir, is no doubt the navy that transported several products from Israel. Thinking of the probabilities leads one to suggest three main products that were exported from Israel and Phoenicia, and they are: copper, dyes made of Murex or Purpura, and perhaps glass as well.

D.1 COPPER

Thinking of the nature of the gold that was brought to Israel, leads one to assume that something similar was given in exchange. It is stated in the Bible, that King Solomon mined copper in Trans-Jordan. Modern scholars have identified the copper mines in Khirbat en-Nahas, located south of the Dead Sea.²⁴ We know that during the Roman period copper was exported to India,²⁵ so it is assumed that gold and silver, and other precious stones were bartered for copper.

D.2 DYES MADE OF MUREX OR PURPURA

Included in the expedition were both Judeans and Phoenicians, reputed for their Murex or Purpura. As a matter of fact, it seems that this dye was their most precious natural resource, as it is evident in the mounded shells on the shores of Phoenicia,²⁶ which may have been responsible for the Phoenicians' wealth in the first place (Ezekiel 28:4, 28:13). In Tyre the purple dye industry is attested between 1650-1050 BCE, and mounds of Murex shells indicative of purple dye production, have been found all along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean.²⁷ The dyes, or rather cloths dyed purple, were precious materials and could have been loaded quite easily in order to be bartered for Indian merchandise.

D.3 GLASS

There is another product for which the Phoenicians were famous. Though in Antiquity the Phoenicians were considered to have discovered the process of glass manufacture,²⁸ it is well known today that glass was manufactured in Mesopotamia and Egypt (but not in Phoenicia) in the 2nd millennium (and even earlier). Now, in the Uluburun shipwreck (in modern Turkey), dated to the 14th century BCE, 175 raw glass ingots were found in the cargo, so though there is no evidence that the Phoenicians knew the process of glass manufacturing in the 10th century BCE, it is assumed that Hiram sailors took glass with them (more precisely: cullet) to India. This is not an ungrounded hypothesis when the fact is considered that raw glass was convenient to use as ballast, and in the Roman period a lot of glass was imported to India from the west.²⁹

²⁴ I. Finkelstein, 'Khirbet en-Nahas, Edom and biblical history', *Tel Aviv*, 32,1 (2005), pp. 119-125; idem. 'Radiocarbon and the history of copper production at Khirbet en-Nahas', *Tel Aviv* 35, 1 (2008), pp. 82-95.

²⁵ Casson, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei*, pp. 27-29.

²⁶ James B. Pritchard, *Recovering Sarepta, A Phoenician City*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978.

²⁷ R. R. Stieglitz, 'The Minoan Origin of Tyrian Purple', *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 57/ 1 (1994), pp. 46-54; Anne Marie Smith, 'From Murex Shells to Purple Cloth', *Journal for Semitics*, 19/2 (2010), pp. 629-641.

²⁸ Pliny the Elder, *Historia Naturalis*, xxxvi. 65.

²⁹ E. Marianne Stern, 'Early Roman Export Glass in India', Vimala Begley and Richard Daniel De Puma (eds.), *Rome and India: The Ancient Sea Trade*, Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991, pp. 113-124; Roberta Tomber, *Indo-Roman Trade: From Pots to Pepper*, London: Duckworth, 2008.

All this discussion leads to the conclusion that the expedition of Judeans and Phoenicians was a cooperative one in that a great distance was travelled to Sophora, India. It is probable that they took with them all sorts of goods, based on the differing products of both countries (copper, dyes, and other goods such as glass). Needless to say, nothing can be verified on this issue with 100% veracity, unless an archeological find will prove any of the above-mentioned hypotheses. In exchange for these goods, the Phoenicians took Indian products, in particular gold, silver, precious stones, sandal-wood, ivory, apes and peacocks.

