

From Kansas to the Rhine: A DNA Journey through Europe's Rabbinic Capitals

by Rachel Unkefer

Way back when, starting out as genealogists researching Jewish ancestry, we probably all had the experience at least once of being chastened by a more seasoned researcher when we asked if our ancestor from, say, Poland could be related to his or her ancestor with the same surname from, say, the west bank of the Rhine. Surnames, we were told, came with Napoleon or later and were adopted independently, coincidentally, by multiple families; only newbies would presume a connection between families from different geographical areas because of a shared surname. The Bacharach DNA Study is yielding results that challenge this conventional wisdom. The paper trails and the genetic markers on the Y-chromosome for this far-flung extended family show that the probability of males with certain surnames sharing a common ancestor is higher than we might have expected.

Background

In 2001, I was one of the first customers of Family Tree DNA, ordering two kits to compare my husband's Y-DNA with that of another man who shared his surname. They turned out not to be related. As the prices of tests decreased over the years, I began to consider preserving genetic information about other ancestors I had been researching. Because Y-DNA is passed only from father to son, my husband's 2001 test results represented only one lineage, the one that carries his surname. In order to find out more about other grandparents, great-grandparents, and so on, I would need to locate living male cousins descended patrilineally from each ancestor. Convincing third or fourth cousins to scrape the insides of their cheeks purely to satisfy my curiosity was going to be a hard sell. As a test case, I looked for one of my husband's lines that might be suitable for a larger study, a surname that was not too uncommon and might yield information of larger historical significance.

My husband's grandmother was born in 1888 in rural Kansas, a third-generation American and the daughter of not one but two descendants of the Bacharach family of Fellheim, in Bavarian Swabia near the Swiss border. We had inherited a large family tree from the early 20th century that did not include the famous Bacharachs (e.g., Burt Bacharach the musician, the Bachrach photography family, and Harry Bacharach a former mayor of Atlantic City), and I had come across the name somewhat frequently, so I

thought there might be enough other descendants to create a project. I also knew that the Bacharachs in Fellheim had a surname as early as the 17th century, which was quite unusual, so I thought there was a chance that an early surname could have persisted over time and spread widely.

For the purposes of this article I use the original German spelling, *Bacharach*, although there are a number of known variants, including *Bachrach*, *Bikrach*, *Bacherach*, *Bacher* and others. See Lars Menk for more information.¹

In 2009, I created the Bacharach DNA project at Family Tree DNA and set out to recruit participants. At first, I planned to focus exclusively on Germany, but fortunately I rejected that strategy. I approached my husband's third cousin (whom I had only recently located) who agreed, after a few e-mails, to be the DNA proxy for all the descendants of Simon Bacharach of Fellheim. Janet Akaha referred another Bachrach from the German-Jewish DNA project, and then there were two.

I set about e-mailing people from the JewishGen Family Finder, posted messages on the JewishGen mailing lists, and contacted people on Geni, Ancestry and Facebook. By the fall of 2009, four more men had sent their DNA samples to the lab, and we waited for results. These individuals included another man whose Bacharachs also were from Fellheim, although no paper trail linked him to my husband's family; two men documented back to the 1700s in Kestrich (Hesse, Germany); one man from nearby Hattenbach (Hesse, Germany); and one from Slonim (Belarus). Based on what I thought I knew about Jewish genealogy, I expected the DNA results to show two or three distinct clusters of related individuals in tight geographical groups and unconnected to one another.

One surreal evening the first results were posted while I watched, refreshing my screen every few seconds. Match. Match. Match. All the Germans, whether from Hesse or southern Bavaria (more than 400 kilometers apart) descended from a common ancestor. A couple of weeks later, the DNA from the man whose ancestor was in Belarus in the early 19th century also was a match at 12 out of 12 markers. As more markers were tested, the participants continued to match closely. The Family Tree DNA relationship predictor at that point showed a range of 12 to 20 generations to a common ancestor (potentially somewhere in the 14th to 16th centuries).

