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Tonight, a 2,000-year-old mystery

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that's confounded top archaeologists,

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the world's most famous queen lost without a trace.

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Cleopatra is a giant in Egyptian history,

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renowned for her cunning across a 21-year rule,

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but no one knows what happens to her after she dies

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00:00:21,000 --> 00:00:23,000

or where she's buried.

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This kicks off an incredible mystery

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that lasts to this day.

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Now, we reveal the top theories

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surrounding the final resting place of Egypt's last pharaoh.

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The last place we know where Cleopatra was

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when she was alive was her palace.

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If we can find Mark Antony,

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we could potentially find Cleopatra.

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Octavian has her killed,

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and either he dumped her body

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00:00:48,000 --> 00:00:52,000

or he left her where she lay in her mausoleum.

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Can new evidence finally uncover Cleopatra's missing tomb?

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November 2022.

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In the ancient Egyptian city of Tapasiris Magna,

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Kathleen Martinez has been excavating a ruined temple

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for the past 17 years.

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Martinez is actually a really formidable woman,

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and she's a lawyer by training.

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She's not an archaeologist of any kind,

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but she has this passion,

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and so in 2002, using her own funds,

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she decides to take herself out to Egypt

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00:01:43,000 --> 00:01:46,000

to explore what's there in Tapasiris Magna.

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She collaborates with Egypt's most famous archaeologist,

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Dr. Zahi Hawass,

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because Kathleen believes that at the site of Tapasiris Magna

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is the lost tomb of the famous Egyptian queen, Cleopatra.

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It could be a major new lead in a cold case

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that goes back thousands of years.

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Cleopatra is one of the most powerful women

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ever to come out of the ancient Mediterranean world.

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She ruled Egypt for 21 years,

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from 51 to 30 BC.

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When Cleopatra's 18 years old,

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her father, King Ptolemy XII, Alatez, dies.

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And Cleopatra then sort of ascends to the throne,

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but because she's a woman, she can't do it alone.

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So her brother is made co-region.

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The thing about her brother, however, is that he's only 10 years old.

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Before long, a rivalry ensues,

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00:02:39,000 --> 00:02:41,000

and those aligned with Cleopatra's younger brother

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seek to dethrone her.

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But Cleopatra devises a clever way to stay in power.

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She allies herself with Rome.

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Cleopatra has two significant relationships in her life,

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both of which are strategic partnerships to keep her on the throne.

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One is a partnership with the great Julius Caesar.

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He helps her shore up her power,

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and with him, she supposedly has a son named Caesarean.

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The second, Caesar's top general, Mark Antony.

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In 43 BC, he becomes part of a new Roman power structure

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created after Caesar's assassination.

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Rome comes to be ruled by what's called a triumvirate.

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This is actually a group of three men,

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Mark Antony, Marcus Lepidus, and Octavian.

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Wisely, she begins a strategic relationship with Mark Antony,

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who promises to support her rule.

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Their romance becomes the stuff of movie lore.

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Eventually, Mark Antony is so smitten with Cleopatra

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00:03:45,000 --> 00:03:49,000

that he leaves his wife, moves to Alexandria,

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00:03:49,000 --> 00:03:51,000

and stays with Cleopatra.

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00:03:51,000 --> 00:03:53,000

Unfortunately for Cleopatra,

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00:03:53,000 --> 00:03:56,000

this ends up having the opposite effect of what she intended,

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00:03:56,000 --> 00:03:58,000

because instead of really getting the support of Rome,

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00:03:58,000 --> 00:04:02,000

she's got Mark Antony earning the enmity of everybody back in Rome

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00:04:02,000 --> 00:04:05,000

for leaving his wife, Octavia,

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who was actually Octavian's sister.

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So Octavian is furious and declares war

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00:04:11,000 --> 00:04:14,000

against Mark Antony and Cleopatra.

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00:04:14,000 --> 00:04:18,000

After nearly three years of fighting in 31 BC,

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00:04:18,000 --> 00:04:22,000

Octavian's forces defeat Antony and Cleopatra's armies

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00:04:22,000 --> 00:04:25,000

and march on Alexandria.

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As the fighting grows ever closer,

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Cleopatra retreats into a mausoleum in her palace.

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The rest is the stuff of Shakespearean lore.

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Mark Antony, who's out fighting on the front,

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00:04:38,000 --> 00:04:42,000

gets a message from one of Cleopatra's servants.

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00:04:42,000 --> 00:04:46,000

When he opens it, he's horrified to find out that Cleopatra is dead,

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00:04:46,000 --> 00:04:48,000

that she's killed herself.

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Upon hearing the news,

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Mark Antony attempts to kill himself by falling on his own sword,

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00:04:55,000 --> 00:04:58,000

but he fails to take his life.

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00:04:58,000 --> 00:05:04,000

Instead, a mortally wounded Antony is brought to Cleopatra's chambers.

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00:05:04,000 --> 00:05:07,000

It turns out she hasn't killed herself at all.

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At this time, Antony had become more of a liability than an asset to Cleopatra.

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00:05:12,000 --> 00:05:14,000

He had no more power in Rome.

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She actually asked one of her servants to go to Mark Antony

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00:05:18,000 --> 00:05:24,000

and give this message to try to scare him into surrendering

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00:05:24,000 --> 00:05:28,000

in the hopes that maybe that would help keep him alive.

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Tragically, Antony dies shortly after this.

