Almost nothing we have done over the years either in the field or in the lab worked out exactly as planned. In 1978 I told NSF, NEH, and the National Geographic Society that I wanted to develop a single continuous 3500-year tree-ring chronology back to 1500 BC. Instead we have 6600 years worth of discontinuous chronologies from a variety of tree species going back to just before 7000 BC.

In 1978 I told the foundations that I would focus on the Central Anatolian Plateau simply because it then seemed unrealistic to expect long-distance crossdating. Instead we have been able to build tree-ring chronologies for the region which includes the Adriatic and Aegean basins, the southern shores of the Black Sea, and the entirety of the eastern Mediterranean including the Greek islands and Cyprus, extending through Georgia almost to the Caspian Sea in the east and Lebanon in the south from which cedar and juniper were exported to Egypt—in short the entire birthplace of literate civilization as we know it.

![Tree Species/Genera Chart](image)

**Bar graph of ADP chronologies:** Vertical band on the right is the “Roman” gap on which our current work is focused. The EBA “problem” is not really one after all.

This year we asked for (and received) NSF support to try complete the continuous, absolute tree-ring chronology for the eastern Mediterranean region from the present back to the Early Bronze Age (c. 3000 BC). Between our long floating chronology spanning the Bronze and early Iron Ages from the 3rd to 1st millennia BC lies what we call the Roman gap. We are currently addressing our major problem area (open box in the figure above) between this 2294-year floating chronology on the left and the 1639-year absolute chronology on the right, so that we end up with an absolute chronology for the last five millennia. We are using data already in hand in the form of some forty-odd floating tree-ring chronologies aided by material coming out of two dozen new sites, reinforced by radiocarbon analysis, to help us forge the links that will enable us to complete the tree-ring chronology from the present back to c. 2944 BC.

**THE “ROMAN” GAP:** Successful dating of Roman wood found in and around the Mediterranean faces two problems. First, not all Roman wood found in the Mediterranean (e.g., found in shipwrecks) grew there. A ship (actually 18 of them) whose sunken remains are found in the harbor in Pisa could easily have been built anywhere from the Near East to England. Second, Roman technology (cement) and geopolitics (relative peace) had the unfortunate consequences of leaving very few remains of wood and mudbrick buildings. There is simply less Roman charcoal to excavate. The first problem we have already