

## Ancient skeleton discovered with oldest prosthetic foot to date

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A medieval skeleton found in Austria has a unique appendage — an iron-and-wood prosthetic foot. Researchers say the 6th century remains are the oldest found in Europe with a prosthetic limb.

The skeleton, found in a Frankish Empire-era cemetery, was outfitted with a wooden peg with an iron ring, perhaps covered in leather, which served as an artificial foot.

Artificial appendages discovered in other parts of the world date earlier, including a 2,200-year-old horse hoof-tipped prosthetic leg from China and wooden toes found on an ancient Egyptian mummy. A metal leg discovered in Italy [dates back to 300 BC](#), but was not found in its owner's body, said Sabine Ladstaetter, director of the Austrian Archaeological Institute, who organized the research project.

Researchers don't know exactly why the foot was amputated in the first place, they write in a [paper](#) published in the International Journal of Paleopathology. They hypothesize that it could have been a medical treatment, a punishment, or a wound. Landstaetter suspects it was an accident.

Archaeologists know relatively little about early prosthetic devices, which these researches say is "puzzling" given the likelihood of "accidental, violent and, to a lesser degree, medical amputation" that occurred in early times.

**Read full, original post:** [The curious case of the ancient skeleton with the wooden foot](#)