

1

00:00:00,947 --> 00:00:07,944

This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture.

2

00:00:07,944 --> 00:00:17,940

The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations but not necessarily the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

3

00:00:30,934 --> 00:00:38,931

In a single day in 79 AD, the entire city of Pompeii was buried by a massive volcanic eruption.

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00:00:45,928 --> 00:00:54,924

Ash and lava covered many secrets of life in those times, secrets which would remain hidden for 1500 years.

5

00:00:55,924 --> 00:00:59,922

One recent discovery there has challenged history.

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00:01:02,921 --> 00:01:09,918

Could this be the earliest Christian cross and found in the very heart of Roman decadence?

7

00:01:09,918 --> 00:01:25,911

No ancient civilization could match the grandeur of Rome. Even her outlying towns bear witness to the wealth of the empire.

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00:01:25,911 --> 00:01:34,907

Most of her monuments have eroded but the city of Pompeii is the one place where the past of Rome was sealed in the earth and not lost.

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00:01:35,907 --> 00:01:48,901

Wall paintings give us a glimpse of life in Pompeii. The city as a whole gives us a large window looking into a single day of that era, 1900 years ago.

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00:01:49,901 --> 00:02:08,893

The city was preserved because it was built right next to Mount Vesuvius, a dormant volcano. On a morning in August 79 AD, the volcano began to rumble.

11

00:02:09,892 --> 00:02:24,886

On the day Pompeii was buried, great winds of change were sweeping across the old world. A thousand Egyptian dynasties had collapsed. Rome had crushed Israel and conquered Europe.

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00:02:25,886 --> 00:02:39,880

Followers of the new religion, Christianity, were worshiping in secret from England to Jerusalem. In distance and in spirit, no city could be much farther from the Holy Land than Pompeii.

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00:02:41,879 --> 00:02:51,875

It seems impossible that in only 25 years, Christians had begun to convert the people of this city. People who thought Mount Vesuvius was a god.

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00:02:54,873 --> 00:03:05,869

Edward Bendell, professor at the American University in Rome and an expert on Pompeii, believes the ancient Pompeians were fooled by the deceptive quiet of Vesuvius.

15

00:03:06,868 --> 00:03:19,863

Here in this moon-like crater of a dormant volcano, there is a strange silence broken occasionally by the sound of falling rock.

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00:03:20,862 --> 00:03:43,852

2,000 years ago, it was perhaps as quiet, for men had lived on its slopes for centuries. They worked the rich volcanic soil, producing rich farms and fine vineyards, making some of the best wine known to the world at that time.

17

00:03:44,852 --> 00:04:03,844

With a natural harbor nearby and a mild climate, Pompeii prospered. The volcano would rumble, but the citizens ignored the danger. Vesuvius had never erupted, they believed, and no one suspected it ever would.

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00:04:04,844 --> 00:04:24,835

They had no idea they were living on a time bomb. The events of 62 AD might have given a warning, but no one associated the violence of the sudden earthquake with a nearby barren crater.

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00:04:25,835 --> 00:04:34,831

Were the gods cursing Pompeii? Should the city be abandoned?

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00:04:36,830 --> 00:04:43,827

Scientists and priests came all the way from Rome to resolve the question.

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00:04:44,827 --> 00:05:05,818

Science, however, was not highly developed then. They consulted astrological charts, searched for obscure references in the writings of ancient philosophers, and for this life or death matter called into consultant to double-check their results.

22

00:05:06,817 --> 00:05:13,814

He was a highly respected professor of augury, who could predict the future by reading the entrails of birds.

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00:05:14,814 --> 00:05:25,809

What seems like primitive superstition was, at that time, the most reliable method of research. The augurer carefully measured the liver or the gallbladder, comparing the size and shape to classic norms.

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00:05:25,809 --> 00:05:38,804

He concluded Pompeii was safe. All the experts agreed.

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00:05:44,801 --> 00:05:54,797

Remarkably, no one noticed the volcano had begun smoking. Deep within the earth, however, pressures were mounting.