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Cleopatra leaves her tomb, goes back to the palace,

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00:05:36,000 --> 00:05:42,000

meets with Octavian with negotiations about her future.

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00:05:42,000 --> 00:05:49,000

Cleopatra's aspirations is for Caesarean her son to become the king or the ruler of Egypt.

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00:05:49,000 --> 00:05:55,000

Rome doesn't have kings, but at least he could be the legitimate heir of Julius Caesar

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and the ruler of Rome as well.

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Octavian says he will spare her and her children,

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00:06:00,000 --> 00:06:02,000

but he will never allow the succession.

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00:06:02,000 --> 00:06:07,000

Cleopatra takes herself back to her palace, to her mausoleum,

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00:06:07,000 --> 00:06:12,000

considers this deal, and ultimately decides that she has nothing left to live for,

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00:06:12,000 --> 00:06:14,000

and she takes her own life.

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00:06:14,000 --> 00:06:18,000

Octavian goes on to become Rome's first emperor,

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00:06:18,000 --> 00:06:25,000

and Cleopatra will die as the last active ruler of the Kingdom of Egypt.

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Early historians tell us the method of Cleopatra's death is poison,

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but in those histories, her story ends there.

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This was a time of civil war, this is a time of occupation of Egypt,

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00:06:39,000 --> 00:06:42,000

and a lot of stuff has been lost over time.

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00:06:42,000 --> 00:06:46,000

This kicks off an incredible mystery that lasts to this day.

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00:06:46,000 --> 00:06:52,000

No one knows what happens to her after she dies or where she's buried.

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With such limited information, where should the search for Cleopatra's remains begin?

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Cleopatra has a mausoleum and tomb under construction in her palace when she dies,

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so it makes sense that the tomb should be the first place that we look.

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The challenge is, the tomb is missing.

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But in 1996, a French archaeologist makes a breakthrough.

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Frank Godio is one of the fathers of underwater archaeology.

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He primarily focuses on finding ancient shipwrecks and also sunken cities.

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Godio comes up with a theory as to the location of Cleopatra's palace.

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He believes that it lies due east of the modern city of Alexandria,

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and the reason why we haven't found it is because it's underwater.

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According to Godio's research, the landscape of this region has changed dramatically since Cleopatra's time.

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Frank Godio reads the ancient sources, and he learns from them that in 365 AD,

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so about 400 years after Cleopatra, there was a massive earthquake that hit Alexandria,

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00:08:02,000 --> 00:08:04,000

followed by a tsunami.

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00:08:04,000 --> 00:08:06,000

It did a tremendous amount of damage.

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00:08:06,000 --> 00:08:09,000

Most of the ancient city at that point was destroyed.

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00:08:09,000 --> 00:08:16,000

This tidal wave is so massive that it flings ships over houses and kills over 50,000 people.

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00:08:16,000 --> 00:08:23,000

And Godio thinks that might be what ultimately covers Alexandria and hides Cleopatra's palace.

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To prove this, Godio begins his search in the waters of modern-day Alexandria's eastern seaport.

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Godio and his team start by doing high-tech scans, ultimately wanting to create a master map of the seafloor surface.

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They start to see the outlines of columns, porticoes, buildings, even statues.

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The team is able to compare the written sources with the archaeological mapping,

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00:08:53,000 --> 00:08:58,000

and they start to see correlations. So they know from this that they're on the right track.

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It takes years to complete the first initial map.

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00:09:01,000 --> 00:09:07,000

They are doing this underwater, and it is so much more difficult than doing archaeology on the land.

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But once they have this master map, things start to go much quicker.

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In 1998, Godio strikes Pater. He finds the sunken remains of Cleopatra's palace.

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The palace has been missing for 2,000 years. This makes big international headlines.

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The thing is, the palace is entirely covered and filled with mud.

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00:09:32,000 --> 00:09:39,000

It is very difficult to excavate and explore. They're confident that Cleopatra is there,

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00:09:39,000 --> 00:09:42,000

but finding her is going to be extremely difficult.

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After nearly a decade of searching, Godio finds no trace of the tomb.

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In 2008, Godio discovers something new. It's an enormous structure as large as a football field.

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Godio has radiocarbon dates that he's taken from organic pieces of the structure,

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00:10:01,000 --> 00:10:06,000

and these dates show that it could have been built during the time of Cleopatra.

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Though the team remains hopeful, they have not yet discovered the tomb.

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To this day, Godio and his team are still searching, but they have barely scratched the surface of this enormous complex.

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When Cleopatra's palace is found underwater by archaeologist Frank Gario,

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00:10:29,000 --> 00:10:32,000

he believes her tomb should be somewhere inside.

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00:10:33,000 --> 00:10:38,000

The last place we know Cleopatra was when she was alive is her palace.

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00:10:38,000 --> 00:10:42,000

And that was just discovered underwater in 1998.

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However, not everyone's convinced Godio will find the tomb.

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First of all, underwater exploration is incredibly difficult.

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Secondly, we believe her tomb wasn't finished when she died,

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00:10:55,000 --> 00:11:02,000

so the artifacts, relics, statues, and other signs that would lead us there, they weren't put in place yet.

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But there might be another way to find Cleopatra's tomb.

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Even though he dies a traitor, many Romans are interested in what becomes of Mark Antony.

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He was, at one point, a national hero.

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00:11:17,000 --> 00:11:21,000

And so there's a chance he'd be easier to track down.

