

OPHIR, ITS LOCATION UNVEILED

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Dedicated to:

Professor Giovanni Semeraro

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Without their contributions Ophir would still be unveiled

Abstract

Ophir is the name of a geographic location appearing in several passages in the Bible. Most notably it appears as the far away place wherefrom Solomon imported a huge quantity of gold, a source that about a century later was no more available. It has always been an open problem whether the place was real or fictitious, and if real where its location was. Here, using philological analysis, historic information previously neglected and especially a geographic information made available only at the end of the nineteenth century, but unknown apparently to scholars, we give a location for Ophir that agrees with the ancient data.

1. Introduction

In past years I was intrigued, but paying only passing attention, by the open problem of what and where Ophir was, Ophir being quoted in several passages in the Bible from Genesis on. The problem was potentially of great interest to me, as I have been interested in geography since very young and in the last thirty years I have added to my academic interest in mathematics a growing interest in certain questions of ancient history or more precisely of ancient events remembered by man via different ways (religions, epics, traditions...). So I have dealt inter alia with Eden, Atlantis,

Gilgamesh, Exodus, and more generally with the three great catastrophes in Egyptian tradition as transmitted to Solon or the four catastrophes in Mayan record. The Ophir question came to my attention while reading the monograph by Roberta Levrero (2000) on the ancient geographic knowledge of Africa. During Spring 2007 I had taken her book with me during a trip to Gran Canaria, where since several years I lecture within the Erasmus program in the local university, at the CEANI department led by prof Winter Althaus. Being free on Sunday, I took a bus to Puerto Mogán, on the south coast, a place less built up with the hotels that make the nearby Maspalomas and Faro highlights of international tourism. That day the sky was overcast, it was a little chilly, not the best weather for swimming. Sitting on a natural chair made by a waves polished rock, I was soon absorbed in the book, where I found information previously unknown to me. Then I arrived at the section dealing with the open problem of the location of Ophir. Most authors put it either in southern Arabia or along the western coast of Africa, but without any precise pinpointing or any special association with gold. Then suddenly another solution came to my mind, a mixture of information from Giovanni Semeraro (2005) book on *Apeiron*, and from Allen (1983) book on Kailas, both read within the previous few years. Also I recalled some papers in the journal edited by dr Christine Pellech in Vienna, *Migration and Diffusion*, on the *Panis*, the great navigators of India who mastered monsoon winds and were certainly the greatest navigators of antiquity; also passages came to my mind from classic authors as Diodorus Siculus, Herodotus, Pomponius Mela and Arrhian that gold in India was produced by “ants”. My solution is presented here and has two important corollaries, one about Shiva’s throne, and one about which one of the three Giza pyramids should be considered as the most important; but this point will be considered in another paper.

This paper has been written two years after my solution of the Ophir enigma; I was again in Gran Canaria, an island certainly visited by the *Panis*. There are indeed arguments that Old World navigators reached the mouth of the St Lawrence river, and other locations along the eastern coast of North America, mainly for exporting to Europe the native copper found in the great mine in Isle Royal in Lake Superior. Such a mine was discovered circa 1660 by white settlers, who found ingots of pure copper left around. It is believed that exploitation of copper started around 4000 BC if not earlier, but the mine was abandoned apparently circa 1450 BC, at the time in Europe of the Deucalion catastrophe, due to the explosion of Phaethon in the scenario developed by Spedicato (2007 a,b,c). At that time also the great civilization in the eastern Mississippi valley was terminated by a tsunami that from the Caribbean Sea invaded the valley for some 2000 km, as established by geomorphologist Stuart Harris, his claim presented in Spedicato, see above. He reached this conclusion by analysis of satellite photographs. The sudden termination of that great civilization was also claimed by others at the Milos 2005 Atlantis conference.