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00:05:54,797 --> 00:06:09,791

Pompeii was given one last warning. In the middle of August 79 AD, the wells went dry. Underground water had shifted, generating tons of pressure deep inside Vesuvius.

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00:06:10,790 --> 00:06:13,789

Then came August 24th.

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00:06:29,782 --> 00:06:35,780

An enormous black cloud of volcanic cinders and ash shot miles into the air.

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00:06:40,777 --> 00:06:45,775

A small volcano was formed during the eruption.

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00:06:59,769 --> 00:07:08,766

As incredible as it seems, many of the people did not flee. None of them had the slightest idea what a volcanic eruption was.

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00:07:39,752 --> 00:07:50,748

A rain of hot cinders started fires all over the city.

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00:07:50,748 --> 00:07:55,746

For the once complacent citizens, it was too late to escape.

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00:07:55,746 --> 00:08:00,744

Self-reviewings killed many on the spot.

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00:08:00,744 --> 00:08:18,736

When the eruption ceased three days later, Pompeii was 30 feet under volcanic ash and rock.

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00:08:18,736 --> 00:08:20,735

The Roman Empire fell.

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00:08:20,735 --> 00:08:25,733

The Middle Ages passed, Columbus discovered America.

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00:08:25,733 --> 00:08:31,730

All that historians knew about Pompeii came from fragments of old Roman records.

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00:08:31,730 --> 00:08:36,728

It was remembered only as a typical pleasure-loving resort.

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00:08:36,728 --> 00:08:49,723

When the lost city was found and excavated, however, surprising evidence for the first Christian cross was discovered, sealed, deep in the earth.

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00:08:50,722 --> 00:09:04,716

Pompeii's place in history is quite unique in that in one day it was completely hermetically sealed.

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00:09:04,716 --> 00:09:09,714

In other words, time stood still.

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00:09:10,714 --> 00:09:20,710

In 1710, in the shadow of Vesuvius, the lost city of Pompeii was miraculously discovered.

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00:09:20,710 --> 00:09:27,707

A peasant named Giovanni Noccerino set out to dig a new well for his farm.

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00:09:27,707 --> 00:09:31,705

The village dowser had directed him to a promising spot.

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00:09:31,705 --> 00:09:36,703

30 feet down, he still hadn't hit water and was about to give up.

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00:09:51,697 --> 00:10:00,693

For as long as anyone could remember, local legends told of a fabulous city buried far underground, teeming with gold and jewels.

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00:10:00,693 --> 00:10:10,688

No one could remember the exact name or location of the city, but they believed it had been part of the ancient Roman Empire.

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00:10:12,688 --> 00:10:18,685

Giovanni sold the marble to a dealer who realized it was both very old and valuable.

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00:10:18,685 --> 00:10:23,683

The two men returned and continued digging in secret.

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00:10:30,680 --> 00:10:38,677

They found treasure beyond their dreams, not only statues and coins, but an entire city that extended for miles.

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00:10:38,677 --> 00:10:46,673

The strange soil was so soft they could dig with their hands, yet firm enough to tunnel in old directions.

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00:10:46,673 --> 00:10:51,671

They realized the old legends of a lost city were true.

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00:11:01,667 --> 00:11:08,664

After 50 years of treasure hunting, diggers made a chance discovery.

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00:11:08,664 --> 00:11:15,661

From that day in 1760 to the present, excavations in Pompeii have continued.

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00:11:15,661 --> 00:11:20,659

Early explorers carted away whatever they found.

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00:11:20,659 --> 00:11:26,656

The old town was a small town, but it was a small town.

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00:11:26,656 --> 00:11:31,654

The town was a small town, but it was a small town.

58

00:11:31,654 --> 00:11:36,652

Early explorers carted away whatever they found.

59

00:11:38,651 --> 00:11:46,648

Only in the last century have scientists been able to put a stop to the stealing and damage of historic artifacts.

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00:11:52,645 --> 00:11:57,643

This control led to the most dramatic find of all.

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00:11:57,643 --> 00:12:08,638

In 1864, the archaeologist Giuseppe Fiorelli was supervising the excavation when workers found yet another cavity in the volcanic ash.

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00:12:08,638 --> 00:12:12,637

Like hundreds of others, the cavity was filled with human bones.

