

# GENETIC LANDSCAPE OF NORTH AFRICA

## David Comas

*Institut de Biologia Evolutiva (CSIC-UPF), Departament de Ciències Experimentals i de la Salut,  
Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona*

Despite being part of the African continent, the human population history of North Africa has shown its own demographic characteristics. The region has been populated since Paleolithic times although posterior gene flow from neighboring territories, especially from West Eurasia, has been extensive. There is ample debate about the continuity of these first inhabitants and the extant groups of North Africa. The genetic composition of North Africans is an amalgam of West Eurasian and sub-Saharan components, including an autochthonous component found exclusively in North Africa. This admixture of components has been shown by the analysis of classical genetic and uniparental markers, as well as recent genome-wide data. Ancient genetic data and new complete genomes provide new insights into the population history of the region, suggesting that there is genetic evidence of population continuity in North Africans despite the major genetic replacement that took place during the Neolithic and the minor influence of historical events such as the Arabization. No correlation between major linguistic groups (Arabs and Berbers) and genetics is found in North Africa, but gradients of ancestral components are found in the region, suggesting a heterogeneous genetic landscape, which can be correlated with demographic events.