

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:05,500

This cross is to Palaya what Excalibur is to King Arthur.

2

00:00:05,500 --> 00:00:07,500

187,000.

3

00:00:07,500 --> 00:00:09,500

Versus how many men that Palaya has?

4

00:00:09,500 --> 00:00:10,500

300.

5

00:00:10,500 --> 00:00:12,000

I've seen that movie, it's called 300.

6

00:00:12,000 --> 00:00:13,500

Yeah, they're not great odds.

7

00:00:13,500 --> 00:00:16,000

Palaya is kind of everywhere here I'm learning.

8

00:00:16,000 --> 00:00:19,500

Yes, it's a hugely important symbol.

9

00:00:23,500 --> 00:00:24,500

Yeah!

10

00:00:24,500 --> 00:00:26,500

Skeleton, from the time of Palaya.

11

00:00:26,500 --> 00:00:27,500

Yeah, I am.

12

00:00:27,500 --> 00:00:28,500

Why don't you go there and meet them?

13

00:00:28,500 --> 00:00:29,500

Are they easy to get to?

14

00:00:29,500 --> 00:00:30,500

No.

15

00:00:30,500 --> 00:00:32,500

Okay, this is a good start.

16

00:00:32,500 --> 00:00:37,500

Oh my word, look at this place!

17

00:00:37,500 --> 00:00:39,500

This is an endless cave.

18

00:00:39,500 --> 00:00:41,500

Oh, f***!

19

00:00:41,500 --> 00:00:43,500

We have a full skeleton here.

20

00:00:43,500 --> 00:00:45,500

Where's the skull?

21

00:00:45,500 --> 00:00:50,500

Nobody has even tread in some of these chambers in the centuries.

22

00:00:50,500 --> 00:00:51,500

Do I hear water?

23

00:00:51,500 --> 00:00:52,500

Yes.

24

00:00:52,500 --> 00:00:53,500

Excalibur.

25

00:00:53,500 --> 00:00:54,500

This is exploration right here.

26

00:00:54,500 --> 00:00:56,500

There's something going on here that feels superstitious.

27

00:00:56,500 --> 00:00:58,500

We got an opening right there.

28

00:00:58,500 --> 00:01:02,500

Oh my word, it is full of bones!

29

00:01:12,500 --> 00:01:18,500

We've all heard of King Arthur, the mythic warrior who vanquished an invading army to become King of the Britons.

30

00:01:18,500 --> 00:01:23,500

But there's another hero from Europe's Dark Ages you may never have heard of.

31

00:01:23,500 --> 00:01:28,500

A man who not only shaped the history of a nation, but the entire world as we know it.

32

00:01:28,500 --> 00:01:31,500

His name is Palayo.

33

00:01:31,500 --> 00:01:44,500

A humble sword bearer in Muslim-controlled 8th century Spain, who rises up to unite his people and repels an army of thousands.

34

00:01:44,500 --> 00:01:49,500

In a battle straight out of Game of Thrones.

35

00:01:49,500 --> 00:01:58,500

His victory leads to the birth of the Christian Spanish Empire, which conquered much of the Americas and altered the course of Western history.

36

00:01:58,500 --> 00:02:02,500

That is, if the story of Palayo is remotely true.

37

00:02:02,500 --> 00:02:07,500

Like King Arthur, it's hard to know where history ends and legend begins.

38

00:02:07,500 --> 00:02:14,500

But now, archaeologists and historians are making discoveries that could unlock the truth.

39

00:02:14,500 --> 00:02:22,500

Beneath the crumbling ruins of an ancient castle, newly found artifacts could reveal Palayo's true identity.

40

00:02:22,500 --> 00:02:29,500

And inside a perilous mountain cave, explorers have made a grisly discovery in the darkness.

41

00:02:29,500 --> 00:02:35,500

Human remains from the time of Palayo, with a shocking tale to tell.

42

00:02:35,500 --> 00:02:49,500

So join me as I search for the real king behind the myth, the true tale of the Christian hero who set Spain on the path to become a global superpower and changed our world forever.

43

00:02:54,500 --> 00:02:56,500

My name is Josh Gates.

44

00:02:56,500 --> 00:02:57,500

Hello!

45

00:02:57,500 --> 00:02:58,500

Explorer.

46

00:02:58,500 --> 00:02:59,500

It goes nothing.

47

00:02:59,500 --> 00:03:00,500

Adventurer.

48

00:03:00,500 --> 00:03:02,500

Oh, that's a long way down.

49

00:03:02,500 --> 00:03:05,500

And a guy who ends up in some very strange situations.

50

00:03:05,500 --> 00:03:07,500

I'm alive for now.

51

00:03:07,500 --> 00:03:16,500

With a degree in archaeology and a passion for the unexplained, I travel to the ends of the earth, investigating the greatest legends in history.

52

00:03:16,500 --> 00:03:18,500

Ready to rock and roll.

53

00:03:18,500 --> 00:03:20,500

This is Expedition Unknown.

54

00:03:21,500 --> 00:03:35,500

Spain, home to beautiful beaches, all night raves, and as much sangria and ham as you can eat.

55

00:03:35,500 --> 00:03:38,500

At least that's what I was expecting.

56

00:03:41,500 --> 00:03:42,500

Plot twist.

57

00:03:42,500 --> 00:03:44,500

Spain is freezing right now.

58

00:03:44,500 --> 00:03:52,500

I'm in the northern part of the country in the Picos de Europa mountains, and it's definitely more alpine than Ibiza.

59

00:03:52,500 --> 00:03:54,500

Turns out I waxed my back for nothing.

60

00:03:54,500 --> 00:03:56,500

What a waste.

61

00:03:59,500 --> 00:04:08,500

Since the story of Palayo is so shrouded in myth, we have to begin with the real locations that are associated with his story.

62

00:04:08,500 --> 00:04:14,500

And there's no better place to start than a high mountain sanctuary known as Covedanga.

63

00:04:14,500 --> 00:04:18,500

After all, Palayo himself is supposedly buried there.

64

00:04:23,500 --> 00:04:28,500

Near the summit of the mountain is a grand basilica and statue dedicated to Palayo.

65

00:04:28,500 --> 00:04:30,500

But I'm not here for sightseeing.

66

00:04:30,500 --> 00:04:36,500

Now that I've climbed all this way, I'm actually going down into the mountain itself.

67

00:04:39,500 --> 00:04:47,500

This is the holy cave of Covedanga, and it's been considered a sacred site for as long as anybody can remember.

68

00:04:47,500 --> 00:04:51,500

But there's a reason that Catholics still make pilgrimages here today.

69

00:04:51,500 --> 00:04:58,500

It's because this is where the legendary warrior Palayo and his men were victorious against an invading army.

70

00:04:58,500 --> 00:05:03,500

Here inside the sanctuary, I meet medieval historian Robert Portis.

71

00:05:03,500 --> 00:05:04,500

Hi Josh.

72

00:05:04,500 --> 00:05:05,500

Nice to meet you.

73

00:05:05,500 --> 00:05:06,500

Likewise.

74

00:05:06,500 --> 00:05:11,500

I think this may be the most dramatic location for a chapel I've ever seen, like literally perched on a cliff.

75

00:05:11,500 --> 00:05:15,500

And of course, here we are standing by the supposed resting place of Palayo himself.

76

00:05:15,500 --> 00:05:17,500

So I have a lot of questions about Palayo.

77

00:05:17,500 --> 00:05:20,500

When does this story take place and what's going on here in Spain?

78

00:05:20,500 --> 00:05:23,500

In the fifth century, the Roman Empire falls apart.

79

00:05:23,500 --> 00:05:31,500

And by the time we get to the early sixth century, a new political force has emerged in Spain, and that is the Visigothic Kingdom.

80

00:05:31,500 --> 00:05:38,500

Meet the Visigoths, the barbarian Germanic tribe that becomes a Christian kingdom, invades Italy, takes down Rome,

81

00:05:38,500 --> 00:05:45,500

and ends up occupying most of the Iberian Peninsula, aka future Spain, with their capital in the city of Toledo.

82

00:05:45,500 --> 00:05:47,500

But wait, who's that at the door?

83

00:05:47,500 --> 00:05:49,500

It's probably just the pizza we ordered.

84

00:05:49,500 --> 00:05:52,500

Oh no, it's the Islamic Umayyad Caliphate.

85

00:05:52,500 --> 00:05:57,500

In the year 711, this army of Arab and North African fighters destroy the Visigoth capital

86

00:05:57,500 --> 00:06:03,500

and conquer most of the country, giving them a foothold to launch attacks on the rest of Western Europe.

87

00:06:04,500 --> 00:06:09,500

And these guys are no joke, right? I mean, they really do sweep the board here in Spain.

88

00:06:09,500 --> 00:06:11,500

Yes, with really astonishing speed.

89

00:06:11,500 --> 00:06:16,500

So within a handful of years, perhaps three years, almost all of the peninsula is conquered.

90

00:06:16,500 --> 00:06:21,500

And it's in this landscape that our guy emerges. This is where Palayo comes onto the battlefield.

