

Medieval graves yield genetic clues about kinship of Germanic warrior family

A dozen lavish medieval graves holding the remains of 13 people have finally spilled their genetic secrets, now that researchers have constructed a family tree of the people buried there.

Researchers initially found the early medieval burials — which hold the bodies of 10 adults and three infants — in 1962 in the southern German city of Niederstotzingen. The contents of the graves dazzled archaeologists, who immediately got to work studying the ornate armor, bridle gear, jewelry and swords buried with the individuals. But they couldn't figure out how these people (some of whom were warriors) were related.

Now, a new genetic analysis of eight of these individuals reveals that five of them were direct relatives, but the other three were not related at all.

It's possible that some of these unrelated people were “adopted as children from another region to be trained as warriors, which was a common practice at the time,” the researchers wrote in the study, which was published online [September 5] in the [journal Science Advances](#).

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The results “prove once more that early medieval society was indeed fluid and adaptive,” [funerary archaeologist Christian] Meyer told Live Science in an email. “Every complex analysis that leads to significant new results should also make us re-evaluate pre-conceived notions about kinship, grave goods and overall burial rites.”

Read full, original post: [Adopted Warriors? Genetic Tests Reveal Unexpected Relationships in Medieval Graves](#)