

POPULATION HISTORY OF EARLY MEDIEVAL UKRAINE

Lehti Saag¹, Olga Utevska², Stanislav Zadnikov², Irina Shramko², Christiana Scheib^{3,4}, Kyriaki Anastasiadou⁵, Monica Kelly⁵, Alexandre Gilardet⁵, Pontus Skoglund⁵, Mark Thomas¹

¹ *University College London*

² *V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University*

³ *University of Tartu*

⁴ *University of Cambridge*

⁵ *The Francis Crick Institute*

Ancient DNA research indicates that, to a first order of approximation, the genomes of present-day Europeans comprise ancestries of three major groups of people: 1) indigenous Mesolithic hunter-gatherers; 2) Near Eastern early farmers; 3) Steppe pastoralists. However, the detailed genetic history of any given area is always much more complex, calling for more focused and local-scale studies. One such interesting but so far understudied region is modern-day Ukraine which borders with Central European Poland, Slovakia and Hungary to the west while Southern Ukraine is part of the vast Eurasian Steppe. As such, the area has been in the path of several migrating groups, including Yamnaya Steppe pastoralists, mixed-origin Cimmerians and Scythians, Gothic Chernyakhov people, Iranian Alans, Golden Horde Mongols, Turkic Nogais, Slavic Cossacks.

Here we present novel genome-wide shotgun sequencing data from 9 individuals associated with the Alan group of the Early Medieval Saltovo-Mayaki Culture, 11 individuals associated with the preceding Chernyakhov Culture and 4 and 7 individuals, respectively, from the succeeding Golden Horde and Nogai periods. Most of the genomes – 23 out of 31 – have been sequenced to an average coverage of around 1x. The ancestry compositions of the individuals are characterised in the context of modern and ancient samples, and interpreted in the context of archaeological and historical information.

Keywords

population history, migration, ancient DNA, Ukraine

Note/comment