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At that time, all the men in the project were assigned to the Y-DNA haplogroup J2 (later J2a4b1). About 15 to 23 percent of Ashkenazi Jews are in the J2 group, which is thought to have originated in the Middle East.² While six individuals admittedly is a small sample, it seemed unreasonable to believe that all these men belonged to the same DNA haplogroup and had the same surname purely by coincidence. Between early 2010 and 2013, eight more Bacharachs whose 18th- or 19th-century ancestors lived in Belarus, France, Germany and Poland all matched the original six, most at 35 or 36 markers out of 37. They shared a common male ancestor, but who was he?

When I first began the project, my ambitions were small. I had no thought of trying to trace all the Bacharachs in the world to a common ancestor. These DNA results, along with information about the Bacharach surname from Lars Menk's book and other sources, convinced me to try.

WIRTH and Frankfurt Projects

As it turns out, I was not the only DNA project administrator interested in these results. The late Herbert Huebscher of the WIRTH project (also in the J2 haplogroup, but a small and closely-related subgroup with significant differences from others who are J2) had noticed that men from his group closely matched many of the Bacharachs, especially in one interesting genetic location. A marker called DYS-464 usually has numbers for the STRs (single tandem repeats) in four positions, labeled 464a, b, c and d. The WIRTH project group is partially defined by a rare mutation: two extra sets of STRs, DYS-464e and f, for a total of six instead of four. All but one of the Bacharachs share this rare mutation. This made it even more unlikely statistically that the shared DNA and shared surname were coincidence—and now we learned that the Bacharachs share a common male ancestor with the WIRTH group.

Huebscher and I joined forces to convince some of the Bacharachs to join the WIRTH project and to upgrade to the maximum available number of markers. In a large project like the WIRTH project, where all the participants are already confirmed to have a common ancestor, increasing the number of markers allows for more accurate statistical estimates of the degree of common ancestry within the group. Janet Akaha's Frankfurt research eventually led to the discovery of a possible common ancestor for the Bacharachs and the others in the WIRTH project around the 11th century (possibly Moshe ben Yehuda Treves, Baal Hatossafot).³

Rabbinic Yichus

In the meantime, I had begun to do background research. The name Bacharach is presumed to have come from the town of Bacharach on the Rhine. Transliteration from German to Yiddish (in Hebrew letters without vowels) and sometimes Cyrillic and then back to Roman letters results in a number of spelling variants, the most common of which seems to be Bachrach. From Lars Menk:

Thus, the surname Bacharach (Bacherach; Bachrach) that

indicates an origin in the town of the same name situated on the Rhine River was originally adopted in the cities of Worms (1449), Mainz (1455) and Frankfurt am Main (1516). Then, carried by a rabbinical dynasty, it spread to numerous locations in Central and Eastern Europe.

Never having studied European rabbinic history, I was surprised to find that the online *Jewish Encyclopedia* and other sources were full of accounts of the *yichus* (distinguished ancestry) associated with this name. Except for one man whose family tree traced back to the famous Rabbi Tuvia Bacharach, the martyr of Ruzhany (Belarus) murdered in 1659, nobody in the project was aware of descent from rabbinic dynasties. Not even the conservative rabbi who had convinced her brother to contribute his DNA knew of the famous Bacharach rabbis. Across Europe, from the Middle Ages to the 19th century, the name had been associated with respected scholarship and community leadership, although succeeding generations seem to have declined to follow their forefathers into the rabbinate.

