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## Mummies' stature reveals inbreeding

Nature 521, 8 (07 May 2015) | doi:10.1038/521008d

Published online 06 May 2015

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Subject terms: Anthropology



Patrick Landmann/SPL

The heights of the mummified pharaohs who ruled ancient Egypt support the belief that they married their siblings.

Historical records say that many Egyptian pharaohs married their sisters, but it is hard to prove through genetic testing because of ethical objections to destroying mummies' tissues (pictured is Ramses III, who was Pharaoh in 1186–1155 BC). Frank Rühli at the University of Zurich in Switzerland and his colleagues used body height, which is heavily dependent on genetics, to look for evidence of inbreeding in 259 mummies of both commoners and royals. Pharaohs varied less in height than men in the general population, which suggests that royal Egyptians may have been more inbred than commoners, the authors say. Pharaohs also tended to be taller than non-royal men from the same time period. Royal and non-royal women were equally variable in height.

*Am. J. Phys. Anthropol.* <http://doi.org/ezproxy.lib.utah.edu/37x> (2015)

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