Ancient Rome was genetic crossroads for many European lineages, DNA analysis suggests

Ancient Rome was the capital city of an empire that encompassed some 70 million inhabitants. An international research team now reports on data from a genetic study suggesting that, just as all roads may once have led to Rome, in ancient times, a great many European genetic lineages also converged in the ancient city.

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[The team collected] 127 human DNA samples from 29 sites in and around Rome, dating from the Stone Age to medieval times. The timeline spanned nearly 12,000 years of Roman prehistory and history. Their analysis of the ancient DNA allowed the team to place genetic changes in what they call “the context of a rich archaeological and historical record.”

The individuals sequenced fell into three distinct genetic clusters. “Mesolithic hunter-gatherers; early farmers (Neolithic and Copper Age individuals); and a broad historic cluster encompassing individuals from the Iron Age to the present,” the investigators wrote.

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The findings indicated that as the Roman Empire expanded around the Mediterranean Sea, immigrants from the Near East, Europe, and North Africa migrated into Rome. This significantly changed the face of the ancient world’s great city.

Read full, original post: DNA Analysis Suggests Ancient Rome Represented a Genetic Crossroads of Europe and the Mediterranean