This explained the early surname and the geographical dispersion of the DNA matches. From the Middle Ages onward, rabbis and Talmudic scholars traveled widely throughout Europe, summoned to the pulpits and *batei din* (Jewish courts) of Frankfurt, Krakow, Posen, Prague and elsewhere. Some sources assert family relationships among the famous Bacharach rabbis and refute others. For example, 1906 *Jewish Encyclopedia* writes:

From the end of the sixteenth century the name Bacharach occurs more frequently in western Germany. In Frankfurt there is a Mendel, son of Isaac Bacharach, who died there Aug. 23, 1599. His son Moses, a prominent member of the congregation, died there Sept. 11, 1620. Moses' son, Issachar Baer Gans Bacharach, a member of the rabbinate, died Aug. 24, 1678. Issachar's son, Naphtali Herz Gans Bacharach, endorses the Responsa of Jair Hayyim Bacharach, but does not mention that they are related, which goes to prove that, though bearing the same name, they were not of the same family.

If we can find more documented descendants to give DNA samples, we might be able to prove the connections.

In 2011, at the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) conference in Washington, DC, Janet Akaha spoke to me of her interest in the early Jewish families of Frankfurt, Germany. By the Middle Ages, they all had adopted surnames, some based on house signs, others after German cities from which they apparently had come. Unlike Jews in most of Europe, these families tended to retain fixed surnames over the generations. Sources such as *Ele Toldot* contain cemetery and other genealogical records for Frankfurt going back to 1241. Akaha realized that gathering Y-DNA samples and documented family trees representing each of these lines (which include such illustrious names as Bacharach, Guggenheim, Oppenheim, Rothschild and Weil), would allow other researchers with shorter documented pedigrees who matched genetically to jump back several hundred years, albeit missing some intervening generations. Thus, the Frankfurt Jewish DNA

Project, of which the Bacharach project is a part, was born.

Bacharachs by Any Other Name

Along the way, I noticed close DNA matches between men in the Bacharach project and others in the Family Tree DNA database with different surnames (some of whom also are in the WIRTH project). I asked these men to join my project, so that their marker values could be compared with the documented Bacharachs. Even though they had no known ties to the Bacharach family, their DNA showed a common ancestor, some within the past 200 years. So far, all of these “possible-Bacharachs” have oldest known ancestors in Eastern European locations where Bacharach rabbis are known to have lived.

We have a number of possible explanations for this phenomenon. First, although the Bacharach surname was in use as long ago as the 12th century (though some sources point only to the 14th century), as family members dispersed throughout Europe, some descendants may have abandoned the name—especially if fixed, inherited surnames were not customary in the area. Perhaps younger sons, who would otherwise have to move elsewhere in order to marry, changed their names as a way around laws governing inheritance of letters of protection (*schutzbriefe*), and the descendants eventually lost track of the original name. Secondly, in some cases a man may have taken his wife’s surname in homage to a distinguished father-in-law. This does not seem to have been the case, however, for the men whom we have identified in our project. Finally, undocumented adoptions, infidelity and births registered by the authorities as illegitimate because the parents had only a religious marriage and not a civil one, may account for the mismatch of DNA and paternal pedigree in some cases.

Samson Wertheimer Connection

One tantalizing DNA match is with a documented descendant of Rabbi Samson Wertheimer (1658–1724), arguably one of the most famous European Jews of his time. As of December 2013, we have a second DNA match to a Wertheimer descendant, albeit one with a short paper trail back to Hungary.

The DNA shows that these Wertheimers share a common ancestor with the Bacharach family. The TMRCA (time to most recent common ancestor) between the closer of the two Wertheimers and the majority of the Bacharachs is estimated to be in the range of 300–400 years, sometime in the 17th century. Because DNA mutates randomly, it’s not possible to pinpoint the exact generation when the branch of the family carrying the surname Wertheimer connects to the Bacharach line, but the paper trail suggests a few possibilities. The two most compelling:

- A family tree in the possession of a Samson Wertheimer descendant shows the Wertheimer name passing twice through daughters (Samson’s paternal grandmother and great-grandmother), both of their husbands using the Wertheimer surname. It’s possible the husbands were cousins

or that they adopted the Wertheimer surname and passed it to future generations, even though they were genetically Bacharachs. One problem with this scenario is that in the time period in question, the Bacharach name was presumably better known in Frankfurt and Worms, and would not likely be abandoned by a husband at the time of a marriage.

