

Brief Communication: New Evidence on the Spatiotemporal Distribution and Evolution of the Uto-Aztecan Premolar

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ABSTRACT Uto-Aztecan premolar (UAP) is a rare morphological feature of the maxillary first premolar that occurs in Native American populations with frequencies ranging 0–16.7%. A recent summary of UAP by Delgado-Burbano et al. (2010) suggests the trait evolved around 4,000 BP in the American Southwest where the earliest cases occur and where the trait exists at the highest frequencies among contemporary populations. In this article, we present new data on UAP prevalence from an Archaic North American sample from Buckeye Knoll, Texas (circa 7,500–6,200 cal BP). Buckeye Knoll preserves a single case of UAP, and a sample frequency of 3.6%. In addition, we confirm the presence of UAP in

other eastern North American Archaic skeletal samples from the Windover and Harris Creek at Tick Island sites in Florida. We also review the dental morphological literature to assess: 1) whether UAP prevalence is limited to New World populations, and 2) whether the trait's antiquity can be extended further into the Early Holocene Paleoindian period. Additional cases of UAP are presented from the Pacific coast of South America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. Combined, these data greatly expand the spatial and temporal distribution of UAP and suggest the trait evolved considerably earlier than previously thought. *Am J Phys Anthropol* 146:474–480, 2011. © 2011 Wiley-Liss, Inc.

Variation in the size and shape of the dentition provides the basis for a number of evolutionary inferences in past populations, varying from global and continental population history to regional population structure and intracemetery kinship analyses. Although these analyses often use dental polymorphisms (traits that vary in frequency among *most* human populations), rare dental “anomalies” also have inferential value for human micro-evolutionary studies. Rare dental traits have been used to reconstruct genealogical relationships among burials within cemeteries (Alt and Vach, 1998; Stojanowski and Schillaci, 2006) and have also been used as “private” dental markers, i.e., dental morphological traits found only in certain, closely related subpopulations (Scott and Turner, 1997). Both intracemetery kinship analyses and private dental marker approaches require accurate information on the geographical and temporal distribution and population frequency of rare anatomical variants.

One such variant is the Uto-Aztecan premolar (UAP) which, as the name implies, denotes a specific biocultural (in this case linguistic) affinity (Morris et al., 1978). First observed by Hrdlička (1921) and reconsidered by Morris (1967), a recent paper by Delgado-Burbano et al. (2010) provides a more thorough description of the anatomical variant. The trait initially was thought to occur only in populations representing the Uto-Aztecan linguistic family (Morris et al., 1978), but has since been documented in a variety of New World populations, including skeletal samples from eastern North America (Turner, 1984, 1985; Powell, 1995; Johnston and Sculli, 1996), Mesoamerica (Turner, 1984; Haydenblit, 1996; LeBlanc et al., 2008), and South America (Turner, 1984; Sutter, 1997; Reyes et al., 2008). As such, the more in-

clusive designation “distosagittal ridge” (Turner et al., 1991) has been proposed and may reflect more appropriate usage; however, the term Uto-Aztecan premolar continues in the literature, perhaps reflecting its historical precedent (Delgado-Burbano et al., 2010). A southwestern US origin for UAP was suggested in early accounts (Morris, 1967; Morris et al., 1978; Kobori et al., 1980), and this reconstruction of the trait's origins continues to receive support (Delgado-Burbano et al., 2010) in spite of additional cases of UAP and the broader geographic distribution of the trait.

In a recent analysis of the temporal and geographic distribution of UAP, Delgado-Burbano et al. (2010) present new and previously published population frequencies of Uto-Aztecan premolar from a sample of over 5,000 individuals from North and South America. On the basis of this extensive survey, the authors note that UAP

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TABLE 1. *New cases of Uto-Aztecan premolar*

