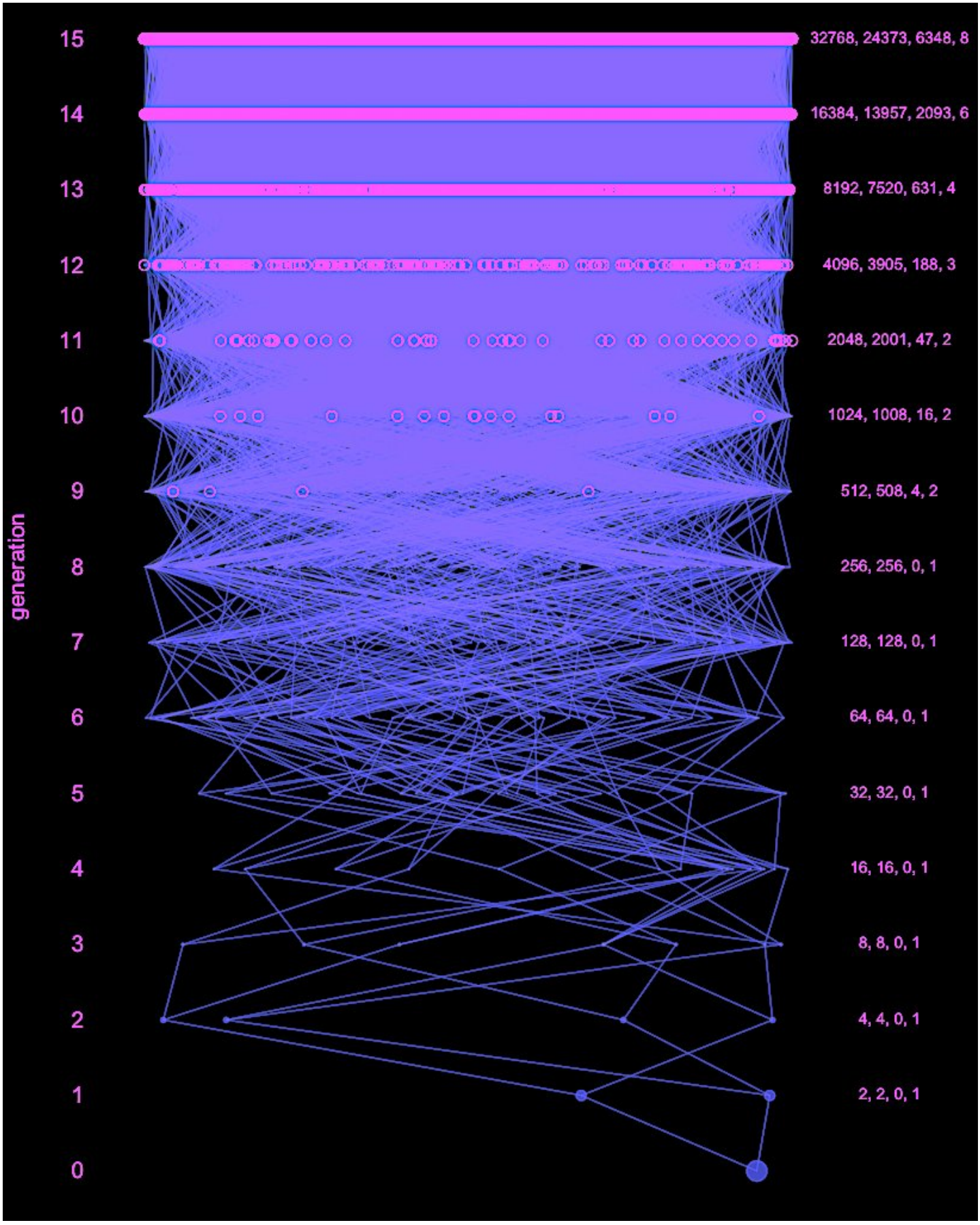
Twitter Thread by Dr Adam Rutherford

Dr Adam Rutherford
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I see that there is a lot of chat about ancestry and indigeneity, two complex and profoundly misunderstood concepts. Here's a thread 1/N - I have written about these ideas extensively, in two books;

Ancestry rapidly becomes a matted web rather than a tree. Claims of ancestral purity are absurd. We are descended from multitudes, and don't bear DNA from actual ancestors after very few generations. (fig. from @Graham_Coop



With both ancestry and indigeneity, the pertinent question is ‘when?’ If you claim ancestry from a certain group of people, then you are timestamping when you consider these ancestors to be important (to you). 3/N

Similarly, with claims of indigeneity, there is no agreed time when this kicks in.