This paper was written in a few hours, before my interview with Carmen Kraus about her late brother, the great tenor Alfredo Kraus, glory of Gran Canaria, the noblest of

the tenors. He sang *Traviata* and *Les pêcheurs de perles* with my friend soprano Adriana Maliponte, whose voice, educated by Rosa Ponselle, has the colour of the gold of Ophir....

2. Data on Ophir, origin of name Africa and related questions

“*Sunt nomina lumina*” is a Latin saying whose use may lead to deep insight and even to unexpected solution of some problems. Just consider the possible meaning of word *Italia*: for Varro it derived from *vituli*, i.e. veals, from Virgil from the name of a king *Italus*; but the best derivation we believe to be the one proposed by the Italian nuclear engineer Felice Vinci (1998), in his monograph claiming a Baltic setting for the Homeric epic: he derives *Italia* from the rare Greek word *aithalia*, meaning *the smoking one*. This name was lately applied only to island Elba, that was notable for the smoke from the fires used to work the local iron. Italy is indeed the only country in the Mediterranean with active volcanoes, in ancient times maybe a dozen being either continuously active (Volcano in Aeolian islands, in the Flegrei area) or intermittently (Aetna, Vesuvius, Lipari, Vulture...). Thus the Italian peninsula on approach by boats was characterized by the smoking volcanoes, the smoke of Aetna easily reaching 20 km high and then hovering over the Mediterranean almost to the African coast. Geographic areas were often named by navigators, especially the Panis or their sub-branch the Phoenicians. Hence features visible from the sea were important and being permanent were more apt to name a country than transient facts as the existence of say a king Italus (Gorishanta, the original name of highest mountain in the world, has been changed since over a century to Everest, from a local British governor; but India will sometimes go back to the original beautiful name, meaning *the white lady of the great mountains*, a hybrid name with a Sanskrit and a Chinese part).

Believing that *sunt nomina lumina*, it was with the greatest interest that I read the book on infinity by Giovanni Semeraro, one of the greatest Italian philologists, explorer of the presence of Akkadian roots in many languages, and written when he was over 90 (the best period in life, the pianist Artur Rubinstein stated; Alfred De Grazia at 89 has written two books; Ernst Mair, 1904-2005, widely considered as the greatest biologist of the 20th century, published his *opus magnum* at 93...). In his quoted book Semeraro claimed that the Greek word *apeiron* does not mean *infinite, without bounds*, but is a derivation from the Akkadian *afar*, meaning *dust, sand, what is obtained from disintegration of a structure*. Hence for him the word can be applied to the destiny of man, whose body returns to earth, as stated in a well known biblical proverb, attributed to Solomon. It is out of the scope of this paper to discuss the attribution to Solomon. But I say that I do not doubt it. The language problem inherent to books attributed to Solomon can be solved if we look at Solomon’s life

using several extra-biblical sources, see Spedicato (2009) where we suggest that these books were recovered from India in Hellenistic times and then rewritten in the more recent version of Hebraic.

The word *afar* got imprinted in my mind. It is clear that it provides a natural meaning for *Africa*, a word for which no specialist I asked could provide a meaning. Looking at AFRICA as AFR – CA we can see it as meaning *people, land of dust*. This follows from the fact that CA, KA is a word that throughout the world appears to mean *soul, person, people, land*, see for several examples Spedicato (2001) work on Gilgamesh. Thus from *afar* we derive for AFR the meaning *dust*, losses or changes of vowels being generally acceptable in most languages in the evolution of words. An interesting question is what should we intend for *dust*. Initially I thought of the frequent sand-dust storms arising from Sahara and generally moving eastwards. They can blot the sky for days, a phenomenon not requiring generally strong winds; they can reach over the Mediterranean, even beyond the Alps. They are called *khamzin* when very strong, a word that strictly means *wind coming every fifty years*. Such a word might be explained, but using 54 instead of 50, within the Patten's scenario of a close interaction of Earth with Mars every 54 years for several thousand years, see Patten (1988). They are anyway frequent phenomena, as I could say from flying over Asian deserts, Arabian, Takla Makan, Lob Nor, where rarely I could observe the soil under the haze. Such storms have been a danger for caravans in the past, especially on areas with dunes, that can move quite fast under wind action, so that caravans can disappear under the sands. This was probably the fate of the expedition sent by Xerxes to Siwa oasis, which disappeared never to be heard of.

