

# Archaeologists hail unique find in Albania

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A marble bust of an athlete dating back to the Roman era, has been unearthed in the ancient city of Apollonia, 120 kms from Tirana. A team of French and Albanian archaeologists digging at the scene are studying how Apollonia evolved from a Greek colony founded in the 7th century BC to a Roman settlement in the 3rd century AD.

Archaeologists unearthed a Roman bust from the 2nd century AD hailed as the most important archaeological find of the last 50 years in Albania, experts said Friday.

"It is an exceptional discovery, the most important in the last 50 years in Albania because the bust is still intact," French professor Jean-Luc Lamboley, who led the dig at Apollonia with Albanian [archaeologists](#),

told AFP.

Experts say the bust of an unknown athlete found at the Apollonia site, some 120 kilometers (75 miles) from Tirana, was of a remarkable quality.

Apollonia is one of the biggest [archaeological sites](#) in Albania and the fact that no modern town was built on its ruins makes for excellent excavating conditions.

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"This spans a thousand years of history and we can study here how the classic Greek civilisation was transmitted, evolved and enriched in Roman times," Lambolely said.

"For security reasons the bust was moved Friday to the Tirana archaeological museum as the Apollonia museum still has no security system in place," the French expert added.

After the fall of communism in the early 1990s and following public unrest in 1997 several art works were stolen from Albanian museums probably to be sold to foreign art lovers at very high prices.

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