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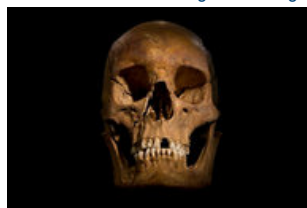
OBSERVATORY

Tracing a Royal Y Chromosome

By NICHOLAS WADE
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Researchers last week developed DNA evidence to help [identify the remains of a skeleton](#) found under a parking lot in Leicester, England, as those of Richard III, the last English king to die in battle, in 1485. But the researchers' work is only half-done. They have made a strong but not conclusive link through the female line, and are now turning to the male side for corroboration.

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University of Leicester, via Associated Press
A skull identified by mitochondrial DNA as that of Richard III.

[Turi King](#), a geneticist at the University of Leicester, found a match in the mitochondrial DNA extracted from the parking lot skeleton and that of two living descendants of Anne of York, Richard III's sister. About 1 percent of the English population carries this type. Mitochondrial DNA is bequeathed exclusively through the female line.

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[Bones Under Parking Lot Belonged to Richard III \(February 5, 2013\)](#)

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[Chris Tyler-Smith](#), a geneticist at the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute near Cambridge, said the mitochondrial DNA type identified by Dr. King was "rare enough to be interesting, but not rare enough to be conclusive."

The Leicester team plans to investigate the paternal DNA of the remains. Kevin Schürer, a historian at the university, has already found four living descendants of John of Gaunt, the son of Edward III, who was Richard III's great-great-grandfather. Dr. King has found that their Y chromosome, which is carried only by men, match, establishing that they are all true descendants of John of Gaunt.

The Y chromosome DNA from the skeleton is very degraded, but Dr. King said she had found that she could amplify it and hopes to get enough to make a match with the living descendants.

NICHOLAS WADE

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