

We've got more in common with Neanderthals than once thought

If you'd asked me five years ago whether modern humans and Neanderthals interbred, I'd have said: probably not. I wasn't convinced by the handful of skulls and skeletons which had been suggested to be "hybrids". And at that point, analysis of ancient DNA had also failed to show any evidence of ancient liaisons.

A team in Leipzig, led by Svante Pääbo, had pioneered the extraction and sequencing of mitochondrial DNA from Neanderthal bone fragments, and this DNA showed a clear separation from modern humans, around 500,000 years ago, with no evidence for any subsequent interbreeding. As the team started to analyse the much larger archive of genetic information from Neanderthal chromosomes, there was still no evidence of interbreeding.

Then, in 2010, Pääbo and his colleagues published a game-changing set of results: a draft Neanderthal genome.

Read the full, original story: [Neanderthals and me: we go back a long way](#)