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00:11:21,000 --> 00:11:26,000

And if we can find Mark Antony, we could potentially find Cleopatra.

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00:11:26,000 --> 00:11:33,000

Within a few years of Mark Antony's death, several ancient historians share more details.

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The Roman custom at the time is to cremate great leaders.

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00:11:37,000 --> 00:11:44,000

Mark Antony is cremated, Julius Caesar is cremated, and after his death, Octavian will be cremated.

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A few decades afterward, the Greek historian Plutarch fills in even more details.

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Plutarch writes that after Mark Antony's death, Octavian has Cleopatra as his prisoner.

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00:11:58,000 --> 00:12:03,000

But he does allow her out of clemency to go and visit Mark Antony's tomb.

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00:12:03,000 --> 00:12:07,000

And when she's there, she holds the urn that has his ashes in it,

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00:12:07,000 --> 00:12:11,000

and she pours out a libation as a kind of act of love and piety.

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00:12:11,000 --> 00:12:16,000

So apparently, Mark Antony has been given a tomb for his ashes.

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According to Plutarch, after Cleopatra commits suicide,

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00:12:20,000 --> 00:12:27,000

Octavian is similarly generous with her remains and allows her to be buried with Mark Antony.

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00:12:30,000 --> 00:12:34,000

Mark Antony's final resting place hasn't been found either.

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00:12:34,000 --> 00:12:39,000

So there's a chance that he and the missing Cleopatra are out there together somewhere.

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Plutarch is actually the only source that we have that says that Cleopatra after her death was placed together with Antony.

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We do have other ancient sources which talk about Octavian's clemency, his mercy and compassion towards his enemies.

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Despite all the stories of Octavian's kindness, many historians believe he didn't treat Cleopatra's body with respect at all.

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There's a saying that history is written by the victors.

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That means that authors in Octavian's time are generally going to write great things about him,

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otherwise they might suffer punishment if they upset him.

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As for the accounts of Plutarch, they were probably just embellished over time.

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Octavian himself also doctors the historical record.

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He comes up with a smear campaign against Cleopatra, labeling her an evil seductress and traitor,

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00:13:38,000 --> 00:13:43,000

someone who used their feminine wiles to brainwash Mark Antony.

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00:13:43,000 --> 00:13:50,000

To me, this suggests that he wouldn't have given Cleopatra a royal burial beside Mark Antony.

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Octavian's actions after Cleopatra's death also speak volumes.

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One of the last acts that Cleopatra does before she dies is she sends her son, Caesarean, away in order to protect him.

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00:14:03,000 --> 00:14:09,000

But after her death, Octavian sends people to go and find him and have him killed.

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00:14:09,000 --> 00:14:12,000

He actually does this by tricking Caesarean once he's been found.

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00:14:12,000 --> 00:14:18,000

So he tells Caesarean that if he returns to Alexandria, he'll be made king of Egypt.

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00:14:18,000 --> 00:14:22,000

But as soon as Caesarean returns home, he's killed.

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00:14:22,000 --> 00:14:29,000

The most commonly told account says that one of Octavian's bodyguards strangles him to death.

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Keep in mind, this is by the same historians who say that Octavian was generous with Cleopatra and Mark Antony.

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This is the cleaned up version of the story.

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Octavian's actions don't stop with Caesarean's murder.

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00:14:45,000 --> 00:14:49,000

Antony's oldest son, Antelus, is executed.

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And Antony's children with Cleopatra, he has three of them, are actually captured and they're taken back to Rome where they're paraded in chains as part of Octavian's military triumph.

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All of this shows considerable hatred and contempt for Mark Antony in Cleopatra.

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00:15:07,000 --> 00:15:17,000

To the new emperor, Antony is the man who left the triumvirate, who left his wife, Octavian's sister, for another woman,

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00:15:17,000 --> 00:15:21,000

who left Rome to go and flee to Egypt.

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00:15:21,000 --> 00:15:26,000

And Cleopatra was the foul temptress who made it all happen.

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00:15:26,000 --> 00:15:32,000

I think the prevailing opinion among today's scholars is that if you're going to go digging around Alexandria,

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00:15:32,000 --> 00:15:41,000

trying to find a carefully preserved urn of Cleopatra's ashes beside those of Mark Antony, you're probably wasting your time.

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00:15:41,000 --> 00:15:49,000

Once Cleopatra was of no further value as a trophy, Octavian probably didn't care about her or Antony.

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For more than 2,000 years, the story of Cleopatra's dramatic suicide remains mostly unchallenged.

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The most famous version of this suicide comes from Virgil in the Aeneid, where he suggests that Cleopatra gets a snake to bite her.

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And that's how she dies.

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The story then gets elaborated on over the years, where some authors suggesting that the snake is actually an asp.

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Plutarch also supports this idea, and what he says is that Cleopatra has the asp smuggled into the palace in a basket,

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00:16:27,000 --> 00:16:32,000

and it was covered over with figs and leaves so that nobody could see it coming in.

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00:16:32,000 --> 00:16:37,000

Today, many historians doubt the snake bite story.

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The reason people have a problem with it is that at this point, Cleopatra is Octavian's prisoner and under close guard.

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Asps are large, they wriggle and hiss.

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00:16:48,000 --> 00:16:58,000

So for someone to have brought in a tray of food with a snake and for it to have gone unnoticed, well, those would have been the worst guards in history.

