

Medieval crusader armies had remarkable genetic diversity

Crusader armies were made up of people from remarkably genetically diverse backgrounds, hailing not just from western [Europe](#) but also much further east, according to a new study that gives unprecedented insight into the fighters' lives.

The Crusades to the Holy Land were [spread over two centuries](#), with many Europeans heading east to fight, and others turning up to trade.

While experts say it is well known that high-ranking crusaders entered into marriages with Armenians to shore up political allegiances, the study adds to evidence that footsoldiers were also striking up relationships as they headed east.

...

Writing in the [American Journal of Human Genetics](#), researchers in the UK, Lebanon and Belgium report how they extracted DNA from remains believed belong to medieval crusaders. The remains, dating from the 13th century, suggest violent deaths and were found in a mass burial pit near a crusader castle in Sidon – a coastal port city in what is now Lebanon, but was once part of the crusaders' kingdom of Jerusalem.

They used existing genetic data from modern-day people and a wider range of ancient individuals, as well as newly extracted DNA from local Roman remains, to make comparisons.

Read full, original post: [Crusader armies were remarkably genetically diverse, study finds](#)