I am however of the opinion that we should consider another type of dust, that appeared more rarely but with more terrifying results. What is common was generally not important for ancient people, they were interested in what is uncommon and such to be related to some action by gods. The type of dust I propose is related to geological effects concerning the depressions between Ethiopia and Erythrea (a word clearly meaning a *red region*), namely the Danakil depression, and the area once in French Somalia denominated the *province of the Afar and Issa*. Such a region is a tectonic depression, reaching about 150 m under sea level; its bottom is covered to a large extent by salt or by very salty and shallow lakes. Moreover there are about a hundred volcanoes, most of which very low, just mouths apt to throw out volcanic material. The area is the geologically most unstable part of Earth, lying about midway of the over 6000 km long split in the eastern part of Africa up to Lebanon, slowly opening to a future sea. In that area volcanoes must have erupted many times in human memory, albeit no geologic dating exists for eruptions younger than 100.000 years BP, as I was told by prof Abate of Florence University, head of the geologist team working there. A sign of how poor is still geology of knowledge about the holocene for which human memory is available. Here we also recall how no eruptions in Iceland have been dated to times earlier than 1200 AD, as I was told by a

volcanologist in Reykjavik university. As a partial motivation for the poverty of results in Danalia we may quote the following items:

- the climate is terribly hot
- the region has been politically unstable
- the local tribes never liked foreigners and used to cut the virility attributes of foreigners that, suitably dried, were a welcome gift to the local girls, who wore them as precious objects.

Now consider one hundred volcanoes erupting together. The volcanic material sent in the sky, dust to a large extent, could spread over millions square km, in eastern or western direction depending on monsoons. Thus Danalia was a powerful source of dust able to darken the skies over large areas of eastern Africa or Indian ocean. A phenomenon happening less frequently than the Saharan winds but of a greater order of magnitude. Moreover we have to consider that the Danakil depression till not many thousand years ago was almost probably partially filled with salty water, originating from the ocean during the great cataclysms, as the Noah or Atlantis Flood, when immense tsunamis raged, able to enter the continents for hundred of km at least (see Harris, above quoted, for the 2000 km distance reached by the tsunami at circa 1500 BC in the Mississippi plane). Now it known that a component of the material erupted by most volcanoes is pumice, of a grey or pinkish colour. It is less known, even to volcanologists as I found to my surprise, that if pumice interacts with salty water it becomes red like blood; a discovery made circa 1930 when the layers of debris erupted by the Krakatoa eruption of 1883 were examined. It was found that the layer corresponding to the collapse of the caldera, hence to the interaction of the erupted material with the oceanic water, had an intense red colour. This fact can be seen as the true origin of the name *Red Sea* given to the part of the Indian Ocean between Africa and India. Indeed pumice falling in the ocean waters tends to form short lived islands, often of remarkable size; such islands would attract a special attention and being of a red colour not present elsewhere would have naturally led to the name *Red Sea*. The name was applied to much of the Indian ocean until Roman times but is now left only to the part between Sinai and Bab el Mandeb. Attributing this name to the reeds that are found in the Suez area is a trivial explanation, as if the ancient navigators, who named many places around the world, had not seen reeds elsewhere.

So from Akkadian *afar* we understand the name of Africa and of the Afar depression. Now *Ophir* as a word is similar to *afar*, so should we look for a place in Africa, as done by some authors, albeit they ignored the relation of word Africa to our Akkadian word? Among the proposals in the literature we find, from a Wikipedia reading:

- Zimbabwe, by Tomé Copas, friend of Vasco de Gama

- Sofala, a port town in Mozambique on river Sabi, as proposed by Milton (we can argue that both names originate from the name of god Shiva, being given by Indian Panis)
- various places along the coast of present Red Sea or the southern coast of Arabia
- Abhira on the mouth of Indus, by 19th century Max Müller
- even locations in Australia, Philippines, Polinesia, South America.

