

Ancient tool technology passed down for thousands of generations by extinct human species, study says

When it comes to extinct human species, Neanderthals tend to hog the spotlight. But another group of early humans, *Homo erectus*, is equally deserving of our love and attention.

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Skull [fragments](#) from two individuals were recently uncovered in Gona, Afar, Ethiopia, alongside associated stone tools—a rarity in archaeology. Even rarer is the discovery of stone tools hailing from two different technological traditions, a finding that's upsetting a conventional notion that associates single human species with single stone tool technologies.

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Of relevance to the new study, the authors reference Mode 1 tools, in which several pieces are knapped off a stone to produce sharp edges, and Mode 2 tools, which are more complex, having all sides flaked off to produce a pear-shaped hand-axe.

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“The fact that the Mode 2 tradition seems to be conserved over such a long time, and over long distances, raises questions about the functionality of Mode 2 stone tools, strength of cultural traditions, and the degree of interactions between wide-ranging groups,” [researcher Michael] Rogers told Gizmodo. “It’s remarkable that the Mode 2 tradition was passed down successfully over thousands of generations, especially in light of the variability that we are now seeing in the paleoanthropological records.”

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