- Another scenario would be a Bacharach male returning to Frankfurt or Worms from Wertheim whose family took the name Wertheimer in order to distinguish themselves from the other related Bacharach lines. Legal documents in the Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg show a Rabbi Izak (no surname) living in Wertheim in 1626. Samson Wertheimer’s father Josel was born in 1626, but we do not know where. Josel’s father was also a Rabbi Isaac.

Further historical research and the acquisition of Y-DNA samples from more Wertheimer and Bacharach descendants are needed to solve the puzzle of this connection.

Family Tree Research

As of December 2013, the Bacharach project had 24 members, both with and without the surname. One goal of the project is to construct as complete a documented family tree as possible for each member. This way, each man whose Y-DNA has been tested can be a proxy for dozens of other Bacharach descendants who do not have a close living male relative with the Bacharach Y-DNA but whose paper trail connects to his. Unfortunately, only a few individuals in the Bacharach project have documented family trees that extend further back than the 18th century. Records in Frankfurt, Worms and elsewhere document various Bacharach families from the 13th century onward, but they often lack evidence of connections between them and/or paper trails forward to living descendants. I have accumulated a database of nearly 8,000 Bacharach descendants, some living but the majority deceased, some belonging to long trees and others to small, unattached twigs. Occasionally, I have been able to connect distant cousins using the information collected.

My research has been done in the usual ways: online databases such as Hassia-Judaica, the Steinheim Institut’s gravestone inscriptions, JewishGen’s Jewish Online World Burial Registry (JOWBR) and Family Tree of the Jewish People (FTJP); help from researchers in Germany; old articles and books about Frankfurt and Prague; and other genealogists who have shared pieces of their trees.

Researchers I contact for help finding living descendants with the Bacharach Y-DNA are often skeptical about connections among the different families, particularly when their name is spelled without a letter *a* in the middle or their relatives were from a town 25 kilometers distant from the one I mention. This lack of knowledge and understanding of Jewish history can keep researchers from seeing connections.

Geography

On the project website, bacharachdna.com, I have links

to Google maps of three regions that had concentrations in the 17th to 19th centuries of Bacharachs: Frankfurt/Hesse/Thuringia, Bohemia/Moravia/ Austria and Poland/Belarus/ Lithuania.

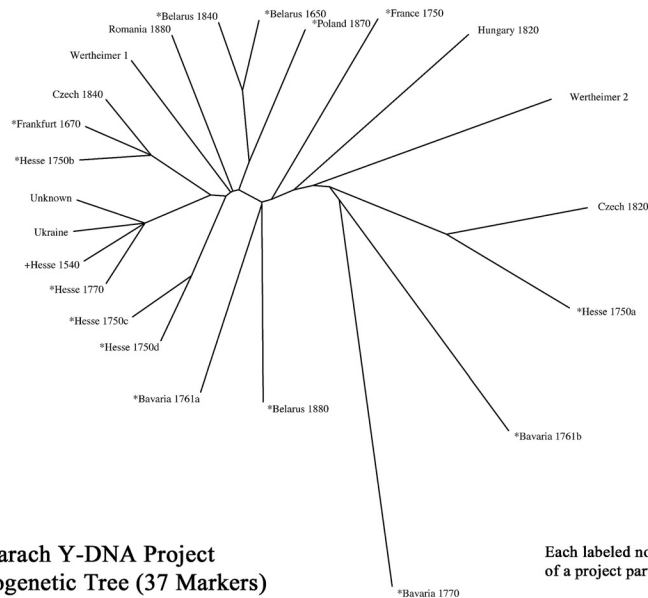
Frankfurt and the small villages of Hesse had a large concentration of Bacharachs in the 18th century. Digging deep into the relationships among families from towns like Bebra, Hattenbach Kestrich, Mansbach, Neukirchen and Stadtlengsfeld, we find close links both genetically and on paper. We suspect that more are waiting to be discovered.