Region/location	Sample/site	Chronology	Affected	N	Observer/reference
Old World					
Spain	Andalusia	4250–3750 BP	1	–	Gallardo and Pimienta, 2008
Yugoslavia	Multiple	~550–450 BP	1 ^a	–	Burnett, 1998
Germany	Clinical	Modern	2	–	Keil, 1966
	Clinical	Modern	2 ^b	–	Schulze, 1987
Bengal	Multiple	19th–early 20th ^c	1	97	Hawkey, 1998
Mongolia	Chandman site	2650–2350 BP	1	20	C. Lee
Siberia	Reka Iya (Trans-Baikal)	5350–3650 BP	1	1	Haeussler, 1996
Australia	Historic	19th ^c	1	–	Turner, 1991, 1992
Western Hemisphere					
East US Indigenous	Windover, FL	8120–6990 BP	5	48	Doran and Dickel, 1988b; Powell, 1995
	Eva, TN	7150 ± 500 BP	1	14	Lewis and Kneberg Lewis, 1961; Powell, 1995
	Anderson, TN	7180–6495 BP	1	18	Dowd, 1989; Powell, 1995
	Buckeye Knoll, TX	7500–6200 cal BP	1	28	Ricklis, 2007; Present study
	Black Earth, IL	5900–4860 BP	2	31	Jefferies, 1982; Powell, 1995
	Harris Creek at Tick Island, FL	5450–5030 BP	5	57	Jahn and Bullen, 1978; Powell, 1995
	Bird Island, FL	4570 ± 110 BP	2	12	Powell, 1995; Stojanowski and Doran, 1998
	Texas	Archaic-unspecified	– ^c	–	Taylor, 2010
	Upper Red River, TX (early)	1150–750 BP	1	26	Lee, 1999
	Lower Red River, TX (mid)	750–350 BP	2	29	Lee, 1999
	Lower Red River, TX (late)	350–150 BP	1	6	Lee, 1999
Chile, Indigenous	Azapa Chinchorro	6950–3950 BP	2	26	Sutter, 1997
	Azapa-140	1150–600 BP	1	57	Sutter, 1997
	Azapa-71 (P ³)	1050–600 BP	2	26	Sutter, 1997
	Azapa-71 (P ⁴)	1050–600 BP	1	19	Sutter, 1997
	Azapa-8	600 BP	1	15	Sutter, 1997
Nonindigenous?	African American	300 BP-modern	2	557 ^d	Edgar, 2002

^a The affected tooth is possibly a P⁴ (Burnett, 1998).

^b One case is an affected P³, the other case is an affected P⁴.

^c Taylor (2010) reports a frequency of UAP greater than 4%, but does not indicate the number affected or the sample size.

^d Sample is drawn from multiple cemeteries.

morphology is found only in P³s (but see Table 1 for cases involving the P⁴), and that the trait likely evolved in southwestern US populations around 4,000 BP followed by a rapid and widespread dispersal into South America. This reconstructed evolutionary history is based on several lines of evidence: 1) the lack of UAP in skeletal samples older than 4,000 BP, 2) the only living populations known to exhibit UAP are from the American Southwest, 3) the highest frequencies of UAP are found in North American samples, especially those from the American Southwest and northern Mexico, and 4) South American samples in which UAP is present have the lowest frequencies of UAP.

However, the data upon which these findings are based seemingly omit several previously observed cases of UAP that dramatically alter the reconstruction of the trait's origins and evolutionary history. For example, Powell's dissertation (1995) reported high frequencies of UAP among several Early and Middle Archaic (Middle Holocene) samples from eastern North America. These cases have not been independently published and remain undocumented in the literature, hence their exclusion from recent summaries of UAP. These data suggest the antiquity of the trait may extend to the Early Holocene of North America. In addition, a review of the Paleoindian literature reveals two dramatically different assessments of UAP prevalence. Turner (1992a) presented dental morphological data for 35 candidate Paleoindian individuals from North and South America, with an additional 19 individuals from Lagoa Santa, Brazil. Alto-

gether, nine individuals were observable for UAP, and none exhibited the trait. Turner (Turner and Scott, 2007) has subsequently examined additional Paleoindian specimens (Sulphur Springs, Horn Shelter, and Wilson-Leonard II), but did not comment on UAP presence or observability. In contrast, Powell (2002: 99, 2005) reports that "nearly 18% of Paleoamerican skeletons" exhibit P³ UAP. Unfortunately, Powell (2002–2005) did not identify which Paleoindian specimens he examined or which exhibited UAP. Nonetheless, these statements suggest the antiquity of the trait may extend beyond the Archaic period samples discussed above which may dramatically alter the reconstruction of when and where the trait evolved.

