

## Groundbreaking research on Jewish ancestry: Near Eastern on Ashkenazi male line while females primarily European

The origins of Ashkenazi Jews remain highly controversial. Like Judaism, mitochondrial DNA is passed along the maternal line. Its variation in the Ashkenazim is highly distinctive, with four major and numerous minor founders. However, due to their rarity in the general population, these founders have been difficult to trace to a source.

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We are...faced with several competing models for Ashkenazi origins: a Levantine ancestry; a Mediterranean/west European ancestry; a North Caucasian ancestry; or, of course, a blend of these. This seems an ideal problem to tackle with genetic analysis, but after decades of intensive study a definitive answer remains elusive.

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This problem can be resolved by reconstructing the relationships genealogically, rather than relying on allele frequencies, using the non-recombining marker systems...This has indeed been attempted, with the MSY results interpreted plausibly to suggest an overwhelming majority of Near Eastern ancestry on the Ashkenazi male line of descent, albeit with much higher levels (>50%) of European (potentially east European) lineages in Ashkenazi Levites.

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[I] seems that at least 80% of Ashkenazi maternal ancestry is due to the assimilation of mtDNAs indigenous to Europe, most likely through conversion.

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The Ashkenazim therefore resemble Jewish communities in Eastern Africa and India, and possibly also others across the Near East, Caucasus and Central Asia, which also carry a substantial fraction of maternal lineages from their 'host' communities

*NOTE: GLP executive director Jon Entine has written a book addressing the debate over Jewish ancestry, [Abraham's Children: Race, Identity and the DNA of the Chosen People](#).*

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [A substantial prehistoric European ancestry amongst Ashkenazi maternal lineages](#)**