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00:12:12,637 --> 00:12:19,634

They usually just tossed the bones aside and kept on digging, a senseless loss.

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00:12:20,633 --> 00:12:26,631

Fiorelli thought, when the Pompeians died, volcanic ash hardened around their bodies.

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00:12:26,631 --> 00:12:31,629

The bodies decayed, leaving a hollow space in the rock.

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00:12:31,629 --> 00:12:35,627

Could this hollow space be used like a sculptor's mold?

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00:12:43,624 --> 00:12:46,622

He tried an experiment.

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00:12:49,621 --> 00:12:54,619

Blaster of Paris was poured in the hollow.

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00:13:20,608 --> 00:13:28,605

Then, very carefully, they scraped away the surrounding ash and cinders.

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00:13:40,599 --> 00:13:44,598

The resulting cast was more detailed than he had dared to hope.

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00:13:44,598 --> 00:13:49,596

It resembled a marble statue, but this was once the shape of a living person.

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00:13:54,594 --> 00:13:57,592

A mule driver huddled under a balcony.

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00:13:59,591 --> 00:14:02,590

A young woman trapped in the street.

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00:14:05,589 --> 00:14:13,586

A dog left behind chained to a post, and many others literally frozen in time.

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00:14:15,585 --> 00:14:18,583

The man was left alone.

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00:14:33,577 --> 00:14:39,574

Charentius the baker gave a party for his brother, Naio, who was just elected magistrate.

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00:14:39,574 --> 00:14:42,573

Their friends came and drank all night.

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00:14:45,572 --> 00:14:51,569

In the wine shop of Felix Arbitris, a new blend was said to capture the very taste of spring.

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00:14:51,569 --> 00:14:57,567

Diceus bought a slave who knew the art of mosaics. His first creation said, beware of the dog.

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00:14:57,567 --> 00:15:01,565

The slaves of Mrs. Vetti were hard at work on her new house.

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00:15:01,565 --> 00:15:04,564

It would be the very finest in Pompeii.

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00:15:04,564 --> 00:15:11,561

This is the atrium of a typical Roman house of a wealthy family naturally.

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00:15:11,561 --> 00:15:18,558

We have the atrium with its compluvium, which leads down to the impluvium,

84

00:15:18,558 --> 00:15:21,557

where the rain fell on the house.

85

00:15:21,557 --> 00:15:24,555

The house is the house of the Roman family.

86

00:15:24,555 --> 00:15:27,554

The house is the house of the Roman family.

87

00:15:27,554 --> 00:15:33,552

The atrium with its compluvium, which leads down to the impluvium,

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00:15:33,552 --> 00:15:39,549

where the rain fell in the rainy season, filling a basin of water below.

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00:15:39,549 --> 00:15:43,547

The family life revolved around this area.

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00:15:43,547 --> 00:15:50,544

You will find that you have small rooms, the cubicles, the trichlinium or dining room, which we find back there.

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00:15:51,544 --> 00:15:59,541

In the morning, mother would have got up and the servants would have gone into her cubicle and done her hair.

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00:15:59,541 --> 00:16:05,538

Father would have got up out of his because it was recommended by the Romans not to sleep together.

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00:16:05,538 --> 00:16:07,537

It led to bad marriages.

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00:16:07,537 --> 00:16:12,535

And you will notice the painting on the walls.

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00:16:12,535 --> 00:16:18,533

This is one of the finest houses as far as the late or fourth style,

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00:16:18,533 --> 00:16:22,531

Pompeian style in painting, can be found.

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00:16:22,531 --> 00:16:31,527

But life was comfortable, calm in these houses, the open air in the garden behind, the open air in the atrium.

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00:16:33,526 --> 00:16:37,524

For all of Pompey's value as a treasure chest of antiquity,

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00:16:37,524 --> 00:16:42,522

the city is ironically better known for its many lewd murals.

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00:16:50,519 --> 00:16:56,516

Advertisements of a sort for the red light district were plastered on walls all over town.

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00:16:57,516 --> 00:17:10,510

What has survived in Pompey are records of frivolity, decadence and still another facet of Roman civilization, savagery.