Before ending the discussion on the products, we must pay attention to a well-known Indian product that is not mentioned in the list of the expedition's capital: spices. Since India is known for being an exporter of spices (and cinnamon and nard, both indigenous to India, and mentioned in the Bible, in the book attributed to Solomon), it seems strange that this product had not been mentioned in the list of goods the Phoenicians returned with.³⁰ It is plausible that the Biblical narrator just forgot to mention spices, but it seems that there may be a different reason for this omission. Earlier it was surmised that King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba had some kind of a treaty: each will safeguard the other's men when they come under their respective authority. We may add that a good treaty is based on the idea that both sides will gain prosperity, and that might happen when each side keeps its royalties without violating the rights of the other. Now, Sheba was known for her caravans and, no doubt, spices played a major role among the commodities of any caravan (Genesis 37:25), because of their relatively light weight. It is stated that the Queen of Sheba brought King Solomon gold and spices (1 Kings 10:10), coming in a caravan through the desert. Therefore, it is assumed that the Judeans respected the old habits of the Sheba people, and left the business of spices in their hands as previous custom. A fair treaty, it is stipulated that the sailors who passed through Sheba's territory would not violate the rules of the local market. The Judean vessels, therefore, were content with trading for gold and other products, excluding spices, which were left to the caravans headed by Sheban people, or Sabaeans (as well as Nabateans).

E. THE GENEALOGY OF OPHIR AND THE LOCATION OF HAVILAH

The name Ophir appears in two different places in the Bible. As mentioned above, there is a place by the name of Ophir that sailors from Judea came to, and this place was identified as a local site: Sophir, India. However, there is another Ophir which exists in the Bible, and this time, the name appears in the genealogy of Noach's children among the (70) nations that comprise the whole world. Hereafter, this Ophir will be discussed, as well as some other names that appear in the same list, such as Sheba and Havilah. The genealogical discussion will soon turn into a geographical history of the world in ancient times, which will lead us to the Garden of Eden.

The Biblical narrator made a list of all the people who were descendants of Noach, but here we will focus on two short lists in order to concentrate on select names that might help us understand the world-view in ancient times. Noach had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japhet. The text reads as follows:

And the sons of Ham: Cush, and Mizraim, and Put, and Canaan. And the sons of Cush: Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah: Sheba, and Dedan (Genesis 10:6-7; my underline).

Later, the narrator turns to the children of Shem (later to be known as the Shemites):

And Joktan begot Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah; and Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah; and Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba; and Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobal; all these were the sons of Joktan. And their dwelling was

³⁰ As a matter of fact linguists have found several words in the Bible that originated in India: Ch. Rabin, 'Indian Words in Hebrew', *Leshonenu La'am*, 14 (1963), pp. 232-245 (Hebrew).

from Mesha, as thou goest toward Sephar, unto the mountain of the east (Genesis 10:26-30).

Before discussing these lists as a whole, and focusing in particular on specific names to gain a deeper insight, we must take a look at our methodology. In the Bible, there are several genealogies dispersed among many books; the author of the book of Chronicles excelled in this type of history. In modern scholarship, it has been shown, concerning genealogies of clans in Israel, that these lists of ancestry reflect toponyms, and that when one discusses names of old, he is also discussing geographical history.³¹ The idea is, therefore, to implement a well-known methodology concerning a small-scale area in Israel, on a much bigger scale: the “whole” world. Needless to say, I am not the first to employ such an approach, however it seems that former scholars have been short-sighted in regard to such remote places and have kept silent, leaving me heretofore unexamined space-names to discuss and identify.

By consulting the genealogies, we are able to see the first mention of both Sheba and Havilah, names of people that derive from Cush in the first list, while also having been derived from Shem in the other. It might be that the scribe erred, as this is something that has happened with scribes from Antiquity to these very days, but this answer seems to be mistaken, since we are not discussing mere duplication, and there are two different names (that appear in different sequences). The scribe must have been aware of that.

In Antiquity, Cush was associated with Africa for good reasons. Mizraim is from Egypt, and according to the Bible, Cush and Mizraim are brothers, children of Ham. Cush, as a place-name, is mentioned in the story of the Garden of Eden, since one of the rivers in paradise, ‘is Gihon; the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Cush’ (Genesis 2:13). No doubt Gihon is the Nile that “compasseth” (better translated as: penetrates) well into the land (a fact that was ascertained only in the 19th century). In other words, Sheba and Havilah, descendents of Cush, are names that represent places, or peoples, located in Africa. On the other hand, these two names appear also as descendants of Shem, a name that was always identified with peoples in Asia. That is to say, in two separate but adjacent genealogical lists, the peoples of Sheba and Havilah are linked both to Africa and to Asia.

