

**Review: Arthur Koestler, *The Thirteenth Tribe*, Random House,
London, UK, 1976**

Pages: 255

History With Biblical-Sized Implications

Uncovering an obscured chunk of Eastern European history, the author presents a compelling case the tough Khazarian Empire of the 7th-13thC(?) both converted to Judaism, and were the principal source of migration into Eastern Europe after their demise, *not* the Sephardim from Spain or Levantine Jews of Southern Europe and Germany.

This subject is extremely important since Ashkenazim make up ~90% of today's Jewry, including the State of Israel. If 'Jews' today are really Khazarian converts and not descendants of Abraham from Palestine, the argument for the current Israeli State is much weakened.

Primary sources are scarce, mainly Arabic, Greek, and Russian, but enough exists for there to be a foundation of truth. Compared to histories about ancient Greece, Rome, and even the existence of Muhammad, Khazarian history as on a comparable footing.

Geopolitical analysis and opinion is incisive, beginning with the Khazarian Kagan's ("king") choice of a neutral Judaism so as to not place him under Greek Orthodox or Islamic Caliphate suzerainty, also, that theologically *it* was meant to be the foundation and therefore governor of both faiths.

Their portrayal is somewhat Spartan and magnanimous; having good relations with the Byzantines until their betrayal as the latter allied with the Rus, and protecting Europe's eastern flank against Islamic invasion.

The linguistic analysis would appeal to specialists, but the logic of there not being a large enough pool of Jews in Germany or continental Europe to beget the size of Eastern Jewry seems most convincing.

It is worth noting that contradicting the historical record is modern-day genetics which stands strongly against a Caucasian origin of Ashkenazi Jews; they could only make up a small proportion.

I) Rise (pp. 1-57)

The Khazars flourished from 7-10thC and were Byzantium's buffer contra the Bulgars, Magyars, Pechenegs, and Vikings from the north and west, and the Muslims in the south.

The Khazars fought the Arabs for a hundred years.

In AD 732, Constantine V married a Khazarian princess.

In AD 740, the Kagan converted to Judaism.

Khazars are more genetically related to Huns, Uigurs and Magyars than Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Arabs report the Khazars were white, blue-eyed and had reddish hair, with a wild temperament. However, there were also swarthy black Kara-Khazars, like Indians.

In the 1st C AD, the Chinese drove the Huns westward.

It is generally accepted Khazars were a Turkic tribe of the Asian steppes.

The Persian state was destroyed by Heraclius in AD 627.

The Arabs had some success in Khazaria from AD 642-652.

In 744, Marwan was the last Omayyad Caliph before the Abbasid dynasty took over.

Prof. Dimitry Obolensky: "The main contribution of the Khazars to world history was their success in holding the line of the Caucasus against the northward onslaught of the Arabs." [p31]

The Byzantines imposed mutilation and amputations as punishment.

Tartar proverb: “If you know too much, they will hang you.”

Khazars are said to have ritually kill the Kagan when he reached old age or after forty years on the throne.

Witness Ibn Fadlan was mainly at the Bulgar court.

The Great Kagan had 25 wives and 60 concubines and lives in a castle of burnt brick.

Al-Masudi, “Herodotus of the Arabs” said there were seven judges in the Khazar capital Itil: two each of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish, and one pagan.

The Kagan delegated much secular power to the Bek Kagan.

II) Conversion (pp. 58-82)

Masudi: “The king of the Khazars has already become a Jew in the Caliph of Harun al-Rashid and he was joined by all Jews from the lands of Islam and from the country of the Greeks/” [p60]

The “Khazar Correspondence” [Cambridge Document],c 954, was between Hasdai Ibn Shaprut of Cordoba, and Kagan Joseph.

[Joseph]: “An angel appeared to King Bulan in his dreams, exhorting him to worship the only true God.”

Joseph refers to the “King of Edom” [Byzantium] and the King of the Ishmaelim [Muslims]. He does not claim Semitic descent, but from Japhteth and Togarmah, ancestor of all Turks.

Joseph: “With the help of the Almighty I guard ... [the Volga] and do not permit the Rus ... to invade the land of the Arabs ... I fight heavy wars with them [the Rus].”

Cyril was successful amongst the Slavs, but not the Khazars.

III) Decline (pp. 83-112)

The Khazar acme was late 8thC.