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00:16:58,000 --> 00:17:10,000

Cleopatra is also no fool. She knows her science and her medicine, and she is smart enough to figure out all the things that could go wrong with this particular plan.

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00:17:10,000 --> 00:17:14,000

She wouldn't have chosen a plan with so many variables.

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Those who believe the suicide story think it's much more likely Cleopatra simply had a bottle of poison with her from the moment the Romans arrived at her dates.

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In 2013, bestselling author and criminal profiler, Pat Brown, upends the suicide theory.

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Brown looks at Cleopatra's death like she would any other cold case, as she's been trained to do throughout her career.

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Pat Brown looks at the evidence, the wounds, the placement of the body, and she wonders if some of the evidence was staged or just completely fabricated.

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00:17:49,000 --> 00:17:56,000

Brown's conclusion? Cleopatra's death isn't suicide, it's cold-blooded murder.

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00:17:56,000 --> 00:18:00,000

Brown starts by taking the suicide theory at face value.

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00:18:00,000 --> 00:18:09,000

She consults with medical examiners, with herpetologists, to understand all of the ins and outs of snake poison.

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00:18:09,000 --> 00:18:17,000

According to the historical accounts, Cleopatra's two maid servants also die from poisoning shortly after she dies.

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00:18:17,000 --> 00:18:28,000

So how exactly does one snake kill three people? Is it trained to bite on command? Does it even have enough venom to kill three women?

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00:18:28,000 --> 00:18:35,000

The most likely poisonous snakes that were around during this time in Egypt were the cobra and the asp.

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00:18:35,000 --> 00:18:44,000

Although both snakes have enough venom in them to kill multiple people, most of the venom is actually discharged in their very first bite.

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00:18:44,000 --> 00:18:49,000

And after that, it takes a little while for them to sort of recharge and reload.

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00:18:49,000 --> 00:18:54,000

Fully replenishing their venom can take a snake days.

234

00:18:54,000 --> 00:19:02,000

They don't need a full tank to kill someone, but it would need to be at least an hour before someone else could be killed.

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00:19:02,000 --> 00:19:09,000

There's another timing issue as well. The amount of time it takes for the snake bite to kill someone.

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00:19:09,000 --> 00:19:16,000

Brown points out that in the hours before Cleopatra's death, she's exchanging messages with Octavian.

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00:19:16,000 --> 00:19:24,000

Guards and messengers are going in and out, and dying from a snake bite takes hours, and it's agonizing.

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00:19:24,000 --> 00:19:31,000

So we're saying that nobody noticed this agonizing death over several hours?

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00:19:31,000 --> 00:19:39,000

According to Brown, the outcome would be the same even if poison was smuggled in via a bottle.

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00:19:39,000 --> 00:19:50,000

Once again, you're left with the same issue. In fact, it would take slightly longer for the venom to take effect because it has to get absorbed into the bloodstream first.

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00:19:50,000 --> 00:19:55,000

Once Brown rules out suicide, she turns her attention to murder.

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00:19:55,000 --> 00:20:05,000

As Brown in any good criminal profiler knows, murder requires motive. And who had the most to gain from Cleopatra's death?

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00:20:05,000 --> 00:20:16,000

Octavian. Some people believe that Octavian would want to keep Cleopatra alive, to display her as a conquer trophy through the streets of Rome.

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00:20:16,000 --> 00:20:22,000

He displays the children of Cleopatra and Mark Antony exactly in this way.

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00:20:22,000 --> 00:20:29,000

But according to Brown, Octavian has a stronger motive to kill Cleopatra than to keep her alive.

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00:20:29,000 --> 00:20:43,000

If Cleopatra is still alive, then Octavian would have somebody who could stand in the way of his control over Egypt. Cleopatra is the rightful queen.

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00:20:43,000 --> 00:20:54,000

Octavian already has several non-threatening trophies to parade around, her younger children. They're too young to raise an army or seize the throne.

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00:20:54,000 --> 00:21:03,000

One year after Brown's book in 2014, two Greek historians write an article that reaches the same conclusion.

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00:21:03,000 --> 00:21:11,000

Gregory Socalus and Marcos Scansos publish *The Death of Cleopatra, Suicide by Snakebite, or Poisoned by Her Enemies*.

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00:21:11,000 --> 00:21:17,000

In it, they propose that Egypt's last queen was in fact murdered by Octavian.

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00:21:17,000 --> 00:21:27,000

Socalus and Scantos say that all the circumstances point to Cleopatra being killed by a Roman poison. And that means murder.

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00:21:27,000 --> 00:21:35,000

Like all military leaders of the time, Octavian actually travels with physicians, and physicians are trained in poisons.

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00:21:35,000 --> 00:21:41,000

The Romans specialize in a poison that's a mixture of hemlock, opium, and aconite.

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00:21:41,000 --> 00:21:47,000

This poison induces a deep sleep, resulting in coma, then death.

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00:21:47,000 --> 00:22:00,000

According to Sucasus and Scantus, Octavian has Cleopatra and her servants injected with this Roman poison, possibly even using a needle that makes it look like they've been bitten by a snake.

256

00:22:00,000 --> 00:22:03,000

Then what happened to Cleopatra's body?

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00:22:06,000 --> 00:22:09,000

If this is the case, there is no two.

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00:22:09,000 --> 00:22:14,000

Octavian is just kind of trying to move on from the whole Cleopatra situation.

