Migration back to Africa took place during the Palaeolithic
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The study confirms the Eurasian origin of the U6 lineage and supports the hypothesis that some populations embarked on a back-migration to Africa from Eurasia at the start of the Upper Palaeolithic, about 40,000 to 45,000 years ago. The Pestera Muierii individual represents one branch of this return journey to Africa, of which there is no direct evidence owing to the lack of Palaeolithic fossil remains in the north of Africa.

"Right now, the research group is analysing the nuclear genome, the results of which could provide us with information about its relationship with the Neanderthals and about the existence of genomic variations associated with the immune system that accounts for the evolutionary success of Homo sapiens over other human species with whom it co-existed. What is more, we will be able to see what the phenotypic features of early Homo sapiens were like, and also see how population movements in the past influence the understanding of our evolutionary history," explained Prof Concepción de la Rúa.

More information: M. Hervella et al. The mitogenome of a 35,000-year-old Homo sapiens from Europe supports a Palaeolithic back-migration to Africa, Scientific Reports (2016). DOI: 10.1038/srep25501

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