Closer to our identification, but not as precise and lacking our motivations, are the statements in the *Easton Bible Dictionary, 1897*, that Ophir means India for the Copts, and especially in Iosephus, *Antiquities I,6*, who associates it to the Indian river Copher and to parts of Asia close to India. Very good, great Josephus Flavius !

However the above proposals are not satisfactory because inter alia:

- they do not identify a location known for special presence of gold. There is of course much gold in South Africa, but getting it requires the technology for deep mining, unknown in the considered period. There is gold in many river sands, a common fact everywhere, in Africa, Asia, Americas, Australia, Europe; such gold is now depleted in most parts of the world (except possibly the Amazon area close to the Guayanas, where the Yanomani land has been invaded by prospectors and polluted by the mercury used by them)
- the locations in Africa or Arabia do not satisfy the Biblical statement of being *very far away*, since monsoon winds can be used in most of western Africa to facilitate travels; it is well known that Zanzibar has been for thousand of years a trade point collecting slaves, gold, ivory from much of western Africa
- why Solomon had no problem in getting a huge amount of gold, many tons, but a century later no gold would come from Ophir.

In next sections we give our solution, incidentally explaining also an enigmatic passage in classic literature (Herodotus, Arrhian, Diodorus, Mela...), that was usually considered as a fable. Moreover we again have a validation of Biblical statements, a result that adds to several previous one obtained by us (in particular regarding Eden and Exodus), against the approach by many modern scholars that the Bible was written when the people of the Jude and Benjamin tribes after their Babylonian captivity moved to Palestine, as a text based on stories invented or copied from other people's traditions.

3. Ophir and Kailas

Since *afar* meanings include “sand”, the recollection came to me, while sitting on that rock of Puerto Mogan beach, of a book by Allen (1983) about the most sacred mountain of Asia, mount Kailas. The book is one of two books he wrote on Tibet using information from several visitors after Tibet opened partially, following the temporary conquest by the British with the expedition led by general Francis Younghusband in 1904, when the thirteenth Dalai Lama was taken prisoner and brought to India. See Fleming (1961) for the history of this military event. The British were in Tibet for a short time, enough to complete the mapping of the Transhimalayan region, that they had tried to do with several tricks in the past. Additional important geographic information came also from the travels of the great Swedish explore Sven Hedin, see in Hedin (1995) a synthesis of his travels in almost 1300 pages.

The Kailas mountain, elevation 6714 m, latitude about just over 31°, is the source of the Brahmaputra and of two rivers that with three other large ones unite to form the Indus river. The flat area of India where they run before joining is called *Panjab*, meaning the *five waters, rivers*, a region now divided between India and Pakistan. One of the rivers originating from Kailas is the Senge river, considered as the main branch of the Indus river. Word *Senge* means *lion* in Tibetan; also the name Indus, *Sindh-Sundh* in India, can be associated with *lion*. Notice too the family name of all Sikhs, *Singh*, again meaning *lion*, and the Persian word *syr*, again *lion*, given to the second largest river in Turan, the ancient Jaxartes, now *Syr Darya*, meaning *sea-river of the lion*. See Spedicato (2001) for the claim that the name Indus is relatively recent, to be dated at the invasion of India circa 1450 BC by Dionysus, king of Margiana-Makan, and the following invasion of Turanians from the Syr Darya region. The original ancient name was given in Genesis as P R T, and translated as Euphrates. The second river originating from Kailas and contributing to the Indus is the Sutlej. From India one can reach Kailas conveniently by following these two rivers, that cross the so called *little Tibet*. Kailas can also be reached by following the Karnali river to the main Ganges source, located not very far from Kailas, then via a pass of about 5000 meters. Reaching Kailas from India by following the Brahmaputra was not convenient, being a very long way, the river moreover for some 2000 km passing through wild jungles and having difficult rapids.