91

00:06:21,500 --> 00:06:25,500

That's right. So Palayo exists both in history and in legend.

92

00:06:25,500 --> 00:06:27,500

And what a legend it is.

93

00:06:29,500 --> 00:06:36,500

Palayo is a young Christian Visigoth noble, being groomed for power under the mentorship of King Roderick in Toledo.

94

00:06:45,500 --> 00:06:50,500

In the first wave of the Muslim invasion, though, the Visigoth army is wiped out.

95

00:06:52,500 --> 00:06:54,500

And King Roderick is killed.

96

00:06:55,500 --> 00:06:59,500

Palayo flees to the untamed northern borderlands of Asturias.

97

00:06:59,500 --> 00:07:07,500

Here, he rallies a ragged frontier population to his cause and prepares to face off against the Islamic forces

98

00:07:07,500 --> 00:07:10,500

in a battle to decide the fate of the Western world.

99

00:07:12,500 --> 00:07:18,500

Palayo and his followers are pursued up to this vantage point here, where we are right now.

100

00:07:18,500 --> 00:07:20,500

We literally right here in this cave.

101

00:07:20,500 --> 00:07:21,500

That's right.

102

00:07:21,500 --> 00:07:24,500

And then ultimately there's this supposedly this big battle.

103

00:07:24,500 --> 00:07:28,500

This is Palayo and his rallied forces versus the Arab army.

104

00:07:28,500 --> 00:07:31,500

And this is meant to be a fairly lopsided battle, right?

105

00:07:31,500 --> 00:07:33,500

What are the numbers that we're talking about here?

106

00:07:33,500 --> 00:07:38,500

We're told that the Arab-Berbat force is 187,000 strong.

107

00:07:38,500 --> 00:07:39,500

Okay. Yes.

108

00:07:39,500 --> 00:07:41,500

Huge, huge army.

109

00:07:41,500 --> 00:07:42,500

Absolutely.

110

00:07:42,500 --> 00:07:43,500

Versus how many men that Palayo has?

111

00:07:43,500 --> 00:07:44,500

300.

112

00:07:44,500 --> 00:07:46,500

I've seen that movie. It's called 300.

113

00:07:46,500 --> 00:07:47,500

Yeah, they're not great odds.

114

00:07:48,500 --> 00:07:55,500

Facing a slaughter, Palayo prays to the Virgin Mary for help, and his prayers are seemingly answered.

115

00:08:01,500 --> 00:08:10,500

Charging onto the battlefield, wielding the cross of their faith, Palayo and his 300 men find themselves aided by a series of miracles.

116

00:08:11,500 --> 00:08:14,500

Crushing boulders rain down from the heavens.

117

00:08:14,500 --> 00:08:22,500

Surging rivers swallow the Muslim army, and volleys of arrows turn in mid-air back at the terrified archers who fired them.

118

00:08:22,500 --> 00:08:29,500

Admittedly, this blessing from above reads like a marvel-sized special effects extravaganza.

119

00:08:29,500 --> 00:08:37,500

But according to the legend, over 100,000 Muslims are killed, and Palayo is crowned the first king of Asturias.

120

00:08:38,500 --> 00:08:52,500

His line would become a dynasty that forms the beginnings of the Christian Spanish Empire, which expands beyond Europe to explore and then conquer the new world, including land that would become

the good old U.S. of A.

121

00:08:52,500 --> 00:08:55,500

And all of it starts in this cave.

122

00:08:55,500 --> 00:08:57,500

So this is a great story.

123

00:08:57,500 --> 00:08:58,500

It's an amazing story.

124

00:08:58,500 --> 00:09:00,500

Right? It's an underdog story. It's heroic.

125

00:09:00,500 --> 00:09:01,500

It is.

126

00:09:01,500 --> 00:09:03,500

Is any of it true?

127

00:09:04,500 --> 00:09:07,500

No, this is the difficult question to answer.

128

00:09:07,500 --> 00:09:08,500

Right.

129

00:09:08,500 --> 00:09:13,500

The main sources for the heroic Palayo legend are all, unsurprisingly, Christian.

130

00:09:13,500 --> 00:09:21,500

But Islamic writers mention him too, painting Palayo as a pathetic rebel who they don't even bother to attack.

131

00:09:21,500 --> 00:09:25,500

They do bother to mention him, though, which probably tells us something.

132

00:09:25,500 --> 00:09:29,500

I think that Palayo is too prominent a figure to have been totally invented.

133

00:09:29,500 --> 00:09:30,500

Right.

134

00:09:30,500 --> 00:09:34,500

And what can we say historically? Let's take the tomb, for instance.

135

00:09:34,500 --> 00:09:37,500

Is there any historicity to him being buried right here?

136

00:09:37,500 --> 00:09:40,500

We don't have a concrete indication that he's buried here.

137

00:09:40,500 --> 00:09:46,500

The tomb dates back to about the year 1200 and is mostly regarded as a symbolic burial.

138

00:09:46,500 --> 00:09:54,500

Furthermore, the crypt here will never be opened, lest it threaten the legend of Palayo, which looms large here in Spain.

139

00:09:54,500 --> 00:10:00,500

So we have a lot of symbolism here, but where do we look to figure out if this story is true?

140

00:10:00,500 --> 00:10:04,500

Well, some artifacts remain from the period in question.

141

00:10:04,500 --> 00:10:07,500

One particular object survives.

142

00:10:07,500 --> 00:10:09,500

An artifact that may be from Palayo's life.

143

00:10:09,500 --> 00:10:14,500

That's right. Perhaps even an artifact that he may have handled himself, which can be found locally, in fact, in Orviado.

144

00:10:14,500 --> 00:10:16,500

All right. A good place to start.

145

00:10:16,500 --> 00:10:17,500

Absolutely.

146

00:10:18,500 --> 00:10:27,500

I drive 50 miles from Covedanga to the capital of Asturias, the city of Orviado.

147

00:10:35,500 --> 00:10:42,500

Over the centuries, Orviado and the surrounding area has been occupied by Celts, Romans and Visigoths,

148

00:10:42,500 --> 00:10:46,500

and the influences of all of them are still felt here today.

149

00:10:46,500 --> 00:10:51,500

I want to see the only known artifact associated with the legendary King Palayo,

150

00:10:51,500 --> 00:10:58,500

so I head to the Cathedral of San Salvador to meet journalist and historian, Olia Pena.

151

00:10:58,500 --> 00:11:02,500

I have to say, I'm kind of overwhelmed. This is magnificent.

152

00:11:02,500 --> 00:11:08,500

It was ordered to be built by one of the descendants of Palayo, the King Alfonso II.

153

00:11:08,500 --> 00:11:11,500

Palayo is kind of everywhere here, I'm learning.

154

00:11:11,500 --> 00:11:18,500

Yeah, and we have a very important object, a physical object, that belongs to Palayo history.

155

00:11:18,500 --> 00:11:19,500

Okay. Do you want to see it?

156

00:11:19,500 --> 00:11:20,500

I would love to see it.

157

00:11:20,500 --> 00:11:23,500

Let's go. There's a crypt underneath the cathedral.

158

00:11:23,500 --> 00:11:24,500

Oh, I love a good crypt.

159

00:11:27,500 --> 00:11:33,500

Olia escorts me underground, having arranged for rare access to the Camara Santa,

160

00:11:33,500 --> 00:11:37,500

the holy chamber where the church holds sacred treasures.

161

00:11:42,500 --> 00:11:44,500

Wow, look at this.

162

00:11:44,500 --> 00:11:50,500

This is the cross that Palayo carried into battle, the cross of victory.

163

00:11:51,500 --> 00:11:52,500

What?

164

00:11:58,500 --> 00:12:04,500

This is the cross that Palayo carried at Covedanga, in the defeat of the Muslim army.

165

00:12:04,500 --> 00:12:10,500

Yeah, according to the legend, he defeats the enemy with the help of this cross.

166

00:12:10,500 --> 00:12:15,500

Spain's celebrated King Palayo was said to have been a Christian Visigoth noble,

167

00:12:15,500 --> 00:12:21,500

who allied himself with savage northern tribesmen to evict the country's Muslim occupiers.

168

00:12:21,500 --> 00:12:25,500

I'm in a church crypt searching for the truth behind the legend,

169

00:12:25,500 --> 00:12:30,500

and getting exclusive access to one of Spain's holiest relics.

170

00:12:31,500 --> 00:12:33,500

And it's the actual cross.

171

00:12:33,500 --> 00:12:34,500

According to legend, it is.

172

00:12:34,500 --> 00:12:38,500

So there's that word again, legend, that always comes up with Palayo, right?

173

00:12:38,500 --> 00:12:42,500

This cross is to Palayo what Excalibur is to King Arthur, right?

174

00:12:42,500 --> 00:12:45,500

Yes, it's a hugely important symbol.

175

00:12:45,500 --> 00:12:47,500

This cross is so ornate.