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00:22:14,000 --> 00:22:27,000

So according to their theory, he has her killed and plants the story of suicide in order to be able to kind of tell a nice story and then move on as quickly as possible.

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00:22:27,000 --> 00:22:32,000

If he's smart enough to do that, then he's smart enough to not build her a tomb.

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00:22:32,000 --> 00:22:40,000

The last thing he needs is a permanent marker of a once-beloved queen for people to pilgrimage to and make offerings to.

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00:22:40,000 --> 00:22:46,000

So unfortunately, if you subscribe to this theory, the search for Cleopatra's lost tomb is pointless.

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00:22:46,000 --> 00:22:49,000

Because Octavian covered his tracks.

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00:22:49,000 --> 00:22:53,000

Egypt's last pharaoh never gets a tomb.

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00:22:53,000 --> 00:22:56,000

Her body was destroyed, dumped, and forgotten.

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00:22:58,000 --> 00:23:06,000

For thousands of years, Cleopatra's story has been entwined with her relationship with Rome's most powerful men.

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00:23:06,000 --> 00:23:18,000

But in 2010, an American archaeologist finds evidence that upends that notion and offers a new theory about her final days.

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00:23:18,000 --> 00:23:29,000

In 2010, Ohio State University professor Dwayne Roller publishes *Cleopatra*, a biography.

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00:23:29,000 --> 00:23:34,000

The real Cleopatra is notoriously difficult to grasp.

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00:23:34,000 --> 00:23:38,000

Roller's book is one of the best researched accounts of Cleopatra around.

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00:23:38,000 --> 00:23:42,000

In addition to being an archaeologist, Roller is a classicist.

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00:23:42,000 --> 00:23:46,000

He can read all of the original accounts in their original Greek and Latin.

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00:23:46,000 --> 00:23:54,000

Based on an exhaustive search through the historical record, he believes that a great deal about Cleopatra has been misunderstood.

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00:23:54,000 --> 00:23:59,000

And perhaps this can explain what happens to her after she dies.

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00:23:59,000 --> 00:24:08,000

First of all, Roller is convinced that Cleopatra is not subservient to her Roman lovers or even to Rome at all.

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00:24:08,000 --> 00:24:14,000

According to Roller, she carefully manipulates them to keep her kingdom intact.

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00:24:14,000 --> 00:24:21,000

When Cleopatra came to the throne, she had three surviving siblings who did not get along.

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00:24:21,000 --> 00:24:24,000

There's all kind of sibling rivalry.

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00:24:24,000 --> 00:24:31,000

Cleopatra's agent is probably about to be split in three parts until she convinces Julius Caesar to help.

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00:24:31,000 --> 00:24:34,000

She does this in a rather ingenious way.

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00:24:34,000 --> 00:24:40,000

Roman sources tell us that she has herself wrapped in a carpet and smuggled in to Caesar's quarters.

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00:24:40,000 --> 00:24:49,000

When he unrolls this mysterious gift, there she is in all her regal finery, ready to negotiate a deal to save Egypt.

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00:24:49,000 --> 00:24:55,000

After Caesar's death, Cleopatra carefully researches his successors.

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00:24:55,000 --> 00:25:02,000

When Anthony comes to the east, she very quickly realizes he is a person to be cultivated.

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00:25:02,000 --> 00:25:08,000

She learns that Mark Anthony believes himself to be the embodiment of the Greek god Dionysus.

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00:25:08,000 --> 00:25:13,000

And so she hatches a clever plan to earn his favor.

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00:25:13,000 --> 00:25:17,000

Dionysus is the god of wine and pleasure.

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00:25:17,000 --> 00:25:24,000

A fact Cleopatra uses to her advantage when she first meets Anthony in 41 BC.

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00:25:24,000 --> 00:25:32,000

Knowing his Dionysus fetish, she arrives dressed up as the Greek goddess Aphrodite, being fan by attendance dressed as cupids.

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00:25:32,000 --> 00:25:38,000

Almost immediately, Anthony is willing to do just about anything Cleopatra asks of him.

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00:25:38,000 --> 00:25:46,000

While these stories show cunning on Cleopatra's part, they suggest that her main tool for manipulation was sex.

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00:25:46,000 --> 00:25:50,000

But Roller believes that that was not the case.

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00:25:50,000 --> 00:25:57,000

Instead, Roller believes Cleopatra uses her negotiation skills to survive.

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00:25:57,000 --> 00:26:05,000

Despite being a smaller kingdom with a less powerful military, Egypt had a lot more money than Rome.

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00:26:05,000 --> 00:26:09,000

Cleopatra, as it turns out, was phenomenally wealthy.

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00:26:09,000 --> 00:26:19,000

I believe it's her wealth and not her sexual prowess that ultimately dictates how Cleopatra lived and how she died.

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00:26:19,000 --> 00:26:23,000

Roller examines the work of the Roman historian Cassius Dio.

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00:26:23,000 --> 00:26:32,000

In it, he discovers that Mark Anthony initially comes to Cleopatra because he needs her financial support to pay off Rome's armies and debts.

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00:26:32,000 --> 00:26:40,000

According to Dio, Cleopatra and Anthony had a financial relationship and who knows whether it was all that he needed,

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00:26:40,000 --> 00:26:47,000

but it certainly helped to sustain him financially, especially as sources began to dry up in Rome.

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00:26:48,000 --> 00:26:57,000

When Octavian defeats Anthony in 30 BC, he intends to seize Cleopatra's treasure, but she has other plans.

