SVANTE PÄÄBO

Professor Svante Pääbo is the Founding Director of the Department of Genetics at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. After receiving his Ph.D. from the University of Uppsala, Sweden, he completed postdoctoral research at the University of Zürich, Switzerland and University of California at Berkeley, USA. Besides his research comparing modern human DNA with that of our other great ape relatives, Professor Pääbo has been a pioneer in developing methods to extract and analyze DNA from ancient sources, including Neanderthals and other extinct Pleistocene mammals. By applying a molecular-level analysis to the most enduring questions of human evolution, he has shed light on such significant issues as the origins of the earliest human migrations, the shape of the hominid phylogenetic tree, the history and behavior of extinct taxa, and how and when singularly human characteristics—such as the capacity for complex speech—evolved. Professor Pääbo has published extensively for professional journals in addition to authoring numerous book chapters.