176

00:12:47,500 --> 00:12:52,500

It's not what I would imagine a warrior would be carrying into battle in the mountains.

177

00:12:52,500 --> 00:12:58,500

According to the legend, the cross that Palayo carried to rally his troops was a wooden one.

178

00:12:58,500 --> 00:13:00,500

Right, a simple cross.

179

00:13:00,500 --> 00:13:01,500

A simple cross.

180

00:13:02,500 --> 00:13:06,500

In the legend, Palayo's faith and the wooden cross he carried into battle

181

00:13:06,500 --> 00:13:10,500

led to divine intervention to defeat the invading army.

182

00:13:10,500 --> 00:13:14,500

Years later, one of Palayo's descendants, King Alfonso III,

183

00:13:14,500 --> 00:13:20,500

supposedly gilded the cross and decorated it with 152 jewels.

184

00:13:20,500 --> 00:13:22,500

How do we know that his cross is in here?

185

00:13:22,500 --> 00:13:23,500

That's a good point.

186

00:13:23,500 --> 00:13:27,500

We know that because there is an inscription here behind the cross

187

00:13:27,500 --> 00:13:33,500

that says that this cross was gilded in Gasson Castle.

188

00:13:33,500 --> 00:13:37,500

One of the castles built by that king, Alfonso III.

189

00:13:37,500 --> 00:13:38,500

And is that true?

190

00:13:38,500 --> 00:13:41,500

Well, there is a team of archaeologists.

191

00:13:41,500 --> 00:13:43,500

They are still working there.

192

00:13:43,500 --> 00:13:44,500

Okay.

193

00:13:44,500 --> 00:13:48,500

So if you want to know if this is the true cross, you have to go to Gasson Castle.

194

00:13:48,500 --> 00:13:51,500

Okay, so to the castle.

195

00:13:52,500 --> 00:13:58,500

To see where Palayo's cross came from and learn if this part of the legend holds up,

196

00:13:58,500 --> 00:14:03,500

I drive 30 miles north of Oviedo to Gasson Castle.

197

00:14:05,500 --> 00:14:10,500

Working here to reconstruct the story of the castle and its connection to King Palayo

198

00:14:10,500 --> 00:14:13,500

is archaeologist Alejandro Garcia.

199

00:14:14,500 --> 00:14:15,500

Alejandro!

200

00:14:15,500 --> 00:14:16,500

Hey!

201

00:14:16,500 --> 00:14:17,500

Hello, Jos.

202

00:14:17,500 --> 00:14:18,500

How are you?

203

00:14:18,500 --> 00:14:19,500

Nice to meet you.

204

00:14:19,500 --> 00:14:20,500

I'm out of breath.

205

00:14:20,500 --> 00:14:21,500

But I'm good, I'm good.

206

00:14:21,500 --> 00:14:27,500

Okay, so I've seen this cross at the cathedral, this beautiful gold gilded cross.

207

00:14:27,500 --> 00:14:32,500

And it says, literally, stamped that it was gilded here at Gasson Castle.

208

00:14:32,500 --> 00:14:33,500

Is that true?

209

00:14:33,500 --> 00:14:35,500

Yes, that's true.

210

00:14:35,500 --> 00:14:36,500

100%?

211

00:14:36,500 --> 00:14:37,500

Yeah.

212

00:14:37,500 --> 00:14:40,500

Oh, I thought you were going to hedge and be an archaeologist and say we don't know.

213

00:14:40,500 --> 00:14:42,500

Maybe you feel confident.

214

00:14:42,500 --> 00:14:44,500

In this case, we are confident.

215

00:14:44,500 --> 00:14:45,500

Okay, why are you so confident?

216

00:14:45,500 --> 00:14:49,500

Because we found a lot of things that are linked with the cross.

217

00:14:49,500 --> 00:14:50,500

Link to the cross?

218

00:14:50,500 --> 00:14:51,500

Yeah.

219

00:14:51,500 --> 00:14:56,500

To make the Palayo connection, Alejandro brings me over to the other side of Gasson.

220

00:14:56,500 --> 00:14:57,500

So what did you find here?

221

00:14:57,500 --> 00:15:08,500

The most important is that we found here, we have in this little box, we have this pieces.

222

00:15:08,500 --> 00:15:09,500

Are these gems?

223

00:15:09,500 --> 00:15:10,500

Yeah.

224

00:15:11,500 --> 00:15:14,500

Wait, you found gems in the ground here?

225

00:15:14,500 --> 00:15:16,500

Yes, in this side.

226

00:15:16,500 --> 00:15:17,500

May I?

227

00:15:17,500 --> 00:15:18,500

Yeah, you can.

228

00:15:18,500 --> 00:15:22,500

These jewels look exactly like the gems that we see on the cross.

229

00:15:22,500 --> 00:15:23,500

Yeah.

230

00:15:23,500 --> 00:15:28,500

The jewels here are exactly the same type and shape as those on the Holy Cross.

231

00:15:28,500 --> 00:15:34,500

And archaeologists found remains of smelting fires in what was likely a workshop.

232

00:15:34,500 --> 00:15:37,500

Carbon dating of the charcoal puts it in the 10th century.

233

00:15:37,500 --> 00:15:41,500

At the exact time the cross was supposed to have been gilded.

234

00:15:41,500 --> 00:15:46,500

So we have a metal workshop where metalworking gilding was happening.

235

00:15:46,500 --> 00:15:47,500

Yeah.

236

00:15:47,500 --> 00:15:48,500

In the exact right time period.

237

00:15:48,500 --> 00:15:49,500

Uh-huh.

238

00:15:49,500 --> 00:15:50,500

Yeah.

239

00:15:50,500 --> 00:15:51,500

In the place where the cross was supposed to be made.

240

00:15:51,500 --> 00:15:52,500

Yes, you are right.

241

00:15:52,500 --> 00:15:55,500

The cross was made here in 908.

242

00:15:55,500 --> 00:15:56,500

Unbelievable.

243

00:15:56,500 --> 00:15:57,500

Amazing.

244

00:15:57,500 --> 00:16:02,500

This could be the very room where Palayo's victory cross was gilded.

245

00:16:02,500 --> 00:16:08,500

And it helps establish a firm connection to the artifact.

246

00:16:08,500 --> 00:16:11,500

But this isn't the only shocking discovery.

247

00:16:11,500 --> 00:16:16,500

Alejandro's team is currently digging just outside the remains of the castle walls.

248

00:16:16,500 --> 00:16:20,500

And they've found items that shouldn't be there.

249

00:16:20,500 --> 00:16:22,500

Look at this.

250

00:16:22,500 --> 00:16:24,500

Here is a piece of pottery.

251

00:16:24,500 --> 00:16:26,500

Oh, with a weird pattern.

252

00:16:26,500 --> 00:16:28,500

It's a special pottery.

253

00:16:28,500 --> 00:16:29,500

Okay, special how?

254

00:16:29,500 --> 00:16:35,500

I think that this pottery can be of the 6th or 7th century.

255

00:16:35,500 --> 00:16:36,500

6th or 7th century?

256

00:16:36,500 --> 00:16:37,500

Yes.

257

00:16:37,500 --> 00:16:41,500

But the castle is built by Alfonso III in the 10th century.

258

00:16:41,500 --> 00:16:42,500

So what is this doing here?

259

00:16:42,500 --> 00:16:49,500

It's here, this pottery, because we are discovering that there was a castle here before Alfonso III.

260

00:16:49,500 --> 00:16:59,500

The fact that there was a castle here centuries earlier than previously thought may fundamentally alter key elements of the Palayo legend.

261

00:16:59,500 --> 00:17:11,500

What the team is discovering here reveals that far from being savage frontiersmen, the Asturians that Palayo led into battle appear to have been a sophisticated and organized society.

262

00:17:11,500 --> 00:17:19,500

Arrowheads and blades found at the site confirmed that they knew how to fight before Palayo arrived here.

263

00:17:19,500 --> 00:17:28,500

In fact, there's even a version of Palayo's story from the 9th century that suggests he might not have come here as an outsider from the big city of Toledo.

264

00:17:28,500 --> 00:17:33,500

Instead, he might have actually been from this northern area to begin with.

265

00:17:33,500 --> 00:17:38,500

So maybe Palayo is less King Arthur and more William Wallace.

266

00:17:38,500 --> 00:17:43,500

He's less of this nobleman who rises up and he's more of a local warrior.

267

00:17:43,500 --> 00:17:44,500

Yeah.

268

00:17:45,500 --> 00:17:49,500

But the artifacts here don't just challenge Palayo's origin story.

269

00:17:49,500 --> 00:17:54,500

They're telling us more about the bedrock of the Palayo legend, his Christian faith.

270

00:17:54,500 --> 00:18:01,500

I think that in the 8th century, they were between the two wars.

271

00:18:01,500 --> 00:18:07,500

They were Christians, but also they were a fallow pagan traditions.

272

00:18:07,500 --> 00:18:14,500

This too defies our image of Palayo as the Christian noble assisted in battle by the Virgin Mary.