Once again, we come to a conclusion that someone was mistaken compiling these lists, but now we are talking about a different mistake, not a scribal error but rather, a geographic-perspective mistake. One should recall that in ancient times, there were no maps and no compasses, so people could arrive at remote places without being sure of where they were (well before Columbus’s time). Until the Middle Ages, from the perspective of those in the Mediterranean (and northern areas), India and Africa were well to the south and in remote areas (both places also shared being populated by black peoples and elephants) so the ‘Northerners’ perceived Africa and Asia to be either connected or close to each other. The search for Prester John in the high Middle Ages reflects exactly this confusion between the affinity of some locations to Africa and/or Asia.³² As already mentioned, Sheba is a well-known region that during the ages did govern some parts of Ethiopia (and shared the same religion: Christianity), so the idea that the Sheba people inhabit Africa and Asia alike, on both sides of the strait, is not greatly mistaken. Havilah will be discussed later, since from its name alone one cannot draw any conclusion.

Due to a lack of evidence, as well as the historic illiteracy in Africa, we are unable to identify the peoples of Africa from the first list, and we turn now to our major target: the genealogy of Joktan. Lists normally have their own order, and are used for several distinct purposes.³³ While the reasoning behind the order is not easy to determine in this case, the whole area on the list is well established:

³¹ A. Demsky, ‘The Genealogy of Gibeon: Biblical and Epigraphic Considerations’, *Bulletin of the American Society of Oriental Research*, 202 (1971), pp. 16-23; idem, ‘The Genealogies of Menasseh and the Location of the Territory of Milkah Daughter of Zelophehad’, *Eretz Israel* 16 (1982), (H.M. Orlinsky Volume), pp. 70-75 (Hebrew; English summary, p. 254*); idem, ‘The Clans of Ephrath: Their Territory and History’, *Tel Aviv*, 13, pp. 46-59.

³² M. Bar-Ilan, ‘Prester John: Fiction and History’, *History of European Ideas*, 20/1-3 (1995), pp. 291-298; Rosa Maria Cimino, *Ancient Rome and India*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1994, pp. 3-7.

³³ J. Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, pp. 74-111.

Hazarmaveth is a well-known district in eastern Yemen, known as Hadramaut (literally: place [of-no-wall] [dedicated to the God] Death), is in southern Arabia, on the shores of the Indian Ocean, some 200 kilometers east to Sheba. Another name at the end of the list is 'Sephar, unto the mountain of the east', an area that in post-Biblical times was known as Zafar, the capital of the Himyarites (ca. 150 km south-southeast of San'aa).³⁴ In other words, the list of names in the genealogy is nothing but a list of peoples, and they all testify, according to the theory of ancestry, that we are discussing today's Yemen.

The name 'Almodad' certainly bears the Arabic prefix 'al', a phenomenon almost unknown in the Hebrew Bible, and to the Arabic roots one may add the names of 'Diklah' (=female palm-tree) and 'Jerah' (=moon), that denote ancient (fertility) deities. Full comprehension of this list will not be achieved without mentioning that according to Yemenite Jews, 'Hadoram' is Damar, 'Uzal' is San'aa and 'Diklah' is Sa'ada, places in Yemen.³⁵ We do not know whether these identifications are true, since Yemenite Jews might have been making such identifications in order to denote their ancient roots in the area, but they do show that the idea that these names on the list are in Yemen has a long history.

Other names on the list are beyond our ability to identify, but I suggest that the name 'Mesha', at the end of the list, denotes the dwellings of all the children of Joktan Eastward, (modern Mouza), known to Europeans according to its main export: Mocha.³⁶ The port of Mouza is almost at the "tip" of the Arabian Peninsula, and it is highly important for two reasons: 1) The course of the ship route changes here from North-South to West-East (North-East), and 2) In this port, cargo from the Indian Ocean was transferred from the ships that are typical to the Indian Ocean to regular ships (though this procedure is relevant to later times when the monsoon winds were used to propel sailing ships).³⁷ At the time when the *Periplus* was written, in the 1st century CE, Mouza appears to have been the most important Arab port on the east coast of the Red Sea, and chances are, that its importance is derived from centuries earlier when the Biblical text was written. Even without full identification of all the toponyms, it is clear that we are in the Arabian Peninsula. However, the list also includes 'Ophir', formerly identified in India, and one wonders if this procedure of making connections between names and places is still valid concerning Ophir in India (to be the name of a descendant of Shem!). Could it be that the people who dwell in Ophir are related to the people in Yemen?

