

Response to Reviewers

Manuscript Title: Exploring the African Lineage of Irish and Italian Identities: Historical Connections and Modern Perspectives

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I thank the reviewers and editors for their careful reading and constructive feedback. The manuscript has been substantially revised to improve scientific rigor, analytical depth, and formal presentation. Below, I respond point-by-point and indicate the sections where changes were made. I reference section headings rather than page numbers.

Summary of Major Revisions

- Abstract rewritten to foreground research questions, methodology, theoretical framework, and originality.
- Introduction expanded with an explicit subsection: "Research questions, theoretical framework, and methodology."
- Genetics substantially expanded and integrated across the argument; the 'cattle' statement clarified with explicit scope limits.
- New synthesis: "Discussion: Integrating Genetic and Socio-Historical Evidence."
- New urban analysis subsection with anonymized vignettes: "Urban positionality and Black community identification: Baltimore, Boston, New York City, and Philadelphia."
- Descriptive passages reduced; critical/analytical interpretation strengthened throughout.
- English expression improved and redundancies removed; transitions tightened.
- References standardized to APA-7, alphabetized, and expanded with peer-reviewed sources in genetics, diaspora/identity, and postcolonial studies.

Reviewer #1 — Point-by-Point Responses

- 1) "How does cattle fit into the section of genetic connection (p. 12)? There isn't enough written about the genetic connections that make sense. It should either be developed further or taken out."

Response: I expanded the genetics discussion and clarified the evidentiary status of livestock genetics. In "Genetic Connections and Shared Heritage" and "Scientific Evidence of Genetic Links," I explain that Italian cattle (e.g., Sicilian/Podolian-lineage

breeds) exhibit African/indicine introgression, which independently corroborates the long-term Afro-Mediterranean exchange. I explicitly note that cattle genetics are contextual and corroborative—not a proxy for human ancestry—thereby addressing scope and avoiding over-claiming. Related language also appears in the new synthesis section, "Discussion: Integrating Genetic and Socio-Historical Evidence."

2) "The Mediterranean connection with Italians and Africans is real, even with sickle-cell genetics. I see Italians with genetic connections, but how does the author explain the Irish?"

Response: The revised genetics sections distinguish Italian (primarily southern and Sicilian) signals—low-percentage but consistent across genome-wide, uniparental, and haemoglobinopathy evidence—from the Irish case, where population-level African-related ancestry is minimal. I integrate clinical/epidemiological evidence (sickle-cell disease, β -thalassemia) and malaria selection in the Mediterranean, while clarifying that the rising SCD cases in Ireland largely reflect recent migration. This simultaneously acknowledges cultural solidarities in the Irish case and aligns the biological record with history.

3) "Write more about the genetics and how they do or don't tie together. Explain the 'cattle' statement."

Response: I added cross-references that link genetics with socio-historical interpretation. The new "Discussion: Integrating Genetic and Socio-Historical Evidence" synthesizes genome-wide data, uniparental markers, disease alleles, and historical mobility patterns. The 'cattle' statement is now clearly framed as corroboration of exchange corridors, not direct evidence of human ancestry.

Reviewer #2 — Point-by-Point Responses

- 1) Clarify research questions and strengthen the theoretical framework in the Introduction.

Response: I added "Research questions, theoretical framework, and methodology" to the Introduction. This subsection presents three research questions, situates the article within diaspora/postcolonial theory (Hall, Gilroy, Brubaker & Cooper), and describes the interdisciplinary method (combining genetics, history, and clinical/epidemiology).

- 2) Reduce descriptive passages in favor of critical and analytical interpretation.

Response: I refined the narrative description and emphasized analytical claims, causal links, and theory-driven interpretation throughout the body sections. Topic sentences and transitions were tightened.

- 3) Revise the Abstract to highlight methodology and originality better.

Response: The Abstract now foregrounds the research questions, methodology (population genetics, ancient DNA, historical analysis, clinical/epidemiology), theoretical framing, and the article's originality in bridging biological and socio-historical evidence.

- 4) Ensure coherence between genetic evidence and socio-historical interpretation.

Response: I introduced "Discussion: Integrating Genetic and Socio-Historical Evidence," which explicitly links the genetic record to Mediterranean connectivity, malaria ecology, and the politics of identity formation, and I cross-reference this coherence throughout the genetics sections.

- 5) Improve English expression and eliminate redundancies.

Response: I edited for clarity and concision (e.g., condensed overlapping phrasing, simplified multi-clause sentences, and standardized terminology).

- 6) Standardize references (APA style) and expand bibliography with more peer-reviewed sources on diaspora, identity, and postcolonial theory.

Response: The References have been standardized to APA 7, with hanging indents, alphabetized, and expanded with peer-reviewed works in genetics, diaspora/identity, and post-colonial studies. Examples of new or corrected entries include Hall (1990), Gilroy (1993), Bhabha (1994), Cohen (2008), Safran (1991), Clifford (1994), Moorjani et al. (2011), Antonio et al. (2019), Di Gaetano et al. (2009), Semino et al. (2004), Hellenthal et al. (2014), Gilbert et al. (2017), Leslie et al. (2015), Mastrangelo et al. (2020), De Sanctis et al. (2017), De Franceschi et al. (2022), Sarno et al. (2017), as well as

migration/whiteness/diaspora sources (Ignatiev, Roediger, Jacobson, Guglielmo, Waters, Gans, Lamont, Orsi, Sugrue, Countryman, Alba & Nee, Appadurai, Brah, Vertovec).

General meta-comment: "The manuscript lacks the scientific rigor expected for publication... A clearer definition of research questions, methodology, and theoretical framework is required... The bibliography is insufficient and non-uniform."

Response: The revisions collectively address rigor and form. RQs, methods, and theory are explicit in the Introduction; genetics are expanded and integrated with history and epidemiology; the new synthesis section consolidates coherence; language has been tightened; and the References are fully audited for APA-7 compliance and depth.

New Subsection on U.S. Urban Identity and Vignettes

In response to the reviewers' concerns about aligning genetics with lived identity, I added "Urban positionality and Black community identification: Baltimore, Boston, New York City, and Philadelphia." This subsection analyzes neighborhood socialization, kinship, intermarriage, political solidarity, suburban boundary-making, and institutional mediators (parishes, unions, schools). To concretize the mechanisms, I inserted two composite, anonymized vignettes (New York City and Boston metro). A cross-reference in the Conclusion ties this analysis back to the genetics synthesis.

Guide to the Revised Manuscript (by section heading)

- Abstract — entirely rewritten.
- Introduction — added "Research questions, theoretical framework, and methodology."
- Genetic Connections and Shared Heritage — expanded analysis, including clarification of the "cattle" evidence.
- Scientific Evidence of Genetic Links — strengthened, with Italy vs Ireland differentiation and clinical/selection context.
- Discussion: Integrating Genetic and Socio-Historical Evidence — new synthesis clarifying coherence and limits.
- Urban positionality and Black community identification: Baltimore, Boston, New York City, and Philadelphia — new subsection with two vignettes.
- Conclusion — cross-reference added to connect urban analysis with the genetics synthesis.
- References — APA-7 standardization and expansion.

I am grateful for the reviewers' insights and believe that the manuscript has been substantially strengthened as a result. I hope the revisions meet the journal's scholarly and formal standards, and I thank you for your consideration.