

## **Einheimisch oder fremd? Isotopenanalyse eines Frauenskelettes des 9. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. aus Elsau, Kanton Zürich, Schweiz**

### **Native or not? Isotope analysis of a female skeleton on the 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D. from Elsau, Canton Zurich, Switzerland**

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Mit 9 Abbildungen und 1 Tabelle

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**Summary:** At Elsau near Winterthur (CH), a 9<sup>th</sup> century AD grave with a female skeleton was found in 2003. This grave was reopened one to six years after burial. After manipulating the partially decayed skeleton, the grave was filled with a layer of rocks and a claw of a sea eagle as well as the paw of a fox was placed on top. At least from this time onwards, the grave was situated in the annex of a church. Because of this special burial site for the 42 year old woman, who suffered from different severe illnesses, it is thought that she belonged to the upper class. The postmortal changes at the grave are exceptional and even after thorough research, no equivalent burial procedures are known from this area.

To investigate the possibility if the woman migrated to the region of Elsau, the oxygen and strontium isotope composition of several teeth and one long bone of her skeleton was analysed. The results indicate a certain but restricted mobility within the northern Alpine foreland and as a result changes of the isotope composition of the food and drinking water during her childhood. Immigration from regions in which similar burial customs to those used for the woman persisted into the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD can be largely excluded based on the isotope composition of her skeletal remains. The mobility in the pre-Alpine region supports the interpretation that the woman belonged to the upper class, whose properties were widely distributed.

**Key words:** Bone, teeth, strontium, oxygen, isotopes, migration.

## **Einführung**

Im Jahre 2003 entdeckte die Kantonsarchäologie Zürich in Elsau, nahe Winterthur (CH), im Nordanbau der Kirche ein Frauengrab aus dem 9. Jahrhundert (Abb. 1; Wild, 2006). Am Skelett der rund 42-jährigen Frau (Abb. 2) waren verschiedene krankhafte Veränderungen sichtbar. Mindestens ein bis sechs Jahre nach der Bestattung öffnete man das Grab. Damals verschob man einzelne Knochen aus dem