Before we continue, I would like to divert attention to 18th century Jews from two sides of the Indian Ocean: Jews in Yemen and Jews in Cochin, India (well south of Ophir). After studying the correspondence between Jews from both places, Rabbi Joseph Kafah came to the conclusion that the multi-faceted connections between the Jews of San'aa and the Jews of Cochin, including business, Torah studies, and matrimonial connections, actually made Cochin 'a suburb of San'aa'.³⁸

Why was this so, and how could two communities separated by a sea of about 3000 kilometers be so closely affiliated with each other? The answer is revealed in the nature of the Indian Ocean travels. As mentioned above, the voyages were highly dependent on the monsoons, and for a few months of the year, the sea was closed. As a matter of fact, even in the Mediterranean, where conditions are much different, the sea was 'closed' (*mare clausum*), from September 15 – May 26, and this was much more so in the case of the Indian Ocean. If one leaves Yemen to do business in a remote place as Cochin, and his ship is "stuck" in the port for few months a year, he must have a local representative.

³⁴ W. W. Müller, 'Zafār', P. J. Bearman, T. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. v. Donzel and W. P. Heinrichs (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2nd Edition) Vol. 11, Leiden: Brill, 2002, pp. 379-80.

³⁵ S. Kasher, *Peshuto shel Mikra*, Jerusalem: Torah Shlema Institute, 1968, p. 159-160 (Hebrew). Kasher writes that Shelef is the name of a district in Yemen but I was not able to verify this.

³⁶ It is highly probable that Qane in Ezekiel 27:23 (together with Eden) is modern Huzn-al-'Urab, known in Antiquity as Kane or Qn', the "last" port in Arabia before departure to India. Recently an ancient synagogue was discovered there. See: J.-F. Salles et A.V. Sedov, *Qāni'. Le port antique du Hadramawt entre la Méditerranée l'Afrique et l'Inde. Fouilles russes, 1972, 1985-1989, 1991, 1993-1994 [Indicopleustoi: Archaeologies of the Indian Ocean]*, Turnhout: Brepols 2010, pp. 221-278.

³⁷ R. Saadia Gaon in the 10th century translated the name of "Mesha" as Mecca and "Sphara" as Madina.

³⁸ J. Kafah, 'A Bunch of letters between Cochin Jews' Leaders and Jews in Yemen and Babylonia', *Sinai*, 79 (1976), pp. 63-81; 80 (1977), pp. 61-71 (Hebrew).

Since one tends not to rely on strangers, chances are, that a Yemenite Jew would employ his nephew or cousin as his counterpart on the other side of the sea, and it is common knowledge that in traditional societies, many marry their cousins or relatives. This explanation is given in reference to the 18th century by a well-known researcher. However, I do not see any reason why, under the same circumstances, the affiliations between such remote communities would not be the same. Cochin was established in the 14th century, but now that we know something about the Indian Ocean and its trade, it is easily understood why Ophir in India is related to Joktan the Shemite: business and family affairs made it so. Additionally, Jews from Cochin share many customs with Yemenite Jews (especially in their liturgy), and it is not merely a coincidence that a very good friend of mine whose father was born in Yemen, is married to a wife whose father was born in Cochin.

By now, one is able to identify with most of the names on the list under discussion, but one name deserves special attention: Havilah. In the list it is stated: ‘...Sheba and Ophir and Havilah, and Jobal’, probably to denote remoteness (since immediately following, the list terminates at the end of the world). From Sheba, one goes to Ophir – it is clear now that the names convey location – so the list informs us there are two places in the world that are far away from Ophir. Where are these places? It is time to look at another source that mentions Havilah, and this time Havilah does not appear in a list but rather in a narrative out of which one can tell where it is located. To find this remote place one should read the description of the rivers in the Garden of Eden again:

And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it was parted, and became four heads. The name of the first is Pishon; that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good; there is bdellium and onyx stone (Genesis 2:10-12).

Now Havilah is no longer the name of a man, but rather a land, which provides another Biblical support for the theory that ancestry equals toponym, and this time, the land is characterized clearly. This is a land with a river, and judging from the river’s counterparts – Tigris and Euphrates – it must be an immense river. Moreover, the land of Havilah exports very fine gold, one type of frankincense (mentioned in the Bible, from Akkadian: *Bedolah*), and one kind of precious stone. It seems to me that after the long discussion above, it is clear that the river Pishon is the Indus, and Havilah is in the northwestern region of the Indian subcontinent. As a matter of fact, some of the traditional commentators (such as Ps. Jonathan) realized that Havilah is India, but Pishon remained either unknown, or was given other interpretations. For example, Josephus states that Havilah is India and Pishon is the Ganges,³⁹ and Eusebius of Caesarea followed him.⁴⁰ Now, the Ganges flow eastwards, and by looking at the world map – a process Eusebius could not follow – we are led to the conclusion that Havilah is India, while the river Pishon is the Indus (since the direction of the Nile “correlates” the Indus, not the Ganges). The area of the Indus valley is considered to be one of the earliest civilizations, and being aware of its fertility, makes it easier to understand why it was perceived to be part of the Garden of Eden. To sum up: The four rivers the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Nile, and the Indus were the cradle of civilization, and these are the rivers that flowed in the area that is interpreted as being the biblical Garden of Eden.