273

00:18:14,500 --> 00:18:19,500

Christianity was still in a time of great transition in this part of the world.

274

00:18:19,500 --> 00:18:23,500

Yeah, because there is a very clear change.

275

00:18:23,500 --> 00:18:31,500

Later of the 8th or 9th centuries, all the people buried in the cemeteries of the churches.

276

00:18:31,500 --> 00:18:32,500

Right.

277

00:18:32,500 --> 00:18:43,500

And before, they were buried in the top of hills or we have found very close from here, burials inside a cave.

278

00:18:43,500 --> 00:18:44,500

Uh-huh.

279

00:18:45,500 --> 00:18:47,500

This is very significant.

280

00:18:47,500 --> 00:18:55,500

Incredibly rare evidence of burials has been found in a nearby cave system close to the site of the battle of Covadanga.

281

00:18:55,500 --> 00:19:01,500

These remains could rewrite the true story of Palayo and his warriors.

282

00:19:01,500 --> 00:19:10,500

Our next stop is about 50 miles from here, where at this very moment, archaeologists are making discoveries in a remote cave known as Lagarma.

283

00:19:10,500 --> 00:19:20,500

And there, deep underground, they're finding that the truth about the world of Palayo is much darker than the gilded legend and much more dangerous.

284

00:19:23,500 --> 00:19:30,500

At the entrance to the Lagarma cave complex, I meet a pair of explorers who have been crawling inside of these mountains for decades.

285

00:19:30,500 --> 00:19:33,500

Pablo Arias and Jose Angel.

286

00:19:33,500 --> 00:19:35,500

Okay, so you guys look ready for adventure.

287

00:19:35,500 --> 00:19:36,500

Ready.

288

00:19:36,500 --> 00:19:37,500

Yes, okay.

289

00:19:37,500 --> 00:19:39,500

So tell me about this cave that you're exploring.

290

00:19:39,500 --> 00:19:41,500

What makes this place so special?

291

00:19:41,500 --> 00:19:43,500

Well, everything makes Lagarma special.

292

00:19:43,500 --> 00:19:44,500

It's a unique place.

293

00:19:44,500 --> 00:19:45,500

It's called Lagarma and why?

294

00:19:45,500 --> 00:19:46,500

Why is it unique?

295

00:19:46,500 --> 00:19:49,500

Because people have been living here for half a million years.

296

00:19:49,500 --> 00:19:52,500

Boy, it sounded like you said a half a million years.

297

00:19:52,500 --> 00:19:53,500

Yeah, exactly.

298

00:19:53,500 --> 00:19:56,500

There's human habitation in this cave that goes back that far?

299

00:19:56,500 --> 00:19:57,500

Yeah, yeah.

300

00:19:57,500 --> 00:19:58,500

Wow.

301

00:19:58,500 --> 00:20:00,500

And has this cave been fully mapped?

302

00:20:00,500 --> 00:20:01,500

Not yet.

303

00:20:01,500 --> 00:20:03,500

There are many galleries and no...

304

00:20:03,500 --> 00:20:04,500

And you think there's more to find?

305

00:20:04,500 --> 00:20:05,500

Yes.

306

00:20:05,500 --> 00:20:06,500

Okay.

307

00:20:06,500 --> 00:20:08,500

And so what sorts of things are you discovering?

308

00:20:08,500 --> 00:20:10,500

Right now, we are finding human skeletons.

309

00:20:10,500 --> 00:20:11,500

From when?

310

00:20:11,500 --> 00:20:14,500

From the time of Palayo.

311

00:20:14,500 --> 00:20:19,500

This is extraordinary because there's so little archaeological evidence from this time period.

312

00:20:19,500 --> 00:20:21,500

Why don't you go there and meet them?

313

00:20:29,500 --> 00:20:31,500

Meet skeletons from the time of Palayo.

314

00:20:31,500 --> 00:20:32,500

Yeah, I am.

315

00:20:32,500 --> 00:20:37,500

Deep inside the mountains of northern Spain, archaeologists have made a discovery that

316

00:20:37,500 --> 00:20:43,500

could help tell the real story of the legendary warrior king Palayo.

317

00:20:43,500 --> 00:20:45,500

So tell me about these skeletons.

318

00:20:45,500 --> 00:20:47,500

Well, you can see them yourself.

319

00:20:47,500 --> 00:20:48,500

In the cave?

320

00:20:48,500 --> 00:20:49,500

Yeah, yeah, inside the cave.

321

00:20:49,500 --> 00:20:50,500

Are they easy to get to?

322

00:20:50,500 --> 00:20:51,500

No, no.

323

00:20:51,500 --> 00:20:52,500

No, of course not.

324

00:20:52,500 --> 00:20:54,500

It's quite a difficult trip.

325

00:20:54,500 --> 00:20:55,500

It's three hours underground.

326

00:20:55,500 --> 00:20:57,500

Three hours in darkness?

327

00:20:57,500 --> 00:21:00,500

Okay, well, I would like to meet them.

328

00:21:00,500 --> 00:21:01,500

Okay, let's go.

329

00:21:01,500 --> 00:21:02,500

Shall we do it?

330

00:21:02,500 --> 00:21:03,500

Let's go.

331

00:21:03,500 --> 00:21:04,500

Come on, let's do it.

332

00:21:05,500 --> 00:21:14,500

Lagarma is firmly closed to the public, so this access is very, very special.

333

00:21:14,500 --> 00:21:19,500

As we approach the cave entrance, we're joined by Pablo and Jose's team, who'll be going into

334

00:21:19,500 --> 00:21:21,500

Lagarma with us.

335

00:21:21,500 --> 00:21:23,500

Into the darkness, here we go.

336

00:21:24,500 --> 00:21:29,500

I've been told this is a massive cave.

337

00:21:29,500 --> 00:21:32,500

Right now, though, it doesn't feel like it.

338

00:21:32,500 --> 00:21:33,500

That's the entrance?

339

00:21:33,500 --> 00:21:34,500

Yes.

340

00:21:34,500 --> 00:21:36,500

Oh, I should have skipped breakfast.

341

00:21:36,500 --> 00:21:37,500

Okay, let's go.

342

00:21:37,500 --> 00:21:38,500

Go ahead.

343

00:21:41,500 --> 00:21:42,500

No way.

344

00:21:44,500 --> 00:21:45,500

I mean...

345

00:21:45,500 --> 00:21:50,500

I might have to do this head first.

346

00:21:50,500 --> 00:21:55,500

Hey, it's not going to be graceful, but here I come.

347

00:21:55,500 --> 00:22:07,500

This is a good start.

348

00:22:07,500 --> 00:22:09,500

This is only the beginning.

349

00:22:09,500 --> 00:22:11,500

Okay, nobody wants to hear that.

350

00:22:11,500 --> 00:22:13,500

Are you kidding me with this?

351

00:22:13,500 --> 00:22:18,500

This cave has been preserved from outsiders for centuries, and microbes from the surface

352

00:22:18,500 --> 00:22:22,500

could potentially change the ecology inside Lagarma.

353

00:22:22,500 --> 00:22:27,500

To prevent that, we change into footwear that's been sterilized.

354

00:22:27,500 --> 00:22:32,500

Properly shod, we are ready to descend the vertical shaft, which has been outfitted with

355

00:22:32,500 --> 00:22:33,500

a ladder.

356

00:22:33,500 --> 00:22:34,500

Oh boy.

357

00:22:34,500 --> 00:22:36,500

I'm going to get out of here.

358

00:22:36,500 --> 00:22:40,500

We're ready to descend the vertical shaft, which has been outfitted with a ladder.

359

00:22:40,500 --> 00:22:41,500

Oh boy.

360

00:22:41,500 --> 00:22:44,500

Big drop off.

361

00:22:44,500 --> 00:22:50,500

Alright, Enblay, coming down.

362

00:22:50,500 --> 00:22:55,500

Everything in this cave is damp and slick, so we make sure to use harnesses and clip

363

00:22:55,500 --> 00:22:56,500

in.

364

00:22:56,500 --> 00:22:59,500

One misstep, and the drops are lethal.

365

00:22:59,500 --> 00:23:00,500

Oh boy.

366

00:23:00,500 --> 00:23:05,500

That's a long way down.

367

00:23:05,500 --> 00:23:12,500

Okay, I'm down.

368

00:23:12,500 --> 00:23:13,500

Okay.

369

00:23:13,500 --> 00:23:17,500

Now that I'm safely down, Pablo and Jose join me.

370

00:23:17,500 --> 00:23:19,500

Okay, we made it down the ladder.

371

00:23:19,500 --> 00:23:20,500

The first ladder.

372

00:23:20,500 --> 00:23:21,500

The first ladder.

373

00:23:21,500 --> 00:23:22,500

Yeah.

374

00:23:22,500 --> 00:23:23,500

Oh, okay, great.

375

00:23:23,500 --> 00:23:25,500

Okay, let's go.

376

00:23:25,500 --> 00:23:27,500

The first ladder.