These dissonant findings suggest clarification is needed on the spatiotemporal distribution of UAP. Here, we document a previously unknown example of UAP from the Archaic period skeletal sample from Buckeye Knoll, Texas, the largest and earliest Native American cemetery west of the Mississippi River (Ricklis, 2007). In addition, we report on our efforts to confirm the presence of UAP in three eastern North American Archaic skeletal samples analyzed by Powell (1995), and we review the Paleoindian physical anthropology literature to assess whether the trait's antiquity can be extended further into the Early Holocene. Finally, we consider reported cases of UAP outside of the Americas that suggest a broader distribution of the trait and question its utility as a private dental marker. The implications for reconstructing the trait's origins are discussed within the context of the peopling of the New World.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Maxillary premolars are highly variable structures (Schulze, 1987; Scott and Turner, 2006; Burnett et al., 2010) and, despite its uniqueness, diagnosis of UAP can be somewhat difficult particularly in worn specimens. UAP involves a pronounced ridge that extends from the apex of the buccal cusp to the distal occlusal border at or near the sagittal sulcus. Typically, a distal fossa sits between the distosagittal ridge and the distal occlusal border of the buccal cusp. Affected teeth also exhibit a mesial rotation of the buccal surface as well as buccolingual expansion of the paracone (Morris et al., 1978; Turner et al., 1991; Delgado-Burbano et al., 2010). It is this latter feature that may allow diagnosis of UAP in highly worn dentitions based on root morphology alone (Schulze, 1987).

Using these diagnostic criteria we observed all P³s for UAP morphology in Archaic period samples from Buckeye Knoll, Texas (41VT98) and from the Harris Creek at Tick Island (8VO24), Bird Island (8DI52), and Windover (8BR246) sites in Florida. The Early-Middle Archaic Buckeye Knoll site dates to circa 7,500–6,200 cal BP and contains the remains of ~70 individuals (Ricklis, 2007; Stojanowski et al., 2011). These data were collected by CMS and the skeletal material has been repatriated.

We also examined three Archaic period samples from Florida housed either at Florida State University or the Florida Museum of Natural History. The Harris Creek site dates to circa 5,450–5,030 BP with a reported sample size of 175 individuals (Jahn and Bullen, 1978; Quinn et al., 2008). These data were collected by KOM. The Bird Island site dates to circa 4,570 ± 110 BP with a reported sample size of 36 individuals (Stojanowski and Doran, 1998). Finally, the Windover site dates to 8,120–6,990 BP, although most individuals were interred there within a 500 year period circa 7,500 years ago (Doran and Dickel, 1988a,b; Doran, 2002a,b). The sample from Windover represents 168 individuals.

In addition to direct observation, we conducted a thorough review of the dental morphology and physical anthropology gray literature (e.g., unpublished Master's theses, unpublished Ph.D. dissertations, and abstracts from presentations at professional meetings) in order to identify and compile instances of UAP that have been overlooked in previous reviews of the trait. This is not to suggest that our review is exhaustive (it certainly is not), but to highlight the importance of making data available to wider audiences. Accessible (i.e., published) data are imperative to efforts that seek to develop the most probable reconstructions of the evolutionary history of rare dental traits such as UAP. In this light, a review of the Paleoindian physical anthropology literature was undertaken in an attempt to resolve the discrepancy between the reported frequencies of UAP in Paleoindian specimens (Turner, 1992a; Powell, 2002, 2005).

RESULTS

New cases from Middle Holocene North America

Table 1 lists a previously unknown case of UAP from the Buckeye Knoll site, as well as cases of UAP identified during our literature review which were not included in previous summaries of the trait. The Buckeye Knoll specimen (Burial 26) is a right P³ that is lightly worn (wear = 4 following Smith, 1984) and displays typical UAP morphology. Photographs of the

remains are not permitted, however we do provide a drawing of the affected tooth for comparative purposes (Supporting Information Fig. S1). There were 28 observable right P³s (50 maxillary P³s in total) dating to the Early/Middle Archaic at Buckeye Knoll resulting in a sample frequency of 3.6%. This is the oldest documented example of UAP in Texas (and oldest west of the Mississippi), but our literature review identified other instances of UAP from Archaic samples from the state. For example, Taylor (2010) reports a frequency of UAP over 4% among Archaic hunter-gatherers from Central and South Texas, although it is unclear whether the reported frequency is side specific or inclusive of antimeres or what samples were examined. In addition, Lee (1999) reports a very high frequency (but for a very small sample, 1/6 individuals) of UAP from the Lower Red River area dating to the Woodland period (circa 350–150 BP).