After verifying all these identifications, and geographical-historical understandings, one may wonder how this discussion is related to the trade between Solomon and India. I have already given numerous clues to the reader on this subject, but if he has failed to understand them, I will state them explicitly. The list of the people in Arabia and India is based on a list drawn up by one of the participants on one of the voyages to India. As already mentioned, a route along the shore takes time and the travelers might have made the acquaintance of several peoples who lived along these coasts

³⁹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, 1,1,3; 1,6,4.

⁴⁰ Eusebius, *Onomasticon* (Genesis E). However, he also writes that Ishmael lives in the desert of Havilah, which means that the children of Ishmael crossed the gulf and inhabited both sides of the Persian Gulf (which explains the spread of Islam in early generations).

(unlike the case with a direct route). It seems almost impossible to send a navy to such remote places without a scribe to take notes of the voyage or even just to write down the commodities taken, for example, the number of gold talents. It has already been noted that King David, Solomon's father, built his administration in his new kingdom with non-Jews because of lack of Jewish professional scribes and bureaucracy.⁴¹ It was assumed that the Hebrew alphabet originated with the Phoenicians, so it is reasonable to presume that while using the skills of the Phoenicians as sailors, among those sailors and commanders, one or more people kept track of the voyage, either a Judean or a Phoenician. King Solomon's scribes are mentioned in the Bible (1 Kings 4:3), and running a monarchy with taxes requires many more scribes. As a matter of fact, when Joshua sent his men to see the Promised Land, he commanded them to write down their observations while on their journey (Joshua 18:1-10), so it is assumed that one of the sailors took notes, perhaps the Judean head of the expedition (who came from the royal family).⁴² The scribe's notes went to the court to be discussed, and were later sent to the archive (like other archives in the ancient world). Sometime later, a scribe used these notes and committed them to the text, later to become one of the many scrolls that the book of Genesis was compiled from, but this is another story.

It is time to end the journey; sails were raised, and the ships landed on the shore. The ships were unloaded, and a caravan went on its way back home, to Jerusalem and Tyre. We do not know how many times this journey was made, but with so much gold, one cannot resist the idea that King Solomon did his best to continue the voyages: the more – the better. However, when he died, it all stopped. To make such a journey, it is not enough to be brave, one also needs expertise and connections with the Phoenicians. However, after the death of King Solomon, the monarchy was torn apart and Judea found itself without her close ally, Hiram, since between Judea and Tyre stood the monarchy of Jeroboam, which was an obstacle to joint ventures between Judea and Tyre. One more word on this issue is given in the Bible. It is stated that King Jehoshaphat (873-849 BCE) tried to follow his great-grandfather's steps but was not successful:

Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold; but they went not; for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber (1 Kings 22:49).

From our perspective, this means that the success of King Solomon's navy depended upon the joint venture,⁴³ but without the Phoenicians, the Judeans made all possible mistakes, and never again did the Judeans try to repeat this adventure until modern times. Almost three millennia have passed from the time of the former success until today's modern navy in Eilat.

Now that we are back on land, without the tossing waves, we can take a look at one very unusual place that most people have never heard of before, and that even the Biblical narrator only mentions during his discussion of the greatness of King Solomon. He does not bring it up in connection to the ships to Ophir, and this is so, probably, because one may think it has nothing to do with the shores of the Red Sea. As a matter of fact, we have to travel some 160km in a caravan from Ezion-geber northwards, on the way home to Jerusalem, to see this site.

⁴¹ B. Mazar, *Canaan and Israel: Historical Essays*, Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1974, pp. 208-221 (Hebrew).

⁴² For this type of records in the Bible, see: Num 33:2; Joshua 18:6-9; 2 Samuel 24:5-8. Furthermore, in the Bible an official recorder is described as follows (2 Kings 25:19=Jer. 52:25): 'and the scribe of the captain of the host'. No doubt, a general without a scribe cannot rule his forces, as is evident in 2 Sam. 11:15, and the naval fleet could not move without a scribe as well.

