137 ancient human genomes from across the Eurasian steppes

For thousands of years the Eurasian steppes have been a centre of human migrations and cultural change. Here we sequence the genomes of 137 ancient humans (about 1× average coverage), covering a period of 4,000 years, to understand the population history of the Eurasian steppes after the Bronze Age migrations. We find that the genetics of the Scythian groups that dominated the Eurasian steppes throughout the Iron Age were highly structured, with diverse origins comprising Late Bronze Age herders, European farmers and southern Siberian hunter-gatherers. Later, Scythians admixed with the eastern steppe nomads who formed the Xiongnu confederations, and moved westward in about the second or third century bc, forming the Hun traditions in the fourth-fifth century ad, and carrying with them plague that was basal to the Justinian plague. These nomads were further admixed with East Asian groups during several short-Term khanates in the Medieval period. These historical events transformed the Eurasian steppes from being inhabited by Indo-European speakers of largely West Eurasian ancestry to the mostly Turkic-speaking groups of the present day, who are primarily of East Asian ancestry.

General information
Publication status: Published
Organisations: Department of Bio and Health Informatics, Metagenomics, Disease Intelligence and Molecular Evolution, Unité mixte CNRS-Université Paris 7, Department of Science, Technology and Innovation, Stockholm University, Australian National University, University of Oslo, Manas University, Study of Life, Bioinformatics and Evolution, University of Naples Federico II, University of Copenhagen, University of Edinburgh, University of Cambridge, Kyrgyz National Academy of Sciences, Kostanay Regional Museum of Local History, Centre for Baltic and Scandinavian Archaeology, S. Toraighyrov Pavlodar State University, University of Arizona, Charles University, Kostanay State University, University of Alberta


Publication information
Journal: Nature
Volume: 557
ISSN (Print): 0028-0836
BFI (2018): BFI-level 3
Scopus rating (2018): CiteScore 15.21
Web of Science (2018): Indexed yes
Original language: English
DOI: 10.1038/s41586-018-0094-2
Source-ID: 85047137672
Research output: Contribution to journal