377

00:23:27,500 --> 00:23:29,500

How deep is this cave?

378

00:23:29,500 --> 00:23:30,500

The answer?

379

00:23:30,500 --> 00:23:31,500

Very deep.

380

00:23:31,500 --> 00:23:35,500

There's almost a mile of known passages in La Garma.

381

00:23:35,500 --> 00:23:41,260

Pablo's team has mapped three distinct levels, each with a sheer drop with some chambers

382

00:23:41,260 --> 00:23:44,860

that are more than 400 feet underground.

383

00:23:44,860 --> 00:23:49,200

To keep all of us from getting hopelessly lost, they've marked the floor with reflectors

384

00:23:49,200 --> 00:23:55,500

to create a narrow path through the dark and winding forest of stone.

385

00:23:55,500 --> 00:24:00,500

I mean, look at this place.

386

00:24:00,500 --> 00:24:04,500

Woo.

387

00:24:04,500 --> 00:24:09,500

We hike on into the darkness through one immense cavern after another.

388

00:24:09,500 --> 00:24:14,140

Eventually, we find ourselves at the top of another drop where the archaeologists have

389

00:24:14,140 --> 00:24:18,140

rigged another ladder.

390

00:24:18,140 --> 00:24:19,500

Ladder number two.

391

00:24:19,500 --> 00:24:21,500

Oh, my word.

392

00:24:21,500 --> 00:24:23,500

Oh boy.

393

00:24:23,500 --> 00:24:27,500

This is an endless cave.

394

00:24:28,500 --> 00:24:33,500

Pablo graciously agrees to go first, then it's my turn to descend.

395

00:24:33,500 --> 00:24:42,500

Okay, down we go.

396

00:24:42,500 --> 00:24:45,500

How is it so far down?

397

00:24:45,500 --> 00:24:50,500

It's like a black hole.

398

00:24:50,500 --> 00:24:54,500

Oh, oh, f***.

399

00:24:54,500 --> 00:24:55,500

You all right?

400

00:24:55,500 --> 00:25:04,500

This is the third level of La Garma.

401

00:25:04,500 --> 00:25:11,500

Pablo and Jose lead us further until we enter a chamber dripping with stalactites.

402

00:25:11,500 --> 00:25:14,500

Well, just this is the room I wanted you to see.

403

00:25:14,500 --> 00:25:16,500

Oh, my word.

404

00:25:16,500 --> 00:25:18,500

Look at this place.

405

00:25:18,500 --> 00:25:20,500

Unbelievable.

406

00:25:20,500 --> 00:25:24,500

As we enter, the chamber is eerily quiet, like a sanctuary.

407

00:25:24,500 --> 00:25:28,500

And then I learn that we're not alone.

408

00:25:28,500 --> 00:25:31,500

And this is the person I wanted you to meet.

409

00:25:31,500 --> 00:25:33,500

Oh, my God.

410

00:25:33,500 --> 00:25:37,500

This is a full skeleton.

411

00:25:37,500 --> 00:25:42,500

Oh, my God.

412

00:25:42,500 --> 00:25:44,500

This is a full skeleton.

413

00:25:44,500 --> 00:25:46,500

Look at this.

414

00:25:46,500 --> 00:25:53,500

We're deep inside the La Garma cave, an undisturbed time capsule from the era of Spain's heroic king, Palayo.

415

00:25:53,500 --> 00:25:57,500

We're searching for evidence of the truth behind his legend.

416

00:25:57,500 --> 00:26:00,500

This might qualify.

417

00:26:00,500 --> 00:26:03,500

We have a full skeleton here.

418

00:26:03,500 --> 00:26:06,500

But there are the skeletons. There's another one up there.

419

00:26:06,500 --> 00:26:08,500

Oh, there's another skeleton right there.

420

00:26:08,500 --> 00:26:10,500

How many of these skeletons are here?

421

00:26:10,500 --> 00:26:12,500

There are five in this gallery.

422

00:26:12,500 --> 00:26:13,500

Five.

423

00:26:13,500 --> 00:26:15,500

And these are from the time of Palayo?

424

00:26:15,500 --> 00:26:16,500

Yeah, he's there.

425

00:26:16,500 --> 00:26:22,500

The archaeologists have discovered that this chamber is, in fact, an eerie necropolis.

426

00:26:22,500 --> 00:26:31,500

The skeletons have been carefully laid out on the floor, surrounded by broken pieces of stalactites in some sort of burial ritual.

427

00:26:31,500 --> 00:26:33,500

Unbelievable.

428

00:26:33,500 --> 00:26:35,500

I'm trying to understand this.

429

00:26:35,500 --> 00:26:38,500

People brought these five bodies all the way down here.

430

00:26:38,500 --> 00:26:40,500

This whole trip that we've made, they came the same way.

431

00:26:40,500 --> 00:26:42,500

Only ropes and torches.

432

00:26:42,500 --> 00:26:46,500

Think about that. With torches, how scary this environment would be.

433

00:26:46,500 --> 00:26:49,500

They must have felt like they were venturing into the underworld.

434

00:26:49,500 --> 00:26:50,500

Yeah, yeah. No doubt.

435

00:26:50,500 --> 00:26:56,500

Why? This must have been a kind of ceremonial burial, in a way, right?

436

00:26:56,500 --> 00:26:58,500

Yeah, it's a funerary treatment.

437

00:26:58,500 --> 00:27:01,500

Was any clothing found? Was any textiles found?

438

00:27:01,500 --> 00:27:03,500

No, it had not been preserved.

439

00:27:03,500 --> 00:27:05,500

We did find one thing in the other room.

440

00:27:05,500 --> 00:27:08,500

Just a metal belt buckle.

441

00:27:08,500 --> 00:27:11,500

A metal belt buckle? And what does it look like?

442

00:27:11,500 --> 00:27:15,500

It is made of iron with silver and brass inlaid.

443

00:27:15,500 --> 00:27:18,500

And it has a cross.

444

00:27:18,500 --> 00:27:20,500

It has a cross? Yes.

445

00:27:20,500 --> 00:27:22,500

So these are Christians?

446

00:27:22,500 --> 00:27:23,500

We think so.

447

00:27:23,500 --> 00:27:28,500

I mean, there's something very heathen or pagan about this.

448

00:27:28,500 --> 00:27:34,500

There are so few burials from the time of Palayo that what we're seeing here is revelatory.

449

00:27:34,500 --> 00:27:40,500

It's clear that at this time Christianity existed alongside lingering pagan traditions,

450

00:27:40,500 --> 00:27:44,500

including some very dark rituals.

451

00:27:44,500 --> 00:27:50,500

For being here over a thousand years, it's incredibly well preserved, except for one thing.

452

00:27:50,500 --> 00:27:53,500

The skull. Where's the skull?

453

00:27:53,500 --> 00:27:55,500

The skull is here, but it has been crushed.

454

00:27:55,500 --> 00:27:57,500

Literally smashed down to a powder almost.

455

00:27:57,500 --> 00:28:01,500

Yeah, yeah, yeah. All of them have their skulls crushed.

456

00:28:01,500 --> 00:28:03,500

Why? Why crush the skull?

457

00:28:03,500 --> 00:28:08,500

Probably because they have a fear of these people because they wanted them to not to return.

458

00:28:08,500 --> 00:28:11,500

To return? Revenants.

459

00:28:11,500 --> 00:28:14,500

Revenants? You're talking about vampires?

460

00:28:14,500 --> 00:28:20,500

In the Middle Ages, the belief that people could return from the dead as evil spirits was not only common,

461

00:28:20,500 --> 00:28:23,500

urgent measures were taken to prevent it.

462

00:28:23,500 --> 00:28:27,500

So-called revenant burials have been found all over the world,

463

00:28:27,500 --> 00:28:31,500

with the dead buried upside down, with stones in their mouths,

464

00:28:31,500 --> 00:28:35,500

and even with the occasional stake through the heart.

465

00:28:35,500 --> 00:28:37,500

But they're from the time of Palayo.

466

00:28:37,500 --> 00:28:40,500

But who these five people are, we don't know.

467

00:28:40,500 --> 00:28:41,500

No, no, no.

468

00:28:41,500 --> 00:28:44,500

These bodies are an incredible discovery.

469

00:28:44,500 --> 00:28:48,500

We don't know who they were or why they were given such a strange burial,

470

00:28:48,500 --> 00:28:54,500

but the fact that things like this were happening shows us that all of the romantic imagery of Palayo

471

00:28:54,500 --> 00:29:00,500

and his men as squeaky clean Christian heroes isn't painting a full enough picture of the time.

472

00:29:03,500 --> 00:29:07,500

We're pressing onward, further and deeper into the bowels of the earth,

473

00:29:07,500 --> 00:29:11,500

toward a section of Ligarma that has never been explored.

474

00:29:11,500 --> 00:29:13,500

Okay, that's impressive.

475

00:29:13,500 --> 00:29:16,500

Yes, this is the largest room that we have in the cave.

476

00:29:16,500 --> 00:29:17,500

This is crazy.