⁴³ Without ruling out the possibility that King Jehoshaphat did not want any cooperation with any allies as might be learnt from others' experience (compare: 2 Chro. 25:7). The author of 2 Chro. 20:36 looked at the ruined ships of Jehoshaphat as a divine punishment for King Ahaziah from Israel joined the venture.

F. A FORTRESS ON THE WAY TO EZION-GEBER

In the Negev (waypoint 1734/0242), there are remains of a fortress from the 10th century BCE,⁴⁴ identified with Tamar, that was built by King Solomon in the desert (1 Kings 9:18).⁴⁵

After the 10th century, several other fortresses were built over the original site, and already in the 9-8th centuries BCE, a huge fortress, by Israeli standards, was built: 100X100 square meters. The fortress was built in a strategic location, on the junction between the North-South route (from Judea to the Red Sea) and the East-West road (from the copper mines in Edom to Gaza or Egypt). The excavators were of the opinion that the place was a military and administration center in the Iron Age II and later. No doubt, the antiquity and the size of the fortress exemplify the importance of the isolated place far away in the southern end of Judea (and beyond).

There is a problem concerning the very origin of this fortress in the 10th century BCE. For what purpose was it built in the first place? My answer is: to secure the trade with Ophir. The main issue here, is that caravans with gold were making their way to Jerusalem, so the fortress (with all the soldiers in it) was needed to secure them. Now, it is true that the fortress is pretty far from Ezion-geber, but awareness of the nature of the desert leaves no room for doubt that the fortress played a major role, albeit in the background, in the story of the marine expedition.

One more word on this subject is needed. One of the leading archeologists in Israel, Israel Finkelstein, offers the statement that Tamar didn't function in the 10th century. Finkelstein is considered a "minimalist", underestimating the Biblical narrative (as do many others), and he believes in a "lower" chronology which views the fortress as being built after the days of King Solomon. However, not all other archeologists in Israel agree with his theory, at least concerning Tamar, with the majority thinking that Tamar was built by King Solomon. From a non-archeological perspective, all I can say, without trying to solve this dispute, is that the exact date of Tamar is not our concern, just as we do not know exactly where Ezion-geber is located. It seems that the Biblical narrator, though he employed a different style of writing, unlike that of a modern scholar, left enough information in the text to inform his future readers that what he wrote was not fiction: King Solomon's men did in fact go to India.⁴⁶

CONCLUSIONS

This is a historical-geographical study based on Biblical sources on the one hand, and traders' and mariners' habits in the ancient world on the other. It is an interdisciplinary study, since without all the relevant methods and data, from archeology to philology, covering many more years than the title might imply, there is no way to reconstruct such an expedition that took place 3000 years ago.

There are three layers of knowledge concerning these issues: 1) The ancient one, based on the Septuagint, Josephus, and the Rabbis; 2) Modern scholarship written some 80 years ago; and 3) The contribution of this paper to the subject.

In Antiquity, and to some extent until this very day, neighboring peoples share conflicts and even wars from time to time. The case of the Judeans and Phoenicians is a story not only of adventure, but also of joint-venture: two neighboring peoples, against all odds, and unlike any other neighboring peoples in the Bible, who joined forces and reached the end of the world. What else would one want except to be in the Garden of Eden with all its gold?

⁴⁴ R. Cohen and Y. Yisrael, 'The Excavations of 'Ein Hazeva / Israelite and Roman Tamar', *Qadmoniot*, 112 (1996), pp. 78-92 (Hebrew).

⁴⁵ However, a scribal error blurs the reading. In 1 Kings 9:18 the Ketib is Tamar though the Qere is Tadmor (=Palmira), a mistake that shows the ambivalence of the scribe concerning the place (which, no doubt, was meaningless to him). In the parallel and "newer" text in 2 Chro. 8:4 the scribe left only one reading, Tadmor, and thus led people (already in Antiquity) to think that King Solomon built Palmira in the northern Syrian desert. My claim here that the exact reading is Tamar and this is the fortress discussed here.

⁴⁶ For later connections between India and the Jews, and other related discussions, see: M. Bar-Ilan, 'India and the Land of Israel: Between Jews and Indians in ancient times', *The Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies*, 4 (2001), pp. 39-77.