We also confirm the presence of UAP in the Florida Early Archaic. An example of an unworn UAP in a left P³ from Windover (Specimen 265.36) is presented in Figure 1. The antiquity of the site makes this the oldest documented (photographed) case of UAP in the world. Although definitely fulfilling all criteria for UAP, the distosagittal ridge in this specimen is divided by a furrow on the lingual side of the paracone which originates within the central fossa giving the appearance of three separate structures. However, the tooth does not exhibit the classic morphology of a tri-cusped premolar (Turner et al., 1991); the distosagittal ridge is clearly a ridge and not a cusp, although Powell (1995: 170, Fig. 7.2) apparently considered it tri-cusped. This specimen in particular suggests a morphological continuum between UAP and tri-cusped premolars, as has previously been suggested (Turner et al., 1991). Powell (1995) reports four additional examples of UAP from Windover and an overall frequency of 10.4%.

The presence of UAP was also confirmed at the Harris Creek site at Tick Island where two out of 23 complete maxillae (8.7%) express UAP. Burial 54 had bilateral P³ expression and Burial 100 had an affected left P³. Photographs of these cases are not permitted, but drawings are included as supplemental files (Supporting Information Fig. S2). The examples from Burial 54 are particularly interesting because the morphology is so similar among antimeres and the distosagittal ridge appears crenulated (almost like mammelons) along its facial and lingual surfaces with distinct and strong double shelving on the paracones. Powell (1995) reports a total of five cases of UAP from Harris Creek at Tick Island (he included all loose teeth) and a sample frequency of 8.8%. Finally, we could not verify the presence of UAP at the Late Archaic period Bird Island site, despite the fact that Powell (1995) reported a frequency of 16.7% for this trait (2 of 12), among the highest in the world.

The Paleoindian database

Because of severe attrition and taphonomic processes, few Paleoindian specimens have maxillary premolars that allow for the observation of the trait. Table 2 presents a list of which Paleoindian specimens preserve dentition with sufficiently light wear to make UAP observable. Our literature review identified no conclusive cases of UAP among Paleoindians. This is consistent with Turner's (1992a) findings and at odds with Powell's (2002-2005) reports of high frequency of the trait among Paleoindians. However, this result is tenuous as it is

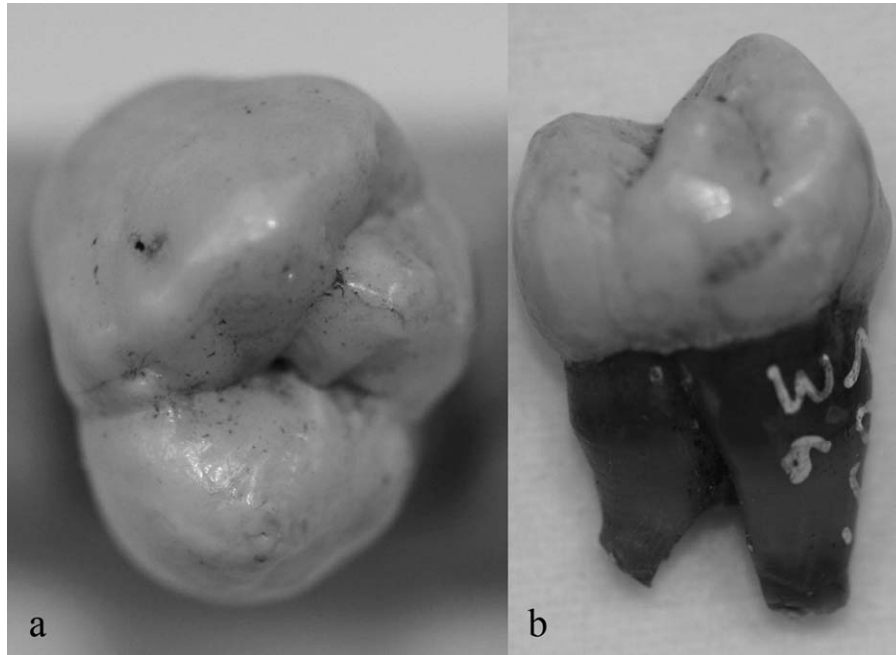


Fig. 1. UAP in the left P³ from Specimen 265.36 at the Windover site from the occlusal (a) and distal (b) views.

