

Putting 'Adam' in his rightful place in evolutionary history

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Our most common male ancestor walked the earth 209,000 years ago – earlier than scientists commonly thought - according to new research from the University of Sheffield.

The pioneering study, conducted by Dr Eran Elhaik from the University of Sheffield and Dr Dan Graur from the University of Houston, also debunked the discovery of the Y chromosome that supposedly predated humanity.

In the new research, published in the *European Journal of Human Genetics*, Dr Elhaik and Dr Graur used conventional biological models to date our most common male ancestor 'Adam' in his rightful place in evolutionary history. The ground breaking results showed that this is 9,000 years earlier than scientists originally believed.

Their findings put 'Adam' within the time frame of his other half 'Eve', the genetic maternal ancestor of mankind. This contradicts a [recent study](#) which had claimed the human Y chromosome originated in a different species through interbreeding which dates 'Adam' to be twice as old.

Debunking unscientific theories is not new to Dr Elhaik. Earlier this year he debunked Hammer's previous work on the unity of the Jewish genome and together with Dr Graur they refuted the proclamations made by the ENCODE project on junk DNA.

"We can say with some certainty that modern humans emerged in Africa a little over 200,000 years ago," said Dr Elhaik.

"It is obvious that [modern humans](#) did not interbreed with hominins living over 500,000 years ago. It is also clear that there was no single 'Adam' and 'Eve' but rather groups of 'Adams' and 'Eves' living side by side and wandering together in our world."

Dr Elhaik added: "We have shown that the University of Arizona study lacks any scientific merit.

"In fact, their hypothesis creates a sort of 'space-time paradox' whereby the most ancient individual belonging to *Homo sapiens* species has not yet been born. If we take the numerical results from previous studies seriously we can conclude that the past may be altered by the mother of 'Adam' deciding not to conceive him in the future, thus, bringing a retroactive end to our species.

"Think of the movie *Back to the Future*, when Marty was worried that his parents would not meet and as a result he wouldn't be born - it's the same idea.

"The question to what extent did our humans forbearers interbreed with their closest relatives is one of the hottest questions in anthropology that remains open."

More information: To view the full research paper visit www.nature.com/ejhg/journal/va...pdf/ejhg2013303a.pdf

Provided by University of Sheffield

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