

Hurro-Uratian Archaeology, Languages, and Genes: A Y Chromosome Model of Northeastern Caucasian Language Spread

Roy King M.D., Ph.D. and Peter Underhill Ph.D.

Diakonoff and Starostin (1986) argued that the Hurrian and Urartian languages of Northern Syria, Northern Iraq, Eastern Anatolia and Armenia were genetically related to the languages of the Northeastern Caucasus, such as Lezgi and Chechen. Thus, according to their model, the Northeast Caucasian languages were distributed during the Bronze and Iron ages over a much larger geographic area than that of their current distribution. Similarly Y-chromosome lineages J2a-M410 and J1-(dys388=13) lineages demonstrate their maximal Y-STR diversity in Eastern Anatolia/Northwestern Iranian samples of contemporary Turkish and Neo-Assyrian populations.

In this presentation, we will trace the geographic and temporal origins of the J lineages which have been associated with the demic expansion of agro-pastoral Neolithic economy in Southeastern Europe, Anatolia, the Levant, Mesopotamia and Iran. WE will adduce evidence that Y-chromosome J lineages originated in the coastal area of the Eastern Mediterranean during the LGM and then spread to Eastern Anatolia just prior to the Younger Dryas. With the advent of the Neolithic agricultural package, J2a-M410 then spread to Central and Western Anatolia, Crete, and Southern Italy, while J2b-M12 spread to Greece and the Balkans. J1-(dys388>13) lineages diffused to the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula, while J1-(dys388=13) lineages remained in the Taurus/Zagros mountain areas of Turkey and Iran. The spatial covariation of J-lineages with the Bronze Age to present day distribution of the Hurrian, Urartian and North Caucasian languages suggests that the early Neolithic farmers in the Near East and in Iran may have spoken North Caucasian related languages at the time.