There are a few places that have been populated by human in recent history, and so logical claims of an indigenous people make more sense, e.g. the M■ori of New Zealand were the first humans to live on Aotearoa from the 12th C.

Male Danish and Norwegian Vikings + female Scots/Faroese/Irish women were the first to live permanently on Iceland (there is some evidence that there might've been a monk or two there previously, but they left no descendants, on account of them being monks). 6/N

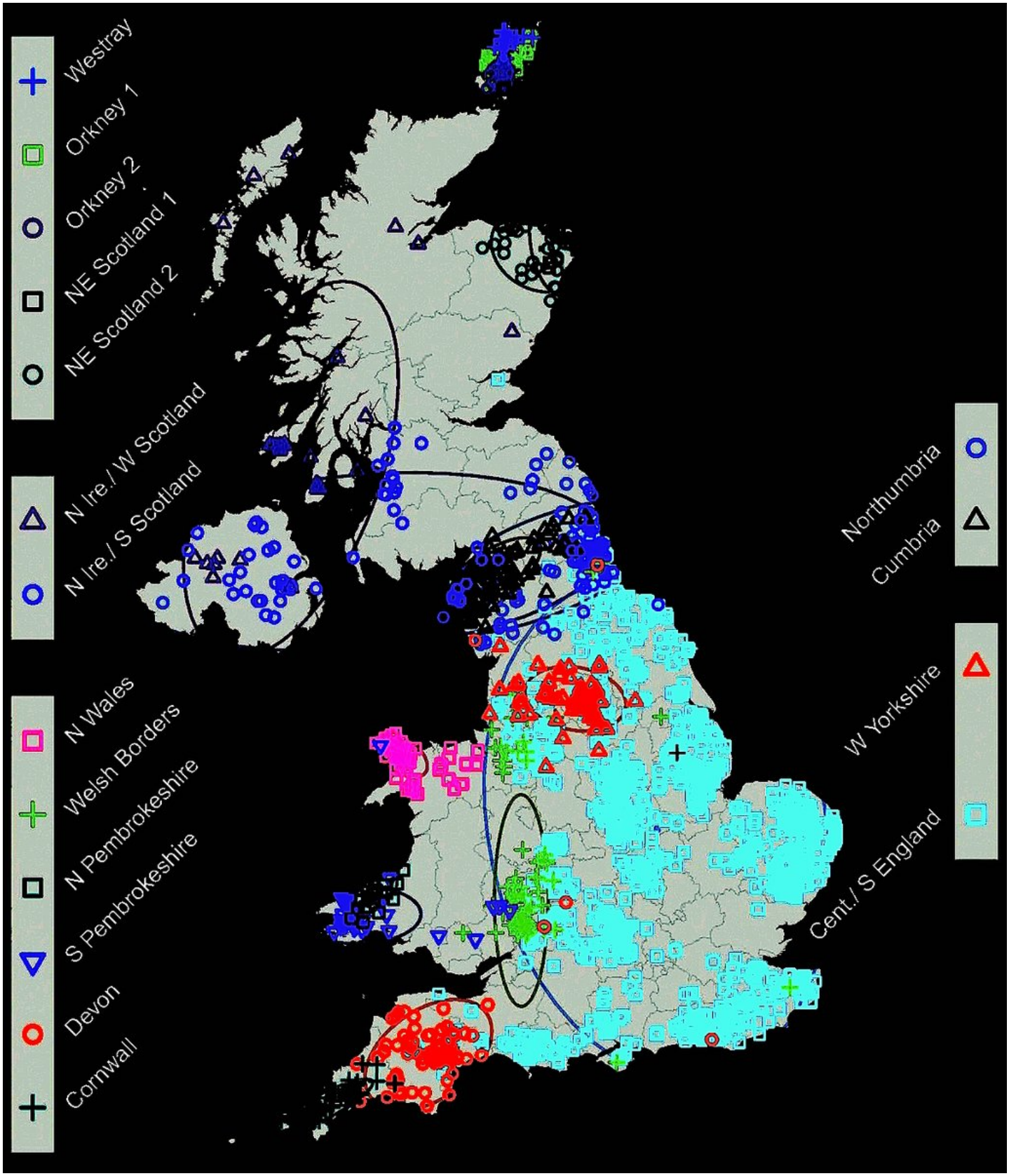
The origins of what we sometimes now call First Nations or Indigenous people of the Americas was the arrival of people across the Bering land mass around 20k years ago, and were isolated in the Americas until Columbus invaded. 7/N