The second regional focus of research has been Belarus/Poland/Lithuania. We find written accounts of Bacharachs, primarily rabbis or descendants of rabbis, as far back as the 1600s. Comparison of the Y-DNA markers suggests a close connection among families from Brest, Ruzhany (this family later moved to Tykocin), Sierpc and Slonim. Using the JRI-Poland database, the All-Lithuania Database, Landsmen, Ancestry.com and the Ellis Island database, I have been trying to construct a comprehensive family tree for the Eastern European branches of the Bacharach family.

The third regional focus is Austria/Bohemia/Moravia/Slovakia. One famous rabbi, Jair Chaim Bacharach, was born in Lipnik in 1638. His father, Moses Samson Bacharach, had been a rabbi in Prague and several other towns in the area before becoming rabbi of Worms in 1650. Jair Chaim's grandfather also had been rabbi in Worms and in what is now the Czech Republic. Yakov Bacharach, known in Vienna as "The Krakower Rabbi," went to Trebic after the Jews were expelled from Vienna in 1670. He and his descendants are buried in the Trebic cemetery. Currently, we have some family trees from this region, but we have not been able to bridge the gap between them, and so far no one has tested their Y-DNA.

DNA Results

In December 2013, our first non-matching result was returned. A man whose Bacharach ancestor lived in Mikulov, Czech Republic (also known as Nikolsburg) at the beginning of the 19th century was shown to belong to the R1b1a2 haplogroup rather than J2a4b1 like the rest. This could be due to the Bacharach name being adopted through the maternal line, especially if these are descendants of the important rabbi Jair Chaim Bacharach (1638–1701) who



**Bacharach Y-DNA Project
Phylogenetic Tree (37 Markers)
Haplogroup J2**

Using the McGehee Y-DNA Comparison Utility with the following parameters:
 - Infinite allele mutation model
 - Average mutation rate varies: 0.0054 from FTDNA derived rates
 - Probability of 80% that the TMRCA is no longer than indicated
 Tree Drawn Using Phylip 3.695 (Kitsch Algorithm)
 December, 2013

Each labeled node shows the location and date of a project participant's oldest known ancestor

* Denotes participants who currently use or whose family used a variant of the Bacharach surname within the past 200 years

+ Denotes participant with a significantly changed surname, but a documented patrilineal ancestor who used the surname more than 200 years ago

All others have no knowledge of Bacharach ancestry

Figure 1. Phenogram of Bacharach Y-DNA Project 37-marker results

are known to have lived in that area. It could also indicate that there is another unrelated Bacharach family after all, and this is the first of their descendants to be tested. More data is needed to explain this anomalous result. The explanations of the figures accompanying this article exclude this R1b1a2 sample.

Since the men in the project have tested different numbers of markers, I can compare apples to apples only at 37 markers. This is a fairly crude comparison, given that some men have tested 67 or 111 markers. Estimates of degree of relatedness are presumed to be more accurate the greater the number of markers tested and compared.

Figure 1 illustrates a phylogenetic tree, a visual representation of the number of differences between each pair of men in the 37-marker test. This diagram does not reflect which particular markers differ between participants; it shows only the degree of genetic distance between the participants based on the number of markers that differ out of the 37. The diagram is not a family tree, but a graphic representation of how closely their Y-DNA matches. Because mutations are random, we cannot be certain when a particular marker changed. The nodes where lines converge represent the likely common ancestors for those particular lines. The common ancestor of the entire group should be somewhere toward the middle of the tree.

