

Archaeologists conduct historic dig

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Archaeologists from 19 nations are digging in the Mediterranean to determine how society changed at the end of the classical Greek and Rome periods.

Led by Professor Richard Hodges of Britain's University of East Anglia, the dig is part of a decade-long project to learn how society was transformed at the end of the classical period of ancient Greece and Rome, the Washington Post reported.

Of special interest, Hodges said, is the Albanian city of Butrint, since during 3,000 years, successive civilizations made that city their home. Hodges said Butrint was first settled between 1000 and 800 B.C., and its location along major trade routes gave it importance.

The city, in turn, was Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine. Then the Venetians and Ottomans built forts to protect the city. During the 5th century Butrint had a population of as many as 20,000, he said.

One of the more interesting finds so far is what's believed to be the first ceramics found in the central Mediterranean dating from the Middle Ages, Hodges said.

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