

Ancient human species interbred extensively, new discovery shows

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The discovery of [yet another period of interbreeding between early humans and Neanderthals](#) is adding to the growing sense that sexual encounters among different ancient human species were commonplace throughout their history.

“As more early modern humans and archaic humans are found and sequenced, we’re going to see many more instances of interbreeding,” says Sergi Castellano, a population geneticist at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany. His team discovered the latest example, which they believe occurred around 100,000 years ago, by analysing traces of *Homo sapiens* DNA in a Neanderthal genome extracted from a toe bone found in a cave in Siberia.

The latest discovery has emerged from a re-analysis of the genome of a female Neanderthal. Her genome sequence — which is much more accurate and complete than those obtained from other Neanderthal samples — contains stretches of *Homo sapiens* DNA, owing to encounters that may have happened in the Middle East.

Reporting their work in *Nature*, Castellano and his team propose that around 100,000 years ago, her ancestors — a small population of Neanderthals migrating from Europe to Asia — encountered a very early wave of *Homo sapiens* leaving Africa. The identity of these early modern humans is a mystery. But roughly 100,000-year-old remains of *Homo sapiens* have been found in the Skhul and Qafzeh caves in Israel, and [similarly ancient human teeth have been found in a cave in southern China](#).

Read full, original post: [Evidence mounts for interbreeding bonanza in ancient human speices](#)