

Mass murder mystery of Maya kingdom

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Forensic scientists with mass burial expertise have been called into an ancient Maya city in Guatemala to help unravel a 1,300-year-old mass murder mystery.

Archaeologists have been unearthing the ancient city of Cancuén and while draining a sacred pool that led to the elaborate channels of the city, found about 50 dismembered skeletons, The New York Times reports.

This murder mystery is believed to have happened around 800 A.D., around the time of the drastic decline of the Maya civilization. The reason behind the fall of that empire is still not known.

What archaeologists believe in this discovery is that the entire royal court was rounded up and killed, their bones buried in the pool.

This led to the inhabitants of the city leaving, as did others in the area.

The king and queen were found about 80 yards from the rest of the bones, buried with royal garb.

Despite the violent deaths -- researchers believe they were speared or hit in the neck with an axe -- the bodies were all buried with fine robes and other nice clothes as a sign of respect.

Dr. Arthur A. Demarest of Vanderbilt University and director of the Maya excavations called the finding "the most important thing I've ever discovered."

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