477

00:29:17,500 --> 00:29:18,500

Yeah.

478

00:29:18,500 --> 00:29:19,500

Oh, it goes up even higher.

479

00:29:19,500 --> 00:29:20,500

Must be 150 feet up.

480

00:29:20,500 --> 00:29:21,500

Thanks.

481

00:29:21,500 --> 00:29:22,500

A single room.

482

00:29:22,500 --> 00:29:24,500

How far underground are we here?

483

00:29:24,500 --> 00:29:26,500

Around 400 feet.

484

00:29:26,500 --> 00:29:27,500

400 feet underground?

485

00:29:27,500 --> 00:29:28,500

Yeah.

486

00:29:32,500 --> 00:29:37,500

But to get to the unseen sections of Ligarma, we're going even deeper,

487

00:29:37,500 --> 00:29:41,500

thanks to one last ladder placed by Pablo's team.

488

00:29:42,500 --> 00:29:48,500

Just, this is the ladder we've just set up to descend to the lowest level.

489

00:29:48,500 --> 00:29:49,500

Okay.

490

00:29:49,500 --> 00:29:53,500

Unlike the ladders above, it feels hastily rigged.

491

00:29:53,500 --> 00:29:58,500

To get to the bottom safely, we may need to resort to Palayo's technique, prayer.

492

00:29:58,500 --> 00:29:59,500

Jose.

493

00:29:59,500 --> 00:30:00,500

Yes?

494

00:30:00,500 --> 00:30:01,500

You like this ladder?

495

00:30:01,500 --> 00:30:02,500

No, I hate this ladder.

496

00:30:02,500 --> 00:30:04,500

But it's the only ladder we have.

497

00:30:04,500 --> 00:30:07,500

You ever think about starting a greeting card company, Jose?

498

00:30:07,500 --> 00:30:09,500

I don't know.

499

00:30:09,500 --> 00:30:10,500

What?

500

00:30:10,500 --> 00:30:11,500

Nothing.

501

00:30:11,500 --> 00:30:12,500

It's very inspirational.

502

00:30:12,500 --> 00:30:13,500

Here we go.

503

00:30:13,500 --> 00:30:18,500

We clip in for one final descent, and then down we go.

504

00:30:18,500 --> 00:30:20,500

Is that a rung my foot's on?

505

00:30:20,500 --> 00:30:21,500

Okay.

506

00:30:21,500 --> 00:30:23,500

Boy, it's just blind.

507

00:30:23,500 --> 00:30:25,500

You can't see anything.

508

00:30:25,500 --> 00:30:26,500

Oh, this sucks.

509

00:30:26,500 --> 00:30:27,500

Okay.

510

00:30:27,500 --> 00:30:29,500

Okay, coming down.

511

00:30:29,500 --> 00:30:32,500

Okay, I'm down.

512

00:30:32,500 --> 00:30:37,500

Shaking like a leaf.

513

00:30:37,500 --> 00:30:40,500

This is it, literal rock bottom.

514

00:30:40,500 --> 00:30:41,500

Okay.

515

00:30:41,500 --> 00:30:42,500

I'm down.

516

00:30:42,500 --> 00:30:44,500

I'm down.

517

00:30:44,500 --> 00:30:46,500

I'm down.

518

00:30:46,500 --> 00:30:48,500

I'm down.

519

00:30:48,500 --> 00:30:50,500

I'm down.

520

00:30:50,500 --> 00:30:52,500

I'm down.

521

00:30:52,500 --> 00:30:53,500

I'm down.

522

00:30:53,500 --> 00:30:54,500

I'm down.

523

00:30:54,500 --> 00:30:55,500

I'm down.

524

00:30:55,500 --> 00:30:56,500

I'm down.

525

00:30:56,500 --> 00:30:57,500

I'm down.

526

00:30:57,500 --> 00:30:58,500

I'm down.

527

00:30:58,500 --> 00:30:59,500

I'm down.

528

00:30:59,500 --> 00:31:06,500

We're heading into unknown territory, a new unmapped level of tunnels here

529

00:31:06,500 --> 00:31:11,000

at Lagarma that may contain more burials and perhaps, even a tangible

530

00:31:11,000 --> 00:31:19,500

connection to Palaios.

531

00:31:19,500 --> 00:31:24,500

Down, down, down.

532

00:31:24,500 --> 00:31:26,500

Do I hear water?

533

00:31:26,500 --> 00:31:27,660

Yes, it's a river.

534

00:31:27,660 --> 00:31:29,140

The river runs through this level.

535

00:31:29,140 --> 00:31:29,940

Yeah.

536

00:31:29,940 --> 00:31:32,180

And I don't see any of your excavation markers here.

537

00:31:32,180 --> 00:31:33,000

No.

538

00:31:33,000 --> 00:31:33,840

That's new territory.

539

00:31:33,840 --> 00:31:34,660

New territory.

540

00:31:34,660 --> 00:31:35,460

All right.

541

00:31:35,460 --> 00:31:36,460

Let's see what we find.

542

00:31:36,460 --> 00:31:45,220

Well, we're really going in the river.

543

00:31:45,220 --> 00:31:46,120

Yeah.

544

00:31:46,120 --> 00:31:47,020

Wow.

545

00:31:47,020 --> 00:31:47,820

Excuse me.

546

00:31:52,900 --> 00:31:55,380

We follow the river deeper into the mountain

547

00:31:55,380 --> 00:31:58,940

until there's nothing but a trickle left.

548

00:31:58,940 --> 00:32:01,540

At the end, we meet up with the rest of the team that's

549

00:32:01,540 --> 00:32:04,020

been working just ahead of us.

550

00:32:04,020 --> 00:32:06,020

Hola, hola, hola.

551

00:32:06,020 --> 00:32:08,380

All right, so here we are at the bottom of the world.

552

00:32:08,380 --> 00:32:12,420

And now, boys, this is the moment to look around here.

553

00:32:12,420 --> 00:32:14,700

Let's explore this this area where there's

554

00:32:14,700 --> 00:32:18,180

a lot of places where there might be hidden objects

555

00:32:18,180 --> 00:32:20,060

or human bones.

556

00:32:20,060 --> 00:32:20,700

OK.

557

00:32:20,700 --> 00:32:22,380

So careful where you step.

558

00:32:22,380 --> 00:32:23,380

Yeah.

559

00:32:23,380 --> 00:32:24,500

And see what you can find, yeah?

560

00:32:25,460 --> 00:32:26,340

All right, here we go.

561

00:32:26,340 --> 00:32:27,340

Keep your eyes open.

562

00:32:27,340 --> 00:32:28,340

No.

563

00:32:39,020 --> 00:32:42,540

Nobody has even tread in some of these galleries

564

00:32:42,540 --> 00:32:46,700

and these chambers in centuries.

565

00:32:46,700 --> 00:32:48,020

This is exploration right here.

566

00:32:54,780 --> 00:32:57,580

This is the end.

567

00:32:57,580 --> 00:32:58,700

Look at that.

568

00:32:58,700 --> 00:33:00,900

We got an opening right there.

569

00:33:00,900 --> 00:33:02,420

That does look like a chamber.

570

00:33:02,420 --> 00:33:03,380

You climbing up?

571

00:33:03,380 --> 00:33:04,180

Yeah.

572

00:33:04,180 --> 00:33:06,740

Careful.

573

00:33:06,740 --> 00:33:09,740

Careful.

574

00:33:09,740 --> 00:33:11,220

Careful, Luis.

575

00:33:11,220 --> 00:33:12,700

Can you see anything?

576

00:33:12,700 --> 00:33:14,100

Oh, shit.

577

00:33:14,100 --> 00:33:15,060

What's going on?

578

00:33:15,060 --> 00:33:16,980

You see something.

579

00:33:16,980 --> 00:33:21,100

It's full of bones.

580

00:33:21,100 --> 00:33:21,580

It's what?

581

00:33:21,580 --> 00:33:22,580

It's full of bones?

582

00:33:22,580 --> 00:33:23,380

Yeah.

583

00:33:23,380 --> 00:33:24,380

Yeah, for sure.

584

00:33:24,380 --> 00:33:25,380

Can I see?

585

00:33:25,380 --> 00:33:26,380

Yeah.

586

00:33:31,380 --> 00:33:33,380

Oh, I mean, it could not be in a worse place.

587

00:33:35,380 --> 00:33:36,380

Ha!

588

00:33:36,380 --> 00:33:39,380

Oh, my word.

589

00:33:39,380 --> 00:33:40,380

It is.

590

00:33:40,380 --> 00:33:41,380

It's full of bones.

591

00:33:53,380 --> 00:33:55,380

Here in Asturias, they don't dance the flamenco

592

00:33:55,380 --> 00:33:56,380

or run with the bulls.

593

00:33:56,380 --> 00:34:00,380

Instead, they drink, specifically hard cider poured

594

00:34:00,380 --> 00:34:02,380

with a lot of flair.

595

00:34:02,380 --> 00:34:05,380

The waiters pour the cider like this to aerate it.

