

A. Research findings**1. Has it been established that this is d'Artagnan's skeleton?**

No. Based on the current research findings, it cannot be established that the skeleton found is that of d'Artagnan. The characteristics of the skeleton are consistent with what is known historically about d'Artagnan, but they are not specific enough to allow a definitive identification. Further research is therefore needed.

2. Has d'Artagnan now been ruled out as the identity of the individual?

No. The current research findings do not confirm the identification, but they do not rule it out either. There are indications that justify further research, but no definitive conclusions can yet be drawn based on the available data.

3. Which research findings are now available?

The first phase of research has provided insight into the location and construction of the grave, the characteristics of the skeleton, the age and sex of the individual, and the initial results of the C14 and isotope analyses. These findings provide an important basis for further research, but do not in themselves produce a definitive identification.

4. Why is further research needed?

The research carried out so far has provided valuable information, but has not yet produced a definitive answer about the identity of the individual buried in the grave. Further archaeological, historical and genetic research is needed to answer the research question more fully.

5. Which investigations will follow?

It is proposed that the archaeological investigation of the grave be completed, that further isotope analysis be carried out, that ancient DNA (aDNA) analysis be commissioned, and that historical sources be studied in greater depth.

B. Skeleton and excavation**6. Has more than half of the skeleton been lost?**

No. During the emergency excavation, it was established that a significant part of the original skeleton was still present in the grave and could be carefully documented and examined. Bone material collected earlier was also assessed. Only bone material that could be attributed to the same individual with sufficient certainty was included in the analyses.

7. Has the loss of information made the research impossible?

No. It has, however, affected the amount of archaeological information available. As a result, certain research questions may be answered less precisely, or may no longer be answered in full. At the same time, enough information could still be gathered to allow scientifically sound follow-up research to be carried out.

8. How reliable are the research findings despite the complex situation?

The researchers base their conclusions solely on data and material whose origin and context could be established with sufficient reliability. Where uncertainties exist, these are explicitly stated. That is precisely why no definitive conclusions are being drawn at this stage.

9. Why was the grave excavated after all?

By the time the competent authorities were informed, the grave had already been partly exposed. To prevent further damage and the loss of archaeological information, it was decided to carry out an emergency archaeological excavation in accordance with the relevant scientific and archaeological standards.

C. Scientific research

10. Why did the C14 dating not produce an exact result?

The period under investigation is characterised by natural fluctuations in the amount of carbon-14. As a result, the C14 method produces a broad dating range for this period and cannot establish an exact date of death. The results do not rule out burial in 1673, but they do not confirm it either.

11. What do the isotope analyses show?

The isotope analyses provide information about the individual's diet and possible origin. The initial results provide interesting indications, but are not in themselves sufficient to establish or rule out the identity of the individual buried in the grave. Further research is therefore proposed.

12. Why is further DNA research being proposed?

Ancient DNA (aDNA) analysis may provide additional information about the possible geographical origin of the individual. Depending on the results, it can then be assessed whether further comparative DNA research would be useful. Even with DNA research, however, a definitive identification cannot be guaranteed.

13. Has previous DNA research been used?

Before the emergency excavation, DNA material was collected by third parties. Because the origin, sampling and documentation of that material were not carried out or verified as part of the current research, it cannot serve as a reliable basis for answering the research question. It is therefore proposed that further ancient DNA (aDNA) analysis be carried out in accordance with the relevant scientific standards.

14. Why was aDNA analysis not carried out earlier or immediately?

A DNA analysis was already under way at the Institut für Rechtsmedizin (Institute of Forensic Medicine) in Munich. The results of that analysis were requested but have not been received. While awaiting those results, the research team decided to use isotope analysis to investigate the origin of the deceased. This method could also potentially have ruled out the possibility that the skeleton was that of d'Artagnan. As the isotope analysis did not produce a clear exclusion, it has now been decided to carry out aDNA analysis as the next step.

D. Process

15. Are the researchers independent?

Yes. The research was carried out by specialised researchers from BAAC and Saxion University of Applied Sciences, in accordance with the relevant scientific and archaeological standards. The Municipality of Maastricht commissioned the research, but has no influence over the substantive research findings or the scientific conclusions.

16. Why is the municipality communicating about this now?

Now that the first phase of research has been completed and the results have been carefully assessed, the municipality considers it important to share the current status of the research transparently. In doing so, it is making clear which conclusions can be drawn and which cannot yet be drawn.

17. Why are there no exclusive interviews?

The municipality considers it important that all media have access to the same information at the same time. The research findings are therefore being made public simultaneously, and all media are being given the same opportunity to ask questions.

18. What will happen in the follow-up research?

After coordination and decision-making on the cooperation agreement for the proposed follow-up research, the various investigations will be developed further and carried out by the specialists involved. The results will again be carefully assessed before any communication takes place.

19. Who will pay for the follow-up research?

The Municipality of Maastricht.

E. Further questions

20. Has information been lost?

Yes. Because no archaeological documentation was prepared in accordance with the usual standards before the emergency excavation, part of the archaeological context has been lost. This means that certain information can no longer be reconstructed.

21. Does this affect the identification?

Yes. The loss of information limits the possibilities for fully interpreting the grave and the skeleton. At the same time, a great deal of valuable information could still be secured during the emergency excavation, which means that follow-up research remains possible.

22. Were mistakes made?

Before the emergency excavation on 13 March, no archaeological documentation was carried out in accordance with the usual professional standards. During the emergency excavation, the researchers then carefully recorded as much available information as possible in order to limit any further loss of information.

23. Why are different stories circulating in the media?

During an ongoing investigation, different interpretations and speculation may arise. The municipality bases its communication solely on the verified research findings of the researchers involved, and communicates only once these have been carefully assessed.

24. How do you deal with information from anonymous sources?

We do not respond to unconfirmed information or speculation. The municipality communicates solely on the basis of verified research data and the findings of the researchers involved. We consider this important both for the integrity of the research and for the provision of reliable information.