TABLE 2. Observability of Uto-Aztec premolar in Early Holocene skeletal remains from North America

Sample/site	Age (¹⁴ C years BP)	N	n	Observer/reference
49-PET-408 (On Your Knees Cave), AK	9,820 ± 40 (average)	1	– ^a	Dixon, 1999
Anzick, MT	10,680 ± 50 (average)	1	– ^b	Stafford et al., 1991; Owsley and Hunt, 2001
Arch Lake, NM	10,220 ± 50; 8,870 ± 40	1	1	Owsley et al., 2010
Arlington Springs, CA	10,000 ± 310; 10,080 ± 810; 10,960 ± 110	1	– ^a	Orr, 1962; Berger and Protsch, 1989; Johnson et al., 2002
Browns Valley, MN	8,790–9049 ± 82/110	1	– ^c	Jenks, 1937; Myster and O'Connell, 1997
Buhl, ID	10,675 ± 95	1	– ^d	Green et al., 1998
Fishbone Cave, NV	8,370 ± 50; 8,220 ± 50	1	– ^a	Dansie and Jerrems, 2006
Gordon Creek, CO	9,455 ± 110 (average)	1	1	Breternetz et al., 1971; Turner, 1992
Gore Creek, BC	8,250 ± 115	1	– ^a	Cybulski et al., 1981
Horn Shelter, TX	9,875 ± 110 (average)	2	1	Young, 1988
Kennewick, WA	8,410 ± 35 (average)	1	– ^d	Powell and Rose, 1999
LaBrea, CA	9,000 ± 80	1	– ^a	Kroeber, 1962; Berger, 1975
Pelican Rapids, MN	7,840 ± 70	1	1	Turner, 1992a; Myster and O'Connell, 1997
Spirit Cave, NV	9,415 ± 25 (average)	1	– ^d	Edgar, 1997; Jantz and Owsley, 1997
Upward Sun River, AK	~11,500	1	– ^a	Potter et al., 2011
Warm Mineral Springs, FL	10,260 ± 190	1	1	Clausen et al., 1975; Turner, 1992a
White Water Draw, AZ	10,000–8,000	1	– ^e	Waters, 1986
Wilson-Leonard, TX	10,500–10,000	1	1	Steele, 1998
Wizards Beach, NV	9,225 ± 60 (average)	1	– ^d	Edgar, 1997; Dansie and Jerrems, 2006

^a No maxillary premolars recovered.

^b Permanent maxillary premolars had not yet formed.

^c Unknown whether maxillary premolars were recovered.

^d Severe wear on maxillary premolars prohibits observation of UAP.

^e Maxillary premolars are present and display “marked” wear, but it is unclear whether attrition is so severe as to prohibit observation of UAP (Waters, 1986: 364). Specific morphological traits are not discussed.

based on published data and images of Paleoindian dentition rather than direct observation of these specimens. Table 2 should provide a useful guide for further research.

Old World cases of UAP

Old World archaeological specimens (Table 1) demonstrating UAP include a Bronze Age individual from the

Trans-Baikal region of Siberia (Turner, 1992b; Haeussler, 1996; Scott and Turner, 2006), a Bronze Age individual from northwestern Mongolia (C. Lee, personal communication), and a single Bronze Age individual from Spain (Gallardo and Pimienta, 2008). More recent Old World specimens include a protohistoric specimen from Australia (Supporting Information Fig. S3) (Turner, 1991, 1992b), an individual from Bengal that dates to the 19th or early 20th century (Hawkey, 1998), and four German

clinical specimens that likely date to the 20th century, including affected monozygotic twins reported by Keil (1966) and two individuals reported by Schulze (1987). The German specimens (Keil, 1966; Schulze, 1987) are noteworthy as they provide clear examples of UAP in living populations from outside the American Southwest.

To date UAP has not been documented in North or Sub-Saharan African populations (Morris et al., 1978; J. Irish, personal communication), making Africa the only continent lacking this feature. Edgar (2002), however, identified two individuals with UAP in a sample of 557 African American individuals. Edgar (2002) suggests that the presence of UAP in African American samples could be due to independent mutation or Native American admixture; additional research is required to evaluate these hypotheses.