As shown in Figure 2, the Time to Most Recent Common Ancestor (TMRCA) varies widely. The closest are estimated to share a common male ancestor within the four previous generations (a 37/37 marker match) or approxi-

ID	Bavaria 1761a	Bavaria 1761b	Poland 1870	Belarus 1650	Belarus 1840	Belarus 1880	Bavaria 1770	France 1750	Hesse 1750a	Hesse 1750b	Hesse 1540	Hesse 1770	Hesse 1750c	Hesse 1750d	Romania 1880	Czech 1840	Czech 1860	Ukraine 1820	Hungary 1820	Wertheimer 2	Wertheimer 1
Bavaria 1761a	-	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
Bavaria 1761b	11	-	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
Poland 1870	11	17	-	8	8	8	11	24	17	18	8	8	11	11	14	14	21	14	8	11	11
Belarus 1650	8	14	8	-	4	8	20	14	14	11	11	8	11	11	18	11	11	11	8	8	14
Belarus 1840	8	14	8	4	-	8	20	14	14	11	11	8	11	11	18	11	11	11	8	8	14
Belarus 1880	11	11	11	8	8	-	24	17	18	14	14	11	11	11	14	14	21	14	14	11	11
Bavaria 1770	17	24	24	20	24	-	17	25	20	20	17	17	14	14	26	20	20	20	17	17	24
France 1750	17	24	17	14	14	17	17	-	18	14	14	11	11	8	8	21	14	14	11	11	17
Hesse 1750a	18	21	18	14	14	18	25	18	-	14	14	11	11	11	14	14	8	14	14	11	11
Frankfurt 1670	14	20	8	11	11	14	20	14	14	-	4	8	8	11	11	18	11	4	8	8	14
Hesse 1750b	14	20	8	11	11	14	20	14	14	4	-	8	8	11	11	18	11	4	8	8	14
Hesse 1540	11	17	11	8	8	11	17	11	11	8	8	-	4	8	8	14	8	8	4	4	11
Hesse 1770	11	17	11	8	8	11	17	11	11	8	8	4	-	8	8	14	8	8	4	4	11
Hesse 1750c	14	20	14	11	11	14	14	8	14	11	11	8	8	-	4	18	11	11	8	8	14
Hesse 1750d	14	20	14	11	11	14	14	8	14	11	11	8	8	4	-	18	11	11	8	8	14
Czech 1820	21	25	21	18	18	21	28	21	8	18	18	14	14	18	18	-	18	18	14	18	25
Romania 1880	14	20	14	11	11	14	20	14	14	11	11	8	11	11	18	-	11	8	14	17	11
Czech 1840	14	20	8	11	11	14	20	14	14	4	4	8	8	11	11	18	11	4	8	8	14
Unknown	11	17	11	8	8	11	17	11	11	8	8	4	4	8	8	14	8	8	4	4	11
Ukraine	11	17	11	8	8	11	17	11	11	8	8	4	4	8	8	14	8	8	4	4	11
Hungary 1820	17	11	17	14	14	11	24	17	14	14	11	11	11	14	14	18	14	14	11	11	20
Wertheimer 2	20	27	14	17	17	20	27	20	21	11	11	14	14	17	17	25	17	11	14	14	20
Wertheimer 1	14	20	14	11	11	14	20	14	14	11	11	8	8	11	11	18	11	11	8	8	14

Figure 2. Time to Most Recent Common Ancestor (Generations)

mately 100 years. The farthest pair is estimated to descend from an ancestor in the past 28 generations (a 31/37 marker match), which would put the entire group's common ancestor in about the 13th century, close to the first historical mentions of Bacharach as a surname. From the *Jewish Encyclopedia*:

The first mention of any Bacharach is that of Samuel Bacharach (טײַר) in 1175 (Solomon Luria, Responsa, No. 29; Heilprin, "Seder ha-Dorot," ed. Maskileison, p. 211, Warsaw, 1878), but it is questionable whether the reading in this case is correct, as the words of Luria may mean, "Samuel in the city כרך of טײַר."

