

Brown Vikings: A dishonest genetic revision of white history?

Were the Vikings white with blue eyes and blond hair, or predominantly brown southern Europeans? A recent DNA-study claims the latter. Is this decent science or just a local example of global attempts to devalue white people's history?

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Many, perhaps mostly Nordic peoples, have long proud assurance themselves that the Vikings were tall, white, courageous people with blue eyes and long blond hair. Well, some were perhaps brutal, robbed church silver and raped nuns, but most of them sailed around in elegantly constructed Viking ships, settled down in foreign countries, married the locals, and governed in several places. We know this from archaeological, anthropological, and language studies.

But this self-glorifying image of white Vikings is fundamentally false, according to a recent [paper](#) in the esteemed journal "Nature", entitled: "Population genomics of the Viking world". The paper breaks radically with common perceptions and causes international interest.

At the St. John's College Press Release department's website (September 16, 2020) we find an [interview](#) with the research team behind the six years of work on DNA gene sequencing of 442 Viking skeletons. The group was led by Danish Professor Eske Willerslev, who is both fellow of St. John's College, affiliated with the Department of Zoology, University of Cambridge, and director of the Lundbeck Foundation GeoGenetics Centre at the University of Copenhagen.

The interview is interesting by its angling of results. Thus, one of the co-authors, Professor Martin Sikora of the University of Copenhagen, uses space in the brief interview to stress that the genetic analyses show unequivocally that many so-called Vikings have high levels of non-Scandinavian ancestry and that there were an ongoing gene-flow over time across the whole of Europe.

Another co-author, Professor Søren Sindbæk from Moesgård Museum near Aarhus, also points out that it was brown "Vikings" of mixed Scandinavian and non-Scandinavian genetic ancestry that exported new ideas, technologies, languages, practices and socio-political structures of the time to other countries. The Viking identity was certainly not limited to genetic Scandinavians, assures Sindbæk. Yes, the whole idea that Vikings were blonde is also compromised by the fact that the Celtic-speaking Pict people, who lived in northern Scotland had been categorised as Vikings without genetically having mixed with Scandinavians.

Now history books on Vikings must be completely rewritten, advises Professor Willerslev. Most Vikings had brown skin and dark eyes and hair, and their "alien" genes show that they may have come from Asia and southern Europe even before the Viking Age flourished. Nobody before us could have predicted that these significant gene flows into Scandinavia happened both before and during the Viking Age", assures Willerslev.

The professor is so convinced that the identity of the Vikings was genetically dominated by brown people with dark eyes and hair that he exemplified this figuratively by letting himself be photographed in a Viking ship photomontage, produced by the well-known Danish contemporary artist, Jim Lyngvil. In the picture, Willerslev appears as a kneeling, shackled, blond slave with humbly bent-away head and closed eyes. Above him thrones a towering brown Viking – confidently staring directly into the camera - in the form of a photograph of the article's first author, Armenian Ashot Margaryan. The symbolism is straightforward: Vikings were predominantly brown.

However, this interpretation of the genetic results got a bitter aftermath. Journalist Marta Sørensen from Weekendavisen (4. december 2020), interviewed two of the report's Norwegian co-authors, historian Sturla Ellingsvåg and emeritus anatomy professor Per Holck, and they both criticised the study. In a [video](#) on the YouTube channel "Survive The Jive", Ellingsvåg recounts, among other things, that: It is decisively critical that the collection of the genetic skeletal material was not representative of white Nordic Vikings. Some skeletal parts came from peasants, fishermen, and slaves in areas of northern Norway, but there were no skeletons from any of the places where presumed Norwegian Vikings most likely may have lived (e.g. Viken in southern Norway and along the coast in southern Trøndelag). Other skeletons came from Greenland, Ukraine, England, Scandinavia, Poland, and Russia. Moreover, the fact that DNA from Europe has entered Scandinavia does not mean that the Vikings were southern Europeans, Ellingsvåg adds.

The criticism prompted Willerslev to immediately terminate the cooperation with Ellingsvåg and then the case took a new turn. Willerslev complained, in an email that Ellingsvåg published, among other things, that Ellingsvåg criticises him in the aforementioned YouTube channel, which is associated with white *supremacists*, that is, with people who claim the superiority of the white race. "We don't want to be associated with such environments, nor do we want the Center to be associated with that kind of thing", says Willerslev.

Firstly, this is unsubstantiated guilt by association. Secondly, both the editor of the YouTube channel, Tom Rowsell, and Ellingsvåg denies the association. Thirdly, Willerslev's first reaction to the serious criticism of questionable Viking-gene-representativeness was: You have to make do with the selection of skeletal material at hand. Fourthly, Denmark today is genetically [surprisingly homogeneous](#), which should not be the case, according to Willerslev.

So, it remains to be explained why the Willerslev-group uses an unrepresentative gene study to revise or deconstrue the history of white Vikings, reshape the image of Vikings, and demonise critics. There must be a deeper motive behind this questionable deconstruction of whites' role in history.

The explanation can perhaps be found in their previous caustic critique of [Cold Winter theory](#), which briefly says that the longer prehistoric black African migrants went up north to ever colder ecozones, the harsher the evolutionary selection became. Northernmost migrants survived only via still whiter skin, a 100cm³ larger brain, a 30-point higher IQ, and more altruism than their black prehistoric ancestors had. It is these [well-documented racial differences](#) that get Willerslev and other evolutionary biologists so [upset](#) that they talk about [racism](#), abuse of science, [scientific malpractice](#), and [bogus research](#). Under no circumstances should population differences be used politically - they opined. Why not? *Back then*, because: " If we appreciate our [humane and strong society, it is precisely as a result of millennia of biological and cultural melting pot of influences from all over the world](#)". *Today*, because genetically brown Vikings are white supremacists. Both arguments are weak.

But a [historiometric study](#) shows that the highest form of export of civilization is virtually white, male, and Northwest European. Other research shows that skin [colour, brain size, and IQ](#) correlate very closely with migrated distance from the Equator, measured in degrees latitude.

In other words, the Willerslev-group's political-moral motives and empirically weak attempts to transform white Nordic Vikings into brown southern Europeans, fall to barren ground, and mutate into a deliberate attempt at revise white history, that coincides with the extensive global efforts to tear down statues of white role models, to increase the number of scientists of colour in university curricula and research, to smear whites for their disgraceful past (which probably is no worse than most others'), and to align them with the ongoing Black Lives Matter movement's attacks on white history.

The real news is that the Willerslev-group now draws a non-representative genetics study into the revision of white history. This cannot be left unchallenged.