



Archaeologists Discover Hidden Underground Society's Secrets

Description

In northern Spain, archaeologists have unearthed the remains of a medieval community that lived underground for centuries. This significant discovery unveils a society marked by disease, inbreeding, and internal strife, highlighting their isolation from the outside world.

The site, known as Las Gobas, consists of natural rock caves that sheltered this troglodyte population between the 7th and 11th centuries. Recent excavations have brought to light the harsh realities these individuals experienced during their secluded existence.

A study published in *Science Advances* details the excavation of 33 skeletons, which provide insights into the lives of these people. Approximately 63% of the genetic samples exhibited signs of inbreeding, suggesting long-standing practices of marrying close relatives, which resulted in diminished genetic diversity. Researchers noted that the community's isolation hindered interactions with outsiders, contributing to weakened health.

In addition to genetic issues, some skeletons displayed fractures and puncture wounds, indicating that internal conflicts likely occurred within this underground society. This evidence suggests that violence was not uncommon among them.

The remains also bore traces of smallpox, a devastating illness prevalent in medieval Europe. Researchers hypothesise that the community contracted smallpox through contaminated pork, a staple in their diet. With no external contact or access to medical care, outbreaks could spread rapidly in such a confined group.

By the end of the 11th century, the troglodyte society at Las Gobas had vanished. The precise reasons for this abandonment remain uncertain, but factors such as resource shortages, disease, and external pressures likely played a role. Ultimately, Las Gobas transformed into a necropolis, with many individuals buried within the caves.

Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. What is the name of the site where the remains were discovered?

Option: Las Gobas

Option: Troglodyte Caves

Option: Medieval Ruins



Option: Cave of the Ancients

2. In which centuries did the troglodyte population live?

Option: 5th to 8th centuries

Option: 7th to 11th centuries

Option: 10th to 14th centuries

Option: 1st to 5th centuries

3. What percentage of genetic samples showed signs of inbreeding?

Option: 50%

Option: 63%

Option: 80%

Option: 40%

4. What illness was found in the remains of the community?

Option: Tuberculosis

Option: Smallpox

Option: Plague

Option: Measles

5. What staple food was hypothesized to be the source of smallpox?

Option: Beef

Option: Chicken

Option: Pork

Option: Vegetables

6. What was one of the signs of internal conflict found among the skeletons?

Option: Dental cavities

Option: Fractures

Option: Osteoporosis

Option: Tuberculosis

True-False

7. The community at Las Gobas experienced regular contact with outsiders.

8. Las Gobas was a necropolis by the end of the 11th century.



9. The troglodyte population lived in above-ground structures.
10. Researchers believe that the community was affected by resource shortages.
11. There was significant genetic diversity within the community at Las Gobas.
12. The excavation revealed a peaceful society with little to no violence.

Gap-Fill

13. The excavation of _____ skeletons provided insights into the lives of the community.
14. The society at Las Gobas lived in caves from the 7th to the _____ centuries.
15. Approximately _____ % of the genetic samples exhibited signs of inbreeding.
16. The remains bore traces of _____, a devastating illness prevalent in medieval Europe.
17. The community's isolation hindered interactions with _____.
18. Factors such as resource shortages, disease, and external _____ likely played a role in the community's abandonment.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Las Gobas 2. 7th to 11th centuries 3. 63% 4. Smallpox 5. Pork 6. Fractures

True-False: 7. False 8. True 9. False 10. True 11. False 12. False

Gap-Fill: 13. 33 14. 11th 15. 63 16. smallpox 17. outsiders 18. pressures

CATEGORY

1. Health - LEVEL6

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