The TMRCA for the Belarus clusters is consistent with their common ancestor being a descendant of Rabbi Tuvia Bacharach (17th century). Although we have documentation back to Tuvia Bacharach for only one of them, the DNA and the geography suggest their family trees merge in the range of four to eight generations before the present. Some of the Hessian clusters also are closely related, with a common ancestor in the 18th century or more recently.

Most of the larger clusters on the phylogenetic tree have a TMRCA that indicates branching at around 11 generations, which would be in the range of late 16th to early 17th centuries. We hope eventually to identify possible ancestors for these different branching points.

I often try to infer the common ancestor for each branch by analyzing the frequency of recurring first names. Nearly all Bacharach families show the same first names throughout the centuries: Simon/Samson, Samuel, Isaac. Several branches have the recurring names Naftali and Yehuda, which do not appear in all the other branches. While these are all common Hebrew names, naming patterns often may provide clues to common ancestors, which can be con-

firmed or refuted by DNA.

Why Should You Care?

You may be thinking that you are not a Bacharach descendant and that this kind of project is useful only for those who come from famous German families. Why should you do a Y-DNA test (or ask someone in your family to do one)? The answer is simple. You just might hit the jackpot and match with a well-documented lineage. As the science and the historical research progress and the number of families represented in the DNA databases increases, the likelihood of finding a match to a well-documented pedigree increases.

Next Steps

Whether you are a Bacharach (or Wertheimer) descendant or not, you may have information, connections or resources that will advance this project or others like it. Connecting Y-DNA, history and paper trails can be a model for many future surname/lineage studies and illuminate areas of Jewish history that academics are not pursuing. Contribute to groundbreaking research by doing any of the following:

- If you are male, join as many Y-DNA projects for which you are eligible; if you are female, ask a male relative to do it.
- Supply funding for Y-DNA tests for your distant cousins who can be your proxies in DNA projects.
- Help find more families from the Czech Republic and Slovakia to do the DNA test. Our hypothesis is that many families from these areas originally had the Bacharach surname or one of the other original Frankfurt names.
- Be on the lookout for family trees and other records. If you have any Bacharach (or Wertheimer) data, or data relating to one of the other Frankfurt names, even fragments of trees or sources of records, please forward your material to me.

More information is available at Bacharach/Bachrach/Bacherach DNA Project: <http://bacharachdna.com>; Frankfurt Jewish DNA Project: <http://jewsoffrankfurt.com>.

Conclusion

From rural Kansas to the European capitals of Jewish scholarship, this journey seems to lengthen with every step. In the past year, I have learned that the Bacharach DNA may connect to a rabbi in the 11th century. It may be impossible to prove the genealogies of all the living Bacharach descendants, but their Y-DNA (so far) shows that all but one belong to one family. Regardless of surname or European provenance, anyone who is a close DNA match (or anyone whose family member is a match) is probably a descendant of this once-revered scholarly family. By broadening your research geographically and incorporating Y-DNA from as many branches of your tree as possible, you might also discover links in your own ancestry to pedigrees going back to the Middle Ages.

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Notes

1. Menk, Lars. *A Dictionary of German-Jewish Surnames*. New Jersey: Avotaynu, 2005.

2. The Jews of Frankfurt DNA Project, <http://jewsofrankfurt.com>, uses sources dating to the late Middle Ages to create "Y Charts" for the families of Frankfurt, Worms, Mainz, and related communities with the goal of locating documented living descendants whose Y DNA can be tested. When these families' DNA "signatures" are established, others whose Y DNA matches closely with these established lines will know they share a common ancestor, even if they don't have a paper trail all the way back to the Middle Ages.

3. *Schutzbriefe* (letters of protection) were documents purchased from local rulers giving Jewish families permission to settle in their lands. Often these permissions could be inherited by only the eldest son, which necessitated relocation of younger sons in order to marry and set up their own households.

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