The sacred mountain Kailas is the goal of many pilgrims, who can make its complete tour by foot in about three days. The trail going around it is not very difficult, with an elevation between 4000 m and the 5670 m of Dolma pass (but it is common that some pilgrims die of edema not being accustomed to this elevation). The mountain reaches 6700 meters, about 1100 meters less than the about 7780 of two other sacred mountains found at the entrance of the Hunza valley, namely the Rakaposhi and the Hunzakunji. It is our opinion, to be developed in another paper, that Kailas, Rakaposhi and Hunzakunji are the three mountains of the sacred *triple Meru*.

The shape of Kailas is that of an almost perfect pyramid, ice and snow covered and shining white against the sky, the name meaning, according to Allen (1983), *crystal*; same is the shape of the other two sacred mountains, the Rakaposhi appearing as a most beautiful pyramid to those entering Hunza valley from Kashgaria via the Mintaka pass.

Not far from Kailas and south of it is the sacred lake Manasovar, about 320 square km, more or less circular with diameter about 30 km, elevation 4560 m, being the highest large lake in the world. His sands up to beginning of the 20th century were collected and sifted for the presence of gold grains, see Hedin (1994). Another smaller lake, called Rakash Tal, is nearby and would join it if water level would increase just a few meters. We leave to another paper the discussion of the meaning of the name Manasovar – apparently unknown to Tibetologists – and how the lake may have played a fundamental role in the Noah's story.

Mount Kailas is sacred to both Hindus and Buddhists. Circling it 108 times, which can be done in less than two years, is claimed to free from reincarnations, opening immediate access to Nirvana after death. The mountain is claimed to be the throne of Shiva, and later we give one new reason to support its special role. Traditions claim that Marpa, who lived in the eleventh century, was the teacher of Milarepa and the last man knowing how to transfer one's soul into the body of another living being, human or animal, hid inside a cave on a side of Kailas the sacred documents providing this information. Here we might notice that the supposed "immortality" of Ziusudra-Utnapishtim, the survivor of the Noachian Flood according to Sumerian-Akkadian creation stories, might have been a product of the technique known to Marpa; and such a technique might have originate from Ziusudra-Utnapishtim Anyway climbing Kailas to the summit has always been prohibited. The Chinese recently asked Rheibold Messner to be the first climber, but he refused, to respect the ancient prohibition.

Now in Allen we find an extremely important information, that to my surprise seems to be unknown to many experts on Tibet. For more on such special place see also Hopkirk (1995) and Holdich (1996). This is the existence at almost 5000 m (precisely at 16.339 feet, i.e. 4980 m at 30.48 cm per foot) on the north side of Kailas of a very special gold mine. The mine is located at latitude 32, 24', 26'' in a flat area, called Thok-Jalung, where the soil is reddish. The place is windy and very cold and may be the highest inhabited location in the world. The gold was excavated, before the arrival of the Chinese, by people of a local tribe who lived in tents set inside holes 7-8 feet deep. Winter was the best time for working and then up to 600 tents were present, the miners being fed with food of high quality. The mine was, again before arrival of the Chinese who are now exploiting the many minerals available in Tibet (and have almost completely wiped out the wild animals, asses, yaks, gazelles, snow leopards, even yetis...), the only mine allowed in Tibet, where excavating the soil was a tabu. How old is that mine is not known as far as I am aware, but if my identification of it

with Ophir is correct it must go back to times earlier than Noachian Flood, hence it should be more than 5000 years old.