596

00:34:05,380 --> 00:34:07,380

And let's face it, because it's very cool.

597

00:34:07,380 --> 00:34:10,380

The best of them can even do it without looking at the glass.

598

00:34:14,380 --> 00:34:15,380

The whole thing.

599

00:34:15,380 --> 00:34:16,380

The whole thing.

600

00:34:16,380 --> 00:34:17,380

OK, sure.

601

00:34:19,380 --> 00:34:20,380

I spoooved.

602

00:34:20,380 --> 00:34:21,380

Can I pour it?

603

00:34:21,380 --> 00:34:22,380

Yes.

604

00:34:23,380 --> 00:34:24,380

You're going up?

605

00:34:24,380 --> 00:34:25,380

OK.

606

00:34:25,380 --> 00:34:26,380

Here we go.

607

00:34:26,380 --> 00:34:27,380

I got this.

608

00:34:27,380 --> 00:34:28,380

I got this.

609

00:34:28,380 --> 00:34:29,380

Going up here?

610

00:34:29,380 --> 00:34:30,380

OK, ready?

611

00:34:31,380 --> 00:34:32,380

Oh, boy.

612

00:34:32,380 --> 00:34:33,380

That's all right.

613

00:34:33,380 --> 00:34:34,380

I'm getting some of it in there.

614

00:34:37,380 --> 00:34:38,380

It's all right.

615

00:34:38,380 --> 00:34:41,380

This tradition dates back to ancient times.

616

00:34:41,380 --> 00:34:42,380

Who knows?

617

00:34:42,380 --> 00:34:43,380

Palaeon is men.

618

00:34:43,380 --> 00:34:45,380

They have celebrated their victory with a cider pour

619

00:34:45,380 --> 00:34:46,380

just like this.

620

00:34:46,380 --> 00:34:48,380

Keep it coming.

621

00:34:48,380 --> 00:34:49,380

Keep it coming.

622

00:34:54,380 --> 00:34:55,380

Ha!

623

00:34:55,380 --> 00:34:58,380

Oh, my word.

624

00:34:58,380 --> 00:34:59,380

It is.

625

00:34:59,380 --> 00:35:00,380

It's full of bones.

626

00:35:00,380 --> 00:35:02,380

It is full of bones.

627

00:35:02,380 --> 00:35:05,380

Deep in a cave, we're discovering the real history

628

00:35:05,380 --> 00:35:08,380

behind the legendary character of King Palaeon.

629

00:35:08,380 --> 00:35:12,380

And we've just discovered a new burial site.

630

00:35:12,380 --> 00:35:13,380

I can see part of a mandible.

631

00:35:13,380 --> 00:35:17,380

I can see teeth, long bones.

632

00:35:17,380 --> 00:35:20,380

It's different from the one we saw on the level above.

633

00:35:20,380 --> 00:35:23,380

The skulls here aren't smashed at all.

634

00:35:23,380 --> 00:35:25,380

Can you see anything else?

635

00:35:25,380 --> 00:35:26,380

No.

636

00:35:26,380 --> 00:35:28,380

It's just bones as far as you can see.

637

00:35:29,380 --> 00:35:32,380

Given the extreme effort surely required to bring the bodies

638

00:35:32,380 --> 00:35:34,380

down to this level of the cave,

639

00:35:34,380 --> 00:35:37,380

it's likely this was a hallowed place.

640

00:35:37,380 --> 00:35:40,380

Only artifacts will tell us for sure.

641

00:35:40,380 --> 00:35:41,380

Fortunately...

642

00:35:41,380 --> 00:35:42,380

Whoa.

643

00:35:42,380 --> 00:35:44,380

There's something metal here.

644

00:35:44,380 --> 00:35:47,380

There's something metal in here for sure.

645

00:35:47,380 --> 00:35:48,380

Pablo.

646

00:35:48,380 --> 00:35:49,380

Now what?

647

00:35:49,380 --> 00:35:51,380

Well, let's see.

648

00:35:51,380 --> 00:35:53,380

We'll have to take some photographs.

649

00:35:53,380 --> 00:35:54,380

Photogrammetry, yes?

650

00:35:54,380 --> 00:35:55,380

Yeah.

651

00:35:55,380 --> 00:35:57,380

Okay, let's get them in here.

652

00:35:58,380 --> 00:36:01,380

This is a groundbreaking discovery.

653

00:36:01,380 --> 00:36:03,380

But we can't risk touching any of the bones

654

00:36:03,380 --> 00:36:08,380

before preserving the scene with a photographic 3D scan.

655

00:36:08,380 --> 00:36:10,380

To create a workspace on a sheer ledge,

656

00:36:10,380 --> 00:36:13,380

the team sets climbing pins into the rock.

657

00:36:14,380 --> 00:36:18,380

Then, team member Carlos climbs up and positions the camera,

658

00:36:18,380 --> 00:36:22,380

while his partner Luis controls the shutter remotely.

659

00:36:22,380 --> 00:36:24,380

Okay, Luis, it's time to put them on.

660

00:36:24,380 --> 00:36:27,380

They quickly take hundreds of photographs

661

00:36:27,380 --> 00:36:29,380

that are instantly beamed to a computer,

662

00:36:29,380 --> 00:36:32,380

where they'll be stitched together to create a final image.

663

00:36:32,380 --> 00:36:35,380

And it all takes place in the blink of an eye.

664

00:36:36,380 --> 00:36:37,380

We have data, yes?

665

00:36:37,380 --> 00:36:38,380

Yes, we have.

666

00:36:38,380 --> 00:36:39,380

Okay.

667

00:36:39,380 --> 00:36:40,380

Let's see.

668

00:36:40,380 --> 00:36:41,380

What do we get?

669

00:36:42,380 --> 00:36:44,380

This is incredible.

670

00:36:44,380 --> 00:36:46,380

But there's so many bones.

671

00:36:46,380 --> 00:36:48,380

There are bones everywhere.

672

00:36:48,380 --> 00:36:49,380

And in the back?

673

00:36:49,380 --> 00:36:50,380

Right up there.

674

00:36:50,380 --> 00:36:51,380

More in the back.

675

00:36:51,380 --> 00:36:53,380

There are concentrations there of long bones.

676

00:36:53,380 --> 00:36:55,380

So many more than you can see from the entrance.

677

00:36:55,380 --> 00:36:57,380

It goes all the way back.

678

00:36:57,380 --> 00:36:59,380

How many people do we think this is?

679

00:36:59,380 --> 00:37:01,380

It's difficult to say.

680

00:37:01,380 --> 00:37:02,380

I mean, several of them.

681

00:37:02,380 --> 00:37:03,380

Incredible.

682

00:37:03,380 --> 00:37:05,380

And the metal piece that's near the front

683

00:37:05,380 --> 00:37:06,380

is where the camera is.

684

00:37:06,380 --> 00:37:07,380

Incredible.

685

00:37:07,380 --> 00:37:09,380

And the metal piece that's near the front is where?

686

00:37:12,380 --> 00:37:13,380

Where is that?

687

00:37:13,380 --> 00:37:14,380

Here.

688

00:37:14,380 --> 00:37:16,380

So here, this large piece of metal here.

689

00:37:16,380 --> 00:37:18,380

Some big chunk of iron, yeah?

690

00:37:18,380 --> 00:37:19,380

Yeah, it's...

691

00:37:19,380 --> 00:37:22,380

Okay, so there's a lot in here.

692

00:37:22,380 --> 00:37:23,380

Yeah, yeah.

693

00:37:23,380 --> 00:37:24,380

I have seen a lot of Burial Sanctus.

694

00:37:24,380 --> 00:37:26,380

This is one of the best I've ever seen.

695

00:37:26,380 --> 00:37:27,380

It's incredible.

696

00:37:27,380 --> 00:37:28,380

It's just incredible.

697

00:37:28,380 --> 00:37:29,380

The presentation is so good.

698

00:37:29,380 --> 00:37:30,380

Yeah.

699

00:37:30,380 --> 00:37:32,380

Okay, we have incredible imagery.

700

00:37:32,380 --> 00:37:33,380

Now what?

701

00:37:33,380 --> 00:37:35,380

Now, it's time to dig.

702

00:37:35,380 --> 00:37:36,380

Yes.

703

00:37:36,380 --> 00:37:37,380

Let's dig.

704

00:37:39,380 --> 00:37:41,380

The scientists have tentatively dated this new burial

705

00:37:41,380 --> 00:37:43,380

to around the time of Palayo.

706

00:37:43,380 --> 00:37:46,380

More importantly, there appear to be metal artifacts here

707

00:37:46,380 --> 00:37:48,380

with the bodies.

708

00:37:48,380 --> 00:37:50,380

Now that we've documented the find,

709

00:37:50,380 --> 00:37:54,380

we get to excavate and see exactly what they are.

710

00:37:54,380 --> 00:37:55,380

Okay.

711

00:37:55,380 --> 00:37:57,380

Coming to you.