DISCUSSION

Initial reconstructions of UAP's evolutionary history were based on a distribution in which the trait had only been documented among populations within the Uto-Aztecan language family (Morris et al., 1978; Kobori et al., 1980). Morris et al. (1978: 75) proposed that UAP appeared as "a mutation in a member of a small band of hunter-gatherers in the American West", during the Late Holocene, and was "carried along in low frequency in subsequent generations." In light of the trait's broader geographic distribution and presence in non-Uto-Aztecan populations, recent reviews either refrain from identifying a specific region of origin (Johnston and Sculli, 1996; Scott and Turner, 1988, 1997) or base such reconstructions on its spatiotemporal distribution rather than a perceived linguistic association (Delgado-Burbano et al., 2010; Taylor, 2010). Such reconstructions are based on the assumption that the antiquity and frequency of a trait are indicative of its place of origin.

Here, we have documented the presence of UAP in the Early and Middle Archaic of Florida and Texas, doubling the trait's antiquity in the New World from 4,000 to circa 8,000 BP. In addition to the cases presented here, samples reported by Powell (1995) from sites in Illinois (Black Earth) and Tennessee (Anderson and Eva) illustrate UAP had a rather broad spatial distribution during the Archaic period (Table 1). The Black Earth site (11SA87) dates to 5,900–4,860 BP and returned two cases of UAP from a sample of 31 individuals. The Anderson site (40WM9) dates to 7,180–6,495 BP, and Powell noted one case of UAP among 18 individuals. The Eva (40BN12) site dates to 7,150 ± 500 BP and had one case of UAP in a sample of 14 burials. Two cases of UAP were also reported from a Chinchorro sample (6,950–3,950 BP) from Chile by Sutter (1997). The broad age range for the Chinchorro specimens complicates interpretations of the relevance of these South American cases with respect to broader spatiotemporal patterns. It does appear, however, that UAP was present over much of the New World at a very early date, suggesting an earlier age of origin for the trait. Nonetheless, the presence of UAP in Paleoindians remains unresolved but is of critical importance for delineating the antiquity of the feature and its potential relevance to New World population history.

Indeed, the spatiotemporal distribution of UAP is often linked to the colonization of the New World in a very general sense, with scholars suggesting the trait evolved pre-colonization in the Old World and was carried to the

New World (Turner, 2002; Scott and Turner, 2006) or it evolved post-colonization in the New World (Morris et al., 1978; Kobori et al., 1980; Delgado-Burbano et al., 2010; Taylor, 2010). Turner's research is the most far-reaching in its conclusions about the meaning of this rare dental trait in Native Americans. Turner (2002) places the evolution and dispersal of UAP within his three-wave model of the peopling of the Americas (Turner, 1984, 1985; Greenberg et al., 1986; Scott and Turner, 1997; Turner and Scott, 2007) and suggests that UAP developed because of a mutation brought to the New World by Paleoindians but not by the other waves of migrants, the ancestors of the Na-Dene and Eskimos and Aleuts. Scott and Turner (2006) suggest the occurrence of UAP at low frequencies in populations from North and South America and its absence in Aleut and Eskimo samples are evidence for at least two migrations into the New World, with an earlier Paleoindian migration followed by a later migration of Aleut and Eskimo ancestors.

The use of a single morphological trait, even a purported private dental marker, to reconstruct major migration events in human history strains the limits of inferential plausibility. Such efforts often rely on overly simplistic understandings of human populations as bounded, discrete entities when, in fact, population histories are typically quite complex (e.g., Moore 1994, 2001; Sattler, 1996; Haley and Wilcoxon, 2005). In addition, the genetic mechanisms underlying these features remain obscure and independent mutation may be as plausible as migration scenarios for the explanation of a private marker's presence in different populations. Even when using all known cases of UAP expression in the New World, these data fail to exclude any of the different hypotheses for the peopling of the Americas (e.g., Goebel et al., 2008; Dillehay, 2009; Hubbe et al., 2010; O'Rourke and Raff, 2010). The presence of UAP in various non-African Old World samples, both modern and ancient, further confounds the meaning of the trait's distribution within and among human populations.

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