The mine became known to western people at time of the 1897 Transhimalaya survey done secretly by the British, Tibet being closed to white people and to modernization. The British sent there a few explorers, Indian pundits, say knowledgeable people, usually Sikhs; they estimated distances by counting their steps with use of a Buddhist rosary having 108 grains. Here we give a few lines from Allen on the discovery:

...a hard four day climb over a high snow-range brought Nain Singh out on a new plateau, a windy plain dotted with small piles of earth like ant hills – the excavations of the fabled goldfield of Thok Jalung. There is a curious story told by Herodotus of a great desert north of India inhabited by giant ants, who threw up nuggets of gold as they burrowed in the ground. Nain Saingh's visit provided some support for this story, for while there were no giant ants he did find large numbers of miners living with their families more or less permanently underground.....he could hear the diggers singing in chorus as they worked....it was summer but Nain Singh thought it the coldest places he ever visited, with a chilling wind blowing ceaselessly across the 17.000 foot plateau....

Allen states that finding gold nuggets of many kilos was not uncommon. The mine was essentially on the surface, suggesting that it was a golden sand type mine. From other few references in Google under the word *Thok Jalung gold nuggets* we find that gold was concentrated in a superficial vein about one mile long, excavated to about 25 feet, width varying between 10 and 200 paces. Excavation was done using spades. The soil was defined *auriferous earth*, finding nuggets of two pounds weight was not unusual. Other less important mines were present in the area. As said before, gold was present in lake Manasovar.

At 5000 meters in Tibet there is still life, in particular marmots (according to Messner (1999) yetis live around this elevation, excavating the soil to hid the animals they catch, particularly the yaks). Marmots excavate the soil to build their complex refuge system and so bring to the surface a significant amount of material. Ossendowski (1995), who was a geologist and an explorer of much of Siberia, observed that in the material brought out by marmots in some areas one could collect vanadium, tungsten and copper. So the marmots that very likely were living on Kailas in the gold sand area would bring out small and possibly also large gold nuggets. Since this gold could be easily collected they would certainly be considered as animals to be protected. Now one may observe that in Greek the words for marmot and ant (μυρμηκιά) are quite similar, which would explain the strange statements in the quoted classic authors that gold in India was produced in the mountains by *large ants* !

In conclusion, we have found a mine extremely rich in gold, probably extremely ancient, where gold is obtained, partly by men, partly by...marmots, from a surface

layer of auriferous earth. A mine very far away from the place where Solomon lived. A mine for which the name *ophir* is quite appropriate, the sand-soil referring probably to the material extracted by the marmots.

So Kailas is from our arguments the location of a great mine of Tibet and quite probably the greatest gold mine of the ancient world. Then we can see an additional reason why such a mountain was named the *throne of Shiva*: is it not indeed appropriate for a great god to sit on something that is at least partly made of gold? Gold has quite often been associated with gods or celestial facts, see the Torah commentators that Paradise consists in sitting at a golden table to study the Torah (or maybe the Indian constitution, amounting to 9000 pages; or Newton's work on ancient chronology...).

In Spedicato (2007 a,b,c) we have argued that Baal Sefon, one of the places where Moses stopped after leaving Egypt and before meeting the Pharaoh army, is present Ras Muhammad on the southern top of Sinai. There a sanctuary must have existed frequented by the Panis and with a statue of Shiva (the Pharaoh found it not destroyed by Moses). Classic commentators have proposed for Baal Sefon the meaning *God of the North*. This agrees with the fact that Kailas is the throne of Shiva and it lies north of India, in Transhimalaya.

Thus we have found:

- a place very rich in gold and very far away from Jerusalem
- a place where name Ophir fits with the local features, of a golden earth-sand deposit
- a place in a sacred mountain whose access was prohibited to outsiders or allowed only under strict conditions
- a place easily connected to India, via rivers
- a city in India (Tharsis-Taxila) where the gold could be worked and exported almost everywhere by the Panis, the greatest navigators of ancient times.

