

Biblical mystery solved: Ancient Canaanites DNA lives on in Lebanese

The Canaanites lived at the crossroads of the ancient world. They experienced wars, conquests and occupations for millennia, and as a result evolutionary geneticists expected that their DNA would become substantially mixed with incoming populations.

Astonishingly, new genetic analysis shows that scientists were wrong. According to a new study in the American Journal of Human Genetics, today's Lebanese share a whopping 93% of their DNA with the ancient Canaanites.

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 or type unknown

One of five Canaanites found buried in present-day Lebanon from which scientists extracted and sequenced DNA. Photo by Dr. Claude Doumet-Serhal/the Sidon excavation

Archaeologists at the Sidon excavation site have been unearthing ancient Canaanite secrets for the last 19 years in the still-inhabited Lebanese port city...

They sequenced the whole genomes of five individuals found in Sidon who lived about 3,700 years ago. The team then compared the genomes of these ancient Canaanites with those of 99 Lebanese people currently living in the country, along with the previously published genetic information from modern and ancient populations across Europe and Asia.

...This evidence supports the idea that different Levantine cultural groups such as the Moabites, Israelites, and Phoenicians may have had a common genetic background, the authors said.

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The findings have powerful cultural implications...In a country struggling with the ramifications of war and a society fiercely divided along political and sectarian lines, religious groups have often looked to an uncertain history for their identities.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [The DNA of ancient Canaanites lives on in modern-day Lebanese, genetic analysis shows](#)