712

00:37:57,380 --> 00:37:59,380

This is going to be a type of archaeology

713

00:37:59,380 --> 00:38:00,380

I've never practiced before.

714

00:38:00,380 --> 00:38:02,380

Delicately moving human remains

715

00:38:02,380 --> 00:38:04,380

while dangling off the ledge of a cave.

716

00:38:04,380 --> 00:38:07,380

But we managed to gently clear the bones away

717

00:38:07,380 --> 00:38:10,380

from the mysterious metal object.

718

00:38:10,380 --> 00:38:13,380

This left humerus.

719

00:38:13,380 --> 00:38:14,380

Got it.

720

00:38:14,380 --> 00:38:17,380

Once the bones are removed,

721

00:38:17,380 --> 00:38:19,380

Pablo can access the metal,

722

00:38:19,380 --> 00:38:21,380

which over the last thousand years

723

00:38:21,380 --> 00:38:24,380

appears to have been concreted to the cave.

724

00:38:24,380 --> 00:38:27,380

He gently chisels at the calcium buildup on the wall

725

00:38:27,380 --> 00:38:29,380

to work it free.

726

00:38:29,380 --> 00:38:30,380

Until...

727

00:38:30,380 --> 00:38:31,380

You got it.

728

00:38:31,380 --> 00:38:32,380

Yeah.

729

00:38:32,380 --> 00:38:33,380

It's free.

730

00:38:33,380 --> 00:38:34,380

It's free.

731

00:38:34,380 --> 00:38:35,380

Okay, hold on here.

732

00:38:35,380 --> 00:38:36,380

I'll take it.

733

00:38:36,380 --> 00:38:37,380

Behind you.

734

00:38:37,380 --> 00:38:38,380

Behind you.

735

00:38:38,380 --> 00:38:39,380

Okay, I have it?

736

00:38:39,380 --> 00:38:40,380

Yeah.

737

00:38:40,380 --> 00:38:41,380

I have it.

738

00:38:41,380 --> 00:38:42,380

Oh, my word.

739

00:38:42,380 --> 00:38:44,380

It's an axe, yeah?

740

00:38:44,380 --> 00:38:47,380

You can see the hole for the handle.

741

00:38:47,380 --> 00:38:49,380

Unbelievable.

742

00:38:49,380 --> 00:38:51,380

Now holding an axe head,

743

00:38:51,380 --> 00:38:54,380

we can see the hole for the handle.

744

00:38:54,380 --> 00:38:56,380

We can see the hole for the handle.

745

00:38:56,380 --> 00:38:58,380

We can see the hole for the handle.

746

00:38:58,380 --> 00:39:00,380

Now holding an axe head,

747

00:39:00,380 --> 00:39:03,380

we rush back down to rejoin the rest of the team

748

00:39:03,380 --> 00:39:05,380

so we can examine it.

749

00:39:05,380 --> 00:39:06,380

I mean, look at this.

750

00:39:06,380 --> 00:39:07,380

It's stunning.

751

00:39:07,380 --> 00:39:08,380

Wonderful.

752

00:39:08,380 --> 00:39:09,380

It's wonderful.

753

00:39:09,380 --> 00:39:10,380

Yeah, yeah.

754

00:39:10,380 --> 00:39:12,380

So, this is like not a household chopping item.

755

00:39:12,380 --> 00:39:13,380

No, it's a weapon.

756

00:39:13,380 --> 00:39:14,380

This is a weapon?

757

00:39:14,380 --> 00:39:15,380

Yes.

758

00:39:15,380 --> 00:39:16,380

When is this from?

759

00:39:16,380 --> 00:39:17,380

Around Pelagios time.

760

00:39:17,380 --> 00:39:18,380

So who do you think this is,

761

00:39:18,380 --> 00:39:19,380

the person who owned this?

762

00:39:19,380 --> 00:39:21,380

Who is probably a warrior?

763

00:39:21,380 --> 00:39:22,380

A warrior.

764

00:39:22,380 --> 00:39:23,380

In this period in Spain,

765

00:39:23,380 --> 00:39:25,380

do we find many burials with weapons?

766

00:39:25,380 --> 00:39:26,380

No.

767

00:39:26,380 --> 00:39:27,380

Rare.

768

00:39:27,380 --> 00:39:28,380

Rare.

769

00:39:28,380 --> 00:39:30,380

Have you found anything like this before?

770

00:39:30,380 --> 00:39:33,380

No, it's the first time I find an axe like this in my life.

771

00:39:33,380 --> 00:39:34,380

Wow.

772

00:39:34,380 --> 00:39:35,380

Incredible.

773

00:39:35,380 --> 00:39:38,380

An Asturian warrior from the 8th century

774

00:39:38,380 --> 00:39:40,380

buried near the Battle of Covedanga

775

00:39:40,380 --> 00:39:42,380

is beyond rare.

776

00:39:42,380 --> 00:39:44,380

And the implications are humbling.

777

00:39:44,380 --> 00:39:47,380

This could be a warrior of Palayo right here.

778

00:39:47,380 --> 00:39:48,380

Incredible.

779

00:39:48,380 --> 00:39:49,380

And now what will happen here?

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00:39:49,380 --> 00:39:51,380

Much more work to be done?

781

00:39:51,380 --> 00:39:53,380

Yeah, quite a lot because it will take

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00:39:53,380 --> 00:39:55,380

quite a long time to scab that properly,

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00:39:55,380 --> 00:39:56,380

but we will do it.

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00:39:56,380 --> 00:39:57,380

Good.

785

00:39:57,380 --> 00:39:58,380

And you'll send me lots of photos.

786

00:39:58,380 --> 00:39:59,380

Yeah, many, many.

787

00:39:59,380 --> 00:40:01,380

Hey, thank you so much.

788

00:40:01,380 --> 00:40:02,380

Gracias.

789

00:40:02,380 --> 00:40:03,380

Thank you so much.

790

00:40:03,380 --> 00:40:04,380

Okay.

791

00:40:04,380 --> 00:40:06,380

A long journey back up to the surface.

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00:40:06,380 --> 00:40:07,380

Okay.

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00:40:07,380 --> 00:40:08,380

Let's go.

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00:40:08,380 --> 00:40:09,380

Thank you guys.

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00:40:09,380 --> 00:40:12,380

In terms of the legend of King Palayo,

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00:40:12,380 --> 00:40:14,380

there's little doubt that he was

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00:40:14,380 --> 00:40:16,380

an actual historian.

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00:40:16,380 --> 00:40:17,380

He was a great historian.

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00:40:17,380 --> 00:40:18,380

He was a great historian.

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00:40:18,380 --> 00:40:19,380

He was a great historian.

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00:40:19,380 --> 00:40:20,380

He was a great historian.

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00:40:20,380 --> 00:40:21,380

He was a great historian.

803

00:40:21,380 --> 00:40:23,380

There's little doubt that he was

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00:40:23,380 --> 00:40:25,380

an actual historical figure,

805

00:40:25,380 --> 00:40:27,380

but his story didn't unfold the way

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00:40:27,380 --> 00:40:31,380

the Christian chronicles would have us believe.

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00:40:31,380 --> 00:40:33,380

Evidence hidden in the foundations

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00:40:33,380 --> 00:40:36,380

of Gausson Castle suggests that rather

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00:40:36,380 --> 00:40:38,380

than being a shining Christian knight

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00:40:38,380 --> 00:40:39,380

from the big city,

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00:40:39,380 --> 00:40:42,380

Palayo might well have been a homegrown

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00:40:42,380 --> 00:40:43,380

Asturian leader,

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00:40:43,380 --> 00:40:44,380

a king of the north,

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00:40:44,380 --> 00:40:47,380

a braveheart who rallied local warriors

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00:40:47,380 --> 00:40:50,380

to win an improbable victory.

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00:40:51,380 --> 00:40:53,380

The vampiric skeletons we found

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00:40:53,380 --> 00:40:55,380

in the depths of Lugarma show us

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00:40:55,380 --> 00:40:57,380

that this was a time where Christianity

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00:40:57,380 --> 00:41:03,380

was still deeply infused with pagan beliefs.

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00:41:03,380 --> 00:41:05,380

And as for the seemingly venerated warriors

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00:41:05,380 --> 00:41:07,380

buried deep in the cave,

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00:41:07,380 --> 00:41:09,380

they could well be among those

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00:41:09,380 --> 00:41:11,380

who fought victoriously at the battle

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00:41:11,380 --> 00:41:14,380

of Covedanga.

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00:41:14,380 --> 00:41:17,380

What we do know is that much like the

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00:41:17,380 --> 00:41:18,380

Cross of Victory,

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00:41:18,380 --> 00:41:21,380

Palayo's story has been gilded,

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00:41:21,380 --> 00:41:23,380

embellished to animate a young country

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00:41:23,380 --> 00:41:27,380

forging a new identity.

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00:41:27,380 --> 00:41:28,380

And now,

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00:41:28,380 --> 00:41:32,380

1300 years after Palayo united his people,

832

00:41:32,380 --> 00:41:35,380

his story continues to inspire them.