In AD 450, Attila laid claim to western Rome under pretence of engagement to Honoria, sister of Valentinian III.

The Dneiper became the Vikings' Great Waterway, leading to the Black Sea and on to Constantinople. They were based at Novgorod and would live by pillaging the surrounding Slavs.

Berserksangr: beserk way.

Khazar controlled the Rus trading routes and were able levy a 10% tax.

Kiev eventually overtook Novgorod in importance.

The Magyars travelled west across the Carpathian mountains in AD 896.

The Pechenegs lived between the Volga and Ural rivers.

The Nomadic Magyars would ride away in numbers, but this would leave their homes vulnerable to attack. Descendants of the Huns, they used light cavalry archers and simulated retreat.

In AD 957, Princess Olga of Kiev was baptised after visiting Constantinople.

IV) Fall (pp. 113-137)

The Rus made a disastrous Caspian expedition in 912-3.

Vladimir had 800 concubines.

From 1037, the Russian Church was under authority of Constantinople.

The Byzantines exchanged the Khazars for the Rus, and in 1016 they invaded Khazaria. However, Byzantium miscalculated the ability of the Rus to fight the warriors of the steppes, and that Kiev could replace Itil. Instead, Kiev began to decline and Rus power shifter north.

The Seljuks (modern Turks) destroyed a Roman army at Manzikert in 1071, capturing Romanus IV Diogenes. This led to their loss of Asia Minor.

Tsargrad: Constantinople.

“Ivan the Khazar” is the last mention of the Khazars in the Russian Chronicle, 1116.

In 1245, Innocent IV sent a mission under Franciscan Joannes de Plano Carpini to Mongolian Batu Khan. In *Historica Mongolorum*, in northern Caucas he mentions the, “Khazars observing the Jewish religion”.

Khazars were also known as “red Jews” because of some Mongolian pigmentation.

In a 12thC Khazarian Messianic movement, David al-Roy only got as far as Mosul on his way to Syria and the Holy Land. One theory holds the six-pointed ‘shield of David’ was his crusading symbol.

V) Exodus (pp. 138-158)

The Mongols are thought to have wiped out the Khazars in the 13thC, leading to a diaspora into Hungary.

“Mountain Jews” are said to have remained in north-eastern Caucasus.

A Khazar Jew Abraham Prokownik was the first king of Poland, who then yielded his crown to a peasant Piast whose dynasty ruled 962-1370.

The Mongols invaded Poland and Hungary in 1241-2 but were defeated.

Itil’s tallest building was said to be a Mosque minaret.

In the 16thC, world Jewry was said to be 1M.

‘Jewish’ occupations were inn-keeping, running flour mills, and fur trading.

VI) Where From? (pp. 159-168)

William the Conqueror invited in Jews, “a class of royal users .. After accumulating great wealth ... were forced to disgorge ... for ... the royal treasury”. They were expelled in 1290 (~2,500).

In 1306, Philip le Bel expelled the Jews from France.

There were said to be no Jews east of the Rhine. Germany was *Judenrein* (“clean of Jews”).

The Sephardim (Spanish Jews) were expelled from Spain.

VII) Cross-Currents (pp. 169-180)

Before linguistics, the gypsies were said to have come from Egypt.

4M Germans migrated into Poland and built Krakau and Lemberg.

The Tribes first spoke Hebrew, then Babylonian, Aramaic, Greek, Spanish and Ladino.

In 1555, Paul IV confined the Jews of Rome to ghettos.

VIII) Race and Myth (pp. 181-200)

The Sephardim were 500K in the 1960s.

Ashkenaz was the son of Gomer, the firstborn of Japheth. He was said to live around Armenia.

Sephardim are dolichocephalic (long-headed), and Ashkenazim brachycephalic (broad-headed).

14% of Jews have an aquiline nose.

$G_a - J_a < J_a - J_b$ (i.e., Gentile and Jew difference of country A is less than Jews between country A and B)
and,

$G_a - G_b = J_a - J_b$ (i.e., Gentile difference between country A and B is comparable to Jew difference between country A and B).

Appendices (pp. 201-255)

Arabic sources are Ibn Fadlan, al-Istakhri, Ibn Hawkal and al-Masudi. Ibn Fadlan was primary, Ibn Hawkal relies on Istakhri.