

Description

George Bähr (1666–1738) was the visionary architect of the Dresden Frauenkirche, one of the masterpieces of German Baroque architecture. Rising from humble origins as the son of a weaver, he became one of the most celebrated architects of his era — yet died five years before his greatest work was completed, and left behind no surviving portraits. His physical appearance had been a historical mystery for centuries. When his remains were recovered from the church crypt during the Frauenkirche's post-war reconstruction, genomic analysis was able to fill in what history had left blank.



Historical page from the Saxon State Library referencing George Bähr.

Bähr's church stood as a symbol of Dresden for two centuries until it was destroyed in the Allied bombing of February 1945. The reconstruction, completed in 2005, returned the building to the city's skyline and renewed interest in its creator. The man who designed it had been known only through his work, making it one of architecture's most enduring monuments created by a figure who remained largely obscure.



Grave / memorial of George Bähr (no contemporary portrait survives).

Image by Paulae

Genomic reconstruction suggests fair skin and brown eyes. It also identifies Central European ancestry in line with his origins and a paternal haplogroup, R1b1a2a1a2-P312, common in the upper Danube basin. He was heterozygous for the LCT mutation, indicating lactose tolerance. Most significantly, his genome contained risk alleles for Type-2 diabetes, hypertension, and coronary artery disease — the precise combination of risk factors for pulmonary edema, the condition recorded as his cause of death in 1738.

Modern population	Distance
German	2.579
Czech	2.926
Austrian	2.964

Modern population	Distance
Dutch	3.009
Hungarian	3.034
Slovenian	3.128
Welsh	3.246
Slovakian	3.266
Danish	3.275
Croat	3.292

Source

Date: 1743–1793 CE

Y-DNA: R-P312

mtDNA: H35

Location: Germany

Research: Inferring genetic origins and phenotypic traits of George Bähr, the architect of the Dresden Frauenkirche

Sample(s): BaehrAB