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00:26:57,000 --> 00:27:03,000

Roller finds evidence that in those final days, Cleopatra takes action.

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00:27:03,000 --> 00:27:09,000

She isn't about to let Octavian get the upper hand. She still has one final play to make.

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00:27:09,000 --> 00:27:14,000

Cleopatra has her servants gather up her wealth, everything they can grab,

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00:27:14,000 --> 00:27:19,000

and she has them amass it in the safest place she knows, her own mausoleum.

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00:27:19,000 --> 00:27:22,000

The rest she orders hidden.

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00:27:22,000 --> 00:27:31,000

When Octavian's forces arrive inside, she dramatically holds up a torch and threatens to kill herself and take all the treasure with her.

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00:27:31,000 --> 00:27:34,000

If this is true, this is an ingenious move.

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00:27:34,000 --> 00:27:42,000

Cleopatra knows the only thing Octavia needs from her is her money, and she can use that as a bargaining tool.

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00:27:43,000 --> 00:27:49,000

According to Roller's research, Cleopatra begins an extended negotiation with Octavian.

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00:27:49,000 --> 00:27:55,000

She offers to support him and give over her treasure if he agrees to meet certain conditions.

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00:27:55,000 --> 00:28:01,000

Here, she is holding her wealth hostage and giving herself time to make other plans.

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00:28:01,000 --> 00:28:06,000

Among those plans, she finds a way to smuggle her son out of town.

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00:28:06,000 --> 00:28:09,000

Next, she has to make plans for herself.

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00:28:10,000 --> 00:28:13,000

Roller cites the account of the Roman historian Titus Livius.

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00:28:13,000 --> 00:28:18,000

In one of Cleopatra's final exchanges with Octavian, she writes,

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00:28:18,000 --> 00:28:21,000

I will not be led in triumph.

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00:28:21,000 --> 00:28:26,000

This is one of the few times any historian bothers to write her specific words down,

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00:28:26,000 --> 00:28:30,000

and it gives us a clue as to what she intended next.

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00:28:30,000 --> 00:28:36,000

Roller writes that Cleopatra then orchestrates her own death by poisoning,

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00:28:36,000 --> 00:28:40,000

which takes place in August of 30 BC.

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00:28:40,000 --> 00:28:49,000

If she's planned this out down to the last detail, many historians believe that she made one final

arrangement.

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00:28:49,000 --> 00:28:53,000

And that explains why her tomb has yet to be found.

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00:28:56,000 --> 00:29:03,000

Upon her death, Cleopatra orders her body smuggled out of the palace and buried in an unmarked grave.

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00:29:03,000 --> 00:29:06,000

This way, her enemies will never find her.

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00:29:06,000 --> 00:29:13,000

Is it possible she pulled this off to have her body smuggled out of a palace swarming with Roman soldiers?

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00:29:13,000 --> 00:29:15,000

I think the answer is yes.

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00:29:15,000 --> 00:29:20,000

Cleopatra had so much wealth, she could have bribed every Roman in the palace.

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00:29:20,000 --> 00:29:23,000

This is how she could have made arrangements for her secret burial.

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00:29:23,000 --> 00:29:28,000

If Cleopatra was successful, where is her tomb?

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00:29:28,000 --> 00:29:33,000

So if this is the case, and Cleopatra made her own funeral arrangements,

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00:29:33,000 --> 00:29:45,000

that means that we would have to stop looking for any kind of evidence of a Roman-style burial in Ash urns and start thinking like an Egyptian.

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00:29:45,000 --> 00:29:49,000

This would mean Cleopatra didn't end up in Alexandria at all.

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00:29:49,000 --> 00:29:54,000

Now we have a whole new world of possibilities to explore.

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00:29:55,000 --> 00:30:05,000

In 2002, Dominican attorney Kathleen Martinez sets out to find Cleopatra's lost tomb.

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00:30:05,000 --> 00:30:11,000

Ever since she was a young child, Martinez has been fascinated with Egypt.

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00:30:11,000 --> 00:30:18,000

Her family encouraged the law career, but eventually she gives it all up to become an archaeologist in Egypt.

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00:30:18,000 --> 00:30:25,000

The one mystery that she wants to solve beyond anything else is the mystery of Cleopatra's tomb.

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00:30:25,000 --> 00:30:33,000

Like many modern-day historians, she respects and admires Cleopatra as a brilliant queen,

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00:30:33,000 --> 00:30:39,000

and she can't imagine that a queen would have allowed herself to be desecrated after death.

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00:30:39,000 --> 00:30:45,000

Martinez believes that Cleopatra is way too smart not to have seen her own death coming.

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00:30:45,000 --> 00:30:52,000

She knows that Octavian is either going to have her executed or use her as a puppet by parading her around.

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00:30:52,000 --> 00:30:58,000

So she plans for her death and has her handmaidens smuggle her body out of Alexandria.

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00:30:58,000 --> 00:31:03,000

But where do you look? Martinez believes that she has the answer.

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00:31:03,000 --> 00:31:10,000

Like many pharaohs, Cleopatra shapes her image around one of the Egyptian gods.

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00:31:10,000 --> 00:31:15,000

During her reign, Cleopatra considers herself a living representation of Isis,

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00:31:15,000 --> 00:31:20,000

a goddess of fertility and motherhood and wife to the god-king Osiris.