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00:17:10,510 --> 00:17:20,506

In here you had the sport which included men against animals, animals against animals and men against men.

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00:17:20,506 --> 00:17:23,505

The Romans loved blood sport.

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00:17:23,505 --> 00:17:33,501

If they ran out of gladiators, they would then go to the local jail, get a condemned prisoner or a group of condemned prisoners and it was like that,

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00:17:33,501 --> 00:17:35,500

slitting the throat, so to speak.

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00:17:35,500 --> 00:17:49,494

At one point the competition between the two gladiator shows was so strong that the populace in the arena joined into the fight

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00:17:49,494 --> 00:17:52,493

and there was a gross bloodbath.

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00:17:52,493 --> 00:17:59,490

For this reason the government in Rome closed this amphitheater for ten years.

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00:18:00,489 --> 00:18:05,487

Discovery of strange murals brought up another mystery in Pompey.

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00:18:05,487 --> 00:18:13,484

The scenes seemed to depict religious rituals, but to this day no one has been able to explain their meaning.

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00:18:14,483 --> 00:18:23,480

For want of a better name, scholars call these rites the cult of the mysteries.

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00:18:29,477 --> 00:18:32,476

No culture in history has been without religion.

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00:18:32,476 --> 00:18:37,474

The Romans borrowed from the Greeks and created a panoply of gods.

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00:18:37,474 --> 00:18:47,469

Evidence has been found in Pompey showing tributes and sacrifices paid to Jupiter, Juno, Mars and dozens of other pagan gods.

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00:18:48,469 --> 00:19:00,464

When Vesuvius erupted, Christianity was less than 50 years old and we would never expect to find evidence of its organized practice so far from the Holy Land.

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00:19:08,460 --> 00:19:20,455

However, in nearby Herculaneum, sister city of Pompey, a small object was found over a simple altar.

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00:19:20,455 --> 00:19:23,454

It looked like a Christian cross.

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00:19:23,454 --> 00:19:28,452

This room was sealed in the earth only 49 years after Christ.

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00:19:28,452 --> 00:19:33,450

Is it possible that whoever worshipped here knew Jesus?

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00:19:33,450 --> 00:19:40,447

Well, some say that it is a cross and that it was a room of a Christian.

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00:19:40,447 --> 00:19:47,444

I have my doubts because all the cross was an early Christian symbol.

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00:19:47,444 --> 00:19:51,442

The most common symbol in that period before 79 was the fish.

123

00:19:51,442 --> 00:19:54,441

If there were fish there, I would be convinced.

124

00:19:54,441 --> 00:19:59,439

Dr. John Ray is a professor of theology in Anaheim, California.

125

00:19:59,439 --> 00:20:05,436

This depression in the stucco wall definitely has the shape of a cross.

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00:20:05,436 --> 00:20:12,433

It looks like it and it looks like a wooden cross had been nailed into this depression at one time and then removed.

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00:20:12,433 --> 00:20:26,427

Then a board or wooden cover nailed over the area and it is thought that this may have happened during a time of Christian persecution such as when Nero persecuted the Christians in 64 AD.

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00:20:26,427 --> 00:20:33,424

As far as I know, no other religion used the cross at that time as a symbol.

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00:20:33,424 --> 00:20:39,422

And so it would be pretty good evidence that it was of a Christian person worshipping.

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00:20:39,422 --> 00:20:41,421

The controversy is still unresolved.

131

00:20:41,421 --> 00:20:48,418

The Bible tells us that St. Paul traveled from the Holy Land to the Bay of Naples around 63 AD.

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00:20:48,418 --> 00:20:52,416

He met Christian brethren at a place called Three Taverns.

133

00:20:52,416 --> 00:20:57,414

Was this place Pompeii or possibly Herculaneum?

134

00:20:57,414 --> 00:21:02,412

The answer may still lie buried in the unexcavated part of this town.

135

00:21:22,404 --> 00:21:33,399

The man who killed Kennedy takes a close look at the evidence that Lee Harvey Oswald may not have acted alone at nine here on the History Channel where the past comes alive.