

2,000-year-old tomb of 'Cerberus' with with fresco of a three-headed dog discovered in Italy

by [Siddhi Vinayak Misra](#) — October 11, 2023



In Italy, a sealed 2,000-year-old tomb with a fresco of Cerberus, the three-headed dog of Greek mythology, was discovered.

[Archaeologists](#) uncovered the burial chamber in Giugliano, a Naples suburb, which is thought to be roughly 2,000 years old.

It was uncovered on farmland during an archaeological investigation conducted before the start of maintenance work on the city's water supply.

Previously, archaeologists discovered a vast number of burial sites in the same location that possibly date from the Roman Republic era (510-31 BC) to the Roman Imperial Age (31 BC- AD 476).

The hidden tomb has several frescoes that are in mostly perfect condition on its walls and ceilings.

The most noteworthy mythical figure depicted in the paintings is the three-headed dog, which is said to guard the gates of the underworld. As a result, the burial chamber was dubbed the 'Tomb of Cerberus'.

The eye-catching painting depicts Hercules' 12th and most difficult Labour when he was escorted by Mercury to Hades to capture the three-headed monster hound Cerberus.

Other legendary beings shown in the paintings included ichthyocentaurs, a centaurine-type sea god with a human upper body, a fishtail, and the lower anterior half and forelegs of a horse.

The scientists uncovered the burial chamber after noticing a wall erected using an ancient Roman construction style known as opus incertum.

A first-of-its-kind finding

Archaeologists had to carefully remove tiles covering the ceiling aperture to enter the burial chamber, which resulted in an 'exceptional' find.

"The tomb has frescoed ceilings and walls in perfect condition, with mythological scenes that go all around the room and figurative representations among which, a three-headed dog stands out," stated Mariano Nuzzo, the superintendent of Archaeology, [Fine Arts and Landscape for the Naples metropolitan area](#).

"Three painted klinai, an altar with vessels for libations, the deceased still placed on the funeral beds with rich objects – complete the picture of a discovery which, in this area, is unprecedented," he added.

There has been continuous work to excavate more of the tomb without damaging its interiors.

"The emotion aroused by the privilege of such a discovery is indescribable. The territory of Giugliano, after years of oblivion, is finally returning significant vestiges of its glorious past, to be preserved and protected, thanks to a common effort," Nuzzo added.