

The first horse herders and the impact of early Bronze Age steppe expansions into Asia

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Ancient steppes for human equestrians

The Eurasian steppes reach from the Ukraine in Europe to Mongolia and China. Over the past 5000 years, these flat grasslands were thought to be the route for the ebb and flow of migrant humans, their horses, and their languages. de Barros Damgaard *et al.* probed whole-genome sequences from the remains of 74 individuals found across this region. Although there is evidence for migration into Europe from the steppes, the details of human movements are complex and involve independent acquisitions of horse cultures. Furthermore, it appears that the Indo-European Hittite language derived from Anatolia, not the steppes. The steppe people seem not to have penetrated South Asia. Genetic evidence indicates an independent history involving western Eurasian admixture into ancient South Asian peoples.

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