
Results of DNA tests of remains Tsar Nicholas II and Alexandra Fyodorovna exhumed from Peter and Paul Cathedral in Saint Petersburg



The remains of Russian Tsar Nicholas II and his wife Alexander Fyodorovna were exhumed on 23 September 2015, from the Peter and Paul Cathedral in the city of Saint Petersburg in the presence of representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, Russian Government and Investigative Committee for additional tests to be run following the request of the Russian Orthodox Church during the resumed investigation in the killing of the Romanov royal family. The samples taken from the remains have not been tested before.

The State Hermitage also took the blood samples from Alexander II's clothes, he was wearing when killed in a terrorist bombing on 1 March 1881.

The samples were taken to identify the skulls found in the grave. The DNA tests are supervised by Y.I. Rogayev, a winner of the State Prize of the Russian Federation, professor of the Moscow State University, head of human genetics department of N.I. Vavilov Institute of General Genetics of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

The specialists managed to get DNA from the fragments of mandibles of Nicholas II and Alexandra Fyodorovna, and from a Tsar's cervical vertebra, suitable for DNA testing. By now, Professor Rogayev together with scientists of his laboratory at the Institute of General Genetics have run a test of DNA inherited from female line (mitochondrial DNA (mt DNA)).

The analysis of the most informative parts of mtDNA got from the samples taken on 23 September 2015 from the Tsar's mandible and cervical vertebra has shown that they match with the samples got earlier from blood stains on Nicholas II's shirt and mitochondrial DNA from other samples taken from the skeleton. The samples contain heteroplasmy, a rare genetic mutation that was found in the samples of Nicholas II's DNA.

Highly informative parts of mitochondrial DNA, rare for human population and matching the variants of it that female descendants of Queen Victoria have (the Empress was Queen Victoria's granddaughter) were found as a result of initial test of mtDNA extracted from the fragment of the Empress's mandible.

The tests once again show that the remains found in Yekaterinburg are authentic.

The examinations are going to be continued. To make more reliable and final conclusion about the identification of the skulls, experts are going to examine more DNA systems. The samples are also going to be matched with those of closest relatives, including, blood samples taken from Alexander II's clothes.

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