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00:31:20,000 --> 00:31:29,000

If Cleopatra was able to choose her own resting place, Martinez is confident it would have been a temple of Isis or Osiris.

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00:31:34,000 --> 00:31:41,000

The problem is, there are a lot of temples dedicated to both Isis and Osiris.

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00:31:41,000 --> 00:31:49,000

To locate the right one, Dr. Martinez relies on Greek geographer Strabo's descriptions of ancient Egypt.

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00:31:49,000 --> 00:31:56,000

Based on Strabo's writing, Martinez locates 21 temples associated with Osiris and Isis.

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00:31:56,000 --> 00:32:03,000

She looks at these 21 locations and realizes that almost all of them have already been thoroughly explored.

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00:32:03,000 --> 00:32:07,000

All except one, the temple at the ancient ruins of Tapasiris magna.

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00:32:07,000 --> 00:32:16,000

Looking at the scant historical records, Martinez believes it's only been lightly surveyed and it's only 30 miles from Alexandria.

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00:32:16,000 --> 00:32:18,000

This must be the place.

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00:32:19,000 --> 00:32:27,000

Martinez gets in touch with Egypt's chief archaeologist and called Zahi Hawas, who agrees to show her around Tapasiris magna.

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00:32:27,000 --> 00:32:33,000

From the moment she arrives, she feels certain that the great queen Cleopatra is here.

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00:32:33,000 --> 00:32:39,000

In order to excavate the site, Dr. Martinez needs permission from the Egyptian government.

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00:32:39,000 --> 00:32:51,000

Initially, the Egyptians kind of make fun of her. They blow her off because after all, what would a

lawyer by trade know about ancient Egyptian archaeology?

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00:32:51,000 --> 00:32:57,000

But Martinez persists and she agrees to fund the venture entirely on her own.

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00:32:57,000 --> 00:33:03,000

Finally, they do grant her a license, the first ever given to a Latin American expedition.

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00:33:03,000 --> 00:33:08,000

There's just one catch. The license is only good for eight weeks.

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00:33:09,000 --> 00:33:14,000

Anyone who knows anything about archaeological digs knows that this is an impossible challenge.

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00:33:14,000 --> 00:33:18,000

Excavations are a slow and tedious process.

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00:33:18,000 --> 00:33:27,000

It can take eight months to find a single artifact and once you find it, it can take a long time to excavate it safely.

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00:33:27,000 --> 00:33:34,000

So an eight-week deadline to excavate an entire site really limits what you're able to do.

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00:33:34,000 --> 00:33:41,000

Undeterred, Martinez and her team start digging at Tapasiris magna in 2004.

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00:33:41,000 --> 00:33:47,000

The clock is ticking down. For seven whole weeks, Martinez finds absolutely nothing.

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00:33:47,000 --> 00:34:00,000

And then, almost like something out of a movie, on the last day of the dig, Martinez discovers what looks to be a hidden shaft by the north gate of the temple.

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00:34:01,000 --> 00:34:07,000

Inside the shaft, she discovers two secret chambers.

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00:34:07,000 --> 00:34:11,000

And in those chambers, Martinez finds something important.

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00:34:11,000 --> 00:34:15,000

These are small gray tablets with Greek inscriptions.

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00:34:15,000 --> 00:34:18,000

The tablets Martinez finds are called foundation deposits.

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00:34:18,000 --> 00:34:26,000

During constructions of the time, tablets like that were left behind to give information on the construction of the building.

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00:34:26,000 --> 00:34:34,000

When Martinez cleans the tablets and reads the Greek, she learns that the Tapasiris magna complex was built by Ptolemy IV.

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00:34:34,000 --> 00:34:37,000

Cleopatra's great, great, great grandfather.

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00:34:37,000 --> 00:34:41,000

Initially, people thought Martinez's theory was far-fetched.

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00:34:41,000 --> 00:34:47,000

They believed that no one was digging at Tapasiris magna because there was nothing to find.

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00:34:47,000 --> 00:34:50,000

Now, Martinez has found something.

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00:34:50,000 --> 00:34:55,000

The Egyptian government allows Martinez to extend the dig.

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00:34:55,000 --> 00:35:00,000

Energized by their find, the team brings in new technology.

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00:35:00,000 --> 00:35:15,000

In 2008, Martinez and her team bring in ground-penetrating radar, and they're quickly able to ascertain that there are a whole series of tunnels underneath Tapasiris magna, about 68 feet beneath the surface.

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00:35:15,000 --> 00:35:22,000

And just below these corridors, they find something that just makes their jaws drop.

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00:35:25,000 --> 00:35:35,000

In 2008, archaeologist Kathleen Martinez and her team are exploring the ruins of the Egyptian temple of Tapasiris magna.

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00:35:35,000 --> 00:35:39,000

They're looking for Cleopatra's tomb.

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00:35:39,000 --> 00:35:47,000

As they sweep the area with ground-penetrating radar, they suddenly see what appears to be a network of underground corridors.

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00:35:47,000 --> 00:35:50,000

And these corridors lead to multiple chambers.

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00:35:50,000 --> 00:35:54,000

Martinez believes that these are burial chambers.

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00:35:54,000 --> 00:35:58,000

Martinez is not about to miss this discovery.

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00:35:58,000 --> 00:36:00,000

She's going in herself.

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00:36:00,000 --> 00:36:04,000

She has her team lower her down into the tunnels themselves.

