

## Who did modern Asian and European populations evolve from?

Modern Europeans can be thought of as compounds. The first element are a set of populations which descend from, or are genetically very close in nature to, Mesolithic hunter-gatherers who likely descend from groups extant during the late Pleistocene on the fringes of the continent. The second element seems to be a population which is an outgroup to all other non-Africans. That is, this group diverged from the ancestors, jointly, of European Mesolithic hunter-gatherers, the people which gave rise of the [Mal'ta boy](#), as well as Oceanians, East Asians and Andaman Islanders. Like the "Ancestral South Indians" my impression is that this group does not exist in "pure" form today, but rather must be inferred. As the 40 thousand year old individual from Peștera cu Oase, Romania, is no closer to Europeans than to East Asians, it seems implausible that it was ancestral in any substantial fraction to modern Europeans. The third element has affinities to central Eurasian groups.

Influenced in part by Clive Finlayson's [The Humans Who Went Extinct](#), I think it seems likely that the earliest group in western Eurasia to contribute substantial ancestry to modern Europeans are the [Gravettians](#). Though even they flourished prior to the Last Glacial Maximum, so this is not assured in my mind. But it seems plausible to me that the population cluster which David Reich's lab term "Ancient North Eurasian" (ANE) may have diverged from that ancestral to Mesolithic Western European hunter-gatherers as the Gravettian culture spread and subdivided.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [The False Dawn of Modern Humans in Eurasia](#)**