



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Ancient Burial Discovered Under Paris Cathedral

March 19, 2022

Archaeologists have discovered an ancient **coffin** under the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris.

The lead coffin, also known as a sarcophagus, was uncovered along with several ancient **tombs**.

France's Culture Ministry said some lower levels of the **excavation** site are believed to date back to the 14th century. It said the unearthed burial sites represented “**remarkable** scientific quality.”

Among the discovered tombs was the “completely **preserved**, human-shaped sarcophagus made of lead,” the ministry added. Archaeologists said the coffin may have been created for a high-level official who had lived at the time.

The excavation work is happening as workers repair the historic religious center after a destructive fire in 2019. Because of the latest discoveries, officials decided to extend the excavation work until March 25.

Christophe Besnier is with France's National Archaeological Institute. He told Reuters his organization was able to send a camera down to where the work is being done. It captured materials including cloth, as well as remains of hair and plants.

"The fact that these plants are still there **indicates** that the contents have been very well preserved," he said.

In addition to the tombs, elements of painted **sculptures** were also found just beneath the current floor level of the cathedral.

Other ancient materials were unearthed during repairs carried out at Notre Dame in the mid-1800s. Many of those pieces are included in the collection of the Louvre museum in Paris.

I'm Bryan Lynn.

Reuters and Agence France-Presse reported on this story. Bryan Lynn adapted the reports for VOA Learning English.

We want to hear from you. Write to us in the Comments section, and [visit our Facebook page](#).

Words in This Story

coffin – *n.* a box in which a dead body is buried

tomb – *n.* a place where a dead person is buried, usually marked by a structure

excavation – *n.* to dig in the ground in an effort to look for objects from the past

remarkable – *adj.* very unusual or noticeable in a favorable way

preserve – *v.* to keep something the same or prevent it from being damaged or destroyed

indicate – *v.* to show that something exists or is likely to be true

sculpture – *n.* a piece of art made from stone, wood, clay, etc.
