

Israel unveils 1,800-year-old sarcophagus

September 3 2015

Israel has unveiled an 1,800-year-old sarcophagus that workers found at a building site and initially tried to conceal.

The Antiquities Authority called the sarcophagus, which was shown to media Thursday, "one of the most important and beautiful" ever found in Israel.

The two-ton limestone coffin features a life-size carving of a human figure wearing a toga on the lid and designs around the sides, including a Medusa head. Archaeologist Gaby Mazor says the piece dates back to the 3rd century and was likely commissioned by a wealthy Roman family.

Antiquities Authority Spokeswoman Yoli Shwartz says it was damaged when workers unearthed it at a construction site. Contractors then hid the piece, fearing it would force them to halt work. She said [legal action](#) would be taken.

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