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00:36:04,000 --> 00:36:10,000

From there, she enters into one of the chambers, and she finds the head of a statue.

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00:36:10,000 --> 00:36:14,000

And can you believe it? It's Cleopatra.

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00:36:14,000 --> 00:36:18,000

She also finds a mask that resembles Mark Antony.

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00:36:18,000 --> 00:36:28,000

It's extraordinary to think that other archaeological teams have explored this site and declared that there was nothing to find when all these wonderful artifacts have been discovered.

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00:36:28,000 --> 00:36:35,000

Next, Martinez and her team uncover hundreds of bronze coins.

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00:36:35,000 --> 00:36:41,000

These coins bear the image of Cleopatra. So obviously, they're from the time of Cleopatra.

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00:36:41,000 --> 00:36:47,000

They also suggest that this is a place of pilgrimage for Egyptians who left those coins.

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00:36:47,000 --> 00:36:56,000

With each of these discoveries, the team becomes increasingly convinced that they're going to find the tomb of Cleopatra.

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00:36:56,000 --> 00:37:06,000

But just as Martinez believes she's on the verge of a major breakthrough, unrest in North Africa brings her progress to a halt.

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00:37:06,000 --> 00:37:10,000

Democracy, democracy, not a slave in liberty!

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00:37:10,000 --> 00:37:18,000

It's complete chaos in the Arab world. You have Libya's leader Muammar Gaddafi, who is deposed and also murdered.

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00:37:18,000 --> 00:37:24,000

And then in 2011, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak is overthrown.

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00:37:24,000 --> 00:37:31,000

With all of Egypt in turmoil, Dr. Martinez has no choice but to suspend her dig.

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00:37:31,000 --> 00:37:41,000

This is a worst-case scenario for Martinez because once an expedition is suspended, there is no guarantee that it will ever start up again.

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00:37:41,000 --> 00:37:46,000

Fortunately, in 2014, stability returns.

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00:37:46,000 --> 00:37:56,000

The project is able to start again and they discover new artifacts, more of a link to Cleopatra herself, but no tomb.

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00:37:56,000 --> 00:38:04,000

Martinez doesn't give up. In 2021, she finds 16 more burial chambers with many skeletons and mummies.

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00:38:04,000 --> 00:38:12,000

Two of these mummies are incredibly special because they appear to be royalty and buried side by side like lovers.

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00:38:12,000 --> 00:38:16,000

One of them is adorned with a crown that's decorated with horns.

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00:38:16,000 --> 00:38:20,000

The other has gilded decorations that look like a wide necklace.

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00:38:20,000 --> 00:38:26,000

Most importantly, the two mummies have golden tongues nestled in their jawbones.

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00:38:26,000 --> 00:38:31,000

Golden tongues are a very important part of ancient Egyptian culture.

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00:38:31,000 --> 00:38:39,000

In the Book of the Dead, gold tongues ensure that the deceased will be able to speak, eat, and drink in the afterlife.

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00:38:40,000 --> 00:38:50,000

A crown, golden tongues, gilded decorations, this was obviously the tomb of no ordinary couple.

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00:38:50,000 --> 00:38:56,000

Could these possibly be the mummified bodies of Anthony and Cleopatra?

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00:38:56,000 --> 00:39:04,000

The mummies are eventually x-rayed and while it is found that they are male and female, no further identification can be made.

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00:39:04,000 --> 00:39:13,000

Martinez concludes that while the mummies are promising, if this really was the tomb of Cleopatra, it would probably be much grander.

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00:39:13,000 --> 00:39:21,000

But who knows, if Cleopatra and Anthony had to be smuggled out at the last minute, maybe the tomb wouldn't be so grand.

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00:39:21,000 --> 00:39:28,000

A year later, Dr. Martinez's team makes an even more exciting discovery.

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00:39:28,000 --> 00:39:34,000

Recently in 2022, Martinez's team found a long tunnel 60 feet underground.

422

00:39:34,000 --> 00:39:40,000

The tunnel is attached to a newly found temple of Isis that's part of the complex.

423

00:39:40,000 --> 00:39:46,000

This is where Martinez believes that Cleopatra and possibly Anthony are both buried.

424

00:39:46,000 --> 00:39:57,000

If Cleopatra does in fact have a tomb, I think Martinez really is looking in the right direction and what she has produced so far only strengthens her theory

425

00:39:57,000 --> 00:40:00,000

that she is looking in the right place.

426

00:40:00,000 --> 00:40:05,000

I think that this is a possibility, although there are a lot of possibilities out there.

427

00:40:05,000 --> 00:40:14,000

No matter what, the investigations at Tapasiris Magna will give us more information than we had before.

428

00:40:14,000 --> 00:40:21,000

And it looks like it'll give us more information on the time of Cleopatra and hopefully Cleopatra herself.

429

00:40:22,000 --> 00:40:30,000

In the hunt for Cleopatra, Kathleen Martinez may have her work cut out for her.

430

00:40:30,000 --> 00:40:36,000

The new section she's exploring at Tapasiris Magna is mostly underwater.

431

00:40:36,000 --> 00:40:43,000

Undeterred, Martinez calls this phase of her day, quote, the beginning of a new journey.

432

00:40:43,000 --> 00:40:47,000

Only time will tell if she's on the right track.

433

00:40:47,000 --> 00:40:52,000

I'm Lawrence Fishburne. Thank you for watching History's Greatest Mysteries.

