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Junior Editor's Report

The Search for Cleopatra's Tomb

By Christina Kumi – Upper Darby Chapter



Cleopatra VII. The last active ruler of Egypt and one of history's most fascinating and complex figures. Born in January 69 BC, Cleopatra was known for her intelligence, political astuteness, and her relationship with Roman leaders, Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. Her reign was marked by efforts to stabilize her kingdom through the expanding power of Rome, and her life has been depicted in literature, art, and film. Aside from her fame, the location of her final resting place remains one of archaeology's greatest mysteries.

The search for Cleopatra's tomb has captured the curiosity and minds of historians and archaeologists for centuries. Cleopatra's death at age 39 in August 30 BC following the defeat of her forces, marked the end of the Ptolemaic rule and the beginning of Roman Egypt. According to ancient sources, Cleopatra and Mark Antony were said to have been buried together in a grand mausoleum. Most archeologists believe the tomb to be located in Cleopatra's capital city, Alexandria in North Egypt; but about 1,000 years ago, the city was hit by a tidal wave which resulted in it being lost underwater. If this theory is true, then the tomb might be lost underwater as well further eluding its discovery. All of these different factors and theories, along with the desire to uncover more about her life and the ancient world, are exactly what has piqued the interest of many, but today I want to speak about the woman who has come closest to finding the truth. Dr. Kathleen Martinez.

Research teams led by Dr. Kathleen Martinez, an archaeologist from the Dominican Republic, performed excavations at Taposiris Magna (one of the most promising sites) which uncovered many artifacts and structures that suggest it may be the final resting place of Cleopatra and Mark Antony. Discoveries such as coins bearing Cleopatra's image, statues, and a network of tunnels and chambers have fueled theories that the tomb lies within this area.

Although the exact location has not yet been pinpointed, ongoing excavations continue to bring us closer to solving this ancient mystery.