

Summary

Our study is based on two reports about Christianity's most precious relic, published centuries apart, with two independent claims that Peter's skull has been lost twice. Furthermore, the archeological evidence shows in both cases that this was covered up by the Church. 1. Jeroni Pujades, a Barcelona law professor and historian, quotes a Latin chronicle with the claim that Peter's skull was lost with other relics in a cave in the Pyrenees and that it was found after a long search and a monastery finally built over it. This was published 1609 in Catalan, followed by a Spanish translation in 1832. 2. Pope Pius XII conducted excavations of Peter's grave in the 1940s, which were documented in a secret report and released to a few international experts. They reveal that the tomb had been ransacked and looted by the Saracens in 846 CE and that the excavators found a heap of "reburied bones" without the skull under a wall. This unbelievable tale was published by the British archeologists Toynbee and Perkins in 1956, and confirmed in 1957 by the German Jesuit Kirschbaum, the leading excavator of the tomb. Regardless if this was really Peter's skull, we intend to show that the above claims are connected.

Thanks to the research of the three archeologists, we can show that there were two cover-ups: 1. The abbots of St Peter of Roda, a monastery in the Pyrenees, who claimed for over a thousand years that it was built over the cave with the relics, were disproven by excavations in the 1990s. Hidden within the monastery's walls are the remains of an ancient Roman structure, which contradicts the long search for the cave and its discovery, if it was under the main altar as claimed. According to the excavations, the crypt under the altar is only about twenty meters from the Roman structure and there are no traces of a cave. 2. Prof. Guarducci was brought in by Giovanni Montini, her old family friend and the future pope Paul VI, to add fragments of a skull to the reburied bones and claim they are part of a second heap of bones she had found *in situ*. She completed the scam in time for his election and her "discovery" was announced by the pope to the public. To silence the many critics, pope Francis celebrated Peter's bones in 2013, canonized Paul VI in 2018, and donated nine of Peter's bone fragments to the Eastern Orthodox Church in 2019, which closed the case.

Consequently, we studied the excellent researches of Toynbee, Perkins, and Kirschbaum to determine which of the many sacks of Rome would explain the "reburied bones" without the skull. Curiously, the churchmen believe that the tomb was only sacked by the Saracens and ignore 410 CE. They overlook that Peter's Basilica was outside the walls of Rome, and that Alaric was an Arian Christian and would be the prime suspect to take the skull and hide the rest of the bones at the grave. Just as he took Galla Placidia, the young and attractive sister of the emperor as a hostage to have some control over the empire, Peter's skull would guarantee him the support of the Church. This conjecture is supported by the fact that after Alaric's death his successor Ataulf married Galla on January 1, 414 in Narbonne with the emperor's support. According to the chronicles, the nuptials were celebrated with lavish Roman festivities and gifts from the booty of the sack. At the time, Ataulf's realm extended from Narbonne to Barcelona, which would localize the treasure cave precisely in their middle. To avoid a battle with Constantius, Ataulf moved his court to Barcelona in 415 and enjoyed a few months of love and peace with Galla -- until Sigeric had him assassinated and took his place. His death may relate to the treasure and it seems he didn't reveal its location because Giseric had all six of Ataulf's children from a former marriage killed and Galla Placidia abused publically. After a reign of seven days, Sigeric was also killed and replaced by Wallia, a relative of Ataulf.

Now that it is established that the cave was never found, we should consider that a medium-sized box with bones could have been buried anywhere and did not need an elaborate site like a cave. Hence, it seems that Ataulf had discovered the cave at an earlier time and decided to hide the bones with a large part of the Roman booty there until a permanent homeland for the Visigoths is established. Our detailed research shows where the cave would be located and than an earthquake had sealed the access!