3. More on gold of Ophir

Here we briefly consider some consequences of our identification:

- we do not know who was controlling the gold in Kailas; we hypothesize that it was the people speaking Zhang Zhung, the *lingua franca* language used in Tibet for probably thousands of years, till it was substituted around 800 AD by the present Tibetan language, introduced by tribes invading from Burma. We are lucky to have a basic dictionary Tibetan-Zhang Zhung, discovered among the many documents found circa 1920 in a hidden niche in a Buddhist

monastery in Dung Huang, once part of Tibet, now of Gansu, China. These documents were bought by the Hungarian explorer Aurel Stein, with Sven Hedin the greatest explorer of Kunlun and the deserts north of it, and by the French archaeologist Paul Pelliot. The dictionary is given, with other documents translated from that language, by Hummel (2000), in a book published in Dharamsala, the Indian town where the Dalai Lama lives. Notice that Hummel, a scholar almost unknown to academicians, was a man of immense linguistic knowledge, with PhD's in Chinese, Mongolian, Tibetan and Turkish and being fluent in some thirty languages. He was director of the anthropology museum in Leipzig, till he was removed, being an evangelical pastor, by the communists who took power after second world war. He was exiled to a small village in the Sudeten; but he was allowed to bring with him his large library. He died recently at over 90. His books will be published in Dharamsala, being translated into English from German by Italian scholar Guido Vogliotti.

- the gold was probably worked in the form of very refined jewels by specialists in metals, especially gold. There are arguments that refined techniques for working metals developed in the region between Altai, Mongolia and Tien Shan. A reason may be the availability of special minerals in a volcanic area near present Urumchi that is similar to the Campi Flegrei near Naples. The minerals in Campi Flegrei allowed the nearby town of Pozzuoli to produce the best steel in the Mediterranean; the Etruscan iron from Elba was refined in Pozzuoli. These people can be identified with the ancestors of the Magyars or Hungarians, the name Magyar possibly deriving from MAGI = NAGY = GREAT (m and n easily interchange in the ugrofinnic languages) and AR = ARI = ARANY = GOLD, hence meaning *those great in working gold*. It is well known that for some reasons part of the Magyars moved to the Ural area, under control of the Khazars, and then to the Pannonian region, which had been depleted of its population by Charles the Great (he killed Avars and others since they did not convert to Christian religion). However it is certain that some Magyars remained in the original land, being listed in the *Secret history of the Mongols* as one of the tribes that Genghis conquered at the beginning of his conquests. It is quite natural that Magyars as gold specialists should be present in several places in the world to work the gold, both the local one and that from Ophir. The Bible names Tharsis as the place wherefrom the gold came. This was probably a town in northern India, on one of the rivers from Kailas, possibly the town later renamed as Taxila, a name meaning (Subhash Kak, private communication) *the place where precious objects are made*. Tharsis can be derived from another word in the ugrofinnic group (the khanty language), *tharasa*, meaning again gold. From Tharsis gold could be exported easily to the present Red Sea region by the ships of the Panis. Such boats could reach over 40 meters length, as shown by recent findings in several caves near MarsaGawasis, where they lied dismantled for over 4000

years. Hence they could bring also trunks of the precious *Cedrus Deodara* from Kashmir, a tree very apt for constructions, considered sacred, the only one whose wood was allowed in Asia for building temples or making sacred statues. Magyar specialists could travel with these boats, to export their jewels or to produce them on demand.

- Solomon got his large amount of gold from Tharsis via his friend Hiram, who also helped him in the construction of the temple. Hiram is in our scenario an Indian king, probably a chief of the Tiranians, the top family of the Panis. Notice how Tiranians may be related to sea-towns in the Mediterranean as Tyre, Tirint, Tarentum...who could have been settlements of the Panis (they could reach the Mediterranean by circumnavigating Africa, or more simply by leaving their large boats in the Egyptians ports in Red Sea, then proceed to the Nile via Wadi Hammamat with smaller dismantled boats, descend it and move around Mediterranean; their boats were build with planks connected with coconut ropes, a technology surviving in the Laccadives). It is unclear how Solomon paid for such large amount of gold. But since his immense kingdom included at least part of India and was based on many kings accepting his authority and sending him tributes, as gold or daughters, part of the gold might have been the collective tribute of Indian kings. See our scenario on Solomon (2009).

