

Publication

Ancient genome-wide DNA from France highlights the complexity of interactions between Mesolithic hunter-gatherers and Neolithic farmers

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Author(s) Rivollat, Maïté; Jeong, Choongwon; Schiffels, Stephan; Küçükkalıoğlu, Oşıl; Pemonge, Marie-Hélène; Rohrlach, Adam Benjamin; Alt, Kurt W.; Binder, Didier; Friederich, Susanne; Ghesquière, Emmanuel; Gronenborn, Detlef; Laporte, Luc; Lefranc, Philippe; Meller, Harald; Réveillas, Hélène; Rosengstock, Eva; Rottier, Stéphane; Scarre, Chris; Soler, Ludovic; Wahl, Joachim; Krause, Johannes; Deguilloux, Marie-France; Haak, Wolfgang

Author(s) at UniBasel [Alt, Kurt](#) ;

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Starting from 12,000 years ago in the Middle East, the Neolithic lifestyle spread across Europe via separate continental and Mediterranean routes. Genomes from early European farmers have shown a clear Near Eastern/Anatolian genetic affinity with limited contribution from hunter-gatherers. However, no genomic data are available from modern-day France, where both routes converged, as evidenced by a mosaic cultural pattern. Here, we present genome-wide data from 101 individuals from 12 sites covering today's France and Germany from the Mesolithic (N = 3) to the Neolithic (N = 98) (7000-3000 BCE). Using the genetic substructure observed in European hunter-gatherers, we characterize diverse patterns of admixture in different regions, consistent with both routes of expansion. Early western European farmers show a higher proportion of distinctly western hunter-gatherer ancestry compared to central/southeastern farmers. Our data highlight the complexity of the biological interactions during the Neolithic expansion by revealing major regional variations.

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