Now, I get a lot of traffic from people (often with middle ages or Anglo Saxon sounding pseudonyms) claiming various things about British indigeneity, but I remain bigly unconvinced, because of this issue of arbitrary timestamps. When do you mean? 8/N

The lands that are now Britain have been occupied by humans for around 900,000 years (the earliest evidence from Happisburgh in Norfolk. But these footprints do not betray what species these people were – it's certainly earlier than Homo sapiens. 9/N



But we have been invaded, colonised, enjoyed and endured occupation throughout our entire history. The legacies of that can be seen in the finest whispers in our DNA. 10/N



These lands have been occupied fairly continuously for almost a million years, by humans of countless lineages, rendering the concept of indigeneity effectively meaningless.
And yes, Stewart Lee does this brilliantly in his ‘coming over here…’ routine.
https://t.co/7KV5HKnDzD

In many cases, though not all, the claims of British indigeneity are apparently a shallow cover for recent, post-colonial immigration. There’s not much I can say about that view, other than attempting to back it up with historical, ancestral or

indigenous claims is folly. 12/N

Claims of for e.g. Celtic ancestry can be muddled, as Celt is more a cultural grouping than a genetic or genealogical one. Celtic means different things to different people, historical Celtic cultures are not necessarily genealogically related (@theAliceRoberts is great on this).

Which brings me to the Great Replacement. This is a conspiracy theory formally described in 2010 by a French writer. It asserts that a global elite is conspiring to replace white Europeans with non Europeans. 14/N

It is, of course, drawn from much older, and predominantly Nazi propaganda, and more recently Enoch Powell's Rivers of Blood, and the neo-Nazi David Lane's White Genocide Manifesto; spree killers cite it sometimes. 15/N

As such, the idea of the Great Replacement is riven with antisemitic coded language e.g. 'global elites'. They are unequivocally paranoid racist conspiracy theories, i.e. not evidence based. And should be regarded as such. That it is entering the mainstream is troubling. 16/N

Its ancestry also included popular eugenics ideas of the early 20th C, such as 'White Suicide'. This features an eternal trope in population control and migration angst, which is the 'right people' aren't having enough babies, and the 'wrong people' are having too many. 17/N

Key scientific and political eugenics proponents felt strongly that this was *the* problem: Galton, RA Fisher, Churchill, FDR, and many more expressed profound concern about this essentially Malthusian idea. Invariably, it is a smokescreen for hegemonic power. 18/N

There was in fact a great replacement of the British people, but it happened about 6000 years ago, and has no bearing on the current paranoid racist fantasies. Fascinating paper here by @Boothicus @mt_genes et al.
https://t.co/JSNHGTbVux

Anyway, I've run out of steam. Ancestry is complex and poorly understood. Indigeneity is similarly complex and requires nuance and thought. Admixture is the norm, migration is continuous, and no people is pure. 20/N

Anyone who tells you otherwise is selling something.

Science is no ally when claiming ownership of lands, nor separation or superiority of races. These are the facts of biology.

21/21

Apparently I'm a Marxist now, Father.
https://t.co/sWvamDNi62

> You're more of a Marxist propagandist than a scientist. Interesting that it is only white Europeans whom you seek to deny any claim to an ancestral homeland. Any fool knows that Europeans originate in Europe and Africans in Africa etc. The clue is in the name. You fool no-one.

> — Rural Conservative Movement (@RuralConserv) December 16, 2020

This tweet is a great example: This guy says 1000 years is the threshold, so presumably would think that America should only be for Nature Americans?

https://t.co/ppO9Z5HF9z

> The DNA of the inhabitants of the British Isles barely changed in 1,000 years of our history up to the start of mass immigration in the 1950s. Up to that point we were 99.95% white and migrant groups who had previously come here were a) tiny in number & b) fellow white Europeans.
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> — Rural Conservative Movement (@RuralConserv) December 16, 2020

Native, obvs, goddamit. Stupid autofellatio