- Circa 810, see Pettinato (1985), i.e. about a century after Solomon died, most probably in Nepal, near Kapilavastu, where Buddha was born, see Tucci (2005), the Assyrian kings Ninus and his wife Sammuamat-Semiramis conquered, albeit for a brief period, part of India. When they were in India the Trojan war took place. Semiramis probably allowed the Greeks to enter a territory under her control since she was the daughter of a high priestess in Ashkelon and possibly of a Mikenean traveller with whom her mother had an affair, see again Pettinato. So she was sympathetic to Mikeneans. Notice that this Trojan war has nothing to do with the earlier one and more dramatic sung by Homer, which took place before the Deucalion Flood, in the Baltic area, as Vinci (1998) has strongly claimed. In India the Assyrians certainly aimed to take control of Tharsis and the related Ophir gold, for their own use. Thus the lamentation in the Bible that no more gold would come from Tharsis at that time is easily understood. Notice that we agree with Kamal Salibi (1996) that Canaan has nothing to do with Palestine, but is the high region of Arabia, very green and rich of water, named Asir, located between Meccah and Yemen. The Assyrian conquered in 722 BC the part of Canaan where the ten tribes lived, deporting them to a far away region, Halah, that can be identified with Kabulistan, while the remaining two tribes, Jude and Benjamin, were defeated and deported in 587 BC to Mesopotamia by Nebuchadnezzar

- the Assyrians had the custom of flaying alive the leaders of the cities they conquered, putting the skins as ornament to the city walls. Not everyone

liked this treatment and many preferred to run away if possible. So it is likely the Magyars in Tharsis fled to the Mediterranean region via e.g. the Oxus-Gihon-Amu Darya River, the Caspian and the Black Sea. We believe they continued to some extent their work as gold specialists, in addition to diviners and magicians, in places like Tarsus and Tursa, names clearly similar to Tharsis. When the Assyrians conquered that area as well, they moved to Tuscany, as Tursenoi, i.e. *those knowledgeable in gold*, or Etruscans, again *those from the gold*. They were probably a people of small size, maybe just a few hundred persons, but very rich and with special knowledge. Their little size explains why they left no traces of their language apparently in Tuscany, but their origin from north Tibet is confirmed by certain very unusual ways of applying the death penalty in certain cases. Thus we again find that ancient historians were correct in stating that the Etruscans came from orient

- finally we like to comment on a presentation made by Gunnar Heinsohn at the Kandersteg 2009 workshop on Quantavolution organized by Amy and Alfred De Grazia. By an impressive photographic evidence he has shown that the golden jewels found in Sumerian cities and in Scythia are essentially the same, so he proposed that Sumerians were Scythians. However it is natural from our scenario that both people could have obtained the jewels, of similar style, from the Magyars. Scythians could have paid with furs, well needed in Tibet where possibly also in very ancient times the prohibition to kill animals was in force. Sumerians must have got the gold from India, maybe paid with white blond women or eunuchs from Armenia.

Acknowledgements

This author saw the solution of the Ophir enigma while, sitting on a rock in front of the Atlantic Ocean in Gran Canaria, he was reading a book on ancient geographic knowledge of Africa by Roberta Levrero. She is thanked for providing the stimulus to solve such ancient open problem. The basic instruments for the solution were the book on *Apeiron* written by philologist Giovanni Semeraro at over 90 years; his reference to the Akkadian word *afar* was the clue towards the solution here given; this author is very sad that he was unable to visit Semeraro, then ill, with whom he only had a telephone brief talk. Second fundamental item towards the solution of the enigma was Allen's book on Kailas, with the information on the golden sands mine, unknown to all Tibetologists and Indologists I talked with (unknown I believe even to the great Tucci and to Alexandra David Néel, the greatest woman explorer of all times, except possibly Semiramis and the Queen of Sheba).

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